Ewa Machut-Mendecka

Creationism in the Arabic drama

Arabic drama as a collection of written texts belongs to the so-called "new" Arabic literature, which has been developing since the 19th century. Prior to this date, in the period of Arabic classical literature, only few dramas had been written. On the other hand, inspired by religion and folklore, numerous forms of theatrical plays developed (theatre of shadows, farce theatre, epic performances etc.). All of these forms were improvised and—in the second half of the 19th century—were replaced by the theatre based on the concept of dramatic text adopted from Europe. Egypt, where Egyptians, Libyans and Syrians (mainly political emigrants) founded numerous theatrical ensembles, has come to be the centre of Arab theatre. Due to their tours to the Middle East and Maghreb, the concepts of the theatre and drama have developed homogeneously in the whole Arab world.

These concepts have been formed under the influence of European patterns: numerous plays have appeared which were borrowings from European works, especially dramas. However, Arabic drama, which created a synthesis of the native and alien patterns, has been shaped as a new quality.

The contemporary Arabic drama comprises thousands of plays. I divided this huge output to the three main directions which I called neoclassicism, realism and creationism.

Neoclassicism (from the second half of the 19th century to the 1960) is a synthesis of various alien patterns and forms or contents which survived from the Arabic literary classical periods. First comes the folk trend, based on the concept of the *Thousand and One Nights* and other aspects of Arabic folklore (the earliest was Aḥmad Abū Ḫalīl al-Qabbānī from Lebanon). The authors of the second literary trend seek their themes in the broadly cenceived past: ancient—Oriental and European, Arab-Muslim and Christian (the leaders were Aḥmad Šawqī and ‘Azīz Abāẓa, both from Egypt).

Realism from the second half of the 19th century onwards develops in Arab drama in the shape of two currents. The first one, in which farces and

melodramas prevail, is called the early realism (the earliest was Yaʿqūb Ṣannūʿ in Egypt), while the second—referred to as the socio-political realism—is represented in particular by Nuʿmān ʿAšūr in Egypt, Yūsuf al-ʿĀnī in Iraq and Ṣaqr ar-Raššūd in Kuwait.

Creationism (since the 1960s), the third direction of the Arabic drama, is the main subject of my paper. It comprises those dramas which reject the concepts of the hitherto Arabic playwrighting and aims at the great change of the Arabic drama.

The history and development of the creationism. Experimentalists with theatre in the 1960s and 1970s turn in the first place to *turāṯ*, i.e. cultural heritage. After neoclassicism, another "return to the roots"[1] of the indigenous culture is observed. At the same time, experimentalists penetrate new trends of European theatre, developed from the time of its Great Reform.[2] As a result of the further inseparable synthesis of Arab and alien elements (Euro-American in particular), a new trend in theatre and drama emerged which I have called "creationism". One of its main features is the breaking with the traditional conception of drama about which Stefania Skwarczyńska writes as follows: "Tradition signing itself with the great name of Aristotle (...) sets drama in the sphere of literature as one of its genres beside epic and lyric. Thus, according to theory of art rooted in this tradition, theatrical drama does not appear in the present-day systematics of arts beside such arts as music, literature, dance or architecture but is comprised by literature as one of its genres. However, such an approach arouses serious reservations".[3]

In this spirit creationist authors raise reservations addressed to hitherto Arabic dramaturgy. They abandon the "literary theory of drama"[4] in favour of establishing greater links of the latter with theatre according to the principle that "language substance is not the only material of dramatic and theatrical art".[5] This leads to the phenomena which Yūsuf Idrīs,

[1] Cf. for the area of Egypt, E. Machut-Mendecka, *Neoclassicism and the Return to Sources in the Egyptian Drama*, in: "Rocznik Orientalistyczny", Vol.XLIII, Warszawa 1983, passim.

[2] Cf. Hatif Majed K. al-Janabi, *Arabski teatr poszukujacy a doświadczenia współczesnej awangardy teatralnej europejskiej*, Ph.D thesis, Uniwersytet Warszawski 1983, passim.

[3] Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Niektóre praktyczne konsekwencje teatralnej teorii dramatu*, in: *Problemy teorii literatury* (oprac. Henryk Markiewicz), Series 2, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1976, p. 251.

[4] The term after: ibid., p. 255.

[5] Ibid., p. 253.

novelist, dramatist and critic, calls "theatralization" (*tamasruḥ*) of drama. His conception of such theatralization consists in the fact that "...the performance is treated as an all-embracing show which is a mixture of reality and fantasy and in which intellectual, sensory and intuitive perception is combined. Yūsuf Idrīs held that a full participation of the spectators was a prerequisite for a good performance".[6] In his play *Il-Farāfīr* (*The Clowns*, produced in Cairo 1963/1964) the dramatist showed the characters of Arab folklore and made use of old spectacular forms. In his theoretical writings he encouraged dramatists to link contemporary Arabic theatre[7] with the old popular theatre, especially to restore a spontaneous actor-spectator tie. "So far, we have not achieved theatralization (*tamasruḥ*) or the unification of the human community divided into the actors and the audience [...]. Theatre is not a place in which we watch something [...], but an assembly in which all the people present take part"–Yūsuf Idrīs wrote.[8]

In the 1950s, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm[9] encouraged dramatists to return to the past, especially to restore the character of the former narrator in the theatre. In Egypt, the patterns of popular Arab classical works were adopted almost in the original form by Alfred Farağ (b. 1929).[10] Other innovative writers develop several currents in Arab dramaturgy: the so-called "expressionism" (Raššād Rušdī, b. 1915 and Šawqī 'Abd al-Ḥakīm, "neorealism" (Maḥmūd Diyāb, b. 1932, Mīḫā'īl Rūmān, b. 1925 or 1927[11]—d. 1973; Fatḥī Raḍwān), surrealist trends (various writers, especially 'Alī Sālim), and the epic current (Nağīb Surūr, b. 1932).[12] Poetic drama of Ṣalāḥ 'Abd aṣ-Ṣabūr (1938-1981) and 'Abd ar-Raḥmān aš-Šarqāwī (b. 1920), as well as many plays of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm are beyond the limits of this classification. "The sixties were the golden age of the theatre and playwrighting in Syria".[13] This was the time of dramatic output of Sa'd Allāh Wannūs (b.

---

[6] H.Janabi, op.cit., p.93.

[7] Yūsuf Idrīs expressed his views in 1964 in the Egyptian monthly "Al-Kātib" (Cairo) Nos. 34, 35, 36, after: ibid., p. 83.

[8] Yūsuf Idrīs, *Naḥwa masraḥ miṣrī*, in: Yūsuf Idrīs, *Naḥwa masraḥ 'arabī*, Beirut 1974, p. 469.

[9] In his work *Qālabunā al-masraḥī*, Cairo 1967, after: Hatif Majed K. al-Janabi, op. cit., p. 100.

[10] Cf. Mohamed Hanna Metwali, *Tradycja we współczesnej dramaturgii i teatrze arabskim*, unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, Warsaw University 1981, p. 185.

[11] N. K. Kočarev, *Pisatieli Egipta XX v. Materialy i bibliografia*, Moskva 1976, p. 189.

[12] After: Ewa Machut-Mendecka, *Współczesny dramat egipski lat 1870-1975,* Warsaw 1984, passim.

[13] Nadīm Ma'lā Muḥammad, *Al-Adab al-masraḥī fī Sūriyā. Naš'atuhu, taṭawwuruhu,* Damascus 1986, p. 60.

1941) who published his manifestos in 1970 in which he encouraged dramatists to make the spectators active within the framework of politicization of theatre.

"Theatre should be politicized to communicate with the spectator, conduct discussion with him and show him the fundamental issues as well as encourage him to take a stand towards them",[14] Wannūs wrote. At the same time, the dramatist made use in his plays of the forms of Arabic improvised theatre, e.g. the character of the narrator.[15]

The seventies saw the flourishment of the innovative Syrian playwriting due to the output of Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, Farḥān Bulbul, Walīd Iḫlāṣī (b. 1935), Muṣṭafā al-Ḥallāǧ, Mamdūḥ 'Udwān and 'Alī 'Uqla 'Ursān.[16]

While in Egypt and Syria the revival of the theatre was largely inspired by dramatists, in Lebanon, Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia this inspiration is mainly owed to producers.

In Lebanon, the leading reformers of theatrical art in the 1960s were Abū Dibs and Antoine al-Multaqā, who followed i.a. the patterns of Jerzy Grotowski.[17] At the same time, drama writing in this country was developed by an innovative dramatist 'Iṣām Maḥfūz.

In Iraq Yūsuf al-'Ānī, after the realist period in his output, wrote the play *Al-Miftāḥ* (*The Key*, 1968)[18] which marked the beginning of innovative drama derived from the folk tradition. In the 1960s, another playwright, 'Ādil Kāẓim (b. 1929), began to write his plays inspired by the Arab and Iraqi past. The most famous of his plays was *Ṭūfān* (*The Deluge*, Baghdad 1966)[19] based on the legend of Gilgamesh. Another Iraqi, Qāsim Muḥammad[20], prepared his performances according to the popular canons and they were free from illusionistic and mimetic tendencies. This producer also subordinated his own plays and screenplays to the

[14] Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, *Bayānāt li-masraḥ 'arabī ǧadīd*, "Al-Ma'rifa" (Damascus) 104/1970, after: ibid., p. 119.

[15] E.g. in *Mūǧāmarāt ra's al-mamlūk Ǧābir*, published in Damascus 1970.

[16] 'Alī 'Uqla 'Ursān is also a theatre specialist and critic.

[17] 'Alī ar-Rā'ī, *Al-Masraḥ fī ǎl-waṭan al-'arabī*, Kuwait 1980, p. 130; another outstanding Lebanese director is Roger 'Assāf.

[18] Cf. Yāsīn Rifā'iyya, *'Iṣām Maḥfūz wa-ǎl-masraḥ al-lubnānī*, "Al-Mawqif al-'Adabī" (Damascus) No. 5/1974, p. 126.

[19] This play is "(...) the turning point in the output of Yūsuf al-'Ānī and at the same time in the entire dramatic output in Iraq" write J. Bielawski, K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, J. Jasińska, *Nowa i współczesna literatura arabska 19 i 20 w. Literatura arabskiego Wschodu*, Warsaw 1978, p. 629.

[20] Another oustanding Iraqi writer is Ṭāhā Sālim, and the outstanding directors are Ibrāhīm al-Ǧalāl and Sāmī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd; see Hatif Majed K. al-Janabi, op. cit., pp. 226, 232.

exigencies of modern staging. There are similarities between his artistic activity and the development of contemporary Moroccan theatre.[21]

In Morocco the theatre developed rapidly after the country gained independence in 1956. A whole group of directors began their activity.[22] They rejected illusionism, curtain, realist decorations, used modern technique, including the film-making technique, abandoned the rules governing time and space and referred to *turāṯ*—Arab cultural heritage. [23]

One of the most distinguished Moroccan directors and dramatists (since 1957) is Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, who calls his productions the "ritual theatre" (*al-masraḥ al-iḥtifālī*) or the "total theatre" (*al-masraḥ al-kāmil*).[24] Both concepts indicate the return to the tradition of an Arab theatrical performance, especially equal rights given to the word, motion, sound as well as to the spectator and actor.[25] His artistic concepts are being disseminated; in 1979 *Bayān al-masraḥ al-iḥtifālī* (*Manifesto of the Ritual Theatre*)[26] signed by Moroccan artists was published. Apart from Aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, creationist drama is developed in Morocco by Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-ʿAlaǧ, ʿAbd al-Karīm Baršīd, Muḥammad Taymūd, Muḥammad Šahrimān and ʿAbd as-Salām Ḥabīb.

Theatrical experimentalism has been developing in the neighbouring Tunisia since 1967 when the artistic "Group 11" (*Maǧmūʿat 11*) was created and the Club of Experimental Theatre (*Nādī al-Masraḥ at-Taǧrībī*) was established. The Club produced the play *Raʾs al-Ġūl* (*The Demon's Head*, 1969)[27] as the experiment of the so-called "collective theatre" shaped by the actors during rehearsal. The play written on this basis by Samīr al-ʿAyādī, Muḥammad al-Arnāʾūṭ and Raǧāʾ Farḥat is the turning point in Tunisian dramatic output: it follows *turāṯ,* rejects illusionism and makes use of the film montage technique.

[21] Especially the influences of Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, ibid., p. 245.

[22] Cf. Adīb as-Salāwī, *Al-Masraḥ al-maġribī min ayna wa-ilā ayna*, Damascus 1975, p. 166; E. Machut-Mendecka, *Dramat. Maroko*, in: J. Bielawski, J. Kozłowska, E. Machut-Mendecka, K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, *Nowa i współczesna literatura arabska 19 i 20 w. Literatura arabskiego Maghrebu*, Warsaw 1989, p. 570.

[23] Adīb as-Salāwī, op. cit., p. 176.

[24] Cf. E. Machut-Mendecka, op. cit., p. 572.

[25] In the 1966/1967 season aṣ-Ṣiddīqī produced his play (written with Aṣ-Ṣamd al-Katfawī) *Dīwān sīdī ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧdūb*, written in Casablanca 1966, which is one of his most favourite plays. Adīb as-Salāwī, op. cit., p. 81; another famous performance of this producer is *Maqāmāt Badīʿ az-Zamān al-Ḥamādānī*.

[26] Published in the Kuwait monthly "Al-Bayān" No. 163/1979, after: Hatif Majed K. al-Janabi, op. cit., p. 226.

