The Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma to al-Farābī's Ignorant (*jāhiliyya*) Cities[1]

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Abstract

This paper explores the resemblance between the socio-political environment of the cities that Ibn Faṭṭūma visits in his journey, to al-Farābī's analysis of the ignorant cities (*al-mudun al-jāhiliyya*). The claim is that both *The Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ, and al-Farābī's extended talk of the ignorant cities alludes to the same crisis; The novelist and the philosopher dream of an utopian virtuous city but aware that in reality there are various forms of imperfect regimes, while the perfect regime is virtually impossible or difficult to reach. Both, the philosopher and the novelist, see that true knowledge (*ḥikma*) is the basis of the virtuous city, and through it the application of a right and virtuous 'religion' may be practiced. The ideal or virtuous city provides happiness, justice, and self-realization for all the citizens. This paper shows that al-Farābī's philosophical text becomes vivid and attractive when considered as a background to the story of Ibn Faṭṭūma's passionate dream of arriving to the perfect or ideal city. The spiritual crisis of both Ibn Faṭṭūma and al-Farābī is the outcome of a defect in the socio-political regime, which is not strange to our time. This justifies the study of both the literary and philosophical works from a contemporaneous perspective.

Key Words: Najīb Maḥfūẓ, al-Farābī, Political Regime, *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma*, *al-madīna al-fāḍila*, *al-mudun al-jāhiliyya, sharī'a, ijtihād.*

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[1] "Now the Lord said to Abram: Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you". Genesis 12:1, New Revised Standard Version.

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Introduction

The spiritual life is often described using the metaphor of quest or journey. "A journey implies movement in space, a physical going out toward a destination. A quest too requires setting forth in search of something. The quest and the journey suggest that history, events, and narrative are meaningful."[1] This kind of journey resembles the one taken by a Sufi traveler who "departs from the station of limited knowledge and understanding and takes the journey towards the destination of greater understanding, understanding the Divine".[2] The Sufi traveler takes an inner journey, the path of the heart to attain knowledge of the Self that leads towards the understanding of the Divine. Yet, Ibn Faṭṭūma leaves his homeland and takes an outward journey to different stations or cities that he wishes would lead him towards his destination, the perfect city (*Dār al-Jabal*). Both the Sufi traveler and Ibn Faṭṭūma expand their first limited knowledge through the journey, but the content of such knowledge is different. The former traveler "will learn the meaning of Divinity, […] will pass the levels of purification to discover the meaning of unity which lies hidden behind the veils of multiplicity."[3] Ibn Faṭṭūma's journey will show him that the life of the human being is strongly connected to the political regime and to the type of religion applied by that regime.

The narration in *The Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma* is meaningful because it shows that the dualism of subject-object is simplistic and misleading. The relationship of the human being to the outer world is always of engagement or correlation. We are never alone with ourselves, because "to be" means to be there in the world and with others, or simply *Dasein*, using Heidegger's terminology.

[1] Diana Lobel, *The Quest for God and the Good: World Philosophy as a living experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 2.

[2] Nahid Angha, "Practical Sufism and Philosophical Sufism", http://ias.org/sufism/practical-sufism-philosophical-sufism/ Retrieved September 9, 2015.

[3] Ibid.

Therefore, the journey of the human being is taken in the dimensions of place and time, and not merely as an individual mystical or spiritual experience. The quest for the good life cannot be an enterprise of a solipsistic mind or individual subject, because the individual's experience is always embedded within the matrix of the socio-political system.

Al-Fārābī (257/870-339/950) emphasizes, in his political philosophy, the Aristotelian notion of the human being as *zōon politikon*, who wants to be part of an association of the community and his/her fellow-citizens.[1] This frame of thought is correct also in the context of the novel discussed here. Hence, the journey of the main character is not subjective or individualistic, and his micro-crisis is the reflection or the manifestation of a macro-crisis in the various socio-political regimes that he experiences in his visits to different places.

The Reception of *The Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma*.

Rasheed El-Enany understands this short novel, episodic in form, as "Mahfouz's last panoramic review of human history".[2] It shows mankind's time from the dawn of organized society to the present day. The 'travels' of the novel are made through time rather than space. "The book is nothing but a conducted tour in social and political history".[3] To my mind this novel does not show a linear or diachronic progress of mankind's socio-political forms throughout time, but rather represents these forms of life as continuous and synchronic, living side by side in the past as well as in modern times. On the other hand, the description of the place is very important for it is always the façade of its specific civilization and time.

[1] See Hans Daiber, "Political Philosophy", in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 849.

[2] Rasheed El-Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz: Egypt's Nobel Laureate* (London: Haus Publishing, 2007), 133.

[3] Ibid. See also Rasheed El-Enany, *The Pursuit of Meaning* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 168.

By giving the title *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma*, Maḥfūẓ wants to remind the reader of the journeys of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (*Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*) in the fourteenth-century since Ibn Faṭṭūma and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa are of the same consonant-vowel pattern.[1] According to Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud, the name Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the Egyptian usage stands for extraordinary feats of travel. To emphasize the deeper affinity with both names in every day conversation in Egypt, she notes that "type setters and sales assistants in book shops sometimes make the mistake of calling his book 'Ibn Baṭṭūṭa'".[2]

I agree with this approach because every reader of Arabic literature will make immediately or naturally this association between the two names. Yet, Wen-chin Ouyang states the significant differences between the two travelers, that can be summarized in the following points:[3]

1. Unlike Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who leaves home for a definite destination and positive purpose, the premise for Ibn Faṭṭūma's escape is loss. The main loss is his faith in the political system supposedly founded on the teachings of Islam.
2. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa travels around the world and brings home the knowledge he gained during his travels to benefit his society, but Ibn Faṭṭūma does not bring home the 'harvest' from the journey.
3. Contrary to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's journey, where there is a clear beginning and an end, Ibn Faṭṭūma seems neither to arrive at *Dār al-Jabal* nor return to his homeland.

