

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



ProQuest Number: 10731465

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731465

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

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 *ḥissī* (sensory or sensuous) type of poetic imagery, in contrast with Abū Tammām, who was considered the pioneer of *dhihnī* (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-'Udharî 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-Ĥabsî, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghaffār and Faḍl al-Maqḥafî 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-Maḥrûqî, my wife Th. al-Ĥabsî, and my sister and brother Sh. and Aḥmed al-Maḥrûqî. 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

فرغ رجاءك

فرغ رجاءك ولا تخطأ أرحملاً فلفنت

على المطايا وثق بالوالحمد العمد

والفرغ حمسى الغنظ ما لم تلو فرصته

واللائب أوتوب العبر في الشاوي

أتم والسب في غمار الملتح تحسبه

في لفة وهو في هم وفي كسر

لوق العنز

ج 3، ص 151

KEY NOTES

- There are several critical editions of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān*, 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-Sāmirāī (Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'A, *Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz; Part I, the Dīwān, Ṣan'at Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī*, Ed. Y. al-Sāmirāī (Baghdad: 1977, v. I and v. II, but v. III in 1978) is the most comprehensive one. Thus, all subsequent references to the *Dīwān* will be to this edition.
- Unless otherwise stated, the author of this thesis is responsible for all translations herein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	12
-----------------------------	----

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-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (1954).....	36
2-2- Husain (1948).....	47
2-3- Sayyid al-Ahl (1951).	51
2-4- Al-Kafrāwī(1967)	53
2-5- Al-Shak'a (1973)	56
2-6- Shalabī (19981).	58
2-7- Al-Taṭāwī (1981)	62
2-8- Al-Muṣṭafā (1991).	66
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

1-2-2- Household Equipment.	136
1-3- Food and Drink.....	141
1-4- Equipment of War and Handcrafts.....	144
1-4-1- Equipment of War.....	144
1-4-2- Handcrafts.....	150
2- Nature.....	152
2-1- The Sun and Stars.....	152
2-2- Fire.....	156
2-3- Plants.....	160
2-4- Water and Land.....	164
3- Animals.....	168
3-1- Wild Animals.....	170
3-1-1- Snakes.....	171
3-2- Domesticated Animals.....	172
3-3- Birds and Insects.....	174
4- Culture.....	178
4-1- Religious and General Culture.....	178
4-2- The Fine Arts.....	181
5- Conclusion.....	184

PART 3: Some Aspects of the Nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

Chapter Five: The *Hissî* Aspect of Poetic Imagery

1- Previous Studies on The Nature of Poetic Imagery.....	188
2- <i>Hissî</i> and <i>Dhihnî</i>: Two types of Poetic Imagery.....	196

2-1- <i>Ĥissî</i> Images.....	198
2-1-1- Divisions of the <i>Ĥissî</i> Image.....	199
2-2- <i>Dihni</i> Images.....	201
2-3- The Problem of <i>Tamthîl</i>	203
2-4- The Predominance of the <i>Ĥissî</i> Image.....	206
2-5- The Imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Abû Tammām.....	209
3- <i>Dihni</i> Images in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.....	215
4- <i>Ĥissî</i> Images in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.....	217
4-1- The Presence of Different Senses.....	217
4-1-1- Types of Visual Images.....	220
4-2- Static Images.....	229
5- Dynamic Images.....	234
6- Calligraphic Images.....	239
6-1- General Background.....	242
6-1-1 Calligraphic Imagery from Pre-Islamic to 'Abbasid Poetry.....	242
6-1-2- The Nature of Some Calligraphic Images.....	245
6-1-3- Subject Matter.....	249
6-2- General Use in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.....	252
6-3- Specific Use in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.....	255
7- Colours.....	263
8- Conclusion.....	271
Chapter Six: Fragmentation in Poetic Imagery	
1- What is Fragmentation?.....	273

2- Important Events in the Life of Ibn al-Mu'tazz	284
2-1- The Assassination of the Poet's Father.....	284
2-2- The Poet and his Father.....	287
2-2-1- Good Days.....	287
2-2-2- Bad Days.....	293
2-3- The Poet in Exile.....	303
2-4- Political Disturbances in the 'Abbasid Era.....	305
3- Fragmented Imagery	308
3-1- The Poet's Relationship with Others.....	308
3-2- The Co-existence of Sadness and Happiness.....	330
4- Conclusion	342
 CONCLUSION	 346
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 353
 APPENDIX	 360

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 Hissî Images.....	197
Table (4) Elements and Relations in tamthîl.....	202
Table (5) Examples of Dhihnî Images in Abû Tammām'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.

Abû 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 أتيت بكأنّ ولم آت بالتشبيهه ففضّ الله فاي"²

"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.

² Al-Ṣṣafadī, Kh, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafyāt*, Ed. D. Krawusky, (Beirut: 1982), v. IX, p. 448.

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-Qayrawānî 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), *al-badî*. 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-Walîd, Abû Tammām and others did not create this new style, but that it already existed in the Qur'ān, 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 *Kitâb al-Badî* 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,

³ Wightman, G and al-'Udhari, 'A, *Birds Through A Ceiling of Alabaster*, (London: 1975), p. 24.

⁴ Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'A, *Kitâb al-badî*, Ed. by I. Kratchkovsky, (London: 1935), p. 1.

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."⁵ (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.⁶ 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*⁷ and al-Jurjānī's *Asrār al-Balāgha*.⁸ 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 *ḥissī*

⁵ Bonebakker, S, in *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, Ed. by J. Ashtiyani, T. Johnstone, J. Latham, R. Serjeant and R. Smith, (Cambridge: 1990) p. 388.

⁶ See Chapter Two below.

⁷ Spurgeon, C, *Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us*, (Cambridge: 1935).

⁸ Al-Jurjānī, 'A, *Asrār al-Balāgha*, Ed. By H. Ritter, 5th ed.(Istanbul: 1954).

aspects of poetic imagery: some of these observations are developed in the present study and some of his terms, such as particularisation (*tafṣīl*) and countenance (*hay'ā*), 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 Abû Tammām as the pioneer of the *dhihni* (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*, *tashbīh* (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

⁹ Culdon, J, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford:1990), p. 442.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 443.

symbol.¹¹ 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.'¹² 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.¹³

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 *tashbîh* (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. *Tashbîh*, for example, has been divided into too many subdivisions, two hundred and eighty nine to be exact.¹⁴ One can find it very difficult to throw fresh light on such definitions. Terminologically, al-Sakkākî defines *tashbîh* in the following manner:

"... إن التشبيه مستندع طرفين مشبهاً ومشبهاً به، واشتراكاً من

بينهما من وجه وافتراقاً من آخر"¹⁵

¹¹ Frie, N, 'Imagery'. In A. Preminger, T. Brogan and others (eds), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, (New Jersey: 1993), p. 560.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 561.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 562.

¹⁴ Abd al-Muṭṭalib, M, *Al-Balâgha al-'Arabiyya, Qirā'atun 'Ukhra*, (Cairo: 1997), p. 138.

¹⁵ Al-Sakkākî, B, *Miftāh al-'Ulûm*, (Beirut: 1937), p. 157.

" ... *tashbîh* 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 *tashbîh*. Other essential, but not sufficient, components of *tashbîh* are *adât al-tashbîh* (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 *tashbîh*, termed intensified simile (*tashbîh balîgh*), 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 *tashbîh*:

وَأَبَ فِي أَبَ يَجْنِيهَا لِعَاصِرِهَا كَأَنَّ كَفِيَّهَ قَدْ عَلَّتْ يُحْنَاءُ¹⁶

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

¹⁶ *Dîwān*, v. II, p.8.

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

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

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

"هي أن تذكر أحد طرفي التشبيه وتريد به الطرف الآخر مدعيًا دخول المشبه في جنس المشبه به، دالًا على ذلك بإثباتك للمشبه ما يخص المشبه به".¹⁷

"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 *isti'āra*:

أما ترى البدرَ قد طالَ المحاقُ بهِ منْ بعدِ إشراقِ أنوارِهِ وأضواءِ¹⁸

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 *isti'āra* are based on similarity, *tashbīh* keeps the two extremes independent while *isti'āra*

¹⁷ Al-Sakkākī, *Miftāh al-'Ulūm*, p. 174.

¹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 10.

identifies these extremes to create a third entity – a literary phenomenon best known as 'the interaction theory of metaphor'.¹⁹ The following formula illustrates the main difference between *tashbîh* and *isti'āra*, letters are used to refer to extremes:

tashbîh = A+B

isti'āra = C (AB)

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

¹⁹ For more details about this and other relevant theories, the following books provide a good start: Abu-Deeb, K., *al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*, (Warminster: 1979), pp. 65-103, Asfour, J., *Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fī al-Turāth al-Naqdī wa'l-Balāghī 'ind al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: 1992), pp. 171-254; Abû al-'Addûs, Y., *Al-Isti'āra fī'al Naqd al-Adabī al-Ĥadīth*, (Amman: 1997), M. Johnson (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, (Minneapolis: 1981) and A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor And Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: 1993).

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 Tammām (188/804-231/846) and Abû al-'Atāhiya (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 Tammām's achievements are considered to be more important

than those of Abû 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.

No	Author	Title	Type	Supervisor	Year
1	Darwîsh	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya fî al-Balāgha wa'l-Naqd al-'Arabî al-Qadîm wa'l-Mu'āşir</i>	MA	Ṭabāna	1973
2	Al-Shāhid	<i>Al-Taşwîr al-Shi'rî 'inda al-Sharîf al-Rađî</i>	MA	Zāyid	1980
3	Al-'Abd al-Raḥman	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya al-Rumansiyya 'inda al-Sha'ir Ali M. Ṭaha</i>	MA	Al-Qalamāwî	1981
4	Sa'fān	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Kuthayyir 'Azza</i>	MA	Khulayf	1981
5	Ḥamdî	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya 'inda Abî Nûwās</i>	MA	Jabr	1984
6	Al-Saftî	<i>Athar Kaff al-Başar 'al al-Şûra 'inda Abî al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrî</i>	MA	Not Mentioned	1986
7	Da'dûr	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Ibn Darrāĵ al-Qaşālî</i>	MA	Makkî & Ṭulayma	1987
8	'Awda	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Dhî al-Rumma</i>	PhD	Khulayf	1987
9	'Alî	<i>Athar al-'Aqida fî Tashkîl al-Şûra fî Shi'r al-Shshî'a</i>	MA	Abû Zayd	1993

Table (2) List of Selected Dissertations and Theses undertaken at Cairo University.

No	Author	Title	Place	Year
1	Spurgeon	<i>Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us</i>	London	1935
2	Armstrong	<i>Shakespeare's Imagination</i>	London	1946
3	Lewis	<i>The Poetic Image</i>	London	1947
4	Fogle	<i>The Imagery of Keats and Shelley</i>	North Carolyn University	1949
5	Stoffer	<i>Shakespeare's World of Images</i>	New York	1949
6	Banks	<i>T. H. Milton's Imagery</i>	Colombia University	1950
7	Clement	<i>The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery</i>	London	1951
8	Naṣīf	<i>Al-Şûra al-Adabiyya</i>	Cairo	1958
9	Abu-Deeb	<i>Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*²</i>	Oxford	1970
10	Nuṣrat	<i>Al- Şûra al-Fanniyya fī al-Shi'r al-Jahilī*</i>	Cairo	1972
11	Asfour	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fī al-Turāth al-Naqdī wa'l-Balāghī*</i>	Cairo	1973
12	Al-Rabbā'i	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fī Shi'r Abī Tammām*</i>	Cairo	1976
13	Berry	<i>The Shakespearean Metaphor</i>	London	1978
14	Al-Baṭal	<i>Al-Şûra fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī ħatā 'Ākhir al-Qarn al-Thanī al-Hijrī*</i>	Cairo	1980
15	Qāsim	<i>Al-Taşwīr al-Shi'rī</i>	Lebanon	1980
16	'Abd Allāh	<i>Al-Şûra wa'l-Binā' al-Shi'rī</i>	Cairo	1981
17	'Assāf	<i>Al-Şûra wa Namādhijuhā 'inda Abī Nūwās</i>	Lebanon	1982
18	Al-Yāfī	<i>Muqaddima li-Dirāsāt al-Şûra al-</i>	Syria	1982

² References marked with * were produced first as PhD theses. For their dates, see al-Rabbā'i, *Fi Tashakkul al-Khiṭāb a-Naqdī*, (Bierut: 1998), pp. 145-74. This author offers an important and detailed review of 'new studies on poetic imagery', see pp. 145-74.

<i>Fanniyya</i>				
19	Nāfi'	<i>Al-Şûra fî Shi'r Bashshâr Ibn Burd</i>	Jordan	1983
20	Al-Rabbā'î	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Zuhayr Ibn Abî Salmā</i>	Saudi Arabia	1984
21	Hudba	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya fî Shi'r a-Diwāniyyin</i>	Cairo	1984
22	Maṭlûb	<i>Al-Şûra fî Shi'r al-Akhṭal al-Şaghîr</i>	Jordan	1985
23	Al-Yāfi	<i>Taṭawwûr al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî al-Shi'r al-'Arabî al-Ĥadîth</i>	Syria	1985
24	Al-Bustanî	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya fî al-Kitabât al-Fanniyya</i>	Lebanon	1986
25	Dahmān	<i>Al-Şûra al-Balāghiyya 'inda 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānî</i>	Syria	1986
26	Mohammed	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya fî al-Khiṭāb al-Balāghî wa'l-Naqdî</i>	Morocco	1990
27	Al-Rabbā'î	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî al-Naqd al-Shi'ri</i>	Jordan	1995
28	Nawfal	<i>Al-Şûra al-Shi'riyya wa'l-Ramz al-Lawnî</i>	Cairo	1995
29	'Assāf	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Qaṣīdat al-Ru'yā</i>	Syria	1996
30	Al-Taṭāwî	<i>Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Muslim Ibn al-Walîd</i>	Cairo	1997

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-Rabbā'ī; 1976(12th).

In *Fi Tashakkul al-Khiṭāb al-Naqdī*, al-Rabbā'ī 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.³ 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.⁴ Spurgeon claims that through his images, a poet 'gives himself away'.⁵ 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.'⁶ 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

³ Al-Rabbā'ī, *Op. cit.* p. 145. The edition used here for Spurgeon's study is *Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us*, (Cambridge).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Charts (towards the end of the book).

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

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

hawking; these are things which chiefly occupy him and remain in his mind."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.'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 *NATURAL* images, especially those relating to *GROWING THINGS* in a garden or orchard, are frequent in Shakespeare's writing, Bacon's most frequently used images come from *DOMESTIC LIFE* and *NATURAL* images take second place.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'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

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-9.

writings'.¹⁵

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."¹⁶

al-Rabbā'ī's study¹⁷ of the poetic imagery of Abû 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-Şûra al-Fanniyya fī Shi'r Abî Tammām*, (Irbid: 1980).

al-Rabbā'ī points out that Spurgeon concentrates on the subject matter of the poetic image and gives no attention at all to its form or structure.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 Abû 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 Abû 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 *al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*.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

¹⁸ *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.

¹⁹ See Abu-Deeb, K, *al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*, (Warminster: 1979).

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: *hissî* (sensory) and *dhihnî* (intellectual), as will be explained. Some other key concepts in the analysis of poetic imagery explicated by al-Jurjānî 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 *tafsîl* (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-Jurjānî 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'l-Tajalî: Dirasât Binyawiyya fî'l-Shi'r*, (Beirut: 1979), pp. 19-63.

²² See Abû Khadrâ, F, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz: Al-Rajul wa Intājuhu al-Adabî*, (Akka: 1981), pp. 525-42 and see also Khafājî, M, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz wa Turathuhu fî'l-Adab wa'l-Naqd wa'l-Bayān*, (Beirut: 1991) pp. 144-9.

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-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, his first critic, and classical rhetoricians and critics such as Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, al-Ĥuṣarī and al-Şūlī, have acknowledged the importance of Ibn al-Mu'tazz as a poet with a genius for creating refined images.²² 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,²³ those that are, in the main, histories of his life, e.g. Khafāji's,²⁴ and those that are interpretations of his poetry.²⁵

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 Intājuhu al-Adabī* (Ibn al-Mu'tazz: the man and his literary production), an extended study of Ibn al-Mu'tazz by Abū Khaḍra.²⁶ 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.

²³ Asfour, j, *Qirā'atu al-Turāth al-Naqdī*, (Cairo: 1994).

²⁴ Khafāji, *Op. cit.*

²⁵ Mattock, J. 'A Political Poem of Ibn al-Mu'tazz'. In D. Jackson (ed), *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, (Edinburgh: 1994), pp. 51-61.

²⁶ Abū 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'tazz 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'tazz's life and literary production, however, is that this work fails to throw fresh light on issues relating to his poetic imagery. Indeed, Abû Khaḍra's treatment of Ibn al-Mu'tazz'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'tazz'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

2-1- 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (1954).

In his book *The Secrets of Eloquence*,²⁷ al-Jurjānī analyses numerous verses of Ibn al-Mu'tazz'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

²⁷ Al-Jurjānī, 'A, *Asrār al-Balāgha*, Ed. H. Ritter, 5th ed.(Istanbul: 1954).

these terms.²⁸ Without mentioning his name, al-Jurjānī attacks Ibn al-Mu'tazz, the author of *Kitāb al-Badī'* (The Book of the New Style), claiming:

"ولا يقنع طالب التحقيق ان يقتصر فيها على أمثلة تذكر ، ونظائر تُعدّ
نحو أن يقال: "الاستعارة مثل قولهم "الفكرة مخ العمل" وقوله (من
الطويل):

"وعري أفراس الصبا ورواحله"

وقوله "السفر ميزان القوم" وقول الأعرابي "كانوا إذا اصطفوا سفرت
بينهم السهام ، وإذا تصافحوا بالسيوف فغر الحمام" ، والتمثيل كقوله:

"فانك كالليل الذي هو مدركي"

ويؤتى بأمثلة إذا حُقِّقَ النظر فيها كانت كالأشياء يجمعها الاسم الأعمّ
وينفرد كلٌّ منها بخاصةٍ من لم يقف عليها كان قصير الهمة 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

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

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-Jurjānī is referring to this particular scholar. Al-Jurjānī 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-Jurjānī 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-Jurjānī 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-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 289.

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

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

جُمِعَ الحَقُّ لَنَا فِي إِمَامٍ قَتَلَ البَخْلَ وَأَحْيَا السَّمَاحًا³³

"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-Jurjānî 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-Jurjānî – is more interested in similes than analogies. Here, al-Jurjānî offers his most significant and controversial comment on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery:

"اعلم أن التشبيه عامّ والتمثيل أخصّ منه ، فكل تمثيل تشبيه وليس كل تشبيه تمثيلاً ، فأنت تقول في قول قيس بن الخطيم (من الطويل):
وقد لاح في الصبح الثريا لمن بدا كعنقود ملاحية حين نوراً
انه تشبيه حسن ولا تقول هو تمثيل. وكذلك تقول: ابن المعتز حسن

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁴ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānî's Theory*, P. 234.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

التشبيهاً بديعها ، لأنك تعني تشبيهه المبصرات بعضها ببعض وكلّ ما لا
يوجد فيه من طريق التأويل...³⁶

"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-Khaṭīm (Ṭawīl):

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-Kafrāwī (1957) and Shalabī (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-Jurjānī – 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-Jurjānī'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

بُدِّلْتُ مِنْ لَيْلٍ كَظْلِ حِصَاةٍ لَيْلًا كَظْلِ رِمْحٍ غَيْرِ مَوَاتٍ

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

³⁸ Al-Jurjānī, *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-8.

exist at all, or whose very existence is not realized ..."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.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:

وكانّ البرقَ مصحفٌ قارئٌ فانفتحاً تارةً وانغلاقاً

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

and comments:

"لم ينظر [الشاعر] من جميع أوصاف البرق ومعانيه إلا إلى الهيئة التي تجدها العين له من انبساط يعقبه انقباض وانتشار يتلوه انضمام ثم فلى نفسه عن هيئات الحركات لينظر أيها أشبه بها ، فأصاب ذلك فيما يفعله القارئ من الحركة الخاصة في المصحف إذا جعل يفتحه مرةً وبطبقه أخرى. ولم يكن إعجاب هذا التشبيه لك وإيناسه إياك لان الشئيين مختلفان فقط ، بل لأن حصل بازاء الاختلاف إتفاق كأحسن ما يكون وأتمّه ، فبمجموع الأمرين - شدةً ائتلاف في شدةً اختلاف - حلا وحسن ، وراق

⁴¹ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 278.

⁴² Al-Jurjānī, *Op. cit.*, p. 118.

"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-Jurjānî 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

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."⁴⁸

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."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁸ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 112. See also al-Jurjānī, *Op. cit.*, p. 152.

In previous examples, al-Jurjānī 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-Jurjānī 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.⁵⁰ 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.”⁵¹

The first point al-Jurjānī 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-Jurjānī

⁴⁹ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī’s Theory*, p. 114. See also al-Jurjānī, *Op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁵⁰ Al-Jurjānī, *ibid.*, p. 162-3.

⁵¹ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī’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

⁵² Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānî's Theory*, p. 119, and al-Jurjānî, *Op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁵³ Al-Jurjānî, *Op. cit.*, pp. 188-214.

والأفحوانُ كالشايَا العُرِّ⁵⁴ قد صُقِلت أنوارُه بالقطرِ

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.⁵⁶ Husain takes the view that the aristocratic lifestyle of Ibn al-Mu'tazz formed his character and, consequently, his poetry:

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵⁶ Husain, Ṭ, *Min Ḥadīth al-Shī'r wa'l-Nathr*, (Cairo: 1948), pp. 155-6.

"شاعرنا عبدالله بن المعتز هو من أمراء هذا القصر العباسي العظيم، وهو سلالة مباشرة لجماعة من كبار الخلفاء الإسلاميين، فأبوه المعتز كان خليفة، وجده المتوكل ثم المعتصم ثم الرشيد ..."⁵⁷

"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:

"... الذي يعينني هو هذه البيئة الخاصة التي نشأ فيها ابن المعتز والتي كان لها في تكوينه الفني أثر بعيد جداً، هذه البيئة خليفة أن تدرس بعض الشيء ..."⁵⁸

"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:

"هذه الأبيات التي سمعتموها الآن تعطىكم فكرة واضحة بعض الوضوح عن فن ابن المعتز في الشعر، فهو مطبوع ليس متكلفاً ولا متعملاً في شعره، هو يؤثر السهل على الغريب وهو حريص ما استطاع على جزالة اللفظ، وهو يعنى بهذه المعاني المترفة التي تلائم حياته وبيئته."⁵⁹

"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.⁶⁰ 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 Abû Tammām and Ibn al-Rûmî, Husain makes the general

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*



judgment that:

"ولكنه ليس كأبي تمام وابن الرومي متعمقاً باحثاً عن المعاني العويصة التي يكاد الإنسان في فهمها ويجد مشقة في ذلك، إنما هو يبحث عن طرائف الأشياء ووجوه تشبيهه قريبة، يفهمها كل إنسان في سهولة ويسر، وفي غير مشقة ولا عناء."⁶¹

"He [Ibn al-Mu'tazz] is unlike Abû Tammām 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-Jurjānī 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-'Azīz 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.⁶² 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.⁶³ 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-Buḥturī's school. He states:

"ذهب ابن المعتز في معظم شعره مذهب السهولة والرشاقة والوضوح
والقرب واللين يتوخاها جميعاً، فيختار المعنى قريباً واضحاً ويختار اللفظ

⁶² Sayyid al-Ahl, 'A, *'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz Adabuhu wa 'Ilmuhu*, (Beirut: 1951).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-27.

عذباً مليحاً، فلا يغرب به على سمع أحد." ⁶⁴

"In all of his poetry, Ibn al-Mu'tazz chose easy words and clear meanings. The master of this attitude is al-Buĥturî. In an opposite group, there is Abû 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' *badī'* less than Abû 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-Sharîf al-Murtaġa'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-Kafrāwî (1967).

This biographical book aims to provide a general portrait of Ibn al-Mu'tazz: the man and the creator.⁶⁸ Muhammad al-Kafrāwî, like other scholars, claims that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was influenced by the aristocratic lifestyle that he grew up in.⁶⁹ However, al-Kafrāwî 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 ويبقى في بيوت آبائه من الثروة ما يهيئ له عيشاً رغيداً، موسعاً عليه فيه، وظل لأسرته وأعمامه من الجاه والسلطان ما ترك باب الأمل والحياة في وجهه مفتوحاً غير موصد، بالرغم من تلك الهزات العنيفة التي نالت من طفولته ... ”⁷⁰

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

⁶⁸ Al-Kafrāwî, M, *'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruhu*, (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:

"والمتتبع لتشبيهات ابن المعتز 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 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 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-Kafrāwī makes the following interesting note on the aspect of movement in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's similes:

"ولعلنا لا نزال نذكر حديثه عن النارج والهلل، وتشبيهه للأول بكرات
ضربت بصوالة فتعلقت بالهواء، والثاني بمنجل يحصد النرجس ..."⁷⁴

"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-Kafrāwī in terms of the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷⁵ A further methodological mistake can also be demonstrated. Al-Kafrāwī 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;⁷⁶ 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-Kafrāwî 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-Kafrāwî 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.⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁷ Al-Shak'a, M, *Riḥlat al-Shi'r min al-'Umawiyya ilā al-'Abbāsiyya*, (Beirut: 1973).

First, he considers Ibn al-Mu'tazz to be the master of 'garden' poetry'.⁷⁸ Second, he repeats the well-worn claim concerning the aristocratic nature of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's simile.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 (*ma'iyyat*). He compares Ibn al-Mu'tazz's descriptions of ice with that of al-Sanawbarî, who compares ice to white flowers, and concludes:⁸⁰

"[و] الذي لم ينتبه إليه الدارسون من قبل، ويتشبيهه الثلج بالورد الأبيض يعتبر [ابن المعتز] صاحب الصورة الأصلية ... نعتبر ابن المعتز رائد فن "الثلجيات" في شعرنا العربي."⁸¹

"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

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 756.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 757.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 768.

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- Shalabî (1981).

Isma'il Shalabî's study examines the effect of the middle 'Abbasid period on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry, developing on the work of Husain.⁸² 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 هـ فأقبل على الترك يستعين بهم، فكانوا عماد دولته، وقوة جيشه، والمستأثرين بهواه، فانصرفت عنه الفرس، وخذله العرب، وتفاقت الأحداث. وأخذت الدولة تنتقص من أطرافها، وتمور وتضطرب في أعماقها. فأغار الروم على الثغور فكان الحرب، واستقلت الدويلات في شتى الأقاليم فبخلت بخراجها فقل الثراء، وتفجرت الثورات وشاع الانقسام، وجمح العصر، وترامى بالشرر الرهيب، وتصاعدت الأخطار وبلغت قمته بمصرع المتوكل (232 هـ) في أبهى قصوره بيد الترك ... وتتابع الخلفاء على الحكم، وتهافتوا عليه، فنساقطوا في أتون من السياسة ..."⁸³

⁸² Shalabî, S, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz Şuratan li 'Aşrihi*, (Cairo: 1981).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

"At the beginning of the third century AH, when al-Mu'taṣim billah (218AH) became the Caliph, a big change took place. Al-Mu'taṣim 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'taṣim 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 contradiction⁸⁴ and Shalabî observes that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was a 'picture of his time' who reflected the contradictions of the 'Abbasid period.⁸⁵ 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

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

contemporary ministers and police chiefs more than caliphs⁸⁸ and interprets this attitude in the following manner:

"إنه التناقض ولو في الظاهر، فإذا ذهبنا إلى علم النفس لنستشيريه في أمثال شخصية ابن المعتز فإنه يرجع ما يعانیه في كهولته إلى طفولته حيث نشأته القاسية، وإلى شبابه حيث حرم من حياة اللهو والاستقرار، وإلى هذا المناخ الذي يجمع في ظلاله أغرب المتناقضات"⁸⁹

"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-Muktafi and al-Mu'tamid in several odes.⁹⁰ 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.

⁹⁰ The *Dîwān*, v. I, pp. 381-607.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 297.

imitation of Imru' al-Qays. According to Shalabî, 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.⁹² The structural level upon which Shalabî's claim is based can be found in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery. Shalabî describes it as follows:

"أما الوصف الحسي، وبه اشتهر ابن المعتز، وأغلبه ينم عن تمكنه من الثقافة العربية التي شاعت في عصره من جهة، وعلى تشبته بالعالم الحسي الذي يحيط به، فيتلهى به عن العالم الفكري الذي يمكن أن يجر عليه من الويلات والآلام لو أطال الإنصات 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 الحسيّات إلا ليفر من عالمه النفسي الذي يموج بالصراعات وكأنه يحاول أن يريح نفسه من أحزانها وصراعاتها فيرضيها بهذه الصور الحسيّة حيناً من الزمن."⁹³

"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.”

Shalabî 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 Shalabî are insufficient to prove his suggestions.⁹⁵

2-7- Al-Taṭāwî (1981).

In his *Qadāyā al-Fann fī Qaṣīdat al-Madhī al-'Abāsiyya*, 'Abd Allāh al-Taṭāwî studies the glory poetry of the 'Abbasid period, sampling the poetry of al-Buhturî and Ibn al-Mu'tazz, with the aim of refuting accusations of *fakhr* in

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁹⁵ Despite these criticisms, Shalabî 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 Shalabî's thesis was written at the beginning of the eighties. This might explain why these two works are different.

⁹⁷ Al-Taṭāwî, 'A, *Qadāyā al-Fann fī Qaṣīdat al-Madhī al-'Abāsiyya*, (Cairo: 1981).

Arabic poetry.⁹⁷ His thesis is divided into two main parts: imagination and style. Imaginative issues are obviously of interest here, and al-Taṭāwī dealt with the following issues:

"و كانت البداية مع التصوير ومصادره الخيالية ثم مستوياته المختلفة من التشبيه المفرد والتمثيل إلى توالي التشبيهات المقلوبة، مع بيان مصادر التشبيه عند الشعاعين موزعة بين القدم والحداثة. ومع التشخيص وقفة عند دوره في الصورة وكيفية انتشاره ومصادره وقيمتة الخيالية وتعلقه بالمحسوسات وكثرته عند الشعاعين. ومن هذه المستويات إلى درس لأهم خصائصها الفنية من تكرار وتناقض ومبالغة مع توضيح دور الصورة في الدلالة على حضارة عصر الشاعر بمعطياته المختلفة."⁹⁸

"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."

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. h.

Al-Taṭāwī 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 صورته ويغلب على شعره بشكل لفت نظر النقاد فأكثرنا من الحديث عن فنه فيه وكأنه لم يطرق سواه من أدوات التصوير. وأدى الموقف إلى عرض طويل لموقفه منه ومحاولة تبرير إكثاره منه ..."⁹⁹

"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-Taṭāwī'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-Taṭāwī 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 البادية من معطيات التصوير وقوامها الحطب والهجرة والظليم المنفر، وفي بقية الصور ترى طي البيد والغدران والأودية ...¹⁰¹"

" ... these images concern the desert. Here, there are: midday heat, camels¹⁰² 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-Mu'tazz's poems are too general and that, without further sub-categories, they are too general to specify the fields that occupied Ibn al-Mu'tazz's thought the most.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹⁰² Al-Taṭāwī refers (p. 359) to a special kind of camel called *al-Shadqamī*. *Al-Shadqamī* is an animal that has a big mouth, but is also a name of a famous Arab male camel. Ibn Manzûr, *Lisān al- 'Arab*, (Beirut: 1956), v. VII.

2-8- Al-Muṣṭafā (1991).

Ali al-Muṣṭafā's study focuses on 'nature poetry' in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān*, 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-Mu'tazz'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-Mu'tazz'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

¹⁰³ Al-Muṣṭafā, 'A, *Al-Ṭabī'a fi Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz*, (MA dissertation, Yarmūk University, Amman: 1991).

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.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'taḍid.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.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.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

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 timewornness. 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:

قهوة بنتُ دنانٍ عتقتُ خمسينَ عاماً²

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 al-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:

ومغرمٍ باصطباحِ الراحِ نادمني لم تبقِ لذته شيئاً ولم تدرِ
ما زلتُ أسقيه من صفراءَ صافيةٍ عجوزٌ دسكرةٍ شابتُ من الكبرِ³

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:

مَنْ لي على رغمِ الحسودِ بقهوةٍ بكرِ ربيبةٍ حانةٍ عذراءٍ⁴

² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 228.

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

قلتُ له هاتِ المسنةَ منهما تفدي عجوزَ الخندريسِ فتأتها

Dīwān, v. II, p. 47.

⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 16. Other images include:

من عهدِ كسرى بكرأ بخاتمها زيدتُ شباباً والدهرُ قد خرفا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 177,

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":

وهاكها بنت يهوديةٍ سَحَّارَةٌ تُحَكِّمُ عَقْدَ اللِّسَانِ⁵

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":

ليس لي لذة سوى بنتٍ كرمٍ لم يشبها في دنها قط ماءٌ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 16,
 سلط على الأحزان بنت الدنانٍ و ارحل إلى السكر برطلٍ وثاني
Dīwān, v. II, p. 253.

⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 253. Another image compares wine with a *majusi* girl:
 وبكرٌ مجوسيةٌ عليها قناع الحبِّ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 33.

خَلَّ عَنْ حِدَّةِ الْأَحَدِ بقوام الروح في الجسد
 بمُدَامِ قَلْبٍ شَارِبِهَا آمِنٌ مِنْ لَوْعَةِ الْكَمْدِ
 وَلِتَكُنْ بَكَرًا مَحْجَبَةً لَمْ تَصِلْ قَبْلِي إِلَى أَحَدٍ⁶

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*:

مِنْ عَقَارِي فِي الْكَأْسِ تُشْبِهُ شَمْسًا طَلَعَتْ فِي غِيَالَةٍ مِنْ شَرَابِ
 أَوْ عَرُوسٍ قَدْ ضَمَّخَتْ بِخَلُوقٍ فَهِيَ صَفْرَاءُ فِي يِقَابِ حَبَابِ⁷

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.⁸ 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:⁹

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

⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 83.

⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 499-500.

⁸ There is another image which stress the yellow colour of wine:

زَوْجَةٌ لِلْفَرَاتِ مِنْ زَعْفَرَانٍ تَلْدُ الْحَبِّ فِي رِوُوسِ الْقَنَانِي
 وَعَلَيْهَا غِلَائِلٌ مِنْ زَجَاجٍ فَاضِحَاتٌ قَلِيلَةٌ الْكُتْمَانِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 252.

⁹

وَمِعْشُوقُ الشَّمَائِلِ عَسْكَرِيٌّ لَهُ قَتْلَى وَلَيْسَ لَهُ سِلَاحٌ
 كَانَ الْكَأْسَ فِي يَدِهِ عَرُوسٍ لَهَا مِنْ لَوْلُؤِ رَطْبٍ وَشَاحٍ

Dīwān, 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:

يَحْتُمْهَا فِي يَدِهِ شَادِنٌ كَأَنَّهَا مِنْ خَدَيْهِ تُعْصَرُ¹⁰

while dark wine is often compared to the rather unpleasant image of blood.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:

يَطُوفُ بِهَا شَادِنٌ مَلِيحُ الرِّضَا وَالْغَضَبِ
كَأَنَّ بِمِيزَالِيهِ دَمًا مِنْ طَعِينٍ وَثَبِ¹²

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:

لَمَّا وَجَاهَا وَجِيَةٌ فِي نَحْرِهَا بِمَذْلَقِ لَطْعَانِهَا مَعْتَادِ
جَادَتْ لَهُ بِدَمٍ كَأَنَّ نَفِيَّهُ شَرُّرٌ يَطِيرُهُ بِقَرَعِ زِنَادِ¹³

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

¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 142.

¹¹ The disagreement between psychological and sense-communication functions will be discussed later, in Chapter Six.

¹² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 33.

¹³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 91.

wajā. 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 respectively¹⁴ and wine's froth is compared to eyeballs¹⁵ or sometimes to teeth¹⁶ 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 *rūh*, (soul), and wine is therefore sometimes mentioned in spiritual terms:

وتَفِيضُ بِالرَّوْحِ مَدَامَةً ۖ يَكُونُ بِأَفْوَاهِ النَّدَامَى مَعَارِجُهُ¹⁷

¹⁴ The example for the first case is :

وارتواءً من مدامٍ في شفاهِ ۖ واعتناقٌ لغصونٍ من قدودِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 254, and for the second case:

أما الدهرُ ما يفني عِجَابَهُ ۖ والدهرُ يمزجُ معسوراً بميسورِ
فليسَ للهِمِّ إلا شربٌ صافيةً ۖ كأنها دَمْعَةٌ من عينِ مهجورِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 140.

فجأتُ بها في كأسِها ذهبيةً ۖ لها حدقٌ لم تتصلُ بجفونِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 248.

سقاني عُقاراً صبَّ فيها مزاجها ۖ فأضحكُ عن ثغرِ الحبابِ ۖ فَمَ الكأسِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 155.

¹⁷ *Dīwān*, 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:

خَلَّ الزَّمانَ إِذا تَقاعَسَ أَوْ جَمَحَ وَأَشكُّ الهمومَ إِلى المَدامَةِ والقَدَحِ¹⁸

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

فَإِذا صادفتُ فؤاداً خلياً لمْ تدعُهُ فرداً بلا أَحبابِ¹⁹

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 person²⁰ and the colour of yellow wine is like the yellow face of a tortured lover:

شابَ منها البياضَ لونٌ اصفرارِ فلها لونٌ عاشقٍ مكروبِ²¹

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

¹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 75.

¹⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 43.

²⁰ As in the following image:

يبيتُ يسحبُ زقاً أو يفرغُهُ كموثقي من رجالِ الزنجِ مذبوحِ
إِذا خلا ساعةً قامت قيامتهُ حذاء بابٍ لباغيِ الراحِ مفتوحِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 73.

²¹ *Dīwān*, 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.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:

وَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى دُنْيَا رَبِيعٍ أَقْبَلْتُ مِثْلَ الْبَغِيِّ تَبَرَّحَتْ لِرِزَاةٍ²³

and:

فَأَصْبَحَتْ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً تَعْرِضُ لِلرَّائِدِ الْمُغْتَدِي²⁴

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:

بِالذَّهَبِ الرَّطْبِ مُكَلَّلَاتٍ وَبِالْيَاقِيتِ مُتَوَّجَاتٍ
تُبَارِي الْعَرَائِسَ الضَّرَاتِ ثُمَّ تَبَدَّلْنَ بِأَوْعِيَاتِ²⁵

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

²² *Dīwān*, v.II, p. 124:

فَكَأَنَّ الرَّبِيعَ يَجْلُو عُرُوسًا وَكَأَنَّ مِنْ قَطْرِهِ فِي نَفَارِ

²³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 57.

²⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 563.

²⁵ *Dīwān*, 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:

أناكَ الوردُ مُبَيَّضاً مَصُوناً كمعشوقٍ تَكَنَّفَهُ الصُّدُودُ
 كأنَّ وجوهَهُ لَمَّا تَوَافَتُ نُجُومٌ فِي مَطَالِعِهَا السُّعُودُ
 بَيَاضٌ فِي جَوَانِيهِ أَحْمِرَارٌ كما أَحْمَرَّتْ مِنْ الخَجَلِ الخُدُودُ²⁷

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:

كأنَّما النارنجُ لَمَّا بَدَّتْ صُفْرَتُهُ فِي حَمْرَةٍ كَاللَّهْيَبِ
 وَجَنَةٌ مَعشُوقٍ رَأَى عَاشِقاً فَاصْفَرَّ ثُمَّ أَحْمَرَ خَوْفَ الرَّقِيبِ²⁸

Other fruit and flowers like the apple²⁹ and pomegranate blossom³⁰ are also

²⁶ See Chapter Five, pp. 186-266.

²⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 565.

²⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 510.

²⁹ One example of this is:

تفاحةٌ معضوضةٌ كانت رسولَ القبلِ
 كأنَّ فيها وجنةٌ تنقبت بالخجلِ

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:

في نَرَجِسٍ غَضٌّ نَوَاضِرُهُ يَبِيضُ الْجَفُونَ عَيُونُهَا صُفْرٌ³¹

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 hair³⁴ 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:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 327.

³⁰ The following line is an example of this:

وَجَلَنَارٍ كَأَحْمَرِ الْخَدِّ أَوْ مِثْلِ أَعْرَافِ دِيوَكِ الْهِنْدِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 544.

³¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 131.

³² For example:

وَالْأَقْحَوَانُ كَالثَنَائِيَا الْغَرِّ قَدْ صَقَلَتْ أَنْوَارُهُ بِالْقَطْرِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 544.

³³ For example:

وَالكِمَاءُ السِّمْرَاءُ بَادٍ حَجْمِهَا فَيَكُلُّ أَرْضَ مَوْسَمٍ لَجِنَاةٍ
فَكَانَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَقَدْ تَلَعُ الضَّحَى يَفْحَصْنَ فِي الْقَيْعَانِ عَنْ هَامَاتِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 58.

³⁴ For example:

لَمْ نَزَلْ فِي الرِّيَاضِ نَشْرَبُ حَتَّى عَطَطَ الْوَرْدُ فِي قِفَا الْمَنْثُورِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 592.

سَلاَفَةُ خَمْرٍ فُجِّرَتْ فِي عُرُوشِهَا جَدَاوُلُ مَاءٍ مِنْ خَلِيحِ قُرَاتِ
 قَلَمًا تَدَلَّتْ كَالثُّدِيِّ وَأَصْبَحَتْ عَلَى الْقَصَبِ الْمَعْرُوشِ مُتَّكِيَاتِ
 أُضِيْفَتْ إِلَى قَارِيَةِ خَزَفِيَّةٍ مُصَفَّقَةٍ بِالطَّيْنِ مُعْتَجِرَاتِ³⁵

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:

تَرُودُ فِيهَا الطَّبَاءُ الْأَدْمُ سَانِحَةً يُشِيهِنَ شِيْرًا بِأَعْنَاقِ وَأَبْصَارِ³⁶

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 *Dīwān* can be summarized as depicting the following: the state as a virgin, squadron, and cloud, and 'message as a bride'. In

³⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 50.

³⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p.317.

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.³⁷ 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:

وملكُ الرومِ أتى كتابُهُ بذليّةٍ تزفُّهُ أصحابُهُ³⁸

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:

فَرَجَعَتْ كَغَادَةَ كَعَابٍ تَقَرُّ فِيهَا أَعْيُنُ الْأَصْحَابِ³⁹

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.⁴⁰ However, this

³⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 448:

سحبَ الجيوشَ فكمَّ بها فتحتُ بعدَ التمتعِ بلدةٌ بكرٌ
³⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 582

³⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 560.

⁴⁰ See also, for example:

لقدْ رَفَّها في حليها رأيتُ قاسمِ إلى ملكِ كالبدرِ مقتبلِ السنِّ

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:

عَانَقْتُمْ الْأَحْلَامَ فِي مَضْجَعٍ سَيَّئِتُ الشُّوكَ لَكُمْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ⁴¹

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:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 603.

⁴¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 394.

قُلْ لِدُنْيَايَ قَدْ تَمَكَّنْتُ مِنِّي فأفعلي ما شئتُ أَنْ تَفْعَلِي بي
واخْرُقِي كَيْفَ شِئْتَ خَرَقَ جَهُولِي إِنَّ عِنْدِي لِكِ اصْطِبَارٌ طَبِيبِي⁴²

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:

سَاءَتْ يَكِ الدُّنْيَا أُسْرَتْ مَرَّةً فأراكِ مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهَا وَذُنُوبِهَا⁴³

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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

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

⁴² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 276.

⁴³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 393.

⁴⁴ As in the following example:

والرعدُ يحدو طعنهُ فإذا تأخرَ عنفا
كالعاذلاتِ أخذنَ بالثقلِ سمعاً مترفا
طوراً وطوراً لا يني زجرأ بهِ وتقصفا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 359.

⁴⁵

خليلِيَّ هذِي دَارُ شَرَّةٍ فَايَسَّأَلَا مغانِيهَا لِمَ كَانَ يَجِدِي جَوَابُهَا
خَلَّتْ وَعَفَّتْ إِلَّا أَنَافٍ كَانَتْهَا عَوَائِدُ ذِي سَقَمٍ بَطْنِي قَعُودُهَا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 19.

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:

مَنْ رَأَى خَفَقَةَ بَرْقٍ لَامِعٍ فِي أديمِ الأَرْضِ يَفْرِي وَيَدَعُ
سَابِقِ حُبْلَى سَحَابٍ أُوقِرَتْ تَعِدُّ الوَادِيَّ سَيْلًا مَا اتَّسَع
ضَمَنْتُ أَيُّدِي شَمَالِهَا أَبَدًا تَقْبِلُهَا حَتَّى تَضَعَ⁴⁶

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 tenderness⁴⁷ 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 *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 57-8.

⁴⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 432:

وَأَمْسَكَنَ صَيْدًا وَلَمْ تُدْمِغِ كَضْمِ الكَوَاعِبِ أَوْلَادَهَا

⁴⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 69:

إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ فِيهَا وَرَدُّ نَرْجِسِهَا نَاغَى جَنِيَّ خَزَامَاهَا بِنَفْسِجُهَا

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:

كَأَنَّ النِّسَاءَ البَيضَ فِي حُجْرَاتِهِ تَكشِفُ عَن أجْسَادِهِنَّ المَلَابِسَ⁴⁹

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:

كَأَنَّ الغَمَامَ وَلَمَعَ البُرُوقِ نِسَاءٌ يُقَاتِلْنَ بالأُزْدِ⁵⁰

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:

وَبِنْيَانِ قَصْرِ قَدْ عَلَتْ شُرْفَاتُهُ كَصَفِّ نِسَاءٍ قَدْ تَرَبَّعْنَ فِي الأُزْرِ⁵¹

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

⁴⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 126.

⁵⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 563.

⁵¹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 435.

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,⁵² rejecting her husband⁵³ or working as a pimp.⁵⁴ One shocking sexual image compares the blood of a horse, in the battlefield, to the blood of a virgin.⁵⁵

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:

ومكملٍ شكتَه مُدَجِّجٍ
أقمرَ مثلِ الملكِ المتَّوِّجِ
ذي مقلَّةٍ نقيَّةٍ المحجِّجِ⁵⁶

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 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 627:

ولقد غدوتُ على طمَّرٍ قارجٍ رفعتُ حوافرُهُ غمامةً قيسطلٍ
متلهمٍ لجمِّ الحديدِ يلوكها لوكَ الفتاةِ مساوكاً من أسحلٍ

⁵³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 328:

ولقد نشرتُ نفسي اللجوجُ على عقلي نشوزَ فتاةٍ السوءِ صَدَّتْ عنُ البعلِ

⁵⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 255:

وكمُ نومٍ لي قوادةٍ أتتُ بالحبیبِ على بُعْدِهِ

⁵⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 426:

قَدْ خاضَ تحجیلاً ولمْ یلجِّجِ كالخودِ في جلبابِها المضرِّجِ

⁵⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 427.

monarchy. Al-Rabbā'ī has also noted that this occurs in Abû Tammām's poetry⁵⁷ 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:

فلما طغى مأؤه في البلا درِ وغصَّ بهِ كلُّ وادٍ صدي
وسارَ بأكدرَ طافي الغثا عميقِ الثرى صخبٍ مزيدِ
ترى الثورَ في متنيه طافياً كضجعةٍ ذي التاجِ في المرقدِ⁵⁸

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

وقد صاحَ مذعوراً مؤذنٌ قريةٍ على شرفِ عالٍ يصفقُ من أشرِّ
ككسرى عليه تاجُهُ يومَ شريهِ إذا صفقَ الكفَّينِ من طربٍ نعرٍ⁵⁹

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

⁵⁷ Al-Rabbā'ī, A, *Al-Şūra al-Fanniya fi Shi'r Abi Tammām*, (Irbid: 1980) ,p. 39.

⁵⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 563.

⁵⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 105-6.

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:

وجلجلَ رعدٌ من بعيدٍ كأنه أميرٌ على رأسِ اليفاعِ خطيبٌ⁶⁰

He precedes others as a rose precedes other flowers:

ثمّ نادى الربيعُ جاءكمُ الورُ دُ أميراً فاذعنوا للأميرِ⁶¹

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

يعلوا الشمالَ كالأميرِ المنتصبِ أمكنةُ الجودِ فأعطى ووهب⁶²

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 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 56.

⁶¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 592.

⁶² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 415.

Qur'ān has the authority to judge between people in disagreement:

سنستأذنُ القرآنَ فيما فعلتمُ ونقضِي بحقِّ فيكمُ وِصوابِ⁶³

In other images, Ibn al-Mu'tazz depicts old age a preacher⁶⁴ and the shape of an animal sitting at peace is compared to that of a religious person kneeling in prayer.⁶⁵ 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 إمامٌ ثقيلٌ خفيفُ روحِ الصلاةِ
يظلُّ يركضُ فيها نقرأً بغيرِ قِراءةِ
كراكبٍ فوقَ طيرٍ مستعجلٍ بيزاةٍ⁶⁶

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:

⁶³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 616.

⁶⁴

Dīwān, v. III, p. 120.

⁶⁵

Dīwān, v. I, p. 470.

⁶⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 611.

ألم تستحي من وجه المشيبِ وقد ناجاك بالوعظِ القريبِ

والأفوحشيّ قروور كآته حوارِي دِيرِ أبيضِ الثوبِ راكعُ

وصيرفياً ناقداً للمنطق. إن قالَ هذا بهرجُ لم يُنفق.⁶⁷

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:

كأنَّ يديها وهي تسترقصُ الحصى يداً ناقداً أو نابلٍ لم يُسدّد.⁶⁸

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 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 487.

⁶⁸ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 31.

departure on the hunt. Echoes of Qur'ān 81:18⁶⁹ can be seen in these images, as in the following:

قَمُ سَيِّدِي فَاسْقِنِي قَدْ تَنَفَسَ الْغَسْقُ مِنْ قَهْوَةٍ فِي الزَّجَاجِ تَأْتَلِقُ⁷⁰

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 (و الصبح إذا تنفس) , *Qur'ān*, 81:18, is translated as: '...by the dawn sighing' in Arberrry, A. *The Koran Interpreted*, (London and New York: 1995), v. II, p. 326.

⁷⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 191.

⁷¹ There are several images for each one of these things and states. One example will be given for each case:
flowers;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 69,
dust;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 370,
worry;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 229,
war;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 315,
light;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 72.
⁷²

Dīwān, v. I, p. 527.
⁷³

Dīwān, v. II, p. 180.

إذا تنفّسَ فيها وردٌ نرجسيها ناغى جنى خزامها بنفسجها

ولما هبطن القاع تبهن تربة وغادرن في الصخر وهو فليق

لم ينم همي ولم أنم نهب كف الوجد والسقم

وفي كل يوم توقظ الحرب منكم اناسي سوء ينقضون عرى الود

خاضوا الظلام إلى خمّار دسكرة منفر النوم يقظان المصايح

ولم يزل ذلك دأب الناس حتى أغيثوا بأبي العباس
الشاهر العزم إذا العزم رقد الحاسم الداء إذا الداء مرد

يا خاضياً للحية يتترفضي بعد قليل ويضيع المعرض
مسودة لها ضمير أبيض نام الخضاب والمشيب يركض

أبيتُ والشوقُ في الفراشِ معي يكحلُّ عيني بمرودِ السهدِ⁷⁴

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also gives the capability of observation to a number of natural objects such as the sun, stars, and daybreak,⁷⁵ conditions such as death, fear and concerns⁷⁶ and human organs such as the heart and soul.⁷⁷ Food and drink-related images become personifications of natural things like earth,⁷⁸ concepts such as patience and longing⁷⁹ and concrete things such as swords⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 245.

⁷⁵ For the sun, the poet says:

مُطرًا بلْ غرقنا ووسطَ بحرٍ فغيري من دعا بنزولِ قطرٍ
تظلُّ الشمسُ ترمقنا بلحظٍ مريضٍ مدنفٍ من خلفِ سترٍ

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

ورنا إليّ الفرقدانُ كما رنتُ زرقاءُ تنظرُ من نقابٍ أسودٍ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 87.
and for daybreak:

وكانَ الفجرَ حينَ رأى ليلةً قاسيةً هابا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 34.
⁷⁶ Death:

أبيّ شيءٍ اتقى والردى بين جنبيّ بعيني يراني

Dīwān, v. III, p. 100,
fear:

وساقٍ إذا ما الخوفُ اطلقَ لحظتهُ فلا بدّ أن يلقى بتسليمه صبا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 34,
concern:

وإذا الخطوبُ رأينَ منّا مطرقاً نكصتُ على أعقابهنّ رجوعا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 131.
⁷⁷ The heart:

أغارُ عليكِ من قلبي إذا ما رأكَ وقد نأيتِ وما أراكِ

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

أبي الله ما للعاشقين شفاءُ وما للملاحِ الغانياتِ وفاءُ
تركنَ نفوسياً نحوهن صوادياً مصراتِ داءٍ ما لهنّ شفاءُ
يرين حياض الماءِ لا يستطعنّها وهن إلى بردِ الشرابِ ظماءُ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 206.
⁷⁸ Earth;

روى ترابَ الأرضِ منصلُّهُ بدمِ العداةِ وكانَ قد عطشا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 465.
⁷⁹ Patience;

فلا تحسبن الصبرَ يشربُ دمعتي عليكِ ويطفي حرَّ وجدٍ أكابدهُ

Dīwān, v. III, p. 27
longing;

واني لكالعطشانِ طالَ به الصدى إليه ولكنّ ما الذي أنا صانعُ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 471.

and organs such as the eye.⁸¹

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:

يَوْمَ يَشْكُو طَرْفِي إِلَى طَرْفِكَ الْحَبِّ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيَّ أَنْ قَدْ عَلِمْتَا⁸²

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

بِنَفْسِي مَسْتَسَلِمٌ لِلرَّقَادِ يَحْدِثُنِي السُّكْرُ مِنْ طَرْفِهِ⁸³

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

⁸⁰ For example:

فَأَعْلَمْتُهُ كَيْفَ التَّصَافِحِ بِالْقَنَا وَكَيْفَ تَرَوَى الْبَيْضُ وَهِيَ مُحَوَّلٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 490.

⁸¹ For example:

لَمْ تَرُدْ مَاءَ وَجْهِهِ الْعَيْنُ إِلَّا شَرَقَتْ قَبْلَ رَبِّهَا بِرَقِيبٍ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 213.

⁸² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 227.

⁸³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 178.

speech, for example the voice of some musical instruments, like the lute,⁸⁴ war weapons such as the spear,⁸⁵ and natural elements like lightning.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.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:

ولم أنسَ تغريدَ الحمامِ عشيةً على فرعِها تدعو الحمامَ البواكيا⁸⁸

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 will⁸⁹ and love,⁹⁰ and of time, such as

⁸⁴ This line is an example for that:

وليلٍ قد سهرتُ ونامَ فيهِ ندامى صرّعوا حولي رقوداً
أسامر فيهِ قرقرةً القناني ومزماراً يحدثني وعوداً

Dīwān, v. II, p. 97.

⁸⁵ This line is an example for that:

فإن انكرتم من ذلك أمراً فأطرافُ الرماحِ لهم شهودٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 646.

⁸⁶ This is an example for that:

يا من لساريةٍ سهرتُ لها غراءَ بشرٍ برقها ورعدٌ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 308.

⁸⁷

مرسلٌ لا تراهُ يحبسُهُ الشَّكُّ إذا ما جرى ولا التفكيرُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 579.

⁸⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 400.

the change from day to night, are the most frequently personified things that fall into this category. For example, day gets rid of night:

وَالْفَجْرُ فِي اثْرِ الظَّلامِ طَارِدٌ⁹¹

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 *Dīwān*. 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:

ملكنا الهوى حيناً وكانَ وكانا فأرخصنا دهرٌ فكيفَ ترانا⁹²

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:

⁸⁹ For example:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 125.
⁹⁰

يناجيني الإخلافُ من تحتِ مطيِّه فتختصمُ الآمالُ والبانسُ في صدري

Dīwān, v. II, p. 323.

⁹¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 538.

⁹² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 186.

اليومَ عادَ الهوى فالويلُ منه لكا اليومَ يأخذُ منكَ الحبُّ ما تركا

ومنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْجُو مِنَ الدَّهْرِ سَالِمًا وَإِنْ سَرَّهٗ حِينًا وَمَدَّ لَهُ الْعَمْرَ⁹³

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,⁹⁴ concern,⁹⁵ will,⁹⁶ sadness⁹⁷ and so on are given the ability to move. Patience, for example, moves away despite the poet's will:

أَهْمٌ بِالصَّبْرِ حِينَ يَسْرِفُ فِي هَجْرِي وَالصَّبْرُ نَازِحٌ نَائِي⁹⁸

Some tangible actions are also personified in this way; dreaming of the beloved,⁹⁹ ardent love,¹⁰⁰ waking,¹⁰¹ being at a distance,¹⁰² old age¹⁰³ and

⁹³ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 174.

⁹⁴

Dīwān, v. I, p. 683.

⁹⁵

Dīwān, v. II, p. 194.

⁹⁶

Dīwān, v. I, p. 204.

⁹⁷

Dīwān, v. II, p. 339.

⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 211.

⁹⁹

Dīwān, v. I, p. 325.

¹⁰⁰

Dīwān, v. II, p. 378.

¹⁰¹

فَإِنْ هَمُّ دَعْوِكَ لَمْ تَجِبْهُمْ بِمِثْلِهَا وَسَافَرْتَ فِي سَهْوٍ وَأُذُنُكَ تَسْمَعُ

إِذَا سَكَنْتَ قَلْبًا تَرَحَّلَ هَمُّهُ وَطَابَتْ لَهُ دُنْيَاهُ وَاتَّسَعَ الضَّنْكَ

سَافَرْتُ بِالْأَمَالِ فِيكَ فَلَمْ تَبْلُغْ وَصَالَكَ وَانْتَهَتْ حَسْرِي

فَلِلَّهِ قَلْبِي كَيْفَ يَلْحَقُ لِهَوَاهُ وَأَسْفَارُ أَحْرَانِي تَخْلِفُهُ مَنُضَى

أَغَارَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَلْبِي إِذَا مَا رَأَيْتُ وَقَدْ نَأَيْتُ وَمَا أَرَأَيْتُ
وَطَيْفِي حِينَ نَمْتِ فَبَاتَ لَيْلًا يَسِيرٌ وَلَمْ أُسِرْ حَتَّى أَنْتَ

كَأَنَّ التَّصَابِي كَانَ تَعْرِيسَ نَازِلٍ ثَوَى سَاعَةَ مِنْ لَيْلِهِ وَتَرَحَّلَا

يَا رَبِّ لَيْلٍ قَاسٍ كَانَ عَلَيَّ وَقَرَا

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:

حرمتُ بعدهمُ مسيرَ يدي إلى فمي شارباً بكأساتِ¹⁰⁸

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 منهنّ مثلَ السارقِ ثمّ علاها بجناحِ خافقِ¹⁰⁹

سريتهُ بعيني حتى رأيتُ الفجرا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 319.
102

وما نازحَ بالصينِ أدنى مجلِّه يقصِّرُ عنه كلُّ مَساشٍ وراكبِ
محا اليأسَ عنه كلُّ قلبٍ فلمْ تكذْ تصوِّره في الفكرِ أيدي الخواطرِ
بأبعدَ عندي من أناسٍ وإن دنوا وما البعدُ إلا مثلُ طولِ التهاجرِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 652-3.
103

أسرعَ الشيبُ إليّ بهمّ كانَ يدعوهُ أحبُّ الدعاءِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 382.

¹⁰⁴ As in the following example:

هجرنَ سواها كلَّ دارٍ عرفتها وحقَّ لدارٍ غيرِ داركِ بالهجرِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 435.

¹⁰⁵ For example:

وقفتَ بها والصبحُ ينتهبُ الدجى بأضوائه والنجمُ يركضُ في الغربِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 216.
106

ألا سقنيها قد مشى الصبحُ في الدجى عفاراً كلونِ النارِ حمراءَ قرقفا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 178.
107

ألا لا أرى كالدارِ إذ نحنُ جيرةً تسافرُ فيما بيننا الكتبُ والرُّسلُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 384.

¹⁰⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 622.

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

أردُّ إليه نظرتي وهو غافلٌ لتسرقَ عيني منه ما ليسَ دارياً¹¹⁰

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,¹¹¹ and to describe luck when it comes to an end.¹¹² 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.¹¹³

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, clouds¹¹⁴ and

¹⁰⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 470.

¹¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 376.

¹¹¹

Dīwān, v. II, p. 188.

¹¹²

Dīwān, v. II, p. 344.

¹¹³

Dīwān, v. II, p. 448.

¹¹⁴

Dīwān, v. I, p. 486.

والنجمُ في أخرياتِ الليلِ مضطربٌ كأنَّه خابطٌ في لجةٍ عرقُ

وعندَ كمالِ الحظِّ يُخشى زواله كما لغريقٍ اللجةَ الرِيُّ والغطُّ

حتى إذا النجمُ بدا لي كالقبسِ قامَ النهارُ في ظلامٍ قد جَلَسُ

ما وجدُ صائدٍ في الجبالِ موثقٍ لماءِ مزنٍ باردٍ مصفَّقٍ
بالريحِ لم يطرق ولم يرنقِ جادت به أخلاف دجن مطبقِ

the Euphrates river ¹¹⁵ all of which provide most important element of life, water. In the negative sense, it is used to transmit negative conceptions such as concern¹¹⁶ and unrequited love.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 beloved¹¹⁸ and the movement of a tree's branches towards each other is described in the same manner.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

115

Dīwān, v. II, p. 7.

116

أجرى الغراتُ إليها منْ سلاسلِهِ نَهراً تَمْشَى على جِرعَاءِ مِثَاءِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 298.

117

وليلةٍ همُّ زارني فقريتهُ فؤاداً صبوراً والكواكبُ جَنَحُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 368.

118

قراكَ الهوى في دارِ شيرةٍ دمعَةً كدينكَ منها والديارُ تشوقُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 620.

119

مالتُ إلى المَحَلِّ البيبسِ الريقِ كمثلِ مُشتاقٍ إلى مَعْشوقِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 640.

فترى الغصونَ موائلًا ميلَ الخليلِ على الخليلِ

dogs catching their prey¹²⁰ or a rescuer saving a drowning person.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:

فطافَ بها والليلُ عريانُ خالٍ بقيةَ ليلٍ كالقميصِ المرعبلِ¹²²

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,¹²³ while in the following lines it is portrayed as a lover walking with a lamp:

والصبحُ يَتَلو المشتري فكأنه عُريانٌ يمشي في الدجَى بسراجِ¹²⁴

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

¹²⁰

Dīwān, v. II, p. 461.

¹²¹

Dīwān, v. I, p. 187.

¹²² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 197.

¹²³

Dīwān, v. II, p. 480.

¹²⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 294.

(خلٌ رقيقٌ واعتناقٌ جافي) ليسَ له غيرُ دمٍ من شافي

وضمٌّ لم تكن تجسُّنه في الريحِ أغصانُ
كما ضم غريقٌ ساءاً بحاً والماء طوفانُ

(كأنه مضطجعٌ عريانُ) وأخذت ما أخذ العيانُ

soil,¹²⁵ likewise disasters are impregnated by Ibn al-Mu'tazz's enemies.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:

إِنَّ زَنْتَ عَيْنِي بِغَيْرِكَ فَاجْلِدْهَا بطولِ السُّهَادِ وَالدمْعِ حَدًّا¹²⁷

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:

مَا نَلْتُ مِنْهُ غَيْرَ غَمَزَةٍ عَيْنِهِ ورسائلِ بوضالِهِ أَوْ سَخَطِيهِ
وَأَجِبْتُ فِي ظَهْرِ الْكِتَابِ إِذَا أَتَى فيلوطُ خَطِّي فِي الْكِتَابِ بِخَطِيهِ¹²⁸

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

¹²⁵

تَلْقَحُ بِالْقَطْرِ بَطُونَ الثَّرَى وَالْقَطْرُ بَعْلُ التَّرْبَةِ الْعَاشِقُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 618.

¹²⁶

فَرَشْنَا لَكُمْ مَنَّا جَنَاحِي مَوْدَةٍ وَأَنْتُمْ زَمَانًا تَلْقَحُونَ الدَّوَاهِيَا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 404.

¹²⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 92.

¹²⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 397.

the appearance of the teeth of the person laughing.¹²⁹ Another quality of laughing that catches his attention is the vocal aspect, and he draws parallels between laughter and the voice of a bucket.¹³⁰ 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:

كَمْ تَائِهٍ بَوْلَايَةٍ وَبِعِزْلِهِ يَعدُو البَريْدُ
سَكْرُ الوَلَايَةِ طَيِّبٌ وَخَمَارُهُ صَفْعٌ شَدِيدٌ¹³¹

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:

حَدَّثْتُ عَنْ تَغْرِيبي أَتْرَابَا وَمَشِيبي فِقْلنُ وَاللَّهِ شَابَا
نَظَرْتُ نَظْرَةَ إِلَيَّ وَصَدْتُ كَصُدُودِ المَخمُورِ شَمَّ شَرَابَا¹³²

¹²⁹ This image is used five times. In one example the poet says:

أما ترى اليومَ في سحائيه قد ضحكَ البرقُ في جوانبيه

Dīwān, v. II, p. 38.

