

# Maslovian theory in arabic poetry: A case study of al-Mutanabbi

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## INTRODUCTION

Even though al-Mutanabbi has been the subject of a considerable number of studies, in both the East and the West, most of his poems have been studied from a different angle, while not much attention has been paid to the human being or to the psychology of the man himself. No great effort has been made to dig beneath the surface in order to examine his strong and forceful personality. Few studies of the poet himself exist, and these do not, to any great extent, examine the features of his character or his psychological make-up.<sup>1</sup> Many modern studies on Arabic poetry have been more attracted to al-Mutanabbi's verses, concentrating on the construction of the poems and the instruments employed by the poet to compose his polythematic poetry, while ignoring the poet's humanitarianism.<sup>2</sup>

In order to examine the poet, we have to treat the material, i.e. the poetry, in isolation from the vast realm of conscious human experience, which includes emotional shocks, the experience of passion and the crises of human destiny in general. C. G. Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, notes that a poet's work, i.e. the poetry, is an interpretation and illumination of consciousness, or the unavoidable experience of human life with its eternally recurrent sorrows and joys.<sup>3</sup> He also stresses the central role that the study of emotions must play in psychology because psychology is the only science that has to take the factor of values, i.e. feeling, into account.<sup>4</sup>

Jung further comments that the most fruitful subject for the psychologist is the poet who has not yet committed to paper a psychological interpretation of his own character. The poet leaves ample room for the psychologist to analyse, examine and interpret his poetry. In this case the poetry is similar to apparently unrevealing narrative:

An exciting narrative that is apparently quite devoid of psychological exposition is just what

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<sup>1</sup> J. E. Montgomery (1995), 'Al-Mutanabbi and the Psychological Grief', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 115 (2), 285-292.

<sup>2</sup> Geert Jan Van Gelder (Ed.) (1999), 'Al-Mutanabbi's Encumbering Trifles', *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures*, 2 (1), 0.5.

<sup>3</sup> C. G. Jung (1992), *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, London: Ark Paperbacks, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> C. G. Jung (Ed.) (1964), *Man and his Symbols*, New York: Doubleday, p. 96.

interest the psychological assumptions and the author is unconscious of them. They reveal themselves to be pure and unalloyed to the critical discernment.<sup>5</sup>

Psychological studies of this kind are undertaken in order to continue the efforts that have been made in the course of time to examine the nature of artistic creativity, which is still one of the most ambiguous and incomprehensible issues in the realm of psychology. The various aspects of poetic creativity in general may also be applied to other art forms, for the arts have many features in common, emerging from one source, namely the human psyche. Jung acknowledges the intangible character of artistic creation:

“Creativeness, like the freedom of the will, contains a secret. The psychologist can describe both the manifestation as process, but he can find no solution of the philosophical problems they offers. Creative man is vain riddle that we may try to answer in various ways, but always in vain.”<sup>6</sup>

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A POET

To investigate a personality of a poet, there is one promising psychological theory that may provide new insights in the study of a poet; this is known as humanistic psychology. There are three important proponents of this theory, namely Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslows and Karen Horney. The theory offers the most comprehensive account of psychological growth, because it concerns a way of life, not only of the person him or herself as a separate individual, but also of the person as a social being, an integral member of society.

Humanism is here taken to be a theoretical orientation that emphasizes the unique qualities of humans, especially their free will and their potential for personal growth. (Humanistic psychology originated in the United States of America. The American capitalist ideology puts stress on the individual striving to become what one can. This obviously used in management training – to fulfill oneself through one’s company). This theory postulates that the motivation for behaviour comes from a person’s unique biological and learnt tendencies to develop and change in positive directions towards the goal of self-actualization. This is the desire to realize one’s potential, to fulfill oneself, to become what one can become. In short people have a drive to become what they are most capable of becoming. The innate striving toward self-fulfillment, along with the realization of one’s unique potential is the constructive, guiding force that motivates each person to become engaged in generally positive behaviours and to enhance the self.<sup>7</sup> A person who recognizes himself or herself as being in possession of artistic talent may have a need to pursue art for its own sake. As a component of fulfillment, art may be pursued instead of more profitable ends. Without art, a gap is left in the artist’s life. The humanistic theory also proposes that the environment has a very important role to play, having an enormous impact on the growth of the individual. The individual will fulfill his genetic potential, become strong and self-directing if the environment in which he or she, is favourable for growth and is based on real needs. When growth is naturally encouraged, then honesty and openness will prevail.

