

Representations of the Affect Scripts in Yussef El-Guindi's *Hotter Than Egypt*^(*)

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Abstract

This paper uniquely explores the scenes depicting couples' relationships in Yussef El-Guindi's *Hotter Than Egypt* (2023). It delves into the scripts of affects, shedding light on 'the death of the subject' as a stable self. The study uncovers the role of affects in motivating, guiding, and amplifying the intensity and quality of emotional behaviours, drawing from Silvan S. Tomkins's affect-script theory. This novel approach to affect-script reading of the play underscores the importance of the affective turn as a lens for the literary analysis of characters and the narrative events. It represents the bodily experience as a site of resistance alongside other experiences, such as thoughts and words. Moreover, representing affects as motivators, guides, and units of scripts of the human personality and behaviour in *Hotter Than Egypt* enrich the deconstructionist and poststructuralist trajectory of representing the concept of the subject and subjectivity. This approach highlights the affective experiences and their scripts as an interpretation and motivating model, aiding in understanding the ups and downs of couples' lives in *Hotter Than Egypt*.

Keywords: Affective turn, positive affects, *Hotter Than Egypt*, Silvan Tomkins, scripts, Yussef El-Guindi

^(*) Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Volume 84, Issue 6, July 2024

تمثيل نصوص التحول الانفعالي في مسرحية أكثر سخونة من مصر ليوسف الجندي

المستخلص

هذه الورقة البحثية تُغوص في تحليل المشاهد التي تتناول علاقات الأزواج ضمن مسرحية "أكثر سخونة من مصر" (الصادرة عام ٢٠٢٣) والتي ألفها الكاتب المسرحي يوسف الجندي. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف "نصوص الانفعالات" التي تبرز مفهوم "موت الذات" كمفهوم للذات الثابتة والمستقرة. وفي سبيل تحقيق هذا الهدف، تكشف الدراسة النقاب عن الدور الجوهرى الذي تلعبه الانفعالات في تحفيز وتوجيه وتضخيم حدة ونوعية السلوكيات العاطفية التي يعرضها الأزواج في المسرحية. وتعتمد الدراسة في تحليلها على نظرية "نصوص الانفعالات" التي ابتكرها العالم سيلفان تومكينز. إن قراءة المسرحية من خلال عدسة نظرية نصوص الانفعالات تسلط الضوء على أهمية "التحول الانفعالي" كأداة فعالة لتحليل الشخصيات والأحداث السردية في الأعمال الأدبية. علاوة على ذلك، فإن هذا التحول يسلط الضوء على أهمية التجربة الجسدية كموقع للمقاومة، إلى جانب التجارب الأخرى التي يخوضها الإنسان مثل الأفكار والكلمات..

علاوة على ذلك، فإن تصوير الانفعالات على أنها عوامل تحفيز وإرشادات ووحدات أساسية تشكل "نصوص الشخصية الإنسانية وسلوكها" ضمن مسرحية "أكثر سخونة من مصر" يعزز المسار التفكيكي وما بعد البنيوية في تقديم مفهوم "الذات" و"الذاتية". فبدلاً من تصوير الذات على أنها مركز ثابت يصدر عنه الأفعال والأحداث، فإن هذه الدراسة تقترح أن الذاتية هي بالأحرى موقع تحدث فيه الأحداث والتجارب المختلفة، بما في ذلك التجارب الانفعالية ونصوصها التي تفسر وتحفز تلك الأحداث والتجارب. وبالتالي، فإن تسليط الضوء على التجارب الانفعالية ونصوصها يساعدنا على فهم التقلبات والتعقيدات التي تشهدها حياة الأزواج في مسرحية أكثر سخونة من مصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحول الانفعالي، الانفعالات الإيجابية، أكثر سخونة من مصر،

سيلفان تومكينز، يوسف الجندي

1- Introduction

Literary representation of affects should be more noticed. While plot, character development, and themes are usually the focus of literary analysis, how authors represent affects can provide deep insights into the human condition and enrich our understanding of the text. Besides, in postmodernist literature, the linguistic turn, the aesthetic form, and experimentation are highlighted features, but the affective turn is not. In the general critical consensus, postmodernist literature tends to be tonally and therefore-affectively cold (Smith, 2011). Additionally, in psychological approaches to literature, affects have been overlooked as the primary motivator of human emotional behaviour. Instead, drives have been represented as responsible for human emotional behaviours, influencing their decisions and ways of life (Frank & Wilson, 2020).