¹³⁰ He says:

أختانِ احداهما إذا أنتجيتُ تبيكي كباكٍ بدمعةٍ حَرَى
وما بهما صبوةٌ ولا حزنٌ تضحكُ منها لدمعِها الأخرى

Dīwān, v. II, p. 587.

¹³¹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 643.

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:

لي بكاءً وللسماءِ بكاءً فدموعي هوى وذاك هواءُ
نحنُ في الحاليتينِ شتى وفيما قدُ بدا للعيونِ منّا سواءُ
يا جفونَ السحابِ دمُعكَ يفنى عن قريبٍ وما لدمعي فناءً¹³³

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.¹³⁴ 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

¹³² *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 136.

¹³³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 493.

¹³⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 329:

وأركبُ ظهرَ الأرضِ أو بطنَ لجةٍ مهملجةٍ لا تشتكي خيبَ السفرِ
إذا اضطربت تحت الرياحِ رأيتها كأحشاءٍ منخوبِ الفؤادِ من الذعرِ.

declines.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:

وهمهمته محذورة والتفاتة
بالحاظ مجنون رأى وجه شيطان¹³⁶

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;¹³⁷ the beloved is a disease,¹³⁸ his promises are sick,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

¹³⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 186:

وقد مالت إلى الغرب الثريا
كما أصغى إلى الحسن الفروق

¹³⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 732.

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

يغدو علي بكأسه
رشاً مريض الطرف أحوى
وكانما أجفائه
تشكو إليك السقم شكوى

Dīwān, v. I, p. 194.

¹³⁸

أولئك أدواء الهوى ودواؤه
فيسقم ما شئن المحب ويصلح

Dīwān, v. II, p. 297.

¹³⁹

وليت شعري عمّن فيك هل مرضت
منه الموائيق أو هممت بتصحيح

Dīwān, v. II, p. 72.

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.¹⁴⁰ Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself is also portrayed as broken and sick with madness.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 cream¹⁴² 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.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.

140

Dīwān, v. I, p. 545.

¹⁴¹ For example:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 333.

142

Dīwān, v. II, p. 559.

143

Dīwān, v. I, p. 141.

وإن رمى كانَ مريضاً السهمِ ذا وترٍ رخوٍ ضعيفِ الزخمِ

وأرجو بإذنِ الله أن يجبرَ الذي بي من كسرٍ فقد شقني كسري

وجسدٍ عليه جلدٌ من وسخٍ كأنه شربَ نبطاً أو وسخُ

كأنني ساورتني يومَ بينهمُ رفشاً مجدولةً في لونها برقُ

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:

كنُ جاهلاً أو فتجَاهلُ تَفزُ للجهلِ في ذا الدهرِ جاهٌ عريضُ
والعقلُ محرومٌ يرى ما يرى كما ترى الوارثَ عينُ المريضِ¹⁴⁴

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

أنا كالمنيّةِ سقمُها قدّامَها طوراً وطوراً تبتدي فتفاجي¹⁴⁵

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:

يا قلبُ كنتَ ترى من أبي حسنٍ دوامَ عهدٍ على ودٍ فكيفَ ترى

¹⁴⁴ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 181.

¹⁴⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 296.

قالَ أسألُ الجسمَ تخبرُ عن عيادتيه وسائلِ السمعِ أيضاً عنه والبصرا
 فقالتُ العينُ لم أقرأ له كتباً وقالَ سمعني لم اعرف له خبرا
 فاستشهدا بدنأ مضمئاً فقالَ نعمُ ما جاءنا عائداً يوماً ولا اعتذرا¹⁴⁶

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 argues¹⁴⁷ and causes problems for the lover.¹⁴⁸ 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,¹⁴⁹ of spears,¹⁵⁰ of a hunting dog rushing to its prey¹⁵¹ and the speed at which the poet does good deeds.¹⁵² 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

¹⁴⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 331-2.

¹⁴⁷ وما كنت أعطي الحب في الدمع ساعةً فما شئت يا عيني من الآن فأصنعني

Dīwān, v. I, p. 299.

¹⁴⁸

يا عينُ منك بليتني، يا جفتها هلاً عن الوجه الجميل سترتها

Dīwān, v. I, p. 414.

¹⁴⁹

كأتما قُدت من الهواء أسرع من جفن إلى إغفاء

Dīwān, v. II, p. 410.

¹⁵⁰

يا ربِّ حربٍ للنوا فذ والقواصب قاصفة
 فكأتما أرمأحنا أجفان عين طارقة

Dīwān, v. II, p. 367.

¹⁵¹

تمشي الأنكب في الرمضاء أسرع من جفن إلى إغضاء

Dīwān, v. II, p. 407.

¹⁵²

سبقتُ عدولي إلى مفخري كسيفك باللحظ خطو القدم

Dīwān, v. II, p. 392.

treatment of the eye can be found in descriptions of positive abstracts, such as welfare¹⁵³ and generosity,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.¹⁵⁵ In another example of his use of colour in eye images, the eye of night is described as smeared with kohl.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:

تَشْقُ رِيَاضاً قَدْ تَيْقِطُ نُورُهَا وَيَلْلَهَا دَمْعٌ مَنِ الْمَزْنِ ذَارِفٌ¹⁵⁷

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:

153

Dīwān, v. I, p. 390.

واجتمعنا للتنائي ولكن لا يرى الناسُ عيونَ الرخاءِ

154

Dīwān, v. I, p. 387.

مرسلُ الجودِ إلى كلِّ سؤلٍ يكلأُ المجدَ بعينِ السخاءِ

155

Dīwān, v. II, p. 362.

في سيبِ موحشٍ شهبٌ هواجرُهُ حرباًؤُهُ عن جِجيمِ الشمسِ منحرفُ
كأنها مقلَّةٌ في الجو ناظرةٌ زرقاءٌ لا كحلٍ فيها ولا وطف

156

Dīwān, v. I, p. 489.

¹⁵⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 462.

إليك امتطينا العيسَ تنفخُ في البرى ولليلٍ طرفٌ بالصباحِ كحيلُ

وزعفرانية في اللون تحسبها إذا تأملتَها في ثوب كافر
 كأنَّ حبَّ سقيطِ الطَّلِّ بينهما دَمَعٌ تَحَيَّرَ فِي أَجْفَانِ مَهْجُورِ¹⁵⁸

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

وإن شئتُ غادتنِي السقاةُ بكأسِها وقد فَنَحَ الاصباحُ فِي ليلِهِ فما

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

¹⁵⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 589.

¹⁵⁹ As mentioned previously, Chapter Six poses some answers to this question.

¹⁶⁰

لَمَّا رَأَوْا أَسَدَ الحَرِيبِ وَفوقَهُمْ شَجَرُ القِنَا وَثَمَارَهُنَّ حديدُ
 وقد انتصوا هندية مصقولة بيضاً ووجه الموت فيها سود

Dīwān, v. I, p. 430.

¹⁶¹

صرفتُ وجوهَ اليأسِ وَجَهِهِ عنهُمُ وَفَطَعْتُ مِنْهُمُ خَلَّةً وَوَصَالَا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 703.

¹⁶²

ووجه العزلِ يضحكُ كلَّ يومٍ وَيَطْنُزُ فِي قفا الوالي المذلِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 713.

¹⁶³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 506.

treatment of hair; night is compared with black hair and day with white.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, images of baldness are used to convey the helmeted heads of warriors¹⁶⁵ and the speed of evil spreading throughout the state.¹⁶⁶ 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:

قُلْ لِقَرِيشٍ دَعِيَ الْإِسْرَافَ وَاقْتَصِدِي إِنَّ عَلِيًّا وَعَبَّاسًا يَدِي وَيَدِي¹⁶⁷

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.¹⁶⁸ 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:

164

حتى بدأ ضوءُ صباحٍ فاتقِـ مثلُ تبدِّي الشيبِ في المفارقِـ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 470.

165

والخيلُ شعثٌ وأبطالٌ كأنهمُ صلَعُ إذا غشموا في البيضِـ والزردِـ

Dīwān, v. III, p. 153.

166

فترى البلادَ كهامةٍ صلَعَتْ تُعدي مفارقُها وتَنحصُ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 679.

¹⁶⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 304.

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

وقد سقى مفلحَ كأسِ القتيلِـ وشكَّه بمخصفِ ذي نصلِـ
وتركَ التركَ بعدَ فقدهِ كذي يدِ قد قطعتْ من زندهِـ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 532.

كَيْفَ يَبْقَى عَلَى الْحَوَادِثِ حَيًّا بِيَدِ الدَّهْرِ عَوْدُهُ مَنْحَوْتُ¹⁶⁹

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 glory¹⁷⁰ and hope.¹⁷¹ Negative connotations presented are the hand of death¹⁷² and the hand of evil.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 minister¹⁷⁶ and a baby snake is compared to the span of a hand.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

¹⁶⁹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰

يعرفُ المعروفَ طبعاً ويثني بيدِ الجودِ عنانَ الثناءِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 387.

¹⁷¹

حمداً لربيّ وذمّاً للزمانِ فيما أقلّ في هذه الدنيا مسرّاتي
لوتِ يدي أمني من كلِّ مطلبٍ وأغلقت بابها من دونِ حاجاتي

Dīwān, v. III, p. 15.

¹⁷² For example, he says:

ووجدتُ كفّ الموتِ أقوى الأخبينَ وألطفاً

Dīwān, v. II, p. 361.

¹⁷³

إنْ تتركِ الشرَّ لا يتركك من يديه لا بدّ للحلّو في الإثمّارِ منْ جاني

¹⁷⁶

وهللاً شوّالٍ يلوّجُ ضياؤه وبناتٍ نعيشٍ وقّفْ بأزائمه
كبنانةٍ من مخلصٍ لما بدا وجهَ الوزيرِ دعا بطولِ بقائه

Dīwān, v. I, p. 607.

¹⁷⁷

ينسلُّ منها لسانٌ يستغيثُ به كما تعوّذُ بالسبابةِ الفرقُ

Dīwān, 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:

طَلْنَا نُسْقَى سَكْرًا حَامِضًا غَضْبًا عَلَى أَنْفُسِنَا قَسْرًا
 وَتَقْلُنَا مِنْ قِصَبِ يَابِسٍ كَأَنَّا تَعْمَلُ أَجْرًا
 وَعِنْدَنَا مَنْ يَتَغَنَّى لَنَا كَأَنَّهُ مِنْ قَمِيهِ يَخْرَا¹⁷⁸

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.

¹⁷⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 666-7.

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 Abû Tammām. Spurgeon notes that the ratio of personification images in Shakespeare's work is 'very large'.¹⁷⁹ As for Abû Tammām, al-Rabbā'ī states:

"We will start [the investigation of Abû Tammām's imagery] with man, giving his activities a particular attention because Abû 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

¹⁷⁹ Spurgeon, C, *Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells us*, (Cambridge: 1935), p. 49.

¹⁸⁰ Al-Rabbā'ī, *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁸¹ Spurgeon, *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

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 *hissî* 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 الموتَ الذي منه هَرَبُ ومَنْ يَفوتُ قدرًا إذا افْتَرَبُ

² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 666:

فَعَفَوُكَ يا ذا العفوِ عنه فأنه أنك باوقارِ ثقالِ مِن الوزرِ.

³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 320:

تُبْنْتُ أن قومي قد دَفنوا لي مَكْرًا

⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 292:

هلْ غيرُ إمساكِ باطرافِ المُنَى فيها لطالبِ خلةٍ أو راجي

⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 189:

خَلَّتْ عليكِ الشوقَ بينَ جوانحِ فُطِعَ فعدَّتْ كيفَ شاءَ ودلّها

dīwān. 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.⁶ Furthermore, this section's topics (primarily the beloved, wine, plants, animals and nature) reflect his preference for tangible attributes.⁷ 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:

وَقَدْ تَبَدَّى النِّجْمُ فِي سِوَادِهِ كَحُلَّةِ الرَّاهِبِ فِي حِدَادِهِ⁸

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 *hissi* type of poetic images.

⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 547.

لَمَّا حَدَا الصُّبْحُ يَلِيلًا أَدْعَجَ. مثل القباء الأسود المفرج.⁹

Daybreak, on the other hand, is compared to the brightness of white cloth:

والدُّجى قد ينهض الصُّبح فيه. قائماً ينشر ثوب الضياء.¹⁰

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,¹¹ and plants of one colour that are compared to textiles that likewise consist only of one colour, such as sarcenet¹² or cotton.¹³ Thus, in the springtime, and as a result of rain, the earth is patterned with different flowers and plants:

فكأنما أيدي الربيع ضحية. نشرت ثياب الوشي فوق ربك.¹⁴

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

وغيث خصب التراب تندی يقاعه. بهيم الدرر أثواب قيعانه خضر.¹⁵

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

⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 425.

¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 384.

¹¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 327:

يَكْسُو الْبِلَادَ قَمِيصًا مِنْ زَخَارِفِهِ كَأَنَّهُ فَوْقَ جِسْمِ الْأَرْضِ مَزْرُورٌ

¹² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 189:

كَأَنَّمَا الْبَيْتُ بَرِيحَانِيهِ ثَوْبٌ مِنَ السِّنْدِسِ مَشَقُوقٌ
وَالسُّوسَنُ الْأَزَادُ مَنْشُورُ الْجِلَلِ كَقَطْنٍ فَمَسَهُ بَعْضُ الْبَلَلِ

¹³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 542:

¹⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 374.

¹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 113.

Thus, the white head of an elderly person is compared to white material.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:

أبا طيبٍ خُبِّرتُ أنكَ بعدنا وقفتَ على قشاشٍ فيما تُقشّشُ
عجوزٌ كأنَّ الشيبَ تحتَ قناعِها على الرأسِ والاكثافِ قطنٌ مُنّفّشٌ¹⁷

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:

قلوبُ الناسِ أسرى في يديه وثوبُ الحُسنِ مَخْلُوعٌ عليه¹⁸

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 pallium¹⁹ and feathers to patterned shirts.²⁰

¹⁶ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 181:

قَيِّعَ الرَّأْسُ مَشِييَا وَاكْتَسَى تَوْبَ الشَّمَطِ

¹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 675.

¹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 380.

¹⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 428:

كَطَيْلَسَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْمَدْبُجِ أَبْرِيشِ بَطْنَانَ الْجَنَاحِ الدَّيْرَجِ
لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ يَوْمِ سُرُورِ مَبْهَجِ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ يَوْمِ سُرُورِ مَبْهَجِ

²⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p.461:

يُمسِّتَمَّرٌ فِي الدَّمَاءِ وَالْغُ تَمَّ لَهُ قَمِيصٌ وَشِيءٌ سَابِغٌ

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 milk²¹ or the tail of a hunting dog.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.²³ In other images the texture of raw cotton is a counter for the dust thrown up in battle²⁴ 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.²⁵

Images describing wine and earth are created in a similar manner; a wine vat is compared to a particular kind of flax called *rāziqī*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:

21

إذا ما بكاء الدّرّ جاءتْ يَمْتَعَبِ ِ كما سَلَّ خَيْطٌ من سَدَى الثَّوبِ ِ فأنسابا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 27.

22

كَمَدَةٍ من قَلَمٍ سَوْدَاءِ أو هُدْبَةٍ من طَرْفِ الرِّدَاءِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 406.

23

تُجَاهِدُ هَمًّا يابنِ يَوْمينِ شَقَّهَا ِ تَمِدُّ إِلَيْهَا جِيدَهَا وَتُرَاقِبُهُ ِ
وتَلَقَمُ فَاهُ كَلِمًا تاقَ حَافِلًا ِ كَعُرْوَةٍ زُرٌّ فِي قَمِيصٍ تَجاذِبُهُ ِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 281

24

تَخَالُهُ وَالنَّقَعُ يعلو أَصْهَبُهُ ِ كَالْقطنِ المندوفِ طَارَ عَطْبُهُ ِ
والجري يَمْرِي ماءه وَيَجْلِبُهُ ِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 505.

25

بَلَّغْتُ الأربَعينَ وَزِدْتُ عَشْرًا ِ وَصِرْتُ كَأَنْبِي خَلَقَ مَطْرِي ِ
بِيزِيدٍ يَلِي خَفِيًّا كلَّ يَوْمٍ ِ وإن هَبْتَ بِهِ رِيحَ تَهْرًا ِ

Dīwān, v. III, p. 176.

26

حَتَّى خَلَلْنَا دَرِي عَلِيَاءَ يَصْرِبُهَا ِ بَرْدُ النَسِيمِ فيمسي ماؤُها خَصِيرًا ِ
وَفوقَها من دِنانٍ فَرغَ شَرَفٌ ِ كالأزقي أَقاموا بَينها المَدْرًا ِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 104.

لا تَسْقِنِي حَبَشِيَّةً دَاذِيَّةً تَعْدِي بِيَاضَ زَجَاجِهَا بِسَوَادٍ
لَكِنْ مُزَعَفَّرَةَ الْقَمِيصِ سَلَافَةً وَ سَمْتَ كُشُوحٍ دَنَانِهَا يَمْدَادٍ²⁷

The function of clothing is also observed in images of abstract notions, such as glory²⁸ and good deeds.²⁹

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:

²⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 91.

²⁸ For example:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 314.

²⁹

Dīwān, v. II, p. 396.

وَنُلَيْسِكُمْ حُسْنًا عَلِيًّا وَدَاؤُكُمْ يَطَالَعُنَا فِي الْهَزْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَفِي الْجَدِّ

وَنُوبٌ أَحْسَانِكُمْ وَاسِعٌ رَحْبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُمْ الْحَاسِدُونَ

أَفْرَعٌ مِنْ دُرَّةٍ وَعَنْبَرَةٍ ۖ حُسْنًا وَطَيِّبًا فِي خُلُقِهِ إِبْتِلَافًا³⁰

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:

إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقِرطَاسَ خَلَّتْ يَمِينُهُ ۖ تُفْتِيحُ نُورًا أَوْ تُنظِّمُ جَوْهَرًا³¹

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:

فَأَشْرَبُ عَقَارًا كَأَنَّهَا قَبَسٌ ۖ قَدْ سَبَكَ الدَّهْرُ تَبْرَهَا قَصَفًا³²

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.³³ Wine-froth is also compared to silver because of its white colour, specifically silver objects such as combs:

³⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 177.

³¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 439.

³² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 176.

³³

Dīwān, v. II, p. 157.

يَا نَدِيمِي سَقِيَانِي فَقَدْ لَا ۖ حَ صِبَاحٍ وَأُذُنَ الْبِنَاقُوسِ
مِنْ كَمِيَّتِ كَأَنَّهَا أَرْضُ تَبْرِ ۖ فِي نَوَاحِيهِ لَوْلُو مَغْرُوسِ

تُقَطَّعُ فِي كَأْسِيهَا رُؤُوسُ مَدَارِي دَهَبٍ³⁴

In addition, the wine glass is compared to jewellery and the faces of people who serve the wine to gold *dinār* coins.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:

تَبَسَّمَ إِذْ مَارَحَّتْهُ فَكَأَنَّهُ يُكْشِفُ عَنْ دُرِّ حِجَابِ زُمْرَدٍ³⁶

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

وظاهرةٍ في نصفِ شهرٍ لمن يرى ولكنها مكتومةٌ آخرَ الشهرِ
تداخلٌ في ليلِ المحاقِ بمثليه وتضحكُ عن دُرٍّ وتسقيكُ من خمرٍ³⁷

³⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 33.

³⁵ About the glass the poet says:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 16,
and about the faces of wine-maids:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 74.

³⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 252.

³⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 576.

كَأْسٌ كَقِشْرِ الدَّرَةِ البَيْضَاءِ
وَوَلَّتْ تُدِيرُ الرَّاحَ أَيْدِي جَادِرٍ
عِناقٍ دنانيرِ الوجوهِ ملاحٍ

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

ذو طُورَةٍ نُظِمَّتْ فِي عَاجِ جَبْهَتِهِ³⁸

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:

وَسُودَاءَ ذَاتِ دَلَالٍ غَنِيحٌ لَهَا فِي الْفُؤَادِ هَوًى يَخْتَلِجُ
إِذَا أَبْصَرْتَهَا فِي النِّسَاءِ تَرَى لِعَبَّةٍ خُرْطَتْ مِنْ سَبَّحٍ³⁹

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, Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil, he describes himself as crying tears of sorrow:

ذَكَرْتُ عَلَى بَعْدِ اللَّقَاءِ مُحَمَّدًا فَفَاضَتْ دُمُوعِي كَالْجُمَانِ الْأُمْبَدِّدِ⁴⁰

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

³⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 245.

³⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 530.

⁴⁰ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 35.

⁴¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 598.

وقد لاقيت بعد العسر يسيراً
بكيت عليه ياقوتاً ودراً

وقالوا لِمَ بكيت دماً ودمعاً
فقلت لفرحتي برضاه عني:

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:

فأندب زبرجد خد صار من سبجٍ ونخ وساعد عليه كل بكاء⁴²

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 silver⁴³ and when the fruit is ripe and ready to be eaten it is like gold.⁴⁴ Other images he uses include the fig's skin as pure gold⁴⁵ and bitter oranges as balls of gold.⁴⁶ Moving on to his treatment of vegetables, in one poem a carrot is compared to a har.⁴⁷ of sarcenet with an agate handle⁴⁷ while a cucumber is a tube of emerald.⁴⁸

⁴² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 10.

⁴³

أفدي الذي أهدى إلينا طلعةً آهدت إلي قلبي المشوق بلابلا بلابلا
فكأنما هي زورق من فضةٍ قد أودعوه من اللجين سلاسل اسلا

Dīwān, v. II, pp. 640-1.

⁴⁴

بخالص التبر مقمعاتٍ قضمنت جوفاً مقبراتٍ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 521.

⁴⁵

أنعم بتينٍ طاب طعماً واكتسى في بردٍ تلجٍ في نقا تبرٍ وفي
حسناً وقاربٍ مخرجاً من منظرٍ ربح العبير وطيب طعام السكر

Dīwān, v. II, p. 596.

⁴⁶

وكأنما النارنج في أغصانيه من خالص الذهب الذي لم يخلط
كرة رماها الصولجان إلى الهوا فتعلقت في جوه لم تسقط

Dīwān, v. II, p. 610.

⁴⁷

انظر إلى الجزر الذي يحكي لنا لهب الحريق
كمدبةٍ من سندسٍ وبها نصاب من عقيق

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:

جلا لنا وجهُ الثرى عن مَنْظَرِ كالعَصَبِ أو كالوشى أو كالجَوْهرِ
 جلا لنا وجهُ الثرى عن مَنْظَرِ كالعَصَبِ أو كالوشى أو كالجَوْهرِ⁴⁹
 من أبيضٍ وأحمرٍ وأصفرٍ وطارفٍ أجفانَه لم يَنْظُرِ⁴⁹

In terms of individual flowers, the narcissus is a frequent subject and is compared to the gold and pearls of *durr*.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 *dīnār*,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

Dīwān, v. II, p. 622.
48

انظر إليه أنابياً منضدةً من الزمردِ خضراً ما لها ورق

Dīwān, v. II, p. 623.

⁴⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 440.

⁵⁰ The example for the first case is:

عيونٌ لَجِينِ فوقها حدَقٌ صَفْرُ يَزِينُها مِنْ تحِيزِها عُمْدٌ خَضْرُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 602, and for the second:

عيونٌ إذا عاينتَها فكأنَّها مدامعُها من فوقِ أجفانِها دُرٌّ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 588.

⁵¹

ومقلةٌ تَلِحِقُ بالقِصِيِّ
قد علقتُ بالشبحِ الخفيِّ كأنها دينارٌ صيرفيِّ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 484, and

ومقلةٌ صفراءُ مثلُ الدينارِ ترفعُ جَفناً مثلَ حرفِ الزنارِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 438.

⁵²

واتصلتُ يرازيه القوهيِّ ساقٌ كغُصْنِ الذهبِ المجلِّيِّ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 485.

good at extracting small bones from its prey, to a skilful jeweller carefully extracting pearls.⁵³ A hunting dog holds its prey tightly and is unwilling to lose it, as if it is a pearl.⁵⁴ 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:

وطلّت على ماء الدُّجَيْلِ كأنّها وقد غرّد الحادي قطعاً متتابعٌ
عرقن رسوم الدار فانجط ببربها كلؤلؤ سلك أسلمته القواطع⁵⁵

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 *dīnār*, while the star of Canopus (which emits less light) is a silver *dirham*.⁵⁶ 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 coins⁵⁷ (it is worth noting here that this image has been adopted by al-Mutanabbî in his famous poem

53

Dīwān, v. II, p. 476.

54

Dīwān, v. II, p. 457.

⁵⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 468-9.

56

Dīwān, v. II, p. 499, and

Dīwān, v. III, p. 154.

57

Dīwān, v. II, p. 323.

منتزع لغامض العظام نزع المكب خرز النظام

كأنها والنقع كالرباط تعجل دراً خر بالتقاط

وكانما الشمس المنيرة ديانا رجلتها حدائد الضراب

يا مقلية راقدة لم تدر بالساهدة
... يدا سهيل لها فانخرقت عاندة
كانه درهم رمت به الناقد

يضاحك الشمس أنوار الرياض بها كأنما نثرت فيها الدنانير

on Bawwān, the people and the place⁵⁸). 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:

والبدرُ في أفقِ السماءِ كدرهمٍ ملقى على ديباجةٍ زرقاءٍ⁵⁹

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

وانجمُ الليلِ مريضاتِ الحدقِ تتلو الثريا حرقاً بعدَ حِزْقٍ
كأنها حينَ فرى الصبحُ وشتقُ وأسِطَةً بينَ لآلٍ نأتليقُ⁶⁰

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

وكانَّ الهلالَ نصفُ سوارٍ⁶¹

or a scythe or shield of silver:

ومصباحنا قمرٌ مشرقٌ كتيرسِ اللجينِ يشيقُ الدجى⁶²

⁵⁸ He says:

وألقى الشرقُ منها في ثيابي دنانيراً تفرُّ من البنانِ.
Al-Mutanabbî, A, *Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbî, bi Sharh Abī al-Baqā' al-'Ukburī*, Ed. M. Al-Saqā, I. Al-Abyārī and 'A. Shalabī, (Cairo: 1971), v. IIII, p. 253.

⁵⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 465.

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:

عَبَقَ الْكَلَامُ بِمَسْكَةٍ نَفَحَتْ مَنْ فِيهِ تُرْضِي مَنْ يِعَاتِبُهُ⁶³

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:

غَيَّرُوا عَارِضَةً بِالْمَسْكِ فِي خَدِّ أَسِيلٍ⁶⁴

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

⁶² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 12.

⁶³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 219.

⁶⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 207.

يامسكة العطارِ وخالَ وجهِ النهارِ⁶⁵

The sensitivity of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's similes can be seen in images like *نبهتُ يحيى وبحر السكرِ يغمرةُ* and *والشمسُ قد نفضتُ ورساً على الأصلِ* conveying the fragrance of plants carried by the wind. *وقهوةٌ صفراءُ مثلُ الوردِ* قد حُيِّستُ في الدنّ أيّ حَبَسَ.

فمالَ على ميثاءِ ناعمةِ الثرى تغلغلَ فيها مأوها وتَحَيَّرَا
كأنّ الصِّبا تَهدي إليها إذا جَرَّتْ على تريها مِسْكَاً سحيقاً وعنبراً⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷

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;⁶⁸ 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,⁶⁹ kohl is used to counter of black things such as night or the breast

⁶⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 577.

⁶⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 107.

⁶⁷

على عقارِ صفراءَ تحسبُها شيبتُ بمسكٍ في الدنّ مفتوتِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 51.

⁶⁸ Two lines can be given as examples:

نبهتُ يحيى وبحرُ السكرِ يغمرةُ والشمسُ قد نفضتُ ورساً على الأصلِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 200, and:

وقهوةٌ صفراءُ مثلُ الوردِ قد حُيِّستُ في الدنّ أيّ حَبَسَ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 159.

⁶⁹ As in the following images;

of the goshawk,⁷⁰ and the horns of wild cows are compared to eye pencils.⁷¹

كَأَنَّا حِينَ نَحْيَا يَهُ نَسْتَنْشِقُ النَّدَّ مِنَ الْجَمْرِ

On occasion, Ibn al-Mu'tazz also refers to other cosmetic equipment, such as

فِي غَيْمٍ نَدٌّ يُرْخِي سَحَابَهُ بَرَقُ ابْتِسَامٍ وَرَعْدٌ تَصْفِيقٍ

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:

لِبَيْلِسِ الشُّجُوبِ مِنَ الظُّهَائِرِ وَجْهَهُ فَكَأَنَّهُ مَأْوِيَّةٌ لَمْ تُصَقَّلِ

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):

لِيَ مِنْ ذِكْرِكَ مِرْآةٌ أَرَى وَجْهِي فِيهَا⁷³

كَأَنَّا حِينَ نَحْيَا يَهُ نَسْتَنْشِقُ النَّدَّ مِنَ الْجَمْرِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 595, and;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 184.
⁷⁰

Dīwān, v. II, p. 644.

Dīwān, v. II, p. 469.
⁷¹

Dīwān, v. I, p. 88.

⁷² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 165.

⁷³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 370.

كَأَنَّا حِينَ نَحْيَا يَهُ نَسْتَنْشِقُ النَّدَّ مِنَ الْجَمْرِ
فِي غَيْمٍ نَدٌّ يُرْخِي سَحَابَهُ بَرَقُ ابْتِسَامٍ وَرَعْدٌ تَصْفِيقٍ

وَلَيْلٍ كَكُحْلِ الْعَيْنِ خَضَّتْ ظِلَامَهُ بَازِرْقَ لَمَاعٍ وَأَبْيَضَ صَارِمٍ

ذِي جَوْجُورٍ لَا يَسِي وَشِي رَائِقٍ كَمَبْتَدَأِ اللَّامَاتِ فِي الْمَهَارِقِ
أَوْ كَامْتِدَادِ الْكُحْلِ فِي الْحِمَالِقِ وَنَجَمَتْ لِلْحَظْرِ عَيْنَ الرَّامِقِ

قَدْ أَطْلَعْتُ ابْرَ الْغُرُونِ كَأَنَّهَا أَخَذَ الْمِرَاوِدِ مِنْ سَحِيقِ الْأَثْمَدِ

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:

آذَانُهَا كَقِطْعِ الْأَمْشَاطِ⁷⁴

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:

قَرِيْبُونَ مَنِّي لَا تَلَاؤُمَ بَيْنَنَا وَنَحْنُ بَنُو عَمْرٍ كَمَا أَنْفَرَجَ الْمَشِطَ⁷⁵

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

⁷⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 457.

⁷⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 343.

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

كَيْفَ الْبَقَاءُ وَبَابُ الْمَوْتِ مُنْفَتِحٌ وَلَيْسَ يُغْلَقُ حَتَّى يَنْفَدَ الْبَشَرُ⁷⁶

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 *Dīwān*.⁷⁷ Likewise, he also uses a traditional image in which a curtain is used to counter the wine-jar.⁷⁸ Other tent images used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz include the description of mounds of figs as resembling a red silk tent,⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ In other images, transport animals such as horses and camels are compared to a monastery or castle.⁸¹ In addition, some abstract conceptions such as good deeds and hope are also compared by Ibn al-Mu'tazz to castles.⁸²

⁷⁶ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 163.

⁷⁷

فَمَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسُ النَّهَارِ ضَحِيَّةً وَلَا أَصْلًا إِلَّا وَمِنْ دُونِهَا خَيْدَرٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 114.

⁷⁸

نَشْرَبُ خَمْرًا أُبْرِزَتْ مِنْ خَيْدَرٍ فِي أَكْوَسٍ قَدْ كَلَّتْ بِالْيَبْرِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 141.

⁷⁹

يَحْكِي إِذَا مَا صَبَّ فِي أَطْبَاقِهِ خَيْمًا ضُرِبْنَ مِنَ الْحَرِيرِ الْأَحْمَرِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 596.

⁸⁰

مَغْفَرَةُ الرَّبِّعِ لَجَّ هَاجِرُهَا عَامِرُهَا مَوْحِشٌ وَغَامِرُهَا
يَنْتَحِبُ الْبُومُ فِي مَنَازِلِهَا كَأَنَّ أَوْطَانَهَا مَقَابِرُهَا

Dīwān, v. II, pp. 581-2.

⁸¹ The following example describes a horse:

فَهُوَ مَبْنِيٌّ كَقَصْرِ مَنِيْفٍ تَحْتَهُ عَيْدَانُ سَاجٍ وَصَخْرٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 121.

