The Influence of the Discovery of Oil on the Poetry of a Selection of Modern Blind Poets from the Gulf Region

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This Thesis looks up the dimensions of the oil age and oil impact on the works of blind poets from Arab Gulf countries with specific reference to al-Sālimī, al-Shabīb, and Ibn Ḥusayn. The Thesis covers the period from 1867 till 2014 and includes three important historical contexts that are both closely aligned to one another and crucial to the Gulf's modern history, i.e. the pre-oil age, the onset of the oil age and the post-oil age. By dividing the scope of the Thesis into three key phases and distributing three blind poets as representatives of each phase, this Thesis will initially examine the impact of blindness on the poetic production of the selected blind poets from two perspectives: psychological and Sensory. The aim of such examination is to test and guarantee their unique ability to use imagery as efficiently as sighted poets despite being blind.

After that, this Thesis will analyse the impact of the Gulf's environment on shaping imagery in the poets' works by adopting a semiotic methodology. In addition, it will shed light on the psychological reception of blind poets regarding the oil age and investigate its echo and signs on their work. Finally, the Thesis will adopt a historical methodology of tracing the impact of oil on the poetic style, language, content and topics of poetic production in the Gulf as of the pre-oil era, the oil era itself and the post oil era. This methodology will uncover the role that oil played in changing the Gulf's poetry through tracing the transformations of poetic style and content during each historical phase.

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Transliteration

Library of Congress Arabic transliteration system:

Consonants

ء	ʾ	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	ʿ
ج	J	غ	gh
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Vowels

Long		Short	
ا	ā	$\overset{\acute{}}{\circ}$	a
و	ū	$\overset{\mathit{u}}{\circ}$	u
ي	ī	$\underset{\cdot}{\circ}$	i

Abbreviations

Dīwān	Several poems belonging to one poet, collected in a volume
d.	Died
Hijrī	The Islamic calendar
Ibn Ḥusayn	Saudi blind poet Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn (1931-2014)
n.d.	No date
Al-Sālimī	Omani blind poet Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867-1914)
Al-Shabīb	Kuwaiti blind poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894-1963)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introduction represents a general view of the topic in six sections. First, it describes the research questions and aims of the study. After that it moves to the scope of the study that includes the criteria of selecting blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries as well as short biographies of each poet. It then presents the literature review in five sub-sections. Later, it uncovers the significance of the study that describes what contribution this thesis will make to the broad literature. It then states the methodology section, and concludes with the organisation of the study section.

Research Questions and Aims

It is clear that literature in general, and especially poetry in Arab societies, reflects the concerns, interests and features of society. Poetry in the Gulf has played a crucial role in representing essential issues in various respects, in both the pre-oil and post-oil eras. Indeed, blind poets from Arab Gulf countries have interacted with life effectively through poetry and faced challenges despite their visual disability. They have simultaneously played a literary role in documenting the political, economic and cultural events surrounding them.

Accordingly, one of the main aims that this study seeks to achieve is to uncover the environmental history of the Gulf as read through the works of blind poets – analysing the unique ways in which they document the pre-oil environment and also the discovery of oil. It also aims to test how oil as an economic factor was an effective contributor towards transforming the style, content and imagery in the poetic movement in the Gulf generally, and in the works of blind poets specifically.

It is also worth pointing out that this study is based on complex key concepts: Blindness, Trauma, Poetry and Oil. As a result, the study's general objective is to explore the influence of oil on poetry through shedding light on the work of three blind poets from Arab Gulf countries, covering three periods: Pre-oil, discovery of oil and Post-oil.

The study aims to achieve its objective by considering three main perspectives. The first will be to examine the impact of blindness on the works of chosen poets from the Gulf from a psychological angle by implementing Trauma Theory, and from an artistic

angle by focusing on Poetic Imagery based on the five senses. Second, it will shed light on the impact of the Gulf's similar environment in formulating poetic imagery of blind poets by focusing on the three main benchmark periods of the region, i.e. pre, onset and post-oil eras. Third, it will trace the influence of oil in modifying poetic style and content in the Gulf via comparing three blind poets to one another, whereby each is representative of one of the oil eras mentioned above.

This study is based on a fundamental question: To what extent did the discovery of oil influence the works of blind poets in the Arab Gulf Countries? Such a problematic question should be adequately addressed through answering the following three sub-questions:

Question I: How did blindness influence the works of chosen poets from the Gulf? Chapter 2 will respond to this issue from two facets: Psychological – as blindness affects the psyche and body, and Sensory. The Chapter will focus on poetic imagery and blind poets' compensatory mechanisms for loss of sight through their imagination and other senses. Answering this question will determine whether the deficit of eyesight formed a barrier for blind poets and prevented them from formulating poetic imagery based on the entire five senses.

Question II: What is the impact of the Gulf's similar environment on formulating the poetic imagery of blind poets? Chapter 3 answers this query as it covers each blind poet representative of either the pre, onset or post eras of oil's discovery. Moreover, it will reveal the representation of the Gulf natural environment in the works of blind poets from Arab Gulf countries in the pre-oil era, as well as uncover how they represented the society of oil. In this Chapter, selected poems – including signs indicating the society of oil – will be analysed through a mixture of Eco-criticism and Semiotic Methodology. In other words, Chapter 3 will examine and analyse the unique ways in which al-Sālimī, al-Shabīb and Ibn Ḥusayn, as blind poets, documented the pre-oil era, the discovery of oil and the post-oil era, respectively.

Question III: How has the poetic content and style in the works of blind poets changed since the discovery of oil in Arab Gulf Countries? Answering this question is an attempt to observe the change that occurred in poetry regarding poetic content and style, which transformed during the appearance of oil as well as in the post-oil periods. For

example, new themes and purposes joined poetic content during the appearance of oil and in the post-oil period. Chapters 4 will answer this question.

Answering these questions – in Chapters 2 to 4 – within the historical context of oil's appearance will reveal the extent to which the discovery of oil contributed towards transforming content and style in the works of blind poets from the Arab Gulf Countries.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is an integral part of Chapter 1 of this Thesis. This section will discuss the reasons for the selection of the three blind poets: the Omani al-Sālimī, Kuwaiti al-Shabīb, and Saudi Ibn Ḥusayn. Some of the core terms that will appear throughout this study must be clarified. Here, the terms 'Blindness' and 'Gulf' will be explained in the context of this study. This part is divided into two sub-sections, each concerning one of the aforementioned terms.

1. Blindness

As stated, my intention as a researcher in literature is to examine the influence of oil on poetry in the Gulf through applying the aforementioned division on a particular category of poets in the Gulf, i.e. blind poets. However, blindness, as a concept, has many degrees and many interpretations. Therefore, it is essential to figure out the concept of *Blindness* to determine a specific category of blind poets selected in this Thesis. The following paragraphs will clarify the concept of blindness, as well as the process of selecting blind poets in the Gulf for purposes of this thesis.

This sub-section explores the meaning of the term 'blindness' and identifies the categories of blind people and the differences between them. It presents a review of work pertinent to the subject area and delves into the mechanisms for critically selecting blind poets to understand how they can be applied effectively in this study.

In general, blindness refers to the absence of one of the five senses: sight. According to Hornby and Parnwell (1969, p. 52), blind people are those who are unable to see. This definition is somewhat general because there are many types of blindness, such as complete, partial, permanent and temporary loss of sight. In this thesis, I will only

examine blind poets who lost their sight completely and permanently when they were young.

Al-Fayfī distinguishes between blind people based on the age at which they went blind. He stated (1996, p. 173) that *Akmah* in Arabic refers to a person who was born blind; the plural form is *Kumh*. *Ḍarīr* refers to a person who became blind at an early age, the plural being *Aḍirāʾ*. There is also a third type of person, one who became blind in later years, but no Arabic term could be identified for this type.

Careful consideration should be given to distinguish between people who became blind at an early age and those who became blind in later years. We must thus query, at what age of going blind can a person be described as *Ḍarīr* (a blind person at an early age) and at what age is this term no longer applicable? This raises two further questions: What is the maximum age for people who became blind at an early age? What is the minimum age for people who became blind in later years?

Previous authors have set no standard or analytical criteria regarding this issue. Both al-Fayfī (1996) and Ḥusayn (1997) left the issue open based on their evaluations. They suggested restricting the process of selecting blind poets to two types: those who were born blind and those who became blind at a young age. Thus, they excluded the category of those who became blind in later years and reduced the scope of blind poets in their studies for a logical reason. According to al-Fayfī (1996, p. 173), people who were born blind do not have a notion of sight other than the notion of visual perception. People who have seen things visually and became blind later in life can imagine visual things and consider them familiar but forgotten for a long time. Similarly, Ḥusayn (1997, p. 115) attributed setting such standards to the visual experience, memory and perception that helps those who become blind in later years to cope mentally with their new, dark world.

The disparity in visual memory among the three types of blind people makes it difficult to place them all in one category. More accuracy is needed in classifying blind people, particularly blind poets. It would be better in any study of blind poets if they were divided into three categories: those who were born blind, those who became blind at a young age, and those who became blind in later years. Such division offers an accurate vision for each group, especially in realising visual things.

Blind poets from the first and second categories were chosen for this study. Blind poets from the first category were born blind, so they do not have any visual memory, whereas blind poets from the second category became blind at a young age, meaning that they might have a visual memory even if it remains limited. Blind poets from the third category will be excluded because they became blind in later years, so they have already created a strong visual memory.

2. Arab States of the Gulf

In this sub-section, the meaning of the term 'Gulf' will be defined from two perspectives: the area and the era. This sub-section aims to narrow down the scope of the study. Consequently, the parameters for selecting certain blind poets for the study, according to the standards explained above, will be made clear by discussing the most critical studies on the poetic movement in the Gulf.

Geographically, the Gulf is a shallow arm of the sea between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. Iran represents the eastern side of the Gulf, while the coastline that extends from Kuwait in the north to Oman in the south represents the western side of the Gulf. Blind poets in this area were selected for this study. To refer to this area; therefore, this thesis approves using the term 'Gulf' or 'Arab Gulf Countries' depend on the context.

Regarding the era of study, Gāfūd (1996), al-Rūmī (1999) and Bū Shaʿīr (1997) have studied the poetic movement in the Gulf and its developments and currents in the modern age. Although Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 145) stated that it is challenging to create a time frame showing the starting point of the modern era accurately, it can be noted that the time frame in these studies begins in the nineteenth century. As a result, the time scope of this study will be the nineteenth century onwards.

Also, of note is that there is a close similarity between the three studies mentioned above, especially in classifying the poetic currents in the modern era in the Gulf. Gāfūd (1996), for instance, classified them into two fundamental poetic currents: *Shu'arā' al-Iḥyāʾ* (neo-classical poets) and *al-Rūmānsiyyīn* (romantic poets). The classical current represents poets who preserve the old style of Arabic poems and imitate or follow the classical Arabic poets in specific poetic themes, such as panegyric, elegy and satire. The romantic current represents poets who came later and removed the classical

restrictions on style and content inherited from classical poets in pre-Islamic era. Thus, Gāfūd (1996) argued that the romantic poets in the Gulf have moved from a classical poetic style and inherited traditional, natural, emotional, personal and artistic themes.

In line with Gāfūd (1996), al-Rūmī (1999) classified them into two key currents: *Tayyār al-shiʿr al-taqlīdī* (neo-classical current) and *Tayyār al-taṭawwur* (modern current). She also added a middle current between these, which represents the classical poets who had a romantic sense in their poetry. Interestingly, the poet that al-Rūmī (1999) studied in this middle current is a blind poet: Ṣaqr al-Shabīb.

Bū Shaʿīr (1997) took the same route as Gāfūd and al-Rūmī in classifying the poetic currents in the modern era in the Gulf, although from a deeper perspective. The division that he applied consisted of six poetic currents. The first three represent the classical current, showing gradual stages of development until the appearance of the classical poetic current, which is closely related to the romantic current. The second three represent the clear emergence of the romantic current and its characteristics. Furthermore, they include the realistic current that was influenced by a powerful factor, oil, as well as the modern current that rebelled against the single rhyme and the traditional style of vertical Arabic poetry.

After selecting the time and area contexts for this study and presenting an outline of the most important studies on the modern poetic movement in the Gulf and its currents, the names of blind poets in the Gulf discovered during the research process will be presented to clarify the selection of the poets that serve the study.

The Gulf in the modern era is a fertile field not only for sighted poets but also for blind poets. According to al-Hāshimī (2002, pp. 109–127), Gāfūd (2002, pp. 421–441), and al-ʿAbūdī (2002, pp. 89–106), no blind poets could be found from Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, yet many were found from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman. This list included the Saudi poets Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif (d. 1868) and Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn (1931–2014), the Omani poet Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914), and the Kuwaiti poets Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963), Fahd al-ʿAskar (1913–1951), and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Baṣīr (1920–1999).

The current author could apply the parameters of this research to three of these poets only. The three who were excluded from the scope of the study are Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif, Fahd al-ʿAskar, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Baṣīr. Regarding Aḥmad Ibn

Musharrif, neither Ḥusayn (1997, p. 176) nor ʿAbūd (2004, p. 121) pointed out the exact year that the poet went blind, and they did not indicate the year in which he was born. Consequently, it is impossible to determine whether he was blind at a young age or in later life.

Fahd al-ʿAskar was excluded because he became blind in the last years of his life (al-Alī, 2000, p. 327). Thus, he had already built enough visual memory to harness it in creating visual images in his poetry; therefore, al-ʿAskar's visual experience does not fit the conditions of the study.

Last, according to al-Qatam (2002, p. 20), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Baṣīr became blind when he was four or five years old. However, al-Qatam (2002, p. 41) argued that ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Baṣīr had never been known as a poet because of the extremely small number of poems that he wrote. As such, he did not produce a sufficient number of poems to serve this research effectively.

The remaining three poets are the most appropriate for achieving the objectives of the current research. The reasons for selecting them are twofold. The first reason is the short visual experience where all of them became blind at an early age. Almost all sources agree that al-Sālimī lost sight completely at the age of 12 (Sharīfī, 2011, p. 950) while al-Shabīb became blind when he was nine (al-Shaṭṭī, 2007, p. 19) and Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn became blind when he was four (al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 54). The second reason is the intensive poetic production where they produced a great number of poems during their lives, covering a variety of diverse themes and issues.

It is fully understood that the area and time frame are broad and extensive; however, the selected blind poets are carefully and respectively distributed to cover the Gulf area in the modern era. This study seeks to ensure the appropriate engagement of readers with the mainstream developmental stages of the poetic movement in the Gulf, which is often generalised to pre-oil and post-oil stages. Consequently, it aims to cover the political, economic, cultural and poetical changes as read in the works of the three blind poets, as they were born and lived in different circumstances and times. The Omani poet Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914) lived in the pre-oil period; the Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963) was born before the discovery of oil and lived during the beginning of the economic jump in Kuwait; the Saudi poet Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn (1931–2014) lived in both the pre-oil and post-oil periods. Therefore,

presenting the poetic currents in three periods and classifying the selected poets according to those poetic currents will be an appropriate strategy for attaining this study's goals.

3. Blind Poets in a Nutshell

Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī

The majority of historical records covering al-Sālimī's life agree that his name is ʿAbdullāh Ibn Ḥamīd Ibn Sulūm al-Sālimī, of al-Sawālim tribe, and who was known as Nūr al-Dīn. He was born in *al-Hawqayn* village in Oman in 1867. Yet most studies have failed to focus on his blindness trauma or even mention the date it struck him, save for al-Sulaymānī's study (2017, p.34). Through meticulous research into the matter at hand, al-Sulaymānī emphasises that al-Sālimī became completely blind as a young man of twelve. This thesis shall utilise this historical fact due to its importance in controlling the selection conditions of blind poets in the Arab Gulf countries' region.

Al-Sulaymānī (2009) states that al-Sālimī was a science and knowledge loving person since his early years and that he had memorised the Quran when under twelve years of age. He then travelled to *al-Rustāq* to be tutored by famous Omani teachers like sheikh Sāliḥ Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārethī. Historical sources emphasise that al-Sālimī travelled extensively in his quest for knowledge including to the city of *Nizwa* for mathematics and astronomy at the hands of his teacher Mūḥammad Ibn Khamīs al-Sayfī.

Al-Sālimī began writing when he was seventeen (Al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p.41) and did so at a fast pace despite becoming blind only five years earlier. Nonetheless, he dedicated his time to the service of science and religion, and hence produced a large collection of literary, religious and historical works, all of which were detailed and well researched. Al-Sālimī produced many writings on Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, History, Linguistics, Poetry and Poetics. According to Sharīfī (2011, p. 166), his most renowned writings are:

> - *Anwār al-ʿUqūl* (Brilliance of Minds): on Islamic dogma and theology – 300 verses of poetry.

> - *Shams al-Uṣūl* (Sun of Principles): on Jurisprudence principles – 1,000 verses of poetry.

- *Jawhar al-Niẓām* (Essence of System): on Islamic Law sciences – 14,000 verses of poetry. Verses were divided into subjects, then chapters. They consisted of a brief introduction of the Science and Principles of Jurisprudence, chapters on Worship Rites (Purities, Prayers, Fasting, Zakāt and Ḥajj, among others), Transactions of marriage, sales, inheritance, etc., and concluded with non-mandatory rites, ethics and lessons to be learned.

- *Tuḥfat al-Aʿayān bi Sīrat Ahl ʿUmān*: Al-Sālimī embarked on writing this two years before his death. It is deemed one of the most important narrative sources on Omani history. He begins by introducing Oman, mentions the good traits of its people, gives historical account of when Arabs first liberated it from the Persians, mentions some of its kings, how Islam reached it, its relations with consecutive Islamic nations from the times of the four rightly-guided caliphs till the Umayyads and Abbasids, and Sultanate-based statehood since the Islamic conquest till its later days. The book lists events in chronological order to allow readers a better grasp of the events thereof.

Al-Sulaymānī (2009), al-Sulaymānī (2017), and Sharīfī (2011) describe the period in which al-Sālimī grew up in as one of knowledge ignorance and political disarray that spread throughout Oman. Accordingly, such dire conditions formed a catalyst towards shaping al-Sālimī, both intellectually and poetically. On the one hand, he revitalised religion and led a social reform movement that also aimed at the dissemination of knowledge and which called for the establishment of the Imam state in Oman (1913-1954) for which he had laid the cornerstone thereof and which materialised a year prior to his death. On the other hand, poetry was al-Sālimī's conduit of reform thought which he utilised in expressing his social suffering, personal feelings and political stances on the glad tidings of the Imam Project, as well as urging his countrymen to adopt Jihad in resistance of British colonisation and occupation and the Christianisation movement. It is also worth pointing out that Al-Sālimī's poetry was not solely aimed at his Omani countrymen and their national causes, but was also deemed a reformist call to the Arab and Islamic nation at large.

Ṣaqr al-Shabīb

The writings of Aḥmad al-Bishr al-Rūmī of 1969 are considered the oldest and most detailed on the life of blind Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb. Al-Rūmī describes minute details of the poet's life due the close friendship they shared and gives a biography of the man in the introduction of a book. Al-Rūmī then collected a number of poetic writings of his friend, edited them, verified their authenticity and laid them bare in a dīwān he entitled "Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Dīwān."

Al-Rūmī states in the introduction of this book that he once asked al-Shabīb about his name and the latter responded it was "Ṣaqr Ibn Sālim al-Shabīb", of the Shammar tribe originating in the city of *Ḥāʾil* towards the North of current Saudi Arabia. Al-Rūmī adds that al-Shabīb was born in 1896 in *Sharq* neighbourhood of Kuwait City, yet this is not a confirmed date as it is contradicted by Kuwaiti literature historian Khaled Saud al-Zaid (1976) who states al-Shabīb was born in 1894.

Al-Shabīb's mother died while he was still young, and with that, al-Shabīb lost the affection he could have found solace in from his father's scolding and cruelty as the age difference between the latter two was 60 years. This caused many disagreements and fights between the two and led to each holding opposite stances on many issues (Al-Shabīb, 1969, p.14).

Al-Shabīb's father was poor and worked as a fisherman, and as the boy became older, his father began readying him to become the same. But the poet contracted an illness in his eyes and completely lost his sight at the age of nine. Hence, his father enrolled him in al-Kuttāb educational system that was prevalent at the time in Kuwait. It was there that al-Shabīb's ability to memorise surfaced – a matter which pleased his father who had hoped the boy would become a religious speaker. But the poet sensed in himself an attraction toward reading literature and poetry, and when this came to the attention of his father, he blamed his son for it and scolded him. This led to a cold relationship between the two and the young man preferred to move away from home so as to avoid his father.

In 1914, al-Shabīb decided to travel to the city of *al-Iḥsāʾ* to the North of Saudi Arabia in pursuit of Islamic studies as the city was the *Mecca* of knowledge at the time (Al-Shabīb, 1969, p.10). The poet remained there for two years and was hosted by renowned Imam ʿAbdulʿazīz Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlijī with whom he became close, and who

taught him linguistics, syntax and jurisprudence. Al-Shabīb left *al-Iḥsāʾ* complaining of its Imams' intolerance and that they do not allow students to argue with them.

Upon arriving in Kuwait in 1916, the only job al-Shabīb was able to land was an Imam of a mosque – a matter that pleased his father – but the poet's love for poetry angered his father yet again. Their relationship remained tense till the older man died in 1918. The demise of the poet's father caused him psychological and financial trauma as he had inherited a ruined house which he was not financially able to fix, as well as a destitute family. This forced al-Shabīb to resort to composing poetry of panegyric of Kuwait's rulers, merchants, and elites so that they may give him monetary gifts and get his house fixed.

Yet al-Shabīb cherished knowledge, poetry and philosophy and would meet with Kuwaiti researchers and intellectuals and attend cultural events. He expressed his intellectual opinions through poetry and called for granting women their right to education. In the introduction of al-Shabīb's diwan that was edited by al-Ghunaym and printed in 2008, al-Ghunaym notes that al-Shabīb's relationships with enlightened Kuwaiti cultural elites like Khālid al-Faraj, ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Rashīd and Yūsuf Ibn ʿĪsā al-Qināʿī caused al-Shabīb trouble with Kuwaiti religious zealots who rejected any opinion that opposed their own. This group expressed animosity towards al-Shabīb and attacked his works without truly understanding their underlying meanings, and even questioned his fidelity to Islam, defamed him, branded him a non-believer and called him a Heretic. Al-Shabīb's poetry contains many verses that express his sorrow and anger regarding this matter.

Al-Shabīb was married three times but had no children and was unable to find a wife that suited him. His final attempt at marriage was his longest period of being married and lasted merely three months. Al-Shabīb wrote an invective poem of his last wife who had caused him much distress and in which he expressed his feelings of misery and suffering due to her actions (Al-Shabīb, 2008, p.625). In the last seven years of his life, al-Shabīb gave up on life and its many trials that he had continued to experience, alienated himself from people inside the confines of his house and remained indoors until he died there alone on 7th August, 1963.

Ibn Ḥusayn

Al-Sayyid (2001, p.38) states that the poet's name is Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn and that he was born in *al-ʿAwdah* village, Najd in 1931, i.e. the same period when the sun of modernisation began shinning on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His birth coincided with the era of Saudi unification and his formative years went in tandem with the period of Saudi development. Ibn Ḥusayn thus witnessed the country's laying of intellectual, social, political and educational foundations, as well as the passage of six consecutive kings of Saudi Arabia, as he had lived till a very old age.

Ibn Ḥusayn lost his eyesight completely at the age of four years old, yet this did not prevent him from travelling extensively during his childhood and youth in pursuit of knowledge as he was an ambitious man who sought grandeur and who prized science and literature. Al-Ḥaydarī (2007, p.83) states that Ibn Ḥusayn received his primary education in *al-ʿAwdah* village and that his father then sent him to Riyadh in 1942 to study at the hands of Shariah scholars like sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm. Ibn Ḥusayn then travelled to Mecca to continue his studies, then to *Dar al-Tawḥīd* in *al-Ṭāʾif* where he studied for two years and then returned to Riyadh. He finished his diploma in 1953 and then sat for a Bachelor's degree at the faculty of Arabic language at the university in Riyadh in 1957. Stressing Ibn Ḥusayn's passion for science and literature, al-Ḥaydarī states that after having taught for a while, the poet travelled to Egypt in pursuit of higher education at al-Azhar university in Cairo where he received a Master's in Literature in 1974 and a PhD in literature and criticism in 1977. Finally, Ibn Ḥusayn returned to Riyadh and taught at the same faculty he had studied at, and remained there till his death in 2014.

Regarding the difficulties Ibn Ḥusayn faced while teaching, al-Sayyid (2001, p.54) quotes Ibn Ḥusayn from when he interviewed him in person that he only felt his blindness bothered him when he needed a person to read for him. Yet Ibn Ḥusayn was always able to find a willing volunteer from among his colleagues and friends who enjoyed the activity so much to the extent that they would even join him in class to do so. As for writing, Ibn Ḥusayn used to say that a blind person uses the typewriter just as easily a seeing person does, and having practised on it from an early age, he was able to preserve all his writings.

According to al-Ḥaydarī (2007, p.83), Ibn Ḥusayn is considered among the first in Saudi Arabia to have learnt writing and reading via Braille, allowing him to partake in the preparation of many cultural programmes at Saudi Radio. This is in addition to taking part in numerous symposiums, public lectures, scientific conferences at universities, national festivals, literary clubs and cultural associations both in Saudi Arabia and abroad. Ibn Ḥusayn has composed numerous research, critique and scientific papers – most prominent of which are: *al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth bayn al-Muḥāfaẓah wa al-Tajdīd* (Modern Poetry Between Preservation and Renewal) in 1988, and *Tārīkh al-Tajdīd fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī ilā Maṭlaʿ al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth* (The History of Arab Poetry Renewal till the New Age) in 2001. Ibn Ḥusayn also wrote a novel entitled, *al-Zahrah al-Muḥtariqah* (The Burning Flower) which was published in 2007 (Al-Ḥaydarī, 2007, p.14).

Literature Review

Many studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of blindness in Arabic literature. Some of them have been descriptive, while others analytical. The descriptive studies represent the pure biographical current by presenting biographies of famous blind people in Arabic literature, while the analytical include the biographical trend and also deal with blindness as a literary phenomenon from an analytical perspective.

This Literature Review will discuss what has generally been written about blindness in Arabic literature. It will be divided into five sub-sections. The first part sheds light on the descriptive studies on blind Arabic poets. It will present a historical background on the beginning of writing about blindness and famous blind Arabs, as well as look at how studies have gradually contributed to building a biographical database of blind Arabs' names.

The second sub-section elucidates analytical studies on the poetry of blind Arabic poets, especially ones that address a group of blind poets and the imagery of their poetic works. The third will present studies that concentrate on imagery in the poetry of the three selected blind poets from the Gulf. The fourth sub-section highlights literary studies adopting Trauma Theory to analyse Arabic literature. Lastly, the fifth will focus on studies that have explored the impact of oil on the poetic movement in Arab Gulf

countries. The purpose of this literature review is to identify the current knowledge gap concerning modern blind poets from Arab Gulf countries.

Sub-section 1: Descriptive Studies on Blind Arab Poets

Four studies have collected biographies of famous blind people who contributed to Arabic literature from the pre-Islamic era to the modern era. These studies have contributed gradually to the building of a fertile basis of blind people's biographies, including their works. This sub-section will concentrate on studies that include only biographies of blind poets in Arabic literature without analysis and will identify studies that include written biographies of the three blind poets in the Gulf which have been selected for this study. This sub-section aims to prove that the authors of blind Arab poets' biographies have ignored the Gulf area in the modern era and also seeks to illustrate the reasons for this neglect.

The oldest book written about blindness in Arab heritage that I found is *Nakt al-Himyān fī Nukat al-ʿUmyān*, written by al-Ṣafadī in the Eighth Hijrī century (the Fourteenth century). Ḥusayn (1997, p. 217) considers it as one of the earliest attempts to draw a biographical frame for the works of the most famous blind people in early Arabic literature from the pre-Islamic era to the eighth Hijrī century when al-Ṣafadī lived.

Indeed, I found it hard to translate the title of this book into English, despite being a native Arabic speaker because I could not understand the meaning of the first and second words, *Nakt al-Himyān*, in Arabic. However, I found that al-Mūsā, in his book titled *Nawāfidh Adabiyyah* (Literary Windows), illustrates the meaning of the title very clearly. Al-Mūsā (2012, p. 131) states that *al-Himyān* is a noun meaning a bag used in the past, fastened in the middle of people's bodies to protect money. *Nakt* is also a noun that means to pull and get what is inside *al-Himyān* (the bag). *Nukat* is the plural of *Nuktah*, which means 'issue' and 'benefit'. Last, *al-ʿUmyān* is the plural of *Aʿmā*, which means 'blind person'. Therefore, I deduced that the title means, figuratively, to benefit from what is inside the bag of stories by the Blind.

Al-Ṣafadī starts his book with ten introductions which he uses to discusses the concept of blindness through four dimensions: Linguistic, Religious, Literary and Medicinal. Then, he presents 312 biographies of blind Arabs individually, including their names, years of birth and death, poems, works and information about their lives. The method

that al-Ṣafadī applies in presenting the biographies of blind people is simple. He favours alphabetical ordering as opposed to using a thematic division of groups according to their major, specific work or notoriety. In general, al-Ṣafadī made the first contribution to studying blind people by presenting these 312 biographies from the pre-Islamic era to the Eighth Hijrī century.

As for modern studies that concentrate on writing biographies of modern poets, after al-Ṣafadī's effort, the topic of blind people was ignored by authors and critics until the unveiling of al-Shurbāṣī's study in 1956 – a huge gap in time between the two works. Thus, the topic of blind people was not considered for almost 600 years. Ḥusayn (1997, p. 218) argued that the only work that has continued al-Ṣafadī's effort and connected it with the modern age is *Fī ʿĀlam al-Makfūfīn* (In Blind People's World) by al-Shurbāṣī.

According to Ḥusayn (1997, p. 218), al-Shurbāṣī's study (1956) is considered a bridge between old and modern ages. The biographical aspect of his study is divided into two parts: Old and Modern blind people. The author depended on al-Ṣafadī's efforts in terms of writing the biographies of blind people from the past. However, the method of division that al-Shurbāṣī used in reviewing these biographies was somewhat thematic, unlike al-Ṣafadī's division, which is alphabetised. Al-Shurbāṣī categorised famous blind Arabs into groups according to common themes. For example, he wrote the biographies of two poets who lived in the Abbasid age: Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAynāʾ. According to al-Shurbāṣī (1956, p. 237), the common theme between them is *al-Fukāhah* (sense of humour). Furthermore, he wrote biographies of blind people who had lived a long life. Some people became blind in old age or because of noble causes such as wars.

Regarding modern blind people, Ḥusayn (1997, p. 218) stated that when pursuing the biographies of blind people in the modern era, he noticed that al-Shurbāṣī concentrated exclusively on blind people from Egypt. However, when I read al-Shurbāṣī's study, I noticed that the author included a single representative of blind people in the modern age, i.e. Egyptian poet Aḥmad al-Zayn (1899–1947) (al-Shurbāṣī, 1956, p. 202).

Of a total of 12 chapters, al-Shurbāṣī allocated an entire chapter to al-Zayn's biography, suggesting that he considered al-Zayn's biography a valuable contribution to the field of blind people's biographies. Al-Zayn's biography could be summarised in

pieces about his works, education, moral values, and reputation among scholars in Egypt. Additionally, al-Shurbāṣī wrote wordily about al-Zayn's personality, behaviour and interests, such as the fact that he hated flattery and loved the arts and music.

As Ḥusayn (1997) stated, al-Shurbāṣī's was the first modern study that continued al-Ṣafadī's biographical work. It is also expected that an Egyptian critic such as al-Shurbāṣī would concentrate on Egyptian poets for three key reasons. First, in the first five years of the 1950s, when al-Shurbāṣī was writing *Fī ʿĀlam al-*Makfūfīn (In Blind People's World), the topic of blind people was still new, and both of them were from the same country. Therefore, it is axiomatic that al-Shurbāṣī would have written about a blind Egyptian poet. Second, Egypt was a cultural landmark in the Arab World, especially from 1930–1960 when many student scholars were sent from the Gulf to Egypt because of its high reputation in education, media and literature (al-Ghazālī, 2011, p. 86). Therefore, it is expected that Egyptian scholars would export Egyptian authors. Eventually, I realised that al-Shurbāṣī did not write about modern blind poets from the Gulf region.

In line with al-Shurbāṣī, Ḥusayn wrote biographies of blind people in his 1997 study *Aṣḥāb al-baṣāʾir, Waqfāt fī aḥwāl al-makfūfīn*. He followed the same path as al-Shurbāṣī in combining past and modern blind people's biographies under common themes and applied a simple method – dividing blind people into two groups: *Ulamā* (scholars) and *Udabā* (authors). Each group includes biographies of blind people reviewed according to chronological order. Ḥusayn (1997, p. 115) stated that several blind scholars are classified as authors and several others are classified as scholars; whereas the standard of such classification is notoriety.

Regarding modern blind poets, Ḥusayn (1997) contributed several biographies to the field that al-Shurbāṣī continued after al-Ṣafadī; however, his contributions were restricted to two countries: Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He wrote a biography of a single modern Saudi blind poet, Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif, who died in 1868 (Ḥusayn, 1997, p. 176).

I believe that Ḥusayn wrote biographies of blind people from Saudi Arabia because he was Saudi as well as blind, so he knew a great deal about this area. However, I also contend that he wrote biographies of blind people from Egypt because he completed his Master's and PhD in Egypt in 1978 (al-Ḥaydarī, 2007, p. 83). It is also worth pointing

out that Ḥusayn included his autobiography as a blind poet, scholar and lecturer at the end of his study (Ḥusayn, 1997, p. 221).

The fourth and last book, written by Khāzin ʿAbūd, is called *al-ʿUlamāʾ wa al-Shuʿarāʾ wa al-Udabāʾ al-ʿUmyān* (Blind Scholars, Poets and Writers). It took a biographical approach and included a vast number of blind Arabs' biographies. It also used an alphabetical order as that adopted by al-Ṣafadī. The book includes biographies of blind Arabs from several eras: from pre-Islam to the end of the Twentieth Century. The book also contains some blind people's works, such as their poems, prose and books. Because the book contains over 300 biographies of past and modern blind Arabs, I consider it an essential source for researchers interested in studying the works of these people.

Moreover, the author pointed out several biographies of modern blind Arab poets. In the same vein as al-Shurbāṣī and Ḥusayn, ʿAbūd concentrated on the region to which he belonged: Palestine and Lebanon. He wrote many biographies of modern blind poets from the two countries. However, he included only two brief biographies of modern blind poets from the Gulf: Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif (d. 1835) and Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (d. 1914), from Saudi Arabia and Oman, respectively (ʿAbūd, 2004, pp. 121, 179). Another point I should make is that although the author used resources regarding Kuwait's history, his book failed to mention any Kuwaiti blind poets despite the country being rich with blind poets such as Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963), Fahd al-ʿAskar (1913–1951) and ʿAbulrazzāq al-Baṣīr (1920–1999).

Nevertheless, I consider ʿAbūd's attempts to cover a few modern blind poets from the Gulf region a step forward in establishing a comprehensive dictionary of blind Arabs and their works. Al-Shurbāṣī (1956, p. 337) argued that such a dictionary is much in demand to serve researchers working in the field of blind people. Similarly, in the introduction and conclusion of his book, Ḥusayn (1997) mentioned the paucity of studies collecting blind Arabs' biographies.

It seems that the four studies above take biographical and descriptive positions in studying blind Arabs in general. In fact, the four researchers pushed their efforts as much as they could to collect and cover biographies of blind Arabs so that no one can deny their efforts in the field. However, blind poets from the Arab Gulf Countries in the modern era have not been sufficiently covered in the four studies thus far, except two:

Saudi Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif and Omani Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī. The four studies fail to mention the remaining blind poets from the Arab Gulf Countries, especially those from Kuwait that I mentioned in the scope of my thesis. Therefore, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap regarding modern blind poets in the Gulf.

Sub-section 2: Analytical Studies on the Imagery used by Blind Poets

This sub-section will concentrate on the studies that covered a group of blind Arabic poets generally and how they examined the imagery by blind poets in their poetic works. This sub-section aims to prove that no previous analytical studies on the imagery used by blind Arabic poets have covered the area of the Arab Gulf Countries in the modern era. Thus, this thesis seeks to fill the knowledge gap by examining imagery in the works of three modern blind poets in the Gulf by exploring the influence of blindness and oil on the imagery they have used.

This sub-section presents six studies that deal with the poetry of blind Arabic poets together as a group and study the imagery used by them. The first study is *al-Ṣūrah al-Baṣariyyah fī shiʿr al-ʿUmyān* (The Visual Images of the Poetry of Blind Poets) by al-Fayfī. From the title, it can be understood that al-Fayfī concentrates on a single aspect: the visual aspect of the imagery used by blind poets. The main idea of al-Fayfī's study is that the absence of the visual sense was the main factor in imagination and creativity regarding the imagery used by blind poets. In line with Ḥusayn (1997, p. 115), al-Fayfī (1996) uses analytical criteria in his study, restricting his selection of blind poets to only two types: *Kumh* (people who were born blind) and *Aḍirāʾ* (people who became blind at an early age). He suggests that these two categories of blind poets are suitable to his study, while the third category (those who became blind in old age) has the same or similar status as sighted poets because of the visual memories that they have already formulated, thus deemed useless for his study.

Al-Fayfī (1996) asks a general question: Does the visual imagery depend on the sense of sight? What seems interesting in this study is that al-Fayfī examined the visual discourse of six blind Arabic poets through a comparison with the visual discourse of their sighted counterparts from the Abbasid era to the modern era. As such, visual imagery used by blind poets has been analysed beside the visual imagery used by their sighted counterparts in the same era and same culture or area. The methodology

applied in this study is discourse analysis through analysing poetic verses from their poetic works (Dīwāns), which are rich in visual imagery.

The process of selecting these poets for al-Fayfī's study is based on three considerations: the same era, the same area and culture, and the abundance of the poetic works that includes visual imagery in particular. The following table presents how the author distributed blind and sighted poets and compared them.

Table 1: Al-Fayfī's comparison of blind and sighted poets

Blind poets	Sighted poets	Similarities
Bashshār Ibn Burd (d. 167 H/ 748 AD), al-ʿAkawwak (d. 203 H/ 728 AD), and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 449 H/ 1057 AD)	Abū Niwās (d. 198 H/ 779 AD)	• Lived in the same area (Iraq and Syria) • Lived in the Abbasid era • Similar poetic style and themes
Al-Ḥuṣarī (d. 448 H/ 1095 AD) and al-Tuṭaylī (d. 525 H/ 1131 AD)	al-Qasṭallī (d. 421 H/ 1002 AD)	• Lived in the same area (al-Andalus) • Lived in the Abbasid era
Al-Baraddūnī (1929–2001)	Bishārah al-Khūrī (1884–1968)	Lived in the modern era

From the table above, I consider that al-Fayfī selects blind and able-sighted poets for his study successfully because of many similarities among them, except for the selected poets from the modern era. It is true that both of the selected poets – al-Baraddūnī and al-Khūrī – lived in the same era, although their areas and cultures were different, as al-Baraddūnī lived in Yemen while al-Khūrī lived in Lebanon.

When al-Fayfī justifies his selection of al-Khūrī as a sighted counterpart to al-Baraddūnī, he states only that al-Khūrī is the most appropriate poet for conducting a comparison with al-Baraddūnī regarding the visual imagery in poetry (al-Fayfī, 1996, p. 201). I disagree with him on this point because the differences between the two

cultures are more numerous than their similarities. I believe that there are differences between Lebanon and Yemen in the modern era regarding the culture and environment. Thus, these differences have seeped into the visual imagery used in poetry. Therefore, for more accurate results and comparisons, I believe that it would be better if the author had selected a modern Yemeni poet rather than the Lebanese al-Khūrī. This is because the study is based on examining the common cultural influences on blind and sighted poets who lived in the same culture or at least a similar culture.

I also believe that the time and area frames are broad and extensive in this study because it involves many eras and cultures. Despite the broad frames, the author carefully arranges the comparison among poets along three dimensions. The first dimension is a comparison between two types of blind poets themselves: poets blind since birth (*Kumh*) and those who became blind at an early age (*Aḍirāʾ*). The second is a comparison according to culture: between Eastern (Arabian Peninsula) poets and Western (*Andalusī*) poets. Last is a comparison according to time: between old and modern poets. Through these three dimensions, al-Fayfī seeks to cover blind Arabic poets in many areas and eras as much as possible to pass general judgments about the visual imagery in the works of blind poets.

It is imperative for this thesis to convey my opinion about this study. Ḥusayn (1997, p. 36) states two crucial points about al-Fayfī's study. First, he criticises the generalisation in the title of al-Fayfī's study, as the study purports to involve all blind poets in Arabic literature but only studies the visual imagery of six blind poets in Arabic literature. Moreover, he wishes that al-Fayfī had not settled for only these six blind poets because of the abundance of old and modern blind Arabic poets. However, he declares that he appreciates the research highly and considers it a pioneering effort in drawing general time and area frames about blind Arabic poets.

Regarding the first point, I agree with Ḥusayn, though I consider that the issue is not so much the title as it is a generalisation of artistic judgments and critical results that al-Fayfī concludes. In fact, al-Fayfī depends on six blind poets belonging to two eras: the Abbasid and modern eras. Five of the selected blind poets lived in the Abbasid era and one in the modern age. Therefore, there is not enough balance between the number of selected poets in the Abbasid era and the number of selected poets in the

modern age to obtain general judgments and results about the imagery used by blind poets in Arabic literature.

I also believe that a comparison of an individual blind poet and an individual sighted poet to represent all Arabic poets in the modern era is not enough, because al-Fayfī applies a comparative approach between modern blind and sighted poets from different cultures and ignored the essential point that each poet represents his own culture, experience, era and area. It is essential to point out that culture played a different role for the two poets, who lived in different areas but in the same era. Thus, I believe that a generalisation appears in the title of al-Fayfī's study and that the conclusions about the modern blind poets are inaccurate and inapplicable to the whole group of blind Arabic poets in the modern age. This thesis will avoid the shortcomings mentioned above and seek to fill a gap in this field, given that there are many blind poets in the modern era and the Arab Gulf Countries.

The second study is *Shiʿr al-ʿUmyān: al-Wāqiʿi, al-Khayāl, al-Maʿānī, wa al-Ṣuwar al-Faniyyah* (The Poetry of Blinds: Reality, Imagination, Meanings, and Figures of Speech), by Maṣarwah (2008). Maṣārwah aimed to study imagery in the poetry of Arabic blind poets generally, without comparing blind and sighted poets as al-Fayfī did. He claimed that *al-khayāl* (imagination), *al-maʿānī* (figurative meanings), and *al-taṣwīr al-fannī* (imagery) in the poetry of blind Arabic poets have been studied but not from as deep a perspective as in his study.

Although Maṣarwah did not explicitly illustrate what he meant by a 'deep perspective', we can predict from reading the content that the deep perspective means studying *al-taṣwīr al-fannī* (the imagery) according to all the senses, not just the visual one addressed in al-Fayfī's study. Here, it might be logical that Maṣarwah presented a contribution to knowledge by examining the auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile images in the poetry of blind poets (Maṣarwah, 2008, p. 223).

Furthermore, Maṣarwah was successful in going beyond where al-Fayfī stopped. Al-Fayfī (1996, p. 297) referred briefly and insufficiently to the issue of *tarāsul al-ḥawās* (compensation among senses) in the poetry of blind poets when he talked about imagination. However, he did not discuss it deeply because of his commitment to studying only the visual imagery used by blind poets (Ibid.). It is also worth pointing out that Ḥusayn (1997, p. 92) referred briefly and insufficiently to this issue as well,

considering it an effective method for blind poets to draw poetic images beautifully. Therefore, the fourth chapter in Maṣarwah's work filled a gap by studying how other senses are employed to compensate for blind poets' lack of sight and examining how blind poets could invoke their senses and move from one to another in the same poetic verse.

I disagree with Maṣarwah regarding the lack of resources that study *al-khayāl* (imagination) and *al-Maʿānī* (figurative meanings) from a deep perspective because al-Fayfī discussed the two concepts in his study adequately. Regarding *al-khayāl* (imagination), al-Fayfī (1996, p. 280) discussed the concept of imagination deeply from various aspects: old and modern Arabic critics, Coleridge's romantic imagination, and the role of senses and culture in blind poets' imagination.

In contrast, Maṣarwah (2008) claimed that his study pioneered the examination of *al-Maʿānī* (figurative meanings) from a deep perspective. This means that he was the first to focus on the cultural influence of other poets on the poetry of blind poets. Although al-Fayfī (1996) concentrated on the role of culture in formulating the visual imagery of blind poets through intertextuality, he also discussed the cultural storage of the blind poets and how it seeps through their poetic imagery.

Despite its advantages, Maṣarwah's study has weaknesses in the title and methodology as well. In line with *The Visual Images of the Poetry of Blind Poets* by al-Fayfī, Maṣarwah depended on two types of blind poets: poets born blind and those who became blind at an early age. Ibn al-Taʿāwīdhī (1125–1187) is an integral part of the variety of poets that Maṣarwah discussed, as he is mentioned in several places (Maṣarwah, 2008, pp. 111–139, 181–182, 186–190, 191–192, 195–199, 290–327). In contrast, in *al-ʿUmyān: al-Wāqʿi, al-Khayāl, al-Maʿānī* (Blind Scholars, Poets, and Writers), ʿAbūd (2004, p. 35) stated that Ibn al-Taʿāwīdhī became blind when he was 60 years old. This means that Maṣarwah was not committed to the analytical criteria that he set for his study.

There is a well-known saying: 'Don't judge a book by its cover'. However, what is written on the cover of Maṣarwah's study obliges one to judge it intensely, as it writes that the study will focus on the poetry of blind poets until the twelfth century. Therefore, it is understandable that Maṣarwah mentioned a specific time frame on the cover of his study. However, he jumped to the modern era by discussing a poetic verse from

al-Baraddūnī (Maṣarwah, 2008, p. 204). According to ʿAbūd (2004, p. 217), the Yemeni poet al-Baraddūnī was born in 1929 and died in 2001, which means that Maṣarwah conducted his research with an unclear methodology.

There are also several weaknesses in the introduction of the study. Maṣarwah stated that the study would depend on the works of Bashshār Ibn Burd, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, al-ʿAkawwak, and 'others'. He neglected to specify the 'others', unlike al-Fayfī, who explicitly listed the names of the six blind poets. Consequently, the reader will find ambiguity from the beginning.

The second issue is the claim in the introduction of his book that the imagination, content and imagery used by blind poets have not been studied from as deep a perspective as in his study. This argument is inaccurate because Maṣarwah then goes on to discuss the previous studies on the topic. Therefore, the reader could notice the author's starting point and what he would contribute to the scholarly field.

There is also another weakness in the study, represented in the language of generalisation. Such language can also be found in the study's conclusion, where Maṣarwah insisted on passing judgments about blind poets generally, although he built his judgments based fundamentally on the poetry of only two blind poets: Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī. These two blind poets take the lion's share in the second, third and fourth chapters of his study, while the first, fifth and sixth chapters discuss them exclusively.

After presenting the two previous studies that examine imagery in the works of blind Arab poets, it is essential to state that the main reason that motivated me to start the current research is the language of generalisation in judgments about blind poets. The discussion above highlights that al-Fayfī and Maṣarwah deduced many of their judgments based on the poetry of a few blind poets. Such judgments are based on the poetry of a maximum of six blind poets and then extended throughout other eras. It is essential to point out that each of them represents a unique phenomenon in his era. Additionally, each of them was influenced by his own social, psychological and environmental culture. Consequently, they lived differently despite their common visual disability. Therefore, because of the importance of the culture and its influence on each era, I would argue that critical judgments become meaningless when they omit from consideration all the circumstances around poets individually.

There is another reason that motivated me to carry out a study on the topic of blind poets, which I will unveil after presenting the third study in this sub-section. The third study is *Wasāʾil Tashkīl al-Ṣūrah al-Baṣariyyah fī Shiʿr al-ʿUmyān: Dirasah Muqāranah fī Shiʿr al-Ṣarṣarī and Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī* (Means of Creating Visual Imagery in the Works of Blind Poets: A Comparative Study between the Poetry of al-Ṣarṣarī and Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī) by al-Falāḥī (2015). In his endeavour to fill a gap in studying the poetry of blind poets in the Abbasid era, al-Falāḥī (Ibid., p. 12) claimed that the two Abbasid blind poets, al-Ṣarṣarī and Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī, have not been considered enough by researchers, such as Masarwah, who have studied imagery in the works of blind poets in the Abbasid era. Hence, al-Falāḥī aimed to uncover the influence of environmental and social culture on the visual imagery in the works of two blind poets who lived in a specific era: the Abbasid era.

Al-Falāḥī (Ibid.) also claimed that the critical judgments and findings that researchers have achieved in their studies are limited to the blind poets that they selected for analysis. Most studies focus on studying the imagery used by certain blind poets – such as Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arī – so whatever they study, they obtain similar results. The difference in findings and results is based on changing case studies and eras, as well as what happened in al-Falāḥī's study.

When al-Falāḥī analysed the visual imagery used by the two selected poets, he remarked (2015, p. 152) that al-Ṣarṣarī employed white and green colours intensively. Likewise, Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī employed red and black intensively, with less green. Al-Falāḥī argued that the green colour in al-Ṣarṣarī's poetry has religious semantics more than environmental semantics, while it indicates the Andalusian environment in the poetry of Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī.

Careful consideration of such results should be conducted. As mentioned, al-Fayfī focused on colours as an element of the visual imagery used by blind poets. He stated that the colours most used by all blind poets in terms of their visual imagery are the white, black, *al-Māʾī* (colour of water) and red, in that order. When I compared al-Fayfī's results with al-Falāḥī's, I found differences that support the fact that different cultures play a crucial role in the creation of the imagery used by poets.

Another difference in results can be found among al-Shurbāṣī's, al-ʿAlī's and al-Falāḥī's studies. For instance, their results differ in the theme of *al-fukāhah* (the sense

of humour) of blind poets. According to al-Shurbāṣī (1956, p. 254), old blind poets such as Bashshār Ibn Burd had their share of humour; thus, modern and contemporary blind poets must have a similar share of humour. Therefore, he motivated researchers to study this aspect of blind poets. Al-Shurbāṣī believed that studying *al-fukāhah* in the works of blind poets helps in understanding their psychology.

According to al-Falāḥī (2015, p. 172), al-ʿAlī (1992) emphasised that *al-fukāhah* (a sense of humour) is one of the most common characteristics associated with blind poets. He considered it a means of getting rid of worries, concerns and troubles in order to be well. It is also worth pointing out that both al-Shurbāṣī's and al-ʿAlī's base their judgments on the poetry of Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī. Likewise, al-Falāḥī (2015, p. 172) obtained a different result, arguing that *al-fukāhah* (the sense of humour) of al-Ṣarṣarī and Ibn Jābir al-Andalusī do not exceed normal levels. Then, he stated that he perhaps could not observe even that sense in most of their poetic works.

The generalisation of and disparity in critical judgments and results motivated me strongly to conduct a study about blind Arabic poets within a specific area and era. Because of the omission of researchers in the Gulf area in the modern era, the current research will study imagery in the works of blind poets in the Gulf together rather than individually. Studying individuals gives findings from an individual perspective, whereas studying blind poets together provides a fuller picture and deeper understanding of the area in this era.

Besides the aforementioned studies, two analytical studies have explored the poetry of blind poets from a different aspect: the psychological influence of blindness on the poetry of blind poets. The fourth analytical study is titled *Shiʿr al-Makfūfīn fī al-ʿAṣr al-ʿAbbāsī* (The Poetry of Blind Poets in the Abbasid Period), written by ʿAdnān al-ʿAlī and published in 1992. This study is considered by al-Falāḥī (2015, p. 12) to be the first analytical research about imagery in the works of blind poets. According to al-Falāḥī (Ibid.), this study is based on the poetry of the most famous blind poets in the Abbasid era, especially Bashshār Ibn Burd (96–168 Hijrī) and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (363–449 Hijrī).

While I was reading it, I found that al-ʿAlī (1992) applied a psychological approach where he started with an introduction about the common relations between psychology

and literature. Here, al-ʿAlī tries to answer the questions of how blind poets faced blindness through poetic expression by looking at two sides: did they do it with respect to themselves and in terms of society, and did they deal with it positively or negatively?

In the first chapter, the author explored the mechanisms for the psychological defence of blind poets against their society through poetry while in the second chapter he focused on the behavioural patterns of blind poets regarding blindness as well as how they dealt with their visual disability through expressing their personal feelings of being blind.

In the third chapter, he examined a key psychological issue related to women such as the poetry of love and the sexual depiction by blind poets and its relation to senses. Another critical psychological phenomenon was noticed by al-ʿAlī in the fourth chapter. He considered the use of sarcasm and irony (*al-Sukhriyah*) in blind poets' poetic language as a means of catharsis, defence, punishment and contempt.

The fifth chapter presents dualisms of various themes in the poetic content of blind poets, especially in Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī's poetry. For example, he looks at the themes of time and area (*al-Zamān wa al-Makān*), life and death (*al-Ḥayāt wa al-Mawt*), light and darkness (*al-Nūr wa al-Ẓalām*), and colours, where he questioned how blind poets could perceive, imagine and employ them in their poetry. I believe that al-ʿAlī selected such themes randomly.

The last chapter examined three artistic aspects in the poetry of blind poets: syntax, imagery and rhythm. In the first artistic aspect, the author noticed that two linguistic phenomena exist in the poetry of blind poets: the complexity of syntax and repetition. The value of examining imagery in the second aspect is to prove that blind poets used auditory, olfactory and tactile imagery as compensation for losing sight. So, he studied imagery according to senses, except for the visual imagery, and he examined colours in the last part of Chapter 5. This means that blind poets also used imagination to create visual imagery as compensation for losing sight.