[1] See El-Enany, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, 168.

[2] Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud, "A Muslim *Pilgrim's Progress: The Riḥla of Ibn Faṭṭūma*", in *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Mediaeval and Modern Islam*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (Richmond UK: Curzon Press, 1993), 168.

[3] See Wen-chin Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel: Nation-State, Modernity and Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 27-28.

Critics of Maḥfūẓ locate his novels within the history of the Western novel, especially because the novel, as a genre, is considered to be a Western genre that modern Arab writers adopted. They relate the novels of Maḥfūẓ to realism when they deal with his *Cairo Trilogy*. This explains the widespread statement that Maḥfūẓ is "the Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy or Zola of the Arab world".[1] But the style of the novel discussed here, breaks not only our conventions and expectations of the Western novel as a genre, but it clearly revives the Arabic classical tradition or literary heritage (*turāth*). This may explain its neglect by critics, or even considering *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* as a bad novel or simply "a failure".[2]

Wen-chin Ouyang is clear in her approach to the novel as a literary form that originated in the West. But she believes that the genre changes when it comes into contact with a new culture, and it is possible that it will interact with other genres in this new culture. Hence, there is a need to try and free ourselves from the genre ideology that has been so dominant in our reading of the Arabic novel.[3]

According to Rasheed El-Enany, the originality of the episodic phase, from the early 1970s onwards, in Maḥfūẓ's literary works, would not have been possible without the novelist's long experience in the arts of Western modernism. In this phase we may find traces of modernism as well as sensibility but also qualities of the indigenous arts of storytelling. But, in the last analysis,

[1] Wen-chin Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", *Edebiyat* 14, no. 1&2 (2003), 84. On the representation of Maḥfūẓ in the Western media see Clara Srouji-Shajrawi, *Naẓarīyat al-istiqbāl fī'l riwāyah al-'arabiyyah al-ḥadīthah: Dirāsah taṭbīqiyyah fī thulāthiyyatay Najīb Maḥfūẓ wa Aḥlām Mustaghānamī* (Baqah al-Gharbiyyah, Israel: al-Qasemī Arabic Language Academy, 2011), 113-122. On Maḥfūẓ as the creator of modern Arabic novel in its unique nature and not as a mere imitation of the Western novel, see Ibid., 95-98.

[2] See Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 81.

[3] See Ibid., 84.

"it is a tribute to the author's accomplishment that the end-product can only be described as Mahfouzian".[1]

Reviving the classic Arabic literary forms is a kind of rebellion against Western influence and colonialism, as Ouyang says:

> Paradoxically, the past can stand in the way of building a satisfying present and future. The redefinition of the past, therefore, is a necessary step towards finding more suitable, and plausible, roots for the present.[2]

Ouyang's reading of *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* is very special because she understands it as an intellectual one that have many similarities, both in structure and theme, with al-Ghazzālī's 'autobiography', *Al-munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (Deliverance from error). She also relates this novel to the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*.[3] In her opinion, this journey of *Ibn Faṭṭūma* mimics *Al-munqidh* in premise, objective, structure and discourse:

> Like *al-munqidh*, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* is set up as quest. This quest is predicated on a sense of loss. Al-Ghazzālī, having lost his faith amidst the deviant practices of Islam, seeks to believe again, and Ibn Faṭṭūma, losing faith in Islam as an instrument of political

[1] El-Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz:Egypt's Nobel Laureate*, 111.

[2] Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 85. See also Wen-chin Ouyang, "Intertextuality Gone Awry? The Mysterious (Dis) appearance of 'Tradition' in the Arabic Novel", in: *Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature Since 1967*, ed. Luc Deheuvels, Barbara Michalak-Pikuska and Paul Starkey (Durham, U. K.: Durham University, 2006), 47-48. On the return of modern Arab writers to classic Arabic narrative, see Muhsin Jassim al-Musawi, *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 71-115.

[3] See Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel: Nation-State, Modernity and Tradition*, 28-32; see also Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 88-91.

> and social justice […] goes on a mission to find the knowledge that would restore justice in an *umma* that has strayed from the right path.[1]

In *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* Mahfouz redefines the genre of *Al-munqidh*; he now defines it as a work of literature, a novel.[2] From the other hand, this episodic novel has similarities with the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*.

> Like *raḥīl* in the *qaṣīda*, the journey comprises potentially life-threatening experiences. The difference is that instead of expressing the dangerous experience metaphorically through the camel or wild animal motif, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* relates the protagonist's own experience.[3]

The journey in search for knowledge in *Al-munqidh*, according to Ouyang, echoes the tripartite *qaṣīda*, in which departure is presented as a necessary step taken in the face of crisis to get away from a source of trouble. Disillusion in *Al-munqidh* is akin to disappointment in love of a *qaṣīda*. *Al-raḥīl* (departure) in both *Al-munqidh* and *Ibn Faṭṭūma* represents the break with the past, or rather, the present which has distorted the past, as well as the beginning of the search for a path towards a present, or future, where the ideal(ized) past may be restored.[4]

[1] Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel*, 29; and Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 88.

[2] See Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel*, 30.

[3] Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel*, 31; and Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 90.

[4] See Ouyang, *Politics of Nostalgia in the Arabic Novel*, 34-35; and see Ouyang, "The Dialectic of Past and Present in *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ", 92.

To my mind Ouyang's analysis of the novel is a good example of Gadamer's and Jauss's call for the fusion of horizons of past and present in the reception of a literary work.[1]

> The horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. *Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.*[2]

Both Gadamer and Jauss saw the process of understanding as a dialogue between the reader and the literary text.[3] The active reader permits the text to 'talk' and rise questions before him/her, so he/she can look for answers in the text. In Gadamer's words:

> We understand only when we understand the question to which something is the answer, but the intention of what is understood in this way does not remain foregrounded against our own intention. Rather, reconstructing the question to which the meaning of a text is understood as an answer merges with our

[1] The idea of the importance of hermeneutics in explaining the relationship between past and present, Hans Robert Jauss has borrowed from his teacher Hans-Georg Gadamer. He considered Gadamer's term 'fusion of horizon' as the center of his critical aesthetic philosophy, but changed it slightly into the 'horizon of expectation'. See Srouji-Shajrawi, *Naẓarīyat al-istiqbāl fī'l riwāyah al-'arabiyyah al-ḥadīthah*, 19-20. This book provides an expanded study of Jauss' Reception Theory, and suggests a model to apply this theory to any literary work.

