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Culture, Creativity and Change in Selected Fiction by Naguib Mahfouz: A Philosophical Approach

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Abstract: ***This paper will try to show the interrelationship between the Egyptian culture, as portrayed by Naguib Mahfouz's fiction and the Egyptian personality represented by Kamal in the trilogy from a philosophical point of view. The novel 'Abath al-Aqdar' (The Mockery of Fate) deals with the impact of the concept of predestination on the individual in general and creativity and change in particular. The paper will try to offer some recommendations for the promotion of the concept of creativity. The paper also is trying to make a comparative study between the Arab world and the West concerning the concept of change.***

Keywords: Naguib Mahfouz; Egypt; culture; Change; philosophy; Vitalism, Voluntarism; creativity

1. Introduction

Youssef Idris recalls, in his book Iktishaf Qarra (The Discovery of a Continent), the story of an Egyptian child who was wounded and brought to one of the hospitals in London to be cured. As a matter of procedure, the child's intelligence was examined. The child scored a high rate in that test. Youssef Idris thought that this child was an exception, but he was astonished when he was told that this was the rule with Egyptian, children. The doctors at the hospital told him also that the Egyptian child had the highest rate in the intelligence test, until the age of nine or ten. (Youssef Idris 99-100). This reminds the reader of Kamal's character in Naguib Mahfouz's trilogy. In Bayn al-Qasrayn he is a perceptive, imaginative, and well developed child. He is resourceful and fond of stories and music. But in Sukkaria, he is static and frustrated in his emotion and intellect. He developed a feeling of spiritual and intellectual barrenness. 'Hence a *man* cannot be static if he is truly active because he becomes creative thereby…nature '

2. Discussion

Creativity is part and parcel of this intelligence test. One then must pay more attention to those factors in the sociocultural setting to which the individual is exposed as long as he lives. Individuals acquire the patterned norms that characterize their cultures throughout the felicities and vicissitude of life. That is to say, the interrelationship between culture and personality is now seen as an ongoing process in which the individual is influenced by culture, and in turn, influences it, throughout his life. As Kluckhohn and Marray have stated:

"in the greater number of cases ... the similarities of character within a group are traceable less to constitutional factors then to formative influences of the environment to which all members of the group have been subjected. Of the group-membership determinants, culture is with little doubt the most significant ... Those who have been trained in childhood along traditional lines, and even those who have as adults adopted some new design for living, will be apt to behave predictably in many contexts because of a prevailing tendency to conform to group standards." (58-59)

Same observation can be applied not only to action patterns but also to the motivational systems of individuals. Thus, the values imbedded in a culture have special weight among the group membership determinants.

The question is: What is the essence of creativity? Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, who represent, philosophical vitalism and voluntarism, view historical determinism as at best a useful scientific fiction. In F. Nietzsche point of view voluntarism is considered as an overriding "will to power" whereby Man would eventually re-create himself as "superman." 'Nietzsche, however, uses the term in a large sense and comprehends under it all the means, physical, social, spiritual, that may be used for producing the great result at which he aims.' They emphasise the creative achievement of exceptional men, the free spirits, who break with convention and orthodoxy, revealing new ways of life, new dimensions of human experience. In other words, creative thought and action is characterised by the very fact that it "deviates" deviates from known solutions, and deviates from the idea that only traditional solution can be uniquely correct. Creativity must, therefore, be allowed to rules and to call in question the well-established. It always involves the opportunity to think of something different, to go new ways. It involves the opportunity to try out new possibilities.

But what does "creative" really entail? Creativity signifies a specific human capacity for achievement. But what capacity? How can that be explained? The "Theory of creativity" starts out from the view that inventiveness, originality, and ability to solve problems in new ways can receive expression in a great diversity of tasks. As far as popular usage is concerned, the term "creativity", generally, only applies to the aesthetic sphere. Nevertheless, there are also a large number of examples of creativity in such a cognitive sphere as the natural sciences. In short, creativity is inspiration in new ways of utilizing what is already known, invented, and constructed, and in establishing new links between what already exists. What is known must be reorganised and applied in different ways.

This is creativity as conceived in the West. What about our own concept of Creativity? As one has observed, the essence

of creativity is *change*. The East is considered, by many, as static, but this is naive. View is now a thing of the past.

