

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF IMITATION IN LITERATURE

I. *From Antiquity to the Renaissance*

Going back in time in an effort to trace the original sources of the concept of imitation in the history of literature, one usually ends up with Plato. It is possible that ideas about art and imitation had been generated by earlier cultures, but we shall not touch upon them in this connection. Democritus, who was born at the time of Xerxes, or around 470, imagined imitation as the beginning of art. It is by imitating the twittering of birds that man learned to sing.

Plato's concept of art is remarkable in that, although it was inimical to art and artists, Platonism has not ceased to be a sustaining force in literature and other art. Ever new generations of people come forth and are just as sure as previous ones that at last the phase of superstition has passed and man's horizons have cleared; but equally surely do Plato's thoughts about our world being only a pale reflection of the world of ideas appear to return. Recurrent is the view that a poem is not beautiful for what it is but for the reason that it represents the idea of its worldly object. This line of thought has in the modern age been pursued by Schelling, Hegel and Eduard von Hartmann.

A Finnish scholar (Railo) has written an interesting study on the forms taken during the course of history by the Platonic cult of the beautiful. They appear often to have been associated with an imagined garden of Eden, which it has been endeavored to establish on earth, either actually or as a literary creation; there have been countless such endeavors whenever economic circumstances have allowed. The study referred to begins with a fresh description of the Garden of the Ten Virgins in Byzantium. The Garden of Beauty appears likewise in the troubadour poetry of Roman de la Rose. The renaissance of the educated class in the nature worship of princes, in the zeal to build a paradise on the slopes of Fiesole or in Tivoli, generally has its parallel in the Platonic pursuits that have reverberated in the discussions taking place in the garden walks of those villas. Pico and Marsiglio Ficino were Platonists, and Cardinal

Pietro Bembo's speech to celestial beauty was written to realize Renaissance man's yearning for the fountainhead of truth and beauty.

What is this strange mode of thought, which seems to destroy itself, just as a wild animal devours its young out of fear that they cannot cope with surrounding dangers?

In his dialogue 'Ion', Plato lets a clever sophist argue with a wandering rhapsodist, or reciter of poetry. The outcome is that the rhapsodist trips on his own words and is constrained to admit poets and rhapsodists to be liars and suspect as citizens. Plato pursues his attack on poets in his 'Politeia'. He regards the effect of poetry on youth as pernicious because poetry does not reproduce the ideas of the ideal realm of the homeland of beauty and truth but copies the copies. The characters of Homer, for example, were imitations from the world of ideas with their desires and their struggles. Homer thus copied copies. Plato remained consistent in his contempt of poets. That is why many contemporary literary critics, especially in the English-language sphere (for example: Wimsatt, Brooks and Alex Preminger), logically hold up Plato as the negative beginning of literary criticism.

Thus the duality, polarity, of Plato's concepts, which is observed in German aesthetics, is apt to be overlooked. Plato was himself a philosophical writer, if not a downright poet, who waxes ecstatic over beauty. It should not be forgotten that for him beauty and art were not the same thing. He was capable of describing the fountainhead of beauty better than many who came after him — at least, more captivatingly than Aristotle, who took a sensibly favorable attitude toward art. But art was not placed by Plato in any relationship to beauty.

However, in the event that he hopes to give his thoughts scope and range, a literary critic cannot readily be at continual and fundamental odds with himself, like Plato. It was in his late dialogue 'Timaeus' that Plato arrived at a less contradictory relation to art. In it he submitted that the cosmos is a divine copy of the ideal world, and he almost states that a poet creates in the same way as the cosmos. This decisive step in favor of the poet he did not, however, take.

Aristotle, although his ideas were rapidly forgotten during the period of antiquity following him, had a decisive influence on the literary criticism of the entire modern era. He taught that the poet's rapture, which Plato scorned, was capable of purging the soul of the listener. As for imitation, he propounded a theory that bore fruit to the middle of the twentieth century. The nature of plays is not one of copying copies, as with Plato; rather do they offer a new opportunity to realize important aesthetic aims, to present in full that to which nature in isolated cases

aspires. Organic nature produces only imperfections; the poet sees the universal aspirations of nature. This typicalness, representativeness in an imitation is something we find in Arabic criticism, but in it the relation of imitation to nature was never conceived with same depth. Aristotle's imitation seeks laws of universal application in nature that would not become revealed unless the image created of the poet seeking the organic whole did not bring them into view.

Aristotle's fine-fibered concept of imitation was exchanged soon, around the time of Christ's birth, for a degenerate view of it. Admonitions were given to imitate, not nature, let alone universals, but the poets of the classical age.

The same view is held by the highly celebrated, anonymous author (called Longinus) of the book 'Peri Hupsous'. Like Islamic critics at a later date, he also urgently held up imitation of old models as the way to reach the summit of the art of poetry. Longinus deviates from the concept of the poet as a craftsman by stressing the importance of ecstasy at many points in his book, while also encouraging the imitation of classical poets. In the name of truth, it must be admitted that Islamic critics, too, such as Ḥāzīm and al-Ġurġānī, soar to ecstatic heights in describing the highest forms of poetry. Ḥāzīm, at least, resembles amazingly Longinus also in the respect that he complains on nearly the same grounds that the contemporary era can no longer produce great geniuses. The concept of genius was a strange one to the Arabian critic writing after the Abbasid time, although it occurs as a phenomenon, but not as a word, in the writings of, for example, al-Ġurġānī. Since the best poet is the best liar, he makes mistakes in moments of ardor, just like Longinus' genius. The poet possessed by 'šaitān' or 'ġinn' while singing was familiar to criticism even during Omayyad times (Mohammed has a *sura* titled *The Poet*, in which he declares that, according to the latest scholarship, the spirit taking hold of a poet is such that a disciple of Islam may accept its products). To the positivists Ḥāzīm and al-Ġurġānī, a genius of this kind was an unknown quantity.

Aristotle's central motif, the great idea, was destined to be left without understanding in his own cultural sphere as well as in the culture of Islam and the culture of the Renaissance. The artist imitates universals and not individual phenomena or abstractions of the ideal world of metaphysics, either.

After Aristotle, the word imitation gained a content much easier to grasp than universals. It was understood as the presentation of stereotyped people: the soldier, the deceitful tradesman, the braggart, the wild Trachian, etc. Gone were Aristotle's universals, the force that

drives separate phenomena toward a universal model and that we recognize as the concentrating force in the universal itself.

The study of Dionysius of Halicarnassus on imitation has been lost, but an idea of its content can be gained from fragments, preserved in the *Institutio Oratorii* of Quintilian. The imitation of the classics during antiquity was not copying, plagiarism or the reproduction of rhetorical patterns, any more than it was later to the best critics in the sphere of Islam, but rather intellectual wrestling with paragons.

Four important ideas that were transplanted into Islamic culture by means of translations by Syrian Nestorians were: 1— Imitation of Plato's sensory phenomenon. 2— Imitation of the universals propounded by Aristotle, the possibilities inherent in nature. 3— Imitation of the classics of late antiquity. 4— The concept of the Neoplatonists, notably Plotinus, that the poet is capable — contrary to Plato's thesis — of imitating real ideas.

The concept of imitation held by Plotinus, the Neoplatonist, is the result of meditation possessing a still stricter all-embracing philosophy and expansive vision.

If we are to believe Spengler, Plotinus marks the beginning of a new, to use a Spenglerian word, Magian culture held in common by East and West. The gift to the Western culture of the Persian religions, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Mazdaism, was dualism. Ormuzd represented goodness and light, Ahriman evil and darkness. The conflict between light and darkness was an eternal and ceaseless fundamental contradiction. Plotinus ingeniously applied this dualism also to aesthetics — even to the extent that his thoughts do not limit their range to metaphysical speculation alone but have implications bearing upon literary phenomena as well. Longinus' poet had acted out of quasi-divine inspiration. In lieu of this uncertain capability, Plotinus presents an integrated world concept, which is based on divine intelligence, or light, which penetrates all that is, though in different degrees. Intelligence is equivalent to light, and it is not intended for philosophers alone but for human beings in general and even for inanimate nature. The higher the form of existence, the more does it contain light and intelligence. A special example of this intelligence is the artist, who is in more direct contact with divine intelligence than are others and who is capable of transmitting perfection, beauty and truth to others. Such a divine explanatory basis would be slim consolation to the literary devotee unless it could indicate the ladder down which the divine 'nous' descends for our eyes to behold. Before it is brought for us to see, light is without form, without color, without truth, without beauty. When the artist has

transformed the divine emanation into shapes, poetry, colors, musical tones, then only has the divine acquired attributes. The artist copies nature but infuses his creation with something of divinity; the form and the colors appearing in the traces left by his hands represent material that had originally been dead and dark but then been purged by a cosmic intelligence and light.

An interesting individual feature of Plotinus' thought is the special status he gives the eye among all the sensory organs; of all the senses, sight is the purest, being in the most immediate touch with light, intelligence. This concept has won later adherents, as witness Goethe's lines:

»Did not the eye partake of sun,
Sun would be darkness to our seeing,
No splendor could from the divine be won,
Were God not part of mortal being.»

