

The lost narratives of A. Z. Abushâdy, poet and bee master

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In the stillness of the dark, in the desolate night,
When mind and feelings are fraught with awe,
I stand alone, a poet in self-communion,
Thirsty for the Truth, wondering about the world
While the world takes no heed of me,
And all around me rushes swiftly past.¹

A polymath who worked across several disciplines, Dr Ahmed Zaky Abushâdy (1892–1955)² is remembered for his Romantic poetry and as the man behind the influential poetry journal *Apollo* (1932–4).³ In the period that stretched between the two world wars and the Egyptian revolutions of 1919 and 1952, Abushâdy cultivated his vision for a modern Egypt by enacting his ideals of liberal humanism through poetry and bee husbandry, and projects that invited cultural exchange.

This chapter focuses on aspects of Abushâdy's work that are not explored in the existing literature, which is mainly concerned with his literary contribution. It discusses little-known or lost narratives by excavating and examining some of the materials he left behind that bring his work into focus and offer insights into the creative, intellectual and political worlds in which he moved. My interest in these lost narratives of Abushâdy stems not from a scholarly agenda so much as the fact that Abushâdy was family, the grandfather I never met and for whom I continue to search. My sense of him continues to shift as I look through his papers, photographs and other belongings he managed to keep despite a series of disruptive moves from Egypt to England and back, and finally to the United States. These materials came to me through his children, my mother Hoda, uncle Ramzy and aunt Safeya, who salvaged what they could after his death and which I have since organized into an archive.

Abushâdy was the only son of Maître Muhammad Abushâdy Bey, a president of the Egyptian Bar Union and prominent supporter of the nationalist Wafd Party, who defended revolutionaries and assassins, and a wealthy and influential man (Figure 7.1). He owned lands in the Delta, mingled in the upper echelons of political and literary



Figure 7.1 Abushâdy and his father, Mâitre Muhammad Abushâdy Bey, c.1912 (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

society, and counted Sa'd Zaghul and Ahmad Shawqi as close friends. His first wife, Amina Nagib, Abushâdy's mother, was an aspiring poet of Turkish descent; the family tree showed me how she was connected to her nephews, my 'uncles' the comedic film actor Sulayman Nagib and his brother Husni. Through Amina we are related to the celebrated Alexandrian artists, the brothers Seif and Edham Wanly, by her brother's marriage into Daghestani royalty.⁴ She was said to have hosted a lively literary salon in Cairo where, as a youth, Abushâdy rubbed elbows with Shawqi and became a protégé of Mutran.⁵ These men were not just mentors; eventually serving as editors of *Apollo*, they boosted its prestige with their names.

When Abushâdy was a teenager, his father took a second wife, a widow known in our family simply as 'al-Sitt'. Their marriage prompted Amina to decamp to another city; I never learned what became of her except that she died young. Al-Sitt brought along two daughters from her previous marriage and her young niece Zaynab. I grew up hearing the story that Abushâdy and Zaynab fell in love as teenagers, but al-Sitt forbade their marriage. It appears that Zaynab was the object of Abushâdy's youthful, anguished and most innovative poetry.⁶

In 1912, Abushâdy Bey sent his son to London to attend medical school rather than allow him to languish in Cairo writing dark love poetry. After completing his medical



Figure 7.2 Abushâdy with Annie and fox terrier Fahmy in the apiary at Benson, Oxfordshire, c.1922 (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

degree,⁷ Abushâdy set himself up with a private practice in a rented house on Cairn Avenue in Ealing, where he lived with Annie Bamford, my future grandmother, until they moved to Benson, Oxfordshire, in 1919. Abushâdy had become interested in bees and bee pathology, and established a research institute and apiary there where he bred

honeybees on a grand scale. He and Annie remained in Benson, marrying in 1922 just before returning to Cairo at the command of his ailing but ever forceful father, who died in 1925 (Figure 7.2).⁸ I found a number of Abushâdy's medical residency logs, including one he kept for his rotation in obstetrics, laboratory notebooks with his drawings of test tubes and equations, and snapshots of him dissecting a cadaver, working in a laboratory and picnicking on the grounds of St. George's Hospital. In his letters and papers, there are mentions of societies and clubs that he joined. What I have yet to find is clear evidence of his literary activities over the course of the decade he spent in England, although, as I discuss below, we can gain a sense of his involvement with anti-colonial politics in London.

The Abushâdy archive

The materials in the archive span the years of Abushâdy's youth, his English education and marriage, his return to Egypt where he became a significant figure in modern Arabic poetry and bee husbandry, and his final years in the United States (1946–55) writing theatre and cultural broadcasts for the Voice of America's new Arabic radio programme. They include manuscripts, deeds, family trees, snapshots, large format photographs, significant artworks such as paintings, sketches, cartoons and calligraphy by artists in Abushâdy's circle, books and serials, audio recordings, small objects and ephemera, and a large amount of correspondence in English and Arabic between Abushâdy, his peers and family members. While most of these materials fit into rough categories, some items resist categorization such as ribbons entwined with wisps of a child's hair and seashells inscribed with coded messages of teenage love. In a velvet box lies a tangle of small kites fashioned from candy wrappers, while albums of pressed flowers tell us what Abushâdy planted in his garden for the delectation of his bees. Prior to writing this chapter, and with the help of a colleague well versed in tabulating the contents of family archives and private papers, I spent several years culling and organizing these materials. Though this process was tedious at times, but more often alchemical, it turned up unexpected fragments that impart a tactile sense of the world from which they came.

