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**‘Ali Muṣṭafà al-Miṣrāṭī’s story *As-Sā’ihāt al-ğamīlāt wa-āl-Hāğğ*.
Critical Analysis and Evaluation**

The story I am introducing here is *As-Sā’ihāt al-ğamīlāt wa-āl-Hāğğ* (The beautiful female tourists and the ḥağğ), chosen from Al-Miṣrāṭī’s *Al-Qird fī al-maṭār* collection of stories.* The reason behind my choice of this particular short story is that it has the tourism issue as a background. Moreover, it contains some scenes where fantasy is mixed with reality, and it also deals with some aspects of the Libyan society including some habits and traditions still in existence. Hereunder, I am quoting and presenting the text from the story, translating it and then giving a short critical account and analysis as to what the text indicates.

Before beginning the presentation and analysis, it should be admitted that Al-Miṣrāṭī is not only a story-teller but also a litterateur, a researcher, a critic, a journalist, and a politician. The characters of the story in question, are also marked by a diversity of choice so that they appear as representing a comprehensive social survey of the Libyan society. Anīs Maṣūr once said: “There are two ways for one to know Libya: either to go there or to meet and sit with ‘Alī al-Miṣrāṭī, the well-known journalist, muğāhid and man-of-letters”.

The story begins as follows: *Mağmū‘atun min fatayāti Ad-Danimārk wa-As-Suwayd wa-Finlanda habaṭna al-madīnata fī sirbin li-s-siyāḥa, ġamīlātun mā’isātun fī ‘umr az-zuhūr wa-basmāt ar-rabī’ — wa-našwat al-ḥayawiyya wa-intilāqa farḥat al-ḥayāt* (p. 119) (A group of Scandinavian girls, from Denmark, Sweden and Finland, arrived at the city (Tripoli) airport in a scheduled tour. They were beautiful, slender and graceful, young in the age of blossoms and the smile of the spring; full of life and happiness).

Here, the writer begins his story mentioning the first elements in the story technique, by trying to attract the attention of the reader. The writer

* ‘Ali Muṣṭafà al-Miṣrāṭī, *Al-Qird fī āl-Maṭār*, Ad-Dār al-Gamāhīriyya li-n-Naṣr wa-āt-Tawzī‘ wa-āl-I‘lān, Miṣrāṭa 1992.

impresses upon the special beauty of these Scandinavian tourist girls, comparing this human beauty with the beauty of nature exemplified in the spring approaching. This is because these Scandinavian girls are gifted with such natural beauty in addition to youthfulness, sweet smile, elegant outside appearance, nimble, energetic and lively movement, that attract the attention of passers-by and encourage wandering men in the streets and provoke their excitement and teasing.

Next the excitement element grows more when the author inserts some details which offer information about the company of beautiful tourists, like the way of arriving, age, diversity of hobbies and professions, though they all have in common one thing: beauty! Despite this diversity, beauty is their main characteristic; none of them is exceptional or less than the others in this. It seems that they all combined a physical and spiritual beauty in their constitution. Their knowledge of the Orient seems to include some myth and fantasy which certainly ignited their curiosity and insistence to go there and find out. Definitely, if they had known the realities of life there, they would undoubtedly have hesitated, despite the fact that they had the ability and freedom to do whatever they liked to do.

Then we have a sequence of paragraphs and scenes logically consecutive so that each leads to the next though they differ in length. The outside appearance of these tourists is detailed here, the writer indicating that they had nice slender figures, compared with the fleshy, fat Egyptian or Libyan women in particular in those days. Corpulence was once a sign of beauty and attraction in a woman, but it is hardly seen so anymore nowadays. Education and the media however, have encouraged the new generation here to practise suitable means of sport and care for what to eat so as to remain in acceptable physical form. Yet these Scandinavian tourists drew attention and attracted curiosity for their exceptional beauty among the public, particularly the youths of Tripoli who, it seems, were fascinated and excited by their way of walking, laughing and playing on the beach. The writer makes this clear in his words *ka'annamā taqūlu: hayta laka* which he quotes from the Qur'ān (12:23) in the sequence of the Egyptian governor's wife trying to seduce Joseph.

