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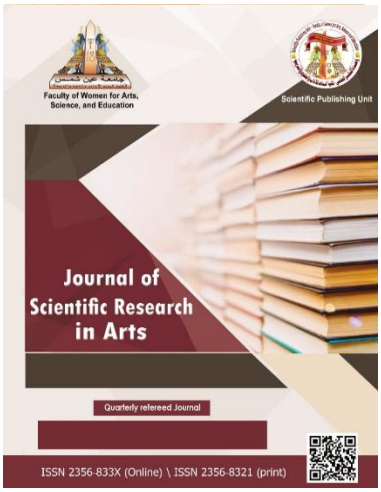

Who Truly Wields Power: Humans or Tools? A Posthuman Analysis of Intertextuality in Al-Hajjaj's Sermon to the People of Kufa

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Abstract

Al-Hajjaj Bin Youssef El-Thakaffi was an Umayyad politician and governor; he is a well-known figure in Islamic history. The caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam (685 – 705) used Al-Hajjaj during his reign to end many uprisings and terminate many of his opponents. One of the cornerstones of the empire was Iraq, in which he delivered the discourse under examination: Al-Hajjaj's sermon to the people of Kufa. The sermon is one that defines the approach used to dominate the people of Kufa. This study offers a new way to examine classic texts in a posthuman light. It decenters humans and replaces their status with that of a tool. The paper makes use of intertextuality that examines a marriage between texts old and new to arrive at an insightful reading of one of the most well-known sermons given by Al-Hajjaj. This study argues that in a post-humanistic stance, Al-Hajjaj compared himself to an instrument, weaponizing himself for the sake of the caliph as his arrow and sword, shifting deictic centers and resulting in many metaphorical entailments. Thus, this paper uses posthumanism and cognitive stylistics to examine how agency is articulated in this sermon, with special reference to intertextuality. Al-Hajjaj's rhetoric uses other important texts like the Glorious Qur'an, poetry, and metaphors to create the fabric of this sermon that is made stronger through intertextuality. This study argues that his use of intertextuality is not merely decorative, but they are used to legitimize his dominance by bringing culturally familiar narratives to life.

Keywords: *posthumanism, intertextuality, power, sermons, Al-Hajjaj, tools*

Introduction

In an abundantly complicated world governed by a relationship between humans and tools, it can be confusing to decide who truly wields power: humans or tools? In this paper, I aim to conceptualize the metaphor of humans as tools, and tools as a possible extension of human agency. This investigation exposes power dynamics, which are expressed through discourse, with special focus on analysis through the lens of intertextuality. The study uses a historically significant sermon delivered by Al-Hajjaj Bin Youssef El-Thakaffi, highlighting that the metaphorical use of language can transform humans into tools while elevating tools into powerful agents. While this sermon took place over a thousand years ago, it creates a posthuman landscape in which humans and tools, the user and the used, dissolve together through the use of dangerous discourse to achieve power and dominance.

This study utilizes posthumanism as a critical framework to understand the transformation that took place as a result of technological tools. Our civilization and culture would never have been the same without the use of tools. They are as important as producing a system for communicating, i.e., languages. Furthermore, the fusion between technology, including tools, and humans complicates matters and blurs the lines between the core nature of humans and their bodies on the one hand, and the outward nature of tools on the other (Herbrechter, 2013). While technology and tools have always been assumed to be a confirmation of human dominance and power over the world, this assumption is being contested (Pepperell, 2009). In fact, humans are becoming more decentralized, so posthumanism aims at understanding a world beyond humans. This human devaluation has been examined in many fields with the purpose of redefining what it means to be human. This also includes a thorough investigation of the integration of tools and machines into human life.

Technology and tools are perceived, according to posthuman views, as expansions to human abilities rather than separate entities. Thus, humans are not understood in isolation from their environment in which tools exist. Tools shape who we are as humans, which is not founded by just our genetic composition. Throughout the ages, we were able to "extend our physical abilities with tools" (Pepperell, 2009, p. 152). This relationship between humans and tools also defines the power dynamics among people. Technology and culture merge with different manifestations of embodiment to give us a posthuman existence that obscures the distinction between humans and their tools (Hayles, 2008). Thus, it is clear that in relation to tools, humans possess an "extended mind" emphasizing that humans' thought can manifest outside their bodies through the use of tools and technology (Pennycook, 2018, p. 45). Thus, a clear departure from the centrality of humans takes place, in which humans are not the dominating sacred entity; they are losing their privileged position (Copson & Grayling, 2015).

In a posthuman context, innovative modes of technology flood the world (Lewis, 2021), which radically changes the relationship between humans and tools. Humans are tool-users (Johnson-Frey, 2003), and they are of course tool-makers (Relke, 2006), with tools considered as optional attachments or accessories that do not blend with the human body, humans remain distinct from it. Tools have always been considered as devices used to control or take advantage of the environment around us for a specific end (Shumaker et al., 2011). However, in this paper, I argue that in some contexts, especially ones fraught with power imbalances like the sermon under examination, the human superiority over tools is inverted, even if only metaphorically. Thus, humans become tools and tools assume the position of agency, power, and domination.