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:

يَظُنُّهَا الشَّيْعَةُ بَابَ الْهَدَىٰ وَخَلَفَ ذَاكَ الْبَابَ بَرِيَّةً⁸³

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,⁸⁴ while the hand of the minister, Yaḥya b. 'Ubayd Allāh, is the key to the power of granting victory:

وَيُؤْمِنَاكَ مِفْتَاحُ الْعُلُومِ وَمَا حَنْتُ عَلَى قَلَمٍ إِلَّا لِيَكْشِفَ هُمُومٍ⁸⁵

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:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 87, and;

Dīwān, v. I, p. 194.
⁸³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 738.

⁸⁴

Dīwān, v. I, p. 433.
⁸⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 515.

وقولي هوى عرش المكارم والعلیٰ وعُظِّلَ مِيزَانٌ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ رَاجِحٌ

أَزْمَانُ أْبْلَغُ فِي الْمُنَىٰ أَقْطَارَهَا مَرِحًا وَلِهَوَا

فَأَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ الْحَمْدَ مِفْتَاحُ الْهَدَىٰ

وُطِرِقُ الْمَجْدِ الَّذِي سَلَكَوا بِا قِ، فَسَيروا بِهِ عَلينا تَجوزوا⁸⁶

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

وَمَحَقَّ الْخَلْفُ وَعَدًّا كُنْتُ أَرْقُبُهُ وَسَدَّ يَأْسِي عَلَيَّ آمالِي الطُّرُقًا⁸⁷

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.⁸⁸ Sometimes, the shape of the rope is found in more than just its

⁸⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 667.

⁸⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 306.

⁸⁸ The following are examples for a *dawhī* tree;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 381.
a path;

كَأَنَّ عُرُوقَ الدَّوْحِ مِنْ تَحْتِ الثَّرَى قَوِيٌّ مِنْ حَبَالٍ أَعْجَلَتْ أَنْ تُفْتَلَا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 385,
a snack;

فَكَمْ مِنْهَلِي يَنْضِي الْمَطَايَا طَرِيفُهُ وَمَا صَاحِبِي إِلَّا الْمَطِيئَةُ وَالرَّحْلُ
لَهُ طَرَفٌ تَأْتِيهِ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ جَدِيدٍ وَبَالٍ مِثْلَ مَا نَقِضَ الْحَبْلُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 328,
a spear;

يَخْرِقُ مَا مَسَّ مِنْ صَخْرٍ وَمِنْ شَجَرٍ كَأَنَّهُ رَسَنٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَجْرورٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 185,
tears;

وَصَعْدَةٍ كَرِشَاءِ الْبَيْرِ نَاهِضَةٍ بَازِرْقٍ كَاتِقَادِ النِّجْمِ يَقْطَانِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 189.

أَبْلَى الْهَوَى وَالْوَجْدُ سَيْلُكَ دَمُوعِيهِ فَإِذَا نَجِيَّ الْفِكْرِ حَرَّكَهُ وَهَى

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:

وإن طارَ أعطى كفه ما بعينه وقربَ منها ما يشاء على بُعدِ
فضمَّ مخاليباً عليه كأنَّها شصوصُ حبالٍ قد جُمِعنَ إلى عقْدِ⁸⁹

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:

شيرةٌ قطعتُ حبالَكَ منها لم يدمَ ودُّها كما قدَّ عَهدتا⁹⁰

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

وطولُ حبلِ الأملِ المجرورِ في ظلِّ عيشِ غافلٍ غريرِ⁹¹

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

⁸⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 243.

⁹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 228.

⁹¹ *Dīwān*, 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.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:

حتى إذا الإمساء أوردَهُ حوضَ الغُروبِ فعَبَّ شارِبُهُ⁹³

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.⁹⁴ In addition, the heavy movement of a camel's hoof is compared

⁹² As in the following examples:
camel's hoof:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 182,
falcon's talons:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 463,
hunting dog's legs:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 53.

⁹³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 219.

⁹⁴

Dīwān, v. I, p. 11.

كَانَ أَحْقَاقَهَا وَالسَّيْرُ يَنْقُلُهَا دَلَاءٌ بَثْرَةٌ تَدَلَّتْ بَيْنَ أَشْطَانِ

كَانَ دَلَاءٌ فِي السَّمَاءِ تَحْطُّهَا وَتَرْقَى بِهَا أَيْدِي سِرَاعٍ غَوَارِفِ

وَعَاوٍ بِدِيمُومٍ يَجَاذِبُ حَيَّةً طَوْنَهُ ثَلَاثًا: لَوْحَةً وَشِعْبِيوبُ
كَمَثَلِ رِشَاءِ الْغَرَبِ مَرَّتَهُ الطَّوِيُّ وَطُولِ السَّرِيِّ فَالْبَطْنُ مِنْهُ قَبِيبُ

فَلَمَّا دَنَّتْ جَلَجَتْ فِي السَّمَاءِ رَعْدًا أَجَشَّ كَجَرِّ الرَّحَى

to the heaviness of a quern when it is moved from one place to another.⁹⁵ Life, which crushes people with its difficulties, and death, which harvests all souls, are likewise compared to querns.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.⁹⁷ Night and daybreak are described as covers:

والليلُ قد رَفَعَ من ستوره⁹⁸

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

⁹⁵

Dīwān, v. II, p. 297.

⁹⁶ As in the following examples:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 171,

Dīwān, v. I, p. 48.

⁹⁷ As in the following examples:

plants;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 570,

river;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 261,

nose;

Dīwān, v. I, p. 668.

⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 539.

وقد ثَقُلْتُ اخفأفه فكأنها من الأينِ أرجاءُ تُشالُ وتُطرحُ

ورحىً تحتنا وأخرى علينا كلُّ امرئٍ فيها طحينٌ هَشِيمٌ
في غَمْرَةٍ كانت رَحَى الموتِ بها تدورُ، والصَبْرُ منِّي قُطْبُ

وقرُشٌ من رباحينِ إذا ما وَقَدَ الحَرُّ

تَدِبُّ فَوْقَ زِخَاخٍ مَصْقُولَةٍ طَبْرِيَه

وأنفه كَسْتَرَةٍ مُشْرِفٍ الأفريزِ

measurement and the hoof of a camel is as a basket.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:

كَأَنَّ الثُّرَيَّا هَوْدَجٌ قَوْقٌ نَاقَةٌ ۖ يَحْتُّ بِهَا حَادٍ إِلَى الْعَرَبِ مُزْعِجٌ
 إِذَا عَارَضَتْهَا الْعَيْنُ خَالَتْ نَجُومَهَا ۖ قَوَارِيرَ فِيهَا زُبُقٌ يَتَرَجَّرُ¹⁰⁰

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:

وَأَشْعَلَ شَيْبِكَ مِصْبَاحَهُ ۖ وَلَسْتَ الرَّشِيدَ فِيمَا تَرَى¹⁰¹

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

واشتعل الرأس شيباً¹⁰²

⁹⁹ As in the following:

كالصاعِ غيرِ مُتَقِيٍّ وَلَا وَجِيٍّ ۖ يَرْقَعُ نَفْعًا كُدْحَانِ الْعَرَقِجِ
Dīwān, v. II, p. 427, and *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 299:

يَسِيمُ الْأَرْضَ لَهُ ۖ حَافِرٌ مِثْلُ الْقَدَحِ

¹⁰⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 68.

¹⁰¹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 118.

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:

فَشَرِبْتُ الرَّاحَ صِرْفًا مِنْ ثَنَائَا كَالْأَقَاحِي¹⁰⁴

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

سَقَانِي خَمْرًا مِنْ يَدَيْهِ وَرَبْقِيهِ وَأَسْكُرَنِي سُكْرَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ جُلَاسِي¹⁰⁵

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:

¹⁰² from Arberry, A, *The Koran Interpreted*, (London and New York: 1995), v. I, p. 330.

¹⁰⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 80.

¹⁰⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 158.

مَزَجَتْهُ بِنَفْسِهَا مِثْلَ مَا يَمْزُجُ سَاقٍ بِمَاءٍ مُزْنٍ عُقَارًا¹⁰⁶

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,¹⁰⁷ while the white dots on a goshawk's feathers in a third are like froth.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:

كَمْ صَرِيعٍ مِّنَّا يَصِيحُ وَيَعْوِي مِثْلَ زَقٍّ بَيْنَ النَّدَامَى طَرِيحٍ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 263.

¹⁰⁷ As in the following examples:
the horse;

وقادوا كلَّ سهَّلبةٍ سَبَّوحٍ كأنَّ أديمَهَا شَرَقٌ يِرَاحِ

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

وأَمِيرُهُمْ مُتَقَدِّمٌ بِهِمْ	وَأَمِيرُهُمْ مُتَقَدِّمٌ بِهِمْ
وَإِذَا يَدَا فِدَى الزَّمَانِ بِهِ	وَإِذَا يَدَا فِدَى الزَّمَانِ بِهِ
وَكأنَّ خَلَّ الخَمْرِ يَعْصِرُ مِن	وَكأنَّ خَلَّ الخَمْرِ يَعْصِرُ مِن
نَحْوِ الحَرَامِ وَسَيَرُهُ نَيْصٌ	نَحْوِ الحَرَامِ وَسَيَرُهُ نَيْصٌ
وَسَيْطَ الخَمِيبِ كَأَنَّهُ دَلِصٌ	وَسَيْطَ الخَمِيبِ كَأَنَّهُ دَلِصٌ
وَجَنَانِيهِ أَوْ يَجْتَنِي العَفْصُ	وَجَنَانِيهِ أَوْ يَجْتَنِي العَفْصُ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 678-9.
¹⁰⁸

عليه منهُ كَحَبَابِ الرَّاحِ ذِي جَلْجَلٍ كَالصَّرَصِ الصِّبَاحِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 430.

¹⁰⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 532.

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.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.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:

وحلاوة الدنيا لجاهليها ومَرارة الدنيا لمن عَقَلَا¹¹²

¹¹⁰ For example:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 63.

¹¹¹ As in the following examples:

good manners;

Dīwān, v. II, p. 386-7,
and health and illness;

Dīwān, v. I, p. 409.

¹¹² *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 198.

شَهِدْتُ بَصِيرَ لَا تَوْلَى جُنُودَهُ فَحَاسَيْتُ أَكْوَاسَ الْمَنَايَا وَسَاقَيْتُ

يَا رَبِّ غَيْرَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سِوَى قَدْ كَانَ لِي ذَا مَشْرَعٍ طَيِّبٍ
رَأَيْتُ أَبِي الْعَبَّاسِ فَاتْرَكْتُهُ لِي حِينًا فَشَيْبَ الْآنَ بِالْحَنْظَلِ

خَوْفًا عَلَيَّ الْوَزِيرِ، بِي وَلَا بِهِ وَأَغْسَلُهُ بِالصَّحَّةِ مِنْ أَوْصَايِهِ
يَا رَبِّ أَمْسَكْ رَمَقَ الدُّنْيَا بِهِ لَا خَيْرَ فِي مَمْلَكَةٍ إِلَّا بِهِ

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:

وَحَدُّهُ مُشَوِّكٌ مُزَوَّرُ التَّزْوِيرِ
كَأَنَّهُ قَرْنِيَّةٌ كَثِيرَةُ الشَّوْنِيرِ¹¹²

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

وَكَأَنَّ الرَّكُضَ ذَرَّ عَلِيهَا سَبَخًا مِنْ مَائِهِنَّ مِلاَحًا¹¹³

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 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 668.

¹¹³ *Dīwān*, 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:

وقيدت لحتفِ الصيدِ عُضْفًا كَوَاسِيبًا كَمِثْلِ قِيدَاحِ الْبَارِيَاتِ نَحَائِفًا¹¹⁴

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

لَا يَتَّقِيهِ هَارِبٌ بِفَوْتٍ سَهْمٌ مُصِيبٌ كَلَّمَا رَمَيْتَ¹¹⁵

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.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, in accordance with traditional custom, the physical attributes of camels, such as the hoof and neck, are described as being like swords.¹¹⁷ The shiny nature of some military

¹¹⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 463.

¹¹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 424.

¹¹⁶ As in the following example:

ومنسرٍ عضبِ الشِّبَا كَالخَنَجِرِ تَخَالُهُ مَضْمَحًا بِالْعُصْفُرِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 442.

¹¹⁷ As follows:

hoof;

يَغْرِي بَطُونَ النَّقَا النَّقِيَّ كَمَا يَطْعُنُ بَيْنَ الْجَوَانِحِ الْأَسْلُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 147,

neck;

فَأَغْمَدَنَ فِي الْأَعْمَاقِ أَسْيَافَ لَجَّةٍ مَصْقَلَةً تَغْزِي بِهِنَّ الْمَفَاوِزُ

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

إذا استجْهَلْتُهُ الرِّيحُ حَالَتْ قَدَاتُهُ وَجُرَّدَ مِنْ أَعْمَادِهِ فَتَسَلَّسَلَا¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹ Some human organs like the tongue and heart are embodied in the same way.¹²⁰ 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:

وقوامي مثلُ القناةِ مِنَ الخَطِّ وخدي من لِحْيَتِي مَكْنُوسٌ¹²¹

Dīwān, v. III, p. 51.

¹¹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 378.

¹¹⁹ For example:

Ibn al-Mu'tazz;

فتراني مثلَ الصفيحةِ قدْ أخلَصَها عندَ صقيها ترديدُ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 79,

al-Mu'tadid;

فإنَّ اللهَ قدْ سلَّ حساماً راسبَ المضربِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 396,

'Ubayd Allāh;

مُسْتَظْهِراً قَبْلَ الخُطوبِ بِعُدَّةٍ والسيفُ يشحذُ قَبْلَ حينِ ضيرايه

Dīwān, v. III, p. 8.

¹²⁰ For example:

the tongue;

ويا رَبَّ السنَةِ كالسيو في تقطَعُ أعناقَ اصحابيها

Dīwān, v. I, p. 18,

the heart;

ورأى قلبي كالحسامِ القاصلِ مهذبٍ يرسبُ في المفاصلِ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 153.

¹²¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 158.

وقوامي مثلُ القناةِ منَ الخطِّ وخدي منَ لِحيتي مكنوس¹²²

while, on the other hand, the curve of an old man's back is similar to the curved shape of a bow:

فغالبتُ دمعها والوجد دافقهُ وكلُّ جازعةٍ بالشيبِ تَنْتَصِرُ
لَمَّا رأتُ رجلاً رَدَّتْ شَبِيئُهُ إلى المَعِيرِ وحنى قوسه الوتر¹²³

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 Allāh b. Sulaymān whose resolution is a result of careful thought:

ورأيي تبيتُ له ساهراً إذا وجدَ الحزمَ لم ينتظرُ
ويُحرِّكُهُ تحتَ أسكانيهِ ويَكَلِّهُهُ بعيونِ الحَدَرِ
ويَصْفِلُهُ منَ صدا شُبُهَةٍ كصقلِ القيونِ الحسامِ الذَّكْر¹²⁴

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 *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 158.

¹²³ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 161.

¹²⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 444-5.

arrows, for example, will strike everyone:

لأَيِّ غَايَاتِي أَجْرِي بَعْدَمَا رَأَيْتُ أَتْرَابِي وَقَدْ صَارُوا تُرَبُّ
كِنَاطِرِي إِلَى سَهَامِي نَازِعِي قَالَ عَسَاهَا إِنْ أَتَتْنِي لَمْ تُصِيبْ
فَانْتَضَمَتْ مِنْهُ فُوَادًا عَاقِلًا عَمَّا جَنَاهُ غَافِلًا عَنِ الثُّوبِ¹²⁵

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:

وَيَجْرَحُ أَحْشَائِي بَعَيْنِي مَرِيضَةً كَمَا لَانَ مَتْنُ السَّيْفِ وَالسَّيْفُ قَاطِعٌ¹²⁶

and the eyelid becomes as arrows:

أَلَا رَبَّ يَوْمٍ بِالدَّوْيِرَةِ صَالِحِي فَكَيْفَ بِيَوْمٍ بَعْدَهُ لِي فَاسِدٌ
ظَلَلْتُ بِهَا أَسْفَى سَلَافَةَ قَهْوَةٍ بَكَفِّ غَزَالِي ذِي جُفُونِي صَوَائِدِ¹²⁷

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

¹²⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 46.

¹²⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 298.

¹²⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 95.

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

يُؤدِّينَ بِيضَاءَ الْخُدُودِ كَأَنَّهَا صَفْحَاتُ هِنْدِيٍّ كُوسِيْنَ صِفَالاً¹²⁸

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

مِثْلُ نَسِجِ الدَّرُوعِ أَوْ مِثْلُ وَاوَا تِ تَدَانَتْ سَطُورُهَا فِي كِتَابِ¹²⁹

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:

وَطَافَ بِهَا سَاقٍ أَدِيبٍ بِمِيزْلٍ كَخَنْجَرٍ عِيَّارٍ صِنَاعَتُهُ الْفَتَكُ¹³⁰

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 *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 701.

¹²⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 43.

¹³⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 193.

1-4-2- Handcrafts.

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-Numayri's mistress are all described as being like a saw.¹³⁰ 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.¹³¹ 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 it¹³² and with the abstract notion of the powerful effect of proof.¹³³ In some images, the function of some tools is of interest – the action of a bull

¹³⁰ As in the following examples describing:
a cockrel's crest:

رافعُ رأسه طوراً وخافضه كأنما العرفُ منه ميبشارُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 120,
hunting dogs' tongues:

تجذبُ كفيّه أشباهَ معرّفة كأنّ أفواها فيها المناشيرُ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 325,
Shurayra's teeth:

وتجسبُ فيها في الدّجى وكره هدهدٍ وتسيفيرُ عن قيردٍ تحصينُ قنغذاً
فإن حلقته صار منشارَ فيشّة وإن نتفته صار منشارَ جنبذاً

Dīwān, v. I, p. 650.

¹³¹ As in the following examples which describe:
a water-bird's beak:

يلقطها بمعولٍ مدرّي لقط نصال الغرض المرمي

Dīwān, v. II, p. 484,
hunting dogs' tongues:

كأنّ في أشداقها معاولا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 474.

¹³²

إن يدفق الصخر يهشمه بحافره كأنه من علاة القين منقور

Dīwān, v. II, p. 328.

¹³³

ولربّ سمعٍ قد فرعت بحجة ولربّ سمعٍ قد فرعت بحجة
أثنى عليها بالصواب حسودها وقضى عليها خصمها بوجودها

Dīwān, v. I, p. 395.

scrubbing boughs with its horn is thus described as being like that of drilling a hole in a shoe:

يَحْكُ الْغُصُونَ الْمُرْقَاتِ بِرُوقِهِ كَخَصْفِكَ بِالْأَشْفَى نَعَالًا مَخْصَرًا¹³⁴

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

لِلتَّفِ فِيهِ أَثْرٌ كَأَثْرِ التَّخْرِيزِ¹³⁵

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:

يَا صَاحِبِ كَيْفَ تَرَى طَعْنًا مُقَرَّبَةً كَسْفُنٍ مَوْجٍ تَهَادَى ثُمَّ تَفْتَرِقُ¹³⁷

while sunset is an anchorage:

وَعَجَّتْ وَالشُّمُوسُ تَرَسُو فِي مَغَارِبِهَا عَلَى طَرِيقِ كَخَطِّ الْفَرْقِ فِي الرُّأْسِ¹³⁸

¹³⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 109.

¹³⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 668.

¹³⁶

دامت ثلاثين حولاً في مقاصيرها تُسَامِرُ الدَّهْرَ فِي لَيْلٍ مِنَ الْقَارِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 129.

¹³⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 362.

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

¹³⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 335.

¹³⁹ Levi-Strauss, C, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Tran. J. and D. Weightman, (Chicago:1964), v. I, p. 188.

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:

طَبْعِي كَطَبْعِ الْمُشْتَرِي مَا فِيهِ مِنْ شُوبٍ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُشْتَرٍ لِلْمُشْتَرِي¹⁴⁰

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:

مَا زِلْتُ أَشْرِبُهَا وَاللَّيْلُ مُعْتَكِرٌ حَتَّى أَكْبَأَ الْكُرَى رَأْسِي عَلَى قَدْحِي
مِنْ قَهْوَةٍ كَشُعَاعِ الشَّمْسِ صَافِيَةٍ تَنْفِي الِهْمُومَ بِأَنْوَاعٍ مِنَ الْفَرَحِ¹⁴¹

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:

عُصْنٌ يَهْتَزُّ تَحْتَ هِلَالٍ لَمْ يَزَلْ يَغْدُوهُ بِالنُّورِ عَشْرُ

¹⁴⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 597.

¹⁴¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 82.

دائماً حتى مضتْ بعدَ عشرٍ أربعٌ ثمَّ أستوى وهو بدرٌ¹⁴²

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.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:

صباحٌ بسِلِّ البِيضِ في ظِلْمِ الدُّجَى وَلَيْلٌ عَرِيضٌ في النِّهَارِ طَوِيلٌ¹⁴⁴

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:

وَسَاسَ الْمُلْكَ مَنَّا كُلُّ خَرَقٍ كَمَثَلِ الْبَدْرِ أَشْرَقَ فِي الظُّلَامِ¹⁴⁵

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

¹⁴² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 124.

¹⁴³ As in the following two examples:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 250,

Dīwān, v. II, p. 145.

¹⁴⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 490.

¹⁴⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 169.

يا مقمراً في الشعرِ الأسودِ

كانتْ نهاراً في جوفِ ليلٍ وكانَ ليلاً على نهارِ

counter the condition of his own, and the enemies of his relatives.¹⁴⁶ Some ministers like 'Ubayd Allāh b. Sulaymān and his son al-Qāsim are also compared to the moon.¹⁴⁷

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:

تَحْسِبُهَا فِي سُرْعَةِ انْسِيَابِ نَجْمًا مُنِيرًا لَجَّ فِي انْصَابِ¹⁴⁸

Likewise, the poet focuses on speed in other images of a hunting bird, the tiercel, and fast horses and camels.¹⁴⁹ Wine-related images are another field where comparison is made to the speed of stars, so that the twinkling nature

¹⁴⁶ He says:

إذا ما اجتمعنا في الندى تضاءلوا كما خفيت مرضى الكواكب في الفجر

Dīwān, v. I, p. 95.

¹⁴⁷ As in the following two examples:

يا آل وهب أين بدر سمايكم في ملحدٍ والله تحت ترائيه

Dīwān, v. III, p. 7,

بدا قمر أو قاسم هو مقبل الست ترى فيه كمال جماليه

Dīwān, v. I, p. 491.

¹⁴⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 422.

¹⁴⁹ An example is given for each case:
hunting bird:

يركض في جو السماء ركضاً يخافقين ينقضان نقضاً
كما رأيت الكوكب المنفضاً فأطعم القوم شواء غصاً

Dīwān, v. II, p. 456,
the horse:

ومخطفاً موثق الأعضاء خالفها بجلدة سوداء
كأثر الشهاب في السماء ويعرف الزجر من الدعاء

Dīwān, v. II, p. 407,
and the camel:

كأنه شهاب رمته به السماء

Dīwān, v. II, p. 494.

of froth is like the intermittent twinkling of stars:

كَأَنَّ فِي الرَّاحِ حِينَ تَمْرُجُهَا نَجُومَ رَجْمٍ تَعْلُو وَتَنْخَفِضُ¹⁵⁰

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

وَكَأَنَّ كَمَصْبَاحِ السَّمَاءِ شَرِبَتْهَا عَلَى قُبْلَةٍ أَوْ مَوْعِدٍ بِلِقَاءِ
أَتَتْ دَوْنَهَا الْأَيَّامُ حَتَّى كَانَتْهَا تَسَاقُطُ نُورٍ مِنْ ثُقُوبِ سَمَاءِ¹⁵¹

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:

وَتَرَاهُ فِي لَيْلِ السُّرَى وَكَأَنَّهُ نَارٌ يُقَلِّبُ طَرْفَهُ وَيُكْرِهُ¹⁵²

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

¹⁵⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 167.

¹⁵¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 17.

¹⁵² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 442.

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

تَقَسَّمْتَنِي هَمومٌ بَتْنِ وَالجَّةَ طارتْ على القلبِ من نيرانِها شرراً¹⁵³

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

يا ناظراً أودعَ قلبي الهوى كويتَ بالصدِّ الحشا فانكوى¹⁵⁴

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

بوجنةٍ كأنما يقدحُ منها الشرر¹⁵⁵

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:

فلا تُلهبوا نارَ العداوةِ بيننا فليسَ سواكمُ في قريشَ صديق¹⁵⁶

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

¹⁵³ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 161.

¹⁵⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 211.

¹⁵⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 269.

¹⁵⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 371.

ألا إنّما العيشُ اللذيذُ مدامَةٌ عُقَارُ كلونِ النارِ حمراءُ قرقفٌ¹⁵⁷

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:

نارتُ وقدْ خاضَ الظلامُ المعتدي والأفقُ الغربيُّ في تورِّدٍ¹⁵⁸

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:

أرقتُ لبرقٍ في الدُّجَيْلِ كأنه إضاءةُ نارٍ بينَ زندينٍ تُقَدِّحُ¹⁵⁹

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:

مَسْجُورَةٌ بالبرقِ مشعلةٌ كلظى الحريقِ أضاءَ ثمَّ خَمَدُ¹⁶⁰

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

¹⁵⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 181.

¹⁵⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 103.

¹⁵⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 298.

¹⁶⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 308.

¹⁶¹ As in the following example:

أما ترى الفجرَ تحتَ ليلتيهِ كموقدٍ باتَ ينفخُ الفَحْمَا

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:

أَحْرَقْنَا أَيْلُولُ فِي نَارِهِ فَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَبِي¹⁶³

War-related images convey the power to destroy like fire. War is fire and likewise its weapons.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:

مَنْ لِيَخِيلُ خَضِبَتْ تَحْتَ نَفْعِ كَدُّخَانٍ طَارَ عَنْ جَمْرِ صَالِي¹⁶⁵

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:

كَأَنَّهُ وَضَافُ الْقُضْبِ تَحْمِيلُهُ أَوَائِلُ النَّارِ فِي أَطْرَافِ كَبْرِيتِ¹⁶⁶

Dīwān, v. II, p. 233.

¹⁶³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 497.

¹⁶⁴ The following line is an example of this:

فَدَحْتُمْ زَنَادَ الْحَرْبِ أَوْلَ مَرَّةٍ لَنَا وَخَلَعْتُمْ بَيْنَنَا رِبْقَةَ الْعَهْدِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 314.

¹⁶⁵ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 68.

¹⁶⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 528.

2-3- Plants.

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:

تَحْنُ الْفُرُوعُ وَأَصْلُ الْفَرْعِ أَنْتِ لَنَا لَا يُعْرَفُ الْأَصْلُ مَا لَمْ يَرْتَقِ الطَّرْفُ¹⁶⁷

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

¹⁶⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 364.

¹⁶⁸ As in the following example:

سكنتك يا دنيا برغمي مكرهاً و ما كان لي في ذلك صنعٍ و لا أمرٍ
... فان ارتحل يوماً ادعك ذميمةً و ما فيك من عودٍ غراس و لا بذرٍ

Dīwān, v. III, p. 172-3.

¹⁶⁹ As in the following example:

كلُّ يومٍ كأنهم و كأنني ورقٌ هزَّ عودُهُ محتوتُ

Dīwān, v. III, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰ As the poet describes him self:

كنتَ ربحانةَ المجالسِ في السلمِ و حتفَ الأبطالِ يومَ الحروبِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 279.

tyranny'.¹⁷¹ Love is also depicted through the action of planting, and the action of hugging between lovers is like two branches crossing each other.¹⁷² 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:

لنا في وجهه بستانٌ حُسنٌ مباحٌ للعيونِ بلا مساسٍ.¹⁷⁴

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:

و كأنّ ظعنَ الحيِّ غاديةً نخلٌ سقّيتِ الغيثَ من نخلٍ.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ As follows:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 644,

Dīwān, v. I, p. 187.

¹⁷² As in the following example:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 318.

¹⁷⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 162.

¹⁷⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 175.

و صاحبٍ يسجّرني موعدهُ
قولِ نديّ ينبت ورد المنى
فأحمدُ اللهَ و لا أحمدهُ
ثم مطال بعدهُ يحصدهُ

جزينا الأمويينَ و دناهم كما دانوا
و ذاقوا ثمرَ البغي و كانوا مثلَ ما خانوا

كلّما رمتُ تركهُ ردّني الشو
و كذلك الغصنانِ في يومِ ربحٍ
قُ و عادَ اعتناقُه و اعتناقِي
خلقاً من تفرّقٍ و تلاقِي

while the neck of a horse resembles the trunk, the horse's mane is like the fronds¹⁷⁶ and the blaze on its forehead surrounded by the forelock and mane are like a spadix appearing between the fronds' parts:

و لها عُرةٌ و ناصيةٌ تَنشَقُّ عنها كطلعةٍ بينَ حَوصِ¹⁷⁷

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:

يُشَقِّقُ أذانَ الأرانبِ صُغُها كما صكَّ أنصافَ الكوافيرِ خارف¹⁸¹

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

¹⁷⁶ As in the following line:

نواصيهنَّ كالسعفا تِ و الأذنانُ كالسروِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 398.

¹⁷⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 453.

¹⁸¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 463.

animals and birds. For example, the colour of a good horse is like the colour of a rose:

ولقد وطئتُ الغَيْثَ يَحْمَلُنِي طرفٌ كلونِ الورْدِ حينَ وَقَد¹⁸²

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

ومقلَّةٌ تصدِّقُهُ إذا رَمَقُ
كأنَّها نرجسةٌ بلا وِرْق¹⁸³

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:

وقدْ لاحتْ لسارِها الثُّرَيَّا كأنَّ نجومَها نورُ الأفاحي¹⁸⁴

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

إذا شجَّها قَرْعُ المِزاجِ تَعَمَّمَتْ بأزبَادِها كالأفْحوانِ المُنوَّرِ¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 309.

¹⁸³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 466.

¹⁸⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 72.

¹⁸⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 454.

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:

مَلِكٌ تَوَاضَعَتِ الْمُلُوكُ لِعِزِّهِ قَسْرًا وَفَاضَ عَلَى الْجَدَائِلِ مَائُهُ¹⁸⁶

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:

فِي كُلِّ كَفٍّ مِنْهُ خَمْسَةٌ أَوْ بَحْرٍ يَسْقِي الْحَوَائِمَ مَائُهَا الْمَوْرُودُ¹⁸⁷

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:

وَكَمْ قَيْتَةٍ قَدْ يَتَّ تَسْبَحُ فَوْقَهَا كَأَنَّكَ مِنْهَا رَاكِبٌ لُجَّةِ الْبَحْرِ¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 442.

¹⁸⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 430.

¹⁸⁸ *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:

وَحَمِيسٍ أَنَا مَا لِكُهُ أَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ بِهِ غَابَا
 مِثْلَ لُجِّ الْبَحْرِ مُصْطَخِيًّا يَزْجُرُ اللَّيْلَ إِذَا رَابَا
 جَامِدٍ لِي حِينَ أَحْبِسُهُ وَإِذَا سِيرْتُ بِهِ ذَابَا¹⁸⁹

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:

قَدْ تُدْرِكُ الْعَيْرَ طَعْنَتِي عَجَلًا يَبْحَرُ جَرِي عِنَانُهُ السَّاحِلُ

¹⁸⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 36.

تَكْسِيرٌ صَمَّ الْحَصَى حَوَافِرُهُ بِوَقْعِهَا وَهُوَ فَوْقَهَا سَائِلٌ¹⁹⁰

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:

وَكَأَنَّهُ مَوْجٌ يَذُوبُ إِذَا أَطْلَقْتَهُ وَإِذَا حَبَسْتَهُ جَمَدٌ¹⁹¹

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:

جَائِلَةٌ تُجَادِبُ السَّلَاسِيْلَا إِذَا ارْتَقَتْ رَأَيْتَهَا مَوَائِلَا
كَمَثَلِ كَفٍّ رَفَعَتْ أُنَامِيْلَا وَإِنْ هَوَتْ حَسِبْتَهَا جَدَاوِلَا¹⁹²

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

¹⁹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 632.

¹⁹¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 310.

¹⁹² *Dīwān*, v. II, pp. 473-4.

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:

وشديد القوي كملومة الصخرِ كَمَيْتٍ يَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ¹⁹³

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:

خَوَازِنَ نَحْضٍ فِي الْجُلُودِ كَأَنَّهَا تُحْمَلُ كُتْبَانًا مِّنَ الرَّمْلِ أَصْلَابًا¹⁹⁴

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:

جَاءَنَا مُقِيلًا فَأَيْ قَضِيبٍ ثُمَّ وَلَّى عَنَّا فَأَيْ كَثِيبٍ¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 125.

¹⁹⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 277.

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'tadîd:

لَمَّا رَأَى الْمَوْتَ صَارَ ثَعْلِبًا يَجْرُ فِي كُلِّ الْبِلَادِ ذَبَابًا¹⁹⁶

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 *Diwān*, v. I, p. 567.

