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Intertextuality, Adaptation or Plagiarism: Al-Sayyab's "Diwanu Shi'r" and Spenser's "Amoretti I"

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ABSTRACT

No matter what the impact of Spenser's sonnet, "Amoretti I", on Badr Shakir al-Sayyab's poem "Diwanu Shi'r" [A Book of Verse] may be named, it is textually and thematically evident that the latter poem has derived much from the former. The affinities between the two poems transcend the simple allusion, metaphor or intertextuality to reasonably assume that al-Sayyab, who is well-versed in English poetry, has re-worked Spenser's sonnet and dressed it in a classical Arabic form. The present study seeks to investigate al-Sayyab's indebtedness to Spenser, the major English 16th century poet, and here lies the significance of the study as it explores an area in the poetic formation of al-Sayyab which has never been investigated before. For this end, it explores the similarities in themes, images and subject matter between the aforementioned poems, showing whether this indebtedness is a matter of intertextuality, influence, adaptation or plagiarism.

Keywords: Spenser, al-Sayyab, intertextuality, plagiarism, comparative literature.

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تناص، أم اقتباس أم سرقة أدبية: قصيدة "ديوان شعر" للسياب وقصيدة "أمورتي" لسبنسر

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المستخلص

بصرف النظر عن طبيعة تأثير سوناتة الشاعر ادموند سبنسر الموسومة "أمورتي I" على قصيدة السياب "ديوان شعر"، ثمة قرائن نصية و ثيمية لا تقبل الشك تدل على أن القصيدة الأخيرة قد استقت الكثير من الأولى. فالعلائق بين القصيدتين قد تعدت حدود الإشارة أو الاستعارة أو التناص، لتجعل من المنطقي الافتراض أن السياب، وهو الملم الضليع بالشعر الانجليزي، قد أعاد صياغة قصيدة سبنسر وألبسها حلة عربية فصيحة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تقصي أوجه الشبه بين القصيدتين المذكورتين من حيث الفكرة والصورة والموضوع، فضلا عن استكشاف المسمى الذي يمكن اطلاقه على هذا التعكز على قصيدة سبنسر.

الكلمات الدالة: سبنسر، السياب، التناص، السرقة الادبية، الأدب المقارن.

1. INTRODUCTION

The assumption that Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (1926-1964), an Iraqi-Arab poet widely celebrated as the father of *al-Shir al-Hurr* (Free Verse) in Arabic poetry, is largely influenced and inspired by the modern English poetry is commonly accepted in the Arabic literary and critical circles. Many claims were -- and are -- made in literary journalism and academia in the Arab world, state that al-Sayyab's contribution to the modern Arabic verse is attributable to his exposure to, and thorough reading of English modernism propounded by Ezra Pound (1885-1972), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) among others (See: Neimneh and Qaisi 178-92; Gohar 40-55; Ayasrah and Latiff 78-84; Naser 11-34). However, such claims, though reasonable and sound in their headlines, some of them are groundless and lacking in verification. Also, the channel and limits of the said influence are rather debatable as al-Sayyab's reading of Western modernism in general, and the cultural and philosophical undercurrents of English modernism in particular, is not firsthand as stated by many, but indirect and secondhand as explained hereafter.

