

# An Anthropological Study of Similes and Metaphors as Cultural Codes in *Al-Manfalūṭī's al-Shā'ir* (Kajian Antropologi terhadap Simile dan Metafora sebagai Kod Budaya dalam al-Shā'ir Karya Al-Manfalūṭī.)

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Received: 9 September 2025 / Accepted: 21 April 2026

## ABSTRACT

*This study addresses the limited anthropological analysis of figurative language in modern Arabic prose by examining similes (tashbīh) and metaphors (isti'ārah) as cultural codes in al-Shā'ir by Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti. Previous scholarship has primarily emphasized rhetorical classification and stylistic appreciation, leaving insufficient exploration of how figurative expressions encode culturally embedded systems of meaning. The study aims (1) to identify and classify similes and metaphors based on classical Arabic rhetorical theory (balāghah), (2) to analyze their conceptual structures using Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and (3) to interpret their cultural significance within an anthropological framework. This research employs qualitative textual analysis through systematic close reading of the original Arabic text. A total of 49 similes and 36 metaphors were identified, categorized into six and eight typologies respectively, and analyzed through a three-stage procedure: rhetorical identification, structural classification, and cultural interpretation. The findings demonstrate that figurative expressions in al-Shā'ir function as semiotic mechanisms that encode shared cultural models rooted in Arab-Islamic intellectual tradition. These include religious symbolism, moral virtues, emotional ideals, and social hierarchies. The study defines "Arab worldview" as a culturally structured system of meaning shaped by Islamic cosmology, ethical philosophy, and classical literary heritage that informs patterns of moral evaluation and emotional expression. By integrating classical rhetoric, cognitive linguistics, and anthropological linguistics, this study proposes a systematic model for analyzing Arabic figurative language beyond stylistic description, contributing to cultural linguistics and literary semiotics.*

*Keywords: Figurative language; Simile; Metaphor; Anthropological linguistics; Arabic literature*

## ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini menangani keterbatasan analisis antropologi terhadap bahasa kiasan dalam prosa Arab moden dengan meneliti simile (tashbīh) dan metafora (isti'ārah) sebagai kod budaya dalam al-Shā'ir karya Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti. Kajian terdahulu lebih banyak menekankan pengelasan retorik dan apresiasi gaya bahasa, manakala penerokaan tentang bagaimana ungkapan kiasan mengkodkan sistem makna yang berakar dalam budaya masih kurang diberi perhatian. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti dan mengelaskan simile dan metafora berdasarkan teori retorik Arab klasik (balāghah), menganalisis struktur konseptualnya menggunakan Teori Metafora Konseptual, serta mentafsir kepentingan budayanya dalam kerangka antropologi. Kajian ini menggunakan analisis teks kualitatif melalui pembacaan teliti secara sistematik terhadap teks Arab asal. Sebanyak 49 simile dan 36 metafora dikenal pasti, dikategorikan masing-masing kepada enam dan lapan tipologi, serta dianalisis melalui prosedur tiga peringkat, iaitu pengenalpastian retorik, pengelasan struktur, dan pentafsiran budaya. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa ungkapan kiasan dalam al-Shā'ir berfungsi sebagai mekanisme semiotik yang mengkodkan model budaya bersama yang berakar dalam tradisi intelektual Arab-Islam. Hal ini merangkumi simbolisme agama,*

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nilai akhlak, ideal emosi, dan hierarki sosial. Kajian ini mentakrifkan “pandangan alam Arab” sebagai sistem makna yang tersusun secara budaya, dibentuk oleh kosmologi Islam, falsafah etika, dan warisan kesusasteraan klasik yang mempengaruhi pola penilaian moral dan ekspresi emosi. Dengan mengintegrasikan retorik klasik, linguistik kognitif, dan antropolinguistik, kajian ini mencadangkan satu model sistematik untuk menganalisis bahasa kiasan Arab melampaui huraian gaya bahasa, sekali gus menyumbang kepada linguistik budaya dan semiotik kesusasteraan.

Kata kunci: Bahasa kiasan; simile; metafora; antropolinguistik; kesusasteraan Arab

## INTRODUCTION

Figurative language, particularly simile and metaphor, is central to literary expression across cultures. These rhetorical devices allow authors to convey complex ideas and abstract emotions in imaginative, vivid forms. In Arabic literature, especially classical and modern-classical texts, similes and metaphors function not only as stylistic embellishments but also as deep cultural signifiers (Orrells, 2024). Their usage reflects collective experiences, traditional values, and spiritual worldviews embedded within the Arabic-speaking communities. Thus, the study of figurative language in Arabic literature opens a rich pathway to uncover how language encodes cultural knowledge.

The intersection between language and culture has long been a central topic in anthropolinguistics. Scholars such as Magnani et al., (2021) argued that language shapes thought and behavior, suggesting that the structures of a given language influence the worldview of its speakers. Figurative language, as a culturally grounded linguistic phenomenon, plays a key role in such cognitive-cultural interactions. When examined within its native context, simile and metaphor become more than linguistic decorations they become semiotic codes that reveal how speakers relate to the world, to others, and to themselves.

In Arabic literary tradition, particularly in the works of early modern Arab writers such as Sophie Read, (2024), figurative language is used not only to persuade or delight but to preserve and transmit cultural narratives. His novel *al-Shā'ir* (The Poet) stands as a testament to the power of language in articulating aesthetic beauty and moral values. The stylistic richness of the novel marked by extensive use of similes and metaphors renders it a valuable object of study for linguists, literary critics, and anthropologists alike.

Despite the prominence of figurative language in Arabic literature, academic attention to its function from an anthropolinguistic perspective remains noticeably limited. Much of the existing scholarship tends to prioritize rhetorical structure (e.g., classification of similes and metaphors) or focus solely on literary aesthetics and stylistic elegance, often overlooking the deeper cultural logic underlying such expressions. While simile and metaphor have been extensively examined in classical Arabic rhetoric and Qur'anic exegesis, their role as carriers of cultural knowledge shaped by worldview, belief systems, and social norms has yet to receive sufficient theoretical interrogation. Only a few studies have attempted to bridge the domains of linguistic anthropology and Arabic literature, despite the fact that Arabic literary texts, particularly from the early 20th century, are rich in symbolic systems that reflect societal values and identity. This gap is critical, as metaphoric expressions are not culturally neutral; they are embedded in layers of historical, religious, and ethical meaning that reveal how Arab communities conceptualize reality (R'boul et al., 2024). A more culturally grounded approach to Arabic figurative language is therefore essential to capture its full semantic and semiotic significance.

