

Camels rest, their drovers do the same.  
The Armenian watches, quietly reckoning,  
But I, at his side, count the miles,  
That separate me from Suleika, repeat  
The path-prolonging, irritating twistings.  
Let me weep. Tears animate the dust.  
Already it is stirring.

The German poet thinks of himself as being in a caravan in the desert. It is the same situation that forms the basis for all of the *Kassids* of the *Muallaquat* poets. The *Muallaquat* are, after all, Bedouin poems sung in the desert and at the oases amongst shepherds and camel drivers. Goethe's chief motive is that of weeping because of the absence of the beloved, a motive which returns in all seven *Kassids* of the *Muallaquat*, and at that, exactly as it stands at the beginning of Goethe's poem. The most thorough as well as the most beautiful fashioning of this motif is to be found in Imriolkais' poem which, like Goethe's begins with the plaintive pattern, "Let me weep". Even the strange word that describes the path prolonging "twistings" is to be found in the Arabian prototypes. And there is yet another striking correspondence in the general content. Goethe's poem closes with an optimistic turn. The tears animate the dust, and out of it comes fresh green; new growth-out of sorrow and tears. This is a symbolical expression for the thought that the pain of parting from the beloved is a stimulating grief for the poet-out of sorrow, blossoms new poetic inspiration. This is completely in line with Goethe's own experience, for it was always the distant and somehow unattainable beloved who most inspired his works. "The sorrow of love" thus often functions for Goethe as the doorway to new creative activity. A very similar phenomenon is to be found in the poets of the *Muallaquat*, for with them it is a kind of rule to give the beginning of each *Kasside* the character of a love lament. Only by these means is the path to poetic expression and evolution made free. This is required by the traditional scheme of things. Goethe recognized something special in the early Arabian *Muallaquat* poems that corresponded in the most curious way with the organizational rules of his own works. It is an extremely interesting fact that Goethe, when suffering himself from a particularly tragic love, remembered that it was the *Muallaquat* more than any other poetical work in the literature of the world, which placed the sorrow of separation in the foreground, richly varying and meaningfully characterizing the motif of a great love which for some reason

has been lost forever. It was the dialogue of a great poet with other great poets, bridging the gulf of a thousand years, and all the attendant differences of peoples and cultures.

The proportion of poems from Arabian models which proclaim love's bitterness are nevertheless fewer in number in Goethe's "Divan", than those with a predominantly happy note. Goethe is also indebted to the Arabian world for some ideas which stimulated him to write these more cheerful poems. Let me but name a few of these Arabian motifs. The alternating songs of Hatem and Suicika refer to a turban of white, silverstriped muslin, that the beloved winds about the head of the poet. To Hatem, such a turban seems to be the proudest and most beautiful head adornment for a man.

A poem in the first book of the "Divan", the "Book of the Singer" praises the turban as the finest possible head adornment. Entitled "Four Favours", this poem is derived from an Arabian proverb. It reads

To the Arabs, joyfully moving  
In their portion (of the world),  
Allah has given four favours  
For the general well-being.

First the turban, which adorns better  
Than all the crowns of emperors;  
A tent, so that a man can move from one place  
And live everywhere;

A sword, which protects more effectively  
Than cliffs and high walls,  
And a little song, that pleases, and is useful  
Because the girls are waiting to hear it.

The turban, the tent, the sword, and the gift of song—these four favours given to the Arabs by Allah are praised many times by Goethe in the "Divan". The free life of the nomadic Bedouins, unstable and constantly threatened by danger, is just as much the subject of his poetic invention as their pride and aggressive clan.

This "dreaming of himself" into the restlessness of the nomad life, and indeed into what was a totally strange world for the poet, had an astounding effect on him: he felt himself refreshed and fired with enthusiasm. Through this contact with the shepherd and warrior life

of primordial Araby, the poet felt himself to have been "newly born", and the expression is his own. From this comes the poem "Reckoning", which originally had the significant title of "Caravan". The poet says here, "Within the immeasurable distance/In an ocean of stars,I was not lost/But as if newly born,—White billows of sheep,Spread over the hills/Sheltered around by serious shepherds/Gladly sharing their scanty hospitality/So quietly—dear people..That each one gladdens me". Hard on the heels of this joyful and peaceful shepherds' idyll comes a depiction of the dangers among which the Bedouins live : "In the terrifying nights/Menaced by battle/The moaning of the camels:Pierces the ear, and the soul". Toward the end of the poem comes a penetrating picture of the life of the nomad, in which the poet symbolically expresses the precepts of his own life-rhythm : "And always it went further/Becoming ever wider/And our constant moving/seemed a little like fleeing,Blue, behind the desert and the multitude/A strip of false sea".