After graduating from the local secondary school of Basrah in 1943, al-Sayyab has joined *Dar al-Mu'almeen al-Aliya*, i.e, the Higher Teachers' Institute; the current Ibn-Rushd College of Education for Humanities in the University of Baghdad (Tawfik 55; Allush 16). This choice to enroll in humanities might be discordant with his high school years in which he chose the scientific rather than literary branch. But this decision was governed by financial rather than intellectual capabilities, given that the latter Institute was free of charge, unlike other institutes which were unaffordable to his poverty-stricken family (Allush 18). His study in this Institute required him to move to the city of Baghdad, then a heating center of various intellectual, ideological and political movements, such as liberalism, pan-Arab nationalism, communism, radical Islamism and others. That is why his college years had a shaping impact on his poetic character, despite his constant search for the umbrella that suits him most. These shifts were not exclusively limited to his political affiliation but extended even to his study major. In September 1943, as a freshman, he joined the department of Arabic language, a very fitting choice for a young evolving poet of Arabic. He spent two academic years (1943-44 and 1944-45) in the aforementioned department, then he grew much enthusiastic to communism and leftism. He officially joined the Iraqi Communist Party late in 1945, which made him an ardent protester and strike organizer which exposed him to a disciplinary committee and expulsion from the Institute in January 1946. His political activism led to numerous troubles, resulting in his dismissal for an academic year (1945-46). During this period, he was also arrested for orchestrating some demonstrations against the British policy in Palestine, leading to several months of imprisonment (Allush 20-21).

Still a more significant shift, as far as this study is concerned, is his decision to give up the study of Arabic and join the department of English at the same Institute in his third academic year 1945-46 before his dismissal (al-Abtta 9). This academic shift, according to Naji Allush (1935-2012), his friend, biographer and editor, was due to his desire to "enlarge his knowledge about foreign literatures" so he started "reading Shakespeare, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. Then he discovered Eliot and admired him, as with those poets" (Allush 24). However, al-Sayyab himself gave another justification for this shift to his friend Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1919- 1994), the much reputed Palestinian Iraqi author and translator, stating that "the professors in the department of Arabic had not the abundant knowledge that they can offer to him, or that he actually needs" (Balata 40). But this justification, according to his contemporaries and classmates was lacking in accuracy since their professors were among the foremost intellectuals of that era (Tawfik 65). It is rather judicious that the fervent young poet, who was aspiring to get a unique experience to make him different, chose to join the Department of English to be an Arab poet who knows English. This would serve his aspiration and satisfy his desire to regularly read the masterpieces of English literature, as he was trying, since his first year at the Institute, to read English poetry "after consulting the dictionary some twenty or thirty times in one poem" (Jargy 19). As an example, his first translation of William Blake's "To Autumn" in December 1943, as a freshman, to impress a high school fellow, was rather painstaking (Tawfik 65).

The possibility of al-Sayyab's English language proficiency to fully comprehend English literature and replicate it remains controversial. His formal study years of English at the Higher Teachers' Institute were two only (1946-47) and (1947-48), which seldom suffice

to give him more than the basics of reading and writing, to qualify the graduates to teach English for Iraqi primary school children at grade 5 and 6. Furthermore, the institute curriculum is education-oriented, rather than literary oriented. This refutes the overtly repeated exaggerations that al-Sayyab, in his college years, delved deep in English literature, and studied Eliot and modern English poetry. According the syllabus of the institute's literature courses, undergraduates are provided with some literary works to familiarize them with English literature, rather than delving deep into the subject. In this regard, Professor Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'ah (1935 -), a well-known Iraqi author and translator who knew al-Sayyab and befriended him later, states:

I joined the department of Foreign Languages Department in 1948, i.e., immediately after the graduation of al-Sayyab. The department at that time had nothing of English literature, particularly English poetry, which may enhance the poetic talents among students during the four years of study, except for very few instances. The college, and the British teaching staff of the department aimed at teacher training, by focusing on the grammar of English and writing, supporting that with few novels, plays and selected poems.As for the novels, they were 19th century works, and a few 20th century ones, which seldom required deep knowledge of the history of England. The plays were usually from Shakespeare's works, such as *Macbeth* or *Romeo and Juliet*. As for poetry, the selection were from the abridged version of *The Golden Treasury* which hardly touches upon the early 20th century poetry. With such syllabi, I do not think al-Sayyab has got much benefit from his last two years in the department. (Lu'lu'ah 7)

