CHAPTER-II
TAWFIQ AL-HAKIM AND ARABIC NOVEL

Tawfiq al-Hakim (1889-1987) was a great Arabic dramatist, novelist, short- story writer and essayist of the twentieth century Egypt. He was born in Alexandria in 1898. His father, a judge by profession came of a wealthy peasant class family and had married a Turkish lady. Al-Hakim's parents' comparative wealth and bourgeois pride led them to scorn the Egyptian peasantry and from the prime of his life, his parents kept him in isolation, far from the contact of his peasant village mates. This isolation in turn led Tawfiq al-Hakim to enter an inner world of thought at an early age. His mother introduced him to arts and used to give him books to read and letting him participate in the back stage activities of a local troupe of dancers and musicians. He was sent to a secondary school at Damanhur, a market town near the family estate in the Delta, and then was sent to the Muhammad Ali School in Cairo with his father's cousin who were poor but whom he liked because of their natural gaiety and openness.

In 1919 al-Hakim and his cousin participated in the revolution in favor of Saad Zaghloul against the British. When al-Hakim was about twenty years old, he was put in prison for a time because of his distribution of revolutionary tracts and poems. In 1921 he began studying law at the Sultaniya Law School which had become the principal ground for Egypt's intellectual leaders of the new generation as the Azhar had been for the former generation. Al-Hakim graduated in 1924. In the law school he came into acquaintance with Yahya Haqqi who later on became an ambassador and novelist. While in the Law School he associated with the directors and actors of the active Cairo theatres and was totally

enchanted by theatre, as one can see by reading his autobiographical short stories.

After completing his law studies at Cairo,al-Hakim persuaded his father to send him to Paris for pursuing doctorate in law. There he stayed for four years studying not only law but also French and western culture in general. He read French novels, went to theatres and concerts and discussed literature with the artists of Paris. With his father's wealth he was able to live the life of a devoted student of arts in Paris. There he decided to prepare himself to become one of the national writers of his time. He began writing his famous novel *Awdat al-Ruh* while he was in Paris. In fact he wrote it in French and later translated it to Arabic and published it in 1933. He wrote some of his short stories in Paris and later published them in *Ahl-al-Faan (The Art's People)* in 1934. He also wrote his first well known plays in Paris. His humorous play entitled *Devant le Guichet* was first performed in Paris and later translated into Arabic as *Amam Shubbak al-Tadakir*.

In 1928 al-Hakim returned to Egypt and got a job as attorney to the Public Prosecutor, working in the district courts of the Delta. He worked there six years and that period gave him the opportunity of meeting many people who would later became characters in his social plays and novels such as *Yawmiyyat Nai'b fil Aryaf and Awdat al-Ruh*, the short stories like *Al-Adala wa al-Fann* are replete with his personal experiences he got during his job as an attorney.

In 1933 al-Hakim became Inspector General for the Ministry of Education and stayed in this post until 1939 when he moved to the Ministry of Social Affairs as Director of Social Guidance. He retired from Government Service in 1943. During this second period of his job he refined and published the writings he had been working upon before. Thus his famous *Ahl al-kahf (The Men of the Cave)* appeared in 1933, as

well as *Awdat al-Ruh* and *Shahrazad* in 1934, assuring his reputation as one of the great writers of his time. Since his only contact with the world was his desk job in the ministry, he became known as the writer of the 'Ivory Tower'. He wrote many essays and short stories on society, politics, and arts which played a formative role on the thoughts of many Egyptians of his day, and even today they are often quoted. He turned increasingly to plays many of which were about society and politics. They have recently been collected in his *Masrah al-Mustama (Theatre of Society*) where he treats his country's problems with a humorous touch. Many of his plays have been translated into French. He continued to write serious full-length plays dealing with the mystical search for a higher world here on the earth. He used themes and subjects from *The Bible, the Kuran, Song of Songs* and *the Arabian Nights*. The critics have called those serious plays al-*Masrah al-Dhiny* or the *Intellectual Theatre* since those plays deal more with thoughts than with actions and some like *Muhammad* (a play) are too long or too involved to be performed on the stage. The language is not poetical but has certain lightness. Plots develop quickly through exciting dialogues and are not impeded by long soliloquies.