The fifth analytical study is *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī Shiʿr al-'Umyān* (Artistic Imagery in the Poetry of Blind Poets), by Riḍā (2011). The research deals with blind poets in the Abbasid era differently and regards various approaches. Riḍā applied a combination of psychological, comparative and analytical approaches in the poetry of Bashshār Ibn

Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī. Hence, the study uncovers the influence of blindness on two blind poets in the Abbasid era from a psychological perspective.

Bashshār Ibn Burd's poetry represents the psychological influences of blindness in the obvious characteristics in his poetry, including images of *Ibāḥiyyah* (pornography), *Tahattuk* (immorality or shamelessness) and *ʿUnf* (violence). In contrast, the psychological influences of blindness on Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī's poetry are represented in introversion and unsocial traits along with a view of life from a black and pessimistic outlook.

The last analytical study is titled *Shiʿr al-ʿAmā min al-Jāhiliyyah ilā al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī* (The Poetry of Blindness from the pre-Islamic Age to the 2nd Century of Hijrah), by Saʿīd al-Muṣliḥ (2017). As far as I am aware, it is the most recent study on the poetry of blind people. It is worth mentioning that it is a comprehensive study around blindness (al-ʿAmā) and its synonyms in the Arabic poetry within three ages: from the pre-Islamic age to the second century of Hijrah. It is both a considerable study regarding the time frame and the selected poets, which is what distinguishes it from all aforementioned studies in this section.

The author seeks to cover the poetry of blindness written by sighted people and dissimilar blind people in the degree of visual disability within almost three centuries, as al-Muṣliḥ collected the poetry that concentrates on blindness as content, whether that poetry was written by completely blind, partially blind, or even sighted poets. The aim of including all sorts of poets who wrote about blindness, regardless of whether they were blind or sighted, is to examine their receptions and attitudes toward the notion of blindness.

According to their different receptions and attitudes toward the notion of blindness, al-Muṣliḥ (2017) divided his book into two main chapters. The first is about the poetic content, themes and purposes, focusing on personal and social issues related to the notion of blindness. The second takes a linguistic standpoint, with the author applying a statistical approach in counting the most words that poets used in expressing their feelings of satisfaction, sadness, rudeness and death regarding blindness. The second chapter also specialised in studying imagery in the works of poets who wrote about blindness, including its sources (internal and external) and its patterns according to senses (visual, auditory and tactile).

One can discuss numerous important points about this book; firstly, this book examines all sorts of blindness, including complete and partial blindness, and ignores the disparity between the virtual influence of blindness on people who were born blind and people who can see with only a single eye. Here, the author not only ignores the distinction between the influence of blindness on the two cases, but he also considers them blind people on the same level, while I believe there is a physical difference, at least, between the two cases.

Further, in his literature review, al-Muṣliḥ (Ibid., p. 14) affirms that modern resources studying the poetry of blind people were busy focusing only two points: first, proving that blind poets are superior to sighted poets; second, studying imagery in the works of blind poets. So, he presented such a study differently from others. However, the second chapter of his book outlines that blind poets had such a high ability in visual imagery to the point that sighted poets could hardly reach it. That is precisely what al-Fayfī (1996, p. 378) proved in the conclusion of his study regarding the comparison between visual imagery used by blind and sighted poets. What I understood, in the beginning, is that al-Muṣliḥ will focus on a different or a new aspect from others, and indeed he has conducted a study in a broader category of blind people than has previously been the case.

Lastly, because of the wide variety of blind poets in his study, al-Muṣliḥ found a disparity among the selected poets concerning talk about blindness in their poetry. Al-Muṣliḥ (2017, p. 603) states in his conclusion that the poetry about blindness in the works of Bashshār Ibn Burd, who was born blind, is exuberant while it is rare in the poetry of others, like Ḥassān Ibn Thābit, who became blind at a late age. I believe that the earlier blindness occurs, the more influence it appears to have on the poetry of that individual. Therefore, I excluded three poets from my study and was careful when choosing the three blind poets to investigate.

In conclusion, the six studies, above, have enriched the literary criticism genre on blind Arab poets by introducing us to their creativity and mastery of visual imagery despite their blindness – like their ability to employ colours, lights and myths into their works. The studies have also given us insight into the poets' immense capabilities in honing their full senses towards creating unparalleled poetic imagery. Some of these studies have also shed light on the natural environment's impact on blind poets towards their ability to formulate such visual imagery, while others applied the psychological

methodology to trace the impact of blindness on blind poets' inner feelings, utilising the proofs from their poetic texts.

As for how I have used these resources and how this thesis benefits therefrom, I aspire to fill the void emanating from ignoring this genre of poets from Arab Gulf countries in addition to utilising them in controlling the criteria for selecting blind poets from that region. Such criteria include specifying at which age poets lost their eyesight so as to fulfil the condition of the short length of sightedness. Finally, I will implement the psychological model in an effort to analyse the suffering befallen on the selected poets due to blindness, yet through a theory different from previous studies – that being Trauma Theory.

Having offered a general idea about the six analytical studies on imagery in the works of blind Arabic poets together as a group, I can now state that imagery in the works of modern blind poets in the Gulf, as a group, has not been studied before, according to my research thus far. Therefore, I will now present studies on the works of three blind poets from the Gulf individually. Prior to this, I present a figure that helps in understanding the knowledge gap that my research aims to fill.

Sub-section 3: Studies on Imagery in the Works of Blind Poets in the Gulf

This sub-section will concentrate on the essential studies that have discussed imagery in the poetry of the three selected modern blind Arabic poets in the Gulf: the Omani Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914), the Kuwaiti Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963), and the Saudi Muḥammad Ibn Saʾad Ibn Ḥusayn (1931–2014). The purpose of this sub-section is to provide a background to the works of the three blind poets to identify a knowledge gap.

1. The Omani: Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914)

Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī is a pioneer scholar in Oman in diverse subjects: theology, literature and linguistics. According to al-Sālimī's biography in the introduction of his work: *Jawhar al-Niẓām* that was edited by: Aṭfīsh and al-ʿAbrī in 2006, he has reached the peak in religious science, Arabic language and codicology – 'the study of

manuscripts as cultural artefacts for historical purposes'. Therefore, his works are many. While I was researching the material for this thesis, I found that the number of studies on al-Sālimī's poetry is much smaller than the number of studies on his other works. This is likely because most of his works are still manuscripts that have never been touched critically by literary studies (al-Sulaymānī, 2007, p. 9).

Many studies have been conducted on al-Sālimī's writings, yet after long searching, the writer of this thesis only found seven; two were on his intellectual facet and five on poetry. A summary of these seven studies is enclosed in this chapter and covers their most prominent ideas. As the thesis's and, in particular, this chapter's central pillar is poetry, we shall focus on those studies which dealt with al-Sālimī's writings' poetic facet to clarify the gap this paper attempts to bridge, as well as the knowledge-based addition it aims to present.

The most prominent among these seven studies is one entitled, *Al-Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī Mujaddid Ummah wa Muḥyī Imāmah* (Sheikh Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī: Renewing a Nation and Reviving an Imāmah) by Muṣṭafā Sharīfī in 2011. In it, he points out al-Sālimī's influence on Ibadi ideology, his prominent role in changing the political ruling system in Oman from a Sultanate to an Imāmah, and his role in Omani social reform. Nevertheless, the study fails to mention al-Sālimī's literary capabilities and poetic competencies.

The second study is a chapter of an edited book entitled, *A basis for Oman's Religious Tolerance: A Review of Late 19th and Early 20th Century Ibadi Jurisprudence of Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī from Oman and Muḥammad Aṭfayyash from North Africa Regarding Coexistence with Jews and Christians*, by Douglas Leonard in 2015. It compares between the jurisprudential opinions of the above-mentioned Muslim scholars from the Ibadi school on the rights of other religious minorities, i.e. Jews and Christians. Sharīfī (2011) and Leonard (2015, p. 195–209) agree on an aspect of al-Sālimī's works that is somewhat distant from the literary one on which this thesis concentrates.

Some studies have identified al-Ḥamāsah style in al-Sālimī's poetry, particularly *Al-Istinhāḍ fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿUmānī al-Ḥadīth (1860–1970)* (Motivation in Modern Omani Poetry (1860–1970)) by Khālid al-Sulaymānī. The writer focuses on al-Istinhāḍ (motivation) and its presence in Omani poetry, as well as explaining it as a modern concept of that known in the classical criticism as Ḥamāsah poetry. It emerged in the

modern age as a result of exposure to European literature and poetry, and due to calls for modernising Arab poetry (al-Sulaymānī, 2017, p. 10).

The study shows the writer citing some of al-Sālimī's Ḥamāsah poetry as a means of exemplifying political Ibadi thought's influence in this genre. Al-Sālimī's conviction that Sheikh Ṣaliḥ Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥarithī is the nation's saviour from ignorance and retardation is the primary catalyst and propeller for motivating the nation. According to al-Sulaymānī (2017, p. 35), motivation to al-Sālimī was not restricted to politics and war terms only, but also for acting out all matters of noble deeds such as infusing life into culture and thought, calling for embracing education, adopting honourable manners and clinging to values and morals.

The fourth study is by Ibrāhīm al-Kindī and echoes Khālid al-Sulaymānī's. It is entitled *Al-Sālimī Adīban wa Lughawiyyan* (The Literary and Linguist al-Sālimī) and focuses on the motivational facet in the latter's poetry, his elegy of righteous people such as his role model Shaykh Ṣaliḥ Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārthī, and how he employs this in motivating the Omani nation to follow suit on the path of the righteous.

The fifth study by Sālim al-Kalbānī mimics the fourth. It is entitled *Iṭlālah ʿAlā Shiʿr Nūr al-Dīn al-Salimī* (A Gaze on Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī's Poetry) and focuses on the poet's employing of *al-Rithāʾ* (eulogy). It is also essential to point out that the writer also states how difficult it was to obtain and collect al-Sālimī's poems.

Study number six is by Maḥmūd al-Salīmī and is entitled *Āthar al-Fikr al-Ibāḍī fī al-Shiʿr al-Omānī* (The Influence of Ibāḍī Thought on Omani Poetry). It focuses on Oman's Ibadi poets, including Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī. The writer covers several al-Sālimī's poetic themes, such as his documentation of Ibadism and its progress, the impact of dogmatic and political thought on Omani poetry, characteristics of a leader and the poetry of enthusiasm. What concerns us the most in this study is that the writer concluded that al-Sālimī's poems are largely narrative and that the poet cared more for content than form.

The last study is by ʿĪsā al-Sulaymānī and is entitled *Dīwān Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī*. The study is divided into two parts: The first presents the methodology that the writer followed in editing the Dīwān, which includes 32 poems. The second part is divided into two chapters: the first includes a thematic study of al-Sālimī's poetry in which he classifies his poems according to the topic and thematic purpose; the second is an

artistic study of the Qurʾān's and Ḥadīth's influence on the poet, as well as the artistic imagery in his poetry. The latter point is that which gets in line this thesis as al-Sulaymānī deductes the sources for al-Sālimī's poetic imagery and divides them into the following: al-Sālimī's community and psychology, nature and the universe, animals and war weapons.

According to al-Sulaymānī (2009., p. 9), there is an evident shortage of criticism of the poetic movement in Oman, despite the substantial poetic contribution of Omani poets, especially Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī. However, al-Sulaymānī lit the road for researchers to study Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī's poetry by collecting his poems in a Dīwān and contributed by presenting a new and valuable review of his poetry, which has been analysed for other purposes, such as political and intellectual studies (Ibid., p. 10). In general, al-Sālimī enriched the Omani library by combining poetry and thought beautifully. Moreover, he succeeded in proving the mutualism between thought and poetry and how they serve each other.

In conclusion, the seven studies on al-Sālimī's works, above, have made valuable contributions in many disciplines in a manner that reflects the high worth of such a unique character who has produced a variety of diverse works. Some of these studies focused on the purely historical facet of al-Sālimī's life, portraying his social, political and scientific influence, while others focused on the intellectual, like the influence of Ibadism on shaping al-Sālimī's poetry. Other studies discussed his poetry from a thematic angle like stressing the subject of Ḥamāsah (enthusiasm), from a purely linguistic angle like linguistic phenomena in his poetic style, or from an artistic literary angle like his several sources for poetic imagery.

As for how I have utilised these resources and how this thesis benefits therefrom, I will attempt to fill the void emanating from previous studies which ignored the impact of blindness on al-Sālimī's poetry. I will do so through applying the psychoanalysis theory of Trauma in an effort to portray the manner in which his suffering from blindness was reflected in his poetic works. This is in addition to studying the impact of Oman's natural environment on al-Sālimī's poetic imagery through applying eco-criticism, as well as his poetry's characteristics from a thematic perspective so as to identify the facets therein which reflect and represent the Gulf's poetic movement in the pre-oil era.

2. The Kuwaiti: Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963)

Because of the high number of studies on the Kuwaiti blind poet al-Shabīb, I will highlight only the studies most relevant to my own and divide them into two parts: studies regarding al-Shabīb's poetry that did not examine the imagery he used and studies that examined imagery in his works. The aim of such division is to fill the gap of knowledge that researchers left behind, especially studying the influence of blindness and oil on the imagery used by al-Shabīb in particular, and other blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries in general.

In a study titled *Udabāʾ al-Kuwait fī Qarnain* (Kuwaiti Men of Letters in Two Centuries), al-Zayd (1976) discusses all Kuwaiti poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. al-Shabīb appears in this study, but only from a biographical aspect and for his position in Kuwaiti literature; a few of al-Shabīb's poems are included. I consider this study descriptive, as it lacks analysis.

In a research titled *al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth fi al-Kuwait ilā sanat 1950* (*Modern Poetry in Kuwait until 1950*), al-Sijārī (1978) discusses the poetic movement in Kuwait up to this date. He depicts the life of al-Shabīb and the gradual stages of content development in his poetry, relating the works to events in his life without outlining imagery in al-Shabīb's works. Additional studies demonstrated the personal expressive aspect of al-Shabīb's poetry. For example, al-Ṣabāḥ's (1973) *al-Shiʿr al-Kuwaiti al-Ḥadīth* (Modern Kuwaiti Poetry) sheds light on several Kuwaiti poets, including al-Shabīb but does not discuss imagery. Fahmī's (1981) *Taṭawur al-Shiʿr al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth fi Minṭaqat al-Khalīj* (The Development of Modern Arabic Poetry in the Gulf) considers al-Shabīb a classical poet but also does not discuss the imagery of al-Shabīb's poetry.

In his study titled *al-Shiʿr al-Kuwaiti al-Ḥadīth: Dirāsah Mawḍūʿiyyah wa Naqdiyyah Ḥadīthah* (Modern Kuwaiti Poetry: A Modern, Thematic and Critical Study), Jaldāwī (1999) discusses al-Shabīb's life, culture and position among Kuwaiti poets. However, like the other studies, Jaldāwī's work does not mention imagery. Moreover, in *Fahd al-ʿAskar wa al-Marʾah, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb: al-ʿUzlah wa al-Ightirāb, Abdullah Sinān Shāʿir al-Busaṭāʾ (*Fahd al-ʿAskar and the Woman, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb: Isolation and Alienation, Abdullah Sinān: The Poet of Poors), al-Muhanā (2004) shed light on a romantic aspect of al-Shabīb's poetry, that of alienation without discussing imagery.

From a nationalist political perspective, Gāfūd (1996), in *Dirāsāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir fī al-Khalīj* (Studies in Contemporary Arabic Poetry in the Gulf), examines the extent to which the pioneers of poetry in Arab Gulf Countries interacted with the political issues surrounding them. Despite the weak communication between the Arab Gulf Countries and other surrounding Arab countries in the pre-oil period, al-Shabīb is discussed by Gāfūd as interacting with three issues: the issue of freedom and struggle; the issue of Arab unity; and the Palestinian Cause. These issues is considered carefully in Chapter 4 of this thesis, as such issues represent cultural influences on the identity of al-Shabīb's poetry.

Similarly, in *Al-Qaḍiyyah al-ʿArabiyyah fi al-Shiʿr al-Kuwaytī* (The Arabic Cause in Kuwaiti Poetry), al-Wuqayyān (2012) pointed out that Kuwaiti poets strongly mentioned Arab issues, most notably pan-Arabism, in their poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century, and also studied al-Shabīb from an Arab national perspective. In line with Gāfūd (1996) and al-Wuqayyān (2012), Sulaiman (1985), in his article titled 'Palestine and Modern Arab Poetry', went beyond the Arab nationalist poets. He paid attention to the nationalist role of al-Shabīb in terms of supporting Palestine and blaming Egypt for its negative attitude at the time.

Two studies applied psychological methods to the study of al-Shabīb's poetry. ʿAbdulfattāḥ (1996), in *Aʿalām al-Shiʿr fi al-Kuwait, 1776–1995* (The Icons of Poetry in Kuwait, 1776–1995), focuses mainly on common characteristics between al-Shabīb and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī without discussing imagery. Nashʾat (2003), in his study *Maʿa al-Shuʿarāʾ fi al-Kuwait* (With Poets in Kuwait), treats the case of al-Shabīb differently where he studies the psychological similarities among al-Shabīb's, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī's and Abū Tammām's poetry in creating poetical images based on mental creativeness.

From an intellectual perspective, Al-Anṣārī (1975), in *Ṣaqr al-Shabīb wa falsafatuhu fī al-Ḥayāt* (Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Philosophy in Life), concentrates on al-Shabīb's thoughts, philosophy, ideology and doctrine in life, without mention of the imagery in his poetry. In the same way, Al-Shaṭṭī's (2007) *al-Shiʿr fi al-Kuwait* (Poetry in Kuwait) briefly covers al-Shabīb, wherein al-Shaṭṭī showed the intellectual aspect of al-Shabīb that rejects any dependence. Furthermore, he implies the ideological influence of Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī and Muʿtazilah on al-Shabīb's poetry. In line the latter, al-Ḥarbī (2007), in *al-Shiʿr al-Ijtimāʿī fi al-Kuwait fi al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Social Poetry in Kuwait in the Modern

Era), studies the poetry of al-Shabīb from two perspectives: the issue of women in al-Shabīb's poetry and the poverty impact on his life.

Regarding the study of imagery, I found five studies that concentrates on the imagery in al-Shabīb's poetry. First, al-ʿAlī's (1986) thesis *Shiʿr Ṣaqr al-Shabīb Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl* (Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Poetry: Study and Analysis) includes several unpublished poems by al-Shabīb as well as five letters that included some poems. More specifically, the author studies the content of al-Shabīb's poetry the artistic tools that al-Shabīb used in his poetry but does not address deeply imagery itself.

Second, al-Rūmī's (1999) *al-Ḥarakah al-Shiʿriya fi Minṭaqat al-Khalīj al-Arabī bayn, al-Taqlīd wa al-Taṭawur* (The Poetical Movement in the Gulf: Tradition and Development) covers the poetic movement across Arab Gulf Countries from the nineteenth century onwards. The most fundamental theme that she studies is the influence of blindness on his poetry and his life through two literary phenomena: the complexity of syntax in his poems and the heavy use of light and its derivatives, such as the sun, fire and stars, despite his visual disability. The study concludes that al-Shabīb represents the beginning of the romantic current because he was able to use poetry as a means to express his suffering from blindness and being poor. The study points out the visual imagery in al-Shabīb's poetry beautifully, albeit briefly and without in-depth analysis.

Third, in his thesis *al-Ṣūrah al-Faniyah fi Shiʿr Ṣaqr al-Shabīb* (The Artistic Imagery in Saqr al-Shabīb's Poetry), al-Muṭayrī (2012) tackles the artistic imagery in al-Shabīb's poetry by focusing on the topics' imagery and their sources and colours. However, The author's discussion on visual imagery in al-Shabīb's poetry seems extremely brief. It might be because he only wants to disagree with al-ʿAlī (1986), who claims that al-Shabīb's blindness prevented him from using his imagination and creating visual images.

Fourth, in *The Visual Images of the Poetry of Ṣaqr al-Shabīb*, al-Faraj (2014) the author of the present thesis sought to narrow down the study of imagery in al-Shabīb's poetry by focusing on the visual imagery. According to *The Visual Images of Blind Poetry*, al-Fayfī (1996) claims that the blind poet depends on two fundamental factors to create their visual imagery: the material aspect and cultural storage. Al-Faraj (2014) applies the vision of al-Fayfī (1996) to al-Shabīb's poetry. The material aspect consists of two sides, colours and motions, while the cultural aspect is divided into four issues: the

intertextuality between al-Shabīb and other blind poets in visual imagery; the influence of the Qurʾān on al-Shabīb's visual images; animal images; and visual representation of myths.

Last, al-Faraj's (2019) article entitled Ufūl al-Ṣaḥrāʾ wa Maṭlaʿ al-Nifṭ fī Shiʿr Makfūfī al-Khalīj al-ʿArabī: Ṣaqr al-Shabīb Unmodhajan (Waning of the Desert Era and Dawn of the Oil Age in the Works of Blind Poets in Arab Gulf Countries: Ṣaqr al-Shabīb as an Example) explored al-Shabīb's poetry from three angles: First, al-Shabīb's experience and his suffering poverty and blindness, but without shedding light on the trauma of losing sight. Academic research must further explore this issue to understand the blind poet's suffering fully when transferring from sighted to complete blindness. Second, the influence of the pre-oil environment on shaping the poetic imagery of al-Shabīb. Third, the appearance of oil in Kuwait and its psychological influence on the blind poet.

In conclusion, many prior studies have provided insight to researchers of al-Shabīb's poetry in two main aspects: The biographical that enables researchers to identify all details and features of a poet's life, and the analytical facet that studies a poet's works from the social, political, psychological-comparative and imagery perspectives. This thesis shall add knowledge from three perspectives: The psychological facet, by applying Trauma Theory to al-Shabīb's poetry to test the influence of blindness on it and identify the impact of rapid Kuwaiti urban development due to the discovery of oil there; second, it will aim to apply eco-criticism and trace environmental signs of the pre-oil era in which the poet lived as well as those of the new age's birth so as to study the impact of his transfer from one era to another and how he expressed this through his poetry; and third, in studying the characteristics of al-Shabīb's poetry in form and theme so as to identify the characteristics of his poetry which represent the transition period between these two eras.

The essential elements missing in al-Shabīb's poetry are to be reviewed, evaluated and tested dissimilarly from a critical perspective while bearing in mind the general context of al-Shabīb's era by shedding light on missing gaps to reach distinct results. al-Shabīb's poems require in-depth analysis, especially since the poet experienced consecutive crises: blindness, poverty and a sudden globalisation culture shock. Therefore, this thesis does not merely aim to examine the influence of blindness and

poverty on al-Shabīb's poetry, but also the influence of the cultural trauma after oil discovery in Kuwait.

3. The Saudi: Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn (1931–2014)

It is rare for studies to be conducted on poets while they are alive, but since the Saudi poet Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn died in 2014, a small number of studies on his poetry have been published. The shortage of previous studies on a topic usually represents difficulties and limitations for the researcher. However, it can be in their favour occasionally.

Nevertheless, I was fortunate when I encountered al-Sayyid's (2001) study, *Ibn Ḥusayn bayn al-Turāth wa al-Muʿāṣarah* (Ibn Ḥusayn: Between Heritage and the Contemporary Era), which is comprehensive enough for any researcher who aims to examine the literary output of Ibn Ḥusayn. It consists of five key chapters. The first and second chapters are particularly relevant to my study, thus will be given the biggest share of the discussion. The third chapter studied Ḥusayn as a critic and not as a poet, the fourth chapter focused on his literary output, critical attitudes and cultural contributions, while the fifth chapter discussed Ḥusayn from the perspective of literary elites.

In the first chapter, the author began by tracking the phases of Ibn Ḥusayn's life, learning and journeys since birth. He additionally summarised the factors that affected his origin, including his conservative culture, human nature, and the development of social, cultural and literary life in Saudi Arabia. Through these factors, he clarified that the circumstances of the modern history of Saudi Arabia drove Ḥusayn to consider literary work from a perspective of realism and not to solely display the aesthetics of the literary work but to display his ideological attitude and intellectual thought.

In the second chapter, the artistic study began. The author divided the themes in Ḥusayn's poetry into three trends: personal poetry, the poetry of courtesy, and poetry of public occasions. Regarding personal poetry, the author illustrated Ḥusayn's romantic bent through expressive emotions in various themes, such as memories, love and religion. In this chapter, the author also investigated the imagery in Ḥusayn's poetry; however, the imagery was not analysed adequately. The author alluded to Ḥusayn's strong imagination and his ability to describe materials, but he did not attempt

to analyse the poems or investigate the rhetorical and visual imagery. Nevertheless, the primary value of this book is the fact that – according to my research thus far – it is the only source to study Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry.

I found another study about Ibn Ḥusayn, titled *Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn Bibliography*, written by al-Ḥaydarī in 2007. However, it is mainly biographical, so it did not study Ḥusayn's poetry itself, although it shed light on the most critical literary outputs that Ḥusayn presented.

Sub-section 4: Literary Applications onto Trauma Theory

The modern trend of studies in humanities relies on interdisciplinary methods by connecting several scientific research fields together. They are conducted because, despite the variation among the majors of humanities, when collected together to analyse a particular phenomenon, they each delve into a topic from their respective angle. This aids a better understanding of a phenomenon, be it social, literary, historical or psychological. It also plays a role in providing more comprehensive solutions to the problems faced by scientific research.

Accordingly, some literary studies have attempted to utilise psychoanalysis theories as a means of understanding literary phenomena. Among the most prominent of these is trauma theory. The preface of the book *Understanding Trauma* by Kirmayer, Lamelson, and Barad in 2007 states, 'The idea for an interdisciplinary book on trauma is to bringing researchers and clinicians together to think across disciplinary boundaries and address issues of fundamental clinical and social concern'.

The introduction of the abovementioned book provides a classification of trauma by four writers. Laurence et al. (2007) define trauma as 'a socio-political event, a psychophysiological process, a physical and emotional experience, and narrative theme in explanations of individual and social suffering' (p. 01). Recent studies have focused on the psychological impact of trauma, known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). 'The diagnostic criteria for PTSD include a history of exposure to a traumatic event and symptoms from each of three groups: intrusive recollections of the trauma event, avoidance of reminders of the event and emotional numbing, and hyperarousal (Laurence et al., 2007, p. 01).

In his book entitled *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Baldick (2008) states the following:

> 'Trauma theory is a body of 20th-century psychological research into the effects upon people of various traumatic events (assault, rape, war, famine, incarceration, etc.), leading to the official recognition in the 1980s of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Concepts developed from that work have since the 1990s been taken up and developed as an interdisciplinary field of study involving literature, psychology, history, and philosophy, with a concentration upon questions of memory, forgetting, and narrative. The impact of trauma theory on literary studies was felt from the publication of essays by various critics in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (ed. Cathy Caruth, 1995) and of Caruth's own study, *Unclaimed Experience* (1996). Since then, a number of specialized critical writings have applied trauma theory to the memoirs of Holocaust survivors and war veterans, and to topics such as sexual violence in women's fiction'. (p. 340)

Trauma theory is applicable to many existing literary works. The following two books are examples: *Holocaust Poetry* (ed. Hilda Schiff, 2002) and *Poetry of the Second World War* (ed. Desmond Graham, 1995). The first presents a collection of poems brings to light the memory of those killed in the Holocaust, and an expression of shared hope for the future. The second is an echo of the true experience of the 1939–1945 conflict, and its eternal consequences through poems from over twenty countries, including Japan, Australia, Britain, America and Russia.

It is also noteworthy that several studies have sought to apply trauma theory to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, dubbed the Second Gulf War. Most prominent among those studies is an article published in ʿĀlam al-Fikr Periodical in 1993 titled, *Iḍṭirāb al-Ḍughūṭ al-Tāliyah li al-Ṣadmah bi Waṣfihi Aham al-Āthār al-Salbiyyah li al-ʿUdwān al-ʿIrāqī ʿAlā al-Kuwayt* (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as the Most Important Adverse Effects of the Iraqi Aggression Against Kuwait) by Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿAbdulKhāliq.

A 2010 study by Suʿūd al-Sanʿūsī entitled, *Al-Mawqif al-Nafsī li al-Adab al-Kuwaytī fī Fatrat al-Iḥtilāl wa al-Taḥrīr: al-Shiʿr Namūdhajan* (The Psychological State of Kuwaiti Literature During Occupation and Liberation: Poetry as an Example) indicated a link between the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the trauma Kuwaiti poets have suffered.

Al-Sanʿūsī's study focused on the beginning of the psychological method and literature, in general, and on the psychological method and poetry, specifically, then applied trauma theory on select poems from that period. The study concluded that Kuwaiti poets had expressed their psychological trauma through their works, and it deemed the occupation period a massive transformation that rebelled against all rooted principles and moral values to which the Kuwaiti and Arab people were accustomed.

Similarly, this study aims to test the validity of applying trauma theory to blind poets from two facets: First, their blindness, as they were all born seeing but lost their sight at an early age; and second, through measuring the impact of the accelerated urban change that correlated with the advent of the oil age in the Gulf society, how poets received such sudden transformation and how they reflected it in their poetry.

As critics embarked on applying trauma theory to limited cases, such as victims of war and sexual violence, this thesis calls for shedding a bright light on psychoanalysis, as psychological trauma does not come to a halt at only these reasons. In fact, the trauma may expand and take on different and more varied forms like that due to a fast-paced cultural-civic transformation after the discovery of oil in Arab Gulf countries. This assumes that the transfer of the Gulf society from the pre-oil to the post-oil era, at such an accelerated pace, has caused psychological trauma to some of its members and exerted upon them much pressure in undergoing testing experiences. Among those is Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb and Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn.

This hypothesis is based on Ḥasan al-Mūdin's opinion – in accordance with Pierre Bayard's – and his call for applying literature to psychoanalysis rather than the contrary. Despite the importance of studies credited for establishing literary criticism based on psychoanalysis, which also considers other facets of the poet and his creations, al-Mūdin feels that they remain studies that apply psychoanalysis to literary texts in a questionable manner for they aim to apply readymade psychological components to texts and their authors, evidence that the founders of psychoanalysis were influenced by mythical, literary and religious texts when they came up with such psychological components. Freud, in particular, utilised Greek Mythology in formulating Oedipus's Complex (al-Mūdin, 2014, p. 37).

Accordingly, al-Mūdin (2014, p. 38) feels that psychoanalysis must not be the vessel utilised to shed light on literature, but rather that literature continues to shed light on psychoanalysis as it is the former which is constantly renewed and more capable of renewing and developing psychoanalysis than the latter.

Based on the above, and for psychoanalysis not to remain a rigid conceptual system and to avoid psycho-critiquing readymade psychological concepts repeatedly, the following questions must be posed:

Is it not possible for psycho-critiquing to draw new psychological concepts from other literary texts? Can it not envisage other reasons for trauma from old or modern texts – leading to evolving the theory itself? What is more useful for literature and psychoanalysis: Applying readymade psychological components to all literary texts, old and new, or aiming towards formulating new ones that increase our knowledge of the phenomenon or our interpretation of humans, their language and their literature? Is it not possible that the modern renaissance in Arab Gulf Countries due to the discovery of oil there, and its outcomes, be a detriment rather than a blessing to its people – particularly to blind poets, as trauma, and its clear outcomes, had befallen one of them already?

In this attempt, the thesis claims that we can develop trauma theory by envisioning an unordinary reason that may possibly be called *Trauma of the Modern Age and its Outcomes*.

The importance of adopting trauma theory here is to explain that which had befallen blind poets due to life's shocking events, the fast-paced urban modernisation in Arab Gulf countries, and the impact thereof on their psychology. We can analyse such traumatic events through meticulous historic searching within a specific timeframe and a controlled and restricted semiotic procedure which would grant the poetic text massive capability of picturing the dawn of the oil age and the setting of its predecessor.

Sub-section 5: Studies on the Influence of Oil on the Poetic Movement in the Gulf

After presenting the missing gap in the field of studying blind poets generally, and multiple modern blind poets from the Gulf together particularly, an essential point remains to draw a completely understanding of the significance of the present thesis. Determining the context is of significant importance to academic researches. Therefore, I suggest that the discovery of oil in the Gulf is the appropriate context within which to establish such research.

There are two main reasons to select that event as a context. The first reason is the relationship between the discovery of oil and the rapid transformation of poetry in style and content, especially in the Gulf. Secondly, the selected blind poets lived in three different eras, and this difference in time enables the current researcher to test the influence of oil on them as blind poets and to observe how blind poets perceived the world and materials around them before and after the discovery of oil, whether through their figurative or literal language. Many issues and questions, indeed, appear on the surface and need to be examined in this subject.

Prior to speaking about the influence of oil on Gulf poetry, the following is a synopsis on the impact of oil's discovery in Arab Gulf countries and the facets through which they exploited it so as to exemplify oil's significant impact on social behaviour, ideologies and everyday life therein.

Abdurraḥmān Munīf (1933-2004) is by far the most prominent to start with for he is considered among the most important Arab novelists of the Twentieth Century as well as the most famous memoirist and historian in the Arabian Peninsula's modern history. Munīf is also an icon of Arab narration and literature in the modern Gulf region and his famous 5-chapter novel, *Mudun al-Milḥ* (Cities of Salt), is among the most prominent literary works that tackle the impact of oil on the Arabian Peninsula region. The novel illustrates everyday life when oil was first discovered and focuses on the rapid transformations of the region's villages and cities due to it. Reading this novel in itself is sufficient for gaining a comprehensive mental image of the social changes that occurred as Gulf societies ushered in the new age of oil.

On the other hand, many sociologists and anthropologists consider the Tribe as a central social and influential component of Gulf society in particular, and of the Arabian

Peninsula region's at large. Many researchers have stressed this discipline throughout all contexts and times; most prominent among these is Abdullah al-Ghadhdhami, in his 2009 book *Al-Qabīlah wa al-Qabāʾliyyah: Hawiyyāt mā baʿda al-ḥadāthah* (The Tribe and Tribalism: Identities after Modernity). The author explains the notion of the Tribe, its evolution and its relationship to identity. He also raises many points that discuss the relationship between identity and ideology, the interaction between the two and the anticipated reaction therefrom. The author discusses the central point of the tribe's status within the general cultural trend in both pre- and post-oil eras. The book gives a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of oil in changing Gulf society.

The social movement in the Arabian Peninsula also witnessed much change during that period. Madawi al-Rasheed is the most prominent writer who discussed this movement in modern times through her famous 2009 book *A History of Saudi Arabia*. In it, the author gives an analytical study of the country's historical, political and religious facets as well as insight to all who seek to understand the rapid transformations witnessed in that region as oil was discovered there. The book heads off with an early historical review of Saudi Arabia's establishment in the pre-oil era, and how it began controlling the area by winning allegiances against the Rashidi emirate in Ḥāʾil and the Sharifian emirate in Hijaz. The book also discusses the role of oil's huge financial returns with Saudi Finance Minister at the time signing an oil exploration agreement with American SOCAL company to commence works in 1933.

Al-Rasheed's book plays a major role in Chapter 3 of this thesis which focuses on the Second Gulf War. As Saudi poet Ibn Husayn witnessed the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and expressed his emotions and fear thereof through many verses, his stance most definitely reflects that of the Saudi society at large concerning that aggression vis-à-vis the feelings of shock, fear and apprehension of an impending invasion by an Arab neighbour. Chapter 3 of this dissertation focuses on the Trauma resulting from the Gulf War.

Also, al-Rasheed's study *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics, and Religion in Saudi Arabia*, 2013, discusses the issue of women in Saudi Arabia and focuses on women's status within the realm of the Saudi state and how this status transformed after the discovery of oil there – a matter that had previously been neglected by researchers and historians. The author investigates the relationship between religion, politics and gender that propagates the exclusion and marginalisation of Saudi women,

and pinpoints the root causes of the seemingly extreme gender inequality in their schooling practises.

Chapter 3 and 4 of this dissertation utilises the above study as it presents a historical background of the educational movement in Saudi Arabia and focuses on the many calls demanding that Saudi women receive the education they deserve as well as encouraging women's participation in all facets of practical life in Saudi Arabia.

With regard to Kuwaiti society, author Farah al-Nakīb's book of 2016 entitled, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life* is considered an important asset in discussing the role played by the discovery of oil in enacting radical change in demographics and social life in Kuwait within an extremely short period. The author also traces the delicate relationship and historical transformation between the urban landscape, common daily practises and Kuwaiti social behaviours in the two target eras. In addition, the author discusses the role of oil in reshaping Kuwaiti social life through a variety of themes like quality of jobs, architecture of houses, immigration trends, citizenship and employment as the discovery of oil led to an exponential increase in migration towards Kuwait due to new work opportunities in construction works and the oil sector and its subsidiary services.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation, in particular, utilises al-Nakīb's book to a large extent as it discusses the impact of oil discovery from the perspective of Kuwaiti poet al-Shabīb. The book assists in the presentation of social and economic life during the period in which the poet lived.

This dissertation also benefits from Jill Crystal's book entitled, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*, 1995, towards a more profound understanding of the nature of social transformation in Kuwait after the discovery of oil there. This is in addition to "*Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State"*, 2016, in which the author references oil as one of the major reasons for Iraq's invasion of the country.

Other works like Mandana Limbert's book *In the Time of Oil*, 2010, focuses on Nostalgia and the Memory Question at the dawn of the oil age as it impacted an Omani village's society and ecology. Al-Rumayhī's study entitled, *Al-Bitrūl wa al-Taghayyur al-Ijtimāʿī fī al-Khalīj al-ʿArabī* (Petroleum and social change in the Gulf), 1984, focuses on the common historical and social factors among the six Gulf countries in the pre-oil era and the means in which oil changed their economy from a traditional to a modern

one. The book sheds light on the evolution and development of the modern Gulf economy, as well as on the social benefits of oil on education and institutions in the these countries. The book concludes with identifying the most prominent emerging changes in Gulf societies after the discovery of oil.

This section fundamentally presents most of the studies that indicated the influence of oil on the poetic style and content in the Gulf. Some of them divided the poetic movement into two key stages, or a maximum of three, according to the discovery of oil, while some others depended on divisions not based on the discovery of oil. This section will serve me to achieve the main aim of this thesis, which is to test the influence of oil on a specific category of the Gulf's poets, namely blind poets, to fill a gap in the studies on blind poets in the Arabic literature generally, and in Gulf literature in particular.

While I was researching the material for this thesis, I found that studies regarding the influence of oil on poetry in the Gulf generally are much fewer in number than studies on the influence of oil on poetry in Kuwait particularly. Therefore, I will start with an article (written in English) by Barbara Michalak-Pikulska (2000) entitled *From al-Ṭabṭabāʾī to Rābiṭat al-ʾUdabāʾ in Kuwait*, which tracks the stages of the poetic movement in Kuwait from its beginning in the eighteenth century until the founding of the Kuwaiti Writers' Union in 1964. The author argues that the Kuwaiti poets in the nineteenth century preserved the style of old Arabic poems with a single rhyme and rhythm as well as preserving traditional poetic content, such as panegyric, elegy and satire. However, the main argument of this article is that the author attributes the change of style and content in the Kuwaiti poem to the rapid economic development linked to the discovery of oil (Ibid., p. 172).

Nevertheless, Michalak-Pikulska indicates the early efforts of the pioneers of Kuwait's cultural rebirth, those who contributed to plant the seeds of that change in the content of the Kuwaiti poem. Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, the blind poet, was mentioned as a pioneer of Kuwaiti's cultural rebirth and an icon of the romantic current in Kuwait's poetic movement. Despite employing traditional forms – elegy, panegyric and satire – al-Shabīb also employed personal lyrics filled with grief conveying his subjective experiences and moods (Ibid., p. 174). Thus, al-Shabīb and others have paved the way for a new poetic current with modern poetic shape and content.

In her study on the development of the poetic movement in the Gulf, al-Rūmī (1999) similarly referred to the influence of oil on poetry in the Gulf. She argued that the discovery of oil transformed life in the Gulf from simplicity to complexity in a short space of time. She considered oil to be a turning point that had adverse consequences on the changing social, political and economic system in the area. Oil caused a cultural shock to people in the Gulf, which they reflected through poetry. Therefore, she classified Gulf poets into two key currents: *Tayyār al-shiʿr al-taqlīdī* (classical current) and *Tayyār al-taṭawwur* (modern current). Here, al-Rūmī agrees with Michalak-Pikulska in considering al-Shabīb a turning point in the content of the Kuwaiti poetry, and she adopts the point that al-Shabīb's poetry is one of the early attempts to get rid of the traditional forms of content of old Arabic poetry through employing heavy personal expressions in his poems.

ʿAbdullah wrote the third study that supports the idea that oil has had an undeniable influence on Kuwaiti poetry. In his book titled *Al-Ḥarakah al-Adabiyyah wa al-Fikriyyah fī al-Kuwait* (The literary and Intellectual Movement in Kuwait), ʿAbdullah enriches the literary studies in Kuwait and elucidates his viewpoint about the factors that contributed to developing the literature in Kuwait. He states that considering oil as the only reason that caused developments and changes in Kuwait is a sort of exaggeration, although oil can be considered as a crucial and decisive factor for all developments and changes in Kuwait (ʿAbdullah, 2014, p. 56). In line with Michalak-Pikulska and al-Rūmī, ʿAbdullah (Ibid., p. 120) considers the dividing of the development of Kuwaiti literature into two main stages according to the discovery of oil to be highly accepted, due to specific features and artistic characteristics of each stage. However, he classifies al-Shabīb with the poets in the pre-oil period; thus, he fails to notice (or chooses not to notice) that al-Shabīb, besides others, represented a transitional stage despite being born before the discovery of oil.

Among the divisions above, I found that a clear division fits with the case study that I selected in my research, particularly regarding the time division. Such a division appears in a short article entitled *Nashʾat al-Shiʿr al-Faṣīḥ fī al-Kuwait wa Taṭawwuruhu* (Emergence and Development of the Fasīḥ Poetry in Kuwait) by Ārmin (n.d.). The article starts with an indication of the high poetic activity in Kuwait within the second half of the twentieth century, and it questions whether wealth caused by the

appearance of oil led to that activity. It examines the influence of oil on poetic content, particularly, Kuwaiti poetry.

The article relies on the appearance of oil in dividing poets in Kuwait, where three generations appear with their own characteristics, issues and culture individually. First, pioneer poets lived and died before the discovery of oil in 1946 and before Kuwait's independence in 1961. In this period, Kuwaiti people and poets, in particular, lived in a poor society, dependent on desert and sea for their livelihood. Thus, poetry was as simple as the simple life in that period, whereby it mirrored issues that concerned Kuwaiti society, especially related to poverty and livelihood, such as the problem of the lack of water and resources.

The second group is those poets who represent a transitional phase in the middle, born in the pre-oil period with its difficulties on one side, and living through the developments caused by the discovery of oil as well as the establishment of the independent state of Kuwait on the other side. The author noticed that this group of poets travelled to several countries, making deep contact with different cultures, being influenced by other literary currents in the Arab world, and interacting positively with regional issues such as Arab nationalism and the Palestinian Cause. Consequently, the content in the poetry by precisely this group of poets became more diverse and broader than that of the poets before them. In line with ʿAbdullah, Ārmin (n.d., p. 15) classifies al-Shabīb with the first group of poets, in the pre-oil period, although al-Shabīb died in 1963, after both the discovery of oil in 1946 and Kuwait's independence in 1961. Furthermore, Ārmin ignores that al-Shabīb, as a poet beside others, represented a transitional phase in content despite being born before the discovery of oil. This is precisely the point I am going to prove in my research, besides considering al-Shabīb as a visual representative, image maker and visualiser (despite being blind) to the developments related to the appearance of oil and modern life in Kuwait.

Lastly, Ārmin (Ibid., p. 31) outlines that the third generation of poets in the Kuwaiti poetic movement were born after the discovery of oil, which is the golden period of welfare, luxury, wealth and richness. In Ārmin's perspective, this group of poets went beyond the Arabic culture to European culture and became opened to the whole world in all fields. Moreover, the author determined that many literary characteristics differentiate this poetic generation from previous generations. There are two prominent

characteristics of Kuwaiti poetry in this period: the appearance of female poets in Kuwait, and the revolution against the traditional style and content.

As stated above, I consider Ārmin's division of the poetic movement in Kuwait fits with the blind poets that I selected in my research. According to al-Sulaymānī (2007, p. 255), Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī belonged to the classical Arabic school of poetry and was born and died before the discovery of oil in the Gulf, thus represents the poetic current of blind poets in the pre-oil era. Ṣaqr al-Shabīb represents a transitional phase in the middle, as he was born in the pre-oil period with its difficulties, yet his life extended to see the developments caused by the discovery of oil as well as the establishment of the independent state of Kuwait. Further, his poetry represents the classical current that includes romantic features, as al-Rūmī (1999, p. 293) and Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 162) both stated. Finally, Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn represents the poetic current of blind poets in the post-oil era, especially as there are clear romantic themes and phenomena in his poetry, such as love, childhood memories, complaint and moral values (al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 146).

Of note, I found only one study that disagrees with the idea of dividing the development of poetry in Kuwait according to the discovery of oil, namely Aḥmad al-ʿAlī's (1986) *Shiʿr Ṣaqr al-Shabīb: Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl* (*The Poetry of Ṣaqr al-Shabīb: An Analytical Perspective*). In his endeavours to divide the developmental stages of the Kuwaiti poetry, al-ʿAlī (1986, p. 27) offers his own division and considers it different to other studies that divide the Kuwaiti poetic movement into two key stages: pre-oil and post-oil.

The author excludes oil as being a basis for his division; instead, al-ʿAlī defines three stages in the development of Kuwaiti poetry. The first stage extends between the second half of the nineteenth century and 1915, which he calls a 'slow stage' according to the inactive cultural, economic and political life at that time (al-ʿAlī, 1986, p. 27). The second stage is called 'increasing cultural awareness', in line with establishing the first primary school in Kuwait in 1912, the first public library in Kuwait in 1923, the literary club in Kuwait in 1923, and the journal called 'al-Kuwait' in 1928. He links the third stage with Arab nationalism after the Second World War and divides it into two sub-stages: poets in the first sub-stage are considered an extension of the previous traditional current because they were born in a late period of the second stage; poets

in the second sub-stage represent a new stage for Kuwaiti poetry, being born into a modern life after the discovery of oil (Ibid., p. 37).

At the beginning of his division, it seemed evident that al-ʿAlī emphasised his view of excluding oil as being an effective factor of the development in Kuwaiti poetry. However, it seems that he could not get rid of this fact when he considered poets in the first, second, and the first part of third stage representatives of the traditional current of Kuwaiti poetry, while poets in the second part were considered representatives of the modern current.

In line with the aforementioned studies, I believe that oil is not the only factor of the poetic development, although it had the upper hand and an effective role on the poetic movement in Kuwait particularly and in the Gulf generally. My fundamental aim in this section is to fill a gap in studying the influence of oil on poetry in the Gulf through studying a specific category of poets: blind poets. Thus, my thesis will study the subject of blind poets from a different aspect to all previous studies mentioned in sections 1, 2 and 3 of this literature review.

In conclusion, this literature review has described the scholarly papers and books that have discussed blind poets in Arabic literature in general and in the Gulf in particular. This literature review has been divided into five key sub-sections. The first sub-section includes four studies that take biographical and descriptive stances in studying blind Arabic people in general. However, most blind poets in the Gulf area in the modern era have not been addressed sufficiently.

The second sub-section concentrates on studies that discuss a group of blind Arabic poets generally and on how these studies examine the imagery used by blind poets in their poetic works. This sub-section aims to prove that none of the analytical studies on the imagery used by blind Arabic poets has covered the area of the Arab Gulf countries in the modern era to date. Thus, this thesis seeks to fill a knowledge gap by examining the influence of environment and blindness on shaping and creating imagery by the modern blind poets from Arab Gulf countries.

The third sub-section sheds light on what has been written about the selected blind poets from Arab Gulf countries in general and the imagery used by them in particular. I believe that the abundance of poetic works by the selected modern blind poets in the Gulf enables me to contribute to knowledge by investigating imagery used by them

together, as a group to be studied, to fill a gap in the study of oil's influence on the works of blind poets from Arab Gulf countries.

After presenting what has been written about the selected blind poets in the Gulf, I realised that most researchers and authors have focused on examining imagery used by them individually. Nevertheless, examining imagery used by them collectively is not enough to conduct a thesis. Therefore, I determined a context to make it more critical: the discovery of oil in the Gulf. Thus, I added the fourth and fifth sub-section in this literature review. The fourth applies trauma theory to the literature and attempts to bridge a relationship between the sudden modern age and cultural trauma. The fifth presents most of the studies that indicated the influence of oil on the poetic style and content in the Gulf. Both of them will serve me to achieve the main aim of this thesis, namely, to test the influence of oil on a specific category of Gulf poets – blind poets – to fill a gap in the studies on blind poets in Arabic literature generally and Gulf literature in particular.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study on the influence of oil on the work of blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries will be revealed after presenting the reasons for undertaking such a study.

As will be shown in the Literature Review, many studies have discussed the imagery in the works of blind poets in many eras of Arabic literature. For example, in *Al-Ṣūrah al-Shiʿriyyah fī Shiʿr al-ʿUmyān* (The Visual Image in Poetry of the Blind), al-Fayfī (1996) attempted to select blind poets from the pre-Islamic era to the modern era and study the imagery in their work to obtain a general view and make general judgments about the imagery used by blind poets, especially Visual Imagery. However, this study ignored the essential point that each blind poet had their own culture, era and circumstances. Thus, it can be argued that generalising and making judgments about imagery in the works of blind poets throughout all eras of Arabic literature are inaccurate feats unless limited to a particular time and area.

The research process for this Thesis revealed that most studies on the imagery used by blind poets focus on only two poets from the Abbasid era: Bashshār Ibn Burd and

Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī. Whatever is presented will give identical or similar results as long as the same blind poets in the same era are studied. The Thesis argues that the differences in findings and results are due to the study of different poets and eras.

To support this argument, al-Falāḥī (2015) studied visual imagery in the poetry of two blind Arab poets from very close eras but different cultures. A few differences in judgment appeared because of the selection of different blind poets as case studies. He narrowed down the timeframe of his study, generating results that were different from those of other researchers, such as al-Shurbāṣī and al-ʿAlī, as have been seen in the Literature Review. Therefore, choosing a specific timeframe and area when studying the imagery used by blind poets will give accurate findings and new results.

The Gulf region is considered the most appropriate area for this Thesis, especially in the modern era. There are four key factors behind the selection of the Gulf in the modern era. First, there are many blind poets in the Gulf in this era that can be studied. Second, no previous studies have looked at the imagery used by blind poets from the Gulf in the modern era as a group to examine a particular phenomenon; likewise, few studies have examined them individually, as shown in the Literature Review.

Third, through examining the studies that discuss the history of the poetic movement in the Gulf, a close similarity appears among the countries of the Gulf regarding the emergence of poetic currents and their development. Last, as a result of the discovery of oil, Gulf societies have witnessed significant changes and transformations through moving from desert life to a modern one within a few decades. The discovery of oil has influenced society in several spheres, not only economically but also culturally and intellectually; the power of oil has also influenced the poetic movement in the Gulf.

Although there are some Arabic resources on the influence of oil in the poetic movement in the Gulf, as far as the current author is aware, no academic works have attempted to study the influence of oil on poetry as read through the works of blind poets in the region. This study will have a particular significance in uncovering the real role of oil in drawing the image of Gulf society before and after the discovery of oil, specifically from blind poets' perspectives. Thus, this study is an attempt to draw a different conception around the influence of oil on the poetic movement in the Gulf through shedding light on the works of blind poets.
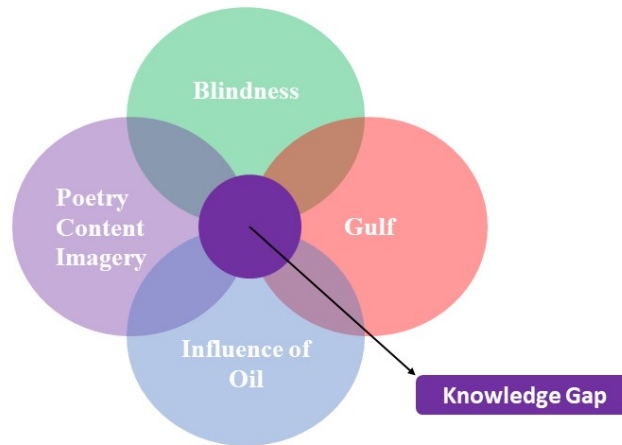
Figure 1: Knowledge gap

Methodology

The current study takes a historical approach due to the essential role of history in understanding Gulf society. Studying the influence of oil on the works of blind poets in the Gulf requires an application of a historical approach through dividing the research into three generations, placing them in their historical contexts, and investigating each one separately. These three generations are as follows: 1) 1867–1914; 2) 1914–1963; 3) 1963–2014.

Although these periods are built on the lifetimes of the three selected blind poets, they are strongly related to the discovery of oil, including remarkable political events and social changes. The first period represents the phase when Britain was the dominant power in the Gulf and summarises the simple life features in the Gulf before the discovery of oil. The Gulf's poets in this period were mostly traditional in content and style, and preserved the inherited shape and purposes of the classical Arabic poem from the pre0Islamic era. This generation is represented by al-Sālimī.

The second period witnessed the Palestine Cause and the increase of pan-Arabism; therefore, people in the Gulf – including poets – were ideologically influenced by pan-Arabism and adopted all causes related to Arabs, particularly that of Palestine. This

period also witnessed the discovery of oil with its developmental changes in economy, construction, behaviours and culture. The features of change reached poetry in the Gulf as well. Such a rapid change brought new poetical phenomena in the literary sphere. This generation is represented by al-Shabīb.