Hoda, Ramzy and Safeya were my last living connections to the Egypt of the ancien regime. As they aged, I feared their memories and first-hand knowledge would vanish with them. I spoke frequently with Safeya, who knew more about the family's history than anyone. We spent time together in her apartment, sifting through photo albums and documents. With her permission, I taped our conversations. In the years before her death at the age of 90, we discussed my grandfather's legacy in a battle of wills; she remained determined to control the narrative to the end, meting out to me select titbits by phone and by mail.

After Safeya's death, I discovered diaries and correspondence she never mentioned. For instance, I found a well-hidden bundle of nearly two hundred letters exchanged between Abushâdy and his wife, my grandmother Annie, during the summers from 1931 to 1934 when, to escape the heat of Cairo, Annie took the children to a hotel on the beach in Port Said while Abushâdy stayed behind to work. Their daily letters reveal



Figure 7.3 Rabindranath Tagore (centre) during his visit to Egypt in 1926. Far right: Dr Apostolos Skouphopoulos and A. Z. Abushâdy. Standing: Dr Muhammad Hamza. Port Said Casino, 31 December 1926 (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

the texture of their lives: Annie's wry sense of humour, disagreements over the care of their small children and the constant labour demanded by their bees and poultry. In one letter, Abushâdy emotes over the acquisition of their first radio; in others, Annie relates the rudeness of waiters, the size of water bugs, an acquaintance's dalliances with prostitutes and the calibre of the food served at the Marina Palace Hotel. Their constant money problems recur as a leitmotif as the two bicker over family finances against the backdrop of a politically turbulent Egypt, glimpses of which appear momentarily only to vanish under the weight of mundane matters. Tensions escalate to reveal the complexities of their marriage and the social and cultural gaps that remained between them.

Fragments of lost or forgotten narratives come to light through the many photographs in the archive. A group photo from 1926 marks the occasion of Bengali philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Egypt (Figure 7.3).⁹ The shot was staged outdoors in bright sunlight. Seven straight-back chairs are lined up on an ornate carpet with Tagore seated in the centre, flanked by two women in saris and three children who sit at his feet. Standing behind them is Abushâdy's friend and colleague, Dr Muhammad Hamza. Off to one side sits the journalist and trade unionist Dr Apostolos Skouphopoulos,¹⁰ with Abushâdy, who seems a bit stiff in his tarbouche, next to him. Everyone looks straight at the camera while Tagore gazes into the middle distance. Tagore's personal connection to Abushâdy can be traced to their mutual



Figure 7.4 Left to right: K. Zeidan, Dusé Muhamed Ali, M. Omar and Abushâdy, 8 December 1913 (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

friend, Egypt's poet laureate Ahmad Shawqi, who hosted Tagore on his visit to Cairo.¹¹ A friend of his father, Shawqi had served as a mentor to the young Abushâdy. When he launched *Apollo* six years after this photograph was taken, Abushâdy invited Shawqi to be its editor and president of the group of poets he called the Apollo Society.

Abushâdy in England

Among the items that shed some light on Abushâdy's early days in England is a large mounted photograph that points to his activities while a medical student. It shows him posing with two young colleagues and the actor, playwright and pan-Africanist Dusé Mohamed Ali. On the wall behind them is a banner with Arabic calligraphy: 'Welcome to our lands ... Freedom in our lands.' The photograph is dated 8 December 1913, about a year after Dusé Mohamed launched his *African Times and Orient Review* (ATOR), 'a monthly devoted to the interests of the coloured races of the world' (Figure 7.4).¹² I wonder what influence Dusé might have exerted on my young grandfather and if ATOR served as a model or inspiration for his future forays in publishing. Abushâdy makes several appearances as a 'nationalist friend and comrade' in Ian Duffield's

doctoral thesis, quoting an MI5 file, where he was one of Dusé Mohamed Ali's 'closer Egyptian friends' and with whom he would continue to correspond after Abushâdy returned to Egypt.¹³ At some point, Abushâdy apparently also helped the Sudanese-Egyptian nationalist obtain a copy of his own birth certificate. The MI5 file shows that Abushâdy himself was under some form of surveillance by the British authorities:

An ex-employee of Dusé Mohamed says that 158 Fleet St was visited by Turks and Egyptians of all characters, some of whom were undesirable. He instanced Abushâdy, an Egyptian ... Ahmed Zaki Abushâdy is a student at St. George's Hospital. Apparently at some date early in January he sent a letter to his father in Cairo which was violently anti-English and in which he stated that although it was risky yet, Turkey's war with England was undoubtedly a source of hope for the Egyptians. Interviewed by the Police he said that he was very much disappointed when the proclamation of the Protectorate of Egypt was announced, but now that it appeared that Egypt was going to have home-rule, he considered that the position was better than before. Abushâdy recently wrote to Mrs Duse Mohamed and sent her an English translation of verses from the Arabic of Shawqi Bey. The verses were composed for school students and urged the young generation of Egyptians to cease to be slaves and by sacrificing themselves for the Motherland to restore the ancient glories of Egypt.¹⁴

It is worth noting that this idea of the youthful Abushâdy as 'violently anti-English' contradicts the widely held notion of him as an unapologetic anglophile. Considering his capacity for romantic idealism and romance itself, I imagine Abushâdy could have held these contradictory sentiments in his heart simultaneously.

Abushâdy met Annie on a London bus soon after he was photographed with Dusé. She was born in the town of Stalybridge in Greater Manchester, one of twelve children in a family of pub owners, Odd Fellows, and cotton weavers. She was a few years Abushâdy's senior and had a head of voluminous hair upon which she perched large feathered hats. As a teenager, she went to live in Germany where she worked as a governess. Annie liked to read the letters of Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon and the novels of D. H. Lawrence. She chain-smoked. Together, they moved into the house on Cairn Avenue in Ealing (they were still several years away from getting married).

