



Life and Works of Tawfiq Al- Hakim: A Study

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Abstract Egyptian-born Tawfiq al-Hakim was a distinguished scholar who made significant contributions to modern Arabic literature. He held a position in Arabic play that was superior to that of any other author of Arabic literature during the contemporary age. He has won awards for his plays around the Arab world. He produced more than fifty plays, which furthered his standing as the creator of contemporary Arab theater. One of the key authors of Arabic literature in the contemporary age is Tawfiq al-Hakim. His work is regarded as a significant contribution to Arabic literature from the perspective of the literary genre, which evolved in his expressive methods and linguistic style as well. He plays a significant role as the solitary inventor of a whole literary tradition in the specific field of theatre. His overall contributions are seen to be concerned with issues pertaining to Egyptian political and social life today. According to mythology, Tawfiq al-Hakim, a well-known Egyptian dramatist, founded and invented Arabic theatrical worldwide. On October 9, 1898, he was born in Alexandria, Egypt, into a landowning family.

The drama *Al Aydi Al Na'imah* was Al-reaction Hakim's to the societal changes carried about by the 1952 upheaval, which he later denounced (*Soft Hands*, 1954). A young scholar who has just started writing a PhD thesis on the usage of the Arabic preposition *hatta* joins the prince of the erstwhile royal family, who is without a significant function in the new society, in this situation. The title refers to the prince's "soft hands." *Al Sultan Al-Ha'ir*, a drama by al-Hakim set in previous Egyptian history, would serve as a further example of this advancement in technique in 1960. The drama examines the problem of the legitimacy of authority in a very effective way. A Mamluk sultan at the pinnacle of his authority is abruptly informed that he has never been manumitted and is, thus, unfit to govern. Some of the original excitement and hope generated by the Nasserist dictatorship itself, expressed in *Al Aydi Al Na'imah*, had started to dissipate by 1960 when this drama was produced.

Keywords Tawfiq Al-Hakim, Distinguished, Arabic Literature, Contemporary, Arab Theater, Significant, Perspective, Genre, Linguistic Style, Tradition, Theatre, Mythology, Worldwide, Alexandria, Upheaval, Legitimacy, Mamluk Sultan

Introduction

He was a well-known author and visionary from Egypt. He is regarded as one of the founders of Arabic literature and play. The reception of his prodigious production of plays serves as a metaphor for the successes and setbacks the Egyptian drama genre has experienced while attempting to integrate its sophisticated communication techniques into Egyptian culture. Al-Hakim was raised in a prosperous household. He completed his legal studies at Cairo University before moving to Paris to continue them, although he spent the most of his



time attending plays. He worked in Cairo for the Ministry of Education and a rural Ministry of Justice upon his return to Egypt four years later (1930). But he left his position in 1936 so that he could focus solely on literature. He was a key character in contemporary Arabic literature as well as the pioneer of modern Egyptian play.

His Life

On October 9, 1898, Tawfiq Ismail al-Hakim was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to an Egyptian father and a Turkish mother. His father, a renowned and esteemed civil officer, served as a magistrate in the village of al-Delnegat, in the heart of the province of Beheira. His mother was a former Turkish officer's daughter. At the age of seven, Tawfiq al-Hakim enrolled in the Damanhour elementary school. Tawfiq al-Hakim finished secondary school in the Beheira province after his father enrolled him there after he finished primary school in 1915. Tawfiq al-Hakim, however, relocated to Cairo with his relatives to attend Muhammad Ali Secondary School since the province lacked adequate secondary education.

After finishing his studies in Cairo, he relocated to Paris, where he obtained his law degree and started working on his PhD thesis at the Sorbonne. His focus shifted more and more toward the opera and theaters of Paris, and after three years there, he gave up his studies and returned to Egypt in 1928, brimming with plans to reinvent Egyptian theater. The well-known Egyptian author and visionary Tawfiq al-Hakim is regarded as one of the founders of Arabic literature and play. His prolific output of plays has been met with both success and failure, which serves as a metaphor for the challenges the Egyptian theater genre, has had in attempting to fit its intricate communication techniques into Egyptian culture.