Then the story writer defines the place: the beautiful female tourist group accommodates at An-Naḥla Hotel. Here we also find that the writer pays attention to nature, the natural environments of the place, providing a short general description of both the desert and the sea, neighbouring Tripoli, with their green meadows and beaches with clean sand, not forgetting the inveterate history of the region.

The writer now introduces the main character, the hero of the story, after he had prepared the stage for the coming scenes. This hero is Al-Ḥāḡḡ. The

writer then provides some details about the task assigned to his hero which are necessary for the dramatic structure and the coming events, and hereby he provides for another essential part of the story structure, the main character in the story.

In the text *Al-Miṣrāṭī* explains what *Al-Ḥāğğ* has to do: to watch and protect these beautiful tourist girls against any possible meddling or aggression brought about by the fascinated and even tempted public who had little to do other than watching with pleasure and enjoyment such eventful visit of these tourists. Before the 1969 revolution; unemployment was the rule; illiteracy, beliefs and traditions seen later as wrong, shared in creating such feelings among the public; and the feeling of utter freedom among these European girls made them behave as if they were in their countries, not considering, possibly not knowing about, the conservative traditions of the people observing or watching them with much admiration, excitement and even desire.

More details are given here in next two paragraphs about the character of *Al-Ḥāğğ*, the composition of this character, its dimensions which contain the exterior side, the outside appearance and the apparent behaviour and conduct, and the psychological and mental aspects of this character which govern the man's conduct and how he behaves, as well as the social aspects which include *Al-Ḥāğğ*'s social status, his position in his society and the circumstances and environments he lives in, in general. All these points are touched on in these last paragraphs.

Here is more technical structure added to the story by means of providing more details of the assignment allotted to *Al-Ḥāğğ* and his responsibilities, and these depict the psychological state of the hero of the story which go along with normal human nature in similar situations.

Anta yā Ḥāğğ fi hāḍihi al-ayyām wa-fī hāḍihi al-muhimma 'indaka yā baḥtaka ḥasana wa-lā ḥasanat an-nuwwāb al-halāfīt wa-ād-diblūmasiyyīn al-kasālā—wa-lā yukallimuka aḥadun—wa-lā sayṭara li-aḥad 'alayka wa-lā yaqrabuka wa-lā yuḥaddiduka aḥad.

*Al-Ḥāğğ: Anā abū al-ḥaṭar. 'indaka rāğil! mā naḥāf illā min rabbī. wa-āllāh law ḡā'a ra'is al-wuzarā' bi-tubatihi, naṭruduhu min ad-durūğ (p. 121). ('You know, O *Al-Ḥāğğ*, you are a lucky man. Your immunity in these days through this special assignment is not unequal to that of the degraded members of the parliament or the lazy diplomats. Nobody dares to approach you and talk with you ; nobody has authority on you ; nobody can draw near you or threaten you.' And *Al-Ḥāğğ* replies: 'I do not fear danger; I am the father of danger. You are facing a manful man. I fear none but my Lord. By*

God! Even if the premier himself comes to this area, I shall drive him out from the stairs!).’

In the dialogue quoted, Al-Ḥāḡḡ gets acquainted with the importance of his assignment. The tourist official explains to him that his job implies immunity from punishment and absolute authority; it is similar to that of members of parliament or diplomats which can protect him from being influenced by any authority while performing his duty. Thus he could face without fear the men mentioned in the text quoted earlier. The writer here speaks of the undeserved immunity of some members of the Libyan parliament and some diplomats with much irony and criticism; for he worked in that field and knew the realities there. For Al-Ḥāḡḡ, his job, his responsibility towards these beautiful girls, satisfies him and this immunity meets his vanity and self-conceit and his lust for practising power over others including officials and the premier of the country as long as he fears nobody anymore. Al-Ḥāḡḡ possibly had known of corruption, privilege, monopoly, enjoyed by high officials including cabinet ministers, members of parliament, and diplomats and with some self-conceit, longs for taking revenge on them all. Apparently, this could be a sufficient reason for Al-Ḥāḡḡ to accept this particular job. But to enjoy the company of such fascinating girls while forbidding other local men from even glancing at them, could also be behind his enthusiasm to accept it.

