

thought, as well as the contributions of Christian Arab thinkers from the renaissance up to the present. Moreover, he considers such contributions as a kind of conspiracy against the world of Islam. Equally, he rejects the interaction of human cultures and the concept of nationalism. Thus, he resorts to communalism which fragments society.

A former Marxist and influential journalist in Egypt, Adel Hussein, reiterates the ideas of Abdul Melik and Hanafi in his *Towards a New Arab Ideology*. Yet he elaborates a new concept which is the relationship of science to faith. In his view, the science of the West is not suitable for the East, not because of local particularity or uneven social development, but because of the eternal contradiction between the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of the East. 'Materialism is atheism which can never be a basis for building a scientific theory, because real science is faith. Consequently, there can never be any science, knowledge or culture beyond the faith of Islam. Such an outlook involves, among other things, racism and a call for self-isolation, as well as a communalist tendency, in addition to turning science into a normative question, changing its meaning from place to place, leading to the impossibility of any scientific laws.'

The above-mentioned names are well-known and highly influential in the sphere of Arab culture. They hardly speak about economic and political dependency, imported technology or the fact that the dominant classes live on the consumption of European commodities. They see only the culture of the West, which in their view is the culture of rationalism, secularism, socialism, Marxism, etc.

While the above-mentioned names, along with many others, are cloaked in the mantle of new fundamentalism, there are others whose function is the same, even if by a different method. This other method is formalism or structuralism. Its outstanding spokesman in the Arab world is Mohammed Abdo Al Jabiri from Morocco, who wants to elevate Arab thought through radical criticism. He draws a line of demarcation between science and ideology, and sees all Arab thought as an ideological discourse which must be replaced by scientific discourse. In his view, the ideological is that which comes close to politics, social classes or the citizens' daily problems. Al Jabiri puts himself above all the social classes and political thought, to deal with the Arab mentality, the Arab personality and its autonomy, and Arab discourse, etc. Doing so, he eliminates all concrete realities to build up a formal relationship between two abstract poles, i.e., the Arab and scientific discourse.

Although Al Jabiri bases all his work on the exclusive difference between the scientific and the ideological, he does not see any necessity to dwell on the social conditions which govern the process of producing scientific knowledge, or the causes which bring about either ideological or scientific discourse. According to him, the production of scientific knowledge appears to be based either on individual genius or subjective inspiration close to prophecy. What is strange about this man of thought, who concentrates on the pure principles of science

free of all social conditions, is that he sometimes moves from theory to politics in order to build a relationship of similarity between Arab nationalism and Islam, whereby the former becomes Islamic to the extent that the latter becomes Arabic. Ultimately, Dr. Al Jabiri demands that the Arab mentality be reformed in order to be capable of understanding modern science and technology. Consequently, the Arab revolution has to be a technological revolution!!!

The above-mentioned names are not exceptions; they reflect the image of the dominant Arab culture which revolves, in general, around two abstract poles, i.e., science and faith. Seeking refuge in abstraction, it refrains from criticizing the existing political regimes, if not supporting them, directly or indirectly, because it considers them capable, sooner or later, of materializing the Arab-Islamic dream by adding the Quran to imported technologies.

Certainly, the forces of rationalism have not lost all their positions in the cultural arena. They are still there in the contributions of a galaxy of thinkers, such as Samir Amin who continues his research on the problem of socialism in conditions of backwardness and dependency; the brave militant, Fuad Zakaria, who is fighting old and new fundamentalism; Abdullah Al Orewi who played an important role in the seventies; the scientist, Mahmud Amin, etc. Yet these democratic and rationalist forces are deprived of the actual possibility of expounding their ideology. They fight from defensive positions, or rather, they fight while retreating in a sense. The dominant forces produce both their ideology and its reader at the same time, while besieging the rationalist intellectual as well as his audience.

Although the theoretical scene is gloomy, the case of the novel is somewhat different.

## THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE NOVEL

The novel occupies a vanguard position in the realm of contemporary Arab writing. It is the literary practice which is closest to the genuine questions of reality, as well as to the problems of the Arab individual. The novel attempts to mirror the daily reality and the social process which has produced it. Sometimes, it may come so close to daily events that it takes the form of a social document. This is what makes the novel the best sphere for identifying the features of the Arab reality in the decades after the June defeat.

The June 1967 defeat was the most serious event in modern Arab history. Its significance and results surpassed those brought about by the establishment of Israel in 1948. Israel's establishment was an expression of the defeat of the Palestinian people and the impotence of the Arab regimes in a certain historical period when they were dependent on the colonial forces. But the June defeat was an expression of the defeat of the Arab revolution as a whole. Arab novelists have dealt with that defeat which was only possible because of the repressive policies which rendered the Arab individual defeated before the combat began. The atmosphere of defeat is there in *When We Gave up the Bridge*, a novel by Abdulrahman Munif,