[27] Based on the story of ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Madanī *Raʾs al-Ġūl wa-sayyidnā ʿAlī.*

The innovative Tunisian playwriting was developed in the 1970s by 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, the follower of the classical literary techniques (such as *istiṭrād*—"digression") and of the themes representing Arab mediaeval popular movements: "the man of theatre, be it writer or director, will not be satisfied in his work, for example, with the character of *maddāḥ* (...) . One must gain a deeper insight into the Arab thought, absorb it fully and get to know its properties".[28]

Beside Al-Madanī, the leading authors of the revival of Tunisian drama in the spirit of tradition are Ḥasan Ḥamāda and Samīr al-'Ayyādī. The uniform experiments conducted in various Arab theatres cause that creationism has come to be the outcome of theatrical searching.

The contents and methods od the creationist drama. Creationism comprises those plays which reject the "reality in appearances resembling the content of everyday experience". Therefore these plays are inconsistent with the above definition, formulated by Henryk Markiewicz, which I have adopted for realism. Since the same logic of "everyday experience" governs both the Arabic realist and neoclassical drama, i.e. the whole earlier dramaturgy of the region under study, creationism breaks with its conditioning. From the point of view of literary studies the opposition realism vs creationism may arouse some reservations, as there may be a risk that the opposition will mean that realist literature will be deprived of creative features. Stefan Żółkiewski puts forward the following reservation: "There is no absolute opposition realism vs creationism on the artistic plane".[29] However, he also says that "extreme realisation of modern realism and creationism contradict each other. And the easiest way to show it is to oppose the philosophical substructure of the two kinds of poetics".[30] In Stefan Żółkiewski's considerations of major importance is the fact that he recognizes the extreme forms of expression of realism and creationism as the foundations of the two currents. Such extreme forms of realisation are precisely Markiewicz's "idealisation of literary facts"[31], thereby leading to the establishment of any kinds of poetics, creative methods or features of currents. The diminishing amount of these features in some of

[28] 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Bayān ḥawla išti'māl al-faḍā' al-masraḥī fī hāḏā ăd-Dīwān*, in: 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Dīwān as-Zanǧ*, Tunis 1973, p. 11.

[29] Stefan Żółkiewski, *Perspektywy literatury XX wieku*, Warszawa 1960, p. 114.

[30] Ibid., p. 114.

[31] Cf. H.Markiewicz, *Główne problemy wiedzyo literaturze*, Cracow 1976, p. 197.

them also leads to relaxation of the boundaries between realism and creationism.

The opposition realism vs. creationism is recurring in publications on literary studies[32], including those devoted to dramaturgy[33]; the signals of reality and the signals of creation have been opposed in the literary work.[34]

Creation is opposed to reality, and causes that "literary facts" become conventional. Within the framework of the conception of "conventionality" the typical content of creationist drama develops, its creative method is shaped and the principal message of the current comes into light.

1. Typical content: power, coercion, compulsion. Neoclassical and realist plays shape their worlds as concrete and detailed, while in creationist drama there is a tendency to generalisation and simplification, which are already inherent in the main motifs of the plays. These motifs constitute mutually interrelated concepts of power, captivity and coercion. Being present in all the creationist plays, they are the main indicator of content typical of dramaturgy of this current.

1.1. Power, coercion, compulsion. The relationship between power, coercion and compulsion provides the whole gamut of dramatic solutions. On one end there is an example of "literal" slavery in the play *Sulārā*[35] (1969) by Muḥammad al-Faytūrī (Libya), on the other end—coercion of man by a mechanised system in *Il-Wāfid* (*The Newcomer*, published in Cairo 1965) by Mīḫā'il Rūmān (Egypt).

The most typical content in creationist drama, which evolves under the influence of the relationships between power, coercion and compulsion, is expressed by de-individualised dramatis personae. Each of the three motifs, with the co-operation of the remaining ones, calls into being one of the popular heroes of creationism. The impact of the motif of power gives

[32] Cf. Katarzyna Rosner, *Świat przedstawiony a funkcje poznawcze dzieła literackiego*, in: *Problemy teorii literatury*, series 2, op.cit., p.92.

[33] For example, Lesław Eustachiewicz in *Dramaturgia współczesna 1945-1980*, Warszawa 1985, 1st ed., while discussing Polish drama, distinguishes two contrasting sub-chapters: "W stronę realizmu" (p. 191) and "W stronę kreacjonizmu" (p. 217); he also defines the two concepts. Distinction between realism and creationism in theatre is made by Jan Kosiński, *Kształt teatru*, Warszawa 1972, p. 187.

[34] Zbigniew Chojnowski, *Infernalne przestrzenie prozy Sołtysika*, "Miesięcznik Literacki" 1988/5, pp. 79-80.

[35] This is a poetic drama about a deportation of a group of Africans from Africa to Hawaii during the Great French Revolution. The title of the play is the heroine's proper name.

rise to the ruler himself; the motive of compulsion results in the evolution of his helpers, while the motif of coercion–of the subjects.

1.1.1. The rulers. The rulers in the creationist plays vary: from referential to imagined, from those having names or surnames to abstract characters.

Caliph Ša‘bān al-Muqtadir and minister Muḥammad al-‘Alqamī are presented as historical figures in a *ḥakawātī* from the cafe tale in Sa‘d Allāh Wanūs' (Syria) play *Muǧāmarat ra's al-mamlūk Ǧābir* (*The Adventure of the Head of Slave Ǧābir*; "Al-Ma‘rifa" (Damascus) No. 105, November 1970). The action of the play takes place in "stormy times, resembling a stormy sea, which fail to achieve stabilisation".[36] This is confirmed by the story of a title slave, who proposed the caliph to carry through the gates of the town a letter written on his shaven head; instead of the prize he expected, he was put to death.

The referential rulers are individualised primarily by means of their names and surnames, as well as of certain details of the historical background. All the personal features of these characters are behind their function of the exercising of power. It serves, in the first place, to maintain the state of coercion in the areas under rule, for which reference to the apparatus of coercion is needed.

The title pharao *Ḫūfū* (*Cheops*, Cairo) in the play of Šawqī ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm (Egypt) has the same ethos as the imaginary kings of other plays written by this author: Old King[37] and king Ma‘rūf.[38] This ethos is strictly limited by the stamps of greatness of the ruler, filled by his feeling of weakness in the face of the burden of power. This burden consists in that he must constantly enter the world of his subjects which is supposed to be governed by the ruler. This world is unfamiliar and it cannot be grasped by an individual, i.e. the ageing Cheops, as well as the Old King. Hence this area[39] fills these and other creationist rulers with terror, thus making them undertake brutal action. The measures of king Ma‘rūf, on the other hand, are fairly awkward because though he gives away all his property to the people, he is unable to set order in the state.

The referential and imaginary characters share a common function of the exercising of power which is performed monotonously and schemati-

---

[36] Sa‘d Allāh Wannūs, *Muǧāmarat ra's al-mamlūk Ǧābir*, "Al-Ma‘rifa" (Damascus) No. 5/1970, p. 196.

[37] Šawqī ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm, *Mālik ‘Aǧūz*, published in Cairo 1965.

[38] Šawqī ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm, *Il-Mālik Ma‘rūf*, published in Cairo 1965).

[39] The play is based on one of the plots of *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights*.

cally by them. The schematism of any rule is emphasised by Sa'd Allāh Wannūs already in the title of his play *Al-Malik huwa al-malik* (*The King is the King*, 1983). Here, the king who wants to amuse himself, transfers a certain merchant to his palace in his sleep and endows him with one-day rule. To the ruler's despair, the merchant—not recognized by the dignitaries, courtiers and even the queen—stays in his place for good.

The sign of the historical times in which the characters of the referential and imaginary rulers appear are their titles of caliphs, kings, sultans, princes as well as their attributes including scepters, purples and jewels. The attractiveness of this character increases as it loses all the contacts with the well-marked historical background, getting rid also of any names and traditional titles. In the *Aš-Šayāṭīn fī ăl-qarya* (*Devils in the Village*, published in Libya-Tunisia 1973) by Raššād al-Ḥamzāwī (Tunisia) the village-kingdom with vague contours is ruled—in the palace permeated with the atmosphere of strangeness and crime—by a character called only the Ruler.[40] The characters exercising power and deprived of historical conditioning, are marked in various ways, for example in Mu'īn Basīsū's plays, whose world is governed i.a. by A Man Wearing a Gold Whig[41], A Man with a Washing Machine[42], A Driver[43], and Physicians[44].

In the creationist plays the character of the ruler has few characterological features and is a dramatic type formed due to hyperbolisation of the main function performed. The function of power exercising may also veil the figure of the ruler so much that it will disappear completely. The ruler who is absent in dramatic content is still revealed in the effects of his activities. Invisible, he becomes more free. Therefore his activities are more effective and rapacious, while their success is safeguarded by an all-embracing apparatus of power exercising which rests on the shoulders of his helpers-executors.

1.1.2.The helpers. Along with the character of the ruler the character of its helper evolves in creationist plays. The caliphs, kings, sultans and princes

[40] The character of the Ruler, marked by the same Arabic term al-Ḥākim, appears also in the play *Al-Aḫyār*, Tunis 1979 by At-Tiǧānī Zalīla (Tunisia) and Muṣṭafa al-Fārisī.

[41] *Aṣ-Ṣaḫra*, 1979.

[42] *Ṯawrat az-Zanǧ*, produced in Cairo 1970.

[43] *Šamšūn wa-Dalīla*, produced in Cairo 1971.

[44] *Al-'Aṣāfīr tabnī a'šāšahā bayna al-aṣābi'*, produced in Rabat 1973; *Ma'sāt Guevara*, 1979.

appearing in these plays have at their service ministers, palace dignitaries, courtiers, military men and police. These helpers may play a key role in the particular plays, for example the Minister in Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's play *As-Sulṭān al-ḥā'ir* (*The Sultan's Dilemma*, produced in Cairo 1961), who becomes a defender of the ruler charged of being a manumitted slave.[45] The mistakes of an indolent Cairo ruler Bahā' ad-Dīn Qarāqūš, fighting in Ḥasan Ḥamāda's play[46] with his mocking biographer, a mediaeval thinker, are corrected by a Helper.

The more distant the past and its "historical" conditioning, the greater is the freedom of the ruler's helpers who represent the authority of increasingly anonymous character. If within the framework of this representation the particular helpers are the protagonists, they may be given some personal features. For example, the two policemen in the play of Al-Buṣayrī 'Abd Allāh (Libya) *Ḥālat ḥiṣār bilā munāsaba* (*The State of Siege without Reason*, 1977) who are relatives, have names and we know that they have families and well-shaped personal life. Being the epitome of discipline and naivety, they try to satisfy their superiors by imagining an inexistent coup.

The cruelty of the helpers grows in these plays in which the personal features of these characters become obliterated.[47] They are absent, for example, in the case of a secret agent who changes names (from Ḥasan to Ḥusayn and Muḥsin)[48] in Sa'd Allāh Wannūs' play[49] and each time he does so, he puts to prison a "poor vendor of brown sugar" who goes out from the prison as a wreck of man. An anonymous conductor, who also undergoes various metamorphoses, terrorizes a passanger in a ghostly atmosphere of a running train in the play *Musāfir al-layl* (*The Night Traveller*) by Ṣalāḥ 'Abd aṣ-Ṣabūr.[50]

The representatives of the force flowing from unknown sources identify themselves with the function performed, destroying own identity. Indefiniteness taken from the superior authority also becomes their main

---

[45] Ministers are among the main characters e.g. in *Lu'bat as-sulṭān wa-ǎl-wazīr*, published in "Al-Fuṣūl al-Arba'a" (Tripoli 1982) by Al-Kīlāni 'Awn (Libya), *Al-Malik huwa al-malik* by Sa'd Allāh Wannūs.

[46] *Bahā ad-Dīn Qarāqūš*.

[47] For example in *Ǧarīmat qatl*, published in Cairo 1973, by Muṣṭafā Bahǧat Muṣṭafā (Egypt), the play in which the main role is played by the motif of coercion, the characters appear without the opponents; here the Prosecutor terrorises the Defendant during the interrogation.

[48] The names are derived from the root **ḥ s n** and are connected with the verb *ḥasuna*—"to be good".

[49] Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, *Ma'sāt bā'ī ad-dibs al-faqīr*, Damascus 1965.

[50] Ṣalāḥ 'Abd aṣ-Ṣabūr, *Musāfir al-layl*, written in 1969.

attribute. What is indefinite[51] is at the same time unknown, arouses fear and distrust. The representatives of the incomprehensible authority are viewed as alien by the inhabitants of the world presented of the creationist plays. Because they do not have common habits: *Al-Ġurabā' lā yašrabūna al-qahwa* (*Strangers Do Not Drink Coffee*), as it results from Maḥmūd Diyāb's (Egypt) play[52], but come for unknown reasons to measure the house of a quiet elderly married couple. The stranger enters somebody's dream as a persecutor and menace in *Al-Ġarrād* (*The Locust*, 1965) by Sa'd Allāh Wannūs. The strangers in 'Ali 'Uqla 'Ursān's[53] play—though at first friendly to the inhabitants of a certain village—push them more and more out of their homes.

All the strangers threaten the communities presented as the representatives of unfamiliar, awestricken authority. Thye are also the epitome of its most abstract form. Due to this form they make the function of a helper perfect, which is sometimes performed awkwardly and unfairly by the king's and caliph's ministers in those plays in which they are encumbered with the weaknesses of their human nature.