After withdrawing from government job in 1943 al-Hakim devoted himself to writing although he held several important positions. During Abd al-Naser's revolution, he was an editor of the newspaper *Al-Ahram* and afterwards was appointed head of the National Library. In 1956 he was made an honorary member of the High Council of Arts and Letters. In 1959 he was appointed to be the United Arab Republic.'s representative to United Nation's Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Paris, but preferred to return to do service at the High Council of Arts in 1960. During this period al-Hakim wrote his misogynist novel *Al- Ribat al-Muqaddas* (1945). Although he was

married and changed his attitude to women to some extent, al-Hakim was always a misogynist. He felt that a woman is the flower of arts, culture and society but that, like some flowers, has thorns with which she ensnares man and causes unspeakable troubles.

He published two collections of short stories *Qisas Tawfiq al-Hakim (Short Stories of Tawfiq al-Hakim)* in 1949 and *Arini Allah (Show Me God)* in 1952. Twelve of these fanciful short stories have been translated into English and published with the title *Miracles for Sale*. He continued writing plays some of which are modern in the manner of Ionesco or a Pirandello like *Ya Tali' al- Shajarah* (1963) which was translated into English in 1966 by Denies Johnson Davies as *The Tree Climbers*. His latest work is a fantastic, imaginary novel *Bank al-Qalaq (Bank of Worry)* which is philosophic and replete with lively dialogues of confusion and anxiety showing the dualistic nature of ultra- modern man.

Amid large output of other writings especially plays, al-Hakim's novels seem to take a place of second importance. But actually they are as much a part of him as his plays and some of them like *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* and *Bank al-Qalaq* are equal to the best of his plays. *Awdat al-Ruh* and *Usfur min al- Sharq* are likewise important because of their large readership in Egypt and the Arab world even if their artistry is not as refined as some would like it to be.

Tawfiq al-Hakim's novel varies in form. He has written a novel in diary form as *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* which is a novel of ideas in French manner and a modern atmospheric novel which fluctuates between existence as a novel and as a play. In spite of the variety however certain forces in al-Hakim's works make him distinctive. He looks at life and art in a special way. He died in 1987 leaving behind him a rich store house of Arabic plays, novels, short stories and essays of lasting effects.

Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898- 1987), though was a reputed Egyptian playwright yet he was a prolific novelist also. He wrote as much as five novels in Arabic which have contributed to the growth and development of the tradition of Arabic novel. Besides being a great dramatist he had authored five novels: *Awdat al-Ruh, Yawmiyyat Nai'b fil Aryaf, Usfur min al-Sharq, Al Ribat al-Muqaddas (The Holy Bond) and Bank al-Qalaq (The Bank of Worry)*. By means of all these novels he had led forward the genre of Arabic novel a considerable step ahead. A brief overview of his novel is given below to estimate his contribution and importance to the domain of Arabic fiction.

Awdat al-Ruh is Tawfiq al-Hakim's first novel which got published in 1933. *Awdat al-Ruh* is a comic novel. The main outstanding themes of the novel are love, conflict between The East and The West and nationalistic revolution. The main episodes of the novel are – the love episode of Muhsin and Saniya, love episode of Salim and Saniya, love episode of Abduh and Saniya, love episode of Saniya and Mustafa, love episode of Zanuba and Mustafa, conflict between western culture and Egyptian traditional native culture and revolt against the British colonialism . At the outset of the novel *Awdat al-Ruh* we encounter with the love episode of Muhsin and Saniya. Muhsin the hero is the only son of Hamid Bey. He lives in Cairo with his step uncles- Hanafi, Salim, Abduh and an aunt Zanuba. He is a high school student. Near their house there lives the family of Dr. Ahmad Halimi. He has a daughter named Saniya. She is eighteen years old, very beautiful and attractive to look at. One day Muhsin happened to visit the house of Saniya with his aunt Zanuba. There he met Saniya's mother. Saniya's mother sang a song. Muhsin could play on piano well and began to give piano lesson to Saniya almost regularly and being encouraged he began to love Saniya. Saniya seemed to show affection to Muhsin. He was bewitched by