The inanimate has no history, simply because time makes no difference to. Its change can be repeated. Life, on the other hand, is a succession of new phenomena. No present repeats the past, no future the present. That is why it has a past and a future. But, says Bergson, if life is a continuous process of the planting of these new phenomena, by which it is apprehended, in the heart of every fleeting moment, it is itself a disturbing, explosive force, exercising a creative power in the universe. Since change involves the new, the process of change-life-is therefore a sort of creation. Creation, however, is incalculable. The *élan vital*, the life impulse, is the basis of existence; and the nearest that one can get to describing it is in terms of itself.

A more critical approach has taught us that the Near East was not, "immovable" at all; changes have occurred in both its social and cultural life. But these changes were minor, or slow, compared to the rapid changes that have occurred in the Western world in the last two hundred years. Revealed religion is undoubtedly a strong factor in developing Arab traditionalism: if a society believes that its religion was revealed by God at a certain time in the past to its greatest religious leader, some claim that it cannot help developing a mentality which considers adherence to religious tradition as a supreme value, and by extension, must come to regard all tradition in the same light. There is no indispensability between religion and creativity. However, Inevitably, it is believed that the age in which the revelation took place was the greatest and noblest period in its history, followed by gradual decay as the distance between the new generations and the original revelation increased. Every innovation is a sin, because it increases this distance according to the rigid and static mind. We all remember the new tactic practiced by prophet Muhammed (peace upon him) in the battle of Trench (Ghazwat al-Khandaqغزوةالخندق). If change is sought, it is only in the direction of-return to the original, pure, prefect state of religion. This belief, which in itself is a potent factor militating against everything new, was strikingly characterised by Nabih Amin Faris: "Piety and virtue lie in obedience and conformity (ittiba'), while nothing is more repugnant than change and innovation (ibtida')." (280) and there are other factors, as well, which make traditionalism a dominant attitude in Arab culture. May example can be given, Moslem Brothers group, Traditionalists (Salafya group). EI-Kadda, Isis ... etc.

One might expect that a society would exhibit great resistance to change in the focal areas of its culture; there is a sentimental attachment to them, and therefore they command loyal adherence, which would militate against the introduction of innovations. On the other hand, innovations in cultural features lying outside these focal areas might encounter no resistance. But in a culture in which traditionalism is pronounced, change and innovation in every area of culture are inhibited. The only option for the individual is to "listen and obey". Moreover, in such a culture, the greater the antiquity of a feature, the greater its traditional value, and, hence, the greater the resistance to changing it.

In modern Western culture, the new is considered better than the old, and thus change in itself is considered good, in tradition-bound Arab cultures, the old is regarded as better than the new, and thus retention of the existing order is considered good.

These differences can best be presented by concentrating on the cultural foci, that is, the dominant concerns which exist in every culture, and belief in which the greatest awareness of form exists, the most discussion of values is heard and the richest variety in structure can be discerned, and which are most highly prized by the carriers of the culture. Among the focal concerns of the West one can mention, by way of illustration, technology, scientific inquiry the belief in and preoccupation with progress which also means that innovation and change are considered benefits in themselves nationalism, democracy, basic individual freedoms, and the like. On the contrary, the Arab world has had a complement of dominant concerns of its own, which lack counterparts in the modern west, such as religion, traditionalism, familism, sexual modesty, and the like. These focal concerns are so pronounced that they can be used with advantage to characterise an entire culture, to draw its profile, as it were.

If, however, a culture is innovation-oriented, as western culture is, one can expect an inverse correlation. The closer a feature is to the cultural focus, the greater the interest and willingness to introduce innovations into it, because innovations are a priori considered improvements, and as such desirable. In such a culture the focal concerns, because of the great interest they attract, are subject to a constant search for possible improvements. This explains why, in a change-oriented culture, such as the American, it is precisely in the dominant concerns' (for example technology) that one finds the greatest and fastest rate of change, which in those cultural areas which are not focal, such as the established religion, the change is less pronounced, not because of resistance to change, but because of lack of interest in them. The characteristic attitude toward these areas is "Let well enough alone" while in the focal concerns nothing is ever felt to be good enough, and incessant experimentation goes on to develop superior alternatives.

