

انسوا هاملت لجواد الاسدي: دراسة في نظرية التكيف وعناصر الإغراءات الاقتصادية والقيود القانونية

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**Jawad al-Asadi's Forget Hamlet: A Study in Adaptation and the
Concepts of Economic Lures and Legal Constraints**

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المستخلص

من المفارقة أن تكييف جواد الأسدي، انسوا هاملت، هو الطلب من القارئ أن ينسى هاملت الشكسبيري المتفلسف، التألمي، وإن يستعد لهاملت الضعيفة وغير المبالي الخامل. انسوا هاملت هو تكييف للكاتب المسرحي والمخرج العراقي جواد الأسدي، تم عرضه في عام ١٩٩٤ ونشر في عام ٢٠٠٠. هذه الورقة البحثية هي محاولة لدراسة الإغراءات الاقتصادية والقيود القانونية للتكيف في ضوء نظرية ليندا هيتشون للتكيف، خاصةً أحد الأسئلة الصحفية الستة، "لماذا". تبحث الدراسة في كيفية نجاح المؤلف في جعل التكيف شائعاً وجذاباً للقارئ وفي نفس الوقت يتجنب جميع القيود القانونية من خلال التعديلات والإضافات والإلغاءات. ستكون هذه الدراسة جهداً قيماً للأشخاص المهتمين بدراسة التكيف في العراق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جواد الاسدي، ليندا هيتشون، التكيف، الاغراءات الاقتصادية، القيود القانونية

Abstract

Jawad al-Asadi's adaptation, Forget Hamlet, paradoxically asks the reader to forget Shakespeare's Hamlet, the philosophical, contemplative and vindictive, and meet with the weak, indifferent and ineffectual Hamlet. Forget Hamlet is an adaptation by an Iraqi playwright and director, Jawad al-Asadi, staged in 1994 and published in 2000. This paper is an attempt to study the economic lures and legal constraints of the adaptation in the light of Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation, especially one of its six journalistic questions, 'why'. The study investigates how the author succeeds with making the adaptation popular and appealing to the reader and at the same time avoids all legal constraints through modifications, additions and cancellation. This study will be a valuable effort to the people who are interested in the study of adaptation in Iraq.

Keywords: Jawad al-Asadi, Linda Hutcheon, adaptation, Economic lures, Legal constraints

1. Jawad al-Asadi

Jawad al-Asadi (also published in English under the spelling of al-Assadi) is an Iraqi playwright, director and poet. He was born in Karbala in 1947 to an extremely poor family consisting of six children. Al-Asadi completed his study in theatre at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad and graduated in 1972 (Myer and Saab 298). Al-Asadi had to leave the country because of the rise of the tyrannical political regime at that time. He fled to Bulgaria and got his PhD in theatre direction in Sofia (1983). He spent nearly 25 years in exile in many Arab and Eastern European countries. He worked as a lecturer at the Academy of Theatrical Arts, Damascus, Syria until 1994. He returned to Baghdad after the Invasion and the downfall of the dictator in 2003. After the Invasion and for the sake of participating in the development of his country, he worked as an adviser to the Ministry of Culture.

2. The Theoretical Framework of the Paper

2.1. A Theory of Adaptation

Hutcheon elaborates on adaptation more specifically than Sanders when she emphasizes putting away the idea of dealing with adaptation as inferior and the adaptor as a copier but not a reader and author at the same time. Concerning adaptation, she considers it as "a work that is second without being secondary" (9). Edward Said also confirms Hutcheon's idea concerning the source or original when he argues in *Beginnings: Intention and Method* that literature is "an order of repetition, not of originality—but an eccentric order of repetition, not one of sameness" (12). Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault reveal the problem of ownership and authority of the author over the text. They call for leaving the traditional conception of the relationship between the text and the author and put emphasis on "the death of the author", introduced by Barthes, to unchain and set the text free from interpretations. Abrams and Harpham point out "the literary text in whatever way he or she chooses, and the intensity of pleasure yielded by the text becomes proportionate to the reader's abandonment of limits on its signifying possibilities" (312).

