

AN IRANIAN DREAM: THE IRANIAN ADAM

The controversy over the country of origin of the ornamental florid style brings to mind Egon Friedell's ironic observation of how in medieval France syphilis was called the 'Neapolitan plague' and in medieval England the 'French plague'. The Germans attributed it to the French, Russians to the Polish. Summing up, Voltaire said: 'Syphilis, like fine arts, has no country of origin'.

The term 'Iraqi style' is used by Persian theorists to characterize stylistic loans in Persian literature borrowed during the period between the 13th and 17th centuries from the Arabic linguistic sphere via Iraq. A Persian poet would then have had to have at his command the whole range of Arabic literature to the extent of being able to identify the source of any loan he might make in the entire vast output of literary works published in the Arabic language. On the other hand, many contend that complicated style came to the Arabs from Persia. Many scholars, including Browne, Eberman, Rypka and Ritter, have remarked upon the strong influence of Iranian culture on Arabic poetry as long ago as pagan times. What, then, in Arabic poetry was of Persian and what in Persian poetry was of Arabic derivation?

Fück notes (J. Fück, *Arabiya*, Abh. d. Sächs. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig, 1950, Bd. 45, p. 7) that at the very earliest stages of Islam many Persians were held as slaves by Arabs. A couple of generations after Mohammed had started preaching his creed, the freed Persian slaves formed the whole of the middle and lower classes of Islamic society. The first dynasty of Islam, that of the Omayyads, was still so close to the Bedouins, the original Arabs, that they had access to its realm of ideas. Things changed around 750, when the Abbasids rose to power. They were not accustomed to nomadic tent life and could not grasp the old Bedouin mode of thought. They could not even imitate the speech of the Bedouins, which was rich in synonyms for the simple things of nomadic life. The Abbasids came into power with the help of Šu^cūbiyya, or the secularized, Persianized or Persian class of clerks, administrators and artisans of the towns. Where else could the suddenly swollen Islamic state have recruited their administrative class if not from the remnants of the Sassanid Empire. Persian customs were introduced and religious

festivities like the New Year's feast, etc. It is therefore no surprise that the two 'moderns' who stand at the beginning of this era, the innovators of literary style, were Persians. We refer to Baššār Ibn Burd and Ibn Muqaffa^c. The latter translated from Middle Persian 'The Book of Kings' (Khodāī nāma), 'The Book of State Administration', 'The Story of Mazdak', 'The Life of Burzōē' and other works. Perhaps the best known is his translation of 'Kalīla wa Dimna', which is a book of fables derived from the Indian fables of Bidpai. Ibn Muqaffa^c was a worldly man, who had become converted to Islam for quite superficial reasons, because conversion to the 'True Faith' was at that time the only way to make a career in the Abbasid State. The writings of Ibn Muqaffa^c transferred to the society of his own time the disillusioned life-form of older cultures. He had no patience with any religion of illumination, and his philosophy is that of a cool and hard-headed man out to get his share of the material rewards of life. His language accurately reflected the views of the urban intelligentsia, and this explains his immense success.

Yet the language of Ibn Muqaffa^c is not that of the older Arabs. It is surprising and puzzling to learn from Fück that Ibn Muqaffa^c seemingly simplified the Arabic language of older generations. His style was polished, transparent and consistent. In place of the Bedouin synonyms for accidental phenomena like, for example, differences between animals of the same genus, differences of age, color, etc., grammatical modes for peculiarities such as limping and physical defects — things previously described with specific words —, Ibn Muqaffa^c introduced a language of generalities. Peculiarities he passes by circumscription. His syntax is simple and clear, and he tries to avoid the infinite, telescopic mode of expression, to which Arabic adapts itself so naturally. This new, limpid and light language of his was soon accepted by Moslems in quite different parts of the Mohammedan world. It became the common linguistic vehicle for different anthropological groups, regardless of social origin or race.

Reading Fück obliges us to accept the rather unsatisfactory idea that the new Magian literary style was at the same time simple — a simplification of the old Bedouin style — and complicated and postclassical. What is the correct view? The situation seems to imply the old Middle-Eastern stance, mysterious and evasive: sahl-e momtane^c, the easy complication!

