

# Waguih Ghali Unpublished Papers

*Diaries (1964-1968), Manuscript Fragments, and Letters*



Photo © Rosine Nusimovici

## About Waguih Ghali

Waguih Ghali (February 25, 192?, Egypt– January 5, 1969, London, England) was a Coptic, Anglophone Egyptian writer, best known for his novel *Beer in the Snooker Club* (Andre Deutsch, 1964). Fearing political persecution, Ghali spent his adult years living in exile in Europe. Waguih Ghali writes critically and compellingly about what has come to be known as the post-colonial condition. His writings reflect a distinctly cosmopolitan vision.

An engaging and politically savvy novel set in the 1950s, *Beer in the Snooker Club* critiques both the British colonial enterprise and the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt. The novel follows two young Copts, Ram and Font, who befriend an Egyptian-Jewish communist, Edna. In tracing their movements—intellectually and physically—between Cairo and London before and after the 1956 Suez conflict, the novel offers insights into these two societies in transition. *Beer in the Snooker Club* has gone into several reprints, most recently by Serpent’s Tail Press (London) in 2010, attesting to its lasting influence and popularity. To date, Ghali’s novel has also been translated into four European languages, Arabic, and Hebrew.

In addition to the novel, Waguih Ghali published a series of personal narrative essays in the *Guardian* (Manchester) between 1957 and 1965. Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Ghali visited Israel as a free-lance journalist. He filed two articles from Israel for the *Times* (London), and upon his return to London, he recorded a report for the BBC.

Waguih Ghali’s battles with depression are amply documented in his diaries. On December 26, 1968 Waguih Ghali swallowed a bottle of sleeping pills in the apartment of Diana Athill, his editor and friend. He died on January 5, 1969.

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## Literary Influences

Throughout his diaries, Waguih Ghali makes note of and reflects upon books he is reading. This page contains a list of authors and titles of books mentioned in the pages of Ghali's diaries. The links navigate to the file containing the diary in which the author/title is mentioned.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Unpublished Paper</b>
Kingsley Amis	One Fat Englishman	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 2</a>
James Baldwin	The Fire Next Time	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Saul Bellow	Dangling Man	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 2</a>
Saul Bellow	The Victim	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 3</a>
Anton Chekhov	An Anonymous Story	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 2</a>
Simone de Beauvoir	The Mandarins	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Simone de Beauvoir	Second Sex	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Fyodor Dostoyevsky	Crime and Punishment	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Hans Eysenck	Fact and Fiction in Psychology	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 3</a>
Gunter Grass	The Tin Drum	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 3</a>
Robert Graves	Man Does, Woman Is	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Tawfiq Hakim	Memoirs of an Egyptian Doctor	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Knut Hamsum	Victoria	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Joseph Heller	Catch-22	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Aldous Huxley	Eyeless in Gaza	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 2</a>
Christopher Isherwood	Down There on a Visit	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
James Joyce	Ulysses	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 2</a>
Arthur Koestler	The Act of Creation	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 3</a>
Arthur Koestler	The Yogi and the Tulip [sic.]	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
D. H. Lawrence	The Trespasser	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 3</a>
Doris Lessing	The Golden Notebook	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Bernard Malamud	A New Life	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 1</a>
Thomas Mann	Magic Mountain	<a href="#">Ghali Diary Notebook 4</a>

Mary McCarthy	The Group	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Henry Miller	Tropic of Capricorn	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 2</u></a>
Henry Miller	Tropic of Cancer	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Henry Miller	Black Spring	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Alan Morehead	Cooper's Creek	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
V. S. Naipaul	An Area of Darkness	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Erich Maria Remarque	The Black Obelisk	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Bertrand Russell	Autobiography	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 4</u></a>
Neville Shute	On the Beach	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Leo Tolstoy	Anna Karenina	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Leo Tolstoy	War and Peace	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>
Emile Zola	Nana	<a href="#"><u>Ghali Diary Notebook 1</u></a>

## About this archive

Upon his death, Waguïh Ghali left in Diana Athill's possession six notebooks of diaries and two fragments from a fictional work in progress. Ghali had begun keeping a diary on May 24, 1964 while residing in Rheydt, West Germany. The final entry was written in London on December 26, 1968, after he had already taken the pills that would eventually kill him.

In 1999, Diana Athill graciously granted me the opportunity to photocopy these materials in support of research I was conducting on Waguïh Ghali's writings. After completing that project, I boxed up the papers. I did not examine them for more than a decade.

In early 2012 a London-based researcher, Susie Thomas, informed me that Ghali's original notebooks had been lost, and that the photocopies I had made in 1999 might be the only complete copy of the archive. In light of this discovery, Diana Athill wrote that she was "very keen on the idea that they should be safely preserved in a library." Two years later, Athill discovered letters she had exchanged with Ghali. She sent this correspondence to add to the archive.

With the support of a Digital Collections Grant, the Cornell University Library digitized and has made accessible the 1999 photocopies of Waguïh Ghali's notebooks.

***Deborah Starr***

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## Acknowledgements

Diana Athill generously shared Waguïh Ghali's papers and granted permission to the Cornell University Library to disseminate this material digitally. Rosine Nusimovici graciously granted permission to use her photograph of Waguïh Ghali. The digitization of this archive was supported by a Grants Program for Digital Collections in Arts and Sciences from Cornell University Library. Digital Consulting and Production Services (DCAPS) provided project management, digitization and website development.

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