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## **Development of Drama in Arabic Literature**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper outlines the development of Arabic drama from its beginnings in Lebanon in the mid nineteenth century to its maturity achieved in Egypt in the second and third decade of the twentieth to the present day. It studies the way in which modern drama was imported and adapted from the West by Marun Naqqash in Beirut and Yaqub Sanu in Cairo, both of whom were motivated by Italian opera and influenced by French comedy. Lebanese and Syrian dramatists and actor-managers immigrated to Egypt to explore greater official support and more accessible spectators. They made the theatre a lasting trait of Egyptian life and by 1900 it had become a major political force. This paper focuses on the expansion of Drama in the Arab world, examining the work of those writers in whose hands Arabic drama reached its prime of life with their compulsive concern on social and political issues, their endeavours to work out the persistent problem of the language of dialogue, their frantic hunt for an original dramatic form and their attempt to share their work to the cultural legacy with various trends and genres. Still, the effort for original and innovative change in drama is presently a continuing process.*

**Key words:** *Arabic Literature, Arab World, Early Arabic drama, Modern Arabic Drama, trends and genre of Arabic Drama.*

Arab culture has contributed to the expansion of the civilisation of mankind in many ways. Its bequest to science, philosophy and learning cannot go by unseen, while its legacy to art, architecture and poetry cannot be refuted. Nevertheless, in one respect, this immense culture has been unfortunately lacking; namely, in that of drama. The term ‘drama’ can have more than one shade of meaning according to its user. Therefore, it is necessary to confine ourselves to one of its varied usages. Here, it refers to ‘a literary genre either in poetry or in prose that describes life and characters or narrates a story by means of action and dialogue through acting on a stage’<sup>i</sup>.

Drama in classical literature was noticeable by its non-existence. Nor has any convincing reason been given for its absence in Arabic. Possibly a type of drama was shaped in *Jahiliyya* times but was so strongly related to idolatry that scholasticism became absolutely unenthusiastic to it. This argument is not validated either. Arab scholars started translating literary masterpiece from other languages in early Islamic times, but they had left out drama. Kalidasa’s plays, for instance, were not translated by them, nor the part on drama in Aristotle’s works.<sup>ii</sup> Soon after, when Ibn Rushd (1122-98) attempted to put together Aristotle’s “poetics”, he was confronted with enormous problems. How could he try to translate comedy and tragedy when the close correspondents in Arabic were the panegyric and satire?

In 1798, the theatre Napoleon had founded in Egypt to entertain French troops, moreover, made no impression on the Arabs, primarily because the performances were not in Arabic. It

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was merely much later when literary and cultural relations between the Arabs and the West developed that drama began to appeal to them.<sup>iii</sup>

The art of the theatre, or relatively dramatic literature in its European form as a literary genre that portrays life and characters, or relates a story by way of action and dialogue in the course of acting on a stage, in the presence of an audience was unfamiliar in Arabic until, in 1847, the first Arab dramatist, Marun al-Naqqash (1817-55), made an ground-breaking effort at writing and producing a play based on a European model. Naqqash's endeavour was Italian in form and French in content. The Lebanese Marun al-Naqqash was motivated by the Italian opera to try a musical verse play entitled *al-Bakhil* (The Mean Man). The play in five acts was adapted from Moliere's *L'avare* and performed in Beirut. Naqqash's brief experiment came to an unexpected end with his premature death. His efforts at playwriting and producing had significant achievement and were almost immediately imitated by others.

Nikula al-Naqqash, Marun's brother writes in *Arzat Lubnan* that Marun introduced elements of music with poetry and prose, as he considered that the poetry and prose would please a part of the audience while music would charm all. Furthermore, Nikula al-Naqqash clarifies that Arabic drama founded by Marun al-Naqqash did not spring from any old form known to the Arabs, nor from folk art, like shadow plays. Drama was directly imported from the West.<sup>iv</sup> The form of musical plays created by Marun al-Naqqash (*mulhina*), which is partly or entirely sung, continued to be formed for many decades in the Levant and Egypt; and publishers gave tunes for every piece of the play serially in footnotes.<sup>v</sup>

