

**The Arab World and Pragmatism  
(Ch. S. Peirce as example)**

**Boukhari HAMMANA**  
Université d'Oran

**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to study the position of Charles S. PEIRCE (1839-1914) in the actual Arab world and more particularly in Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria.

- The first part will be devoted to the analysis of the circumstances in which the actual Arab World, in search of a renewal of its structures and its modes of thought and action, was led to take an interest in Pragmatism. Moreover, the reasons which have limited this interest to only the psychological and pedagogical Sides of this Philosophy essentially represented by W. JAMES (1848- 1910) and J. DEWEY (1859-1952) will be equally looked at.
- The second part looks at the evolution of pragmatist thought in general and that of CH.S. PEIRCE in particular during the second half of the present Century (1930-1988). The Arab World has been undergoing important political, economic and social mutations, and the study will consequently determine the philosophical, scientific and political themes which found more interest among the Arab Intelligentsia (namely those related to the Peircean concepts of doubt, truth and practical effect).
- The third part tries to situate Peirce's thought with regard to the manifold philosophical, ideological and religious currents such as positivism, liberalism, socialism and fundamentalism for which the Arab scene has today become the common ground of challenge and controversy.



Finally the intervention will evaluate the possibilities of this philosophy in the future which seems more promising in the Arab World than some would think.

"Science without action is mania, action without science is utopia"

Abou-Hamid Al-Ghazali (12th Century) O SON



As paradoxical as it may seem, the forerunner of pragmatism, or rather pragmatism as he later on came to call it, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) has come to be known in the Arab World only half a century after his successors, namely William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952).

The Arabic philosophical essays that deal with pragmatism in general, date back only to the 1930's and do not exceed about ten. As to those universities of the Arab World where this philosophical trend is more or less present today, they are very scarce (1).

Such a state of affairs which is not necessarily typical of the Arab World seems much more inexplicable be it only regarding the increasing interest that the Arab World manifests, in the search process of its renewal particularly since World War II, towards America and her scientific and technological progress.

Is this to be interpreted as a clear case of the resistant nature of Arab thought, or at least its lack of interest for this philosophy ... as some have tried to believe or make it a belief?

Judging from the previous steps of this thinking and its current preoccupations, the answer can only be negative.

In fact, an analysis of the Arab thinking process along the lines of the fundamental thesis of pragmatism as Ch. S. Pierce himself put it (2), makes it possible to state without necessarily reducing this philosophy to the mere notion of effectiveness, that this Arab thought was, in its own way, and through more than one era of its long history, a pragmatic thought.

We shall not dwell too long on the history of this "Arab pragmatism". Suffice it here to mention two examples :

a. The first example comes from the pre-islamic thought:

Indeed, the nature of the desert itself that transformed them and their living ever changing and misleading mirages, ancient Arabs ended up, within this hostile environment, accepting as a truth only that which stems out of facts, and by doing so they gravitated thus around some kind of pragmatism which was for sure unavowed but which nonetheless shaped their vision of reality.



Brief and attached to the real facts to the point of leaning towards materialism (3), the ancient Arabs, so poetic as some of them were, constructed their odes as a faithful reflection of this hostile environment where only winds, traces of abandoned camps and tribal battles fed their muse and aroused their inspiration(4)

In spite of all the fears that some of their wise men expressed on the mysteries of Life and Death, coupled with their often so heartrending doubt have drifted them only so little from this pragmatic approach.

It is this very approach (which in fact constituted the source of their fierce resistance to Islam) which led more than a specialist of Arab Thought to conclude "to the little interest that ancient Arabs attributed to super-terrestrial values"(5). It has also led others to note "this practical concern in them, and contrary to the Athenians who were more tempted by specious rhetoric and likely to present the worse in the form of the better"(6).

B. The second example will be taken from the fusion of pre-Islamic Arab thought with Islam.

Indeed, and as early as the year 622, Islam as a religion of Tawhid (Unification) has become one of the major components of Arab Thought. This unification which represented the undissociable element between the Spiritual and the Temporal, Religion and the State, Faith and Action(7), has soon endowed this Thought with new modes of perception, reflexion and representation before it was assigned the heavy burden of taking over the culture and civilization of the people who were newly islamicized as well as that of the neighbouring people, some of which were rather important as was the Hellenic culture.

Needless to say here that the Arab Thought which was so confined then to the limits of its Arabian desert, has been able to take in this inextricable jumble of cultures, idioms and beliefs, and then take on the responsibility to raise high up the torch of human civilization and culture which were then threatened even at the doors of its last strongholds of Athens, Alexandria and Edessa by the Justinian (529), the Theophile (412) and the Zenon (489) as a result of the collapse of the Greek, the Roman, and the Persian Empires. Such an achievement was possible only thanks to this pragmatic approach the context of which reminds us singularly that of Peircian Thought.



Our aim here is not to evaluate the scope and the overall results of this effort. We shall simply point out that Arabo-muslim Thought must have had a whole strategy in order to neutralize hostilities towards its approach. These hostilities came from all sides, were and still remain numerous for her to achieve again this junction with pragmatism.