The action begins to develop with an element of excitement in the story when the hero finds himself placed in an expectedly difficult situation, which gradually leads to the knot in the story structure and to a series of incidents which follow: wa-kānat ḍimna ʾal-mawḡib as-siyāhī ihḍā al-fatayāt ta-rifu šay’an min al-īṭāliyya allati aḡādahā Al-Ḥāḡḡ muḥādaṭatan wa-mulāḡatan ‘indamā kāna musāqaḡan muḡannadan fī ḥidmat Aṭ-Ṭīliyan - wa-takallama ma’ahā wa-takallamat ma’ahu. wa-lūḡiḡa ba’da yawmayni, Al-Ḥāḡḡ ḡalaqa ra’sahu bi-uslūb ‘ašri wa-kawā—ḡaddada—malābisahu wa-ištara rabṡat ‘unuq min lawn wa-ṡirāzin mustaḡdaṡ. wa-ašbaḡa šāḡib qiyāfa anīqa wa-muḡaḡḡaban bi-šaklin mā, aw nisbiyyan, muḡaḡḡab ma’ahunna bi-ʾal-īmā’ wa-ʾal-kalimāt wa-ʾal-išārāt wa-niṡf al-ibtisāma wa-muḡāwalat al-ḡidma wa-ʾal-‘ināya. kāna ḡaḡa ma’ahunna. lākin ma’a al-āḡarīn, naḡarātuhu lā zālat ḡaddatan, ḡaddatan, šarīmatan, ḡazīmatan aw maḡzūmatan (p. 132) (Among the tourist procession there was a young woman who knew some Italian, a language which Al-Ḥāḡḡ had learnt to speak while he was recruited as a conscript in the service of the Italian army (in Libya). And so she conversed with him and he conversed with her. After two days, people noticed that Al-Ḥāḡḡ had changed : he shaved his head in a modern style and pressed his clothes and even bought and wore a necktie of

modern colour and type, and so became elegant and relatively polite, communicating with the girls by a word, a sign or half a smile and trying to offer them his services and take more care of them. In the mean time he continued to be serious, strict and watchful towards outsiders).

The writer presents us with a clue for the mystery to come later, viz. the sudden disappearance of Al-Ḥāğğ. A relationship is growing between him and one of the tourist girls who happens to know and speak Italian which he can also speak. Now Al-Ḥāğğ starts to make himself look elegant and acceptable to her and the others. The text gives more clues of his personality and life: he had served as a soldier in the Italian army in Libya, knew their language, the Italian, as his generation of Libyan natives possibly did, led a normal life like other natives, careless about his apparent look until he fell the victim of temptation by the Scandinavian who spoke Italian and started to change, so as to win her sympathy and eventually her heart. Meanwhile his attitude towards his curious natives did not change: he continued to do his job as before, severe in checking and rebuffing approaching men.

The reader is becoming more and more anxious to know more of the events of the story. The writer is also anxious not to go beyond the plan of his story. He is noted here as making the dialogue in the service of the events of the story, depicting some of the dimensions of the character of the person through conversation and the words he utters. In this way, the reader can understand and follow the sequence of events until the climax is reached, thanks to the way the writer follows in dealing with these events and his skill and proficiency in building the knot and the conflict, in the story. The series of incidents which follow present not only Al-Ḥāğğ but also the young street-seller who was anxious to sell his commodities near the hotel, the journalist and the representative of the joint Scandinavian embassies in Tripoli, which were in charge of the company of the Scandinavian girls touring Libya, all these help to portray the picture and the effects in the story.