Consideration of Plotinus dramatically makes apparent the disparity prevailing in Islamic literature between the standards held up by literary criticism and the literature itself.

Inspired by the secret lore of the Magi and the forbidden wine of mysticism, the late Islamic poet moved with sovereign freedom through the world of rhetorical figures. The figures dictated by rhetoric did not confine his spirit, emancipated as it was by cosmic light, but offered the material to which he might apply the forms and the colors brought back from his nocturnal rambles. The Neoplatonic codex was well within the reach of Islamic scholars and it could have offered flexibility and mobility also to the literary criticism in the Islamic sphere, after the fashion of Plotinus' literary views, but this criticism chose a different direction to pursue from that taken by its target, poetry. On the other hand, it may also be observed that the non-mystic later Islamic poetry scrupulously adhered to the systems of rules formulated by its criticism. It is remarkable that the passion penetrating the walls of the Sufi world cave did not produce a single literary critic, although it penetrated the most magic of the magic, the orthodox theology itself, in al-Ghazzālī's great work of theological reform, which was based on the vistas gained from a lifetime spent among the Sufis of the wilderness.

But why should we force Islamic criticism into a mold into which it never sought to fit? Why should we demand that that criticism follow in the wake of Plato, Aristotle or Plotinus in perpetuating the theory of imitation?

We remember, to be sure, how many scholars have wondered about the vacuum into which aesthetics appears to have ended up in among the

Arabians. Grunebaum notes that Islamic criticism has »this mechanistic idea of beauty added from outside by technical devices» (p. 328). Heinrichs observes (p. 45) that it is precisely the discrepancy between poetry and reality that caused García Gómez to speak in his study 'Convencionalismo e insinceridad en la poesía árabe' of the lack of seriousness in Arabic literature, of a condition of non-earnestness.

Nevertheless, it is precisely from that vacuum that we find a new species of literary creation. The starry sky of the Islamic thinker is strange to us at first; we stand underneath it in astonishment; its lights do not tell us much; but as their patterns begin to grow alive, they reveal to us secrets of a culture thousands of years old, the mystic tradition of the Arabs and the Persians. We discover that Islamic literary criticism is not a vacuum; after all: for it has developed the theory of imitation along lines quite its own and has produced diverse definitions of that which is here referred to as literary arabesque. This arabesque has previously been characterized in chapter 1. It may be defined in relation to imitation, but it may no longer be that in comparison with the concepts of imitation held during antiquity or by later Europeans. As a literary phenomenon, we met with the arabesque in the baroque style, to be sure, as well as in 20th-century modernism and its criticism (cf., e.g., Ransom's concept of the verbal icon, which contains some of the same ingredients as appear in the arabesque 1)).

In Arabian criticism we meet with a good deal of the same content as in Longinus — the idea that by imitation is meant copying old masters, the emphasis on the importance of rhetorical figures; but the addition brought in by Arabian criticism is *taḥyīl* or phantasmagoria, as we call it, perhaps exaggerating a little or to provoke the deepest sense of the concept. The different techniques involved in it will be shortly discussed. When the complicated style of the Abbasid period had once got started, it spread with amazing rapidity everywhere that the Islamic culture was adopted. For example: the original poetry of the Turkish and Indian peoples differed from each other very greatly, but after the literary arabesque had once been accepted, creative work in the writing of poetry continued in rather much the same manner from India to Morocco up to our own century. Where did this method of writing originate, then? In a separate chapter, 'An Iranian Dream: The Iranian Adam', we shall describe how its origin is connected in a remarkable way with the history of the Arabian and Persian peoples.

1) The verbal icon is a way of explaining an individual metaphor, while the arabesque is the archetype or primal symbol of a certain literary genre.

Arabic literary criticism has two separate traditions, one Aristotelian and one indigenous, as Heinrichs has shown in his meritorious work, which provides the guidelines for the following historical review as far as it concerns the Arabs.

All the critics, al-Ġurġānī, al-Bāqillānī, Ibn Khaldūn, who have been dealt with separately in this study, stem from a tradition of their own separate from Greek philosophy. Aristotle's tradition came from the theological academy of Alexandria. In this academy, attention was concentrated on the study of Aristotle, whereas in Athens it was Plato that was studied, in a Neoplatonic spirit (e.g., Iamblichus and Proclus). The men who studied in Alexandria gave rise to the so-called Syrian Renaissance, and this in turn spawned many of Aristotle's Arabic translations.

As if foreshadowing the future trend of its thinking, Islamic criticism at an early period produced imitation in the form of kaḍīb, 'non-truth'. The positions taken by Islamic literary critics toward the concept of kaḍīb are divided by Heinrichs into four principal categories:

- 1— In the sense of a lie, a falsehood. As such, it is permitted in poetry.
- 2— In the sense of maġāz, trope. Ibn Qutaiba, in his early day, pointed out that there are those who wish by means of tropic use of language to conceal the truth of the Koran.
- 3— Kaḍīb in the form of a hyperbolic expression, exaggeration. This approaches the meaning inherent in the main object of our examination, the literary arabesque.
- 4— Taḥyīl, the last form of kaḍīb, phantasmagoria, is the one that al-Ġurġānī realizes more completely, perhaps, than anybody else in utilizing it in the form of the literary arabesque.

The fact that we meet with the word kaḍīb early in connection with discussion of poetry brings to the fore the circumstance that, from the very beginning, Islamic culture had a certain tendency to view poetry as a phenomenon wherein the poet created another world, which was parallel but not the same as sensory reality.

Ibn Qudāma (d. 922) long ago made a statement typical of Islamic criticism: »The best poet is the best liar.« He presented a highly interesting and early picture of the way the arabesque began to be molded in the sphere of Islamic criticism. He himself supported those who in the use of figures were in favor of moderation, but at the same time he showed how forcefully hyperbolic expression and exaggeration

had gained a foothold in critical circles. »In my opinion, moderation is the better of these two trends... One of them has said, however, that the best poetry is the least veracious, the most false. The poet strives, you see, by exaggerating to strengthen his idiom, to make it more effective; and even though he strays in his exaggerations into the sphere of things that do not exist, he regards them only as means of enriching his style» (Heinrichs, p. 59).

The great idea nourished by al-Ġurġānī (d. 1078) was to place taḥyīl, the phantasmagoria, into the very center of his literary-aesthetic thought. The phantasmagoria is the Arabian interpretation of imitation. It is when al-Ġurġānī portrays the poet as a fantasist and liar that he writes the choicest pages of his book and gives of his best.

»These phantasmagories excite wonder and abandon in the beholder. They induce in the soul of one who has come under their spell a strange feeling, which previously was not there. They act seductively, and their might is not to be denied in any connection nor should it be underestimated. The phantasmagories of the poets work in the same way as idols, and exert the same degree of temptation as these» (al-Ġurġānī, p. 369).

Here is discharged clearly the whole nature of the arabesque, its content as torn loose from time, being ornamentation halted to a standstill, simply existing in space. Imitation, again, expresses something only when it is in the process of realizing the thing it is portraying.

But the arabesque is not petrified, dead. We meet the arabesque anew in gradually dawning modernism in the prose studies of Charles Baudelaire. To Baudelaire, the abstract by no means signified something difficult of comprehension and empty, as our elders tended to think of modern poetry; for him, the abstract was something spiritual and its highest expression was that which he termed the arabesque. The freest form of poetry is that in which non-objective, free patterns and lines are enabled to take shape freely in the magical laboratory of the poet's brain. »The arabesque,» Baudelaire commented, »is the most spiritual of all methods.» As Baudelaire thought, the grotesque, the arabesque and the fantasy belong together. Fantasy is, for him, the capability whereby the movements of the free spirit detached from objects can be discovered and appropriated; the arabesque, again, is a creation of this capability. We notice here that the genre of literary arabesque appears and disappears in the history of literature.

The matters here expressed are the same content, if not verbally, as those expressed by al-Ġurġānī in the following: »The other ones who say

that the biggest liar of a poet is the best poet hold the opinion that the art (of poetry) can prosper and find its greatest glamour and develop to many-sidedness only where it can operate freely and with a maximum of elbowroom. Here the poet will find a way to create something new and to add to the old thing, to see new forms or to enliven the old ones. Here he will find a field of riotous action stretching as far as he ever wanted. Unceasingly, the motifs stream toward him; he draws water from a well that will never run dry, takes out things from a container that is forever full. He who wants to stress plain facts is confined in a narrow space, with feet fettered, and he cannot move at will. He has the desire but not the ability to use his strength » (al-Ġurġānī, p. 293).

When we thus examine side by side statements by Baudelaire and al-Ġurġānī, there comes alive for us that which is the core of abstract poetry of every era.

In the Islamic sphere, to be sure, this abstract poetry has its own special character, owing to the primal symbol of magical culture, the basilica, which separates the person of that area from the world of the senses outside. The first presentation of this poetry, one that proved exhaustive for centuries, was offered by al-Ġurġānī. In phantasmagoria the poet can apply several methods. In his zeal, al-Ġurġānī reverts to his pertinent and empirical style; in view of our theme of the arabesque, his thoroughgoing description of these methods produces certain of al-Ġurġānī's best pages, where the properties of the literary arabesque, only assumed previously, are delineated.