### THE MASLOVIAN THEORY

Abraham Maslow, the humanistic theorist who believed that an accurate and viable theory of

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<sup>5</sup> Jung, 1992, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>7</sup> Zimbardo, 1988, p. 437.

personality must include not only the depths, but also the heights that each individual is capable of attaining. His theory mainly relied on mentally healthy human beings, and was based on the concepts that human beings are governed by a hierarchy of biological-based needs. He used the words 'hierarchy' because he felt that these needs formed a hierarchy of propensity, since the lower needs must be satisfied in order to gratify the upper ones.<sup>8</sup>

According to Maslow love and esteem are the basic needs essential to everyone, and take precedence over self-actualization in the hierarchy of need. The need for self-esteem is concerned with self-respect and a feeling of personal competence, as well as the opinion of other people. A person whose most basic needs are unsatisfied, does not feel a strong need for love, but one whose physiological and safety needs are satisfied will feel a strong desire for the regard of his fellow.

Maslow's theory is primarily concerned with that part of human motivation and behavior which is based on the higher needs. He concentrates on the process of self-actualization in the movement that a healthy person makes toward "the actualization of his potential, capacities and talents". Maslow's prime concern is the highest needs which incorporate motives for growth. He defines self-actualization as the "full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities as fulfillment of mission". In addition to this, it is an episode, or a spurt, in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intense, as well as enjoyable way. Maslow also argues that self-actualization is not a static condition, but an ongoing process of using one's capacities fully, creatively and joyfully. Maslow finds that self-actualizing people are dedicated to a vocation or a cause.

Actualizing the real self demands a culture that offers a course of activity congruent with the individual's inner bent, and which permits him to realize his capabilities. It also needs a set of significant adults who are interested in the child as a being in himself, and who will also allow him to have his own feelings, tastes, interest and values.<sup>9</sup>

Wherever possible, the child must be allowed to exercise his own choices. The understanding of one's inner nature and acting in accordance with it is essential, especially because Self-actualizing people, those who have come to a high level of maturation, health and self-fulfillment, have so much to teach us that sometimes they seem almost like a different breed of human being.<sup>10</sup>

In Maslovian terms, the child is a weak and dependent being whose needs for safety, protection and acceptance are so strong that he will sacrifice himself, if necessary, in order to get these things. If the child is faced with a choice between his own delightful experience and the approval of others, he generally will choose approval, and suppress his desire for delight by repression or letting it die, or not noticing it, or controlling it by will-power. Generally speaking this will lead to the development of disapproval of the delightful experience, embarrassment and secretiveness about it, and finally the inability even to experience. The primal choice, says Maslow, is "between others and one's self. If the only way to maintain the self is to lose others, then the ordinary child will live up the self". The self-actualizing person, however, will be occupied, not with controlling the urges of his ego, or with becoming "well-adjusted" to his society, but with cultivating the development of the real self, his human nature. He will expose to himself his real self and this exposure will be manifested in his greater congruence, his greater transparency and his greater spontaneity.

#### THE APPLICATION OF THE MASLOVIAN THEORY TO AL-MUTANABBI'S POETRY

Personality is displayed in many ways – through behaviour patterns, thoughts and feelings. Behaviour is said to occur because a drive is operative, and an association has developed between the

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<sup>8</sup> Maslow, 1968, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Maslow, 1968, p. 58.

<sup>10</sup> Maslow, 1968, p. 71.

drive stimulation and an object or a response.<sup>11</sup> Humanistic theories postulates that the motivation for behaviour comes from a person's unique biological and learned tendencies, and capacity to develop and change positively in relation to the goal of self-actualization, which is the desire to realize one's potential.<sup>12</sup>

The political and cultural environment in the 4th/10th had a great impact on the growth of al-Mutanabbi, for it helped to develop his powerful assertion of individualism, as witnessed by a burst of personal expression, in the domain of literary creativity as well as political action. Literature, particularly poetry, is a vast repository of psychological insight. It can also be primarily regarded as a means of communication, because language has been employed to express one's thought and emotions.