This leads to the importance of the intersection between affect theory and literature. The intersectionality of literary studies with affect theory contributes to the debates about representation. With 'the death of the subject' and a generalised critique of "all forms of Presence" in deconstruction and post-structuralism, the turn to affect is foregrounded with the question of representation in literary studies (Thomassen, 2017). As Claire Colebrook (2005) points out, the epistemological concern with representation was taken as the "condition of finitude" of the subject (2), by which the human gives up access to things in themselves to think the representational limits of knowledge (Kant, 1987). In *What is Philosophy?* Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's explanation of affects as autonomous beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds reflect the agency for affects: "Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them." (1994, p. 164). Moreover, Silvan Tomkins states that their strength is related to their role in creating the plot of life. In this respect, Tomkins' affect theory emphasises the deconstructionist concept of 'the death of the subject' in this context. This perspective is a philosophical concept that emerged in the mid-20th century, primarily influenced by French intellectuals like Jacques Derrida. This represents a shift from the traditional notion of a fixed, rational individual or subject as the central focus of philosophical inquiry.

Tomkins (1911-1991), a psychologist and a playwright, introduced the concept of affect theory in his book *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (2008). Tomkins used the term affect to refer to the biological portion of emotion. As a system, it encompasses the innate, automatically set and hereditary processes within us. These are mechanisms that we are born with, encoded in our genes, and operate without us having to learn or consciously control them. They are part of our biological makeup and influence our behaviours, reactions, and functions. When triggered, these mechanisms set off an analogy to a recognised sequence of biological occurrences that form the basis of our emotional experiences. Examples include instinctual behaviours, physical growth patterns, or inherent survival responses. Some critical aspects of his theory that will be discussed in detail are universal affect programs, affect-drive relationships, affect amplifications, psychological magnification, facial and voice expressions, and affects as primary motivations of human behaviour.

Tomkins posits that our emotional experiences are grounded in physiologically defined affect programmes, per his concept of affect. Tomkins' scholarly contributions to affect theory are intricately connected to the notion of universal affect programmes. These programmes function autonomously, without reliance on conscious cognition or external conditions. They establish the basis for our emotional reactions. According to Tomkins, some universal affect programmes exhibit similarities across all cultures and animals. A range of emotions, such as fear, joy, rage, sadness, disgust, surprise, and anticipation, are encompassed within these programmes. Every individual programme exhibits a unique combination of physiological and behavioural reactions. The affect theory proposed by Tomkins offers valuable insights into the biological foundations of emotions and their influence on our motivations and experiences.

In *Hotter Than Egypt*, El Guindi explores the complex relationships and emotions experienced by two couples from the United States and Egypt. Paul and Jean, a couple from the United States, undertake a voyage to Cairo in observance of their 24th wedding anniversary. Paul, a wealthy businessperson working in Egypt, is accompanied by his uninterested partner, Jean, who is starting her first trip there. The tour guides, Seif and Maha, are encountered by the people who are an Egyptian couple facing

