

Ces linguistes estiment que, en ce qui concerne la distinction entre consonnes sourdes et sonores, l'arménien, l'anatolien et le germanique se sont montrés, à l'époque préhistorique, plus stables que les autres langues indo-européennes. Mais ce qui échappe à l'attention de Gamkrelidze et Ivanov, c'est le fait que, à l'époque historique (où l'anatolien disparaît de très bonne heure), l'arménien et le germanique, en ce qui concerne la distinction des sourdes et sonores, sont beaucoup plus instables que les autres langues indo-européennes. Ce qui rend la "théorie glottale" suspecte, c'est que, si on l'admettait, on serait obligé d'arriver à la conclusion que l'histoire n'est pas une continuation de la préhistoire, qu'entre histoire et préhistoire il y a une rupture. D'après cette théorie, en ce qui concerne la distinction des sourdes et sonores, 1° les occlusives de l'arménien ont été stables à l'époque préhistorique, mais elles sont très instables dans les parlers arméniens d'aujourd'hui; 2° les occlusives du germanique ont été stables à l'époque préhistorique, mais elles sont instables dans les langues germaniques attestées à l'époque historique; 3° les occlusives du slave ont été instables à l'époque préhistorique, mais elles présentent une étonnante stabilité dans les centaines de parlers slaves d'aujourd'hui, et ainsi de suite. Pour plus de détails, voir Mańczak 1990.

Tenant compte de tous ces arguments, force est bien de constater que la thèse que l'habitat primitif des Indo-Européens se serait trouvé en Arménie, est invraisemblable.

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UNEMBELLISHED REALITY: A VIEW OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE THROUGH STORIES BY WALID AR-RUJAYYIB

Walid ar-Rujayyib is a young writer, born in Kuwait on January 1st 1954, in the traditional Kuwaiti family. He learned to appreciate art and beauty from early childhood. His grandfather used to recite the Koran to him, his mother and aunts used to sing beautiful, old Kuwaiti songs to him, and his father was a poet (he died in 1986. Since then Walid has been looking for his father's works. He intends to publish them sometime in the future). His uncle, Hammad ar-Rujayyib, now aged 70, brought dramatic art to Kuwait for the first time, during the 1940's. He is also the composer of numerous beautiful, old Kuwaiti songs. The young Walid took up the family interests: he learned to play the accordion, he painted, he wrote literary compositions, and he spent every free moment reading. When he was 18 he got interested in humanism, in philosophy and in writing stories. His first story, *Al-hadar*, was published in 1976 in the newspaper Al-Watan. He backed up his interests by constant study. He completed pedagogical studies in the U.S.A. where he obtained a Master's degree. Since returning to his country he worked as the specialist in social help at Kuwait University. He was the head of the Kuwait Literary Society. At present, he is the director of National Council for Arts and Letters.

He is the author of the following books: *Ta'luq nuqta tasqut... taq* (1983), *Irada al-ma'bud fi hal Abi Jasim zi ad-dahl al-mahdud* (1989), as well as a collection of stories published after the Gulf War in 1992: *Talqa fi sadri ash-shimal*. Furthermore, in 1989 he published a novel entitled *Badriya*.

In this article I analyse his first collection of 1983, entitled *Ta'luq nuqta tasqut...taq*. One is immediately struck, even from a casual reading, by the author's incisive descriptions and singular talent for observation, as well as his passion for writing about reality as it really is, without embellishment. At the same time his stories always make compelling reading, often having interesting characters and exciting themes and events. These themes usually revolve around typical problems found in everyday Arab life. The past, tradition and so forth, are not so significant in the stories, although new

changes do not always mean more cause for hope. Materialism has not changed society yet: there are individuals who endeavour to find their Arab identity in the modern world.

The first story, *Tawasul*, is about childhood, and the way it forms our view of "life's next phase". Childhood is seen as being difficult for everybody, but that also it awakens our consciousness of the real world. The author begins the first part in his characteristic style whereby every constituent part of a given story is fully contained: a picture of playing children who are busy observing the world in their own way. Childhood has no responsibilities: the children's world consists solely of their toys and games. The next part shows us two grown-ups who are still young at heart. Their thoughts return to sandy beaches and play, but at the same time they have become conscious of their identity in a new environment: the real world. The cruel realities of modern life – such as an absent father who abandons Abdullah, and his mother, in early childhood, allegedly to buy him the "legendary red bicycle", are somewhat lessened by the growing friendship between the two children. Soon they search for a common denominator that would bring them together, despite all their differences. Abdullah recalls the day when he summoned up the courage to bring a dog into the house, which then made him, in 'Alija's eyes, somebody worthy of her friendship.

