

George M Grow

Wald



Prophet at a Loss

Novel

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EXTRACT, WALD AND THE PRINCE OF THE FREE ARABIC TRIBES

Wald feels too exhausted for joining in the Prince's laughter. For a moment, in light of the current weather forecast, pictures arise inside his head showing how the tour with the sly fox Rafiq would have gone off. And since a whole sequence of outstanding factors is milling about in his head and now he really doesn't feel like walking back to Srinagar, he avoids blowing it with the driver's boss by taking the time and the effort to expose the course of man and humankind starting with the "undivided unity".

This first of three phases, he says, as his eyelids close from tiredness again and again, stretched from the dawn of Anthropocene to the beginnings of urban life, from humankind being embedded in the natural world to the appearance of homo logicus. The antediluvian people experienced the world with completely original, undivided sensuality, original in the sense that they saw, heard, smelled and grasped into the world attentively while they gave little attention at objects since they did not have many of them. In this phase, it was not the factual skill but their discretionary and assessor skills that came first. Their naïve state of consciousness didn't only consist in their receptivity towards perceptions but in the unity of received and self-acting

ability. It was that unity which causes thinking to become more than an empty play of imagination, but rather one which corresponds to the reality from which they immediately emanate. This kind of *cognitio intuitiva* sensitive wasn't a preliminary, uncertain form of recognition but the most certain of all forms of recognition. Within it, the object was comprehended within a sole act of grasping in which intellect and senses cooperate inseparably as *simul totum*, as cooperation of all sensory features in one totality. Wald says that we could find a place for this awareness even in the present day. Politically, for instance, it is to be found on the right. To the left, there was the man of the second phase since he doesn't accept the world as it is but questioned it for what he has plenty of good reasons to do so. While namely humans of the first period had accepted the world (which soon consisted not only of nature but also of cultural achievements) as something that was naturally granted, man in phase two knew a whole lot more, for example, how people live in other cultures and under other circumstances or why the poorest always have the least. The intellect, Wald says, was a spade that builds streets and roads across the landscape whereas streets and roads would have been completely useless for folks living in phase one. While the naive being incorporated the objects into

his natural surroundings in their actuality and actual existence, with the post-Socratic intellect and once more with the post-French philosophers, man's mind had been growing completely objectified by inventing and producing material and mental objects. Since then, Homo sapiens has been living in phase two which he presents the Prince and his clever niece as "divided plurality". Within this consciousness, which was typical for us, the world didn't see itself as world, as an organism, but in the knowledge of innumerable, single, separate parts. No matter whether these parts are things, beings, words, ideas or experiences, they made the transition into validity one after another. Now, the conception of the world doesn't represent the cosmos and the Gods of India's pantheon are not the aspects of the one nature and being any more, but a multitude of views and gods which contradict each other more and more. No one, so Wald's advice, may take instinct, intuition or whatever it was too lightly, since even the thinking and the language of the most fussy experts came up in the end by way of intuition, after word after word has been found, each of which feels like a separate particle that had come to rest after it was thrown into a jar and rattling around. Even when seeking ideas or solutions, one finally decided the way as the feeling recommends it after he has weighed up the arguments.

Our young poeta doctus, who certainly isn't the first man on earth to reconcile empiricism with rationalism, feeling with thinking, experience with reflection, waits for the response which is a nod and a thought what gives him the opportunity to check how things are looking for him and the Pearl.

The girl, who has been enchanted him both with her oddly unique mind and with her fresh but almost completely veiled femininity, for instance, by bating her painted eyelashes towards him, now, since his full attention is paid to her, seems to snuggle up against something that only existed in her imagination. Then she runs her hands over her arms and puts them into her lap so that her veil comes to rest showing off her long legs. His questions why she does so and how she fits into the deal (whether he is to be her ticket to freedom or he is a loving companion for her either), he defers in order to predict, as her uncle wishes in remembrance of their agreement, the third and future period of humankind. This one wasn't the return to phase one, as the Prince assumed, but the fusion of phase one and phase two into integrality. In short, "integral" would mean: There are two ways of recognition, so learn to make the best of both. The insight was that phase one has need of a natural environment, phase two has need of the artificiality of their ideas

and objects and phase three has the need of the idea of what the natural-ity of artificiality could be. Then he yawns widely as a lion and says that that was basically all there was to it and that he was very tired now.

“Tired, no, now he is tired too,” the Prince moans, the same one who was abed a few hours ago as my friend thinks to know from Christian and in respect of his fresh shave. And after the Prince has inspected the face of his tired charge, who would be a great blessing and bring a great future to mankind, he notes that Wald in fact looked worse for wear, twitches as if he were struck by a flash of wit and asks the girl behind him,

“Darling, the Prophet has lavished much time on us. He shared the most confidential knowledge with us and is tired now. Don’t you think you could cheer him up with a little performance of your art?”

Like a curtain highly fluttering in the wind, the girl jumps on her feet and says, while she sorts her hair below the veil, that she would like to help on condition that her uncle lets turn up the heating.

