



كلية التربية

كلية معتمدة من الهيئة القومية لضمان جودة التعليم
إدارة: البحوث والنشر العلمي (المجلة العلمية)

=====

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's The Tree Climber

By

Dr. Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

**English Language Center, Umm AlQura University,
Makkah, Saudi Arabia**

E-mail: szsharadgeh@hotmail.com

﴿ المجلد الخامس والثلاثون - العدد الثامن - أغسطس ٢٠١٩ م ﴾

http://www.aun.edu.eg/faculty_education/arabic

الملخص باللغة العربية

تبحث هذه الورقة في القراءة الدقيقة لسخاء الوجود الإنساني في متسلق شجرة التوفيق الحكيم. وهو يركز على الموضوعات والتقنيات فيما يتعلق بثقافة المجتمع العربي. أيضاً، تناقش مدارس الفكر التي أثرت على أسلوبه وتقنيات الكتابة.

ينتمي توفيق الحكيم، الدرامي المصري، إلى مسرح العبقرى الذي تتشكل أفكاره بعمق من خلال الفلسفة الوجودية.

تهدف الدراسة إلى إظهار كيف قتلت الحضارة الحديثة البشرية بأسلحة قاتلة بدلاً من منحه حياة فاخرة.

من خلال مناقشة السيرة الذاتية للكاتب المسرحي، تقترح الدراسة وجود علاقة بين مواقف الكتاب المسرحيين ومساهماتهم في الأدب. خاصةً في الثقافة العربية كمحور لهذه الدراسة.

الكلمات الدالة: العبثية، المسرح العبثي، الفلسفة الوجودية، المواقف، الثقافة العربية.

Abstract

This paper investigates the exact reading of the absurdity of human existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's *The Tree Climber*. It focuses on themes and techniques with regard to the culture of the Arabian society. Also, the schools of thought that affected his style and techniques of writing are discussed. Al-Hakim, the Egyptian dramatist, belongs to the Theatre of Absurd whose thoughts are deeply shaped by Existential Philosophy. The study aims to show how modern civilization has killed the mankind by fatal weapons instead of giving him luxurious life. By discussing the autobiography of the playwright, the study suggests that there is a relationship between the attitudes of playwrights and their contributions to literature especially in Arabian culture as the focus of this study.

Keywords: absurdity, theatre of absurd, existential philosophy, attitudes, Arabian culture.

1. Twfiq Al-Hakim

Tawfiq Al-Hakim (1898-1987) is one of the most brilliant Egyptian writers. His family was very interested in his education moving from town to another to join school. His father sent him to a village near Alexandria to attend his primary and secondary schools. Then, he moved to Cairo with his uncle and studied Law at Cairo University. He got Bachelor's Degree in Law in 1924. His stay in Cairo enabled him to attend theatre and give him the chance to begin his drama writing.

Al-Hakim was active against the British occupation of Egypt that resulted of being captured for a short period in 1919. His early work was *The Heavy Guest* was against the British occupation. This activity was against his father's wish who thought seriously to get his son away from this corrupted environment. Therefore, he sent him to Paris for higher studies in Law in 1925. His stay in Pairs gave him the chance to be in touch with European literature and theatre. It was a great chance also to meet famous playwrights. At that time, he has become well known among many great writers as Ibsin, Shaw, and Maeterlinck (Al-Hakim, p. 22).

In the twentieth century, Arabic literature has witnessed emergence of great writers as Taha Hussein (1889-1973), Abbas Al-Aqqad (1889-1964), Ibrahim Al-Mazini (1890-1945), and Mohamud Taymur (1894-1973) who initiated the foundations of modern Egyptian literature have taken the lead of the Arabic literature scene for many decades. Their works have been translated into many languages. This generation ended by the end of Al-Hakim's life in 1987, who is entitled as the father of Arabic modern literature (Badawi, p. 949)

2. The Thoughts of Absurdity

The term “absurd” refers to nonsensical, opposed to reason, silly, foolish, senseless, ridiculous, and topsy-turvy things (Oxford Dictionary). It implies that man’s life is purposeless. He cannot connect with others. The central themes of the Theatre of the Absurd are lack of purpose which produces a state of metaphysical anguish. In fact, “The Theatre of Absurd” appears in France in 1950s as a reaction of the World War II and the catastrophic events in the world at this time (Esslin, 1962, p.15). The term itself was coined by Martin Esslin to describe works by Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Tom Stoppard and others. This genre of drama writing cannot be described as an organized theatrical movement since the playwrights who practice this theatre express their own personal approach for both subject and form. There is no school of thought that gathered them but they follow Albert Camus’s philosophy.

