Hacettepe University
Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature

REVISITING SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM PLAYS: *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*, *HAMLET* AND *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

Emine Seda ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU

Ph.D. Dissertation

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KABUL VE ONAY

Emine Seda ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU tarafından hazırlanan "Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 27.01.2017 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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27.01.2017

Emine Seda ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU

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o **Serbest Seçenek/Yazarın Seçimi**

27/01/2017

Emine Seda ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU

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ÖZET

ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU, Emine Seda. Shakespeare'in Problem Oyunlarına Yeniden Bakış: *The Merchant of Venice* (*Venedik Taciri*), *Hamlet* ve *Measure for Measure* (*Kısasa Kısas*). Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2017.

Julius Caesar (1599), *Hamlet* (1599-1601), *All's Well That Ends Well* (*Yeter ki Sonu İyi Bitsin*) (1601-1602), *Troilus and Cressida* (*Troilus ve Cressida*) (1603), *Measure for Measure* (*Kısasa Kısas*) (1603), *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Antonius ve Kleopatra*) (1607) ve *Timon of Athens* (*Atinalı Timon*) (1607-1608), "problem oyunları", "karanlık komediler", "trajikomediler" ve "problem komedileri" olarak adlandırılmıştır. Shakespeare'in bu oyunları problem yapan özellikler on yedinci yüzyıldan bu yana eleştirmenler ve akademisyenler tarafından farklı açılardan ele alınmakta ve tartışılmaktadır. Her eleştirmen ve akademisyen, isimlendirme, sınıflandırma ve ortaya atılan soruların çeşitliliği bakımından, Shakespeare'in problem oyunları alanına yeni bir boyut getirmiştir. Ayrıca, edebi türde belirsizlik, seyirciyi/okuyucuyu tatmin etmeyen belirsiz son, karakterdeki problemler ve seyircinin/okuyucunun yorumuna bırakılan özellikle ahlaki soruların ortaya atılması bu oyunların farklı özellikleri olarak ele alınmıştır. Oyunların karanlık bir havaya sahip olmasına Shakespeare'in kişisel hayatında yaşadığı problemlerin mi, yoksa dönemin tarihsel bağlamının mı etkisi olduğu eleştirmenler ve akademisyenler tarafından tartışılmıştır. Bu tezin amacı, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* ve *Measure for Measure* oyunlarını, problem oyunu olarak incelemektir. Bu bağlamda, Birinci Bölüm'de, *The Merchant of Venice*, karakterdeki ve edebi türle ilgili problemler açısından analiz edilmektedir. İkinci Bölüm'de, *Hamlet*, karakterdeki problem bakımından tartışılmaktadır. Üçüncü Bölüm'de ise *Measure for Measure*, adaletin sağlanamaması bağlamında ve edebi türle ilgili problemler açısından incelenmektedir. Ayrıca, bu tez, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* ve *Measure for Measure* oyunlarını sırasıyla yazıldıkları dönemlerdeki dini bağlamda, siyasi bağlamda ve adalet anlayışı çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özellikle Kraliçe I. Elizabeth döneminin sonunda, Kral I. James'in yönetiminin başında ortaya çıkan dini, siyasi ve hukuki konulardaki sorunların bu oyunlardaki kasvetli havayı yarattığı savunulmaktadır. Ayrıca,

bağlama ait bu sorunlar, her bölümde ele alınan problemin ortaya çıkışına ya da gelişimine zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bu anlamda, *The Merchant of Venice* oyununun dini bağlamı açısından İngiltere'deki Yahudi tarihi ele alınmıştır. *Hamlet* oyununda, veliaht sorunu ve Essex Ayaklanması politik bağlam açısından çalışılmıştır. Son olarak, *Measure for Measure* oyununda, Kral I. James yönetiminin ilk yıllarında adaletin yerini bulmamasına neden olan otoriter rejim ve yasaların uygulanmasında karşılaşılan sorunlar siyasi ve hukuki bağlam açısından incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, problem oyunları, edebi türle ilgili problem, karakterdeki problem, oyunun sonu ile ilgili problem, dini bağlam, siyasi bağlam, hukuki bağlam

ABSTRACT

ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU, Emine Seda. Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: *The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*, Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara, 2017.

The features which make *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Hamlet* (1599-1601), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-1602), *Troilus and Cressida* (1603), *Measure for Measure* (1603), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) and *Timon of Athens* (1607-1608) were called "problem plays", "dark comedies", "tragi-comedies" and "problem comedies". Shakespeare's problem plays have been discussed by critics and scholars from different perspectives since the seventeenth century. Each critic and scholar brought a new dimension to the field of Shakespeare's problem plays in terms of naming, categorisation and types of questions which are raised. Various aspects of these plays such as generic ambiguity, uncertain endings which did not satisfy the audience/readers, character issues and the presentation of particularly moral issues that have been left to the interpretation of the audience/readers were emphasised. In addition, whether Shakespeare suffered similar problems in his personal life or whether the historical background of the time was influential on the gloomy atmosphere of these plays were discussed by the critics and scholars. This dissertation aims at studying *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1598), *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* as Shakespeare's problem plays. In this regard, in Chapter I, *The Merchant of Venice* is analysed in terms of the problems with reference to character and genre. In Chapter II, *Hamlet* is discussed with regard to the problem in character. Lastly, in Chapter III, *Measure for Measure* is studied in relation to the problems regarding the abuse of justice, and genre. Furthermore, this dissertation aims at analysing *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* respectively within the religious, political and legal contexts of the periods in which they were written. It is argued that the problems in religious, political and legal affairs, particularly, in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign and at the beginning of James I's rule influenced the bleak tone of these three plays. These problems related to the context also establish the ground for the emergence and/or the development of the particular problem dealt with in each chapter. In this sense, the history of the Jewish people in England is dealt with within the religious context of *The*

Merchant of Venice. In *Hamlet* the succession problem and the Essex Rebellion are studied as the political context. Lastly, in *Measure for Measure*, the authoritarian rule which results in the abuse of justice and the problems in the enforcement of law in the early years of James I's rule are analysed within the political and legal context.

Key Words: William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, problem plays, problem in genre, problem in character, problem in ending, religious context, political context, legal context

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INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's problem plays are different from his history plays, romantic comedies, tragedies and romances as they cannot be placed in either of these groups. Along with the generic ambiguity, these plays raise various questions in the minds of the audience/readers and leave them unanswered. In addition, the endings are problematic as they are not satisfactory but ambiguous. Also they can be problematic because of character, plot and themes. Various Shakespearean scholars and critics have defined and analysed the term problem play, and categorised for different reasons different plays of Shakespeare as problem plays throughout the centuries.

The critics and scholars who studied *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Hamlet* (1599-1601), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-1602), *Troilus and Cressida* (1603), *Measure for Measure* (1603), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) before the late nineteenth century commented on the problems in these plays, but they did not label them as problem plays. The views of these critics and scholars and the reasons they set for the problematic nature of the above-mentioned plays will be reviewed in chronological order. In *The Mirror of Martyes* (1601) John Weever emphasises that the changing attitude of the Roman people in *Julius Caesar* is problematic. For Weever, the Romans do not commit themselves to a cause, but they are easily impressed and change their opinions, hence they are unreliable (qtd. in Salgado 22). In *Troilus and Cressida, Or, Truth Found too Late. A Tragedy ... To which is Prefix'd, A Preface Containing the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy* (1679) John Dryden puts forth that *Troilus and Cressida* is problematic in terms of the text and the characters. The texts of the play published by the actors and the publishers after Shakespeare's death are not divided into acts and are incorrect (qtd. in Vickers, vol.1 250). Furthermore, for Dryden, the two characters, Pandarus and Thersites are problematic. Though these two characters initially dominate the play through their acts and speeches, they lose their impact towards the end of the play (qtd. in Vickers, vol.1 250). On the other hand, in *A Short View of Tragedy: It's Original*

Excellency, and Corruption. With Some Reflections on Shakespeare, and other Practitioners for the Stage (1693) Thomas Rymer argues that there is a problem about the presentation of the historical figures such as Brutus, Cicero and Caesar in *Julius Caesar*. For Rymer, these characters are "the noblest *Romans*" (148), and Shakespeare devalues them in his representation as he "sins not against Nature and Philosophy only, but against the most known History" (148). Charles Gildon comments on *All's Well That Ends Well* in *Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare* (1710) and asserts that the plot of the play is problematic as there are various inconsistencies between the first and the second parts of the play which are set in France and in Italy, respectively (qtd. in Vickers, vol.2 244). For Gildon, *All's Well That Ends Well* "can't be call'd natural" (244) as the story of the play is far-fetched. Two critics in the eighteenth century, George Stubbes and George Steevens emphasise the problems in *Hamlet* without assigning the play to the category of problem play. While Stubbes points at the problems in the scenes of Ophelia's madness in *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736), and finds them "shocking" (qtd. in Vickers, vol.3 61), Steevens expresses his discontent with the variety in *Hamlet* in his letter to David Garrick in 1771 (qtd. in Vickers, vol.5 456). Steevens expresses that there are both comic and tragic elements in the play; however, Steevens calls it a problem: "This play of Shakespeare, in particular, resembles a looking glass exposed for sale, which reflects alternatively the funeral and the puppet-show, the venerable beggar soliciting charity, and the blackguard rascal picking a pocket" (qtd. in Vickers, vol.5 456). In addition, Samuel Johnson finds *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* problematic as the former is the darkest play of Shakespeare (qtd. in Halliday, *Shakespeare and His Critics* 238), and in the latter, Shakespeare is not successful at displaying his dramatic skills and imagination (qtd. in Woudhuysen 235).

Moreover, August Willhelm von Schlegel, in his lecture, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* which he delivered in Vienna in 1808, puts forward that *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Hamlet* embody various problems. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the inconsistencies in Antony's character are problematic for though Antony enjoys a debauched life with Cleopatra in Egypt, he also feels ashamed of this kind of life and finds it immoral (qtd. in Bate 262). Moreover, the nature of the relation between Antony

and Cleopatra is open to question because Antony, despite his noble features, easily yields to Cleopatra (qtd. in Bate 263). As for *Hamlet*, it is an obscure play which does not provide the audience/readers with particular solutions (qtd. in Bate 370-371). Lastly, in a lecture to the St Andrew's Club for Women in 1839, Julia Wedgwood presents similar remarks to those of Thomas Rymer's, and states that "[t]he representation of the world's greatest statesman by the world's greatest poet" (qtd. in Thompson and Roberts 217) in *Julius Caesar* is problematic. In this sense, she argues that Shakespeare features Caesar's physical and moral deficiencies along with his arrogance, but ignores his strength and virtues.

After the late nineteenth century, Edward Dowden in *Shakspere: His Mind and Art* (1875), Frederick S. Boas in *Shakspere and his Predecessors* (1896), William Witherle Lawrence in *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (1931), E.M.W. Tillyard in *Shakespeare's Problem Plays* (1951), Arthur Percival Rossiter in *Angel with Horns* (1961), Peter Ure in *The Problem Plays* (1961), Ernest Schanzer in *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare* (1963), Richard P. Wheeler in *Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies: Turn and Counter-Turn* (1981), Northrop Frye in *The Myth of Deliverance: Reflections on Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (1983), Vivian Thomas in *The Moral Universe of Shakespeare's Problem Plays* (1987), Richard Hillman in *William Shakespeare: The Problem Plays* (1993), Nicholas Marsh in *Shakespeare: Three Problem Plays* (2003), and Edward L. Risden in *Shakespeare and the Problem Play: Complex Forms, Crossed Genres and Moral Quandaries* (2012) discuss the naming, classification, the questions that are raised and characteristics of some of Shakespeare's problem plays. Moreover, they focus on the plays which should be included in or excluded from this category. In this regard, the chief features which make a play 'problem play' have aroused controversy among the aforementioned scholars and critics. Though there have been some similarities in their opinions, there are also differences in their remarks on the naming, categorisation and characteristics of Shakespeare's problem plays. Robert Ornstein comments on the purpose of the diverse critical opinions about the designation and characteristics of Shakespeare's problem plays along with the ambiguous nature of these plays as follows:

> The ability of the problem comedies to polarize critical opinion raises questions not only about the plays themselves but also about the theories and assumptions which underlie conflicting interpretations. For example, are the problem comedies ambiguous because of the failure of Shakespeare's art? Or are they deliberately and necessary ambiguous because they deal with acts, motives and dedications which are at once ideal and impure? Or do they seem ambiguous only because the aesthetic, ethical, and psychological assumptions of modern critics lead them to discover ironies and ambivalences which Shakespeare never intended? (Introduction viii)

As it may be understood from Ornstein's words, the variety of the opinions of the scholars and critics on Shakespeare's problem plays poses questions not only about the nature of these plays but also about the cause of such diversity. In this sense, I will present the discussions of the aforementioned scholars and critics on the issue of the naming of Shakespeare's problem plays along with the categorisation and the questions which are posed, and the relation between problem plays and Shakespeare's biography, the common characteristics of problem plays while presenting my own comments and arguments on the points discussed.

In the Preface to the Third Edition in *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (1881), Edward Dowden classifies *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as "Later Comedy" and defines them as "[s]erious, [d]ark, [i]ronical" plays (x). Moreover, in Dowden's words, *Measure for Measure* "is dark and bitter" while *All's Well That Ends Well* "is grave and earnest" and *Troilus and Cressida* is "strange and difficult" (vi). Furthermore, though Dowden does not classify *Timon of Athens* as a later comedy of Shakespeare, he asserts that there is similarity between *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida* in terms of darkness in tone and content. Dowden puts forth the resemblance between the two plays taking into consideration Troilus's frustrated trust in Cressida. Dowden calls *Troilus and Cressida* a "comedy of disillusion" (viii) and comments on the content of *Timon of Athens* as follows: "Timon has a lax benevolence and shallow trust in the goodness of men; he is undeceived, and bitterly turns away from the whole human race in a rage of disappointment" (viii). It may be argued that both Troilus and Timon are deceived by the people they depend on and in frustration lose their faith in humanity. Another play Dowden compares to *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens* with regards to the darkness in tone is *Hamlet* (1602). Dowden does not assign *Hamlet* to a

certain category. Though Dowden classifies *Hamlet* as a "Middle Tragedy" (x), he points at the obscurity of the play which "[i]n point of style […] stands midway between [Shakespeare's] early and his latest works" (111). Morever, Dowden also refers to the uncertainty of the issues dealt with in *Hamlet,* which leads to ambiguity at the end of the play because the questions posed in the play are open to the interpretation of the audience/readers. According to Dowden, *Hamlet* is a riddle, hence it is and will be impossible to explain the play thoroughly due to the diversity of meanings the play offers (112). Dowden further argues that *Hamlet* is "Shakespeare's profoundest and most sympathetic psychological study" (42). Dowden also asserts that Shakespeare's main concern for all the plays he wrote after *Hamlet* was "the deep insoluble questions suggested by human character and destiny" (42). In this sense, according to Dowden, in his dark comedies Shakespeare poses questions, but leaves them unanswered. Therefore, it may be deduced that Dowden points at the darkness in tone and of the issues dealt with in *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens* along with the ambiguous questions posed in *Hamlet*. However, he does not classify these plays as a particular group, and defines their distinctness from Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, histories and romances by using the term "dark".

Frederick S. Boas is the first critic who uses the term 'problem play' which he appropriates from nineteenth century drama, especially from the plays of Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw, to refer to *Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure.* Though Boas does not openly state the reason for calling the aforementioned plays problem plays, he refers to the problematic issues in the structure of these plays and asserts that the best way to address them is to use the term 'problem' as follows: "[...] as in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, the complications are outwardly adjusted in the fifth act. In *Troilus and Cressida* and *Hamlet* no such partial settlement of difficulties takes place, and we are left to interpret their enigmas as best we may" (*Shakspere* 345). Vivian Thomas, in this sense, also argues that Boas uses the term 'problem' for some of Shakespeare's plays merely for the sake of the term. She asserts that Boas does not use the term due to the close relationship between the plays of Ibsen or Shaw and those of Shakespeare's but

because of the convenience of using that particular term for the plays which cause problems in categorisation (2-3). Simon Barker points at all the critics and scholars who use the term 'problem play' and asserts that the plays called problem plays are variable, and that the critics need to use the term 'problem play' to differentiate them from the classifications whose structures and contents are more definite like tragedy, comedy, history play, or romance (2-3). According to Srinivasa Iyengar, without drawing parallels between Shakespeare and Ibsen, Boas thinks that both playwrights have "the same tormented restlessness in mind and the same rottenness of sophistication – and so he concluded that these so very unconventional plays needed to be grouped separately" (*Shakespeare* 380).

George Bernard Shaw also highlights Shakespeare's being ahead of his time as a playwright in the Preface to *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* as he refers to *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* which he calls "unpopular plays" (xxii). Shaw emphasises the fact that with these plays, "we find [Shakespeare] ready and willing to start at the nineteenth century if the seventeenth would only let him" (xxii). Therefore, Shaw indicates clearly that the aforementioned plays are different from Shakespeare's other plays in different genres, and it is necessary and fundamental to treat them differently.

Furthermore, Boas highlights the difficulty of labelling these plays as comedy, tragedy, romance, or history play as follows: "Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies. We may therefore borrow a convenient phrase from the theatre of today and class them together as Shakespeare's problem-plays" (*Shakspere* 345). Hence, it may be said that Boas refers to the variety in content and structure of these plays. He asserts that categorising them as either tragedy or comedy limits their contents and structures as there are both tragic and comic elements in them.

Boas's remarks on the contents of *Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* are broader than those of Dowden's. Boas focuses on the problems suffered by the societies presented, the feelings created in the audience/readers, and the unsettled issues at the end of these problem plays. For Boas,

the societies reflected in problem plays are degenerate, which affects the psychological and mental health of the people, and complex problems created in these societies require unusual means to reach a solution (*Shakspere* 45). As a matter of fact, Boas stresses the problems the societies presented in *Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* embody. It may be argued that in *All's Well That Ends Well* the collapse in Rousillion because of the illness of the King and the wars, in *Troilus and Cressida* the decadence in Troy due to the long-standing war between the Trojans and the Greeks and the conflicts among the Trojan and Greek heroes strengthen Boas's argument. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, the King's ill health at the beginning of the play and the Tuscan wars between "[t]he Florentines and Senoys" (I.ii.1) in which the French nobles are expected to be a party, indicate that the people of Rousillion endure various problems. The King's illness is presented at the opening of the play as Countess of Rousillion asks, "[w]hat hope is there of his Majesty's amendment?" (I.i.11). Lafew's answer demonstrates that there is no hope for the King until Helena's intervention: "He hath abandoned his physicians, madam, under whose practices he hath persecute time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time" (I.i.12-15). In *Troilus and Cressida*, the war caused by the abduction of Helen by Paris signals the problems encountered in Troy. In this regard, the heavy losses of Troy may be clearly seen in Hector's following speech in the council in Troy: "Let Helen go: / Since the first sword was drawn about this question, / [...] / If we have lost so many tenths of ours, / To guard a thing not ours nor worth to us" (II.ii.17-22). In addition, as Boas further puts forth, "[...] throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths, and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome [...] (*Shakspere* 345). Hence, Boas refers to the sense of uneasiness aroused in the audience/readers at the end of the aforementioned plays as it may be stated that the endings are not convincing because they leave various questions in the minds of the audience/readers. In this respect, although *All's Well That Ends Well* ends with the marriage of Helena and Bertram, it is unclear whether they truly love each other. Helena's tricks throughout the play raise doubts in the minds of the audience/readers about her intentions, which will be dealt with in detail in the analysis of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Similarly, at the end of *Troilus and Cressida*, on

one hand, the audience/readers have doubts about Cressida's infidelity and question whether she truly loves Troilus; on the other hand, they lament Hector's tragic death and question Achilles's murder of Hector. Thus, while Cressida expresses her in-betweenness while she is giving the token of Troilus to Diomedes as she says, " 'Twas one's that lov'd me better than you will. / But, you have it, take it" (V.ii.88-89), Troilus's words grieve the audience/readers as he laments Hector's death as follows: "He's dead; and at the murderer's horse's tail, / In beastly sort, dragg'd through the shameful field" (V.x.4-5).

As opposed to Dowden and Boas, William Witherle Lawrence excludes *Hamlet*, and categorises *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as Shakespeare's problem plays. He emphasises the unity of these plays in terms of tone and structure as he accounts for labelling the three plays as problem plays in the following words: "While they were composed, no doubt, in alternation with other work, they resemble each other closely in style and temper, and may be conveniently studied together" (20). In addition, like Boas, Lawrence refers to the generic ambiguity of problem plays, and he highlights the difficulty of classifying these plays. As Lawrence notes, "[t]he term 'problem play', then, is particularly useful to apply to those productions which clearly do not fall into the category of tragedy, and yet are too serious and analytic to fit the commonly accepted conception of comedy" (22). Thus, as may be deduced from his words, Lawrence refers to the importance and necessity of putting these plays in a new category, which is 'problem plays'. In this sense, he also explains the reason for excluding *Hamlet* from this classification in contrast to the groupings of Dowden and Boas. According to Lawrence, if a problem play has tragic elements, it is still possible to classify it as problem play, but if a tragedy has the features of a problem play, it is hard to classify it as a problem play (22). To put it more clearly, Lawrence expresses that classifying a tragedy as a problem play may create an ambiguous and a problematic situation which Lawrence aims to avoid in his own grouping. Therefore, Lawrence classifies Shakespeare's problem plays considering the genre, and therefore, *Hamlet* should not be classified as a problem play because it can be definitively categorised as a tragedy. As for the questions posed in the problem plays, Lawrence focuses on the ethical questions raised but left unanswered as follows:

> The essential characteristic of a problem play, I take it, is that a perplexing and distressing complication in human life is presented in a spirit of high seriousness. This special treatment distinguishes such a play from other kinds of drama, in that the theme is handled so as to arouse not merely interest or excitement, or pity or amusement, but to probe the complicated interrelations of character and action, in a situation admitting of different ethical interpretations. The 'problem' is not like one in mathematics, to which there is a single true solution, but is one of conduct, as to which there are no fixed and immutable laws. Often it cannot be reduced to any formula, any one question, since human life is too complex to be so neatly simplified. (21-22)

As indicated above, Lawrence maintains that the main subject matter of problem plays is human life which is full of intricate and painful situations reflected in a serious tone. Moreover, human experiences presented in the plays do not only create a sense of wonder and pity in the audience/readers but also provoke moral questions on both the nature of the character and her/his actions. Rossiter supports Lawrence's opinions related to the questions in the problem plays and says: "Lawrence's discussion has the great merit of containing a precise, clear, and, above all, an acceptable definition of what constitutes a problem play" (3). Furthermore, like Boas, Lawrence asserts that the problems examined in problem plays have various solutions which are all open to diverse interpretations as there are a number of questions asked in these plays and there are various ways to interpret these questions in relation to the complexity of human life.

E.M.W. Tillyard agrees with Dowden and Boas but differs with Lawrence as he includes *Hamlet* in the category of problem plays. He also classifies *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as problem plays. First, he evaluates the terms used by the critics like 'dark comedies' and 'problem comedies' for *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure,* and 'satirical comedy' for *Troilus and Cressida* but he maintains that when *Hamlet* is included in the group, an inclusive name, which is 'problem play', is necessary (9).

In addition, Tillyard expresses that he uses the term 'problem play' "vaguely and equivocally; as a matter of convenience" (9) to find the best definition which fits the plays he discusses as problem plays. He further claims that the term can be interpreted in various ways and its scope has to be limited. Therefore, unlike Dowden, Boas and Lawrence, he uses a comparison in order to describe the content of Shakespeare's

problem plays. He compares the problem play to a problem child and states that there are two kinds of a problem child: "[...] first the genuinely abnormal child, whom no efforts will ever bring back to normality; and second the child who is interesting and complex rather than abnormal" (10). In this regard, he puts *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* into the former category as these plays "are [themselves] problems", and cannot be normalised, but the problem of *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* results from the "interesting problems" they present (10). Risden finds Tillyard's definition functional as "it opens the field for re-examination" (4) and brings a new perspective to the study of Shakespeare's problem plays. Thus, I also believe that Tillyard's definition is useful and constructive to comprehend the contents of problem plays thoroughly. And it is also noteworthy to state that interesting and complex issues are also dealt with in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. At the end of *All's Well That Ends Well* Helena's ambiguous intentions and Bertram's problematic transformation, in *Measure for Measure* the choice Isabella has to make to save her brother's life, and Angelo's cruel attitude towards Claudio and his abuse of the judicial system raise various interesting and complex questions. Moreover, unlike Boas and Lawrence, Tillyard does not explicitly clarify the nature of the problems presented in problem plays but he reduces them to "interesting problems" (10). However, he also touches upon the significance of the moral statements particularly in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. According to Tillyard, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, the two French lords, and in *Measure for Measure*, Escalus and the Provost make moral statements (17). On the other hand, Tillyard maintains that the way morality is presented in *Troilus and Cressida* is different because "[...] the morality is not conveyed through any one person or set of persons. It is rather choric and to be gathered from what a number of people say when they are least themselves and most rhetorical mouth pieces" (17). Similarly, in *Hamlet,* the speeches of a single character such as Horatio or a group of characters put forward the moral messages (17). In this regard, while in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* the characters embody moral aspects and reflect them not only in their words but also in their acts, in *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida,* the morality is merely in the words of the characters as it is not reflected in their behaviour.

A.P. Rossiter, as in Lawrence's discussion of Shakespeare's problem plays, considers *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* according to the generic terms. However, he differs from Lawrence as he calls the aforementioned plays 'tragi-comedy' because it is possible to argue that the feelings problem plays create in the audience/readers develop out of "the tragi-comic view of man" (116). Rossiter defines tragi-comedy in various ways such as "[a] refusal or failure wholly to credit the dignity of man", "[a]n emphasis (comic, derisive, satiric) on human shortcomings, even when man is engaged in great affairs", "[a]ny trends towards suggesting that there is usually another side to all human affairs, and that the 'other side' to the serious, dignified, noble, famous and so forth, is comic", "[a]ny trend in the direction of expressing unhappiness, disappointment, resentfulness or bitterness about human life" and "[...] the stock response to [traditionally funny subjects] by-passes pain at human shortcomings or wickedness" (116-117). Therefore, in Rossiter's classification of problem plays, the defects and the noble sides of man are presented simultaneously. Furthermore, the serious and the comic intersect with each other. In this sense, it may be deduced that as opposed to Dowden, Boas and Tillyard, Rossiter places more emphasis on the generic ambiguity in *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*.

For the questions in the problem plays, Rossiter refers to the psychological and moral problems they present. He asserts that a particular expectation has already been created in the audience/readers by the discussions of the former Shakespearean critics and scholars about the categorisation of *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*. Hence, Rossiter argues that he should consider the inclination of the audience/readers and deal with "glooms, disillusions, moral dilemmas and artistic perplexities, vexed questions of human psychology and behaviour" reflected in the aforementioned problem plays (108). Moreover, Rossiter also touches upon the ambiguity created at the end of problem plays, and he argues that they generate a discussion about certain issues while they do not provide satisfactory solutions (128). In other words, problem plays arouse a wide variety of challenging thoughts, but they do not present satisfying and established endings which provide reconciliation. In Rossiter's words, "[t]hey are all about 'Xs' that do not work" (128). In this regard,

Rossiter illustrates his argument about the ambiguity at the end of the problem plays through examples from the three problem plays: "*Troilus and Cressida* gives us a 'tragedy-of-love' pattern that is not tragic (nor love?); *All's Well* a 'happy ending' that makes us neither happy nor comfortable; *Measure for Measure* a 'final solution' that simply does not answer the questions raised" (128).

With respect to the naming and classification of Shakespeare's problem plays, Peter Ure adds a new play, which is *Timon of Athens*, to his classification. On the other hand, Ure keeps *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*. Like Boas, Lawrence and Tillyard, he also uses the term 'problem play' to categorise the mentioned plays. Ure points out that Boas found similarities between particular plays of Shakespeare and those of Ibsen's which examine the inequalities in society and the extent people are affected by them, and so, Ure preferred to use the term 'problem play'. However, though Ure does not wholly approve of this correlation, he still supports that 'problem play' is the best term which can be applied to the plays in question (7). Ure includes *Timon of Athens* in this category due to the lack of compatibility between the characterisation and the action of the play, and the problems in the presentation of moral questions. According to Ure, Shakespeare's portrayal of the characters in the play is weak while the action is not complicated enough, hence the characterisation and the action do not complement and improve each other (45). In this sense, though Shakespeare aimed to equate Timon with Othello and Lear in terms of the characteristics of the tragic hero, the story of the play remains incapable in creating such a powerful character (Ure 45). Moreover, as Ure argues, there is inconsistency between the first part of the play, which, according to him, is the first three acts, and the second part of the play, which is the last two acts. The events in the first three acts are linked to the moral lessons on lavishness, ungratefulness and flattery and they are generalised as it is possible for every person to be exploited by self-seeking and adulatory people. However, in the last two acts, the main focus shifts from moral lessons towards Timon's experiences which are unique to him (49). In a sense, the first three acts present moral issues that are for everybody as they illustrate the general condition and experiences of man while the last two acts are more specific as they reflect Timon's personal experiences and transformation into a fierce misanthrope. In the last two acts, Timon

hates not only all mankind but also the animals and nature, which creates a sense of despair and astonishment in the audience/readers (50).

As regards the structure of the problem plays, Ure is mainly concerned with the endings. They are doubtful as they give rise to multiple interpretations, and problem plays pose intellectual questions which lead the audience/readers to speculate on the endings (52). Moreover, the characters in problem plays act in such a way that they are conscious of "their own fictive nature" (52), and hence, they incorporate reality and imagination. Ure, also, asserts that the problem plays functioned as "Shakespeare's experiments", and Shakespeare used what he had learned from these plays as a playwright to write plays that were more powerful in dramatic structure and characterisation (52). In other words, his problem plays served as a school for Shakespeare where he developed his artistic skills. In this sense, *All's Well That Ends Well* guided Shakespeare towards *Measure for Measure*, while *Timon of Athens* served as a model for King *Lear* (52).

Different from all the scholars and critics mentioned above, Ernest Schanzer makes a new classification, which Vivian Thomas defines as "a direct challenge" or "attaching [the term problem play] to an unusual triumvirate" (10). Schanzer exludes *Hamlet*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida* from the previous group of problem plays and instead includes *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in the categorisation while keeping *Measure for Measure*. Schanzer explains the reason for making a new categorisation in the Preface to *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare* (1963) as follows:

> This book has been written out of a feeling of acute dissatisfaction – which I share with many students of Shakespeare – with the common grouping together *All's Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and sometimes *Hamlet*, as Shakespeare's Problem Plays. It seeks to define the term 'problem play' more narrowly and precisely than has been done in the past and to apply it to a largely different group of plays, which it seems to fit more adequately. *Measure for Measure* remains, but to it added *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* [...]. (ix)

With these lines, Schanzer asserts that designating *All's Well That Ends Well, Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as Shakespeare's problem plays

narrows down the extent of the term 'problem play', and he considers that *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra* fit the meaning of the term. In this sense, he criticises Dowden for being "chiefly responsible for imposing [*All's Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as Shakespeare's problem plays] upon the minds of later generations, so that it has become an almost unquestioned dogma that these three plays are to be classed and studied together" (187). According to Schanzer, the common feature which makes *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra* problem plays is the "[...] double vision and the divided, problematic response" of the audience/readers to the main characters and incidents in the plays (184). In Schanzer's words, "[...] what to one side of our minds appears as [characters'] main flaws, to another side appears as their great virtues. This seems particularly true of Antony, but also applies to Brutus and Isabel" (184). In *Julius Caesar*, Schanzer refers to the obscure nature of Caesar's character as it is not definitely presented whether he is a dictator or an ideal ruler who falls victim to a false conspiracy (32). Similarly, the character of Brutus raises questions in the play as he suffers from dilemmas about the rightfulness of Caesar's murder throughout the play (46). As for *Antony and Cleopatra*, Schanzer finds "its structural pattern" (132) problematic and argues that studying the structure of the play is fundamental in comprehending the problems posed about the characters of Antony and Cleopatra. As Schanzer puts forward, "the structure of Shakespeare's plays, comedies and tragedies alike, is not linear but multilinear, not based on a unity of action but on a unity of design", which is a method that was applied by many Elizabethan playwrights (132). However, Shakespeare manages to maintain unity in the plot and the characters of his plays by comparing and contrasting the characters and cases (133). In other words, he either draws analogies between the characters and instances or demonstrates the discrepancies between them. In this sense, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the differences between Rome and Egypt and the similarities between the characters of Antony and Cleopatra raise questions (133). Particularly, in the last two acts of the play, according to Schanzer, Antony and Cleopatra resemble each other in words and deeds while the discrepancy between the West and the East decreases (134).