The story *Al-fursa al-ula...ahira* is about a hero whose life is totally dominated by the hardship and evil of his poorly paid work. The oppressive conditions far exceed the limits of endurance of even the toughest workers. The misery and oppressiveness of the work is so overpowering and so far removed from reality, that normal human affairs merely become a figment of his imagination. There is an undoubtedly sarcastic side to the story, as the hero works in a pornographic cinema, endlessly cleaning it up, just to make enough money to support himself. Then, in a critical moment, he realizes the irony of the fact that he has never seen a naked woman. He reminds himself that having a wife/woman is an everyday human condition which could be his also. He ends up spending some of his hard earned money to see the films in the cinema. He has no chance of changing jobs. He can't allow himself a peek at one of the pornographic films and see a naked woman for the first time. Whenever one of the pornographic films is being screened, he is far too exhausted to stay awake physically during the performance. The cruel lot that life has meted out to him leaves him with no other alternative way out of leaving.

The story *Nujum aqall... nujum akthar* astounds the reader by its concise form. It comprises of three parts, each one consisting of dialogues between two army officers of differing ranks. The middle part is characterised by terse speech, full of insinuations which the lower ranked officer uses when addressing his fiancée. The story could well be a portrait of the author himself

taken from obvious real life situations, which he must be only too familiar with of course – professional work affecting his private life, the illusion of justice and kindness, the fear and the inability to defend himself in front of officers of higher rank. Influence and status alone is powerful enough to dictate other people's lives.

The story entitled *Wa'l-insan la yasmun* has a similar theme to it: it concerns a man who is in danger of losing his worthless job. His health is deteriorating and, in addition, he is constantly weighed down by his demanding wife. Moreover, he becomes increasingly depressed at the derision he receives from his close friend. The theme of work constantly repeats itself as if in a film frame – in this case the work is selling newspapers on the street. One can make an analogy with a musical chorus line, which is constantly repeated in a piece of music, and the hero's internal struggle with himself, which comes out as monologue. The story sends a very gloomy message about everyday human situations: possibly the author wishes to emphasize that the only way to accurately describe them is to do so without embellishment and without recourse to euphemisms.

Al-lu'ba is written in a very open-ended, ambiguous way: the reader is left to form his own conclusions about the story, which involves criminal action. For example, we don't know whether the two antagonists are really genuinely fighting with each other or just playing: the reader must decide for himself. The plot unfolds slowly, comprising of increasingly more intense attacks and counter-attacks. The culminating point of the story suggests that the two antagonists are the brothers in fact.

Ma zala al-jihaz yadur is another composition of fully contained sections: each dialogue represents the next stage in the action. It concerns married life and courtship and is written as an integral whole. The husband falls into a jealous rage on discovering that his wife has been unfaithful. Finally, his hatred extends to the tape-recorder itself, the object which provided the proof of his wife's betrayal.

Most of the action in *Ad-dariba* occurs in the dialogue. Again, the work is written in integral sections and again the central theme relates to life without adequate means of support as a source of further complications. A happy family, in particular a marriage, undergoes a crisis of separation as a result of the impossibility of being free to express their true feelings. The hero-mother's hidden drama is that she does everything she can to avoid hurting the feelings of her two sons and single daughter in the face of the threat posed by the two male lodgers, she has to keep in order to pay the rent. Out of desperation, her husband Mahmud, an assistant surgeon, takes to secretly administering sleeping pills to the children, so he can be free to make love to his wife. The whole situation is utterly degrading. Walid's pessimism is only too apparent in this case. Surely this is confirmation of the author's passionate beliefs: he

could not have written such a disturbing work, and in such vivid detail, in any other case.