2.1.1. Economic Lures

Adapters seek the popularity of literary work such as best-selling books, Pulitzer Prize winners, the box office and the number of viewers in multimedia. A film that acquires the first rank in the box office is commercially more guaranteed to be adapted into a videogame than

others. The contrary is also true. Tomb Raider, Lara Croft, Resident Evil, Alice in Wonderland, Death on the Nile, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes, Dracula, Frankenstein and so many others were adapted into videogames because of the economic lure. Malcolm Bradbury writes, "When you are writing a TV script, it is like sitting in a taxi; the meter is always running, and everything has to be paid for. You can always see the price turning over everywhere you go, or the difficulties of performance and production" (Bradbury 101). Authors also affect adapters, especially when the author of the adapted text is a cornerstone. Hutcheon states, "Well-known writers will make lots of money (often millions), however, because studios realize the name alone will sell the movie" (Hutcheon 88).

2.1.2. Legal Constraints

Adapters may discover that, in many cases, the economic lure is more than equippollent due to legal concerns, especially when adaptation is treated as autonomous. H. Porter Abbott criticized adapters and accused them of being raiders who stole what is beneficial and useful while leaving what is not profitable for them: "they don't copy, they steal what they want and leave the rest" (105). Accordingly, there are legal consequences and restrictions against adapters; nevertheless, there are revisions, cuts or deletions of other characters, changes in the nature of the plot. However; the violation of the copyright in intellectual and cultural property may cause adapters to be sued. In many cases of adaptation, contracts could solve the problem between the source and adaptations like novel and film. Noel Baker states:

The contract lets you know where you the writer stand in brutally frank legal language. You can be fired at any time. You are powerless and for the most part anonymous, unless you also happen to direct, produce, and/or act. Your credit can be taken away from you. Once your work is bought, it's like a house you've designed and sold. The new owners can do whatever they want to it. (15)

Hutcheon also points out that "substantial similarity" (90) refers to the complexity of arguing over the property and possession of literary work in court because the court has to examine characters, setting, pace, mode, sequences of events and character development. There can be other variations between any of what we have mentioned above, such as cutting or removing, replacing or re-functioning the literary work.

3. Why did al-Asadi write the adaptation *Forget Hamlet*

As was mentioned, *Hamlet* is regarded as a nomadic-mobile work. Besides, for many readers and adapters, with a plethora of adaptations and reproductions, what can be done more than what has already been done to *Hamlet*, particularly in the Arab world? Margret Litvin states in her book *Four Arab Hamlet Plays* that the most adapted play in the Arab world is *Hamlet* (xvi). So, what are Jawad al-Asadi's motives in adapting *Hamlet* and how does he fulfil his dual responsibilities by adapting another literary source and making it autonomous?

3.1. *Forget Hamlet's* Economic Lures

Al-Asadi maintains *Hamlet* in the title of his adaptation '*Insu Hamlet*' (*Forget Hamlet*) because only the title will sell the book or it is a safe bet for his literary work. Besides, adding the word 'forget' may make readers curious to read or view the adaptation because they will be prepared in advance to meet with something new but is simultaneously related to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Indeed, al-Asadi in 1994 published his adaptation with the title '*Ophelia's Window*' but later he changed the title of the adaptation to *Forget Hamlet* (2000) because *Hamlet* is more popular and more effective than *Ophelia*. Margaret Litvin argues that most of the Arabs adapt Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*; she writes, "their most frequently adapted Shakespeare play has been *Hamlet*" (*Four Arab*, xvi). Al-Asadi paradoxically asks his readers and viewers to forget *Hamlet* but at the same time he reminds them of *Hamlet*. The first impression of the readers and viewers on looking at the title is that *Hamlet* will not be one of the characters in the adaptation, but on the contrary *Hamlet* is quite present in the play as the shadow, the hapless and the non-protagonist (ibid 227).

Critical success is another motive of the adapter. The adaptation of al-Asadi has had many workshops, such as the New York Theatre workshop on the adaptation and that of Vassar College. Furthermore, *Forget Hamlet* has been staged in many places, such as the World Shakespeare Congress in Brisbane in Australia, in Egypt, and recently in Iraq by the National Acting Ensemble at the National Theatre in Baghdad in 2020 under the title of '*Ophelia's Window*' directed by Monadhil Daood. The translation of this adaptation into English has also been a commercial and critical success. Al-Asadi intends to make his adaptation readable and accessible even to the non-Arab readers by keeping the setting of the play unchanged, the place is Denmark and the time is the same as it is in

Shakespeare's Hamlet. Laertes states, "what's driving me mad is being in the walls of this palace. Take me outside Denmark. Bury me outside Denmark" (ibid 235). The names of the Characters is the same without any modifications. Moreover, al-Asadi preserves the lavish scenes and royal pictures of Shakespeare's play as most of the events take place in the palace: "Glass doors, rickety chairs! Huge chandeliers hanging down from the ceiling" (ibid 231).