In the following part, the writer employs the dialogue to convey the plot: Ḡā'a muşalliḡ al-hawātif wa-fī yadihi ālat at-taşlīḡ. Lākinna himmat 'ammika Al-Ḥāğğ, hafid mufannis al-'uyūn, bi-isrārihi wa-'inādihi wa-ğaddiyyatihi akṡar min al-luzūm wa-kawnihi mas'ūlan 'an 'azl al-banzīn 'an al-kibrīt. qāla muhtaddan:

- lā yumkinu an yağtāza şābbun 'atabat al-funduq.
- Sayyidi! anā muşalliḡ al-hawātif. 'uṡlun bi-āl-ğihāz.
- lays! al-maşlaḡa al-waḡida fī āl-balad hātifuhā 'āṡil wa-ğihāzuhā samit?
- Lākin hāḡā funduq.
- hāḡihi ḡuğğa li-iqtihām wa-duḡūl ġanāḡ al-fatayāt. ba'da safari al-

banāt bi-salāmat Allāh ilā As-Suwayd wa-Ad-Danimārk wa-‘āṣimatuhā Kubinhāgin (naṭaqahā mutazaḥliqatan wa-mutadaḥlatan) ta‘āla wa-aṣliḥ al-hātif wa-iṣna‘ fī āl-ḡanāḥ mā taṣā’.. in šā’a Allāh tarquṣ fihi, in šā’a Allāh turakkib ‘afrīt. lā ḡihāz hātif.. ammā tawwa.. NO... (wa-šaḥaṭa wa-madda kalimata NO (p. 132) (Then the telephone technician came carrying the case of tools to repair a broken down telephone set in the suite. But Uncle Al-Ḥāḡḡ, the grandson of mufanniṣ al-‘uyūn with all his energy, his insistence and obstinacy and unnecessary seriousness, being responsible for the safety of the girls and for isolating the fire from the fuel, angrily said to him :

‘No man shall cross the hotel threshold into it.’

‘But sir, I am the telephone technician, and I am here to repair a telephone set which is out of order.’

‘Why ? Is this the only telephone for the administration in this city and it is out of order and silent?’

‘But this is a hotel (not the administration)

‘What you say is only a pretext to enter the hotel and rush to the girls’ suite. Look! After the departure of the girls from here in God’s safety to their countries, Sweden and Denmark, whose capital is Copenhagen (and Al-Ḥāḡḡ uttered Copenhagen in a peculiar way), you come, repair and do in the hotel whatever you like. Even you can dance in the suite and you may install in it a devil and not only a telephone set. But now: NO! and pressed the letters of NO and extended the word).

The dialogue portrays more of the dimensions of the character of Al-Ḥāḡḡ, be he the speaker or the telephone technician. It also provides more of the technical structure of the story and additional excitement and psychological enjoyment to the reader, making him feel as if he is watching a scene in a comedy, and inciting him to read more so as to find out how the story ends. The last part of the quotation despite its length, portrays more of the peculiar character of Al-Ḥāḡḡ without causing boredom to the reader. This character may be seen as unfamiliar and abhorred for such unusual behaviour; but on the other hand it can be regarded as rarely existing, containing social and traditional values seldom found in the society nowadays. The writer draws it in accordance with his imagination, yet it is based on reality, on actual existence of such men as called now the old generation.

More is provided here of the excitement element and technical development in the story so, the knot, and prepare for the end. The development of the story provides for the logical cause for the hero’s conduct when it reaches the peak of the dramatic structure and explanation is given, why Al-Ḥāḡḡ suddenly disappeared.

He felt a sense of relief at the departure of the beautiful Scandinavian tourists; the troubles of their protection is now over and he has now time for his family. Or probably he is relieved more to see these beautiful girls no more an object for the peeping eyes of parasites and curious men who could be more attractive to the girls than he was.

