

American University in Cairo

## AUC Knowledge Fountain

---

Archived Theses and Dissertations

---

6-1-1996

### Status and characteristics of the Nubian short story in Egyptian literature: Layali Al-Misk Al-Atika by Hadjdjadj Hasan Uddul and Arus Al-Nil by Yahya Mukhtar

Muhammad Helmi

*The American University in Cairo AUC*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds)



Part of the [Arabic Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Arabic Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

##### APA Citation

Helmi, M. (1996). *Status and characteristics of the Nubian short story in Egyptian literature: Layali Al-Misk Al-Atika by Hadjdjadj Hasan Uddul and Arus Al-Nil by Yahya Mukhtar* [Thesis, the American University in Cairo]. AUC Knowledge Fountain.

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds/1187](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds/1187)

##### MLA Citation

Helmi, Muhammad. *Status and characteristics of the Nubian short story in Egyptian literature: Layali Al-Misk Al-Atika by Hadjdjadj Hasan Uddul and Arus Al-Nil by Yahya Mukhtar*. 1996. American University in Cairo, Thesis. AUC Knowledge Fountain.

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds/1187](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds/1187)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by AUC Knowledge Fountain. It has been accepted for inclusion in Archived Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of AUC Knowledge Fountain. For more information, please contact [fountadmin@aucegypt.edu](mailto:fountadmin@aucegypt.edu).



STATUS & CHARACTERISTICS  
OF THE NUBIAN SHORT  
STORY IN EGYPTIAN  
LITERATURE:

MUHAMMAD HELMI

1996



thesis  
1996/1223

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC STUDIES

SK

STATUS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NUBIAN SHORT STORY  
IN EGYPTIAN LITERATURE:  
*LAYALI AL-MISK AL-ATIKA* BY HADJDJADJ HASAN UDDUL  
AND *ARUS AL-NIL* BY YAHYA MUKHTAR

MUHAMMAD HELMI

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
ARABIC STUDIES

JUNE 1996



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

LIBRARY

1223

Theses

Declaration to be signed by the author:

NAME. Muhammad Helmi Mahmud  
TITLE OF THESIS. STATUS and characteristics of the  
Nubian short story in Egyptian literature  
DEPARTMENT [REDACTED] YEAR. 1996 [Library no. ....]

Please sign and date ONE of the following paragraphs:

1. The thesis may be consulted in the Library and photocopied.

Signed.....Date.....

OR

2. The thesis may be consulted in the Library, but may not be photocopied. The restriction on photocopying will cease two years after the date below, unless I apply for, and am granted, its renewal.\*

Signed. M. Helmi.....Date. June 1996.

OR

3. The thesis may neither be consulted nor photocopied without written permission from me, or from the appropriate Head of Department if I cannot be contacted. This restriction will cease three years after the date below, unless I apply for, and am granted, its renewal.\*

Signed.....Date.....

\* Application for renewal of restrictions will be considered by the Librarian, the appropriate Head of Department and the Chairman of the Academic Board or his nominee.



1223

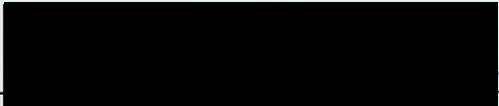
THIS THESIS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

BY

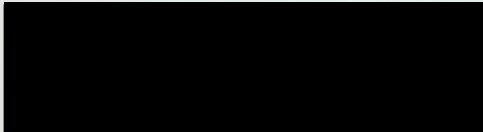
*MUHAMMAD HELMI*

HAS BEEN APPROVED


JUNE 1996



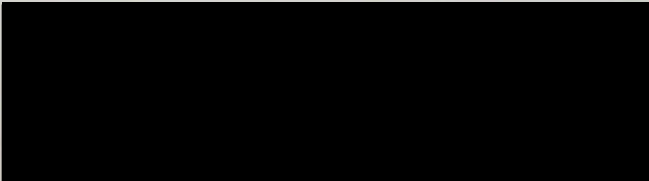
DR. HAMDI EL-SAKKOUT  
CHAIRMAN, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. MAHMOUD EL-RABIE  
READER, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. MOHAMED BIRAIRI  
READER, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. CLAUDE AUDEBERT  
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC STUDIES



STATUS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NUBIAN SHORT STORY

IN EGYPTIAN LITERATURE:

LAYĀLĪ AL-MISK AL-<sup>c</sup>ATĪKA BY ḤADJDJĀDJ ḤASAN UDDŪL

AND <sup>c</sup>ARŪS AL-NĪL BY YAḤYĀ MUKHTĀR



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: <i>Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka</i>	19
<i>al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr</i>	19
<i>Adīlā yā djaddatī</i>	33
<i>Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka</i>	44
<i>Zaynab Ubūrtī</i>	54
CHAPTER II: <i><sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl</i>	68
<i><sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl</i>	68
<i>Wākī<sup>c</sup>a</i>	82
<i>al-Ṭard</i>	93
<i>Ḥikāya li-al-nisyān</i>	104
CHAPTER III: A comparison between the two collections: The characteristics and status of the Nubian short story	119
CONCLUSION	141
APPENDIX	144
BIBLIOGRAPHY	146



#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Hamdi al-Sakkut, for all the help and assistance he has provided me not only on my thesis but all along the years of my graduate program as well. I would also like to thank Dr. Mahmoud al-Rabi<sup>c</sup>i and Dr. Muhammad Brairi for their continued support and encouragement throughout my graduate program and as readers of my thesis.

Thanks are due to the Nubian writers Yahya Mukhtar and Haggag Uddul, who never spared any chance to help me and fill out my knowledge gaps about Nubia. I would also like to thank the two Nubian writers Idris Ali and Hasan Nur for providing me with information needed for my thesis.

Thanks are also due to Mr. James Ward for the time he spent editing my thesis. I would also like to express my appreciation to the firm I work for, KPMG Peat Marwick, particularly Dr. Darwin Johnson, Ms. Carol Swan and Mr. Richard Clayton for allowing me the time to attend my courses and for their great personal enthusiasm.

To my wife, Anita Keizers, I am grateful for the continued love, patience and support. Without her, this thesis might have stayed as a dream.



These two collections of Hebrew short stories are  
by the author of the first collection, and the second  
by the author of the second collection. The first  
collection is by the author of the first collection,  
and the second collection is by the author of the  
second collection. The first collection is by the  
author of the first collection, and the second  
collection is by the author of the second collection.

From the point of view of the two collections represent  
a new trend in Hebrew literature. The first trend  
is the trend of the first collection, and the second  
trend is the trend of the second collection. The first  
trend is the trend of the first collection, and the  
second trend is the trend of the second collection.  
The first trend is the trend of the first collection,  
and the second trend is the trend of the second collection.

## INTRODUCTION

Of eight collections of Hebrew short stories, two collections  
were selected to be included in the present thesis. The first  
collection is by the author of the first collection,  
and the second collection is by the author of the second  
collection. The first collection is by the author of  
the first collection, and the second collection is by  
the author of the second collection.

The collection of Hebrew short stories is mentioned first  
because it is the first collection of Hebrew short stories  
to be published in the present century.



This thesis examines two Nubian short story collections: *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* by Ḥadjdjādī Uddūl<sup>1</sup> and *Arūs al-nīl* by Yaḥyā Mukhtār, and identifies the elements which characterize the Nubian short story. The thesis will also discuss the status of Nubian short narrative fiction in the wider context of contemporary Egyptian short narrative.

From the thesis' point of view, the two collections represent a new trend in Egyptian fiction in general. The term 'trend' is used in the present thesis in the sense that these novels and short stories have brought into Egyptian fiction new content that is pertinent to a particular region in Egypt. This trend draws on the region of Nubia, with its historical, cultural and social composition, and depends upon Nubia for its setting. These stories were nevertheless written in Arabic not in Nubian.

Of eight collections of Nubian short stories, two collections were selected to be examined by the present thesis. The first collection is *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*, by Ḥadjdjādī Ḥasan Uddūl, and the second collection is *Arūs al-nīl* by Yaḥyā Mukhtār. These two collections in particular were selected for the thesis because they best represent the Nubian short story.

---

<sup>1</sup> The collection of *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* is mentioned first because it is published two years before the collection of *Arūs al-nīl*.



The two collections won *DJā'zat al-Dawla al-Tashdjī<sup>c</sup>iyya*, (the State Incentive Prize) of 1990 and 1993 respectively, and have pioneered Nubian short narrative fiction. *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*, published in 1989, is the first Nubian short story collection, and *Arūs al-nīl*, published in 1990, contains the first Nubian short story, the story of *Arūs al-nīl*, which was published in the magazine *al-Ṭalī<sup>c</sup>a* in June 1973.

The two collections have attracted the attention of the reading public. The stories in both collections include a wide range of Nubian elements, from myths, superstitions and rituals to customs, daily life and the problems of the Nubians.

Of the remaining six collections which were excluded, four collections are written by the late Nubian writer Ibrāhīm Fahmī, who mixes his experiences in the city (Cairo) and his experiences and memories about Nubia in his stories and thus cannot be said to be 'purely Nubian'. The other two collections are Yahya Mukhtār's *Mā' al-ḥayā* and Hasan Nūr's *KHūr raḥma*. Mukhtār's collection includes a novella and three short stories that are not as good in representing the Nubian short story as those in the collection *Arūs al-nīl*. In Hasan Nūr's collection, the stories do not have a deep structure and the incidents tend to be poorly selected.

The importance of the present thesis lies in the fact that no serious study has ever been done on Nubian short stories. Based on



Before Ḥadīdjādī's collection, the only Nubian narrative fiction in Egyptian literature was the novel *al-ṢḤamandūra*.<sup>2</sup> This novel, by late Nubian writer Muḥammad KḤalīl Kāsim, (1922-1968), was well received by Egyptian literary critics, and became known as the first Nubian novel in Arabic literature. It gained even more fame when it was dramatized as a radio series.<sup>3</sup>

Between the years 1968 and 1989, which mark the appearance of the first Nubian novel and the first Nubian short story collection respectively,<sup>4</sup> Nubian writers published Nubian short stories in periodicals and in collections. As well, they published their own collections of short stories that did not rely on Nubian themes.

*al-ṢḤamandūra*'s author published a short story collection, *al-KḤāla* <sup>c</sup>*aysha*, which included seven short stories, none of which had Nubian themes. Similarly, in 1985, no Nubian short story was included in the two collections *al-Mub*<sup>c</sup>*adūn* by Nubian writer Idrīs <sup>c</sup>*Alī*, and *al-Ḥāmūsh* by Nubian writer Ḥasan Nūr. Afterwards, Nubian

---

<sup>2</sup> In *al-Baḥṭh* <sup>c</sup>*an al-ṣḥamandūra* the author stated, on page 65, that *al-ṢḤamandūra* was published by *al-Hay'a al-miṣriyya al-amma li-al-kitāb* in 1968, and mentioned in the same book, on page 112, that the year was 1976. The edition of the novel published by *Kitāb Adab wa-naḥd*, (issue No. 4, January, 1994), mentioned *Dār al-kātib al-<sup>c</sup>arabī* as the publisher of the first edition of the novel in 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Based on interviews with Nubian writers, the first Nubian short story is *Arūs al-nīl* which Yaḥyā Mukḥtār published in the magazine *al-Ṭalī<sup>c</sup>a* (issue No. 6) in June 1973.



short story writers started to include Nubian short stories in their collections. The first writer to include a Nubian short story in his collection was Idrīs ʿAlī, when he published, in 1987, his short story collection *Wāḥid didd al-djamī*<sup>5</sup> which included a short story about rape, *Dhi'b al-djanūb al-kāsir*,<sup>5</sup> which took place in Nubia.

The flowering of the Nubian trend occurred in 1989, when three Nubian writers published three short story collections. Out of Ḥasan Nūr's thirteen stories in his second short story collection *Anā al-muwaḥḥaʿ adnāh*, two short stories touched on Nubian themes: *Rihla fī ḥayāt ṭifl nūbī*,<sup>6</sup> which tells the story of the trip of a Nubian child to the north, and *al-waḍḥ wa-al-ḥidhā'*,<sup>7</sup> which exposes the pains of a young Nubian who had to work as a servant in a northern city.

Early in the year, late Nubian writer Ibrāhīm Fahmī (1952-1994) published his first collection *al-Ḳamar būbā* in which he had a number of stories that focused on Nubian themes. In his stories, Fahmī does not often use plots. He mixes his experiences in Nubia and in Cairo, using a poetic language.<sup>8</sup> Later in the year,

---

<sup>5</sup> *Wāḥid didd al-djamī*<sup>c</sup>, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> *Anā al-muwaḥḥaʿ adnāh*, p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> See the study of Sayīd Ḥāmid al-Nassādī, attached to the collection on page 179.



Ḥadīdjādī Uddūl's collection *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* appeared as the first Nubian short story collection, and the work of Nubian writers began to increase remarkably.

In 1990, Nubian writer Yaḥyā Mukhtār published his first Nubian short story collection *Arūs al-nīl*. This was the second Nubian short story collection, after Ḥadīdjādī's, to win the State Incentive Prize in 1993. In the same year, Ibrāhīm Fahmī published his second short story collection, *Baḥr al-nīl*,<sup>9</sup> which included four stories. They were, as in his previous work, a mixture of his Nubian and Cairene experiences.

In 1991, Ḥadīdjādī Uddūl published *Bakkāt al-damm*, his first collection to include no Nubian stories. In 1992, Yaḥyā Mukhtār published his second Nubian short story collection *Mā' al-ḥayā*. This collection included a novella, *Tabadud*, and three short stories. The collection employed Nubian myths, fantasy and rituals.<sup>10</sup> In the same year, Nubian writer Muḥammad Wahba published his first short story collection, *Tadā<sup>c</sup>īyyāt zaman al-sukūt*, which did not include any Nubian stories, and Ibrāhīm Fahmī published his

---

<sup>9</sup> This collection shared the second prize in Su<sup>c</sup>ād al-Ṣabbāh's contest for intellectual creation, *Musābaḳat Su<sup>c</sup>ād al-Ṣabbāh li-āl-ibdā<sup>c</sup> al-fikrī*, in 1989.

<sup>10</sup> See, Ṣalāḥ Faḍl 'Āndā' al-zaman al-nūbī', in *Akhbār al-adab*, No. 1, 1993, p. 25.



third collection, *al-<sup>c</sup>Ishk awwaluhu al-kurā*.<sup>11</sup>

In 1994, Ḥasan Nūr published his collection *KHūr rahma*, which dealt with Nubian themes. The collection included five stories and the novella *Baḥr al-damīra*.<sup>12</sup> In the same year, Idrīs ʿAlī published his collection *Min waḳāʿi<sup>c</sup> ḡharaḳ al-safīna*, which included only one Nubian short story, *Kūmā kūmā djākūm allah*,<sup>13</sup> about the problems of a Nubian community.

The last short story collection by late Nubian writer Ibrāhīm Fahmī, *Rimsh al-ṣabāyā*, was published in the same year. Again, he mixed, in the six stories that were included in the collection, his Nubian and Cairene experiences. The last short story collection came in 1995,<sup>14</sup> when Ḥasan Nūr published ʿAynān zarkāwān, which mainly covered Nūr's experiences in the city.

---

<sup>11</sup> While four stories in this collection were already included in his second collection *Baḥr al-nīl*, the author rewrote them and added a lot more details especially in the story *Baḥr al-nīl*. See, Dandarāwī, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> *KHūr rahma*, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Min waḳāʿi<sup>c</sup> ḡharaḳ al-safīna*, p. 106.

<sup>14</sup> Ḥadjdjādī published a new collection, *GHazaliyyat al-kamar*, in March, 1996. The collection included three long stories. He described the first story as "inspired by Ottoman Egypt," and the second and third as, "inspired by the lands of Nubia."



After this brief account of Nubian short narrative fiction, it is clear that the works of Nubian writers which employ Nubian themes increased remarkably after 1989. For that reason, the term "Nubian," used to modify such works, became a topic of discussion and argument.

\*\*\*\*\*

Although supporters and opponents both agreed that these works expressed a unique Nubian experience, the latter refused to refer to them by the term "Nubian literature" for various reasons. Some opponents refused the term on the grounds that it was literature written in Arabic; therefore, it had to be considered Arabic literature not Nubian. Others refused the term on the basis that every region in Egypt would probably had its own '*couleur locale*', but this was not enough to distinguish them from 'Egyptian literature'.

By forcing a "political" reading on the texts,<sup>15</sup> some opponents expressed political concerns, arguing that the term, Nubian literature, laid the foundation for ethnocentrism and separatism.<sup>16</sup> However, even those who opposed using the term

---

<sup>15</sup> Idrīs 'Alī's *Dunkula* created a great deal of discussion because of his protagonist's political inclinations.

<sup>16</sup> See, *DJamāl al-GHītānī 'wa-al-nūba aydan .. thaghra yuhāwilūn al-nafādh minhā*', in *Akhbār al-adab*, No. 42, 1994, p. 3.



"Nubian literature" could not help but use other phrases such as "stories from Nubia", or "literature of the South", admitting implicitly the uniqueness of such writing.<sup>17</sup>

Supporters of the term "Nubian" believe that it is not contrary to "Egyptian" or "Arabic" literature; Egyptian literature covers, as a general description, Nubian literature while Arabic literature covers any literary text written in Arabic.<sup>18</sup>

With regard to concerns of separatism, it is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss politics or questions related to ethnic groups. However, suffice it to say that literary texts should not be read outside their own literary framework; thus "political" conclusions derived from literary texts are not relevant to this thesis.

Finally, although many Egyptian regions have specific historical and geographical characteristics, and every region has its own poetics of place, the region of Nubia, still, stands amongst them as a unique region. Before it disappeared under the river, Egyptian Nubia had a history that went back thousands of years and a geographical location that extended from Aswan southward to the Egyptian-Sudanese borders. In addition, Nubia had

---

<sup>17</sup> See, KHūrshīd, Fārūḳ 'Kaḍiyyat al-intimā' bayna al-shadjan wa-al-tamarrud', in al-Muṣāwwār, No. 3649, 1994, p. 47-49.

<sup>18</sup> See, al-Sayyid, Yusrī (ed.) 'Nādī udabā' al-aḳālīm', in al-DJumhūriyya, No. 14528, 1993, p. 14.



and still has its own customs, traditions and myths,<sup>19</sup> which are expressed, orally at least, in their own language, Nubian.

Historically, the region of Nubia extended from the first cataract in Aswan southward to the fifth cataract in Sudan. Discoveries have disclosed that even prior to the First Dynastic Period, 3400 to 2700 B.C., an advanced cultural epoch embraced all of Nubia. Very early in the dynasties of the Old Kingdom, approximately 2000 B.C., Egypt conquered Nubia and subjugated it politically. By the year 741 B.C., Nubian Pharaoh Piankhi began to launch military campaigns on Egypt, and by the year 722 B.C. he was in possession of most of Upper Egypt. Theories differ then as to the history of the period between Pharaonic and Christian Nubia.<sup>20</sup>

In the sixth century, Nubia became Christian and united under one king.<sup>21</sup> And in the seventh century, after the Arab ruler of Egypt, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allah Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>ad, had conquered Nubia, he withdrew and concluded a treaty with the Nubian king. Afterwards, Arabs moved to Nubia in increasing numbers, and by the end of the 13th century Christianity declined and Islam dominated all of Nubia.

---

<sup>19</sup> See, SHa<sup>c</sup>rāwī, *al-KHurāfa wa-al-ustūra*.

<sup>20</sup> Geiser, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Fernea, p. 8.



During the long period between the 13th century and the early 19th when Muḥammad ʿAlī ended the power of the Mameluke rule in Egypt, circumstances varied in Nubia between lack of interest on the part of the central government to the establishment of military garrisons which gave rise to a ruling class called *al-Kāshif*. Muḥammad ʿAlī appointed administrative officers that were also called *al-Kāshif*, who ruled Nubia until Great Britain assumed total control over Egypt after 1882.<sup>22</sup> After the Mahdist revolution at the end of the 19th century in the Sudan, Nubia became divided by the Egyptian-Sudanese border.<sup>23</sup>

Geographically isolated by the cataracts to the north and south, and desert and mountains to the east and west, Nubia retained its own traditions, customs and myths, in which the Nile plays an essential role. For example, Nubians believe that there are complete cities with palaces, lands and streets under the Nile, and that sometimes the surface of the river would 'open' for human beings to go spend sometime with the 'people of the river' and come back again. In the past, in the marriage ceremony, the bride and the groom, celebrating their first morning together, would go to the Nile in the company of friends and relatives. The groom would carry his sword with him, dip it in the Nile three times before handing it over to his attending boy. He then would go wash himself

---

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Hāmīd, p. 31.



in the Nile.<sup>24</sup>

The region of Nubia has two other distinctive features. First, the Nubians have their own language, that is divided into two dialects.<sup>25</sup> Language is a clear distinguishing feature that is said to be a factor in forming a distinct character.<sup>26</sup>

Second, and probably the most distinctive aspect, unique among the regions of Egypt, the region of Nubia completely disappeared under the Nile water after the High Dam was built in the sixties. Before that, Nubia had suffered from several severe floods when Aswan Dam was built in 1902 and raised twice in 1912 and 1933. During that period, Nubian people had to give up their land and move closer to the mountains, until the whole of Nubia was flooded and Nubians were resettled in villages in Upper Egypt.<sup>27</sup>

These factors together, particularly ceremonial life, language and the lose of the land, provided the region of Nubia and the Nubians the characteristics that allow their unique literary work the term "Nubian." From the present thesis' point of view, the decisive criterion for using the term "Nubian", with regard to

---

<sup>24</sup> On Nubian ceremonial life and myths, see Kennedy, 30-47, and SHa<sup>c</sup>rāwī, al-KHura<sup>a</sup>fa wa-al-ustūra, p. 106-113.