The last period bridges the change that occurred in the second period. Although it seems an extension of the increasing change in the Gulf's poem, it shows entirely different themes and conceptions from the two previous periods concerning poetic purpose and content and documents the modern age of Gulf society. Ibn Ḥusayn is representative of this generation.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on these three periods; however, both Chapters 1 and 2 will be employed as introductions before moving to the in-depth analysis in the remaining chapters. To be clear, Chapter 1 is an introduction for the entire Thesis and includes the title, study questions and aims, scope of the study, literature review, signification of the study, methodology, and then the organisation of the study while Chapter 2 uncovers the impact of blindness on the works of blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries.

There are three reasons for the decision to divide Gulf poetry into three main periods according to the discovery of oil: First, to obtain a more complete and broad knowledge on the emergence of poetry in the Gulf before the discovery of oil; second, to obtain a more complete picture and deeper understanding of the gradual stages of poetic development in the Arab Gulf Countries; and third, because such divisions enable the development of an easy-to-follow method for comprehending the influence of oil on Gulf society, with its economic, cultural and literary dimensions.

The study's applied methodology will be presented now to highlight that it is not merely a historical approach, but a combination of historical, analytical and comparative approaches. The analytical approach is represented in critical discourse analysis (CDA). In general, discourse encompasses written and spoken language. Moreover, it involves visual images and pictures as if they were linguistic texts (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 61). What I mean by CDA here is the analysis of cultural signs of the modern Gulf as read through the works of blind poets via Semiology. In other words, Semiotics as a theory of signs will be my methodological tool to analyse the unique ways in which they document the desert society, discovery of oil and urban society.

According to Baldick (2008, p. 303), semiology is the study of signs, and semiotics is the production of meanings from signs. In his article entitled, *Towards a Modern Tafsīr of Sūrat al-Kahf: Structure and Semiotics*, Netton (2000, p. 68) argues: 'Everything signifies and the Holy Qur'an itself testifies to this in Q.41.53:

Sa-nurīhim āyātinā fī ʾl-āfāq wa-fī anfusihim

We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves'

Thus, my study will apply the theory of Semiotics to the works of blind poets from the Gulf to investigate poetic texts that include signs indicating the features of Gulf society, especially the features of change after the discovery of oil. For semioticians (researchers who practice semiotic analysis), a poem about cars, gas, or anything about modern life, can be taken as a sign and a message to be decoded and analysed to discover its meaning. This theory of Semiotics is further elaborated upon in Chapter Three.

In order to effectively write about and interpret the influence of oil on the works of blind poets in the Gulf, this thesis examines three critical variables in their poetry: Content, Style and Imagery before and after the discovery of oil to figure out the transformation of blind poets' works, as well as their unique ways in describing the Gulf's society before and after the discovery of oil.

Therefore, this research is based upon selections of poems belonging to the three selected blind poets from the Gulf that involve various poetic contents and purposes. The works of each poet will be discussed to uncover the real shape and prominent features of each stage represented by a blind poet from the Gulf. To be clear and accurate, the selection of poetic texts will represent the attitudes of the selected blind poets toward their society, whether before or after the discovery of oil.

The goal of such analytical methodology here is not merely to describe and understand the works of blind poets in the Gulf but also to reveal the hidden signs inside the poetic texts that have reflected the society of oil and blind poets' unspoken trauma. 'The aim of critical discourse analysis is to shed light on the linguistic discursive dimension of social and cultural phenomena and processes of change in late modernity' (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 61).

Further, Jorgensen and Phillips considered discourse to be not only written and spoken language but also visual images. In this Thesis, visual imagery used by blind poets is

an integral part of the poetic discourse, since they are blind. Those blind poets have conveyed the features of change and development in Gulf society – especially within the economic leap after the discovery of oil – through their poetry – and have reflected the old and modern ages in their works. Therefore, 'It is commonly accepted that the analysis of texts containing visual images must take account of the special characteristics of visual semiotics and the relationship between language and images' (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 61).

The application of Semiotics in Chapter Three via critical discourse analysis is the methodological guidance of this Thesis to form a fuller picture on the influence of oil in the works of blind poets in the Gulf. The aim of such application is to see how they perceived materials, framed the modern world and documented the discovery of oil through poetry.

However, the image of Gulf society can also be understood by looking at imagery used by blind poets, since imagery is a representation of senses' experiences and culture. The figurative language or imagery that blind poets used in their works reflects features of their cultures, i.e. desert and oil societies. The simile, for example, is a type of imagery that makes a comparison between one thing and another to strengthen poetic meaning in readers' minds. According to Lewis (1946, p. 18), metaphors and similes are means of creating an image. As such, selections of poetic texts that are rich in imagery and involve cultural dimensions will be collected from the works of blind poets and analysed in this study.

In the analysis of the figurative language used by blind poets, I will not only focus on the signs that go beyond the figurative language but will also shed light on the role of imagination in the visual aspect of poetic imagery, particularly as these poets were deprived of the sense of sight. Imagination enables blind poets to conceive what they are unable to see, such as describing cars, especially if they were blind before the invention of cars.

Authors in general, and poets, in particular, create visual images through their choice and arrangement of words, which require the use of imagination for interpretation. Bohm (1994) argued that there are various types of imagination and that this variation affects how images in literature are understood. The type of imagination based on memories of the past and projections of the future differs from creative imagination,

which can create new images or ideas. Bohm further contended that the perception of visual images in literature involves sensory perception; a process that is similar to the senses of seeing and hearing but which is also based on memory.

Regarding the types of imagination, the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the romantic imagination will be used as foundation. According to Myers and Wukasch (2003, p. 134), Coleridge divided imagination into two fundamental types: Primary and Secondary. Additionally, he made distinctions between the quality, range and function of imagination and fancy. Baldick (2008) stated that before S.T. Coleridge's distinction between the faculties of fancy and imagination, the terms were often synonymous, with 'fancy' often being an abbreviation of 'fantasy' (p. 125).

According to Myers and Wukasch (2003), Coleridge defined the term *Imagination* as 'a process that has the power to change the character of its individual parts, and to synthesize and unify them into an organic whole that is related to the quality of perception of an experience or memory' (p. 134). Baldick (2008) stated that 'Coleridge, in *Biographia literaria* (1817), argued that the fancy was merely a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space' (p. 125).

Myers and Wukasch (2003) illustrated the role of imagination from Coleridge's perspective: 'The imagination has the power to lead to or to grow a new creation from parts that are integrally related to and inextricable from the whole' (p. 134). Similarly, Baldick (2008) explained the role of fancy from Coleridge's perspective by stating that fancy is 'able to combine and reassemble ready-made images in new spatial and temporal arrangements, but not able to dissolve and unite them in new creations as the imagination could' (p. 134).

The following table summarises the definition and function of imagination and fancy from Coleridge's perspective.

Table 2: Definition and function of imagination and fancy

	Imagination	**Fancy**
Definition	Power to unify and create	Power to combine and reassemble
Function	Unifying images to create a united whole and new creation	Combining images without unifying them, so it does not create a united whole

This Thesis will illustrate Coleridge's theory to measure the imagination in Chapter Two and Three in the light of the imagery in the poetry of the three selected poets. This process will make it easier to determine whether the selected poets had imaginative or fanciful minds in terms of documenting the pre-oil era society and the discovery of oil. The way in which blind poets in the Gulf unleash their senses and imagination and employ them in their poetry to create poetic images, including visual images of Gulf society, despite their loss of sight, will also be revealed.

The importance of the historical approach and studying the poetry of blind Arab poets from Arab Gulf Countries and breaking it into three temporal oil-related stages lies in knowing the actual and personal impression of blind individuals towards the temporal phase they belong to, the phase preceding it, and the one after it. Researchers and the society at large sometimes possess certain inaccurate beliefs regarding the poetry of the blind, and hence the critical re-examination of the poetic movement's history in the Gulf region shall constitute a distinct addition that aids readers in understanding the reasons which caused trauma to the blind after the accelerated urban and cultural transformation at the advent of the oil era.

As mentioned, the general layout of the study will rely on a multi-methodology that brings together comparative and sensory methods coupled with eco-criticism. At the same time, the study shall adopt two theories: Trauma (psychoanalysis) and Semiotics, and their distribution shall be as follows:

Chapter 2 will study the psychological and sensory impacts of blindness on poetry of the Blind. Trauma theory will be applied to the former as it is applied to the selected poets of the study since they were all born able sighted then lost their eyesight at an early age; a matter that caused them physical and psychological trauma. The Chapter

shall attempt to put forward a new perspective towards developing trauma theory and creating a new paradigm thereof as it is not only natural disasters, wars and sexual assault that cause trauma to individuals and societies. Sometimes, *Blessings* can also cause trauma – blessings like that of oil in the Gulf – as rapid development and urban change can be bliss to some and a disaster to others.

As for Sensory Imagery, the study shall rely on that method based on studying the impact of blindness on the poetry of the blind. The Chapter shall focus on poetic imagery drawn from the five senses, like challenging visual deficiency through visual imagery relying on colours, or sensory compensation via audio, touch, taste and smell imagery.

Chapter 3 shall test the impact of the environment on constructing the poetic imagery of the blind through eco-criticism. The natural environment of the Gulf area, like the sea, mountains and city, shall be discussed in their pre and post-oil eras' contexts. Nevertheless, one of the most critical theories Chapter 4 adopts is that of Semiotics. As it is based on the detection of signs, this theory will be applied to Omani poet al-Sālimī's works to identify the signs of his pre-oil environment and their influence on his poetic imagery. Afterwards, we shall pursue the signs of the advent of the oil age on the poetic works of Kuwaiti poet al-Shabīb to identify the cultural trauma that befell him as a result; finally, the same methodology shall be pursued regarding the poetic works of Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn.

Comparison is another critical tool used in this study and will take two key sides. The first is by comparing the unique ways in which blind poets document Gulf society from one period to another. The comparison aims to understand blind poets' attitudes towards their culture: First, the pre-oil culture whether before or after oil; second, the urban culture after the discovery of oil.

Chapter 4 addresses the second comparison and determines the prevailing shape and content of Gulf poems in the pre-oil era. It then traces changes in both style and content of Gulf poems after the discovery of oil. Observing the similarities and differences between the two cultures, namely pre-oil and post-oil, will lead to observing the influence of oil on the works of blind poets.

This thesis further argues that the prevailing style and content of Gulf poems in the pre-oil era were limited and classical. However, the word *Classical* needs to be clearly

defined and accompanied by some examples. Therefore, Chapter 4 compares the cultural influences and textual relationships between the poetic style, content, purposes and images used by the selected blind poet, al-Sālimī, and the poetic images used by classical Arabic poets from pre-Islamic, Omayyad, and Abbasid eras. Thus, it will discuss how the selected blind poets have simulated other classical poetic texts in terms of shape, content, purposes and imagery.

This comparison will reveal whether poetic works of blind poets in the pre-oil era are a type of simulation and imitation, a type of reassembly and renewal, or something between the two. The purpose of such comparison is to prove that the pre-oil generation examined in this study preserved the pure traditional shape, content, poetic images and purposes of the classical Arabic poem. This study will collect and analyse the poets' works using qualitative methods, namely Discourse Analysis, so as to reach its main goal and accomplish its objectives.

After figuring out the knowledge gap that my research aims to fill, I will briefly present the sources that I will utilise primarily in this research and explain how I collected them during my research period. The Dīwāns or the poetic works of three blind poets from the Gulf are the primary sources upon which I base my research. The individual Dīwāns of the three poets selected as case studies include all their poetic works produced in their lifetimes. The first blind poet is the Omani al-Sālimī. Two of his Dīwāns – *Jawhar al-Niẓām* and al-Sulaymānī's study – will be used in this thesis. The second blind poet's Dīwān used in this thesis is the Kuwaiti al-Shabīb. Lastly, the extensive Dīwān entitled *Hawāmish al-Thāt*, by the Saudi Ibn Ḥusayn, consisting of two parts, will be used.

Regarding al-Sālimī's Dīwāns, I found that the largest poetic works by al-Sālimī is called *Jawhar al-Niẓām*. It is a colossal Dīwān consisting of a great number of poems. In fact, al-Sālimī covered most Islamic rules and teachings in 14,000 poetic verses with almost simple literary language (al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 9). The driving force behind writing such large works is the social responsibility of transferring Islamic rules and explanations to Muslims in simple poetic language. This Dīwān serves my study slightly because it has been written basically for religious purposes. By this, I mean to say that it does not reflect the personal concerns of al-Sālimī as a poet particularly; rather, it reflects his religious concerns as an *Imām* in the first class. Nevertheless, the fact that it was written for religious purposes and in the frame of teaching does not necessarily mean that the poems are without metaphors, similes and artistic imagery.

In general, the poetic environment in Oman is rich and fertile. Nevertheless, most Omani poetry remains archived in manuscripts. Similarly, the poetry of al-Sālimī remained mostly archived until the unveiling of al-Sulaymānī's study. The fruit of al-Sulaymānī's study lies in collecting the poetic manuscripts and publishing them in a Dīwān for the first time, as well as studying this poetry critically. Consequently, al-Sālimī's poetry can be studied deeply and further by researchers. In other words, this study has opened further doors to allow other researchers to study al-Sālimī's poetry from new perspectives, such as studying the influence of blindness on building imagery in poetry or considering his poetry – as I will consider it – to represent the traditional poetic current in the Gulf before the discovery of oil.

As far as I have read, this is the extent of al-Sālimī's published poetry to date, and it encompasses what I could collect from friends in Oman, bookshops, book fairs and online. Thus, the study of *Jawhar al-Niẓām* and al-Sulaymānī's study will account for the primary sources of data that enable me to investigate the content imagery of al-Sālimī's poetry.

Regarding al-Shabīb's poetic works, it was published within three stages. First, al-Shabīb (1969) included 152 poems, plus 28 poetic excerpts. Then, al-ʿAlī (1986) collected 18 unpublished poems belonging to al-Shabīb, as well as five letters that include nine poetic excerpts. Last, al-Shabīb (2008) collected the whole poetic works of the poet and called it 'al-Shabīb's Dīwān'. I was able to get the three books in Kuwait from bookshops or book fairs. Nevertheless, I consider only al-Shabīb (2008) as a primary source because it includes the whole poetic works of the poet. Thus, I will chiefly depend on this Dīwān in selecting poems and poetic verses that are rich in the imagery used by the Kuwaiti blind poet al-Shabīb. Further, I will classify his poems into themes according to their content. In this way, the features of al-Shabīb's poetry will be clear to study and analyse.

Regarding Ibn Ḥusayn's poetic works, I visited Saudi Arabia and met the poet's sons to get all his poetic production and the material written about his works. I found that he published only two Dīwāns. The first is titled *Aṣdāʾ wa Andāʾ* (Echoes and Dews). This Dīwān represents the first poetic issue by Ibn Ḥusayn, and it was used as a primary source to analyse his poetry (2001). The second, titled *Hawāmish al-Thāt* (Margins of Self), involves most of the poems that are in the first Dīwān as well as many more. Many of the new poems in the second Dīwān include new themes and different

imagery from those in the first. Likewise, no previous researcher has used this second Dīwān, including the new poems, in an analytical study. Thus, the abundance of new poems in the second Dīwān, *Hawāmish al-Thāt* (Margins of Self), enables me to investigate the imagery of Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry from a deeper perspective. As long as the second Dīwān does not wholly include the whole poetic works of Ibn Ḥusayn, I consider it is insufficient to address only *Hawāmish al-Thāt* (Margins of Self) as a primary source regarding the poetry of Ibn Ḥusayn, but addressing both of his Dīwāns is pretty essential to cover the whole themes and imagery of Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry.

Organisation of the Study

This Thesis includes four key chapters, an abstract and a conclusion.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter offers a general introduction to the Thesis. It consists of six main parts: First, Research Questions and Aims of the Study. Second, the Scope of the Study that presents the standards and conditions of selecting blind poets from Arab Gulf countries and short biographies of each poet.

Third, the Literature Review which consists of five sub-sections. The first concentrates on the descriptive studies on blind Arabic poets and presents the historical background on the beginning of writing about blindness and famous blind Arabic people until the modern age. The second sub-section highlights the most famous analytical studies on the poetry of blind Arabic poets, especially studies that address a group of blind poets together and the imagery of their poetic works. The third considers studies that concentrate on the poetic production of the three selected blind poets in the Gulf individually. The fourth presents literary studies that applied Trauma Theory to Arabic literature. This section also presents a clear definition of Trauma to examine its validity on the works of blind poets from the Gulf. Lastly, the fifth sub-section focuses on studies that have examined the effect of oil on the poetic movement in Arab Gulf countries.

The Fourth part of the general introduction is Significance of the Study unveiled the contribution of knowledge that this thesis will make to the broad literature. Last, the Methodology that have been applied to this thesis.

Chapter 2: Impact of Blindness on the Works of Blind Poets from Arab Gulf Countries

This Chapter sheds a psychoanalytical light on the works of blind poets by focusing on their suffering from blindness. It is divided into two key sections. In the first, the echo of blindness trauma is revealed through a collection of poetic texts expressing the poets' suffering and grief. The second section will examine the influence of blindness from a sensory perspective. It will focus on blind poets' sensory discourse, including the visual.

Chapter 3: Representations of Environment in the Works of Blind Poets from Arab Gulf Countries

This Chapter is divided into three key sub-sections where each represents a particular phase of the Gulf's history. The first reflects the pre-oil era which was influenced by simple life and nature. The second represents a unique period in which the Gulf took its first shape as a group of modern states. The section examines how a blind poet received the oil age and tests the trauma it caused him and how it affected his works. The third covers the post-oil era and its consequences. The selected blind poets are distributed equally and respectively, to be representatives of each phase.

Chapter 4: Influence of Oil on Poetic Style and Content in the Works of Blind Poets from Arab Gulf Countries

This chapter is also divided into three key sub-sections, each of which represents a specific phase of Gulf history. The first is a pre-test on the dominant poetic style and content in the pre-oil era. It shows prevailing poetic style, including poetic language, rhythm and rhyme, as well as poetic content which include poetic themes, topics, purposes and genres. The second represents a formative stage of the modern Gulf, involving rapid and radical development in Gulf societies, especially after the discovery

of oil. It examines the transformations on poetic style and content in the works of blind poets. The third represents the post-oil era, where Gulf society entered a new stage and witnessed the modern age and its developments at various levels in that region. So, it will continue examining the consequences of oil on poetic style and content; thus, elucidate the influence of oil on the works of blind poets.

Conclusion

It is the very last part of this thesis. Its main purposes are: to summarize and reflect on the research, to clearly state the answers to the main research questions, to present the gap of knowledge, contribution it makes, and the essential findings in the research. It also makes recommendations for future work on the topic.

Chapter 2: Influence of Blindness on the Works of Blind Poets from Arab Gulf Countries

Introduction

As covered in the literature review chapter, many studies have dealt with the impact of blindness on the poetry of multiple Arab poets together. However, those studies clearly focused on classical blind poets who lived in older ages and ignored discussing the works of modern age blind poets despite their abundance throughout the Arab World in general, and in the Gulf region in particular. One must also note that those studies followed an inequal methodology of comparison among the poets chosen for study and the testing of the impact of blindness on their poetry. The studies included blind poets with uneven visual memory or experience of length or shortness, e.g. Bashshār Ibn Burd was born blind, but Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī lost his sight at a young age.

Hence, this study, and particularly this chapter, lays out specific conditions for choosing blind poets in accordance to a methodology of similarity of blind poets' circumstances, as well on temporal, environmental and physical equality among them to test the impact of blindness on their works in a more accurate manner.

This chapter focuses on the impact of blindness on the poetry of blind poets of modern times that influenced the Gulf region and then aims toward testing the validity of trauma theory on three of the region's poets: Omani Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī, Kuwaiti Ṣaqr al-Shabīb and Saudi Ibn Ḥusayn, who all lost their sight at an early age, rendering their able-sighted period in their early years limited, short and somewhat equal. This leads us to focus on how their sudden transformation from one stage to the other, as well as the aftermath of such physical trauma on their psychology, social life and even their economic status, impacted their poetry.

This chapter is divided into two main sections with the first testing the poets' trauma on the psychological level by duly presenting the experience of each poet; the second section will then test the impact of the poets' trauma due to blindness on a sensory level. In other words, the second section will focus on blind poets' poetic imagery and follow a sensory methodology that will reveal these poets' brilliance in honing the five senses for creating this imagery.

Section 1: Poets' Blindness Trauma – Psychological Facet

Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914) is considered among the first blind poets of the Gulf region in modern times. Historical sources reference that he was born able-sighted but lost his sight at the age of 12 (al-Sulaymānī, 2017, p. 34).

Although the topics of his poetry are far from emotional and self-sensory expression – as they focused on religion, education, praising scholars and enthusing Muslims for resisting foreign colonisers – one can note the impact of blindness on him as he has expressed his suffering due to it in scattered locations. In his Dīwān, *Jawhar al-Niẓām*, he says:

<div dir="rtl">

لا تَطْلُبِ الحاجةَ للعُميانِ

زالَ الحَيا إنْ ذَهَبَ العيْنانِ

</div>

Do not ask for assistance for blind people

No pride remains when the eyes are gone

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 360)

In the above verse, al-Sālimī tells seeing people not to volunteer and request any matter for blind poets so that the former does not let the latter feel they are incapable of doing so themselves and then end up hurting their feelings. Such is the overt sensitivity of blind poets as was also mentioned by al-ʿAlī (1999, p. 144) in his book, *Poetry of the Blind in the Abbasid Era*, where he gives the example of Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī and his inclination towards seclusion in his society rather than mingling with people. The poet expresses:

<div dir="rtl">

إذا انفرد الفتى أُمِنَتْ عليهِ

دنايا ليس يُؤمِنُها الخِلاطُ

</div>

If one chooses seclusion, he will be safe from

Ills which could be forsaken if among others

(al-Maʿarrī, al-Abyārī, ed., 1961, V. 3, p. 104)

Al-ʿAlī (1999, p. 145) also mentions another verse by the same poet, reflecting the latter's overt sensitivity and social trauma in fear of people. Al- Maʿarrī says:

<div dir="rtl">

فانفردْ ما استطعْتَ! فالقائلُ

</div>

الصادقُ يضحى ثِقْلًا على الجُلَساءِ

Alienate yourself as much as possible

As an honest speaker is a burden to gatherers

(al-Maʿarrī, ed. al-Abyārī, 1961, p. 56)

In his Dīwān, verified by al-Sulaymānī (2009), al-Sālimī expresses his resentment and suffering from adversaries who ignore his ideas on the sole premise of him being blind and disregard his noble traits, fine manners and scientific achievements. They are ones who judge not that which he possesses, but rather his appearance. He proclaims:

قل للأُلى جهلوا صفاتي عن عمًى

إنّ الذي أعماكُم لِبَهاءِ

مِثْلَ الخَفَاشِ يرى إذا جَنّ الدُّجى

لكنّهُ يُعْميهِ كُلُّ ضياءِ

Say to those who have forsaken my traits due to my blindness

That that which has blinded you is stupidity

Like bats seeing if darkness reigns

But blinded by all that which wonderfully glows

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 266)

In the verse above, al-Sālimī utilised the rebound style (*al-Taʿwīḍ*) which means compensating between the absence of sight and the foresight (*al-Baṣīrah*) by attributing blindness to his adversaries and foresight to himself. The verse also echoes the similar experience of Abbasid poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī when he was similarly ridiculed by his adversaries, leading him to ridicule their sight in comparison to his foresight:

رأوك بالعين فاستغوَتْهُم ظِنَنٌ

ولن يرَوْكَ بفكرٍ صادقِ الخَبرِ

والنجمُ تستصغرُ الأبصارُ رؤيتَهُ

والذنبُ للطَرْفِ لا للنجمِ في الصِّغَرِ

With eyes they saw you and were deceived

For they will never see you with honest minds

As the star seems too small for eyes to catch

Yet it is lack of vision, not size or grandeur

(al-Maʿarrī, ed. al-Saqqā, 1974, p. 162)

The duality of sight and foresight is also echoed in Kuwaiti blind poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Dīwān who drew a poetic image akin to that of al-Sālimī in defending himself and attacking his adversaries. al-Shabīb says:

لئن كرهوا اشتعالَ سراجِ فَضْلي

فإنّ النورَ يكرهُهُ الخِفاشُ

They hate the illumination of my traits' torch

For light is hated by all bats

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 449)

Al-ʿAlī (1999, p. 153) says that blind poets utilise foresight, and pride for possessing it, as a psychologically defensive and compensatory means in which they prove themselves, emphasise their individuality in a society that gives them no importance and thus draw attention to themselves. This method also strengthens their morale and is described by al-ʿAlī as getting back at those who demean and ridicule them.

Historical sources also indicate al-Sālimī died in 1914, due to his blindness, as he had left his house and rode a donkey to meet Sheikh Mājid al-ʿAbrī where the two had agreed to have a public debate on a religious matter; along the way, a tree branch struck al-Sālimī's head and caused him to fall off the donkey. His injuries were so severe that he was transported to his village (Tanūf), where he died soon after (Sharifi, 2011, p. 415).

Moving on to Kuwaiti blind poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Dīwān, we notice that his trauma due to blindness is very evident. Historical sources state that he was born, able-sighted, into a poor family but lost that sense completely at the age of nine (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 13). His Dīwān contains many examples of his suffering of poverty and blindness, some of which are mentioned together in the same poem.

For example, when he attended ceremonies presenting the art of al-ʿArḍah (plural: ʿArḍāt) – a folk musical with participants dancing with swords – he would state that his loss of sight prevented him from enjoying the celebration:

وما للعُمْيِ في العَرْضاتِ أُنْسٌ

فأمدحها بنظْمٍ أو نثيرِ

وهل أُثني على العرضات خيرًا

ولذّتُها خصوصًا للبصيرِ

The blind cannot enjoy ʿArḍāt

Nor can I praise it in poetry or prose

I cannot praise it with goodness

When its pleasure is purely for the able-sighted

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 396)

In another poem entitled, 'From a Blindman to Blindmen', al-Shabīb responds to questions on blindness posed by the able-sighted when they asked him whether blindness was bliss or misery. The poet explains his stance towards blindness and suffering profusely, and says:

أَلِلأعمى بمَحياهُ سُرورُ؟

وهل يا صقرُ فيهِ لهُ حُبورُ؟

فقلت لهم: عمى العميانِ أَسْرٌ

وهل في الأسرِ يبتهج الأسيرُ؟

Do you see happiness on a blind man's face?

Do you feel joy with it O' Saqr?

I said: The blindness of the blind is a jail

Does an imprisoned man feel happiness when chained?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 347)

The above verse exemplifies the concept, essence and meaning of being blind to al-Shabīb, who considers it eternal and unescapable incarceration that prevents him from

communicating with all externalities. The verse also makes it clear to the reader how important seeing is to the blind.

In the same poem, al-Shabīb continues with his responses and says:

فقالوا: 'العُميُ أكثرُهم سِمانٌ

وهل سِمَنٌ بلا أُنْسٍ يَصيرُ؟'

فقلتُ لهم: 'سِمانُ العُمْي ماتت

مشاعرُهُم، فليس لهم شعورُ'

ألم يَسْلَمْ من السِّمَنِ المعرّي

وبشّارٌ ومِثلُهما يَسيرُ؟

They have said: The blind are mostly overweight

Does obesity occur without loneliness?

I said: Feelings of the overweight blind have died

And hence can feel nothing any more,

Was not al-Maʾarri safe from it

And Bashshār and others throughout the ages?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 347)

The verses above explain what obesity indicated in past times. Although it was a status statement of the rich, happiness and a sign of beauty, from the perspective of the blind like al-Shabīb, it signified the death of feelings. He denies that blind poets were overweight and cites his skinny figure as an example, as well as those of the two famous blind poets al-Maʿarrī and Bashshār Ibn Burd.

Another image of al-Shabīb's suffering from blindness is the demeaned status of the blind in society and not providing them with that which enables them, rendering them sad and destitute. Nevertheless, to al-Shabīb, blind individuals have the ability and strong will to enact successes and achievements despite their visual impairment. He writes:

يمزّقُني انحطاطِ العُمْي حُزنًا

وكُلُّهُم على العَلْيا قديرُ

70

It tears me to pieces the low status granted to the blind

While all of them have abilities to achieve grandeur

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 349)

Then in another verse of the same poem, al-Shabīb expresses his suffering from mobility and movement impediments due to blindness, particularly his failed attempts of handling kitchen dishes and glassware. He says:

فأكسِرُ من أوانِيَّ اللواتي

تأتِّيها على مثلي عَسيرُ

And I break of my kitchenware many pieces

That are difficult for one as poor as me to afford

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 349)

Additionally, when describing his wish to leave his house, the impediment of blindness stands in his way. He says:

لزوم البيت للأعمى سبيلٌ

إلى راحاته وإلى السلامَة

فلا يسرحْ ضريرٌ من ذراه!

فغايةُ مسرحٍ الأعمى ندامهْ

Staying at home is a means for the Blind

Towards their comfort and safety

A blind person should not walk alone

As his end will only be one of regret

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 561)

In describing exiting or returning to his house, al-Shabīb uses dramatic description which, on face value, leads to despair, but deep down is meant to be considerate of his blindness while walking, encapsulated in the following verse:

وكم تَنْغَطُّ رجلاهُ بِرَوْثٍ

على الطرقاتِ مُلْقَى، أو قمامهْ

71

وكم ماءٍ مُراقٍ، كلُّ أعمى

يصادفُ فيه –إنْ يعثُرْ– حِمامَهْ

How many times do his feet step on manure

Scattered on the pathways, or on garbage?

So many times if walking over a puddle of water

Does a blind man fall almost to his death!

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 561)

al-Shabīb had a habit of visiting the late Sheikh ʿAbdullāh Sālim al-Sabāḥ every week, but then stopped doing so and secluded himself at home. He sent the following verses to the Sheikh, explaining his reason for this after the latter had reproached him in a friendly manner for not visiting him as usual:

ولو أني أسْطيعُ وحدي ازديارهِ

لكنت إليه الدهرَ متّصلَ السيْر

ولكنّني ما سِرْتُ وحدي مَرّةً

فعدتُ ولم تجرح جبيني يدُ الجُدْر

كأن لجدران الكويت جميعِها

عليّ تِراثٌ غيرُ منسيّةِ الذّكرِ

فهنّ متى أبصرنَني دون قائدٍ

ردَدْتُ نظيمَ الصبرِ مني إلى نثرِ

أظنُّ كأني كنتُ بالأمسِ واترًا

وهنّ بصفعي اليومَ يأخذْنَ بالوِثْرِ

Had it been up to me alone to visit him

I would have spent an eternity pacing the way,

But not once have I walked alone in the streets

Without having slammed into its walls every day,

As if I owed all the walls of Kuwait a debt

That stained my arms, fingers and bled my head,

72

Whenever they see me approaching while not being led

They would shatter my poetic patience into thread,

It is as if yesterday I had killed one of their kin, and

They avenge themselves today in slapping me around

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 355)

al-Shabīb utilises these reasons as the excuse for being absent from Sheikh Abdullah al-Salim's gatherings. He also painted a scene of one-sided combat in which the blind poet falls victim to the walls, due to not being led by someone able-sighted. As the walls continued to slap the blind poet, he complains of the absurd role played by his walking stick in being useless, whether long or short, like the fingers of his hands which can barely sway the walls from slapping him. It is only when a good doer assists him in returning home that the beatings stop, yet the poet loses his temper and sends a barrage of insults against the walls. Nevertheless, there is no point in cursing as his chest already burned with anger and his clothes filled with dirt. He says:

فيُسلمُني هذا لذاك بصفعةٍ

وذاك إلى هذا بصفعٍ له مُرِّ

وليس لعكّازي وإنْ طال من غِنًى

تجاهَ صنيعِ الجُدْرِ أو أنمُلي العشْر

فأبقى شريدَ اللُّبِّ حتّى يُتاحَ لي

كريمٌ عن الإسعافِ ليس بمُزْوَرِّ

فيرجعُ بي للبيت أشكرُ فضله

وطوْرًا أنالُ الجُدْرَ بالمنطق الهُجْر

وما كان قول الهُجْر خُلقي وعادتي

ولا بمُبيخٍ ما بصدري من الحرّ

ولكنّ غيظ المرء يُخْرجُهُ إلى

سوى عادِهِ أو ضدِّ أخلاقِهِ الغُرِّ

فآوي إلى بيتي وثوبي لا ترى

به أو بجسمي موضعًا غيرَ مُغبَرِّ

73

One would slap me over to another

And the other afterwards bitterly to the next,

My walking stick regardless of length does me no good

For neither it nor my ten fingers can sway their slaps,

I remain as such till goodness is sent my way

And a kind-hearted person aids and leads me away,

Who then takes me back home with my thanks and gratitude

At times I launch salvos of insults against the walls

Yet uttering bad words has never been my habit or trait,

Nor does it extinguish the fire in my heart

But it is one's anger at times that does the trick,

And puts one in a position unbecoming his kind manners.

So I seek solace within the confines of my home, where dust

On my clothes and body, not a single spot has missed

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 356)

Once accompanied safely back to his abode, the valiant doer of goodness suggests that al-Shabīb remains in his house, as a blind man leaving alone shall only gain scars and blisters. To this, al-Shabīb says:

فيتركني ذاك الفتى بعد قولِهِ:

أرى لك أن تبقى من البيت في العُثْرِ

فما لضريرٍ في فراق مكانِهِ

من الربحِ إلا ما يقلُّ عن الخُسْرِ

فلستُ أرى ربحًا وإنْ جلَّ وافيًا

بما تركتْ في وجهكَ الجُدْرُ من حَفْرِ

And that lad would depart after telling me

To stay home and not leave these destitute walls,

That a blind man must not leave his comfort zone

74

As no gain shall overweigh the incurred losses,

For no gain regardless of how glittery it may seem

Is worthy of the blisters which walls shall impose

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 357)

The poet continues to humanise the walls, fills them with hatred towards him, and doubts they bear him goodwill. He even reduces his chances of survival if he were to overcome their tormenting by revealing the second line of enemies, i.e. donkeys, whose only concern is to make him fall and engulf him in dirt. He says:

وما رقّت الجدران يومًا لحالتي

وهل رقّةٌ للطين تُرجى أوِ الصّخرِ؟

وإن أنجُ منها لم أعُد قَطُّ ناجِيًا

إلى منزلي من وقعةٍ بِيَ للحُمْر

فكم أوجعتْ صدري صِلابُ صدورها

وكم عفّرتْ ظهري بطرحي على العَفْر

The walls have never softened their stance towards my condition

For no man can expect clay or stone to have mercy,

If I were to escape their slaps as I wish, I am still in peril

For the donkeys would make sure they finished the task,

Many a time have they fallen on me and caused me pain

And many more have they flung me onto dirt

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 357)

al-Shabīb then describes the meanness of people who rode donkeys and who bullied him with ridicule and loud laughter, causing him severe psychological pain more than the physical one caused by donkeys. He says:

ولم يَرْثِ لي مَن أقلّتْ ظهورُها

لقلّةِ ما فيهم من الفهِم والحِجْرِ

كأني لديهم للحمير ممازحٌ

75

فليس لديهم غيرُ ضحكهمُ المُزري

فمهما أقعْ مستلقيًا لا تجد فمًا

على منظري من جَهْلِهِمْ غيرَ مُفْتَرِّ

كأنهمُ شاؤوا بإرسالِ ضِحْكِهِمْ

زيادةَ ما قد ألحقوني من الشرِّ

Those riding their backs have not felt sorrow for me

As they lacked intellect and goodness,

As if I were to them a plaything for donkeys

With their cynical and wretched laughs and taunting,

As many times as I fell down, they would at my sight

Shoot off their mouths both foul and harsh,

As if with their laughs they wished to add

To my pain as well as their acts of evil doing

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 357)

Al-Shabīb's Dīwān contains poetic imagery that expresses his suffering due to blindness, and perhaps it is this epic scene that summarises it. His plight began with a shock that transformed into a crisis which scarred his soul and body. He had not abstained from the Sheikh's presence due to laziness as children usually do, acted coy as women do with their lovers for more attention, nor to savour torture as described by Najmah Idrīs who said, 'He would accept in a masochistic manner all facets of his incapacity and longing, and would justify not responding to generous invites with blindness at times, and the congestion and evils of roads at others' (Idrīs, 2012). However, this is not the case as he excused himself to conceal an internal problem he suffered and to contain psychological pain that had engulfed him. These are among blind people's defence mechanisms, as ʿAdnān al-ʿAlī (1999) explained when branding such tools as justification and projection:

'Justification is to give false reasons through which one explains his demeanour and actions so as to preserve his self-respect and that of others towards him, and to also mitigate the tension caused by his surroundings. It is also a means

through which one avoids the struggle that occurs within him between what he likes and wishes to achieve, and what may actually be achieved.' (p. 64)

Chapter three will explain the struggle between that which al-Shabīb hoped to achieve and that which he actually was able to achieve by the dawn of the modern age.

Finally, we come to Saudi blind poet Ibn Ḥusayn's Dīwān, where we see a glimpse of his suffering with blindness. Historical sources state that he was born able-sighted but lost this sense completely at age four (al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 54). One of his poems is entitled, *Between Blindness and Seeing,* where he expresses the trauma very clearly. In this poem, Ibn Ḥusayn responds to those who take him lightly due to being blind, and sheds light on the duality of sight and foresight, stressing the strength of the latter within him. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

كلّ أعمى تضيء فيه البصيرة

ما تمنّاهُ مَن بعينٍ بصيرة

هكذا الله إنْ يُواري طريقًا

يفتحُ الطُّرُقَ للعقولِ المنيرة

هكذا العُمْيُ معشرٌ قد تساموا

واستهانوا بكلّ دعوى خطيرة

جَهِلَ الناسُ أمرَهم فاستخفّوا

إنهم لو عَلِمْتَ عُمْيَ البصيرة

</div>

Every blind man within him is foresight lit

That which the able-sighted only wish for,

Such is God Who if one path He conceals

Opens another for Enlighted minds,

Such are the blind who have soared higher

And laid aside all demeaning they receive,

People have taken them lightly in ignorance

For if you have realised, those are blind of foresight

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 301)

In another poem, he expresses his suffering due to those who take him lightly only for being blind, and he defends himself by describing them as foresight blind:

هم معشري لا أبتغي بدلًا بهم

إنْ غيّرتْ أسْلابَها الحَيّاتُ

وأراكَ مثلي، غيرَ أنّي فيهم

أعمىً يُرَوَّضُ، فتنفِرُ الحِيلاتُ

قالوا كذا، قلت: الحقيقة أنّهم

عُمْيُ البصائرِ حُسْنُهُمْ عَوْراتُ

They are my people, whom I seek no other

Even if snakes change their skins,

And I see you like me, yet I am among them

A blind man being tamed, as tricks spring up,

They say such, yet I say: The truth is

That they are foresight blind and their better traits are but flaws

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 690)

Then in another poem, Ibn Ḥusayn expresses his longing for his place of work after having been forced to retire. He requests one of his former colleagues to take him along to work and not to complain of doing such due to Ibn Ḥusayn's blindness. He says:

خذني معك، لا تقلْ: أعمى سيرهقني!

فإنّي عليمٌ بما أجفو وما آتي

طالَ اشتياقي إلى رَبْعٍ تطرّبني

ما كان من غدوةٍ فيهِ وروْحاتِ

Take me along and do not say: A blind man will tire me!

For I am aware of what I say and do,

And my longing to the place that gives me solace is great

Having headed to and came back from it so many times

78

The preceding verse clarifies Ibn Ḥusayn's weariness from the complaining of others due to his visual impairment, as well as his unforgiving feelings that blindness is the primary reason causing him to be a burden to the able-sighted. It is probably this overt sensitivity regarding his blindness that made him feel he did not get along with his friends and society. In this regard, he composed a poem entitled ʿItāb (Gentle Reproof) in which he scolded his friends for making fun of him, and in which he expressed his psychological pain due to it:

تندّرتمُ ما شئتمُ أنْ تَنَدّروا

فهلّا كفى! فالجرحُ ما زال يَقْطُرُ

اتَخَذْتُكُمُ صَفْوَ الرفاقِ وليتني

تبصّرْتُ، فالرأيُ السديدُ التبصّرُ

وقولوا بلا ترقيعٍ ثوبِ نفاقِكم:

'وجودُكَ في سِلكِ الرّفاقِ مُكَدِّرُ'

سأُلقي عليكم حينها غيرَ آثمٍ

سلامَ وداعٍ لم يُشْبِه التنكُّر

وأمضي وفي نفسي عليكم تحسّرٌ

وهيهات أنْ يُجدي عليّ التحسّرُ

ولكنّ صَحْبي ضيّعوني سَفاهةً

فللهِ صَحْبي كم أساؤوا وأغفِرُ

You joked about it so many times

But enough already for the wound still bleeds!

I considered you the best of friends, yet I wish

I had eyes, for a righteous judgement requires foresight,

Just say it without blemishing your garb of hypocrisy:

'Your presence causes us much discomfort',

At which time I shall bid you unapologetically

A goodbye unveiled by that similar to your disguise,

And move forward as my heart feels pain for you

A remorse that yours will feel none for me,

But my friends have forsaken me out of stupidity

To God I complain of their mischief and forgive

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 709)

To the same effect, al-'Ali (1999, p. 76) states that such overt sensitivity and sense of inferiority was the main reason for Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī's social alienation and confining himself to his house. The poet says:

تغيّبْتُ في منزلي بُرْهةً

ستيرَ العيوبِ فقيدَ الحسد

I recluse myself at home for a while

To conceal flaws that are unenviable

(al-Maʿarrī, al-Abyārī, ed., 1961, V. 2, p. 100)

Section 2: Poets' Blindness Trauma – Sensory Facet

The five senses form a source of poetic imagery. Baldick (2008) demonstrates that 'The imagery of a literary work comprises the set of images that it uses, these need not to be mental pictures, but may appeal to senses other than sight' (p. 164).

Many researchers have implemented a methodology based on the five senses to study the impact of blindness on the poetic imagery of blind poets. Prominent among those studies are al-Fayfī's (1996), Maṣārwah's (2008), and al-Muṭayrī's (2012) as shown in Chapter 2 (Literature Review).

Accordingly, this section shall test the influence of Gulf blind poets' trauma from a sensory perspective and focus more specifically on their poetic imagery to ascertain whether blindness has impeded them from formulating poetic imagery that is drawn from these five senses, i.e. sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

Visual Imagery

Section 1 of Chapter 3 concluded that blindness had a clear psychological impact on the poetry of al-Sālimī, al-Shabīb and Ibn Ḥusayn. The facets of their suffering are evidenced in their recurring mention of its bitterness; hence, section 2 shall focus on their brilliance of compensating for the loss of that sense via the utilisation of a multitude of sensory images. This is in addition to having employed visual imagery in their works as a means of challenging their visual impairment.

In the quest to explain visual imagery, al-Fayfī (1996, p. 18) sheds light on the matter as he divides it into three types, i.e. colour, motion and light. The first deals with employing colour to create imagery in poetic texts; the second refers to imagery means that transform the expression of motion into visual imagery; the third is that which expresses the meaning of lighting, notwithstanding its other interferences with colours.

As for colour, poetic texts of blind poets were never void thereof. This was concluded by al-Fayfi's study when he proved that blind poets surpassed their able-sighted peers in poetic imagery – particularly that based on colour.

Among the questions, section 2 aims to answer whether blindness has prevented blind Arab Gulf poets from grasping the concept of colour and correctly employing it in its proper elements.

In the Dīwān entitled, *Jawar al-Niẓām*, al-Sālimī writes:

<div dir="rtl">

سَوْدَا وَلودٌ خيرُ مَنْ حسناءَ

عقيمةٍ لو نالَتْ السّماءَ

</div>

Black and disobedient is better than a fair maiden

Who is sterile, even if of high magnificence

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 2, p. 240)

In the above, the poet employed the colour black in describing a woman's skin colour. In the context of Gulf societies, blackness is a trait of a less worthy and beautiful lady. Therefore, blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries are aware of the notion ascribed to the colour black and of its social and psychological facets in their societies.

Similarly, in his poem entitled, *Thikrā Zawāj* (Marriage Anniversary), al-Shabīb sneers at his third wife after only three months of marriage and then describes the woman of

his dreams that he yearns to marry. He then returns to reality and expresses the emptiness he feels due to the nonexistence of his dream girl in his life and how this dark woman he sees, despite her ugliness, is so much more caring of him than his wife. He says:

وإنْ يَصْعُبْ عليّ منالُ هذا

لِما يشكو من الإقلالِ مالي

وأقصتْ فاقتي عني الأماني

فسوداءُ الجُليدةِ لا الفعالِ

تساعدني على تنظيف بيتي

وتغسيل الثيابِ أو اغتسالي

وإنْ أمرضْ وأمراضي كِثارٌ

أجدْ منها مُمرضةً حِيالي

Although attaining this may be difficult for me

As my money is lesser than must be

And my poorness has swayed from me all desires.

Yet she who is dark of skin but not of deeds

Aids me in cleaning my house of free will.

She washes my clothes and bathes me,

And when sick as I usually am,

She nurses me and caters to all my needs.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 629)

In expressing his profound sadness, al-Shabīb draws a truly distinct poetic image that relies on the already lost sense of seeing as he paints his sorrows with black and states that if they were to come into contact with stars, the latter would lose their glow and be engulfed by blackness. al-Shabīb says:

أقاسي من الأحزان ما لو أَقَلُّهُ

يمسُّ نجومَ الأفقِ ما لاحَ كوكبُ

82

I suffer of sorrows that whose least

If touches stars in the sky no planet will be seen.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 128)

It seems that, to the blind, the colour black represents sadness as they can see only it due to their blindness.

Red is also another colour recognised and employed by blind poets like Ibn Ḥusayn. He expresses it quite appropriately in the following verse:

حَمام الحمى أرهقت بالشجو مذْنفًا

بأحشائه الآلامُ (حمرٌ) ندوبُها

The sounds of pigeons have maddened the one in love

In his guts reign pains of scars that are (red)

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 155)

As for motion imagery, al-Sālimī draws poetic imagery based on the descriptive motion of an army where he likens it to that of sea waves. He says:

وكم جيشٍ سَحَبْتَ، لهُ عُبَابٌ

تدفَّقَ مِثْلَ أمواجِ البُحور

So many armies you have led

Like flooding sea waves crashing against shores

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 66)

Also, in praising Sheikh Ṣaliḥ al-Hārithī, al-Sālimī draws a poetic motion image that likens the sheikh's resolve to one stepping on stars:

لهُ هِمَمٌ تدوسُ النجمَ تِيهًا

وعَزْمٌ يَبْهِرُ المُتَأَمِّلينا

His determination treads the stars

And his endurance astounds all crowds

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 72)

Al-Sālimī also describes the battle with smooth-flowing motion imagery:

وترى الدّماءَ بهِ تصبُّ

كمِثْلِ غيثٍ ينسكِبُ

And you can see him drawing blood from enemies

As swift and fast as pouring rain

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 160)

Blindness did not simultaneously prevent al-Shabīb from mastering motion imagery as he described his criteria of bravery. He gave an example of the bravery and resistance of Palestinian men and the duel that occurred between them and the enemy till the latter dispersed under the prowess of the former:

ولكنّ فتى الفتيان عندي هو الذي

يُعَدُّ من الإقدام في الأُسْدِ الغُلْبِ

تَطايَرَ عنهُ في النّزالِ عُداتُهُ

تطايُرَ ريشٍ في زعازِعِهِ النُّكُبُ

The top among men to me is he

Who is as brave as the alpha lion and daring,

His enemies in battle flutter from him hurriedly

As do feathers when winds blow strong and fierce.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 148)

Al-Shabīb also describes the kind of woman he yearns to be his wife and expresses her facial features from pure imagination through incredible imagery of motion. He says:

تلقّاني بوجهٍ ليس فيه

عُبوسُ الباخلين لدى السؤالِ

She greets me with a face that contains none

Of that which misers show me when I ask for aid

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 629)

On the topic of complaining about his society, which al-Shabīb believes to be the culprit in his poverty and blindness, he says:

إلى الله أشكو أني في معاشر

رأوني من الإعسار كالواو في عمرو

To God do I complain that I am among people

Who consider me as insignificant as the letter (wāw) in Amr

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 363)

It is well-known in the Arabic language that the proper noun (ʿAmr) (عمرو) is written with a silent (wāw) at the end so that one may differentiate between it and the proper noun (ʿUmar). The verse above is proof that al-Shabīb knows that this silent letter must nonetheless be transcribed, and as such, it shows the vastness of blind poets' imagination and their brilliance in visual imagery.

Ibn Ḥusayn says:

والطَلُّ في ساعةِ الإصباحِ منتشرٌ

تيّارُهُ فوق هامَ الزهرِ مجراهُ

A light drizzle of dew engulfs the morning sky

Whose breeze at plant tops lightly flows

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 158)

This verse is a perfect depiction of visual imagery drawn from Ibn Ḥusayn's imagination. It is an image that reflects the poet's desert culture where he expresses his love for rain and finds himself inclined towards describing the beauty of morning dew engulfing his environment. He then likens the dew through beautiful motion imagery:

كأنه أدمعٌ في خد غانيةٍ

غيداءُ في قلبها وَجْدٌ تولّاه

As if it is tears on the cheeks of a temptress

Of beauty in her heart is a captivating yearning

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 158)

On the matter of light, we find that blind poets have made strides in mentioning phrases drawn from the lighting of the moon, stars and sun. In this regard, al-Sālimī says:

<div dir="rtl">

فكم من غارةٍ قد كُنتَ فيها

كمِثْلِ البدرِ في شرَفٍ ونورِ

</div>

So many a raid you had fought with honour

In which you were as bright as a full moon

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 66)

He also says:

<div dir="rtl">

وترى المَنايا في وجوهِ

القومِ تلمَعُ كالشُّهُبْ

</div>

You see hopes of grandeur shining therein

In faces of men and glimmering like meteors

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 153)

Al-Shabīb also draws visual imagery in describing how clouds conceal the sun:

<div dir="rtl">

ونُصْحُكَ مثلُ الشمسِ لكنّ جهالتي

غمامٌ وقد تُخفي الشموسَ غمامُ

</div>

Your advice is as bright as the sun, yet

My ignorance is clouds that conceal its shimmer

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 695)

Similarly, al-Rūmī (1999, p. 312) noticed the influence of blindness on his poetry and his life through shedding light on two literary phenomena: the complexity of syntax in his poems and the heavy use of light and its derivatives, such as the sun, fire and stars, despite his visual disability.

Ibn Ḥusayn also paints visual imagery drawn from light, which reflects his suffering due to blindness, as well as his longing for his childhood days:

<div dir="rtl">

أين الليالي البِيضُ في سالف

كانوا به نورًا يُذيبُ الظلامْ؟

</div>

Where have the white nights of the past gone

In which their glow dissolved all darkness?

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 328)

Audio Imagery

Generally speaking, the blind rely mainly on their sense of hearing as it is deemed their primary means of interacting with their surroundings. Masarwah (2008, p. 227) argues that it is the number one sense which the blind have utilised instead of sight as its most important function is estimating distance and appreciating beauty. al-Shabīb says:

لا تقلْ: أنّى لأعمى صَبْوَةٌ؟

أذْني عَيْني! وهل ثَمَّ التباسُ؟

Say not 'How may a blind man have any will?'

For I see through my ear, and would you doubt that?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 418)

Hence, blind poets throughout history have created many poetic images drawn from their sense of hearing. al-Shabīb, for example, eulogises his late friend Khalaf al-Naqīb in a long poem that includes verses drawn from his sense of hearing:

رثاءً لو على الأشجار يُتلى

لكانَ لها بلا ريحٍ حَفيفُ

A eulogy if recited upon trees its friction would

Sound with clarity when winds are silent

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 624)

The poet also describes the woman he imagines and to whom he yearns to be wed with astounding audio imagery which he employs in likening her beauty and words to a pearl necklace when its pieces touch each other:

وتولج مسمعيَّ أرقّ لفظٍ

كأحسن صوت مهزوز اللآلي

Into my ears delves the sweetest voice

87

Like that of the most precious pearls' friction

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 629)

Taste Imagery

According to Masarwah (2008, p. 260), the sense of taste to a blind poet enriches their cultural wealth as it adds much knowledge of the surrounding environment to their awareness since it requires direct contact between the two, coupled with practical experience that instils an understanding of the savoured subject.

For example, al-Sālimī draws a poetic image from the sense of taste, e.g. a sea marker related to salinity. He writes:

بأقوالٍ مُزَخْرَفَةٍ

يُخالُ أُجاجُها عَذْبا

With ornate words

Whose salty waters seem to be pure

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 137)

Here, he speaks of a devious person who says the opposite of what he hides and draws a simile with water that a thirsty person sees as pure, but which, in reality, is salty. Here, too, the poet compensated his lack of sight with another of his senses. Al-ʿAli (1999) considers taste as the most critical sense for blind people in what he calls 'Connecting with Reality' (p. 52). He points out to its importance, in the absence of sight, in playing a substitutional role in enjoying many social events, as well as for having the ability to diversify life's pleasures.

Al-Shabīb also draws a poetic image emanating from the sense of taste when he describes his imaginary lover:

وما كنتُ فيه أكتفي بترشّفي

ثنايا لها هُنّ الرحيقُ المعتّقُ

Of it, I would not stop at sipping

From her teeth that are of pure essence

Smell Imagery

Masarwah (2008, p. 243) states the effective role the sense of smell possesses in aiding the blind to distinguish between varied types of food and drink; actually, the blind can distinguish specific individuals from their natural odours or the perfume/cologne they usually use.

