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Animal Literature in Al-Jahiz's Works in the Light of Ecocriticism

أدب الحيوان عند الجاحظ في ضوء النقد البيئي

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Abstract:

This study aims to reexamine Al-Jahiz's "The Book of Al-Hayawan" in light of ecological criticism, to uncover representations of animals and nature within traditional Arab discourse, and to demonstrate the extent to which a reading based on anthropocentrism can be transcended.

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach by examining selected passages from "Al-Hayawan" and analyzing them according to certain concepts of ecological criticism.

The study revealed that Al-Jahiz presented a perspective that goes beyond the direct description of animals to highlight the reciprocal relationships between living beings and their environments. It revealed an awareness of the importance of balance within the natural world and assigned animals semantic and cultural functions within the text. The results confirm the potential for employing ecological criticism in reinterpreting the Arab heritage while taking into account its historical and epistemological specificity.

Keywords: Al-Jahiz, The Book of Al-Hayawan, ecological criticism, nature, heritage.

الملخص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى إعادة قراءة كتاب الحيوان للجاحظ في ضوء النقد البيئي، للكشف عن تمثيلات الحيوان والطبيعة داخل الخطاب التراثي العربي، وبيان مدى إمكان تجاوز القراءة القائمة على المركزية البشرية، واعتماد البحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال استقراء نماذج مختارة من كتاب الحيوان وتحليلها وفق بعض مفاهيم النقد البيئي، وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن الجاحظ قدّم تصوّرًا يتجاوز الوصف المباشر للحيوان نحو إبراز العلاقات المتبادلة بين الكائنات وبيئاتها، وكشف عن وعي بأهمية التوازن داخل العالم الطبيعي، كما منح الحيوان وظائف دلالية وثقافية داخل النص، وتؤكد النتائج إمكان توظيف النقد البيئي في إعادة قراءة التراث العربي مع مراعاة خصوصيته التاريخية والمعرفية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجاحظ - كتاب الحيوان - النقد البيئي - الطبيعة - التراث.

1. INTRODUCTION

Al-Jahiz was mainly one of the well-known literary leaders of the Abbasid period. He was born in 159 AH and died around 255 AH. The tremendous scholarly works of Al-Jahiz were featured by excellence, diversity, and uniqueness across many fields. His distinct artistic contribution resulted in a collection of works including language, literature, and philosophy. Among these works, Al-Bayan wa-l-Tabyin, Al-Boukhala (The Book of Misers), and Al-Mahasin wa-l-Addad (Virtues and Opposites). In addition to, Kitab al-Taj fi Akhlaq al-Muluk (The Crown of Kings' Morals), and his letters. Moreover, he wrote the massive encyclopedia called Kitab al-Haywan (The

Book of Animals). The latter is recognized one of the earliest books written on zoology. This book includes seven parts including over 2,000 pages, in which Al-Jahiz tackled and explored the world of animals. This work incorporated language, poetry, and research into the nature, instincts, conditions, and habits of animals. Since Al-Jahiz was characterized by knowledge and cultural-awareness, he encompassed as references the Holy Quran, the Prophetic Hadith, the Torah, and the Gospel. In addition to the sayings of sages and poets, Greek sciences, Persian literature, and Indian wisdom. Also, he included his own scientific experiments, observations, and personal notes .

In light of the transformations

witnessed in modern critical approaches, particularly ecological criticism, it has become possible to re-read this heritage in a way that transcends the narrow human-centered perspective, toward revealing representations of nature and the place of animals within it. From this perspective, this study poses the following question: How can ecological criticism reinterpret al-Jahiz's texts beyond anthropocentrism?

2. Research Objectives and Methodology

2.1- Research Objectives

This study seeks to achieve a set of epistemological and critical objectives, notably:

A. Uncovering early environmental awareness in Al-Jahiz:

by elucidating the philosophical and literary roots of the relationship between humans and animals in his thought. Moreover, demonstrating how he was ahead of his time in approaching what is known today as "land ethics," which is a concept discussed by the American author, philosopher, and environmentalist Aldo Leopold (1887–1948), who is considered the founder of modern wildlife management.

B. Critique of anthropocentrism:

by analyzing the textual and rhetorical mechanisms Al-Jahiz employed to challenge humanity's absolute dominance over nature and to grant a form of agency to non-human beings.

