

NIETZSCHE & THE LITERATURE OF DEFIANCE: AN INTERVIEW WITH KHALID AL-MAALY

It is the first time that a publishing house intends to translate Nietzsche's entire works from German into Arabic. The specific cultural circumstances of our times, marked by a conflict between the Arab and the Western world, makes this act of translation not only a literary, but a cultural event as well.

How will the Arab world respond to the work of a philosopher and poet, who recalled "Zarathustra" for the sake of *deconstructing* the view of morality, that was introduced, once, by Zoroaster, thousands of years ago?

The video version of this interview will be part of a lecture-performance which Susanne Granzer, an actress from Vienna, and Arno Böhler, a philosopher at the University Vienna, will perform on stage in June 2007 at KosmosTheater in Vienna. The performance will question the "hits," one receives by getting in touch with and being touched by Nietzsche's texts.

(For more see: <http://www.univie.ac.at/performanz/pos2/>)

In 2001, Cologne publishing house *Kamel Verlag* began to have Nietzsche's works translated into Arabic. On 30 October 2006, Arno Böhler & Susanne Granzer (GRENZ-film Vienna) conducted an interview with the publisher Khalid Al-Maaly in order to gain insight into the process of the editing project.

Original interview in German—translation by Yunus Tuncel

Arno Böhler: You have established Kamel Publishers in Cologne, which has undertaken to translate German and French literature into Arabic. What is your intention in pursuing this?

Khalid Al-Maaly: First of all I would like to establish this: I am someone who loves to read. I am also a writer. And as an Arabic reader and writer I have soon found out that many works of the great thinkers of Europe have not been translated into Arabic and, if they have been, not from the original language. This is also the case with Nietzsche. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was, for a long time, the only book by Nietzsche that was translated into Arabic. This is really astonishing! And this translation of 1937, for example, was done from French. As it became clear to me, I began to translate and have translated those books that I myself have read and liked. Already early on Nietzsche counted as one of my favorite authors. Therefore it was obvious for me to translate his work into Arabic some day. Now this day has arrived.

And of course I see myself in my activity as a publisher also as a mediator of culture, as a translator of cultures that begin to touch, cross over into, and intertwine with one another in the act of translation.

Susanne Granzer: Thus aesthetic criteria are decisive for the choice of books that you translate?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes. The joy in a translation project is most decisive for me. Still today. A kind of pleasure, in the sense of Nietzsche's "joyful wisdom," is for me indispensable in my work. It increases even more when I hear that many people in the Arabic world, people from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Tunisia, Morocco and so on, share this joy with me, because they themselves are in a situation to be able to read, through my publishing activity, authors like Nietzsche in Arabic. My joy then is contagious and also turns into shared joy.

You see, my approach to publishing is of a literary and not of a pragmatic nature.

Arno Böhrer: What in Nietzsche's texts is it that gives joy to you?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Nietzsche belongs to those authors who have fascinated me from the beginning. Just like Baudelaire, Paul Celan, Cioran, Claudel, Adorno and so on. *They are all for me authors of defiance...*

Susanne Granzer: Of defiance? Against what?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Against the injustices of this world.

Arno Böhler: Your own life story is evidence of this defiance?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Possibly. I was born in Iraq, in a small village called Samaua. My parents are Bedouins who roamed around in the desert with sheep and goats. My family settled, for the first time, in 1967, when I was eleven years old. In 1964, when we were half nomadic and half settled, I went to school belatedly. When I learned how to read and write there, it became clear to me that I wanted to become a poet. I wanted to write. I began to read Baudelaire, but there were only awful Arabic translations. Later I also read Arabic authors; for example, the mystics. Finally I was so advanced as to be able to read them fluently. Since, at the beginning, reading them was extremely difficult for me. At home we had neither electricity nor chairs nor water nor light nor oil lamps.

