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ACCULTURATION AS A THEME IN CONTEMPORARY ARAB LITERATURE

I

Acculturation, or more precisely Westernization, in the Near and Middle East has gone through distinct typical phases. After the shock of inferiority discovered, an almost complete surrender to the foreign values and (not infrequently misunderstood) aspirations; then, with Westernization partially realised, a recoiling from the alien, which however continues to be absorbed greedily, and a falling back on the native tradition; this tradition is restyled and, in some cases, newly created with borrowed techniques of scholarship to give respectability to the results. Finally, with Westernization very largely completed in terms of governmental reforms, acceptance of the values of science and adoption of Western literary and artistic form, regained self-confidence expresses itself in hostility to the West and insistence on the native and original character of the borrowed product.

It is during this stage that a deliberate *prise de conscience* of one's cultural character and its relationship to the native past and the alien intruder is sought. This *prise de conscience* uses

at first historical material projecting predetermined conclusions into a description of the nation's development designed to buttress its self-respect. As a second and so far last step, literature begins to describe or dramatise the culture conflict to which the authors, or their fathers, have been exposed.

II

The process of acculturation, with its quest for a nex identification, the awakening of a responsiveness to new or hitherto disregarded stimuli, the intoxication of discovery, the embarrassment felt at the continuing social and intellectual heritage, and the anxiety to encounter one's aspirations for the future in the very past one has been so eager to slough off—this process is one of simultaneous triumph and pain, of a sense of vigor and inferiority, curiously blended in despondency over the inherited setting and the arrogancy of the self-asserting conqueror. The individual and his society are divided against themselves, suffering from feeling at the same time attracted and repelled when confronted with the nonchalant aggression of Western mentality.

To my knowledge it was Ibn Khaldūn, the great Tunisian statesman, historian and jurist, who first presented a sociological analysis of the fascination which power holds for the overpowered. "The vanquished," he wrote in 1377, "always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive mark(s), his dress, his occupation, and all his other conditions and customs. The reason for this is that the soul always sees perfection in the person who is superior to it and to whom it is subservient. It considers him perfect, either because the respect it has for him impresses it, or because it erroneously assumes that its own subservience to him is not due to the nature of defeat but to the perfection of the victor. If that erroneous assumption fixes itself in the soul, it becomes a firm belief. The soul, then, adopts all the manners of the victor and assimilates itself to him. This, then, is imitation.

"Or, the soul may possibly think that the superiority of the victor is not the result of his group feeling, *'asabiyya*, or great fortitude, but of his customs and manners. This also would be an erroneous concept of superiority, and (the consequence) would be the same as in the former case.

"Therefore, the vanquished can always be observed to assimilate, *yatashabbahu*, themselves to the victor in the use and style of dress, mounts, and weapons, indeed, in everything."[1]

What Ibn Khaldūn had to say almost six hundred years ago on the imitation of the conqueror by the conquered applies without qualification to the relation of colonial to metropolitan culture in our age and with but a slight amplification to the pull exerted by any superior civilisation, even if its representatives are not possessed of any political control.

"(This attraction) goes so far," Ibn Khaldūn continues, "that a nation dominated by another, neighboring nation will show a great deal of assimilation and imitation, *iqtidā'*. At this time, this is the case in Spain (i.e., in Muslim Spain, *al-Andalus*). The (Muslim) Spaniards are found to assimilate themselves to the Galician nations, *al-Jalāliqa* (i.e., the Christian Spaniards) in their dress, their emblems, and most of their customs and conditions. This goes so far that they even draw pictures on the walls and (have them) in buildings and houses. The intelligent observer will draw from this the conclusion that it is a sign of comination (by others)."[2]

Ibn Khaldūn is not concerned, however, with the psychological aspects of imitation and assimilation. He appears unaware of the driving power of the need to belong with the superior group, of the urge to secure the self-respect, individual and collective, by an attempt at cultural, hence social, hence political adjustment, and he is completely oblivious of the hurtfulness inherent in the *tashabbuh* which he describes. He simply is not interested in what to us has become one of the most disconcerting features of acculturation: that only in very rare cases is the achievement of progress, even of ardently desired progress, accompanied by what a French sociologist has called "confort dans le progrès."[3] Yet it is the near-impossibility of painless accomodation to culture change which is causing much of the unrest that is today

[1] *Muqaddima* (Cairo, n.d.), p. 147; ed. E. Quatremère (Paris, 1858), I, 266-67; trans. F. Rosenthal (New York, 1958), I, 299.

[2] *Muqaddima* (Cairo), p. 147; ed. E. Quatremère, I, 267; trans. Rosenthal, I, 300.

[3] R. Maunier, *Sociologie coloniale*, II (2nd ed., Paris, 1949), 372.

tormenting the world outside the core countries of Western civilisation.

Western man has assigned to himself an infinite task in every sphere of life; "hence his willingness to recognise his insights as provisional, his anticipation of his life-work being superseded by subsequent correction and refutation, but also his conviction of the manipulability of the social and economic universe with the implied duty to strive after this worldly perfection which he yet knows to be unattainable."[4] Operationally, we have accepted psychological and partial in lieu of absolute and final truth; its deficiencies are bearable only because with the advance of science and social organisation the most immediately unbalancing errors are directly discarded. The stability of our mental and social universe hinges, as it were, on its rapid change. Our morality is built on the demand that everyone be fit to master any situation with which he may be confronted, that he must never prove himself inferior to his self-image. We may be destroyed, but we may not give up.

Acculturation to the Occident would, for full effectiveness, compel acceptance of our basic outlook and our basic personality traits. But when acculturation is begun and even when it has developed to a point from which the acculturating civilisation no longer is able to retreat, these ultimate implications are not realised. In his dreams of the future the reform-minded Middle Easterner sees himself merely in a technologically, politically, etc. improved, "Westernized" society, but a society of the same binding absoluteness as the one in which his ancestors grew up; he envisages himself as secure in a stable network of dependencies and protectively limited, i.e. government-shouldered responsibilities. The new truth, more effective than the old, but as final, is not to throw him on the road to everlasting transformation but to shield him from being abandoned to the whims of the foreigner, the tortures of self-criticism, the unpredictable risks of an expanding universe. The longing for the dependable si-

[4] G. E. von Grunebaum, *Self-Image and Approach to History*, 1958, p. 10 of mimeograph. This sense of obligation to improve an imperfect world is a characteristic of the modern West only; it was absent as late as the fifteenth century; *cf.*, e.g., J. Huizinga, *Herbst des Mittelalters* (7th. ed., Stuttgart, 1953), pp. 32-33.

tuation, the withdrawal from ultimate responsibility which used to be God's and has become the state's, constitutes the basis of that *colonisabilité*, without which, in the view of the French colonial administrator Mannoni and the Algerian Muslim Malik Bennabi (born 1905), colonisation never has been possible.[5] Actually, however, colonisation is bound to bring the experience of threatened dependence-relationships to wider and wider circles of the colonised—in precise proportion to the degree of Westernization and the degree of self-government attained. One wonders sometimes whether the craving for liberation in dependent areas and the craving for "full" independence in many states outside the Western core zone is not *also* a craving for the restoration of the traditional dependence systems, an honorable means for a psychological return to the good old days that never were.[6]

The realisation that directed change was possible, that improvements could be compelled and even planned, the malaise of the Middle Eastern intellectual who felt uncomfortable in his defeat-stained tradition and equally uncomfortable in his marginal status vis-à-vis the Occident, who might feel the Westerner's superior in his religious status as a Muslim and his inferior in the desired mastery of the contemporary reality, the pent-up irritation with himself, the state, the foreigner, his tradition, the frustrations of reform—these moods found their expression in a thirst for indiscriminate freedom, active distrust of authority and a turbulent zeal that as likely as not would lead into a cul-de-sac.

The Iranian writer, Fereidoun Esfandiary (born 1931), says in the Foreword of a novel which depicts the political life of his country in the early years after the Second World War: "Never before had (in Asia) the clamor for change been more widespread or more determined. Men were no longer willing to accept blindly, as holy and irreversible, the institutions that had been conveyed from generation to generation through many dark, miasmic centuries.

"Young men and women oppressed by domestic rigidities

[5] O. Mannoni, *Psychologie de la colonisation* (Paris, 1950), p. 87; for Bennabi *cf.* G. E. von Grunebaum, "Das geistige Problem der Verwestlichung in der Selbstsicht der arabischen Welt," *Saeculum*, X (1959-60), 289-327, at p. 321.

