

## Shakespeare Adapted by Contemporary Arab-American Poets: Two Modes of Cultural Interaction

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### Abstract

Adaptation is a literary technique which encompasses dialogic interactions between cultures. It can best echo the principles of multiculturalism through omitting cultural spaces and permitting a Self/Other dialogue. This technique is a postmodernist practice of intertextuality that intersects with Harold Bloom's paradigm of creative influence. This paper focuses on selected poems by the contemporary Arab-American poet Samuel Hazo in his poetry collection *The Song of the Horse* which examines his adaptation of William Shakespeare in a way that indicates his assimilative identity as an American citizen of bicultural origins. It also highlights Philip Metres's adaptation of the Shakespearean sonnet in his poem "Compline" from his book *Sand Opera*. The paper argues that Hazo's influence by Shakespeare can best illustrate Harold Bloom's paradigm of Daemonization which shows that the poet's influence by canonical literature is indicated in his attempt to maintain a counter-sublime to that of the precursor's sublime. Unlike Hazo, Metres proposes a matured being of hyphenated identity which seeks to break with the established norms of the canon experiencing Bloom's paradigm of Tessera. His adaptation can best echo the multicultural discourse of the 'salad bowl.'

**Keywords:** adaptation, assimilation, dialogue, identity, influence, integration, multiculturalism.

### Introduction

Adaptation is a process of textual recycling which expresses an overt relationship to prior texts, "revealingly called sources." (Hutcheon and O'Flynn, 2013:3) It entails recreation and transposition and shows how different texts can undergo an overt or covert relationship with prior texts which are known as sources. Hutcheon and O'Flynn point out that adaptation is "repetition without replication", that is, it aims to bring into memory a particular text, making a cultural alteration on it in order to fit a new context or to call the adapted source into question. (Hutcheon and O'Flynn, 2013: 7) Adaptation, in this sense, provokes Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism, stressing an ongoing relationship between individual texts and an entire cultural system. Hutcheon argues that such a dialogic textual relationship defies the Post-Romantic notions of texts' originality, autonomy and uniqueness. It recalls the post-structuralist notions of difference and multiplicity and introduces texts as a visible or invisible "mosaic of citations." (Hutcheon and O'Flynn, 2013: 21)

Adaptation, which is a creative form of intertextuality, is an artistic re-visitation of canonical works. It is involving a shift in their genres or mediums, that is, a work of drama to movie, a work of fiction to poetry or a work of literature to ballets and so on. The term intertextuality was first conceived in Julia Kristeva's essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in which she argues that any literary text cannot exist as a

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closed system, detached from socio-cultural discourses. It is “constructed as a mosaic of quotations” which is produced out of textual intersection, that is, any text is not an authentic production of one single author but rather an absorption and a transformation of another prior text. (Kristeva, 1986:37) Kristeva’s theory, which has been stimulated by Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism, emphasizes the intra-cultural nature of the text which makes it an open space for socio-cultural ethos.

Intertextuality is a system of textual apparatus which the Indian- American thinker Gayatri Spivak defines as a “network of politics, history, society, sexuality.” (Spivak, 1987: 12) It typifies a politicized understanding of culture when it functions against the supremacy of the ideological systems which manipulate cultures. Its goal, in this sense, is at large sociopolitical, relating to issues such as race, empire, gender or economics. Adaptation, according to Spivak’s definition, entails raising insightful questions such as why a text is adapted, that is what discourse the new text explores, which best befits the new context, and how, that is the techniques and tropes which the new author employs to introduce new thematic concerns. Adaptation, accordingly, may take place for purposes of imposing identity, voicing the marginalized or defying systems of power.

Dialogue is a key concept which illustrates the intersection of intertextuality and the theory of multiculturalism. Charles Taylor considers that dialogue is a “crucial feature” of the human nature which enables individuals to maintain self-definition. (Taylor, 1994:32) Dialogue has a big role in multicultural communities where recognition of minorities is a principal concern. Taylor argues that dialogue helps to recognize “the equal value of different cultures; that we not only make them survive, but acknowledge their worth.” (Taylor, 1994: 64) Continuous dialogue with the “Other” helps minorities to attain their dignity through public recognition. Taylor argues that citizens’ dignity is based on the idea that all members of the community are “equally worthy of respect” and recognition. (Taylor, 1994: 41)