The more books I read then, the more pressing was the desire kindled in me to see something of this other foreign world from which I read. I wanted to become someone else, be part of this other world, wanted to get to know new books, other books and to see, say and express things which I have not yet said in this way or could not either say so in Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

My mutiny was first directed against my family, as it is common with young people. But then I started to turn myself ever more against the state, against the ruling power in Iraq, against religion and the idea of nation.

My world of books finally became ever more the “true world” in which *I* lived. Whereas the world in which I “really” lived became ever more the “apparent world” for me, a sheer world of appearance from which I wanted to escape.

Arno Böhrer: Were you persecuted by the Baath Party at the time?

Khalid Al-Maaly: The situation in Iraq at the time of Saddam Hussein was comparable to the Nazi period in Germany. Whoever wanted to study, to have a job *had to* be a member of the Baath Party. It was a pressure, a social necessity in which I did not want to take part. From then on only escape remained for me as an option at the end, namely to leave the country. That, however, happened in this way not only to me but also to most Iraqi intellectuals and political activists and not only to them.

Susanne Granzer: How were those who were not part of the Baath Party specifically treated in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Whoever did not take part or whoever did not also support the Baath Party actively were simply excluded from Iraqi social life. But what should a writer do whose writings are not published?

And if even one remained silent, one was already under suspicion, because one was not involved with the Baath Party publicly. “Whoever is not with us is against us”—that was the logic of the Iraqi leadership at the time. Many made arrangements with the Baath Party in the course of time and adapted. Such people could then write something here and there. They then indeed wrote no eulogies for the regime and, as a result, did not become rich either, but they could at least write and survive. Human beings, as a fact, are simply human, all too human.

Then came the war against Iran, which changed many things in Iraq: the worldview of many people, the everyday life, and the family histories. The threat of punishment for the whole family was especially terrible when someone went astray, like I did. Since then, the family to whom that person belonged was responsible for everything that person did.

For example, my father was summoned almost monthly by the secret service of the Baath Party until his death in 1998. They demanded from him that he had to inform them about what happened to me after my escape. But, to be honest, I was not really politically active, as long as I did still live in Iraq. Because, at some time, I too had given up my active political resistance and devoted myself to subversive acts of resistance, like writing, reading, subversive dialogues and the act of translation.

Susanne Granzer: What did that mean for your father and for your family?

Khalid Al-Maaly: The Iraqi Secret Service wanted to know above all if my father and my sister received letters from me. I have 18 siblings. Some of them are engineers, others are in the army. None of them were promoted any longer after my escape. Their salaries were no longer raised since my escape from Iraq. And that was some twenty years long.

Along with the political reasons came the fact that I was a young dreamer; really a dreamer. I yearned for another life, another world. Therefore I had to leave the country too at that time. In order to protect my family, I carefully avoided contact with them after my escape. News and information about me could go to them only through indirect channels. As long as I was considered a traitor, every evidential material that my family was still in touch with me, would have put them in great danger. Because whoever applied for political asylum overseas was a traitor according to the laws of Iraq of that times.

Susanne Granzer: And how is it today?

Khalid Al-Maaly: When I wanted to escape from Iraq, my father and my family were understandably against it. Besides they had a fully different perception of life than I did. In the meantime they have been, however, proud of the fact that I had then escaped and established Kamel Publisher here in Germany, that I received awards, the Rolf Dieter Brinkmann Award for literature, 1988 Forder Award of the City of Cologne, and that the

Arabic Press quotes me often. Today everyone is proud of the fact that I created my path overseas.

Arno Böhler: What has changed for you since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime?

Khalid Al-Maaly: The situation had already changed drastically before the fall of Saddam Hussein. The regime of Baath Party became ever weaker so that they had no time any more to take care of cases like me and my family. After the first Gulf War, and also the Kuwait War, other members of my family also escaped from Iraq. One of my sisters escaped somehow to Saudi Arabia and now lives in the United States.