I wonder how Annie influenced Abushâdy. Perhaps she inspired him to implement the principles of the cooperative movement. The movement was also emerging in Egypt in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it is reasonable to imagine that Abushâdy became enamoured of the concept of cooperation through Annie and the sense of radicalism, historical depth and proximity which her family's past conferred. She grew up not far from its birthplace in Rochdale, where the Society of Equitable Pioneers established the first cooperative nearly twenty years earlier in 1844.¹⁵ Also persuasive is the fact that Annie boasted Samuel Bamford (1788–1872), the famous labour organizer and voice for peaceful activism, as her forebear.¹⁶ Bamford, who wrote poetry in Lancashire dialect, was present at the 1819 Peterloo Massacre, and authored several books, including *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, a chronicle of conditions among the working classes in the years after the Battle of Waterloo.¹⁷

Apollo Journal and the Apollo Society

In the years before my forays into the cupboards of my aunt Safeya's apartment, I worked as an assistant in a museum library in New York. I spent my spare time searching databases and scheduling interlibrary loans of journals and books on modern Arabic literature that included chapters on Abushâdy's poetry. I corresponded with close family friends who were either writers or scholars of modern Arabic literature who pointed me to the relevant literature.¹⁸ There I learned that Abushâdy was a precocious young poet and that his influence on modern Arabic poetry began with his youthful love poems, which were fresh and wholly innovative.¹⁹ I was able to confirm that in the landscape of modern Arabic poetry, Abushâdy's most notable achievement was *Apollo*, the first Arabic periodical devoted exclusively to poetry and poetry criticism.²⁰ *Apollo* provided a platform for experimental poetry that pushed beyond the conventions of content, rhyme and metre. Abushâdy brought together an ever-shifting group of men and women (including Nafisa al-Sayyid and Zaynab al-Rubi among the latter) to form what he called the Apollo Society (Jam'iyat Apullu), which welcomed poets that hailed from different schools and movements, and from beyond Egypt's borders (Figure 7.5).

Apollo was unusual on numerous levels. It was lavishly illustrated with drawings, colour plates and calligraphy that Abushâdy commissioned from local artists



Figure 7.5 The Apollo Society. Back row (left to right): 'Abd al-Ghani Hassan, Hassan Kamil al-Sayrafi, Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghafur, A.Z. Abushâdy, Salih Jawdat, Ramzy Maftah. Seated: 'Ali Mahmud Taha, Zaki Mubarak, Sayyid Ibrahim (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).



Figure 7.6 Cover of *Apollon* (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

(Figure 7.6). Some of these artists had already made a name for themselves, such as the poet and calligrapher Sayyid Ibrahim (Figure 7.7),²¹ while others were unknowns yet to be discovered, like the self-taught painter Sha'ban Zaki,²² who wrote art criticism and ran advertisements on the back pages of the journal for his services 'in the art of



Figure 7.7 Drawing by calligrapher Sayyid Ibrahim for *Apollo* (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

advertising and decorative paintings of Egyptian scenes'. Another unusual aspect of *Apollo* is its use of author portraits. Many of these were reproduced from photos I had seen in the albums in Safeya's apartment, including group photographs of the members of the Apollo Society.

Among the publications represented in the archive is a single issue of *Apollo* and a reprint of the full set bound as six volumes in red buckram, the 1983 bootleg published by Dar Sadr in Beirut. Safeya had once mentioned to me that she threatened to sue the publisher after he reprinted the journal without her permission. In the end, they agreed to settle: she, Hoda and Ramzy would each receive a set. During its short but influential run, *Apollo* counted among its contributors well-known figures such as the Syro-Egyptian poet Khalil Mutran (who became its editor after the death of Shawqi), Mustafa Sadiq al-Rafi'i,²³ 'Abd al-Rahman Shukri,²⁴ Hasan Kamil al-Sayrafi²⁵ and the then unpublished Tunisian poet Abul-Qasim Al-Shabbi.²⁶ One of its early issues includes the poem 'Buried Light' (*al-Ashu'â' al-khaba*) written by a young aspiring poet named Sayyid Qutb before he abandoned verse to write the works on Islam that now define him (Figure 7.8). It has been generally assumed that Qutb never published poetry in *Apollo* despite Abushâdy's repeated invitations because Qutb was a student of 'Abbas al-'Aqqad,²⁷ Abushâdy's chief antagonist, who viciously attacked the Apollo group over its aesthetics and politics.²⁸ Over the course of the ongoing literary spat, Qutb adopted the withering style of his mentor and dubbed the Apollo Society 'the procession of the handicapped' (*mawaqib al-'ajaza*).²⁹ The presence of Qutb's poem in an early volume suggests that he may once have held a different opinion and attitude