The near the beginning plays were either translated or adapted. They were written in an amalgamation of classical Arabic with Turkish, or colloquial Syrian or Egyptian and consequently had their share of grammatical errors and weaknesses. Purity of language could not be expected at this phase. Drama was not willingly accepted by the Arabs. For a long time it was measured as an interloping art, unfamiliar to the Arab customs and a Western innovation on the same level with other practices like mixed dancing.<sup>vi</sup>

Yet, the Lebanese progressively began to translate, adapt and stage plays after Marun's effort to popularise the theatre. Salim al-Naqqash, Adib Ishaq, Ibrahim al-Ahdab, Salim al-Bustani and Khalil al-Yazigi were pioneers in this field. Salim al-Naqqash left with his troupe to Alexandria and the "stage" shifted from the Levant to Egypt. The recognition for bringing the theatre to Egypt goes to Ismail, who founded the first theatre and got French and Italian troupes to carry out plays with his liking for introducing French cultural customs into Arab life. In 1869, the Cairo Opera was built to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal and the first performance there was Verdi's "Rigoletto". Soon after, Verdi composed "Aida" particularly for the Cairo Opera in 1871.

Nevertheless, it was only when Arabic started to be used on the stage that drama took roots in Egypt.<sup>vii</sup> The first play in Arabic was shaped by Ya'qub Sanu (1839-1912) in Ismail's palace. A type of vaudeville performance with song, dance and sport, it attracted spectators of thirty thousand when staged for a second time outside the Azbekia theatre. Motivated by Ismail, who gave Sanu the title "Moliere of Egypt" as he copied abundantly from Moliere, Sanu founded the first Arabic theatre in Egypt, the National Theatre in 1870. He began with great confidence to prepare his troupes, create music for his plays, numbering thirty-two, together with comedies, tragedies and musicals. Sanu's plays dealt with behavioural patterns of current Egypt, political observations and integrated his spontaneous appearances on the stage

as well which lent a cheerfulness and liveliness to his drama. His theatre prospered but when Sanu exposed the weakness of Ismail's regime, his plays were banned.<sup>viii</sup> Sanu's art was straightforward and his language colloquial. Although his plays do not form part of *al-adab al-maqru*<sup>ix</sup> (texts to be read), Sanu's involvement to the Arab theatre is remarkable. He was successful in generating an ambience for the theatre and brought it down from the precincts of the palace to the common man.

Abu Khalil al-Qabbani (1841-1902) was the most talented Syrian playwright who also constructed his own theatre in Damascus. Al-Qabbani had all the elements for producing flourishing plays. He was an expert in music and song and excelled in *zajal* and other verse. Moreover, he initiated dramatic sequences and suspense and set the language of the stage near to the classical. At the same time, he popularised the theatre by basing his plays on accepted folk topics taken from Arab history and *Alf Laila wa Laila*. Al-Qabbani introduced a supplementary novelty by bringing the dance on the stage. His plays, combined with verse and a type of folk ballet which had started off in Andalusia called *Raqs al-Samah*, were widely acclaimed.<sup>x</sup> After five years of theatrical activity, he was compelled by the order of Abd al-Hamid II, to shut down his theatre. Al-Qabbani shifted with his troupe to Egypt, where the cultural atmosphere was more favourable.

Al-Qabbani showed the prospective of historical plays written in classical Arabic apart from giving an improvement to the Egyptian theatre. This matched up to the humour of the Egyptians, who were in the throes of the 'Orabi movement and looked up to their ancient times history and culture for encouragement. Al-Qabbani's achievement guided others to follow suit. In reality, the period between 1882 and 1922, called *fatrat al-Nidal* (period of struggle), witnessed increased activity of the stage in Egypt.<sup>xi</sup> Many troupes were performing and this created a vigorous competition. Great litterateurs like Khalil Mutran, Najib Haddad and Farah Antun began to write for the theatre.

