CHAPTER – IV

INFLUENCE OF WESTERN DRAMA IN TAWFIQ'S WRITINGS

4.1. Introduction to Western Drama

This chapter leads to the acquaintance of the western drama that exerted influences on the writing of Tawfiq al-Hakim who was practically endowed with the knowledge of West. As of the tradition continued in the Middle East countries, most of the modern Arab litterateurs went to the European countries for acquiring up-to-date information of literature. We are aware of the fact that Tawfiq al-Hakim went to Paris in 1925 to obtain a doctorate degree in law; he chose to steep himself in Western culture, imbibing the sense of the role and power of the dramatic medium in its Western form and determined to replicate it in the context of his own society. He returned to Cairo in 1928 without law degree, but achieved full of ideas for his literary projects. In fact, he was fascinated by the literary culture of Paris, and thereby became passionate to develop the position of Arabic drama for intellectual and artistic life. Shortly speaking, it was a surprising matter for Tawfiq al-Hakim to turn away from the popular theatre in Paris; he enjoyed there the stage productions of plays by Ibsen, Pirandello, Maeterlink and Shaw including the daring productions of the Russian Georges Pitoeff. Their highly intellectual contents of drama inspired al-Hakim to write what became known later as his theatre of ideas. Al-Hakim's stay in Paris over a period more than three years provided him with interesting experience, which became a valuable source material for his creative writing. It is aware of the fact that Tawfiq al-Hakim could

learn all the trends of European culture from ancient to modern times. The plays of Sophocles, and their modern versions presented by Andre Gide, Pirandello, Bernard Shaw and Ibsen, inspired al-Hakim to introduce abstract plays which became his first major contribution to the Arab theatre.

In respect of the evolution of European drama, we find many countries to develop the literary genre - drama; they are brought to discussion as follows:

Greek Drama

If we look into the evolution of western drama, we find in the context of Greek Drama that the western dramatic tradition has its origins in ancient Greece. The precise evolution of its main divisions—tragedy, comedy, and satire—is not definitely known. According to Aristotle, Greek drama, or, more explicitly, Greek tragedy, originated in the dithyramb. This was a choral hymn to the god Dionysus and involved exchanges between a lead singer and the chorus. It is thought that the dithyramb was sung at the Dionysia, an annual festival honoring Dionysus.

It appears from the tradition of Greek drama that at the Dionysia of 534 B.C., during the reign of Pisistratus, the lead singer of the dithyramb, a man named Thespis, added to the chorus an actor with whom he carried on a dialogue, thus initiating the possibility of dramatic action. Thespis is credited with the invention of tragedy. Eventually, Aeschylus introduced a second actor to the drama and Sophocles a third, Sophocles' format being continued by Euripides, the last of the great classical Greek dramatists.

Generally we find that the earlier Greek tragedies place more emphasis on the chorus than the later ones. In the majestic plays of

Aeschylus, the chorus serves to underscore the personalities and situations of the characters and to provide ethical comment on the action. Much of Aeschylus' most beautiful poetry is contained in the choruses of his plays. The increase in the number of actors resulted in less concern with communal problems and beliefs and more with dramatic conflict between individuals.

Along with this emphasis on individuals' interaction, from the time of Aeschylus to that of Euripides, there was a marked tendency toward realism. Euripides' characters are ordinary, not godlike, and the gods themselves are introduced more as devices of plot manipulation (as in the use of the deus ex machina in *Medea*, 431 B.C.) than as strongly felt representations of transcendent power. Utilizing three actors, Sophocles developed dramatic action beyond anything Aeschylus had achieved with only two and also introduced more natural speech. However, he did not lose a sense of the godlike in man and man's affairs, as Euripides often did. Thus, it is Sophocles who best represents the classical balance between the human and divine, the realistic and the symbolic.

In fact, Greek comedy is divided by scholars into Old Comedy (5th cent. B.C.), Middle Comedy (c.404–c.321 B.C.), and New Comedy (c.320–c.264 B.C.). The sole literary remains of Old Comedy are the plays of Aristophanes, characterized by obscenity, political satire, fantasy, and strong moral overtones. While there are no extant examples of Middle Comedy, it is conjectured that the satire, obscenity, and fantasy of the earlier plays were much mitigated during this transitional period. Most extant examples of New Comedy are from the works of Menander;

these comedies are realistic and elegantly written, often revolving around love-interesting aspects.[105]

Roman Drama

It is aware of the fact that the Roman Theater never approached the heights of the Greek, and the Romans themselves had little interest in serious dramatic endeavors, being drawn toward sensationalism and spectacle. The earliest Roman dramatic attempts were simply translations from the Greek. Gnaeus Naevius (c.270–c.199 B.C.) and his successors imitated Greek models in tragedies that never transcended the level of violent melodrama. Even the nine tragedies of the philosopher and statesman Seneca are gloomy and lurid, emphasizing the sensational aspects of Greek myth; they are noted primarily for their inflated rhetoric. Seneca became an important influence on Renaissance tragedy, but it is unlikely that his plays were intended for more than private readings.

It is imperative to know that the Roman tragedy produced little of worth; and in this connection, a better judgment may be passed on the comedies of Plautus and Terence. Plautus incorporated native Roman elements into the plots and themes of Menander, producing plays characterized by farce, intrigue, romance, and sentiment. Terence was a more polished stylist who wrote for and about the upper classes and dispensed with the element of farce.

The Roman preference for spectacle and the Christian suppression of drama led to a virtual cessation of dramatic production during the decline of the Roman Empire. Pantomimes accompanied by a chorus developed out of tragedy, and comic mimes were popular until the 4th century A.D. It is this mime tradition, carried on by traveling

[105] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western.html

performers, which provided the theatrical continuity between the ancient world and the medieval. The Roman mime tradition has been suggested as the origin of the commedia dell'arte of the Italian Renaissance, but this conjecture has never been proved.[106]

Medieval Drama

It is worth-mentioning that while the Christian church did much to suppress the performance of plays, paradoxically it is in the church that medieval drama began. The first record of this beginning is the trope in the Easter service known as the Quem quaeritis (whom you seek). Tropes, originally musical elaborations of the church service, gradually evolved into drama; eventually the Latin lines telling of the Resurrection were spoken, rather than sung, by priests who represented the angels and the two Marys at the tomb of Jesus. Thus, simple interpolations developed into grandiose cycles of mystery plays, depicting biblical episodes from the Creation to Judgment Day. The most famous of these plays is the Second Shepherds' Play.

In this respect, another important type of drama evolution is noticed that which developed from church liturgy was the miracle play, based on the lives of saints rather than on scripture. The miracle play reached its peak in France and the mystery play in England. Both types gradually became secularized, passing into the hands of trade guilds or professional actors. The *Second Shepherds' Play*, for all its religious seriousness, is most noteworthy for its elements of realism and farce, while the miracle plays in France often emphasized comedy and adventure.