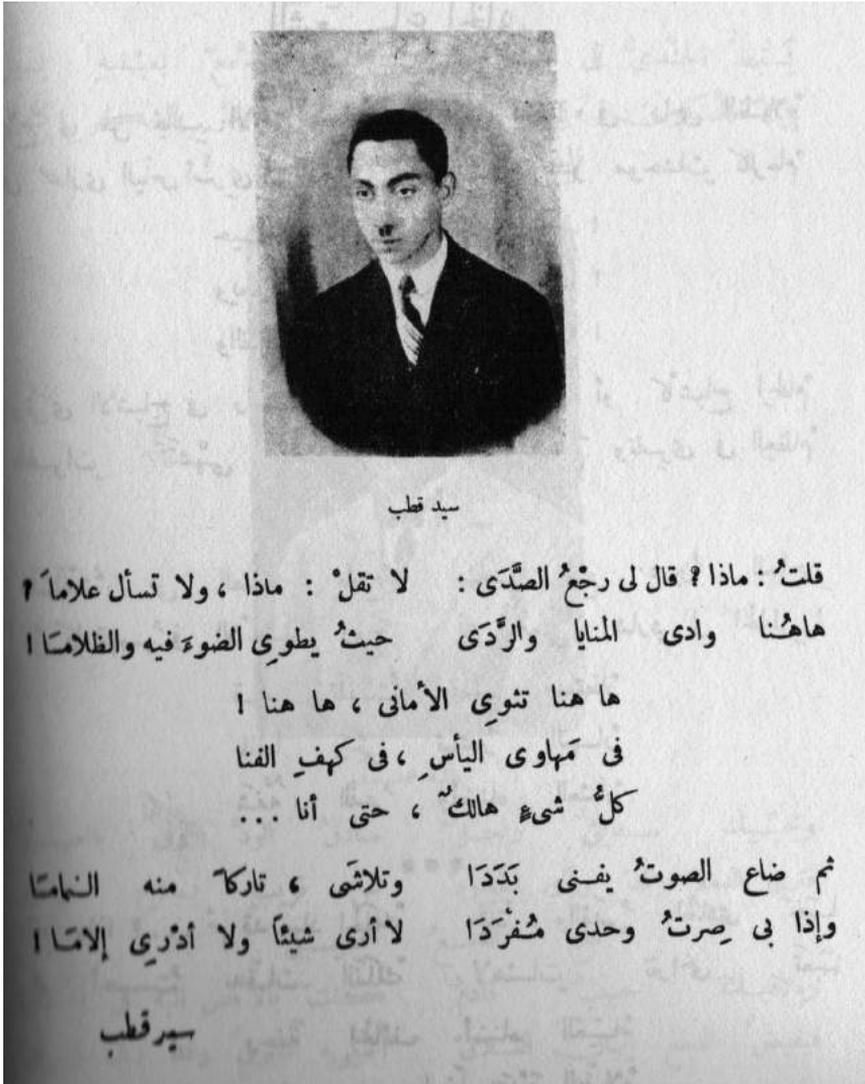


Figure 7.8 Portrait of Sayyid Qutb with the first page of his poem, 'Buried Light' (*al-Ashu'a' al-khaba*), *Apollo* 1, no.1 (1932) (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

towards the group, or that he was willing to hold his nose and appear among them in order to see his work in print.

The vitriol levelled at Abushâdy by his literary adversaries was fuelled by a political misstep.³⁰ For years, he habitually approached government officials to request funding for projects. When money ran out for *Apollo*, Abushâdy turned to the widely despised Prime Minister Isma'il Şidqi. Abushâdy's opponents saw in this association the opportunity to tar his reputation despite the fact that Şidqi had refused to help him.³¹

In 1935, a year after *Apollo's* demise, Abushâdy quit the Cairo literary scene with its feuding factions and moved his family to Alexandria.

Abushâdy the apiarist

I am not sure how or why Abushâdy first became interested in bees, but it may have stemmed from his research in bacteriology and infectious diseases. Bee culture—the notion of the ‘hive mind’ and harmony through cooperation—seems to have inspired Abushâdy and provided a metaphor for his work. But since the range of his many varied enterprises lies beyond the scope of modern Arabic literature, even the very literal connections he drew between the arts, biology, sociology and bee culture have not been explored.

I became interested in Abushâdy the Bee Master³² and was struck by the ubiquitous presence of the honeybee across his writings and letterheads as literal figure and decorative symbol. I began to set up research appointments in various libraries that held Abushâdy's papers and publications to see if I could locate his writings on bees. My first stop was the Aziz S. Atiya Middle East Library at the University of Utah, which contains private papers that Safeya had donated in 1975 at the behest of the library's founder, Aziz Atiya, a close family friend.³³ There I found a reprint of a public address that Abushâdy delivered in 1922 under the auspices of the Apis Club promoting the standardization of bee husbandry.³⁴

The Apis Club was a cooperative apiary with educational and research programmes that Abushâdy established in 1919 in Benson, a small village in the countryside near Oxford. He did so with the help of an investment from the Egyptian cotton magnate, ‘Ali al-Manzalawi.³⁵ With this financial infusion, Abushâdy started a parent company called Adminson that financed the Apis Club until it could sustain itself through the contributions of its members. In its first year, the co-op attracted over thirteen thousand members and grew to over six hundred hives, an auspicious beginning of Abushâdy's lifelong venture in beekeeping.³⁶ In the same year, he launched his first scientific journal, *The Bee World*, and obtained a number of patents for beehive inventions. The most radical of these was a removable aluminium honeycomb, an improvement upon an existing removable comb whereby beekeepers can extract honey without destroying the colony, a method that remains standard practice today.³⁷ Abushâdy later adapted these and other practices for use in Egyptian apiaries where the traditional skep made from twisted straw or wicker baskets and mud was still prevalent.

The Apis Club and *The Bee World* provided Abushâdy with a platform by which he could implement his deeply felt humanist ideals. He had practised medicine during the influenza pandemic, dealt with cholera outbreaks, treated children suffering from malnutrition and witnessed the effects of extreme poverty across England and Scotland. A physician who provided care in the most basic sense, he also had a vision. The Apis Club became a way for him to disseminate his views while putting them into practice. He envisaged his headquarters in Benson as an educational centre for experts and amateur beekeepers alike, and he encouraged knowledge-sharing among beekeepers from different social strata and backgrounds. He promoted best practices

through *The Bee World* and demonstrated to farmers how they could dramatically increase honey yields, and thus improve their standard of living.