[2] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 306. (Italics in original).

[3] See Peter V. Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 58-59; Srouji-Shajrawi, *Naẓarīyat al-istiqbāl fī'l riwāyah al-'arabiyyah al-ḥadīthah*, 20-22.

> questioning. For the text must be understood as an answer to a real question.[1]

To clarify the problem of the circularity of literary communication and its dialogical nature Jauss says:

> Just as the producer of a text becomes also a recipient when he sets out to write, so the interpreter has to bring himself into play as reader when he wants to participate in the dialogue of literary tradition. A dialogue consists not only of two interlocutors, but also of the willingness of one to recognize and accept the other in his otherness. […] Literary understanding becomes dialogical only when the otherness of the text is sought and recognized from the horizon of our own expectations […] and when one's own expectations are corrected and extended by the experience of other.[2]

In my understanding of the Reception Theory, Ouyang's reading of this novel fits a group of readers who have a deep and wide knowledge in both classic and modern Arabic literature. This group usually tends to harmonize between past and present or tradition and modernity.

My own reading of *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* also tries to harmonize between past and present, but specifically with the background of al-Fārābī's political writings. This novel deals with the different possibilities of political regimes, and shows the interconnections between 'religion' and its praxis within the political regime. This emphasizes the linkage between the novel and al-Fārābī's thought. To my mind, Maḥfūẓ, in most of his literary writings, is concerned primarily

[1] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 374.

[2] Hans Robert Jauss, "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding", in: *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*, ed. James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 9.

with the socio-political situation, and gives science a privilege over religion.[1] Also al-Fārābī states the supremacy of philosophy over religion.[2] Therefore, to relate this novel to the political philosophy of al-Fārābī is reasonable.

Al-Fārābī and Maḥfūẓ are more concerned with political regimes that define the type of religion or ideology that is applied to a specific city/state. By the word religion (*milla*, in al-Fārābī's terminology) here I mean the moral system, the social norms and the knowledge that are transmitted to the citizens by their leaders, and which shape their mentality. Therefore, Ibn Faṭṭūma's search is for the ideal Islam, or rather the perfect form of religion, to be applied to the city in order to turn it into a virtuous homeland (*watan*).

By choosing the period of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (medieval period) as the setting of the novel, Maḥfūẓ aims to emphasize the difficulty of travels before the invention of modern transportation vehicles. Most of the problems, difficulties and obstacles that the main character faces in the novel, will vanish with the development of modern transportation. In order to attain knowledge, in past times, one must travel to different countries, despite the difficulties of weather or primitive transportation.

The journey of the main character is a journey to the inside and the outside that are inter-connected. It shows the mutual relationship between the individual and the community. Man's happiness and satisfaction does not depend on one's state of mind but rather is connected to his/her environment. Thus to be happy means to realize or actualize one's hidden talents and capabilities in a country that enables this so that the citizen will not feel alienated or estranged in his/her

[1] Rasheed El-Enany has a similar opinion. See his analysis of religion in Mahfouz's novels, *Najīb Maḥfūẓ: Kirā'at mā bayn al-suṭūr* (*Najīb Maḥfūẓ: A Reading between the Lines*) (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿa, 1995), 41-57.

[2] See Clara Srouji-Shajrawi, "The Role of Religion in al-Fārābī's Virtuous City", *Al-Majma': Studies in Arabic Language, Literature and Thought* 6 (2012), 26-27.

country. Clarifying this idea will be the focus of this comparative study between al-Farābī's philosophical writings and Maḥfūẓ's novel.

A Reading of the Voyage of Ibn Faṭṭūma

At the age of twenty Ibn Faṭṭūma decides to leave his homeland (*Dār al-Islām*) after a personal crisis. He felt that his mother betrayed him when she accepted to marry his teacher (Sheikh Maghagha al-Jubaīlī). Also Ḥalīma, the girl that he has loved at first sight and was his fiancée for a short period, betrayed him; The Sulṭān's third chamberlain decided to have Ḥalīma as his fourth wife, and her father was incapable to refuse. In addition to that, he found himself betrayed by Islam as religion because his homeland (*waṭan*) is full with poor and ignorant people. He was "upset by injustice, poverty, and ignorance".[1]

Al-Farābī's political writings shows clearly that the virtuous man (*al-'insān al-fāḍel*) feels alienated in a corrupted country, and it is better to him to leave for another better place:

> It is wrong for the virtuous man to remain in the corrupt polities (*as-siyāsāt al-fāsida*), and he must emigrate (*wajabat 'alaīhi al-hijra*) to the ideal cities, if such exist in fact in his time. If they do not exist, then the virtuous man is a stranger in the present world and wretched in life, and to die is preferable for him than to live.[2]

[1] See Najīb Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, in *al-Mū'llafāt al-Kāmila*, 5 vols., (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1990), 5: 645; and Naguib Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, trans. Denys Johnson-Davies, (Cairo: AUC, 1992), 7.

[2] Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl al-madanī*, ed. & trans. D. M. Dunlop (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 72. The Arabic text is also provided in this book. See Ibid., 164. The above quoted passage, according to Dunlop, may have marked some crisis in al-Fārābī's life who left Baghdad and went to Syria in 330/942 when there was great upheaval in the Muslim empire. See Ibid., 14 and 92.