The morality play, a third type of religious drama, appeared early in the 15th cent. Morality plays were religious allegories, the most

[106] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-roman-drama.html

famous being Everyman. Another type of drama popular in medieval times was the interlude, which can be generally defined as a dramatic work with characteristics of the morality play that is primarily intended for entertainment.[107]

Renaissance of Western Drama

It has been noticed that the Renaissance of western drama appeared in the 15th and 16th centuries; and most European countries had established native traditions of religious drama and farce that contended with the impact of the newly discovered Greek and Roman plays. Little had been known of classical drama during the Middle Ages, and evidently the only classical imitations during that period were the Christian imitations of Terence by the Saxon nun Hrotswitha in the 10th century.

Italy

The translation and imitation of the classics occurred first in Italy, with Terence, Plautus, and Seneca as the models. The Italians strictly applied their interpretation of Aristotle's rules for the drama, and this rigidity was primarily responsible for the failure of Italian Renaissance drama. Some liveliness appeared in the comic sphere, particularly in the works of Ariosto and in Machiavelli's satiric masterpiece, *La Mandragola* (1524). The pastoral drama—set in the country and depicting the romantic affairs of rustic people, usually shepherds and shepherdesses—was more successful than either comedy or tragedy. Notable Italian practitioners of the genre were Giovanni Battista Guarini (1537–1612) and Torquato Tasso.

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[107] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-medieval-drama.html

The true direction of the Italian stage was toward the spectacular and the musical. A popular Italian Renaissance form was the intermezzo, which presented music and lively entertainment between the acts of classical imitations. The native taste for music and theatricality led to the emergence of the opera in the 16th century and the triumph of this form on the Italian stage in the 17th cent. Similarly, the commedia dell'arte, emphasizing comedy and improvisation and featuring character type's familiar to a contemporary audience, was more popular than academic imitations of classical comedy.

France

In fact, drama renaissance appeared somewhat later in France than in Italy. In this connection we find that Estienne Jodelle's Senecan tragedy *Cleopatre captive* (1553) marks the beginning of classical imitation in France. The French drama initially suffered from the same rigidity as the Italian, basing itself on Roman models and Italian imitations. However, in the late 16th century in France there was a romantic reaction to classical dullness, led by Alexandre Hardy, France's first professional playwright.

This romantic trend was stopped in the 17th century by Cardinal Richelieu, who insisted on a return to classic forms. Richelieu's judgment, however, bore fruit in the triumphs of the French neoclassical tragedies of Jean Racine and the comedies of Moliere. The great tragedies of Pierre Corneille, although classical in their grandeur and in their concern with noble characters, are decidedly of the Renaissance in their exaltation of man's ability, by force of will, to transcend adverse circumstances.

Spain

Drama Renaissance in Spain and England was more successful than in France and Italy because the two former nations were able to transform classical models with infusions of native characteristics. In Spain the two leading Renaissance playwrights were Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Earlier, Lope de Rueda had set the tone for future Spanish drama with plays that are romantic, lyrical, and generally in the mixed tragicomic form. Lope de Vega wrote an enormous number of plays of many types, emphasizing plot, character, and romantic action. Best known for his *La vida es sueño* [life is a dream], a play that questions the nature of reality, Calderón was a more controlled and philosophical writer than Lope.

England

The English drama of the 16th century showed from the beginning that it would not be bound by classical rules. Elements of farce, morality, and a disregard for the unities of time, place, and action inform the early comedies *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and *Ralph Roister Doister* (both c.1553) and the Senecan tragedy *Gorboduc* (1562). William Shakespeare's great work was foreshadowed by early essays in the historical chronicle play, by elements of romance found in the works of John Lyly, by revenge plays such as Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (c.1586)—again inspired by the works of Seneca—and by Christopher Marlowe's development of blank verse and his deepening of the tragic perception.

Shakespeare, of course, stands as the supreme dramatist of the Renaissance period, equally adept at writing tragedies, comedies, or chronicle plays. His great achievements include the perfection of a verse form and language that capture the spirit of ordinary speech and yet stand

above it to give a special dignity to his characters and situations; an unrivaled subtlety of characterization; and a marvelous ability to unify plot, character, imagery, and verse movement.

With the reign of James I the English drama began to decline until the closing of the theaters by the Puritans in 1642. This period is marked by sensationalism and rhetoric in tragedy, as in the works of John Webster and Thomas Middleton, spectacle in the form of the masque, and a gradual turn to polished wit in comedy, begun by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher and furthered by James Shirley. The best plays of the Jacobean period are the comedies of Ben Jonson, in which he satirized contemporary life by means of his own invention, the comedy of humors.[108]

Western Drama from 1750 to 1800

The second half of the 17th century was distinguished by the achievements of the French neoclassicists and the Restoration playwrights in England. Jean Racine brought clarity of perception and simplicity of language to his love tragedies, which emphasize women characters and psychological motivation. Molière produced brilliant social comedies that are neoclassical in their ridicule of any sort of excess.

In England, it has been noticed that the restoration of tragedy degenerated into bombastic heroic dramas by such authors as John Dryden and Thomas Otway. Often written in rhymed heroic couplets, these plays are replete with sensational incidents and epic personages. But Restoration comedy, particularly the brilliant comedies of manners by George Etherege and William Congreve, achieved a perfection of style

[108] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-renaissance-drama.html

and cynical upper-class wit that is still appreciated. The works of William Wycherley, while similar in type, are more savage and deeply cynical. George Farquhar was a later and gentler master of Restoration comedy.[109]

Eighteenth Century Drama

The influence of Restoration comedy can be seen in the 18th century in the plays of Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. This century also ushered in the middle-class or domestic drama, which treated the problems of ordinary people. George Lillo's *London Merchant; or, The History of George Barnwell* (1731), is an important example of this type of play because it brought the bourgeois tragic hero to the English stage.

Such playwrights as Sir Richard Steele and Colley Cibber in England and Marivaux in France contributed to the development of the genteel, sentimental comedy. While the political satire in the plays of Henry Fielding and in John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728) seemed to offer a more interesting potential than the sentiment of Cibber, this line of development was cut off by the Licensing Act of 1737, which required government approval before a play could be produced. The Italian Carlo Goldoni, who wrote realistic comedies with fairly sophisticated characterizations, also tended toward middle-class moralizing. His contemporary, Count Carlo Gozzi, was more ironic and remained faithful to the spirit of the commedia dell’arte.

Prior to the surge of German romanticism in the late 18th cent., two playwrights stood apart from the trend toward sentimental bourgeois realism. Voltaire tried to revive classical models and introduced exotic Eastern settings, although his tragedies tend to be more philosophical than dramatic. Similarly, the Italian Count Vittorio Alfieri

[109] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-drama-from-to-1800.html

sought to restore the spirit of the ancients to his drama, but the attempt was vitiated by his chauvinism.

The Sturm und Drang in Germany represented a romantic reaction against French neoclassicism and was supported by an upsurge of German interest in Shakespeare, who was viewed at the time as the greatest of the romantics. Gotthold Lessing, Friedrich von Schiller, and Goethe were the principal figures of this movement, but the plays produced by the three are frequently marred by sentimentality and too heavy a burden of philosophical ideas.[110]

Nineteenth-Century Western Drama

The romantic movement did not blossom in French drama until the 1820s, and then primarily in the work of Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas père, while in England the great Romantic poets did not produce important drama, although both Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley were practitioners of the closet drama. Burlesque and mediocre melodrama reigned supreme on the English stage.