In this caravan poem, Goethe gives us a picture of the restless nomad existence which early Arabian poetry had enabled him to envision. The whole "West-East Divan" is shot through with something of this nomadic restlessness. Already in the first great poem entitled "Hegir" the poet alludes to Arabian life and traditions. His own "Hedschra" is an intellectual emigration to a simpler state of existence which seems to him to be purer and righter than his own immediate world. Thus he calls out to himself :

You must flee to the pure east  
 To savour the air of the patriarchs ...  
 There, amongst the pure and the right,  
 I want to fathom  
 The origins of human kind,  
 Where they still receive, from God,  
 Heaven's teachings in the language of the land,  
 And don't have to worry their own heads ...  
 I want to move among shepherds,  
 Refresh myself at oases  
 When I, living the wandering life of caravans,  
 Barter with shawls, coffee and musk;  
 I want to tread every path  
 From the desert to the city ..."

These lines come from the poem "Hegire", and have the quality of exposition. They provide information for the meaning and intent of the entire work. As the poet himself says in his commentary to the "Divan": "The Poet", continues Goethe, "sees himself here as a traveller. He has already arrived in the Orient. He takes pleasure in the customs and usage, in the wares, religious convictions and opinions, and does not even reject the supposition that he himself may be a Moslem!" Goethe's astounding confession goes this far, and shows us with what pleasure he lived among the Arabs in his thoughts, discovering so much of the custom of patriarchal times in their way of life. There is proof of this love for the world of Araby which had fascinated him from his youth in even other works of his. "The Journeyman Years of Wilhelm Meister", for example, contains a passage in praise of the Bedouins. This is obviously no accident. In this great novel of his old age, Goethe wanted to show that all true men are wanderers, that wandering is a condition of human existence. At the same time, the Bedouins are the wanderers par excellence, the prototype of wandering mankind, and as such do they appear in Leonardo's speech in praise within Goethe's great novel.

But enough of this topic, ladies and gentlemen, for I want to speak to you about something else in the short time that remains, something very important for our subject, and that is of Goethe's connection to the "Thousand and one Nights", that is to say, to a work which already because of its language belongs completely to the Arabian world, and whose subject is at least in many sections of Arabian origin. During Goethe's time, one spoke of the work simply as "Arabian Tales". The connection between the poet and "A Thousand and one Nights" is particularly interesting because firstly, we are concerned here with one of the great standard works of world literature, and secondly, because the extent of its influence on Goethe in this case is positively enormous. Because I have already spoken about the relationship of Goethe to "A thousand and one nights" in another lecture, I should here like only to refer to some of the high points, without looking too closely at the details.

Goethe had loved the fairy-tale of Scheherazade from his childhood, and during all periods of his poetic creativity, he let Scheherazade inspire him to works of his own. Even in a few of his most famous poems, Scheherazade had served as godmother for particular motifs, characters, or turns of plot. In his old age too, Goethe lost none of his love for "A thousand and one nights", for these tales drove away the

depression occasioned by illness or long winter nights. And those who surrounded Goethe in his old age were amazed at the intensity and perseverance with which the aged poet read and re-read the many volumes of "A thousand and one nights". References to the work are to be found in dozens of Goethe's letters, diaries and transmitted conversations, and these remarks in their totality already provide extremely important information. One obtains here a completely new conception of Goethe's art of storytelling and of his inventive fables, particularly if one takes note of their long overlooked relationship to "A thousand and one nights". Goethe consciously and repeatedly compared himself with Scheherezade as storyteller and poet, and this comparison is reflected in particular aspects of his writings which have always seemed obscure and difficult to researchers and specialists. His liking for a kind of loose organization, evident in certain of his works, is here explained. Just for this reason, people have puzzled their heads about the organization of his novel "The Journeyman Years of Wilhelm Meister", the structure of which is handled in a particularly free manner. They ask themselves if a hidden unity and formal compactness could not be found in the novel if one were to search for it in an appropriate way. All these questions become superfluous when one remembers that Goethe, as he himself expressed it, handled his materials in the manner of Scheherezade. It is therefore by no means a sign of comfort in old age that the form in "Wilhelm Meister" appears to have been slighted. Rather, the whole way in which very different stories are linked to one another, the procedure of "interweaving", the form of a "wreath of flowers", of "garlands" — remember that I am quoting Goethe's own expressions — all this rests upon a consciously organized principle of style, and Goethe expressly confesses that it was "A thousand and one nights" which led him to this principle of organization. He wrote the "Journeyman Years", so he said, in the manner of the Sultana Scheherezade.

But this discovery also leads to an explanation for other things. Goethe had a pronounced, almost obstinate preference for presenting his large-scale works (mostly stories, but also some dramatic works) — to the public, not in their entirety, but in serialized episodes. It was part of the nature and pleasure of storytelling that, and I quote his own words, through "curiosity", even when it appeared to be "aroused in a frivolous way", the storyteller could delight his hearers, and grasp their attention by "interruptions", thus extending their interest by "every possible artifice". In his "Conversations of German Emigrants", a work which he also allowed to be published in serialized form, he said in

so many words and with preconceived intention, and I quote "He proceeds in the manner of "A thousand and one nights" where, as he says, "one event is encased, one interest displaced by another".