This study addresses this gap by examining the similes (*tashbīh*) and metaphors (*isti'ārah*) in *al-Shā'ir* by al-Manfaluti through an anthropolinguistic framework. Specifically, it aims to (1)

identify and systematically classify the types of similes and metaphors employed in the novel based on classical Arabic rhetorical theory (*balāghah*), (2) analyze their conceptual structures using principles of cognitive semantics, and (3) interpret the cultural values and symbolic models encoded in these figurative expressions within their socio-cultural context. Drawing on theories of linguistic relativity, cognitive semantics, and classical Arabic rhetoric, the study clarifies the interrelationship between language, cognition, and culture, thereby demonstrating that figurative language in the novel functions not merely as stylistic ornamentation but as a structured system of cultural meaning.

Anthropo-linguistics offers a useful framework for understanding how figurative language reflects cultural structures and symbolic systems. It considers not just how language functions grammatically or semantically, but how it participates in the creation and maintenance of cultural meaning (Hossain, 2024). In the Arab context, this includes values such as honor, religiosity, beauty, hospitality, and communal solidarity many of which are conveyed implicitly through metaphor and simile. Through the systematic analysis of selected examples from the novel, this study not only examines how figurative expressions function beyond stylistic ornamentation but also explicitly aims to demonstrate how they structure narrative development, intensify emotional expression, frame moral instruction, and activate shared cultural knowledge. By doing so, the research establishes as a core objective the clarification of the communicative and cultural functions of similes and metaphors within their broader anthropo-linguistic context. For instance, likening a woman's beauty to a blooming garden is not only a poetic image but also a reflection of Arab aesthetic ideals and symbolic associations between femininity and nature.

In examining the figurative language of *al-Shā'ir*, in addition to the objectives outlined above, this study explicitly aims to examine the dual function of simile (*tashbīh*) and metaphor (*isti'ārah*) in *al-Shā'ir* by al-Manfaluti: first, to analyze how these figurative expressions operate as cognitive instruments for conceptualizing abstract phenomena, and second, to investigate how they function as cultural mechanisms that transmit traditional knowledge, moral values, and social norms. Accordingly, a central objective of the research is to demonstrate that this dual cognitive-cultural function reflects the fundamental concern of anthropo-linguistics namely, explaining how language simultaneously represents and constructs human experience within a specific socio-cultural framework (Hossain, 2024).

Ultimately, the present study contributes to a deeper understanding of the linguistic mechanisms through which culture is encoded and transmitted. It emphasizes the importance of context in interpreting figurative language and advocates for more integrative approaches to literary analysis that account for the cultural embeddedness of language (Hossain, 2024). By focusing on a modern classical Arabic novel Ab Rashid et al., (2025) this research highlights the enduring role of figurative language as a vehicle for cultural continuity and identity formation in Arab literary discourse.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Figurative language has been extensively studied in literary, linguistic, and cognitive domains. Traditionally defined as language that deviates from the literal meaning to convey abstract, symbolic, or imaginative expressions, it encompasses devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole (Kövecses, 2023). Among these, simile and metaphor are the most

prominent in both poetic and narrative discourse, acting as essential tools for expressing emotion, building imagery, and encoding cultural meaning.

Metaphor theory has undergone a significant transformation since the emergence of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), pioneered by Kövecses, (2023). They argue that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. According to CMT, metaphors are grounded in bodily experience and conceptual mappings between source and target domains. This theory has been supported and expanded by scholars such as Hong & Rossi, (2021), who highlights how metaphors reflect cultural models and shared values within communities.

From a linguistic anthropological perspective, metaphor and simile are not only cognitive constructs but also cultural tools (Hossain, 2024). Anthropo-linguistics explores how language embodies cultural practices, ideologies, and worldviews, with language serving as a key medium for constructing and maintaining social reality (Marwick & Partin, 2024). Figurative language, therefore, becomes essential for examining how cultural identity and symbolic meaning are embedded in both everyday and literary discourse. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis further elaborates the relationship between language and culture, asserting that linguistic structures influence thought and perception patterns (Hossain, 2024). This has prompted investigations into how metaphorical expressions vary across linguistic communities, encoding culturally specific knowledge, for instance, argue that metaphor reflects not only universal human experience but also culturally shaped emotion, morality, and worldview.

Within the Arabic rhetorical tradition, *isti'ārah* (metaphor) and *tashbīh* (simile) constitute foundational elements of *balāghah*, historically framed as the art of eloquence. Classical treatises emphasized their persuasive and aesthetic dimensions; however, recent scholarship has begun to reinterpret *balāghah* as an epistemic system embedded in Islamic intellectual history rather than merely a formal stylistic apparatus (Talebi Anvari & Mirdehghan Farashah, 2022). Contemporary analyses argue that rhetorical categories such as *al-Tashbīh al-Balīgh* and *al-Isti'ārah al-Maknīyyah* function not only as classificatory tools but also as culturally codified interpretive frameworks that mediate theological discourse, ethical reasoning, and socio-political expression (Besharati & Besharati, 2022). Such reinterpretations align with broader semiotic and cultural-linguistic approaches that view figurative language as structured cultural cognition rather than ornamental embellishment (Hossain, 2024).

Scholars like Bertling & Hodge, (2025) have compared Western metaphor theories with those from Arabic traditions. introduces a semiotic-cognitive model of metaphor as a multi-level meaning-making process shaped by bodily experience, culture, and semiotic creativity. These models are crucial for analyzing Arabic metaphors, which are deeply rooted in Islamic and pre-Islamic poetics. However, few studies have applied anthropo-linguistic frameworks to Arabic literary texts, with much research focusing on stylistic features or cognitive universals (Bertling & Hodge, 2025), neglecting cultural codes. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring cultural values, symbolic hierarchies, and worldviews in Arabic literature through simile and metaphor, focusing on al-Manfalūṭī's *al-Shā'ir*.

Despite this theoretical richness, systematic applications of anthropo-linguistic frameworks to Arabic literary figurative language remain limited. Existing scholarship has largely concentrated on stylistic taxonomies or on universal cognitive mechanisms, often treating metaphor either as a formal aesthetic device or as an abstract conceptual structure (Bertling & Hodge, 2025). Such approaches, while valuable, rarely interrogate how classical Arabic rhetorical classifications intersect with culturally situated meaning-making practices. Consequently, the role of figurative

language as a historically embedded socio-symbolic system that encodes moral hierarchy, religious imagination, and collective memory remains insufficiently theorized. This gap underscores the need for an integrative framework that brings rhetorical analysis into dialogue with anthropolinguistic inquiry.

