Theatre Research International *43:3* doi:10.1017/S0307883318000524

Conspicuous by His Absence: Remembering a Colleague

MUSTAFA RIAD Y IMAN EZZELDIN

We, faculty members and students in the Ain Shams University Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, miss Hazem profoundly on both the personal and academic levels. Both have been well integrated in a way that recalls Hamlet's commendation of Horatio, whose 'blood and judgement are so well commingled, that they are not a pipe for fortune's finger to sound what stop she please'. Hazem possessed this even-handed temper. No wonder, then, that his passion for the theatre coupled with his sound and carefully measured judgements will be remembered and rest firmly in our 'heart's core, ay, in our heart of hearts'.

Hazem Azmy took up the responsibilities of academic as well administrative administrator of graduate studies in the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University. He was well suited to this key post by virtue of his incessant zeal for uncovering fresh ideas and breaking new ground in theatre research. Several qualifications rendered him capable of fulfilling his job. First, the fact that he was bilingual, in perfect command of both Arabic and English, and consequently well versed in Arabic culture and the cultures of the English-speaking nations, sharpened his critical sense of both theatrical traditions in a way that made each shed light on the other. This was especially valuable given the recent interest of Anglo-American theatre in the Arab region, and the long history of Arab flirtation with Western theatrical forms. Second, as a seasoned and disciplined scholar, he brought some kind of order to the ever-growing volume of research in his field. His valuable and focused contribution to the content of graduate courses and the manner of their presentation to graduate students was commendable. Third, he established a research tradition based on dialogue and interaction in his graduate classes. For example, he trained his students to respond to each other's research efforts, helping them all to hone their research skills and acquire a critical dialogic sense. Fourth, he was the academic master of ceremonies at an annual Graduate Day, attended by faculty members and students, where young researchers give a progress account of their MA and PhD projects. Last but not least, Hazem had an eye for assessment and evaluation. He is to be credited since he joined the department with setting the admission exams. These were carefully crafted to guarantee that the department admits only the best applicants. Later on, he would draw up detailed criteria that he shared with his students so that their work might measure up as closely as possible to his vision. And this brings us to his own very demanding nature that somehow equated with his giving nature. In his lectures, Hazem encouraged his students to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307883318000524 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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.

MUSTAFA RIAD (mrmriad@gmail.com) *is a Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt. A translator and editor of works in the fields of literature and the humanities, his research interests include comparative literature, performance theory and translation studies. He held the position of editor in chief of the latest edition of* Al Masraḥ *magazine from 2014 to 2015.*

IMAN EZZELDIN (iman.ezzeldin@gmail.com) *is an Assistant Professor in the Drama and Theatre Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt, and has served as director of Egypt's National Library, Dar al-Kutub. Her research interests include classical studies, the cinema, theatre adaptations and experimentation.*

Theatre Research International *43:3* doi:10.1017/S0307883318000494

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.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307883318000524 Published online by Cambridge University Press