

## Critical Issues of Al-Maarri in "Resalat-el-Ghofran" (Letter of Forgiveness)

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### Abstract

*The text of Resalat-el-Ghofran of Al-Maarri remains a creative critical pattern. It contained his critical vision in many literary criticism issues in a critical, discreet manner founded on argument and proof. This study tackles the most important critical issues discussed by Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri in his letter, such as: essence of poetry, the new things he added to the definition of the earlier people, the plagiarism issue, ascribing the poetry to its composer, prioritizing a certain opinion over others. In all these, he depended on a comparison and balance among poets in a very unique critical method, combining between the vision of the poet, the human, the critic, the philosopher, and his attitude about the poetry thefts and Al-Rajaz poetry, which he rated low. He reasoned this by a mature critical method, and explored the function of poetry, and the relation of the Jinn with poetry. Resalat el-Ghofran remains an inexhaustible wellspring, it is a wealthy material for those who give careful consideration and sparkle their natural talents.*

**Keywords:** Essence of poetry, poetry thefts, plagiarism, functions of poetry, poetical inspiration

### Introduction

Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri, is a well renowned critic in the fourth and fifth Hijri centuries. In spite of his high rank as a creative poet, yet he further excelled in the criticism field; and he coined his critical creativity in writing his famous work "**Resalat el-Ghofran (Letter of Forgiveness)**", which is an imaginary journey to the hereafter world. During this trip, he imagined that he looked at the conditions of the people of Paradise, and those of Hell, namely those of the poets and linguists. His views were very interesting through his dialogue with the poets and writers such as: those who tasted the sweetness of the bliss, and those who suffered the ravages of Hell.

The research focused on the most important critical issues Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri dealt with in his critical style, which demonstrates an amazing skill, and very unique critical ability, such as:

1. Essence of poetry, the new things that Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri added.
2. Poetical thefts.
3. Plagiarism and attributing poetry to its composer.
4. Classes of the Poets, reasons for locating them in Paradise or Hell.
5. Functions of poetry, between the utilitarian and aesthetic aspects.
6. Relationship of Jinn with poetry, and the poetical aspiration.

### First: Essence of Poetry

Al-Maarri's definition of poetry was cited in the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh, when he attempted to attract Paradise attendant (Redwan), and told him that he praised him in many poems. Redwan said, what are the poems? I had never heard of this word before this moment. I said: poems are the plural of poem, and poem verses are balanced speech, acceptable by the instinct under certain conditions, if the balance is increased or decreased, the natural sense will reveal it. <sup>(1)</sup>

The above mentioned definition focuses on the balance or the musical aspect, which he gave preference over all other components; a definition that does not care for other components that form a condition of poetry such as the poetic image and rhyme.

Of this definition, it seems that Abu Al-Alaa emphasized the instinct (talent and nature); it is the power of perception that provides poetry with a magic ability enabling it to influence the recipient. Ibn Al-Qareh attempted to utilize this trait to attract Paradise attendant.

In the words of Ibn Al-Qareh: "if increased or decreased, the natural sense will reveal it; by the sense, he means that of the critic who is highly experienced and acquainted in the knowledge of the good poetry criteria, perception of its purposes, distinguishing the art works and sorting the good works and the poor works."<sup>(2)</sup>

And in his saying: under certain conditions, he meant conditions that should be available to develop poetry, which will be of value. It seems that Al-Maarri was not interested in an in-depth examination of the poetry components and its conditions; rather, he only depended on briefing, because the definition came only accidental within the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh with Paradise attendant.

However, among these conditions, which are not at all unknown by a poet like Abu Al-Alaa, possibly, he meant the poet's suggestive energy which makes the recipient taste poetry verses and influenced by them. Of these conditions are: accuracy of the creative poetical image, quality of paraphrasing, among other things.