Al-Fārābī is mainly concerned with political life and its relevance to human happiness and perfection.[1] He sees religion as the ideology that shapes the mentality of a nation, and the reflection of its underlying philosophy. Both (religion and philosophy) constitute the socio-political milieu of a nation.[2] Religion (*milla*) is defined by him as follows:

> Religion is opinions and actions, determined and restricted with stipulations and prescribed for a community by their first ruler, who seeks to obtain through their practicing it a specific purpose with respect to them or by means of them.[3]

The ignorant cities (*al-mudun al-jāhiliyya*) cannot provide true felicity for their inhabitants.[4] These cities are called by such name because of their false view about felicity. Both the rulers of the ignorant cities and their inhabitants are not aware of the real good and hence hanker after apparent goods (*khayrāt maẓnūna*), such as bodily health, wealth, enjoyment of pleasures, freedom to follow one's desires, etc. These inhabitants do not even have the ability to know, to understand and to believe in the true meaning of felicity, even when they are rightly guided to it.[5]

In each land that Ibn Faṭṭūma visits he is told by a wise man (*ḥakīm*) that they have the best socio-political regime and, therefore, the people live happily. But Ibn Faṭṭūma's observations of each system lead him to the opposite view.

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[1] See Fauzi M. Najjar, "Fārābī's Political Philosophy and Shī'sm", *Studio Islamica* 14 (1961), 57.

[2] See Srouji-Shajrawi, "The Role of Religion in al-Fārābī's Virtuous City", 2-3.

[3] Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, "Book of Religion", in *Alfarabi: The Political Writings*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 93; and Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Milla Wanuṣūṣ 'Ukhrā*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beīrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), 43.

[4] Al-Fārābī uses the term *jāhiliyya* and *jāhila* (ignorant) as synonyms.

[5] Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, trans. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 254-255; See also the commentary, 411.

He travels first of all to the land of Mashriq (*Dār al-Mashriq*). This land "consists of a capital and four towns. Each town has an overlord who is its owner; he owns the pastures, the cattle, and the herdsmen. The people are his slaves, they submit to his will in exchange for a sufficiency of subsistence and security".[1] All the people of *Dār al-Mashriq* worship the moon. They know neither eternity nor heaven. The people at the full moon hurry out to the open space and "form a circle round the priest for prayers, then they practice his rites by dancing, singing, drinking, and making love".[2] Men and women walk in the streets without clothes. Nakedness for them is natural and attracts no attention. Ibn Faṭṭūma felt himself embarrassed, but out of shape as he moved among these naked people with his clothes on. He had a great difficulty to turn away his gaze from the exciting spectacles of nudity.

The 'ignorant' city is divided by al-Farābī into a number of cities. One of them is *al-madina al-ḍarūriyya* (city of necessity) that may be considered analogous to *Dār al-Mashriq*. The people in *al-madina al-ḍarūriyya* "strive for no more food, drink, clothes, housing and sexual intercourse than is necessary for sustaining their bodies, and they co-operate to attain this".[3] The people in both *Dār al-Mashriq* and *al-madina al-ḍarūriyya* (as well as in all the 'ignorant' cities), are ignorant of the true meaning of felicity here and after death. They do not hold the right views on the Supreme Being, i.e., God who's existence is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*). They know nothing about the emanation theory that explains the *fayḍ* (emanation) of reasons (*'uqūl*) from the First Reason or First cause.[4]

[1] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 27; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 651.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 28; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 651.

[3] Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 255.

[4] Influenced by his Nestorian Christian teachers and his reading of the great Neoplatonic teachers, al-Fārābī developed a Neoplatonic Islamic theology. See Muhsin S. Mahdi, *Alfarabi*

In *Dār al-Mashriq* Ibn Faṭṭūma married a pretty woman (called ʿArūsa) who reminded him of his first love to Ḥalīma. But when he started to bring up his eldest son on the principles of Islam, ʿArūsa was not pleased and accused him with heresy: "You are bringing him up in godlessness (*kufr*) […] and preparing him for a life of misery in his own country".[1] Ibn Faṭṭūma was obliged to depart alone from *Dār al-Mashriq* with the first caravan to the land of *Ḥayra*.

In *Dār al-Ḥayra*, he is told that they worship the King who owns all the lands. He is the source of all wisdom and good, for he sees everything with the eye of God, and thus the people receive from him everlasting wisdom in everything. Nothing is demanded from the citizens but to have faith and obey. The god-like King "appoints the governors from his holy family, and picks leaders for the work on the land and in the factories from amongst the elite (*ṣafwa*)".[2] As for the rest of the people, they possess no sanctity and have no talents. They do manual hard works and get only their daily bread for that. The land of Ḥayra is presented as a model for honorable and happy land.

Every 'ignorant' land that Ibn Faṭṭūma visits makes him compare its evils with that found in his country of 'divine Revelation' (*bilād al-waḥy*): "There is no evil I have come across in my journey which has not reminded me of my unhappy country".[3] He was upset when he saw human heads fixed to the tops of the poles. These were the heads of those who insurrected against the god-king. But most of the people live in delusion and error as in his homeland.

This god-King of *Dār al-Ḥayra* reminds us of the ignorant rulership (*riʾāsa jāhiliyya*) in al-Fārābī's political thought. The ruler in such case uses the residents as tools for seeking his own 'ignorant' goods, such as wealth, pleasure,

and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-2.

[1] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 48; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 658.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 60; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 661.

[3] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 57; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 660.

honor, glory and conquest. His errant rulership (*ri'āsat ḍalāla*) makes him presume himself to have virtue and wisdom. Those under his rulership believe that of him, though in fact he does not have these qualities. Thus, what he prescribes to them as the way to obtain ultimate happiness (*al-sa'āda al-quṣwā*) is not the true method, but a deceptive one.[1]

We notice that the epistemological parameter is that which differentiates the virtuous city (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*) from the 'ignorant' cities (*al-mudun al-jāhila or al-jāhiliyya*). The virtuous ruler in *al-madīna al-fāḍila* has true knowledge, for it is joined with revelation from God, and thus leads those under his rulership to ultimate true happiness. Whilst the deceptive ruler assumes to have this divine knowledge, and makes those under his rulership believe that he, in fact, posses such attributes. Thus the residents obtain false knowledge.