1.1.3.The subjects. The world presented in most creationist dramas is "densely populated" by large human communities. Their primary feature is anonymity and in the extreme cases these communities are deprived of all attributes. In 'Abd Allāh al-Quwayrīs *Aṣ-Ṣawt wa-ǎṣ-ṣadā* (*The Voice and Echo*, published in Tripoli 1972) a Man who does not have any personal features discusses with a Woman, Old Man, Young Man, representatives of the authority who terrorize him, as well as anonymous groups of people, among other things, the right to ask questions. In *Al-Mīlād* (*The Birth*, 1965) by the same author the discussion on the sense of any activity is interrupted by the galloping crowds. Voices of anonymous characters force their way into the action of *Ta'āzī fāṭimiyya* (*The Fatimid Mourning*, 1978) by 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī (Tunisia); while scanning the elegies, they recall the death of Al-Ḥusayn, the Prophet's grandson, which makes up an intermission in quasi-historical events connected with the rule of the first Fatimids (10th c.) in North Africa.

Human communities in the creationist plays can also be defined more precisely as peoples, nations, street crowds or professional groups.

---

[51] The atmosphere of complete indefiniteness characterises the action of the play *Ma'a ǎs-salāma, ayyuhā ǎz-Zunūǧ al-bīḍ*, published in Baghdad 1981) by Muḥyī ǎd-Dīn az-Zanakan (Iraq), where a solitary musician receives a telephone call in which someone's voice asks for help, which is followed by the shots.

[52] *Al-Ġurabā lā yašrabūna al-qahwa*, ab. 1970).

[53] 'Alī 'Uqla 'Ursān, *Al-Ġurabā'*, Damascus 1974).

However, this definition cannot be pushed too far as the creationists avoid giving detailed and concrete names to the communities presented. While distinguishing some individuals, they willingly define them—like many realists do—by the functions performed but also mark them with numbers. Thus, the created anonymous characters, as if they were temporarily distinguished from the particular groups, do not veil with their personal plots their main task: to express the complaint of helpless subjects about the omnipotent authority. The complaint is rightful and long-standing; it is substantiated i.a. by Qāsim Muḥammad's (Iraq) Craftsmen in *Maǧālis at-turāṯ* (*The Feasts of Heritage*, written 1974-1975), who are marked with numbers. In this play, the soldiers preparing Baghdad for the royal festival terrorize the people, and the elder of the trade guild does harm to a Baghdad philosopher and tramp who earns his living by copying books.

The anonymous community of subjects in some creationist plays is even more differentiated as it is divided into smaller groups related to the concrete background of Arab towns and villages. Tramps, beggars, petty thieves, adventurers or popular rebels are particularly abundant in the mediaeval Baghdad bazaar in Qāsim Muḥammad's play *Bagdād al-azal bayna al-ǧadd wa-ǎl-hazal* (*The Eternal Baghdad Half Joking Half Serious*). The bazaar is full of the characters of clowns, dwarfs, snake charmers, trainers of monkeys[54], and against this background work honest and dishonest craftsmen are working under a strict control of an elder of the trade guild.

In the anonymous crowd depicted in the creationist plays there also appear characters that, while sharing its worries, are marked with their own names. Their fate has a twofold implication: collective suffering is confirmed in an individual's experience. The physician Labīb in *As-Su'āl* (*The Question*, 1970) by Muḥyī ǎd-Dīn Ḥamīd (Iraq), who helps the beggars of Baghdad, fails to defend himself against the charge of crime he did not committed and is sentenced by the corrupt apparatus of justice of the caliph.

The rulers marked with concrete "historical" signs have more individualized subjects. Twentieth-century Egyptian pashas face the characters of fellahs having more differentiated plots in Naǧīb Surūr's plays.[55] Other

[54] Similar human characters appear in the play *Kubri in-namūs*, produced in 1963-1964, by Saʿd ad-Dīn Wahba, of which the action takes place in 20th-century Egyptian village.

[55] See Ewa Machut-Mendecka, *Współczesny dramat egipski...*, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

popular heroes of the plays of this current experience own tragedies, though the latter develop within the framework of "creationist" conditioning.[56]

1.2. Revival. In many creationist plays whose world is usually governed by the authority, compulsion and coercion, there is also a recurring problem of revival of the existing relations. The revival assumes various forms and represents a differentiated scale of intensity: from the individual's protest to a collective revolt and all-embracing revolution. Already in the dramatic world of *al-ǧāhiliyya*, a Bedouin of the play *Al-Bāb* (*The Gate*, written 1964) by Ġassan Kanafānī (Palestine) resists the authority of a pagan god; when he dies, he moves his revolt into the other world, where he attacks a solid gate of the extramundane prison.

In creationist dramaturgy the protest showing both universal and Arab features embraces the modern and mediaeval world. The yearning for protest and change stirs the subjects to action. Nameless peasants in Sāmiḥ Qāsim's[57] play (Palestine), at first being a passive tool for acquiring loots for their ruler Qarqāš, rebel against their superior assuming revolutionary attitudes. In *Iz-Zuǧāǧ* (*The Glass*, written in 1967) by Mīḫā'īl Rūmān (Egypt), the contemporary Cairo civil servant protests against the sensation of being at bay and of threat, referring to his relationships with the people. In day-dreaming, beyond historical reference, the revolt reaches the gate of the palace in the play of the same author *Il-Lēla niḍḥak* (*We Can Laugh Tonight*, after 1962).

The revolution in the creationist approach is also a way to revival of the nation and statehood menaced from the outside. It is perceived in this manner in those plays in which the concepts of power, compulsion and coercion are connected with the rule of one state over the other.[58] Thus, creationists undertake one of the most popular themes of realism, that of the national struggle, but with no realist "literariness" and concretisation of details.

The dependence of Bolivia on the United States in *Ma'sāt Guevara* (*The Tragedy of Guevara*, 1979) by Mu'īn Basīsū (Palestine) assumes the form of a dynamised fresco. The action takes place in various places and on various planes: in the square, where tourists arrive in a coach to see the mummified Guevara, in a Bolivian village pacified by the police, in prison, in the library, in a TV studio. The world of real characters is joined by the

---

[56] For example the plays of Šawqī 'Abd al-Ḥakīm (Egypt), see ibid., p. 59 ff.

[57] Samīḥ Qāsim, *Qarqāš,* 1969.

[58] The individual's revolt against the oppression by the ruling system can be found e.g. in a one-act play by 'Ali Sālim (Egypt) *Il-Bufe*, produced in 1968, and one-act plays of Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ (Egypt). E. Machut-Mendecka, op. cit., p. 90.

abstract human types: Men having symbolical meaning, and an omni-present Man Looking like Guevara.[59]

The theme of subjugation of Palestine by Israel is evolving by use of the same "realist" motifs. Although the creationists willingly use abstractionism and pauses, they introduce signs that are sufficiently clear to allow us to recognize the theme. In Muʿīn Basisū's *Samson and Delilah*, where the torments of awaiting are experienced by the passangers of an immobile car, this is the sign of the garden in Jaffa appearing in an ever-lasting memory of the family home of the hero. In ʿAli ʿUqla ʿUrsān's *ʿArāḍat al-ḫuṣūm* (*Manifestation of Opponents*, published in Damascus 1976) the realist background is provided by the Arab-Israeli fighting on the Sinai. A mother of one of the dead, encouraging to fighting, creates, however, an unreal world in which three slightly different worlds are marked by three symbolical characters: Muslim, Salmān and Sālim, having names similar in meaning[60] and declaring equally good intentions. Pictures and loose scenes from the Palestinian struggle, interwoven with songs and music, can be found in Alfred Farağ's play *An-Nār wa-ăz-zaytūn* (*The Fire and Olives*, produced in Cairo 1969-1970).

However, in the creationist output the external world does not confirm the coherence of the community presented, as it is the case in neoclassical and realist drama. The creationist motifs already at the level of simplification and abstraction combine—by way of common content—the characters and themes called into being. Any concrete forms that these motifs may assume do not veil their key message. Power, compulsion and coercion, no matter whether they flow from beyond the boundaries of the world depicted in the plays or whether they evolve within the framework of this world, are equally negative in putting together the human communities created. These communities defend themselves by undertaking revival in the same way no matter whether the centres of terror develop on their own territories or beyond them.

Another dramatic type of creationism, namely a revolutionary or a revolutionary leader, is responsible in the first place for the revival. Just as other contents of the creationist plays, this character is shaped between a concrete and detailedness on the one hand and an abstract and generalisation on the other hand.

---

[59] Guevara is a symbol of total fighting against oppression in *Layla maṣraʿ Guevara al-ʿaẓīm*, produced in Cairo 1968-1979 by Miḫāʾīl Rūmān, where the geographical names, such as Vietnam, Latin America, Africa, Palestine, Jerusalem, Nile, Dunšawāy village in Egypt prove that coercion dominates in the real world.

[60] The names are derived from the root **s l m**, which occurs in Arabic verbs denoting the striving for peace, security and good.

The type of a revolutionary and a revolutionary leader is developed most in those plays which take up the theme of the historical contestation, i.e. Arab religion-based popular movements which were numerous in mediaeval Islam. One of the most outstanding leaders of these movements in Arabic dramaturgy is Al-Ḥallāǧ, an Iraqi mystic of the 8/9th century. He was already present in neoclassical drama and he appears in the creationist plays. In a poetical play of Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣabūr *Ma’sāt al-Ḥallāǧ* (*The Tragedy of al-Ḥallāǧ*, written 1964), he is an opponent who disseminates among the Iraqi people the Sufi doctrine, closely related to the physical and spiritual revival of the faithful. Under the guise of charge of spreading heresy he is sentenced to crucifixion by the Muslim court of caliph.

In ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī’s play *Riḥlat al-Ḥallāǧ* (*Al-Ḥallāǧ’s Travel*, 1973) the title character of the same opponent was split into three personalities one of which follows the idea of revival and reaches the present time. On this road the protagonist remains a model of a self-sacrificing revolutionary, which is untypical in Al-Madanī’s dramaturgy. But other leaders in the same play, who led 19-century movements of Qarmatians, Babak’s followers and Zanǧ developing in the Arab East, assume an ominous visage. Although all of them fight with the terror of central authority of an Abbasid caliph, they are at variance and hostile towards one another. In their approach the revival becomes distorted and they themselves depart from the revolutionary ethics indicating the return to ideology of equality and democracy of early Islam. Likewise, other leaders of revolutionary movements deviate from the principles adopted in al-Madanī’s dramaturgy: a Kharijite Yazīd in North Africa[61], founder of the Fatimid dynasty in this area—imam ‘Ubayd Allāh from the East[62], and the leader of the Zanǧ rebellion in Iraq.[63] They all undergo also a significant metamorphosis: they turn from revolutionaries to rulers governing by means of the apparatus of coercion; from the partners of the subjects they become their enemies. They may exemplify the “theory saying that an inevitable annihilation of civilisation occurs upon the extinction of creative forces of the elite, which causes that it degenerates to form a ruling oligarchy”.[64]

The same—as in the past—fall of the conception of revival is presented in creationist drama in the contemporary perspective and in the world

---

[61] ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Ṯawrat Ṣāḥib al-Ḥimār*, published in Tunis 1970.

[62] ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *The Fatimid Mourning*.

[63] ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Dīwān az-Zanǧ*, published in Tunis 1973.

[64] Arnold Toynbee’s hypothesis quoted after Alina Brodzka, *O kryteriach realizmu w badaniach literackich*, Warszawa 1966, p. 18.

deprived of toponimic keys.[65] In 'Abd Allāh Manṣūr's *Šay' min al-ǧaḍab*
(*A Bit of Anger*, published in Amman 1984) a Man, formerly a Revolu-
tionary, will not save a girl from a compulsory marriage to a Respectful
Man. But he will start negotiating with him in a hypocrytical atmosphere
of mutual respect.

However, the deviation from the revival conducted may also have
another variant: the leader's striving to resume the protest does not need to
be a treason. In Yūsuf Idrīs' *Il-Muḥaṭṭaṭīn* (*The Striped Ones*, written in
1968 or 1969) the action takes place already beyond any great history and
concretisation; the protagonist called the Brother accomplishes a victorious
revolution all over the world and replaces all the colours by black-and-
white stripes. After the victory, the old order stiffens and the Brother, who
does not want to be an "old-style" ruler, proclaims a new revolution which,
however, has no chances for success in view of the perfection of the appa-
ratus of coercion.

The revolutionary dissident competes in creationitst drama with the
character of an ardent leader ready for the highest sacrifice to change the
existing order. The example of such a character may be the Revolutionary
in *Al-Mawt wa-ăl-qaḍiyya* (*The Death and the Cause*, written in 1969)
by 'Ādil Kāẓim (Iraq), who manages to protect the Book of the Revolution
and in the moment of death he transfers it to a legendary Shahrazad.[66]

The revival is the problem solved in a different way in the particular
creationist plays. Its general sense for the entire current is closely connect-
ed with the temporal order adopted in the plays.

1.3. The sense of existence. The world of creationist drama is a field of
specific penetration of restless, constantly seeking characters. They make
long travels, acquiring knowledge about the world, but they never rest sat-
isfied. They hectically follow the boundaries of cognition which are con-
tinually spreading, seeking a deeper sense within their framework. It is the

[65] The idea of revival subsides and diminishes in the content of the four-part
play by Muḥammad al-Māǧūt (Syria) *Al-'Uṣfūr al-aḥdab 1, 2, 3, 4,* published in
Beirut 1976, which is permeated with abstractionism. In the play the Dwarf, the
Old Man and the Shoemaker are held in the cage in the desert. After they are
released, the Dwarf becomes a rebel and is killed by the Old Man turned into
Prince. The shoemaker with his family is sentenced to death for injuring the guard
with an ear of corn.

