The Image in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (247-96/861-908)
With Special Reference to Metaphor and Simile

BY

MOHAMMAD NASSER RASHID AL-MAHROUQI

School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

2004
This thesis investigates the imagery of one of the most important poets of the 'Abbasid age, 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz (247-96/861-908). Ibn al-Mu'tazz shows great interest in external attributes, especially shape, colour and speed. His fondness for describing external attributes is the characteristic feature which has led to his reputation as the pioneer of the ṫissī (sensory or sensuous) type of poetic imagery, in contrast with Abū Tammām, who was considered the pioneer of dhihnh (intellectual) poetry. It is also this fondness for external description that generates one of the most significant features of his poetry; the lack of harmony, indeed the outright contradiction at times, between two different functions of imagery, the semantic and the psychological. In Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry both positive and negative aspects of meaning often coexist in the very same image. This study seeks to place Ibn al-Mu'tazz's conception of imagery in the context of his life-experience and interests.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz has traditionally been seen as a wealthy prince whose poetry reflects a life of luxury. This study, however, develops a different understanding and argues that the poet experienced an extremely difficult and turbulent life, right from the early days of his childhood: both his grandfather and, later, his father were assassinated following which he was sent into exile in frightening circumstances; he himself was Caliph for 24 hours, and he suffered real misfortune and adversity throughout his life. This thesis will argue that the lack of harmony found in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry is indicative of the fragmentation in the poet's own life and reflects his bitter life-experiences.

The two major aspects of imagery this study explores are the nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images and the sources from which they are derived. Special attention is paid to simile and metaphor as they are possibly the most important figures of poetic speech, particularly in the age of classical Arabic literature. This poet's frequent use of particular images reveals important information about his interests. He shows great admiration for the palm tree - its trunk, fronds and spandex. Other topics, such as the moon, Pleiades, wine, wine froth, wineskin, hunting dogs, horses and flowers, especially the narcissus, are also favoured topics in his poetry. For the purpose of this thesis, five main sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery have been identified and investigated: the human being, daily life, nature, animals and culture.

In studying the nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery, the work of classical Arab rhetoricians and critics, as well as modern views, are utilised. In the study of sources, the approach developed by Caroline Spurgeon has been adopted, and has proved to be of enormous value.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first and foremost expression of gratitude must go to Professor Kamal Abu-Deeb for his excellent supervision and generosity of spirit towards me in every aspect during my doctoral studies. His exacting academic precision and unfailing guidance have illumined the path this researcher has chosen to travel in his work on poetic imagery. I am also grateful to Dr. Stephan Sperl, Dr. Wen-Chin Ouyang, Dr. 'Abd Allāh al-'Udharih and Mr. Clive Smith for their help and support during different stages of writing this thesis. In addition, my friends Riham Abu-Deeb, Muḥammad al-Ḥabsī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghafl̄ and Faḍl al-Maqhafi deserve heartfelt thanks. This work would also have been impossible without the great understanding and unlimited support I received from my beloved family, especially my mother Gh. al-Mahruqi, my wife Th. al-Ḥabsi, and my sister and brother Sh. and Ahmed al-Mahruqi. Finally, a special expression of thanks goes to Sultan Qaboos University for giving a scholarship to this researcher.
For my eight year old daughter, Maisson,

a promising reader
سفر رماده

علي الطابع ونفي بالراحم العصر
رار رماد الذي الفجر حافظ ذلك في سنة
وال+[نسبة] عينت العصر السامي
راكب في نصاب المسلمون نجومهم
تذلزة رحم فيقع وذي كمسير

ارج العنصر

ب3، ص 151
KEY NOTES

- There are several critical editions of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Diwan*, as can be seen in the bibliography. The value of these editions varies as most of them do not represent the whole body of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. The edition edited by Y. al-Sāmirā'ī (Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'A, *Shiʿr Ibn al-Muʿtazz; Part I, the Diwān, Šanʿat Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī*, Ed. Y. al-Sāmirā'ī (Baghdad: 1977, v. I and v. II, but v. III in 1978) is the most comprehensive one. Thus, all subsequent references to the *Diwan* will be to this edition.

- Unless otherwise stated, the author of this thesis is responsible for all translations herein.
LIST OF TABLES

PART 1: INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction
1- General Introduction ................................................................. 14
2- Definitions ............................................................................... 19

Chapter Two: Literature Review
1- Studies of Poetic Imagery .............................................................. 24
2- Previous Studies on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Work .............................................. 35
   2-1- 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjānî (1954) .................................................. 36
   2-2- Husain (1948) ........................................................................ 47
   2-3- Sayyid al-Ahl (1951) ................................................................. 51
   2-4- Al-Kafrawi (1967) .................................................................. 53
   2-5- Al-Shak'a (1973) .................................................................... 56
   2-6- Shalabi (19981). ..................................................................... 58
   2-7- Al-Tatāwī (1981) ................................................................... 62
3- Conclusion .................................................................................. 68
PART 2: Investigation of the Sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

Chapter Three: The Human Being

1-Types of People.................................................................71
   1-1- The Feminine............................................................71
   1-2- Occupations.............................................................87

2- Actions and Conditions...................................................91
   2-1- Autonomic Actions..................................................91
   2-2- The Power of Speech..............................................94
   2-3- Power Actions.........................................................95
   2-4- Lovers and Sexuality..............................................100
   2-5- Conditions.............................................................102
   2-6- Sickness.................................................................105

3- Bodily Organs.................................................................107

4- Conclusion......................................................................114

Chapter Four: Daily Life and Other Sources

1- Daily life........................................................................117
   1-1- Clothing and Cosmetics..........................................117
      1-1-1- Clothing...........................................................118
      1-1-2- Jewels and Objects of Value.............................122
      1-1-3- Cosmetics and Personal Grooming..................130
   1-2- Accommodation....................................................133
      1-2-1- Housing...........................................................133
PART 3: Some Aspects of the Nature of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s Imagery

Chapter Five: The Ḥissī Aspect of Poetic Imagery

1- Previous Studies on The Nature of Poetic Imagery.................188
2- Ḥissī and Dhīhni: Two types of Poetic Imagery..................196
Chapter Six: Fragmentation in Poetic Imagery

1- What is Fragmentation? ................................................................. 273
2- Important Events in the Life of Ibn al-Mu'tazz

2-1- The Assassination of the Poet's Father

2-2- The Poet and his Father

2-2-1- Good Days

2-2-2- Bad Days

2-3- The Poet in Exile

2-4- Political Disturbances in the 'Abbasid Era

3- Fragmented Imagery

3-1- The Poet's Relationship with Others

3-2- The Co-existence of Sadness and Happiness

4- Conclusion

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX
LIST OF TABLES

Table (1) List of Selected Dissertations and Theses undertaken at Cairo University.................................................................23

Table (2) List of Studies on Poetic Imagery.................................................................24

Table (3) Divisions of Ĥissî Images............................................................................197

Table (4) Elements and Relations in tamthîl.............................................................202

Table (5) Examples of Dhihnî Images in Abû Tammâm’s Poetry.........................209

Table (6) The Nature of Similarity in Pre-Islamic and 'Abbasid Poetry...243

Table (7) Different Shapes of Letters Used in Calligraphic Images.................252

Table (8) The Nature of Relationships in Poetic Imagery.................................268

Table (9) 'Abbasid Caliphs During Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Life.................................297
PART ONE:

Introduction and Literature Review

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.
INTRODUCTION.

1-General Introduction.

Abū al-'Abbās 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz is one of the finest 'Abbasid poets and is well known for his love of forming attractive and amazing poetic images. As becomes evident on any careful reading of his poetry, simile and metaphor are Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s favourite figures of speech. Even a brief survey of images based on, for example, the moon, Pleiades, wine, wine froth, wineskin, hunting dogs, horses, flowers (especially narcissus) and trees (especially palm trees), makes his pre-occupation with imagery obvious.¹ It is perhaps worth mentioning at this early stage that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was fully aware of his preoccupation with imagery and that it was a conscious undertaking. This can be seen in statements he is reported to have made theorising his inventions in poetic imagery, for example:

"إذا أتىت بكان ولم أت بالتشبيه فقض الله فاي"¹

"If I mention “as if” or “as though” and do not end up with the simile, God may not save my mouth.”

"As if” or “as though” are two of the main particles in the basic form of poetic imagery, the simile. Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s statement thus demonstrates his

¹ Examples of these images can be seen in Chapters Three and Four.
conscious engagement in the search for new and amazing images. Furthermore, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry reflects his preoccupation with metaphor and simile in particular. Al-Qayrawānī refers to this when he states:

"I do not know a poet who is more perfect and amazing in his craft than Ibn al-Mu'tazz. His art is so light and so delicate it can scarcely be detected."\(^3\)

The second aspect of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's preoccupation with poetic imagery is evident in his literary critical work of a major new poetic movement that arose in the 'Abbasid era (132/656-750/1258), \textit{al-badī}. While his poetry has long been appreciated, the value of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's work on literary criticism, again driven by his love of imagery, has only recently begun to be recognized. He is now considered to be the first scholar who dealt with 'the new style' and analysed it, in order to prove that Bashshār b. Burd, Muslim b. al-Walīd, Abū Tammām and others did not create this new style, but that it already existed in the Qurān, in the sayings of the Prophet, and in Arabic in general.\(^4\) Several scholars, for example Bonebakker, have acknowledged the importance of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's study. For example Bonebakker states:

"At the time of its appearance in 1935, the edition by I. Kratchkovsky of Kitāb al-Badī did not receive the attention it deserved. Only in the years following the Second World War have scholars become fully aware of the importance of this publication,

which brought to light one of the first, and certainly the most fundamental, works of a genre that was to be amongst the most brilliant achievements of medieval Muslim scholarship. (Italics mine)

Despite this, the imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz has not, to the best of my knowledge, received a great deal of scholarly attention. Thus, this thesis aims to study the poetic imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, through an extensive investigation of the sources of imagery in the poetry of this poet, and to analyse some aspects of the nature of his imagery.

In this study, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery will be dealt with in three main stages. The first presents a literature review of studies on both poetic imagery in general and that of this poet in particular. More emphasis will be placed on those studies that are more relevant to this thesis with reference to methodology and analysis, particularly Spurgeon’s *Shakespeare’s Imagery And What It Tells Us* and al-Jurjānī’s *Asrār al-Balāgha*. Spurgeon’s method of categorising the imagery of Shakespeare according to its sources, as well as her method of analysing certain aspects of the nature of that imagery, has proved to be of great importance for this study. Therefore, her categorisation of the sources of poetic imagery is used as a model, subject to some modifications to make it more applicable to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. Al-Jurjānī’s *Asrār al-Balāgha* provides insightful observations regarding the ḥiṣṣā

---

6 See Chapter Two below.
aspects of poetic imagery: some of these observations are developed in the present study and some of his terms, such as particularisation (tafsīl) and countenance (hay'a), are borrowed to throw fresh light on the ḥissī aspect of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery.

The second part, consisting of Chapters Three and Four, identifies and categorises five main sources from which Ibn al-Mu'tazz derives his images (the human being, daily life, nature, animals and culture). Chapter Three presents 'the human being', the largest category, and sorts it into a number of sub-categories. Chapter Four treats 'daily life' and other image sources in the same manner.

The examination of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's image sources undertaken in Part Two, combined with that of literary studies in the literature review section, brings to light certain aspects of the nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery. Part Three analyses two of these aspects, in Chapters Five and Six respectively. First, Chapter Five introduces Ibn al-Mu'tazz as the pioneer of the ḥissī (sensory) type of poetic imagery and Abū Tammām as the pioneer of the dhīhnī (intellectual) type during the 'Abbasid era. A detailed analysis of what is termed the ḥissī nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery is also undertaken.

The second aspect of the nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery is studied in Chapter Six. Ibn al-Mu'tazz is usually seen by both classical and modern scholars as a wealthy prince and distinguished member of the 'Abbasid royal
family. More attention, hence, is given to what used to be called the ‘luxury’ aspect of his poetry. Accordingly, for these scholars this poetry reflects a degree of characteristic luxuriousness and a sense of harmony. This chapter, however, will argue that fragmentation is probably one of the most dominant aspects in both his life and poetry. The era in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz lived is recognised for its political disturbances: seven out of nine caliphs were assassinated during Ibn al-Mu'tazz's lifetime of (which lasted for around half a century only), among them his grandfather, al-Mutawakkil and his father, al-Mu'tazz, and eventually the poet himself was to meet the same fate. These circumstances affected Ibn al-Mu'tazz as a man and a poet, leaving their mark on his life and also in his poetry, notably in the form of his fragmented imagery. In this chapter, the different levels of direct and indirect fragmentation in his images are highlighted and accompanied by brief historical accounts, as these are vital for an understanding of the environment in which the poet grew up, and in which his poems were created.

Last but not least, the Conclusion will attempt to highlight some important findings arrived at in the course of this study, give further insight into the poetry and life of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, and make suggestions for further studies on both the work of this poet and the field of studies of poetic imagery.
2- Definitions

The following will define a number of specific terms used in this study: *imagery*, *tashbīḥ* (simile) and *isti‘āra* (roughly translatable as metaphor).

*Imagery* has been seen as the most important element in poetic works. Its importance is one of the few things on which critics appear to agree, but they have different views on its definition. Culden defines imagery from the point of view of meaning:

"... as a general term [it] covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience. An ‘image’ does not necessarily mean a mental picture."\(^9\)

Furthermore, he points out that there are two kinds of imagery. The first is termed ‘literal image’ and the second is termed ‘the perceptual image’.\(^{10}\) While the former does not include figurative language, the latter depends on it.

On the other hand, imagery has also been viewed as a figure of speech. Frie states that figures of speech can be divided into seven categories: synecdoche, metonymy, simile, metaphor, personification, allegory, and

---

\(^{10}\) *Ibid*, p. 443.
symbol. Frie deals with imagery on the basis of its meaning and function. He formulates what is viewed as a radically ‘functional’ theory which supposes that: ‘Figures are the differentia of poetic language and poetic language is the differentia of the poetic art.’ He also states that the significance of imagery can be shown through the use of statistical principles, which can be organised in several ways according to the repetition and recurrence of images.

Generally speaking, the terms poetic image or imagery are used here to refer to certain types of figures of speech, specifically simile and metaphor, that comprise two parts which are related to one another by virtue of an analogy.

To formulate precise definitions for tashbih (simile) and isti‘āra (metaphor) as kinds of imagery is not as easy a task as it may first appear. Efforts made by traditional Arab scholars in the field of rhetoric are elaborate, perhaps even over-elaborate. Tashbih, for example, has been divided into too many subdivisions, two hundred and eighty nine to be exact. One can find it very difficult to throw fresh light on such definitions. Terminologically, al-Sakkākī defines tashbih in the following manner:

... إن التشبيه مستدع طرفي مثبها ومشبها به، واشتراكا من بينهما من وجه وافترافا من آخر

---

" ... tashbih requires two extremes, [the first is] mushabbah (tenor), [the second is] mushabbah bihi (vehicle). It also requires attributes, some of which are shared while others are not."

Such a definition states clearly the two extremes that create the statement of tashbih. Other essential, but not sufficient, components of tashbih are adāt al-tashbih (the linguistic particle which connects the two extremes), and wajh al-shabah (the feature or point of similarity). These components are insufficient because a certain mode of tashbih, termed intensified simile (tashbih baligh), does not require the explicit statement of the linguistic particle or the point of similarity to be stated verbally. The following line by Ibn al-Mu'tazz can be presented here as an example of tashbih:

والآب في آب ينيرها لعاصرها

And he [a farmer] came back in August to pick the grapes for he who presses them,

As though the palms of his hands were heightened in colour by henna.

al-mushabbah (the tenor) here is the redness of the traces left by the grapes al-mushabbah bihi (the vehicle) is redness of henna

---

adāt al-tashbīh (the linguistic particle) is ka'anna 'As though'

wajh al-shabab (the point of similarity) is the redness which exists in both extremes.

Istī'āra (metaphor) is based on a relationship of similarity just like tashbīh (simile). Al-Sakkākī defines istī'āra as being:

"هَيِّنَ أَنْ تَذْكَرْ أَحَدُ طَرَفٍ لِلطَشْبِيْهِ وَتَرَيدْ بِهِ الْطَرِفُ الْأَخْرُ مِدْعَاءً دَخُول المشيَّةِ فِي جِنْسِ المشيَّةِ بِهِ، دَالًا عَلَى ذَلِكِ إِبْنِيْكَ لِلْمَشِيَّةِ مَا يَخْصُ المشيَّةِ بِهِ."

"To mention one extreme while intending another, claiming that the mushabbah (tenor), is identical with the mushabbah bihi (vehicle) [and] proving that by giving the mushabbah attributes that belong to the mushabbah bihi."

The following line by Ibn al-Mu'tazz is an example of poetic istī'āra:

أمَّا تَرَى الْبَدْرُ فَذَٰلِكَ الْمَحَاقُ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِشْرَاقٍ أَنْوَارٍ أَوْ أَضَوَاءٌ

Do you not see that the moon has waned when it had been shining brightly.

The word 'moon' is used here to replace another word, the 'beloved', according to the above definition. Although both tashbīh and istī'āra are based on similarity, tashbīh keeps the two extremes independent while istī'āra

identifies these extremes to create a third entity — a literary phenomenon best known as 'the interaction theory of metaphor'.\textsuperscript{19} The following formula illustrates the main difference between \textit{tashbîh} and \textit{isti'âra}, letters are used to refer to extremes:

\[ tashbîh = A+B \]

\[ isti'âra = C \ (AB) \]

Thus, it can be seen that \textit{tashbîh} consists of two extremes \( A+B \), while \textit{isti'âra} consists of one extreme \( C \) which is a compound of \( A+B \).

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.

This chapter aims to situate the present study in context by providing a review of a number of major studies on both poetic imagery and Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, paying particular attention to those studies from which this work has benefited directly. It is hoped that this will demonstrate the importance of poetic imagery and the increasing interest of scholars in studying different aspects of poetic imagery in the twentieth century. In addition to this general survey, identification and evaluation of major opinions that have previously been expressed regarding the poetic imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz will also be carried out.

1- Previous Studies on Poetic Imagery.

To study poetic imagery is to study the core of poetic creation. What differentiates one poet from another is often the technique he or she uses in forming images. For instance, Abû Tammâm (188/804-231/846) and Abû al-'Atahiya (130/748-211/826) are important figures in 'Abbasid poetry. The former changed radically the mode of poetic imagery, especially metaphor, by comparing objects or entities that had not traditionally been compared. The latter used some new meters and also meters taken from the songs sung by fishermen on the Tigris in Baghdad. Although both poets were important figures, Abû Tammâm's achievements are considered to be more important.
than those of Abū al-'Atāhiya because of his use of poetic images. Hence, the
imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz is a topic that is worth investigating: such a study
will give a clearer picture both of the poet as a creator and of the poetic
production of the 'Abbasid period that Ibn al-Mu'tazz represents. In addition,
as a result of the increasing interest in poetic imagery at the present time, the
field of literary criticism has witnessed a growing interest on three main
levels: the imagery used by individual poets, the imagery of poetic schools,
and the review of its theorisations. Universities seem to be encouraging their
students more and more to conduct research in this field.¹

The following table illustrates some of the most influential studies in the field
of poetic imagery. Some deal with poetic imagery in general, while others
deal with the imagery of individual poets.

¹ During an academic visit to Cairo University, Egypt three years ago, this researcher was
surprised by the large number of dissertations and theses conducted by PhD and MA
students, particularly in the eighties, in the field of poetic imagery. The following list indicates
that interest. It is not, however, a comprehensive one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Darwish</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya fi al-Balāgha wa-l-Naqd al-'Arabi al-Qadim wa-l-Mu'āṣir</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ṭabāna</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Al-Shāhid</td>
<td>Al-Tašwīr al-Shīrī 'inda al-Sharīf al-Radīf</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Zāyīd</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Al-'Abd al-Rahman</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fannisīyya al-Rumansiyya 'inda al-Sha'ir Ali M. Ťaha</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Al-Qalamāwī</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sa'fān</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fannisīyya fi Shīr Kuthayyir 'Azza</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Khulayf</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ʿAlāʾi</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya 'inda Abī Nūwās</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Jabr</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Al-Safī</td>
<td>Athar Kaff al-Baṣar 'al-šūra 'inda Abī al-'Alāʾ al-Ma'ārī</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Not Mentioned</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Da'dūr</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fannisīyya fi Shīr Ibn Darrāj al-Quṣṭālī</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Makkī &amp; Ṭulayma</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>'Awda</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fannisīyya fi Shīr Dhī al-Rumma</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Khulayf</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) List of Selected Dissertations and Theses undertaken at Cairo University.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spurgeon</td>
<td><em>Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us</em></td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td><em>Shakespeare's Imagination</em></td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td><em>The Poetic Image</em></td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fogle</td>
<td><em>The Imagery of Keats and Shelley</em></td>
<td>North Carolin University</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stoffer</td>
<td><em>Shakespeare's World of Images</em></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td><em>T. H. Milton’s Imagery</em></td>
<td>Colombia University</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Clement</td>
<td><em>The Development of Shakespeare’s Imagery</em></td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Naṣīf</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra al-Adabiyya</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Abu-Deeb</td>
<td>Al-Jurfānī’s Theory of Poetic Imagery*</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nuṣrat</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fī al-Shi’r al-Jahili*</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Asfour</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fī al-Turāth al-Naqāḍ fī al-Balāghī*</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Al-Rabā’i</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fī Shi’r Abī Tammām*</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Berry</td>
<td><em>The Shakespearean Metaphor</em></td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Al-Baṭal</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra fī al-Shi’r al-‘Arabi Ḥātā ʿĀkhir al-Qarn al-Thanī al-Hijrī*</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Qāsim</td>
<td>Al-Taṣwīr al-Shi’rī</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ʿAbd Allāh</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra wa‘l-Binā’ al-Shi’rī</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ʿAssāf</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūra wa Namādhijuhā ʿinda Abī Nūwās</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Al-Yāfī</td>
<td>Muqaddima li-Dirāsah al-Ṣūra al-</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*References marked with * were produced first as PhD theses. For their dates, see al-Rabbā’ī, *Fi Tashakkul al-Khitāb a-Naqāḍ* (Bierut: 1998), pp. 145-74. This author offers an important and detailed review of ‘new studies on poetic imagery’, see pp. 145-74.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nafi'</td>
<td>Al-Šūra fī Shi'r Bashshār Ibn Burd</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Al-Rabbāt</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fanniyya fī Shi'r Zuhayr Ibn Abī Salmā</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hudba</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya fī Shi'r al-Dīwāniyyin</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Maṭlūb</td>
<td>Al-Šūra fī Shi'r al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Al-Yāfī</td>
<td>Taṭawwūr al-Šūra al-Fanniyya fī al-Shīr al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Al-Bustani</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya fī al-Kitabāt al-Fanniyya</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Dahmān</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Balāghīyya 'inda 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mohammed</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya fī al-Khiṭāb al-Balāghī wa'l-Naqdi</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Al-Rabbāt</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fanniyya fī al-Naqd al-Shīrī</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Nawfal</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Shi'riyya wa'l-Ramz al-Lawnī</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>'Assāf</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fanniyya fī Qaṣīdat al-Ru'yā</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Al-Taṭāwī</td>
<td>Al-Šūra al-Fanniyya fī Shi'r Muslim Ibn al-Walīd</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) List of Studies on Poetic Imagery.

This table leaves no doubts about the kind of reception that poetic imagery has received. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to undertake a comprehensive review of these studies, however, in what follows, three particular studies from the list will be discussed. This thesis has been particularly informed by these three works, on different levels, in terms of the approach taken to the subject matter and technique of poetic imagery: the
approaches and issues they discuss are at the heart of this study. Chronologically, the works in question are: Spurgeon; 1935(1st on the list), Abu-Deeb; 1970 (9th) and Al-Rabbāi; 1976(12th).

In *Fi Tashakkul al-Khitāb al-Naqdi*, al-Rabbāi rightly emphasises the importance of Caroline Spurgeon's study on the imagery of Shakespeare (first published in 1935), as being the first study to focus only on imagery. In her invaluable work, Spurgeon has two main goals: 1) to discover Shakespeare's personality, temperament and thought; and 2) to thereby throw light on themes and characters of his plays. Spurgeon claims that through his images, a poet 'gives himself away'. In her own words, she has so great an interest in Shakespeare's imagery because 'each writer has a certain range of images which are characteristic of him, and ... he has a marked and constant tendency to use a much larger number of one or two kinds.' In her view, images are like fingerprints and no two poets have the same range of images. One cannot deny that, as Spurgeon states:

"The greater and richer the work the more valuable and suggestive become the images, so that in the case of Shakespeare [as any other poet] I believe one can scarcely overrate the possibilities of what may be discovered through a

---

systematic examination of them."\(^7\)

To attain her goals, Spurgeon formulates a precise method consisting of two stages: first, she collects, sorts and classifies Shakespeare's imagery; secondly, she analyses the images, illustrating Shakespeare's preference for some types of image (e.g. natural images) over others (e.g. town life images). Through this general classification of Shakespeare's images, Spurgeon unifies what she calls 'the whole body of Shakespeare's images'\(^8\), which she then summarises into chart form. Chart number five in her work shows the 'range and subject of Shakespeare's images in their exact proportion'.\(^9\) She classifies Shakespeare's imagery into three categories: subject, sub-subject and sub-sub-subject. The chart divides the images into eight subjects (*NATURE, ANIMAL, DOMESTIC, BODY, DAILY LIFE, LEARNING, ARTS and IMAGINATIVE*) which are then sub-divided. Nature, for example, is divided into nine sub-subjects (*GROWING THINGS, WEATHER, SEA & SHIPS, CELESTIAL BODIES, ELEMENTS, GARDENING, SEASONS* and *FARMING NATURAL FEATURES*). Growing things, as a sub-subject, is broken down into five sub-sub-subjects (*FLOWERS, TREES, PLANTS, FRUIT* and *WEEDS*).

However, there are some potential problems with Spurgeon's approach, the most obvious one being that she does not describe the methodology by why she has arrived at the basis of her classifications. In addition, can these

---


classifications be changed or are they fixed? For example, *LEARNING* and *ARTS* as main subjects could be regarded sub-subjects of the subject *DAILY LIFE*. Indeed, they are no less suitable than *WAR* to be considered as sub-subjects of *DAILY LIFE*. Another possible change might be made with *ARTS* and *IMAGINATIVE*, which could be joined together to create one subject rather than two on the basis that both *ARTS* and *IMAGINATIVE* reflect one function of the creative mind, and so might be better classified as one subject.

Having classified Shakespeare’s images, Spurgeon then posits that the whole body of Shakespeare’s imagery ‘falls .... into two groups, those from nature and those from indoor life and customs’.10 She then goes on – as she usually does – beyond this to discuss a number of profound details, bringing in a considerable number of examples to support her argument. For example, in the following, Spurgeon explains how Shakespeare was fond of the English countryside:

"The weather and its changes, the seasons, the sky, sunrise and down, the clouds, rain and winds, sunshine and shadow; the garden, flowers, trees, growth and decay, pruning and grafting, manuring and weeding; the sea and ships, the river and its banks, weeds and grasses, pools and water, animals, birds and insects, sport and games, especially snaring birds, hunting and

hawking; these are things which chiefly occupy him and remain in his mind."\textsuperscript{11}

In another part of her study, Spurgeon deals with the poetic imagery of five poets contemporary to Shakespeare. She emphasises that 'without such a comparison .... the reader might suspect that his subject-matter was merely the usual equipment of Elizabethan writers, and distrust my conclusions as to his personal peculiarities.'\textsuperscript{12} To make her case, Spurgeon performs two types of comparison between Shakespeare and these other poets: a summary of her comparison between Shakespeare’s and Bacon’s imagery will be brought in here as an example of her methodology.

Spurgeon notes that while \textit{natural} images, especially those relating to \textit{growing things} in a garden or orchard, are frequent in Shakespeare’s writing, Bacon’s most frequently used images come from \textit{domestic life} and \textit{natural} images take second place.\textsuperscript{13} Spurgeon goes on to give the reason why each poet employed certain images, stating that, 'Shakespeare seems to think most easily and naturally in the terms of a gardener. He visualises human being as plants and trees, choked with weeds, or well pruned and rose or noxious as a weed\textsuperscript{14} and '[o]ne reason why the 'Domestic life' group of Bacon’s images is so large is that it includes the many images of artificial and natural lights, and other ‘light’ effects, which constantly recur in his

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 12-3.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 18-9.
In Spurgeon’s second type of comparison she takes a given subject and examines how different poets deal with it from entirely different angles, depending on their individual personality and mind. Spurgeon states this in the following manner in her comparison of Shakespeare and Bacon:

“Both writers are interested in the subject, both have a fine number of astronomical references by the old Ptolemaic system, which so well corresponds to the testimony of our senses. I think it possible that the myth of Phaeton driving his horses across the sky, so dear to the Elizabethan poetic mind, was largely responsible for the unwillingness of the poets to give up the conception of the sun revolving round a fixed concentric sphere centered on earth. This latter idea, especially, fires Shakespeare’s imagination, and his references to the movement of stars in their spheres, especially in imagery, are very many.”

al-Rabbā‘ī’s study of the poetic imagery of Abū Tammām is the first in Arabic literature to follow the method applied by Spurgeon. This study also investigates the source of poetic imagery and divides it into five main categories – ‘human life’, ‘daily life’, ‘nature’, ‘animals’ and ‘culture’. However,

---

15 Ibid., p. 17.
16 Ibid., p. 21.
17 The edition which is used here is al-Rabbā‘ī, A, Al-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fi Shi‘r Abī Tammām, (Irbid: 1980).
al-Rabbā'i points out that Spurgeon concentrates on the subject matter of the poetic image and gives no attention at all to its form or structure.\textsuperscript{18} Consequently, he offers equal attention to both subject matter and form. His first three chapters are devoted to studying different aspects of subject matter, respectively, the subject matter of the imagery of Abū Tammām’s poetry (pp. 25-68), image and the poet’s opinions (pp. 69-103) and image and the hidden meaning (pp. 105-40). The following two chapters focus on the form of Abū Tammām’s poetic imagery, addressing the structure of his imagery (pp. 141-85), and the mechanics of how the image builds the poem (pp. 185-220). The last chapter in this study, however, has little connection to poetic imagery and deals with poetic music (prosody) and suggestive language (pp. 221-65).

The third major work of methodological interest to the present study is Abu-Deeb’s \textit{al-Jurjānī’s Theory of Poetic Imagery}.\textsuperscript{19} This is devoted to highlighting the theory of poetic imagery in the works of one of the most influential and well-known Arab critics, namely ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī. Unlike the two previously mentioned studies that concentrate on the subject matter of imagery, this study inquires into the form of poetic imagery through linguistic and psychological approaches.

Abu-Deeb undertakes to bring together and interpret the comments and

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 20. Here he reports Clements’s criticism on ‘Spurgeon’s static method’. Then he makes the justification that her study was the first to concentrate on the poetic imagery in this particular way. Spurgeon had intended to write another study about the form of imagery, but died before her ambition saw the light of day.

observations of this critic on poetic imagery to prove that they form a coherent theory and are still valid from a modern perspective. Some of his most insightful remarks are used in Chapter Five of this study to form the basis of its discussion of the nature of poetic imagery which, depending on the nature of the point of similarity and the nature of the two entities that are involved in a poetic image, has been seen as taking two main forms: ḥissī (sensory) and dhīhnī (intellectual), as will be explained. Some other key concepts in the analysis of poetic imagery explicated by al-Jurjānī and illustrated by Abu-Deeb are used in the same chapter. In dealing with visual images two points of methodology are used which are related to the concepts of hay'a (countenance) and tafṣīl (particularisation).²⁰ One illustrates the style of formulating a poetic image while the other illustrates the technique.

²⁰ Another concept that was invented by al-Jurjānī and is developed by Abu-Deeb, that of psychological and sense-communication functions, underpins the sixth chapter. This concept is related to harmony in poetic imagery. For more details, see Chapter Six below and Abu-Deeb, K, Jadaliyyat al-Khafā' wa'-Tajali: Dirasāt Binyawiyya fi'l-Shi'r, (Beirut: 1979), pp. 19-63.

2- Previous Studies on the Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

The life and poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz have received considerable attention from classical and modern scholars since the time of 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, his first critic, and classical rhetoricians and critics such as Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani, al-'Alawi and al-Šulûfî, have acknowledged the importance of Ibn al-Mu'tazz as a poet with a genius for creating refined images. In what follows, however, the focus will be directed mainly on those studies that relate directly to the imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Thus, the following studies will not be dealt with at this stage: studies of the works of literary criticism produced by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, e.g. Asfour's, those that are, in the main, histories of his life, e.g. Khafaji's, and those that are interpretations of his poetry.

Having made the above provisions, one particular study which offers insight into Ibn al-Mu'tazz's use of imagery is Ibn al-Mu'tazz: Al-Rajul wa Intâjuhu al-Adabi (Ibn al-Mu'tazz: the man and his literary production), an extended study of Ibn al-Mu'tazz by Abû Khaḍra. The wide scope of this study is evident from the contents page alone, which includes an introduction and six parts. The introduction provides a literature review, whilst other parts relate to the historical time and place, the man himself, his prose production, poetry production, political, social, and literary opinions and his role and importance.

---

26 Abû Khaḍra, op. cit.
Making excellent use of important classical reference sources and the poet's own books, this study offers valuable information about the poet's life and, to a lesser extent, his production. It is the biographical aspect which makes this study vital for any further investigation of Ibn al-Mu'izz or his production, as it provides the basis or the background for more concentrated investigation. A result of the ambition of this study to deal with all aspects of Ibn al-Mu'izz's life and literary production, however, is that this work fails to throw fresh light on issues relating to his poetic imagery. Indeed, Abû Khadra's treatment of Ibn al-Mu'izz's use of imagery is superficial and does not extend beyond offering statistics for the number of figures of speech used in each genre. His remarks on Ibn al-Mu'izz's imagery of the love poetry genre (157-8) are limited to providing a table for the repetition of each figure and concluding that, in his work, simile came first among other figures of speech: he does not seek to give any explanation for this high occurrence of simile, nor does he provide any serious investigation into the imagery of love poetry and whether or not it is different from the imagery of other genres.


In his book *The Secrets of Eloquence*, al-Jurjānī analyses numerous verses of Ibn al-Mu'izz's poetry. He investigates metaphor, simile and analogy to differentiate between them and to formulate sub-categories for each of them. He starts his book by outlining the importance of fully understanding each of

---

these terms. Without mentioning his name, al-Jurjānī attacks Ibn al-Mu'tazz, the author of Kitāb al-Bādi′ (The Book of the New Style), claiming:

"ولا يقتنع طالب التحقيق ان يقتصر فيها على أمثلة تذكر ، وتظائر زعّد نحو أن يقال: "الاستعارة مثل قولهم "الفكرة من العمل" وقوله (من الطويل): "وعري أفراس الصبا ورواحلة" وقوله "السفر ميزان القوم" وقول الأعرابي "كانوا إذا اصطفوا سفرت بينهم السهام ، وإذا تضافوا بالسيوف فغر الحمام"، والتمثيل كقوله: "فانك كالليل الذي هو مدركي" ويتى بأمثلة إذا حُقّ النظير فيها كانت كالأشياء يجمعها الاسم الأعمّ وينفرد كلّ منها بخاصةً من لم يقف عليها كان قصير الهمّة في طلب الحقائق ..." 29

"It is not enough for the investigator to limit the metaphor in examples, for instance, when they say: ‘the idea is the essence of the work’,

And the horses and riding camels of youth’s passion are unharnessed ... 30

‘travel is a measure of people’, and as one Bedouin said ‘they were when they lined as arrows appeared among them, and if they clashed by sword [as] death opens its mouth widely. [Nor is

29 Ibid., pp. 26-7.
30 This line is translated by Ritter in Ibid, p. 11.
enough to limit] the analogy in an example like:

You are like the night which will reach me wherever I go ... \(^{31}\)

These examples and others were grouped together. However, each of them has special features. Anyone who fails to grasp such features will be lacking in his ability to seek facts ... "

By using examples that have already been used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, it is obvious that al-Jurjānî is referring to this particular scholar. Al-Jurjānî makes a number of observations that appear to be acceptable, however, he ignores the historical fact that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was probably the first scholar to write about such figures of speech, a fact which makes it understandable that he was rather unclear about their definitions and categories. It is notable that al-Jurjānî seems to appreciate Ibn al-Mu'tazz more as a poet than as a theorist and his general attitude towards the poet's imagery is positive. This can be seen in the fact that he illustrates his approach by using numerous lines of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry when discussing topics such as the typology of poetic imagery, the power of analogy, and simile and reversed simile.

Al-Jurjānî divides metaphor into two general categories: nominal and verbal.\(^{32}\) The latter category is further sub-divided into two more categories: metaphors which are metaphorical by virtue of their subjects, and metaphors

\(^{31}\) This line is translated by Abu-Deeb in *al-Jurjānî's Theory*, p. 289.

which are metaphorical by virtue of their objects. In his discussion of the latter sub-division, al-Jurjānī gives the following example from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry:

"Right has been totally given to us concentrated in an 'imām who has killed meanness and made generosity alive."\(^{34}\)

He comments: ‘... ‘kill’ and ‘made alive’ became metaphors by their objects, namely meanness and generosity’.\(^{35}\)

In his attempt to distinguish between analogy and simile, al-Jurjānī states that while the former is more general, the latter is more specific (p. 84) and gives six examples taken from Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetry to illustrate simile (pp. 85-6). In contrast, he gives only one example to illustrate analogy (p. 86), because Ibn al-Mu'tazz – according to al-Jurjānī – is more interested in similes than analogies. Here, al-Jurjānī offers his most significant and controversial comment on Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s imagery:

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p.\ 50.\]
\[\text{Abu-Deeb}, \ Al-Jurjānī’s\ Theory, \ P. \ 234.\]
\[\text{Op. cit.}, \ p.\ 51.\]
“Realise that simile is general and analogy is more specific, consequently every analogy is simile and not every simile is analogy. You say in the verse of Qays Ibn al-Khaṭîm (Ṭawîl):

The Pleiades appeared in the morning ... like a bunch of long white grapes in blossom.37

It is a fine simile and it is not an analogy. You also say: Ibn al-Mu‘tazz has fine and wonderful similes. You mean that he compares visible objects [with each other], and every thing that cannot be compared by means of interpretation.”

Thus, he comments that Ibn al-Mu‘tazz has fine similes and that he compares visible subjects that do not require an effort to be understood. Indeed, the concreteness of the poet’s similes has been repeatedly pointed out by later scholars such as al-Kafrāwî (1957) and Shalabî (1981), albeit with little investigation, as will be shown later. Indeed, the nature of these similes requires more investigation, through detailed analysis of the largest possible number of images in Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s poetry.

The power of analogy – for al-Jurjānî – lies in several factors such as the possibility to show great distance between objects, a strong point of similarity

---

36 Ibid., pp. 84-5.
37 This line is translated by Abu-Deeb, Al-Jurjānî’s Theory, p. 112.
between the image and described object in one sense, concurrent with a strong point of differentiation in another, and the power of detail. For example, the following line by Ibn al-Mu'tazz contains a powerful simile, since the poet illustrates his statement by tangible things (the shadows of stone and spear) that can be seen and caught:38

I turned from a night which is like a stone's shadow
By a night which is like a spear's fast shadow.

Analogy, like simile, can be powerful because of the great distance, or difference, between the two subjects of the poetic image. As al-Jurjānī states:40

"Human nature is so created, and human instinctive and innate qualities are such that when something appears whence it is not usually expected to appear, and when it emerges from a source which is not its normal one, the soul feels deeper fondness of and greater affection for it. It is as exciting and amazing to reveal the existence of something in a place in which it is not known to belong, as it is to create something which does not

---

40 Ibid., pp. 117-8.
exist at all, or whose very existence is not realized ...\textsuperscript{41}

On these terms, al-Jurjānī prefers the image of the blue violet on stems which is compared to the beginning of a fire in a matchstick, over that of the narcissus compared to oily pearls filled with agate.\textsuperscript{42} Furthermore, he points out, the power of the analogy and simile comes not only from the complete difference between the two objects of the poetic image, but sometimes also from the strong similarity in one common point. Al-Jurjānī illustrates his point with another line from Ibn al-Mu'tazz:

\begin{quote}
وكأن البرق مصحفُ قارَ فانفتحاً تارةً واغفتاً
\end{quote}

Lightning is as a copy of the Qur'ān that opens and closes.

and comments:

\begin{quote}
لم يُنظر [الشاعر] من جميع أوصاف البرق ومعانيه إلا إلى الهيئة التي تجدها العين له من انيسات يعقيبه، انقباض وانتشار يثوره، ثم فليب نفسه عن هيئة الحركات لينظر فيها أشياء بها، فأصاب ذلك فيما يفعله الفارق من الحركة الخاصة في المصحف إذا جعل يفتحه مرة وبطبه أخرى، ولم يكن إعجاب هذا التشبيه لك وإناسه إياك لان الشيئين مختلفان فقط، بل لأن حصول بازاء الاختلاف إتفاق كأحسن ما يكون وأحسن، فيمجموع الأمرين - شدّة اتلاف في شدّة اختلاف - خلا وحسن، وراق
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{41} Abu-Deeb, \textit{Al-Jurjānī's Theory}, p. 278.

“He [the poet] did not look at all the aspects of lightning, he only focused on the countenance or the state of image that the viewer will see in [the action of] opening followed by [the action of] closing and spreading, followed by affiliation (association). He searched in his mind for a comparable action and found, correctly, the state of a reader in that particular movement with a copy of the Holy Qur’ān when it is opened at one time and closed at another. You are not attracted by this simile just because the two objects are different, but also because of the strength and supreme quality of the similarity. For the combination of absolute difference and strong similarity makes this simile fine, beautiful, and attractive.”

Later, al-Jurjānī calls this kind of simile a ‘strange simile’, i.e. one in which the point of similarity is not obvious for the receiver, who has to think hard in order to understand the image.⁴⁴ He cites two of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s images as examples of the ‘strange simile’; first, the image of lightning mentioned previously and second, an image of lines in a book compared to the stems of plants.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid., p. 140.
⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 143.
⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 144.
Another power of simile and analogy lies in the wealth of detail they convey. Al-Jurjānī distinguishes between two levels of comparison. The first does not require any effort from the receiver to understand, for example, comparison of a huge man with an elephant, and is considered of lesser value. The second is the comparison of two objects using much more detail, such as the image of the Pleiades compared with a bunch of white grapes mentioned above, in which the poet – according to al-Jurjānī – picked up on several things in the tenor which he then duplicated in the vehicle. Thus, when he compares Pleiades with a bunch of white grapes, he considers their shape, their colour and their being clustered together at a certain distance; all attributes which are also present in the vehicle.

Detailed images are sub-divided by al-Jurjānī into a) detail of a single attribute and b) detail of countenance or state. To demonstrate the first type, he cites two lines of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry:

"With a falcon which searches every horizon with its eye,
Whose sharp beak pierces where it hits. Its eye, which never fails it, is like a narcissus without petals."

The latter is exemplified by the following line by Ibn al-Mu'tazz:

"... with dawn appearing beneath the night like a noble dappled horse whose saddle has slipped down."

---

46 Ibid., p. 149.  
In previous examples, al-Jurjānî has applied – mostly – a ‘subjective approach’ in which he has looked at each subject of the image, its countenance or state, its attributes and whether it was single or composite. Another approach, which can be called a ‘linguistic approach’ is used in the following examples. In these, al-Jurjānî makes two linguistic points about one of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s verses which highlight another aspect in which Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s imagery is effective. The verse is as follows:

“As if we were, with the light of dawn hurrying the night away, starting a white-winged crow into flight.”

The first point al-Jurjānî highlights is that the crow is described as having white wing feathers. Thus, the poet here compares the appearance of the morning through the darkness of the night to that of a crow with white wing feathers. The use of the expression ‘we ... starting a white-winged crow into flight’ rather than ‘a crow flies’ also makes the movement of the arriving morning light appear quicker: If the crow is to fly itself, it will fly a shorter distance at a more leisurely pace than if startled into flight.

There is one further exemplification of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s poetry in The Secrets of Eloquence that is of relevance here, in the chapter that focuses on the power of simile. Providing the countenance or ‘state’ – according to al-Jurjānî

50 Al-Jurjānî, ibid., p. 162-3.
51 Abu-Deeb, Al-Jurjānî’s Theory, p. 117.
makes a simile more interesting. This concept of ‘state’ refers primarily to that of movement or motionlessness; the latter is found in sleeping and sitting states. For example, in the following lines, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz describes a valley:

“When the flood swept the land, filling all thirsty valleys, you could see the bull floating in it, like a king relaxing on his bed.”52

In the second line, the poet includes a simile in which he compares the floating bull to a relaxing king. The similarity between the two entities compared here is the state of relaxation and motionlessness. However, one can further argue that the power of the poetic image in these lines is not due merely to their stationary state, but emerges from its contrast with the whole, moving image of a valley in flood. Within this over-arching image is contained the single image of the bull and the king. Thus, non-movement in the single image cannot be appreciated without the entire frame image of the flowing, flooding water; the power of the poetic image here is due to the association between states of movement and stillness.

In his chapter on ‘reversed simile’, an example of which would be the comparison of stars to lamps, accompanied by the claim that the brightness of lamps exceeds that of stars, al-Jurjānî again illustrates his approach with several lines of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s poetry:53

---

The daisy is like fresh front teeth
Its blossom burnished by drops.

In conclusion, in *The Secrets of Eloquence*, al-Jurjānī analyses numerous lines of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry by approaching them from a linguistic, psychological and descriptive point of view. His comments on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's similes can be considered as the basis for most subsequent studies. However, although he analysed numerous lines of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, it is obvious that it was not al-Jurjānī's aim to undertake an exhaustive treatment, and, as mentioned previously a full account of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery still remains to be undertaken.

2-2- Husain (1948).