challenges in meeting their fundamental needs while simultaneously providing tours to Western tourists. *In John Moore's interview with El Guindi about this play, the latter explains why the increase in passive affects impacts couples' lives. In a marital relationship, one desires to be treated with respect, have a sense of security, perceive a certain level of equality, and experience a sense of being acknowledged. However, occasionally, inside marital relationships, we feel unnoticed.* That is especially true of the American wife, Jean. At one point, she says she feels like a ghost in her marriage. (Summit Spotlight_ Yussef El Guindi, *Hotter Than Egypt* - Denver Center for the Performing Arts, n.d). In this respect, *Hotter Than Egypt* is a captivating play that delves into the complexities of couple relationships. Their two Egyptian tour guides, Maha and Seif, become entangled in the couple's predicament while they are stuck in the intense heat of Cairo. Based on the interview mentioned above, this paper seeks to answer two main questions: First, what are the primary affects manifest in the play? Second, how are they represented thematically and aesthetically as scripts of Paul-Jean and Maha-Seif's relationships as couples? Answering these two questions explores the impact of primary affects on interpersonal communication and intimacy.

2-

Review of Literature

This paper's literature review is mainly concerned with the affective turn in cultural studies, The Tomkins concept of the affective analysis and a review of previous analyses of El-Guindi's plays. The affective turn refers to a shift in various disciplines, particularly the humanities and social sciences, toward focusing emotions, affects, and feelings as essential aspects of human experience and understanding. The affective turn gained momentum in the late 20th century and early 21st century. While it is challenging to pinpoint a specific date for such a conceptual shift, it is generally associated with the work of scholars such as Brian Massumi, Adam Frank and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995), who explored the significance of affect and emotion in fields like cultural studies, philosophy, and literary theory during the 1990s and early 2000s. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the affective turn is a continuous intellectual movement rather than a solitary event with a clear beginning. Scholars such as Brian

Massumi and Sianne Ngai have examined the affective turn in cultural studies. Massumi (1995) and Ngai (2004) emphasise the pre-linguistic and physiological origin of affect. In this manner, affect questions the supremacy of language forces and reason in the representation process, undermines established meanings, and encourages a more flexible and physical involvement.

Tomkins' affect theory is similar to many theories of emotion (Ekman, 1992; Plutchik, 1980, 1991). However, what is distinctive in Tomkins' affect theory are scenes and scripts, the amplificatory relation between drives and affects, and the binary structure of affects). In his theory, innate affects are responsible for motivation, guidance, experiences of good and evil, and the intensity and quality of human behavior and personality. Tomkins's proposition posits the presence of a finite set of universal "affect programmes" or fundamental emotions. The affect mentioned above programmes are inherently activated reactions that function autonomously from external stimuli or cognitive mechanisms (*Tomkins Institute » Nine Affects, Present at Birth, Combine with Life Experience to Form Emotion and Personality*, n.d.).

Tomkins' binary structure of nine innate affects, the biological responses to a stimulus that form the basis of emotions, mainly manifests in the play's scenes and dialogues. This binary structure affirms that although innate affects are universal, affective experience leads to differential magnification of affects, leading to various affect scripts and different patterns of human personality. In this respect, Tomkins's binary structure of innate affects resonates with the deconstructivist goal that challenges the traditional notions of a stable meaning and an objective reality.

El Guindi (1960) is a Muslim Egyptian-American author, a distinctive voice in the third generation of Arab Americans. His writing style distinguishes him from his peers due to his distinctive combination of sarcasm and comedy when addressing weighty topics. He skillfully integrates the personal and the political, as seen in an interview where he was questioned about the convergence of the personal and the political. This intriguing style is a hallmark of his work. Most of his works focus on Arab-Americans' experiences as immigrants who try to blend in with the mainstream of American

society, such as *Pilgrims Musa* and *Sheri in the New World* (Abdelsalam, 2023; Schiavini, C. 2021). But in this paper, the selected play, *Hotter Than Egypt* (2023), is more concerned with the interpersonal relationships that public events, such as tourism, the relationship between tourists and locals, and the Egyptian Revolution of 25 Jan, can be backdrops of the private lives of the couples, Maha-Seif and Paul-Jean. Moreover, this play has no studies like his other plays. So, it is worth examining and adding a new scope to El-Gunidi's writings. Moreover, selecting this play highlights the importance of Tomkins' affect theory, which focuses on subjective experiences and the intersection between psychology and literature. This intersection reflects on universal problems such as the ups and downs of married life.

