engage with theatrical concepts and practice, suggested readings, listened patiently and provided succinct and discerning comments.

Hazem's role extended to paraprofessional extracurricular activities. It was through this role that he opened the windows to the winds of change. He made use of his relationships with prominent academics in his capacity as an active IFTR member, and arranged highly fruitful academic encounters that brought our graduate researchers and faculty members into energizing and interactive dialogue with them. Marvin Carlson, Khaled Amine, Sirkku Aaltonen, Margaret Litvin, Sameh Hanna and Hassan Abdulrazzak are among the well-established names in world theatre research who were Hazem's guests in Cairo.

Hazem's unfailing support for graduate researchers and junior staff in the department was exemplary. He gave them voice and encouraged their first writing projects when he took up the position of co-editor of the prestigious *Al-Masrah (Theatre) Quarterly* published by the General Egyptian Book Organization in Cairo. He commissioned articles from them, gave advice, provided material and edited their work.

Hazem's untimely death is a great loss indeed. Conspicuous by his absence, he will be remembered as a passionate, theatre-loving academic who played by the rules of the theatrical game – dialogue, teamwork, active participation and a dedication to sincere artistic expression.

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# The Editor of Works-in-Progress

MARGARET LITVIN

For me Hazem Azmy was not only a very close friend, despite the infrequency of our in-person meetings, but also the interlocutor who provoked some of my best work. His questions, his challenges, his invitations and the publications he edited have inspired and deepened almost everything I have written about Arab theatre over the past ten years. They provoke me still.

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One example. In 2012 Hazem published a twenty-page chapter on Egypt in the *Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*.[1] The chapter used a series of 'snapshots' to show how artists and rulers in different conditions responded to the fact that Egypt's modern statehood has been, from its very start, a theatricalized performance produced partly for global consumption. In just twenty pages the chapter makes Egypt's conflictual history legible to outsiders, without resorting to cultural essentialism. It makes you care. It also typifies Hazem's approach to theatre studies. Rather than impose a teleological reading, it analyses 'snapshots' of a moving and changing history. Rather than using political events as a backdrop to explain Egyptian theatre, it offers a convincing interpretation of Egypt's political history through the lens of theatre and theatricality. Just like the Khedives and performers he profiled, Hazem was 'staging Egypt on the global stage', putting it on the world theatre studies map, but in a sophisticated and empathetic way.[2]

Hazem used the same 'snapshot' form in a recent article on 'Shakespeare in Egypt between Two Quadricentennials'.[3] As we brainstormed for the article, he told me he was rereading the early issues of *Al-Masrah*, the Egyptian theatre magazine founded in 1964 that had published a generation of critics including Mohamed Enani (b. 1939) and my late mentor Farouk Abdel Wahab (1942–2013). In one conversation, Hazem told me,

> Looking at the mid-sixties issues, I'm honestly surprised. These people were writing in the Nasser period, but somehow they were trying to get out of the ideological boxes. You can see in the articles that people were not buying into the party line completely. Between the lines, you can see a lot of the tensions of the period. You can see that the period was trying to impose a single narrative and these writers were looking beyond it.

His reading of the early *Al-Masrah* illustrates Hazem's ethical drive: reading empathetically 'between the lines' for the 'tensions' and blind spots of a society, including his own. It also describes his own editorial ambitions and successes, in Arabic on the revival of *Al-Masrah*, where he was deputy editor, and in English on two important journal special issues and a host of other projects.[4] To the joy of every contributor to *The Experimental*, the daily English newsletter he edited for the annual Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre, Hazem the editor was generous, engaged and sometimes able to capture your thought better than you could yourself. He was tireless in encouraging promising scholars, especially early-career and female scholars, to do their best work. About his brief revival of *Al-Masrah* magazine, he told me,

> We try to give voice to a younger generation of writers. We are trying to establish a different type of theatre reviewing, scholarship, documentation. We are a scholarly journal, even if we're not exclusively doing scholarly stuff. We're trying to get people to write in a different way. Maybe a little like the way people used to write in the 1960s. Every article should be a piece of wonderful Arabic prose, but self-contained. Even if you know nothing about the topic, you can read one article and come away with something. There's a value added, a pedagogical element. We are training critics.[5]

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Of the outdated files in my Dropbox, the most heartbreaking is called 'To Write with Hazem'. There are article and special-issue ideas, the abstract of an essay accepted but never written, thoughts of co-translation. Egypt's censorship had become ferocious and depressing in recent years, but we had acted as though we had all the time in the world. And now? In a sense, all my writing about theatre will still be 'with Hazem'. Along with many other scholars around the world, I strive to do justice to his work and his approach: to be patient with emerging talent, to explore not only what image a society presents but also the confusions, tensions and painful blind spots underneath. That is the empathetic attention that Hazem gave to everyone, and that he demanded and helped create for Egypt on the world stage.

NOTES

1 Hazem Azmy, 'Egypt', in David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski, eds., *Cambridge Companion to Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 116–35.

2 See Hazem Azmy, *Staging Egypt on the Global Stage: Egyptian Performance from 9/11 to the Arab Spring* (Palgrave, forthcoming).

3 See Hazem Azmy, 'Egypt between Two Shakespeare Quadricentennials 1964 through 2016: Reflective Remarks in Three Snapshots', *Critical Survey*, 28, 3 (November 2016), pp. 102–18.

4 Hazem Azmy and Marvin Carlson, eds., *Performing Islam/Muslim Realities*, special issue, *Ecumenica: Journal of Theatre and Performance*, 1, 2 (Fall 2008); Hazem Azmy and Marvin Carlson, eds., *Theatre and the Arab Spring*, special issue, *Theatre Research International*, 38, 2 (July 2013).

5 Hazem Azmy, personal communication, 18 July 2016.

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