<sup>25</sup> See, Rouchdy, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> See, Abū Zayd, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> See, Kennedy, p. 13.



literary work, is the extent to which the writer has celebrated and taken interest in the details that make Nubia, with all its components, an intentional objective in the narrative. Gathered and intertwined carefully in the story, such details, which are always a manifestation of the nostalgia of the writer for the eternally drowned place, are the present thesis' justification for using the term "Nubian."

\*\*\*\*\*

In the two collections *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* and *Arūs al-nīl*, which the thesis will examine in the following two chapters, both Nubian writers carefully included details that were pertinent to the poetics of the place, its myths, traditions, customs, language and the problems the Nubian people were confronted with. They also went to the extent of recording Nubian names of villages and individuals. It is worth noting here that some of these details are shared, one way or another, by other Egyptian regions. Very good examples of such shared details are the Nile, the palms and the myth of "the people of the river." However, in a Nubian context, they either gain more depth or more local color.

A relationship does exist between the Nile and palms on one hand and the Nubian people on the other hand, as much as it exists for other Egyptian villages, but it is clear from Nubian narrative fiction in general that Nubian writers celebrate to a greater



extent each and every detail related to the Nile and palms. The Nubian writer describes the different shapes of the river's waves, the different sounds originated by palms as a result of different degrees of wind, the several uses of palms in the Nubian environment and the relation between the river and myths. Also, although a popular belief prevails in other Egyptian villages that female *djinn* live in the Nile, such a superstition takes the form of a myth that Nubian writers employ in fiction, with a classification of creatures.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the above examples, details that distinguish the region of Nubia are quite clear and present in Nubian fiction. Nubian houses with their decoration and particular style of architecture,<sup>29</sup> jewelry used by Nubian women, especially in marriage occasions, and the use of palms in building houses, beds and baskets, are common details used by Nubian writers in almost every story. There are also details that describe rituals of marriage and death, popular medicine and the various famous Nubian dances and songs.

From these details taken together, whether pertinent to the region of Nubia specifically or shared by other Egyptian regions, the Nubian writer weaves his pure Nubian picture where Nubian and

---

<sup>28</sup> See, *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*, p. 72

<sup>29</sup> See, *al-KHādim*, p. 42.



non-Nubian features can not be separated. This is what distinguishes Nubian narrative fiction. Nubian fiction has its own "diction", or discourse, making Nubia a new current in Egyptian contemporary literature.

\*\*\*\*\*

The modern Egyptian short story has a history that goes back to the second decade of this century. Until the 1950s, short story writers tackled, mainly, social and nationalistic themes, oscillating between romantic and realistic trends. Socialist realism became the dominant trend in the fifties, with themes focusing on the underprivileged, the poor and the oppressed classes in the society.<sup>30</sup>

Yūsuf Idrīs was the towering talent of the 1950s and 60s who gave a fresh momentum to the realistic trend. His early short story collections in the fifties were not confined to particular themes or settings, but his characters suffered, generally, from frustration and the inability to fulfil their dreams. In his collections in the sixties, Idrīs was more concerned with structure and experimentation, which played an important role in shaping the modern sensibility.

---

<sup>30</sup> see, Hafez, Sabri 'The Modern Arabic Short Story', in Badawi, M.M., p. 301



The sixties witnessed a very important stage in the history of the Egyptian short story. Two generations of writers launched out in a new mode of discourse in their writings: An established generation represented by Idrīs, Maḥfūz and Idwārd al-KHarrāṭ, and a new generation, which became known as the generation of the sixties, represented by DJamāl al-GHītānī, Ibrāhīm Aṣlān, Muḥammad al-Bisāṭī, Maḍjīd Ṭūbyā and Bahā' Ṭāhir. The short story of the sixties was characterized by the attempt to create a new reality, the withdrawal from the world and the feeling of alienation. Writers used techniques that make reality seem absurd and unreal. They explored time in a manner that enabled them to illustrate the absurd reality.

While the sixties' generation continued to write, and reached maturity in the seventies and eighties, a new generation emerged whose short stories were characterized by a lack of clarity and a disregard for plot.<sup>31</sup> There was also a tendency towards relying upon poetic language, which led to the emergence of a trend that was termed 'verse story', or *al-ḳiṣa al-ḳaṣīda*.<sup>32</sup>

Except for Yahyā Mukhtār's story *Arūs al-nīl*, which was published in the magazine *al-Ṭalī'a* in 1973, the Nubian short story emerged in periodicals in the eighties. The beginning of

---

<sup>31</sup> al-KHarrāṭ, *al-Ḳiṣa al-ḳaṣira*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Al-KHarrāṭ, *Al-Kitāba 'abr al-naw'īyya*, p. 9.



publication of Nubian short stories in collections was in the late eighties, when Ḥadīdjādī Uddūl and Yaḥyā Mukhtār published their two collections *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* and *Arūs al-nīl*, in 1989 and 1990 respectively.

The Nubian short story represented by these two collections breathed fresh air into the Egyptian short story. There is no doubt that the major contribution of Nubian short story is the new content it brought into the mainstream Egyptian short story. The distinctive culture, place and circumstances of the Nubians were reflected in the content of the stories.

With the exception of his story *Ḥikāya li-al-nisyān*, which addresses the tragic resettlement of Nubians, Mukhtār pays attention to themes that tackle the underprivileged, the poor and those who feel alienated. In his themes, Uddūl focuses on the problems of the Nubians. He portrays the problems of Nubian women who wait endlessly for the men to return from the north, the problem of living in *al-mahdjar* villages in Upper Egypt and the problem of Nubian men marrying non-Nubian women.

After almost three decades of experimenting with the form and producing what was called 'stories of modern sensibility', Nubian writers took the Egyptian short story back to the traditional form and the romantic language. Mukhtār employs traditional plots in his stories and the technique of flashback, with a traditional



omniscient narrator. Uddūl is not as traditional as Mukhtār in his plots and in the use of a narrator. He used different techniques of frame story, flashback and the stream of consciousness.

However, both writers are traditional in the use of language. They use modern standard Arabic, and the nostalgia for the old Nubian place is reflected in their descriptive romantic language. Occasionally, they use Nubian vocabulary in the narrative and "Nubian colloquial Egyptian" in the dialogue. This is more of a complement to the setting of the stories than a new linguistic phenomenon.

Disregarding value judgements of modern versus traditional, Nubian short writers have succeeded in establishing themselves as a new trend amongst their contemporaries. They represent the short story that is traditional in form and structure, but very rich and new in subject matter.

The two collections, *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* by Ḥadjdjādj Ḥasan Uddūl and *Arūs al-nīl* by Yaḥyā Mukhtār, will be examined in the first and second chapters of this thesis. Each of the four stories in each collection will be examined, interpreted and analyzed in the form of an applied critique.







*Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* comprises four short stories that are relatively long,<sup>1</sup> except for the story from which the collection gets its title. Each of the four stories play on themes that tie it directly to Nubia: be it the tragedy and myths of the place in *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*, the problems Nubian people suffer in *Adīlā yā djaddatī*, the poetics of the place in *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* or the superstitions and the supernatural in *Zaynab Ubūrtī*. In the following, each of these stories will be reviewed and analyzed.

#### *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*

The collection starts with the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*. The story relates two tragedies which the narrator indicates in a proleptic aphorism to the story, "O, seasons of the south, successive since the beginning of time .. beware of the inundation. It shall overwhelm you with one eternal season .. the season of grief."<sup>2</sup> (p. 5) The first tale, is the tale of *Āshā* (a Nubian name for *Ā'isha*) who disappears from the village. The people of the village look in vain for *Āshā*, while her sister *Kūrtī* keeps assuring them that she is neither dead nor drowned, but has left for the people of the river and would come back.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Friedman, Norman 'Recent Short Story Theories: Problems in Definition', in Lohafer, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The two dots (...) in the quoted text are the author's. When three are used (...), they will be the student's, indicating missing words or sentences intentionally left out by the student.



The narrator does not give any more details about Āshā's tale. He disappears and the time of the story moves forward to the second tale of the new Āshā, Āshā the granddaughter, who narrates her own story. She was born in the same year the first dam was constructed, and Kūrtī, her grandmother now, named her Āshā because of the resemblance to her own sister who has left for the people of the river.

Grandmother Kūrtī tells Āshā the story of her sister Āshā Ashrī<sup>3</sup> (which means beautiful Ā'isha), who gained her beauty from her Turkish father, who was a Kāshif<sup>4</sup> and her Nubian mother. She was obsessed with the people of the river, and her beauty caused controversy among the families of the village, when a man from the village tried to take her by force. As a result, her family confined her to the house. She could not stand the fact that they kept her away from the river, and one night she disappeared.

Āshā, the granddaughter, relates her story since she was young, grabbing the fish from the fisherman and throwing them back into the river. The fisherman chases her and she runs from him to find protection with her grandmother and Ṣiyām, with whom she is in love. Ṣiyām proceeds with formal betrothal to Āshā and leaves to work in the north after the building of the dam left the village

---

<sup>3</sup> When there is a need to mention Nubian words, they will be interpreted or translated between brackets.

<sup>4</sup> This word is a title the Nubians used for Turkish rulers. See, Hāmid, p. 41.



with minimal means of living.

Şiyām sends letters promising to come back but never does. Āshā receives new marriage proposals since the village is convinced that Şiyām has forgotten her in the wake of the pleasures in the north. She refuses all the proposals and blames the dam which drowned the land and forced men to migrate to the north to find means to support their families.

Time passes, and Āshā, who used to dance in the wedding parties of her friends, dances now in the wedding parties of her friends' daughters. Finally, she receives a letter from Şiyām saying he is coming back, but she hears from other people who have already come back that he is very sick. Şiyām drowns when *al-būsta*, the postboat, which is the only means of transportation to get from Aswan to Nubia, sinks in the Nile and people say that he did not exert any effort to try to save himself.

The whole village mourns the dead and Āshā insists that Şiyām did not drown but left for the people of the river to enjoy their joyful life. She stays away from people and has fits of temper, rushing to the valley and the river. The river has uncovered itself to her, she believes, and the people of the river, grandmother Āshā and Şiyām are calling her. She goes back home, wears *kurş al-raḥmān*, a nubian golden necklace married women wear, carries the sword to give it to Şiyām and leaves for the river.



At this point in the story, the omniscient narrator who started the story in the beginning resumes the narration. Grandmother Kūrtī wakes up looking for Āshā, and starts crying for help when she finds out that she has gone. They start to look for her and when they discover that the sword and *ḡurṣ al-rahmān* were taken, they run to the river. At this time, Āshā is drowning in the river, carrying the sword in her hand and singing for her groom, while every one is calling her name. The story ends with grandmother Kūrtī bewailing the leaving of Āshā for the people of the river.

In the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*, Ḥadjidjādī addresses the tragedy of Nubia, the place and the people. Ḥadjidjādī uses the character Āshā as a symbol for Nubia, the place. At the same time, the tragedy of Āshā represents the tragedy of Nubian woman and Nubian people in general. He also uses the myth of *nās al-nahr*, people of the river,<sup>5</sup> and establishes a dialectical relationship between Nubia and the river. He condemns and blames the tragedy of Nubia on both the north and the south.

The symbol manifests itself in the resemblance between Āshā the grandmother and Āshā the grand daughter: The name (p. 8), the beauty (p. 6, 7), the love for the river and its creatures (p. 7,

---

<sup>5</sup> Nubians believe that there are people under the river, living in cities that have streets, palaces and water wheels. They also believe that the river uncovers itself to humans who sometimes disappear into it and come back to earth again. See, *SHa'rawī, al-KHuraḥa wa-al-ustūra*, p. 111.



17), the fact that they leave for the people of the river after being confined, the fact that they both leave when the village is busy with a wedding party and the fact that Kūrtī was the guard in both cases (p. 8, 27).

While the drowning, or leaving of Āshā/Nubia for the people of the river, is an indirect condemnation of the north, it is a direct condemnation of the south. The north is indirectly responsible for the drowning of Āshā the grandmother, when her father leaves the village because, "the cruel people of the north deposed him," (p. 7) and she loses her protection. It is also indirectly responsible for the drowning of Āshā the granddaughter because the raising of the dam inundated the land, forcing men to leave the village for the north looking for work to support their families. The north consumes Ṣiyām, Āshā's future husband, who drowns on his way back to the village, leaving her with no hope but to find happiness with the people of the river.

The south, however, is directly responsible for this tragedy when *al-kāshif* leaves his daughter in the village without enough protection, and when the men in the village take advantage of the situation, which results in the confinement and drowning of Āshā, the grandmother, while the village is busy with a wedding party. Āshā the granddaughter suffers the same carelessness from the village.



Ṣiyām, immersed in the joyful life of the north, does not care to come back and marry her. Also when she drowns herself, the village is having a wedding party, which makes Kūrtī cry out, blaming them, "women of the village, where is Āshā? O men, where is Āshā? You, arrack drunkards .. drunkards of the south .. stoned over the dam .. where is Āshrī? Wake up .. where is Āshā ashri?" (p. 27).

On a different level, there is this ideal parallel world, the world of the river and its people, to which the Nubian escapes when life becomes impossible. The Nubian lives in a dialectical relationship with the river. He can not live without it, and at the same time can not get too close to it, otherwise the people of the river will pull him into it. "Do not feel the river much," says Kūrtī to Āshā, "do not roam on its banks during the flood ... do not frequent it alone." (p. 8)

Also, although the river is a blessing and life for the Nubian, it is the primary cause of the tragedy of drowning of Nubia. At the same time, according to the Nubian belief, those who leave for the people of the river do not die, but lead an ideal life, "with people, gaiety never ceases to exist in their water and tambourines never cool off in their dwelling, never in agony from fear of a future that might disperse them," (p. 5) and would probably come back again.



Thus, the solution for both Āshā the grandmother, when confined and put away from the river, and Āshā the granddaughter, when she loses hope in the future, is to run from the people of the village to the people of the river to enjoy the ideal world. Hence, by projecting the symbol on the myth, Nubia did not truly drown. It lives in an ideal world under the river and one day it will probably come back.

The narrator starts the story with a prolepsis, warning Nubia from the flood that will bring about a season of eternal grief. This prolepsis provides the story with a mythical historical dimension by directing the warning to nature. At the same time, it makes the tragedy seem like a fate Nubia can never escape. In the first paragraph, the narrator gets directly into the climax of the tragedy of Āshā the grandmother and the myth of the people of the river. He creates a sense of suspense about the reason behind the disappearance of the girl and a mythical atmosphere about the assurance that she has left for the people of the river.

After this paragraph, the story moves to a completely different level with regard to the time and narrator. The omniscient narrator disappears and Āshā the granddaughter starts telling her own story, as a first person narrator. The omniscient narrator appears again close to the end of the story, when Āshā decides to leave for the people of the river.



The omniscient narrator lets Āshā narrate her own story although we know at the end that she has already disappeared in the river, to affirm the myth of the people of the river, where leaving does not mean death. Giving Āshā the role of a narrator here ensures the myth and the mythical atmosphere which overwhelms the story as a whole, creates an intimate relationship between her and the reader as well as a relationship of identification between her and the symbol; Nubia is also the people of Nubia.

The story, then, has two narrators: an omniscient narrator and a first person narrator. In the parts that were narrated by an omniscient narrator, he does not seem to take advantage of the "omniscience" situation, but rather plays the role of a "story teller." He focuses more on telling rather than showing the actions of the story,<sup>6</sup> and contents himself with description in "action sentences." In the first paragraph of the story, he describes the actions in the search for Āshā, "On that day .. the people of the village carries lanterns and blazing torches, they searched in the mountain .. in the cultivated strip all along the river banks. No trace." (p. 5). When he resumes narration just before the end of the story, he uses the same style,

"Annā (grandmother) Kūrtī turned around .. woke up .. but where is Āshā? She surveyed the courtyard with her weak eyes. Pushing her bending torso leaning on the palm-branch stick.

---

<sup>6</sup> See, Booth, p. 3.



She entered the narrow rooms." (p. 27)

When Āshā is used as a first person narrator, she is also not completely free to take advantage of the situation. It is clear that she is relating her own story from "within" the story teller. In other words, the story teller is using her as a means to convey his own ideas. She is not given the chance to express her own views about her tragic situation, but rather keeps blaming the north and the dam for what is happening to her. The story teller emphasizes this fact by raising thoughts beyond the capability of the girl who has never left Nubia and is never mentioned in the story to have had any education,

"Means of subsistence became scarce .. men migrated to the north where work is submissive, circled with belts red like the faces of the English masters and beys. They migrated north where the girls of lower Egypt are and the salty water that does not quench thirst." (p. 11)

In another paragraph, a nostalgic thought is also expressed through Āshā,

"Before the dam, the yearly flood surged in slow flow, filling its extending vein. With reddish brown blessing, containing fertile alluvium, it penetrated the prolific land, conceiving the valley who delivers billions of green infants that break



up the belly of the earth, sprouting in pride under the sun."  
(p. 14).

From the above passage, it is clear that the voice of Āshā, as a first person narrator, is the voice of the story teller, or the omniscient narrator, and that it is only used for the purpose relevant to the symbol. The story teller makes the tragedy of Āshā that of all Nubians, identifies her with Nubia, "Bear up succulent body of the river, for I'm just like you .. the dam has discorded my life," (p. 18) and, by using her voice in narration, confirms the myth that leaving for the people of the river does not mean death.

Time and place play an essential role in the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*. The story starts and ends before the complete disappearance of Nubia under the river. The story starts close to the end of the first story; the story of Āshā the grandmother, which creates a sense of suspense. The details of this story, then, are narrated by Annā Kūrtī, after the time moves to the second story, the story of Āshā the granddaughter.

The time of the second story extends from the childhood of Āshā until she decides to leave for the people of the river, at an age where the daughters of her friends are getting married. This huge temporal space, though peculiar to a short story, serves the purpose of telling two stories, and allowed the narrator to



describe the details of Nubian culture.

Place plays a major role in the story, for the symbol in the story relies on the myth of the people of the river, which is a belief in this particular place. It is the place, and the lack of sufficient means of living after the raising of the dam, that forces Nubian young men to migrate to the north leaving their women behind waiting endlessly for them. Besides, it is quite evident that for the narrator, the place, with all its physical, metaphysical and cultural components, is a purpose in itself, for the main characteristic of Nubian stories is the recreation of the place.

The author does not give much attention to characterization, externally nor internally. There are four main characters in the story: Āshā the grandmother, Annā Kurtī, Şiyām and Āshā the granddaughter, who is the most important character of course. Āshā the grandmother is characterized in the story as beautiful and attached to the river and its people. Her role is only as a symbol of warning for Nubians, if Nubia is left without protection, against drowning.

Annā Kurtī is also characterized as beautiful, who with her henna-dyed hair, plays the role of the protector and witness to what happened to her sister, Āshā the grandmother, and to her granddaughter. She fails to protect either of them when they escape



at night while she is sleeping, to leave for the people of the river. It is impossible for the Nubian woman alone to take over the responsibility of protecting Nubia, while men are either drunk or away in the north.

Şiyām is characterized as a man who is tall, pompous and strong as a palm. Like all Nubian young men who leave their women behind them after the building of the dam, Şiyām migrates to the north. He gets overwhelmed by life there, forgets his vows to Āshā, and sends letters that say he will return but never does. Finally, he becomes very sick, and on his way back, he drowns in the river when the postboat sinks. Although Şiyām is able to provide Āshā with love and protection when he is still in Nubia, he loses all his good qualities in the north. He forgets his love, loses his courage and does not even resist death when the postboat sank.

Āshā the granddaughter is the main character in the story. She inherited her beauty from her grandmother, and challenges her fate to the end. Her friends get married and their daughters as well, but she keeps her vows to Şiyām all these years. She gives up and leaves for the people of the river only when she loses hope in living happily with Şiyām.

Apart from being a symbol, Āshā enjoys all the qualities of tragic characters. She challenges her fate and decides to observe her vows to her man, regardless of what people say about him



forgetting her and being with another woman in the north, and regardless of all the marriage proposals she receives while he is away. She waits for him for years, but when he is returning he drowns when the postboat sinks. Again, she does not accept her fate and decides to go under the river to marry him. Āshā's tragedy represents the tragedy of Nubian women whose men had to go to the north looking for jobs, leaving them behind with their desires for love and protection.

The author used modern standard Arabic, and sometimes Nubian words and phrases that best express the Nubian connotations he wants although he has to translate them whether in a footnote or in the text itself. The use of these words and phrases add to the *couleur locale* of the story.

Rhetoric is quiet evident in the style of the author in this story in particular. He uses similes, metaphors and personification, as well as rhetorical phrases excessively. Āshā's color, for example, is described as, "milk mixed in molasses," (p. 7), girls' cries of joy as, "copper strings singing in the night of the wedding," (p. 15), the postboat as "a white goose whose bill is coming out from her back," (p. 16), and the wailing as, "black lightning." (p. 28). To express Āshā's dissatisfaction, he uses rhetorical phrases such as, "O, you lump dam ... you separator of lovers," (p. 11), "You, people of the river .. break up the dam," (p. 18), or, "Oh, our villages which are compelled by the Nile ..



oh villages where wolves roam your mountain, scorpions swim on the surface of your sand and snakes submerge in it." (p. 24).