The interest of modern scholars in Ibn al-Mu'tazz started with Ṭaha Husain, who gave an account of the factors that influenced his character and offered some notes about his poetry in an article originally delivered as an introductory (non-academic) lecture on classical Arabic literature to an audience drawn from the members of a public club in the Cairo of the nineteen-forties. Husain takes the view that the aristocratic lifestyle of Ibn al-Mu'tazz formed his character and, consequently, his poetry:

---

54 *Ibid.*, p. 188.
"Our poet, 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, is a member of the great 'Abbasid house. He belongs to a group of great Islamic Caliphs. His father, al-Mu'tazz, was a Caliph as were his ancestors: al-Mutawakkil, al-Mu'tasim and al-Rashīd ..."

He adds:

“I am very interested in that special environment that surrounded the lifestyle of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and influenced – to a great extent – his artistic structure. This environment deserves study ...”

Husain makes two general observations on the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, linking it to the poet’s lifestyle. These are a) the use of accessible rather than

57 Ibid., p. 155.
58 Ibid.
esoteric vocabulary and b) the prominence of description in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. After quoting nine lines by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Husain makes the following statement:

"These lines to which you have already listened, give a clear idea about the art of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in poetry. He has a natural, unaffected gift for poetry. He prefers the accessible to the esoteric. He adheres, as much as he can, to eloquent vocabulary and rich meanings that suit his life and environment."

Yet Husain does not explain precisely how an aristocratic lifestyle had influenced Ibn al-Mu'tazz. As will be seen, this idea has been taken up by scholars without further examination.

Husain also claims that Ibn al-Mu'tazz's interest in simile was greater than that of other poets. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, according to Husain, made his major contribution in the development of simile and metaphor. When he compares Ibn al-Mu'tazz to Abū Tammām and Ibn al-Rūmī, Husain makes the general

59 Ibid., p. 163.
60 Ibid.
judgment that:

"He [Ibn al-Mu'tazz] is unlike Abû Tammâm and Ibn al-Rûmî in [terms of] searching for a deep and difficult meaning that needs a great effort to be understood. He [Ibn al-Mu'tazz] is looking only for rare things and close relationships between things which do not need effort to be understood."

Two points can be made about this statement. First, Husain does not give any example to support his argument, but simply cites his conclusion. Second, there are, in fact, many images in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry that compare two different and distant entities and which force the reader to think hard in order to understand them. As mentioned earlier, this poet is praised by al-Jurjânî precisely because of his ability to form images between objects that have many differences. Thus it can hardly be said that Ibn al-Mu'tazz does not always look for 'close relationships between things'.

61 Ibid.
2-3- Sayyid al-Ahl (1951).

'Abd al-'Aziz Sayyid al-Ahl’s biography of Ibn al-Mu'tazz aims to give a general idea of the poet and his work on prose and poetry, rather than a study of issues concerning his work. Sayyid al-Ahl sets out the factors that influenced the literary character of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, which he traces back to a) the prevailing conditions in the middle period of the 'Abbasid age with regard to instability in politics, the general state of knowledge, and poetic modes current at the time, and b) the influence of the environment that Ibn al-Mu'tazz grew up in, such as his aristocratic lifestyle, teachers’ attitudes and friends’ manners and behaviour. The first part of the book is full of historical information that can be a useful aid for interpretation of certain aspects of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetry, such as his preference for special types of image. However, Sayyid al-Ahl does not make a connection between these factors and Ibn al-Mu'tazz's literary production. In other words, although he discusses the factors that create the literary character of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, he does not show precisely how that production reflects these factors.

Sayyid al-Ahl considers the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz as similar to that of al-Buhturi's school. He states:

ٍذهب ابن المعتر في معظم شعره مذهب السهولة والرشاقة والوضوح
والقرب واللبن بنواها جميعاً، فيختار المعنى قريباً ووضحاً ويختر اللفظ

---

63 Ibid., pp. 7-27.
"In all of his poetry, Ibn al-Mu'tazz chose easy words and clear meanings. The master of this attitude is al-Buhturi. In an opposite group, there is Abū Tammām's attitude which is marked by ambiguity in meaning and strange words." (with some modifications).

Thus, for this scholar, Ibn al-Mu'tazz used the 'new style' bāḍī less than Abū Tammām. He claims, also, that the poet tended to use simile to clarify or ornament meaning.65

Sayyid al-Ahl goes on to assert the common claims concerning Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry that a) Ibn al-Mu'tazz used simile more than other figures of speech and b) the value of the simile is a result of the value of the vehicle it uses.66 He then makes two further comments on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's simile. First, he claims that Ibn al-Mu'tazz used short expressions in his similes to convey the meaning quickly to his reader. However, he does not investigate this claim fully or provide examples. Second, he repeats al-Sharīf al-Murtada's note that Ibn al-Mu'tazz compared, in two lines, six entities to six entities.67

Sayyid al-Ahl's study is thus a biography that aims to give a general

---

\(^{64}\) Ibid., pp. 29.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., pp. 37.
\(^{66}\) Ibid.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 40.
introduction to the poet and his world. However, the comments he makes on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery are unsupported by sufficient examples.

2-4- Al-Kafrawî (1967).

This biographical book aims to provide a general portrait of Ibn al-Mu'tazz: the man and the creator.68 Muhammad al-Kafrawî, like other scholars, claims that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was influenced by the aristocratic lifestyle that he grew up in.69 However, al-Kafrawî also claims that the poet was influenced – to some extent – by two negative factors a) the murder of his father, the Caliph al-Mu'tazz, and the displacement of his family and b) the cruel behaviour shown to him by the 'Abbasid Caliphs. He asserts that the reason why Ibn al-Mu'tazz was not hugely affected by these factors is that:

"... فقد ظل حوله من أفراد أسرته من يحوطه بالعطف والرعاية ويقي في بيوت آباهه من الثروة ما يهبي له عيشاً زجاجا، موسعا عليه فيها، وظل لأسرته وأعمامه من الجاه والسلطان ما ترك باب الأمل والحياة في وجهه مفتوحاً غير موصد، بالرغم من تلك الهرات العنيفة التي نالت من طفولته..."

"... The members of his family gathered around him and fulfilled his need for pity and the fortune that the family still possessed.

68 Al-Kafrawi, M, 'Abd Allâh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Šayatu hu wa Shi'r u hu, (Cairo: 1957).
69 Ibid., pp. 17-9.
70 Ibid., p. 17.
His family and uncles had the fortune and power that make doors open ...”

In his opinion, this negative effect can be seen in two poetic genres favoured by Ibn al-Mu'tazz: self-glorification and wine poetry. In his self-glorification poetry, the poet mixes his complaints about the time in which he lives with glorification of himself and his ancestors, thereby reducing the strength of his criticisms of the current status quo, while in his wine poetry, his complaints appear at the beginning of the poems.\(^{71}\)

Al-Kafrāwī also links Ibn al-Mu'tazz's personal circumstances to his use of concrete types of image. For example, he states:

"المتنبي لتشبيهات ابن المتنبى يراها تلتقي في أمر واحد هو نقل القارئ إلى عالم آخر أبهى وأجمل من ذلك الذي نعيش فيه." \(^{73}\)

“Followers of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s images will note a common thing within them. All [images] move their reader to another world, that is better than the existing one.”

- According to al-Kafrāwī the images that reflect this are those in which the moon is depicted as a silver scythe or a half ring, and those in which the

\(^{71}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 18.}\)
\(^{72}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 154-5.}\)
bitter orange is portrayed as a golden ball. However, he does not make a convincing case, on the basis of these images, that Ibn al-Mu'tazz reflects a desire for a 'better world' in his similes.

Finally, al-Kafrawi makes the following interesting note on the aspect of movement in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's similes:

"We remember his [the poet's] speech about the bitter orange and the moon, when he compares the former to a ball that is hit by a stick to hang in the air and the latter to a scythe that harvests the narcissi ..."

The point he makes here is that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was very keen on moving images. However, only two lines are quoted later to support this argument and there is no comment on or further explanation of these two lines.75

In general, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery is seen by al-Kafrawi in terms of the

74 Ibid., p. 159.
75 A further methodological mistake can also be demonstrated. Al-Kafrawi does not mention his sources in two cases, each of which has a historical context, the first being the poet's impotency (p. 21), and the second being the report of the poet's craving for a happy life. Although this scholar mentions that he traced this information to 'some narrators', he does not mention their names, nor does he mention his sources.
classical mode; Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Imru' al-Qays are alike as their shared technique in creating poetic images is to link two close entities and to focus on the similarities between objects. This opinion would appear to be a repetition of Husain's: al-Kafrawi does not carry out any new investigation, nor does he acknowledge his sources. However, despite the shortcomings of this study, by indicating the influences on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's life and their effects on his poetry, al-Kafrawi went beyond his predecessor, Sayyid al-Ahl, who did not connect these influences with their effects.

2-5- Al-Shak'a (1973).

In his history of Arabic poetry in the Umayyad and 'Abbasid periods, Mustafa al-Shak'a studies the poetic image of Ibn al-Mu'tazz as representative of imagery in the 'Abbasid period. He divides his study of Ibn al-Mu'tazz into an introduction and two parts. The introduction (pp. 715-9) is a historical account of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's character in which he claims – as other scholars have – that the aristocratic lifestyle in which the poet grew up had a great influence on shaping his character and poetry. Al-Shak'a then devotes Part One (pp. 719-56) to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's favoured genres: love, wine, wisdom, glory, gardens and hunting, while Part Two (756-85) gives more attention to the imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, in particular his use of simile.

Al-Shak'a bases his analysis of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery on two statements.

76 Ibid., pp. 152-4.
First, he considers Ibn al-Mu'tazz to be the master of ‘garden’ poetry.\textsuperscript{78} Second, he repeats the well-worn claim concerning the aristocratic nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s simile.\textsuperscript{79} He classifies the subject matter of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s gardens’ poetry into two categories: that belonging to a general description of gardens and that belonging to special plants such as the narcissus, which he then analyses. For al-Shak’a, Ibn al-Mu'tazz was the master of water descriptions (\textit{ma’yyat}). He compares Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s descriptions of ice with that of al-Sanawbari, who compares ice to white flowers, and concludes: \textsuperscript{80}

"What scholars have not noted before is that the image comparing ice to white flowers is taken from Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetry ... Ibn al-Mu'tazz is really the master of describing ice in Arabic poetry." (with some modifications)

Al-Shak’a gives several examples to support his claim of the nobility of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s simile; he finds that the sources of moon images come from the field of jewelry, such as silver, the half ring and ivory ring. He also mentions that in another line the moon is compared to a silver coin and the sky in the

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 756.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 757.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 768.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 767.
background to blue silk. Although the observations made by al-Shak'a are very brief, they succeed in throwing fresh light on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's interest in garden poetry and give several examples of the claim of the aristocratic nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's simile.

2-6- Shalabi (1981).

Isma'il Shalabi's study examines the effect of the middle 'Abbasid period on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, developing on the work of Husain. This scholar discusses some of the political conflicts which affected the life in the 'Abbasid period, for example he states:

وفي أوائل القرن الثالث الهجري آذنت الأحداث بتحول خطير منذ أن تولى الخلافة "المعتصم بالله" 218 ه فأقبل على الترك يستعين بهم فكانوا عماد دولته، وقوة جيشه، والمستأثرين بهواه، فانصرفت عنه الفرس، وخذله العرب، وتفاقمت الأحداث. وأخذت الدولة تنقص من أطرافها، وتمور وتضطرب في أعمقها. فأغار الروم على التغور فكان الحرب واستقلت الدولات في شتى الأقاليم فيخلت بخراجها فقل الثراء، وتفجرت الثورات وشاع الانقسام، وجمح العصر، وتزامى بالشرر الرهيب، وتصاعدت الأخطار وبلغت قمتها بمصرع المتوكل (232 ه) في أبهى قصوره بيد الترك ... وتنايع الخلافة على الحكم، وتهافتا عليه، فتسافطوا في أنون من السياسة ...

81 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
"At the beginning of the third century AH, when al-Mu'tasim billah (218AH) became the Caliph, a big change took place. Al-Mu'tasim brought the Turks to power. They became assistants with complete control of the army and all state affairs. As a result, Arabs and Persians left al-Mu'tasim to face difficulties on his own. Conflicts inside the state increased and the Byzantines invaded the border of the state. Other regions refused to pay tax. Wealth declined and there were revolts in several places. These conflicts reached their peak with the murder of al-Mutawakil (232AH) who was killed by the Turks in his great palace ... the Caliphs were murdered one after the other ... "

(with some modifications)

These political conditions affected the social life of the people and destroyed a co-operative society. The poor became poorer and the rich became richer. Shalabî states that the poor observed the religious leaders, while the rich plunged into decadence. This led to a society full of contradiction\footnote{Ibid., p. 6.} and Shalabî observes that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was a 'picture of his time' who reflected the contradictions of the 'Abbasid period.\footnote{Ibid., p. 7.} He tries to prove this claim through examination of the themes and structure of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. In discussing these themes, Shalabî notes that Ibn al-Mu'tazz praises

\footnote{Ibid., p. 164.}
contemporary ministers and police chiefs more than caliphs and interprets this attitude in the following manner:

"This shows the contradiction [in the character of Ibn al-Mu'tazz]. By referring to psychology we understand why Ibn al-Mu'tazz had struggled in his youth. These struggles were a result of difficulties in the poet's childhood, the lack of fun in his youth and the contradiction of the environment in which he lived."

Thus, unlike other scholars who refer to Ibn al-Mu'tazz as leading a luxurious life, Shalabî uncovers the difficulties in his childhood and youth. However, by going back to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, one can see that he did actually praise the caliphs al-Mu'tad'id, al-Muktaff and al-Mu'tamid in several odes. Thus, Shalabî's claims about the foci of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's eulogies are subjective judgments, free from all objective evidence.

Another thematic point made by Shalabî relates to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's conscious

---

89 Ibid., pp. 164-5.
imitation of Imru’ al-Qays. According to Shalabi, Ibn al-Mu’tazz imitated Imru’
al-Qays not only because both were princes, but also because both of them had suffered in their childhood and youth. The structural level upon which Shalabi’s claim is based can be found in Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s imagery. Shalabi describes it as follows:

"أما الوصف الحسي، وبه اشتهر ابن المعترز، وأعله ينم عن تمكنه من الثقافة العربية التي شاعت في عصره من جهة، وعلى تشبته بالعالم الحسي الذي يحيط به، فتلهيه به عن العالم الفكري الذي يمكن أن يجر عليه من الويلات والآلام لو أتى النشاطات إليه والتجوال فيه، هذا الوصف يشيع في هذه الأبيات لكلاب الصيد وألوانها، وانطلاقها وصيدها، والشراب والسقاة والشاربين والمجلس الذي يضمهم، وما لجأ الشاعر إلى هذه الجسيمات إلا ليفر من عالمه النفسي الذي يموج بالصراعات وكأنه يحاول أن يريح نفسه من أحزانها وصراعاتها فيضيها بهذه الصور الحسيّة حنيّاً من الزمن."

"Ibn al-Mu’tazz is famous for concrete description that shows his knowledge of Arabic culture in his time as well as the tenacity of the tangible world surrounding him. He sought distraction from the intellectual world that caused him many misfortunes when he engaged with it. Concrete discretion filled his poetry. Here, there are descriptions of hunting dogs, their colour and their action as well as description of drink, drinkers and the place of

93 Ibid., pp. 314-5.
drink. The poet escaped to this tangible world from his internal world where conflicts raged as he tried to comfort his soul from its sadness, even if for a short time.”

Shalabi demonstrates the sadness that colours Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery by referring to certain aspects of some of his poetic images. Running clouds, for example, are compared to tears. However, according to literary convention while the former entity causes happiness, the latter causes sadness.94 This is an interesting interpretation of a phenomenon that is found in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery, the imbalance between psychological and sense-communication functions, which will be given some attention later in this study in sections dealing with analysis of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. However, although the element of darkness in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry is so important, the examples given by Shalabi are insufficient to prove his suggestions.95

2-7- Al-Tašawî (1981).

In his Qaḍa[y]a al-Fann fi Qaṣiđat al-Madhī al-'Abāsiyya, 'Abd Allāh al-Tašawî studies the glory poetry of the 'Abbasid period, sampling the poetry of al-Buhtutrî and Ibn al-Mu'tazz, with the aim of refuting accusations of fakhr in

---

94 Ibid., p. 316.
95 Despite these criticisms, Shalabi has written a solid thesis. He links the causes and effects of his case study well (i.e. the contradiction of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry). To show what is so significant here, one can compare this thesis to al-Kafrawî's study (for the purpose of exemplification only). It has been demonstrated above that in the latter the connections found between cause and the effect is weak. However, al-Kafrawî wrote his study in the fifties, while Shalabi's thesis was written at the beginning of the eighties. This might explain why these two works are different.
Arabic poetry. His thesis is divided into two main parts: imagination and style. Imaginative issues are obviously of interest here, and al-Taťawi dealt with the following issues:

"و كانت البداية مع التصور ومصادر الخيالية ثم مستوياته المختلفة من التشبيه المفرد والتمثيل إلى توالي التشبيهات المقلوبة، مع بيان مصادر التشبيه عند الشعراء موزعة بين القدم والحدثة. ومع التشخيص وقفة عند دوره في الصورة وكيفية انتشاره ومصادر وقيمته الخيالية وتعلقه بالمحسوسات وكتره عند الشعراء. ومن هذه المستويات إلى درس لأهم خصائصها الفنية من تكرار وتنافض ومبادئة مع توضيح دور الصورة في الدلالة على حضارة عصر الشاعر بمعطياته المختلفة."  

"The beginning [of the analysis dealt with] imagination and imaginative sources. It then moved to different levels such as single simile, analogy, complex simile and reversed simile whilst explaining classical and modern sources of simile for both poets. Personification was also discussed [with respect to] its role, popularity and tangible aspect. From these levels, [the analysis] moved to study artistic characteristics such as repetition, contradiction and hyperbole with clarification of the image’s role to indicate the civilization of the poet’s time."

---

97 Ibid., p. h.

98 Ibid., p. h.
Al-Tatāwī duplicates the idea of the domination of simile in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, an idea which he repeats again and again without further substantiation, for example:

"وفي الموقف التصويري عند ابن المعتز يبرز التشبيه فيحتل أكثر صوره ويغلب على شعره بشكل لفت نظر النقاد فأتلكوا من الحديث عن فتحه وبأنه لم يطرق سواء من أدوات التصوير وأدى الموقف إلى عرض طويل لموقفه منه ومحاولة تجربة إكتاره منه ...

"On the level of imagination in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, simile dominates other figures. This caught the attention of critics ... They tried to give the reasons as to why Ibn al-Mu'tazz was so interested in simile ...

He attributes the sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images to two types of life: nomadic and settled, asserting that Ibn al-Mu'tazz gathered the first from ancient Arabic poetry and the second from his own environment.100

Al-Tatāwī's analysis of the structural and imaginative aspects of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's glory poetry is undoubtedly a work of value. Nevertheless, it addresses only one genre of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, raising the question; to what extent can the analysis of one genre of give a full knowledge of the whole of his poetry? There are also a few criticisms that can be made of this

99 Ibid., p. 355.
100 Ibid., p. 358.
study. Al-Taťawî does not give enough attention to defining his term 'sources of images'. It is only from his usage that this term can be understood as referring to the entity of the vehicle – confirmation of this understanding can be found in his following comment:

"... فهي [الأبيات] ترجع إلى ما شهدته البداية من معطيات التصوير وقوامها الحطب والهاجرة والظليم المنفر، وفي بقية الصور ترى طي البد والغذران والأودية... "

"... these images concern the desert. Here, there are: midday heat, camels\textsuperscript{102} and ostriches. In other images we can see the Sahara, brooks, valleys ...

Furthermore, one can argue that the two image-source categories he finds in Ibn al-Muťazz's poems are too general and that, without further subcategories, they are too general to specify the fields that occupied Ibn al-Muťazz's thought the most.

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 359.

\textsuperscript{102} Al-Taťawî refers (p. 359) to a special kind of camel called \textit{al-Shadqami}. \textit{Al-Shadqami} is an animal that has a big mouth, but is also a name of a famous Arab male camel. Ibn Manţûr, \textit{Lisân al- 'Arab}, (Beirut: 1956), v. VII.
Ali al-Muṣṭafā’s study focuses on ‘nature poetry’ in Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s Diwān, using descriptive and historical approaches, conducted within the academic arena as an MA dissertation.103 It is divided into five chapters, four of which are devoted to studying different fields of nature such as the sky, the earth, animal and birds and modern nature (that is to say, parks and gardens that were made in the ‘Abbasid era). Each of these four chapters is sub-divided into sections in accordance with its topics. In the first chapter (pp. 16-46) the sky, for example, is broken down into five sections; stars, wind, rain, cloud and lightning and thunder. The fifth chapter deals with what the researcher claims to be ‘the artistic structure’ of nature poetry. In addition to studying the various fields, the researcher aims to show how each topic was presented and how it reflects Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s inner personality. He also tries, rightly, to situate this poetry within a wider historical context that starts with pre-Islamic poetry and ends with ‘Abbasid poetry.

In Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s poetry, different topics can be said to reflect the poet’s personality on different levels. Some are used in a novel way and hence shed light on some aspects of the poet’s personality and style. Others are used in a traditional manner and so are less important in terms of the poet’s life and style. However, al-Muṣṭafā’s endeavour to prove that every single image

reflects the poet's personality and engagements leads him, at times, to
generalise and exaggerate. Such generalisation can be seen in his
interpretation of the dog image in hunting poetry (as well as other genres)
which appears, for him, to be a reference to the poet's enemies and does not
refer to an actual dog at all.\textsuperscript{104} Another example of generalisation can be
found in his comment on the poet's description of the positive attitudes of
birds and trees in the castle of al-Mu'tadid.\textsuperscript{105} It is strange enough that these
trees and birds, for him, are not real, but even more so that they are
interpreted only as representative of the positive attitudes of the general
public of different classes. Having said this, al-Muṣṭafā does make some
interesting points regarding Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, such as the poet's
fondness for some topics like stars, specifically the Pleiades.\textsuperscript{106} His use of
numerous examples from the work of other poets when studying each topic is
also appreciated, as these potentially provide other scholars with raw material
for further studies.

In conclusion, although al-Muṣṭafā does not develop many of his individual
remarks on the poet and his poetry to produce a coherent picture, this study
is still valid for its focus on one particular theme, namely 'nature', and is
appreciated as an MA dissertation.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 103.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 105.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 107.
3- Conclusion.

Overall, most previous studies have applied a sort of sociological approach to the analysis of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry which takes for granted that the poet was influenced by his lifestyle and the circumstances in which he grew up. However, these studies differ in depth. For example, while al-Kafrāwī notes some of the potential influences acting on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, but does not link cause and effect together, Shalabī effectively connects these factors to their effects. In contrast, al-Jurjānī does not restrict himself to a sociological approach but combines three approaches: linguistic, psychological and descriptive.

The major issues that have been raised by these previous studies are: the effect on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry of his aristocratic lifestyle; the domination of simile over figures of speech, and the concrete imagination of the poet's imagery. These issues are presented, somehow, in a general manner and treated with either little or no depth: to the best of my knowledge, there is no one study devoted to an investigation of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's use of imagery. Therefore, the forthcoming study will concentrate on this aspect of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry and will investigate the sources of this imagery and some aspects of the nature of his images.
PART TWO:

Investigation of the Sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

CHAPTER THREE: The Human Being.

CHAPTER FOUR: Daily Life and Other Sources.
CHAPTER THREE: The Human Being.

If one examines the imagery used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, it is possible to divide it into five main categories; 1) 'the human being', 2) 'daily life', 3) 'nature', 4) 'plants' and 5) 'culture'. In his personification of things and notions, Ibn al-Mu'tazz focuses on shape, colour and movement, making great use of the human body, its organs and its conditions. The female body, in particular, is the source of numerous images because of the possibilities it has to offer on the level of shape and colour. Because of this special interest in the human form, a category into which 35% of the total images in his Dīwān fall, this chapter will examine the first category, 'the human being' in detail, while the other image categories will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's human images can be divided into three sub-categories; 1) types of people, 2) actions and feelings and 3) physical attributes. Movement related images will be discussed in a separate section dealing with actions and feelings, in which his passion for describing both the movement of the body from place to place and the movement of specific organs will be discussed.¹

¹ For more detail regarding this interest, see Chapter Five, pp. 186-266.
1- Types of People.

1-1- The Feminine.

Female-related images form the largest group among individual topics. In this section, different aspects of the female are presented in terms of age, action, physical attributes and race. However, in some cases, such as the 'wine is a woman' image, the image source does not fall only into one sub-category, but rather draws on several different sub-categories. In such cases, these sub-categories will not be applied, so as to maintain the unity of the basic image. (The term 'basic image' is used in this study to refer to a collection of images that belong to one source or one vehicle and also present the same first domain or tenor). In the following, this way of looking at the concordance in the first domain will be applied when similar groups of 'basic images' appear.

For Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as for most men, wine and women are the most readily available pleasures. Hence, in his poetry, wine is described as female in terms of several aspects: age, physical attribute, and action and feeling. In age-related images, the two main qualities of the female that are compared with wine are those of freshness and timeworness. Through young girls, Ibn al-Mu'tazz indicates the quality of freshness, and through old women he indicates the most important feature of wine: age. These two ages sometimes interact so that the qualities of one are passed on to the other. The poet wants to emphasise age, and he also wants to present wine as a young girl:
Youth and old age are combined here poetically even if they cannot be in reality. However, young girls are mentioned more often than older women and there are only two images of female old age in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's wine poems. For example, on one occasion Ibn a-Mu'tazz writes that he was accompanied in a morning wine drinking session by a wine expert who offered him a pure yellow wine, which he compares to an aged woman:

ومغمرنا باصطباح البختر نادمًا
لم تبق لذئب شباً ولم تذر
ما زلت أسقية من صفراء صافية
عجوز دسكرة شابت من الكبير  

On the other hand, images of young women are repeated more than ten times. The kind of young girl Ibn al-Mu'tazz prefers is a virgin, and the attribute of virginity became the focus of a number of his wine-related images, as in the following example in which he expresses his longing for the virgin daughter of the tavern:

من لي على رغم الحسود يقهوة
 بكريمة حارة عناء  

---

3 Diwān, v. II, p. 111. The second image is in the following line, in which he values the old over the young:

فلت هذان، المسنة منهما
 تقدي عجوز الخنديس، فتباهًا

4 Diwān, v. II, p. 16. Other images include:

من عهد كسرى يكبر، يختيمها
 زيدت شبابا، والدهر قد خرفنا

Diwān, v. II, p. 177,

72
Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses another feminine description of wine in order to make it more exotic when he compares wine to a Jewish girl, saying to his companion, "Take here a Jewish girl whom no word can praise":

وُهَاءُها بْنَتَ بَهْوُدِيَةٍ سَجّارىْ، تَحْكَمُ عَقْدُ الْلَّسِّانَ

But exactly how does this description add an erotic element to the girl? It is well known that Christian and Jewish families ran taverns during the 'Abbasid era and it can be supposed that the fantasy of a Jewish girl is suitably exotic to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as a Muslim from a highly conservative family, because Jewish women of the time who worked in taverns and mixed with men paid less attention to covering their body. Thus, because of her manner of showing her beauty, the image of the Jewish girl seems both erotic and suited to a description of wine.

Another aspect of the erotic in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry can be found in the image of a covered lady, as can be seen in the lines in which he says "forget the stress of time and strengthen your soul with wine that prevents sorrow":

\[
\text{ليس لي لَّذة سَوِى بْنَت كَرْمٍ لم يُشْبَّهُا في دُنْهَا قِطَّ مَآءٌ}
\]

\[
\text{وَارْجِلَ إِلَى السَّكَرُ بِرُطَلٍ وَتَّانِي}
\]

\[
\text{سَتّطُّ عَلَى الأَخْرَانْ بْنَت الدَّنَانُ}
\]

\[
\text{Dْٰبْٰنَ, v. II, p. 16.}
\]

\[
\text{Dْٰبْٰنَ, v. II, p. 253.}
\]

\[
\text{Dْٰبْٰنَ, v. II, p. 253. Another image compares wine with a \textit{majusi} girl:}
\]

\[
\text{وَيَكَرّ مَجوسيةً عَلَیْها فَتْنَاعُ الحَبِّ}
\]

\[
\text{Dْٰبْٰنَ, v. II, p. 33.}
\]
Other images used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz that relate to a woman's age are those that focus on a 'bride'. In these images, Ibn a-Mu'tazz devotes his attention not simply to wine itself, but to a glass of wine. For example, in the following he compares wine in a glass with a sun that shines through clouds, or a bride oiled with a particular yellow oil called *wars*:

من عقارب في الكأس تشبه شمسا  
أو عروس قد صمخت خلوقا.  
فهي صفراء في نقاب حبيب

The sense of colour is emphasised here by the comparison of the yellow wine topped with froth to a made-up bride wearing a veil. In another vivid image from the same category he compares a glass of wine with froth on the top to a bride wearing a patterned scarf ornamented with pearls:

In images in which he uses physical attributes as an entity, Ibn al-Mu'tazz

---

6 *Diwān*, v. II, p. 83.
8 There is another image which stress the yellow colour of wine:

زوجة للفرائش من زعفران  
فتاحات قليلة الكفان  
و عليها غلال من ذهب  
و معشوق الشمائل. عسکری  
كأن الكأس في يدي عروس  
له فتنة وليس له سلاح  
لها من لؤلؤ رطبة وساح

*Diwān*, v. II, p. 252.

9 *Diwān*, v. II, p. 78.
uses them to describe the attributes of wine, such as colour, froth, purity and
taste. He sees redness in wine at two levels – light and dark. Light red wine is
compared to a woman's cheeks:

\[
\text{يَحْتُها فِي يَدٍ شَادٍَن كَانَّا مِن خَذٍّ نُخْضَر}^{10}
\]

while dark wine is often compared to the rather unpleasant image of blood.\textsuperscript{11}

Having said this, it does not seem strange or necessarily distasteful to
envisage wine in the hand of a barmaid as the blood of a wounded man, as
indeed is the case in the following image:

\[
\text{يَطُوفُ بِهَا شَادٍن مَلِيحُ الرَّضَا وَالْغَضَبُ}
\]

\[
\text{كَانَ بِمَبِيزَالِهِ دَمًا مِن طَعِينٍ وَنُبُؤُ}^{12}
\]

In most of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's other blood-related images, the blood in question
belongs to a wineskin that is slaughtered by a barman, for example:

\[
\text{لَمْ يَحَا وَجِهاً وَحِياً فِي نَحْرَهَا}
\]

\[
\text{شَرَّرَ يَطِبَّرَ بِفِرْعُ. زِنَادٌ}^{13}
\]

As in the previous group of 'wine as women' images, these images refer to
another image, 'wineskin as a she-camel', inferred by the use of the verb

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{11} The disagreement between psychological and sense-communication functions will be
discussed later, in Chapter Six.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 91.
Images such as this are of a type that can be called 'complex images' within which one finds two images: one will be highlighted (in this case the 'wine is blood' image) and one shaded, i.e. not overtly mentioned (in this case the 'wineskin as a she camel' image). One more feminine image that is linked with wine in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry is that of a woman's eyes as spears, which can be seen in his image of a man who runs away, stabbed by the eyes of a barmaid.

Another quality of wine that is stressed as much as colour is that of purity or clarity. Ibn al-Mu'tazz compares the taste and clarity of wine to women's spittle and tears respectively\(^{14}\) and wine's froth is compared to eyeballs\(^{15}\) or sometimes to teeth\(^{16}\) to emphasise their shape and colour. The ambiguity in understanding the nature of wine also forces the poet to use similarly ambiguous human attributes in his comparisons, such as the concept of the \(r\u00f6h\), (soul), and wine is therefore sometimes mentioned in spiritual terms:

\[
\text{وَتَقَيَّضُ البَالِ الْرَّوْجُ رُوحُ مُدَادَةٍ يَكُونُ بِأَفْوَاهُ الْمَدَامِيَ مَعَارِجَةً}^{17}
\]

\(^{14}\) The example for the first case is:

\[
\text{\textit{D}i\textit{w}ān, v. II, p. 254, and for the second case:}
\]

\[
\text{أَمَّا الْدِّهْرُ مَا يَقْبَلُ عَجْلَانَةً وَالْدِّهْرُ يَمِّرُ مَعَصُورً بَمِيْسُرٍ فَلِينَ لِلْهُمْ إِلَّا شَرِّ صَافِعٍ كَأَنْ هَا دُمَّةٌ مِنْ عَينٍ مِهْجُورٍ}
\]

\[
\text{فَجَتَّ بِهَا فِي كَأَسِيَّةٍ ذَهِبِيَّةٍ لَّا حَدِّٰٰقَ لَّمْ تَنْتَصَّ لَبَعْفُونُ}
\]

\[
\text{شَفَانِي عَفَّارًا صَبُّ فِيهَا مَزَاجَهَا فَأَضَحَكَ عَنْ ثَغَرِ الحَبَّا فَمَ الكَأَسِ}^{17}
\]

\(^{15}\) \textit{D}i\textit{w}ān, v. II, p. 140.

\(^{16}\) \textit{D}i\textit{w}ān, v. II, p. 248.

\(^{17}\) \textit{D}i\textit{w}ān, v. I, p. 70.
Wine operates like a woman: it sees, drinks and gives company. The last action, in particular, is repeated several times. To cite just one example:

\[
\text{خلَّ الزمانَ إذا تقاعسَ أو جمحُ وأشكُ الهمومَ إلى المدامة والقَدَحٍ.}^{18}
\]

Wine here can also listen to people as they let off steam and accompany those who are alone:

\[
\text{فإذا صادفتُ فؤاداً خلياً لم تدعهُ فردًا بلا أحبابٍ.}^{19}
\]

Furthermore, descriptions such as these sometimes reflect the darker side of this poet's mixed attitude towards wine. Thus, an empty wineskin is described as a dead person\(^{20}\) and the colour of yellow wine is like the yellow face of a tortured lover:

\[
\text{شبابٌ منها البياضَ لونُ اصفرٍ فلها لونُ عاشقٍ مكرٍّ.}^{21}
\]

Another basic image in the 'feminine' category is *land as a woman* in which land and vegetation are seen in terms of a woman's body and organs. Sometimes a whole land is compared with a whole woman, at other times a

\[\text{ببيتُ يسبحب رفاً أو يفرغُعُ. خنأْهُ من رجَّلٍ. الزنجُ. مذوقُ}
\]

\[\text{إذا خلا ساعةُ قامَتُ قبامتهُ. حذاءٌ بابٌ لباغٍ الراجُ. مفتوحُ.}
\]

\[\text{Diwān, v. II, p. 73.}
\]

\[\text{Diwān, v. II, p. 42.}
\]
particular part of land is compared with a particular part of a woman, for example, land in springtime is described as a bride, showing her beauty.\textsuperscript{22} The point of similarity between land and woman is described in terms of external attributes, expressed through shape and colour. A vivid example of this can be found in the following verses in which the poet compares spring to a prostitute:

\begin{quote}
وانظر إلى دنيا ربيع أقبلت
 مثل البقاء نبرحت إيزناو
\end{quote}

and:

\begin{quote}
فاصبحت الأرض مخصصة
 تعرض للرائد المعتدي
\end{quote}

and also in the following example, in which palm trees at harvest time, when they are full of fruit in different colours, are compared to crowned brides:

\begin{quote}
بالذهب الرطيب مكللات
 وبالواقت متوجات

نباري العرائس الصّرات
 ثم تبدلون بأوعيات
\end{quote}

With regard to the parts of the female body Ibn al-Mu'tazz refers to in his images, cheeks and eyes are the most frequently used but other organs, such as teeth, necks, waists, heads and breasts, are also presented. The rose is always (as in poetry in general) compared with cheeks because of the obvious

\textsuperscript{22} Diwān, v.II, p. 124:
\textsuperscript{23} Diwān, v. II, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{24} Diwān, v. II, p. 563.
\textsuperscript{25} Diwān, v. II, p. 521.
quality of colour in both. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as a great observer of colour at
different levels,\(^{26}\) gives emphasis to the different colours of a rose, which is
redder in the center and paler at the edges:

\[
\text{أتاك الورد مُتَبَّضاً مَصْوَناً}
\]
\[
\text{كأن وجهة لم تَوَاقَتْ}
\]
\[
\text{تَجومَ في مِطاَلِها السَّعَودُ}
\]
\[
\text{بَياضٌ في جوائِيّه احْمِراً}
\]
\[
\text{كَمَا احْمَرَتْ مِن الْخَلْجِ الْخُدُودُ.}^{27}\]

This image has been given psychological effect by the introduction of the
element of blushing due to shyness, which lends a greater human quality to
the rose. In other examples, Ibn al-Mu'tazz focuses on the concept of colour
change in a single image: for example, the fruit of the bitter orange which
changes its colour from completely yellow to yellow and red is compared with
colour changes in the face of the beloved when she sees her lover, torn
between happiness at seeing him and her fear that somebody might report
him:

\[
\text{كَانَتْ النَّارِحَةُ لَمْ يَا بَيْتَ}\\
\text{فَاضَرََُّ نَمُّ احْمَرُ خَوْفَ الرَّجُبِ.}^{28}\]

Other fruit and flowers like the apple\(^{29}\) and pomegranate blossom\(^{30}\) are also

\(^{26}\) See Chapter Five, pp. 186-266.
\(^{27}\) Diwān, v. II, p. 565.
\(^{28}\) Diwān, v. II, p. 510.
\(^{29}\) One example of this is:
seen in terms of the cheeks of the shy beloved.

With regard to images referring to eyes, Ibn al-Mu'tazz compares them mainly to flowers, and to narcissi in particular. There is no doubt that the circular shape of the eyes attracts him intensely, and he sometimes adds to images relating to their circular shape with his favourite technique of noting different colours:

\[
\text{في نَرْجسٍ عَضْدَ نَواضُرُهُ بَيْضُ الجُفُونِ عُيُوْنُهَا صَفْرٌ}^{31}
\]

Hence, the narcissus has two colours for its circle: the first is yellow while the second is white. Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses other images which compare the different parts of flowers to the different physical attributes of women: daisies are compared to teeth,\(^32\) a truffle to the head,\(^33\) a wallflower to the hair\(^34\) and so on. However, these images are not of his invention but are of common stock in 'Abbasid poetry. Having said that, one particular image seems to be especially interesting and may be unique in 'Abbasid poetry:

\[\text{دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. I, p. 327.} \]
\[\text{30 The following line is an example of this:} \]
\[\text{دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. II, p. 544.} \]
\[\text{31} \text{ دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. II, p. 131.} \]
\[\text{32 For example:} \]
\[\text{دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. II, p. 544.} \]
\[\text{33 For example:} \]
\[\text{دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. II, p. 58.} \]
\[\text{34 For example:} \]
\[\text{دِلْوَانٍ،} \text{ v. II, p. 592.} \]
This image, in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz compares a cluster of grapes to breasts, clearly illustrates his love of shape and colour.

Woman as a sub-category of a human being is also used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz to convey two different kinds of image, namely concrete and abstract. In terms of concrete imagery, animal images are the most frequently used. In the following example the wide eyes and long neck of a gazelle are compared to Shurayra's eyes and neck:

The qualities of the width of eye and length of neck are obvious attributes of the gazelle. However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz here claims the opposite to emphasise these qualities within his beloved, using a technique known as tashbih maqlûb (reversed simile), which is among the most frequently used forms of simile in Arabic poetry throughout different eras. Other concrete female images used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Diwân can be summarized as depicting the following: the state as a virgin, squadron, and cloud, and 'message as a bride'. In

addition, 'bride' images are used and have both positive and negative connotations. When used to represent the state and troops these images convey a positive sense, because of the feeling of victory of conquering the state after it has been under siege and troops have been moved to fight the rebels. In contrast, in the following 'bride as message' image, the bride is used as a caricature, to convey the humiliation of a messenger sent by the Roman king:

Having discussed concrete female images, the way in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses feminine imagery in abstract terms will now be examined. A good example of his use of abstract imagery is in his depiction of the caliphate and the viziership as brides for the right caliph and minister. He sometimes portrayed the caliphate as old and ugly until the accession of al-Mu'tadid, upon which they took on the characteristics of a buxom young girl:

The use of these positive images of woman to depict the caliphate and wizāra reflects the warmth of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's feelings towards them. However, this

---

37 *Diwān*, v. I, p. 448:

38 *Diwān*, v. I, p. 582


40 See also, for example:
source of imagery is sometimes used with less positive feeling when he discusses other topics like dreams and sleep. In one poem the interaction between dream and dreamer is conveyed as entailing a woman with whom his addressee has slept, who, it is said, will produce a baby as bad as thorns:

"عائشه الأحلام في مخالب سفينت الشوک لكم بعد حين"⁴¹

This difference in attitude towards one particular image-source (here the feminine) can be understood as relating to the different topics Ibn al-Mu'tazz deals with. A positive attitude is linked to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's perception of the topic he is dealing with, for example when he felt that the caliphate was in safe hands with a caliph like al-Mu'tadid and the viziership with a powerful minister like al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd Allāh, he uses positive imagery. On the other hand, these images encompass negative attitudes when Ibn al-Mu'tazz is dealing with what he perceives as negative situations, for example when the poet's relatives are separated, or when dealing with sleep and dreams.

Images of older women are characterised by themes of dictatorship and power and generally fall into the category of negative images. Life is seen as a woman — mother and beloved — and in both cases Ibn al-Mu'tazz pursues the theme of the harshness of these women. Where life is depicted as a mother, she is the mother of all problems, and when it is depicted as a beloved, she is a tyrant. In one case, Ibn al-Mu'tazz says:

---

There are a few examples where the poet illustrates life in a happier vein. However, in these examples, he is not entirely positive, but stresses that life brings good as well as evil:

In imagery linked to this theme, the strength of a woman is conveyed through images of wind, which causes great discomfort on earth, the origins of which can be found in the high pitch of a woman's voice when she blames or cries. Finally, because of the high level of frequency with which they are used, this section cannot be brought to a close without mentioning the repetition of traditional images of the andiron, which depicts three women visiting an ill man or sitting round a fire.

In addition to these predominantly negative images of older women, there is

---

44 As in the following example:
a group of images that can be called 'motherhood images' in which Ibn al-
Mu'tazz gives a sensitive observation of mother and child, depicting a
pregnant mother, for example, as like a cloud full of rain:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{من رأى خفقة برقة لا يعم.} \\
\text{في أدم الأرض يقر ويصد.} \\
\text{سابق جلبى سحابا } \text{أوقرت.} \\
\text{تعد الوادي سيلا } \text{ما اسمع.} \\
\text{أبدا تقبلها حتى تلى } \text{مصغ.}
\end{align*}
\]

In addition, some actions relating to children were of special interest to Ibn
al-Mu'tazz, and he used them in images intended to convey innocence, love,
and softness. For example, the gentleness of a well-trained dog chasing its
prey is compared to a young lady hugging her child with love and
tenderness\(^47\) and an image in which lavender is depicted talking to violet is
used to represent the early talk of a child.\(^48\) In contrast, other childhood
images show a disharmonious relationship with the mother; that of a child
who cannot reach his mother's milk, and that depicting an inexperienced
mother dancing her baby in an unsafe manner come to mind. These images
may reflect an unstable relationship between the poet and his own mother –
it is interesting to note that there is no direct mention of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's
mother at all (what her name was, who she was or what her relationship with
the poet was like), instead, historical references are made only to his
grandmother.

\(^46\) \textit{Diwan}, v. III, p. 57-8.
\(^47\) \textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 432:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{أمسكن صيدا ولم تدمع كضم الكواعب.} \\
\text{أولادها إذا تنفس فيها ورد ترجيسها.} \\
\text{ناغى جني خراها بنفسها.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^48\) \textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 69:
One of the striking features of a woman's body for Ibn al-Mu'tazz is its brightness (or whiteness), as can be seen in the following image in which he compares the flash of lightning in a dark sky to the brightness of women taking off their clothes in a dark room:

\[\text{كان النُساء البيض في حجرا به تُكشف عن أجسادهن الملابس.}\]

In a similar image that gives attention to the brightness of women bodies, Ibn al-Mu'tazz presents the flash of women's naked hands fighting one another to illustrate the movement of lightning in a dark cloud:

\[\text{كان الغمام ولمع البروق، نساء يقابلين بالآزق.}\]

This image reflects Ibn al-Mu'tazz's characteristic focus on shape and colour. Other images in this category rely on the whole body of a woman rather than concentrating on one particular part. For example, palm trees and balconies are compared to a row of women:

\[\text{بنيان قصر قد علبت شرفاتها، كصف نساء قد تزين في الازرق.}\]

In this context a group of images that have a sexual side can be considered.

---

A woman is revealed to be a prostitute through some of her actions, such as putting her tooth-brush inside the mouth in a particular manner, rejecting her husband or working as a pimp. One shocking sexual image compares the blood of a horse, in the battlefield, to the blood of a virgin.

1-2- Occupations.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poems feature people of different professions and classes, high and low, such as kings, princes and other occupations. It is worth noting that the poet uses the word king rather than caliph and in some places describes him as 'the crown holder' in conjunction with the image of the goshawk:

Calling the caliph 'king' can be understood in terms of the government system at work during the 'Abbasid era, whereby the caliphate later turned into a

---

52 《戴》, v. II, p. 627:

53 《戴》, v. I, p. 328:

54 《戴》, v. I, p. 255:

55 《戴》, v. II, p. 426:

monarchy. Al-Rabbā'i has also noted that this occurs in Abū Tammām's poetry\(^{57}\) and it can be said it was customary to call caliphs kings in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's time. In some images the king is introduced in a humorous fashion, through comparison with a bull or a cockrel. In one such image, a bull that is compared to a king is described as without any power and the focus is on its shape:

\[
\text{بـِكـلُ وـاديُ صـعـدي،}
\]

\[
\text{وـسـأـرُ أـبـأـكـرُ طـافـيُ الغـنا،}
\]

\[
\text{كـضـجـعَةُ ذـي النـاـجٌ، فـي الـمرـقَ.}^{58}
\]

In another image, a king is compared to a cockrel as follows:

\[
\text{وـقـدُ صـاحٌ مـذعوـراً مـؤذنٌ قـريةٍ،}
\]

\[
\text{كـكـسـرِي عـلـى عـالٌِ يـومُ شـرـيعٍ،}
\]

\[
\text{إـذـا صـفـقُ الكـفـيـنِ، مـنُ طـرـبٍ، تـعـرُ.}^{59}
\]

To create an image relating the bull, or even the cockrel, to the king shows Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attitude towards the caliphs of his time. After the death of his father, the ex-caliph, Ibn al-Mu'tazz regarded himself as the authorised successor to the caliphate, with the appropriate balance of intellectual and physical abilities, while others he regarded as less suitable gained power against his will. For him, they were without intellect and incapable of taking


responsibility for controlling the state as the only power they have is physical.