Needless to say, that a given feature introduced from the West is an innovation, and therefore, might encounter a tendency on the part of the tradition-bound culture to oppose it. A Western feature must indeed possess, most readily, apparent advantages to be accepted with little or no opposition. Also, it must lie well outside focal concerns of traditional Arab culture. Technological features which do not seem to threaten any of the traditionally embedded values are the most readily accepted. The traditional lack of concern with technology means that there is no traditional opposition to technological novelties such as a radio, a kerosene lamp, heater or stove, a steel plow, an iron thresher, a motor-driven water pump, and the like. Where traditionalism does play an important role in preventing or hampering the introduction of Western innovations is in those areas of life which are linked with the basic values. Among these figure such features as familyism, personal relations, sexual modesty, and, to a lesser extent, the traditional arts and crafts, especially the verbal arts? All these are held in high esteem, not merely because they

represent old traditions in Arab life, but also because they are hallowed by religion.

Next to traditionalism, and closely connected with it, is familism. We can define familism as "the centrality of the family in social organisation, its primacy in the loyalty scale, and its supremacy over individual life." The traditional Arab family (as well as the Muslim family in the non-Arab parts of the Middle East) is characterised by certain features, each one of which supports and strengthens the dominance of familism in Arab life: extended patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal endogamous, and occasionally polygamous traits". (Patai 282) A family with such traits cannot but reign central and supreme in both social and individual life.

It is not at all difficult to understand that those who have a vested interest in maintaining familism - all those individuals who occupy the middle and upper rungs in the family hierarchies, that is, practically everybody except the youngest men and boys - are strongly opposed to any change that would disrupt the family or even weaken it. Now the fact of the matter is that all elements of westernisation tend to do precisely this. If you send a girl to school, she will be less likely to accept unquestioningly her parents' choice for a husband. If a boy goes to school, he is likely to entertain ideas of his own as to what work he wants to engage in, and where he wishes to live.

While it cannot be said that processes such as these are always consciously examined, both traditionalism and familism create a state of mind which is generally and, in principle, suspicious of foreign born innovations. This is obvious in Mahfouz's trilogy.

As far as the Egyptian personality concerned, there can be no doubt that the same belief in predestination or, fate (referred to variously as qisma, hence "kismet", or nasib, or, by the Persian derived term, "bakht", or by merely saying "maktub", "it is written") exerts considerable formative influence. It endows the Egyptian mind with calm and equanimity in the face of adversity, with patient resignation to whatever occurs, and with an acceptance of one's "place" and circumstances which cause hardships, hazards, and deprivations comprised in the narrowly circumscribed life of the average Egyptian. On the other hand, it engenders an attitude of passivity and of disinclination to exert efforts to change or improve things. It especially discourages long-range efforts, which require advance planning, because any such activity might come dangerously close to rebelling against fate the existing order of things.

A character trait closely related to fatalism is improvidence. It is inevitable that people who rely on providence should themselves not be provident; for the tradition-bound mind, there is even something sinful in engaging in long-range planning, because it seems to imply that one does not put one's trust in future providence.

This deterministic orientation inclines the individual to abdicate responsibility for improving his lot or providing for his future. As Sania Hamady remarked:

He attributes the ills of his society, his mistakes and failure either to fate, to the devil, or imperialism. Whenever he is blamed for passivity or corruption, the answer to the accusation is that he is forced by an uncontrollable factor about which he can do nothing. This refusal to assume responsibility in the use of his life and environment increases the Arab's weakness and encourages his surrender, as if fate were bound to act against him and not for him (187-188)

Of course, this attitude causes considerable difficulties when it comes to industrialisation and modernisation, i.e. there is something intrinsically improper in taking action least one should go against the fate.

In contrast to the West, the Arab world still sees the universe running its predestined course, determined by the will of God, who not only guides the world at large, but also predestines the fate of each and every man individually. Naguib Mahfuz gives the reader literary interpretation of these ideas in his fictions.

II-Abath Al-Aqdar(1939)
The action of "Abath al-Aqdar (The Mockery of Fate) takes place in the days of pharaoh khufu (Khufway, Cheops) of the Dynasty (approx. twenty-sixth century B.C.). It concerns the career of Dadaf (Ra; djedef), the son of the high priest of Ra, from his birth until he mounted the throne of Egypt in his early youth.