The text implies the fact that he was not sad for their departure which may indicate that his relationship with the Danish one who he loved, would continue but in secret.

The account on his disappearance portrays the way society used sometimes to solve its social problems like this incident, the disappearance of certain member of a family. Lots of interpretations and explanations and inventing rumours which not only could damage the credit of the family but also complicate the situation instead of sound investigation or referring the case to the authorities to investigate: wa-safara as-sirb wa-ṭārat al-‘aṣāfiru wa-tanaffasa Al-Ḥāḡḡ, ḥafid mufanniṣ al-‘uyūn, aṣ-ṣu‘adā’... wa-ḥallafna lahu daftaran min aṣ-ṣuwar at-taḍkārīyya (albūm) wa-ahdāhunna ba‘ḍ al-hadāyā at-taḍkārīyya wa-marrat asābī‘ wa-nasiya al-funduq wa-ās-siyāḥa sirb as-sā’ihāt wa-ḥadaṭa mā lam yakun fī al-ḥusbān. Iḥtafā Al-Ḥāḡḡ, hafidu mufannis al-‘uyūn, iḥtafā lam yu’tar lahu ‘alā aṭar wa-lā ḥabar wa-kānat hunāka ‘adidun min at-ta’wīlāt.

– Hal šābbun min alladīna naharahum ayyām wuḡūd sirb al-banāt as-sā’ihāt wa-qarrara al-intiqām minhu ḥāṣṣatan annahu haddadahu wa-ahanahu amām an-nāsi wa-‘alā masma‘ min al-banāt?

– Hal gasa fī tahqīqa ḡamīḍa wa-ibtala‘ahu dihlīzun min ad-dahālīz?

– Hal ursila fī bi’ta ‘ilmiyya rasmiyya? wa-mā hiya mu’ahhilatuhu?

– Hal gasa fī ār-rimāl?

– Hal ḥatafathu al-Mafia? wa-hal tahtufu al-Mafia miṭlahu? wa-māḍā taṣna‘u bihi? [...] wa ḡalla al-ḥālu aṣḥuran qurābata al-‘ām wa-zawḡatuhu al-miskīna tas’alu ‘anhu wa-āṭarat az-zawḡa ‘alā ṣūra lahu ma‘a sirb al-ḡamīlāt min Ad-Danimārk wa-As-Suwayd fī al-funduq wa-walwalat: Yā day‘ata al-aḥlāq! wa-lākin hadda’a min raw‘ihā al-ḡāra wa-ās-suwayhibatu wa-ṭalabu minhā an tu’aḡḡil al-ḥuzn wa-al-mu’āhada ba‘da an ya’ūda (pp. 141–142) (The company [of beautiful tourists] finally departed, left for home, and the birds flew away and Al-Ḥāḡḡ, the grandson of mufanniṣ al-‘uyūn breathed a sigh of relief. But the girls left him for memory, an album of photographs taken there during that tour, and he gave them some presents for memory, too. Weeks passed by, and the tourist office and the hotel staff forgot about that company of beautiful Scandinavian tourists. But one day something happened. Al-Ḥāḡḡ, the grandson of mufanniṣ al-‘uyūn suddenly disappeared without notice and

leaving no sign to trace his whereabouts. And many speculations and explanations as to his disappearance started.

‘Did any of the young men whom Al-Ḥāğğ had once snubbed or rebuked during the time of that job and the stay of the tourist girls at the hotel, decided to take revenge upon Al-Ḥāğğ especially if Al-Ḥāğğ had insulted that young man publicly and in the hearing of, and before those beautiful Scandinavian tourists?’

– Did Al-Ḥāğğ plunge into mysterious investigations and disappeared in one of the corridors (of the Investigation Department in charge of the country security)?

– Or was he sent on an official scientific expedition? But is he qualified for such expeditions ?

– Or have the sands (of the desert) swallowed him?