King-related images counter prince-related images; while the first have negative connotations, the second are positive. The prince is described approvingly, as a speaker with a fine voice as powerful as thunder:

وجلجل رعد من بعيد كأنه أمير على رأس الينابيع خطيب

He precedes others as a rose precedes other flowers:

ثم نادي الربع جاء كور د أمير فاذعنا للأمير

And is a generous person who gives to his people as a goshawk gives its prey:

يعلوا الشمائل كالأمير المنتصب أمكته الجود فاعطى ووهب

It seems reasonable to assume that Ibn al-Mu'tazz depicted his own character through brilliant images like thunder, the rose and the falcon, and that of other caliphs through less flattering likenesses to the bull and the cock.

Another group of ‘occupation’ images refers to religious occupations. The

60 Diwān, v. II, p. 56.
Qur’ān has the authority to judge between people in disagreement:

سنستأذن القرآن فيما فعلتم، ونقضي بحق فيكم وصواب.

In other images, Ibn al-Mu’tazz depicts old age a preacher and the shape of an animal sitting at peace is compared to that of a religious person kneeling in prayer. In a caricature, Ibn al-Mu’tazz focuses on the shape and movement of an Imam who prays in haste, comparing him to a hunter who runs with a goshawk:

لنا إمام نقبل خفيف روح الصلاة
بطل يركض فيها، نقرا بغبر قرآة
كراكب فوق طرف مستعجل، بيزاى.

Money-changer related images are also used quite frequently by Ibn al-Mu’tazz, and he pays particular attention to the function and the movement of the cashier’s hand. The function of the cashier’s job is to distinguish between sound and unsound money, and he has the last word on the matter, for which reasons he is compared to a literary critic who differentiates between good and bad texts and judges them accordingly:

64 Diwān, v. III, p. 120.
The movement of the cashier's hand is also compared to the movement of the legs of a running camel and the hands of an archer:

2- Actions and Conditions.

This sub-division can in turn be broken up into five main groups: autonomic actions, the power of speech, power actions, love and conditions. Things like animals, nature, plants, and even human organs, are personified by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in terms of human actions and conditions.

2-1- Autonomic actions.

Breath-related images are traditionally used to refer to a number of different things, such as daybreak, various kinds of flower, and the sirocco (or levanter) wind. The two contexts in which the image of daybreak's breath are used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz are the invitation for an early morning drink, or the

\[67 \text{ Diwān, v. I, p. 487.} \]
\[68 \text{ Diwān, v. III, p. 31.} \]
departure on the hunt. Echoes of Qurʾān 81:18⁶⁹ can be seen in these images, as in the following:

٥٨ مُسَيِّدٍ فِي الرِّجَاجِ ٥٩ مُسَيِّدٍ فِي الرِّجَاجِ

In images relating to sleep and weakness, he deals with concrete and abstract themes: blood, flowers, scattered dust, worry, war and light are weak like a human being.⁷¹ On other occasions, the inactive nature of resolution⁷² and the ineffective colour of a beard⁷³ are compared to sleep. In addition to the active and inactive nature of weakness and sleep, the image of longing, which is expressed in terms of sleep, also reflects the unstable condition of the poet:

---

⁶⁹ This verse (quxojj li> J eu-aJI), Qurʾān, 81:18, is translated as: ‘...by the dawn sighing’ in Arberry, A. The Koran Interpreted, (London and New York: 1995), v. II, p. 326.
⁷¹ There are several images for each one of these things and states. One example will be given for each case:

flowers;
Diwān, v. II, p. 69,
Dust;
Diwān, v. II, p. 370,
worry;
Diwān, v. II, p. 229,
war;
Diwān, v. II, p. 315,
light;
Ibn al-Mu'tazz also gives the capability of observation to a number of natural objects such as the sun, stars, and daybreak, conditions such as death, fear and concerns and human organs such as the heart and soul. Food and drink-related images become personifications of natural things like earth, concepts such as patience and longing and concrete things such as swords.

---

74 Diwan, v. I, p. 245.
75 For the sun, the poet says:

Diwan, v. II, p. 580, for stars he says:

Diwan, v. I, p. 87, and for daybreak:

Diwan, v. I, p. 34.
76 Death:

Diwan, v. III, p. 100, fear:

Diwan, v. II, p. 34, concern:

77 The heart:

Diwan, v. I, p. 325, the soul (nafs);

78 Earth;

79 Patience;

Diwan, v. III, p. 27 longing;

and organs such as the eye.\footnote{For example:}

\textbf{2-2- The Power of Speech.}

The soul, mind, heart, body, waist, eyes, tears, longing, love and sleep are all given the ability of speech by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. All bodily organs have something in common, in that they can express love. To cite the eye, which communicates to express feelings inexpressible in words, as an example; in the following the poet's eye exchanges feelings of love with that of his beloved:

\begin{quote}
 يومٍ يشكو طرفه إلى طرفك الحب
 فأوحى إلىَّ أنّ قد علمت
\end{quote}

His love of drink is expressed by his eye in the following line:

\begin{quote}
 بنفسي مستسلم للرقاد
 يحدثني السكر من طرفه
\end{quote}

while the beloved's eye reveals the feeling of intoxication and desire for sleep.

The sounds made by tools and implements are also regarded by the poet as

\footnote{For example:}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Diwan, v. I, p. 490.}
\footnote{For example:}
\textit{Diwan, v. II, p. 213.}
\footnote{Diwan, v. I, p. 227.}
\footnote{Diwan, v. II, p. 178.}
\end{quote}
speech, for example the voice of some musical instruments, like the lute,\textsuperscript{84} war weapons such as the spear,\textsuperscript{85} and natural elements like lightning.\textsuperscript{86} Other things, like pens, which do not themselves produce any kind of sound are seen as having the ability to speak because they express ideas and information as clearly as a sound.\textsuperscript{87} Again, these images are traditional and have no specific bearing on our understanding of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's personality or style. However, a small group of 'talking bird' images does reveal something of the poet's self. Birds sing, primarily in a sad voice and are a sign of separation, as in the following example:

\begin{quote}
ولم أنس تغريد الحمام عشية على فرعها تدعو الحمام البواكيا
\end{quote}

But why does the poet have this attitude towards birds? This is an intriguing question which will be answered in Chapter Six.

2-3- Power Actions.

Abstract concepts of feelings, such as will\textsuperscript{89} and love,\textsuperscript{90} and of time, such as

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{84} This line is an example for that:


\textsuperscript{85} This line is an example for that:

\textit{Dīwān}, v. I, p. 646.

\textsuperscript{86} This is an example for that:


\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Dīwān}, v. II, p. 579.

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Dīwān}, v. II, p. 400.
\end{quote}
the change from day to night, are the most frequently personified things that fall into this category. For example, day gets rid of night:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{والنّجر في اثر الظلام طارد}^{91}
\end{align*}
\]

This use of the verb 'rid' illustrates Ibn al-Mu'tazz's dislike of the coming of day, which will destroy his enjoyment of the night. This concept of time as change is repeated many times in his poetry and the personification of time is one of the 'basic images' which is repeated frequently; there are a total of 136 of such images in his \textit{Diwan}. In these he often compares two temporal situations: 1) when he was in the strength of his father's presence and 2) when he was alone, in a weak position, controlled completely by the vagaries of time. The following line is an example of the former situation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ملكنَا الْهُوَى حيناً وكانَا فَأَرْخَصْنا دُهْر قَكِيفُ تُرَبِّنا}^{92}
\end{align*}
\]

However, the balance of power seems always to be in favour of time and even when Ibn al-Mu'tazz manages to get the upper hand, it will only be for a short period. For him, there is no one who can withstand the evil of time:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{For example:}
\end{align*}
\]


As will be shown later, this attitude towards time is coloured by a number of awful experiences the poet faced during his life.

Images relating to movement are also repeated frequently, whereby abstract concepts such as patience, forgetfulness, concern, will, sadness and so on are given the ability to move. Patience, for example, moves away despite the poet's will:

Some tangible actions are also personified in this way; dreaming of the beloved, ardent love, waking, being at a distance, old age and

96 \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 204.
98 \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 211.
walking. Other image-topics which belong in this category are ‘birds’, 104 ‘stars’ 105 (which move very fast towards morning106) and messages107 (which move at a reasonable speed). In a particularly beautiful image, the movement of a hand is compared to a journey:

حَرِمتُ بُعْدَهُم مَسْرَيْدُ
إِلَى فِمي شَارِيّاً بِكَأسَانِ

With a total of 57 occurrences, movement images make up a considerable part of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s poetry, a fact which reflects his engagement with this kind of image. He is attracted by the speed of things under his observation, thus the quick, darting movement of a thief’s hand is used to convey the speed of predatory birds:

حتى دنا منهن مثل السارق.
ثم علاها بجناحٍ خافٍ.

سَرِينَتُ بَعيدي
حتى رأيت الفجر

102

وَمَا نُحْرَى بِالصَّمْينَ أَذْنَى مَنْحَلْلَةً يَقَصُّ عَنْهَا كُلُّ مَيْنَاشَ وَرايْبِ
مَحَا آيَاسَ عَنْهَا كُلُّ قَلِيلٍ فَلَمْ تَنْكَذَ
وَبَعِيدُ عَنْدِي مِنْ أَنَاشَ. وَإِنْ دَنَا
وَمَا البَعِيدُ إِلَاء مَثْلِ طُولِ النَّهاجَا

أَسْرُعُ الشَّيْبِ إِلَيْهِ بِهِمْ
كَانَ بِدَعَوَةِ أَحْبَابِ الدُّعَا

103

104 As in the following example:

هِجْرَتْ سَوَاهَا كُلَّ دَارٍ عِرْفَتْهَا
وَقَفَتْ لَدْنَ غَيْرِ دَارَكَ بِالْجَهَرَ.

وَقَفَتْ بِهَا وَالسِّحْبُ يَنْتِهِبُ الدِّجَيْ
بَأَصْوَائِهِ وَالنُّجْمُ يَرْكَبُ فِي الْغَرِبَ.

أَلا سَقَبَهَا قَدْ مَشَى السِّحْبُ فِي الدِّجَي
عَفَأً كَلُونُ النَّارَ حَمَأْرَ قَرْقَفاً

أَلا لا أَرَى كَالدَّانِ إِذْ نَحْنَ جَرِيْهَا
تَسَافَرُ فِي بَيْنَا الْكِتَابِ وَالرَّسُلِ

105 For example:

106

107

This image, of the thief's hand in action, is also used to convey the eye's furtive movement to glimpse the beloved:

أرْتُ إِلَيْهِ نَظْرِي وَهُوَ غَافِلٌ لِتَسْرِقَ عِينِي مِنْهُ مَا لَيْسَ دَارِيًا.

This interest in movement is also seen in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's description of the shaking movement of a body and other things which by nature do not move, such stars at the end of a night, and to describe luck when it comes to an end. Sometimes he also applies concepts of 'normal' movement in his images, for example he uses the movements of the human body movements when standing up and sitting down to counter the appearance and decline of day respectively.

The concept of generosity, specifically in terms of the action of giving generously, is also used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in both a positive and negative sense. The positive sense can be found in his images of water, clouds and

---

111 Diwân, v. II, p. 188.
the Euphrates river\textsuperscript{115} all of which provide most important element of life, water. In the negative sense, it is used to transmit negative conceptions such as concern\textsuperscript{116} and unrequited love.\textsuperscript{117}

2-4- Lovers and Sexuality.

Nature is seen by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in sexual terms and is often depicted in terms of the lover. It is attractive, naked and does what any lover does. The images than can be classified as falling into this category focus mainly on actions, primarily hugging, undressing, sexual congress, and other sexually charged behaviour). Clouds in the act of turning towards a dry area, for example, are described as being similar to a lover turning to his beloved\textsuperscript{118} and the movement of a tree’s branches towards each other is described in the same manner.\textsuperscript{119} Some images concentrate specifically on the shape or outer form of actions associated with love, such as hugging, rather than encompassing its emotional aspect, as can be seen in the image of hunting

\begin{itemize}
  \item [115]\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 7.
  \item [116]\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 298.
  \item [117]\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 368.
  \item [118]\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 620.
  \item [119]\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 640.
\end{itemize}
dogs catching their prey\textsuperscript{120} or a rescuer saving a drowning person.\textsuperscript{121} Images of dressed night and naked daybreak are also frequent in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, sometimes occurring together, as in the following line:

قطافّ بها والليلّ عريانٌ خالعٌ  بقيةّ ليلٍ كالقميصٍ المرعبل.\textsuperscript{122}

It is also worth noting that Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry contains two classes of 'lover' image. The first can be categorized as 'implicit', in which the object being described is implicitly personified by being described as performing a lover-like action, as in the example of the cloud turning towards dry land. However, there is also a second category of 'lover' image, in which the object being described is personified overtly. For example, in one image, Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes daybreak as a person sleeping naked,\textsuperscript{123} while in the following lines it is portrayed as a lover walking with a lamp:

والصبيحٌ يَلَو المشتري فكانتهّ عريانٌ يمشي في الدجّى بسراج.\textsuperscript{124}

However, despite this interest in imagery relating to love and lovers, there are relatively few images relating to actual sexual congress; rain impregnates

\begin{itemize}
\item[D\textsuperscript{120}i\textsuperscript{120}w\textsuperscript{120}n, v. II, p. 461.]
\item[D\textsuperscript{121}i\textsuperscript{121}w\textsuperscript{121}n, v. I, p. 187.]
\item[D\textsuperscript{122}i\textsuperscript{122}w\textsuperscript{122}n, v. II, p. 197.]
\item[D\textsuperscript{123}i\textsuperscript{123}w\textsuperscript{123}n, v. II, p. 480.]
\item[D\textsuperscript{124}i\textsuperscript{124}w\textsuperscript{124}n, v. II, p. 294.]
\end{itemize}
soil,\textsuperscript{125} likewise disasters are impregnated by Ibn al-Mu'tazz's enemies.\textsuperscript{126} In addition, some human actions such as seeing and speaking are regarded in terms of sexual intercourse. In one image the poet's eye wandering to one who is not his beloved is considered as fornication and deserving of punishment:

\[
\text{ إنْ زَنَتُ عِينِي بَعِيركَ فَاجَلَذْهَا بِطَوْلِ السَّهَادَةِ وَالدَمْعَ. حدّا} \textsuperscript{127}
\]

Another rather strange image is that of the poet writing his response to his beloved's letter on the very same page used by him, so that his script will penetrate that of his beloved:

\[
\text{ما نَلْتُ منْهُ غِيرُ عِمزَةِ عِينِهِ وَرسَائِلِهِ وَبَصَالَهُ أو سَخْطِهِ}
\]
\[
\text{وَأَحْيَتْ فِي ظُهْرِ الكِتَابِ إِذَا أَتِى فِلُوطٌ خَطْيٌ فِي الكِتَابِ بِحَيْطِهِ.} \textsuperscript{128}
\]

\section*{2-5- Emotional Conditions and States}

Ibn al-Mu'tazz pays special attention to describing feelings, emotions and related physical states such as happiness, fear, drunkenness, crying, etc. In an image he frequently uses to describe laughter, lightning is compared to

\textsuperscript{125} Diwān, v. II, p. 618.

\textsuperscript{126} Diwān, v. II, p. 404.

\textsuperscript{127} Diwān, v. II, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{128} Diwān, v. I, p. 397.
the appearance of the teeth of the person laughing. Another quality of laughing that catches his attention is the vocal aspect, and he draws parallels between laughter and the voice of a bucket. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's drink-related images reveal his excellent knowledge of a drinker's emotional states; the following example describes a person who is initially happy with a new government position and only later experiences the travails associated with it as being like a drinker initially experiencing the euphoria of drunkenness, followed by its less desirable after-effects:

كم نانع بولاتَك وبعِزْلِهْ بعدُ الْبريدُ
سكر الولادة طيب وخمارة صفع شديد.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's familiarity with the behaviour of drinkers is also revealed in the following image, in which the harmony between actions and emotions is subtly created, of a fed up beloved who does not wish to see her lover any more – a state which is compared to the feelings of a drunk who has had enough and does not want any more:

حدّتْ عن تغري أيّارا
ومشيبٍي فقلنُ والله شابا
نظرت نظرَةً إلىّ وصدّت كصدود المحمور شمّ شترا.
The image of clouds crying, which is repeated nine times in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān*, is the dominant image he relates to the activity of crying and can be linked to tear-related images in which he compares rain to tears. Despite the fact that 'crying clouds' is a traditional image, Ibn al-Mu'tazz is able to add fresh insight:

In this image he contrasts his tears with that of the clouds, in terms of the cause and the duration of their respective weeping, heightening the reader's appreciation of the poet's grief; he is forced to cry for love with no foreseeable respite, whereas the cloud's tears are the result of a natural phenomenon and will soon pass.

On the subject of the emotion of fear, Ibn al-Mu'tazz includes only a few images, but these are of great interest. For example, he uses the shaking body of a frightened person to describe a shaking ship. Additionally, the image of a person in a state of fear, listening for any slight sound or movement, is used to convey the image of the Pleiades constellation as it
declines.\textsuperscript{135} There is another image in this section which is worthy of mention as it is rather deeply imaginative, according to which the face of a frightened person seeking forbidden pleasures is said to resemble the face of someone seeing Satan:

وهمالمَهَيَيْ مَحْذوْرَةٍ والْتَفْنَاثَةٍ بِالْحَاتِر مِجْنُونٍ رَأى وَجْةَ شِيْطَانٍ 

\textbf{2-6- Sickness}

Images relating to sickness are common in Arabic poetry, in which love is seen as a sign of weakness that is not much different from sickness. Images of this kind play also a great part in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry and have special importance in shedding light on his life and personality. In terms of images related to love, love and its attributes encompass an entire field of sickness;\textsuperscript{137} the beloved is a disease,\textsuperscript{138} his promises are sick,\textsuperscript{139} his eyes are weak, and so on. However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also focuses on the weakness of the sick person to imply a range of other ideas; for example, the social and political problems of the state and the conditions of enmity and hypocrisy are

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 186:

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 732.

\textsuperscript{137} This type of image occurs 20 times, the following is just one example:

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 194.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 297.
all viewed as ailments which require medication. The state of sickness is also attributed to things when they are not in peak condition, i.e. arrows that miss and stars that do not shine.\textsuperscript{140} Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself is also portrayed as broken and sick with madness.\textsuperscript{141}

Ibn al-Mu'tazz demonstrates knowledge of different types of disease, skin problems, wounds and stings in his poetry. Two points in particular interest him the most – the physical appearance of the ailment and the pain endured by its victim. Hence, the appearance of a dirty body is compared to that of a person who has been smeared with vesicant cream\textsuperscript{142} and, on the other hand, his feeling of sorrow when the camp of his beloved moves is compared to the pain of a person who has been stung.\textsuperscript{143} Of the two kinds of image, those which reflect the appearance of disease occur more often than those that reflect the feeling of pain. This corresponds to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's tendency to focus on the external more than the internal.

In his death-related images, Ibn al-Mu'tazz makes use of three themes; completion, weakness (or powerlessness) and destruction (or powerfulness). Night, day and some abstracts like repentance, spite, stinginess and love, die.

\textsuperscript{140} Dīwān, v. I, p. 545.
\textsuperscript{141} For example:
\textsuperscript{142} Dīwān, v. II, p. 559.
\textsuperscript{143} Dīwān, v. I, p. 141.
Having no power to act, the condition of lovers or the good-minded person who (like the poet himself) has no chance to practice his skills in the declining time of the poet's era is described as like a dead person:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{كن جاهلًا أو فتجاهل تفرز للجهل. في ذا الدهر جاه عريض} \\
\text{والعقل محروم يرى ما يرى كما ترى الورث عين المريض.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In a few images, the poet focuses on the power of death, showing himself as pitted against his enemies as death itself:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{أنا كالمتبنٍّ سقمُها قدامَها طورًا وطورةً تبتدي فتفاجي.}
\end{align*}
\]

3- Bodily Organs.

For Ibn al-Mu'tazz, bodily organs are considered as human beings and are treated as companions, especially where affairs of the heart are concerned; he often complains to his heart, eye, and soul. The latter is sometimes also used in the context of asceticism, rather than love, when he advises his soul to stop sinning and get (herself) ready for the departure to the other world. The following example demonstrates how the poet creates a conversation between his heart, body, eye and ear:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{يا قلبُ كنتَ ترى من أيدي حسنٍ، دومًا عهدٌ على ود، كيفَ ترى}
\end{align*}
\]

Here, his personification of human organs is almost used in a way traditional to Arabic poetry. The four organs – eye, face, heart and soul – are personified in terms of human action and condition. The eye is treated, in general, as a companion through whom the poet exchanges messages with the beloved. It is personified in different ways, becoming both an independent person who speaks and argues and causes problems for the lover. The main feature Ibn al-Mu'tazz observes in the eye is the speed with which it opens and closes, to which is compared the speed of stars' disappearance, of spears, of a hunting dog rushing to its prey and the speed at which the poet does good deeds. He also gives attention to the importance of the eye as one of the primary organs that connect people to the world surrounding them – without vision the world would be completely dark. This aspect of his

---

treatment of the eye can be found in descriptions of positive abstracts, such as welfare\textsuperscript{153} and generosity,\textsuperscript{154} to which eyes are given.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also focuses on the physical aspects of the eye in his imagery; its colour and shape, as in the image of in which the chameleon is compared to a blue-eyed bull looking at the horizon.\textsuperscript{155} In another example of his use of colour in eye images, the eye of night is described as smeared with kohl.\textsuperscript{156} Ibn al-Mu'tazz's focus on the shape of the eye can be seen in a number of images relating to tears – in the following, raindrops and dew are compared to tears as both continue to fall:

\begin{quote}
\textit{'\texttt{تشوشكُ رياضًا قد تبقى نورها ويلِلها دمع من المزت دارف.'}}\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

However, it is noticeable that, in contrast to the personified eye described above, the point of similarity between rain and tears is their external nature. This proviso can also be applied to a beautiful image describing a saffron flower covered in dew:

\begin{quote}
\textit{\texttt{واحتجعنا للبناني ولكن لا يرى الناس عيون الرحاء}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{153} Diwān, v. I, p. 390.

\begin{quote}
\textit{\texttt{مرسلٌ الجود إلى كل سؤل يكلَّاء المجد بعين السخاء}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{154} Diwān, v. I, p. 387.

\begin{quote}
\textit{\texttt{في سبيسٍ موحش، يشبّ هواجرة حرائة عن جحيم الشمس، منجرف كأنها مقيلة في الجو ناطرة زرقاء لا كحل فيها ولا وطٍف}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{155} Diwān, v. II, p. 362.

\begin{quote}
\textit{\texttt{إلىكَ أمنطيشنا العيس تنفح في البرى وليلٌ طرف بالصباح كحلٍ}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{156} Diwān, v. I, p. 489.

\textsuperscript{157} Diwān, v. II, p. 462.
The question that arises here is: why are Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images of essentially positive things like rain and flowers coloured with all this sorrow?159

Images relating to the face fall into two main groups: images entailing a complete face and images that concentrate on hearing only. With the first group, the poet mostly personifies negative concepts such as death,160 hopelessness,161 and dismissal.162 However, a few images convey positive senses, as in the following one in which morning opens its mouth:163

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses a number of images relating to the head, specifically hirsuteness and baldness, and his interest in colour is reflected in his

---

159 As mentioned previously, Chapter Six poses some answers to this question.
treatment of hair; night is compared with black hair and day with white. On the other hand, images of baldness are used to convey the helmeted heads of warriors and the speed of evil spreading throughout the state. He also focuses on the function and shape of the hand. In terms of function, the hand is a symbol of power for those who have it and of weakness for those who do not. The poet's counterargument to those who allege his hatred towards Ali is that Ali is his hand just as is 'Abbās:


On the other hand, weakness is personified as an amputated hand; the move against the political predominance of the Turks made by al-Mu'tadid left them, metaphorically, as a person whose hand has been cut off. Thus, Ibn al-Mu'tazz gives the hand both negative and positive connotations. Images of 'the hand of time' are generally positive, but the poet also frequently complains of its arbitrariness:

---

168 See Chapter Six for details of the political background to these events.

---
To depict time as having a hand with which to convey its power is in agreement with the dominant action of time as a force for change. Other positive concepts include the hands of glory\textsuperscript{170} and hope.\textsuperscript{171} Negative connotations presented are the hand of death\textsuperscript{172} and the hand of evil.\textsuperscript{173}

As mentioned above, the other feature that Ibn al-Mu'tazz emphasises is the shape of the hand. In these images the moon during the month of Shawwāl is compared to the fingertip of a loyal person who praised the minister\textsuperscript{176} and a baby snake is compared to the span of a hand.\textsuperscript{177}

The earth's interior is also described in terms of human internal organs and is shaken by the heavy movement of a powerful army. Likewise the she-camel

---

\textsuperscript{169} Diwān, v. III, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{170} Diwān, v. I, p. 387.

\textsuperscript{171} Diwān, v. III, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{172} For example, he says:

\textsuperscript{173} Diwān, v. II, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{174} Diwān, v. I, p. 607.

\textsuperscript{175} Diwān, v. I, p. 141.
wounds the land’s inner depths when she runs quickly. Human waste can also be mentioned in this context, and is used when Ibn al-Mu’tazz wishes to make a personal criticism. For example, one stanza describes a drinking session, which the poet criticises because the drink was sour and of low quality, the food consisted of dry sugarcane that was too difficult to bite and the singer was producing, not a voice, but excrement:

Poetically, this is a beautiful image that conveys the poet’s dislike of the meeting. Both the heart and soul are personified to convey a feeling of crashing time and a breakdown of ambition and love. The term ‘soul’ is repeated when Ibn al-Mu’tazz speaks about time and ambition; it does not always sail with the same will as the poet’s ships. The heart is referred to in connection with love affairs and is characterised as existing independently of the poet, able to choose a beloved or to act against the poet’s wishes. Here the poet describes himself as without the ability to control his emotions, especially love, but rather at the mercy of his organs, such as the eye and heart.

4- Conclusion:

It has been said that the human being, as a source of imagery, forms the largest section in the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz. It is worth noting that the same conclusion has been reached by Spurgeon in her study of Shakespeare's imagery and al-Rabbā'ī in his study of Abū Tammām. Spurgeon notes that the ratio of personification images in Shakespeare's work is 'very large'.\(^{179}\) As for Abū Tammām, al-Rabbā'ī states:

"We will start [the investigation of Abū Tammām's imagery] with man, giving his activities a particular attention because Abū Tammam, as we have said, gives it a great deal to the extent that one can feel its presence in his poetry as a whole."\(^{180}\)

Furthermore, Spurgeon considers this personification as an 'ordinary method of poetry'.\(^{181}\) Bearing in mind the frequent presence of personification in poetry in general, regardless of the time and culture in which it is produced, it does not seem unreasonable to stress the importance of its poetic role. However, this does beg the question, why is this so? The possible answer may lie in two things. The first is that man is a creature of endless complexity and it is this very complexity which leads the poet to find the human being such a great source for his images. The second possibility is that poets derive


their images from sources they know best, and the human being (in terms of both the body and its concomitant feelings and emotional states) is the best available source, as human characteristics exist within the poet’s own body and mind from the moment he is born.

In the case of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, the human being as a source of imagery can be sub-categorised into three main sections; types of people, actions and feelings, and bodily organs. Images relating to the female, which belong to the first category, are the most varied and frequent. They are used to convey a range of different topics and themes and particularly occur in Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s treatment of wine, palm trees and time. In addition, this image source discloses some aspects of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s life and poetic style. His negative attitude towards certain caliphs of his time can be clearly seen in images in which he compares these caliphs with animals such as the cock and bull. Furthermore, his relationship with his mother seems to be a fragmented one, as some of his images portray an immature mother who does not care properly for her child.

As for what we can elucidate about Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetic style from this material, attention has already been drawn to the poet’s fondness of observing external attributes such as shape, speed, colour and so on. Thus, the female body with its shape and brightness, as has been shown, offers itself to a number of images; of palm trees and lightning, for example. This love of the external attribute can also be found in images which make use of
concepts of movement, in which a considerable number of abstract themes, such as patience and forgetfulness, are given the ability to move. The poet pays special attention not only to different types of movement, but to the speed of motion, thus the quick movement of the cashier or thief's hand is of special interest to the poet. This attitude will be dealt with in some detail in the fifth chapter, which concentrates on the ḥissī aspects of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetic imagery.
CHAPTER FOUR: Daily Life and Other Sources.

1- Daily Life.

Daily Life is the second largest category of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's image sources and a percentage of around 24% of his total images fall into this class which can, in turn, be sub-categorised into four main sections; ‘clothing and cosmetics’, ‘accommodation’, ‘food and drink’, and ‘equipment of war and handcrafts’. In these images Ibn al-Mu'tazz tends to substantiate conceptual notions, particularly negative ones; thus death is a thing that can be seen,¹ the poet's sins are heavy in weight² and illness is buried³. Some positive conceptions are represented in his imagery but these are fewer in number. For instance, hope is described as a thing that has limitations⁴ and longing is something that can be cut off.⁵

1-1- Clothing and Cosmetics.

This sub-category is the most frequently used in the category of 'daily life', and Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses 'clothing and cosmetics' images 291 times in his

¹ Dīwān, v. I, p. 577: فعاينَ الموتُ الذي يَفُوتُ قِدْراً إذا اقترب
² Dīwān, v. I, p. 666: فعققوُ با ذا العقو عنة فاتُة أالفُ واقفُ تقالُ من الوزن
³ Dīwān, v. II, p. 320: تَبَنِّتَ أن قومي قد دُفِنُوا لي مَكَرا
⁴ Dīwān, v. II, p. 292: هل غُيرُ اَماساك باطراف المَنِى فيها لطالب خُلُة أو راحي
⁵ Dīwān, v. I, p. 189: قطعَ فقدتُ كيف شاء وذَلِكَها
The predominance of these images reflects the aristocratic lifestyle that the poet enjoyed for some time of his childhood, and his love of external attributes can be seen in his descriptions of valuable items such as different types of clothes, jewels, perfumes, cosmetics and grooming tools used by both men and women. Furthermore, this section's topics (primarily the beloved, wine, plants, animals and nature) reflect his preference for tangible attributes. In contrast, there are relatively few conceptual topics addressed in these images.

1-1-1- Clothing.

This sub-category can be, in turn, divided into two sections: 1) the general texture of fabrics and 2) men and women’s clothing. Night and daybreak, plants, old age, youth, birds, concrete things and abstract notions are compared to texture; the darkness of night is described as being as black as a holy man’s cassock or shirt, as in the following line, one of a number of images in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes the impenetrable gloom of night:

\[ \text{وَقَدْ تَبَدَّى النَّجْمُ فِي سَوَاوَهُ كَحَلَّةٍ الْرَايْبَةِ فِي حِدَادٍ} \]

The end of night is like an open outer garment:

---

6 This has been considered, in Chapter Six pp. 267-335, as a kind of escape from the poet’s reality of a hard life to an imaginative easy and wealthy one.
7 Chapter Five offers an extensive treatment of this preference for what is regarded as the ḫissī’ type of poetic images.
8 *Diwān*, v. II, p. 547.
Daybreak, on the other hand, is compared to the brightness of white cloth:

The quality of textile colour is also represented with plant-related images in which can be found two types of colour: the mixed colours of different plants that are compared to patterned clothing such as a patterned shirt, and plants of one colour that are compared to textiles that likewise consist only of one colour, such as sarcenet or cotton. Thus, in the springtime, and as a result of rain, the earth is patterned with different flowers and plants:

and the image of a pastoral landscape is compared to green cloth:

Images of old age and youth are also represented by the colour of textiles.

---

11 Diwān, v. II, p. 327:
12 Diwān, v. II, p. 189:
13 Diwān, v. II, p. 542:
Thus, the white head of an elderly person is compared to white material.\textsuperscript{16} Likewise, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also portrays texture through such imagery, as in the following description of the white, dishevelled hair of a slave girl called Qashshāsh, who is compared to uncarded cotton:

\begin{quote}
أبا طيبُ خُبَرَتُ أنَّكَ بعدنا
عجبُ كَانَ الشَّيبُ تحت قناعها
على الرأس، والأكتاف، قطنٌ منتَشٌرٌ.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

In images of youth, attention is paid to the states of newness and attractiveness, hence the poet speaks of the beautiful clothing of the beloved:

\begin{quote}
قلوبُ الناس، أسري في يده،
وثوبُ الجُسَّان، مَخلِّعٌ عليه.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

In other images the colour and the softness of a bird's body are compared to those of clothing. The breast, wings and feathers of hunting birds were attractive to Ibn al-Mu'tazz and breasts of different colours are compared to patterned clothing, wings with king's cloaks pallium\textsuperscript{19} and feathers to patterned shirts.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Diwān, v. III, p. 181:

\textsuperscript{17} Diwān, v. I, p. 675.

\textsuperscript{18} Diwān, v. I, p. 380.

\textsuperscript{19} Diwān, v. II, p. 428:

\textsuperscript{20} Diwān, v. II, p. 461:
Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses the constituent parts and condition of clothing to convey the shape and the movement of a number of things. Thread, for example, is used as a counter for the flow of milk\textsuperscript{21} or the tail of a hunting dog.\textsuperscript{22} Furthermore, the shape of a buttonhole and the movement of a buttonhole as it closes are respectively used to counter a gazelle's ear and the action of a gazelle feeding its baby.\textsuperscript{23} In other images the texture of raw cotton is a counter for the dust thrown up in battle\textsuperscript{24} and torn clothing is a counter for the poet's state when he has reached the age of fifty and his health is worsening from day to day.\textsuperscript{25}

Images describing wine and earth are created in a similar manner; a wine vat is compared to a particular kind of flax called \textit{rāziq}\textsuperscript{26} and a glass of wine is like a shirt, as in the following line in which the shirt is described as being made of saffron:

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 27.
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 281
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}
The function of clothing is also observed in images of abstract notions, such as glory and good deeds.

In his descriptions of male and female dress, Ibn al-Mu'tazz shows familiarity with the fashions of his time. Different types of ladies’ head coverings, body covers resembling gowns and different styles of dress (such as a garment of silk and an embellished, flax dress) are presented in his poetry. Male garments, such as the turban and cloak appear in a considerable number of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images but are used in a traditional manner without any novelty.

1-1-2- Jewels and Objects of Value.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz often praises attributes of people and things by describing them in terms of valuable jewels or items. Thus, the beauty and morals of the person being praised in the following example are said to be like pearls and ambergris:

---

28 For example:


Likewise, the position of the poet’s family in the bigger frame of its clan is like the position of the centre pearl in a necklace, and the writings of the vizier 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād are jewels:

إذا أخذ القرطاس خلت بمينه تفيح نورا أو تنظم جوهرا

Ibn al-Mu’tazz portrays wine and its associated features, such as its froth, glass, and the people who serve it, in terms of minerals and jewels. Different states of wine are regarded in different ways – pure, unadulterated wine is compared to flowing gold:

فأشرب عقارا كأنها قيس قد سبك الذهب تبرها فصقا

Here, the golden colour is the point of similarity in both extremes. When water is added to wine, froth appears and produces numerous counter images such as that in which wine with froth is deemed to be like gold, topped with pearls. Wine-froth is also compared to silver because of its white colour, specifically silver objects such as combs:

---

In addition, the wine glass is compared to jewellrey and the faces of people who serve the wine to gold dinār coins.\textsuperscript{35}

In descriptions of the beloved, the beloved’s physical attributes – face, teeth, tears and fingers – are given special attention by Ibn al-Mu'tazz and comparisons with different jewels such as pearls, ivory and jet are used to create images. Thus, when he mocks his beloved and she laughs in response, she shows her pearls:

\begin{quote}
	تبسم إذ مارحته فكانتة يكشف عن در حجاب زمرد
\end{quote}

The concept of the mutual brightness of pearls and teeth is more noticeable when the beloved is black:

\begin{quote}

ولكنها مكتومة آخر الشهور وتضحك عن در وتسبيك من حمر

36


35 About the glass the poet says:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 16.

and about the faces of wine-maids:


In addition to being a feature of teeth, brightness is also seen in the beloved's face, particularly the forehead:

\[
\text{ذو ظلما نظرت في عاج جبهته}^{38}
\]

On the other hand, dark qualities in the beloved are seen in terms of a black gem, namely jet. Thus, a black female in a group of women is said to resemble a doll made of jet:

\[
\text{وسوداء ذات دلال غيّر لها في الفواد هوى يختلي}^{39}
\]

\[
\text{إذا أبصرتها في الناس ترى ليّة خرّطت من سبج}^{39}
\]

As well as being compared to teeth (as described above) pearls are also compared to tears, which not only the beloved but also the poet himself produce, both in sorrow and happiness. In Ibn al-Mu'tazz's elegy for his uncle, Muhammad b. al-Mutawakkil, he describes himself as crying tears of sorrow:

\[
\text{ذكرت على بعد اللقاء محمدًا ففاضت دموعي كالجمان ألميدد}^{40}
\]

Likewise, he cries tears of joy when excited by the fact that his beloved is not upset with him any more: \(^{41}\)

---

\(^{38}\) Diwān, v. II, p. 245.  
\(^{39}\) Diwān, v. II, p. 530.  
\(^{40}\) Diwān, v. III, p. 35.  
\(^{41}\) Diwān, v. II, p. 598.
Hair is conveyed in the same way as the dark skin of the beloved and the poet's hair and that of his male and female beloveds are compared to jet. A male beloved, for example, who gets hair on his cheeks becomes old with jet:

فازّب زبّجح خدّ صار من سّنج، ونح وساعده كلّ بكّاءٍ  

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses a variety of minerals and jewels to describe different plants and flowers. Palm tree fruits are described in different stages of ripeness; the spadix with its cover is like a skiff of silver\(^4\) and when the fruit is ripe and ready to be eaten it is like gold.\(^4\) Other images he uses include the fig's skin as pure gold\(^4\) and bitter oranges as balls of gold.\(^4\) Moving on to his treatment of vegetables, in one poem a carrot is compared to a hand fan of sarcenete with an agate handle\(^4\) while a cucumber is a tube of emerald.\(^4\)

---

In his flower images, Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes both whole gardens and individual flowers. In the first case, as with the textile and clothing images, gardens are compared to jewels of various different colours:

In terms of individual flowers, the narcissus is a frequent subject and is compared to the gold and pearls of durra.\(^50\)

The hunter and his prey are also predominant subjects of imagery in this category, demonstrating the admiration Ibn al-Mu'tazz held for them. In his images describing the hunter, the focus is on the shape of organs such as the eye of the tiercel or the goshawk, which are compared to a gold dinar,\(^51\) or the leg of the tiercel, which is as a golden bough.\(^52\) The activity of hunting is one that is of great interest to the poet and he compares the tiercel, which is


\(^{49}\) The example for the first case is: Diwân, v. II, p. 602, and for the second:

\(^{50}\) Diwân, v. II, p. 588.

\(^{51}\) Diwân, v. II, p. 484, and

\(^{52}\) Diwân, v. II, p. 438.

good at extracting small bones from its prey, to a skilful jeweller carefully extracting pearls. A hunting dog holds its prey tightly and is unwilling to lose it, as if it is a pearl. In the same vein, the prey, such as the oryx and birds like sandgrouse, are mostly compared to pearl necklaces of pearls. Thus sandgrouse on the water of Tigris are depicted as a newly made necklace:

The last group of images in this sub-sub-category is that which describes stars such as the sun, moon and Pleiades. The concept of reflected or emanated light is the focus in these images, thus the sun with its strong light is as a gold dinār, while the star of Canopus (which emits less light) is a silver dirham. The first image is extended to a second form in which the streaks of the sun’s rays are compared to a group of golden coins (it is worth noting here that this image has been adopted by al-Mutanabbi in his famous poem

---

on Bawwān, the people and the place\textsuperscript{58}). As for the full moon and the Pleiades, they are described in ‘accompanied’ images, thus the shape and colour of the moon and the sky behind it is like a silver coin lying on a table covered in silk cloth:

والبدر في أفقي السماء كدرهم ملقى على ديباجة زرقاء\textsuperscript{59}

Furthermore, the Pleiades constellation in its place amongst the other stars of the night sky is like the central pearl in a bejewelled setting:

وأنجم الليل. مريضات الحدف تتنو التري حرفًا بعد حرفٍ

كأنها حين فرى الضحى وشقي واسِطة بين للأثر تألقت\textsuperscript{60}

However, the crescent moon is mainly described in nonaccompanied images; its shape is like a half bracelet of ivory:

وكان الهلال نصف سوار\textsuperscript{61}

or a scythe or shield of silver:

ومضَاحَنَا قمرٌ مشَرَقٌ كَهِرس اللَّجين. يُشِقٌ الدَّجَيٌ\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} He says:

\textsuperscript{59} Dīwān, v. II, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{60} Dīwān, v. II, p. 465.

\textsuperscript{61} Dīwān, v. II, p. 655.
1-1-3- Cosmetics and Personal Grooming.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz shows great admiration for perfumes and cosmetic equipment, and his knowledge of this field is notable. Two topics that are amongst his favourites, descriptions of parks and of beloved ones, are often conveyed with images relating to perfume. He mentions a number of perfumes in this context and musk is the one he seems to prefer (although a number of images refer to ambergris and camphor). The fragrance of musk is found in the beloved's mouth, on her cheek, and even on the messages she sends. When she speaks, she scatters the fragrance of musk and no one can persuade her to change her mind:

\[
\text{عَيْقَ الْكَلَامُ بِمَسِكَةٍ نَفْحَتُ منْ فِيهِ أُرْضَيُ مَنْ يُعَانِيَهُ}
\]

The scope of poetic creation here also covers the concept of colour, in terms of the black colour of musk, thus a black beauty spot on the beloved's cheek is a drop of musk:

\[
\text{غَيْرَوا عَارَضَةً بِالمَسِكِ فِي خَزَّ أَسِيلُ}
\]

Furthermore, a black slave girl is compared to a piece of musk:

\[
\text{غَيْرَوا عَارَضَةً بِالمَسِكِ فِي خَزَّ أَسِيلُ}
\]

---

64 Diwān, v. II, p. 207.
The sensitivity of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s similes can also be dearly seen in images conveying the fragrance of plants carried by the wind:

Another example of his extension of the simile of perfume to appropriate other sensory attributes, i.e. colour and taste, can be found in the way that wine is sometimes described as being mixed with musk, from which it derives its yellow colour and musky taste.

In Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s metaphorical use of cosmetic image sources, he often uses reference to face-cream and incense: the cream of Wars is used to counter the light of sun and the yellow of mixed wine; the incense of aloe wood is used to convey both emotional state and physical form – a smiling appeal is like the smile of aloe wood, the shape of a cloud resembles the shape of the incense, kohl is used to counter of black things such as night or the breast.

---

68 Two lines can be given as examples:
69 As in the following images;
of the goshawk,\textsuperscript{70} and the horns of wild cows are compared to eye pencils.\textsuperscript{71}

On occasion, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also refers to other cosmetic equipment, such as mirrors, combs, scissors and straight razor. Of these, the mirror and the comb occur most frequently in his images. At a simple level, images featuring cosmetic equipment focus on the shape or condition of the thing being described, thus the tired face of a military leader is compared to an uncleaned mirror:

\begin{quote}
لبيسَ الشِّجْحوبُ منَ الْطَّهَارِ وَجهةٍ فَكَّاهُ مَأْوِيّةً لَمْ تُصَفَّ.
\end{quote}

However, other images focuses on the mirror's function and its ability to reflect an unchanged image. Hence, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's memory of his beloved is a mirror in which he will see his own face (that is to say, in which he will discover the truth):

\begin{quote}
ليَ مِنْ ذَكَرَاءِ مَرَأَةٍ أَرِى وَجهَيَّ فِيهَا.
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{70} Diwān, v. II, p. 595, and;
\textsuperscript{71} Diwān, v. II, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{72} Diwān, v. II, p. 644.
\textsuperscript{73} Diwān, v. II, p. 469.
\textsuperscript{74} Diwān, v. I, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{75} Diwān, v. I, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{76} Diwān, v. II, p. 370.
\end{flushleft}
The shape of the comb is likewise the counter of some concrete and abstract notions. For example, the ears of hunting dogs resemble pieces of a comb:

آذانها كقطع الشام.

While the emotional separation he feels between himself and his relatives is described in terms of a comb which has lost some of its teeth:

قريبون متى لا تلامس بيننا ونحن نتوهم كما انفرج المشط.

1-2- Accommodation.

Images related to accommodation fall into three groups: 1) ‘housing’, 2) ‘household equipment’ and 3) ‘food and drink’.

1-2-1- Housing.

In this group of images can be classed different types of housing, such as the house, the tent, the castle and some religious buildings. Other images concentrate on specific parts of the house, such as doors, keys, etc. The word ‘house’ is often repeated and is used to convey a number of negative concepts such as death, worry, sorrow and evil; times such as night and morning; human organs such as the heart, and some positive concepts like

---

knowledge and religion. Death, for example, in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's hands becomes a house with an open door:

كيفاً البقاءُ والموتُ مُفتقَحُ وليس يُغلَقُ حتى يَندفَع البشرٌ

Traditionally, the image of the tent is linked with the counter of the cloud, and Ibn al-Mu'tazz indeed uses this image in his *Diwan*.

Likewise, he also uses a traditional image in which a curtain is used to counter the wine-jar.

Other tent images used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz include the description of mounds of figs as resembling a red silk tent, and the comparison of tent pegs to swords and mountains. Allowing for a degree of indulgence, images describing graves, which are used to convey the negative feelings of a deserted camp, can also be classed in this category. In other images, transport animals such as horses and camels are compared to a monastery or castle. In addition, some abstract conceptions such as good deeds and hope are also compared by Ibn al-Mu'tazz to castles.