In contrast to many of the previous stories, the story "Al-hadar" consists of disconnected parts: each part having no relation to any other. The whole action is set in a café. Each separate part concentrates on the dialogues by every separate table. The reader finds out about Salih, who earned his wealth abroad, and to whom all doors are opened, although not always without some difficulty. On tying the conjugal knot, he takes on family responsibilities. Although his background is subject to insinuations from certain family members, he finds his place in society thanks to his continuously increasing wealth. The end of the story comes when everybody in the cafe hears the call to the mosque. At that instant the difference between a good man or bad man, a rich one or a poor one, all becomes insignificant.

Thumma yuqta ba'daha is of a totally different nature to the previous stories we have considered. It does not concern any particular deep social issues. It's all about saving the life of a dog called Sanqur. The action is rather straight forward, so it's hardly surprising that the author concentrates on the typical canine escapades that Sanqur gets himself into whenever he runs away: a frequent occurrence. What strikes the reader uppermost is the trouble and care the owner takes in looking after Sanqur. One can say "effort binds them together". The narrative is neither based in favour of the owner nor of the dog, which is the charm of it. Moreover, it is very realistically written.

Man afragh qa 'al-jasad al-mahruq min al-milh? relates the story of the mysterious death of one of the factory workers, who happens to be the best friend of the hero of the story, who shares the same fate-unbearably hard and cruel labour, which turns into an uncontrollable obsession for the hero, work - from dawn till dusk, abysmally poorly paid, exploitative and leaving no opportunity for changing it - and ultimately dangerous to the extent of loss of life. His compartmental style allows him to achieve moderation. This is necessary to ensure that the reader's attention is concentrated on the drama itself and is not diverted away by the more grizzly, but irrelevant, details of the story. One of the critical scenes is when the hero confronts the director and where many of the threads of the later plots are first introduced. Many of the parts are similar to each other in that the same expressions and phrases are used again and again. The story can be interpreted in various ways, is full of insinuations, and focusses one's attention on symbolism. It is through this concise form that the author manages simultaneously to write expressively about the drama and tragedy of the story, as well as describes each successive phase in the life of the main character. The hero comes to identify his life, and that of his rebellious and ill-fated friend, to that of a simple earthworm aimlessly worming his way along the ground. To say that: "man is a worm" is an insinuation that attempts to underline the author's sense of pessimism.

Walid spares nothing and nobody in his story: neither the hero, nor his aims, nor the cruel director, not even nature and ultimately not even life itself. Everything is presented in vivid and painful details. Nothing is left out. Pessimism pervades throughout, but for the possible exception of human psyche which is a witness to everything. It is appealed to see, to endure...or maybe even die.

Burgha is written as a monologue and tells of a beautiful woman whose husband does not take proper care of her. Just as in many other stories the general speech is sneering, mocking and cruel. The women in Walid's stories are just the same as everything else in the surroundings, cruel world: incapable of understanding, ruthless and demanding. Meanwhile the men are seen as being helpless, by virtue of the mercilessly oppressive work they do. They are seen as being mere instruments of fate, a fate they no longer challenge.

The two stories entitled *Ta'luq nuqta* and *Tasqut...taq* are in some senses complementary. The first of these describes an illegal, nocturnal attempted voyage to Kuwait - in the eyes of the central characters it's a magical land where all their dreams of a wealthy life will come true. The heroes of the story are the immigrants-to-be passengers on the ship. The focus of attention falls on two of them: two friends, Mustafa and Hussain. Mustafa, although worried about the son and daughter he has left behind in order to return to them after having acquired wealth abroad, is well suited to the illegal voyage. However, as the dialogue shows, he is not exactly sure what he has got himself into, even though he wanted this chance more than anything else. His gloomy and sad thoughts create a singular atmosphere of sadness. The conclusion of the story is full of surprises and tension at the successful and safe landing at the bank.

Tasqut...taq is a sequel to *Ta'luq nuqta* and follows Mustafa's adventures after his "salvation". It is divided into two parts, the first takes place in a worker's hostel, where Mustafa is in hiding until he obtains his visa, for which he has paid an exorbitant amount of money. His hopes rise and fall while waiting: he gave away his money without any guarantees. After several weeks he breaks down and in his despair he runs away into the street. The mood is ambiguous. Violence and theft, and the consequent arrest, are left as possible alternatives. In his desolation Mustafa resigns himself to a future with no visa, that condemns him to degrading work which brings him no money in pocket, neither does it guarantee him a chance to go back home to his beloved children.