2. PLAGIARISM or INFLUENCE: Al-SAYAAB and SPENSER

The investigation of the much repeated influence of Eliot, Sitwell and other 20th century poets on al-Sayyab is beyond the scope of this paper. Many studies have tackled this issue, but they mostly investigate almost the same aspects overlooking many vital areas that are worth investigation (See for example: (Ali 33-45) (Khidr 857-89) (Aloos 431-58) (Naser 11-34) (Al-Azmeh 2004). However, this paper argues that al-Sayaab has heavily relied on one the most famous 16th century poems, namely Spenser's "Amoretti I" sonnet. Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) is evidently included in Book II of *The Golden Treasury: Selected from the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language and Arranged with Notes* (1912), edited by Francis Turner Palgrave. This means that as an undergraduate, al-Sayyab must have read this sonnet. Based on the foregoing discussion and considering the fact that this sonnet has been, and continues to be, one of the items of English poetry syllabus of in the former Higher Teachers' Institute, and the colleges of education of the present day in Iraq. It is unmistakably clear that al-Sayyab must have studied this poem in class, or have read it by himself in the context of his passion to read foreign poetic experiences, along with the above-mentioned Blake's poem which he found in the same source.

Now that al-Sayyab's direct contact with this particular sonnet, i.e. Spenser's "Amoretti I", is established, it is worth stating that he imitated, emulated, reworked or rather

adapted it in a poem titled “*Diwanu Shi’r*” [A Book of Verse]. The affinities between the former and the latter are apparent in matters of subject, theme, imagery as well as in the courtly love tradition to which they roughly belong, and in the classical forms they both adhere to. Such affinities exceed the limits of intertextuality or coincidental references as will be explained below. The resemblance extends even to the occasion in which each poem was written.

Spenser’s *Amoretti* sonnet sequence, first published in 1595, is intended to show courtship and express adoration to his lady and second wife Elizabeth Boyle, an Irish-British young lady, to immortalize her “by devices of word play” (Blick 309). Basically, these sonnets register the progress of the two lovers’ love story which culminated in their marriage in June 11, 1594 (Prescott 152). As a poetic work, *Amoretti* has “been more often regarded as a work of biography than as a work of art serving an aesthetic purpose” (Cummings 163). However, this personal biographical air of the work does not justify the claim that it is devoid of aestheticism. On the contrary, *Amoretti*, according to J. W. Lever, can be read as a structure that serves some specific aesthetic purpose (96), and the unrelenting biographic motifs never suffice to prevent poetry, which is customarily subjective, from being aesthetic at the same time. It is the presence of the poet as the speaker and protagonist of the poem which adds authenticity and credibility to the overtly exaggerated flames of passion and makes his assumption of the role of the courtly lover and worshipper plausible. As such, the subjectivity of the sonnet sequence serves in exposing some of the very personal mental and psychological moments of the poet-lover. The first sonnet, which is the main focus of the present article, is in a sense a dedication of the book which includes 89 sonnets in total where the recipient of the book is identified. This sonnet includes the dedication to his lady Elizabeth whose “lily hands” hold his life “their dead doing might” (Spenser 69).

On the other hand, al-Sayyab’s poem, “*Diwanu Shi’r*” [A Book of Verse] is also written in relation to a book of verse he gave to a lady he adored, but unlike Spenser, his book of verse was handwritten, not yet published, and his passions to her were unrequited for she did not even know about that. When al-Sayyab was a student at the aforementioned institute, he was fervently thirsty for love, to be loved by a woman. This was quite an issue for a marginalized poverty-stricken youth whose queer physical appearance and stunted body further deepened his inner pain and subjected him to a lot of bullying, particularly by female students. He reported to a female colleague how girls used to look at his queer shape with astonishment, and once when freshmen gathered at the dean’s office for the admission interview, girls were pointing at him and whispering, till one of them loudly said “Look! We have a student from China!” (qtd. Tawfik 56). In such a context, his was longing to be loved, to find a real muse who would inspire his love poem. He was previously in love with the idea of love, not with a real woman who would exchange passion with him. In his high school days, he has lived many illusions of love, assuming love affairs with a shepherdess, a rustic neighbor, or any rural girl, as shown in his juvenilia. When he came to Baghdad, he expected that he would find his loving muse at the institute. But this did not come true and he had to interpret any greeting, smile or gesture from a girl as an expression of love, and he always registered that in a poem. In this sense, juvenilia can be safely read as a biography—as with *Amoretti*—and this is true to the poem in question which shows him as a dreamer of wrong dreams.