“Christiaaaaan!” the Prince hollers. And when the girl under the black veil reaches the exit with short, swift steps, he calls after her,

“But nothing indecent! You know the old goat gossips about everyth-

ing!”

Once more Wald lets himself be enchanted by her bewitching eyes squinting for him. And when the girl has left the tent, her mom has unburdened herself in a rant and, in view of the arms along the wall, Wald is not sure yet where he would be better off: inside here or outside there, the Prince, attended by his fizzy smile, says that Allah may give my friend as much bliss as He can spare since he himself wasn't in need of it anymore. Now that the Prince knows that people were unable to find the meaning of life since they were still trying to execute it (when they fool around with the puzzles of left with right, mind with matter, matter with matter, mind with mind in order to answer the questions even Allah cannot get to the bottom of), the Prince, holding the new order of things and non-things in his hands now, could approach his matter with a good deal more calmly, if he didn't have to present the statutes of the concept of humankind, of the basic rights and of the basic duties before the Tribal Council within two weeks and if he wasn't plagued by new doubts arising in the Prophet's new light. “And what are they like?” my friend asks when Christian and the bodyguard carry in a small, pear-shaped oven for setting it up in the middle of the tent. For this purpose, Christian opens a small hatch in the roof, connects a shorter

pipe to a longer one, shoves the top end through the hole in the roof and inserts the lower end into the oven. And while he checks the combustion chamber for draft by holding a lit matchstick through the little opened door and the flame is drawn in as it should, the Prince shows his sad side to the guest. Wistfully, he says that everything hadn't got better and everyone who put himself out for justice, for God and for veracity had to acknowledge to themselves that there isn't the slightest glimmer, not the smallest toehold that can let them say that their effort was worth doing it. "It could have been worse," Wald utters watching Christian filling the furnace with newspaper and firewood before the pleasant crackling noise appears. And while the Prince gravely wonders what had been happening, whether they themselves got carried away and the others were right yet, whether they themselves asked the wrong questions and had stoked the cat against its nap, whether they themselves were the victims of illusions and Wald responds that it were not important whether he believes in it but that the young people believe in it, Christian prepares a mini-hi-fi system, inserts a tape and leaves the tent, returns a moment later and reports that they are ready.

"Finally some good news," the Prince replies into the haze of which

Christian chops out and turns on the tape so that the room fills with drums, with flutes and with hush. Then he steps in front of the entrance, waves into the awning, calls, "Hut, hut, hut," and three red veiled women in the garments of oriental dancers stride in.

His Reverence's niece is the girl in the middle. That's how Wald wanted it to be it from the first second and so it has come. And still before he looks for her eyes, her hips, her thighs, her breasts and that all, the trio dances off at the same moment as the vocals of tape and the silver bell swung by the Pearl's big mother come in to the flutes, to the tablas and the maracas. The noisy jingle-jangle is made by the hollowed-out nutshells bound around their thighs and the deep ring of the cymbals between their thumbs and middle fingers. Their feet follow the basic rhythm, their pelvises follow the tablas. Hands and arms are used modestly and serve to frame the dancing bodies. The isolated trembling of the hips, the dance figure at which the silver ankle chains touch the golden rings in their ears and even the splits, regarded as highly indecent by men from the east, strike Wald as quite harmless, which he cannot say about the smile repeatedly sparkling at him through Aaminah's veil. The fact that her rare beauty, her inexorable charm and her not at all jerky grace have not swept him off

his feet so far has nothing to do with him or with her personally but with his disappointing attempts at love over the past years. Actually not for the recent years but for all his sexual life beginning with the freckle-faced, red-haired Susan who said that in a few years, men would all be wearing makeup, up through to Veronica. Also the chicks between Susan and Veronica had annoyed him, let him wait always and everywhere, rushed him always and everywhere and tried to change him to fit their taste at every opportunity. Still, he didn't see that women care for the physical good for nature and men for the mental good for nature, that the mental good without the physical good was like order without love and that he had greeted the physical good with smiles wrongfully since this what man's world has been producing so far was more than uncertain till the day of March, when Wald decided to put his six planets or strengths or senses in the mansion of sex on ice after almost five years in order to warm up his other strengths by using a psycho trick, which happened as follow:

After the breakup with Veronica, as she was annoying him with innumerable calls and messages full of snotty insults, repeatedly putting him down in front of his friends, yelling at him, "If you don't want to spoil me, go piss off someone else" after she had a free ride in Alaska and made clear to

him that he had to bring the sunglasses she had forgotten at his place right away, he asserted that he wasn't a courier service and she would have to fetch them herself. Then, as she sat on his sofa, he involuntarily, unplanned or spontaneous (he places great emphasis on this) came up with a fitting reply to both her greed and his sex addiction by putting a small box from Schullin on the table in such a way that her restlessly prying eyes could not help but find it. Then she returned from his bathroom, sat on his sofa and found the box.

“Oh, a gold necklace,” it streamed out from her after he allowed her to open it, whereupon he wanted to know if she liked it. “If I like it, but of course,” she replied his question, “it is wondrously beautiful.”