[6] Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 136, seems to think so with regard to the Madagascans.

abandoned their ancestral hovels and travelled far away; women trapped in their impossible veils struggled in many diverse ways to throw off the bondage of fathers, brothers, and husbands; peasants, landless and forgotten, journeyed to the cities to join others in fighting the feudal systems that had stifled their initiative and prolonged their poverty; the religious, shackled by their amulets, fought religion in the name of religion.

"Urgent cries for Freedom rang from one end of Asia to another.

"It was, however, through politics that the people sought to fulfil their goal. Politics offered the most respectable and dramatic opportunity for the release of their hostilities and for the expression of their hopes and their ideals."[7]

In the Moroccan Driss Chraïbi's (born 1926) novel *Le Passé simple* Haj Fatmi Ferdi berates his son for what he has become and for what he has done under the impact of French education. After pointing out that in Morocco the prospective reformer would find it easier to whiten the Negroes than to change existing conditions Haj Fatmi breaks out:

"And then there were you. You, the poison. And I should not think that the Residency would have endeavored to let its cultural contribution reach our sons in the form of poison; or if this was their intention, it constitutes violation of the soul; in any event, from the day that you entered a Lycée you have been nothing but that: poison. Everywhere did you see social injustices and, as you said, in one and the same person, from one moment to the next, temporal injustices: who asked you to see them? Who the Hell taught you that they were injustices? embittered people whom you wanted to comfort—a knight errant in the century of the black market!—oppressed people whom you waved like a banner; you sowed rebellion among your brothers. You emptied my supplies in my storehouse into the hands of jackals who immediately returned to their good old beggary; was one bag of barley or of oats enough to shake them up? You find this funny! The poison, you injected it even into the extreme resignation of your mother. The idea of a revolt would never have entered her mind. You stuffed her full of it. She died of it."

[7] *The Day of Sacrifice* (New York, 1959), pp. vii-viii.

And then Haj Fatmi widens the accusation to embrace a whole generation.

"I am going to tell you: you are not the only one. I do not know anyone of your generation who does not resemble you ... The young are insolent, charged (*voltés*) with complexes, proud of their complexes, thieves taking compound interest from their loot, cynics—and if by chance they enter a mosque it is to pray to God with a loud voice to make them orphans the faster the better. This youth that preens itself with being nationalist, the only elements of the population who are convinced that Atatürk guides them from beyond the grave. And they complain ...."[8]

In defense of the viewpoint of the young speaks Leïla Baalbaki (Lailà Ba'lbakkī; b. 1936), a Lebanese *muslima* become famous almost overnight through her novel *Anā ahyà* (I am alive). "The fight which we are leading within our narrow frontiers aims at loosening the grip which fiction has over our history, our society, our state, our people. ... Our life begins henceforth with the break (with the past) and rises up ever more violently, ever more savagely, ever more constructively. From our early youth, in our effort to emancipate ourselves from all the foreign elements that lay us waste, confident in ourselves alone, concentrated on ourselves to become better fit for liberation, by means of that irruption into the tumult of life which will make explode our potentialities, too long oppressed, we are giving and taking at the same time ... We reject everything that awakens in us the slightest sentiment of weakness and inferiority, even though we should not go so far as to deny that man is all the more miserable the more he is eminent and all the more imposing the more he is low and impotent. What matters in every regard is that our experiences flow from a human reality sufficiently intense for us to accept it, and that they do not gather up the *débris* of external influences which decompose and annihilate it (i.e. this reality)."[9]

[8] *Le Passé simple*, Paris, 1954, pp. 248-49; 251.

[9] *Nous sans masque* (a lecture given on May 11, 1959); French translation by M. Barbot, *Orient*, XI (1959), 147-63, at p. 158. *Anā ahyà* was published in 1958. What Augustin Berque (1884-1946) said of the Algerian intellectual applies with equal force to the Arab, the Middle Eastern intellectual in general,

What means is there to pacify this turmoil? What is the therapy that will give direction to this irresistible if aimless passion? The answer is: self-understanding. But what is the nature of this self-understanding to be? And what its formative purpose?

III

The objective is clear: a self-image must be perceived or if needs be, created, apt to facilitate the realisation of collective ambition and, more immediately, the reparation of collective pride. The sting must be taken out of the prevailing dissatisfaction with actual conditions, cultural and political, by having circumstances, of which a specific and unessential segment of the heritage may be one, take the blame rather than any of the more permanent and pervasive factors of history such as geography or the natural endowment of the people themselves. History must furnish the evidence of the Messianic hope.

To this extent, scant disagreement would arise. There can be less certainty, however, when it comes to determining the pragmatically most effective measures that need to be taken to remove that "tornness" of the Arab intelligentsia who, like the brilliant Tunisian poet, Abū 'l-Qāsim as-Shābbī (1909-1934) are fascinated by the "efficient and seductive" civilisation of the West but feel obligated to their own "dusty or embryonic" culture and who will tend to reject their heritage for that of the Occident and to construct, in justification, a self-image of dismal poverty and sterility.[10]

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and perhaps to most of the Western-schooled élites of new or resurgent nations in Asia and Africa. Ideas with which one discourses in the West, become in the Maghreb "tyrannical, imperious mistresses (which) jealously seize the mind. They are ideas that are a moving force, but also defensive reflexes. Here one thinks, not for the sake of thinking, but against someone..." ("Les intellectuels algériens," *Revue Africaine*, XCI (1947; no. 410-411), 123-151, at p. 138). Another observation of Berque's deserves recording as it describes to perfection one important aspect of the contact between the intellectual and his people and which compensates for the prevailing sense of mutual estrangement: "The exciting of the people's instincts by an ideology which remains inaccessible to it." (*ibid.*, p. 128).

[10] *Cf.* A. Ghedira, "Essai d'une biographie d'Abū l-Qāsim al-Šābbī," *Arabica*, VI (1959), 266-80, esp. at pp. 280 and 273-74.

It is not Westernization that is offensive but the rationale of the proposed acculturation. To be acceptable it must be aspired to in the service of a restoration of the *'urūba* to its pristine glory. Costi Zurayk (b. 1909) advocates an incisive reorganisation on Western lines as the goal of that (peaceful) revolution toward progressiveness which alone can secure for the Arabs the attainment of their legitimate cultural aspirations. The separation of state and religious organisation is demanded, "for nationalism is inconsistent with literal theocracy. The states of the West," Zurayk argues characteristically, "have only realized national strength to the extent that they have uprooted sectarianism and organized their life on the basis of the latest achievements of open-minded, cumulative thought." For a similar reason, the positive and empirical sciences of the West must be made to replace the bequest of the past, "benumbing fancy and insubstantial romanticism, the lost guides that lead" ever further astray.[11]

"Some of us still believe that the attacks of the Turks and the Mongols are what destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate and Arab power in general. But here also the fact is that the Arabs had been defeated internally before the Mongols defeated them and that, had those attacks been launched against them when they were in the period of growth and enlightenment, the Mongols would not have overcome them. On the contrary, the attacks might have revitalized and re-energized them."[12] So the Arabs will have to acquire more of the drives and means of modern civilisation. And when it is urged by some that such acquisition represents a "departure from our history and loss of our national traditions" it must be conceded "that some of our traditions are unsound, and (that) these will be demolished and routed by the forces of modern civilisation whether we desire it or not." What is more, " that which is lasting and sound, and suitable to this (or any) time, can only be discovered, separated from the temporary and the worthless, and vitally and completely assimilated into our present lives, by the action of that liberated,

[11] *The Meaning of the Disaster* (originally published in 1948), trans. R. B. Winder (Beirut, 1956), p. 40.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

organized mind which we must acquire from modern civilisation and on the foundation of which we must build our revolution."[13]

Zurayk's views, formulated under the impact of the lost war against Israel in 1948, are but an extension, as it were, of ideas which in regard to Egyptian (Arab) literature had been formulated with remarkable precision by 'Īsà 'Ubaid in 1921.