Camus introduced the term “absurd” in his easy, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). His notion is used as the basic of the absurd theatre. According to him, there is no inherent meaning in the universe; human condition is meaningless. He believes that there is no God or supernatural force guided the Earth “The absurd, which is the metaphysical state of the conscious man, does not lead to God” (p.40). White (2006) says that:

Camus believed that, despite the limitation in perspective and the absurdity of life, humans can make decisions that lead to less suffering. This is not the eradications of evil...it is instead the work of humans to reduce suffering when they can, to act with acceptance that all cannot be healed, resolved, or explained on this earth. (p.557)

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

This free, active and optimistic philosophy of Camus gives people the chance to rethink of their values and seek justice. He invites people to focus only on present temporal existence. He clarifies absurdity simply as “a total absence of hope (which has nothing to do with despair), a continual rejection (which must not be compared to immature unrest)” (Camus, p.31). It is clear that hope, which is related to future, has no place in this philosophy since future is nonexistent. Anderson (...) claims that The Myth of Sisyphus is a clear examination of the painful reality of human condition as the pursuit of meaning in a meaningless universe (p. 54). Camus clarifies in his essay that humans like Sisyphus in repeating their daily tasks to reach nothing but their imminent death. He also assert that man should revolt against the silence of universe to assert the dignity of his existence and affirm his identity as an “absurd hero” with an “absurd freedom”.

Hence, this kind of drama is written from existential point of view with no true order. There is no specific form of writing to be followed. There are no order events that lead to a story. All events lead to nothing. It just ends where it has started. Also, there is on logically built-up dialogue. Audience is forced to think about the issues presented since language confuses them. Absurd theatre can be perfectly described as Ionesco called it “anti-theatre” as it does not follow any of the main characteristic of traditional drama. It is a revolution against conventional theatre.

Al-Hakim shows his influence by Camus in his Preface of the play:

A play is a human craft: it is associated with the human self . . . it is the universe, and man stands in it talking, conversing and inquiring, he is answered or wants to be answered . . . but if the universe is silent to him, woe to the universe, it then seems vainly absurd in eyes of this man, that is sometimes called Albert Camus and other times called many different names in various countries and languages. (Al-Hakim, PP. 23-4)

3. The Tree Climber

In *The Tree Climber*, Al Hakim has been influenced by Ionesco's technique (Jabra, p.90). Al Hakim's plays inaugurated in the beginning of Arab Theatre of Absurd particularly after his second sojourn to Paris, as Egypt's representative to UNSCO (1959-60). Writing his masterpiece "YaTali' al Shajara" (*The Tree Climber*) is a prominent indication of his attraction to the theatre of absurd (Badawi, p. 259; Allen, pp. 203-4). The cultural differences between Eastern and Western societies forced Al Hakim to develop Arabic literature and adopt a new form particularly absurdism. In an interview with Lucy Yaqub, Al Hakim says, "In our religion...we do not believe that God has created the world meaninglessly. Rather, we believe that there is a wise purpose behind the creation of the world with all its harmony" (Yaqub, p.38)

The Tree Climber is about a wife, Bahana, a childless widow who has married for the second time. Her husband, Bahadir, is a retired train inspector who worked for thirty five years taking care of his tree in the house garden. An old sterile woman, Bahana, nevertheless, dreams of her deceased child whom she aborted fifteen years ago because of financial difficulties. She lives with dream and knits and prepares clothes for her child. Bahana owns small house in which there is a single tree in the garden for which the husband devoted most of his life. They do not pay attention to each other since each one is absorbed with his dream. There is a lizard that lives in the hole under the tree. Bahana suddenly disappears for three days after she went to buy the wool. The police expect that she might be killed by her husband. According to his confessions during investigation, the tree was in need of a human body as fertilizer to produce four kinds of fruits in the year. The husband is arrested. The doubts are based upon the testimony of the dervish who

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

narrates from the past to predicate the event. The husband is released after his wife returns to her house. Bahadir asks Bahana where she had been for the last three days. Failing to determine where she was, he kills her. Firstly, he thought to call the police, but later does not believe him. He thought of burying her corpse under the tree as fertilizer to produce four sorts of fruits in the year. However, the dervish who once had predicted that he would kill his wife reappears. Suddenly, the corpse of his wife disappears and he finds the Lizard dead under the tree, when the dervish has left (Shafiq, pp.123-4).

