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A Study of Adapting Shakespeare's "Romeo And Juliet" In Albaiaati's "Romeo And Juliet In Baghdad"

ABSTRACT

Shakespeare's classic tragedy "Romeo and Juliet," which captures the spirit of modernism, is adapted and set in a modernist play in the modern Iraqi city of Baghdad. In order to represent the socio-political realities and cultural subtleties of Baghdad in the modern era, this paper explores how the play's themes and narrative structure are reconstructed and re-imagined. It explores the inspiration for "Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad," looking at the playwright and cast's goals and aesthetic decisions. In order to portray a feeling of the contradictory realities and complicated identities every day in Baghdad, the paper examines how the adaptation employs modernist characteristics like fragmentation, self-reflexivity.

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دراسة في تكييف مسرحية شكسبير "روميو وجولييت" في مسرحية البياتي "روميو وجولييت في بغداد"

الخلاصة:

مأساة شكسبير الكلاسيكية "روميو وجولييت"، التي تجسد روح الحادثة، تم تكييفها وتُدور أحداثها في مسرحية حديثة في مدينة بغداد العراقية الحديثة. من أجل تمثيل الحقائق الاجتماعية والسياسية والخفايا الثقافية لبغداد في العصر الحديث، تستكشف هذه الورقة كيفية إعادة بناء موضوعات المسرحية وبنيتها السردية وإعادة تصورها. يستكشف مصدر إلهام "روميو وجولييت في بغداد"، بالنظر إلى أهداف الكاتب المسرحي والممثلين والقرارات الجمالية. ومن أجل تصوير الشعور بالحقائق المتناقضة والهويات المعقدة كل يوم في بغداد، تبحث الورقة في كيفية توظيف التكيف للخصائص الحداثيّة مثل التجزئة، والانعكاس الذاتي، والانفصال عن السرد الخطي التقليدي.

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Introduction

Many people consider the English poet and the playwright William Shakespeare the most excellent writer and dramatist in history. He is frequently called the "Bard of Avon" and England's national poet. Shakespeare first gained recognition as an actor, and even though his dramatic career quickly overshadowed his theatrical reputation, he continued to be a significant actor until the end of his life. His remaining compositions, such as a few joint works, include roughly 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two lengthy narrative poems, and a few more poems. His plays have been translated into every primary living language and are used more frequently than any other dramatist. On June 26, 1564, he saw his baptism in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was born. He is a literary genius and prophet whose works speak to more; they encapsulate the human condition. He presents the timeless values of tolerance and humanity because he puts them together better than anyone else. It is difficult to envision a world devoid of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's plays and poems, written five centuries ago, have been performed worldwide, inviting audiences to give them a personal touch. Romeo and Juliet is an early tragedy by William Shakespeare about two teenage "star-cross'd lovers" (add reference) whose "untimely deaths" ultimately unite their feuding households. Literary critics have highly praised the play for its language and dramatic

effect. It was among Shakespeare's most popular plays during his lifetime and, along with Hamlet, is one of his most frequently performed plays. Romeo and Juliet as a play is widely represented as an archetypal young love story. On the other hand, Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad is a Shakespearean adaptation that highlights a political conflict with a religious undertone. It illuminates the conflict between the two conflicting groups .

Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad were written and directed by Monadhil Doood Al-Bayati, allowing the Iraqi theatre to participate in the Shakespeare International Festival in Stratford in April 2012. Al-Bayati is an Iraqi dramatist, director, and actor. He was born in Basra In 1966, and after earning his directing diploma from the Fine Arts Institution of Baghdad in 1982, a high diploma in theatre directing in 1986, and a PhD in performing arts from the Theatre Academy in Russia in 1999, he remained a resident of Basra for a time. Among Basra for a bime. Here is Baghdad. The Boy Mahran, The Time of Milland, and Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad are among the plays Daood has written. All other plays have been staged in Baghdad except for Romeo and Juliet, which was played in England.

Methodology.

This research aims to develop a methodology for adapting Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in the context of Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad, a modern retelling set in contemporary Iraq. This research adopts adaptation as one kind of intertextuality theory, meaning that the interpretation or meaning of any text is connected to or

related to the meaning of all other texts. As a result, all writings are intertextual and cannot be understood in isolation (Bresslar 2012). According to Linda Hutcheon in her book "A Theory of Adaptation," "there is an underlying similarity between all media in terms of their function in the adaptation process, and every genre reveals details about how adaptation works" (Hutcheon 2006).

