The Adaptation of William Shakespeare’s Drama and Poetry in the Arab World

Case Study: The Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam and the Lebanese Poet Jawdat Haydar

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Candidate Declaration Form

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to everyone who is/was a part of my personal and academic life, to everyone who helped and intervene in making this work, to all my family members, to all my friends and classmates whom were my supporters in my hardest times. Special dedication to my life partners: Mohamed Amine Bousmaha, Haidar Harkat, Samir Belaid, Kouachi Derraji and Ahmed Ghodbane. To my best classmates: Delhami Okba, Salah Bouzid, Hamlaoui Ahmed, Hamdi Mourad. To all those who encouraged and supported me: Gattal Maria, Debba Rania and Malki Asma. And to everyone I forgot to mention his name above.
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Abstract

Literature is believed to be the widest field where literary figures, writers, authors, poets and playwrights exchange impact and influence, this field has never been determined or limited by cultural or geographical boundaries. The universal access of literature made literary figures from all over the world been covered and bound together, and what traced the path to writers of literature for being influenced by their consorts without having any geographical limitations, these cross-cultural meetings pave the way to the literary adaptations of a given writer by another. Literary Adaptation is a very famous field of literature; its significance lies in making a local literary work universally accessed, and break the cultural and geographical boundaries between literary materials that are culturally different. Without these adaptations English and Shakespeare’s literature would never reach the Arab world boundaries, as many other writers around the world who took Shakespeare’s works as a substance in adapting literature, Arabs also have been part of these Shakespeare’s adaptations. Arab thinkers adapted Shakespeare’s drama and poetry and tried to create a version of Arabic Shakespeare, amongst them were, The Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam, who utilized Shakespeare’s drama to paint on theatres the picture of the political and social situation of the Arab world, and the Lebanese poet Jawdat Haydar who adapted Shakespeare’s sonnets through his poetry and made them even more understandable for the Arab modern audience. These adaptations of Shakespeare’s theatre and sonnets by Sulayman and Haydar participated in building that cross-cultural bridge which bound the Arab audience with Shakespeare.
Résumé

La littérature est considéré comme le plus grand champ où les figures littéraires, écrivains, auteurs, poètes et dramaturges effets de change et de l'influence, ce domaine n'a jamais été déterminé ou limité par les frontières culturelles ou géographiques. L'accès universel de la littérature faite figures littéraires de partout dans le monde sont couverts et liés ensemble, et ce qui a tracé le chemin à des écrivains de la littérature pour être influencé par leurs épouses sans avoir aucune limitation géographique, ces rencontres interculturelles ouvrent la voie aux adaptations littéraires d'un écrivain donné par un autre. Adaptation littéraire est un champ très célèbre de la littérature; son importance réside dans la réalisation d'une œuvre littéraire locale universellement accessible, et de briser les frontières culturelles et géographiques entre les matériaux littéraires qui sont culturellement différents. Sans ces adaptations en anglais et la littérature de Shakespeare ne serait jamais atteint les frontières du monde arabe, comme beaucoup d'autres écrivains du monde entier qui ont pris les œuvres de Shakespeare comme une substance dans l'adaptation de la littérature, les Arabes aussi ont fait partie des adaptations de ces Shakespeare. penseurs arabes adaptés drame et la poésie de Shakespeare et a essayé de créer une version de l'arabe Shakespeare, parmi eux étaient, Le dramaturge koweïtien Sulayman Al-Bassam, qui a utilisé le drame de Shakespeare à peindre sur les théâtres l'image de la situation politique et sociale du monde arabe, et le poète libanais Jawdat Haydar qui a adapté les sonnets de Shakespeare à travers sa poésie et les rendait encore plus compréhensible pour le public arabe moderne. Ces adaptations du théâtre de Shakespeare et sonnets par Sulayman et Haydar ont participé à la construction de ce pont interculturel qui liait le public arabe avec Shakespeare.
الملخص

الدُّبّ يعتبر الحلقة الأوسع حيث الشخصيات الأدبية، الكتاب، الأدباء، الشعراء والمؤلفين يتأثرون ببعضهم البعض،

هذا الحقل لم يكن أبداً محدوداً أو محصوراً بالحدود الثقافية والجغرافية. التغطية الشاملة للأدب جعلت الأدباء من جميع أنحاء العالم يرتبطون بمنهج واحد، وهذا ما عد الطريق نحو الأدباء لكي يتأثروا بأفكارهم من الكتاب بدون مواجهة أي حدود جغرافية.

هذا اللقاء ما بين الثقافات فتح الطريق نحو الاقتباس الأدبي، هذا الأخير هو ميزة معروفة: أهميته تكمن في جعل عمل أدبي محيط متاح عالمياً و في كسر الحواجز الجغرافية و الثقافية بين الأعمال الأدبية المختلفة. لولا هذه الاقتباسات لما وصل الأدب الشكسبيري إلى الحدود العربية. كثير من الأدباء من كل أنحاء العالم اتخذوا أعمال شكسبير كمادة أساسية في اقتباساتهم الأدبية، الأدباء العرب أيضاً شكلوا جزءاً هاماً في اقتباس شكسبير. مفكرون عرب اقتبسوا مسرحيات شكسبير و شعره و حاولوا رسم نسخة عربية من شكسبير، من بينهم المؤلف الكويتي سليمان اليسام الذي استعمل الدراما الشكسبيرية 

لتُقدم صورة مسرحية للوضع السياسي والاجتماعي للعالم العربي، والشاعر اللبناني جهاد حيدر الذي اقتبس قصائد شكسبير من خلال شعره وجعلها واضحة أكثر بالنسبة للقراء العرب المعاصرين. اقتباسات مسرح وقصائد شكسبير عن طريق الكويتي سليمان اليسام واللبناني جهاد حيدر اللذان ساهموا في بناء جسر ثقافي يربط القراء العرب بشكسبير ستكون محل الدراسة في هذه المِنْكَرَة.
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Introduction:

It is highly well-known that the great British poet William Shakespeare is one of the best and most famous literary figures in the history of literature. His works, plays, poems and his masterpieces of art that took place during the 16th and 17th century are still a warm substance of teaching literature in almost every single institution in the 21st century. His widespread fame can not only be seen or touched in Great Britain, but in almost every part of the entire world. Arabs were not excluded from Shakespeare’s influence that was much observed on: First, on Arab theatres performances of the Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam who adapted and represented Shakespeare’s drama with an Arab taste. Second, on the poetry of the Lebanese poet, Jawdat Haydar, who was highly influenced by Shakespeare’s sonnets.

Because Literature is the widest circle where writers and authors from over the world influence each other, this study is aiming to prove that Arabs were not excluded from Shakespeare's universally fame and they were of a great part of influence, to provide a clear image about Sulayman Al-Bassam’s and Jawdat Haydar’s adaptations of English drama and poetry and to shape a version of the Arabic Shakespeare.

Personally, I was highly fascinated, how could the 17th century Shakespeare's works and writings still exist and taught and his plays are still performed in many theatres around the world. And so many writers around the world adapted his priceless masterpieces, that's what urged me to investigate this part of adaptation at the level of the Arab world and examine how they considered Shakespeare and what they imported from him, regarding a special reference to the Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam and the Lebanese poet Jawdat Haydar who they will shape the case study of that research.

Due to my study, I will try to provide a clear answer for the following questions:
1- How did Arabs adapted Shakespeare?

2- What they borrowed from the Shakespeare’s drama and poetry?

3- What are the reasons behind adapting Shakespeare?

4- How was the reaction of the Arab audience toward these adaptations?

By basing this part on the rules of the adaptation theory featuring intertextuality, and by considering the cross-cultural approach, a thin line will be created that links Sulayman Al-Bassam’s modern plays and Jawdat Haydar’s poems with the original Shakespeare’s masterpieces. Due to this part, some key elements will be analyzed and extracted, elements that strongly proves that the Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam and the Lebanese Jawdat Haydar has completely adapted Shakespeare and to spot the light on these key elements to understand what they both exactly imported from the English drama and poetry of Shakespeare.

This analytical research will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter of this research will be a theoretical framework that will represent the main theories will be used in the body of this paper. Along the second chapter there will be an illustration to Sulayman’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s drama and the main special elements in his Shakespearean production. The third chapter will spot the light on Shakespeare’s sonnets and how the Lebanese poet Jawdat Haydar adapted them.

In order to make the reader able to draw in his mind that picture of the Arab Shakespeare version, this will never be done without supporting my hypothesis by a mass of scholarly publications, books, articles, interviews … that supported the following thesis. Articles written and published by Graham Holderness, the professor who tackled the matters of Sulayman Al-Bassam’s adaptations in his writings, and who talked about these Arab versions of Shakespeare from a western point of view will be analyzed alongside the three plays of Al-Bassam. Litvin
Margeret who had witnessed Al-Bassam’s trilogy and performed a mass of interviews with the Kuwaiti playwright, her interviews and articles will be another basic element in conducting this research. And Linda Hutcheon who is believed to be the founder of the Adaptation theory, her book ‘The Theory of Adaptation’ will be of a great significance in order to achieve this dissertation’s aims. From the other side, the two professors John M. Munro and Jayson Iwen and their forewords on Jawdat Haydar’s books will take a considerable position in the part of the poetic analysis and many other books and articles that are related to this research.
Chapter One:

I- Adaptation and Literature: Theoretical Framework

This chapter is basically a theoretical framework that will present and define the body of the theories will be used along this research. It will be divided into two sections. The first section will spot the light on the literary adaptation, its tools and concepts, and will go much further to define this theory, its characteristics, and its uses. While the second section of this chapter will deal in specific with Sulayman Al-Bassam and Jawdat Haydar and their adaptations of Shakespeare, and then to turn the attention toward the cross-cultural bridge they built between the Eastern audience and the Western literature.