This story reveals aspects in the Arabian character which are the kindness, tolerance and forgiveness of the Arabian. Within this theme, the story addressed another aspect of Arabian tradition that has become a real problem. Although Arabian tradition prevents marriage to non-Arabs, the problem of Arabian men carrying non-Arabian wives. Probably, the theme arose after the successive rising of the sea and the migration of Arabian men to the north in search of ways to support their families.

The story is narrated from a first person point of view, and starts with Muhammad, the narrator, sitting next to his grandfather's grave one day after his death, and ends with his leaving the village after the three-day mourning. The time of the story, therefore, is vague, while the time of narration extends in an extensive manner to suit the writer's choice as extended and artistic detail of events. Therefore, the time of the story is extended to suit the writer's choice as extended and artistic detail of events.

Muhammad, the protagonist, is born to a Arabian father and a non-Arabian mother, and lives with them in a "northern" city, Alexandria. As a child, his father takes him for the first time to visit his Arabian family in an Arabian village, the new village where Arabian men migrated after the building of the High Dam.



Adīlā yā djaddatī

This story reveals aspects in the Nubian character which are the kindness, tolerance and forgiveness of the Nubian. Within this theme, the story addresses another aspect of Nubian tradition that has become a real problem. Although Nubian tradition prevents marriage to non-Nubians, the problem of Nubian men marrying non-Nubian women, djūrbātiyya, became more severe after the successive raising of the dam and the migration of Nubian men to the north in search of ways to support their families,

The story is narrated from a first person point of view, and starts with Muḥammad, the narrator, sitting next to his grandmother's grave one day after her death, and ends with him leaving the village after the three-day mourning. The time of the story, therefore, is simple, while the time of narration extends in Muḥammad's memories of his childhood, when he first visits the village to the moment he sits next to his grandmother's grave.

Muḥammad, the protagonist, is born to a Nubian father and a non-Nubian mother, and lives with them in a "northern" city, Alexandria. As a child, his father takes him for the first time to visit his Nubian family in al-mahdjar village, the new village where Nubians were relocated after the building of the High Dam.



In his first visit, Muḥammad faces some difficulties in dealing with Nubian boys because of the language and because they insult him through his mother (the word *ḍjūrbātiyya* is an insult). He also does not get along with his grandmother, who does not accept the fact that his father has married a non-Nubian woman. He hates her and wishes she were dead because she is rough with him and insults his mother. However, he loves his aunt, <sup>c</sup>Awwāḍa, who loves him as a son. <sup>c</sup>Awwāḍa was engaged to a man called Yāsīn, who went to the north and never came back.

After a number of visits to the new Nubian village in the school summer holidays, Muḥammad develops good relations with his Nubian playmates, and more importantly with his grandmother. He starts to discover how kind Nubian people are, especially his grandmother who, he understands finally, loves him but seems tough because she speaks from her heart.

When the grandmother begins to suffer from an eye disease, Muḥammad's father decides to take her to the northern city for treatment. There she develops a good relationship with Muḥammad's mother, and even treats her sickness using popular Nubian medicine. After that the mother visits the village for the first time and is well received. Muḥammad decides to marry his cousin Zaynab, which makes his grandmother and his father very happy. Before she dies, the grandmother walks out of her house and dies standing like a palm, while dreaming about old Nubia.



In this story, the author focuses more on characterization, especially Muḥammad and his grandmother, and expresses nicely contradictory human feelings that stir sarcasm and laughter sometimes, but are without exaggeration. The beauty of these feelings lie in the author's ability to express them simply and naturally.

As typical short stories, the story starts close to the end, and the narrator relates his story through flash back. Although the story addresses two themes, the relationship between the boy and the grandmother and the theme of marrying non-Nubians, the author has skillfully interwoven both themes to observe the unity of effect in the story. Being the son of a *djūrbatiyya* creates the tension in the relationship between the boy and the grandmother, through which the author was able to show how kind in fact the grandmother is. At the same time, ʿAwwāda, Muḥammad's aunt, is a living example of the tragic situation when Nubian men migrate to the north, ignore their vows, and marry non-Nubian women.

Muḥammad remembers his feeling of estrangement when he first visited the village. Although his grandmother embraced him and kissed him in his first meeting with her, he hated her for insulting him with his mother. After only one week, he came to discover the kind and tolerable world of Nubia. Homes are always open and children can go into any home they find to drink water from the water pots.



In the beginning, Muḥammad is never able to understand his grandmother. He never understands her straightforward way of expressing her feelings towards him. She is insulting him, not out of hatred for him or his mother, but because she believes that *al-djūrbātiyya* has "kidnapped" her son, who should not have married a non-Nubian. The grandmother's shoe which she used to throw at animals to frighten them away from the house, is used in this context as a symbolic indication of her straightforwardness, "every time it fell down to the ground upside down or on one side, it quickly turn itself upright to its natural position." (p. 38)

Muḥammad's feelings towards his grandmother start to take a different course when he realizes that she loves him and even insults the boys who insult him and his mother. Gradually, he discovers the love in the hearts of the Nubian people, which sometimes lies behind their cruel words. On his way back to city, after the end of the school summer holiday, his grandmother pays him a warm farewell wishing him a safe return to the village: *adīlā yā Muḥammad*.

Muḥammad starts to look forward to the end of the school year in order to return to the village. He finds out about the true feelings of the people of the village, who are simple, very friendly and straight forward. On another level, the kindness of his grandmother manifests itself in the clearest way, when she has to go to the city for medical treatment. There, she treats her



daughter-in-law, using her experience with popular medicine, when her daughter-in-law suddenly falls sick, regardless of the grudge she has against her.

On the other hand, the mother does her best to make her mother-in-law as comfortable as possible in the house, for kindness and goodness are not just confined to Nubians. (Although Muḥammad's sister, unjustifiably, treats her grandmother badly.) The visit ends in a demonstration of love, with the grandmother and her daughter-in-law kissing each other, and the grandmother insisting that the father should bring his wife on his next visit to the village.

On another level, the theme of marrying non-Nubians, is interwoven skillfully with the theme of love and kindness in the hearts of Nubians. The Nubian tradition prevents Nubians from marrying non-Nubians. It is considered, especially if it happens to a woman, a shameful and disgraceful act.<sup>7</sup> With the increased migration of men to the north, the problem has become more severe, for the men have begun to marry women from the north. Nubian women's view to *al-djūrbātiyya* is antagonistic, and they consider such a marriage an act of "kidnapping."

---

<sup>7</sup> See, Hāmid, p. 246.



The grandmother's essential kindness is demonstrated in her acceptance, though reluctantly, of her daughter-in-law,

"my grandmother was mad at me and my father because we did not bring my mother with us. She was asking kindly about her health and saying to <sup>c</sup>Awwāda that the djūrbātiyya was a good daughter and had the best of manners and religions .. her only fault .. is that she is a djūrbātiyya." (p. 50)

<sup>c</sup>Awwāda, with her overwhelming love for people, was a living example of this problem, and saw her deprivation being remedied in the marriage of Muḥammad and Zaynab.

Part of the grandmother's resentment of her son's marriage is her grudge for the north in general,

"they pulled us out of our roots, so we became like a brushwood. Our sons roamed the countries as servants, feeding the grandchildren the leftovers of foreigners and beys. And we are here, thrown away like goats in the valley of the djinn. They gave us land that does not grow but the plant of the devil with its bitter fruit that even cattle refrain from. They killed us my son .. the djūrbātiyya killed us." (p. 44)

The story shows how Nubians become even poorer in their new land, living in cement houses away from the river.



The grandmother is the heroine of the story. The narrator has characterized her from his own perspective, but he has left the character to express herself freely through dialogue most of the time. To let the character express herself more freely, he uses dialogue or indirect speech. At the same time, her sarcastic style and funny language in the dialogues makes her look very much alive and natural,

"I said to my grandmother:

- If a Nubian man marries a *djūrbātiyya*, why do you call their son (half a mule)?
- Because he is half a mule.
- So, am I half a mule?
- Exactly.
- Exactly! and of my parents, who is the mule?
- Your mother, you donkey.
- So! .. and why is it not my father?" (p. 51)

In his first meeting with her, the narrator describes her from the outside, "dried body in a black gown ... old black, with wrinkled face. sharp features." (p. 33) Although she seems very tough, always swears and is very angry at what the north has afflicted on Nubians, she is very kind and tolerant in her heart. She never forgets her old small village Bahdjūra, and her wish is to die and be buried there,



"Muḥammad, I ask God to die in our old village, in Bahdjūra hamlet. And to be buried in our cemetery on the hill that looks over our Nile, our palms, our houses and our plants .. Amen." (p. 51, 52)

Given her persistent personality, and since that her wish is impossible of course, she dreams, while dying, about her village in old Nubia, "Awwāḍa .. do you see our palms, row after row? The season of dates Awwāḍa and Bahdjūra hamlet in feast." (p. 55) The character of the grandmother seems to be a round character,<sup>8</sup> but in fact she is not, though she is complex. Bain defined round characters, paraphrasing an 'influential critic' as, "those who can 'surprise convincingly'." The grandmother never really hates her daughter-in-law or her grandson. She only hates the north for forcing Nubians to leave their land.

The character of Muḥammad, the protagonist, is the round character in the story. When he first visits the village as a child, he hates it and hates his grandmother. In the beginning, he does not understand her way of expressing herself, "I fell down on my grandmother as a result of her sudden pull. She kissed me as if she was biting me." (p. 33) As a child, he feels estranged from people he does not know, and in a place he has never been before. After a while, he starts to get along with the children in the village, but not with his grandmother, "I hate her. I say: If this

---

<sup>8</sup> Bain, p. 84.



wrinkled old woman dies, I will love this village." (p. 35)

Muhammad began to understand his grandmother and feel her love for him. She insults the other boys when they insult him, and pays him a warm farewell wishing him to come back when the school summer holiday was over, "I did not feel disgusted from her eyes and rested in her arms." (p. 39) He becomes immersed in Nubian life and decides to marry his Nubian cousin Zaynab, which seems to conform to tradition, and avoids what happened to <sup>c</sup>Awwāda, for the author does not give a lot of attention to his relationship with the girl in the story,

"My grandmother said frankly one day:

- Hmmm, *ḍjūrbātī amān dāmū*. No trust.
- Why grandmother?
- <sup>c</sup>Awwāda says, Zaynab is waiting for Muhammad, I'm afraid Muhammad will leave her and marry a *ḍjūrbātiyya* like his father and sister." (p. 52)

<sup>c</sup>Awwāda, Muhammad's aunt, has a very delicate character. She suffered personally from the problem of Nubian men migrating to the north and getting married there. She was engaged to Yasin who left for the north and never came back. Muhammad's mother is characterized objectively as a *ḍjūrbātiyya* from the grandmother's point of view and as a mother from the narrator's point of view. She is made to prove to Nubian women that not all *ḍjūrbātiyya* are



bad by definition. She also helps highlight the kindness of the grandmother who likes her when she finds out, from her own point of view, that there is nothing wrong with her except for the fact that she is djūrbātiyya.

The narrator characterizes the father as a man with a weak personality. He fears the anger of the grandmother, and at the same time fears the anger of his own wife when the grandmother insists that he leave the boy with her in the village. Also, he does not seem to have control over his own daughter who is about to marry a djūrbātī. The actions of Muḥammad's sister are not justifiable, even if it is the desire of the author to present an example of those who live in the city and just hate being Nubians. Her hate for the grandmother, even when she treats her sick mother, her anger at her brother when he decides to marry a Nubian girl and her refusal to visit the village are not explained by the author.

From the four stories in the collection, this story in particular is a typical short story that is traditional in its plot, characters and beginning and end. The author uses modern standard Arabic, but in the dialogues, which play a very important role in illuminating the character of the grandmother, he uses the Arabic language the way Nubians use it. Nubians use feminine and masculine interchangeably, and pronounce the letter ḥ like h.



The author also uses Nubian sentences rather than words in this story. It is clear that the fascination with the place that urges the Nubian writer to use Nubian words has no room in this story, where there are no palms or river. The setting in the story is the *mahdjar* village where sand is everywhere and houses are small and merge into each other.



*Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*

In this story, the first person narrator relates his cherished memories in the Nubian village, brought about by his wife giving birth to their first baby. He remembers his flirtation and pursuit of his wife from when she was young, both his wedding party and the village's, the beautiful Nubian songs and nature, and the kind people of Nubia.

The narrator is completely immersed in a Nubian 'good mood' in this story; no worries, no tragedies, no problems. He does not address the migration to the north, the dam, nor the women hopelessly waiting for their men. He just calls up his dear memories in Nubia, which spread a magnificent ambience throughout the story.

The time of the story starts with the labor pains of his wife and ends with the narrator carrying his baby in his hands, but the time of narration covers memories from his childhood, adolescence and youth. While the narrator begins the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr* with a prolepsis, he introduces this story with a panegyric statement for Nubia and the Nubians,

"Long long ago. South of the cataract. Our nights were blowing off incenses and exhaling musk. Drinking from the *kawthar* of the Nile. Fed from the strip of greens. Its sky is clarity.



Its air is remedy. Generation after generation are born in it .. brown .. brown. So, we say: we are brown brown, because our sun is in our faces." (p. 58)

The story starts with the narrator's wife screaming from the labor pains, and the attempts of the family to rest his worries. The scene ends with the sound the narrator desires to hear: *wāāā'* .. *wāāā'*. The scene brings to the narrator's mind the memory of his flirtation with his wife.

So, he remembers the sound of the tambourines, *tūūm-tak* .. *tūūm-tak*, when young men are testing them to be prepared for the wedding party, while he is flirting with *Ṣālḥa*, his wife. He sings her a *mawwāl* (popular poem), "*al-burtudjān nahdik mudardam*," (p. 59) praising her bosom which excites him, and chases her while the sound of the tambourine concords with his heartbeats. The scene ends with the sounds of tambourines.

The narrator goes back to the scene of labor pains, where his wife is screaming: *wīīīk* .. *wīīīk*. He wonders, while waiting in the courtyard, whether his nephew will marry his daughter-to-be, and whether he will flirt with her decently or indecently, and sing her the same *mawwāl*. He ends the scene with the sounds of his screaming wife. Playing with his nephew, and imagining him flirting with his daughter, stirs his memory of playing with *Ṣālḥa* and the children.



So, he remembers, in the next scene, the voice of the children calling each other in play: *hūūūī .. hūūūī*, surrounded by the charming nature: the different colors of the Nile, the mountain, the blue sky and the strip of green. He believes this nature helps children grow fast, for wedding parties to start and bellies to inflate. The scene ends with the sounds of crying babies.

Talking about nature reminds the narrator of the sound of the whispers of the millet's tufts: *iishshsh .. iishshsh*, of trees' boughs, palms' leaves, the Nile's little waves. He remembers the day he went to Ṣālḥa's father asking to marry her. The scene ends with the sound of whispers. The former image stirs the memories of the narrator's adolescent longings and passionate love for Ṣālḥa.

He remembers in the new scene the voice of the singer with the beginning of his *mawwāl*: *yā salāāām .. yā salāāām*, where young men are sitting in moonlit nights, singing under doom palms. The girls are sitting near, under sycamore trees, with each of them thinking that the *mawwāl* is for her. Grandmothers are sitting not too far from them all, guessing who is going to marry whom. The narrator ends this scene with the beginning of the *mawwāl*.

The narrator wakes from his memories to the sound of a real cry of a baby. The family tells him he has a daughter, Zubayda. With a new Nubian coming in to the world, the narrator contemplates Nubians, and the new scene starts with a voice singing for the



people of Nubia.

The narrator praises the qualities of Nubians, their manners, dress and the sound of the piece of jewelry hung on both sides of the head: *shaw* .. *shaw*. The Nubian and the dancing jewelry reminds the narrator of Nubians' fascination with dancing. In his ears rings the sound of clubbing during the hand-palm dance: *trāāk* .. *trāk trāk* .. *trāāk* .. *trāk trāk*. He describes this dance and how everybody partakes in it: men, women, children and elders. He, in exaggeration, claims that even the sick, the people of the river and the people of the under-world would not miss dancing in Nubian wedding parties.

The scene reminds the narrator of his own wedding night, and how his mother and sister were wonderfully dressed, dancing *al-firrī* (a Nile fish) dance. He remembers the sounds of the jewelry movement: *shaw* .. *shaw*, the silver anklets: *klīn* .. *klīn* and the women's cries of joys: *lilī lilī lilī*. The scene brings to his mind once again the memories of his flirtation with *Ṣālḥa*. He remembers the day when she was riding her female donkey, and the sound of her hoofs: *diridjid* .. *diridjid*, and how he chased her and jumped behind her. He remembers their conversation, and the scene ends with the sound of her laugh: *hā' hā' .. hā' hā'*.

The narrator wakes from his memories to the sound of the children in the courtyard. They are celebrating the birth of the



new baby by dancing, singing and banging on tins: *kūm-bān-kāsh* .. *kūm-bān-kāssh*. They are also knocking on bottles with two spoons to make the sound with which the narrator ends the scene: *kīn klīn līn* .. *kīn klīn līn*.

The scene of the children reminds the narrator of his wedding night and Ṣālḥa's voice muttering: *immm* .. *immm*, in an indication of refusing to talk with her groom until he pays her money, which is a Nubian tradition. He describes the body of his bride, which is saturated with the essence of oils and herbs, and the arts of love making which her mother taught her. He groans in desire: *āāāh* .. *āāāh*. In the dark, the two of them jump in the Nile to be purified by its water. In his ears, the narrator hears the sound of the crash of their bodies in the river: *tūdīīshshsh* .. *tūdūūshshsh*. The alluvium of the river penetrates the bodies and waters the wombs, so babies come out screaming in the face of the sun: *wāāā'* .. *wāāā'*. The scene ends with this sound and the sound of the children playing with tins and bottles.

Again, the narrator wakes standing by the side of Ṣālḥa's bed, with the baby in his arms. He ends the story with a mixture of the sounds he used in the different scenes.

In this story, the author uses the technique of the stream of consciousness to be able to relate, in scenes, his cherished memories of Nubia. He uses only one incident, which is childbirth,



and takes it as the point of departure for his memories. In fact, the incident of childbirth with its precedings: flirtation, love, marriage, wedding and sex, and its meanings and consequences: pain, happiness, expectation, creation and continuity, is a natural stimulant for certain memories. Although childbirth is the only incident in the story, it does not get as much attention as the attention given to the memories the incident evokes.

In narrating the scenes, the narrator alternates between using the tenses: past, present and future. He uses the future tense only when he imagines the nature of the relationship between his daughter and his nephew, "I wonder .. is she going to fall to your fate? are you going to chase her in sand dunes?." (p. 60)

When he narrates the incident of the story, the childbirth, the narrator uses the present tense, "my wife screams in pain ... I sit with my family around me ... experienced men encourage me with repeated words," (p. 58) "in the room, she screams: *wīīīk wīīīk*. She leans on the two shoulders .. walks in exhaustion .. I wait in the courtyard." (p. 60)

When memories associate, the narrator begins to use two tenses: the past and the present. He uses the past tense when he relates his own "private" memories; his relationship with *Ṣālḥa*, whereas he uses the present tense when he relates his memories in general about Nubia and Nubian nights, which are far more important



to him, far more "present" in his mind. In his private memories, he remembers his flirtation with Ṣālḥa, using the past tense, "I flirted with Ṣālḥa two ways, decently .. and indecently ... I chased her a lot ... admired myself in front of her ... danced for her ... sang for her," (p. 59)

However, when his memories roam in general over play and dance in the beautiful Nubian nights, he uses the present tense, "As kids, we call each other ... run over the soft sands ... inhale the fresh air ... count the colors of the Nile." (p. 60) Also, when he remembers the singing in the moonlit nights, "In the moonlit evenings, I am amongst my friends ... under the two doom trees we sit, we sing *mawāwīl* ... we praise the kindness of the face of the beloved." (p. 62) He uses the same tense when he describes the dances, "in the hand-palm dance, they club vigorously ... the souls of the grandfathers watch over us ... come down to us ... mix with us." (p. 64)

In the passage where the narrator describes Nubians, tense is absent, for he uses nominal sentences, "brown faces. Clear eyes. white teeth .. and conscience. One and specific, our colors. The crown of the turban, snow white as daybreak. The gown, a glass of milk ... the shoes, pure red. The girls, their kohl, black black." (p. 63)



However, despite the fact that the narrator is using various tenses in the story, and is using the present tense to narrate the incident of the story, as if it is happening in the present, the narrator sets the general time framework for the story as a whole in the title and in the introductory passage. The title reveals that the story is about *layālī* <sup>c</sup>*atīka* (old nights)<sup>9</sup>, and in the introductory passage the narrator uses the vocabulary of the *ḥaddūtha* (tale or story), "long long ago..." The use of the present tense in narrating the general memories of Nubia, together with using the vocabulary of the *ḥaddūtha*, reveal the nostalgic feeling of the narrator for those old musk nights.

This is what the narrator wants to speak about: the *ḥaddūtha* (story) of the old musk nights in Nubia. The incident of the childbirth is the point of departure for the narrator to start talking about his memories, not the incident that he wants to talk about in the story. Even when his wife is screaming from labor pains inside the room, the narrator goes on describing the place, "Inside, my wife is screaming in pain. The courtyard of the house is spacious, and under the roofing I sit with my family around me." (p. 58) The only reaction of the narrator to the only incident in the story is when he gets the news that his wife has delivered the baby. He just,

---

<sup>9</sup> The word <sup>c</sup>*atīka* connotes old or obsolete, but also precious.