يا من ينجي ضيغته في نفسه ويدبُّ تحتني بالأفاعي اللدغِ
وببيت ينهض زفرة في صدره مني فان دميت جراحي يولغ¹⁹⁷

Abû '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:

وكان أبوك في كركين كلبا يقاد على البغاء ولا يفيد¹⁹⁸

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

لقد عشق الشيخ النميري جيفة يجر الكلاب رجلها: ذا وذا¹⁹⁹

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.

¹⁹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 353.

¹⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 648.

¹⁹⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 649.

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'taḍid in particular), ministers (for example 'Ubayd Allāh b. Sulaymān), army commanders and soldiers are compared to lions or beasts. Al-Mu'taḍid, 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 weakened caliphate of the sons of Hāshim is returned to glory:

أَلَا تَرَى مُلْكَ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ عَادَ عَزِيزاً بَعْدَ مَا ذَلَّلَا
بَضِيغَمٍ يَفْرَسُ أَعْدَاءَهُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ يَسْحَبُ الْجَحْفَلَا²⁰⁰

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:

خَلَّتْ لِفَمِّ الدَّهْرِ الْخِلَافَةُ بَعْدَهُ يَرُوحُ عَلَيْهَا كَيْفَ شَاءَ وَيَغْتَدِي²⁰¹

The beauty of the gazelle, on the other hand, in particular its wide eyes and

²⁰⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 493.

²⁰¹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 35.

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, *žaby*, *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 *mahā'*,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:

رِيمٌ يَنْبِيهُ بِحَسَنِ صَوْرَتِهِ عِبْتِ الْفَتُورُ بِلِحْظِ مُقْلَيْهِ

²⁰² As in the following examples:

gazelle:

وَعَزْلَانُ نَاسٍ لَمْ يَزَلْنَ سَوَانِحًا يَسَارِقْنَ لِحْظًا أَوْ سِلَاحًا مَكْتَمًا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 507,
žaby:

وَلَرَبِّمَا رَوَّكَ مِنْ قُبُلٍ ظِيْبِيُّ مَجَاجَةٌ رَيْقِيهِ خَمْرٌ

Dīwān, v. I, p. 448,
rashā':

عَذْرُ الْهَوَى عِنْدَ الْعِذُولِ رَشَاءٌ مَا لِيَمِّ حَبِيٍّ فِيهِ حِينَ فِشَا
شَقُّ الظَّلَامِ الْفَجْرُ حِينَ بَدَأَ وَأَهْتَزَّ غِصْنَ الْبَانِ حِينَ مَشَا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 461,
shādin:

أَشْكُو إِلَى اللَّهِ هَوَى شَادِنٍ أَصْبَحَ فِي هَجْرِي مَسْتَوْرًا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 280.

²⁰³ As in the following examples:

arām:

وَكَأَنَّ فِي الْأَحْدَاجِ يَوْمَ تَرَحَّلُوا أَرَامٌ سَدْرٍ قَدْ لَبَسْنَ ظِلَالًا

Dīwān, v. I, p. 701,
mahā':

وَفَارَقَنِي مَلِكُ الشَّبَابِ فَأَصْبَحْتُ عَيُونُ الْمَهَا الْإِنْسِي تَلْفِظُنِي لَفْظًا

Dīwān, v. II, p. 338.

وَكأَنَّ عَقْرَبَ صَدْغِهِ وَقَفَّتْ لَمَّا دَنَتْ مِنْ نَارِ وَجَنَّتِيهِ²⁰⁴

and the glistening nature of snakeskin is used to illustrate the flash of lightning:

إِذَا تَعَرَّى الْبَرْقُ فِيهَا خِلْتَهُ بَطْنَ شَجَاعٍ فِي كَثِيبٍ يَضْطَرِبُ²⁰⁵

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.²⁰⁶

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:

²⁰⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 229.

²⁰⁵ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 41.

²⁰⁶ As in the following examples:

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

بعج الفرات لها فسلسلَ جدولاً متسريراً في كرمها كالأرقم.

Dīwān, v. II, p. 420,
dog's tail:

تنسابُ مثلَ الأرقمِ المنسابِ كأنما تنظرُ منْ شهابِ.

Dīwān, v. I, p. 32.

فأبصرُ لَمَّا كَادَ يَأْمَنُ قَلْبُهُ سَلُوقِيَّةً شُوساً تُجاذِبُ كَلَابَا
وأطلقَ أشباحاً يُخَلِّنَ عَقَارِيأ إِذَا رَفَعَتْ عِنْدَ الْحَفِيطَةِ أُذُنَابَا

لو كان يدري ما المحاورة اشتكى أو كان يدري ما جوابُ تكلمي²⁰⁷

Another Islamic poet Al-'Abdî, 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 أهة الرجل الحزين²⁰⁸

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:

أبامُ يلقي الدهرُ في لذّاته رَسَنِي وَتَبَعَنِي الحوَادِثُ مَبَعًا²⁰⁹

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

²⁰⁷ See [ʿAntara] *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-Thamīn, The Divan of the six Arabic Poets, Ennābiga, ʿAntra, Tharafa, Zuhair, ʿAlqama and Imruʿlqays Arabic poets*, Ed. W. Ahlwardt, (London: 1870).

²⁰⁸ Al-'Abdî, al-M, *Shi'r al-Muthaqqab al-'Abdî*, Ed. M. Āl-Yasīn, (Baghdad: 1956).

²⁰⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 632.

finishing line:

وَنَرُومُ الثُّرَيَّا فِي الْغُرُوبِ مَرَامَا
كَانِكَبَابِ طَمْرٍ كَادَ يُلْقِي اللِّجَامَا²¹⁰

In contrast, in his old age the poet cannot stand the pace and loses his position at the front, falling to the back:

وَأَصْبَحْتُ مُعْتَلِّ الْحَيَاةِ كَأَنْنِي حَسِيرٌ وَرَاءَ السَّابِقَاتِ تَعَثَّرَا²¹¹

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:

غَدَا وَالصُّبْحُ تَحْتَ اللَّيْلِ بِأَدِي كَطَمْرٍ اشْفَرِ مُلْقَى اللِّجَامِ²¹²

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:

²¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 390.

²¹¹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 107.

²¹² *Dīwān*, 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.²¹⁴ Likewise, the voice of a good singer is compared to the melodic songs of pigeons, turtledoves and nightingales.²¹⁵ 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:

ومعشوقٍ يواصلني بلا مطلٍ ولا عللٍ
أتى عجلانَ يطيرُ بهِ جناحُ الخوفِ والوجلِ²¹⁶

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

²¹³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 363.

²¹⁴ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 123.

²¹⁵ As in the following examples:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 76,

Dīwān, v. II, p. 523.

²¹⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 218.

فدُّ باتٍ ينطقُ عودَه في كفه غرداً كقمريِ الحمامِ إذا صدحُ
كانَ القماريِ و البلابلَ غرّدتُ لدى العودِ في أصواتِها حينَ غنّتِ

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 eagle²²⁰ 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:

كَأَتَمَا سَنَاهُ أَطَارَ عَنِّي نَسْرًا²²²

217

Dīwān, v. II, p. 151.

²¹⁸ As in the following examples:

Dīwān, v. I, p. 165,

Dīwān, v. II, p. 347.

219

Dīwān, v. II, p. 370.

220

Dīwān, v. I, p. 433.

221

Dīwān, v. I, p. 72.

²²² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 319.

اشربُ بكأسٍ من كَفِّ طاووسٍ مدللٍ في النعيمِ مغموسٍ

ثُمَّ اسْتَشَارَهُمْ دَلِيلٌ فَارْطُ يَسْمُو لُغَايَتِهِ بَعِينِي أُجْدَلُ

أَيْهَا الْعَايْتُ بِي سِرْفًا وَغَلَطًا
هَلْ يَرُوعُ بَازِيَا رُؤُوفِ أَفْرَاحِ الْقَطَا

كَأَتِي وَرَجَلِي فَوْقَ أَحْقَبَ قَارِحٍ يَسْوِقُ قَبَا سَبِيرُهُنَّ ذَلِيقُ
إِذَا مَا عَلَا نَشْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ حَالِيًا دَعَاهُنَّ تَغْرِيدَ لَهُ وَنَهِيَقَ

فِيهِ عَقْبَانُ خِيُولٍ فَوْقَهَا أَسَدٌ حَدِيدُ

تَخَلَّفُ فِي وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ رَسْمًا كَأَفْحُوصِ الْقَطَا أَوْ كَالْأَفَاحِي

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

أرقتُ وأخلتني العاذلاتُ لبرقٍ عَناني فلمْ أرُقِدِ
يطيرُ ويرتدُّ مثلُ انتها ضِ بازٍ تَصْرَبَ فوقَ اليدِ²²³

and finally, clouds move as if they had wings:

سَقِيًّا ليومٍ صبوحنَا إذ غيبتُ عَنِّي الشوامتُ
يومٌ كأنَّ سماءَهُ حُجِبَتْ بأجنحةِ الفواختِ²²⁴

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;²²⁵ hunting dogs are light and speedy like butterflies,²²⁶ and finally, in a less flattering image, al-Nuwayrî is described as being as low as flies in human excrement.²²⁷

²²³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 562.

²²⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 62.

²²⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 227.

²²⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 350.

²²⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 665.

4- Culture.

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'ān. 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.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:

وعابدو لكن تُصلي على القفا وتدعو برجليها إذا الليلُ أظلما²²⁹

²²⁸ As in the following examples:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 328,

Dīwān, v. II, p. 624.

²²⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 719.

حورٌ ترقعُ أجفاناً مفترةً ما لآعبَ النومُ منها فهو مقمورٌ

كأنَّ أرواحَ أهلِ العشيِّ سائرةً إلى جمالكَ بالتقريبِ والعنقِ
تؤمُّ كعبةً حسنٍ، خالها حجرٌ في الخدي أسودٌ في أبيضٍ يققِ

Nature is also introduced in a religious context: a spring fragrance is as the fragrance of paradise and farms are samples of paradise too.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 *Dīwān*. Talebearing somebody is compared to eating his flesh, righteousness is a way and white hair is a fair.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, (*'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 'arad' (substance):

كأنّ الراج حين تمزجها نجوم رجم تعلو وتنخفض
فلو رآها النظام في قدح ما شك في أنّ جسمها عرض²³²

²³⁰ As in the following examples:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 256, نَشْرُ هَذَا الرَّبِيعِ نَشْرُ جَنَّاتِ وَأَوَانُ هَذَا الرَّبِيعِ خَيْرُ أَوَانِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 251. يَا صَاحِبَ إِنِّ غَبْتُ يَا كَلْتَنِي وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَنِي فِي النَّدِيِّ سَجْدُ

²³¹ As in the followings:

Dīwān, v. II, p. 310, لَوْ عَلَى الْأَظْلَمِ مَنَّا سَخَطُ السُّلْطَانِ وَالْأَنْكَبِ عَنِ سَبْرِ الرَّشَادِ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 301, وَأَصْبَحَنَ لَمَّا أَشْعَلَ الشَّيْبُ مَفْرَقِي يَقْرِينَ أَطْمَاعِي وَيَشْحَطَنَ بِالوَدِّ

Dīwān, v. II, p. 314. وَأَصْبَحَنَ لَمَّا أَشْعَلَ الشَّيْبُ مَفْرَقِي يَقْرِينَ أَطْمَاعِي وَيَشْحَطَنَ بِالوَدِّ

²³² *Dīwān*, 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:

أَسْمَعُ قَوْلًا وَلَا أَرَى أَحَدًا مِنْ ذَا الشَّقِيِّ الَّذِي أَبَاحَ دَمَهُ²³³

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

يَا لِقَوْمِي لِخِيَالٍ زَارَنِي يَسْتَعِيدُ الْحَبَّ مِنْي فَرَجَعُ
سَاعَةً جَاءَ كَلَا شَيْءَ وَمَا هَابَ مِنْ هَوْلِ الْغِيَا فِي مَا قَطَعُ²³⁴

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:

صَفَّتْ وَصَفَّتْ زَجَاجَتُهَا عَلَيْهَا كَمَعْنَى دَقِّ فِي ذَهْنٍ لَطِيفٍ²³⁵

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

هَآءَ خَذَهَا مِنْي وَمِنْكَ فَهَا صَفَقَ مَشْمُولَةٍ كَطَعَمِ الْحَيَاةِ²³⁶

²³³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 722.

²³⁴ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 59.

²³⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 180.

²³⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 63.

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:

ومنسرٍ عَضِبِ الشَّيْأَةَ دَامِيٍّ كَعَقْدِكَ الْخَمْسِينَ بِالْأَيْهَامِ
وَمَنْسِرٍ عَضِبِ الشَّيْأَةَ دَامِيٍّ كَعَقْدِكَ الْخَمْسِينَ بِالْأَيْهَامِ

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 *ṭabṭab*:

مَا قَرَّ لِي فِي لَيْلَتِي مَضْجَعٌ كَأَنَّي فِي كَفِّ طَبْطَابٍ²³⁸

and the walls of Sāmīrrā', 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

²³⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 476.

²³⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 498.

²³⁹

Dīwān, v. II, p. 517.

ونسلكُ في شوارعِ خالياتٍ أحلَّ اللهُ فيهنَّ الشَّتاتَا
وحيطانٍ كشيطنٍجِ صفوفٍ فما تنقكُ نضربُ شاهَ ماتَا

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:

وساقٍ مليحٍ مكرهٍ قد بطحتهُ لتدخلَ لامُ البطنِ في ميمةِ الظهرِ²⁴⁰

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'ān.²⁴¹

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

²⁴⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 664.

²⁴¹ The poet says:

كأئما خيلائهُ بانعةُ الروضِ الأنفُ
أو لا فكالأخماسِ والأعشارِ في متنِ الصحفِ

Dīwān, v. II, pp. 615-6.

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

وقد صغتِ الجوزاءُ حتى كأنّها وراءَ نجومِ هاوياتٍ وغورٍ
صنوحٌ على رقاصَةٍ قد تمايلتُ لتلهي شرباً بينَ دَفٍ ومَزهَرٍ²⁴²

²⁴² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 452-3.

5- Conclusion.

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 *hissi* 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 *Hissî* Aspect of Poetic Imagery.

CHAPTER SIX: Fragmentation in Poetic Imagery.

CHAPTER FIVE: The *Ĥissī* Side of Poetic Imagery.

1- Previous Studies on The Nature of Poetic Imagery.

In previous chapters, it has been noted that there is a *ĥissī* 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.

Shawqî 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 (*madhāhib*) of Arabic poetry, based on various distinctive historical and poetic elements. These trends are given similar terms, *ṣan'a*, *taṣannū'*, and *taṣnī'*, 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

Ṣan'a is identified by Ğayf as the first *madhhab* 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 Ğayf, the term *ṣan'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 *ṣan'a* in pre-Islamic poetry:

"... بل هم يعتمدون على فن آخر لعله أكثر تعقيدا وهو " فن التصوير"
... ومن يرجع إلى نماذج امرئ القيس وهو من أقدم الشعراء الجاهليين
يلاحظ أنه يعنى بالتصوير في شعره كأن " التصوير" غاية في نفسه ،
فالأفكار تتلاحق في صنوف من التشبيهات ، حتى تستتم هذا الفن من
" التصوير " وكأنما القصائد برود يمانية ، ففيها ألوان ونقوش ورسوم على
صور وأشكال كثيرة"²

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

¹ Ğayf, Sh, *Al-Fann wa Madhahibuh fi al-Shi'r al-'Arabī*, (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."

Ďayf 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 *ṣan'a* style developed and reached its peak (Ďayf calls it *ta'qîd al-ṣan'a* 'complexity of mannerism') and a new style that he calls *taṣnî'* appeared.⁴ Development in the *ṣan'a* style can be seen, according to Ďayf, in innovations in meaning, style, and the feelings expressed. He states that:

"... فقد ارتقى الشعراء بها [صنعة الشعر] من وجوه كثيرة، من حيث المعاني، وما أثاروا من غرائبها ، ومن حيث الأحاسيس وما بعثوا من طرائفها ، ومن حيث الصياغات وما نسقوا من زائدها. وسنرى بعد قليل

³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

أن ضروب إحسانهم لذلك كله انتهت بهم إلى مذهب جديد هو مذهب التصنيع ، ولكن هذا المذهب لم يظهر توّاً ، بل أخذ يُعدّ له جيلان ، جيل بشار ، وجيل أبي نواس وأبي العتاهية ...⁵

" ... 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-'Atahiya's ..."

The works of al-Buḥturî and Ibn al-Rûmî are representative of the complexity of *ṣan'a*. The domain in which al-Buḥturî shows his skills is descriptive poetry, especially in his description of castles, swimming pools and wild animals.⁶ Ibn al-Rûmî 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.⁷

The second trend, *taṣnī'*, 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

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

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

"وأخذ هذا التصنيع يتسرب من حياة الشعراء العامة إلى حياتهم الفنية الخاصة ، وهي حالة طبيعية توجد دائماً في الصنائع حين يعمّ الترف ... وليس الشعر وحده الذي أخذ يسود فيه هذا التصنيع فقد كان يشيع في فن العمارة وبناء المساجد والقصور ، كما كان يشيع في التصوير الذي كان يستخدم زينة وزخرفاً للكتب والقصص ، فلا عجب أن ينتقل إلي الشعراء ، وأن ينمو مع الزمن حتى تصبح القصيدة كأنها واجهة لمسجد مزخرف بديع ، قد تألق في وشي مرصع كثير."⁹

"*taṣnī'* 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 *taṣnī'*, 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-Walīd is said to be the pioneer of this trend,¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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.¹² 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.¹³ On the other hand, Ibn al-Mu'tazz was the pre-eminent creator of the sensuous type of *taṣnīʿ* poetry, with special reference to *jinās* (paronomasia), *ṭibāq* (antithesis) and *taṣwīr* (simile). Ḍayf 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.¹⁴ He praises the poet's techniques in adding a number of features such as movement, colour and shape to each simile.¹⁵

The third trend that is recognised by Ḍayf is *taṣannuʿ*. He describes it as 'extreme and affected' (*taṭarruf wa takalluf*)¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ Ḍayf 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 *luzūmiyyāt* of al-Ma'arī).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.

¹⁹ Abu-Deeb, K, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*, (Warminster: 1979), p. 104.

creation."²⁰

In a wider context, Read²¹ 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'.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 *ḥissī* (sensory) and *dhihnī* (intellectual).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²¹ Read, H, *The Philosophy of Modern Art*, (London: 1951), see Chapter One: The Modern Epoch in Art, pp. 17-45.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

2- *Ĥissî* and *Dhihnî*: 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: *ĥissî* (sensory) and *dhihnî* (intellectual). These two types of imagery can be differentiated in terms of the point of similarity and the two entities involved. Al-Jurjānî explains the difference in the following, in which he describes first the *ĥissî* image and second the *dhihnî* 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'awwul*), the second is where the similitude can be realised and revealed only by analysis and interpretation.”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, *dhihnî*. The English equivalent term for the Arabic term *ĥissî* is 'sensuousness' or 'sensibility', however this term needs some further classification. The term 'sensibility' first 'became prominent as a literary term in the mid 18th c.²⁴ to refer to susceptibility, emotional impressions, esp. to tender feelings, a popular quality in the age of Sterne, Goldsmith, and

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

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'.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 'sensitivity' 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 usages²⁶ 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".)'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."²⁸

²⁵ L. Lerner "Sensitivity," in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Ed. A. Preminger and T. Brogan, (New Jersey: 1993), p. 1143.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1144.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

To avoid the ambiguity associated with the English terms 'sensuousness' or 'sensitivity',²⁹ 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- *Ĥissī* 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'.³⁰

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 non-sensuous 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-Qarṭājānī who focuses in his definition of poetry on its affect on the psyche of the recipient. See al-Qarṭājānī, Ḥ, *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-Ṣūra al-Fanniyya fī al-Turāth al-Naqdī wa'l-Balāghī '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 *Hissi* Image.

Al-Jurjānī applies further sub-divisions to his classification of the *hissi* image, basing his divisions on different factors, such as the point of similarity (i.e. where it is revealed from the adjective/*sifa* 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.

Type	1 st entity	2 nd entity	Point of similarity
Pure <i>hissî</i>	S	S	S
Less pure 1	S	S	I
Less pure 2	I	S	I
Less pure 3	S	I	I

Table (3) Divisions of *Hissî* Images: (S) Refers to *hissî* and (I) Refers to *dhihnî*.

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 *hissî* image classified by al-Jurjānî is:

وأنتَ أنزرُ منْ لا شئَ في العددِ³³

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 *dhihnî* image rather than *hissî* 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- *Dhihnî* Images.

The *dhihnî* or '*aqlî* (intellectual) image³⁴ is found in every image in which at least one aspect, along with the point of similarity, is *dhihnî* 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-Jurjānî's classification of poetic imagery will be modified in this study, and his last two *hissî* image types (less pure 3 and 4) will be considered as simple forms of the *dhihnî* image. The complex form can be seen in the form of simile known as *tamthîl*,

³³ Translated by Ritter at Al-Jurjānî, 'A, *Asrâr al-Balâgha*, Ed. By H. Ritter, 5th ed. (Istanbul: 1954), p. 69.

³⁴ Hereafter, use will be made of the term *dhihnî* image, as the opposite of a *hissî* image. The word '*aqlî*' is usually used in a wider context to refer to the influence of Aristotle's logic upon the style of 'Abbasid poetry.

which will be discussed later.³⁵

Abu-Deeb explains *dhihnî* 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" (*tubṭal*) completely ..."³⁶

To elucidate further, an example of *dhihnî* imagery can be found in the following verse of the Qur'ān:

"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."³⁷

³⁵ The *tamthil* image is defined and discussed in section 2.3 later in this chapter.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

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

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

of the *hiss'* image type could be said to be more related to the *'aql'* image type. It seems that the only reason to consider them of *hiss'* 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'an. 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, *tamthil*, which can be defined as a 'simile based on a set of sentences; conceit; complex, non-physical simile',³⁹ 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 *tamthil* is different from that of metaphor and simple simile. The relationships between the involved items are different: metaphor and simile depend on interaction, while *tamthil* depends on fusion. To illustrate this rather theoretical concept, two examples will be given. In the example quoted earlier of:

وَأَنْتَ أَنْزَرُ مَنْ لَا شَيْءَ فِي الْعَدَدِ

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

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 *tamthîl* quoted earlier consists of several elements and several relationships working in different directions, as can be summarised in the following table:

Entity	Elements		Type of relationship
1 st entity	Jews	Torah	Opposite
2 nd entity	Donkey	Books	Opposite
<i>Tamthîl</i>	1 st entity	2 nd entity	Similar

Table (4) elements and relations in *tamthîl*.

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 '*aqîl*' type of imagery works in two ways: interaction for metaphor and simile and fusion for *tamthîl*. 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 *Ĥissî* Image.

The *ĥissî* type of imagery has received considerable attention from medieval Arab philosophers, critics and interpreters of the Qur'ān⁴⁰ 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-Rummānî notes that the style of the Qur'ān is to compare things or notions with things that can be apprehended by the senses.⁴¹ Other scholars like Abû Hilāl al-'Askarî are of the same opinion, but emphasise particularly the importance of the sense of sight.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:

"وارتباط المحسوسات بالتوضيح مبحث ازدهر أساسا في الأوساط
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

⁴⁰ For more information, see Asfour, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-312 and Mu'minî, Q, *Naqd al-Shi'r fi'l-Qarn al-Rabi' al-Hijri*, (Riyadh: 1982), pp. 359-61.

⁴¹ See al-Rummānî, *Thalāth Rasa'il fi I'jaz al-Qur'ān*, Ed. by M. Khalaf Allāh and M. Sallām (Cairo:n.d.), p. 84.

⁴² See Abû Hilāl al-'Askarî, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'tayn*, Ed. M. Abû al-Fadhî and A. al-Bajāwî (Cairo: 1952), p. 274.

لأرسطو في النصف الثاني من القرن الثالث على أقل تقدير.⁴³

"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:

"والسبب في ذلك [طلب المثال المحسوس] أنسنا بالحواس ، والفنا لها منذ أول كوننا ولأنها مبادئ علومنا ، ومنها نرتقي. فإذا أخبر الإنسان بما لم يدركه ، أو حدّث بما لم يشاهد، وكان غريبا عنده، طلب له مثلا من الحس، فإذا أعطي ذلك أنس به. وقد يعرض في المحسوسات أيضا هذا العارض، أعني أن إنسانا لو حدّث عن النعامة والزرافة ، والفيل ، والتمساح، لطلب أن يصور له ليقع بصره عليه ويحصل تحت حسّه لعينه. وهكذا الأمر في الموهومات فان الإنسان لو كلف أن يتوهم حيوانا لم يشاهد مثله لسأل عن مثله، وكلف من يخبره أن يصوره له، مثل عنقاء مغرب، فان هذا الحيوان، وإن لم يكن موجودا، فلا بدّ لمتوهمه من أن

⁴³ Asfour, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

يتوهمه بصورة مركبة من حيوانات قد شاهدها. فأما المعقولات فلما كانت صورها ألطف من أن تقع تحت الحس، وأبعد من أن تمثل بمثال الحس – إلا على جهة التقريب- صارت أخرى أن تكون غريبة غير مألوفة. والنفس تسكن إلى مثل وإن لم يكن مثلاً ...⁴⁴

"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

⁴⁴ Al-Tawhīdī, A and Miskawayh, *Al-Hawāmil wa'l-Shawāmil*, Ed. by A. Amīn and S. Şaqr, (Cairo: 1951), pp. 240-1.

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-Jurjānî and al-Qarṭājānî. 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.⁴⁵ Al-Jurjānî 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.⁴⁶ Al-Qarṭājānî, 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.⁴⁷

2-5- The Imagery of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Abû Tammām.

It can be argued that Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Abû Tammām are good representatives of the development of Arabic poetry in the 'Abbasid era, in terms of the formation of poetic imagery. As mentioned previously, the first may be considered as the pioneer of the *ḥissî* image while the second is the pioneer of the *dihni* image. This chapter is devoted to the classification of the *ḥissî* side of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's imagery, however before addressing this, the *dihni* imagery of Abû Tammām will also be discussed.

⁴⁵ Al-Jurjānî, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-2.

⁴⁶ Al-Jurjānî, 'A, *Dalā'il Al-I'jaz*, Ed. M. Ridhā, (Cairo: 1961), p. 317.

⁴⁷ Al-Qarṭājānî, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-9.

Abû 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-Āmidî, for example, criticises some of Abû Tammām's metaphors, describing them as 'ugly'.⁴⁸ In his view, they do not reflect the Arabic style, which he explains in the following manner:

"وإنما استعارت العرب المعنى لما ليس له إذا كان يقاربه أو يدانيه، أو يشبهه في بعض أحواله، أو كان سبباً من أسبابه ... " ⁴⁹

"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 Abû Tammām's images are not inherently 'strange' or 'weak', although they were ground-breaking and different at the time. Abû 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

⁴⁸ Al-Āmidî, al-Ĥî, *Al-Muwāzana Bayna Abî Tammām Ḥabîb Ibn Aws al-Jā'ī wa Abî 'Ubada al-Walîd Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Buḥturî*, Ed. by M. 'Abd Al- Ḥamîd, 2nd Ed.(Cairo: 1954), p. 208.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 213.

reason for finding them 'strange' lies in the abstract, 'aqli' nature of his use of the two parts of poetic imagery and the nature of the similitude.

Abû Tammām's personification of epoch is widespread in his poetry and deserves special mention, as it exemplifies the shift towards the *dhihnî* 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:

يا دهرُ قومٍ منْ أَدَعَيْكَ فَقَدْ أَضَجَجْتَ هَذَا الْأَنَامَ مِنْ خَرَقِكَ⁵⁰

In another example, time is knocked down by day and night's problems:

تَرُوحُ عَلَيْنَا كُلَّ يَوْمٍ وَتَعْتَدِي خُطُوبٌ كَأَنَّ الدَّهْرَ مِنْهُنَّ يُصْرَعُ⁵¹

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. Abû 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:

جَذِبَتْ نَدَاهُ غَدَوَةَ السَّبْتِ جَذَبَةً فَخَرَّ صَرِيحاً بَيْنَ أَيْدِي الْقَصَائِدِ⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

The following diagram clarifies the nature of the two parts of of this image as well as the point of similarity:

No	1 st entity	2 nd entity	Point of similarity
1	Time (I)	Man (S)	Arrogance (I)
2	Time (I)	Man (S)	Weak (I)
3	Generosity (I)	Man (S)	Defeated (I)

Table (5) Examples of *Dhihnî* Images in Abû Tammâm's Poetry. (S) Refers to *hîssî* and (I) Refers to *dhihnî*.

The table shows that there are at least two *dhihnî* 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 *hîssî* type, since it reflects both man's physical and mental attributes.

This discussion of Abû Tammâm's imagery should not be closed without reference to the findings of al-Rabbā'î's study of his poetic imagery, *Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fi Shi'r Abî Tammâm*.⁵³ One of his conclusions in particular may need to be revised as in light of the recognition of Abû Tammâm's role as the pioneer of the *dhihnî* type of poetic imagery in the 'Abbasid era. Al-Rabbā'î divides the images used by Abû Tammâm into two types: *hîssî* and *'aqlî*, and then sub-divides the second type (*'aqlî*) into three further sub-types: model,

⁵³ Al-Rabbā'î, A, *Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fi Shi'r Abî Tammâm*, (Irbid: 1980).

abstract and verbal.⁵⁴ Regarding the second sub-section (abstract), he makes the following comment:

"وعلى أية حال فإن الصور التي بلغ عددها (108) مئة وثمانين صور محدودة نسبيا في شعره الذي زادت فيه الصور عن ستة آلاف كما رأينا في الباب السابق. ولهذا فإن النسبة الضئيلة التي تشكلها لا تؤثر كثيرا في اتجاهه العام في الصورة ، ذلك الاتجاه الذي رأيناه ينزع فيه دائما إلى تمثيل الموضوعات الحسية."⁵⁵

"In any case, the these images, which number 108, have a limited presence in his poetry in comparison with [his *ḥissī* 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-Rabbā'ī reaches his conclusion by comparing the total number of *ḥissī* images to those of *'aqlī* 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 *ḥissī* 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 *Dīwān* 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.

3- *Dhihnî* Images in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Examples of *dhihnî* images in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān* are few in number (approximately 40) and demonstrate less innovation than the *ḥissî* type. Most of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *dhihnî* 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:

هَنَّكَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ خِلَافَةً أَتَتَكَ عَلَى طَيْرِ السَّعَادَةِ وَالْيَمْنِ⁵⁶

while a bird's wings are used in reference to 'wings of peace', as in the following image:

وَلَمَّا أَقَرَّتْ فِي يَدَيْكَ عِنَانَهَا تَشَرَّتْ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا جَنَاحًا مِنَ الْأَمْنِ⁵⁷

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:

ثُمَّ هُمْ كَالثُّوبِ أَعْيَا تَارِكًا لَوْ رَأَى فِيهِ مَصْحًا لَرَفَعُ

⁵⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 603.

⁵⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 603.

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:

ورأيتُ الناسَ ثوباً بعدكمُ خَلِيقاً ما فيه لي من مَرَقَعٍ

4- *Ĥissī* Images in The Poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz.

4-1- The Presence of Different Senses.

Most of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *ĥissī* 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:

فَتَخَالِهِنَّ كَرُوضَةٍ مِنْ لُجِيِّ وَكَأَنَّمَا يَصْفِرْنَ مِنْ قَصَبَاتٍ⁵⁹

مِنْ كُلِّ صَدَّاحِ الْعَشِيِّ صَفَّارٌ كَأَنَّهُ مُرْجَعٌ فِي مِزْمَارٍ⁶⁰

The voice of one bird is also compared to a certain style of singing. Al-Qumrī, one of the poet's favourite singing birds, gives *tadrīb* (enrapturement):

⁵⁸ See Ibn al-Mu'tazz's biography in Al-Aṣḥānī, A, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, (Cairo: 1938), v. 10, pp. 274-86.

⁵⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 59.

⁶⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 439.

هل لكما قبل ابتسام الفجر. وقبل تطريب غناء القمري⁶¹

On the other hand, the voice of a female singer is like the voice of al-Qumrî:

وقمريّة الأصوات حمراً ثيابها تهين ثياب الوشي جرّاً وتسحابا⁶²

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:

مزّقتها عزف شمال يغري رشفت فيها ريقه كالخمر⁶³

and the sound of rain falling on small stones is like the combined sounds of singing and dancing:

فألقي على الدير أثقاله ودجلة فالقائم المفرد
بويل يرقص شؤبوئه يقال حصى الصفصفر الأجرد⁶⁴

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:

⁶¹ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 145.

⁶² *Diwān*, v. I, p. 31.

⁶³ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 141.

⁶⁴ *Diwān*, v. II, pp. 562-3.