The big part of my family still lives in Iraq. In the meantime I have visited them many times, even in the desert where I come from. By the way, one of my sisters still lives in a tent today.

Arno Böhler: Where did you flee after you left Iraq?

Khalid Al-Maaly: First to Lebanon. That was 1979. Then to France. France was especially hard for me. I had to live on the street for two years and feed myself from the garbage. For two years that was my life. Even under these difficult circumstances reading and writing belonged to the most important survival practices for me. They were my first nutrition. Therefore, right from the beginning, I had to improve my French as fast as possible and thus started translating volumes of poetry with my dictionary. They are with me here until now. Gallimard's *Collection Poésie*, for example, is a book which I read again and again. This volume changed my understanding of language fundamentally.

To understand this, one has to know that in Arabic poetry the rhetorical moment of language governs the texts. A literary practice in which the propositional content of a text often gets lost through the senseless repetition of "beautiful" words out of pure rhetorical reasons. In Gallimard's *Collection Poésie*, on the other hand, not only empty words, but experiences were spoken about, without taking care of the taste of the masses. Poetry and

writing do not hanker after the assent of the masses. But this type of “writing” too must be learnt. In the Arabic realm it must still be learned first!

If language comes down to bare rhetoric, poetry can even become a reactionary instrument of suppression and an avoidance of reality. When even our Arabic poets can no longer see the reality, because they suppress it rather than reflect it, who else should see and criticize it? This blindness of many Arabic poets in the face of real relations prevents them from finding any public either. Since the Arabic readers too certainly want to hear something that has to do with their real situation. However many Arabic poets lose no words over this. Their poems are simply lacking relevance. Therefore usually only five thousand to ten thousand copies are published for a realm of three hundred million Arabs.

Arno Böhler: You led your path to France through Lebanon. How did you come to Germany after that?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Through many detours. One resulted from the other. One simply goes his way and suddenly one has arrived there where one is located.

I knew some people in Cologne and applied for a visa in Germany, which one could then easily obtain. After that I applied for asylum. The process took three years. I lived in a refuge shelter, had a bed; that was it. Besides, I started reading Paul Celan’s books at the City Bookstore at that time. First I believed he was French (he laughs). His name sounded French to me, like Paul Claudel. And then I began to read Nietzsche the first time in the original, in German. I already knew of Nietzsche from high school; at any rate from one awful translation. That whole time was difficult and rough, many times even very rough, almost inhuman. But there were also beautiful moments that I experienced then. Some friends, male and female, really took care of me, and indeed selflessly; because I had nothing really, what could they expect from me in return? This help came altogether from Germans. From then on I have been very grateful to many people in this country, really more than grateful.

I have learnt a lot here and hope also to have given something to Germany, not only to have received things. What I try is to mediate between two cultures, something that is possible for me; whether what I do is good or bad, I do not know.

Arno Böhler: And when did you start with your work as a publisher?

Khalid Al-Maaly: As I saw that many people, here in Germany, in France and in England, publish interesting books, the idea, the fantasy was born in me at some time to do the same. Through my translations I wanted to show that there was yet *another* world next to *this* world, the world of *literature*, of *text* and *poetry*. I wanted to make this *other* world accessible to the readers in the Arabic world as much as possible, to set them in defiance of injustice.

Publishing is for me an activity as if one exchanges books among friends, to recommend them mutually. “I read this book by Nietzsche. Can you also read it? It is very beautiful.” My publishing activity follows this principle of friendship. Translation is sending a message that is worth reading to a friend. That is it.

Susanne Granzer: Translation as act of friendship? As “hearty friendship” (Hölderlin)?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes. But in an unsentimental sense. Translating, publishing, that is also toilsome work. One may, for example, expect no thanks, no fruits. There are, on the one side, the bystanders who watch how one gets on and again and again tumbles and stumbles. Then there are the officials whose support one needs in order to realize the publication of the books. Then there are those who find what I do fantastic. But all of that really goes past me. Do you understand? Publishing is simply my work, and its fruits are the works that I edit. And only the works! I do this work for myself and for my readers. I must simply do what I do. Translating and publishing are my life. My thoughts, my life time go into this work and into my own poetry. That which I do here is simply *my* life’s work. Do you understand that?