Regarding the questions raised in the problem plays, for Schanzer, a problem play is "[a] play in which we find a concern with a moral problem which is central to it, presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable" (6). Schanzer restricts the problems reflected in Shakespeare's problem plays merely to moral problems as he excludes the social, political, legal, religious, metaphysical and psychological problems. In addition, he emphasises that the audience/readers doubt their own moral values while reading or watching a problem play. This doubt of moral bearings should be accompanied with a central moral problem which emerges in the play, and it should make the audience/readers think about their own views on moral values. Furthermore, Schanzer also explains the reason for making a new categorisation of Shakespeare's problem plays while he reveals his ideas on the questions in the problem plays. He asserts that in *All's Well That Ends Well*, both Helena herself and the audience/readers are sure of her intentions about Bertram as throughout the play she tries to win Bertram, which is " 'difficulty' rather than 'moral perplexity' " (7). In *Troilus and Cressida*, according to Schanzer, the only moral problem is to decide whether to return Helen to the Greeks, which does not create any moral doubt in the audience/readers (7). However, in *Hamlet*, Schanzer argues that the nature of the problem dealt with does not create a moral uncertainty in the audience/readers as it is a psychological problem (8).

Richard Wheeler considers *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* as 'problem comedies', and he argues that they bear common characteristics with Shakespeare's festive comedies and romances though they cannot be definitely classified in either group (1). For Wheeler, both plays are more realistic than Shakespeare's romantic comedies, and though in some incidents the characters are subordinate to the action, in other incidents, the characters are more in the foreground (1). Wheeler also argues that the critics and scholars who have studied Shakespeare's problem plays before him were not precisely content with terms like 'problem play' or 'problem comedy', but they need to use them to distinguish the problems the plays embody (2).

As regards Shakespeare's problem comedies, Wheeler also emphasises two points: the uncertainty of genre and the conflicts which are left unresolved at the end of the plays. In terms of genre, he argues that Shakespeare wrote in various genres and made shifts between different genres throughout his dramatic career, and he advanced in his use of each genre (4). Hence, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* have characteristics of Shakespeare's early comedies; they are also parallel to his romances in the way of using comic elements; and they present serious issues that Shakespeare's tragedies written at the beginning of the 1600s deal with (4). With regard to the unsettled conflicts presented at the end of *All's Wel That Ends Well l* and *Measure for Measure*, Wheeler notes that Shakespeare's romantic comedies conclude with affection between the lovers and social reconciliation; however, the problem comedies cannot provide convincing endings as the struggle between the debased lust and the social order where ethics are valued is not resolved (3).

Like Wheeler, Northrop Frye designates *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure* f*or Measure* as 'problem comedies' because he finds the term 'problem play' unfitting. For Frye, though *Troilus and Cressida* should be considered in a distinct group due to its experimental nature, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* do not completely differ from Shakespeare's romantic comedies (3). In this regard, in Frye's words, "[m]any of the critics who first called them problem plays imposed what [he] consider[s] a pseudo-problem on them [...]" (3). However, Vivian Thomas disagrees with Frye and he argues that Frye "dismisses such issues as 'realistic' nature of the problem plays and their concern with 'serious' social issues as a 'pseudo problem' " (10). In a sense, Thomas asserts that the questions which are posed about the social issues in Shakespeare's problem plays should not be underestimated as ostensible problems.

According to Frye, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* resemble Shakespeare's romantic comedies though they are not conventionally categorised as such (61). Moreover, Frye compares the bed trick used in both plays to the magical forests where the lovers are united, or the twins who are separated find each other at the end of Shakespeare's romantic comedies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The*

Merry Wives of Windsor (3). On the other hand, he defines *Troilus and Cressida* as "an experimental play in a special category" (3) as it bears the characteristics of comedy, tragedy, history play and romance at once (62). However, Frye's comparison of the problem plays with the romantic comedies is criticised by Vivian Thomas who argues that though it is possible to find similarities between the two types of plays in terms of structure, it is impossible to compare them in terms of the worlds they present (12).

In this regard, Thomas considers *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as problem plays and comments on the classification and the content of these plays laying stress on the generic ambiguity, the questions posed throughout the plays and the open-endedness as follows:

> The term problem play is here used to encompass three plays which defy absorption into the traditional categories of romantic comedies, histories, tragedies and romances, but share striking affinities in terms of themes, atmosphere, tone and style. In particular, they explore fundamental problems relating to personal and social values within a framework which makes the audience acutely aware of the problems without providing amelioration through the provision of adequate answers or a dramatic mode which faciliates a satisfactory release of emotions. (21)

Therefore, Thomas primarily highlights the difficulty of categorising problem plays as comedies, tragedies or histories. In this sense, he focuses on the difficulty of classifying problem plays in a certain genre. Then, he emphasises the common points the plays share in terms of themes, the seriousness in atmosphere and tone, and structure. As Thomas also asserts, these plays provoke various and difficult questions on social and personal matters, and leave it to the audience/readers to make distinct interpretations. In Thomas's words, the sense that is created in the audience/readers at the end of problem plays is "incongruity" (15) as the complications the characters go through throughout the plays do not come to an end, and the audience/readers contemplate the problematic relationships between the characters and the institutions (15). However, it may be said that Thomas, like Schanzer, does not present an inclusive approach towards the nature of the questions raised in the problem plays as he focuses on only social and personal questions.

Similar to Thomas, in his comments on the contents of the problem plays, Richard Hillman puts emphasis on the unresolved questions dealt with in these plays. For Hillman, the common point connecting *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* is the lack of a resolution provided at the end of the plays. In Hillman's view, the problematic situations are present in all of Shakespeare's plays written throughout his career but in the plays except *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*, solutions are offered at the end of problematic situations; whereas, in the abovementioned plays, fulfilling resolutions are not provided (5). In addition, like Frye, Hillman correlates between problem plays and Shakespeare's romantic comedies, yet unlike Frye, he makes a distinction between them stressing the realistic nature of problem plays. In Hillman's words, "[n]one of the Problem Plays employs the two-world principle (court vs. Natural or "green" world), as found in comedies ranging from the *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to *As You Like It*, although intriguing vestiges exist in all three of them" (7). In other words, as opposed to Shakespeare's romantic comedies, in problem plays, there is not a place where the characters escape from realism and enter a romantic world where all the contradictions are magically solved, and the lovers come together leaving the obstacles preventing their union behind (7). Furthermore, supporting the realistic nature of the problem plays, Hillman touches upon the significance of the nature of the marriages presented in these three plays as the couples do not get married at the end due to love, or in Hillman's words, to provide "[t]he identification of sexual consummation with marriage". Yet, marriage functions "as a closure motif" rather than "the emblem of romance fulfillment", and "is invested with connotations of emptiness, futility, [...]" (7).

Similar to Dowden's approach, Nicholas Marsh asserts that his main concern is not to put *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* into a particular group contrary to the earlier critics and scholars (1). For Marsh, although the composition dates of the three plays are close, and there are similarities between them as regards characterisation and action, they are still three different plays, and any attempt to put them into the same category will be futile (2-3). Thus, it may be said that Marsh does not attribute a specific category to the aforementioned plays, which is a

completely different approach towards Shakespeare's problem plays in relation to the issues of naming and classification.

According to Edward L. Risden, almost all of Shakespeare's plays have problems in relation to genre so that the classification of 'problem comedies' cannot be restricted to particular plays (1). In this regard, Risden deals with the plays he defines as "Shakespeare's most difficult plays" (2) in order to demonstrate the structural pattern of these plays and how they create meanings. As Risden argues, labelling a play as tragedy, comedy, romance, or history directs the reading process and has an impact on the audience's/readers' anticipation and the nature of their interpretation (3). In this regard, the audience/readers know beforehand that if a play is a tragedy, the characters will suffer from dreadful experiences; if it is a comedy, comic events will dominate the lives of common people; if it is a romance, magical and extraordinary incidents will take place; and if it is a history, historical characters and events will be the major issue. However, if the audience/readers cannot be certain about the nature of the ending of a play, or cannot feel pity and fear at the end of a play, the problem of how to label the play arises (3). Thus, what Risden proposes in his study of Shakespeare's problem plays is that, apart from the conventionally classified problem plays, Shakespeare's other plays may also present problems when they are evaluated according to generic ambiguity. In this sense, as Risden notes, "[...] if we read any or all of the plays as problem plays, each one opens up with new and intellectually satisfying possibilities for understanding" (8), and from this uncertainty in relation to genre, "the most complex and troubling questions" (8) arise. Shakespeare raises highly complicated questions on the general human condition, and he leaves the solutions to his audience/readers. Moreover, even if Shakespeare provides answers to the questions he brings up in his plays, at the same time, he also creates an implicit restlessness in his audience/readers on the acceptability of these solutions (202). Therefore, for Risden, only *Macbeth* suits the features of tragedy defined by the Classics, and *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* maintain the characteristics of Latin comedy and do not have generic ambiguity (9). However, Risden includes new plays in the category of problem plays and argues that *The Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* can be studied as problem plays in terms of the use of

genre and the questions they pose. *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night* are "the 'comedic' problem plays" (9). *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear* are "the 'tragic' problem plays" (9). Risden further designates *Henry IV*, *Part 1*, *Henry V*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest* and *Love's Labour's Lost* as problem plays regarding the questions they pose on the issues of "love, adventure and governance" (9). Although Risden makes an extensive grouping, he uses the term 'problem play' as he supports that it is the best term that can easily be comprehended by any audience/reader of Shakespeare as well as students, critics and scholars (203).

There is also a discussion among the scholars and critics in relation to the link between Shakespeare's biography and the dark and serious content of the problem plays. In this sense, Dowden associates Shakespeare's personal life with the problem plays as he maintains that Shakespeare lost his life energy and entered a pessimistic phase in his life when he began to write problem plays as he stated that "a mood of contemptuous depreciation of life may have come over Shakespeare, and spoilt him, at that time, for a writer of comedy" (*Shakspere: His Mind and Art* vii). Moreover, Dowden also argues that Shakespeare was highly influenced by the artistic, political and social developments of the Elizabethan era as he was a man who achieved to succeed within the political, social, religious, economic and artistic circumstances of that period (7). It may be deduced that in his comment Dowden correlates Shakespeare's artistic development as a playwright with the issues of the Elizabethan era, and in this sense, the contents of Shakespeare's plays cannot be isolated from particularly the historical background of the sixteenth century.

Lawrence, on the other hand, does not establish a direct relation between Shakespeare's biography and problem plays, and he argues that Shakespeare did not write his problem plays with the intention of presenting his own thoughts on various issues. In this sense, Lawrence asserts that "there is no evidence that the problem comedies were composed, […], for the gratification of Shakespeare's aesthetic interests, or to give expression to his views on conduct and morality", and "they were written in the first instance to entertain, which does not mean merely to provide diversion but also to arouse and hold serious interest" (28). Therefore, it is possible to deduce from Lawrence's statement that

Shakespeare's problem plays not only amuse the audience/readers but also arouse interest through the issues they deal with.

Like Lawrence, Tillyard does not associate the problems in Shakespeare's private life with the sombre atmosphere of the problem plays. In other words, he asserts that the problems Shakespeare coped with in his private life are not the main reasons for his writing the plays categorised as problem plays. In this sense, for Tillyard, the approach which establishes a connection between Shakespeare's biography and the bleak contents of the problem plays is highly far-fetched (10). Although Tillyard does not correlate Shakespeare's personal life and his problem plays, he sustains that Shakespeare reflects the issues of his period in his problem plays as he notes that "[...] though it may be vain to conjecture from external evidence how Shakespeare's emotions were behaving at this period, we can infer from the plays themselves that he was especially interested in certain matters" (11). In other words, like Dowden, Tillyard asserts that although there is not a direct relation between Shakespeare's personal life and the issues handled in the problem plays, there is an association between the historical background of the late Elizabethan era and the early Jacobean period in *Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure.*

Like Dowden and Tillyard, Hillman, although he does not directly relate Shakespeare's biography and the contents of the problem plays, associates the historical background of the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century with the issues dealt with in the problem plays. He asserts that "several features of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean scene" have an impact on the generic ambiguity "and, especially, on their perceived 'darkness' of tone and outlook" (9). Hillman highlights the contrast between the Elizabethan era which was "orderly and harmonious, respectful of hierarchy" (9) while providing "solid support for a sense of national purpose that expressed itself in heroic military exploits" (9) and the Jacobean period which was characterised by King James I's "distant and authoritarian, at once mean-minded and both intellectually and politically arrogant" (10) personality. Furthermore, Hillman refers to the new circumstances of the Jacobean period which decreased the significance of the Elizabethan ideals and conventions such as honour and the social hierarchy. According

to Hillman, the rise of middle class, which was economically powerful, and consequently, the growth of an avaricious economical market were the main reasons of the changes in the Elizabethan ideals and traditions (10). However, Hillman does not only lay stress on the degeneracy in the Jacobean period but he also refers to the "atmosphere of decay" (12) seen in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign, which he calls the "defunct myth of Elizabethan harmony" (11). For Hillman, the deterioration in Elizabeth I's state of health**,** the lack of an heir in the succession**,** and the transformations in the society and the economic disruption caused unrest in the Elizabethan era (12).

Lastly, in respect of the common characteristics of Shakespeare's problem plays, the scholars and critics present different opinions. For instance, for Tillyard, in *All's Well That Ends Well* the theme of "a young man gets a shock" (14) is presented in Bertram's forced marriage to Helena and the night he spends with Diana, in *Hamlet* in the successive states of confusion Hamlet goes through, in *Measure for Measure* in Claudio's trauma after he learns about the death penalty at the beginning of the play, in *Troilus and Cressida* in Troilus's being betrayed by Cressida (14). Again for Tillyard, the second common characteristic of these plays is that the maturation the young male characters experience takes place at night which is presented by night scenes (15). Tillyard describes Shakespeare's use of darkness for the process of maturation as follows: "I do not mean any conscious plan, but instinctively Shakespeare staged the most critical phase of growth in darkness" (15). For Tillyard, the third feature which is Shakespeare's "interest in the old and new generations and in old and new habits of thought" (16) is presented only in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida.* In *All's Well That Ends Well*, the old generation stands as the exact opposite of the young generation; while the former lives by the remnants of a creditable past, hence grieving and yearning for the glory of their past, the latter looks to the future and is free from the restrictive effects of the past, yet lacks the kindness that the old generation maintains (Tillyard 17). In *Troilus and Cressida*, the opposition between the old and the new is presented in the comparison between the Greeks who "are the new men, ruthless and, though quarrelsome and unpleasant, less inefficient than the Trojans" and the

Trojans who "are antique, anachronistically chivalrous, and rather inefficient" (Tillyard 16).

Rossiter focuses on "seeming and being" (127) or "a world of appearances [...] capable of opening-like a masque-set transformation-scene-and disclosing something totally different" (127) seen in all the problem plays. According to Rossiter, in Shakespeare's problem plays the appearances of circumstances and people are deceptive as disappointing realities are hidden in them. Thus, when people awaken to hard truths, they are frustrated by the baseness, infidelity and egoism of humanity, a feature which leads to the downfall of Hamlet, Isabella, Troilus, and, also lightly affects, Helena (Rossiter 126-127).

For Ure, the first common feature of the problem plays in his classification is the analysis of a character through various trials which gives rise to contradictory moral perceptions (7). In this sense, in *All's Well That Ends Well* the way that Helena wins Bertram disturbs the audience/readers at the end of the play as "the wonder-working heroine of the first Acts is transformed into a business-woman in the later ones" (15). The second common characteristic is the use of satire. Then, the wish for agony and death and the use of realistic characters in romantic plots are the other features which link *All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens* (7). The last characteristic which Ure defines as "the first and most vital 'problem' " (8) is the difficulty of grasping the meaning of the plays due to their difficult language. Furthermore, according to Ure, indirect and startling words are used along with highly rich but confusing images and limited meter (8).

As distinct from Tillyard and Rossiter, for Thomas, "a crucial debate scene which focuses on the central theme" (15), analysis of the link between the man and the institutions (15), the existence of characters like Thersites (*Troilus and Cressida*), Parolles (*All's Well That Ends Well*) and Lucio (*Measure for Measure*) who do not function as clowns or fools but as maligners (16), the use of honour, sex and disillusionment as major themes (17-18), "the matter of identity and kinship" (19) and the difficult language reflecting the tension in the plays (21) are the common

characteristics of *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* as problem plays. The point on which Thomas agrees with Rossiter is the "contrasts between appearance and reality" (15) which is seen in *All's Well That Ends Well* where Bertram acts viciously though he has a good lineage, and in *Measure for Measure* where Angelo is presented as a skilled judge who is later corrupted (15).

As can be clearly observed, the naming, the categorisation and the structure of *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Timon of Athens* which are thought to have problematic features that distinguish them from Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, histories and romances have been discussed by different scholars and critics from different perspectives. In this dissertation, the term 'problem play', which was first introduced by Boas, and agreed upon by Lawrence, Tillyard and Schanzer while disagreed by Dowden, Rossiter and Northrop Frye, will be used. It is argued that 'problem play' is more inclusive than the term 'dark comedies' which was used by Dowden who refers to the gravity in tone but categorises the plays in question as comedy ignoring the tragic nature of *Hamlet*. Moreover, the term 'problem play' is more comprehensive than 'tragi-comedies' used by Rossiter and 'problem comedies' used by Frye which classify the plays according to their generic qualities. Moreover, different from these scholars and critics who have analysed various plays of Shakespeare as problem plays in different aspects, this dissertation aims at concentrating on *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1598), which has rarely been addressed as a problem play, in terms of character and genre, *Hamlet* in terms of character, and *Measure for Measure* in terms of issue and genre as problem plays. It will also be argued that the problems in religious, political and legal affairs, particularly, in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign and at the beginning of James I's reign had an impact on the bleak tone of Shakespeare's problem plays when it is considered that the composition dates of these plays coincide with the last years of Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603) and the early years of James I's reign (1603-1625). In this sense, it will be argued that in *The Merchant of Venice* the lasting enmity between the Christians and the Jews which increased in England particularly in the last years of Elizabeth I's rule due to the Lopez case is reflected in the problematic representation of Shylock. In *Hamlet* the presentation of the succession problem and the Essex Rebellion, which also establishes

the ground for the unrest and corruption in Denmark, becomes one of the reasons of Hamlet's melancholy until he decides to feign madness. In *Measure for Measure* James I's authoritarian rule causing problem in the abuse of justice and enforcement of law is presented through Angelo and the Duke. In this regard, the historical background related to *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* will be analysed separately in detail in each chapter.

Shakespeare's three problem plays, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure,* will be studied in three different chapters respectively while taking into consideration the aspects which make them problem plays, and the religious and political background of the late Elizabethan era along with the political and legal background of the early Jacobean period.

CHAPTER I

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE: A PROBLEM PLAY IN TERMS OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM AND GENRE

Antonio: An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
(*The Merchant of Venice* I.iii.94-97)

After a full tyde of prosperitie
cometh a lowe ebbe of
adversitie. After a day of
pleasure a night of sorrowe
(Manningham, Folio 7 37)

The Merchant of Venice raises various questions on the character of Shylock, Portia, and the issue of justice. The cruel treatment of Shylock primarily by Antonio and the other Christian characters is related to animosity between the Jews and the Christians in the play. Not only do the Christians despise the Jews but also Shylock detests the Christians. The religious and financial reasons for the enmity particularly between Shylock and Antonio make both the characters and their relationship to each other complex and arise questions in the audience/readers. Furthermore, the uncertainty of the genre of the play, that is whether it is a pure tragedy or a comedy, makes it problematic and again leads to some questions in the minds of the audience/readers.

The original full title of *The Merchant of Venice* presented on the cover pages of the first and the second Quartos of 1600 and the third Quarto of 1637 is "The most excellent Historie of the Mercant of Venice. With the extreame crueltie of *Shylocke* the Iewe towards the fayd Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his fleshe and the obtayning of *Portia* by the choyfe of three chefts" (qtd. in Krane vii). In this sense, it may be argued that the emphasis is laid on not only Antonio, who is presented as the subject of Shylock's malice, but also on Shylock, whose atrocity is in the foreground, and Portia, who is observed choosing among the three caskets.

Hence, this chapter aims at analysing *The Merchant of Venice* as a problem play in terms of the presentation of Shylock’s character, also regarding the place of the Jewish people in the Elizabethan era and the play’s generic uncertainty. It will be demonstrated that Shakespeare was aware of the negative image of the Jew presented in England since the Middle Ages but his presentation of Shylock neither disparages nor favours the image of the Jew; instead, Shakespeare gives rise to uncertainty about the intentions of Shylock in the audience/readers through his presentation of Shylock’s character. In other words, on the one hand, Shylock wins the affection of the audience/readers with the cruel treatment he receives from the Christians; on the other hand, it is openly put forward that Shylock hates Antonio not only because of his insults to Jewishness but also for his lending of money without interest. Therefore, it is left vague whether Shylock is victimised by the Christians or he victimises them. In this regard, the hypocritical attitudes of the Christians will be displayed notably through Antonio’s behaviours towards Shylock. In addition, the evolution of Portia’s character from a submissive woman to a manipulative one is of significance as it raises the problem of Shylock’s presentation through its contribution to his victimisation at the trial scene. Thus, it will be argued that there is a parallelism between the problematic representations of Portia and Shylock.

The following analysis will first deal with the ambivalence about the composition date and the categorisation of *The Merchant of Venice*, and the discussion by various Shakespearean critics on these subjects will be presented. This will be followed by the performance history and the literary sources of the play. Then, the presentation of the historical background of the Jewish problem starting with the Middle Ages in western and central Europe, Italy and England, respectively, will be followed by the discussion of the trial of Doctor Roderigo Lopez and the influence of this case on Shakespeare. In this respect, Shakespeare’s relationship with the Earl of Southampton who was a close friend of the Earl of Essex who led the trial of Lopez will be dealt with in order to demonstrate Shakespeare’s familiarity with the case, and hence the Jewish problem that prevailed in sixteenth century England. Then, Shylock’s conflicting representation will be discussed through his relationship with Antonio, and the degrading of Shylock by the Christian characters and also his daughter who converted to Christianity will be

presented. In relation to this, Portia's transformation and her deceiving Bassanio and Shylock in the disguise of a man during the trial scene will be analysed, and the link between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I, which may be argued as a political allusion by Shakespeare, through the marriage issue will be put forth. Finally, it will be demonstrated that the ending of the play and the casket scenes have elements of comedy.

The first uncertainty about *The Merchant of Venice* starts with the composition date and categorisation of the play. Though there are various suggestions, it is not certainly known when the play was written. The play was registered in the Stationers' Register on 22 July in 1598 as follows: "[…] James Robertes. Entered for his copie, under the handes of bothe the wardens, a booke of the marchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Jewe of Venyce […]" (Lambert 27-28). Edward Dowden dates the play to 1596 and groups it as "Middle Comedy" (*Shakspere* 56). For Dowden, "Middle Comedy" has the features of Shakespeare's early and late comedies, and it is the synthesis of both groups (*Shakspere* 50). According to Dowden's categorisation, *The Merchant of Venice* shares some similarities with *Love's Labour's Lost* (1590), *The Comedy of Errors* (1591), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592-93) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1593-94) which are Shakespeare's early comedies and *As You Like It* (1599), *Twelfth Night* (1600-01), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-02), *Measure for Measure* (1603) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1603) that are his late comedies (*Shakspere* 56). E.K. Chambers argues that *The Merchant of Venice* was written before the autumn of 1596 as it shows similarities with the other plays Shakespeare wrote in 1596 and *the Sonnets* in terms of style. *The Merchant of Venice* is also more serious than the comedies Shakespeare wrote in 1594 and 1595 (373). For Barber, the year 1596 is the early stage of the first period in Shakespeare's authorship when he began to demonstrate his mastership through plays like *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II, Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar* and *Twelfth Night*. Therefore, *The Merchant of Venice* has festive qualities like a comedy, but it is different from other festive comedies written in 1596 as it is "rather more 'a kind of history' " (39-40). Thus, it may be deduced that the joyous elements of *The Merchant of Venice* brings the play close to Shakespeare's early comedies and romantic comedies; however, the presentation of

Jewish history through Shylock's cruelty and his mistreatment by the Christian characters attribute a distinct characteristic to the play. George Hunter suggests that *The Merchant of Venice* is one of the six romantic comedies written by Shakespeare between 1595 and 1600 and has common points with *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* (241). Similarly, Alfred Harbage categorises *The Merchant of Venice* as a comedy (*Annals* 62). However, *Palladis Tamia,* "a comparative study of English poetry with the poetry of Greece, Rome, and Italy" (Lee, "Shakespeare's Life and Work" 501), which was written by Francis Meres in 1598 and presents the "lists of most of the plays and poems written by 1598" (Harbage, *William Shakespeare* 96), is the major source which gives the most accurate evidence about the dating of *The Merchant of Venice. Palladis Tamia* demonstrates that *The Merchant of Venice* was written before 1598, most probably in 1596. In *Palladis Tamia*, Meres mentions six comedies and six tragedies of William Shakespeare and he categorises *The Merchant of Venice* as a comedy (Hatcher 105).

In respect to the performance history, as the title page of the First Quarto dated 1600 demonstrates, *The Merchant of Venice* had " 'beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants' " (qtd. in Halliday, *Shakespeare and His Critics* 174). In this sense, according to Martin Holmes, *The Merchant of Venice* may be listed among the plays performed between 1594 and 1597 at the Theatre (xiii). Though there is an ambiquity about the identity of the actor who played Shylock, Charles Edelman argues that "[…] it is likely that Burbage was the first to play him, but no genuine contemporary document confirms this […]" (5). Edelman further emphasises the success of the play when it was performed and states that "[w]hoever the actors may have been, the Merchant's place in the King's Men's repertoire nine or ten years after it was written argues for its popularity […]" (5). Thus, it may be argued that *The Merchant of Venice* achieved to stir the interest of the Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences for many years after its first performance and received their appreciation. Moreover, the play was performed twice at the court before King James I in 1605 and was not restaged until 1741 (Mahon 21). The performance of the play at the Court is stated in the *Accounts of the Revels* as follows: "Hallamas Day being the first of

Nouembar A play in the Banketinge house att Whithall called The Moor of Venis" (Book XII 203).

Regarding the sources of *The Merchant of Venice,* it may be argued that Shakespeare used diverse sources which are both literary and historical in *The Merchant of Venice*. To start with the literary sources, Shakespeare used *The Jew*, *Il Pecorone* (1387) by Ser Giovanni of Florence*, Gesta Romanorum* by Richard Robinson and *The Jew of Malta* (1589) by Christopher Marlowe for the plot and the characters. *The Jew,* which is a lost play, is accepted to be one of the sources Shakespeare used for *The Merchant of Venice* (Reese 121). The reference to *The Jew* is found in *The School of Abuse* (1579) which is a pamphlet by Stephen Gosson and "the bloody-minded usurer representing an early version of Shylock, and the worldy choosers foreshadowing Portia's rejected suitors, the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon" are the reflections of *The Jew* in *The Merchant of Venice* (Gross 7). Shakespeare borrowed the story of the bond between the Christian merchant and the Jewish money lender from *Il Pecorone* (E.K. Chambers 373). As John Russell Brown explains, "Shakespeare's story of the bond for human flesh is of ancient origin, and is found, in rudimentary form, in religious tales from Persia and India" (*The Merchant* xxvii); however, "the first story of the fourth day in Ser Giovanni's *Il Pecorone*" (Brown xxviii) is a significant source for the bond story in *The Merchant of Venice*. In *Il Pecorone*, Giannetto, the youngest son of a wealthy merchant in Florence, comes to Venice at the request of his dying father to live with Ansaldo who is his godfather and the richest merchant in Christendom. Giannetto decides to embark on a voyage with two of his close friends to see the world, so Ansaldo provides him with an imperial merchant ship with all the necessary equipment. However, Giannetto leaves his friends on the way to Alexandria to go to the harbour of Belmonte which is ruled by a beautiful widow who has accepted to marry any gentleman who achieves to spend the first night with her awake; if the gentleman falls asleep, he will lose his merchandise. With great eagerness, Giannetto twice accepts this challenge, yet he falls asleep each time and leaves Belmonte and his wealth behind. However, he tells his friends in Verona and Ansaldo that he was shipwrecked at sea and lost his ship and belongings in the shipwreck. When Giannetto forces Ansaldo to go on a voyage for the third time to recover what he has lost, Ansaldo sells everything he has

and borrows ten ducats from a Jew, whose name is not mentioned in the story, on condition that the Jew will take a pound of flesh from any part of Ansaldo's body. Then, on his third visit to Belmonte, Giannetto is warned by a maid about not to drink the wine served before he goes to sleep and in the morning. Giannetto is announced as the husband of the lady and the new king of Belmonte. On the final date of the debt that Ansaldo owes to the Jew, Giannetto leaves Belmonte to save Ansaldo from the Jew who mercilessly and determinedly wants to cut a pound of flesh from Ansaldo's body. The lady of Belmonte disguises as a judge from Bologna and interferes in the action. First, the judge offers the Jew the hundred thousand ducats to withdraw the bond; however, the Jew insists on his bond. Then, the judge accepts the Jew to cut exactly a pound of flesh from Ansaldo's body without shedding any drop of blood. Eventually, the Jew is forced to tear the bond up and is left moneyless. Before the characters return to Belmonte, the lady in disguise of the wise judge wants Giannetto to give her the ring he wears as a token of his love for his wife. In Belmonte the lady reveals Giannetto the facts about her disguise as a judge and why she takes the ring from him. The story ends happily as Giannetto and the lady are reunited and Ansaldo marries the maid who helped Giannetto (Satin 120-133). Therefore, it may be argued that the test of the young gentleman from Verona by the lady of the Belmonte, the story of the pound of flesh, the presentation of the cruel Jew who wants to fulfil his bond and the happy ending are the common points of *Il Pecorone* and *The Merchant of Venice*. However, in *Il Pecorone*, the reason for the Jew's hatred towards the Christian merchant is not presented. Furthermore, the grounds of Gianetto's voyage is different from Bassanio's reason to travel to Belmont. In addition, the English translation of *Il Pecorone* was not published during Shakespeare's lifetime; hence, it may be stated that Shakespeare read the source in Italian, or he read the unpublished English manuscript of the tale (Gross 5).