The rulership of the god-King in *Dār al-Ḥayra*, accompanied by his 'holy family' and the elite of society, is analogous to that of the city of meanness (*madinat al-nadhāla*). These people of the upper class regard wealth as the sole aim in life. On the other hand, I see the political regime in *Dār al-Ḥayra* related to another 'ignorant' city which is the city of depravity and baseness (*madinat al-khissa wa'l suqūṭ*). The aim of its people is the enjoyment of the pleasures connected with the body or the senses.[2]

In *Dār al-Ḥayra* Ibn Faṭṭūma spends twenty years in prison on a false charge. When he is released he embarks on his journey to *Dār al-Ḥalba*. From the first moment the city of *Ḥalba* pleased him with its beautiful buildings, places of business, and places of entertainment. Beauty and elegance were much in evidence in the clothes of men and women. It is a city of all kinds of opposites; There are rich people alongside with poor ones, there are highly educated people but also there are narrow-minded people. Seriousness and gravity go hand in

[1] See al-Fārābī, *Book of Religion*, 93-94; and al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-milla*, 43-44. See also Srouji-Shajrawi, "The Role of Religion in al-Fārābī's Virtuous City", 13-14.

[2] See al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 254-256.

hand with gaiety and simplicity, and modesty is found alongside emancipation that is close to nakedness. Homosexual persons are treated well in this land. It is simply the city of freedom. To my mind, this city is a counterpart to the USA for it is a democratic, secular and capitalist city.

A voice rang out with the words "God is greatest" (*Allah Akbar*), and Ibn Faṭṭūma's heart jumped violently for he thought that *Dār al-Ḥalba* was a Muslim country. But after he met Sheikh Ḥamāda al-Sabkī, Ibn Faṭṭūma was astonished to know that *Dār al-Ḥalba* embraces all religions: "All religions are to be found in it. It has Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Buddhists; in fact it also has atheists and pagans".[1]

The 'democratic' city (*al-madīna al-jamā'iyya*) resembles the land of *al-Ḥalba*. The aim of people in both cities/lands is to be free. The citizens in *al-madīna al-jamā'iyya* are equal, and are free to do whatever they like.[2] This city brings together persons and groups –both the base and the noble– from different other cities because it offers freedom to all its residents, including strangers and outsiders. Consequently, "it develops many kinds of morals, inclinations, and desires, and they take pleasure in countless things. Its citizens consist of countless similar and dissimilar groups".[3] This city possesses both good and evil to a greater degree than the rest of the ignorant cities. With the passage of time, it is quite possible that it will be bigger, more civilized, more populated, and more productive. But, at the same time, the chance is greater that this city will be, amongst the other 'ignorant' cities, the greatest one that possesses greater good and greater evil *(ākthar al-mudun al-jāhiliyya khayran wa-sharran ma'an)*.[4]

[1] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 85; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 669.

[2] See al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 257. See also al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, (Toronto, Ontario: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 50; and al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, ed. Fauzi M. Najjar, (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Cathūlikiyya, 1964), 99.

[3] Al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 50; and al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 99.

[4] See al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 101.

Therefore, it is also possible to glean from it certain parts of the virtuous city. Al-Fārābī states clearly that

> the construction of virtuous cities and the establishment of the rule of virtuous men are more effective and much easier out of the indispensable and democratic cities (*al-mudun al-ḍarūriyya wa'l mudum al-jamāyiyya*) than out of any other ignorant city.[1]

It is worth mentioning that Ibn Faṭṭūma married twice; one woman was Ḥalīma from *Dār al-Mashriq*, and the second woman was Sāmeya from *Dār al-Ḥalba*. In each one of these lands he spent several years of his life and had children from both women. This shows clearly that the narrator finds the socio-political regime in these lands better for the resident.

Sāmeya is the daughter of Sheikh Ḥamāda al-Sabkī. She is a pediatrician at a large hospital, a beautiful, youthful and intelligent woman, highly confident of herself as her mother who ran the household. Ibn Faṭṭūma was "amazed by the unrestrained way in which the mother and her daughter took part in the conversation. They talked with a bold and spontaneous frankness just like men".[2] Discussing the situation and role of women in *Dār al-Islam* (the homeland of Ibn Faṭṭūma), Sāmeya critically concludes: "Islam is wilting away (*yadhwī*) at your hands and you are just standing back and contemplating".[3] According to Sāmeya, the difference between Islam in *Dār al-Ḥalba* and Islam in the homeland of Ibn Faṭṭūma, is that the former "has not closed the door of independent judgment (*ijtihād*), and Islam without independent judgment means Islam without reason".[4] Islam in *Dār al-Ḥalba* is enlightened, veracious and open to the

[1] Al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 51; and al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 102.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 91; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 671.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 103; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 675. *Ijtihād* is a technical term of Islamic law that describes the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the legal sources, the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna*. The

other civilizations and religions. Women are equal to men, and they work in the public sphere as men do.

The virtuous ruler, in al-Fārābī's political thought is able to change the Islamic Law (*sharīʿa*), that "designates the rules and regulations governing the lives of Muslims".[1] *Sharīʿa* is derived from the *Qurʾān* and the *Sunna* (the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad), and both are considered to be the divine sources of *sharīʿa*. It is a divine legislation, as opposed to human legislation. Hence, all Muslims must behave in their daily life according to the *sharīʿa*. Yet, al-Fārābī has a revolutionary view for he regards *sharīʿa* as a dynamic process that needs to accord with the ever changing conditions in society, and thus the gate of *ijtihād* is always open:

> Just as it is permissible for each of them to change a law (*sharīʿa*) he had legislated (*sharraʿahā*) at one time for another if he deems it better to do so, similarly it is permissible for the living who succeeds the one who died to change what the latter had legislated, for the one who died also would have changed it had he been able to observe the new conditions.[2]

Ijtihād means the use of human reason in the elaboration and explanation of the *Sharīʿa* Law. It is an independent or original interpretation of problems not covered by the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna*. In the early days of the Muslim community, every adequately qualified jurist had the right to exercise such

opposite of *ijtihād* is *taqlīd* (imitation). See Pascal, "The Importance of Learning the Meaning of Ijtihad", *Pascal's View*, http://www.pascalsview.com/pascalsview/2006/02/the-importance-of-learning-the-meaning-of-ijtihad.html; and 'Ijtihad', in *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ijtihad Retrieved March 29, 2016.