Of course it is wondrously beautiful. At Schullin, even the entryway of marble and wood, designed by the star architect Hans Hollein radiates modern design paired with perfect craftsmanship. The shop isn't far from here, and I know his necklace from which branches of corals and chili protrude; Wald uses it as a place to store his valuables. And since evolution drove forward, as he says, he asked Veronica whether she wanted to put it on her neck in order to see how it fits, and so it happened. And when she was looking into the mirror, she walked right into the trap

(not he, but evolution had thought up) by asking if it was a present to her. “To you?” he truly wonders in return, took the necklace right off her neck and received a powerful haymaker followed by a volley of punches and wild kicks, him opening the apartment door and finally a really awfully deep bite into his right upper arm. Professional medical diagnosis: bone-deep human bite. In the end, it doesn’t matter what kind of impression this story may leave, fact is: Veronica’s vaccination works to the present day and still works now, when the oldest of the three but therefore not less interesting dancer entwines the Prince with her bare legs while she is signaling by the motions of her eyes and arms this was an act of piety.

Wald shrinks back. And when his breath starts up again, deep mourning assails him, and despair soars on his brooding face. It’s not the frivolity of the dancer, whose legs embrace the Prince while his niece and the third dancer follow the choreography that drives him to despair. For God’s sake not this. Not even the fact that the Prince, as the bearer of his title and the wedding ring on his finger, is making out with another woman makes him deeply sad, but another shattering insight: that even Wald’s most rare knowledge was not able to arouse even half the eagerness the dancers have inflicted on the Prince.

For him, looking for fulfillment, disenchantment is the worst thing he has come to know. But suddenly, there is a flicker of hope, unexpected help and relief! It is the shrill sound of the little, silver bell in the big Pearl sister's hand that signals the end of the performance so that the perky dancer climbs down from His Reference's lab, the young ladies line up, bow and dash out with veils flying. "Ha, ha, ha," the Prince laughs. Then he turns to Wald and asks,

"Well, my son, what do you think of my niece, have I promised too much to you?"

Wald wants to reply, but before he can, the Prince shouts,

"What's the matter now, can't I have a moment's peace?"

With this, the Prince is referring to Christian, who wants to deliver a message. At his master's behest, he comes closer and whispers into his master's ear while the Prince himself says, "Aha, so so, I see." Shortly later he utters, "Superb, excellent, that's how it shall be!" Then he turns to Wald and says,

"Mr. Smith, I just heard that we will receive a visitor."

"A visitor?"

"Yes, a surprise for you!"

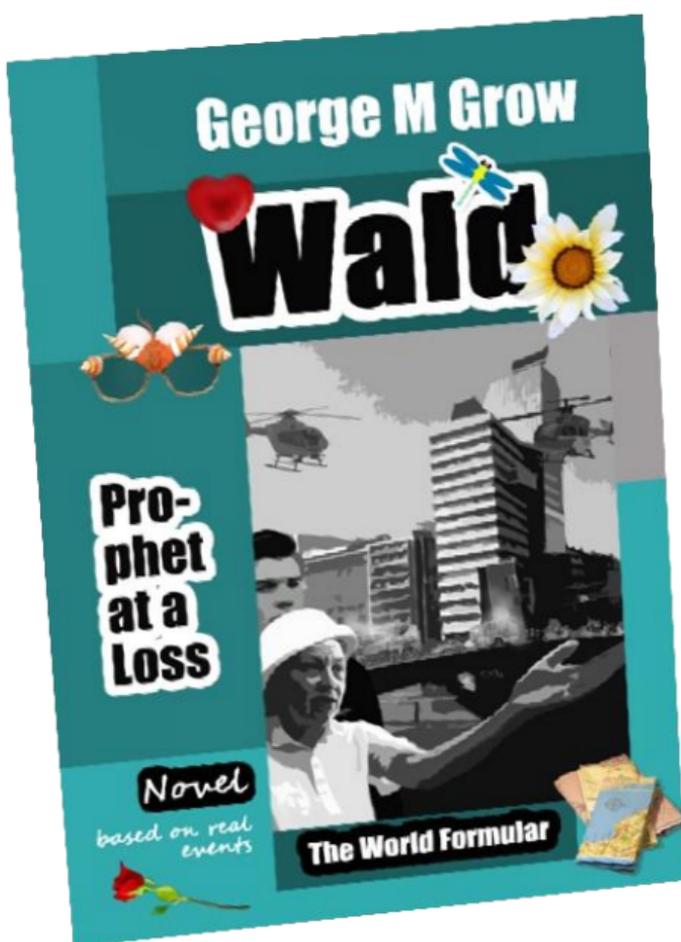
"For me?" he asks taken aback.

Then he looks at the Prince's personal servant and his shrugging shoulders, ascends and makes his way out.

"Stop, Mr. Smith, where are you going?" the Prince calls after him.

"Sayyid, I guess even a Prophet needs to take a pee," Christian rejoins not stupidly, as the guest, accompanied by His Reverence's blessing: "Well, then may Allah be satisfied with you and accompany you on your way", slips unopposedly into the open.

End of the extract
From the novel
Wald – Prophet at a Loss



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