I-1- Literary Adaptation: Tools and Concepts

Literature is believed to be the widest circle and the biggest cover, that holds together writers, readers, thinkers, scholars, or anyone who hold a deep interest in literary matters. This big circle can be considered as the first common point or the first shared element between literature producers, the circle that bound them together under one umbrella. English Literature is not excluded from this phenomenon, rather it stands to assure it and prove it due to the universality of English Language and its global addressing boundaries.

Literary writers have a long history of adapting “texts” into different forms. Historical events and spoken legends were the inspiration for paintings and sculptures, plays, written tales, films, stories and novels. Cinematic adaptations of literary and theatrical texts are as old as the medium of cinema itself. Adaptation is believed to be the reproduction of a literary work (a story, a novel …) represent it and reshape it to fit a given cultural, social or political environment.
Speaking about English Literature, one can never deal with this without passing by the
great literary figure, the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare who is considered to
be the greatest writer in English literature. The uniqueness of his writings, the style and the form
he used, the subjects he wrote about, the way of how he pictured these subjects led William
Shakespeare to be considered as the ‘founding father’ of the English Literature, and this traced
the path of his wide and universal fame that made him known in almost every single part on the
entire world and made his literary production exists in every single literary institution.

Shakespeare’s literary products still exist till now and still taught in every part of the
world’s English language institutions, in front of the big mass of the modern literary products that
were released and wrote in the modern centuries. The everlasting feature of Shakespeare’s
literature made this English playwright the preferable target for writers from over the world, his
impact and influence can be deeply touched and felt within them. This impact and influence
urges writers to adopt Shakespeare’s literature and to reproduce his writings and his
masterpieces.

Despite the geographical and the cultural boundaries and limits, Arabs and Arab thinkers
were not excluded from Shakespeare’s universality, Arab novelists, poets, writers and
playwrights have been also influenced by the English talent, their tendencies to Shakespeare were
strongly observed not just at the level of their readings, but at the level of their literary
productions. These Arab literary productions will be the tackled substance along this thesis, that
will spot the light on the universal glory that Shakespeare achieved, and as an Arab researcher I
urged myself to investigate this part of glory and fame within our Arab world.

Professor Linda Hutcheon commented on the significance of Adaptation in our daily life
and in anything we read, we see or we listen:
Adaptations are everywhere today: on the television and movie screen, on the musical and dramatic stage, on the Internet, in novels and comic books, in your nearest theme park and video arcade. (Hutcheon 2)

Adaptation can be known as the act or the process of changing or modifying something to make it fits a certain environment or to assert a given purpose or situation.

Literary Adaptation is a very significant and much more famous phenomenon in world literature, it stands for recreating and reproducing some targeted literary works to assemble a new environment with new conditions. The significance of these adaptations is very high due to the links and the bridges that these adaptations offer between the old and the new adapted production, and in making the targeted audience familiar with the original literary material. As Linda Hutcheon commented: “A text can not only survive the shift from one form to another, but it can also thrive in ways not previously possible in the original form” (32)

The disciplinary tension between literature and film has also informed adaptation theory, which, until recently, was primarily concerned with the translation of the literary into the cinematic. Such analysis traditionally focused on the notion of fidelity, and the perpetuation of a hierarchy which situated the literary text as a primary, touchstone, or source text, and the adaptation as a weaker, derivative text.

However, recent trends in adaptation theory have moved away from the dichotomy of film and literature and toward a focus on multidirectional flows across a transmedia model, concentrating less on what has been lost by a text during the process of adaptation, and more on what the text has gained by taking on a new form or variation. Theories of Intertextuality have also become a central element of adaptation theory, as the user compares the adapted text with not only the original, but other adaptations and similar texts in an ongoing dialogical process.
When content undergoes adaptation, it is subject to a variety of forces and factors, which are dictated by the nature of the source text, the reason for adapting the text, medium, market, and culture into which it is adapted. Large novels, for example, have traditionally undergone a process of compression in order to fit into a two-hour film format, while short stories have required some measure of expansion. An older text may undergo a process of correction or amendment if it contains anachronistic elements such as racial stereotypes, or may be shifted into an entirely different setting for purposes of social or market relevance like the case of Sulayman Al-Bassam’s adaptations of Shakespeare’s drama.

According to Linda Hutcheon’s book, to study a given adaptation and to examine its originality, WH questions must be answered; what is adapted? Why is adapted? And how is it adopted? Examining these questions may help in drawing in the mind of the critic a full image of the adapted work and its relationship to the original one.

What we adapt? Here, a light must be spotted on the means that the adapted work grasped from the original, speaking about the form, the content, the characters ... and other adapted matters. Why is adapted? Means dealing with the original work’s impact and perceiving, to shed the light on what makes the adapter select a giving writer or a given literary work rather than another, and what are the implicit or explicit aims behind his adaptation. How is adapted? And here where an examination of the way it is adapted will take place, to illustrate the means that the adapter used to produce such a new derived product.

Of course whenever adaptation exists intertextuality will take place, like Graham Allen assumed: “Intertextuality is another concept that can be integrated in the process of analyzing adaptations.” (16). This intertextuality that stands for illustrating the relationship between the
literary texts will be another supporting approach in conducting this paper, to cover a wider understanding of the adapted works and their resemblance to the original one.

Intertextuality is a literary discourse strategy utilized by writers in novels, poetry, theatre and even in non-written texts (such as performances and digital media). Examples of intertextuality are an author’s borrowing and transformation of a prior text, and a reader’s referencing of one text in reading another. To understand the concept of intertextuality, it’s simply for aiming the literary text as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of Analysis instead of static structures and products.

The concept of intertextuality, therefore, requires that we understand texts not as separate systems but as differential and historical, since they are shaped by the repetition and the transformation of other textual structures. It’s like intertextuality is telling us that there are no literary modern productions coming from none, there must be something that they derives from, whether intentionally or not, some previous notions must be there implicitly or explicitly within that work.

This intertextuality must be a part (basically a big part) in speaking about or dealing with adaptations, Theories of Intertextuality have also become a central element of adaptation theory, as the user compares the adapted text with not only the original, but other adaptations and similar texts in an ongoing dialogical process.

I-2- Al-Bassam and Haydar: The Cross-Cultural Bridge

Al-Bassam’s Shakespeare trilogy is believed to be the most coverable Arab adaptation of Shakespeare, Al-Bassam’s success in offering a new version of Arab Shakespeare made him a mind builder of a cross-cultural bridge between the modern Arab audience and William Shakespeare.
First, *The Al Hamlet Summit* that was performed in 2002 and was basically an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, where Al-Bassam expressed his political tendencies and tried to present a show in which he can depicture the true social, political, cultural and religious situation that the Arab world was covered by.

Second, *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy* which was performed in 2007 as an adaptation to Shakespeare’s original *Richard III*, where Al-Bassam gave to his audience a satirical image that reflects the doctrines of the governing regimes with their dominance and dictatorship.

Third, the last play in this trilogy was released under the title of *The Speakers Progress* performed in 2011 as a reflection to Shakespeare’s masterpiece *The twelfth night*. This play was a mirror which reflects the Arab Spring era that the Arab world passed through, and illustrates its causes and results and the true bloody hands of the true benefiters from this disgrace.

Jawdat Haydar, from the other hand, with his trilogy of sonnets he traced and helped in drawing this cross-cultural bridge between Eastern audience and Western literature, the impact and influence of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Jawdat Haydar’s poetry was highly seen when reading his poems, and this what gave Haydar’s poetry a universal criterion.

Starting by his first selection of poems that were released under the title of ‘*Voices*’ that was first published in 1980 by Vantage press in New York, moving to his second selection that entitled ‘*Echoes*’ published in 1986 in New York, and passing by his last entry of this trilogy, ‘*Shadows*’ of 1990. These three entries gave audience of Jawdat Haydar the first overtones of the new born of Arab Shakespeare.

Sulayman Al-Bassam like other Arab playwrights, played a significant role in establishing an Arabic dramatic field of study, his adaptations of Shakespeare’s drama provided the audiences as well as scholars with a full understanding of Shakespeare’s plays in an Arab mold, by
including terms of Arab culture, religion, and language, and to give a full understanding about the political issues that are bounding our Arab region, like he was producing Shakespearean drama from an Arab point of view.

Born in Kuwait in 1972, Sulayman Al Bassam founded Zaoum Theatre in London in 1996. SABAB Theatre is the Arabic arm, established in 2002. His plays have been published in various languages and study of his work forms part of higher education curriculae at universities in the USA and the Middle East. He produces work in both English and Arabic languages.

(Sulayman Al-Bassam Theatre)

Best Production and Best Director at Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre 2002, and the National Arts Award Best Production and Best Design Awards at Gulf Youth Theatre Festival. His succeeding in depicting Shakespeare’s plays made his theatre a priceless source in producing great Arab versions of Shakespeare’s works.

Both, the Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam and the Lebanese poet Jawdat Haydar, aimed at creating an extension that links the Arab audience and Arab people in general, with the Western Shakespearean literature. They both adapted Shakespeare in order to create and build that cross-cultural bridge which helped in making Shakespeare, his drama and poetry, among the most famous English literary figures in our Arab world:

   Literary cross-culture is the study of literature and culture beyond national, regional, and disciplinary boundaries; the politics of knowledge production, circulation, and institutionalization. (Trimmer 11)
And that’s what Sulayman Al-Bassam and Jawdat Haydar did, by jumping over the geographical and cultural boundaries to grasp Shakespeare’s works and adapt them in an Arab mold.