[1] Mawil Izzi Dien, *Islamic Law: From Historical Foundations to Contemporary Practice* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 35.

[2] Al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 37; and al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 80-81.

original thinking.[1] Towards the end of the ninth century the gates of *ijtihād* were closed in the Sunni Muslim world.[2] Hence, exercising independent judgment (*ijtihād*) became no longer permissible. This may refer to the fear of Sunni Muslim leaders who began to see the process of *ijtihād* politically dangerous to their ability to rule and to justify their autocratic rule.[3]

For the Shiʿites the gates of *ijtihad* have never been closed. However, for them only their *Imāms*, who are presumed to be infallible (*maʿṣūmūn*), are allowed for such independent reasoning and judgment. Therefore, al-Fārābī, a Shīʿī philosopher, is not an exception when he announces the possibility of changing the *sharīʿa* by the virtuous leader.

I see the question of whether to close or to reopen the gates of *ijtihad* in the modern time as the clash between two classes of Muslim jurists: the conservative fundamentalists who oppose reforms, and moderate liberals who support the introduction of reforms to their countries. Muslims in *Dār al-Ḥalba* present those people who believe and justify the importance of opening the gates of *ijtihad*, and thus they represent the enlightened and dynamic Islam. While, in the homeland of Ibn Faṭṭūma, the gates of *ijtihad* were closed, and, therefore, Muslim jurists are conservative, no matter of the new social requirements. They prefer *taqlīd* over *ijtihad* in their judgments, and refuses any juristic innovations.[4]

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[1] ʿAbdur Raḥmān I. Doi, *Sharīʿah: The Islamic Law* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, n.d.), 78; Claude Salhani, "Open the Gates of Ijtihad", http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=2579&lan=en&sp=1 Retrieved March, 29, 2016.

[2] Wael B. Hallaq tries to show that the gate of *ijtihād* was not closed in theory nor in practice. See Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (Mar., 1984), 3-41.

[3] See Harold Rhode, "Can Muslims Reopen the Gates of *Ijtihad*?", http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3114/muslims-ijtihad Retrieved March, 29, 2016.

[4] *Taqlīd*, in Islamic legal terminology, means literally "to follow (someone)," or "to imitate" the decisions of a religious expert without examining the scriptural basis or reasoning of that

Though Ibn Faṭṭūma was satisfied with his second marriage to Sāmeya, yet he did not forget his dream to arrive to the ideal land. He embarked on his fourth journey, this time to *Dār al-Amān*, "the land of total justice".[1]

Dār al-Amān is exceedingly clean, elegant, with vast buildings. All men and women are employed, therefore the streets are empty during the hours of the day. As for the old and the children they are in parks that fit their age. Ibn Faṭṭūma saw people of both sexes, some over eighty years of age, walking in the park, taking some gentle exercise, sitting, talking and singing. In the park of young children he saw many playgrounds and areas for study and teaching, with teachers from both sexes. In the park, the teachers discover the different talents of each child, so he/she will be directed in accordance with his/her inclination and the plan laid down for him/her.

> Every individual is trained for a job and then works. Every individual gets an appropriate wage. It is the sole land that does not know rich and poor. Here there is a justice that no other land can attain even a measure of.[2]

The president of *Dār al-Amān* is elected by the small group of the elite (*al-ṣafwa*) who made the revolution. He holds the post for life, but if he deviates (*yanḥaref*), then the elite will remove him.[3] The law is sacred in this land, not freedom. The people do not believe in the existence of God, but worship the earth that is considered "the creator of mankind and the supplier of his needs".[4]

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decision. See "Taqlid", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqlid Retrieved April 6, 2016. ʿAbdur Raḥmān I. Doi states that in all the Muslim countries, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, the hybrid system of law which is neither *Sharīʿa* nor purely European law is in practice till today. See Doi, *Sharīʿah: The Islamic Law*, 454.

[1] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 114; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 678.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 118; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 679.

[3] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 124; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 681.

[4] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*,125; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 682.

The magnificent civilization in *Dār al-Amān* aroused the admiration of Ibn Faṭṭūma. Yet it aroused also his disgust, because personal freedom is not permitted in this land. He who rebels for any reason is punished.[1] Comparing the socio-political regime in *Dār al-Amān* to that in *Dār al-Islam*, Ibn Faṭṭūma felt sad, for it reminded him of the caliph who is no less despotic than the ruler of *Dār al-Amān*:

> He practices his forms of corruption blatantly, while the religion itself is beset with superstitions and trivialities; as for the people, they are ravaged by ignorance, poverty, and disease.[2]

I share El-Enany's view that there are enough clues in the description of *Dār al-Amān* which make us suspect that Ibn Faṭṭūma "must have arrived in the pre-Gorbachovian Soviet Union".[3] Yet, to my mind, this land has also an important common denominator with al-Fārābī's virtuous city (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*); Every individual in *al-madīna al-fāḍila* must work according to his inherent talent or innate disposition (*al-fiṭra al-latī takūn bi'l ṭab'*).[4] Only by this way he can be happy as an individual, and is useful for his own country, for he works also for the benefit of the whole society. In the virtuous regime human beings cooperate together to achieve perfection in labor, and to perform noble activities.[5] By this way they "attain earthly happiness in this life and supreme happiness in the life beyond".[6] Hence, happiness is attained through political association, and the citizen can defeat alienation when he/she knows his/her natural abilities to find

[1] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 129; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 683.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*,125; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 682.