As the literature demonstrates, figurative language cannot be fully understood outside its cultural context. The present study draws upon both Arabic rhetorical theory and contemporary anthropolinguistics to investigate how similes and metaphors serve as carriers of cultural meaning. By bridging these theoretical traditions, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how language shapes, and is shaped by, the cultural logic of a community.

## METHOD

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design grounded in anthropolinguistic inquiry, understood as an interdisciplinary approach that examines language as a cultural practice and a system of meaning embedded in social life. In this context, anthropolinguistic inquiry does not treat figurative expressions merely as linguistic forms but analyzes them as symbolic resources that reflect shared cultural models, belief systems, value structures, and patterns of social interaction within a specific community. The primary objective is to analyze the types and functions of simile and metaphor in *al-Shā'ir*, a modern classical Arabic novel by al-Manfalūṭī, and to interpret the cultural values embedded within these figurative expressions. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for capturing the nuanced meanings and culturally situated interpretations of language features, particularly those found in literary texts (Pawar et al., 2025).

### DATA SOURCE

The data for this study are drawn from the original Arabic version of the novel *al-Shā'ir*. The novel was selected for its rich and stylistically marked language, its widespread readership across the Arabic-speaking world, and its reputation for incorporating traditional Arabic rhetorical devices. The text serves as a representative literary corpus for exploring how similes and metaphors function as cultural codes in Arab literary discourse.

### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The data collection was conducted using documentary analysis or library research methods (Mwita, 2022). Sentences, phrases, and expressions containing similes (*tashbīh*) and metaphors (*isti'ārah*) were identified through systematic close reading of the original Arabic edition of the novel. To ensure validity and reliability, identification was guided by explicit criteria derived from classical Arabic rhetorical theory (*balāghah*), particularly the structural components of simile (*mushabbah*, *mushabbah bih*, *ḥarf al-tashbīh*, and *wajh al-shabah*) and the established classifications of metaphor in rhetorical scholarship. Each identified instance was cross-checked against these formal criteria to distinguish genuine figurative constructions from literal or stylistic expressions, thereby ensuring analytical consistency and methodological rigor. Only those instances that clearly demonstrated rhetorical patterns of *tashbīh* (simile) and *isti'ārah* (metaphor)

as defined in classical Arabic rhetorical theory were selected for further analysis. A total of 49 similes and 36 metaphors were extracted as the core dataset for this study.

#### DATA CLASSIFICATION

The collected figurative expressions were classified based on established Arabic rhetorical taxonomies. Similes were categorized into six types, including *Tashbīh Mursal*, *Mu'akkad*, *Mujmal*, *Mufassal*, *Balīgh*, and *Tamthīlī*, while metaphors were classified into eight types, such as *Isti'ārah tasrīhiyyah*, *Makniyyah*, *Asliyyah*, *Taba'iyah*, *Mujarradah*, *Mutalaqqah*, *Murasysyahah*, and *Tamthīliyyah*. These classifications followed the frameworks of classical scholars such as Al-Jurjānī and contemporary commentators such as Hossain, (2024).

#### ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical process combined textual analysis with interpretative anthropolinguistic approaches. The study focused on both form and meaning of figurative expressions, using anthropolinguistic theory as a lens to uncover cultural codes embedded in the metaphoric and simile structures. Following Viskovatykh, (2023), the analysis considered how language usage reflects broader cultural practices, beliefs, and values. Each simile or metaphor was analyzed contextually to identify the cultural significance and its symbolic or emotional function in Arab society.

#### VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing classical Arabic rhetorical theory, contemporary metaphor theory (e.g., Conceptual Metaphor Theory), and cultural semiotics. Peer debriefing with experts in Arabic linguistics and literature was also conducted to validate the classification and interpretation of selected expressions. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the analysis process to acknowledge the researcher's own cultural and linguistic positioning (Gong et al., 2022).

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As this study involves textual analysis of a published literary work and does not engage human participants, there were no ethical risks identified. However, academic integrity was maintained by providing accurate references, maintaining fidelity to the original Arabic text, and ensuring transparent interpretation without distortion of cultural content.

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW OF FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS

The analysis of *al-Shā'ir*, a modern Arabic novel by Mustafā Luthfī al-Manfalūṭī, identified 85 figurative expressions, including 49 similes and 36 metaphors. These were categorized based on classical Arabic rhetorical criteria, offering insights into the density and variety of figurative

language in the text (Bertling & Hodge, 2025). In al-Manfalūṭī's prose, both *isti'ārah* (metaphor) and *tashbīh* (simile) serve structural roles, enhancing emotional intensity and the narrative atmosphere. For example, the metaphor *فها هو الموت يرفرف فوق رأسك* (Behold, death flutters above your head) personifies death, transforming it into an immediate threat, while the metaphor *وكان الليل قد بدأ يرخي سدوله على اكتاف الدير* (Night had begun to cast its veils over the monastery's shoulders) envelops the space in a somber mood. Similes like *ثم يمشي به مختالا كأنه طاووس يجرد ذنبه وراءه* (He walks proudly as if he were a peacock dragging its tail) and *فوثب من مكانه وثبة النمر الجائع* (He leapt like a hungry tiger) enhance characterization through vivid imagery, highlighting vanity and aggression. These figurative devices do more than embellish; they concretize abstract concepts, deepen aesthetic expression, and contribute to the overall rhetorical and semantic construction of the narrative.

Interestingly, the distribution of these simile and metaphor instances was not uniform across the text. Instead, they were concentrated in specific narrative segments, particularly those involving emotional conflict, moral reflection, and dramatic turning points. This strategic placement suggests that figurative language is employed not merely for embellishment but to heighten narrative intensity and reinforce thematic focus. For example, metaphors tend to cluster in moments of introspection and existential despair, while similes often appear in relational contexts, such as expressions of love, grief, or social judgment.

The frequency of these rhetorical devices contributes significantly to the novel's stylistic identity. al-Manfalūṭī's prose is known for its ornate and emotive tone, and the extensive use of simile and metaphor plays a central role in achieving this effect. The cumulative presence of these figures of speech fosters a lyrical rhythm that engages the reader's imagination while grounding abstract ideas in culturally familiar imagery. This stylistic technique aligns with classical Arabic literary aesthetics, where eloquence (*balāghah*) is regarded as both an art and a moral act.