However, most plays shaped by the Syro-Lebanese émigrés in Egypt were translations of French and English plays, or adaptations referred to as *ta'rib* or *tamsir*. Names as well as events were modified and from time to time verse was introduced instead of the original prose to give an Arab flavour. The modifications made were so many that the adapted plays appeared at times to have no link whatsoever with the originals.<sup>xii</sup>

The early Arab theatre pioneered by Naqqash and Sanu was founded on songs and lyrics to attract spectators. Among the well-known producers of musicals was al-Shaykh Salama al-Hijazi (1852-1917). Apart from his professional approach in action, decor, costumes and stage effects, his emotional voice endeared him to the audiences. Al-Hijazi put down a legacy of renowned compositions like *salamat* which has made him immortal in Egypt. Nevertheless, the prevalence of musical plays was influential in delaying the expansion of straight plays, for these could extend only if they were weaned away from music, song and dance.<sup>xiii</sup>

Arab dramatists attempted time and again to produce plays without song and music but were confronted with meagre reaction and financial losses. For instance, Farah Antun (1874-1922), after producing two plays with bright literary value, *al-Sultan Salah ad-din wa Mamlakat Urshalim* (Salahuddin and the kingdom of Jerusalem), and *Misr al-Jadida* (New Cairo), was compelled to shift over to vaudeville type of performance which attracted larger viewers, as Taymur says: "Farah Antun switched over to non-artistic plays after producing artistic

ones<sup>xiv</sup>. Ibrahim Ramzi (1884-1949) produced *Abtal al-Mansura* and *Hakim bi Amrillah* both of a high order, but was impelled by popular demand to write comic plays with the only aim to making the spectators laugh, e.g. *al-Akshid* and *al-Huari*.

In 1912, drama went through the second stage of its development when the Lebanese actor Jurj Abyad (1880-1954) established his own troupe in Cairo. Abyad, who had made a serious study of drama in Paris, and also acted in the Comedie Francaise (French Comedy), began to translate well-known European tragedies in pure and dominant prose. Forsaking all the tricks that were used to attract audiences, and adhering to the classical set of laws of European theatre, Abyad created a series of tragedies including *King Oedipus* of Sophocles, *Othello* of Shakespeare and *Louis XI* of Casimir Delaigne. For the first time the Arabs came to know the art and interpretation of tragedy.<sup>xv</sup>

Furthermore, Jurj Abyad produced social plays written by well-known Arab playwrights such as ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Rashidi, Ibrahim Ramzi and Muhammad Taymur. Abyad produced Farah Antun’s *Misr al-Jadida wa Misr al-Qadima* in 1913. *Al-Mu’tamid bin ‘Ibad*, written in 1892 by Ibrahim Ramzi is among the first plays to make a mark in Arabic literature. It represents the Arab period in Andalusia and the author tells historical realities in the form of dialogue. Although his style is laboured, the play is significant as it is an endeavour to bring sincerity and genuineness into a musical and comical stage.<sup>xvi</sup>

Though Ramzi began to write for the theatre from 1892, it was only after his return from England that his style matured. *Abtal al-Mansura*, written in 1915, is considered his best play and portrays a vibrant depiction of Egyptian leadership during the Crusades.<sup>xvii</sup> The play created in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as *Dakhul al-Hamam* by Ibrahim Ramzi, *Al-Sharit Al-Ahmar* by Abbas Allam, *Tarid Al-Usra* by Husayn Ramzi and *Al-Hawiya* by Muhammad Taymur were new efforts to bring in realism into drama. These plays are also vital for their artistic construction, dramatic structure, better expressions and professional production.<sup>xviii</sup>

Since the first play was shaped, the question whether to write in the classical or colloquial Arabic has been a well-founded one. Marun al-Naqqash and Ya’qub Sanu wrote in the colloquial medium. The translators employed the classical idiom and Jurj Abyad highlighted the purity of the classical. Some writers such as Farah Antun compromised, making the characters speak in the classical and the others in the colloquial.

On the other hand, the idea of writing plays in the colloquial continued and beginning with Muhammad Taymur in *Al-Usfur fil-Qafs*, the employment of the colloquial obtained immense popularity.<sup>xix</sup> Antun Yazbek wrote *The Victims* in the colloquial. Marun Ghun employed Syrian colloquial to such a degree that a strong reaction against its use started in literary circles.<sup>xx</sup> Yet, the idea of writing plays in the colloquial persisted and a complete queue of writers opted for this medium to the more sophisticated literary form.