As for the rhyme, and the fact that Abu Al-Alaa avoided defining it within the above definition of poetry, it does not mean an ignorance of his part. In fact, the book included long sections talking about the rhyme defects such as "**Iqwa'a**" (*ending letter voicing of certain one or more verses in a one poem different from the rest of the poem verses*), and "**Sanad**" (*different rhythms of the letters preceding the last letters of the verses*), among other defects (prosody issues). In spite of his penchant in rhymes and rhythms, he may have believed that the rhyme is not a condition of poetry that binds the poet to follow very strictly; and that what actually happened when he later attempted to introduce renewals (new things) in poetry.

Poetry has the power to create aesthetic influence due to the high concentration and suggestive energy it enjoys. This what made Al-Maarri, in more than one section in his work "**Resalat Al-Ghofran**", indicate to the multiple possibilities, sometimes without giving priority of one side over the other, still sometimes he chooses the aspect he prefers. An example is when Ibn Al-Qareh was conversing with Antara (a Pre-Islamic, very famous poet), when he asked him: what did you mean by the very bright and marked? Is it the Dinar or the Clothes? Then he responded: "anyone you take is good, both are good and irrevocable."<sup>(3)</sup>

An example of the second state when he gave preference to one opinion over another, is the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh with Imri' el-Qais, when he asked him: "Tell me about your saying; "similar to the "virgin egg" which white color had taken a relatively yellowish color". What did you mean by the virgin? Those who explained your poetry differed in giving its meaning, some said the egg, others said the pearl, and still others said: the orchard, the flower and the papyrus. And how do you recite it: Al-Bayada or Al-Bayadi? Then, he answers: all are good, but Al-Maarri had opted Al-Bayadi in lieu of Al-Bayada."<sup>(4)</sup>

Al-Maarri also mentions many other examples showing that the increase and decrease are strongly related to discriminate between poetry and just word-arrangement. The latter is a kind of balanced arrangement of words that never goes beyond. Meanwhile, the former (poetry) is something that the instinct accepts and enjoys. So the instinct is a base which was solely discussed by Abu Al-Alaa when he defined poetry. None of the previous poetry critics include this indication in their definition of poetry.

Other examples cited by Al-Maarri include that when he asked Imri' el-Qais about increasing the letter "waw" (*a vowel pronounced "wa" in Arabic, which is essentially a conjunction means and*) in the beginning of some verses of his "Moa'llaqa" (*a famous type of the Arabic ancient poem consisting of too many verses*). His response was: "May Allah take them away those who did it; they mistreated the poetry-telling." And, "If they did so, then what is the difference between true poetry and the simply word-rallying?" This is something done by those who do not possess knowledge and instinct in poetry; the people who came later believed it was poetry, crying to the moon."<sup>(5)</sup>

The above statements indicate that Al-Maarri pays very careful attention to the instinct, sensing and perception for the classification of poetry, and a good knowledge of its aesthetic, musical and rhythmic dimensions.

### **Second: Poetical Thefts**

Poetical theft is a very fundamental topic with the ancient critics, and the ensuing arguments whether to consider it as "imitation" or "creation". He believes that the meanings *are well known by everyone, they are even laid on the road for every body*.<sup>(6)</sup> Therefore, two poets may agree on one meaning, but they differ in coining, creativity or imaging.

An example is the dialogue of Ibn Al-Qareh with Hameed Ibn Thawr (a poet), when he told him: "You have excelled in the poet with its rhyme is "dal" (D letter); it included the adjective (description) which I thought Al-Qatami (another poet) had taken from you. But still may be he had mentioned it before you because you both lived the during same age of time." <sup>(7)</sup> Here we conclude that Al-Maarri sees a similarity between two texts of two different poets: Hameed Bin Thawr and Al-Qatami; but he did not make sure who may have taken from the other, because the meanings are not a monopoly of any poet. The only difference aspect is the method of coining and systemizing. This was further emphasized by critics and ancient scholars such as Ibn Rashiq, when he said: "And, theft is in the Badi, the creativity which is characteristic of the poet, not in the common meanings." <sup>(8)</sup>