Al-Shabīb emphasises the importance of the sense of smell to him as a blind person, particularly when identifying flowers:

<div dir="rtl">

والزَّهْرُ لا تَخْفى حقيقةُ طَبعِهِ

ما مرّ بالآنافِ منهُ شَذاءُ

</div>

Flowers' true nature cannot be concealed

From a nose which has smelled their wonderful scent

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 72)

Al- Shabīb also draws an image from his sense of smell in describing his imaginary lover. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

فأصبحتُ أستشفي بشمّيَ تربةً

له لم تزل من نشرها بعدُ تعبَقُ

ومن عزّهُ وصلُ الحبيبِ فشمُّهُ

مَواطِئ رجليهِ شفاءٌ محقَّقُ

</div>

I came to be healed by smelling where she had trodden

And where her fragrance still filled the air

For he who yearns to connect with a loved one,

Smelling where her feet have paced is definite cure

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 478)

Touch Imagery

In describing testing times, al-Sālimī likens his suffering through the heat of fire and draws a touch-based image, as blazing fire can be felt by touch. He says:

وفي الأحشاء منها حَرُّ نارٍ

تكادُ بحرّها تَقضي عَلَيّه

In my core of her is intense fire

Whose scorching temperature almost consumes me

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 102)

Al-Shabīb's Dīwān is also rich of the poetic images created by the sense of touch. For example, he describes his last wife by drawing a physical image expressing how ugly his wife was, and how her skin was filled with hairs as spiky as the thorns of al-Siyāl trees that is famous in the Kuwaiti desert (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 625). There is also another example describes how al-Shabīb is able to draw poetic imagery inspired by the sense of touch (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 473). A deep reading on these verses uncovers the truth of al-Shabīb's ability to utilise his hands as a source knowledge to perceive materials and then create poetic images.

These verses depict the harsh treatment al-Shabīb received from his wife, and when failed by sight in noticing her faults, he utilised touch instead. The poet created a sensory image when he compared the hair on her head and body to the spikes of the harsh desert plant known as al-Siyāl. 'The hands of a blind man are receptive organs, a source for knowledge, research, and action' (al-ʾAlī, 1986, p. 52).

Interference among the Senses

This poetic phenomenon is widespread in the literature of the blind and was noticed by al-Fayfī (1996, p. 297) and Ibn Ḥusayn (1997, p. 92) who dubbed it as the theory of compensating among senses (*al-Taʿwīḍ*).

Also, Maṣārwah (2008, p. 223) dubbed it as a sensory exchange, i.e. the interference among senses.

Despite the discrepancy in the naming, they all agreed on its concept meaning of being the process in which two or more senses combine together in one single poetic image.

For example, whenever al-Shabīb wished to express how he draws the image of his beloved in his mind, he emphasised that his sense of hearing does this by listening to the words she utters. However, in the same verse, he utilises more than one sense in singing about her beauty to the extent that there exists a sort of connectivity between hearing and seeing. al-Shabīb says:

تَلَوْتُ بعَيْنَيْ مَسْمَعي صورةَ البَها

بلفظٍ لهُ منهُ تكوّنَ عِقدُهُ

In my hearing eye has the image of beauty been shaped

Through a word she utters, she makes its sequence complete.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 218)

This interference among senses is more evident in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry as he creates communication channels among the senses, such as between eyes and ears, through which the two communicate and delegate specific tasks to the other and can stand in the other's stead.

In one of his poems, Ibn Ḥusayn describes the immense beauty of the village where he grew up by combining between beauty, which is seen, and quality of life, which is heard:

كلّ الجمالِ بها لفظٌ ومعناهُ

فالحُسنُ -يا شيخُ- فيها طاب مغناهُ

All of its beauty is relayed to all

For its splendour can be the topic of songs

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 158)

Elsewhere, Ibn Ḥusayn listens to his colleagues in academia speaking and likens that which he heard to the scent of roses, i.e. smell. He says:

يصوغُ أحاديثُ الشيوخ قصائدًا

لها نفحةُ (الريحانِ) و(الآسِ) و(الوردِ)

The stories of the elderly are shaped into poems

Of scents as sweet as basil, myrtle and roses

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 714)

He also compares the words uttered by his beloved to light that can be sensed through sight:

<div dir="rtl">

وكالنور أفواه المحبين في الدجى

وهمساتهم سحرٌ يغشاهُ سامعُه

</div>

Like light are the mouths of lovers at night

And their whispers magic that sends one into a trance

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 524)

In conclusion, this chapter is dedicated to studying the impact of blindness trauma on the selected poets from two facets: First, identifying the three poets' suffering from their loss of eyesight and how they expressed it through their works; second, tracing the impact of blindness on the poetic imagery drawn from their senses. By comparing the poetic text among the three, this chapter has exhibited a number of results, most dominant of which that their loss of eyesight at an early age has impacted their psychology harshly, painfully and constantly. Their works are rife with images of the suffering and sadness befalling the blind due to it, and through it, they have expressed sentiments like: their overt sensitivity from the word "blind" when hearing it directed towards them from able sighted people; the feeling of despair due to the difficulty of movement from one location to another; their constant feeling of danger and lack of security due to the perils that may face them along a road if they walk it alone; their feeling of despair and ineptness when needing to pick up an object; the feeling of being a burden on others due to their constant need of assistance. This is in addition to their feelings of anger and ire for being antagonised, bullied and mocked by others; their feeling of pain as others underestimated them for merely being blind; their feeling of alienation in their own societies for their inability to enjoy activities practised by the able-sighted like dancing and the like. All of these led them to feel that being blind was like being in jail and resulted in their preference to be alone, introverted, refrain from mingling with people and even secluding themselves within the confines of their houses.

Chapter Three also concludes that blindness in no way means a lack of the sense of imagery. The inability of blind poets to have visual contact with their surroundings has not hindered them from sensory and cultural interaction. On the contrary, these blind poets were able to form unique visual imagery through their imagination as well as the ability to employ colours as per their able-sighted peers. Accordingly, this chapter has reached the important conclusion regarding blind poets' awareness of colours' significance in social and psychological contexts and meanings like the colour black in criticising women and the colour red in describing pain and suffering, and were thus successful in employing these references within verses that accurately expressed such meanings.

The three blind poets in question were also able to draw visual imagery based on motion like scenes of combat on a battlefield or even a change in facial gestures. They were so creative to the extent of even being able to create poetic imagery inspired by the lettering of words as did al-Shabīb with the letter "wāw" in the name "ʿAmr" (Al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 363).

This chapter reached a further important conclusion that the blind poets in the study had harnessed their entire senses towards the formulation of perfect poetic imagery like their creation of a multitude of audio images. As hearing is a blind person's most dominant sense for communication, they consider it their most reliable sense in recognising their surroundings. In addition to audio imagery, their diwans are rife with imagery based on their senses of taste, smell and touch. The phenomenon of *Interference among the senses* was also extremely prevalent and clear in their poetry and hence became one of blindness influences on their poetic imagery.

Chapter 3: Representations of Environment in the Works of Blind Poets from the Gulf

Ecocriticism is that criticism which aims towards studying the relationship between literature, in general, and the environment. It caters to studying literary discourse and poetic texts through an ecological theory that seeks to identify the status of environment, nature, location or land within the literary text via analysis, exploration and study. This is done to identify writers' and poets' stance towards the environment, particularly after the changes the natural environment has witnessed due to the rapid technological and industrial advancements of the twentieth century.

The concept of ecocriticism has been defined in many literary dictionaries and studies; however, Jonathan Culler's (1997) book, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, has provided a clear definition. He highlights:

> Most narrowly, it is the study of literary representations of nature and the environment and the changing values associated with them, especially evocations of nature that might inspire changes in attitudes and behaviour. More broadly, it is an interdisciplinary investigation of the wide range of forces that affect the human relation to the environment, many of which are reflected in literature. (p. 146)

According to Baldick (2008), ecocriticism is sometimes categorised as 'environmental literature' (pp. 101–102) and emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. It is also worth pointing out that ecocriticism, from Baldick's view, is not a method of analysis but a redefined area of research and rediscovery. In line with Baldick, Culler (1997) argues the following:

> Ecocriticism does not have a distinctive method of reading so much as a dominant question. It may explore writings about nature, how different groups treat nature differently, or highlight celebrations of nature in order to promote ecological consciousness; or it may take on human uses of nature more directly. (p. 127)

Culler (1997, p. 71) also concentrates on the function of rhetorical figures in unveiling the influence of nature on shaping poetic images.

Accordingly, this chapter will be divided into three key sections: the pre-oil era, the dawn of the oil age, and the post-oil era. It also attempts to answer the following questions: Do blind poets represent nature in the poetry as do their able-sighted peers? (or) Does blindness prevent blind poets from representing the environment in their poems?

Section 1: Pre-Oil Era

The study conducted by ʿĪsā al-Sulaymānī (2009) is probably the closest related to this section because he has approached the sources of al-Sālimī's imagery. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that his discussion was not as in-depth as needed, especially when he approached the environment as an integral source of al-Sālimī's imagery.

The author decided on a few general elements of the environment such as the sea, full moon, mountains and the sun as sources of creating imagery, and did not shed light on the diverse Omani environment and its powerful function in shaping imagery uniquely. Additionally, when he shortly approached both animals and birds as sources of imagery, he did not name any animal, nor specify any bird other than *al-ʿUqāb* (eagle) (al-Sulaymānī, 2009, pp. 258–261).

This section aims at shedding light on the influences of the Omani environment in the pre-oil era on the poetic imagery created by al-Sālimī. In more specific terms, this section will examine the blind poet's unique ability and how he harnessed his imagination and all senses in picturing the Omani environment in the phase that he lived according to the diverse Omani environment geographically. It further examines how he perceived each environment separately, as well as his own psychological stance concerning each environment.

From a geographical perspective, the Oman environment consists of four key shapes: civic, marine, mountainous and desert. Accordingly, this section will be divided into these four sub-sections to examine their reflection on al-Sālimī's works.

In line with the above, this section will apply a semiotic methodology in which signs play a prominent role. However, before embarking on the applied study, one must set controls for application and boundaries of semiotic interpretation. Therefore, the space for interpretation will be limited by that which the poetic text provides.

In this context, palaces of a civic environment, waves of a marine environment, caves of a mountainous environment, and animals and plants of the desert, may transform into signs of the Omani environment in the phase that al-Sālimī lived. At the same time, such signs might draw images leading to psychological, social and intellectual dimensions.

Before the discovery of oil in Oman, al-Sālimī lived in a civic society with a desert climate, surrounded by mountains and a marine environment. These four facets were evident in his poetry but at different rates, and the poet was able to harness his imagination and all his senses in drawing a picture of that environment and utilise its signs as vessels for expressing his feelings and to create poetic images.

1. Signs of a Civic Environment

A reader of al-Sālimī's poetry can quickly notice that he approached the civic life rarely in his Dīwāns. In other words, the civic environment did not influence al-Sālimī's imagery as much as the other aspects of the Omani environment. The reason behind that paucity is perhaps because he harnessed his life in calling to al-Jihād, battles and motivation. Through al-Sālimī's poems, it is generally known that armed forces in the pre-oil era mostly engaged in battles outside cities or villages. Therefore, civic life was considered a sign of luxury from al-Sālimī's perspective.

In one poem, he describes the civic environment where people lived as being in palaces, houses and buildings, and who preferred living luxuriously than travelling nomadically in search of a higher order of goodness. He also likens men who live in a civic society to housewives who only do house chores and are of limited action:

مقامٌ في القصورِ على قُصورِ

مقامٌ مثل ربّاتِ الخدورِ

An abode in palaces of shortcomings

Like housewives tending to their chores

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 63)

Palaces, here, are signs of civic life. From a semiotic perspective, palaces are not only physical buildings but also involve psychological dimensions. From al-Sālimī's

perspective, palaces are not only signs of the civic environment but also involve further dimensions. Inactivity is the essence of palaces in al-Sālimī's perception where the mention of palaces is a semiotic reference to lush buildings in the civic society which he pictured as one of inactivity, shortcomings, and inaction towards conducting the chores of men who persevere and endure difficulties. This contrasts with his own view and perception regarding the signs of the marine environment, and both mountain and desert environments, as will be explained.

2. Signs of a Marine Environment

The distinct location of Oman in the southwestern region of the Arabian Peninsula has played a role in diversifying its geography. Its beachfront extends from North to Southwest, from the Gulf, through Hormuz Strait, the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea to the Indian Ocean (Sharīfī, 2011, p. 27). This marine environment influenced the poetic imagery of the blind poet. When praising his role model Sheikh Ṣaliḥ Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥarithī as the latter ferociously led armies against enemies, al-Sālimī said:

وكم جيشٍ سَحَبْتَ، لهُ عُبَابٌ

تدفَّقَ مِثْلَ أمواجِ البُحورِ

So many armies you have led of pounding sound

Like rushing sea waves crashing against rocks

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 265)

Here, he forms a simile between the leader's strength and the multitude of soldiers with flowing sea waves that emit roaring sounds as they tumble on top of one another. Thus, the poet created poetic imagery from his sense of hearing that reflected this army's strength and fortitude from the sound of their marching on the battlefield. At the same time, it reflected his blindness that was overcome by utilising another of his senses and which drew an artistic, poetic image.

Hearing is the first among the five senses on which the blind depend, and it is capable of recognising beauty more than the others due to the dual role it conducts. Physiologists state that vision is the door to awareness, and hearing cords are of dual

function as whenever they transfer audio, they categorise the minute artistic differences that allow for the formulation of emotions (Ḥamzah, 1965, p. 123).

Al-Sālimī then draws a poetic image from the sense of taste, i.e. a sea marker related to salinity:

بأقوالٍ مُزَخْرَفَةٍ

يُخالُ أُجاجُها عَذْبا

With ornate words

Whose salty waters seem to be pure

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 137)

Here, he speaks of a devious person who says the opposite of what he hides and draws a simile with water that a thirsty person sees as pure but which, in reality, is salty. Here, too, the poet compensated for his lack of sight with another of his senses. Al-ʿAli (1999) considers taste as the most critical sense for blind people in what he calls 'Connecting with the reality' (p. 52). He points out its importance, within the absence of sight, in playing a substitutional role in enjoying many social events, as well as for having the ability to diversify life's pleasures.

The image of the sea in al-Sālimī's poetry varies from one instance to another as it reflects his mood at the time, as well as according to the poem's purpose. In the verse below, he describes mankind and their somewhat short journey in this fluctuating life as akin to a seafarer trying to escape it by any means:

ولم تَأْذَنْ لنا أنّا عليها

كمِثْلِ الرّاكبينَ على البُحورِ

It has not allowed us to fare on it

Like seafarers on a trembling sea

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 63)

Humankind's safety from God's wrath is in the good deeds one performs to escape the punishment of Judgement Day. The poet drew a simile between mankind's good deeds and a ship that saves people from drowning at sea:

وإنّ الصّالحاتِ لنا سَفينٌ

<div align="center">بها نرجو النّجاةَ من الخُطورِ</div>

<div align="center">Good deeds are for us a ship</div>

<div align="center">On which we hope for safety from dangers</div>

<div align="center">(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 63)</div>

These two examples show us how he feels differently about the sea according to his psychological state at the time. He also attempts to highlight a commendable trait thereof:

<div align="center">بحرُ العلومِ مُهَذَّبٌ</div>

<div align="center">من فَضْلِهِ في النّاسِ شائعْ</div>

<div align="center">The sea of knowledge is polite</div>

<div align="center">And people delve into its richness</div>

<div align="center">(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 96)</div>

A feature of marine life was involved in al-Sālimī's Dīwān: (Jawhar al-Niẓām) when he clarifies the Islamic law on eating fish that have died and float on the water, which reflects the importance of the sea to Omanis as being a source for sustenance. He says:

<div align="center">والسمكُ الطّافي أرى النبيّا</div>

<div align="center">عنهُ نهى فكنْ له أبيّا</div>

<div align="center">وهو الذي قد صارَ فوق البحرِ</div>

<div align="center">ذا نَتَنٍ والنّهيُ لا لِحَجْرِ</div>

<div align="center">The floating fish I know the Prophet</div>

<div align="center">Of it has discouraged, and to him be faithful,</div>

<div align="center">That which has floated on the sea</div>

<div align="center">Of stinking smell yet is not prohibited.</div>

<div align="center">(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 226)</div>

In the verses above, al-Sālimī urges Muslims to refrain from eating fish floating on the sea in observance of the Prophet's discouragement of eating it; he explains that it is not prohibited, but rather disliked. Although these specific verses are classified as

<div align="center">100</div>

educational poetry void of any imagery and are more of a legal message than anything else (Muḥsin al-Kindī, 2002, p. 406), the verses are of dual importance. First, their content reflects the importance of the marine environment as being a source for Islamic legislation set in poetic form. The second reflects the impact of blindness in his poetry. As he could not describe floating dead fish through eyesight, al-Sālimī did so through the sense of smell. A seeing person would spot and verify rottenness with their eyes, yet it is more of an assurance of its state to smell it, as does a blind person (Ḥamzah, 1965, p. 127).

Although the several aforementioned poetic texts depend on the marine environment as a source of creating imagery, marine environment was only slightly reflected in al-Sālimī's poetry in general, perhaps because he grew up in al-Hawqayn village, which was relatively distant from the coast of the Gulf of Oman. Also, he then moved with his family to al-Khubbah village for a short while, and it too was not close to the coast. Afterwards, he travelled to al-Rustāq, which was farthest from the coast, and settled there permanently (Sharīfī, 2011, p. 101).

3. Signs of a Mountainous Environment

The wildlife environment in Oman, especially the mountainous, was representative in al-Sālimī's poetry similarly with its civic counterpart. The mountainous environment has a low presence in al-Sālimī's poetry where he drew some similes from mountains due to his extensive travels via land to seek knowledge.

Blindness did not deter al-Sālimī from weaving poetic similes drawn from Omani wildlife's environment as Oman's geography possesses many series of extended mountain ranges (Sharīfī, 2011, p. 28). The imagery of mountains reflected in his poetry is clear, like when he draws a likeness between his countrymen partaking in the war with fortified mountains in strength and in holding their ground. He draws the image of the enemy army as another charging mountain:

<div dir="rtl">

جبالُ وَغًى تُصادِمُها

جبالٌ مِثلُها حَربَا

</div>

Mountains when marching face other

Crashing mountains like them in war

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 138)

In the above, despite his blindness, the poet drew a highly visual and mobile image with a high quality akin to that of his seeing counterparts. He pictures two mountains moving in a collision course towards one another and then strike into the other. Hs lack of eyesight possibly challenged him in writing words that even his seeing counterparts could not match!

Also, al-Sālimī's travelling from one town to another via land may have influenced his ability towards creating words that able sighted poets could barely match. When praising his friends who reached great heights in life, he utilised a visual image drawn from the sky and likened their grand status with that neighbouring the bright star 'al-Simāk':

<div dir="rtl">
فَرَقَّوْا أعلى مقامٍ

جاوَزُوا فيها السِّمَاكَا
</div>

They held great status

Elevated by Arcturus's side

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 141)

In another instance, mountains are also reflected in his poetry when he utilises his vast imagination in painting an image of those ignoring righteousness as being blind. Al-Sālimī likened those to bats that usually live in mountain caves – considered a sign of mountain environment – and which fly cluelessly and flutter right and left as they cannot see in the light. These deniers of righteousness are similar to the bat (al-Kuffāsh) which appears at night and hides during the day. Al-Sālimī describes these people as blind, stating that God caused them to be so due to His greatness and wisdom:

<div dir="rtl">
قل للأُلى جهلوا صفاتي عن عمًى

إنّ الذي أعماكُم لِبَهاءِ

مِثْلَ الخَفَاشِ يرى إذا جَنّ الدُّجى

لكنّهُ يُعْميهِ كُلُّ ضياءِ
</div>

Say to those who have forsaken my traits due to my blindness

That that which has blinded you is stupidity

Like bats seeing if darkness reigns

But blinded by all that which wonderfully glows

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 266)

4. Signs of a Desert Environment

The desert environment received the lion's share in al-Sālimī's poetry. With regards to al-Sālimī, the desert was more than merely a geographical void. It was a symbol of customs, traditions, and high-order values that are gained by whoever abodes there. Whenever he wished to encourage men to join battles and fight for Islam, he reprimanded those who had forsaken it. He likened hot deserts and marching in the wilderness as a reason for reaching glory and high status. The scorching Omani desert became a sign of precise military bearing and plight of being burned by its high temperatures, as well as a symbol for fatigue and doom. From al-Sālimī's view, one gains perseverance, endurance and courage only after overcoming the woes and dangers of the desert to reach an elevated status and subsequent glory. He says:

قُلْ لِلّذي تركَ العُلا

لَمّا رأى فيها البَلَى

إنّ الْتِماسَ المَجْدِ مِنْ

قَطْعِ السَّباسِبِ والفَلا

في شِدّةِ الحَرِّ الشّديدِ

ونارِ حَرْبٍ تُصْطَلى

Tell him who has forsaken glories

When witnessing hardships and troubles

That gaining glory is attained

By crossing hot lands and deserts

In scorching temperatures

When war rages and burns

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 107)

Then, when describing an ongoing battle and its fighters, the blind al-Sālimī draws a sensory image of the sun's scorching heat burning the back of fighters' heads (al-Qamāḥid):

والشمسُ في كبدِ السماءِ

على القماحِدِ تلتهبْ

And the sun perpendicular as it sears

Burning the back of fighters' heads

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 153)

In another example, when describing the vast numbers of fighters in the army marching towards 'al-Muntarib' province to fight against the British Consul, he likens the army to desert sand as it numbered many men/grains. The army was led by ʿĪsā Ibn Ṣaliḥ al-Ḥarithī – a pupil of al-Sālimī and also the son of his mentor, Sheikh Ṣaliḥ al-Ḥarithī. Sand is considered among the most prominent desert environment signs. al-Sālimī says:

عيسى وأصحابٌ له

جاؤوا لنَحْوِ المُنْتَرَبْ

ووراءَهم جُنْدٌ كثيرٌ

كالترابِ إذا حُسِبْ

ʿĪsā and his compatriots

Advanced towards al-Muntarib

With many soldiers behind them

As many as sand grains if calculated

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 150)

When describing highly virtuous people, al-Sālimī creates an image drawn from the barren and dry desert environment and likens these people to a cloud of rain that quenches the thirst of others' need:

ولَهُ في النَّدى سَحائبُ عُرْفٍ

تُمْطِرُ الجُودَ للوَرى والمَغانِمْ

In good deeds are clouds of rain

That falls on those in desperate need

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 117)

The desert environment also has other signs represented by the animals that dwell in it and which the blind poet employed in a manner that correlates with the poem's main purpose. The most prominent of these is the lion which is considered a sign of bravery in Arabic poetry. Al-Sālimī likens brave fighters to lions when they attack the enemy in battle. He says:

وترى الكُماةَ من الرّجالِ

كأُسْدِ غابٍ تنتشبْ

And you see fighters among the men

Like jungle lions roaring and clawing

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 153)

Elsewhere, al-Sālimī repeats the same call on his countrymen to reach high morals by joining battles, confronting knights, instilling fear in the enemy and being courageous like lions in battle:

ولو رُمْتَ العُلا جِدًّا

سَلَكْتَ طريقَها الرَّحْبا

بفرسانٍ مُدَرَّعَةٍ

تذوبُ بها العِدا رُعْبا

أسودٌ في الوغى لكنْ

تُجيدُ الطَّعْنَ والضَّرْبا

If you seek grandeur and high status

The path of battle is wide and welcoming

With armoured knights

You strike fear in their hearts

Lions you are in battle

Masters of striking and stabbing

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 137)

Camels are also in al-Sālimī's poems with their usual traits of patience and endurance during long and strenuous journeys. The verse below is the image of a man who lives a nomadic desert life dependant on travelling, and who seeks a means of light-heartedness and passing the time while on the long path accompanied by cattle marching at a fast pace:

أَمَا في سبيلِ العِزِّ سَلْوَةُ عاشقٍ؟

إذا ما توالى فيهِ للإِبِلِ الوَخْدُ

Is there not in the path of grandeur any light-heartedness

Other than the fast paced clamour of accompanying camels?

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 113)

al-Sālimī's poetry also presents the falcon with its Arabic name (al-Bāziy). In the following verses, al-Sālimī speaks sarcastically of falcons as one flees from a weaker, non-carnivore, al-Bughāth:

وقد ترى البازِيَّ في جَوِّهِ

من البُغاثِ هَرَبًا يَنْحُو

وقد كانَ بالأمس لنا سيِّدٌ

لهُ على هَامِ العُلا ضَرْحُ

You may witness a falcon soaring high

Fleeing the grasp of al-Bughāth

While he was our master in the old days

With a statue for him erected up high

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 86)

In the verses above, the poet describes how time is treacherous and rebels against an elite member of society by likening him to the carnivorous falcon when the meanest of people overpower their master. He likens them to the weak bird (al-Bughāth) which is known for being weaker than the eagle although similar in appearance. Al-Sālimī

employed this desert environment drawn image in line with the main sarcastic and comedic aim of the poem.

According to al-ʿAlī (1999, p. 247), the social sarcasm is a poetic mode most prevalent in the works of blind poets as most worries, fears and pessimism of these poets are due to faulty social adaptation – whether society, the blind poet himself, or both are to blame. Each experience has a special feeling for al-Sālimī, and each sensation has its image drawn from his environment to portray his society's members.

When viewing the other Dīwān by al-Sālimī (Jawhar al-Niẓām), written in the rajz metre, one notices the lack of rhetorical language drawn from the desert environment such as similes, antonomasia, and metaphors as it is educational poetry that utilises an easy, light and direct language for learners to memorise. It caters more to content than form, as stated by al-Salīmī (2003, p. 366).

The content of Jawhar al-Niẓām reflects, on the one hand, involvement in the Islamic law, yet on the other, yearning for the desert environment. In other words, when shedding light on the Dīwān's content from a Jurisprudence point-of-view, not poetically, it becomes evident how Oman's general environment influenced this content. Al-Sālimī drew his Islamic provisions based on that available in his surrounding environment whose animals and plants had a share therein. The poet did so to clarify the Islamic ruling on a matter in a poetically framed literary mould.

For example, al-Sālimī says:

<div dir="rtl">

والقبرُ من كرامةِ المنّانِ

يُسترُ فيه عَورةَ الإنسانِ

لم يُجعَل الإنسانُ كالبهائِم

يُلْقى على الصحراءِ للحوائِم

</div>

Burial is God's dignity for Man

In which one's private parts are unexposed,

God has not left humans like cattle

Whose carcasses vultures swarm over in deserts.

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 160)

In seeking discovery of the desert's essence in al-Sālimī's eyes and analysing how he imagines it as a blind poet, it is representative of a geographical area for battles, full of desert carnivores of both animals and birds of prey hovering in the skies awaiting any carcass to devour. This gives the impression that the desert plays a vital role in painting al-Sālimī's poetic imagery through correlations between poetry and nature.

Moreover, in the chapter on 'Foods' (Kitāb al-Aṭʿimah) and the 'Animal Types' section (Bāb Ṣunūf al-Ḥaywān), al-Sālimī states the Islamic ruling on eating a renowned Arabian desert reptile called 'al-Ḍabb':

<div dir="rtl">

والضَّبُّ أيضًا جائزٌ حَلالا

وبعضُهم لم يَدْرِ فيهِ القَالا

</div>

Al-Ḍabb is also permissible and Halal

But some people are unaware of this ruling

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 222)

In the same chapter, al-Sālimī speaks of the ruling on hunting al-Ḥumur al-Waḥshiyyah (zebras) and specifically describes their presence in the desert. He then describes their shape and colour but denies their existence in Oman. He states he was informed they were present in a land between Oman and al-Aḥsāʾ to the North of Saudi Arabia along the Gulf coast. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

والصيدُ منهُ الحُمُرُ الوحشيَّه

وهي التي توجدُ في البرِّيَّه

قصيرةُ الأذنابِ والظّهورِ

ولونها السّوادُ في المأثورِ

وفي عُمانَ ليس شيءٌ منها

فيما رَوَى لي مَنْ سألتُ عنها

بل بينها تُوجَدُ والأحساءِ

قد قالَ بعضُ أولي الذّكاءِ

</div>

Hunting zebras is permitted

Those that exist in the wilderness

108

Of short ears and backs

Mostly coloured black

Yet in Oman, they do not exist

But those who informed me when I asked

The clever stated they exist between here and al-Aḥsāʾ

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 222)

Gazelles are also signs of the desert and are mentioned in the chapter on 'Hunting' under their Arabic name (al-Ẓabiy). Al-Sālimī shows permissibility of hunting them and the requirement of leaving them for the hunter if found in a trap:

وإنْ يكن لم ينطَلِقْ من الشّبَكْ

فذاكَ مَحكومٌ به لمنْ شَبَكْ

فالظَّبْيُ إنْ كان به حِبالُ

لو كانَ بالصَّحراءِ لا حَلالُ

لأنهُ علامةُ الإمساكِ

مَرْجِعُهُ يكونُ للشّبّاكِ

If found trapped in a net

Leave it for him who placed it

If the gazelle has ropes on it

Even in the desert, it is not Halal

As it is a sign of being caught

And should be handed to the one who tied it

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 225)

The poet then mentions desert snakes (al-Ḥayyāt wa al-Afāʿī) that are usually dangerous and poisonous. He states the Islamic ruling on killing snakes in self-defence:

والحيوانُ لانتفاعٍ خُلِقا

ومنهُ ما يكونُ ضُرًّا يُتَّقى

....

لكنّنا نُؤمَرُ بالدّفاعِ

فنقتُلُ الحَيّاتَ والأفاعي

Animals for usefulness were created

Yet some of which are harmful and must be avoided

....

But we are ordered to defend

So, we kill snakes and restrictors

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 231)

The poet then states the permissibility of killing wasps and scorpions (al-Dibyān wa al-ʿAqārib) due to their harm. These, too, are desert signs. Al-Sālimī says:

كذلك الدِّبّيانُ والعقاربُ

وكُلُّ مُؤْذٍ وهو قَوْلٌ صائبُ

So too are wasps and scorpions

And all that is harmful, for these words are righteous

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 232)

Al-Sālimī then states the Islamic ruling on killing al-Sinnawr (Felidae) – wild cats which live in the desert:

ويُعْقَرُ السِّنّوْرُ إنْ أضَرّا

على أُناسٍ كي يَكُفَّ الضُّرّا

Felidae are to be killed only if they harm

People so as to prevent harm

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 232)

In the chapter on 'Foods' and 'Types of Animals', the poet states Muslim scholars' divergent opinions on eating the meat of horses (al-Khayl), mules (al-Bighāl) and donkeys (al-Ḥamīr):

والخيلُ والبغالُ والحَميرُ

<div dir="rtl">

في لحمها خِلافُهم مذكورُ

</div>

In the meat of horses, mules, and donkeys

Their disagreement is stated

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 222)

The above are animals found not only in the Gulf or in Oman but rather throughout the world's environments as humans use them for transportation. They are forced to eat them only when they have no other alternative, as is often the case in desolate deserts. It is from this desert scene that al-Sālimī induced the Islamic ruling and set it in poetic frame void of any metaphoric decorations. He focused on content rather than form and emphasised the importance of the desert environment.

Beyond the confines of the Dīwān on Islamic Jurisprudence, i.e. 'Jawhar al-Niẓām', al-Sālimī uses poetic imagery filled with metaphors in which he urges people to join battle and face foes courageously and valiantly. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

فَأَشْبِعِ الوَحْشَ من لحوم الأعادي

وَارْوِ من دَمِهِمْ ظَما كُلَّ هائِمْ

</div>

Fill the beast's belly with the flesh of foes

And quench with their blood the thirst of all wanderers

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 118)

This verse also gives a grim image of a barren desert void of huntable animals and filled with desert carnivores seeking to quench their hunger for blood and meat. Al-Sālimī calls upon his countrymen to kill foes in battle and to quench the desert animals' and birds' craving for flesh. Once liberated from the jurisprudent mould, al-Sālimī excels in employing metaphors that deliver lush meaning drawn from his desert environment.

Al-Sālimī's poetry rarely mentioned plants in Oman's environment. He drew jurisprudence provisions from them and stated them in dry poems void of metaphors. On the ruling concerning utilising a palm tree on a mountain and eating from its fruit, he says:

<div dir="rtl">

كنخلةٍ في جبلٍ قد نبتتْ

</div>

إباحةُ النَّفعِ بها قد ثبتت

Like a palm tree on a mountain has grown

Whose fruit may be permissible if needed

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 104)

He then states the ruling on cutting down al-Sidr trees (lote) found in canyons:

بل لا يجوز قَطْعُ سِدْرِ الوادي

إذْ تَرْكُهُ أنفعُ للعبادِ

فهو غِذًا إنْ عُدِمَ الغِذاءُ

وظِلُّهُ مأوىً إذا ما جاءوا

The lote of the valley must not be cut

As leaving it is more beneficial for people

It is food if none other exists

And its shade soothes passers-by

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 105)

Finally, al-Sālimī mentions the frankincense tree (al-Shawʿ) which is found in Oman and prohibits cutting it down as some of its kind produce oil. He says:

والشُّوعُ أيضًا قَطْعُهُ مَكروهُ

لأنّ منه الحَلُّ يعصروهُ

Cutting down Frankincense is also denounced

As from it, oil is squeezed

(al-Sālimī, 2006, p. 105)

In a nutshell, the poetic creations of al-Sālimī are a mine of beauty in which his high artistic competence is clearly visible. It shows his mastery in employing the Omani environment in the poetic imagery uniquely despite being blind. Al-Sālimī's poetic experience unveils not only artistic value but also documentary where he was successful in documenting the desert signs of Oman's environment, both animals and plants.

The Omani environment in its varied forms was a fundamental source of poetic imagery for al-Sālimī where the civic and marine environments registered a low presence in al-Sālimī's poetry, particularly on an imagery level as the poet spent most of his life travelling across deserts and mountains in search of knowledge. Thus, wildlife environment (both mountainous and desert) reigned first among its peers in influencing al-Sālimī's poetry. He drew many poetic images from it that correlated with his psychological feeling and the purpose of each poem.

The desert environment, in particular, was substantially represented in al-Sālimī's poetic experience and formed the primary source for his poetic imagery, where he succeeded brilliantly in employing desert signs in line with poetic content. The philosophy of the desert, in al-Sālimī's view, is a bridge to reach the ultimate glory and moral values.

Additionally, the desert environment's animals and plants had a tangible influence on the content of his legal poetry. They were among the main sources from which he based his Islamic rulings as he was an Imam and was religiously educated.

A point worth noting is that loss of eyesight had a definite impact on al-Sālimī's poetry and caused him psychological challenges that fuelled him towards being on par with his seeing peers through the imagery evident in his poems. However, when his impediment prevented him from visual imagery, he compensated for it through his other senses and created images emanating from hearing, taste or smell.

Al-Sālimī's poetic experience held two central values: artistic and documentational. In the first, his poetic gift in creating images and employing rhetorical figures in transferring feelings and meanings is evident. In the second, he documents Oman's environmental signs like naming animals and plants.

Section 2: The Dawn of the Oil Age

Many studies have discussed artistic imagery in the works of blind Arab poets, whether as a group or individually. The focus was mostly given to the most famous, most productive and most classical of these poets like Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, consequently giving much less attention to other blind poets despite their

multitude along the ages, particularly in modern times and in the Gulf region in particular.

Many researchers have been able to deduce the Gulf society scene both before and after the discovery of oil there through the poetry of seeing poets by utilising it as a documentation of events and changes that occurred in that critical transformational period. Nevertheless, researchers did not do enough to shed light on blind poets and their unique insights, nor on how they ushered in that era and described it.

The Gulf society is worthy of study as it contains much desert, urban, marine and oil-related lore. Poets are the black box of the region's memory, and accordingly, this chapter aims to shed light on the brilliance of blind poets in drawing images of this area in pre- and post-oil-eras. The Kuwaiti blind poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963) has been utilised as an example as he spent a large portion of his life inside Kuwait City before the discovery of oil there and in an urban society of desert climate and marine surroundings. He then witnessed the oil age and the changes it brought, which gave him a pre- and post-oil experience in a very short time, and which continued till his death which coincided with the actual beginning of the country's modern renaissance.

Despite the multitude of blind poets in the Gulf area in general – like Fahd al-ʿAskar (1913–1951) and ʿAbdulrazzāq al-Baṣīr (1920–1999) – I have chosen the pioneer of the Romantic School in Kuwait, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, in particular, as he went blind at the very young age of nine. This limited his visual memory and rendered him the most suitable candidate representative of blind poets. Al-ʿAskar lost his eyesight in 1946 in the last five years of his life (ʿĪdān, 2013, p. 283), and accordingly possessed a strong visual memory that aided him in describing matters as if he had sight. So, despite having become blind at a later age, his visual memory was stronger than al-Shabīb's and gave him an edge over other blind poets.

However, ʿAbdulrazzāq al-Baṣīr lost his eyesight at a young age and composed poetry similar to Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, but he was not famous for being a poet and only composed very little poetry throughout his life (al-Qatam, 2002, p. 41); consequently, he was eliminated from consideration. This chapter set the following two criteria for choosing blind poets as examples: Their short seeing experience and their plentiful poetic creations. Hence, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb was the most suitable example.

In line with the above, many studies have been able to picture the Gulf society before and after oil through the poetry of sighted poets. Researches utilised their poems as live documents that recorded events and changes that took place during that crucial transitional period in the history of Arab Gulf Countries.

However, these studies failed to explore the unique vision and imagination of blind poets and ignored figuring out their distinctive perception of the oil age, and how they received, welcomed and reflected this transitional period. This was probably due to their lack of visual capacity which enables them to document the sightings of that stage which witnessed a massive construction, and industrial and economic transformation.

The image of the true Gulf society with its desert and oil lore is embodied in the verses of poets who serve as the region's black box of consciousness. Therefore, this section seeks to shed light on the skill of blind Arab poets' portrayal of the pre- and post-oil Gulf society by taking Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb as a model. al-Shabīb spent a large portion of his life in a desert society before the discovery of oil, then witnessed the harbingers of change after its discovery, rendering his experience filled with record time changes.

This section is divided into three main axes: The first is a prelude for readers on benchmarks in the poet's life which form two angles of his crisis triangle, i.e. poverty and blindness. The second examines the impact of the Kuwaiti environment on al-Shabīb's poetry and how he documents the pre-oil environment, despite visual impairment; thus, it traces the signs caused by the Kuwaiti pre-oil environment on al-Shabīb's poetry in general, according to two contexts: spatial and temporal. The third part carefully studies al-Shabīb's poetry semiotically and deducts from it emergent change signs on Kuwait's environment at the onset of its oil age. The goal of the third part is to examine the impact of sudden change that accompanied Kuwait society's ushering of the oil age, and how al-Shabīb harnessed all his senses in portraying and documenting that change. It also eventually deduces the poet's psychological state and its ramifications that were caused by this age while greatly considering the importance of phased chronology and meticulous historical investigation of the poetic text.

Axis I: al-Shabīb Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Poverty and Blindness

More than half a century after the death of Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1894–1963), many investigations dealing with his poetry have emerged, dealt with its form and content, and presented his works from different points of view and facets. This formed a mosaic of opinions and judgements on his poetic experience, which in its diversity, enriched the critical sphere in Kuwait and simultaneously stressed the importance of that experience on the Kuwaiti poetic scene.

It is worth beginning this axis with two crucial questions Najmah Idrīs asked in her article, 'Ṣaqr al-Shabīb and Remaining Questions': 'What psychological or intellectual connections remain between us and a poet like Ṣaqr al-Shabīb almost half a century after his death?' 'What benefit is there from revisiting his life and poetry as if playing an old record?' (Idrīs, 2012). Such questions stimulate the critical mind to revisit al-Shabīb's poems – altogether – and to explore them once more in the hope of producing different findings, which reveals the value of his poetic experience and the viability of retrieving it.

Similar to al-Faraj (2019), this axis assumes that al-Shabīb underwent three crises in his life; two at its onset and a third at a later stage. The first was that of financial need (economic crisis), the second was blindness (physical crisis), and the third was a cultural-civic trauma one with the advent of modernisation in Kuwait and the country's discovery of oil. However, despite the bitterness of these three crises in al-Shabīb's life, they produced artistically important literary, historical and thematic records.

The connoisseur of al-Shabīb's poetry will only taste misery and suffering which surmount all other senses as his poetry was a mirror image of a long process of misery, about fifty-nine years, to the extent that al-Shabīb reduced his life into three verses when a photograph of him was taken. When asked about his thoughts regarding that photo, al-Shabīb replied:

<div dir="rtl">

هذا خيالُ امرئٍ مُذ شَبَّ ما اشتملت

على المسرّةِ حتى شابَ أضلعُهُ

ما إن تناول من آمالِهِ سببًا

إلا رأى مَدِيَّةِ الأيام تقطعُهُ

</div>

وأيُّ صادٍ من الأحرارِ ما وقفتْ

دنياهُ عن كلّ ما يُرويهِ يدفعُهُ

This is a silhouette of one since he was a child

Has never witnessed pleasure till he went grey

No sooner had he once become hopeful

Till he was cut down by the sharp blades of time

Freemen are those whose lives are rife with wants

But the course of life prevents from quenching their thirst

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 458)

These three verses contain an implicit acknowledgement by al-Shabīb of his suffering and that it revolves around hardship, disappointments and inability to achieve goals. Al-Ghunaym (the editor of al-Shabīb's Dīwān) in the introduction of al-Shabīb's Dīwān explains the above verses as follows:

> They indicate that his life never witnessed any happiness, that whenever he felt close to achieving something, the blade of life would cut down that hope, and that he is akin to freemen whose life prevents them from that which quenches their thirst. (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 41)

While studies have agreed on the misery and suffering of al-Shabīb from birth until his death, they differed in diagnosing and defining its forms or tiers. The diverse critiquing of al-Shabīb's experience has benefited its recipients as it enabled them to understand it more broadly, digest it more deeply, and build a comprehensive perception of the poet's suffering. Al-Shabīb's psychological suffering from the perspective of Nūriyah al-Rūmī stems from two main reasons: poverty and blindness (al-Rūmī, 1999, p. 297). This opinion is shared by al-Ghunaym (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 44). However, Idrīs (2012) believes that al-Shabīb's crisis went through two main tiers of conflict, i.e. family conflict and rivalry with opponents.

One should not question the validity of both opinions together as al-Shabīb's crisis took different forms, e.g. road-related incidents, poverty, blindness, oil catastrophe, family feuds and struggles with adversaries. Nevertheless, the first opinion is more diagnostically sound of al-Shabīb's condition – without suspending the second – due

to two reasons: first, in the sense that poverty and blindness were constants in the poet's life from childhood to death, and accordingly impacted him through the pain he exhibits in his poetry. His conflict with his father was interrupted by his untimely death, similar to that with his opponents – which soon ceased as he was no longer connected to them. Second, despite their bitterness, the two conflicts were optional as al-Shabīb always chose to shy away from confronting his father when at odds and preferred to shun adversaries when they harmed him. However, his poverty and blindness were compulsory and inevitable no matter what he did, and these scarred his soul and memory and reflected in his poetry through forms of complaint, isolation and the desire to die. This chapter adds a third component to poverty and blindness, namely, the shock resulting from the age of oil, in an endeavour to come up with an interpretive reading of the implications behind what he said in losing hope when he reduced his life and described his image, which he was unable to see:

ما إن تناول من آمالِهِ سببًا

إلا رأى مَدِيَّةِ الأيام تقطعُهُ

No sooner had he once become hopeful

Till he was cut down by the sharp blades of time

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 458)

We begin with al-Shabīb's crisis with poverty as it was the longest to accompany him. It was neither a current one nor one that would end with time, but rather a series of shocks which began in childhood when he was born destitute, lived through poverty and struggled with life, unemployment and the pain of begging (al-Rūmī, 1999, p. 297). Although his poetry has a melancholic tone, it was loudly expressive, especially when he would ask for assistance. He would express his poverty aloud as it was his only means for seeking aid. For example, he would demand the members of Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif (Ministry of Education nowadays) give him extra money than that granted him per month (fifty rupees):

لا يدفعُ الجوعَ والعُرْيَ اللذيْن هما

شرُّ النوائب إيلامًا وإيجاعا

خمسون في الشهر عن مثلي فهل لكمُ

في ردِّ هذين إلباسًا وإشباعا

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Hunger and nakedness which in effect are

The worst of harms in pain and deprivation

Cannot be quelled by fifty a month for one of my like

Who beseeches you to clothe and feed him

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 464)

He continues complaining in the hope that his Kuwaiti countrymen will hear him before death claims his soul, and says:

أقولُ والكِبَرُ المُوهي قُوى جسدي

يُعينُ مِن مَرضٍ ما فيّ قد شاعا

شكوايَ إنْ لم يُصِخْ سَمْعُ الكويتِ لها

في شِدّتي، فمتى ألقاهُ سمّاعا؟

أبعدما الموتُ يُفني عنكَ يا وطني

منّي امْرَأً عاش في أهليكَ نفّاعا؟

I say as age has tightened its grip on my body

And as illness has engulfed all my extremities

If my complaint falls deaf on Kuwaiti ears in my time of need

Then when shall they hear me if not now?

Will it only be after death has exiled me from my homeland

While I now thrive in it and seek the goodness of its people?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 466)

Elsewhere, his psychological pain intensifies sharply due to his poverty crisis. He denies any goodness in his life because he is poor, and poses a rhetorical question:

فمثلي ما له في العيش خيرٌ

وهل في العيش خيرٌ للفقيرِ؟

My likes have no goodness in living

For does life bear any grace for the destitute?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 395)

He then justifies his destituteness with:

أخاف إذا بقيت تذلّ نفسي

على طمعٍ لذي مالٍ كثيرِ

فتمنحهُ مدائحَها اللواتي

تعزُّ على الفرزدق أو جريرِ

فيجزيني على شعري شعيرًا

ولستُ من البغالِ أو الحَميرِ

ولكنّي ـكما سُمّيتُـ صقرٌ

وهل أبصرتَ ذلًّا في الصقورِ

I fear if I remain that myself is humiliated

In greed of receiving favour from one who is rich

Where I would bestow on him sonnets of praise

That neither al-Farazdaq nor Jarīr can match

Then for such praise, he would reward me with barley

While I am neither a mule nor a donkey

But I have been named Ṣaqr (Falcon), and

Such birds of prey are never demeaned

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 395)

Here, he declares overcoming need, yet it is more daunting and overpowers him. He announces his willingness to praise for the sake of money provided that the subject of this panegyric is not ungenerous or does not reward him equal to the beauty of such poetry; a matter which al-Shabīb views as an insult. This is because he believes himself better than Umayyad poets al-Farazdaq and Jarīr in the art of panegyric. He also feels dignity that rejects humiliation, like the falcon that soars high above all.

Accordingly, one notices that his lack of financial sustenance did not sway him from seeking to earn money, nor did he use his blindness as an excuse for surrendering. al-Shabīb used poetry as a means for earning a living and bestowed much praise through it on the late ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Sālim Mubārak al-Sabāḥ (1917–1921) (al-Shabīb,

2008, p. 67), his late son Sheikh ʿAbdullāh Sālim al-Sabāḥ (1950–1965) (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 355), and the al-Shamlān family (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 646). Al-Ghunaym said that al-Shabīb tore up poems that he said in praise of people after he discovered they were not worthy of it, especially since they did not reward him after composing them (al-Muṭayrī, 2012, p. 183). This was not something out of the ordinary, as al-Shabīb was merely following the norm of the time. It also did not undermine poetic composing although some may argue it was an intellectual luxury for only the well-off; whereas, for the destitute, it was a means for living, and was there anyone more destitute than al-Shabīb?!

Just as the crisis of poverty was a severe shock in al-Shabīb's life but did not prevent him from declaring material gain in exchange for praising people, so too was the trauma of blindness which influenced him profoundly. It poured out of him openly and profusely into his poetry with no sense of embarrassment. Muḥammad Ḥasan ʿAbdullāh noted: 'al-Shabīb – unlike other blind poets – had no hesitation in declaring his impediment and in requesting people to heed it' (ʿAbdullāh, 1974, p. 24).

Al-Shabīb's Dīwān contains poetic imagery that expresses his suffering due to blindness, as illustrated in Chapter 2 while Axis III of this chapter will explain the struggle between that which al-Shabīb hoped to achieve and that which he actually did by the dawn of the age of growth and renaissance.

Axis II: Pre-Oil Era

The next two sections aim to provide an exploratory critical reading by shedding a semiotic light on Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's poetry to determine the features of the pre-oil Kuwaiti environment and then monitor signs of material and cultural change which documented the migratory scene of Kuwaiti society from the pre-oil era to the oil age. They also aim to deduce the position of al-Shabīb – the blind poet – from the phase soon to engulf Kuwait at the time to that which was different from what he had been accustomed.

Utilising semiotic data in interpreting the literary text is based primarily on the possibilities of the text itself which the reader can manoeuvre with and base his study on, and in light of this data, the text becomes readable within a defined methodology (Rabābʿah, 2011, p. 28). It is probably the massive imagery possibilities which Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Dīwān provide of a setting desert age and the dawning of the oil era that

enables the researcher to examine and conduct a study per a particular semiotic methodology, in the hope of unlocking a new horizon in reading Gulf literature in general and Kuwaiti in particular.

Semiotics is the study of signs and accordingly known as the science thereof. A sign – despite its multiple definitions – is a matter whose knowledge of assists in that of another. Rabābʿah (2011) feels it 'Represents something else which it beckons to describe it as its alternative, as Emile Benveniste believes, in the sense that it is a particular thing that replaces another for someone, something and to some degree' (p. 7). Daniel Chandler (2000, p. 179) also states that a sign is any meaningful unit interpreted as standing instead of another. Signs could be words, images, sounds, deeds and things.

A sign consists of two fundamental pillars: the signifier and signified. For readers not to confuse Semantics with Semiotics, as both are based on the same two pillars, Bernard Toussaint (2000, p. 19) differentiates between them in saying that semantics only cares about the meanings themselves, signs of languages, and the varied forms of expression and communication; whereas semiotics aims to study the relations between signifiers and the signified.

Bernard Toussaint believes signs are of a dual nature and divides them into linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (non-verbal) ones. The former occurs in spoken words and signs of writing or letters in whichever language, but the latter are those of an organic basis according to human senses, such as iconic signs, smelling, touching, tasting, hearing and seeing.

The iconic sign represented the third side in Pierce's triangular classification of signs and types. This widely acclaimed, rational classification divided signs into three main types, i.e. symbol, indicator, and icon (ʿAbdul-Muḥsin, 2015, p. 153). The first is based on a random relationship between its signifier and signified; the second's signifier and signified are based on a causal and iconic relationship; the third's signifier and signified are based on a similarity and simulator relationship.

Given the critical role which the sign – and the icon – will play in this section, namely as a tool of interpretation that contributes to extrapolating poetic text and delving into its reaches, the close connection between the icon and the senses is worth noting. This is 'because senses can refer to objects connected to the icon, or that it seeks to

transform senses into icons through the context in which they fall, and accordingly an icon may be formed through sound and smell.' (Rabābʿah, 2011, p. 15). In this context, desert animals and plants, cars and gas derived from oil, and anything associated with the emergence of oil in Kuwait may transform to icons through descriptive segments that form images which refer to psychological, social and intellectual facets.

In this context, walls of an urban environment, waves of a marine environment, animals and plants of the desert, and cars and gas emanating from the oil environment in Kuwait may transform into icons via descriptive segments formed from images of psychological, social and intellectual facets.

Prior to embarking on the applied study, one must set controls for application and boundaries of semiotic interpretation. Therefore, the space for interpretation will be limited by that which the text provides. By considering the studies and theories in this vast semiotic realm, this chapter will seek to invest these concepts in the reading of Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's poetry through an applied semiotic procedure that instils the hypothesis and which crystallises a clear conception of the impact of the desert environment on his poetry. This is in addition to al-Shabīb's own position on the initial change features that accompanied Kuwaiti society's ushering of the oil age.

Before the discovery of oil in Kuwait, al-Shabīb lived in an urban society with a desert climate and marine surroundings. These three facets were evident in his poetry but at different rates, and the poet was able to harness his imagination and all his senses in drawing a picture of that environment and utilise its icons as vessels for expressing his feelings and craftly creating artistic images.

Urban Environment Signs

The origins of modern popular gatherings in the western shore of the Gulf and its villages date back to the first half of the eighteenth century, after which these began to expand (al-Rumayḥī, 1984, p. 15). Likewise, Kuwait had an urban society that lived within its walls and al-Shabīb was part of it and was born in its eastern quarter (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 13). His poetry shows images of this urban environment through Kuwait City's icons like al-Ṣifāt Market. He writes:

<div dir="rtl">

ما في الصَّفاةِ لذي عَمًى

</div>

مثلي أمورٌ تُحْمَدُ

كم مرّةٍ قد ضَمَّني

فيها زحامٌ أَنْكَدُ

كادتْ به عن جُثَّتي

نفسي العزيزةُ تُفْقَدُ

In al-Safaa, there is no goodness

For a blind man like myself

So many times, in it

Have hordes of crowds crushed me

To the extent that my corpse

Would have lost its dear soul

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 257)

The image drawn here by the poet of al-Safāt Market is a stifling one that reflects his dismay with its crowded streets where he was almost trampled upon or fell off a ridge. It is as if he utilised al-Safāt Market as an objective equaliser of an environment packed with people posing a threat to his life and expressing his dismay therewith.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Al-Safāt Market	Urban environment	Hordes, stifling, fear

In contrast with the above, the vast natural environment rests well with al-Shabīb and pleases him. Examples on this facet are the expressions he uses to describe areas outside Kuwait City's wall like al-Dasmah, al-Shiʿb, al-Bidiʿ and Rās al-Arḍ which Kuwaitis flocked to in the Spring. He writes:

مَواضِعُ فيها للسّرورِ مَواضِعٌ

فلم أَلفَ فيها ساعةً غيرَ مُسْتَرّ

Locations that cause pleasantries

In which not a single moment did I feel bad

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 663)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Al-Dasmah, al-Shiʿb, al-Bidiʿ and Rās al-Arḍ	Open & vast nature	Happiness & Exaltation

His happiness upon visiting these locations is easily detectable as they were famous for their natural beauty and blooming flowers, especially during springtime. This feeling of happiness and pleasure is in contrast with that of the stifling al-Safāt Market and his displeasure with the al-ʿArḍah dance, as mentioned earlier (see Axis I). It also trumps the pain he receives from bumping into the city's walls or donkeys (see Axis I). So, although belonging to an urban environment, the poet finds solace and pleasure only in the vast and open desert.