"threw away the *bāndjū* (marijuana) cigarette, jumped screaming .. the bestower is Him. The provider is Him. And the praiseworthy is Him. My uncle Bilāl the father of Ṣālḥa laughed. He said: did not I tell you to be patient? He embraced me while crying. My sister (Miskā) came out of the room soaked in sweat. She fell on me with kisses .. congratulation for your daughter Zubayda." (p. 63)

The story has no plot, the only event is the incident of the childbirth, which stimulates scenes in the narrator's mind. However, the way the author connects these scenes makes up for the lack of plot in the story. Thus, for the narrator, the incident of childbirth leaves the room for the memory scenes which become far more important than the event.

Moreover, the story has no characters but the narrator, for it is built on scenes. The structure of the story, as explained above, does not allow for the development of characters that have an active role in the story. Each scene is meant to convey a mood, whether individual or collective.

The sounds and voices are consciously used by the author in the beginning and the end of each scene, until the story ends in a symphony of sounds and voices. They connect the events of the story, which are just scenes from the memory of the narrator. This memory is not complete nor accurate without the sounds and voices



stored in the memory of the narrator, which are human, artificial, or from nature. The nature of the place itself is very quiet, therefore sounds and voices play a very important and complementary role to the nature of the place.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See, Kennedy, p. 73.



Zaynab Ubūrtī

The fourth and last story in the collection *Layālī al-misk al-ʿatīka* is the fantasy *Zaynab Ubūrtī*, a story that deals with the world of black magic and devils. The events of the story take place in a Nubian village and the narrator tells the story as he had heard it from an eyewitness, called *Hūlā*, who used to tell it to children in the Nubian village.

The story is about Zaynab, the ugly malicious woman who becomes known in the village as Zaynab Ubūrtī (Zaynab the ugly).<sup>11</sup> Not until she reaches forty is she married to an old widower. He punches her in a fight, causing all of her teeth to fall out with the exception of one that stays bent. She hits him on the head in return with an iron bar, paralyzing him. He divorces her and dies. Approaching her fifties, she marries Maḥmūd *isbitālya* (hospital), who has to stay away periodically in a hospital in Aswan because of his chronic disease. She curses him and curses the day she had to marry him.

Zaynab remembers a book about magic that her mother used to talk about. It is the only book left from the books of her

---

<sup>11</sup> In the story, the narrator explained the word *ubūrtī* (p. 80), which seemed inappropriate for he was telling the story to Nubian audience. It would have been more suitable for the author to have explained the meaning of this Nubian word in a footnote, or between brackets, as he did before.



grandfather Hamrīn the magician, whom the people of the village killed and buried far from the village. However, hyenas dig out his body and a strange monster eats him. Zaynab finds the book and studies it while her husband is away at the hospital. She does not understand anything except the chapter on how to make men impotent. And so it happens, she makes every man in the village impotent, and is also able to call Kākūkī the devil and make a contract with him. At the same time, the village starts to witness some strange phenomena in the climate of the place.

First, Zaynab orders the devil to build her a great house, get her a fat mule and bring her perfumes, gold and fur. Meanwhile, the village suffers from the freezing cold and the men from impotency. After a while, Zaynab starts to grumble and requests the devil to get her a man or provide her husband with manhood. The devil also begins to ridicule her and to gain more control over her.

One cold night, a baby freezes to death, so the women of the village begin to blame everything on Zaynab the magician. They push the men of the village to go out and kill her. Those who have a personal interest in getting rid of her go out, but, approaching her house, they feel very afraid and eventually only one man is able to come close to the house. The man is the chief guard of the village and has three wives. The minute he comes closer to the house, he hurries back and faints, for he encountered giants, wolves and scorpions coming out at him from everywhere.



The village lives in terror and cowardice for a while. Zaynab is very upset because she knows that what happened will draw an eternal line between her and the people of the village. She decides to abrogate the contract between her and Kākūkī, but he refuses to do so and controls her completely, taking away her vision gradually. The village, meanwhile, suffers from misery, fights and alternating seasons of freezing cold and scorching heat. Even beasts and cattle go mad, killing themselves.

After the devil has made her almost blind, Zaynab begins to regret her actions and wishes to have her former life back with her husband, who has died in the hospital in Aswan without her knowledge. She begs Kākūkī to let her use the mule to escape from the village, but he refuses. She sneaks out at night and accidentally meets Bahiyya, whose baby has died from the cold. Bahiyya beats her, and Zaynab runs away back to her house. She wants to kill the devil but she can not, so she takes the contract and burns it.

When the people of the village realize that Zaynab is becoming weak, the women urge the men again to go out and kill her. When they reach her house, they find that it has disappeared and that the climate has begun to take its normal course again. They break themselves into groups, and eventually her body is found by the chief guard of the village and Bahiyya's husband. They see a strange beast opening his mouth, breathing fire and crushing the skull between his jaws. The hyenas, who are standing nearby, tear



at the body snarling and barking. The people of the village look for the book of magic, but never find it.

Zaynab Ubūrtī is the heroine of the story, and the story of Zaynab is the story of sex and the role sex plays, whether positively or negatively, in people's lives. Sex stimulates the events of the story, whether on Zaynab's part or on the part of the people of the village. The motive for Zaynab to resort to magic is to deprive the women of the village of the sexual desire which she has never enjoyed, "I swear by the soul of my great-grandfather Hamrīn, no woman will taste what I am deprived of." (p. 82) It is for the same motive, sexual deprivation, that the people of the village want to kill Zaynab, in addition to the connection they make between her evil and the strange natural phenomena.

What Zaynab and the people of the village have been deprived of was not only the pleasure of the act of sex, but the social aspects associated with it,

"without this damn pleasant action, which bring the male and the female together, the colors of the world become pale and life spoils. The evenings of bragging between men about their exaggerated manhood get lost. The pretending woman loses the chance to drivel about the number of times her husband can, to hide her grief and hunger that has not been fulfilled by her worn out man. Needless to mention the abate in reproduction



and preserving the species that God has preferred over most of the creatures." (79)

Two worlds exist and interact in the story of Zaynab Ubūrtī, the world of reality and the world of metaphysics or supernatural. The story starts in the world of reality with the frame story, but the two worlds interact in the story within the frame story. With regard to both the form and the content, the story brings up the atmosphere of the Arabian Nights, where the world of superstition, magic and devils prevails, and is being narrated by a first person narrator, who acts like an omniscient narrator in the story within the frame story.

The narrator starts the story by identifying the creatures that exist in his environment, which he himself regards as very unique when he elaborates in the first sentence, "At our place, we divide them [creatures] into three [categories]." (p. 72) These categories are *al-admīr* (humans), of whom half are good and half are evil, people of the river, who are also good and bad, and the third category is people of the current, whose evil ones are unbearable. Those can only be evoked through a book of magic, and eventually they cause disaster and the one who calls them faces a horrible death.

This is how the narrator introduces the story, making everybody ready to hear a story about a human being who calls



someone from the people of the current and dies horribly. The narrator specifies the place as a village in the middle between the first and the second cataract, and that he heard this story from an old man, who lived through one hundred and ten floods and actually witnessed the events. So, the time of the story takes just as long as the telling of the story, while the time of narration covers several seasons.

At this point in the story, the frame story ends. The narrator of the frame story interferes from time to time to remind the audience that it is him who is narrating not Hūlā, e.g., "Hūlā straightens himself up, beats with his stick on the sand that separates us from him by an arm's length to scare us. He looks at our amazed eyes that watch him with tension," (p. 76) it is quite clear that he 'melts' into Hūlā's character as a narrator and does not even go back to the frame story at the end of the story.

As a matter of fact, it seems hard to call this first part of the story a 'frame story', for it has no story. It seems more appropriate to call it just a 'frame', or an introduction that sets the stage for the story of Zaynab. The story, as it seems, is more like a Nubian tale (*ḥaddūtha*) narrated by a story teller.

After the 'frame', or the introduction to the story, the story teller uses all the suspenseful elements that are usually employed in superstitious folktales, and demonstrates all the capabilities



he has in controlling his audience. The story teller begins his tale by showing the nature of the people of his village for the audience to appreciate the contradiction in their behavior later on, "We were people just like any people. But a bit better than all the people. We pray and bow down, dance and sin, be right and wrong, get stoned and drunk." (p. 74)

Instead of starting the story from its logic beginning, the life of Zaynab and what happens to her, he starts with the changes that happened to nature. People face weather that is so cold in winter that they have ice on the water, and so hot in summer that the sun almost hits the top of the mountain. After the story teller attracts the attention of his audience by mentioning these strange phenomena, he swears that the reason for this was the malicious woman Zaynab, and gives the audience the key to the tale.

The key is that Zaynab evokes the devil after she finds the book of magic. The story teller is not concerned that this might make the audience lose interest in the story, for the details will have enough suspense to keep them listening until the end. To arouse their desire for more, the story teller, before getting into the heart of the tale, tells his audience about what Zaynab does to the men of village, making them impotent, and the reaction of the women.



In addition to that, the story teller controls his audience by addressing them directly and by making jokes and sarcastic comments, such as "imagine, you generation of troubled time," (p. 74) or "Lucky for us and for you, the tops of Wāwāt [mountain] are miles away ... otherwise we would have melted ... and never beget you or saw your faces which are staring at me in imbecility and stupidity." (p. 76)

Moreover, the narrator, who is a first person narrator, shifts his role to an omniscient narrator in order to increase the suspense in the story. He talks about things he could never have seen or heard, which is one of the characteristics of the superstitious folktale. When he starts to speak about what happens to the men of the village when they first suffer from impotence, he is an omniscient narrator,

"After the evening prayer, the macho chief of the guards tried to make love to his youngest and newest wife, but she ridiculed him and talked to him shamelessly. The following night, he tried to make love to his middle wife, but he went out while she was grumbling nervously and in contempt." (p. 77)

The same thing happens with his third wife.



In a much more important element of suspense, the narrator speaks about the moments when Zaynab calls up the devil. He even describes him and the dialogue he has with Zaynab, although nobody but her can see him or hear him,

"Dark is gloomy, deep and still. She is in the courtyard of her house, with nothing appearing from her but a yellow shine in her eyes and in her bent tooth. She read some incantations and mumbled for a while sweating all around." (p. 84)

This is how he sees Zaynab, then he moves to describe the devil,

"She hazily saw the fire ball piercing from between the tops of the mountain. In a matter of seconds it was over the courtyard. It came down, became inflated and turned into phosphoric gas that has become a horrible body taller than the tallest palm and larger than the largest sycamore. In a moment the color became orange with some parts becoming blue. The nails of his hands and his horn were as black as a locust fruit. His bold head shines between his long spread out ears, which shake whenever he talks. His eyes are cut vertically and without eyelashes. A nose two times the span of the hand and a mouth three times the span of the hand. As for his legs, they were sunk knees down in the sand of the courtyard." (p. 84)



Then the narrator starts talking about the dialogue between Zaynab and the devil, and her fears that someone might see or hear him:

"- Hey you, lower your voice. They will hear you.  
I told you no human being can hear me but you and no one  
can see me but you." (p. 85)

In more than one scene, the story teller mixes his role as a first person narrator with the role of an omniscient narrator.

The character of Zaynab is a tragic character who wants to defy her fate. She "grew ugly and drained. Envious and malevolent. (p. 79) Due to her physical and moral ugliness ... no male has ever cherished her womanhood." (p. 80) At the age of forty, she marries an old widower who adds to her deformity, physically and psychologically. This husband admits before he dies that "the reason for the problems between him and Ubūrtī is that he felt disgusted by her and could not get near her regardless of her begging." (p. 81)

When she becomes fifty, she marries her second husband, Maḥmūd *Isbitālyā*, who is sick and weak. He marries her just to have a woman to look after him, which deepens her feelings of not being a woman because she has never had any sex life. The importance of that matter to her is evident in her attempts to brag falsely about



what her first husband was doing, "God bless my first husband, he was so and so. He made me feel like a worthwhile woman." (p. 81)

In her fifties, Zaynab loses hope in enjoying her womanhood. She wants to defy her fate by resorting to magic, in order to have revenge on all the men of the village who have had let her down, and on the women who have enjoyed something she never has.

She also thinks that magic will help her be rich and find a man to fulfill her needs. She makes the men of the village impotent and calls the devil Kākūkī<sup>12</sup> to provide herself with wealth and prestige. But her defiance does not work in her favor, and the only thing she gets out of it is disappointment in not having a man and more hatred from the people of the village,

- "     -     Why are you sad? What do you need woman?  
       -     To be a woman I need a man.  
       -     And your husband?  
       -     He is colder than the water in the pot at dawn  
              time." (p. 90)

After the people of the village have made sure that she practices magic, some of them go out to kill her, but come back

---

<sup>12</sup> The name Kākūkī is made up of two words: Kā, which means the soul in hieroglyphic language, and Kūkī, which means the male organ in Nubian language. (An interview with the author in Alexandria on August 5, 1995.)



terrorized from the acts of magic they have seen. Zaynab knows that this accident will make it impossible for her to make her dreams come true in the village. Kākūki knows that as well, and begins to ridicule and manipulate her. It is too late to turn back the clock:

- " - What have you done to my cousin? Have I told you to do that?
- I protected you and taught him a lesson. Now, all the people of the village will be afraid of you totally.
- I want their love.
- Whose love? Those who deprived you of men?
- I consent to my fate.
- *Hūū' hūū'*. Now? You should not have done it in the first place.
- We separate.
- It is not as easy as you think." (p. 97)

Zaynab could not change her fate through magic or by evoking the devil, so she gives up and burns the contract between her and the devil. She knows very well that this means the end for her, but it is the only good thing she has done in her life before she becomes food for the beasts of the desert.

In the story, nature has been affected, positively and negatively, by the forces of good and evil. It is as if the



elements of nature have to live in harmony with the behavior of human beings. The narrator relies a great deal in depicting the terrors that reflect the evil in the village on the details of nature's reaction. He uses them often enough for them to seem repetitious, but they help emphasize the concept of harmony. In addition, they reinforce the superstitious aspect of the story and the suspenseful element as well,

"we were done with the cold in the beginning of *Barmahāt* (the seventh month of the Coptic calendar). As if this *Barmahāt* was a period of rest, after which .. a scorching summer overwhelmed us as of *Birmūda* (the eighth month of the Coptic calendar). The sun went down and down to the extent that every morning when it rose, its bloody halo crashed with the top of the eastern mountain, so the mountain cracks and lows from the terror that overwhelms it, and its rocks fly around burning, going down rapidly and noisily until it sinks in the Nile which passes directly beneath it. So we hear the sound of the water wailing from its fire .. tishshshshsh." (p. 75)

Even the animals do not accept that the evil element which has dealt with the devil is buried in this land. So, the hyenas dig the body of the magician Hamrīn, Zaynab's great-grandfather, out from the mountain and tear it apart,



"that even a unique strangely very large beast took Hamrīn's skull between his jaws and pressed on it until it exploded making a horrible sound. The beast raised his mouth up for the brain to flow through inside his throat. Then he began to break down its bones." (p. 82)

Similarly, Zaynab eventually suffers the same death by the beasts: "the hyenas attacked the body, cutting, tearing and breaking it, snarling, howling and snoring." (p. 113)

However, the book of magic still exists and no one finds it, which makes the place exposed to evil elements which might use the book again. So the story does not just end at this point. There is a warning to people against evil in the future. This, in fact, could be one of the purposes of this story, or the purpose of folktales in general. People need to be reminded of certain actions or incidents and their consequences for people to be aware when they see the initial signs in the future.



The short story collection *Arūs al-Nīl* is composed of four stories. *Arūs al-Nīl*, *Nīl*, *al-Nīl* and *al-Nīl* are the focus of the author's concern in these stories, which bring to light different aspects of human feelings. The four stories take place primarily in the Nile valley and the surrounding areas.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COLLECTION *ARŪS AL-NĪL*

BY YAḤYĀ MUKHTĀR

Muḥammad, the son of the chief of the village, married Fāṭima and she became pregnant, bringing shame and disgrace to her people and the whole village. *Arūs al-Nīl*, as well as Fāṭima's parents, think that an abortion will solve the problem, and at the same time alleviate the fear of the people of the village. Fāṭima takes her daughter to a group of other women in the village who carry out the abortion, while her husband goes to the shrine of the two sheikhs of the village to pray for help.



The short story collection <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl is comprised of four stories: <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl, Wāqī<sup>c</sup>a, al-Ṭard and Ḥikāya li-al-nisyan. People are the focus of the author's concern in these stories, which bring to light different aspects of human feelings. The four stories take place primarily in Nubia and address Nubian culture and Nubian concerns.

### <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl

The story reveals delicate human feelings in a most difficult situation, where a father is about to kill his own daughter. Farīda is the daughter of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān, who is a free man now after years of slavery. The feeling of being a slave has never really left him, and at the same time his position from the village's perspective, has not changed. He, his wife Nabūh and his daughter, have never ceased serving SHāhīn Tumūsh, his old master, nor rendering their services to the whole village.

Mustafa, the son of the chief of the village, seduces Farīda and she becomes pregnant, bringing shame and disgrace to her parents and the whole village. Al-SHaykh SHāhīn, as well as Farīda's parents, think that an abortion will solve the problem, and at the same time alleviate the anger of the people of the village. Nabūh takes her daughter to a group of elder women in the village who carry out the abortion, while her husband goes to the shrines of the two sheikhs of the village to pray for help.



However, the <sup>c</sup>umda, chief of the village, does not find his son's act criminal enough, nor is the village satisfied with the abortion solution. He urges some people to burn down <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān's shanty to force him to leave the village. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān realizes, then, that he will always be an outcaste as long as his daughter is alive. So, he makes up his mind to drown her in the Nile at night. Farīda senses what is going on in her father's mind, and how difficult such a decision must have been for him. To save him the terrible burden of implementing his decision, she jumps out of the boat into the Nile with a sudden movement that capsizes the boat. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān falls in the water calling his daughter's name and calling people for help.

The story reveals the feelings of a man and his daughter who, although both are victims of oppression and injustice, have to make a sacrifice. The man is ready to sacrifice his daughter for fear of old memories of estrangement, alienation and loneliness, and the girl, who has never had any grip over her own destiny, decides to rise above her suffering and misfortune and sacrifice herself for her father. It also reveals the injustice and selfishness of man through the village's stand against <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān and his family. Men and women, even children and the two sheikhs buried in the village, have taken a stand against the man and his family.

<sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān, who is oppressed and treated unjustly by the village, and by the system that made him a slave, oppresses, in



turn, his daughter. He decides to sacrifice her in return for acceptance from the village and to avoid being expelled, and at the same time, revenge the people of the village by imitating the 'honorable'. However, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān's feelings as a father overpower him eventually, and he can not help but call Farīda when she falls into the river and cries for help.

<sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl (Nile bride) has been a traditional ritual passed from generation to generation,<sup>1</sup> as a sacrifice to the Nile to win its favor. Whether the story is true or not,<sup>2</sup> Farīda is the modern version of the Nile bride, who is also sacrificed but for ignoble reasons. The modern Nile bride herself sets an example in nobility by turning the situation into a sacrifice of herself to save her father the painful decision of casting into her into the river,

"She no longer weeps herself. She was weeping her father .. her desire blazed deep in her to sacrifice herself for him, to relieve him from what he feels .. to save him the pains. To cast herself [into the water]." (p. 30)

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Budge, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> See, Lane, p. 488.



The slave complex is the driving force behind 'Abd al-Raḥmān's actions, as much as the class-conscious view towards those who were slaves is the driving force behind the village's actions. No one in the village sees what happens as affecting human beings. For them, the shame is not what the son of the chief of the village does to Farīda or her family, but that she becomes pregnant from the son of the chief of the village. The only thing they think will remedy the situation is punishment of the victim.

Even the selfish solution that sheikh SHāhīn found does not satisfy the people of the village, who insist on the expulsion the whole family from the village,

"al-SHaykh SHāhīn Tumūsh was very angry at Farīda and 'Abd al-Raḥmān and on the people of the village as well, they did not lose anything .. but he lost the hand of 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Nabūh and Farīda .. everyone agreed with him about the abortion .. he was very happy .. everything will be over .. the abortion will satisfy them." (p. 22)

To force 'Abd al-Raḥmān out of the village, they set his shanty on fire. Even the children take part in this 'amusing' spectacle, and those who are trying to extinguish the fire are doing so for fear the fire might reach their own homes,



"For the first time he sees his neighbors holding palm branches hitting the sparks flying from the burning of his shanty to extinguish it out of concern about their own shanties .. the whole village gathered in groups .. looking and talking .. and pointing [at it] .. raising their voice. Or a rejoicing laugh will come from the gathering. And some boys, from where did they come at this early dawn .. rejoicing and clapping with their hands." (p. 27.)

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān does not find any help or comfort from the village, even Heaven does not help him, "Sayidī Kabīr and al-SHaykh ʿAbd Allah did not accept his offering but hastily set the people of the village to expel him from the land in whose depth are their two virtuous bodies." (p. 27)

Also, those who used to be slaves do not comfort him; on the contrary, DJabāya Marsīla, the woman who carries out Farīda's abortion, exaggerates her anger to imitate the 'honorable',

"The hands of DJabāya sneak softly like a snake into her belly .. fingering it .. she mumbled. Three months .. she insulted her mother and father .. and because she was "ushāh" (slave) her anger was flaming, and she had more ardor than the "honorable" women." (p. 16)



Before the burning of his shanty, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān is ready to forget about what happened to his daughter in return for being allowed to stay in the village,

"With the move of some of the "honorable" of the village to perform abortion on Farīda .. he gained courage and a little hope for that silence to be broken .. resorted to the two sheikhs to expedite things so he can get back to his life among them." (p. 21)

But after that incident, it becomes clear in his mind that the village is leaving him with two bitter options, to kill his daughter or leave the village; and he opts for the former.