### **Third: Plagiarism in Poetry**

Plagiarism is one of the ancient critical issues which took a large space in the works of the ancient critics. "You cannot say a person is a plagiarist unless he/she claims that poetry of others is his/hers." <sup>(9)</sup> Thus, plagiarism is attributing poetry to the person who did not compose it. Al-Maarri method was clear in the plagiarism phenomenon, assuring that some verses or poems are plagiaries; and he makes balancing and comparisons between the narrations, and gives priority to one narration over the other.

The method of Al-Maarri is clear in this book, a method indicating a very delicate wisdom of his thinking and accuracy of his criticism. This is very clear in the conversation between Ibn Al-Qareh and Adam (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), when he asked about poetry that is attributed to him (to Adam). He did not hesitate in denouncing what was attributed to Adam of poetries. He based his view on the proof and evidence, as the poetry ascribed to Adam is narrated in the Arabic language, but Adam's language is Syriac. Then Ibn Al-Qareh says: Oh our respected father (meaning Adam, Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), may be you said these poetries and then forgot them." Then Adam (PBAUH) says: "You insisted to be of ingratitude and harm. I was talking Arabic when I was in Paradise, and when I landed on the earth, my tongue shifted to Syriac, and I did not speak other language till I died. But when God, the Exalted, took me back to Paradise, the Arabic language returned to me again. And he who said so must have said it in the worldly living. Don't you consider His saying: from it we were created and to it will shall return. Then, how shall I say this with my tongue is Syriac?" <sup>(10)</sup>

Sometimes, he may rely on certain stylistic features in denying some poems or verses. An example is the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh with Imri' el-Qais when the former asked the latter: "Tell me about "Tasmeet" that is ascribed to you, is it true or not?" Then Imri' el-Qais replies swearing that he did not even hear of it; that is a feature he had never followed; that lying is in abundance." I think it is of the Islamic period poets; they misjudged and abused me." (*Tasmeet is a prosody term which means dividing the verses into certain numbers of prosody syllables, with different rhythms*). <sup>(11)</sup>

Another example about his talk with Imri' el-Qais when he said: We narrate for you a verse which in not in all narrations, and I think it is "fabricated" since it contains something you never followed or accepted, it is your verse: "And, Amro Bin Derma'a (the praised person), the courageous, the steadfast, if he gets in the morning with his sword, he will be walking exactly as does the lion." (*the word of focus is the last Arabic word in the verse: Qaswaraaa (one of the lion's names in Arabic) with a long pronunciation of the last vowel "a", while the correct vocalizing is "Qaswara, with a very short "a" letter ending.*)

Then Imri' el-Qais says: I pray God to take away this other man who claimed so on behalf of me; this man manipulated the word and he could not conceal its defect spelling. He further added: "ascribing these things to me is one of the stigmas." <sup>(12)</sup> So he totally denied removal of the correct letter at the end of the last word in the verse, because it is not a place that accepts deletion of any letter or vowel.

Al-Maarri, as a critic, is a very experienced scholar, who gives preference to a certain narration over the other/s. This is clear in his talk with Al-Muhalhal (*very famous ancient Arabian poet and knight*), when he asked him: Tell me about this verse that is attributed to you:

"They thundered at the time of rampage, and we were the lightning, as if mighty male camels menace one the other."

Al-Asma'i (*a famous Arab poetry narrator, linguist and critic*) denied ascribing this verse to Al-Muhalhal. But Abu Zaid used to cite it and confirm attributing it to Al-Muhalhal. Then he said: "it is too, too long time after I said that, I had already forgotten what I had said in the world life. So what parts of the verse did Al-Asma'i deny?"