"We feel aggrieved to state that modern Egyptian literature in our present time is neither independent nor marked by the seal of our personality. It is still subjected to Arabic literature, frozen in its imitation of the ancient or influenced by the foreign literature which we have had to study in order to learn the secrets of true and superior art and to borrow from it its rules, its laws and its style." The difference between the two authors lies in the fact that 'Īsà 'Ubaid feels the time has come to free Egyptian writing from the foreign model (as well as the indigenous tradition) while Zurayk sees a period of further intensive adjustment to West lying ahead. But is this difference really so great considering 'Īsà's repeated plea for a veristic art on the European pattern to give the *coup de grâce* to the ancient literature which is characterised as "rigidly frozen, obscure and banal?"[14]

The attitudes behind programs of this kind have their analogs among every intelligentsia which hopes for a cultural revival that is, more often than not, intended as a stepping stone toward political reform and an increase in the international power of its society. The Slavophil, or more properly "Russophil," Ivan Kireevskij (1806-1856), in discussing the nature of European civilisation and its relation to Russia (in 1852) criticises the prevailing opinion that in his country there used to be nothing but barbarism and that Russian *Bildung* began only when the Russians decided to imitate Europe, so far in advance of themselves in all intellectual pursuits. The Western Europeans are here conceived of as the teachers, the Russians as the eager

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[14] Preface to Ihsān Khānum, trans. H. Pérès, "Prefaces by the Arabian Authors to Their Novels or Collections of Short Stories and Novellas," *Annales de l'Institut d'études orientales* (Université d'Alger), V (1939-41), 137-195, at p. 159.

students, so gifted that they were likely to outdo their masters before long.[15]

This relationship of voluntary and at times, enthusiastic submission to the teacher and guide is the harder to sustain the greater the advances that have been realised. The heart will not be at peace unless it has been assured that the existing differential in level is but momentary and that essentially the student is the equal of his teacher, if not actually his superior. In other words, at a certain stage of the acculturation process resituating and re-evaluating oneself through a re-evaluation of one's society and culture imposes itself as a psychological obsession. As one might expect it is the model civilisation and its representatives, be they colonisers, "imperialists" or merely individual bearers of the foreign culture who provide unwittingly a good many of the data and viewpoints by means of which this self-interpretation becomes feasible and meaningful.

It is in terms of a Western philosophy of culture that, in a passionate and beautifully written paragraph, Leïla Baalbaki demands an end to the confusion between "the heritage" and "the past"—this confusion has proved calamitous; for by castigating the Arab past the invaders cowed the spokesmen of the Arab heritage. With the specter of their own civilisation, disguised as liberty, the foreign nations frightened the Arabs into losing their self-confidence and reduced them to a chain of stillborn generations. Never will the Arabs compel the respect of mankind unless they rip the veils asunder that now mask their history and expose the bricks which their ancestors have laid in the great edifice of human solidarity. No foreign state must henceforth be allowed to render aid in even our vital concerns as long as it brushes aside the fact that it is the Arabs "who have erected the temples of Baalbek, built the Pyramids (!), promulgated the charter for the service of humanity, known God, and cleft the waves to spread science to the four corners of the earth."[16]

[15] "Ueber das Wesen der europäischen Kultur und ihr Verhältnis zur russischen" *apud* D. Tschižewskij and D. Groh, *Europa und Russland. Texte zum Problem des westeuropäischen und russischen Selbstverständnisses* (Darmstadt, 1959).

[16] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

The foreigner must be expelled, his spirit submerged in the resurgent genius of the heritage. His intrusion has been a crime mainly because it imposed "inorganic" change on the structure of the glorious past. The coloniser and conqueror have laid the groundwork of a Renaissance by creating the nations that now may strive toward a rise that to them appears as a resurgence. The enforced stability of a common order, political unity, internal security have made it possible to conceive of a policy of cultural renewal whose motivation has been characterised by a European observer with the telling phrase—"they want to be like us, but not with us."[17]

That a society which is proud of its past and basically convinced of the superiority of its traditional structure should be resentful of change, induced or imposed, is as natural as the tendency of a conquering society to introduce reforms in morally sensitive areas. Already Plutarch reports that Gelon of Syracuse (*ca.* 491-478 B.C.) wrote into a treaty with the Carthaginians a prohibition of their customary child sacrifices.[18] And in another work Plutarch raises the question whether in one's colonies one ought to abolish cruel and barbarous customs, especially as these relate to sacrifices of women and children.[19] Needless to say, Islam has labored everywhere to make usage conform to its precepts; the history of Morocco, for example, is one long battle to Islamicise the Berbers. As early as 1582 did the Moghul Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) discourage the self-immolation of the Hindu widow on her husband's pyre,[20] a measure which the British found it necessary to repeat in the form of an absolute prohibition in 1829. The complaint which marks interference *per se* a grievance arises for the most part only when the idealisation of the past has become an instrument for the shaping of the future.

This reaction, however, is conditioned by the fact that "civi-

[17] Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[18] *Apophthegmata basileon*, 175A (Bernardakis, II, 9).

[19] *Aetia Romana*, quest. 83, 283F-284C (Bernardakis, II, 300-302); *cf.* Maunier, *op. cit.*, II, 110-111 and 117.

[20] Abū 'l-Fadl 'Allāmī, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, 2nd. rev. ed. Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar (Calcutta, 1939-49), II, 45 (*cf.* also I, 215); R. S. Sharma, *The Crescent in India* (rev. ed.; Poona, 1954), p. 449 and 469.

lising" or rather assimilating to the civilisation of the ruler is more often than not one of the (stated or unstated) purposes of colonisation or domination in general.[21] This is universally true even as colonisation as a culture contact through conquest, acquisition or occupation (of empty land) is a universal and, for that matter, extremely ancient phenomenon of which, incidentally, the growth of the Arab empire and its aftermath provide a number of particularly striking instances.

Culturally speaking, the modern "conqueror" has given more than he received. This observation is especially true in the context of acculturation leading to the revival of the indigenous society. Much more than individual actions such as codification of laws under the influence of, or in competition with the Occident or the reviewing of existing institutions, has the necessity of a general stocktaking of intellectual and organisational possessions enhanced the rise of self-consciousness and not infrequently the sense of pride in the heritage, if not in the past—to borrow Miss Baalbaki's distinction. Paradoxical though this may seem, it was the European scholar who revealed to the Indians their forgotten sacred books, to the Egyptians the glories of their pre-Islamic civilisation, to the Arab world as a whole the beauties of its popular literature. It is hardly an overstatement to claim that the Western concern for their history, the Western appreciation of their past achievement secured this history and this achievement the prestige needed for them to become levers in that revaluation of the autochtonous civilisation whose frequent superficiality and cliché-likeness in no way detracted from its psychological and political effectiveness. Occidental scholarship furnishes the arms to combat the West; in combating the West, its scholarship is combated as well and room is made for a mystique of the past (no longer endangered by criticism), a mystique of the kind that all nationalisms everywhere are yearning for but which the rationalistic bent of scientific research has made it increasingly difficult for us to construct and to sustain.

The recourse to the indigenous past is, however, also a means of self-protection against possible rejection by the civilisation to which assimilation is desired—and in large measure achieved.

[21] *Cf.* Maunier, *Sociologie coloniale*, I (Paris, 1932), 68-72.

Chraibi has given expression to this aspect of the flight into the tradition which, in the last analysis, has long been abandoned.

"You have sprung from the Orient and by means of your painful past, your fancies, your education, you will triumph over the Orient. You have never believed in Allah, you know how to dissect the legends, you think in French, you read Voltaire and admire Kant. Only the Occidental world for which you are destined appears to you speckled with stupidities and blemishes from which you are escaping. Moreover, you anticipate its hostility; it will not accept you at the first trial. And on the point of exchanging your box for a flap-seat (*strapontin*), you beat a retreat (*tu as des reculs*)."[22]

The *recul* of the Westernized is likely to lead into active opposition, at times into a two-front war—against the indigenous tradition and the civilisation of the Occident, each battle conducted as fight for the true against the distorted, for the blessed origins against the decay he suffered at the hand of the *'ulamā'*, for the humanitarian ideals of the West against the politicians who are debasing them. It cannot possibly be overemphasised that the arms leveled at the West by its opponents in the Middle East and beyond, those arms which a modern opponent would wish to use on the international stage, have one and all been preshaped by the West itself. This is true for the ideologies of nationalism and the mythology of absolute sovereignty; but it is true as much for the depreciation of colonial rule, the theme of the equality of the races and the potential equality of civilisations—which last doctrine must sound somewhat absurd in the ears of those who use it to remake their heritage on the Western model.

There is nothing astonishing in this situation. For the three principal motivations for acculturation in our time are in psychological and, to some extent also in chronological order: admiration for the richer civilisation of the West; the use of it as a means to attain and demonstrate social distinction within one's own group or people; and its adoption as a means of emancipation.[23]

[22] *Passé simple*, p. 99.