[66] Among self-sacrificing revolutionaries and leaders of the struggle for revival
the most distinguished in creationist drama are the Martyr in *Masā' at-ta'ammuq*,
published in "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad No.6/1973), by Qāsim Muḥammad, Yūsuf in
Ḥattā yastrarīḥ al-ab, published in "Az-Zamān al-Maǧribi" (Morocco)
No.11/1982, by Aḥmad Ibn Maymūn (Morocco), *Woman in the Aṣ-Ṣaḥrā'* by
Mu'īn Basīsū.

sense of existence, the "sense of the living process", which "man (...), however, will never find and that is why his life is a constant search—the movement and the change."[67]

Among the protagonists seeking thus conceived sense of existence one can distinguish in the creationist dramaturgy—due to persistence of search and tragic fate—a character of the Moroccan wise man and popular poet, a title hero of Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī and aṣ-Ṣamd al-Katfawī's play *Dīwān Sīdī 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧḏūb* (*The Dīwān of Sīdī 'Abd ar-Raḥmān the Mad*, Casablanca 1966). The play shows the adventures of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, who wanders about the Arab world. The knowledge about the world acquired by this wise man is presented in the play allegorically and symbolically. It is conveyed to the audience by way of tales, jokes or poems recited by the poet-protagonist himself, as well as the performances of the theatre of *ḥalqa* improvising his life story. It is a tragic story: a wise man and a tramp loses his sight at the old age and dies in a mental home.[68]

In those creationist plays in which the pursuit of the sense of existence is the leading theme, it veils the glaring expression of the relationship of power with compulsion and coercion in the world depicted in the plays. However, this relationship continues to form the relations in this world, and the philosopical approach to the content does not diminish its political meaning. In Yūsuf al-'Ānī's play *Al-Miftāḥ*[69] an intellectual Nawwār (i.e. The Brightening One) uses his knowledge to help his brother and his wife, who wander about the world according to the lyrics of a popular song and their travel will bring them a longed-for child—being at the same time a symbol of national revival needed for the change of relations existing in the world presented.

The problem of the quest of the sense of existence makes the creationists use popular wisdom in dialogues and a parabolical language, as well as introduce allegorism into an imaginary sphere of the plays. In some of them man is replaced by animal characters. A hoopoe, for example, is the embodiment of eternal wisdom, both in *Muḥākamat Kalīla wa-Dimna* (*The Judgement on Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 1979), by Mu'īn Basīsū and *Risālat aṭ-ṭayr*, 1979, by Qāsim Muḥammad. In both plays the bird offers its services in experience connected with the search of the sense of existence for the fight for revival against terror and violence.

---

[67] Bogusław Jasiński, *Transcendentalizm nowożytny i dwa programy uprawiania filozofii*, "Miesięcznik Literacki" 1988/9, p. 94.

[68] Cf. the summary of the play in: J. Bielawski, J. Kozłowska, E. Machut-Mendecka, K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, op. cit., pp. 573-574.

[69] Cf. the summary, J.Bielawski, K.Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, J.Jasińska, op. cit., p. 629.

The animals endowed with the mind and speech are the most conventional figures of creationism. By creating an innocent and intelligent world, as compared to the brutal world of people, they make us presume that the latter needs a total revival.[70] Some other time, the animals fraternizing with the human world are cowardly and conservative. For example, the title *Aḍ-Ḍafādī' al-kaḥlā* (*Navy Blue Frogs*) in Muḥammad Šahrimān's (Morocco) play risk an extermination but join the fight of their community for the right to live. The animals lend their appearance to the fighting people; for example, the characters in Aḥmad Ibn Maymūn's play *Ar-Raǧul aḍ-ḍaḥm wa-ăl-'aṣāfir* (*A Huge Man and the Birds*), printed in "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad) No.6/1980, put on wolf's and ship's skins. In the same play, the tormented birds become the symbol of a young generation in a country having no name.

The search for the sense of existence is a problem which adds a philosophical tinge to the content of the plays. Social and political issues placed in this setting acquire a deeper meaning. Unlimited possibilities of search for the sense of existence also contribute to development of the artistic measures and methods used.

1.4. The sense of art and thought. Apart from the sense of existence the characters of the plays seek the sense of art and thought—often in the same areas of the world created. And the search for both of them supports each other. They are developed, i.a. by various wise men, as well as animal characters. They offer their knowledge for the sake of the theatre in its popular and spectacular forms.

The typical creationist content related to them is particularly abundant in Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Alaǧ's play *Ḥimār aš-šāhid* (*The Donkey of the Witness)*. The world of this play is based on the main creationist motifs: power, compulsion and coercion; the play deals with such themes as revival, sense of existence, sense of art. The play *Ḥimār aš-šāhid* presents an anonymous Arab town which is ruled by a despotic rich man. The town-dwellers' striving for revival is shown as an abortive revolution guided by the intellectuals. The search for the sense of existence is reflected in philosophical talks of the protagonist—a wise man and a tramp - with his donkey. The wise man also considers the sense of art; his memo-

---

[70] This attitude is characteristic i.a. of the animals in the plays *Ḥimār aš-šāhid*, published in "Al-Ḥayāt al-Masraḥiyya" (Damascus) No. 7-8 (1979, by Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-'Alaǧ, *Sindibād*, published in "Al-Ḥayāt al-Masraḥiyya" (Damascus), No. 14 (1980), by Samīr al-'Ayyādī (Tunisia), *Faraḥ šarqī*, published in Damascus 1981, by Walīd Iḫlāṣī, *Al-Akbāš yatamarrinūna* by Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-'Alaǧ, *Bahā' ad-Dīn Qarqāš* by Ḥasan Ḥamāda.

ries bring onto the stage the troupe of the Arab improvised theatre—*ḥalqa*. The troupe (monkey, clown and donkey) proves that art serves to disclose the secrets of human nature on the one hand, and helps to change the relations existing in the world on the other. Here, the donkey-artist, charmed into being by the wise man's imagination, finally impairs the direction of movement ordered by the ruling rich man.

The same function (as that of the popular artists) is performed in the "creationist" world by writers, poets, historians, philosophers, actors or directors of modern theatre. This group includes both referential characters, referring to the reality, and utterly fictitious protagonists, either marked by the toponyms or nameless.

The creationists draw their inspiration, among other things, from classical Arabic literature from which they borrow such great figures as: Abū ăl-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī[71], Ibn ar-Rūmī, Aṭ-Ṭabarī, Al-Mas'ūdī, Al-Ğāhiẓ, Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadānī[72], Al-Mutanabbī[73], as well as the heroes created by those thinkers. These figures taken over by creationist drama usually leave their epochs, appearing in the periods of unrest and anarchy embracing the Arab world.

The sense of art and thought is also sought in creationist dramaturgy by nameless characters, deprived of all personal features, which might veil the function performed. The authors or directors with abstract characteristics hold that the main purpose of art is the satisfaction of social needs.[74] The art acquires an educational and informative meaning, thus being a weapon in political fight, which finds expression in Sa'd Allāh Wannūs' play *Ḥaflat samar min ağl 5 ḥazīrān (The Evening Devoted to the 5th of June)*. The Poet appearing in it is the author of the play devoted to the fighting on the Arabo-Israeli front, who criticises the Director for distortion of his thought in the production of the play presented.

The ficticious audience is of the same opinion, and the policemen being at the service of the "president" who is watching the performance, put an end to stormy discussions.

The dramatic heroes involved in the search for the sense of art and thought, though highly self-dependent, join to a certain extent the group of

[71] 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Ğufrān* (published in 1977), 'Ādil Kāẓim, *Az-Zaman al-maqtūl fī Dayr al-'Āqūl. Al-Mutannabbī* (published in Baghdad 1977.

[72] 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Dīwān az-Zanğ*.

[73] 'Adil Kaẓim (Iraq), *Az-Zaman al-maqtūl fī Dayr al-'Āqūl. Al-Mutanabbī, Al-Mawt wa-ăl-qaḍīya*).

[74] Director, Critic, Actress, Actor and Author discuss, for example, their own function in the theatre in the play *Mašrū' li-ăl-munāqaša*, written in 1967, by Nağīb Maḥfūẓ.

the characters-helpers. In the conflict between the ruling and the ruled ones they usually support one of the two opposing sides.

1.5. The personal and emotional life of characters. The problems of human nature and complex personal relationships of the individuals are rather absent in creationist dramaturgy, just as the care for detailed characteristics of the world presented. These two scopes of content are the domain of the realist plays. And if creationist drama shows dramatic characters "unable" to live in a purely conventional world, but demanding a certain concretization of this world, they partly develop along the motifs borrowed from realism. The personalities of the heroes marked toponimically are shaped on the motif of nature, while the motif of society entails the setting of these characters in human communities.

The personal life of thus constructed protagonists is determined in the first place by deeply experienced love. Thus, the love themes developed in the plays are tragic since they are suppressed by omnipotent motifs of power, compulsion and coercion. The creationists set these plots in the milieu of popular legends, borrowing them perhaps from neo-classical dramaturgy.

In creationist drama love themes usually develop in Arab villages, where lovers are often subject to a certain hostile authority which suppresses their freedom. In the play *Hind wa-Manṣūr (Hind and Manṣūr)*, published in Libya-Tunisia 1977, by Ibrāhīm al-Faqīh (Libya), in Walīd Iḫlāṣī's plays *Maqām Ibrāhīm wa-Ṣafiyya (The Grave of Ibrāhīm wa-Ṣāfiyya)* published in "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad) 6/1980, and *Faraḥ šarqī (The Oriental Wedding)* the authority rests in the hands of fathers enforcing their laws upon the young generation. That is why the course of the love themes is tragic there, ending with the death of some characters.[75] These plays can easily be interpreted in the realist spirit: struggle of tradition and customs with emancipation. Nevertheless, their realism is negated by the creationist creative method, especially by the abandoning of the linear construction of time and introduction of the character of narrator.

---

[75] All the main female characters of these plays are killed because they do not want to renounce their affection; Ibrāhīm dies too—dug alive in the grave together with Ṣafiyya by her husband in Walīd Iḫlāṣī's play *Maqām Ibrāhīm wa-Ṣafiyya*. Other tragical love themes take place in the rural milieu in Šawqī ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm's plays *Hasan wi-Naʿīma*, published in Cairo 1965, *Iš-Šabābīk*, published in Cairo 1965, *Šafīqa wi-Mitwalli*, published in Cairo 1965, and in Naǧīb Surūr's plays: *Yāsīn wi-Bahīyya*, written in 1964, *Ah, ya lēl, ya qamar*, written in 1965, *Qūlu li-ʿīn iš-šams*, written in 1970), *Minēn agīb in-nās*, published in Cairo 1975.

*   *   *

Creationism is a current in which—unlike neoclassicism and realism—develop well-shaped dramatic types. Abstract, de-personified and de-individualised types in the plays' contents, are often made detailed in the sphere of composition. This detailedness concerns both human characters and figures from the world of nature, such as: animals and objects brought to life in *Al-Ġufrān (The Forgiveness)*, 1976, by 'Izz ad Dīn al-Madanī. In this play, the mediaeval philosopher and poet Abū ăl-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī starts on a journey in the other world to "seek a new man", and he is accompanied by everlasting beings and figures taken from the Muslim cosmology: Peacock, Tree, Chandelier, Glass.[76] All the characters, animals and objects are presented by way of expressive descriptions included in the didascalies of the play, for example:

"A Pen

It is the extension of a finger, hand, thought, imagination. It impresses the two mutually supplementing faces, such as darkness and light. This impression is familiar and wild at the same time. What is outside is familiar and what is inside is wild. When it draws, it praises God, when it draws the lines, it bows before Him, and when it creates ornaments, it prostrates before Him.

It is holy, then—everlasting, then—limited in time".[77]

Referential and utterly fictitious characters are made equally epic by the descriptions of the didascalies in the creationist plays. The two types of characters do not differ much, either. Also the names they are given are of little importance. As Walīd Iḫlāṣī writes in the didascalies of one of his plays: "It seems that the names of the characters are unimportant (...). They are like a glass which is easy to break. Little light will suffice to see what they have inside".[78]

The characters with names and nameless, referential and ficticious, individualised and abstract jointly populate the world presented in the creationist plays. This is suggested i.a. by 'Abd Allāh al-Quwayrī when he describes the characters of his play *Al-Mīlād* (*The Birth)*: "At first, you conclude that the characters may live in the conditions of our current histo-

[76] Cf. Ewa Machut-Mendecka, *Tunezja III. Dramat niepodległej Tunezji*, in: J. Bielawski, J. Kozłowska, E. Machut-Mendecka, K. Skarżyńska Bocheńska, op. cit., p. 555.

[77] 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Al-Ġufrān*, Tunis 1977, p. 11.

[78] Walīd Iḫlāṣī, *Sahra dimūqrāṭīya 'alā ăl-ḫašaba*, Damascus 1979, p. 6.

ry. But when you take a closer look at the characters related to a concrete contemporary reality as well as at those surrounded by the older historical atmosphere, both types move within own reality which is expressed by them".[79]

This "own reality" is formed according to the rules of a new convention, which differs from those binding so far in Arabic dramaturgy. The conventional world of creationist drama is free from the burden of concrete facts, which are presented as real ones and have a great effect on the developments in realist and neoclassical plays. What is in mind may come true or at least is likely to come true. Conventionality and free development of the content of creationist dramaturgy is made possible due to the creative method adopted in it.