»Know that poetry which operates with phantasmagoria appears, with all its side branches and special features, ... as such a gigantic, multibranched tree that the description and classification of all its branches into special phenomena is not possible in its multiple forms» (p. 296).

A classification of this kind is nevertheless accomplished by al-Ġurġānī with characteristic relentlessness and thoroughness. We shall here touch upon only the main points of this classification to gain an idea of how carefully an Islamic critic could approach this literary genre created by his own fantasy and the heritage of his cultural sphere. The method of phantasmagoria is a fantastic etiology.

Al-Ġurġānī separates the following main segments of the fantastic etiology or fantastic origin:

- The poet presents the primary cause of the phenomenon, which is obviously contrived but effective poetically.
- The fantastic animation of an inanimate phenomenon.

- The invention of imaginary reasons for, e.g., the white hair of an elderly person.
- A fantastic debate between a narcissus and a rose over which is more valuable.— The animation of natural phenomena in, e.g., explaining the original cause for the different colors of horses.
- The invention of fantastic reasons apart from the combatants for the movements of swords and spears during a battle.
- A fantastic etiology, or original cause, for meteorological phenomena and, e.g., the phases of the moon.

Thus far did Islamic literary criticism carry literary taste from imitation of sensory phenomena. Although this taste was carried far, its saturation point was not reached in a century, as in the case of European modernism; rather did it prevail throughout the lands of Islam for a millennium — and does so in places even to this day within the sphere that now has taken upon itself the task of carrying forward the European cultural tradition.

From the foregoing I hope it has become clear that Islamic literary criticism was not a vacuum in which certain concepts borrowed from antiquity might have been mechanically realized, concepts without any real substance for the men of this culture. Doubtful, therefore, appears to be the view held by v. Grunebaum, one that is repeated on many pages of his study 'The Aesthetic Foundation of Arabic Literature': »Of the two fundamental lines of approach developed by antiquity, they did not follow the Platonic and Plotinian tradition to investigate the nature of the beautiful, but rather took up the Aristotelian problem of the nature of the literary art.» As we have seen, Aristotle's interest is focussed not on the technique of making a poem but mainly on his concept of the poet. The artist copies universals, not random phenomena of nature; it is the latent possibilities of nature that he portrays. The essence of Islamic poetry was not inward dishonesty, »insinceridad», as García Gómez argues, but rather does it have its own great central objectives. It created its own conceptions of literature, which prove to be distant, though indisputable relatives of 20th century poetics. The attachment of Islamic criticism to abstraction must not be understood as a limitation. Do we see, or did Yeats see Byzantine culture as an insincere one? Every culture constitutes a galaxy all its own.

To continue our review of indigenous Arabic literary criticism, we might call attention to Ibn Khaldūn (1332—1382). In his work culminated the psychologism of indigenous Arabic criticism, which we find so strong in al-Ġurġānī; on the other hand, we find in him the

scholastic need of Arabian philosophy to circumscribe concepts logically, a need the Arabs had generated, apparently, by slightly misunderstanding Aristotle. Ibn Khaldūn nevertheless has something else, something much more modern, to say. In his discussion of poetics, Ibn Khaldūn used the words »texture» and »structure» (or »construction») in precisely the same sense as certain of the New Critics, notably Ransom. As applied by Ibn Khaldūn, »texture» corresponds to Aristotle's concept *lexis*, signifying style or mode of expression, the ability to represent contrasts, etc. Ibn Khaldūn's »structure», again, corresponds to Aristotle's expression *taxis*, signifying the construction of a poem, its 'poetic strategy', architecture or plot. The antithesis structure-texture is construed in our own day in somewhat deviating ways, too, yet it provides one of the basic concepts of the New Criticism.

We shall now turn to the other mainstream of Islamic poetics, the Aristotelian tradition. The tradition of Aristotelian poetics in Islamic criticism is a long one, but rather slight of significance. As Francesco Gabrieli has demonstrated in his 'Estetica e poesia araba nell' interpretazione della Poetica aristotelica presso Avicenna e Averroè' (Riv. Stud. Or. 1929), the earlier Arabian philosophers really did not comprehend Aristotle's poetics at any point. Gabrieli asserts, in fact, that the retention of 'Poetics' in the Arabic Organon was, after all, a futile act. Characteristic of Arabian misconceptions is the fact that Aristotle's poetics was understood throughout the world of Islam to be the business of logicians and philosophers and no concern of the students of poetry and literary style or philologists. By the late Alexandrian period, to be sure, the poetics of Aristotle was seen to belong to the sphere of logic; but this is perhaps only additional evidence of what we have talked about before, namely, that thought along Arabian lines began as long ago as late antiquity. In general, poetics was classified by Arabian encyclopedias, according to this erroneously understood Aristotelianism, among non-Arabic branches of learning, notwithstanding the fact that the Arabs might boast of no few sharp thinkers in the field of poetics. Thus isolated did indigenous Arabic poetics remain, along with the Arabian tradition of Aristotelian poetics. As mentioned before, Aristotle's Organon was obtained by the Arabs through the intermediation of Syrians. An early representative was the celebrated translator, physician and philosopher Sergius of Rēš ʿAinā, who studied in Alexandria and translated Aristotle's 'Poetics' into Syrian. The first Arabic translation of the work was done by Abū Bīšr Mattā (who died in 940). He rendered the word 'mimesis' as 'muḥākāt', which was retained afterwards in the vocabulary of Aristotelian poetics in Arabic.

Among Arabian philosophers, al-Kindī in his early day dealt with Aristotelian poetics, but his work in this sector amounted only to an episode.

Al-Fārābī locked horns with the syllogisms of late Alexandrian scholastics and the laws of logic. He did not look upon poetic images as veritative. Mimesis, muḥākāt, was an expression used to say something about an object that it resembled, whereas a deceptive, sophisticated expression, kaḏīb, sought to say something about its object that was completely contrary to the reality. So emaciated and sophisticated had Aristotle's highly pregnant idea about mimesis, or imitation, thus become. It is probable that al-Fārābī received this idea and its interpretation from his teacher, Abū Bišr, who had translated 'Poetics' into Arabic. At any rate, it is obvious that not much was to be gained by following this dual road, compared with al-Ġurġānī's innovative concept of taḥyīl (phantasmagoria), which defines the most significant theoretical invention in the literature of Magian culture. The term taḥyīl is also to be found in al-Fārābī — but used as a synonym for muḥākāt.

Let us now turn our attention to Ḥāzim al-Qarṭāġannī, who is perhaps the most interesting thinker in the Aristotelian tradition of the Arabs. The son of a Saragossian merchant, he was born in Cartagena, Murcia, in 1211 and studied in Seville. When the Spanish Reconquista took Cordoba, Ḥāzim fled to Marrakesh, where he spent the rest of his life. He therefore belonged to the Arab generations that taught sciences and free thought to Europeans; he was a member of the intelligentsia that Christian chauvinists drove out of Spain.

Ḥāzim is the subject of quite an exhaustive study done by Wolfhart Heinrichs, a study that has been previously quoted. Heinrichs has also translated Ḥāzim's work on mimesis, or imitation in poetry.

In this connection, the fact needs to be reiterated that 20th century European Arabists still entertain just as erroneous ideas about Aristotle's 'Poetics' as the Arabs did during the Middle Ages. To reiterate: according to Aristotle, poetry reproduces universals, not random phenomena. »Poetry is more philosophical and more solemn than is history, as the former concerns itself with the universal, the latter with the individual» (Poetics, Chapter 9).

We have referred to Aristotle's concepts about poetics, and we shall do it again, for the orientalist are not all too well acquainted with them. As Aristotle sees it, poetry thus expresses with regard to its object something universally valid, generic. According to Aristotle, the most important concepts of poetic beauty are: 1) 'taxis', 2) symmetry and 3)

'horismenon'. 'Taxis' may be represented by the words **structure, architecture, order, even poetic strategy**. Symmetry means that the parts are in a set arrangement in relation to both the whole and each other. It does not mean equal dimensions of the parts but rather the harmonious adjustment of differences. 'Horismenon' means delimitation. What Aristotle wanted it to mean, according to his present interpreters, was that a beautiful object must clearly stand out from other objects. Internally, the term is intended to signify that a work of art is an entity, integral, sufficient unto itself and comprehensible as such, in no need of any continuation or extension. Poetics in the Aristotelian sense is highly holistic: no part of a work can be removed without reducing the whole into disorder. One of its fundamental concepts, in addition, is unity in variety. Aristotle is the inspiration for the present organicity demands, met with in both the New Criticism and the structuralism of the French and the East-Europeans.

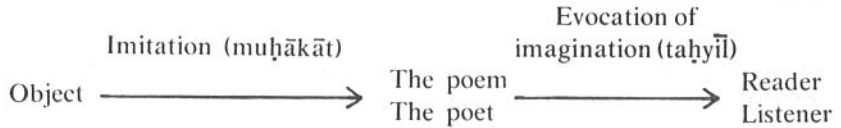
Of these basic Aristotelian concepts, we do not meet with a single one in European studies on Arabic poetics. It is as if the Orientalists were either under the domination of the scholastic logic of the Arabs or habituated to borrowing each other's conjectures concerning the nature of literary theory without anybody's looking to see what the immense accumulation of research material on literary theory contains or what Aristotle has, in the view of other literary scholars, said about poetics.