The prodigality and insistence of Giannetto on winning the widow ignoring the financial difficulties of Ansaldo is evidently referred to in II.vi. in *The Merchant of Venice* through Graziano's words on the nature of marriage as follows:

> How like a younger or a prodigal
> The scarfed bark puts from her native bay–
> Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
> How like the prodigal doth she return

> With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails–
> Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind! (14-19)

Thus, it may be stated that Shakespeare not only uses the plot of his literary source but he also refers to the incidents happening in the source play through the statements of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Another literary source Shakespare used for the story of the three caskets is *Gesta Romanorum* which is "the collection of stories so popular in the Middle Ages" (Dowden, *Shakspere* 92). It is probable that Shakespeare knew about the translation of *Gesta Romanorum* which was made by Richard Robinson and was published in 1577 and 1595 (Boyce 419). There are both differences and similarities between *Gesta Romanorum* and *The Merchant of Venice*. The major difference between the two works is the gender of the chooser and the chosen. In *Gesta Romanorum* a girl is forced to make a choice among the three caskets to be the wife of the Emperor's son while in *The Merchant of Venice*, a man has to make a choice to be the husband of the Princess of Belmont. However, in both works, the casket made up of lead is the right casket to win the lover and the beloved (Freud 7). For the bond motif, Shakespeare also used Anthony Munday's *Zelauto* (1580) which additively mentions the story of how the Jewish money lender is robbed by his daughter (E.K. Chambers 373).

Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, which was first performed by Lord Strange's players on 26 February 1592 at the Rose Theatre (Longmans 22), was particularly a significant source for Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*. According to Alfred Harbage, *The Jew of Malta* should be categorised as a tragedy while *The Merchant of Venice* has been grouped as a comedy by various Shakespearean critics and scholars as mentioned earlier (*Annals* 52). As Thomas Marc Parrott points out, *The Jew of Malta* became very popular with the Elizabethan audience and it was staged for many times in 1594, and hence "[i]t seems reasonable to suppose that Shakespeare's fellow-actors urged him to write them a wicked Jew play that might compete with Marlowe's melodrama" (135). In *The Jew of Malta*, Farnese, who is the Christian governor of Malta, plunders the wealth of Barabas, the affluent Jew, so that he can pay tribute to the Turks. He offers Barabas two options; he would either convert to Christianity or keep

half of his wealth, or he would not convert and lose all of his riches. Barabas rejects to convert and lose his Jewish identity; instead, he takes revenge from the Christians and sets the Turks against the Christians (Longmans 22-23). In this sense, it may be argued that Shakespeare was influenced by the representation of Barabas, the rich and evil Jew in *The Jew of Malta* while creating Shylock, the wealthy Jewish money lender who cold-heartedly insisted on his bond. Furthermore, the desire for revenge that both characters have against the Christians is common for both plays. In Brown's words, "[…] more important is the probability that Marlowe's successful portrait of the villain Barabas coloured Shakespeare's conception of a Jew. Abigail, the Jew's daughter who turns Christian, may also have played a part in suggesting Shylock's Jessica" (Introduction: *The Merchant* xxxi). In addition, regarding the similarities between the two plays, Boas argues that *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice* should be studied together as both plays arouse curiosity in terms of the plot and characters, and in both plays the main focus is on the Jewish character (*Shakspere* 287). However, it may also be stated that there is a major distinction between Barabas and Shylock in terms of characterisation. In this regard, while Barabas "is a cunning, avaricious schemer […]", Shylock "is a dramatic character of an entirely different dimension, a subtly drawn mixture of evil and suffering" (Frykman and Kjellmer 40), as will be demonstrated in this chapter. In this regard, as Sir Israel Gollancz points out, "[…] in some way or other both Marlowe and Shakespeare knew much about the Jews. How they knew it is difficult to tell, but they did know this: that your Jew may be in the public mind the vilest usurer" (30).

The literary sources are not the only sources Shakespeare was influenced by or used for the composition of *The Merchant of Venice* and particularly for the creation of Shylock. In Sir John Squire's words, "[a] great part of Shakespearean literature is concerned with special aspects of his knowledge, with his 'sources', with the textual history of his plays, with his relations to his time – in other words with facts, real or presumed" (17). To put it more clearly, Shakespeare combined the literary and historical sources with his imagination in his plays. In this respect, the history of the Jewish people in Europe and England is of importance in order to understand the creation of the negative image of the Jew which shaped the public opinion in the Elizabethan era.

The lasting enmity between the Jewish people and the Christians has a long past as Christianity had grown out of Judaism but after it parted from Judaism in terms of religious practices, Christianity became more widespread and its separation from Judaism was regarded as a rebellion by the Jewish people (J. Edwards 12-13). In this regard, in Charles Guignebert's words, "Jesus was born among Jews on Jewish soil, and his message was for Jews alone. In its origin, therefore, and in so far as it is dependent on its traditional founder, Christianity must be considered a Jewish phenomenon. When Jesus ended his ministry, it was not yet a religion, but at least it was the embodiment of a great hope" (Introduction 1). Furthermore, John Manningham mentions the sustained hatred between the Jews and the Christian as he refers to the betrayal of the Jews in an entry dated 1601 in his diary as follows:

> Honour is like a spiders webbe, long in doinge, but soone undone, blowne down with every blast. It is like a craggy stepe rocke, which a man is longe getting upon, and being up, yf his foote but slip, he breakes his necke. Soe the Jews dealt with Christ; one day they would have him a king, an other day none, one day ctyed Hosanna to him, an other nothing but Crucifie him. (Folio 7b 37-38)

As indicated in these lines, not only do the Jewish people accuse the Christians of betrayal but also the Christians consider the Jews responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. In other words, the hatred between the Christians and the Jewish people has been mutual since the first interaction between the two religious beliefs started, which is also explicitly presented in *The Merchant of Venice* as will be demonstrated.

The rejection of the Jewish people in the political, social and religious spheres in western and central Europe started in the Middle Ages. In France the Capetian Philip IV and his Valois successors purposed to remove the Jews from the regions which they controlled in 1306 and 1394, respectively. Furthermore, in the fourteenth century, throughout France, Germany and Spain, the rest of the Jewish population was exposed to constraint due to the outbreak of political, social and economic crises, and also the Jews were held responsible for the contagion of the Black Death. They were deported from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and in 1497, respectively (J. Edwards 11). Ivan G. Marcus explains these charges against the Jews as follows: "The major turning point for central European Jewry was the Black Death of 1349, a trauma that reduced the population of some areas of Europe by as much as 50 percent. Unable to explain a

catastrophe of such magnitude, the popular mind personalized the agents of destruction by blaming the Jews for poisoning the wells of Europe" (180-181). In Spain the positive and inclusive approach towards the Jewish population changed negatively particularly in the late fourteenth century and the Jewish people living in Toledo, Seville, Valencia and Burgos were slayed and were forced to convert to Christianity (Israel 4). The Jewish people who had been deported from western and central Europe as a result of various accusations and persecution found shelter in Poland, Lithuania and the Ottoman Balkans in the late fifteenth century (Israel 5). Therefore, in the light of the condition of the Jewish population in western and central Europe between the early fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it may be argued that the Jews were regarded as the enemies of the Christians and they were exposed to massacre and expulsion.

The Jewish people in Venice had been protected by law since 1385 and they were allowed to reside in Venice and do business as money lenders on the Rialto (Gilbert 30) as also presented in *The Merchant of Venice*. In III.i. Solanio asks Salerio, "Now what news on the Rialto?" (1) in order to get information on the course of Antonio's business. In this respect, the Jews in Venice were allowed to sell clothes (Gilbert 30). However, they were imposed restraints in commerce as they were excluded from the international trade corporation, and thus the Jews of Venice and the Christian businessmen were kept apart (Cerasano 16). They were also subject to various restrictions in social life as they could not possess land, and it was initially obligatory for the Jewish men to wear a yellow circle while the Jewish women had to wear a yellow scarf, but then both men and women were forced to wear a yellow hat so that they could be distinguished from the Christians (Gilbert 30). Furthermore, the Jewish people in Venice were alienated from the Christian people and were forced to live in deserted areas within the city which were close to prisons and called a 'ghetto' by the decree implemented by the Council of Ten, "a major governing body in the city" (Cook 151), in 1516 (Cerasano 15). In Ennio Concina's words, "[t]he settlement of Jews in Ghetto Novo began at the end of July 1516, and was preceded by negotiations which were far from easy, especially with regard to property ownership, while the complexity of the situation was compounded by social, political, and cultural factors" (180). According to Martin Cohen, until the establishment of ghetto settlement, the Jewish

people were able to have contact with the Christian intellectuals, and the Jewish religion and culture interacted with Christianlity and Christian culture (169-170). The ghettos were surrounded by walls and the Jews were not allowed to leave the ghettos at night as the doors were locked (Mahoney 20). The Christian Church and the Italian State intended to segregate the Jewish people from the Christians from sunset to dawn, and thus the social and cultural life of the Jewish people was imprisoned in the ghetto (Israel 60). Therefore, it is possible to argue that by means of the ghetto, the Jews were strictly kept under control by the authorities and their life was restricted. In this regard, as Miriam Gilbert asserts, "[t]he creation of a Jewish community, barely tolerated and forcibly isolated, has become a familiar historical entity, and its name, ghetto, probably comes from Venice" (30). According to Louis Jacobs, "[l]ife in the old ghetto was usually grim, squalid, and restricted but in it the Jew found a measure of protection from a hostile world and the ability to assimilate his own spiritual heritage" (188). Hence, ghetto life was highly limiting and exclusionary for the Jewish people, which led to the creation of a separate community with its own way of life.

Although the constraints on the Jewish people in political, social and cultural life were imposed throughout Italy, Venice had a distinguishing feature for all the Christians in the fifteenth century as it was idealised as the city of the divinity; it was protected by the divine power, and hence could not be destroyed; therefore, the settlers were sacred, blessed and secure. Furthermore, Venice, once the port which had been used by the Christians travelling to Jerusalem, replaced the city of Providence especially after the conquest of Constantinople (Crouzet-Pavan 163-166). Thus, it may be deduced that anti-semitism grew in Venice and a settlement excluding the Jewish people was established rapidly in comparison to other Italian cities.

However, despite all the above-mentioned limitations on their lifestyles and business, the Jews were free to practice their religion in Venice and what is more striking is that compelling the Jewish people to convert to Christianity was legally forbidden (Edelman 4). In this sense, as Charles Edelman also asserts, it may be argued that Shylock, who is forced to convert to Christianity and loses his wealth to Christians in *The Merchant of Venice* is a representative of the Jewish people in Spain rather than the Jews in Italy as

conversion of non-Christians to Christianity was a common practice in Spain especially in the fourteenth century (4).

Moreover, the city of Venice Shakespeare presents in *The Merchant of Venice* suits the historical image and importance of Venice as a holy city and a rich port where trade developed and culture was fostered. Thus, the Venice presented in *The Merchant of Venice* reflects the city that the Elizabethan people pictured in their minds as argued by Harley Granville-Barker as follows:

> [Shakespeare] does present a Venice that lived in the Elizabethan mind, and it is the Venice of his dramatic needs; a city of royal merchants trading to the gorgeous East, of Jews, in their gaberdines (as rare a sight, remembers, as to us a Chinese mandarin is, walking the London streets to-day), and of splendid gentlemen rustling in silks. To the lucky young Englishman who could hope to travel there Venice stood for culture and manners and the luxury of civilisation; and this – without one word of description – is how Shakespeare pictures it. (69)

Therefore, as indicated in the above lines, the Elizabethan people visualised Venice as the cradle of civilisations. For the Elizabethans, Venice was associated with economic progress and the supremacy of Christianity. Shakespeare adopts a sophisticated approach to this image employed by the Elizabethan people as he poses moral questions through the treatment of Shylock by the Christian people in Venice as will be demonstrated in this chapter. Likewise, Marchette Chute presents how Italy was viewed by the Elizabethan people, and the close connection between Italy and London during the Elizabethan era:

> Above all, it felt the stirring of new winds from Italy. To the average Londoner Italy was still the place of strange poisons and passionate love affairs, to be mistr usted as the home of the wicked Machiavelli; but English architects travelled in Italy and brought back new designs, English sportsmen did their riding and fencing in the Italian manner, and when a poet wrote love songs, he imitated Petrarch. There was a fury of translation from the Italian of novels and plays and poems, and the brilliant Italian actors penetrated England and flourished for at least a season in London. (62)

These lines clearly display that the Elizabethan people had a strong interest in Italy and they followed the religious, economical, cultural and literary developments taking place

there. The link between Italy and England in the sixteenth century was strong, and hence it may be inferred that the Elizabethan people had knowledge of how both the Christians and the Jews lived there.

The history of the settlement of the Jewish people in England goes back to the Norman rule in England between 1066 and 1154. The Jewish people settled in England during the rule of William the Conqueror. In the twelfth century they were given privileges as they took over the control of their own community and ruled it according to Jewish law, which was also recognised by King John. However, the Jewish community was associated with crime and in 1144, they were accused by the Christians of murdering a boy who had disappeared in Norwich, which paved the way for the accusations of the Jews of ritual murders. Henry II, who ruled England between 1154 and 1189, aimed to improve the image of the Jewish people within the society but nevertheless they were not allowed to take part in the unions of the craftmen and they could not possess land (Lelyveld 4). Frederick Hawkins describes the negative image of the Jewish people in the minds of the English people by the twelfth century and their exclusion from the society as follows:

> By that time the populace had conceived a bitter hostility to the Jews on account of their faith or rather want of faith, the proved superiority of their talents of commerce, and the inordinate wealth they were supposed to have amassed. The long-discordant elements of which the nation was composed hated them with equal fervour. Any story to their disadvantage, however improbable it might be, found ready and implicit credence. They were believed to be adepts in the black arts, to be engaged in a mysterious conspiracy against Christians as a body, and to have a penchant for crucifying living children. This animosity more than once took a very practical form; Jews were murdered by hundreds, their goods and chattels seized, and their houses razed to the ground. (191)

However, the importance of the Jewish people for the economic development of England was realised gradually in the twelfth century as the Church prohibited the Christian people from lending money with interest, hence the wealthy Jews were the only people who could provide the nobility, who had difficulties in collecting taxes, with money. Furthermore, the members of the government could also benefit from the financial assistance provided by the Jews. The Jewish people could not leave their wealth to their heirs, thus the monarchy inherited the wealth of the Jews on their death

(Lelyveld 4-5). Before the Jewish people were expelled from England, there was wide discrepancy between the way they were treated by the monarch and the attitude of the public. They were protected by the sovereign and by their patrons as they were money lenders and were important in economic terms. However, they drew negative reaction from the common Christian people due to their roles as money lenders and their royal protection (Danson 147-148). In this regard, it is possible to argue that the position of the Jewish people in the Christian society in the Middle Ages created social unrest and divergency between the monarch and its subjects. The Jewish community was expelled from England in 1290 (Mahoney 19). According to Lawrence Danson, Edward I decided to expel the Jewish people at the end of the thirteenth century as they began to lose their economic power and usefulness to the monarch, and hence Edward I accommodated himself to the expectations of his Christian subjects (147). In other words, Edward I sided with his Christian subjects and acted according to their requests and expelled the Jewish people who had already lost their economic power and efficiency. Toby Lelyveld further describes the decreasing importance of the Jewish people in the English society in the twelfth century and the thirteenth century as follows:

> Their expulsion from England was hastened by the rise of several Italian banking houses, to which England now gave its patronage. Jewish money-lenders began to lose their importance and their stay in England was now considered superfluous. In 1189, a deputation of Jews, bearing gifts to Richard I at the time of his coronation, was attacked by the mob and slaughtered. Other riots followed. In 1217, English Jews were made to wear the ignominious yellow badge. By this time, the word "Jew" had become a synonym for usurer, liar, rascal, cheat. (5)

Thus, as mentioned in the above lines, in the late twelfth century and the early thirteenth century, the Jewish people were economically weak and they were the targets of growing public unrest. They, moreover, became the victims of social restrictions, and they were directly associated with usury, corruption and deceit. Robin Mundill elaborates the charges against the Jewish people in 1290 as he says, "[t]hey ranged from deep suspicion and fear of heresy and even magic, to a distinct predilection for listening to rumour about the minority concerned. The background to such events obviously included economic envy, jealousy of the outsider's position within society, and the marshalling of public and theological opinion against the minority" (249).

As regards the Tudor dynasty, it may be argued that there was a specific Jewish community living in England and there was also an interaction with the Jews living in Italy during the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal formed the Marrano communities in England (Shapiro 68). The Marrano Jews came to London in the reign of Henry VIII and their numbers increased in London under the rule of Elizabeth I. The Marranos living in the Elizabethan era were converted Christians but they secretly carried out the Jewish customs (Gross 20-21). In Bate's and Thornton's words, "Jews who converted or whose ancestors had converted were called Marranos, but their Christian beliefs and political allegiance were always doubted […]" (160). The second group of Jews who settled in London under Henry VIII were Jewish musicians who came from Italy to improve the taste of music at the court. The Bassanos from Venice were a distinguished family, and chiefly the members of the Bassano family and the other Italian musicians became successful performers and instrument makers and they easily adjusted to the English society (Gross 23). Therefore, starting with King Henry VII, until the official readmission of the Jewish people to England by Oliver Cromwell in 1656 (Bate and Thornton 159), the Tudor monarchs approved the settlement of limited number of Jews in England because they proved to be beneficial for the country. The Jews dwelling in England worked as merchants, teachers, physicians, translators of Hebrew and mining experts (Shapiro 68). In addition, the existence of the Jewish people in England in the sixteenth century is proved by the State Papers about the marriage of Catherine of Aragon with Arthur, Prince of Wales. As indicated in these legal documents, King Henry VII discusses the situation of the Jewish people in England with the Spanish ambassador (Lee, "The Lopez Case" 138). Therefore, as Sidney Lee argues, "[t]hese witnesses can leave little doubt of the truth of the general proposition that Jews were known [in England] before their formal readmission under Cromwell […]" ("The Lopez Case" 138). Another significant incident which demonstrates the relation between England and the Jews in the sixteenth century is that Henry VIII found the proof enabling his divorce from to Catherine of Aragon, the wife of his deceased brother, and hence making his marriage to Anne Boleyn possible in Leviticus, "the third book of canonical Jewish and Christian Scripture consisting mainly of priestly legislation" (*Merriam Webster*). Therefore, in order to invalidate the opposition of the Pope, Henry

VIII consulted the Jewry in Italy, where the Holy Book was studied and researched on, about the detailed explanation of the prohibition presented in the Leviticus against levirate marriage (Katz 17-18). In *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* a levirate marriage is defined as "[t]he marriage of a widow to a brother of her husband from the same father" (Jacobs 315). Furthermore, "[a]ccording to Leviticus 18: 16 it is forbidden for a man to marry his brother's widow (the verse must be referring to a widow; if the brother is still alive he is forbidden to marry her in any event since she is a married woman)" (Jacobs 315). In this sense, Henry VIII met with the Jewish physician, Elijah Menahem Halfan, the son of Abba Mari Halfan and the grandson of Joseph Colon. Halfan helped Henry VIII in the interpretation of Leviticus. The second Jew who assisted Henry VIII in his attempts to invalidate his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was Francesco Giorgi who was the Venetian theologist. Giorgi supported Henry VIII by bringing scholarly explanation about the divorce and receiving help from other Jewish scholars. The third Jewish man whom Henry VIII consulted was Marco Raphael, a scholar and a converted Jew, who supported Henry VIII's divorce particularly through his writings (Katz 24-25). In the light of the information, it may be argued that the existence of the Jewish people in England continued even after their formal expulsion in 1290. In addition to this, as it has been distinctly illustrated through Henry VIII's case, there was also a close connection between the English monarchy and the Jewish scholars in Italy. In this regard, the question how Shakespeare had knowledge about the Jewish people and was familiar with their way of life arises. Due to the lack of documented evidence, there are various speculations about whether Shakespeare had ever travelled to foreign countries like Italy, France and Vienna which he used as settings. It is also discussed by the Shakespearean scholars and critics whether Shakespeare left England and reflected his experiences in the foreign countries in his plays or he met the foreign characters, like the Italian merchants and the Jewish money lenders and witnessed the incidents related to them in London. In this regard, Srinivasa Iyengar also says:

> It is unlikely Shakespeare was ever out of England, - though biographers have enterprisigly tried to send him on seaborne expeditions, on Italian tours, and on Continental campaigns. […] but Shakespeare had no such opportunities, no such need even. He knew his Stratford well, he knew his London well: he also knew the provinces, since he must have occasionally at least accompanied his Company on

> their travels. He knew the value of reading, and he read extensively both for pleasure ad for picking up thoughts or plots for his plays. […] With a mind so well-stocked Shakespeare was also ready to assimilate ideas and impressions from his conservations with his fellow-dramatists and fellow-actors as also travellers rich in experience. […] His Italy is like Italy only superficially, and is really England in fact; and his Vienna is more London thanVienna. (91)

As indicated in the above lines, for Iyengar, Shakespeare did not go on excursions and tours of Italian cities and expeditions in Europe. In this respect, it may be argued that for Iyengar, Shakespeare knew Stratford-Upon-Avon, his birthplace, very well. He also knew London where he worked as an actor and a playwright and spent almost twenty years of his lifetime in London and in the counties where his theatre company performed plays. Furthermore, Shakespeare studied various classical sources from which he borrowed his plots and characters. His talks with his fellow actors and playwrights along with wealthy travellers who had embarked on adventures in foreign countries also shaped Shakespeare's dramatic imagination. Similarly, Thomas Fairman Ordish argues that Shakespeare learnt about the foreign ports and cities from the stories told to him by the boaters who had formerly worked for the English navy. These boaters carried the theatregoers to the theatres through the River Thames by ferry. In addition, Shakespeare might have been informed about the experiences of the nobles who had made tours to Germany, Paris and the Italian cities. He might also have been informed by Lord Southampton, Lord Pembroke and other lords with whom he had close relations at the court (16). Edwin Goadby manifests that Shakespeare was influenced by the events of his age and presented them in his plays in his following words: "[Shakespeare] was not its creature, and yet the features of the age have left their impress of everything he wrote. His dramas and comedies seem to have been written in the street and the public tavern rather than in the closet […]" (16). At this point, it may be stated that even if Shakespeare did not travel to foreign countries and acquire first-hand knowledge of foreign characters like the Venetian merchant and the Jew, his interactions with both common people like the traders and boaters and the noble people from the court provided him with certain ideas. Cerasano also states that it is uncertain how Shakespeare had information about the merchants and money lenders in Venice and as to so skillfully present them in his plays. Thus, Cerasano suggests that Shakespeare met merchants like Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* in London and listened to the stories about Jewish money lenders which were told by the travellers who

had gone to Italy along with his acquitance of the Jewish people living in London as follows:

> In the absence of information that would suggest that Shakespeare had travelled to Italy, we are forced to believe that he created Antonio from a combination of Venetian merchants that he knew or had heard about in London. Along the same lines, he probably created Shylock from a combination of the tales of Jewish moneylenders told by travellers who had been to Venice, together with whatever he had heard about the Jewish community resident in London in the 1590s. (15)

Hence, it may be argued that Shakespeare had the means to learn about the foreign countries and the foreign characters in London as he met the foreign characters or became familiar with them through the stories told. Lee also lays emphasis on the fact that the historical accounts explicitly or implicitly suggest the absence of the Jews in England between 1290 and 1655, and then it is a challenging question whether Shakespeare travelled abroad or met the characters like Shylock in London due to the lack of information about his journeys. However, Lee concludes that Shakespeare must have had an opportunity to meet the Jewish people residing in London during his lifetime ("The Lopez Case" 137-138).

Apart from the impression about the Jewish money lender that Shakespeare received through his contacts in London, through the Jewish population living in London and the literary sources he had read, a significant event which had a negative impact on the impression of the Jewish people living in England not only on the Christian public but also on Shakespeare was the trial and execution of Doctor Roderigo Lopez who was the Portuguese-Jewish physician to Queen Elizabeth I and was charged with treason against the Queen in 1594 (S. Wells, *Dictionary* 101). Lopez had served the Earl of Leicester who was the patron of Richard Burbage and the lasting disputes between Lopez and the Earl of Essex led to the indictment of Lopez (Lelyveld 6). Lopez established relationships with the courtiers and the Earl of Essex who was a favourite courtier of Queen Elizabeth I and a close friend of the Earl of Southampton, the patron of Shakespeare. Lopez, who knew foreign languages, was recruited by Essex so that he could translate Antonio Perez's speech, who was a Portuguese refugee at the court.

However, Lopez plotted with the King of Spain against Perez, and he was also forced to take part in a conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth I. Though Lopez claimed that he had refused to poison the Queen, Essex led the campaign accusing Lopez of treason and his trial was conducted by a special commission in the Guildhall. Eventually, Lopez was executed at Tyburn in 1594 (Boas, *In Shakspere's* 217). Platter refers to one attempt to poison Elizabeth I, which may be interpreted as Lopez's case, along with the other schemes intending to kill her in an entry dated 1599 in his diary. First, Platter elaborates the appearance of the Queen and asserts that she was wearing a white and satin dress which was embroided with gold. Her jewelry was pompous and she was wearing fancy gloves. Platter also refers to Elizabeth I's age and maintains that though the Queen was seventy-four years old in 1599, she looked like a young woman (58). Then, Platter says: "[…] although her life has often been threatened by poison and many ill designs, God has preserved her wonderfully at all times" (59). Platter also describes the general practice of execution at Tyburn in his diary in the part where he mentions the law courts as follows: "[…] when the trial is over, those condemned to the rope are placed on a cart, each one with a rope around his neck, and the hangman drives with them out of the town to the gallows, called Tyburn, almost an hour away from the city, there he fastens them upone after another by the rope and drives the cart off under the gallows which is not very high off the ground […]" (36). As Judith Cook puts forward, the evidence which proves that Lopez plotted with the Spanish forces was a jewel he was given as a gift. However, Lopez denied all the charges against himself and claimed that he had directly given the jewel to Elizabeth I as a present (115). Anthony Burgess particularly focuses on the hostility between the Earl of Essex and Lopez and argues that the personal matter underlies the charges against Lopez. First Walsingham, then the Earl of Essex wanted to use Lopez in order to get information from Spain because Lopez had a wide network in Portugal and could easily learn the important political developments in Spain. However, Lopez spied on the Earl of Essex and informed Elizabeth I about the acts of Essex, and he made Essex his enemy. Essex, in return, used the statements of Tinoco who accused Lopez of taking a jewel from the King of Spain in exchange for his support (137). Though Lopez was a converted Christian during his service to Queen Elizabeth I, his Jewish identity was also in the foreground in the accusations and Cerasano associates Lopez's treachery against Queen Elizabeth I with the the growth of

the sense of anti-semitisim in England as follows: " […] in tracing the history of anti-semitism in England some historians and literary scholars have traditionally pointed to the trial and execution in 1593 of Doctor Roderigo Lopez, a Spanish Jew who, it was alleged, had participated in a plot to poison Queen Elizabeth I" (16-17). Frederick Hawkins vividly puts forth the fear which gripped the Elizabethan people about the increasing influence of the Jewish people in England upon the assignment of the Jewish physician at the court as follows:

> These events, as may be supposed, created quite a panic among the people at large. The Jews, it seemed certain, would be allowed to reestablish themselves in the country, diminish the profits of good Christian traders, pervert crowds to Judaism, and, as in former times, crucify children in derision of the true religion. The prospect seemed to sting everyone to fury; […]. (191)

Therefore, in the minds of the Elizabethan people the Jew was still a murderer, a fraud who hindered the trade of the Christian merchants and a liar who propagated his own religion while disdaining Christianity. Moreover, they had worried over the reappearance of the Jewish people both in the society and at the court. John Manningham refers to the negative image of the Jewish people during the Elizabethan era in his diary with an entry on March 1602. He mentions the emotional reaction of Queen Elizabeth I to a hymn read by Doctor Parry and comprising religious teachings which were, on the one hand, plausible, but on the other hand, disliked as the Jews had used these teachings as follows: "The doctrine was concerning vowes, which were growne in contempt and hatred because the Jews of old and the papistes of later tymes have used them, whereas the thing it selfe, in i[t]s owne nature, is reasonable and commendable" (Folio 110 206). In this sense, in Parrott's words, "[w]hether Lopez was guilty or innocent, however, his trial and execution fanned the embers of anti-Semitism in London into a blazing flame" (134). Thus, as indicated in these lines, the trial and execution of Lopez had an effect on the growth of hatred towards the Jewish people in the Elizabethan society. Although the discussion among the historians and critics on whether Lopez was quilty or not continued, the Elizabethan people were strictly convinced of his guilt as the trial and execution of Lopez drew considerable interest in the public. As Lelyveld points out, "[a]lthough later historians have found only inconclusive evidence of his guilt in plotting against the life of the queen, the

Elizabethans had nothing but loathing for the proselytized Jew, and they rejoiced at his death" (6-7). In this regard, it may be argued that the trial and execution of Lopez attracted the attention of the Christian Elizabethan people as the convict was a Jew, a member of a community which had been accused of various crimes throughout the history of England as has been presented in this chapter. The treason of the Jewish doctor was kept on the agenda by five official accounts about his treachery published after his execution (Boas, *In Shakspere's* 217). Furthermore, as Lopez was renowned in London, Frederic Boas argues that he "must have been well known to many members of the theatrical profession" (*In Shakspere's* 217), and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* was staged for more than twenty times between May, 1594 and December, 1594 to keep Lopez's case alive in the minds of the Elizabethan people (Boas, *In Shakspere's* 217). In the light of such information, it may be stated that Shakespeare was influenced by the trial and execution of Lopez because different from the ordinary Elizabethan citizen, he had knowledge of the incident as he was close to the court and would have had information about the details of the accusation, trial and the execution. Shakespeare's relationship with Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, who was an influential courtier and a close friend of the Lord of Essex, the leader of the Lopez trial as has been mentioned, kept him informed about the incidents happening at the court. As Alfred Leslie Rowse explains, Southampton got in close contact with Essex especially after 1591 as he wanted to follow him in his campaign in Normandy, and stood by Essex throughout his turbulent political career (*William* 141-142).

As Arthur Acheson asserts, the relationship between Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton started after Southampton began to serve at court in 1590. Furthermore, as Acheson puts forth, Shakespeare became acquainted with Southampton during Elizabeth I's visit to Cowdray and Tichfield House in 1591 as Shakespeare and the members of his theatre company accompanied Southampton throughout the Queen's visit (165-166). Southampton's influence at the court is presented in Andrew Gurr's words as follows: "[…] by the time [the Earl of Southampton] died in 1624 he had become a powerful figure at court and an exceptionally rich man" (*William* 63). Moreover, Shakespeare wrote and published his narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of the Lucrece" in 1593 and 1594, respectively when the Earl of

Southampton was his patron. In addition, Shakespeare dedicated both poems to Southampton (Frye, *Shakespeare's* n.p.). Halliday depicts the prominent position of Southampton at the court at the time of the publication of Shakespeare's poems as follows: "When *Venus and Adonis* was published, therefore, he was still a bachelor and one of the most handsome and accomplished noblemen at Court, a favourite of the Queen and a friend of Essex, a patron of poets and young-looking for his years, which were only nineteen" (*The Life of Shakespeare* 123). In the dedication of "Venus and Adonis", Shakespeare highlights the power of Southampton at court as follows: "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden […]" (Maxwell 4). Therefore, it may be deduced that Shakespeare was at the beginning of his dramatic career and was not a well-known and an influential playwright in 1593; however, Southampton was already a powerful courtier. With the lines, "[…] only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account my self highly praised, and wov to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour" (Maxwell 4), Shakespeare also explicitly puts forward that he wishes to continue his connection with Southampton and promises to honour his greatness through a masterpiece. In the dedication of "The Rape of Lucrece", Shakespeare makes a more intimate introduction which may be interpreted as an indicator of the development in their relationship. Shakespeare says: "The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end: whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety" (Maxwell 46). As indicated in this line, Shakespeare clearly asserts that the opening of his poem with the demonstration of his love for Southampton is necessary as his affection for him gives meaning to the poem. In the light of this information, it may be argued that Shakespeare and Southampton had a close relationship in 1594 when Lopez was accused of treachery and was executed. In Acheson's words, "[f]riendship may perhaps be too strong a term to apply to the relations that subsisted at this date between Southampton and Shakespeare, but we have good proof […] in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and of *Lucrece* in 1594 […]" (153). Ordish also comments on the close relationship between Shakespeare and Southampton by referring to Shakespeare's remaining unresponsive to the death of Queen Elizabeth I. According to Ordish, Shakespeare was thinking about the fate of Southampton who had been imprisoned in

the Tower of London due to his part in the Essex Rebellion in 1601 and he regarded the death of the Queen as an opportunity for the emancipation of his beloved patron and friend (278).