The novel opens on the very day of Dadaf's birth. In Khufu's palace in Memphis, an old fortune-teller predicts, to Pharaoh's dismay, that none of his sons will ascend the throne after his death. Instead, the old man announces that the newly born son of the high priest of Ra will be the next Pharaoh. No sooner had Pharaoh and his sons heard the ominous news than they set out for on, the high priest's homeland, intent on murdering the infant. The party arrives at the priest's house just after the mother and child have left accompanied by the servant Zaya. Pharaoh, however, kills the son of the maid Kata, who was also born on that day, assuming that he was the one they sought. The high priest commits suicide, and Pharaoh's party now return to Memphis, believing that they have rid themselves of a possible contender.

Meanwhile, the childless servant Zaya kidnaps the baby, leaving the mother alone in the desert, where she is in tum kidnapped by Sinai tribesmen. Zaya and the infant arrive in Memphis, helped by Pharaoh himself, who finds the two lost in the desert, she discovers that her husband, who has been working as a builder on the great Pyramid, has died. Luckily, however, she attracts the attention of the Pyramid superintendent Bisharu, who takes her to his home first as concubine then as wife. Thus, Dadaf has the opportunity to grow up in a comfortable home.

At twelve, Dadaf chooses a military career. During his training at the Military Academy he proves himself to be a distinguished cadet. Consequently, the Prince appoints him officer in his bodyguard. At the graduation ceremony he wins first prize in all the sporting events, and thus wins the favor of the crown prince; who is attending the ceremony

with his sister Meri SI 'Ankh. Dadaf has already fallen in love with a peasant girl with whom he used to flirt on the banks of the Nile. On seeing Pharaoh's daughter, Meri Si Ankh, he is convinced that she is none other than his "peasant girl." The princess indignantly denies any connection with that girl, but later implicitly admits it (she does this to escape from the formality of palace life).

Dadaf makes rapid progress in the Prince's court. Thanks to his extraordinary courage, he saves the Prince's life in a hunting incident, and at twenty he is appointed commander of the bodyguard. Soon he is chosen by Pharaoh to command the contingent which is to drive off the marauding Sinai tribes. On the eve of the army's departure the Princess visits the young commander to confess her love.

The Sinai campaign ends in victory. Among Dadaf's many captives is an Egyptian woman of fifty who claims to have been kidnapped by the tribe twenty years earlier. Dadaf takes the woman back to Memphis, and, to his utmost bewilderment, finds that she is his real mother of whose existence he knew nothing. Meanwhile, the Pharaoh consents to give his daughter to the victorious officer.

Things now, move rapidly: the Crown Prince, frustrated and impatient, plots to kill his father in order to ascend the throne. Dadaf uncovers the plot and, at the very last moment, saves Pharaoh. The latter falls ill, and, gratified by Dadaf's vigilance, summons his family and aides to announce that he is depriving his sons of the throne and, instead, is appointing Dadaf, his future son-in-law, to inherit it before dying, however, Pharaoh is informed of Dadaf's real identity. He now discovers how futile his endeavors to defy Fate were. He dies sadder but wiser, leaving his throne to the young hero.

III- ***Bayn Al-Qasrayn (19556)***.
This volume tells the story of a middle-class Cairene family before and during the 1919 revolution. The plot covers a period of eighteen months (from the 10th of Nov., 1917 to the 9th of April 1919).

In his house at Bain al-Qasrayn (not far from the al-Husayn Mosque) the Master (al-Sayyid) Ahmad 'Abd al-Jawad, a merchant of about forty-five, rules his family with the utmost rigour. Al-Sayyid's personality, however, has other facets of which his family know very little. For, whereas his children never see him smiling, he is at the hub of a group of middle-aged merchants who spend their nights merrily. Together till the small hours and whereas he imposes the severest moral restrictions on his wife and children, he himself is a great connoisseur of women and drink. As the action commences, we witness Al-Sayyid engaging in yet another amorous affair, this time with a well-known signer ('alma), Zubayda. She is not young, but is regarded by Al-Sayyid as his ideal of fleshy femininity. His success indeed arouses only admiration and jealousy among his friends. Later, when he has had enough of Zubayda, a new adventure fires his imagination. A neighbor dies, whose widow, Bahija, no less plump than Zubayda, offers him her favors. Al-Sayyid, whose moral standards would not allow him to flirt with a neighbor’s wife, now feels free to act, since the husband is no longer among the living.

