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**Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat (1912-1976) and Woman's Beauty  
Reading in his Poetry**

At the advent of the twentieth century, Egypt was subjected to different cultural currents the most prominent of which was the emergence of the “Dīwān Group”<sup>1</sup> who shook off the bases of the traditional poetry with the ideas and concepts which the pioneers of this Group came up with, together with the relentless oppositions between advocators of innovation and those of traditionalism. The Group drew, in their culture, on foreign tributaries, the most pioneering representatives of which were Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Shelley, Byron and Wordsworth, on the one hand—and other influential figures such as Browning, Tennyson, Emerson, Longfellow, Poe, Whitman and Hardy on the other.<sup>2</sup> Al-‘Aqqād (1889-1964), one of the pioneers of this Group, unambiguously confirms that the Group benefited from English criticism as well as from poetry and other arts of writing: “I would not be mistaken if I say that Hazlitt is the leader of all this school of criticism because it was he who guided it to comprehend the meanings of poetry, arts, the functions of writing and the position of comparison and quotation.”<sup>3</sup> And although this Group could find an outlet through which modern Arabic poetry could be acquainted with the various trends throughout the last two centuries on the other side of the world, the political conditions<sup>4</sup> prevailing

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information about the “Dīwān Group”, see S. Moreh, *Modern Arabic Poetry*, Leiden E. J. Brill, 1976 pp. 71f., S. K. Jayyusi, *Trends and movements in modern Arabic poetry*, Leiden E. J. Brill, 1977, vol.1, 152-175.

<sup>2</sup> Al-‘Aqqād, *Šu‘arā’ Mišr wa-bī’ atuhum fī ǎl-ġil al-māḏī*, Cairo, 1950, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 192.

<sup>4</sup> Political circumstances in Egypt in the reign of Ismā‘il Sidqī (1875-1950) at the beginning of 1930s, were very bad, as he suspended parliamentary authority, abolished the constitution and suppressed liberties. With this deterioration, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn was expelled from the University and Al-‘Aqqād was put in jail for having defamed the royal person. See ‘Abd al-Azīz ad-Dasūqī, *Ġamā‘at Apollo, wa-aṭaruhā fī ǎš-ši‘r al-hadīṭ*, Cairo, 1971, p. 298.

and the violent disputes<sup>5</sup> among these pioneers made them part company: Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī (1880-1949) abandoned composing poetry and turned completely to writing prose, and Al-‘Aqqād engaged himself in politics and journalism. Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Šukrī (1886-1958) did not write a single *divan* after 1919; only several limited poems published by some newspapers and magazines such as “Al-Muqtaṭaf”, “Al-Hilāl”, “Aṭ-Ṭaqāfa” and “Ar-Risāla”, and then he kept silent.<sup>6</sup>

If the “Dīwān Group” were destined to cease at that stage, their notions and trends of thought —pertinent to romanticism, realism and symbolism— did not disappear. Another Group of young poets took over whose artistic and literary ambitions were greater than their painful and sad reality. They were guided by foreign, cultural tributaries they derived from their sources: the works of Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth, which left their impact clearly on much of their poetic works. Most important of these is a multi-talented and versatile poet, namely Aḥmad Zakī Abū Šādī (1892-1931), who could —by virtue of his literary talent and uncommon personality— harvest all the views of the “Dīwān Group”, after absence of the three champions from the competitions. Furthermore, he succeeded in calling upon his fellow poets to form a group whose concern was to advance poetry, to embrace all poets and support them financially and morally, to watch over their literary output and foster in them the spirit of group work<sup>7</sup>. Abū Šādī’s call adumbrated the emergence of a new movement to be named “Ġam‘iyyat Apollo” (Apollo Society) which was able, in September 1932, to issue a magazine bearing its name and embodying its constitution and objectives<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Māzinī levelled biting criticism at his colleague, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Šukrī, in the second part of *Ad-Dīwān* bearing the title, *Šanam al-alā‘ib* (Idol of Crookedness) in which he says: “How poor this idle is! He does not know —because of his dumbness— what to say. Those who sympathize with him volunteer to defend him but their defense comes more deadly to him than our criticism, and they hate having made of him the idol of crookedness, so they ridicule and laugh at him” see, *Ad-Dīwān*, Cairo, third edition p. 178. He who contemplates Al-Māzinī’s article would find it far from serious criticism; it is almost meaningless, personal slander.

<sup>6</sup> M. Mandūr, *Aš-Ši‘r al-miṣrī ba‘da Šawqī*, Cairo, u. d., ed., *Naḥḍat Miṣr*, vol. 1, p. 121.

<sup>7</sup> A. al-Dasūqī, *ibid.* 302.

<sup>8</sup> Abū Šādī designated the message of “Mağallat Apollo”, whose chief editor he was, by introducing it to the readers in the following words: “These lines derive their force from concrete reality, not from fascinating poetic imagination, in calling to attention the need for such a magazine in order to promote Arabic poetry, to serve its men and to defend their dignity and to orient their efforts in the artistic and right way. No one can deny that Arabic poetry has advanced and declined at one and the same time. It has advanced by the virtues of current civilization, its human tendencies and

“Ġam‘iyyat Apollo” could manage to embrace all literary trends prevailing in the literary arena, and to mould most of its artistic output in a dejected emotional tinge that revealed that deep anxiety which enveloped the ideas of many of the poets resultant of unstable political conditions. This fact was perceived by the contemporary critic, Muḥammad Mandūr (1907-1965), who described this atmosphere saying:

“It is impossible to get in such an atmosphere any but plaintive and groaning literature, as the poet cannot speak but about himself, his dreams and passion, his soul’s longings—or he may run away, from the hell surrounding him, to nature and its landscapes and diversions, seeking in these a consolation for his and his people’s sufferings, without being able to reveal the source of these, or to call for ridding himself of them in one way or another.”<sup>9</sup>