In addition, starting with 1593, after Shakespeare earned reputation with his narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of the Lucrece", as a friend and servant of Lord Southampton, he began to have a place among the nobility (Ordish 251). In this sense, in Peter Alexander's words, "[p]erhaps this trial, which Essex, the president, and his party made as sensational as possible for their own ends, interested Shakespeare in a story with a Jew in it. For Shakespeare was no doubt 'a man of business', as Spedding puts it, who thought the story of a wicked Jew good material for such a time […]" (111). Parrott supports Alexander's argument as he says, "[t]here was a great doubt about his guilt, but Essex, the Queen's favourite, who presided at the trial, was determined to secure a conviction, and Shakespeare's friend, Southampton, the intimate associate of Essex, could have informed the poet of all the details of the trial" (134). In other words, Shakespeare had access to first-hand information about Lopez's case, and the increasing popularity of the story of the villainous Jew among the Elizabethan people inspired him to write about the Jew who was alienated and finally punished for doing evil to the Christian people. However, Shakespeare's presentation of the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice* is problematic due to the uncertainty created in Shylock's character and Shakespeare's controversial approach to Shylock as will be demonstrated in detail in this chapter. Last, Lopez's execution marks the end of the official accusations directed at the Jewish people in London as there was no legal document showing the denunciation of the Jewish people or any appeal to dismiss them since the execution of Lopez (Edelman 2). Hence, considering particularly the Lopez case and the existence of the Jewish people both in the English society and at the court, as Boas argues, "[...] it is perfectly certain that Shakespere had opportunities of acquiring first-hand knowledge of Jewish life without leaving England [...]" (*In Shakspere's* 218).

In addition to this, Shakespeare's demonstration of his love for Southampton particularly in the dedication of "The Rape of Lucrece" is also fundamental as it is similar to Bassanio's expression of his affection and respect for Antonio in I.i. in *The*

Merchant of Venice. Bassanio reveals his strong attachment to Antonio after Antonio asks about the lady with whom Bassanio is in love:

> […] to you Antonio
> I owe the most in money and in love,
> And from your love I have a warrantly
> To unburthen all my plots and purposes
> How to get clear of all the debts I owe. (130-134)

Hence, the way Bassanio presents his deep commitment to Antonio bears resemblance to Shakespeare's dependence on his patron, the Earl of Southampton. Furthermore, Antonio's approach to Bassanio mirrors the attitude of a patron who protects his subject financially. In this regard, Antonio says:

> I pray you good Bassanio let me know it,
> And if it stand as you yourself still do,
> Within the eye of honour, be assur'd
> My purse, my person, my extremest means
> Lie all unlock'd to your occasions. (I.i.135-139)

Thus, as indicated in Antonio's words, he does not only offer his friendship to Bassanio but he also proposes to put his wealth into Bassanio's service. In this sense, it may be argued that the relationship between Bassanio and Antonio has common features with that of Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton in terms of the relationship between the patron and his subject.

Shakespeare's closeness to the court, where he could obtain information about the political developments, was not limited to his relationship with the Earl of Southampton as Shakespeare had noble patrons throughout his dramatic career. After the Lord Chamberlain became the patron of Shakespeare's theatre company in 1594, Shakespeare began to maintain close relations with the court. Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon who was the first Lord Chamberlain and the first patron of the theatre company had a family tie with Queen Elizabeth I as he was her cousin. Thus, under the patronage of Henry Carey and the other noble successors, Shakespeare's theatre company staged plays before Queen Elizabeth I and King James I at the court (Ordish 250). Cook puts forth the high efficiency of Henry Carey at the court as follows:

> Lord Hunsdon was directly related to the Queen, being the son of Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary. Mary had preceded Anne as Henry VIII's mistress but when Henry fell passionately in love with her younger sister, he arranged a good marriage for Mary with one of his gentlemen-in-waiting, William Carey. Mary had a son with Carey, who was dutifully christened Henry after the King, shortly after which Carey died, leaving behind a merry widow; Mary certainly fared considerably better than her unfortunate sister. The young Henry, later created Lord Chamberlain by Queen Elizabeth, was a man of considerable influence at Court. (111)

Therefore, as indicated in the above lines, Henry Carey had a powerful position at the court as the only son of Mary Tudor and William Carey and as the cousin of Queen Elizabeth I. In this sense, after Carey became the patron of Shakespeare's theatre company, both Shakespeare and his fellow actors became known by the court. Furthermore, according to Jean Wilson, the Earl of Nottingham and the Lord of Hunsdon, who were brothers-in-law, "were also relatives of Elizabeth, and among her inner circle of friends" (9). Ordish's argument concerning the considerable number of performances of Shakespeare's theatre company at the court after 1594, the year of Lopez's execution, is also supported by Roland Mushat Frye as he says, "[…] during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign the Chamberlain's Men was by far the most popular company at court, putting on thirty-two known performances before the queen as compared with thirty-three known performances by all the rival companies combined" (*Shakespeare's* n.p). That is, the Lord Chamberlain's Men performed its first play at the court before Queen Elizabeth I during the Christmas period of 1594-1595 and performed at least one play each year until the Queen died (Astington 109). John H. Astington's list of performances at the court between 1558 and 1642 as he presents in the Appendix of *English Court Theatre 1558-1642*, supports Frye's argument and puts forth that the Lord Chamberlain's Men performed thirty-three plays between the season of 1594-95 and the season of 1602-03, almost equal to the total performance number of Admiral's Men, Gentlemen of Gray's Inn, Gentlemen of Middle Temple, Derby's Men, Children of Chapel, Worcester's Men and Hertford's Men (234-237).

With respect to the analysis of the play, *The Merchant of Venice* starts with a question. At the very beginning of the play, Antonio's mood poses questions. He reveals that he suffers from tediousness and he does not know the exact reason of it. Thus, he says:

> In sooth I know not why I am so sad,
> It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
> What stuff ’tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn. (I.i.1-5)

In other words, Antonio feels depressed for a cause; however, he cannot find the underlying cause of his distress. Salerio and Solanio claim that Antonio is dispirited because his merchant ships are at sea. It is highly likely that Antonio is reported at any moment that his ships have sunk or have been damaged. In this respect, Salerio says: “Your mind is tossing on the ocean, / There where your argosies with portly sail” (I.i.8-9). Salerio further claims that Antonio’s mind is busy with his commercial business as follows: “But tell not me, I know Antonio / Is sad to think upon his merchandise” (I.i.39-40). Similarly, Solanio asserts that the underlying reason for Antonio’s sorrow is the condition of his trading ships at sea: “Believe me sir, had I such venture forth,/ The better part of my affections would / Be with my hopes abroad” (I.i.15-17). Hence, Solanio maintains that he would be as sad as Antonio if his merchant ships were at sea. Therefore, from the statements of Salerio and Solanio, the audience/readers may think that Antonio is worried about his business. In response, Antonio says:

> Believe me no, I thank my fortune for it –
> My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
> Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
> Upon the fortune of this present year:
> Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad. (I.i.41-45)

With these lines, which create uncertainty in the minds of the audience/readers, Antonio openly asserts that he is not worried about his property because he has acted wisely as a merchant and has not placed all his goods on the ships at sea. In addition, he self-confidently emphasises that he is already a wealthy merchant and his savings are more than his goods on his ships at sea. Antonio’s objection, “Fie, fie!” (I.i.46), to Solanio’s statement, “Why then you are in love” (I.i.45), also creates ambiguity about the intention of Antonio. In addition, Gratiano increases the uncertainty about Antonio’s complicated situation as follows:

> You look not well Signior Antonio,
> You have too much respect upon the world:
> They lose it that do buy it with much care, -
> Believe me you are marvellously chang'd. (73-76)

Thus, Gratiano immediately realises Antonio's troubled temper and is curious about the reason. However, Antonio's obscure answer satisfies neither Gratiano nor the audience/readers. Antonio says: "I hold the world but as the world Gratiano, / A stage, where every man must play a part, / And mine a sad one" (I.i.77-79). Therefore, it may be argued that Antonio holds the mystery of his situation and though he does not present his business and falling in love as the causes of his sadness in his conservations with Salerio and Solanio, he does not give a convincing reason for his tediousness and asserts that acting as a sullen man is his part in life.

The major problem in *The Merchant of Venice* which makes the play a problem play is Shakespeare's presentation of Shylock. On the one hand, Shylock comes into prominence with his Jewish identity and is presented as the victim of the Christian people as he is constantly insulted, put on trial, loses his wealth to the Christians and is forced to change his religion. On the other hand, Shylock is also presented as a cruel Jewish money lender who does not abandon his bond for the sake of his revenge on Antonio. In this regard, as Frykman and Kjellmer put forth, "Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is a dramatic character of an entirely different dimension, a subtly drawn mixture of evil and suffering" (40). In other words, Shakespeare's Jew, Shylock, is different from Marlowe's Jew, Barabas, who is purely evil as has been presented, and hence Shakespeare gives rise to uncertainty in the minds of the audience/readers over the character of Shylock.

Shylock's character is described through a strong resemblance to the devil by the Christian characters throughout the play. When Shylock says that Jessica was cursed due to her betrayal, Salerio implies that if Jessica is judged by Shylock, then it is inevitable that she is damned because Shylock is the devil: "That's certain, if the devil may be her judge" (III.i.30). Similarly, Solanio uses the image of devil to describe all the Jewish people when he sees that Shylock's friend Tubal heads toward him: "Here comes another of the tribe,- a third cannot be match'd, unless the devil himself turn

Jewish (III.i.70-71). Based on Solanio's statement, it may be argued that the Christian characters in the play nurture enmity not only towards Shylock but also towards the whole Jewish population in Venice. Antonio's hatred towards Shylock and the Jewish people is revealed in his farewell to Shylock after they compromise on the bond. Antonio says: "Hie thee gentle Jew. / The Hebrew will turn Christian, he grows kind" (I.iii.174-175). It may be deduced from these lines that Antonio generalises about the Jewish people through Shylock and he fiercely condemns them for intolerance. For Antonio, only the Christian people are capable of showing understanding towards other people. The only character who momentarily hesitates about leaving Shylock is Launcelot Gobbo, the servant of Shylock, because despite his intense dislike of him, Launcelot is still undecided about leaving Shylock. He feels certain that leaving Shylock will turn into a necessity in the future as Shylock gradually becomes cruel in his attitudes and statements: "Certainly, my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master" (II.ii.1-2). Thus, Launcelot is torn between his conscience which troubles him and constantly tells him to stay with his master whom he has served for a long time, and the devil which warns him about the increasing atrociousness of the Jew. In this sense, his conscience says: " ' Launcelot budge not' " (II.ii.18), while the devil says: " 'Budge' " (18). However, after the inner conflict he goes through, Launcelot eventually awakens to the fact that Shylock himself is an evil character, so he should not assume any responsibility towards Shylock and he questions the orders of his conscience as he says: "I should stay with the Jew my master, who (God bless the mark) is a kind of devil" (II.ii.22-23). Launcelot further expresses his hatred towards Shylock with the following words: "[…] certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation […]" (II.ii.25-26). In other words, for Launcelot, Shylock is the representative of the devil on earth; therefore, Launcelot will eventually fulfill the wishes of the devil whether he leaves Shylock or stays with him. Finally, Launcelot decides to escape from the household of Shylock to serve the Christians: "I will run fiend, my heels are at your commandment, I will run" (II.ii.29-30). What is striking in Launcelot's reasoning is that his association of leaving Shylock and entering the Christians' service with the proposal of the devil leads the audience/readers to think about the nature of Christianity as well. In addition, Launcelot generalises, as Antonio has done, and projects his hatred onto the whole Jewish community living in Venice when his father, Gobbo, asks whether he has

good relations with his master. Launcelot's statement, "my master's a very Jew" (II.ii.100), vividly demonstrates that Launcelot does not see only Shylock as his enemy but also all the Jews. Launcelot further puts forth the marked contrast between Shylock, the Jew and Bassanio, the Christian after he starts to work for the latter. After Bassanio asks Launcelot whether he is completely sure of his choice, Launcelot justifies his decision by referring to an old proverb which magnifies Christianity and denigrates Judaism: "The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you sir, you have 'the grace of God' sir, and he hath 'enough' " (II.ii.142-144). Hence, it may be argued that the divine power overwhelmingly supports Christianity and regards Judaism as inferior and such substantial discrepancy occurs not only between Shylock and Bassanio but also between the Christian people and the Jewish people. Shakespeare distinctly puts forward the long-standing hostility between Christianity and Judaism both in England and throughout Europe through this old proverb. At this point, Bill Overton emphasises the problem in Shylock's characterisation by referring to his Jewishness and the enmity between the Christians and the Jews: "There are two main reasons why Shylock is a problem. One lies in the history of the Jews. Dispossessed from their homeland and scattered among other nations, victims of pogrom and holocaust, their story should permanently warn against the appalling dangers of all racial prejudice. […] The second reason why Shylock is a problem lies in the nature of his role" (293).

Furthermore, Shylock's daughter, Jessica, adopts a negative attitude towards Shylock, which is similar to that of the Christians'. Therefore, as Stoll suggests, "[…] all the people who come in contact with Shylock except Tubal – among them being those of his own house, his servant and his daughter – have a word or two to say on the subject of his character and never a good one" (16). In this regard, Jessica complains to Launcelot about Shylock's inconsiderate nature and she severely criticises him for being an evil person behaving badly towards other people: "I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so, / Our house is hell, and thou (a merry devil) / Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness" (II.iii.1-3). Hence, Shylock is presented as the main reason for the unbearable sorrow which makes their lives miserable. Furthermore, Jessica is deeply

ashamed of being Shylock's daughter, which she finds intensely embarrasing to express. Jessica says:

> Farewell good Launcelot.
> Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
> To be ashamed to be my father's child!
> But though I am a daughter to his blood
> I am not to his manners: O Lorenzo
> If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
> Become a Christian and thy loving wife! (II.iii.15-21)

Therefore, it can be clearly seen that Jessica does not want to be identified with Shylock just because they have a family tie. She openly asserts that Shylock's relentless attitude towards herself and other people has alienated her from Shylock, and although they are both Jewish, Jessica firmly denies her Jewish heritage and affirms that she is willing to convert to Christianity just to sever all her ties with Shylock. According to Jessica, converting to Christianity is the sole means of salvation. Thus, Jessica heavily stresses that her character is totally different from that of her father's. Moreover, Jessica reveals her hatred towards Shylock in her letter to Lorenzo. As Launcelot explains to Graziano, Jessica sees Shylock as the source of all evils and if she is ever wronged, she will be punished merely for her father's misdeeds: "And never dare misfortune cross her foot, / Unless she do it under this excuse, / That she is issue to a faithless Jew" (II.iv.35-37). Jessica's strong emphasis on Shylock's religious faith is fundamental as she, like all the other Christian characters in the play, asserts that Shylock's malignancy stems from his Jewishness.

Although Jessica lays great stress on her differences from her father and complains about Shylock's patronising attitude which makes her life miserable, the portrayal of Shylock in II.v. suggests an exact opposite of this image, which poses a question in the minds of the audience/reader. Before Shylock leaves for the dinner invitation by Bassanio, he gives some instructions to Jessica about what she will do in his absence. Though these instructions seem to be oppressive and aim at keeping Jessica under his control, it may be argued that, in fact, Shylock wants to keep the Christians who wander in the streets amusing themselves away from his house and his daughter, and thus warns

Jessica against interacting with the Christian people. Therefore, Shylock's sharp reaction is not against Jessica but the Christians. In this sense, Shylock says:

> Hear you me Jessica,
> Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
> And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife
> Clamber not you up to the casements then
> Nor thrust your head into the public Street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces:
> But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements,
> Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter
> My sober house. (28-36)

As it is clearly seen in these lines, Shylock does not seek to restrict Jessica's life but wants to avoid the direct intervention of the Christian people in his own life. In other words, Shylock fully intends to protect his private domain from the Christian influence. In addition, Shylock does not lock the door or close the windows himself; instead, he leaves the keys to Jessica and authorises her to take the necessary measures against the Christians. In this regard, Shylock is not presented as a repressive father figure in this scene as constantly suggested by Jessica because instead of exerting pressure on Jessica, he just gives her the necessary warnings against the Christians and leaves her alone without knowing whether she will fulfill his demands. Furthermore, Shylock does not express that he will impose sanctions if Jessica does not take into consideration his instigations. Shylock voices the absolute trust he has in Jessica in the following words: "Jessica my girl, / Look to my house" (II.v.15-16). Thus, Shylock consigns his belongings including his money and jewellery to Jessica without hesitation. In this sense, the question of whether Jessica really suffers oppression at the hands of Shylock as she claims or whether Shylock struggles to keep his daughter away from his enemies arises.

Solanio and Salerio also demonstrate that they are biased towards Shylock in II.viii. where they compare the emotional responses of Shylock and Antonio to Jessica's escape taking Shylock's money and gold with her and Bassanio's departure for Belmont, respectively. While they mock Shylock's attitude, they praise Antonio's manner. First, Solanio and Salerio comment on Shylock's reaction as follows:

> I never heard a passion so confus'd,
> So strange, outrageous, and so variable
> As the dog Jew did utter in the streets, -
> "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
> Justice, the law, my ducats, and my daughter! (12-17)

As can be understood, Shylock shows an extreme and bitter response to Jessica's running off with a Christian. He yells in pain on the streets and begs for justice. He angrily and despairingly cries as he feels dreadfully and genuinely upset not only about losing his daughter but also about being betrayed by a person whom he had relied on. However, Solanio and Salerio consider Shylock's lament as abnormal and disgraceful and belittle Shylock with pejorative words. They also find Shylock's mentioning of Jessica and his gold and money in the same speech inconsistent and imply that it is not certain whether Shylock is profoundly sad about the escape of his daughter or about the loss of his money and gold. Salerio's further statement, "Why all the boys in Venice follow him, / Crying his stones, his daughter, and his ducats" (II.viii.23-24), explicitly demonstrates that they accuse Shylock of being avaricious and thinking about his money and gold rather than his daughter. On the contrary, Salerio highlights Antonio's virtuous and noble character when he describes Antonio's seeing Bassanio off:

> A kinder gentleman treads not the earth,-
> I saw Bassanio and Antonio part,
> Bassanio told him he would make some speed
> Of his return: he answered, "Do not so,
> Slubber not the business for my sake Bassanio,
> But stay at the very riping of the time,
> And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me-
> Let it not enter in your mind of love:
> Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
> To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
> As shall conveniently become you there."
> And even there (his eye being big with tears),
> Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
> And with affection wondrous sensible
> He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted. (35-49)

In these lines, Salerio holds Antonio in considerable respect and asserts that Antonio selflessly gives priority to Bassanio's interests. In other words, unlike Shylock, Antonio does not place importance on his financial gain or loss but highly regards his beloved friend. Therefore, Antonio strongly recommends that Bassanio should enjoy his time

with Portia in Belmont and should not rush to win Portia's heart just because of the bond between Antonio and Shylock. In short, when Solanio' and Salerio's attitudes towards Shylock and Antonio are compared, it is clearly seen that there is a marked difference. Although both men express their inconsolable grief for being separated from the people they love most, Antonio's farewell to Bassanio is regarded as a dignified move while Shylock is blamed for attaching priority to materiality over his daughter.

Shylock asks for justice not only after Jessica escaped but also after Antonio fails in paying his debt. Firstly, in III.i. Shylock complains to Tubal about his desperation at his inability to find Jessica along with the gold and money she has stolen from him. In addition, he bemoans his fate as he expresses that he is the only one who suffers while the Christians and his own converted daughter enjoy themselves. In this sense, he says: "[...] the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief, and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders, no sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but o' my shedding" (III.i.85-88). Thus, Shylock feels that the wrongful party is unjustly rewarded while the rightful party, which is Shylock, is unfairly punished. In this sense, Shylock openly expresses that he is ready to use various means such as taking revenge or making Jessica restore what she stole from him in order to maintain justice. It may also be argued that the sense of isolation and the lack of justice Shylock suffers from after Jessica escapes foreshadow the ending of *The Merchant of Venice* where all the characters in the play except Shylock are happy. Furthermore, Shylock asserts that justice has been done when Tubal gives the news of Antonio's financial loss. Shylock blesses God as follows: "I thank God, I thank God! is it true, is it true?" (III.i.93). Therefore, it may be stated that Shylock asks for justice and as he cannot take his daughter and assets back, he immensely feels relieved at Antonio's financial loss and hereby his own material gain.

In regard to the relation between Shylock and Antonio, Shakespeare draws a sharp comparison between Shylock, the Jewish money lender, and Antonio, the Christian merchant, with regard to their personalities and presents the lasting tension between them throughout *The Merchant of Venice*. The aggressive attitudes of both characters towards each other set forth the marked distinctions between them. To start with

Shylock, his hostile treatment of Antonio is presented at the beginning of the play, in the first scene where Shylock is introduced to the audience/readers. He talks about Antonio's character when Bassanio expresses his wish to borrow money from Shylock in the name of Antonio, and Shylock's response, "Antonio is a good man" (I.iii.11), makes the audience/readers think about Shylock's intention. Shakespeare makes the very first comment of Shylock for Antonio uncertain as it is not definite whether Shylock refers to Antonio's personality. However, as it is indicated by Shylock's further explanation, "Ho no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me that he is sufficient" (I.iii.13-14), Shylock, in fact, does not really mean that Antonio is a virtuous man through the word 'good'. He refers to his success as a merchant and states that despite the fact that all of Antonio's ships are at sea and are likely to face dangerous situations like sinking or being attacked by the pirates, he still trusts him as a trader. Therefore, as it is implied from the very beginning of the play that Shylock evaluates Antonio only as a merchant considering his financial statute but he refrains from expressing any positive opinion about Antonio's personality. Additionally, Shylock openly voices that he hates Antonio due to his disruptive behaviours towards him, which stems from the difference in their religious faiths. In this regard, the audience/readers are firstly introduced to Shylock's aversion to Antonio and his desire to take revenge on him for his insults to Jewishness. In his aside, Shylock reveals that he will make a plan in order to deceive Antonio. According to his scheme, Shylock will make Antonio believe that he sides with him, and hence he will be able to avenge himself eventually:

> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
> He hates our sacred nation, and he rails
> (Even there where merchants most do congregate)
> On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
> Which he calls interest: cursed be my tribe
> If I forgive him! (I.iii.41-47)

Thus, as clearly indicated in the above lines, Shakespeare refers to the long-standing animosity between the Christians and the Jews not only in England but throughout Europe as has been presented at the beginning of this chapter. Shylock's emphasis on "the ancient grudge" indicates that the hostility between the Christian and the Jew is not

a new phenomenon in the sixteenth century and this fierce dispute is reflected in the relationship between Antonio and Shylock. Therefore, Shylock vows to take revenge on Antonio for not only himself but also his people. Hence, in the light of Shylock's belligerent statements about Antonio, it may be argued that Shakespeare introduces Shylock to the audience/readers as a wicked Jewish money lender who secretly plots against Antonio and determinedly plans to destroy him. However, doubt arises in the minds of the audience/readers over the intentions of Shylock when he puts forth Antonio's cruel attitudes towards himself forthrightly and in detail and asserts that the chief reason for his hatred towards Antonio is the fact that he is being humiliated due to his religious faith:

> Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
> In the Rialto you have rated me
> About my moneys and my usances:
> Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
> (For suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe)
> You call me disbeliever, cut-throat dog,
> And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine,
> And all for use of that which is mine own.
> Well then, it now appears you need my help (I.iii.101-109)

Therefore, as clearly indicated in the above lines, Antonio constantly affronted Shylock based on his wealth and commercial activities, yet Shylock did not react against Antonio's hostile attitudes and remained patient like all the Jewish people who have endured maltreatment throughout the centuries. Furthermore, Antonio labelled Shylock as the other as he accused him of being a nonbeliever and he not only disesteemed Shylock's personality but also desecrated Jewishness by spitting at Shylock's gown which signifies his Jewishness. Thus, it may be argued that both Shylock's stature, faith and business become a target for Antonio. In this regard, Frederick Hawkins also elaborates Shylock's rightness in seeking revenge on Antonio and asserts that Shakespeare gave Shylock distinctive personality traits which clearly differentiate him from the other characters in the play: "[…] in *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespere was animated by a tolerant spirit, indirectly excited sympathy for Shylock by humanizing the character and assigning adequate motives for the vindictiveness ascribed to it, and sought to enforce the truth that the darkest passions of human nature are nurtured by undeserved persecution and obloquy" (195). That is, Shylock's nurturing enmity

towards Antonio is rooted in Antonio's vicious and unfair slander against Shylock's religious faith, which awakens the savage desire, which is hidden deep inside Shylock, for taking revenge upon Antonio. As Rowse puts forth, "[Shakespeare] makes Shylock's desire for revenge understandable, he gives him cause, he holds the balance more persuasively" (*William* 231).

In addition to this, Shylock makes a new claim about the motive behind Antonio's enmity and affirms that Shylock's trading business disturbs Antonio and conflicts with his interests. In other words, Antonio hates and humiliates Shylock not only because of his religious faith but also due to the high income he makes from trade. Antonio's following statement to Solanio in order not to plead mercy from Shylock supports Shylock's claim and confirms that financial issues are decisive in the relationship between Shylock and Antonio:

> Let him alone,
> I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
> He seeks my life, his reason well I know;
> I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
> Many that have at times made moan to me,
> Therefore he hates me. (III.iii.19-23)

These lines clearly display that Antonio is a fierce rival to Shylock in commerce and the dispute between them is rooted in the incompatible practices they apply in trade. William Poel comments on Antonio's aversion to Shylock as follows:

> […] yet if we read between the lines it is evident that religious differences are not the chief grievance. Shylock is a Jew, therefore a moneylender; a moneylender, therefore rich; rich, yet a miser, and therefore of little value to the community, which remains unbenefited by his usurious loans. This, in the eyes of the Christian merchants, is the real significance of the word Jew. The Catholic Church, by forbidding Christians to take interest, had unintentionally given the Jews a monopoly of the money-market, but with it that odium which attaches to the usurer. (72)

However, Shylock contradicts himself when he accuses Antonio of hating him due to his business because Shylock shows Antonio's business as a cause for his hostility against him as well. In this regard, Antonio's commercial activities give rise to Shylock's hatred towards Antonio. Antonio lends money without interest, which starkly

conflicts with Shylock's interests. In this sense, Shylock says: "I hate him for he is a Christian: / But more, for that in low simplicity / He lends out money gratis, and brings down / The rate of usance here with us in Venice" (I.iii.37-40). Therefore, Shylock explicitly professes that he despises Antonio for the Christian publicly insults the Jew, but the other reason that stirs his enmity towards Antonio is his trading activities as Antonio's offer of interest-free loan attracts borrowers, and hence reduces Shylock's income. In III.iii. Shylock touches upon Antonio's lending money without interest before Antonio is imprisoned in the following words to the guardian: "Gaoler, look to him,-tell not me of mercy,- / This is the fool that lent out money gratis" (1-2). Furthermore, Shylock reveals the fact that Antonio's trading activities bother him in the following words to Tubal: "[...] I will have the heart of him if he forfeit, or were he out of Venice I can make what merchandise I will [...]" (III.i.116-118). In other words, after Shylock takes the pound of flesh from Antonio's heart and kills him, he will be able to do business without being precluded by the Christian merchant. It may be inferred that the rivalry between Shylock and Antonio over the supremacy in trading practices gives rise to Shylock's hostility against Antonio.

Now Antonio desperately needs Shylock's financial support in order to send Bassanio to Belmont, to Portia's court. In this sense, Shylock expresses that he derives a perverse pleasure and an immense satisfaction from Antonio's imperious need of him. Moreover, he takes advantage of Antonio's weak position and reproaches him in the following words:

> Go to then, you come to me, and you say,
> "Shylock, we would have moneys," you say so:
> You that did void your rheum upon my beard,
> And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
> Over your threshold, moneys is your suit.
> What should I say to you? Should I not say
> "Hath a dog money? is it possible
> A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" or
> Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key
> With bated breath, and whisp'ring humbleness
> Say this:
> "Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last,
> You spurn'd me such a day, another time
> You call'd me dog: and for these courtesies
> I'll lend you thus much moneys"? (I.iii.110-124)

Hence, it is vividly indicated that Shylock and Antonio have switched roles and Shylock gets opportunity to make Antonio pay for his ill treatment of him. For this purpose, he one by one tells the wrongs Antonio has done to him and points out that he is unsettled about whether he should easily forgive Antonio for his contempt in words and deeds or he should demand justice as a proud member of a nation which has always been oppressed. In this regard, Shylock ridicules Antonio and asks whether he should refuse his request suggesting that a disparaged dog cannot lend money or he should supply a limited amount of money as a servant who has been spitted at and kicked a short while ago. It may be argued that the way Shylock unveils Antonio's biased attitudes is so drastic that it makes the audience/readers realise the intense agony of alienation Shylock endures. To put it more clearly, Shakespeare vividly demonstrates that Antonio's religious and economic suppression justifiably underlie Shylock's hatred towards him. Additionally, Antonio, in return, confirms that he does not feel remorse for his cruel treatment towards Shylock and he expresses that he will behave in the same way at the first opportunity: "I am as like to call thee so again, / To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too" (I.iii.125-126). In this respect, Antonio is not even slightly offended by Shylock's bitter attack on him and implies that he gets in contact with Shylock just for financial reasons; otherwise, Shylock is a servant who deserves to be scorned and a dog to be assaulted in the eyes of Antonio. Shylock's desire to destroy Antonio is justified in the eyes of the audience/readers through Antonio's previous maltreatment and present impenitence. Antonio further presents a direct challenge to Shylock and wants him to remember that he is Shylock's enemy. So, if Antonio delays the payment of his debt to Shylock, then Shylock will be free to impose sanction against Antonio. In this regard, Antonio says:

> If thou will lend this money, lend it not
> As to thy friends, for when did friendship take
> A breed for barren metal of his friend?
> But lend it rather to thine enemy,
> Who if he break, thou may'st with
> better face
> Exact the penalty. (I.iii.127-132)

With these lines, Antonio reveals that he does not care about Shylock's sorrow and fury and asks him to be more rigid if Antonio fails in fulfiling the conditions of their bond.

Alexander puts forward the justness of Shylock's desire to avenge himself as follows: "Shakespeare tries to have it both ways. Shylock has to play the part demanded of him by the plot; but Shakespeare's thoughts go far beyond the mere business in hand, and we have a picture of the Jew at bay that both Jews and Gentiles can admire. […] there is a kind of wild justice in his attempt at revenge" (113). In addition, in this challenge, Antonio continues to insult Shylock and affirms that they can never regard each other through the bond of friendship because hostility is in the nature of their relationship. However, Antonio maintains a contrary stance towards Shylock, which contrasts with his previous challenge, after he is put in prison due to the bond. Antonio pleads with Shylock for mercy, yet Shylock rigorously asserts that he feels no compassion towards Antonio. In this regard, Antonio's statements, "Hear me yet good Shylock" (4), and "I pray thee hear me speak" (11), demonstrate that Antonio gives up offending Shylock when his life is at stake. In other words, Antonio's self-confidence, which he has presented in his challenge to Shylock, results from his wealth and after he loses his ships at sea, he is forced to submit to Shylock's will in order to save his life.