At home, where he is as harsh as a father can be, his household can avoid his wrath only by constant lying. Moreover, they feel no qualms in shielding each other through deceit in the face of their father, who would not forgive the slightest deviation from the standard of behavior which he imposes, therefore, his three sons behave like slaves in his presence. The same applies, of course, to his wife and two daughters, who are never even allowed to peep through the window.

In the course of the novel he finds himself in a most humiliating position in which he himself, but not his family, tastes an element of poetic justice. On leaving Bahija's house late one night, he is caught by British soldiers and brutally dragged to a pit which rebellious students have earlier dug, and made to join others until the next morning in refilling it.

Amina, his wife, is a daughter of a shaykh. Al-Sayyid married her after divorcing his first wife who rebelled against rigid rules. Amina accepts her husband's excesses with loving submission; it is his right to rule his house in his own fashion. At first, though, she felt resentful and somehow jealous because her husband spent all his evenings away from home. Still, as days passed, she came to accept it as yet another indisputable privilege of the Master.

Amina is never allowed to set foot outside the door, and for the last twenty years or so she has seen the outside world only a few times; her husband took her for an occasional visit to her aged mother.

One day, when Al-Sayyid is away in Port Said on business, she is prevailed upon by her children to seize the opportunity to pay a visit to Al-Husayn's Mosque. The temptation is too strong to resist, thus accompanied by her son, Kamal, she hesitantly makes her way to the revered Mosque. On her return, however, she was hit by a cart and is ordered to stay in bed for some time. On his return" Al-Sayyid reacts gently, to her great relief. But, as soon as she recovers, he orders her out of the house without delay. The woman silently obeys and goes to live with her mother. None of her grown out children have the courage to utter a word of protest or appeal to their father. The most the boys can do is to visit her secretly in her exile. Eventually, AlSayyid calls her back, thanks to the good offices of a respectable old lady, a friend of the family, who comes to intercede for Amina with Al-Sayyid. The woman's mission is too old, for she also comes to propose that her son marry 'A'isha, Al-Sayyid's younger daughter.

Kamal is the youngest son, about ten years old. He is to become, to a large extent, the hero of the other volumes of the Trilogy, in this book, however, he is too young to be in the center of the story. He is resourceful, playful, and fond of stories and music. He becomes friendly, much to his family's displeasure, with the English soldiers who camp opposite their home.

III-Sukkaria (1957)
The events of this volume - the last of the Trilogy - begin eight years after the end of the second part, and cover a period of nine years (1939-1944).

In the house of Al-Sayyid, the Master is an ailing old man. He sells the business and retires to his home. His friends die, one by one, and finally he himself becomes an invalid, and his last years are spent in desolation. The air raids of 1941 find him unable to walk, and he has thus to be carried by his family from the shelter. He dies humiliated after one of these raids.

Amina's old age is also filled with misery, her sorrow for 'A'isha's plight is no less painful than the memory of her own son. There is, however, one bright spot in their lives: Na'ima, the granddaughter is now as beautiful and lively as her mother had-been. She is the darling of the family and enjoys more freedom than did the girls of the earlier generation (although her grandfather refused to allow her to go to secondary school). She has great fondness for music and singing, but at the same time, she is deeply religious. Kamal still lives with his parents. In his thirties, he is unmarried and developed a feeling of spiritual barrenness. He finds no satisfaction in his work as teacher of English, nor are his dreams of a literary career fulfilled. Admittedly, he is now a contributor to a literary periodical in which he publishes a monthly article on philosophy. But this activity, he feels, is far from being creative. His articles are, in the main, nothing but neutral accounts of different trends in philosophy. Any graduate of a modern university, he reflects, could write better ones.

He is introduced to Riyad Qaldas, a young Copt writer, who publishes short stories in the same periodical. Their friendship saves both men, to a certain extent, from intellectual isolation, but nothing will dissipate their pessimism and skepticism.