It is significant that Heinrichs wrestles strenuously with the question of, for example, whether al-Fārābī's idea of imitation is of Greek origin or not. It would suffice simply to note that it has nothing to do with Aristotle's concept of 'mimesis'.

It is indisputable that the present inquiry, too, owes Heinrichs a debt for everything said about Ḥāzīm; even so, certain critical remarks about Heinrichs' work are warranted.

Just as Grunebaum, in his study 'The Aesthetic Foundation of Arabic Literature', represented Aristotle as some kind of a poetic technician, who left as a legacy to the Arabs a somewhat sterile, mechanistic concept of poetry, one constructed of device, so does Heinrichs depict Ḥāzīm as a scholar of poetics who, alone among the Arabs, worked out a true synthesis of Aristotelian and indigenous Arabic poetics. Yet, it appears as if, in truth, Ḥāzīm does not establish for poetry any such autonomy as does Aristotle, but concentrates rather in the truly Arabic manner on the psychological effects of imitation. In his mind, the object of poetry is to produce an effect that leads to action. It is not our desire, however, to bypass with such a simplified explanation one of the most interesting scholars in the field of Arabic poetics.

We have previously remarked that al-Fārābī and Avicenna used the terms 'muḥākāt' and 'taḥyīl' as synonyms for the same word, imitation. According to Heinrichs, these words are used by Ḥāzīm not as synonyms but as complementary terms. They function approximately according to the following formula:



New in Ḥāzīm is the fact that he was presumably the first to describe imitation as a significant element in the process whereby poetry carries its effect. Imitation sets off the imagination, which, again, leads to love or hatred of the object. It would seem as if Ḥāzīm really — and alone among Arabian scholars — embraced imitation as an important part of his theory of poetry. Earlier theoreticians translated imitation into 'evocation of imagination' or 'phantasmagoria' or 'metaphorical thinking', most gave it only passing interest. In the case of Ḥāzīm, it is plainly an important part of the poetic process designed to produce an effect.

It is noteworthy, however, that Ḥāzīm remains quite a typical child of his Arabic tradition of poetics. The fact that he grafted the genuinely Greek idea of imitation on the Arabic tradition of explaining the psychological effect produced by poetry does not negate this statement. With respect to poetry as such, there is a vacuum in Ḥāzīm's system: only the effect is described. This is precisely where we encounter the psychologism of the Arabs. A poem does not exist as an entity, it is not organic, it does not require order, its parts are in no special relation to the whole.

However, the fact that in Ḥāzīm's opinion poetry does not pose a question of truth or falsehood strikes me as significant. Poetry concentrates all of its power on producing an effect. Earlier theoreticians actually never dwelt on the intention of poetry, although they did, to be sure, describe its effect. It is as if with respect to the poetic ego or the poet's phantasy, the birth site of a poem, there were a gap in Ḥāzīm's theory. We did, after all, meet with the poet's phantasy in Philostratus and Plotinus.

Poetry therefore produces an effect. Whether for right or wrong is a secondary matter. On this point, Ḥāzīm is a very rare thinker. No other school of theoretic literary thought besides the Marxian comes to mind that has so intensely concentrated its attention on the exclusively

propagandistic effect of poetry. Poetry itself is capable of taking a vigorous stand on issues of, for example, patriotism, as witness Homer, the Jewish prophets, Virgil, Whitman, René Char; religion, as witness Dante or Eliot; politics, as witness, once more, the Jewish prophets, Dante, Dryden, Shelley, Yeats, Mayakovsky; and so on. It is, however, quite difficult to find theoretical backing in poetics in support of older propagandistic poetry. The principle of Horace and Boileau, *aut prodesse aut delectare*, which persisted all the way to the didactic stand of the Victorians, has so weakly permeated philosophical or aesthetic or, in general, theoretical principles that it cannot serve as a suitable apologia of propagandistic poetry.

Let us conclude our consideration of Islamic criticism here and try to discover the historical juncture at which literary criticism the next time started to follow new guiding stars. In order to give the ideas embodied in Islamic theory perspective, of the kind we ourselves can understand easily, let us move over to Western European culture. As an additional reason for this move, we might mention the fact that the concepts of imitation reached Western Europe for the first time through translations done from the Arabic. The criticism of the Renaissance was not very original; in the matter of originality, it cannot be compared with Arabic criticism. It followed in the main two principles inherited from antiquity: the vulgarized Aristotelian principle that poetry and drama depict human behavior in the form of stereotypes; and the Hellenistic principle that the purpose of literary activity is imitation, though not in the Aristotelian sense or as conceived by Ḥāzīm, but as the imitation of the style and works of canonized classical authors. These principles of Renaissance poetics became mixed, however, with a third principle of considerable potency — the Neoplatonic conception of the artist who is capable of creating something new, in the manner of the Creator, the artist who can also reach out for true ideas. As a fourth leading theme of Renaissance literary theory, we might single out the defense of the speech of the common people undertaken in many tracts written by, among others, Dante, Du Bellay and Philip Sidney. In Eastern Europe, such apologias continued to be published until the 19th century.

A particularly barren period in the history of imitation was marked by the controversy waged in the 16th and into the 17th century: the controversy did not involve the question of how or what to imitate; nobody thought to inquire into the meaning of imitation as defined by Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus or Ḥāzīm; the controversy centered on *which one* of the classics of Antiquity should be imitated. The hottest dispute raged over the matter of whether Cicero should be nominated as the one

and only worthy model or whether the stamp of approval should also be placed on such writers as Sallust, Livy and Seneca. This shows to what a low level the literary theoretical debate fell after the Islamic criticism.

Lorenzo Valla represented enlightened, eclectic Ciceronism in his work 'De Elegantia Linguae Latinae' (1444). The same issue was argued by Pietro Bembo, Poliziano and Gianfranco Pico della Mirandola, nephew of the celebrated Giovanni. In the sphere of poetry, Vida (1527) and Scaliger (1561) canonized Virgil as the sole acceptable paragon of poetry. It is quite remarkable that the Renaissance, which was innovative, newly creative in nearly every sphere, was incapable of producing a single original idea in the theory of literature. Fracastaro (Naugerius, sive de Poetica Dialogus, 1555) confounds the concepts of Aristotle and Plato, holding up Platonic ideas as Aristotelian universals. Scaliger (1561) recommends imitation of Virgil because he understood him to be Neoplatonic; he asserted, that is, that Virgil had created another Nature, one superior to the first, for which reason he should be imitated. Although Aristotle's 'Poetics' was brought out at the beginning of the 16th century, theoreticians did not comprehend — any more than had the Arabic theoreticians before them — what the universals of Aristotle were that poetry was supposed to imitate. After the end of the 18th century, the very word 'imitation' began to be held up in horror as some sort of synonym for 'aping'. This was not, however, true of the best thinkers of the times, namely, Goethe and Coleridge. In their thinking, the ideas of Aristotle once more, after a hiatus of 2000 years, began to take shape as originally intended, but at the same time in quite a new guise, which was influenced by, among other things, a heightened sense of self, the self and the world, the self as opposed to all the rest of humanity, as brought forth by romanticism.

2. *Goethe, Coleridge and the myth of Western Man's nearness to Nature*

In the first chapter of our study, we examined the primary symbols of Middle-Eastern literary criticism and European criticism and found them to be different. To the Gothic church builder, there was no gilded

cupola, as in a basilica or mosque, between earth and sky: the vault of the Gothic cathedral soared almost out of sight, rising to heaven. Faust's password to reach the secrets of Nature was the command 'Es werde', directed at his own work and which might be rendered to mean, »Let my will be done«. The secrets of Nature and life would remain forever in the dark unless they were brought into the light by the artist or the scholar.

The aesthetic ideas of the Faustian person are marked by an awareness of his artistic self, a self that is clearly differentiated from given conceptions. The ego of the artist is a powerful factor in the aesthetic thinking of Goethe and Coleridge.

Is the relation of Western aesthetics and literary criticism to Nature a direct one, then, as our first study and the studies of Hellmut Ritter would seem to show? In the following, we shall not undertake to write a full history on imitation of the natural world in European aesthetics. We shall take up for examination only a couple of examples typifying our theme and our thesis. One is the father of Faustian man, Goethe. There has been no lack of disciples of Goethe to this day. The roots of the theories held by one of the most celebrated of these disciples, Oswald Spengler, are — according to his own report — deep in the dark jungle of Goethe's diaries and maxims. The other example is Coleridge, whose ideas on the fine-fibered ties between nature and poetry are still in our day quite as much alive in the English-speaking world as Goethe's are in Germany.