The impact of European drama on its Arabic counterpart can be seen in three fields: motivation for some written plays in Arabic; Arabicisation and Egyptianisation of some of the famous works from their original languages; translation that differs from faithfulness to adaptation. With this trend Arabic drama was enhanced at the start and this impact persisted in altering degrees up till the present.



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The influence of the West was at the start restrained to French drama due to the closer bonds between France and the Mediterranean Arab countries, which were strengthened after the Napoleonic campaign and the cultural victory it left behind, and by the activities of the French missionaries in Syria. English started to gain a significant position and obtain impetus only at a later period, near the end of the nineteenth century, when the Arab translators turned to Shakespeare and other English dramatists.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the pioneers of Arabic drama were not influenced by contemporary French writers such as Hugo. Their concern was centred on the classical French dramatists. Moliere and Racine had the lion's share, followed by Corneille. Of all these three, Moliere wielded more impact than the other two, mostly because the larger bulk of his works fall within the sort of comedy which appealed more to the flavour and outlook of the Arab spectators.

Tawfiq al-Hakim must be considered as one of the most noteworthy figures in twentieth century Arabic literature. The achievements and failures that are represented by the response of his huge production of plays are illustrative of the matters that have faced the drama genre as it has tried to adapt its complex modes of communication to the societies of the Arab world. Sent to Paris in 1925 to complete a doctorate in law, al-Hakim selected instead to steep himself in Western culture, absorbing the wisdom of the role and power of the dramatic medium in its Western form and resolved to reproduce it in the perspective of his own society. He returned to Cairo in 1928 without a law degree, however overflowing with ideas for literary projects, some of them already in draft form.

The cause of 'serious' drama, at least in its textual form, was in the process of being given a furtherance by one of the Arab world's greatest litterateurs. Ahmad Shawqi, 'the prince of the poets', who during his later years composed a number of verse dramas with topics selected from Egyptian and Islamic history; these consisted of *Masra' Kliyubatra* (The Death of Cleopatra, 1929), *Majnun Layla* (the name of the famous *ghazal* poet, 1931), *Amirat al-Andalus* (The Spanish Princess, 1932), and *'Ali Bey al-kabir* (a ruler of Egypt during the eighteenth century), a play initially written in 1893 and later revised. Nonetheless, between the well-liked customs of farcical comedy and melodrama and the show of translated versions of European dramatic works of art, there still remained an emptiness within which an original tradition of serious drama could expand. Al-Hakim's wish to reproduce the European practice was therefore timely in the extreme, and it is for that motive that the publication and presentation of his play, *Ahl al-Kahf* (The People of the Cave, 1933) is such an important event in Egyptian drama.

Within a year, al-Hakim created another most important work, *Shahrazad* (Scheherazade, 1934). When the National Theatre Troupe was shaped in Egypt in 1935, the first production that it produced was *The People of the Cave*. Al-Hakim kept on writing plays with philosophical themes chosen from a diversity of cultural sources: *Pygmalion* (1942), a fascinating combination of the legends of Pygmalion and Narcissus; *Sulayman al-Hakim* (Solomon the Wise, 1943), and *Al-Malik Udib* (King Oedipus, 1949).

While al-Hakim's earlier plays were all penned in the literary language, he was to carry out a number of experiments with various levels of dramatic language. For instance, in the play, *al-Safqah* (The Deal, 1956), dealing with land ownership and the exploitation of poor peasant farmers, he phrased the dialogue in something he termed 'a third language', one that could be

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read as a text in the standard written language of literature, still that could moreover be acted on stage in a manner which, while not precisely the idiom of the colloquial dialect, was surely graspable to a larger population than the educated privileged of the city.

During the 1960s, among the most famous of his plays were *Masir sarsar* (The Fate of a Cockroach, 1966) and *Bank al-qalaq* (Anxiety Bank, 1967). His struggles on behalf of Arabic drama as a literary genre, its techniques, and its language, are coterminous with the accomplishment and success of a fundamental role in modern Arab political and social life.

