

Secret of Love, Marriage, Sex, Genius, Success, and Happiness: Analytic View According to the Recent Scientific Studies

Naser Hegazy

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Readers will be curious about the secrets Naser Hegazy has to offer in his boldly titled *Secrets of Love, Marriage, Sex, Genius, Success, and Happiness*. Yet, while the author's deepest thoughts are interesting, many Western readers may be confused or even offended by some of his insights.

Formerly a short fiction writer for an Arabic-reading audience, Hegazy shifts his attention to philosophical concepts and his own thoughts on such diverse fields as the nature of memory, the biology of sex, and social sciences. In his series of twenty-two essays, he attempts to arrive at the essence of these many categories through philosophy rather than hard science. Predictably, thoughts are scattered all over the place; there is simply too much ground to cover.

The book's cover, a stock photo of a happy, laughing couple, could make the subject matter appear too facile. Inside, Hegazy offers lengthy discussions of important questions such as these: What is success? Why and how do humans experience erotic love? How can individuals conquer fears?

Expounding on quotations from primarily Western philosophers, notably Schopenhauer, and in describing the lives of other historical household names of the West, the author's projects include deconstructing love and understanding genius. Hegazy barrels through his laundry list of inquiries with occasional evocative, poetic insights. He writes, "Then love grants life its color, taste, and meaning. So, we contemplate the universe, and then we find the greatest bliss and the most completeness when the lover obtains his or her beloved."

Hegazy seems to lift some of his material from Capellanus in the how-to section on seduction, even explaining how to kiss a woman for maximum effect.

Yet his is a somewhat haphazard and incomplete approach. Paragraphs run into one another. The structure of some sentences is overwrought and confusing, even incomprehensible, yet one can't look away from this prose. Briefly trying on the hat and ascot of a classical music critic, he writes, "The music of the genius Mozart is also distinguished by simplicity, lightness, vitality, docility, beauty, superiority, clarity, truth, spirit, meaning, wealth, gravity, flexibility, and softness."

During a section titled "Teach Me Love," he instructs, "The weakness of the woman attracts the man. In addition, the Eastern man prefers the obedient lady, who feels that she needs him and holds back her decisions and opinions in favor of his opinions and his views. He also hates the independent and despotic brawny woman." Perhaps a mention of the poor word choice is in order, unless the intended effect was humor, as when he refers to the "manhood hormone" of sexual desire.

Ultimately, the author tries to accomplish too much within a slim volume. Trying to appeal to a Western audience is a noble but unlikely project, given the bizarre nature of many of the "secrets" within. A fluent, but not entirely fluid, relationship with the English language make this book a difficult read, and the presence of only four references warns readers not to take the "recent scientific studies" part of its title too seriously. We may have heard of the same studies as Hegazy has, but his stating that "scientific fact says that the woman lives longer than the man, because she cries more than he and she overflows with crying" is not an acceptable way to promote a scientific point of view in the West.

While Hegazy delivers his viewpoint in an often logical and straightforward manner, many Westerners will find

the author's seemingly sexist position difficult if not impossible to accept.

CARRIE WALLACE (May 9, 2013)

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