DICHOTOMY IN JÁHILLÍ POETRY

"All the sorrow in the world is less
Than virtue's might and value's confidence." 1

"The more a theory lays claim to universal validity, the less capable it is
of doing justice to the individual facts." 2

Three notions, of vital importance to the understanding of Jâhili poetry, actuated this study; firstly, that the concept of the ritualistic function of the šârīr is in danger of causing the personal and inward aspects of pre-Islamic poetry to be neglected, by providing a convenient explanation of the apparently stereotypical conventionality of Jâhili poetry; secondly, that the poetic force and importance of the dhikr al-attâl and nasîb movements, 3 had not been properly understood, the translation of the term nasîb as "amatory prelude" being representative of this deficiency in understanding; thirdly, that, although I considered that scholars who discerned a connection between Jâhili poetry and the concept of murūsuwârah were on the right path, nevertheless I did not think that they had fully realised the extent of that connection. The purpose of this study, then, is to rectify what I consider to be serious shortcomings in our knowledge and understanding of the poetry of this period.

1 E. Spenser, The Faerie Queene, 3, 11, 14.
3 This is a reference to a system of analysing poems which I am in the process of developing. When applied to a sufficient number of poems and an extensive repertory has been established, I think, reveals how original, or otherwise, any poet's treatment of a given line has been. The terms which I have decided to use in this system are: movement, topic and motif. These terms can be explained as follows: Movement; the analogy with musical terminology is intentional, because it captures the essence of the quâlidâh and how it was composed in a way in which the words 'section', or 'passage' do not. This will become evident if the following explanation of the term 'movement' is used as a working base: a movement can be a self-contained section, or part, of a larger composition, such as a concerto or symphony in orchestral music, or a sonata or string-quartet in solo or chamber music. Its self-containment and potential independence capture the peculiar nature of any movement of a pre-Islamic quâlidâh, which is both integral to, and independent of the quâlidâh when considered as a holistic phenomenon. The term is applied to such 'building-blocks' of the quâlidâh as the nasîb and the āridâh.

Topic; this is a term which refers to the major constituents of any movement, such as the topic of the disconsolate poet, common in the dhikr al-attâl and nasîb movements.

Motif; this term refers to constituent details of any topic and can display, more than the movement or topic, the poet's personal touches and originality of composition.
Mura'wah in pre-Islamic Arabia was a concept which comprised everything that the ancient Bedouin thought redounded to his honour. Yet it was not merely a conception of life, a \textit{Weltanschaung}, but was also a way of life. Its full relevance must be realised—being both a practical method of living and an idealised programme of how an Arab should live. Its influence was ubiquitous, permeating every aspect of life. Essentially mura'wah was the cohesive factor in the Bedouin interpretation of reality, and was the standard by which he evaluated his own deeds and aspirations as well as those of others: it was an ideal, but an eminently realisable one. This conception of reality is one of competitive virtue and is a natural development of the nomadic and fundamentally tribal system then prevalent. However it was important not merely on the tribal level but also on the personal level. It dictated the way in which the Bedouin of the Jāhiliyyah thought of himself and how he interpreted his environment in relation to himself.

Naturally then, mura'wah, comprising the Bedouin outlook on life, is reflected in the poetry of the Jāhiliyyah: it is its subject matter, that with which most pre-Islamic \textit{qasīdād} are concerned. The ubiquity of the permeation of mura'wah was such that the seven posited themes of the Jāhili \textit{qasīdāh} are in fact poetical manifestations of this world-view and may be explained in the following manner:

\textit{Ghazal (Love Poetry)}: The \textit{habīb}, the object of the poet’s love, is beautiful to the degree that her beauty surpasses all others; the passion, not merely love, felt for the beloved is of an intensity which cannot be matched; these two aspects are well exemplified in the \textit{Mu'allaqah} of ‘Amr b. Kuhlūm, \textit{4} lines 13-18, the poet’s hyperbolic description of the \textit{habīb}, and lines 19-20, his assertion of the extent of his passionate grief; the grief experienced at her departure and the ecstasy of being near her are all-consuming. The indefinite language in which the beloved is described reflects this aspect: the poet does not offer his audience an individualised portrait of her but seems to be trying to capture an abstracted ideal, with which they were not acquainted.