This represented the main aspect of the reformist effort achieved by the arabo-muslim thinkers of the golden ages of Arab culture (4th-7th centuries).

By applying the principle of Ijtihad, that is the personal (individual) thinking effort on the data emerging in the light of actual realities, they succeeded to preserve and conciliate the essential in religion and reason, and by the same token neutralize all dogmas.

Someone like Ghazali (d.1111) for instance, a pragmatist beforehand, who was so unfairly accused by others to be the source of the collapse of philosophy in the arabo-muslim world - an accusation which lasted over seven centuries - and who through some of his works, particularly his criterion science(8) and his scales of action(9) reminds us strangely of the criticism of "Pure reason" and the criticism of "Practical Reason" by E. Kant\* (1804). Did he not, in his search for certitude as he presents it to us in his Munquid(10) refuted the philosophical cognitions and negative theologies of his time? Was he not exposed, and this well before Ch. S. Peirce, to the conflicts with real doubt(11) to the point of becoming physically and psychologically crippled? Did he not reach, given the tenacity and objectivity of his method, a certain individual truth for sure, but in which faith was only the straightforward result of the living experience? Did he not, when he faced the idea of God(12), end up lapsing into a Sophism when he stated that despite its unprovable nature, the belief in God dictated only by the heart is more worthy of faith than objective belief?(13)

Is it not him he who wrote, by applying this pragmatic approach to morals, "that the truth is not advocated by religion and morals because it is good in itself ... and by the same token lying is not advocated because it is bad in itself, but because of the consequences, be they good or bad, that affect the doer and others ... of one or the other. So that if, in some constraining



circumstances the fact of telling the truth is bad for the community, the appeal to lying is allowed"(14).

Therefore, and by virtue of this vision of things and of the world, we do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that Arab thought could have elaborated a whole philosophy which probably would not have been the same as that of Pierce, but close to the general meaning that he confers to it.

If this did not take place, it is not at all because of a reluctance of one kind or another to pragmatism, but rather because of the socio-cultural conditions which prevailed later on within the arabo-muslim world and which came to be called "decline" by modern Arab historians.

Indeed, the growing and grumbling hostility of the dogmatics of all sorts-who under the effects of such decline since the 11th century became the main characters in the arabo-muslim scene- was such that none of the successors achieved or dared continue the work of the masters, let alone impose it. Even people like Ibn Roshd (Averroès, d.1198) with his genius "Ijtihad" or Ibn Khaldun (d.1406) with his pragmatic and reformist project who tried to achieve this goal, were in their turn disheartened.

It is only after more than six centuries that the Arab world woke up facing the shock of a Western modernity from which it was absent, shall we say at the expenses of the Arab world; a modernity whose military and scientific challenges nowadays assault this very world from all sides.

Out of the rubbles resulting from this decline and the destruction of the political structures (shakiness of the Khalifat under the burden of its internal disintegration and external threats), the destruction of the modes of thinking and acting, and the direct or indirect Western colonization of more than one of its lands which are only but examples, an idea and a project sprang up.

The idea was this very West which has suddenly become a source of admiration and repulsion. Its more and more precise image exemplifies hereafter for the Arabs, not only this colonization of which they are victims and which has consecrated their economic, political, social and cultural rupture with the middle ages(15). But the West is also and mainly this "other world" where reason is generative of efficient sciences, inventive of techniques, the tamer of nature and a source of knowledge. Synonymous of happiness and greatness..., this image which they believe they can



apprehend only to realize that it is already obsolete and which henceforth serves as a reference point for them to redefine themselves, to be born again and to react.

In his description of this West, the Egyptian RifaâT Tahtawi writes as early as 1826, after his return from Paris where he had just finished studies, "the West is freedom, reason, equality, law and order, comfort, cleanliness, and efficiency"(16). Similar statements will come from his contemporaries (Kheir-Eddine, the Tunisian (d.1889) and his followers, especially DjamaI-Eddine Afghani (d.1897) and his Egyptian disciple Muhammad Abduh (d.1905) whose efforts and audacity for reconciling Western modernity with Islam, remain unrivalled.

Their disciples and successors in the Arab world (Rachid Rédhâ) (Syria, d.1935), Taher ben Achour(Tunisia), Abdelhamid Ben Badis(Algeria, d. 1940); Chakib Arsalane (Lebanon, d. 1946); Allal Al-Fassi(Morocco, d. 1974), etc... will intensify and develop this effort further as early as the thirties in their political and cultural struggle against Western colonization. The project, on the other hand, stemmed from an overall reaction of the Arabo-Muslim world. It started at the end of the last century and was named "Nahda" (Renaissance). The chief objective of this reaction was to integrate again the Arabo-Muslim society within the chorus of modern nations by means of "Islah" (Reform) of all its structures and within the framework of the values of Islam as it was lived and explicated by the ancient great scholars (Salaf).

Nevertheless, this reformist project which gathered the totality of Arab intelligentsia as early as the 1920's, saw its major religious and modernist theses being radicalized by ones and the others.

As a matter of fact, the trend of Reformation was divided into two opposed sub-trends because of the rapid penetration of Western modernity, the colonial extortion and awkwardness of some orientalists towards the Arabo-Muslim patrimony.