What is striking in Walid ar-Rujayyib's stories is his unique and penetrating power of description. The author is an accurate recorder of all the possible social dilemmas that surround him. He never embroiders the truth. Walid ar-Rujayyib avoids the temptation of leaving the reader with a solution to the dilemmas he addresses. He portrays man as being powerless when confronted with his own psyche, his surroundings and his uncompromising

living conditions. The central characters of his stories are used as a means of presenting social issues. He identifies himself with those most vulnerable, people who cannot face the problems and pressures set before them. Through his passionate conviction Walid ar-Rujayyib portrays the truth and harsh realities of life.

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VARDANES CONTRA GOTARZES II. - EINIGE ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZUR
GESCHICHTE DES PARTHERREICHES CA. 40-51 N. CHR.

In den ersten Dezennien des 1. Jhs. n. Chr. erfuhr das arsakidische Großreich tiefgreifende Veränderungen. Die ältere dynastische Linie der Arsakiden war in Parthien anscheinend ausgestorben, ihre Vertreter lebten freilich noch in Rom. Einer von ihnen, Vonones, konnte sich kurzfristig als Herrscher Parthiens durchsetzen. Aus dem Ringen um den parthischen Thron ging schließlich Artabanos II. als Sieger hervor, ein Politiker von hohen Graden. Im ganzen bezeichnete seine lange Herrschaft (ca. 11/12 - 40 n. Chr.) eine erfolgreiche Zeit für das Partherreich, gleichwohl kamen - besonders am Ende seiner Regierungszeit - manche Krisentendenzen zum Tragen. Nach Artabanos' II. Tode war kein legitimer Nachfolger vorhanden, der effektiv die Regierungsgewalt hätte ausüben können. So wuchs sich die Nachfolgefrage zu einer schweren Krise in Parthien aus. Ein Kampf um die Herrschaft im Imperium Parthicum sollte sich nun mit aller Schärfe entfalten. In den Wirbel der Ereignisse gerieten verschiedene parthische Gruppierungen, die um die Macht kämpften, dabei sollten zwei Protagonisten auf der politischen Bühne dominieren, Vardanes und Gotarzes (II.). Vardanes, eine glänzende Gestalt jener Tage, wird bei dem sonst pragmatischen Tacitus in den Maßstäben eines sagenhaften Helden beschrieben. Ein anderer bedeutender Artabanosnachfolger, dessen Wege sich häufig mit denen des Vardanes kreuzten, war Gotarzes II. Vorläufig konnte er an die Macht gelangen, schließlich unterlag er aber Vologases I. Diese Auseinandersetzungen, ihr Charakter sowie Auswirkungen, sind nur im Rahmen weiterer Perspektiven einzuordnen. Die Polarisierungen zwischen bestimmten parthischen Gruppenbildungen in bezug auf ihre Herrschaftsansprüche veranschaulichen die Vielzahl von Gegensätzen und Konfliktebenen, welche Parthien dieser Zeit durchzogen und für uns nur teilweise nachvollziehbar sind.

Zwar wurde die Epoche nach dem Tod des Artabanos II. in einigen Teilstudien¹, sowie größeren Synthesen der parthischen Geschichte untersucht², doch lag der Schwerpunkt der bisherigen Forschungen in der Analyse des rein politischen Handelns und der parthischen Beziehungen zu Rom. Ursachen und bestimmende Faktoren der internen Kräftespiele in Parthien unter Artabanos II. und seinen Erben waren nur sporadisch Gegenstand intensiverer Forschung gewesen. Einige Aspekte dieser Vorgänge sind bis jetzt vor allem von G. A. Košelenko und E. Dąbrowa herausgestellt worden. Laut G. A. Košelenko seien zwei Gruppierungen innerhalb der parthischen Führungsschicht für das Kräftespiel der zweiten Hälfte des 1. Jhs. v. Chr. und der ersten Hälfte des 1. Jhs. n. Chr. im Partherreich ausschlaggebend gewesen: Einerseits die Bevölkerung der griechischen und babylonischen Städte Mesopotamiens sowie die

¹Kahrstedt 1950, 24ff.; Dąbrowa 1983, 118ff.; Dąbrowa 1989, 318ff.; Schottky 1991, 87ff.

²Debevoise 1938, 166ff.; Bivar 1983, 75ff.; Wolski 1993, 141ff.