The theoretical instructions that this chapter offered will intervene and help in understanding the application part of this thesis. The Adaptation theory, the intertextuality, the cross-cultural approach, were all bound together with a set of Arab Shakesperean productions and a mass of reviews that were written about them to draw a mental map in the mind of the reader that shows the Arab Eastern version of Shakespeare.
I-3- List of works cited


Chapter Two:

II- Sulayman Al-Bassam’s Trilogy of Shakespeare

This analytical chapter will tackle the three plays of Sulayman Al-Bassam and the impact of Shakespeare within them, that part of the study is divided into two initial sections. The first is dealing with Shakespeare’s plays in Arab Theatres, and the second is spotting the light on Sulayman Al-Bassam and the Arab Shakespeare.

II-1- Shakespeare’s Drama on Arab Theatres

Adaptation, as defined and explained by the Oxford English Dictionary, provides a mass of meanings and applications, most of them bound by the operation or the process of transforming an original work to suit an alternative specific purpose, function, or environment. More specific, Adaptation in Literature tends to be an altered or amended version of a literary text, a novel, a poem or a play adapted for the production of a modern material with new elements that suits certain conditions from a given literary source. The field of Adaptation often can be highly seen at the level of the most famous and the wide well-known literary works that are circulating with a universal fame through decades.

Shakespeare with his plays and masterpieces could be considered as the most targeted literary source by authors and editors around the world; they received, adapted, reshaped, transformed and reproduced his plays in almost every single theatre in their local cultural environment. The Arab world was not excluded from this universal fame of Shakespeare and from the Shakespearean Adaptation, for there are so many Arab authors and editors who tried to import Shakespeare’s productions to the Arab World. The English Playwright entered the Arab
theatres in the late 19th century, when his plays were translated and adapted to suit the Arab cultural and religious relevance.

Sulayman Al Bassam, the Kuwaiti Author and playwright, could be considered one of the most leading figures who gave a new birth to Shakespeare within the Arab World by adapting his plays and masterpieces and producing them at the Arab theatres with a new cultural dimension to suit the Arab cultural and religious circle. Al Bassam’s trilogy: “The Al Hamlet Summit”, “Richard III: An Arab Tragedy” and “The Speaker’s Progress” have together reformed what is known as the “Arab Shakespeare” and gave a full adaptation for three well-known and very famous plays of Shakespeare that are successively: “Hamlet”, “Richard III” and “Twelfth Night”.

The Arab productions of Shakespeare were highly derived from earliest French materials and they were fully adapted, with some modified scenes and Arabic songs and there were also inclusions of Arab love poetry with Hamlet falling in love to Ophelia. The majority of Arab Hamlet productions converted and reshaped Shakespeare’s tragedy into a Romantic history, where Hamlet defeats his uncle, took back his father’s throne, and ruled the land.

Within the Arab world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Hamlet was strongly expanded as a stage show, independently of textual scholarship, and flourished in fully revised, rewritten, and constructed adaptations. Early Arab Shakespeare shared this wide freedom of adaptation with the Restoration and 18th century theatres, as David Kastan assumed:

On the stage … Shakespeare was not merely modernized, but aggressively modified to satisfy the expectations of the fashionable audiences that filled the theatres … turned … into a contemporary playwright, at once modern and highbrow, for the theatrical environment in which he was now performed … (Kastan, 14).
So, it’s obviously believed that the early Arab stage productions of Shakespeare’s plays were reproduced and reshaped to please the audience and to fit their cultural, political, and religious norms and values.

This complex tradition was one of the basing points for the Kuwaiti writer Sulayman Al Bassam in adapting Shakespeare’s plays and in giving birth to his trilogy to spread it at the stages of Arab theatres. From 2002 onwards the Kuwaiti writer was trying to make Shakespeare theatre in the Arab world and present it to the west by addressing their native language; Al Bassam due to his works tried to picture and presents the political and the sociable situation that the Arab world was and still living in.

Starting by the first element in Sulayman Al-Bassam’s trilogy, the play that was performed on theatres in 2002, that is basically a reflection of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* but in an Arab taste.

“Sulayman Al-Bassam’s *The Al-Hamlet Summit*, first performed, in Arabic with English surtitles, as part of the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, in August 2002, where it was awarded the Fringe First Award for excellence and innovation in writing and directing. It was subsequently presented at the 14th Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre, in September 2002, where it won Best Performance and Best Director Awards. Subsequently it has played at the Riverside Studios in London (March 2004), the Singapore Arts Festival (June 2005), and at Elsinore Castle in Denmark (August 2005).” (Holderness 66).
The setting that bound Al Hamlet Summit was a room that is prepared like a conference hall somewhere in the Arab world. There are desks with push-button microphones and headsets. Behind, there is a screen, where back-projected images and scenes were played, and with names on the desks that are the familiar characters from Hamlet. The setting of Sulayman Al Bassam's adaptation is a version of Hamlet that defines the modern Middle-Eastern state whose old king has just died, to be replaced by his brother, a ruthless, westernized dictator who has married the old king's wife to legitimize his rule, and calls his regime a "new democracy".

The Al Hamlet Summit reshaped Shakespeare’s language and reproduce Hamlet into modern English with a strongly Arabic taste, presenting and giving what is known as the ‘cross-cultural construction’. The Arab Kuwaiti director performed versions in both Arabic and English language. Sulayman Al Bassam’s play pictured the Middle Eastern and the Arab political situation in a mold of Shakespeare’s Hamlet, he kept the characters’ names as they appeared in the Shakespeare’s play and provide them with parallel situations within the modern Middle Eastern world; Hamlet’s father, the old ruler, has been poisoned, and his position shifted and token by Claudius his brother, who bears a parallel resemblance and similarity to Saddam Hussein, with that hidden sense of dictatorship. Gertrude and Ophelia, Polonius and Laertes all played roles and took positions comparable and similar to those consorts in Shakespeare’s original work, but depictured to fit the Islamic Arab context.

The west role and the western hands within the Arab world policy were not ignored in Al Hamlet Summit; Al Bassam mentioned the west in his play in the shadowy dark persona of the Arms Dealer, who speaks in English with an Arabic accent, she plants sedition and hatred within the Arab world and she will offer weapons to anyone prepared to pay, and care just about her own benefits. “As the lights begin to fade, the Arms Dealer enters and walks downstage incredibly slowly”. (Kand, 61).
Similar to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Claudius the dictator felt and knew that the real opponent of his doctrine existed inside, so Claudius and Polonius in Al Bassam’s adaptation vigilant and careful against any notions of domestic opposition. This latter was considered as ‘fundamentalist terrorism’; Polonius witnessed and observed the ‘apocalyptic imagery’ and the sense of the opposition and the revolution against the royalty in Hamlet’s letters to Ophelia, these elements were considered to be what is known in the play as ‘terrorist activities’. Both Hamlet and Ophelia became islamified, adopting traditional Muslim costume; and both became, from the perspective of the ruling doctrine, known as ‘terrorists’.

[CLAUDIUS:] Just two hours ago, our forces began an attack on terrorist positions belonging to Hamlet and his army. These continue as I speak. This conflict began when Hamlet laid siege to our democracy, our values and our people through a brutal series of kidnappings and terrorist bombings that have killed many innocent victims and shocked the world community. (The Al-Hamlet Summit).

The relationship between Islamic fundamentalist and terrorist militant is one internal element in Al Bassam’s adaptation, which is the equivalent of Hamlet’s revenge that was explicitly expressed in the language of the Holy Qur’an:

[HAMLET said] I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his messenger… I will clean this land, I will make it pure, I understand, I do understand, but I will cleanse it for you, I will prepare it for your return, even if it costs me my life, I will clean it, I will purge it, blood will flow, I will make blood flow in torrents, I swear in my father’s name, I swear in the name of Allah. (The Al Hamlet Summit)
The figure and the character of Hamlet that Al Bassam’s tried to create in his adaptation cared a sense of an active crusader against corruption and militant for justice.

HAMLET: The real enemy is here, in the palace, amongst us.

LAERTES: There will be no nation to fight over unless we defeat Fortinbras.

[HAMLET:] We’ll have no nation to lose unless we destroy the rot that devours us from within.

[HAMLET:] … the time for the pen has passed and we enter the era of the sword … No more words … Words have been killed, they died on our tongues and in our ears, words are dead… now we must speak with our flesh. (The Al Hamlet Summit)

Hamlet became wholly the man of action, the intellect who rejects Claudius reign and revolt against it.

Unlike most Arab Hamlet adaptations, The Al Hamlet Summit was sharply political; it offered a well-provisioned satire of Arab political rhetoric situation. Al Bassam’s adaptation of Shakespeare drama sounded to be strongly linked with the political circle; due to his work he tried to create parallels between the social worlds depicted in Shakespeare and political conditions in the modern Middle East, and to highlight the political dimension. Al Bassam’s play was bound by themes as: Political corruption, the twisted relationship between small servants and their masters, the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism, suicide as a desperate form of political self-expression, and these were and still the symptoms that are dominating our Arab peninsular. The parallel between Claudius and Saddam Hussein was further exaggerated, Ophelia is more
closely linked to the Palestinian cause, and Hamlet himself more decisively characterized as an Islamic fundamentalist, goaded to violence by internal betrayal rather than by external aggression. The Al Hamlet Summit has highly succeeded in bringing Shakespeare up to date at the Arab stages, providing dramatic scenes (the Arab dictatorship, the Islamic fundamentalist, the suicide bomber) that are visible daily on every television screen.