Al-Mutanabbi fulfilled his genetic potential and became strong and self-directing when the environment was favourable for him to grow. When the growth in natural channels was encouraged, then his honesty and openness prevailed.<sup>13</sup>

To better understand the poet through the study of his poetry, it would be instructive to begin by creating what Freud called 'the primal situation' – the first and original situation.<sup>14</sup> By doing so, we will be enabled to see how verbal art could have been woven into fabric of governance in early societies. Al-Mutanabbi, who early recognized in himself the possession of an artistic talent, may have had a need to pursue art for its own sake. As a component of self-fulfillment, art is often pursued instead of more profitable ends. Without art, a huge gap open up in al-Mutanabbi's life.

There are two particularly important events in al-Mutanabbi's turbulent life. The first one was his disaffection with Sayf al-Dawlah, the Hamdanid Prince of Aleppo. Although al-Mutanabbi was depicted as genuinely admiring the Hamdanid prince. He fought at the prince's side in many of his military campaigns. But the compatibility between the poet's and the prince's valuation of the poet's work proved hard to maintain. The poet was accused of avarice<sup>15</sup> while other observers portrayed Sayf al-Dawlah's failure to defend al-Mutanabbi in his argument with Ibn Khalawayh, as a betrayal.<sup>16</sup> For the various of reasons offered above, al-Mutanabbi's life with Sayf al-Dawlah will be examined employing Maslovian theory. This is because in Maslow's theory, the two concepts, love and creativity play a vital role in self-actualization process likewise in al-Mutanabbi's case, we can make a plausible assumption that these two points are crucial elements in his relationship with Sayf al-Dawlah.

#### THE SEARCH FOR SAFETY

In spite of its political turmoil, the 4th/10th century witnessed a remarkable growth of cultural life. Cultural and intellectual activities developed in an environment of material prosperity and religious heterodoxy. The age's creative achievements had a personal and individual character. This period also witnessed the emergence of an affluent and influential middle class, which was keen to acquire knowledge and social status. The pursuit of knowledge was considered to be a path toward human perfection and happiness.

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<sup>11</sup> Edward L. Deci (1985), *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behaviour*, New York/London: Plenum, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Maslow, 1968, p. 113.

<sup>13</sup> The work of art depends upon the environment of the artist and upon the artist himself. It depends upon his environment because this includes material for his work and values to be incorporated. It also depends upon the artist, for he is more sensitive to the tangibles and intangibles in his environment, and is more sensitive to the meanings which they have beyond the meanings customary assigned to them. (J. K. Feiblemen, 1945, *The Psychology of The Artist*, *Journal of Psychology*, xix, pp. 165-189).

<sup>14</sup> The word primal is often used as equivalent to primitive or primordial, particularly in psychoanalysis.

<sup>15</sup> al-Thaalibi (1956), *Yatimat al-dahr* (vol. 2, 2nd ed.), M. Muhyi al-Din Abd Hamid (Ed.), Cairo, p. 137.

<sup>16</sup> al-Badi'I (1963), *al-Subh al-Munbi 'an Haythiyyat al-Mutanabbi*, Mustafa al-Saqq, Muhammad Shita and 'Abd Ziyada (Eds.), Cairo: n.p., p. 87.

In al-Mutanabbi's time, rank and status were determined by knowledge, intelligence and talent. Rulers and statesmen were avid patrons of learning, entertaining philosophers, scientists and men of letters in resplendent court where the cultural elite included poets, scholars and secretaries. The provincial courts of local rulers and viziers also became centres of intellectual activity. Poets served in all these courts as panegyrists, while scholars acted as secretaries, historians, astronomers, advisors, spies and purveyors of edification and delight.

From the early 'Abbasid times, patrons were often among the well-versed in literary Arabic and poetry. Many of them had received a thorough training from philologists who played a very important role in Arabic life. For religion and political purposes, many 'Abbasid caliphs were keen to be defenders of the faith. To do so, they needed to master Arabic. In the courts and homes of the patrons normally gathered men of letters. For the patrons, the way to confer their prestige, demonstrates their discernment and devotion to Arabic literature and Islamic culture was through largesse. For the men of letters, supports meant livelihood and sometimes fortunes. In order to please patrons, poets had to compose panegyrics that satisfied their patrons, by showing mastery of language. The poet would be conferred prestige after giving praise for the accomplishment and scathing satires of its enemies. Thus, the poets wandered from court to court, transferring allegiance, readily shifting landscape and horizon.

From the outset, the Arab poet was understood to perform a clearly defined social function, namely to sing the praises of his tribe, to defend its honor and attack its enemies, as well as to rouse his people to military zeal through stirring poetry. The recital of a panegyric had become an important formal occasion and provided an opportunity for the sovereign to demonstrate his generosity publicly by handsomely rewarding the poet, who, if genuinely admired his patron, could be inspired to produce truly excellent work.