Beyond their aesthetic function, these figurative expressions also encode layers of implicit meaning that reflect the cultural worldview of Arab society. The selected similes and metaphors often draw upon shared cultural symbols, such as references to nature, light, honor, and the divine. Their recurrence reinforces specific values and ideological perspectives, indicating that language in *al-Shā'ir* serves a dual role: to delight and to instruct. As such, figurative language becomes a vehicle for both emotional resonance and cultural transmission.

In summary, the quantitative presence and strategic deployment of similes and metaphors in *al-Shā'ir* are indicative of a deeply intentional literary design. The author harnesses figurative language not only to embellish narrative prose but also to articulate cultural identity, evoke empathy, and embed philosophical and ethical meanings within the fabric of the story. These findings underscore the importance of treating figurative language as a functional and culturally rich component of literary analysis, especially within an anthropolinguistic framework.

#### TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF SIMILES (*TASHBĪH*)

The analysis of similes in *al-Shā'ir* identified six categories based on classical Arabic rhetorical theory, with *Tashbīh Mursal* being the most frequent, accounting for 18 of 49 cases. This form uses comparative particles like *ك* or *مثل*, directly comparing the *musyabbah* and *musyabbah bih* to enhance clarity and rhetorical impact. For instance, *"ثم يمشي به مختالا كأنه طاووس يجرد ذنبه وراءه"* (He walks proudly as if he were a peacock dragging its tail behind him) uses *كأن* to emphasize vanity, while *"فوثب من مكانه وثبة النمر الجائع"* (He leapt from his place like a hungry tiger) intensifies

aggression and energy. These examples show that *Tashbīh Mursal* in *al-Shā'ir* is not just stylistic but a structural tool that concretizes abstract qualities and amplifies expression (Hussein, 2023).

The second type, *Tashbīh Mu'akkad* (emphatic simile), accounts for 9 of the 49 identified instances and is characterized by the omission of explicit comparative particles such as *ك* or *كأن*, thereby creating a more direct and intensified identification between the *mushabbah* and the *mushabbah bih* (Hussein, 2023). For example, وهو يزار زئير الليث (“He roars the roar of a lion”) foregrounds courage and ferocity as intrinsic attributes through unmediated association, while الحب روح (“Love is a spirit”) conceptualizes love as an essential animating force rather than a mere comparable quality. In both cases, the absence of a comparative marker strengthens rhetorical compression and semantic fusion. The remaining five types are examined using the same analytical framework, each quantified from the total of 49 instances and supported by representative Arabic examples integrated into concise stylistic interpretation.

The third form, *Tashbīh Mujmal*, comprises 7 of the 49 identified instances and is marked by the omission of an explicit *wajh al-shabah*, leaving the point of similarity implicit (Hussein, 2023). For example, ألعب كما يلعب القرد (“I play like a monkey”) suggests resemblance without specifying the shared trait, allowing readers to infer playfulness or restlessness contextually. Likewise, ثم صرح بصوت كهزيم الرعد (“He cried out with a voice like the rumble of thunder”) evokes intensity and power without detailing the precise attribute compared. In both cases, the undefined comparison broadens interpretive scope while preserving rhetorical impact.

In contrast, *Tashbīh Mufassal* accounts for 6 of the 49 identified instances and is characterized by the explicit presence of the *mushabbah*, *mushabbah bih*, *wajh al-shabah*, and *adāt al-tashbīh* (Hussein, 2023). For example, أترأه رخوا متهدلا كخرطوم الفيل (“Do you see it limp and dangling like an elephant’s trunk?”) clearly specifies the subject, the comparison target, the comparative particle *ك*, and the shared attribute of limpness, thereby producing a vivid and concrete image. Similarly, وهم يمزحون ويضحكون كأنهم ذاهبون إلى مرقص (“They jest and laugh as if they were heading to a dance hall”) explicitly constructs resemblance through *كأن*, highlighting carefree behavior as the defined point of similarity. In both cases, the detailed structure strengthens semantic clarity and reinforces the author’s evaluative intent through fully articulated comparison.

*Tashbīh Balīgh* accounts for 9 of the 49 identified similes and is distinguished by the omission of both the *adāt al-tashbīh* and the *wajh al-shabah*, leaving only the *mushabbah* and *mushabbah bih* in a condensed, metaphor-like structure (Atiq, 2025). For example, the expression هو بحرٌ في الكرم (“He is a sea in generosity”) eliminates the comparative particle and directly equates the subject with “a sea,” intensifying the semantic force of abundance and boundlessness. Likewise, الوجهُ قمرٌ (“The face is a moon”) presents a compact equivalence that evokes radiance and beauty without explicitly stating the shared attribute. In both instances, the structural reduction enhances rhetorical density and aesthetic elegance, allowing the simile to function with metaphorical immediacy while preserving its underlying comparative logic.

Lastly, *Tashbīh Tamthīlī* constitutes 7 of the 49 identified instances and involves an extended analogical comparison in which an entire situation is likened to another illustrative scenario. For example, the depiction of a morally negligent character as كمن يبني بيتاً على شفا حفرة (“like one who builds a house on the edge of a pit”) compares a precarious physical act to ethical instability, thereby framing moral failure as inevitable collapse. Similarly, the portrayal of fleeting worldly pleasure as كسرابٍ يحسبه الظمآن ماءً (“like a mirage that the thirsty one supposes to be water”) constructs a situational analogy between illusion and misplaced desire. In both cases, the comparison operates at the level of narrative structure rather than isolated attributes, reinforcing

philosophical reflection and didactic intent, consistent with the analogical function of *Tashbīh Tamthīlī* in ethical prose (Azhar et al., 2025).

The functions of these simile types vary but are generally oriented toward expressing emotional states, defining character through comparison with natural elements, and embodying cultural ideals such as chastity, honor, and piety. Grief is portrayed through harsh natural imagery; longing is depicted via spatial metaphors; and moral strength is likened to enduring objects such as mountains or the sun. These similes draw from a shared cultural lexicon familiar to the novel's intended audience, reinforcing collective identity and normative values.

In sum, the similes employed in *al-Shā'ir* do more than illustrate or ornament the narrative. They function as cognitive and cultural bridges that connect the inner emotional states of the characters with shared symbolic frameworks embedded in Arab cultural consciousness. The diversity of simile types reflects the author's rhetorical sophistication and his deliberate attempt to engage readers at both intellectual and affective levels (Roncero et al., 2021). From an anthropolinguistic perspective, these similes embody what is meant here by worldview: a culturally structured system of perception, values, and interpretive schemas through which a community understands reality. In the context of Arab society, this worldview includes deeply rooted conceptions of honor, courage, love, faith, nature, and social hierarchy, which are symbolically encoded in recurrent images such as the lion, desert, light, or spirit. Through these figurative constructions, the novel does not merely mirror cultural meanings; it actively reproduces and stabilizes them, ensuring their transmission across generations through literary discourse.

#### TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF METAPHORS (*ISTI'ĀRAH*)

In sum, the figurative constructions in *al-Shā'ir* operate as cognitive-cultural mechanisms rather than mere stylistic embellishments. Of the 36 identified instances of *isti'ārah*, 14 are classified as *Isti'ārah Taṣrīhiyyah*, marked by the omission of the *mushabbah* and the explicit substitution of the *mushabbah bih*. For example, أنت شمسٌ في سماءِ حياتي (“You are a sun in the sky of my life”) foregrounds radiance, vitality, and centrality by directly equating the beloved with shams, while هي جوهرةٌ لا تُقَدَّر بثمن (“She is a jewel beyond price”) encodes rarity and value through *jawharah*. In both instances, semantic transfer is intensified through direct nomination, consistent with classical *balāghah* theory (cf. al-Jurjānī; al-Sakkākī) and supported by cognitive metaphor theory, which posits systematic conceptual mapping between abstract emotional valuation and culturally salient experiential domains (Hong & Rossi, 2021). Furthermore, as Rogers, (2021) argues, such recurrent symbolic encoding contributes to the reproduction and stabilization of culturally embedded worldviews within literary discourse.

In contrast, *Isti'ārah Makniyyah* accounts for 12 of the 36 identified instances and is characterized by the presence of the *mushabbah* while the *mushabbah bih* is omitted but implicitly suggested through one of its attributes. For example, غرقَ في بحرِ همومه (“He drowned in the sea of his worries”) retains the human subject yet implies the metaphorical vehicle “sea,” evoking depth and overwhelming force without explicitly naming the comparison structure. Similarly, نهشتهُ أيامَ الفراق (“The days of separation devoured him”) attributes the action of devouring to “days,” implicitly suggesting a predatory creature as the concealed source domain. In both cases, the metaphorical image is not directly stated but inferred through transferred attributes, thereby intensifying emotional resonance and requiring greater interpretive engagement from the reader.

The distinction between *Isti'ārah Aṣliyyah* and *Isti'ārah Tabā'iyyah* in *al-Syā'ir* is substantiated by the empirical findings: of the 36 identified metaphors, 6 are categorized as

*Isti'ārah Aşliyyah* and 4 as *Isti'ārah Taba'iyyah*. In the primary type, semantic transfer occurs through direct nominal substitution, as in أشْرَقَ نُوْرُ الْحَقِّ فِي قَلْبِهِ (“The light of truth shone in his heart”) and غَابَتْ شَمْسُ الْعَدْلِ (“The sun of justice has set”), where culturally stabilized symbols such as *nūr* and *shams* encode epistemic clarity and moral centrality, consistent with classical *balāghah* theory (Radhia, 2026). By contrast, *Isti'ārah Taba'iyyah* extends this mapping through derivative or contextual attribution, as in قَادَهُمْ بِيَدٍ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ (“He led them with a hand of iron”) and تَكَسَّرَتْ أَمَالُهُ عَلَى صَخْرَةِ الْوَأَقَعِ (“His hopes shattered upon the rock of reality”), where qualities such as hardness and rigidity are metaphorically transferred to abstract domains. Together, these forms demonstrate systematic conceptual mapping between moral-intellectual abstractions and embodied experiential schemas, aligning classical rhetorical classification with contemporary cognitive metaphor theory.

The remaining metaphor categories further solidify the rhetorical structure in *al-Shā'ir*. Of the 36 identified metaphors, 3 are classified as *Isti'ārah Mujarradah*, 3 as *Mutalaqqah*, 2 as *Murasysyah*, and 2 as *Tamthīliyyah* (Ravanjoo & Pedram, 2021). In *Mujarradah*, the metaphor appears in a stripped, abstract form, such as هُوَ ظِلٌّ بِلَا رُوحٍ (“He is a shadow without a soul”), where “shadow” symbolizes existential emptiness. *Mutalaqqah* metaphors, like الْحَيَاةُ طَرِيقٌ طَوِيلٌ (“Life is a long road”), remain open to interpretation, lacking restrictive contextual reinforcement. In *Murasysyah*, ornamental reinforcement strengthens the metaphor, as in فَاضَ بَحْرُ حَزْنِهِ بِأَمْوَاجٍ عَاتِيَةٍ (“The sea of his sorrow overflowed with raging waves”), which deepens the initial “sea” metaphor with additional imagery. Finally, *Tamthīliyyah* metaphors, such as كَانَ كَمَنْ يُمَسِّكُ الرِّيحَ بِيَدَيْهِ (“He was like one trying to grasp the wind with his hands”), present analogical scenarios that express futility. These categories demonstrate layered semantic transfer, highlighting the stylistic and intellectual depth of al-Manfalūṭī’s prose within Arabic rhetorical tradition.

In *al-Shā'ir*, metaphors serve as structured semantic mechanisms rather than decorative devices, with their interpretation grounded in a triangulated theoretical framework. According to the Arabic *balāghah* tradition, *isti'ārah* involves rule-governed semantic transfer based on culturally sanctioned associations (*'alāqah*), as formulated by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani and systematized by Al-Sakkaki (Radhia, 2026). Thus, metaphorical representations of abstract concepts like love, fate, sorrow, and virtue follow established rhetorical logic rather than subjective interpretation. This view is supported by Kövecses, (2023), conceptual metaphor theory, which posits metaphor as a systematic mapping between embodied experience and abstract meaning. Furthermore, metaphors such as “light” for divine guidance and expansive natural imagery for divine will are intertextually grounded in *Qur'ānic* discourse, particularly *surah an-Nur* (24:35), and Islamic philosophical and mystical traditions. Together, these frameworks provide a robust justification for the study's interpretations, ensuring methodological validity and analytical rigor.