After describing the language of Baššār ibn Burd and Ibn Muqaffa^c, Fück says (p. 33): "... formal polish and regularity cannot hide the fact that the inner form of the new state language showed... at the very

beginning postclassical features.» Fück then proceeds to explain how the idea of the grammatical error developed alongside the birth of the new official language. Fück does not, however, elaborate upon his use of the term 'postclassical feature'. Such postclassical features appeared not only in the increasing frequency of grammatical errors, which, rather, reflect the fact that the »new official language» was born with a complicated, circumscribing literary taste inherent in its very character. In Abū Nuwās we behold this style at the same time at its inception and in its full bloom.

The abrupt emergence of this style is quite remarkable. We refer to it as Magian (* Persian), although we cannot find a trace of it in the older Persian or Persian-influenced poetry. In the following pages, we shall attempt to describe that event of genesis first in the light of factual history. However, one should be mindful that if that genesis could be factually described, this would already have been done. Such is not the case, though, and therefore our account must gradually take on an increasingly mythical, fabulous aspect. Highly similar influences emanating from many different directions now, after being previously unable to make themselves felt fully, all of a sudden came to the fore.

The Magian literary style came into being circumscriptively and wittily, as a) the ornamental twist was there for the taking in the nature of the new urban culture, which was predominantly Persian, and b) the roots of that urban culture were ages old. Therefore, though the style is, in a real sense, new, it has a past and might be called a 'late style'. As for our use of the term 'ornamental twist', the meaning is illuminated in our first essay, dealing with Spengler and the literature of the Middle East. The new Magian style, which found its first open expression in Arabic, could draw on a prehistory of half a millennium. It rose out of the soil of the Magian religious group — from the Monophysites, the Nestorians, the scholasticism of Talmud and Avesta, Mazdakism and Manichaeism. Architecturally, it had begun in the Roman basilicas and in Byzantium. In regard to literary taste, the beginnings can be traced back to Hellenistic Greek poetry. H. Ritter took this position in his 'Über die Bildersprache Nizāmīs' (pp. 19—21), too. The Persians themselves have entertained the vague idea that Greek rhetoric might have influenced the approach to the writing of poetry in post-pagan times. Ritter is fully convinced of the continuity of Greek literature in the Islamic literary tradition, and he cites many examples of it, such as numerical games in poetry and poetical puns and puzzles. He is quite right when he says (on p. 21): »the linguistic borders cannot be any barriers for the student of Oriental literature». He likewise points out that in Abū Nuwās, all these features can be seen.

It is conceivable that the first notable source of Iranian influence on Arabic poetry during the Sassanid dynasty was in Yemen, where one segment of the population, called al-abnā, the 'Boys', or banū 'l-aḥrār, the 'Free Ones', was half Persian and half Arabic. These people were descendants of the Iranians who helped the Arab chieftain Seif liberate Yemen from Abessinian rule in the time of Khosrou Anūšervan I (531—578). Seif turned to Khosrou with a plea for help and was given no more than 800 men, because the latter did not want to waste more soldiers on the conquest of Yemen, which he regarded as worthless. Second in command in this military campaign was the Iranian Vahrīz. The campaign is celebrated by an epic poem written by an anonymous poet of apparently Persian nationality despite his use of the Arabic language (Eberman, pp. 122—123).¹⁾

Al-Mervezān, who acted as regent of Yemen for Hormuzd IV (578—590), had two sons, who were born and raised in Yemen. One of them, Khurra Khosrou, the father's favorite, loved the Arabic language and translated Arabic poems into Persian. The other brother had no interest in Arabic and chose to live like a Persian prince, or dehkan, speaking only the Persian tongue. Mervezān bestowed the regency upon his favorite son and himself set out to journey to Iran but died on the way. When the king heard that the regent of Yemen, Mervezān's son, had become Arabized, he arranged for his assassination and replaced him with Bāzān, who was the last Iranian regent of Yemen.