Hotter Than Egypt has two types of innate effects: positive and passive. The positive one is represented by the Egyptian couple, Maha and Seif, and the second is represented by the American one, Paul and Jean. In terms of affect-script theory, from the beginning of the play, their passive affects function as a predictive power, helping the reader anticipate a tragic end to their married life. While the Egyptian couple, with their different views, the playwright pays readers' attention to their love for each other. So, the readers can anticipate the transformation of some passive affects to positive ones between them and their attempts to maximise the positive affects through experiencing mutual interest-excitement and joy-enjoyment as motivations to reward the positive affective experiences. Moreover, this play explores themes of loyalty, attraction, and cultural differences against Egypt's political and religious realities. As the characters navigate their desires and personal revelations, the scorching heat of Cairo mirrors the intensity of their affects and emotions. Through sharp dialogue and vivid storytelling, *Hotter Than Egypt* invites audiences to contemplate the universal challenges couples face, regardless of their origins or backgrounds.

3. Methods and Materials

This paper explores the intersection of Tomkins' affect theory with the representations of the affective turn and the nature of representation as mediation in the context of *Hotter Than Egypt*. The focus is on the debate about representation as a form of mediation where affect is an encounter between two

ends, rejecting the traditional concept of representation limited to the subject and forms of presence (Moyano Ariza, 2020). The importance of an interdisciplinary approach and the affective turn in understanding the role of affects as forces to change and impact married life is highlighted. This study is divided into the affect system structure and affective aesthetics.

I/The Structure of Affect System

The binary structure of these nine innate affects is interest-excitement, the positive affect of curiosity, and engagement. In the play, this affect is generally shown by the characters' desire to learn about each other's cultures, histories, and personal stories. Enjoyment-joy refers to the favourable outcome resulting from feelings of contentment and happiness. The drama conveys this emotion through the characters' instances of mirth, closeness, and admiration. Distress-Anguish refers to the adverse emotional response caused by pain and suffering. Within the play, the characters' encounters with loss, remorse, regret, loneliness, dread, and the detrimental consequences of threat and peril evoke this emotional impact. The drama elicits an emotional response because of the brutality and volatility of the Egyptian Revolution, together with the individual struggles and uncertainties experienced by the protagonists. Anger-rage refers to the adverse emotional response caused by frustration and hostility. The play demonstrates this impact through the characters' disputes, animosities, allegations, and their unwillingness to adapt and reach a middle ground. Disgust refers to the adverse emotional response caused by rejection and revulsion. The play depicts this impact through the characters' biases, preconceived notions, and evaluations of one another and their discontent with their own selves and existence. Aversion and avoidance can have a detrimental impact on individuals. Within the play, the characters' endeavours to evade or disregard their issues are exemplified through actions such as consuming alcohol, fabricating falsehoods, or departing. Shame-humiliation refers to the adverse emotional impact caused by feelings of humiliation and self-consciousness, as explained by Tomkins (2014). In this respect, the play portrays the characters' insecurities, vulnerabilities, regrets, and longing for validation and acceptance as manifestations of these innate affects.

a- The Affective Quality of Shame-Humiliation Experience

Tomkins' affect theory posits that shame is among the nine inherent affects that, combined with life experience, contribute to developing emotion and personality. A heightened and swift surge in brain activity elicits shame. It arises when there is an incomplete reduction in positive affect, indicating that positive affect is paused but not entirely halted (2014). Jean might feel shame and humiliation due to Paul's criticism, affecting her self-esteem and perception. In scene one, a dialogue is between Jean and Paul. She wears a bikini and does not change it. She is excited and happy about her experience in the pool in the hot weather. Nevertheless, Paul tries to let her understand that this is inappropriate clothing in Egypt after swimming. According to Tomkins, the scene is composed of the stimulus that can be respecting customs in Egypt, and the shame affect is an outcome. The response is Jean's emotion of embarrassment and changing her clothes. In this dialogue, the aside shows Jeans' bodily experience when she feels embarrassed.