Furthermore the beauty of the \textit{habīb} is a foil for the poet’s own excellence, redounding to his credit.\textsuperscript{6} His excellence is also reflected in his ability to describe the beloved and evoke his own feelings. The \textit{nasiib} of the \textit{Mu'allaqah} of Imru’ al-Qays is an extensive expression of this competitive virtue conception of love. In it both love and erotic prowess are presented as a source of pride for the poet and his approach is both sexual and artistic.\textsuperscript{9} As far as the sexual aspect is concerned, the poet sees his amorous conquests as a tribute to his sexual prowess and hence to his manliness. Artistically, the poet not only has a fine eye for beauty, he can also describe that beauty consummately well, although the description always remains highly abstract: one \textit{habīb}, as an individual personality, is often indistinguishable from another. The descriptions of the \textit{habīb} which occur in the \textit{nasiib} are to be considered in this light—the poet represents himself as surpassing other poets in his ability to capture perfectly the beauty of the beloved—he is a consummate master of the craft of poetry.

\textit{Hikmah (Aphoristic and Didactic Poetry)}: The wisdom which the poet possesses and his ability to give it the fullest and most eloquent expression possible point to his superiority, in that the wiser a man is, the greater his ability to make wise decisions and persuade others that those decisions are the right ones, and this is an important aspect of the societal function of the shāfir. In the \textit{Mu'allaqah} of Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā there is a celebrated \textit{hikmah} movement wherein the poet represents the two chiefs whom he is praising, Hārith and Harīm, as objectivisations of wisdom. In this passage the poet is also establishing his own wisdom as a laudatory foil to that of the two \textit{mamdāsh}: if the poet’s wisdom is as such he portrays it in his poetry, then by praising the two chiefs for their wisdom, he enhances that praise by implying that their wisdom is greater and more impressive than his. This is the poetic rationale behind the \textit{hikmah} movement in the \textit{Mu'allaqah} of Zuhayr.\textsuperscript{10}

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\textsuperscript{4} The best definition of mura’wah is to be found in I. Goldziher, \textit{Muhammadische Studien}, Halle 1889-1890, p. 3. Contrary to Goldziher who sees mura’wah as a fully and as a sort of Arabian jurisprudence. I see mura’wah as more abstract and less which arose naturally from a society such as that of the Bedouins: mura’wah was felt philosophy of mura’wah devised by the Bedouins themselves. There is no evidence for their interpretation of life, the basic data of which were tacitly assumed.


\textsuperscript{6} The text used is that of al Zawzali, Beirut, n.d.

\textsuperscript{7} Analogous to the idealisation of the \textit{habīb} is the practice of the painters of Greek vases, when painting a youth or a woman. "Each painter seems to have adopted a formula for the face and adhered to it consistently". They often attached a name to the portrait, perhaps to communicate that "this is the most beautiful youth I can portray, and ... is as beautiful as that." K. J. Dover, \textit{Greek Homosexuality}, Duckworth 1978.

\textsuperscript{8} See G. E. von Grunebaum, \textit{JNES IV} (1945), p. 137.

\textsuperscript{9} See A. El Tayib, op. cit., p. 59 for a discussion of the sexual and aesthetic attitudes towards women in \textit{Jahili} poetry.

\textsuperscript{10} It is not, however, the sole reason for the extremeness of the \textit{hikmah} movement. The good pre-Islamic poet was well aware of how he should compose his \textit{qasīdāh} to create the best effect possible. However in the excitement and urgency of recital or exten-
Wasf (Descriptive Poetry): This type of poetry is relevant to the concept of muruwah for two reasons: the poet’s possession and his mastery of the language—the more vivid the description, the better the poet and the better the possession the greater the advantage he has over his enemies. This is best exemplified in the lengthy and, to Western sensibilities, protracted descriptions of camels and horses. However, descriptions are also an important component of the so-called Schusskeil section, especially of the eulogistic and self-vaulting type, thereby indicating that these descriptions do have an ulterior purpose—they are an implicit form of fakhr and madih. Furthermore, the riḥṭah which often introduces the descriptions of camels and horses also functions as a foil to the poet: the desert-journey is a test of his hardiness, the difficulties encountered whilst on such a journey, which the poet reveals in surmounting, are a challenge to his manhood and the riding-beast is an extension of that manhood, without which it would be incomplete.