كَأَنِّي وَرَحَلِي فَوْقَ أَحْقَبَ قَارِحٍ يُسَوِّقُ قَبَّ سَيْرُهُنَّ ذَلِيقٌ⁶⁵

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:

أَتَتْ كُلَّ مُشْتَاقٍ بَرِّيًّا حَبِيبِهِ فَهَاجَتْ لَهُ الْأَحْزَانُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَدْرِي⁶⁶

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:

يَا طَيْبَ رَبِّكَ حِينَ يَبْتَسِمُ الْفَ جَرُّ وَفِيهَا لِلرُّوضِ أَخْبَارُ
كَأَنَّمَا مَسَّتِ الْقَرْنَفَلَ أَوْ ذَرَّ عَلَيْهَا الْكَافُورَ عَطَارُ⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II p. 370.

⁶⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 601.

⁶⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, pp. 118-9.

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 نحنُ جيرةٌ تُسافرُ فيما بيننا الكُتُبُ والرُّسُلُ
بسرِّ أحاديثٍ عذابٍ لو أنّها جنى الشُّهدِ لم يلفِظْ حلاوتهُ النحلُ⁶⁸

4-1-1- Types of Visual Images.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz, as previously stated, is the master of the *hissi* image. His poetry provides a large number of images that concentrate on different shapes and external attributes, and thus the sense of sight. These will now be divided into particular groups, with reference to al-Jurjānī's insightful comments about classification. Two points in particular are of interest in this context. The first relates to the style in which a poetic image is formulated, and the second relates to technique. These points are related to countenance⁶⁹ (*hay'a*) and particularisation (*tafsīl*).

Before applying al-Jurjānī's methodology to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān*, some aspects of his approach must first be discussed. In general, there are two types of countenance: the first is static and the second is dynamic. Al-Jurjānī indicates that the second type can be seen in two forms: dynamic countenance accompanied by other attributes, such as colour, and merely dynamic. He states:

⁶⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 384.

⁶⁹ As Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 85, translates this word.

"إعلم أن مما يزداد به التشبيه دقة وسحراً ان يجيء في الهيئات التي تقع عليها الحركات. والهيئة المقصودة في التشبيه على وجهين (أحدهما) أن تقترن بغيرها من الأوصاف كالشكل واللون ونحوهما، و(الثاني) أن تجرد هيئة الحركة حتى لا يراد غيرها ...⁷⁰"

"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:

والشَّمْسُ كالمِرْآةِ فِي كَفِّ الأَشْتَلِ⁷¹

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."

يقصُّ السفينُ بجانبَيْه كما ينزو الّرباحُ خلا له كَرَعٌ⁷²

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:

كأنّ في عُدرانيها حواجباً ظلّت تُمَطُّ⁷³

Al-Jurjānī provides some other insightful observations. He notices that the static *hay'a* can itself be in different forms, for example, the position of a man sleeping or sitting up.⁷⁴ 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:⁷⁵

"وأما هيئة الحركة مجردة 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 قدام ونحو ذلك، وكلما كان التفاوت في الجهات التي تتحرك أبعاض الجسم إليها أشدّ كان التركيب في هيئة المتحرك أكثر، فحركة الرجا والدولاب

⁷² *Ibid*, 167. He gives the following definitions: '*Al-Rabāh* is the young camel or the monkey and *al-kar'u* is the rain' (167).

⁷³ *Ibid*, 166. Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 118 provides the following translation: "As if there were, in its springs, eyebrows which kept on lifting [or stretching]."

⁷⁴ Al-Jurjānī, *Asrār*, p. 167.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

وحركة السهم لا تركيب فيها لان الجهة واحدة ...⁷⁶

"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 al-Jûrjânî'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.⁷⁸ 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."⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰ 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'.⁸¹

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

⁷⁸ See Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 110-7.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 112-3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 114-5.

⁸¹ *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'.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.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."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:

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 112.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 150. Abu-Deeb, *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"

⁸⁴ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 113.

كَأَنَّا وَضوءُ الصُّبْحِ يَسْتَعْجِلُ الدُّجَى نَطِيرُ غُرَابًا ذَا قَوَادِمَ جُونٍ⁸⁵

The particularisation and beauty of this line are described by al-Jûrjânî in the following terms:

"شبهه [ابن المعتز] الليل حين يظهر فيه الصبح بأشخاص الغربان ، ثم شرط ان تكون قوادم ريشها بيضاءً لان تلك الفرق من الظلمة تقع في حواشيتها من حيث تلي معظم الصبح وعموده لمع نور يتخيّل منها في العين كشكل قوادم اذا كانت بيضاء ، وتمام التدقيق والسحر في هذا التشبيه في شيء آخر وهو ان جعل ضوء الصبح لقوة ظهوره ودفعه لظلام الليل كأنه يحفز الدجى ويستعجلها ولا يرضى منها بأن تتمهل في حركتها."⁸⁶

"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-Jurjānī'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."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 *Dīwān*. 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:

أَعْمَلْتُهَا وَالْبَدْرُ مُؤْتَنَفٌ حَتَّى انْكَفَا كَقَلَامَةِ الطُّفْرِ⁸⁸

or the comparison of the crescent moon and Pleiades to a half ring and a

⁸⁷ Abu-Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, p. 117.

⁸⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 592.

hand pointing to that ring:

وَكأنَّ الهَلالَ نَصْفُ سوارِ
والثُّرَيَّا كَفَّ تُشِيرُ إِلَيْهِ⁸⁹

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:

وَلَحِيانِ كَاللَّوْحَيْنِ رُكَّبَ فِيهِمَا
مَساميرُ أَقيانٍ لهنَّ غُرُوبٌ⁹⁰

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:

يا رَبِّ بَيْتٍ زُرْتُهُ فَكأنَّما
قَدْ ضَمَّنِي مِنْ ضَيْقِهِ سِجْنُ

⁸⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 655.

⁹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 54.

لم يُحْسِنُ الرُّمَانُ يَجْمَعُ حَبَّهُ في قَشْرِهِ الْآ كَمَا نَحْنُ⁹¹

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, *tal'a*, peeping out between the fronds, or a cluster of grapes between the tendrils of the vine:

ولها عُرَّةٌ وَنَاصِيَةٌ تَنْشَأُ قُ عَنْهَا كَطَلْعَةِ بَيْنَ خُوصٍ⁹²

إذا ما بدا أبصرت عُرَّةَ وَجْهِهِ كعَنْقُودِ كَرْمٍ بَيْنَ غُصْنَيْنِ نَوْرًا⁹³

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.

⁹² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 453.

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:

وَالْخَيْلُ شُعْتُ وَأَبطالٌ كَأَنَّهُمْ صَلُّعٌ إِذَا غَشِيمُوا فِي الْبَيْضِ وَالزَّرْدِ⁹⁵

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:

وَأُخْرَمٌ كَهَامَةِ الطَّائُوسِ⁹⁶

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:

وَ قَدْ لاحتُ لَسارِيبِها التُّرَيَّا كَأَنَّ نِجومَها نَوْرُ الأَفاقِ⁹⁷

while another image specifies that these stars appearing at the end of the night resemble flowers in bloom, or a silver bridle:

كَأَنَّ التُّرَيَّا فِي أواخرِ ليلِها تَفْتَحُ نَوْرَ أَوْ لِجامٍ مُفَضِّضٍ⁹⁸

The habitat of bird's is another source of round images. Alongside the

⁹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 153.

⁹⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 540.

⁹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 72.

⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 168.

traditional image in which tent pegs are compared to pigeons,⁹⁹ 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:

تُخَلِّفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الْأَرْضِ رَسْمًا كَأَفْحُوصِ الْقَطَا أَوْ كَالأَدَاخِي¹⁰⁰

and the Pleiades are like the eggs themselves:

وترى الثُّرَيَّا فِي السَّمَاءِ كَأَنَّهَا بِيضَاتُ أَدْحِيٍّ يَلْحَنَ بِقَدْقَدِ¹⁰¹

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:

يحكي زواريقها في ذهايها والجيّه
عقارباً شائلاتٍ أذناؤها مخشيّه¹⁰²

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:

لملمم بادكاره موبوع
وأثاف كالحمام الوقوع

لم يدع فيها اليلى باقية
غير نوي ورماد دارس

Dīwān, v. III, pp. 62-3.

¹⁰⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 87.

¹⁰² *Dīwān*, v. II, pp. 260-1.

فأبصرَ لَمَّا كَادَ يَأْمَنُ قَلْبُهُ سلوْقِيَّةٌ شَوْسًا تَجَادِبُ كِلَابًا
وأطلقَ أشْبَاحًا يُخَلِّنَ عَقَارِبَا إذا رَفَعْتَ عِنْدَ الحَفِيظَةِ أذْنَابَا¹⁰³

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:

لدى تَرَجَسٍ غَضٌّ وَسُرورٍ كَانَهُ قدودُ جَوَارٍ مِلْنِ فِي أَرْزٍ خُضْرٍ¹⁰⁴

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 *dastabandā*.¹⁰⁵

ودنانٍ كَمِثْلِ صَفِّ رِجَالٍ قد أقيموا ليرقصوا دَسْتَبَنْدَا¹⁰⁶

In the second group, hunting dogs seen from a distance are like a leather belt:

غَدَوْتُ لِلصَيْدِ بَعْضُفٍ كَالْقِدْدِ والليلُ قَدْ رَقَّ عَلَيَّ وَجْهِ البَلْدِ¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 32.

¹⁰⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 130.

¹⁰⁵ *Dastabandā* is a type of dance, see Faruqi, L, *An Annotated Glossary of Arabic Musical Terms*, (London:1981), p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 93.

¹⁰⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 433.

and, in another poem, a snake is also compared to a belt of leather:

قَاحِلٌ كَالْقِدِّ لَوْ قَطَّعَهُ غَرَبُ سَيْفٍ لَمْ يَجِدْ فِيهِ بَلَلٌ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 81.

5- Dynamic Images.

Movement is an essential feature in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's style of formulating *hissi* 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:

حتى إذا النجمُ بدا لي كالقَبَسِ قامَ النَّهارُ في ظلامٍ قد جَلَسَ¹⁰⁹

doing *sujûd* or *rukû'* is the counterpart in the following light-hearted image of falling walls:

فكمُ كم جدارٍ لنا مائلٍ وآخرُ يسجدُ أو يركعُ¹¹⁰

the river Euphrates flows in one direction like a snake:

بَعَجَ الفراتُ لها فسلسلَ جدولاً متسرِباً في كرمِها كالأرقمِ¹¹¹

and likewise the flow of wine echoes the mark of a leather belt on the body of a camel:

¹⁰⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 448.

¹¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 611.

¹¹¹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 85.

وكان آثار الشُّوعِ بدفِّها مسرى الأساودِ في هيامِ أهيل¹¹²

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:

يَحْكُ الغُصُونَ المورقاتِ بروقيهِ كخصفِكِ بالإشفي نعالاً مخصراً¹¹³

or that between the heavy fall of an eagle's claws and the action of a pick shattering a stone:

إن يدفقِ الصخرَ بهشمه بحافيرهِ كأنه من علاةِ القينِ منقور¹¹⁴

likewise, arrows piercing a hunted animal are like nails driven into a piece of wood:

يَنفَذَهُنَّ بَخَطِييِنٍ قَد مَرْنَا نأ كما تنفذُ اللوحَ المساميرُ

Rapid movement is also mentioned in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry and the human

¹¹² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 163.

¹¹³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 109.

¹¹⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 328.

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:

وله أربعٌ تراهُ إذا همَّ لَجَّ تحكي أناملَ الحَسَّابِ¹¹⁵

In hunting poetry, hunting animals such as dogs and cheetahs are compared to a strong wind:

عَوَاصِفُ منتهياتٍ للأمدِ ما يَسْتَزِدُّهَا الشَّوْطُ مِنْ عَدُوِّ تَزْدُ¹¹⁶

وإنَّ أُطْلِقَتْ مِنْ قِلَادَاتِهَا وَطَارَ العُغَابُ وَجَدَّ الطَّلِبُ
فَزَوْبَعَةٌ مِنْ بَنَاتِ الرِّبَا حِ تَرَكُّ عَلَى الأَرْضِ شَدًّا عَجَبٌ¹¹⁷

The fast movements of a female gazelle when standing up on its legs is like that of hands collecting shells:

وإذا ما هبَّ مِنْ رَقْدَةٍ خائفاً مِنْ شَبْحِ مائِلِ
رَقَعَتْ أَظْلَافُهُ أَرْبَعٌ لَقَطُ أَيِّهِ صَدَفَ السَّاحِلِ¹¹⁸

In addition, birds and pebbles are compared to different objects performing various actions. For example, scissors trimming grey hair are compared to the

¹¹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 125.

¹¹⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 434.

¹¹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 404.

¹¹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 71.

beaks of crows picking at ears of wheat:

أَلَسْتَ تَرَى شَيْبًا بِرَأْسِي شَامِلًا وَنْتُ حَيْلَتِي فِيهِ وَضَاقَ بِهِ ذُرْعِي
كَأَنَّ الْمَقَارِيضَ الَّتِي يَعْتَوِرُنَّهٗ مَنَاقِيرُ غُرْبَانٍ عَلَى سَنَبِلِ الزَّرْعِ¹¹⁹

The last example in this category is one in which the pebbles under horses' feet are compared to bees or locusts:

وَتَخَالُ الْحَصَى إِذَا مَا عَدَّتْ نَحْلًا أَطِيرَتْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَوْ جَرَادًا¹²⁰

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:

أَرَقْتُ وَأَخْلَتْنِي الْعَاذِلَاتُ لِبَرْقٍ عَنَانِي فَلَمْ أَرْقُدْ
يَطِيرُ وَيَرْتُدُّ مِثْلَ أَنْتَهَا ضَرْبِ بَازِيٍّ تَضَرَّبَ فَوْقَ الْيَدِ¹²¹

alternatively, lightning occurs as quickly as the belly of a snake that turns over suddenly:

إِذَا تَعَرَّى الْبَرْقُ فِيهَا خِلْتَهُ بَطْنُ شُجَاعٍ فِي كَثِيبٍ يَضْطَرِبُ¹²²

¹¹⁹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 182.

¹²⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 144.

¹²¹ *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:¹²³ 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:

تَحْمَلْنِي طِرْقَةً صَادِرَةً وَارِدَةً
تُرْضِيكَ فِي يَوْمِهَا وَهِيَ غَدًا رَائِدَةً
وَرَجْلُهَا تَقْتَضِي وَيَدُهَا جَا حِدَةً¹²⁴

¹²² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 41.

¹²³ See *Dīwān*, v. III, pp. 154-156.

¹²⁴ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 156.

6- Calligraphic Images.

Images derived from calligraphy are numerous in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *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."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."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:

¹²⁵ Hitti, F, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (New York: 1996), p. 423.

¹²⁶ Burckhardt, T, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, (London:1976), p. 47.

" ... 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'ān. 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.*

¹²⁸ See A. Schimmel, "Calligraphy and poetry" in *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, (London: 1990), pp. 115-147.

pictures:

For this reason the master cut its neck".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

" ... as a symbol for the human body, and thus mankind'. The poetry goes as follows:

The form of man [*insān*, human being] holds your name, my trusted one, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. First the initial *mîm*, the head is its sign; the two hands are *he*; the second *mîm* is the feet on which man walks (Allen 1971:87)."¹³⁰

In the `Abbasid era, the widespread use of calligraphy was linked to people's devotion and service to the Qur'ān, a fact which was echoed in the poetry of the time. Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentions the word *muṣḥaf* when referring to the written copy of the Qur'ān, and in describing the movement of the Qur'ān when opened and closed:

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹³⁰ F. Topan, "Projecting Islam: Narrative in Swahili Poetry" in *Journal of African Studies*, v. 14, N. 1, June 2001, p. 117.

ذو جَوْحٍ مِثْلُ الرِّخَامِ المَرْمَارُ أو مَصْحَفٍ مَنَمْنَمٍ ذِي أَسْطَارٍ¹³¹

وَفَرَجَ الخَشْخَاشُ جِيباً وَقَتَّقُ كَأَنَّهُ مَصْحَفٌ بِيضُ الوَرَقِ¹³²

يَلْسَعُنَا بِشَعْرٍ مُجَوِّفٍ يُعَذِّبُ المُهْجَةَ إِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَلِ
وَتَنْقُبُ الجِلْدَ وَرَاءَ المَطْرَفِ يُعَذِّبُ المُهْجَةَ إِنْ لَمْ يَتَلَفِ
أَوْ مِثْلَ رَشِّ العَصْفَرِ المَدْوُوفِ¹³³ حَتَّى تَرَى فِيهِ كَشْكَالَ المَصْحَفِ

فَكَأَنَّ البَرَقَ مَصْحَفٌ قَارٍ فَانطَبَاقاً تَارَةً وَأَنْفِتَاحاً¹³⁴

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:

قفا نيكِ من ذكرى حبيبٍ وعرفانِ ورسمِ عَفَتِ أياته منذُ أزمانِ
أنتُ حِجَجٌ بعدي عليها، فأصبحتُ كخَطِّ زَبُورِ في مَصْحَفِ رَهْبَانِ¹³⁵

¹³¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 438.

¹³² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 541.

¹³³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 614.

¹³⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 418.

Another calligraphic image can be found in the poetry of al-Akhnas b. Shihāb al-Taghlibī, who compares the remaining ruins of the abode of his beloved, the daughter of Ḥaṭṭān b. `Awf, with the title of a book:

ولابنة حطان بن عوفٍ منازلٌ كما رقتشَ العنوانَ في الرقِ كاتبٌ¹³⁶

In his discussion of poetic imagery, al-Jurjanī 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:

تُزجِي أعنَّ كأنَّ إبرةَ روقِهِ قلمٌ أصابَ مِن الدواةِ مداها¹³⁷

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

¹³⁵ See Ḥasan, `A, *Shi'r al-Wuqûf 'alā al-Aṭlāl min al-Jahiliyya ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thālith*, (Damascus: 1968), p. 29. An extensive study of poetry that describes ruins and gives good attention for calligraphy related images is provided.

¹³⁶ Nash'at, `A, *Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī: Uṣūluhu, Nahd'atuhu, Intisharuhu*, (Damascus:1984)p. 331.

¹³⁷ Al-Jurjanī, *Asrār*, p. 141.

drawn from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Dīwān*.¹³⁸

حتى عَفَّتْ آيَاتُهَا فكأنها تَرْقِيشُ ساطرٌ¹³⁹

وعراضٍ جرتُ عليها سوارِي الـ رِيحٌ حتى عُودِرَنَ كالأَسْطَارِ¹⁴⁰

بَدَتْ فِي بِياضِ الآلِ والبُعْدُ دَوْنَهَا كأَسْطَارِ رِقٍ أَمْرَضَ الخَطَّ كاتِبُهُ¹⁴¹

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-Naskhī*, *al-Diwānī* 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. Bahnasī (130) shows the 'new victory' of calligraphy on painting as in the following passage:

"في الفن الحديث، حقق الخط انتصاراً جديداً في عشرين، الأول عند توحيد الحروف مع التشكيل ... والبعد الثاني هو بعد الأصالة. والخط العربي الذي نشأ على مهاد العبقريّة العربيّة التشكيلية، استطاع أن يسعف الفنّان العربي بتقديم لوحة عربيّة ذات خصائص قومية ..."

'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...', Bahnasī, 'A, *Jamaliyyat al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī biwaṣṣfihi Fannan Ibda'iyyan*, in *Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī: fa'liyyāt Ayyām al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī*, (Tunisia: 2001), pp. 111- 136.

¹³⁹ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 45.

¹⁴⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 282.

specific purpose.¹⁴² A related field of development was that of specific writing techniques such as *tashqîq*, *tawrîq*, *mashq*, and *ta'rîq*.¹⁴³ 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 Nuwwās 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:

كَأَنَّ عَيْنِيهِ إِذَا مَا أَتَارَا فَصَّانٍ قَيْضًا مِنْ عَقِيقٍ أَحْمَرَا
فِي هَامَةٍ غَلْبَاءَ تَهْدِي مَيْسِرَا كَعَطْفَةِ الْجِيمِ بَكْفٌ اعْسَرَا¹⁴⁴

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.¹⁴⁵ For example, the following image, from a poem by al-Nābigha, in which the poet compares the ruins that have been affected by the wind blowing over the

¹⁴² Nash'at, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

¹⁴³ Bahnasî, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Jurjānî, *Asrār*; p. 163.

¹⁴⁵ See Abu-Deeb, K, *Al-Ru'ā al-Muqana'a: Naḥwa Manhaj Binyawî fi Dirāsāt al-Shi'r al-Jāhilî*, (Cairo: 1986). pp. 645-60.

desert to a mat ornamented by delicate fingers, particularly caught his attention:

كأن مجرّ الرامساتِ ذيولُها عليها حصيرٌ تمقّتهُ الصّوانع¹⁴⁶

Abu-Deeb sees in this line an opposition between,

"مرور الريح الدارسة التي تمحو الأطلال ، بكل ما في ذلك من أسى وعفاء وجلاء لفاعلية الزمن المدمرة ، بالحصير الجميل المنمق الذي لونه أصابع الصانعين ، بكل ما في ذلك من حس جمالي ومن جلاء لفاعلية الإنسان المبدعة لأشكال البناء ، ومن تضاد بين الطبيعي والثقافي ...¹⁴⁷"

"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

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 646.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 646.

written texts, as is the case in Labîd's *Mu'allaqa*,¹⁴⁸ and the work of Tha'laba b. 'Amr al-'Abdî,¹⁴⁹ and Mu'awiya b. Mālik.¹⁵⁰ 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:

أَكْبَّ عَلَيْهَا كَاتِبٌ بِدَوَاتِهِ يُقِيمُ يَدَيْهِ تَارَةً وَيُخَالِفُ¹⁵¹

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:

"... أن عملية التدمير تعانين من خلال عملية البناء والخلق ، السكونية من خلال الحركة ، والأسى من خلال الغبطة 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 *Ibid.*, p. 647.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 647-9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 649-50.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 647.

¹⁵² *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:

The era	The topic	The image	The nature of similarity
Pre-Islamic	Ruins (-)	Writing (+)	Opposition
Abbasid	Love (+)	Calligraphy (+)	Agreement
	Wine (+)	Calligraphy (+)	Agreement
	Hunt (+)	Calligraphy (+)	Agreement

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-Mutanabbî.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ As in the following line:

إذا كانَ ما تنويهِ فعلاً مضارعاً مضى قبل أن تلقى عليه الجَوازِمُ

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 *dhihnî* style, of which, as mentioned earlier, Abû Tammām 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 *sûffî* meanings. Such *sûffî* qualities in letters have been mentioned by al-Bahnasî, who states:

" ... ثم إن للحرف قيمة قدسية سرية ، نراها واضحة في القرآن الكريم ،
عندما نبتدئ بعض السور بها مثل : (ياء سين ، ونون ، وكاف ها ياء
عين صاد ...) إلخ ... وكثيراً ما نرى في الرقش العربي حروفاً منفصلة
أو مبهمه ، 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 كناية
عن الصدغ ، والصاد هي مقلة الإنسانية ، والهاء هي الهوية الإلهية عند
ابن عربي. والميم كانت تعبيراً عن الضيق. أما الألف فلقد كانت ذات
أهمية خاصة عند العرب لأنها في مقام (أحد) وهي رمز لوحدة الله

See Al-Mutanabbî, A, *Dîwān Abî al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbî, bi-Sharḥ Abî al-Baqā' al-'Ukburî*, Ed. M. Al-Saqā, I. Al-Abyārî and 'A. Shalabî, (Cairo: 1971), v. III, p. 382.

"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 *Yā Sîn*, *Nûn*, *Kāf*, *Hā*, *Yā*, *'Ayn*, *Ṣād*, 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. *Bā* has its own sanctity as it is the first letter in the Koran, *jīm* meant temple, *ṣād* is the eye ball of the man, *hā* is the Godly identity for Ibn 'Arabî and *mîm* was an expression of distress. As for *alif*, it has a special importance as it is the first of the letters that make up one of God's names, '*ahād*' (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 (*āya*) of victory;
the composition of the verse (*āya*) is from dotted letters."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Bahnasî, *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 *hissi* 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:

يَكْتُبُ فِيهَا مَاؤُهَا أَسْطَرًا حُرُوفُهَا مِنْ شَعْرِ الزَّعْفَرَانِ¹⁵⁶

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:

¹⁵⁶ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 254.

واكْتَسَتْ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ حَباً بَيْنَ مَنْثُورٍ وَمَنْتَظِمٍ
وَتَبَدَّتْ فِي أَسْرَتِهَا أَسْطَرّاً مَجْهُولَةَ الْكَلِمِ¹⁵⁷

Similarly, comparing foam to written poetry:

كَتَبَ الْمَزَاجُ عَلَى مَقْدَمِ تَاجِهَا سَطْرِينَ مِثْلَ كِتَابَةِ الشُّعْرَاءِ¹⁵⁸

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 *bāzi* is like indistinct writing in which the dots are not clearly marked:

ذِي جَوْجُوٍّ كَنَمَشِ الرَّخَامِ أَوْ أَسْطَرِّ دَقِيقَةِ الْأَقْلَامِ
خَفِيَّةِ الْأَحْرِفِ وَالْإِعْجَامِ يَنْفُضُ غَيْبَ الْقَفِّ وَالْآكَامِ¹⁵⁹

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:

تَسْتَعْجِلُ الْخَطْوَ إِذَا طَالَ الْمَدَى حَتَّى مَحَا الْإِصْبَاحُ عُنْوَانَ الدُّجَى¹⁶⁰

In another use of this particular image source, night is depicted as

¹⁵⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 231.

¹⁵⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 20.

¹⁵⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 495.

¹⁶⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 492.

disappearing like the [old] title:

رَبِّ غَيْثٍ خَلْفَتُهُ بِصُوحٍ وَدَجَى اللَّيْلِ دَارِسُ الْأَعْنَوانِ¹⁶¹

(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:

وَكأنَّ مِسْحَلَهُ إِذَا مَا رَجَعَتْ نَهْفَاتُهُ دَرَجٌ مِّنَ الْأُدْرَاجِ¹⁶²

while, in another image, the appearance of people drinking coffee is like black inkjars:

أَخِي رُوِّيتَ كَأَسِّ الْخَمْرِ عَنِّي فَلَا خَمْرًا
كَأَنَّ النَّدَامَى حِينَ كَطَّوْ بِشْرِيهِ
تَبَدَّلْتُ مِنْهَا أَسْوَدًا حَالِكًا مَرًّا
مَحَابِرُ وَرَاقِينَ قَدْ مَلَّتْ حَبْرًا¹⁶³

And a hunting dog catching its prey is folding a book to control it:

حَوَى لَوَاقِحَ يَطْوِيهَا الطَّرَادُ لَهُ
بِالْحَائِرِينَ كَمَا تُطْوَى الطَّوَامِيرُ¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 258.

¹⁶² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 295.

¹⁶³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 134.

¹⁶⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 326.

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 مرتسم الكون كانت الدائرة التي استوعبت جميع الأشكال الهندسية الأولى ، المثلث والمربع والمخمس والتي استوعبت بدورها أنماط الخطوط العربية ، فبدأ المثلث إطاراً للثلث والنسخي ، والمربع المائل إطاراً للرقعي ، والدائرة سمة الديواني ، والشكل البيضي طابع خط التعليق".¹⁶⁵

"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 *raq'î*, the circle was the framework for *dîwanî* and the elliptical shape was the

¹⁶⁵ Bahnasî, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

framework for *ta'liq*."

The circle, in particular, plays an important role in the physical form of Arabic letters:

"إن دراسة ميزان الخط التي قدمها ابن مقلة توضح بجلاء علاقة كل حرف من الأبجدية بأحد الأشكال الكونية الأولى ، فالدائرة أساس تكوين الأحرف ح ، ق ، ي ، ن ، ع ، ونصف الدائرة يتجلّى في تكوين س و ص ، وربع الدائرة في ر ، والمثلث في د ، ف ، ل ، والمربع في م ، لا ... " ¹⁶⁶

"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: *h*, *q*, *y*, *n*, *'a*, *w*. Half circle is the core of *s*, *ṣ*. 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 *la* ... "

The following table provides an analysis of calligraphic images used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz that rely on the shape of particular letters:

Shapes	Letters	Number of images
Circle	ن - ق	9
1/2 circle	ص	2

¹⁶⁶ Bahnasî, *ibid.*, pp. 118-9.

¼ circle	و	1
Triangle	ل	1
Square	م	2
Straight line	أ	1
Total	7	15

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

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:

تَكْتَبُ فِيهِ كَفُّ الْمَزَاجِ لَنَا مِيمَاتُ سَطْرِ بَغِيرِ تَعْرِيقٍ¹⁶⁷

Ibn al-Mu'tazz also uses the technique of *ta'riq*, which can be defined as follows:

"وأما المراد بالتعريق إبراز النون والياء وما أشبهها ، مما يقع في اعجاز
الكلمات مثل من وعن وفي ومتى وإلى وعلى بما يكون كالمنسوج
على منوال واحد".¹⁶⁸

"*Ta'riq* means highlighting letters such as n, y and other such

¹⁶⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 183.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Tawhīdī, A, *Thalāth Rasa'il*, ed. By I, Al-Kaylānī, (Damascus: 1951) p. 32.

letters when they come at the end of the word as is the case when writing words like *min*, *'an*, *fī*, *ilā* and *'alā*. 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'riq* that he was interested in the *dīwanī* 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 *و* 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 *و* in the following line:

وشادنٍ عذبي حبه معرقٍ من صدغيه نونا¹⁶⁹

Another technique used by Ibn al-Mu'tazz is that of *mashq*. This is closely related to the techniques of *shaqq* and *tashqīq*, and the following definition, which describes *tashqīq* can also be applied to *mashq*:

"وأما المراد بالتشقيق فتكف الصاد والضاد والكاف والطاء والظاء وما أشبه ذلك مما يحفظ عليها التناسب والتساوي ، فان الشكل بهما يصح ومعهما يخلو ..."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 477.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Tawhīdī, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

“*Tashqīq* means curving letters such as *ṣ*, *ḍ*, *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 ن :

وكساها قشراً لؤلؤةٍ ليسَ ما فيها بمُكْتَمِ
رشاً قد زان طرتهُ مشقُّ نونٍ ليسَ بالقلمِ¹⁷¹

while, in the context of hunting, the claws of a falcon are like a group of ن letters written alongside one another:

أقنى المَخَالِبِ طَلُوبٍ مَارِقِ كأنها نوناتُ كَفِّ الماشقِ¹⁷²

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:

بكفٍّ غزالٍ ذي عذارٍ وطرةٍ وصدغينِ كالقافينِ في طرفي سطرِ¹⁷³

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,

¹⁷¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 231.

¹⁷² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 469.

¹⁷³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 130.

and the other deals with the poet's own.

وُحِطَّ فَوْقَ حِجَابِ الدُّرِّ شَارِبُهُ كَنَصْفِ صَادٍ وَدَارِ الصَّدْعِ كَالنُّونِ¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, the appearance of grey hair among black is like the letter *ص* written in *shaqq*:

أَشْرَقَ الشَّيْبُ عَلَى لِيْمَتِي وَشَبَابُ الْمَرْءِ ظِلُّ الزَّمَانِ
مِثْلُ شِقِّ الصَّادِ لَمَّا بَدَا قَارَنَتْهَا أَحْرَفِي فِي مَكَانِ¹⁷⁵

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

مِثْلُ نَسِيحِ الدُّرُوعِ أَوْ مِثْلُ وَاوَا تِ تَدَانَتْ سَطُورُهَا فِي كِتَابِ¹⁷⁶

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:

¹⁷⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 246.

¹⁷⁵ *Dīwān*, v. III, pp. 99-100.

¹⁷⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 43.

تُبَشِّرُ النَّبَاتَ بِالْحَيَاةِ ِ عَلَى سَوَاقِيهَا مُقَدَّرَاتِ
كَأَلْفَاتٍ مِتْجَاوِرَاتِ ِ عَلَى سَطَوِرٍ مُتَشَايِهَاتِ 177

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:

غِلَالَةُ خَدِّهِ وَرَدٌ جَنِيٌّ ِ وَنُونٌ الصَّدْعِ مُعْجَمَةٌ يَخَالِ 178

A beauty spot is like a single dot:

وَنَشْرَبُ الرَّاحَ مِنْ يَدَيْ رَشَاءِ ِ بِحَبْرِ خَالٍ فِي الْخَدِّ مَنُكُوتِ 179

while three pigeons that remain in a ruin are like the three dots of the ن letter:

عَرَّجٌ عَلَى الدَّارِ الَّتِي كُنَّا بِهَا ِ تَغَيَّرَتْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِنَا بِهَا
غَيْرَ ثَلَاثٍ لَمْ يَزَلْ يَشْفَى بِهَا ِ كُنُقُطِ الثَّاءِ لَدَى كُتَابِهَا 180

rain drops are like a number of dots:

¹⁷⁷ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 519.