Following the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, an entire generation of younger playwrights appeared at the forefront who were able to construct and extend upon the foundation that had been laid by al-Hakim himself and by other well-known pre-revolution dramatists such as Mahmud Taymur (d. 1973) and Ali Ahmad Bakathir (d. 1969). Among this new generation was Numan Ashur (d. 1987). His play, *An-NAs illi taht* (Downstairs Folk), was created in 1956 and was an immediate sensation.

The 1960s demonstrated to be a principally fruitful decade in Egyptian drama production, with eminent contributions from such writers as Sa'd al-din Wahbah, Mahmud Diyab, and Ali Salim. Both Wahbah and Diyab focused in the beginning on the life of the village. Ali Salim's mode of dealing with the distasteful realities of his intellectual and political environments has been through comedy, witnessed at its most pleasant in his meaningful satire of the all-pervasive conquest of system of government.

Most of the dramatists write on the supposition that the problem of language use has been determined in support of the colloquial. Nevertheless, for those playwrights who desire to keep on al-Hakim's endeavours by taking Arabic drama to a wider Arab world audience, the issue of language hangs about. One dramatist who has tackled himself to this problem is Alfred Faraj. *Hallaq Baghdad* (The Barber of Baghdad, 1963), while not his first contribution to the drama, was the work that secured him an accepted audience.

The phase of flourishing in Egyptian drama corresponded with a boost of scholarly and governmental concern in the resurgence of the legacy of Egyptian folklore. Among those linked with this movement were at least two dramatists, Shawqi Abd al-Hakim and Najib Surur. Abd al-Hakim got encouragement in the well-liked heritage for several plays, including *Hasan wa-Naimah* (Hasan and Naimah, 1960), *Shafiqah wa-Mitwalli* (Shafiqah and Mitwalli, 1961), and *Mawlid al-Malik Ma'fur* (King Ma'ruf's Birthday, 1965). The mention of Surur brings back into the centre of attention the problem of verse drama in Arabic.

During the golden age of Egyptian drama, at least two writers, Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi (d. 1987) and Salah Abd al-Sabur (d. 1981), thrived in making contributions that both kept away from the association with music and were effectively performed on stage. Of the two Abd al-Sabur was surely the more proficient, most particularly in his outstanding play, *Ma'sat al-Hallaj* (The Tragedy of al-Hallaj, 1965), which retells the true story of the renowned mystic, al-Hallaj, who was crucified in AD 922.<sup>xxi</sup>

In the case of Lebanon, special mention needs to be made of two important litterateurs who penned dramas that made momentous contributions to the societal tolerability of the genre. Within the *émigré* (*mahjar*) surroundings of the Unites States, Mikhail Nu'aymah published *Al-Aba wa al-banun* (Fathers and Sons, 1916), a play set within the Christian Lebanese community that investigates the intricacies of corruption, arranged marriages and true love.

Another contributor to the literary tradition of Lebanese drama is the distinguished symbolist poet, Sa'id 'Aql, who is evidently reproducing his eminent concern with the Phoenician feature of Lebanese nationalism in writing a verse drama on the subject of Qadmus (1944), a tale selected from Greek myth about the pursuit of Cadmus to save his sister, Europa, who has been carried off by Zeus.

The plays which Palestinian litterateurs wrote were likely to be contributions to the more literary and intellectual side of the dramatic tradition. Their works depended to a major level on the symbolic power of the re-enactment on stage of incidents of tyranny, cunning, and revolt chosen from history: for example, *Thawrat al-zanj* (The Zanj Revolt) and *Shamsun wa-Dalilah* (Samson and Delilah) by Mu'in Basisu (d.1984) and *Qarqash* by Samih al-Qasim (d.2014).

One Syrian writer, Sa'dallah Wannus (d.1997), attempted to make a key contribution to the progress and expansion of drama not only in his country but on a much wider scale as well. Playwright, director, drama critic and theorist, Wannus was successful in his plays in mixing classical topics and modern techniques in order to produce works that contain instant contemporary significance. While Wannus had written some short plays before 1967, it was *Haflat samar min ajl al-khamis min Huzayran* (Soiree for the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1968), an intense criticism of the stance and outlook of Arab society that were so meanly depicted by the June War, that actually brought him to the limelight.