To examine the relationship between humans and tools, this study uses many linguistic tools and phenomena, most importantly intertextuality. Intertextuality is described by Kristeva (1980) as a semiotic phenomenon that involves producers and receivers of discourse in a relationship and includes texts and their predecessors in another one. Intertextuality, thus, highlights the manifestation of new texts based on old ones, which means they function as organisms that have a relation of coexistence with each other. According to Allen (2011), when we come in contact with a text, we really are engaging with many more texts. This brings to life networks of meaning that both affect and are affected by culture. Before attempting to write a text, the writer must consume other texts, "therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind" (Worton & Still, 1990, p. 1). The selected sermon displays a strategic use of intertextuality that draws on Qur'anic verses, poetry, and cultural references. In this sermon, Al-Hajjaj creates an intertwined web of meanings that simultaneously grants him power and domination and robs his audience of any agency, making them mere objects under his power. In discourse, power is seen as a relation between two opposing groups; according to these dynamics, one group holds power and domination over the other (Fairclough, 1989). This imbalance of power is manifest on the ground, distinguishing actors and agents from powerless subjects. Power is exercised and maintained through discourse, which is evident in sermons (van Dijk, 1998). People who are more powerful produce any desired discourse, which does not exclude impolite discourse. They force the less powerful group to endure many injustices, including linguistic ones (Culpeper, 2011).

This study delves into the use of metaphorical language and its weaponization that aims at dehumanizing others (and oneself) while treating tools as sentient, agent beings. In many comparisons between himself and different weapons, Al-Hajjaj plays the role of the hand of the caliph, quick and violent. Al-Hajjaj does that while also comparing his new subjects to fruits or animals he owns and can eliminate. He uses many linguistic tools to intensify his threats and put his audience in a scenario, in which they are threatened by an imminent danger, and their execution is impeding. Thus, the present paper argues that the discourse of this sermon ushers

in a posthuman era, in which humans do not mind being used as tools. Hence, by carrying a close linguistic examination of Al-Hajjaj's sermon, with particular attention to intertextuality and its metaphorical entailments, this study exposes power dynamics veiled in discourse where the nature of user and tools are no longer clear, mixing the agent with the instrument. By looking at metaphorical progression of humans and their use of tools in this sermon's historical context, we understand how language shapes power and domination. Therefore, the answer to the question, "who truly wields power?" is not only an examination of rhetoric and metaphor, but also an investigation of humans' agency, power, and domination in a historical context that can be applied to a contemporary one. This paper aims to examine of Al-Hajjaj's sermon; a rhetoric that articulates a posthuman hierarchy of power in which the boundaries between humans and tools are hazy and unstable. Through a close linguistic analysis, this study explores how metaphors can shed light of the construction of agency and submission, how intertextual references can reinforce authority and intimidation, and how deixis can deeply center the audience in a hostile space of subjugation.

Theoretical Foundation

A clear definition of posthumanism can be elusive, but it can be described as a broad, philosophical field that aspires to understand the world beyond humans (Ferrando, 2019). The concept has branched out into different fields, and to approach it, a redefinition of *human* is needed. This can lead to many repercussions like decentering humans, altering their bodies with machine parts, and examining humans' cognition in a new, post-humanist light (Pennycook, 2018). The posthuman condition is one that has triggered a massive change in our understanding of ourselves and others. It has also revisited the dynamics that govern the citizens of the world (Braidotti, 2013). It is evident that "human and posthuman are historically specific constructions that emerge from different configurations of embodiment, technology, and culture" (Hayles, 2008, p. 34). This culture exists away from humanism that considered humans as sacred entities located at the center of attention rather than deities (Copson & Grayling, 2015). To clarify, "human subjects are inundated with new mediums of technology," (Lewis, 2021, p. 53), which is one of the main features of a posthuman world. Man is predominantly seen as a *tool-user* (Johnson-Frey, 2003). Thus, tools can shape the body, but the tool, nonetheless, is envisioned as an object that is outside the body, an entity that can be picked up and put down at will. Since many animals have displayed their ability to use and manipulate tools, humans have shifted into tool makers, whose chief characteristic is removable additions of the forelimb (Relke, 2006). Hence, the tool is both a removable element and an augmentation, separate from yet contributing to the human hand. Tools are items or devices that can help manipulate the

environment or carry a specific function (Shumaker et al., 2011). To do something as simple as to hold a tool is to move beyond simple human capabilities and take a step closer towards the posthuman and to yield a new source of power.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), power is a relation between a dominant, controlling group and another group that lacks power. Content, relation, or subject constrains this relation. Moreover, power also defines the agent that causes the action as well as the goal (Fairclough, 1989). Such power can be exercised and maintained through types of discourse like sermons or political speeches (van Dijk, 1998). A prominent feature of the discourse of the powerful is that they often engage in impoliteness, and society legitimatizes this because their power enables them to produce such discourse. On the other hand, less powerful groups are regulated by society to undergo injustice. They are prohibited to oppose this unfairness in its many forms and manifestations, including linguistic expressions (Culpeper, 2011). These unfair practices have been produced and reproduced in many texts, which in turn affects countless other texts.

Intertextuality is a semiotic term that tackles two kinds of relations or centerlines: horizontal and vertical ones. The horizontal centerline mediates the relationship between the producer and the receiver of the text while the vertical governs the relationship between a present text and previous ones (Kristeva, 1980). In terms of intertextuality, instances of speech often overlap and change each other's effects. Thus, intertextuality entails a relationship between a text and another text or a set of texts. This is a fundamental feature of texts, and often they interchange. Intertextuality can also illuminate matters of social and historical significance, for any text is a manifestation and an amalgamation of earlier texts. Hence, a text is a semblance of an organism that coexists with other organisms. This facilitates our understanding that any text can be an indication of a specific society or culture (Kristeva, 1980). Fairclough (2003) connects intertextuality to assumptions, and he stresses that intertextuality assumes and aims to find common ground with other texts. Thus, to recognize an intertext, we must do revelatory work. The text's associations with other texts must be constructed through readers' interpretations (Frow, 1990).