2. The creative method: between the spectator and the narrator. It is already in the neoclassical and realist plays that the "present (...) inherhuman (...) event" is not of primary importance and it is even more difficult to observe in the creationist plays—among characters deprived of individual features.

However, in ʿAbd Allāh al-Quwayrī's play *Al-Ǧūʿ (The Hunger)* this event does occur in the case of two characters: The Old Woman feeding on the palm tree juice and ʿAbd al-Ǧawād, a man in his prime who has just finished off his wounded brother. Both characters share the feeling of loneliness and struggle for survival in the conditions of ongoing war, but they differ as regards a concrete situation: the woman is a witness of man's crime and he would like to kill her but he does not have enough courage. Thus, the event presented is not confined to its present-day and interhuman aspects. The importance of the past for its occurrence is a signal of the epic form of the methods adopted in creationist dramaturgy.

2.1. Time: dislocation and discontinuity. The time of the creationist plays departs to a varying extent from the linear development and conception of causality in the sequence of events. For example, the linear time of the action develops in Farḥān Bulbul's (Syria) play *Lā tarhab ḥadd as-sayf (Don't Be Afraid of the Edge of Sword),* printed in "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad), 6/1980. However, its protagonist, who is successively a tramp, a king, a chieftain of robbers, a judge and fighter for the freedom of the people, is not basing his successive transformations on the principle of causality; he does so within the framework of search for the sense of existence and the struggle against violence.

[79] ʿAbd Allāh al-Quwayrī, *Al-Mīlād*, in: *ʿAšar masraḥīyāt*, Tripoli 1980, 3rd ed., p. 89.

Creationists attach more importance to the time of dramatic events than the neoclassical and realistic playwrights. The temporal order adopted in their plays is regulated by various formal measures. While introducing indefinite time, deprived of "historical" conditioning, they define accurately this time by use of loose indications narrowing the framework of its semantic field. These indications include such phrases as: "in the past"[80] or "now"[81]. Sometimes they are more developed, for example in Walīd Iḫlāṣī's play *Iṭlāq ad-nār min al-ḫalf, (The Shot from the Back)*, printed in "Al-Maʿrifa" (Damascus) No.64/ 1976, about the encirclement of a young girl hiding herself in an old Arab home, time is expected to comprise "one full day from the life of the town which continues to live."[82]

However, even a very detailed concretisation of time does not mean that the principle of causality is really observed in the creationist plays. When at the beginning of ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Madanī's *Ṯawrat Ṣāḥib al-Ḥimār* (*Revolution of the Man Riding a Donkey)* the date 947 is due to appear on the curtain, it will indicate the last event of the action and its retrospective form. The following dates given in a similar manner define the course of the mediaeval popular and religious revolution in Tunisia. However, its time raises doubts when the authorities want to attack a revolutionary leader using "tanks in front of the Ministry of Defence".[83] The attack is abandoned and the action goes on along its "historical" course: the leader's deviation from democratic ideals leads to the fall of the revolution.[84]

Tanks and airplanes roar also the tramp of Mongolian horses invading Egypt in *Al-Arḍ wa-ăl-Mūğūl wa-ăl-Wādī al-Ğadīd (The Land, the Mongols and the New Valley)*, ab. 1976) by Muḥammad Abū al-ʿAlā as-Salāmūnī; here the Middle Ages already turn completely into the 20th century.

Thanks to the techniques adopted by the creationists the time of the plays becomes transferrable and discontinuous. Here, "through the trick of temporal and spatial translocation the natural property of art is expressed,

[80] Šawqī ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm, *Rağul aʿmā*, published in Cairo 1965.

[81] Mīḫā'īl Rūmān, *Il-Wāfid*.

[82] Walīd Iḫlāṣī, *Iṭlāq an-nār min al-ḫalf*, "Al-Maʿrifa" (Damascus) No. 64, p. 108.

[83] ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Ṯawrat Ṣāḥib al-Ḥimār*, Tunis 1970, p. 62.

[84] The concrete date—778 a.H. (1377 A.D.)—denotes the rule of sultan Al-Manṣūr ʿAlī in *Ya salām sallim il-ḫīta bititkallim*, published in Cairo 1971, by Saʿd ad-Dīn Wahba. But an anegdotic event is developed here: behind the title "talking wall" there is a Woman encouraging people to get out of the oppression of the Mamluk apparatus of power.

in which the categories of time and space find a different structuralisation than in the real world".[85]

Raššād Rušdī in his play *Baladī, yā baladī (Country, my Country)*, produced in Cairo 1968), introduces the structuralisation of time which is particularly distant from "common experience". The content of the plays deals with "the feast of birthday of *sayyid* Al-Badawī, taking place one hundred years after his death, i.e. seven hundred years ago, counting from the present moment".[86] The action of the play takes place on two planes: during the feast and in Al-Badawī's lifetime. The colourful Cairo people, terrorized by the ruling Mamluks, is transferred from the former to the latter, i.e. a hundred years earlier, to the time of al-Badawī, imam and ascetic, wrongly declared to be a miracle worker.[87]

Transfering in time disturbs its continuity and linearity, thus destroying cause-and-effect conditioning of the action in the creationist plays. The elimination of this conditioning is also possible thanks to the form of time short-cut, employed by the creationists in accordance with the rule that the author "always builds the presented reality from loose scenes—obviously in a certain way—despite their apparent mutual strangeness".[88]

Discontinuity in creationist drama results from the interruption of the course of events by making them stand apart using the techniques of staging and techniques of stations. The staging is meant here primarily as the way of expression of the various points of view by changing the position of the scene.[89] For example, the staging of two interchangeable planes of the action is the basis for composition in the play by Al-Buṣayrī 'Abd Allāh *Lu'bat as-sulṭān wa-ăl-wazīr*. The change of the rulers on the plane of the government game is accompanied here by the fall of thrones of the successive sultans in the fictitious state presented.[90] The technique of staging also allows for the emergence in creationissm of a "film-making dramaturgy

[85] N.Tarabukin, *Problema vremeni i prostranstva v teatre*, "Teatr" 1974, No. 2, after: N. Džohadze, *O czasie artystycznym w dramacie*, "Przegląd Humanistyczny" 1976/6.

[86] Raššād Rušdī, *Baladī, yā baladī*, Cairo n.d., p. 3.

[87] Exchangeability and overlapping of time structures—contemporary and historical—is the basis for *Ra's al-Ġūl*, produced in Tunis 1969, by Samīr al-'Ayyādī, Muḥammad al-Arnā'ūṭ (Tunisia) and Muḥammad Raǧā' Farḥāt (Tunisia) based on the story of 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī; see E. Machut-Mendecka, op. cit., p. 555.

[88] Stefania Skwarczyńska, op. cit., Part 1, Vol. I, p. 136.

[89] J. Łotman, *Struktura tekstu artystycznego*, p. 384 ff.

[90] E. Machut-Mendecka, *Libia* III. *Dramat eksperymentalny*, in: J. Bielawski, J. Kozłowska, E. Machut-Mendecka, K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, op. cit., p. 593.

which tends to be amorphous".[91] For example, Qāsim Muḥammad's play *Anā ḍamīr al-mutakallim* (*I, The Personal Pronoun*) is composed of fragments of the various plays and shows crowds of the Palestinian refugees, the fruitless session of the Security Council, and snatches of events from personal and family life, interrupted by the sounds of shots. The play represents a composition which "in the theatre (...) uses the film reel as a model, with its technique of sticking and the ensuing technique of screenplay".[92] This type of technique is created by creationist drama itself by destroying the cause-and-effect order of the action by use of discontinuous streams and transferrable events.[93] This is how the world in ʿĀdil Kāẓim's *Az-Zamān al-maqtūl fī Dayr al-ʿAqūl. Al-Mutanabbī* (*Time Stopped at Dayr al-ʿAqūl. Al-Mutanabbī)* is constructed. In this play, devoted to an outstanding Arab poet al-Mutanabbī (10th c.), his travels, poems, and steps taken to disseminate revolutionary ideas, personal meetings, and encounters with another great poet al-Maʿarrī (10th/11th c.) alternate with a film picture of a horse galloping across the desert. In the notional plane of the play it forms the framework binding the alternating and mutually dependent events, combined in the content of the play by common references to the person of al-Mutanabbī.

In one of such creationist plays as *Anā ḍamīr al-mutakallim* by Qāsim Muḥammad, loosely combined[94] events are the expression of the various points of view included in the plays. In other plays, similar events remain "little stones strung on the moving thread of "I".[95] Thus, the "unity of action is replaced by the unity of "I", which—in Peter Szondi's opinion—is the technique of the "drama of stations?[96]

In Arabic dramaturgy, this technique is more widely used in the plays by Naǧīb Surūr.[97] His plays are composed of loosely interrelated pictures presenting various stages of life of "popular" heroes. In the play *Minēn agīb in-nās (How Can I Get People)* the Egyptian peasant woman, Naʿīma, wanders across the country seeking the body of her beloved Ḥasan, murdered during the revolutionary fighting. She meets other peas-

---

[91] J. Kosiński, *Kształt teatru*, Warsaw 1972, p. 85.

[92] The montage uses here the fragments of the poems by Maḥmūd Darwīš, Samīḥ Qāsim, *qaṣīda*s by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, the works of Bertold Brecht and Peter Weiss.

[93] Jan Kosiński, op. cit., p. 70.

[94] The technique of the montage is used consistently throughout the plays of Raššād Rušdī.

[95] Peter Szondi, op. cit., p. 42.

[96] Ibid., p. 42.

[97]

ants, fishermen, sailors and workers and these encounters (stations), filled with discussion, encourage Na'īma to continue to travel.

In Naǧīb Surūr's plays and in other creationist works written by use of similar technique, the motion being the centre of the action, evolves beyond the limits of the reality presented. The stations are filled with more or less interrelated pictures, each of which has its own thought. The latter interrupts a rapid course of the action, hampers it and makes it static. Thus conceived technique of stations makes the action depend on one character, while the staging technique ensures the occurrence of the various points of view in the play. It is only the combination of the two techniques in creationist drama that is conducive to dynamisation of the course of the events presented. In Qāsim Muḥammad's *Ṭā'ir as-sa'd (Bird of Happiness)*, 1979, an ill child travels in its dream along the road full of adventures in pursuit of the title bird of happiness in order to offer it to all the people who need help. Although the protagonist remains the author of the events, each of them also consists of the facts co-created by other characters.

The techniques used for the purpose of time organisation in creationist drama yield effects of various intensity for the composition of the plays. In the linear time, just as in neoclassical and realist dramaturgy, the cause-and-effect system of events is slightly disturbed. Staging and station techniques may bring about a complete disturbance or destruction of this system so that the form of organisation of events will result in transferrability and discontinuity.

2.2. From the narrator's distance. The system of discontinuous and transferrable events is an epic borrowing; it also destroys the coherence of the creationist plays. This coherence is defended by another form borrowed from epic tales, namely the character of the narrator. On the one hand, he binds the particular segments of the dramatic construction, and on the other hand, he makes a critical assessment of this construction from his place on the border of the stage and audience.

The narrator appearing in most creationist plays originates from the Arabic improvised theatre. This is evidenced by such contemporary terms denoting the character of the narrator as: *rāwī* or *rāwiya, ḥākī,* and *maddāḥ.* In that case this character usually acts in a quasi-historical setting: 14-th century Morocco in *Dīwān sīdī 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧḏūb* by Aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī and 'Abd aṣ-Ṣamd al-Kaftawī, or in the medieval bazaar in Cairo in Raššād Rušdī's play *Itfarrag, ya salām*, produced in 1965. Also a *rāwī,* a narrator and at the same time historian in the first scene of *Al-Wazīr al-'āšiq*, published in Cairo 1981) by Fārūq al-Ǧuwayda (Egypt) recalls a famous Andalusian love story of princess

Wallāda and a poet Ibn Zaydūn, which is popular in neoclassical dramaturgy.

The functions of the narrator in the plays which are not connected with a concrete place and time are performed by the characters having more stylised names: Poet in *Al-Mawt wa-al-qaḍiyya* by ‘Ādila Kāẓim, Fortune-Teller in *Faraḥ šarqī* by Walīd Iḫlāṣī. In *Masā’ at-ta’ammul* (*The Evening of Deep Reflections*) by Qāsim Muḥammad the narrator is a Woman. In each of the plays: *Ba‘d an yamūta al-malik* (*After the King Dies* 1973) by Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣabūr and in King Ma‘rūf by Šawqī ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm the function is performed by as many as three old women, who draw dramatic fables from their life wisdom and secret knowledge.

Regardless of the name of the character—be it traditional or innovatory—each of these characters actually remains a narrator since it preserves its vast “apparent cognitive competences (...) of registering, categorising, concluding and assessing”.[98]

Narrators in creationist drama are “supported” by the actors, who act individually and collectively. In accordance with the requirements of the didascalies, they are expected to enter the action from time to time, playing themselves, and to “affect” the course of the performances from this position. The same function is performed by the chorus; for example, in *Sayyād al-lūla (Pearl Diver)* published in Cairo 1982) by Hayrī Šalabī, it greets the audience and announces the “tale from distant lands about a fisherman and his family who are catching pearls or maybe rather about what is inside man”.[99]

By use of the character of narrator as well as the actors playing themselves, the creationists aim at creating the technique of pseudo-improvisation referring to the tradition of Arabic theatre of the classical period. This pseudo-improvisation, which serves aesthetics of stylisation and establishing closer ties of modern drama with the old theatrical art, plays an important role in the very composition of creationist drama as it destroys the dramatic illusion. Unlike neoclassical and realist dramaturgy, the creationist dramaturgy does not treat its world presented as independent of other beings. Using pseudo-improvisation, the narrator and the actors address the audience, drawing its attention to an artificial and fictitious character of the action taking place on the stage. At times, the didascalies of the play order one actor to play several characters. The principle of such a transformation of the roles of actors is specially well developed in Yūsuf al-‘Ānī’s *Al-*

---

[98] H. Markiewicz, op.cit., p. 101.