“Peace be upon you O dwellers of the grave, may Allah forgive us and you – you have preceded us to the grave and we are following in your footsteps” (The Al Hamlet Summit). The Islamic religion and Islamic notions were of a great part in Al Hamlet Summit, the extract mentioned above from Al Bassam’s play has clearly indicates the language of Islam and Islamic prayers, and Shakespeare’s Christian Hamlet has been replaced by an Islamic Character who hold strong belief in Allah, who uses in his speeches verses from the Holy Qur’an and from Holy Hadiths of our prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Following the same path, Ophelia’s final speech is clearly arabized and Islamicized:


[LAERTES:] Ophelia!

[CLAUDIUS:] She is mad, Laertes.

[OPHELIA:] The one who has turned me into a refugee has made a bomb of me. I have tried to speak the language of women, I have tried to forgive, on many nights I severed my tongue but my silence bleeds from my mouth. Here I am the animal that the world forgets, I have tried to speak language of man but lying no good no change can make to it of injustice to life. I want people outside to know this, that I will express politics and mighty nations. So I go to my God pure in my soul in my dignity I am pure. (The Al Hamlet Summit)
This scene was characterized by the appearance of Ophelia’s face in a back-projected image, covered with a headscarf, and an echo of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwich. Another Islamic indicator was observed in the Ophelia’s achievement to martyrdom, which is a fully Islamic element. Al Bassam’s attempt to include Islamic religion in the play and to make it suit and fit Islamic resemblance could be clearly observed in the division of his adaptation into sections and acts corresponding to the Islamic times of prayer, (Al Sobh, Al Dhohr, Al Aasr, Al Maghreb, Al Isha’a).

Concerning the language, Al Hamlet Summit can be clearly considered as a literary material in creating new links between English and the traditions of Arabic language. As Graham Holderness stated, “Al Bassam speaks Arabic and writes in English” (4), his English experience in this adaptation produced an English language with Arabic notions. The Al Hamlet Summit was translated into the Arabic Language where there was an existence of a mixture of old and modern native facets of language, and keeping the cover and the mold of English. The Arabic performances of the play, were accompanied with a displayed Arabic subtitles projected on screen, in the primary language of the audience.

Al Bassam himself has described this part by assuming that “The texts are written in English and then produced in Arabic, undergoing a layered process of arabization and re-appropriation.” (Al Bassam interview with Litvin Margaret 852). As a matter of fact, the English versions of Al Bassam’s adaptation have been played in the Middle East, the Arabic in the west, and both were targeting mixed audiences of Arabic and English speakers. It is argued that the performance of these works in arabized English, and the use of both English and Arabic together in a single performance is not simply a usual translation for the convenience of the audience. The true meaning of the work lies in the interaction of different languages, particularly between Anglo-American English and Arabic that are mainly two languages grammatically, vocabulary
and formally different, but are linked together in this Arab adaptation with the purpose of creating a reciprocal recognition and mutual understanding.

In fact, the primary motivation in Al Bassam’s adaptation in choosing and focusing on Shakespeare, rather than simply writing or creating a new work, was first, because the larger wide matters of ideology, philosophy, and discourse that were already the basic substance in Shakespeare’s work and its global culture. And second due to the political parallels that can be extracted from the plays, and on the classic taste of Shakespeare that offers a covered picture of drama.

The second work in Al Bassam’s trilogy is entitled Richard III: An Arab Tragedy that was first appeared on stage and performed in February 2007, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford. This production was basically a full adaptation of Shakespeare’s The Tragedy of King Richard III; Al Bassam’s work has first appeared under the title Baghdad Richard as Graham Holderness stated in his essay entitled ‘From Summit to Tragedy: Sulayman Al Bassam’s Richard III and Political Theatre’ “An Arab Tragedy … project was initially titled Baghdad Richard (tickets were sold for us under that title)” (8), the title was later changed, subordinating the changing events of Saddam Hussein’s trial and execution, this new title ‘Richard III: An Arab Tragedy’ addressed a broader territory, not just Iraq, and tackled bigger issues of concern to the Gulf States and generally Arab world.

Sulayman Al Bassam’s piece of theatre has fully tackled the depiction of agitation and propaganda, and took the spectators and the audience deeper into Arab culture, language. The painful exaggeration and the dark status that characterized Shakespeare’s tragedies was a warm link to the modern Middle East situation, the corruption of the ruling regime, the Modern Imperialism, globalization, assassinations, suicide bombing, civil wars and many other facets of corruption and the underdevelopment of our Arab world. The players in this political crucial
game like the characters in Richard III, none are innocent, they all have bloody hands. This
dimension was basically the primary focus that urged to produce this adaptation.

Not similarly to Al Hamlet Summit, in Richard III: An Arab Tragedy the back-projected images pictured scenes of despotism, military actions, secret affairs … , these multimedia tools were included to highlight the contemporary parallels. The character of Buckingham in Sulayman’s adaptation is a double agent working for the profits of two sides, and has secret relations with the Americans and pretending by supporting Richard’s throne. On the other hand, Richmond was depicted and portrayed as a Christian US general who announces at the end of the play the installation of a temporal government. Richmond the American general, recites his speech speaking the final words of the play in English language with an arrogant accent of dominant ruling army, he conclude his speech with “God say Amen” (Richard III: An Arab Tragedy), at the same time of delivering his speech, a crew of revolutionists can be seen in the background whom are ready to fight in the name of Islam, they were yelling “Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar” (Richard III: An Arab Tragedy). Al Bassam by this adaptation has giving a rebirth to a 17th century work and set it up to date to fit and suit the conditions of our 21st century.

Sulayman Al Bassam’s Richard III: An Arab Tragedy provided the audience with a full implicit image of the Arab world current situation and showing a clear idea about Arab traditions, costumes, thoughts and ideologies in a modern dramatic literary work. Along this adaptation, Clarence’s character was designed like a serious careful Muslim who has been quoting verses from the Holy Qur’an and Hadiths against the unlawful murdering and the unfair treatments and acts. Clarence’s death scene was fully reshaped in this adaptation subordinating the Arab rituals, the wine barrel in Shakespeare’s original play was replaced by a barrel of water where Clarence was preparing for his ablution to do his daily prayers, Clarence was drowned in this barrel and he died, this scene of Clarence murdering was accompanied by playing an old Arab song with colloquial Gulf language.
The part of Clarence’s dream, that was very famous in Shakespeare’s original play, has been moved in this adaptation to an earlier scene with Richard. In the scene of his death there was no narration on Clarence’s passing, of his loyalty, of his fidelity or of the role he had played in politics. He appears as a usual ordinary man who recognized and confessed by his sins and his mistakes and was asking for Allah’s mercy and forgiveness. The Islamic notions that were rooted in the character of Al Bassam’s Clarence were a response to this character in Shakespeare’s play that was strong Christian man who never gives up on his religion and who asked for mercy through the blood of Christ in the Shakespeare’s version of the play. Similarly to Al Hamlet Summit, Richard III: An Arab Tragedy was completely deprived from the Christian elements that were replaced by Islamic references, related to this, Al Bassam’s stated in his interview with “Margaret Litvin” that:

“[Richard III: An Arab Tragedy] it is a political play, but it happens in a very religious context … a secular, western audience would normally see that in a very historical way, but this way it becomes contemporary” (853).

The Qur’anic verses and quotations that were used by Clarence criminalize and inveigh the murder of innocence, the corruption and the injustice that were dominating there.

The uniqueness of Al Bassam’s work could be seen or touched in the possibility of classifying his work according to political, cultural and linguistic terms, previous adaptations of Shakespeare’s works were paying too much attention and basing their works on linguistic features, they were translating rather than adapting, giving the same image of Shakespeare in an Arabic version. Unlike others, Al Bassam in his adaptations was producing and creating a version of “Arab Shakespeare, rather than Arabic Shakespeare” (Litvin 2), giving too much care about other cultural, religious, traditional and ideological features.
The shift in Al Bassam’s adaptation, from the original Shakespeare play, was seen and felt in the very beginning of the play, the first person on the stage and the first to speak was not Richard, but it was Queen Margaret. The play started by her words saying:

[Margaret was speaking] I am Margaret, you need not to be concerned about me, we lost, it is your right to ignore me, I would ignore myself if my history let me. I don’t want you loans, your gifts, your reconstruction grants. I don’t want your pity. We lost, all I ask from you is not to question my thirst for revenge, it’s not because I’m Arab, I have a degree.

Anyway, my name is not Margaret, but our history is so awful, even the victors have changed their names. (Richard III: An Arab Tragedy).

In the first scene of the play, Margaret walked on the stage holding a suitcase, this character was identified as a poor refugee, marginalized, discriminated, and ignored by history and the politics of power. She has changed her name, lost her identity, she got insulted and humiliated by the political ruling class. As a result, she turned into madness, speaks for vengeance, especially through the language of revenge, tragedy, sorrow and witchcraft. So she was vowing and threatening those who insulted her by a curse that will dominate them and will ruin their lives and turned them into hell, she was promising them by an evil power that will destroy their kingdom and their reign, as a payback for their corruption and their bad wills.

“All-Bassam begins his play, then, not with a man, but a woman; with a woman who is not English, but declares herself to be Arab; not with a theatrical star, but with a marginal figure; and not with one of victors … but with one of the defeated.” (Graham, “Sum to tragedy” 3).

Through this, and by picturing Margaret as a refugee, Lebanese, Iraqi or Palestinian, Al Bassam was trying to depict the situation of the Arab peninsula within the world, that situation of marginalization, of underdevelopment, of depression that are dominating the Arab world.
In one of the most telling and expressive scenes, at the closing end of the play, that scene where Al Bassam provided his Richard with a horse, ‘a mechanical wooden horse’ on stage:

What this horse called? [Richard asked]

Al Umma [they replied]

[RICHARD:] Al Umma!? Ooh let me ride you! O my battle of Badr!