The Tree Climber depicts Man who is physically and metaphysically entrapped and without communication with others. Al Hakim portrays the “realistic with unrealistic and the rational with irrational” (Shusha, p.181). Although the western culture has a deep influence in Al Hakim, he does not imitate Western absurdist playwrights. He believes that there are great differences between Western and Arabian societies. Al Hakim, for example, asserts that the Arabic collective society does not suffer from the isolation and alienation of the Western individual society. He always wants to depict the life of Orientals and their soul. Hence, he creates a new Arabic style and a new phase in modern Arabic drama (Omotoso, pp. 256-7). He develops his unique version of the theatre. His concept of Man is well-matched with that of Ionesco's Absurdist School (Hassib, p.37). The main theme of *The Tree Climber* is the act of volition and trying. In other words, Man spends his time fighting the forces that stands against him. This concept is rooted in the nature of human being rather than what he wants. In his work, he expresses the Arabic consciousness and reflects the Egyptian environment.

4. Analysis

Al Hakim differs from Western absurd playwrights when he forms his play through sequences of events leading critics to exert great deal of effort to explore ambiguity. He creates typical characters rather than individuals. Bahadir represents an old married man living an absurd life. He bravely faces the difficulties of his unreasonable wish to harvest four different kinds of fruits in his tree. Bahana is another character as an aging wife rejecting the despair of living with an unreasonable wish to have a child. The husband does not give the wife a certain identity relating her with the lizard, which has the same space in his life. This fact is embodied by his answers to detective about Bahan's disappearance. He is more concerned with the absence of lizard than his wife:

HUSBAND: First and foremost, I've something to say, something strange and extraordinary, utterly extraordinary.

DETECTIVE: Something, naturally, to do with the incident of the disappearance?

HUSBAND: Yes the disappearance.

DETECTIVE: Please go ahead and tell me.

HUSBAND: She disappeared. Can you imagine it?

DETECTIVE: We have known that four days.

HUSBAND: But I noticed it only today.

DETECTIVE: You only noticed your wife's disappearance today?

HUSBAND: I'm not talking about my wife.

DETECTIVE: About whom then?

HUSBAND: About the venerable lady green. (Davies, p. 95)

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

Mechanical repetitiveness of life is an aspect that shows the influence of Camus, the existential philosopher on Al Hakim's style. This aspect is embodied in Bahadir's life. Bahadir, the railroad inspector, who had worked for thirty-five years, took the same road and stopped at the same station at the time every day:

DERVISH: Your work calls you, Mr. Inspector.

INSPECTOR: My work has begun to bore me, thirty-five years in the railways, aren't I entitled to be bored? (Davies, p.113)

This state of routine generates monotony which deprives man of the meaning of life and existence:

DETECTIVE: The husband of the woman who is disappeared. Yes but isn't it natural for the husband of the woman who's disappeared to be concerned about knowing the truth as to his wife's disappearance?

HUSBAND: I'm concerned.

DETECTIVE: You don't look it.

HUSBAND: How do you want me to look?

DETECTIVE: Worried...disturbed.

HUSBAND: I lost that habit a long time ago.

DETECTIVE: Can someone lose the habit of being worried and disturbed?

HUSBAND: Yes when you have been an inspector on the railways for thirty or forty years.

DETECTIVE: What do you mean?

HUSBAND: I mean that an inspector on a train is the only one among the passengers who is neither worried nor disturbed about the being late or whether or not it will arrive. (Davies, p.105)

The theme of mechanical repetitiveness of life has been clearly seen in Bahadir's and his wife's daily life after retiring from his job. The husband has spent most of his life caring for his tree in his small house garden. The wife has spent most of her life sitting on her chair near the window, wearing a green dress and knitting clothes for her child who has not been bear yet. This can be seen in the opening scene:

DETECTIVE: When exactly did your mistress disappear?

MAID: Justas the Lizard returned to its lair.

DETECTIVE: You mean at sunset

MAID: I did not see the sunset.

DETECTIVE: And when does your mistress calls to him?

MAID: When it gets chilly in the garden.

DETECTIVE: And when does it get chilly in the garden?

MAID: When my mistress tells him so.

DETECTIVE: And when does your mistress tell him so?

MAID: When I finish my work here and get ready to return home.