At the head of these poets is our poet, Ṣāliḥ Ġawdat, who threw himself in women’s arms in order to avoid the hardness of life. He wholeheartedly committed himself to the phenomena of love, as this—in our viewpoint—shaped his life, music, images and all his artistic means. It may be maintained that these means were ones of love’s elements which—when they meet at the level of letters, sentences and content—created cases of love, or more precisely, each one created the other. For love generated the poetry, and poetry love. This is the way this study will proceed, especially because we shall, initially, transcend the view that gives priority to the word over the meaning, or that advocating the opposite, into the view that equates the one with the other, or at least blends the one with the other. Or we adopt the view that approximates the modern outlook seeing the one branching from the other, or as two faces of one and the same thing<sup>10</sup>. What concerns us here is to emphasize that there is a precise link between wording and

artistic spirit—and most of its men have declined—I do not exempt many good ones—who would not have been affected by those ages which celebrated good literature—where making money from poetry was not to blame—and thus poetry has declined with them as a result of their financial disability, being at odds with life, and their abstention from artistic production that requires effort and thinking. Thus Arabic poetry has become in our age a mixture of ugliness and beauty, loftiness and decline, superiority and inferiority, in a strange, eccentric way...”, “Mağallat Apollo”, Sep. 1932, vol. 1, p. 4. For more detailed information about “Apollo Group” Ad-Ḍasūqī, *ibid.*, Jayyusi, *ibid.* vol. 2, pp. 369-452.

<sup>9</sup> M. Mandūr, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> See Jerone Beaty, *Poetry from Statement to Meaning, Introduction*, New York, 1965, 3ff. See also, G. E. von Grunebaum, *The Aesthetic Foundation of Arabic Literature, “Comparative Literature”*, 1952, Vol. IV, pp. 323-340.

meaning, that is to say, the phenomena of love in Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat created its own artistic means. We shall even see that these often created love, or at least, made for its existence.

It should be said, from the outset, that the poet, Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat, was descended from a Turkish family<sup>11</sup> that settled down in Egypt, and that he inherited from it the love of literature as well as the love of love. For it is well-known that he lived a familial life laden with affection and kindness. His family provided him with an aesthetic experience which had a conspicuous impact on his poetry. After the transference of the family to Zaḡāziq in Egypt —where he had been born—it settled in Heliopolis where he lived a peaceable dreamy life. There was a blooming garden situated in a rich library and an outer luxuriant one which greenness, shades and flowers embraced, together with the sweet singing of birds, which must have had its effect on the child's world. If psychologists admit the serious effect the early years have on the child this early period in the life of the poet was rosy. We shall see how all this had its effects on his poetry. Some of his poems are about flowers and thickets, others are about birds' musical hymns, and some others are about wandering butterflies. What is reiterated about the history of this family is the deep love between the son Ṣāliḥ and father Kamāl ad-Dīn, as there was —besides the parental and filial relationships— that relationship constituted in the love of poetry in general, and the love of the 'Poet of the Court' Aḥmad Ṣawqī (1868-1932), in particular.

"It is amazing that we —my father and I—met at one and the same opinion about Shawqī, and I shared with him the opinion that he was the master of all, those who had come before, or those who came after, him, because we do not equate with him great poets such as Ibn ar-Rūmī (836-896) or Al-Mutanabbī (905-956). For what first impressed me about poetry was music and Ṣawqī was a musician whose playing on rhyme strings is unattained by Ibn ar-Rūmī's and Al-Mutanabbī's quill. Thus I studied his poetry by heart, and neither the passing away of years, nor the change of schools, nor my ample reading in French and English poetry —could change my faith in the 'Poet of the Court.'"<sup>12</sup>

This is how family relationships deepened the relation between poet and poetry, and poetry deepened the relation between the poet and his family, and hence the broadening of love in the poet's character.

<sup>11</sup> The poet wrote his own brief autobiography in the introduction to his *Dīwān: Layālī al-haram* (Nights of the Pyramids), first edition, Cairo: 1957.

<sup>12</sup> Ṣ. Ğawdat, *Layālī al-haram*, p. 3.

If we leave out the family love in which the poet powerfully swam, and which was characterized by what psychologists express as “conformity” and “adaptability”, and proceed to the phase prior to coming of age, characteristic of “action” and “energy” —we find an early love experience that had its impact on the poetry and continued extending its shade on his poetry for such a long period of time that it has become one of the landmarks of his poetry<sup>13</sup>.

For in the period in which he lived at Heliopolis, the poet joined an English school, and was closely attached to a blonde blue-eyed teacher<sup>14</sup>, who used to caress and treat him amicably, as some female teachers sometimes do. As for him, he felt suddenly grown-up, able not only to practice love, through poetry as well, and as such his first poetry came out at his English school. Although what he wrote at that stage were mere “immature attempts” in the vast realm named poetry which he abandoned later on, it is noticeable that his early relationships with poetry stamped on him what may be called an “aesthetic pattern”: the actual key by means of which we shall enter the world of love of Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat. This “pattern” constituted a conspicuous common characteristic feature of his poetic world, as the blue-eyed blonde dominated much of his poetry<sup>15</sup>, until other “patterns” gained the upper hand. It is noteworthy that the poet excelled in delineating this “pattern” and pursued it from more than one angle, and in more than one condition —especially with respect to the splendid poem that drew people’s attention to his flowing poetry/imagery and his dancing words, which opens as follows:

<sup>13</sup> Early love experience left its impact on a number of the Dīwān Group such as Aḥmad Zakī Abū Ṣādī who was shocked by his first experience in love, when his beloved got married and left him to suffer a bleeding heart; thus he composed his sad poem, “Funeral Marriage,” on her wedding night, as the wedding music made its way to his room. Abū Ṣādī remained suffering from the effects of this thwarted love even after his leaving for England, as he remembered her in every beautiful thing he saw. Thus his dīwān Zaynab came to reflect the impact of this experience on his poetry. Ibrāhīm Nāġī (1898-1953) also passed through a similar experience in his boyhood, which extended its impact on his poetry even until his old age. His poem Al-‘Awdā (Coming back) —estimated as the best of his poetry by the critics—is a wonderful embodiment of the penetration of this experience into the depths of his self. Small wonder to see him henceforward deriving inspiration from his boyhood beloved whenever he lacked inspiration. And Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat’s experience —the object of our study— is one more testimony of the impact of such experience in shaping the poet’s poetry. There are other testimonies which it would not be appropriate to follow up here.