Intertextuality is a useful tool to examine culture, and it displays an interesting case of connection between different texts and parts of life. As a result, to engage with one text is to engage with many more (Allen, 2011). Thus, an intertext is a node that links other notions, and it is borrowed from past texts and will influence others in the future. Intertextuality is the product of cooperation between producers and receivers of texts; they both need to resort to a previous, shared knowledge to make sense of texts (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). Traces of other texts make more sense when they are abundant in a text, they will then generate a better reading

experience (Panagiotidou, 2014). Certain cognitive models activate readers' minds through "frame repair", in which what they know from their previous experience can be modified and enhanced to lead to a better appreciation of the text at hand (Emmott, 1997, p. 160). Intertextuality ranges from obvious attempts like direct quotations to more complicated and more difficult to understand metaphors. In other words, "texts are made out of cultural and ideological norms; out of the conventions of genre; out of styles and idioms embedded in the language; out of connotations and collocative sets; out of clichés, formulae, or proverbs; and out of other texts" (Frow, 1990, p. 45).

Genres are constructed through distinguishable characteristics that connect together in a vigorous manner (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). Every genre has its recognizable patterns that differentiate it from other types of discourse. A *Khutba* or a sermon is rooted in oration, which was used since the beginning of Islam by the Prophet himself. The nature of sermons evolved to include Friday prayers that are obligatory for devout male Muslims to attend. Thus, sermons are an essential aspect of the Muslim culture. Friday prayers have always had political implications. At the dawn of Islam, a sermon was a "proof that the participants had joined the Muslim community; later on, it implied a manifestation of allegiance to the caliph or governor who conducted the service, or whose name was mentioned in the sermon" (Gibb, 1997, p. 38). For Arabs, a sermon is a form of art, and its purpose plays a significant role in its structure. It aims to persuade the audience of something, and it can also include an element of storytelling. Since sermons as a type of public speaking address vital topics, they require a level of freedom and power to have their effects on the intended audience (Shalby, 1991). Since sermons are not a conversation and are directed at a silent audience, the speaker is the most powerful person.

Research Aim and Methodology

This paper aims to examine the transportation of humans and tools into mixed, ill-defined entities. The close examination of power relations offers insight into how they are enacted and naturalized through the metaphorical and intertextual strategies applied by Al-Hajjaj. The study also investigates the nature of power relations, especially from a posthuman perspective. It is clear that the governor Al-Hajjaj reduces himself and his subjects into tools/things using many metaphors of agency, submission, and violence.

Thus, the study sets out with the aim of answering the following questions:

1. How does Al-Hajjaj's sermon metaphorically construct the roles of humans and tools within a posthuman framework of domination?

2. What intertextual references, particularly to Qur'anic verses and Arabic poetry, are employed to enhance the persuasive (more intimidating) effect of the sermon?
3. In what ways do metaphors and other linguistic tools work together to manipulate the audience's perception of agency, domination, and violence?

To answer these questions, the study adopts a qualitative approach to examine intertextuality and uses linguistic tools to arrive at a semiotic inspection from a posthuman lens. The analysis focuses on a historically and politically significant sermon delivered by Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf in Kufa (75 AH), which is treated as a representative case of authoritative political discourse (Safwat, 1933).

Thus, the paper's analytical procedure involves:

- A close reading of the selected excerpts from the sermon. The identification of intertextual manifestations and links between the Glorious Qur'an and the sermon, with an added focus on poetry and cultural references;
- The selection focuses on the metaphorical use of language in general, with a special focus on tools, violence, and domination;
- For Al-Hajjaj's discourse to achieve its full coercive impact, metaphor alone is insufficient. It must be anchored within a deictic framework that positions the audience within the violent narrative world. Thus, this analysis considers metaphor and deixis not as separate tools, but as interdependent strategies that jointly construct a posthuman space of domination and subjugation. The examination of deictic expressions, including person, time, and space is used in the study. This examination uses Deictic Shift Theory (Segal, 1995), with a focus on audience's immersion and projection into a world of subjugation created by Al-Hajjaj;
- A framing of the linguistic findings in a posthuman lens is established, with special attention to the shifting boundaries between agency and instrumentality.

Finally, the analysis aims to show how a posthuman linguistic examination can offer fresh insights into classical discourse like the selected sermon, where the relationship between humans and tools is unstable because of the loss of agency of humans only to be granted to tools.

Analysis and Discussion

This study aims to reorient readers to "think outside anthropocentric and humanistic habits" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 133) when it comes to making sense of a famous figure like Al-Hajjaj. The paper examines a sermon of a man, who is known for being both an eloquent speaker and a merciless killer. In the city of Kufa in the year 75 per the Hijri Islamic calendar, Al-Hajjaj gives his

first sermon as a governor (Shalby, 1991). In an "unequal encounter" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 44), Al-Hajjaj and the people of Kufa meet. This sermon is marked by intertextuality, which is clear in many linguistic choices that signal the absolute power of Al-Hajjaj and his clear aim towards his new subjects: utter intimidation. Al-Hajjaj uses poetry and verses from the Qur'an to start his sermon and make his point and come across as the master and controller. This offers undeviating paths "created when a lexical concept affords access directly to the primary cognitive model literary entity triggering the formation of an intertextual frame" (Panagiotidou, 2014, p. 137). This takes place when the original text is identified, activating intertextual frames.

Intertext 1
أَنَا ابنُ جَلَا وطَلَّاعُ الثَّنَايَا //متَى أضَعِ العِمامَةَ تَعرِفُوني
My glory is known to all, resilient and capable of overcoming hardships. When I remove my turban, you will recognize me.