(Davies, p.88)

Isolation is also a major absurd theme employed in Al Hakim's The Tree Climber in several images. The life of a husband and a wife with no communication with each other or the external world is vividly expresses this theme. No one visits them and they do not visit any friends or relatives. They also rarely use the telephone since the husband retired from his job. The following dialogue can show this theme:

DETECTIVE: And apart from the three and the Lizard, what does he do?

MAID: Nothing. He is retired now. He left railways for five years ago.

DETECTIVE: And your mistress? She has no relations to whom she could have gone.

MAID: No, none at all. She is, you might say, a tree without roots.

DETECTIVE: Not even any acquaintance?

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

MAID: None.

DETECTIVE: You're sure?

MAID: Absolutely. All the time I have been here I haven't seen anyone visit them, nor have they paid anyone a visit.

DETECTIVE: Did no one get in touch with her by telephone before her disappearance?

MAID: No one.

DETECTIVE: And she, didn't she get in touch with any one?

MAID: This telephone has seldom been used since Bahadir Effendi retired. He asked the telephone company to install it while he was in service and they would call him at night to go on shift or during the day when he was off for some job of work that cropped up. Since those days I have seldom heard it ring. (Davies, pp. 90-1)

The theme of isolation is also embodied by the main character, Bahadir Effendi, who was separated from others. He neither asks nor expects answers as he says "..., I, for a long time have directed no questions at anyone—nor expected answers from anyone" (Davies, p.121). It is also clearly recognized in the husband and wife relationship. The do not speak to each other during the day or night.

DETECTIVE: And the relationship between the couple?

MAID: The relationship?

DETECTIVE: Yes, were there any arguments between them, for example, or squabbles or disagreements?

MAID: None at all. Since I have been here I've never once seen them disagree about anything.

DETECTIVE: They never disagreed?

MAID: Not once.

DETECTIVE: But the situation as between a man and wife is not devoid of...

MAID: Except where this husband and wife are concerned.

DETECTIVE: Are they all that...?

MAID: Yes in absolute harmony would you like to see with your own eyes how they live? (Davies, p.91)

Man's need to live with a group is a necessity to communicate with others and understand their controversial arguments. In the preface of *The Tree Climber*, Al Hakim refers directly to Albert Camus and the absurd movement, "Being inability of Man to destroy the silence of the Universe conducts him to destroy himself" (Al Hakim, *The Tree Climber*, p. 20). The loss of communication between the main characters suggests how they were preoccupied by their illusions reflecting image devoid of harmony between them:

HUSBAND: [he enters carrying gardening tools]: I know when it begins to turn chilly the venerable Lady Green goes into her sanctuary. But what I don't understand is that though there is no wind today yet some of the oranges are falling. What could have brought them down?

WIFE: [busy with knitting]: it was I who brought her down. She was the first fruit and it was I, with my own hand, who aborted her. At that time he didn't her. It was because of poverty—didn't yet own anything, apart from the small grocery shop.... (Davies, p. 92)

One aspect that distinguishes Al Hakim's philosophy from the Western playwrights can be seen in his believing that all creatures are useful in somehow. This theme is embodied in the speech of Dervish, who visited Bahadir after killing his wife and burying the corpse under

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

his tree. In fact, this play reveals Al Hakim's view of the Absurd. He states that the absurd is a valuable value in our life. According to Al Hakim, the concept that a person may consider as absurd, others may not consider it so. The husband considers his wife's life as absurd because she only thinks of her dream; the fact that makes the husband kills her. The Dervish tells the husband about the significant of Bahana's life in a way that expresses absurd is not just a relative concept:

DERVISH: Admit, then, what you call futility is in relation to yourself.

HUSBAND: You want to say that my wife's life had meaning?

DERVISH: The meaning of every being is within its own framework—
not within your own head. (Davies, p.160)

It is remarkable moment when the main character turns from an absurd man into a regular character and asks her wife about her place for the last three days. The dialogue depicts the only logical part in the play although her answer turns the scene to illogical state and the husband kills her. Actually, her answer is not important; it just indicates that they have different views in life. Silence as one of the dramatic device of the Western absurdist drama is employed widely in Al Hakim's. Behanaa uses silence after her appearance and does not answer her husband about her place.

HUSBAND: "No"... whatever I ask the answer is "no"... won't you stop messing with me?!...won't this tampering end one day?...No human being can endure this!...No one... I've been very patient with you...but I know how to force you to answer me... I'll force you to answer me... I'll make your tongue utter... I'll show you how answer is said!... (He strangles her throat with his hands) out with it! Now!