Saniya's charm and began to dream of her. Previously Muhsin took up stealthily a silk handkerchief which belonged to Saniya. Months passed on. One day Muhsin got a letter from his parents who lived in Damanhur. As he was in love with Saniya he was first reluctant to visit his parents but he could not desist from it. Before leaving for Damanhur he met Saniya and returned the handkerchief. Saniya expressed her anger to him. But eventually they reconciled and Saniya gave the handkerchief to Muhsin as a token of remembrance. After that Muhsin went to Damanhur and stayed there about ten days. Coming back to Cairo he came to know from his aunt Zanuba that they are in bad terms and Saniya had fallen in love with Mustafa Bey who lived in a rented house near the house of Saniya. Some days after returning from Damanhur Muhsin took a visit to Saniya's and found Saniya cold towards him. Muhsin got disheartened and mentally broken down. Their love affair came to an end. Their love episode here seems to be almost one sided. Muhsin was mad of her but she seemed not to be so. Muhsin was still a student and Saniya was about two year senior to Mushin. It seems that this love affair between Muhsin and Saniya is something tragic for Muhsin as he had seen her indifferent to Muhsin. Later on we see that she fells in love with a young boy named Mustafa Bey whom she marries. He may not be called the hero of the novel. It is because the novelist makes him appear in the very last few chapters and in all the formal chapters he is hinted only as a reference.

Awdat al-Ruh is thoroughly a comic novel. There are ample elements of comedy which are produced by means of action, situation, speech and physical gestures. Almost all the characters except some few are comic from head to feet. Hanafi Afandi is the first and foremost comic character in the novel. Besides him there are comic elements in Salim, Abduh, Zanuba, Mabruk, Maestra Labiba Shakhla and even in Muhsin's father and mother.

Tawfiq al-Hakim's second novel *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* which got published in 1937, is a tragic novel written in a comic way and an autobiographical style.There is no specific plot in the novel but some sequence of episodes huddled together. The main outstanding themes of the novel are the arbitrariness and corruptions in legal system, fraud and corruption in politics, crime in society and consequently the sufferance of poverty-stricken *fellahin* (peasants) of Egypt. The main episodes of the novel are – the investigation regarding the shooting of Kamar al- Dawla Alwan, the judgment episode, Rim episode, the childbirth episode and the episode of politics. At the outset of the novel *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* we encounter with the episode of Investigation concerning the case of Kamar al-Dawla Alwan. The episode shows us the hollowness of the judiciary system of the then Egypt. The officials pertaining to the judiciary system are good for nothing fellows. They only maintain the formality but have no goodwill at their heart to find out the truth. The Public Prosecutor who leads the investigation of Kamar al-Dawla Alwan is a type of the officials of the judiciary department. He along with other officials is drowsy throughout the investigation. He often complains of his lack of sleeping. His function is routine-like. The duty of the investigation officers is to reach their destination as soon as they can without making delay. But the team of the investigation makes delay in maintaining their formality. The Legal Officer is very minute in presenting the report other than the investigation. He takes pains to make a lengthy report because the higher officials give emphasis on the length of a report rather than the accuracy of investigation. Kamar al-Dawla Alwan was shot by an unknown person. It was evident that he got one shot. But the controversy rose regarding whether he got one shot or two shots. Eventually Kamar al-Dawla Alwan died in the hospital uttering an indistinct word 'Rim' and thus the case was buried without being got

justice. The novel *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* is a tragic-comedy as in spite of some tragic episodes like the episode of Kamar al Dawla Alwan, the episode of Rim, the episode of the village women etc. there are abundant elements that affect our sense of humour and thus delight us. The comic elements in the novel are made up of speech, situation and action. All the type characters representing the government machinery are full of comic traits either in action or in speech.

Tawfiq al-Hakim's novel entitled *Usfur min al-Sharq* published in 1938 is a socio-political novel. It is a novel of intellectual contrast between the spiritual East and the materialist West. The theme of contrast is firmly established by a comparison of the opening and closing chapters. In the first chapter, Muhsin, the Egyptian hero is given the nickname, "Sparrow from the East" by the French friend Andre``when he catches Muhsin eating dates on the street of Paris.[18] Andre`` drags Muhsin to a church for the funeral of an acquaintance's relative only to abandon him there temporarily and Muhsin's eastern perspective is revealed far more in his sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of the service than by the dates. Andre`, who represents the western perspective, replies when chided by Muhsin for not allowing him proper time to prepare before entering the sacred place like a church. He says: "Going there is the same for us as entering a café! What is the difference! Each is as much a public site as the other! One has an organ! The other has an orchestra!"[19] Muhsin corrects him saying: "To the contrary, in the former, we encounter the heavens!….. It's not easy for the soul to ascend at any moment. It definitely requires efforts![20] In the French church Muhsin experiences the same feeling that convulsed his soul each time he entered the mosque of al- Sayyida Zaynab in Cairo. So he realizes that the house of God is