Metaphors in *al-Shā'ir* enhance the symbolic structure of the narrative, providing cohesion and thematic unity by linking scenes and characters through recurring motifs and symbolic frames. This allows the reader to engage with the text not only on a literal level but also through layered allegorical meanings, enriching the interpretive experience and aligning the literary form with its cultural function as a medium for moral reflection and communal identity. The metaphors used by al-Manfalūṭī are not merely rhetorical flourishes, but essential semiotic devices that reflect, reinforce, and transmit cultural knowledge. By employing a wide range of explicit and implicit metaphorical structures, the author constructs a narrative that speaks to the heart, intellect, and cultural memory of readers, bridging language, culture, aesthetics, ethics, and tradition, while affirming the centrality of metaphor in Arab literary anthropology

CULTURAL THEMES ENCODED IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In Arabic *balāghah*, as articulated by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī and systematized by al-Sakkākī, *isti‘ārah* operates through culturally recognized semantic relations (*‘alāqah*), ensuring interpretive legitimacy rather than subjective association (Radhia, 2026). The symbolism of light, particularly in *surah an-Nur* (24:35), is deeply embedded in Islamic intellectual history, representing divine guidance. From a cognitive semantic perspective, these expressions map embodied visual perception to abstract moral understanding. Religious metaphors in *al-Shā‘ir*, such as «هي شمسٌ» (“She is a sun that illuminates the universe”) and «بدأ الفجرُ يرسلُ أشعته الأولى» (“The dawn began to send its first rays”), reflect cultural and moral meanings through light imagery radiance and renewal grounded in rhetorical theory, intertextual tradition, and cognitive linguistics (Gwervevde & Mthombeni, 2023; Tektigul et al., 2023).

In *al-Shā‘ir*, religious and natural metaphors are grounded in culturally stabilized symbolism. Phrases like «هي قمرٌ في ليلٍ وحدتي» (“She is a moon in the night of my solitude”) and «تفتحت كالوردة في ربيع الشباب» (“She blossomed like a rose in the spring of youth”) link lunar and floral imagery to beauty and renewal. Similarly, metaphors like «هبت عاصفة الحزن في صدره» (“A storm of grief raged in his chest”) and «كان صبره كشجرة ثابتة في وجه الرياح» (“His patience was like a firm tree against the winds”) reflect emotional turmoil and endurance. These metaphors align with Arabic literary conventions (Tektigul et al., 2023) and *balāghah* theory by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, following rule-governed, culturally recognized semantic relations (*‘alāqah*). Drawing on cognitive semantics (Gwervevde & Mthombeni, 2023), they map embodied experiences to abstract moral values, grounded in culturally stabilized symbolic structures.

In *al-Shā‘ir*, figurative language encodes cultural codes-recurring symbolic patterns with shared meanings that are socially regulated and historically stabilized within a speech community (Gwervevde & Mthombeni, 2023). These metaphors, reflecting values such as honor, loyalty, and generosity, are culturally entrenched. For example, describing a self-sacrificing character as «نهر» (“a river that quenches every thirst”) links water with generosity, while «لؤلؤة مصونة» (“a protected pearl”) associates concealment with honor. Interpretations were derived through close reading and intertextual comparison with classical Arabic literature, ensuring meanings align with recurring symbolic conventions. Validation was achieved through theoretical triangulation: applying *‘alāqah* in classical *balāghah* (Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani), examining intertextual motifs from the *mu‘allaqāt*, and drawing on conceptual metaphor theory (Gwervevde & Mthombeni, 2023). These figurative expressions function as semiotic carriers of collective memory and ethical values, conveying social meaning beyond aesthetic ornamentation.

In conclusion, the figurative language used in *al-Shā‘ir* operates as a cultural archive, preserving and transmitting deeply held beliefs, values, and identities. Through religious symbolism, natural imagery, and socially embedded metaphors, the novel encodes a rich array of cultural meanings that resonate with its Arab-Muslim audience. Similes and metaphors are not employed randomly but serve as structured, purposeful devices that carry both emotional weight and ethical guidance. From an anthropolinguistic perspective, these expressions reveal how language operates as a living reflection of culture molding perception, shaping morality, and sustaining collective memory through literary expression. In doing so, they affirm the central claim of this study: that figurative language, far from being mere ornamentation, is a profound and powerful medium of cultural transmission.

## SIMILE AND METAPHOR AS TOOLS OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY

In *al-Shā'ir*, similes and metaphors go beyond rhetorical ornamentation, serving as powerful mnemonic tools that preserve traditional cultural values. Al-Manfalūṭī's metaphorical language draws on familiar symbols, idioms, and archetypes, making it easier for readers to internalize moral lessons and social expectations (Liao & Dai, 2020). By translating abstract virtues like loyalty, humility, and courage into concrete, image-based expressions, these figurative devices enhance cognitive salience and retention. This is grounded in classical *balāghah*, where figurative language intensifies meaning and impact, as outlined by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, supported by conceptual metaphor theory (Tektigul et al., 2023), it demonstrates that abstract moral concepts become more cognitively accessible when structured through embodied imagery. From an anthropological perspective (Liao & Dai, 2020), these symbolic forms act as carriers of collective memory, enabling intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Thus, the mnemonic and transmissive role of figurative language in *al-Shā'ir* is validated through established rhetorical, cognitive, and cultural theory.

These metaphors do not function merely as poetic embellishments; rather, they operate as culturally transmitted semiotic structures that reflect and reinforce intergenerational worldviews concerning gender roles, ethical norms, and social conduct. Through such figurative constructions, *al-Syā'ir* acts not only as a literary narrative but as a cultural script that affirms and stabilizes traditional models of identity and social order. For example, «هي درّة مصونة في صدق الحياء» (“She is a guarded pearl within the shell of modesty”) and «كان لها كنزاً مخبوءاً لا تراه العيون» (“She was for him a hidden treasure unseen by eyes”) present the Arabic expressions first, encoding femininity through images of precious concealment that connote purity, protection, and moral value within Arab-Islamic cultural symbolism. Likewise, masculine identity is framed in expressions such as «كان درعاً لأهله» (“He was a shield for his family”) and «هو جبل لا تزعه الرياح» (“He is a mountain unmoved by the winds”), where strength, steadfastness, and responsibility are mapped onto natural and martial imagery.

A key feature of the figurative language in *al-Shā'ir* is its ability to bridge classical and contemporary cultural discourses. Many of its similes and metaphors demonstrate intertextual continuity with the pre-Islamic (*jāhilīyyah*) poetic tradition, particularly through desert imagery, natural forces, and honor-based symbolism. This is validated through comparative analysis with early Arabic poetry, where motifs like the sword, desert, and tribal valor symbolized ethical and aesthetic ideals (Tektigul et al., 2023). In classical *qaṣīdah*, the "sword" represents nobility, sacrifice, and moral courage within a tribal honor framework. When al-Manfalūṭī recontextualizes these images in *al-Shā'ir*, embedding the "sword" in themes of education, emotional discipline, or civic responsibility, the symbolic essence remains but its sociocultural application shifts. This transformation aligns with intertextuality theory (Jauss, 2022), which argues that literary meaning emerges through the reimagining of prior traditions, supported by documented symbolic continuities across historical periods.