Victory sits on our helms. (Richard III: An Arab Tragedy)

As it’s widely known in our Arab culture that the word ‘Al Umma’ means ‘the nation of believers’, the people who are considered as a belief community, Richard has offered himself as the leader of Arab Islamic nationalism. And by getting on and riding this horse, that was a sign of control, highness and dictatorship on the people, “Al Umma!? Ooh let me ride you” (Richard III: An Arab Tragedy) and you can clearly read between his words that he was like saying ‘Al Umma!? Ooh let me control you, enslave you, let me share my dictatorship, my tyranny and my despotism amongst you. And unfortunately, this was/and still the current doctrine and the ideology of the ruling regimes in most parts of our Arab world.

Another observable scene was that of stating and naming the list of martyrs with which the play closes, which was basically the equivalent of a Shakespearean list of battlefield slain. But Al Bassam’s list collected together well-known Arab martyrs from past to present, from the first ages of the appearance of Islam, the martyrs from our prophet age (that are known in our culture as ‘Al Sahaba’) to the martyrs of the present at that time, those whom were the victims of the hatred and the seduction that was rooted by the western among Arab people’s minds, and to those martyrs whom were the victims of the western American forces in Iraq, and the Israeli devil in Palestine. Al Bassam’s list contained some known names from this innocents whom were murdered for no reason, but for being believers and innocents. By mentioning their names, Al Bassam was trying to dedicate them and glorify their loyalty and their courage in defending their native lands against the evil the unfair and the unjust bloody western colonial hands.
The third work in Sulayman Al Bassam’s trilogy that was first performed in 2011 at the New York stage, it appeared under the title of ‘The Speaker’s progress’ which was a basic adaptation of Shakespeare’s ‘Twelfth Night’. And similarly to the previous two plays in this trilogy, The Speaker’s progress was released and created to explore show events in the Arab Middle East. Shakespeare’s comedy ‘Twelfth Night’ was fully transformed into a satire that has well described the political situation of the Arab world, and it provided a comprehensive theatre that traced the path to well understand the mechanisms of people’s dissent against the ruling regimes. The very noticeable basic element of the play was ‘The Arab Spring’ and the internal civil wars that were the fruit of the people’s objection and opposition toward their leaders.

The setting of this play, like in Richard III: An Arab Tragedy, was in an unnamed Arab country where Al Bassam offered his audience with a new modern piece of theatre, a new Shakespearean adaptation that explained and expressed the notions of what is known as ‘The Arab Spring’. The Speaker’s progress was different from The Al Hamlet Summit and Richard III: An Arab Tragedy in terms of scenes and costumes that were resembling a scientific rather than an Artistic context, with the actors wearing laboratory coats, with men and women that remained at a distance from one another and with an ominous camera that was placed in front of the stage, suggesting universal government surveillance.

Some scenes from the 1960s production were present in this plays, scenes that were projected in black and white film on a large screen on stage, these scenes were followed by playing an adapted Shakespearean dialogue:

Music is the food of love and love is the blood of freedom and freedom is the mother of progress, How can you transform a country if you don’t put women at its center? (The Speaker’s progress).

Unlike the previous two adaptations of Sulayman Al Bassam, The Hamlet Summit and Richard III: An Arab Tragedy in 2002 and 2007 respectively, they were basing on what is known
as scene-for-scene adaptation, the 2011 Al Bassam’s work *The Speaker’s progress* was circling about a former director who has been sent abroad with a group of ‘envoys’ to defend their unnamed and unmentioned homeland. *The Speaker’s Progress* has contained some scenes from a ‘sub-play’ that projected on a wide screen, performing what is known as a “play-within-a-play” (Litvin, “Rev of The Speaker’s Progress” 351), and resulting a Gulf Arab version of Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night. The sub-scenes that were included in Al Bassam’s adaptation were fragments from a supposed production that was appeared in 1963 in Black-and–white, these sub-scenes were in fact written and directed by Al Bassam in the 60s style, they offered the audience with full image about the modern social situation in the Arab world.

Sulayman Al Bassam due to his work and his stage performance, he pictured the real modern life in an art mold. The Kuwaiti director added what was defined in his play as ‘the down stage camera of the Ministry of information’ to make a sense of ‘revolutionary performance’ and to make a notion of challenge for the Arab governments in his performance. The actors and the characters in Al Bassam’s *The Speaker’s Progress* were called ‘envoys’, The Malvolio character of the original Shakespeare’s *The Twelfth Night* was pictured by Al Bassam in his adaptation as ‘Al Mullah’ who has been whipped and imprisoned in a dark cage.

In the ‘Orange grove scene’, which is the equivalent to *The Twelfth Night*’s scene in Olivia’s garden in Shakespeare’s play, there was an implicit hidden political message; during this scene, ‘envoys’ were holding plastic fruits in performing their role while in the time the director (the role that has been played by Al Bassam) was eating a real one, which was an act that truly recited the modern Arab situation from the ruling dictator regimes to the people, in which the upper class were living in ‘extravagance’ and ordinary people were still believing in some ‘extra matters’ to fulfill their moral desires.

In another scene during *The Speaker’s Progress*, ‘envoys’ covered the security camera, which was positioned down stage, with a female’s headscarf to perform on the stage a scene
where they impersonate Umm Kalthum by the Feste figure (that was known in Al Bassam’s adaptation by Feylooti) to invoke the hypnotic audience-performer relationship ascribed to the Arab 1960s life. Within the play Al Bassam said:

As some of you may know, I used to be a theatre maker but for several years now since the closures myself and others like me have been enforced to retire, theatres and other public venues have been closed, the act of performance itself has been criminalized, as part of a series of preemptive measures including the statements of military courts, nocturne confuse and suspension of the internet, to go against the undermining of our national unity and hold the spread of the mental plague. (The Speaker’s Progress)

These were the opening lines of Al Bassam’s play The Speaker’s Progress, they were said by Al Bassam himself who played the role of the director in this play, and these words were included in an attempt to offer the audience with the Arab current situation concerning the matters of the freedom of speech. By the end of the director’s speech, Al Bassam said sarcastically:

the core of this play will show the true peaceful situation that we are living in our Arab world, and that anyone who came to hear about our life under dictatorship is welcome to leave now. (The Speaker’s Progress)

And it’s obvious here that Al Bassam was making a kind of satire about the Arab situation and the ruler-people relationship.

The one remarkable difference in this work if compared to Al Bassam’s previous works The Al Hamlet Summit and Richard III: An Arab Tragedy, Al Bassam in this adaptation and unlike the two previous works, he didn’t adopted the character’s names, rather, he used some
Arab names such as: Thuraya, Al Mullah, Fawz, Nechami, Feylooti … in making his comedy work and in implicitly criticizing the Arab Current situation.

The play has included a scene where there was a ‘funny poem’ presented by the drunken uncle, a poem in a colloquial Arab Gulf language with words and lines that glorified the ruler and its dominance and control over them, and the people’s fear and submission for the ruler and his coming sons, and here was a clear satirical message against some Arab permanent rulers. One of the most expressive scenes in this play has took place on stage, in the scene where Fawz (the woman who is disguised as a man) was sent to Thuraya to deliver the letter of love of his ruler to her. Fawz has blown up addressing and saying:

If I were I, I’d turn myself into a fruit seller, and set my body alight in the square, I’d scrawl your name on the walls, I’d take a bullet to the chest, and turn the wound into a spring, to quench the thirst of millions, and chant your name through a year of Fridays … [and he screamed] … Thuraya, Thuraya, Thuraya, Houriya [Freedom], Houriya, [Freedom], Houriya [Freedom],”. (The Speaker’s Progress).

That was an attempt to bring up some notions of the Arab Spring, the Tunisian revolution was present by bringing and mentioning the Tunisian citizen ‘Mohamed Al Bouazizi’ who set himself on fire in a public place, and another mention for the Egyptian revolution and their public organized demonstrations of Fridays (The Friday of Anger, The Friday of revolution, The Friday of Freedom …)

In Another scene which was named ‘The Tourist Board Presentation’, Al Bassam has made another sarcastic message; this scene was performed by a character who is believed to be the ‘envoy’ of the tourist board. This last was making a kind of proclamation and describing our Arab world sarcastically using expressions and stating that our public beaches are free from any
dead bodies, our schools refusing violence and terrorism, our hospitals fighting death, and our Arab Spring is 100% natural, untouched by human hands.

The famous Arab Libyan leader, ‘Maamer Al Qaddafi’ was not excluded from Al Bassam’s adaptation of the ‘Twelfth Night’, as well as the phenomenon of ‘modernity’. One of the scenes in this play gave a very expressive image about ‘modernization’ and about style, costumes, language as sings of modernity. Al Mullah who had fall in the trap of ‘modernity’ by an organized plan where he was deceived by a fake love letter, the content of the letter addressed to Al Mullah a message that if he wants love and if he wants to be loved he needs to be modern, he needs to be free, he needs to speak the language of modernity, he needs to dress costumes of modernity. Al Mullah adopted the modern style seeking for Thuraya’s love, he was speaking a language that he doesn’t understand, which led him to be a prisoner in a small cage where was yelling ‘Jirdhan, Jirdhan’ the famous expression of ‘Maamer Al Qaddafi’.

In the last final scene of The Speaker’s progress, a very big mess, and a wide chaos was highly existed on stage, sand was falling off on the ground, dark was dominating the stage, broken tables and chairs and clothes were dispersed on the ground. In this last scene, Al Bassam was trying to provide a parallel image for Arab countries’ situation after the public revolution of the Arab Spring. “And now how shall we live?” (The Speaker’s Progress) these were the last spoken words in the final scene that concluded Al Bassam’s masterpiece about the Arab Spring.