Although “*Diwanu Shi’r*” [A Book of Verse] is not dated in al-Sayyab’s complete works, his biographers state that it was written late in 1944 or early 1945 (Allush, 2005; Tawfik, 1997). While still aspiring to live a real love story, a pretty colleague named Daisy al-Ameer (1935-2018), who later became a short-story writer and a novelist, asked him to let her read some of his poems, as she knew that he is a poet. He was overjoyed by this request, considered it as a sign of her interest in himself not in his poems. Then, he copied some of his poems in an elegant decorated notebook, delivered it to her. He soared in his imagination and dreamt that Daisy (whom he named *al-Uqhuwana*, the Arabic word for daisy), and all her beautiful friends will embrace his *diwan*, read it and put it under their pillows, wondering who is the lucky muse who inspired such great poems (Tawfik 58-59). The poem in question was not included in the said notebook, but it was written after he gave it to Daisy, to give his imagination free reins, expressing his envy for this *diwan* for being touched, read and embraced by the fair folk. In this sense, he is emulating Spenser’s sonnet in which the same sense of envy is expressed for being held by the lily-handed lady. In both cases, a book of verse is being sent to an unattainable lady who assumes a superior position, where the poetic persona expresses the sighs of a helpless poet-lover who is begging the favors of a carefree lady in the manner of courtly love tradition. In both, the recipients of the books of verse are specific ladies, Elizabeth Boyle in the case of Spenser, and Daisy al-Ameer in the case of al-Sayyab. The only difference here is that in the former case, Spenser was acknowledged as a lover and a husband later on, whereas al-Sayyab’s longing for Daisy was not acknowledged as she never knew about his approaches to her as being motivated by love. Hence, al-Sayyab’s poem refers to no particular lady, but to a group of virgins, Daisy and her circle of friends. Being so thirsty for being loved, he did not care which one of them; the most important issue for him is to be loved. Al-Sayyab’s poem starts as follows:

A book of verse with ghazal laden	بين العذارى بات ينتقل	ديوان شعرٍ ملؤه غزلٌ
Among the virgins, it has been called in	صفحاته والحبُّ و الأملُ	أنفاسي الحرى تهيم على
My heating breaths hover over its pages	و تحوم في جنباته القبلُ	و ستلتقي أنفاسهن بها
Along with love and hope.		
Their breaths shall meet with mine	بين العذارى بات ينتقل	ديوان شعرٍ ملؤه غزلٌ
And kisses shall revolve over each line		
A book of verse with ghazal laden		
Among the virgins, it has been called in.		
(Quatrain 1)	(CP: I, 350) ¹	

Whereas al-Sayyab adopts a third-person viewpoint in speaking about his *diwan*, Spenser uses second-person viewpoint in which he directly addresses his book. The former uses the classical Arabic form of vertical *qasida* (classical Arabic poem) form, rather than *taf'eela* form of poetry which is wrongly called (*shi'r hurr*: free verse) which he himself

¹ Al-Sayyab, Badr Shakir. *Diwan Badr Shakir al-Sayyab*. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar Al-Awda, 2005. 2 vols. Henceforth, Completed Poems (CP) followed by Volume number and page number (CP:I, 350-352). Subsequent references to and citation from al-Sayyab’s poem are taken from this edition. Translations of al-Sayyab’s poem into English which appear in this study are done by the researcher.