The same conclusions can be reached concerning almost all of the descriptions which occur in pre-Islamic qaṣīdah. In the case of many lightning- or rain-storm descriptions, for example, it is significant that the poet introduces it with the question yā man ð, for example, or with an exhortative apostrophe of his companions, urging them to join him: the implication seems to be that they are reluctant, unable or afraid to do so. On a less sophisticated level, the fact that the poet either sees or experiences something which his companions do not is consonant with a primitive society’s attitude to the poet, an attitude which is comprised in the ritualistic function of the ḥāfir. What is more important, in this context, is that the superlativeness of the description reflects the superlativeness of the poet’s poetic genius.

Poem 6 in the dīwān of ʿAbid is particularly interesting in that it exemplifies these points and raises the important and difficult question of the fragmentarity of Jāḥili poetry. The point at issue here is whether it is necessary to postulate the existence of a larger qaṣīdah of which this is a part or whether the poem can stand as it is. It is a vivid storm-description and on the basis of the muruwah conception of poetry a case can be made for the poem’s independence; the actual language and description are themselves a reflection of the poet’s genius, are a tribute to his ability to describe a storm. Furthermore there is no direct need to refer to a theory of oral transmission and to the fluidity of poetry transmitted in such a fashion.11 Since according to this interpretation, the poem is an instance of the glorification of the poet’s poetic prowess. The personal and intimate aspect of the poetry must not be lost sight of—the poet himself may be exulting in the language and its evocative majesty and the impulse to compose this short piece need not be supposed to have originated from some external source or ritualistic necessity.

Hijāz (Satirical Poetry): The relevance of this as a poetic manifestation of muruwah is obvious: the object of the satire is portrayed as someone who has flagrantly violated the code of competitive virtue, and by means of such a portrayal is shown to be worthless and of no merit. Moreover, the poet’s hatred and the vehemence of his response are constituents of muruwah, which is composed of extremes. The success of the satire reflected both on the poet’s genius and the inadequacy of the person satirized.

Riḥṭah (Elegiac Poetry): In this type of poetry the poet praises the dead person in much the same way as he does the maddāh with the exception that in riḥṭah the extent of the poet’s grief has a twofold relevance: it implies praise of the person being mourned and it reflects on the poet, or poetess—the passionate nature of the grief is a fitting reflection of the greatness of the dead person, but it is only an exceptional person who can grieve to the extent that the poet or poetess does. Thus the topic of the disconsolate poet, common in the ḏikr al-ʿalālī, the nasīb and riḥṭah is a manifestation of an important component of muruwah—passionate feelings, whether of love or hate, grief or joy.

Maddāh (Panegyric Poetry): In the context of maddāh the poet portrays the maddāh as the personification or objectivisation of the ideal of muruwah; the maddāh has no faults, but has attained muruwah to a degree which marks him as pre-eminent among men. The maddāh becomes muruwah and is muruwah in his every thought and action. Moreover, the concept of poetry as an important facet of muruwah also contributes towards eulogizing the maddāh: the poet is both offering and displaying his genius to the maddāh in recognition of his excellence. This is also true of hijāz, riḥṭah and fakhr, although with different emphasis in each case.

11 J. T. Monroe, “On the Oral Composition of pre-Islamic Poetry”, JAL II (1971). See, in particular, pages 14 and 15: “In the rather fluid situation of oral performance the poets are often obliged to end their poem rapidly when they see that their audience is becoming impatient or bored” and “the melodic dimension of oral poetry helps to explain why so many pre-Islamic poems seem to stop in mid-air rather than coming to a carefully constructed conclusion.”
**Dichotomy in Jähili Poetry**

**Fakhr (Self-vaulting Poetry):** Fakhr can be of two types—personal and tribal. It is the most explicit statement of the Bedouin world-view and as such it has tended to fall under the general categorical label of the ‘aim’ of the qaṣāidah, the direction in which the poem moves. That it has been so labelled is a sufficient indication of the importance of muruwwah in pre-Islamic poetry. In fakhr of the personal type the poet extols his own worth, whereas in tribal fakhr the tribe becomes the paradigm of muruwwah and the poet, without losing his individualism, merges with the tribe; he retains his individualism by means of his role as poet, poetry being a vital aspect of muruwwah, but in this instance subordinates his own importance to that of the tribe. However there is very little distinction between the poet and the tribe, since personal fakhr implicitly functions as a glorificatory foil to the tribe, the assumption being that the excellence of the poetry is proportionate to the excellence of the poet, manadūth or tribe.