C. Adapting modern curricula:

by highlighting the effectiveness of ecocriticism as a methodological tool capable of interpreting classical Arabic texts and linking them to contemporary global issues.

D. Re-reading Kitab al-Hayawan:

By presenting a new critical perspective on this monumental work, moving beyond viewing it merely as a "scientific encyclopedia" or a record of "literary curiosities" to considering it a text with intellectual and philosophical dimensions related to issues of ecological balance.

2.2 Research Methodology

The research adopts a descriptive methodology based on analytical mechanisms that are supported by ecocritical

frameworks as a reference point. The research methods are as follows:

A. Textual analysis of selected texts and discourses related to animals in Al-Jahiz's writings. In addition, the extraction of evidence indicative of environmental awareness.

B. A study of representations of animals as a cultural "sign," and an analysis of "animal speech" as a communicative act aimed at challenging anthropocentrism.

C. An interdisciplinary approach: linking literature, rhetorical philosophy, and modern environmental sciences to offer an interpretation that bridges the gap between tradition and modernity.

3. Theoretical Framework: Intersections of Ecocriticism and Al-Jahiz's Environmental Philosophy

Ecocriticism is one of the modern critical approaches that has emerged in contemporary literary studies. It focuses on examining the relationship between literature and the environment through an analysis of representations of nature and non-human beings in literary texts. As for the term ecocriticism, "studies indicate that it first appeared in Anglo-Saxon culture, specifically in the United States and Britain, in an essay by William Ruckert entitled *"Literature and the Environment: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,"* published in 1978. Therefore, Ruckert is considered the first critic who established the term. In the article, he addressed the most important concepts related to the environment, as well as the principles of ecology and their relevance to the study of literature. The term was not limited to this single designation; it was also known by other terms, including ecological criticism, ecopoetics, environmental poetics, and green cultural studies. According to Karen Winkle, the proliferation of these terms stems from the openness and diversity of critical trends and the differing perspectives surrounding them. Some critics believe their role lies in raising public awareness of the environmental problems and crises that threaten their existence and that of other living beings on

Earth, while others argue that the proliferation of critical theories that dominated the critical scene in the 1980s and 1990s was the cause of its emergence.” (Issa and Al-Budyri, 2024, p. 56).

Environmental criticism is related to literature throughout examining how the environment is represented in texts. This representation is manifested using description, symbolism, or narrative structure. Furthermore, it focuses on both ethical and aesthetic values, which are produced by the relationship between humans and their natural surroundings.

1.3 Environmental Humanities:

Environmental humanities concern themselves with the study of representations of nature and non-human beings in human discourses. In addition, it is an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between humans and the environment through approaches belonging to the humanities, with a focus on representations of nature and non-human beings in cultural discourses. In his book *Al-Hayawan*, Al-Jahiz begins with an early critical perspective on what we today call “Environmental Humanities”, an approach that seeks to understand non-human beings not as functional tools, but as “partners” possessing an independent cultural and epistemological identity. Thus, Al-Jahiz’s representations of animals transcend purely biological description to delve into the “anthropology of the being.”

3.2 Land Ethics:

This is an examination of humanity’s moral responsibility toward its living environment. Aldo Leopold states: “Land ethics changes the role of rational man from colonizer of the Earth’s community to an ordinary member and citizen of it; it requires him to respect his fellow members as well as the community itself.” (Zimmerman, 2006, p. 147)

We also find that he formulated Land Ethics as an evolutionary process of philosophical ethics, stating, “All ethics is an ecological process”. He noted that “the ecological definition of ethics and its

philosophical definition mean the same thing: ecologically, it means restricting the freedom of action in the struggle for survival; philosophically, it means the trade-off between social behavior and anti-social behavior.” (Rashid Ahmad and Sabra, 2023, p. 74). Thus, some features of this conception can be explored in Al-Jahiz’s discourse through his references to the balance among beings and his view of them as part of an integrated natural system.

3.3 Biocentrism:

The shift from “anthropocentrism” to a view that considers humans part of an integrated ecological system is closely related to the concept of anthropocentrism, which “rejects the view that concern for humans holds greater significance than that for other non-human beings, and starts from a firm conviction in the centrality of humans as represented by their interests, leading to the belief that the theory of anthropocentrism is not viable. Thus, in principle, central values can be preserved, while on the other hand it is acknowledged that practice must be guided by human interest, for in all its aspects, even if understood differently, it grants humans the right and centrality to exercise their utilitarian right to satisfy their material needs through it.” (Issa and Al-Budyri, 2024, p. 58).