But Goethe also handled his own autobiographical writings, particularly "Poetry and Truth", in the same manner as an Arabian storyteller, at least as far as the structure is concerned. All the forms and artifices of which we spoke are also to be found here, and the volumes of "Poetry and Truth" appeared, exactly like the "Memoirs of his Italian Journey", at widely separated intervals. We find an explanation for this in the manner in which he referred to this work as "the thousand and one nights of his own wayward life". "The Journeyman Years of Wilhelm Meister" appeared by no means all at once, but also in serialized form, as did the second part of his "Faust" tragedy. And when, at the end of one of these partial publications, Goethe wrote the laconic comment, "to be continued", we need no longer puzzle over the reasons. For he always considered himself in such cases, and for this there is plenty of evidence available, to be an *encasement* *Schichtenbau*. But even more interesting than the influence of "A thousand and one nights" on Goethe's formal organization and the countless cases where the poet was actually stimulated by motifs and materials of the Arabian anthology. Poems from all periods of his life are evidence of such stimulation, beginning with the early "The whims of a lover", to the last, the second part of the great tragedy of "Faust". It partly concerns characteristic details which Goethe borrowed, striking motifs or personalities, and partly characteristics which helped Goethe to create an atmosphere of enchantment of particular sections of his work. But it is also finally demonstrable that he adopted, in extremely interesting cases, whole chains of motifs, patterns of plot, and the story-telling scheme as such from "A thousand and one nights". In the limited time at our disposal it is only possible for me to give you a few examples, but you will perhaps allow me to mention at this point, that I published a book on the subject of "Goethe and a thousand and one nights" in 1960, which, I am happy to say, is now also being translated into Arabian.

Already, in an early work by the seventeen-year-old Goethe, "The whims of a lover", the Arabian name of the heroine, Amina, is borrowed from a story in "A thousand and one nights". And much more than the name is adopted at that. The shape of Amina's personality and the character traits of a person tormented by jealousy were also taken over. Not only this, but the moral of the piece is also in accord-

nce with "A thousand and one nights". Here, just as in the source material, an extremely jealous man is brought to regret his suspicion and his brutally egoistic behaviour. I should like to mention in addition, that especially in Goethe's own fairy tales is to be found a profusion of characteristics which can be shown to have been based upon "A thousand and one nights". This applies to the fairy tales called "The new Paris", and "The new Melusine", as well as to the fairy tale in the "Conversations of German Emigrants". In "The Journeyman Years of Wilhelm Meister" the poet alludes very clearly to "Aladdin and his magic lamp" and "The Barber of Baghdad". The tale of Abdulbasan and Schemselihar from "A thousand and one nights" also served as the subject matter for the final portion of Goethe's novel "The Relatives by choice", while the poet made use of the fairy tale of Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Paribanou in his Novella.

The most astounding influences of "A thousand and one nights", nevertheless, can be discovered in the second part of "Faust". Here, whole acts are based upon motifs from stories out of "A thousand and one nights", for example, Faust's courtship of the beautiful Helen of Troy, and nuptials. The scenes at the Emperor's court in the first act are also strongly influenced by the fairy-tale world of the Orient. Here too, Goethe purposely paid homage to Scheherazade and "A thousand and one nights" in the words of the Emperor addressed to Mephistopheles, his master of pleasure. The lines are as follows :

What kind fortune hast thee here but sent,  
Direct from 1001 nights to Occident;  
Shouldst with Scheherazade's fancy thine compare,  
Thou'lt receive from me great honours, that I swear  
Be always ready, when our world of day,  
As often happens, sore displeases me.

At this point in "Faust", Goethe expressed clearly his own gratefulness to these Arabian fairy tales. At the time that he wrote this homage to Scheherazade, he owed her in one way or another — and more than at any time in his literary career — the most decisive debt of gratitude. Large sections of the second part of "Faust" were inspired by "A thousand and one nights", for just at the time that he was formulating them, a new study of the fairy-tale collection came into his hands. when one knows this, it is much easier to understand why Goethe felt at this time the necessity of expressly acknowledging Scheherazade as his

mentor, by specifically honouring her name. It is no accident that the line "Should'st with Scheherazade's fancy thine compare" appears exactly this way in his first sketch, just as the line originally flowed from his pen: "As mentor dost thou know Scheherzade".

But we have yet another beautiful testimony of the gratitude of the seventy-five-year-old poet to his work which embodies the art of Arabian storytelling, a work which had given wings to his imagination. As he succeeded in completing that scene from "Faust" to his own satisfaction, assisted in one way or another by "A thousand and one nights", he wrote a short poem on a page which contained sketches for the lines from "Faust". This is an obvious allusion to the integration of both western and eastern elements which even his work on "Faust" had unexpectedly assumed. And this poem of Goethe's forms a fitting conclusion to our discussion :

He who knows himself and others  
Recognizes also here :  
Orient and Occident  
Are no longer different spheres.

By reflecting, not disputing,  
I seek the way between two worlds:  
So to make twain east and west,  
That is truly for the best.