The first sub-trend inaugurated as early as 1928 by the Muslim Brothers (Egypt) was called Integrist Fundamentalism(17).

The second, called Scientist Rationalism, was represented by some adepts after Spencer and Darwin (e.g., Salama Moussa, d.1958; Chebli Choumyyel and Ismaïl Madhar...); Descartes (e.g. Taha Hussein, d. 1973;



Youcef Karam, d. 1959; Ali Abderrazak, d. 1966); Marx (e.g. Youcef Derwiche, 1940; Boukourt, 1936; Khaled Bakdache, 1940, etc.).

While admitting that the potentialities of these two sub-trends, as well as those of Reformism continued since then to operate though unequally in the Arab world, we believe, however, and on the basis of its creed that "Islam is Faith and Culture, Koran and Sword, Horizon and Morals, Mode of life and Vision of the world"(18); and on the basis of its subsequent refusal to make the least concession to Western modernity, Integrist fundamentalism spare us for the moment to fix our attention on it.

Thus, is it not in Scientific Rationalism (all tendencies together) that one should endeavour to mark this pragmatic approach of contemporary Arab thought ?

More concerned by the how of this renewal than by the why of this decline which has only diverted the Arabs' attention from the chief aim, the rationalo-scientists most of whom educated in-between the two wars at the universities of London and Paris, suggested to the Arab World the pure, straightforward adoption of Western modernity ...

In addition to this, Arab Thought , being the main tool for this revival, still remains stagnant in its old-fashioned modes of knowledge which derive from the dark ages; and therefore trod on the heels of Western thought.

Everything, the past, the present and the future, culture, politics , economy, industry, morals, etc., must be accepted or rejected according to this thought.

From a Fundamentalo-Integrist stand-point, contrary to what one may think, everything should be conceived, adopted or rejected, according to Islam as it was actually practised in the Prophet's time ... We must note "en passant", that reference to such a founder society of Islam reminds us of the Athenian society of Pericles and what it represents for Western democrats.

Thus, what does Western modernity mean according to the occidentalo-rationalists? "It is freedom, education, the constitution, the factory and the overall and objective vision of the universe", answers Salama Moussa, that champion of occidentalism in the Arab world of the 1940's (19).

This rationalo-scientists' wave... that the champions of occidentalism have succeeded to produce for the first time in the history of contemporary Arab





world with its printing works (Egypt, 1822), its universities (Lebanon, 1860; Cairo, 1924; Syria, 1932: etc.), its academies (Syria, 1919), its literary and political magazines (Lebanon, 1876), its historians and Feminist movements (1920); its syndicates (1920), its theatres, its fine arts encyclopaedias, etc. reminds us of the Enlightenment in Europe.

It is within this context that the Arab world called on the European social sciences.

More than any other, social sciences given their object of study (Man), the relative easiness of their method, the 'universal' nature of their results and the identity of their producers (i.e. the Westerners) seemed to be according to this category of Arab intelligentsia, the best means to achieve this junction with modernity.

What is wrong with understanding oneself better in order to be born again and with educating oneself in order to achieve development?

It was only three decades later on that the advocates of occidentalism in the Arab world (and in the Third World), as they struggled for their political independence which was recovered especially throughout the 1960's, that they became aware of the enormous gaps which exist between these sciences at the level of concepts and results, and the reality of the Arab world (20).

In any case, it was only thanks to this wave of rationalo-scientists that some of the psychological and pedagogical works by W. James(21) and J. Dewey(22) paved their way into the Arab world.

Nevertheless, and as far as the major works by C. Peirce are concerned, it was only nearly half a century later, and by the combination of more than political and cultural factors, that his works, in their turn, paved their way into the Arab world.

Out of these factors we shall mention among other things :

1. The revolutionary wave which followed the Arab disaster in Palestine (1948), the movement of the "Free Officers" (Egypt, 1952) and the National Liberation War in Algeria (1954-1962) are but examples.
2. The growing hostility, particularly that of some of the formerly colonial powers which tried, under the cover of thwarting the progression of communism in the Arab world, to hamper politically and militarily (the



tripartite aggression against Egypt. 1956) Arab eagerness for freedom and esteem.

However, despite this atmosphere of conflict between the Arab world and a large part of the West which was joined by the U.S.A. (under the same cover) in the late 1950's, pragmatism still continued its way in the Arab world.

Evidence of such a state of affairs lies in the first work in Arabic (devoted to American philosophy) (\*), the translations in Arabic of Peirce's article : The Fixation of Belief (23), and those studies and translations into Arabic of the major works by W. James and by J. Dewey.

The Arab military defeat of June 1967 by Israel where the non-involvement of the U.S.A., according to the Arabs, remains to be proved, was far from putting an end to that pragmatic breakthrough in the Arab world. In fact, it only contributed to the acceleration of this process.

As a matter of fact, if some Fundamentalists still condemned to live underground found in this defeat which spared not a single aspect of Arab life, and in the heartbreaking re-look it provoked in the Arab intelligentsia, the opportunity to come to surface once more on the Arab scene and to lead an open and merciless struggle against the Arab regimes described as "ungodly" by Sayyed Kotb (1966) and his followers (the group of "Excommunication and Exile" and the group "The Survivors of Hell")(24), some rationalo-scientists have nonetheless taken advantage of such a situation.