My next appointment was at the archive of the Apis Club in Aberystwyth, in the special collections of the National Library of Wales.³⁸ The Apis Club archive offers a glimpse of the inner workings of the cooperative and early plans and designs for *The Bee World*,³⁹ now published as *Bee World* by the International Bee Research Association (IBRA).⁴⁰ There I learned that Abushâdy continued to edit *The Bee World* after he returned to Cairo in 1922 but soon resigned in order to focus his attention closer to home. In 1930, he launched another scientific journal, *The Bee Kingdom* (*Mamlakat al-nahl*), which accepted contributions in both Arabic and English and took in advertising from around the world.⁴¹ Next, he launched the Bee Kingdom League, an Egyptian bee husbandry cooperative, in the Matariyya suburb of Cairo where he and Annie were raising their family. Under its auspices, Abushâdy published papers and monographs on aspects of bee botany, bee diseases and different methods of bee breeding. With support from the Egyptian Ministry of Education, he taught classes in beekeeping to grammar school and high school students. With sponsorship from the Ministry of Agriculture, he organized the first international bee conference and honey fair in Cairo, and established the Royal Apiaries at the request of King Fu'ad.⁴² *The Bee Kingdom* remained in print for a decade, while members of the Bee Kingdom League continued to hold meetings and conferences as recently as 1978.⁴³

Abushâdy kept bees his entire life. Photos show him posing with his hives in every place he called home: the back garden in Ealing and the apiary at Benson, the rooftop in Matariyya and in backyards in Alexandria, Jamaica, Queens and Washington, DC. A photograph dated 11 August 1946, just a few months after his arrival in New York, shows him brandishing a cigar while posing with Safeya and Hoda among the predominantly female members of the Bronx Beekeepers Association. What Abushâdy found in bee culture provided a model that could be applied across disciplines. One could make the case that he drew on the concepts of hybridity and cross-pollination – concepts essential to botany and to bee breeding – while mining modern Western poetry for his experiments developing Arabic blank verse.⁴⁴

Biography and the archive

Abushâdy's output in the literary, scientific and journalistic realms was formidable.⁴⁵ Indispensable to these pursuits were his skills as a publisher. In his letters to Annie, we learn that he was always on the lookout for cheap, second-hand accessories for his printing press. By the late 1920s, he was able to print and publish under his own imprint, Maṭba'at al-Ta'awun – Cooperation Press – from his home in Matariyya and later from his office on Rue de France in Alexandria.⁴⁶ In the 1930s, Abushâdy surreptitiously self-published two biographies, each focusing on different aspects of his work, and arranged to have them distributed. Taking into consideration his bitter experiences with the Cairo literary community, it seems that he tried to generate and control the narratives around his work. He commissioned the first biography from a young associate, an Alexandrian Turk with literary aspirations, named Ismail Ahmed

Edham.⁴⁷ *Abushâdy the Poet: A Critical Study* offers a short and somewhat grandiose biographical sketch in English that includes an analysis of Abushâdy's modern Arabic poetry.⁴⁸ An earlier draft of the text had appeared in his self-published journal *Adabi* ('My Literature'), with Edham's by-line and a lengthy postscript by Abushâdy. It has been suggested that by providing this biographical text in English, Abushâdy was attempting to broaden his audience and better position himself in the wake of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.⁴⁹ When the biography first appeared, at least one of Abushâdy's detractors suggested that he wrote it himself,⁵⁰ but it is likely to be the work of Edham with considerable input and editing by Abushâdy. While its title page displays the name of a publisher in Leipzig, a centre for Middle East scholarship, on close inspection, with its telltale blue wrappers and quirky typography the book was obviously printed in Alexandria by the Cooperation Press.

Two years later, Abushâdy commissioned another biography from his long-time ally and colleague at Benson, Leonard Harker, which is a more substantial study and focuses on Abushâdy's contributions to bee science and husbandry.⁵¹ *Blazing the Trail* seeks to do justice to these contributions by contextualizing them within the history of modern beekeeping and its major figures. The book is replete with photographs, many of which I recognize, yet again, from family photo albums. *Blazing the Trail* excerpts approximately a dozen pages of biographical material from Edham's biography and bears all the marks of having been printed in Alexandria by the Cooperation Press.⁵²

Abushâdy clearly had a hand in constructing his own narratives; family members also contributed to the construct, omitting key facts and burnishing others, often inadvertently and sometimes by design. I recently discovered a sheaf of family trees and, separately, photographs of a woman named Wafiyya al-Rubi, Abushâdy's older sister. No one in my family ever mentioned her to me, and I always assumed that Abushâdy was an only child. But I grew up knowing several of Wafiya's children, and called them aunt and uncle when I stayed with them in Cairo. I never had a clear sense of how we were related, and I had no idea that they were my mother's first cousins. Nor did anyone give me straight answers when I asked.

Artworks in the archive

The archive contains original artworks, logos and designs that Abushâdy commissioned to illustrate his journals. Among these are a caricature of him by Edham Wanly that is reproduced as the frontispiece for *Abushâdy the Poet* (Figure 7.9), a pair of oil portraits of him and Annie painted by Muhammad Hassan when he was studying at London's Central School of Arts and Crafts,⁵³ and a pencil sketch of young Safeya by Sha'ban Zaki. There are also small paintings by Seif Wanly and original fine-line drawings by the poet and calligrapher Sayyid Ibrahim. When I first saw them reproduced in the pages of *Apollo* and in *The Bee Kingdom*, I assumed they were unsigned elements of graphic design produced by an anonymous hand. However, upon close inspection of the original drawings, which are larger than their reproductions, I found that each piece contained Ibrahim's minuscule signature.



Figure 7.9 Edham Wanly's portrait of Abushâdy reproduced in *Abushâdy the Poet* (1936) (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).