Persian features have been detected in the pagan love poems of the Arabs. ʿOmar ibn Abū Rabīʿa is a particularly well known maker of love songs. He was a pure Arab, it is true, but his mother came from Yemen, where the Persian song tradition had been preserved. The publisher of ʿOmar's collection of poems, 'Divan', Paul Schwarz, has noted that the lyric style represented by ʿOmar can be traced to Yemen and that it bears features alien to Arabic poetry, features that must have had their origin in Iran. After all, the most celebrated representative of Yemenite love songs, Waḍḍāḥ, was a descendant of the 'Boys', abnā. Of the Iranian origin of the amorous poetry of writers like ʿOmar and Waḍḍāḥ, also Eberman is convinced. During Waḍḍāḥ's lifetime, the ṣuṣūbiyya controversy — over the foreign, especially Persian, contribution to cultural life — waxed strong and the poet became a target because of this Persian extraction.

Eberman brought out more precise arguments to support his views. The fragment of Waḍḍāḥ's 'Divan' includes 36 poems, and in 13 of them the poet mentions his own nom de plume, in the true Persian manner. This custom is observed as early as the Persian poems that ʿAufī claims were written by the Persian king Bahrām Gūr. As additional evidence of

1) V. A. Eberman, 'Persi sredi arabskikh poetov epokhi Omeyyadov', ZKV 2(1927).

direct Persian influence on early Arabic poetry of love. Eberman cites the 'Tenzone' form, in which the first half-verse starts with the word 'qāla' and the second half-verse with the word 'qālat' (- he said ... she said). We will remember this from Persian poetry in the form 'guft-guftā' (likewise - he said ... she said). Even the earliest poems mentioned in biographies of the poets (not to speak of later ones) have this dialogue-like form.

In examining these two features of Waḍḍāḥ's poetry, Eberman is led to the assumption that the poet derived them from earlier Arabic lyric poetry, which, in turn, is greatly in debt to Iranian lyric poetry. Thereby Eberman arrives at the conclusion that both the 'takhallus' (a poet's practice of mentioning his own name in a poem and in that way applying, as it were, his signature to it) and the 'tenzone' form had been special features of Iranian lyric poetry, from which they had been borrowed to become part of the post-Islamic poetic legacy. No increasing complexity is pointed out by Eberman, however, as a consequence of the Persian influence.

Eberman goes on to deal with three poets of Medina whose output, in his opinion, clearly reflects the Persian influence at the very opening stage of Arabic poetry. These poets are: Abū 'l-Abbās al-A^cma, Mūsā Šakhawāt and Isma'īl ibn Yasār, who lived during the final period of the Omayyads, that is, around the 7th and 8th centuries.

Of this trio of Iranians who wrote in Arabic, it is the third that Eberman considers to be the most brilliant poet, and he was also the fiercest champion of the subjugated Iranian segment of the population. He presented bold odes (qaṣīda) in honor of the Persians in the very presence of the prince of the faithful, Omayyad Caliph. He suffered much because of his boldness. He lived during the time of Hišām and Walid II and failed to see the Abbasid time, which was more favorable to the Iranian cause. The poetry of Isma'īl offers an example of the chicanery that in the end succeeded in destroying the dynasty of the Omayyads. The Mawālī movement, working out of Kufa, established relations with Khorasan, in Persia, where the Abbasid clan had begun to conspire against the central government. The Mawālī movement acted along the same lines as the šu^cūbiyya movement: the Mawālīs directed their activity against the Omayyads and reached for the same political objectives as the Abbasids and, like them, were in the throes of a fierce patriotic Iranian spirit.

We submit that the abrupt emergence of the Magian literary style is connected with the literary history of the šu^cūbiyya and Mawālī movements. Under different names, these movements fill the entire

history following Mohammed as a mighty flow, which then received a common visible manifestation in the dynasty of the Abbasids. Šu^cūbiyya and Mawālī are common appellations for the spiritual ferment that took hold of the young Islamic society from the outside; this ferment was thus an alien influence. Although the Syrians were a strong force in the Šu^cūbiyya, the Iranian influence, which the Arabs thought they had snuffed out, became personified in this movement.