Almaaroorf and Mahmood define intertextuality as "a postmodern critical theory that alters the concept of the text. It refers to the interrelationships between a particular text and other texts. Intertextual relations include rearranging, insinuation, or allusion related to the subject, structure, transformation, and simulation influences of one text on another that show reverberating consequences". (3) In the case of "Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad," it could involve exploring how Shakespeare's play has been adapted to reflect the cultural, social, and political realities of Iraq and examining how the original themes of love, conflict, and tragedy are understood and portrayed in the Iraqi context. This approach could involve analysing the changes made to the original story, including local cultural elements, and the impact of the adaptation on the audience's perception and reception of the play .

Discussion:

Plot Summary of Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad:

An Arabic adaptation based only partially on Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad The show did not work as a complete theatre piece since the

writing wavered between honesty and histrionics, and there needed to be more chemistry between the title characters. Still, it offered fresh insights into Shakespeare's play and life in Iraq after the war. Ruining the well-known tale of young love, the production emphasised parts of Romeo and Juliet that are rarely highlighted, such as the machismo of young men and the avarice of their fathers, illustrating how the confluence of passion, youth, and greed results in tragedies like those one reads about in plays that date back 500 years and the headlines of the day.

Instead of being Veronese teens in the setting of this play, Romeo and Juliet were weary of the world, who, nine years before the war, had been lovers. Not only were Capulet and Montague rivals in business, but they were also brothers, and the source of their conflict was the pearl boat their father had left them. Montague was identified as a Shiite by his black and white scarf, while Capulet was identified as a Sunni by his red and white scarf. The father of Juliet wishes to wed his daughter to a member of the Mujahideen who travelled to Iraq to resist the occupation. The rival families separate Romeo and Juliet and forbid interfaith unions. Even though their labour benefits the eldest brother, the second-oldest brother and his offspring live in poverty. As time passes, the two brothers' disagreement intensifies, and their animosity grows. Romeo and Juliet, against their parent's wishes, choose to wed in secret in Al-Najat Church. Their history instructor, who underlines that interfaith marriages still happen in Iraq despite the outbreak of sectarian strife, supports their decision .

Romeo and Juliet's final scene in Baghdad is set in Sayidat-al-Najat, when the violent, irrational, and radical Paris shoots himself up, killing the two lovers. The history professor offers the leaders of the two rival families Juliet's scarf when they visit the church following the explosion. As a symbol, these families gesture, take the scarf and exit the church. The scene serves as a warning that greed, dishonesty, prejudice, and arrogance are about to end. This adaptation celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Baghdad, highlighting the transformative power of art, music, dance, and storytelling in fostering understanding, appreciation, and unity among diverse communities. By weaving these elements into the adaptation, "Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad" can become a powerful exploration of political turmoil, sectarian tensions, and the yearning for peace in a divided society. It aims to reflect the realities faced by communities living amidst political conflict while highlighting the timeless themes of love, sacrifice, and the human cost of war.

Socio-Cultural Context in Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad:

From a thematic perspective, Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad borrows the topic of love from the original work, with passages denouncing the sectarian strife that arose in Iraq following US intervention. It illustrates how the occupation significantly impacted Iraq's social, cultural, and political life. The author incorporates well-known Shakespearean characters—Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Tybalt, and Paris—and Iraqi characteristics

into the play. In order to emphasise a modern period of Iraqi history following 2003, the storyline has modified the Shakespearean tale and elements while including Iraqi realities. The aspects of the conflict in Iraq's social and cultural spheres are chronicled in the play.

Romeo and Juliet's Testimony in Baghdad addresses the legitimacy of power dynamics by focusing on the tension between Sunni and Shia. Even though certain words are not stated, Iraqi readers will still recognise them because they are implied. The red and white keffiyeh that Capulet, Juliet's father, wears represents his Sunni faith. However, his black and white scarf depicts Montague, Romero's father, as a Shiite person. Beyond their outward manifestation, their discourse involves the will to power as it is viewed through a sectarian discourse focused on the concepts of self and other. By adapting Shakespeare's play and introducing Iraqi folkloric songs, Daood portrays joy and happiness. For example, when Romeo announces his engagement to Juliet, Mercutio and Benvolio carry him on their shoulders and sing a traditional Iraqi wedding song: "He is the groom, and his friends escort him to his bride with joy and happiness" (Al-Azraki et al., 94). In the adaptation, the playwright combines the intertextualized marriage with the intertextualized Iraqi song to show the old play in a contemporary context.