One aspect of muruwwah which has been touched upon in the foregoing discussion is that it comprehends the pre-Islamic conception of poetry: the poet’s ability to compose qaṣā’id and to use language, metre and rhyme are constituents of competitive virtue. If this interpretation is accepted, many of the difficulties encountered when considering any Jähili qaṣīdah can be made sense of: the obscurity of the language, assuming that there was an element of obscurity for at least some of the poet’s audience, is to a large extent contrived and purposed, in addition to the wide diversity of dialects then prevalent and the linguistic potentialities available in the Arabic language, for the poet’s genius is reflected, first and foremost, in his ability to use words. The diversity of the topical development of many pre-Islamic qaṣā’id is also pertinent at this juncture; no two qaṣīdahs are identical in the treatment of topics, motifs and technical devices and any normative approach to the structure of the qaṣīdah ought to be abandoned. The poets of the Jähiliyyah were not slaves of convention, rather the stock of materials available were their tools which they frequently manipulated. Pre-Islamic poetic was so vibrant and urgent that it is debatable whether the term “conventional” can be used to describe it and any standardisation which may be thought to have occurred is attributable to two phenomena: normativisation on the part of transmitters or philologus and the importance of poetry as providing the artistic expression of muruwwah. In this latter instance, standardisation occurred because the movements and topics were poetical manifestations of muruwwah, because they were of immediate relevance to the poet and his audience and it is from this that their vitality derived. Poetry was as much a part of muruwwah as was nobility, bravery and generosity.

To maintain, then, that there are seven themes of pre-Islamic poetry is to place emphasis where it ought not to be placed, for despite the facility of these neat compartmentalisations there is essentially one theme around which many, if not all, Jähili qaṣā’id revolve—muruwwah. Pre-Islamic poetry is, in fact, the poetical statement of how the Bedouins conceived of themselves in relation to the world: it is the expression of an all-pervasive Weltanschauung. Hyperbole is vital to this conception of poetry as a constituent of muruwwah. It fulfills two functions: it is a means by which the poet suggests the excellence of his poetic genius and of his manhood as reflected in his possessions, and, on a more abstract level, it perpetuates the vitality of muruwwah, in that the ideal of competitive virtue is constituted of extremes. Hyperbole has only attained the status of being one of the tools at the poet’s disposal as a result of its relevance to muruwwah. Its permanence is similar to the permanence of the topics and motifs which occur in pre-Islamic poetry, and their permanence derives from their relevance to the world-view of the Jähiliyyah.

This conceptual connection between poetry and virtue is well exemplified in two poems by ‘Abid which are concerned with the poet and his poetry (poems 10 and 23).

The relevant section of poem 10 can be schematized as follows:

**Lines 11-20:** The personal fakhr movement.
11: The topic of the poet on a raid; motif: the poet shelters a companion with his own cloak at night.
12-20: The topic of the poet’s prowess, described in military language; motifs: the poet’s humbling of an opposing satirist (12-14), the renown gained from the contest and the sword-like sharpness of his tongue (15-17), the apostrophe of an unnamed opponent, containing a metaphor in which the poet is alluded to as a lion (18), the lion’s power and prowess (19) and the two opponents of the poet, one of whom he has killed with his tongue, while the other escapes badly wounded (20), are described.

The celebration of the poet’s prowess in martial language is significant, because that prowess is vindicated by means of an extended metaphorical equation of poetic ability and martial excellence (the word “equation” is probably misleading for in the poet’s world-view there is no fundamental distinction, no sharp dichotomy between poetic ability and martial prowess in that they are both manifestations of the ideal of muruwwah). The use of metaphor is also very enlightening; a metaphor captures the essence of this conception more completely, because in a metaphor no distinction is made between the two separate entities involved, as occurs in a simile—the ultimate effect of poetical and satirical
prowess is the same as that of martial prowess within the domain of muruwwah. 12