<sup>14</sup> Muḥammad Riḍwān, Ṣā‘ir an-Nīl wa-ān-naḥīl, of the publication of Al-Maktaba at-Taqaḥfiyya, Cairo, 1977, p. 27.

“The blue eyes and the golden hair,  
Have drawn me, darling, to your love,”

and he does not hesitate to present her in the image of a demi-saint, as he swears by her, and even swears by many of her features:

“By the forenoon and golden brooks,  
And your blue eyes like clouds  
By your grape-cheeks,  
And your sweet-dallying breasts,  
An oath I have from lying safeguarded.”<sup>16</sup>

The prerequisites of this ideal pattern of beauty were the blueness of the eyes, the goldenness of the hair, the redness of cheeks and lips, the tallness of figure, the sweet guise and lively breasts:

“On your figure, blond, temptation idols show,  
Glorification and dreams of golden hair dwell,  
And melodies of blue eyes’ charm and tunes,  
A frame of rare beauty, never by a painter marked.”<sup>17</sup>

“You have golden, enchanting hair,  
My heart lost in its waves and melted,  
You have two cheeks from which appeared,  
Redness that flowed in my dissolved heart,  
And the blue eyes there above,  
Going to and fro like clouds”.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that the first beloved’s features, her colour and physical characteristics, greatly control the taste and choice of poetry. This was understood by the learned Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī Ibn Ḥazm (994-1064) in his book *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (edited by Aṭ-Ṭāhir Makkī Cairo, 1980, pp. 47f), as he says: “... And I know that he whose first amorous relation was a girl-slave tending to shortness —never loved a tall one henceforward. And I also know he who loved one with mouth, abstained from every small mouth, denounced and hated it. And about me, I would tell you that in my boyhood I loved a goldenhaired girl-slave of mine, thus I never liked a black-haired one from then onward, however beautiful she might have been. I find this in my construction since then, myself never liking or loving another. This also happened to my father —may God be pleased with him— and he remained so till his death.”

<sup>16</sup> Ṣ. Ġawdat, *Layālī al-haram*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, Ṣ. Ġawdat, *Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb*, Cairo 1975, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> “Mağallat Apollo,” April, 1933, no. 8, vol. 1, p. 882.

“Oh! For your sweet guise and beautiful face,  
Your soul nourishing blue eyes that inspire,  
And the virgin breasts shaking on a handsome figure.”<sup>19</sup>

When the poet finds himself in front of a blue-eyed nun, beauty is seen blended with holiness, and he finds himself unable to resist the temptation, face to face with religion and beauty. But if religion alienates people from fascination with beauties, he—as poet—turns the formula upside down by seeing that religion’s advocates are ignorant of love’s logic. They do not know its principles; only poets will know its secrets:

“If monastery taught you not to reveal a secret  
He who taught you vanity was untrue parent,  
Love’s rationale has an uneloquent logic,  
Seek me, then, for true worship,  
You are a Christian, whose religion beneficence urges  
I am a Muslem, and Islam does not spurn my unruliness.”<sup>20</sup>

The confrontation between religion and love was one of Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat’s preoccupations, especially when the beloved was possessed of the features with which he was concerned in so far as we know from the excellent poem entitled *Dīn ġadīd* (A New Religion):

“A beauty from Lebanon Arz, tender,  
Cruciferous of love and never relents  
Church bells called her in the forenoon,  
And roused her to the Cross a pinning  
She passed, and made me half a smile,  
And almost a kindness that never appeared  
I followed, my shadow embracing hers,  
My footsteps never from her destination swerving.  
I went on tempting her and enduring her words,  
Since beauties’ insults are impertinence.  
Nor would my heart be chided for her saying,  
How many debts beauty is owed to us.  
I said to her, while eye to eye are met,

<sup>19</sup> Ṣ. Ğawdat, *Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb*, 57f.

<sup>20</sup> Ṣ. Ğawdat, *Layālī al-haram*, 15.

My heart with beauty's arrows thrust.  
 "Do you disobey a bell in my chest to follow  
 A monastery bells that has no melodies?"  
 To a cross statue she herself shattered as if,  
 Seeing counsel against me to succor.  
 Overcome by a belief toward Christ,  
 And driven to me by love and passion."<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the first thing that occurs to our mind, while reading this unique poem, is the impact on our poet of the method of 'Umar Ibn Abī Rabi'a (643-711) in dallying with women. Worthy of note here is that 'Umar's mistresses are Muslims, but that of our poet is a Christian. The use of elaborate dialogue is here essential to reach the climax of the event, enabled by lengthy resilient sounds which are here unusually concentrated to register the force of the flaming feelings and emotions. These are seen to have overwhelmed the poet in confrontation with the gleaming beauty making its pace to the church in response to call for worship, while the poet's worship is ironically in lover's oasis. Our poet may add many things to the tableau, when he "himself" enters into one side of it and when he is ruled by narcissism which determines much of his poetry; thus he imagines that the news of his fascination with the blue eyes and the golden hair has reached her ears, and hence the emergence of a dialogue that constitutes the essence of the poetic process and soars with it:

"Finally we talked about love,  
 In tenderness and coyness, she said,  
 Are you still, as you were,  
 Yearning for blue eyes?  
 Seeking beauty in golden hair,  
 To be melted by its radiant waves?  
 Beaten by honesty, I was puzzled,  
 Tempted by the eye of hypocrisy,  
 Saying: I am still, but have changed,  
 And the heart has become in broader vastness,  
 The artist's heart kneels down to beauty,  
 In a diversity of shades and lights."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 51f., Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb, p. 153.