[99] Ḫayrī Šalabī, *Ṣayyād al-Lūla. Sūnāta al-amal*, Cairo 1982, p. 8; the chorus also appears e.g. in Naǧīb Surūr’s plays.

Ḫarāba (The Ruin), written in 1968-1970.[100] According to the require-
ments of the didascalies, the protagonists marked with numbers, against a
background of a ruined house in which they live, play the characters
known by their names. Thus, the first one presents the character of Naǧm
al-Baqqāl, the leader of the popular Iraqi uprising of 1918, and next he
transforms himself into an actor who was once expected to play the role of
Brutus in Julius Caesar. In the successive actor's roles, the contemporary
female Lawyer becomes a goddess Aštarūt, oppressed Iraqi peasant
woman, Palestinian Mother and Vietnamese Mother.[101]

The appearance of the narrator and actors in the particular plays
destroys the dramatic illusion in the various places of the action. However,
many plays start—like in neoclassical and realist dramaturgy - without any
introductory signals. For example, in the play *Al-Bāb* (*The Gate*, written in
1985) by Yūsuf aṣ-Ṣā'iġ, the action starts with a trial, which shows only a
moment later that the defendant is Him because—despite his earlier writ-
ten consent to be buried alive with his wife (in case she dies first)—he does
not want to keep his promise now. (The further action is the realization of
the condemning sentence: He will find himself underground, where he will
meet Her—in the same situation—and their love will lead to the explosion
of the tomb.).[102]

'Abd al-Karīm Baršīd (Morocco) projects his play *Faust wa-ăl-amīra
aṣ-ṣal'ā' (Faust and the Bald Princess)*, written in 1976 as a segment of
time and space, history of the world, maintaining it in the convention of a
great carnival: "there is not point of departure here, from which we can
start a play, and there is no definite place, but the signs of the festival sur-
prise us the moment we enter the theatre".[103]

As compared to neoclassical and realist drama, the signals of the begin-
ning of the action are innovative in the creationist plays. They consist in
the introduction of the action by the narrator or the persons performing this
function (actors, particular characters, chorus) and they are fairly well
developed. The words of the narrators, being lexical delimitative signs, are

---

[100] See the summary of the play: J. Bielawski, K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, J.
Jasińska, op. cit., p.631.

[101] Another example of the play in which the actors are expected to play sev-
eral characters is *Muḥākamat ar-raǧul allaḏī lam yuḥārib*, published in Baghdad
1971, by Mamdūḥ 'Udwān (Syria).

[102] For example, the play *Sirrī ǧiddan*, An-Naǧaf 1976, by Mahdī Mudā'ī
(Iraq) devoted to the plots connected with the June war of 1967 starts also—with-
out introduction—with a quarrel which shows after some time that the Beggar has
a dispute with other persons over a place at the bazaar.

[103] 'Abd al-Karīm Baršīd, *Al-Amīra aṣ-ṣal'ā'*, "Al-Aqlām" 1976/6, p. 206.

accompanied by non-lexical signs[104] in the form of music or choreographic patterns.

The play *Al-Ġirban wa-ğawqat al-ğiyā'* (*The Crows and the Ensemble of the Hungry*, written in 1972) by Al-Buṣayri 'Abd Allāh starts with a monologue of the Comentator who declares his indifference to the events foretold by Beethoven's music. Indeed, the Comentator does not interfere with the struggle of nameless protagonists led by Adam against the enforcement of appearances of wealth offered by the authority.[105]

The form of festivity and folk festival is also the signal for the beginning of the action in the creationist plays. Qāsim Muḥammad is the playwright who often uses this form. For example, in his *Al-Malḥama aš-ša'biyya (Popular Story)*, produced in 1964-1978, the play is introduced by a *rāwiya,* who announces a festivity perceived on two planes: as an element of dramatic action and as the form of the existence of the world. The ongoing festivity gives rise to the evolution of the motif of compulsion of the inhabitants of an Iraqi village by the feudal authority. The festivity in this play—apart from signalling the beginning of the action—is the way of organisation of its further content.[106]

Apart from well-developed beginnings of their plays, the creationists introduce rich and imaginative names for the successive internal parts of the content of the plays. The more complicated the dramatic structure of the work, especially due to its disintegration into loosely related fragments, the more differentiated are these names, being marked by the increasing inventiveness. However, the creationist plays still include "traditional" terms to denote the particular delimitators: *faṣl* (act), *mašhad* and *manẓar*; the two latter terms, similarly as in the remaining currents of Arabic dramaturgy, are used alternately and denote scenes. Depending on the inventiveness of the authors, the particular plays include such innovative names of delimitators of the action as: *lawḥa* (picture), *ğuz'* (part), *qism* (part), *ḥaraka* (motion),

---

[104] The subdivision of delimitative signs into lexical and non-lexical, after: Teresa Dobrzyńska, *O głosowej delimitacji tekstu*, in: *O spójności tekstu*, Wrocław 1971, p. 152.

[105] The epic prologue in which one of the protagonists describes the charm and quiet of the summer evenings (destroyed in action by the ardent passion of peasants being in love in a beautiful girl) marks the beginning of Maḥmud Diyāb's play *Layālī al-ḥaṣād*.

[106] In *Faraḥ šarqī* by Walīd Iḫlāṣī the action starts with the performance of an artistic ensemble, and the merry-making on the occasion of ongoing title wedding lasts throughout the entire action.

tarkīb (montage), and *mawqif* (situation, position).[107] ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī[108] divides his plays in an original and varied manner. One of the most innovative creationist plays in this respect is his *Dīwān az-Zanǧ*. It is divided into two planes—*rukaḥ*, and the first one into two acts (marked with the term *faṣl*). This division is justified by the drama content. On the first plane, within the framework of the acts, the traditional (like in neaoclassical or realist plays) action takes place showing the evolution and fall of the revolution of the Zanǧ, Negroes working in the Iraqi saltpetre mines, who in the 9th century established a small state in the caliphate of the Abbasids. The second plane, on the other hand, divided into two stages (each one is marked with the term *ṭawr*) is a novelty in Arabic dramaturgy: it shows the characters from the various epochs of Islam, prose utterances are interlaced with poetic lines, and the action in the traditional sense of the word does not exist, but is replaced by the montage of "movable" pictures.

All the innovative and imaginative names for the structure of creationist drama are not so "transparent" as *faṣl, mašhad* and *manẓar*, popular in the hitherto Arabic dramaturgy. They are not confined to the informative and auxiliary function in relation to the dramatic text, but attract the receiver's attention due to their aesthetic expression. Thus, they make up a successive epic form breaking up the coherence of dramaturgy.

In the creationist plays the epic form is given to the signals of the beginning of the action, delimitators of internal division of the structure, as well as the endings. These endings have an open character—according to Umberto Eco's conception[109]—and it is both the protagonists and spectators that "are given" certain rights to "affect" the fate of the plot. The public and its participation in the performances is of special concern

---

[107] These terms are used e.g. by the following dramatists: *lawḥa*: Ḫālid Muḥyī al-Barādi‘ī (Syria) in *Al-Ǧarrād*, Mu‘īn Basīsū in *Ṯawrat az-Zanǧ, Šamšūn wa-Dalīla*; Fatḥi Sa‘id (Egypt) *Al-Fallāḥ al-fasīḥ*; *ǧuz’*: Mu‘īn Basīsū in the play *Al-‘Aṣāfīr tabnī a‘šāšahā bayna al-aṣābi‘*, Šawqī Ḫamīs (Egypt) in *Sindibād* Naǧīb Surūr in *Yāsīn wa-Bāhiyya*; *qism*: Walīd Iḫlaṣī in *Faraḥ šarqī*, ‘Ādil Kāẓim in *Al-Mawt wa-al-qaḍiyya*; *mawqif*: ‘Izz ad-Dīn a-Madanī in *Al-Ǧufrān*; *ḥaraka*: Samīr al-Ayyādī in *As-Sindibād*, Aṣ-Ṣamd al-Kaftawī and Aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī in *Dīwān sīdī ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧḍūb*, the latter play is also divided by use of the term *tarkīb*.

[108] E.g. Al-Madanī's play *Riḥlat al-Ḥallāǧ* is divided into stations (sing. *maḥaṭṭa*), which are divided into stages (sing. *marḥala*), and *Ta‘āzī fāṭimiyya* by the same author—into sessions (sing. *maǧlis*).

[109] The Arab creationists' output joins the thought of Umberto Eco, who says : "a contemporary artist is not only fully aware of what "opening" is, not only treats it as something inevitable, but he also accepts it, thus making it a creative programme and making efforts to make the most of this "opening", op. cit., p. 28.

to a Syrian innovator of the theatre Sa'd Allāh Wannūs. This dramatist allows the spectators to chose among many possibilities of interpretation, and he leaves the producers with great creative freedom. For example, his play *Al-Iġtiṣāb* (*The Rape*, published in "Adab wa-Naqd" (Cairo) No.55/1990) is in his opinion an "open text".[110] The play shows a brutal rape committed by the Israeli security service upon the Palestinian married couple. In the ending, the author mentioned by name has a discussion with an Israeli physician—a humanist—on the relations existing in Israel. This discussion signals the end of the play, but not of the action: it is an example of a wide opening of creationist dramaturgy to the natural world.

The signals of the end determine here only the structure of the plays, but they do not limit a further free evolution of dramatic content (in the receivers' imagination, in other works of art etc.).

The signals of the beginning and of the end may also create a framework of composition of the plays which in Qāsim Muḥammad's play *Kān yā mā kān...(It Happened Once upon a Time)* form folkloristic scenes. Here the Reciter (*al-Qāri'*) begins the story of princess Badūr against a background of the singing Group. In the action, the story develops (the princess pays homage to labour, love, faithfulness and the people) and in the ending the characters recite Baghdadi proverbs.

The signals of the ending of the plays coupled with the "opening" of their content, as well as the intermissions of the action introduced by the narrators and actors, cause intensified impact of the signs of the "code of audience" in creationist dramaturgy in comparison with neoclasssical and realist output.

The audience which is "inscribed" by creationists in the texts of their plays consists of two kinds. The first kind is the "fictitious" audience, belonging to the world presented in the drama, which observes the action of the performance on its border. It is most often the artistic show, organised as a "theatre in the theatre". Here, the popular artists, patterned after those who acted in Arabic theatre in the classical period, establish lively contacts with their audience. For example, this audience is addressed by Abū ǎl-Ward, showing jugglery, trained monkeys and reciting popular wise sayings in the bazaars and streets of Baghdad in 'Ādil Kāẓim's *Maqāmāt Abī ǎl-Ward* (*Maqamas of Abū ǎl-Ward*). The public reacts in a lively manner: it treats the performance both as entartainment and political reaction against the terrorist authority opposed by one of the Arab contestation movement in the Middle Ages.

---

[110] Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, *Mulāḥaẓāt*, in: Sa'd Allaḥ Wannūs, *Al-Iġtiṣāb*, "Adab wa-Naqd" (Cairo) No. 55/1990, p. 39.

The second type of the public, affecting the shape and content of creationist drama, is obviously formed by the spectators of the natural world, i.e. virtual receivers of the theatrical shows. The creationists try to make them participate in the performances using various ways. The Narrator "dedicates" Muḥammad Mahrān aṣ-Ṣayyid's play *Ḥikāyat min Wādī ăl-Milḥ (The History of Wādī ăl-Milḥ)*, published in Cairo 1975), showing the slavery of the Egyptian fellahs in the pharaonic times, to his future offsprings. The mediaeval playwright, Ibn ʿIbād al-Baġdādī[111], promises the liberation from "exploitation and oppression"[112] to his potential spectators in Mahdī as-Samawī's (Iraq) play *Aṣ-Ṣahīl (The Neigh of the horses)*, published in Baghdad 1981.

Just as in the time of Arabic improvised theatre, the dramatic illusion is to be abandoned in creationist dramaturgy by confronting the world presented of the plays with the real world. Although in the authors' projects the relationship between the spectator and the narrator revives, its identification with the old tradition of the show is disturbed by the literary material in which it develops. Carefully projected, it leaves only a narrow margin for improvisation in the shape of the expected spectator's reaction. However, playwrights set much hope on this reaction, as they see a chance for re-unification of Arab dramatic and theatrical thought. For example, Samīḥ al-Qāsim writes in the introduction to one of his plays: "The spectators have the right to intervene in the dialogue and express their views in the manner regarded by them as appropriate".[113]

The stage-setting projects presented in the didascalies of the plays are used to reduce the distance between the audience and the stage. According to the instructions of Qāsim Muḥammad, the theatrical public may do shopping in the mediaeval bazaar, where the action of the *Baġdād al-azal bayna al-ğadd wa-ăl-hazal* takes place. The exhibition of photos and documents regarding the fighting in Vietnam and Palestine is expected to be part and parcel of the play *Al-Ḫarāba* by Yūsuf al-ʿĀnī. In Muʿīn Basīsū's *Aṣ-Ṣaḫra (The Rock)*, where the abstract characters revolt against terror and coercion as the method of governing, the newspapers reporting the developments are distributed among the spectators.