Although melodrama was aimed solely at producing superficial excitement, its development, coupled with the emergence of realism in the 19th cent., resulted in more serious drama. Initially, the melodrama dealt in such superficially exciting materials as the gothic castle with its mysterious lord for a villain, but gradually the characters and settings moved closer to the realities of contemporary life.

The concern for generating excitement led to a more careful consideration of plot construction, reflected in the smoothly contrived climaxes of the "well-made" plays of Eugène Scribe and Victorien Sardou of France and Arthur Wing Pinero of England. The work of Émile

[110] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-eighteenth-century-drama.html

Augier and Alexandre Dumas fils combined the drama of ideas with the "well-made" play. Realism had perhaps its most profound expression in the works of the great 19th-century Russian dramatists: Nikolai Gogol, A. N. Ostrovsky, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Maxim Gorky. Many of the Russian dramatists emphasized character and satire rather than plot in their works.

Related to realism is naturalism, which can be defined as a selective realism emphasizing the more sordid and pessimistic aspects of life. An early forerunner of this style in the drama is Georg Büchner's powerful tragedy *Danton's Death* (1835), and an even earlier suggestion may be seen in the pessimistic romantic tragedies of Heinrich von Kleist. Friedrich Hebbel wrote grimly naturalistic drama in the middle of the 19th cent., but the naturalistic movement is most commonly identified with the "slice-of-life" theory of Émile Zola, which had a profound effect on 20th-century playwrights.

Henrik Ibsen of Norway brought to a climax the realistic movement of the 19th century and also served as a bridge to 20th-century symbolism. His realistic dramas of ideas surpass other such works because they blend a complex plot, a detailed setting, and middle-class yet extraordinary characters in an organic whole. Ibsen's later plays, such as *The Master Builder* (1892), are symbolic, marking a trend away from realism that was continued by August Strindberg's dream plays, with their emphasis on the spiritual, and by the plays of the Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck, who incorporated into drama the theories of the symbolist poets.

While these anti-realistic developments took place on the Continent, two playwrights were making unique contributions to English theater. Oscar Wilde produced comedies of manners that compare favorably with the works of Congreve, and George Bernard Shaw

brought the play of ideas to fruition with penetrating intelligence and singular wit.[111]

Twentieth-Century Western Drama

During the 20th century, especially after World War I, Western drama became more internationally unified and less the product of separate national literary traditions. Throughout the century realism, naturalism, and symbolism (and various combinations of these) continued to inform important plays. Among the many 20th-century playwrights who have written what can be broadly termed naturalist dramas are Gerhart Hauptmann (German), John Galsworthy (English), John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey (Irish), and Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, and Lillian Hellman (American).

An important movement in early 20th-century drama was expressionism. Expressionist playwrights tried to convey the dehumanizing aspects of 20th-century technological society through such devices as minimal scenery, telegraphic dialogue, talking machines, and characters portrayed as types rather than individuals. Notable playwrights who wrote expressionist dramas include Ernst Toller and Georg Kaiser (German), Karel Čapek (Czech), and Elmer Rice and Eugene O'Neill (American). The 20th century also saw the attempted revival of drama in verse, but although such writers as William Butler Yeats, W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, and Maxwell Anderson produced effective results, verse drama was no longer an important form in English. In Spanish, however, the poetic dramas of Federico García Lorca are placed among the great works of Spanish literature.

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[111] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-nineteenth-century-drama.html

Three vital figures of 20th-century drama are the American Eugene O'Neill, the German Bertolt Brecht, and the Italian Luigi Pirandello. O'Neill's body of plays in many forms—naturalistic, expressionist, symbolic, psychological—won him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1936 and indicated the coming-of-age of American drama. Brecht wrote dramas of ideas, usually promulgating socialist or Marxist theory. In order to make his audience more intellectually receptive to his theses, he endeavored—by using expressionist techniques—to make them continually aware that they were watching a play, not vicariously experiencing reality. For Pirandello, too, it was paramount to fix an awareness of his plays as theater; indeed, the major philosophical concern of his dramas is the difficulty of differentiating between illusion and reality.

World War II and its attendant horrors produced a widespread sense of the utter meaninglessness of human existence. This sense is brilliantly expressed in the body of plays that have come to be known collectively as the theater of the absurd. By abandoning traditional devices of the drama, including logical plot development, meaningful dialogue, and intelligible characters, absurdist playwrights sought to convey modern humanity's feelings of bewilderment, alienation, and despair—the sense that reality is itself unreal. In their plays human beings often portrayed as dupes, clowns who, although not without dignity, are at the mercy of forces that are inscrutable.

Probably the most famous plays of the theater of the absurd are Eugene Ionesco's *Bald Soprano* (1950) and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). The sources of the theater of the absurd are diverse; they can be found in the tenets of surrealism, Dadaism (see Dada), and existentialism; in the traditions of the music hall, vaudeville, and burlesque; and in the films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton.

Playwrights whose works can be roughly classed as belonging to the theater of the absurd are Jean Genet (French), Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt (Swiss), Fernando Arrabal (Spanish), and the early plays of Edward Albee (American). The pessimism and despair of the 20th century also found expression in the existentialist dramas of Jean-Paul Sartre, in the realistic and symbolic dramas of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Jean Anouilh, and in the surrealist plays of Jean Cocteau.

Somewhat similar to the theater of the absurd is the so-called theater of cruelty, derived from the ideas of Antonin Artaud, who, writing in the 1930s, foresaw a drama that would assault its audience with movement and sound, producing a visceral rather than an intellectual reaction. After the violence of World War II and the subsequent threat of the atomic bomb, his approach seemed particularly appropriate to many playwrights. Elements of the theater of cruelty can be found in the brilliantly abusive language of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) and Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), in the ritualistic aspects of some of Genet's plays, in the masked utterances and enigmatic silences of Harold Pinter's “comedies of menace”, and in the orgiastic abandon of Julian Beck's *Paradise Now!* (1968); it was fully expressed in Peter Brooks's production of Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade* (1964).

During the last third of the 20th century a few continental European dramatists, such as Dario Fo in Italy and Heiner Müller in Germany, stand out in the theater world. However, for the most part, the countries of the continent saw an emphasis on creative trends in directing rather than a flowering of new plays. In the United States and England, however, many dramatists old and new continued to flourish, with numerous plays of the later decades of the 20th century (and the early 21st century) echoing the trends of the years preceding them.

Realism in a number of guises—psychological, social, and political—continued to be a force in such British works as David Storey's *Home* (1971), Sir Alan Ayckbourn's *Norman Conquests* trilogy (1974), and David Hare's *Amy's View* (1998); in such Irish dramas as Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) and Martin McDonagh's 1990s Leenane trilogy; and in such American plays as Jason Miller's *That Championship Season* (1972), Lanford Wilson's *Talley's Folly* (1979), and John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation* (1990). In keeping with the tenor of the times, many of these and other works of the period were marked by elements of wit, irony, and satire.