Therefore, it may be argued that through the vivid presentation of Antonio's hostile attitudes towards Shylock, the audience/readers get the impression that Antonio victimises Shylock and Shylock defends not only himself but also his whole community against underestimation and ill-treatment. Yet, Shylock's executing his plan cunningly creates suspicion in the audience/readers concerning his suffering. Shakespeare, on the one hand, presents a man who is marginalised owing to his religious faith and success in trade, which evokes sympathy from the audience/readers; on the other hand, Shylock appears as a crafty Jewish money lender who makes use of his business to entrap Antonio. In this sense, Antonio's unjust religious and economic discrimination against Shylock stirs empathy in the audience/readers for Shylock, but Shylock's design poses a question in the minds of the audience/readers about his unjust suffering. In other words, it is left ambiguous whether Shylock is aggrieved and has a right to demand justice or whether he cynically exploits Antonio's hatred towards him. In this sense, Shylock kindly responds to Antonio's challenge and asserts that he principally aims at making peace with Antonio and resolving the problems between them. Shylock asserts that he sincerely wants to save Antonio from the financial difficulty he is going through and

maintains that he will treat Antonio as his friend when he has any further economic problems:

> Why look you how you storm!
> I would be friends with you, and have your love,
> Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
> Supply your present wants, and take no doit
> Of usance form y moneys, and you'll not hear me, -
> This is kind I offer. (I.iii.133-138)

Hence, Shylock's magnanimity and merciful approach to Antonio, which should elevate Shylock in the eyes of the audience/readers and lead them to sympathise with him, do not have that emotional impact on the audience/readers as they are fully aware of Shylock's plot. Antonio manifests his profound distrust in Shylock's intentions with his brief response, "This were kindness" (I.iii.139), which directly reflects the emotions of the audience/readers. However, Shylock continues to show goodwill towards Antonio and asserts that the bond, which suggests that Shylock will become entitled to take a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body if Antonio cannot pay back, is a formality and he is not enthusiastic about carrying out the terms of the bond. In this respect, Shylock says:

> This kindness will I show,
> Go with me to a notary, seal me there
> Your single bond, and (in a merry sport)
> If you repay me not on such a day
> In such a place, such sum or sums as are
> Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
> Be nominated for an equal pound
> Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
> In what part of your body pleaseth me. (I.iii.139-148)

John Arthos, hence, asserts that the two enemies easily reach an agreement, which is highly doubtful and says: "Everyone's temper is so fine, hearts are so good, dispositions so tractable, the evil money-lender so improvident of his own treasure, but the thought of danger is taking a clearer shape even though it is still in the distance. The bond seems as fanciful to us as to Bassanio, and almost as strangely kind" (81).

The fact that Shylock's religious belief, rather than his personality, plays a crucial role in the nurturing of the Christians' hatred towards Shylock, is also presented through the Christian characters' way of addressing to him. Instead of calling Shylock by his name, they address him pointing out his religious affiliation. In II.vi. Lorenzo's statement, "Here dwells my father Jew" (25), vividly demonstrates that he alienates Shylock both as a man and his father-in-law through his religion. In a sense, Jewishness is displayed as Shylock's mere personal trait and the only means to describe him. Furthermore, in II.iv. Laucelot underlines Shylock's Jewish identity to explain where he is heading for after he gives Jessica's letter to Lorenzo. In this regard, he says: "Marry sir to bid my old master the Jew to sup tonight with my new master the Christian" (17-18). Hence, Launcelot does not mention Shylock's name to describe their relationship as master and servant but uses his religious faith.

Despite the pejorative statements which reveal that the Christian characters are filled with hatred and bitterness towards Shylock and the Jewish people in general, there are also contradictory statements and situations which leave the audience/readers puzzled. Before Launcelot leaves the household of Shylock, he bids an emotional farewell to Jessica and expresses his love for her disregarding her Jewish identity. In this regard, he says: "Adieu! Tears exhibit my tongue, most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew!" (II.iii.10-11). As indicated in this line, Launcelot underlines Jessica's Jewishness, but he does not have a feeling of hatred towards Jessica just because she is Jewish; on the contrary, he compliments on her beauty. Thus, it may be argued that Launcelot's contemptuous comments on Shylock targeting his Jewish identity and the Jewish people in general directly contradict his positive attitude to Jessica. In this sense, an uncertainty is created in the minds of the audience/readers about Launcelot's intentions and as to whether Launcelot hates Shylock in person owing to his harsh treatment or whether his hatred is directed at the Jewish community in general. Related to the different attitudes that the Christian characters have towards Shylock and Jessica, it should be marked that Jessica converts to Christianity after she marries Lorenzo. Therefore, Jessica's former Jewish identity, which she greatly desires to leave behind, becomes the chief obstacle that she needs to overcome to lead a happy life. In addition, Jessica's religious conversion wins the Christians' approval and lead them to consider Jessica from a

different perspective. In III.i. Shylock bitterly complains to Salerio and Solanio about Jessica's escape and says: "My own flesh and blood to rebel" (31). However, Salerio frankly puts forth the disparity between Jessica and Shylock in the following words: "There is more difference between thy flesh and hers, than between jet and ivory, more between your bloods, than there is between red wine and Rhenish" (34-36). In other words, although both Jessica and Shylock have family ties and belong to the same religion by birth, Jessica is regarded as more qualified than Shylock because she has an aspiration for following up the doctrines of Christianity, which makes her precious in the eyes of the Christian people. Furthermore, Jessica's virtues and good manners like her beauty, loyalty and wisdom are presented as features which are utterly in contrast with Jewishness that is associated with Shylock. In this sense, in II.vi, when Gratiano, Salerio and Lorenzo wait for Jessica to finalise her preparations to leave home, Gratiano glorifies Jessica's noble character and abandoning Judaism as follows: "Now (by my hood) a gentle, and no Jew" (II.vi.51). Lorenzo shares Gratiano's positive views about Jessica's personality and expresses his love for her as follows:

> Beshrew me but I love her heartily,
> For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
> And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
> And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself:
> And therefore like herself, wise fair, and true,
> Shall she be placed in my constant soul (II.vi.52-57)

As indicated above, Jessica will maintain the virtues and good manners she embodies after she marries Lorenzo and converts to Christianity. Thus, the positive features of her personality which are not associated with Jewishness will be elevated through the Christian doctrines.

One of the most significant scenes in the play which makes the audience/readers feel deeply sorry for Shylock and think about Shakespeare's intention in presenting him, that is whether Shakespeare aims to present a tyrant who hates not only the whole Christian population but also his own daughter or a man who belongs to the minority and is constantly scorned by the majority because of his religious faith, is the scene where Shylock desperately voices that he is no different from his Christian counterparts. In his speech, he emphasises the equality between the Jews and the Christians because despite

their different religious beliefs, they are all humanbeings and deserve respect. Boas describes Shylock's speech as follows: "In his insistence on the repayment of his bond from Antonio, Shylock is the typical Jew usurer of the Middle Ages, hard, merciless, and grasping. But he rises above the character of a clever grasping usurer in his magnificent speech in Act III, and seems for a moment to become the spokesman of the whole trampled Hebrew race" (*In Shakspere's* 287-288). In this sense, Shylock further elaborates the evil done to him by Antonio and justifies his hatred towards him as follows: "[...] if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge; he hath disgrac'd me, and hind'red me half a million, laugh'd at my losses, mock's at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies,- and what's his reason? I am a Jew" (III.i.47-51). Thus, as it is clearly understood from these lines, Antonio humiliated Shylock in front of other citizens; he ridiculed Shylock's financial damage while he underestimated his earnings. Moreover, Antonio despised all the Jewish people and collaborated with Shylock's enemies to make him lose money. According to Shylock, the only reason for all of these wrongs he did to him was Shylock's religious faith, which contradicts Shylock's previous statement about Antonio's jealousy of Shylock's financial gain. In other words, for Shylock, Antonio disregards the human values Shylock embodies and judges him with prejudice because he is the other according to Antonio's religious belief. In the continuation of the speech, Shylock emphasises that both the Jewish and the Christian people are the same: that is why they are supposed to feel the same in moral matters as follows:

> Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? – if you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us do we not die? (III.i.52-60)

In these lines, Shylock aims at eliminating not only all the apparent discrepancies between the Jews and the Christians but also the prejudices against the Jews. Thus, he asserts that they have the same physical weaknesses as the Christians. Thus, they get shot, wounded or poisoned. They feel the cold and the heat. In other words, they are as human as the Christians. Therefore, Shylock maintains that they have a right to seek revenge if they are subject to injustice: "[…] and if you wrong us shall we not revenge?

– if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? - why revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction" (III.i.60-66). As clearly indicated in these lines, Shylock maintains that demanding vengeance on the people who do wrong to them is a Christian custom, and in this sense, the Christians, notably, do not show tolerance to the Jews. Thus, if the Jews and the Christians are the same in human qualities, then Shylock asserts that they will be the same in the desire for revenge and the Jews are free to seek retribution against the Christians when they suffer a terrible injustice by them. However, Shylock's touching speech which leads the audience/readers to question the rightfulness of the Christian people and makes them sympathise with the Jews contradicts also his refusal to dine with the Christians in I.iii. Shylock puts forward the religious discrepancy between the Jews and the Christians, which he fiercely criticises in his speech in III.i. when Bassanio invites him to dinner. Shylock declines the dinner invitation by showing the religious difference as a reason and says: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with, and so following: but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (I.iii.30-33). Hence, by taking Shylock's statement into consideration, it may be argued that the relations between the Jewish people and the Christians are entirely superficial because they refuse to eat and drink together, which vividly demonstrates the disintegration between the two groups of people living in the same society. Thus, the human aspects of both parties are ignored.

In relation to the problematic representation of Shylock, Shakespeare's conflicting presentation of Portia's character is also of significance as it determines Shylock's fate in *The Merchant of Venice*. In other words, similar to Shylock's presentation, Shakespeare develops a contradictory approach to Portia's characterisation, which also leads the audience/readers to ambiguity. On the one hand, Portia is presented as a wealthy, beautiful, moral and noble princess who waits for her suitors, which may also be regarded as an analogy to Queen Elizabeth I and may pose political questions. However, from III.iv. onwards, she turns into a powerful and crafty female character who leads the course of events in the play. In other words, Portia rises to prominence

and surpasses the male characters like Shylock and Antonio who have dominated the play until the trial scene.

At the beginning of the play, Bassanio describes Portia with complimentary remarks and praises both her appearance and personality in his conservation with Antonio in I.i. For Bassanio, Portia is not extraordinarily beautiful but also considerably virtuous: “In Belmont is a lady richly left, / And she is fair, and (fairer than that word), / Of wondrous virtues […]” (161-163). Bassanio also highlights Portia’s nobility as he assaociates her with Brutus’s wife who is also named Portia and says: “Her name is Portia, nothing undervalu’d / To Cato’s daughter, Brutus’ Portia” (165-166). The descriptions of Queen Elizabeth I issued by historians and ambassadors who visited her are similar to the portrayal of Portia by Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*. Sir John Hayward, a historian, depicts Queen Elizabeth I through similar images of beauty and virtue after encountering her:

> She was a lady upon whom nature had bestowed and well placed many of her fairest favours: of stature mean, slender, straight and amiably composed; of such state in her carriage as every motion of her seemed to bear majesty; her hair was inclined to pale yellow, her forehead large and fair, a seeming seat for princely grace; her eyes lively and sweet, but shortsighted; her nose somewhat rising in the midst; the whole compass of her countenance somewhat long, but yet of admirable beauty […] But without good qualities of mind, the gifts of nature are like painted flowers, without either virtue or sap; yea, sometimes they grow horrid or loathsome. Now her virtues were such as might suffice to make an Ethopian beautiful, which, the more a man knows and understands, the more he shall admire and love. (qtd. in Routh 63-64)

With these lines, Hayward emphasises the Queen’s natural grace. She is not only beautiful but also wise and virtuous and makes all the men fall in love with and respect her as they get to know her. Similarly, in his account of meeting with her André Hurault, the French ambassador, praises the beauty and virtues of the Queen despite her old age as follows: “Her figure is fair and tall and graceful in whatever she does; so far as may be she keeps her dignity, yet humbly and graciously withal” (qtd. in Routh 66). Therefore, in the light of these eyewitness accounts of Queen Elizabeth I, it may be argued that it is possible to draw a parallel between Portia’s depiction in *The Merchant of Venice* and the image of the Queen put forward by the visitors to the court.

It may be argued that the most distinct similarity between the Queen and Portia is presented in the scenes where the suitors come from all over the world to choose the right casket and marry Portia. In other words, Shakespeare refers to the marriage issue of the Queen through the scenes of the suitors trying to win Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. Historically, Queen Elizabeth I had various noble suitors from diverse countries but she turned down the proposals of all the suitors. Ivan the Terrible, the Russian ruler, Philip II, the king of Spain and François, the Duke of Alençon and Anjou, were among the suitors of the Queen. Though the English people wanted their Queen to be married for the welfare of England, and the nobles at the English court attempted to win the Queen's heart and marry her, Queen Elizabeth I led a single life (Goadby 18). The Queen's affair with Lord Robert Dudley, who was married, was the most prominent relationship she had with the nobles at her court (Brett 170). Furthermore, Prince Eric of Sweden, the two sons of the Emporer Ferdinand, the ruler of Austria desired to marry the Queen but could not reach their goals (Chidsey 57). In this sense, Donald Barr Chidsey comments on Queen Elizabeth I's view of marriage in his following words: "The entire kingdom, Catholic and Protestant alike, took it for granted that Elizabeth would get married. Individuals and then a committee from Parliament approached her on this subject. At first she said (or seemed to say) that she meant to be wed, and then she seemed to say (or said) that she didn't. What she really had in mind we shall never know" (56). Therefore, Chidsey emphasises Queen Elizabeth's doubt over the necessity of marriage and puts forth the pressure from not only the members of the Parliament but also the English people regardless of their religious sect for her marriage in order to secure the future of England. In this respect, Iyengar resembles Queen Elizabeth's court which was constantly visited by the suitors particularly in her youth to Portia's Belmont which turns into a place of pilgrimage by the suitors who desire to take their chances to win Portia. Thus, the princes and the kings visited Queen Elizabeth I personally and asked for her hand or they sent their ambassadors to notify their proposal of marriage to Elizabeth I (98). In this sense, Shakespeare alludes to the Queen in his presentation of Portia's suitors such as the Prince of Morocco in II.i. and vii. the Prince of Arragon in II.ix. and finally Bassanio in III.ii. Furthermore, Shakespeare's description of the nature of marriage and the changing attitudes of the lovers about marriage in II.vi. may be regarded as another allusion to the Queen's irresolution in the issue of marriage. While

Gratiano, Salerio and the masked characters are getting ready to help Lorenzo and Jessica to elope, Salerio asserts that the lovers become quite eager to marry and says: “I ten times faster Venus’ pigeons fly / To seal love’s bonds new-made, than they are wont / To keep obliged faith unforfeited” (5-7). Thus, Jessica and Lorenzo are expected to yearn for marriage. However, Shakespeare also puts forth the hesitation that the lovers may be going through before the decision of marriage through Gratiano’s following words: “That ever holds: who riseth from a feast / With that keen appetite that he sits down?” (8-9) and “[…] all things that are, / Are with more spirit chased than enjoy’d” (12-13). Furthermore, Shakespeare establishes another connection between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I in III.ii. after Bassanio chooses the right casket and deserves to be Portia’s husband by finding Portia’s picture in the lead casket. Portia expresses that she will devote herself and her wealth to Bassanio from then on as follows:

> Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit
> Commits itself to yours to be directed,
> As from her lord, her governor, her king.
> Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
> Is now converted. But now I was the lord
> Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
> Queen o’er myself: and even now, but now.
> This house, these servants, and this same myself
> Are yours, - my lord’s! [...]. (III.ii.163-171)

As clearly indicated in the above lines, Portia explicitly manifests that she was the queen of her household commanding her subjects, but now Bassanio is not only her husband but also the master of her household and the king of Belmont, thus she passes on her authority to Bassanio. Moreover, the above lines are of importance in terms of displaying Portia’s passive character who is willing to be guided and controlled by a dominant force at the beginning of the play. Through these lines, Portia defines herself as a property which can be used by her husband, Bassanio at his own will.

In addition, similar to Antonio’s sadness at the beginning of the play, Portia also feels deeply aggrieved by her inability to choose the man she wants to marry. That is, she was placed in an extremely difficult situation without her own consent, which was set up by her deceased father as follows: “O me the word “choose”! I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curb’d by the

will of a dead father: is it not hard Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?" (I.ii.22-26). Thus, it may be inferred that Portia's life is out of her control since the very beginning of the play even before she falls in love with Bassanio and becomes his wife. The conditions of her present life and future were laid down by her dead father and Portia is not able to do anything to change this situation. In other words, despite her wealth, beauty, virtues and nobility, Portia is presented as a powerless character against the will of her deceased father at the beginning of the play. She bitterly complains about the fact that she maintains neither the right nor the competency to make the crucial decision on her own life. Her fate depends on the caskets which were prepared by her deceased father, and though it is now impossible for her deceased father to interfere with her life, she still fulfills her father's wish and uses caskets to find a husband among her suitors. However, Portia, who was a yielding woman, presents a completely different character especially after she learns about the story of the bond between Antonio and Shylock as presented in the trial scene in IV.i. In Ralph Berry's words, "[t]his is Shakespeare's first major experiment in comedy with female domination – the line of development culminates in Rosalind three years later – and we can, I think, assume a certain queasiness in at least the original audience here" (*Shakespeare* 62). This change in Portia's character is of enormous significance as her manipulative character contributes to the problematic representation of Shylock particularly in the trial scene as will be demonstrated.

The contrasting representation of Portia's identity is also put forth through the metals that the caskets are made of. There are three caskets for the suitors to choose among and they are made up of gold, silver and lead. All the suitors except Bassanio, who chooses the lead casket, choose either the gold casket or the silver casket and lose Portia. Hence, despite the elaborate and glorified descriptions of Portia by her suitors, she is hidden in the lead casket which is the most worthless metal among the three caskets. That is to say, the lead casket that embodies the picture of Portia in spite of its cheap appearance may be associated with Portia's independent and at the same time cunning nature which she does not reveal until she learns about the issue of the bond between Antonio and Shylock.

In this sense, Portia gives the first hint of her dominant personality which contradicts her initial submissive characterisation just after Bassanio chooses the right casket. She imposes a condition on their marriage as follows: "[…] I give them with this ring, / Which when you part from, lose, or give away, / Let it presage the ruin of your love, / And be my vantage to exclaim on you" (III.ii.171-174). Though she seems to voluntarily submit to Bassanio and transfers the management of her household and country to him, she still controls their marriage. In this sense, Portia maintains control and begins to lead the course of events and people after Bassanio leaves Belmont to go to Venice and save Antonio from Shylock. Thus, it may be said that Bassanio, Antonio and Shylock will be no longer the characters who have the control, but Portia will be the one in control. Instead of waiting for her husband passively in Belmont, she takes action and orders Nerissa, her maid, to join her: "Come on Nerissa, I have work in hand / That you yet know not of; we'll see our husbands / Before they think of us!" (III.iv.57-59). In these lines, Portia emphasises that they will act so swiftly and secretly that they will arrive in Venice and appear at the court for Antonio's trial before their husbands. In Overton's words, "[i]n the second part of the play Portia is active and assertive as she was passive and subdued in the first" (306). In this regard, Portia reveals to Nerissa her scheme that they will carry out in Venice:

> They shall Nerissa: but in such a habbit,
> That they shall think we are accomplished
> With that we lack; I'll hold thee any wager
> When we are both accoutered like young men,
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
> And speak between the change of man and boy,
> With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
> Into a manly stride; and speak of frays
> Like a fine bragging youth: and tell quaint lies
> How honourable ladies sought my love,
> Which I denying, they fell sick and died:
> I could not to withal:-then I'll repent,
> And wish for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
> And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
> That men shall swear I have discontinued school
> Above a twelvemonth: I have within my mind
> A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
> Which I will practise. (III.iv.60-78)

Hence, according to Portia's plot, Portia and Nerissa will disguise as men and appear at the court where all the participants are men. In this sense, Portia describes the actions of man which she herself will imitate. She will turn into a man in her outer appearance, behaviours and costume. Moreover, she will talk like a man and tell stories about how she fights. She will brag about her wooing of women and making them lose their virginity to him. Thus, she will leave her role as a delicate queen and woman, and turn into one of "these bragging Jacks." However, Portia not only talks about the role she will play but also depicts the image of man in her mind. In Portia's view, a man constantly lies about the things he never does, and hence is less dignified than a woman, yet Portia needs to pretend that she is such a man in order to gain recognition at the Venetian court where a highly fundamental case will be handled. Portia's reprimanding Nerissa for her question of why they need to disguise as men to achieve their goal also indicates that she associates manhood with lechery and vulgarity. In this sense, Portia says: "Fie! what a question's that, / If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!" (III.iv.79-80). However, what is ironical in the disguise of Portia and Nerissa as men is that though the two women are in men's costumes, they use their intellect and cunning to save Antonio and punish Shylock with their reasoning as women.

The trial scene (IV.i.) poses various questions not only about the disguise and motives of Portia but also about the justness of Shylock and Antonio and increases the problematic aspect of the play particularly on the side of Shylock. At the very beginning of the scene, Shylock is exposed to insults by the Duke who aims at promoting Antonio's character while abasing Shylock as follows: "I am sorry for thee,-thou art come to answer / A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch, / Uncapable of pity, void, and empty / From any dream of mercy" (3-6). Hence, the Duke accuses Shylock of being merciless and strict because he wants the worth of his bond. Antonio's response to the Duke's wholehearted support of him also demonstrates that Shylock's sheer persistence in fulfilling the conditions of the bond which gives Shylock a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body is not appreciated. Antonio expresses his scorn for Shylock in his following words: "My patience to his fury, and am arm'd / To suffer with a quietness of spirit, / The very tyranny and rage of his" (11-13). Furthermore, Antonio's statement on the law's remaining incapable to save him out of the conditions of the

bond, “And that no lawful means can carry me / Out of his envy’s reach […]” (9-10), may be regarded as a foreshadowing to Portia’s ability to make use of the gaps both in the bond and in law. In this sense, the Duke tries to make Shylock feel guilty of his demand and firmly warns him about the severe consequences of his excessive claim as follows:

> Shylock the world thinks, and I think so too,
> That thou but leadest this fashion of thy malice
> To the last hout of act, and then ’tis thought
> Thou’lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
> Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
> And where thou now exacts penalty,
> Which is a pound of this poor merchant’s flesh,
> Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
> But touch’d with human gentleness and love,
> Forgive a moiety of the principal,
> Glancing an eye of pity on his losses
> That have of late so huddled on his back,
> Enow to press a royal merchant down,
> And pluck commiseration of his state (16-30)

As one can deduce, the Duke tells Shylock that he will not derive any profit from Antonio’s punishment. In other words, after Shylock takes a pound of flesh from Antonio’s body, not only will Antonio suffer but also Shylock will suffer as he will not be able to take any money in return for Antonio’s debt and he will also commit an inhumane crime. Thus, Shylock will end up being wrong due to his unforgiving attitude. The Duke makes a great effort to persuade Shylock into relenting to Antonio. Moreover, the Duke wants Shylock to empathise with Antonio as both of them are merchants and may suffer from financial loss at any time. However, Shylock takes a tough stand on the Duke’s warnings and indignantly demands the law to be enforced. Shylock vividly puts forth his rightfulness, which convinces the audience/readers of his victimisation, in the case as follows:

> I have possess’d your grace of what I purpose,
> And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
> To have the due and forfeit of my bond,-
> If you deny it, let the danger light
> Upon your charter and your city’s freedom! (35-39)

Here, it is implied that the Venetian law should be impartial and if Shylock cannot take the pound of flesh from Antonio's body which he deserves as of right, then it will be impossible to call Venice an unbiased and egalitarian country. According to Shylock, both parties already accepted and promised to meet the requirements of the bond, so the attempts of the Christian people to deter Shylock from the punishment that will be inflicted on Antonio are both unfair and baseless. The legitimacy of Shylock's demand is, in fact, proved in the eyes of the audience/readers because the following questions have arised: Is Shylock just to ask for the sanction of the breach of the contract, or is he really inhumane? Does Antonio not know that he has to fulfil the terms of the deal, and when he fails to do so, is it just that he asks for forgiveness? Does Shylock deserve to be accused of relentlessness? In this sense, Shylock emphasises that what he demands conforms with the law of Venice and the Duke is responsible for carrying out these laws. Otherwise, their practice will be unlawful. However, Shylock's following statement clearly puts foward the fact that Shylock's hatred towards Antonio, which has been analysed in detail, is also influential in his refusing to forgive him: "So can I give no reason, nor I will not, / More than a lodg'd hate, a certain loathing / I bear Antonio, that I follow thus / A losing suit against him!-are you answered?" (59-62). Thus, Shylock asserts that he is totally aware of the consequences of his demand but he is determined to get his right and punish his old nemesis. In this regard, it may be argued that, on the one hand, Shylock's revelation concerning his enmity towards Antonio and his showing this hostility as a reason behind his demand lead the audience/readers to question Shylock's plausibility in laying stress on fairly upholding law. On the other hand, Shakespeare openly puts forth that Shylock is very clear in his intentions, he does not hide his emotions and desires. He does not do anything behind Antonio's back. In other words, regardless of his contrasting intentions, Shylock sounds straightforward. He wants the penalty to be carried out as a result of a fair deal between himself and Antonio and demands the laws of Venice to be implemented to achieve his goal. Shylock insistently supports his being right as he believes that a pound of flesh from Antonio's body is his right by law. When the Duke asks, "How shalt thou hope for mercy rend'ring none?" (IV.i.88), Shylock's response vividly demonstrates that he is highly stable in his decision: "What judgment shall I dread doing no wrong?" (IV.i.89). Moreover, Shylock reveals the hypocrisy of the Christian people by saying that they

oppress the slaves under their service without mercy and treat them as if they were animals:

> You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
> Which (like your asses, and your dogs and mules)
> You use in abject and in slavish parts,
> Because you bought them,-shall I say to you,
> Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
> Why sweat they under nurthens? let their beds
> Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
> Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
> "The slaves are ours,"-so do I answer you:
> The pound of flesh which I demand of him
> Is dearly bought, 'tis mine and I will have it:
> If you deny me, fie upon your law! (90-101)

As indicated in these lines, Shylock draws a direct and striking parallel between the Christians' retaining the ownership of their slaves and his claiming his right over a pound of flesh from Antonio's body. For Shylock, the Christians treated him in the way they treat their slaves and they have no right to beg for mercy. That is, Shylock implies that if the Christians were in his position in this case, they would undoubtedly not have pity on Shylock, which is confirmed at the end of the trial scene. In the light of these developments, it may be inferred that at the very beginning of the trial scene, Shakespeare presents the views of both parties of the case but Shylock appears to have right on his side in the eyes of the audience/readers despite his contradicting motives.

However, the Duke uses all the means to avoid the penalty from being inflicted on Antonio and Shylock's getting his right. He says that he called a man of law to deal with the case and if he fails to appear at court, the Duke is entitled to postpone the trial and thus gain time for Antonio: "Upon my power I may dismiss this court, / Unless Bellario (a learned doctor, / Whom I have sent for to determine this) / Come here to-day" (104-107). Portia, in the male disguise of the doctor of law, starts the case by justifying Shylock's demand and says: "Of a strange nature is the suit you follow, / Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law / Cannot impugn you as you do proceed" (173-175). Although Portia agrees with the Christians on the peculiarity of the case, she fully supports Shylock in his rightfulness before the Venetian law. As Risden expresses, "[c]oncentrating on punishing Shylock, everyone forgets the point on which Portia

agrees: Antonio has willingly made a bond, he fails to keep it, and he owes Shylock repayment" (27). Then, Portia asks Shylock to show Antonio mercy as he accepts that they made a legal contract which entitles both parties. In this sense, Portia does not display an aggressive behaviour towards Shylock; instead, she tries to soften his heart and emphasises the significance and necessity of mercy. She asserts that the sense of mercy is a fundamental part of human life because it makes life easier for all the people. It gives inner peace not only to the person who shows mercy but also to the one who pleads for mercy. It is also essential for justice as it reduces the rigidity of the letter of law:

> [...] therefore Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
> That in the course of justice, none of us
> Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,
> And that same prayer, doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy. [...] (IV.i.193-198)

With these lines, Portia highlights the cruciality of the sense of mercy and implicitly reminds Shylock of the fact that everybody may need mercy, thus Shylock should forgive Antonio, and the case, despite its justness, should be dismissed. In Harold Goddard's words, "[i]n all Shakespeare – unless it be Hamlet with 'To be or not to be' – there is scarcely another character more identified in the world's mind with a single speech than Portia with her words on mercy. […] They are no prepared words of the Young Doctor she is impersonating, but her own, as unexpected as was Shylock's disconcerting question" ("Portia's" 30).