¹⁷⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 210.

¹⁷⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 51.

¹⁸⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 39.

بَكَرَتْ تُعِيرُ الْأَرْضَ ثَوْبَ حَدَادٍ رَجَبِيَّةٌ مَحْمُودَةٌ التَّسْكَابِ
نَثَرَتْ أَوَائِلُهَا حَيًّا فَكَانَتْهَا نُقِطٌ عَلَى عَجَلٍ بِيْطُنٍ كِتَابٍ¹⁸¹

Finally, hunting dogs at a distance resemble a *madda*:

شَبَّهَهَا لِحْظِي عَلَى تَنَائِي بِمَدَّةٍ مِنْ قَلَمٍ سَوْدَاءٍ¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 502.

¹⁸² *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 410.

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 طيبٍ مَنْ لِلْمَجَالِسِ وَالخَمْرِ وكأسٍ غَبوقٍ أَوْ صَبوحٍ معَ الفَجْرِ
وَسَحْبِ زَقاقٍ شائِلاتٍ بِأرجُلٍ كصرعى مِنَ السُّودانِ غيرِ ذوي أزر¹⁸³

In other examples, drinking vessels resemble Ethiopian women and wineskins Africans:

فَقمْتُ إلى الكُومِ الصفايا بِمِنْصَلِي فَصَيَّرْتُها مَجْداً لِقومِي وأحسابا
قَباتتُ على أحجارنا حَبشيَّةً تُخاطِبُ أمثالاً مِنَ السُّودِ أنرابا¹⁸⁴

a ship is like a black woman:

¹⁸³ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 663.

¹⁸⁴ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 29.

وزنجيةٍ كرديةٍ الحلبي فوقها
 جَنَاحٌ لَهَا فَرْدٌ عَلَى الْمَاءِ يَخْفُقُ
 يُؤَدِّبُهَا أَوْلَادُهَا بِعَصِيَّتِهِمْ
 فَتُحْبَسُ قَسْرًا كَيْفَ شَاءَ وَتُطَلَّقُ¹⁸⁵

and night is as dark as an Ethiopian woman:

سَرَيْتُ بِهَا فِي لَيْلَةٍ حَبَشِيَّةٍ
 إِلَى أَنْ بَدَأَ صُبْحٌ أَعْرَ قَتِيْقُ¹⁸⁶

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.¹⁸⁷ 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 Nuwwās and Ibn al-Rûmî.

¹⁸⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 616.

¹⁸⁶ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 370.

¹⁸⁷ The trend known as *shu'ûbiyya*, 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:

دَامَتْ ثَلَاثِينَ شَهْرًا فِي مَقَاصِيرِهَا تَسَامَرُ الدَّهْرَ فِي لَيْلٍ مِنَ القَّارِ¹⁸⁸

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:

لَهُ طَرَّةٌ كَجَنَاحِ الغُدَافِ تَلُوحُ عَلَى غُرَّةٍ مُقْمِرَةٍ¹⁸⁹

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:

وَالصَّبْحُ مِنْ تَحْتِ الظَّلَامِ كَأَنَّهُ شَيَّبُ بَدَا فِي لَيْمَةٍ سَوْدَاءِ¹⁹⁰

Grey hair in a parting is more noticeable and hence indicates a later time of day than that in the previous line mentioned:

¹⁸⁸ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 129.

¹⁸⁹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 118.

¹⁹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 496.

حتى بدا ضوءُ صباحٍ فاتقِـ مثلُ تَبدي الشيبُ في المفارقِـ¹⁹¹

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:

كأنَّ وضوءَ الصِّبحِـ يستعجِلُ الدُّجىـ نُطيرُ غراباً ذا قوادمَ جُونِـ¹⁹²

الأربَّ كأسٍـ قد سبَّقتُ لشريرِها صباحاً كيازهمَّ بالنهضِـ أقمريـ¹⁹³

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:

قدَّ بيتُ الثَّمةِ والليلُ حارسُنَا حتى بدا الصِّبحُ مبيضُ المقاديرِـ¹⁹⁴

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

¹⁹¹ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 470.

¹⁹² *Diwān*, v. II, p. 249.

¹⁹³ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 452.

¹⁹⁴ *Diwān*, v. II, p. 226.

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 focussing 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.

قَدَحْتُمْ زِنَادَ الْحَرْبِ أَوْلَّ مَرَّةٍ لَنَا وَخَلَعْتُمْ بَيْنَنَا رِبْقَةَ الْعَهْدِ¹⁹⁵

the sword is as bright as a fire:

وَقَدْ أَلَاقِي بِأَسِّ الْعُدَاةِ عَلَى طَرْفٍ بِعَضْبٍ كَالنَّارِ يَتَّقِدُ¹⁹⁶

and swords and arrows make fire as they clash in battle:

وَلَمَّا حَبَا الصَّفَّانِ فَرَّقَ بَيْنَنَا حَرِيْقُ ضِرَابِ الْبَيْضِ وَالْأَسْلِ السُّمْرِ¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 314.

¹⁹⁶ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 84.

¹⁹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 116.

In addition, Ibn al-Mu'tazz uses a number of related images in which death is given two colours, red and black:

وَلَقَدْ أَخْضِبُ رُمَحِي وَسَيْفِي وَوُجُوهُ الْمَوْتِ سَوْدٌ وَحُمْرٌ¹⁹⁸

and:

وَ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ عَسْكَرًا فَعَسْكَرًا بِالكَرْخِ وَالذُّورِ وَمَوْتًا أَحْمَرًا¹⁹⁹

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:

كَأَنَّهُ وَصْفَاةُ الْقُضْبِ تَحْمِيلُهُ أَوَائِلُ النَّارِ فِي أَعْوَادِ كَبْرِيتٍ²⁰⁰

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:

¹⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 124.

¹⁹⁹ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 523.

²⁰⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 528.

كَمَعَشُوقٍ تَكْنَفُهُ الصُّدُودُ	أُنَاكَ الْوَرْدُ مَبِيضًا مَصُونًا
نُجُومٌ فِي مَطَالِيعِهَا السُّعُودُ	كَأَنَّ وُجُوهَهُ لَمَّا تَوَاقَتُ
كَمَا أَحْمَرَّتْ مِنْ الْخَجَلِ الْخُدُودُ ²⁰¹	بِيَاضٍ فِي جَوَانِبِهِ أَحْمِرَارٌ

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:

كَانَتْ رَسُولَ الْقَبْلِ	تُفَاحَةٌ مَعْضُوضَةٌ
تَنْقَبَتْ بِالْخَجَلِ ²⁰²	كَأَنَّ فِيهَا وَجَنَةً
صَفُرَّتُهُ فِي حُمْرَةٍ كَاللَّهِيبِ	كَأَنَّهَا النَّارُنْجُ لَمَّا بَدَتْ
فَأَصْفَرَ ثُمَّ أَحْمَرَ خَوْفَ الرَّقِيبِ ²⁰³	وَجَنَةً مَعْشُوقٍ رَأَى عَاشِقًا

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:

فِي قَمِيصٍ مَنقَشٍ بِيَزْجَاجٍ ²⁰⁴	وَعَرُوسٍ زُفَّتْ عَلَى بَطْنِ كَفٍّ
--	--------------------------------------

²⁰¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 565.

²⁰² *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 327.

²⁰³ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 510.

²⁰⁴ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 67.

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:

لَكِنَّ مَزْعَفَرَةَ الْقَمِيصِ سَلَافَةً وَسِيَمَتُ كُشُوحٌ دَنَانِيهَا بِمِدَادٍ²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 91.

8- Conclusion.

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 *dhihnī* (intellectual) image. Because of its widespread presence in the Qur'ān 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 *dhihnī* image. Ibn al-Mu'tazz does use some *dhihnī* 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 *Dīwān* 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 *dīwānī* 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.¹ Further to this, however, use will also be made of terminology coined by Abu-Deeb in *Jadaliyyat al-Khafā' wa'l-Tajalī: Dirāsāt Binyawiyya fi'l-Shi'r*, namely 'psychological functions' and 'sense-communication functions'². 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-Khafā' wa'l-Tajalī: Dirāsāt Binyawiyya fi'l-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-Jurjānī'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.

1 st Entity	2 nd Entity	Relationships
Face +	Rose +	Harmony
Face +	Fire -	Fragmented

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 انْقَضَتْ دَوْلَةُ الصِّيَامِ وَقَدْ بَشَّرَ سَقَمُ الْهَلَالِ بِالْعِيدِ
يَتَلَوُ الثَّرِيَا كِفَاغِرَ شَرِيهِ يَفْتَحُ فَاهُ لِأَكْلِ عُنُقُودٍ³

which he interprets in the following manner:

"... أن البيتین یقرران أن شهر الصوم (رمضان) انتهى، وأن ظهور القمر

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

هلالاً وعد خير يبشر بقدوم العيد. ثم يقارن القمر، في علاقته المكانية
الخاصة بالثريا ... بأكل شره فاتح فمه لالتهام عنقود من العنب ...⁴

" ... The two lines confirm that the fasting month of *Ramādān* is over and the fact that the crescent moon is a sign of promise for the coming *'īd* 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 *Ramādān* 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.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's dislike of *Ramaḍān* can be seen again in the following lines, in which this month is compared to a parasitic person because the *Ramaḍān* fast is undertaken against the poet's will, before he has fulfilled his desire for wine:

طفّلَ في أيلولَ شهرُ الصيامِ وما قَضَيْنا فيهِ حقَّ الأمدامِ
واللهِ لا أرضى عنُ الدهرِ أوْ يسرِقَ شهرَ الصومِ في كلِّ عامٍ⁵

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 *Dîwān*, 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:

كأنه وكأنَّ الكأسَ في فيه هلالٌ أولي شهرٍ غابَ في شفقٍـ

Dîwān, 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-Sharîf al-Radiyy, describing a beautiful face with an attractive beauty spot:

كَأَنَّهُ وَالْخَالُ فِي خَدِّهِ سَاعَةٌ هَجْرٍ فِي زَمَانِ الْوَصَالِ⁶

which he interprets in the following manner:

"ان الخد الموصوف الأبيض (والبياض قيمة جمالية في بيئة الشاعر) والخال الاسود الموجود في الخد، هيئة تشبه هيئة زمن الوصل الممثل حسيّاً (و هو أبيض لارتباط السعادة والانشراح بالصفاء والبياض)، اذا تخلله زمن قصير من الهجر (ساعة)، (والسواد يمثل الهجر لانه يرتبط بالشقاء والتعاسة)"⁷

"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

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

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:

"رغم دقة الصورة على الصعيد الحسي فإنها لا تخدم وظيفة حيوية في سياق الموقف الشعري المتكامل. إذ يستحيل عزل الترابطات الشعورية التي تستثار على المستوى النفسي لكل من الموضوعين المركبين للصورة. الوجه الجميل يثير حقلًا من الانفعالات والمتعة الجمالية يمكن أن يرمز له، اختصاراً، بالعلامة (+) ، بينما يثير زمن الهجر انفعالات مغايرة خالية من المتعة الجمالية ، يرمز لها اختصاراً ب (-). على المستوى النفسي، إذن يبدو أن الشعور المسيطر هو شعور سلبي تجاه الخال في وجه الموصوف (كره، نفور، حس بالتعاسة) ، كالشعور تجاه زمن الهجر والشقاء الذي يحدث في سياق الوصل والسعادة والمتعة".⁸

"Despite the accuracy of the image on the *hissi* level, it does not serve any active function in the poetic context as a whole because it is impossible to isolate different psychological

⁸ *Ibid.*

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:

وأرى الثُّرَيَّا فِي السَّمَاءِ كَأَنَّهَا قَدَمٌ تَبَدَّتْ مِنْ ثِيَابِ حِدَادٍ⁹

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:

بأبلىقَ كالجَزَعِ الذي لم يُثَقِّبِ	لَحِقْتُ الرضا منْ بعدِ طولِ تَغْضُوبِ
تُباري سنا نارِ على رأسِ مَرَقَبِ	لَهُ هامةٌ مُسَوِّدَةٌ اللونِ عَيْنُهَا
مُوكَلَّةٌ مِنْها يِرأسِ مُعَصَّبِ	كَمِذْرَى فَتاةٍ في خِمارِ حِدايِها
كما لاجَ في جَنحِ الأُدجى صَوءٌ كَوَكَبِ ¹⁰	مِنَ الذَّهَبِ الإبريزِ يَلْمَعُ لَوْنُهُ

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 *hīdād* 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 يترافد في بنيتها المستويان

¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 287.

المحددان هنا لفاعلية الصورة، ويتضافران ليخلقاً أثراً موحداً يفعل في الذات بخلق تلك "الهزة" العميقة التي تنبع من الكشف والإضاءة الشعريين، ومن التوصيل الشعري المنبثق فيهما"¹¹

"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.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p, 32.

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 *mawālī* 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 *mawālî*, called Waşîf,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 Qabiĥa. 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-Fatĥ¹⁴ and said to him, 'I am

¹³ See al-Ṭabarî, M, *Tārîkh al-Ṭabarî: Tārîkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk wa man Kān fi Zamānihim*, Ed. By Ş. al-'Atţār, (Beirut: 1998), v. XI, pp. 184-7.

¹⁴ His minister, al-Fatĥ b. Khaqān

acquitted of God and my relationship to the Messenger of God if you do not cuff him,' that is al-Muntaşir. Al-Fatĥ 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-Muntaşir ("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-Muntaşir 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 Waşîf, and was on the point of sending out orders to seize estates of this *mawlā*, which were to be given to his *vizier*.¹⁶

As a result of their grievances, al-Muntaşir and Waşîf joined forces and plotted to murder al-Mutawakkil. On a tragic night, when the caliph was happily drinking with his minister, Waşîf's plan came to fruition when another *mawlā*, Bughā, together with a number of companions, also *mawālī*, entered the room:

¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, M, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Tā'rikh 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.

¹⁶ 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. Abû Aḥmad was in his chamber and when he heard the commotion he came out and shielded his father. Baghlûn 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-Mu'tazz 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

¹⁷ *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, v. XXXIV, p. 181.

¹⁸ That this fear was in fact relevant is revealed in the record of a conversation between al-Mu'tazz 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, Qabīḥa, 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 Qabīḥa 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 boy²¹ 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-Buḥturī, 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-Ḥabārī, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

²⁰ See al-Qālī, I, *Dhayl al-Amālī wa'l-Nawādī*, (Cairo: n.d.), p. 99.

²¹ See al-Ḥabārī, M, *Tārīkh al-Ḥabārī: Tārīkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk wa man Kāna fī Zamānihim*, Ed. By Ṣ. al-'Aṭṭār, (Beirut: 1998), v. XII, p. 18.

²² See al-Ḥabārī, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 7.

deposition of al-Mustaʿīn, Marwān composed the following lines:

Al-Muʿtazz is now in charge of all affairs
while al-Mustaʿīn 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-Ṭabarī*, 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-Ṭabarī, M, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Tā'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulûk)*, Tran. and annotated by J. Kraemer, (New York: 1985), v. XXXV, p. 118.

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:

أَبَ أَمْرُ الْإِسْلَامِ خَيْرَ مَايِهِ ِ وَ غَدَا الْمَلِكُ ثَابِتًا فِي نَصَائِهِ
مُسْتَقْرًا قَرَارُهُ مُطْمَئِنًّا أَهْلًا بَعْدَ نَائِيهِ وَاغْتِرَابِيهِ
فَأَحْمَدُ اللَّهَ وَالْتَمِسُ مِنْهُ بِالْعَفْوِ عَمَّنْ عَفَا جَزِيلَ ثَوَائِيهِ²⁶

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

²⁵ *The History of al-Jabarī*, v. XXXV, p.134.

²⁶ Al-Mas'ûdî, 'A, *Murûj al-Dhahab wa Ma'âdin al-Jawhar*, Ed.Ch. Pilat, (Beirut: 1974) v. V, p. 81.

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-Ṭabarī 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

²⁷ *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, v. XXXV, p. 165.

²⁸ For the poetry attributed to al-Mu'tazz, see Ibn al-Kazarûnî, Dh, *Mukhtaṣar al-Tārîkh min Awwal al-Azamân ilâ Muntahâ Dawlat Banî al-'Abbâs*, Ed. By M. Jawād, (Baghdad: 1970), p. 154.

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 Şāliḥ b. Waṣīf.²⁹ Al-Mu'tazz was unable to pay the requested money from treasury funds and sent word to his mother Qabīḥa asking for her financial aid. She refused.³⁰ Following this, the Turkish leaders decided to depose al-Mu'tazz. Al-Ṭabarī 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 Niḥrīr 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-Dûr. Then suddenly, Şāliḥ b. Waṣīf, Bāybāk and Muḥammad b. Bughā, the one known as Abû Naṣir, entered with their weapons and stood by the door of

²⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 32.

³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *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.'³¹ 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 Mûsā b. Bughā used to stay when he was there. Following that, they sent for Ibn Abî al-Shawārib, who was admitted together with a group of his men. Şālîf 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 Abî al-Shawārib now said to Ṣāliḥ, 'They bore witness that his sister, his son and his mother shall be given safe conduct.' Ṣāliḥ 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 ...³²

The new caliph, Muḥammad b. al-Wāthiq, was anointed on Wednesday, the last day of Rajab 255 (July 14, 869), and was called al-Muhtadî 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-Mas'ûdî, however, refers to the fact that there are several different stories about the assassination of al-Mu'tazz:

³² *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, v. XXXV, p. 165. Al-Mas'ûdî reports the same event with less details, see *op. cit.*, p. 88. However, the latter offers better account of the conversation between al-Mu'tazz and his brother al-Muhtadî.

³³ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 29.

³⁴ *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, v. XXXV, p. 165.

"ورأيت أصحاب السير والتواريخ وذوي العناية بأخبار الدول قد تنازعوا في مقتله: فمنهم من ذكر أنّ المعتزّ مات في حبسه في خلافة المهدي بالله، ... حتف أنفه ؛ ومنهم من ذكر أنّه منع في حبسه من الطعام والشراب ، فمات عند قطع مواد الغذاء عنه من المآكل والمشرب ؛ ومنهم من رأى أنّه حقن بالماء الحارّ المغلي ، فمن أجل ذلك حين أخرج إلى الناس وجدوا جوفه وارماً"³⁵.

"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-Muhtadî, 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 .. أنّه أدخل حماماً وأكره في دخوله إياه ، وكان الحمام محمياً ومنع الخروج منه ؛ ثم تنازع هؤلاء: فمنهم من قال إنه ترك في الحمام حتى فاضت نفسه ، ومنهم من ذكر أنه أخرج بعد أن كادت نفسه تتلف للحمّى ، ثمّ أسقي شربة ماء مقرر بثلج فنثرت كبده

³⁵ Al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

"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-Ṭabarī 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-Ṭabarī records the passing of power from al-Mu'tazz to al-Muhtadī in less than four lines:

"It was reported on the authority of an eyewitness that Muḥammad 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

³⁶ *Ibid.*

matters entrusted to him and, moreover, expressing his desire to relinquish these matters into the care of Ibn al- al-Wāthiq.

Extending his hand, al-Mu'tazz acknowledged his allegiance to Muḥammad b. al-Wāthiq, and only then was the new caliph given the honorific title of al-Muhtadī. Thereupon al-Mu'tazz withdrew, and the inner circle of clients (*mawālī*) rendered their own oaths of allegiance.³⁷

Al-Mas'ūdī, however, describes the same event in more detail and in a more eloquent style:

"فأتى بالمعتزّ عليه قميص مدنس وعلى رأسه منديل ؛ فلما رآه محمد بن الواثق وثب إليه فعانقه ، وجلسا جميعاً على السرير ؛ فقال له محمد ابن الواثق : " يا أخي ، ما هذا الأمر؟" - قال المعتزّ: "أمر لا أطيعه ولا أقوم به ولا أصلح له" ؛ فأراده المهتدي على أن يتوسّط أمره ويصلح بينه وبين الأتراك ؛ فقال المعتزّ: " لا حاجة لي فيها ، ولا يرضونني لها" - قال المهتدي : "فأنا في حلّ من بيعتك؟" - قال : " أنت في حلّ وسعة" ؛ فلما جعله في حلّ من بيعته حولّ وجهه عنه ؛ فأقيم عن حضرته وردّ إلى محبسه ، فقتل في محبسه بعد أن خلع بستّة أيام"³⁸

"Al-Mu'tazz was brought in, clothed, with a head scarf on his

³⁷ *The History of al-Jabarī*, v. XXXVI, pp. 1-2.

³⁸ Al-Mas'ūdī, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-9.

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 *bai'a*'. Al-Mu'tazz replied: 'You are completely free'. When he released him from his *bai'a* 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-Ṭabarî and the second by al-Mas'ûdî. Al-Ṭabarî reports that Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣîf asked for a grant for the Turks from al-Mu'tazz and accused the caliph's secretary, Aḥmad b. Isrā'îl, of theft. Aḥmad, however, answered this accusation with an even stronger accusation, that Ṣāliḥ and his father were disobedient:

"Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣîf then attacked Aḥmad b. Isrā'îl, 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 Isrā'îl and his companions have carted away all the

money in the world.' Aĥmad responded, 'O you disobedient son of a disobedient father.' They continued to exchange words ...³⁹

It is reported that Ṣāliĥ then took Aĥmad b. Isrāīl, Ibn Makhlad and 'Isā b. Ibraĥīm, put them in chains, tortured them and demanded money from them; apparently he did not get much out of them.⁴⁰

Al-Mas'ūdī's account appears to be more reliable and comprehensive. Unlike al-Ṭabarī who concentrates mostly on individual events, al-Mas'ūdī 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:⁴¹

"إني لأخاف أن ينزل عليّ بغا من السماء أو يخرج عليّ من الأرض"⁴²

"I am afraid that Bughā will descend from above or emerge

³⁹ *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, v. XXXV, pp. 163-4.

⁴⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 28.

⁴¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *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'ūdī 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 Ṣālīh b. Waṣīf 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 Ṣālīh b.

Waṣīf:

”ولمّا رأى الأتراك إقدام المعتزّ على قتل رؤسائهم وإعمال الحيلة في إفنائهم ، وأنّه قد اصطنع المغاربة والفراغنة دونهم ، صاروا إليه بجمعهم ، وذلك لأربع بقين من رجب سنة خمس وخمسين ومائتين ، وجعلوا يقرّعونه بذنوبه ويؤيخونه على أفعاله ، وطالبوه بالأموال ؛ وكان المدبّر لذلك صالح بن وصيف مع قواد الأتراك ...“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 Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf 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 Qabīḥa had played an important political role. She was behind his attempt to withdraw al-Muntaṣir 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, Qabīḥa 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 Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf. However, these secretaries were imprisoned by Ṣāliḥ before they carried out their mission. When Ṣāliḥ 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."⁴⁵

Qabîña took refuge with Hâbîb, the wife of Mûsa b. Bughā, who used to be a girl slave for al-Mutawakkil and asked a female apothecary to act as her intermediary with Ibn Waşîf, offering him money and jewelry.⁴⁶ She was, however, imprisoned and it is reported that Şāliḥ 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 Şāliḥ b. Waşîf, saying: "Oh God, humiliate Şāliḥ b. Waşîf just as he has dishonoured me, murdered my son, seized my property, squandered my goods, banished me from home, and behaved obscenely toward me".⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, v. XXXVI, p. 6.

⁴⁶ See *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, v. XXXVI, p. 7.

⁴⁷ *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, v. XXXVI, pp. 7-8.

The exiled Qabîḥa remained in Mecca for a year of al-Muhtadî's rule, accompanied by her daughter, Ibn al-Mu'tazz and a slave girl⁴⁸ until, when al-Mu'tamid became the next caliph, he brought them back to Sāmīrrā.⁴⁹ 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.

The Caliph	Type of Death	Means of Death	Year	Time Spent in Role
Al-Mutawakkil ⁵⁰	Assassination	Conspiracy by Bughā al-Ṣaghîr and al-Muntaṣîr	247	14 years and 9 months
Al-Muntaṣîr ⁵¹	Assassination	Ibn al-Ṭayfûrî	248	6 months
Al-Musta'în ⁵²	Assassination	Al-Mu'tazz	252	3 years and 8 months
Al-Mu'tazz ⁵³	Assassination	Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣîf	255	4 years and 6

⁴⁸ This could be the poet's mother.

⁴⁹ Al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁵⁰ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XI, pp. 184-7 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 5 and pp. 34-8.

⁵¹ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XI, pp. 201-3 and al-Mas'ûdî, *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'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 59 and p. 76.

⁵³ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 28-9 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 78 and p. 93.

				months
Al-Muhtadī ⁵⁴	Assassination	Turkish leaders	256	11 months
Al-Mu'tamid ⁵⁵	Assassination	Al-Mu'tad'id	279	23 years
Al-Mu'tad'id ⁵⁶	Natural death		289	9 years and 9 months
Al-Muktafi ⁵⁷	Natural death		295	6 years and 7 months
Al-Muqtadir ⁵⁸	Assassination	Mû'nis al-Khadim	320	14 years and 11 months

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-Muntaşîr'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-Muntaşîr, and a Turkish commander called Waşîf.⁵⁹ 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, Waşîf and Bughā,⁶⁰ but was himself killed before his plan came to fruition. Al-Muhtadî had another plan, which was to bring new people into

⁵⁴ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 78-9 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 92 and p. 96.

⁵⁵ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 213 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 107 and pp. 135-6.

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'tad'id, the most powerful caliph in that time, al-Mas'ûdî reports some *riwāyas*/ stories about the assassination of this caliph, see p. 175.

⁵⁷ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XII, p. 18 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 176 and p. 192.

⁵⁸ Al-Ṭabarî, *op. cit.*, v. XIII, pp. 104-5 and al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 193 and pp. 203-4.

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'a* as the law of the state.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.⁶²

⁶¹ Al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

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.⁶³ 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:

وَرَقَدْتُ مِلءَ الْعَيْنِ فِي قُرْشِ الْقَلَى وَ شَرَبْتُ مِنْ مَاءِ الْفِرَاقِ زَلالاً⁶⁴

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 *mufīdathûn* style and have echoes of Abû Tammām's famous line that mentions the water of blame;⁶⁵ 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 *itāb* 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'.

نَبَّهَ السِّيفَ عَلَى وَاتِرِيهِ حَيَّيَ الْجَهْرُ وَمَاتَ السَّرَّارُ

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 تسقني ماء الملامر فإنني صبُّ قدر استعذبت ماء بُكاني

لَوِيهِ أَقْتُلُ كُلَّ قَرِيبٍ وَبَعِيدٍ لَمْ يَنْمُ لِي ثَارٌ
مَطَلَّتْهُ النَّصْرَ مَنِّي سَيْنٌ لَمْ تَطُلْ بِي فَخُطَاهَا قِصَارٌ
وَلَعَمْرِي لَوْ تَمَطَّتْ يَجْسَمِي مُدَّةً مَا دَلَّ لِلْمَلِكِ جَارٌ⁶⁶

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 *rithā* 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:

رُبَّ حَتَفٍ بَيْنَ أَثْنَاءِ الْأَمَلِ وَحَيَاةُ الْمَرْءِ ظِلٌّ يَنْتَقِلُ⁶⁷

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 14-5). 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:

إِنَّ بِالْكَامِلِ لِي ذَا حُفْرَةٍ سَوْفَ أَبْكِيهِ بِأَطْرَافِ الْأَسَلِ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 44.

⁶⁷ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 80.

⁶⁸ *Dîwān*, 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:

يَدْمِرُ فَالِدَمٌ حِثَّاءُ البَطْلِ	إِنْ يَكُنْ خَصْبَهُ أَعْدَاؤُهُ
لَهُمْ صَيْلٌ أَعَادِ أَيَّ صَيْلٍ	وَ لَقَدْ خَلَّفَ مِنِّي بَعْدَهُ
فَهِيَ الأَيَّامُ وَالدهْرُ دَوْلٌ ⁶⁹	قَرَوِيداً بِظِلَامٍ صَبْحُهُ

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:

تَتَّبِعُ الأَمَالَ كالباعِي المُضِلُّ	يَا مُكَيْلَ العَيْسِ فِي دَيْمومَةٍ
بِيَدِ المِقْدَارِ فَأَصِيرُ وَأَتَّكِلُ	إِنَّ مَفْتاحَ الَّذِي تَطْلُبُهُ
مُدَّةَ العُمُرِ وَمِنْ وَقْتِ الأَجَلِ ⁷⁰	فَرَعَ اللهُ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ وَمِنْ

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 *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 82.

⁷⁰ *Dîwān*, v. III, pp. 83-4.

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:

أَسِيرًا لِدَهْرٍ لَا أَرِيشُ وَلَا أُبْرِي
جَرَى بِي مَن كَسَرَ فَقَدْ شَفَّنِي كَسْرِي

يَعِزُّ عَلَيَّ الْمَعْتَزُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أُرَى
وَأَرْجُو يَأْذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُجَبِّرَ الَّذِي

ولستُ بحمدِ الله أشكو خِصاصةً ولكنْ هموماً قد أحاط بها صدري
 وإنِّي وإن حَلَّ الزمانُ يَربيه لأصبرُ من رَيبِ الزمانِ على الصبرِ⁷¹

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'taḍid in the year 289/901, al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd Allāh captured Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Quṣayy b. al-Mû'ayyad and 'Abd 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

⁷¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 333.

⁷² See al-Samirā'i's comment on Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poems which describes his fear, *Dīwān*, 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:

يا نفسِ صبراً لعلَّ الخَيْرَ عُقباكِ خانتكِ من بعدِ طولِ الأَمَنِ دُنْيَاكِ
مَرَّتْ بنا بَكَرّاً طَيْرٌ فقلتُ لها طُوباكِ يا ليتنا إِيّاكِ طُوباكِ⁷⁴

The last line emphasises the unwanted reality that this day may be the last of his life:

أظنُّهُ آخِرَ الأَيامِ من عُمري و أوشكَ اليَوْمَ أنْ يبيكي ليّ الباكي⁷⁵

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-Jabaqāt*), to literary criticism (such as his book on al-Badī'). On one occasion,

⁷³ See Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, v. XII, pp. 12-3.

⁷⁴ *Dîwān*, v. III, pp. 188-9.

⁷⁵ *Dîwān*, 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:

أسكنتنا حوادثُ الأيامِ بيتَ أسْرٍ في كُرْبَةٍ واهتمامِ

Dîwān, v. II, p. 642.

he announced that he was giving up all ambition for any political position:

طَوْتُكُمْ يَا بَنِي الدُّنْيَا رِكَابِي	وَحَارِيكُمْ رَجَائِي وَارْتِقَابِي
حُجِبْتُ بِهَمَّتِي مِنْ أَنْ تَرُونِي	أُرَاقِبُ مِنْكُمْ رَفَعَ الْحِجَابِ
لَئِنْ عَرَّيْتُ مِنْ دَوْلِي أَرَاهَا	تَجَدَّدُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ لِلْكِلَابِ
لَقَدْ أَخْلَفْتُهَا بَعْدَ ابْتِدَائِي	لَهَا ، وَمَلَلْتُهَا قَبْلَ الذَّهَابِ ⁷⁶

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:

وحلاوةُ الدُّنْيَا لِجَاهِلِيهَا ومراةُ الدُّنْيَا لِمَنْ عَقَلَا⁷⁷

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

⁷⁶ *Dîwān*, v. I, pp. 38-9.

⁷⁷ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 198.

others as being as powerless as a dying person looking at their inheritor:

كُنْ جاهلاً أو قَجاهل تَفُزْ للجهلِ في ذا الدهرِ جاهٌ عريضٌ
والعقلُ محرومٌ يرى ما يرى كما ترى الوارثَ عينُ المريضِ⁷⁸

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:

يا نفسِ صبراً وإلاً فأهلكي جَزَعاً إنَّ الزمانَ على ما تكرهينَ بُني
تَلَفَّتِي وَسَكِّي هذا ، وذاك ، وذا بأنَّهُمْ لم يَخِسْ دَهْرٌ ولم يَخُنْ⁷⁹

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

⁷⁸ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 181.

⁷⁹ *Dîwān*, 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 *Dîwān*, 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 *Dîwān*, v. III, pp. 270-3.

difficult nature:

والدهرُ أهوجُ عائرٌ بخطامهٍ عسيرُ الخليفةِ هادمٌ ببناء⁸⁰

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:

وَلَرُبَّ أَقْوَامٍ أَوْاصِلُهُمْ (وَيَرُونَنِي يَتَمَلَّقُونَ أَرَى)
وَهُمْ إِلَى عَيْنِي أَبْغَضُ مِنْ شَيْبٍ إِذَا مَا خِلْتَهُ اسْتَعْرَا⁸¹

In the second, reference is made to a companion who is as bitter as the water of al-Jahh:⁸²

وَلَا بَدَّ لِي مِنْهُ فَحِينًا يَغْصُنِي وَيَنْسَاغُ لِي حِينًا وَوَجْهِي مُقَطَّبُ
كَمَاءِ طَرِيقِ الْجَحِّ فِي كُلِّ مَنْهَلٍ يُذَمُّ عَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْهُ وَيُشْرَبُ⁸³

⁸⁰ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 6.