Poem 23, and particularly lines 8-16, is a splendid example of the poetry of ‘Abid at its best, and in this context C. J. Lyall’s note is informative, elucidating some of the poem’s difficulties whilst being unable to account for them: “This poem is of doubtful authenticity. But on the whole the picture (of the storm) wants the definiteness of the other passages, and it has no proper names to mark the locality as is customary; there is a heaping together of high-sounding words which savours of over-elaboration. Some of the words used are (as not unfrequently happens with a difficult rhyme) of doubtful reading and application… and the alliteration of some of the lines (e.g. line 15) is not like the style of ancient poetry.” 13

The language used in evoking the picture of the storm is elaborate and difficult because it is intended to establish the superlativeness of the poet’s genius, being an example of this genius, as, in a more involved way, is the comparison between the poet’s tongue and the fish. In this context it is useful to reflect that the poet may be revelling in the urgency and intricacy of his images and language. The comparison with the fish is, significantly, both introduced and rounded off by personal jāhri (lines 8-9 and 17-18). When ‘Abid describes the fish he is by obvious implication describing his poetic ability, referred to in line 9 as his tongue (lisān). Therefore the superiority of the fish and its domination of the other fishes is a symbol for the poet’s ability and his domination of other poets. Having established his poetic pre-eminence by means of demonstrating it in the descriptions of the storm and the fish, and having expressly stated it in lines 8-9, the poet is now in an unassailable position and can proceed to boast of his generosity and to vilify the baseness of the unnamed person apostrophized in lines 8, 17 and 19-22. If it is supposed that the person satirized had attacked the poet on some occasion, then the measures ‘Abid takes to emphasize his poetic ability and the attendant difficulty of the language used are placed in their proper context.

To conceive of poetry as being an important constituent of muruwwah solves, or helps to solve, many of the problems of interpretation which are encountered all too frequently in the course of reading any diwān, let alone the whole corpus of pre-Islamic poetry.

When any theory of general application is being put forward, the more general it is in its application, the more liable it is to be disturbed by details and anomalies which necessitate more specific treatment. In the case of the application of a scheme based on the muruwwah interpretation of pre-Islamic poetry, a very important provision must be stated, namely that there is a certain equi-voicalness about the dhikr al-‘aqlīl and nasīḥ movements and about the profusion of pessimistic gnomes and aphoristic statements in the corpus of Jāhili poetry which requires further discussion.

There are two ways of interpreting the dhikr al-‘aqlīl and the nasīḥ movements. They can be interpreted as poetical manifestations of muruwwah in the manner adopted above; alternatively, they can be interpreted as introducing into the poet’s mind a pessimism and sadness which sow the seeds of doubt concerning the validity and general relevance of living one’s life according to the dictates of muruwwah. Any qasīdah which is introduced by a dhikr al-‘aqlīl, by a nasīḥ or by pessimistic gnomes has the potentiality of developing in two different ways: the whole qasīdah may become either a poetic manifestation of muruwwah or a negation of the validity and relevance of muruwwah. The likelihood is that the doubt engendered by the movements was subliminal or subconscious. This confrontation between pessimism and muruwwah may help to explain the importance and dominance enjoyed by poetry of the Jāhiliyyah in subsequent Arabic literature, because, as W. Montgomery Watt has shown, this tendency towards pessimism was an Arab characteristic, not simply a pre-Islamic one. 14 Furthermore it may be the source of that ever-present tension which endows the poetry with that quality of jazīlah which, as A. El Tayib has suggested, later Arab poets constantly sought to recapture. 15 The development of the topics and motifs of the poem was not fixed until the poet found himself faced with public delivery. No pre-Islamic qasīdah had an end or conclusion until the poet in his performance, if he had composed it previously, or in his extemporaneous composition actually arrived at the point at which he finished it: the poem was not considered to be a monolithic structure but existed as the poet delivered it. In an oral culture the poem has an immediacy which it does not possess in a written culture; any nasīḥ, for example, is both important in its own right and subordinate to the rest of the qasīdah when it has been delivered. The Jāhili qasīdah is thus both disparate, in that each section has its own importance and urgency, and a unified whole, in that it is the artistic creation of a human being inter-

12 “From the technical point of view indeed the poet’s task is constantly (though not only) that of finding ways and means of controlling feeling through metaphor.” I. A. Richards, Practical Criticism, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1929, p. 222. Was ‘Abid forcing an accepted view of his audience, which he was couching in a novel metaphor?

