

The Message of the Novel in Arab Unity: The Revolution's Impact on the Development of the Novel

Majallat al-Hilal, May 1958.

There is no doubt that I am pleased with the Arabic novel, on condition that it always be in classical Arabic, so that we need not attempt to translate it when we wish to carry it over to the other Arab countries with which we have begun to unite, and with which we are becoming intertwined in every respect.

As for the duty of the Egyptian or Arab writer, in the new sense and in the new terms, it is that, if he is able, he should travel the earth with his body, his mind, and his taste; and if the opportunity does not come to him, then let him at the very least read the output of as many peoples as possible.

As for the duty of governments, it is to open wide, to their fullest extent, the doors and windows of culture to their sons, and not to allow one or two languages to monopolize it. It suffices for me to say: I once met an English orientalist and asked him how many languages he commanded; he said, modestly, that he could read sixteen languages, and could speak English reasonably well.

The first duty of governments, then, is to spare no effort in organizing cultural relations, not only between themselves and their Arab sisters, but between themselves and every country, or at the very least the countries of the East, in Asia and Africa.

And there is no doubt whatsoever that the Revolution has had a great effect in developing the novel in a new way, linking it to the Arab goals toward which we are all directing ourselves with our hearts and our souls, hastening the precious steps by which the unity of the whole Arab world, near and far, is being confirmed.