[23] On this point *cf.* Maunier, I, 138 ff.

IV

It is in the realisation of this last goal that a *prise de conscience* becomes imperative, that the personality, as it were, of one's own society has to be pitted against the (usually freely stylised) "personality" of the West, and that the shaping of the "personality" image of one's people proves unavailing unless this "personality" is placed against or allowed to arise from the background of history. The need for recourse to history is a direct outgrowth of human insecurity. Precedent bolsters and facilitates decision. Where the stars can no longer be invoked to illuminate the future, past achievement can. Not only do "happy nations have a history"[24] but they are willing to accept their history as it is, with its weaknesses and limitations. Does any Englishman or American feel humiliated when, as so frequently happens, it is pointed out to him by an Arab interlocutor that his ancestors were barbarians and worse at a time when the caliphate led the civilised world? In fact, his is likely to be a composite reaction—a faint suspicion that, for personal reasons, the Arab may be overstating his case and a discreet pride, left inarticulate, in his own comparatively close involvement in a great human triumph. When Goethe[25] says that reminding a nation of its past in a perceptive manner will create a general sense of well-being, of being pleased with the ancestors' virtues and smilingly indulgent of their vices which it deems to have long overcome; when Goethe envisages this peaceful satisfaction as the typical response to history, he is indeed describing but the attitude of a happy, self-assured and self-satisfied society, of a society that, in a sense, has little need of that consultation with history, which nations faced with the psychological complexities of acculturation seek so desperately.

Consultation with history presupposes a certain familiarity with its essential facts, bare or stylised, on the part of a large section of any given society. To create this familiarity is in the early phase of the search for identification the function of the

[24] This is the suggestive title of a study by O. Hatzfeld in the *Cahiers du monde non chrétien*, XVI (1950), 387-403 (on which *cf.* G. E. von Grunebaum, *Saeculum*, X, 318).

[25] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Buch 17 (Hanser-Ausgabe, S. 564).

historical novel. In the Arabic speaking world the taste for this genre, adopted from the West, dominates prose fiction between 1880 and 1904. Jurjī Zaidān (1861-1914), the leading representative of the historical novel in Arabic, clearly states its function in the Preface to his *Charlemagne and 'Abdarrahmān* (1904): " ... the people has lively desire to read Muslim history, that is to say, the history of the Orient, its literature and its sciences after the Roman period." The novel gives the reader the knowledge of the historical data in a much more plastic and drastic manner than a history book and succeeds at the same time in acquainting him with the mores of the period in a direct and persuasive fashion.[26] In fact, Jurjī Zaidān intended to present his public with a complete cursus of Middle Eastern history in novel form, from the pre-Islamic period to the days of the greatest splendor of the caliphate, a plan, incidentally, which he was able to carry out to a remarkable extent.

Once a certain measure of familiarity with the past is attained and the habit of having recourse to it is established it becomes possible to use it as the foundation and proof of a political program and a political mystique. Perhaps the most brilliant example in the Arab world of this blending of past and future in a political vision is the article by 'Abdarrahmān 'Azzām (who from 1945-1952 was to be the first Secretary General of the Arab League; 1893-1955) "The Arabs, People of the Future", published in the Palestinian journal *al-'Arab* in 1932. After pleading for Arab unification on the analogy of the unification of Italy and Germany in the nineteenth century 'Azzām describes the Arabs as a youthful people in spite of the fact that they are "one of the ancient races that have given the world great civilizations." Unification would permit the Arabs to show new forces and abilities over and above those they possessed at the time of their first successes against Romans and Persians and ever since throughout thirteen centuries against the nations of East and West. The achievement of the past turns into the cornerstone of

[26] *Cf.* Pérès, *op. cit.*, p. 142. *Cf.* also Jamīl al-Mudawwar, *Hadārat al-Islām fī Dār as-salām* (1888), for whose Preface cf. *ibid.*, p. 140; a detailed study of Mudawwar has been prepared by Erika Röcher, *Untersuchungen zu Gamīl al-Mudauwars Hadārat al-Islām...* (Berlin, 1958).

a mystical vision of what lies ahead." ... in saving the Arabs, (the people of Arab tongue) will save the universe, that universe whose civilisation has become senile and whose culture is about to go bankrupt; that world over which materialism has spread its wing since the civilisation of the Arabs has reached its dusk."[27]

"On the other hand, the war of the classes is on the point of breaking out. Now there does not exist in the universe a race professing faith in equality and placing itself far above matter like the Arabs. If the Arab race becomes predominant, their qualities will become dominant with them and the material life will decline so the spiritual life may rise. And if the Arabs give their qualities and instil life to the universe they will have saved it from the calamities with which it struggled and they will have created it anew."[28]

The stylisation of the past can and will, however, be rendered more precise or more concrete through selection of one particular period as the *pièce justificative* of the future, as the model on which the future must be patterned. It is only natural that next to the period of the greatest splendor of Muslim civilisation in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, the period of the Islamic origins should be most frequently singled out for this role and that, consequently, it has had to undergo a good deal of reconstructing in which it has been viewed, depending on the writer's outlook, as socialistic, religiously impeccable, simple, pure, ever-victorious. To many (but by no means all), the brief period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (632-660) is the only period in which a truly Islamic state existed. Then and only then did the world in the Muslim domain enjoy a perfect balance of religious and political, practical and spiritual aspirations and activities.[29]

[27] The sense of the universal messianic significance of the development of one's own society recurs on all cultural levels; *cf.* e.g., the belief of the Papua in New Guinea who, on the defeat of the Japanese at the end of World War II, thought the Manseren (Messiah) on his way to New Guinea "to herald the beginning of the Golden Era of the Papuans which at the same time is the golden era of the world"; C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* (The Hague and Bandung, 1958), p. 13, note 1.

[28] *Documents de la Revue des deux Mondes*, I, July 1958, pp. 43 and 44.

[29] *Cf.* G. E. von Grunebaum, "Fall and Rise of Islam. A Self-View," *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome, 1956), I, 420-33, at

Other than most nations and individuals the Arab-Muslim leaders of that time did not assume rulership without previous education of their character and previous cleansing of their souls; they realised that man consists of body and soul, of reason and emotion, and were thus capable to develop a civilisation in keeping with human nature.[30] So Islam was able to implement if only for a brief span the principles of a political liberty holding the mean between democracy and aristocracy.[31] In short, the period has been selected as one of political and more so, of sociological excellence, or rather, uniqueness.

The pragmatically purposeful idealisation of Muslim society in history has its parallels in the pragmatically purposeful idealisation of Russian society (before its modernisation was begun by Peter the Great), which is typical of the Slavophiles. To quote Kireevskij once more—the passage is especially significant because its author like the Arab writers of more recent days is concerned with fighting Westernization by means of a self-image that itself is very largely a result of acculturation accomplished.

"While the orthodox Church directed society in the same manner that the mind directs the body, it never endeavored to impose on secular institutions the spirit of an ecclesiastical institution as it was inherent in the monkish knightly orders, the courts of the inquisition and other temporal-spiritual institutions of the West ... (Other than in the West) there were in Russia neither conquerors nor conquered. The country did not know an iron-bound separation of rigid estates, neither oppression for the one, nor privileges for the other, it did not know the resulting political and intellectual battles, nor the mutual contempt, hate and envy of the estates ... In this guise, Russian society developed independently and naturally, borne ahead by a single inner conviction, the work of the Church and of popular tradition.

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p. 425, with reference to 'Alī al-Hasanī an-Nadwī, *Mā dhā khasara 'l-'ālam bi'nhitāt al-muslimīn?* (2nd ed., Cairo, 1370-1951), pp. 100-101.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 424, with reference to Nadwī, pp. 96-100.

[31] *Cf.* G. E. von Grunebaum in *Klassizismus und Kulturverfall*, eds. G. E. von Grunebaum and W. Hartner (Frankfurt am Main, 1960), p. 28 and the materials and references on pp. 28-30.