[18] Tawfiq al-Hakim: *Usfur min al Sharq* Trans. By R. Bayly Winder, Beirut, Khayats, 1966 P. no. 48
[19] Ibid., p. 19
[20] Ibid., p. no. 19

identical in essence in every place and every age.[21] Finding himself in a queue of people making the sign of the cross over the corpse, he is so flustered that afterwards he does not know whether he signed a cross or crescent.[22] Seated in a cafe with Andre`, Muhsin has a reverie, recalling a dream in which he is accused of killing someone. In his reverie his mind moves by association of ideas to a painful memory of the 1919 revolution. He remembers witnessing the murder- by a mob of fellow demonstrators- of a young British soldier. That atrocious sight wiped from his mind the thought that the victim was an enemy of Muhsin's homeland.[23] Although implicated only in the most intellect fashion with the soldier's death, he felt responsible for it. The exasperated Andre` asks rhetorically, "Are you Easterners fools or sages? Muhsin retorts, "That is our genius to combine the two qualities in one like the folk sage Juha or Mulla Nasr-ud-din."[24] *Usfur min al-sharq* ends with Ivan's dying charge to Muhsin to carry a remembrance of him to the Eastern source of spiritual light. This novel which is more a book-length sermon than a novel, opens with Muhsin's participation in the funeral of a European he never knew, it ends with the symbolic burden of performing a ritual act of remembrance in the East for a deceased European friend. There is far less intellectual posturing about East versus West and far more description of the reality of shattered hopes and lives in al-Hakim's highly regarded Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l-Aryaf, which reveals the devastating effects on everyone of a mindless attempt to superimpose a European style legal code on unprepared people of a different legal and cultural heritage.[25]

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[21]Tawfiq al-Hakim: *Usfur min al Sharq*Trans. By R. Bayly Winder, Beirut, Khayats, 1966 p. no. 13.

[22] Ibid., p. 14.

[23] Ibid., p. 17-18.

[24] Ibid., p.60.

[25] Rozer Hardy: *A Note on Tawfiq al-Hakim*, University of Texas Press, 1989, p.no. 20.

Tawfiq al-Hakim's novel entitled *Al-Ribat al-Muqaddas (The Holy Bond)* is a well-written exciting novel the main theme of which is love. The novelist through this novel has shown that a man falls easy prey to the charm of woman. The hero of the novel is denunciated devotee of thought who strives to lead an exemplary life, indulging his physical appetites only sparingly: to quench a specific thirst and to replenish his stamina in his ascetic desert.[26] In this novel the author shows that woman is no more imprisoned in her subjectivity than man. She contrasted man and male thought by using the example of procreation, which is miraculous from the father's point of view and magical from the mother's. Since the experience of man is intelligible but interrupted by blanks, that of the woman is, within its own limits, mysterious and obscure but complete. In her day at least she felt that logic was not gender neutral. Masculine reasoning becomes a strong form of force. She knows that he has himself chosen the premises on which his rigorous deduction depends. In *The Sacred Bond* the author depicts the young anti-heroine in a moment of triumph over the monk philosopher. Reflecting that she could win that she had succeeded in bringing him gradually to her tuft where her feminine instincts would defeat him. The situation was different when she had gone to her field, where she was able to employ logic and intellect and quickly defeat her.[27]

The dialogues are among al- Hakim's most dramatic representation of the tension which he felt was at the root of all human encounters. In none of Hakim's other books is the contrast between the world of thought and the world of material things as apparent as it is in this book. The contrast between the letters of virtue which the schlor writes to the woman and her own confessions of her passionate love with the move

[26].Rozer Hardy: *A Note on Tawfiq al-Hakim*, University of Texas Press, 1989, p. no. 11
[27] .Rozer Hardy: *A Note on Tawfiq al-Hakim*, University of Texas Press, 1989, p. no. 215

actor is all the more forceful because the woman's writing is so realistic. It is in the style of an angry woman who wants to break away and live. Although it was Hakim's intention to paint the woman in a bad light, his propensity or dramatic dialogues lets the woman appear startlingly realistic and brilliantly witty.