---

76 *Diwan*, v. III, p. 163.
78 *Diwan*, v. II, p. 141.
79 *Diwan*, v. II, p. 596.
81 The following example describes a horse:
82 The following lines are examples of good deeds and hope respectively;
It can be argued that Ibn al-Mu’tazz spent most of his life in poor housing conditions and that the relative frequency of 'house images' with negative connotations in his poetry can be understood in terms of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s own experiences. His hatred for houses can be seen, for example, in his satire of the house he bought from al-Numayriyya, and is an attitude which can be seen again in the following line:

```
یَطْنِها الشَّيْعَةُ بابَ الهدى وَخِلفَ ذَاكَ البابِ بِرَبِّهَا
```

Images of the house key are used in regard to its function as an opening device or a means of obtaining power; thanking God is the key by which one opens the door to more of His kindness, while the hand of the minister, Yaḥyā b. ʿUbayd Allāh, is the key to the power of granting victory:

```
وَيَمَّانِكَ مِفتاحُ العِلْمِ وما حِنَتْ على قَلمِ إِلَّا لِكَشْفِ هَمْوَهُ
```

On a slightly different note, path related images counter a number of abstract notions such as glory, rightness, hope, patience and amusement. Glory, for example, has a path on which the poet’s ancestors have walked:

```
وقولي هوى عرشُ المَكَارِمِ والْفَلَقَى وَعُمُّلْ مِيزانَ مَنَ الْعِلْمِ راجِحَ
أَرْمَانُ أَبْلُغُ فِي المُنْيَ أَفْقَارَهَا مَرَحاً وَنِيِّها
فَأَحْمَدَ اللَّهُ فَانَ الحَمْدُ مِفتاحُ الْهُدَى
```

---

Dīwān, v. I, p. 87, and;

64

On the other hand, from a more pessimistic viewpoint, the poet sees the way that leads to his will is closed:

ومَحَقَّ الخَلَفَ وَعَدَّ كَتَّ أَرْقَّةٍ وَسَدَّ يَأْسِيَ عَلَى آمَالِ الْطُّرُقَ

1-2-2- Household Equipment.

Images from this category are found in two groups: those found in general household use, such as ropes and basins, and those which are used specifically in the kitchen. In these images Ibn al-Mu'tazz focuses first on shape, and secondly on function. Thus, the length of a rope is described as similar to the root of a large tree, a path, a snake, a spear and continuously falling tears. Sometimes, the shape of the rope is found in more than just its

---

88 The following are examples for a *dawāf* tree;  
Diwan, v. II, p. 381,  
a path;  
Diwan, v. II, p. 385,  
a snack;  
Diwan, v. II, p. 328,  
a spear;  
Diwan, v. I, p. 185,  
tears;  
length. Thus, in one image in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz draws on not only the shape of the rope, but also the function of it in tying things together tightly, the claws of a falcon holding its prey are compared to a knotted rope:

\[
\text{وإن طار أعطى كفّة ما بعينه وقصّر زمّ عنها ما يشاء على بعذ.}
\text{فصّم مُخالبًا عليه كانّها شصوص حبال قد جمع بعّند إلى عقّد.}^{89}
\]

The focus on the rope’s function can also be found in those images which present relationships between people, as in the relationship between two lovers, and some abstract notions such as death. For example, when the poet’s beloved cuts the rope between them, it means that their relationship as lovers has been cut:

\[
\text{شّرعة قطعت حبالك منّها لم يدم وذّها كما قد عهديت.}^{90}
\]

Furthermore, hope becomes as a long rope, in the sense that people hold onto hope in the same way they hold onto a rope:

\[
\text{طول حبل الأمل المجرور في ظل عيش غافل غريب.}^{91}
\]

In some images which focus, mostly, on shape, the rope is connected with a bucket. The concept of speed is well represented in these images which

---

91 Diwān, v. II, p. 444.
describe the long leg of a camel and its hoof, the leg and talons of a falcon and the leg and paw of a hunting dog.\textsuperscript{92}

Images of basins initially seem to reflect some rather sad feelings in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, for example, night and sunset have a basin:

\begin{quote}
حوضَ الغروبِ فَعبّ شارِيّةٌ
\end{quote}

However, on closer examination one discovers that the focus in such images is on the external attributes only, and no attention is paid to the description of negative internalised feelings.

Moving on to discuss kitchen equipment, it can be seen that the focus in these images is again on shape and function. The quern is the most repeated counter and the sound of thunder, for example, is described as being like that of a quern.\textsuperscript{94} In addition, the heavy movement of a camel's hoof is compared

\begin{itemize}
\item camel's hoof: \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 182,
\item falcon's talons: \textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 463,
\item hunting dog's legs: \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 53.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{92} As in the following examples:


\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Diwan}, v. I, p. 11.
to the heaviness of a quern when it is moved from one place to another.\textsuperscript{95} Life, which crushes people with its difficulties, and death, which harvests all souls, are likewise compared to querns.\textsuperscript{96} However, the frequency with which Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses the quern in his imagery might be a result of its common presence in Arabic poetry in general, rather than reflecting any specific usage on his part.

Carpets and coverings are used to convey concepts of shape and function, thus a multi-coloured group of plants, a river, and even the noses of those criticised in his poetry are compared to rugs.\textsuperscript{97} Night and daybreak are described as covers:

\begin{quote}
والليل قد رعى من سطوره.\textsuperscript{98}
\end{quote}

Other tools are used to convey the different shapes of different things, for example the physical attributes of animals. Thus, a horse's hoof is a cubic

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 297.
\textsuperscript{96} As in the following examples:
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 171,
  \item \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 48.
\end{itemize}
\textsuperscript{97} As in the following examples:
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 570, plants;
  \item \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 261, river;
  \item \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 668.
\end{itemize}
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 539.
measurement and the hoof of a camel is as a basket.\textsuperscript{99} The most interesting images which can be categorised in this section are those pertaining to the bottle and the lamp, in which the point of similarity is in the shape and brightness of the object and its image. For example, the Pleiades constellation is compared to a bottle of mercury:

\[ \text{كَانَ الْشَّيْبَيْنَ مُرِيَّةٌ قُوَّةٌ نَافِقَاً} \]
\[ \text{يَحْبَسُ بِهَا حَادِّ الْعَرْقُ مُرْعِيَّةٌ} \]
\[ \text{إِذَا عَارَضَّهَا الْعِينُ خَالِتُ نَجُومَهَا} \]
\[ \text{قُوَّارِيرُ فِيهَا زَنِيدٌ يُتَرْجِحُ} \textsuperscript{100} \]

In adding the mercury element to the vehicle, a third quality has here been added to the descriptions of shape and brightness: this quality is that of movement, which is presented in both tenor and vehicle. In addition, the brightness of the moon, and that of old men's hair are compared to a lamp, as in the following line:

\[ \text{وَاشْتَغِلَّ شَبِيبٌ مَّصَاحِبُ} \]
\[ \text{وَلَسْتَ الْرِّشَيدُ فِيما تَرَى} \textsuperscript{101} \]

The connection between lightning and white or burnt hair, can be traced back to a well known Qur'anic verse, Q.19:4:

\textsuperscript{102} واشْتَغِلَّ الرَّأسِ شَبِيبٌ

\textsuperscript{99} As in the following:


\textsuperscript{100} Diwān, v. II, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{101} Diwān, v. III, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{102} As in the following:
which can be translated as ‘...and my head is all-aflame with hoariness’.

1-3- Food and Drink.

It is well known that a poet draws his images from things he or she knows best. For Ibn al-Mu'tazz this is true with regard to the dominance of images that belong to 'wine' – its taste, effect and shape in its glass or container. Although this group of images is the smallest in this section (images relating to wine are repeated 55 times) they reflect this poet’s positive attitude towards wine. For example, in the context of love, the taste of the beloved’s saliva is compared to the taste of wine:

قَهْرَتْ الْرَّاءَ صرْفًا١۰۴ من ثنايا كالأفاحي

while the effect of the beloved’s gaze is compared to the effect of wine as both cause intoxication:

سَفَانِي خَمَرًا مِن يَدَيْه وَرَفَقُه وأَسْكَرْنِي سَكْرَتْنِي مِن دُون جَلَاثٍ١۰۵

The action of mixing water with wine is used to convey the poet’s desire to mix his soul and body with those of his beloved ones:

١۰٥ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 158.
This interaction between love and wine is not a device of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's invention, but was formulated by Abû Nuwas's in his love poems and is a widely used convention in 'Abbasid poetry. However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's personal touch can be seen in the particular attention he pays to the colour of wine and the shape of the various wine containers he mentions. For example, the redness of wine is the counter of the colour of a horse named suhayla mentioned in one of his poems and, in a more sarcastic manner, of a handsome prince's cheeks in another,\(^\text{107}\) while the white dots on a goshawk's feathers in a third are like froth.\(^\text{108}\) Indeed, his focus on the external attributes in some of these images results in a loss of harmony between their two extremes. The following line, in which the tenor is a person who is falling down and the vehicle is a wineskin, is a good example of this:

\[
\text{کمّ ضرّع مّا يّصّبح وّيغّوي مثلّ رّقّ بينّ النّدامى طّريح.}\]

\(^{106}\) Diwân, v. I, p. 263.
\(^{107}\) As in the following examples:

Diwân, v. I, p. 72,
the prince's cheeks;


While the tenor here reflects the pain of a person who has been stung by hornets, the vehicle reflects a rather happy feeling that is evoked from the image of the wineskin.

Very few of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images reflect the negative effects of wine or excessive drinking, however reference to these can be found in images such as those in which death is compared to wine.\textsuperscript{110} Other liquids that are mentioned in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry are water, milk and honey, and all are again used in a traditional way; for example, good manners are described as being as sweet as water, and health is a water that cleans away the dirt of illness.\textsuperscript{111}

Food-related images, on the other hand, convey experiences in life and with people. The harsh aspects of life, bad people, illness and death are bad in taste, while good friends are like good food. People's reactions towards life are different depending on their wisdom – as the poet puts it:

\begin{quote}
وحلاوة الدنيا لجاهلها ومرارة الدنيا لم عنّا
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} For example:
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Divān}, v. I, p. 63.
\end{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} As in the following examples:
\begin{itemize}
\item good manners;
\item \textit{Divān}, v. II, p. 386-7, and health and illness;
\item \textit{Divān}, v. I, p. 409.
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz does not forget his love of shape in these images either. Hence, the hairy face of an ugly woman is depicted as being like a big round loaf of bread which is full of black cumin:

\[
\text{وَخْدَهُ مُشْوَكُ مَزْوَرُ الْتَزْوِيرُ}
\]

\[
\text{كَأْثَآ قَرْنِيُّ كَثْيَرُ الْشَّوْرِ}^{112}
\]

and the image of the sweat on a horse's body is expressed by comparison to grains of salt:

\[
\text{وَكَأْنَ الْرَكْضَ دَرُّ عَلَيْهَا سَبْعَاً مِنَ مَايِهِ مِلَاحاً}^{113}
\]

1-4- Equipment of War and Handcrafts.

1-4-1- Equipment of War.

Images relating to equipment of war are frequently used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz and number 237 in total. However, they do not reflect any particular knowledge of the experience of war on the part of the poet, but concentrate mostly on the equipment itself, for example swords, spears, and arrows, without giving attention to the other important aspects of war; feelings and consequences. The main features that Ibn al-Mu'tazz focuses on are again the appearance, shape and power of the equipment, as can be seen through their use in three groups of images: those applied to animal and natural

\[^{112} \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 668.} \]
\[^{113} \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 421.} \]
phenomena, people, wine and women. The former two groups can be seen as representing nature, while the latter addresses ideas and pleasure.

To deal first with the 'natural phenomena' category; in describing hunting creatures such as dogs, and in birds, such as the goshawk and sparrow hawk, the poet focuses on their shape and speed. Thus, the speed of a hunting dog when leaping to hunt its prey is as a speeding arrow:

وقدت لِحَتْفِهِ الْصِّيدِ غُضَفَ ٌ كَأَلْبَسْبُ " كَمْثَلُ قِدْحِ الْبَارِيَاتِ * تَتَحَافُثُ "

The sparrow hawk is also described as having the speed of an arrow:

لا يَتَقَبَّيْ هَارَبُ بِفُوْتٍ سَهْمٌ مُصَبٌّ كَلْمَا رَمَتُ

The appearance and power of hunting animals are also described in the terminology of war equipment, for example a hunting dog's tongue and a goshawk's beak are compared to daggers. Furthermore, in accordance with traditional custom, the physical attributes of camels, such as the hoof and neck, are described as being like swords. The shiny nature of some military

116 As in the following example:

117 As follows:

Diwān, v. II, p. 147,
equipment (for example swords) is also used to counter some similarly shiny natural phenomena such as water, morning, lightning and the sun. For example:

The second group in this context consists of images of people and ideas. The poet himself, the Caliph al-Mu'tadid, the Minister 'Ubayd Allāh and other warriors are swords in sharpness and effect. Some human organs like the tongue and heart are embodied in the same way. In addition to drawing on the physical strength of war equipment, he also refers to its quality of sharpness. Thus, in describing himself, the youthful straightness of the poet is compared to the straightness of a spear:

��مان مثل القناة من الخط وخدي من يحيتي مكنوس

متراني مثل المنيقة قد أَخْضَلْهَا عند صفيها ترديت

فان الله قد سال حسماً راسب المضرب

ممستهواً قبل الخطوب يعده... والسيف يشذب قبل حين ضرائه

ويا ربي السنج كالسبي في نقطت أُعناك أصحابها

ورأى قليبي كالحسام الفاصل. مهذب يرسب في المفاصل

119 For example: Ibn al-Mu'tazz;

Divan, v. I, p. 79, al-Mu'tadid;

Divan, v. I, p. 396, 'Ubayd Allāh;

120 For example: the tongue;

Divan, v. I, p. 18, the heart;

121 Divan, v. II, p. 158.
while, on the other hand, the curve of an old man's back is similar to the curved shape of a bow:

فواعمِ مثلُ القناةِ منَ الحَقْقَ وَلَهُ منْ لِحْيَتِهِ مَكْنُوسٌ 122

Positive concepts, such as resolution, and negative ones, such as death, are also embodied in devices of war in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery. In his opinion, the most important quality for any minister to have is resolution in governing his administration and the ability to give the right advice to the caliph. Ibn al-Mu'tazz concentrates on this quality in poems in which he eulogises some of the successful ministers of his time, such as 'Ubayd Allah b. Sulaymān whose resolution is a result of careful thought:

وَرَأَيَتْهُ شَهِيدًاٌ إِنَّ وَجْدَ الْحَزَمَ لَمْ يَنْتَظِرْ
وَيْبَزَرْ كَأَنَّهُ بَعْضُ سَوَاهِلِ
وَيُرَكَّزُ تَحْتَ سَوَاهِلِ
وَيَضُلُّهُ مِنْ صَدَأٍ سَبِيلَةٍ كَصِفَ الْقَيْسُالْ حِيَامَ الدُّكَر١٢٤

Other, negative, notions such as death and the problems of time are also embodied in terms of war devices to show their power upon man. Death's

122 Diwān, v. II, p. 158.
arrows, for example, will strike everyone:

لايَّ غايانيَّ أجري بعدما رأيتُ أترايٍّ وقد صاروا تربٍّ
كناطرُ إلى سهامٍ ضارِعٍ قال عساها إن أشنتي لم تصبُ
فاتَّظِمَتْ منه فؤاداً عافِلاً عمّا جَناهُ عافِلاً عن الثُّوب١²⁵

Pleasure-related images make up the last group in this section and consist mainly of images depicting love and wine. Love is considered here as pleasure because it does not reflect a deeply truthful relationship, but rather a kind of enjoyment obtained from describing a woman's body. The eye gets special attention from the poet in terms of the effect of the eye itself, the activity of sight and the eyelid, which are all portrayed in a powerful way. For example, the beloved's eye wounds the poet:

وَخَرِجَ أحسائي بعينَ مَريضةٍ كما لان متين السَّيف والسيف قاطعٌ١²⁶

and the eyelid becomes as arrows:

الآرَبّ يوم بالدوّرة صالحة فكيف يوم بعدةً في فاسدٍ
ظلمت بها أسقى سلاقة قهوةٌ بكفّ عرائطّ ذي جفونٍ صواندٌ١²⁷

In descriptions of other features such as the cheeks and the neck, the focus is

---

on appearance. Thus, the cheeks of his beloved Shurayra are compared to a sword made in India in their brightness:

\[\text{فَظَلِينَ بِيَهَاءِ الْخُدُودِ كَأَنَّا} \text{صفحاتٌ هنديّ كُسيّنّ} \text{صِقاَلاً}^{128}\]

As mentioned above, wine is also seen in terms of war equipment. Its froth is compared to woven armour:

\[\text{مَثلُ نُسْجُ الْدُّروِّعَ أو مَثلُ وَأْوَ} \text{تُدَانِتُ سَطُورُّهَا} \text{في كتابٍ}^{129}\]

However, the notion of the strength of wine is presented in an unappealing fashion, perhaps to convey the bad effects it can have on the consumer:

\[\text{وَطَافَ بِهَا سَاقٌ أَدْبِبٌ يَمِيزُ} \text{كِنْجَرٌ عِيْنُ صَنَاعَتِهِ الْمَكْتُُ}^{130}\]

Furthermore, in a slightly horrifying way, wine is connected to blood and the iron ladle with which it is served to a dagger.

In the above, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attitude towards wine and women has merely been touched on. However, a detailed investigation into the reasons behind this poet's attitude to these subjects is an area of his work that would be of benefit to academia.

\[128 \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 701.} \]
\[129 \text{Diwān, v. II, p. 43.} \]
\[130 \text{Diwān, v. II, p. 193.} \]
Images relating to handcrafts do not reflect any specific knowledge of this field on the part of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, but deal generally with craft tools and activities. However, as is typical of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, he shows his love of observing shape and external attributes in these images; thus a cock's crest, a hunting dog's teeth and al-Numayrî's mistress are all described as being like a saw. In these images again shape is sometimes combined with function, thus the beak of a water bird and the tongue of a hunting dog are both compared to a hoe. A hammer is also seen in terms of shape and action when compared to the concrete image of a falcon landing on a stone and destroying it and with the abstract notion of the powerful effect of proof. In some images, the function of some tools is of interest – the action of a bull
scrubbing boughs with its horn is thus described as being like that of drilling a hole in a shoe:

\[
\text{يَحْكَّلُ الْغَصُونَ المُورَقَاتُ بِرَوْقِهِ كَخَصْفَ الْبَلَّاسِفِ نِعَالًا مَخْصُرًا.}^{134}
\]

and pulling out white hairs is compared to the result of drilling with a file.

\[\text{للنَّفْرِ فِيْهِ أَثْرٌ كَأَثْرِ التَخْرِيزِ.}^{135}\]

Another aspect of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's concentration on form is his focus on colour, as in the example of the darkness of night, which is described as pitch black.\(^{136}\) In some images, he maximises the scope of his image to include the whole picture of both the tenor and the vehicle, as in the case of images involving ships. In the following example, the evacuation of a campsite is compared to a ship being shaken by waves:

\[\text{بَا صَاحُ كِيفَ تَرَى طَنْحًا مَقْرِبَةً كَسَفْقٌ مَوْجُ تَهَادَى تَمَّ تَفْترُقُ.}^{137}\]

while sunset is an anchorage:

\[\text{وَعَجَتَ الْشَمْسُ تَرَسَّوَ في مَفَارِيقِهَا عَلَى طَرِيقٍ كَخَطِّ الفَرَقُ فِي الرَّاسُ، أَس.}^{138}\]

\(^{135}\) Diwan, v. I, p. 668.  
\(^{136}\) Diwan, v. II, p. 129.  
2- Nature.

Images in this category can be sub-divided into four main sub-categories: 1) 'the sun and other stars', 2) 'fire', 3) 'plants' and 4) 'sources of water and types of land'. Before moving on to discuss these, it is necessary to mention the following distinction made by Levi-Strauss between two types of water and fire – creative and destructive:

"I have on several occasions more or less explicitly accepted the fact that in the mythological thought of South America there are two distinct kinds of water: creative water of celestial origin and destructive water of terrestrial origin. Similarly, there seem to be two kinds of fire: one celestial and destructive, the other terrestrial and creative, that is, fire for cooking purpose." 139

Since the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz does not make a clear distinction between these, such a categorisation will not be made here.

2-1- The Sun and Stars.

The sun, moon and stars are used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz to demonstrate three things: the state of clarity and shininess, the state of being lofty and

important and the concept of speed. In general, the images in this sub­
category do not reflect a good knowledge of astronomy. One of the very few
examples in which the poet does show some signs of specific astronomical
knowledge is the image in which he compares his character to that of Jupiter:

\[ \text{طَبِيعِيَ كَطْبِيعُ الْمَشْتَرِيَ ما فِيهِ مِنَ} \]

Wine and women make up the majority of the images that focus on the state
of clarity and shining. For example, the brightness of wine is compared to the
light of the sun:

\[ \text{هَيْتُ اِلْحَلْيَةُ وَالْلَّيْلُ مُمْتَكِرُ} \]

and the appearance of a woman’s face is described as being like the
appearance of the sun or the moon. In the case of moon images, when the
woman’s age is not specified Ibn al-Mu’tazz will use the word moon \( qamar \).
However, in many cases he qualifies this image and the younger woman is
described as a crescent, \( hilāl \), and the older as a full moon, \( badr \). This can be
seen in the following lines in which the poet describes his beloved at the age
of ten and later in life, at the age of fourteen:

\[ \text{غَيْضُنَ بِهِتْرُ تَحْرَتَ هَلَالَ} \]

\[ \text{لَمْ يُرِزَ نَوْعُهُ بَلْ نُورٌ عَشَرُ} \]

\[ ^{140} \text{Diwān, v. II, p. 597.} \]

\[ ^{141} \text{Diwān, v. II, p. 82.} \]
Ibn al-Mu'tazz's fondness for contrasting positive, bright colours, human attributes, concrete ideas and abstract themes against darker, more negative ones can be addressed at this point. To give just two examples, the brightness of the beloved’s face against the darkness of her hair and the contrast between the dark wine jar and light, translucent wine are frequently mentioned.\textsuperscript{143} Other themes like war, riding animals etc. are compared to night and daybreak. The darkness of the dust raised in war, for instance, is contrasted with the light reflected by equipment such as swords:

\begin{quote}
صبح بسل البيض في ظلمٍ الدُجَّى وليل غريب في النهار طويل
\end{quote}

In imagery describing himself and his relatives, Ibn al-Mu'tazz depicts them as being as lofty as the sun and stars. The moon is also usually used to convey a state of lofty importance, as in the following line:

\begin{quote}
واسسَ المَلَكَ مِنَا كَلٌّ خَرَقَ كَمِثلٍ اليدر أشرق في الظلام
\end{quote}

As an extension of this image, the poet formulates an image of ‘sick stars’ to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{142} Diwān, v. I, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{143} As in the following two examples:
Diwān, v. I, p. 250,
\textsuperscript{144} Diwān, v. I, p. 490.
\textsuperscript{145} Diwān, v. I, p. 169.
\end{flushright}
counter the condition of his own, and the enemies of his relatives. Some ministers like ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Sulaymān and his son al-Qāsim are also compared to the moon.

The speed of hunting animals in particular and other animals in general, as well as a number of different topics and abstracts, are dealt with in terms of the sun and stars. Thus the fast speed of a hunting dog is compared to that of a falling star:

Likewise, the poet focuses on speed in other images of a hunting bird, the tiercel, and fast horses and camels. Wine-related images are another field where comparison is made to the speed of stars, so that the twinkling nature

---

146 He says:

\[
\text{إذا ما اجتمعنا في النديّ تضامًا كما خفيتُ مرضى الكواكب في الفجر}
\]

*Diwān*, v. I, p. 95.

147 As in the following two examples:

\[
\text{يا أَلْ وَهْبَ ابْنُ بَقِرَةَ سَمَّيُكمُ}
\]


\[
\text{بِدا قَمْرُ أَوْ قَاسِمُ هُوَ مَقْبَلُ}
\]


149 An example is given for each case:

hunting bird:

\[
\text{يراَ ئَيُّ رِكَّزَكَ في جَوْهَ السَّمَاءِ رَكَّزَكَ}
\]


the horse:

\[
\text{هذا تَفَافٌ يَقْبَضُنَّ نَقْصًا}
\]


and the camel:

\[
\text{كَأْسَ الشَّهَابُ وَمَيَّزُقُ الأَعْيَاضَ}
\]

of froth is like the intermittent twinkling of stars:

\[ 
\text{كانَ في الرَّاحَ حينُ تمُرُّجُها نجومٌ رحمٌ تعلو وتنخفض.} 
\]

Finally, the speed of time as an abstract theme is also compared to the speed of falling stars:

\[ 
\text{وكَانَ كَمِصَابَ السَّمَاء شرِيْتُها} \quad \text{علىُ قُبْلَهٍ أو مَوَعِّدٍ بَلَقَاءٍ} \\
\text{تَساَقُطُ نُورُ منْ تَقُوبُ سَمَاءٍ} 
\]

2-2- Fire.

Fire is the second topic in the 'nature category'. It is used as a counter for the attributes of man, wine, natural elements, war and other themes. In some poems where Ibn al-Mu’tazz praises the essential mind processes of people of wise opinion, their decision making process is compared to the process of fire testing different metals to discover which is the best. Al-Mu’tadid, for example, is praised as follows:

\[ 
\text{وَتَرَاهُ فِي لِيْلٍ السَّرُّى وَكَانَتَهُ بَارً يُقَلَّبُ طَرْقَةُ وَدَيْرُهُ} 
\]

Some negative feelings, such as being worried or being in love, are portrayed

---

as being as painful as being burnt by fire. Worries are fire and they have
flames that burn the heart of the poet:

\[
\text{تَقَسَّمَتْنِي هَمُومُ بَنَّ وَالْجَهَّةُ طَارَتْ عَلَى الْقُلْبِ مِنُ نِيرَاتِهَا شَرٌّ}
\]

In a love affair, the heart of the poet is also burnt:

\[
\text{يَا نَاظِرًا أَوَّدُ قَلْبِي الهَوْى كَوْيَتُ بِالسَّدَّ الحَشَا فَانَكَوْي}
\]

This fiery attitude towards love is perhaps is the cause of his comparison of
the cheeks of the beloved to fire and flames:

\[
\text{بُوْجَنَّةٌ كَأَنَا يَقِدُحُ مِنْهَا الشَّرْرٌ}
\]

The danger of enmity inside the royal family, in particular, is like a rampaging
fire which destroys everything in its way. Thus, in one poem, Ibn al-Mu'tazz
directs his speech at al-'Alawyyin, asking them not to light 'the fire of enmity'
between their families and his:

\[
\text{فَلَا تَلْهَبَوا نَارَ الْعَداوةُ بَينَانَا فَلِيسَ سَوَاكُمُ فَيْنَقِيرِشَ صَدِيقٌ}
\]

Wine is also like fire in its colour and strong effects. It is red just like fire:

---

154 *Diwān*, v. I, p. 211.
In this context, two things in wine attracted Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attention. First, its brightness in the dark of night stands out like the light of fire in the night:

Secondly, lightning, night and daybreak and summer are dealt with in terms of the radiation of light and heat of fire. Thus, the bright flash of lightning is compared to fire:

However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz often likes to add the element of cloud to this image. Lightning thus appears through the cloud just like fire and smoke:

His admiration for contrasting opposite colours appears in images of night and daybreak in which they are compared to carbon and fire.161 The heat of the

---

159 Diwān, v. II, p. 298.
161 As in the following example:
summer season is also represented in rather a fiery manner. In one case, the poet expresses his dislike for the fiery heat of September and his longing for August:

\[\text{فُرِحَّنا أَيْلَوْلُ في نَارِهِ} \quad 163\]

War-related images convey the power to destroy like fire. War is fire and likewise its weapons.\(^\text{164}\) However, images of horses are of an interesting nature. They reflect the technique of contrasting opposite colours that has been noticed in several places in this investigation, and can be seen again in the following example:

\[\text{مَنْ لِحْيَلَ، حُبْبَتْ تَحْتَ نَقْعٍ} \quad 165\]

The focus on the shining nature of fire can be seen lastly in images of plants and flowers. Carrots, bitter oranges, blossoms and nilupher are like fire and the form and radiant luminosity of the narcissus on its stalk is like a lit match:

\[\text{كَأَنَّهُ وَضَفَافُ القَضْبُ، تَحْمِلُهُ} \quad 166\]

\[\text{أَوَلِ الْبَارِ في أَطْرَافِ كِرِّيْتُ} \quad 166\]

\[\text{فَدْخُمُ زَادَ الْحَรِبَ، فَأَوْلَى مَرَةً.} \quad 166\]

Let us commute between a ripe pool.

---

166 \textit{Divān}, v. III, p. 68.
166 \textit{Divān}, v. II, p. 528.
Plants represented in this section include those that produce fruit and those that produce flowers. Their cyclical life, productive nature and external form are the focus of images depicting human beings, animals, stars, wine and so on.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes his tribe as a big tree with roots sinking deep into the earth and branches connected strongly to the trunk. The name of the tree is Quraysh and the poet's family is one of its branches:

Life, death and other human attributes and feelings are also dealt with in terms of plants. Thus, people in an early stage of life are like seeds168 and they die like falling leaves,169 while a person with good morals is compared to basil.170 Some positive and negative abstract notions are depicted as products of plants and flowers; hope is compared to fruit and injustice to a useless product. Hence, the poet speaks about the 'rose of hope' and 'fruit of

---

168 As in the following example:

سكتك يا دنيا برغمي مكرها
و ما كان لي في ذلك صنع ولا أمر
و ما فيلك من عودي غراس ولا بدر
فان ارتحل يوماً ادعلم ذميمة

169 As in the following example:

(كَلَّ يُومَ كَأَنِّهُمْ وَ كَأَنِّي وَرَقُّ هَرَ وَعُودُ مَهْدُونُ)

170 As the poet describes himself:

tyranny’. Love is also depicted through the action of planting, and the action of hugging between lovers is like two branches crossing each other. The figure of a woman and a branch are the same since both are soft/mild and the female body is broken down into different parts illustrated by images drawing on various fruits and flowers; breasts are pomegranates, fingers are jujubes, cheeks are roses or apples and so on. The complete beauty of the face of the beloved is like a garden containing different fruit:

It is interesting to see the Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s interest in palm trees in particular in those images that relate to camels and horses. Palm tree imagery provides him with numerous shapes and conditions, both in terms of the whole tree and its various parts. The parts referred to most intensively are the trunk, fronds and spadix. Thus, camels in a row at the departure of the beloved are like a row of date trees:

\[
\text{إنا في وجهة بستان حسن، مباح للعيون، بلا مساس.}
\]

As follows:

\[\text{Dīwān, v. I, p. 644,}\]

\[\text{Dīwān, v. I, p. 187.}\]

As in the following example:

\[\text{Dīwān, v. I, p. 318.}\]

\[\text{Dīwān, v. II, p. 162.}\]

\[\text{Dīwān, v. I, p. 175.}\]
while the neck of a horse resembles the trunk, the horse’s mane is like the fronds\textsuperscript{176} and the blaze on its forehead surrounded by the forelock and mane are like a spadix appearing between the fronds’ parts:

و لها غرة و ناصية تنشق عنها كطلعة بين خوص.\textsuperscript{177}

Tender fruit is used in two ways: a complete shape and one that is cut into parts. The parts of the young fruit are used as the counter for the ears of animals like rabbits, hunting dogs and wild donkeys. Here, an image describing a rabbit’s ears will be given as an example. Its ears, which are destroyed by the attack of a hunting dog, are like a young fruit that has been cut into pieces:

يَشْقِيَّ أذانَ الأرَانِب صُغُّها كما صَعِّت أَنصَافَ الكُوَافِر خَارِفٌ.\textsuperscript{181}

These variations of palm trees images, and their novelty, may indicate the central role of this tree in this poet’s creative imagination.

The shape and colour of different flowers are also used as a counter for

\textsuperscript{176} As in the following line:


\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 453.

\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 463.
animals and birds. For example, the colour of a good horse is like the colour of a rose:

ولقد وطنت الغُبْت يحملُني طرف كلون الورد حين وقُد

Particular attention is given to the eye, so that the eye of a hunting bird is like a narcissus that has no leaves:

ومقَة تصدْعه إذا زُمَّ، كَأَنَّها نَرجُسُهُ بِلا وَرْق

Flowers are also used to convey the shape of stars in general, and the Pleiades in particular, and the shape of the wine froth. Thus, the Pleiades appear to a night traveller to be like water lilies:

وقد لاحت لساريها الثْرَيا، كَأَنَّ تجومها نور الأفاحي

and the circular shape and bright colour of wine in a glass is like a basil plant in bloom:

إذا شَجَّها فِرَعٌ المِزَاج، تَعْمَمْتُ بِأَزِبادِها كَالأَفْحَاح، المُنوُر

2-4- Water and Land.

Different types of sources of water such as the sea, rain, the wadi and the well convey three main characteristics: abundance, strength, and shape. The primary topics dealt with in these images are human beings, war, animals, plants and wine. Hence, the generosity of caliphs Ibn al-Mu'tazz praises is as plentiful as the sea, and Al-Mu'tadid is to other kings as the sea is to small streams:

\[
\text{ملك توافقته الملوك لعزه قد يقاس على الجداول ماؤه.}^{186}
\]

An expansion of this basic image ‘the generous person is like the sea’ is applied in the following comparison of five fingers of the hand of Caliph al-Muktafi to five seas:

\[
\text{في كل كف منه خمسة أبحر يسقي الحوائج ماؤها المسور.}^{187}
\]

The shape of some other human physical attributes are also referred to with this kind of image. For example, the hips of a woman are as big as shaking waves in the following image:

\[
\text{وكم فيها قد يتب تسبيح فوقها كأنك منها راكب لجنة البحر.}^{188}
\]

\[Dīwān, v. I, p. 442.\]
\[Dīwān, v. I, p. 430.\]
\[Dīwān, v. I, p. 664.\]
This image, it must be pointed out, was formulated in 'Abbasid poetry. Indeed, Abû Nawwās had a particular interest in such an image and, in one poem, compares the hips of ladies to the waves of the sea and those of boys to dry land. He concludes his comparison by emphasising his preference for the dry land and his hatred for the sea.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also compares other female physical attributes to water to indicate their colour and freshness: the beloved's teeth are as white as snow, and the beauty of her face is as fresh as water. In contrast, water images pertaining to war represent plentitude and power. For example, in the following a huge and powerful army is compared to a shaking sea:

\[
\text{وَحَمِيسَ أَنَا مَالِكَةُ،}
\]
\[
\text{أَمَّلَ الْأَرْضِ يَهُ غَابَاءُ،}
\]
\[
\text{مِثْلُ الْبَحْرِ مُضْطَخِباً، يَرْجُحُ اللِّيْلِ إِذَا رَابَاً}
\]
\[
\text{جَامِدٌ لِي حِينَ أَخْيَسُهُ، وَإِذَا سَرَتْ يَهُ ذَا بَا.}
\]

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's characteristic focus on shape can also often be seen in his descriptions of individual weapons, in which a sword is as shiny as lightning or a shining brook and well-made armour is like foam on water. Related images depict horses, which are seen as powerful as the sea:

\[
	ext{قَدْ تُدْرَكُ العَبْرُ طَعَنِي عَجَلًا، يَبْخَرَ جَرْيَ عِيْنَةَ السَّاحِلِ،}
\]

\[189\] \text{Dīwān, v. 1, p. 36.}\
What appears to have attracted Ibn al-Mu'tazz to the horse here is its movement and intelligence in understanding orders as it would move forwards or stop to order:

These concepts of shape and power are also represented in his water images describing hunting and prey. Thus, the eye of a goshawk is as clear as water, or as a drop of water on flat stone; the depth and width of a wild donkey's eyes are like deep wells, and the shape and the quick movement of hunting dogs which rush to catch their prey is likened to the shape and motion of creeks:

When it comes to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's land imagery, Images of different geographical types of environment can be divided into two types: solid and fragile. While images of horses are more frequent in the first type, images of camels are more frequent in the second. Horses were frequently used for

---

fighting and hence were required to be slim, strong, and fast. However, camels were used more for transport and were hence required to be fit to cope with the shortage of food and water when travelling in the desert. Hence, the strength of a black horse, *kumayt*, is like a heavy stone:

\[
\text{وشديء القوى كالمومة الصخر} \quad \text{كـميت زمـر السـحاب}.
\]

Furthermore, horse’s hips are like mountains and its hooves are like shoes made of stone. In contrast, the shape of a camel is described as resembling a huge mountain of sand:

\[
\text{خوارن نحس في الجلود كأنها تحمَّل كنباتاً من الرمل. أصلابة}
\]

Some human attributes and notions are also dealt with in terms of geographical environment. Similar images to those previously mentioned describing women’s hips as waves are images comparing their hips to mountains of sand, this time to convey their hugeness and softness, as in the following description of a wine-maid’s hips:

\[
\text{جآنا مقيلا فاي قضيب} \quad \text{ثمً والى عتق فأي قضيب}
\]

---

194 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 28.  
3- Animals

Animal images are used mainly to elaborate on different states and aspects of man and some natural phenomena. These images can be broken down into two equal sub-categories 1) ‘wild animals’ and 2) ‘domesticated animals’.

Before moving on, one specific aspect of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s animal images must first be briefly discussed. The criticism of man is a common theme in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's animal images and, to a great extent, he uses this source to criticise his political enemies and literary critics. In terms of the former category, Ibn al-Mu'tazz seems to have had two kinds of political enemy: those rebelling against Abbasid rule and those opposed to the poet himself. Although we have little detailed information on the first group, in terms of their names and deeds, Ibn al-Mu'tazz criticises a great many such characters. To give just one example, Ibn al-Mu'tazz says the following about Bakr b. ‘Abd Al-'Azîz, an opponent of al-Mu'tadid:

In contrast, the second group favours the governing establishment of the 'Abbasid caliphs, but is against the poet’s desire to become caliph himself. A number of these enemies were members of the 'Abbasid family and hence their names are not mentioned directly. Ibn al-Mu'tazz compares them to snakes because they hide their hatred for the poet and feign respect:

\[196 \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 567.}\]

168
Abū 'Alī b. al-Munajjim was one of the Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s most detested literary critics. Indeed it was for him that Ibn al-Mu'tazz reserved his strongest criticism and the depths of his hatred led him to go beyond criticising the person himself to criticising his father, comparing him to a useless dog:

He also criticises Ibn al-Munajjim’s beloved as being a merely corpse which was offered to all dogs:

In addition to being used to describe his enemies, Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s animal images also reveal his attitude towards different races. This aspect of his imagery will not be discussed here, but will be given further attention in coming chapters.
3-1- Wild Animals.

Power, beauty and appearance are three features of wild animals, ranging from lion to gazelle to snake, which attract the poet’s attention. Members of the 'Abbasid family, including the poet himself, as powerful, wild animals. Caliphs (al-Mu'tadid in particular), ministers (for example 'Ubayd Allāh b. Sulaymān), army commanders and soldiers are compared to lions or beasts. Al-Mu'tadid, the caliph most often admired by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Dīwān, is mentioned frequently in this context. He is, as Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes him, the figure through whom the weaked caliphate of the sons of Hāshim is returned to glory:

الآمَنُ رَأى مَلكُ بنى هاشمُ عَادًا عَزِيزًا بعـَدّ ما دَأَلا
بِضَيْفِهِم يَفْرُسُ أُعدَاءُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ يُهْلُبُ الْجَحْفِلا

In another theme, concepts such as time, death and war are seen as having power and control over people, just as strong animals have power over weak ones. The basic metaphor of 'time as a beast', for example, is extended to give time a mouth, and hence the poet speaks about the mouth of time:

حَلَّتْ لَفَمُ الدَّهْرِ الخلافة ـ بعـَدّةُ يَرْوُحُ عِلْمًا كَيْفَ شَاءَ وَيَغْنُدِي

The beauty of the gazelle, on the other hand, in particular its wide eyes and
long neck, is the focus for several of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s descriptions of his beloved, wine-maids and boys. Different types of gazelles are presented by using different names and metonymies, as numerous as gazelle, ージャビ, rashā', and shādin.202 The beauty of the eye of the beloved and wine-maids respectively is also seen in terms of other pleasing creatures, for example, arām and maha,203 however these animals are mentioned less frequently than the gazelle.

3-1-1 Snakes.

The focus on shape and/or state of some human bodily organs and various natural phenomena is the point of images in this category. Thus, the curls of the hair of the poet’s beloved are like a scorpion’s tail:

---

202 As in the following examples:
- gazelle:
  - Diwān, v. I, p. 448, rashā'.
- shādin:

203 As in the following examples:
- arām:
and the glistening nature of snakeskin is used to illustrate the flash of lightning:

اذا عَرَى البَرْقُ فيها خِلتَةٍ
بَطَنٌ شَجَاعٌ فِي كَنُيبٍ يُصِيرُبُ

Other images that can be classed in this category include those in which a river is depicted as either a snake or a speedy hunting dog.

3-2- Domesticated Animals.

Images addressed in this section can be divided into two sub-sub-categories: animals and birds. Arabic poetry reveals a close relationship between man and animal, in particular camels and horses. The pre-Islamic poet 'Antara recorded just such a relationship when he shared his feeling of tiredness with his horse on the field of battle:

206 As in the following examples:

Diwān, v. III, p. 85, speedy hunting dog:

Diwān, v. II, p. 420, dog's tail:

Diwān, v. I, p. 32.
Another Islamic poet Al-'Abdi, writes that it is not only human beings who become attached to their first home – camels have feelings and long to go home too:

إذا ما قمت أرحلها بليل
تأوه آهه الرجل الحزين

The theme of interaction between man and animal is one of the oldest subjects of Arabic poetry. In Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry this interaction is taken one step further, not only humanising the animal, but animalising the human so that, for example, man is given the attributes of camels and horses. Thus, the poet has a halter (*rasan*) like a camel. In his youth, he is in control of his own halter. However, when he is older and weaker, unable to do what he used to in his youth, the halter is no longer under his control. The following line illustrates this:

أيامٍ بلفى الدهر في لذائي
رَسَنِي وَتَيَتنَي الحوادثُ مَبِينَةٌ

This image occurs frequently in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, along with the image of the poet (or someone else) compared to a horse. In the following example, the poet in his youth is compared to a horse in a race, running towards the

---

209 *Divān*, v. 1, p. 632.
In contrast, in his old age the poet cannot stand the pace and loses his position at the front, falling to the back:

وَأَصْبَحْتُ مُفْتَنَّ الْحَيَاةِ كَأَنِّي حَسْبِي وَرَأَا السَّابِقَاتُ تَعَتَّرا٢١١

A considerable number of images in this section compare natural phenomena to camels and horses. For example, the appearance of daybreak through the night is described as being like a blond horse whose cover has been removed:

عَدَا وَالصِّبْحُ تَحْتَ اللَّيلِ بَادَرُ كَتَمَّرُ اسْقَرُ مُلْقِيِ اللَّجَام٢١٢

This comparison between dark and light is one of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's techniques that requires further investigation and will be looked at in detail in Chapter Six. In another image, a shift from focus on colour to focus on speed can be found in his comparison of the appearance of morning to the movement of a camel:

\[\text{References:} \]

\[\text{Diwān, v. II, p. 390.} \]
\[\text{Diwān, v. I, p. 107.} \]
\[\text{Diwān, v. II, p. 209.} \]
3-3- Birds and Insects.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses a number of different kinds of bird in his imagery, ranging from hunting birds to song birds. Birds, as a source for his poetic images, offer themselves to a great deal of images that focus on external attributes, such as the colour of black hair resembling a crow's wing. Likewise, the voice of a good singer is compared to the melodic songs of pigeons, turtledoves and nightingales. They are used to illustrate different themes and concepts such as human beings, animals, and nature. Turning first to bird images relating to human beings, although different aspects and states are covered, the subject of love in particular is dealt with in detail. Thus the fearful beloved, visiting her lover in secret, resembles a frightened bird:

 ومعشوق، ياوصلني بلا مطل ولا علّ.
أتي عجلان يطير به جناح الخوف والوجل.

A number of his other images also contrast a fearful beloved with a frightened bird. In other images, a bar-maid in her embroidered clothes and her softness

---

215 As in the following examples:

Diwān, v. II, p. 76.
is usually compared to a peacock.\(^{217}\) The power of hunting birds is also used to counter some powerful attributes in the human being. Hence, the eye of a good guide is like that of a falcon and the poet himself is as powerful as a goshawk.\(^{218}\) In other images in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz compares horses with birds, he finds similarity in three things: voice, shape and speed; the voice of a horse is like a pigeon's calling,\(^{219}\) they fly as fast as an eagle\(^{220}\) and the traces left by horses' hooves are like the nests of doves.\(^{221}\)

When using bird images to describe natural phenomena such as daybreak and night, lightning and clouds, the focus is again on their external attributes. In these terms, the movement of birds in flight strikes Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Thus, the sudden appearance of daybreak is like a flying eagle:

\[
\text{كَأْنَّا سَنَاهُ أَطَارَ عَنْهُ سَّتَرًا}^{222}
\]


\(^{218}\) As in the following examples:

Diwan, v. I, p. 165,


\(^{221}\) Diwan, v. I, p. 72.

lightning is like a goshawk moving its wings when starting to fly:

أرقت وأخلتي العادلات
بطر وبرتد مثل أنتها

and finally, clouds move as if they had wings:

سقيبا ليوم صيدليلا
إذ غيث على الشمانت
يوم كان سماءه
حبيت بأخماسه القواخت

There are relatively few images of insects in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. Because there are only a few and they generally have the same metaphorical significance as birds, they are included in this section. To give a few illustrative examples of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's use of insects in imagery, the froth of wine is like ants' feet; hunting dogs are light and speedy like butterflies, and finally, in a less flattering image, al-Nuwayri is described as being as low as flies in human excrement.

This category forms the last source of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery to be discussed here, and can be divided into two main sub-categories. The first, which is more numerous but less diverse, is religious and general culture. The second, which consists of fewer images, is considered to be of more interesting poetic value and deals with the fine arts.

4-1- Religious and General Culture.