Figure 7.10 Masthead of *The Bee Kingdom* by Paul Beer (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

Chief among the emblems that Abushâdy employed to represent his bee-related initiatives is the masthead and logo of *The Bee Kingdom*. Signed by the artist Paul Beer (who is identified on the back of one sketch as ‘*al-Nimsawi*’ – ‘The Austrian’ – but is otherwise unknown), the illustration depicts a crowned queen bee sitting astride a throne, her arms embracing both Eastern and Western hemispheres (Figure 7.10). The image appears on letterheads and envelopes, gummed labels, lapel pins and enamel-inlaid medallions commissioned by Abushâdy from the preeminent silver workshop Mappin & Webb in London, as well as from craftsmen in Cairo.

A fine ink caricature by the Alexandrian cartoonist Mohamed Fridon best sums up Abushâdy’s multicultural and interdisciplinary tendencies (Figure 7.11).⁵⁴ Originally featured in Abushâdy’s *Mukhtarat al-wahy al-‘am* 1928, it was widely reproduced by Abushâdy in the 1930s to illustrate the advertisements he placed to promote his own projects on the back pages of his magazines.⁵⁵ The drawing may well have been a commission; I found the original framed on a wall in Safeya’s study. It depicts a bespectacled Abushâdy with his signature toothbrush moustache. His torso is a detailed rendering of a microscope from which extends elongated arms and legs; his bare feet cradle an inkwell and his right hand brandishes a quill pen. He composes a line of text in an open notebook that floats in the air before him, writing from right to left (hence, in Arabic). Between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand, he holds a gigantic honeybee; above the bee, flanked by cherubs, is a treble clef and bar of music. It shows Abushâdy as a many-faceted creature, a romantic idealist that bridged mediums and disciplines, who lived by the credo that neither poetry nor art nor science – nor nations and cultures – can develop and blossom in isolation.

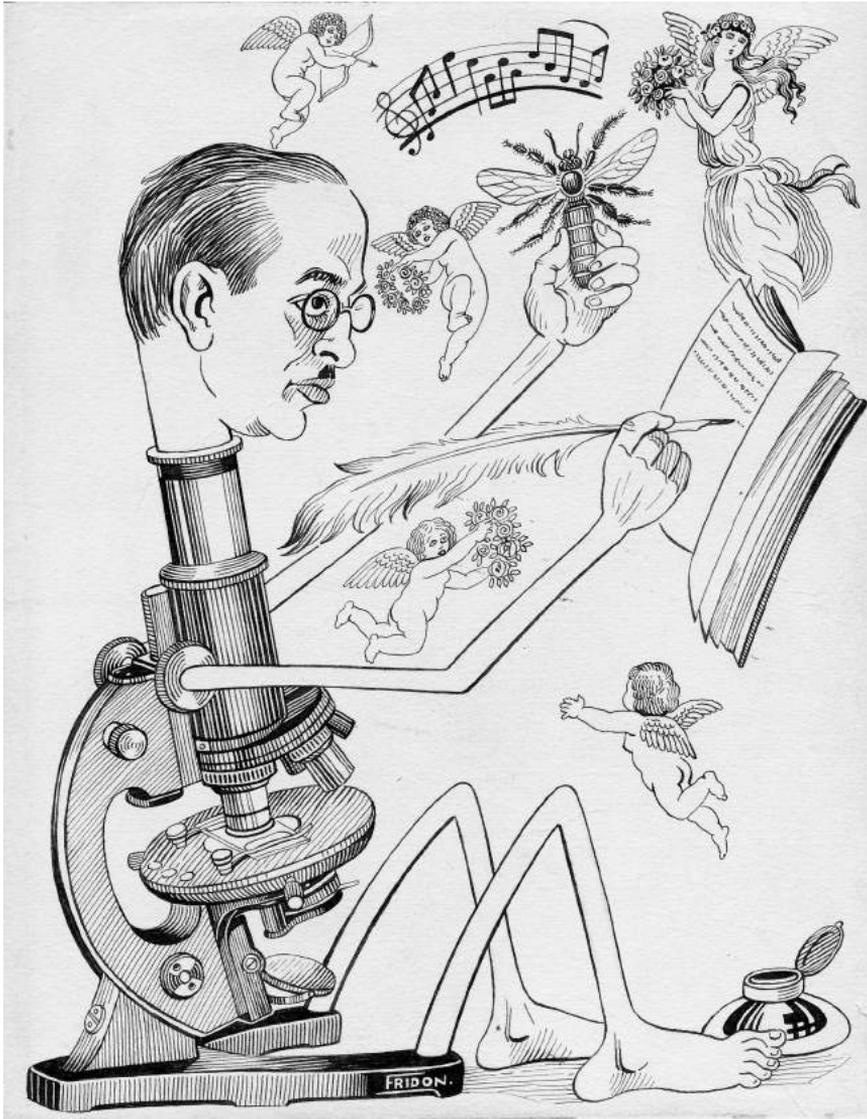


Figure 7.11 Caricature of Abushâdy by Mohamed Fridon, c.1928 (Courtesy of the Abushâdy Archive).

Notes

- 1 Opening lines from Abushâdy's poem 'In the Stillness of the Dark,' translated by Badawi, *Critical Introduction*, 120.