introduced for the first time in the history of Arabic verse in 29 November 1946 (Tawfik 268). The latter form depends on multi-rhymes rather than the classical mono-rhymed poems, and various number of feet of the meter in the line of verse, rather than using one meter consisting of the same number of feet throughout the *qasida* as in the classical form of Arabic poetry. In other words, the *qasida*, usually uses one rhyme and one meter consisting of one exact number of units or feet (Arabic: *tafa'eel*) and in all the *bayts* (singular: *bayt*) which means a line of verse. Each *bayt* consists of two hemistiches which are equal in their *tafa'eel* (feet), the first hemistich is called *sadr* and the second is *adjz*, neither of which can stand by itself as a complete unit of meaning. So, a *sadr* must be read with the *adjz* for the message to be delivered. Between the *sadr* and *adjz* of each *bayt*, there is an empty space to serve as an interval or a pause when reciting the *qasida* as in the above-quoted lines. Variations of rhymes, but not in meter, in the same *qasida* have become possible in the so-called *rubaiyaat* (quatrains) in which every four *bayts* use one rhyme, and this exactly is the form al-Sayyab used in the poem under consideration herein.

“*Diwanu Shi'r*” [A Book of Verse] consists of ten quatrains, the fourth *bayt* in each quatrain is a repetition of the first one, except for quatrains 2 and 9 where he uses a variation of the *sadr* of the first *bayt* in the fourth one. The poem is written after *al-Kamil* meter, using nine rhymes only, since the first quatrain is repeated at the end of the poem. So the rhyme-scheme of the poem is [AAAA, BBBB, CCCC, DDDD, EEEE, FFFF, GGGG, HHHH, IIII, AAAA]. The 40 *bayts*, in comparison with the 14 iambic pentameter lines of the Spenserian sonnet, and the nine rhymes, in comparison with five rhymes [ABAB BCBC CDCD EE] of Spenser have given al-Sayyab some more liberty to elaborate on the same subject of Spenser’s sonnet. So, both poems follow classical forms of English and Arabic verse, respectively.

Hence, since Spenser is more bound by the requirement of the sonnet form, he opens the poem with a direct apostrophe, addressing the pages of his book expressing his envy for them as his lily-handed lady who holds his life with might, shall handle them, touch them, relying much on the tactile sense. He says that the leaves shall tremble in her mighty presence like captives in the presence of the captivator, just as his heart which trembles before her:

Happy ye leaves when as those lilly hands,
Which hold my life in their dead doing might,
Shall handle you and hold in loves soft bands,
Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight. (1-4)²

² Spenser, Edmund. *Edmund Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion: A Critical Edition*. Ed. Kenneth J. Larsen. Arizona: MRTS, 1997. Subsequent references to and citation from Spenser’s sonnet are taken from this edition.

What has been stated in the first quatrain in Spenser's sonnet takes al-Sayyab four quatrains to express, namely quatrains 4, 5, 6 and 7 in which he envies his *diwan* as it will have access to places and spaces he longs to reach, such as virgin's naked breasts, breaths and kisses, as some of them shall fold it there and sleep (quatrain 4). His *diwan* shall get love as the ladies will love the book, not the poet (quatrain 5); it will enjoy immortality as they will bless it with memorizing its verses (quatrain 5); it will accompany them in their boudoirs or bedchambers as they will spend sleepless nights reading it (quatrain 6); it will enjoy light, fragrance, whispering mouths, and naked breasts once again (quatrain 7):

O my book of verse, there may be a virgin
You may remind of her far away lover
Then she felt a kissing lip,
With panting breaths and echoes
So she folds you over her breasts with one hand
And passed in a pseudo-slumber
O my book of verse, there may be a virgin
You may remind of her far away lover.

(Quatrain 4)

I wish I were my own book
So from one breast to another I may proudly
look
Out of envy I started to say:
I wish the one who loved you loved me!
Do you take the cups and I get only the lee?
And shall I pass away, and you get immortality?
I wish I were my own book
So from one breast to another I may proudly
look.

