

10.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature I have studied was written in a certain setting and period of medieval times. Yet, its relevance to understanding today's Arab should not be underestimated. In the vast material I have presented with its numerous points, deliberations, remarks and suggestions, and countless themes, in which one can easily get lost, I have mainly aimed at, and in my opinion, been able to establish the following:

1. Although this material has been used extensively by Arab and foreign scholars to draw on the information it provides on such topics as social history, individual poets, music, the phonology and morphology of women's names, diglossia, and numerous other subjects¹, this material can, as has been recommended by e.g. Hilary Kilpatrick, be used for gaining a clearer view of the manners in which people used to interact; i.e. their psychological dispositions. I find the kind of "handlist of emotional appeals" compiled in this Thesis significant to understanding some of the components of the value system which the average Arab of today can be said to hold or to be aware of, as it provides a great deal of insight into and how it came about, or at the very least, its manifestations and components. As I argued in the introduction, relatively little changes have taken place in the Arabic language over the centuries, and this is a folk that has retained quite a bit of its primordial traits. So, understanding the kind of background this material is rich with, brings us a step closer to understanding sentiments an Arab can identify with.

2. The listing of emotional appeals and their classification into categories, where an entire spectrum of appeals emerges – a total of 72 categories ranging from ecstasy, love, hatred, loathing, eulogy, cursing and foul, abusive language to appealing to pity, mercy, traditions, swearing in the name of God, etc. – showed that, in the first volume of the 25-volume epic work the most frequent appeals resorted to were:

- a) Swearing in the name of God or a religious figure or token (Orcos). As much as 8.2% of the appeals were constituted by this Category, which is a highly significant number, and does explain why every other sentence, or the beginning of each one, in extreme cases of excited speech, can be an oath similar to the ones listed in Section 9./Orcos of this Thesis (to be found in transliterated form in Appendix IV/Orcos) among Arabs, even today. Using secular or religious formulas (which came 8th and 9th in frequency, respectively), together, constituted 5% of the emotional appeals (2.5% each). These are formulaic phrases which, in the case of religious formulas, are mostly blessings and expressions of veneration placed in front of the name of God, the Koran or a Prophet or revered persona; and in the case of secular formulas, they are exclamations of well-wishing of every variety, but can also be ones in which disdain is expressed by mouthing the specific formula, in connection with the mention of someone or something. So, together swearing and using formulas constituted 13% of the emotional appeals. It is a fact, that once one has learned to swear, praise, commend, lament, compliment and make allusions in this highly fixed, predictable and stereotyped way, one is well on one's way to mastering one of the secrets of fluency in Arabic. Understanding why people stick to them, is on the other hand, a key to grasping the dynamics of "freedom vs. automation" in Arabic communication.
- b) Experiencing longing, inebriation, dazed states, catapulting into song or showing off one's prowess in love, poetry or composing (Pathopoeia) was the second most frequent emotional appeal. Its meticulous subdivisions, which I arrived at through investigation of how they could

¹ Kilpatrick 2003, e.g., p. 12.

be grouped, are best seen in the Table of Contents (9.2.3.). The Section entitled Defining “real *tarab*” (9.2.3.1.1.) lists the examples from which it can be deduced what an Arab considers to be the typically Arab way of “exhibiting or reacting to an emotionally charged impulse”. The percentage of Pathopoeia out of the total was 8%, which again, is a highly significant number. As mentioned in the Section entitled An Overview of Relevant Literature, the doctor of ethnomusicology, Racy, views being able to identify with, produce and react to this type of emotional appeal, in particular, the real test and measurement of “eastern-ness”. The behaviour exhibited in this Category could, in some instances, be compared to the ‘mad’, ‘hysterical’ or ‘hyper-reactive’ behaviour of people screaming and fainting in a pop concert, but it is a pervasive, more easily elicited, more constantly present type of frame of mind, which pops up and finds outlet in connection with very ordinary situations, does not last long and is not frowned upon. It is a kind of “condoned regular or intermittent insanity”, one could very well say.

- c) Justifying an argument by appealing to the sense of custom, tradition, piety or general awareness of normative behaviour in that society (*Argumentum ad Verecundiam*) also had a high occurrence of 5.9%. From this Category, a great deal of what is normative in Arabic societies can be deduced. Here, a lot of mannerisms, such as kissing someone’s hands or forehead, and a lot of conscientiousness which helps one have a tranquil state of mind, such as being magnanimous, honest, hospitable, empathetic, and so forth, are depicted. This is a highly interesting Category from an anthropological or “ethnic studies” point of view, but so is the Category, which is almost its opposite, namely, the justification of an argument or act by appeal to violence (*Argumentum ad Baculum*). Although the latter Category constituted 1.9% of the appeals only, that is still a high and significant occurrence and a careful study of its contents reveals a lot about the justification of coercion, force, even violence in the Arab society. It is noteworthy that killing, flogging and inflicting bodily harm are often justified on religious grounds, especially by rulers, religious groups or in instances where revenge is sought.
- d) The appeals which did not total to over 5% of the whole, will not be commented upon here, since the above conclusions are sufficiently significant for this Thesis. They can all be found in Appendix III in descending order, and their definitions and translated examples are in Section 9. of this Thesis, while their transliterations are to be found in Appendix IV. I am therefore, leaving much room for independent deductions and “discoveries” to be made, by the prospective reader of this Paper, which has been written with its possible appeal to a wider public in mind, besides being a mere “curricular must”. The deduction I do make and find supported by the material in this Thesis, is that emotions have a logic of their own, which although it might be unintellectual or even irrational, at times, reflects the basic nature of human beings, and can be rather resistant to attempts to ameliorate, let alone, wipe it out. The abundance of examples of a whole range of emotional states, including amplification of horrors, forgiveness and magnanimity, scorn, insults, sarcasm, appealing to pity and mercy, wonder, exclamations of delight, flattery and sychophancy, pressure with intent to coerce, and countless others, makes it possible for anyone to get a vivid picture of “mental scenes” in order to breed familiarity with them. In particular, I wish to draw attention to the c) subdivision of the category called *Philophronesis*, which contains examples of the “explicit wish to please”, which I argue, is a very Arabic ingrained feature, which is also supported by the fact that this category represented 2% of the total of emotional appeals. As for the examples, they have not been included in this Thesis as much as an analytical exercise as for the purpose of providing an opportunity to experience them, so no more will be said about the rest of them, at this point.