This literary strategy illustrates how figurative language can serve as a dynamic instrument of cultural continuity, allowing for the retention of foundational ideals while also enabling their reinterpretation. By embedding familiar metaphorical images into new narrative frameworks, al-Manfalūṭī ensures that tradition remains alive within innovation. The reader is drawn into a dialogue not only with the characters and plot but with the cultural imagination of the Arab world an imagination that is anchored in collective memory, rhetorical legacy, and symbolic resonance.

Figurative language thus becomes a conduit through which past and present, form and function, aesthetics and ethics are all meaningfully interwoven.

In conclusion, the strategic use of simile and metaphor in *al-Shā'ir* exemplifies the role of figurative language as a vehicle for cultural preservation and transformation. These expressions encapsulate enduring moral codes and societal norms, ensuring that they are not merely stated but experienced, remembered, and transmitted. By connecting ancient poetic forms with contemporary cultural issues, al-Manfalūṭī sustains a literary continuum that transcends historical ruptures and affirms cultural identity. From an anthropolinguistic standpoint, this interplay of form and meaning reinforces the thesis that language is not a static tool of communication, but a living medium through which values are perpetuated and culture is continuously reimagined.

#### COGNITIVE AND SEMIOTIC INTERPRETATION

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Flusberg & Thibodeau, 2023), these expressions reflect cognitive mappings where abstract emotions are structured through concrete domains like war and fire. The metaphors are grounded in shared cultural schemas within Arab tradition, where valor and endurance are central ethical values. *al-Shā'ir* transforms internal emotion into socially intelligible imagery, reinforcing the link between cognition, culture, and literary expression. For example, «قلبي ساحة حرب لا تهدأ» (“My heart is a battlefield that never calms”) maps emotional turmoil onto physical combat, while «اشتعلت في صدره نارُ الصراع» (“The fire of conflict ignited in his chest”) links psychological struggle to sensory heat, both using embodied imagery to enhance interpretation.

Similes and metaphors in the novel also function within the semiotic system of Arab literary and cultural meaning. Take, for instance, the recurring simile “her eyes are like moons.” This image is deeply embedded in Arab cosmology and aesthetics, where the moon signifies not just physical beauty but spiritual illumination and cyclical purity. The choice of the moon over other celestial bodies is significant as it reflects the cultural preference for symbols of calm radiance, rhythmic presence, and feminine mystery. The metaphor’s semiotic force lies in its intertextual reference to both classical poetry and Qur’anic symbolism, thus enhancing its meaning through layers of cultural familiarity. Such imagery operates within a web of signs that extend far beyond the immediate narrative context, tapping into a collective cultural memory.

In *al-Shā'ir*, metaphors like «خَرَجَتْ كلماته كسيفٍ يغرَس في القلب» (“His words emerged like a sword piercing the heart”) and «جرح حديثه قلبي كما يجرح الريحُ أغصانَ الشجر» (“His speech wounded my heart as the wind wounds the branches of a tree”) project physical actions piercing, cutting, wounding onto abstract emotions like grief and pain. The first metaphor emphasizes the potency of words to harm, reflecting the Arab cultural view of speech as carrying moral and social weight. The second uses the imagery of wind damaging branches to convey vulnerability and the indirect force of words on the psyche. By grounding abstract emotions in physical experiences, *al-Shā'ir* constructs complex emotional and ethical meanings, framed within culturally specific symbolic structures that guide interpretation and social understanding.

This interplay between cognition and culture affirms the idea proposed by scholars like Flusberg & Thibodeau, (2023), who argue that metaphors must be understood as both motivated and sedimented. They are motivated by lived human experience but sedimented through historical use, cultural embedding, and linguistic convention. In this sense, the metaphors in *al-Shā'ir* are both *newly constructed* within the narrative and *inherited* through centuries of literary and cultural evolution. The metaphorical language thus serves a dual purpose: it reflects immediate narrative

needs (e.g., expressing a character's sorrow) while simultaneously invoking broader cultural worldviews about identity, virtue, fate, and human relationships. This duality makes figurative language a uniquely rich subject of cognitive-semiotic investigation in literature.

In conclusion, the metaphors and similes found in *al-Shā'ir* exemplify the intricate relationship between embodied cognition, semiotic tradition, and cultural worldview. They are not random artistic embellishments but carefully crafted expressions that draw upon physical experience while resonating with symbolic meaning. By interpreting these figurative forms through the frameworks of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and cultural semiotics, we uncover their role as cognitive tools that help us think and feel, and as semiotic instruments that root language in the cultural soil from which it grows. The fusion of the bodily and the cultural in metaphor demonstrates that figurative language is a fundamental mechanism through which literature reflects, shapes, and sustains the human experience both individually and collectively.

#### LITERARY-AESTHETIC IMPACT

The figurative language in *al-Shā'ir* plays a pivotal role in reinforcing narrative cohesion and emotional pacing. Similes and metaphors are not inserted arbitrarily but strategically placed at key junctures in the storyline moments of crisis, revelation, emotional intensity, or moral realization (Caracciolo, 2023). These devices serve as rhythmic anchors within the prose, controlling the tempo and tone of the narrative. For example, when a character undergoes emotional turmoil, the sudden emergence of an extended simile or metaphor serves not only to express internal conflict but also to slow the narrative, allowing readers to absorb and contemplate the depth of the moment. This modulation of narrative rhythm through figurative language enhances the immersive quality of the text, encouraging deeper engagement with its emotional and thematic layers.

Moreover, simile and metaphor act as stylistic signatures of al-Manfalūṭī's literary voice. His writing is distinguished by its eloquence, emotional resonance, and moral earnestness all of which are expressed and amplified through richly textured figurative language (Hossain, 2024). The deliberate use of ornate metaphors and carefully constructed similes situates his prose within the lineage of classical Arabic literature, where eloquence (*balāghah*) is both an artistic achievement and a marker of intellectual refinement. At the same time, his metaphors are infused with psychological depth and social commentary, revealing a modern sensibility that adapts traditional forms to new discursive needs. In this way, his style becomes both familiar and innovative grounded in heritage but responsive to the evolving concerns of a changing Arab world.