The dialogue in the final chapter, where the words are sometimes spoken aloud, and sometimes only thought, is one of the most exciting encounters between thought and matter which al-Hakim ever wrote. Some of the speed and urgency in the dialogue can be seen in the following passage, which touches on serious matters. They discuss as in the case of Anatole France's character, the monk Paphnous, who left his hermitage in order to reform a notorious Alexandrine courtesan, but in doing so could not overcome his own attraction to her and thereby of his salvation. The woman, pointing out that even monk could love a woman, says: "But the monk Paphnous didn't love the saint in her, he loved the woman."

You should expect one like me to give you a bit of advice, and tell you the way things really are. Every man who refuses love- when it comes- is completely deluded… The age of the blessed saints has passed… Come away with me now and enter the new society, so that you'll know in what age you live… It astounds me that an intelligent man like you still lives with the ghosts of thoughts dead long ago, and the superstation of old books…"I live with things that remain forever… Thought never dies."

She laughed and said, "On the contrary. Nothing dies as fast as thought. Every generation has its thoughts just as every period has its particular clothes…Thoughts are the leaves of a tree which fall every autumn. Where are the thoughts that were alive a thousand years ago? But as for the kiss, it remains a kiss and does not lose its heat over a

thousand years, since the every creation of man! ... and love's embrace remains and still engenders the same feelings in the mind and body as it did at the beginning of thought itself.

You compare book and thoughts to kisses and embraces?''' What a pretty comparison!"

She smiled seductively and said, "Did you think the comparison appropriate?"

There is no basis of comparison at all…."[28]

The dialogues run on in this manner, until the thinker is eventually overcome by the presence of feminist and almost succumbs to her charms. The feeling of excitement and tension throughout this long encounter is a result of al-Hakim's artistry in developing the woman into a kind of intangible force which hovers over the story like a Shahrazad in the *Alf Layla wa Layla*. The thinker is torn between succumbing to material delights and clinging to thought. In the end he stays with thought and rejects the material, tempting though it was. The ending accords with the author's wishes, although the telephone call distracts him is a weak contrivance. The important part of the book is the dialogue which proceeds to overcome. The dialogue in *al-Ribat al-Muqaddas* is a wavering between thought and body.

Thus the novel is replete with rich and philosophical dialogues that imparts a novelty to this novel.on comparing is clear the dialogues of this novel with those of his other novels it is clear that Al-Hakim has excelled in this novel in matters of using veritable dialogues, and this dextenity in the use of dialogues attributes a uniqueness to this novel.

Al-Hakim in his *Sacred Bond* assumed a dichotomy between male and female perspectives and between spiritual and material ones. He clearly understood that the perspectives one adopts shapes what one

[28] . Tawfiq al-Hakim: Al-Ribat al-Muqaddas, Cairo,Maktaba al-Adab, 1960. p. no. 281.

perceives. He was more fluid or inconsistent than Vencivenga in the cause of gender dichotomies and with regard to the linkage he proposed between these dichotomies. For Tawfiq al-Hakim, though the characteristics of opposite forces are less important than keeping them in balance. The right answer will usually be found in a reconciliation or equilibrium of opposite.

When the critic Hamdi Sakkut praised the achievement of Ibrahim al-Qadir al-Mazini in presenting to the reading public, in a convincing manner, a highly cultured Egyptian intellectual for the first time in an Arabic novel adding that "Al-Hakim had not created any personality measuring up to or even approaching this most striking individual, he at least provided a clue as to what al-Hakim attempted in *The Usfur min al-sharq `, Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf ,*and *The Sacred Bond*.[29]