If one considers the 2500-year-old problem-field of aesthetics and should like to express oneself in terms of concepts taken from it, the mythical ingress of this chapter might be restated as follows: the question that has troubled people the most, perhaps, is what the word 'imitation', first used in antiquity, means. The problem involves the eternal struggle between subjectivism and objectivism. We here try to concentrate on the objectivists, or rather on a synthesis of both views, presented by Goethe and Coleridge. Aristotle's 'Poetics' was republished in the 16th century, and it became the theoretical guide of French classicism. In the works of Schiller, Goethe and Schelling, the ideas on imitation attained a certain culmination. As transmitted by Coleridge, the discussion on imitation has continued as a central problem even in the New Criticism. In the mind of John Crowe Ransom, imitation is the same as the production of verbal icons. The New Criticism has regarded imitation as of great significance in, for example, the study of metaphors. Ernst Cassirer and Suzanne Langer assert that metaphors (or myths or Ransom's icons — all these terms being used) are at best realizations of archetypes, and they fulfill one of Coleridge's great hopes — the hope

that there might be found a meeting place for the objects of the external world and the words of the conceptual world. According to Cassirer, objects and words unite in a myth (Langer's 'metaphor') that brings to fruition the archetypes of humanity; myths (or metaphors) are 'momentary divinities'.

Anglo-Saxon literary scholarship focussed on criticism has thus made much of imitation. The more theoretical Germans, who have contributed great figures to the field of aesthetics, have represented the same matter as the gulf separating subjectivism from objectivism. Do the phenomena that we behold as beautiful possess their agreeable properties in themselves or are these properties bestowed upon the natural phenomena by us?

The question of the Western writer's relation to nature is not, in fact, as broad as it might seem. It is circumscribed by the old afore-mentioned problems of imitation, subjectivism and objectivism. It also borders on the epistemological basis of aesthetics and in epistemology, too, on quite a central question: How is knowledge of the external world possible?

In the following pages, we shall try to establish Goethe as the most important and typical exponent of imitation in the modern age. Considerable space shall therefore be devoted to different views on Goethe.

In his theorizing on the relationship between artist and nature, Goethe is still accorded — perhaps because of his very inscrutableness — positively mythological esteem. »Through him we see roots and tree simultaneously.« Writers deviating from Goethe, like Graham Greene and Franz Kafka, have, as if denying their own professional character, seen in Faustian man the myth of their own history, the primeval father of Western man. It is as if these writers, against their will, were admitting the Faustian hero to be mightier than they themselves. What then is this hero? Like Eastern man, he, too, strives for the infinite, but he finds the infinite by travelling into the finite in every direction. Dante's epos ends in Paradise, but the happiness of the Faustian hero lies in a balance between earthly joy and Paradise. He governs equally well both the instinctless chill of the rationalist and the ecstasy of mysteries, and as an inventive fellow has found a comfortable way to live on the paper-thin surface that separates the cosmic frost from the flames contained by the earth's crust.

In his theories, Goethe has keenly and profoundly studied the relation of art to nature. The very word 'nature' in this connection has much to say. If we substitute for it the words 'external world', we take a step at the

same time toward abstraction. The word 'nature' as used by Goethe has a specific meaning. It represents the external world, which has been viewed as mysterious, organic, with laws not yet explained and with wonders not yet described. Its essence, including the forms, colors and governing natural laws, has already, however, been comprehended.

The question of the foundations of Goethe's aesthetics has been dealt with in countless literary and philosophical works, which, in fact, amount to an entire library. A pleasant over-all review of this literature is given by, for example, Kindermann's work 'Das Goethebild des XX Jahrhunderts'.

In the ranks of interpreters of Goethe, we can find many major figures of our own century, including Croce, Thomas Mann, Eduard Spranger, Georg Lukács, Wilhelm Dilthey, Ernst Cassirer, Ortega y Gasset, Albert Schweitzer and others. The Dutch author Nico Rost has even produced a study entitled 'Goethe in Dachau', which seeks to ascertain what was left of Goethe's ideal on humanity in the concentration camps of the Nazi era.

No wonder George Bernard Shaw was prompted to pen the following lines:

»Who dares write about Goethe?
Insects will buzz around the colossus, but not I.
I take my hat off and hold my tongue.»

It is actually possible to find a certain special philosophy in the works of Goethe scholars, a philosophy with features of its own, humanism, admiration of dynamic nature — whatever it might be —, the witnessing of natural laws as polarities, and so on. Eduard Spranger illuminates the well-known line about the West-östlicher Divan, »Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder sei nur die Persönlichkeit«, by noting the inevitable similarity and affinity between the two sexes. »Only with the two combined can the personality of each survive. Alone, neither can continue to exist.« Many learned men have expressed their views on Goethe's morphology and symbolism. Willoughby wrote a study on Faust as an »organization of life«. The Dutch scholar H. J. Pos published a paper on Goethe's theory of knowledge. The American scholar E. Jockers investigated certain of the categories typical of Goethe's mode of thought: shape, type, original phenomenon, form-shaping force, polarity, development, invigoration (Steigerung). All of these are examples of the Goethean concept of metamorphosis, and each of them is dealt with thoroughly. Also Friedrich Waaser has studied

Goethe's concept of 'organism' — not as a mobile but as a form-producing force.

One of the most brilliant of Goethe scholars has been Karl Viëtor, on the strength of his 'Goethe, Dichtung — Wissenschaft — Weltbild'. As regards Goethe's aesthetics, Viëtor has some weighty things to say. The best parts of his book are, as had often been the case earlier, the quotations from Goethe. »Beauty is the manifestation of secret laws of nature, which, had they not made their appearance within ourselves would have remained forever hidden.» Drawing on an inner vision signifies to Goethe only a mannerism: »Reality must provide the impetus and the subject.» To be sure, he also expresses quite the opposite viewpoint: »Had I not possessed the world within myself as an idea, I should have been blind with seeing eyes.»

Here is a significant citation passed on by Viëtor: »To become understandable, art utilizes manifestations of reality familiar to us, but it makes use of them like symbols, in which art reveals its own purposes.» With respect to the means at his disposal, the artist is therefore bound to nature, but at the same time he has made himself master of nature: »In fact, all that nature offers us is only material, raw stuff; it is we who make of it something with sense and meaning; it is we who make reality significant. There is no such thing as passive observation; experience we produce ourselves... No portrait is worth a thing until the artist has, in the truest sense of the word, created it.»

All this appears to be perfect; it is as if nature's own forces had combined to create the most suitable domicile for all human beings. But something is nevertheless lacking, unless one is willing to settle for an easily found existence. The impression cannot be avoided that the Goethe scholars form a solitary group in the reality of the present. The ideal of humanity appears to be thrust aside by the force of the explosion of knowledge, which defies the laws of humanity. Their spirituality is real but pallid.

Goethe's aesthetics concentrated on the basic view that the activity of nature and the creative activity of man are as one. The work of the artist and the scientist is not passive perception. Seeing and awareness are active processes; they add something to nature, that is, the part of nature produced by thinking, without which part one cannot speak of the whole reality. The scientist adds to perception his thought and the result is knowledge of laws that were originally secret, constituting an unformulated mass, laws that without him would not even exist. These images, these matters of knowledge, together with perception, are needed before reality as a whole can exist. The task of thought, therefore, is to formulate reality as a total entity.

Such are the basic ideas of Goethe's aesthetics, and they are to be found in almost all the works dealing with Goethe's aesthetics (e.g., Koch, Viëtor, Wellek).

René Wellek is one of the most prominent names in contemporary literary scholarship. His 'History of Modern Criticism 1750—1950' is destined to be the basic work in the field for a long time to come. In it he observes that Goethe's thoughts on literary criticism have by no means been studied sufficiently, but Wellek's own attitude toward the great German betrays considerable reserve. He presents Goethe's aesthetics with this quotation: »The artist must learn from nature, he must create a second nature.» Which prompts Wellek to inquire: »But how, may we ask, can the poet create according to the laws of nature? Does it mean more than postulating the old Platonic idea?» (Wellek, pp. 208—209).

We shall directly see one possibility whereby the poet can create »according to the laws of nature». This seems to be a question that quite particularly preoccupies Wellek in his aforementioned history. His final question concerning Goethe is repeated several times: »He achieved a delicate balance, which may seem to us precarious and irretrievable» (Wellek, p. 226).

Such a delicate balance is not, perhaps, altogether impossible to achieve anew.

To quote Rudolf Steiner is surely to risk the charge of having performed a scholarly fiasco. At any rate, in the field of scholarship dealing with Goethe, Steiner has made certain contributions that can bear to be cited on a critical and even academic level. Steiner started out as a regular philosopher with the requisite university training, and it was only later in his career that he emerged as a pontiff in a sectarian theosophist movement. The impressive works of his youth appear as if wrapped in the cloak of the ancient witch doctor of Dornach. It is a pity that no description of his youthful philosophical output can be found in even the most exhaustive reference works on philosophy. In his youth, Steiner built on a basis fortified by Goethe's thinking. In some respects moving along simple lines, his works supply an acceptable theory of Goethe's philosophy. It is my feeling that something of high value has been thrust aside because of ignorance, bias and the exclusive attention paid to his colossal obscurantism. The work I am citing in this connection is 'Truth and Knowledge', which Steiner wrote in 1891 at Rostock University as his doctoral thesis. It is to be believed that the requirement of rigid academic clarity has, for once, yielded a positive result. And, for once, at least, Steiner was made to write in a generally intelligible way.