He answers that Al-Asma'i claims that the Arabs do not say thunder and lightning (*Ara'ad wa Abraaq*) in menacing others and even in accounting them. He says this is a mistake; and this verse is said only by a person of the highest eloquent class; either me or any other person. So consider it and do not listen to the words of the fools." <sup>(13)</sup>

When Al-Maarri is unable to judge firmly the poetry attribution to its writer, he leaves this matter accepting both possibilities (yes or no). He most often justifies ascribing the poetry to its writer by that he (the poet) may have written these verses, but due to the long time after writing, he may have forgotten them. For example, when he spoke to Al-Muraqqash Al-Akbar (Al-Muraqqash Sr.): "Some people narrate this poetry ascribing it to you, and I did not find it in your "Divan" (volume containing all or most of the poetry of a certain poet). So is it true that these verses are yours?" Al-Muraqqash then answers: "I have said and composed too many poems, some came down to you and still others did not. I may have written these verses, but over long periods of time, I forgot them." <sup>(14)</sup>

Al-Maarri made many poets forget their poetries, either because they devoted themselves to enjoy the bounties of Paradise, or being engaged in suffering the ravages of Hell. By doing so, he emphasized being unable to firmly confirm the poetries attributed to them, and, at the same time, even he did not deny them composing these poems.

Al-Maarri outlines that mentioning the woman to whom the love poetry (amatory) is made is not a fixed standard indicating the person to whom the poem is ascribed. This is because the poet may make verses of love and amatory in many different names of women; either because of leaving one woman's love and shifting to another, or due to technical reasons. The poet may further employ symbolic rather than explicit names of his female love. An example of this is Al-Maarri's talks with Al-Muraqqash, when he asked him about some verses that he did not find in his Divan, but still they are ascribed to him: "So, you may deny that these verses are specially made for "Hind (female love), and my "Girlfriend" is "Asmaa", so do not be worried about it." The courting poet may move from one name to another, and in some points of life he may playboy with a certain person, then he shifts to another." <sup>(15)</sup>

So often, the names of women may have symbolic dimensions, such as So'ada, Fatimah, Asma'a, Ar-Rabab, Salma, Laila, and others (All are Arabic female names). This may have made Al-Maarri unsure of ascribing the poem to Al-Muraqqash.

#### **Fourth: Poetry and Rajaz**

Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri makes distinctions between poetry and Rajaz (a very common type of poetry which has many styles of prosody scales). He said that Rajaz- in his point of view- is the weakest type of poetry, and even he ranked the composer of Rajaz poetry the lowest among those in Paradise, because their poetry products are not good enough to reach the level of the actual poetry. In this concern he stated: "You pass by verses that have no highness of those of Paradise. When you ask about it, you will hear that this Paradise of Rajaz poets, most of them are of Bani Ajal (a tribe), Al-Ajjaj, Ro'beh, Abu Al-Najem, Humaid Al-Arqat, Athafer Bin Aws, and Abu Nuhaileh, and all those who were forgiven of the Rajaz poets. Then he says: "Blessed be the Might the Grantor (Allah the Exalted). The narrated Sublime Hadith (Saying of Prophet Mohammad PBAUH) is quite true and applicable: "Almighty Allah likes the affairs of high value and importance to the mankind, and hates the trifles; and Rajaz poetry is of such low-ranked poetry. You did not possess the high rank of poetry, thus poetry did not upgrade you." <sup>(16)</sup>

In another part, during the talks of Ibn Al-Qareh with Imri' el-Qais, when he was asking him about "Tasmeet" which was ascribed to him. (*Tasmeet is a prosody term which means dividing the verses into certain numbers of prosody syllables, with different rhythms*). Imri' el-Qais responded denying that Tasmeet is his style. "And, Rajaz is the weakest type of poetry, and this prosody scale is the weakest Rajaz too." <sup>(17)</sup>

In his saying "Rajaz is the weakest type of poetry" is an emphasis that Rajaz is a type of poetry, but it is not good enough to rank high in poetry scales "a low-level poetry" <sup>(18)</sup>, and thus he described the Rajaz poets as living in the lowest grades of Paradise.