PAUL: Following the traditions of a country, yeah?

JEAN: I was at the pool. What am I going to wear, a coat?

PAUL: Well, the women here do wear like full-on outfits when they go swimming. (Jean will move the towel from her waist to wrap around her chest.)

MAHA: Not all women.

PAUL: I didn't see one bikini last time I was at an Egyptian beach. Not even one-piece suits. (El Guindi, 2023, pp. 7–9)

This dialogue is an extended conversation between Jean, Paul, Seif and Maha. Paul mentions that he saw no bikinis on an Egyptian beach, not even one-piece suits. This could be interpreted as a cultural difference in swimwear preferences. According to Tomkins' affect theory, shame is an affect that occurs when positive affect is incompletely reduced. In the context of the conversation, women in Egypt may wear full-on outfits while swimming due to cultural norms and expectations. If a woman were to wear a bikini or a one-piece suit, it could be perceived as a violation of these norms, leading to shame. In Arabic, Seif comments on Jean's behaviour: "It's amazing she

feels no shame walking around like that.” (El-Guindi, 2023, p.9). In this respect, the Universal affects play a crucial role within this scene. So, when Jean stays wearing a bikini after coming out of the pool, Paul inhibits Jean’s joy-enjoyment and triggers her shame, influencing the scripts of their interpersonal relationships.

In summary, El-Guindi’s work highlights the innate nature of affect programs and their impact on our emotional lives. These programs provide a lens through which we understand our motivations, reactions, and the universal aspects of human emotion. Unlike purely stimulus-response models, Tomkins emphasized the affective quality of experiences. These affective experiences enable us to store, retrieve, and draw conclusions from our encounters.

b-The Affective Quality of Distress-anguish Experience

At the beginning of the play, in scene 1, Paul rebukes her for wearing a bikini after coming out of the pool, gesturing her disrespect to the Egyptian culture that the bikini is not known in public. Here, Paul activates a passive affect, shame-humiliation. Such an affect impacts Jean’s feelings towards Paul, driving her to a distress-anguish affect in scene 2. In this boat scene, Jean cries when Paul tries to activate the interest-excitement affect. Again, she refuses his motions when he tries to take a photo with her to express his interest. She also cries when the boatman cannot take a photo of them and claims that “he is staring” (El-Guindi, 2023, p. 23).

According to Tomkins, interconnected scenes lead to psychological magnification. She cries twice for activating two different passive affects. One is distress-anguish because of her sense of shame-humiliation. That is why she cries. In this case, this combination of Jean’s passive affects from these interconnected scenes turns into psychological magnification and forms a script that interprets the lack of intimacy between Paul and her. Another feature of this script is changeability. Jean tries to change the affect script of her life and turns these passive affects into positive ones such as interest- excitement, and joy-enjoyment. So, at the end of the play, in the boat scene, she, without Paul, avoids being aggressive with the boatman. She disillusions herself of anger-rage affect and her affect of anticipation that he was “staring” at her.

In this respect, one criticism of Tomkins' affect theory is the oversimplification of emotions. However, relating affect theory with script theory gives reason for not accepting this claim. In his script theory, he explains that affect is the unit of analysis of a scene and the primary motivation of the individual's emotional behavior. Moreover, in an interview, El-Guindi explains that his use of The Egyptian Revolution is a backdrop of interpersonal relations in *Hotter Than Egypt* (Summit Spotlight_ Yussef El Guindi, *Hotter Than Egypt* - Denver Center for the Performing Arts, n.d.).