Here, Bassanio shows a contrary behaviour to that of Portia's. Portia stresses the prominent place of the sense of compassion in justice; whereas, Bassanio wants Portia, the doctor of law, to interpret the law for the benefit of Antonio, which goes against both the letter and spirit of law. That is to say, he asks the doctor of law to favour Antonio and lose 'his' objectivity as follows: "And I beseech you, / Wrest once the law to your authority,- / To do a great right, do a little wrong,- / And curb this cruel devil of his will" (210-213). However, Portia vividly puts forth that she is clever and cunning enough to save Antonio's life and punish Shylock without breaking the laws. She, in this respect, turns down Bassanio's offer and explicitly puts forward the wrongfulness

of it by emphasising the supremacy of laws: “It must not be, there is no power in Venice / Can alter a decree established” (214-215). Therefore, it may be stated that Portia gives the impression that she will enforce the law as a ‘man’ of law and will not privilege any side. She further says: “For the intent and purpose of the law / Hath full relation to the penalty, / Which here appeareth due upon the bond” (243-245). Portia affirms that the content of the punishment that Shylock demands is lawful and nobody has the right to prevent Shylock from cutting a pound of flesh from a part close to Antonio’s heart. With these statements, Portia wins Shylock’s trust and leaves him completely vulnerable to the final judgement of the court. Then, she suddenly wants Shylock to meet the requirements which are not in the bond to be able to uphold the Venetian law. First, she wants Shylock to call a surgeon to avoid the excessive bleeding of Antonio’s body, and says: “Have by some surgeon Shylock on your charge, / To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death” (253-254). However, when Shylock asks whether such an obligation is written in the contract by saying “[i]s it so nominated in the bond?” (255) and “I cannot find it, ’tis not in the bond” (258), Portia reveals the fact that the legal conformity of the contract between Shylock and Antonio is not so significant as she says, “[i]t is not so express’d, but what of that? / ’Twere good you do so much for charity” (256-257). Therefore, Portia gives Shylock a specific recommendation which is contrary to her previous statements on the sufficiency of the bond to enforce the law. She, in fact, interprets the law as Bassanio has formerly wanted, and she claims that the contract merely gives Shylock a pound of flesh but not any drop of Antonio’s blood. Hence, according to the Venetian laws and their contract, Shylock has to cut a piece of flesh close to Antonio’s heart without shedding any blood. Portia says: “Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh,- / Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more / But just a pound of flesh [...]” (320-322). In addition, if Shylock draws any blood from Antonio’s body while cutting his flesh, he will be severely punished as he will be acting against the Venetian laws and no mercy will be shown to him. Portia explains the rules that Shylock should abide while cutting a pound of flesh from Antonio’s body along with the penalty which will be given to him in detail as follows:

> [...] if thou tak’st more
> Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
> As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
> Or the division of the twentieth part

> Of one poor scruple, nay if the scale do turn
> But in the estimation of a hair,
> Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate. (322-328)

As indicated above, Shylock faces highly serious obstacles in his search for justice. Furthermore, the consequence of not following these strict rules is either death or dispossession. Gratiano and Shylock switch roles and Gratiano, this time, extols the wisdom of the doctor of law and his success in his profession through the following words: "O upright Judge!– / Mark Jew,–O learned judge! (307-308). Furthermore, Portia rejects Shylock's request for the payment of Antonio's debt and menacingly tells Shylock that he will get justice as he has asked. When Shylock withdraws all his claims and decides to leave the court, Portia does not allow him to go and announces Shylock's retribution:

> Tarry Jew,
> The law hath yet another hold on you.
> It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
> If it be proved against an alien,
> That by direct, or indirect attempts
> He seek the life of any citizen,
> The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive,
> Shall seize one half of his goods, the other half
> Comes to the privy coffer of the state,
> And the offender's life lies in the mercy
> Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice. (342-352)

It is strongly asserted in these lines that Shylock is treated by the Christian characters like a criminal and is accused of intending to kill Antonio. In this sense, the conditions of the bond, which Portia has glorified at the beginning of the trial as has been demonstrated, are forgotten and Shylock is presented as a violent murderer. The sanctions which will be imposed on Shylock are also highly severe as Shylock's wealth will be equally divided between Antonio and the state. Furthermore, it will be under the initiative of the Duke to decide on the death penalty. Hence, it may be deduced that Portia, initially, seems to be a man of law who has principles and complies with the regulations. In this respect, she sides with Shylock and encourages him in his demand of justice. But then, she abruptly takes advantage of the lacking articles of the bond and manipulates the situation. In this respect, Sinead Cusack comments on Portia's

transformation which takes Shylock to his tragic end while he evaluates the role of Portia from the point of an actress who plays it on the stage as follows:

> I finally worked out that the great problem for the actress playing the role is to reconcile the girl at home in Belmont early in the play with the one who plays a Daniel come to judgement in the Venetian court. I couldn't understand why Shakespeare makes her so unsympathetic in those early scenes-the spoilt little rich girl dismissing suitor after suitor in very witty and derisory fashion. The girl who does that, I thought, is not the woman to deliver the 'quality of mercy' speech. I knew that was a problem. (339)

Eventually, Shylock loses half of his wealth to his daughter and Lorenzo and he is forced to convert to Christianity. Shylock leaves the stage wearily and ruefully saying, "I pray you give me leave to go from hence, / I am not well […]" (391-392). And henceforward Shylock is not seen on the stage again and the audience/readers hear nothing about Shylock. John Russell Brown offers three alternatives while interpreting Shylock's leaving the stage and says: "The speeches are brief but, in the intensified focus, they suggest a renewed control – a dignity (especially in the assurance of fulfilling his word), or a new, hidden purpose (as of suicide or revenge), or an accepted hopelessness" (The Merchant of Venice*: Critical Essays* 286).

Thus, on the one hand, Shylock is insulted by the Christians due to his religious faith and commercial practices throughout the play and arouses considerable sympathy in the audience/readers and "[t]he treatment of Shylock and the presentation of Christian behaviour in the play is […] the most familiar cause of uneasiness" (Edelman 190). On the other hand, he hates the Christians and particularly Antonio because of his interest-free trading and harsh behaviours towards him, which raises doubt in the minds of the audience/readers as to his rightfulness. However, it may be argued that the confiscation of Shylock's property and his enforced conversion inspire immense pity in the audience/readers. In this regard, according to Halliday, Shakespeare aimed at creating a Jewish character who would entertain the Elizabethan audience with the extremely degrading situation he finds himself in, and his solitude. However, this amusing portrayal of Shylock turns into a tragic representation notably after Jessica leaves him stealing his money and gold and Shylock emotionally matures during the trial scene as a result of unjust suffering caused by the Christians. Shylock's gradual evolution occurs

depending upon his intense feelings and standing against the Christians who agonise him (*The Life of Shakespeare* 159). The unrest felt by the audience/readers caused by Shylock's victimisation increases through the hypocritical attitudes of the Christian characters after Antonio is saved. The Duke who asked Shylock for compassion punishes Shylock at the first opportunity he finds and says: "That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit / I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it: / For half thy welath, it is Antonio's, / The other half comes to the general state" (364-367). Though the Duke implies that the Jew and the Christian have distinct ethic values and the Christian is a good person who shows mercy to the needy people, first the Duke, then Gratiano and Antonio contradict their submissive attitudes desperately asking Shylock for mercy at the beginning of the trial and want Shylock to be punished severely. Moody establishes a link between the theme of appearance and reality and the hypocritical attitudes of the Christians as follows: "Thus so far we have had developed and intensified the contradiction between the gilded appearance and the corrupt spirit of the Christians. Now, in IV.i. this conflict of the appearance and the reality is worked out in the bringing to trial and judgement of all that Shylock represents" (79).

Notably, the ending of *The Merchant of Venice* poses questions concerning the genre of the play. According to Risden, though the play is generally categorised as a comedy, "it certainly is not a comedy: it has little if any humor, […] nor tragedy, nor Romance, nor history, but something that, if you pay attention, will leave you feeling really disturbed […]" (15). That is to say, Risden focuses on the unrest the audience/readers feel as a consequence of Shylock's punishment rather than a particular grouping of the play. Likewise, Nicholas Marsh highlights the considerable discomfort the audience/readers suffer at the end of the play as follows: "The audience does not feel 'well' either, because we find the issues of persecution and revenge, and the justice meted out by a Christian court, morally unsettling" (233). Therefore, the way that justice is maintained on behalf of the Christians at the Venetian court disturbs the audience/readers. In addition, for Marsh, Shylock is a complicated character with, on the one hand, his implacable desire for revenge, and on the other hand, his sufferings, to be the subject of comedy (233).

In this sense, right after the trial ends and Shylock leaves the court deplorably in IV.i. Portia and Nerissa play the ring trick on Bassanio and Gratiano, to which Portia first refers in III.ii. to test the loyalty of their husbands. James Siemon emphasises the significance of the ring trick in order to link the disturbing defeat of Shylock by the Christians at the Venetian court and the reconciliation which marks the end of the play as follows: "[The ring trick] looks forward to Act V, creating the illusion that the action of the play is not yet complete, and thus provides a necessary link between Acts IV and V. […]" (203). Similarly, Dowden comments on the ring trick: "After the real struggle […] we pass on to the playful differences about the rings" (*Shakspere* 96). In this sense, Bassanio first offers Portia "[t]hree thousand ducats due unto the Jew" (407) in return for 'his' service. In addition, Antonio expresses his heartfelt appreciation for saving his life and says: "And stand indebted over and above / In love and service to you evermore" (409-410). In response to both Antonio's and Bassanio's profound gratitude towards herself, Portia humbly says that she is satisfied with punishing Shylock and saving Antonio's life, and that is why, what she just wants from Antonio and Bassanio is to recognise 'him' in their next meeting: "He is well paid that is well satisfied, / And I delivering you, am satisfied, / […] / I pray you know me when we meet again, / I wish you well, and so I take my leave" (411-412,415-416). However, when Bassanio strongly insists on giving Portia a present in return for saving Antonio's life, Portia asks for Bassanio's ring which symbolises the love bond between Bassanio and Portia as she says, "[a]nd (for your love) I'll take this ring from you,– / Do not draw back your hand, I'll take no more, / And you in love shall not deny me this" (423-425). Though Bassanio first refuses to give his ring claiming that it does not have material value but sentimental value saying, "There's more depends on this than on the value,– / The dearest ring in Venice will I give you, / And find it out by proclamation, / Only for this I pray you pardon me" (430-433), Antonio compels Bassanio to give the ring to the doctor of law and says: "My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring, / Let his deservings and my love withal / Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandement" (445-447). Then, Bassanio, despite his initial refusal, is disposed to give the ring to the 'man' of law on Antonio's reminding him of their strong bond and orders Gratiano to follow the lawyer to give the ring: "Go Gratiano, run and overtake him, / Give him the ring […]" (448-449). Therefore, it can be said that through the ring trick the religious and financial rivalry

between Antonio and Shylock is replaced by the competition between Antonio and Portia for Bassanio's love. In this respect, the first hint about the clash between Antonio and Portia is given through Antonio's comparison of Bassanio's love for himself with his love for Portia as indicated in the above lines. Similarly, Nerissa plays the ring trick to Gratiano in IV.ii. after he follows them to give Bassanio's ring to the lawyer. She reveals her intention to Portia saying, "I'll see if I can get my husband's ring / Which I did make him swear to keep for ever" (13-14). Portia's statement, "Thou may'st I warrant,–we shall have old swearing / That they did give the rings away to men; / But we'll outface them, and outswear them too" (15-17), indicates that Gratiano will be deceived by Nerissa into giving his ring to the clerk of the 'man' of the law. Her statement also foreshadows their gathering in Belmont and Bassanio's and Gratiano's attempts to convince Portia and Nerissa that the lawyer and 'his' clerk deserved to take their rings. Hence, it may be inferred that the main object of the play completely changes at the end of IV.ii. and it focuses on the Christian characters and their relationships. Furthermore, the gloomy atmosphere which is created by the heavy punishment of Shylock after the trial clears through the ring trick that Portia and Nerissa play.

Accordingly, the last act and scene of the play (V.i.), starts in a romantic mood with the presentation of Jessica and Lorenzo talking about the stories of great lovers such as Troilus and Cressida, Pyramus and Thisbe and Dido. Lorenzo compares the night in Belmont to the night in Troy where Troilus spies on the Greek camp to see the tent where Cressida sleeps: "[…] in such a night / Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls, / And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents / Where Cressid lay that night" (3-6). Jessica likens the night to the night when Thisbe escapes from the lion while Lorenzo asserts that Dido calls her lover back to Carthage in such a night. The two lovers compare their relationship to the relationships of these great lovers as "[i]n such a night / Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew, / And with an unthrift love did run from Venice, / As far as Belmont" (14-17) and "[i]n such a night / Did young Lorenzo swear he lover her well" (18-19). However, this romantic atmosphere is temporarily spoiled by the entrance of Launcelot who informs Lorenzo about the arrival of Portia. Launcelot yells and gabbles as follows: "Sola, sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!" (39) and though he

sees Lorenzo, he still pretends not to see him and says: “Tell him there’s a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news,–my master will be here ere morning” (46-47). At this point, it is possible to draw a parallelism between Launcelot’s behaviour and that of the underclass character’s in Plautus’s comedy as Sandbach expresses as follows: “[S]currilities and foolish jokes are delievered mainly by slaves and men of low standing. A standard motif developed for its own sake is the ‘running slave’, who often comes on in haste to deliver some piece of news, pretending to push aside invisible persons who crowd the street” (125). After Launcelot leaves the stage, the musicians enter to celebrate the arrival of Portia and Bassanio at Belmont and they begin to play music. Lorenzo comments on the relieving aspect of music which may be interpreted as the relief that the Christian characters feel after the punishment of Shylock. When Jessica says: “I am never merry when I hear sweat music” (69), Lorenzo’s following response alludes to the Christians’ settling Shylock’s rage and hatred:

> Or race of youthful and unhandled colts
> Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
> Which is the hot condition of their blood,–
> If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
> Or any air of music touch their ears,
> You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
> Their savage eyes turn’d to a modest gaze,
> By the sweet power of music […]. (72-78)

These lines clearly demonstrate that Shylock was a source of trouble for the Christian characters, yet they resolved all the problems by getting rid of him. Like music taming the wildest colts, the Christians defeated the Jew. Furthermore, Lorenzo’s following words, “The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils” (83-85), may be regarded as an explicit reference to Shylock who was accused of intending to kill Antonio.

The Merchant of Venice ends with reconciliation after the short-lived dispute over the rings between Nerissa and Gratiano and Portia and Bassanio, respectively. The bleak atmosphere after the trial scene and Shylock’s severe punishment is first ended by means of the ring trick. After all the characters return to Belmont, first Nerissa gets angry with Gratiano at his giving the ring to the clerk in Venice. Although Nerissa

possesses the ring, she seems to be terribly disappointed with Gratiano's indifference to her love and says: "What talk you of the posy or the value? / You swore to me when I did give it you, / That you would wear it till your hour of death, / And that it should lie with you in your grave" (151-154). Then, Portia pretends not to know what happened to the ring she gave to Bassanio and trustfully asserts that Bassanio vowed never to give it to another person: "I gave my love a ring, and made him swear / Never to part with it, and here he stands: / I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it" (170-174). Both women swear an oath that they will not sleep with their husbands until they get back their rings. At this point, the rivalry between Antonio and Portia is presented in the dialogue between Bassanio and Portia in which both of whom mention the people they love most. In this respect, Bassanio emphasises his deep commitment to Antonio and says: "Sweet Portia, / If you did know to whom I gave the ring, / If you did know for whom I gave the ring" (192-194). In response to this, Portia asserts that the ring she gave Bassanio as a token of their love was priceless and Bassanio should have remained loyal to Portia rather than to Antonio. In other words, Portia deeply resents the fact that Bassanio disregarded their vow of commitment: "If you had known the virtue of the ring, / Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, / You would not then have parted with the ring" (199-201). The tension between the lovers increases as Portia and Nerissa say that they have the right to sleep with the lawyer and 'his' clerk, who now possess the rings, instead of their husbands. In this respect, Portia warns Bassanio not to leave Belmont and wants him to accompany her all the time; otherwise, she will cheat on him with the lawyer and will not regret:

> I'll not deny him any thing I have,
> No, not my body, nor my husband's bed:
> Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.
> Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus,–
> If you do not, if I be left alone,
> Now by mine honour (which is yet mine own),
> I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow. (227-233)

These lines demonstrate that Portia aims to teach Bassanio a bitter lesson about loyalty and openly tells him that she will not forgive him next time and the punishment will be severe. Nerissa lays down the same conditions to punish Gratiano and threatens him that she will commit adultery with the clerk without remorse: "And I his clerk: therefore be

well advis'd / How you do leave me to mine own protection" (234-235). In return, Bassanio sincerely apologises to Portia for betraying her trust and begs for forgiveness: "Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong, / And in the hearing of these many friends / I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes / Wherein I see myself–" (240-243). However, Portia does not easily relent and mocks Bassanio's pleading for mercy and his oath of loyalty: "Mark you but that! / In both my eyes he doubly sees himself: / In each eye one,–swear by your double self, / And there's an oath of credit" (243-246). In response to Portia's sneering attitude, Bassanio displays that he takes his relationship with Portia seriously and asks her not to hold onto resentment between them: "Nay, but hear me. / Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear / I never more will break an oath with thee" (246-248). Antonio at this point gets involved in the discussion between Portia and Bassanio and asserts that it was entirely his fault that he forced Bassanio to break his oath of loyalty as a token of his gratitude to the lawyer for defending him against Shylock. In this sense, Antonio reveals that he will not come between Bassanio and Portia again and will do anything to ensure that Bassanio will keep his word:

> I once did lend my body for his wealth,
> Which but for him that had your husband's ring
> Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
> My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
> Will never more break faith advisedly. (249-253)

As indicated in these lines, Antonio and Bassanio are linked by a strong bond, which led Antonio to risk his life for Bassanio's happiness and which made Bassanio break his oath of loyalty to his wife. However, the relationship between Bassanio and Portia outweights the friendship of Bassanio and Antonio thanks to Portia, and hence Antonio also wants Portia to forgive Bassanio's unfaithfulness. In this sense, it can be said that the conflict between Portia and Antonio is settled, which is described "as the resolution of the latent conflict between Antonio and herself" (Hamill 242). Nonetheless, Portia continues her scheme and gives the ring back to Bassanio asserting that she slept with the lawyer to take it back. Nerissa also presents the ring to Gratiano and states that she in return lay with the clerk. At this very moment when the tension is at its peak, Portia discloses her plan and tells how she and Nerissa fooled Bassanio and Gratiano by means

of the ring trick. Furthermore, she also reveals the fact that she disguised as the doctor of law while Nerissa disguised as the clerk at the Venetian court:

> Speak not so grossly,–you are all amaz'd;
> Here is a letter, read it at your leisure,–
> It comes from Padua from Bellario,–
> There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
> Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
> Shall witness I set forth as soon as youı,
> And even but now return'd: I have not yet
> Enter'd my house. [...] (266-273)

Though both Bassanio and Antonio are for an instant thrown into confusion, they positively react to the disguises of Portia and Nerissa as the lawyer and the clerk, respectively. They do not ask Portia and Nerissa any questions as to why they devised such a scheme. Bassanio first expresses his astonishment at Portia's plan and his own inability to recognise Portia in disguise: "Were you the doctor, and I knew you not" (280). Similarly, Gratiano is unable to hide his bewilderment and says: "Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold" (281). However, after their initial shock wears off, both Bassanio and Gratiano court Portia and Nerissa indicating that they want to sleep with them and consummate their marriages. In this respect, Bassanio says: "Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow,– / When I am absent then lie with my wife" (284-285). Gratiano's wooing Nerissa at the very end of the play is also significant to demonstrate that the disputes between the lovers are resolved and the truths are uncovered:

> […] the first intergatory
> That my Nerissa shall be sworn on, is,
> Whether till the next night she had rather stay,
> Or go to bed now (being two hours to day):
> But were the day come, I should wish it dark
> Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
> Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing
> So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. (300-307)

Therefore, it may be argued that the play ends like a romantic comedy as all the lovers in the play are united with the marriage vow. Apart from the reconciliation of the lovers, the play ends with a happy ending for Antonio, despite the fact that he lost Bassanio to Portia, Jessica and Lorenzo as well. As to Antonio, Portia reveals that the three

merchant ships which Antonio possesses safely arrived at the port: "[…] Antonio you are welcome, / And I have better news in store for you / Than you expect: unseal this letter soon, / There you shall find three of your argosies / Are richly come to harbour suddenly" (273-277). After Antonio reads the letter, he expresses his content with recovering his ships: "Sweet lady, you have given me life and living; / For here I read for certain that my ships / Are safely come to road" (286-288). Nerissa tells Lorenzo and Jessica that they will inherit half of Shylock's wealth after he dies. Thus, the lovers, who already overcame all the obstacles and united, now learn that they are the inheritors of Shylock's possessions. Lorenzo states that both Nerissa and Portia "[…] drop manna in the way / Of starved people" (293-294). In this regard, it may be argued that in *The Merchant of Venice*, "[…] the shadow of Shylock darkens the celebrations at Belmont in the last act […]" (David Hirst 27) as on the one hand, the play ends with happy ending for the Christians; on the other hand, the fierce enmity between Antonio and Shylock throughout the play and Shylock's persistence in taking a pound of flesh from Antonio's body along with the question whether Shylock deserved such a severe punishment create uneasiness in the audience/readers.

Moreover, in *The Merchant of Venice* the scenes of caskets are also functional as they are used in order to distract from the seriousness of the conflict between the Jew and the Christian. Thus, it may be argued that they provide comic relief, which is "[a] humorous scene, incident, or speech in the course of a serious fiction or drama, introduced–it is sometimes thought–to provide relief from emotional intensity […]" (Harmon 101) and they are, in a way, scenes of relief which release the tension in the audience/readers. Hence, as Edward Hubler also argues, "the comic and the solemn stand side by side fortifying each other" (59-60). It starts with the conversation between Portia and Nerissa in I.ii. which is after Antonio's financial difficulty is put forth and before Shylock and Antonio make the bond. Here, they talk about Portia's previous suitors and they mock at the ridiculous aspects of their characters, which reduces the tension of the I.i. where Bassanio leaves to ask Shylock for credit in the name of Antonio. In Matthew Black's words, "[…] the greatest increment [in this scene] is the little vignettes of the suitors themselves, the variety of types, the satire on national traits, and Portia's dazzling wit playing about them" (250). First, Portia and Nerissa treat the Neapolitan Prince with

ridicule and Portia asserts that the Prince is just a fool who is interested in merely horses and says that his father must be a blacksmith rather than a noble king: “Ay that’s a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse, and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself: I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith” (39-43). For Portia, the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon “is every man in no man, if a throstle sing, he falls straight a-cap’ring, he will fence with his own shadow” (57-59). Portia complains about the inability of Falconbridge, the English baron, to communicate with Portia as he can speak neither of the languages that Portia can speak, and in this regard, Portia asks: “You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, or I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English: he is a proper man’s picture, but alas! who can converse with a dumb-show?” (65-70). Furthermore, Portia makes fun of the way Falconbridge dresses and the vanity of his behaviours as she says, “How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere” (70-73). With respect to the Scottish lord, Portia makes a political comment and refers to the conflicts between England, Scotland and France: “[…] for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal’d under for another” (75-79). As Portia does not want to marry none of the mentioned suitors and looks down on their various characteristics, she makes the most derisory comments on the Duke of Saxony’s nephew who is a coarse young man as she says, “when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst he is little better than a beast, - and the worst fall that ever fell […]” (83-86).

The two casket scenes, II.vii. where the Prince of Morocco tries to find the right casket to win Portia and II.ix where the Prince of Arragon choses among the caskets are also important in order to ease the tension in the play. In II.vii. which is after Jessica’s elope with Lorenzo and before Bassanio leaves for Belmont, the Prince of Morocco not only praises the virtues of Portia but also his own merits. When he considers the inscription on the silver casket, “Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves” (23), he boasts about his dignity and asserts that he thoroughly deserves Portia through his

wealth, noble birth, good manners and his love for her: “I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes, / In graces, and in qualities of breeding: / But more than these, in love I do deserve” (32-34). Furthermore, the Prince of Morocco is easily deceived into choosing the golden casket due to its beguiling appearance, which makes the audience/readers ridicule him. He associates Portia with the golden angel on the English coin and maintains that Portia is more precious than that golden angel: “They have in England / A coin that bears the figure of an angel / Stamp’d in gold, but that’s insculp’d upon: / But here an angel in a golden bed / Lies all within” (55-59). After the Prince of Morocco faces the fact that the golden casket is the wrong choice, he reads the note which is hidden inside the casket and mocks the chooser’s folly: “Had you been as wise as bold, / Young in limbs, in judgment old, /Your answer had not been inscroll’d” (70-72). Thus, it may be argued that the reasoning that the Prince of Morocco employs about the lead, silver and golden caskets is presented in detail, and the audiece/readers feel temporary relief from the tension created by the dispute between Antonio and Shylock through the wrong choice that the Prince of Morocco does out of his arrogance.

Similarly, the choice of the Prince of Arragon in II.ix. before it is revealed that Antonio’s merchant ships were destroyed and Shylock is determined to take a pound of flesh from Antonio’s body, is also functional in clearing the gloomy atmosphere. As Paul Siegel points out, “[a]nother foolish rival of [Bassanio] […] is the conceited Prince of Arragon in *the Merchant of Venice*, French and Spanish nobles often being presented as haughty on the Elizabethan stage (172). The Prince of Arragon reads the inscriptions on the caskets and eliminates the lead casket as he looks down on the cheap material of which the casket is made. He does not choose the golden casket after he reads the inscription, “Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire” (24), because he concludes that almost all the men may prefer the golden casket and he is different from the other desirous men. When he comes before the silver casket, he speculates on the virtue of honour and morality and declares that as he has outstanding merits, he will choose the silver casket: “ ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves,’– / I will assume desert; give me a key for this” (50-51). However, the inscription within the silver casket mocks the Prince of Arragon saying that only a fool can choose the silver casket because there are so many fools who seem to be wise and the Prince of Arragon

is one of them. Furthermore, the silver casket refers to the failure to make decision and the men who hesitate about taking action like the Prince are not worthy of Portia’s love and cannot win her. In this sense, the inscription says: “There be fools alive (Iwis) / Silver’d do o’er, and so was this” (69-70). After reading the sneering writing, the Prince realises the indignity of the situation he is placed in and prefers to leave Belmont as soon as possible so as not to be further humiliated. Moreover, he is angry at himself and concludes that he deserves to be taken for a complete fool after he returns to his country for both coming to Belmont to win Portia and his failure to choose the right casket: “Still more fool I shall appear / By the time I linger here,– / With one fool’s head I came to woo, / But I go away with two” (73-76). Portia also expesses her antipathy for the Prince and all the other suitors like him and her unwillingness to marry him and the like as follows: “O these deliberate fools! when they do choose, / They have the wisdom by their wit to lose” (80-81).

In conclusion, Shakespeare’s contrasting representation of Shylock and his taking sides with neither the Jew nor the Christian within the historical context of the Jewish people living in England since the Middle Ages and the generic ambiguity make *The Merchant of Venice* a problem play. In this regard, in the play Shylock is presented as a victim insulted and underestimated by the Christians due to his religious faith and financial gain, but at the same time he is presented as an oppressor who looks for revenge not only because of his ill-treatment by Antonio but also Antonio’s trading activities reducing his income. In other words, it is argued that Shakespeare is not anti-semitic, but he does not favour the Jew, either and “we can be both shocked at [Shylock’s] cruelty and moved by the circumstances that provoke his monstrous revenge” (Hyman 111). It has also been demonstrated that the Jewish problem was a common problem throughout western and central Europe and Italy since the Middle Ages and the negative image of the Jew highly affected the impression of the Jewish people by the English people in the sixteenth century, which was particularly formed by the execution of Roderigo Lopez in 1594. Furthermore, Portia’s plan to interfere with the trial at the Venetain court in disguise resulting from her change from a passive lady to a cunning woman increases the tension of Shylock’s conflicting representation and dominates the play especially after III.iv. As for the generic ambiguity of *The Merchant of Venice*,

Shylock's insistence on taking a pound of flesh from Antonio's body and his leaving the stage having lost half of his wealth to Lorenzo and Jessica and converted to Christianity at the end of IV.i. create a gloomy and serious atmosphere and make Shylock a tragic hero while the opening of V.i. with the ring trick played by Portia and Nerissa to Bassanio and Gratiano eases the tension which prevails throughout the play. Moreover, the reconciliation of the lovers and their celebrations of their marriages at the end of V.i. give the play a feature of a romantic comedy. The casket scenes are also fundamental in terms of the generic ambiguity because each provides a comic relief before and after a serious crisis.

CHAPTER II

HAMLET: A PROBLEM PLAY IN TERMS OF THE SUCCESSION PROBLEM AND CHARACTER

> *Hamlet:* Denmark's a prison.
> *Rosencrantz:* Then is the world one.
> *Hamlet:* A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th' worst. (II.ii.242-246)
>
> [*Hamlet*'s] variety is infinite (Vargas 110)

Hamlet is among the much-discussed plays by the critics and scholars with regard to the moral, political, religious, metaphysical and psychological questions it poses and the distinctness in Hamlet's character. As John Corbin asserts, "[o]ne man considers Hamlet great intellectually, but malevolent; another takes him to be gentle and just, but lacking in courage; a third thinks that, though he is not lacking in courage, his intellect so overbalances his will that he reflects away the time for action; some hold him quite sane, others make him wholly distraught […]" (1). According to Arthur Percival Rossiter, Hamlet does not have one self but has various selves and "[i]n sudden emergencies a Hamlet springs into existence, unknown before and hardly perhaps credited afterwards" (178). Therefore, *Hamlet* brings up challenging questions, but leaves them unanswered for the interpretation of the audience/readers, which gives each reader an opportunity to have a distinct reading regardless of their country or the century.

Hence, this chapter aims at focusing on one of the various aspects of *Hamlet* and analysing the play as a problem play with regard to the problem in Hamlet's character. In this sense, the problems in Hamlet's madness and hesitation will be dealt with in relation to the political context of the late Elizabethan era. The succession problem in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign and the Essex Rebellion (1601) will be examined in relation to Hamlet's initial melancholic mood and the uneasiness in Denmark which

disturbs Hamlet as soon as he returns from Wittenberg. It will be demonstrated that Hamlet's madness raises questions in the minds of the audience/readers as Hamlet's initial mood, which is presented at the beginning of the play and is rooted in his father's sudden death and his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle, displays symptoms of melancholy. Hamlet's later encounter with the Ghost of his father lays the burden of revenge on Hamlet, which leads him to feign madness. However, it will be displayed that Hamlet's pretended madness is intermingled with melancholy and sanity. As regards the problem in Hamlet's hesitation, it will be demonstrated that though Hamlet delays action and explains the reasons particularly in his soliloquies, he takes action at the very end of the play.

In this regard, first, the date and the different texts of *Hamlet* will be discussed. Then, the performance history of the play will be presented. The examination of the literary sources will be followed by the analysis of the succession problem with illustrations from the play. Then, the Essex Rebellion will be studied along with its reflections on the play through the presentation of unrest and corruption in Denmark. The chapter will be concluded with the analyses of the problems in Hamlet's madness and hesitation as the problem in his character.

Edward Dowden categorises *Hamlet* as a 'Middle Tragedy' along with *Julius Caesar* (*Shakspere* 57). For Dowden, Shakespeare preferred to deal with tragedy after he wrote his history plays and romantic comedies and now he had matured not only as a playwright, but also as a philosopher (*Shakspere* 53). Francis Meres did not mention *Hamlet* in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) which provides a sound evidence for the composition date of *Hamlet* (Honigmann, "The Date" 24). The tragedies Meres named in his work are *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* (S. Wells, *Dictionary* 114). *Hamlet* was registered by James Roberts at the *Stationers' Register* in 1602 with an entry as follows: "1602, xxvj Julij. James Robertes. Entered for his Copie, under the handes of Mr. Pasfeild and Mr. Waterson, warden, A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lo:Chamberleyn his servantes" (Lambert 44). Hence, in the light of this information, it may be argued that *Hamlet* was written between 1599 and 1602. However, Gabriel

Harvey's mention of a play called *Hamlet* by Shakespeare in his note dated 1598 creates ambiguity about the composition date of the play. Harvey referred to *Hamlet* in his note as follows: "The younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeares Venus & Adonis: but his Lucrece, & his tragedie of Hamlet, Prience of Denmarke, haue it in them, to please the wiser sort" (qtd. in Jenkins 4). Harold Jenkins, thinking about the topical issues dealt with in *Hamlet* such as the Essex Rebellion along with the rivalry between the boy companies and the adult companies, concludes that Shakespeare could have written the manuscript of the play before 1598 as Harvey mentioned, but it is possible that he made minor changes adding the topical political and theatrical issues of the period before the publications of the text in 1603 and 1604 (5). Jenkins also puts forth the uncertainty as to whether Harvey saw a performance of *Hamlet* in 1598 or read the play from a manuscript in circulation (5-6). William Empson, in this regard, supports the idea that *Hamlet* was written before 1601, the date when the Earl of Essex was executed. And particulaly the political allusions were added to the play as a result of a revision after 1601 and according to Empson, "[the influence of Essex's death] corresponds to a certain darkening of the whole air" in *Hamlet* (97) as will be demonstrated.

There are various quarto and folio texts of *Hamlet* which were published at different dates and which bear obvious distinctions in terms of plot, characterisation, language and length. These texts are the First Quarto published in 1603, the Second Quarto published in 1604 and the First Folio published in 1623. Q1 of 1603 was composed by means of the notes that the actors took after the performances and the parts memorised by the minor actors at the Globe (D. Marsh 11). Hence, it is usually known as "unauthorized or 'bad' " (Holzknecht 355). In this respect, Erik Frykman and Göran Kjellmer call Q1 "garbled" and "a corrupt form" (74) while John Draper depicts it as "so crude and so different from the texts of the later quartos" (9). As regards Q2, on its title page a reference is made to Q1 as follows: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie" (Lambert 50-51). Therefore, it may be said that the publisher of Q2 directly expressed that the new text was longer than the previous one and it was true and perfect while the previous one was wrong. However, Holderness and Loughrey bring forth the possible question about the

authoritative text that Q2 was based on as follows: "We do not know what the Second Quarto claims to be a true and perfect copy of – the author's manuscript? the promptbook?" (Introduction 14). Hence, though Q2 claims to be more correct than Q1, the source text it depended on is not stated.