In his memories, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān saves what happened to him on the day he is taken away from his land and his people, while sleeping, to be sold as a slave in strange places and to strange people. Thus, in his consciousness, being driven away from the land is tied with slavery, estrangement and alienation. This is the feeling he remembers, and fears, when the village burns down his shanty, "The bleating of his emaciated goat set on fire woke him up. He cried "mother" in his old language .. exactly as when he woke up terrified on that boat many years ago." (p. 26)

So, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān can not help but stick to his new roots and offer his daughter as a terrible price for this decision,



"He was not thinking about her being killed but about the burning down of his shanty, where he married Nabūh and begot Farīda, which he had built since his master freed him .. the burning down of the shanty was a sharp sickle that eradicated the roots of his life, uprooting his existence .. the village has refused him completely. It sentenced him .. he knows for certain that all the villages will expel him." (p. 26)

At the same time, and maybe because he wants to convince himself that what he is doing is right, he sees his decision as revenging the "honorable" of the village, who are the only ones capable of making such a decision, "All of a sudden he felt that killing her is revenging them. A revenge that is derived from his feeling that only he who is an honorable like them can dare to kill." (p. 27)

The story comes to an open end, creating sympathy with both victims, the father who is crying for help and the daughter who has drowned herself to sacrifice herself for her father. It gives room to open questions: Would 'Abd al-Rahmān save Farīda? Can he save himself from the whirlpools of the river? Would he get the acceptance of the village in return for the price he paid?

In narrating this human tragedy, the author uses some techniques that enable him to set the scene and create the appropriate atmosphere for the story. He uses an omniscient



narrator who does not participate in the story. The type of narrator that Rimmon-Kenan refers to, following Genette's terms, as both extradiegetic and heterodiegetic.<sup>3</sup> Such a reliable narrator is able to reveal the innermost thoughts and feelings of 'Abd al-Rahmān and Farīda in the main incident of the story; a father who is about to kill his daughter.

From his position 'above', the narrator, like a cameraman, describes the scene, provides the necessary information about the characters and reports what is in their minds. The narrator never uses dialogue or indirect speech; he reports the whole story. This helps intensify the mood of the story, for what is expected from Farīda and her father in a situation such as this but silence.

The narrator starts close to the end of the story and uses flashbacks to provide background information on the story and the characters. So, the story time is as long as the scene in the boat until Farīda throws herself in the water, but in text time the narrator creates the space he needs to narrate the fictional 'reality'.<sup>4</sup>

The story starts with 'Abd al-Rahmān and Farīda in the boat, with the narrator describing the background in nominal sentences that made the scene cinematic,

---

<sup>3</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 44-45.



"The feluca was swinging on the surface of the river shadowless .. the west bank with its sand that hiss hot air is moving away and plunging in the dark .. and the croaking of the frogs squatting between the thick esparto stems is fading away ... two ghosts sitting opposite each other, the external features of their two bodies are defined by the overall frame of the surface of the river .. Farīda in front and her father in the middle." (p. 13)

Important as it is in the beginning of the story, the narrator completes the mood this picture should convey by selecting the words that give the sense of terrifying sadness and mystification,

"With the striking of oars they heard the wailing of the whirlpools at the stumps of the palms which are sunk, erected in the dark like giant ghosts, with their branches which are hanging in sad gloomy silence .. the heavy dark breezeless silent night is descending on the heart of 'Abd al-Rahmān and his daughter Farīda, and on the Nile and the palms and the houses of the villages and hamlets." (p. 14)

After the scene is prepared, the narrator starts to open up the worlds of the two characters. He starts to describe the cruel struggle in Farīda's mind between seeing her father in the current situation like the monster in Nubian tales, *al-Arkabī*, and her love for him,



"It never occurred to her that she will feel lonely while he is with her, or that she will be afraid while she is with him .. when her mother beat her she ran to him .. fall back on his wide chest with his big arms which he wraps around her and the smell of his sweat and tobacco of his cigarettes fill up her nose." (p. 15)

Then, the narrator mystifies Farīda's fear of her father, when blood starts to sneak down between her thighs, and uses the flashback to describe the savage operation to abort Farīda. He moves to <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān again to also reveal his suffering and the struggle between killing his daughter for fear of loneliness and estrangement if he were to leave the village and his beautiful memories about her,

"Farīda runs to him with her little stumbling steps .. he kisses her on her mouth .. she closes her eye-lids apprehensively from the touch of his coarse moustache on her soft black skin. He wishes to hold her. To embrace her with a tender strength and her childish smell sneaks into his nose." (p. 19)

The extensive use of flashback is necessitated by the fact that the first narrative starts close to the end of the story. Flashback is termed as analepsis by Rimmon-Kenan, following Genette, to avoid the cinematic-visual connotation of the term.



Analepsis is defined as, "a narration of a story-event at a point in the text after later events have been told."<sup>5</sup> Analepsis and the use of an omniscient narrator enable the author to go deep into the minds of his characters, provide information about the events that precede the starting point of the narrative and create the atmosphere that overwhelms the story.

These techniques allow the author a style of description where the tiniest details illustrate how the girl, absent-mindedly, pictures her father's position relative to the boat, the oars, the waves of the river and the darkness in the background.<sup>6</sup> It also allows him to describe, in very long sentences, the cruelty of the struggle in the minds of the father and his daughter. He describes it all as if he follows the logical order that the feeling of sadness takes in the self,

"Clear drops of heavy sadness are poured into her depth, and the fear drowned in the depth of the soul's sadness over the self, and plunged and stayed in hiding moving that sadness until it put her on the blade of an edge thin as a sword .. at the certain realization that reaches the deep belief and admittance that the end is close .. and that she is on the steps of that mysterious door that leads to the other side."

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> <sup>c</sup> *Arūs al-nīl*, p. 17.



This desire to describe feelings and scenes is reflected in the romantic language the author uses in description. He also uses a few Nubian words that are very relevant to the environment. He uses, for example, *al-Arkabī*, the monster in Nubian tales, to express Farīda's fear of her father, and emphasizes the class position of the woman who gave Farīda an abortion by referring to her as *al-ushāh*, the salve.

The story has only two main characters: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and his daughter, Farīda. In characterization, the author focuses on internal rather than external features. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān is characterized as a defeated man. He spends all his life, whether in slavery or as a freeman, serving people. He derives his happiness from belonging to a large family, the village, a particular place on earth and from having his small family, his wife and daughter. The driving force behind ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's actions are his slavery complex: the fear of being sold to another master or being moved to someplace else. He is ready to swallow the shame and disgrace, and forget about what happened to his daughter in return for keeping his sense of belonging to a place and a family,

"And suddenly nothing .. everybody denies him ... They do not see him any more .. his loneliness fell upon him dry rough and dreary .. no father no mother no uncle .. no one .. no one but



Nabūh and Farīda, and he can not even talk to them." (p. 24)

The author does not focus much on the history of the character of Farīda. She is presented as a young girl suffering from physical pain after the savage abortion operation, and the psychic pain of waiting to be killed by her beloved father. Only at the end of the story does the narrator give the round character of Farīda more space to express herself. Rather than using flashbacks, he skillfully narrates the stream of consciousness of the thoughts of the girl.

This technique allows him to show the tour she makes in her own mind to the old cherished places of her home and the village,

"She sneaked like the soul of the dead sneaks to his home after being buried in a longing affectionate return to every corner in it .. she was touching everything .. *al-<sup>c</sup>andjarīb* (bed made of palm branches) .. the coop of the her chick." (p. 29)

It also allows him to show the different changes in her feelings towards the village, the people of the village and towards her father.

She has a sudden feeling of clarity in her mind, a feeling of forgiveness even to those who have hurt her. Then, she has a



feeling of contempt and hatred for all the men and women of the village, followed by a sudden feeling of joy overwhelmed by the idea of liberation, riddance from the woman who made her suffer from abortion, the man who raped her, and even from her father.

This feeling of salvation or liberation captures her completely. She, then, has the idea of sacrificing herself for her father, for she starts to see him in a new light,

"And for the first time she looks at her father in compassion and sadness, a sadness that almost had her stand up and embrace him and cry on his chest .. and she felt him as never before .. very close and very loving .. more close and loving than he has been .. and she felt him lonely and poor and weak and humiliated." (p. 30)



In this story too, the author deals with human suffering as his main theme. He explores human nature: the good and the bad in Man's self. In the beginning of the story, the author quotes Nikos Kazantzakis, in his book "A Report to Greco", as an indication of his theme, "Deep down inside us a layer over layer of darkness .. coarse voices and hairy hungry beasts."

The story is about the young Upper Egyptian Muḥammadayn, who escapes from his village, Abū Qurḡāṣ, for fear of blood revenge. He is afraid to see his father being killed one day, or he himself being killed, because of the endless blood feud between his family and another family in the Upper Egyptian village. Without knowing exactly where he is going, Muḥammadayn escapes to the south and ends up in the Nubian village, al-DJunayna wa-al-SHubāk.

He is completely stunned to find that people there speak a different language, and is terrified of what they might do to him. There is no communication between him and the people who gather around him, surprised to see a strange man in their village. They are suspicious and curious but can not communicate with him until Ḥasan Makkī, the young educated Nubian who speaks Arabic, arrives.

When the chief of the village makes sure that Muḥammadayn is not escaping because of any wrongdoing, he takes him to join his



slaves and provides him with a shanty. Ḥasan Makki, who saved Muḥammadayn by being able to speak Arabic to him, and his two friends Sulaymān Fāris and Ṣāliḥ KḤalīl develop a friendship with Muḥammadayn. Inexplicably, three men, Ḥasan Tabid, ṢḤarīf Barsī and Muḥammad DJa<sup>c</sup>far, who found Muḥammadayn hiding when he first came to the village, harbor hatred toward him.

Muḥammadayn opens his heart to his friend Ḥasan and tells him about what his life was like in the village in Upper Egypt and why he has escaped. Suddenly, when he realizes that, by escaping, he has betrayed his father, Muḥammadayn jumps into the river in an attempt to drown himself. But, life's will overpowers him and he comes out of the river intending to wait for an opportune time to go back to his village. While Muḥammadayn is sleeping in his shanty, the three Nubian men who have hated him from the very beginning break into his shanty. They tie him up and, in a very cruel and primitive way, castrate him and run away.

After the author has shown the unjustness of the Nubian village in ʿArūs al-nīl, he presents the savage behavior of some Nubians, which is contrary to what is known about the peaceful nature of the Nubians. He presents a good human example of those who befriend the 'stranger', and an example of those hypocrites who pretend to be peaceful but treat strangers cruelly. And although the incident that causes misfortune to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and his family is presented in the story ʿArūs al-nīl, the text in Wāk<sup>c</sup>a



does not justify the behavior of the three Nubian men.

The author exposes the deceit and pretense of the Nubians' claim that they are peaceful people. In the title of the story *wāk'a*, which means an incident or event, the author does not use the definite article, which means it is one of other such incidents that happen in the Nubian village. In the beginning of the story, the nature, though beautiful, or maybe because of its beauty, deceives even the Nubian himself,

"The milky gray shadows of sun rays reflection and its refraction on water vapor particles that are hung on the branches and leaves of the palm grove of "*al-Aghasīniyya*" ... deceived the three schoolmates friends of "*al-Dur*" school."  
(p. 33)

From the moment *Muḥammadayn* is found, the village has its own doubts and suspicions. *Sharīf Nāṭik*, sheikh of the mosque, thinks the man is a thief; some young men think he is a police informant sent to spy on them; and *Ḥasan Būris*, the water-wheel carpenter, thinks the man came to steal monuments. *Muḥammadayn* is saved from the doubts and suspicions of the people who gather around him by the kind educated young man, *Ḥasan Makkī*.

*Ḥasan* is proud of his village when he answers *Muḥammadayn*'s question about whether there were blood feuds in the village. He is



proud of his village which does not know blood feuds or theft,  
just,

"provocation to the extent of striking or holding one another's by hand .. then censure and reconciliation .. and when the dispute is severe due to inheritance or distribution of each person's share of dates or millet crop .. only a hit with a club." (p. 49)

Peace in the Nubian village is for its own people, not for strangers or slaves. The story shows those who accept the stranger, those who have to accept the situation because the chief of the village accepts it, and those who refuse the stranger entirely,

"The people of the village were not pleased with this situation. But giving up to the will of their chief and sheikh accepted his presence cautiously, as for Ḥasan Tabid, SHarīf Birsī and Muḥammad DJa<sup>c</sup>far they refused his presence completely suspicious and worried about mysterious evils that will definitely cast the village on the hand of this cunning stranger." (p. 41)

In fact, the text does not reveal anything about these 'mysterious evils' or the reason behind this hatred on part of the three men for Muḥammadyan despite, "his good manners and politeness." (p. 42) Even those around him do not find an



explanation for such hatred to the extent of castrating the man at the end of the story.

If it is just that the author wants to bring to light one of the inexplicable dark sides of the human self, why castration in particular? Especially in that Hasan Tabid himself answered Hasan Makki, when he asked about Muḥammadyan, saying that, "maybe he went down to wash in the river seizing the opportunity that the beach is free of girls and women at this time of the day." (p. 47)

So, Muḥammadyan already avoids such sensitive situations, where women are near by. Was castration meant to be a punishment for Muḥammadyan to lose his manhood physically after he lost it morally through fear and the escape from responsibility? Maybe, but the hatred of the three men for Muḥammadyan is still a mystery the text does not illuminate.

Muḥammadayn is presented from the beginning as a cowardly hesitant character. When he is surrounded by the people of the Nubian village who are curious about who he is and where he comes from,

"he inhaled deeply which caused air to be held up in his chest until he almost choked .. his surprise grew up until it became absentmindedness which swallowed him up in a convulsing whirlpool that pushed him to the verge of a rapid faint." (p.



And he starts to hesitate and review his situation, "My folks and family rather to face my fate and destiny amongst them was better than what I am in now." (p. 39)

Muhammadayn does not provide a good reason for one to sympathize with him, because his justification for leaving his village, "I fear killing. I rather fear the blood and its color," (p. 52) and for being afraid of blood, which he suddenly realizes in a moment of deep thought, is not convincing,

"A long stream of blood exploded from the neck of a cock when his mother cut it with a sharp knife blade .. he flapped his wings hard and slipped away rapidly from her hand to slap him [Muhammadayn] with his wings on the face." (p. 52)

He himself, then, feels that this fear was not a good enough reason to escape from his village. When he thinks about it deeply, he realizes that he has betrayed his father by escaping. He rushes to the river to drown himself, but his cowardice overcomes him eventually and he swims back to shore deciding to go back to his village at the appropriate time,

"He gave up to death ... and suddenly Muhammadayn went up to the surface and the strokes of his hands and legs started to



take him to the shore ... and inhaling the first air breeze, the idea of determining to go back and beg for the father's forgiveness and to consent to destiny concluded inside him." (p. 54)

Muḥammadayn behaves in a cowardly manner in all the confrontations he has in his own village, in the Nubian village and when he decides to take his own life. So, he ends up losing his manhood physically. In <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān lost his freedom when he was pulled out of his land and environment, and here Muḥammadayn loses his manhood because he has escaped from his land and environment.

The story is narrated by an omniscient narrator who is able to express what goes on in the minds of the people of the village, and at the same time, uses flashbacks to give the reasons why Muḥammadayn escaped from his village in Upper Egypt. But the narrator reports at some length about a number of people from the village who do not have any role in the story, and leaves other actions that need explanation.

There are many unnecessary details in the narrative which add to the structural weakness of the end of the story, the unjustified attack on Muḥammadayn. The narrator repeatedly describes not only the place where the people of the village gather around the stranger, but its location in relation to the surroundings as well,



"al-DJunayna wa-al-SHubāk is all there as they guessed .. near "al-farkī" - the inlet - which separates it with its great depth from Tūshka SHark in the south .. the roaring crowd was in "Adjūlāsh" hamlet which is adjacent to the inlet and not in Amka land as they thought in the beginning, and specifically on "al-mashrī" - the footpath - that goes up to the main road which leads to the court of the chief of the village." (p. 35)

The narrator also mentions, in this 'short' story, the names of quite a number of characters - nearly twenty five names - most of which do not play any role in the story, or at least did not enrich the text, in addition to characters from Muḥammadayn's family in Upper Egypt, whose names are not mentioned.

The situation of the people gathering around the stranger in the beginning of the story may justify the presence of these characters and their comments, but perhaps the 'recording' of all these names is a temptation to describe or give the background of a number of them. For example, Ṣāliḥ KHalīl, the son of KHalīl DJazma, the only grocer in the village (p. 35), and Ḥasan Būris, who learned nothing from the excavation mission but drinking, are characters that have no role in the story.

The narrator also describes the trip the three friends make to visit the family across the Nile, whose only purpose in the text is to illustrate how lonely Muḥammadayn feels when his friends are



away. But, he goes into details again about one of them staying behind, and the difficult trip for the other two coming back by land instead of across the river. He describes their clothes, the road and the mountain,

"*al-mūlīh* - the mountain - stands like a solid high wall between *Ibrīm* and *al-DJunayna* and extends for several arms inside the Nile to be a natural separator between the two villages, but the existence of "*shabh farandj* - a narrow passage - made commuting between them on land not impossible."

(p. 46)

Getting into the worlds of different characters combined with the repeated description of the village and the fact that there is no main incident or main action in the plot, weakens the structure and the unity of effect in the story. The story focuses more on giving a wide range of characters from the Nubian village and describing the geography of that particular village. Even at the peak of the crisis of the stranger, with his worries and fears of the people who gathered around him, the narrator disregards the mood that this scene conveys and starts describing the village, using Muḥammadayn's voice,

"Amid the entangled dust and the very clear shining sun in the open sky, under the plain rays of which the village houses shine with its white and bright yellow walls and its fronts



which are decorated with ornamented porcelain plates and the wide smooth stone benches that are extended as wide as the fronts of the houses .. he was immersed reflecting about all this forgetting or pretending to forget what is around him and what could happen to him." (p. 39)

However, the narrator describes the environment in some scenes skillfully and indirectly, interweaving it in the structure of the story. He describes a daily activity in the village in the context of affirming the complete involvement of the three friends in playing their game,

"they were engrossed in playing *"al-ṭāb al-akhḍar"* - a game with palm leaves - thinking that the day is in its beginning without noticing that the voices of the girls and women who were talking shortly while filling *"al-ṣaḥn kūbīh"* - a deep copper container - from the Nile, going up to the houses at the edge of the sloping hills have vanished a while ago with the withdrawal of the sounds of donkeys and cows and goats which have been driven to staples." (p. 34)

He also uses the event of discovering a stranger in an environment that hardly sees strangers to portray the boredom of the village people,



"They deserted the stone benches and guest rooms and the stretched yawning extended as long as the endless hours of the day regardless the tens of games of "al-sīdja" (nought and crosses) they play or the twining and stretching of ropes of fibers the whole day or the decorating of the plates made of palm leaves." (p. 35)

In this story, speech is reported directly through dialogue, which gives the characters a chance to express themselves freely, away from the narrator. The dialogue allows the characters to use more Nubian words, which the author has to translate in the text itself.



al-Ṭard

This story addresses the suffering of the Nubians after the second extension of the Aswan Dam in 1933, and the consequences on family relations. Due to the flooding of most of the remaining lands, Nubian men had to migrate to the north to seek ways to support their families.

DJābir and his mother Fātī are waiting for the father, who is working in Cairo, to send a ṭard (a parcel). DJābir remembers the days he and his mother spent with his father in Cairo. During that period, the Second World War, the father is dismissed from his work and can hardly support them. Because of the *turwasa* (*al-ṭard*: dismissal from employment), the father has to send them back to the village, *al-DJ*unayna wa-*al-SH*ubāk.

The mother goes back to the village pregnant and delivers there. As the Nubian custom dictates, the family waits for a parcel from the father congratulating them on the safe delivery. After the first congratulation letter, they wait for months and years for the parcel. This means that the father is suffering, because no one disregards this traditional obligation. Finally, the parcel comes with its simple gifts, which make the small family very happy and assure them about their supporter.



Without rhetorical speech, the author presents the suffering of the Nubians after the second extension of the Aswan Dam in 1933, through a very revealing key incident, which is the wait for the parcel. The majority of Nubian men have to migrate to the north leaving their families behind. When they settle there, they send for the families to join them. In both cases, the family suffer one way or another.

On one hand, they suffer in the north from working in marginal humiliating jobs, constantly threatened with dismissal and receiving inferior treatment as Nubians, which DJābir feels as a child in Cairo, "the harassments of the Cairenes and their calling him and his fellow-Nubians "hey black .. hey barbarī". (p. 58)

On the other hand, they suffer in the south from the absence of the supporter, the father, "he will not see his father about whom he wove before he sees him dreams and stories from his imagination to tell them to his friends." (p. 58) And the challenge becomes to maintain the relations between families through letters, parcels and money orders sent from those who work in the north to their families in the Nubian village.