Intertextuality takes place when Al-Hajjaj starts his sermon with a *bayt* (a metrical unit of poetry in Arabic poems). The *bayt* is quoted from Saheem Riahi who aims at highlighting his high status and bravery (Shalby, 1991). Al-Hajjaj quotes the poet verbatim, in what is known as direct quotations, which is a feature of intertextuality. This makes his audience quickly understand his purpose because they would have heard the verse before. In this intertext, the people of Kufa are introduced to Al-Hajjaj by evoking a well-known fact; that he is a warrior. The intextual use of the lexical item *turban* triggers the idea of war. People are familiar with warriors wearing their turbans at war and taking them off when they no longer need them. This highlights a readiness for war and the will to face hardships. Thus, the metaphor CLOTHES ARE IDENTITY is clear. From the source domain, a warrior wardrobe is not only there to protect him but to give him honor and prestige (target domain). It also grants him well deserved fame, which is the target of Al-Hajjaj at this point. In terms of deixis, the use of first-person pronouns highlights his high regard for himself. He also uses the present tense to show his present prominent position above the people of Kufa. He also uses the second-person pronoun to address his subjects and to confirm their knowledge of his person.

Intertext 2
أَمَا واللهِ إِنِّي لأَحْمِلُ الشَّرَّ بِحِمْلِهِ، وَأَحْذُوهُ بِنَعْلِهِ، وَأَجْزِيهِ بِمِثْلِهِ
By God, I carry evil in its full weight, match it step for step, and repay it in kind.

In his sermon, Al-Hajjaj also uses intertextuality to arrive at many brilliant metaphors that intensify his intended message. In this part of the sermon, he threatens his new subjects by declaring, "I carry evil in its full weight." Here, as per Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the metaphor is EVIL IS WEIGHT, and the source domain comes from the physical act of carrying a heavy weight like stones. The target domain is evil, which is the basis of the moral and emotional

hurtful experience. This maps between the emotional burden of being evil to the physical act of carrying heavy stones. Feeling the pain of carrying the heavy physical burden is compared to the emotional pain one feels from acting in an evil manner. As heavy burdens can break the body, the emotional results of evil can weigh heavily on the soul. The metaphorical entailments show that this image personifies evil as a person that weighs heavily and wears shoes in a metaphor of EVIL IS A PERSON. His role as a carrier of evil intensifies his view of the world as a protector (both in physical and metaphorical terms). This image brings closer a doomed fate to the people of Kufa, who can almost see evil brought to their doors in its physical form. This metaphor is intensified by the semantic properties of the verb *carry* that entails a subject or a carrier, in this case Al-Hajjaj. He must follow a difficult, bloody path to arrive to the destination to put that heavy object down or deliver it. The choice of the verb also underscores his agency. Al-Hajjaj uses intertextuality here to evoke the notion of punishment, which is used often in religious discourse.

Intertext 3
وَإِنِّي لأَرَى رُؤُوسًا قد أَيْنَعَتْ وحانَ قِطَافُها، وَإِنِّي لَصَاحِبُها وكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إلى الدِّمَاءِ بينَ العَمَائِمِ واللِّحَى تَتَرَقْرَقُ.
I see ripened heads, and their time for harvesting has come, and I am their owner/companion. I see blood flowing between turbans and beards.

Moreover, Al-Hajjaj's intertext is clear when he rephrases a verse in the Glorious Qur'an, "Watch their fruits as they grow and ripen!" (Qur'an 6:99). While this verse offers a description of fruits in paradise, Al-Hajjaj borrows lexicon from the verse, creating a vivid image, intertextuality here offers a set of lexical choices that enables this metaphor to be easily understood while still disrupting its original intention, leaving the audience in a state of shock and fear. They can easily imagine, see, smell, and taste this loaded threat. A conceptual metaphor can be traced here (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In it, the heads of the opponents of the caliph are under threat. From the source domain of agriculture (harvesting crops), Al-Hajjaj hints at the death of his new subjects, asserting his control by threatening them. This maps the ripen fruits ready to be picked into people reaching a point of readiness as well, it could be for control, change, or death. As farmers control and own crops, so does the speaker who has a relation of power and authority over the crowds. Heads become ripened fruits, harvesting equals with ending lives, the farmer/speaker is the owner. Since harvesting is a natural, inevitable ending for crops and fruits, so is the killing of his subjects.

This metaphor implies that these opponents have reached a stage of *audacity* in their opposition, and for him they are ready to be murdered. This also evokes the notion of a gardener, which stands for the person responsible for picking the fruit (Al-Hajjaj). The harvesting time signifies the opportune moment to act against these opponents. He portrays himself as the governor responsible for dealing with these opponents, executing threats (and people). In this

conceptual metaphor, the source domain fruits and harvesting gives rise to the target domain, which is the persecution he promises them. This conceptual metaphor is possible because of the intertwining with a verse from the Qur'an forming the metaphor PEOPLE ARE FRUITS/VEGETATION.

Furthermore, Al-Hajjaj's use of deixis offers insights into his view of the world. He already sees the decapitated heads, using the present tense in *see* to show that the process of eliminating his opponents, in his mind, has already started. In terms of deixis, he uses personal pronouns to signify a stark difference between himself and the subjects who are receiving the threat. The deixis use increases readers/hearers' involvement and immersion (intensifies the threat), as per deictic shift theory, which theorizes that both speakers and hearers assume they are in a world that is not "literally present" (Segal, 1995, p. 14). They are now present within a hypothetical world in which they are beheaded. Al-Hajjaj stresses, "I perceive rivers of blood flooding turbans and beards." This allows both the speaker and his audience to mentally shift their deictic center to an imagined point of view, a violent world. His use of the third-person pronoun pulls the audience and anchors them to this new reality proposed by Al-Hajjaj. His use of the personal pronoun *I* also reveals spatial proximity of the murderous event because of the proximity of the speaker. Turbans might also hint at a social class or specific turban-wearing group, which could be a social deictic marker. Therefore, hearing this sermon requires the people of Kufa to have a full deictic shift into a new deictic center. The speaker sees rivers of blood; hence, the hearers feel urgency and horror.