Images in this sub-category do not reflect any diversity in terms of their source as many of them are derived from the Qur'an. Images of ghazal are the most frequent and they are formed in a traditional style which is mixed with religious thought and terminology. The beloved is as a nymph, or her beauty is a holy mosque for lovers.\textsuperscript{228} However, in an astonishing piece of literature, Ibn al-Mu'tazz mocks this traditional poetic conceit in his portrait of a female singer, by using some religious ceremonies, namely prayer and the action of invoking God's blessing:

\begin{quote}
وعابذةً لقن تُصلي على القفا،
وتدعو برجلها إذا الليل أظلمها.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{228} As in the following examples:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 328,
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
Nature is also introduced in a religious context: a spring fragrance is as the fragrance of paradise and farms are samples of paradise too.\textsuperscript{230} The direct influence of the Qur'ān is also shown clearly in the use of some Qur'ānic images and references to its stories in the \textit{Diwān}. Talebearing somebody is compared to eating his flesh, righteousness is a way and white hair is a fair.\textsuperscript{231} References are made to Solomon, 'Ad, Joseph and others in many places throughout his poetry.

The second section in this sub-category is 'general culture'. Images in this sub-category do not show deep involvement in the various scientific fields of the time, such as philosophy, (\textit{`ilm al-kalām}, also termed 'scholastic theology'), and astronomy. Only a few images use terms that belongs to this sphere, one example being that in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz relates the clarity of the wine to the concept of \textit{'arad} (substance):

\begin{quote}
كانَ الراحَ حينَ نمْرهُما
ما شكّ في أنَّ جسمها عرض
فلا رأها النظام في قدح.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{230} As in the following examples:
\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 256,
\textsuperscript{231} As in the followings:
\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 310,
\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 301,
\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 167.
The concept of emptiness is used repeatedly by Ibn al-Mu'tazz, mostly in criticism of his enemies. Thus, the person who criticises him is nothing:

أَسْمَعْ قُولًا وَلا أَرَى أَحَدًا
من ذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي أَبَاهُ دُمَهُ

and the body of his beloved, Shurayra, when she visits him in a dream, is like nothing:

يا لَقَوْمِي لَحْيَاتَ زارَتِي
يُسْتَعْدِدُ الحَبَّ مَنِي فَرَجَعَ
ساعةً جاء كلا شيء وما
هاب من هول الفيافي ما قطع.

Similar to this are the images in which the second part of the poetic image is a conceptual notion, for example, in the following lines the clarity of the wine and the glass are described as like a specific meaning in a sharp mind:

كَمْ نَبْتَ وَقُطْتَ رَجَاهُكَا عَلَيْهَا
كَمْ نَبْتَ دَقَّٰدٌ فِي ذَٰهِنٍ لَطِيفٍ

An even closer comparison can be found in the following comparison of wine and the taste of life:

هَاتَكَ حِذَّكَا مَنِي وَتَفْكَارَاتُكَا
صِفَٰقٌ مشِمْوَتِكَ كَطَعَمُ الحَٰيَةِ

This kind of image is widespread in ‘Abbasid poetry and is the subject of particular attention in Chapter Six.

With regard to mathematics, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz uses number to represent shape, for example a goshawk’s beak is compared to the hand signal denoting the number fifty:

وَمَنْ سَرَّعَ عَصْبَ الشَّيْاَدَّ دَامِي َّ عَصْبَ السَّمَّىَنَ لَيْلِيَمٍ

Shape is also the focus in images regarding to games. The shaking body of the poet when frightened is as if he is in the hand of a player of a ball game called ūabīb:

ما قَرْلَي فِي لِيْلِي مُضِجَّ وَكَأَنَّى فِي كَفٍّ طَنْطَابٍ

and the walls of Sāmirrā‘, having fallen down after a disaster, are like falling soldiers in a chess game. 239

4-2- The Fine Arts.

The images in this section have a special importance because they reflect Ibn

---

al-Mu'tazz's tendency to concentrate on shape and colour. They can be divided into three main sub-sub-categories: calligraphy, collage and singing and dancing. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's calligraphic images in particular demonstrate his intelligence and creative genius. In these, the forms of a variety of subjects, such as women, nature, hunting and wine are depicted by his sharp eye in terms of the different shapes of letters. Because of the novelty of these calligraphic images, they will be investigated in detail in Chapter Five, however two examples will also be given here. In the first, a description of sexual intercourse between himself and a male wine-maid, he focuses on the two relevant sexual organs, his being shaped like the letter ج in Arabic, and the wine-maid's resembling the round shape of the Arabic letter م.

The second example relates to some writing samples and, in a somewhat more delicate image, the beauty of spots on cheeks are compared to the signs that are used in chapters of the Qur'an.

Finally, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's images describing the activities of singing and dancing are of a traditional nature, with images describing birdsong and the sound of ringing cymbals. However, some images have Ibn al-Mu'tazz's trademark style, as is the case in the following image in which he pictures the

---

241 The poet says:

كَأَنَّمَا خَيْلًا نَّبَأْتَ بَيْنَ النَّارِ أَوْ لَا فَكَالْأَحْمَاسِ أَوْ لَا مَفَافٍ فِي مَتَنَّ الْصَّفَحَةِ

position of Gemini between fallen stars as cymbals on the fingers of a female dancer, who is entertaining a group of drinkers:

وقد صفتُ الجوزاءُ حتى كاذبَها وراءَ نجومٍ هاويةٌ، وغَورَ،

صنوَّحٌ على رقَاصةٍ قد تمايلتُ لتلهي شرباً بينّ دفٍّ، ومَزْهرَ.

In conclusion, five sources for the imagery used in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry have been identified in this section. After 'the human being', which began Chapter Three, came 'daily life' with four sub-sections; 'clothing and cosmetics', 'accommodation', 'food and drink' and 'equipment of war and handcrafts'. The third source examined was 'nature', which again had four sub-sections; 'the sun and stars', 'fire', 'plants' and 'water and land'. 'Animals' made up the fourth category, which consisted of three sub-sections: 'wild animals', 'domesticated animals' and 'birds'. The final category discussed was 'culture', which was comprised of two sections: 'religious and general culture' and 'fine art'.

From the beginning of the discussion of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery in Chapter Three, attention has been drawn to his characteristic focus on shape and colour. It has been pointed out that tiny shapes, both circular and non-circular, are presented in large numbers. In terms of circular shapes, wine froth, for example, is compared to pearls, the eye of a hunting bird is like a narcissus without leaves, and the Pleiades are as small as basil. Non-circular shapes can be seen in images such as that comparing the curls of the beloved’s hair with the tail of a scorpion. In addition, plants and flowers, as well as clothes with different patterns, offer different colours. However, what really catches the poet’s attention is the comparison between opposite colours such as black and white or the light of day and the dark of night. Ibn al-
Mu'tazz’s admiration for external attributes has also been in evidence throughout the foregoing discussion of his image sources, and it is this characteristic that marks what might be called the ḥissī type of poetic imagery which will be investigated fully in Chapter Six.

Finally, it has become evident that the poet shows first-hand knowledge of, and great interest in, some topics, while others are treated much more generally. His admiration of palm trees is evident in the numerous references he makes to this tree – its trunk, fronds and spadix – as shown in the plant section earlier in this chapter, and as can be seen in his poetry generally. Furthermore, some other subjects such as wine, hunting, particular flowers (i.e. the narcissus) and the moon, are referred to frequently in his poetry. As will be seen in the following chapters, in addition to revealing a great deal about the creative mechanics of his poetic imagery, the preferences and characteristic peculiarities revealed by a study of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s imagery also do not fail to reveal a great deal of the poet’s life and interests.
PART TWO:

Some Aspects of the Nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

CHAPTER FIVE: The Ḥissī Aspect of Poetic Imagery.

CHAPTER SIX: Fragmentation in Poetic Imagery.
CHAPTER FIVE: The Ḥissī Side of Poetic Imagery.

1- Previous Studies on The Nature of Poetic Imagery.

In previous chapters, it has been noted that there is a Ḥissī side to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetic imagery. This chapter aims to further investigate this phenomenon. However, before doing so, some general points on the subject of Arabic poetry and previous literary criticism must be made.

Several attempts have been made to illustrate the nature of poetic imagery in Arabic literature, particularly in the arena of 'Abbasid poetry. In these, two approaches can be clearly seen. The first tends to investigate poetic imagery as a part of art in total, rather than restricting itself to the poetic genre, and hence distinguishes between two processes of the mind: imagist and symbolic. The second approach is more limited in scope and focuses on poetic creation in terms of style, subject matter and technique, and hence identifies and develops the concept of various poetic schools or movements within the poetic genre. A brief discussion of these two approaches will now be carried out in order to situate Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetic production within the context of his time. Three major studies will be taken as examples, and will be presented in accordance with their breadth of scope rather than by chronological order, starting with the most focused, which will also receive the most attention, and moving on to more general works.
Shawqi Ğayf can be taken as an example of the second approach, henceforth referred to as the restricted approach, which identifies trends and schools within the genre. He distinguishes between three main schools (madḥāhib) of Arabic poetry, based on various distinctive historical and poetic elements. These trends are given similar terms, șan'a, tašannū', and tašnī', in an attempt to reflect the fact that, although different, they share a great deal of common ground in terms of subject matters and meter.¹

Șan'a is identified by Dayf as the first madḥhab to be established historically, the beginnings of which can be seen as early as pre-Islamic poetry in the work of poets such as Imrū' al-Qays and 'Antara. For Dayf, the term șan'a refers to the fact that poetry is a craft governed by conventions, traditional forms and terminology. He draws attention to the tendency for 'the art of picturing' that demonstrates șan'a in pre-Islamic poetry:

"... بل هم يعتمدون على فن آخر لعله أكثر تقليدا وهو "فن التصوير"

... ومن يرجع إلى نماذج امرئ الفيس وهو من أقدم الشعراء الجاهليين

بلاحظ أنه يعني بالتصوير في شعره كان "التصوير" غاية في نفسه ،

فالأفكار تتلاحق في صنوف من التشبهات ، حتى تستتم هذا الفن من

"التصوير" وكأنما القصائد برود يمانية ، فهيها ألوان وقوس ورسوم على

صور وأشكال كثيرة"²

"...they are using another complex method which is 'the art of

¹ Dayf, Sh, Al-Fann wa Madhahibuh fi al-Shi'r al-'Arab; (Cairo: 1969), p. 90.
² Ibid., p. 15.
picturing’ ... Any one who goes back to examples from Imrû’ al-Qays’s poetry will observe his passion for picturing as if it is an aim for its own sake. Ideas are presented in different types of similes until they reach the pinnacle of artistic creation and the odes become like fine Yemeni garments which are full of colours, patterns and drawings in endless types and shapes.”

Dayf follows the presence of this characteristic facet of pre-Islamic poetry chronologically through later eras and discovers that it remains a constant factor in Arabic poetry. When he examines Umayyad poetry he finds this style represented in the sensuous love poetry of ‘Umar b. Abî Rabî’a and in the desert landscapes of Dhû al-Rumma.³

In the ‘Abbasid era, and as a result of the extension of the Islamic state and the interaction between different cultures and races, major changes occurred in Arabic poetry. The şan’a style developed and reached its peak (Dayf calls it ta’qîd al-şan’a ‘complexity of mannerism’) and a new style that he calls taṣnî” appeared.⁴ Development in the şan’a style can be seen, according to Dayf, in innovations in meaning, style, and the feelings expressed. He states that:

"... فقد ارتفى الشعراء بها [صنعة الشعر] من وجهة كبيرة، من حيث المعاني، وما أثاروا من غرائزها، ومن حيث الأجاسيس وما بعثوا من طرائفها، ومن حيث الصياغات وما تسقاها من زاندها، وسنترى بعد قليل

³ Ibid., p. 33.
⁴ Ibid., p. 141.
... the poets developed [the writing style of poetry] in many ways: in unfamiliar meaning, novel expression of feelings and refined style of writing. We shall see that their achievements led them to a new style, namely *taṣanī‘*. This style had been prepared for by two generations: Bashshār’s, and the generation of Abû Nawwās and Abû al-‘Atiya’s ...”

The works of al-Buḥtūrī and Ibn al-Rūmī are representative of the complexity of *ṣanā‘a*. The domain in which al-Buḥtūrī shows his skills is descriptive poetry, especially in his description of castles, swimming pools and wild animals. Ibn al-Rūmī also demonstrates an excellent gift for writing descriptive poetry, especially in his descriptions of emotions, nature (specifically with reference to its enjoyment in springtime) and food.

The second trend, *taṣanī‘*, is of special interest in this context since it was the fruit of Islamic civilization in the ‘Abbasid era and because Ibn al-Mu’tazz is regarded as belonging to this school of poetry. The term refers to the practice

---

of *zukhruf* (ornamentation) and *zina* (decoration)\(^8\) and can be found in a variety of different aspects of 'Abbasid life: textiles/archaeology, materials, and art; in Dayf's own words:

> "أَوْصِفْ هَذَا التَّصِيْعَ يَتَسْرِبُ مِنْ حَيَاَةِ الشَّعْرَاءِ العَالِمَاَ إِلَىِّ حَيَاتِهِمَا الْفَنِيَّةُ الخاصة ، وَهِيَ حَالَةٌ طَبِيعِيَّةٌ تُوجَدُ دَائِمًاَ في الصَّنَائِعِ حِينَ يَعْمُّ الْتَرَفّ ... وَلَيْسَ الشَّعْرَ وَجْدَةٌ الَّذِي أَخْذُ يُسْوَدُ فِيهِ هَذَا التَّصِيْعَ فَقَدْ كَانَ يَشْيِعُ في فَنّ النَّمَّاءَ وِبَنَاءِ المسَاجِدِ والْقَصُورَ ، كَمَا كَانَ يَشْيِعُ فِي التَّصِيْعَ الَّذِي كَانَ يُسْتَخْدَمُ زِيَتَةَ وَزَخْرَفًا لِّلْكِتَابِ وَالْقَصَصِ ، فَلاَ عَجْبُ أَنْ يَنْتَقَلْ إِلَىِّ الشَّعْرَاءِ ، وَأَنْ يَنْمَوَ مَعَ الزَّمَنِ حَتَّى تَصْبِحَ القَصِيَّةُ كَأَنَا وَاجِهَةُ لِمَسْجِدٍ مُزَخْرَفٍ بَديعٍ ، فَهُوَ تَأْلِقُ فِي وَشْيٍ مَرْضَعٍ كَثِيرٍ."

\(^9\) ibid., p. 174.

“*tasnī*’ found its way into the public and private life of the poet. It is a natural phenomenon that has always occurred in art when luxury becomes prevalent. Poetry was not the only art that was dominated by *tasnī*’; it pervaded architecture and the construction of castles and mosques, likewise it dominated in that type of picturing which was used for ornamenting and decorating books and stories. It is not strange that this tendency made its way into poetry and developed in time to the extent that every ode became like a façade of an ornamented mosque which is full of enchased gems.”

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 172.
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 174.
This attitude also found its way into poetry. Muslim b. al-Walid is said to be the pioneer of this trend, however, the undisputed masters of this genre of poetry are Abū Tammām and Ibn al-Mu'tazz, who represent two different types of taṣnīʿ. Abū Tammām is said to be the most important representative of the intellectual trend within taṣnīʿ in the third century AH. His philosophical and cultural knowledge gave him a background and expertise that enabled him mix art and culture so as to produce different kinds of intellectual and sensuous embellishments in his poetry, as can be seen in the famous poem ‘Ammūriya. Abū Tammām’s poetry is characterized by an ambiguous nature, which is seen as being the result of the influence of philosophy and the complex new culture of his time. On the other hand, Ibn al-Mu'tazz was the pre-eminent creator of the sensuous type of taṣnīʿ poetry, with special reference to jīnās (paronomasia), tībāq (antithesis) and tašwīr (simile). Dayf gives special attention to Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s use of simile and states that the poet concentrates on one kind of taṣnīʿ simile, and succeeds in producing endless forms of it. He praises the poet’s techniques in adding a number of features such as movement, colour and shape to each simile.

The third trend that is recognised by Dayf is taṣannuʿ. He describes it as ‘extreme and affected’ (taṭarruf wa takalluf) and hence determines it to be of less poetic value than the previous two schools. In his opinion, this trend

---

10 Ibid., p. 180f.
11 Ibid., p. 219.
12 Ibid., p. 256.
13 Ibid., p. 239.
14 Ibid., p. 267.
15 Ibid., p. 271.
16 Ibid., p. 9.
indicates the decline of the Arabic mind and is expressive of the move towards the creation of endless types of rules to govern different aspects of cultural and social life. Dayf highlights several examples of the application of these rules and complications in prose (as in the case of the 'style complexity' found in maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī) and in poetry (as in the case of the luzûmiyyāt of al-Ma'ārī).18

One of the earliest attempts to investigate poetic imagery in a wider context, as a production of the process of the mind, can be credited to al-Jurjānī. He distinguishes between two types of similitude: one that does not require interpretation, and one that does. According to Abu-Deeb, who has undertaken an in-depth investigation of these types of similarities, with reference to the opinions of some modern critics such as Johnson and Eliot, this is 'one of al-Jurjānī’s major contributions to the study of imagery'.19 Abu-Deeb concludes that:

"Unlike the Symbolists and the Imagists ... Al-Jurjānī recognises the two types of similarity under consideration as two modes of poetic imagery, both legitimate and both poetic. No one type was said by him to be the only type, the absolute, besides which no other type is of value for the poet or poetic

17 Ibid., p. 280.
18 Ibid., p. 280f.
In a wider context, Read\textsuperscript{21} refers to two types of art when investigating the effect of economic and social trends on modern art. Distinguishing between image and symbol is, he says, "fundamental to an understanding of the modern movement in art".\textsuperscript{22} One might emphasise such a distinction in all eras rather than restricting it merely to modern movements, as Read does, especially given that these two faculties had been pointed out by al-Jurjānī centuries before. Further investigation of the nature of poetic imagery, with reference to its forms, would be a fruitful and fascinating area for academic study, especially given the benefit of recent developments in cognitive science; unfortunately, such an ambition lies beyond the scope of the present study. However, the achievement of al-Jurjānī in this regard will be taken as a guideline by which to distinguish between two types of imagery, namely \textit{ḥissī} (sensory) and \textit{dhihiʃī} (intellectual).

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 141.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 19.
2- Ḥisṣī and Dhihnī: Two Types of Poetic Imagery.

Depending on the nature of the point of similarity and the nature of the two entities that are involved in a poetic image, two types of images can be recognised: Ḥisṣī (sensory) and Dhihnī (intellectual). These two types of imagery can be differentiated in terms of the point of similarity and the two entities involved. Al-Jurjānī explains the difference in the following, in which he describes first the Ḥisṣī image and second the Dhihnī image:

"... when two things are said to be similar, this may be done in two [different] ways: the first is where the similitude is obvious and does not require any interpretation (ta'awwil), the second is where the similitude can be realised and revealed only by analysis and interpretation."\textsuperscript{23}

English dictionaries and encyclopedias demonstrate little awareness of these two types of poetic imagery, with a complete absence of any reference to the second type, Dhihnī. The English equivalent term for the Arabic term Ḥisṣī is 'sensuousness' or 'sensibility', however this term needs some further classification. The term 'sensibility' first 'became prominent as a literary term in the mid 18\textsuperscript{th} c.\textsuperscript{24} to refer to susceptibility, emotional impressions, esp. to tender feelings, a popular quality in the age of Sterne, Goldsmith, and

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 104-5.
\textsuperscript{24} Abbreviation is used in the original text where c. stands for century, s. stands for sensibility, esp. for especially and incl. for including.
Cowper. The feelings may be one's own or those of others.\textsuperscript{25} This definition links the term with the emotional feelings conveyed by any poetic image. However, when used in the context of more modern literary criticism, according to which 'sensibility' refers to a slightly different phenomenon, it has more relevance to the focus of this study. This term has been subject to a number of different usages\textsuperscript{26} in the 20th century, but it is the definition made by T. S. Eliot that is of special interest in this context: 'For him the physical element is very strong: “a thought to Donne was an experience: it modified his s.” (this must mean that he apprehended it with one of his five senses as in the case of “the odour of a rose”).'\textsuperscript{27}

It could be said that the usage of this term in modern English criticism is not associated exactly with the physical nature of the two extremes in a poetic image, and the nature of similarity between them, but it is always connected with feelings. Eliot himself used the term in a rather vague manner. For him:

"The term does not indicate one special kind of awareness or yield one particular poetic style: s. is simply a name for artistic faculty as found in every poet. As a result, he brings the term closer to intellect, incl. in it the ability to offer intellectual resistance to the dangers of generalization."\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1144.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}
To avoid the ambiguity associated with the English terms 'sensuousness' or 'sensibility', this study will instead use the relevant terms that have been used in Arabic rhetoric for some thousand years. As will be shown later, these terms have the advantage that they reflect exactly the phenomenon they describe, since they are productions of the same culture.

2-1- Ḥissī Images.

In his study of al-Jurjānī’s theory of poetic imagery, Abu-Deeb formulates a definition according to which sensuousness is simply defined ‘in terms of the nature of the affinity revealed between two entities and, also, in terms of the function which is fulfilled by revealing a relationship between two entities’. He goes on to say:

“Nevertheless, in view of the fact that al-Jurjānī always considers the revelation of similarity within the framework of the nature of the two entities involved, the sensuous or nonsensuous nature of these entities must be taken into consideration. Thus, the type of sensuous imagery is that in which the common quality is sensuous, and the two entities are physical, whereas the less pure type is that in which the

29 Such ambiguity can be also seen with Arab scholars who are influenced by Aristotle, for example al-Qartājānī who focuses in his definition of poetry on its affect on the psyche of the recipient. See al-Qartājānī, Ḥī, Minhāj al-Bulaghā‘, Ed. By M. Ibn Al-Khawja, 3rd ed. (Beirut: 1986), p. 70. This attitude can be linked to the theory of imitation of Aristotle. See Asfour, Al-Šūra al-Fannīyya fī al-Turāth al-Naqdī wa-l-Balāgha‘ ‘ind al-’Arab, 3rd ed. (Beirut: 1992), p. 298.

30 Op. cit., p. 82.
common quality is not sensuous, even though the two entities are physical."

Attention here is drawn to two aspects: first, the external attributes of the two entities in a poetic image, such as colour, shape, movement and so on, and second, the nature of the point of similarity. The poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz may be one of the best illustrative examples of such a definition, as will be shown later in this chapter.

2-1-1- Divisions of Ḥissi Image.

Al-Jurjānī applies further sub-divisions to his classification of the Ḥissi image, basing his divisions on different factors, such as the point of similarity (i.e. where it is revealed from the adjective/ṣifā itself, or from another meaning conveyed by it, and when it is a single or complex adjective) and on the different kinds of poetic tropes. Al-Jurjānī’s treatment of this imagery is, however, quite general and because of this it is not easy to establish an exact or complete picture of the divisions he depicts. An initial attempt, however, can be made here which is dependant on the two entities involved in the poetic imagery and the point of similarity. Table 3 overleaf illustrates these divisions.

The 'Less pure type 1' images classified in Table 3 can be illustrated by the following example, 'his words are like water in fluency', in which the two
entities are physical (and therefore 'sensory': words can here be regarded as physical things since they have a physical existence and can be apprehended by the sense of hearing. However, the point of similarity here is not a direct one and requires a degree of interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1st entity</th>
<th>2nd entity</th>
<th>Point of similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure ħissi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pure 1</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pure 2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pure 3</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) Divisions of ħissi Images: (S) Refers to ħissi and (I) Refers to dhīhni.

The third type of image ('less pure 2') is considered to be, in Abu Deeb's words, 'the subtler type of similitude, which cannot be comprehended except by those who are acute and which only exists in the best works of literature'.³¹ An example of this is, 'they were like a cast ring whose ends are not recognizable'.³² The first entity, 'they' (the sons of al-Muhallab) is physical. As for the second entity 'the cast ring', the similitude is not in the object itself but in an intellectual attribute within it i.e. the roundness of the ring and the fact that this roundness has no start or end point. As can be seen, the point of similarity in this type of image needs a deeper level of interpretation than that of the second type.

³¹ Ibid.
³² Ibid.
Finally, an example of the fourth type of ُهِسُسُ image classified by al-Jurjānī is:

وَأَنَّتَ أَنْزَرُ مِنْ لا شَيْءٍ فِي الْعَدُدٍ

which can be translated as 'You are fewer than nothing in counting'. This type of image is of a different nature and raises serious questions with regard to whether it should, in fact, be categorised as a ُدِهْنَى image rather than ُهِسُسُ because although the first entity, 'you' (the satirized person) is a physical one, the second entity, 'nothing', is an abstract notion. The problematic nature of images of this type will be discussed later in some detail.

2-2- ُدِهْنَى Images.

The ُدِهْنَى or ُأَقْلِ (intellectual) image\(^{34}\) is found in every image in which at least one aspect, along with the point of similarity, is ُدِهْنَى and can only be apprehended by mental processes rather than by any of the five senses. This type of image can be classified as having two different forms: simple and complex. In accordance with the above definition, al-Jurjānī's classification of poetic imagery will be modified in this study, and his last two ُهِسُسُ image types (less pure 3 and 4) will be considered as simple forms of the ُدِهْنَى image. The complex form can be seen in the form of simile known as ُتَمْثِيلِ.


\(^{34}\) Hereafter, use will be made of the term ُدِهْنَى image, as the opposite of a ُهِسُسُ image. The word ُأَقْلِ is usually used in a wider context to refer to the influence of Aristotle's logic upon the style of ُأَبَاسِي드 poetry.
which will be discussed later.\textsuperscript{35}

Abu-Deeb explains \textit{dhihni} imagery in the following manner:

"In its simplest manifestation, the similarity is revealed as existing in two objects only ... But in its more complex form, a number of objects are considered as one unit, the similarity which they bear to something else resulting from their interaction one with another. The similitude here is analogous to the fusion of two objects, which produces a new image different from the images of both individual objects. The images of the objects themselves are modified and transformed, in the process of complete fusion, beyond recognition, or are even "cancelled out" (\textit{tubj\textsuperscript{al}}) completely ..."\textsuperscript{36}

To elucidate further, an example of \textit{dhihni} imagery can be found in the following verse of the Qur'\text{\text{"}an}:

"The likeness of those who have been loaded with the Torah, then they have not carried it, is as the likeness of an ass carrying books."\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} The \textit{tamthil} image is defined and discussed in section 2.3 later in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
Al-Jurjānī has the following to say about this image:

"The similarity is taken from the state of the ass, i.e., that he carries the books which contain the knowledge and fruits of thinking minds without being aware of them or of what they contain and without distinguishing between these books or the other types of loads which have nothing to do with knowledge ... The only thing he is aware of or concerned with is the fact that loads tire him and hurt his sides. This similarity, as you can see, arises from things which are unified, woven, and closely related one to the others ... The similarity cannot be found in each of these states or elements separately ... It does not lie in the fact of carrying unless it is performed by the ass, and it does not lie in the carrying by the ass unless the thing carried is the books. But the similarity does not lie even here, unless both these elements are linked and closely related to the ignorance of the ass and his unawareness of what he carries on his back."\(^{38}\)

2-3- The Problem of *Tamthīl*.

Al-Jurjānī’s classification of *ḥissī* imagery requires further attention to bring it into better focus. As has been mentioned already, the last two sub-divisions

of the *hissî* image type could be said to be more related to the *'aqîlî* image type. It seems that the only reason to consider them of *hissî* nature is due to the fact that the image relies upon the comparison of two different entities; these are single entities, rather than complex ones like the example quoted earlier from the Holy Qur’ân. It might be suggested that poetic imagery can be considered in the light of the point of similarity and the nature of the second entity. Two main approaches to these can be shown; the first is sensuous and focuses on comparing mainly sensuous elements (although it can sometimes compare intellectual notions to such sensuousness), while the second is intellectual, and focuses on comparing intellectual notions and ideas.

In the light of these suggested criteria, *tamthîl*, which can be defined as a ‘simile based on a set of sentences; conceit; complex, non-physical simile’, and is thus a rhetorical figure that requires a high degree of interpretation, can be viewed with fresh insight. It is interesting to note that the technique of *tamthîl* is different from that of metaphor and simple simile. The relationships between the involved items are different: metaphor and simile depend on interaction, while *tamthîl* depends on fusion. To illustrate this rather theoretical concept, two examples will be given. In the example quoted earlier of:

وَإِنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَيَبْعَثُهُ عَلَىَّ

two elements can be clearly defined. The first is the pronoun ‘you’ which refers to the satirised person and the second is the notion of nothing. There is an interaction between these and the meaning of the second entity, which is transferred to the first. So, in this example there are two elements and one relationship. However, the example of *tamthil* quoted earlier consists of several elements and several relationships working in different directions, as can be summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Type of relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st entity</td>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Torah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd entity</td>
<td>Donkey</td>
<td>Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tamthil</em></td>
<td>1st entity</td>
<td>2nd entity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) elements and relations in *tamthil*.

Thus, four entities and three relationships can be seen in this image. The first entity consists of two things, Jews and the Torah, and there is an opposing relationship between them. The second entity consists of two other sub-entities: the donkey and the books, and the relationship is also one of opposition. In addition to the two entities, there is a third, more abstract one that creates a set of similarities between these two entities. Hence, it can be concluded that the *aqli* type of imagery works in two ways: interaction for metaphor and simile and fusion for *tamthil*. Its nature can be judged according to the nature of the point of similarity and the second entity; where
they are both intellectual, the image will be intellectual as well.

2-4- The Predominance of the ʿHissī Image.

The ʿHissī type of imagery has received considerable attention from medieval Arab philosophers, critics and interpreters of the Qur'ān\textsuperscript{40} and was one of the key intellectual issues in the period from the third century AH to the fifth. In the field of Qur'ānic studies, al-Rumānī notes that the style of the Qur'ān is to compare things or notions with things that can be apprehended by the senses.\textsuperscript{41} Other scholars like Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskārī are of the same opinion, but emphasise particularly the importance of the sense of sight.\textsuperscript{42} This attitude to Qur'ānic studies has influenced the treatment and analysis of poetic imagery and is one which philosophy has played an important role in strengthening. For example, in the following Asfour discusses the influence of Aristotle on Muslim philosophers with regard to the benefit of using sensuous things for illustration:

\begin{quote}
واَرِتَبَاطٌ الْمِحْسُوسَاتِ بِالتَّوْضِيحِ مِبْحَتِ اَزْدِهَرْ أَسْاسًا فِيِّ الأُوْسَاطِ

الفلسفية منذ أواخر القرن الثالث، ومبحث كان يستند إلى نوع من المعارف التي أفادها العرب نتيجة اطلاعهم على التراث الفلسفي اليوناني بوجه خاص. ومن المعروف أن العرب اطلعوا على كتاب النفس
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{40} For more information, see Asfour, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 255-312 and Muʿminī, \textit{Q, Naqād al-Shīr ʿfil-Qam al-Rabiʿ al-Hijrī}, (Riyadh: 1982), pp. 359-61.
\textsuperscript{41} See al-Rumānī, \textit{Thalāth Rasaʾī ʿfi Ijaz al-Qurʾān}, Ed. by M. Khalaf Allāh and M. Sallām (Cairo:n.d.), p. 84.
"The use of sensory things for illustration was a field that flourished originally in philosophical circles at the end of the third century. This subject was a result of a type of modern knowledge gained from studying the tradition of Greek philosophy in particular. It is known that Arabs read Aristotle’s book ‘The Psyche’ at least in the second half of the third century."

Miskawayh, in a unique text, shows how sensory things work in illustration, the effect on the recipient, and the category of senses according to their importance:

43 Asfour, op. cit., p. 273.
"And the reason beyond that [seeking a sensory example] is out of familiarity with different senses right from the beginning of our creation, as from them we get basics of our knowledge and by them we apprehend our understanding. When a person is told about something he did not know or had not seen and that thing is a strange one, then he will ask for a sensory example. When his question is answered he will feel happy/ satisfied.

This is true for all sensory [real] topics. I mean, if a person is asked about an ostrich, a giraffe, or a crocodile [and it happened that he had not seen them], he will ask for a drawing of them so they become perceptible to his vision. This is also true for imaginative topics. If the person is asked to imagine an animal he never saw, he will ask for a similar one, as in the case of 'anqā' maghrib [a methodological bird]. Although this animal does not exist, the person who is asked to imagine it will, without fail, create a picture that is made up from different animals he knows. However, intellectual topics are more delicate and far from being apprehended by senses except by way of...

approximation. And this is why such topics are strange. The soul
needs an example ...”

The influence of this discussion can be found in the works of influential critics
such as al-Jurjānī and al-Qarṭājānī. The first considers the sensuous nature of
elements of the image to be an original form of comparison, while non-
sensuous nature is perceived as derivative.\(^4^5\) Al-Jurjānī also gives special
attention to the sense of sight when comparing the work of poets and artists,
as both present ideas and objects in a lively and expressive way.\(^4^6\) Al-
Qarṭājānī, on the other hand, shows a deep understanding of the sensory
nature of the poetic image and gives particular attention to the psychological
effect of the image on the recipient.\(^4^7\)

2-5- The Imagery of Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Abû Tammām.

It can be argued that Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Abû Tammām are good
representatives of the development of Arabic poetry in the ʿAbbasid era, in
terms of the formation of poetic imagery. As mentioned previously, the first
may be considered as the pioneer of the ʿhīsṣī image while the second is the
pioneer of the ʿdhīhīnī image. This chapter is devoted to the classification of
the ʿhīsṣī side of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's imagery, however before addressing this, the
ʿdhīhīnī imagery of Abû Tammām will also be discussed.

\(^{4^5}\) Al-Jurjānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-2.
\(^{4^7}\) Al-Qarṭājānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-9.
Abū Tammām shocked his contemporaries with his strange metaphors, which are usually attributed to a desire not follow the traditions of Arabic poetry, and his critics claimed that the similitude in his two part metaphors was either very weak or absent altogether. Al-Āmidī, for example, criticises some of Abū Tammām’s metaphors, describing them as ‘ugly’.\(^4\) In his view, they do not reflect the Arabic style, which he explains in the following manner:

> "وإنما استعارت العرب المعنی لما لسی له إلا كان يقاربه أو يدانیه، أو يشبهه في بعض أحواله، أو كان ساباً من أسبابه ...


> “The Arabs usually borrowed the word for new meaning if the meaning was close to the original meaning of the word or if there was a kind of similarity or rationale [between the original meaning and the borrowed one] ...”

In contrast to the views of classical critics, it is argued here that Abū Tammām’s images are not inherently ‘strange’ or ‘weak’, although they were ground-breaking and different at the time. Abū Tammām was interested in dealing with innovative subject material in his poetry, such as abstract concepts (i.e. ‘epoch’) or notions (i.e. people’s characteristics). Thus, these metaphors reflect his tendency for dealing with conceptions and notions: the

\(^4\) Ibid, p. 213.
reason for finding them ‘strange’ lies in the abstract, ‘aql’ nature of his use of the two parts of poetic imagery and the nature of the similitude.

Abū Tammām’s personification of epoch is widespread in his poetry and deserves special mention, as it exemplifies the shift towards the dhihni type of imagery. In his poems, epoch is usually personified and given human qualities. For example, in the following line time is called to change ‘his’ aggressive, unacceptable manner and is given jugular veins just like man:

\[
\text{يا دهر عدد من أحسنك فقد أضحكت هذا الأنان من خرقك.}^{50}
\]

In another example, time is knocked down by day and night’s problems:

\[
\text{خطبك كان الدهر منهن يصرع. تروح علينا كل يوم وتغتدي}^{51}
\]

On the other hand, people’s characteristics are brought to focus in the poetic arena. In Arabic poetry, generosity is considered as one of the main merits of the gentleman. Abū Tammām emphasises the importance of this quality by concentrating on generosity itself and personifying it as in the following line where generosity is defeated by his poetry and falls down:

\[
\text{فخره ضرعا بين أيدي القصائد. جذبت تده غذوة السبت جذبة}^{52}
\]

---

50 Ibid., p. 208.
51 Ibid., p. 209.
The following diagram clarifies the nature of the two parts of this image as well as the point of similarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>1st entity</th>
<th>2nd entity</th>
<th>Point of similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Time (I)</td>
<td>Man (S)</td>
<td>Arrogance (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Time (I)</td>
<td>Man (S)</td>
<td>Weak (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Generosity (I)</td>
<td>Man (S)</td>
<td>Defeated (I)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (5) Examples of Dhihnī Images in Abū Tammām’s Poetry. (S) Refers to ḥissī and (I) Refers to dhihnī.

The table shows that there are at least two dhihnī aspects in this particular image: the first entity and the point of similarity. The first image, for example, concentrates on a mental attribute of man, ‘arrogance’. Furthermore, the second entity, that is to say ‘man’, is not a pure form of the ḥissī type, since it reflects both man’s physical and mental attributes.

This discussion of Abū Tammām’s imagery should not be closed without reference to the findings of al-Rabbā’ī’s study of his poetic imagery, Al-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fi Shi’r Abî Tammām.53 One of his conclusions in particular may need to be revised as in light of the recognition of Abū Tammām’s role as the pioneer of the dhihnī type of poetic imagery in the ‘ Abbasid era. Al-Rabbā’ī divides the images used by Abû Tammām into two types: ḥissī and ‘aqīlī, and then sub-divides the second type ( ‘aqīlī ) into three further sub-types: model,

---

abstract and verbal. Regarding the second sub-section (abstract), he makes the following comment:

"In any case, the these images, which number 108, have a limited presence in his poetry in comparison with [his ] images] which exceed 6000, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Thus, the low percentage these represent does not greatly change the general trend of the image, that trend we have already seen according to which he tends towards the portrayal of sensory subjects."

As this illustrates, al-Rabbāṭ reaches his conclusion by comparing the total number of images to those of images in the work of the same poet. For two main reasons, this conclusion is hard to accept. First, bearing in mind the strong presence of the image in Arabic poetry in general, simply stating that its prevalence is not enough to indicate the style of the poet, or to pass judgement on his use of other types of image. Secondly, this type of

---

54 Ibid., p. 156
55 Ibid., p. 160.
image might be considered as an indicating image. Abû Tammām's usage of images of the 'aqlī type, although substantially less frequent than his use of ḥissī images, can still cast some light on his poetic craft. This can be proved by comparing the percentage of ḥissī and 'aqlī images in his poetry, to the percentage of similar images used by another poet. If, for example, one takes Ibn al-Mu’tazz as an example, the total number of 'aqlī images in his Diwān is approximately 40 as opposed to ḥissī images, which total around 6000 images and make up the largest proportion of images in his poetry. In contrast, the proportion of 'aqlī images in Abû Tammām's poetry exceeds three times the amount found in that of Ibn al-Mu’tazz. The large number of ḥissī images with both poets does indeed indicate the prevalence of this image type in Arabic poetry in general, however, it is widely agreed that Abû Tammām's craft lies in the dominance of the 'aqlī image in his poetry.

Examples of *dhihnī* images in Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s *Dīwān* are few in number (approximately 40) and demonstrate less innovation than the *fiissī* type. Most of Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s *dhihnī* images are represent simple types, as in the following examples in which he addresses human action, feeling and emotion. In his images, positive aspects are compared to a bird, parts of a bird (i.e. its wings) or its actions (i.e. flying), while negative aspects are compared to old clothes. Happiness, for example, is a bird:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{هَنَّئْكَ أمِيرُ المؤمنينَ} & \quad \text{خِلافةً} \\
\text{أنتَكَ على طَيْرِ السَّعَادَةِ} & \quad \text{وَاليَمِينَ.} 
\end{align*}
\]

while a bird’s wings are used in reference to ‘wings of peace’, as in the following image:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{وَلَمَّا أَقَرَّتْ فِي بَدْيَكَ} & \quad \text{عَنَانَها} \\
\text{تَشَرَّتْ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا} & \quad \text{جِنَاحًا مِنَ الأَمْنِ.} 
\end{align*}
\]

On the other hand, there are a considerable number of images in which the poet uses clothes to compare them with people’s characteristics. Thus, members of his own family in disagreement are like an old piece of cloth which is full of holes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ثُمَّ هُمُّ كَالْنَّوْبَ} & \quad \text{أَعْيَا تَارِكًا} \\
\text{لَوْ رَأَيَ فِيهِ} & \quad \text{مَضَحَّا لَرَقُعً.} 
\end{align*}
\]

---

The same image is repeated again to describe the poet’s feelings towards people in general after the death of his relatives and his growing pessimism:

ولايت الناس نوبًا بعدكم  
خلاقا ما فيه لي من مرقع.
4- Ḥissī Images in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

4-1- The Presence of Different Senses.

Most of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Ḥissī images are derived from visual sources, to the extent that this poet may be considered a visual poet. These visual images will be dealt with later in this chapter, but first images devoted to other senses will be discussed here. Images relating to senses other than vision barely figure in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, with the notable exception of the sense of hearing. Images relating to hearing are of special interest to this poet and reveal his fondness for music, which can be understood in the light of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's further gift for music and composition.58 Often, in his images, the sound of birds and musical instruments and the voice of man are exchanged. Hence birds produce sounds as beautiful as those of a talented singer or a musical instrument such as a reed pipe or flute:

قَتَحَلُّهُن كِرَوْضَةٌ مِنْ لُجْعٍ 
وُكَآئَمَا يَصُفُّرُ مِنْ قُصَبَاتٍ 59

مِنْ كُلِّ صَدَاحٍ العشِيَّ صَقَارٌ 
كَانَتْ مُرَجْعُ في مِزَمارٍ 60

The voice of one bird is also compared to a certain style of singing. Al-Qumrî, one of the poet's favourite singing birds, gives *taḍrīb* (enrapturement):

---

On the other hand, the voice of a female singer is like the voice of al-Qumrī:

وُقَّرَتْ آذِنَةُ الْعَرْفِ شَمَالًا عَرْفُتْ فِي هَا رَقَبَةُ كَالْخَمْرِ

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's sensitivity towards different voices can also be found in images dealing with natural elements and reflecting different psychological conditions. For example, wind has a high tone that destroys the quietness of the night:

مُرْقَةُهَا عَرْفُ شَمَالًا عَرْفُتْ فِي هَا رَقَبَةُ كَالْخَمْرِ

and the sound of rain falling on small stones is like the combined sounds of singing and dancing:

فَألَقَى عَلَى الدَّلِّرَ أَتْقَالَهُ وَدَجلَةُ فَالقَالَاءُ المفْرِد

بَيْلَ يُرْقَصُ شَطَبَةٌ تَقَالُ حَصَى الصَّفَصَرِ الأَجْرَادِ

However, one particular aural image provides a good illustration of the fundamental importance of common understanding of signifier and signified between poet and receiver in the use of imagery:

In this image, the neighing of the poet's horse is seen by him as a bird singing, and conveys his love of this sound or his positive attitude towards it. However, this image jars with this particular receiver, to whom the very same sound conjures up a disturbing, braying noise, with negative, rather than positive associations.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, images derived from the other senses are scant and of little interest. On occasion, the scent of flowers or fruit reminds the poet of the smile of his beloved and places he loves. Bitter oranges, for example, remind lovers of the smile of their beloveds:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also recognises the breeze that comes from a childhood place, which is called Ghummā, as it is mixed with carnation and camphor:

---

65 *Diwān*, v. II p. 370.
The last sense to be mentioned here is taste. In this case, the exchanging of letters between the poet and his beloved is as sweet as the taste of honey:

ألا لا أرى كالدار إذ تحنَّ جيرة
بسرّ أحاديث عذاب لَو آتَها
جنتى الشهد لم يلفظ حلاوة التحل

4-1-1- Types of Visual Images.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as previously stated, is the master of the ٍىٍصُ스ُ
"Know that what makes simile more accurate and magic is that it comes with countenance that is accompanied with movements. The intended countenance could be in one of two ways: (first) to be accompanied with some attribute like form, colours and likewise and (second) to come on its own without anything else ...”

He supports this claim with numerous examples, three of which will be cited here. For the first type, he gives the following line in which the sun is compared to a mirror held in quivering hands, where the focus is on the attribute of light and the circular form of both entities:

والمشمس كالمرآة في كف الأدّلٚ

He illustrates the second type with the image of a ship moving up and down, which is compared to a monkey jumping on water:

---

70 Al-Jurjānī, Asrār, pp. 164-5.
71 Ibid., p. 165. Abu-Deeb, Al-Jurjānī’s Theory, p. 117 translates this line as follows: “The sun is like a mirror in the hand of a trembling man.”
Finally, in the following image in which the extended circular ripples of water in a brook resemble eyebrows that are permanently raised, the extension of the circular countenance occurs in both the waves and the eyebrows:

```
كان في غدّرانها حواجباً طلّت نَمّطاً
```

Al-Jurjâni provides some other insightful observations. He notices that the static ḥay'a can itself be in different forms, for example, the position of a man sleeping or sitting up. When discussing dynamic images, he distinguishes between two movements; the first and more basic one is a movement that goes in one direction only; the second is a combined one where movement goes in different directions.

```
وأما هيئة الحركة مجردّة من كل وصف يكون في الجسم فيقع فيها نوع
من التركيب بأن يكون للجسم حركات في جهات مختلفة نحو أن بعضها
يتحرك إلى يمين والبعض إلى شمال وبعض إلى فوق وبعض إلى قدم
ونحو ذلك، وكلما كان التفاوت في الجهات التي تحرك أبعاد الجسم
إليها أشدّ كان التركيب في هيئة المتحرك أكثر، فحركة الرحا والدولاب
```

---

72. *Ibid.*, 167. He gives the following definitions: 'Al-Rabān is the young camel or the monkey and al-kar'u is the rain' (167).
73. *Ibid.*, 166. Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjâni’s Theory*, p. 118 provides the following translation: “As if there were, in its springs, eyebrows which kept on lifting [or stretching].”
"As for the moving countenance which is free of any other attributes, it comes with a degree of complexity. The movement of objects can be in different directions e.g. some moving right while others move left, or some up and other down and likewise. The greater the difference of directions, the greater the complexity. The movement of a hand mill, a wheel and the movement of arrows are without any complexity; they move in one direction ...