A witty surrealism also characterized some of the late 20th century's theater, particularly the brilliant wordplay and startling juxtapositions of the many plays of England's Tom Stoppard. In addition, two of late-20th-century America's most important dramatists, Sam Shepard and David Mamet (as well as their followers and imitators), explored American culture with a kind of hyper-realism mingled with echoes of the theater of cruelty in the former's *Buried Child* (1978), the latter's *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983), and other works. While each exhibited his own very distinctive voice and vision, both playwrights achieved many of their effects through stark settings, austere language in spare dialog, meaningful silences, the projection of a powerful streak of menace, and outbursts of real or implied violence.

The late decades of the 20th century were also a time of considerable experiment and iconoclasm. Experimental dramas of the 1960s and 70s by such groups as Beck's Living Theater and Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre were followed by a mixing and merging of various kinds of media with aspects of postmodernism, improvisational techniques, performance art, and other kinds of avant-garde theater. Some of the era's more innovative efforts included

productions by theater groups such as New York's La MaMa (1961–) and Mabou Mines (1970–) and Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Co. (1976–); the Canadian writer-director Robert Lepage's intricate, sometimes multilingual works, e.g. *Tectonic Plates* (1988); the inventive one-man shows of such monologuists as Eric Bogosian, Spalding Gray, and John Leguizamo; the transgressive drag dramas of Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theater, e.g., *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (1984); and the operatic multimedia extravaganzas of Robert Wilson, e.g. *White Raven* (1999).

Thematically, the social upheavals of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s—particularly the civil rights and women's movements, gay liberation, and the AIDS crisis—provided impetus for new plays that explored the lives of minorities and women. Beginning with Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), drama by and about African Americans emerged as a significant theatrical trend. In the 1960s plays such as James Baldwin's *Blues for Mr. Charley* (1964), Amiri Baraka's searing *Dutchman* (1964), and Charles Gordone's *No Place to Be Somebody* (1967) explored black American life; writers including Ed Bullins (e.g., *The Taking of Miss Janie*, 1975), Ntozake Shange (e.g., *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, 1976) and Charles Fuller (e.g., *A Soldier's Play*, 1981) carried these themes into later decades. One of the most distinctive and prolific of the century's African-American playwrights, August Wilson, debuted on Broadway in 1984 with *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and continued to define the black American experience in his ongoing dramatic cycle into the next century.

Feminist and other women-centered themes dramatized by contemporary female playwrights were plentiful in the 1970s and extended in the following decades. Significant figures included England's Caryl Churchill (e.g., the witty *Top Girls*, 1982), the Cuban-American

experimentalist Maria Irene Forńes (e.g., *Fefu and Her Friends,* 1977) and American realists including Beth Henley (e.g., *Crimes of the Heart,* 1978), Marsha Norman (e.g., *'Night Mother,* 1982), and Wendy Wasserstein (e.g., *The Heidi Chronicles,* 1988). Skilled monologists also provided provocative female-themed one-women shows such as Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* (1996) and various solo theatrical performances by Lily Tomlin, Karen Finley, Anna Deveare Smith, Sarah Jones, and others.

In fine, we have observed that Gay themes (often in works by gay playwrights) also marked the later decades of the 20th cent. Homosexual characters had been treated sympathetically but in the context of pathology in such earlier 20th-century works as Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* (1934) and Robert Anderson's *Tea and Sympathy* (1953). Gay subjects were presented more explicitly during the 1960s, notably in the English farces of Joe Orton and Matt Crowley's witty but grim portrait of pre-Stonewall American gay life, *The Boys in the Band* (1968). In later years gay experience was explored more frequently and with greater variety and openness, notably in Britain in Martin Sherman's *Bent* (1979) and Peter Gill's *Mean Tears* (1987) and in the United States in Jane Chambers' *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* (1980), Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy* (1981), Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* (1986), David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988), which also dealt with Asian identity, and Paul Rudnick's *Jeffrey* (1993). Tony Kushner's acclaimed two-part *Angels in America* (1991–92) is generally considered the century's most brilliant and innovative theatrical treatment of the contemporary gay world.[112]

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[112] http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/drama-western-twentieth-century-drama.html

4.2. West Influence to the Arabs

Here it is imperative to know that the basis of Modern Arabic literature derives from the Western sources as and when West and East came together in political relation; and especially in Egypt the ideas of the West and East transformed to the development of Arabic literature. In this connection, we are aware of the fact that the destruction of the Arab caliphate in 1258 AD and the subsequent invasion of the Mongols culminating in the subjugation of the Arabs by the Ottoman Turks in the early 16th century resulted in the political as well as intellectual decay for the entire Arab world. The Ottoman conquest appears to have induced in Arab lands an intellectual hibernation which was not ended until Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798 AD.). Under its influence Muhammad Ali there founded schools and established a periodical press; at the same time translations from European tongues stirred the Arab mind to an awakening. The classical tradition made for resistance to any change, because much cultivation of Arabic literature was bound up with Islamic lore. But extraneous influences prevailed, the pioneers in the 19th century being Syrian Christians such as the novelist and historian Jurji Zaydan (d.1924 AD.). Yet it was an Egyptian theologian, Mohammad Abduh (d.1905AD.), who compelled recognition of modern ways of thought and opened a road for such Muslim innovators in literature as Dr. Taha Husayn (d.1973 AD.) did. Prose rather than verse was affected, for the poetry composed by an outstanding modern like Ahmad Shawqi Bek (d.1932 AD.), is directly in the classical tradition. It has been observed that these are of the Egyptian scholars and, indeed, Egypt is regarded as being in the van of Arabic letters, even though the writing of fiction,

history, essays, and verse flourished wherever Arabic is spoken, in America as well as in the eastern countries.[113]

In the 19th century, the rise of modern Arabic literature was preceded by a sustained movement for the revival of classical Arabic and an output of literary work directly or indirectly inspired by classical models. The first object of the leaders of this movement was to rescue the Arabic language from its degeneration in the preceding centuries and to restore the heritage of classical literary art; in its purest form it is represented by Nasif al-Yazizî (1800 - 1871) among the Syrians, by Nasr al-Hurini (d.1874 AD.) and Ali Pasha Mubarak in Egypt and by Muhammad Shukri al-Alusi (1857 - 1923 AD.) in Iraq. All of these and many others were consciously ambitious to revive the classical traditions, both in their original productions, e.g. al-Yazizi's maqamat (*Majma' al-Bahrayn*) in the manner of Hariri, Ali Pasha's *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya* in continuation of al-Maqrizi, and al-Alusi's adab collection *Bulugh al-Arab*.[114]

The activity in translation played a vital role in the development of modern Arabic literature. Because, translations from English and French became the order of the day as translations from Greek were the order of the day in the 19th century. Muhammad Yusuf Najm lists seventy French novels and short stories as examples of translated works published in Egypt from 1870 to 1914. Rifa'at al-Tahtawi's *Mawaqi' al-Aflak fi Waqai' tilimak*, Muhammad 'Uthman al-Jalal (1829 - 1898) whose *al-Shaykh Matluf* and al-Manfaluti's *al-Fadila* are considered remarkable works in the realm of modern Arabic literature.[115]

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[113] Chambers's Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, London, 1950, p. 513
[114] Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 1, London, 1967, p. 596
[115] Ibid, p. 597

In the movement literary translations, the subject matter of adaptation included oriental tales, historical fiction, love stories, social novels, picaresque and detective novels, as a result of which they gave to the birth and development of modern Arabic literature.[116]

In the 20th century the Syrian and Lebanese immigrants in the United States produced a school of literary men untrammeled by old conventions and headed by Khalil Jibran (1883 - 1931) and Amin Rihani (d.1940 AD.), whose works in both English and Arabic have a wide vogue.[117] As a matter of fact, the religious and nationalist revivals aided the revival of Arabic prose and poetry literature. The Lebanese dispersal, despite in the United States, has produced a flourishing precious literature also in the South America. In such a way, under the confluence of relation between the West and the Arabs, Modern Arabic drama came to the position of full development by the different Arab dramatists, among them Tawfiq al-Hakim topped the rank in producing full-fledged Arabic drama.