The early philosophical theory of the Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin emphasizes the role of dialogue in the human life. People are in continuous dialogue with everybody and everything in the world. It is through dialogue that people’s unique identities are realized and their roles in the world are assigned. Bakhtin’s philosophy of dialogism has been practiced on the novel as a type of literary theory; however, it has been also taken as a model of cultural debate which implies exchanging different viewpoints through people’s interaction. Dialogue is an essential part of the human society and it is also a principal part in Bakhtin’s theory of language; however, it foregrounds socio-cultural dimensions manifested in class “divisions and hierarchies within society.” (Allen, 2011: 21) Dialogism provides a platform for the multicultural theorists who criticize social hierarchy and insist on the right of the minorities in multicultural communities to express themselves and develop their opinions through cultural dialogue. It permits minorities in multicultural communities to define their collective identity, foster their particularity then maintain their dignity through recognition. Julia Kristeva adopts Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism in her own theory of literary intertextuality. She builds her argument of textual dialogue on his discourse of the double-voiced which is based on the view of the “intertextual nature of language.” (Allen, 2011: 22)

Adaptation illustrates Bloom’s six praxis of creative influence which he manifests in his outstanding book *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). Bloom’s theory investigates the struggle which the posterior

authors face to overcome the anxiety of literary influence which Bloom considers unavoidable. Bloom's six praxes are: Clinamen, or poetic misprision, that is swerving away from the precursor's work; Tessera, which refers to the antithetical completion of the precursor's work; Kenosis, which means breaking away with the precursor's work; Daemonization, which refers to maintaining "counter- sublime in reaction to the precursor's sublime"; Askesis, which is a process of separation from the precursor by curtailing; and Apophrades, which means reading the precursor's work in terms of the successor's work. (Bloom, 1997:14-15) Bloom points out that these six praxes of influence are not altogether passive since they represent "a matrix" of textual relationship. (Bloom, 1997: xxiii) Adaptation and influence, in this sense, are synonymous tasks which express a process of textual call and response for different purposes such as psychological, postcolonial, feminist or multicultural. Traces of influence by canonical literature in postmodernist Arab-American poetry indicate a multicultural thrust to create a Self/Other dialogue in order to omit cultural spaces and fulfill integration. It is an act of self-affirmation which makes their voice audible and attracts a wide scale of American audience to their poetry.

Harold Bloom places Shakespeare at the center of the canon, arguing that he excels all other Western writers in "cognitive acuity, linguistic energy and power of invention." (Bloom, 1997: 43) Shakespeare acquires a unique status in the literary canon because of his aesthetic supremacy which provides a global understanding of human culture. Bloom comments that the "substance" of Shakespeare's works provides a multicultural apprehension that surpasses the Eurocentric thinking. (Bloom, 1997: 59) He asserts that Shakespeare remained the most influential author for four centuries and describes him as an "indispensable author" whose works continue to appeal to audiences of different races and languages. (Bloom, 1997: xv) The adaptation of Shakespeare by non-Western authors indicates his universality and his place at the center of the English canon. Much of his works found their way of trans-cultural immigration through their relevance to contemporary context.

The Arab- American poet Samuel Hazo, as a case in point, finds in the different works of Shakespeare a model with which he can explore issues related to human and social life such as: death, aging and the role assigned to poets in societies. Hazo (1928-) is a poet, novelist, essayist, a playwright and the founder and director of the international poetry Forum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he was born to Lebanese and Assyrian immigrants. After the death of his mother at an early age, the poet and his brother were raised by their aunt who inflicted in them the love of learning and education. Hazo earned his B.A. degree from Notre Dame University in 1948. Between 1950- 1957, Hazo enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, which became later an inspirational experience for him as a poet. He earned his M.A. degree from Duquesne University, where he later taught for forty-three years and from which he received Griffin Award for creative writing in 2005, and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He has been also awarded nine honorary doctorates. Hazo is the author of thirty books including *As They Sail* (poetry), *Just Once: New and Previous Poems* (poetry), *Stills* (fiction), *Watching Rain* (drama), *Spying For God* (essays), *The Pittsburgh That Stays Within You* (memoir) and *The Song of the Horse*, which comprises fifty years of his poetry. In 1993, he was chosen as the first State Poet for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which he held until 2003. (see Layton, 2010 :37-8)

Much of Hazo's poetry indicates a direct relevance to his life. He states that an inspired poet has a sparkling vision that can make the world different: "what the poet does is create a place for wonder or for doubt or silence or for nothing." (qtd. in Orfalea and El Musa, 2000: 118) He believes that poetry has nothing to do with genealogy and should not have. He appreciates poetry's ability to speak what cannot be said that it triggers a collective way of identification which surpasses identity and grapples instead with the dilemma of humanity. Hazo writes: "One writes out of what one is, and that is best done without self-consciousness." (qtd. in Orfalea and El Musa, 2000:118) The voice of poets, unlike these of politicians and broadcasts, speaks for the whole humanity not for a specific culture or identity.