Likewise, the positive affects script of Maha and Saif's narrative is changing and dynamic. Although they love each other, the socio-economic conditions impact their emotional behaviour, as their affect script shows. However, the increase of positive affects in their relationship controls passive affects, such as anger-rage, to be amplified and turned into psychological magnification. So, again, they have a different narrative that intensifies positive affects such as interest-excitement and joy-enjoyment. They have a shared interest in the quest to change their lives. Both of them agree to stay in Egypt, challenging the socio-economic conditions and fighting for a better life, affirming El-Guindi's perspective that the personal is political.

c-The Affective Quality of Facial Expressions: An Organ of Affective Motivation

Tomkins emphasized the importance of facial expressions in understanding and studying affects. Facial expressions contribute to our understanding of facial expressions' universality and cultural variability. In *A Silvan Tomkins Handbook, Foundations for Affect Theory*, Adam J. Frank and Elizabeth Wilson explain that affect is not a singular 'hardwired event' but includes other components, such as the face as the primary organ of affective motivation (2020). In the boat scene, Jean's crying is the affective motivation of distress, so her husband asks the boatman to return. In the museum scene, Jean recalls her distress-anguish affect by crying while on a tour with Seif.

As a result of a magnified set of scenes laden with distress that Jean faces, she decides to form her script to interpret Paul's disloyalty toward her and his love relationship with Maha. So, she makes up a seduction scene, trying to seduce Seif. Nevertheless, Seif proves his

loyalty and love for Maha. He clarifies this by telling her, "I love my fiancé." (El-Guindi, 2023, p. 60). In this respect, this scene helps Jean be sure that love and loyalty are the emotional responses to any seduction and that love activates positive affects. That is why, at the beginning of the play, Jean asks Paul if he still loves her.

d- the Affective Quality of Emotional Motivation:

Affect programmes serve as the principal drivers behind our activities. They influence our actions to favour positive emotional experiences and avoid negative ones. In this way, they can assess experiences. Besides, they motivate us, making things urgent and driving our actions. When they act as motivators, the biological response momentarily attaches meaning to the stimulus we encounter. As for the intensity and quality of affects, the affect system responds to changes in the intensity and quality of experience as an organism moves through time and space. So, the affect system is influenced by various factors, including environmental stimuli, physiological changes, cognitive processes, and interpersonal interactions. As an organism moves through different environments and situations, the affect system continuously evaluates and responds to the emotional significance of these experiences. In an intimate scene, for example, Paul's motions as a bodily experience trigger the interest-excitement affect towards Jean. However, the intensity of this affect decreases when she rejects and refuses to respond to such positive affects and emotions of love. In this way, the affect becomes negative in quality, Playing the role of guidance that motivates Jean to feel bad and avoid this experience.

e- Amplificatory Relation between drivers and affects

Tomkins' affect theory is mainly concerned with affects and how they work, influencing the human personality and ways of life. He explains that affects and not drives are the primary motivators for human behaviour, making a drive state urgent. In a sense, understanding human motivation involves exploring these affective responses. Tomkins regards the affect system as the bridge between physiological events and our conscious awareness (2008, vol. 3). It converts physiological data into conscious data (Tomkins Institute » Nine Affects, Present at Birth, Combine with Life Experience to Form Emotion and Personality, n.d.). In this respect, in the play, lack of

interest-excitement affects Paul-Jean relationship and has an impact on the sex drive. About the sex drive, Paul informs Jean of not having “a healthy sex drive” (El-Guindi, 2023, PP 1-3-7). He adds, “Not physically, but I feel it” (El-Guindi, 2023, PP 1-3-11). In this quote, Paul complains about Jean’s lack of a positive affective experience and of amplifying the intensity of the interest-excitement affect as a motivation for the sex drive.

e.1. Scenes

Tomkins uses a dramaturgic model of psychology that highlights the importance of drama as a literary genre in interpreting the human personality. He extended his affect theory to include the concept of scenes. Like a scene in the drama, it happens with “a perceived beginning and end” (3:83). A scene consists of three components: stimulus, the external event or situation; affect, the emotional response triggered by the stimulus; and response, our behavioural reaction to the stimulus. A basic unit of the affective experience includes at least one affect and an object of that affect (3:47). Every single scene features an affective amplification. Besides, the interconnected scenes in the individual’s life combine to form scripts that predict, interpret, respond, and control one’s life (3:83).