4. Manifestations of Environmental Awareness in Al-Jahiz:

Al-Jahiz was one of the most prominent thinkers of Islamic civilization, whose pioneering scientific contributions transcended the boundaries of literature and language to touch upon the realms of the natural sciences. In his encyclopedic work “*Al-Hayawan*” (The Animals), Al-Jahiz did not merely compile accounts and poems about animals, but also established a rigorous scientific methodology that, in essence, approximates what is known today as ecology. This methodology is based on a cosmological conception of nature as a system composed of interrelated elements, as al-Jahiz alludes to in his statement: “The earth is one of the four elements, which are water, earth, air, and fire” (Al-Jahiz, 1965, p.

27). This conception reflects an early awareness of the unity and interdependence of natural elements in shaping the living world.

We can say that Al-Jahiz demonstrated an advanced environmental awareness, manifested primarily in his deep understanding of the interrelationships between living organisms and their environments, the concept of ecological balance, and the influence of geographical and climatic factors on the characteristics of living organisms. Below, we will review the most prominent manifestations of this environmental awareness, supported by evidence and direct quotations from “*Al-Hayawan*”:

4.1 Al-Jahiz’s Scientific Method: “Observation and Experiment”

Al-Jahiz is considered one of the most prominent scholars of the Arab heritage who distinguished himself with a clear scientific approach to the study of natural phenomena. This is clearly evident in “*The Book of Animals*”, where he relied on direct observation and experimentation as fundamental tools for verifying knowledge. He expressed this approach when he asserted that: “Observation or direct examination was one of al-Jahiz’s methods for verifying what he read or heard; for al-Jahiz, nothing satisfied him except direct examination, as he himself stated, saying ‘Nothing satisfies me except direct observation.’ If direct observation is possible, he either verifies the truth of the report himself—resorting to tests and experiments—or relies on the observations of other scholars, though some doubt remains within him. However, if direct observation is difficult, the report is subject to refutation in Al-Jahiz’s view,” (Al-Jawzi, 2018, p. 5),

The methodological dimension of Al-Jahiz’s thinking is evident in his critique of superficial interpretations of natural phenomena, as seen in his objection to the claim that fire is dry, as expressed under the heading “Refuting Those Who Claim That Heat Causes Dryness”: “He refuted their claim that ‘heat causes dryness,’ for heat

should only produce warmth and generate what is similar to it; it does not produce another kind of thing that is in no way related to it” (Al-Jahiz, 1965, p. 36), where he explains that the apparent dryness after combustion is not an effect of the fire itself, but rather the result of the removal of moisture and the retention of the earth element. This analysis reveals an interpretive approach that goes beyond sensory appearances to investigate underlying causes, reflecting a scientific consciousness grounded in criticism and reasoning.

The analytical dimension of al-Jahiz’s methodology is also evident in his distinction between light and color, as he refuses to consider light a color, based on his observation of the difference in their functions; colors interact with one another and change, whereas light remains an element that reveals them, serving to display and distinguish them without being affected by them. He says: “Fire is heat and light, and every light has whiteness and radiance, but not every whiteness has radiance and light. A scholar among the theologians erred on this point: light is not a color, for colors decay—a phenomenon common to all of them and universal among them all. Milk and ink decay, and dry dust mixes with liquid water, just as hot and cold, and sweet and sour, mix. Thus, the effect of whiteness on blackness is like the effect of blackness on whiteness, and the change that occurs between green and red occurs to the same extent between whiteness and all other colors” (Al-Jahiz, 1965, p. 56). Through this analysis, al-Jahiz asserts that differences in actions indicate differences in essences—an argument that reveals a critical intellectual approach based on linking phenomena to their effects, reflecting an awareness of a methodology grounded in observation, comparison, and inference.