(Quatrain 5)

Many a graceful lady you saw her boudoir
And spent the night with her on her night moire
She longs for a cruel lover
Whose past love caused her tears to fall
So she starts telling you her story
And reveals what aches her.
Many a graceful lady you saw her boudoir
And spent the night with her on her night moire

(Quatrain 6)

You shall live between light and fragrance
Leaping from one breast to another
You shall see the whispering lips reciting
The wonders and magic you are hiding

ديوان شعري رب عذراء

أذكرتها بحبيبها النائى

فتحسست شفة مقبلة

وشتيت أنفاس وأصداء

فطوتك فوق نهودها بيد

واسترسلت في شبه إغفاء

ديوان شعري رب عذراء

أذكرتها بحبيبها النائى

يا ليتني أصبحت ديوانى

أختال من صدر إلى ثان

قد بت من حسد أقول له:

يا ليت من تهواك تهوانى

ألك الكؤوس ولي ثمالتها

ولك الخلود وإنتى فان؟

يا ليتني أصبحت ديوانى

أختال من صدر إلى ثانى

كم عادة شاهدت مخدعها

ومضيت تسهر ليلها معها

قد هزها شوق لمعتسف

أمس هواه يسيل أدمعها

فمضت تذيع إليك قصتها

وتبتت هما فل أضلعها

كم عادة شاهدت مخدعها

ومضيت تسهر ليلها معها!

ستعيش بين النور والعطر

وتقر من صدر إلى صدر

فترى الثغور تعيد هامسة

The breast shall throw your shade
On the meadows of imagination and the dancing
yard of poetry
You shall live between light and fragrance
Leaping from one chest to another.

(Quatrain 7)

ما فيك من فتن ومن سحر
والنهد يرمي الظل فيك على
روض الخيال ومرقص الشعر

ستعيش بين النور والعطر

وتقرّ من صدر إلى صدر

(CP: I, 350 -51)

After his failure to win the heart of women, al-Sayyab wished he were his own *diwan* to go from one virgin to another, from one lap to another. He personifies the book, again as Spenser does and addresses it with jealousy and envy, for being loved and favored by ladies, unlike the poet who wrote it (Sadoon 21).

The second quatrain of Spenser's sonnet, which address the lines of his verses, is also expanded to two successive quatrains in al-Sayyab's poem (quatrains 2 and 3). This part tackles the act of reading of the book of verse and what to read beyond the lines, what messages the poet seeks to convey to his recipient(s), and what mind and soul are behind the written words. Spenser, once again, envies the lines for they will be seen by his lady's eyes which, he hopes she will find them worth reading, hoping that she may read the sorrows of his dying spirit, written with tears of his secret love:

And happy lines, on which with starry light,
Those lamping eyes will deigne sometimes to look
And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,
Written with teares in harts close bleeding book. (5-8)

In this part, Spenser involves the visual sense in the process, stating that what would his lady, and by extension his readers, see in the lines he wrote. The eyes would see the bleeding heart of the poet and then feel his sorrows. Likewise, al-Sayyab uses the visual sense, in almost identical, albeit elaborate, images in quatrains 2 and 3, using such phrases as "their looks shall fall on its pages"; "my pretty one may read it"; "they will see what I have encountered"; and "they may shed tears on its pages." As such, al-Sayyab seems to follow Spenser's footsteps in ideas, sensory functions, and images as well. But he introduced an additional issue to the scene, when his imaginary reading folk, consisting of girls only, read his poems, they would ask who the lucky one whom he loves is?