- 2 While 'Abu Shadi' is the correct English transliteration for my grandfather's surname, for the purposes of this chapter and related writings, I have kept the family spelling as well as the Ottoman 'ā' that my grandfather favoured.
- 3 See, for instance, Kendall, *Literature, Journalism and the Avant-Garde*, 48–51; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 131–2.
- 4 Seif Wanly (1906–1979) and his brother Edham Wanly (1908–1959) were born in Alexandria at the palace of Irfan Pasha in Muharram Bey. Their uncles were the brothers Husni and Sulayman Najib (1892–1955), whose father was the writer Mustafa Najib and maternal uncle was Ahmad Ziwār Pasha (1864–1945), Egyptian prime minister from 1924 to 1926. Sulayman was a famous comedic film and theatre actor and head of Cairo's Royal Opera House. The Wanly brothers studied painting together at the studio of Arturo Zanieri and later with Ottorino Bicchi (1878–1949), an Italian painter from Livorno who opened a studio in Alexandria. The Wanly brothers influenced one another and developed similar styles. They became fixtures of the art scene in Alexandria from the 1940s until the late 1960s, introducing European modernist tropes and breaking away from traditional folk motifs. They painted everyday life, café scenes, portraits and landscapes. Together they participated in more than seventeen exhibitions, including the Venice and Sao-Paolo Biennales. In the 1940s, they opened their own studio with the help of Muhammad Bayumi, the pioneer of Egyptian cinema. Seif used his first name to sign his paintings while Edham signed his work 'Wanly'. During the 1950s, the brothers travelled regularly to Europe where they sketched and painted scenes of ballet, the circus, opera and theatre. When sculptor Ahmad Osman (1907–1970) established the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria in 1957, Seif was appointed Professor of Painting. An entire floor of the Mahmoud Said Museum in Alexandria is dedicated to their work. Abaza, *Twentieth-Century Egyptian Art*, 215–16.
- 5 Mustafa Badawi describes Abushady's relationship to Mutran as that of 'disciple' (Badawi, *Critical Introduction*, 115).
- 6 Pieced together from conversations with Safeya Abushady and Robin Ostle.
- 7 LMSSA (Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery of the Society of Apothecaries), graduated 1915.
- 8 Abushady, 'Obituary', 44.
- 9 Marashi, 'Imagining Hafez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932'.
- 10 Dalachanis, 'Internationalism vs. Nationalism', 332.
- 11 *The Times of India*, 2016.
- 12 Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 40.
- 13 Duffield, 'Dusé Mohamed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism, 1866–1945', 478–9.
- 14 The National Archives, FO 371/2355/15047, February 1915, 'Dusé Mohamed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism, 1866–1945'. My thanks to Robert Vitalis for bringing this to my attention which clarifies the authorship of the verses, a point which Duffield misread.
- 15 Birchall, *Co-op*, 1994.
- 16 Harker, *Blazing the Trail*, 38.
- 17 Gardner, 'The Suppression of Samuel Bamford's Peterloo Poems'.
- 18 Wadei Philistin and Mohammed Mustafa Badawi attended Alexandria University (then Faruq University) with Safeya Abushady, with whom they remained lifelong friends. Philistin went on to become a well-connected journalist and editor, working for *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Muqattam*, and author and translator of over forty books in

literature, economics, biography, politics and journalism. Between 1948 and 1957, he taught journalism at the American University in Cairo. Badawi became a scholar of English and Arabic literature and a Fellow of St. Antony's College (1967–2012) at Oxford University, where he was the first lecturer in Modern Arabic at the Middle East Centre.

- 19 From correspondence and conversations with Robin Ostle, 2008–13.
- 20 Jam'iyat Apullu. *Apullu = Apollo*. Cairo, s.n., 1932–34; see also Badawi, *Critical Introduction*, 127 *passim*.
- 21 A pioneer in the art Arabic calligraphy, Sayyid Ibrahim (1897–1994) was known as a particular innovator of the art who was well known as a teacher to many students throughout the Arab world. See Bibliotheca Alexandrina (<https://www.bibalex.org/en/News/Details?DocumentID=4959&Keywords=>).
- 22 Sha'ban Zaki (1899–1968) was a self-taught Egyptian artist known for his paintings of Egyptian everyday life. From a lower middle-class family of government employees, he worked in a railway station and studied art by correspondence with an institution in Chicago. He became involved in the local art scene in the 1920–40s and was a close friend to many luminaries of his time like the poet Hafiz Ibrahim. Abaza, *Twentieth-Century Egyptian Art*, 216.
- 23 Mustafa Sadiq al-Rafi'i (1880–1937) was a Syro-Egyptian born in Bahtim, Egypt, and was one of the most important Arab poets of the early twentieth century. He played an important role in the literary and intellectual transformation of Arabic literature, promoting a return to a classical Arabic style and working to strengthen the Islamic identity of Egypt. He composed the words to the Egyptian national anthem, 'Islami ya Misr', adopted between 1923 and 1936, and co-wrote the Tunisian national anthem. Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, 277, 412, 428.
- 24 'Abd al-Rahman Shukri (1886–1958) was born in Alexandria and studied in England at the University of Sheffield where he received his BA degree. He co-founded the Diwan school of poets with 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini but abandoned poetry after a dispute with them. Ostle, 'Three Egyptian Poets'.
- 25 Born in Damietta, Hasan Kamil al-Sayrafi (1908–1984) worked as an editor of the Egyptian journal *al-Majalla*. A member of the Apollo Society, frequent contributor to *Apollo* and one of Abushâdy's staunchest allies, his poetry has been characterized as melancholic and romantic. Interest in his poetry was rekindled in Egyptian literary circles in the 1980s. Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia*, 696.
- 26 Abul-Qasim Al-Shabbi (1909–1934) was a Tunisian poet best known for 'The Will to Live', the poem he wrote in opposition to French colonial rule, which became the final verses of the National Anthem of Tunisia, 'Humat al-Hima' ('Defenders of the Homeland'). *Apollo* was the first literary journal to publish his poetry (Speight, 'A Modern Tunisian Poet'). During the 2011 Arab Spring, his poem 'To the Tyrants of the World' was circulated and chanted at demonstrations in Tunisia and later in Egypt.
- 27 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad (1889–1964) was a prolific Egyptian writer, journalist, poet, literary critic and polymath. Founder of the Diwan school of poetry with 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini and 'Abd al-Rahman Shukri, al-'Aqqad positioned himself as the intellectual and creative leader of the modern Arabic poetry movement and was a vigorous critic of Abushâdy and the Apollo Society (Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, 88–95).
- 28 Badawi, *Critical Introduction*, 66–71.
- 29 Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb*, 71