Kamal has long since lost all touch with ‘A’ida and her family, but he has never forgotten his first and only love. By sheer accident he meets her younger sister, Budur, whom he remembers as an infant, now grown and a student at the American University in Cairo. The girl, who looks amazingly like her sister, notices Kamal's interest in her, and she is not unresponsive, but Kamal is too timid to approach her. After a while he finds out that she has married, and this welcome echo of this early youth fades from his life. A'ida herself, as he later learns, is divorced by her first husband, marries a school inspector of English and dies soon afterwards. Kamal, it turns out, has attended the funeral of the inspector's wife, not realizing that the dead woman was none other than A'ida.

Kamal's character shows that certain aspects of culture, such as the family atmosphere and father-son relationship, affect the developing personality of the child, and by the time the child grows up he will have developed behavioral dispositions which constitute his character.

The actual channels, through which such behavioral dispositions are instilled into Kamal, are his parents and other members of his family like Yasin and Fahmy who surround him in his early years. These social and cultural agents mould his personality by requiring him to conform to the patterns which they consider the proper ones.

Kamal, sharing, as he does, some of the author's own experiences, provides those interested in the intellectual history of Egypt with rich material. He can be viewed as an important "specimen" of the sophisticated new generation, as the Egyptian breed of the "outsider" (al-Ia-muntami) or, as one critic prefers to put it, "the crisis-stricken insider" (al-muntami-ma'zum). (Shukry 65) The love-fear affair of the Arab intellectual with the West is portrayed through kamal with utmost vitality.

(As an artistic accomplishment, however, this character is rather uneven. In Bayn Al-Qasrayn he is a perceptive and well-developed boy. The discrepancies between his powers of imagination on the one hand and his lack of positive action on the other, are already evident (for instance: in his imaginary story about the bus-conductor (Bayn Al-Qasrayn Ch. 9) or his behavior at the time of the demonstration) (Ch. 55) yet, one is often surprised that such as intelligent boy of twelve should show a curious lack of intelligence when witnessing Fahmi's flirtation with Maryam. (Ch. 10, 21)

Kamal is undisputed as the central figure. It is in this volume that the most poignant moments of his life unfold before us: his painful awakening to the realities of religion, love, and life in general. A succession of crises leave him pathetically irresolute. He loses faith in God, but is unable to find another haven of belief or idealism. His agonising first love for the aristocratic 'A'ida leaves him with more than one open wound, he loses his self-confidence, becoming afraid of love and marriage, suspicious of friendship, and helplessly aware of the prevailing social injustice and political perfidy. His literary ambitions are also frustrated and the pangs of love, far from igniting his imagination, suppress whatever creative ability he might possess. Nevertheless, he refuses to let himself slide into cynicism or to become anti-social. This stage of his development is the most convincing, and, at the same time, most poetic.

In Sukkaria, however, we witness a static Kamal already full shaped. His literary aspirations are reduced to occasional articles summarising world philosophical trends. His great passion for "a life ideas" which induces him to join teacher's college, ends in the unrewarding post of a teacher of elementary English at a junior school. He is a bachelor and has not the courage to change his position when a sudden opportunity arises. Thus, when, towards the end of the work, he becomes convinced that action is essential, his conversion does not impress us 'as being other than superficial.

The trilogy with the dominance of the paterfamilias and elders and (their veneration carries with it a preference for the staid ways of the older generation and their unquestioning adoption and continuation by the younger. The meagerness of the material resources also militates against emergence of an innovative spirit: it creates the feeling that one must be satisfied with one's ability to eke out living by traditionally approved and proven methods, rather than risk starvation by experimenting with new ones. Al-Sayyid dominates the whole of the first volume of the Trilogy.

But he is also a very active figure in the second, and, until his death, is still important in the third. Through him we are

acquainted with a representative (an individual representative that is) of that colorful old race of patriarchal merchants. As a father, he is despotic yet loving; as a merchant astute yet generous; as a lover, indulgent yet majestic.

The richness and many sidedness of his personality are represented with great competence, mostly by means of action. Throughout these situations we get a full view of the world that surrounds Al-Sayyid: his middle-aged friends, their samar (entertainment) parties, their amorous affairs with prominent 'awalim (plural of 'alma - a female singer'), and their different attitudes towards family affairs, business, etc.