Tawfiq al-Hakim was born when Egypt was governed by the Ottoman Empire. Colonel Ahmed Arabi was the leader of a military coup against the Khedive in 1881. (A title given to the Turkish viceroys ruling Egypt from 1867 to 1914). Arabi requested both a legislature chosen by the people and a bigger army budget. The movement was started by Egyptian officers who were upset over the treatment of Turkish-born officers. Then it developed into a criticism of foreigners' privileged status, prevailing influence, and meddling in Egyptian affairs by Europe. In August 1882, a British expeditionary force set foot on both sides of the Suez Canal. The Ottoman Khedive Tawfiq was reinstated to power after the Egyptian army was routed. The British military invasion of Egypt officially began with this and continued until 1936. But Turkey remained in power from 1892 to 1914. Khedive Tawfiq's son Abbas Helmy II succeeded him after his passing in 1892. Abbas Helmy governed until Egypt was declared a British protectorate in 1914, which led to his overthrow.

At his aunt's home in Alexandria, the city where his mother was raised, Tawfiq al-Hakim was born. Isma'il al-Hakim, the father of Tawfiq al-Hakim, came from a modest background and supported himself completely via his work as a prosecutor. Isma'il was one of the top students in his law school class and co-founded the Law Journal with a few other classmates. He read a lot of literature, especially classical poetry and narrative writing, in addition to his legal materials and the Qur'an. However, Isma'il appears to have given up writing after being married to a proud and independent woman (Starkey, 16, 17). His stepmother, who sent his aunt and sister to her hometown of Alexandria to hunt for a wife, set up Isma'il's marriage to al-mother. Hakim's despite the little dowry provided and against her mother's objections, the match was made because the intended bride was impressed by Isma'il's picture and status in society. Isma'il progressed through the government's legal ranks, rising from Associate Attorney to Prosecutor. The family was forced to travel frequently due to the consequent postings in the countryside. Although Richard Long has identified his mother as Asma al-Bustami, Al-Hakim omitted mentioning her in his memoirs. She moved in with her new spouse in al-Mahalia al-Kubra after getting married to Isma'il al-Hakim in the 1890s.

She finally learned about his small wage after seeing her empty house. Isma'il received a greater pay and a quick promotion to prosecuting agent, fourth level. Al-mother Hakim's desired her own financial freedom considering their improved financial condition. She invested part of the tiny private money she received from her own side of the family for some land. However, she was enraged to learn that Isma'il had merely registered a portion of



the land in her name, registering the remainder in his own name. Up until Isma'il gave in and previously registered the property in her name, life at the home was unpleasant. The family visited Isma'il's father a few months after Tawfiq al-Hakim was born in the hopes that he might be able to provide some financial assistance. Isma'il's wife and his stepmother got into a fight. For a divorce to be enforceable in some schools of Islamic law, a husband simply has to declare his decision to reject his wife three times. Isma'il's father, who was quietly moved by her bravery in defying the lady of the house, eventually intervened to settle the matter.

Whatever the case, it involved Tawfiq al-Hakim's family. That is why he is affected by a mental health issue. However, he never stopped studying and developed into a rational person. Hakim was given the laqab of ('Aduww al Mar'a), which means "Enemy of woman," since he had authored a few pieces that were perceived as being sexist and had remained single for an abnormally lengthy period of time. Nevertheless, he finally got married and had a son and a daughter. His son perished in a vehicle accident in 1978, and his wife passed away in 1977. 23 July 1987 saw his passing.