When the mourning and complaining time
comes
Each of them asks who is the one whom he
loves?
Their looks shall fall on pages,
Among its lines in ecstasy
Their breasts shall shake in remorse
Provoked by the pain it contains
Perhaps my enchanter may read

لما يحين التّوح والشكوى
كل تقول من التي يهوى؟
وسترتمي نظراتهنّ على الص
فحات بين سطورہ نشوى
ولسوف ترتج النهود أسى
ويثيرها ما فيه من بلوى
ولربّما قرأته فاتنتني
فمضت تقول: من التي يهوى؟

And asks who is the one whom he loves?
(Quatrain 2)

What I encountered in my love they shall see
And cry: What a passionate lover! Dear me!
Their tears may fall on its pages rolling ,
They fall and keep falling
I wish my hear were one of its poems
So the graceful pretty one could see
What is there in the heart of me
What I encountered in my love they shall see
And cry: What a passionate lover! Dear me!
(Quatrain 3)

سيرين ما لاقيت في حبي
فيصحن: يا للعاشق الصبّ
ولقد تسيل دموعهن على
جنباته، موصولة السكب
يا ليت قلبي من قصائده
لترى الحسان الغيد ما قلبي
سيرين ما لاقيت في حبي
فيصحن، يا للعاشق الصبّ
(CP: I, 350)

In these quatrains, al-Sayyab focuses more on the acts of seeing and reading which will lead the virgins to ask who is the girl whom he loves. Their looks will fall on the pages, with ecstasy, but this intellectual act is combined with sensuality as the poet introduces the image of “the breasts shake in remorse” due to the calamity and pain expressed in the poems. They may shed tears in pity for the poet and his unrequited love. Al-Sayyab, unlike Spenser, makes it his ultimate goal to seek sympathy of the female readers, and uses his poems as a means to win their passion and pity.

Spenser’s third quatrain utilizes another dimension of poetry, rhymes, which depend on the auditory sense. Here, he deems his rhymes happy, since they were inspired by mythical muses in the Helicon site, and since his angel will look at them. Rhymes are to be read or recited, rather than beheld. Still, he envies them for that:

And happy rymes bath'd in the sacred brooke
Of Helicon whence she is derived is,
When ye behold that Angels blessed looke,
My soules long lacked foode, my heavens blis. (9-12)

This quatrain is also imitated and elaborated in a-Sayyab’s poem where he uses the same auditory effect of rhymes and poems, stating that such rhymes and poems may invoke various images when read. His readers will hear the songs of the country which celebrate the wild beauty of rustic girls; the murmurs of the water complaining to the jars; the silence of the palm trees; and the night, breezes, the boats whose rows are left to sleep.

They hear in you, the country songs, Chanting
for its graceful girls
The water sighs to the jars of its love,
The palms are in silence and giggling
The night, the odorous breezes, and sleeping-
rows boat
Are listening to the country, as it complains of
his love to graceful girls.

يسمعن فيك أغاني الريف
مترنما بحسانه الهيف
الماء يشكو للجرار هوى
والنخل في صمت وتعزيف
والليل والأنسام عاطرة
والزورق الغافي المجاديف
تلقى مسامعها إلى الريف
يشكو غرام حسانه الهيف

Then, al-Sayyab reiterates his jealousy and envy of his *diwan*, which sleeps under the pillows of graceful girls, while he himself spends the nights awake in sighs and moans. His *diwan* is luckier than himself as he thinks that he is born for misery, to conclude the poem with the same quatrain of the outset, repeating his address to his *diwan*. The poem ends up with the same quatrain with which it begins, following the same rationale used in Spenser's sonnet which wraps up with a couplet that summarizes all as he asks the "leaves, lines, and rymes" to please her alone and nobody else, as he cares for nobody else.