Marine Environment Signs

The sea represents the main pole of the Gulf environment in general, and the Kuwaiti one in particular. It has always been a consuming, economic and trade source for Kuwaitis as it brought them fish and pearls and was their passageway for trade and travel. The importance of the sea in the pre-oil discovery era in Kuwait was reflected in the poems of those who lived in that era and who experienced its hardships. To these individuals, the sea represented their source of artistic imagery, and the most famous among them was seasoned Kuwaiti poet Mohammed al-Fayez (1938–1991) who wrote *Mudhakkarāt Baḥḥār* (A Seaman's Memoires).

The eastern quarter of Kuwait City where al-Shabīb was born was close to the sea and was present in his poetry although to a lesser extent compared to the other icons of the area of which he wrote. Most probably the reason for al-Shabib's non-employment of the sea's imagery in his poetry, from an artistic facet, is due to a psychological trauma he suffered that was caused by being on the sea. This is based upon a story mentioned by the late Aḥmad al-Bishr al-Rūmī in his introduction of al-Shabīb's Dīwān. Al-Rūmi states that al-Shabib had once suggested to him on one summer day that the two of them along with two other friends take a ship and go diving. Al-Rūmī liked the

idea as he had hoped he would find a pearl and that they would all become rich. He adds that they all went searching for a ship, found a small-sized one, prepared it for travel and set a day for sailing out. They then locked al-Shabīb's house, carried his bedding to the ship and hoisted its sail. While at sea, they faced a fierce storm and the ship almost sank, but its passengers miraculously survived it and immediately sailed back home (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 23).

After having scoured al-Shabib's poems, we found the bare minimum of artistic imagery reflecting marine life, which numbered only five. Among these is the following expressive image of his suffering from the sea on the one hand, and blindness on the other:

<div dir="rtl">

فأمضي بلا رُشْدٍ كأنِّي سفينةٌ

بمُلْتَطَمِ الأمواجِ من لُجَجٍ خُضْرِ

</div>

I continue aimlessly as if I were a ship

Crushed by fierce green waves that would take me under

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 358)

The poet employed the above marine icons to suit his physical and psychological conditions while walking alone amid the city. He equated himself to a ship and everything he would bump into while walking as fierce waves that could sink large boats. The sea represented fear and reflected his psychological feeling towards it and blindness.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Hapless ship at sea	Hapless when walking	Suffering due to blindness

One also notices here that blindness did not prevent al-Shabīb from using colours in his poetry (al-Muṭayrī, 2012, p. 171). As he remembered what colours looked like from when he was a child before losing his eyesight (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 13), the poet created colourful imagery that rivalled his able-sighted peers.

The above stanza shows how al-Shabīb drew a coloured image that surpassed the descriptions of sighted poets when stating the waves' greenness instead of the

common blue. Green is the dominant colour of Kuwait's sea as the seabed is muddy, unlike the blue waters of rocky shoreline seabeds.

This may mean that the high quality of visual imagery was not impossible for blind poets to attain as, throughout the ages, it was either a sensory experience or a cultural one, which intrinsically means that imagination in visual imagery was of higher order to blind poets than that of touch (al-Fayfī, 1997, p. 378).

Desert Environment Signs

Unlike urban and marine environments which were modestly present in al-Shabīb's poetry as sources for poetic imagery and metaphors, the desert environment received the lion's share therein. It seemed as if the poet had been bred and raised in a purely desert locale. This phenomenon must be brought to light to explain the reasons behind the strong connection between the poet and the desert.

This connection between the poet and the desert is probably due to two reasons. The first is that al-Shabīb is a tribal person originally and descended from the large *Shammar* tribe based in Ḥāʾil and its vicinity (al-Shabīb, 1969, p. 13). It is well known that the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula are proud of their affiliation with the Bedouin desert environment as they travel through it at length. Ḥusayn (1994) states that 'The Arab community in Kuwait had till recently been one dominated by tribalism' (p. 63). Additionally, he asserts:

> Kuwait's connection to the desert is a custom inherited by their forefathers and is still practiced till present day. Whenever Spring is close-by, many Kuwaitis go to the desert, set up tents and stay there for days savouring the desert's calming and tranquil air. (Ḥusayn, 1994, p. 64)

Second, Kuwait's climate is deemed part of the larger desert belt extending from the Atlantic to the Gulf (Ḥusayn, 1994, p. 45), and accordingly has granted it high regard by Arabs in general (ʿAbbās, 2006, p. 36) and by Kuwaitis in particular. The desert to al-Shabīb was never merely a geographical space, but rather an objective equaliser for the happiness, tranquillity and ease he lacked in his miserable reality. It was his escape from the city's stifling crowds and a psychological passageway from narrow streets towards a vast and open desert. This is why al-Shabīb was so closely connected to the desert and drew inspiration from it. The imagery it provided allowed

him to express his emotional state and his fluctuating feelings. In the law of constants and variables, al-Shabīb's feelings fluctuated according to his psychological state, but the desert was always the constant in his culture and imagination. The following poetic texts are examples of this.

Al-Shabīb employed desert signs in line with the poem's main aim and was artful in capturing desert phenomena to transform them into mosaics which expressed his psychological state. He describes hypocrites as a Mirage as per the following:

The mirage is one of the most distinctive signs of a desert environment. It is a natural phenomenon of the desert and occupies a vast space in human memory in general and in Arabic memory in particular. The poet employed the mirage to describe hypocritical people, and its words and imagery were parallel to the sad experience controlling his emotions. He expresses:

<div dir="rtl">

خَدَعَتْنا منه الظواهرُ حتى

نال ما ناله بلا استحقاقٍ

وسرابُ الفلاةِ كم غرَّ من قبلُ

عطاشًا بالمنظر البرّاقٍ

</div>

The outer traits of man have tricked us

Allowing them more praise than they deserve,

The mirage of the desert has for long deceived

The Thirsty of the sparkling illusion in sight

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 483)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Mirage	Hypocrites	Cunning appearance

Desert Animal Signs

Several researchers have noticed the mention of birds and animals in his poetry. Among these is Muḥammad Ḥasan ʿAbdullah (1987, p. 36) who dubbed it the phenomenon of poetic storytelling on behalf of birds and animals, and who then

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attributed it to the influence of Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawqī on al-Shabīb's poetry. Bū Shaʿīr (1997) disagreed and said, 'It is difficult to decide on this matter as some Gulf poets have known this type of poetry before the emergence of Shawqī, and perhaps even before he composed any such poetry' (p. 124). He then cited Saudi poet Aḥmad Ibn Musharraf who had previously composed poems on behalf of animals with the same construct and artistic characteristics that Shawqī later pursued.

However, al-Rūmī (1999, p. 319) and al-ʿAlī accurately rephrased the phenomenon and called it 'the multitude of similes in which animals or birds are part' (al-ʿAlī, 1986, p. 210) as it is a clearer and more vivid phenomenon than that of poetic storytelling on behalf of birds and animals.

When studying Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's Dīwān, we can clearly notice the animal and plant environments of the period in which he lived. These form artistic imagery in the shape of markers or icons of Kuwait's Bedouin and desert environment in the pre-oil discovery era. Accordingly, this section will aim to present images of the desert's animal and plant environments present in al-Shabīb's poetry.

There are many instances in Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's poetry of the animal environment that refer to the desert, most prominent of which is the falcon, considered a unique Arabian desert icon. The poet mentioned falcons to the extent of profligacy as the bird mirrored his name:

وقد ظنّ بعضُ الناسِ أنّ قصائدي

حَمامٌ وأنّي صقرُ أجوائِها كاسمي

إذا شئتُ أنْ أصطادَ منها حمامةً

سَمَتْ بي إلى ما شئتُ أجنحةُ العَزْمِ

Some people have considered my poetry dove-like

And I am the falcon of its skies as my name shows

If I wished to prey on a pigeon from above

The wings of determination shall carry me high

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 539)

The poet likens his high standard of poetic ability to the falcon, which soars high in the sky on the one hand and associates poetic vocabulary items as the pigeons spread

throughout the sky on the other. He picks from those meanings whatever he wishes just as the falcon does with the pigeons whenever it decides to make a kill. From al-Shabīb's perspective, the essence of a falcon soaring in the skies may reflect an imaginary reality in his mind that is vast, limitless and void of city complications, the narrowness of roads and crowded markets.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Falcon hunting a pigeon	al-Shabīb hunting vocabulary	Poetic mastery

Horses were also present in al-Shabīb's poetry:

<div align="center">

ربما تُبصر العيون هجينًا

قد تربّى بين الجِيادِ العِتاقِ

The eyes may see a non-pedigree

That was raised among horses of thoroughbred

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 483)

</div>

Here, he draws a visual image by likening himself to a non-pedigree horse of less worth, bred among thoroughbreds.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Wild & domesticated horses	Noblemen & callous ones	Nobility & Degradation

Wolves are icons of fear and treachery in the Arabian Desert and were mentioned in his poetry more than horses. At times, there is acoustic imagery of their howling at night that terrorises humans, and he, therefore, represented the voice of his adversaries as such:

<div align="center">

يَجِدّ خصامُهم فيها سَفاهًا

وتسمعُ كالذئابِ لهم عُواءَ

Their adversaries work hard to be ignorant

</div>

And like wolves, you hear their howling echo

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 97)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Wolf	His adversaries	Dread, Fear, Respect

Again, he brings together wolf and sheep in traditional poetic imagery when he published a poem after the end of the Second World War, reproving his nation for its weakness, and likening it to a sheep and the West to a wolf:

<div dir="rtl">

ولا ذنبَ إلا الضعفُ، والشاةُ لم تكن

ليأكلها لو خاف سطوتها الذئبُ

</div>

The only guilt is its weakness as the sheep

Would not have been slaughtered had the wolf feared it

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 123)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Wolf & Sheep	the West & Arabs	Strength & Weakness

Al-Shabīb emphasises the wolf's bloody imagery when brought together with the sheep:

<div dir="rtl">

قالوا اعتزلتَ الناس قلتُ لأنهم

جَرّوا عليّ المُخْزِناتِ صُنوفا

لولا مخالطتي البريَّةَ لم يكن

قلبي لذؤبانِ الهمومِ خَروفا

</div>

They claimed I forfeited mankind, yet

I responded that they added sorrows to sorrows

Had I not mingled with them, my heart

Would not have fallen a sheep to wolves' horrors

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 472)

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Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Wolf & Goat	People & the Poet	Antagonist & Victim

In describing the most widely spread reptile in the desert, al-Shabīb draws a similarity between the snake and life:

يفتش عن سعادتها ذَوُوها

وقد خَبَأَتْ لهم فيها الشقاءَ

كما خَبَأَتْ لِلامِسِها الأفاعي

خلال لِيانِها الداءَ العياءَ

Its happiness is sought by those who seek it

Yet life has hardship for them in store

Just as the snake has in store for one who touches it

Poison underneath its soft texture and skin

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 104)

He created an image drawn from the sense of touch when comparing life to a serpent that is sleek on the outside but dangerous on the inside. Just as a snake is soft and sleek when touched, so is life to the poet, but its venom is in its occurrences.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Snake	Life	Sleek image, horrid essence

The poet compares life to the snake as seeming smooth yet hiding poison in its days and occurrences. He then compares himself to a wriggling snake on hot sand in fear of the municipal tax collector when knocking on his door to collect dues. The snake image changes in another scene iconic to poetic storytelling when the poet likens himself to the snake that twists with fear and due to scorching sand as the municipal fees' collector pounds on his door to demand payment of dues. al-Shabīb writes:

قَرْعَةُ الجابي لبابي

غادرتْ نفسي شجِيّة

واثقًا أنّ جيوبي

ليس فيهنّ خبيّة

خائفًا أنّ اعتذاري

منه لا يثني أبيّة

فتململتُ كما تفعلُ

في الرمضاءِ حيّة

The knock of the tax collector on my door

Has caused my soul to depart

Certain that the void in my pockets

Has no substance nor anything to hide

Fearing that apologising to him

Will not sway him from insisting I pay

So I wriggled as does the snake

In the heat of the desert on scorching sand

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 187)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Twisting snake	Twisting poet	Torture

It is necessary here to point out the poet's artistic brilliance in employing the scenes of the falcon, snake and other animals in line with the poem's main aim. It is as if the desert – with its animal signs – gives him clarity of thought, peace of heart, mercy to his soul and foresight of vision.

Desert Plantation Signs

Icons of desert plants is a facet of al- Shabīb's poetry never tackled. He also mentions the desert's immortal sign, i.e. the palm tree, which is prevalent in old and modern Kuwait by referencing its fruit (sweet and moist dates) in this wisdom-filled verse:

وَمَنْ غرستْ يمناهُ يومًا فسيلةً

فبشّرْهُ من بعد المشقّةِ بالرُّطَبِ

Whoever shall plant one day a seed, bring him good tidings

That after burden shall come sweet and moist dates

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 114)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Dates	Palm Tree	Reaping success

Al-Shabīb's description of his wife's traits reflect both his blindness and his amazing imagination processes of compensating through touch that which he lost of seeing when he draws a physical image expressing his wife's ugliness:

وما تفصيلُ وصفِ الجسمِ منها

ولا الإجمالُ منه لي بحالٍ

عِظامٌ نُحَّلٌ أُودِعْنَ جِلْدًا

به شَعرٌ كأشواكِ السِّيالِ

And to me, neither were the details of her body admirable

Nor the whole shape of it by any means

Nothing but skinny bones covered with skin

Filled with hairs as spiky as the thorns of al-Siyāl trees

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 625)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Al-Siyāl plant	His wife's hair	Ugliness

These verses depict the harsh treatment al-Shabīb received from his wife, and when failed by sight in noticing her faults, he utilised touch instead. The poet created a sensory image when he compared the hair on her head and body to the spikes of the

harsh desert plant known as *al-Siyāl*. 'The hands of a blind man are receptive organs, a source for knowledge, research, and action' (al-ʾAlī, 1986, p. 52).

Another phenomenon never before discussed is the signs of desert plants. Having shed light on an artistic facet of al-Shabīb's poetry, a historical one is also required as some of his poetry represents a documentary record of vegetation in Kuwait. He sent a poem to his late friend Aḥmad al-Mishārī from his farm in al-Finṭās village where he was recuperating from feeling under the weather:

<div dir="rtl">

ما كنتُ أحسبُ قريةً بجمالها

تُنسي الحبيبَ مُحِبَّهُ في الناسِ

حتى نسيتَ اليومَ مني ذاكرًا

لمّا اجْتَلَيْتَ مَحاسنَ الفنطاسِ

</div>

I had never thought a village of such beauty

Would lead one to forget all those he loves

Until today when you forgot me who remembers you

As you savour the beauties and riches of al-Finṭās

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 438)

He then describes that coastal village which was a sanctuary for Kuwaitis in the Spring. He also mentions some of its plants: 'al-Ḥūdhān' and 'al-Bisbās':

<div dir="rtl">

فالذنبُ للفنطاسِ لا ازْدَهَتْ الرُّبا

منها (بحوذان)، ولا (بسباسِ)

</div>

It is the fault of al-Finṭās which was a beacon of prosperity

Where plants like Ḥūdhān and Bisbās flourished

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 438)

It is clear that the poetic verse is void of any similes or metaphoric decorations in describing al-Ḥūdhān and al-Bisbās plants. Nonetheless, it is to the poet's favour that he documented Kuwait's plants, and emphasised their importance and effectiveness in his poems.

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In another verse, he mentions the al-Saʿadān plant which grows in the desert and is preferred for grazing. The plant was made into a proverb – evident in the second line, below:

<div dir="rtl">

متمثّلين لدى الرجوع بقوْلهم

مَرْعًى ولكن ليس كالسَّعدانِ

</div>

When returning from the area, they would say

Good grazing it is, but far from being like al-Saʿadān

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 573)

The chief fruit of this section is observing that, on the spatial level, al-Shabīb lived in an urban environment with a marine surrounding, yet on a cultural level, the desert seems to dominate his poetry in both choices of words and images. This is due to the desert being the foremost source of suggestion and inspiration on the artistic level, and a haven from the city's clamour on the psychological level.

Also noticeable are two values of al-Shabīb's poetry. The first is a documentation of Kuwait's urban and desert life in all its forms like when he documented al-Safaa Market, the art of al-ʿArḍah dance, and desert animals and plants by name and shape, and even their locations at times.

The second value is an artistic one, as his visual impairment did not prevent him from sensory expression. In fact, it was this impairment that drove him towards visual artistic imagery that rivalled his able-seeing peers. Accordingly, al-Shabīb recorded Kuwaiti life in its urban, marine and desert forms – encompassing both animals and plants – within a uniquely objective and artistically impressive frame.

Axis III: Oil Era's Signs

The truth is that Kuwait's modern renaissance did not occur overnight but was preceded by phases of gradual modernisation that formed the prelude to this fast-paced revival. It was not a sudden advancement that occurred only upon the discovery of oil there in 1938, but rather a 'quick' one. The discovery of oil accelerated its progression only in 1946 when Kuwait began exporting oil after the world witnessed the end of WWII.

As al-Nakib (2016) explains:

> 'Oil was discovered in Kuwait in commercial quantities in 1938, and the first barrels were exported in 1946 (the delay caused by World War II). The oil income went straight into the hands of the ruler, and it was his responsibility to distribute the wealth among the population. With the accession to power of Abdullah al-Salem in 1950, Kuwait entered a period of enormous state-building and centralization. Oil revenues brought about a major shift in the social pact between the rulers and the ruled' (p. 91).

Kuwait would not have been able to achieve its modern renaissance with such high speed had it not been for the tremendous financial returns it received after launching its first oil export processes. It was at this juncture that the country metamorphosed on urban, economic, cultural and food levels towards the completion of its renaissance in the late 1960s–1970s. In terms of immigration and employment, al-Nakib (2016, p. 94) argues: "The launch of the oil industry led to a substantial increase in immigration from the desert and neighboring Arab countries due to new employment opportunities in the oil, construction, and service sector".

Hence, Axis III will follow a specific chronological order of Kuwait's modern history. It will pause at benchmarks witnessed and documented by the poet before the country's discovery of oil and through the dawning of the oil age and its preliminary characteristics, as well as pondering on al-Shabīb's stance concerning this accelerated urban leap.

By considering psychologists' theories on trauma types, causes and symptoms (Baldick, 2008, p. 340), this axis presumes that al-Shabīb experienced a cultural-civil crisis in this specific timeframe consisting of a series of shocks and disappointments due to the fast-paced cultural leap in which he faced much resistance. These are as follows:

Education Development Sign: Extinguishing Hope

The winds of change and modernisation began in Kuwait before the discovery of oil. The first to undergo change was the educational establishment as the Kuwaiti society had long been bred on valuing education, even in its strict notion.

According to al-Rumayḥī (1984, p. 112), Kuwaiti society has always held high regard for teachers, and the traditional form of education was through male and female (Muṭawwaʿ: teachers of Quran). In some areas, this person was called a Mullah. This form of education prevailed in the Gulf for many centuries, where boys or girls would gather in a house or a masjid in each neighbourhood or village and receive Quran lessons from that teacher - who may be the Imām or muʾadhdhin of the mosque or the Sharīʿah judge there. "It was the norm that boys would pursue the same profession of their fathers, in either agriculture or diving for pearls, and that girls would remain at home conducting household tasks until they wed" (al-Rumayḥī, 1984, p. 112).

Society had sought to adopt modern forms of education even before the emergence of oil.

> 'It is often pointed out that modern education began in Kuwait in 1912, but this was only a historic beginning. That year, a quasi-school was established due to individual initiatives by local Kuwaitis and others living abroad to teach children reading, writing and mathematics. The staff there were either locals with religious qualifications, or resident teachers. The pupils would sit in one room and would memorise some early poetry, mathematics, and some religious studies without sitting for tests, time divisions or supervision as prevalent nowadays. Whenever they or their parents felt they had learned enough, the pupils would leave school and embark on pursuing any available job. The first school in Kuwait was named *al-Mubārakiyyah* to reflect the name of Sheikh Mubarak al-Sabah in whose rein it was opened. The school suffered ill-tidings though for lack of funding and officials' disregard of education…' (al-Rumayḥī, 1984, p. 113)

Ṣaqr al-Shabīb realised how bad education was at the school when he visited it and sat near one of the classrooms. He heard the class teacher giving a lesson on the Arabic language yet whose sentence structure was very weak. al-Shabīb said:

ما زلتُ أسمعُ لحنَ ذا اللَّحَّانِ

حتى لكِدْتُ أذوبُ من أشجاني

لم يُلْقِ من بيتٍ على طُلَّابِهِ

إلّا وشانَ البيتَ بالألحانِ

I can still hear the mistakes of the inefficient 'teacher'

Till my heart melted with sorrow and pain

Not a single sonnet did he recite to his pupils

That wasn't corrupted with weakness of expression

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 569)

al-Shabīb then harshly criticises and reproaches the teacher for ruining Arabic. He laments:

خَدَعَتْ بني قَوْمي شهادتُهُ التي

شَهِدتْ له بالعلمِ والعِرفانِ

وإذا بإصغائي إلى تدريسه

يعزو شهادتُهُ إلى البُطلانِ

إنْ لم يكنْ نالَ الشهادةَ ذا الفتى

زُورًا، فآفتُهُ من النّسيانِ

His certificate tricked my countrymen

Which testified to his knowledge and capability

Yet while listening to his teaching, I could only sense

His certificate void of any substance

He either gained his certification on false pretences

Or forgot all the teaching it embodied

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 569)

His jealousy for his language and countrymen reaches a climax as he encouraged the termination of the melodious teacher and insisted that he return to his homeland to study anew:

فلينصرفْ من حيثُ جاء فلم يزلْ

منهُ التعلّمُ بعدُ في الإمكانِ

Let him go back to where he came from as learning from him

Is as unattainable as ever could be

He then beseeches his people to replace the teacher with one who has mastered the language, and warns them of taking such matters lightly:

<div dir="rtl">

يا قومُ إنْ لم تبدّلوه بمُحسنٍ

تعليمَهُ الأبناءَ ذي إتقانِ

عَظُمَتْ ندامتكم على تفريطكمْ

وعلى التساهلِ مُعْقِبِ الخُسرانِ

</div>

My dear countrymen if you do not replace him with a worthy one

Who teaches our offspring with care and diligence

Your regret will be compounded for acting lightly

And on your leniency shall hang all losses

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 570)

In the end, he appears to be offering himself for the job and swears:

<div dir="rtl">

تاللهِ يا لُغتي العزيزةَ لن تريْ

منّي سوى ذي نجدةٍ مِعْوانِ

</div>

By God, my dear language, you shall find only from me

Aid and assistance in overcoming your debacle

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 574)

It appears that al-Shabīb sought employment at that specific time because he realised that the drums of modernisation were about to sound, evolution was imminent, the development of Kuwait also depended on his development, holding employment meant an end to his poverty, and that by holding a post, he would no longer need to praise the unworthy to sustain livelihood nor ask for aid. Holding a job would render him no longer destitute or in need of glorifying others for a grant or money they may give him, particularly with an opportunity on the horizon that could remove him from his state of desperate need and allow him independence, self-sustenance and saving face.

Perhaps the only reason for which he sought this particular job of being a teacher of the Arabic language was that it embodied his aspirations. Through it, he would be able to practice his 'banned hobby' of delving into books of poetry with his students after having been forbidden from doing so by his father's wrath who always recited a verse of *Surat al-Shuʿarāʾ* (The Poets): 'Poets are followed by corruptors' (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 13). His father had always contrasted this with the position of a preacher or 'Mullah' which he had always urged his son to adopt (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 16), which only led the poet to be disappointed with his father's stance.

However, not too long after, he was again disappointed when the officials in Kuwait's educational establishment refused his application to become a teacher due to the school principal's hesitation to hire him because of the poet's blindness and shabby clothing. He composed a protest poem in which he said:

<div dir="rtl">

لو لم يُوظَّفْ في (المعارفِ) غيرُ مَنْ

أبدى الكفاءةَ لم أكن بالعاطلِ

</div>

Had that department not included any but the competent

I would not now be out of a job

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 508)

The rejection rattled the poet, and he escalated the matter to one more senior than the director. He advised:

<div dir="rtl">

هلّا بحثتمْ عن مُديرٍ مخلصٍ

مُترفّعٍ عن كلّ أمرٍ سافلِ

يقِظِ النُّهى، غافي الهوى، متجرّدٍ

عن كلّ شَخْصيٍّ المنافعِ عادلِ

</div>

Shall you search for a loyal director who

Rises above all matters that are unworthy

One who is aware of all that is right and

Who is just and devoid of personal gain

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 509)

It seems as if his close relationships with Kuwait's elites and scholars did not assist him in securing the job, nor in appointing a loyal director. He then escalated matters further by taking his woes beyond the borders of Kuwait – to Iraq in particular – where poetry appeared in printed form in magazines rather than merely being auditory. As the journalism movement in Kuwait began crystallising both intellectually and socially (Bū Shaʿīr, 1997, p. 88), al-Shabīb embraced it and published a poem in al-Yaqīn Magazine that was published by Muḥammad al-Hāshimī in Baghdad. The poem stated:

<div dir="rtl">

يقولون لي: يا صقرُ مالَكَ عاطلًا؟

وقد وظّفوا مَنْ لم يُقارِبْكَ في الأدبْ

فقلتُ لهم: في رِثّةِ الثوب مانعٌ

رُقِيّي إلى تلك المناصبِ والرّتبْ

يُوَلَّى هنا المرءُ الوظيفةَ جاهلًا

على شرطِ أَنْ تُلْفى ملابسُهُ قُشُبْ

ويُحْرَمُ منها المرءُ والمرءُ عالِمٌ

إذا لم تكن منه الملابسُ بالنُّخَبْ

ولو عَقَلوا كان التقدُّمُ عندهم

على حَسْبِ ما تقضي الفضيلةُ والحَسَبْ

فما كلُّ ما راقَ العيونَ بَريقُهُ

وأعجبها منه ملاحتُهُ ذَهَبْ

</div>

They say O' Ṣaqr, why are you jobless

While they have hired those less learned than you?

I said, the ruggedness of my clothing seems to prevent me

From aspiring for such high posts and offices

The reigns of such a job are awarded to the ignorant

Provided that his clothing is of fancy style

And denied it is to one who is very learned

When his clothing is not up to par

Had they known better advancement to them would be

According to the mandate of virtue and knowledge

For not all that attracts the eye with its shine

And flare is golden nor equal in goodness

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 113)

An escalation after another, and all the while the tragedy expands on civilisation and geographic scales. al-Shabīb then exports the same idea from his Kuwaiti homeland to Tunisia after the late leader Abdul-ʿAzīz al-Thaʿālibī sent him felicitations on ʿEid al-Fiṭr. al-Shabīb complained in response:

أزعيمَ تونس والكويتُ فَسيحةٌ

قد ضاق بي منها الفسيح الأرْحَبُ

إنْ يردني بؤس فلوموا موطني

بعدي على تفريطه بي واعتبوا

حاولت إدراك الوظيفة جاهدًا

بالقوت من قومي فعزّ المطلبُ

منحوا الوظائف كل من ضاقت بهم

ذرعًا لجهلهم فباتَتْ تَنْدُبُ

.   .   .   .

ما كنت لو أني ارتديتُ ملابسًا

حَسُنت على نيل الوظائف أُغْلَبُ

يرقى ببزته الفتى لا علمِهِ

أسمى الوظائف في الكويت ويَكسبُ

From the Tunisian leader do I receive felicitations

While Kuwait so vast has had enough with me although my homeland

If I shall ever feel misery, then blame my homeland

After me for forfeiting me so lightly

Hard have I tried to win a job

And earn my sustenance, but my people abstained

They granted jobs to all the unworthy

And now of their ignorance, they feel the pain

.   .   .   .

This would not have been the case had I put on clothes

Which would have secured me the job I had sought

The young man's clothing not knowledge elevates him

In Kuwait's most important jobs and secures an earning

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 132)

كم قلتُ إنّ السيفَ ليس بغمده

بل إنما هو حدّه والمَضْرِبُ

Many a time have I said that a sword's worth is not its handle

But rather in how well it cuts and what it strikes

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 133)

Between forsaking one's safety and undermining motivation, and between giving up on the local community and seeking aid from the regional one, lies an answer to Najmah Idrīs's question: 'Wasn't Ṣaqr al-Shabīb qualified to play a larger role when considering his poetic talent and reformist inclinations? Did he not possess enough responsibility and dreams of development to encourage him in assuming an abler and more formidable personality? Did he not have enough promising opportunities and appreciation from elite scholars and sheikhs that would allow him playing that role, let alone insisting on it?' (Idrīs, 2012).

The dawning of the new age permitted him a new role that was abler, more formidable and better suiting his dignity than the age of earning sustenance through poetic panegyric. He was so qualified, bore a high sense of social responsibility for the preservation of Arabic, and offered to teach at *al-Mubārakiyyah* School had officials at the Ministry not prevented him from it. Only a few of his friends, like Aḥmad al-Ṣarrāf (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 226) stood by his side when scholars and sheikhs alike denied

him the right to carry out that job or any other that would have allowed him a paying alternative to poetic begging.

Al-Nābulsī's opinion on psychological shock and its types regards losing employment as a reason for psychological trauma (al-Nābulsī, 1991, p. 285). Hence, after having been let down by society and losing the chance of employment that would have removed him from poverty, al-Shabīb underwent a compounded psychological shock from both his social surroundings and the new era being ushered into Kuwait.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Education development	New phase	Extinguishing hope

Electricity Sign: Physical Shock

Electricity represents a signifier of emergent modernisation on the world in general, and the Kuwaiti society in particular. al-Shabīb was alive when the first electric current entered Kuwait's homes and shops in 1934 (al-Ḥātim, 1980, p. 105), after which its usage began cascading throughout the entire country. The poet drew artistic imagery thereof in writing:

<div dir="rtl">

ليتَ مَنْ لاموا بأسلاكِ الجَوَى

كَهْرَبَتْ أحشاءَهُم أيدي الهوى

</div>

I wish those who blamed me with wires of adoration,

Their internal organs were electrocuted by that love

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 473)

Such poetic simile can only be sensed through touch as he wished for the electrocution of internal organs of those who blamed him with the same wires of their claimed love for him – as explained by Ibn Hazm al-Andalusī (2002, p. 75).

In semiotic consideration of the icon and its underlying meaning, the blind poet sees electricity differently to a seeing one. The latter benefits from it as it illuminates his surroundings, but the former cannot do the same due to blindness and can only feel

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the wrath of its electrocution. This is the reason al-Shabīb employed it in wishing ill for his adversaries.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Electrocution	Pain of love	Internal fragmentation

The point of transformation is evident as the imagery of light in its modern form is entirely different from the blind poet. For example, he says:

ونُصْحُكَ مثلُ الشمسِ لكن جهالتي

غَمامٌ وقد يُخفي الشموسَ غَمام

Your advice is as bright as the sun, yet

My ignorance is clouds that conceal its shimmer

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 695)

The representation of light in its natural context is drawn from the sun, being the main source thereof, and possesses a different representation in modern context. 'al-Shabīb's poetry employs many references of light, its sub-categories and sources, like the sun, which reflects his need to compensate for the darkness he suffers from and complains much about' (al-Rūmī, 1999, p. 312).

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
The Sun	Advice & Guidance	Clarity & Seeing

Hike in Prices Sign: Economic Shock

As Kuwait ushered in its new era, the hopes of al-Shabīb collapsed one after the other as when it rains on the destitute, it pours! Despite the discovery of oil in Kuwait in 1938 and the people's good feelings towards the riches coming along with the black gold, the poor segment of society suffered from sudden economic relapses. Al-Ghunaym mentioned that a hike in prices of goods engulfed Kuwait in 1941 (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 107). Similarly, historian al-Ḥātim (1980, p. 164) stated that shortly after the breakout

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of WWII, Kuwait and other countries witnessed an exponential hike in the prices of consumer goods, and some foodstuff almost disappeared from the shelves. On this matter, al-Shabīb wrote:

غلاءٌ أهلك الفقراءَ جوعًا

وعُرْيًا، أهلك اللهُ الغلاءَ

وزاد الأغنياءُ غنًى و يُبْسًا

كما زدتَ الحصى المنقوعَ ماءَ

فلستَ ترى غنيًا عن فقيرٍ

يخفّف مُحسِنًا هذا البلاءَ

Scorching prices that have led the poor to hunger

And nakedness; may God rid us of both

Which have rendered the rich even richer and harsher

Like pebbles submerged under water

Not a single rich man defends the poor

Or aids them in philanthropy against such famine

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 107)

al-Shabīb suffered from poverty and blindness since his early life but was then compounded with a third blow even after the discovery of oil. This economic crisis of an oil-rich society was akin to a drought in the poet's eyes. He seems still composed despite these calamities, holding onto the thin thread of patience. He says:

فصبرًا أيها الفقراء صبرًا

فإن الأمر حائلٌ انتهاءَ

Patience, O' poor ones, patience

For all matters shall come to an end

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 110)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Hike in prices	Economic relapse	Disappointment & Frustration

Car & Motorcycle Signs: Psychological Shock

Kuwaiti historian al-Ḥātim (1980, p. 140) states that the first car to drive on Kuwait's land was that of its seven ruler Sheikh Mubarak al-Sabah (1896–1915) in 1912. However, the sheikh used it very little as the roads were narrow and unpaved and because it was a primitive car with no means of comfort as is the case nowadays.

Al-Hatim (1980, p. 144) also gives record on the psychological reaction of Kuwaitis upon witnessing a car, saying that it was as if a world wonder had appeared on Kuwaiti soil, with people panicking if they saw it approaching or heard its roar.

He adds that in the years after the emergence of that first car, with petrol becoming readily available, five merchants, in particular, began thinking of owning cars. Afterwards, taxis began appearing but were no more than five. Nevertheless, 1948 was the year when many taxis began operating as oil extraction picked up speed (al-Ḥātim 1980, p. 145).

Accordingly, al-Hatim confirms that the discovery of oil in Kuwait played an active role in facilitating the dissemination of petroleum and the appearance of more cars there; a matter which quickly ended the monopoly thereof by elite merchants. Kuwaitis from all walks of life were able to own cars, and this became an icon of the oil age. Nonetheless, this was contrary to almost all other Arab societies, particularly the non-oil producing ones, which took their time in receiving the icons of the new era and began gradually moving towards modernisation.

After the end of WWII, Kuwait's economy began to grow, and the manifestations of civilisational change surfaced. Cars and motorcycles roamed the streets and the rhythm of change took on a speedy character. The crisis of the modern city started early where al-Nakib (2016, p. 106) states: "The inefficiency, maladministration, and chaos that continuously plagued the state's planning administration had a significant impact on how the city during this crucial first decade". However, al-Shabīb was unprepared and not yet ready for its reception or quick adaptation in light of all these

rapid changes. Accordingly, and in one instance, he expresses extreme fear of cars' horns when he describes walking alone in the street:

وكم حوّلَتْ سيارةٌ بصفيرِها

أناملَ كفّيَ الحمرِ خوفًا إلى صُفْرِ

Many a time has a car's rabid horn transformed

The calmness of my red palms into the yellow of fear

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 359)

Although comfortable means of travel for their occupants, cars represented a sign of fear to the blind poet as he expresses this with the changing colour of his calm red palm to a yellow one akin to fear. It was a clear external sign of fear that represented underlying astonishment, nervousness and caution.

al-Shabīb expressed this fear through a visual-audio image of the cars' horns which were scary to him. It is as if he feared the unknown as he was more used to walls and donkeys along the road than cars. Despite being scared of donkeys, he was at least familiar with their presence, but cars were a total enigma to him. The visual-audio image which he drew was so horrid as if taken from scenes of Judgement Day:

'ونُفِخَ في الصّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ في السّماوات ومَنْ في الأرض إلّا مَنْ شاءَ الله ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فيهِ أُخرى فإذا هُم قيامٌ ينظرون'

'And the horn was blown rendering all in the heavens and on Earth dead, except those whom God has decided to remain, and then again the horn wailed resurrecting all to await judgement' (Q. 39: 68).

He continues to describe the psychological trauma suffered by this rapid shift:

وقد يَصْفِرُ الدرّاجُ حَوْليَ غافلًا

لأبْعُدَ عنه أو ينبّهَ بالنّقْرِ

فأرعدُ ذُعرًا منه حتى كأنما

تمشّت بجسمي كله رَعْدةَ القُرِّ

ولا غروَ أن خاف الدواهسَ جاهلٌ

وجوةَ المناجي من حوادثها الغُبْرِ

Motorcyclists may pass near me unaware

And honk for me to move out of their way

This would make me shudder in fear as if

Throughout my body thunder has passed

It is not unbecoming to fear the driving of an ignorant

So that one may survive their deadly accidents

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 359)

It is as if the oil era continues to frighten the poet here, as a new icon intercepts his way, i.e. the motorcycle. It too has a whizzing sound that is heard suddenly, and the poet moves away once again for fear of being run over. He is scared and shudders as if struck by a harsh arctic wind. Although the visible image painted by al-Shabīb is one of psychological shock from cars' and motorcycles' horns, its underlying image is one of cultural shock, resentment, indignation and rejection of everything new.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Cars & motorcycles	Astonishment & fear of the unknown	Incompatibility with modern changes

Kerosene Sign: Audio Shock

It appears once again to express his rejection of the oil age's latest developments and of one of its prominent manifestations, i.e. kerosene – a derivative of oil which replaced that used for lighting in the pre-oil era like sesame oil, olive oil, coconut oil, and *al-Wadak* (al-Ḥātim, 1980, p. 110). In this regard, he addressed a poem to the Mayor complaining of the annoying bell sound used by Kerosene sellers in the streets. al-Shabīb wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

يا بائعَ الغاز رُبع الربع من مئة

مما تقوم به من دقّكَ الجرسا

</div>

O' seller of kerosene, a quarter of a quarter

Of the sound of your bell do I beg

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 446)

Then he continues his complaint, saying:

<div dir="rtl">

يؤذي ويزعج أيقاظًا تمر بهم

ويطرد النوم عن عين الذي نعسا

</div>

It disturbs and harms the awake you pass by

And dispels sleep from the eyes of the tired

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 446)

It becomes evident that Ṣaqr had an acute sense of hearing and that annoying noises harmed and prevented him from sleeping. It seems he does not embrace any innovations, especially those related to the oil age:

<div dir="rtl">

فلستُ أغبط ما جلجلتَ عن كثبٍ

إلا الأصمّ وإلّا ميتًا رُمِسا

</div>

I do not envy for that loud and close sound

Except the deaf or the dead who are shed and buried

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 446)

Although he lost his sense of sight and became mainly dependent on his hearing, he envies the deaf and the dead and paints his suffering from the bell's loud sound, evident in the following verse:

<div dir="rtl">

ما قارَبَ البَرْءَ رأسي من تصدُّعِهِ

إلا ومرّ به شَرْواكَ فانتكسا

أما هدوء أعصابي فلم أره

منذ استهلّ من الأجراسِ ما خرسا

</div>

No sooner has my head almost gone back to normal

Than he passes by again and it relapses

The calmness of my nerves I have not witnessed

Since the bells have sounded and haven't silenced

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 446)

He continues to complain and show his displeasure and counts the signs of kerosene sellers' bells that continue to ail him as if in permanent spasm. Finally, he beseeches God to rid him of his sense of hearing due to the distress this has caused him:

لا أَفْقَدَ اللهُ سمعي غيرَ صحتِّه

فكم أحالتْ أسىَّ في نفسي الأُنْسا

May God rid my hearing of its health

For these men have caused me so much sorrow

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 446)

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Kerosene sellers' bells	Deadly clamour	Rage towards change

Canned Food Sign: Ethical Shock

In 1962, a year before his death, al-Shabīb criticises the municipality with harsh words and demands canned food be banned as they did not show a date of production. Before the discovery of canned food, Kuwaitis had never had this type of food as it was imported, hence considered a repercussion of the oil age. al-Shabīb writes:

فلم يُصدروهُ للزّبون مُؤَرَّخًا

وإنْ جَرَّ إهمالُ التواريخِ ما جرّا

يشاؤونَ من مال الزّبونِ تَوَفُّرًا

لربحٍ وإنْ حازوهُ من عمرِهِ خُسْرا

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 404)

They did not disseminate it among clients dated

With all the woes that forgetting of dates has caused

They seek only to profit from clients' money

To accumulate wealth at the expense of their health

The last verse, above, reflects tradesmen's greed and giving money as being more important than people's health. This embodies social criticism of Kuwaiti's elite tradesmen after the ushering of the oil age. He says of their demeanour:

إذا لم يكن هذا الغِشُّ مُرْدِيًا

فلا عِلْمَ لي بالغِشِّ يُرْوى و لا خُبْرا

If such cheating is not caught red-handed

It is brushed away and none hear of it

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 405)

Despite not having complete oil-age specificity, the swift emergence of canned food in Kuwait was directly connected to the fast economic leap due to the discovery of oil. Canned food became a widespread and noticeable phenomenon and was widely discussed by writers. In the eyes of the public though, and to the al-Shabīb, it was a facet of dubious food change.

Signifier	Signified	Semiotics
Canned food cheating	Food renewal & moral change	Suspicion and discontent

This axis encompassed as many poetic attestations on the dawning of the oil age in Kuwait to identify al-Shabīb's psychological outlooks towards that age's icons. It also meant to deduce the stance of the seasoned blind poet towards the oil age and its novelties. The result was that al-Shabīb wished to fulfil, at the onset of that era, all which he had toiled towards achieving throughout his life. However, the age did not usher in any aid for the poet that would allow him to exit his state of suffering. On the contrary, it only made him more destitute, unemployed, struck by electricity, fearful of means of transportation, annoyed by kerosene sellers' bells and suspicious of new food supplies. The dawn of the new age extinguished his hopes and trampled on his aspirations. It represented a cultural-civic crisis for him that cemented the last angle of his trauma triangle, i.e. poverty, blindness and oil.

It becomes evident after reviewing the third axis of this chapter that al-Shabīb had attempted to keep at pace with Kuwaiti Renaissance since its dawn and even sought to ride the wave of growth. Nevertheless, like his fellow poor men, and particularly the blind, he did not gain anything from it despite his patience, determination and protesting. Najmah Idrīs (2012) dubbed this, 'addictive complaining', yet I call it 'protesting greed' as al-Shabīb spoke to his eyes and said:

<div dir="rtl">

فَسَكْبُكُما دموعُكما احتجاجٌ

وقد يحتجُّ بالدمْعِ الفقيرُ

</div>

Your shedding of tears in protest

Shall not sway any as you are poor

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 348)

However, a poor man like him has no saviour in life as he parted it poor, alone, destitute and let down yet leaving behind a literary inheritance rich with values.

We conclude this section with the question stated in its introduction by Najmah Idrīs on the value of al-Shabīb's experience and the worthiness of recalling it. This chapter's three axes concluded that al-Shabīb's poetic experience embodies a double value: one of documenting Kuwaiti ecology in both pre- and post-oil eras and an artistic value of sensory imagery drawn from Kuwait's multifaceted environment.

Reduction and posturing are among the most dangerous methods of analysis in humanities, such as literature and the like. This is because superficial diagnosis of a literary phenomenon has always led to inequitable judgments and inaccurate results. Perhaps Idrīs's reduction of al-Shabīb's suffering with family and adversaries was the reason for her harsh judgment of his poetic experience, and which led to her lack of fairness in pronouncing her critical judgment – akin to sentencing that experience to death – and hastily closed behind her the door to open-ended questions.

Idrīs attributed al-Shabīb's suffering, misery, isolation, addictive complaining, being at odds with life, desire to die and social and poetic suicide to two partial reasons or secondary factors while neglecting other more important ones like the crises of poverty, blindness and the oil shock. She then based her opinion on that reduction and was excessive in her judgement until the poet was rendered lacking the power and strength in facing life's hardships. It is as if life did not grind him down, but rather merely brushed

against him, and accordingly, he began complaining to his Kuwaiti surroundings, became a hermit and died meaninglessly. When revisiting al-Shabīb's Dīwān, we find it bleeding with all forms of suffering, and marred with all forms of arbitrary measures, social bullying and administrative sadism perpetrated against him due to his poverty and blindness.

The truth is that al-Shabīb went through hail and high waters since his youth due to being poor and blind, but his high ambition and perseverance swayed him from succumbing and surrendering. He sought education in *al-Aḥsāʾ*, then returned to Kuwait, mingled with scholars and elite members of society, and earned their appreciation. Then when the age of development dawned, his only request was to spend his last days in dignity and therefore requested employment to partake in Kuwait's development and achieve for himself the social justice achieved by others with lower qualifications. While their methods were morally wrong, his methods were of science, determination and perseverance. His efforts failed, and he grew disappointed as the new age was no less harsh than its predecessor. He ushered in the new age with the shock of the rejection of his application for employment, in addition to other compounding ones, so he chose to isolate himself from people, and urged death to befall him after having been let down by his people's free men:

<div dir="rtl">

ولمّا لم أجد في الناس حُرًّا

يُعينُ على مُلِمّاتِ الأمورِ

نَبَذْتُ الناسَ ظهريًّا ورائي

ونادَيْتُ المَنونَ ألا فزوري

</div>

When I did not find among people a free man

Who would aid me with hardships that befell me

I cast all people behind my back

And called on death to visit me

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 395)

Ṣaqr al-Shabīb followed the example of Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, wishing that death pay him a visit when he said:

<div dir="rtl">

فيا موت زُرْ! إنّ الحياةَ ذميمةٌ

</div>

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وِيا نفْسُ جِدّي! إنّ دهركِ هازلُ

O death pay me a visit for life is horrid

O soul toil hard for this life is but a joke

(al-Maʿarrī, 1957, p. 195)

Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d. 354 H/ 965AD) had also wished for the same before they did:

كفى بك داءً أنْ ترى الموتَ شافِيا

وحَسْبُ المنايا أنْ يَكُنّ أمانيا

Death shall cure the greatest of diseases

And wishing for death is the biggest of hopes

(al-Barqūqī, 1986, p. 418)

Death is probably the wish of geniuses when they cannot attain their rights or when marginalised in their communities. It is their saviour from a reality filled with misery, disappointment and injustice. al-Shabīb's wish was granted as he died in August 1963.

When closely examining his writings, the reader appreciates that al-Shabīb's poetic experience was a real one, for his writings may seem simple, but are complex. His works also deserve to be revisited as they are unique in the Kuwaiti literary scene, in addition to being rich and varied. This is why this chapter aimed to delve into his poetic experience, examine his brilliance in poetic imagery and document Kuwait's pre- and post-oil eras.

The most important aspect of the study in Axis I was concluding that al-Shabīb's suffering took different forms and had varied tiers – foremost of which were those of poverty and blindness. He had employed his poetic gift as a means for earning sustenance and was no longer embarrassed to express being poor and blind. With wealth limited to a few elite members of society in the pre-oil era, al-Shabīb's psychological suffering and financial need took a toll on him but were the catalyst for his poetic brilliance. Nevertheless, it was his blindness that was the more significant catalyst for creating artistic imagery that rivalled his able-seeing peers.

Axis II concluded that al-Shabīb drew his artistic imagery – urban, marine, desert – from his own Kuwaiti environment before the country's discovery of oil. He was also

brilliant in employing all relevant icons thereof in line with his psychological state. Urban and marine environments were shyly mentioned in his poetry on the artistic level despite having lived in an urban community close to the sea. However, it was the desert environment that had the lion's share in his poetry. On the spatial level, the poet lived in an urban community with marine surroundings, but on the cultural level, the desert played the most substantial role in his poetry in both wording and imagery for it was his greatest source for suggestion and inspiration on the artistic level and a haven from the city's noises on the psychological level.

Axis II also recorded al-Shabīb's overstatement in employing desert animals and plants, but this reflects an underlying escape from his narrow reality towards a vaster world in his imagination. Associating himself with a falcon reflects cultural belonging to the desert environment, which contrasts with the complaining and dissatisfaction connected to his urban one despite his spatial belonging to the latter. The essence of the desert to al-Shabīb was the attainment of happiness, tranquillity and love of life, which offered him an underlying means of escape and salvation from the stifling city and its markets, and was a symbol of what he was missing in his miserable urban reality.

It is evident how Ṣaqr al-Shabīb's poetic experience played an essential role in documenting Kuwait's pre-oil era, like when speaking of al-Ṣifāt Market, the art of al-ʿArḍah dance and the names and shapes of desert animals, plants and sometimes even the locations of their natural habitat. These were all employed within purely sensory imagery that reflected the influence of his blindness, like when he likened his wife's hair to the thorny al-Siyaal plant, which he was able to feel through touch when blind.

Axis III critically analysed the poetic text and showed that al-Shabīb had a nationalistic inclination and was keen on contributing to the growth phase of Kuwait's early renaissance prior to the country's discovery of oil. With the winds of progressiveness emerging in Kuwait at the time, al-Shabīb found his calling in education and applied for the post of a teacher at al-Mubārakiyyah school in the hope of exiting poverty.

Nevertheless, the new age embarked on undermining al-Shabīb's professional drive and exposed him to a psychological trauma caused by his society when he was denied employment in the profession he had sought. This compounded his suffering and

prolonged it; it pulled him back and once again, he found himself marginalised, eliminated and in poverty. The poet had become certain that a poor man of his kind, particularly if blind, held no importance in this modern society.

The poet confined his poverty and blindness crises to the local level but escalated the refusal to hire him on the regional level. This escalation reflects the great level of psychological trauma the blind poet felt with the setting of the desert age and the rise of change. But alas, even complaining at the regional level was no more fruitful than on the national one!

The semiotic analysis of the poetry shows al-Shabīb's loyalty to the desert culture through clinging onto its icons and his innocence of the new age culture due to the series of traumas it caused him, i.e. both frustrating and causing him to cry, disturbing his sanity, and highlighting his inability to cope with the new changes or even to embrace them.

Having had his life torn apart by the two 'impairments' of blindness and poverty, the oil age came along to cause his third trauma. When electricity replaced the sun, he was fearful of it; when the car replaced the donkey, it terrified him; and when kerosene replaced natural oils, he was bothered and concerned.

The most prominent fruit of applying semiotics to al-Shabīb's poetry was identifying Kuwait's pre- and post-oil eras' phases. This is in addition to discovering their effect on the creation of poetic imagery at the artistic level in the blind man's poetry.

al-Shabīb's poetic experience is most undoubtedly rife with suffering, filled with insight and forms a fertile ground for studying. Nevertheless, there remain dark spots that await enlightenment in the hope that critics would dare to approach and uncover them. If so done, it will reveal their value and enrich the critical space in Kuwait in particular and in the Gulf in general – especially with the presence of many blind poets in the Gulf region in modern times, who have enriched the region's literary lore, but who have not received their fair share of interest.

Section 3: Post-Oil Era

In Section 2, We showed how blind poet, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, ushered in the onset of the oil era in Kuwait and explained the unspoken trauma he suffered since the early

processes of modernisation up until the discovery of oil in Kuwait. Although the poet's writings clearly portray his trauma, its effects seemed minimal and were not fully visible. This is because he died in 1963 just as the practical transformation in Kuwait had begun. Therefore, he was able to provide an image of the oil era's dawn but was unable to show the massive changes that subsequently occurred.

Section 3 is a continuation of Section 2 as it attempts to show the effects of trauma that blind Gulf poets suffered due to the accelerated changes (modernity and modernisation) after the discovery of oil. Hence, this chapter will discuss the influence of the oil age trauma on another renowned Gulf poet from Saudi Arabia – Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Ḥusayn, also known as Ibn Ḥusayn.

As the impact of trauma takes a while to manifest, its consequences may be more apparent through shedding light on Ibn Ḥusayn's poetic experience. His seasoned civic experience was due to having witnessed two varied eras during his life, which spanned from 1931 to 2014, rendering this the best example of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The importance of adopting trauma theory here is to explain that which had befallen Ibn Ḥusayn due to traumatic events, and the impact thereof on his mind-set. We can analyse these traumatic events through careful historical probing within a specific timeframe and a controlled and restricted semiotic procedure which would grant the poetic text massive capability of picturing the dawn of the oil era as well as the post-oil era.

This section is divided into three axes. The first discusses the positive psychological stance of Ibn Ḥusayn on the transformation associated with the oil era. The second focuses on the psychological trauma suffered by the poet due to the rapid transformation and sudden changes upon the discovery of oil, and the third demonstrates the symptoms of that trauma.

Axis I: The Positive Psychological Stance on Oil Era

One must first note the importance of understanding the context of events as this shall assist in reading the different junctures in the blind poet's life as the Gulf society ushered in the oil era. It is probably unfair to say that the many changes and speedy

transformations after the discovery of oil were generally more negative than positive on blind poets from Arab Gulf Countries. This is because economic, urban and educational prosperity would not have occurred so rapidly in the Gulf area had oil not been discovered there.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia entered a new phase of stability during the late reign of King ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd (1876–1953), founder of the third Saudi State, and began achieving advancement and prosperity, particularly following the discovery of oil. However, al-Rasheed (2013, p. 77) states: "The state's education narrative highlights the role of two kings, Saud (r. 1952-64) and Faisal (r. 1964-75), with the latter assuming all the credit for a revolutionary step in a conservative society".

