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## PHILOSOPHIC IDEAS IN THE ARABIC LITERATURE

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The paper analyses the specifics of the usage of philosophic ideas in modern Arabic literature on the basis of traditional Arabic themes and forms.

**Key words:** the Arab-Islamic philosophy, the genre of the “Zuhdiyyat”, Abu Ala al-Maari, Faiz Mahmud, West-European skepticism.

From the very beginning of its appearance (early VIII century) the Arab-Islamic philosophy was considered to be “a science of sciences” and comprised studies of different questions related to the socio-political role of the philosopher in the medieval society. Scientists and philosophers such as Al-Kindi (died in 837), Al-Farabi (died in 950), Ibn Sina (Avicenna, died in 1037), Al-Gazali (died in 1111) and many others were interested in the nature of the Divinity and its relation with the physical world, problems of anima, mind, good and evil and “freedom of will” (as between divine decree and human activity) knowledge. Moral and social aspects of life are subject matter for both representatives of the Arab-Islamic philosophy and the foremost Arab writers. During the reign of the Abbasid dynasty a new development in the Arabic poetry appeared — “philosophical verses”, the authors of which touched on the themes of the outward world using the analytical approach. Philosophical musings over the reason for being, its transience and certainty of death in the form of austere sermon (the genre of the “Zuhdiyyat” — “abstention, austerity”) became a frequent practice in the works of Abu al-Atahiya (748—825), who can be justly designated as the father of the genre of philosophical lyric poetry. Ibn ar-Rumi (836—896), a talented poet, was called an “eminent philosopher”. The ideas of rationality and fairness, which were prevailing concepts for the ideologists of the “mutazilism” (VIII century), attracted medieval prose-writers, such as: al-Jahiz (775—868), A. Ibn al-Muqaffa (approx. 720—756), Abu Ala al-Maari (979—1057) and others.

The closest rapprochement of the philosophical ideas and Arabic literature can be traced nowadays, when the crisis phenomena in politics, economy and social life of the Arabic communities are exacerbated by the moral and ethic “diseases”, by self-dissatisfaction of the human being. One of the contemporary writers-philosophers is the Jordanian writer Faiz Mahmud. His philosophic novel “al-Ablah” (“Idiot”), in which the author used a parabolic form, was published in 1979. The author borrowed this name from the Russian writer F.M. Dostoevsky, but the novels practically have nothing in common. Behind the fancy plot a real context — socio-historical events in the life of Jordan, segregation of people in the modern Jordanian community, commotion of the spirits of the person under the difficult conditions of the socio-economical situation in the Middle East — can be traced.

The Jordanian writer realizes the need for a new moral code to be adopted, which could give the Arabic society a good shake and startle it out of its apathy, release from loafing, vacancy of mind, and passivity. Against the background of the political processes taking place in the Middle East countries, the writer is striving to match a new strength against the evil, having returned to the traditional ways of society salvation already used by the Arabic literature.

The main idea of the novel — narration of a gradual revival of the human personality, its moral quest, liberation from vices — is expanded by the author in the ideas classical for the Arabic literature, by the refraction of the “pathway to the light”. In quest of this way of the human being’s transformation into the more perfect person, and then of the spiritual transformation of the whole society, F. Mahmud comes to the assertion of the beauty of human nature, its aspiration for good and general welfare. According to his statement “ugliness of the worldly aspect is a lamp of clay, but in the spiritual aspect there is neither pain, nor fear or ugliness, only the beauty is incarnated in there” [5. P. 15]. Therefore, Faiz Mahmud has regard to the idea of the variety of the natural and morally-psychological human phenomena, which he sees as the organic integrity of the spirit and body, at that the spirit cannot be destroyed — only the body can be born and can die. So, it is the spirituality, the “spirit”, that is a key component in F. Mahmud’s structure of personality.