Mostly, the Arabs have been regarded as the indigenous and most important source of power of the Arabic literature. Is this correct? The foregoing should make it plain, however, that the history of Arabic poetry cannot be written wholly apart from Persian literature. The »indigenous« element applies only to the preculture, antedating the development of the true Islamic high culture, the Magian culture. After this development, the preculture was forgotten and before the eyes of the urban Mohammedan poet opened up quite other visions than before. Where did those visions come from? Who were the heroes of that new culture? What was that mundane or ultramundane paradise?

To facilitate our plunge into the murky waters of mythical interpretations and explanations, we shall undertake a preparatory review of C. G. Jung's archetypes and the cluster of theories known as myth criticism.

Quite important contributors to the development of myth criticism were the so-called Cambridge Hellenists, who sought to understand the Hellenistic world and the Greek authors in the light of myth and rituals. This group published the compilation 'Anthropology and the Classics' (R. R. Maretti, publisher). Notable works were Gilbert Murray's 'Euripides and His Age' (1913), F. M. Cornford's 'Origin of Attic Comedy' (1914) and, the most famous of them, James G. Frazer's 'The Golden Bough', which appeared as early as 1890 and had an extraordinary influence on the culture of our own century. Among literary figures, James Joyce, Thomas Mann and T. S. Eliot are indebted to Frazer, who in his main thesis demonstrated »the essential similarity of man's chief wants everywhere and at all times«. This similarity has drawn the attention of the structuralists of recent decades under the leadership of Lévi-Strauss. James G. Frazer wrote: »Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially vegetable life, which they personified as a God, who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites vary from place to place: in substance they were the same« (p. 325).

Mark Schorer, in 'William Blake, the Politics of Vision' (1946, p. 29), asserted that »myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, on a primary awareness of man in the universe, capable of many configurations upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend«.

To the myth critics, water signifies the mystery of birth, death and resurrection, to Jung the unconscious. The sun is the same as creative energy, natural laws, consciousness. The different colors are given many meanings: black indicates chaos, evil and the unknown; red, blood and sacrifice; green, growth and hope.

In his work 'Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious' (1959), for example, C. G. Jung took off on a different course from the majority of the mythologists with an anthropological orientation. He stressed that myths are not produced by outward happenings in Nature — rather that the internally generated archetypes are forms in which the unconscious becomes conscious. A great artist, according to Jung, is a person who possesses primordial vision and has a special sensitivity, which enables him to express himself in primordial images, archetypes. This makes him capable of projecting the forms of the inner world into the outer world.

We asked what the visions of the new Islamic poet of the Abbasid times were like. We might say that they were a cluster of myths and beliefs constituting the Iranian dream, or the Iranian Adam. Iranian writers express themselves in a certain way. The way they write can be attributed to the language, with its semantic and morphological and syntactic implications, the national style of expression, the sociological situation, all of which add up to the national character. Yet, the linguistic and sociological factors are only one side of the matter; to make the picture fuller, we must add to it the Iranian myth, the Iranian Adam.

At the core of this myth is the inherited ability of the lately conquered Persian to control the worldly life in a supreme way, a way beyond the grasp of the rather crude Bedouin who was brought into the new, great Mesopotamian megalopolis. He was born in the first decades of 800. His grandfather had been one of the Sons, the Abnā, in Yemen and his ancestors had defended the Sassanid king's rights in the cohorts of al-Mervezān. His grandfather was one of the ruling class in Yemen and had been a cultured man among the barbarians of Yemen, the ignorant Yemenites, as he used to think about them. He had been playing with al-Mervezān's later so famous sons in the oases of Yemen, hunted,

played the lute, composed verse and led a life of pleasure. This was something that the Iranian Adam in the new circumstances never could forget. But, as we shall later see, he had a way to fight against circumstance.

More difficult was life for his father. The fall of Iranian power was for him something which he could never make up. Under the Arab conquerors he had been a slave, although with his skill he had been able to free himself. But the proximity of the good life in the towns of the fallen Sassanid empire made him a life-long discontent. He fought against his rulers, he wrote derisive and rebellious poems for the lost civilization and for his nationality, he was always in the teeth of the new Islamic police force, he sat in many jails, and he was repeatedly exiled.