Another contribution of Tawfiq al-Hakim to the storehouse of Arabic novel is *Bank al-Qalaq (The Bank of Worry).* In this novel there is no longer any discussion of the contrast between the spiritual and the material. Instead, it seems to be the final expression of a man who has been tormented by these dualities all his life and now wishes to show the overall effect of such worries. In the first chapter of the novel the protagonist, Adham Sulayman watches a night club scene and thinks about *Qalaq* (worry). He looks at the pretty female acrobat on the cabaret stage as she proceeds atop a human skyscraper of men and feels a strange torn feeling in his mind and body because she happens to be his faithless wife, who jumps from lover to lover and comes back to him for short periods, leaving him always in doubt about where she will be next. He looks at the young people dancing, twisting their body into contorted forms and wonders what their worries are. As he leaves the cabaret and

[29] Hamid Sakkut: *The Arabic Novel: Bibliography and Critical Introduction.* Vol-6, American University in Cairo Press, 2000, P. no. 20-21.

walks along the Nile he muses that the lovers in the moonlight are entangling themselves in worry:[30]

The evening air was fresh outside. It was one of this cairene nights of May. The stroll along the Nile Cornish was delightful. The couples of lovers sat in intimacy all along its stone benches. Every boy clung to his girl. As Adham walked among them, he saw too clearly what their future would be: housing crisis, crisis of communication and consumers goods!... That is the end result of the addition, subtraction and division in love operation in our present age. The thing that worries the lovers now is how to get together. But when they are joined under one roof and all become naked between them, worry will take on a new aspect…

Adham is an interesting character,who has many worries himself, yet at the same time, as seen in the above passage is above the problems of others. He found his ridiculous bank in this spirit of detachment from other people, yet he thereby becomes involved in a game which puts his own security in jeopardy.

Bank al-Qalaq is extremely contemporary in form, perhaps in advance of its time. Much of the novel is in the form of a dialogue. It might be expected that Egypt's great playwright would eventually develop this new, fast moving form of novel.[31]

The author describes the characters from the outside, instead of having them speak in a straight forward confession. By shifting his focus from the inner to the outer, somewhat the way a cinema camera moves in on its subject and then jumps far away,al-Hakim can reveal a great deal about his characters. The treatment of Adham's thoughts as he walks along the Nile is a good example of his technique. Furthermore, his juxtaposition of a section of pure dialogue in the text adds to the shifting,

[30] Tqwfiq al-Hakim: *Bank al-Qalaq*, Cairo, Dar al-Ma'aarif, 1966, P. no. 17-18
[31] . Ibid., P. no. 5-13

cinematographic effect. He has produced much the same atmosphere that Antonioni achieves in his film. Antonioni uses many devices to produce an atmosphere suspended between reality and psychic eccentricity. One feels this suspended atmosphere during the scenes when the casually eccentric photographer here blows up some picture and discovers he had been photographing a man being killed.

Al-Hakim's half novel and half play produce the same suspended effect. The following quotation from the end of chapter six and the beginning of scene six is a good example of Hakim's technique. Adham's newspaper friend Mutawally is talking with Adham and Sha'ban in their newly established band. He has noticed Sha'ban's attraction for the rich manager's niece, and Adham attempts to steer him on to a different topic before he gets too curious. After Mutawally leaves, Adham and Sha'ban wait for their Bank of worry clients to come. Chapter six of which the last page is quoted, is a novelistic chapter, followed by a scene arranged like a play.

The crafty reporter noticed Sha'ban's concern and cast a sly glance in his direction. Adham understood what he was after, and hastened to cover up for his friend by pointing out that all the case meant to them was an attempt to understand her social class. What was its actual position in this changed society?....had society really changed? From what point of view had it changed? And how far reaching was the extend of this change? Was it really complete change or merely superficial? Mutawally only shrugged his shoulders. Suddenly he seemed tired, because everything outside the realm of pure reporting made him yawn…even commentary and analysis of news bored him and made him lazy. Whenever the course of a conversation would reach a joke or a similar triviality, he would get up and leave. This was what he did now. He left

the two companions saying that he would return another time to get what news the bank would make.

Adham and Sha'ban were left sitting, waiting for their customers to come. They waited until waiting lost its meaning. And they almost forgot that they were waiting for anyone or anything…then when the door bell rang they took no notice of it or rather, they noticed it but did not believe it. But it was really ringing.

The protagonist never discovers the whole inner tragedy of this woman, whose niece had been one of the clients associated with the Bank. Their concern at the end of the book is so extract themselves from their Bank, which might result in disaster for them if they are caught. Their discovery that their playful Bank idea had been financed by an illegal conspiracy shows them that the ground they tread on is paper thin and in danger of tearing and letting them drop into the world of terror.