The relationship between Arab literature and ancient dramatic art is relatively new in many regards. Translating the ancient dramatic texts for Arab readers is a trend that dates back only to the third decade of the twentieth century. Despite the originality of Arabic poetry and the wide reputation of the ancient Arabic poets as talented in classical poetry all through history, drama as a poetic form never existed in the Arab world before it was imported from western culture, arguably via Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition in Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus the genre of drama in Arabic literature is an imported form of poetry as much as it is an imported type of performance.

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[116] Mahdi, Ismat :Modern Arabic Literature, Hyderabad, 1983, pp. 12 - 3
[117] Encyclopedia Americana, Vol.2, New York,1958, p.129

The absence of the dramatic genre from Arab literature may partly explain why the early Arab translators during the eighth and ninth century, under the Abbasid caliphs, translated most of the major Greek books in applied science but neglected the works of ancient Greek literature.

As a result of this neglect Greek literature, especially drama remained unknown to Arabs until the early decades of the twentieth century when the *Nahda*, or the awakening movement, woke up Arab intellectuals to revive the role of the ancient Arab translators in Baghdad ten centuries earlier.

Ancient drama on the Arab stage appeared first in Egypt in the work of many pioneers of the Arab theatre who provided early translations, not directly from Greek and Latin, but through the medium of modern European languages. Many of these translations were not of Greek tragedy but stage translations of the neoclassical versions of the Greek originals, like for example *Iphigenia* (1893) by Muhammad Etman Jalal (1828-1898) translated from Racine's *Iphigenia*; *Oedipus* or *The Great Secret* (1905) by Najîb Al-Hadad (1867-1899) which is translated from Voltaire's *Oedipus*. However, as far as we know, the earliest Arabic translation of a Greek play, probably from a French version, is *Oedipus* (1912) by Farah Antun (1874-1922) who created this translation specifically to be staged by the theatrical group of George Abyad (1880-1959), one of the greatest classical tragedians in the history of Egyptian theatre who staged it at the old Cairo Opera house. Although Antun's translation has not been preserved, it remained in the repertoire of many theatrical groups until the early 1940s.

Though a variety of indigenous, popular forms of performance, both secular and religious, had existed in Egypt as part of the popular culture prior to the French campaign and survived the

introduction of European theatre, continuing to entertain the masses through the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th, it is noteworthy that the introduction of performance art in the Western style on the Arabic stage influenced Arabic intellectuals to respond to the developing theatre activities by translating dramatic texts from the western world, among them the major ancient Greek dramatic texts. In these circumstances, the process of translation played a major role in introducing the classics to the modern Arab world; a process which is enriched by the contributions of many leading Arabic intellectuals, among them for example Taha Hussein (1889-1973): one of the most influential Egyptian intellectuals in the twentieth century who since 1939 has published translations of *Electra, Ajax, Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus,* and *Philoctetes.*

It is important to note that this cultural communication was part of a wider renaissance of education in general. Many Arabic countries sponsored students to study abroad at university level, especially in France, Italy, and England. In addition the Egyptian state supported the publication of Arabic translations of many works of western literature. This led to a new direction: the publication of Arabic adaptations. Following this stage where many examples became available for Arab readers, the literature of the Classics in Arabic was enriched by Arabic plays originally influenced by Greek myth. The myth of Oedipus was especially fruitful. It was treated first by Tawfiq al-Hakim in 1949. In the same year another adaptation was published by the Islamic intellectual Ali Ahmad Bakathir under the title of *The Tragedy of Oedipus*. Beside these two notable examples there are another three adaptations based on Oedipus: *The Comedy of Oedipus* (1970) by Ali Salim, *Oedipus* (1977) by Fawzi Fahmi, and *Oedipus* (1978) by Walid Ikhlasi.

These successive stages in the history of Arab drama suggest that the reception of ancient drama in Arab literature has two main directions: translation and adaptation. Both of these directions have had a positive influence in modern Arab literature. The translations have not only introduced the ancient text to Arab readers, but their rich introductions also played a significant role in setting a background about the ancient world for their readers. The adaptations on the other hand, have decreased the distance between the mythical atmosphere of the ancient plays and the reality of the Arab world. The ancient plays are used as sources for new plays with themes related to the contemporary Arab world.

The continuity of the reception of classics in the Arab world and the interaction between Arab creative writing and the classic sources was enriched by a new generation of educated people who specialized in classics and employed their knowledge in creating a new cultural direction between the east and the western world.[118]

4.3. Western Influence on Tawfiq al-Hakim

It is referred earlier that Tawfiq al-Hakim wrote Arabic novels and dramas having been influenced by the west that he got experience in the European countries. In 1933 he wrote a novel titled *Awdat al ruh* (the Return of the Spirit) which reflects his thoughts on social problems and his nationalist feelings. In 1936 his *Yawmiyat Na'ib fil Aryaf* (Diary of a Country Prosecutor) was published, a satirical novel about peasant life – the primitive conditions under which they live and the abuse they suffer from those in power. By 1938 he decided to devote

[118] Mohammad Almohanna, The Reception of ICHNEUTAI in the Modern Arabic World, New Voices in Classical Studies, Issue 5 (2010), University of Nottingham

himself completely to writing. *Usfur min al Sharq* (Bird of the East) is the forerunner to several other novels about persons from the East experiencing life in the West.

His works were influenced by European literary movements, particularly symbolism, realism and surrealism. The play *Ya tali' ash Shagara* (the Tree climber) translated by Denys Johnson- Davies is in the manner of the Theater of the Absurd. Some of his early works deal with the problems facing the educated Arab who returns to his country from the West.