His son, the Iranian Adam was more resilient. He noticed that in spite of his nationality, he actually could master the situation and in fact rule his own rulers. Even in his early days he had noticed that it was of no use to fight against Islam, but rather to knuckle under and thus make life easier in school and university. What was more, he noticed that the school teachers and university professors were Iranians too, and seeing their miserable existence he learned that the stupidest thing to do was to stick too close to old Iranian beliefs. So he became a world citizen. For him the Iranian reality in its old form was something to sneer at, because it was the reality of his father and had led the family only from misery to misery and persecution to persecution. But it was equally natural for him to be unable to see in Islam anything more than a set of values imposed on the citizenry. The inner life of Islam was alien to him, but as he was very ambitious, he seized Islam, made it his tool and imposed it on others as a high state official in his later days. When he graduated from the university and started to look for a job he immediately noticed that the ruling stratum of society consisted of people like him, and that all the really good jobs were open only to people who thought like him. The Iranian Adam was sovereign of a thousand facts: the clerical work, the accountancy, the management of world-wide commercial enterprises, the postal and fiscal systems were all taken from the vanquished. The Iranian Adam knew the caravan routes; the nomenclature of a life of pleasure in Arabic is borrowed from him. He was a master of ceremonious display, a master of cookery, a master of festivities. He was quick to acquire the things that under the new circumstances of Islamic society could not be changed, among them the Koran and its language. As a servant, he was high class. As an organizer, he was excellent. But although he was well aware that his skills were a legacy of his race, he

was, unlike his father, clever enough to realize that in the new situation he could not impose on others his language or his religious beliefs. Notwithstanding his efforts to show loyalty to the Koran, he was constantly under the scourge of being called a heretic. But he injected his spirit into all the affairs of life. In a word, he was a perpetual administrator, central state officer, a perpetual grand vizier.¹⁾

To the pure Arab, the desert always remained the milieu of home and the teeming life of the metropolis inspired him with horror. Although he had conquered the big cities of Mesopotamia, he did not know what to do with them. Afterwards, as a learned man, he at least tried to stick to the language of his Bedouin ancestors and resisted the Persianized jargon spoken around him. (Fück, in his *Arabiyya*, gives a good description of his puristic struggle). When the real Arab turned poet, he sought to block out the life around him; endeavoring to recover lost moral and social values, he tried to lose sight of the pervasive Iranian elements, which, in fact, are to be found even in the oldest Arabic poetry. In his orthodoxy, he abhorred the ease with which Persian-begot thinking rose to transcendence, from the dark alleys of the towns to the spiritual light on the abstract wings of an innate gift of dialectic thought. This mercurial gift of the Iranian Adam not only took on the appearance of foreign charlatanry, but the true Arab must have seen in every Persian who opened his mouth to utter an opinion on religious matters a secret agent of the still potent Magi as well as a Kāfir, an infidel. As a vizier, the Iranian Adam might have been sometimes fervently addicted to the secrets of the Magian wine, which only he possessed; but the difficulties of daily life, complicated by hectic politics involving family rivalries and feuds, forced him to cling to orthodox Islam and even to inflict it on others, which — this being one of his peculiarities — he also did with extreme cruelty. He was compelled to exist in a strange kind of symbiosis with his character and Koran; it was his only way to stay alive and keep his position. Many of his family, many of his cousins, tried to restate the old Magian religion inside the Islam. But even then the restatement was made in terms that were never accepted by the orthodox, still it could be called a form of Islam. From time to time, the Iranian Adam arranged pogroms against those who let the Magian wine of discursive mystical thinking lead them to too wild phantasms.