Creationist drama, even though based on written texts, tries to be as near the spectator as possible, breaking up the framework of literary limitation.

[111] The play is based on mediaeval *maqāma*s of Ibn ʿIbād al-Baġdādī.
[112] Mahdī as-Samāwī, *Aṣ-Ṣahīl*, Baghdad 1981, p. 132.
[113] Samīḥ al-Qāsim, *Qarqāš*, Beirut 1970, 1st ed., p. 7.

2.3. The stage space: between reality and conventionality. The organi-sation of the stage space projected in the creationist plays comprises a whole gamut of solutions: from realist to symbolical, and from generalisa-tion to far-reaching detailedness.

The authors' scenographical projects in the creationist plays, according to which the objects presented on the stage should preserve their utilitarian properties, are similar to those created by the realists. In the play *Ḥabībatī Šamīna (*Šamīna, My Beloved) written in 1971, by Raššād Rušdī the stage will represent the view of old Jerusalem with its Wailing Wall and the Castle of King Solomon. In the action of the play, a beautiful shepherdess Šamīna keeps resisting king Solomon, being even the mother of his chil-dren, and the two of them remain the symbols having wide meanings. The realist setting in Raššād Rušdī's play serves the symbolical content.

In the didascalies of the creationist plays the authors outline the pictures of old Cairo, Damascus, Marrakesh or mediaeval Baghdad.[114] This type of stage setting, with a functional system of objects of which it consists, is expected to satisfy mainly the physical needs of the characters. In the cre-ationist plays they are reduced to a minimum. Hence these objects have a wider meaning and are different than those in realist dramaturgy. One meaning is specially well seen here and it is present in many creationist plays: a quasi-realist scenography sets the conventional world of the plays upon the indigenous Arab ground. A perfect example of conventionality, and at the same time opposition of the "realist scene" in the projects of the creationists is an empty stage, having no—or hardly any—objects. For example, 'Alī ad-Du'āǧī's (Tunisia) play *Rā'ī ăn-nuǧūm (L'Observeur des étoiles)*, 1944, is designed in the convention of a "poor theatre". The empty stage confirms the suspension of human characters between the heaven and the earth during an ever-lasting dicussion between Him and Her.[115] Modest stage scenery favours similar placing of the characters of the play *As-Sudd (Dam)*, written in 1940, by Maḥmūd al-Mas'adī (Tunisia) in the world of thoughts which is deprived of concrete condition-ing.[116]

Conventionality in creationist drama is represented not only by an empty stage but also the stage filled with various symbolic objects. The

[114] For example, Cairo—in the plays of *Qarqāš* by Samīḥ Qāsim or *Itfarrag yā salāma* Raššād Rušdī, Damascus—in *Aṣ-Ṣaḥrā'* by Mu'īn Basīsū, Marra-kesh—in *Dīwān sīdī 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧḍūb* by aṣ-Ṣamd al-Katfawī and Aṭ-Ṭayyib aṣ-Ṣiddīqī, Baghdad—in *Baḡdād al-azal bayna al-ǧadd wa-ăl-hazal* by Qāsim Muḥammad.

[115] See E. Machut-Mendecka, *Tunezja...,* op. cit., p. 545.

[116] Ibid., pp. 545-546.

degree of accumulation and the way of the functioning of aesthetic measures varies here. For example, Yūsuf Idrīs in the didascalies of *Il-Muhzila il-arḍiyya (The Comedy about the Earth,* written in 1966) only suggests that the play should be presented in an atmosphere of dream.[117] This convention corresponds to the content of the play in which the relatives marked by absurdly duplicated characters carry on a dispute over the property, charging one another of the lack of loyalty, which is overheard by the police inspector.

In order to make the projected scenery conventional and unreal in character, the creationists also use veristic means of expression, though in a different manner than the realists. For example, Saʿd Allāh Wanūs demands that the action of his play *ʿIndamā yalʿab ar-riǧāl (When the Men Play)* take place in a garden projected in the convention of childish drawings with excessively bold and regular lines. As he writes in the didascalies of this play,"the decoration is not an imitation of reality, but an imitation of the imitation of reality".[118]

Muʿīn Basīsū is the master of plastic descriptions of the future stage of his plays. He uses all the creationist means of expression: realist and symbolic scenes, veristic details and abstract generalisations. Here is the example of his description.

"The light falls down onto the decor in various proportions. On the left side, there is a huge cross with a crucified Indian, a plume in his hair. Under the cross there is a chair standing with its back to the audience, its legs are almost touching the base of the cross. Beside the chair, a man wearing completely torn clothes, holds out his hand with a human skull. To the right of the cross, almost in the middle of the stage, there is a huge cage made of sticks of elastic cane like those used for the coops for hens. In the cage one can see faces of men and women. Some of these figures take hold of the sticks with their hands. Some men are dressed like American cowboys, others wear ordinary clothes. Some women wear traditional clothes of Palestinian peasant women. In front of the cage, there is a man in his late twenties; he is wearing a swim suit and spreading a colourful umbrella over his head. On the roof of the cage, there is a dais on which there is a horse-shoe table. On the table, tightly packed sand bags form a kind of a barricade. On the bags stands a machine gun, and to the left of it there are microphones. A long club on which a steel helmet is hanging protrudes from behind the

[117] Yūsuf Idrīs, *Il-Muhzila il-arḍiyya*, in: Yūsuf Idrīs, *Naḥwa masraḥ ʿarabi*, op. cit., p. 279.

[118] Saʿd Allāh Wannūs, *ʿIndamā yalʿab ar-riǧāl*, in: Saʿd Allāh Wannūs, *Faṣd ad-damm wa-masraḥiyyāt ṯāniya*, Damascus 1978, 1st ed., p. 108.

bags. To the right, a black cow is standing with its side to the audience; on its side there is an inscription saying "pool together for Palestine". Under the cow's belly, a man is sitting on the floor, a bucket in his hands. Behind him, three men are standing in a row, holding buckets in their hands as if they lined up. Exactly in the right corner of the stage, a man is sitting on the floor under the spread table-cloth on which there are bottles of various size, cloth bags as well as several stones. Among these objects there is also a case with cow's dung inside. The man sitting under the table-cloth is wearing trousers in the colour of the Palestinian flag. His naked chest has great letters with the names of towns: Gaza, Jerusalem, Jaffa".[119]

All the characters in this picture come from Mu'īn Basīsū's play *Ṯawrat az-Zanǧ* (*The Revolution of the Zanj*). However, these figures are not present in the content of the play, they do not take part in the dialogues and they belong only to the projected stage space. This enhances the importance of the title revolution which in Mu'īn Basīsū's approach lasts from the past to the present day.[120]

In the creationist plays there appear various symbolic objects: masks[121] or puppets which, e.g. eye-shaped, give an account of the action of *Aḍ-ḍabāb (The Fog)* published in Tripoli 1982) by Al-Kīlānī al-'Awn (Libya).[122] Extremely condensed colours are also used as the means of giving the conventional meaning to the creationist stage scenery. The monotony of black-and-white strips expresses a routine rule of violence over the human community.[123] Groups in various colours: red, green, blue and yellow composed of figures devoid of definite nature are fighting for the middle of the desert space in Raššād al-Ḥamzāwī's play *Aṣ-Ṣāriḫūn fī ǎṣ-ṣaḥrā' (The Crying in the Desert*, 1973).[124]

[119] Mu'īn Basīsū, *Ṯawrat az-Zanǧ*, in: Mu'īn Basīsū, *Al-A'māl al-masraḥiyya*, Beirut 1979, 1st ed., p. 128.

[120] Compare with the play of 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī *Dīwān az-Zanǧ*.

[121] The fight with the masks as an embodiment of deceit and hypocrisy is carried on i.a. by the Girl resisting the stereotypes of life in the play *Min warā' al-aqni'a*, printed in "Al-Fikr" (Tunis) No. 10/1979 by Fatḥīya al-'Arūsī (Tunisia); the masks are used as narrators in Al-Hilāliyya *The Epos of Abū Zayd al-Hilālī* by Yusrī al-Ǧundī (Egypt).

[122] The play depicts the terror applied by the royal authority in a certain country until the time when the king turns into a stone. The puppets may appear (though the author does not insist on showing them) in the play *Ḥimār aš-šāhid* by Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-'Alaǧ.

[123] In the plays *Il-Muḫaṭṭaṭīn* by Yūsuf Idrīs and *Ḥattā yastarīḥ al-ab* by Aḥmad Ibn Maymūn.

[124] See E. Machut-Mendecka, , op. cit., p. 559.

In the projected stage scenery the creationists propose both realist and symbolic forms, and they subordinate the future scenes to the canons of the "poor theatre", as well as make rich plastic projects for their use. In each case, on the groundwork of the projected scenography, the stage space is formed as an open place. Open means encouraging the spectator to take part in the performance, being subject to various interpretations and susceptible to the flow of new artistic ideas.

2.4. The expressive language. Creationist plays are written in direct and indirect speech and from the formal point of view they can be divided into prose and poetic works. Nevertheless, in both kinds epic and lyrical signs occur.

The epic character makes the author uncover the subject of the utterance, and this is usually the task of "creationist" narrators and their helpers. Under the "anti-illusory activity" they willingly perform unmasking and didactic functions, speaking with pathos and emphasis.

Hence, for example, the words "hunger", "poverty", "justice", and "law" are the explanations of metaphorical expressions and plastic pictures in Qāsim Muḥammad's play *Masā'at-ta'ammul*. The play is an account of events made by the Female narrator:

Woman: My dearest one, friend,
        I was a smell sleeping in a rose,
        why did you go away?
        I was a pearl hidden in the sea,
        why did you let us recognize you? (...)
Martyr:[125] Evil...
        is the hunger of the hungry,
        poverty of the beggars,
        In their eyes words are glowing,
        of which the meaning I will not stop (...)[126]

The motifs of power, compulsion and coercion also develop under cover of grotesque, for example in Ḥasan Ḥamāda's *Ṣāḥib al-kalām* (The Lord of the Words, written in 1977), where the "Animator of smart tricks, joy and boredom" will appear to be one of the typical rulers in creationist dramaturgy. And the grotesque in this play is further mixed up with tragedy, when the title Lord of the words, guardian and interpreter of the

[125] The crucified Martyr, hanged on the cross, is the protagonist of the play.
[126] Qāsim Muḥammad, *Masā' at-ta'ammul*, "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad) No. 6/ 1975, pp. 9-10.

utterances of the Skull-Oracle, stops talking, and the fictitious state presented faces almost a catastrophe.[127]

In those creationist plays in which epic tendencies to formulate information are weakening, the force of impacts of lyrical signs increases. A long dialogue of the Group of Statues in Sa'd Allāh Wannūs' *Ar-Rasūl al-maġhūl ilā ma'tam Antīgūna*, (Unknown Envoy to the Tomb of Antigone, published in Damascus 1965) includes barely a trace of indefinite action. The dialogue is a sequence of poetic utterances.

Group: Grey wind smashes sharply in pale eyes and pale faces (*a moment of silence*)

First Statue: Sky was grey.

Second Statue: Land was grey.

Third Statue: Sun was grey.

Whole Group: Ravens sang in the space... Dead bodies of brothers
                spread over the land... In childhood they
                exchanged smiles and caresses.

First Statue: Blood was destroyed...Blood congealed. The prayer
                died at the bottom.[128]

The same language is also used by the main heroine of the play, but the subject of her utterance remains obliterated.

The accumulation of poetic measures enhances the intensity of the utterance, and the dramatic character expresses itself similarly as the lyrical subject of poetry. The character experiences emotion which makes the clarity of thought difficult and obliterates an objective picture of the world. This language is widely used by Egyptian playwrights Raššād Rušdī and Šawqī 'Abd al-Ḥakīm[129] as well as by a Tunisian dramatist Raššād al-Ḥamzāwī. Their characters speak hybrid broken phrases of which the subject remains out of reach of dramatic texts. Raššād Rušdī also introduces into his plays the rhymed prose in the form of harmoniously arranged parallelisms. Hybrid vagueness of passages does not preclude the appearance of the epic narrator or chorus in his plays.

Interchangeability of the subject and pre-subject language of the utterance is bound up with a far-reaching attempt at reconciling the attitude of a dramatic hero and an epic narrator with the function of the lyrical subb-

---

[127] Cf. E. Machut-Mendecka, op. cit., pp. 556-557.

[128] Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, *Ar-Rasūl al-maġhūl fī ma'tam Antīgūna*, in: Sa'd Allāh Wannūs, *Ḥikāyat Ǧawqat at-tamāṭil*, Damascus 1965, p. 172.

[129] These are the so-called "Egyptian expresionists", cf. E. Machut-Mendecka, *Współczesny dramat egipski...*, op. cit., p. 59 ff.

ject in *Ma'sāt bayḍā'*, published in "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad), No.10/177, by Ġālib Fāḍil al-Muṭṭalibī. Here, the main character, i.e. the Sultan, who under the influnce of one of his captives wants to become a beggar, inter-laces the stereotype talks on the governing with accounts of his personal experience which are incomprehensible to his surroundings:

Sultan: Mother (*calmly*), Mother! Don't you understand what is happening here, inside my soul, you can't comprehend what is hidden there, and I am not able to explain it to you. (*Silence*). All I can say is this: There, inside, there are large halls full of strange sobbing and a tomb always awaiting a new grave. There is an old man who just yearns to go out into the free space. He asks himself if he was created to make a living man's heart beat (...). There is also a child that cries because it wants to see new kinds of birds, or the sun over the mountain peak, where the clouds mix up with the sunlight (...).[130]

The Observer speaks in a similar tone, realizing his function of an epic narrator of events:

Observer: From that moment on, the Sultan began to touch hard rocks of his soul (the curtain slowly falls down). It is interesting to know what is hidden behind these rocks. Ha! The Sultan organises one party after another for the observers of strange graves in which there are no dead bodies but wild monsters. Meanwhile, the dead are hiding under the leaves of well-formed trees, thus causing noise and commotion in the hearts of stupid birds".[131]

A dramatic hero, a lyrical subject and an epic narrator combine their functions in the dialogues of the plays. The striving to reconcile the epic, lyrical and dramatic measures is one of the main tendencies of creationist aesthetics.