According to al-Rasheed (2013, p. 89), Saudi Arabia created a Ministry of Education in 1954, headed by Prince Fahad, but it was not concerned with the education of Girls. In 1960, Girl's schools were introduced. This statement emphasises the importance of the role played by substantial oil revenues in Saudi Arabia's educational transformation, leading to a gradual educational transformation during the reign of King ʿAbdulʿazīz and his sons after him.

In line with that stated above, Ibn Ḥusayn witnessed the educational transformation since its first days and throughout his long life. In his panegyric poem, *Qaṣīdat al-Iftitāḥ* (The Opening Poem), Ibn Ḥusayn praises King Suʿūd Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd (1953–1963) on the occasion of inaugurating the general headquarters of colleges and institutes building in 1958:

<div dir="rtl">

سعود يا فرحةً للشعب غامرةً

رَقْتْ فخَفَّتْ لمجراها الزغاريدُ

بنيتَ للعلم دارًا زان ساحتها

قدومك اليوم فهو الأنسُ والعيدُ

</div>

O' Saud, what happiness you are to your people

That they usher your passage with happy songs

For you have established institutes of knowledge

And your presence today is the happiest of occasions

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 570)

In another poem, Ibn Ḥusayn celebrates the (grand) transformation during the reign of King Fayṣal Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd (1964–1975) – grand, as it was complex, compounded and had many political, economic, educational and industrial facets. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

<div dir="rtl">

هيّا املأ السّمعَ إنشادًا وتغريدا

واسمع الكونَ تسبيحًا وتحميدا

وباركْ النهضةَ الكبرى يوجّهها

ربُّ السياسةِ إنفاذًا وتسديدا

</div>

Go on and fill the masses with poetry and song

And echo in the universe gratitude to the Lord

And bless the grand transformation led by him

The lord of politics in application and direction

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 570)

Then the poet praises the educational transformation accompanying the reign of King Fahd Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd (1982–2005):

<div dir="rtl">

يا رائد العلم، والأعلامُ خافقةٌ

بالنصر تروي أفانينَ البطولاتِ

</div>

O' you pioneer of education as the flags flutter

With victory they tell the grandest of heroics

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 566)

On another occasion, Ibn Ḥusayn feels pride when Saudi Regent to the throne at the time, Prince ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd, praises scholars. This occurred in 2001 when Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Ḥarīrī visited Riyadh on the occasion of Eid al-Fiṭr. The prince took Ibn Ḥusayn by the hand and said to al-Hariri, 'This is a scholar and a poet' (Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p.587). As a result, Ibn Ḥusayn wrote a poem to express his joy:

<div dir="rtl">

إذا صافحتْ يُمنايَ يُمناهُ رفرفتْ

تفاريحُ يوم العيدِ في مجلسِ الحُرِّ

</div>

يُمَجِّدُني والمجدُ ملءُ إهابِهِ

ويَذْكُرُني بِالعِلمِ والفِكرِ والشِّعرِ

When his right hand shook mine, it fluttered

During Eid Day's happy celebrations in his council

Praising me wide and long

For my knowledge, conscience and poetry

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 587)

In his 2002 poem *al-Dhikrā al-ʿIshrūn* (*The Twentieth Anniversary*) commemorating the Ascension of King Fahd as ruler, Ibn Ḥusayn celebrates the king's personal attention to developing education in the country:

عشرون عامًا وبلغت المزيد على

عرش البلاد تذود الهمَّ والكدرا

وكنتَ من قبلها للعلم رائده

ولم تزل رائد التعليمِ مصطبرا

Twenty years have passed with you on the throne

Defending against woe and anguish

You have also been a pioneer of education

And remain steadfast thereof and persistent

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 595)

Naturally speaking, the vast revenues due to the oil era brought prosperity and modernisations to many other facets of Saudi Arabian society as well. It was a reason for the emergence of many industries, and the poet praised the sons of King ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd due to harnessing such revenues towards the country's development:

قادوا البلاد إلى حيث اعتلت أممًا

رَكِبَ الحضارةِ تمدينًا بتطويرِ

عِلمٌ مُشاعٌ، وأمنٌ راسخٌ، وَجَدا

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رَبُّ العِبادِ ثراءً غيرَ محصورِ

نمّى الصناعات حتى نافست أممًا

سبّاقةً في مسارات المضاميرِ

They led the country towards prominence among nations

Leading all in modernisation and development

With reigning knowledge and stable security

And non-surmounted financial wealth

They developed industries that could compete with nations

That had a lead position in all fields

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 587)

In 2002, after the passing of a century since the conquest of Riyadh and establishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Ḥusayn composed a poem to commemorate the event and celebrated transforming the deserts into cities after years of being void of humans. They were so empty to the extent that *al-Ḥabab* (Ḥabārā birds) felt lonely nesting there. He writes:

فها هي اليومَ أحياءٌ مُمَدّنةٌ

كانت قِفارًا بها تستوحش الحَبَبُ

Behold today as they are modern districts

Formerly wastelands of lonesome Habaras

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 471)

This axis allows us to deduce that Ibn Ḥusayn had witnessed many phases of the modern transformation and found to his liking the civic progress of Saudi Arabia, in its broader concept, and praised its educational and industrial advancement due to the substantial financial revenues from the discovery of oil, in particular. Also to his liking was the modernising rebirth of desert wastelands. The next axis will seek to uncover his opposing stance toward this transformation.

Axis II: Trauma Due to the Oil Era

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and its aftermath – dubbed the Second Gulf War – are reflected in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry as events of political and economic magnitude which left a wedge in Arab unity. This invasion assisted in toppling the Arab Nationalist Project in which Ibn Ḥusayn so very often took pride, and which resulted in a sudden transformation of Arab identity and the establishment of a nationalistic Gulf one in its stead. As the attack on Kuwait was by an Arab neighbour, not an enemy supposedly, it caused a major psychological trauma for the poet that led him to renounce the idea of Arab nationalism in its totality.

Al-Rasheed (2010, p.158) argues that that the Gulf War was a major challenge that faced Saudis in the 1990s. "Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 proved to be problematic not only for the Kuwaitis but also for their Saudi neighbours. The war was an unprecedented event in that, for the first time, Saudi Arabia felt that it was under imminent threat of invasion by a neighbouring Arab state." (Al-Rasheed, 2010, p.158).

Ibn Ḥusayn composed *Saqaṭa al-Qināʿu* (The Mask has Fallen), which reflects his psychological trauma due to this event, and in it, he portrays ex-Iraqi president Ṣaddām Ḥusayn as a hypocrite and criminal after having been considered a brother and ally in pan-Arabism. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

سقط القناعُ عن الوجوه

الرّبْدِ فانكشف النفاق

وجلى رئيسُ عصابةٍ

الإجرامِ ما يُخفي الرفاق

نهبَ الكويتَ وجَرَّ

ألونَ الدمارِ على العراق

The mask has fallen off faces

Of liars and exposed their hypocrisy;

Showing the gang leader

And his criminality that was concealed;

164

Who plundered Kuwait and brought about

All sorts of destruction to Iraq.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 827)

In order to understand the relationship between the oil and trauma, one must equally understand the historical context of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as history confirms that oil was the main reason for it (Crystal, 1995, p. 173). Hence, this invasion was the main reason for dispersing Arab nationalism and causing discord among them. Al-Sanʿūsī (2010, p. 71), in his book entitled '*Al-Mawqif al-Nafsī li al-Adab al-Kuwaytī fī Fatrat al-Iḥtilāl wa al-Taḥrīr: al-Shiʿr Namūdhajan*' (The Psychological Trauma of Kuwaiti Literature During the Occupation and Liberation: Poetry as Example), the author argues that Iraq's greed in Kuwait's oil was the main reason for the invasion. He cites a poem from Kuwaiti poet Ghanīmah Zayd al-Ḥarb's Dīwān – born 1949 – entitled *Qaṣāʾid fī Qafaṣ al-Iḥtilāl* (Poems in the Cage of Occupation) whereby she says:

أخطؤوا الدرب المؤدي لفلسطين الجريحة

فضّلوا أن تصبح التي تحتضن

القرآن

والتاريخ

والأهل

ذبيحة!

فتعاليم الجوار

هكذا أوحت إليهم

حملتهم في سفين الجشع الممقوت

والحقد الدفين

إنه النفط اللعين

They mistook the path leading to wounded Palestine

And preferred that which embraced

The Quran

And history

And kin

To become a sacrificial animal!

This is what being neighbours

Deceived them to believe

And upon which they pursued despised greed

And instilled hatred;

It was the damned oil

(al-Ḥarb, n.d., pp. 14–15)

Reflecting this crime, Ibn Ḥusayn's poem entitled *Nākir al-Jamīl: Ṣaddām Ḥusayn* (The Ungrateful – Ṣaddām Ḥusayn) brands the deposed leader as the illegitimate child of Arab nationalism and strips him of all moral values of Arabs. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

أجل، نحن أبناء العروبة لم تلد

تتاريةٌ فينا لئيمًا فعائلُه

كمثلك مأفونٌ تدلّ فِعاله

على لؤمه في أصله ومخاولُه

Truly, we are the sons of Pan-Arabism which did not give birth

To one whose actions are so shameful;

One like you whose ill actions

Expose his meanness of roots and pride.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 856)

Ibn Ḥusayn then reprimands Ṣaddām Ḥusayn for betraying the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Kuwait in particular, after it had assisted him both financially and militarily during his war against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the First Gulf War (1980–1988):

أتهتكُ عرضًا صان عرضكَ عندما

دهتكَ من الخصم العنيدِ غوائله؟

وتزهق أرواحًا فدتكَ ولم تكن

<div dir="rtl">

كريمًا يُفدى لو درى مَن تقاتِله؟

وتنهبُ أموالًا حبوْك جليلَها

فقبحًا لما تأتي، وما أنت فاعلُه

</div>

How dare you aggress against an honour that protected your own

When your strong adversary almost overcame you?

And kill souls that took a bullet for you

When you proved not honourable for them to have sacrificed self for you?

And loot monies which had blinded you?

Despised be your intentions and actions.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 856)

Ibn Ḥusayn then speaks collectively on behalf of all Gulf citizens as if signalling the emergence of a new Gulf identity instead of the Arab one which Ṣaddām Ḥusayn had destroyed with the invasion. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

أجل، نحن من جادوا عليك وأجزلوا

ومسراكَ قد ضاقت عليك مداخله

وجئناك بالنصر المبينِ ولم تكن

بأهلٍ لما خلناكَ في الناسِ آهلُه

فضيّعتَه في لحظةٍ من سفاهةٍ

عليك بها الإخفاقُ تهوي معاولُه

جَنَيْتَ على دارٍ حبتكَ نعيمُها

وجارٍ حباكَ الخيرُ تحبو مطافلُه

ولكنه طبعُ اللئيم وخلّةٌ

تتاريةٌ فيها من الجَور طائله

إذا أنت أوليتَ الجميلَ لناكرٍ

فلا لومٌ إنْ رُدَّت عليك غوائلُه

</div>

Yes, we are the ones who were generous towards you

As your means of sustenance tightened and shrank;

167

We provided you with means of victory, but you were not

Worthy of that in which we entrusted you;

As you lost it in a moment of stupidity

And deserved the failings which your hands sowed;

You aggressed against a land that was generous to you

And a neighbour who wished you well and aided you;

But the traits of the traitor have surfaced

And have revealed all concealed ugliness;

When you rebuke those who have been kind to you

Do not blame any when your ill actions backfire.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 856)

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait also led to a diminishing of Arab nationalist poetry and flourishing of Saudi nationalist poetry instead. This was particularly evident when the Iraqi army attacked the Saudi city of al-Khafjī in 1990. Ibn Ḥusayn was psychologically traumatised by the incident, as well as Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's "slithering" and "treacherous" stance against his fellow Arabs as he "betrayed" all pacts of pan-Arabism based on brotherhood and loyalty. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

جارت ببغداد أرجاس الطواغيتِ

يقودها فاجرٌ من أرض تكريتِ

داس المواثيق حتى لم يدع دنسًا

إلا ارتداهُ، كذا فِعلُ الطواغيتِ

رمى بجاحِمٍ نار الغدر جارته

فأهلها بين تقتيلٍ وتشتيتِ

Demi-tyrants have taken reign of Baghdad

Led by an illegitimate man of Tikrit;

Who trampled on all pacts and wore all

Impurities, as have done all tyrants;

With raging fires of treachery, he flung at his neighbour

Rendering their kin either dead or destitute.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 235)

Elsewhere in the poem, Ibn Ḥusayn is cynical of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn yet is saddened by the lost Arab unity due to the latter's greed. He says:

غدا يُحاسبُ تاريخُ العروبةِ مَنْ

جنى عليهِ بتخريبٍ وتشتيتِ

The history of pan-Arabism has begun holding accountable

He who has caused it sabotage and dispersal.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 235)

Although some critics embarked on applying trauma theory to literary cases from the Gulf, such as al-Sanʿūsī's attempt in 2010 indicating a link between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the trauma Kuwaiti poets have suffered (al-Sanʿūsī, 2010, p. 55), this axis calls for shedding a bright light on psychoanalysis as psychological trauma does not end at these reasons only. In fact, trauma may expand and take on different and more varied forms due to a fast-paced cultural-civic transformation after the discovery of oil in Arab Gulf countries. This assumes that the transfer of Gulf society from the pre-oil to the post-oil era, at such an accelerated rate, has caused psychological trauma to some of its members and exerted upon them much pressure in undergoing testing experiences. Among those was the Saudi Ibn Ḥusayn.

In this attempt, the Axis claims that trauma theory may be developed through envisioning an unordinary reason which may probably be called *Trauma of the Modern Age and its Outcomes*.

The fast-paced urban modernisation in Arab Gulf countries in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, is deemed one of the most prominent forms of change accompanying the oil era. Accordingly, it is crucial to uncover Ibn Ḥusayn's stance on this process, which wiped out old buildings and built modern ones instead that corresponded to the new phase.

Regarding the Gulf area in general, al-Tamīmī (2018, p. 100) says that urbanisation was random and not well planned since the onset of the transformation period.

However, as regarding other facets, it had to go through such misdirection within a short period as the financing was available due to oil revenues.

Following the footsteps of al-Tamīmī, Ibn Ḥusayn – in his first Dīwān (Poetic Collection) published in 1988 and titled, *Aṣdāʾ wa Andāʾ* (Echoes and Dews) – denounces urbanisation after having heard that his hometown's mosque's minaret was to be torn down after having stood there since his forefathers erected it, and which was considered a wondrous work of art in beauty and height. When it was demolished, he said:

آباؤنا أودعوا فيها مهارتهم

يزهى بصنعهم ذوقٌ ومعمارُ

Our forefathers erected it with their skill

With craftsmanship and architectural wonder

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 37)

In the above verse, Ibn Ḥusayn expresses pride for the masonry skills of his forefathers. He then says:

هم شيّدوا في سبيل الله مئذنةً

بيضاء من حسنها الأبصار تحتارُ

They erected a minaret for God's sake

Of glorious white whose beauty bewilders beholders

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 37)

The above verse is the poet's reminiscing of the minaret's beauty that bewildered his eyes as a child before he had lost his eyesight. He speaks of its whiteness as a symbol of peace:

ملفوفةٌ مثل غصن البان سامقةً

لكن عليها رجال العصر قد جاروا

باتت ركامًا وكانوا في صنيعهم

كأنما حثهم في هدمها ثارُ

Strewn like a [*Bān*] tree and rising tall

Yet destroyed by the men of the new age

Rendering it a ruin by their hands

As if taking vengeance against its clay

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 37)

The above verse expresses the poet's grief towards tearing down the minaret and is akin to sobbing by ruins and elegising them as the familiar pattern of lamentation with classical Arab poets in pre-Islamic era. He adds:

ما ضرّ لو أنهم أبقوا على عَلَمٍ

فيه الفَخارُ ومنهُ الذِّكْرُ يشتارُ

It would have done no harm had they preserved a landmark

That evokes pride and the best of praise by many

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 37)

In the above verse, the poet's feelings of sorrow compound due to the tearing down of the mosque's minaret which, for him, was not just a structure but an icon of Islamic lore pride and a platform from which prayer was called, and God's Name praised. He says:

'اللّه أكبر'، كم أَسْرَتْ مُحبّبةً

منها فتصغي عشيّاتٌ وأبكارُ

Allāhu Akbar [God is Greatest] how many people has it captivated

The call of prayer that echoed from it day and night

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 37)

In the above verse, Ibn Ḥusayn utilises his hearing sense and draws an audio image that tantalises his immense audio senses when hearing the call for prayer emitting from the minaret day and night. He then says:

واليوم غابت فجاشت في أجنّتنا

من بعدها ورفاقِ الأربعِ النارُ

But today it has disappeared and evoked such sorrow in us

Filled with scorching pain within myself and my fellow neighbours

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News of destroying the mosque's minaret bore down heavily on the poet and caused him and his neighbourhood friends psychological trauma that ignited fires within their hearts, and all wept due to this calamity.

Ibn Ḥusayn also expressed a longing for past times in his last Dīwān entitled, *Hawāmish al-Dhāt* (*Margins of the Self*). In a poem titled, *Aṭlāl al-ʿAwdah* (*The Ruins of al-Awda*), the poet speaks of his sorrow for the once beautiful village of al-ʿAwdah where he was born and denounces the distortion caused to it due to urbanisation at the hands of modern age men whom he dubbed *al-ʿĀbith al-ʿĀdī* (aggressing anarchists):

<div dir="rtl">

باتت مدارجَ آبائي وأجدادي

أطلالَ ماضٍ، وكانت درّةَ الوادي

يا 'عودةَ' الخيرِ، يا مَهدَ الصِّبا لعِبَتْ

فيكِ الحوادثُ لَعِبَ العابثِ العادي

</div>

The pathways of my fathers and theirs before them

Have become ruins of a past though once jewels of the valley

O ʿAwdah of goodness, where I was raised

The misfortunes of men upon you have aggressed and corrupted

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 431)

He then blames men of the modern era, whom he likens to children, for their cruelty due to renouncing the past and aggressing on its lore. He addresses his village with the following:

<div dir="rtl">

لو أنّ أطلالَكِ الثكْلى تحدّثنا

لكان في نطقِها تقريعٌ لأولادِ

خَلْفَ تنكّرٍ للماضي وحُرْمتِهِ

وهدموا مَعْلَمًا يوحي بأمجادِ

منارةٌ زخرفتها كفُّ مبدعها

أبو محمدٍ تماميُّ أجوادِ

</div>

172

If only your saddened ruins could speak

They would utter scolding to these children

Who have forsaken the past and its sanctity

And destroyed a landmark that was a beacon of glory

A minaret crafted by the hands of an artist

Named Abū Muḥammad of good manners

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 431)

Ibn Ḥusayn then describes the minaret and its guiding value as it was a landmark that directed people to their destinations. He says:

هم شيّدوه فلم تبخل براعته

حتى بدت معلمًا يهدي لقُصّادِ

They built it with so much grace

Till it became a landmark and beacon for seekers

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 431)

Finally, he concludes the poem with his longing for the minaret after its destruction. He says:

واليومَ غابتْ، وما غابت ملامحها

من القلوبِ، وإنْ مَنِيَتْ بإفسادِ

Today it has ceased to exist, but its memory

Shall remain in hearts, even if having been corrupted

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 431)

The trauma of urbanisation that befell Ibn Ḥusayn due to tearing down the mosque's minaret allows us to deduct that he did not consider it a mere structure or building, but rather a four-dimensional icon. The first among these is a religious marker that foremost represents Islam; the second, a historical marker that carries with it past lore and the struggles of forefathers; the third, a social marker that represents the poet's childhood, memories and friends; and the fourth, a guidance marker that leads people.

Axis III: Trauma Symptoms

Since this chapter attempts to give evidence that Ibn Ḥusayn suffered psychological trauma due to the fast-paced urbanisation accompanying the oil era, and as it aims toward applying trauma theory on his poetic experience, it is crucial to discover the symptoms thereof and identify their psychological impact through a semiotic methodology based on the study of signs. Accordingly, trauma symptoms become signs that affirm having befallen the poet and prove the ability to apply the theory to Ibn Ḥusayn's experience.

Temporal Alienation

According to Baldick (2008, p. 340), trauma theory questions revolve around three main points: memory, forgetting and reciting a trauma's details. Discovering the impact of recalling trauma on Ibn Ḥusayn's memory is therefore very important.

It became evident when viewing Ibn Ḥusayn's two Dīwāns that his trauma due to the destruction of the minaret occupied much of his memory and continued to haunt him the older he became. It ignited his nostalgia for the past and infected him with it.

This nostalgia is perhaps what led him to visit the neighbourhood where he grew up long after men of the new age had destroyed it. Ibn Ḥusayn composed a poem that summarised his suffering in recollecting the areas where he lived as a child as having become void of yesterday's friends. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

يا أربع الخير أنتِ اليوم موحشةٌ

من كلّ أُنسِ أنيسٍ ما نسيناهُ

</div>

O the districts of goodness, you are now lonesome

Of all men who we have not forgotten as friends

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

He then confesses to his extreme longing by crying over losing those old neighbourhoods, with crying being a significant icon of loss and nostalgia. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

نبكي عليه إذا جدّ الحنين بنا

أوّاه لو لم نكن حزنًا بكيناه

</div>

174

We cry over it once our longing for it heightens

Alas, how we weep over it for having lost it

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

The poet then reveals the reason behind the visit and admits that longing and nostalgia were catalysts, in the hope he would meet up with his friends whom he always used see:

جئنا آلى الربع والأشواق تقدمنا

سعيًا إلى مجلسٍ كنا عمرناه

We come to see our friends with longing preceding us

Seeking a gathering we had once established together

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

He then expresses discomfort due to the demolishing of the minaret he had longed for:

حتى إذا ما استقر الخطو أزعجنا

أنّ الذي شاقنا حقًا فقدناه

دُكّت على رغم سحر الفن مئذنةٌ

ومنبرٌ طالما كنا علوناه

يا مسجدًا كان فيه الفن معجزةً

بناؤه أبدعت في الفن يمناه

When our footsteps settled, we were disturbed to realise

That that which we missed had actually disappeared

With artistry like magic a minaret had been

And a podium in a mosque we had ascended

Ode to a mosque in which art was a miracle

Of constructing it with awe and mastery abound

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

It is also worth pointing out that Ibn Ḥusayn's utilisation of synonyms for (destruction) like 'demolition', 'toppling' and others, reflects his psychological pains due to the doings

of modern-age men. It is also iconic of his tight clinging onto signs that symbolise a grand past and Islamic values (minaret, podium, mosque). He says:

<div dir="rtl">

هدّوه يبغون تجديدًا وما علموا

أنّ الخسارات في تهديم مبناه

</div>

They demolished it seeking modernisation

Not realising the losses this has incurred

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

Ibn Ḥusayn's objection is heightened in the verse above and expresses holding onto signs of the past and his rejection of those of renewal. He describes the process of modernisation as a loss, disregarding lore, renouncing the past and destroying the bridge of communication between pre- and post-oil era generations.

He then concludes the poem with a longing to see friends from the past:

<div dir="rtl">

أما رفاق الزمان البكر فانطفأت

أنوارهم، وانقضى عهدٌ صحبناه

</div>

As for companions of olden times

Their lights have dimmed and their time has passed

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 1988, p. 39)

The noteworthy point is that the minarets of mosques in the post-oil era have become symbols rather than realities; they have become signs of the past, symbols for memories and a source of inspiration for the poet.

Practising Commemoratory Resistance

The resistance of recalling past events is considered a facet of PTSD by psychologists. 'Individual acts of remembering or commemoration may serve state or community purposes or constitute acts of resistance' (Kirmayer, 2007, p. 296).

Both of Ibn Ḥusayn's Dīwāns contain scores of poems on topics of childhood memories and nostalgia for bygone days. His last Dīwān: *Hawāmish al-Dhāt* (Margins of the Self), published in 2008, includes a high number of poetic texts on his suffering with

memories of the past, the difficulty of recalling them and of ridding himself from thinking about them.

For example, in his poem *al-Saʾam min al-Dhitrayāt* (Tired of Memories), he begins with:

<div dir="rtl">

سئمتُ من ذكرياتٍ كلّما خطرت

رفّ الفؤاد كرفّات العصافير

</div>

I am tired of memories whenever they come

As my heart flutters like the wings of birds

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 142)

In the above verse, the poet expresses his suffering in surrendering to memories to the extent that he became fed-up with the suffering, and hence, embarked on resisting memories and revolting against them to expel them from his mind.

Ibn Ḥusayn then draws a poetic image that reflects the extent of his psychological pain whenever memories creep up again. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

إذا تذكّرتها جارت على كبدي

نارٌ كأنّ لظاها جَوْفُ تنّورِ

</div>

When remembering them, they weigh heavily on my chest

And fill me with a fire of scorching kiln-like temperatures

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 142)

Contrary to the previous trend of poems in which he expressed his suffering in remembering, to the extent that he began practising resistance thereof, we find other poetic texts by Ibn Ḥusayn in which he expresses his pleasure and enjoyment in recollecting those beautiful memories and his need to return to his days of youth and olden lifestyle.

In his poem titled, *Ṣadā al-Maḍī* (*Echo of the Past*), the poet begins by recalling the past and its memories and describes that life as one abundant with sparkling and shiny visions, particularly as he has become older and grey. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

أناجي مع الشيب المطهّر سالفًا

من العمر رفاف الرؤى أستثيرها

</div>

177

I yearn for a past age as my hair grows grey

Of glimmering visions it evokes within me

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 223)

The poet then expresses his enjoyment of the recollection process and the purity of remembering those events:

هي الذكريات البيض، ما أعذبَ الرؤى

إذا خطرت يُزكي الشعورُ خَطيرُها

They are the purest of memories, how sweet they be

When overcoming me as they tantalise my senses

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 223)

In the same poem, however, he reverts to weeping as the irresistible memories begin to flow. This occurred when recalling memories of good men and the elderly whom he always sat among as a child. He says:

إذا ما ادّكَرْتُ الصالحين ومعشرًا

صَحِبْتُ ومن لا يستقلّ عشيرها

وأشياخُ أيامٍ تمرّ بخاطري

كأروعِ ما يرويهِ منها مَديرُها

بكيتُ وقد أشجى الفؤاد إدّكارُهُ

وجدّت شجونٌ هالَ عقلي نفيرُها

Whenever I remember the good and hospitable

Who were the best of company and its most elite

As well as the elderly passing through my mind

Who were fascinating and most eloquent,

I weep with a heart filled with woe and a mind

Standing in attention for that past and its memories

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 223)

Caruth (1995) notes an important matter on the tricky connection between trauma and survival: 'For those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis' (p. 9).

In correlation with Caruth's opinion, Ibn Ḥusayn's overcoming of his trauma was merely a new involvement in it due to his forms of suffering from post-traumatic pressures like old memories, resisting memories and his failings therein in general.

Spatial Alienation

In his 1993 poem *al-ʿAwdah ilā Najd* (Returning to Najd), Ibn Ḥusayn is traumatised by the degree of urbanisation there after the discovery of oil to the extent that he feels like an alien in the modern Najd where he grew up and composed poems praising its natural beauty. He starts with:

<div dir="rtl">

هل هذه نجدٌ أم أطيافُ أحلامي؟

أم دوحةٌ في ذراها صُغْتُ أوهامي؟

</div>

Is this truly Najd or my ominous dreams?

Or an abode in whose grains I built my illusions?

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 538)

Then, in the end, he says:

<div dir="rtl">

غيداء لم تترك الأيام لي أمَلًا

أشدو له بعدما حطّمت أقلامي

</div>

Passing days have left me with no hope

To sing to it after having crushed my pens

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 538)

The poet had visions of its past beauty in his imagination, yet he denounces all changes that occurred there in later years. He felt the city changed so much that it became fake, and this caused him to feel like a stranger there and to cease from composing poetry praising its beauty.

Social Alienation

"Alienation is a relation of relationlessness" (Jaeggi, 2016, p. 1). In his poem *Yā ʿĪd* (O' Eid), Ibn Ḥusayn complains about the present and expresses his feelings of spatial and temporal alienation:

<div dir="rtl">

يا عيدُ لم يبقَ لي شيخٌ أنادمهُ

ولا صديقٌ صدوقٌ كي أناديهِ

فلا الزمان زمان الصالحين ولا

هذا المكان بناديهِ وواديهِ

</div>

O' Eid, no old man exists for me to listen to

Nor an honest friend to call upon

For this time is neither one of the righteous

Nor this place one of vastness and valleys

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 763)

Eid, from Ibn Ḥusayn's perspective, is different nowadays from its form in the past when it was an icon for social visits, but which has now become a symbol of loneliness, self-alienation, and internal division.

Practising Environmental Resistance

Al-Sayyid (2001) noted Ibn Ḥusayn's attention to the physical description of nature and explained it as 'a reaction to the sensory deficiency of his eyesight. It is as if he did not wish readers to know that he was blind, and hence amalgamated with the environment he had drawn' (p. 264).

Such an explanation would have probably been indisputable if the blind poet had contended with composing a poem or two to prove his high ability in sensory descriptions as compensation for the missing visual one. However, his insistence on describing nature through scores of poems unleashes other possibilities. Perhaps his unspoken trauma due to the fast-paced urbanisation after the discovery of oil led him to practise a type of environmental resistance and hence embarked on resisting the modern environment through clinging onto a natural and pure one.

As stated, Ibn Ḥusayn was born in 1931 in al-ʿAwdah village in the Sadīr region to the north of Riyadh (al-Haydari, 2007, p. 83). Al-ʿAwdah is renowned for its many valleys, such as one called al-Faqī, of which Ibn Ḥusayn writes:

فلي في هوى (وادي الفقي) ألف قصةٍ

ولي فيه أيامٌ أحاديثها رشدُ

In the love of al-Faqī Valley, I have a thousand stories

And in it, I have spent many days when young

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 781)

Nature is mirrored in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry as his entire being was connected to it. Images of nature are evident in his poetry to the extent that they formed signs expressing his solid connection to the pre-oil era's natural environment. In his poem titled Waḥy al-Kharīf (*Revelations of Autumn*), Ibn Ḥusayn says:

مضى زمن الأحباب والعيشةُ البِكْرُ

ونامتْ أحاديثُ الصِّبا والهوى الغِرُّ

وتاهت على هام الرُّبا خطواتنا

وجفَّ الغديرُ العَذْبُ فارتاعت الغَفْرُ

فلا الماءُ موجودٌ ولا العشبُ مورقٌ

فقد أجدبَ المرباعُ والأربُعُ الخُضْرُ

The times of loved ones and untainted life have disappeared

And the conversations of youth and adoration have slumbered

And on the pathways of hills, our footsteps are lost

And the creek's pure waters dried up and sand set in

For neither is there water nor greenery of plants

The area has gone barren as well as its green pastures

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 435)

Ibn Ḥusayn symbolises old times with signs of Spring that reflect life, and the modern era with signs of Autumn that represent death. These signs reflect the poet's strong connection with the natural environment, having employed all elements thereof in

describing his feelings concerning the changes that have befallen it due to the onset of the modern era.

Escape to the Desert

Many studies have noticed the phenomenon of modern Arab poets' escape to the desert. Among these studies is *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry*, by M. M. Badawī in 1975. In Chapter 3, Badawī concentrated on the escapist attitude of the Lebanese poet Khalīl Maṭrān (1872–1949) 'where the poet openly turns his back on civilization and seeks refuge in the desert away from the vices of the city and the world of men' (p. 74).

In line with the Badawī, many researchers have noted Gulf poets' connection with the desert, particularly those poets who lived in the post-oil era. Among the most prominent studies is *Thaqāfat al-Saḥrāʾ* (Culture of the Desert), by Dr Saʾad al-Baziʿī. Also, among the earliest attempts to cover this topic is *Al-Ḥarakah al-Shiʿriyyah fī al-Khalīj al-ʿArabī: al-Taqlīd wa al-Taṭawwur* (Poetic Movement in the Gulf between Tradition and Evolution), by Dr Nūriyyah al-Rūmī.

Al-Rūmī studied the works of Kuwaiti poet Aḥmad al-ʿAdwānī (1923–1990) who was born in the pre-oil era and died after having witnessed the most phases of the transformation after the discovery of oil. Al-Rūmī (1999, p. 378) noted an important point on the poet's sense of alienation in the modern life which led him to search for a utopia disconnected from new times, leading him to adopt a nomadic life as a symbol of escaping from the present.

That urbanisation trauma which had befallen able-sighted poet Aḥmad al-ʿAdwānī may just as well be the same that traumatised blind Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn. This qualified them to be partners in alienation and with the inability to cope and adapt to the new occurrences of the oil era. Both of them utilised the desert as an icon for escaping desolate modern times towards a better utopia.

Ibn Ḥusayn's poem *al-Nakhlah* (*Palm Tree*) expresses his internal connection with the desert environment's most iconic marker – the palm tree. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

ولي نخلةٌ يغفو على متنها الحبُّ

وتسبحُ روحي حينما تسبحُ العَسْبُ

</div>

I have a palm tree on which love falls asleep

And where my soul floats when its branches sway

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 419)

He then expresses his longing for olden memories and draws an audio image that reflects his adoration of the palm tree's beauty and its hissing sound. This audio image also reflects the impact of blindness on his poetry:

وتشعل شوقي كلّما داعب الصّبا

صِباها فيغريني حفيفٌ بها عَذْبُ

It ignites my longing whenever its youthful branches move

And I am enticed by its hissing that is all so sweet

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 419)

The palm tree, to Ibn Ḥusayn, was also a symbol for memories that modern-age men could not remove from his memory.

The camel was also an icon of the desert environment's signs that existed in al-ʿAwdah village. At the beginning of his poem al-ʿAwdah, Ibn Ḥusayn writes:

يُعاودني من 'عودة الخير' هاجسٌ

يذكّرني عهدًا بها كان أطيبا

I am overcome by a notion from good old al-ʿAwdah

Which reminds me of times when it was all more appealing

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 483)

He then describes the audio communication between shepherds and camels, as he still remembered those sounds; he feels unease and says:

وصوتُ حُداةِ العِيسِ يروي حكايةً

تردّدَ في صدرٍ من الهمّ أكربا

يُحدّثُها عيسٌ تُشاطِره الجوى

إذا انحدرت أو أُصْعِدَت تُشبهُ الظّبا

And the sounds of shepherds to camels tell such stories

That echo is a chest weighed down with sorrows

Sung by herder to a camel yearning for his voice and responding

By moving up or hurrying down like a gazelle with fast paces

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 483)

The essence of the dialogue scene between a shepherd and a camel is in its simplicity and purity. It reflects the strong bond, understanding and communication between Man and the desert environment, and reflects Ibn Ḥusayn's longing for that olden age of equal simplicity and purity. Hence, it led to a metaphorical escape from the dreary realities of modern life, and a reunion with desert's signs such as palms and camels.

The critical outcome that this axis can deduct from the multitude of desert icons in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry is that his feeling of alienation in the oil age led him, unwillingly, towards two matters: first, favouring the past over the present, and second, searching for a different utopia that is disconnected from modern-day life, simplistic, and void of modern complications and dishonesty.

Chapter 4 arrives at important conclusions after having traced the impact of the natural environment on Gulf poets' works from three temporal context sections. Section 1 concludes that the lack of eyesight did not prevent Omani poet al-Sālimī, as representative of the pre-oil era, from interacting with his natural environment and that he had utilised the civic, marine, mountainous and desert environments as sources for his poetic imagery. Yet it was the desert environment that most stirred his poetic inspiration – probably due to having travelled extensively in pursuit of knowledge and to encourage people to resist occupation. Thus, the desert environment comprising of all its phenomena, fauna and flora was visibly identifiable throughout al-Sālimī's works.

Section 2 concludes that the two traumas of blindness and poverty were the most notable in Kuwaiti blind poet al-Shabīb's varied facets of suffering. Having lived through the pre-oil and the onset of oil eras, and despite having been poor and blind since a young age till his death, al-Shabīb was still capable of sensory communication and interaction with his natural environment – civic, marine and desert – and created exquisite poetic imagery drawn therefrom.

As with al-Sālimī, Chapter 4 arrives at the notion that the desert culture dominated al-Shabīb's poetic imagery which reflects his harmony and familiarity with the desert,

being the safe harbour from the city's bustle and the sea's treachery. Yet at the dawn of the oil age with the inauguration of rapid modernisation processes in Kuwait, this dissertation concludes that al-Shabīb was subjected to psychological trauma and disappointment from the start due to being refused a teaching post for merely being blind and poor. As the oil age reigned in and processes of modernisation erupted throughout Kuwait, it became clear that stripping the pre-oil environment from its simplicity and nature, as a prelude for establishing the modern one, created a new level of trauma for al-Shabīb and produced a culture unfamiliar to him. This change led to the poet's constant feeling of insecurity and lack of a safety net, and compounded his feelings of despair, fear, alienation, isolation and the wish to die.

Section 3 concludes that Ibn Ḥusayn's long life bore witness to two crucial phases in the history of the Gulf region: pre-oil and post-oil eras. His poetic ability played a prominent role in picturing and documenting those two phases despite being blind. Ibn Ḥusayn held two stances on the modernisation processes accompanying the oil age in Kuwait: First, as a proponent of modernising education and industrial and desert environments, and second, as an opponent of modernisation in two facets: oil and rushed modernisation. Ibn Husayn opposed the notion of "oil" because he had been traumatised by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait where oil was the premise thereof. As for opposing modernisation in its urbanisation form, it demolished old structures which Ibn Husayn had dearly held onto – a matter that caused him psychological trauma. Ibn Ḥusayn felt that old buildings and structures held religious, historical, social and directional symbols that should have been preserved.

Section 3 uncovers poetic literature that expresses signs of the unspoken trauma Ibn Ḥusayn suffered. These signs were reflected in his clinging onto the past, nature and the desert, his spatial and temporal alienation in the then modern era, and his inability to cope with the advents of that new age. Accordingly, the current study's assumption has been proven correct, that is, the ability to apply trauma theory on the poetic experience of Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn.

Chapter 4: Influence of Oil in the Poetic Style and Content

As mentioned earlier, among the most famous attempts that characterised the history of the poetic movement in the Gulf region and categorised it into poetic trends were the studies of al-Rūmī (1999), Michalak-Pikulska (2000) and Bū Shaʿīr (1997). Studies that catered to tracing the history of the Gulf region were few, probably as the term 'Arab Gulf Poetry' is deemed more a modern one in comparison to poetry in other Arab areas like Egypt and the al-Shām region.

Nevertheless, despite the scarcity of these studies, historians of the poetic movement in the Arab Gulf area disagreed on the classification of poetic trends due to two main reasons mentioned by Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 145). First, there is a problem in identifying literary or poetic eras as they intertwine, cannot be conclusively divided or face difficulty in identifying the specific year as the one when a literary or poetic era ends and the next begins. Second, the difficulty is not merely temporal, but also spatial regarding the geographical location in which any poetic era occurred.

This issue was also raised by Ṭāhā Ḥusayn when discussing methodologies for determining the history of Arab literature in the introduction of his book on *Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī* (Literary Criticism on Pre-Islamic Poetry). He argues that literature was not flourishing in Baghdad when it was in Cairo and Cordoba. Conversely, it was not flourishing in Cairo, Cordoba or Aleppo when it was in Baghdad and Damascus. It also was not flourishing in Damascus when it was so in Mecca and Medina, nor in Baghdad when it was so in al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah (Hussein, 1973, p. 44).

However, according to al-Rūmī (1999, p. 11), Gulf history can be simply divided into two distinct phases: pre- and post-oil discovery. Despite comprising of many countries, al-Rūmī argues that the Gulf region is made up of one geographic, religious and historical extension that has witnessed similar cultural, social and civic trends. Thus, the researcher considers the area one due to such proximity and conditions among its countries.

Accordingly, this chapter will attempt to adopt a tri-division of poetic trends that was utilised by Ārmin (n. d.) and which he applied to Kuwaiti literature. The division is based on the discovery of oil where his study divided his choice of poets into three

generations, i.e. pre-oil poets, seasoned poets (born before the discovery of oil and witnessed its beginning) and post-oil poets. This chapter aims towards adopting the aforementioned divisions and applying these to blind Arab Gulf poets starting with the pre-oil era represented through the works of Omani poet Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (1867–1914).

Section 1: Pre-oil Era

This section aims at unveiling the features of the prevalent poetic style before the discovery of oil by focusing on the works of al-Sālimī from three main pillars: Al-Sālimī's poetic language, rhythm and rhyme, and poetic content (the poetic purposes and topics covered by the blind poet during that period). Section 2 will then clarify the reflection of oil emergence on the poetic scene in Arab Gulf countries. The following section aims to detect change and renewal markers in the region's poetry in both form and content as the age of the desert set, and the oil age began. That section will be represented through another blind Gulf poet: Kuwaiti Ṣaqr al-Shabīb. At the moment, section 1 will be a pre-test on the development of the prevalent poetic pattern in Arab Gulf Countries.

Poetic Style

Arabic poetry, from the old pre-Islamic to the modern one, has undergone many developments. In line with those developments, researchers on poetry continue to trace the forms of such transformations and detect the factors which aided this poetry's development in both form and content.

Michalak-Pikulska (2002, p. 24) argues that Arabic poetry, according to the views of Arab critics and classical philologists, for example, Abū ʿUthmān Ibn Baḥr al-Jaḥiẓ (775–869), is an art that was born relatively early, while the first of its creators who opened up the route for future development to other poets were Imruʾ al-Qays (died circa 540) and Muhalhil Ibn Rabīʿah (died circa 531) in the pre-Islamic period.

It becomes evident when shedding light on the poetic movement in the Gulf that it has equally witnessed many developments from pre-oil times to date. In the former, many poets belong to the Revival School which called on the revival of the classical Arabic

form of poetic language instead of the colloquial (*al-Lahjah al-ʿĀmmiyyah*) which was prevalent there at the time.

Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 157) argues that the most prominent poets of that School were Kuwaiti ʿAbdul-Jalīl al-Ṭabṭabāʾī (1776–1853), Qatari Mājid Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Khulayfī (1873–1907), and Saudi Moḥammad Ibn ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿUthaymīn (1854–1944), among others. These and other poets contributed to instilling classical Arabic poetry, called for the return of Arabic poems' traditional format, abiding by poetic columns and reviving old Arab terms, traditional topics and poetic trends like lamenting the past.

This section focuses on al-Sālimī's poetic style, as he is representative of the pre-oil era, to detect the poetic school to which he belongs. Muḥsin al-Kindī, while presenting poetic trends in his study entitled, *Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir fī Salṭanat ʿUmān* (Contemporary Arabic Poetry in Oman), classified Nur al-Dīn al-Sālimī as a traditional poet. In explaining traditional poetry as a term and identifying its dimensions, al-Shāyib (1991, p. 80) considers it to be of three key dimensions: poetic language's vocabulary and structures, rhythm and ending rhyme, and poetic content. This section shall test these three points to identify the poetic trend prevalent in the Gulf's pre-oil era.

Poetic Language

Al-Sālimī's poetic language is predominately traditional and reminiscent of old Arabic poetry. It was influenced by the Qur'an, *Ḥadīth* and classical Arabic poetry (al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 236). The Qur'an influenced al-Sālimī as he was also a jurist of jurisprudence and Islamic sciences; thus, much of his poetry influenced accordingly. For example:

إنْ جاء نصرُ اللهِ والفَتْحُ

وبَطَلَ التدليسُ والشَّطْحُ

If victory and conquest from Allah come forth

And no longer is there lying and overstating

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 85)

The Arabic rendition of the first line, above, is identical to Verse 11 of *Surat al-Naṣr* in the Quran.

{إذا جاء نصرُ الله والفتح}

{If victory and conquest from Allah come forth}

As for his poetry being influenced by the Ḥadīth, as al-Sālimī emphasises, the following is an example:

وإنّ جِنانَ الخُلدِ حُفّت بمُكرَهِ النفوسِ

ودونَ الخيرِ تبدو مناقبُه

The path towards Paradise is paved with that which one hates

And the wrongs of no goodness are hence exposed

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 240)

Here, al-Sālimī's poetic text is a product of intertextuality with the Prophet's Ḥadīth:

الجنةُ حُفّت بالمكاره، والنار حُفّت بالشهوات

The way towards Heaven is paved with hatreds, while that towards hell is paved with lusts

(al-Nisābūrī, 1991, p. 384)

Additionally, al-Sulaymānī (2009, p. 240) notes the influence of old Arab poets like ʿAntarah Ibn Shaddād, Ḥassān Ibn Thābit and al-Mutanabbī on al-Sālimī. The following two points are examples thereof:

خلِّ عن ذكرى حبيبٍ واللوى

واطلبِ المجدَ بما الكفُّ حوى

Let the painful memory of a loved one pass

And seek glory with what your hand possesses

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 104)

The above verse is influenced by the *Jāhilī* poem of Imruʾ al-Qays in whose beginning he writes:

قفا نبكِ من ذكرى حبيبٍ ومنزلِ

بسقْطِ اللوى بين الدّخولِ فَحَوْمَلِ

190

Stand up you two and assist me in elegising my loved one

Where desert sands settle between al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal

(Abdulshafi, 2004, p. 110)

And in:

فَخَلِّ التوانيَ وقُمْ للعُلا

بقلبٍ مُنيبٍ وَدَعْ مَنْ قسا

Leave behind hesitation and rise to glory

With a regretful heart bidding farewell to another

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 127)

Al-Mutanabbī's verse influences the above:

إلى كم ذا التخلّف والتواني

وكم هذا التمادي في التمادي؟

Till when will this backwardness and reluctance continue

And till when with this elongating of all such callousness?

(al-Barqūqī, 1986, p. 77)

Accordingly, al-Kindī and al-Sulaymānī classify al-Sālimī's poetic style as following the Classical School. It is also most probably the same conclusion which al-Rūmī reached (1999, p. 38) when she recorded the influence on Gulf poets who lived in the same timeframe as al-Sālimī. Al-Rūmī focused on Saudi poet Ibn ʿUthaymīn and similarly noted the influence of pre-Islamic poetry style and language on his works.

Rhythm and Rhyme

Poetic vocabulary is not the only marker identifying al-Sālimī's works as classical as there exist others. Poetic rhythms and rhymes are also traditional in accordance with the period in which he lived. Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 157) states that Gulf poets in the pre-oil era preserved the columned or vertical poetry, which is called al-Shiʿr al-ʿAmūdī in Arabic. The same was noted by Michalak-Pikulska (2000, p. 170) in her study of the

poetic movement in Kuwait, *Preserving the Classical Rhythms and the Single Rhyme Principles*.

According to Prosody, Arabic poetry consists of 16 key metres, rhymes or styles, such as *al-Ṭawīl*, *al-Baṣīṭ*, *al-Wāfir*, *al-Khafīf*, *al-Sarīʿ*, *al-Hazaj*, *al-Mujtath* and *al-Raml*, (al-Shāyib, 1991, p. 65). The unity of rhythm and rhyme among all verses were markers of old Arabic poetry where each poem adhered to the same style of verses therein (al-Shāyib, 1991, p. 65).

Generally speaking, al-Sālimī's poetry does not deviate from the column format of a single rhythm and rhyme. He composed much poetry in all poetic metres thereof such as in that of al-Wāfir metre:

<div dir="rtl">

مقامٌ في القصورِ على قُصورِ

مقامٌ مثل ربّاتِ الخدورِ

</div>

An abode in palaces of shortcomings

Like housewives tending to their chores

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 63)

According to al-Baṣīṭ metre, he wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

هوّن عليك فإنّ الرزق مقسومُ

والعُمرُ في اللّوحِ محدودٌ ومعلومُ

</div>

Do not toil so much for sustenance is destined

And age on the Chart is limited and predestined

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 68)

According to al-Kāmil metre, he wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

مُتْ بالعُلا إنْ شئتَ أنْ تحيا بها

إنّ الحياةَ هُناك عينُ فِناءِ

</div>

Die with your head high if you so wish to do

Life there is like the spring of water in a garden

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 140)

According to al-Sarīʿ metre, he wrote:

مَنْ كان يرضى الدُّونَ في دينِهِ

فكلُّ هذا منه لا يكفي

Whoever accepts the minimum of religion

Then all of such duties shall not suffice

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 84)

According to al-Mutaqārib metre, he wrote:

تحدَّر دمعي على سادةٍ

تخرُّ الجِباهُ لهم سُجَّدَا

My tears have fallen over people of highness

To whom foreheads bow in reverence

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 91)

According to al-Raml metre, he wrote:

أسعدُ الأقوامِ في الحربِ البطلْ

الذي لم يدرِ أصلًا ما الفشلْ

The happiest people at war are the heroes

Who never even knew what failure is

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 120)

According to al-Ṭawīl metre, he wrote:

أليس احترامُ النفسِ في طلبِ العُلا

وإنْ لم تنلْ ما حاوَلْتَهُ هو المجدُ؟

Is it not self-respecting to seek grandeur

And if not attaining it is glory nonetheless?

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 110)

According to al-Khafīf metre, he wrote:

وإذا لم يكن لك المجدُ مسعًى

ومقامًا فأنت مثلُ البهائم

If glory is not that which you seek

And an abode, then you are aimless like cattle

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 118)

According to al-Mujtath style, he wrote:

يا آخذًا بالنواصي

أدركْ غريقَ المعاصي

O' You who shall claim all lives

Help he who is drowning in sins

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 132)

According to al-Hazaj style, he wrote:

أرى الأيامَ لي حَرْبا

ودهري كُلّهُ صَعْبا

I see the days as warring against me

And my destiny all of which shall be difficult

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 136)

The poet also composed poetry according to al-Rajuz metre throughout all the poems in his Dīwān entitled 'Jawhar al-Niẓām'. Al-Rajuz metre is usually used for scientific matrixes (Educational Poetry) as it is capable of carrying explanation and bearing length like prose. At the onset of the Dīwān, al-Sālimī says:

أحمَدُكَ اللهمّ كلّ الحمدِ

في حالةِ الرّفْدِ وغيرِ الرّفْدِ

I praise Thee O' God all so much

Whenever I am in need or not so

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 1, p. 1)

Also among his most prominent poetic compositions following al-Rajuz style, according to Sharifi (2001, p. 166), is *Anwār al-'Uqūl* (The Lights of Minds) – a poetic collection on Islamic rites and theology, composed of 300 verses. The same is evident in another

poetic collection entitled *Shams al-Uṣūl* (The Sun of Origins), which comprises 1,000 verses on jurisprudence origins, bases and principles.

One also notices many poems by al-Sālimī composed in *al-Muʾāraḍah* style – an artistic form of old Arabic poetry through which a poet speaks about a specific topic and another comes along and composes a poem correlating to the first in rhythm, rhyme and topic, but which surpasses the first. Accordingly, *al-Muʾāraḍah* style requires the presence of an original poem that can then be followed, matched and surpassed. This is the reason why *Jāhilī* poetry was void of such style as the prior poetic form was unknown.

In one of al-Sālimī's most famous poems, he imitated the form and content of another's poem, which begins with:

<div dir="rtl">

لَشُغلي بأهلِ الدهرِ إحدى العجائبِ

وتركي طِلابَ العدلِ إحدى المصائبِ

</div>

My concern towards looming destiny is a wonder

And relinquishing seeking justice is yet another woe

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 57)

Each line of the Arabic version ends with the same letter (*Bāʾ*) whose sound is like a strong musical ring, according to the same poetic metre (al-Ṭawīl) and on the same topic of enthusing men to take part in battle. This is the same style followed by pre-Islamic poet ʿAntarah Ibn Shaddād in his poem:

<div dir="rtl">

أحنّ إلى ضربِ السيوفِ القواضبِ

وأصبو إلى طعنِ الرّماحِ اللواعبِ

</div>

I yearn for striking soul reaping swords

And similarly for spears that stab and sway

(Ḥāḍirī, 1992, p. 126)

At the beginning of another poem, al-Sālimī says:

<div dir="rtl">

هو المجد فاطلبهُ وإنْ عزّ طالبُهْ

وَجُدْ وإنْ ضاقت عليك مذاهبُهْ

</div>

It is glory thou shall seek although hard to attain

195

But persevere in doing so despite all pain

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 78)

In the above, al-Sālimī follows suit of blind Abbasid poet Bashshār Ibn Burd in utilising the same (*Bāʾ*) rhyme ending, the same poetic metre (al-Ṭawīl) and the topic (motivation to fight in battle). Bashshār Ibn Burd's poem includes the following famous verse in depicting the battle:

كأنّ مثارَ النقعِ فوقَ رؤوسِنا

وأسيافَنا، ليلٌ تهاوى كواكبُهْ

As if dust engulfing the air from battle above our heads turned day into darkness

And the clashing of swords glimmered with light like colliding meteors

(al-ʿAlawī, 1981, p. 46)

Al-Shāyib (1991, p. 82), notes the impact of poetic styles and rhythms on the strength of method and poetic music as he argues that poetic metre (al-Ṭawīl) suits the topics of pride and enthusiasm (*Ḥamāsah*), and this is perhaps why al-Sālimī used it accordingly. He also employed the (*Bāʾ*) rhyme ending, with its strong musical ring, so that it suits the poem's topic.

At the onset of another poem, al-Sālimī says:

قضتْ أحسابُنا أنْ لا نَدينا

لِحُكْمِ الحادثاتِ وإنْ رُزينا

Our tradition is never to succumb

To misfortunes even if forced upon us

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 71)

The Arabic version of the above follows the same (*Nūn*) letter ending and the same Wāfir metre. This mirrors al-Muʿallaqāt, especially the famous poem of pre-Islamic poet ʿAmr Ibn Kulthūm on the art of panegyric. Al-Shāyib (1991, p. 82) also notes the stylistic strength of the al-Wāfir metre and its suitability for the topic of pride. He supports his argument with further examples from the same poem by ʿAmr Ibn Kulthūm:

ملأنا البرَّ حتى ضاق عنّا

وماءُ البحرِ نملأُهُ سفينا

196

Our numbers filled the land till it became too small

As well as the waters of the sea which we filled with ships

(al-Shāyib, 1991, p. 82)

Poetic Content

Just as the pre-oil era in the Gulf region was traditional in poetic form, its content followed suit. This was emphasised by poetic movement researchers in the Gulf region like Bū Shaʿīr (1997, p. 149) when stating that poets of that era discussed traditional topics confined almost entirely to al-Madḥ (panegyric), al-Rithāʾ (elegy), al-Ikhwāniyyāt (panegyric of friends), al-Munāsabāt (events and occasions), al-Shiʿr al-Taʿlīmī (educational poetry), and others. Focus in this section will be on the clearest topics of poetic content covered by al-Sālimī's poems.