1) A scholarly work 'Iran's Contribution to World Civilization' describes how the skills of urbanized Persians were needed in all spheres of endeavor. As late as the year 700, Persian was the sole language of the bookkeeping of the caliphs. The Persian mode of expression in Arabic was considered best. Even Arabs studied Persian. «One of these Arabs who learned Persian was Etabi. Tayfur tells us... that he knew Persian and travelled a great deal in Iran and visited Neishabur and Merv and other cities and in various libraries found old Persian books which he translated into Arabic. Tayfur tells us that 'I asked him: «O Aba Amr, why are you translating Persian books into Arabic?» He replied: «Can one find literary styles and meanings and ideas anywhere else but in Persian books?»' (N. Nouri, 'Iran's Contribution to World Civilization' vol. II, p. 376).

Only Mohammed among the Arabs could fly to Heaven during his lifetime. But just as the Iranian Adam could enjoy the earthly paradise here and now, he could contrive the means of reaching the spiritual paradise through a secret gate which was to be found only in his garden. This mystic yearning for paradise, both material and spiritual, marked the character of the Iranian Adam, who possessed the ability to achieve it to boot. This was the vital new thing he brought to Abbasid culture, and it was this that kept the Abbasid metropolis booming for several centuries. Coming from the desert, the man who looked for achievement beheld his new opportunities with bright expectation.

Returning to the world of scholarly studies, we may here note that the instant enjoyment of both paradises was not the life blood of Arabic poetry, although some of the greatest sufi poets wrote in Arabic. In Persia the omnipresence of the spiritual paradise pervaded all poetry. The poetry of the Persians therefore has a strong monistic strain, which Arabic poetry lacks. In Persian poetry, this realization of the two paradises can be traced from perhaps the unsophisticated Epicureanism of Rūdakī through the joyful gardens and wine parties of Mo^cezzi and Manūchehrī, through the spiritual paradise ever present in Rūmī to the strange poetical synthesis of both paradises of Ḥāfiẓ and the whole Indian school of poetry.

But we return again to the life circumstances of the Iranian Adam. We ask another question: can he be compared in any way to the newest type of man, the American Adam. We pose this question because of the paradox inherent in it, and because this modern Adam has been well studied. The myth of the American Adam has been portrayed in studies like F. I. Carpenter's 'American Literature and the Dream', 1955, and R. W. B. Lewis' 'The American Adam', 1955. The American Adam is a clean-living, straight-shooting celibate, with an adamantine innocence among crooks. Many are the names we might call him, three examples being Lew Whetzel, Hopalong Cassidy and the Great Gatsby.

If we look in the set of moral values of the Iranian Adam we notice interesting things, things which are different from his American counterpart. We know well the utter poverty of his father and the humble circumstances in which he grew up. Ancestors he has always, unlike his American brother. The Iranian Adam invariably boasts about being a descendant of the noblest and most ancient families, even if in reality his pedigree leads to a Mongol slave. He is a warrior at the age of 16. Timur Lenk's son, later Shāh Rokh, after his father had taken Shiraz, the ancient capital of poetry, cut off in the presence of his father the head of the last Muzaffarid Sultan. The Iranian Adam almost without exception

ascends the throne through usurpation, then blinds his father and slays his brothers. When it involves seizing power from another family, he kills every member, tracking each one down meticulously in all the provinces. In sharp contrast to clean living, he leads the life of a zealot or an indulgent roué, who nevertheless upholds his authority among his followers with the sure instinct of a born leader or caliph. Far from the innocence of the American Adam, he utilizes every trick of intrigue and does not even stop at murder to reach his goal. Celibacy is totally alien to his character. He is familiar with every source of pleasure. Revelry is second nature to him. What we call perverse might be for him just a passing whim. Adamantine he is not, but there is something about him that makes him infinitely more attractive, in a certain light, more colorful and more interesting than his Western brother. He is treacherous and he has his deep weaknesses, but his character has a larger compass than the American Adam's. We can speak of the American Adam's dark sides. This is not possible with his Eastern counterpart, since the latter is a chameleon, whose moods change from hour to hour. But this trait makes the Iranian Adam a more unified personality, and in comparison the American Adam takes on the appearance of a schizoid. The Great Gatsby strives after an ideal impossible for him to achieve, and he makes it his perpetual problem. For the Magian man, this striving after the impossible involves no neurotic problem, for it is part and parcel of his unified life-style.