In the following pages, we shall pay more attention to the theory of knowledge than to aesthetics. We shall therefore borrow a couple of sentences from Karl Viëtor's work on Goethe to show at what point Goethe makes the transition from aesthetics to epistemology:

»Im Grunde ist alles, was wir sinnlich wahrnehmen, nur rohes Material für uns; wir machen daraus erst etwas, was Sinn und Bedeutung hat, und machen uns durch die Wirklichkeit erst verständlich. Es gibt kein passives Gewahrwerden, jede Erfahrung wird von uns produziert, das gilt besonders für den Künstler.»

Around these thoughts of Viëtor turns the entire work 'Truth and Knowledge'.

The 'Goethean' epistemology presented by Steiner is set into motion by criticism of Kant's theory of knowledge. Kant's *a priori* postulates have probably already aged otherwise, too; Steiner's criticism would thus not have been required for that. But Steiner's epistemology possesses the same property as Kant's, namely, simplicity. Characteristic is the rather exacting title of one of Kant's contributions to the theory of knowledge: 'Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können.' Somewhat the same opinion of Kant was held by Schopenhauer, who wrote of Kant's *a priori* judgments that they would be preserved as the foundation of philosophy for a thousand years.

Intended for eternity, these judgments of Kant's crumble, however, in a rather simple way. Steiner desires to establish on the basis of Goethe's ideas an »epistemology without assumptions».

Accordingly, of the three postulates of his epistemology, the first calls for the rejection of all knowledge from the 'world-picture' and the holding as given a world-content lacking in all connections, unarranged in detail.

»... An epistemological investigation must begin by rejecting existing knowledge.» This is the first postulate. »*Before* our conceptual activity begins, the world-picture contains neither substance, quality nor cause and effect; distinctions between matter and spirit, body and soul, do not yet exist. Furthermore, any other predicate must also be excluded from the world-picture at this stage. The picture can be considered neither as reality nor as appearance, neither subjective nor objective, neither as chance nor as necessity... Error is wholly excluded only by saying: I eliminate from my world-picture all conceptual definitions arrived at through cognition and retain only what enters my field of observation without any activity on my part. When on principle I refrain from making any statement, I cannot make a mistake...»

»Illusions and hallucinations too, at this stage are equal to the rest of the world-content. For their relation to other perceptions can be revealed only through observation based on cognition.»

The second main point in the Steinerian-Goethean theory of knowledge consists in the postulate: »In the sphere of the given there must be something in relation to which our activity does not hover in emptiness, but where the content of the world itself enters this activity.» This something is the thinking activity itself.

It is a »characteristic feature of all the rest of our world-picture that it must be *given* if we are to experience it. »The only case in which the opposite occurs is that of concepts and ideas: *these we must produce if we are to experience them.*»

The third postulate is expressed in the following:

We must realize that the part that we separated from the given, in spite of our postulate and in addition to it, is in necessary connection with the world-content. Thus is the next step in the theory of knowledge taken. It restores the unity that was broken in order to make cognition possible. The act of restoration consists of *t h i n k i n g* of the world as given. In the thinking examination of the world, actual union of the two parts of the world-content is brought about: »the part we survey as given on the horizon of our experience, and the part which has to be produced in the act of cognition before that can be given also.»

Thinking is therefore truly an activity that mediates (creates) knowledge. »It is only when thinking arranges the world-picture by means of its own activity that knowledge can come about.» Thinking has to approach something given and transform its chaotic relationship with the world-picture into a systematic one. This means that thinking approaches the given world-content as an organizing principle.

Kant's *a p r i o r i* judgments are fundamentally not cognition, according to 'Truth and Knowledge', but only postulates. In the Kantian sense, one can always simply say: »If a thing is to be the object of any kind of experience, then it must conform to certain laws.» *A p r i o r i* judgments are thus conditions that the subject imposes on objects. It is nevertheless clear that if we are to attain knowledge of the given, then it must be derived, not from the subject, but from the object.

Thinking reveals nothing *a p r i o r i* about the given; but it does provide the forms on the basis of which the conformity to law of the phenomena becomes *a p o s t e r i o r i* apparent.

»A true law of nature is simply the expression of a connection within the given world-picture, and it exists as little without the facts it governs as the facts exist without the law.»

The given world-picture becomes complete only in the indirectly given form produced by thinking. »The immediate aspect of the world-picture reveals itself as quite incomplete to begin with.«

If the thought-content were united with the given from the beginning, no cognition would exist. And no need to go beyond the given would ever arise.

It is only in the form the world-content attains through cognition, with both aspects of it joined together, that it can be called a reality.

We might perhaps ourselves add to this as Steiner's criticism the fourth postulate of his theory of knowledge: There exists some active part of the world-content that produces thought. Steiner evidently means by this some kind of self, ego, some subject acting on the power of its own will (although he does not speak of it in his book).

This therefore is the epistemological background of Goethe's aesthetics according to Steiner, and it must be conceded that it is quite original — something that cannot be said for many other attempts to explain the relation between subject and object in art. I am thinking here of the abstract complexity that characterizes, for example, the work 'Aesthetics in the Modern World' (London 1968). This work reflects various aesthetic viewpoints of our time; several of the essays contained in it are interesting, but applicable to many is Richard Wollheim's statement: »The great difficulty in any modern book of aesthetics is to find anything to criticize. For by and large what is not unintelligible is truism.«

The following citations from Goethe bind the main theme of ours in the foregoing epistemological part of this paper, to wit: What is the Western poet's relation to reality? The citations are from a collection put together by Steiner, who also adds comments of his own that I feel to be quite to the point.

The following reflection brings to mind Coleridge's wish to see word and natural phenomenon unite. In our own time, Ernst Cassirer and Suzanne Langer, to be sure, contend that this has already happened, Cassirer in myth and Langer in metaphors. We see that the ideas of Goethe and Coleridge thus continue to be sustaining forces in contemporary criticism.

»Word and depiction are correlatives which forever seek each other, as we can observe from the use of metaphors. Thus he whose ear has heard speech or song from within must call upon the eye for assistance. If we look at the childhood of mankind, we will note how in laws and in the Holy Bible word and depiction always balance each other« (Goethe).

Steiner's comment to this: »Depiction reveals phenomena of the objective world — not bare, however, but provided with the additional element of imagination.»

»Poetry points to the secrets of nature and seeks to expose them through pictures. Philosophy points to the secrets of the mind and seeks to lay them bare with words» (Goethe).

Steiner's comment: »Elsewhere, Goethe has written: 'Poetry: unripe philosophy. Poetry: ripe nature. Philosophy: ripe reason.'» To this comment might be added the New Criticism's concept of so-called Platonic poetry, in which the abundance and power metaphors have been thinned down with the philosophy contained in poetry. Poetry belongs to the senses and imagination, not reason.

»A mannerism is misguided idealism» (Goethe). Steiner's comment: »A mannered presentation involves dealing with a phenomenon in such a way that the phenomenon has not been sufficiently taken into account, but rather has the writer paid attention to himself in a way alien to the phenomenon itself.» Is the poetry of the Middle East more mannered than the poetry of the West? The poetry of the Arabs long continued to depict the abandoned campsites of pagan Arabic poetry, along with the standard themes of the poets of pagan times, although it had not been witness to them. The poetry in the Urdu language of the Muslims of India drew on Persian reality, which was alien to the Indian scene. The poetry of the Middle East fulfilled its own aesthetics, which differed from that of the West, herein presented. Nowadays, it is true, all the Eastern nations pursue some aesthetic ideal borrowed from Europe. Thereby has come about Toynbee's conception of European culture's becoming the whole world's culture.

»Classicism is 'healthy, romanticism morbid» (Goethe). Steiner's comment: »The romanticist sees how natural phenomena are governed by natural laws but is incapable of seizing upon what he sees and carrying the conformity to law to perfection. He realizes how far reality is from this perfection. While the humorist is above the ideal-perfect and reality, the romanticist perceives in particular the imperfection of reality and its failings. This sense comes from a feeling of weakness, which is unable to see or realize perfection behind the imperfect. The classicist sees behind imperfection the idea of perfection and proceeds to develop this germ. Ovid strives to see his happiness in misfortune.» Steiner's comment gives sense and extra content to Goethe's concept of the 'morbid' and the 'healthy' in art, which in the view of Wellek and — why not? — other people of our day is so limited, unless positively Nazi in its implications. The words 'morbid' and 'healthy' are not, therefore,

literary judgments but are intended to represent the relation of different literary trends to the external world although the words chosen by Goethe suit these trends rather badly. We are glad to accept this interpretation, although Goethe did sometimes mistreat his romantic contemporaries. This he was perhaps apt to do quite apart from his theories. Turning to the Eastern countries, we observe that romanticism did not appear in this Goethean sense whatsoever in classical Persian poetry, although Saʿīd Nafīsī (copying Western models) has found such a phase in Persian literature. At most, romanticism would be represented by the decades of the 1930s and 1940s (Hedayat, Chubak). Classical Persian poetry — if we think of literary periods as totalities and do not seek individual names — always perfected the reality it beheld; it was truly classical according to this definition of Goethe's. We do not meet 'morbid' geniuses in classical Persian poetry.