Arno Böhler: Publishing, writing, translating—how do you bring all these activities under one heading?

Khalid Al-Maaly: There are activities that are simply beautiful. To publish a book is a beautiful work. To read books, to review, choose, and translate them, writing and composing poetry, to write an article for the German or the Arabic Presses, all of these are intellectually exacting activities that lie close to my heart.

As a publisher, there are but of course still quite other tasks to take care of: to make designs for book jackets, to write informational texts for books, to go to the printing press, to watch over the printing, to go to book fairs, etc.

You must know that book fairs resemble a bazaar in the Arabic world. One builds a stand by himself, prepares signs out of cardboard, and then waits for people to purchase them. That is for me the unpleasant, the rough part. It is not easy to cover the outstanding cost of the publication from the sale of difficult books, the cost for copyrights and also the money for one's survival. As a publisher I often come across like an agricultural worker who is also the "girl for everyone." I build a spring that delivers water to me in order to water my land and to harvest the fruits.

For the past two years I have owned an office in Iraq, and many people work there. But the present security situation makes working at the head of the office difficult. We have indeed created it, to find "Great Customers" in many big cities in Iraq, who pick up books from us in order to sell them in their regions. But these customers no longer reach Baghdad, neither in nor out, so that this sales route is no longer functioning and has come to a standstill.

We hope that the situation there improves. Then I could also ship out a part of my publication work in Germany and have it taken care of by my co-workers. But at this moment everything is vague, insecure, and difficult in Iraq.

But, what again and again encouraged me nevertheless is the fact that there is a great thirst for books in the Arabic world, like for those of Nietzsche. The last delivery of books to Iraq was sold right in the first week. We had to deliver more right away. I know about this thirst for books, because I myself was one of those thirsty readers, a dreamer. How does Nietzsche say it? “Only a fool! Only a poet!” (He laughs). For the search of books, for new books I myself once went from my village to the city, then to a capital and so on. I firmly believe that this source of hope and inspiration that I draw from reading books never dries up, also not for others.

Arno Böhler: Which Arabic public reads your books?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Unfortunately the level at the Arabic universities has become very bad and the climate overall more corrupt; even professors in an Arabic university, for instance in Egypt, often cannot afford to buy a book, so small are their salaries.

The libraries of Egyptian universities hardly purchase books any more. On the other hand, my books are regularly ordered by the universities of Tunisia, Morocco or Syria. There are also scattered individual readers who, as I said, are eager for books. And I make my books for them. If I see them waiting, impatiently, for new publications and how they are delighted that good books still come out, that makes me glad too. It is true. Everything moves slowly, needs time. But I am full of hope and have many encounters that have strengthened me in my hopes time and again. These readers are my “sisters” and “my brothers,” as Baudelaire says. They are the readers whom I want to reach. And I reach them too.

Arno Böhler: How do you assess the current relationship between Europe and the Arabic world?

Khalid Al-Maaly: At the moment no one wants to recognize that the removal of Saddam’s regime in Iraq is not succeeding. There are too many powers that do not really

want such a change; perhaps the neighbors of Iraq, Iran and Syria, but also other Arabic states. The region does not want this change. One sees that, for example, in the “Murder-TV” Al-Jazeera. There it is only a matter of not saying the truth three times a day, like what Max Frisch once said in relation to the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, where my wife and I write now and then (he laughs).