Using this as starting point, in order to analyse al-Mutanabbi psychologically based on his poetry composed to his patron Sayf al-Dawlah, will primarily focus on al-Mutanabbi as a poet rather than an individual.

Safety needs include physical well-being as well as psychological security derived from stability, predictability, and structure. Al-Mutanabbi needed a strong, protective patron who not only valued his poetry, but also was able to give him many opportunities to display his ability as a poet. Only such knowledgeable, generous patronage would allow him to achieve fame and a comfortable livelihood as a poet. In 337/948 al-Mutanabbi finally succeeded in attracting the attention of the illustrious Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo, Prince Sayf al-dawlah. The Banu Hamdan were a distinguished Arab family of Bedouin origin and Shi'ite inclination. They played a vital role as warriors in affairs of the declining 'Abbasid caliphate from near the end of the 3rd/9th century until about the end of the following century.

With his newly won security, al-Mutanabbi was able to enjoy feelings safety, peace and security in the company of Sayf al-Dawlah, who became his intimate friend and comrade in arms. As a result, he was better able to appraise the heroism of the prince more justly and wholeheartedly. The satisfaction of his safety needs assured al-Mutanabbi that he was living in an environment that was stable and secure. He gained strength from the constructive energy that urged him on towards inner freedom. In addition to that, it gave him the power to sustain the inevitable pain of maturation, and made him willing to take the risk of getting rid of attitudes that had given him a feeling of safety. He started to feel the need to fulfill other desires, an indication of his healthy growth.

#### THE NEEDS OF BELONGING AND AFFECTION

When physiological and safety needs are largely satisfied, the needs for love, affection and belonging come to the forefront as motivations, and the whole cycle repeats itself about this new centre.

We could consider that al-Mutanabbi now hunger for affectionate relationships with friends, and specifically with a powerful and influential patron. Having gained knowledge of Sayf al-Dawlah, al-Mutanabbi then grew to love him. It could be considered that he was expressing his love to Sayf al-dawlah when he said that he had chained himself to Sayf al-Dawlah:

“I chained myself to your love in affection  
He who loves good deeds is held by a chain”<sup>17</sup>

From the verses that were written in his happy period at the court of Sayf al-Dawlah, we could consider that al-Mutanabbi was able to enjoy feelings of belonging and affection:

“Every day you load up fresh  
and journey to glory, there to dwell”  
“And our wont is comely patience  
were it with anything but your absence that we were tried”  
“Every life you don’t grace is death  
every sun that you are not is darkness”<sup>18</sup>

#### THE NEED FOR SELF ESTEEM

Assuming that at this point the first three levels of the hierarchy of al-Mutanabbi’s needs were adequately satisfied, we would expect he to become concerned with the needs for esteem. Maslow distinguishes two types of esteem needs. The first is esteem from others. This involves the desire for reputation, status, recognition, fame and feeling of being useful and necessary. Individuals need to feel respected and valued by others for their accomplishments and contribution. Self-esteem, on the other and, involves a personal desire for feelings of competence, mastery, confidence and capability.

Self-esteem is therefore closely linked to the desire for superiority and respect from others, and to some extent, these are part of an accepted practice in Arabic poetry. Moreover, for the Arabs, poetry is a source of pride and rivalry. So the poet, by skilful ordering and vivid imagery could play upon the emotions of his hearers. Al-Mutanabbi’s pride for example, can be seen in the verses written when he was saying:

“In whom indeed is the pride of every true Arab  
and the refuge of the wrongdoer, and the succour of the outcast”  
“If I am conceited, it is the conceit of an amazing man who has  
never found any surpassing himself”<sup>19</sup>

The fulfillment of the need for self-esteem is an indication of healthy growth since it will release feelings of self confidence, worth, strength, capability, adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world.

Prompted by the envy and jealousy of the rivals when he was at Sayf al-Dawlah’s court, al-Mutanabbi’s customary arrogance, his intemperate and unbridled boasting appear in his own poetry, for example:

“Reward me, whenever a poem is recited to you, for it is only  
with my poetry repeated that panegyrists come to you”  
“And disregard every voice but mine, for  
I am the singer who is mimicked; the rest are the echo”<sup>20</sup>

#### THE QUEST FOR SELF ACTUALIZATION

Al-Mutanabbi began to attain the final level of Maslow’s hierarchy after he had satisfied his basic

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<sup>17</sup> See *The Diwan of Abu Tayyib Ahmad ibn al-Husain al-Mutanabbi, al-Saifiyyat*, vol. 2, A. Wormhoundt (trans.), William, Penn College, 1978, p. 373.