His works have been translated into English, French, Italian and Russian, and have been adapted for broadcast radio in the West. Although he wrote novels, poems and essays, he is best remembered as a prolific playwright who played a key role in the development of Arabic drama. His output covers fifty volumes. He died in 1987.[119]

In addition, we find other important influences exerted on Tawfiq al-Hakim from those European personalities like Wilde, Moliere, Chekov, Schiller, Goethe, and de Musset. In fact, their one-act plays gave al-Hakim the idea of depict social themes. His abstract plays like *Ahl al-Kahf* (People of the Cave, 1933, *Shaharzad*, 1934, *Pygmalion*, 1942 and *Sulaiman al-Hakim*, 1943, *al-Sultan al-Ha'ir*, 1961 are prominent in the history of Arabic literature to be influenced by the West. His social plays like *Rassasa fi'l-Qalb*, 1938, *al-Aydi al-Na'imah*, 1955, *al-Ṣafqah*, 1956 are considered to bear the philosophy that he experienced in the West. Likewise his drama namely *Ya Ṭali' al-Shajarah*, 1962 is one of the absurd plays that he found from the western philosophy.

Though he had already written some plays in colloquial Arabic for the popular theatre while studying in Cairo, it was al-Hakim's stay in France between 1925 and 1928 that played the major role in

[119] http://www.al-hakawati.net/english/Arabpers/tawfiq-al-hakim.asp

determining the course of his future literary career. In Paris he fell under the spell of avant-garde authors such as Shaw, Maeterlinck, and Pirandello, and it is these writers' influence that is apparent in the "intellectual" plays for which al-Hakim is best known.

The first of these dramas, *Ahl al-Kahf* (The People of the Cave), related the Qur'anic story of the sleepers of Ephesus to the contemporary situation of Egypt, as the country woke from a long period of stagnation to face the challenges of the 20th century. The Pirandellian confusion between fantasy and reality apparent there was carried further in Shahrazad, in which the heroine of The Thousand and One Nights is presented as the embodiment of a "mysterious woman," whose nature is interpreted by the other main characters each according to his own disposition, but whose true nature remains elusive to the end of the play. Meanwhile, al-Hakim had already produced his first novel, *Awdat al-Ruh* (Return of the Spirit), a work set at the time of the 1919 uprising against British rule. This work, characterized by a vision of the Egyptian peasant as the direct descendant of his Pharaonic forebears, marked the beginning of a new realistic trend in the Arabic novel, and was much admired by, among others, Nasser.

The series of "intellectual" dramas begun with The People of the Cave and Shahrazad was continued with Pygmalion—partly inspired by Shaw's play of the same title—and Al-Malik Udib (King Oedipus), an attempt, according to the author, to rework the legend of Oedipus in accordance with Islamic beliefs, eliminating the concept of fate. Though these plays have apparently little direct relevance to contemporary Egyptian society, elsewhere al-Hakim's treatment of his themes is clearly intended to relate to the Egypt of the day. Sulayman al-Hakim (The Wisdom of Solomon), for example, discusses the relationship between wisdom and power, using stories from the Qur'an and The Thousand and

One Nights; Isis takes as its main theme the question of whether the end justifies the means; and in *al-Sulṭan al-Ha'ir* (The Sultan's Dilemma)—a play set in Mameluke Egypt—al-Hakim discusses a question which he regarded as crucial for the world, and the Egypt, of the 1960s: the country should seek to resolve its problems by the application of law, or by force.

In addition to these "intellectual" plays, al-Hakim composed, between 1945 and 1950, a series of short plays on Egyptian social themes—of widely varying quality—which were later collected and published in book form.

Unlike most Egyptian writers of his generation, al-Hakim had not allowed himself to become identified with any particular political party in the inter-war years. This attitude of detachment stood him in good stead with the new regime which came to power in 1952, and in the following years he received a number of honours and official appointments. His attitude towards the new regime was expressed in the play *Al-Aydi al-Na'ima* (Tender Hands), the main theme of which is the need for reconciliation between the various classes of Egyptian society. Meanwhile, he had continued to produce a stream of essays and articles in the Egyptian press, in addition to three more major novels, including *Yawmyyat Na'ib fi al-Aryaf* (The Maze of Justice), the work regarded by some as his masterpiece. This work, in diary form, and based on al-Hakim's own experiences as a rural prosecutor, presents a damning picture of corruption in Egyptian rural society, highlighting the gulf between the mentality of the Egyptian fellah and that of the European-style legal system imposed on him.

Two main trends can be seen in al-Hakim's work during the post-1952 period. Firstly, his major works are for the most part all plays; secondly, his work shows a new enthusiasm for technical experiment, largely, though not exclusively, inspired by developments in

contemporary Western theatre. The first, and most successful, of these experimental plays—*Ya Tali'al-Shajara* (The Tree Climber)—shows the influence of the "theatre of absurd," with which al-Hakim had become acquainted on a recent visit to Paris; while Al-Ta'am li-Kull Fam (Food for the Millions), for example, seems to have been influenced by Brecht.

By the end of his life, al-Hakim had become almost a national institution in his native Egypt. The range of themes and influences evident in his work, however, makes an overall evaluation difficult; and his work is further marked by an inconsistency both of quality and of outlook. On the one hand, his use of language is characterized by an admirable simplicity of style; on the other, much of his work is marred by a tendency to quasi-philosophical rambling at the expense of artistic unity. Many of his plays lack dramatic qualities, and were— on his own admission—intended to be read rather than acted. The best of them, however, have an appeal far beyond the Arab world, and assure him of a lasting place in the history of modern Arabic literature.[120]

The research throws light on the Egyptian playwright Tawfiq Al- Hakim (1898- 1987) who is a leading Arabic dramatist of the Arab world. Before the Arabs thought of theater as a medium of Arabic art, Al-Hakim had been one of the writers who started writing modern Arabic plays. Tawfiq al-Hakim had been introduced to western influences, and so, he got the chance to experiment with various theatrical techniques. The paper presents Al- Hakim as a magical realist writer and tackles his play Not a Thing Out of place (1966) as part and parcel of Postcolonial literature. The play incarnates the conflict between the east and west, and exhibits the Egyptians' feelings as a formerly colonized nation. Egypt, in fact, struggled against the British colonization from 1888 to 1954. The play shows how contemporary Egyptians enjoy their liberation but bear

[120] http://what-when-how.com/literature/tawfiq-al-hakim-literature/

psychological conflict inside them result from the long- term colonization. It is interesting in the research to know how and why the characters reverse morality and consider chaos a virtue instead of vice.

Paul Starkey notes that Tawfiq Al- Hakim had studied French at Berlitz School in Cairo, and so he was able to recognize the French theater of Daudet, Anatole France, De Musset and Marivaux (20). Because Tawfiq al Hakim could not get a post in the government after receiving his License in Law, his father sent him to obtain his Ph. D. degree from Paris. In Paris between 1925 and 1928, Al- Hakim used to watch several plays in French admiring mostly those of the Italian Luigi Pirandello (1867- 1936) and George Bernard Shaw (1856- 1950).

In fact, Not a Thing Out of Place is a contemporary avant-garde play. In the play, Al- Hakim experiments with the genre of magic realism which is part of post-colonial literature. Marc Maufort points out that magic realism is a literary movement that appeared in the 1920s representing postcolonial culture highlighting “the more collective, societal or mythic” (249). In their attempt to challenge the colonizers’ coercion, magic realist writers manage to assert their national identities by stressing their cultural myths, folklore and traditions.