However, this pattern springing from the female English teacher had great influence on his poetry, and for which he adapted rhymes and employed dancing measures and hyperbolic and delicate expressions in the service of this pattern. Even when he quarreled with it, he tenderly chided it saying:

“I thought, my enchantment,  
Blue eyes would not lie.”<sup>23</sup>

This is how this pattern enriched Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat’s poetry and endowed it with special ringing, radiance and taste.

In Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat’s poetic career, woman constituted his preoccupation; if unattainable in reality, he sought her in imagination —and imagination for him was an important source of inspiration.<sup>24</sup> Thus he endowed woman with such sacredness that made of her —in his opinion— the vision of God in this world:

“A beauty, in her enchantment  
Is God’s vision in this life.”<sup>25</sup>

“You, most probably, are the vision of a god,  
Who’s a genius an elevated world.”<sup>26</sup>

In spite of this lavish sacrament the poet endows upon woman, he would have her enjoy love’s liberty as man does, and to have her liaison with her lover made public without embarrassment, fear or any feeling of guilt. He demands that she overlook what is said or circulated, since the relation between man and woman is far higher than that; it is an eternal one the roots of which go back to Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. It is even the origin of this human existence we are now living, inherent in our genesis the day Adam ate the apple, so why should we be ashamed of it?

Hence his poem, *At-Tuffāḥa* (The Apple), in which he soared up into great heights, embodies many of his daring ideas:

<sup>23</sup> *Layālī al-haram*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43, Ṣ. Ğawdat, *Alḥān miṣriyya*, ed. Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī, Cairo n. d., p. 50, *Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb*, p. 130.

<sup>25</sup> “*Mağallat Apollo*”, April, 1934, vol. 2, 772.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

“Do not chide me for my daring ideas,  
     The first story on earth was sin.  
 Neither did our father, Adam, abstain from it,  
     nor was our mother from guilt acquitted.  
 They squeezed an apple in our blood,  
     We had no will in what they were fed.  
 A melody she was in every going.  
     In every coming she was singing.  
 All appetites were what she desired,  
     A joy in the self recesses inherent,  
 A pleasure from eternity paradise, if  
     Only obscenely expressed by people,  
 The first prophet substituted it  
     For paradises abounding in felicities,  
 It is the origin of the world in its beginning,  
     How strange of us to call it vicious.  
 If we remember who our predecessors were,  
     We would find our posterity but debts,  
 Whenever a candle vanished and melted away,  
     Another rose, shinning on our earth.”<sup>27</sup>

He was interested in these strange ideas in his old age—and in his later life—so he took to drawing most curious images of the young girl thirsty for love, who would chase man and seduce him to satisfy her bursting appetites. And although this was odd and unladylike behaviour in a conservative Arab community, these poems of his reflect how attached beauties were to him, even in his old age, or more accurately where he is sought rather than seeking. And as such, he does not differ much, in his behaviour, from the chief love poet, ‘Umar Ibn Abī Rabī‘a or Baššār Ibn Burd (713-783).

The poet says:

“She came in a forenoon, plaintive to my father,  
     Saying: your son is long-armed  
 Seeing me at the Nile bank at sunset,  
     He passed with no heeding to two taboos,  
 Womanly tears that are thirsty,  
     And emotions humility in burning,

<sup>27</sup> Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb, p. 17.

I advanced and called on him,  
     But he shut up his ears to love.  
 Catching him up, he upon me encroached,  
     In two looks, he made my heart melt.  
 But my breasts startled at him,  
     He touched them and come in between,  
 I held my hair in my two hands,  
     And he saw it in gold fathomless,  
 Thus I leaned on him tempting,  
     He responded, and I kissed him twice.  
 He embraced me, so I turned the lip,  
     And lover's kiss he with me exchanged.  
 My father said in puzzlement:  
     I thought my son long-armed  
 Yes, she said, he embraced me,  
     And after that he kissed me on my mouth.  
 Do you agree he kissed me once,  
     When I would have it twice?"<sup>28</sup>

In his poem, *Ṣaḡīratī* (My Young Lady), the poet draws up a simple portrait of the day-dreaming of a young lady with no experience of love, who has chosen him of all people:-

"He says to me: my young lady,  
     Am I his young lady?  
 And am I the only one,  
     His inner self does embrace?  
 His life is an "album" of love,  
     How many has his life encompassed!  
 Am I then his cherished one,  
     And am I his last beloved?  
 O, for me! I wish I had been  
     Of all people, his own choice.  
 In arrogance he embraces me  
     As if I were his possession,  
 And he pulls my braids.  
     If his jealousy has been aroused,

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-159.

In gluttony, he bites me,  
As if I were his sandwich.”<sup>29</sup>

Noteworthy in this simple poem, in its words and ideas, is that the poet unusually saw himself in this adolescent girl rather than in his real self.<sup>30</sup> Hence the repetition of the *hā’ as-sakt*<sup>31</sup>, preceded by *tā’*, and *rā’*, as rhyming final letters in the poem, which represent with their neighbouring letters a sound composite. This was not done haphazardly, but rather deliberately aimed at conveying the infatuation in this adolescent girl’s discourse.

On the other hand, we should not overlook, in this poem—and other ones which he composed when he became old—the other side of the poem, namely the “artistic projection”, employed by the poet with great skill under the plight of old age, strengthened by the sentence indicative of possessiveness. For physical stamina, youthfulness and handsomeness which had attracted beauties to him started to slip away from him—or they had already done—like grains of sand slipping away between his fingers, and thus let him, then, live rosy daydreams.

His unique poem, *Minio*, composed in the middle of the 1960s, told by a beauty, skillfully embodies the dreams of a reality in which he is so much absorbed himself that he thinks it an actual reality. Thus he does not hesitate to make this fascinating woman flirt with physical stamina, looks, voice,

<sup>29</sup> *Alḥān miṣriyya*, 76-77.