⁸¹ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 38.

⁸² Al-Samirā'ī states that this water is used as a metonym for the bad water which the common people drink. See *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 619, note 36.

⁸³ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 619.

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:

يا من يُناجي ضِغَنَهُ في نفسه ويدبُّ تَحْتِي بالأفاعي اللُدَّغِ
ويَبِيتُ يَنْهَضُ زَفْرَةً في صدرِهِ مِنِّي فَإِنْ دَمِيتُ جِراحِي يُولِّغِ⁸⁴

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:

خُلِّفْتُ في شَرِّ عَصِيٍّ خُلِّقْتُ أَثْكلِنيها رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
كِلَابٌ رَحِلي إِذا حَضرتُ فَإِنْ غِبتُ فُواقاً فَأَسدُ غابَاتِ⁸⁵

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'taḍid and al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd

⁸⁴ The *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 353.

⁸⁵ The *Dîwān*, 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.⁸⁷ It is said that the poet had a good relationship with this caliph,⁸⁸ 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، سفاكا للدماء، شديد الرغبة في أن يمثل بمن يقتله وكان إذا غضب على القائد النبيل والذي يختصه من غلمانه ، أمر أن يحفر له حفرة بحضرته ثم يدلى على رأسه فيها ويطرح التراب عليه ونصفه الأسفل ظاهر على التراب ، ويداس التراب ؛ فلا يزال كذلك حتى تخرج روحه من دُبره ؛ وذكر من عذابه أنه كان يأخذ الرجل فيُكتف ويقيّد ويؤخذ القطن فيحشى في أذنه وخيشومه وفمه ، وتوضع المنافخ في دُبره حتى ينتفخ ويعظم جسمه ، ثم يسد الدبر بشيء من القطن ، ثم يفصد وقد صار كالحبل العظيم من العرقين اللذين فوق الحاجبين ، فتخرج النفس من ذلك الموضع ؛ وربما كان يُقام 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-Numayrī and Ibn al-Munajjim, for example, were initially friends of his and he composed poetry in praise of them (see *Dīwān*, 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-Numayrī'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).

⁸⁷ See Abū Khaḍra, F, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz: Al-Rajul wa Intājuhu al-Adabī*, (Akka: 1981), pp. 205-7.

⁸⁸ See al-Ssamirāī, in *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 391.

في أقصى القصر مجرداً موثقاً ويرمى بالنشاب حتى يموت ؛ وأتخذ
المطامير وجعل فيها صنوف العذاب ...⁸⁹

"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

⁸⁹ Al-Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

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:

دَعَانِي الْإِمَامُ إِلَى قُرْبِيهِ فَأَهْلًا بِذَاكَ وَسَهْلًا بِهِ⁹⁰

The second example of al-Mu'taḍid'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:

وَنَهَانِي الْإِمَامُ عَنْ سَقَى الْكَأْ سَ فَرَدَّتْ عَلَى السُّقَاةِ الْإِمْدَامُ
عَفَّتْهَا مُكْرَهًا وَلِذَاتِ عَيْشٍ قَامَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُنَّ الْإِمَامُ⁹¹

As an additional precaution, al-Mu'taḍid also distanced himself from Ibn al-Mu'tazz and did not allow him to see him. This rather harsh measure made

⁹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, p. 397.

⁹¹ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 234.

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:

مِنَعِ الزَّيَارَةَ مِنْ شُرَيْرَةَ خَائِفًا لَوْ يَسْتَطِيعُ لَبَاتَ بَيْنَ جُيُوبِهَا
 وَيَجْرُنِي بِالْمَطْلِ مَوْعِدُ حَاجَةٍ لَوْ شِئْتُ قَدْ بَرَدَ الْغَلِيلُ بِطَيْبِهَا
 مَحْبُوسَةٍ فِي كَفِّ مَطْلِكٍ طَالَمَا عَذَّبْتَنِي وَشَغَلْتَ آمَالِي بِهَا⁹³

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 *'adhabtini*).

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:

زَوَّدِينَا نَائِلًا أَوْ عِدِينَا قَدْ صَدَفْنَاكَ فَلَا تَكْذِبِينَا
 خَبَّرِينِي كَيْفَ أَسْلُو فَلَا أَحْسَدُ مِنْ إِلَّا زَفْرَةً أَوْ أَنْيِنَا

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 composed for the occasion of opening a new castle called *al-Thurayyā*. See *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 437-8, lines 18 to 26.

⁹³ *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 292-3.

أو أربحيني ففِي الموتِ كافٍ واقْتُليني مثلَ ما تَقْتُلينا⁹⁴

In addition, another short poem refers to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attempts to see al-Mu'taḍid 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:

حَارَ هَذَا النِّجْمُ أَوْ هَابَا وَقَرَاكَ الِهْمُّ أَوْ صَابَا
ووفودُ اللَّيْلِ واقِفَةٌ لَا تَرَى فِي الغَرْبِ أَبْوَابَا
وكانَ الفَجْرَ حينَ رَأَى ليلَةً قاسيةً هابَا⁹⁵

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's fear and hidden dislike of this caliph are manifested clearly in his elegies in which, as al-Mu'taḍid is now dead, the poet can show a little more of his true feelings. In one elegy, he professes sorrow at al-Mu'taḍid's death in the first line, and accuses time of robbing him of his relatives:

يا دهرُ ويحك ما أبقيتَ لي أحداً وأنتَ والدُ سَوٍّ تَأْكُلُ الوَلدَا⁹⁶

However, the second line betrays a different sentiment as he now expresses a sense of happiness at this death:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ بَلْ ذَا كُلَّهُ قَدَرٌ رَضِيتُ باللهِ رَبًّا واحداً صَمَدَا⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 591.

⁹⁵ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 34.

⁹⁶ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 21.

The clarity 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:

أَبْنَ الرَّجَالِ قِيَامًا فِي مَرَاتِبِهِمْ مِنْ رَاحَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَمْ يُطَمَّرَ فَقَدْ سَعِدًا⁹⁸

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

⁹⁷ *Dīwān*, v. III, p. 21.

⁹⁸ *Dīwān*, 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:

ثُمَّ انْقَضَيْتَ فَلَا عَيْنٌ وَلَا أَثَرٌ حَتَّى كَأَنَّكَ يَوْمًا لَمْ تَكُنْ أَحَدًا
لَا شَيْءَ يَبْقَى سِوَى خَيْرٍ تُقَدِّمُهُ مَا دَامَ مُلْكٌ لِإِنْسَانٍ وَلَا خَلْدًا⁹⁹

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):

صَدَّتْ وَأَغْرَتْ طَيْفَهَا يَمْتِمُّ إِنَّ الْفِرَاقَ لَمُغْرَمٌ بِالْمُغْرَمِ¹⁰⁰

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

⁹⁹ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 85.

preferred topics for an elegy.¹⁰¹ 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:

ألا زوّدينا الوعدَ إن لم تُزوّدي ورُدِّي جوابَ القولِ من خُلُقٍ نَدِي¹⁰²

Al-Kafrāwī rightly sees in this proof that Ibn al-Mu'tazz feels happiness at al-Mu'taḍid's death, and a kind of gloating over the fact he has come to grief.¹⁰³

Another fragmented relationship worthy of investigation here is that between Ibn al-Mu'tazz and the minister al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd Allāh. This minister, like al-Mu'taḍid, was known for his excessive power, a fact referred to by al-Mas'ūdī, who states:

"عظيم الهيئة ، شديد الإقدام ، سفاكا للدماء ، وكان الكبير والصغير
على رعب وخوف منه ، لا يعرف أحد منهم لنفسه نعمة."¹⁰⁴

"He was hugely awesome, intrepid, and a blood-shedder. All,

¹⁰¹ See al-Qayrawānī, I, *Al-'Umda fī Maḥâsin al-Shi'r wa Adâbihi*, Ed. M, Qarqazân, (Beirut: 1988), v. II, pp. 150-1.

¹⁰² *Dîwân*, v. III, p. 31. According to the *Dîwân*, this elegy is composed on the death of Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil. The poet's relation to this person was sincere. The appearance of *ghazal* in the introduction, as explained above, prevents this elegy from being said at the death of Ibn al-Mutawakkil.

¹⁰³ See al-Kafrāwī, M, *'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Ḥayâtuhu wa Shi'ruhu*, (Cairo: 1957), p. 99.

¹⁰⁴ See al-Mas'ūdī, *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).¹⁰⁵ 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':

هَلْ مِنْ مُعِينٍ عَلَى أَحْدَاثِ أَزْمَانِي أَسَانَ مَعْتَمِدَاتٍ بَعْدَ إِحْسَانِ¹⁰⁶

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.¹⁰⁷ 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.

¹⁰⁶ *Diwān*, v. I, p. 600.

¹⁰⁷ See Abû Khadrā, *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:

بَدَا قَمَرٌ أَوْ قَاسِمٌ هُوَ مُقْبِلٌ أَلَسْتَ تَرَى فِيهِ كَمَالَ جَمَالِهِ¹⁰⁸

وَإِذَا أَبْصَرْتَهُ قَلْتَ بَدْرٌ لِيَتَمَامَ لَا يُرِيدُ غُرُوبًا¹⁰⁹

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:

يَأْتَلِقُ التَّاجُ فَوْقَ مَفْرَقِهِ عَلَى جَبِينٍ كَأَنَّهُ الذَّهَبُ

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):

¹⁰⁸ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 491.

¹⁰⁹ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 400.

إنما مصعبٌ شهابٌ منَ اللّهِ تجلّتُ عنْ وجهِهِ الظلماءُ

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-Mu'tazz 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:

يَتُّ يِيهِمْ أَطْرُدُ الْكَرَى بِهِ كَتَمْتُهُ النَّاسَ فَمَا يُدْرِي بِهِ
خَوْفًا عَلَى الْوَزِيرِ، بِي وَلَا بِهِ يَا رَبِّ أَمْسِكْ رَمَقَ الدُّنْيَا بِهِ¹¹⁰

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-Mu'tazz'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

¹¹⁰ *Dīwān*, v. I, pp. 408-9.

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:

ما قاسم إلا عبيدُ اللهِ حَسْبِي بِهِ خَلْفًا بِحَمْدِ اللهِ¹¹¹

As in the elegies addressed to al-Mu'taḍid, 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:

قُلْ لِعُبَيْدِ اللهِ يَا وَجَهَ الصَّبِيِّ وَلِبْنِيهِ الْعُقَلَاءِ وَاقْلِبِ
أَيَا نُشَارَ خَرَزِ الْمُخْشَلَبِ لا بِأَبِي ، أَنْتُمْ فِدَاءٌ لِأَبِي¹¹²

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

¹¹¹ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 111.

¹¹² *Dîwān*, 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.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:

كَأَنَّ لَمْ تَحُلَّ الدَّارَ شَيْرٌ وَأَهْلُهَا بَلَى تُمْ بَانُوا فَهِيَ مِنْهُمْ بَلَاغٌ
خَلَاءٌ وَرَاءَ الْعَامِ يَمْحُو رُسُومَهَا دُمُوعُ السَّمَاءِ وَالرِّيَّاحُ الزَّعَازِعُ¹¹⁴

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.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

¹¹³ See above, Chapter Two, section two.

¹¹⁴ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 467.

¹¹⁵ Similar examples can be seen in *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 38 and p. 493.

rain to fall on the grave of his relative Ibn al-Mutawakkil.¹¹⁶

سَقَى ذَاكَ مِنْ مَّيْتٍ وَقَبْرِ يُحْيِيهِ أَجَشُّ سِيْمَاكِي تَجِنُّ رَوَاعِدُهُ
إِذَا مَا بَكَى الْبَاكِي عَلَيْهِ تَهَلَّلَتْ دُمُوعُ سَمَاءٍ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ تُسَاعِدُهُ¹¹⁷

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:

كَأَنَّ انْحِدَارَ الطَّلِّ فِي جَنَابِهَا دُمُوعُ مُحِبٍّ قَدْ أَضْرَبَهُ الْهَجْرُ
إِذَا لَمَسَتْهَا الرِّيحُ مَالَتْ كَأَنَّهَا كَنَيْبٌ مِنَ الصُّهْبَاءِ مَالَ بِهِ السُّكْرُ¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹ Flowers, in general, share in Ibn al-

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 *Dîwān*, v. II, pp. 382-390 and *Dîwān*, 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 *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 275) and asceticism (see for example *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 177) in which he seeks repose in remembering this true friendship.

¹¹⁷ *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 29. See also *Dîwān*, v. III, p. 63.

¹¹⁸ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 602. For more examples see *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 589 and p. 602.

¹¹⁹ Al-Shak'a gives an accurate account of the flourishing of 'gardens poetry' *rawdīyyāt* and Ibn al-Mu'tazz's pioneer role in such a trend. See *Rihlat al-Shi'r 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:

وَقَفْتُ بِالرُّوضِ أَبْكِي فَقَدْ مُشْبِهِي حَتَّى بَكَتْ بِدَمُوعِي أَعْيُنُ الزَّهْرِ¹²⁰

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:

كَمْ قَدْ قَطَعْتُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ دَيْمُومَةٍ	نُطِفُ الْمِيَاهِ بِهَا سَوَادُ النَّاطِرِ
فِي لَيْلَةٍ فِيهَا السَّمَاءُ مُلِمَّةٌ	سُودَاءُ مُظْلِمَةٌ كَقَلْبِ الْكَافِرِ
وَالْبَرْقُ يَخْطِفُ مِنْ خِلَالِ سَحَابِهَا	خَطَفَ الْفَوَادِ لِمَوْعِدٍ مِنْ زَائِرِ
وَالغَيْثُ مَنَهْلٌ يَسُحُّ كَأَنَّهُ	دَمْعُ الْمُودَعِ إِثْرَ الْفِي سَائِرِ ¹²¹

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

¹²⁰ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 101.

¹²¹ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 586. More examples for this case can be seen in *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 71 and p. 101, and *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 58 and p. 336.

concerns. In his *Al-Ṭabī'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

جاءت تهادى كالغرابِ الحائمِ مكظوظةً مسودةً القوادمِ¹²³

as is the sound of thunder, which is seen to be as sad as wailing women:

في مكفهرٍ كركنِ الطودِ مُصْطَخِبِ كأنَّ إرعاذهُ تحنانٌ تاكلاتِ¹²⁴

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:

هل ترى برقاً عناني سناهُ خاضَ نحوي الليلَ والليلُ غمرُ
مثل ما مدَّ سُرَادِقُ مُلْكِ فهو يسمو تارةً وبخرُ¹²⁵

This image embodies the political disturbances and rapid changes of the 'Abbasid caliphate, with its uprisings during the rule of caliphs such as al-

¹²² al-Muṣṭafā, 'A, *Al-Ṭabī'a fi Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz*, MS (Al-Yarmūk University: 1991), p. 39.

¹²³ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 641.

¹²⁴ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 295.

¹²⁵ *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 120.

Mûta'wakkil and al-Mu'ta'ḍid, and its periods of decline, for example during the rule of the caliphs al-Muntaṣir and al-Mûwaffaq.

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.¹²⁶ 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:

وباتَ كما سرَّ أعداءَهُ إذا رامَ قوتاً من النومِ شَذُّ
تُغْرِزُهُ شَرَرَاتُ البَعُو ضِـ في قمرٍ مثلِـ ظهرِ الجُرْدِ¹²⁷

In another image, the shape of the crescent moon is compared to a nail cutting – an insignificant part of the body:

ولاحَ ضوءُ هلالٍ كادَ يَفْضَحُهُ مثلِـ القلَامَةِ قد قُصَّتْ من الطُّفْرِ¹²⁸

¹²⁶ The Pleiades, for example, is usually depicted in a delightful way and is compared with a bunch of grapes (see for example *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 72 and *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 114) or a bunch of blossoms (see for example *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 72 and *Dîwān*, 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:

وقد مالتُ إلى الغربِ النَّرْبَا كما أصغى إلى الجسِّ القَرُوقُ

Dîwān, v. II, p. 186. A similar example can be seen in *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 68.

¹²⁷ *Dîwān*, v. II, pp. 567-8.

¹²⁸ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 111. The same image can be seen in *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 592.

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':

قد انقضت دولة الصيام وقد بشر سقم الهلال بالعيد
يتلو الثريا كفاغر شره يفتح فاه لأكل عنقود¹³⁰

In this case, Abu-Deeb's interpretation of this attitude being a result of his being fed up with fasting during *Ramadhān* 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'

¹²⁹ Sayyid al-Ahl, 'A, 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz Adabuhu wa 'Ilmuhu, (Beirut: 1951), p. 45.

¹³⁰ *Dīwān*, v. II, p. 100.

¹³¹ See above pp. 275-7 and Abu-Deeb, *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 مُتَكِلِي طَيْبِ الْكَرَى وَمُنْعَصِي	يا سَارِقَ الْأَنْوَارِ مِنْ شَمْسِ الضُّحَى
وَأَرَى حَرَارَةَ نَارِهَا لَمْ تَنْقُصْ	أَمَّا ضِيَاءُ الشَّمْسِ فِيكَ فَنَاقِصٌ
مُتَسَلِّحٌ بَهَقًا كَلُونَ الْأَبْرَصِ ¹³²	لَمْ يَظْفَرِ التَّشْبِيهُ مِنْكَ بِطَائِلٍ

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-Sharīf al-Rādiyy uses the *žabyat al-bān*/ gazelle of *al-bān* tree to express his desire for the caliphate

¹³² *Dīwān*, v. II, pp. 607-8.

in his poems.¹³³ 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 Sharîra is used as a symbol for the caliphate in a number of poems. Shalabî 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'.¹³⁴ 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,¹³⁵ 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 Sharîra 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 Sharîra 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 Sharîra'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

¹³³ See the poem in al-Radiyy, al-Sh, *Dîwān al-Sharîf al-Radiyy*, Ed. Y. Rarahât, (Beirut: 1995), v. II, pp. 99-100.

¹³⁴ Shalabî, S, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz Şuratan li 'Aşrihi*, (Cairo: 1981), p. 307.

¹³⁵ See *Dîwān*, v. I, pp. 17-23.

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'.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:

تَعْمَلُ بِالْهَمِّ فِي الضَّمِيرِ كَمَا يَعْمَلُ فِي الْفَتَكِ صَاحِبُ الْخَنْجَرِ¹³⁷

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:

كَأَنَّ بِكَاسِهَا نَارًا تَلْطَى وَلَوْلَا الْمَاءُ كَانَ لَهَا حَرِيقٌ¹³⁸

This fire infiltrates the entire body of the drinkers and, following a night of drinking, they discover that their hands are glowing:

وَشَرِبِ سَقَيْتُهُمْ وَالصَّبَا حُ فِي وَكْرِهِ وَقَعَ لَمْ يَطِرْ
كَأَنَّهُمْ انْتَبَهُوا بَيْنَهُمْ حَرِيقًا فَأَيْدِيهِمْ تَسْتَعِرُ¹³⁹

¹³⁶ See for example *Dîwān*, v. I, p. 123 and the *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 232.

¹³⁷ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 144.

¹³⁸ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 186.

¹³⁹ *Dîwān*, 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:¹⁴⁰

لَمَّا وَجَّاهَا وَجِيَّةً فِي نَحْرِهَا يَمْدَلُّقٍ لِبَطْعَانِهَا مُعْنَادٍ
جَادَتْ لَهُ يَدَمٌ كَأَنَّ نَفِيَّهُ شَرًّا يُطِيرُهُ يَقْرَعُ زِنَادٍ¹⁴¹

the barmaid is seen as a soldier:

مِنْ يَدَايَ عَسْكَرِيَّةِ الزَّيِّ تَمْشِي فِي قَبَائِ مُشَمَّرِ الْأَذْيَالِ¹⁴²

and the drunkard moves as heavily as a prisoner in chains:

يَمْشِي وَفَدَّ أَخَذَ الثُّعَاسَ يِرْجُلِهِ مَشِيَ الْأَسِيرَ يُحْتُّ فِي الْأَقْيَادِ¹⁴³

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

¹⁴⁰ It should be mentioned here that Ibn al-Mu'tazz'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-Allāh on the battle field are described as flourishing flowers, is given here for illustrative purposes:

شَقَّ الْجَمُوعَ بِسَيْفِهِ وَبَشَقِي حَرَارَاتِ الْإِحْنِ
دَامِي الْجِرَاحِ كَأَنَّهُ وَرَدَ تَفْتَحَ فِي عَصْنِ

Dîwān, v. I, p. 594.

¹⁴¹ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 91.

¹⁴² *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 211.

¹⁴³ *Dîwān*, v. II, p. 91.

example:

أَتَلَفَ الْمَالَ وَمَا جَمَعْتُهُ طَلَبُ اللَّذَاتِ فِي مَاءِ الْعَنْبِ
وَأَسْتَبَاءُ الزُّقِّ مِنْ حَانُوتِهَا سَائِلَ الرَّجْلِينَ مَعْصُوبِ الذَّنْبِ
كَلَّمَا كَبَّ لِيَشْرَبَ خِلْتَهُ حَبَشِيًّا قَطَّعَتْ مِنْهُ الرُّكْبُ¹⁴⁴

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 *Dîwān*, 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 to 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

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.² 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.³ 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, Qabîḥa. 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.⁴ 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:

وَنَقَّبْتُ عِرْسِي بِالطَّلَاقِ مُصَمِّمًا وَكَانَتْ حَصَاةً بَيْنَ رَحْلِي وَأُخْمَصِي⁵

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 *Dîwān*, 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, Abû al-'Alâ' al-Ma'arrî, Ibn al-Mu'tazz announced:

سَكَنتُكَ يَا دُنْيَا يِرْغَمِي مُكْرَهًا وَمَا كَانَ لِي فِي ذَاكَ صُنْعٌ وَلَا أَمْرٌ
.. فَإِنْ ارْتَحِلْ يَوْمًا أَدْعُكَ دَمِيمَةً وَمَا فِيكَ مِنْ عُودِي غِرَاسٌ وَلَا بَذْرٌ⁶

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 *Dîwān*, 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 Abû Tammām, the pioneer of the *dhihnī* (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'ān.

'A, Bahnasī, Jamāliyyat al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī biwaṣfihi Fannan Ibdā'iyyan, in *Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī: fa'āliyyāt Ayyām al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī*, (Tunisia: 2001), pp.

111- 136.

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, M, *Al-Balāgha al-'Arabiyya, Qirā'atun 'Ukhrā*, (Cairo: 1997).

Abû al-'Addûs, Y, *Al-Isti'āra fi'l-Naqd al-Adabî al-Ĥadîth*, (Amman: 1997).

Abu-Deeb, K, *Al-Jurjānî's Theory of Poetic Imagery*, (Warminster: 1979).

---, *Al-Ru'ā al-Muqanna'a: Naĥwa Manhaj Binyawî fi Dirāsāt al-Shi'r al-Jāhilî*, (Cairo: 1986).

---, *Jadaliyyat al-Khafā' wa'l-Tajallî, Dirāsāt Binyawiyya fi'l-Shi'r*, (Beirut: 1979).

Abû Khaḍra, F, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz: al-Rajul wa Intājuhu al-Adabî*, (Akka: 1981).

Al-Āmidî, al-Ĥ, *Al-Muwāzana Bayna Abî Tammām Ḥabîb Ibn Aws al-Ṭā'î wa Abî 'Ubāda al-Walîd Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Buĥturî*, Ed. by M. 'Abd al-Ĥamîd, 2nd ed. (Cairo: 1954).

Al-'Abdî, al-M, *Shi'r al-Muthaqqab al-'Abdî*, Ed. M. Āl-Yasîn, (Baghdad: 1956).

Al-Aṣṣfahānî, A, *Kitāb al-Aghānî*, Ed. I. Al-Abyārî, (Cairo: 1938), v. 10.

Al-'Askarî, A, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn*, Ed. M. Abû al-Faḍl and A. al-Bajāwî, (Cairo:1952).

Al-Jurjānî, 'A, *Asrār al-Balāgha*, Ed. H. Ritter, 5th ed. (Istanbul: 1954).

---, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, Ed. M. Riḍā, (Cairo: 1961).

- Al-Kafrâwî, M, *'Abd Allâh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Ḥayâtuhu wa Shi'ruhu*, (Cairo: 1957).
- Al-Mas'ûdî, 'A, *Murûj al-Dhahab wa Ma'âdin al-Jawhar*, Ed. Ch. Pilat,
(Beirut: 1974), v. V.
- Al-Muṣṭafâ, 'A, *Al-Ṭabî'a fî Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz*, (MA dissertation, Yarmûk
University, Irbid: 1991).
- Al-Mutanabbî, A, *Dîwân Abî al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbî, bi Sharḥ Abî al-Baqâ' al-
'Ukburî*, Ed. M. al-Saqqâ, I. al-Abyârî and 'A. Shalabî, (Cairo: 1971), vols.
III and IV.
- Al-Qâlî, I, *Dhayl al-Amâlî wa'l-Nawādî*, (Cairo: n.d.).
- Al-Qarṭājani, Ḥ, *Minḥāj al-Bulaghā'*, Ed. M. Ibn al-Khawja, 3rd ed. (Beirut:
1986).
- Al-Qayrawânî, I, *Al-'Umda fî Maḥāsîn al-Shi'r wa Ādābih*, Ed. M. Qarqazân,
(Beirut: 1988), v. II.
- Al-Rabba'î, A, *Al-Ṣûra al-Fanniyya fî Shi'r Abî Tammām*, (Irbid: 1980).
- , *Fî Tashakkul al-Khiṭāb al-Naqdî*, (Beirut: 1998).
- Al-Raḍiyy, al-Sh, *Dîwân al-Sharîf al-Raḍiyy*, Ed. Y. Faraḥât, (Beirut: 1995), v.
II.
- Al-Rummānî, *Thalāth Rasā'il fî I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, Ed. by M. Khalaf Allah and M.
Sallām, (Cairo:1956).
- Al-Sakkâkî, B, *Miftāḥ al-'Ulûm*, (Beirut: 1937).
- Al-Shak'a, M, *Riḥlat al-Shi'r min al-'Umawiyya ilā al-'Abbāsiyya*, (Beirut: 1973).
- Al-Ṣṣafadî, Kh, *Kitāb al-Wāfî bi'l-Wafyāt*, Ed. D. Krawusky, (Buriet: 1982), v.
IX.
- Al-Taṭāwî, 'A, *Qaḍāyā al-Fann fî Qaṣ'idat al-Madh' al-'Abbāsiyya*, (Cairo: 1981).

Al-Tawhîdî, A and Miskawayh, *Al-Hawāmil wa'l-Shawāmil*, Ed. by A. Amîn and S. Şaqr, (Cairo: 1951).

---, *Thalāth Rasā'il*, Ed. I. Al-Kîlānî, (Damascus: 1951).

Al-Ṭabarî, M, *Tārîkh al-Ṭabarî: Tārîkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulûk wa man Kān fi Zamānihim*, Ed. Ş. al- 'Aṭṭār, (Beirut: 1998), vols. XI and XII.

---, *The History of al-Ṭabarî (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulûk)* Tran. and annotated by D. Waines, (New York: 1992), v. XXXVI.

---, *The History of al-Ṭabarî (Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulûk)*, Tran. and annotated by G. Saliba, (New York: 1985), v. XXXV

---, *The History of al-Ṭabarî (Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulûk)*, Tran. and annotated by J. Kraemer (New York: 1989), v. XXXIV.

--- *The History of al-Ṭabarî (Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulûk)*, Tran. and annotated by Ph. Fields, (New York: 1987) v. XXXVII.

[Antara], *Kitāb al-'Iqd al-Thamîn, The Divan of the six Arabic Poets, Ennābiga, 'Antra, Tharafa, Zuhair, 'Alqama and Imruulqais Arabic poets*, Ed. W. Ahlwardt, (London: 1870).

A. Scinmmel, " Calligraphy and poetry" in *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, (London: 1990), pp. 115-147.

Arberry, A, *The Koran Interpreted*, (London and New York: 1995), v. II.

Ashtiyani, J. Johnstone, T. Latham, J. Serjeant, R and R. Smith (eds.), *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, (Cambridge: 1990).

Asfour, J, *Al-Şûra al-Fanniyya fi al-Turāth al-Naqdî wa'l-Balāghî 'ind al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: 1992).

---, *Qirā'tu al-Turāth al-Naqdî*, (Cairo: 1994).

- Biṭām, M, *Mażāhir al-Mujtama' wa Malāmiḥ al-Tajdīd min Khilāl al-Shi'r al-'Abāsī al-Awwal (133-232)*, (Algiers: 1995).
- Burckhardt, T, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, (London: 1976)
- Cuddon, J, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: 1990).
- Ḍayf, Sh, *al-Fann wa Madhāhibuh fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī*, (Cairo: 1969)
- Faruqi, L, *An Annotated Glossary of Arabic Musical Terms*, (London: 1981).
- F. Topan, "Projecting Islam: Narrative in Swahili Poetry" in *Journal of African Studies*, v. 14, No 1, June 2001, p. 107-119.
- Ḥasan, 'A, *Shi'r al-Wuqūf 'alā al-Aṭlāl min al-Jāhiliyya ilā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Thālith*, (Damascus: 1968).
- Hitti, F, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (New York: 1996).
- Hourani, A, *Arabic Thought In The Liberal Age 1798-1939*, (Cambridge: 1983).
- Husain, Ṭ, *Min Ḥadīth al-Shi'r wa'l-Nathr*, (Cairo: 1948).
- Ibn al-Kazarūnī, Ṣ, *Mukhtaṣar al-Tārīkh min Awwal al-Azamān ilā Muntahā Dawlat Banī al-'Abbās*, Ed. M. Jawād, (Baghdad: 1970).
- Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'A, *Kitāb al-Badī'*, Ed. by I. Kratchkovsky, (London: 1935).
- , *Shi'r al-Amīr Abī al-'Abbās*, Ed. M. Sharīf, (Cairo: 1977) vols. I and II.
- , *Shi'r 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz*, Ed. B. Lewin, (Istanbul: 1950). vols. III and IX.
- , *Shi'r Ibn al-Mu'tazz; Part I, the Dīwān, Ṣan'at Muḥammad b. Yaḥya al-Ṣūlī*, Ed. Y. al-Sāmīrāī, (Baghdad: 1977), vols. I and II, but v. III in 1978.
- , *The Dīwān of 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz*, Tran. A. Wormhoudt, (Oskaloosa: 1978).

- Ibn Manẓûr, M, *Lisān al-'Arab*, (Beirut: 1956), v. VII.
- Johnson, M (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, (Minneapolis: 1981).
- J, Mattock, 'A Political Poem of Ibn al-Mu'tazz', in D. Jackson (ed), *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, (University of St Andrews: 1994), pp. 51-61.
- Khafâjī, M, *Ibn al-Mu'tazz wa Turâthuhu fi'l-Adab wa'l-Naqd wa'l-Bayân*, (Beirut: 1991).
- Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. *More Than Cool Reason; A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, (Chicago and London: 1989).
- Lévi-Strauss, C, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Tran. J. and D. Weightman, (Chicago: 1964), v. I.
- Maṭlûb, A, *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahât al-Balāghiyya wa Taṭawwuruhā*, (Baghdad: 1989), vols. I and II.
- Mu'minî, Q, *Naqd al-Shi'r fi'l-Qarn al-Rrābi' al-Hijrî*, (Riyadh: 1982).
- Nadîm, S, *A Critical Appreciation Of Arabic Mystical Poetry*, (Delhi: 1993).
- Nash'at, 'A, *Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabî; Uṣûluh, Nahḍatuh, Intishāruh*, (Damascus: 1984).
- Ortony, A (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: 1993).
- Preminger, A and T. Brogan (Eds), 'Imagery', by N. Frie, pp. 559-65, and "Sensibility" by L. Lerner, pp. 1143-5, in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, (New Jersey: 1993).
- Read, H, *The Philosophy of Modern Art*, (London: 1951).

- Rowson, E, '*mujûn*', in J. Meisami and P Starkey (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, (London and New York: 1998), v. II, pp. 546-8.
- Sayyid al-Ahî, 'A, '*Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Adabuhu wa 'Ilmuhu*, (Beirut: 1951).
- Shalabî, S, '*Ibn al-Mu'tazz Şûratan li 'Aşrih*, (Cairo: 1981).
- Spurgeon, C, '*Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us*, (Cambridge: 1935).
- Stetkevych, S, '*Abu Tammām and the Poetics of the 'Abbasid Age*, (Leiden. New York. Kobenhavn. Koln: 1991).
- Wightman, G and al-'Udhari, 'A, '*Birds Through A Ceiling of Alabaster*, (London: 1975).

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Sources of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Imagery