1. Educational Poetry

Most of al-Sālimī's poetic topics seem traditional as notes Bū Shaʿīr concerning the phase that al-Sālimī lived in (Bū Shaʿīr, 1997, pp. 157–161). The former's Dīwān, *Jawhar al-Niẓām*, consisting of 14,000 verses of poetry, is entirely on education and how it is connected to religion thematically. The verses were divided into subjects, then chapters. The Dīwān consists of a brief introduction of the Science and Principles of Jurisprudence, chapters on Worship Rites such as Purities, Prayers, Fasting, Zakāt, Hajj, Transactions of marriage, sales, inheritance, etc., and concluded with non-mandatory rites, ethics and lessons to be learned.

At the beginning of *Jawhar al-Niẓām*, al-Sālimī says the following in praising scholars disinterested in money:

<div dir="rtl">

واعلَمْ بأنّ العلماء قالوا:

الأغنياءُ لهم الأموالُ

قد جمعوا الكنوزَ ألفًا ألفا

وقد جمعنا العلمَ حرفًا حرفا

ولو بحرفٍ واحدٍ أعطونا

</div>

ألفَا من الأموالِ ما رضينا

Know that scholars have said:

The rich have much money

And have accumulated it thousands by thousands

Yet we have brought together knowledge letter by letter

When even if for one letter they gave us

Thousands of riches, we would not forsake

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 1, p. 6)

On the Topic of Fasting, for example, al-Sālimī mentions reasons that void it. He says:

ويَنْقُضُ الصوْمُ بلا نزاعِ

بالأكلِ والشُّرْبِ مع الجِماعِ

That which annuls fasting undisputedly

Is eating or drinking as well as copulating

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 1, p. 146)

As for reasons permitting breaking one's fasting during Ramadan, he says:

وللمريضِ الفِطْرُ كالمُسافرِ

إنْ كان للصيامِ غيرَ قادرِ

The ill may break fast just as travellers

If fasting proves a feat too much to bear

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 1, p. 144)

Then on breastfeeding, al-Sālimī writes on Islam's ruling forbidding the marriage of a couple who suckled milk from the same woman. He says:

وحُرْمَةُ التزويجِ بالرضاعِ

ثابتةٌ في صحّةِ الإجماعِ

It is forbidden to be married if fed of same breast

A matter which is uncontested by all jurists

On prayer, al-Sālimī emphasises that kneeling is a pillar thereof, and he mentions the supplication accompanying it:

فَرْضُ الرّكوعِ في كتابِ اللهِ

جاءَ بهِ الأمرُ بلا اشتباهِ

فَارْكَعْ بتعظيمِ الجَلالِ

وكُنْ لدى الركوعِ ذا اعتدالِ

وَضَعْ يديْكَ فوقَ رُكبتَيْكا

فإنْ ترَكْتَ فلا عليكا

وسَبّحْ اسمَ ربّكَ العظيمِ

ومِثلُ ذاكَ الذِّكْرُ بالتعظيمِ

Kneeling is a mandatory act in God's Book

An order for which it is clearly stated

So do so while praising the Almighty much

And be straight when kneeling nonetheless

And place your palms on your knees

And when finishing, you are relaxed

And mention God's Glorious Name in abundance

And double it more for He is the Greatest

The three most important remarks on educational poetry in *Jawhar al-Niẓām* are as follows: First, that its poetry is usually solely related to religion, rights and jurisprudence provisions. Second, that it is poetry void of subjectivity, affection or self-expression. Third, that poetic imagery is based on borrowing and artistic similes. This was noted by al-Rūmī (1999, p. 54) in the poetry of two Saudi poets, Aḥmad Ibn Musharrif (d. 1868) and Ibn ʿUthaymīn, both born in the pre-oil era. She argues that their poetic texts are purely religious and void of all forms of artistic beauty and poetic imagery which marks all high-quality poetry.

Michalak-Pikulska (2000) noticed the same in the poems of Kuwaiti ʿAbdul-Jalīl al-Ṭabṭabāʾī, 'They are distinguished by a strong link with religion. Characteristic also are the huge number of rhetorical figures and stylistic additions, which give it certain dry and passionless quality' (p. 170).

Al-Sālimī's Dīwān, verified by ʿĪsā al-Sulaymānī, encompasses 32 poems covering four topics: elegy, panegyric, religion and motivation (al-Ḥamāsah style) – the last of which encourages men to fight stronger, breathes an air of enthusiasm within them, glorifies heroes and shames cowards in the context of military glories and victories.

2. Elegy Poetry

From a linguistic perspective, the word elegy means *al-Rithāʾ* in Arabic. According to Myers and Wukasch (2003), 'elegy' is a Greek term and stands for 'lament' (p. 115). Baldick (2008) identifies it as, 'an elaborately formal lyric poem lamenting the death of a friend or public figure, or reflecting seriously on a solemn subject' (p.104).

In order for readers not to confuse 'elegy' (*al-Rithāʾ*) with 'panegyric' (*al-Madḥ*), as both are based on similar purposes, Ibn Qudāmah differentiates between them in saying that there exists no difference between the two except for the text mentioning that the subject of such poetic style has died (Mustafa, 1978, p. 100).

Elegy poetry has been highly regarded throughout the history of Arabic poetry and was one of the main focuses of al-Sālimī's works. Al-Sālimī held high regard for scholars and among his most famous poems is one in which he eulogises his mentor Sheikh Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī (1250h–1314h). Al-Sālimī says after al-Ḥārithī's death:

لَقِينا هَدْمَ ركنٍ كان حِصْنًا

منَ البَلْوى ونُورًا مُستَبينا

هُمَامٌ ليس يرضى غيرَ صَيْدِ

الكُماةِ الصِّيدِ بين الصّائدينا

A cornerstone of a fortress has disappeared

That which protected and enlightened our path

A brave one who would excel among others

And who was the best among hunters of riches

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 71)

Al-Sālimī continues:

فضُمَّ في الأرضِ وذِكراهُ في

أُفقِ العُلا لنشرِها نَفْحُ

In earth he has been entombed and his memory

Remains elevated and fills the air with rosy scents

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 87)

He adds:

مُصيبةُ صالحٍ يَبْيَضُّ منها

سوادُ الحالكاتِ من الذوائبِ

My sorrow for the death of Ṣāliḥ whitened my hair

From its original blackness due to all my tears

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 89)

He also says:

تحدّر دمعي على سادةٍ

تخرُّ الجِباهُ لهم سُجَّدَا

بَنَوْا للمعالي بحدِّ الظُّبا

وَرُوْسِ القَنا منزلًا أسْعدا

My tears have fallen on men of glory

To whom foreheads bow in reverence

Those who sought grandeur with sword blades

And with mighty spears towards a happier abode

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 91)

Noticeable is that al-Sālimī's poetic style is influenced by old Arabic poetry, particularly that of Abbasid poet Abū Tammām (d. 231 H/ 845 AD) in his Dīwān entitled '*Al-Ḥamāsah*' which al-Shāyib (1991) described as follows: 'Its words are of a strong ring,

are positive in meaning, are of spears and swords, of stabbing and striking, of killing, capturing, blood, human remains and of facts' (p. 80).

3. Panegyric Poetry

Panegyric is rendered as *Madḥ* in Arabic. According to Myers and Wukasch (2003), panegyric is a 'rhetorical expression classified as epideictic, consisting of thanksgiving in praise of victories after battles' (p. 262).

Baldick (2008) defines panegyric as, 'a public speech or written composition devoted to the prolonged, effusive praise of some person, group of people, or public body (e.g. a government or army)' (p. 245).

Panegyric poetry was very much present in al-Sālimī's poetry. He would praise his mentor Sheikh Ṣāliḥ al-Hārithī, while the latter was alive, in the way he led battles, and would praise his bravery and strength as in the following:

<div dir="rtl">

فكم من غارةٍ قد كنتَ فيها

كمِثْلِ البدرِ في شرَفٍ ونورِ

وكم جيشٍ سَحَبْتَ له عُبَابٌ

تدفّقَ مِثْلَ أمواجِ البُحورِ

وكم خَصْمٍ تجرّعَ منكَ كأسَ

المَنونِ بصارمٍ ذَكَرٍ بَتُورِ

</div>

So many raids in which you have taken part

Like the full moon shining with honour

So many armies have retreated like a gushing tide

That engulfed shores with sea-like waves

And how many an adversary have you dealt

Fatal blows with your solid and cutting blade

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 66)

Panegyric poetry was not only limited to battle, as al-Sālimī also praised his mentor's demeanour and likened it as following that of Prophet Muhammad:

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وأيُّ طريقٍ أقتفي في سلوكِهِ

سبيلَ رسولِ اللهِ زينِ المناقبِ

Which example has he followed in his actions

Other than that of the Prophet, the purest of all

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 58)

Elsewhere, al-Sālimī feels sorrow that ignorance had spread in his society, but simultaneously praises the deep knowledge attained by his mentor, Sheikh Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥārithī. al-Sālimī calls on him to spread that knowledge among the masses and says:

أصالحُ إنّ الجهلَ أرخى سُدولَهُ

وألقى علينا حالكاتِ الغياهبِ

أصالحُ إنّ العلمَ أقْوَثْ رسومُهُ

وليسَ لهُ لولاكَ لهفةُ نادبِ

O' Ṣāliḥ ignorance has engulfed us

And covered us with the darkest of darkness

O' Ṣāliḥ the signs of science have hence disappeared

And only you can extract them with passion and care

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 61–62)

4. Religious Poetry

It is no surprise that religious poetry occupies a large portion of al-Sālimī's Dīwāns as he was a jurist and then a poet. He utilised poetry to deliver his religious messages to society as he was keen on social reform. Al-Sālimī praises the Almighty Allāh and supplicates to Him. He writes:

يا آخِذًا بالنّواصي.. أدرِكْ غريقَ المعاصي

وامْنُنْ عليه بلُطْفٍ.. يَفضي بهِ لخلاصِ

واغفِرْ لهُ كلَّ ذنبٍ.. يَخشاهُ يومَ القَصاصِ

وامْنُنْ عليهِ بفضلٍ.. ومَقْعَدٍ غيرِ قاصِ

203

يا واهِبَ الفضلِ جَزْلًا.. لطائعٍ ولعاصي

إنْ لمْ تُدارِكْ بِلُطْفٍ.. فليس لي مِنْ مَناصِ

أينَ الهروبُ وما مِنْ.. قَضاكَ تُحْمى الصَّياصي

O' You who shall reclaim our souls … aid he who has drowned in sins

Bestow upon him Your Kindness and Compassion … to redeem his soul

Forgive the sins he committed … whose consequence he fears on Judgement Day

Let him be grateful for Your Kindness … for a place without punishment

O' You who grants forgiveness in abundance … to who obeyed and disobeyed

If You are not sympathetic towards me … I shall not be able to escape

To where may one escape and to whom … as Your destiny reaches all who seek to evade

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 132)

5. Representations of Women

Much of Arabic poetry is on the topics of love and flirtation, both in the old and modern ages. Women have been the central topic for poets from pre-Islamic times to date. However, such topics seem absent in al-Sālimī's Dīwāns, as well as him not mentioning the name of a specific woman. This is perhaps because he was a jurist and gave religious lectures. His religious status and social position, consequently, mandated him to abstain from doing so. Accordingly, al-Sālimī seems to have directed his gift of the gab towards topics related to religion and upholding virtuous traits.

Nevertheless, women's representation had a slight presence in al-Sālimī's poetry but in a form far from love and flirtation. In a poem on motivating people to take part in *Jihād* and war, he reprimands laggards and people who make progress slower than desired or expected:

أترجو المَعاليَ وأنتَ فتىً

تَنامُ الليالي حليفَ النّسا؟

Do you wish for grandeur while the only thing you do

204

Is sleep through nights as only women do?

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 127)

In the same context, he also says:

مقامٌ في القصورِ على قُصورِ

مقامٌ مثل ربّاتِ الخدورِ

An abode in palaces of shortcomings

Like housewives tending to their chores

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 63)

The image of women in the verses above mostly reflects women's status in Arab Gulf countries before the discovery of oil. In the pre-oil context, women stayed at home and exited it only rarely or upon necessity as they catered to the household and home duties, while men spent most of their time outside the home working (al-Rumayḥī, 1984, pp. 146–148). The simile in the poem is of men who act like women by staying at home and not joining the war effort. In the modern context, the application of such an idea seems to exist still. Al-Ṣubḥī (2016) states, 'Usually religious Omani men have reservations about women's involvement in the public sphere, in general. Even if they allow their wives, sisters, or daughters to work, these women would be involved in women-dominated jobs like school teachers and nurses' (p. 15).

Al-Sālimī repeats this image of women when saying:

وإنّ شريفَ القومِ مَنْ كُنتُ أرتجي

به عَضُدًا في الدّينِ أقعَدَهُ المَهْدُ

غَدا في نعيمِ العيشِ بُغيا تلذّذٍ

ومالَ بهِ عنّي كواعبُها النُّهْدُ

The honourable of people in whom I had had faith

As a supporting anchor has sought grandeur in sleeping

Has sought the riches of an easy life

With she whose breasts have just begun budding

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 112)

The above verses show the traditional view which al-Sālimī holds of women in that they are merely a means for sexual pleasure that sways men from joining others in battle. This is also why al-Sālimī's stance was anti-marriage:

مَن استطاعَ أنْ يعيشَ أعزبا

فذلكَ الفوزُ لهُ قد وَجَبا

قد استراحَ مِن معاناة النّسا

وارتاح من قولِ لعلّ وعسى

Whoever can live a single man

Has won riches to be envied for

He has been relieved of suffering with women

And needs no longer pray for patience

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 2, p. 239)

The previous verse signifies an ideological similarity between al-Sālimī and blind poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī as the latter also had a negative stance on marriage, where he considered the status of being single ultimate happiness. He says:

إنْ صَحّ عقلكَ فالتفرّدُ نعمةٌ

ونوى الأوانسِ غايةُ الإيناسِ

If your mind is right, being single is bliss

As having no Mrs is never missed

(al-Maʿarrī, n.d., p. 75)

6. Motivational Poetry (*Ḥamāsah*)

Al-Ḥamāsah poetry is one of the most classical topics on which Arab poets composed their works. The most famous among those was Abbasid Ḥabīb Ibn Aws al-Ṭāʾī, also known as Abū Tammām, who composed a poetic collection entitled *Dīwan Al-Ḥamāsah*. This type of poetry is meant to charge both poets and readers with enthusiasm. According to Wahbeh and al-Muhandis (1984, p. 153), *al-Ḥamāsah* style refers to literary genre poems that emotionally torment adversaries who have lost

battles, glorify conquests and winnings at war, as well as exalt good manners of generosity and faithfulness, among others.

Hamāsah in the poetry of al-Sālimī deserves to be considered from a different angle since it unveils the Gulf society in the pre-oil era and represents a clear reflection of Arab-Islamic identity that was prevalent in the region, specifically during the British occupation.

The period in which al-Sālimī lived was rife with poverty, intellectual stagnation and high levels of illiteracy to the extent that Gulf educational institutions in general, and during that period in particular, were simplistic and revolved around memorisation of the short verses of Qurʾān, reading and writing basics, and on simple mathematics. Accordingly, ignorance was a burden to al-Sālimī, and he took upon himself the responsibility of encouraging the society to learn about religion, revive it, and apply it effectively through *Ḥamāsah* poetry.

One example is when al-Sālimī rebukes his society for falling back on religious matters, halting the application of Islamic Law's provisions and failing to apply religious penalties like cutting the hands of thieves, stoning adulterers and whipping those who consumed alcohol. He says:

وإنّ مَنارَ الدينِ أمسى مُهدّمًا

وعُطّلَت الأحكامُ وانْتُبِذَ الحَدُّ

The beacon of Islam has been toppled

With laws frozen and penalties brushed aside

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 111)

Another point noteworthy of al-Sālimī's poetry is the connection between *al-Hamāsah* poetry and religion. He would express the formulation of religious identity for the people at that time by calling upon them to join Jihād and battles. He says:

يا للرجالِ! فقد غدا .. دينُ المُهيمنِ مُنَّضَغ

وعَلا الفسادُ من العبادِ .. بكلِّ أرضٍ وارتفَغ

What men are you?! The religion that once reigned … has been forsaken

Corruption now fills the heart of Man … in all lows and highlands

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 145)

He adds:

يا قومُ إنّي ناصحٌ .. لكم، فهل من مُستَمِعْ؟

أدعو لإحياء الهُدى .. إنّ الهُدى نورٌ سَطَعْ

إنّ الهُدى لا يُحْييهِ .. إلّا المُهنّدُ إنْ لَمَعْ

O' people I am only giving advice … to you, is there any who hears?

I call for reviving righteousness … as its light shines and guides

Such righteousness may only be guided … by swords' shimmering light

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 146)

During the period in which al-Sālimī lived, the Gulf region in general, and Oman in particular, went through similar historical and political trials as the region was a theatre for many struggles among different colonising powers which had certain economic interests. This period drove some poets to express the matter of occupation in their poems (al-Rūmī, 1999, p. 11).

According to al-Hājrī (2006, pp. 76–80), some dramatic historical events overshadowed the British-Omani relations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. British colonial presence in Oman caused al-Sālimī much anguish, and it was the catalyst for his Hamāsah poetry to motivate the nation to stand up to the British occupier as he believed poetry to be a means of influencing people. Al-Shāyib (1991, p. 63) stressed poetry's ability to influence when he distinguished between prose and poetry and that where the former merely reports, and the latter influences.

Al-Sālimī's *Hamāsah* poetry against the British occupier possessed a two-layered meaning: Islamic and Arabic against the presence of the occupier of a different religion and race. He would call upon society to combat Britain in the name of Islam and pan-Arabism, as when he says:

حَدِّثْ أُخَيَّ عن العَجَبْ .. وعن العُلا وعن الحَسَبْ

وعن الخيانةِ أنّها .. عارٌ قبيحٌ في العربْ

طَلَبَ النّصارى أرضَنا .. بمكيدةٍ لم تُحْتَسَبْ

فأتى 'القُنَيْصِلُ' قاصدًا .. لمكاننا كيْ يَخْتَلِبْ

مُتَعَلَّلًا بسياحةٍ .. وقنّاصةٍ تَقضِي الأرَبْ

فأقامَ مِنّا عُصْبةً .. في ردِّهِ حتّى ذَهَبْ

لمّا دعا (عيسى) أجبناهُ .. فحيّا مَنْ وَثَبْ

فمضى ونحنُ أمامَهُ .. لنضُمّ شَمْلًا للعرَبْ

فمضى (القُنَيْصِلُ) راجِعًا .. مُنَفَّهْقِرًا عمّا طَلَبْ

قد هالَهُ ما قد رأى .. من حالِنا يومَ الرَّهَبْ

فرأى النّصارى أنّنا .. في البأسِ كالسّيفِ العَضَبْ

Speak O' brother about greatness … about faithfulness and honour

Speak about treachery that is … an ugly disgrace of Arabs

Christians have demanded our lands … through miscalculated trickery

And the miniature Consul came forth … so as to milk our lands dry

Claiming to love tourism … and hunting wildlife for sustenance

But some among us … stood up to him till gone

When ʿĪsā called, we responded … all glory be to who have borne arms

ʿĪsā led the way with us up ahead … to bring unity for all Arabs

And the miniature Consul returned . empty-handed of what he had demanded

Stunned in awe of what he witnessed … our strength and prowess when tested

Christians attest that under pressure … we are as resilient as a slicing sword

(al-Sālimī, ed. al-Sulaymānī, 2009, p. 148–150)

According to al-Sulaymānī (2009, p. 148), al-Sālimī was enthusing Omanis to act against British Consul Percy Cox, who attempted to enter the Eastern area of Oman at Jaʿlān province. The poet's use of the word *al-Naṣārā* (Christians) reflects his different Islamic identity. Also, insisting on minimising the position of *Qunṣul* (Consul) by saying the *Qunayṣil* (Mini-Consul) reflects pride in his Arab identity that is different from that of the British man. It is also worth pointing out that al-Sālimī utilised the plural language in representation of himself and his fellow countrymen, who share his religious and ethnic traits, allowing them to distinguish themselves among others and shape their own distinct identity.

Also noteworthy is that Jawhar al-Niẓām includes a chapter enthusing Muslims to *Jihad* against the occupier, in which al-Sālimī says:

حَرْبُ النصارى اليومَ بالدَّواهي

والكُلُّ مِنّا غافِلٌ وَلاهي

فيأخُذونَ الدَّارَ بالخدائعِ

وإنّها أقوى من المَدافِعِ

<div align="center">

Christians' warfare nowadays is based on deception

And all of us are clearly unaware and oblivious to the danger

They occupy our lands through deceit

Which is more powerful than cannons

(al-Sālimī, 2006, Ch. 2, p. 239)

</div>

Employing the term 'Christians' in the aforementioned poetic text indicates al-Sālimī's Islamic identity, which implies that in that timeframe, poetry had an Islamic character disregarding any other classification (i.e. pan-Arabism, Nationalism). As al-Ḥarbī (2015) contends:

> In the poem written during this period, the most prominent feature of the West in general, and the British in particular, is deception. This should not be understood as a right or wrong position. Rather the positions on the West were given as ways of reacting against occupation, domination and injustice. (p. 85)

Section 2: Transformations of Poetic Style and Content during the Dawn of the Oil Age

After testing the poetic style and content in the pre-oil era which was represented by al-Sālimī, this section aims towards presenting the influence of the oil appearance and clash on the poetic style and content by using al-Shabīb and his poetry as an example for this particular phase. The poetic transition that is obvious in al-Shabīb's poems makes him an appropriate representative of the themes of this section. Moreover, the new themes in his poetry set him apart from other poets.

Poetic Language

al-Shabīb possesses a distinct style that is more akin to classical Arabic poetry in the language, wording, structure, imagery and similes, to the extent that readers may assume it is *Jahilī* poetry at times. This is because al-Shabīb would flood his poems with complex Arabic words whose meanings are multifaceted, and which may only be deciphered by referring to specialised language thesauruses. Almost all of the poet's compositions contain such wording.

For example, al-Shabīb uses the word (*Qushbu*) when speaking of new clothes:

<div dir="rtl">

يُوَلَّى هنا المرءُ الوظيفةَ جاهلًا

على شرطِ أنْ تُلْفى ملابسُهُ قُشُبْ

</div>

The opportunities of such a job are awarded here to the ignorant

Provided that his clothing is of fancy style [Qushbu]

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 113)

al-Shabīb would also begin his poems with introductions on the same pattern of *Jahilī* poems' style:

<div dir="rtl">

أذابَ فؤادي منكِ هذا التجنّبُ

فباتَ دمًا من مقلتي يتصبّبُ

</div>

Your avoidance of me has melted my heart

Rendering it blood from my eyes profusely dripping

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 604)

The above is similar in style to the poem by *Jahilī* poet ʿAlqamah al-Faḥl, which says:

<div dir="rtl">

ذهبتِ من الهجران في غير مذهبٍ

ولم يَكُ حَقًّا كلّ هذا التجنّبِ

</div>

You [feminine] have taken of desertion varied levels

Yet truly no act was deserving of all such avoidance

(al-Shanqīṭī, n.d., p. 12)

Furthermore, al-Shabīb would invoke classical Arabic characters and employ them in his poems, like when he summons the immortal love story between Qays and Laylā:

<div dir="rtl">

فوَلّتْ وهيَ تحسَبُ أنْ سأبقى

كقَيسٍ بعد ليلى في خَبالِ

</div>

She left me thinking I will remain behind

Like Qays after Laylā left him delirious

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 627)

In another poem, al-Shabīb employs the love story between al-Farazdaq and his beloved Nawār, as well as Ibn Zaydūn's and his beloved Wallādah (al-Shabīb 2008, p. 627).

This summoning of classical figures and utilisation of complex wording are solid proof that al-Shabīb's poetry was not influenced by the modern age nor by the schools of renewal, particularly since he was a seasoned poet who lived through both the pre-oil and the onset of oil ages. Later in this section, we will show how he was keen on memorising many verses of poetry by classical poets, insisted on mirroring their style and called for the revival of Arabic through his poetry.

Rhythm and Rhyme

In viewing the poems in al-Shabīb's Dīwān comprehensively, no signs of renewal in rhythm are visible as he has preserved the poem's vertical style and classical Arabic rhyme and did not veer towards the free-verse poem which became widespread in modern Arabic poetry. al-Shabīb, like al-Sālimī and poets of the pre-oil era, composed his poetry in accordance with all classical rhythms inherited from ancient ages and then renewed them.

For example, in a long vertical poem entitled, *Ḥikāyat Gharām* (Love Story). al-Shabīb begins as follows:

<div dir="rtl">

أجْمِلي يا جُمْلُ أوْ لا تُجْمِلي

واعذِلي في الحبّ أو لا تَعْذِلي

واعمَلي ما شئتِهِ بي وافعلي

ليس عن حبّكِ لي من مَعْدَلِ

بعدما جارى دمائي في العُروقْ

</div>

Be nice to me O' Juml or don't be

And blame me in love or don't,

Do whatever you wish with me

Of your love, I shall not sway,

For your love in my veins flows along with blood.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 473)

For the poem, above, al-Shabīb chose al-Raml poetic metre, which as al-ʿAlī says (1986, p. 148), is easy to pronounce and be heard and is accordingly fit for singing and poems of enthusiasm and love. al-Shabīb was successful in choosing this rhythm as the poem's topic was about love, lover's adventures with his beloved lady and the poet's courage in picturing a woman lewdly and erotically.

Even as rhymes are concerned, al-Shabīb's Dīwān has proven to be of distinct excellence in the choice thereof, which transmit his feelings and serve the poem's topic well. For example, he says:

وبُعْدُ حبيبِ النفسِ يقتلُ وحدَهُ

فكيف إذا ما ظاهَرَ البُعْدَ صَدُّهُ

When the distance of the loved one in itself is deadly

How much then if accompanied by it is rejection?!

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 281)

The Arabic version of the above verses ends with the letter (*hāʾ*) rhyme that transfers the sense of woe, pain and suffering. al-Shabīb followed suit of classical Arabic poets in using this letter in the rhyme of poems of similar context, including that of al-Mutannabbī. al-Shabīb writes:

أَوَدُّ مِنَ الأيّامِ ما لا تَوَدُّهُ

وأشكو إليها بيْنَنا، وهي جُندُهُ

I wish of days that which they do not wish, and I complain

To them our distance, yet they are its keepers.

(al-Yāzajī, n.d., p. 486)

Poetic Content

We notice how al-Shabīb preserved poetic topics that were prevalent in classical Arabic poetry until the pre-oil era. These topics included panegyric, satire and elegy as when he praised Kuwait's rulers and many other Kuwaiti families who were financially generous towards him and then defamed many religious fanatics who disagreed with his beliefs to the extent that they called him a Zindīq. He also elegised Kuwaiti rulers and many of his friends after their death.

al-Shabīb also composed poetry on topics that were novel for his era. ʿAbdullāh (1974, p. 23) emphasises that al-Shabīb wrote in panegyric, al-Muʿāraḍah, al-Ikhwāniyyāt (panegyric of friends), Arab nationalism, eulogised, and attempted to philosophise. Accordingly, he wrote on many non-traditional topics – for his phase in Kuwait – regarding the mind and its role; on happiness, its role, and his share therefrom; on isolation, and its spiritual and social significance; and on the attempt to discover the secret of existence. al-Shabīb also presented amusing images of stinginess and misers without aiming to criticise anyone namely in particular, as well as others of falling for appearances, animals tortured by boys, and the goat which chewed on books.

This is in addition to the thematical or subjective renewal in the poetic discourse which was realised by al-Rūmī. She wrote an entire chapter on it entitled *Ṣaqr al-Shabīb wa al-Nagham al-dhātī* (Ṣaqr al-Shabīb and the Self-Tune), where she stated:

> "It may seem strange that we include Ṣaqr al-Shabīb within the conscience current as he was a traditional poet in all facets of the word. Whoever reads his Dīwān will sense the poet's adoption of early poetic style in form, meanings, topics and methods. This Dīwān mainly consists of classical topics extending from panegyric to Hijāʾ to adoration. Yet, despite this prevailing traditionalism, he was able to speak of himself in some of his poems, and accordingly, the Self-Tune began to infiltrate those meanings" (al-Rūmī, 1999, p. 293).

In light of the above, this section shall persist in delving deep into this matter to reveal the most prominent signs of change and renewal in poetic discourse and the topics that accompanied the onset of the oil age.

Transformative Representation of Women

As we saw in Section 1 of Chapter 5, the representation of women in al-Sālimī's pre-oil era poetry was limited to women confined to their households and detached from social participation and enablement. However, such an image began to transform, particularly as the Gulf society, in general, and Kuwaiti society, in particular, were on the verge of ushering in the oil age. Concurring with an article published by his friend, Yūsuf al- Qināʿī, al-Sālimī began demanding that women receive their due right to education.

According to Alebrahim (2019), Yūsuf Ibn ʿĪsā al-Qināʿī (1878-1973) was an active person in the Kuwaiti political scene in the twentieth century as he was one of the most prominent Kuwaiti religious scholars: 'Born in Kuwait, he was raised and studied in different cities (Kuwait, Basra and al-Aḥsāʾ). Al-Qināʿī was a member of the first Shūrā Council in 1921 and vice-Speaker in the 1938–9 Legislative Councils' (p. 181).

According to al-ʿAlī (1986, p. 181), al-Qināʿī was among the first people to demand that women receive their equal right to education and expressed this through an article he wrote in the early 1930s. Al-Qināʿī and al-Shabīb were close friends and were always in the company of one another. The article written by al-Qināʿī made the poet realise that his friend's demands were what he himself believed in and advocated, and he sent him a poem to thank him for his stance.

al-Shabīb wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

قرأتُ مقالَكَ الحُرَّ الجميلا

فألزَمَني لكَ الشُّكْرَ الجزيلا

</div>

I read your beautiful and liberating article

Which bound me to thank you all so much.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 522)

He then began stating why he liked his friend's article so much:

<div dir="rtl">

وأعجبَني انتصارُكَ للّواتي

تَكَبَّدْنَ الأذى زمنًا طويلا

فواصلْ -لا عدِمناكَ- انتصارًا

</div>

لهنّ من الأذى حتى يزولا

I admire your standing up for the ladies

Who have for long suffered so much,

So, continue championing forevermore

Doing away the harm that has always befallen them.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 522)

The poet then encourages his friend to persevere in defending women's rights until the very end:

فلا تَدَعِ انتصارَكَ يا ابنَ عيسى

يُنِلْكَ اللهُ مقصَدَكَ النبيلا

Do not claim victory O' son of ʿĪsā

Until God has fulfilled your noble cause.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 522)

Al-Shabīb then calls on al-Qināʿī to splinter from patriarchal society's traditions by championing women's aspirations and ridding them of their great suffering:

فقُمْ في مَحْوِ عاداتٍ ثقالٍ

فمثلُكَ من مَحا العادَ الثَّقيلا

فما ترجو سوى عَلياكَ غِيدٌ

تُقاسي في الكويت عَنَّا وَبيلا

Stand up in expunging excruciating customs

For your likes are those up to the task,

Women seek only your support in defending

The rights of those who suffer dearly in Kuwait.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 523)

As the Gulf society embarked on ushering in the oil age, we notice that the image of women there began to transform with calls for doing away with inherited customs and

enabling women to integrate into the public sphere gradually starting with education. al-Shabīb continues to encourage his friend on the matter:

تدارَكْ راحِمًا فيها قلوبًا

بنارِ الحُزنِ توشِكُ أنْ تسيلا

ولولا أنّ فيهنّ احتشامًا

لأسْمَعْنَ الرّجالاتِ العَويلا

Be merciful towards hearts that will almost soon

Flow from the molten fire of despair,

Were they to forfeit customs of respect and coyness

They would sound to men their wailing woes.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 523)

From al-Shabīb's perspective, women suffered miserable conditions – which he honestly reflected through his poetry – as their lives were rife with ignorance, sadness and arbitrary practices all due to prevalent social customs in Kuwait and the wider Gulf region. At the time, women were unable to wiggle themselves out of the harsh social norms, and coyness had always prevented them from standing up and speaking for themselves. Their only hope was awaiting men who would champion their cause.

As it was a rare matter in that context for a man to demand that women receive an education, al-Shabīb encouraged al-Qināʿī to stay on track:

وقُلْ واجهَرْ وصَرّحْ تَلْقَ مِنّا

ومنهنّ التجِلّةَ والقَبولا

Speak up, express, and announce your conviction

From us, you will receive appreciation and acceptance.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 524)

The first line above voices three verbs or actions that the poet has long awaited to proclaim: speak up, express and announce.

Further down in the poem, he expresses religion's perspective on women's right to education as Islam, to al-Shabīb, is a religion that does not oppose women's right to education as proven in the Holy Qurʾan and Sunnah:

أَنُلْزِمُهُنّ ما نَرضاهُ قَسْرًا

وإنْ لم يُرْضِ منهنّ المُيولا؟

ونزعمُ أنّ هذا الظلمَ يأبى

علينا الدينُ عنهُ أنْ نميلا؟

Are we to force upon them that which we want

Even though they are adamantly against it?

Then claim that such injustice is mandated of us

By religion which forces us to follow such claims?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 524)

Of the society that had imposed unreligious social restraints against women, he says:

أَأَمتعةً خُلِقْنَ لنا الغواني

فلم نرأفْ بهنّ ولو قليلا؟

أيُرضي اللهَ عطفُ الغيدِ قَهْرًا

إلى ما لا يُرِدْنَ أمِ الرّسولا؟

Were they created as things we own these ladies

That we not empathise with them in the least?

Will God be pleased that we force on women

Our will which neither He nor the Prophet accept?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 524)

According to al-Ḥātim (1980, p. 79), Kuwaiti educational institutions entered a modern phase in 1937 where the first school for girls was eventually established in that year. Despite his blindness, al-Shabīb employed his poetic ability in speaking up for women and removing them from the traditional mould they had been cast into; hence, becoming an important influencer in his society. He represented women's importance

through his enlightened and renewal thought, particularly as a new phase of development and change was about to ram itself through Kuwait's gates.

Another related theme that we find abundant in al-Shabīb's poetry is that of love poems dedicated to women named *Zaynab*, *Suʿād*, *Suʿdā* and *Juml*. These poems reveal an unfamiliar facet of al-Shabīb's personality as they are romantic and flow with love, yearning and heated emotions; a genre that contradicts with the rest of his Dīwān whose poems are filled with fury, worry, complaint, sadness, trauma and suffering.

Not only was al-Shabīb a blind poet, but also one who lived in a traditional society where it was difficult to express one's love for women by name openly. Accordingly, we are best to search for the truth about how he is connected to those beloved ones and whether or not he had been in love with real women. For all we know, his love poems may have as well been fictitious and that he intended them just for fun.
Al-ʿAlī (1986, p. 147) states that nothing existed in al-Shabīb's life that would confirm he had a love story with any woman. Having composed several love poems and attributed a few female names to them does not mean that he had a relationship with any of them. Al-ʿAlī adds that al-Shabīb may have written such fictitious poems after having failed in his three marriages and was thus expressing his need to feel love from one of them in the form of fiction as his sanctuary.

If we are to consider al-ʿAlī's reasoning as possible, this means that al-Shabīb utilised a compensatory method in his poetry that would allow him to feel the emotions he yearned for in his life. This is particularly more so after having suffered various consecutive traumas in his marriages, rendering him immersed in virtual romanticism of which his real life was devoid. Nevertheless, his imagination must be connected to his blindness in some way or form, and we refer here to that mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 on how al-Shabīb described imaginary women through poetic imagery conjured from his senses and imagination.

The following are examples regarding how a beloved woman, called '*Juml*', whom al-Shabīb imagines in his poem *Ḥikāyat Gharām* (Love Story), is manifested. It is a long vertical poem detailing a love story between a man and a woman, and contains much sexual innuendo:

أَجْمِلي يا جُمْلُ أوْ لا تُجْمِلي

واعذِلي في الحبّ أو لا تَعْذِلي

واعمَلي ما شئتِهِ بي وافعلي

ليس عن حبِّكِ لي من مَعْدَلِ

بعدما جارى دمائي في العُروقْ

Be nice to me O' Juml or don't be

And blame me in love or don't,

Do whatever you wish with me

Of your love I shall not sway,

For you love in my veins flows along with blood.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 473)

The poet then goes a bit further with his imagination and boldly pictures this imaginary woman erotically and attributes to her much outright sexualism without heeding any restraints of his conservative society. He says:

فدوائي ليس ليلى أو نَوارْ

بل دوائي عند مَنْ تُرخي الإزارْ

For my cure is not through Laylā or Nawār

It is through that which lies beneath loosened clothes

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 474)

Being a blind poet, al-Shabīb's only means for exploring a body is through touch; hence the above text is indicative that the number one source for the physical, sexual pleasure of the blind is through touch. Able sighted people can enjoy sex through other means, coupled with touch – a luxury al-Shabīb did not have. He then continues with his erotic description and expresses his enjoyment of lovemaking via the sense of taste:

فاحتسائي مرةً أخرى اللّمى

من ثناياها يزيلُ السَّقَما

فدوائي ساكنٌ منها الفَما

فصِفوا حالي لديها رُبّما

ينثني لي قلبُها القاسي رقيقْ

220

Savouring the taste of her neck once again

With suckling of skin that expels all illness,

And through her moist lips comes hither all cure.

So describe to her what has befallen me

For maybe her tough heart will soften for me.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 474)

al-Shabīb then imagines meeting with his loved one and spending a full night with her in which both express their feelings for one another. However, the night is too short and soon ends, and al-Shabīb clings onto her for fear she will not return, but she assures him she will as she has vowed to do so. With this background, al-Shabīb says:

<div dir="rtl">

قالتِ: 'الوعدُ على الحُرّةِ دَيْنْ'

وهي تُدْني لوداعي الشفتَيْنْ

فَتَزَوَّدْتُ بفيها قُبْلَتَيْنْ

لجراحاتِ الحَشا مُبْرِنَتَيْنْ

ثمّ سارتْ ولها قلبي رَفيقْ

</div>

She gave me her word as only a free woman does

As she loosened her lips to bid me farewell,

Two kisses did I steal to sustain my journey

Of heart's ailments in her absence and awaiting.

Then she departed accompanied by my heart.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 476)

In another poem, al-Shabīb describes his imaginary beloved lady whom he calls (*Zaynab*) and expresses his longing for her singing. This reflects the fact that blind people learn a lot more through the sense of hearing than through any other compensatory means, particularly when falling in love. The sound of a woman tantalised al-Shabīb's senses, as we see in the following:

<div dir="rtl">

إلى ذلك المَغْنى أَحِنُّ ولم تَعُدْ

بهِ منذ غابت شمسُ زينبَ تُشرقُ

</div>

To that signing I yearn so eagerly as since

With Zaynab's departure the sun has not shone.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 478)

He then describes Zaynab erotically through his taste and smell senses, mentioned in Chapter 3 as follows:

وما كنتُ فيه أكتفي بترشّفي

ثنايا لها هُنّ الرحيقُ المعتّقُ

Of it I would not stop at sipping

From her teeth that are of pure essence.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 478)

As well as in the following verse:

فأصبحتُ أستشفي بشمّيَ تربةً

له لم تزل من نشرها بعدُ تعبَقُ

ومن عزّهُ وصلُ الحبيبِ فشمُّهُ

مَواطئَ رجليهِ شفاءٌ محقَّقُ

I came to be healed by smelling where she had trodden

And where her fragrance still filled the air.

For he who yearns to connect with a loved one,

Smelling where her feet have paced is proved cure.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 478)

In another poem entitled, *Wāshīnā Kadhūb* (Our Lying Tattler), al-Shabīb describes his unsurmountable love for his imaginary Zaynab and states that he intentionally uses the pseudonyms (Suʿdā) and (Suʿād) in his love poems but actually means Zaynab in their stead. He says he does this so that if any wished to break up their love, that person's efforts would be in vain. The poet writes:

ربّما أذكرُ سُعدى وسُعادْ

في نسيبي وَهْيَ واللهِ المُرادْ

خوفَ واشٍ لم يزل صَبَّ الفؤادْ

بشتاتِ شَمْلٍ أو نَقْضٍ الوِدادْ

I may mention Suʿdā and Suʿād

In my poetry of love, yet it is she I mean,

For it is fear of a tattler whose heart loves no more

Than scattering us apart or leading us astray.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 706)

Then in another poem, the poet expresses his intense love for Zaynab and his suffering due to her departure:

أذابَ فؤادي منكِ هذا التجنّبُ

فباتَ دمًا من مقلتي يتصبّبُ

فإنْ كان لي ذنبٌ إليكِ جنيتُهُ

على غير عَمْدٍ فاغفري الذنبَ زينَبُ

Your avoidance of me has melted my heart

Rendering it blood from my eyes profusely dripping,

If I have erred against you so graciously forgive me

O' Zaynab for an unintended mistake of guilt I made.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 604)

The critical finding in viewing the imagery of women in al-Shabīb's poetry is that it appeared in a Renewal Framework during the poet's phase of transforming from the pre-oil era to that of its onset and then exited the narrower frame in which it had existed during its first phase. We also notice the emergence of poetry that stood up for women's rights and which carried the banner of ridding them of injustices perpetrated against them by society. In this genre of poetry exists the call for supporting women in receiving their fundamental rights and doing away with all social injustices that have befallen them. Moreover, we notice the rise of romantic discourse in al-Shabīb's poetry compared to that of al-Sālimī as the former describes imaginary love stories with non-existent women. These figments of al-Shabīb's imagination describe his brilliance in

picturing women through relying on imagination and his senses as sources for poetic imagery.

Rise of Arab Nationalism in Poetic Discourse

When viewing al-Shabīb's life that spanned from 1894 to 1963, one immediately realises it was the phase of complete transition that engulfed the Arab World on all levels. Politically, this phase was rife with many revolts in some Arab countries, resulting in many regime changes. The map of the Arab World also changed as many Arab states gained independence, like Kuwait, and were ridden of their occupiers. Economically, it was the era in which oil was discovered and which thus transformed Arab Gulf societies from poverty to prosperity. With all such events surrounding al-Shabīb, an important question arises: Did blindness prevent al-Shabīb from participating in expressing the woes of his Arab Nation, or was he one within this Arab context and expressed its struggles fully? If we insist on the latter, we must explore the real reasons behind him doing so, and which led to the formulation of an Arab identity and nationalism in his poetry.

Many studies covered poets who discussed Arab issues in their works within this specific timeframe, the most prominent include the following. The aforementioned study by Gāfūd (1996) entitled, *Dirāsāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir fī al-Khalīj* (Studies in Contemporary Arabic Poetry in the Gulf), which focused on the emergence of Arab nationalism in the works of the Gulf's poets, among who was al-Shabīb. The second study is by al-Wuqayyān (2012), *Al-Qaḍiyyah al-ʿArabiyyah fi al-Shiʿr al-Kuwaytī* (The Arab Cause in Kuwaiti Poetry) in which the researcher presented a collection of Kuwaiti poets' works on Arab nationalism like those of Palestine and the Algerian revolution. In the study, al-Shabīb is at the forefront of these poets. Another prominent study is Kāmil al-Sawāfīrī's '*Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī al-Ḥadīth fī Maʾsāt Filisṭīn min Sanat 1917 ilā Sanat 1955* (Modern Arabic Poetry on Palestine's Tragedy 1917-1955) in which the researcher utilised only one poem by al-Shabīb as an example on Kuwaiti poets who expressed solidarity with the Palestinian cause through their works. Moreover, there is the study by al-ʿAlī (1986) which deals with al-Shabīb's poetry on pan-Arabism where the researcher focused on the poet's works from two facets, the call for Arab unity and championing Arab causes.

The richness of poetic works by Arab Gulf poets in this period, in particular, emphasises the stark fact regarding the formulation of a new identity, namely an Arab one. The many poetic works contained in al-Shabīb's Dīwān on pan-Arabism, Arab unity and championing the issues thereof emphasise the existence of such identity within him. This Arab identity manifests itself in al-Shabīb's poetry through three main facets: first, the call for reviving the classical form of Arabic; second, the call for Arab unity; third, the championing of Arab issues.

Call for Reviving Arabic:

The importance of language lies in that it is an aspect of similarity among members of a society, be it through thought or expression, as it is akin to the social space and cultural vessel that binds members of a community and thus partakes in formulating collective awareness. In discussing common language's importance in formulating Arab identity, Ḥāzim Nusaybah (1959, p. 27) argued that although the Arabian Peninsula was not a political entity prior to Islam, it still held a high level of social and cultural awareness that was near-nationalist primarily due to the common language in which poets composed their works despite being members of different tribes. Nusaybah added that this common language was not restricted to poets and intellectual elites, but was also spoken by the general public. This emphasises that the common Arabic language used in poems, proverbs and tales in pre-Islam literature was highly influential in instilling Arab nationalist awareness as it moulded Arab minds into one cast and formed the prelude towards formulating them as one nation at the hands of Prophet Muhammad.

In discussing the Gulf region, it is evident that al-Shabīb was a true believer in the idea that the rise of his Arab nation can only be attained if its members practised its classical form of language as he was a staunch believer that language is an integral part of that identity and an essential factor in building civilisation. Many of al-Shabīb's poetic works call for linguistic safety and reverting to and preserving Arabic, as in one of his most important compositions in which he pays homage to Sheikh Sālim Mubārak al-Sabāḥ for the latter's encouraging of him to delve more into Arabic literature and study the sciences of the Arabic language, dubbed as *Lughat al-Ḍād* (Language of the letter Ḍād). Here, al-Shabīb writes:

<div dir="rtl">

منذ حرّضتَني على بذلِ جِدّي

في تلقّي الفصحى وبَذلِ اجتهادي

كان شغلي جميعه في نهاري

بل وليلي تطلُّبًا للضادِ

ولقد ذُقتُ طعمَها الحلوَ حتى

ليس إلا منالُها من مرادي

ولكَ الفضلُ -ليس لي- أنْ تأتّى

ليَ ما رمتُ من لُغى الأجدادِ

</div>

Ever since you encouraged me to exert my best

In studying Arabic and toiling towards it,

My entire days were spent in such

As were my nights seeking that Ḍād(ī),

For having savoured its sweetness

I seek only to achieve more of its lore,

And to you is the favour, not my own,

If I enrich myself with the forefathers' language.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, pp. 291–292)

The above verses state that Arabic is a precious inheritance and that the poet's pride in their language reflects his pride in his Arab identity.

In his introduction to al-Shabīb's Dīwān, Aḥmad al-Bishr al-Rūmī states that the former never went to school, held a degree or received information from an institute as is the case in schools and universities nowadays. Al-Rūmī says that al-Shabīb was self-made by having memorised almost 30,000 verses of classical Arabic and modern poetry (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 25). Those whose poetry he memorised included the works of Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī (d. 284 H/ 897 AD), al-Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283 H/ 896 AD), and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī who he favoured among all others as the two had similar traits of being blind and secluding themselves in their homes. The works of

Aḥmad Shawqī (1868–1932), Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm (1872–1932) and Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945) were among those of al-Shabīb's modern times, which he also memorised.

al-Shabīb was keen on keeping abreast with the works of this modern age's writers and was interested in literature, philosophy and sociology. His memorisation of so much poetry allowed him excellent knowledge of Arabic grammar, rhetoric and aesthetics to the extent that al-Rūmī states in his introduction that he barely remembers a day when al-Shabīb did not know the answer to a question the former posed about a specific Arabic word, and how al-Shabīb would always respond by quoting a verse of poetry or prose (al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 25).

Furthermore, his poem – which we referred to in Chapter 4 – clearly states al-Shabīb's call for reviving Arabic and reveals his frustration with the Arabic language teacher at al-Mubārakiyyah School. al-Shabīb says:

<div dir="rtl">

يا أيها اللغةُ الجميلةُ إنّني

مُغرى الفؤادِ بحسنِكِ الفتّانِ

</div>

O beautiful language I am

Fond of heart with your graceful beauty.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 571)

In this same poem, al-Shabīb expresses his wish that members of the new generation would revert to their original language so that they may eventually fulfil his not yet attained dream of Arab unity:

<div dir="rtl">

إنّا لَنَأْمَلُ في بَنينا أنْ يُرَوْا

وهُم من الفصحى بخيرِ مكانِ

كي يُظْهِروا من حُسنِها وجَمالِها

ما أضْمَرَتْهُ حوادثُ الأزمانِ

ويقومُ كلٌّ منهُم بنصيبِهِ

من بثّها ما اسْطاعَ في الإخوانِ

حتى يَتِمَّ ظهورُها، فظهورُها

صلةٌ لقاصي قوْمِنا بالداني

الوحدةُ الكُبرى التي تحقيقُها

</div>

ما زالَ حتى اليومِ وهْوَ أماني

Let us hope our children may realise

As they embrace Arabic and master it well,

That they may portray of its loveliness and beauty

That which ill-fated times have concealed,

And each does his duty towards cascading it

And spreading it as much as possible among people

Till it reigns throughout the land,

For its spread connects our members together.

The grand unity whose achievement we seek

Still eludes us till this day in dreams.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 570)

Call for Arab Unity:

As discussed in Section 1 of this chapter, identity in the pre-oil era was mainly religiously Islamic when considering al-Sālimī's works as a representative example of that phase. As the Gulf region was under British occupation, al-Sālimī was inclined to hold onto the bond of religion and the strength of Islam to ensure that the largest portion of his Omani society may join in on the effort of resisting and expelling their occupiers. In Kuwait, al-Shabīb witnessed the two consecutive phases of pre-oil and the onset of oil ages. Through his poetry, we notice a rescinding of the Islamic identity and the gradual emergence of an alternative Arab one.

One must pay attention to the importance of the historical context of the phase in which al-Shabīb lived, as the most prominent event of the time was the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1922. This resulted in shockwaves throughout the Islamic World in general, and in the creation of an identity void for the Arab nation too, as Islamic identity reigned at the time and was clearly reflected through poetry. Since the affiliation between Gulf states and the Ottoman Empire was one of religion, not politics, the

former were in need of seeking an alternative identity – a matter that led many of the masses, including poets, to embrace Arab nationalism.

None of al-Shabīb's poetry directly reflected the impact of the Ottoman Caliphate's fall, yet we can notice the rescinding of Islamism therein and the rise of pan-Arabism. This was due to branding him a nonbeliever (Zindīq) and excommunicating him, as well as due to the discovery of oil in the Gulf.

1. al-Shabīb excommunicated and Branded a Zindīq

Al-Shabīb says:

<div dir="rtl">

تأملتُ أديان البَرِيّةِ كلَّها

فما رَكَنَتْ إلا لإسلامِها نفسي

وقد كان تقليد أمّي دِيانتي

فأصبحَ عن إرشاد عقلي والدَّرْسِ

فمُذْ كنتُ حتى اليوم ما زال مِلّتي

ولكنّ يومي فيه أحسنَ من أمسي

ومالي عن الإسلامِ –ما عشتُ- مَرْغَبٌ

إلى غيرهِ حتى ولو قطعوا رأسي

</div>

I pondered all religions of mankind

But of Islam only did my soul accept,

I had followed religion as a blind tradition

That I then accepted through knowledge and study,

From when I was born till this day I have followed its guidance

And my days through it are better than my yesterdays,

So long that I may live, from Islam I shall not sway

Or embrace another even if they behead me.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 424)

Despite professing his undying allegiance to Islam, al-Shabīb was not safe from Takfīrī groups led by men of religion in his time.

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Michalak-Pikulska (2000, p. 173) highlights that al-Shabīb affronted not only orthodox Muslim circles but also Fahd al-ʿAskar, to the point that a death sentence was passed on both of them. According to Michalak-Pikulska (2000, p. 174), al-Shabīb was condemned as a heretic (Zindīq) for his religious beliefs that were contrary to the social principles and cruel tradition while most of his poetic texts are social resistance as well as pessimistic reflection on the poet's situation in Kuwaiti society, similar to al-ʿAskar's works.

al-Shabīb comments on these accusations:

<div dir="rtl">

وبعضٌ عَزا شَكًّا بصحّةِ مِلّتي

إليّ وإيماني بها ثابتُ الأُسِّ

</div>

And some held doubts on the sincerity of my affiliation

Yet my faith is strong and well-rooted

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 424)

al-Shabīb would argue against these false accusations and state:

<div dir="rtl">

لماذا أصومُ الشهرَ إنْ كُنتُ مارِقًا؟

وآخِذُ نفسي بالحِفاظِ على الخمسِ؟

</div>

Why would I fast the month if I were untrue

And toil so as to preserve fulfilling the five prayers?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 425)

These harsh social circumstances are similar to those of a very famous blind poet: al-Maʿarrī. As mentioned in the literature review, four studies have made comparisons between al-Shabīb and al-Maʿarrī: Abdulfattāḥ (1996), Nashʾat (2003), al-Anṣārī (1975) and al-Shaṭṭī (2007). The first of these studies discussed al-Shabīb's life and the social circumstances surrounding him and concentrated on common features between al-Shabīb and al-Maʿarrī. The second studied the psychological similarities between al-Shabīb's and al-Maʿarrī's poetry. The third concentrated on al-Shabīb's thoughts, philosophy, ideology and doctrine in life, while the last implied the ideological influence of al-Maʿarrī and Muʿtazilah on al-Shabīb's poetry.