4.2 Understanding Ecological Balance and Interdependence:

In his book “*Al-Hayawan*”, Al-Jahiz demonstrated an early awareness of the nature of the universe as an integrated ecological system, based on the interdependence and interaction of its

elements within a framework of delicate balance. He does not view living beings in a fragmented manner but rather perceives them within a network of functional relationships upon which the order and continuity of the world depend. Consequently, every creature—no matter how insignificant or despised it may seem in the eyes of humans—plays a vital role in maintaining the stability of this system. This perspective is clearly evident in his statement: “Glory be to Him who made their benefits a blessing, and their harms lead to the greatest of benefits; who divided them into the pleasant and the painful, the sociable and the solitary, the small and insignificant and the great and majestic, the enemy who lies in wait for you and the wise one who guards you, the peaceful one who protects you and the helper who supports you; and who placed in all of them the perfection of benefit, and through their combination, the blessing is fulfilled; and the nullification of even one of them nullifies them all—a valid analogy and clear proof” (Al-Jahiz, 1965, p. 206). Here, Al-Jahiz presents a holistic view of nature, based on the diversity of living beings and the complementarity of their roles, thereby achieving the common good of the cosmic order. This conception does not stop at merely acknowledging diversity; rather, it goes further to emphasize the principle of interdependence among the components of the environment, since the existence of each element remains contingent upon the existence of others, such that the disruption of one leads to the disruption of the whole. Hence, al-Jahiz develops a vision closely resembling what is known in modern environmental thought as the concept of “ecological balance,” whereby natural phenomena are understood only within their interconnected relationships, and organisms are not evaluated in isolation from their functions within this system.

Recognition of ecological balance and interdependence points to an awareness of the relationships that govern living organisms within the natural system, where the continuity of life depends on an integrated

interaction among its elements, such that an imbalance in one of them leads to disruption of the whole; this is because “ecological balance serves as the foundation for the continuation of existence and the evolution of life on Earth.” In ecologically balanced systems, a complete equilibrium is achieved between the elements of the food chain—consumers at their respective levels and producers of various types who serve as food sources for consumers. The necessary condition for a living organism to survive and continue its existence within a specific ecosystem is that it must.

5. Representations of the Animal “Other” and Discursive Mechanisms in “Al-Hayawan”

After revealing the dimensions of environmental awareness in Al-Jahiz’s conceptions of nature and the relationships that govern the beings within it, the course of this research necessitates a shift to another level of analysis concerning how the image of the animal is formed within the discourse itself. The environmental value of the text is not determined solely by the ideas it offers about the natural world, but is also evident in the way the presence of non-human beings is constructed within the textual structure. Consequently, the presence of animals in the book is not merely subject matter for reporting or a topic for classification and description; rather, it becomes a semiotic element that contributes to the production of meaning and the formation of a particular vision of the relationship between humans and their living environment. Based on this perspective, this section aims to study representations of animals as entities embedded within a system of ecological and cultural relationships by analyzing the mechanisms that shape their portrayal, revealing the impact of the environment on the construction of their identity, and elucidating the ethical dimensions that frame its presence in the text, thereby allowing for a reinterpretation of this work in light of questions of environmental criticism without disregarding the specificity of its traditional context.

5.1 The Representation of Animals in Al-Jahiz's Discourse: From the Described Being to the Signifying Being

Anyone reflecting on Al-Jahiz's *Kitab al-Hayawan* will clearly observe that the presence of animals in it goes beyond being merely material for description or a subject for classification; rather, it extends to the formation of a semantic structure that reveals the nature of the relationship Al-Jahiz establishes between humans and the non-human world. Animals do not appear in the text merely as static beings whose external characteristics are observed; rather, they are utilized in the production of meaning and the construction of conceptions related to the natural order and the diversity of beings within it. "Human ignorance of the logic of creatures—including animals—does not imply a denial of thought and communication on the part of these creatures; they do not need logic to understand humans, but rather it is humans who need this logic to be able to communicate with them. Thus, Solomon, peace be upon him, needed to learn it in order to grasp what he did not know, as God, the Exalted, says: 'O people, teach us the logic of the birds.' But the birds and other creatures did not need this logic, for they already possessed it; rather, they merely needed to expand the scope of their mandate to reveal to humans abilities and knowledge that humans were unaware of." (Satanbuli, 2025, p. 8) Consequently, the focus on the representation of animals is not so much directed toward studying their characteristics as it is toward analyzing their position and function within al-Jahiz's discourse, and the opportunity this affords to reexamine the traditional boundaries that have made humans the sole center of meaning. Based on this, this section poses the following question: How did the mechanisms of animal representation in "The Book of Animals" contribute to transforming the animal from a subject of description into a being that performs a semantic function transcending the utilitarian perspective and reconstructing its relationship with humans and nature?