[3] El-Enany, *The Pursuit of Meaning*, 172.

[4] See al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 76.

[5] See Srouji-Shajrawi, "The Role of Religion in al-Fārābī's Virtuous City", 14-15.

[6] Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, in *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), 13; and Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb taḥṣīl al-sa'āda*, ed. Jaʿfar Āl Yāsīn (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1981), 49.

the work that suits him/her *bi'l-fiṭra* (inborn nature) in the hierarchical community.[1]

However, on the other hand, *Dār al-Amān* is not the ideal city of al-Fārābī. Its leader is not qualified with the attributes of the virtuous one, whose management is ethical, and intends to elevate the society to the highest possible level with his honesty, reliability and fairness.[2] Nevertheless, Dār al-Amān resembles one of the 'ignorant cities' which is the city of honor (*madīnat al-karāma*). The "aim of its people is to co-operate to attain honor and distinction and fame among the nations, to be extolled and treated with respect".[3] For this reason al-Fārābī likens this city to the virtuous one, especially when the honors are conferred and preferred over more useful things such as wealth and pleasures.[4] However, when the love of honor becomes excessive, "it becomes a city of tyrants, and it is more likely to change into a despotic city (*madīnat al-taghallub*)".[5]

Ibn Faṭṭūma leaves *Dār al-Amān* in the direction of *Dār al-Jabal*, but first he must visit *Dār al-Ghurūb* (the land of sunset). This land is safe and peaceful, without guards or a political ruler, but there is one old man who is the instructor

[1] See al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, 24; and al-Fārābī, *Kitāb taḥṣīl al-sa'āda*, 63. See also Srouji-Shajrawi, "The Role of Religion in al-Fārābī's Virtuous City", 15.

[2] See Alper Ozmen, "Ethical Management and Leadership in the Framework of Farabi's Work "El-Medinetu'l Fazila" (The People of the Virtuous City)", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, vol. 3(3) August 2014, 186, and 190-191. The ideal virtuous city can only be reached by a man in whom twelve natural qualities are found together. See Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 246-249.

[3] Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' ārā' āhl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 257. See also Al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 43-46; and al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 89-94.

[4] See al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 46; and al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 46.

[5] Ibid.

of those who are perplexed (*mudarreb al-ḥā'erīn*).[1] "It's a paradise of people in a trance (*jannat al-ghā'ebīn*)".[2]

The mystic (*ṣūfī*) atmosphere is obvious through the use of the above expressions in Arabic. The old man (like a guru) seems to know everything about Ibn Faṭṭūma for the amazement of the latter.[3] The people of *Dār al-Ghurūb* are emigrants from all different parts. They come to this land to prepare themselves for the journey to *Dār al-Jabal*. The 'guru' trains them with singing, but they themselves must extract the powers hidden within them. The main lesson for the emigrants is to love their duty and work, without paying attention to the expected fruits and rewards. Thus each one of them cements the affection between him/her and the soul of existence (*rūḥ al-wūjūd*).[4]

The old man (or the 'guru') accuses Ibn Faṭṭūma of not working hard enough to accomplish his duty. Apparently, he made his journey from his homeland towards *Dār al-Jabal* in the quest for knowledge. But, in reality, he deserted his duty and missed his target many times, thus wasting valuable time in darkness.[5]

The idea of duty/work as related to one's happiness and goal in this life, which is a prelude to his ultimate happiness in the afterlife, is emphasized in the

[1] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 138; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 685. Note that al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) refers to God (Allah) as '*dalīl al-ḥā'erīn*'. Maimonides was most probably influenced by this expression when he wrote his book '*dalālat al-ḥā'erīn*' (translated into English *The Guide for the Perplexed*). See the Hebrew translation of Maimonides' book from Arabic, Maimonides, *Moreh Nevokhim* (*The Guide of the Perplexed*), trans. Michael Schwartz (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2002), note 19, 11.

[2] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 136; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 685.

[3] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 137-141; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 685-687.

[4] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 142; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 687.

[5] See Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 137, and 140; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 685, and 686.

writings of al-Fārābī.[1] However, there is a need for a separate study to show its correlation to Kant's conception of duty which is considered as the basis of his ethical law.[2]

Dār al-Amān becomes a city of tyrants (*madīnat al-taghallub*). Its army succeeded to occupy *Dār al-Ghurūb* before *Dār al-Ḥalba* did that, and thus prevented the latter from besieging *Dār al-Amān*. The people of *Dār al-Ghurūb* were obliged to plant the land and join the workers of *Dār al-Amān* if they wanted to remain safe. If not they had to move from *Dār al-Ghurūb* towards the land of *Jabal*. Thus Ibn Faṭṭūma and other emigrants left at dawn the land of *Ghurūb* with the first caravan.

The last chapter of the novel is called 'the beginning' (*al-bidāya*) and not *Dār al-Jabal*. It is the seventh part of the novel and the last journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma. We do not know if Maḥfūẓ alludes here to Genesis 2:2 ("By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done"). But at this stage Ibn Faṭṭūma decided to give his manuscript about the travels he made to the master of the caravan, so he would hand it over to the custodian of the House of Wisdom (*Dār al-ḥikma*) at his homeland. After doing that, Ibn Faṭṭūma felt himself free of his misgivings (*wasāwes*) and was "ready for the final adventure with unabated determination".[3] The readers come to the end of this journey without attaining any further knowledge about Ibn Faṭṭūma, the traveler.

[1] See for example, al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 35-38; and al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*,78-81.

[2] See for example, Kelly Oliver, "The Plight of Ethics", *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2012), 118-133.

[3] Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, 148; and Maḥfūẓ, *Riḥlat Ibn-Faṭṭūma*, 689.