Al-Maarri refuses to give any benefit of Rajaz poetry, even if the linguists and grammarians cited verses of this poetry. This was included in the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh with Ro'beh when he was pride that the linguists cite his poetry.

Then he responded to him saying: "Do not be proud that some cited your words, we found them citing the words of slaves and servants... so many times the grammarians narrate from a child, in which he (the child) has nothing to do with literature." <sup>(19)</sup>

It seems that Al-Maarri dislikes Rajaz and puts it in a lower rank because of the uncommon and tough words, and because of its "fabricated" rhythms. This is clear in his talks with Ro'beh when he said to him: "How artificial your rhythms are! They do not appeal, you compose Rajaz verses on "Ghain", Rajaz on "Ta'a" and on "Tha'a" (*Arabic alphabets that are unique to Arabic and are heavily vocalized*), and on other strange letters." <sup>(20)</sup>

And when he continues pride on his Rajaz and defends it, Ibn Al-Qareh tells him: "Should your Rajaz and your father's Rajaz be coined together, we shall not get of them any one good poem." <sup>(21)</sup>

### ***Fifth: Classes of Poets***

Al-Maarri Distributed the poets over two classes: one in Paradise and one in Hell. His criterion, it seems, was ethical rather than technical. The poets in Paradise are of the Islamic poets whose piousness was clear, and those who were chaste and stayed away from the underworld in pre-Islamic era. But those who were known by their immorality and promiscuity in both the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras are in Hell.

Among the poets who he put into Paradise was Al-A'asha (Maymoun Ibn Qais); he gained intercession and entered Paradise because of some verses in which he praised Mohammad (PBAUH), and other verses in which he mentioned his belief in accountability and resurrection during his life in the pre-Islamic time. He said to Ali Ibn Abi Taleb: "I was a believer in God, accountability and resurrection while I was living in the pre-Islamic time." <sup>(22)</sup>

He also puts Zuhair Ibn Abi Salma in Paradise, just for his truthfulness in the pre-Islamic time, his belief in resurrection, and avoidance of falsehood. In this concern, Ibn Al-Qareh said: "What made you forgiven, while you lived the era of infidel people whose works are not good?" He (Zuhair) responded: My inner self disliked falsehood, so my soul met a forgiver God, and I was believer in God, the great." <sup>(23)</sup>

In Paradise he also saw Oday Ibn Zaid Al-Abbadi, and he was saved because he was Christian. Ibn Al-Qareh said addressing Oday: "How did you follow the true path, and how did you gain salvation in spite of committing sins? Then he said: " I was following the religion of the Christ, and he who follows the apostles who came before the appearance of the prophet Mohammad will be saved." <sup>(24)</sup>

In Paradise, Ibn Al-Qareh meets Al-Nabegha Al-Thibiani (poet), and he asked him about the reason that made him enter Paradise. He responded: "I was truly believing in God and I went for pilgrimage in the pre-Islamic period." <sup>(25)</sup>

He indicates in more than one point that there are people in Hell who are entitled to be in Paradise, and people in Paradise who deserve being thrown in Hell. An example is the conversation between Al-Nabegha Al-Ja'adi and Al-a'asha, when the former said to the latter: "I swear that your entrance to Paradise is one of the evil actions; but your fate was destined by Allah. You deserve being in the lowest and deepest part of Hell. People who are better than you had been destined to it (Hell)." <sup>(26)</sup>

In his talk with Aws Ibn Hijer (poet), who Al-Maarri had put into Hell, he said: "People much worse than me entered Paradise, but forgiveness is a gift of God." <sup>(27)</sup>

Many of the poets were destined to the fire of Hell, such as Al-Akhtal Al-Taghlibi, who attributed the reason of his bad destiny to his passion for wine, when he said: "You continued describing the wine and drinking it till you became the food for the red flames." <sup>(28)</sup> Among the poets who were burnt by Hellfire are: Bashar Ibn Burd, Antara Ibn Shaddad, Amro Ibn Kolthoom, and others.