Intertext 4
وَإِنَّ أميرَ المؤمنينَ نَثَرَ كِنَانَتَهُ بينَ يَدَيْهِ، فَعَجَمَ عِيدَانَها، فَوَجَدَنِي أَمَرَّها عُودًا وَأَصْلَبَها مَكْسَرًا، فرماكم بي.
The caliph emptied his quiver before him and tested each arrow one by one. He found me to be the bitterest and strongest of them, so he flung me onto you and launched me at you.

In another manifestation of posthumanism, Al-Hajjaj's discourse exhibits yet another conceptual metaphor that is both vivid and violent. In this metaphor, he renounces his identity as a man/human and assumes the identity of a tool of war, the caliph's arrow. This creates the metaphor of AL-HAJJAJ IS AN ARROW. The caliph inspected his pool of potential governors and chose Al-Hajjaj because he was the most potent and vicious candidate, saying, *"then flung me onto you."* This metaphor uses the source domain of archery, which is clear in lexical choices like *quiver*, *arrows*, *fling*, etc. This aims at projecting the target domain of political authority and dominance. In this schema, the arrow is a projectile symbol of lethal precision and violent purpose. By aligning himself with an arrow, Al-Hajjaj becomes less of an agent and more of a tool used by another human. He is not a man; he is just an extension of the caliph and his will. This is of course a display of a posthuman, machine-like force meant to dominate and devastate and

enable others. The mappings here blend the quiver (storage of arrows) with the qualities of a group of governors that include Al-Hajjaj. The sharp, fast, and lethal arrow itself is mapped with the cruel nature of Al-Hajjaj that is both effective and obedient. The act of flinging an arrow is compared to that of dispatching Al-Hajjaj to the people of Kufa. The sharpness of the arrow serves as a metaphor for the governor's violent disposition. The unsuspecting target of this arrow is of course the people of Kufa. These mappings giving rise to this conceptual metaphor highlight a posthuman logic in which Al-Hajjaj is proud to act without individual autonomy but just an extension of the caliph.

Deixis here exposes more about this utterance by Al-Hajjaj. He speaks using the first-person to anchor the future, violent narrative around himself. Furthermore, he also uses the second-person to address the people of Kufa, which highlights the proximity of both parties to the deictic center and his subjective standpoint in which he experiences events through a weaponized identity. As for time deixis, he uses the past tense to reflect that the action coming to the people of Kufa that has been contemplated over the past. As for deixis of space, it could be clarified by examining the verb *fling* and its semantic properties, which shed light on the arrow's trajectory, including a shift of position, thus, a shift in power. The social deixis is clear with the use of titles like caliph and governor on the one hand and the people of Kufa on the other. This creates a hierarchy in which the people of Kufa are at the bottom receiving threats, which displays a lower, vulnerable social status. In this newly constructed world by Al-Hajjaj, the audience temporarily abandons their normal stance (both physically and mentally) and assume a new one. They enter a deictic center of Al-Hajjaj in which he is not a man but an instrument, an arrow. Here, the people of Kufa are not active citizens but passive targets. The audience cannot escape the feeling that Al-Hajjaj has a viewpoint, which is instrumentality, obedience, and violence. This also redefines their sense of identity, in which they move from citizens to a target, in a direct impact zone moving from the caliph's court to their space. By using this utterance, Al-Hajjaj forces an emotional and cognitive shift, making the audience live the act of being violently dominated. This shift happens successfully due to the semantic properties of the verb *fling*, which indicates intensity, dynamicity, and speed. The verb also reveals that the arrow's target is the people's heads or bodies. Once again, there is a path and a destination of this action; they both mean harm to the people of Kufa.

Intertextuality reappears because the audience become acquainted with metaphors of threats and violence. For people who lived in this time, a quiver of arrows is a common theme. Arrows symbolize speed, war, and violence in this environment. They also symbolize death from afar. The speaker now taps into a reservoir of cultural images from poetry and other cultural frames. This leads to an intertextual effect in which the crowd recognizes the cultural echo of such an utterance. This relates to their old notions of predestined authority. His use of the word

caliph, whom the crowds already know, also evokes religious beliefs, as the choices of caliphs are divine and are politically and religiously legitimate. This evokes an intertextual effect that the opposition to Al-Hajjaj means opposition of the caliph, and this means opposing God's will. This means that he presents his authority as inevitable and traditional, not a choice by a mortal. Within these shared cultural traditions, opposing Al-Hajjaj is not only futile but also blasphemous.

Intertext 5
أَمَا واللهِ لأَلْحُونَّكم لَحْوَ العَصَا، ولأَقْرَعَنَّكم قَرْعَ المُرُوءَةِ، ولأَعْصِبَنَّكم عَصْبَ السَّلَمَةِ، ولأَضْرِبَنَّكم ضَرْبَ غَرَائِبِ الإِبلِ
By God, I will bend you like a stick, and beat you like a hard stone, and bind you like a slippery tree, and strike you like stray camels.