Magic in the play is incarnated in the inexplicable mental infection that catches up with the visitors who come to the village. It is grotesque to see the three visitors— Young Man, Man with Twirled Moustaches and Young Lady— changing from a state of rebellion to another state of surrender. As a magical realist writer, Tawfiq Al- Hakim historicizes magic referring to the Egyptians’ resentment of the British colonization.

It is worth-mentioning that Tawfiq al-Hakim engages a magical realist mode of representation. He allows domestic space to transcend the colonial model. Domesticity in postcolonial literature is an

important issue because postcolonial writers often highlight home as a site of power and struggle for superiority. Tawfiq al-Hakim challenges the colonial scientific ration and claim of enlightening power. Therefore, a new vision of home emerges, a home which refuses to give up to colonial norms and ideals. Indeed, the village is a postcolonial home that reverses the colonial expectations.

Not a thing Out of Place is meant not to conform to the colonial ideology. The villagers reject the ideal of order and adopt instead their own ideal of 'positive disorder.' In fact, domestic disorder indicates individual freedom. The villagers celebrate the idea of being different from the westerners who formerly colonized them. As a postcolonial writer, Al- Hakim stresses this distinctive view of home, a sphere unpolluted by foreign rules.

Jean- Pierre Durix believes that writers from formerly colonized countries bear inferiority complex and think that the metropolitan European models are the best (4). In an attempt to overcome the inferiority complex, writers like Tawfiq Al- Hakim appeal to magic realism to confirm their difference and individuality; they brag of their heritage even if it embodies superstitious ideas.

Not a Thing out of Place displays the life of some uneducated or poorly educated villagers. Characters like the Barber and Postman are reluctant to work properly. First, the Barber compares his customer's head to a water-melon and scares him by showing an intention to split it open with his razor to know his thoughts (Al- Hakim 175). Secondly, the Postman gives a handful of daily letters to the Barber to throw in a basin on the floor allowing anybody to pick any letter (176). The Postman asserts, "The people like it this way" (ibid). Hence, the people are indifferent and do not complain about not receiving letters that are addressed to them. It seems that the whole village celebrates

irrationality and finds it amusing. Fuad Megally elaborates, “The play seems to suggest that the ultimate in freedom, anarchy, can be fun” (93). That might explain why the villagers are happy in the play.

Tiffany Magnolia notes that “magic realism is… based on realism but which contains fantastic occurrences that are naturalized in the realist narrative” (1). The villagers do not find the idea that visitors change from one mental state to another extraordinary at all. They believe that it is part of their lives to see such thing happening. For example, both Postman and Barber assert to Young Man that the villagers do not complain of their lives, and dislike the Young Man’s description of their village as “chaotic” (Al- Hakim 176). Al- Hakim seamlessly blends realism with magic, so it is hard to separate them in the play. It has been observed that where realism begins and where magic begins is almost indistinguishable.

M. M. Badawi confirms, “In its place is a community where all values are equal and all are meaningless. It is clearly a mad extravaganza, a joyless topsy-turvy world where nothing really matters”. Magnolia asserts also, “(if) the reader… sees the magical phenomena as odd; the characters accept and integrate these occurrences without having to explain them away”. Magical realist drama is meant to remain mysterious keeping some unexplained magical elements. The characters in the play do not deny the existence of a mental infection in the village because it is part of their actual life.

As a matter of fact, both realist and magical elements are similarly politicized in the play. Al- Hakim challenges the westerners’ influences by making the villagers reject the outsiders’ criticism of them. The Young Man in European Dress and the Man in European Dress with Twirled Moustaches represent the westerners. Their statements sound didactic and provocative to the villagers.

For example, Young Man says, “But this is what’s called chaos” (Al- Hakim 176). The villagers hate to see him educate them because he sounds like the former colonizer who claimed to ‘enlighten’ the Egyptians in the past. Immediately, the Postman replies, “Not at all. That chaos you’re talking about is something altogether different” (ibid). The Postman did not give Young Man a chance to talk back. He usurps Young Man’s turn taking and says, “That sort of chaos doesn’t happen here, my dear sir—thank God” (ibid)! Al- Hakim implies that what the colonizers say is not always right by necessity. The villagers say that they are free to have their own logic. Their definitions of abstract matters like ‘chaoses are different from those of the westerners, and this makes sense also.

Concurrently, the Man in European Dress with Twirled moustaches imposes himself on the villagers’ conversation. His way of opening conversation with them is unpleasant at all. He tells them, “What’s happening around here? Why are you calling to the villagers? Again the villagers defend themselves by replying rudely. The Postman says, “What’s it to you?” Then, the Barber mocks him saying, “And who twirled your moustaches like that for you” (183)? The villagers’ defiant attitude is a means to protect their public security from imperial influences and guarantee a free domestic sphere. Once the Man says, “I’m an Inspector…,” both the Barber and Postman think that he is a police inspector who comes to punish them (ibid). This means that they are aware of the crimes they are committing: the Barber threatens his customer with a razor while the Postman does not distribute the mail among the people and allow anybody to read the secrets of the other.

These discourses between the two opposed parties juxtaposes the westerners’ aggression with the formerly- colonized nation’s dignity

insinuating the audience to sympathize with the oppressed party. They, moreover, throw light on the clash between the east and west.

The villagers question the credibility of the criteria of good and evil in the world, and so do not admit the global moral codes any more. They feel free by flouting the pre-conceived social rules. Al-Hakim satirizes the colonizer's dual morality. This is obvious since the beginning of the play. The philosopher symbolizes the colonizer who is rational and sensible (Tawfiq al-Hakim 178). Comparing a philosopher to a donkey is an insult in the Arabic tradition. They humorously suggest that the donkey's big brain is a sign of brilliance. In the same vein, the Postman and Barber argue that a philosopher has a small brain so he is supposedly an idiot. They indirectly say that animals are much better than inhumane colonizers.

According to Patricia Hart, there are two kinds of magic realism: andocentric and feminocentric. The first kind focuses on a male protagonist, while the second highlights a female protagonist. In Not a Thing Out of Place, there is only one woman who has a minor role. She looks weak and indecisive. Young Man takes her to the registrar of marriage to marry her without her consent. She does not run away from him while he "leads her away by hand" (Al- Hakim 182). She only exclaims, "Heaven knows how all this is going to end"! The play is an andocentric magical realist because it shows two male characters acting and reacting with outsiders. The Barber and the Postman are the main focus of the play.

It seems that magical realist writers favor the expressionistic technique, and this is for two reasons: first, the nightmarish atmosphere and discomfort suits the kind of magic found in magical realist works. For instance, the mental infection that changes the characters' manners and beliefs in Not a Thing Out of Place is unpleasant. Magic in that genre

is associated with grotesquerie i.e. there is always a gloomy atmosphere at the background of the events.

In the Second place, modern expressionists often rebel against the status quo and this matches also with magical realist literature. By means of absurdity and abstraction, expressionist writers register their rejection of social injustice, and this is the goal of postcolonial literature. Absurdity emits from the characters' entrapment in a magical village that enchants people mentally metamorphosing them. Though Young Man has rejected the Postman's lack of commitment to his job, he accepts to open and read a letter which is not his own. Being enchanted by the infection, he says, "Hope it's all right!