Every person occupies a certain position in life and wends the multi-level path of the spiritual insight implementing their ideals of the good and love, and finally gains inner liberty gradually overcoming their own vices, malices and winning perilous desires.

For F. Mahmud moral, spiritual values become especially significant. The platform of the Jordanian writer’s novel is the people’s ability to see with their own eyes the true reason for being through the pure life.

Under the conditions of internal and external conflicts of the Arabic East countries situated in the Middle East, the problems of life and death, problems of all people and each individuality salvation cannot but worry the Jordanian clerisy. Faiz Mahmud is looking for the solution of difficult problems of the contemporary reality trying to turn the personal existence to the world.

Trying to understand the destiny of an ordinary person whose acts and hopes are units of measurement of all philosophic, moral and spiritual values of the society, F. Mahmud absorbs historical and art experience of his nation resorting to the genre of the parable. At that, the parable is a decompressed vivid narrative granule that is not only a preaching in the form of the exciting story about the residents of the “city of death” doomed to destruction because of a strange illness but, first of all, it is a philosophical statement of the person’s destiny dependence on the outside world, of the necessity of the person’s moral relation with the world. Through the lens of a fable F. Mahmud is trying to show the Arabic community people and system of this community, to bring to light causes of appearance of the difficult vexing problems which his contemporaries are facing every day.

In the novel the author is a narrator — Ravi: “It happened years and years ago. With every sunrise there were a lot of dead bodies in the great city at sight of which

people became lost, and the doctors were unable to cure people” [5. P.14]. Artistic fiction, which F. Mahmud uses in his novel, helps him to present events in such a way as to show facts of life more vividly with the help of allegory. Socio-ideological imperatives that are contained in the folk tale are sustained by their “matching” to the rational experience, to the daily life. The more cruel the world around the man is the more our anguish for an ideal is and the more the artist’s duty is — to “find a man in the man”, to show realistically not only ugliness and chaos prevailing in our world but also the flush to the ideal hidden in the man’s soul, his desire to “return the lost soul” suppressed by the burden of circumstances. F. Mahmud interprets the parable in terms of Sufism — the hero should choose the path that leads to the supreme awareness of existence and to the spiritual perfection; heroes are accompanied by a certain abstract character (taif), who acts as a sufi teacher — sheikh. At the end of the way viators “open up new horizons” (cashf al-ufuk) and “understand the existence” (fath al-vudjuk). Using the parable as the edifying or a cautionary example, the author used also its genre resources, gave it a modern substance, and turned his work in a certain experiment. The parable underlines and enhances morally-philosophical concept of the novel, and the concept is to approve honorable motives which the man should follow during his life. F. Mahmud is searching for ways of social transformations related to the creation of a new model of personality. It is the heroes’ arduous quest of the mutual understanding under the conditions of the contemporary social existence that can awake the heart and the mind. Heroes do forth for the sake of people’s salvation. During this pilgrimage “the honour is above all things whatever the aim is” [5. P. 20].

Through the uplift of the person’s feeling and its awakening, the personal spirit in man’s behavior and thinking becomes supreme. This process can take the most contradictory shapes. In a complex environment the liberated person may equally become a great creative or a negative, destructive power, and the author is trying to show it.

A man, according to the author’s opinion, cannot lose dreams and love during their life because they value “these top things” though it is difficult for them to confess it in conditions of cold reality [5. P. 21]. Hence the duality of the human nature where the good and the evil closely interweave, purity of feeling and sensitivity get along with the turning deep into the selfish inner world. In this regard the author especially draws the reader’s attention to the relationships between a man and a woman in the belief that they are equal. “No one should de-emphasize the woman’s role thus soothing the man’s vanity”, — he says [5. P. 23]. The radix of the common love tragedy of the heroes and their attempt to make a family should be sought in the “human’s nature” but not in that who is prevailing in the relationships [5. P. 24]. Psychological gap between the heroes is inevitable as the exalted impulse to the alliance of souls faces the inner segregation and impossibility of the absolute mutual understanding.