With this utterance, he intensely threatens the people of Kufa with the aim of asserting power. First, there is the conceptual metaphor that allows us to understand a target domain in terms of a source one to make sense of another image of violence. These metaphors highlight submission, punishment, and restrain resistance from possible unruly groups. Thus, from source domains or concrete and physical entities, Al-Hajjaj uses *bending a stick*, *stones*, *binding a tree*, and *striking stray camels*. These all aim to clarify the target domain of forcing people to obey, administering punishment, and punishment of rebellious groups. Thus, conceptual metaphors like REBELLION IS WANDERING and SUBJECTS ARE ANIMALS/TREES control the scene. These metaphors are embodied or based on physical experiences that include *bending*, *beating*, *binding*, and *striking*. However, they aim at projecting those bodily schemas onto the abstract world of political power and coercive control. Al-Hajjaj must control these camels/people as their actions are costly/dangerous to the owner/state. Hence, they must be brought back forcefully. Furthermore, *stones* and *tress* represent the lack of animacy, which denotes hardness and stubbornness. The people of Kufa are being robbed of their qualities and identities as citizens and humans.

The speaker still uses the same parameters to explain the close deictic center, which are the first and second-person. Time deixis indicates the future, which means threats of imminent action. A hostile imagined space is created in which punishment and beating take place. Social deixis and impoliteness merge here to depict the citizens as animals, trees, and even stones. The people of Kufa are moved suddenly from being independent people to being less than humans; and from living in a comfortable present to a threatening future; and they move from social equals to subjugated and powerless objects. Thus, their normal deictic center collapses into a new devastating one.

Intertextuality is clear in Al-Hajjaj's evocation of God's name, where oaths are used as divine intensifiers. His imagery borrows from the life people are accustomed to at that time, especially the references to the nomadic lifestyle. For instance, stray camels are known in their

environment to be beaten to be brought back into submission. Intertextuality in this incident brings quick relatability; the audience instantly recognizes the cultural imagery and are more likely to be intimidated by this rhetoric. By swearing and evoking God's name, the intertextuality frames his violence as righteous and traditional. Thus, his threats do not happen in isolation; they borrow authority from religious and cultural references.

Intertext 6
إِنَّمَا أَنتُم أَهْلُ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ، فَكَفَرْتُم بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ، فَأَتَاهَا وَعِيدُ الْقُرَى مِنْ رَبِّهَا. ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ. وَإِنَّمَا أَنتُم كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: "وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ".
God presents the example of a town that was secure and at ease, with provisions coming to it abundantly from places. Then it became ungrateful for God's blessings, so God afflicted it with the garment of famine and fear, for what its people had done. A messenger who was one of them came to them, but they called him a liar. So punishment overwhelmed them in the midst of their evildoing (Qur'an 16:112-3). *A good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky (Qur'an 14: 25).* *But an evil word is like a rotten tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure (Qur'an 14: 26).*

The use of the Holy Qur'an is an important source of intertextuality. This use of intertextuality is almost a direct quote, yet his threats are specific to the people of Kufa and the punishment that looms. In this quote from these verses, the target domain is the status of ingratitude of the people of Kufa. This is made clear by using the source domain of food, safety, or abundance in general. The important message here is that he equates his judgement and punishment to that of God's to create the metaphor of GOOD/BAD WORDS ARE TREES. He also equates himself to God's promised punishment evoking the metaphor of AL-HAJJAJ IS PUNISHMENT. This echoes an earlier metaphor for his instrumentality. This intertext plays many roles, most importantly highlight his knowledge of the Qur'an, and his ability to recall its verses. He can also use metaphors and similes from the Qur'an to arrive at metaphorical entailments in his time and space. He also uses sacred text to threaten his new subjects.

Intertext 7
وَاللَّهِ لَأُؤَدِّبَنَّكُمْ أَدَبًا.
By God, I shall teach you politeness.

In this hostile sermon, Al-Hajjaj's declaration functions as an example of impoliteness, which poses a threat to these people's face, especially negative face; the desire for autonomy and being free from imposition. His threats cause damage to the hearers' face (Brown & Levinson,

1987). Al-Hajjaj uses religious discourse in the form of an intertext that evokes the name of God to do the opposite of invoking politeness but asserting power and domination even if this will cost his hearers their face. He then directs a face-threatening act (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987), using a speech act that indicates explicit impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011), where Al-Hajjaj purposefully damages his hearers' face to assert power and provoke fear. The sociopolitical landscape amplifies the performative force of this FTA. With this address, Al-Hajjaj destabilizes the authority of the people of Kufa and infantilizes them. He also positions them as impolite and uncivil. Thus, the idea of robbing them of their power makes sense because they are impolite. Al-Hajjaj strips the crowds of their agency when he marks them as culturally deficient, which causes them to lose face (Goffman, 2005). Thus, before his physical attack, he starts to verbally attack their social identity and collective dignity. From a posthuman perspective, his impolite strategies in this utterance and the rest of the sermon are a form of weaponized discourse that aims at enforcing his domination. It is noticeably clear that Al-Hajjaj holds the power; he does not leave the chance to the subjects, who are distinguished men who own slaves and entourages, to even save face. The extent of wealth and prestige these men enjoy in their community intensifies the insult; he is insulting the best of them. This evokes the intertextual metaphor of GOVERNOR IS A PARENT/TEACHER and that PEOPLE/SUBJECTS ARE IMPOLITE CHILDREN.

Findings and Conclusions

This study investigated how posthuman power relations are constructed through metaphor, deixis, and intertextuality as previously analyzed in Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf's sermon to the people of Kufa. Through the application of tools of CDA informed by the intertextual deixis of many conceptual metaphors and posthumanism, this research examined how the sermon enacted a transformation wherein both the speaker and his audience are metaphorically reshaped into tools, animals, and objects of power. This section of the study aims to respond to the three questions posed at the methodology section earlier.