Hazo alludes to one of the well-known Shakespearean characters in his play *Romeo and Juliet* in his poem "Thus Spake Mercutio" which explores the identity of the true poet and the role of poetry in society. Hazo comments that a true poet should "strive to make poetry an expected and readily accepted part of public discourse." (qtd. in Layton, 2010: 37) He seeks to demonstrate poetry's beauty and its relevance to the public, urging poets to avoid writing humbugged verses. In act one, scene four of Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio, Romeo's kinsman and his best friend to cheer his friend up after his love Rosalind left him: "*You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings / And soar with them above a common bound*" (Shakespeare, 2005: 375) Romeo and his two friends Benvolio and Mercutio attend secretly the Capulets' party. Mercutio, in these lines, refers to the Roman god of love, urging his friend Romeo to forget the pain that his former beloved caused him, and try to find another love. The speaker-poet in Samuel Hazo's poem "Thus Spake Mercutio" personifies the role of Mercutio, asking poets to write poetry which evokes the readers' emotions and senses like the love arrows of Cupid which 'stabbed' Romeo's heart:

*Let us*

*Have poetry that strikes us dumb*

*Or leaves us stabbed so deeply*

*That the wound in perpetuity stays raw.*

*Let us have that or nothing.* (Hazo, 2008: 124)

Mercutio is the foil character for Romeo who mocks his friend's over romantic vision of love. The speaker-poet of Hazo's poem similarly considers himself a foil for poets who write bad poetry which he describes as 'drivel' and 'humbug'. Shakespeare's Mercutio has an unpredictably volatile temperament; yet he has a devoted and loyal character as well as witty and rational traits that he detaches himself from the family feud of the Capulets and the Montagues. Mercutio, the speaker in Hazo's poem, is a witty, devout poet who is keen on poetry's high status in society.

Although Mercutio is a secondary character in the play, he takes a distinct role in it. His antithetical character to Romeo helps to define the protagonist's character better. Moreover, he has an ability to play on words that his utterances have different, interesting implications. When Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, scratches Mercutio with his sword, the latter replies by teasing him, calling him "king of cats" because of his quarrelsome character and his swiftness with the sword. He is as *sly as cats with nine lives*:

*Tybalt: What wouldst thou have with me?*

*Mercutio: Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives....*(Shakespeare:385)

The speaker-poet in Hazo's poem distances himself from bad poets whose poetry is no more than drivel that easily disappears from the memory of readers. He refers to them scornfully by alluding to Mercutio's description of Tybalt as 'the king of cats':

*Be they belaureled as the king  
of cats, I'll not recant.  
Euphues is no more poet  
Than a pig, oinking his drivel  
At the moon.*

Hazo, in these lines alludes to Euphues, a Greek name which symbolizes wit and gracefulness. The name is mentioned in two famous works by the English author John Lyly (1554-1606). The name then became inspirational for the emergence of the Elizabethan prose literary genre, Euphuism, which lived very shortly. Hazo uses this name as a symbol of bad poets who are unable to compose fine poetry because of their lack of poetic wit and talent. The poet, who stresses the necessity to present poetry orally as a means of connecting it with the public, uses a metaphorical visual image to compare the voice of bad poets to the noise that oinking pigs make. Fine poetry, on the other hand, is resembled to Solomon's "Song of Songs" which is mentioned in the last section of the Old Testament:

*And singsong rhymers  
By the millions shrink to nil  
beside the singer of the "Song of Songs"*

Bad poetry shrinks to nil when it stands beside the works of the giant poets who are metaphorically referred to as the tribe of Ben: "Name one of all / the acolytes who formed the Tribe / of Ben." Mercutio in Shakespeare's play criticizes Romeo's passivity out of love. Hazo's Mercutio criticizes poets who exploit the literary market through their writings, calling them 'marketeters'. They are false mongers who deserve disdain since life is too short to endure humbug:

*And those who pen for pelf  
and hawk their words as marketeters  
deserve the wages of disdain  
The time of breath is much  
Too brief for humbug.*

A true poet, according to Hazo, is the one who is able to gain access to eager listeners with poetry that throbs with zeal for humanity all over the world. This poem functions as a mentor for young poets to be memorable in life by writing poetry that speaks the unspeakable of the human struggles and emotions. Samuel Hazo's main thematic concerns include love, war, life's absurdity, death, aging and immortality. His style is generally meditative and obscure revealing the significance of observation in everyday life. In "After Mercutio", the poet alludes again to Shakespeare's character Mercutio but in a different context, exploring the nature of male / female love. This poem is a dramatic monologue which portrays a scene of two lovers who experience the sacramentality of passionate and erotic love. Mercutio, in Shakespeare's

play scorns Romeo's spiritual view of love asserting that it is a physical pursuing. In act I, scene iv Shakespeare uses pun to represent Mercutio's obscene view of love: "*If love be rough with you, be rough with love;/ Prick love for pricking and you beat love down.*"(Shakespeare: 375)

Influenced by Shakespeare's mastery of pun, Hazo opens his poem with an invitation by one of the two lovers to commemorate their love: "*Come we to this commemoration, / nude or garbed, we stay / in most ways one.*" (Hazo: 75) It is a commemoration of the speaker's love, of Mercutio's obscene love vision and of Romeo and Juliet whose love story will be retold forever. The poet espouses a post-Mercutian view of love which shows it nobler than bawdy intercourse. Physical passion complements the spiritual so that both unite the two lovers. He introduces in stanza three a set of sensual images and metaphors which suggest that love is both a physical and emotional pursuit which makes them one:

*A sweeter dark, a lover  
lets his fingertips be eyes  
until the lolling one he teases  
sheathes and thighs him to herself.*

The two lovers experience love, unaware of time and place. Hazo begins his poem describing the scene when the lovers meet at midnight, on the shore where the light of the moon "enrobes" the place. The two lovers wander there as beachcombers, indifferent of everything except their love which intoxicates them. It is as "sorcery" which robs their minds and makes them mad: "*by all this sorcery, we dance / fandangos on the shore before we sleep.*" The poet ends his poem with the voice of the lover who asserts that love bemuses them both and makes them free: "*...mildly bemused and wildly free./ For you./ For me.*"

Hazo raises philosophical questions centering on life and aging in his poems "For the Dead, It's Over" and "God and Man" which are inspired by Shakespeare's portrayal of the drama of life as a stage and human beings as actors in his play *As You Like It*. The poet adapts Shakespeare's metaphor of life as a stage and people as actors in a play which the latter currently refers to in many of his play: "*All the world's a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players./ They have their exits and their entrances*"(*As You Like It*, act ii, scene vi). Shakespeare, in these lines, reduces all human life to absurdity, describing it as a futile drama that one enters with birth and exits with death. He ends his sketch of human life in despair: "*Last scene of all, / That ends this strange, eventful history,...*" The metaphorical image of life as an ephemeral drama is also featured in his tragedy play *Macbeth* in which he melancholically describes man as a poor player and life as a tale "*Told by an idiot, ...Signifying nothing.*" (*Macbeth*, V,v)

Hazo, in the same context, expresses his woeful attitude over the mystery of aging and death. Life's absurdity and death are currently explored in Hazo's poetry with rhythmic style and vigor imagery. In his one-stanza poem "God and Man", the poet's fear of death is instilled in the melancholic tone of the speaker who metaphorically describes God as a play director who has left actors onstage without script or directions:

*After casting the first act, checking sections*

*Of scenery and mastering His rage*  
*Because the female lead blundered on page*  
*One, He left the actors to themselves on stage*  
*Without a script and fretting for directions.*(Hazo 2008:4)

Hazo's poem encompasses religious denotations, suggested in the third line which refers to the Biblical story of Man's expel from Eden after Eve submits herself to the Serpent's temptations. God, the director of this universe, is furious because of a female's blunder. Man, as a result, is doomed to eternal suffering in a futile life.