Besides maintaining the names of the characters, al-Asadi keeps most of the characteristics of the characters and this is his safe bets in this adaptation. Claudius the usurper and the murderer who killed his brother and married his sister in law in order to get the throne. Addressing Gertrude on the conspiracy of killing Hamlet's father, he says, "what's bothering you? We carried out our plan successfully. The kingdom is calm. And no one but you is setting the throne" (ibid 249). Gertrude is the naive person who is duped by Claudius and helps him with the killing of her husband and then falls into remorse and the feeling of guilt. Gertrude reveals her sorrow and regret in her speech to Claudius, "my feeling of shame is killing me" (ibid 262). Polonius has a great concern about his son and daughter, showing himself less wise than he is in reality, flattering Claudius even when he is most tyrannical or destructive. Addressing Ophelia, he says, "now be a reasonable girl and figure out how to win the love of Prince Hamlet" (ibid 253). Horatio remains Hamlet's faithful friend in the adaptation; commenting on the death of Hamlet's father, he tells Hamlet, "your father's blood hadn't dried on the floor tiles before your mother married your uncle. Two days after your father's death! Doesn't that stir any doubts in you?" (ibid 248). Al-Asadi maintains the same relationship among the characters, such as the relationship between Polonius and Laertes, the love story between Hamlet and Ophelia, Laertes discomfort about the relationship of his sister with Hamlet. Discussing the nature of this relationship with his father Laertes states, "He's planning how to seduce my sister" (ibid 234), and Polonius responds, "Don't worry, my eyes are wide open. I'm watching them" (ibid).

Al-Asadi uses many quotations from the source to guarantee the artistic success of his adaptation. For Example, he borrows the speeches of Hamlet in act 1, scene 5 and relocates it to be said by Horatio to Hamlet in order to restore and evoke the latter's spirit. Furthermore, al-Asadi includes some of the most valuable speeches of Shakespeare's

Hamlet in his adaptation. The first one is made by Laertes addressing Hamlet when Laertes reveals the truth of the death of Hamlet's father and incites Hamlet to take revenge: "Claudius killed the just king, which of us doesn't know that? And meanwhile Hamlet responds to his father's murder with 'to be or not to be.' Be, just for once be, you rat!" (ibid 242). The second one is made by Ophelia when she turns the table against Hamlet in the 'nunnery scene' blaming him for putting the life of her brother in danger; she says, "get yourself to a monastery; that would be more merciful. There you can focus your body and your mind on the pressing theological question. There you can have more peace to ask and re-ask your question, 'to be or not to be'" (ibid 255). Some other speeches by Hamlet are given to characters such as Horatio, the gravediggers and Laertes by the adapter. The reasons for using these verbal echoes are to add artistic beauty and increase the critical value of the adaptation. In the first scene, al-Asadi uses part of the source and twists the dramatic device of a play within a play when Hamlet meets one of the actors and questions him about what has really happened and whether Gertrude had a part in the killing of her husband:

Hamlet: Come here, player.

Player: Just as I expected you, my lord. Sweet, handsome.

Hamlet: Has everyone fallen dead asleep?

Player: The whole kingdom is sleeping except for Claudius and your mother. (Ibid 235).

In scene six titled 'Ghost', the adapter introduces some changes to the original play by making the appearance of the ghost of Claudius rather than that of Hamlet, the father. Al-Asadi compares Claudius to an aurochs, a 'large wild and aggressive cattle or a buffalo' which is coming towards them carrying a sword to stab every one that stands in front of him. Horatio addresses Hamlet:

Horatio: I swear I saw him.

Hamlet: What did you see?

Horatio: The new king.

Hamlet: Don't ruin my peace with your nonsense.

Horatio: I've never seen anything so horrible in my life. Claudius turned in to a wild buffalo, parting the sea and coming toward us with a sword in his hand (ibid 247).