1. **How does Al-Hajjaj's sermon metaphorically construct the roles of humans and tools within a posthuman framework of domination?**

Al-Hajjaj's discourse is a mix of metaphors that portray him and his audience as instruments or objects. Through instrumentalization, Al-Hajjaj's metaphorical self-presentation as a weapon, as "an arrow in the quiver of the caliph," it is clear that this metaphor is not for ornamental purposes, it rather serves a deeper posthuman purpose, which frames Al-Hajjaj as an entity that relinquishes personal will, transforming himself to an extension of the caliph. The arrow metaphor simultaneously displaces Al-Hajjaj's human identity while rooting his lethality towards the people of Kufa and his functionality. It is a conscious submission of humanity in favor

of power and dominance. This highlights the posthuman nature of his discourse, which shows that he is no longer an autonomous, rational human, but rather an optimized tool/weapon designed for domination and expansion. He is an efficient tool and a unique one. The analysis has shed light on his paradoxical nature; he is a conscious instrument because he displays both submission and command.

The role of the people of Kufa is different because they are metaphorically reconstructed as passive entities, they are either fruits to be harvested or camels to be beaten. Their heads are ready to be chopped off. As the audience of his sermon, their already silent, passive role is reinforced with their agency stripped, and being included in a mechanical system of punishment. Before asserting his power over them, Al-Hajjaj reduced their ontology, their essence and very nature; they are not humans anymore. This is the root of many instances of genocidal discourse, I argue. Thus, their role is only to be acted upon, their human nature is replaced with that of animals and crops. With this discourse, Al-Hajjaj creates a hierarchy, manifested powerfully in many of his metaphors, which put the caliph at the top of this hierarchy as the wielder of power, Al-Hajjaj as his weapon, and the people of Kufa as the target. Although the caliph does not spatially exist directly with Al-Hajjaj and the people of Kufa, it is still abundantly clear who is in total control. This is, therefore, a clear manifestation of post humanity that decenters humans and their importance and favors the functionality of tools and the power they can enact.

2. What intertextual references, particularly to Qur'anic verses and Arabic poetry, are employed to enhance the persuasive (more intimidating) effect of the sermon?

As previously examined, the sermon is saturated with intertextuality to enhance Al-Hajjaj's potency and power. In his sermon, Al-Hajjaj borrows lexical and syntactic choices, imagery, and metaphors from the Qur'an, Arabic poetry, and traditional oratory to implant his threats within the sermon. These references serve multiple functions because they establish his intellectual and religious credibility and activate the audience's prior knowledge through his manipulation of sacred language to arrive at political intimidation and power assertion.

For example, Al-Hajjaj uses intertextuality as he quotes a verse from the Qur'an that describes the ripening of fruit. In his version, he creates a metaphor that is not only graphically violent but is doubly effective because it parasitically draws authority from a divine source. The juxtaposition of fruit imagery with execution threats creates a cognitive dissonance that could destabilize the sacredness of the original text/verse and implants it within a posthuman rhetoric of threats. Al-Hajjaj deploys this intertextual gesture to signify urgency, dread, and inevitability. By echoing the Qur'an, he places his sermon within a divine frame, his war, governance, and punishments are no longer purely political acts but almost divine interventions. His references to classical Arabic poetry underscore bravery and elite lineage and serve to align him with

archetypes of heroism, classic acts that demand dominance and respect. These poetic intertexts help reinforce his status as an instrument of fate, chosen from a group like a superior arrow from a quiver. These intertextual insertions do more than ornament the speech; they weaponized shared cultural memory to legitimize cruelty and suppress dissent.

In terms of posthumanism, these intertexts dissolve the boundaries between past and present; sacred and secular; and human and divine. Al-Hajjaj's speech becomes a site where different discursive bodies (religious, poetic, or political) converge to amplify control. The texts he references no longer work in their original domains; they are repurposed to serve a political function of domination. I argue in this paper that intertexts, like many incidents in the selected sermon, have the power to disrupt, not only use or react to other texts. The verses of the Qur'an are manipulated and bent to serve a political, cruel purpose. While intertextuality usually shows reverence to the verses of the Qur'an and care to use them properly, the intentions of the speaker as well as the context of the rest of the sermon compel us to depart from this assumption. Al-Hajjaj has clearly deviated from the norms in which people usually cite the Qur'an, which clearly has higher purposes than threat and intimidation. The result is distorting the essence of many of the verses he uses.

Addressing Research Question 3:

3. In what ways do metaphors and other linguistic tools work together to manipulate the audience's perception of agency, domination, and violence?

These linguistic tools play a significant role in altering and distorting the perception of people. For instance, deixis in Al-Hajjaj's sermon plays a critical role in constructing an immediate spatial-temporal threat. His use of personal pronouns, temporal markers, and spatial references positions his audience within a deictic world where violence is already underway. Statements like "*I see ripened heads*" and "*rivers of blood flooding your turbans*" employ tense deixis to create a vivid, immersive environment. This temporal manipulation gives the illusion that punishment is not temporally far. Thus, deixis can shed light on how language can transport listeners into a constructed narrative space, in this case a very frightening one. Al-Hajjaj expertly leverages this phenomenon to force his audience into a cognitive frame where resistance seems futile because their doom appears to have arrived. By controlling the deictic center, he positions himself as the only stable agent, even if he is a tool, in a shifting and threatening world.