<sup>30</sup> T.S. Eliot differentiates between the three voices of poetry: in the first one the poet addresses himself, in the second the poet’s voice is addressed to the audience, and in the third the voice of poetry tries to create a person speaking it. Perhaps the third voice is the most difficult because it requires great artistic aspects unattainable except by those who are really talented. See details of this subject in: T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, London: Faber and Faber, 1956, 89-102.

<sup>31</sup> Arab Scholars, in olden times, were aware of the effect of the silent “*ḥ*” in discourse. Ibn Ḡinnī (912-1002) mentioned in his book *Al-Ḥaṣā’iṣ* (edition of *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya*, Cairo 1956, vol. 3, p. 293.) that one of the people of *Al-Madīna* chanted *Abū ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Alā’* (689-770) the saying of *Ibn Qays ar-Ruqayyāt* (000-704):

The events in the city pained and hit my gullets.

*Abū ‘Amr* chided him saying: “What have we to do with this limp poetry! This makes any discourse soft”. The city man said to him: “God forbid! How ignorant of the Arabs discourse you are! God Almighty said in his Holy Book: “My wealth is useless to me now. My power is no longer mine...” Thus *Abū ‘Amr* felt completely defeated. *Abū Ḥiffān* reported: when the Caliph *‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwān* (646-705) heard this poetry, he said: Well-done *Ibn Qays*, except that you feminized your rhyming.

strength, and jealousy the same as his own; he makes her such as to be subject to misgivings, when she rings him up to find him engaged, certain that there is another woman on the phone who is taking him away from her! In this way he makes her go astray in penetrating the “mist” of imagination, chopping off from it that beautiful woman to heaps curses upon her, then abandons the attempt, submitting herself to her destiny, since she loves her—even if her fidelity to her was enveloped in suspicion.

“He loves me, I love him,  
     His love makes me conceited,  
 I like his plentifulness,  
     My littleness pleases him,  
 As if I were, when I came,  
     Near him, in his two fingers,  
 A cigarette keeping him company,  
     Giving him warmth and flaming  
 As if I were a bird,  
     Whose singing delights him,  
 He embraces me in his hand,  
     And contains me in his pocket,  
 In my admiration of him,  
     I almost eat, drink him.  
 I like his jealousy,  
     His foresaking and chiding,  
 His look fascinates me,  
     His pride and conceitedness.  
 His brown colour attracts me,  
     His voice and greyness.  
 His cruelty astonishes me,  
     And his quarrelsomeness.  
 I love to be conquered by him,  
     Always, and not to defeat him,  
 I like him and all that is,  
     My littleness, pleases him.  
 My idiocy makes him happy,  
     And my simplicity delights him.  
 How many nights, in my longing,  
     On my phone I ring him up.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Alḥān miṣriyya, pp. 103-106.

Could it not be said about the poem, too, that the poet tries to call back the past to run, from the present that does not help him live an experience in psychological, social and health dimensions? The answer is “yes”, as Ṣāliḥ would go back to the past by means of “artistic projection”, making this beauty his mouthpiece, and recalling in her his intercessors to beauties, and especially his voice that used to run smoothly like flowing streams in poetry festivals, fascinating audiences with its vibrations. Many a time did the festival guests complain that once Ṣāliḥ’s voice started to flow out with poetry, he wiped the floor with them all. Is it not possible to apply this to the poem just discussed above, namely that it best reveals his narcissism when he flirts with himself? Yes, a tour into the “depths” of his poetry, and contemplation of his life routine, would reveal an important aspect of self-love in him, which he did not disdain to express, appreciate or emphasize whenever he had the means, at which fact we have already hinted at the outset of this study.

Notwithstanding these new garments, in which he started to appear in his old age—to avoid being rejected by beauties, or to prove that age did not affect his virility, this last becoming so doubtful—these garments did not conceal everything, but were crushed under beauties’ feet; thus everything was uncovered and his tricks did not convince anyone. Thus we find him in his wonderful poem ‘Umr aš-šā‘ir (The Poet’s Age)—which seems to be based on an incident that deeply shook him and took him from the world of dreams to that of reality, when a beauty refused to respond to his feelings because of difference in age—justifying his caprices by the delusion that his heart has not aged with him, since it ceased aging at twenty; as such his life is a continuous spring destined to create fascinating imaginative realms into which beauties would like to stroll. Then he reminds this beautiful woman of his that it has made her glory, and that had it not been for him, she would not have known the way to love. He then concludes his poem by tempting her to maintain close relations with him before her hair becomes grey, her neck wrinkles, and her girlhood becomes a legend. But he—the poet—has transcended time, and will not age, since his age is in his feeling:

“Do not, sweet of twenty, get frightened,  
 By the whisper of fifty in my ears.  
 I am in perpetual youth  
 Mine is ever rising spring.  
 The poet, my child, never gets old,  
 His age is in his resilient sense.  
 My heart I have tied to twenty,

My heart's age does not parallel mine.  
 With poetry alive an alluring boyhood,  
 Rejoicing in its delightful paradise.  
 I love birds and tempt dolls,  
 And scatter flowers in my bed-chamber."<sup>33</sup>

If one has a taste for poetry, one cannot leave this poem without feeling the harmony between the artistic form, together with the tone and rhythm it constitutes, and the content embodied in the ideas and emotions that overwhelmed the poet's being toward this situation. Perhaps the first thing which draws our attention in the verbal aspect of this is its rhymes. If you contemplate these, you will find it forcibly compatible with the state of embitterment from which the poet was suffering.<sup>34</sup> The same is true of the letter “ر” (rā'), described by linguists as the repetitive sound, and which is used in the poem amazingly in an intensive way! But our amazement will come to an end when we consider the vocal quality of letter “ع”, repetitiveness, since this letter provides an appropriate sound to evoke the poet's persistence in describing old age, his art, cautioning the beloved and tempting her not to spoil the intimacy between them. This also applies to the “ي” (yā'), which emanates in this poem, being more harmonious with the pricking of pain—the poet's pain resulting from the beloved's dislike of him—which increases with the poet's emphasis upon it, as in some couplets of the poem.