At the end of scene one, al-Asadi uses another safe bet by adding an improvisatory meeting between Hamlet and one of the players. In the

original play, Hamlet summons the players to perform a play to discover the real killer of his father. The player, in the adaptation, tells Hamlet of the real killer directly, but before that Hamlet asks him to tell him a story. Furthermore, the player gives the name Socrates to the prisoner in his story and the narrator is his guard. Al-Asadi thus uses another safe bet by giving the name of a great famous philosopher known to the world instead of naming an Iraqi philosopher barely known in Iraq and some Arab countries.

Hamlet: Can you recite to me a piece of what you're working on?

Player: Of course, my lord. I'll perform for you the last thing I've written.

A long silence. Horatio begins to play with the flute.

Player: I was Socrates' jailer and the guardian of the community. Before that I was a groom for the horses, and blacksmith making swords for the wars (ibid 335-336).

However, when the adaptation was staged in Egypt, al-Asadi deliberately used some Egyptian proverbs or phrases maintaining their culture, tradition and norm. For example, Laertes states, "my bitterness will explode" (ibid 237), a proverb that indicates the annoyance, boredom and impatient towards the tyrannical behavior of Claudius. Also, in a conversation the gravedigger about Claudius and how he dominates everything in Denmark says, "Claudius is going to eat everyone around him for sure" (ibid 257). Nevertheless, al-Asadi could not forget the Iraqi readers and viewers, so he also used some Iraqi phrases and proverbs; for instance, Gertrude teases Hamlet because of his careless and powerless reaction to the murder of Laertes: "you've refrigerated all your blood" (ibid 269). This proverb is used in the Iraqi language to comment on a person's lack of action or a reaction to an occasion. In the Epilogue, the gravediggers describe Hamlet's speeches as theorization or speculation concerning serious or fundamental issues and as sophistry, particularly in a grandiloquent or tedious way. This kind of speech called 'philosophizing' in the Iraqi culture: "His problem was his tongue, he kept philosophizing. Look, here's his tongue!" (ibid 281).

Al-Asadi retains the King's assassination in his adaptation, but instead of being poisoned by Claudius, the King is slain apparently by one of the servants who is present at the scene with a bloody dagger in his hand and is thus accused of being the King's murderer. Claudius interrogates the servant asking, "who bribed you to kill the king? Who?" (ibid 237).

Gertrude also confirms the trick of Claudius and shouts at the servant, "lowlife! You slaughtered my husband!" (ibid). The adapter also preserves the act of observing and keeping an eye on Hamlet by Claudius and Gertrude who try to uncover Hamlet's intentions and to see whether he knows the truth about the death of his father:

Gertrude: Hamlet's silence is terrible.

Claudius: He has no response to what happened. That's a good thing.

Gertrude: But he's not blind. I have a feeling he saw and understood everything.

Claudius: His relationship with his father left something to be desired. So he didn't comment on his death. Who knows, maybe it made him happy. (Ibid 249-250).

In the scene where Claudius plots and intrigues to kill Hamlet by ordering two soldiers to do that, "tonight, you must slaughter Hamlet" (ibid 273), Al-Asadi preserves the action but the two soldiers succeed in killing the prince of Denmark in his sanctuary. So, Hamlet instead of being killed in a duel with Laertes and by the latter's poisoned sword, he is stabbed to death by a soldier, who declares his intention by saying, "I'll stab him in the neck" (ibid). Additionally, Hamlet reveals his true love to Ophelia before being killed by the two soldiers. Hamlet says, "it's the middle of the night. The moon is on the windowsill and Ophelia is far away. Do you see Ophelia's window, how the light embroiders its edges?" (ibid 278). Tragically, the play ends with many deaths on the stage: Laertes slaughtered Claudius, the two soldiers killed Hamlet and Gertrude and Ophelia died by the poisoned drink. Finally, al-Asadi uses what is not possible to be overlooked, the dramatic monologue or the soliloquy but in his own way. He maintains this literary device, but instead of Hamlet in his third soliloquy, the Gravedigger 2 is the actor who speaks the soliloquy, and it is the Gravedigger 2 who remembers, "what a rogue and peasant slave am!!" (ibid 280).