The complexity and the duality of this character can be further demonstrated by the fact that he is man of many faces. He is one person at home (wajh hazim sarim 'a resolute, severe face'), and another with his friend (wajh bassam, mushriq 'a smiling, radiant face'). He is, again, different when facing his God (wajh khashi', 'a submissive face'). He is a genuine and naive believer, even though he would not refrain from committing numerous acts, which, he knows very well, cannot be approved by his Maker. His word in undisputed. His spell on women is unsurpassed. To his household he is almighty, infallible. He is capable of solving any problem - at least this is the way people think of him (in fact he is more often than not unable to solve these problems, and only imagines or suggests to people that he is). Yet, already in Bain al-Qasrayn there are signs that his world is not as unshakable as it seems to be. His children are beginning to rebel, each in his own way. They even persuade their mother to take "rebellious" step-one which she has never taken before throughout her life with Al-Sayyed (and which brings upon her much sorrow). Outside his house, the new political and social processes are too dynamic for him to understand fully. The pace of life in general is already too quick for Al-Sayyed to cope with. The volume ends with the death of Fahmi. By the time of World War II he is an ailing bedridden and desolate old man who has lost even the company of his life-long friends. His death itself is wrought with humiliation: he is carried back home from an air-raid shelter on Kamal's shoulders, like a child. That night he dies.

Al-Sayyed is among the few characters who are not passive in the face of events. He is a man of action and will. Furthermore, he is one of the few joyful people in Mahfouz's novels: his humor would not desert him even in the most desperate hours of crisis. It can be said that it is these two qualities which render his decline and fall so poignant. He is strong willed, but helpless against the tyranny of Time; he is fond of life and pleasures, but these, alas, never last. If change is the essence of creativity, we can see, in spite of the prevailing traditionalism, familism and fatalism and determinism, a strong current of change. 'The ultimate nature of change is by no means self-evident. Like other ultimate conceptions it is accepted or rejected by something much resembling an act of faith.'… 'The main problem is, of course, that which was the point at issue between Heracleitus and the Eleatics, namely, the relative value of permanence and of change. Every voluntaristic philosophy seems bound to decide for the latter, to resolve things into processes, and substance into flux.'

Above all, it can be noticed that there is much less determinism here than in Mahfouz's other novels. In fact, stress is not on the perennial, the static, and the immutable. On the contrary, the main theme of the Trilogy is precisely the change. It is in fact a study of a rapidly changing human community, a change which finds expression in every aspect of the lives and values of these people. (Somekh 110). The change, it must be added, is not confined to superficial aspects of life. In this respect one should not make the mistake of seeing the Trilogy as a political novel, as indeed a few critics have done. Truthfully, the interest in politics is here, as in practically all of Mahfouz's works, a central issue. The stress on the theme of change can only be seen clearly when viewing the trilogy as a whole. The first volume, in fact, deals with the old society, which is only the starting point of the work. The change of social patterns is not less admirably recorded than the rapid rejection of time-honored social norms, the slow emancipation of woman from medieval shackles, the spread of education and scientific thinking, and the increasing influence of western culture.

But while the process of change is at the forefront of this work, the world of yesterday, that which is rapidly losing ground, receives no less meticulous a treatment. It is delineated with great competence and love (sometimes even with a tinge of nostalgia). Throughout the pages of the Trilogy, especially its first part, this world is recalled in its minutest details. The people of Cairo in the early twenties come alive before us, as do their habits, entertainments, songs, prejudices, dress and furniture.

In short, though Naguib Mahfuz is concerned with the theme of change, and hints at the idea that our way of life requires modification, reinterpretation, and reform, he gives us a picture of a static society, especially in the first volume, in which inertia, tradition, and imitation became the predominant characteristics. Furthermore, the stagnation and the loss of initiative permeated every aspect of life, both material and Spiritual. The question is: Where do we go from here?

Promotion of creativity is not a concept that can be narrowly defined. Promotion of creativity is, instead, a magnitude within the concept of education that cannot be laid down by the state, but, instead, arises in the course of the shared existence of children and adults in a great diversity of ways, both inside and outside the family.