Nevertheless or rather, precisely because of this situation, sentimental enthusiasm for equality was as foreign to it as oppressive privileges. ... Because of the naturalness, simplicity and harmony of the prevailing conditions, the laws that expressed them were without any formal artificiality," in contrast to the jurisprudence of the West which identifies the law with its form and considers the letter of the law the embodiment of absolute reason.[32]

The need to come to terms with the present through an adjustment of the past appears to be universal and in large measure independent of the level of sophistication which the crisis-bound society has attained. The Madagascan *demi-évolué* who in 1945 and 1948 published under the *nom de plume* of Dama Ntsoha two tracts, *Les Temps nouveaux* and *La Démocratie malgache* (both in his own language and in French)[33] proposes a reorganisation of his country on the basis of the *fokon'olona*, a kind of village council, whose origin he projects, not quite accurately, into the remote darknesses of the past. The government resumes the character of an assembly of notables who are to revive the paternalistic régime which the French superseded. This concept is widened in the second treatise where the *fokon'olona* (whose administrative structure is no longer clearly recognisable) are identified with the collectivity as such which, in tune with the traditional, pre-modernist view of the people, includes the dead. The overcoming of the paternalistic village councils is buttressed by recourse to a more distant and hence more genuinely *malegasy* past in which Buddhism was the religion of the island. By adopting an ancient though imaginary tradition Dama Ntsoha finds the strength to abandon a more recent tradition of undisputable reality.

The Arabs as well as other non-Western nations who fight free of the West while acculturating to it are taking the road which the Russians took little more than a century ago. From unconditional admiration of the West they moved in the work of figures like P. Y. Chaadaev (born between 1793-96; died during the Crimean War) toward transcending the discomfort

[32] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 281-83.

[33] On these books *cf.* Mannoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-97.

of an unsatisfactory past—unsatisfactory, that is, in terms of the desired self-image—by first revaluing their lack of a (suitable) history as an advantage: the embarrassing *tabula rasa* reveals itself suddenly as an unlimited opportunity for a young and vigorous people.[34] The contrast to the Arab approach could not be more striking as regards the manipulation of the actual past, but intent and technique are the same. The classical formulation appears in a letter which Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) wrote to the German revolutionary Georg Herwegh (1817-1875) under the impact of the failure of the French and German upheavals in 1848-49. "Russia appears to be the last nation that still is full of youthful demands on life, at a time when the other nations want peace; it appears in the reckless energy of its wild strengths at a time when the others feel tired and exhausted... Many races of people made their exit from the stage of history without ever having fully lived; but, unlike Russia, they did not have such colossal demands on the future. They know: in history, *tarde venientibus* not *ossa*, but the best fruits, if they are only capable of assimilating them."[35]

The next step, accompanied like the earlier ones by a systematic and almost contrapunctic deprecation of the Western model, consists in a transvaluation of the deficiencies of the living past. Once again an illuminating example is offered by Kireevskij (writing in 1852). The lag in intellectual activity in Russia in comparison with her Christian neighbors is put to good account by arguing that the culture of antiquity did not affect the Russians as overwhelmingly as the Europeans because they received it only through the intermediary of Christianity. Only when Russia had been fully christianised did she appropriate the latest results of ancient civilisation—at this point Providence was pleased (by means of the Mongol invasion and its consequences) to arrest her further intellectual development. "Thereby," Kireevskij continues, "she was preserved from that noxious onesidedness that would have necessarily fallen to her lot, if she had dedicated

[34] "Erster philosophischer Brief" (written in 1829) *apud* Tschižewskij, *op cit.*, pp. 73-93, at pp. 73 ff.; *cf.* also note 1 on p. 73-74.

[35] Letter to G. Herwegh, 25 August 1849, *apud* Tschižewskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-220, at p. 218.

herself to a rationalistic *Bildung*, before Europe had completed the cycle of its intellectual formation."[36]

V

Self-construction through history allows partial liberation from the realities of the present; but to achieve an assessment of one's situation and characteristics at a given moment, it requires complementation by direct description. An analytical appraisal of nature and state of the conflicting and blending cultures has to be resorted to which marks, from a literary point of view, a further step in that *prise de conscience* which, in our time, seems to be inseparable from the process of acculturation.

The most obvious and hence, as far as I can see, the earliest technique of self-analysis is the comparison of Eastern and Western mentality by juxtaposition and contrast. Shihāta 'Ubaid says in the Preface to his novel *Dars mu'lim* (A Painful Lesson; 1922):

"Which person, endowed with a shred of reason, *au courant* of the psychology of peoples, would not be saddened and feel aggrieved when drawing a parallel between Europe and the East? Does he not see how the Occidentals, serious and active even in their moments of pleasure and leisure, are always grasping for something that widens their knowledge and opens their intelligence? Whereas we have inclination only for what will augment our pleasure or will permit us to step outside the circle of our actual lives and to throw ourselves in the infinite field of the imagination. A single glance at the books that are printed and circulated among them and among ourselves suffices to show the difference of the mentalities. Some claim that we do not have any writers capable of rivaling those of the West. This cannot be denied. But we have seen more than one writer of the new generation in full development follow in the footsteps of the Western writers and make an attempt which, if assisted, would have permitted him after a short time to resemble those Occidentals."[37]

[36] *Loc. cit.*, p. 260. Be it noted, incidentally, that Kireevskij's letter contains, pp. 269-70, a characterisation of Islamic civilisation which does not of course transcend the knowledge of his period and is of purely historical interest.

[37] Pérès, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

On a more popular level, the rivalry reappears in anecdotes that pit, for example, an Egyptian magician against a European and have the Egyptian defeat his opponent before the Khedive.[38] In general, the *Altgläubige* will recognise the material superiority of the European, the greater efficiency of his ways, but he sees it as the result of a division by which God gave the infidels a brief span of well-being on earth while reserving eternal felicity to his own, the Muslims. "God has accorded me that prodigious favor of letting me be born outside the ranks of his enemies, of those whom he created only to increase the bliss of the elect by the spectable of their tortures ... I am a Muslim. Praise be to God."[39] "We shall have Paradise. They have this passing life. This is their share. God says: 'I have created men and *jinn* only so they will adore me.'[40] The highest purpose of life is therefore to dedicate oneself to God. The infidels think only of their well-being, their money. It is they who keep everything going down here. God has assigned them this role. In this they are already, without knowing it, our servants."[41]

But with progressive acculturation this resignation dies down, a troubled feeling of superiority remains and the analysis by anecdote and religious solace no longer suffices. A self-image emerges through the emergence of an articulate image of the West and its civilisation that is more carefully reasoned. It is based on selective experience and perhaps not as obviously programmatic as the self-portrayal by means of history had been.

An example of such an effort to draw that antithetical picture of East and West that has proven so satisfactory as an instrument of self-appeasement and pedagogy is provided by the booklet which Ahmad Amīn (1886-1954), in his day one of the leading figures on the Egyptian intellectual scene, wrote

[38] F.-J. Bonjean and Ahmed Deif, *Mansour. Histoire d'un enfant du pays d'Egypte* (Paris, 1924), pp. 187-88; reference to this story is especially appropriate in the light of the fact that, in 1858, Napoleon III sent the great prestidigitator, R. Houdin, to Algeria with a view to having him demonstrate to the Muslims that the alleged miracles of their saints are nothing but sleights-of-hand.

[39] Bonjean-Deif, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

[40] Koran 51-56.

[41] Bonjean-Deif, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

as a result of a political visit to London, which, in 1947, greatly affected his attitude toward the West and led him "to doubt the soundness of the prevailing belief that, in point of civilisation, *hadāra*, the West was ahead of the East."[42] With this sentence of the first paragraph of the first page, the keynote of the essay is sounded. Ahmad Amīn does not know much of the West, nor does he pretend to. He is aware of, in fact, he shares the principal motivation that inclines the East, the Arab East, that is, toward culture change and like many of his compatriots he seems to believe in a kind of planned syncretism. Preserve religion, add science; leave the essential structure of Muslim society untouched, but introduce such and such features from Europe. Bring the material culture of Egypt up to the Western level but do not sacrifice the warmth of a pre-industrial society. He speaks gently diffident when it comes to positive proposals but quite assertively where he contrasts the two civilisations.

The East-West antithesis which gave the title to his essay dominates the presentation. Yet, Ahmad Amīn is at pains to demonstrate that what cultural divergences do exist are not in any sense predetermined, say, by geography or race. It is attitudes and aspirations, not unchangeable, impersonal forces that work the cleavage. Besides, it is erroneous to attribute universal validity to Western civilisation. It has its particular place in the human development, it may be in some ways superior to what came before it, but it does not embody an absolute in value or achievement. Ahmad Amīn's view could be stated in the words of Prince N. S. Trubetzkoj (1890-1938), a leading exponent of the so-called Eurasian concept of Russian history: "European culture is not a universal culture (*Menschheitskultur*). It is the result of the history of a certain ethnic group."[43]

[42] *Ash-Sharq wa'l-Gharb* (Cairo, 1955), p. 1.