Furthermore, two important passages of Q1, which are Hamlet's comparison of Denmark to a prison and the part about the boy companies, are missing in Q2. The first passage does not take part in Q2 as the wife of James I was Danish and it may have been thought that it would be degrading, while the second passage would be insulting for James I who was the patron of a Children's Company (Boyce 240). As to the distinct aspects between the version of *Hamlet* in the First Folio and Q2, the First Folio text does not have the 230 lines which exist in Q2 while it has 80 additional lines which lack in Q2. Moreover, the distinctions in the use of words, punctuation, the use of stage directions and the names of the characters are the prominent differences between the First Folio and Q2 (Dawson 6). However, a similarity between the two texts is that both texts are inappropriately long and difficult to stage as the performance of Q2 takes four hours without any cuts and shortening (Holderness and Loughrey, Introduction 14). Accordingly, Giorgio Melchiori asks the following question in relation to the excessive length of Q2 and the First Folio for performance: "The simple question is how a man of the theatre like Shakespeare came to supply his company with a script that he could realistically never hope to see performed on the public stage in its entirety" (22). In this regard, Melchiori argues that Shakespeare prepared Q1 to be performed at the Globe Theatre while Q2 was not intended to be staged but to be studied as a literary text (23).

Accordingly, the performance history of *Hamlet* is also related to the features of Q1 and Q2. On the title page of *Hamlet* in Q1, there is a direct reference to the performance history of the play as follows: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shake-speare. As it hath been diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere" (Lambert 49). Thus, it is stated that Hamlet had been performed at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and at public and private playhouses by 1603 though exact detail is not provided. David Bevington comments on the suitability of the

dining halls of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford for theatre performance as he describes the original models for the London playhouses and says: "Any dining halls at Oxford and Cambridge are laid out in this pattern still today. At the lower end of the hall, a transverse screen, usually richly carved, separated the hall itself from a passageway used by servants in bringing food and drink. The screen might have two or three doorways, and above it stood a gallery, for musicians or whatever (*This Wide* 34). According to Peter Davison though, there is not another firm indication as to the performance of *Hamlet* at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford apart from the title page of Q1 and the expression "elsewhere" was used for the promotion of the play but did not refer to the accurate performance history of the play (43). However, Davison also highlights the specific reference in *Hamlet* to the university, which is Wittenberg from where Hamlet and Horatio come back for the funeral of King Hamlet, and argues that it is possible to consider the extreme length of the play and the soliloquies where various issues like life, death, memory, honour and revenge are questioned as the indications of the performances at the universities (43). It is also stated in *Annals of English Drama* that *Hamlet* was performed in 1601 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men though the place where it was performed was not specified (80). Another performance of *Hamlet* took place on 5 September 1607 on the ship called *the Dragon* in the service of the East India Company and captained by Captain Keeling. Kneeling organised the performance of *Hamlet* on his ship to entertain the captain of another ship (Bevington, *Murder* 25) and he himself explains his purpose for having *Hamlet* performed on board as follows: "I invited Captain Hawkins to a ffishe dinner, and had Hamlet acted abord me: which I permitt to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawfull games, or sleepe" (qtd. in Farley-Hills 8). In this sense, Bevington states that *Hamlet* was familiar to the English people by the early seventeenth century in the following words: "Whatever else this bizarre item may suggest about life on board a vessel of the East India Company in the early seventeenth century, it certainly testifies to the sense in which *Hamlet* had already become a household, or at least a shipboard, name" (*Murder* 25). Therefore, *Hamlet* was not staged merely at the university halls or at the public playhouses, but also on board, which suggests the popularity and the appreciation of the play by the English people from a variety of social classes and intellectual backgrounds. In accordance with the performance history, the first actor who played the role of Hamlet

was Richard Burbage while Shakespeare played the part of the Ghost (Buell 1). The fact that Burbage played the role of Hamlet is also presented in the funeral elegy on Burbage after his death in 1618 as follows: "He's gone and with him what a world are dead! / Which he reviv'd, to be revived so, / No more young Hamlet, old Hieronymo / Kind Lear, the grieved Moor, and more beside, / That lived in him […]" (qtd. in Salgado 38).

As regards the literary sources of *Hamlet*, the primary source which Shakespeare used is a lost play which is popularly known as *Ur-Hamlet* (Satin 381). Thus, there is no surviving manuscript of *Ur-Hamlet*, but Thomas Nashe referred to the existence of such a play in 1589 (McEvoy 7). The performance of *Ur-Hamlet* is also stated in Philip Henslowe's diary with an entry under the title "*In the name of God Amen, beginninge at Newington, my Lord Admeralle and my Lorde chamberlen men, as foloweth*" and dated 9 June 1594 as follows: "Rd at hamlet" (Satin 35). In the footnote of the entry, Payne Collier agrees to Malone in the suggestion that the play Henslowe mentioned in his diary is not Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but it refers to an older play. According to Collier, in this regard, Shakespeare laid claims to the older *Hamlet* because it had been staged by the Lord Chamberlain's Men which performed at Newington Theatre in 1595 along with the Lord Admiral's Men (35). Neil Carson also supports Collier's argument as follows:

> Without any means of verifying the identification of titles in the diary, the reader must constantly remind himself that familiar titles may refer to source plays or earlier versions of extant texts. Take, for example, the question of 'Shakespearean' titles in the diary. Of the seven works mentioned – *King Lear* (39), *Hamlet* (43), *Henry V* (82), Troilus and Cressida (172), *Henry VI* (11), *Titus Andronicus* (37), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (44), only the last three conform to the orthodox notions concerning Shakespearean chronology. Consequently, it is probable (although not, by nature of the evidence, absolutely certain) that *Hamlet* and *Troilus* are lost plays which Shakespeare may have known […]. (68)

In this sense, Davison also emphasises the significance of *Ur-Hamlet* as the chief source of *Hamlet* as he says, "[t]hreads of the story – some going back to pre-literary times – were drawn together in Saxo Grammaticus's *Historia Danica* (Paris, 1514). Belleforest's French version, *Histories Tragiques* (1570) may have been known to Shakespeare; but his immediate source was an earlier play about Hamlet (now lost) – termed by scholars the *Ur-Hamlet* – probably by Thomas Kyd, which had a revival in

1594" (8). Accordingly, Saxo Grammaticus creates the character, who is later called Hamlet, in *Historiae Danicae*, which was written at the end of the twelfth century and was published in 1514. In Grammaticus's story, Amleth's father Horwendil is killed by his brother Fengo, who is bitterly jealous of Horwendil's defeat of the King of Norway, marrying Gerutha, the daughter of King of Denmark, and having a son called Amleth. Amleth feigns insanity after his father's death in order to protect his own life and becomes sulky and wears messy clothes. He carries long and pointed sticks which, as he says, he will use to avenge his father's murder (Jenkins 85-86). A beautiful unnamed woman is used to tempt Hamlet and confirm his madness by later denying their sexual intercourse, which is similar to Hamlet's relationship with Ophelia, who is used by Polonius in order to be sure of the cause of Hamlet's madness. Moreover, Amleth's speaking with Gerutha in her chamber and the hiding of a friend of Fengo under the bed to listen to their conservation remind the audience/readers of Hamlet's encounter with Gertrude after the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* and Polonius's spying on them behind the arras in Gertrude's chamber. Accordingly, Amleth savagely kills Fengo's friend realising his existence under the bed after he gabbles and bounces on the bed. He tears the eavesdropper's body into pieces and throws them to be eaten by the pigs, which is different from Polonius's murder by Hamlet because Hamlet merely stabs Polonius behind the arras and then after lengthy negotiations with Claudius, he tells where he keeps the dead body. In addition, Fengo sends Amleth to England in the company of two servants, yet Amleth discovers Fengo's scheme and changes the letter commanding the King of England to kill Amleth and instead asks the King of England to kill the two servants and grant approval to the marriage of his daughter and Amleth, which bears a direct relation to Claudius's sending Hamlet to England under the supervision of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with the intention of having him murdered and Hamlet's release through changing the letter and the attack of the pirates. The endings of *Historiae Danicae* and *Hamlet* are different. In *Historiae Danicae* Hamlet kills Fengo and takes his revenge, but he survives and declares himself as the King of Denmark while in *Hamlet* though Hamlet achieves to take revenge upon Claudius, he dies as well and Fortinbras becomes the King of Denmark (Jenkins 86-87). In this regard, though there are differences in the names of the characters and the development of the plot, there are close and direct parallels between *Historiae Danicae* and *Hamlet* in

terms of the presentation of the major scenes such as the murder of Amleth's/Hamlet's father by his uncle, Amleth's/Hamlet's pretending madness in order to avenge himself, the use of the fair lady/Ophelia to deceive Amleth/Hamlet, Amleth's/Hamlet's murder of the friend of Fengo/Polonius during his conversation with Gerutha/Gertrude and eventually Amleth's/Hamlet's being sent to England to be murdered, yet his escape after changing the content of the letter written by Fengo/Claudius.

The other source for both *Hamlet* and *Ur-Hamlet* is a French collection of stories, *Histories Tragiques,* by François de Belleforest. It was published in French between 1564 and 1582, but it was translated into English in 1608 (MacCary 22). The Elizabethan playwrights were acquainted with the character of Amleth through *Histories Tragiques* as Belleforest had knowledge about *Historiae Danicae* (Bullough 10). In Belleforest's version, the theme of revenge comes to prominence along with Amleth's crafty and resolute personality. Moreover, in *Historiae Danicae* Horwendil is murdered privately while in *Histories Tragiques* Fengon kills his brother during a banquet with the help of his accomplices. Another major difference between the two works is that in *Histories Tragiques* Geruth is not innocent as she is presented as a disloyal wife who has a sexual relationship with the brother of her husband and after her husband is killed, though she knows, she does not reveal the murderer. There is also a difference in the temptation scene in the forest in *Histories Tragiques* as Amleth's foster brother does not warn him against the scheme. The similarities between the two sources are seen in the closet scene where Amleth discovers the existence of a spy hiding under a coverlet and violently kills him and in the part where Amleth is sent to England (Bullough 11-13). In addition to *Ur-Hamlet*, *Historiae Danicae* and *Histories Tragiques*, there is a close resemblance between Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* in terms of the appearance of the ghost charging the protagonist with the duty of revenge, pretended madness, the use of play within a play and the existence of the trustworthy friend, Horatio (Satin 381). According to Geoffrey Bullough, the common aspects between *Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* are as follows: the revenge demanding ghost; the foul crime which needs to be justified; the hesitation of the avenger and the constant delays; the pretended madness of the revenger and the real insanity of the female character; meditations on committing suicide; the innocent female character who

is warned by her father and brother against the avenger; the discussion on the art of theatre; the use of play-within-a-play to discover the murderer; the existence of a faithful friend to the revenger; the representation of a rageful and grieved protagonist (17).

Apart from the above-mentioned major sources, there are also other sources which bear similarities with the plot and characterisation of *Hamlet* that Shakespeare might have used. It may be argued that Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586) may have been effective for the representation of Hamlet's melancholy. *Pierce Penniless His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), a pamphlet by Thomas Nashe and *Hamlet* share a similarity in terms of Hamlet's sharp criticism about the corruption and drunkenness in Denmark in I.iv. Moreover, Luis de Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation*, which is a religious work and was translated into English by Richard Hopkins, is reflected in Hamlet's comments on death in his conversation with the Gravedigger in V.i. (Boyce 239). As Muriel Bradbrook points out, "Shakespeare was using an old, crude and violent story; he was turning it to majestic usage, controlling and mending it as far as he could, to convey the tragedy of a man caught in ethical and metaphysical uncertainties" ("An Interpretation" 30). Thus, it may be deduced that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* bears elements from the old sources which deal with the relentless revenge of a son on the murderer of his father; however, Shakespeare developed the revenge story through a character who goes through moral dilemmas, and questions the meaning of life and death.

At this point it will be useful to deal with the historical context of *Hamlet* which contributes to the development of not only the gloomy atmosphere throughout the play but also Hamlet's sombre character that leads him to the pretended madness and hesitation which are the two main problems in the play. In this sense, the two major issues which shaped the political and social atmosphere of England at the time of the composition of *Hamlet*, the succession problem and the Essex Rebellion, will be analysed. Ralph Berry, who interprets various performances of *Hamlet*, points out that "[*Hamlet*] has always contained two large scenarios, one of them the political dimension, the other the family or domestic dimension. It was open to the director to lay

emphasis on either" ("*Hamlet* Then" 45-46). In this respect, *Hamlet* is rich in political interpretations, hence not only do the family relations presented through Hamlet's relationships with his father, mother and uncle come to prominence but also the political issues which establish a ground for the disorder and corruption in the country affect Hamlet's problematic mood.

With regard to the succession problem, a grave concern about who would succeed Queen Elizabeth I and ascend the throne was deeply felt throughout England because the Queen was not married and did not produce an heir for the English throne. Moreover, as she got older, the ambiguity about the future of the English throne and Protestanism flourished (Neale 10). Frank Kermode describes the growing anxiety throughout England about the lack of an heir as follows:

> Worries about her successor declared themselves almost at once. Elizabeth was not particularly healthy, and she might be assassinated. A successor might be needed at any time. Her counsellors dreaded the idea of an interregnum after her death – a time when rival claimants might decide to press their claims violently. There was another difficulty: with the death of the monarch all civil administration was halted, all offices vacated. If the successor was not proclaimed immediately, anarchy threatened. (22)

It is strongly asserted in these lines that the Queen's growing old and the assassination plots were the chief sources of worry and fear both at the court and among the English people. William Cecil, the first Baron Burghley also supported that having an heir to the throne would stop the possible assassination plans for Elizabeth because an heir would be the guarantee for the continuation of the royalty and the Protestant cause (C. Levin 81). In addition, the existence of an heir was essential in order to avoid a possible period of interregnum which would bring political chaos to the country through the severe rivalry among the parties which would claim the English throne. The other reason for the disorder in the country would be the interruption in the political order. Nonetheless, similar to Burghley's failed efforts to persuade Elizabeth into a marriage, the Parliament failed in making Elizabeth name an heir for the welfare of England. She did not want to turn the heir into a target for the attacks of the competitors because she herself had fought against her enemies when she was the heir during Mary's rule (C. Levin 81). In this regard, there were twelve candidates for the English throne in case of Elizabeth's

death as Thomas Wilson presents in detail in *Domestic Calendar, 1601-1603*, in 1601 as follows:

1. James VI, King of Scotland, from Margaret, sister of Henry VIII
2. Arabella Stuart, from the same Margaret.
3. Lord Beauchamp, from Mary, 2nd daugher of Henry VII.
4. His brother, Henry Seymour, from the same.
5. Earl of Derby, from the same.
6. Earl of Huntington, from George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.
7. Earl of Westmoreland, from Elizabeth, daughter of John of Gaunt.
8. Earl of Northumberland, from Mary, granddaughter of Edm. Crouchback, eldest brother Henry III.
9. The son of the King of Portugal, from Philippa, eldest daugher of John of Gaunt.
10. Duke of Parma, from the same.
11. King of Spain, from Catherine, daugher of John of Gaunt, and from the Portugal family.
12. The Infanta of Spain, from Henry II as Duke of Aragon, and from the House of Bretagne in France, by Constance, daughter of William the Conqueror. (qtd. in Wernham and Walker 103-104).

The fierce competition among the heirs to the English throne was not only limited to the rivalry among the kings, queens and the earls, but there was also a severe competition among the courtiers of Elizabeth in order to seize power in the absence of a strong monarch. In Joel Hurstfield's words, "[n]o one minister was allowed to be the custodian of all her secrets or the delegated authority of all her power. Against Burghley there was Leicester; against Robert Cecil, Essex" (371). In this respect, Robert Cecil supported the Infanta of Spain while the Earl of Essex was on the side of James VI of Scotland (Kermode 140).

In this respect, the relief that the English people felt at the succession of James VI of Scotland after the death of Elizabeth I is mentioned by John Manningham in his diary. In his entry dated March 1602, Manningham depicts the content of the English people on the accession of James I and how they tried to hide it in order not to be disrespectful to the memory of the deceased Queen:

> The proclamacion was heard with greate expectacion, and silent joye, noe great shouting. I thinke the sorrowe for his Majesties departure was soe deep in many heartes they could not soe suddenly shewe anie great joy, though it could not be lesse then exceeding greate for the succession of soe worthy a King. And at night they shewed it by bonefires, and ringing. (Folio 112 209)

Therefore, it can be clearly seen in Manningham's note that the Elizabethan people loved and esteemed Elizabeth I and though she jeopardised the continuity of the monarchy and the peace in the country, they mourned her death. Furthermore, Manningham asserts that the order was maintained after the accession of James I because the rivalry for the throne ended: "Noe tumult, now contradiction, noe disorder in the city; every man went about his busines, as readylie, as peaceably, as securely, as though there had bin noe change, nor any newes ever heard of competitors. God be thanked, or king hath his right […]" (Folio 112 209). According to Manningham, the accession of James I also secured the continuation of the government and the Protestant cause without any rupture: "The people is full of expectacion, and great with hope of his worthines, of our nations future greatnes; every one promises himselfe a share in some famous action to be hereafter performed, for his prince and Country. They assure themselves of the continuance of our church, government and doctrine" (Folio 112 209). Therefore, not only did the rivalry between the claimers to the English throne ended but also the worries of both the English people and the courtiers over the future of England disappeared after the accession of James I as he put an end to the possible political crises that would arise out of the lack of an heir.

The problem of succession in *Hamlet* is presented through the accession of Claudius just after the death of King Hamlet. Throughout the play, Hamlet's right to the Danish throne is particularly emphasised by Claudius and Laertes. At the beginning of the play though Hamlet's right to the throne was not recognised, Claudius implies that Hamlet was still equal to the King and the Queen: "Be as ourself in Denmark" (I.ii.122). Claudius's further statement in I.iii. about the essentiality of leading one's life even after the most painful deaths is fundamental as it may be regarded as an allusion to the succession problem. At the beginning of his statement, Claudius reminds Hamlet of the normality and commonality of death and wants him to return to normal after a short period of mourning:

> 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
> To give these mourning duties to your father,
> But you must know your father lost a father,
> That father lost, lost his–and the survivor bound
> In filial obligation for some term

> To do obsequious sorrow. (I.iii.87-92)

As indicated above, Hamlet is in agony because of his father's death for a long time and manifests his woe and fury to the people around him. However, for Claudius, such a long period of lamentation means opposing the divine will and is sinful. In addition, it is a sign of mental and emotional weakness, which does not suit a man of Hamlet's calibre. Claudius emphasises that educated people like Hamlet should not be enslaved by sorrow as merely ignorant and shortsighted people make such a mistake. Moreover, Claudius touches upon relation between Hamlet's pointless grief and the state affairs as he refers to Hamlet's being heir to the Danish throne after himself. In this respect, Claudius says: "We pray you throw to earth / This unprevailing woe, and think of us / As of a father; for let the world take note / You are the most immediate to our throne" (106-109). Thus, it might be deduced that Claudius highlights the fact that the death of the present monarch should not have an adverse impact on the rule of the country as the welfare of the country should be considered as more fundamental than the private anguish that the individuals suffer. In this respect, according to Claudius, Hamlet should gather himself up because he bears responsibility as the present heir and the future king towards not only his deceased father but also Denmark. Hamlet's crucial position in state affairs as the heir to the throne is also put forth by Laertes in I.iii where he warns Ophelia about her love for Hamlet. Laertes asserts that Hamlet's affection for Ophelia may be temporary, so Ophelia should not rely upon Hamlet and should avoid any kind of physical intimacy with him in order not to dishonour herself and her family. Accordingly, Laertes shows Hamlet's prominent position at the court as a reason as follows:

> His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own.
> For he himself is subject to his birth:
> He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,
> Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
> The sanity and health of this whole state;
> And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
> Unto the voice and yielding of that body
> Whereof he is the head. (I.iii.17-24)

It is strongly asserted in these lines that Hamlet is wholly responsible for the welfare of Denmark, and it is inevitable that his sense of duty towards his country will outweight

his love for Ophelia. It may be also argued that Laertes's statement alludes to the fact that Hamlet's present and future behaviours will define the future of Denmark. In other words, it is possible to draw a direct parallel between Laertes's reference to Hamlet's liability for Denmark and Hamlet's excessive sorrow and pretended madness which he uses to observe the people around him and to sort out the corrupted relationships. In William Toole's words, "[t]hough Hamlet is in no way responsible for the poison that flows through the veins of the body politic, he must provide the antidote" (105). However, the main question whether Hamlet will achieve to maintain the prosperity of the country or whether he will fail to terminate the degeneracy arises. In this sense, it might be argued that the close link between the welfare of Denmark and Hamlet's behaviours is, in fact, put forward by Laertes at the very beginning of the play.

In this regard, the main question is why Hamlet, the heir to the Danish throne after King Hamlet, did not succeed his father. G.F. Bradby refers to the question of succession in *Hamlet* as he puts forth the two common problems encountered in Shakespeare's plays: the problems already existing in the original story Shakespeare borrowed from, and the problems which arise from his creation of the characters. As an example for the latter, Bradby raises the question of succession and asks: "We may wonder, for instance, why Hamlet, who was highly gifted, popular, and of a suitable age, was not elected King in succession to his father" (9). At this point, Gurr refers to the fact that it is possible for a king to be elected and accepted as the rightful ruler through election and says: "The laws of the Danish succession, the system of electing kings which lets Claudius freely choose who to give his "voice" or vote for, and which makes it possible for him to appear in law a legitimate king and not a usurper are also explicitly sketched in" (*Hamlet* 22). Hence, though Hamlet is the rightful heir to the Danish crown after his father, the accession of Claudius does not make him a usurper as he is the elected King of Denmark and wins the absolute loyalty of the courtiers. However, when the issue of succession is considered from Hamlet's point of view, Soji Iwasaki comments on the importance of the Danish throne to Hamlet as follows: "The logical proposition 'That that is is' (*Twelfth Night*, 4.2.14) does not hold here, but 'To be, or not to be' is indeed a 'question.' Hamlet was prince of Denmark while King Hamlet lived, but now Claudius is king, and if a child is born to Claudius and Gertrude he will be nothing" (3). In a

sense, being heir to the throne as the future King of Denmark after King Hamlet was one of the means through which Hamlet defined himself and it was totally destroyed by the accession of Claudius just like Hamlet's loss of his beloved father and his loss of trust in his mother. In this sense, in V.ii. Hamlet refers to his intense disappointment with not ascending the throne after his father's death and openly expresses that losing the throne to Claudius has intensified his sorrow at the death of his father and his mother's hasty marriage as follows: "He hath kill'd my king and whor'd my mother, / Popp'd in between th'election and my hopes" (64-65). Michael Hattaway also supports this argument asserting that at the opening of the play Hamlet moans about not only losing his father and mother but also the throne in his following words: "Not only is his father dead and his mother precipitately remarried […] but he has been displaced as heir-presumptive" (90). It may be inferred that Hamlet's initial melancholy which takes on a different dimension by his pretended madness is rooted in not only his father's death and his mother's disloyalty but also his being replaced by his uncle as the King of Denmark.

There is also another reference to the succession problem at the very end of the play where Hamlet, as the rightful heir, names the successor to the Danish throne before he dies. Hamlet gains the right of having claims to the throne just after he kills Claudius in V.ii. Though Hamlet himself did not rule Denmark as the monarch, he asserts that the most convenient ruler after him will be Fortinbras who is the son of the deceased King of Norway and that Fortinbras has a rightful claim on the Danish throne regarding the previous relations between King Hamlet and King Fortinbras. Accordingly, Hamlet reveals his support regarding Fortinbras for the succession as follows: "I cannot live to hear the news from England, / But I do prophesy th'election lights / On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice" (359-361). Therefore, it may be inferred that Fortinbras will be an elected King of Denmark like Claudius and this time Hamlet pledges his full support for the elected King. In this sense, Ralph Berry emphasises the late consent of the Danish court for Hamlet's accession after Claudius's death but Hamlet's choosing Fortinbras for the maintenance of the throne as follows: "The court, which had once chosen Claudius over Hamlet, silently ratifies the election of Hamlet. Hamlet himself, giving his 'dying voice' in the election of Fortinbras, accepts and participates in the continuity

of Danish government" (*Tragic Instance* 111). In addition, Horatio assures Fortinbras of Hamlet's support and says: "Of that I shall have also cause to speak, / And from this mounth whose voice will draw on more" (V.ii.396-397). Thus, Horatio expresses that he will function as a spokesman for Hamlet and uncovers Hamlet's wish before he dies. Fortinbras also self-confidently voices his rightful claim on the Danish throne in his following words: "For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. / I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, / Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me" (V.ii.393-395). Hence, as Kenneth Muir maintains, "[Hamlet's] own disastrous failure made him choose as best for country as a man most unlike himself. Fortinbras is thus enabled to avenge his father's death, not merely regaining the territory he forfeited, but acquiring the whole country of Denmark" (73). Fortinbras's unproblematic accession to the Danish throne despite the problematic crowning of Claudius at the beginning of the play has a parallel with James I's smooth succession to the English throne in spite of the turbulent last years in Elizabeth's rule. In this regard, as Carole Levin points out, "[a]fter all the worry about the succession, when Elizabeth died in March 1603, there was a smooth transition to her cousin James VI of Scotland, Mary Stuart's son. Despite the range of possible successors at the end of the reign as at the beginning, there was a clear and general consensus for James" (102). Hence, it may be deduced that Hamlet's last remarks on the succession of Fortinbras leads the courtiers and the Danish people to reach an agreement on Fortinbras as the rightful king, and Hamlet himself dies with inner peace.

The Essex Rebellion, as Neslihan Ekmekçioğlu points out, "is one of the most famous, even notorious events in the long reign of Queen Elizabeth I" ("Roles Disguising" 10). Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, was an important politician at the Elizabethan court. He was also an acquaintance of the Earl of Southampton, the patron of Shakespeare (Boyce 180). Therefore, as Philip Edwards puts it, "William Shakespeare, through his patron the Earl of Southampton, belonged to the Essex affinity" (*The Making* 213). After the death of the first Earl of Essex, Devereux attracted Elizabeth with his charm and took his place at the court as a favourite courtier of Elizabeth (Brett 245). Essex first had the protection of Lord Burghley, then after the marriage of his mother to Leicester, he was taken by Leicester to the expedition in the

Netherlands as General of the Horse, from where he returned in 1586 and aroused the attention of the Queen (Marshall 135). Elizabeth and Essex had a turbulent relationship because on the on hand, Essex was one of the favourite courtiers of Elizabeth; on the other hand, she angrily reacted to the deeds Essex did without her knowledge like his marriage to the widow of Philip Sidney with whom he fought in the Netherlands in 1589-1590 (Boyce 180). Essex also had impertinent attitudes towards Elizabeth, which foreshadowed treachery. However, Elizabeth forgave him and kept him in her circle of favourites due to his political potential (Brett 246). He won a great victory in Cadiz in 1596 as he took over the management of Cadiz from the Spanish forces. Moreover, he had already entered the Privy Council and became the leader of opposing military forces against Spain (Marshall 137). The rivalry for power among the courtiers forced Essex to take effective measures against his enemies at the court. The appointment of Robert Cecil as the Privy Councillor when Essex was in France during 1591-1592 led him to disclose the attempt of Doctor Roderigo Lopez to poison Elizabeth, which was refuted by Cecil (P. Edwards, *The Making* 214). Furthermore, the fierce enmity between Essex and Cecil, which weakened in the last years of Burghley's governance and blazed out after he died, became effective in Essex's falling into disfavour. Cecil decided to besmirch Essex's reputation due to his attempts to inform James I, his candidate for the English throne, about Cecil's support for the Infanta of Spain to access the English throne after Elizabeth I's death (Hurtsfield 375). However, Essex's commission for a military campaign in order to suppress a rebellion in Ireland in 1599 became a turning point in the relationship between Elizabeth and Essex; though it seemed like a reconciliation, it had severe consequences (Boyce 181). The uprising in Ireland was rooted in Hugh O'Neill's attempt to take over the control of Ulster. O'Neill had been kept at the English court for a long time. In this sense, he showed his hostility towards the English forces in Ireland and collaborated with O'Donnell against the English in 1594, which was approved by the Irish people. Eventually, the Irish movement was led by O'Neill who gathered thousands of soldiers to fight against the English military forces (Brett 254). Alfred Leslie Rowse states the rise of O'Neill and Essex's appointment in Ireland as follows:

> Irish resistance found its greatest leader in the Ulster chieftain, Hugh O'Neill – to the English, Earl of Tyrone. In 1598 he had inflicted the gravest defeat English

> forces had met with, at the disaster of the Yellow Ford. There was danger of Spain's intervention; it was necessary to send the largest army yet equipped for Ireland. Essex made it impossible for anyone else to assume the command, though the Queen had a better candidate; he was determined to make Southampton his General of Horse, though she vetoed it. (*Shakespeare* 73)

As Rowse underlines, Essex voluntarily served in Ireland despite Elizabeth's contrary expectations. John Chamberlain described the delays in the assignment of Essex in Ireland, which signalled a divergency, in his personal letters. In his letter dated 20 December 1598, Chamberlain mentioned a sudden cancellation of the voyage as follows: "From Tuesday last till Sunday it held fast and firm that the Earl of Essex was to go [into Ireland] and all things were accordingly settled and set down; but a sudden alteration came on Sunday night, the reason whereof is yet kept secret" (qtd. in Thomson 9). In another letter dated 17 January 1599, Chamberlain refered to a postponement from February to March and stated that many soldiers and courtiers would accompany Essex during his service in Ireland: "The Earl's journey for Ireland is somewhat prolonged, for his victualers that had order to make provisions for February are now put over till March. He shall carry a great troop of gallants with him, if all go that are spoken of. . . ." (qtd. in Thomson 10). In *A Second Elizabethan Journal* compiled by Harrison, Essex's arrogant and hostile attitude towards the Queen before the Irish expedition is presented in an entry dated 2 July 1598 as follows:

> Her Majesty thought Sir William Knollys the fittest man of any to be sent to Ireland; but the Earl of Essex obstinately insisted that Sir George Carew was fitter than he, and quite forgetting himself and neglecting his duty, he uncivilly turned his back upon the Queen as it were in contempt, and gave her a scornful look. She not enduring such contempt returned him a box on the ear and bade him get him gone and be hanged. Thereupon the Earl laid his hand on his sword, and the Lord Admiral stepping between, he swore a great oath that he neither would nor could put up with so great an affront and indignity, neither would he have taken it at King Henry the Eight his hands, and in great passion withdrew forthwith from the Court. (287)