WIFE: (rattling) No...No...No...No....

HUSBAND: You don't want to talk!... out with it!... Speak... I order you to speak!...(her head falls in his hands...He shakes her in a panic when realizes that she is dead)

Bahana!...Bahana, my wife!...Dearest!...Bahana...Bahana...Was it worth it? (Davies, p.153)

Literary language is used in the play to reflect the intended illogical state in Al Hakim's absurdist drama. He investigates both science and dark fantasy mixed with folkloric and mythical component (Abdel-Daem, p.74). The literary language employed in the dialogues creates an effective impression for penetrating into the unreal world of absurd drama including unconnected speech between husband and wife. Al Hakim uses a very simple technique and specific words to achieve ambiguity through a complex relation of resemblances to dramatize freely (Audebert, p.148). He uses different technical elements such as man's physical and metaphysical confinement, lack of communication and incompatible in the human circumstances. He employs these elements to create new style to present "the realistic with unrealistic and rational with irrational" (Shusha, p.181).

Al Hakim used the dramatic technique which was symbolism represented by the train. The train symbolizes life. The hero's job as a train inspector reflects his link to life itself "only one among the passenger who is neither worried nor disturbed about the train being late or whether or not it will arrive...Occasionally, the station bell and the whistle of the train upset me a little—especially when I'm asleep or half asleep"(Davies, p. 105). Though living in the same house, both the husband and the wife live in two different worlds. Although the wife is absent, she carries in her mind the memory of her child that she believes

Absurdity of Human Existence in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh

is still inside her and the husband is usually busy with his orange tree that bears fruits. The author tries to use a sufficient technique that has an ability to represent reality through fiction and rationality to find logic in what seems illogical. In act 1, the Bahadir's job as train inspector represents the conflation of time and space and he never worries or thinks neither about life or in a conscious way " I mean that an inspector on a train is the...." (Davies, p.105). The author gives the image of what Camus called it as a philosophical suicide. Al Hakim, by his characters, offers us scenes, which are full of mysterious life and bewildering the world throughout the play on the stage.

The stage is also occupied by sounds of some characters without appearance such as the digger who is searching under the tree for the wife's corps and the milkman, who is engaged with talking the Maid indicating the mystery of life, where the Man lives in. this fact is also embodied in the character of the invisible Lizard for all except Bahadir can see it every day, particularly when he declares joyfully in its return to its hole in the same time of his wife's return for his house. However, the dialogue between milkman, the Maid and the invisible Lizard show the image of the bewildering world. These events happened on the stage in the same time as detective is investigating with the husband who is suspected of killing of his wife and burying her corpse under the uncertainty tree. The atmosphere of mystery is sustained by Al Hakim, led audience in a disorderly state. It is quite, Al Hakim concentrates on the important relation between the Tree and Bahadir. Bahadir's Tree symbolizes his own life, which is illustrated by Al Hakim's image of rejection strongly for digging under the tree as the police have believed that wife's corps was buried here, as he faces the detective in a nervous way:

HUSBAND: Do you wish to destroy my tree? Do you know what this tree means to me?

DETECTIVE: I do.

HUSBAND: To my whole life in fact?

DETECTIVE: I do, but it's a question of a body and a case of murder.

HUSBAND: It's my body... my own body and the spade which strikes at the trunk of the tree will be striking at my neck. Do you understand that? Do you understand?

HUSBAND: [attempting to seat him]: You're killing me. You'll kill me-you're committing murder. (Davies, pp. 100-1).

Indeed, the crucial relationship between Bahadir and the tree is emphasized by the wife. She saw the hole dug under the tree after she returned to her house refusing all of what had been done for the tree. Thus, she revealed the important indication of what the tree was symbolized in the play.

WIFE: [Looking towards it]: Why did you do that to it? He'll be extremely sad.

DETECTIVE: It was inevitable. However, I don't believe any harm has come to it-its roots are intact.

WIFE: I hope so, it's his life. (Davies, p. 136).

Al Hakim adopted the approach of "equilibrium" and mixed it with his art to adopt the play to his own culture. Although the characters came from different period, the dialogue in the play occupies a single space. From the beginning, we see the content and the context of the play follow absurdist dramatic technique. Such as when we discuss the place of the play, Al Hakim presents all time periods in one person who occasionally speaks in more than one place in his own voice. Al Hakim does not copy the Western thought to be embodied in Arabic society but he aims to learn about new genre. In Al Hakim's play, the form and content of the

absurd are inseparable (Audebert, p.138). The play ends with an absurd model although the playwright wants to create new theory but it was not succeeded. He gives an important to the theatre of the mind. The cyclic dialogue is very clear in the play which ends in the same way it begins as noticed in act 1, Bahadir Affendi exchanges speech with his wife:

WIFE: It was in the fourth month. The child had formed; she had become the size of one's hand. I'm certain of that....