– Or, did the Mafia kidnap him? but does such a man interest the Mafia so as to kidnap him? and what will the Mafia do with him? [...] For months and even for almost a year speculations had continued as to his disappearance which led to this uneasy situation, and his poor wife had insistently continued her inquiry to know his whereabouts but in vain ... And finally she found a photograph showing him with the group of the beautiful tourist girls who had come from Denmark and Sweden and stayed at that hotel. Then she broke into loud wails, crying and repeating loudly : What a loss of morality! But her female neighbours and friends tried to calm her and sooth her nerves and console her; they requested her to wait for that sadness and reproach until her husband returned).

The end is approaching fast since the story has exhausted almost all the elements of attraction and the reader has become ready to reach that end. The “black box” as they say in the world of flight is now found: after almost a year, the poor wife discovered the photograph which showed Al-Ḥāğğ with the Danish tourist. She had looked for him everywhere assisted in this by all who sympathized with her, but she had never searched her husband’s clothes and materials until she found the photograph. This indicates her confidence in her husband and respect for him, common in the society then. Moreover, he was an old man, well-known for his rectitude. Her astonishment to see him with the girls was therefore a normal reaction and so were her words about the loss of morality.

The writer intended to reach a quick end to his story after it had exhausted all that it had aimed at. A year had passed by before the wife of Al-Ḥāğğ finally recognized that her husband has deserted her, his family and his country to lead a new life with a new wife. This was expected after she had found that photograph with him and the Danish girl. The sequence of these

final events indicate rather painfully the uneasy status of the wife in the family in Arab countries in general in those days. She had to tolerate patiently her husband's despotic dictates and behaviour if she were to survive as a wife and live with her own children. The text indicates the woman's patience, chastity, and concern about her family, her endurance and insistence to weather the storm and survive even when there was nobody to care for her or defend her, be it the state or society. The photo card which she finally received from her husband carried with it nothing but the end of that married life which had bound them for years and years, thus leaving this unhappy old woman to face a new situation alone: wa-ba'da sana kāmila, ġā'at bi-āl-barīd biṭāqa mulawwana wa-bihā ṣūra ma'a fatāt ḥulwa kānat min as-sirb ad-danimārki wa-as-suwayadī wa-āṣ-ṣūra ultuqīṭat hunāka fī Kubinhāgen 'inda mašrab As-Sa'āda wa-bi-ġānibihi as-sayyida ad-danimārkiyya wa-kutiba taḥta aṣ-ṣūra satr: taḥiyyatī ma'a zawġatī min Kobinhāgin – Ad-Dānimārk ... Hubsā Al-Ḥāġġ! (After the elapse of a complete year, the postman brought the unhappy wife a coloured photo card showing Al-Ḥāġġ with a pretty girl, one of that Danish and Swedish company. And the photograph was taken there in Copenhagen inside a bar called the Happiness Bar, and down underneath the photograph the following line was written: 'Greetings from me and my wife from Copenhagen, Denmark. Hubsā Al-Ḥāġġ').

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The beginning of the story is rather exciting and calling for the curiosity of the reader, quick and full of feelings and sentiments to the extent of excitement. The introduction and descriptive account in the story of the company of the tourist girls, their particular and exceptional beauty is perfect and it looks as if the reader is watching a video film showing the glamour and enchantment of beauty in the woman and the fascination of her body. This is also reflected in the reactions and comments of the local passers-by, and this makes the reader tautened and tightly drawn to the events of the story and anxious to read and know more of the events to come.

The story depicts quite well the conduct, behaviour and even the implicit thinking of some of the persons who have not the courage to express their feelings and sentiments openly. Thereby it exposes those who are connected with the incidents which are related to these tourist girls, including Al-Ḥāġġ and those men whose curiosity and advances were rebuffed by him through his seriousness about his job.

In this story unity of time and place is clearly observed. The scene of events is the beautiful city of Tripoli and the time is the fifties or early sixties (of the last century) and this is understood from the sequence of incidents and the characters we are meeting in the story.