In "For the Dead, It's Over", the poet again likens life and aging to stage and acting:  
*Our rebellion like an actor near*  
*The middle of the final staging*  
*Of a play that ends before*  
*Its time and leaves us raging.* (Hazo, 2008: 178)

Death cuts the play of life on its final act and ends it before its time. Hazo adapts Shakespeare's portrayal of death as sleep that ends fret and rage: "*They're spared the fretting and the raging/ that prevent us from surrendering/ at last to sleep, or paging.*" Hamlet, in one of the famous soliloquies in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, questions life and death in the form of paradox, that is, being and not being. He describes death as sleep that ends shocks and aches: "... ..*To die, to sleep/ No more, and by a sleep to say we end/ The heartache and the thousand natural shocks*" (act iii, scene i) Hamlet in this soliloquy questions whether sleep is like death, then dreams would be like beginning a new life that is devoid of rage and fret: "*For in that sleep of death what dreams may come*" The speaker in Hazo's poem lives an internal struggle arguing on the futility of life and the fear of death, like Hamlet who argues with himself on stage: "*An argument we're always waging/ with ourselves like Hamlet*" Both question life and death in a paradoxical language. Death is like sleep that lets us dream and thus disengage in a futile life: "*To let us dream we're disengaging/ from whatever fate or fear/ awaits us in our aging*" (Hazo, 2008:178) When one is living a life close to death, then only death stops worry and fret. Both Hamlet and the speaker-poet live a disturbed state of mind though for different reasons. Their melancholy leads them to contemplation over the most difficult questions. Hazo employs a language of paradox: life / death, engaging / disengaging, waging / paging: "*Because the fear of aging/ makes us deal with death/ without a way of disengaging*" He makes assertion through negation, emphasizing that death is an engaging in a new eternal life through disengaging in the prior mortal life.

Hazo is a thoughtful poet who has a prolific ability to translate everyday life experiences into familiar poetic images. His mastery is shown in his ability to create juxtaposition, bringing antitheses side by side. However, Hazo's complete absorption of the host culture is shown in his inability to free himself from the English literary tradition, establishing an authentic voice of his own. He is a precursor poet who witnessed two ages of Arab- American poetry; however, he is best classified with modern Arab- American poets whose poetry reflects the assimilative identity of Arab immigrants who expose a high

regard to the host culture. Hazo's adaptations are forms of tribute or homage to the American culture that he mostly finds himself belonging to. They also indicate his desire to guarantee survival and recognition to his literary voice. Hence, his poetry voices the melting pot discourse that is antithetical to the multicultural concept of pluralism which celebrates cultural diversity.

Charles Taylor comments that the melting pot concept encourages assimilation in favor of the dominant culture where the immigrants live. He criticizes assimilation and the melting pot theory, describing them as "one-wayness" processes that evoke "hierarchy along ethnic and racial lines." Taylor calls for absorbing multiculturalism, comparing it to a salad bowl in which each part is different but it "makes up one whole." (Taylor, 2007: 3-7. drcharlestaylor.com) The melting pot theory was a distinctive cultural norm in The United States before 1960, where people of diverse cultural backgrounds blend as one. Will Kymlicka comments that assimilation, which was known as an "Anglo-conformity" model for immigrants, was essential to guarantee "political stability" and Eurocentric exhibition of values. (Kymlicka, 1996: 14) Ethno-cultural minorities, including Arab-Americans, were supposed to blend within the identity of the major culture in the United States instead of forming their own cultural identity. However, the assimilative model was replaced by a more liberal approach which tolerated cultural diversity since the 1970s. Kymlicka states that the multicultural "model of integration" began first with the announcement of the Civil Rights movement which helped to guarantee the rights of citizenship of African-Americans, then an advanced model of integration was embraced to suit the American multicultural mosaic. (Kymlicka, 1996: 25) Multiculturalism provides an interesting model of accepting diversity and respect to the cultural identity of the minorities who constitute the American community.