The American Adam is conspicuously masculine; this leads him into perversity and produces in him neuroses unknown to the perverse but paradoxically sound Easterner. The Iranian Adam is an androgyne, man and woman combined. In a flash, his nature turns from harsh to soft, from that of a tough warrior to that of a soft maiden easily reduced to tears. To this androgynous character of the Iranian Adam is due the homosexual twist in Iranian culture, as much as it is to the fact known of old that if you hide or suppress the women you tend to produce homosexual culture. Fluctuating between hard and soft also in speech, quick in his responses, impenetrable in amazingly beautiful but never-ending qualifying clauses, he gains an extra dimension in comparison with his straight-talking American opposite number. At the same time, the Easterner appears less real, less substantial, less visible, more like a being out of a fairytale than the conquering hero of the Wild West.

Over the speech of the Iranian Adam there persists the radiant aura of ever-running poetry, which makes it even today less tangible, less real, less believable. If he is a sultan, his claim to the throne is by divine

appointment, and this right has a certain solar, aurean quality, which also stamps his poetry. The American Adam's interest in poetry is nil, and his power has no other divine attributes than those implicit in his own personality. The Magian hero could unify far-reaching opposites; his life-style was inclusive, not exclusive. The Iranian Adam knows nothing about the liberty of his Western fellow, a liberty described by D. H. Lawrence as that of »Thou shalt not«. With consummate skill, he combined the ambiguities and even ironies of his complex and manifold character.

The poetry — still couched in Arabic — became lighter and more airy than it had been before. It might be said that the Arabic language strove in vain to imitate the ideal that the Persian language later succeeded in imitating. With tremendous force, poetry of a Persian nature gushed forth into the court of the Abbasids; but the manner of the poets of that time, too, nevertheless always retained some of the heavy-handedness of the pagan, which was eliminated only after the language had changed and Ferdousī's brief epic period had been left behind and an original style began to develop in Iran. The power of Magian poetry was always left to seek its form in the Arabic language sphere. Let us recall such poets whose vehicle was Arabic as Mutanabbī and Abū^cAlā'l-Ma^carrī. It is quite generally said of Mutanabbī that he in particular exerted an influence on the Persian style of poetry during the so-called Iraqian period (1250—1500). Arabic criticism had difficulties in following the flow of events and took a dim view of both of these poets, regarding them quite logically as alien to the Arab cause (witness the critics al-Ġurġānī and Ibn Khaldūn).

However, the remotest and innermost secrets of Magian poetry were expressed with light turns of phrase in a language that was so opalescent that it could serve a mystic in singing an ode to eternal beauty, a lover in courting his earthly beloved, or a politician in delivering an ultimatum as Shāh Shuġā once did in poetic form to his own brother (A Locust's Leg, 1962). In the literary circles that gathered in the hunting lodges of the princes of Abbasid times, poetry had its reformers: Abū Nuwās poked fun at the poets of the Bedouin period, asking who these desert bandits were.

When the Magian poetry advanced into the sphere of the Persian language, it at last found its true milieu. It was only then that it found a sufficiently loose and light medium, morphologically and syntactically, to sustain the complex and chameleonic style characteristic of Magian poetry. That milieu had come about as the outcome of the morphological evolution of the Persian language and psychological development of the

masses of the Islamic state. If a man's individual features are eliminated, something nevertheless remains to identify him with the masses. This something might be called in the present connection the typical linguistic form of Magian life. This linguistic form had begun to evolve in Arabic poetry as early as Abbasid times, but it was in the Persian sphere that it reached its purest realization. This form constituted a unified radiant pneuma, manas or aura, whatever word most aptly describes it. As a vital underlying principle, it was then borrowed to a large extent, both verbally and even, in part, grammatically, by the Turkish and Urdu languages, the classical literature of which has a conspicuous Persian tone — the more conspicuously present, the more to the credit of the writer. And it was this aura — or, if you please, pneuma or manas — that, up to our own century, made everybody inside the charmed Magian circle a poet and, on the other hand, made every poet alike.