This last situation to which the poet was subjected was not the last of embarrassing situations in confrontation with love, as he was subjected to similar ones.<sup>35</sup> His attraction to beautiful woman—of all types and races—are limitless. Thus we are not surprised when we find him abandon his usual sense of pride and become ecstatic in woman's love, regardless of whether she be sincere or not; he is contented with her being a female of dazzling beauty, and his being in love with her, and that is all:

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-81.

<sup>34</sup> “ع” ('ayn) is a frictional loud sound, and of all Arabic letters it is the most closely associated with cases of sadness, and highly emotive and embittered feelings, because of the special taste of 'ayn in the throat. This fact was perceived by Muḥammad an-Nuwayhī and thus we are not surprised when we find him contemplate the Elegy of Abū Du'ayb al-Hudālī (d. 648), based on this letter 'ayn referring to the actual value of 'ayn when it occurs in narrating poems permeated with sadness, sorrow and bitterness. See his book *Aš-Ši'r al-ġāhili*, Cairo n. d., vol. 2, pp. 649-779.

<sup>35</sup> Alḥān miṣriyya, pp. 53, 84, 93.

It is all the same whether sincere or not,  
 I love you as you are,  
 In you I see woman shot up,  
 And in you I smile a girl's innocence.  
 Which reckless hermet's mud,  
 In love of life, you are made of?  
 You have sin and salvation blended,  
 Changing, and how often you changed!  
 With a virgin's purity you melted of piety,  
 And with love eagerness of woman yourself adorned."<sup>36</sup>

In the period of his study at the Faculty of Commerce, and his participation in literary life, Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat's attention was drawn to a pattern of a new kind, namely the "sinful pattern", as he was concerned with the pattern of the "belle", which he intensively emphasized. Perhaps this new movement was transferred to him through the concepts of the romantic school upon which he started to draw. It is well known that the first one who presented this pattern in mature artistic form was Victor Hugo in his popular *Marion de Lorme* (1831). Alexandre Dumas also excelled in this domain when he represented *La Dame aux Camélias*; then he deepened this tendency in his lyrical poem *Alfred de Musset*. Perhaps the first one who introduced this "pattern" in modern Arabic poetry was the Niqūlā Rizq Allāh (1869-1915) in a poem of his titled *Ilā bāḡī* (To a Whore), in which he says:-

"We saw beauty on your cheeks as flowers,  
 But it has become withered.  
 Think, girl of desire, and answer me,  
 How you have your honour abandoned,  
 And your fortress, one and all, to people  
 And also your wasted, depraved love?  
 Remind us, we have forgotten,  
 That face when it was bashful."<sup>37</sup>

If Niqūlā Rizq Allāh had the credit of pioneering pattern, Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat had such depth of feeling, foresightedness and interaction with human disaster, that make his poem *Al-Haykal al-mustabāḥ* (The Profaned Temple),—in

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 142.

<sup>37</sup> See his *diwān*: *Munāḡāt al-Arwāḥ*, Cairo, u. d. p. 163.



which he described the whole standing in her transparent clothes smiling for every comer, offering her body in the sever cold to anyone wanting it—unique of its kind.<sup>38</sup> Poets were not enthusiastic about the pattern of “the whore”, nor eager to sympathize with her, but he elevated this type of woman to great heights, and instead of condemning her, we find him condemn people around her:

“At the door, she stood in a transparent dress,  
 Opening the door for highwaymen.  
 How many a robber got a part of her,  
 And went away, what in a robber let loose.  
 Oh! host to whom that came in to you,  
 How patient, welcoming and never bored.  
 How, in God’s name, did you appear to them,  
 Smiling, yet with an inward flame,  
 Come to her at night, she painted  
 A smile that betrayed inspiration heat.  
 Then she said: welcome, most welcome,  
 Desire-mate, welcome lover,  
 Here is the flower, you love’s bees,  
 Come and win the honey, and the nectar suck.  
 Then throw away the withered flower,  
 In a blooming spring, tender and flowery.”<sup>39</sup>

In his early life, Şāliḥ Ğawdat was enthusiastic about this pattern which we may place within the realm of “pity”. We often do not like others except when they are in psychological pain, for “direct participation in others’ pains is the source of every liking.”<sup>40</sup> Some see that “pity” is equivalent to feeling for “the depressed other,” so much so that one can feel pain for the wounded animal or the caged bird; above all, “the depressed other” is the whore.

<sup>38</sup> The contemporary poet Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā‘īl, dealt with this pattern in his poem, *Dam‘at bāġī* (A Tear of a Prostitute) composed in 1934, and published in “Maġallat Apollo”, Feb. 1934, vol. 2, no. 6, pp. 479-480, one year after or more after Şāliḥ’s poem had become popular. Whatever may be said about the beautiful imagery of Maḥmūd’s poem, an analytic comparison between the two would prove Şāliḥ’s superiority over his colleague in presentation and the penetration into the innermost feeling of the prostitute.

<sup>39</sup> “Maġallat Apollo”, April, 1933, vol. 1. No. 8, pp. 875-876, Ş. Ğawdat, *Risālat ḥubb*, Beirut 1982, pp. 23-27.

<sup>40</sup> Zakariyā Ibrāhīm, *Muškilat al-ḥubb*, ed. Maktabat Mişr, third edition, Cairo n. d., p. 52.

However there are some who associate pity with egotism, in the sense that man quietens his personal pain when he is exposed to the pain of others. There are even some who link “pity” and “humiliation”, because when we pity the other we feel superior to him.<sup>41</sup> However we see that Šāliḥ Ğawdat’s motives concerned with this “Whoredom Pattern” were nothing but seeking an exciting poetic topic.