Since the 1950's, and urged by the "Thaura" (Revolution) in order to prepare itself to political, military and social struggles, hence driven to relegate to secondary place their nonetheless important epistemological and cognitive tools, the Arab intelligentsia which by now was more aware of the presence of an increasing influence by the U.S.A. on the Arab World, instituted for the first time, and after more than two decades had passed, a deep critical analysis of their approach and of their previous philosophical and ideological choices.

Out of such an analysis, a non negligible group from that intelligentsia was somehow dissatisfied by the results of their former philosophical and ideological adherences and paid more and more attention to this American philosophy advocating pragmatism.



This attention increased steadily since the 70's. A proof of this being the flourishing philosophical and political literary works in the Arab world which appear with a touch of pragmatism.

However, what does contemporary Arab thought find in pragmatism and in pragmaticism in particular?

First of all, it finds in it "a logical method that accounts for meaning" (25), where words and ideas have meaning only through the final results (whether material or moral) (26), where faith, whatever its object may be, is but an establishment of a consequent rule of behaviour (27) where the idea is not an object of thought but a plan, an invitation to action; and where philosophy becomes experimental (28), not in the strict meaning of science (e.g. physics), but in the sense that the idea it conveys becomes a truth and not in abstract meditations or subjective sensory experience as it is the case with English philosophy, but in its exposure to public experience(29).

For the Arabs, so frequently seen by some as a people preoccupied in the first instance with the verb at the expense of action, "turning to signs rather than facts", and to symbols rather than things, the pragmatic thought represents through its new concept of signs (30), this new science so long sought for in which the word becomes the exact equivalent of the thing and where the idea becomes a strategy for action.

For the Arabs whose thought was once the promoter of universal culture and knowledge, and which is now given by some the cliché of Eschatologism, Obscurantism and attachment to the past, the Peircian thought by virtue of its conception of truth as the product of the interaction between the spiritual and the real between the individual and his environment, represents the best means to detach oneself from his classical processes in achieving knowledge which consisted up to now in the cogitations over truth instead of turning it into action.

Finally, for the Arabs who are now the first to denounce this gap which exists between their speech and their acts, the Peircian Thought, in particular, provides them with the right means to reduce that gap. This would be achieved through the conception of experience as pruned by this thought, not only as an objective attempt which can be translated to a great

extent into an action (31), but also as an earnest commitment to the truth (32).

In short, here is to the Arab's mind, a thought in which man is presented as a dynamic creature, facing a world he can and must assume not by means of an abstract thinking or a resignation to its constraints, but through a consistent and thought out action.

A thought where truth is the privilege of no institution, no individual, but which is democratically everybody's property in the sense that it stands out only through the diverse modes of action it produces on each and every one (33), and where it will consequently be recognized by all in the long run (34).

These are the reasons, among so many others, of the undoubtedly still heterogeneous, but nonetheless increasingly growing influence that the Peircian thought in particular and pragmatism in general exert nowadays on the Arab thought.

From the translation into Arabic - around the 1950's - of Peirce's article "The Fixation of Belief" and of his chief writings to the subsequent teaching of pragmatism and pramaticism in many Arab universities, Peirce's work is from then on omnipresent in the Arab World.

It would take long here to discuss in details this interest that the Arabs express for pragmatism in general and for Peirce's Thought in particular.

That is why we prefer to confine ourselves only to the philosophical and political areas where the influence of Peirce's thought exerts itself strongly. One finds this influence in the Egyptian Zaki Naguib Mahmoud in the first place. This forerunner of logical positivism in the Arab World who continually invited Arab thinking to spouse positivism for more than two decades (1950-1970) and for whom metaphysics is a myth and religion only a state of mind (35), defines the Peircian thought as the "philosophy of the future" (36).

As one of the first scholars in the Arab World to have devoted more than a book to American philosophy (37) Zaki N. Mahmoud has become as early as the 70's, more thoughtful towards pragmatism and the Arabo-Islamic cultural patrimony to which he nowadays devotes the rest of his life.

Summing up the prime importance of pragmatism for the Arab World, Zaki N. Mahmoud stresses that "many changes would occur in our Arab life, if



before pronouncing any word, any idea, we asked ourselves what action (be it moral or material) it might serve. It's by doing so, he goes on to say, that all meaningless talk, all abstract and sterile ideas would disappear from our cultural and social environments" (38).

The same concern underlies the work by Azmi Islam who regards the Peircian Thought as being first and foremost a thought of meaning, faith and action (39).

As he exposes in details the fundamentals of Peircian philosophy, notably its conception of meaning and faith and their mutual relationships, Azmi Islam ends up with a comparison between this belief and doubt.

"If the object of doubt and of faith is the same, he writes, their nature and their results are not. The real doubt (and not the artificial doubt as advocated by Descartes), he adds, is a source of idleness and ill-being while faith is generative of action and relief".

"Arab thought nowadays is in need of such a conception of truth, of faith and of meaning", he concludes (40).