Because metaphors are ubiquitous, this immersive use of deixis is tightly bound to metaphorical use of language. The metaphors of harvesting, warfare, and tools operate not only at the conceptual level but also in temporal alignment with deixis. The progression from ripened fruit to blood-soaked turbans is intense, and it unfolds in real-time within the sermon. The

metaphors provide the semantic substance of the threat, while deixis provides the temporal and spatial coordinates that make it psychologically effective. Together, these devices create a discursive landscape where the audience is stripped of their agency and reduced to mammals or crops. They cannot speak, reposition, or reframe themselves within this posthuman narrative. They are fixed in the sermon's rhetorical purpose as objects/goals of violence. This reinforces the posthuman condition of the discourse, in which the human subject is not centered as rational or moral but rather repositioned as targets, tools, or even debris. All this leads to a state of fear, which in turn leads to total domination of the caliph through his *arrow*.

Implications and Conclusions

By attempting to answer the three research questions, the analysis and discussion section proved that Al-Hajjaj's sermon constructed a posthuman world where agency is fluid. The caliph is portrayed as the divine selector; Al-Hajjaj is the powerful weapon; and the audience are reduced to nonlinguistic, metaphorically vegetative or animalistic entities. The sermon does not just describe domination; it enacts it. The use of intertextuality amplifies the sermon's rhetorical force by embedding it within sacred and poetic texts, thereby masking violence with cultural legitimacy. Metaphors are not only for aesthetic use, but they are functional, as they reconfigure human roles. Furthermore, deixis turns that reconfiguration into an experiential simulation, immersing the audience into their new reality of domination and subjugation.

The analysis underscored the value of posthuman theory in engaging with premodern texts. Thus, posthumanism is not only suitable to be applied to contemporary issues of AI, robotics, or biotechnology, but it can also shed light on the indistinct divisions between the autonomous subject/humans and tools, which makes it a powerful lens for historical discourse. Al-Hajjaj's sermon is a prime example of early posthumanism. This is significant because his discourse is populated by a world in which language, not machines, decentered the human long time ago, making them tools, animals, or crops. Moreover, this reading suggested that political discourse, especially an authoritarian kind, often operates through posthuman logic. In this case, it used intertextuality of mostly sacred texts to reduce complex identities into manageable categories. It also utilized metaphor to further dehumanize in preparation to kill subjects. These rhetorical techniques are not only found in Al-Hajjaj's discourse, meaning they are not relics of the past. They continue to manifest in many modern political and religious speeches and media narratives that rely on dehumanization and symbolic violence to groom the world for upcoming genocides, which can benefit from future linguistic examination and research.

This study offered a critical posthuman reading of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf's sermon through a combined framework of posthumanism, intertextuality, and conceptual metaphor theory. It argued that the sermon does more than communicate intimidation; it creates a world where human identities are destabilized and redefined through metaphoric and intertextual use. The governor is both subject and tool; the people are both hearers and targets; and sacred language is both invoked and distorted. Therefore, by answering the three questions guiding the study, the analysis arrived at clear conclusions. Most importantly, metaphors enable the transformation of humans into tools, which causes a posthuman reconfiguration of agency. Furthermore, intertextuality justifies the use of sacred texts and cultural heritage for political, deadly ends. Lastly, the audience is immersed by deixis in a simulated environment of violence, enhancing the sermon's coercive impact and reinforcing the caliph's power, such findings can be extended to similar discourse produced at many eras.

من يمارس السلطة حقاً: الإنسان أم الأدوات؟ تحليل ما بعد إنساني للتناص في خطبة الحجاج لأهل الكوفة

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المستخلص:
كان الحجاج بن يوسف الثقفي سياسياً أموياً وحاكماً، وشخصية معروفة في التاريخ الإسلامي. استخدمه الخليفة عبد الملك بن مروان بن الحكم (685 – 705) خلال عهده لإخماد العديد من الثورات والقضاء على الكثير من الخصوم. كان العراق أحد أركان الإمبراطورية الأساسية، والذي ألقيت فيه الخطبة قيد الدراسة: خطبة الحجاج لأهل الكوفة. تحدد هذه الخطبة النهج المستخدم للهيمنة على أهل العراق من قبل الحجاج. تقدم هذه الدراسة طريقة جديدة لفحص النصوص الكلاسيكية في ضوء ما بعد الإنسانية حيث يزحزح البشر عن مركزتيهم وتستبدل مكانتهم الأداة. يستخدم البحث التناص الذي يفحص التزاوج بين النصوص القديمة والجديدة للوصول إلى قراءة جديدة لإحدى أشهر الخطب التي ألقاها الحجاج. تناقش هذه الدراسة ما بعد الإنسانية، حيث قارن الحجاج نفسه بأداة، جاعلا من نفسه سلاح من أجل الخليفة حيث يلعب دور السهم والسيف، وبذلك يحول مركزه الإشاري لأماكن أخرى مما يؤدي إلى إنتاج العديد من المجازات. في هذا البحث، يتم توظيف نظريات ما بعد الإنسانية والأسلوبية الإدراكية لتحليل كيفية تجسيد الفاعلية في هذه الخطبة، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على التناص. يستخدم الحجاج في خطابه نصوص أخرى ذات أهمية، مثل القرآن الكريم، والشعر، والاستعارات، لصياغة نسيج خطبته، وهو نسيج يزداد قوة بفضل التناص. وتُظهر هذه الدراسة أن توظيف الحجاج للتناص لم يكن مجرد تزيين بلاغي، بل كان وسيلة لإضفاء الشرعية على سلطته من خلال استدعاء سرديات مألوفة ثقافيًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: **ما بعد الإنسانية، التناص، السلطة، الخطب، الحجاج، الأدوات**

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