<sup>18</sup> Translation by A. J. Arberry, *Poems of al-Mutanabbi*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Translation by A. J. Arberry, *Poems of al-Mutanabbi*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Wahidi, *Diwan*, p. 535. Translated by K. Khalaili, ‘al-Mutanabbi in his Role’, p. 8. We believe that al-Mutanabbi’s pride at this time is a healthy one. It is based on the substantial attributes and a warranted high regard for his special achievement.

needs and those for safety, love, belonging and self-esteem. This final level of Maslow's hierarchy is known as that of "self-actualization" – in other words, becoming what one is peculiarly adapted to be by nature and temperament.

Al-Mutanabbi's aim in life could never be realized unless he was utterly true to his own self and nature. As a self-actualization he could be defined as a person who was no longer principally motivated by the needs for safety, belonging love, status and self-respect because these needs had already been satisfied. However, we may wonder what motivated him, or in other words, what were the psychological systems and theories that gave him motivation and drove his central concepts.

The components of the real self are potentialities. Al-Mutanabbi, who was given the appropriate conditions, was able to grow to realize his inherent potential. He became more completely himself. Thus, he became more easily self-expressive and spontaneous without effort, more daring and courageous. He launched himself fully into the stream of life. He had attained a healthy sense of the self as he was provided with a proper emotional climate, since humans will only grow to be emotionally healthy if they are surrounded by warmth and acceptance.

#### a) *A Self-Actualizer's Love*

Love, for a self-actualizer, consists primarily of a feeling of tenderness and affection coupled with great enjoyment, happiness, satisfaction, elation and even ecstasy. In the most desirable way, the self-actualizer's beloved is perceived as beautiful, good and attractive, there is a simple pleasure in looking at, and being with, the loved one. As a result, there is a tendency to focus the whole attention on the loved one. To forget other people, to narrow perception in such a way so that other things are not noticed.

Al-Mutanabbi's love for Sayf al-Dawlah grew out of his more than satisfactory life with his patron. As the self-actualizer's love relationship continues, there is a growing intimacy and honesty and self-expression, which at the height is a very rare phenomenon. Al-Mutanabbi's intense love for his patron can be deduced from the verses below:

"Why do I hide this love which wastes me away  
While for Sayf al-Dawlah the world feigns love?"  
"Since we all must love him, let us share his love  
Proportionally according to our love of him"<sup>21</sup>

Al-Mutanabbi's expression of his undying love for Sayf al-Dawlah appeared when he mentioned the latter's bravery in his wars with the Byzantines. In the verse below, it shows that he genuinely admired, as well as loved, the Hamdanid prince. He also celebrates the prince's exploits in war, by using martial images that strongly assert valour and an enduring will to cut down the enemy.<sup>22</sup>

"I've visited him when the Indian swords were sheathed  
And I've seen him when swords were dripping blood"  
"The flight of your enemies is victory enough  
Encompassing at once triumph and regret"  
"The rumours of your valour made them flee in fright  
The terror of your name inspired more fear than an mighty army"<sup>23</sup>

In composing this type of poem called panegyrics (love poem), al-Mutanabbi expressed his gratitude as an all-embracing love for Sayf al-Dawlah. His impulse to praise his patron far transcended the responsibilities of his position.

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<sup>21</sup> Translation by S. K. Jayyusi and C. Middleton, 'Qasida 5:2-3', in S. Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Eds.), *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 2, p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> S. K. Jayyusi, 'The Persistence of the Qasida Form', in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa, Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Translation by S. K. Jayyusi and C. Middleton, 'Qasida 5: 4-8', in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, vol. 2, p. 87.

