

## Ideological Passing: A Study of Tawfiq Al-Hakim's The River of Madness

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**Abstract :** Tawfiq Al-Hakim (1898-1987) celebrated the 1919 Revolution by writing *The Return of The Spirit* published in 1933, a novel which portrayed national awakening and illustrated the cult of a nationalist leader, such as Saad Zaghloul so much that it influenced Egypt's first president Gamal Abdel Nasser. However, in 1974, and because of an excruciating sense of disappointment, Al-Hakim wrote *The Return of Consciousness*. Between losing and regaining consciousness, Al-Hakim wrote *The River of Madness*, a short play published in 1937. It portrays an old kingdom established in a distant place where there is a conflict between the King and his minister, who have not drunk from the river of madness, on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the kingdom who thought that the King and the minister have gone mad because they refused to drink from the river. (Each party doubted the sanity of the other). In fact, the King and the minister differ in their political stance from the rest of the people. By philosophical reasoning, the minister convinces the King that it is safer to go mad with the majority than to be treated as an unwanted minority. It is believed that in *The River of Madness*, Al-Hakim deftly portrays an example of ideological passing as an alternative solution that can save the country from the woes of the aftermath of revolution and civil war.

**Keywords :** ideological passing, Al Hakim, The River of Madness, Arabic literature

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