The second point which can be taken from al-Jûrjânî’s theorisation relates to the technique of particularisation. Through comparing particularisation to generalisation (jumla), al-Jûrjânî emphasises the importance of the former. He points out that the soul comprehends things in their entirety, then moves to their particularity.77 Throughout the course of his analysis of different aspects of this technique, he shows that the greater the particularity between the two compared objects, the finer the poetic image becomes. As will be demonstrated in the course of this chapter, Ibn al-Mu’tazz is a great practitioner of the technique of particularization, a claim that is supported by a-Jurjânî’s discussion of it; most of the images he uses to illustrate this phenomenon come from Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s poetry.

76 Ibid., p. 167.
77 Ibid, p. 147.
In his *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, Abu-Deeb has carried out an extensive examination of the different types of particularisation classified by al-Jurjānī, and his application of his critical theories.\(^7\) Depending on different factors, he distinguishes between three types of particularisation. The first is considered to be the most common one and can be seen in three forms:

"... basing the similarity on a part of an attribute, leaving out other parts which are ordinarily associated with it, ... relat[ing] a number of attributes of the thing compared (*mushabbah*), considering them individually and in relation one to the other, to a number of similar attributes in another object' ... [and] concentrat[ing] on a particular detail of the attribute in the object compared."\(^7\)

The second 'is carried out in the context of his [al-Jurjānī] analysis of the remoteness and strangeness of the point of similarity'; this can be found in his analysis of the complex simile.\(^8\) The third is, rightly, deemed to be the deepest type of particularisation, in which 'the poet may pursue the details of his imagery, thus achieving accuracy and visual vividness'.\(^8\)

Two examples from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry will be given to illustrate such theorisation. Al-Jurjānī defines the first type of particularisation as being

---

\(^8\) Ibid, pp. 112-3.
\(^8\) Ibid, pp. 114-5.
\(^8\) Ibid, p. 116.
'where the poet relates a number of attributes of the thing compared (mushabbah), considering them individually and in relation to one another, to a number of similar attributes in another object.'\textsuperscript{82} He then refers to an image in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz's image compares the appearance of the Pleiades to a bunch of grapes in blossom as an example.\textsuperscript{83} Abu-Deeb explains this image in the following manner:

"[T]he poet considered the stars themselves, their shape and colour, and also the relations between them, i.e., the spatial position of each in relation to the others. He then looked at those elements forming one whole or entity of certain characteristics. Then the poet discovered the similitude between the Pleiades thus visualised and a bunch of long white grapes."\textsuperscript{84}

The third type defined by al-Jurjānī is illustrated with another line from Ibn al-Mu'tazz, in which he compares the appearance of the day through the darkness of night to the appearance of the hidden, white feathers of a crow's wing through black ones when it unfolds its wings:

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid}, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid}, p. 150. Abu-Deeb, \textit{Al-Jurjānī's Theory}, p. 112 translates this line in the following manner: "The Pleiades appeared in the morning ... like a bunch of long white grapes in blossom"

\textsuperscript{84} Abu-Deeb, \textit{Al-Jurjānī's Theory}, p. 113.
The particularisation and beauty of this line are described by al-Jûrjânî in the following terms:

"شيّة [ابن المعتز] الليل حين يظهر فيه الصبح بأشخاص الغريبان، ثم شرط ان تكون قوادم ريشها بيضاً" لان تلك الفرق من الظلمة تقع في حواشيها من حيث تلي معظم الصبح وعموده لمع نور تخيّل منها في العين كشكل قوادم اذا كانت بيضاء، وتمام الدقيق والسحر في هذا التشبيه في شيء آخر وهو أن جعل ضوء الصبح لقوة ظهوره ودفعه لظلام الليل كأنه يفرح الدجى ويستعملها ولا يرضى منها بأن تتمهل في حركتها."

"The poet has related by similarity the darkness of the night with the appearance of dawn through it to the body of the crow. He then sets the condition that the ends of the crow's feathers are white because through the margins of the parts of darkness there appear flashes of light which the eye sees to be like the white ends of the front parts of the wings. The perfection of the particularization and the fascination in this tashbih lie in something else, namely that the poet has pictured the light of dawn, in its strength as it rises and pushes the

85 Al-Jûrjânî, Asrār, p. 162. Abu-Deeb, Al-Jûrjânî’s Theory (117) translates this line in the following manner:
"As if we were, with the light of dawn hurrying the night way, startling a white-winged crow into flight".

86 Al-Jûrjânî, Asrār, p. 162.
darkness of the night before it, as making the darkness hurry away.\textsuperscript{87}

In general, Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s poetry offers an extensive body of interesting images that can be treated from the point of view of particularisation. Images relating to colour and calligraphy, in particular, can be seen in light of this technique. For this reason, al-Jurjānī’s theory will now be applied to his \textit{Diwān}. His visual images will now be divided into two main groups: static images and dynamic images. However, in a modification to al-Jurjānī’s classification scheme, another, third, category will be introduced for images of colour, some of which are static while others are dynamic.

Before proceeding further, some notes will be made here on Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s obsession for perceiving the world in a sensuous manner. He appears to have an endless source of tangible imagery, ranging from man’s body to everyday tools, not forgetting plants and flowers. Parts of the human body are the source for some of his static and dynamic images. To cite just a few examples from a long list, nothing can show precisely the thin shape of a crescent more than the shape of a nail cutting:

\begin{quote}
أَعْمَلُهَا وَالـۡنَّارُ مُؤْنِئٌ
\end{quote}

or the comparison of the crescent moon and Pleiades to a half ring and a

\textsuperscript{87} Abu-Deeb, \textit{Al-Jurjānī’s Theory}, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 592.
hand pointing to that ring:

وكان الهلال نصف سوار
والثرية كف تشير إليه 89

However, the following image, in which the mouth of a hunting dog is compared to two pieces of wood with nails in them, is one of the most striking images in this context:

وَلَحْيَانٌ كَاللوحينَ رَكَبَ فِيهِا 90

A poet is usually said to be like a painter because they both observe objects and transfer them to a poem or to a painting, with some changes in the original form of these objects. Ibn al-Mu’tazz, however, is more like a photographer who does not only faithfully copies the objects, but chooses the angle of and distance from which they are viewed: it is with a photographer’s mind and camera technique that he zooms the magnification and framing of the shot to exactly the right place so to include all the necessary objects in perfect placement. For example, to take a picture of people gathering in a small place, one needs to photograph from a distance to include everyone, with the result that they will then appear to be as tiny as a pomegranate’s seeds, just as Ibn al-Mu’tazz does in the following lines:

قد ضمّني من ضيقته سيجُن

89 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 655.
90 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 54.
Another photographic technique is that of focusing on one central object and bringing other objects in beside or around it. Thus, the blaze on a horse’s head under its forelock is like the burgeoning fruit of a palm tree, *ṭal’a*, peeping out between the fronds, or a cluster of grapes between the tendrils of the vine:

ولها غرة وناصية تتشت ـ ق عنها كطلعة بين خوص.

إذا ما بدا أبصت غرة وجهه كعنقود كرم بين غصنين نورا.

4-2- Static Images.

The focus in these images is mostly on countenance, which can be found in two shapes: circular and linear. Related to these are images in which the second extreme is drawn from calligraphy. Because of the importance and frequency with which these calligraphic images are used an independent section will be devoted to them.94

Plants, especially flowers, and animals, in particular scorpions and birds provide the poet with complete and incomplete circular forms. A shape which

---

91 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 646.
93 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 110.
94 See this chapter, section 6.
is completely round can be seen in the following image in which warriors wearing helmets are compared to heads without hair:

In a similar vein is the simile describing a plant of the carnation family, *khurram*, the fruit of which is compared to the head of a peacock:

The point of similarity in this static image form is not always so obvious as in the previous examples, for example a cluster of stars resembles lilies:

while another image specifies that these stars appearing at the end of the night resemble flowers in bloom, or a silver bridle:

The habitat of bird’s is another source of round images. Alongside the

---

traditional image in which tent pegs are compared to pigeons, there are a number of other images which represent Ibn al-Mu'tazz's admiration for the shape of objects. Thus, the footprint of a horse is described as like the mark left by a sand grouse on the sand, or the place where an ostrich lays its eggs:

```
*"س, او:  
```

and the Pleiades are like the eggs themselves:

```
إضاتاً أرديَّا يَلْحَنَ يَقْدَقَر
```

Incomplete roundness can be seen in images describing boats and hunting dogs. In one poem, the curved shape of boats resembles the pointed tail of a scorpion:

```
ديابها والجبة  
حكي زواياها في  
عقارب نشائات

اذنباها مخشيي
```

Hunting dogs seen from a distance also suggest to Ibn al-Mu'tazz the pointed tail of a scorpion:

---

99 As in the following lines:

\[ \text{Diwān, v. III, pp. 62-3.} \]

100 \[ \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 72.} \]

101 \[ \text{Diwān, v. I, p. 87.} \]

102 \[ \text{Diwān, v. II, pp. 260-1.} \]
Linear shaped images, however, are fewer in number. They are, in general, divided into two groups. In the first, tree boughs are compared to women’s figures, as in a line that compares a narcissus stem to poplars. In another example, cyprus trees are compared to the figures of servant girls wearing green dresses:

A similar image, in terms of its linear shape, is that of wine jars lined up in a straight row, which are given movement when compared to a group of men set up to dance the *dastabanda*.

In the second group, hunting dogs seen from a distance are like a leather belt:

---

103 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 32.
104 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 130.
106 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 93.

232
and, in another poem, a snake is also compared to a belt of leather:

قاحل كالنفر لو قطعة
غريب سيف لم يجد فيه بلل

5- Dynamic Images.

Movement is an essential feature in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's style of formulating ġissi images. Movement at a different speed and in different directions is observed in human beings, birds and some natural phenomena such as wind, rivers and streams. Images of slow movement are mostly of a traditional nature, thus sunrise and sunset are like the human actions of standing up and sitting down respectively:

\[
\text{ـ حتى إذا النجم بدا لي كالقبس، قام الظهار في ظلام قد جنس.}^\text{109}
\]

doing sujūd or rukū' is the counterpart in the following light-hearted image of falling walls:

\[
\text{ـ فكم كم جدار لنا مائل، وأخر يسجد أو يركع.}^\text{110}
\]

the river Euphrates flows in one direction like a snake:

\[
\text{ـ يَمَعُّ الفرات لَها فَسْلَسْلَ جَدْوَلًا، مَتَسِرِيًا في كَرْمِهَا كَالآرْف.}^\text{111}
\]

and likewise the flow of wine echoes the mark of a leather belt on the body of a camel:

\[
\]

\text{109 Diwān, v. II, p. 448.}
\text{110 Diwān, v. II, p. 611.}
\text{111 Diwān, v. III, p. 85.}

\text{234}
However, as well as using traditional dynamic images, it is this genre of imagery in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz particularly shows his skill in formulating fine images. In a fine example, his sharp observant eye does not miss the resemblance between the movement of a bull scratching boughs with his horn and a leathersmith piercing a shoe:

or that between the heavy fall of an eagle's claws and the action of a pick shattering a stone:

likewise, arrows piercing a hunted animal are like nails driven into a piece of wood:

Rapid movement is also mentioned in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry and the human
hand provides numerous images that convey speed, as in the following example in which the horse’s gallop is compared to the rapid movement of a cashier’s fingers, as he counts money with both hands:

ولهَّ ارْيَعَ تَراهُ إِذَا هَمُّ

In hunting poetry, hunting animals such as dogs and cheetahs are compared to a strong wind:

عَواصِفُ منْهَيْاتٍ لَلْأَمْدُدْ
وَالَّذِي أُطِلَقَتْ مِنْ فَلاَدَانِهَا
قَرْنُيَّةٌ مِنْ بَنَاتِ الرَّيْا
حِيْرُهُ عَلَى الأَرْضِ شَدَّاً عَجِبَ

The fast movements of a female gazelle when standing up on its legs is like that of hands collecting shells:

وَإِذَا ما هَبَّ مِنْ رَقْفَةٍ
فَخَانَهَا مِنْ شِبْيَ مَائِلٍ
لُقِتْ أَبَدًا صِدْفَ السَّاحِلِ

In addition, birds and pebbles are compared to different objects performing various actions. For example, scissors trimming grey hair are compared to the

---

beaks of crows picking at ears of wheat:

The last example in this category is one in which the pebbles under horses' feet are compared to bees or locusts:

The concept of objects moving in different or opposite directions also attracts Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Thus, lightning and the quick change between its bright flash and the following darkness is described in terms of the rapid beating of a goshawk's wings:

alternatively, lightning occurs as quickly as the belly of a snake that turns over suddenly:

\[\text{Dīwān, v. II, p. 182.}\]
\[\text{Dīwān, v. I, p. 144.}\]
\[\text{Dīwān, v. II, p. 562.}\]
Furthermore, Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s projection of his feelings is evident in many of his images, for example, the following lines which are extracted from an elegy in which the dominant theme is loss.\footnote{\textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 41.} Ibn al-Mu'tazz is here lamenting the fact that man obtains things like wealth or friends only to suddenly lose them. In this context, the movement of the camel’s legs is coloured by his feelings – the front leg makes a request while the rear leg dismisses it:

\begin{quote}
تحملني طرقة صادرة واردّ
ترضيك في يومها وهي عدا رانده
وحلها تقتضي وينها جاحده\footnote{\textit{Diwān}, v. III, pp. 154-156.}.
\end{quote}
6- Calligraphic Images.

Images derived from calligraphy are numerous in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's \textit{Dīwān}, comprising a total of approximately 65. Before discussing this particular poet's use of calligraphic images, the overall issue of the importance and significance of calligraphy, considered to be the most pure Arab-Islamic art form, must be placed into context. Hitti states that:

"The art of calligraphy, which drew its prestige from its object to perpetuate the word of God, and enjoyed the approval of the Koran (68:1, 96:4) arose in the second or third Moslem century and soon became the most highly prized art. It was entirely Islamic and its influence on painting was appreciable."\textsuperscript{125}

Burckhardt also acknowledges this when he asserts: '[t]he art of Arabic writing is by definition the most Arab of all plastic arts of Islam.'\textsuperscript{126}

Nevertheless, although calligraphy has been defined as a specifically Arab art form, participation in this field was not restricted to the Arabs alone and all Muslims from any background were able to become involved in the invention of new writing styles and opening up new horizons in this creative art. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that a Persian, Sībawayh, is the author of the first known work on Arabic grammar. Burckhardt illustrates this when stating that this art of writing:


“... belongs ... to the entire Islamic world, and is even considered to be the most noble of the arts, because it gives visible form to the revealed word of the Qur’an. Princes and princesses practised copying out the Sacred Book in beautiful script. Calligraphy is also the art most widely shared by all Muslims, since anyone who can write is in the position to appreciate the merits of a good calligrapher, and it can be said without fear of exaggeration that nothing has typified the aesthetic sense of the Muslim peoples as much as the Arabic script.”¹²⁷

In a more pertinent comment, given the context of the current discussion of calligraphic art and its relationship to, and portrayal in, poetry, in “Calligraphy and poetry” Schimmel offers valuable examples of the use of Arabic calligraphy in poetry by poets from different backgrounds: Andalusian, Persian, Turkish and Indian.¹²⁸ She points out that:

“Mas’ud ibn Sa’d-i Salman in Lahore gave the image of the pen a different twist, which may be attributable to his Indian background:

[The pen] bound the infidels’ girdle and became a worshipper of

¹²⁷ Ibid.
For this reason the master cut its neck".\textsuperscript{129}

African Islamic poetry may offer different tastes to the anthology. The following, striking image is mentioned by Topan for its innovative use of the Arabic letters of the name of the Prophet

\textquoteright ... as a symbol for the human body, and thus mankind\textquoteright. The poetry goes as follows:

The form of man \textit{[insān, human being]} holds your name, my trusted one, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. First the initial \textit{mīm}, the head is its sign; the two hands are \textit{he}; the second \textit{mīm} is the feet on which man walks (Allen 1971:87).\textsuperscript{130}

In the \textquoteleft Abbasid era, the widespread use of calligraphy was linked to people\textquotesingle{s} devotion and service to the Qur\textasciitilde{ā}n, a fact which was echoed in the poetry of the time. Ibn al-Mu\textasciiacute{t}azz mentions the word \textit{mu\textasciitilde{sh}āf} when referring to the written copy of the Qur\textasciitilde{ā}n, and in describing the movement of the Qur\textasciitilde{ā}n when opened and closed:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 117. \\
\end{flushright}
6-1- General Background

6-1-1 Calligraphic Imagery From Pre-Islamic to 'Abbasid Poetry.

The use of calligraphic images in poetic creation is as old as Arabic poetry itself; pre-Islamic poetry stands as a solid example of this. In his description of the ruins of the beloved's abandoned campsite, Imrû' al-Qays makes what may be the oldest mention of calligraphy in poetry when he compares the ruins to writings on the psalter:

ورَسَمَ عَقِبَتُ أَيْتَاهُ مِنْذُ أُرُمَانٍ
قَفَّا نِبْكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَعَرْفَانٍ
كَحْلُ زَبْرُ فِي مَصَاحِفِ رَهْبَانٍ

Another calligraphic image can be found in the poetry of al-Akhnas b. Shihāb al-Taghlibi, who compares the remaining ruins of the abode of his beloved, the daughter of Ḥaṭṭān b. ‘Awf, with the title of a book:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ولايِنَة حَطَّانٌ بْنَ عَوْفٍ مَّنازلٌ} \\
\text{كَمَا رَقِّشَ الْعِنَّانَ فِي الْرَّقَّ كَانَ} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In his discussion of poetic imagery, al-Jurjani gives an example of the use of calligraphic tools in poetry in which the poet ‘Adyy b. al-Raqa‘ compares the sharp end of the female gazelle’s horn with the coloured sharp end of a pen:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{نَرْجِي أَعْنَ كَانَ إِبْرَةٌ رِقْعٍ} \\
\text{قَلْمُ أَصَابُ مِنَ الدَّوَائِر مَدَائُهَا} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The main observation that can be made here is that calligraphy is used in a general and uncomplicated sense. The pre-Islamic poet generally seems to draw images of writing in which the written script is the counter of things which are not clearly seen or have been destroyed and the use of images derived from writing appears to have become a convention when describing ruins. It is not until the ‘Abbasid era that poets use calligraphy in a more sophisticated fashion, as can be illustrated by the following three examples

---


137 Al-Jurjani, Asrār, p. 141.
drawn from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Diwān*.

However, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's calligraphic images seem related to positive topics connected with life's enjoyment, such as descriptions of the beautiful features of a beloved or a wine boy, wine (especially its foam), and the hunter and hunted.

As part of the increasing sophistication and development of the calligraphic art specific calligraphic techniques were developed, for example writing styles like *al-Thuluth*, *al-Naskh*, *al-Diwan* and so on; there were as many as twelve writing styles by the beginning of the 'Abbasid time, each of which served a

---

138 It is interesting to note that this relation has shifted from poetry to painting. Bahnasi (130) shows the ‘new victory’ of calligraphy on painting as in the following passage:

"في الفن الحديث، حقق الخط انتصاراً جديداً في بعيدين، الأول عند توحيد الحروف مع التشكيل ... والثاني هو بعد الأصالة، والخط العربي الذي نشأ على مهاد العبرية العربية التشكيلية، استطاع أن يسعف الفنان العربي بتقديم لوحة عربية ذات خصائص فنية ... "

'In modern art, calligraphy achieved new victories in two aspects: the first aspect is the fusion of letters and paint, and the second is originality. Arabic calligraphy, the product of Arabic paint ingenuity, provides the Arabic artist with paintings that reflect the national identity... ' Bahnasi, 'A, Jamaliyyat al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabi biwaṣfihī Fannan Ibad'īyyān, in Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī: fa'liyyāt Ayyām al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī, (Tunisia: 2001), pp. 111- 136.

139 *Diwān*, v. III, p. 45.
140 *Diwān*, v. I, p. 29.
A related field of development was that of specific writing techniques such as *tashqiq*, *tawriq*, *mashq*, and *ta'riq*. This attention to form and detail is reflected in the fact that the shape of some letters became the focus for poetic images, rather than the general act of writing referred to in pre-Islamic poetry. It was Abû Nuwwâs who pioneered this new type of calligraphic imagery, as can be seen, for example, in the following image in which he compares the beak of a falcon with the shape of the *jîm* letter written with the left hand:

كَانَ عِينِيَهُ إِذَا مَا أَتَارَا
في هَيَامَةٍ غَلِيِّاَهُ نَهَيَانَ منَسَرا

Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s poetry, as we will see, also offers a number of examples of this kind of image.

6-1-2- The Nature of Some Calligraphy Images.

This section should not be brought to a close without reference to Abu-Deeb’s insightful remarks on some aspects of the nature of the poetic imagery of pre-Islamic poetry in general, and calligraphic images in particular. For example, the following image, from a poem by al-Nâbigha, in which the poet compares the ruins that have been affected by the wind blowing over the

---

144 Al-Jurjânî, *Asrâr*, p. 163.
Abu-Deeb sees in this line an opposition between,

"The effect of the destructive wind which destroys ruins, with all the connotations it entails regarding sadness, extinction and proof of the power of time, with a beautiful ornamented mat made by the delicate fingers of craftsmen, with all the connotations this entails relating to fine taste and the skill of man in inventing different creations; and of the opposition between the natural and the cultural ... "

This kind of opposition is also found the comparison of abandoned ruins to

---

written texts, as is the case in Labîd's *Mu'allaga*, and the work of Tha'laba b. 'Amr al-'Abdî, and Mu'awiya b. Mâlik. Tha'laba b. 'Amr al-'Abdî, for example, compares ruins to a piece of writing into which the author has put a great deal of effort so as to write in the most eloquent way possible:

\[\text{أكبّ عليها كاتبٍ نداً، يُقيمُ بذبيته تارةً، ويخاليف}^{151}\]

The metonymy in the second part of this line indicates how much effort is made to finalise the writing. In this kind of opposition, one will see that:

\[\text{... أن عملية التدمير تعابين من خلال عملية البناء والخلق، السكونية من خلال الحركة، والأسي من خلال القبطة والحس الجمالي، والانقطاع من خلال الاستمرارية.}^{152}\]

"The operation of destruction is seen through a creative and a constructive process, the static through the dynamic, sadness through happiness and fine taste; and disconnection through connection."

In harmony with the purpose of his study, Abu-Deeb does not offer a final conclusion about the interpretation of this phenomenon, namely the opposition of comparing negative objects to positive ones. However, in the

\[^{148}\text{Ibid., p. 647.}\]
\[^{149}\text{Ibid., pp. 647-9.}\]
\[^{150}\text{Ibid., pp. 649-50.}\]
\[^{151}\text{Ibid., p. 647.}\]
\[^{152}\text{Ibid., p. 649.}\]
light of his remarks, a comparison may be made between the calligraphic images of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (who represents to some extent, 'Abbasid poetry) and those originating from pre-Islamic times, in terms of topics and the point of similarity between the two entities that form poetic images. This comparison can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The era</th>
<th>The topic</th>
<th>The image</th>
<th>The nature of similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Islamic</td>
<td>Ruins (⁻)</td>
<td>Writing (⁺)</td>
<td>Opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abbasid</td>
<td>Love (⁺)</td>
<td>Calligraphy (⁺)</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wine (⁺)</td>
<td>Calligraphy (⁺)</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunt (⁺)</td>
<td>Calligraphy (⁺)</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (6) The Nature of Similarity in Pre-Islamic and 'Abbasid Poetry.

Thus, a first reading of the nature of similarity in pre-Islamic and 'Abbasid poetry gives the impression that there is a meaningful change in the way calligraphic images are used. It can also be said that the 'Abbasid poet brings these images a previously absent harmony between the two extremes of the poetic imagery as, unlike pre-Islamic poetry with its concentration on ruins, 'Abbasid poetry concentrates on some seemingly positive topics: love, wine and the hunt. However, this reading might be altered when it is taken into account that, in 'Abbasid poetry, and particularly in that of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, these topics often carry a hidden negative nature (as will be shown in Chapter Six). In Ibn al-Mu'tazz's case, he often used these seemingly positive topics as an escape from the harsh life he, the usurped crown prince, faced — barred from political involvement and living in fear of assassination or imprisonment.
In fact, it is through such topics that Ibn al-Mu'tazz often conveys his fear and negative feelings.

Further studies on the topics regarding writing in pre-Islamic poetry, as well as calligraphy in 'Abbasid poetry, are needed in order to formulate a better understanding of the nature of the similarity between the image topic and writing and calligraphy. Using such data, two conclusions can be reached. First, in terms of topics, these are of a directly negative nature in pre-Islamic poetry and an indirectly negative one in 'Abbasid poetry. Secondly, the point of similarity illustrates the contrasting nature of both eras and proves, to some extent, Abu-Deeb's previously mentioned findings.

6-1-3- Subject Matter.

The use of imagery relating to calligraphy and its associated terminology gave rise to a new style of poetry known as *al-badi*. A new era had begun, and huge changes took place in the poetic genre; new topics were invented, new techniques were used and different sources for poetic imagery were explored. In short, the whole poetic operation was rearranged and new tastes were established. Abu-Deeb argues that the extensive use of calligraphic imagery in poetry should be understood in the wider context of the use of grammar and its terminologies, as can be witnessed later in the poetry of al-Mutanabbi.153

---

153 As in the following line:

إذا كان ما تلوه فعلاً مضارعاً مسي قبل أن تلقى عليه الجوارمَ
The ‘Abbasid poet created a new source for his imagery, derived from cultural or conceptual notions rather than nature, the main subject of the poetry of previous eras. He calls this a shift from the ‘topic’ to the ‘tool’, and identifies this as a signal of modernity. Indeed, the appearance and development of the *dihnhî* style, of which, as mentioned earlier, Abû Tammâm was the master, is valid proof of such a claim.

Poets, in general, use calligraphy and its terminologies in two main ways. Either they concentrate on the physical shape of letters, for instance the straightness of the *alif* letter, or the roundness of the *mîm*, or in the second type of usage, letters are used as symbols of *sûfî* meanings. Such *sûfî* qualities in letters have been mentioned by al-Bahnasî, who states:

"... ثم إن للحرف قيمة قدسية سريه ، نراها واضحة في القرآن الكريم ، عندما نبتدد بعض السور بها مثل : (باء سين ، ونون ، وكاف ها ياء ، عين صاد ... ) إلخ ... وكثيراً ما نرى في الرفق العربي حروف منفصلة أو مهمه ، كانت هي ذاتها أساساً أو موضوعاً للوحة فنية. ويرجع ذلك إلى أن العرب وفي الإسلام خاصة، قد أعطوا لكل حرف مدلولاً خاصاً. أما الباء فلها حرمتها ، لأنها أول حرف في القرآن ، والجيم كانت كتابة عن الصدع ، والصداء هي مقلة الإنسانية ، والهاء هي الهوية الإلهية عند ابن عربي. والميم كانت تعتبراً عن الضيق ، أما الألف فقد كانت ذات أهمية خاصة عند العرب لأنها في مقام (أحد) وهي رمز لوحدة الله..."

"There is a secret holy value for the letter which we can see clearly in the holy Koran when reading the beginning of some chapters like َيَ سِنُ, َنُنُ, َكَفُ, َحَا, َيَا, َءَيْنُ, ُسَادُ, etc. Mostly what we see in the arabesque style are enjoined or unidentified letters which are the core of the painting. The reason for this is that the Arabs, especially in regard to Islam, gave every letter a special meaning. ِبَاءُ has its own sanctity as it is the first letter in the Koran, َجِيمُ meant temple, ُسَادُ is the eye ball of the man, َحَا is the Godly identity for Ibn ‘Arabî and ِمِمُ was an expression of distress. As for َلِفِ, it has a special importance as it is the first of the letters that make up one of God’s names, َ‘ان١/٣ (The One), it is an example of God’s singularity ...”

The following example from Anavari illustrates the use of one of the new calligraphic techniques, namely the addition of dots to the base shape of the letters, so as to distinguish consonants:

"From the letter of your sword appear the signs (َايَا) of victory; the composition of the verse (َايَا) is from dotted letters."

---

154 Bahnasi, op. cit., p. 65.
155 Quoted in Schimmel, op. cit., p. 118. She provides an excellent investigation of the topics or subjects dealt with using calligraphy.
6-4- General Use in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz mainly uses calligraphy to illustrate external attributes, a style of usage which agrees with his ḥissī tendencies. Beyond this, his calligraphic images can be grouped into two categories: 1) general use of the art, its terminology and actions, and 2) specific use of particular letters and dots. General use will be discussed in this sub-section, followed by specific use which will be addressed in the next.

Writing, lines, titles, writing pads, inkjars and the action of folding a book are used mainly in two genera: hunting poetry and wine poetry. For example, he describes wine-foam as being like lines of writing:

\[
\text{حروفَها من شَعَرَ الزعفران}^{156}
\]

There is a ‘particularisation’, as defined by al-Jurjānī, in this image. The writing is specified as being the colour of saffron, rather than black, in order to suggest the colour of the wine. In another image Ibn al-Mu'tazz tries to convey the commonly held perception that wine and its effects are somehow exotic and difficult to comprehend, and thereby portray the ambiguous nature of wine. Foam is compared with lines, the meaning of which is unknown:

\[\text{'يكَتُبُ فيها ماؤها أسطراً}

---

Similarly, comparing foam to written poetry:

Similarly, comparing foam to written poetry:

In hunting poetry, the colour of the breast of hunting birds, such as the falcon, goshawk, or zurraq, is compared to the writing of a sharp pen, while the colour of the breast of the bāzī is like indistinct writing in which the dots are not clearly marked:

In another image, which plays semantically on the Arabic word ‘unwān, which has at least two meanings – ‘the title’ and ‘the proof’ or ‘the signal’ – night is a book, the title of which has been erased by the appearance of the day:

In another use of this particular image source, night is depicted as

---

159 Diwān, v. II, p. 495.
disappearing like the [old] title:

(The word 'unwān in these two lines is used probably to mean ‘the title’ in consistence with the use of writing in poetry). The folded book is also compared to the tongue of the donkey:

while, in another image, the appearance of people drinking coffee is like black inkjars:

And a hunting dog catching its prey is folding a book to control it:

---

6-3- Specific Use in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Specific use, i.e. the focus on the shape of letters as well as dots and diacritical marks such as madda, can be said to be of more significance in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery than the general use previously discussed. Before investigating any specific poetic images, some basic information about the art of calligraphy should be mentioned. In Islamic culture, calligraphy is seen as an important operation that links man to the universe. The calligrapher invented his four main geometrical forms from the universe around him: the circle, triangle, square and quintuple. Bahnasî elaborates on this:

ومن مرتبّم الكون كانت الدائرة التي استوعيت جميع الأشكال الهندسية الأولى، المثلث والمربع والمخمس والتي استوعبت بدورها أنماط الخطوط العربية، فبدا المثلث إطاراً للثلث والنسخ، والمربع المائل إطاراً للرقعي، والدائرة سمة الديواني، والشكل البيضي طابع خط التعليق.

"And from the shape of the universe the circle came to contain basic geometric forms: the triangle, the square and the quintuple, which in turn, contained the different Arabic writing styles. The triangle was the framework for thulth and naskhî, the incline square was the framework for raqî, the circle was the framework for diwani and the elliptical shape was the
framework for taʿlīd'.”

The circle, in particular, plays an important role in the physical form of Arabic letters:

"The study of the metre of the calligraphy produced by Ibn Muqla proves clearly the connection of every letter with one of the universal forms. The circle is the core of these letters: ĥ, q, y, n, ‘a, w. Half circle is the core of s, ş. The quarter circle is the core of r. The triangle is the core of d, f and l. The square is the core of m and lа ... “

The following table provides an analysis of calligraphic images used by Ibn al-Muʿtazz that rely on the shape of particular letters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapes</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>ن - ق</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ circle</td>
<td>ص</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The circle dominates other shapes with more than twelve images out of the total fifteen. In this case, the image reliant on the letter م should be considered as having a circular shape rather than a square one because the poet focuses only on the round part. In another line, Ibn al-Mu'tazz repeats this conceit, this time comparing foam and a bunch of م letters:

١٦٧

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses the technique of *ta'riq*, which can be defined as follows:

١٦٨

"*Ta'riq* means highlighting letters such as n, y and other such..."
letters when they come at the end of the word as is the case when writing words like *min, 'an, fî, ilâ* and 'alâ. These words will take the same shape."

In this context, it can be inferred from the dominance of the circular shape in Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s use of *ta'rif* that he was interested in the *diwani* writing style.

There are a number of examples that can be cited here which demonstrate Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s use of calligraphic techniques in his poetry. For example, the letter ن is used to convey the shape of a particular hairstyle adopted by women during the 'Abbasid period in one image, and the curve of a temple is again portrayed as like the curve of the ن in the following line:

وِشَادَنُ عَذِبَةُ حُبُّهُ مَعََرَقَّ٣ مِنْ صِدِّيقِهِ نُون١٦٩

Another technique used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz is that of *mashq*. This is closely related to the techniques of *shaqq* and *tashqiq*, and the following definition, which describes *tashqiq* can also be applied to *mashq*:

"وَأَمَّا الْمَرَّادُ بِالْتَشْقِيقِ فَتَكْنِفُ الصَّادِ وَالضَّادِ وَالكَافِ وَالنَّافِعِ وَالْفَاءِ وَالْفَظَاءِ وَمَا أَشْهَبُهُ" ١٧٠

ذَلِكَ مَا يَحْفَظُ عَلَيْهِ الَّتِنَافِسِ وَالْتَساوِيِّ فَأَنَّ الشَّكْلَ بِهِ يَصْحُ وَمَعْهُ يَحْلُو١٧٠٨

١٦٩ دِیْوَان، v. ٢، p. ٤٧٧.
“Tashqiq means curving letters such as §, d, k, t, dh, and so on.
The [curve] shape with these letters looks sound and fine ...”

Thus, a lock of hair is as curved as the shape of the letter َّ:

وکساها قشر لولوة
مشق نون لنس بالقلم

while, in the context of hunting, the claws of a falcon are like a group of letters written alongside one another:

أفني المخاليب طلوب مارق
كاتها نونات كف الماشق

Hair is especially interesting to the poet. He goes on to formulate three other images using two letters: ق and ص. Here, a different hairstyle is in focus which, in contrast to that in the 'hair' image mentioned previously in this section, has not one lock but two:

وفق غزال ذي عزاز وطرة
صدغين كالفافين في طرفه سطر

Moving from women’s hair to men’s hair, in the following example, there are two images: one concerns the moustache of the beloved boy, or wine-boy,

and the other deals with the poet's own.

Furthermore, the appearance of grey hair among black is like the letter ص written in *shaqq*:

The last circular letter used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his calligraphic imagery is و. In a striking image which resembles a painting, the poet creates a simile for wine foam which hits upon two things: chain mail armour and a group of the letter و written together:

Last, but not least, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also bases some images on the letter أ. The straight shape of some tall plants and flowers, planted on the side of canals at a distance from one another, is described as like the shape of a group of the letter أ, written in lines:

---

176 Diwān, v. II, p. 43.
In terms of the markings denoting the various consonants, these dots are presented in two ways: with letters and on their own. In the *Diwān* as a whole, there are several occurrences of dots in Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s images, in the form of a single dot, three dots and a number of dots:

A beauty spot is like a single dot:

while three pigeons that remain in a ruin are like the three dots of the letter:

rain drops are like a number of dots:

---

177 *Diwān*, v. II, p. 519.  
Finally, hunting dogs at a distance resemble a *madda*:


\[
\text{شَبَّهَهَا لَحُظَيْي عَلَى تَنْبَوَي ١٨٢}
\]


\[
\text{بَمَدَّةٌ مِنْ قَلْمِ سَوْدَاء١٨٢}
\]

---

7 - Colours.

Different colours, pure and patterned, are used in the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, mainly to illustrate the external attributes of objects, while in some other images they convey, to some extent, various kinds of psychological effects. The colour black is used more than any other and is used to describe wineskins, ships, drinking vessels, hair and the darkness of night, amongst other subjects. When looking for counterparts for these subjects, the poet tends to search for the source of the colour black in parts of the human body and other objects. Some of these sources are rather disturbing for the modern reader, as when, for example, black wineskins are compared to the undressed corpses of black people:

أبا طيب مَن للمجالس والخمار وسحق زفاق شائلات بارحل كصرعي من السودان غير ذوي أزر

In other examples, drinking vessels resemble Ethiopian women and wineskins Africans:

قصبتها مجدداً لقومي وأحساماً نحاطب أمثالاً من السود أثراها

a ship is like a black woman:

and night is as dark as an Ethiopian woman:

It is true that these images might disturb the modern reader, however, some qualifying observations can be made here. First, there are obvious problems inherent in imposing modern moral and ethical concepts on classical poetry. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attitude should be understood in the context of the socio-political circumstances in which this poetry is composed. Abbasid society was a multi-racial one, in which people from different parts of the world integrated and mixed to produce a great civilisation, however this did not preclude the existence of a degree of racist views, which appear to have been widely held amongst both the common people and the ruling classes. Furthermore, this kind of image is not unique to either Ibn al-Mu'tazz or specifically Arab poets, but is of common stock in 'Abbasid poetry and can be easily identified even in the poetry of poets who are not of Arabic origin, such as Abû Nuwwâs and Ibn al-Rûmî.

187 The trend known as shu'ûbîyya, which will be discussed further in Chapter Six, with reference to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's opinions regarding different races, might be understood in this regard.
Moving on to the more general usage of colour images, these are very representative of the Ibn al-Mu'tazz's focus on the external attributes of the two extremes of the poetic image. Thus, the darkness of night is also compared with the blackness of pitch:

\[
\text{دمَّتُ ثلاثينَ شهراً في مقاصفها تسامَرُ الْذَّهْرُ في ليلٍ.} \quad \text{فِينَ الْقَارَ.} \quad 188
\]

while a crow is also a source of dark colour so that the blackness of the wine-maid’s hair is as the wing of a crow:

\[
\text{لَهُ طَرِيقةٌ كَجِنَاحٍ.} \quad \text{الْعِدَافُ.} \quad 189
\]

In some images black overlaps with white, resulting in an interesting image. For example, the rise of day over night attracted Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attention and he drew on it for some of his dynamic images, such as the following in which the appearance of the day over night is compared to the appearance of grey hair over black:

\[
\text{وَالصُّبْحُ مِنْ تَحْبُرِ الظَّلاَمَ.} \quad \text{كَأَنَّهُ.} \quad 190
\]

Grey hair in a parting is more noticeable and hence indicates a later time of day than that in the previous line mentioned:

---

190 Diwān, v. II, p. 496.
Day’s appearance over night is also compared with another moving counterpart, the appearance of white feathers over black ones in a crow’s wing:

Once one is aware of this last comparison, one can understand and appreciate some of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s more ambiguous images in which the crow is either not mentioned at all, or only a part is mentioned, as in the following example:

In this image, two things are seen in the first extreme – night and morning – while only one thing is seen in the second extreme – concealed white feathers, which are the counterpart for the morning. There is no counterpart for the night, however the reader will soon recognise the hidden element if

---

aware of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s other usage of this image. It is also possible, with some difficulty, to discover the hidden element by logical deduction, based on Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s mention of white feathers, which could bring out the hidden element of ‘the crow’s wing’ as the counterpart of the night.

As well as focusing on external attributes in his colour images, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also creates some images which include description of internal attributes as well, primarily images dealing with the brightness of fire. The power of war and its instruments, for example swords, arrows, horses, and even the smoke of war, are compared to fire. Thus, the effect of starting a war is like that of starting a fire.

\[\text{Qdhammu zanaa al-‘arab `ala `arab} \]

the sword is as bright as a fire:

\[\text{Wadd alaqa baas al-‘ud} \]

and swords and arrows make fire as they clash in battle:

\[\text{Walma haba al-zafan} \]

**Notes:**

196 *Diwan*, v. I, p. 84.
In addition, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz uses a number of related images in which death is given two colours, red and black:

\[
\text{وَ لقد أَخْضَبَ رَمْحِي وَسَيْفَي وَ جَوَهَرَ الْمَوْتَ سَوَءَ وَحَمْرٌ}^{198}
\]

and:

\[
\text{وَ كَلْ يُومَ عَسَكْرًا فَخْسَكْرًا بَالْكَرْحَةِ وَالْخُوَرَ وَمَوْتًا أَحْمَرًا}^{199}
\]

However, other images which describe fire reflect Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s predilection for concentrating on external attributes, as in the following image which describes the colour violet. The poet, in this image, chooses to describe violet in terms of the striking of a match, so as to illustrate two colours, red surrounded by blue, which resemble the exact colour combination of violet:

\[
\text{كَانَةُ وَضَفَاءُ القُصُبُ تَحْمِيلَةُ أوَائِلُ الْنَّارِ فِي أَعْوَادٍ كَبَّرَيْتٍ}^{200}
\]

Ibn al-Mu‘tazz also compares roses, and other kinds of flowers, and fruit to cheeks (although it should be noted that images comparing cheeks to roses are a convention of ‘Abbasid poetry and are by no means unique to this poet). The following line is an example of the ‘roses are cheeks’ image:

---

This is a good poetic image which conveys feeling and particularises both the first and the second extreme. The cheeks of a shy beloved are described as being of two colours, white in the centre and light red at their edges, overlapping colours which can be found in the rose. In other examples, apples and bitter oranges are also compared to cheeks:

\[\text{أناَّ الوردُ مبيِّباً مَصوَّنَا} \quad \text{كَانَ وَجُوُهَةٌ لَمَا تَواَقَتُ} \]

\[\text{كَمَا احْمَرَتْ مِنَ الْحَجْلِ.} \quad \text{بِيَضٍ في جُوَانِيِهِ احْمِرَرُ} \]

The last group of images that will be classified in this section concerns those relating to patterned colours in texture and furniture. For example, an ornamented wine glass is like an ornamented dress:

\[\text{تْفَاحَةٌ مَعْضُوَةٌ} \quad \text{كَانَتْ رِسُولٌ الْقُبُّلِ.} \]

\[\text{كَانَ تَنْقِبْتُ بِالْحَجْلِ.} \quad \text{كَانَ فيَّا وَجَنَّةٌ} \]

\[\text{صَفَرَيْتُهُ فِي حُمْرَةٍ كَاللُّهِبِ.} \quad \text{كَانَّا أَلْلَهِبُ لَمَا بَذَّتْ} \]

\[\text{فَاصْرَرَ نِمَّ أَحْمَرُ خُوَفُ الرَّقَيِّبِ.} \quad \text{وَجَنّةُ مَعْشُوَةٍ رَأَي عَاشِقَا.} \]

while another line consists of two images – the colour of a glass that is full of
wine is described as like saffron while a wine-jar is as black as ink:

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{205} Diwān, v. II, p. 91.} \]
In conclusion, in this chapter two primary types of poetic imagery have been identified as current at the time of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s life, the ḥissī (sensory) image and the dhīhnī (intellectual) image. Because of its widespread presence in the Qurān as well as in pre-Islamic poetry, the ḥissī image received more attention from the classical Arab scholars and was considered to be the ‘original form of comparison’. It has also been argued that each type of imagery can be divided into sub-divisions depending on the nature of the two parts of poetic imagery as well as the nature of the involved similitude. In terms of poetic creation in the ‘Abbasid era, Ibn al-Mu'tazz can be considered as the pioneer of the ḥissī image, whereas Abū Tammām is the pioneer of the dhīhnī image. Ibn al-Mu'tazz does use some dhīhnī images, but they show little novelty. His ḥissī images, on the other hand, are rich in quantity as well as quality, with heavy emphasis on visual sense.

Ibn al-Mu’tazz is also known for his fondness for depicting oppositional movement and his poetry provides a large number of both dynamic and static images. Likewise, his use of colour is also a characteristic element of his imagery, in which it is mostly used by to illustrate external attributes, although on some occasions colour is used to convey emotion.

One further feature of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s imagery that has been identified is that static images are often presented in terms of linear and circular shape.
Furthermore, his *Diwān* includes a large number (sixty-five) of related, calligraphic images that prove the poet’s fondness for this specific type of image. It has been mentioned that using calligraphy in poetry is as old as pre-Islamic poetry itself. An initial comparison between the use of calligraphy in pre-Islamic and ‘Abbasid poetry shows that the former covers negative topics, such as ruins, and the latter deals with positive topics like love, wine and hunting. In addition, Ibn al-Mu'tazz refers to calligraphic techniques such as *shaq* and *mashq* and letters of circular shape are predominant in his images. This information provides interesting evidence of this poet’s attachment to the *diwāni* writing style.
CHAPTER SIX: Fragmentation in Poetic Imagery.

1- What is Fragmentation?

Poetic imagery is probably the most expressive aspect of poetry and the one which tells us the most about the poet's mind and personality. Thus, this chapter will be devoted to the attempt to deduce further information about Ibn al-Mu'tazz through his images on the basis that the point of similarity between the two entities of poetic imagery is the key to discovering such an inner personality. It does not aim to rewrite the history of the man in the direct sense of the word 'history', but rather intends to reveal more about his taste as a man and poet, his likes and dislikes, opinions on life and people and, more importantly, his mental processes. To this end, specific historical events will be mentioned where they shed light on the poet.

The method used by Spurgeon in her treatment of Shakespeare's poetic imagery in Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us is at the heart of the analysis undertaken in this chapter. Further to this, however, use will also be made of terminology coined by Abu-Deeb in Jadaliyyat al-Khafāʾ wa'l-Tajali: Dirāsāt Binyawiyya fil-Shi'r, namely 'psychological functions' and 'sense-communication functions'. Abu-Deeb asserts that sometimes a poet succeeds

---

1 Her method of showing how the poet reveals himself through images has been outlined in Chapter Two, section 1.
2 Abu-Deeb, K, Jadaliyyat al-Khafāʾ wa'l-Tajali: Dirāsāt Binyawiyya fil-Shi'r, (Beirut: 1979) pp. 19-63. Although Abu-Deeb refers to this idea as originating from al-Jurjānī, his treatment is too elementary to be of use here, and has been extensively clarified by Abu-Deeb. For this
in maintaining harmony between the two entities which form the poetic image by virtue of noting external attributes (its sense-communication function) as well as whatever positive or negative feelings these entities cause (its psychological function). The idea here is that all images are made up of two basic components; their contents, and the effect these have on the recipient. Thus, when the meaning of an image is positive it should cause a positive feeling, in which case it can be described as a harmonic or harmonious image. However, when the intended meaning of the image can be presumed to be positive but there is an element within it that causes a negative effect upon the recipient, it can be described as lacking in harmony, or fragmented (the element causing this lack of harmony can usually be found either wholly or partly in the second part of the poetic image, the vehicle). Both harmonic and non-harmonic images are informative and reveal a great deal about the poet. Although harmonious images lend themselves better to analysis, it is still possible to argue (as in this study) that fragmented images illuminate the poet's personality; even they will cast some, albeit fractured, light on aspects of his character and perhaps his life.