As far as courtly love is concerned, Spenser has one specific lady and he addressed her in particular, and dedicated the sonnet sequence to her. He intends his sonnets for her only and cares for nobody else, as he asks his "Leaves, lines, and rymes" to "seeke her to please alone, / Whom if ye please, I care for other none" (13-14). His approaches proved success as he won her heart. But al-Sayyab had no specific lady, though he copied and decorated the handwritten manuscript of his *diwan* to Daisy, but his other plan was to win the heart of any particular "virgin" in case his approaches to the latter failed. That is why he imagines that his *diwan* would win predilection and favor among the college fair ladies, to the extent that it would instigate the sparks of passion, memories and love with all. One other difference is that Spenser, in this particular sonnet, describes the recipient of his sonnet- sequence as being a source of might and power, and presents himself as a humble and weak person who seeks to make her happy though he wrote them all with sorrow and tears. The physical features of the lady are not predominant in the sonnet. He describes her "lily hands" and "laming eyes" which all gave her an "Angels blessed looke." But in al-Sayyab's poem, more sensual images are used to describe the unspecified virgin of whom he dreams, such as "a kissing lip", "breasts", "chests", "bedchambers" scented with "fragrance and lights"... etc. This can be ascribed to the Neoplatonic tradition in Italy propagated by Petrarch, which begins with the flesh and gradually ascends to the spirit (Cummings 166) in the case of Spenser who little focuses on the body in this sonnet. Whereas in the case of al-Sayyab, he keeps revolving in the realm of the flesh, descending from the elevated and ennobling effect poetry should have to the flesh, hence contradicting the poetic legacy of the Arabic tradition of virtuous love and chivalric courtship which can be traced back to the Udhri Love (Arabic Platonic love) which appeared in pre-Islamic Arabia and flourished to be a prevalent standard in the Umayyad Dynasty era (661-750 A.D.).

3. CONCLUSION

Despite the contextual differences between the poems explained in this paper, which are mainly related to the cultural and social milieu, the Arabic poem is evidently following the same steps of the English sonnet. First and foremost, al-Sayyab has employed Spenser's subject matter and followed exactly the same approach to that subject: addressing his own book of verse and deeming it a messenger of love, a practice that was not very common in Arabic tradition, though very common at the Elizabethan Age - as in Shakespeare and other sonneteers. Here, al-Sayyab introduces a western theme in an

Arabic form. Both poems come in the context of dedicating a book of verse to a lady, and both express heating desires and passions, and seek favors of that lady. However, al-Sayyab deviates a little in tackling the subject, since Spenser's entire sonnet is built upon an apostrophe in which he directly and openly addresses an inanimate object, whereas al-Sayyab relates his ideas in the third-person, using the direct apostrophe only occasionally, as in quatrain 5. Structurally speaking, al-Sayyab has also imitated the same pattern as Spenser's, the poem depends on three main parts, featuring three sense images: tactile, visual and auditory, and again, he deviates a little in the elaboration and extension he has given to each, due to the length of his poem which affords such elaboration. In addition, al-Sayyab adds some local colors – such symbols as date-palms, boats, etc. – to such images to naturalize the theme and subject matter.

The employment of a classical *qasida* form is another point of comparison with the classical sonnet form. However, the Arabic *qasida* of al-Sayyab does not derive from or establish on the Arabic tradition of the elevated Udhri love which exalts the idealized the unattainable lady, which has always been typical in Arabic poetry. Paradoxically, the courtly love tradition is strongly observed by Spenser, whereas al-Sayyab, who stands upon a deep-rooted poetic tradition of spiritual, pure and chivalric love which is known to have a shaping influence on the Western courtly love tradition, fails to observe this tradition, so he never departs from the flesh. However, al-Sayyab differs from Spenser in his ultimate goal of the poem and the book of verse with which it is associated. True he has written the book to Daisy –whom he called *al-Ughuwana* – but he has another route if he fails to win her heart, so he uses her as a passage to any lady of her company, being so much in need to experience love, no matter with whom. In other words, when he has no genuine feeling of love to a specific lady, he was in love with the idea of love rather than being in love with a real woman when he wrote the poem, and the book of verse associated with it.

In view of the forgoing similarities between al-Sayyab's "*Diwanu Shi'r*" [A Book of Verse] and Spenser's "Amoretti I", and the imitation of the former to the latter, it can be safely concluded that al-Sayyab exceeds the limits of the proper intertextuality, allusion, quotation or pastiche in his employment of Spenser's sonnet. His re-working of the latter's poem is too broad in latitude and nature to be deemed a matter influence and response. It is no less than clear plagiarism, or translation with adaptation, if euphemism steps in.

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