Through this study, we examine the

deconstruction of al-Jahiz's style—based on digression and the juxtaposition of seriousness and humor—to demonstrate that, in al-Jahiz's thought, the animal served as a parallel text from which the order of the universe and the wisdom of the Creator could be read, through the following examples and analytical passages:

A. An examination of how the animal transforms from a subject of description into a vehicle of meaning and insight.

The presence of animals in al-Jahiz's work is not limited to being a subject of description or external characterization; rather, it goes beyond that to become part of a holistic worldview, where animals are reintegrated into a network of relationships that link their value to their function within the overall system of nature. In this sense, the animal is not understood as a separate or isolated entity, but rather as an element that derives its meaning from its position within an integrated system in which elements overlap and their roles complement one another.

This conception reflects a clear shift from a partial to a holistic perspective, in which the animal becomes a means of highlighting the unity of the natural world and the interdependence of its components, thereby making al-Jahiz's discourse closer to constructing an interpretive vision of the world than to a mere empirical description of creatures.

• The Religious Dimension:

In his treatise, al-Jahiz employed animals in various ways, including: drawing inferences from their extreme smallness, particularly by considering the biological size of the animal, such as his reference to the example of the "mosquito," through which al-Jahiz moves from the context of ordinary physical observation to the realm of rational inference, so that we find him relying on precise descriptions of the anatomy of these tiny creatures—such as mosquitoes and flies—to demonstrate the Creator's power, uniqueness, and the subtlety of His design; for, in Al-Jahiz's view, the marvel of creation is equally evident in the creation of the

massive elephant and the infinitesimally small mosquito.

- **The Philosophical and Epistemological Dimension:**

Al-Jahiz challenged anthropocentrism by citing several examples in which animals excel in certain respects. He mentioned the “ant model,” which he used as an epistemological tool to undermine anthropocentrism’s monopoly on reason and intelligence. Al-Jahiz does not merely describe the ant as a tiny insect crawling on the ground; rather, he analyzes its economic and engineering behavior as evidence of “divine inspiration.” Through his careful observation of how the ant manages its life, Al-Jahiz elevates this creature to the ranks of thinking and planning beings, transforming a simple sensory description into a compelling philosophical argument proving that intelligence and resourcefulness are inherent in the smallest elements of the universe and are not exclusive to humans. He says: “We have learned that the ant stores provisions for winter during the summer, acts promptly when time permits, and does not waste opportunities to gather supplies. Furthermore, by observing its behavior, its sound judgment, and its consideration of the consequences of its actions, we see that the ant —fears that the grains it has stored for winter in the summer will rot and become worm-eaten, and that the earth will swallow them up; so it brings them out onto its back to dry them and restore their dryness, so that the breeze may blow upon them and dispel any mold and decay from them.” (Al-Jahiz, 1983, pp. 5–6), among other examples that transcend anthropocentrism to highlight the uniqueness and distinctiveness of animals

- **The Social and Political Dimension:**

Al-Jahiz moves on to his attempt to anthropomorphize behavior by presenting numerous animal examples, including that of the dog. In doing so, he shifts the focus from the context of social aversion and biological baseness to the realm of moral and political evaluation. He devotes a significant section of his book to this topic. After observing the

dog’s sensory characteristics, Al-Jahiz draws a stark, satirical comparison between the dog’s loyalty and human treachery, recounting stories of animals that possess qualities lacking in humans—a theme he frequently illustrates in his work. Commenting on the dog’s loyalty to its owner, he says: “This behavior demonstrates natural loyalty, instinctive affection, and fierce devotion, as well as knowledge and patience, generosity and gratitude, and a remarkable abundance of benefits that surpass all others—for all of this was without affectation or pretense.” (Al-Jahiz, 1983, p. 123) This metaphorical shift did not stop at the realm of ethics; rather, he used the conflict between animals (as in the debate between the dogs and the rooster) a mask through which to convey scathing criticism of sectarian and tribal fanaticism in the Abbasid era, transforming the dog here from a subject of description into a mirror that reveals the flaws of human and political behavior without directly clashing with authority.