II-2- Sulayman Al Bassam and the globalized Arabic Shakespeare

Shakespearean readers in the Arab world are taking a variety of approaches to the question of what Arab readers, writers, producers, translators, directors and audiences do with Shakespeare, Sulayman Al Bassam’s adaptations of William Shakespeare offered a nice coverable answer for what Arabs imported and concerned in Shakespeare’s works. The most Arab spot and biggest influenced area by Shakespeare in the Arab world is believed to be the
Middle East area, Arab thinkers and producers used Shakespeare to trace some of the tensions of politics and cultural geography concerning the Palestinian case. Recently, there are numerous Arab Shakespeare adaptations as well as translation studies involved in moving Shakespeare into Arabic and back out again. So, the Arab Shakespeare was just another domain of international and intercultural Shakespeare productions that were highly famous in nearly every institution in the entire world.

Arab adaptations of Shakespeare of Sulayman Al Bassam and of other Arab writers, translators and producers was needed for some scholars in the west and their interest in the Arabic Language and culture, to meet up with some people in the east and to politely get into a clear understandable conversation or debate. The Arab importations and adaptations of Shakespearean dramatic works from the west were in a way required to help in formulating an Arabic dramatic traditions. Shakespeare’s works, as well as other western works, were assimilated into the language, and Sulayman Al Bassam, like other Arab playwrights, played a significant role in establishing an Arabic dramatic field of study.

Shakespeare entered the Arab world in the late 19th century as theatre; that is, the plays were translated and adapted specifically to form the repertoire of dramatic companies in Egypt and other Arab countries. Hamlet was first performed in Egypt around 1893, and was immediately popular with local audiences, who had a strong taste for ghosts, revenge and madness. Productions were based on translations derived from 18th century French versions of Shakespeare. Hence the play was radically adapted, with whole scenes deleted and songs introduced; with Hamlet making love to Ophelia in the language of Arab love poetry, and with all obscenity discreetly purged. Above all the play was converted from Shakespeare’s tragedy into a historical romance, in which Hamlet defeats his uncle, ascends the throne, and reigns with the Ghost’s blessing. In Egypt in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Hamlet flourished as a stage
show, independently of textual scholarship, and appeared in radically revised, rewritten, and reconstructed adaptations.

According to Al-Bassam’s Theatre, Sulayman Al-Bassam’s *The Al-Hamlet Summit* was first performed as part of the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, in August 2002, where it was awarded the Fringe First Award for excellence and innovation in writing and directing. It was subsequently presented at the 14th Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre, in September 2002, where it won Best Performance and Best Director Awards. The work had previously been through various adaptations of the Shakespeare text, from 2001 onwards, performed by the Zaoum Theatre Company: *Hamlet in Kuwait*, performed in Kuwait, and *The Arab League Hamlet*, performed at a festival in Tunisia. The earlier versions were both adaptations of the Shakespeare text. *The Al-Hamlet Summit* by contrast Shakespeare’s language and rewrites *Hamlet* into modern English with a strongly Arabic flavour, producing a ‘cross-cultural construction’. Al-Bassam produced and performed versions in both Arabic and English.

The writing of *The Al-Hamlet Summit* began with the experience of globalization, Al-Bassam himself said:

I was in Cairo with an exiled Iraqi theatre director and a Palestinian theatre troupe from Ramallah drinking coffee in the bazaar when a boy came running past us, chanting: ’Al-Kull murtabit / Am-reeca qarabit’ (‘Everything is linked /America just got closer…’). It was September the 11th and news from New York was just beginning to stream across the television screens. In all the confusion of that night, I remember the words of one of the Palestinian actors: The hell in New York today will bring hell to Ramallah tomorrow. (Al Bassam Interview with Litvin 850).
The 9/11 was the supreme instance of globalization, viewed here from a range of different perspectives. The boy’s chant seems to celebrate with a certain triumphalism the shrinking globe and the ease with which Islamic terrorism can reach to the very heart of America’s political and economic institutions. The Palestinian actor thinks ruefully of the consequences, immediate reprisal not from America but from Israel, and against the Palestinians. Global events know no barriers of time and space.

Globalization is not only inevitable but desirable, since it is the only route to mutual understanding and a stable world. Everything really is linked, as the Arab boy recognized. The problem is how to develop those links without conflict and violence; without the supremacy of the West; without the suppression of alternative cultures and consequent global homogenization. The events of 9-11 and the political fallout since have drawn to light the inextricable intertwining of the fates of Arab peoples and those of the West. Al Bassam said:

Everything is linked and the much-touted ‘clash of civilizations’ simplifies and tries to obscure what is a complex series of overlapping and interpenetrating cultural realities that are tied together in fatal symbiosis (Al-Bassam 8).

This is quite a different approach from Tony Blair’s vision of a universalization of enlightenment values of liberal democracy via the spread of free-market capitalism. Though he does not speak for Islamic fundamentalism or terrorist violence, Al-Bassam shows them as the inevitable consequences of an alliance between native Arab totalitarianism and the economic machinations of the West. In Shakespeare’s play, Hamlet is driven reluctantly towards revenge, and in *The Al-Hamlet Summit* Hamlet and Ophelia seem to have no option but the bloody and suicidal course they undertake and is it was clearly stated by Graham:
The Al-Hamlet Summit is a representative product of multicultural communication in a global frame. It occupies one of innumerable local sites that have no territorial linkage, yet reflect specifically on global events, defined as events that implicate humankind as a whole. This is the ultimate globalization of Shakespeare; but it is also the ultimate localization of Shakespeare, since it implies an infinite multiplicity of local/global Shakespeare. (Holderness “Arabesque” 3).

And this is how Al Bassam used Shakespeare’s works as a substance of a global conversation.

Sulayman Al Bassam’s adaptations of Shakespeare’s drama provided the audiences as well as scholars with a full understanding of Shakespeare’s play in an Arab mold, by including terms of Arab culture, religion, and language. “Today’s best-known Arabic Shakespeare adaptor, writer director Sulayman Al Bassam,” (Litvin 1) This is how Margaret Litvin commented on Sulayman’s adaptations and his success in addressing both Arab and western audiences using Shakespeare as a road for showing the world our Arab culture, religion and knowledge, and to give a full understanding about the political issues that are bounding our Arab region, like he was producing Shakespearean drama from an Arab point of view.

Al Bassam made his starting as a playwright with *The Al Hamlet Summit* 2002 that was first performed in the west and then on the Arab stages, this play sets Shakespeare’s characters and plot in a dark Middle Eastern dictatorship, shown on the edge of collapse. The tottering state in Al Bassam’s adaptations holds an official conference while civil wars were dominating the country with foreign army invades. Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia, Polonius, and Hamlet conspire, declaim and wage war in the pitch of a perfect satire of Arab political discourse.
In 2002 Al-Bassam moved to Kuwait and since then has been working with Arab actors and translators and directing mostly in Arabic. Perhaps as a result, the Arab Shakespeare influences on his version of *Richard III* may be more recognizable than in his Summit commissioned in Arabic. The revenge-thirsty deposed queen, the toady-turned-killer, the nouveau-riche bimbo, the slick western-trained consultant and the violence seems more specific than in Summit; the location is narrowed to an unnamed country in the Gulf. U.S. policy in the Middle East, personified by the bumbling Richmond, is shown as inept rather than all-powerfully evil.

Al-Bassam’s *Richard III* represents the latest evolution of an Arab Shakespeare tradition that has developed over the past 120 years. In this tradition, Shakespeare’s plays have served various functions for Arab adapters: playhouse fodder, high-culture prestige objects, megaphones for revolutionary political aspirations, and camouflage for political dissent. Al Bassam brings this tradition full circle: he brings his Arab-world and Arabic-language rewordings of Hamlet and Richard III to Western, English-speaking audiences. His work shows not only what English Shakespeare can say to Arab audiences, but how Arab Shakespeare can speak to English-speaking audiences as well.
II-3- List of works cited


Chapter Three:

III- Jawdat Haydar and William Shakespeare’s

During this chapter, a poetic analysis will take place by comparing the structure of Haydar’s poems in order to investigate any similarities between it and Shakespeare’s sonnets. Two sections will perform this chapter, the first will deal with Haydar’s Poetry and Shakespeare’s Sonnets, similarities and differences between them. The second will be about the implications of these adaptations of Jawdat Haydar and their impact on both Arab and western side.

III-1- The Poetry of Haydar and Sonnets of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English Language and the world’s pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England’s national poet and the “Bard of Avon”:

“He surviving works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems”
(Magreta and Stanely, 11).

His poems has been taught in almost every English language institution in most parts of the world more often than those of any other poet. Shakespeare’s glory and fame helped in spreading his works and masterpieces and breaking the geographical and the cultural boundaries to make his worldwide drama and poetry a warm substance for adaptation by so many writers in the world literature. The Arab literature has not been excluded from the universally fame of William
Shakespeare, Arab poets, playwrights, novelists, translators … have all been influenced by the English author and by his literary materials.

Though Shakespeare’s poetry has been produced during the late 16th and early 17th century, but many recent Arab thinkers and writers are still using and adopting his writings. Within the Arab world we could highly touch Shakespeare and observe his existance strongly in some parts of the Middle East especially in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. One of the most known Arab poets who adopted Shakespeare’s poetry and represented his style of writing in our Arab world is the Lebanese poet Jawdat Rostom Haydar.