[43] From *Europa und die Menschheit*, written in 1923, *apud* Tschižewskij, *op. cit.*, p. 520; *cf.* also p. 521. From a (if not necessary, the) Communist viewpoint, generously enlivened with Russian patriotism, the limited validity of European culture is aggressively asserted in various "wissenschaftstheoretische" statements of which the following brief selections constitute a fair sample.

"The only truly scholarly methodology, the Marxist-Leninist one, gave Soviet scholars the possibility of unrolling and solving boldly the most important problems of Byzantine history, which had remained beyond the realm of bourgeois

There is another factor that ought to caution the East when it desires acculturation: The decline of the West has already begun. In support, there is the inevitable quotation from Spengler, there are references to the two World Wars, to the Occident's worship of power, its pride, the excessive influence of women and the imbalance that obtains between reason and heart, between the material and the spiritual.[44] The whole section sounds like

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scholars or which bourgeois scholarship had proved itself incapable of solving. In contrast to the bourgeois Byzantine experts, the Soviet historians study Byzantine history, according to Stalin's directions, as the history of the active masses, the history of the peoples."...

"The Soviet Byzantine and Slavic experts battle determinedly against the reactionary concepts of foreign historians, who try to minimize the historical role of Slavic institutions in the development of the medieval order of society."...

"The most important task facing the Soviet Byzantine experts is the irreconcilable battle against the reactionary bourgeois ideology of American and West European Byzantine experts."...

"... In the first volume of *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, which appeared in 1947, this spirit of irreconciliable battle against reactionary foreign Byzantine scholarship was still missing. Instead of sharp, unmasking criticism, the first issue of the periodical presented cosmopolitan ideas of peaceful co-scholarship with foreign bourgeois Byzantine experts. In addition, the lead editorial presented the deeply mistaken and also unpatriotic thesis that Byzantine scholarship was a 'worldwide' study; and that Soviet Byzantine experts had the task, 'of taking an honorable place' in this 'worldwide' study."...

"Inasmuch as the materialist in scholarship represents the point of view of the proletariat, he presents a truly objective judgment of the occurrences; for, as the learning of the most revolutionary class, Marxist-Leninist learning is the only progressive, objective learning." (From M. W. Lewtschenko, "Gegen den bürgerlichen Kosmopolitismus in der sowjetischen Byzantinistik", 1949; trans. *apud* Johs. Irmscher (Hg.), *Aus der Sowjetbyzantinistik. Eine Auswahl prinzipieller Beiträge*, Berlin, 1956, pp. 13-22, at pp. 13, 15, 16, 17 and 19).

By substituting as one must "Western" for "bürgerlich reaktionär" the denial of the claim to universal methodological validity of Occidental science comes out in bold relief. The political-psychological motivation of the statements is obvious; the patriotic *parti pris* places these expressions of Marxist-Leninist unmistakably alongside the other nationalistic self-reconstructions with which this paper is concerned. That our examples could, in the nature of things, be drawn only from the literature of a very few national groups should not stand in the way of recognising the phenomenon as universal within a certain political-psychological framework. It would be easy to add illustrations from the *indigenista* restyling of Mexican history, from what a number of African states are trying to do with their past, etc. etc.

[44] Amīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-44; on pp. 38-41 the author quotes from one of Maxim Gorki's writings a list of scandalous *fait divers* which the Russian writer

a subdued echo of Herzen's passionate statement on the dying West when in the wake of the failures of 1848 the Russian exile felt moved to exclaim: "What impotence to create, to organise! Everyone begins to realise the dull heaviness of life! All are tired, and everyone's life is deteriorating!"[45] This diagnosis of Europe then at the height of a breathless rise reflects the defensive yearning of the Slavophil even as Ahmad Amīn's diagnosis, a century later, seems indicative of the condition of the physician rather than of the patient.

The great asset of the East according to Ahmad Amīn, of Russia according to the Slavophiles, is spirituality, *rūhāniyya*, which is contrasted with the West's materialism—a traditional cliché which in Ahmad Amīn may have received its special nuance from the distinction between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* of which Spengler, with whom Amīn was acquainted, has made so much. If however we disregard this particular influence we are back to Kireevskij and his criticism of European mentality in which the analytic outlook and the scientific knowledge—which Kireevskij recognises and admires precisely as do Amīn and his compatriots—fail to affect the inner man and which with progress has lost the essential meaning of life itself.[46] In any event, the Easterner is not to forget that only from the sixteenth century did the cleavage between the civilisational levels of Occident and Orient develop. The realisation of this fact should remove any feeling of inferiority and, more important still, it should help the Easterner understand that the truly great achievements of the West had been adumbrated in the East; thus, for instance, democracy was represented already by political figures like the caliph 'Umar II (717-720) or Nūr ad-Dīn Zangī (1146-1174).[47]

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had culled from Western newspapers; this section is one of the few passages of Amīn's essay that are frankly propagandistic and almost touchingly naive.

[45] From *Vom anderen Ufer* (1850) apud Tschižewskij, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

[46] *Apud* Tschižewskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 262 and 252.

[47] Amīn, *op. cit.*, p. 55. The reference to Nūr ad-Dīn Zangī may be based on a passage like the following which is taken from Abū Shāma (d. 1267) *Kitāb ar-raudatain*, ed. Barbier de Meynard (Paris, 1898-1906), I, 43. There Zangī is shown in 1159 soliciting the consent of the *'ulamā'* for some legal action in these words: *wa-laissa al-'amal illā 'alà mā tattafiqūna 'alaihi wa-tashhadūna bihi wa-'alà*

Kireevskij is more cautious in making specific statements of this kind that exhibit too clearly their arbitrary character; but he maintains emphatically the cultural equality between Russia and the West during the first centuries of its history; afterwards she was kept back by a number of secondary (*nebensächlich*) and accidental events which prevented her from transmitting to the present the fulness of her culture.[48]

The characterisation which Ahmad Amīn offers of the East (and, by contrast, of the West as well)[49] perpetuates the peculiar romanticisation of a painfully experienced backwardness which Kireevskij had used for the same purpose a century earlier. The similarity of the psychological situation accounts for parallelisms; the absence of any kind of literary contact need scarcely be emphasised. The East is the home of the great religions. The religious outlook prevents life and its content from being considered in terms of usefulness alone. The Easterner, in his actions, takes the next world into account. Owing to its more intense spirituality the East has produced the greater saints. The West in its advances is solely motivated by the quest of profit.

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hādā kāna 's-sahāba (ridwān Allāh 'alaihim) yajtami'ūna wa-yatashāwarūna fī masālih al-muslimīna; i.e. no action will be taken unless you agree to it and bear witness to it; in this manner the Companions (of the Prophet) assembled and consulted on the concerns of the Muslims. The injunction to consult goes back to Koran 42:36 where God's reward is promised to "those who have responded to their Lord and established the prayer, their affair being matter of counsel amongst them, *wa-amru-hum shūrà baina-hum*, and from what We have provided them with, contributed." The phrase is often quoted, its bearing, however, never precisely defined; at least one author, Qudāma b. Ja'far (d. *ca.* 948) cites Alexander the Great soliciting the advice of Aristotle in support of the scriptural command; *cf.* D. Sourdel, *Le Vizirat 'abbāside de 749 à 936* (Damascus, 1959-60), II, 712-13. In 128/745-46. an "arbitration court" decides to "depose Nasr (b. Sayyār, the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān) *wa-yakūna 'l-amr shūrà*," presumably to let future leadership be a matter of consultation, either in the sense of government by committee or of the next governor to be agreed upon in committee. The phrase as quoted from Ibn Katīr, *al-Bidāya wa'n-nihāya* (Cairo, 1932-39), X, 271, goes unmentioned in J. Wellhausen's presentation of the pertinent events, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* (Calcutta, 1927), p. 486.

[48] *Loc cit.*, p. 257; the whole passage, pp. 255-57, is very important in our context: revulsion from *Westlertum* and concentration on the study of Russian history into which the pre-established principles of Russian life are read.

[49] Esp. pp. 157 ff.