In this effort to discover the Peircian thought one must give pride of place to the Doctoral thesis by the Syrian Hamed Khalil who devoted it to the logic of the founder of pragmatism (41).

Throughout this thesis, the novelty of Peircian logic seems to lie essentially "in his conception of induction whose function is no longer the discovery of general rules, but that of examining of the validity of hypotheses and the search for laws that stem from reality and experience; as well as in his abortive attempt to make of metaphysics a science".

To conclude, it is worth mentioning two other stands which though they are not as enthusiastic as those mentioned earlier regarding Peircian thought, they nevertheless see in it some positive aspects that the Arab thought is more in need of today.

The first stand is represented by the Egyptian Fouad Zakaria the forerunner of rationalism and scientism in the Arab World today. He sees in pragmatism as a whole a doctrine which is essentially geared towards action and which he thinks constitutes "the secret of American success" (42).

Nevertheless, this success exists, according to him, only in scattered phenomena ... and not in global or strategic situations. The American



human output, with regard to progress, is virtually nil in comparison to the efforts produced by each individual American ... and the bitter defeat of the U.S.A in their war in Vietnam, a defeat which is far too disproportional compared to the efficiency and the perfectness of the American war machine, are presented as examples (43).

However, and despite these grievances, F. Zakaria does not ultimately hesitate to advise all the countries wishing for renewal, and to the Arabs in particular who have close links with the U.S.A. and following the possibility that they may find themselves one day confronted with the same problems of development, to meditate thoroughly on the American "pragmatic" experience.

Moreover, in his recent book *The Arabs and the American Example*, F. Zakaria advises openly to the Arabs to "take as it is the American recipe if they want to reach quickly, as America did, the level of power and greatness"(44).

Much more critical than this is the stand of the Algerian Malek Bennabi (d. 1973), of the "Lebanese" Noumeyr El-Ani and the Egyptians Hani Soulimane and Yahya Houeidi.

On the basis of the principle that the great miracles in History have always been related to fundamental ideas (true and authentic), any pragmatic subjection of what is true to what is efficient is refuted by Malek Bennabi.

For this famous figure of contemporary islamism, "an authentic idea is not always an efficient one, and an efficient idea is not always authentic".

"The idea is born either as true or false. When it is true, it keeps its authenticity forever".

"On the other hand, it may lose its efficiency in the course of its history even if it is true."

"History proliferates with ideas that stem out wrong and which had their dreadful efficiency in a wide range of domains, and of true philosophical and scientific ideas whose efficiency has been proven much later on"(45).

Thus, for M. Bennabi, the danger which threatens the Muslim society and which may project it into a world stuffed with things but apathetic and lacking social dynamism, lies exactly in its tendency to substitute the thing for the idea and efficiency and usefulness for truth and authenticity (46).



For his part and in an article with a Marxist resonance (47), Noumeyr Al Ani exposes the major guide-lines of Peircian thought which he regards as "machiavellian", and points out that it ultimately represents only a mixture of Solipsism and Idealism in Berkley's sense, in the same way as its notion of Fallibilism (48) is nothing but a disguised agnosticism. Finally, while he recognizes to Peirce his contribution to the development of this new science of Semiotics (49), Noumeyr Al Ani concludes that "despite his earlier definition of the truth, a definition which was closer to objectivity, Peirce has failed to gather around it the remaining pioneers of pragmatism, and W. James in particular".

The article by Hani Soulimane (50) is by far less bitter. In this article which is an answer to that of one of his Egyptian colleagues, he notes that "pragmatism in general can be of no rescue to the Arabo-Islamic cultural patrimony because any pragmatic vision of Arab patrimony, and especially of its religious component, would mean the reconstituting of this component in an arbitrary way provided it responds to our present preoccupations".

As to Yahya Houeidi (Egypt), he believes as much as Z.N. Mahmoud (51) that, by virtue of its attitude which consists in adapting oneself to reality rather than changing reality, pragmatism stands at the other extreme of the spirit of any socialist philosophy (52).

That Peirce becomes subject to enthusiastic praise or to bitter criticism is not a main concern. What is important, however, is that he represents nowadays and for a substantial part of Arab intelligentsia, the philosopher who was able to break a number of dogmas which were up to now taken for granted by everybody, and to give experience a meaning that this intelligentsia feels is much closer to her than the one it is involved in nowadays.

Nevertheless, while such writings are indicative of the end of this strange indifference towards pragmatism as a whole and pragmaticism in particular which has been characteristic of the Arab World for many decades, they nevertheless represent only attitudes and not reconstructions.

Thus, if it is hard for the moment to know exactly what use would be made out of these writings, it is nevertheless possible to scrutinize the new horizon they announce for the Arab thought.



This horizon which becomes clearer and clearer especially since the 80's in favour of this new realistic and pragmatic environment which is since then taking over from the high-flown socialist revolutions (Egypt, Algeria, etc.) which promise all equalities and the flood of oil incomes which encourages all sorts of caprices.

