

which clearly illustrates the frustration of the Arab individual who, before the defeat, had believed that he was advancing towards a new society, based on Arab unity and social progress. The defeat came and took away all dreams and illusions. The atmosphere of defeat is also present in *The Dreary Time* by the Syrian novelist, Hayder Hayder, which depicts the alienation of the Arab individual after the defeat - this alienation which would freeze his will and enable the defeat to continue. The June defeat not only defeated the political regimes or some of them, but it forced every Arab to live with his own defeat.

Something similar is found in *A Thousand and Two Nights* by the Syrian novelist, Hani Al Rahib, and in both *Six Days* and *The Return of the Bird to the Sea* by another Syrian novelist, Halim Barakat who lives in the US. These novels do not present a mere description of battle and defeat, but bring forth a comprehensive critique of the totality of the social phenomena which gave birth to it, including political despotism, marginalization of the masses, backward mentality and the absence of both individual and collective social responsibility.

While revolving around the June defeat, its causes and effects, the Arab novel became a political novel par excellence, because its basic subject is accusation of the existing authorities, considering them the basic factor responsible for the destitution of the Arab reality, which is manifest on many levels. The role of these authorities is destroying the collective social will and reducing the whole society to a political elite, unable to realize its existence unless it negates the whole society. Thus, the question of despotism is the principal subject which has governed the Arab novel for the last twenty years.

One of the most important novels dealing with repression is the masterpiece of Jamal Al Ghaitani, *Al Zaini Barakat*, which revived the Arab literary heritage to reconstruct a current subject and present an image of the typical despot. There is also *August Star* by Sunallah Ibrahim, which condemns every authority that converts man into a mute, muscular force; as well as *Allaz* by the Algerian novelist, Al Tahir Wattar, which exposes the relationship between bloody terror and the ideology of religious fanaticism; and the Egyptian novel, *An Eye with a Metal Lid*, by Sharif Hatatah, which depicts the forms whereby man is destroyed in prison, whether under a monarchy or republican rule.

Perhaps the novel which approaches total documentation, very close to an autobiography of every Arab political prisoner, is *East of the Mediterranean* by A. Munif, which presents the horrible image of the slow death of the political prisoner who is, if not dead within the prison walls, chased after being released by the security service to guarantee his real or allegorical death. The predominance of repression does not allow the Arab novelist to make much distinction between the small prison surrounded by high walls and equipped with its hangmen and instruments of torture, and the huge prison which is the whole society or homeland. In such writing, the Arab novelists do not defend the right of man to a free life to the same extent that they expose the destructive results of

repression which converts society into terrified human atoms, seeking individual salvation and viewing the terms of homeland, community, society, etc., as something foggy, with no sense. While building authority, repression thereby undermines the very base of society.

Coming close to the daily life, to the reasons which have produced and reproduced defeat, the Arab novel has observed the sweeping social transformations in the Arab world during the past twenty years, characterized by defeat in the struggle against Israel, civil war in Lebanon, the disintegration of the political parties of rationalism and democracy, and essentially by the rise of the petrodollar, especially the Saudi one. This latter factor has not only bolstered the forces of reaction and obscurantism, but has succeeded in some Arab countries, through massive financial input, in restructuring the class and social framework. In other words, it has managed in some countries to produce a sociopolitical and cultural balance which would have been impossible without the lever of petrodollars.

One of the most significant novels to have provided an account of the social changes is *The Epidemic* by H. Rahib, which is one of the most important Arab novels in recent years. It depicts the tragic course of the Arab dream of liberation from its predominantly romantic and freely innocent beginning, up to a society of lust, greed, extreme egoism, etc. A course that begins with complete innocence ends, after the attainment of power, in comprehensive sin. Power was a dream, being a way to realize freedom and justice; the same power has, after seizing it, become an instrument for repressing both freedom and justice, very close to complete sin or an epidemic ready to destroy man.

There is also *The Distant Echo* by Fuad Tekerli, which describes the social transformations in Iraq in the sixties, which brought the Baath Party to power and constituted the beginning of the historical defeat of the communists. In this novel, we do not read the destiny of certain individuals but that of a society where the new is defeated by the old. Then there is *Disintegration*, a novel by the Algerian author, Rashed Bou Jadra, that deals with the reasons which deprived the Algerian Communist Party of its expected historical role, due to its inability to grasp the national specificity. *Feast for the Seaweed*, by H. Hayder, is a similar work; it depicts the tragic end of the revolutionary forces in Iraq and Algeria.

The June defeat is shown in the Arab novel as the beginning of a whole series of defeats. After the defeat of the Arab military, the defeat grows to include all the positive human values, as if the Israeli victory were a victory for all that is obscurant and inhuman in the Arab world. Death is therefore the natural end of every person who defends noble human values. The ordinary civil servant in *The Pains of Mr. Maarouf*, by Ghaeb Tuma Fereman, moves towards death. The Iraqi revolutionary dies in exile in *Feast for the Seaweed*. The same fate befalls the ordinary man in *Distant Echo*. The artist in *The Tragedy of Dimitrio*, by Hanna Mina from Syria, perishes because the cult of quantity and money leaves no room for either art or the artist. A similar destiny awaits the individual who dreams of the revolution at a time of social disintegration in *The Epidemic* by H. Rahib.

Individual as well as collective death remains the primary