Were it otherwise, *rūhāniyya* would make him forego armaments.[50] Kireevskij is too subtle to allow himself naive "party line" statements of this kind. But the inspiration of the beautiful page in which he confronts Russian and Western civilisation is the same. "The theology in the West became abstract and rationalist; in the orthodox world it preserved its inner spiritual wholeness. There (i.e., in Europe) the split of the faculties of reason, here (i.e., in Russia) the striving after their living synthesis."[51]

With all his reservations, Ahmad Amīn admits that Westernization is proceeding apace. Suddenly, he reverses himself and expresses the hope that science and industry will rise in the East (but of course without the defects they exhibit in the West). He is at pains to refute those who claim Western civilisation is not transferable and he encourages his people by insisting that their own heritage predisposes them to receive the new culture which the Occident has brought to them.[52]

The tornness of the Arab conservative could not have been exemplified more guilelessly.

[50] *Op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.

[51] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 293-94.

[52] *Op. cit.*, pp. 156-64. What would appear to be a more realistic and consequently a more productive attitude has been formulated by Muhammad an-Naqqāsh who, first of all, affirms his belief in the tendency to progress as a major characteristic of man and then finds the natural, the inevitable road of advancement in Occidentalisation. Such Occidentalisation is already very largely an accomplished fact. Western civilisation so-called is actually not a prerogative of a number of occidental lands but a common possession of the European and the American continents (with some qualifications) and of a part of Asia. Now that the Arab has put behind him his national struggles he is free to examine the various modes of life and make his choice. What this choice is to be cannot be in doubt. Besides, the leaven of Western civilisation has long since penetrated Arab society; it is now a matter of completing the work and of taking conscious stock of the process. "The rising generations do not believe in half-measures; they do not find it acceptable to borrow what pleases us from western civilization and to reject what does not please us. Personally, I admit to feeling no admiration for the Japanese dictum: 'Acquire western science and western techniques, but preserve the cult of ancestors and the traditions of our forebears.' Civilization consists of matter and spirit; these two elements must unite and go side by side. If we do not commune spiritually and intellectually with western civilization, that is to say with the apogee of the human civilization in which we Arabs have

VI

In contrast to an Ahmad Amīn there are the few for whom acculturation, at least in a personal sense, does not exist as a problem because it has been accomplished without leaving a break or even a sensitive spot in their work. The Egyptian (Copt) Bishr Farès (Fāris; born 1906) may be placed in this group although his first book, *L'Honneur chez les Arabes avant l'Islam* (1932), still exhibits some traits of the *apologia.*[53] The classic representative, however, is the Tunisian Mahmūd al'Mas'adī (Messadi; born 1911), in whom the French (or perhaps, the European) and the Arab tradition appears flawlessly blended. Not syncretism, not search for reconciliation and compromise, but a natural synthesis as convincing as life itself. One may differ in the evaluation of his intricately symbolistic writings—the drama, *as-Sudd* (the Dam, 1957); the novel, *Maulid annisyān* (1944, the Birth of Forgetfulness); the brief tales united under the title of *al-Ahādīth*) ("Les propos", 1945)—it remains indisputable that their spirit is a novel crystallisation of the Arab and the Western literary and philosophical traditions and that the Arab component, for its part, reflects the classical heritage in form without excluding ideas and motifs of the popular sphere.

The heroic failure of Ghaylān, the dam builder, evokes the climate of Greek tragedy. In contrast with the Muslim religious tradition man is sufficiently important to be shown in his fight against destiny. *Maulid annisyān* could not have been written without the French medieval epics, especially *Tristan et Yseult*; at the same time, its principal theme, Madyan's search for-getfulness, his obsession with death and his strange relationship with Laila and her jealousy of the past, presuppose Rilke and Thomas Mann. The style of the book, however, is Arabic at its

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a share: if we are content to borrow its material realizations, we shall be like the donkey loaded with books...; we will stay at the stage of copying and imitating; we will not surpass it, attaining the realms of invention and discovery; we will not join the force of creators." (Translated from an article in *al-'Ulūm*, February 1960, in *Orient*, XV (1960), 167-174; the quotation is taken from p. 174).

[53] We owe to Dr. Farès a very perceptive (though fortunately no longer as painfully correct) analysis "Des difficultés d'ordre linguistique, culturel et social que rencontre un écrivain arabe moderne, spécialement en Egypte," *Revue des études musulmanes*, 1936, 221-246.

most classical; that is to say, not the terse Arabic of the pre-Islamic narrative but the more subtly inflected language of the tenth century. The magic and the marvellous of medieval Baghdad blend with the magic of medieval Brittany. The existential anguish of a Sartre and a Camus, the aestheticism of Baudelaire and Valéry, Rilke's and Thomas Mann's concern for suffering and decomposition, come to life through a style, an imagery, an invention of detail which are purely Arab—not perhaps in the sense in which the writers of the "golden prime" would have understood it, but as a development of unused potentialities which before Mas'adī one should hardly have suspected were waiting in the prose of caliphal Baghdad. And then there is the effortless blending of the Hellenic and the French (as in Valéry) with the ancient Arabic anecdotes and *akhbār* in the *vignettes* of the *Ahādīth* which exhibit a mastery of phantasmagory not previously met with in Arab literature and yet displayed as if fantasy had always been securely located in the Arab tradition.[54]

VII

The very ease and the very perfection with which acculturation has come to pass in Mas'adī's development and perhaps also the extreme individualism of his writings has kept him from dealing with acculturation explicitly as a personal or a collective problem. In fact, the only "Arab" *romancier* who has made it the dominant theme of a major work is the French-writing Moroccan, Driss Chraibi (born 1926).

The strength of *Le passé simple* is in the description of the Muslim milieu, the weakness in the shadowy haze of the Occidental atmosphere. It seems to be taken for granted; it certainly

[54] On Mas'adī *cf.* M. Ferid-Ghazi, "La littérature tunisienne contemporaine," *Orient*, XII (1959), pp. 131-97, esp. at pp. 134-43; on pp. 157-63 a few scenes from *as-Sudd* are given in translation. Another kind of integration through a particularism common to French and Arab writers in North Africa is suggested by a remark of Mouloud Feraoun's: (b. 1913) "I am by no means thinking of a narrow nationalism or regionalism; the essential thing for me is to find in the works of North Africans beings of flesh and blood like those I see around me. They may be called Rieux or Smaïl, it will please me equally because *they are from my home.* And I say to myself that the people from my home are no longer absent from literature." (Quoted by A. Dupuy, *L'Algérie dans les lettres d'expression française* [Paris, 1956], p. 157, n. 2).

is presupposed as known by the reader. When the hero, or rather the narrator and protagonist, for with all the shrewdness of his self-analysis and his drastic revolt against his father Driss Ferdi is a somewhat sorry and unquestionably a sterile and petty specimen, is allowed to enter the *Lycée*, Haj Fatmi realises that he will henceforth have an enemy in his house; but he accepts this situation in the interest of securing the perpetuation of his own position in the Moroccan business (and political) community which he is convinced will require bi-cultural, French educated leadership.

Nothing is said to cast a light on the author's concept of the Occident. The rich French of the book, its unsought allusions to the French cultural background and the obvious influence of the French existentialist novel of the forties bespeak the author's familiarity with the West as represented by France and bear witness to the ease with which he moves in the French intellectual milieu. This habitus which his (we should hope somewhat distorted) mirror-image, Driss Ferdi, shares without much reflection is not seen as a problem. When his French friends fail to give him support in a crisis, which, incidentally, is largely of his own making, they do so not because of any sense of national, racial, cultural *apartheid*, but solely in response to pressure, not to say blackmail on the part of his ruthlessly insistent father. Such *apartheid* may exist; in fact, the prejudice against the *bicot* makes its appearance every now and then, but it remains a very minor factor and contributes little to the formation or even the psychological discomfort of Driss.

His problem is the Muslim milieu: Muslim intellectuality, Muslim piety, and above all, the patriarchal Muslim family. His father's barbarous tyranny, the blending in Haj Fatmi of a religious behavior of extreme formal correctness and of an equally extreme cruelty in his human and amorality in his business relationships, the reactions to the exigencies of this setting on the part of his mother and his brothers, exacerbated by Driss' obtuseness with regard to his father's true aims—which are indeed merely facets of an uninhibited drive for self-aggrandizement, but a drive of which Driss is the intended beneficiary—these are the ingredients of his existence which drive him to rebellion and with which, in the last analysis, he can cope only

through evasion: first, by leaving his home in an attempt to break away which collapses, and then by allowing himself to be sent to Paris by his father where, at the end of the novel, he plans to "forge himself arms" for a more effective revolt while Haj Fatmi expects him to complete his preparation to step into his own shoes when the time comes.