A basic illustration of the difference between fragmented and harmonious images can be seen in the following two examples:

'Her face is like a rose'

'Her face is like a fire'

reason, it appropriate to base the discussion here on Abu-Deeb's analysis, rather than al-Jurjani's.
Table 8 below illustrates both the various entities of these two images and the relationships between them. The first simile can be considered to be of the harmonious type because the face and the rose share an obvious positive aspect in terms of colour and both are beautiful. On the other hand, the second image is considered to be fragmented because the face has a positive emotional aspect while the fire has a negative one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Entity</th>
<th>2nd Entity</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face +</td>
<td>Rose +</td>
<td>Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face +</td>
<td>Fire -</td>
<td>Fragmented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (8) The Nature of Relationships in Poetic Imagery.

A number of more complex images will be cited in the course of this chapter. However, one further image, which has been discussed by Abu-Deeb, should be brought in at this point. Abu-Deeb cites the following lines by Ibn al-Mu’tazz:

قَدْ أَنْفَسَتْ دُولَةُ الصَّيْامَ وَقَدْ يَفْتَحُ فَاهُ لأَكْلٍ عَنْقُودٍ
بَلَّوْذَةُ الثُّرِيَاءِ كَفَاغُرُ شَرَّرَم

which he interprets in the following manner:

"... أن البيتين يقرران أن شهر الصوم (رمضان) أنهى، وأن ظهور القمر.

---

... The two lines confirm that the fasting month of Ramadān is over and the fact that the crescent moon is a sign of promise for the coming 'ID festival. He [Ibn al-Mu'tazz] then compares the moon in its particular position with the Pleiades ... to a hungry person who opens his mouth wide to eat a bunch of grapes ...

He then goes on to say that, at a deeper level, this image indicates that the poet was forced to do something against his will, to 'fast during Ramadān by the power of social custom' and also by the 'governing institute, the state'. It also shows Ibn al-Mu'tazz's love for fine wine, as can be understood from his use of particular words and expressions such as suqm al-hilāl, 'the sickness of the moon' (the verb saqama has connotations of becoming thin due to ailing health, and this phrase can thus be understood as referring to the crescent moon) a negatively charged image which is contrasted with the positive feelings intimated by the word bashshara, 'to announce or bring good news'. Although the image appears, according to generally accepted logic, as fragmented and lacking harmony between the two entities, it shows a deeper kind of harmony within the psyche of the poet himself and reveals the poet's joy at the end of the fasting month.

Ibid., p. 24.
Ibn al-Mu'tazz's dislike of *Ramadān* can be seen again in the following lines, in which this month is compared to a parasitic person because the *Ramadān* fast is undertaken against the poet's will, before he has fulfilled his desire for wine:

![Arabic text](image)

It should be acknowledged at this point that the words 'harmony' and 'fragmentation' are used in this study in accordance with this author's perception of generally accepted logic. However, one serious question that must be raised here is what the basis or the foundation of 'generally accepted logic' is. Several factors make such a thing far from globally applicable. Different cultures and different interpretations play an important role in giving specific value to any poetic image, thus colour, for example, as an element in some poetic images has different multi-cultural connotations. Black, for instance, can be interpreted as designating negative feeling and meaning, e.g. sadness or sorrow. However, in another reading, the very same colour might be regarded as a sign of some positive feeling and meaning, such as wisdom or originality. In addition, context can further complicate and

---

5 *Diwān*, v. II, p. 238. A comparison between the appearance of the crescent moon and wine can be seen in the following ambiguous image in which the curved shape of wine running into the mouth of the beloved is compared with the curved shape of the crescent disappearing through the clouds:

![Arabic text](image)

*Diwān*, v. II, p. 185.
influence the interpretation of colour in different cultures as will be shown later. Hence, what might be seen as a harmonious image to one receiver might not be perceived in the same manner by another. A full investigation of the factors that make a poetic image harmonious or fragmented lies beyond the scope of this study. However, an example will be given here which demonstrates how two different interpretations can be reached in the analysis of one image. During the course of his discussion, Abu-Deeb quotes the following line, by al-Sharif al-Radiyy, describing a beautiful face with an attractive beauty spot:

which he interprets in the following manner:

"The portrayed white cheeks (white colour has a value of beauty in the poet’s society) and the blackness of the beauty spot on the cheek have an aspect that is similar to the aspect of

---

7 Ibid.
the time of good relations that are conveyed in a tangible [way] (time is white because of the connection between happiness and whiteness) when is disrupted by short period of separation (an hour); (blackness resembles the disruption because of its link with misery and hardship).

For Abu-Deeb, there is no harmony between psychological and sense-communication functions in this image, as he himself explains:

Despite the accuracy of the image on the hāssī level, it does not serve any active function in the poetic context as a whole because it is impossible to isolate different psychological

---

affiliations which will be stirred on the psychological level in both topics which form the image. A beautiful face causes a range of emotions, and fine enjoyment which can be given a (+) sign. The time of separation, however, causes different emotions which are empty of any enjoyment and can be given a (-) sign. On the psychological level, it seems that the general feeling is negative towards the beauty spot in the described face (hatred, aversion, feelings of misery) like the feeling towards a period of separation which takes place during a time of good relations, happiness and enjoyment.”

However, another, different reading of this image might be suggested here which depends on an alternative interpretation of the blackness of the beloved’s beauty spot. According to this reading, instead of seeing the beauty spot as a cause of misery, it can be seen as illustrative of the poet’s true reaction towards the beauty of the beloved’s face: pain is dark and black, however the blackness here can be seen as a sign of the pain felt by the poet when seeing the face of his beloved, particularly the spot. Beauty causes an positive emotional response (as does the face as a whole here) but can also inspire simultaneous feelings of pain (as does the beauty-spot) at the very same moment. Hence, the overall feeling expressed here is the true reaction of the poet towards his beloved’s beauty and, according to this interpretation, the image is of a harmonious nature.
Thus, as illustrated in the above interpretations, a new perspective can be suggested when dealing with fragmented images. In general, they show the poet's own 'sense of logic', his fragmented experience, feelings and personality. According to this view, harmony can be found, but on a different, more personal level; fragmented images truly reflect the poet's psyche and make the reader understand and perhaps appreciate that psyche. One further example from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān* will clarify this idea:

Two readings might be suggested for this line, in which the Pleiades and the dark sky behind it are compared to the appearance of a white foot through the folds of a black mourning dress as it is put on by the wearer. The first entity, the Pleiades and the dark sky can be said to have positive connotations; the second uses a black mourning dress as part of the entity, and can thus be said to be of a negative sense. According to a more general reading, this is thus a fragmented image which conveys two opposite senses. However, in terms of a more specific reading, another way of looking at it can be suggested: This image is a formative one and reflects Ibn al-Mu'tazz's personality and view of life. As will be discussed later, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's life history was such that he was unable to see pure happiness or complete beauty; in his world-view, every moment of happiness contains a degree of sadness, and in any beautiful thing is found some aspect of ugliness. The overlapping of positive and negative senses in the quoted line thus reflects

---

9 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 86.
the personality of this poet and, in addition, provides an informative and fine image.

One more, similar image in which this characteristic conjunction of positive and negative senses can be seen is one in which the brightness of a horse’s eye and the darkness of its head are compared to a gold pin fixed on the scarf of a girl who is bereaved:

The overall image of the horse and the beauty of its features (the head and the eye) cause positive feelings in the receiver, as does that of the girl and her costume (the scarf and the gold pin). However, the presence of mourning Ḥidād gives the image a sad and negative twist, reminding us of the fleeting, transient nature of their beauty and the inevitability of death.

In light of the foregoing discussion, one of Abu-Deeb’s conclusions about imagery can be reviewed. He states that:

"إن الصورة الرائعة الحيوية هي تلك التي يترافق في بنيتها المستويان"

---

The lively and wonderful poetic image is the one created by the convergence of the two factors mentioned here [i.e. psychological and sense-communication functions]. They collaborate to cause a special kind of pleasure for the soul. This pleasure is a result of poetic discovery and enlightenment, and also of the poetic communication they contain.

However, as demonstrated here, images in which there is an easily perceived balance between psychological and sense-communication functions are not the only forms a fantastic image can take. Sometimes there can be an imbalance between these two functions from the point of view of ‘generally accepted logic’, but still be an accessible balance on the level of the poet’s ‘own sense of logic’, in which case the image can still be an excellent one.

2- Important Events in The Life of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

As has already been mentioned in the course of this study, to fully understand the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, particular events that he encountered in his childhood must be appreciated. In contrast with the prevailing opinion that tends to view this poet as an aristocratic prince who had a comfortable life, it will be argued here that despite his aristocratic background and upbringing Ibn al-Mu'tazz nonetheless underwent a number dreadful experiences that affected his personality and consequently his poetry; hence his poetry reflects not a settled personality, but rather a fragmented one.¹²

2-1- The Assassination of the Poet’s Father.

The second phase of the 'Abbasid caliphate was marked by the accumulation of excessive power by a number of people in the service of the royal family, mostly those who held high positions in the institution of the caliphate; ministers, army leaders (primarily from the mawāli class), and even slaves at the court. Competition between different ethnic groups, such as the Turks and Persians, as to who would control the caliph and consequently gain power, was at the heart of events of the time. Caliphs were, in general, without any or very little real authority but were appointed and replaced by whichever faction or figures were most powerful at the time. The occasions on which these transferrals of power took place were as ugly, dreadful and

¹² As will be shown later.
callous as it is possible to imagine, involving inhuman methods of assassination and torture – if indeed they can be anything else – of the deposed caliph and his people. Indeed, Ibn al-Mu'tazz eyes were first opened to the harshness of this environment in the year 247 /861 when he witnessed, in the very early years of his childhood, the assassination of his grandfather and his father in quick succession. These events, as well as the torture and exile of himself and his family, gave him an early experience of terror that he never forgot and were highly important in shaping the character of the adult poet.

Months after the birth of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, his grandfather, al-Mutawakkil was assassinated, and his father al-Mu'tazz sent to prison for the following three years. Al-Mutawakkil, one of the greatest 'Abbasid caliphs, was killed in his castle by a conspiracy planned by his own son, al-Muntaşir, and one of the mawāli', called Waṣîf;¹³ These figures had a shared interest in removing al-Mutawakkil from power. On the one hand, al-Mutawakkil was in favour of withdrawing his oldest son al-Muntaşir from the position of crown prince in favour of al-Mu'tazz, the son of his most beloved wife Qabî'în. As al-Ṭabarî reports, al-Mutawakkil pushed al-Muntaşir hard to give up this position and even humiliated him when he refused to accede to his demands:

"... Al-Mutawakkil turned to al-Fathî¹⁴ and said to him, 'I am

¹⁴ His minister, al-Fathî b. Khaqān
acquitted of God and my relationship to the Messenger of God if you do not cuff him,’ that is al-Muntaṣir. Al-Fatḥī got up and cuffed him twice on the back of his neck. Al-Mutawakkil then said to those present, ‘All witness that I have deposed the Impatient One.’ Then al-Mutawakkil turned to him and said, ‘I named you al-Muntaṣir ("the Victorious"), but because of your folly the people named you al-Muntażir ("the Expectant"), and now you have become al-Musta‘jil ("the Impatient").’ Al-Muntaṣir replied, ‘O Commander of the faithful, if you had given orders that I be decapitated, it would have been more bearable than your present treatment of me.’."¹⁵

On the other hand, al-Mutawakkil wished to minimise the power wielded by Waṣīf, and was on the point of sending out orders to seize estates of this mawḥa, which were to be given to his vizier.¹⁶

As a result of their grievances, al-Muntaṣir and Waṣīf joined forces and plotted to murder al-Mutawakkil. On a tragic night, when the caliph was happily drinking with his minister, Waṣīf’s plan came to fruition when another mawḥa, Bughā, together with a number of companions, also mawāli, entered the room:

¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, M, The History of al-Ṭabarī (Tāʾrīkh al-Rusul wa’l-Mulūk), Tran. and annotated by J. Kraemer, (New York: 1989), v. XXXIV, p. 176. Henceforth, I shall refer to the English translations of al-Ṭabarī’s history by stating the title and the volume (e.g. The History of al-Ṭabarī, v. XXXIV) to distinguish it from the original Arabic which will be referred to in the usual manner.
⁶⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 184.
"Al-Fatḥ confronted them, 'Get out of here, you dogs, get out!' Bughā al-Sharābī rushed over to him and split open his belly with a sword. The others pounced upon al-Mutawakkil. 'Ath'ath fled headlong. Abū Aḥmad was in his chamber and when he heard the commotion he came out and shielded his father. Baghiʿun rushed up to him and struck him twice."¹⁷

This assassination is of general historical significance because it opened the way for mawālī to become more involved in 'Abbasid affairs. In the context of this study, it has further significance in that these events meant that Ibn al-Muʿtazz grew up in an environment where the story of the assassination of his grandfather was in wide circulation, and where there was a fear that the mawālī had set a precedent and could carry out another assassination, whenever they wanted against whomever they wanted.¹⁸ The sad end of one of the greatest caliphs in history had, without doubt, a special place in the mind of the young boy.

2-2- The Poet and his Father.

2-2-1- Good Days.

The events that followed al-Mutawakkil’s assassination brought even more

¹⁸ That this fear was in fact relevant is revealed in the record of a conversation between al-Muʿtazz and his mother, to be quoted later.
fear into the house of the poet when his father was imprisoned for three years, to ensure the unchallenged authority of his brother al-Muntaṣir, who now became caliph.\(^{19}\) During these dreadful years, the poet was looked after by his grandmother, Qabiha, who was one of the most powerful and wealthy members of the royal family living in the ‘Abbasid castle. She played an important role in raising Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, sheltering him from an unstable environment and even choosing the teachers who educated him. In contrast, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s mother seems to have played a very small role in the poet’s life. In general, very little is known about his mother, but one of the surprisingly rare historical references to her mentions that she was a slave girl belonging to Qabiha with whom Al-Mu‘tazz is said to have fallen in love.\(^{20}\)

This period of turmoil was followed by a short time of relative peace for Ibn al-Mu‘tazz when his father became caliph after getting rid of al-Musta‘īn in the year 252/866. Al-Mu‘tazz brought in Muḥammad b. ‘Umrān to teach the promising young boy\(^{21}\) and during this time the poet was often seen at his father’s side, especially when he received poets, who used to recite panegyrics in praise of the Caliph. Al-Buḥṭūrī, the distinguished poet, had strong links with the castle and on some occasions, praised Ibn al-Mu‘tazz himself, suggesting to his father that he declare him crown prince.\(^{22}\) Other poets who are known to have composed panegyrics in praise of al-Mu‘tazz include Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān and Abū ‘Aliyy al-Baṣīr. After the

\(^{19}\) Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, p. 191.


\(^{22}\) See al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 7.
deposition of al-Musta’ìn, Marwān composed the following lines:

Al-Mu’ťazz is now in charge of all affairs
while al-Musta’ìn has gone [back] to his old self.

He already knew that he was not cut out for rule.
It was yours all along, but he fooled himself.

The real ruler is the one who grasps rule and clasps it.
and now rule is brought to you, having been grasped
from him. 23

A second panegyric on the same topic goes as follows:

The world has returned to its original state,
and God has gladdened us with its fortunes.

A world which God has relieved through you
of the terrible horrors it once held.

It has been ruled by an ignorant ruler,
and the world can never be right for ignorant ones.

23 The History of al-Jabari, v. XXXIV, p. 117.
The world had been locked by him,
until you became the key to its locks.²⁴

When al-Mu'tazz discharged his brother from the position of crown prince and
gave the order for him to be assassinated in cold blood, Marwān celebrated
this (victory) in yet a third panegyric, in which he tried to justify al-Mu'tazz's
actions:

You are the one who holds the world fast if ever it trembles.
You can, indeed, hold both the world and religion if they
tremble.

Your subjects, may God keep you for them,

wish that with your justice you'll be preserved for
generations.

You had to deal with a very difficult war,

but your arrows were of hardwood, not of willow.

You were never the first head to be betrayed by a tail,

for you were indeed the head, and the traitor [was] the
tail.

²⁴ Al-Ṭabarî, M, The History of al-Ṭabarî (Tārīkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk), Tran. and annotated by
If he had succeeded in accomplishing what he plotted,
both Islam and royalty would have vanished.25

Another poet, Abû 'Aliyy, echoed these sentiments when he addressed al-Mu'tazz's attainment of the caliphate in the following lines:

آبَّ أَمْرُ الإِسْلَامِ، خِيرَ مَآيِهٍ
وَغَداً الْمُلْكُ ثَابِتاً فِي نِصَائِهِ
مُسْتَقْرِراً فَرَأَهُ مُطْمَئِنَّا
أَهْلَا بَعْدَ نَأَيِهِ وَعَيْرَابِهِ
فَأَحْمَدَ اللَّهُ، وَتَمَسْهُ مَنْ بِالْعَفْوِ عَمَّنْ عَفَا جَزِيلَ نَوايَهِ 26

The affairs of Islam return to their best
And the kingship becomes solid.
It is now stable
after being strange and distant.
Do thank God and ask for
forgiveness, though He forgives and rewards.

It is generally thought that Ibn al-Mu'tazz used to listen to Ibn Marwān, who composed a reasonable number of panegyrics in good style, when he recited his poetry in the presence of the caliph. However, the three lines cited above are the only remnant that has come down to us from Abû 'Aliyy's poetry, and the style they reflect is poor, factors from which it can be inferred that he was

not one of the court poets of the time.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's father is said to have been a very charming and charismatic person: handsome, a powerful character and a lover of life. Al-Ṭabarî describes him as follows:

"He was tall in stature. He had a white complexion and thick dark hair. His eyes were beautiful, his face was narrow and handsome and he had reddish cheeks." 27

His powerful character can be seen in his attempts (which will be discussed later) to restore the lost dignity and power of the caliphate by getting rid of figures he felt were too powerful. He was fond of certain popular aristocratic activities: drinking, singing and hunting. In addition to enjoying these pursuits, al-Mu'tazz was also a poet and composer, and some lines of poetry and melodies attributed to him have come down to us. 28 Thus, an artistic nature and love of life and joy seems to have been passed from the father to the son.

In general, this time of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's life was carefree; indeed his father's presence offered him a kind of stability, as is reflected in the fact that, later on, when life again showed Ibn al-Mu'tazz its ugly side, he tended to find

comfort in remembering these days.

2-2-2- Bad Days.

However, this happiness did not last for long. In the year 255/868, when Ibn al-Mu'tazz was aged almost eight, al-Mu'tazz was assassinated in yet another conspiracy, this time carried out by Turkish army leaders and the poet and his grandmother were sent into exile to Mecca for a year. There are a number of theories about the reason behind his assassination, but it is agreed that the trigger was a request from the Turks for a sum of 50,000 dinār in order to carry out the killing of an upstart, the Turkish leader Şālīh b. Waṣīf. Al-Mu'tazz was unable to pay the requested money from treasury funds and sent word to his mother Qabīna asking for her financial aid. She refused. Following this, the Turkish leaders decided to depose al-Mu'tazz. Al-Ṭabarî describes events as follows:

"On the twenty-seventh of Rajab, 255 (July 11, 869), al-Mu'tazz was deposed ... One of the Sultan's relations mentioned that he was with Nihrîr al-Khādim in the palace of al-Mu'tazz on the day they came for him. The Caliph was shaken only by the shouts of the people of al-Karkh and al-Dūr. Then suddenly, Şālih b. Waṣīf, Bāybāk and Muḥammad b. Bughā, the one known as Abū Naṣir, entered with their weapons and stood by the door of

---

29 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, p. 32.
30 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, p. 28.
residence where al-Mu’tazz was staying. They sent word to him, ‘come out to us.’ He sent word back, saying ‘I took a medicine yesterday which has caused me to panic twelve times. I am so weak that I cannot talk. If it is an urgent matter, let one of you enter and inform me of it; let him see for himself why the matter which interests you is at a standstill.’ A group of the people from al-Karkh and al-Dûr, the lieutenants of the commanders, came in and dragged him to the room’s door.

The source of this account also reported the following. I thought that they had already beaten him with clubs, for he came out with his shirt torn in several places and traces of blood on his shoulders. They stood him in the sun in the palace at that time when the heat is oppressive. I saw him lift his foot time and again due to the heat of the place where he had been made to stand. I also saw some of them slap him, as he tried to protect himself with his hand. They started to call out, ‘Take it off’. Then they brought him into a room connected by a door to his own room – this was the room where Mûsâ b. Bughâ used to stay when he was there. Following that, they sent for Ibn Abî al-Shawârib, who was admitted together with a group of his men. Šâlih and his followers then said, ‘Write a letter of

---

31 This sentence does correspond strictly with the original Arabic which goes as follows: وهو يرى أن أمره واقف على حاله (ibid). Another translation for this sentence can be suggested: ‘He was sure that his fate would depend upon his condition’.
deposition for him’. He responded, ‘I can’t do a good job of that’. He wrote the letter, and they witnessed it and then departed. Ibn Abī al-Shawārib now said to Šālīḥ, ‘They bore witness that his sister, his son and his mother shall be given safe conduct.” Šālīḥ either signaled with his head or answered, ‘Yes’. They appointed men to guard the Caliph’s company (majlis) and some women to watch over his mother ...

The new caliph, Muḥammad b. al-Wāthic, was anointed on Wednesday, the last day of Rajab 255 (July 14, 869), and was called al-Muhtadī bi-Allāh.33 Promises made, however, were not kept, and al-Mu’tazz was assassinated. Al-Ṭabarî relates his death in the following manner:

“After he had been deposed, he was reportedly given over to someone who tortured him, and he was forbidden food and water for three days. Even when he requested a mouthful of well water, it was denied to him. Finally, they plastered a small vault with heavy plaster, put him in it and shut the door behind him. By the next morning he had expired.”34

The later historian al-Masʿūdī, however, refers to the fact that there are several different stories about the assassination of al-Muʿtazz:

---

32 The History of al-Ṭabarî, v. XXXV, p. 165. Al-Masʿūdī reports the same event with less details, see op. cit., p. 88. However, the latter offers better account of the conversation between al-Muʿtazz and his brother al-Muhtadī.
33 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, p. 29.
34 The History of al-Ṭabarî, v. XXXV, p. 165.
"I found narrators, historians and those who are interested in the history of states had been in dispute as to the cause of his death: some of them mentioned that al-Mu'tazz died in his prison naturally during the reign of al-Muhtadi, some said that he was denied food and water so he died, and some think that he was forced to drink hot water, as a result of which when he was taken out before the people they observed that his stomach was swollen."

However, this last account is considered to be the most reliable:

"والأشهر في الأخبار... آله أدخل حماماً وأكره في دخوله إياه، وكان الحمام محمياً ومنع الخروج منه؛ ثم تنازع هؤلاء: فمنهم من قال إنه ترك في الحمام حتى فاست نفسه، ومنهم من ذكر أنه أخرج بعد أن كادت نفسه تلف للحمم، ثم أسقيت شرباً ماء مقرور بتلجر ففرت كيدة" [35]  

The most well-known narrative is that he was forced into a bath and the bath was heated; then he was not allowed to get out. After this [the various narrators] disagree, some saying that he was left to die in the bath and others saying he was taken out half dead from the heat and was forced to drink iced water, which tore to pieces his liver and intestines, so that he collapsed immediately.

It is difficult, from the information available, to judge the authority of any of these reports. Al-Ṭabarî is closer to these events, but by no means does this mean that his account is more accurate. He himself lived during turbulent times in which people who supported deposed caliphs could be beheaded, a fact which might be behind his careful, and sometimes extremely brief, statements. Whatever the reason, his account of al-Mu'tazz's last days is much shorter than that of al-Mas'ūdī. Al-Ṭabarî records the passing of power from al-Mu'tazz to al-Muhtadî in less than four lines:

“It was reported on the authority of an eyewitness that Muhammad b. al-Wāthiq refused to accept the oath of allegiance from anyone until al-Mu'tazz came before him and submitted his abdication, confirming his inability to administer
matters entrusted to him and, moreover, expressing his desire to relinquish these matters into the care of Ibn al-Wathiq.

Extending his hand, al-Mu'tazz acknowledged his allegiance to Muhammad b. al-Wathiq, and only then was the new caliph given the honorific title of al-Muhtadi. Thereupon al-Mu'tazz withdrew, and the inner circle of clients (mawāli) rendered their own oaths of allegiance.”

Al-Mas'ūdī, however, describes the same event in more detail and in a more eloquent style:

"فَأَتَى بِالمَعْتَزِّ عَلَيْهِ قَمِيصٍ مَدِنِسٍ وَعَلَى رَأْسِهِ مَنْدِيلٌ، فَلَمَّا رَأَهُ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْوَاثِقٍ وَتَبَّ إِلَيْهِ فَعَانَقَهُ، وَجَلَّسَ جَمِيعًا عَلَى الْسَرِيرِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْوَاثِقِ: "بَا أَخِي، مَا هَذَا الأَمْرُ؟" قَالَ الْمَعْتَزِّ: "أَمْرُ لَا أَطِيقُهُ وَلَا أَقُومُهُ وَلَا أُصْلِحُ لَهُ". فَأَرَادَهُ الْمِهْتَدِيُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَتَوَسَّطَ أَمْرَهُ وَيَصِلُ بِنِعَةٍ وَبَيْنَ الْأَنْتَارِ، فَقَالَ الْمَعْتَزِّ: "لَا حَاجَةٌ لِيَ فِي هَٰذَا، وَلَا يُرْضِونِي لَهَا". فَقَالَ الْمِهْتَدِيُّ: "فَأَنَا فِي حَلٍّ مِنْ بِيْعَتِكَ?" قَالَ: "أَنْتَ في حَلٍّ وَسَعَةٍ". فَلَمَّا جَعَلَهُ فِي حَلٍّ مِنْ بِيْعَتِهِ حَوْلَ وَجْهِهِ عَنْهُ، فَأَقِيمَ عَنْ حَضْرَتِهِ وَرَدَّ إِلَى مُحِبْسَهُ، فَقَتَلَ فِي مُحِبْسَهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ خَلَعَ بَسَتَةً آيَٰمًا."

"Al-Mu'tazz was brought in, clothed, with a head scarf on his

head and when Muhammad b. al-Wathiq saw him, he ran to him and hugged him and they sat together on the sofa. Muhammad b. al-Wathiq then said: 'O my brother, what is going on?' Al-Mu'tazz replied: 'I cannot cope with this matter [the caliphate], I do not want to undertake it, and I am not fit for it'. Al-Muhtadî suggested that he mediated between him and the Turks but al-Mu'tazz said: 'I do not want it and they do not want me for it'. Al-Muhtadî said: 'Then I am free from your ba'îd'. Al-Mu'tazz replied: 'You are completely free'. When he released him from his ba'îa he turned his head away from him. He was taken and returned to his prison and killed there after he had gone through six [more] days.'

In this account al-Mas'ûdî describes al-Muhtadî's opportunism and hypocrisy and, in mentioning al-Muhtadî's offer to mediate between al-Mu'tazz and the Turks, refers directly to the control the Turkish soldiers exercised over the caliphs. Al-Mu'tazz's response, 'They do not want me' indicates that he was fully aware that his time had expired and that it was better for him to abdicate with the minimum of fuss. Al-Mas'ûdî's narratorial style here is elegant, and al-Muhtadî's changed manner is depicted to the reader in two main phases. At first, when al-Muhtadî still needs al-Mu'tazz, he talks to him nicely and the verbs used to describe his actions – 'he ran to meet him', 'he hugged him' and 'they stayed together on the couch' – make the reader think that al-Muhtadî really cared about the situation of his brother and still
respected him. Al-Mas‘ûdî also attributes specific dialogue and particular words to al-Muhtadî to express his special relation to al-Mu‘tazz, for example, his calling him ‘O my brother’. The second phase occurs after al-Muhtadî has achieved al-Mu‘tazz’s abdication, following which there is no further discussion, and al-Muhtadî ignores al-Mu‘tazz completely, as he ‘turned his face away from him’. The verbs at the end of the story indicate the helplessness of the deposed al-Mu‘tazz through use of the passive tense, for example ‘he was taken’ and ‘he was returned’. Finally, through this changing tone and the device of al-Muhtadî’s offer to mediate with the Turks, which appears to be a ruse by which he assures himself of al-Mu‘tazz’s abdication, the reader is led to understand the duplicitous nature of al-Muhtadî by the end of this story.

There are two main accounts concerning the reason for al-Mu‘tazz deposal, the first is given by al-Ţabarî and the second by al-Mas‘ûdî. Al-Ţabarî reports that Şâliîn b. Wa‘îf asked for a grant for the Turks from al-Mu‘tazz and accused the caliph’s secretary, Âhmad b. Isrâîl, of theft. Âhmad, however, answered this accusation with an even stronger accusation, that Şâliîn and his father were disobedient:

“Şâliîn b. Wa‘îf then attacked Âhmad b. Isrâîl, saying to al-Mu‘tazz, ‘O Commander of the faithful, the Turks are not being paid and there is no money in the treasury. Ibn Isrâîl and his companions have carted away all the
money in the world.’ Ahmad responded, ‘O you disobedient son of a disobedient father.’ They continued to exchange words ...

It is reported that Şâlih then took Ahmad b. Isrāil, Ibn Makhlaq and 'Isa b. Ibrahim, put them in chains, tortured them and demanded money from them; apparently he did not get much out of them.

Al-Mas‘ūdi’s account appears to be more reliable and comprehensive. Unlike al-Ṭabarî who concentrates mostly on individual events, al-Mas‘ūdi prefers to address with the general context, within which he deals with individual events. Thus, for him the cause of the fall of al-Mu'tazz’s caliphate lay in something more than the Turkish demand for money. According to him, al-Mu'tazz aimed to reduce the control of Turks through a policy of killing their leaders. Bughā, one of the main protagonists of the plot against him, was one of these Turkish leaders and the caliph’s worst nightmare; it is reported that al-Mu'tazz was in such fear of him that he did not sleep without being fully armed while Bughā was alive, and expected him to appear at any moment:

"إِنِّي لَا أَخَافُ أَنْ يُنْزِلَ عَلَيّ بَعْضٌ مِّنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ يُخْرِجَ عَلَيّ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ"

“I am afraid that Bughā will descend from above or emerge

---

40 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, p. 28.
41 Al-Mas‘ūdi, op. cit., p. 88.
42 Ibid.
from below.”

and:

"لا أزال على هذه الحالة حتى أعلم لبغا رأسي أو رأسه لي" 43

"I will stay in this condition until I have his head or he has mine.”

Al-Mu'tazz got the chance to finish Bughā in the year 254/868. Al-Mas'ûdî reports this and immediately afterwards states that the cause of the demise of al-Mu'tazz's caliphate was a conspiracy by the Turks to stop the bloodshed of their leaders. When Şâlih b. Waṣîf realised that the caliph had no money, he judged the moment to remove al-Mu'tazz had come and asked his people to approach the caliph for money, claiming it was payment to kill Şâlih b. Waṣîf:

"وَلَمْ يَرَى الأُتَراَكَ إِقَدَامَ الْمُعْتَرِّ على قُتْلِ رُؤِسَائِهِمْ وَعَمَالَ الْحِيَّةِ فِي إِفْنَائهِمْ، وَآَتَّهُمْ أَصْنَعَ المُفَارِقَةَ وَالْفَرَاغَةَ دُونَهُمْ، صَارَوْا إِلَيْهِ بِجَمِيعِهِمْ، وَذَلِكَ لَأَرِبَ يِقْبَلُ مِنْ رَجْحِ سَنَةٍ خَمْسَ وَخَمْسِينِ وَمَائَتِينِ، وَجَعَلُوا يَقِعُونَهُ بِذُنُوبِهِ وَيُوْبِخُونَهُ عَلَى أَفْعَالِهِ، وَطَالِبِهِ بالْأَمْوَالِ، وَكَانَ المُدِّيِّرُ لَذَلِكَ صَالِحٌ بَن مَّصِيفٍ مَعْ قَوْادِ الأُتَراَكَ ..." 44

"When the Turks realised the progress of al-Mu'tazz in killing

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 88.
their leaders and applying different stratagems to finish them, and they saw that he employed the Maghāriba and Farāghina rather than them, they walked to him four days before the end of Rajab of the year 255. They started blaming him for his sins. They asked him for the money which Șāliñ b. Wașīf had arranged with Turkish leaders ...

2-3. The Poet in Exile.

The misery endured by Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s family did not end with the assassination of his father; they had to live with the constant fear of being attacked or even killed by the supporters of al-Muhtadī. Since the time of al-Mutawakkil’s reign, Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s grandmother Qabiña had played an important political role. She was behind his attempt to withdraw al-Muntašir in favour of her own son al-Mu'tazz, as mentioned earlier, and had also tried to help her son remove his opponents once he was in power. On one occasion, it is reported that she suggested her son avenge his father’s killing and tried to provoke him by showing him his father’s cloak, which was still soaked with his blood. Because of her active political role, Qabiña knew that she would be in danger and had already prepared an escape to be used at a suitable moment before al-Mu'tazz was assassinated. She then planned with some secretaries to kill Șāliñ b. Wașīf. However, these secretaries were imprisoned by Șāliñ before they carried out their mission. When Șāliñ knew of this conspiracy, and after finishing with her son, he started looking for her. However she fled the
palace through a tunnel she had had prepared as soon as she heard of her son’s fate:

“A tunnel was excavated leading from one of the private chambers inside the palace to a place that would not be detected. When she learned of the circumstances [surrounding her son’s discharge] she hastened to the tunnel without a second thought and escaped from the palace confines.”

Qabīṇa took refuge with Ḥabīb, the wife of Mūsa b. Bughā, who used to be a girl slave for al-Mutawakkil and asked a female apothecary to act as her intermediary with Ibn Wasif, offering him money and jewelry. She was, however, imprisoned and it is reported that Ṣāliḥ tortured her aggressively before sending her and her family into exile in Mecca. She is said to have mentioned her experiences of torture in prayer against him:

“It was reported that someone heard her along the way imploring God in a loud voice against Ṣāliḥ b. Wasif, saying: “Oh God, humiliate Ṣāliḥ b. Wasif just as he has dishonoured me, murdered my son, seized my property, squandered my goods, banished me from home, and behaved obscenely toward me’.”

---

The exiled Qabiba remained in Mecca for a year of al-Muhtadi’s rule, accompanied by her daughter, Ibn al-Mu’tazz and a slave girl until, when al-Mu’tamid became the next caliph, he brought them back to Saimirra. By now, the poet was nine years old.

2-4- Political Disturbances in the ’Abbasid Era.

Political events continued to affect Ibn al-Mu’tazz to some extent, and throughout the course of his life he feared that he might be imprisoned or even killed, as the political disturbances in the ’Abbasid caliphate continued unabated. Table 9 below shows the names of the caliphs who ruled during Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s life, the way in which they died, the year of their death and the length of their rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Caliph</th>
<th>Type of Death</th>
<th>Means of Death</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Time Spent in Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mutawakkil</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Conspiracy by Bughā al-Šaghīr and al-Muntaṣīr</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>14 years and 9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Muntaṣīr</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Ibn al-Ṭayfūrī</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Musta’in</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Al-Mu’tazz</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3 years and 8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mu’tazz</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>4 years and 6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 This could be the poet’s mother.
49 Al-Mas’udi, op. cit., p. 108.
50 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XI, pp. 184-7 and al-Mas’udi, op. cit., p. 5 and pp. 34-8.
51 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XI, pp. 201-3 and al-Mas’udi, op. cit., p. 46 and pp. 49-50. There is, however, another account concerning his death. It is believed that he died naturally. See al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XI, p. 200.
52 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, pp. 12-3 and al-Mas’udi, op. cit., p. 59 and p. 76.
53 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., v. XII, pp. 28-9 and al-Mas’udi, op. cit., p. 78 and p. 93.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caliph</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Muhtadi</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Turkish leaders</td>
<td>256 months 11 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mu'tamid</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Al-Mu'tadid</td>
<td>279 months 23 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mu'tadid</td>
<td>Natural death</td>
<td></td>
<td>289 months 9 years 9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Muktati</td>
<td>Natural death</td>
<td></td>
<td>295 months 6 years 7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Muqtadir</td>
<td>Assassination</td>
<td>Mūnis al-Khadim</td>
<td>320 months 14 years 11 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (9) 'Abbasid Caliphs During Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Life.

As can be seen, a total of nine caliphs ruled during Ibn al-Mu'tazz's lifetime. Al-Mu'tamid's era was the longest, with 23 years on the throne, while al-Muntaşir's was the shortest, lasting for only six months. Most caliphs' periods of rule were brought to an end by assassination, sometimes carried out by Turkish commanders acting on their own, sometimes by them and members of the royal family itself, as in the case of al-Mutawakkil, who was killed as a result of a conspiracy planned by his son, al-Muntaşir, and a Turkish commander called Waşīf. Several attempts were carried out to curb the control of the Turks, few of which succeeded. As mentioned earlier, al-Mu'tazz's plan was to kill the influential leaders: he did manage to kill two of them, Waşīf and Bughā, but was himself killed before his plan came to fruition. Al-Muhtadi had another plan, which was to bring new people into

---

56 Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 246-7 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 137 and p. 175. Even with al-Mu'ṭadid, the most powerful caliph in that time, al-Mas'ûdî reports some *riwayas* stories about the assassination of this caliph, see p. 175.
59 See this chapter section 2-1.
60 See al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 22-4.
government, in order to weaken the Turkish powerbase. Accordingly, he increased the powers and influence of the 'ulamā' and fuqahā' and declared the revival of 'Umar b. Abd al-'Aziz's sira. His method of ruling was strict and he used Sharī'ā as the law of the state.\textsuperscript{61} However, al-Mu'tad'id, a powerful ruler who used a heavy hand against his opponents, was one of the only rulers to have some success in their attempts to restore the power and dignity of the 'Abbasid caliphate.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61} Al-Mas'ūdī, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{62} It will be shown later in describing the poet's relationship with this caliph.
3- Fragmented Imagery.

The events discussed in section 2 above affected the poet to a great extent and are reflected in his poetry on two different levels. The first is direct, whereby the poet reveals his sorrow at the loss of his father and at being orphaned – a sorrow which remained with him even when he was old. The second is indirect and takes the form of a number of fragmented images in which negative or sad notions or feelings are portrayed at the heart of positive or happy ones, and vice versa.

3-1- The Poet's Relationship with Others.

In the following line, in which he says that he has slept comfortably on the bed of abandonment and drunk from the pure cold water of separation, Ibn al-Mu'tazz summarises the difficulties he has encountered in his life:

This feeling of loss is manifested in another indirect way. It can be seen in his extensive use of jewels, elements of value and cosmetics as sources for his imagery. In addition (as has been shown earlier in Chapter Four, pp. 123-132), some of his favourite topics, such as his descriptions of gardens, wine, his beloveds and the moon and stars, are conveyed in a luxurious way. After the assassination of his father and the seizure of his grandmother's wealth, Ibn al-Mu'tazz lost his previously prosperous lifestyle and henceforth struggled through life without a proper source of income. As far as we know, the only source of income he had is the salary he used to receive from the court as a member of the royal family, in addition to the gifts he received from the various caliphs from time to time. His poetry reflects his unhappiness with his financial position, as can be seen, for example, in his references to the poor state of the house in which he lived, the roof of which allowed the rain through (see, for example, Dīwān, v. II, p. 611 and p. 629), and to the cheap wine he was forced to drink most of the time.

63 This feeling of loss is manifested in another indirect way. It can be seen in his extensive use of jewels, elements of value and cosmetics as sources for his imagery. In addition (as has been shown earlier in Chapter Four, pp. 123-132), some of his favourite topics, such as his descriptions of gardens, wine, his beloveds and the moon and stars, are conveyed in a luxurious way. After the assassination of his father and the seizure of his grandmother's wealth, Ibn al-Mu'tazz lost his previously prosperous lifestyle and henceforth struggled through life without a proper source of income. As far as we know, the only source of income he had is the salary he used to receive from the court as a member of the royal family, in addition to the gifts he received from the various caliphs from time to time. His poetry reflects his unhappiness with his financial position, as can be seen, for example, in his references to the poor state of the house in which he lived, the roof of which allowed the rain through (see, for example, Dīwān, v. II, p. 611 and p. 629), and to the cheap wine he was forced to drink most of the time.

64 Dīwān, v. I, p. 703.
This line contains two unfamiliar metaphors (the bed of abandonment and the pure cold water of separation) which are remarkable in two ways: they reflect, on the one hand, the muḥḍathūn style and have echoes of Abū Tammām's famous line that mentions the water of blame; on the other hand, they show 'the poet's own sense of logic'. How can the abandoned be comfortable and have a bed? And how can separation be pure cold water? The answer to these questions should become clearer when Ibn al-Mu'tazz's relationship with his contemporaries is explored.

To understand Ibn al-Mu'tazz's view of life, it is vitally important to bear in mind that he saw his main task in life as being to avenge his father's death and regain the lost caliphate. These themes are often referred to, mostly indirectly, in his poetry in general and in the šīb genre in particular. However, on at least two occasions he mentions this task directly. The first is a short poem in which he threatens those responsible for killing his father and assures the reader that he will regain dignity for the kingship, saying: 'Let the sword awake for those who are responsible for his death as it is the time for declaring war. Even if I kill every relative and non-relative I should not be satisfied. His support came late as I was young and my power was limited. I swear if I got the time I would restore the power of the kingship'.

---

65 He says: “do not let me drink the water of blame as I am in love and have liked the water of my tears”:

لا تسمعني ماء احلامي فإنني
صب قدر استعذبت ماء بكاني

309
The second poem is quite long, consisting of 30 lines, and contains more dialect than the first. It has been categorised as belonging to the rithä genre and is said to be an elegy for his father. It begins by directly mentioning the death which always befalls a man who is full of ambition, and stressing that man's life is like a moving shadow:

In lines 2 to 15 Ibn al-Mu'tazz then begins speculating on death and its necessity, in the context of which he observes the necessity of death for all living things such as the wild bird (lines 2-4), the ibex (lines 5-8) and the snake (lines 9-13). He then concludes that death is the only fair judgement in life (lines 14-15). It is not until line 16 that Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentions the death of his father, who lies in a grave at the castle of al-Kāmil, insisting that he will make spears drop tears in his search for vengeance:

---

66 Diwan, v. III, p. 44.
68 Diwan, v. III, p. 82.
He emphasises this desire for revenge in lines 20 to 23, in which he describes his father’s blood as being as beautiful as henna and says that he will be a strong poison for his enemies, reminding them of the fact that life is changeable and day always comes after night:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{يَدَمُ فَالدَّمُ حَبَاءُ البَطْلَ}^
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{لِهُمُ صَلٌّ أَعَامِدَ أَيْ صِلٌّ}^
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{قَوْرِيدًا بَظَلالُ صَحِيحَةٌ}^
\end{align*}
\]

In the rest of the poem (lines 23-31), the poet returns to speculation, at this stage highlighting his experiences in life and the power of God’s will: no matter how much effort man puts into fulfilling his ambitions, his achievements all depend on fate:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{يَا مُكَلَّ الْعِيسِ. فِي ذِي مَوْمَهَ}^
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{بِئْدِ المِنْدَارِ. فَأَصْبِرْ وَاتَّكِلْ}^
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{مُدَّةً الْعَمَّرِ. وَمِنْ وَقْتِ الأَجْلِ}^
\end{align*}
\]

In terms of placing this poem into the overall context of Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetic corpus, we have no definitive record of when this elegy was composed. From the overall tone of this poem, however, it can be assumed that it was written a long time after the death of his father, hence it might be suggested that Ibn al-Mu'tazz wrote this elegy sometime between the ages of 25 and 30.

69 *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 82.
His tone is less intense than in the shorter poem mentioned first, in which he blames his enemies and clearly reveals his ambition to be a caliph, a factor which might indicate that this poem was composed earlier. In the second poem, he displays a degree of acceptance of the reality of the power of God’s will and the necessity of death on the one hand, and the power of his opponents on the other hand. However, he still expresses his desire for revenge, still hinting at the possibility that he will one day become caliph. This poem is notable because it includes Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s last direct mention of revenge. It would appear that he gradually came to realise how strong his enemies were and how fatal it could be to declare such ambitions: with time he learned not to be quite so direct.

The following short poem is an example of this third stage, in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz can be seen to submit to the undeniable fact that his enemies are stronger than him, and to realise that he should lower his tone. He depicts himself as a captive of the epoch, trapped in a situation that his father, al-Mu'tazz, would have disliked and which would have caused him sorrow. He then prays to God to cure his wounds; his complaint stems not from poverty, but from concerns buried deep in his heart. Finally, in the last line he emphasises his ability to bear whatever problems time brings with equanimity:

**Arrowa yadhu’l-lā ilaa ‘usri‘ sti‘a‘a‘ ba’l-wābi‘  
Jirrī bi‘ man kisrī fīqidd shiqūn kisrī  
Wārja‘ bi‘a‘al-lā ilaa ‘usri‘  
Yāyirr al-māun ‘alā ilaa  
‘Arā‘ bi‘a‘al-lā ilaa ‘usri‘  
Fīqadd shiqūn kisrī  
Yāyirr al-māun ‘alā ilaa  
‘Arā‘ bi‘a‘al-lā ilaa ‘usri‘  
Fīqadd shiqūn kisrī**

312
This short poem is composed some time after the two examples previously given. It may have been composed after the age of 30, considering the poet's subdued tone in expressing his ambitions. This more subdued tone can also be seen in the poet's description of himself as a captive. Furthermore, instead of mentioning revenge or ambition, it is noticeable that Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses the phrase 'hidden concerns'.