Daood points out some of the damaging and shabby customs in the community. For example, the cousin has the right to marry his cousin; this right belongs to him alone, even if it is done against the girl's wishes or without her consent. Father of Juliet says, "Tomorrow is her wedding, and if she doesn't agree—I

swear to God, I will call for Paris now, and you will get married right now" (Al-Azraki et al., p. 89). Similarly, there is no denying a big difference between ease of use leading to flattening and simplicity leading to creativity. Daood also employs the indigenization of the comedic scenes and simplicity in the original play to highlight the mistreatment of women in Iraq, particularly that of divorced and widowed women. Daood criticises the patriarchal tribal society's mistreatment of Iraqi women. For instance, Tybalt yells at Nurse, "Nobody asked you, stupid" (Al-Azraki et al., p. 92), and Juliet is made to wed her cousin even though she does not love him.

The two families quarrel about who should own a yacht that their father left them. The families are the Montagu and Capulet families. In this way, the essential query is always the same: who controls the nation? This makes the question of who is in charge a metaphor for the situation in Iraq. The play concludes with a reflection on the power of cultural heritage to unite rather than divide. The families, recognizing the destructive consequences of their cultural animosity, come together to honour the legacy of Romeo and Juliet's love, vowing to bridge cultural divides and embrace the shared cultural tapestry that makes Baghdad unique.

Political Context in Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad:

The contemporary political history of Iraq is full of intolerance, brutality, and instability. Ideas like cruelty, betrayal, and the disloyalty of some Iraqi politicians have been indigenoused in this contemporary adaptation piece. The history professor

details the power struggle and dominance that are taking place among the lawmakers in the Iraqi parliament, whom the two fathers represent. Shakespeare's play about a conflict between two families is subtly transformed into a political and sectarian conflict between two factions by Daood. He demonstrates how terrorists and certain powerful nations, with support from the US government, are also contributing factors to the conflict .

In the play, the American General is depicted as a character. About the damaging foreign meddling in Iraqi politics, Romeo's father tells Juliet's father, "You are going to strangers for help" (Al-Azarki et al., p.77). Inevitably, the incidents resulted in suicide bombs, and there have been numerous car bombs in Iraq, killing a large number of innocent people. There was one of those vehicle explosions close to Sayidat-al-Najat, or Our Lady of Salvation, a Syrian Catholic church in Baghdad, where both of the Romeo and Juliet lovers take refuge before being slain. Daood selected the church because there had been a terrible explosion in it; also, the church represents the harmonious cohabitation and relationship between many religious groups and sects in Iraq, including Muslims and Christians. It also conveys the adapter's message to readers worldwide about the harmony and togetherness of the Iraqi people. Ultimately, "Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad" from a social perspective aims to examine and challenge social hierarchies, prejudices, and systemic injustices. It highlights the potential for love, compassion, and collective action to drive social change and create a more inclusive and just society.

Conclusion:

The audience's experience of witnessing their lives unfold is the true narrative of "Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad." The drama allowed them to step back from their narratives long enough to consider how the past nine years had affected their motherland, with all of its tremendous loss, suffering, and deaths. It was a chance to let go, to make sense of things, to find healing, and even to laugh. The play's central narrative, driven by fear, misunderstanding, and pride, is a universal tale of conflict's emergence and growth. It highlights the necessity of togetherness and illustrates how outside factors may incite conflict and split groups. Here, a love story serves as a doorway into a realm that viewers might never be able to comprehend otherwise. We can gain insight into the subtleties of contemporary Iraqi society by connecting with the tale of youthful lovers. This theme cuts beyond both time and cultural boundaries. Viewers can better comprehend close-knit families and the deteriorating historical ties between Sunni and Shiite Muslims by watching the performance. Many people worldwide might share Iraq's similar objectives, which include reducing violence and improving quality of life. More significantly, these plays force us to face universal realities: conflict exists in all human civilisations and must be resolved before it gets out of hand. Above all, though, the need to love and be loved exists for everyone and everywhere, be it Baghdad or Verona, lovers like Romeo and Juliet, or siblings like Montague and Capulet.

Thus, the play focuses more on how families, towns, and nations can be rapidly ripped apart than their romance. The narrative invites the audience to consider how pride, remorse, a lack of mutual understanding, and outside intervention are barriers to amicable conflict resolution. We never know if peace will return once blood has been shed.

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