A significant aspect of the aesthetic power of al-Manfalūṭī's prose lies in its intertextual engagement with the Arabic poetic tradition (Creswell, 2021). The metaphors and similes he employs often echo themes, symbols, and stylistic patterns from pre-Islamic poetry (*al-Shi'r al-Jāhili*), Qur'anic imagery, and classical *qaṣīda* structures. This literary intertextuality is not merely ornamental; it connects his modern narrative to a broader cultural archive of Arab literary expression. For instance, the metaphor of the desert wind, the image of the moonlit night, or the comparison of virtue to a flowing river all evoke poetic conventions familiar to readers steeped in Arabic literary culture (Caracciolo, 2023). These intertextual references deepen the reader's aesthetic experience by layering contemporary emotional realities over historical and symbolic forms, thereby enhancing both cultural resonance and literary depth.

In conclusion, the literary-aesthetic impact of simile and metaphor in *al-Shā'ir* is substantial and multifaceted. These devices function not only to structure and embellish the narrative but also to shape its emotional dynamics, define its stylistic distinctiveness, and embed

it within a rich intertextual tradition. Through his masterful use of figurative language, al-Manfalūfī achieves a synthesis of form and meaning, tradition and innovation. His metaphors and similes are not merely linguistic flourishes; they are integral to the novel's artistic power and cultural significance. From a literary and anthropolinguistic perspective, this confirms the vital role of figurative expression in Arabic prose not only as a tool of persuasion or aesthetic pleasure but as a medium through which literature becomes a living, evolving reflection of its cultural roots.

#### ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

The findings of this study affirm that figurative language particularly similes and metaphors offers critical insights into how the Arabic language codifies cultural worldviews. In *al-Shā'ir*, figurative expressions are not merely linguistic ornamentations but cognitive and symbolic structures that reflect the Arab way of seeing, feeling, and interpreting the world. Each metaphor or simile employed by Kao, (2022) carries with it a conceptual load that arises from the community's historical experiences, religious foundations, and moral convictions. These expressions serve to encode systems of value, emotional orientations, and social norms that are deeply rooted in Arab-Islamic culture, thus transforming the literary text into a cultural document that captures the essence of a particular worldview.

Within this framework, simile and metaphor function as symbolic codes whose meanings extend beyond their immediate narrative context and participate in culturally stabilized semiotic systems. In this study, a symbolic code is defined as a recurrent figurative pattern whose semantic associations are historically documented and socially shared within Arabic literary discourse (Othman, 2025). In *al-Shā'ir*, images such as «نشرت الشمس رايتها البيضاء», «هي شمس تضيء الكون», and strength-inflected imagery related to moral firmness echo long-standing symbolic inventories in Arabic poetry, where light connotes guidance and moral clarity, and weapon imagery encodes honor and sacrifice. The interpretive validity of these associations is grounded in classical *balāghah*, particularly the theory of structured semantic transfer articulated by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, which emphasizes that metaphor operates through culturally recognized relations (*alāqah*), not subjective resemblance. Intertextually, similar symbolic patterns are well documented in pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* traditions (Asiri, 2024), where desert, celestial, and martial imagery function as ethical signifiers.

From an anthropolinguistic perspective, language is both a communicative medium and a mechanism of cultural construction, The metaphorical frames found in the novel such as experiential mappings that align moral struggle with physical struggle or spiritual illumination with light correspond to conceptual metaphor theory (Tektigul et al., 2023), which explains how abstract domains (virtue, destiny, identity) are structured through embodied source domains (journey, battle, light). These mappings were identified through systematic close reading and categorized according to established rhetorical taxonomy, then cross-validated through intertextual comparison with Qur'ānic discourse particularly *surah an-Nur* (24:35) in the case of light symbolism and classical poetic usage.

Diachronically, the figurative expressions in *al-Shā'ir* draw upon a cultural reservoir that transcends the author's historical moment, recontextualizing inherited metaphors within modern narrative concerns. This continuity is theoretically supported by intertextuality theory (Yazar & Batur, 2025), which posits that literary meaning emerges through transformation of prior textual traditions. Accordingly, the similes and metaphors in the novel operate as cultural bridges linking classical, medieval, and modern symbolic orders. The conclusions of this study are therefore

justified through methodological triangulation: (1) textual evidence in Arabic drawn directly from the novel, (2) classical rhetorical theory, (3) intertextual comparison with established Arabic literary traditions, and (4) contemporary cognitive and anthropological theory. In this sense, figurative language in *al-Shā'ir* is analytically demonstrated to function not merely as ornamentation but as a structured mechanism of cultural transmission and symbolic continuity.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that similes and metaphors in *al-Shā'ir* function as more than stylistic devices; they operate as deeply embedded cultural codes that reveal the cognitive, aesthetic, and anthropological dimensions of Arabic language and literature. Through a systematic analysis of 49 *tashbihāt* (تشبيهات) and 36 *isti'ārāt* (استعارات), classified according to classical Arabic rhetorical frameworks, the study confirms that figurative language serves to transmit moral values, cultural identity, and philosophical worldview, directly addressing the research problem regarding the limited anthropolinguistic exploration of Arabic literary figurative expressions.

From an anthropolinguistic perspective, these expressions serve to codify culturally shared meanings, particularly regarding religious belief, social behavior, emotional experience, and ethical ideals. They function as mnemonic devices that preserve tradition, intergenerational wisdom, and symbolic associations grounded in Arab-Muslim heritage. Moreover, by bridging pre-Islamic poetic forms with modern discursive themes, al-Manfalūfī constructs a literary continuity that situates his work within a dynamic cultural lineage.

Drawing from theories of conceptual metaphor and cultural semiotics, the study also highlighted the embodied and experiential basis of figurative language. Metaphors such as « قلبي ساحة حرب لا تهدأ » (“the heart is a battlefield”) or similes like « عيناه كالقمر » (“eyes like moons”) are not arbitrary; they are grounded in culturally situated perceptions, bodily experience, and historical intertextuality. These images evoke not only emotional resonance but also cultural belonging, offering readers access to deeper layers of symbolic meaning that transcend the immediate narrative.

The research highlights the dual role of figurative language in Arabic literary discourse: expressing subjective experience and reinforcing collective identity. In *al-Shā'ir*, simile and metaphor encapsulate the Arab cultural worldview, blending timeless elements with responses to socio-cultural contexts. These figures of speech transform language into an archive of shared memory, ethical values, and spiritual vision. Future studies could expand this anthropolinguistic approach by comparing across genres, literary traditions, and linguistic communities, exploring how figurative language shapes and sustains social reality across time and contexts.

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