Hazo belongs to the second generation of Arab-Americans who melt in the American cultural mainstream. He is the son of Assyrian immigrants who came from Lebanon. Assyrians, Chaldeans and Nestorians were religious minorities in the United States who sought "refuge and fresh starts as immigrants" there. (Kte'pi, 2011: 79) Peter C. Valenti, a Professor at New York University, states that there were attempts to "Americanize" certain religious rituals of Christian Arab-Americans as part of the assimilative tactics which were widespread at that time. (Valenti, 2011: 43) Hazo began writing poetry when he was serving in the US Marines corps during the Korean War in 1950. It was a time when the melting pot theory was popular in the American community. Many immigrants at that time sought to downplay their own cultural legacy to embrace the American values and American cultural practices in order to gain recognition and naturalization as American citizens. Assimilation at that time was a dominating policy for immigrants who wanted to maintain "cultural survival" by full integration into the Americans' way of life. (Zaarour, 2011: 107)

The Arab- American poet Philip Metres adapts the form of the Shakespearean sonnet in "Compline", the last poem of his book *Sand Opera*. Metres was born in San Diego on July 4th, 1970 and grew-up in the outlying districts of Chicago. He graduated from the Holy Cross College in 1992 and received his Ph.D. degree in creative writing from Indiana University in 2001. He wrote and translated several books and chapbooks including *A Kindred Orphanhood: Selected Poems of Sergey Gandlevsky* (2003), *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront since 1941* (2007), *Sand Opera* (2015), *I Burned at the Feast: Selected Poems of Arseny Tarkovsky* (2015), and *Pictures at an Exhibition* (2016).

(philipmetres.com/biography) Metres received many awards for his powerful writing which brilliantly transforms the human pain, rage and horror into a work of art. His poetry is also translated into Arabic, Russian, Tamil and Polish. He is currently a professor of English and the Director of the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights Program at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

Being a son of a Lebanese father, the poet finds himself standing on a third cultural space where two hyphens meet. In a personal contact with him via e-mail, the poet explains that he is a grandson of immigrants; however, being the eldest of his generation makes him feel close to his Arab roots and to his grandparents who migrated from Lebanon: "I am closer temporally, and I feel closer in my heart." (Metres, e-mail on February 10, 2018, pmetres@jcu.edu) Metres comments that he tended to find himself "more at crossroads" especially after the events of September 11, 2001 when he felt that Arab-Americans were gripped firmly by a strategy of otherness which labels them all as terrorists or carriers of criminality in their DNA. (Metres, interview, February 28, 2017, Poetry International online) Metres has poems which resist the US strategy of war, racism and silencing that practice a new face of terrorism on people's lives. He employs the language of poetry to explore hidden historical facts which have been redacted or suppressed by the US Administration..*Sand Opera* is an example of the "Operation Iraqi Freedom" literature which represents an overarching portrayal of the American military involvement in the invasion of Iraq. Philip Metres states that he wrote this book "out of a desire to write back against the dehumanizing force of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal." (Metres, interview by Fady Joudah, 2015, lareviewofbooks.org)

Metres's poem "Compline" introduces an overarching portrayal of the American military involvement in the invasion of Iraq. It is a prayer-like piece that represents a collective call for a day of human peace after a dark night of terror and war. The poet aestheticizes the traumas of war and torture in his book *Sand Opera* which aims to interrogate the hidden secrets of Abu-Ghraib dark prison. It examines the abhorrent policy of the American Administration which conflated the September 11 attacks with Iraq and discloses the non-human treatment that Abu-Ghraib detainees were subjected to.

The title of "Compline" is inspired by the "final prayer" which is a Christian contemplative prayer over spiritual peace that is delivered at the end of the day. (Metres, 2015:103) Peace is a collective demand which involves a life of human serenity. The collective tone of the poem is evident in the repetitive use of the pronoun "we" along its lines:

*That we await a blessed hope, & that we will be struck  
With great fear, like a baby taken into the night, that every boot,  
Every improvised explosive, Talon & Hornet, Molotov  
& rubber-coated bullet, every unexploded cluster bomblet,  
Every Kevlar & suicide vest & unpiloted drone raining fire  
On Wedding parties will be burned as fuel in the dark season.* (Metres, 2015: 97, lines 1-6)

These lines represent a collective prayer to God to make peace spread over earth. The word "boot" is a metaphor of the soldiers who wear it during the military combat. Metres employs visual images of war

and terror attacks such as: “Talon”, “Hornet”, “Molotov”, “rubber”, “suicide vest” and “cluster bomblet” and “unpiloted drone”. These images indicate the fear that that trauma of war and terror cause to civilians. The word “night” is metaphorically analogous to death that has conquered the world. It suggests reference to the loss of humanity. The traumas of war and terror trigger profoundly the attitudes of civilians who are emotionally traumatized regardless of their cultures and religions. The phrase “wedding parties” which is a metaphor of happiness over the creation of a new life through wedding is antithetical to the horror of death that war and terror cause. Night, in this poem, figuratively refers to the wars, torture, terror, shatter and despair that humanity has endured. However, there remains this pulse to turn towards the light of God that will end the torment of humanity.