As outlined in section two of this chapter, political involvement in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's time was potentially highly dangerous, due to the excessive power of the mawālī and the constant plots by various factions to gain control of the caliphate. In addition, the assassination of his father and grandfather had made the poet highly alert to the danger of any public political involvement. This awareness of his vulnerability can only have been heightened when, on one occasion, Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself came close to being assassinated. After the death of al-Mu'tadid in the year 289/901, al-Qāsim b. ʿUbayd Allāh captured Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Quṣayy b. al-Mū'ayyad and ʿAbd al-'Azīz b. al-Mu'tamid, and sent them to prison to ensure the smooth transfer of the caliphate to al-Muktafi.72 From his knowledge of similar situations, Ibn al-Mu'tazz knew that his assassination was highly likely, as it had happened, for

---

72 See al-Samiraʾī's comment on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poems which describes his fear, *Diwān*, v. III, p. 188.
example, to al-Mu'ayyad who was captured and assassinated by al-Mu'tazz.73

The poet realised that his end was approaching and composed a poem in which he conveyed his terror. In the first part of the first line he expresses some small hope of evading death and asks himself to remain tolerant. In the second part, however, hope disappears as the world has betrayed him and peace no longer exists. He then carries on a dialogue with a dove, wishing that he was as free as she was:

\begin{align*}
\text{خانتلي من بعد طول الأمان.دنياك} \\
\text{طوباك يا ليتنا إياك طوباك.74}
\end{align*}

The last line emphasises the unwanted reality that this day may be the last of his life:

\begin{align*}
\text{و أوشك اليومن أن يبكي لي الياكي}75
\end{align*}

Because of his awareness of the personal dangers involved, Ibn al-Mu'tazz distanced himself from the political scene and involved himself in various forms of literary creation, ranging from poetry to literary history (such as al-\textit{Tabaqāt}), to literary criticism (such as his book on al-Badi'). On one occasion,

---

73 See Al-Ṭabari, \textit{op. cit.}, v. XII, pp. 12-3.
75 \textit{Diwān}, v. III, p. 190. There is another short poem which is said to have been composed while the poet was in prison. He starts that he was accommodated, by the circumstances of time, in a prison where he suffered:

\begin{align*}
\text{بيتٌ أسِرٌ في كُرْنَةٍ.}
\end{align*}

he announced that he was giving up all ambition for any political position:

**Wāhrūkhum rājāni wa rāfīqānih**

But did Ibn al-Mu'tazz really give up all ambition of restoring his lost heritage? A careful reading of the very same short poem in which he apparently renounces it will contradict that claim and demonstrate that his ambition still remained. This short poem is a bitter satire in which the people of his day are described as being as low as dogs; when the poet, with his various, suitable skills, was deprived of the caliphate, it passed on to less qualified people, who were like dogs. This somewhat unflattering view of his contemporaries is repeated elsewhere in his poetry. For example, in one particular line he states that all advantages in life are given to ignorant people, whilst discerning intellectuals have all the disadvantages:

**Wulhāwā dhinnā lajālimhā**

The third example which will be cited here is one in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz draws directly on his own experience. He says that his day is the time for ignorant people; people of firm mind are denied everything and they look at

---

77 *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 198.
others as being as powerless as a dying person looking at their inheritor:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{للجهل في ذا الدهر جاهت عريض.} \\
\text{كنْ جاهلاُ أَوْ قَنتِهِمْ تَفَرْ.} \\
\text{وَالعَقْلُ مَحروُمُ يَرِى ما يَرِى.}
\end{align*}
\]

The image in the second line gives an intriguing indication that the poet did not give up his ambitions completely, but that he felt himself just as weak as someone on his deathbed who sees himself robbed of wealth, unable to hold on to his possessions.

To avoid the dangers associated with overt ambition and political involvement, Ibn al-Mu'tazz used to remind himself of the importance of not complaining too much, for time, by its very nature, will continue to create problems for him as it does for everyone:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{إِنَّ الزماناً عَلَى ما تكَرَهينَ بَني} \\
\text{يَا نفس صبراً وإلا فأهلكي جَعَناً} \\
\text{بَأَنْهُمْ لم يَحَسَ دَهْرٌ ولم يَخْنِ} \\
\text{تَلقَّقي وسْلي هذا وذاك وذا}.
\end{align*}
\]

Such railing against time is a widespread theme in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry. He viewed the circumstances of time as being the main thing that prevented him from achieving his goals and tended to describe it as a furious camel with a

---

79 Diwān, v. III, p. 109. The ambition to become caliph and the satire of time and his contemporaries are disclosed in a long poem that is unique in what it reveals and deserves special treatment which cannot be offered here. See Diwān, v. III, pp. 149-54. Reference can also be made to another poem in which he finds comfort in a long description of a camel and the desert. See Diwān, v. III, pp. 270-3.
The poet’s complaints against time should be linked with his complaints against his contemporaries, primarily his own relatives, as both themes draw on the same core belief that he had been robbed of his rightful place in life. Rivalry between the royal members of the 'Abbasid family and the existence of numerous conspiracies inevitably lit the fires of mutual hatred, often hidden under a superficial veneer of acceptance, as can be seen in the following images. In the first, Ibn al-Mu'tazz states that he is forced to deal with people whom he detests and sees as being as bad as widespread grey hair:

лат吸取 أقوىهم أوصلتهم
وشيب إذا ما خلتة استعر

In the second, reference is made to a companion who is as bitter as the water of al-Jahh: 82

ولا بد لي منه فحينا يقضني
وماء طريق الجح في كل منهل

---

82 Al-Samira'i states that this water is used as a metonym for the bad water which the common people drink. See Diwān, v. I, p. 619, note 36.
He usually describes their viciousness as that of snakes and lions, comparing, for example, those who hides their hatred to snakes that attack weak prey:

\[
\text{بَا مِنْ بُنَاجِي ضَعْفَةٍ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَبِيْبٌ تَحْتِي بالَّفَاعِي اللَّدّ}
\]

\[
\text{وَاسِيَتْ بِنَهْضٍ زَغْرَةٍ فِي صَدَرٍ مِّنَّهُ فَذَيَّبَتْ جَمِيعٌ يُولُؤُ.}
\]

When in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's presence these people behave as his guards, just like his dogs, but when he leaves they will be as dangerous as lions:

\[
\text{خُلَقَتْ فِي سَلَّمَ عَدِيدٌ خُلَقَتْ}
\]

\[
\text{كِلَابٌ رَحْلَّيْي إِذَا حَضَرَتْ فَإِنْ}
\]

\[
\text{أَنْكِلْبِي رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ غَيْبَ فُوَافَا فُتُّسَدُ غَابَاتِ.}
\]

Ibn al-Mu'tazz was aware of how much he needed protection in the unstable society which surrounded him. Thus, although he was a son of a caliph whom poets used to address with panegyrics, it is not strange that Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself addressed poems of praise to other caliphs, ministers and even, on some occasions, to more lowly officials. Poetry for him was a means of life and the motive behind most of those panegyrics was not a truthful appreciation for the people he praised, but rather the intention to avoid their domination and win small benefits for himself. In the following, the way in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetic imagery reveals this fragmentation of trust between himself and his subject will be examined, specifically in the panegyrics and elegies he created for al-Mu'tadid and al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd

\[84\text{ The } \textbf{Dīwān}, \text{ v. II, p. 353.}\]

\[85\text{ The } \textbf{Dīwān}, \text{ v. I, p. 623.}\]
Ibn al-Mu'tazz devoted 15 panegyrics, five short poems and a long *muzdawija* to praise of al-Mu'tadid, in which he praised al-Mu'tadid's courage and intelligence in restoring the lost dignity of the 'Abbasid monarchy - this is the largest corpus of poetry he composed in praise of one person. It is said that the poet had a good relationship with this caliph, however an examination of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry reveals a fragmented relationship. This caliph was violent towards his enemies, and it is reported that he was:

وكان مع ذلك قليل الرحمة، كثير الإقدام، سفاكًا للدماء، شديد الرغبة في أن يمثل بمن يقتله وكان إذا غضب على القائد النبيل والذي يختصّه من علمائه، أمر أن يخسر له حفرة بحفرته ثم يدُلُّ على رأسه فيها ويطرح النبراب عليه ونصفه الأسفل ظاهر على النبراب، وبداس النبراب؛ فلا يزال كذلك حتى تخرج روحه من دُربه؛ وذكر من عذابه أنّه كان يأخذ الرجل فيكتف ويكفي، يؤخذ القطن فيُحشى في أذنه وشيوعه وفمه، وتوضع المنافخ في دُربه حتى ينتفخ ويعظم حجمه، ثم يسّد الدبر بشيء من القطن، ثم يفصد وقد صار كالحبل العظيم من العرفين اللذين فوق الحاجبين، فتخرج النفس من ذلك الموضع؛ وربما كان يقَام الرجل

---

86 Ibn al-Mu'tazz's unstable life and his awareness of hidden dangers made him very suspicious of people and he rarely trusted people enough to count them as a faithful friend. It is, therefore, not strange to find him changing his opinion on some people from one extreme to another. Al-Numayrî and Ibn al-Munajjîm, for example, were initially friends of his and he composed poetry in praise of them (see *Diwâ'*, v. I, p. 608 and p. 511 where short biographies of these characters are offered). However, later in his life, the poet directed satire of the very worst kind at them (p. 583 and p. 499). In al-Numayrî's case, Ibn al-Mu'tazz went beyond this to criticize his wife in a manner which cannot be mentioned here (see for example p. 500 and p. 507 where he concentrates on sexual intercourse).

“Besides, he has little mercy, great audaciousness, is a blood-shedder and longs to mutilate everyone he kills. If he was angry with a noble leader or close servant, he would order a hole to be dug, in his presence, and then would order that that person be put in upside down and the hole be filled with soil; the person would be left there until his soul come out from his back. Another of his methods of punishment that is reported is that he used to take the person and put chains on his hands and to put cottons in his ears, nose, and mouth. Then he would attach a bellows between his buttocks until he filled up with air and his body became huge, and block up the anus with cotton. Then he would bleed him, beginning with, for example, the two major veins above the eyebrows, until the soul would leave [his victim’s body] from that place. Sometimes they the person used to be stood up on a distant part of the castle, naked and bound, and was shot with arrows until he died. He used particular prisons and filled them with different kinds of punishments.”

Al-Mu’tadid was tough on Ibn al-Mu’tazz, restricting his movement and interfering in his personal life, and a number of his actions proved that he did...
not trust the poet. The first intimation of this lack of trust can be seen in his order that Ibn al-Mu'tazz be brought to Baghdad from Sāmmirā'. This must have alerted the poet to potential danger, but he managed to hide his fear, saying that the Imam had invited him to be close to him, and expressing welcome for this summons:

\[ \text{ذعانني الإمام إلى قريبه فاهلبا بذلك وسهلا به} \]

The second example of al-Mu'tadid's interference in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's life was occurred when he ordered him to stop drinking wine. The reason behind this order is not mentioned in the historical accounts, but it is entirely possible that it might be due to Ibn al-Mu'tazz expressing unwanted political sentiments when he had been drinking too much. In any case, the poet showed his discomfort about this order, saying that the Imam prohibited wine so glasses were returned to the wine waiters: Ibn al-Mu'tazz gave up wine, one of life's joys, by force and, because of the Imam it was no longer available:

\[ \text{وَئهاني الإمام عن وفعلاَ الكا} \\
\text{قم ببني وبيتهن الإمام} \]

As an additional precaution, al-Mu'tadid also distanced himself from Ibn al-Mu'tazz and did not allow him to see him. This rather harsh measure made

---

90 *Divān*, v. I, p. 397.
the poet even more wary of the caliph. Expecting the worst to happen at any
time, he tried hard to portray the situation as normal, but with little success. 92
In some of the introductions to poems praising al-Mu'tadid, he starts with
ghazal. For example, in the following his beloved Shurayra does not keep her
promises and does not allow him to visit her:

It might be suggested that the poet is here speaking in veiled terms about his
relationship with the caliph because he could not talk freely about the fact
that he wanted to visit him. Thus, these lines contrast the poet's condition,
which was one of fear (kha'if), with the caliph's, which was one of power
(kaff, and 'adhabtin).

The power of the beloved is conveyed in another panegyric composed in
praise of al-Mu'tadid which reflects the same division of power between the
poet and caliph:

92 One of the more explicit expressions of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's perceptions of the excessive power
of this caliph is a long analogy between him and a lion which can be found in a poem he
437-8, lines 18 to 26.
In addition, another short poem refers to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attempts to see al-Mu'tadid and the latter's refusal of such a meeting. This poem expresses the situation indirectly, in symbolic terms, according to which the poet is the dawn and the caliph is the cruel night that prevents the day from coming:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{حار هذا النجم أو هابا} & \\
\text{ووفود الليل واقفه} & \\
\text{لا ترى في القرب أبولا} & \\
\text{وكان القجر حين رأى} & \\
\text{ليلة قاسيه هابا}
\end{align*}
\]

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's fear and hidden dislike of this caliph are manifested clearly in his elegies in which, as al-Mu'tadid is now dead, the poet can show a little more of his true feelings. In one elegy, he professes sorrow at al-Mu'tadid's death in the first line, and accuses time of robbing him of his relatives:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{أنت والد ستوع تأكل الولد} & \\
\text{يا دهر وبحك ما أبقى لي أحدا}
\end{align*}
\]

However, the second line betrays a different sentiment as he now expresses a sense of happiness at this death:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{أستغفر الله بل دا كله فذر} & \\
\text{رضيت بالله ربا واحدا صمدا}
\end{align*}
\]

95 Diwan, v. I, p. 34.
The aclarity of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's change from blaming time to accepting its disasters intimates his real feelings, especially when it is viewed in the context of the other themes of the elegy, which can be summarised as follows:

lines 1-2: Complaints against time followed by acceptance of events.
lines 3-9: Description of the caliph's strength in administration and war.
lines 10-14: Description of the caliph's castles and favourite pastimes.
lines 15-21: Description of the caliph's strength in war and his fighting skills.
lines 22-25: Conclusion: death will claim everyone, even the strong.

As can be seen from the above summary, the violent, aggressive nature of the caliph is the dominant theme. There is no mention of the poet's sorrow for the death of the caliph, and the poem is primarily a manifestation of his power and his frightening presence. Even in the section devoted to the description of the caliph's castles and favourite pastimes a frightening image emerges in which his own servants are not free from the fear of being killed at any moment:

\[ من راح منهم ولم يطمير فقد سُعداً \]

In addition to stating the different aspects of al-Mu'tadid's power and authority, Ibn al-Mu'tazz emphasises that when he died this strength came to

---

98 *Diwan*, v. III, p. 23.
an end and it was as if the caliph had never existed - the second line claims that only good deeds will remain and no king will hold onto his kingship forever:

Thus the themes and the imagery of this elegy indicate that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was, actually, happy to hear of the death of al-Mu'tadid, the caliph who had terrorised him and filled his life with fear. These same themes and feelings are expressed in yet another elegy which he begins in the style of ghazal (love poetry):

In this poem, which has one particular aspect that indicates his real feelings about the death of al-Mu'tadid, Ibn al-Mu'tazz again expresses a sense of relief over his demise. By opening his elegy with ghazal Ibn al-Mu'tazz breaks with established literary convention. An elegy should, traditionally, begin with a topic that agrees with the overall feeling of loss and sorrow; subjects such as ancient nations and kings and the necessity of death are amongst the

100 Diwân, v. III, p. 85.
preferred topics for an elegy. Ibn al-Mu'tazz followed this tradition, except in two of his poems: the aforementioned, and another elegy that is said to have been composed for the same occasion. This second poem also opens in the ghazal style, with the poet asking his beloved to at least promise to let him visit her:

\[ \text{ألا زوّدنا الّبعد إن لم تزودي} \]

Al-Kafrawi rightly sees in this proof that Ibn al-Mu'tazz feels happiness at al-Mu'tadid's death, and a kind of gloating over the fact he has come to grief.

Another fragmented relationship worthy of investigation here is that between Ibn al-Mu'tazz and the minister al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd Allah. This minister, like al-Mu'tadid, was known for his excessive power, a fact referred to by al-Mas'ūḍī, who states:

"\text{عظم الهيبة، شديد الإقدام، سفاكًا للدماء، وكان الكبير والصغير على رعب وخوف منه، لا يعرف أحد منهم لنفسه نعمة.}"

"He was hugely awesome, intrepid, and a blood-shedder. All,

---

102 \textit{Diwān}, v. III, p. 31. According to the \textit{Diwān}, this elegy is composed on the death of Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil. The poet's relation to this person was sincere. The appearance of \textit{ghazal} in the introduction, as explained above, prevents this elegy from being said at the death of Ibn al-Mutawakkil.
104 See al-Mas'ūḍī, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 281.
were in terror of him, young and old, and no one felt safe anywhere.”

It was the custom of the time to imprison members of the royal family who might cause problems during the transition of power from one caliph to another. Although Ibn al-Mu'tazz distanced himself from any involvement in politics, he was put in prison several times to clear the way for a succession of new caliphs. On one of these occasions, the accession of al-Muktafi to the caliphate, al-Qāsim b. ‘Ubayd Allāh was responsible for his imprisonment (as has already been mentioned above). In addition to the poem already cited, a second poem in Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s diwān is said to have been composed when he was under arrest at this time. In the first line the poet seeks a supporter against ‘the events of his time’:

هُلْ مِنْ مُّعيِنٍ عَلَى أَحَدَتِ أَزَمَائِي

He goes on to praise the minister and his father, the previous minister, with whom, he says, he had a good relationship and urges al-Qāsim to deal with him in the same manner. It has been observed by previous scholarship that Ibn al-Mu'tazz cites two particular attributes in praise of the father, of which, he hints, the son has been deprived: good values and tolerance. The imagery in the panegyrics composed by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in praise of this minister indicate his hidden dislike in two ways; his concentration on external

105 See above, pp. 313-4.
107 See Abū Khadra, op. cit., p. 222.
attributes and his use of cold, chilly images. For example, one of the dominant images he uses is the comparison of al-Qāsim with the moon:

\[
\text{ألست ترى فيه جمالًا} 108 \\
\text{بذا قمر أو فاسم هو مقيل.}
\]

\[
\text{إيتمام لا يريد غروبًا} 109 \\
\text{وإذا أبصرته فلت بدر.}
\]

This concentration on external attributes when describing the minister’s beauty suggests perhaps that Ibn al-Mu‘tazz intentionally overlooked moral values, and may also reflect his attempt to hide his true feelings. This view can be supported by a well known anecdote, which Ibn al-Mu‘tazz undoubtedly knew, involving the poet ‘Abd Allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt and the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, according to which the poet praised the caliph by saying:

\[
\text{بأثقيق، النَّاجٌ فوق مَرفقيٍّ} \\
\text{على جبين، كأنه الذهب.}
\]

The crown glitters on his head

over a forehead that is like gold

to which the caliph respond, in anger, ‘you praised me in this fashion as the kings of al-‘ajam, used to be praised, when you have said about Muṣ'ab’ (the caliph’s enemy):

Muṣ'ab, indeed, is a comet sent by God
whose face has cleared away all darkness

The use of cold, sterile images is another method by which Ibn al-Muʿtazz conveys his underlying dislike for al-Qāsim. For example, in one poem the humiliated poet can be seen to display a sense of relief when the minister falls ill. He starts by stating his concerns about the secret news, then says that the cause of his concerns is fear for the minister’s health. He wishes that he himself would fall sick instead of the minister and asks God to save the world by saving al-Qāsim:

His hidden dislike in these two lines can be seen in his use of the slang expression ‘bī wa-lā bihi’ ‘I wish I were sick instead of him’. This expression is not one in which the respect and honour that should be used when addressing a minister is evident. Ibn al-Muʿtazz’s insincerity can also be seen in the exaggerated expression ‘yā rabbi amsik ramaq al-dunyā bihi’ ‘God save life by saving him’, as if the minister is the only important and meaningful

thing in life.

This coldness of expression is particularly noticeable in poetry addressed to al-Qāsim. On another occasion, he praises him in slang, stating that al-Qāsim is nothing but 'Ubayd Allāh, expressing his thanks to God for this similarity:

\[
\text{ما قاسم إلاّ عبيد الله حسبه به خلفاً بحمد الله} \text{ }
\]

As in the elegies addressed to al-Mu'tadid, Ibn al-Mu'tazz flouts convention by beginning this poem with ghazal. In addition, al-Qāsim is here praised using some unsuitable images. On another occasion Ibn al-Mu'tazz expresses his hatred of 'Ubayd Allāh and his sons, al-Qāsim being one of them, describing them as lacking values and a sound mind, so that they appear to be pearls when, in fact, they are only beads:

\[
\text{قل يُعِبِّدِ اللَّهُ بَاِوَحِةَ الصَّبِّيَّ لا بَأَبَيْنِهِ العَقَلَاءَ وَاقِيِّب} \\
\text{أَيَا نَفَار حَرْزُ المَخْضَلَب} \text{ }
\]

3-2- The Co-existence of Sadness and Happiness.

In linking different topics or themes by comparison, Ibn al-Mu'tazz shows less awareness of the nature of the topics or themes involved. It is sometimes possible to see both positive and negative aspects co-existing in the very

\[\text{111} \text{ Diwān, v. III, p. 111.} \]
\[\text{112} \text{ Diwān, v. I, p. 617.} \]
same image, an element which has led some scholars to criticise the imbalance between psychological and sense-communication functions in his images.\textsuperscript{113} Rain, which is usually considered a sign of life and hence has a positive nature, is compared by this poet to tears, with their affiliations with sadness and negative feelings. The opposite also occurs so that, for example, grey hair, which is usually a sign of old age, is compared to certain types of flowers.

However, when the context requires a mixture of positive and negative associations, it is understandable if a poet uses such fragmented images. For example, separation from his beloved or the loss of a close relative are negative experiences that make Ibn al-Mu'tazz associate rain with tears. Thus, in a reference to Sharīra's leaving camp, he states that the features of the place had been changed by 'the tears of the sky', by rain and strong wind:

\begin{center}
\begin{multicols}{2}
بَلَى تَمَّ مَا فِي مَنْهَا بَلَاقَعٍ
دُمُوعُ السَّماوَاتِ وَالرِّيَاحُ الزَّعَازَعَ
\end{multicols}
\end{center}

Despite the fact that rain is a source of life, it is here seen as a reflection of the poet's general feeling of sadness for the separation from his beloved.\textsuperscript{115} Death is another sad experience which inspires Ibn al-Mu'tazz to refer to 'the tears of the sky' when, as is the custom in Arabic poetry, the poet asks for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} See above, Chapter Two, section two.
\item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 467.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Similar examples can be seen in \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 38 and p. 493.
\end{itemize}
rain to fall on the grave of his relative Ibn al-Mutawakkil.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{quote}
{
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
أجيشُ سماكى تَجَينُ رواعدهُ & دموعُ سماكى كلّ يومٍ تساعدهُ
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

إذا ما بَكى البَاكى عليه تَهَلَتْ
\end{quote}

This mixture of feelings, however, becomes harder to comprehend when the context is of a positive nature. For Ibn al-Mu'tazz it is possible, when describing a flourishing narcissus, to compare the dew on it to the tears of a lover who has been affected by the abandonment of his beloved. A second image, in which the graceful movement of a narcissus stem in the wind is compared to the gloomy movement of a drinker under the effects of alcohol, also features this characteristic link between positive and negative feelings:

\begin{quote}
{
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
كَانَ احِجَازُ الطَّلَّلَ في جَبَابِها & دموعُ مُحب قَد أضَرَّ بِهِ الهِجرُ
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

إذا لَمْصَبَّتْها الريحُ مالتُ كَانَها
\end{quote}

This personification of nature shows this poet's sensitivity towards it and is, in fact, a feature of his era, in which poets turned their attention to green landscapes, particularly gardens.\textsuperscript{119} Flowers, in general, share in Ibn al-

\textsuperscript{116} The poet had a good relationship with this relative, as can be seen in some panegyrics and elegies dedicated to him (see for example \textit{Dihwān}, v. II, pp. 382-390 and \textit{Dihwān}, v. III, p. 20 and pp. 26-9). The genuine love Ibn al-Mu'tazz felt towards Ibn al-Mutawakkil is also evident in poems belonging to other genres, such as admonishment (see for example \textit{Dihwān}, v. II, p. 275) and asceticism (see for example \textit{Dihwān}, v. III, p. 177) in which he seeks repose in remembering this true friendship.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Dihwān}, v. III, p. 29. See also \textit{Dihwān}, v. III, p. 63.


\textsuperscript{119} Al-Shak'a gives an accurate account of the flourishing of 'gardens poetry' \textit{rawdiyyāt} and Ibn al-Mu'tazz's pioneer role in such a trend. See \textit{Riḥlat al-Shīr min al-'Umawiyya ilā al-'Abasiyya}, (Beirut: 1973) pp. 760-7.
Mu'tazz's sorrows and concerns. When he sees flowers in the garden, he remembers his beloved who has left him and breaks down in tears. The flowers then cry with him:

\[ 
\text{وقفتُ بالروض. أيكي قدّ مُشبّهُ حتى بُكُت يدموعي أعينُ الزهر.}^{120} 
\]

These concerns about love and other affairs of heart usually emerge at night when the poet is alone. In another poem, in which he describes a night journey, different aspects of the night are viewed with sadness: he crosses a desert devoid of even a single drop of water; it is as dark as the heart of an unbeliever; lightning, when it flashes, comes and goes as fast as the heartbeat of a lover who has won an appointment with his beloved; rain falls as heavily as do the tears of a lover saying farewell to his beloved:

\[ 
\text{كَمْ قد قطعتَ إليكُ من دَمْومَةٍ} \\
\text{موَاهُ يَضْلُّهُ كَمَلَبِ الكافر} \\
\text{خَطْفَ الْفِؤادُ لَمْ يَمْعَعَهُ من زائِر} \\
\text{فِي ليلَةٍ فِيها السَّمَاءُ مَيِّمَةٍ} \\
\text{والبرقُ يَخْطُفُ من جِلالِ سِحْابِهَا} \\
\text{ذَمْمُ الموْدُعَ إِلَّهُ سَائِرُ}^{121} \\
\text{والغيبُ مَنْهَلُ يَسْحُعُ كَاتِبُ} \\
\]

It is important to mention at this point that rain, as a semantic field, and its related terms of cloud, lightning and thunder, are represented in a gloomy fashion. In other words, this field is used to convey the poet's feelings and

---

concerns. In his Al-Ṭab'i a fi Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz, al-Muṣṭafā rightly notes that, rather than following the established convention of linking the shape of cloud with that of an eagle, Ibn al-Mu'tazz links it with a crow — a symbol of pessimism for the Arabs. This description of the rain-cloud, which is full of water, as a pitch black crow is, as al-Muṣṭafā asserts, a true indication of the poet’s inner world:  

\[122\]

as is the sound of thunder, which is seen to be as sad as wailing women:

\[123\]

In another fragmented image, in which the shaking nature of lightning during the night is likened to the shaking pavilion of the kingdom, Ibn al-Mu'tazz's concerns are more readily identifiable:

\[124\]

This image embodies the political disturbances and rapid changes of the 'Abbasid caliphate, with its uprisings during the rule of caliphs such as al-
Mūtawakkil and al-Mu'tadid, and its periods of decline, for example during the rule of the caliphs al-Muntaṣir and al-Muwaffaq.

This negative aspect is introduced into two further themes: images related to the moon and to wine. The moon is mainly pictured in a fragmented fashion, in contrast to imagery relating to other stars, which tends to be less fragmented.\footnote{The Pleiades, for example, is usually depicted in a delightful way and is compared with a bunch of grapes (see for example \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 72 and \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 114) or a bunch of blossoms (see for example \textit{Diwān}, v. I, p. 72 and \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 114). Occasionally, however, it also takes on some negative aspects. In the following line, for example, the form of this star cluster and its position in the western skies bring to the poet’s mind the state of a frightened person who holds himself still while listening carefully for any slight sound: \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 186. A similar example can be seen in \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 68.} Thus, the poet’s emotional turmoil and dislike of a night in which he does not get enough ‘food of sleep’ spills over into his imagery so that he is surrounded by problems and attacked by mosquitoes while the curved shape of the crescent appears like the curved shape of the back of a rat:

\begin{equation}
\text{ وإذا رأى قوبأ من النوم شلدت } \\
\text{ ض في قمر مثل ظهر الجود } \text{\footnote{\textit{Diwān}, v. II, pp. 567-8.}}
\end{equation}

In another image, the shape of the crescent moon is compared to a nail cutting – an insignificant part of the body:

\begin{equation}
\text{ ولا اض هلال كاذ بفضحة } \\
\text{ مثل الاقلامة قد فصت من الطفر } \text{\footnote{\textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 592.}}
\end{equation}
In their attempts to justify such fragmented images, some scholars have limited their attention to the particular occasion on which any given poem was composed. Thus, Sayyid al-Ahl explains the poet’s dislike of the moon in one poem as resulting from it having disclosed the poet’s secret on an occasion when he visited his beloved.\(^{129}\) Although this interpretation superficially seems sound, it may be more rewarding to classify this image with others which reveal Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s standpoint regarding the moon, and examine the interpretative possibilities this opens up. To concentrate on the same shape, on another occasion Ibn al-Mu‘tazz describes the moon as being unfit, hence he talks about ‘the sickness of the moon’:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{بَشَرُ سَقُمُ الهِلَالِ بِالعِيد} \\
\text{يَفْتَحُ فَأْهُ لَأَكْلِ عُنْقُوٰ،} \\
\text{فِرُอ انفَضَتْ دُوَلَةُ الصَّيَامِ وَقَدْ} \\
\text{يَجْلَوُ الْثُّرَبُ كَفَاغِرُ شَرَهٰٗ.}
\end{align*}
\]

In this case, Abu-Deeb’s interpretation of this attitude being a result of his being fed up with fasting during \textit{Ramadān} has already been discussed.\(^{131}\) His understanding of this poem is undoubtedly justified, however this does not preclude the existence of another reading which pushes the interpretative boundaries to include the use of this image throughout the whole body of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s poetry.

On another occasion, the poet directs his speech at the moon, accusing ‘him’

\(^{130}\) \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 100.
\(^{131}\) See above pp. 275-7 and Abu-Deeb, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23.
of stealing the light of the bright sun and being the cause of all his problems. 'He' is, to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, an incomplete creature when compared to the sun, and he concludes that there is no worthy simile for this vitiligo moon, other than saying it is like a leper:

يا سارق الأنوار من شمس الصّحّى
وأرى حرارة نارها لم تنَقص.
مُتسَلَّحُ بهفاء كلون الأبرص. 132

The question which now begs to be asked is, 'Why does the poet look at the moon in this gloomy manner?' Does it represent the poet's luck or his unfulfilled wishes? More specifically, is it the caliphate that the poet is hinting at when mentioning the moon? In answering these questions, it can be suggested that in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's moon images are connotations of the classical metaphor which compares a woman's face to the moon. To arrive at this conclusion one must follow two integrated steps.

First, when engaging in political discourse, it has been already been noted that some poets express their views in an indirect fashion, especially when they feel that their life is under threat. In these cases, they often use a type of symbolism through which the poet can use a certain object or idea to discuss another object or another idea. For example, al-Sharif al-Radiyy uses the žabyat al-bân/ gazelle of al-bân tree to express his desire for the caliphate.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz is another example of this trend. As explained earlier in this chapter, he tends to talk about his desire to avenge his father's death and his political aspirations indirectly. In his case, his beloved Sharīra is used as a symbol for the caliphate in a number of poems. Shalabī notes that the poet mentions this name 80 times in his poetry and cites particular descriptions which make the link between the two a definite matter, such as his portrayal of her as 'the pearl of the kingdom'. Furthermore, there is one particular, political poem, in which Ibn al-Mu'tazz directs his speech to his close relatives and proves the rights of al-'Abasiyyin branch of his family over the al-'Alawiyyin, which manifests the use of this symbol clearly. Ibn al-Mu'tazz opens this poem, the main topic of which is the right of accession to the caliphate, by stating his sorrow and concerns for the absence of his beloved Sharīra in Baghdad, who cannot be reached. Following this he discusses the importance of making use of any opportunity that arises to reach his beloved in Baghdad. On this occasion the implied equation between Sharīra and the caliphate is undeniably clear. From this symbolic connection between his beloved and the caliphate, it then seems logical to posit a further interpretation of his symbolism; that the poet's concerns about gaining the caliphate were transferred via Sharīra's face to the moon through the classical image that compares a woman's face to the moon.

Wine, in which the poet seeks comfort, also appears to entail discomforting

---

aspects. As Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself says, one reason for his wine drinking is to make a bitter life sweet or to encounter ‘the face of happiness’.\textsuperscript{136} However, although he drinks to escape the negative aspects of his life, he does not seem to be fully successful and some negative aspects still come through. Thus, a number of strong and powerful elements colour the wine image when it is linked with fire and war. For example, Ibn al-Mu'tazz says that he drinks wine to deaden his problems and concerns, as wine is a strong weapon for such a purpose:

\begin{quote}
٣٧\textsuperscript{137} يَعمَلُ بِالْحَرَّاءِ فِي الْفَتْقِ صَاحِبُ الحَمْرَاءِ
\end{quote}

This strength, however, turns against the poet and the other drinkers. Wine in the glass is like fire which makes strong flames, but added water cools it:

\begin{quote}
٣٨\textsuperscript{138} كَانَ بِكَأْسِهَا نَارٌ تَلْتَقَى
\end{quote}

This fire infiltrates the entire body of the drinkers and, following a night of drinking, they discover that their hands are glowing:

\begin{quote}
٣٩\textsuperscript{139} حُفِقًا قَابِدِهِمْ تَسَطَّرُ
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Diwān}, v. II, p. 133.
Every action related to wine and the drinking environment is coloured with this negative aspect; opening the wineskin is likened to an act of slaughter and the wine itself is compared to blood or flames.\textsuperscript{140}

\textit{يلمعها وظاها وحية في تحرها}
\textit{جاذب لها يتم كان نفيهة}

the barmaid is seen as a soldier:

\textit{في قباء مشمر الأديال}

and the drunkard moves as heavily as a prisoner in chains:

\textit{يمشي وقد أخذ الثعاس برجله}

Reference has previously been made to a group of images in which the colour of black skin is used in rather an astonishing way. These images occur at the heart of this present phenomenon, in which positive and negative aspects of the poetic image co-exist, as should become clear from just one, final

\textsuperscript{140} It should be mentioned here that Ibn al-Mu’taazz’s sensibility towards blood needs further investigation and might reveal interesting psychological aspects of his personality. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of the present study, nevertheless one particular example, in which the wounds inflicted on al-Muwaffaq bi-Allah on the battle field are described as flourishing flowers, is given here for illustrative purposes:

\textit{شَقَّ الجُمُوع بسيف}\\
\textit{ورَدُّ النَفْطُ في عَصَن}

\textit{Diwan}, v. II, p. 211.
In these lines, Ibn al-Mu'tazz first declares that his wealth is spent on seeking pleasure in wine and then goes on to say that the tightened wineskin resembles the body of an Ethiopian man, while the wine itself is like his blood. The co-existence of the pleasurable connotations of wine juxtaposed with the uncomfortable ones of a slaughtered human body in this image makes a perfect manifestation of fragmentation in the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.


\[^{144} Dîwân, v. II, p. 43.\]
4- Conclusion.

In this closing section, a few conclusions concerning Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s life and poetry that have been reached in this chapter can now be highlighted. First, in contrast to other literary critics and historians who have often depicted the poet as a wealthy prince who led a rather comfortable life, it has been argued in this chapter that for the majority of this poet’s life he faced difficulties which affected both his personality and poetry a great deal. From a very early age, following the assassination of his grandfather, Ibn al-Mu’tazz was only too aware of the danger of being involved in politics. The assassination of his father soon afterwards taught him again that he should distance himself from politics, as a result of which he became involved in literature and poetry. Although his early poems show some kind of political resistance and express his desire to take revenge against his father’s killers, he grew to realise the danger of such outspokenness and hid his true intent in an indirect tone and, occasionally, through the use of symbolic language. Thus, the concept of ‘fragmentation’ is one that is applicable to his life as well as to his imagery.

The second conclusion that can be reached is that Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s view of time and people was coloured by his experiences. Hence, he usually pictured time as a ‘furious camel that has a difficult nature’ and regarded his contemporaries, especially those belonging to the royal family, as no more than snakes who were soft on the outside, yet masked an inner poison.
Thirdly, the fragmentation that can be found in Ibn al-Mu'tazz imagery operates on two different levels: direct and indirect. Direct fragmentation can be clearly recognised in some of the poems which address the poet's relationships with others. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's dislike of al-Mu'tadid, for example, and his lack of sadness at his death can be seen in the fragmented imagery of the two elegies he is said to have composed on this occasion. Indirect fragmentation can be seen in the co-existence of positive and negative aspects in some of his images, such as those related to rain, which is coloured with unusual negative connotations, and those related to gray hair, which take on unconventional positive connotations. Negative aspects occur often in his treatment of two further topics; the moon and wine. It has been posited that this overlapping of positive and negative connotations can be seen to reflect the instability and co-existence of happiness and sorrow in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's life.

The fourth finding of this chapter is that Ibn al-Mu'tazz's fragmentation of moon-related images reflects a symbolic use of language, according to which the moon is consistently used as a symbol of the caliphate, a subject about which he was not always able to talk freely.

Finally, attention has been drawn to the idea that Ibn al-Mu'tazz's extensive use of images that came from jewels and elements of value reflects an attempt by him to escape the reality of his poor level of living. This is an issue that would benefit from further investigation, for example in the form of a
chronological analysis of the poet’s imagery in order classify the periods in which the poet used this source the most so as to determine if there is indeed a correlation between his standard of living and use of this image source.
CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to throw fresh light on the imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz by investigating its sources and analysing some aspects of its nature using a methodology based on a combination of techniques used by classical and modern critics. In addition, it has also tried to highlight some features in the life and interests of the poet. In this conclusion, the main findings and some recommendations will now be presented.

This study first posited that, although the significance of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery has been acknowledged by traditional and modern scholars, no one has yet explored or proved its importance. It also acknowledged that most ideas regarding the nature of the imagery of this poet originate from the work of al-Jurjānī, whose conclusions and opinions have been repeated by following scholars without further investigation or analysis. This has resulted in a situation whereby the stereotypical view of this poet is one of a wealthy prince whose poetry reflects a life of luxury, based primarily on the high frequency of images relating to jewellery and expensive items in his poetry. However, this study has adopted a different understanding and argued that Ibn al-Mu'tazz experienced an extremely difficult life full of hardship and poverty, right from early days of his childhood, during which not only were his grandfather and then his father assassinated, but his remaining family was stripped of its assets and sent into exile in terrifying circumstances. Apart

---

12 See chapter three of this study.
from a short time during the rule of his father (nearly four years), Ibn al-
Mu'tazz generally lived in fear of being imprisoned or killed, and occasionally
even suffered imprisonment. It has been argued that evidence found in his
imagery supports this alternative interpretation: the very same evidence that
is seen as a sign of his aristocratic, comfortable life is used here to support
the opposite claim. Hence, among other indications, the frequent mention of
jewels and similar items in his imagery is here seen as a kind of escape from
unwanted reality. This escape can also be seen in the poet's description of the
stars, moon and sun; it seems as if the poet wanted to leave worldly affairs
for other realms and therefore occupied himself with astral matters that no
one else was interested in.

The second main finding of this study is that investigation of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's
imagery sources discloses five distinct sources; 'the human being', 'daily life',
nature', 'animals' and 'culture'. These reflect the poet's interests, as well as
his likes and dislikes, and studying the sources of imagery has proved to be
more rewarding than studying the subject matter of that same imagery. It
can be posited that this is because the poet has little power or control in the
choice of his sources, as they emerge, primarily, from his subconscious.
Subject matter, on the other hand, results from the exertion of direct and
conscious choice on the part of the poet, thus he has more control over the
aspects of himself that he reveals or keeps hidden.

3 See Chapter Five for more details.
Furthermore, systematic analysis of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's image sources shows that ‘the human being’ is the predominant source of his imagery, as indeed is the case with the two other poets mentioned in Chapter Two. On this basis, it should be mentioned here that this phenomenon deserves further study in order to, first, determine whether or not ‘the human being’ is the primary image source for all poets and, second, provide an acceptable interpretation for this phenomenon if it indeed proves to be the case.

With regard to the ‘human being’ image source, it is also worth clarifying that attention has been drawn by Ibn al-Mu'tazz's biographers to the fact that there is no clear reference to his mother, only to his grandmother, Qabiña. It is argued in this study, however, that his poetry does make reference to his mother in an indirect manner, where the poet describes an immature mother who does not offer enough love to her child. In this context, given the scarcity of references to the poet's private life in biographical sources, his poetry is also important in that it remains the only available and reliable source for information about his life. Indeed, no one biographer can, or has, depicted the poet's relationship with his ex-wife as it is revealed in the following image:

I have divorced my bride for no return

---

4 This relationship is mentioned first in Chapter Two and emphasised later in Chapter Five.
5 The Dīwān, V. I, p. 679.
And she was [like a] a stone between my sandal and the bottom of my feet.

This image represents perfectly the difficulties Ibn al-Mu'tazz experienced with married life. These unhappy marital experiences, in addition to other reasons, made him choose to live a lonely life, a decision which he publicised in his poetry. Long before the precedent set by the great Arab poet of loneliness, Abū al-'Alā’ al-Ma'arri, Ibn al-Mu'tazz announced:

وَمَا كَانَ لِي فِي ذَاكَ صَنَعَ وَلَا أَمْرُ
وَمَا فِي كُلِّ مِنْ عُوْدِي غَرَاسٌ وَلَا بَذْرٌ

O world, I came to you despite my will,
And had no choice for that
I will leave you dispraised
I did not plant on your soil any seeds

Further examination of the other image sources addressed in Chapter Four also discloses information about Ibn al-Mu'tazz's personality and preferences. In the course of the analysis undertaken here, it has been found that his admiration for the palm tree as an image source is evident through the numerous references to it, its trunk, fronds and spadix. Other topics, such as

---

6 The *Diwān*, V. III, pp. 172-3.
the moon, Pleiades, wine, wine froth, wineskin, hunting dogs, horses and flowers (especially the narcissus) are also frequently used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his imagery. An in depth study of these topics would offer interesting insights into this poet but was beyond the scope of the present study.

The third main finding of this study is that, while investigating the sources, two common characteristics emerged; Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s concentration on external attributes and the frequent imbalance or lack of harmony between the two parts of his poetic image. Chapters Five and Six were devoted to a detailed study of these aspects of his poetry, hence these characteristics will not be elaborated further here.

Finally, Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s fondness for, and use of, shape, colour, and speed in his imagery are the major qualities through which the poet is recognised in this thesis as the pioneer of ḥissī (sensory) poetic imagery, in contrast to Abū Tammām, the pioneer of the dhīhnī (intellectual) image. As has already been explained, these two types do not just demonstrate two different aspects of poetic creation, rather, they indicate two forms of human thinking: imagist and symbolist. In Ibn al-Mu'tazz’s poetry, different types of shape, colour and movement are extensively presented. One particular group of these images, however, is especially interesting and deserves to be highlighted in this context. This is the large body of images relating to calligraphy, totaling sixty five items, which has been discovered and classified. It is believed that this thesis may be the first in which such an undertaking has been carried out for
an individual poet. It is suggested here that further, similar studies are required, especially for poetry dating from the Abbasid era, in order to highlight the integration between different types of art at that time.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Holy Qur'an.


353

Al-Mas'udi, 'A, Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar, Ed. Ch. Pilat, (Beirut: 1974), v. V.


Al-Qâli, I, Dhayl al-Amâli wa'l-Nawâdî, (Cairo: n.d.).


Al-Qayrawâni, I, Al-'Umada fi Ma'âsin al-Shi'ir wa Âdâbih, Ed. M. Qarqazân, (Beirut: 1988), v. II.


Al-Radiyy, al-Sh, Diwan al-Sharîf al-Radiyy, Ed. Y. Farâhât, (Beirut: 1995), v. II.

Al-Rummânî, Thalâth Rasâ'îl fi I'jâz al-Qur'ân, Ed. by M. Khalaf Allah and M. Sallâm, (Cairo: 1956).

Al-Sakkaki, B, Mi'atat al-'Ulûm, (Beirut: 1937).

Al-Shak'a, M, Riḥlat Shi'r min al-'Umaiyya ilâ al-'Abbâsiyya, (Beirut: 1973).

Al-Ṣṣafadi, Kh, Kitâb al-Wâfi bi'l-Wafyât, Ed. D. Krawusky, (Beirut: 1982), v. IX.


---, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ṭa‘rīkh al-Rusul wa’l-Mulûk)* Tran. and annotated by D. Waines, (New York: 1992), v. XXXVI.


[‘Antara], *Kitāb al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn, The Divan of the six Arabic Poets*,

Ennābīga, ‘Antra, Tharafa, Zuhair, ‘Alqama and Imru’ilqais Arabic poets,


A. Scinmmel, "Calligraphy and poetry” in *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*,


Ashtiyani, J. Johnstone, T. Latham, J. Serjeant, R and R. Smith (eds.),


Biţām, M, Māzhār al-Mujtama’ wa Malāmīḥ al-Tajdīd min Khilāl al-Shīr al-


Dayf, Sh, al-Fann wa Madhāhibuh fi al-Shīr al-'Arabi, (Cairo: 1969)


Ḥasan, ‘A, Shīr al-Wuqūf ‘alā al-‘Āṭlāl min al-Jāhiliyya ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-
Thālith, (Damascus: 1968).


Hourani, A, Arabic Thought In The Liberal Age 1798-1939, (Cambridge:
1983).

Husain, Ṭ, Min Ḥadīth al-Shīr wa‘l-Nathr, (Cairo: 1948).

Ibn al-Kazarūnī, Ž, Mukhtaṣar al-Tārikh min Awwal al-Azamān ilā Muntahā


and IX.

---, Shīr Ibn al-Muṭazz; Part I, the Dīwān, Şan’at Muḥammad b. Yaḥya al-Ṣūlī,

---, The Dīwān of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Muṭazz, Tran. A. Wormhoudt, (Oskaloosa:
1978).
Ibn Manžûr, M, *Lisân al-‘Arab*, (Beirut: 1956), v. VII.


APPENDIX
Sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Daily life</th>
<th>Human being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graph shows the distribution of imagery sources for Ibn al-Mu'tazz, with 'Human being' being the most frequent category, followed by 'Daily life', 'Nature', 'Animal', and 'Culture'.