According to his biography Jawdat Rostom Haydar was born in Baalbeck in 1905. In 1914, he experienced the bitterness of exile as he and his family were sent to Anatolia. Upon his return, he recievied his education at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, and the North Texas University, USA. He showed great interest in the English language and began to write poetry in English in the early 1930s while he was studying in the USA. He devoted his life to poetry writing from 1960 (Michwar Al Omor, 5). In his autobiography entitled « Michwar al-Omor » (The Trip of Life) published in 2002, he described his poems as the true expression of his love for Lebanon and admiration for American values.

Jawdat Haydar grew up in a family of intellectuals, which led him to pursue his studies in France and later in the United States, before returning to his home country in 1928. Although he worked in industrial and agricultural fields, that did not impede his thirst for politics and literature. The poet expresses his outlooks towards humanity through his written works, mainly poetry. His poems were written in English which allowed him to take his place among his Lebanese literary contemporaries such as Gibran Khalil Gibran and contemporaries such as Amin Rihany and Mikhail Naimy. It wasn’t until the death of his wife in 1982 that the poet expressed himself in his mother tongue.
Dr. Karam Rizk, in his speech of celebrating Jawdat Haydar’s poetry he said:

Through his works, Jawdat Haydar emerges as a man who is aware of his humanity and who vows that his most desired wish is to see human beings attain absolute happiness. His poetry, representative of our daily life, tends to combine the orient and the occident, to surpass any clashes that might be caused by social and cultural differences and to reconcile these two worlds in hope of achieving absolute human harmony. By using the English language, the poet is not rebelling against his roots but using English as a tool to convey the concept of transculturation. (The Educational Magazine 54)

Dr. Karam Rizk in his speech has tackled the western effect on Jawdat Haydar’s poetry and his combination of the orient and occident culture by his poetry has traced the double reception of Western and Eastern elements, by adapting Shakespeare style in an Arabic mold of poems. Similarly to William Shakespeare’s poetry that reveals a deep attachment to England at that time, Haydar expresses his love to his mother country in some of his poems, in a poem that is entitled ‘Lebanon’ Jawdat Haydar wrote:

I would that you were with me hence, sharing
This celestial view seen, unseen, before
Where Sannin eternally up staring
At the evening star glaring at the shore.
The deep is rising, the ships heading east
The green mountains capped with snow behind
Perhaps the eye of an artist possessed
May contain such a paradise in mind. (Lebanon).
Haydar’s affection to Lebanon his native country can be highly observed and felt when reading his poems. By using the main themes of Shakespeare’s sonnets such as love, nature, nationhood, Ambition, hope and many other themes he presented his tendencies to express beautifulness in his poetry and in adapting Shakeseare’s sonnets.

Jawdat Haydar is a poet who transcends national boundaries. Though he writes with affection about his native Lebanon, evoking, in particular, the natural beauty of his ancestral home in the Bekaa valley with its world famous ruins of Baalbek, his themes are universal rather than local. Expressing himself in English and writing in a style that is accessible to the ordinary reader, Haydar’s poetry speaks to young and old alike. Containing echoes of some of the great poets of the English literary tradition, particularly William Shakespeare by mixing Shakespeare’s style and form of writing in his poetry. This mixture of Shakespeare’s form and vocabulary with his style of writing and the themes he used in his writings made Haydar’s poetry a transcultural elements that broke geographical and cultural boundaries to reach an international fame.

The appeal of Haydar’s poetry is universal and while Lebanese readers will respond to his evident affection for his native land no less than its cultural heritage, his words resonate far beyond the shores of Lebanon. In the final analysis, his audience is global as well as local and, like one of his poetic inspirers, William Shakespeare, his poetry touches on subjects that “lie too deep for tears. (The Educational Magazine 54).

Throughout Jawdat Haydar’s talent, and in recognition of his outstanding achievement, he was awarded many medals:

He [Jawdat Haydar] Has been awarded the Golden Medal of Lebanese Merit, the Lebanese Order of the Cedars, the Ninth Medal from Pope
Jawdat Haydar, is a poet who had the certainty that “Arab native style” was not the path he will choose to follow. By writing poetry, by building a society of Lebanese poets and by attempting to revive Lebanese culture and literature, by adapting the western Shakespearean poetry Jawdat Haydar left his print on the sand of the Lebanese shores and of the Arab and western world. In his poems about Lebanon, we can clearly see the undying love that the poet vows to it by singing its praises but we can also notice the critical eye that Jawdat Haydar has towards the country for he doesn’t fail to notice its faults alongside of its beauties, however, no matter how clearly he sees the vices of Lebanon, his longing for it never fades away.

Jawdat Haydar's interest about Lebanon appears to be unlimited, his commitment boundless and his affection to his audience of readers. It's highly observed that Jawdat Haydar is continually bowing at the sacrificial table of this nation and offering his lyrics as a present and a gift to all that Lebanon brings to the table. In his poem 'Lebanon', the artist talks about "the eye of a craftsman had" that holds "such a heaven at the top of the priority list". For him, this nation is so impeccable that it must be the invention of a craftsman's creative energy, the result of a talented artist. The writer draws a faultless and divine picture of Lebanon, and his ‘sonnets’ go about as a masterpiece that reflects his adoration in a brilliant rainbow of landscapes.

A "heavenly view" is offered to us through the eyes of the writer, who goes ahead to portray in more profundity the ponders that lie before him. Jawdat Haydar notice a "dream of developing euphoria", which takes us back to the assurance that his interest is, undoubtedly, interminable. This interest and affection for the nature and its elements traced a commun point between him and Shakespeare at the level of the content and the meaning in their both sonnets.
In speaking about nationhood in Haydar’s poems, he does not just look upon Lebanon's outer excellence but also its renowned internal qualities. Like Dima Matta inserted it in her article:

In "Lebanon", the writer closes the lyric by specifying the vote based system that is held in "the banner of freedom", accordingly saying two extraordinary unique ideas that interrelate and exist together in this nation; majority rules system and freedom. In the ballad "Beirut", the artist portrays it as "the city that was keeping huge with destiny"; the capital spread general ideas, for example, "fellowship and adoration", it is depicted as a instructor who conveys lessons of insightful verities that "opened the purdah of brain". To be sure, one can't deny that for a significant long time, Lebanon was (and still is) considered as the most liberal nation in the Middle East. (6)

This critical eye toward Lebanon’s governing regimes can be highly observed in Shakespeare’s works, not only in his sonnets but also in his plays, like for instance the notions of rebellion Hamlet’s character.

Shakespeare’s impact and influence on Jawdat Haydar’s poetry has not came from none, Shakespeare’s affection on Jawdat Haydar was strongly felt in the form of his ballads, he followed a style of writing in his poetry to resemble and to sound like Shakespeare’s Sonnets, in the majority of Haydar’s poems he uses a system of rhymes that is similar to Shakespeare:

How I long to saddle my horse and fly [a]

Back over the tracks of life to regain [b]
The age of my youth ere I age and die [a]
Then o then! I’ll love and be loved again [b]
And so I pass through the trellis of time [c]
Having my doubts wrestling over my head [d]
Could I on the ladder of the years climb [c]
And go backward while I’m going ahead [d]
Oh God! but why should I age bending wane [e]
Why not by your will live once and again [f]
Shrouded by your blessings and grace remain [e]
The Wonder Man who dies and lives again? [f] (The Wonder Man)

This poem consisted of three stanzas and the rhymes came as following. First stanza, a-b-a-b. Second stanza c-d-c-d. and third stanza e-f-e-f. And this is the same structure that William Shakespeare used in writing his sonnets, if we take for example Shakespeare’s 15th sonnet:

‘When I consider euery thing that growes’:

When I consider every thing that grows [a]
Holds in perfection but a little moment. [b]
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows [a]
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment. [b]

When I perceive that men as plants increase, [c]
Cheered and checked even by the self-same skie [d]
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease, [c]
And wear their brave state out of memory. [d]
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay, [e]
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight, [f]
Where wasteful time debateth with decay [e]
To change your day of youth to sullied night, [f]. (Shakespeare, 24)

As similar to this, in another poem that is entitled ‘Perhaps’ he uses the same rhyme scheme of Shakespeare’s famous sonnets, a-b-a-b then c-d-c-d then e-f-e-f then g-g.

Should patience be freed from its reticence [a]
Would it un-curtain the secret of time [b]
To lay bare our origin by ev'dence [a]
Showing how we rise age and back to lime [b]

In a round trip go'ng ahead we go back [c]
And we are impotent to make a change [d]
Of a proc'dure go and wait to come back [c]
Though we deem it right it looks a bit strange [d]

To keep our heels on a half measured track [e]
Where we stop fall leaving only a name [f]
'Tis a dream to be a pho'nxix and live back [e]
Centuries of glory out of the flame [f]

Withal I bel'eve though empty is my hand [g]
The earth perhaps will make me understand [g] (Perhaps)
And this completely the same structure that was used in Shakespeare’s most famous sonnet ‘Shall I compare thee to a summers day?’