Arno Böhler: Your assessment of Al Jazeera does not come out kindly.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Al Jazeera is simply only a news channel for the production and spreading of hysteria. There are no discussions there, no critical background reporting. And right now this news channel is praised so highly in public, even in the West. In this one sees once again the European double-standard in an exemplary way. On the one side, the West sets its value in motion on the whole globe; on the other side, it accepts a news channel like Al-Jazeera, even when it observes no Western standards in its delivery of news. Even here in Germany it is not really easy for me to express myself publicly against the news channel Al-Jazeera.

Arno Böhler: Saying this, you mean that not only the neighboring countries around Iraq do not really want the democratization in Iraq, but Europe and the US do not want it decisively enough too?

Khalid Al-Maaly: No, I would not want to put it so simply. Because truly said, I do not know what the Americans really want in Iraq. I have again and again tried to find out what the US really wants from what the media circulates. But the conduct of the Americans is so dumb and contradictory that I have not yet succeeded in finding out what they want.

The consequences of this ambivalence for Iraq are simply devastating. I can only say what I saw with my own eyes, that the situation in today’s Iraq is simply chaotic. The daily murders are horrible. The fanaticization of the Moslem communities, the civil war amongst them, is terrible. Today we are not far from having a “religious state.” Recently,

for example, I read in an Arabic newspaper that no tomatoes and cucumbers should be sold in Iraq any longer, because they would represent sexual symbols. And even the goats were a danger, because their dicks were often visible and it is, therefore, better that they be covered and hidden.

The British were cleverer than the Americans; they studied, beforehand and in detail, the situation of the countries that they occupied.

But once more, I do not know what the Americans really want in Iraq at this moment. Who knows, perhaps they have their senses together and want this chaos? Perhaps they want Iraq as a showplace of civil wars, perhaps they want to prepare the ground for the fanatics in Iraq? Do you understand me? I simply do not know any more what they want.

Arno Böhrer: You are often in Iraq where you also have an office. While there, don't you have any anxiety about being threatened by the religious militants?

Khalid Al-Maaly: No, because until now the religious or the secret service in Iraq has not yet had time for people like me. I would like to use this time to publish many books as fast as possible. Besides Nietzsche I have also translated other authors into Arabic, who are even more incisive than Nietzsche in their critique of religion, including also radical critics of religion of Arabic descent, who were, in turn, inspired partly by Nietzsche's works.

Susanne Granzer: Who?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Here I think of, for example, the Saudi author Abdallah Al-Qassimi who, I believe, died in 1996 in Egypt. He uses Nietzsche's phrases to some extent and employs them against the Arabic and Islamic reality. His difference with Nietzsche lies in the fact that he himself was a preacher, a Wahabi, a religious preacher. And I would like to add yet another example. An Iraqi poet, who died in 1945. His name is Maruf Al-Rasafi and left a manuscript behind with the title, *The Mohammedan Personality*. It is

about research on the biography of Prophet Mohammed. Mohammed for him is an exciting and an intelligent personality. His manuscript ventures to discover the real person in the Prophet. No one in the Arabic world has ventured to publish his manuscript or a similar work.

Arno Böhler: You said you would like to translate only those authors who interest and appeal to you personally. What in Nietzsche has appealed to you?

Khalid Al-Maaly: I used him as my dynamite substitute.

Arno Böhler: But Nietzsche himself is dynamite.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes, but I use a dynamite-substitute, because I am myself dynamite of a certain strength. We all need Nietzsche's texts as literature of defiance against the injustice of this world, as dynamite against injustice. So, like one needs songs, which one can sing *communally* so do I use Nietzsche, in order to write communally with him against the injustice of the world. I use him for a communal concert against injustice. Out of defiance, as a reaction of defiance.

Arno Böhler: Nietzsche as author of defiance?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes. We must bring the youth in the Arabic world again to the point where they take their own situation seriously again, reflect and muster courage, not to oppress their real situation, but rather to perceive it. We must bring them to the point again where they come to terms with their own reality.