The rest was taken care of by the consolidation, particularly since 1967, of the military and economic presence of the U.S.A. (whose likings for Israel, the sworn enemy of the Arabs are nobody's secret) in the Arab Machrek which has been transformed into a field of rivalry because of its strategic position, its oil resources and its high-flown centres for revolutionaries (Nasser's Egypt, The South Yemen, Syria, Libya, etc.) or its islamists (Iran, 1978).

Throughout the Arab World people are more aware than ever before of the limited success of its socialist revolutions. They are so concerned with the catching up of this ever increasing westernized and americanized modernity that it's high time now for pragmatism and liberalism.

Everywhere, the emphasis is on the urgency for the building up of a modern economy capable of answering Arab needs for the third millenium and the giving up of empty slogans in favour of efficiency and rationality.

In this respect, a former Algerian Minister of industry stresses that "It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white What matters is that he can catch mice". He adds, "a socialist or capitalist society does not progress under eqalitarism because, it is not synonymous to social equality ... Earn and consume more! that's what makes a population work and produce more than moral slogans do" (53).

Egypt had a clearer and more advanced attitude where a liberalism with a pragmatic resonance has come to surface once more as Saddate came to power (1970). His assassination (1982) has not succeeded in any way to stop the liberalised open door policy of "Infitah" which has since had its most determined supporters among the majority of the Egyptian intelligentsia and the Cairo media, especially the "Revue Assyassa Addawlya" (54) (Journal of International Politics).

When one recalls that both thought and culture in the Arab World today remain, as H. Djaït (55) puts it, dependent upon politics, it is easily understood why the holders of pragmatism among Arab intelligentsia





attach a particular interest nowadays to any sensible and objective improvement of Arab politics towards the U.S.A.(56).

When one also understands the substantial steps made by social sciences in general and philosophy in particular within many Arab countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, etc.), one can easily talk about the place pragmatic philosophy and pragmatism have taken in the Arab World today.

To define the scope of this place would mean to try to locate it in relation to the various philosophical trends (rationalo-scientists, fundamental-integrist, and ideologico-political) mentioned earlier and which are contesting the Arab scene today.

Out of these trends, only those whose influence is proven will be of interest to us.

Thus, if the fundamental-integrist trend and the rationalo-scientist trend gather almost all of the Arab intelligentsia around them today, and by so doing they impose themselves, though unequally, in the Arab scene, positivism and Marxism were not so popular, and it was even less so for sub-trends like the existentialist (A. Badawi, Zakaria Ibrahim and Souheil Idriss), the personalist (R. Habachi and Mohammed A. Lahbabi), the spiritualist (Othmane Amine, etc.).

Indeed, as it comes from a crystalised western society, positivism cannot expect to see its method make a breakthrough in the Arab World where Society and the State are setting themselves up (57).

Similar reasons were and still are the source of the failure of Marxism which despite its long lasting settlement in the Arab World has remained ignorant of (or indifferent to) its specificities with which it could not set itself up.

To return to the rationalo-scientist trend, one can say that the new generation which claims it today like the Hegliano-marxist (A. Laroui, H. Djaït), the positivo-logicist (Z.N. Mahmoud), the socialo-marxist (M. Amel, T. Tizini, S. Al-Azameh), the structuralo-islamist (Mohamed Arkoun, Mohamed Abed Al-Jabiri), the islamo-marxist (H. Mouroua, etc.) is more aware of the gap that separates social sciences ... in the Western World ... from Arab reality, and of the impact of the fundamental-integrists. This new generation seems, to the same extent as the present



reformist generation (Mohamed Al-Ghazali, S.R. El-Bouti, Youcef Al-Kardawi), and more especially its neo-reformist wing (H. Hanafi)(58), more anxious and in its own way, about a modernity that does not allow itself any repudiation (59).

As to the Fundamental-integrist trend, whose influence on Arab masses (that are subjected to economic, political, and cultural crises: masses which more than ever before equate the West in general and America in particular with materialism, egoism, and bad morals) is unquestionable today, it does not seem to represent a real threat to the reformist trend which has always managed to absorb because of its moderation all the radicalist trends ... that the Arab World has known throughout its long history.

... The remaining ideologico-political trends whose impact on Arab Thought is decisive, as it was mentioned earlier, boil down to two, we believe :

A. An Arabism taking over from Nasser's arabism and which now wants to be more realistic and more anxious about its economic strength (the Gulf States Cooperation Council, 1971), the Union of the Maghrebi Arab States (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, 1988), The Arab Cooperation Council (Egypt, North Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, 1989).

B. An economic and political liberalism at its early stages and which desperately keeps itself related to a socialism that now claims social justice rather than egalitarianism.

For Arab masses in general, and for a large part of Arab youth in particular which represent the inevitable addresses of the theses of these religious, philosophical, ideological and political trends which dispute the Arab scene today, they find themselves, by the end of the day and after more than a century away from this Arab Nahda, only too far from this "reviving" Islam, this promised modernity and this socialism promising of happiness.

There's no doubt this is one of the main reasons behind this growing interest that the Arabs show today for the Thought of the founder of Pragmatism and for those of his colleagues W. James and J. Dewey in particular.