In short, the adapter in his play retains the setting of the play, the names, the characteristics of the actors, the costumes, the lavish life, the soliloquies, the play within a play and the general atmosphere of the play including the tragic ending. Indeed, the adapter uses every element and maintains every action to safe his adaptation and guarantee its artistic success and popularity. Besides the adapter changes the title from 'Ophelia's Window' to *Forget Hamlet* because Hamlet has is more popular and known worldwide than Ophelia. Finally, many institutions

workshopped the adaptation and the play was translated into English because of its critical and artistic success.

3.2. *Forget Hamlet's* Legal Constraints

Not only the Western adapters but also the Arab playwrights have made a plethora of adaptations concerning Shakespeare's plays, especially *Hamlet*. So, Jawad al-Asadi is not the first adapter who indulges in the terrain of *Hamlet's* adaptation. However, the adapter changes several scenes, acts, characters and even the title of the adaptation to escape legal repercussions. The title, *Forget Hamlet* prepares the readers and viewers for a different play, completely different from the original *Hamlet* in all its artistic dimensions and indications. Therefore, at the beginning of his adaptation, the adapter declares that readers and viewers have to forget Hamlet and they are about to see a new play, along with its imperative and paradoxical demand. Al-Asadi sweeps away Hamlet's kingliness and heroism and reduces him to a hapless, non-effective and ostracized character in the adaptation.

Apparently, al-Asadi undertakes his adaptation by restoring the existence of the king 'Hamlet's father'. In the adaptation the king is very sick but insists on completing the party despite Gertrude's insistence on going to bed and taking a rest. Later, the King feels that he has a headache and Gertrude accompanies him to bed. Addressing his wife, King Hamlet states, "take me to bed, then. A sudden pain is throbbing in my head" (ibid 233). After that, instead of poisoning the king, Gertrude rushes and shouts: "They slaughtered the king" (ibid 236). A servant appears carrying a blood-dripping dagger and Claudius stabs him to death calling him the murderer of the King. While stabbing the servant Claudius cries, "Lowlife! Lowlife! Lowlife!" (ibid 237). Al-Asadi also modifies one of the most effective techniques in *Hamlet*, 'a play within a play' to be a story narrated by an actor to Hamlet when he was alone. In the beginning, the actor sows the first seeds of doubt in Hamlet's head by telling him that everyone is sleeping in the Kingdom except Gertrude and Claudius (ibid 235). The actor narrates a story, which is invented by the adapter. He recounts the time when he was the guard of Socrates in his jail and his commander ordered him to kill Socrates by putting poison in Socrates' cup. The actor remembers, "Suddenly out of nowhere, the head of the prison ordered me to pour poison in Socrates' cup and make him drink it" (ibid 236). Beside the added story told by the actor, al-Asadi introduces names and places in his adaptation, such as Socrates and

Athens. The actor says, "kill the most precious thing in Athens with my own hands?" (ibid). Likewise, Laertes in al-Asadi's adaptation is a blind person and, nevertheless, he is the first person who sees the truth. He has insight though he does not have eyesight. He addresses Gertrude when she asked him to dance with her, "even though I can't see the shape of your face or the blue of your body, I'll dance with you" (ibid 232). The adapter also passes much of Hamlet's fruitful and productive speeches to other characters since Hamlet is swept away and becomes like a shadow. For example, Hamlet's most distinctive and famous sentence is not spoken by him but by some other characters. Ophelia, for example, says to Hamlet, "there you can have more peace and quiet to ask and re-ask your question, 'to be or not to be'" (ibid 255). In addition, Laertes in his conversation to his father about the tyranny of Claudius and the hapless Hamlet, states, "Hamlet responds to his father's murder with 'to be or not to be.' Be, just for once be, you rat!" (ibid 242).

The Gravedigger, on the other hand, recites Hamlet's third soliloquy in the last scene of the adaptation. The third soliloquy of Hamlet in Shakespeare's play is also spoken by the second Gravedigger in the adaptation. Gravedigger 2 states, "what a rogue and peasant slave am I! Is it not monstrous that this player here, But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, Could force his soul so to his own conceit That from her working all his visage wann'd, Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect" (ibid 280-281). Seemingly, al-Asadi makes all these transitions and modifications to prove that there are no substantial similarities.