Arno Böhler: For you Nietzsche belongs to those who bring us out of our "otherworldly dreams" back to the earth and its realities?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes, exactly. For instance, recently we published Nietzsche's *Collected Poems* in Arabic according to the model of Gallimard's *Collection Poésie*. The

poems were received excellently in the Arabic world. With this volume of poetry we simply wanted to show that Nietzsche was a philosopher who could write poetry. The book is selling very well, even better than novels and philosophical prose.

Arno Böhler: In the meantime *Ecce Homo* was also published in Arabic by Kamel Verlag.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes. *Ecce Homo* was translated by Ali Mosbah and published by me in Arabic in 2002.

Arno Böhler: Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is now in line. The translation, from German for the first time, is being prepared right at the moment.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes. Ali Mosbah is ready with the translation. After that it goes further. I want to publish all the volumes by Nietzsche. But also other authors like Cioran, Baudelaire, etc.

Susanne Granzer: Why Cioran exactly? This incredible cry of hope of a pessimist?

Khalid Al-Maaly: E. M. Cioran is, for me, an author of defiance like Nietzsche. He wanted to write his master's thesis, or was it his doctoral dissertation, on the history of tears. A history of tears! What a grand idea!

Arno Böhler: Nietzsche himself expressed thoughts himself repeatedly as to what readers he desires.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Of course, Nietzsche is also read primarily by the intellectuals in the Arabic world. But his readers vary from country to country. There, where the educational system is still halfway in tact, somewhat like in Tunisia, there Nietzsche is already being taught in high schools, while such a humanistic foundation simply no longer exists in countries like Saudi Arabia, and in countries like Egypt, only very rudimentarily. If

Nietzsche's works are available to read in Arabic, then all Arabs from then on can read him, also those who can read only Arabic. Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* is now in the second edition. In the first edition, two thousand copies were sold; now the next two thousand copies are in line. I am satisfied with that; that is quite good.

Arno Böhrer: How are you financing this project?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Unfortunately I found no Arabic sponsors; that is a bitter experience for me. It boils down to the fact that the Arabic publishers hardly read their own books and the Arabic authors, as already mentioned, rather repress the reality than reflect upon it. From here on I am forced to realize my projects myself and to often finance them out of my own pocket. I am simply no good salesman, rather one of these terrible idealists (he laughs). Therefore I must learn anew every day how I can also earn my living out of my activities. Somehow that is already happening. I write as a free writer and am active as a journalist like my wife. Whatever comes at the end of the month altogether we both invest mostly right back in our publishing house. Here and there we also receive subsidies from the state. But for the four Nietzsche books, which I published in the meantime, I received only one state subsidy for one of them. *Ecce Homo*, for instance, was rejected.

However when I am convinced that a book should be translated and published, then I do it also without any state support. One must be ready to sacrifice something for his books. Not only time and trouble, but also money, when it is necessary. If I want my books to be affordable for people in Baghdad, then I must sell them under their cost price. Instead of \$5, I then sell them perhaps for \$2.50, because people don't have the money to pay more.

It comes down to the fact that even my translators are dependent on the honorarium, because they are usually not rich and also have to survive. I must also be able to pay them something, so that they can do their work after all. And even if these are not big amounts, they must still be raised by me. The whole would not function, if we did not support

ourselves financially in a reciprocal way also and meet half-way. For the edition of Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, we received €3,000 in total. The book has 1,200 pages, which must be translated and printed. Nevertheless the translator keeps working. The second volume has just now appeared.

Arno Böhler: Nietzsche, Musil, who else are you translating into Arabic at the moment?

Khalid Al-Maaly: It is my heart's desire to make Heinrich Heine's works accessible to the Arabic world. Unfortunately no one else, at least no one who could also support me financially with this plan apparently wants that. Also my proposal for support for my office in Baghdad was rejected. I publish five to six books in Arabic every year. Until now I have had more than 60 works of German literature translated and published, most of that without any subsidy. Would it not be a great idea, if it occurs, for example, to a Nietzsche society to bestow grants for the translation of Nietzsche's works into Arabic?