Metres adapts the Shakespearean sonnet in the line number of the poem; however, he breaks with the rhyme-scheme of this sonnet, justifying that “modern sonnets come in all sorts, with and without rhyme.” The poet asserts that the existence of the ‘volta’ technique is a significant evidence of the form. (Metres, personal contact, March 1, 2018) The ‘volta’ technique refers to a break of thought that may exist in different types of poetry; however, it is frequently connected to the type of the sonnet. The English sonnet which is named after its most practitioner William Shakespeare is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter. It includes three quatrains and a couplet, rhyming abab, cdcd, efef,gg. The volta in a Shakespearean sonnet exists in the twelfth line of the third quatrain rhyming ‘ef’. In her book *The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, Helen Vendler argues that “the couplet placed not as resolution but as codato the preceding argument.” The volta then gives the Shakespearean sonnet “its final shape”, narrowing the idea in the third couplet “to a vortex of condensed perceptual and intellectual force, and either constricting or expanding the vortex via couplet.” (Vendler, 1997: 25)

Shakespeare’s sonnet 127, as a case in point, is dedicated to a mysterious dark lady. It is the first sonnet of the dark lady sequence which extends until the end of sonnet 154. Shakespeare innovates different ideals of beauty that are based on the natural rather than the artificial:

*In the old age black was not counted fair,  
Or if it were it bore not beauty’s name:  
But now is black beauty’s successive heir,  
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame* (qtd. in Wilson, 1969:66, lines 1-4)

The speaker in these lines orients the reader to reconsider ideals that are unconsciously perpetuated. He explains that black has never been ideal for women, and by this he refers to all aspects of physical darkness. His redefinition of beauty establishes a social space for women who are secluded because they lack the conventional standards of prettiness. The speaker, along the sonnet, suggests that beauty is not altogether physical and that it can be traced in any woman: “*Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,*” In the ‘volta’ of the sonnet, the speaker employs an assertive tone commenting that absence of the conventional ideals of fairness does not mean lack of beauty since these standards slander creation by imposing a false understanding of beauty: “*At such who not born fair no beauty lack, / Slandering creation with a false esteem.*”

In his sonnet "Compline", Metres proposes a change of tone in the volta which turns from despair to a spark of hope guided by the will of Almighty God: "*Reaching of God. We're dizzy in every departure, limb-lost. / We cannot sleep in the wake of God, & God will not sleep*" The poet comments that this poem "borrows language from Isaiah." (Metres, 2015: 103) Metres proposes in these lines a sense of hope through the enlightening power of God that will bring the grace of peace on human beings and end their misery. These lines provide a sense of consolation and comfort that God's word will revive the traumatized humanity, granting it power and strength. He employs Biblical images to describe God's powerful wakefulness that will guard humanity and end its long desperate sleep in comparison to man's weak state that is metaphorically described in the images of "sleep", "dizzy" and "limb-lost".

Regardless of his use of the volta technique, Metres breaks with the Shakespearean standards of rhyme-scheme, commenting that modern sonnets do not necessarily follow the standard rhyming. Hence, his adaptation of the Shakespearean sonnet projects the Bloomian paradigm of *Tessera* which is a kind of creative influence that is marked by an antithetical completion of the precursor's work which retains the form but introduces it in a new sense. This sonnet encapsulates a mature state of Arab-American poetry which seeks to voice the invisible "Other". It constitutes a form of writing-back to the imposition of the Western mindset and conventions. Metres belongs to a young generation of Arab-American poets who are more aware of the growing outcomes of the multicultural experience in the United States. They acquire more a capacity to use their poetry to omit cultural spaces and establish a sense of collectivity to the traumatic experiences of humanity. Metres's adaptation illustrates the growth of Charles Taylor's multicultural discourse of the salad bowl. It calls for absorbing multiculturalism, comparing it to a salad bowl in which each part is different but it "makes up one whole." (Taylor, 2007: 3-7. [drcharlestaylor.com](http://drcharlestaylor.com)) It is a call for a new mode of integration that breaks with the established norms and calls for accepting multiplicity. Taylor's discourse of the salad bowl permits poets of hyphenated identity to maintain their collective identity, forging a Self / Other dialogue. It encourages them more to free themselves from the anxiety of complete influence by the canon for purposes of imposing their cultural and ideological orientations.