e.2 Scripts

Scripts characterised by what Tomkins calls psychological magnification are “the phenomena of connecting one affect-laden scene with another affect-laden scene” (3:83). Tomkins’ script theory posits that a script is a set of rules for evaluating, interpreting, and predicting life’s events. Furthermore, he explains that the primary innate affects are the central units in these scripts and the unit of analysis in the individual’s life scenes. These scenes form the building blocks of our interactions with the world. For more celebrations of scenes and scripts as a feature of affect theory, this paper examines El Guindi’s couples’ scenes in *Hotter Than Egypt* (2023) to evaluate to what extent the amplification of an affect in a single scene can explore the personality traits of El Guindi’s characters. For example, Jean’s sense of shame uncovers her self-consciousness. She blames her husband for embarrassing her because she is wearing a bikini. In reaction to her, Paul describes her as self-conscious. In summary, universal affect programs, such as shame-humiliation affect, are the

main components of scripts that play a crucial role in predicting the personalities of El-Guindi's characters.

On the other hand, the play's narrative structure also significantly represents affective aesthetics. It highlights affects' roles as predictive power and interpretation models. The title of the play, metaphors, and symbols help reflect such use.

II-Affective aesthetics

a. Affective aesthetics as a predictive power

As a result of "a magnified set of scenes," Tomkins explains that affects programs and scripts allow us to predict and explain human behaviour. By recognizing interconnected scenes, we can anticipate how individuals will respond to various situations (2008, vol. 3). For example, El-Guindi's use of affective aesthetics, such as the play's title, *Hotter Than Egypt*, can be a predictive power of the later scenes of passive affects and lack of intimacy. Paul tells Jean this phrase when he expresses how she was attractive to him when she was young. In this way, he tries to activate her interest-excitement affect. However, she decreases the intensity of this affect when she says: "But not so much now," and when she knows he is disloyal to her and loves Maha (El-Guindi, 2023, p36).

Another affective aesthetic is the playwright's notes about the scenes. These notes predict the intensity and ratio of positive-passive affects. For example, scene 3 could be the climax of the play and a description of the extent to which Jean-Paul's relationship is intimate. In a note, El Guindi explains that the dispute between Paul and Jean does not get "too heated. Animated, yes, and certainly there is a moment when Jean lets loose". They have no intention of being harmful (again, outside of a moment or two). "It's just that what they're saying ends up being hurtful/ painful." (El-Guindi, 2023, p2). In this way, in scene 3, the quality of this dominating affect, distress-anguish, is passive but not too intensive.

b-Affective Aesthetics as a Model of Interpretation

b. 1 The Ghost Image: A Subtext and an Inner Life

Jean's affective experience after being shocked by Paul's disloyalty to her drives her to memorize and interpret what upsets her. In her dialogue with Seif, she informs him about

“ghosts” that are alive. These living ghosts are her obligations to her family when she has decided to stay home to care for them. Now she concludes, “I can look back I think: . . .what a waste”. She implicitly reveals that she is ending her shame about her needs because they are obstacles to their children’s goals (El-Guindi, 2023, p. 59). In this respect, Jean’s monologue or confession contains underlying subtext and unspoken thoughts or desires. She tries to explore the subtext and unspoken thoughts or desires and delve into her inner life to convey the depth of her emotions. By internalizing Jean’s thoughts and conflicts, the actor can communicate the emotional complexity beneath the surface, adding depth and resonance to the performance.

b.2 Use of Silence and pauses

Sometimes, it is not the words themselves but the absence of words that evokes the affective experience of distress-anguish. El-Guindi’s strategic use of silence, pauses, or meaningful silences can convey unspoken emotions, tension or contemplation. Jean uses pauses when she talks about her married life: “It’s just that...it seems so strange lately not being able to grab onto anything that can...grab me back.” So, Jean uses pauses when she contemplates her invisible position in her marriage. She feels like a ghost in her marriage.