In the original play, Hamlet compares Claudius with "a king of shreds and patches" (*Hamlet* III, iv, 102), but in al-Asadi's adaptation, the adapter compares Claudius with the wild buffalo and it is suggested not by Hamlet but by Laertes, Horatio and Gertrude. On the first occasion, Laertes while talking to Ophelia about the murdering of Hamlet's father and Claudius' stratagem of portraying that a servant has killed the King. Laertes reveals to Ophelia that he knows the truth and he intends to expose the treachery. Laertes says to Ophelia, "I want to drag the bull by his horns in front of a huge mirror to show him his crimes" (*Four Arab* 237). The second occasion is spoken by Horatio in the sixth scene. In the scene titled 'Ghost' al-Asadi changes the appearance of the ghost of Hamlet's father into the appearance of Claudius in the shape of a wild buffalo running rapidly towards Hamlet and Horatio with a sword in his hand. Horatio tells Hamlet, "I've never seen anything so horrible in my

life. Claudius turned into a wild buffalo, parting the sea and coming toward us with a sword in his hand" (ibid 247). The third occasion occurs when Gertrude describes Claudius' artifice to play with her thoughts; she addresses Claudius and tells him that he is conspiring and plotting to make her collaborate with him to kill Hamlet's father: "The wild buffalo is chasing the lost little bee!" (ibid 271).

One of the most important aspects that Jawad al-Asadi changes in his adaptation is Hamlet's effective and influential role in the play as a protagonist a pivotal character. Hamlet turns into a shallow character that does not influence the events or other characters. For example, in the funeral scene, 'the third scene', Hamlet's speech at his father's grave reveals how Hamlet is hapless and not willing to get his revenge. He states, "What dust will they pile on you? What worms will eat your body?" (ibid 240). Furthermore, in his conversation with Horatio, Hamlet informs the latter that he will not seek revenge although he knows that Claudius had murdered his father:

Horatio: You act as though Claudius hadn't killed your father.

Hamlet: He killed my father or didn't kill him—it's all the same to me.

Horatio: You're making me angry.

Hamlet: I don't care about anything anymore. That's how I've trained my body and mind to be.

Horatio: You don't care about anything—and here your uncle has grabbed the crown away from your father just like a child grabs a doll away from his brother.

Hamlet: This is the play of brothers. An eternal play that will never cease.

Horatio: A bloody king has mounted the throne of the just king.

Hamlet: Who said my father was just? And who can tell if Claudius is really bloody? This killing doesn't prove that the new king is bloody.

Horatio: You aren't the Hamlet I've known and lived with.

Hamlet: Well, maybe I should change my name. (Ibid 247-248).

Evidently, Hamlet in this adaptation is a non-effective and hapless character; al-Asadi depicts his character as such for certain reasons and one of them is that no legal action will be taken. For instance, in scene seventeen, the adapter reveals that Hamlet knows the real killer and is aware of the treachery of his mother but he remains silent. Even after

Gertrude has appealed to Hamlet to help her stop the murdering of Laertes, he declines to hear anything anymore. Gertrude addresses Hamlet, "Don't you want to put a stop to this big farce" (ibid 275); Hamlet responds to her that he does not know what she is talking about. She further urges him, "Don't you hear the scream? (ibid 276)", but Hamlet answers, "I barely hear anything, Mother, since you have taken over this kingdom. Since my father was slaughtered, I have not wanted to provoke you, because I don't want to be dragged into your filthiness. I am silence itself! I have become the very soul of silence" (ibid). Even when Gertrude confesses her sin in her collaboration in murdering her Husband, Hamlet's reaction is one of indifference and carelessness. Gertrude addresses Hamlet: "I confess before you now! I tell you that I am guilty and that my sin is unforgettable", but Hamlet answers: "Mother, it would be better if you would leave me" (ibid). Additionally, al-Asadi adds a conversation between Hamlet and Horatio to confirm the change in Hamlet. When Horatio asks him about his anger and madness, Hamlet responds to Horatio that two Hamlets are fighting inside his body, the first one is brave and is willing to kill Claudius but the second one is abject and is full of despondency. He states, "there was a clash and a struggle between the two Hamlets and the winner is the disillusioned Hamlet!" (ibid 264).