Bank al-Qalaq ends on a serious note. Like the heroes of some of al-Hakim's novels, Adham and Sha'ban are left suspended, almost as failures. What will happen next? One wanders. At the end of the novel *Awdat al-Ruh,* Muhsin, the hero is in prison, not working for his faith. He has won a victory in his mind, but not in reality.

The fantasy in the novel, on the other hand, never wins the realm of the reality. It takes place in the absurd, and when the real enters in, the absurd must collapse: the Bank worry disappears. The absurd in the Bank al-Qalaq is nothing more than a modern expression for the mystical ideas by which men in the Middle East have found meaning for ages. For a while Adham and Sha'ban found meaning in their absurd idea and could even make money out of it, but they soon were caught in the reality it created: the suspect affairs of their patron. At the end of the book, they must extract themselves before reality overtakes them. But one wonders if they merely move off, or whether they keep their fertile imagination

intact- will they keep striving to devise more super worldly jobs like the Worry Bank for themselves? Or will they give up and live with reality. Probably they will be as Hakim himself seems to be neither a mystic, nor a realist, but caught unbalanced in between.

Al- Hakim introduced an effective writing style for the novel in Arabic- which is called to be compound and adorned. The power of his writing lies in his ability to present thoughts quickly and concisely. He used the colloquial language in his dialogues and even at certain time in his texts. A colloquial word or expression often speaks more forcefully than the classical since the readers are more acquainted to such words. But al- Hakim is against the total reliance on the colloquial. Outside his dialogues, he always observed the rules of the classical making skilful use of its sophistication. Some of his ideas about a third language in the theatre have spilt over into his novels. In his *Bank al Qalaq* the dialogues are in this third language.

Tawfiq al-Hakim is equally well known in his country even outside the literary circles. He has a large following among the common people from all walks of life, not merely intellectuals. His *Awdat al-Ruh* has probably been one of the most important novels of Egypt both pre revolutionary and post revolutionary Egypt. The fact that it influenced President Nasser is of considerable significance. It is the literary spirit behind the1952 revolution.

The heroes of Al-Hakim's novels are often projections of himself. They are constantly disillusioned: they are romantics who view the realities of life with a kind of sadness, just as Muhsin regrets his love affairs with Saniya when he finds how easy it was to win her. His characters always try to bridge the gap between the reality and the ideas. Both the Muhsins of *Awdat al-Ruh* and *Usfur min al-Sharq* put all their hopes in Sayyida Zaynab, the virgin protector, whose mosque is at the

centre of old Cairo. Hakim was the first of the modern writers who talked about the special Sufi significance of Sayyida Zaynab in their characters.[32]

Tawfiq al-Hakim's concern for his country does not lead him to indulge in overly sensational cries for reform or social improvement. He is noted for his balanced views although at times he can be firm and impassioned. At certain points in the *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi-l- Aryaf* and *Bank al-Qalaq*, he keeps a static vein, poking fun at people and at the government. The satire is subtle enough not to offend or insult which make it all the more readable and effective.

The novels of Tawfiq al-Hakim are an integral part of his whole literary and social career. They reflect the same basic themes as in his plays and essays: his enchantment with the East, his patriotic concerns and his attempts to reach a mystical ideal above sordid reality and materialism. He is one of the first Arab writers for whom novelistic writing was more than an aside to politics or scholarship. He may be called the complete artist as he has shown that there is a room for pure artists in the Arab revival which is taking place in the Middle East today. Al-Hahim,no doubt has given the Arabic novel a basis for existence on its own with its own concern and methods. The Arabic novel need no longer be ashamed of itself for being a Western technique. With Tawfiq al-Hakim it has become Arab as well.

Thus Tawfiq al-Hakim through his novels expounds some new questions, problems and philosophy by means of which he has given a new turn and bold steps to the tradition of Arabic novel which is still to be perceived by his next generation. In brief, Tawfiq al-Hakim brought the tradition of Arabic novel into perfection and gave a solidarity both is

[32] Wahby, S, Bain: Al- Fikr al- Mu'sdir, Dec. 1965, p. no. 89-90

theme and structure which had began arbitrarily and chaotically just some two decades before he took to writing.