The story is also ample of situations with a special kind of irritations and conflicts among these characters. The effect of the appearance of such exceptionally beautiful Scandinavian girls among the local people of the society of the time, conservative as it was then, is interesting and shows the extent of the sexual hunger and suppression of this desire prevailing not only among young men but also among the elderly who are usually known for their piety or pretend to be so and call for respect (p. 136).

The Libyan society then led a life which was governed by traditions, habits and concepts which evaluate and glorify particular concepts of honour and a different code of moral values even to the extent of exaggeration sometimes. Woman was still not liberated in mentality and her outside appearance was usually observed and controlled, and education was still at a low standard and not extended to cover educating the females of the society in Libya as it is nowadays. Moreover, man was still the image and authority of the family, maintaining authority over all, and his authority over the females was still unshaken and absolute. This is understood from the story, for example from the behaviour of the tourist official while Al-Ḥāğğ was in charge of guarding these foreign female tourists.

The story portrays this social background in a lively way: the habits, the traditions and beliefs, the psychological vacuum the normal people lived in, their interest in trifles, trivial things and passing time in gossip and tittle-tattle and satisfied in spreading rumours and hearsay about each other.

The dialogue in the story pervades it from the start to the end, and this increases the excitement elements in it and exposes the characters through the situations where different feelings emerge such as courage, fear, desire, curiosity and other emotions. It is not unlike normal real dialogue and talk among people in real life, but it does not lose its seriousness and aim so as to become mere chat or prattle.

The dialogue and narrative account go side by side in a balanced way throughout the story, and the style in which the story is told corresponds to, and is conformable with, the kind or type of the story in question. The writer sticks to the subject and does not deviate from it or become lost in other thoughts.

As regards the language and vocabulary in use in the story, the writer employs easy language so as to be understood by a normal reader. This is also necessary for this type of story. There is no need for a dictionary to be

used here, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two classical expressions: *allatī wa-al-lutayya* and *hayta laka*. The first, viz. the expression *allatī wa-allutayya*, or more correctly *ba'da al-lutayya wa-allatī* which means in "after lengthy discussions" or "after much ado" is often used in classical and modern literary works. It indicates that an acceptable conclusion has been finally reached after a hard work or discussion. The other, viz. *hayta laka*, is a quotation from the Qur'an (12:23: *wa-rāwadathu allatī huwa fī baytihā 'an nafsihi wa-ḡallaqat al-abwāb wa-qālat: hayta laka!*) in the sequence of the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob, and Zulayḥa, the wife of the Egyptian governor, who was impressed by Joseph's fine appearance and tried to seduce him saying: 'Come, take me!' (A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*). By inserting these words here the writer possibly aims to add some linguistic knowledge to his reader. Such method is often utilized by almost all writers and this is because and for the enjoyment of any literary work, there should be some sort of speculative as well as mental satisfaction.

The characters of the story including the main one, that of Al-Ḥāḡḡ are plain and simple from the psychological point of view, representing a large sector of, if not almost all, the society in Libya. From the social point of view and the outside appearance, the main character, Al-Ḥāḡḡ, is clearly painted in the story: his occupation, his dress, his character and qualities including his seriousness and jealousy from young handsome men, as well as his social and familial status.

Technically, the writer observed a general proceeding of events till these events reach the climax. Then he started the way down to the end, also gradually, until a natural conclusion is smoothly reached, acceptable to the normal reader. It is noticed that the writer makes no irrelevant remarks or expatiation in this story.

The problem faced in the story is represented in the struggle between man's innate moral and other values and principles on one side and the currents of change invading these values and principles which were generally accepted and believed in by the society of the time, on the other.

The hero became a victim of these changes despite his known inflexibility and resistance to any compromise, clearly apparent in the story. He finally gave in to change: to the inducement of the beautiful foreign tourist girls and left his past, his wife, his children and his home to follow and subsequently marry one of these Scandinavian beauties and lead a new life in a new country.