In the story, the parcel is the proof of the continuity of family relations and the key of the family's assurance, not for what it contains but for what it symbolizes,



"As for him and his mother, they were no longer waiting for the parcel or dreaming of what it contains, nor even for the agreed upon seventy five piasters money order for monthly expenses .. just a letter containing greetings and salute and with it the assurance." (p. 61)

The author plays with the meanings of the word *al-ṭard*: parcel, dismissal, expulsion, to create the sense of contradiction and fragmentation that resulted from the migration of Nubians to work in the north, "for the time is the time of *al-turwasa* (dismissal)." (p. 58) On one hand, *al-ṭard*, the parcel, represents assurance and security for the Nubian family, and on the other hand *al-ṭard*, dismissal from work and expulsion from the village, represents the opposite. In both cases, the Nubian families live in constant tension and oscillation between the two meanings, waiting for *al-ṭard*, which "ruined everything." (p. 60)

Mukhtār selects the key incident very carefully, in that it reveals the concerns of security of the Nubian family and its endeavor to maintain family ties. The story has a plot typical of a short story, where the story starts close to the end, and an omniscient narrator who expresses, without exaggeration or getting into unnecessary details, the concerns of the characters.



Unintrusively, the narrator presents the characters indirectly through actions and speech.<sup>7</sup> He shows them in different situations, leaving their behavior to reveal their tension, happiness or anxiety. He pays much less attention to external characterization, for the story is not really a story of characters. The author rather employs spatial time to focus on the importance of the event and the setting.

In order to show how worried and impatient DJābir is while waiting for *al-būsta*, the postboat, to see whether it is carrying his father's parcel this time or not, the author creates a picture, "He sat alone holding a dry palm branch playing with it in the black soft mud." (p. 57) This is also illustrated in DJābir when he hears the whistle indicating the arrival of the postboat, "DJābir shook violently till he almost fell down for the sudden whistle of the postboat which came discontinuously in three long strong gushes." (p. 62)

In other instances, he describes the characters' behavior to emphasize their feeling in particular situations. He describes, for example, DJābir's embarrassment as seen by the people of the village for the many times he waits in vain for the postboat, hoping to receive the parcel,

"He left the stone bench and returned hurrying putting his

---

<sup>7</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, p. 63-64.



hand over his turban until he reached the tree, climbed it and hid .. He does not want anyone even Ḥasan Makki, he did not have a desire in a self-retirement but he does not want anyone to see him today also as they have seen him tens of times before." (p. 60)

The narrator uses flashbacks to provide the necessary background information that show the suffering of the Nubian family. In the same manner as above, he describes how the father feels, after being dismissed from work, when he comes home empty-handed everyday, "He returns everyday with abashment looks and lips shaking in resentment and surrender to fate, asking their forgiveness because he is empty-handed not carrying the food they expect." (p. 58)

Despite the dramatic potential of the situation, the scene where DJābir meets his father in the train station for the first time after he migrated to the north is described objectively, showing how difficult the situation is for the child being unable to recognize his father,

"No one of these [men] has a distinct mark so that he can point at him amongst them shouting "father". He is completely confused .. looking right and left .. Where is his mother to help him? He never saw him .. he also does not know him, it is long ago and his memory does not retain him so that he can



retrieve him. As for the issue of the blood and its call, it seems doubtful." (p. 59)

This is what migration to the north does to a relationship that is necessarily intimate, for the child to feel alienated while he is in his father's arms,

"He falls into the arms of whom she pointed at. He did not recognize features .. the embraces are strong, but he remembers now here in *al-DJunayna* and will never forget that at that moment he did not feel any recognized compassion towards him .. a strange person .. truly he remembers that his embraces were warm, passionate and strong, but he continued to feel that what he showed towards him was much more than what was tying them at that time." (p. 60)

Again, in a dramatic situation, the narrator describes how happy *DJābir* and his mother are when they know that the parcel has arrived. He just shows what they do to express their happiness, supported by the good preparation he had done in the 'rising actions' to reach such a climax,<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Bain, p. 7.



"Fāṭī looks over his shoulders at the yellow paper in disbelief. Finally Muḥammad fulfilled his promise .. and with her longings for him she felt she loves him more and more .. and she felt pity, she sensed it hurting her and a hot burning in her nose, so she sneezed and her tears fell down silently against her will, she shyly retreated wiping her eyes with the sleeve of her dress .. the feeling of gratefulness that invaded her brought her self confidence she never lost and never thought about although she was surprised by it .. she is in the heart and the mind .. The distance did not weave the threads of oblivion nor the poverty and incapability severed kinship and ties. As for DJābir he almost went out to the people of the hamlet shouting and violating the rituals that have been laid down from years of practices observed by everyone who receives a parcel from the north." (p. 65)

Happiness almost has DJābir violate the rituals, even the ordinary and daily gain a different taste that day, "Even everyday's lunch cooked from leaves of green beans with water, onion and hot pepper with "*al-kābid*" the millet-made bread .. all this becomes more tasteful." (p. 65) All this joy and happiness are not directed at the parcel, whose contents are simple, but at the meaning of the parcel which makes Fāṭī hurry to her mother to tell her about the arrival of the parcel,



"She wanted to hurry to tell her mother that the parcel has arrived from her husband Muḥammad to stop blaming him, that he left them for her to take care of them .. he rather did not wait and sent her while pregnant in her eighth month .. she wants to prove to her that her husband is not what she says about him, and that he is kind and did not forget them .. and when his conditions were good he brought them to the north and sent the costs of her travel with her son in cash with sheikh salāma <sup>c</sup>abd al-Sayid .. She is right in loving him and being patient on him. Rather trusting, conceited of and proud of him." (p. 66)

Once again, in the dramatic situation of the opening of the parcel, the narrator shows the feeling of gratefulness of the family and how valuable such simple contents are for them. The narrator only interferes to reveal their feelings spontaneously through the actions and comments of the characters, " In the name of God the caramel candy is on top of the parcel .. God help you observe your custom Abū DJābir." (p. 67) Then the narrator interferes to explain this custom, "Mouths must be sweetened immediately after opening the parcel .. this is the custom .. sweets then discover slowly what is in the parcel."

The contents of the parcel start to come out, and with them the memories they convey. The narrator emphasizes the beauty of such contents in the eyes of the family, "the smell of the pieces



of orange whose reddish yellow seemed a joyful bright color ... The smell of the perfume "bint al-sūdān and the sneaking heavy perfume "al-burtūdī". (p. 67) The perfume evokes memories from the mother, "she held the two bottles and whispered "from Ḥasanayn al-Mawardī in al-Tarbī'a or al-Ḥādī KHayrī" .. and she remembered her trip with him to that small wooden shop."

The feelings of assurance, security and gratefulness the parcel evokes are quite evident in the family after they remove the contents of the parcel,

"Fathīyya slept holding an orange and a piece of cloth she said will be her dress which she will travel in to her father in the north. The quiet nightly chat took them away, and a feeling of satisfaction and assurance overwhelming them .. and yawn started to take them in turns, so they climbed the bed quietly as in agreement beside Fathīyya." (p. 68)

The language plays a role in the story with its simplicity in the description of the different events. Although the story has several dramatic situations, the author does not fall into rhetoric, but uses concentrated language appropriate for the situations. He also uses a number of Nubian words that were used in the previous stories to distinguish the setting. He uses modern standard Arabic, but also the 'Nubian colloquial Egyptian' in which feminine and masculine are used interchangeably, whenever the



comments of the characters necessitate it (p. 64 and 66).

In a repititious manner of recording the village and its geography, the author reiterates the name and the location of the village, "al-DJunayna wa-al-Shubāk which lies to the south of Ibrīm east of the Nile on a bare hill surrounded by black rocky hills." (p. 57) He also repeats the names of the hamlets and lands that surround the village. He describes the poverty of the Nubian village after the second extension of the dam, which forced the men to leave for the north, "The remaining palms and the holes in the tiny strip of land that could only be cultivated once a year are no longer sufficient for them and their cattle." (p. 59)

Through the well-selected main incident, the author exposes in the narrative two of the most important events in the Nubian village: The arrival of the postboat, and of a parcel from the family in the north. The postboat is the most important event in the bored Nubian village. For the Nubian, it is the only means of transportation northward to Aswan and southward to the Sudan. Since most Nubian men have migrated to the north, the postboat meant either the return of the absent, the arrival of their letters or parcels. Thus, the postboat has become the center of attention for everybody in the Nubian village,

"Truly, the whole village, women, men and children go down to the anchorage of the ship - al-būsta - and only the old who



can not move stay in houses or on the stone benches .. for the day of the postboat is not an ordinary day .. it is a joy renewed every week .. and the days of the week start with the anchoring of the postboat that is coming from the north, and end with the anchoring of the second while coming down from the south." (p. 61)

The second important event is the arrival of a parcel, which must be sent after the birth of an infant, and no one can disregard this social obligation even if he has to borrow money to fulfil it. So, the delay in the arrival of a parcel from DJābir's father is a very good reason for worrying about him, "It is quite evident that things there are not going very well and there is no one from whom he could borrow money any longer .. or that borrowing has become to be confined to subsistence in an expectation of relief." (p. 61)

As for the parcel itself, there are certain rituals that have to be observed after it arrives, "customary rituals whose steps he is aware of .. no one will learn that they have received a parcel. And no one should know until they see its marks on their bodies as dresses and in their hands as sweets and toys." (65)



### *Ḥikāya li-al-nisyān*

The fourth and last story in Mukhtār's collection is *Ḥikāya li-al-nisyān*. It is the only story in the collection where events take place in *al-mahdjar* village, *Kūm Umbū*, where Nubians were resettled after the construction of the High Dam. The story tackles the cruelest event that ever happened to Nubians in their entire history. In fact, the turning point that put an end to the existence of the Nubian land.

Nubians suffered a great a deal from the two successive extensions of the Aswan Dam which was built in 1902. Although the extensions resulted in the loss of a vast area of Nubia, Nubians still had a tiny strip of land to cultivate, and were still able to stay on both sides of the river, in Nubian houses and on Nubian land. With the construction of the High Dam, a mass resettlement of Nubians to new villages in Upper Egypt took place. The resettlement process was a human tragedy from which Nubians suffered economically, socially and humanly.

The story begins with a group of Nubians sitting chatting outside the house of one of them in the new village. They remember, some in malicious pleasure and some in tolerance, what happened to *Bashīr Ḥasan*, the Nubian trader who took advantage of the unjust system the Government adopted in resettlement by buying their belongings cheap. He stopped purchasing when he realized that they



would have to leave these things behind any way after the Government has specified a certain weight for every family.

Before it becomes clear what happened to Bashīr Ḥasan, some members of that group start talking about the bad dreams they have had lately. Aḥmad Samil tells the story of his bad dream, where he is left behind by his family during the process of resettlement to find himself alone in the ruins of old Nubia. Suddenly, he finds his dog 'Antar playing with him and growing bigger until he becomes the size of a donkey. He rides him and catches the ship that is carrying the people to be resettled.

Then sheikh Tawfīk retells his dream where he sees a rabbit running, then disappearing, to find himself alone and wolves approaching him until his dog Filfil comes to save him. The dog barks loudly enough to scare the wolves away and attacks one of them. Sheikh Tawfīk is surprised to find that what is in the dog's jaws is a human being.

The others start to remember their dogs as well and the village's dogs in general after they had to leave them to drown. Among the group is Ḥākim Murdīān, who was working on one of Bashīr Ḥasan's boats and saw what happened to him. As a result, he became mentally ill and underwent treatment and still suffers from this accident. These dreams about dogs provoke him and he returns home.



There, he remembers what happened to Bashīr Ḥasan. That night, he asked him to take him back to the village after the people had left it in order to bring something he had hidden in his home. Suddenly, while he was waiting for him in the boat, he heard sounds of crazy barking and howling. He climbed up a palm and saw SHaṭa, Bashīr's dog, eating him. Ḥākīm wakes from this memory and has a violent fit. He rushes outside his house heading towards the graveyard of the village and no one can catch him.

Through the dreams/nightmares, and through memories of resettled Nubians, the author addresses one of the inhuman aspects of the resettlement process. Once again, despite the cruelty and bitterness of the experience, the author does not fall into the trap of rhetoric. He subtly gains sympathy and skillfully portrays this "human" stand of the dogs paying farewell to their masters while embarking the ships that will transport them to the new villages.

The author presents the new circumstances of the Nubians in their new village,

"They escaped to the stone bench from the cement rooms which the Government built for them, missing their cool spacious houses overlooking the Nile, they were playing *al-sīdja* [nought and crosses] to kill the boring long time without work, for after the resettlement no lands to be cultivated,



and no cattle to be looked after. The sustenance is provided by the Government each month awaiting giving them the land to start their life in the new world." (p. 70)

This is one of the material aspects the Nubians suffer in the new world, which can not, in fact, be compared to their psychological suffering. The experience of leaving their land brings down on them bad dreams from which they suffer for some time and a bitter feeling of guilt for having to leave their dogs to drown. It is worth noting that their anger is not directed at the Dam and the rationale behind the resettlement, but at *al-armūd* (the rotten) system, "Every family on the scale .. together with the belongings .. exactly like cattle?" (p. 77)

This rotten system is not only the reason they had to leave their dogs behind, but it is also *Bashīr Ḥasan*, the Nubian trader, who had the chance to exploit this circumstance cruelly,

"First he bought very cheap .. and when he learned that every family would have a specific weight .. he refused to buy .. Why should he pay if he is going to get it for free after they leave? .. and he took what was left for us .. and marketed it in Aswan, *Isnā* and *Idfū*." (p. 79)

He received what he deserved for his greed and exploitation; eaten by his own dog.



What Bashīr did had a terrible impact on them. His greed and his attempts to prevent other boats from coming to the village forced them to leave things they might not have left, especially their dogs, had they had the means of transportation,

"to take for free what remained to us after all we had lost .. what remained to us sheikh Tawfīk. This was more painful than what the Government of Egypt had done. We are family .. we went to him as you know asking him to transfer our stuff for us for money and there is no need for him to insist on buying as long as we do not want to sell .. he prevented the boats of Kinūz and upper Egyptians from coming to us in order to have it only for himself." (p. 77)

Hasan Tabid reacts desperately to this exploitation by burning his house in order not to let him take what was left in it for free,

- " - But Bashīr Hasan did not buy anything from you Hasan Tabid? ...
- I do not sell to him for peanuts .. nor leave it to him to get it for free ...
- So .. it was you who burned the house before leaving .. oh .. and how did your heart allow you? ...



- It did not .. but I forced myself to do it .. it is the same to leave it as it is for Bashīr Hasan to benefit from its ceilings, windows and doors for free or burn it? .. all is lost ...
- Why did you sit crying Hasan if it was you who burned it?" (p. 78)

Hasan Tabid does not answer SHarīf Nāṭik's question, because the answer is a reminder of the grief he felt when he burned his house by his own hand; something he never expected to do. Tabid is not just crying over his house, he is crying over Nubia, for both are alike, crying over his house and his Nubia, and all will be lost.

Bashīr's ghost chases them to the new village, making them suffer bad dreams and nightmares which they interpret as due to their feelings of alienation. This obsessive memory is a constant reminder to them of what they have left in old Nubia. That is why it chases both those who have forgiven Bashīr and those who find malicious pleasure in his terrible death. His death by his own dog reminds them of their dogs whom they had to leave to starvation and drowning,

"The forgiving ones and the hard liners who are maliciously pleased towards the memory of Bashīr Hasan, the days and stories that were told about them affirmed that sleep turned



away from them all without exception for many nights, afterwards they also became victims of bad dreams and had terrible nightmares, they did not realize in the beginning that Bashir Hasan was and still behind this, and that he is chasing them, they explained this by the long estrangement days and what was poured inside them of estrangement, despair and worry about the mysterious fate which they found themselves encountering suddenly." (p. 71)

This whole feeling resides in their consciousness in the form of bad dreams. So, Ahmad Samil dreams that everybody has forgotten him in the deserted village and that he is saved by his dog Antar and his love for him, as if he is blaming himself for leaving his dog to die there alone,

"The more I patted his back the more he grew .. and kept growing and his legs lengthening until he became like sheikh Tawfik's donkey and like a human being .. he waved at me to ride on his back .. so I rode while happy .. and he ran and ran like a djin .. until we caught the ship at al-Dur." (p. 74)

As for sheikh Tawfik, he is chased, while he is alone, by wolves who surround him in his dream and no one saves him but his dog,



"His dog Filfil ran to him barking so horribly that it echoed in the black high "al-mūlīh" - the mountain - .. the barking increased until it became the barking of tens of dogs .. the wolves were scared and ran away except one wolf whom he did not know how he was caught by the grip of Filfil who started to tear him violently and eat parts of him. Then he saw in Filfil's jaws a man's leg instead of the wolf's body .. and a red shoe worn by the foot of this unanimous leg fell down .. and he saw two fingers from the foot." (p. 75)

The wolves that chase sheikh Tawfīk are nothing more than the human beings who want to take advantage of his helplessness to eat him alive. The sheikh does not find anyone but his loyal dog, Filfil, to save him, the dog who has drowned already while swimming behind the ship that is carrying his master.

These dreams are a reaction to the feeling of guilt they have for what happened to the dogs. The dogs begging for their masters in order not to leave them to face the unknown has never left their memory. SHarīf Nāṭīk still remembers his dog Lūlān as if he were one of his children,

"He became crazy .. jumping holding me from my shoulders .. he came to cheep like a child and look in my eyes as if he was saying do not leave .. he grumbles and lies on the ground then jumps and goes to my daughter Fāṭma and embraces her .. I



swear I cried." (p. 77)

This is not the case only with SHarīf's dog,

"The dogs of the whole village not just Lūlān .. did you forget sheikh Tawfīk's dog when he saw everyone embarking on the ship and kept swimming behind the ship until he drowned? .. or did you forget when all the dogs stood like when men say goodbye to travellers on the postboat under the palms of al-KHalīliyya looking and running after us hanging on our dresses, howling in ardor of love and begging to the extent of crying .. as if they do not believe that they will be left alone in the empty houses." (p. 77)

The terror in these bad dreams and nightmares are not only related to the loss of their dogs but the eternal lose of the whole of Nubia, and their feeling of estrangement and insecurity after being pulled out from their roots. They still go there in their dreams, but they can not recognize the place any more. Aḥmad Samil wonders, in his dream, where he was when his family left, as if he were unconscious, "I tried to calm down and to understand the disaster which preoccupied me so much that it took me away on a day like this for them all to leave .. and where was I when all this happened?" (p. 73)



Apart from those who go to Nubia in their dreams, there are others who have brought a handful of dust from Nubia and a handful of dust from the graves of their beloved. Ibrāhīm, the son of DJa<sup>c</sup>far DJunayna, made a fake grave for his father, who is buried in Nubia, on the basis of a Nubian superstition,

"Now he finds consolation after losing him and his grave in these handfuls of sands which he took with his right hand from his [father] grave while reciting Yāsīn Chapter and he also took "al-āsyā" - the grave measurement - with a green palm branch where the soul accompanies this branch wherever it went .. He buried the sand and the branch in the new graves and put the tomb stone to visit it in the two feasts and the beginning of Radjab." (p. 80)

God fulfilled his father's wish not to die in strange lands, after he knew for sure that the Government was serious in removing them from their land. It is after the resettlement that death rate increased amongst the old because of their feeling of grief, not the change in the weather as the Government claims, "After the resettlement many old people from all the villages fell down .. they undoubtedly died of grief, despair and worry about the destiny." (p. 80)

The bad dreams and nightmares for Hākim Murdjān, the boat man of the boat "untī" - the moon - are a reflection of what he sees in



reality. He saw with his own eyes the dog of his old master Bashīr Hasan tear him with his teeth. He becomes mentally ill as a result of this accident and no popular medicine succeeds in treating him. He improves after he receives medical treatment in Cairo, but never heal completely. The story ends with Murdjān having a fit of temper as a result of the dreams he hears, which brings back the horrible scene of his master eaten by his dog.

Although the story time is confined by the chat in the sitting on the stone bench, the author creates a spacial time that allows him to tell a number of different tales through dreams, but they all fit the unity of effect. As a matter of fact, the different tales tackle one tale, the tale of the resettlement process, the tale that everybody is trying vainly to forget. It is always there in the form of bad dreams, nightmares and bitter memories. It is not a tale to be forgotten, *Hikāya li-al-nisyān*, no matter how hard they try to forget.

In order to be able to express the richness of the content from different perspectives, the author uses an omniscient narrator. These perspectives are presented through dreams, discussions and memories that address the rotten system the Government adopts to organize the resettlement process. The narrator leaves the characters to express themselves freely in discussions, through dialogue, but he narrates the memories invoked in the minds of some of them and the story of Hākim Murdjān and his



master. He also interferes in the narration of the dreams which could have been, naturally, narrated by the dreamers, for his narration of the dreams does not add anything. He even narrates a whole dream himself.

He starts narrating the dream of Ahmad Samil himself, "The sky was as he used to see it," (p. 72) then let him narrate part of the dream, "I felt afraid .. so I looked at our houses and I found it empty also." The narrator goes back to narrating the dream again, using verb 'to say', "and he said that he could not do anything but walk and look for them all," then lets Samil narrate a new part, "I felt my heart fell down my feet."

While the narrator takes part in narrating a large part of Samil's dream, he does not give sheikh Tawfik the chance to tell his dream, "and he started telling his dream .. and how he found himself under the temptation of a big and fat mountain rabbit." (p. 75)

In this story, the author does not only rely on flashback and memory to provide background information for the story as in the previous stories, but he employs the dream this time as a mechanism that truly expresses the consciousness of the characters. This enables him to show their opinions about the system the Government has adopted in the resettlement process, their memories of that tragic moment and, at the same time, what resides in their



consciousness of inner feelings that accompany them to the new village.