Summary and Conclusion

The Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma is a travel to different socio-political regimes in quest of the ideal city. This reminds us of the 'philosophical journey' of al-Fārābī towards the virtuous city. Thus the philosophic text becomes vivid and interesting when taken as the background for the Maḥfūẓian novel.

We have shown that there is a correspondence between each land in the journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma, and the different forms of 'ignorant' cities in al-Fārābī's political writings. Yet *Dār al-Ḥalba* that is likened to al-*madīna al-jamāʿiyya*, has a special status. It seems that Maḥfūẓ prefers the Secular Democratic regime of *Dār al-Ḥalba* that provides freedom for its citizens to express their thoughts, their personal values and sexual inclinations, and to live according to the religion they prefer without hurting those who belong to other religions or considering them disbelievers (*kuffār*).

Al-Fārābī's *madīna jamāʿiyya*, can be the basis for a futuristic virtuous city (*madīna fāḍila*). The virtuous city of al-Fārābī may contain different virtuous religions that are all considered to be different imitations (or 'forms of life' using Wittgenstein's terminology) derived from the one true demonstrated philosophy. For this reason religion comes after philosophy.[1]

Islam in *Dār al-Ḥalba* differs from Islam in the homeland of Ibn Faṭṭūma. The former has not closed the door of independent judgment (*ijtihād*), unlike the latter form of Islam. Islam in *Dār al-Ḥalba* is dynamic and enlightened. The Islamic law (*sharīʿa*) in this land is open to changes to accommodate the new circumstances. The virtuous ruler in al-Fārābī's ideal city is able to change the *sharīʿa* if the new conditions in society necessitate such reforms in the laws.

[1] See al-Fārābī, *The Book of Letters*, in *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Muhammad Ali Khalidi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1; and al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1981, 131. See also, al-Fārābī, *The Political Regime*, 41; and al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 85-86.

The idea of duty or work as essential to one's happiness and goal in this life, which is a prelude to his/her ultimate happiness in the afterlife, is emphasized in the writings of al-Fārābī, but is also obvious in the teachings of the 'old man' (or 'guru') of *Dār al-Ghurūb*. Likewise, in the socialist regime of *Dār al-Amān*, work is of no less importance. Every individual in this land is trained, since childhood, for a job that suits his/her talents, and works accordingly for the benefit of all society. Yet, his/her work has no relation to one's happiness or satisfaction as in al-Fārābī's thought.

Maḥfūẓ's allusion to Sufism is shown in the special Arabic expressions such as '*mudarreb al-ḥā'erīn*' and '*jannat al-ghā'ebīn*'. Maḥfūẓ's attitude about this issue is clear; he is not interested in Sufi exaggerations (*shaṭaḥāt*). For him Sufism is a way of achieving knowledge and loving the Divine or the soul of existence (*rūḥ al-wūjūd*), without neglecting one's responsibilities toward family and society.

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رحلة ابن فطّومة إلى مدن الفارابي الجاهليّة

كلارا سروجي-شجراوي

مُلخَّص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقديم قراءة جديدة لرواية نجيب محفوظ رحلة ابن فطّومة (1983) تبيّن تشابها مع المنحى الفلسفيّ العامّ لأبي نصر الفارابي (950-870)، مؤسّس الفلسفة السّياسيّة في الإسلام، حين كتب عن المدينة الفاضلة. فالمتأمّل لكتب الفارابي السّياسيّة سيجد أنّها تحفل بوصف أشكال لمدن جاهليّة، كما يسمّيها، تتعارض في مبناها السّياسيّ والاجتماعيّ والفكريّ مع المدينة الفاضلة المثاليّة. تماما هذا هو حال ابن فطّومة في رواية محفوظ الذي يترك وطنه بحثا عن "دار الجبل" – المكان المثاليّ الذي يتوفّر فيه تحقُّق التناغم ما بين الإسلام، في صورته الصحيحة، وسعادة المواطن وخيره. كما أنّ مدينة الفارابي الفاضلة لا يمكنها أن تتحقّق على أرض الواقع هكذا تنتهي رحلة ابن فطّومة دون أن نعرف كقرّاء إن كان حلمه بالوصول إلى "دار الجبل" سيتحقّق أم سيبقى مجرّد أمنية خياليّة. كذلك لا نعرف إن كان سينجح في العودة إلى الوطن. في رحلة ابن فطّومة نشهد أشكالا مختلفة لأنظمة سياسية-اجتماعيّة لا تُرضي ابن فطّومة، بل تبقيه حائرا يعيش أزمة وجوديّة ودينيّة، فكلّ فعل جميل أو قبيح يُستهلّ باسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم.

إنّ التناغم الصوتيّ بين اسم الرّحّالة ابن بطّوطة، من القرن الرابع عشر الميلاديّ، وعنوان رواية محفوظ "رحلة ابن فطّومة" هو أمر واضح لكلّ مطّلع على التّراث. لكنّه جاء هنا بهدف ربط شكل الرّواية الجديد بالتراث العربيّ القديم كنوع من التحرّر من مقولة الغربيين بأنّ الرواية العربيّة الحديثة هي إنتاج غربيّ بامتياز. جاء زمن الأحداث في رواية محفوظ منتميا إلى العصر الوسيط الذي شهد ازدهارا في مجالات علميّة وفكريّة شتّى، لكنّه أنجب في الوقت ذاته أفكارا أو مذاهب دينيّة قد أحدثت حيرة وبلبلة في المجتمع. أمّا الأمكنة في الرواية فهي خياليّة لأنّها يمكن أن توجد كأنظمة سياسية-اجتماعيّة في أيّ عصر. تكشف الرّحلة لابن فطّومة أنّ حياة الإنسان الفرد ترتبط بشكل وثيق بالحياة السياسيّة العامّة وبالدّين كمنظومة فكريّة تبيّن عقليّة شعب ما. لذلك فإنّ أزمة ابن فطّومة تشبه أزمة فيلسوف العصر الوسيط الفارابي، لأنّها صورة مصغّرة عن أزمة مجتمع بأكمله.