The father, strong, single-minded, invincible in his conviction that he leads and upholds the life that God has prescribed for the true believer, secure in the correctness of his formal relationship to the religious law and untroubled by moral considerations, the father whom his sons think and speak of as The Lord and whose remoteness tortures and crushes them—he is the real hero of the book; and the book fails when the author exceeds the modern novel's requirement of individuation by lending Haj Fatmi a variety of vices and involving him in business intrigues which degrade him into a "case" and diminish the significance of the milieu portrayal. This effect is clearly contrary to Chraibi's intent for he proposes to emphasize a (necessary or at least) organic connection between the rigid legalism of the Haj and the unconcern with which he crosses the borderline of dissipation and crookedness.

The immorality of the Haj is, for the reader, more easily borne than the fanatical egotism of the son. Driss exhibits the brutality of the weak, the apodictic views of those that are uncertain, the romantic's implicit approval of anything done on genuine impulse, the aimless sophistication of the half-baked genius. By portraying him in this fashion Chraibi has made it possible to put into his mouth an uninhibited, but for this not necessarily adequate diagnosis of the kind of Islam within which he grew up. Writing in an examination paper, whose questions he has changed to suit his mood, Driss characterises the five basic commandments of his religions. As regards the "profession of faith," the *shahāda*—"everyone believes in God even though the 'average Moroccan' does not respect the corollaries: one may swear and perjure onself, lie, commit adultery, drink. But the faith is safe and God, Very Powerful and Very Merciful. As regards the prayers, only the aged will perform them. And even with them praying is mostly a habit or a show. So that anyone who believes in God, fasts during Ramadān, keeps away from

wine and pork, prays five times a day and is hard up, is almost automatically labeled a saint, provided he be of a certain age, carry around his neck a sufficiently heavy rosary and feature a rich beard. My grandfather has posthumously become a saint: because he was poor, pious and deranged." And after a few pages in this style Driss concludes: "Man proposes and time disposes, but not a single shoeshine boy of the Medina (the Muslim quarter) would admit this; and here lies the strength of Islam."[55] Acculturation will remain the fate or the accomplishment of the few—the mass has not been touched by almost fifty years of *la présence française*—and what is more, the French attempt assimilation more out of a sense of duty than from faith. "An old bigwig from among my friends, Raymond Roche is his name, told me last night, 'We French are in the process of civilising you Arabs. Badly, in bad faith and without any pleasure. If by chance you arrive at being our equals: in relation to whom or what will *we* then be civilised?"[56]

Much more clearly and in fuller awareness of its ramifications the acculturation problem has been seen (but not resolved) by a Tunisian writer, Albert Memmi (born 1920) who does not, strictly speaking, qualify for consideration in our context because he is not an Arab, but a member of his country's Jewish community. Yet his two novels, *La statue de sel* (1933) and *Agar*, (1955) must be mentioned. It is not their unusual literary qualities that necessitate their inclusion but the to my knowledge unsurpassed manner in which the three-pronged acculturation problem of the Tunisian *Israélite* has been understood and brought to life. Uneasy in his attitude toward his own community, fascinated by Western civilisation and confronted by Tunisian Islam, itself in the throes of an assimilative movement, Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche after finding a *modus vivendi* allowing him to "occidentalise" while remaining actively loyal to the Jewish society around him is confronted with the refusal of the French to accept him on equal terms. True, their refusal is in large measure dictated by the political circumstances of the fascist-nazi era and the German occupation; after the occupation

[55] *Le Passé simple*, pp. 198-201.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

ends Benillouche is, in fact, encouraged to resume his academic work and he can be certain, on passing of his *agrégation*, of obtaining a position in the French system. But he finds it impossible to agree to "limited acceptance," as impossible as return to the cultural environment of his childhood or an utopian integration in the Arab-Muslim world. He evades the issue by deliberately failing his examination and emigrating to Argentina—a decision which we can view but as an awkward postponement of the great choice. For in Argentina he will no doubt find it even more difficult to realise his identification and we are left with the impression that his departure from Tunis and the area of French civilisation is nothing but a symbolic gesture of defiance and resignation. In real life, Memmi has carried "*l'aventure de la connaissance occidentale*" to a more consistent conclusion by completing his studies and accepting a position with the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.*

His second "acculturation novel" is in a sense a reversal of the first. It describes the attempt of the French-Catholic wife of an acculturated Tunisian Jew to find her place in her husband's society. This attempt fails and the reader is left with the painful impression that what Memmi describes is not a "case" but the ineluctable result of a social constellation. Memmi's artistry is apt to obscure this verdict because he suceeds in personalising the problem to the extent that one is hardly aware of it in the abstract while one follows with ever-deepening participation the fate of the characters.[57]

La terre et le sang (1953) by the Algerian Mouloud Feraoun (born 1913) would tend to suggest the opposite lesson as it depicts the process by which another French-Catholic woman

[57] On Memmi *cf.* A. Dupuy, *La Tunisie dans les lettres d'expression française* (Paris, 1956), pp. 101-103 and 128-131. On the whole, the *nahda* among the North African Muslims has been more effective in their French than in their Arab production; consequently, their French contribution to world literature is more significant than what *maghrabī* authors have accomplished in Arabic. This judgment is easily substantiated by contrasting the listings of Arabic works owed to North African Muslim authors in H. Pérès, "Quelques aspects de la renaissance intellectuelle au XX^{e} siècle en Afrique du Nord," *La Table Ronde*, No. 81, Oct. Nov., 1957. In this instance the realisation of a cultural individuality is stimulated rather than impeded by the adoption of a more suitably perfected tool, the French language, and the technical and intellectual association supporting it.

manages to take roots and to win acceptance in the Kabylian mountain village which is the home of her Berber fellāh husband. But the story of Marie in Ighil-Nezman is indeed a "case"; it is true, her problem is one of acculturation; but in terms of the concerns of the Arab (or Berber) speaking world it is atypical.

VIII

Acculturation, Westernization, the cultural identification of the Arab, and more particularly of the Muslim Arab, is only in the process of becoming a topic of literary analysis. Only where Westernization has been largely experienced and reacted to, the degree of self-consciousness will be reached that is the prerequisite for examining, in a work of art, the interplay of the contending and blending social "personalities." The artist need not necessarily give form to his insights through invented characters and invented occurrences. Thinly disguised self-images though they may be, Driss Ferdi and Benillouche yet have an existence other than, apart from that of their creators. It is worthy of notice as an indication of the level of self-penetration to which, at this moment in their history, the Arab intelligentsia has fought through that such memoires or autobiographies as have been left by Muslim Arab writers—and I am thinking, for example, of Ahmad Amīn's *Hayātī* (1950) and Muhammad Husain Haikal's (1888-1956) *Mudhakkarāt* (1951-1953), to which the *Tarbiya Salāma Mūsà* (1948) may be added as the statement of a Coptic writer (born 1888)—are not essentially concerned with the culture conflict springing from contact with the West. The dominant culture conflict of their lives is between traditional Islam and "modernism" as it is mirrored inimitably in Tāhā Husain's (born 1889) *al-Ayyām* (1926 and 1939).

Is it a matter of phasing or of a permanently different orientation to himself and his society which has so far deprived the Arab world of works like Nehru's *Autobiography* (1936) or, more characteristic still, the *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) by the Bengali Nirad C. Chaudhuri (born 1898)? Nehru and especially Chaudhuri (who has no political public to hold) know who they are and how they have, as it were, acquired their present selves. Neither obscures his psychological finesse

by literary mannerisms;[58] Chaudhuri refrains completely from pleading a cause or preaching a gospel. Both are aware that their society is in transition and that, in a sense, they are walking on quicksand. Yet they are certain of their identity, certain also of its elements, their origin and growth, and of the aspirations that give them cohesiveness and unity. Could it be that a touch of doubt about their cultural identity is still preventing the Arabs from realising the collective self-perception, the analytical plausibility of the Indians whose sensibilities, too, had been sharpened by a confrontation with the West?

[58] This is not, of course, to overlook the presence of "self-stylisation" in many a statement made by Indian intellectuals about themselves; for examples *cf.* E. Shils, "The Culture of the Indian Intellectual," *The Sewanee Review* (April and July 1959), reprinted as a brochure in the Reprint Series of the Committee on South Asian Studies, the University of Chicago (1959; 46 pp.). When the acculturation problem of Indian and Arab is considered it must be remembered that actually the individual is faced with three "options"—the indigenous tradition, the modernised indigenous tradition (in varying stages of medernisation and Westernisation), and the Western tradition (again in varying forms and types).