## Conclusion

Samuel Hazo's adaptation of English canonical literature reflects a whole willingness to be fully acculturated in the culture of the majority society. His influence by the canonical authors shows an assimilative attitude which penetrates deeply in a way that influences his hyphenated identity as an Arab-American. The way he quotes Shakespeare's paradigms of life in his works advocates his desire to be fully integrated into the conventions of the host culture. His mode of assimilation is antithetical to Charles Taylor's notion of "authenticity" which determines the way that an individual in a multicultural community should be true to his/her own culture. (Charles in Gutmann, 1994: 31) However, Hazo's assimilative tendencies which are reflected in his thematic adaptations also indicate a desire of self-affirmation for the purpose of improving his poetic performance. Hazo is best identified with Bloom's paradigm of *Daemonization* which indicates that his influence by canonical literature reveals an

implication of a certain argument that the canonical text could not take foe enough. This is, for instance, obvious in Hazo's two Mercutio's poems which draw the readers' attention back to this character whose death marks a turning in Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* despite his secondary role.

Philip Metres belongs to a new generation of Arab-American poetry whose works represent a matured identity that has been born since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath when Arab Americans were collectively victimized by a negative stereotyping imposed on them. Metres's poem "Compline" is part of a whole book of poetry that is aimed at disclosing the U.S. illusive motto of peace and democracy. Metres's poem "Compline" evokes the issues of human rights abuse and devastation caused by the machinery of war, in the portrayal of testimonial images of Iraqi people inside and outside Abu Ghraib prison as well as American soldiers. The poet adapts the Shakespearean form of the volta which is a break of thought technique that occurs in the twelfth line of the sonnet. The poem which opens with a bleak image describing the mental and physical destruction caused by war, ends with a tone full of hope that humanity calling for a collective human pray for peace and love. This poem which is the last in Metres's book *Sand Opera* signifies the eyes of humanity clinging to God's mercy to end the violence and terror which has spread everywhere.

The adaptations of both poets fall under Bloom's paradigm of creative influence; however, they echo different multicultural orientations. Their influence by the English canon is a vivid sign of their integration within the values of their host culture.

## تبني شكسبير من قبل المعاصرين من الشعراء العرب الامريكان: نهجان من التفاعل الثقافي

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### الملخص

يعد التبني والمواءمة من التقنيات الأدبية التي تشتمل على تحقيق تواصل تحاوري بين الثقافات، إذ تُعدُّ من الركائز الأساسية للتعددية الثقافية المشتملة على تجاوز المسافات الفاصلة بين الثقافات، وضمان التحوار مع الآخر. وتعدُّ هاتان التقنيتان أيضاً من تطبيقات ما بعد الحداثة في نظرية التداخل النصي التي تلتقي مع مفهوم هارولد بلوم في التأثير الفعال. يقوم البحث بتسليط الضوء على مختارات شعرية من ديوان الشاعر العربي الأمريكي صاموئيل حازو في مجموعته الشعرية " أغنية الحصان " ، إذ تتناول بالدراسة مواءمة شعرية للشاعر وليم شكسبير بأسلوب يعكس شخصية متأثرة بالفكر الغربي؛ كونه مواطناً أمريكياً ينحدر من ثقافتين. وتتناول الدراسة أيضاً قصيدة للشاعر العربي الأمريكي فيليب ميتريس في ديوانه الشعري "أوبرا الرمال" تعكس مواءمته للسونيّة الشكسبيرية بأسلوب معاصر. يهدف البحث إلى إثبات أن تأثر الشعراء بالأدب الغربي، وتحديدًا بشكسبير، يقع ضمن مفهوم بلوم للتأثر الإيجابي، بيد أنه ينعكس بأسلوب مختلف ، إذ إن تأثر ميتريس يظهر مستوى النضج الذي بلغه الشعر العربي الأمريكي المعاصر، فقد عدا انعكاساً حقاً لمفهوم "طبق السلطة" وهو اصطلاح بلاغي يعبر عن نظرية التعددية الثقافية وقبول الآخر في المجتمعات ذات الطابع الثقافي المتعدد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التبني- الاندماج- الحوار- الهوية- التأثير- التداخل- التعددية الثقافية.

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