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? [a]
Thou art more lovely and more temperate: [b]
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, [a]
And summer's lease hath all too short a date: [b]

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, [c]
And often is his gold complexion dimmed, [d]
And every fair from fair sometime declines, [c]
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed: [d]

But thy eternal summer shall not fade, [e]
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st, [f]
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade, [e]
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st, [f]

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, [g]
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. [g] (Shakespeare, 28)

There are fourteen lines in a Shakespearean sonnet. The first twelve lines are divided into stanzas basically three quatrains with four lines each. In the three quatrains the poet establishes a theme or problem and then resolves it in the final two lines, called the couplet. The rhyme scheme of the quatrains is a-b-a-b c-d-c-d e-f-e-f. The couplet has the rhyme scheme g-g. This sonnet structure is commonly called the English sonnet or the Shakespearean sonnet, and this is exactly the same structure that Jawdat Haydar utilized in writing most of his poems.
To illustrate more the similarities between Haydar’s poetry and Shakespeare’s sonnets at the level of the structure, Jawdat Haydar’s and Shakespeare's sonnets are written predominantly in the meter which known as iambic pentameter, a rhyme scheme in which each sonnet line consists of ten syllables, in Shakespeare’s 12th sonnet:

> When i [] do count [] the clock [] that tells [] the time
> when in [] dis grace [] with for [] tune and [] men’s eyes (Shakespeare 22)

And this is the same structure of Iambic pentameter that is used in Jawdat Haydar’s poems, if we take for example the poem of ‘Lebanon’:

> The deep [] is ri [] sing, the [] ships hea [] ding east
> The green [] mountains [] capped [] with snow [] behind

(Lebanon)

Only three of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets do not conform to this structure: Sonnet 99, which has 15 lines; Sonnet 126, which has 12 lines; and Sonnet 145, which is written in iambic tetrameter.

At the level of the characteristics and the themes used in their sonnets, Romanticism was the umbrella that bounds together the two talented poets. Like Shakespeare, Jawdat Haydar followed the path of the Romantics, he glorified nature and nationality, Jawdat’s existing in USA has crossed the periode of the industrial revolution, he tackled subjects and matters in his poetry that westerners were no longer seemed to talk about. Romanticism has started to be vanished at that time but the Lebanese poet tried to revive and to give another birth to this literary movement in a time where philosophy started to dominate the literature of that time.

Jawdat Haydar is the poet of diversity, he has some poems in love and he dedicated to his wife and his influencer the best of his poems, and nature has never faded away from his poetry especially the sea. The Arab cases like the Palestinian affaire were dominating haydar’s mind, in
some of his poems he expresses his pain about what was going on on the palestinian land and the violations of the human rights. He was mentally suffering from the Lebanese war where he expressed his unfortunate and his deep sadness and he wrote a poem for the lebanese revolution. Similar to Shakespeare, the most themes that dominated Haydar’s poetry were ‘death’ ‘feeling’ ‘affection’ undoubtly these were the basic elements in Shakespeare’s sonnets.

The global language is another linking element between Jawdat Haydar’s poetry and William Shakespeare’s sonnets, they were addressing the international and the universal audience of readers by tackling matters and themes that seems to be a sharing point within all human beings, no matter what belief they hold or to what culture they belong, and this globality gave and offered to their poetry a universal existing and a very wide fame.

At the level of vocabulary, william Shakespeare’s words were strongly present in almost every single poem written by Jawdat Haydar, this last used and imported some key words that are believed to be the features of what is known as the ‘Shakesperean Language’. Terms such as (thee), (thou), (‘Tis), (‘ve), (O) ... and the list is too long. And here we can devide two types of imported vocabulary, first type could stand for the terms that are truly Shakespeare’s words and that were adapted and used as they are by Jawdat Haydar in his poems, the second type is where Hayder used Shakespeare’s notions in a mold of modern vocabulary to reform and create some words of modern language but hold Shakespearean inspiration , it’s like recreating a modern Shakespearean language that is clearly understandable, speaking about words such as: (cres'ent), (ess'ntial), (dyn'mite), (en'gma), (noth'ngness), (o'erall) … and the list is limitless.

Jawdat Haydar’s new invented words were created and used due to the influence that Shakespeare left on the Lebanese poet, some examples like what comes in Haydar’s poem that is entitled ‘There’s no speed like a mind to travel’:

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Friends never drill the mind more than enough
The rig will damage the well of your dreams
Be sane in your attitude and rebuff
All your sup'rfluous hopes and their gl'aming gleams.
(There’s no speed like a mind to travel).

In his poem ‘we shall ever be yearning’ Jawdat included such invented terms:

The one preferred by Adam lost to reg’in
And live back in our old and sweet home ’gain

Paradise where the sacred rivers run
Where the birds sing and we enjoy to hear
Where there'll ne'er be an eclipse of the sun
And where there'll ne'er be pollution to fear

There we promise never to touch the fruit
Though we shall e'er be yearning for Beirut (We shall ever be yearning)

Shakespeare’s original terms and words took also a considerable place within the body of Jawdat Haydar’s verses. “O life! There's nothing more to enchant me” (Lebanon) and:

So friend, be not sure of the things as they seem.

’Tis like churning the sea to skim but the ream.

That's why our joy remains tied to our sorrow.

That's why what's true today may not be tomorrow. (On Lebanon).
And in so many other poems like:

There's no land but dear old Texas for me.

’Tis paradise ‘tis the home of the free. […]

I love thee old Texas, I love thy land.

I love the plains, rivers, rocks, hills and sand. (Dear Old Texas).

And the list goes on and on.

III-2- Haydar’s Poetry: Reception and Implications

The fame, the glory, the success that Jawdat Haydar gained and earned through his poetry and his adaptation of Shakespeare’s sonnets was strongly believed and deservedly earned, Jawdat Haydar intentionally or unintentionally has recreated and invented a new version of Shakespeare in an Arab mold and with Arab features, and has represented the old and traditional Shakespeare’s sonnets and poetry in a modern understandable language, he simply gave another birth to Shakespearean poetry in our Arab World.

As a result of this successful adaptation and as a result of the fame that Jawdat Haydar’s poetry reaches, this last was praised by holding the title of ‘The Arab Shakespeare’, the title that was giving to him by his friends his family and the mass of scholars and doctors whom witnessed the Lebanese poet and whom were part of his life. This title that became his nickname that is always following his name in ceremonies and festivals.

Many Scholars have talked about western and Shakespeare’s influence on Jawdat Haydar, In Dr John M Munro’s Foreword, and after talking about Haydar’s glory and merit he mentioned the western influencers that were present within the Lebanese poet writings, he assumed:
Haydar's poetry reveals a catholicity of caste, not only in its wide range of subjects and themes, but also in terms of the writers who have left their influence on it. One can hear echoes of William Shakespeare, the down-to-earth plainness of Robert Frost, while in some of his more recent compositions, one can recognize a sympathy for Romanticism. (Munro xv)

And like Amel Dibo stated in her speech that:

Jawdat Haydar stands in front of us as a bridge between English readers and Shakespeare … and a centennial bridge between Romantic age old poetry and modern times. (4).

Dr Kassim A. Shaaban a Ph.D director in his foreword talked about the Arab Shakespeare title saying:

Jawdat R. Haydar, the poet who known as "The Shakespeare of the Arabs," projects in his poetry a fresh, rational perspective on the confusion of our lives and helps bring some order, vigor, and wisdom into these lives.

(Shaaban vii).

In Jawdat Haydar’s autobiography that was published in Arabic language under the title of (Michwar Al Omor) which means ‘The Journey of Life’ it contains views and opinions of both Arab and Western scholars and critics concerning the ‘Arab Shakespeare title’ and a long poem in Arabic language written by the poet Adib Farhat glorifying the deserved title of The Arab Shakespeare.

Despite the fact that many Arab thinkers and talented minds were highly neglected and excluded from the Arab circle of fame, and may be this could be the result of the Arab uninteresting in science and education which is a truth and a fact we must confess and accept, unfortunately. Jawdat Haydar traced his path of success by profiting from his existence and his living in USA and by selectively expressing his talent, it’s true that Haydar’s glory didn’t exceed
the Lebanese boundaries but this will not neglect the fact that the Lebanese poet had really created some priceless masterpieces that deserve all Arabs’ attention and respect.

Of course someone who had been honored with medals for humanitarian and poetic achievements from more than one national government and from the patriarchs of more than one religion, including one from Pope John XXIII, Someone who his poetry is studied in Lebanese high schools and universities, someone who fought and suffered to bring poetry back to Lebanon after the civil war, someone who had come from a family of intellectual landowners who had been exiled to Anatolia by the Ottomans, someone who made a long journey to achieve what he achieved, of course this figure and this poet must deserve more than what he had honored, his poetry must be taught in every single literary institution in our Arab world.
III-3- List of Works Cited


Conclusion:

Al-Bassam’s trilogy that consisted of three consecutive plays: The Al Hamlet Summit that was performed in 2002 and was basically an adaptation of Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Richard III: An Arab Tragedy which was performed in 2007 as an adaptation to Shakespeare’s original Richard III, and the last play in this trilogy was released under the title of The Speakers Progress performed in 2011 as a reflection to Shakespeare’s masterpiece The twelfth night, made the Arab reader able to grasp and understand Shakespeare’s drama and made a mental cultural meeting between Arab audience and Shakespeare.

Sulayman Al-Bassam like other Arab playwrights, played a significant role in establishing an Arabic dramatic field of study, his adaptations of Shakespeare’s drama provided the audiences as well as scholars with a full understanding of Shakespeare’s play in an Arab mold, by including terms of Arab culture, religion, and language, and he gave a full understanding about the political issues that are bounding our Arab region, like he was producing Shakespearean drama from an Arab point of view.

If Sulayman Al-Bassam painted the picture of the Arab Shakespeare as a playwright, Jawdat Haydar, from the other hand, created an extension between the Arab world and Shakespeare’s sonnets, they both helped in creating cultural lines that are linking the Arab world with English literature, and in making us as Arabs part of the universality of Shakespeare and his everlasting works.

Of course English and Westerners have Shakespeare, as Arabs we could be able to have an Arab Shakespeare if we gave enough attention to our Arab thinkers, not just Jawdat Haydar
and Sulayman Al-Bassam but this is the case of so many others whom are ignored and having no opportunity to express themselves.

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