13 C. J. Lyall, op. cit., p. 51.

14 W. M. Watt, Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam, Luzac 1948, Chapter 2;

15 “The Opposing Trends in Islam.”
DICHOTOMY IN JÄHILI POETRY

6b-10: The topic of the disconsolate poet; motifs; similes comparing the poet’s tears to a waterskin full of holes (7-8), a torrent (8), a brook at the bottom of a valley (9) and a stream of water under the shade of date-palms (10).

11: The topic of the advent of old age; motif; a warning of the imminence of death given by the greyness of the poet’s hair.

Lines 12-24: The hikmah movement.

Pessimistic gnomic; motifs; the transitoriness of life (12-17); contentment (18), the futility of instructing the man whom time has failed to instruct (19); the treachery of friends (20), comments on strangers and kinsmen (21-22) and the longer lives, the more pain one undergoes (24). 17

Lines 25-27a: The rukhmah movement.

25-27a: The topic of the desert-journey; motifs; the tainted water-hole and dangerous desert (25), the palpitation of the heart (26) and the journey at dawn (27a).

Lines 27b-45: The uṣmah movement.

27b-31: The topic of the description of the she-camel; motifs; swiftness (27b), the she-camel is compared to a wild- ass (28), the camel’s strong back and withers are like a sand-dune (28), her age (29), resemblance to a wild-ass of Čhaib which bears the scars of its fighting (30), a simile likening the young she-camel to a wild- bull digging up the rukhmah plant whilst the North Wind blows (31).

32-45: The topic of the description of a mare; motifs; the she-camel is a part of the past (32), the mare’s frame and forelock (33), oily smoothness of movement (34), a simile in which the mare is compared to an eagle (34-35)—its hunting prowess (35), nightly perseverance in waiting for prey (36), emergence in the cold of dawn (37), epistolary of a fox (38), how it moved as it went in pursuit (39 & 41), the fox covers (40 & 42), the moment of the kill (43 & 45).

This qasīdah appears to work on a very simple and economical binary antithesis of pessimism (1-24) and muwawwah (25-45). Despite the apparent transcendence of the feelings of pessimism in lines 25-45, the poet has not adequately reassured himself of the validity of muwawwah as a Weltanschauung.

Lines 12-24, the pessimistic hikmah movement, are pervaded by attempts made by the poet to overcome his sense of desolation and worthlessness. The feeling of pessimism is introduced by the enumeration of the erstwhile dwellings of the tribe and the mention of their passing

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**Note:** The presence of (the probably) Islamic line 23 is an indication of the Arabness of this type of pessimism, in that it would never have been included if later reciters, transmitters and philologists had felt it to be out of place. The fluidity of an oral tradition is adduced as an explanation of this phenomenon in J. T. Monroe, op. cit., pp. 39-40 and M. Zetter, The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: its character and implication, Ohio State University Press: Columbus 1978, p. 21.

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away. It is corroborated by the reference to the poet’s old age in line 6: his feeling of pessimism is both personal and environmental—a total collapse of the relevance of competitive virtue as a means of confronting the transience and impermanence of the world. In many qas‘ād the topic of the disconsolate poet is an inverted self-glorificatory foil—excessive grief being a component of muruwwah—and the poet manages to dispel this grief both by indulging it and by means of the desert-journey. However in this poem these means of transcendence are not successful because these very means are being questioned and doubted. Line 11 is the first instance of what seems to be self-remonstrance.

Tashā fa-annā la-ka al-tāṣāb bil-anā wa-qi‘d rā‘aka al-mashībū

You (are full of) longing, but how can you deceive yourself (that you will achieve anything by weeping), how, when harshness has frightened you?

Solace is not to be found in weeping, the desolation which surrounds the poet is overpowering, and depth of grief and excessive mourning no longer have any significance, because the whole world-view of the poet has been called into doubt.

In the pessimistic hitmah movement (lines 12-24) the poet tries to find meaning in the apparently random and meaningless events which have come to pass. His pessimism is enunciated in the gnomes contained in lines 12-17 and 19-20. However the self-apostrophe and advice contained in line 18 is insufficient to stem the flow; in the formally parallel line 24 he resigns himself to expressing a desolate and bleak gnomon. The poet’s wisdom and depth of feeling have proved to be of no avail in endowing muruwwah with its pristine validity and relevance.