HUSBAND: Yes, I'm certain of that, because the branches were moving extremely slowly....

WIFE: Yes, she was moving inside me. I felt her moving. They were the movements of a girl. One can tell the way a girl moves; also I wanted her to be a girl....

HUSBAND: I also wanted this slow movement or no movement at all, because motionless branches stop any damage happening to the flowers and the fruit in the early stage.... (Davies, p.93)

5. Conclusion

Al Hakim is considered an innovative and a pioneer of modern Arabic drama. He opens a new horizon to the theatre known as the Theatre of Absurd in order to give a vivid image of the bad conditions from which the Arab society suffers. His commitment to the principles of the playwriting suggests that he did not imitate Western absurdist playwrights. Instead, he used his creations, environment, and the Egyptian Arabic consciousness. The philosophical thought has shaped his personality which has viewed the Arabic literature as stagnant. As he believes that the Arabic writer is unable to flow spiritually in both the life of Orientals and their soul. As a result, Al Hakim focuses on the main theme of his play that is man spends his time fighting any forces which stand against him.

Although the absurdist playwrights of the twentieth century have collected at the same world of absurdity, their identities are various but their aim is still one. The masterpiece Al Hakim's *The Tree Climber* is a prominent example of his attraction to the theatre of absurd. Al Hakim uses literary language in the dialogue embodied non-reality of the atmosphere of absurdist drama through wide passages of non-communication between the husband and his wife. Hence, these cultural differences between Eastern and Western societies pushed Al Hakim to develop and transform the Arabic literature into a new form and style called absurdism represented by rational and irrational. This is declared by Al Hakim in an interview with Lucy Yaqub where he refers, "In our religion... we do not believe that God has created the world meaninglessly. Rather, we believe that there is a wise purpose behind the creation of the world with all its harmony" (Yaqub, p.38).

To sum up, Western theatre of absurd is completely different from the Arabic theatre of absurd. According to many critics' views, it refuses to handle issues do not belong to the Arabic society. At this point, Al Hakim believes that Arabic culture has its unique components and thus should have its unique self-developed theatre. Hence, it is evident that the Arabic problems are not too different from Western. However, they are presented in different ways.

References

- al-Hakim T., al-Ruh A. (1974). [The Return of the Spirit], two parts (Cairo, 1933), Diary of A Country Magistrate (Cairo, 1937), and Bird of the East (Cairo: Dar al-Maaref.
- Al-Hakim, T. (2008). *The Tree Climber*. The Essential Tawfiq al-Hakim: Plays, Fiction, Autobiography. Trans. Denys Johnson-Davies. Cairo: New York: American University in Cairo Press. 87–164.
- . *YaTali' al-Shajara*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1976.
- Allen, R. (2004). *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*. Cambridge.
- Anderson, R. (2011). *Existentialism*. London: Hodder Education.
- Auderbert, C. F. (1978). "Al-Hakim's YaTali' al-Shajarah" and folk Art". *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 9, 138.
- Badawi, M. M. (1993). *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature*. New York.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. Vintage Books, 1995. Esslin, M. (1966). *The Theatre of Absurd*. London, Eye & Spottis woode.
- Hassib, M. (2014). "Life Crisis and Existentialism in Three Dramatic Works". MA Thesis, The American University in Cairo, Egypt.
- Ionesco, E. (1965) *The Chairs*, in *Rhinoceros, The Chairs, The Lesson*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Jabra, I. (1971) *Modern Arabic Literature and West*. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol.2, Brill, pp. 76-91.

- Shafiq, M. (1986). “The Impact of Absurd on Modern Arabic Literature: A study of the Influence of Camus, Ionesco and Backett”. Diss., U of Illinis at Urbana-Champaign.
- Shusha, M. (1984). Khamsawa Thamanoun Sham’a Fi Hayat Tawfiq Al-Hakim (85 Candle in the life of Tawfiq Al-Hakim). Caire.
- White, H. (2009). “Practicing Camus.” Cross Currents 55.4 (2006): 554-563. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 19 Nov.