In fact, al-Shabīb wrote against religious fanatics in his poetry as he believed they were the main reason for the dispersal of the nation. He says:

فرّقَتْنا تلك العمائمُ حتى

أَيْأَسَتْنا من أُلفةٍ واتّحادِ

وإذا عَزَّ الاتّحادُ بني العُرْبِ

عَدَتْهُمْ عن الحياةِ العَوادي

Those turbans have divided us from one another

Until we despaired togetherness and unity,

And if unity has estranged the Arabs

Enemies shall await them at every corner.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 285)

al-Shabīb denounced religious icons' blind imitation, religious zealousness and the excommunication of others who disagreed with them intellectually, and for these reasons, he attempted to circumvent Islamic identity and replace it with the trend which called for Arab nationalism. This was reflected in his poetic works in the form of unambiguous Arab identity.

From then on, al-Shabīb attended every event he heard about which called for Arab unity, some of which he documented in poems. For example, al-Shabīb composed a poem of gratitude to many Kuwaitis who believed in Arab nationalism upon their establishment of the Literary Club (al-Nādī al-Adabī) in Kuwait in 1923. According to Alebrahim (2019, p. 51), some of al-Nādī al-Adabī's members had exhibited Arab nationalist views. In this poem, al-Shabīb writes:

لعَمْرُكُمُ -شبابَ القومِ- إنّي

لمسرورٌ بهذا الاحتفالِ

فهذا الاحتفالُ أراهُ بابًا

إلى مَجْدٍ يؤدّي القومَ عالِ

أكادُ أطيرُ من فرَحي بما قد

أتيتُم يا بني وطني الأعالي

فقد جئتُم ـشَبابَ القومِ ـ أمرًا

بِهِ تنجو الشعوبُ من الضلالِ

I swear by your life O young men

I am pleased with such a celebration,

For I see a door in this event

Leading to supreme glory of the people,

I can almost soar high out of joy

For that which ye countrymen have achieved of grace,

For you, my countrymen have brought about

A matter that can save the masses from going astray.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 684)

al-Shabīb then calls on them to continue on the path of holding activities at the Club:

فسيروا للأمامِ ولا تُبالوا

ولو دُسْتُمْ على شوكِ السِّيالِ

فعُشّاقُ الأمامِ كما علمتمْ

تخوضُ لهُ الخُطوبَ ولا تُبالي

So march forward and fear not

Even if you tread on thorns of blood,

For those who seek glory

Fear neither danger nor give it a second glance.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 684)

al-Shabīb then expresses his pride in the Club members' ideology, principles, stances, their Arab race and the achievements of their forefathers – matters which reflect his approval thereof. He says:

شبابَ القومِ مبدؤكمْ أراهُ

سيوغلُ في السموّ وفي الجَلالِ

وظنّي فيكُمْ حَسَنٌ ألستُمْ

سُلالةَ أَثْبَتِ الأممِ الخوالي

بلى، أنتم بنو مَن لم تزعزعْ

ثَباتَهُمُ مخيفاتُ النَّزالِ

O my countrymen to me is clear your principle

That shall rise high and unambiguous to all,

And my hopes of you are great and good

For you are the dynasty of past nations,

Certainly you are the sons of those who

Calamities have not swayed off course.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 685)

2. The discovery of oil in the Gulf region:

The Gulf region was under colonial rule during the pre-oil era and until the early 1970s. This colonialism was accompanied by a dire economic situation that led to cultural and intellectual isolation in the region.

In his study on the poetic movement in the Gulf, Gāfūd (1996, p. 6) focuses on the economic factor and attributes the rise in political and nationalist awareness therein to oil revenues which began flowing generously as of the 1930s. These revenues played a significant role in cultural openness and social changes that the area began to witness, especially as of the 1950s. Gāfūd adds that the arrival of many citizens from Arab countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine also played a role in the development of nationalist sentiment in the Gulf.

Al-Rashoud (2016, p. 108) states that the Kuwaiti-Palestinian connection began in the 1930s with the emergence of Kuwait's popular demand that occupied Palestine be helped to rid itself from its occupiers, and the connection became stronger by the day. An important historical point to note here is that the production of oil in Kuwait in 1946 coincided with the Palestinian Catastrophe two years later. This led to the arrival of many Palestinians to Kuwait who contributed towards the establishment of a modern Kuwait.

It was on this argument that Shafīq al-Ghabrā based his 2019 study. In his book *Al-Nakbah wa Nushūʾ al-Shatāt al-Falasṭīnī fī al-Kuwayt* (The Nakba and the Emergence of the Palestinian Diaspora in Kuwait), Shafīq al-Ghabrā seeks to understand an critical and undocumented part of the Palestinian diaspora – the massive Palestinian community in Kuwait until 1990 – through an in-depth investigation of the survival and accommodation strategies used by a people driven by force to settle far from their homeland.

In Chapter Three of the book (2019, p. 69), al-Ghabrā states that the first step for Palestinians after the 1948 Catastrophe was to tend their wounds and travel with their families to find jobs that would aid them in weathering their new refugee status. Travelling to Arab countries was the more logical choice due to cultural and linguistic similarities, and Kuwait was one of their destinations. Hence, hundreds of educated Palestinians travelled to Kuwait and began practising the jobs they were experienced at as the majority of them were teachers, doctors, engineers, accountants and academics. These men and women travelled to Kuwait in particular as it was the most open Gulf society at the time, as well as the most Arab nationalistic since years before the discovery of oil there. It was the country with the best prospects towards advancement, and al-Ghabrā writes how a new Palestinian community was formed in Kuwait, and how it played an important role in Kuwait's development.

al-Shabīb praises Palestinians for their favour towards Kuwait and says:

<div dir="rtl">

فلسطينُ مَنْ لم يعترفْ طائعًا بما

علينا لها من مِنّةٍ يعترفْ غَصْبا

</div>

To Palestine whoever does not acknowledge willingly

Its favour towards us is noted and chiselled in memory.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 193)

As for the reaction of Kuwaiti elites regarding the arrival of Palestinians to Kuwait, al-Ghabrā (2019, p. 70) adds that they considered it supportive in preserving Kuwait's pan-Arabism as the country readied itself to gain independence from Britain. "The assumption among Kuwaitis at the time was to harness Palestinian expertise for a temporary period until they returned to their homeland after a few years, yet none had

expected the diaspora to increase in numbers and that the aspiration to return to Palestine would not be achieved" (al-Ghabrā, 2019, p. 70).

Hence, the discovery of oil in the Gulf region, and particularly in Kuwait, drew in Palestinian intellectuals and together played a role in the rise of pan-Arabism and the creation of an Arab identity for Arab Gulf poets. This was emphasised by Gāfūd (1996, p. 6) who argued that Gulf poets called for freeing their societies from the chains of the English occupation of the region and the necessity for these societies to reap the riches of their own wealth.

In the same context, al-Jābirī (2015, p. 145) feels that the West deemed Arabs as their strategic passageway and as those whose lands contained the world's largest oil reserves. He argues that the West considers itself the rightful owner of Arabian oil and not merely a client as it was the West that discovered and manufactured it; hence, the West believes it is not up to the Arabs to dispose of the oil as if they were its sole owners.

al-Shabīb was among those poets who witnessed that phase and who expressed their disdain towards this occupier's notion. He warns all Arabs by saying:

<div dir="rtl">

لَعَمْرُ أبي ما (الإنكليزُ) بِمُنْتَهٍ

-لهم مطمَعٌ- إلا بِناءٍ من الرَّهْبِ
</div>

I swear by my father's life that the greed of the English shall not cease

Except if opposed by ones of might who strike in them fear.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 147)

In another poem, al-Shabīb warns:

<div dir="rtl">

قسّمونا باسم الديانةِ أقسامًا

لِيَحْظَوْا بالغَسْجَدِ المُستفادِ
</div>

In the name of religion, they have divided us into groups

So that they may reap the riches of the lucrative gold.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 286)

al-Shabīb also witnessed the political unity between Egypt and Syria, dubbed the United Arab Republic, which lasted from 1958 until 1961. He was elated by the event

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which seemed like a prelude to grand Arab unity that would destroy the foreign occupiers. al-Shabīb says:

استضيئي بهما يا أنفُسًا

تُهْنَ في ظلماءِ ظُلْمِ الأجنبي

May these two be your beacon O tired souls

That have gone astray in the foreigner's dark injustices.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 168)

Elsewhere in the same poem, al-Shabīb describes the occupiers' tyranny and injustices against Arab countries:

ما رأى شعبًا ضعيفًا مَرَّةً

وعليه لم يُغِرْ أو يَثِبِ

كم لنا شعبٌ حبيبٌ يشتكي

منهُ شرًّا باللسانِ المُعْرِبِ

اذكروا شَعْبَ عُمانٍ والذي

يتلقى من مُبيدِ الشَّجَبِ

وفلسطينَ التي ما تَرَكَتْ

دمعةً من أَدْمُعي لم تُسْكَبِ

ليس الاستعمارُ عنكُمْ يَرْعَوي

ما رأى صَدْعًا بِكُمْ لم يُرْأبِ

إنه الذئبُ الذي إنْ سَنَحَتْ

فرصةً يظهرْ وإلا يختبي

Never has it seen a weak people

And not pounced on it as does a predator,

Many are our beloved countries that outwardly express

Suffering from their heinous and devious deeds,

Remember if you may the people of Oman

Who receive woe and deadly sorrow,

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And Palestine that has caused every one of my tears

To fall on my cheeks as pouring rain,

Occupiers of you shall neither stop nor be content

If they see a crack in your unity unresolved,

For they are the wolf that attacks when chance

Is present or otherwise disguises itself from detection.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 170)

al-Shabīb then calls on Arabs to unite to rid themselves of overbearing occupiers who aim to plunder Arabs' wealth. He says:

لو رأى الوحدةَ هذي ما رمى

أحدًا منّا بإحدى الكُرَبِ

نقمةٌ كُبرى على استعمارهم

إنْ رآها تتلظّى يَذُبِ

Had the West seen unity it would not have dared

Cast any of us with any of these woes,

It shall be a calamity befalling their occupation

And if they saw its scorching flare, they'd flee.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 171)

al-Shabīb believed that the only way for the Arab nation to dust off its dirt and advance was through unity and accordingly called for such aloud. He also called on the masses to promote the same ideology:

فإلى الوحدةِ الحميدةِ عُقبى

نادِ يا مُصْلِحَ العروبةِ نادِ

فهي بعد الإله خيرُ كفيلٍ

ببلوغ المُنى وخيرُ عَتادِ

Towards a blessed unity call

O believers in pan-Arabism call,

For it after God is the best guarantor

Of fulfilling objectives and best sustenance.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 286)

Championing Arab Issues:

Many are the verses on Arab unity in al-Shabīb's poetry – a sign that blindness did not deter him from expressing the woes of his Arab nation and reflect on that which had befallen it. These verses also emphasise al-Shabīb's inclusion within the Arab context and that Arab identity began to surpass its Islamic one, which was prevalent during the pre-oil era.

al-Shabīb's poem entitled *Yā Asheqqāʾī al-ʿArab* (O' My Arab Brethren) expresses his annoyance with Arab broadcasting agencies' laggardness in carrying out their role towards championing the Arab nation. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

ما للإذاعات بين العُرْبِ دائَبَةٌ

تبثُّ مِلْءَ الشروقِ اللهوَ والطربا؟

أكان يعربُ يرضى اللهوَ وهو يرى

من قومهِ أحدًا قد سِيءَ أو نُكِبا؟

</div>

Why are Arab broadcasting stations continuing

To play songs and music of debauchery?

Would Yaʿrub agree to fool around as he sees

Of his people those done injustice and harm?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 210)

Yaʿrub is the forefather of Arabs to whom they all belong and al-Shabīb calls upon him so that Arabs may feel remorse for failing to support Arab states that were being occupied because of the wealth and riches they possessed.

Despite Arab broadcasting stations' lagging, al-Shabīb utilised poetry as a means for aiding these oppressed states as he believed in its reach and ability to change perceptions. Through poetry, al-Shabīb also supported the 1954 Algerian revolution against France which lasted until 1962 where one million Algerians gave their lives for

the cause. With the war there raging and the fighting becoming fiercer by the day, al-Shabīb's poetic inspiration surged, and he composed a poem blaming Arabs for their inaction and for watching from the bleachers while their brethren fought and died. He reprimanded them severely as in the following:

دَعُوا الجزائرَ تَلْقى الويلَ والحَرَبا

ثمِّ ادّعوا أنّكم ما زلتُم عَرَبا

You let Algeria face horrors and doom

Yet you still allege being real Arabs?!

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 209)

Despite the spatial distance between Algeria and Kuwait, al-Shabīb's Arab nationalist awareness pressed him to assist Algerians in their struggle. In this vein, al-ʿAlī (1986, p. 174) notes that al-Shabīb's nationalist consciousness was ahead of his Gulf peers' and described him as having realised the notion of nationalism in its modern concept.

The Palestinian Cause was also widely present in al-Shabīb's Dīwān. In a poem entitled, Ṣarkhah fī al-ʿArab fī athnāʾ Jihād Filisṭīn (A Shout at Arabs during the Palestinian Struggle), al-Shabīb writes:

أَيَجْمَعُ شُذّاذُ اليهودِ نفوسَهم

وما مَلَكوا من وافِرِ البيضِ والصُّفْرِ

لِإخْذِ فلسطينَ العزيز مكانُها

ورَمْيِ أهاليها بقاصمةِ الظّهْرِ؟

Shall the Jews in diaspora band together

And that of silver and gold they possess,

So as to overtake dear Palestine in their stead

And doom its people to death and destitution?!

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 364)

Al-Shabīb's sorrow and pain are apparent when speaking of the Jews' ability to band and unite towards the occupation of Palestine, while Arabs persisted in dispersion and disagreement. His 1937 poem, Miṣr wa Qaḍiyyat Filisṭīn (Egypt and the Palestinian Cause), is proof of this sorrow as he blamed the defeatist stance of Egypt towards the

division of Palestine when the former, in the eyes of all Arabs at the time, was the Arab World's strongest power. Al-Shabīb says:

<div dir="rtl">

لومي فلسطينُ العزيزةُ أو ذَري

مِصْرًا على هذا السكوتِ المُنْكَرِ

سَكَنَتْ وصوتُ الظُلمِ يَدْوي مُعلِنًا

تقسيمَكِ المُشْجي كأنْ لم تَشْعُرِ

</div>

Blame dearest Palestine or hold responsible

Egypt for this denounced silence,

For it has gone still when injustice rang loud

Announcing your partition as if it sensed nothing.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 374)

al-Shabīb then escalates the tone of his reprimanding and blame as he holds al-Azhar's religious establishment responsible for that which had befallen Palestine. He wishes that al-Azhar – whose orders were revered by Muslims at the time – had called on Muslims to bear arms (Jihād) to save Palestine, but he was stunned by its silence and forfeiting its role in the calamity. al-Shabīb says:

<div dir="rtl">

وأحَقُّ من مصرٍ بكلِّ ملامَةٍ

ذاك الذي يدعونَهُ بالأزهَرِ

كنّا نُوَمِّلُ أنْ يُقيمَ قيامةً

إنْ لم تُرَقْ مُهَجُ الأعادي تُذْعَرِ

فإذا تثاقِلُهُ يطولُ كأنَّما

دَهَنَ العِدا أعصابَهُ بمُخَدِّرٍ

</div>

More deserving of all blame than of Egypt

Is that which they call al-Azhar,

Who we hoped would raise hell and resistance

For the blood of enemies to be spilt or be scattered,

Yet its inaction and slothfulness persist longer

As if enemies had infused its senses with a sedative.

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 375)

Al-Sabah (1973, p. 147) notes that despite al-Shabīb's seemingly harsh accusation of Egypt for being respondent and his warning that Arabs will no longer revere it as their superpower, this blame remains vital in showing that Egypt – despite its political conditions – was the hope of Arabs towards liberation, allaying injustice and resisting occupiers.

al-Shabīb's cognisance of Arab nationalism, coupled with his deep understanding of its facets, caused him to delve deeper into the affairs of Arab causes and compose many poems about them to the extent that he was able to write about all causes he witnessed within one poem. This poem included the causes of Palestine, Oman and Algeria, and in which he warns of colonialists' danger and their injustices towards Arabs. al-Shabīb writes:

<div dir="rtl">

يُريدُ الذي في الغربِ أنْ يُفنيَ العُرْبا

جميعًا ولكن الذي في السّما يأبى

فلو أَمْكَنَ الإفناءُ أفنى ولم يَدَعْ

من العُرْبِ لا فردًا يعيشُ ولا شَعْبا

وهذا عُمانُ والجزائرُ شاهدٌ

جهادُهُما الميمونُ أنْ لم أَقُلْ كِذْبا

وما بَرِحَتْ من فِعْلِهِ النُّكْرُ تشتكي

فلسطينُ ما أغرى بها الكَرْبَ فالكَرْبا

فهل عربيٌّ بعدَ هذا مُؤَمِّلٌ

من الغربِ إنصافًا إذا استرشدَ اللُّبّا؟

</div>

Those of the West wish to annihilate all Arabs

Yet He in the Heavens protects them from so,

Had they been able to annihilate us they would have

And would not have let one or a group of us live,

Oman and Algeria are witnesses thereof

See their blessed struggle if you deem me lying,

And Palestine of their ill-doings still complains

So much calamity has befallen it for so long and more,

Is there an Arab after this who has any faith

In a West, if he follows the signals of one's heart?

(al-Shabīb, 2008, p. 195)

In conclusion, the phase that accompanied the onset of the oil age – represented by al-Shabīb – accentuates that the Gulf's poetic movement preserved the vertical form of Arabic poetry and classical rhymes yet went beyond the notion of imitation in poetic content. Poetic topics, hence, began to expand beyond the classical style, began embracing social and nationalist causes and reflected the specificity of the Arab society in general, and the Gulf one in particular. Among the most prominent outcomes of the discovery of oil in this region was that it influenced the works of blind poets from the Gulf in reformulating their poetic content by replacing the poem's religious identity with an Arab nationalist one as the Ottoman Caliphate began to crumble.

Section 3: Poetic Style and Content in the Post-Oil Era

Examining the poetry of Saqr al-Shabīb during the onset of the oil era in the Gulf area has brought to light the fact that it mimicked old poetry in form, content, topics, imagery and meanings to the extent of full adherence to artistic imagery of some classical Arab poets who lived in ancient ages. The only difference from that style in al-Shabīb's poetry was a development in content, not style. This chapter will continue with analysing that poetic development in the post-oil discovery era from the works of Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn to elucidate how this era influenced poetic style and content.

One must first review the historical background of Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn's life in order to comprehend the benchmarks in this man's life and comprehend the rapid cultural transformations the region underwent throughout it – a life which extended from 1931 – when the Kingdom ushered in the oil age during the 1930s – until 2014.

Education in Saudi Arabia during the 1930s was very primitive and did not go beyond the basics of reading and writing Arabic, in addition to Islamic Law sciences. According

to al-Ḥaydarī (2007, p. 83), Ibn Ḥusayn was born in al-ʿAwdah village to the north of Riyadh. It is where he received his basic education at the hands of his uncle and then father, after which his father sent him to Riyadh proper in 1943 to study the principles of education. Ibn Ḥusayn was then sent to Mecca to study Islamic Law principles at the Kaʿbah and then to al-Ṭāʾif where he studied at the Islamic school *Dār al-Tawḥīd* for two years.

It is also essential to point out that Ibn Ḥusayn's knowledge of Arabic clearly impacted his poetic ability as he continued learning more about the language until his university years. Having returned to Riyadh in 1954, he enrolled at the Faculty of Arabic Language in Riyadh and graduated in 1958. He then taught Arabic at the Scientific Institute in Riyadh until 1972 (al-Ḥaydarī, 2007, p. 83).

In later years, the economic prosperity due to the discovery of oil brought about an educational renaissance for the entire region, particularly Saudi Arabia, where many students were sent abroad to receive their education and complete their higher studies. In his book, *Al-Ḥadāthah wa al-Taḥdīth fī Duwal al-Khalīj al-ʿArabiyyah munthu Muntaṣaf al-Qarn al-ʿIshrīn* (Modernity and Modernisation in Gulf Countries since mid-Twentieth Century), al-Tamīmī (2018, p. 133) marks the transformations the kingdom witnessed after the discovery of oil and states that educational endeavours expanded there particularly after the increase in oil prices in 1973. Saudi students studying abroad gained new ideas, witnessed the ways of the most advanced nations at the time, and lived a free and open experience abroad. This became a norm, which persists to date, as many Saudi students continue to study at universities abroad.

Ibn Ḥusayn was among those students and was sent to Egypt to pursue his higher education where he received a Master's in Arabic Literature and a PhD in Literature and Criticism from al-Azhar University, Cairo, in 1974 and 1977, respectively. Upon returning to Saudi Arabia in 1977, he was appointed as a professor in the faculty of Arabic language in Riyadh until his retirement in 1989. Afterwards, King Saud University contracted his services, where he taught Arabic literature until the day he died (al-Ḥaydarī, 2007, p. 83).

Having lived in Cairo as a student and having experienced life in an environment entirely different from his Gulf one, it is most likely that Ibn Ḥusayn was influenced by the poetic school of Egypt and by the styles of its famous poets the likes of Ahmad

Shawqi (1868–1932). This is particularly probable as Ibn Ḥusayn published his first Dīwān, *Aṣdāʾ wa Andāʾ* (Echoes and Dews) in 1988, almost ten years after returning from Egypt. Then again, he may have been influenced by modern poetry schools, while studying Literary Criticism, which called for a renewal of poetic form and content, like 'al-Dīwān Group', the 'Pen League' or the 'Apollo Group'. The Free Verse School may have also influenced him – a style free from the limitations of regular metre or rhythm, which Iraqi poet Nāzik al-Malāʾikah (1923–2007) called for embracing.

Accordingly, this chapter attempts to provide an understanding of the post-oil era's poetic style and focuses on Ibn Ḥusayn's works. It will also follow the same four artistic standards of previous chapters, i.e. poetic language, rhythm and metre, poetic content and poetic imagery, in the hope of eventually understanding the influence of oil on the poetry of Arab Gulf poets. Hence, this chapter aims at identifying the role of oil in formulating – or reformulating – poetic style and content in the Gulf.

Poetic Language

The discovery of oil in the Gulf played a role in the transformation of Gulf societies, particularly the Saudi one, towards a new phase in which the region's economic, political and social norms were clearly different. In her book '*Al-Ḥarakah al-Shiʾriyyah fī al-Khalīj al-ʿArabi bayn al-Taqlīd wa al-Taṭawwur*' (Poetic Movement in the Gulf from Traditionalism to Modernity), al-Rūmī (1999, p. 285) argues that this qualitative cultural leap was due to the substantial financial returns that flooded this region after the discovery of oil there. She adds that this led to cultural connectivity between the Gulf and the outside world, whether via travelling abroad to study or the arrival of many people from other more advanced cultures in the region.

Shedding light on Ibn Ḥusayn's case, and on his poetic language as the Gulf society ushered in the new age – and the impact of modern poetic schools, which aimed at simplifying their language so that it may be easily embraced by the masses, on the Gulf's poetic movement – one notes his insistence on employing classical terminology in his poetry. Such insistence denotes his steadfastness in clinging onto his poetic Arab lore as if considering classical Arabic an inseparable part of his identity. Then again, he may have done so having felt a responsibility as a poet to revive classical vocabulary and build a linguistic bridge connecting the old to the new. For instance, he

insists on employing old names in their old context rather than the new like the classical form for the word 'swords' in Arabic whereby he uses the word '*Maṣālīt*' instead of '*Suyūf*'. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

أما ترى وقعةَ الخفجيّ إذ نصبت

لهم شراكًا سقت سُمَّ المصاليتِ؟

Did you not see how the al-Khafjī incident

Ensnared them as they fell on jagged swords?

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 235)

The above verse exemplifies how to Ibn Ḥusayn, poetry was classical, traditional, and one of revival akin to old Arabic poetry – not only linguistically, but also in its poetic imagery. The man created a poetic image of the 1990 Gulf War by utilising classical tools and archaic wording similar to classical images used in old poetry, which are far from modern images, for example, traps, poison and swords instead of bombs, firearms and tanks.

Hence, renewal in its critical form not only influenced the poet's poetic language but conversely overwhelmed his Dīwān, rendering his poetry more akin to classical Arabic of olden poetry than that of the modern age.

One must understand Ibn Ḥusayn's complex psychological circumstances first in order to comprehend why he utilised such a form of linguistic resistance. As the civic, cultural and economic leap in the Gulf after the discovery of oil there occurred almost suddenly, it led Ibn Ḥusayn to remain faithful to the classical form of poetry despite his full-fledged interaction with modern life's facets. He expressed his new feelings and advanced stances on life utilising the same classical poetic style of olden days.

From another angle, the influence of the Holy Quran on Ibn Ḥusayn's poetic language is evident throughout many portions of his Dīwān where he is keen on employing names of classical figures and from mythology in creating poetic imagery. An example of this is when he conjures characters from Quranic stories like the sorcery of Hārūt and Mārūt – mentioned in verse (102) of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* – to describe the magical beauty of al-Tāʾif in Saudi Arabia. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

كأنَّ بها هاروت ينفث سحره

<div dir="rtl">

فيرويه شرقيّ الهوى ومغاربُه

</div>

As if Hārūt had had it enchanted

With lush beauty from East to West

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 486)

Ibn Ḥusayn was also influenced by pre-Islamic (Jāhilī) poetry as evident in his poem entitled '*Yā Ayyuhā al-Ṣarḥ*' (*O' Thou Establishment*) when forced to retire from al-Riyadh Institute in 1989. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

ودّع هريرة إنّ الرَّكْبَ مُرتحِلُ

وهل تُطيقُ وداعًا أيّها الرجلُ؟

ودّعتُ مَنْ لم يعد في ودّها أملٌ

كلّا، وما عاد لي في وصلها أملُ

يا معهدًا عشتُ في أكنافه زمنًا

أشدو له والهوى يحدو ويعتملُ

</div>

Bid Hurayra farewell as her group is leaving

And can you bear such farewell O' man?

I have bid farewell to she in whose love is no more hope

None, nor have I hope any longer of being close to her

O' this institute in which I lived an eternity

I yearn for it with an ever-aching heart

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 837)

The first two lines are taken from a famous *muʿallaqah* by al-Aʿshā, and then continued with Ibn Ḥusayn's own production, where al-Aʿshā starts his *muʿallaqah* saying:

<div dir="rtl">

ودّع هريرة إنّ الرَّكْبَ مُرتحِلُ

وهل تُطيقُ وداعًا أيّها الرجلُ؟

</div>

Bid Hurayra farewell as her group is leaving

And can you bear such farewell O' man?

However, Ibn Ḥusayn's employment of the name '*Hurayra*' is not in reference to the woman al-Aʿshā loved but instead used as a symbol, or objective equivalent, of al-Riyadh Institute in which Ibn Ḥusayn worked for many years, rendering its value as that of a beloved sweetheart.

In addition to resistance in the use of poetic language, Ibn Ḥusayn did the same with its form as he followed the vertical style and traditional metres inherited from classical Arab poets. He did not implement any renewal in the form of his poems, like the free verse style, for example, and held steadfast to his principles as he considered them part of his heritage. Most probably his siding away from doing so in metre and rhyme is a reflection of his trauma caused by modernisation which accompanied the ushering in of the Gulf society's oil age. It could have also been due to his sense of alienation and unfamiliarity with the new form of the poem as well as yearning for original poetic style .

Poetic Content

One glance at the topics, themes or purposes of Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry provides a clear indication of how traditional they are, as well as being strict in echoing the topics of classical poetry, e.g. the poetry of panegyric, pride, eulogy and love. However, Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry includes some unique themes making him an appropriate representative of this phase.

The Poetry of Female Imagery

The poetry of female imagery has two phases in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry: oil age and pre-oil age. During the latter – represented by Omani poet al-Sālimī – the topic of women was scarce in poetry as none of this poet's Dīwāns contained a poem dedicated solely to women – as opposed to the onset of the oil age there.

As the Gulf region ushered in the oil age – represented by Kuwaiti poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb – the topic of women became prominently present in poetry and transformed them from being a neglected topic to one of importance as evidenced in this poets' Dīwān. The most important imagery of women in al-Shabīb's poetry was that of the fictitious

female lover such as Zaynab (his fictional lover) and Laylā whom Qays loved. These are in addition to the sharp-tongued woman who al-Shabīb denounced and ridiculed.

Nevertheless, in the post-oil era, women in the Gulf underwent an apparent social transformation, and they were included in many Dīwāns of that period. The most distinct works among these were that of the poet Ibn Ḥusayn, as women were mentioned to a large extent in his writings and had multiple facets. The imagery of the woman as a wife is most prevalent in his Dīwān as he composed many poems to celebrate his love for his wife, such as the one entitled '*Dhekrā*' (Anniversary), which he composed to commemorate their 50 years of marriage. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

رفيقتي في معاناتي وفي فرحي

هيّا إلى حيث نروي من أمانينا

خمسون عامًا طويناها مكلّلةً

من النجاحِ بما نهوى فيرضينا

هل تذكرين؟ فإنّي ما نسيتُ شذا

ذاك المساء، وهل أنسى تدانينا؟

حبيبتي أنتِ مفتاحُ النجاحِ لما

حقّقتهُ، أنتِ مَن بالسعي يُغرينا

My partner in suffering and in joy

Come let us speak of our yearnings;

Fifty years we have completed together

Bursting with success in achieving what pleased us;

Do you remember for I have not forgotten that evening's sweet scent

I can never forget how we swayed towards each other;

My darling you are the key for what I have achieved

For you entice me to pursue all success.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, pp. 675–676)

In another poem entitled '*Antī*' (You), Ibn Ḥusayn professes to her his immense love and admiration for all she does:

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يا زوجةً كلَّ ما تأتيهِ أُكبِرُهُ

وكلّ شيءٍ بها يحلو به الغزلُ

Whatever you bring about O' wife I revere

And everything about you makes flirting so sweet.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 670)

Ibn Ḥusayn also wrote about women as mothers, as evidenced in his poem dedicated to his late mother, entitled '*Wā Ummāh*' (O' Mother):

رحلتِ عن الدنيا وكنتِ نعيمَها

إذا الهمُّ أضناني دعوتك يا أمّي

أرى الكونَ أفراحًا وأنتِ بجانبي

دعاؤكِ يجلو ما تكاثر من همّي

بكيتُ وقد أُخفي عن الناس عبرتي

وهل تُرجِعُ العبراتُ روحَكِ يا أمّي؟

You have left this world when you were its joy

When I am bereaved I invoke you O' mother;

The universe is a happy place when you are by me

And your supplication relieved all my worries;

I have cried and may conceal from others my tears

Would tears bring back your soul O' mother?

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, pp. 799–801)

Women as daughters also held a place in his poetry, and he utilised the story-telling style in a poem about his eldest daughter titled '*Ūlā al-Zuhayrāt'* (First Among the Rosebuds). In it, he professes much love for her after she complained to her mother about him having not composed any poetry about her although he had done so for her sisters. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

تشكو لأُمّها أولى زُهيْراتي

أمّاهُ ما لأبي قد خَصّ أخواتي؟

بنفحةٍ من قصيدٍ صاغَهُ، وأنا

لم يذكر الشعرُ روحاتي وجَيْآتي

أمّاهُ، هلّا نصيبًا منهُ يَذْكِرُني؟

أم قد نُسِيتُ وفاتَتني حلاواتي؟

لا يا ابنتي، أنتِ مَن غنّيتها سلفًا

شعري وكانت لها أحلى نُغَيْماتي

باكورةَ العُمرِ لا. لا تغضبي أبدًا

يفديكِ شعري بماضٍ فيهِ والآتي

فأنتِ في القلبِ لا أنساكِ ثانيةً

وأنتِ في سالفي أحلى حكاياتي

The first among my rosebuds complains about me to her mother

Why has daddy excluded me from among my sisters?

He composed much poetry about them

Yet poetry has not spoken of my actions;

O' mother will any of it speak of me

Or have I been forgotten and my sweetness escaped me?

No my dear daughter for you have sung it in advance

For all the sweetness of my poems are due to you;

The best event of my life, please do not be upset

For all my past and future poetry I dedicate to you;

For you are welded in the heart, not for a second do I forget you

And in all past poems, you are the sweetest of my stories

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 660)

Then, finally, he writes about women as granddaughters in his poem 'Ḥafīdatī al-ʿAnūd' (My Granddaughter al-ʿAnūd) in which he expresses his tender temperament after having not bid farewell to her when she left his house:

ذهَبَتْ وما ودّعتها

نوّارة البيت العنود

لا، لم أودّع زهرتي

وهوى 'عنيدةٍ' لا يبيد

إنّي أرجو زَوْرَةً

وَهْجُ الوداد بها يزيد

فمتى تجيءُ لبيتِنا

نوّارة البيت العنود

She left without me telling her Goodbye

The house's sunshine, al-'Anoud;

No, I did not bid my rose farewell

And my love for her is everlasting;

I yearn for her visit

As my love with her presence glows;

So when will she pass by again

The house's sunshine, al-'Anoud?

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 662)

Transforming from pan-Arabism to Nationalism

The poetic identity in both Islamic and Arab contexts endured until after the oil-era as the third Saudi state, established in 1931, upheld Islam as its methodology. This Islamic notion was evident in Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry and formed a clear Islamic identity.

For example, Ibn Ḥusayn composed the poem *Fī Yawminā al-Waṭanī* (On Our National Day) in which he takes pride in Saudi land which encompass Muslims' holy sites. He also praises King Fahd (1982–2005) in it as one who followed Islamic Law. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

فأنت على أرض القداسة ظلّه

تُمكّن للشرع الذي عزّ طالبُه

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حكمتَ بأمر الله حتى كأنما

هوى كلّ قلبٍ أنّ فهدًا مُخاطبُه

On the land of holiness you are His reflection

Enabling Islamic Law to reign

And ruled by God's order as if

All yearnings of hearts hear Fahd speaking

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 558)

Ibn Ḥusayn's identity was not merely a religious one but mixed with pan-Arabism as well. One glance at his long-lived years suffices in painting a storyline of several noteworthy political events in modern Arab history that witnessed the rise of pan-Arabism among Arab peoples. His poetry reflected his nationalistic Arab identity which empathised with all Arab causes, the most prominent among which was that of Palestine from the Balfour Declaration to the Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948, which Ibn Ḥusayn lived through.

In his poem entitled *Amaliyyat al-Fidāʾ* (The Operation of Sacrifice), Ibn Ḥusayn brings back to memory the Declaration which provided Jews with protection:

ما كان جارًا للكرامِ وإنّما

كان الجريمةَ من قوى الأشرارِ

زُرِعْتَ بأرض العرب، وعدٌ مُلَعّنٌ

وحمايةٌ من أكبرِ الفُجّارِ

They were not neighbours of the good natured, but

Rather criminals of the evil forces

Implanted in Arab lands through a damned promise

And protected by the worst of conspirators

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 751)

The sacrifices which Palestinians had given in defending their land, along with their struggles for reclaiming the land stripped from them by the Israeli occupation led Ibn Ḥusayn to express nationalist sentiment and solidarity through his poetry. He

composed the poem *The Operation of Sacrifice* in which he praised the members of Palestinian resistance who waged guerrilla warfare against their occupiers. He writes:

بطلٌ على درب الجهاد مسيرُهُ

متوحّشٌ بالعزمِ والإصرارِ

سَحقَ العدوَّ بجسمه وسلاحه

قتلى وجرحى فوق ساحِ الدارِ

Heroes on the path of combat they march

Enthused with will and resolve

Have crushed the enemy with body and arms

Killing and wounding those on their land

(Ibn Ḥusayn. 2008, p. 751)

Ibn Ḥusayn considered pan-Arabism as a reflection of bravery; contrary to the Israelis whom he considered cowards. He says:

حسبوا العروبة مثلهم في جبنهم

يشرون دولارًا بحقّ الثار

كلّا، فللثاراتِ فينا حُرمةً

يمضي الزمانُ وثأرنا كالنارِ

ما باع يومًا يعربيٌّ ثأرَهُ

بفرنكهم أو دان للدولارِ

Conceited that Arabs were cowards like them

And would prefer dollars over vengeance;

No, for vengeance for us is sacred

As with the passage of time it flares and rages;

Never has an Arab sold out his right

Or forfeited it for a Franc or a Dollar.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 751)

He then directs his words to the Jewish nation by using the collective form of Arabs and describes what it means to be an Arab who possesses many noble traits. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

فلتعلموا أنّا جميعًا أمةٌ

جُمِعَت على التوحيدِ والأخطارِ

متعاضدون على الخصومةِ والرضى

نفدي البلاد بأثمن الأعمارِ

Let it be known to you that we are one nation

With commonalities of belief in the One God, and in dangers

Together we stand when in dispute or good tidings

We sacrifice our precious souls for our lands

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 751)

However, on 2nd August, 1990, Iraq's appetite for Kuwait's oil was the reason it invaded Kuwait. Crystal (2016, p. 159) states and exemplifies several effects of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. However, it is also worth pointing out the following effects. This act of aggression caused a psychological trauma for the Gulf society at large and for Ibn Ḥusayn in particular and materialised in four facets. First, causing extreme fear of an imminent aggression and a feeling of lack of safety or trust in Iraq and its political leadership. Second, veering the direction of the geopolitical compass of animosity from Israel – being Arab's main enemy – towards a fellow Arab, i.e. Iraq. Third, leading to the decimation of Arab unity after having had shared purposes, causes and woes as one nation. Fourth, retracting Arab Nationalism to National Identity as the Iraqi invasion was a disappointment for Arabs in general with Saddam Husayn sealing the last nail in the coffin of Arab unity. Ibn Ḥusayn expressed these facets in his poetry to a great extent as he renegaded from pan-Arabism, held strong onto the notion of the homeland, celebrated nationalism and clung onto it once the notion of Arab unity had faded.

In order to understand this sudden transformation of identity, the nationalist identity replacing the Arab one becomes evident when Ibn Ḥusayn praises the then king of Saudi Arabia, Fahd Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz al-Suʿūd (1982–2005), and equates between him

and a powerful jaguar – 'Fahd' in Arabic means jaguar. He also praises his Regent prince ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbdulʿazīz, Minister of Defence Prince Sultan Ibn Abdelaziz and the Kingdom's army who defended Saudi Arabia and forced out the Iraqis. The poet denounces Ṣaddām and calls him '*Haddām*' instead, i.e. one who tears down things, as a sign that he is the reason for tearing down Arab unity. Ibn Ḥusayn says:

فهد الفهود تصدّى للغواة فلم

يترك لهم فرصةً من غير تبتيتِ

أعدّ جيشًا بعبدالله مقتديًا

يسعى وسلطان يترا في المواقيتِ

جيشٌ لأبطالٍ دارِ عزٍّ جانبُها

يسقون أعداءها صابًا بحلتيتِ

أما ترى وقعةَ الخفجيّ إذ نصبت

لهم شراكًا سقت سُمَّ المصاليتِ؟

كتائب زجّها (هدّام) فاحترقت

قتلى وأسرى وتشتيتٌ على الهيتِ

لو كان يعقِلُ لم ينطحْ بهامتِهِ

شَمَّ الجبال، ولم يسبح مع الحوتِ

The mighty jaguar (Fahd) stood up to the deceivers

And tore apart all their conniving;

He readied an army led by ʿAbdullāh

Who answered the call without delay;

An army of proud men of a solid land

Who fed its enemies the most sour of fruits;

Did you not see how the al-Khafjī incident

Ensnared them as they fell on jagged swords?

Battalions brought forward by 'Haddām' that were burned

With the dead, the captured and the dispersal of the rest;

Had he been sane, he would not have rammed

Tall and mighty mountains, nor swum with whales.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, ed. al-Sayyid, 2001, p. 235)

In another poem entitled *Salāmun ʿalā al-ʿArab* (Peace be Upon Arabs), Ibn Ḥusayn praises Arabs' history and characterises ancient Arabs as ones of virtue, unity and brotherhood. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

وهم نشروا في الناس كلّ فضيلةٍ

تُحَدّثُ أنّ العُرْبَ منهجهم حبُّ

وما فرّقوا بين العِباد، فكلّهم

سواءٌ وفي الدين التنافسُ والقُرْبُ

</div>

They have cascaded virtue in all mankind

Which speaks of their loving nature;

They treated all equally for each was equal

To the other as well as in religion.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 365)

He then denounces the Arabs of modern times who forfeited those values and brands them traitors, as a sign confirming his psychological trauma due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait:

<div dir="rtl">

همُ سلبونا كلّ شيءٍ وما أتوا

بشيءٍ سوى أنْ ضيّعوا وانطوى الخَطْبُ

همُ ضيّعونا ثمّ خانوا وخلّفوا

نوادبَ ترمينا بما خلّف الكَربُ

</div>

They have stripped us of everything, and

Brought in nothing other than our destitution;

They caused us sorrow then betrayed and left us

With mourning over those we have lost.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 365)

This incident was a turning point for Ibn Ḥusayn whose poetry shifted to Saudi nationalist style instead of its pan-Arabism predecessor. He composed many poems on the love for country, most prominent among which was that commemorating Saudi Arabia's national day. In this poem, Ibn Ḥusayn declares his wholehearted allegiance to the Kingdom and renounces love for any other. He says:

<div dir="rtl">

أرى كلّ حبّ غيرِ حُبّيكِ خُدعةٌ

وكلّ هوئ إلا هواكِ مُذمّمَا

</div>

I feel any love other than for you is a ruse

And any other affection for another a sin.

(Ibn Ḥusayn, 2008, p. 536)

Overall, the influence of oil is clearly seen as the last straw which broke the back of pan-Arabism, having played a significant role in the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait due to the greed of its deposed leader. Oil was also influential in creating a new Gulf nationalist identity for Ibn Ḥusayn, which was of a lesser degree than pan-Arabism, having sided with Kuwait as did all Arab Gulf countries, and who assisted it in its liberation war of 1991. Also, once the Iraqi army attacked al-Khafjī, Ibn Ḥusayn's poetic production, as well as his affiliation and sense of belonging, reverted to his country's borders, and he composed many poems defending its causes. Much of Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry regarded love of country, King, Regent and the Saudi army which he was proud of as its members were steadfast during this trial which ended in their victory and the expulsion of the occupier.

This chapter adopts a historical methodology to test the transformation of poetic style and content in the works of modern blind poets from Arab Gulf countries and is divided into three main sections. The first starts with the pre-oil era, which is represented by al-Salimī. The second covers the beginning of the oil age in the Gulf, where al-Shabīb was its representative. The last reflects the post-oil era and is represented by Ibn Ḥusayn.

This chapter achieves a vital outcome, namely that poetic content in the post-oil era preserved classical topics and traditional themes inherited from classical Arabic poetry such as panegyric, pride, eulogy and flirtation. It also denotes that this poetry began occupying a wider romantic space than in it did in the two previous eras, i.e. pre-oil

age and the onset of that age, where the poet started concentrating his expression on his internal mood and feelings, without forfeiting the classical form, metre and rhyme inherited from classical Arabic poetry.

Conclusion

The conclusion seeks to shed light on four key points: the thesis's contribution to knowledge, emphasis on the topic's originality, a summary of chapters' primary outcomes, and a presentation of recommendations and difficulties faced by the researcher.

First, the thesis's research contribution is embodied in studying a topic that has not received its rightful due by researchers who have left behind a research gap in studying the literary production of modern age blind poets, specifically in the Gulf region.

As clarified in the literature review, many studies dealt with the phenomenon of artistic imagery in the literary works of blind Arab poets, whether via studying an entire group of poets collectively or by contending with one type. These studies mainly focused on the oldest and most famous blind poets who possessed many literary works like Bashshār Ibn Burd and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, causing other less known poets emaciation and limiting the scope of blind poets 'worthy' of study despite their multitude throughout the ages, particularly in modern times, and in the Gulf region more specifically.

From a different angle, many researchers were able to study the poetic movement of the Gulf and deduct an image of the society's pre- and post-oil age surroundings through the works of seeing poets. They utilised these poets' works as living documents that registered events and changes throughout that crucial transitional period. However, these researchers did not focus on blind poets' works specifically and overlooked their unique vision of those two distinct eras and how they received and pictured that transitional period. Researchers probably assumed that since those blind poets could not see, it meant that they were incapable of documenting the visual transformations of that phase vis-a-vis substantial construction, industrial and economic strides. Hence, this thesis took it upon itself to bridge this research gap and to provide a scholarly addition in studying the poetry of modern-age blind poets of the Gulf region.

The image of the Gulf society is worthy of study due to its richness of desert, urban, marine and oil lore. Poets are the black box of the Gulf basin's memory, with blind poets as no exception. Despite the abundance of blind poets in this region, this thesis chose to discuss three thereof as they fulfilled two specific criteria.

The first criterion was the short time in which they possessed the ability of sight (the short visual experience), and second, their abundance of poetic production. Accordingly, al-Sālimī, al-Shabīb and Ibn Ḥusayn were the best examples thereof.

Moving forward, originality of topic appears in three main facets, first among which is that this thesis did not stop at only one blind poet, but brought together more blind poets from the Gulf region who were in close temporal proximity to one another. The thesis also drew a new paradigm through the temporal distribution of blind poets according to three consecutive phases: the pre-oil era, the dawn of the oil era, and the post-oil era.

Second, contrary to and uniquely distinct from other studies, this thesis aimed to apply a psychoanalysis theory of trauma onto new topics, like the traumas due to blindness and the onset of the oil age. Previous applications of this theory had mainly been restricted to the literature of wars, like that of the Palestinian Catastrophe, the Second Gulf War (Iraq's invasion of Kuwait), the Holocaust Poetry and that of WWII.

Third, the originality of topic is also embodied in the connecting and networking of four main concepts upon which this thesis is based: trauma, blindness, oil and poetry. This was conducted via testing trauma theory throughout three important chapters of the thesis. In Chapter 2, the notion was tested on the three blind poets to measure their traumas due to blindness as they had all been born able-sighted and subsequently lost that sense at an early age – a matter which caused them psychological and physical traumas. Chapter 2 focused on the two fundamental points of the psychological and sensory impacts of blindness on the poets and how they expressed them through their poetry. This chapter also posed an important question on whether blindness had prevented the poets from delivering visual imagery. It concluded that the lack of sight did not mean the inability to draw images as, despite the poets' lack of visual communication with the environment, it did not prevent their sensory interaction with their surrounds. It was argued that they created visual imagery from memory and insight, coupled with auditory, sensory, taste and olfactory senses.

The poetry of the blind in the Gulf is a complex and compounded singularity that cannot be studied from only one point of view. The chance of studying it through one specialised method is impossible. Therefore, the researcher followed a multi-disciplinary method, and a combination of methodologies was applied in Chapter 3 that

brought together eco-criticism, chronological order and semiotics – the last of which is based on the study of signs and tracing signs of Gulf ecology in its pre- and post-oil contexts through blind poets' literature.

Chapter 3 followed a sequenced chronological order and, at its onset, aimed towards testing the impact of the natural environment representation in the pre-oil age on the discourse of blind poet al-Sālimī. It concluded that this environment was clearly reflected in the man's poetry through varied marine, mountain and desert forms that played a crucial role in forming his poetic imagery.

Chapter 3 also sought to measure the impact of urban transformation at the onset of the oil-age as the Gulf society began advancing towards the modern era when oil was discovered there. The experience of rushing into the new age was in no way an easy feat for almost all poets in the Arabia Gulf, including the seasoned al-Shabīb. On the geographical level during the pre-oil era, al-Shabīb lived in an urban area with a marine circumference and a desert climate which allowed him to create matching imagery of this versatile environment through his imagination and functioning senses. However, on the cultural level, the culture of the desert controlled his poetic discourse and imagery as it was a safe space away from the congestion of the city and the treachery of the sea.

The chapter also concluded that al-Shabīb attempted to take part in the modern age as modernisation commenced in Kuwait by applying for an Arabic language teaching position at al-Mubārakiyyah school, but his application was rejected because he was blind. This led him to escalate the tone of his poetic condemnation and simultaneously reflects the massive psychological trauma that struck him as the age of the desert set and that of modernisation dawned.

As the oil age grew, it seemed evident that its predecessor was being emptied of its simplicity as a prelude for setting modernisation in its place. This created a new tier of trauma and produced a culture unfamiliar to al-Shabīb – a matter which shook his psychological stability, and which instilled within him a continued sense of insecurity and imminent danger. It also amplified his symptoms of despair, fear, estrangement, seclusion and the wish to die.

Chapter 3 concluded with Saudi Arabian blind poet Ibn Ḥusayn, whose long life bore witness to two important phases in the history of the Gulf: the pre- and post-oil eras.

Ibn Ḥusayn's poetic ability played a prominent role in picturing and documenting those two phases despite being blind.

Ibn Ḥusayn took two stances on modernisation processes accompanying the oil age: the first as a proponent of modernisation of educational, industrial and desert environments, and the second as an opponent of the wealth and its consequences that caused the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as well as modernisation in its urbanisation form that demolished old structures – a matter which caused him psychological trauma. Ibn Ḥusayn felt that old buildings and structures held religious, historical, social and directional symbols that should have been preserved.

Chapter 3 also uncovered poetic texts that expressed signs of the psychological trauma Ibn Ḥusayn suffered. They reflected his clinging onto the past, nature and the desert, his spatial and temporal alienation in the modern era, and his inability to cope with the advents of the new age. Accordingly, the assumption on which the study was based was proven correct, namely the ability to apply trauma theory to the poetic experience of Saudi poet Ibn Ḥusayn.

Thus, the thesis finds that blindness did not impede poets from picturing the Gulf environment before and after the oil era and that they, in fact, documented it with unprecedented skill. It also found that the Gulf society has the specificity and individuality of many cultural and ecological characteristics that distinguish it from other Arab societies. Such aspects were reflected in blind poets' clinging onto the desert environment even through modern civil times.

Chapter 4 followed a sequenced historical methodology from the pre-oil age to the dawn of that age and until the post-oil era to measure the change that poetic style and content underwent in the Gulf region, particularly after the discovery of oil there.

The chapter drew many conclusions, most prominent among which was that poetic style remained immutable to the vertical poem style even as the new age set in as poets began embracing new poetic schools. Nevertheless, blind poets remained faithful to originality and were not influenced by the modern poetic schools which called for the renewal of metre and rhyme. They did not enact any renewal forms whatsoever onto poem form and resisted all forms of change as an expression of loyalty to poetic lore and holding fast to the vertical poem style.

On poetic content, Chapter 4 concluded that poetic topics in the pre-oil era were classical enough and limited to eulogy, panegyric, religious poetry and resisting colonisation, as well as being void of love poetry and non-expressive of poets' feelings. However, as the oil-age dawned, poetry began opening up in content and embraced a romantic form expressive of the blind poet's inner feelings, worries and suffering. Topics like love and women began emerging, although in an imaginative form, like that of the fictitious woman al-Shabīb imagined and wrote about his feelings towards in many of his poems.

From a different point of view, the Gulf region experienced cultural alienation during the pre-oil era, yet with the discovery of oil there, Gulf intellectuals and poets were influenced by nationalistic awareness and the pan-Arabism of Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq which came as a reaction to the Ottomans' attempts in the late nineteenth century to culturally wipe out all that was Arab – a matter which led to Arab resentment and the call for embracing pan-Arabism.

Based on this, intellectuals and poets from the Arab Gulf Countries began calling for liberation from foreign control and its English colonial proxy and demanded that their riches be utilised and invested by them. This led to the emergence of new topics in the poetic scene there, like that of pan-Arabism and the Palestinian cause.

As Chapter 4 dealt with the post-oil era represented by Ibn Ḥusayn, it concluded that poetic content became more open in this phase and its topics purely romantic in which the poet would express his feelings on most occasions and stances. Much of Ibn Ḥusayn's poetry was on women as mothers, wives, daughters and granddaughters.

This thesis also confirmed an important postulation regarding the influence of oil on poetry, namely that poetic identity began diminishing from its Arab and Islamic form to its nationalistic one subsequent to the discovery of oil. This was the main factor in demoralising the spirit of pan-Arabism within Ibn Ḥusayn, particularly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 whose sole cause was the love of oil. The invasion caused the blind poet psychological trauma, and feelings of betrayal and despair regarding pan-Arabism, instigating him to write about nationalist ideology instead of Arab woes.

All this demonstrates that the poetry of the blind in the Gulf region was artistically unique, a form of overcoming blindness, a platform from which to view and perceive the world differently, and a reflection of the Gulf society's causes.

Lastly, the thesis makes four recommendations. First, it recommends the need to write books on the names of blind poets in both old and modern Arab literature, which include their biographies, and to ensure they are continuously updated with new names. This information must include the approximate time-period of becoming blind as it is a matter of interest to literature researchers as in the condition regarding visual experience, as mentioned above.

Second, it is important that researchers seek originality and renewal in blind poets' literature, as well as the need to shed light on lesser-known poets in the modern age instead of only focusing on recycled names of classical blind poets like Bashshār Ibn Burd and al-Maʿarrī. This is of great importance as the Gulf region is bursting with blind poets who have contributed qualitatively to the literary scene, but who received little study.

Third, it suggests continuing to extract literary works of lesser-known blind poets from written form to its typed and electronic counterparts, as well as verifying their authenticity, particularly those of al-Salimī, which most are still in manuscript form.

Fourth, the thesis calls on all centres specialising in Gulf studies, East and West, to cater to the literature of the Gulf Region as they do to politics, economy, history, identity and women's causes – particularly in the post-oil era. The broader notion of oil is not limited to specific topics as its implications exceed those to cover all topics, most important of which is literature, like that of poetry, short stories, novels and the theatre.

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