In dealing with questions of language, of theatre semiotics, of acting technique, and of production through both his plays and critical writings, Wannus achieved a very useful role in the continuing process of developing an Arabic drama that is both dynamic and appropriate. No other dramatist in Syria or Lebanon has tried to match the all-inclusive nature of his contribution to the Arabic theatre tradition, but several other playwrights have composed important dramas. In Lebanon, mention should be made of Raymond Jabbarah and 'Isam Mahfuz, and in Syria, Muhammad al-Maghut, Walid Ikhlassi and Mamduh Adwan.<sup>xxii</sup>

Of the countries that are part of the region known as the Maghrib, it was Tunisia that had made the initial wave in the development of a drama tradition. From early attempts that followed visits by Egyptian troupes in 1908, several theatre troupes were established that performed frequently in the period before independence (1956). In 1964, an Arab Theatre Festival was founded, which has provided as the centre of much discussion relating to the nature and direction of the drama genre in the Arab world. One of the participants in such discussion was 'Izz al-din al-Madani, who has penned a series of plays that take as their subject popular revolution: they are *Thawrat sahib al-himar* (The Donkey-owner's Revolt, 1971), *Rihlat al-Hallaj* (Al-Hallaj's Journey, 1973), *Diwan al-Zanj* (The Zanj Collection, 1974), and *Mawlay al-Sultan al-Hasan al-Hafsi* (Our Lord, Sultan al-Hasan the Hafsi, 1977).

In Algeria and Morocco, the speed of development has been slower; the causes include a complex of issues, involving those of language use and educational policy and the political dimensions of such a public cultural activity. While a number of Algerian writers have made contributions to popular drama in the colloquial dialect of the region such as the famous novelist, Katib Yasin, the process of Arabising (*ta'rib*) the cultural and educational systems in the country is yet in progress. In Morocco, two writers have played a vital role in the fostering and growth of a theatre tradition. Ahmad Tayyib al-'Ilj transferred to the Moroccan environment Moliere's *Tartuffe* under the title *Wali Allah*, a work that was performed with

immense triumph in the Theatre Festival in Tunisia in 1968. Al-'Ilj's colleague, al-Tayyib al-Siddiqi, is a man of the theatre in every sense: playwright, producer, and actor. His play, *Diwan Sidi 'Abd al-rahman al-Majdhub* (The Collection of Sidi 'Abd al-rahman al-Majdhub, 1966), narrates the story of a nomadic poet, a role that he has often taken himself, while in *Maqamat Badi' al-zaman al-Hamadhani* (The Maqamat of 'the Wonder of the Age' al-Hamadhani, 1971) he explores in modern dramatic form the long appreciated prospective of the picaresque episodes written ten centuries earlier by al-Hamadhani.

While the theatre tradition in Iraq is indebted by a great deal to the ground-breaking endeavours of Haqqi al-Shibli who established a theatre troupe in 1927, joined the famous Egyptian troupe of Fatimah Rushdi, and later studied drama in Paris, there can be little uncertainty that Yusuf al-'Ani has been the principal figure in Iraqi theatre during the modern period. Al-'Ani brings into play all the touchy power of the colloquial dialect of the region in *Ana ummak ya Shakir* (I'm Your Mother Shakir, 1955) to present a precise manifestation in dramatic form of the period that preceded the bloody Iraqi revolution of 1958.

The extent of official help and well-liked concern for theatre in the other nations of the Gulf region has been significantly less. With the development of educational and cultural openings the position of drama is changing, although slowly. An example of such a tendency can be witnessed in Kuwait where early gestures in the 1940s are now starting to bear fruit in the plays of writers such as Saqr al-Rashud and 'Abd al-Aziz Surayyi.

It is in the difficult area of stage show that many of the complex issues linked with modern Arabic drama continue to lie. There is first the key problem of censorship. While some countries in the region, particularly Egypt between 1956 and 1967, appear to have allowed a good deal of freedom of expression with the theatrical medium, the general principle has been one of the closest governmental power over drama, as both text and performance.