It can be said that, after he settled down in life, and after he graduated from the university, the poet hurried—even breathlessly—toward a new pattern, namely “the perfect pattern of beauty.” And since “perfection” means the presence of all the good qualities of a thing, we find him running after beautiful women. He was helped by touring the Arab world and becoming acquainted with many women; thus he writes of Layla of Iraq, and on a Tunisian, a Moroccan ... etc.<sup>42</sup> He also writes of the white and brunette, and soars up with some patterns to great heights, and turns some of them into dancing music:

“I sacrificed life,  
     To the white and the brunet,  
 I was not aware,  
     I would meet with your,  
 You, brunet’s temptation,  
     In your vinous colour.  
 In love, your eyes,  
     Have perplexed my life.  
 These black eyes,  
     And their worshipped night,  
 Also your long hair,  
     And your tender figure.  
 Oh! you, paradise of the lucky,  
     Oh! you, God’s miracle!  
 The cluster has danced,  
     Shake is the flute’s heart.  
 For your chanted melody,  
     Oh, for it! ... oh!”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 55ff.

<sup>42</sup> Š. Ğawdat, *Ḥikāyat qalb*, Cairo n. d., pp. 144, 150, *Alḥān mišriyya*, pp. 38, 47, *Layālī al-haram*, Beirut, 1982, p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> *Layālī al-haram*, Beirut edition, p. 26f.

He was faithful to beauty, not to be beautiful, or to love, nor to the beloved. When he became an adult and got married to a faithful wife, Suhā, he never ceased to chase beautiful woman within her hearing and sight. He wanted to explain this behaviour of his, and ended up writing a beautiful poem bearing the title *Suhā Sa'īd*, which is better than the critics' interpretation of his poetry. Here is an extract from it:

“A group after another appear to me,  
 And to deers I have a compassionate heart,  
 I see them in a way of beauty,  
 I know not to which I may aspire,  
 A short one in my hand I embrace,  
 And a tall one to her heights I mount,  
 A brunet that has an impression in the heart,  
 And a blond for whom a hope in the eye,  
 A wise one whose charms are quiet,  
 And a rake in jesting and playfulness,  
 A simplicity in her purity does enrich,  
 And a wily one with caprice and coquetry,  
 And a cruelty in her defiance likable,  
 And a delicacy, delicious, and lovable.  
 Their beauty grieving in my self arouses,  
 As though their beauty was my offense.  
 .....  
 .....  
 They are the springs of my poetry, but  
 You are the end —and here is the mouth.”<sup>44</sup>

It is clear here that the poet was seeking “a pattern of beauty”, or more specifically—as Muslim philosophers call—“the love of perfection,” since healthy man “likes the good image.” Let us contemplate this precious text included in *Mašāriq anwār al-qulūb* by Ibn al-Dabbāg (1208-1300), because *Šāliḥ Ğawdat* is an intelligent offspring of Arabic civilization. The text says: “senses, which are the messengers of self to beauty dispersed over the surfaces of existence, find comfort in seeing clear water, blooming flowers, mellow voices, hymned odors. The attainment of one of these delights would drive away, make the heart rejoice, broaden hope, pull out worries, as a result of the congruity between the soul and moderations,

<sup>44</sup> *Alḥān mišriyya*, 48-50.

transparence and light, and the incongruity between it and darkness and bloom.”<sup>45</sup>

If we want to pursue the features of this pattern of beauty, we find it quite manifest in modern, emancipated woman, the leisured one in the sense we derive from the poem *Aṭ-Ṭawb al-banafsāğī*.<sup>46</sup> This is the woman who dances in the poem *Samba*:

“Do wise people denounce *Samba*?”<sup>47</sup>

Or she may walk as she dances, as in the poem “rhythmic walk”:

“On your rhythmic walk I intoned my poetry,  
Do you belong to Heaven’s art and creativity,  
A song Beethoven’s finger never reached.”<sup>48</sup>

Or she may be one between whose lips letters soften and dissolve, as in the poem entitled *Tasawwari* with a letter “ص” softened into “س” (Imagine: for Imagine):

“I said to her: *taṣawwarī* (imagine),  
You God’s fascinating creation,  
*Taṣawwarī*—(imagine) my story,  
In your perplexing love.  
She said: *Tasawwar* (imagine),  
I said ... *Tasawwarī* (imagine).”<sup>49</sup>

Or the daring girl who angers her father and mother for love:

“Your father chides me for your love,  
And suspects our emotions,  
Had he once tasted love,  
He would have known love’s madness.  
And your mother asks me the impossible,

<sup>45</sup> ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad, known as, Ibn al-Dabbāğ, *Mašāriq anwār al-qulūb*, ed. H. Ritter, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, u. d. p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> *Layālī al-haram*, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 40-41, *Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb*, pp. 137-140.

<sup>48</sup> *Layālī al-haram*, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18, *Allāh wa-ān-Nīl wa-āl-ḥubb*, p. 79.

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Seeking for a division that will never be.  
Had she known, in her girlhood, love's joys,  
She would have excused those in love."<sup>50</sup>

This is the poet Ṣāliḥ Ġawdat's attitude to woman or, more specifically, to his many-angled way of envisioning women. On the other hand, which is more important, we see these attitudes closely related to his artistic devices. As we previously said, love in him created poetry, and poetry love! For there is an aspect which we can set up pertinent to the artistic devices of the poet, namely: these devices may be "feminine", as the sentences are delicate, not to say the letters, and they are quite "equal" to the types of women he discoursed about. Thus when he talked about a golden-haired and blue-eyed woman, he did not go deep in language roots, but soared far from these. And for some reason, the metres he employed were light and smart, far from gravity and Arabic prudence. It is true that this outlook dominates all his poetry, but the "intonation" and "rhythm", in this type of poetry, differ from those in other types. Moreover, when the poet speaks about this pattern, his poetry is almost transported into a "verbal manifestation"; he then seems to be enchanted by music, or as if he himself has been transported into a case of singing.