What an extraordinary thing" (177)! When he learns about the young lady who is coming to meet her fiancé at the train station, he is encouraged by the Postman and Barber to wait for her instead of her real fiancé. Young Man again says, "How extraordinary! Hope it's all right" (179). Admiring the beautiful lady on seeing her, he claims to be her fiancé. The Postman and Barber support Young Man in his claim. The Postman tells the Young Lady, "Tomorrow you'll come to your senses" (181). The Barber asserts his words, "In the same way as the gentleman has" (ibid). It is therefore absurd that the play begins and ends in chaos.

Tawfiq al- Hakim reiterates at the end that the characters are imprisoned in a futile cycle of meaninglessness:

Postman: The end will be like the beginning—all one and the same!
Barber: And half a shave's like a whole one—all one and the same!
Postman: And a letter of yours turns out not to be yours—all one and the same!
Barber: And a head you think is a water-melon, and a water-melon you think is a head—all one and the same (182)!

Al- Hakim emphasizes the same meaning by ending the play with the villagers' funny song:

Dancing to sound of drum and flute
Into reverse the world we'll put—
And yet it's going right we'll find.
Whether sane or out of mind
It really matters not at all.
Come step it out now, one and all (184).

Tawfiq al-Hakim abstracts with characterization. First, he picks abstract names for all his characters challenging the traditional list of characters. The characters have no names. They go by profession or gender: Barber, Customer, Postman, Young Man in European Dress, Young Lady, Man with Twirled Moustaches in European dress and Villagers.

Second, Al- Hakim portrays the characters as types that do not develop throughout the play. They are mere symbols—the villagers stand for the oppressed formerly colonized nation while Young Man and Man in European dresses represent the colonizers.

Moreover, the events are unreal. Chris Baldick defines realism as "a lifelike illusion of some 'real' world" (184). In Not a Thing Out of Place, it is not likely to find a man loving a lady at first sight and immediately taking her "by the hand" to the registrar of marriage to sign a marriage contract (Al- Hakim 182). Besides, the characters' behavior looks unreal. It is funny rather than probable that a barber pretends to be mad to scare his customer and make him flee half-shaved. The Barber tells the customer directly, "After all, is there anything wrong about slicing a water-melon with a razor" (Al- Hakim 175)? The way Young metamorphoses is also unexplained and unjustified. After calling the villagers 'chaotic' at the beginning of his visit, he confirms to Young

Lady, “What’s wrong with this village? It’s the very best. …Everything’s reasonable here. God be my witness—I am now absolutely convinced” (181).

Al- Hakim abstracts with language as well. The play is full of fast-moving dialogues. For instance, the elliptical telegram-like phrases exchanged by the Barber and Postman convey a pseudo philosophic logic reflecting the villagers’ inherent smartness:

Barber: What’s a philosopher?

Postman: Someone with a big brain.

Barber: That’ll be me.

Postman: No, you’re the donkey.

Barber: Why?

Postman: Because a donkey’s got a bigger brain.

Barber: How’s that?

Postman: I’ll tell you: Ever seen a donkey having a shave at a barber’s?

Barber: No.

Postman: Is that clever of him or not?

Barber: Yes (Al- Hakim 177).

The conversation between the Postman and the Barber makes some sense. There is a code of logic that furnishes that bizarre dialogue with a sort of order. Each believes that the donkey is more intelligent than the philosopher because he has bigger head and brain (Al- Hakim 178). In one sense, the villagers might prefer not to think and contemplate about life because it is hostile and unpleasant. It can be suggested that they choose to delude themselves rather than confront the harshness of life. In another sense, the playwright wants to show that the villagers are instinctively smart, and they are victims of the government that has not offered them good education. This idea is also quite clear in their ability to display a sensible argument.

As a postcolonial writer, Tawfiq Al- Hakim does not want to fulfill the colonizers' stereotypical images of the Egyptian villagers as 'stupid.' Therefore, he delineates them as 'poorly educated' or even 'uneducated' but never 'intellectually inferior.' The Barber's conversation with his customer proves that same point as well:

Barber (taking hold of the customer's bald head): When there's a water-melon right there in front of you all nice and shiny, how can you find out whether it's red inside or unripe except by splitting it open with a knife? ……..

Customer: …..Slice the customer's head (Al- Hakim 174)?

Barber: Isn't that the way to see whether it's red inside or unripe (175)?

Though the Barber sounds insane, he makes some sense.

The 'illusive' title of the play Not a Thing Out of Place is repeated as a phrase towards the end. The Postman asks Young Man, "Convinced that this village of ours is not chaotic" (181). Young Man replies, "Absolutely so—in this place of yours not a thing out of place" (ibid). The statement "Not a Thing Out of Place" is illusive because it implies a contrary meaning. The villagers are bewildered and enchanted. They are mystified by the infection. The audience might sympathize with them for being chaotic and unaware of their own misery. The despotic authorities can be blamed for leading the people to this miserable state. Political corruption results in moral disintegration. The phrase "not a thing out of place" actually expresses the point of view of the oppressed party. The villagers know that they energize chaos, but this is their way to prove their identity and challenge the westerners who call for 'order.'

The setting then—not the events or characters— are realistic. The place is a typical Egyptian village. In magic realist works, realism not fantasy is the dominant. It is undeniable that local aspects dominate the play. Al- Hakim delineates particular features of the Egyptian

countryside. For example, the peddler barber is always there roaming Egyptian villages with his tools kit and setting up by any wall shaving for the poor villagers in exchange of a little sum of money. Besides, the metaphor comparing one's head to a water- melon is commonly used by Egyptians. It often indicates a bald head. Moreover, the Barber uses an Egyptian idiom "put a summer water- melon in your stomach and relax!" (Al- Hakim 181). He means to comfort Young Man that the registrar of marriage will marry him to Young Lady without problems. Finally, the villagers appear at the end of the play to send off the supposed bride and groom in a traditional procession. They sing and play music using drums and flutes, folkloric oriental musical instruments (184).

Tawfiq al-Hakim balances the gloominess of the play with his sense of humor. For example, although signs of poverty are clear on the Barber and the Postman, the Barber introduces himself to the Man with Twirled Moustaches saying, "We're respectable and sensible people. My honored friend is the Grand Bey, Director of the District Post Office, while I myself am the owner of the hairdressing establishments in the district" (183). The names of the village singers are also comic: "Naboubou" and "Shakaa Bakaa" (ibid). Ultimately, the play ends in "excited shouting, with singing and mad dancing" (184).

Last but not least, Tawfiq al-Hakim can be compared to his Italian peer Luigi Pirandello who creates humorous intellectual drama that embodies philosophical ideas. Not a Thing out of Place discusses the conflict between the east and the west, the Egyptians' dilemma after World War II, the strong rebellious spirit of the formerly colonized nation, the value of serious work and the relation between freedom and

anarchy. All these ideas are highlighted in the play where language plays more important role than action.[121]

[121] http://www.arabworldbooks.com/Literature/tawfik_hakim_hashish.htm