3. I find that I have been able to demonstrate how language is used to maintain a comfortable relationship between members of Arab societies, at the very least, the ones which are the settings of the conversations and interactions, which take place on the pages of the work I studied. Having introduced the postulation that there is a link between the need for phatic communion (which is defined in Chapter 4.) and emotive expressiveness, I find that my hypothesis that **emotive content can be understood as a reflection of the nature and force of phatic communion in the situations and circles it is produced in or described as being produced by** can be fully supported. If one analyzes the groups of examples of each category of emotional appeal in this Thesis, one finds that there is a very distinct, predictable, even stereotypical pattern of communication among people who share the same language, which reflects a psychosocial type of schooling undergone by the members of that society, by the adherence to which they can balance out their own need for personal communication and psychological leeway with the capacity of the members of that society to accept, address, contain or curb that need. It cannot be overemphasized that this is a study of **automatically produced** exclamations, responses and impulses. They, therefore, paint a very true picture of the complex figure of inhibitions vs. indulgences of the individual in relation to her or his environment. Hopefully, the image of the Arab society as one in which permissiveness of any sort has no room can be reversed at some point, when it is noticed, that the picture one gets from a close look at “inner circles” is nothing like the one medias present, simply, because they are on the outside looking in with the disadvantage of peering over a linguistic and cultural barrier of the tallest sort.

Finally, it is my hope that this Thesis adds to the body of knowledge already present. My work, in the first instance, should have some documentary value by providing organized stylostytistical data, and in the second place, it does suggest some very concrete and real applications for the information it presents, in the area of modern cross-cultural understanding. From an academic point of view, I do feel that the entire anthology should be similarly raked on the part of emotional appeals, for more conclusive findings, before any generalizations can be made, which is why I refrain from making sweeping statements on the basis of my own findings. It is obligatory to see whether what I have come up with holds true for the entire Anthology in question, and if so, to which extent and with which modifications. I also suggest that later, comparative studies of the results of the “emotive content count” (if that is ever undergone) of the 25-volume Anthology (of which the last two volumes are indexes) with the emotive content of modern works and forms of interaction, be conducted, as that would definitely be likely to provide us with more conclusive evidence as to the place of emotions vs. reason in Arabic literature, so to say. Literature, being after all, a reflection of the highly elusive, even controversial term used to denote the collective consciousness and understandings of a people, namely their “mentality”.

I hope that I have been able to demonstrate and establish that it is possible, through systematic contextual semantic deduction within the framework provided by the clear-cut definitions of rhetorical devices, to break rhetorical devices up into units (lexemes), which enable us to say more than hitherto about the ‘culture’, ‘mentality’, ‘value system’, ‘outlook’, ‘attitude’ and ‘the individual’s vs. collective’s psychological dispositions’ in a ‘society’ – all of which are highly elusive terms in that they continuously defy definition. At the risk of divulging an anti-academic inclination, I must add, that this is a domain that needs to be vividly experienced before it can be analyzed with any success, but I hasten to rectify this view by summoning screening above and over any deep feelings.

In closing, I will give myself leave to say that, most academics find it harder to translate a literary understanding of Arabic as a language and a civilization into practice and to mingle naturally in various settings, whereas my difficulty is the precise opposite: it has not been easy for me to try and

translate my quite down-to-earth and firm practical grip of this culture into a literary form, but I hope that I have succeeded up to a certain level, and that this piece of work will to some extent expedite flexibility, if used as a kind of looking glass when faced with live situations, in which an interpretation of the communicative value of what an Arab is saying or expressing is necessitated. In any case, I trust it is not lacking in examples, which invite looking up. They are bound to enlighten the reader as to the concepts of morality, immorality, chastity, draping, piety, rhapsodizing, praising others, boasting, professional panegyric, grudges, anger, depression, enmity, lamentation, comforting, marvel, admiration, ... among others. That is, roughly, the ideal of beauty vs. the abomination of ugliness, in the mind of an Arab.

Concluding Remark

In a movie I saw recently, which revolved around a man who had lost his wife, whom he had loved dearly, the man, an American, goes to Rome to deal with his grief. When he returns, after a long trip, his brother meets him at the airport and asks him whether he had done the wise thing by leaving his home, for he had been in no shape or condition to travel. The widower, who is still haunted by his wife's memory, but not as deranged as he was immediately after his loss, replies: If I had stayed in Washington, I would have been picked up and locked up. In Italy, you can roam the streets talking to yourself, shouting obscenities and seeing things, and everyone will agree with you.