The adapter adds another scene, which is scene eleven, when Ophelia goes submissively to Claudius to ask for her brother's forgiveness and begging not to kill him. Claudius sentences Laertes to death because of Laertes' objection to Claudius' usurpation of the throne. Laertes states, "Claudius killed the just king, which of us doesn't know that?" (ibid 242). After the request of Ophelia and her begging, Claudius shows how his abusive and corrupt character when he asks her to sleep with him in return of his forgiving her brother. Claudius asks Ophelia, "How about a kiss, for instance, or a night of drinking together, we'll write Laertes' pardon paper and drink his health together right here, on the bed" (ibid 258). Ophelia is sitting on a powder keg and she has to accept Claudius' proposal for the sake of saving Laertes' life. Ophelia evades Claudius' claws by twisting the conversation and hinting at Hamlet's father death. Ophelia reminds him, "Isn't Hamlet the son of your brother, whose father was murdered?" (ibid 260), and Claudius responds, "Are you implying something?" (ibid). Moreover, Ophelia escapes by calling Gertrude to be present with Claudius; she shouts, "Gertrude! My lady Gertrude! My lord

the king requests your presence immediately!" (ibid 261). Eventually, Ophelia discovers that Claudius has killed her brother and the guards bring his body to the palace to be an example for others. Helplessly, Ophelia goes to Hamlet and talk to him from a distance asking him to help her get her revenge from Claudius, but she finds out when she approaches Hamlet that he has been killed, too. She addresses Hamlet, "I'm pleading for your help, don't desert me! My strength has collapsed. Claudius the butcher promised me to pardon my brother. Imagine, he pardoned him and killed him at the same time. He tricked me! How should I get revenge on him?" (ibid 278). Accordingly, al-Asadi's adaptation proves dissimilar to the source play and thus evades prosecution.

In a related manner, al-Asadi makes Laertes blind but he is the only brave male in the adaptation who stands against Claudius and expresses his condemnation against murdering Claudius' brother which provokes Claudius to sentence him to death. Claudius in answer to Ophelia when she asks him to pardon her brother, "He slipped up on the Coronation Day and brought the curse on himself" (ibid 258). On the other hand, the gravediggers in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* appear once in act V, scene I, whereas, in al-Asadi's *Forget Hamlet*, the gravediggers are present on five occasions. The appearance of the gravediggers is characterized by serious reflections, implications, preparations, sophistry, intermingled with comic speeches, jokes and intentional fallacy. For example, the gravediggers' sardonic conversation reveals that Claudius is tyrannical and bloodthirsty whereas Polonius is the most hypocritical person in the kingdom:

Gravedigger 2: Claudius won't just marry the hag-queen: he'll marry you, and he'll marry me, and he'll marry your mother and my mother...He'll marry all of Denmark.

Gravedigger 1: And Polonius?

Gravedigger 1: Laughs

Gravedigger 2: What about him?

Gravedigger 1: He was the greatest flatterer of our poor betrayed king. (Ibid 238).

The end of the adaptation is a tragedy as the end of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* but the adapter modifies it as well. Hamlet and Laertes do not kill each other in a duel but they are slaughtered separately. Laertes is sentenced to death by Claudius and Hamlet is murdered by two soldiers

sent by Claudius. Furthermore, Ophelia is not drowned in the brook but she and Gertrude drink from poisoned cups and die: "Ophelia and Gertrude approach in great dismay. They drink a cup of poisoned drink, then sit on the chair. The glasses fall from their hands into the ground" (ibid 279). Thus, Jawad al-Asadi escape from any legal action or prosecution via modifications and changes including the plot, characters, mood, pace, setting and sequence of events.

4. Conclusion

Based on the previous analyses and depending on the shreds of evidence, Jawad al-Asadi reproduced *Hamlet* using his bold intention. He draws on a global kaleidoscope of theatre styles and adds contemporary issues to Hamlet. The adapter uses an allegoric style and structure imagining that his readers and viewers are aware of in Shakespeare's text and will notice easily the modifications and, thus, the implications as well. Moreover, the adapter does not move the play into another setting or environment but he manipulates the characters increasing, decreasing or omitting the role of the characters to fulfil his aim via the indirect reference of the text. Furthermore, al-Asadi keeps the general storyline and most of the effective characters but he modified the character 'Hamlet' for the sake of economic lures and legal constraint. The economic lures appeal to the adapter to keep the frame and some elements from the source making his adaptation a safe bet. For instance, he uses the word 'Hamlet' in the title and retains the character names and setting of the play. For the legal constraints, the adapter modifies the sequence of the events as well as adding scenes and omitting others. Additionally, he manipulates the development of the characters in the play.

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