Reality and delicacy of Vafa’s feelings to Ablah resembles the attempt to combine pure Eros with the worship to “the beautiful man” as an object of the kind of an absolute godhead or the prophet gifted with a great vision of the prophet. In this novel Vafa becomes a symbol of the whirl of thoughts and actions. She eagers to find “rest and peace” after the long wandering over the old city ruins which the author by the words of his hero calls “the traces of the world’s depravity” [5. P. 21].

And her father helped her to make a choice. Vafa finds her way of salvation avoiding eventual meetings with Ablah. This choice is disputed by the author himself as the passive existence leads to the mental block which causes “chill over the heart though the life is successful” [5. P. 41]. In such a manner F. Mahmud asserts the necessity to trust to own longings and this is the spirit of the novel. And the hero begs vainly for one more chance. It is difficult for Ablah to go through the separation. Only after the anguish of the body and the mind related to the bitterness of loss and loneliness, the hero could fully aware what had happened and regret and repent.

Here, the author again addresses the theme of knowledge of life through the pilgrimage, wandering through the desert. Steeping into the mental world of the hero becomes kind of exit to the immensity of the universe. Through Ablah’s conscience F. Mahmud is trying to recreate an immediate unity of the man and the world. The life as well as the nature never rests “the wind lifts the sand that flies up and falls down just to sail up into the clouds again” [5. P. 48]. After the storm calmness and quietness come and the sun warms the Earth and every live creature. “During my pilgrimage I have been everywhere and I tell you that the Earth will always have sand hills and winding coulees. The Earth and the Heaven are measureless as the sea which my soul desires to plunge to. Wild forests and mountains. I would like to enumerate at once all the life forms, all the ways of existence I have not passed yet. Is this the immortality of soul that becomes free after the death of the lamp of clay of the temporary guest?” [5. P. 45—46]. The second chapter practically deprived of the strand of the plot is full of expatiative philosophical sanctions interspersed with the moral wisdoms. Ablah’s realization of his selfishness that led him to the vicious circle of the relationships with Vafa and her relatives, showed by F. Mahmud, inevitably causes the isolation and then the death of the hero.

The writer says that at the time of national and social convulsions it is necessary to see in the man a worthwhile person, to cultivate by all means a reasonable aspect of their being as the base of the commonwealth; the natural aspect of the human being — his animal nature inducing the man to the selfish and mercenary existence — is considered as the source of the social evil. Naturally people are prone to show a lack of determination that is why according to the author’s opinion “the crimes are committed in the world” [5. P. 33]. According to the Islamic cosmology, a man who stepped on the spiritual path is capable to gradually release his spirit from the chains of his ego, acquiring knowledge, conscience and virtues. The whole man’s life is an endless path — “desert hills climbing” [5. P. 48]. Now we see again the same philosopho-mystic movement: identification of the path inside with the path in space.

It seems to us, that the novel “al-Ablah” by F. Mahmud is written in accordance with the creative interests of a number of the Arab writers of the 60—90s. (Naguib Mahfouz, Muhammad Gazi Arabi, Gamal al-Gitani) whose works embodied rich traditions of Sufism.

At the same time, influence of the West-European skepticism, French existentialism with their tragic vision of man’s destiny, sense of inanity of people’s ambitions to realize their potential in this world and to find happiness and peace cannot go

unnoticed. Apparently, all this together with political and social problems of the Arab community incurred that feeling of disappointment in the world, which F. Mahmud masterfully showed in his novel.

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### **ОТРАЖЕНИЕ ФИЛОСОФСКИХ ТЕМ В АРАБСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ**

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В статье анализируются влияния философии на арабскую литературу, особенности трансформации философских идей в темах и формах современной арабской литературы.

**Ключевые слова:** арабо-исламская философия, жанр «зухдийят», Абу Аля ал-Маарри, Фаиз Махмуд, западно-европейский скептицизм.