Arno Böhler: What experiences have you gone through as an Arab in your 27 years in Germany?

Khalid Al-Maaly: I live considerably in isolation. There are friends, but they all come from very different cultural backgrounds. I have already almost forgotten my life as an Arab. My friends are incidental neighbors, authors, artists, and journalists, very mixed in terms of their professions and their origins. They are Iranians, Turks, Greeks, all mixed topsy-turvy. In fact I live globally networked. My authors and translators are spread over the whole globe. They live in the US, Latin America, Australia; I have also Russian authors.

Arno Böhler: You said that you like literature that defies the injustices of the world.

Khalid Al-Maaly: Every great author or philosopher is a visionary. One sees that in Nietzsche in every step.

Arno Böhler: And what is his vision for you?

Khalid Al-Maaly: That is not so easy to say. Nietzsche attacks many things, in order to transform them. For me two questions are especially important and problematic: the religious and the national questions. In relation to both, Nietzsche has important things to say. And because there are always injustices in the world, philosophers and poets will always have something to say. A visionary for me is always a dreamer at the same time. Do you understand that? Visionaries dream and carry a hope in the world through that. I see myself also as a carrier of hope. A carrier of hope exists, in order to go on his path without expecting anything from the world. He goes on his path, forward, always further, sings a song, sings it further, develops a melody of his song, watches how the clouds pass by and so on, like a shepherd who watches his sheep. I know what I speak about. As a child, I was myself a shepherd of sheep and goats. A shepherd has time to dream. Sunken in his thoughts, he watches and guards over the herd of sheep and goats. Such childhood experiences remain with you. Do you understand me?

The poetic attitude fascinates me! Let's think, for instance, about Nietzsche, about his poetic language and the poetics of his works. He has mastered philosophy and poetry at the same time.

Arno Böhler: Could one say that he was the figure of an artist-philosopher *par excellence*?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes, but he was also a materialist, a human being of the senses and a critic of the philosophy of the beyond.

Susanne Granzer: Ali Mosbah, who indeed translates Nietzsche's works, told us in his interview that Nietzsche, for him, could become the visionary for the twenty-first century which Marx was for nineteenth and twentieth centuries, because he binds the category of the sense back on to the individual. How do you see that?

Khalid Al-Maaly: The Arabic communists always saw themselves as anti-Nietzsche. For them Nietzsche is a Nazi writer. But I see the real problem not in the fact that one covers Nietzsche with clichés or takes him even possibly in a reactionary way. The real problem lies in the fact that there are today massive forces in the Arabic world that do not think at all. They have no sort of independent thought at their disposal, but rather merely diffused religious ideas. I mean those people who demonstrate massively against the Pope or so, because there are cartoons in Denmark about suicide bombers. Thousands and thousands simply go demonstrate in this way, without thinking. They even die for it, excellent Moslems, without having thought something about it themselves.

Arno Böhler: Thoughtlessness?

Khalid Al-Maaly: Yes, no sort of *critical* thoughts, no *independent* thoughts; a thoughtless mass that can simply be brought to dance by their leaders, even if they send them to hell.

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In 1997 Susanne Granzer & Arno Boehler founded the Viennese art factory *GRENZ-film*. Realization of *Philosophy in Pictures* – 4 DVD-books, *Philosophie im Bild*, Passagen Press, Vienna 2005 and *Philosophy On Stage*, Lecture-Performances in Europa and the USA.

Title of DVD-books (German-English): *The Call* (with Avital Ronell); *Das Fremde* (engl. title: *Strangeness*, with Elisabeth von Samsonow); *In.Time* (with Robin Kelley); *Archivare des Sterbens* (engl. title: *Archives of Death*, with Hans-Dieter Bahr). Various Lecture-Performances – “Philosophy On Stage” – in Europe and the USA.