- 30 Toth, *Sayyid Qutb*, 23–4.
- 31 Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb*, 70.
- 32 The term applied to Abushâdy in the biography by Harker, *Blazing the Trail*.
- 33 Aziz Suryal Atiya (1898–1988) was an Egyptian scholar of Coptic history and Islamic and Crusades studies. He founded the Institute of Coptic Studies in Cairo in 1954, and in 1960 he founded the Middle East Center at the University of Utah, which houses the Aziz Atiya Library for Middle East Studies, the fifth-largest such collection in North America. Atiya was a close friend of Abushâdy, and he and his wife remained close to Safeya. See ‘Biography of Dr. Aziz Atiya’ (<https://lib.utah.edu/collections/middle-east/atiya.php>).
- 34 Shadi and Zaki, *International Standardisation*.
- 35 Al-Manzalawi would later serve as a Minister of Agriculture in 1933.
- 36 Harker, *Blazing the Trail*.
- 37 Abushady, *Improvements in and Relating to Combs for Beehives*.
- 38 I was initially drawn to the collection in Aberystwyth because it held the lanternslides Abushâdy used to teach bee husbandry. There, I was given access to the Apis Club archive, which holds a wealth of documentation, including shareholders’ agreements, press clippings and photographs of famous beekeepers who became involved with the apiary. It contains fine anatomical drawings of bees, a series of botanical drawings of enlarged pollen grains and mock-ups for different *Bee World* covers. There are a few exceptionally evocative items, such as a diagram in Abushâdy’s hand that maps out his plan (unrealized) for a public bee library. Unfortunately, I never got to see the lanternslides. After repeated cancellations and vague excuses, I was forced to give up. I still wonder if the boxes are lost, or locked in a dark cupboard in that vast neoclassical building.
- 39 Joy Garnett, ‘Blazing the Trail’.
- 40 At time of writing, IBRA is celebrating its centenary with a special issue of the journal that charts its development since it was founded: see Brodschneider, ‘Around the Bee World in 100 Years’, 33–33; Richard Jones et al., ‘Bee World – The First Hundred Years’, 34–9.
- 41 *Mamlakat al-nahl*, 1930–40.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 A renowned writer on bees and beekeeping, Eva Crane (1912–2007) established the Bee Research Association (BRA) in 1949 (later IBRA) and served as editor of *Bee World* from 1949 until 1984. In 1954, one year before Abushâdy’s death, Crane visited him in his Upper East Side apartment where he gave her a menu from a recent dinner in his honour at the Waldorf Astoria celebrating the publication of his diwan *Min as-sama* (‘From the Heavens’, 1949). Crane later reported that during a visit to Egypt to meet beekeepers in 1978, she learned that the Bee Kingdom League was still active and met several members who took her to their former headquarters, Abushâdy’s old house in Rue Menasce in Alexandria. Later, in Cairo, she attended one of their meetings. It was quite an extraordinary experience, she said, for these old men treated her, the editor of *Bee World*, as if she were the living incarnation of Abushâdy: ‘In Egypt, you know, the living and the dead are almost equally present.’ (Letter of David Blair to Safeya Abushâdy, 30 January 1987).
- 44 Ostle, ‘Modern Egyptian Renaissance Man’, 184–92.
- 45 Jayyusi, ‘A Short Account of Abu Shadi’s Life in the United States’, 36–47.
- 46 Ibid.

- 47 Born in Turkey, 1911, of Turkish and German parentage, Adham spent part of his life in Egypt, where he invented for himself doctorates in physics and philosophy from Russian universities and elevated positions in Russian academia. On moving to Egypt, he became a prolific writer of literary and pseudoscientific works and gained considerable notoriety as an avowed atheist. He committed suicide in 1940, aged 29 (Juynboll, 'Ismail Ahmad Adham', 54–6, 63).
- 48 Edham, *Abushâdy the Poet*.
- 49 Juynboll, 'Ismail Ahmad Adham'.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Harker, *Blazing the Trail*.
- 52 Copies of both books can be found in major public and university libraries, including the New York Public Library, the British Library, National Library of Wales, Bibliothèque Nationale, National Library of Israel, Harvard Library and, of course, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Leipzig. All copies seen have been inscribed with 'compliments of' and seem to have been donated to these libraries either by Edham or Abushâdy himself.
- 53 Muhammad Hassan (1892–1961) taught at the School of Arts and Crafts in Bulaq before being awarded a two-year scholarship from the Egyptian government to study painting and design at London's Central School of Arts and Crafts (1917–18), during which time he met Abushâdy and Annie Bamford and painted their portraits in oil. He returned to Egypt in 1919 after earning his certificate and taught at the School of Egyptian Arts and Decoration in Cairo. Later appointed Director of the Egyptian Academy of Arts in Rome, he returned to Egypt to become the Director of the Fine Arts Museum in Alexandria until his death in December 1961.
- 54 A friend of Abushâdy's, Fridon is otherwise unknown (conversation with Safeya, 2008).
- 55 Ostle, 'Modern Egyptian Renaissance Man', 190–2.

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