»Just as soon as subjective poetry was granted its license at the expense of the objective, the representational — it could not be otherwise, for then would we be obliged to reject all of modern literature —, we could guess ahead of time that the trend would produce true poetic geniuses who would totally direct themselves toward the depiction of the internal world instead of the great events of the world at large. This has at the moment been brought to pass to the extent that there exists poetry without metaphors» (Goethe). Here again Goethe really mitigates the disparity between morbid and healthy poetry. Steiner's comment: »Schiller describes the difference between naive and sentimental poetry as follows: The naive poet is internally familiar with natural phenomena and the secrets of nature and brings this out directly in his works. The sentimental poet has become alienated from nature and his output is an expression of his yearning for nature. This alienation is due to the fact that a sentimental person cares more for internal and a naive person more for external life. Difficulties are created for the sentimental person in formulating his inner experiences; to the naive poet, this is easy — he represents his outer life metaphorically. His relationship with nature is such as to enable him always to project his imagination in the form of perceivable mental images. The sentimental person must first seek the metaphors for mental images difficult to represent.» This is like a commentary on H. Ritter's work 'Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs'. If in lieu of the word 'sentimental' we use the word 'Islamic' and for 'naive' we substitute 'Western', this comment of Steiner's would crystallize the main thought contained in Ritter's paper as regards the differences between Islamic and Western poetry. These differences should not, to be sure, be taken categorically. The early poetry of Persia, roughly up to

Ferdousi's 'Book of Kings', was also realistic, naive, dynamic, or however else it might be designated. The same might be said of Arabic poetry up to Abbasid times. It should be borne in mind, however, that from the very beginning both Persian and Arabic poetry (Fück, Eberman) held a strong in-built potential for the ornamental, a potential that was then realized, too. On the other hand, there are many periods in European literature when complicated and 'arabesque' taste prevailed. There were artificial literary languages already in the childhood of European literature (e.g., Arnaut Daniel), as Shklovski has shown. Baroque and modern poetry are two other examples. They ought not to be held, however, as the original invention of European poetry, as represented by Goethe and Coleridge.

The following maxim speaks also in favor of the kind of imitation that copies nature, not other poets. No demand for such imitation is to be found in Islamic aesthetics, with perhaps the exception of Ḥāzīm, who is singled out by Heinrichs as the sole Islamic critic to comprehend the concept of 'mimesis' in Aristotle's poetics.

»It is far harder to learn from models than from nature» (Goethe). Steiner's comment: »Creative production must be based on individual spiritual strength. The uncreative, who is incapable of perceiving perfection behind natural phenomena, cannot find that perfection in literary models, either.»

We have seen that Goethe expressed in a fairly cognitive form in the aphorisms quoted the basic outlook of Western literature. When this is placed in relation to what has been stated here about Eastern literary criticism, a perspective develops that reveals the difference between the outlooks of poets representing different cultural spheres. This perspective, precisely because it shows the disparities, might serve to generate an aspiration toward a united view in the hope that the ultimate goal of UNESCO's East and West Program could be brought closer: it need not be as a poet said, »East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet.»

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It is strange but the best propagandist of the primal symbols of European criticism, »Es werde» and »quest for infinity», is no longer Goethe, let alone Steiner. No, he is Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the

English poet of the early 1800s, along with one of his present-day discoverers, I. A. Richards, who in psychologically explaining Coleridge's theories comes to exactly the same conclusions, expressed in identical language, as Steiner shortly before him. The Coleridge renaissance is actually quite a fascinating phenomenon. In his own day, Coleridge was at times shunned on account of his eccentric ways. The more proper Wordsworth — as generally viewed by his contemporaries — rose above Coleridge in spite of the latter's youthful fame as a poet. Once, considerably after the 'lake period', the Wordsworths were visited at their home in Newmarket by Coleridge. Characteristic of the bourgeois reaction was the moral horror of the Wordsworths upon beholding the depraved state into which their friend had fallen. Otherwise, Coleridge spent a major part of his time trying to break his opium addiction. Much of his scholarship has been found to be translated directly from the works of Schelling. That present-day authority on literary criticism René Wellek observes, not a little reproachfully, that theft of this kind cannot be shrugged off as has been done in the English literary sphere, for at stake is the issue of intellectual honesty. To this it might be said that there is many a kind of 'theft', good and bad, great and worthy, petty and mischievous.

How can it be possible that such a morally dubious person and literary thief can have such a profound bearing upon not only the subject of this paper but also the whole of Anglo-Saxon criticism in our century? The secret probably lies in the fact that, in spite of his borrowings, Coleridge did rise to the creative level: he created new totalities guided by his own theory of the important difference between imagination and the kind of fancy that merely combined old ingredients. Moreover, the English spirit in its empirical quality is so far removed from the German that even merely the competent translation of Schelling's ideas into the language of the empirical and practical English thought constitutes in some degree a creative act. This act blazes all the broader trail considering that the range of its influence nowadays extends over other parts of Europe as well. Following World War II, with the silencing of the German voice in the field of aesthetics and literary criticism and the shifting of the center of gravity in the new theorizing to the English-speaking nations, we have all, in fact, changed. It might be said that the New Criticism has Anglicized the German idealism and accordingly made Coleridge's voice the only one still capable of reaching us from the age of idealism. Here we come to a certain important feature. Coleridge was a product of idealism and yet at the same time easily fits into our empirical and rational period. Coleridge succeeded in achieving

a certain universal validity independent of the element of time with his ideas, and this is also one criterion of his genius.

In Coleridge's mind, poetry is generated by the magical ability he calls imagination. Imagination is a divine force, for a poet creates in the same way as the Creator. At the instant of action inspired by the imagination, there are joined (in the imagination) the subject — the creative ego — and the object — nature. The secret laws of nature make their appearance only in the imagination, and not in nature itself as seen with ordinary eyes (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817). As these laws are revealed at the visionary instant, therefore, a union takes place of the subject, the imaginative self, and the object, nature, which only in man becomes aware of its own laws. The imagination is stimulated by the tension between various antitheses, which seeks relaxation in a new entity. Here we find Coleridge's connection with the holistic psychology of our own day.

Following in the wake of the post-Kantian philosophers, notably Schelling and A. W. Schlegel, Coleridge sets up imagination as the antithesis of mechanically operating fancy. Fancy combines and gathers matters without the addition of creativeness; imagination, again, is described by Coleridge in the same terms as a growing plant is described. A plant represents a process that organizes itself by itself; and that process is capable of assimilating diverse and even ostensibly incongruous ingredients. It possesses a law-bound organic unity that manifests itself in the reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference, of the general with the concrete, the idea with the image». Coleridge thus inaugurated the organic theory of poetry in England as well as the aesthetic principle of inclusiveness, which, in the form of 'irony', 'tension', 'reconciliation of diverse impulses' or a 'pattern of resolved stresses' has in our century become both the basic conception of poetic unity and the prime criterion of poetic excellence in I. A. Richards and a number of the New Critics.

To Coleridge as to Goethe, no phenomenon or law had been given ready made. Ready-made was only the confused, undifferentiated mass of phenomena and sensations in which hallucinations cannot be distinguished from reality, in which the color of the grass or the sunlight does not reveal whether it is summer or winter, in which a tree does not grow or spread out its branches but is merely a figure on a chart, turned upside down. The sounds and colors of a city and the busy traffic of streets are just peculiar, frightening movement, in which nothing can be distinguished from anything else. If we can know that a coach will stop at a corner, it is to know a good deal. If we know the style of the architecture on a street, it is to know infinitely more. The next stage is

the knowledge of an artist: he knows how to combine the multifarious sounds and the motley scenes of a commonplace street into a total concept to astonish others.

All awareness is activity. That afore-described 'given' world begins to gain sensible motion only when we begin to attach ideas to it. When we examine the world like an upside-down map and then state, »That pattern represents a procession, which at the next streetcorner turns left and approaches a cemetery,« we shall have already attached to the given map a collection of our own ideas, ideas associated with a network of city streets and ethnographic customs. If we say, »That figure is a tree,« we shall have joined to the given the ideas of leaves, growth, age, time, and so on. This is explaining the secrets of nature or the given — however one might wish to put it — in a simple way. The physicist who measures the temperature of space at his desk does the same, if just at a higher level.

One might know ethnographic customs, networks of streets and roads, one might possess boundless learning in these matters and still be lacking in imagination in the sense meant by Coleridge. In an afterdinner speech, Coleridge remarked about the learned men he had met: on the forehead of most of them can be read the sign, »Storehouse to let«. Imagination is not the ability to combine and summarize matters known before, as is fancy. It is the ability to create new entities. Imagination brings together extremes; it sees beauty in the carcass of a horse, polarity where others see only diversity, paradoxes where others see merely words.

Coleridge, if anybody, must have understood awareness of the world as an active function with especial intensity. For he had experienced dark years without the joy of awareness, years that were spent in bitter struggle not so much for bread as against specifically that depressing immobility which underlay his use of opium. For him the months of awareness and appreciation meant intense activity. When he took some matter up for consideration, it meant for him rebirth or holy communion with the eternal laws of nature.