Al-Maarri relied on criteria like: ethics, virtue and truthfulness in classifying the poets. But he overlooked these standards when he put Rajaz poets in the lowest ranks of Paradise, as stated earlier, and accredited another criterion, i.e. the technical standard, because he considers Rajaz poetry is the weakest type of poetry: "Rajaz poetry is of such low ranked poetry. You did not possess the high rank of poetry, thus poetry did not upgrade you." <sup>(29)</sup>

Al-Maarri's justification of putting some poets to Paradise is not persuasive. For instance, he put Al-Hutai'a in a lower place in Paradise, although this poet is well known of his termagant tongue, and disgusting satire.

When Ibn Al-Qareh asked him "What made you reach intercession? Al-Hutai'a responded: "By truthfulness". Then Ibn Al-Qareh asks him: "Which truthfulness you mean?", he answers: in my saying (single verse):

I see "for me" a face which God made ugly;

How ugly is the face and the bearer of the face either (meaning himself)! This justification for entering Paradise is a poor, unconvincing one.

(This verse, which is ascribed to Al-Hutai'a (the poet), is very famous. It is said that he improvised it when he looked at his face through the mirror and realized how ugly his face was.)

### ***Sixth: Functions of Poetry***

Undoubtedly, the function of poetry is its aesthetic value, the joy realized by reader. But, Abu Al-Alaa referred to another issue, the livelihood (bread earning). In other words, poetry was a technical fabrication achieving an important source of living; a tributary of poets' social life stability. Even though, this does not degrade the value of poetry and poets; rather it indicates the multiplicity of the poetry functions.

The utilitarian aspect came within the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh when he said: "The worldly people used it (the poetry) to please and get close to the kings and high status people." <sup>(30)</sup> It was also mentioned ascribed to Hameed Ibn Thawr during his talk with Ibn Al-Qareh when he said: "The poet used to urge his thoughts for a year or months about the person to praise, who had been gifted by God honor and wealth. Still the poet with this praise may return unrewarded, or being given very little money for his poetry; but, even though, poetry is one of the Arabs virtues." <sup>(31)</sup>

Al-Maarri's talk about gaining rewards and money for poetry does not mean that he ignored the most important aspect of poetry, the aesthetic and psychological feature; because poetry immortalizes the poet, and maintains his works after his death. This was clear in a dialogue between Ibn Al-Qareh and Al-Shammakh (a poet), when he asked him to recite for him some verses. Al-Shammakh replied that he did not remember anything because he is engaged only in the bliss of Paradise. Then, Ibn Al-Qareh said to him: "Don't you know that your words (meaning praising others by poetry verses) are more beneficial to you than your daughters?" You were highly spoken of in many places, and you were famous within both the travelers and residents." <sup>(32)</sup>

Abu Al-Alaa believes in the magical, aesthetic power of the poetry, which influence the recipient, which is not unfamiliar to a master poet like him. He very often affects others just like magic through his poems. Furthermore, he himself falls very excited with the poetical aesthetics. This was very clear when he talked to Al-Muhalhal: Oh, Oday, "when you recited your verses in your married daughter, my eyes flooded with tears of sorrow." <sup>(33)</sup>

Therefore, seeking livelihood and gaining money by poetry, is only one of the motives for writing poetry, and mentioning this does not mean that Abu Al-Alaa had ignored the aesthetic aspects of poetry; or that seeking livelihood by poetry should reach the vulgarity and platitude; or disgracing the poet's face. In this concern he says: "over ages of literature, poets took poetry as a means of livelihood and bread earning." <sup>(34)</sup> Therefore, Al-Maarri, in many cases, was sensing, through his critical thinking and unique taste, the aesthetics of the verses, giving preference to one vocabulary over another.