3. The ominous empire. As compared to neoclassical and realist drama, creationist drama developing since the 1960s comprises different content, new formal measures and techniques.

The content of all the creationist plays is based on interrelated motifs of power, compulsion and coercion. In connection with this relationship, the particular plays develop the successive themes of: revival, sense of exis-tence, sense of art, as well as a narrow sphere of the characters' "personal" problems. In the creative method, which is used to tackle the content of the

---

[130] Ġālib Fāḍil al-Muṭṭalibī, *Ma'sāt bayḍā'*, "Al-Aqlām" (Baghdad), No. 10/1977, p. 16.

[131] Ibid., p. 116.

plays, one can distinguish in the first place the abandoning of the rule of linear time, which was binding in the plays of the two "older" currents. They also differ in that creationism aims at abstraction and generalisation.

3.1. The individual and the community. Creationists outline only a general framework of the world presented in their plays, taking no care of its concrete shape. Dramatic characters do not build detailed social structures, seeking a place for themselves in them, since they do not strive to reveal their individual human nature. These characters are part and parcel of the mechanisms combining the groups of inhabitants of common space. These are not, however, "neoclassical" communities, since the latter share the motif of glory. Meanwhile, in creationist drama, the world is full of characters and phenomena based on the relationship of the motifs of power, compulsion and coercion. Relations among people caused by the impacts of this relationship create fairly loose groups rather than communities. In Sa'd Allāh Wanūs' play *Faṣd ad-damm (The Blood-Letting*, written in 1963), a group composed of several men, a woman, a girl, and a child silently approve throughout the entire action of the struggle of a young intellectual with his stronger relative, an advocate of coercion prevailing in the world of drama. This is solely a group of terrorised people, since they do not show any signs of mutual relationships shared by a community. However, all the characters do display an attitude of full dependence on the system in power.

These plays focus on the main conflict outlined in creationist dramaturgy, namely that of the ruling and the ruled ones. In this dramaturgy, a man with morals, who is usually free from acting from personal motives, does participate in a general conflict. Searching for solutions to this conflict is the foundation of ethics of this community, and the individual regards this ethos as its own. A different conduct is immoral, or at least strange, thus questioning the affiliation of the character to the community enslaved by the apparatus of power.

In this conception of the relationships between the individual and the community, creationist drama falls into a certain controversy since it puts a human being into the system limiting its freedom, which resembles the one that the created world wants to overthrow. In *Al-Aḫyār*, 1979, by Muṣṭafà al-Fārisī and At-Tiğānī Zalīla, the inhabitants of a fictitious and undefined country revolt against the rule of the machine. The human types appearing in the play, including a Poet, a Weaver and a Builder, individualise themselves only in short fragments of the play as fully-fledged characters experiencing emotions stemming from their personal problems. However, when - due to popular revolution - the rule of the machine collapses, the place of

human personality in the new system of organisation of victorious individuals remains unknown.

Limitation of the role of human personality in the world presented by creationist drama results both from the striving to reach simplification and abstraction as well as hyperbolisation of the main conflict emerging there, i.e. that of the ruling and the ruled ones.

3.2. Aiming at a common end. The solution of the conflict between the ruling and the ruled ones is a primary goal of the world created in the plays and the central part of the message inherent in creationist dramaturgy.

A teleological approach to this issue results already from the technique of handling the time of events in the plays. Loosely combined events weakly condition one another, hence they do not evolve—like in realist drama—in accordance with causes and effects. Likewise, the events undetermined by the category of causality, are not subject to fatalistic principles, being independent of the order in the world created and reaching beyond its framework. It is the world of thought, which does not resist sufficiently the concept of "going beyond" or transcedence to create its *raison d'être*.

Incongruent or loosely connected events develop on a finalistic plan. They share and are made dynamic by the aiming at a common goal. The attainment of the goal is presented in extreme cases by creationist drama as unreal, in others—as possible, and some other time—as necessary even though difficult.

Il-Farāfīr, produced in Cairo 1963, by Yūsuf Idrīs prove that the search for the solution to the conflict between the ruling and the ruled ones is fruitless. Here, the Clown and the Master, created and "abandoned" by the Author, try to organise their life on stage. They penetrate and reject increasingly new values—from everyday and individual (choice of profession and families) to public. The forms of the functioning of the community they find, the empire and the republic alike, appear to be worthless. After a grotesque suicide, Master and Clown pass to eternity, where they will remain in an unchanged mutual dependence.

A similar quest is conducted by creationists in the historical perspective. In 16-th century Hafsid state in ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Madanī's play *Mawlāy as-sulṭān al-Ḥasan al-Ḥafṣī* (*Our Gracious Sultan al-Ḥasan al-Ḥafṣī*, printed in Tunis 1977) the popular revolution wins. Here, however, the key question is asked about the future system of government which neither the characters nor the audience, marked with dots, can answer.[132] As it seems,

---

[132] ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Mawlāy as-sulṭān al-Ḥasan al-Ḥafṣī*, Libya-Tunisia 1977, p. 108; cf. Ewa Machut-Mendecka, *Tunezja...*, op. cit., p. 555.

the victorious party is likely to split into two groups again: the ruling and the ruled ones.

The goal pursued moves away as it is being approached, and the achievements lose sense. No one knows whether the search should be abandoned or if the goal itself should be formulated again. Creationists, who are pessimistic about the problem of the solution of the conflict between the ruling and the ruled ones, usually give no answer to this question.

In those plays in which the search for this solution meets with optimistic attitudes, they are primarily paid by heroes' sacrifices. In the play *Muḥākama fī Naysābūr (The Trial at Naysābūr,* 1963) by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, 'Umar al-Ḫayyām, a wise man and poet, exiled because of his heretic knowledge of the world, rejects both the caliph's invitation and the challenge of a revolutionary who fights using terror. Solitary and defeated, he dies as a herdsmen of camels, believing in the revolution, even though he knows that it will take a very long time to live to see it.

"Creationist" characters of this type believe that after a long anticipation the events will develop in such a direction as will allow human communities to take an appropriate form of organisation, which will put an end to their previous problems. The shape of the new anticipated organisation is, however, equally amorphous and undefined as in realist drama.

3.3. Historism and abstractionism. The time which is unlimited by concrete conditioning and the historical time form in creationist drama the foundations of two conceptions of the world presented: as a collectivity and as a community. Both conceptions are based on the same motifs, developed by use of the same creative methods and they affirm each other: the historism of the community is confirmed in the abstractionism of the collectivity.

In extreme cases, the undefined time and the historical time permeate each other, aiming at a common message. The example of this is the play *Sindibād* by Samīr al-'Ayyādī. The action of the play takes place "on a certain night in 1258, when Hulagu besieged Baghdad".[133] On that night, however, the events of six centuries of Muslim history are supposed to appear on the stage along with seven travels of Sindbad, to be accompanied by the performance of the popular ensemble with the participation of people-monkeys. During six centuries presented, the history develops in the same way, shown in the successive stations which duplicate one situation of political downfall.

---

[133] Samīr al-'Ayyādī, *Sindibād*, "Al-Ḥayāt al-Masraḥiyya" (Damascus) No. 14/1980, p. 39.

The content expressed in creationism is based on the conception of the great error, i.e. the strengthening of the relation of power with compulsion and coercion in the successive epochs of Arabo-Muslim history and ruling dynasties. The error is documented in the particular plays by the examples from the history of Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids or Mamluks.[134] The play applying the "dynastic" point of view automatically precludes the system of signs accepted in creationism.

The Arabo-Muslim community is in the state of constant disintegration and fall which is the result of centuries of the autocratic system of governing. This is used by creationist drama to create a model of an ominous empire being constantly in the situation of partial disintegration. The model is the more so dangerous as it is outlined in the synchronical order. The events in creationist drama —due to loosened time—are incongruent and their chronology does not play a major role. The model of the empire, detached from the historical background, is inscribed in the historical order. Thus, it is an abstract model, being formed at any moment of the history or beyond it. At the same time, it is a historical model as it concerns one nation and one civilisation with a well-marked beginning.

Islam remains its main cementing factor in creationist drama. However, the change of Islam into civilisation brings about deviation from Islamic doctrinal and social principles. Doctrinal deviation from pure Islam, spread in the shape of Sufism, is opposed, for example, by the title hero of ‘Alī Abū Zakiyya's (Libya)[135] play, a mediaeval scholar Šihāb ad-Dīn. Various kinds of the deviation develop amidst incessant wars and battles in the East and in the West of the Arab world, which can be seen in the background of the play. Islam also becomes a facade of religion and a pretext for development of the autocratic and totalitarian power in Arab states. Particularly dramatic deviation from the canons of Muslim faith is practised by the leaders of Arab mediaeval popular movements developed against a religious background in the plays of ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī.

On the other hand, Maḥmūd Diyāb's *Bāb al-futūḥ (Chapter about Conquests*, ab. 1970) charges the Arabo-Muslim history of suppressing heroic attitudes:

The Fifth One (...): In our history there are magnificent civilisations.

---

[134] Umayyads—‘Abd ar-Raḥmān aš-Šarqāwī, *Al-Ḥusayn ṭā'irān*, 1969, *Al-Ḥusayn šahīdan*, 1969); Abbasids—Mu‘īn Basīsū, *Ṯawrat az-Zanğ*, ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Dīwān az-Zanğ*; ‘Ādil Kāẓim, *Az-Zamān al-maqtūl fī Dayr al-‘Āqūl*; Fatimids—‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Madanī, *Ta‘āzī fāṭimiyya*; Mamluks—Raššād Rušdī, *Itfarrag ya salām*.

The Fourth One: Yes, magnificent civilisations. They were born and they
  died... We are left only with fragments and ruins.
The Fifth One: Our history is full of heroism.
The First One: But we don't care about heroism of history unless we want
  to fly again like baloons into the wilderness of fantasy.
The Fifth One: But history is the truth. We will find a pattern in it; maybe
  it will inspire us with faith in ourselves and ability to act.
Group: We believe in ourselves and we are capable of taking action, but
  we must be silent.
The Fifth One: I propose history. It is a good amusement, it will save us
  from silence and it will bring us trust we need in our strength. We are
  the sons of a noble nation. We have a long history which is preserved in
  thousands of sources.
The First One: Unproductive history.[136]

In this play, which is a kind of the history game, a Group of contempo-
rary youth creates a figure of an Andalusian knight, who wants in vain to
meet Saladin to propose him total emancipation of slaves and unification
of all the Arabs. But the knight, together with the youth that creates him,
goes to prison, while Saladin does not appear in the play at all, thus con-
tributing to development of totalitarian empire due to his indifference.

Due to the signs inherent in the empire, it does not belong to the past,
but is a menace to current and future forms of human existence. Two
epochs in creationist drama are combined by the character of caliph ʿAbd
ar-Raḥmān ad-Dāḫil, an ancestor of the Umayyad dynasty in Andalusia,
appearing in Muḥammad al-Māġūṭ's (Syria) play *Al-Muḥarriǧ* (*The
Clown*, published in Beirut 1976).[137] The said caliph arrives in the 20th
century to save the Arab community from disintegration and then he is
captured and sold to Spain that will trial him as its prisoner.[138] Another
Sindbad (from Šawqī Ḫamīs'[139] play) in creationist dramaturgy reaches an

---

[135] ʿAlī Abū Zakiyya, *Šihāb ad-Dīn*, "Al-Fuṣūl al-Arbaʿa" (Tripoli) No.
5/1979.

[136] Maḥmūd Diyāb, *Bāb al-futūḥ*, Cairo 1974, pp. 12-13.

[137] This character also appears in neoclassical dramaturgy.

[138] ʿAntara, the Arab tribal knight and poet, who arrives in the 20th century in
Aḥmad ʿĀmir's play *Ar-Rīḥ wa-ăl-ḫiyām* is disappointed with the present day;
Shahrazad and Šahriyār are transferred into the present time in Nuʿmān ʿĀšūr's
play *Luʿbat az-zaman. Fantaziyya drāmiyya* (written in 1971); the protagonists'
travel allows for a satirical approach to Arab problems.

[139] Šawqī Ḫamīs (Egypt), *Sindibād.*

unknown kingdom which is still one more totalitarian state situated beyond time. The mourning over Al-Ḥusayn's death is also accompanied by the voices of Christ and Guevara beyond the rigour of time in the play *Al-Ḥurr ar-Riyāḥī* (1982) by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ‘Abd al-Wāḥid (Iraq).

The inhabitants of the Arabo-Muslim empire share the forms of its existence with the citizens of undefined worlds. These are the forms occurring in all the areas outlined by creationist drama, since in all of them power co-exists with compulsion and coercion. Despite the conventionality adopted, due to persisent, though irregular toponymic keys, the world presented in this drama assumes a concrete shape. Just as in neoclassical and realist drama, its core comprises the Arabo-Muslim areas, while the peripheral territories may cover different forms of existence.