When we consider what we called the "Whoredom Pattern" we find it dealing with a kind of delicate sadness, and soft, long sounds such as metre, rhyme and the movement of rhyme, and the vibrating way of the poem; this, in addition to the tragedy of letters and the brokenness of sentences, make one feel that the one possessed of this common body is a corpse floating on a sea of sad music. But the aesthetic patterns he dealt with he permeated with joy and happiness, and chose for them many kinds of merry music. And if the nature of metre imposes itself on the poet as a predetermined value, and if the poet is guided by what is appropriate to his experiences in metres, in this aspect of rhyme the poet has greater liberty, especially when rhymes are numerous in one poem. Therefore, this point requires special consideration because it is a testimony of what we want to emphasize.

It is known that Arabic poetry paid special attention to rhyming, which it considered a "pivotal point" in the couplet, and for some reason it was said that rhymes are the "hoofs of poetry". Discourers have focused on saying that rhyming has a relation to harmony—to metre—and to general music prevalent in the age, on the one hand, and to the poet's psyche, on the other. They considered for long the poets who used to construct the first couplet on

<sup>50</sup> Layālī al-haram, p. 58.

rhyiming or and those who did not. According to Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭāğannī (1211-1285), rhyiming was believed to be a virtue peculiar to the Arab tongue, and if it was found in others' poetry, it would mean it had been drawn from Arabic.<sup>51</sup> However, it is agreed that rhyme is an "aesthetic merit," that Arabs laid much emphasis upon as responsible for musical delight, in addition to their concern to distinguish between differences in meaning.<sup>52</sup>

What concerns us in all this is that rhyiming in the poetry of Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat came first; secondly, he gave priority in his poetry—in accordance with the traditions of Arabic poetry—to the imaginary; thirdly, he was a "festive" poet who delivered his poetry at festivals and occasional symposia. Therefore he often presented the unirhymed poem, contrary to his generation that was used to multi-rhymed poem. The following are characteristics of his rhyiming:-

1. The excessive use of rhymes of "outer articulation" "ك, ر, د, م, ت, ب" (b, t, m, d, r, k), and this is compatible with his delicate nature, on the one hand, and his "chest disease," from which he suffered, on the other—which obliged him to work "at the minimum cost", and with the least effort, so to speak.

2. There is a kind of rhyme the critics did not consider, namely the kind that depends on the repetition of a specific word at the end of each stanza, which signifies that the intonation effect will not be produced by a letter, or what used to be called "necessity of what is necessitated", but by a complete stanza reiterated in a way that does not differ from—but goes beyond—the way rhyme is based. This may be illustrated by the reiteration of the term *anā mā lī* (none of my concern) at the end of each stanza, as in his saying:-

"In my sickness she described, and to the nights, abandoned me,  
After submitting the heart to her she said "none of my concern!"<sup>53</sup>

3. There is another kind of rhyiming to which critics did not give heed, which may be entered in the rhyiming process. This depends, in the first place, on borrowing, that is the reiteration of a hemstitch or part of the couplet, at the end of each stanza, especially if they are permeated with music. Ṣāliḥ Ğawdat resorted to this in order to intensify rhyiming, to give it fluidity, and to impress the listener's or the reader's ear—not by a single letter: the rhyme—but by a number of letters. We notice this often reiterated in his poetry.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭāğannī, *Minhāğ al-bulağā' wa-sirāğ al-udabā'*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb Ibn al-Ḥūğā, Tunis, 1966, p. 123.

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> *Allāh wa-an-Nīl wa-al-ḥubb*, pp. 127-129.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

4. Rhyming preceded by an extended letter —wāw, yā’— although they are interchangeable, in words such as: aš-šu‘ūb (peoples), al-ḥabīb (beloved), but the poet unifies to produce more music in al-ḡanūb (south), al-ḥurūb (wars), al-qulūb (hearts), al-luḡūb (fatigue), that is placing “و” (wāw) before “ي” (yā’), and says: aṣ-ṣaḡīr (the young), al-ḡarīr (the inexperienced) al-asīr (the prisoner), amīr, al-‘abīr (odour), making the yā’ precede the rā<sup>55</sup>.

5. The frequent precedence of “ha”, following the last letter, as a kind of singing, already illustrated in the discussion of the poem “Minion” at the beginning of this study.

6. Most of his rhymes are fractured, which produces a beautiful sense of defeat in music.

7. Related to his “musicality”, he excelled in “rendering” poetry, showed concern with the articulation of the letters he dealt with, and paid special attention to the way they were not well uttered, which is well illustrated in his poem about a girl who transformed the ص into a س, where he tried to imitate her at the end of the poem:

“She said: tasawwar (imagine), I said: did you leave me tasawwarī?<sup>56</sup>

He also has a poem titled: Min waḥy as-sinna al-maksūra<sup>57</sup> (From the Inspiration of the Broken tooth), which means that he had a concern for the articulation of letters. In addition to that, he was excellent in rendering poetry; he worked as broadcaster and programme presenter for a long time. Moreover, he was a song-writer, one who used to select specific words and transfer them within the semantic system of the poem. Above all he has fidelity to Arabic turāt (tradition) in this field. In brief he had full command of rhyming.

If we go beyond the real of music constituted mainly in metre and rhyme, which represent the peak in the performance of Ṣāliḥ Ġawdat’s poetry, we still perceive love in the remainder of his devices. For the poet’s dictionary is derived mainly from the domain of woman. He speaks intensively about her clothes, make-up, jealousy, the way she looks, her gait and laugh, her turn and fascination with exciting things... etc. All this had its impact on the imaginary in the poem and the way it was constructed. If we say his poems are “real women”, we will not be exaggerating.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 26, 27.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

In conclusion, what has been discussed in this study is only one aspect among many in the poet's poetry, though it is the most splendid of all, namely: the poet's attitude to woman. One hopes to come back and discuss other aspects, so that the assessment of this poet's achievement may be more comprehensive. For this poet contributed much poetry, and as such he deserves the attention of the critics, since he was sincere to the cause of poetry at a time like ours where poetry is not accorded the concern it well deserves.