The author also uses suspenseful elements, as in previous stories, to provoke curiosity about what happened to Bashīr Ḥasan, "For many years to come the people of al-*DJunayna wa-al-SHubāk* in their new *mahdjar* in *Kūm Umbū* will keep telling what happened to Bashīr Ḥasan after migrating from old Nubia." (p. 69) Then he uses Ḥākim Murdjān's reactions to preserve curiosity about what happened to Ḥasan and what almost makes Murdjān lose his mind, "Undoubtedly, there are hidden secrets behind the destruction of Bashīr Ḥasan. He will look through the meanings of what is going on here .. they think he is mad, but they will know." (p. 76)

The narrator concentrates the narrative and observes the unity of effect except when he narrates unnecessary details about the sickness of Ḥākim Murdjān and his going to the hospital in Cairo, "Muṣṭafā, Bashīr Ḥasan's brother, talks about how Ḥākim came out swaying after the electric shocks, with traces of white foam between his lips and mouth," (p. 81) These details do not add anything, rather, they are unnecessary to the text.

Although the actual setting in the main incident of the story is in the new village, all the references focus on old Nubia through the dreams and memories. The details of the place only come in the context of its ugliness in comparison with the old place.



The author embodies the nostalgia the Nubians feel in the details of the dreams and what they invoke of memories in the minds of the group, who can hardly forget the smell of the place while listening to the dream of Ahmad Samil,

"the attendants loudly interrupted him asking for reciting *al-fāṭḥa* to "*sayyidī Kabīr*" and "*al-SḤaykh* <sup>c</sup>*Abd allah*" and the visions of their holy shrines which are opposite to each other in a friendly manner on a hill east of *al-DJunayna wa-al-SḤubāk* appear to them embodied with their longing noses almost smelling the incense which was coming out of the shrines' curtains .. their eyes almost cries .. the wound of migration is still green in their hearts." (p. 71)

The author highlights the nostalgia through the small details which reveal how active the place was, "No chicken is running there and no pigeon is cooing in the tins that are hung on the walls." (p. 73) The author also brings directly to mind how the place used to be before the people left it, through portraying the terrible image of the place that appears in the dreams,

"the alleys are empty and the shadows are lifeless extended on the ground .. and the silence is stuck to everything and the walls are standing naked alone .. the decorated porcelain plates are taken out from all the fronts of the houses, so it appeared hollow as a camel hoof on a dry muddy ground." (p.



The narrator, then, follows the impact of remembrances of the attendants of old Nubia,

"They no longer look at him although they were watching him .. they were swimming far away .. retrieving the memories of their life in these dear familiar places .. their lips show mysterious laughs .. then suddenly a dim grief poured in the eyes and a bitterness on the lips." (p. 73)

The author uses modern standard Arabic with some Nubian words, as usual, to complement the setting. He, again records some of the names of the Nubian villages and lands. In this particular story in the collection, the author does not emphasize any Nubian rituals, customs or particularities of the place, such as the palms, the houses or the poetics of the place in general. It only comes in the context of the dreams and memories, because the theme itself is purely Nubian. This time the author is concerned with recording the details of the place, for the theme itself is Nubian enough, besides the fact that the main event takes place in the new village.







In this chapter, a comparison between the two collections will be presented, with regard to content, focusing on the details which the two writers have chosen to recreate the world of Nubia, and with regard to the structure of the stories.

\*\*\*\*\*

Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka and <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl both include four stories that rely in their setting and subject matter on the region of Nubia, and both are written by two Nubian writers. However, there are some differences in the manner the two writers have treated their stories. The main reason for these differences is that Uddūl is very much involved emotionally in the Nubian affair, whereas Mukhtār is somewhat detached and more involved in the art of writing itself.

In the selection of titles for their collections, both writers chose the title of one of the stories from their own collection. While Mukhtār's title, <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl (The Nile Bride), reveals human sacrifice, it is not related to the human sacrifice of the Nubians, but to the sacrifice of the heroine of the story to save her father the emotional burden of casting her into the Nile. Uddūl selected the title Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka (The Old Musk Nights), for his collection. What the title really connotes, which might not be as clear in the literal translation, is 'the good old days', which is an evident nostalgic choice, made clear in the story itself.



In the selection of titles for the stories in both collections, which are indicative of the themes, Uddūl chose titles and themes which are very much expressive of some Nubian concern, and could stand alone as indicating Nubian content. al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr (The Leaving for the People of the River) refers to the Nubian myth about the people living under the river,<sup>1</sup> which is employed in the story to symbolize the drowning of Nubia and the hope that it may come back one day. In the second story, Adīlā yā djaddatī (May You Come Back Safe, My Grandmother), he chose a Nubian word which is an invocation of God for someone to come back safe. The theme of the story is related to traits of tolerance and kindness in the Nubian character, emphasized through the problem of Nubian men marrying non-Nubian women.

The story of Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka is a nostalgic celebration of the good old days in Nubia. Although the nostalgia in the story seems individualized through the narrator's perspective, the author, to intensify this nostalgic feeling, relies on the knowledge of the reader of the disappearance of Nubia. Zaynab Ubūrtī, the fourth and last story, is the only story in the collection that does not rely on a Nubian theme, but acquires its Nubian characteristics from the ambience. The Nubian word ubūrtī, which connotes ugliness in the Nubian language, the gathering of Nubian daily life details and the use of the geographical environment of the place helped create the 'Nubian'

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Kennedy, p. 34.



atmosphere of the story.

Conversely, Mukhtār chose titles that are neutral in their general indication, but at the same time very much related to the themes of the stories. Except for the fourth story Hikāya li-al-nisyān (A Tale To Be Forgotten), in which the theme is related to the inhuman organization of the tragic mass resettlement of Nubians, the remaining three stories rely more on the setting rather than on Nubian subject matter. The themes in the three stories are universal: The father who wants to kill his daughter for her sin, or sacrifice her in return for not being expelled from the village; in 'Arūs al-nīl, the inherent evil and savagery in man; in Wakī'a, the things that assure the continuity of family ties.

Mukhtar's skill is quite evident in the more difficult task of interweaving such universal themes in the Nubian setting. For Mukhtār, the point of departure for the Nubian story is the place and the people who live there. For where Uddūl treats Nubians from a Nubian point of view, Mukhtār treats them from a wider perspective, as human beings who happen to have problems in this particular area, in as much as any group of people might happen to have problems elsewhere. This can be seen in the excessive use of rhetoric by Uddūl and his characters's direct blame of the north, which will be dealt with when discussing the language of both writers.



In Mukhtār's stories, the nostalgia is derived from the clear focus on celebrating the details of the place: The camera-like photographing of the nature of the place from different angles, the sensitivity to the smell and sounds of the nature of the place and the tendency to topograph the place and record names of persons and places.

This difference between the two writers is also illustrated in the selection of the main incident in the story. Mukhtār is very careful in selecting a main incident, the time of which is usually short. For example, in <sup>c</sup>Arūs al-nīl, the time of the main incident takes only as much as the time Farīda and her father spend in the boat until she throws herself into the water. In al-Ṭard, it is only the time between waiting for the postboat which carries the parcel until receiving and opening it in the evening. In Hikaya li-al-nisyān, the main incident takes as much time as the sitting of the group of Nubians. However, Mukhtār creates, mainly through flashbacks, an extensive space to tell the story.

Uddūl did the same in the story layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka, but in al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr he does not start the story from a main incident. He starts the story from what happened to Āshā the grandmother until Āshā the granddaughter leaves for the people of the river, in an almost linear development. In Adīlā yā djaddatī and Zaynab Ubūrtī, although the main incident in both story is short, the sitting on the grandmother's grave in the former and the



time it takes to tell the story of Zaynab in the latter, Uddūl created an extensive space for narration. In both stories, he tells the story of the main character since he/she was a child until they grow up, Muḥammad as a young man and Zaynab in her fifties.

The desire to create an extensive narrative space reflects the nature of the 'storyteller' in the Nubian writer. After the extension of the dam in 1933, there was very little work for men in the Nubian villages. They would sit together and talk the whole evening, in what they call 'al-wanasa'. At the same time, children were left for grandmothers to take care of them, for the father is usually working in the north and the mother is busy looking after the house. All Nubian writers credit the grandmother for developing their imagination through her storytelling.<sup>2</sup>

The two writers used the plot traditionally in the stories, except the story *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka* which depends, in its structure, on stream of consciousness. The use of flashbacks prevails as a narrative technique in the two collections. This is not surprising for what occupies the minds of the two writers is the past, Nubia being a saved memory. Symbol is used to a lesser extent in the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr* by Uddūl and *al-Ṭard* by Muḥtār. In the former, the drowning of *Āshā* symbolizes the disappearance of Nubia, and in the latter *al-ṭard*, with its double meaning, symbolizes the suffering of the Nubians whether in their

---

<sup>2</sup> *SHa<sup>c</sup>rāwī*, *al-KHuraḥa wa-al-usṭūra*, p. 65.



villages or in the north.

The narrator in Mukhtar's stories is always an omniscient narrator, who is unintrusive but very much present in the stories because of the lack of dialogue and indirect speech. Uddūl uses a first person narrator who participates in two stories: *Adīlā yā djaddatī* and *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*. In the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*, he uses an omniscient narrator and the voice of *Āshā* as a first person narrator. He starts with the omniscient narrator, moves to the first person narrator to create intimacy with heroine, then ends the story using the omniscient narrator again.

Although the stories in both collections seem to be relatively long, characterization is not given much attention. In Uddūl's collection, the only story that has active characters is *Addīlā yā djaddatī*. In the two long stories *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr* and *Zaynab Ubūrtī*, there is only one active character in each. In Mukhtar's collection, although there are a number of characters in each story, less attention is given to characterization, except in the case of the father and the daughter in *ʿArūs al-nīl* and *Muḥammadayn in Wākī<sup>c</sup>a*.

The language in the two collections, in general, is romantic and reflects the nostalgia for the place and the rituals of daily life in old Nubia. To be able to express the particularity of the place, both writers use modern standard Arabic, for the Egyptian



colloquial language reflects a certain milieu. However, in dialogue, though not used extensively in either collection, Uddūl sometimes uses the way the Nubians pronounce Arabic, interchanging masculine and feminine and pronouncing the Arabic letter *h* like *h*. Nubian words, and sometimes sentences, are used by the two writers to highlight the particularity of the place.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the stories of the two collections, Uddūl and Mukhtār bring along the details of the world of Nubia, which is rich enough to be dealt with from several angles. While Uddūl pays more attention to Nubian myths, superstition, customs and tradition, Mukhtār focuses more on the place and its poetics, and on the Nubian individual and his suffering.

Uddūl employs the myth of the people of the river, in the story *al-Raḥīl ilā nās al-nahr*, to symbolize the survival of Nubia, regardless of its loss, and the hope that it may come back one day. He projects the suffering and drowning of Nubia on *Āshā Ashrī*, who symbolizes Nubia and its tragedy. Nubians believe that there are people living in cities under the river. It was common in Nubia to explain the sudden absence and return of some people by the fact that they had gone to the people of the river.<sup>3</sup> Hence, *Āshā*/Nubia leaves for the people of the river, and there is always this

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 5.



mythical hope that she may return one day.

At the same time, Uddūl uses other details that are also related to some mythical beliefs. In the same story, Āshā grabs the fish from the fisherman and throws it back into the river, (p. 6, 13) in an indication of the common belief that the spirits of the good people of the river pass into fish, "so, if we ate it, we might be at the same time putting in our intestines humans from the people of the river, brothers to us in religion, and between them and some of the people of the earth kinship and marriage relations."<sup>4</sup>

This classification of creatures extends to the fantasy Uddūl presents in the story *Zaynab Ubūrtī*. Creatures are broken down into three categories: Human beings, the people of the river and the people of the current, *ahl al-tayār*. Each category has the good ones and the bad ones. (p. 72) Although the story does not rely on a particular Nubian myth, it includes other references that have their roots in superstitious Nubian tales. For example, the punishment for Zaynab and also for her great grandfather, Hamrīn the magician, is to be eaten by a horrible beast in a place far from the village. (p. 82, 112) Such terrible punishment for evil is a common ending in Nubian superstitious tales.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 88, 130.



Mukhtār pays no attention to Nubian myths and superstitions, except in a single reference to the animal *al-arkabī*, in the story *Arūs al-nīl*. (p. 14) *al-Arkabī* is a common mythical creature in Nubian superstitious tales.<sup>6</sup> Mukhtār's major concern in his collection was the place.

Place is the most important element that renders this fiction its Nubian character. It is the element through which the nostalgia of the Nubian writer materializes. The importance of the place lies in the fact that, contrary to other elements that may continue one way or another in a different place, language, customs and tradition, and grandmothers' stories, it has disappeared under the river.

In his collection, Mukhtār insists on giving all the details of the place a share in the stories. He goes from drawing beautiful pictures in which he mixes and immerses in the tiniest details of the place, to a tendency in which he topographs the place and records the names of the people and the villages.

The river, the palms and the Nubian house are the most recurrent elements in Mukhtār's stories. He usually mixes the details of such elements with the other elements of the place. This is not surprising, however, for particularly the river and the

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 97.



palms are the pillars of the economic and ritual life of the Nubian.

Mukhtār takes very good care of the details of the river with its different conditions and its relation to the other elements of the place. He describes the river at the time of the flood, "The Nile is full at the edges with the fast flowing dark flood water," (p. 14) and the destruction it causes to the cultivated area, referring also to the government negligence and the cooperation of the people of the village at times of crises,

"When "al-damīra" (the flood) comes, and the Nile water rises suddenly after the closure of the gates of Aswan Dam in the north in preparation for al-taḥārīḳ (the hottest season) .. and without a notice from the irrigation department .. and the millet which is the buttress of their bread is about to ripe .. the Nile rises suddenly .. and the water runs like a snake between cracks and holes .. then rushes devouring everything reaching the middle of palm stumps, and a few steps from the doors of the houses that are close to it .. and shouting becomes louder in the houses and everyone runs, men and women with lanterns in their hands. Picking up the plants." (p. 23)

Mukhtār describes the tiniest details about the river, even, "the wrinkles of the surface of the river made by the oars of felucas and the barges of "bank miṣr" and "coke", (p. 20) and the



effect of the wind, "The waves of the close river whose surface has wrinkled ... by the cautious southern wind." (p. 34)

The clarity and quietude of the place are clear in Mukhtār's concern with the description of the different sounds caused by the wind, and the particular smell of the place.<sup>7</sup> He describes the sands of the shore as it, "hisses hot air," (p. 13) and in the flood, "they heard the wailing of the whirlpools at the sunk palm stumps." (p. 14) As for the wind, it, "made the whispers of the palm branches have sounds more roaring in their hearing in the somnolent silence." (p. 34) Farīda also smells, "the water splashing on her face from the stokes of the oars," (p. 17) and sneaks into her nose, "a hot breeze carrying the smell of water and mud and the smell of the decay of palm stump sunk in the Nile." (p. 19) Even the children, "the smell of Cairo," (p. 63) invades their noses when the parcels arrive in the village.

Mukhtār pays attention to palms, whether sunk in the water at the time of the flood, as mentioned earlier, or as an element of beauty in the pictures he draws for the Nubian environment,

"the thick heaps of palm trees and the river behind them with its water shining in roars surging towards the north, and a thin part of the sail pole of "al-balshūn" is dancing with waves movements .. and behind the river to the west the yellow

---

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, p. 73.



sands of <sup>c</sup>Inayba and its hills and small white houses." (p. 44)

He also does not overlook the small details when describing the different colors of different parts of the palm, "under the shadow of the palm heaps whose fruits began to become yellow to be distinct from the dark green branches." (p. 51)

He emphasizes the different usages of palms in the Nubian environment, whether in making beds and mats (p. 41), the plates and baskets made of palm leaves, which Nubian girls are known to be clever in making,<sup>8</sup> or in making the ceilings of the houses, "which is roofed by palm stumps and painted with pale colored falling lime, and the palm branches which are braided with palm fiber ropes," (p. 15) and the shanties which are, "built by palm stumps and their walls from palm branches which are joined together strongly by palm fiber ropes until they are stuck together and were inserted in the ground and crushed with thick mud." (p. 41)

Mukhtār portrays the houses, whether in their location in general in the village, "lined up side by side parallel to the river," (p. 14) or their decoration and colors which are known to be distinct from the houses in Upper Egypt,<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> al-KHādim, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 42.



"the very clear shining sun in the open sky, under the plain rays of which the village houses shine with its white and bright yellow walls and its fronts which are decorated with ornamented porcelain plates and the wide smooth stone benches that are extended as wide as the fronts of the houses." (p. 39)

In the context of paying attention to the place, the events of the stories take place in one village, namely al-DJ<sup>u</sup>nayna wa-al-S<sup>h</sup>ubāk. Mukhtār repeats the name of the village, and the villages and hamlets around it, in a manner as if he is drawing a map of the village,

"al-DJ<sup>u</sup>nayna wa-al-S<sup>h</sup>ubāk is all there as they guessed .. near "al-farkī" - the inlet - which separates it with its great depth from Tūshka S<sup>h</sup>ark in the south .. the roaring crowd was in "Adjūlāsh" hamlet which is adjacent to the inlet and not in Amka land as they thought in the beginning, and specifically on "al-mashrī" - the footpath - that goes up to the main road which leads to the court of the chief of the village." (p. 35)

Uddūl does not pay as much attention to the elements of the place as Mukhtār. In his description of the place, he focuses on a mixture of elements and not on each individual element as Mukhtār sometimes does. Also, contrary to Mukhtār, Uddūl's description of the place seems much more subjective and rhetorical,



"The blessed Nile moves slowly like a dream. Its whirlpools are fine and delicate as if they are kind dimples in the body of a full golden brown girl walking in a swinging timid movement. Over and under our Nile is a halo of transparency. The whispers of its waves are as quiet as the steps of a tender-skinned baby. Its breeze is a scent that perfumes the universe so I drink from it with my eyes .. with my nose .. and my pores. Our mountain and the sky before sun rise are degrees of grey color variegated with silver. The long narrow strip of green breathes exhaling rising drunkenness. The clusters of dates disperse their fragrance a Godly felt unseen arrack. The palm branches get drunk swing softly on palm roofs mixing the virgin perfumes and diffusing them with love." (p. 18)

In describing the elements of the place, Uddūl pays attention to their relation to human beings, particularly children and their obsession with the place as a field for their different games,

"In the flood, after the construction of the dam, the water flows in al-fārki (the inlet) surrounding us ... As children we went to it, time and again, I and you cross the thin stone bridge with the water around us, I hold your gown lest I fall. The water is pulled away from the sands in the hot season, blazed by the sun, burning our bare feet ... I jump hanging on your high shoulders." (p. 9)



While playing, children also recognize the beauty of the place with its different colors,

"We run on shining soft sands. We inhale the clean air in our chests. We count the colors of the magnificent Nile. From above the mountain it extends around in the blueness of the sky. Parts of it are silver sheets reflecting the sun rays. We come down close to it, its color gets darker into overlapping layers of grey. We run to it in the green strip it turns into brown alluvium. We swim naked in it. We find it clear and transparent." (p. 60-61)

In addition, Uddūl makes the place react, in the fantasy Zaynab Ubūrtī, to the good and evil in the village,

"We were done with the cold in the beginning of *Barmahāt* (the seventh month of the Coptic calendar). As if this *Barmahāt* was a period of rest, after which .. a scorching summer overwhelmed us as of *Birmūda* (the eighth month of the Coptic calendar). The sun went down and down to the extent that every morning when it rose, its bloody halo crashed with the top of the eastern mountain, so the mountain cracks and lows from the terror that overwhelms it, and its rocks fly around burning, going down rapidly and noisily until it sinks in the Nile which passes directly beneath it." (p. 75)



In *Adīlā yā djaddatī* and *Ḥikāya li-al-nisyān*, both Uddūl and Mukhtār, respectively, express the anti-place after the resettlement. The reference to the new place helps emphasize the poetics of the lost place and how Nubians feel toward resettlement.

While Mukhtār disregards the details of the new place, except in a quick reference, and focuses only on the nightmare-like feeling which the resettlement process has left on Nubians, Uddūl describes the new place and the conditions of the Nubians in al-mahdjar village where, "the dry sands are along sight," and "the narrow houses are accumulated," with their, "rectangular narrow courtyard." (p. 32) Uddūl highlights the comparison when he describes the new place as, "desert lands which did not yield so far but gravel and stones," (p. 41) while the grandmother in the story sings a Nubian *mawāl* in which she wishes to return to die in the old place, "Oh dear .. the Nile and the palms .. and the long shore .. and the buoy. Oh dear .. the mountain and the camel .. and the inch of hope .. and the hamlet of Bahdjūra." (p. 39)

In the mahdjar village, the Nubians are in, "constant grief and desperate silence." (p. 41) They suffer from poverty and lack of work, and nostalgia about their lost land,

"Why did they relocate us in this dry failure? Where is our old country? Where is our Nile? Where are our palms? Where are our spacious houses? And the water-wheel? And the wedding



parties which are full of food and drinks and the beats of tambourines? Where are the days of the flood and the days of harvest? Where is our hamlet .. the hamlet of Bahdjūra ... They uprooted us so we became like scrubs. Our sons roamed the countries as servants, feeding the grandchildren the leftovers of foreigners and beys. And we are here, thrown away like goats in the valley of the djinn. They gave us land that does not grow but the plant of the devil with its bitter fruit that even cattle refrain from. They killed us my son." (p. 43-44)

Mukhtār refers in short to the details of the new place while the men sit talking outside their houses,

"They escaped to the stone bench from the cement rooms which the Government built for them, missing their cool spacious houses overlooking the Nile, they were playing al-Sīdja [nought and crosses] to kill the boring long time without work, for after the resettlement no lands to be cultivated, and no cattle to be looked after." (p. 70)

Mukhtār focuses, however, on the cruel resettlement process itself and its effects which the Nubians suffer still in the new place in the form of nightmares. He does not compare the new place to the old place, for his characters never really get away from the latter. The nightmare is what the village and the houses look like after they left them,



"The alleys are empty and the shadows are lifeless extended on the ground .. and the silence is stuck to everything and the walls are standing naked alone .. the decorated porcelain plates are taken out from all the fronts of the houses, so it appeared hollow as a camel hoof on a dry muddy ground." (p. 72)

The intimate feeling that ties the Nubian to the place and its small details disappear and is replaced by a feeling of estrangement. In the bad dreams, the Nubians could not even recognize the old place after the changes,

"The houses are of his village .. and this house is their house .. He entered "al-dahlīz" (the corridor) and went to "al-mandara" (the guest room) and crossed the big courtyard .. no chicken is running there and no pigeon is cooing in the tin containers hung on the walls .. He looked at "al-dīwānī" .. Why do its walls seem high and naked? .. higher than they should be .. higher than they really were, and he felt as if he is inside a deep well .. black silence. Quietude and soundlessness as death .. heavy and depressed emptiness." (p. 73)

Contrary to Uddūl, Mukhtār does not direct his anger at the Government because of the construction of the High Dam, but because of "al-armūd" (the rotten) system, which has not allowed them to



carry all their belongings with them. As a result, they had to leave their dogs behind to drown, which causes them pain that is reflected in their bad dreams,

" - The Government .. why did not it agree that we take our dogs with us?