Concerning the language of drama, it is now obvious that a great number of highly talented Arab playwrights penned their contributions to drama in the colloquial dialect of their own region. If the innumerable political and social factors implicated in theatre production are working in their favour, they have a realistic anticipation of popular achievement and accomplishment. On the other hand, the linguistic boundaries of each colloquial dialect practically assure that any such accomplishment will be a local one. Any ambition or goal that the playwright may have to expand the audience to the pan-Arab level will include readiness and keenness to settle on the question of language.

If the world of Arabic drama demonstrates signs of artistic and ingenious liveliness and vigour today, then that is homage to the astounding flexibility of practitioners of the theatre in the face of significant chances. With Arabic drama, we witness a genre in a progressing process of adaptation and maturity, one that must face the political, social and cultural complexities of the day.

## GLOSSARY

Diwan: pl. Dawawin, collection e.g. diwan al-Shi'r, collection of poems

Gazal: amatory verse

Jahiliyya: pre-islamic



Mahjar: emigration of the Arabs to North and South America. Adab al-Mahjar or Shi'r al-Mahjar, literature or poetry produced by the Arabs in Americas.

Masrah: theatre

Ta'rib: Arabising or adopting themes and texts to Arab conditions.

Tamsir: Egyptianising or adopting themes to Egyptian conditions.

Zajal: popular strophic poem.

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- xii. Wahba M, 'A Dictionary of Literary Terms', Beirut, 1974.

## ENDNOTES

- i. Magdi Wahba, 'A Dictionary of Literary Terms', p.121.
- ii. If the early scholars did not adapt tragedies because of their mythological references, they did not tackle the Greek or Indian plays that were free of these, such as the plays of Aristophanes, Tawfiq al-Hakim in an interview with the Ismat Mahdi 27-3-1977/ Ismat Mahdi, 'Modern Arabic Literature', p.40.

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- iii . Shawqi Daif, ‘al-Adab al Arabi al-Muasir fi Misr’, p.212.
- iv . Muhammad Mandur, ‘al-Masrah al-Nathri’, pp. 1-3.
- v . Ibid, pp. 1-3.
- vi . Ibid, p. 4.
- vii . Ahmad Haykal, ‘Tatawwur al-Adab Al-Arabi Al-Hadith fi Misr’. P.83.
- viii . Anis al-Maqdisi, ‘al-Funun al-Adabiyya wa Alamuha fi al-Nahda al-Arabyya al-Haditha’, p. 535.
- ix . Ahmad Haykal, ‘Tatawwur al-Adab al-Arabi al-Hadith fi Misr’, p. 83.
- x . Muhammad Mandur, ‘al-Manrah al-Nathri’, p. 11.
- xi . Ahmad Haykal, ‘Tatawwur al-Adab al-Arabi al-Hadith fi Misr’, p. 221.
- xii . Shawqi Daif, ‘al-Adab al-Arabi al-Muasir fi Misr’ p.213.
- xiii . Muhammad Mandur, ‘al-Masrah al-Nathri’, p. 20.
- xiv . Ibid., p. 21.
- xv . Abd al-Rahman Sidky, art. “Le Theatre Arabe”, special number, Cinquante Ans de Litterature Egyptienne, Revue du Caire, 1953.
- xvi . Ahmad Haykal, ‘Tatawwur al-Adab al-Arabi al-Hadith fi Misr, p. 222.
- xvii . Shawqi Daif, ‘al-Adab al-Adabi al-Muasir fi Misr’, p. 215.
- xviii . Muhammad Mandur, Masrah al-Nathri, p. 22.
- xix . The Caged Sparrow, Muhammad Taymur’s first play, was written originally in the classical and then rewritten in the colloquial. Jacques Berques, Imperialism and Modern Egypt, p. 355.
- xx . Najib Ullah, ‘Islamic Literature’, p. 181.
- xxi . Roger Allen, ‘An Introduction to Arabic Literature’, p. 208.
- xxii . Roger Allen, ‘An Introduction to Arabic Literature’, p. 211.