It has been argued that in the modem West the "spiritual vacuum" left behind the' "progressive decay of religious belief', which Toynbee bemoaned, has, at least partly, been filled by an attitude of self-reliance and a drive to know and understand the world. It is argued that it is no coincidence that the great urge to explore the universe methodically, which is a unique characteristic of the modern West, arose as religion began to wane. But it is also no coincidence that the establishment of the Royal Academy of science was established in a time of great religious urge. Newton, himself, was a religious man. A scientific approach implies a

firm belief in man's ability to understand and improve things around and within him, and expresses the conviction that it is his moral duty to make every effect to do so. This, ultimately, is the intellectual, moral, and, if you will, spiritual foundation of religions. We can achieve these aims by following reforming our religious discourse, for they offer favorable condition for the development of self-reliance, capacity for communications, and social peace.

What is needed is not a particular programmer, but exactly the opposite areas of freedom. Private initiative is particularly important in the creation of such areas of freedom. Individuals should be brought up to become citizens who freely express their opinions rather than conformists "yes men". But anyone who wants to assert his views must also know about democratic procedures and learns to understand decision-making processes.

The fear lies in our concern about our faith. Of all the dominant concerns of Arab culture, religion is the most solidly entrenched in the Egyptian psyche, and faces the smallest risk, in fact no risk at all, of being supplanted by the dominant religion of the West. The danger that Westernization represents for religion is a different one. The penetration of Western culture into Arab lands introduces a feature that young Egyptian are increasingly inclined to adopt: the typical Western attitude to religion. None of them would dream of converting to any of the numerous Christian denominations represented in their midst, but they learn to relate to their religion the way Westerners relate to their religions. This means, first of all, that they learn to consider religion not as a total way of life, but a religion which, in a certain area of life, imposes specific duties upon them and prescribes the relationship they must have to God. As tradition-bound Arabs see it, westernization introduces a dichotomy into Arab life, which had been one organic whole religion in its totality; now it has become partly religious and partly secular. While this dichotomy is in itself a sin, because it removes part of human life from divine guidance, still worse is the development which inevitably follows, and which leads to a progressive expansion of the secular area of life at the expense of the religious. At the end of this road, as Muslim traditionalists see it, a duplication of what has happened to the West a complete subordination 'of all human endeavor to materialistic goals, with a corresponding total abandonment of religion, together with the morality it teaches.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the solution lies in changing the religious discourse, the way people this of religion and how they deal with it, and reinterpret the erroneously interpreted concepts of the 'fate'. This concept in part and parcel of the faith: to believe in God and the "fate". This concept is understand as to accept an effect without apparent cause, i.e. does not attribute the effect to any doer but God and one and the only. This is wrong for many reasons. First, this contradicts a verse in the Quran that says: "we made a cause for every effect""وجعلنالكلشيءسببا".volition

Another thing, the word "qadr" means the judgment God will determine (or estimate, evaluate, value, rate) for man's deeds in life in the days of judgment. Thirdly, if man's destiny is determined or established in advance, i.e. 'maktub', how does this square with the fact that man is furnished with the mental faculty by which man deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action, i.e. will or isolation. Lastly, it seems that N. Mahfuz in his novel *Abath al-Aqdar* (The Mockery of Fate) wants to say that this concept of fate is very old in Egyptian history. Truly Herodotus, the fifth century B.C. Greek historian wrote about this story, and Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) dealt with same theme is his poem "Mycerinus" but with a different concept of fate. But the story as conceived by ancient Egyptian must be understood in the light one of their aphorisms that "the one who seeks aggressively to obtain something losses it." (مانيتون - 365)

Notes:

(1). Arab Folklore and Proverbs are full of sayings like: "Whatever is, is right".
خرجمن"عامٍآخر"وكذلكمثل،كانممالیسرفیالإمكانابدع
مرداره قلهقداره"

(2). "Nothing comes from the West that would please the heart".
یسرالقلبمالایأتیهنالغرب

(3). See the controversy over free verse and traditional verse.
(4). This concept is more obvious in Upper Egypt.
(5). This situation can be understood in the light of the plan of creation, to create opposite for the creationof movement and the state of becoming. However, Islamic culture recognises the idea of volition. Mancan will but he must say 'I will do it, if God wills it. This is common in all religions. Dante famous phrase"la sua voluntale e nostra pace" (in your will lies out peace.)

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