In lines 25-45 the poet seemingly re-establishes the validity of competitive virtue; both the she-camel and the mare reflect his manhood, their excellence standing as a foil to his. The duality of the wa‘af movement in which two animals are described can be interpreted in the light of the extensive nature of the pessimism contained in lines 1-24, an extra effort being needed to dispel the doubt and uncertainty. Nevertheless, on some level, possibly unconscious, the poet has still not managed to come to terms with that pessimism. The word qīm (line 25) and its interpretation are vital in this context. The verb qānn means to become tainted or corrupted, used of water, and if it implies no more nuances than this, then the goal for which the poet hazards his life by embarking on such a perilous desert-journey is no more than tainted water, that is, the efforts have been worthless—a further expression of the pessimism which the poet is experiencing. Alternatively, if C. J. Lyall is correct in his translation of the word, “altered for the worse, covered with slime and stinking from long standing unvisited”, then the inaccessibility of the place may be a corroboratory detail in the re-invigoration of muruwwah, with the emphasis being on the absence of visitors to the water—only the poet is adequate to the challenge, brave enough to overcome the perils involved in such a journey. There may also be a note of hybristic exultation implied in taking such risks merely for the sake of tainted water. Nonetheless, the very possibility of divergent interpretations suggests that the poet is not sure in his own mind that he is vindicating muruwwah; in its very ambiguity this poem points to the subtlety of pessimism and this line, 23, may cast some doubt over the validity of K. Abu Deeb’s statement that “the journey always leads to safety despite the hardships involved. It seems that structurally the end of the journey counteracts its beginning and brings balance to the whole process which is fundamental to the human and (animal) condition.”

Abid was unable to convince himself that the impermanence of mortal existence could be surmounted. This tension invests the poem with a vitality and ambiguity which are also characteristic of the Mu‘allaqah of Labid in the last line of which the poet refers to the existence of base men (l‘āmi) among the members of his tribe which he is exalting. This is an indication, similar to ‘Abid’s use of qīm in line 25, that the poem’s conflict and tension have not been resolved by the poet; muruwwah has not been vindicated.

Poem 5 by ‘Abid evinces characteristics similar to those of poem 1; the dākh al-adīlī movement, in which the emphasis is laid on the tribe, despite the reference to the beloved, Hind, in line 1; the topic of the advent of old age in line 5; a personal fakhre movement in which the poet’s martial prowess, mare, drunkenness and amorous prowess are delineated. Yet despite the personal fakhre movement, the poet cannot rid himself of doubt, and the qasidah concludes on a note of pessimism.

It will be informative to consider at this point some poems by poets other than ‘Abid. Poem 4 in Brockelmann’s edition of the diwān of Labid provides an excellent example of a thoroughly pessimistic poem. It is an elegy which manifests no explicit tension between pessimism and muruwwah. As befits an elegy this poem is thoroughly pessimistic, though on a subjective level the poet’s grief and his poetic ability manifested in evoking that grief may be interpreted as instances of muruwwah, in the manner indicated in the discussion of rithā. A profitable contrast can be made between Labid poem 4 and a poem in much the same vein by Imrū’ al-Qays, number 5 in Alwardt’s edition, pages 72-73 of the Dār

DICTATION IN JAPAN POETRY

15

1938

DICTATION IN JAPAN POETRY

14
Dependence

DiCNOTOMY IN ANTel PORTAY

HOWARD WINSETT. 1860.

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HOWARD WINSETT. 1860.
poetry, no less than any other aspect of life, is informed by
mood. Thus, to read poetry is to enter into the expressive
world of the poet, to be carried by the passion of the
poem. Poetry is a component of mood and as such can be
experienced in its fullness. The mood itself can be
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Transcendence, as understood by Heidegger, is the ability to
experience the world in a way that transcends the confines of
the individual. This transcendence is achieved through the
experience of the world as a whole, as a unified whole, which
includes the poet and the reader. The poet's experience of
the world is not confined to the individual, but extends to
the whole of the universe. This is a way of experiencing the
world that is not limited to the self, but includes the
otherness of the world.

In poetry, the mood is not only experienced, but also
experienced as a reflection of the mood. The mood is a
reflection of the mood, which is a reflection of the mood.
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