Steiner had understood Goethe's challenge as a philosophical and epistemological problem, but I. A. Richards approached it as a psychological and physiological problem. In his work 'Coleridge on Imagination', I. A. Richards takes the position that we must become »aware of our awareness«. In general, the observation might be made of I. A. Richards' work that — contrary to Coleridge's own thinking — it amounts to an apotheosis of introspection and by no means of the study of nature. Psychologizing somewhat less and connecting Coleridge's

ideas more broadly with aesthetics and philosophy, the English philosopher Braithwaite produced his 'Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature'.

On the principal elements of Coleridge's theory of knowledge is the connectivity of subject and object. The subject is a perceiving 'I', the object here likewise a perceiving 'I' when it forms perceptions. In forming perceptions, it partakes of holy communion with the dynamic laws of nature. As Coleridge understands it, 'knowing' is an exceedingly active verb: »knowing is parallel to growing«. Confronted with knowing, Coleridge experiences a kind of holy reverence, the same kind of reverence felt before the force that makes Creation function and that unites with the laws of nature. Coleridge sees knowledge as one of the major organs of nature. In his view, it begins to operate with the rising sun and then unites with all the forces of nature, combining their laws into one of itself and others. We are exhorted to behold how it arranges the minutest movements of nature to become part of the profoundest peaceful whole. Knowing, he asserts, is the most conspicuous organism of all nature and its elementary life.

In speaking of Coleridge's concept of imagination as the poet's most significant power, which fundamentally deviates from the gathering, collecting fancy of the epigonous poet, who repeats what has been said before, Richards had more good luck explaining the parallelism of 'nature man' than in the case of the Goethe study, although the content of Goethe's epistemology is to a great extent the same. In both we meet with the concept of the artist as the culmination of nature. Coleridge offers the coincidence of antitheses, Goethe the polarity. Coleridge has his imagination; from Goethe derives the present-day concept of the symbol, which this imagination alone can produce. Coleridge has his fancy, Goethe his mannerism.

Brought to the fore by Richards, in particular, and embraced by T. S. Eliot and many others, the concept of imagination as the principle in an artist that actually creates something new has gained a strong grip on contemporary criticism. It has all the freshness, the feeling of a functioning idea, that is lacking in a large part of the Goethe research, notwithstanding its dealing with similar matters. Coleridge's influence in our time has therefore been more fertile than Goethe's, although both speak of similar things. Imagination sees the parts of a whole as more important; a whole is composed of many contradictory manifestations, phases between which exists tension. Imagination reveals the vital diversity of the literary organism.

Coleridge's ideas have constituted literary criticism more specifically than have Goethe's maxims, which were intended to serve in many cases as general scientific principles. As developed by Steiner, in particular, Goethe's maxims have become a consistent philosophy and epistemology of literature.

In his 'Concepts of Criticism', Wellek remarks that it is wonderful that the most important philosopher to influence modern thought is no rationalist like Kant but the idealist Schelling, whose works are not read and cannot even be obtained in translation. According to Wellek, we need not search far for causes and consequences before we can see that the principal themes of German idealism were transferred to American literary criticism of the 1930s and 40s through Coleridge's mediation: creative imagination, the congruity of opposites, art as the analogy of nature, a work of art as an organic whole, the symbol as a higher manifestation than allegory, etc.

I. A. Richards translated the language of Coleridge in perhaps a slightly naive way into the language of physiology so as to become understandable to our scientific age. The positions taken by Coleridge are at present represented most conspicuously by Cleanth Brooks. Brooks demonstrates that true poetry exists wherever the ability exists to put together images that otherwise fit together only poorly. The properties of poetry mentioned in the preceding section are all treated in Brooks' critical writing. Good poetry must be ironic to be able to stand up under the ironic scrutiny of all times. This is the principle of »inclusive» poetry, the poetry that takes in everything.

All in all, Coleridge likewise offers an answer to the question posed by Wellek in dealing with Goethe: »But how, may we ask, can the poet create according to the laws of nature?» Maybe it is possible, however, to find a more valid epistemological answer in Goethe.

Yet Coleridge and Goethe have shown the connection between poetry and nature to be more direct than has the literary criticism of the Islamic sphere, and the influence of both men continues to be felt.

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But let us continue with our historical review of imitation.

In the chapter on the Iranian dream, I have pointed out how the controversy between the generations is so sharp in the field of literary

theory that one might speak of a kind of macrodialectics that regulates progress but remains overlooked in the theorizing itself. An examination of the history of imitation reveals that this macrodialectics wavers constantly between realism and abstractionism.

Some decades ago, in 1917 to be exact, the critic Viktor Shklovski, in an essay titled 'Art as a Device', argued that the purpose of all art is to rescue the device from oblivion, to bring it into view. If we study the language of poetry, he asserted, its vocabulary, its grammar, its phonology, we are bound to notice everywhere that something artistic has been attempted: the artist strives with certain special twists to excite our attention, he tries to the best of his ability to save, to expose to view, his artistic device, to set it apart from the automatism of commonplace use. According to Aristotle, the language of poetry had to have the character of a foreign language. This condition is fulfilled, too, quite literally, by virtually all the languages in which poetry has been written to make sure that the poetic character is appreciated: Sumerian words occur in Assyrian poetry, Latin in all the languages of medieval Europe. Arabisms in Persian, ancient Bulgarian words in the Russian language. The language of *Il dolce stil nuovo*, which might have been considered to contain the complete simplicity of youth, was an artistic vehicle consciously manipulated into a difficult form. Arnaut Daniel's language of the springtime of European literature was just as difficult to read as to pronounce.

Shklovski has somewhat unmodern views to express on the rhythm, the art of masses, groups of people. A working song makes work easier — why? It is easier to march in time to music than without music. Similarly, it is easier to walk if we are engaged in interesting conversation: then we are no longer conscious of the act of walking. Thus a prosaic rhythm is important in the automatization of an action. This is not, however, the case with the language of poetry. There is order, to be sure, in art, but the columns of a Greek temple have been deliberately made to differ slightly from each other. Not rhythm but a deviation from rhythm, contends Shklovski, makes for art.

Such theories were replaced in Russia by socialist realism, the theory of which did not begin to make its breakthrough in Western Europe until the 1960s. Its most important spokesman, perhaps, is Georg Lukács. The adoration of the common midcult of mass culture has spread generally. Like the antithesis and diagonal contrast to Shklovski's theory favoring the obscure and everything beyond comprehension, Umberto Eco's essay on Ian Fleming warrants notice.

Eco wants to scorn Fleming but his ardent exposure of the charming devices of Fleming's midcult makes him a defendant of Fleming's narrative technique. Characteristic of Fleming's narrative machinery is that on which the classical detective story is based as a whole: namely, the reader is enabled at all times to reach in the text for points of support, familiar features, items meaningful to him as *déjà vu*. The reader's pleasure derives from the fact that he has been invited to join in the game, the rules and course even, of which are known to him in advance. Fleming's stories might be compared to a soccer football game, in which the milieu is familiar from the start, the number of players and their temperaments, the fact that the game is played on a green turf of specified dimensions, and so on, although an unknown factor does remain — the final score, along with, often enough, the winner in the end. A better comparison might be a basketball match between, for instance, a champion team like the Harlem Globetrotters and some small-town team. It is an absolute foregone conclusion that the Harlem Globetrotters will win, and the rules whereby they will do the trick are also known. The joy of the spectator is derived from seeing with what skilful stunts the champions are able to put off the moment of decision, with what polished sleight-of-hand they are able to redeem the promise of victory, with that virtuosity they are able to bamboozle the opposing team.

The midcult theory has been followed simultaneously by a simple art deviating from the abstract. The best names linked to such anti-abstractionist literary art adhering close to life are probably Gorki and Brecht.

In the East — and also the West (as witness Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, Levin) — the new Marxist theory is at the moment restoring autonomy from ideological bonds to art. It is rejecting »the short circuit between art and the economy« (Chvatík). The Russian formalists, who had set forth ideas like those of Shklovski cited in the foregoing, have been rehabilitated. After a single decade of socialist realism, Czechoslovakia's great formalist Jan Mukařovský has been rehabilitated, along with all the rest of the Czech formalism. According to Kvetoslav Chvatík', there prevails no causal relationship between art and society, but they are in a mutual dialectical relationship. The elimination of mechanical determinism appears in the removal of the mechanical principle of interchange. Social phenomena were interchanged, art was changed into an ideology, ideology into economics, and so on. Art is no passive product of its environment, in the view of Chvatík, but, on the contrary, it molds its environment, which to some extent is the product of its art. In this

respect, Chvatík resembles that other Marxist art theorist Ernst Bloch, according to whom artists represent a set of ideal situations, of which then some one is realized historically. It would appear as if literary theory were once more reverting to the semiautonomous relationship of art to its environment. In certain sectors of Marxist theorizing, a reversion is taking place to Goethean premises, although in the language of modern information theory. Jurij Lotman (Trudy po znakovym sistema 3, Tartu, 1967) presents the following dialectic model:

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|---------|------------------------------|----------------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Reality | Theoretical model | Art | Reality |
| Object | Our concept of the object | Work of art | A reality that is grasped in the light of a pre- vious artistic experience |