They burst out laughing loudly .. His words were not funny .. but they laughed...

- Hey SHarīf .. you have asked this question a hundred times .. Have they agreed that we take all our belongings .. to rather agree on the travel of the dogs? Every family by weight .. the family and the belongings .. exactly like cattle?

- Cattle or not .. leave that alone .. I'm talking to you about my dog "Lūlān". I swear to God .. when we were travelling. He became crazy .. jumping holding me from my shoulders .. he came to cheep like a child and look in my eyes as if he were saying do not leave .. he grumbles and lies on the ground then jumps and goes to my daughter Fāṭma and embraces her .. I swear I cried. You.

And he stopped talking when his voice trembled." (p. 77)

The two writers have also paid attention to Nubian customs and traditions as one of the most important elements that exposes the Nubian environment. In al-Ṭard, Mukhtār shows the tradition



followed in sending parcels and how Nubians practice certain rituals in receiving them. When a new baby is born, the father must, "send a parcel for the mother and the new baby .. this is an inevitable matter no one falls short of even if he had to borrow."  
(p. 61)

As for receiving the parcel itself, there are traditional rules that must be followed, "no one will learn that they have received a parcel. And no one should know until they see its marks on their bodies as dresses and in their hands as sweets and toys."  
(p. 65)

Uddūl is much more concerned with Nubian customs and traditions. One of the most obvious customs is the Nubian's love for dancing and singing, and the fact they have different dances for different occasions. Weddings have their own rituals and special dances in which everyone in the village participates,

"The nights of the hamlets are lit by lanterns and torches .. the shots of the two-aperture rifles .. the men with the fire of the arrack in their veins, beat the tambourines and the hands, beat down the ground with the feet in proud rhythmic jumps, the hearts of the virgins beat hard and their cells dance in a mass of hot southern songs. In the middle of the women circle I dance the Nile fish dance .. The steps are fast in coquetry. The arms are together forward and backward." (p.



In weddings, the bride and the groom perform certain rituals before and after the wedding procession,

"You will dance with this polished sword on the night of our henna, and tie a dagger up on the arm on the night of our marriage consummation, you will crack with the long whip, so as the whips of the naughty friends do not reach you ... the bridal room will be closed, and no one will dare to climb over the roof of our room to watch us through the hatch. I say to you .. before anything .. the bath of our wedding is in the river .. purity. For the friendly [river] to bless us and grant us fertility." (p. 15)

The bride also performs certain customs, where she refuses to allow the groom to come closer to her, or to talk to him before he pays her some money, and she bargains with him, "The bride grumbles refusing even to talk with her aroused groom. She wants him to pay her (*fath kalām*) one pound (*madjīdī*) bill." (p. 67)

Even when someone dies, the Nubian women do certain movements and say certain phrases that are rhymed, which is called the dance of the *thaklā* (the bereaved of a child),



"women and girls around me crying and screaming .. bare-foot .. in couples opposite each other .. their hands are up swaying the black female veils. they shout the chants in sad melody that squeezes the soul. The foot moves one step aside then returns before the other moves beside it. Then the two sitting opposite each other come over each other's embrace throwing the heads on the shoulders crying and sobbing. Then they scream suddenly raising their hands with the veils swaying them to the sky dome." (p. 23)

The above passages are illustrative examples of how Nubian writers use Nubian myths, customs and tradition in their stories. These elements in addition to place and certain themes are what render the short story its Nubian character. The Nubian short story is not just a story written by a Nubian writer. The short story is Nubian when the writer celebrates the place and interweaves the Nubian 'details' in his theme, whether the theme is Nubian or not.

On the basis of the previous three chapters, the characteristics and the status of Nubian short narrative fiction will be concluded.



...which short story is a direct narrative which was  
...able to do nothing and subject matter. There are certain  
characteristics for the Russian short story that distinguish it from  
the mainstream American short story.

The characteristics of the Russian short story do not focus  
only on the formal content of the stories, for form and content are  
...except for analysis purposes. Since this is an  
...and since the Russian  
...and the Russian  
...of the Russian  
...of the Russian  
...of the Russian

### CONCLUSION

Therefore, Russian short stories tend to be relatively long.  
The Russian writer creates a space for himself to give form to even  
details that describe the customs and traditions of Russia,  
through which he expresses his nostalgia for old Russia. Thus, one of  
the main characteristics of the Russian short story is the  
...of all the Russian details the place and the  
....

Since the Russian writer is writing from past memories about  
...and that has disappeared, flashback is a typical characteristic  
of the Russian short story. It allows the Russian writer to tell



Nubian short story is a short narrative fiction that uses Nubia as a setting and subject matter. There are certain characteristics for the Nubian short story that distinguish it from the mainstream Egyptian short story.

The characteristics of the Nubian short story do not focus only on the Nubian content of the stories, for form and content are inseparable, except for analysis purposes. Since Nubia is an implicit objective for Nubian writers, and since the Nubian character of the stories can not be recognized without the Nubian 'details', there is a need on the part of Nubian writers to include such details in their stories. For example, the details of the place are mentioned in all the stories, even if they sometimes seem redundant, like the topographic details in the story *Wākī'a*.

Therefore, Nubian short stories tend to be relatively long. The Nubian writer creates a space for himself to give room to such details that describe the customs and traditions of Nubians, through which he express his nostalgia for old Nubia. Thus, one of the main characteristics of the Nubian short story is the meticulousness of all the Nubian details; the place and the culture.

Since the Nubian writer is narrating from past memories, about a place that has disappeared, flashback is a typical characteristic of the Nubian short story. It allows the Nubian writer to talk



about the past, be it the river, the palms or the ceremonial life, like in the story *Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*. In the description of such details, the Nubian writer uses a romantic language, sometimes rhetorical, to express the nostalgia and a tendency to idealize the place.

The Nubian short story tends to be traditional in its structure, for the focus of the Nubian writer is on the content, the implied objective. It has a plot, characters, starts close to the end, uses flashbacks, and observes the unity of effect.

With the above characteristics, the Nubian short story has itself become a new trend in the wider context of the Egyptian short story. Its contribution to mainstream Egyptian short story does not lie in structure, but in the new content that reflects a very distinctive Egyptian region that has never been represented in Egyptian literature. The Nubian short story is a new addition that enriches the Egyptian experience in short narrative.

The current generation of Nubian writers is from those who have actually seen old Nubia, and therefore have the nostalgia which urge them to write about it. Whether Nubian fiction will continue on the hand of a new generation is a legitimate question. What may be expected is for 'pure' Nubian fiction to eventually disappear, and a mixture of Nubian and non-Nubian experiences to appear as a reflection of the concerns of a new generation of Nubians.



Some indications in that direction may be detected in Ibrāhīm Fahmī's collections, where he mixes his experiences in Cairo and his memories of Nubia. Ḥasan Nūr also expresses the same tendency in his last collection, <sup>c</sup>Aynān Zarkāwān. Even in an earlier collection, Anā al-muwaḳḳa<sup>c</sup> adnāh, Nūr had two short stories: *Rihla fī ḥayāt ṭifl nūbī* and *al-waḍḥ wa-al-ḥidhā'*, that expressed experiences of Nubians in the city.



## APPENDIX



## THE AUTHORS IN BRIEF

Yahyā mukhtār Muḥammad

Yahyā Mukhtār was born in the Nubian village, al-DJunayna wa-al-SHubāk, on December First 1936. When he was six years old, he joined the primary school in his village. Shortly after he joined the school, he had to leave to join his father who went to work in Būlāk, Cairo. After a few months, he was sent back to the village, because his father was dismissed. In 1944, he returned to Cairo, in al-Ma<sup>c</sup>ādī, and joined al-Kūtāb to learn Arabic.

In 1956, he joined the Journalism Department in the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. In 1960, he was imprisoned for two years for being a member of the Egyptian Communist Party. After his release from prison, he worked in the information department and the advertisement department in Dār al-Hilāl.

After he got his degree in 1963, he was appointed in the public relation department in the Prison Authority for nine months before he was fired. During his training to be a manager of a Cooperative, he was fired again after three months. In 1965, he was appointed to the distribution department in al-Akḥbār Newspaper, and still works there to date.



Ḥadīdjādī Ḥasan Muḥammad

Ḥadīdjādī is born in Muḥaram Bik, Alexandria, on May 23, 1944. He is originally from the Nubian village, Tūmās wa ʿāfya. He joined al-Nahḍa al-Nūbiyya primary school in Alexandria, and got his certificate from a commerce high school in 1962. Later in the year, he went to work on the High Dam Project.

In 1967, he was drafted into the Armed Forces. He was dismissed in 1974. He went to work in Saudi Arabia for two years and returned to Alexandria to work in the Agriculture Directorate. In 1995, he resigned and dedicated his time to his career as a writer.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY



A. In Arabic

- Abā yazīd, Šābir <sup>c</sup>Abu. 'Dirāsa taḥlīliyya li-al-ḵiṣa al-<sup>c</sup>arabiyya min khilāl namāzidj min udabā' al-nūba al-mu<sup>c</sup>āṣirīn', in *al-Ḵiṣa al-<sup>c</sup>arabiyya*, No. 1, 1994, p. 4.
- Abū <sup>c</sup>Awf, <sup>c</sup>abd al-Raḥmān. *Muḳadima fī al-ḵiṣa al-misriyya al-ḵaṣīra*, n.p., 1992. (al-Maktaba al-thakātiyya, No. 486)
- Abū Zayd, Naṣr Ḥamid. *Iṣḥkāliyyāt al-ḵirā'a wa āliyyāt al-tā'wīl*, 3rd. ed., al-Dār al-Bayḍā', 1994.
- <sup>c</sup>bd al-Rāzīk, Muḥammad Maḥmūd. 'Zāhirāt lughawiyya fī al-ḵiṣa al-nūbiyya', in *al-Kāhira*, No. 130, 1993, p. 150-159.
- Aḥmad, DJamāl Muḥammad. *Hikāyāt min al-nūba* (transl. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Ḥamid Yūnis), n.p., 1987
- <sup>c</sup>Ali, Idrīs. *Dunkula: riwāya nūbiyya*, n.p., 1993.
- Min wakā'i<sup>c</sup> ghark al-safīna: ḵiṣas, Cairo, 1994. (Aswāt adabiyya, No. 82)
- al-Mub<sup>c</sup>adūn: ḵiṣas*, Cairo, 1985. (Maṭbū<sup>c</sup>āt al-faḍīr)
- Wāḥid didd al-djamī<sup>c</sup>: ḵiṣas*, n.p., 1987. (al-Mawāhib, No. 46)
- Dandarāwī, Ḵurashī <sup>c</sup>Abbās. *Ibrāhīm Fahmī: sīrat al-<sup>c</sup>ishk wa-al-mawt*, n.p., n.d.
- al-DJayyār, Miḍḥat. *al-Sard al-nūbi al-mu<sup>c</sup>āṣir fī miṣr*, Cairo, 1994.
- Faḍl, Ṣalāḥ. 'Andā' al-zaman al-nūbī', in *Aḵḥbār al-adab*, No. 1, 1993, p. 25.



- Fahmī, Ibrāhīm. *Bahr al-nīl: kiṣas kaṣīra*, n.p., 1990.
- al-<sup>c</sup>Ishk awwaluhu al-kurā: kiṣas, n.p., 1992. (Mukhtārāt fuṣūl, No. 77)
- al-Kamar būbā: kiṣas kaṣīra, Cairo, 1989. (Ishrākāt adabiyya, No. 45)
- Rimsh al-ṣabāyā: madjmū<sup>c</sup>at kiṣas kaṣīra, n.p., 1994.
- Hāmid, al-Sayyid. *al-Nūba al-djadīda: dirāsa anthrūbūlūdjiyya fī al-mudjtama<sup>c</sup> al-miṣrī*, 2nd. ed., Cairo, 1994.
- Ibrāhīm, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Hamīd. *al-Kiṣa al-kaṣīra fī al-sitīniyyāt*, Cairo, 1988. (Ikr')
- Ishak, Sayyid DJamāl. *al-Baḥth <sup>c</sup>an al-shamandūra*, n.p., 1995.
- Kāsim, Muḥammad KHalīl. *al-KHāla <sup>c</sup>aysha: madjmū<sup>c</sup>at kiṣas kaṣīra*, n.p., n.d.
- al-SHamandūra: awwal riwāya nūbiyya fī al-adab al-<sup>c</sup>arabī, 3th ed., Cairo, 1994. (Kitāb adab wa-naḥd, No. 4)
- al-KHādīm, Sa<sup>c</sup>d. *al-Funūn al-sha<sup>c</sup>biyya fī al-nūba*, Cairo, 1966. (al-Maktaba al-thakāfiyya, No. 155)
- al-KHarrāt, Idwār. *al-kiṣa al-kaṣīra fī al-sab<sup>c</sup>īniyyāt: mukhtārāt*, 1st. ed., Cairo, 1982.
- al-Kitāba <sup>c</sup>abr al-naw<sup>c</sup>īyya: maḳālāt fī zāhirat ((al-kiṣa - al-kaṣīda)) wa nuṣūṣ mukhtāra, 1st. ed., Cairo, 1994.
- KHūrshīd, Fārūḳ. 'Kaḍiyyat al-intimā' bayna al-shadjan wa-al-tamarrud', in *al-Muṣawwar*, No. 3649, 1994, p. 47-49.
- Mabrūk, Murād <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥman. *Aliyāt al-sard fī al-riwāya al-nūbiyya*, n.p., 1994.



- al-Madjlis al-a<sup>c</sup>lā li-al-thakāfa (ed.) *Abḥāth nadwa "al-ibdā<sup>c</sup> al-kiṣaṣī li-udabā' al-nūba"*, Cairo, 1994.
- Makkī, al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad. *al-Ḳiṣa al-kaṣīra: dirāsa wa mukhtārāt*, 6th. ed., Cairo, 1992.
- Mukhtār, Yahya. *Arūs al-nil: kiṣaṣ min al-nūba*, n.p., 1990.
- 'al-DJunayna wa-al-shubāk,' in *Akḥbār al-adab*, No. 109, 1995, p. 31.
- Mā' al-ḥayā, Cairo, 1992. (Ḳiṣṣa, ḵ)
- Nūr, Ḥasan. *Anā al-muwaḳḳa<sup>c</sup> adnāh, kiṣaṣ*, n.p. 1989. (al-Mawāhib, No. 57)
- Aynān zarkāwān: kiṣaṣ kaṣīra*, n.p., 1995. (Ḳiṣaṣ <sup>c</sup>arabiyya)
- Bayna al-nahr wa-al-djabal: riwāya nūbiyya*, n.p., 1991. (al-Riwāya al-<sup>c</sup>arabiyya)
- al-Hāmūsh: kiṣaṣ kaṣīra*, Cairo, 1985. (Maṭbū<sup>c</sup>āt al-fadīr)
- ḲHūr rahma: kiṣaṣ*, Cairo, 1994. (Aṣwāt adabiyya, No. 74)
- DJaddatī lahn djamīl: kiṣaṣ li-al-ṣighār*, n.p., 1995.
- 'Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka li-al-kaṣ Ḥadīdjādī Uddūl', in *Adab wa naḵd*, No. 72, 1991, p. 125.
- al-Rabī<sup>c</sup>ī, Maḥmūd. 'Ḳirā'a naḵdiyya fī layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka,' in *al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī*, No. 400, 1992, p. 179.
- al-Sayyid, Yusri (ed.) 'Nādī udabā' al-aḳālīm', in *al-DJumhūriyya*, No. 14528, 1993, p. 14.
- *SHa<sup>c</sup>rāwī*, Ibrāhīm. *al-ḲHūrāfa wa-al-ustūra fī bilād al-nūba*, n.p., 1984
- Rādiya: <sup>c</sup>an al-hikāyāt al-nūbiyya*, Cairo, 1967



Tawfīk, Majdī Aḥmad. 'al-ḵiṣṣa al-nūbiyya: shurūṭ ḵiyām al-muṣṭalah', in *al-Muntada*, No. 137, 1994, p. 40-41.

'Ramz al-nīl fī al-ḵiṣṣa al-nūbiyya,' in *Aḵḥbār al-adab*, No. 109, 1995, p. 19.

'Sūrat al-dhāt bayna Ḥadjdjādī Uddūl wa-Sa<sup>c</sup>īd Bakr ..', in *Ladīnat al-buḥūth* (ed.) *al-Adab wa-taḥaddiyāt al-mustakbal*, Cairo, 1994, (Kitābāt naḵdiyya, No. 33), p. 331-351.

Uddūl, Ḥadjdjādī Ḥasan. *Bakkāt al-damm: madjmū<sup>c</sup>a ḵiṣṣiyya*, Cairo, 1991. (Aswāt adabiyya, No. 22)

*GHazaliyyat al-kamar: madjmū<sup>c</sup>a ḵaṣṣiyya*, Cairo, 1996.

*al-Kuṣḥar: riwāya*, 2nd. ed., Alexandria, 1992. (Aṣīl, No. 3)

*Layālī al-misk al-<sup>c</sup>atīka*, 2nd. ed., n.p., 1989.

*Nās al-nahr*, Cairo, 1993. (al-Masrah al-<sup>c</sup>arabī, No. 72)

*al-Nazlāya: masraḥiyya*, Cairo, 1993. (Ishrākāt adabiyya, No. 141)

*al-Nūba tatanafas taḥt al-mā': ḥiwārāt wa ārā'*, Vol. 1, n.p., 1994

Wahba, Muḥammad. *Tadā<sup>c</sup>diyyāt zaman al-sukūt: ḵiṣṣa ḵasīra*, Cairo, 1993. (Ishrākāt adabiyya, No. 125)

al-Warākī, al-Sa<sup>c</sup>īd. *Itḍjāhāt al-ḵiṣṣa al-ḵasīra fī al-adab al-<sup>c</sup>arabī al-mu<sup>c</sup>aṣir fī miṣr*, 2nd. ed., Cairo, 1984.



B. In English

- Allen, Roger. *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., Syracuse, New York, 1995. (Contemporary Issues in the Middle East)
- Adams, Meyer Howard. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 5th ed., Orlando, 1988.
- Bain, Carl E. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, 3rd. ed., Toronto, 1981.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago & London, 1961.
- Brooks, Cleanth. *Understanding Fiction*, 3rd. ed., New Jersey, 1979.
- Budge, E A. Wallis. *The Nile. Dates for Travellers in Egypt and in the Egyptian Sudan*, 11th. ed., London, 1910.
- Davies, W. V. (ed.) *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*, London, 1991.
- Elad, Ami. *The Village Novel in Modern Egyptian Literature*, Berlin, 1994. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, Band 175)
- Ferneau, Robert Alan. *Nubians in Egypt: Peaceful People*, Austin and London, 1973.
- Geiser, Peter. *The Egyptian Nubian: A Study in Social Symbiosis*, Cairo, 1986.
- Genette, Gerard. *Figures of Literary Discourse* (transl. by Alan Sheridan), New York, 1982.
- Narrative Discourse Revisited* (transl. by Jane E. Lewin), 2nd print, Ithaca, New York, 1994.



- Hafez, Sabri. 'The Modern Arabic Short Story', in Badawi, M.M. (ed.) *Modern Arabic Literature*, Cambridge, 1992, (The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature), p. 270-328.
- Hinkel, Friedrich W. *Exodus from Nubia*, Berlin, 1978.
- Jaffe, Adrian H. *Studies in the Short Stories*, 3rd. ed., New York, 1968.
- Kennedy, John G. *Struggle for Change in a Nubian Community: an Individual in Society and History*, Palo Alto, California, 1977. (Explorations in World Ethnology)
- Lane, E.W. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London, 1981.
- Lohafer, Susan and Clarey, Jo Ellyn (eds.) *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, Baton Rouge and London, 1989.
- Rimmon-Kenan, Schlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, repr., London, 1994. (New Accents)
- Rouchdy, Aleya. *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt: A Case of Cultural and Linguistic Contact*, Leiden, 1991. (Studies in Semitic Language and Linguistics; 15)
- Scholes, Robert and Kellogg, Robert. *The Nature of Narrative*, Oxford, 1968.