### ***Seven: Jinn Relationship with the Poets***

Abu Al-Alaa did not clearly handle the issue of the poetical inspiration and the relationship of the poets with the Jinn, when it was anciently said that every poet has a Jinni or devils that teach him (the poet) poetry. But it is understood of his words that there are signs indicating the relationship of poetry with the Jinn and devils. For instance, in the dialogue between Ibn Al-Qareh and king "Zofar", one of the Paradise attendants, who did not care for the praise of Ibn Al-Qareh to him, in order to allow him (Ibn Al-Qareh) enter the Paradise. Then "Zofar" responded to him saying: "I think that what you brought to me (the praise) is the book of Iblis (prince of darkness), the genie, which cannot be said to the Angels; it is for the jinni who taught it to the humans (sons of Adam)." <sup>(35)</sup> In the same text, Zofar maintains that "Iblis (Satan) the dreaded had spread this type of speech over the Arabian region, and it was learnt by men and women." <sup>(36)</sup>

It may be said that poetry, as the speech of the Satan, is an indication to the relationship of poetry with the devils and genies. And, the attempt of Ibn Al-Qareh to influence the Angels by composing praise poetry, is a blatant proof of the magic power of poetry. Still this magic power influence did not work with the Angels.

Among other indications that purport the relationship of genies with poetry is the talk of Ibn Al-Qareh with "Abu Hadrash" (a jinni), when he asked him about the genies' poetry. He responded saying: "They (the humans) have fifteen scales of poetry only, very rarely exceeded; we (the genies) have thousands of poetry scales, humans never heard of... I composed Rajaz and poems before Allah created Adam by one or two ages." <sup>(37)</sup> Here we see Abu Hadrash's underestimation of the poetry scales known by the humans; "they are little, not exceeding fifteen scales; meanwhile, those of the genies are thousands which are never known by the humans."

### Conclusion

The researcher found the following:

1. Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri excelled in the poetical criticism depending on the higher critical taste and the scientific bases, which made Resalat Al-Ghofran (Letter of Forgiveness) a literary text, rich in the critical, grammatical, language and prosody materials.
2. He was distinguished from others by the definition of poetry, and he added new aspects to it over those who came before him.
3. Al-Maarri possessed a critical ability that enables him to realize the apocryphal poetry.
4. In his classification of the poets (those in Paradise and those in Hell), he depended on the ethical basis. Therefore, whose reputation was good and renowned by truthfulness is in the Paradise, and whose manners are bad was in the Hell.
5. Even though, Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maarri did not strictly follow these criteria in categorizing the poets, when he put the Rajaz poets in the lowest ranks of Paradise, depending here on the technical (rather than the ethical) standard.
6. Al-Maarri was not convincing when he put Al-Hutai'a in Paradise, justifying that by Al-Hutai'a's truthfulness, even though this poet is very well known of his bad reputation and disgracing satire.
7. He dealt with the poetical thefts issue, and assured that influencing and being influenced undoubtedly exist; so, not every similarity between two poets means a poetical theft.
8. In his letter, dialogue with the jinn was clear, and he indicated that the jinn know poetry thousands of years before the humans. It seems here that he indicates to the relationship between poetry and jinn as well as the poetical inspiration issue.
9. Al-Maarri underlined a new value of poetry, the utilitarian aspect, in addition to the well known aesthetic aspects.

### Footnotes

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25. Ibid, p.60.
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27. Ibid, p.158.
28. Ibid, p. 16.
29. Ibid, p. 180.
30. Ibid, p.92.
31. Ibid, p.104.
32. Ibid, p.83.
33. Ibid, p.165.
34. Mansour Abdul Rahman, "Aesthetic Judgment Criteria in the Literary Criticism", Dar el-Ma'aref, Cairo, 1981, p.333.
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37. Ibid, p.121.

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