“There I remembered a union it was as if I had never attained  
and a pleasureable period it was as if I had passed in one leap”  
“And a maiden of bewitching eyes, mortal and desire  
When her sweet perfume diffused over and old man he became youthful again”  
“And O my yearning, how long you have continued!  
And O, who will deliver me from the anguish of separation”

Al-Mutanabbi's strong love for Sayf al-Dalwah who can be regarded as his beloved in a spiritual sense, manifested itself perhaps most acutely when he was separated from him. He fondly remembered his lover at this time, and resigned himself to his fate:

“I desire of the Days that which they do not desire, and I  
Complain of our separation to them, but they are its warriors”  
“They banish far a love with whom we are co-joined. So how much  
More the case with a love from whom we are divided”  
“The temper of this world [is such that it] will not let loved  
One stay for long, so how can I ask it to bring back a loved  
One [that has gone]”<sup>24</sup>

In the eyes of al-Mutanabbi, Sayf al-Dawlah was a perfect figure, a role model embodying all that he admired. He personified the Bedouin style of life in Syria with which al-Mutanabbi was so fascinated. Sayf al-Dawlah also possessed the valorous spirit of the desert: he had his warriors into battle personally and never hesitated to engage in single combat.

#### b) *Creativity and Self-Actualizing Person*

According to Maslow, the most universal characteristic of all the people he studied and observed was their creativity, regarding which he notes that a fundamental characteristic of common human nature is a potentially given to all human beings at birth. (Maslow opines that genius, talent and productivity are not synonymous since some of the greatest talent mankind like Van Gogh or Byron were not psychologically healthy people. For him, creativeness is the universal heritage of every human being that is born, and which covaries with psychological health.)

Every self-actualizing person displays a fresh and creative approach to life, a virtue by no means limited to the artist or genius. Al-Tha'alabi lists, among the creative innovations al-Mutanabbi introduced, “addressing the patron as one addresses one's beloved”, and “using expressions proper to love poetry in the description of war”.

The majority both of Eastern and Western critics agree that al-Mutanabbi's poetic performance during his life with Sayf al-Dalwah marked the zenith of his profession. It is important to note that, during this period, he accomplished both commendable levels of poetic production and maturity. The poet's ability to invent something, which would leave its mark on the listener's soul and inspire emotion and passion determined the estimation of his talent. It was judged according to how far it could raise listeners' appreciation to the level of intense delight. It can be argued convincingly that al-Mutanabbi was at his most brilliant in his Saifiyyat-collection of poems, produced during his time with Sayf al-Dawlah.

## CONCLUSION

To recapitulate our discussion, we suggest say that four basic tendencies characterized al-Mutanabbi's journey toward his self-actualization. The first tendency was to strive for his personal satisfaction in

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<sup>24</sup> Translation by K. Khalaili, 'al-Mutanabbi in his Role', poem 4: 1-3.

ego recognition. The second was to struggle toward self-limiting adaptation for the purpose of fitting, belonging and gaining security. The third was toward self-expression and creative accomplishments and the last was toward integration or order upholding.

Al-Mutanabbi's creativity flowed spontaneously from his personality and the key to al-Mutanabbi's triumphs as a panegyrist lies in his relationship with Sayf al-Dawlah. We might affirm that al-Mutanabbi was consciously and courageously struggling towards authentic self-development. However it is especially difficult to judge how far al-Mutanabbi actualized himself as a poet. As we are dealing with internal matters, it is impossible to prove absolutely any hypothesis concerning a figure from the past. Maslovian theory may nevertheless be of considerable value in allowing us to understand the motivation and the mental and emotional structure of the creative individual in general.

Al-Mutanabbi's safety predominated until he obtained secure patronage from the Handanid prince, Sayf al-Dawlah, an aristocratic warrior and the personification of Arab chivalry whose court was renown as a centre of intellectual and cultural excellence. We could say that the fundamental goal which motivated al-Mutanabbi during his time with Sayf al-Dawlah was to become a great poet. His desire to secure a special place at Sayf al-Dawlah's court reflected his ambition to achieve mastery over his art, and his privileged position was to be the means of attaining it. Apart from that it provided a conspicuous indication of the poet's power of creativity, his emotional and intellectual as well as imaginative talents.

It is crucially important to note that for humanistic psychology, in general and Maslovian theory in particular, the problem of creativeness is the problem of the creative person (rather than of simply the creative product, or of creative behaviour). In other words, the 'creative person' is not a special kind of people, but one in whom 'creativity' is unusually strongly developed. Since creative people embody the essence of our creativeness, they represent the problem of the transformation of human nature, the transformation of character, and the full development of the whole person.

It is hoped this effort will contribute to our appreciation of the brilliance of al-Mutanabbi, and of the genius of one of the truly great masters of Arabic literature.

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