Moreover, the subtext, the underlying meaning beneath the surface of the dialogue, can create a sense of intrigue and emotional depth. The use of the ghost image implies her desire to communicate with her family. So, she wonders about the lack of sharing experiences, asking, “Why is that so hard?”. Then she pauses and says: “... without any contact whatsoever” (El-Guindi, 2023, p59).

b. 3 Symbols and Metaphors

The Egyptian revolution can symbolise the intensity of passive affects among her people, taking couples’ relations as an example. Maha informs Seif of the increased anger-rage affect on Mahmoud and Sally’s relationship. So, she feels an overwhelming desire to Propel Mahmoud onto the roadway. (El-Guindi, 2023, p70).

Weather conditions, such as the hot weather in Egypt, can serve as a metaphor for the range of the intensity of the character’s affects. Paul has, for example, a high level of interest-excitement

affect. So, the author uses the adjective form of hot four times in the scenes and the play's title, indicating that neural firing is the biological part of emotions. Paul uses the adjective hot when expressing how he was attractive to her when she was young. However, Jean discovers his disloyalty. A second time is when Paul wants to return to her, he humorously gives the hot weather as a reason for this disloyalty and explains that “maybe it was the heat? Can we just say blame it on the heat? Please?” (El-Guindi, 2023, p77). In this respect, Paul can be right regarding Tomkins’s perspective on the influence of the affect system with some factors, such as the environment. Another metaphor used is their journey to Egypt. It is significant in reflecting the dynamic aspect of the affect programs. They are changing and unstable. So, they went to celebrate the anniversary of their marriage. Nevertheless, the rules of their affect scripts became different, leading to the dissolution of their marriage.

4. Conclusion

This study proposes that the selection of mediation as the representation method highlights the importance of our innate emotions in generating meaning and evoking emotional responses. Affect functions as a mechanism for establishing a connection between the tangible world and our interior cognitive processes, thereby augmenting our engagements with artistic manifestations and literary compositions.

Using Tomkins’ paradigm of affects to assess thematic as well as aesthetic representation of the affective turn in *Hotter Than Egypt* is effective for two reasons: On the thematic level, affect theory provides a lens through which we understand how primary affects, such as shame-humiliation, distress-anguish, and anger-rage have an impact on the scripts of interpersonal relations among the couples in the play. Such impact shapes their personality and perception of reality. We also explore how affects as hidden forces can be predictive and interpretive powers in their decisions by using Tomkins’ script theory to analyse and interpret the script of interpersonal relations. On the aesthetic level, El-Guindi’s use of natural symbols, such as the hot weather, highlights bodily experience as the primary motivation for human emotional behaviour.

In this captivating play, El-Guindi skilfully crafts scenes that offer a window into the intricate workings of romantic relationships. The author delves into the profound impact of emotions by examining the characteristics of Jean-Paul and Maha-Seif. Throughout the play, the characters' adverse feelings, such as rage and embarrassment, transform into favourable ones, such as enthusiasm and delight. El-Guindi puts up a persuasive case for how one can either strengthen or weaken a relationship by emphasising the significance of recognising and accepting inherent feelings. This play is essential for anyone who wishes to comprehend the intricacies of romantic relationships.

In summary, the affect system is a complex system that has evolved to aid individuals in effectively navigating their environment. Emotional behaviour is a vital component that significantly influences our motives, decision-making processes, and general mental and physical well-being. The theatrical production entitled *Hotter Than Egypt* has exhibited its impact on the intricacies of romantic partnerships. Using Tomkins' affect theory as a framework to portray the combination of passive and positive emotions is appropriate in the context of a tragic-comedy. Furthermore, examining affect scripts sheds light on the interrelation between Tomkins's affect theory and literature, specifically in drama as a dramaturgical framework within psychology and psychotherapy. Furthermore, this research proposes a progressive methodology for reevaluating the literary utilisation of Sigmund Freud's concept of life drives as the principal drivers of human conduct.

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