B. Analysis of the Narrative and Cultural Functions of Animals within the Text.

In al-Jahiz’s text, animals transition from mere natural beings to narrative and cultural tools that drive the text and endow it with profound rhetorical and literary dimensions. Al-Jahiz did not recount animal stories for entertainment, but rather to convey ideas and positions through specific, carefully considered functions.

- **Narrative Functions of Animals**

The “Mask and Political Satire” Function

Al-Jahiz used animals as a “mask” to convey political and social ideas that might have been dangerous to express openly during the Abbasid era. Narratives told through the voice of animals or centered on them granted al-Jahiz literary immunity, allowing him to criticize the authorities and expose sectarian conflicts by projecting them onto the conflict between roosters and dogs, for example. In this context, al-Jahiz says: “As for those who say that the dog’s meanness and treachery are such that if a thief wishes to

enter a family's home, he first feeds the dog guarding them with embers day and night... so that when the dog comes to him at night, he will surrender the house and all it contains to him—this interpretation can only be the result of poor judgment, for poor judgment presents falsehood to its people in the guise of truth..." (Al-Hayawan, 1983, Vol. 2, p. 143).

• **The Cultural Functions of Animals**
The function of "Cultural Demystification"

Al-Jahiz employed "Al-Hayawan" to fulfill a critical cultural function; in it, he compiled Arab myths and superstitions about animals (such as the ghoul, the *shak*, the *azif al-jin*, and the raven's association with bad omens), and subjected them to rational criticism and the empirical method. Thus, the animal here became a means of purifying Arab culture of superstition—or at least of pointing out its inaccuracy and lack of realism. Regarding the "Gharab al-Bain," he says: "Any crow may be called the 'crow of separation' if they wish to associate it with misfortune; as for the 'crow of coffee' itself, it is a small crow. Rather, every crow is called the 'crow of separation' because they fall into the courtyards of people's homes when they stray from them'" (Al-Jahiz, 1983, Vol. 3, p. 431)

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- The study showed that Kitab al-Hayawan by Al-Jahiz goes beyond descriptive accounts of animals and presents a vision based on the interconnectedness of living beings within an integrated natural system.
 - The study revealed an early environmental awareness reflected in Al-Jahiz's understanding of the relationships between living beings and their environments through concepts of balance and interdependence.
 - It demonstrated Al-Jahiz's recognition of the influence of environmental factors in shaping the characteristics and dispositions of living beings.
 - The study found that the representation of animals in Al-Jahiz's discourse extends beyond description to

perform cultural and semantic functions within the text.

- The findings confirm the possibility of employing ecocriticism to reinterpret Arabic classical heritage while preserving its historical and epistemological specificity.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has sought to re-examine al-Jahiz's "The Book of Al-Hayawan" in the light of ecological criticism, beginning with an examination of how the presence of animals and nature is constructed within the text, moving beyond the traditional human-centered perspective. This analysis revealed that "The Book of Al-Hayawan" is not merely a compilation of facts about animals and their characteristics, but goes beyond that to construct a worldview based on the interconnectedness and interaction of all beings within a single, integrated system.

The study demonstrated that al-Jahiz's environmental awareness manifests itself on multiple levels; beginning with his reliance on observation, examination, and critical analysis in addressing natural phenomena; continuing with his understanding of the relationships between living beings and their environments; and culminating in his conception of nature as a balanced system in which functions are integrated and whose elements cannot be understood in isolation from one another. The study also demonstrated that the presence of animals in al-Jahiz's discourse is not limited to a descriptive function but rather becomes a semantic element that contributes to the production of meaning and performs narrative and cultural roles that allow for a reexamination of the relationship between humans and other beings.

Furthermore, the application of eco-criticism tools has revealed new possibilities for reading classical Arabic texts—not as texts detached from contemporary issues, but as texts capable of being reinterpreted and of generating meaning within modern critical frameworks. However, this approach remains an interpretive one that must be practiced with methodological caution to avoid imposing modern environmental concepts on

a traditional text that originated in a different epistemological context; Therefore, what can be gleaned from "The Book of Al-Hayawan" should not be understood as environmental theory in the contemporary sense, but rather as intellectual precursors and semantic intersections that open up new horizons for .reading the heritage

This study paves the way for subsequent research focused on re-engaging with approaches of ecological criticism in the reading of other works of classical Arabic prose and exploring the representations of nature and non-human beings therein, thereby contributing to the expansion of the horizons of Arabic literary studies and linking them to current humanistic and environmental questions.

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