The second generation of pragmatists. C.I. Lewis (1883-1964), Charles Morris (1901-1979), W.N. Quine (born in 1908), Charles Harles



Hartshorne (born in 1897), Charles Stevenson (born in 1908) P. Weiss (born in 1901), remains in as much as a part from the first generation - Josiah Royce (1855-1916), George H. Mead (1863-1931) - known a little in the Arab world.

One wonders if the new Arab intelligentsia which is the first to know that "faith for the Arab masses is a phenomenon which is as much popular as it is venerable" (60), will take advantage of a number of assets that pragmatism as a whole and pragmatism in particular offer, and of the union this thought has succeeded to make between philosophy, applied sciences and religion (61) is but an example, in order to be successful in its turn in realizing a union which thought it is of a different type, it remains as important as the first. The union between the Arabs who are more than ever anxious about their authenticity (Açala) and this modernity which becomes more and more rebellious and complex and of which they are nowadays and more than ever before so fond of. In any case, this appears to be the wish of the Arab majority.

However, there are some Western experts of contemporary Arab thought and society who see it otherwise. "Though Americanism, some may write, spreads in the Arab world and largely takes over from the West, it does not stand for this old people as a would be cultural substitution, but only as a useful means. ... a comfort" (62).

How will such a statement (whose author is the first to maintain that he is among the advocates of a given simplistic conception which claims that the mind, matter and comfort constitute the shares of the West whereas physical strength, the spiritual and discomfort would belong to the rest) find its way among the americano-liberalist wave which is howling nowadays not only in the Arab World but also deep inside the strongholds of socialism and Marxism? This Americanism and this liberalism are so much vilified verbally by some only for the sake of being equally stubbornly courted.

What the Arabs - whose growing wave of religiosity and protesting Islam is, we believe, only the manifestation of a revolt against their own decay and against all those who nowadays persist in maintaining them in this situation - have been seeking for more than a century is neither comfort nor useful means but a philosophy of life drawn from their own experience and



open to the reality of their century. A philosophy they hope to work out on the basis of science and faith, freedom and work, and whose substantial acquirements achieved so far by the Arab intelligentsia in fields like the study of the Arab cultural patrimony as well as political, philosophical, social ... and linguistic ... studies etc. represent only a first step.

This is the reason why the Arabs are interested today more than ever before in pragmatism in general and in the thought of its founder in particular, thought that they still consider to be that which contributed to make out of the U.S.A. what they are today.

Would this not be the reason, among many others, which encourages us to believe without too much risk for us to be proven wrong, that the future of pragmatism in general and of Peirce's thought in particular is more promising than some people think ?

Will the Arab thought be able to draw all the necessary conclusions concerning the set-backs of the other philosophical and ideological trends in the Arab World while preserving at the same time the main components of pragmatism (especially the religious component) so that it can adapt it better to Arab reality in the meantime while it works out its own philosophy ?

Only the future can tell !



## Notes

1. Pragmatism is now taught in Lebanon (1960), in Egypt (1970), in Syria (1976), in Algeria (1980), etc.
2. J.M. BALDWIN, The Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology (1902)
3. Jacques BERQUE : Les dix grandes odes arabes de l'anté-Islam, Lib. Sindbad, Paris, 1975 (Introduction).
4. Boukhari HAMMANA : "Le génie de la langue arabe", Revue des Sciences Sociales (Panorama), ed. Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, Algiers, 1980, n° 10, june-august.
5. I. GOLDZIHIER : "Le dogme et la loi de l'Islam", French trans. by Félix AREN, Lib. orientaliste, P. GEUTHNER, Paris, 1973, p.11.
6. W.M. WATT : Mohammed at Mecca, French Transl., by F. Dourveil, SNED, Algiers, 1977, p. 31.
7. The Koran, 61 : 3.
8. Abou Hamed AL-GHAZALI, Le critérium de la science, Lib. Al-Maâref, Cairo, 1961 (in Arabic).
9. A.H. AL-GHAZALI, Mizane Al Amal, Lib. Al-Joundi, (n.d.), Le Caire (in Arabic).
- \* See : Jean FERRARI : "Notes sur quelques références à la pensée arabo-musulmane dans la pensée d'E. Kant", pp. 38-46.
10. A.H. AL-GHAZALI, Al Munquid Mina-addalal (n.d.), Cairo (in Arabic).
11. Cf. Charles Sanders PEIRCE, Collected Papers (C.P.), ed. Hartshorne, Weiss and Burks, Harvard University Press (5, 372), (5, 265), (5, 397).
12. C.S. PIERCE : Collected Papers (C.P.), (6.483), (6.493).
13. A.H. AL-GHAZALI, Al Munquid, pp. 45-50, (in Arabic).
14. Zaki MOUBARAK, L'éthique chez Al-Ghazali, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Cairo, 1968, p. 93 (in Arabic).
15. Cf. A. LARAoui, L'idéologie arabe contemporaine, ed. Maspéro Paris, 1982, p. 29, et Mohammed ARKOUN, La pensée arabe, P.U.F., Paris, 1975, pp. 85-89.
16. Cf. M. ARKOUN, La Pensée Arabe, Q.S.J?, Paris 1975, pp. 95-98.