His Works

One of the key founding characters of contemporary Arabic literature is Tawfiq al-Hakim. As Taha Hussein had already stated, he plays a significant role in the specific field of theatre as the solitary inventor of a complete literary heritage. In order to play a significant part in Egyptian political and social life today, he had to fight for Arabic theatre as a literary form, its techniques, and its language. Mohammed Fairouz's 2008 opera Sumeida's Song's libretto was based on Hakim's 1956 drama *Death Song*. *Ahl al-kahf* (1933; "The People of the Cave"), which was nominally based on the tale of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus but which was essentially a study of the human battle against time, made Al-Hakim become famous as a playwright. His "dramas of ideas" or "symbolism" were thus presented. They included the drama *Shahrazad*, which was based on *The Thousand and One Nights*, as well as the works *Al-Malik Udib* (1939), "King Oedipus," *Pijmalyn* (1942), and "Solomon the Wise" (1934). He wrote more than 50 plays, many of which dealt with societal issues in Egypt, including *Sirr al-muntahirah*, also known as "The Secret of the Suicide Girl," and *Ruah f al-Qalb* (1944), also known as "A Bullet in the Heart."

List of works

1. A Bullet in the Heart, 1926 (Plays)
2. Leaving Paradise, 1926 (Plays)
3. The Diary of a Country Prosecutor, 1933
4. The People of the Cave, 1933 (Play)
5. The Return of the Spirit, 1933 (Novel)
6. *Shahrazad*, 1934 (Play)
7. Muhammad the Prophet, 1936 (Biography)
8. A Man without a Soul, 1937 (Play)
9. A Sparrow from the East, 1938 (Novel)
10. *Ash'ab*, 1938 (Novel)
11. *The Devil's Era*, 1938 (Philosophical Stories)
12. *My Donkey told me*, 1938 (Philosophical Essays)
13. *Praxa/The problem of ruling*, 1939 (Play)
14. *The Dancer of the Temple*, 1939 (Short Stories)
15. *Pygmalion*, 1942
16. *Solomon the Wise*, 1943
17. *Boss Kudrez's Building*, 1948
18. *King Oedipus*, 1949



19. Soft Hands, 1954
20. Equilibrium, 1955
21. Isis, 1955
22. The Deal, 1956
23. The Sultan's Dilemma, 1960
24. The Tree Climber, 1966
25. The Fate of a Cockroach, 1966
26. Anxiety Bank, 1967
27. The Return of Consciousness, 1974

Novel and play adaptations

1. 1944: A Bullet in the Heart (film)
2. 1960: The Holy Bond (film)
3. 1963: Soft Hands (film)
4. 1964: A Bullet in the Heart (play)
5. 1964: Food for the Millions (Radio miniseries)
6. 1967: Leaving Paradise (film)
7. 1973: Death Song (Short film)
8. 1973: Witch (Short film)
9. 1976: The Quiet Nest (film)
10. 1977: The Return of the Spirit (TV miniseries)
11. 1986: A Sparrow from the East (film)

Conclusion

With a few closing remarks, I'll wrap up this study that Al-Hakim was born in a landowning family in Alexandria, Egypt, as the son of a rich Egyptian judge. He displayed sensitivity and a love of books at a young age. He started frequenting the theater and going to see performances by well-known performers like George Abyad. He started composing short plays while completing his secondary education, which he performed for his classmates. He tried his hand at writing in a variety of genres, including short tales, essays, and even the lyrics to certain national anthems. Despite having a low academic record, he was admitted to Cairo University's law program. He subsequently started learning French.

Al-Hakim was a pioneer in contemporary Egyptian theater, as well. Up to the 1920s, Egyptian theater specialized on melodramas, which were frequently staged as what modern audiences would refer to as musicals. It is still up for dispute whether to adopt classical Arabic (current standard Arabic) or colloquial Arabic. Early on, the well-liked plays of the famous comic Najib al-Rihani posed a serious threat to the works of playwrights like Farah Antun and, in particular, Muhammad Taymur, whose tragedies dealt with modern societal concerns. However, Tawfiq al-Hakim was the figurehead of the Egyptian theater's subsequent growth. His 1933 play *Ahl al-Kahf*, *People of the Cave*, would go on to become the forerunner of what are today referred to as intellectual plays or theater of the thought. With his kind of useful theater, he advanced both the field of writing purpose and Arabic literature, as well as the reader's intellectual ability.

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