In Arabo-Islamic civilization, both in word and in praxis, hila and its linguistic correlates (e.g. makr, kaid) signify a complex range of cultural and ethical appraisals of "cunning" as "applied intelligence." Its poetic embodiments in Arabic belles-lettres (e.g. exempla literature, maqamat, adab treatises on 'ilm al-hiyal, etc.) offer a particularly revealing cipher of its possible valuations, whether as a cherished virtue or as an agent of social corruption. This presentation will canvass some of its literary expressions with an Old Spanish case study: i.e. a brief examination of the Cid, the Castilian epic hero, as a poetic avatar of Arabo-Andalusian makr.