17. According to Mohammed ARKOUN, Fundamentalism is that trend which tends to rethink Islam starting from its foundations, while integrism would be the calamitous twitch on a past that has never existed anywhere. Cf. "L'Islam, morale et politique", UNESCO, 1987.
18. Cf. Anwar ABDELMALEK : La pensée arabe contemporaine, ed. Seuil, Paris, 1975, p. 70.
19. Salama MOUSSA : Réthorique moderne et langue arabe, (in Arabic), 4th edition, Cairo, 1964, pp. 29-67.
20. Boukhari HAMMANA : "Les sciences sociales et le Tiers-Monde. (le cas de l'Algérie), colloque international sur les "Sciences Sociales" aujourd'hui, Université d'Oran (Algeria), 1984, ed. OPU Algiers, 1986.
21. See W. JAMES's "The will to believe" translated in arabic by Mahmoud HOB-ALLAH (1958) and that of Mohammad Fethi CHENITI (1960)
22. See J. DEWEY's Logic : the theory of inquiry, translated by Zaki NAGUIB MAHMOUD (1960) and Reconstruction in Philosophy as well as The Quest of Certainty translated by Amine M. KENDIL and Ahmed Fouad AL-AHWANI (1960).
- \* Zaqui N. MAHMOUD: Life Story of Thinking in the New World (1956)
23. This translation was made in more than one arab country since 1960.
24. See G. KEPPEL, Le Prophète et le Pharaon, edit. Ladeouverte, Paris, 1985, p. 217.
25. Zaki NAGUIB MAHMOUD : D'un point de vue philosophique (in Arabic), Dar Achourouk, Beirut, 1979, p. 208.
26. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.402), (5.403), (5. 422).
27. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.397), (5.398), (5. 400).
28. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.411), (5.391).
29. Gérard DELEDALLE, La Philosophie Americaine, ed. L'âge d'homme, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1983, Introduction.
30. J. BERQUE, Les Arabes , ed. Sindbad, Paris, 1979, p. 167.
31. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.400), (5.411).
32. L. MARCUSE : La philosophie américaine (French Transl.), Danièle BOHIER. col. Idées, Paris, 1976, p. 73.
33. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.400).



34. L. MARCUSE , op.cit., p. 78.
35. Z.N. MAHMOUD : Le mythe de la métaphysique (in Arabic), Cairo, 1953, (in Arabic)
36. Z.N. MAHMOUD : Notre culture face au siècle (in Arabic), Lib. Achourouk, Beirut, 1979, p. 44.
37. Z.N. MAHMOUD : Life Story of Thinking in the New World (in Arabic), Lib. Anglo-egyptienne, Cairo, 1956.
38. Z.N. MAHMOUD : Notre culture, op.cit., p. 44.
39. Azmi ISLAM : Les tendances de la philosophie contemporaine (in Arabic), Koweit, 1980, p. 92.
40. See also Azmi ISLAM : La vraie logique selon Ch. S. PEIRCE, (in arabic), Rev. Héritage de l'humanité, Vol. 7, N° 2, Cairo, 1969. (in arabic)
41. Hamed KHALIL : La logique chez PEIRCE, unpublished Doctoral Thesis (in arabic), Cairo, 1977.
42. Fouad ZAKARIA : Discours à la raison arabe, (in arabic), Koweit, 1987, p. 138.
43. Ibid.
44. F. ZAKARIA : Les arabes et l'exemple américain, (in arabic), 1988.
45. M. BENNABI : Le problème des idées dans le Monde Musulman, ed. El-Bay'yinate, Algiers, 1990, p. 88.
46. Ibid.
47. Al-Ani NUMEYR : "A propos de la vérité dans la philosophie pragmatique (ou comment PEIRCE nie la vérité)", in Revue Attarik, (in arabic) n° 6, Beyrouth, pp.
48. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (5.948).
49. Charles S. PIERCE, C.P. (1.559), (2.229).
50. Hani SOULIMANE : in Revue "Contemporary Thought", (in arabic), n° 6 June, 1970, Cairo.
51. Zaki Naguib MAHMOUD : Notre culture, op. cit., p. 45.
52. Yahya HOUEIDI : "in Revue "Contemporary Thought", (in arabic), n° 6, June, 1965, Cairo.
53. El-Moudjahid (Daily newspaper), Algiers, October 14, 1985.
54. A Journal led since its publication by the former Egyptian State Minister to Foreign Affairs, Dr. BOUTROUS Ghali.



55. Hicham DJAIT : La personnalité et le devenir arabo-islamique, Paris, Seuil, 1974, pp. 111-115-291.
56. Boukhari HAMMANA : "La politique arabe des U.S.A." Conférence/débate, Oran, in the Daily El-Moudjahid, Algiers, August 1st, 1980.
57. A. LARAOUI : L'idéologie arabe contemporaine, pp. 136-137.
58. Hassan HANAFI : Revue "La gauche islamique", n° 1, Cairo, 1981
59. Louis GARDET : Les hommes de l'Islam, ed. Complex, Hachette, Paris, 1979, p. 351.
60. J. BERQUE : Les arabes, p. 109.
61. G. DELEDALLE : La philosophie américaine, Introduction.
62. J. BERQUE : Les Arabes, pp. 93-113-147.