In the light of this information, it may be assumed that there was already a chaotic atmosphere at the court of Elizabeth before Essex's failure in Ireland and his being accused of treachery which deepened the gloom in the country. Essex went to Ireland with Sir Christopher Blount and Lord Southampton in 1599 (Strachey 126). However, instead of directly dealing with the rebellion in line with the royal commands, Essex

went through Munster where there was no resistance. When he finally reached Dublin, he had already lost a large number of his soldiers, hence the English military forces had lost power against the Irish. Essex's arrival in Dublin with great losses is mentioned in *A Last Elizabethan Journal* in an entry dated 26 April 1599 as follows: "My Lord of Essex landed in Dublin on the 14th of the month, having had a rough and dangerous passage. Upon their landing the Admiral and the Vice-Admiral […] wherein all the Queen's treasure was, having all their sails up and full were like to stem each other but with much do and by God's goodness escaped" (Harrison 17). Furthermore, in an entry dated 30 July 1599, Devereux's journey to Munster is described as "unreasonable, and by the small effects thereof my Lord hath broken the heart of the best troops, weakened his strength upon inferior rebels and run out the glass of time that can hardly be recovered" (29). Moreover, Essex, after had lost his hopes to return to England with a remarkable military triumph against the Irish, he signed a ceasefire with O'Neill, which infuriated Elizabeth because Essex not only weakened the English army and made England lose her reputation in Ireland but he also wasted money and time (Brett 256). Rowse puts forth the disappointment of Elizabeth with Devereux's conducts as follows:

> [Devereux] was, however, present at the treasonable interview with the grand rebel, Tyrone, with which Essex brought to an end in fiasco all the hopes placed upon him. The unpardonable thing was that he discussed with the Irish chieftain what should be done about the succession to the Crown; he was hoping to use James from Scotland to bring pressure upon the Queen. She could never put her case to the public; so her popularity with the people suffered in consequence – Essex, who should have been her chief support, robbed her of it. (*Shakespeare* 78)

Essex defied Elizabeth's order to stay in Ireland and put down the revolt and returned to England. However, before his return, he began to make plans of a rebellion against Elizabeth, which was approved by Southampton but avoided by Blount (Marshall 138). Elizabeth displayed a negative reaction to Essex's disobedience and ordered him to stay in his house until the inquiry was finalised. After Essex was tried at York House in 1600, he was charged with misconduct in Ireland, lost all of his titles and was sentenced to house arrest (C. Levin 101). Essex decided to make preparations for an uprising against Elizabeth due to the further economical restrictions imposed on him by her. As Essex lost his influence at court, his debts rose and Elizabeth refused to extend his licence to import sweet wines (P. Edwards, *The Making* 215). Therefore, the

discriminated groups such as the Puritans and Roman Catholics, the people who criticised the economic policies of the government met in Essex's House (Marshall 139). On the news of these gatherings, Essex was called to the Council in 1601 (Brett 257). Essex did not go to the Council; instead, he marched through the streets of the city of London hoping to receive support from the English people. However, Cecil had already organised the declaration of Essex as a treacher, thus Essex could not get the support of the citizens (C. Levin 102). Essex's useless efforts to gain the support of the Londoners is referred to in an entry dated 8 February 1601 in *A Last Elizabethan Journal* as follows:

> Being entered into London he began to cry out, 'For the Queen! For the Queen! A plot is laid for my life.' And so went forward in much haste through the chief streets of the city to Sheriff Smith's house near Fenchurch, for he had been given to understand that the Sheriff who hath command of a thousand of the trained bands would be assistant to him upon all occassions. The citizens tunning together without any arms to gaze, he besought them to arm themselves else they would be of no use to him; nevertheless in the City not so much as one man of the meanest quality would take arms for him. (Harrison 146)

As indicated above, Essex was left alone in his cause and though he sought for the Londoners' help, he had already fallen from favour. Exceptionally, Shakespeare and his theatre company were also involved in the Essex Rebellion because they were asked by the supporters of Essex to perform *Richard II* at the Globe the day before the rebellion. The chief objective of the supporters was to get the help of the citizens through the performance of the dethronement of Richard II by Bolingbroke. However, the performance of *Richard II* by the Lord Chamberlain's Men did not create the expected impact (Parsons and Mason 16). Francis Bacon refers to the staging of *Richard II* before the uprising and the consequences for the players in his following words:

> The afternoone before the rebellion, Merricke, with a great company of others, that afterwards were all in the action, had procured to bee played before them, the play of deposing King Richard the second. Neither was it casuall, but a play bespoken by Merrick. And not so onely, but when it was told him by one of the players, that the play was olde, and they should haue losse in playing it, because fewe would come to it: there was forty shillings extraordinarie giuen to play it, and so thereupon playd it was. So earnest hee was to satisfie his eyes with the sight of that tragedie which hee thought soone after his lord should bring from the stage to the state, but that God turned it vpon their owne heads. (qtd. in E.K. Chambers 326)

In the above lines, Bacon indicates that Sir Gillie Merrick, a supporter of Devereux, ordered the Lord Chamberlain's Men to perform *Richard II*, when the actors refused to stage the play as the play was old fashioned and would not attract an audience, Merrick offered them forty shillings in order to compensate for their financial loss. However, as Bacon states, despite the absolute belief of the rebels in the success of the uprising, the expectations of establishing a new rule collapsed with serious repercussions for the rebels. Accordingly, Roland Mushat Frye mentions the involvement of Shakespeare and the other actors in the rebellion as follows:

> On the day before the uprising, Essex supporters paid the Chamberlain's Men to stage Shakespeare's Richard II at the Globe, since the play concerned "the deposing and killing" of a king, and thus might be effective propaganda for their rebellion against Elizabeth. The play did not materially aid their cause, but a careful official investigation was made into the company's part in the whole business. […] Indeed, they played before Elizabeth at Whitehall Palace on the eve of Essex's execution. (*Shakespeare's* n.p.)

As indicated in these lines, Shakespeare and the members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men were not punished, yet they became subjects of an investigation and performed *Richard II,* this time on the command of Elizabeth, at Whitehall Palace before the execution of Essex. In his account of the trial of Essex on 19 February 1601 Sir Edward Coke vividly explains the intense disappointment Elizabeth felt over Essex's disloyalty as follows:

> I protest upon my soul and conscience I doe beleeve she should not have long lived after she has been in your power. Note but the precedents of former ages, how long lived Richard the Second after he was surprised in the same manner? The pretence was alike for the removing of certain counsellors, but yet shortly after it cost him his life. (qtd. in E.K. Chambers 325)

These lines clearly demonstrate that the failed Essex revolt targeted the English throne and aimed at dethroning Elizabeth just like the deposition of Richard II by Henry Bolingbroke. In this sense, Coke established a close connection between Elizabeth and Richard II and implied that Elizabeth was betrayed by a courtier whom she trusted and favoured. Accordingly, Essex's uprising failed as it could not get support from the courtiers and the English people. Essex was imprisoned to be executed (Frye, *Shakespeare's* n.p.). Along with Essex and Southampton, twenty-five courtiers, nine of

whom were earls and sixteen of whom were barons were arrested (Thomson 18). Lytton Strachey puts forward the slight hesitation Elizabeth went through in ordering the execution of Essex as follows:

> The trial had taken place on 19 February, and the execution was fixed for the 25th. A little wavering there had indeed to be – she would not have been Elizabeth without it; but it was hardly perceptible. On the 23rd she sent a message that the execution should be postponed; on the 24th she sent another that it should be proceeded with. She interfered with the course of the law no further. (163)

As indicated above, Essex was executed on the 25 February 1601 and the rebellion was crushed. John Chamberlain gives information about the trial of Essex in his letter dated 24 February 1601 and asserts that Essex and his supporters were accused of disobeying the orders of the Court and returning from Ireland, coming to the city of London armed and aiming to provoke an uprising and preserving the Essex House instead of surrendering. Essex defended himself arguing that his reason for coming to London and fighting against the Queen's soldiers was to save his own life and he argued that he returned to England in order to throw himself at the feet of Elizabeth and contrary to his enemies at the court who denigrated him, he desired to remind Elizabeth of the intimacy between them (qtd. in Thomson 18). Of all the mentioned charges against Essex, Chamberlain, a witness to the incidents that led Essex to his trial and to execution, emphasises that though Essex strongly denied the accusations of his treason against the Queen, still his cooperation with O'Neill and making a compromise with the Pope were two serious accusations against Essex (qtd. in Thomson 18). As Bevington states, though the rebellion was suppressed before it turned into a serious crisis, an atmosphere of fear and worry still prevailed throughout England (*Murder* 77). After the execution of Essex, James VI of Scotland intervened in the situation of Southampton, who was accused of taking part in the revolt, in order to avoid his execution (F. Edwards, *The Succession* 23). After James I of England acceded to the throne, he ordered the liberation of Southampton and Sir Henry Neville and he not only entitled Essex's son but also allowed him to stay at the court (McElwee 112).

The unrest in Denmark, which may be associated with the disorder England was thrown into by the Essex Rebellion, is presented at the very beginning of the play as "Denmark

is from the start in a state of shock and confusion. The whole place seems mad" (Richardson 88). Thus, the play opens with the presentation of the widespread unrest terrorising Denmark, which foreshadows the conflicts that start with Hamlet's appearance at the court and prevail throughout the play. Frederick Boas refers to the impact of the circumstances on Hamlet's psychology and highlights the corruption in Denmark as follows:

> Another man than Hamlet might have set right the world that was out of joint around him: he himself might have overcome his deep-seated malady in another and sounder world. But his inward disease is ever fed from the rank poison that circulates through the body politic around him. Rightly does he, who could be bounded in a nut-shell and count himself a lord of infinite space, call Denmark a prison, for whenever he seeks to escape from his weakness he is clogged and thrown back by the system of things wherein his lost is cast. (S*hakspere* 387)

As indicated in these lines, Hamlet is greatly and directly influenced by the uneasiness in Denmark after his return from Wittenberg. In other words, there is a close link between the unrest in the country and Hamlet's growing restlessness after his father died and his mother married his uncle. Thus, the instability in Denmark and Hamlet's melancholy affect each other and Hamlet's distemper is also shaped by that "something […] rotten in the state of Denmark" (I.iv.90). In this respect, according to Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo, the Ghost's appearance in armour and leaving without saying a word in I.i. portend trouble in the country. Horatio tells Hamlet that they saw "a figure like [Hamlet's] father / Armed at point exactly" (199-200) and all the soldiers say that the Ghost was armed "from head to foot" (229). When Hamlet asks Horatio, "Did you not speak to it" (213), Horatio states that they tried to speak, but it left in silence, which creates uncertainty about the reason of its appearance: "My lord, I did, / But answer made it none" (214-215). Horatio further comments that the sudden presence of the mysterious apparition is the foreshadowing of a threat to Denmark: "But in the gross and scope of my opinion, / This bodes some strange eruption to our state" (I.i.71-72). Moreover, Marcellus confirms Horatio's deep concern about Denmark as he bitterly complains about the extreme measures taken against an unknown danger:

> Why this same strict and most observant watch
> So nightly toils the subject of the land,
> And why such daily cast of brazen cannon

> And foreign mart for implements of war,
> Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
> Does not divide the Sunday from the week. (I.i.74-79)

As clearly indicated in the above lines, there is a great preparation as if Denmark will go to war or will be torn apart by civil strife. The soldiers keep watch every night, weapons are bought from other countries and they are put on stand-by against any external or internal attack. In addition, the navy is enormously strenghtened. In this sense, Marcellus asks: “What might be toward that this sweaty haste / Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day, / Who is’t that can inform me?” (I.i.80-82). Thus, Marcellus reveals that there is disorder in the country for an unknown reason and the people feel anxious about such a chaotic situation. In return, Horatio explains the possible cause of the widespread unrest in Denmark and says that Fortinbras plans to assault Denmark in order to retrieve the lands King Fortinbras lost to King Hamlet and to avenge his father’s murder: “The source of this our watch, and the chief head / Of this post-haste and rummage in the land” (I.i.109-110). At the beginning of the play Claudius also calls Denmark “this warlike state” (I.ii.10) and puts forward the possibility of going to war against Norway. Barnardo’s further statement vividly puts forth that widespread unrest prevails throughout Denmark after the death of King Hamlet and continues despite the accession of the new monarch: “Well may it sort that this portentous figure / Comes armed through our watch so like the King / That was and is the question of these wars” (I.i.112-114). Though the problems that seriously impinge on Denmark started during the reign of King Hamlet, their impact increased after his death. Alfred Harbage describes the beginning of the play as “rich in atmosphere, and daring to a degree in immediately creating a tension difficult to sustain” and says that “[o]ur attention is held by the vividly pictorial language describing the nation urgetly arming, and by the suggestion of an omious connection between the past events being narrated and the ghastly visitation just seen” (*William Shakespeare* 304). In addition to the stataments of the above-mentioned soldiers, King Claudius also speaks of the political disturbance that threatens the welfare of Denmark in relation to Fortinbras’s possible military assault:

> Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,
> Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

> Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
> Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
> Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,
> He hath not fail'd top ester us with message (I.ii.17-22)

As indicated in these lines, the possibility of foreign intervention also causes uneasiness at the royal court of Denmark. In other words, King Claudius warns about an attack which will disturb the peace in Denmark and will force the country to go to war against Norway.

Moreover, in I.iv. Hamlet lays emphasis on the debauchery which already spread throughout the country and influenced the Danish people, causing Denmark to lose prestige in the eyes of the foreign countries. Though Hamlet admits that the sumptuous feasts are a part of the Danish tradition, he also asserts that a honourable king should terminate them and hence save the country from dissipation. In this sense, Hamlet puts forth the massive corruption that Denmark became a part of: "This heavy-headed revel east and west / Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations– / They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase / Soil our addition […]" (17-20). Hence, apart from the political and military unrest, there is also a moral degeneracy that disturbs Denmark. The political and military uncertainty in Denmark after the death of King Hamlet, which might be linked to the riotous nobles in the last years of Elizabeth I in England, is heightened by moral depravity. For Harbage, the Danish court is "a court where recent death can be followed by *swaggering* revels" (*William Shakespeare* 310). Thus, desolation and entertainment intermingle at the Danish court in exactly the same way affection and hostility merged at the English court as seen in the relationship between Elizabeth I and Essex. Claudius also refers to the intermingling of joy and sorrow in Denmark as he states that he married Gertrude, the widow of his deceased brother, with "[…] a defeated joy, / With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, / In equal scale weighing delight and dole" (I.ii.10-13). Moreover, in this current state of Denmark, "Hamlet […] seems in a measure detached, a thoughtful spectator of a society he is in but not morally of" (Harbage, *William Shakespeare* 310). Hamlet does not morally belong to Denmark where his father was killed, and his mother married his uncle. Moreover, political and military uncertainty pervade throughout the country and even the customs are corrupted; nonetheless, he is obliged to find out the murderer of his

father and avenge himself in Denmark. In this sense, upon the insistence of Claudius and Gertrude for him to stay in Denmark, Hamlet accepts: “I shall in all my best obey you, madam” (I.ii.120). Hence, though “Denmark’s a prison […] being one o’th’ worst” (II.ii.242), Hamlet has to struggle against the evil in order to take revenge on the murderer of his father.

The significance of the existence of a powerful monarch, who is capable of maintaining order in the country and stopping all kinds of major and minor riots for the welfare of the country, is also emphasised in III.iii. in the conversation between Claudius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Claudius tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that they will accompany Hamlet on his journey to England because Hamlet’s existence at the Danish court poses an obvious danger not only to Claudius’s kingship but also to the well-being of Denmark. In Ruth Nevo’s words, “[Hamlet] who was Denmark’s honored prince (and is still, after all, heir apparent) becomes in the eyes of all an overt menace to the kingdom, and this fact is exploited by Claudius, who seizes the opportunity to rid himself of this dangerous nephew” (45). Accordingly, Claudius refers to Hamlet’s instable behaviours and says: “I like him not, nor stands it safe with us. / To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you. / I your commission will forthwith dispatch, / And he to England shall along with you” (III.iii.1-4). Guildenstern confirms Claudius’s remarks on the necessity of averting any type of danger to protect the country and says: “We will ourselves provide. / Most holy and religious fear it is / To keep those many bodies safe / That live and feed upon your Majesty” (7-11). In this respect, Guildenstern believes that carrying out the orders of Claudius is their primary duty to the monarch and the country. Similar to Guildenstern’s complete support for Claudius’s wish to send Hamlet away from Denmark, Rosencrantz also refers to the essentiality of securing the monarch’s life because the continuity of all other lives in the country depends on the existence of a strong monarch. In this regard, all the people who endanger the life of the monarch should be eliminated:

> The single and peculiar life is bound
> With all the strength and armour of the mind
> To keep itself from noyance; but much more
> That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
> The lives of many. […] (11-15)

As indicated in these lines, the individuals may act against the sovereign in order to protect their own lives or to rise to power, which directly refers to Essex's self defense at his trial saying that he opposed the soldiers of the Queen in front of the Essex House in order to protect his own life as has been mentioned; however, the maintenance of the existing power is fundamental for the preservation of the people. Hence, as Rosencrantz says, "[t]he cess of majesty / Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw / What's near it with it" (15-17). In this respect, the courtiers and the people should support the monarch in his/her fight against the rebels, as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do; otherwise, not only is the monarch destroyed but also the courtiers and the people are severely affected by the disorder in the country. In Rosencrantz's words, "[n]ever alone / Did the King sigh, but with a general groan" (22-23). Accordingly, it may be argued that the mentioned support of the majority of the courtiers for the Queen along with the support of the Londoners during the Essex Rebellion is reflected in the words of Claudius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

As regards the problem in Hamlet's madness, almost all the characters in the play make a comment and try to find an explanation for Hamlet's distemper and define it. For the Gravedigger, Hamlet "is mad and sent into England" (V.i.144), while for Gertrude, "[t]his is mere madness, / And thus awhile the fit will work on him" (V.i.279-280). Polonius calls it "lunacy" (II.ii.49), but he also thinks that madness and consciousness exist together: "How pregnant sometimes his replies are–a happiness that often madnes hits on, which reason and sanity could not so presperously be delivered of" (II.ii.208-211). Claudius, on the one hand, tells Laertes that Hamlet is mad (V.i.213), or defines Hamlet's psychological state as "distemper" (II.ii.55); on the other hand, he is sure that "[Hamlet's] affections do not that way tend, / Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little, / Was not like madness" (III.i.164-166). Therefore, although almost each character in the play has a comment on Hamlet's psychological state, none of them reaches an obvious conclusion about the nature of Hamlet's sombre mood. In this sense, it may be stated that the immense distress Hamlet suffers both before and after he encounters the Ghost fits the definition of melancholy which is described as "[a] mood, state, or episode of sadness, dejection, or introspection" (n.p.) in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Furthermore, this psychological state refers to "[a] severe form of

depression; […] a major depressive episode" (Colman 449). Melancholy is also defined as "indicating a condition or quality, referring to the ancient doctrine of the four temperaments, according to which depression was attributed to an excess of black bile" (Colman 449). As Thomas MacCary points out, "[i]n the late sixteenth century, there was a variety of explanations of madness. One is the theory of the bodily humors. Melancholy, which Freud called dementia praecox and we call depression, was, as its name implies ("black anger"), attributed to a superflux of black bile" (28). In this respect, according to the medical records of the Elizabethan era, the mental disorder was linked to physiology, and the four humours dominating the human body were held responsible for the peculiar behaviours of human beings. The excessiveness of blood causes gayety; the extravagancy of yellow bile results in rage; the excess of phlegm leads to apathy and the excess of black bile causes melancholy (McEvoy 15). Therefore, it may be argued that even from the very beginning of the play, as will be demonstrated, Hamlet exhibits the symptoms of melancholy, which later becomes a part of his feigned madness. As there are diverse causes of melancholy, there are also various symptoms according to Robert Burton as he presents in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Some of the symptoms, which also fit Hamlet on different occasions, appear in the melancholic person are as follows:

> […] mimical gestures are too familiar, laughing, grinning, fleering, murmuring, talking to themselves, with strange mouths and faces, inarticulate voices, exclamations, etc. And although they be commonly lean, hirsute, uncheerful in countenance, withered, and not so pleasant to behold, by reason of those continual fears, griefs, and vexations, dull, heavy, lazy, restless, unapt to go about any business; yet their memories are most part good, they have happy wits, and excellent apprehensions. (383-384)

Furthermore, "fear and sorrow […] are the most assured signs, inseparable companions, and characters of melancholy" (Burton 385). For Bradley, Hamlet's being "inclined to nervous instability, to rapid and perhaps extreme changes of feeling and mood" and his being "absorbed in the feeling or mood that possessed him, whether it were joyous or depressed" (87) fit the definition of "melancholic" for the Elizabethans. Bradley further asserts that Hamlet's melancholy is directly related to the circumstances in which he is placed because if he were in a different condition, he would not show the symptoms of melancholy, but his distemper would still pose a danger for the people around him (88).

In this sense, the question whether the appearance of the Ghost and the duty of revenge are the sole causes of Hamlet's melancholy or whether Hamlet already feels extremely depressed as soon as he returns to Denmark is posed.

In the light of this information, it is vividly presented in the play that Hamlet's deep sorrow stemming from his father's death and his mother's early and hasty marriage to his uncle, King Claudius, starts before he meets the Ghost of his father which reveals the truth about King Hamlet's death. Courtni Crump Wright elaborates Hamlet's situation in the beginning of the play as follows: "The king's death has not even been investigated, avenged, or mourned before Gertrude is wed to his brother, the new king. Hamlet does not have time to be sorrowful for the loss of his father before he must suffer the loss of his mother to another man and be expected to rejoice in his mother's new happiness" (43). For Boas, "[Hamlet's] idealism has taken the form of pessimism; his will and emotions are alike diseased. The metaphysics of Wittenberg have dwarfed and dimmed for him the practical world of facts and events […]" (*Shakspere* 391). In accordance with this argument, in I.ii. when Gertrude wants Hamlet to accept the reality of death and ease his distress, Hamlet bitterly resents the fact that his mother is not so sorrowful as him for the death of King Hamlet, and above all she asks Hamlet not to overreact to his father's death:

> 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
> That can denote me truly. (I.ii.77-83)

It is strongly professed in these lines that Hamlet blames not only Gertrude but also all the members of the royal court of Denmark for pretending to feel extremely upset about King Hamlet's death. Hamlet asserts that the black clothes which are worn as an indication of sorrow, the audible sighs of grief, the insincere tears shed to show the extent of misery and the factitious poses assumed are not sufficient to express the intense agony Hamlet endures. Hamlet's torment is so great that he suffers it within as he says, "[t]hese indeed seem, / For they are actions that a man might play; / But I have

that within which passes show, / These but the trappings and the suits of woe" (83-86). And apart from the sorrow, "aversion and indignation are the feelings [Hamlet] experiences" (Richardson 87-88). Therefore, Hamlet feels terribly depressed by his father's death and his mother's marriage to his uncle even before he sees the Ghost and is given the duty of taking revenge, which overburdens him as will be demonstrated in this chapter. To put it more clearly, Hamlet's uneven temper is not totally rooted in the task of vengeance as he suffers growing alienation from his environment on his return to Denmark. He vividly stresses that what he feels inside is deeper and greater than mourning for his dead father. In this respect, as Iwasaki points out, Hamlet desperately struggles with an identity crisis as "his mother is now his aunt, his uncle his father, or Hamlet himself is his uncle's nephew and son, his mother's son and nephew" (3). Furthermore, the above-mentioned lines may be considered as a foreshadowing to Hamlet's feigning madness, which is first presented in I.v as will be demonstrated. Hamlet openly refers to the ability of the human beings to pretend various feelings and to convince the people around them. Furthermore, Hamlet reveals that he already started to think about committing suicide as the only means of emancipation from the massive corruption prevailing throughout Denmark and the sorrow he suffers from after his father's death. He says: "O that this too too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into dew, / Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd / His canon 'gainst self-slaughter" (I.ii.129-132). For Hamlet, life is "[…] weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" (I.ii.133) while Denmark is "[…] an unweeded garden / That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely" (I.ii.135-137). Thus, it may be said that Hamlet feels desperate not only about the depravedness of the environment where he is forced to live but also about the future of the country even at the very beginning of the play and brings forward the idea of an aimless life which can be terminated by death. Hamlet also expresses the chief reason for his grief which starts before the appearance of the Ghost and asserts that his mother's abrupt marriage to his uncle soon after his father's death troubles him deeply:

> […] Frailty, thy name is woman–
> A little month, or ere those shoes were old
> With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
> Like Niobe, all tears–why, she–
> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourn'd longer–married with my uncle,

> My father's brother […] (I.ii.146-152)

As it is stressed in these lines, Hamlet accuses Gertrude of being disrespectful to the memory of King Hamlet through her marriage to King Hamlet's brother. For Hamlet, Gertrude betrayed her deceased husband by marrying a close relative. Thus, Hamlet does not find Gertrude's sorrow that she showed in King Hamlet's funeral credible and hence he considers himself to be a part of trickery because he deeply feels that his immediate family is not reliable. Wilson Knight touches on Hamlet's sheer misery about his father's death and his mother's marriage to his uncle as follows:

> These two concrete embodiments of Hamlet's misery are closely related. He suffers from misery at his father's death and agony at his mother's quick forgetfulness: such callousness is infidelity, and so impurity, and, since Claudius is the brother of the King, incest. It is reasonable to suppose that Hamlet's state of mind, if not wholly caused by these events, is at least definitely related to them. Of his two loved parents, one has been taken for ever by death, the other dishonoured for ever by her act of marriage. To Hamlet the world is now an 'unweeded garden'. (18)

As it is stressed in these lines, the nature of Gertrude's marriage to Claudius is questionable because the marriage of two close relatives has an unethical aspect. At this point, it will also be useful to analyse Laertes's words in IV.v. about a disloyal wife which directly refer to Hamlet's situation after his father's death. After Laertes returns from France for revenge on the murder of Polonius, he grows bitterly angry with Claudius who tries to calm him and says: "That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard, / Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot / Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow / Of my true mother" (116-119). Therefore, the dead father and the unfaithful mother Laertes wishes to have if he does not act and avenge his father's murder are the major sources of Hamlet's early sorrow. Hamlet's inconsolable grief for his mother's marriage is also presented in his conversation with Horatio. When Horatio expresses that he came to Denmark from Wittenberg to be present at King Hamlet's funeral, Hamlet's following response, "I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student. / I think it was to see my mother's wedding" (I.ii.177-178), vividly demonstrates that Hamlet resents the marriage of Gertrude and Claudius. Accordingly, Hamlet defines the marriage between Gertrude and Claudius as sinful and expresses that such terrible wrong does not foreshadow positive developments: "O most wicked speed! To post /

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! / It is not, not it cannot come to good" (I.ii.156-158). Therefore, Hamlet is already in a gloomy world where the closest kins prove to be unreliable and he feels extremely confused about the means of surviving in such an unsteady environment. In this regard, Hamlet asserts that he will not immediately react, but instead, he will maintain his silence and stay calm, which is in compliance with his upcoming feigned madness and hesitation: "But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue" (I.ii.159). Hence, it may be argued that Hamlet's emotional breakdown is presented at the beginning of the play before the appearance of the Ghost of his father and the root cause may be regarded as Gertrude's infidelity to Hamlet's father who died unexpectedly. In this sense, for Bradley**,** the type of melancholy Hamlet suffers from cannot be called madness. It stems from psychological breakdown which can affect human beings even after a long and tiring period of an illness. Therefore, this kind of psychological mood does not lead to a radical change in man's moral values, but may make man cease positive thinking and this temper may worsen by the effect of a sudden shock (40). In the light of this information, it may also be said that with the appearance of the Ghost, Hamlet's initial intense agony turns into a fundamental problem for him and lead him to pretend madness.

After Hamlet first learns about the existence of the Ghost of his father in I.ii. he instantly gets out of the melancholic mood and focuses on secrecy rather than lamenting for his dead father. In this sense, Hamlet underlines the necessity of maintaining absolute secrecy in his acts by requesting that Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo remain silent about the appearance of the Ghost. He wants not to mention this event to anybody else at the court: "I pray you all, / If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight, / Let it be tenable in your silence still" (I.ii.246-248). Therefore, Hamlet demands the soldiers to keep the apparition as a secret as he wants to see the course of events. Accordingly, after Hamlet talks to the Ghost and learns about the truth of his father's death, he lays secrecy down as a condition so as to authenticate the things that the Ghost told him. In this regard, when Horatio begs Hamlet to reveal them the truth which was uncovered by the Ghost, "Good my lord, tell it" (122), Hamlet expresses that he does not have trust in the soldiers and says: "No, you will reveal it" (123). Then, at the insistence of the soldiers, Hamlet agrees to tell about his talk with the Ghost only if the soldiers promise

that they will keep it a secret: “How say you then, would heart of man once think it– / But you’ll be secret?” (126-127). However, Hamlet still does not disclose the Ghost’s story as he further firmly insists the soldiers’ keeping everything about the Ghost to themselves: “Never make known what you have seen tonight” (149). Marcellus’s exasperated reaction to Hamlet’s excessive persistence in secrecy demonstrates that the soldiers are disturbed by Hamlet’s strange behaviours: “We have sworn, my lord, already” (155). The Ghost’s insistence on confidentiality saying, “Swear by his sword” (169), displays that though the Ghost orders Hamlet to retribute, it also wishes its presence to remain confidential. Moreover, Hamlet tries to suppress his curiosity and anxiety until he meets the Ghost as he says, “[w]ould the night were come. / Till then sit still, my soul” (I.ii.256-257). Therefore, it may be argued that Hamlet’s constant attempts to delay his actions and repress his emotions through the play are seen at the very beginning of the play.

In this regard, after his encounter with the Ghost of his father, Hamlet is obliged to bear the heavy burden of his father’s murder apart from his father’s death and his mother’s marriage to his uncle. Before their meeting, Hamlet reveals that he already sees the Ghost of his father in his consciousness. When Hamlet says, “[m]y father–methinks I see my father–” (I.ii.183), Horatio asks, “Where, my lord?” (184). And Hamlet’s response, “In my mind’s eye, Horatio” (185), indicates that the image of his dead father already haunts Hamlet’s mind. As Richardson expresses, the memory of his father is so abiding for Hamlet that “[t]he idea strikes his mind with a sudden and powerful impulse: he pauses: forgets his intention of explaining himself to Horatio: the image of his father professes him: and, by the most solemn and striking apostrophe that ever poet invented, he impresses it on his audience” (107). The appearance of the Ghost to Hamlet in I.iv. also poses a complex problem about the bleak atmosphere of the country. When Hamlet first sees the Ghost, he asks the reason why it wanders in its armour and in arms ready to fight. Hamlet asserts that he saw his father lying tranquilly in his grave and he wonders about the reason that made the Ghost of his father get out of its tomb and mysteriously walk around the living: “O answer me. / Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell / Why thy canoniz’d bones, hearsed in death, / Have burst their cerements […]” (45-48). Therefore, Hamlet strongly suspects that the Ghost of the old king returned for a

cause and not in vain. Hamlet further estimates that there is a link between the unexpected emergence of the Ghost of his father and the rife corruption not only in Denmark but also in the relationships at the court. In this respect, he asks the Ghost: "What may this mean, / That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel / Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon" (51-53). Hamlet also puts forth the questions that the appearance of the Ghost raises as follows: "Making night hideous and we fools of nature / So horridly to shake our disposition / With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?" (54-56). However, it is also possible to argue that Hamlet regards the emergence of the Ghost not only as the reason for various complicated questions but also as the means of finding the reasons for the degeneration influencing the whole country. To put it more clearly, Hamlet counts on the Ghost in order to find the answers of the questions which have preoccupied him since his return to Denmark. In this respect, Hamlet asks: "Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?" (57). Hence, Hamlet hopes that the Ghost provides the answers he is looking for and helps him make sense of the rottenness surrounding his life and ease his melancholy.

At this point, it is useful to touch upon the references to the idea of madness before Hamlet decides to feign madness and openly voices his plan at the end of I.v. Horatio refers to the possibility of Hamlet's real madness due to the sight of the Ghost. First, in I.ii, when the soldiers inform Hamlet about the shape, facial expressions and attitude of the Ghost, Horatio asserts that Hamlet would be filled with tremendous excitement on the appearance of the Ghost in his following statement: "It would have much amaz'd you" (233). Thus, as it is openly indicated in this line, Horatio first refers to the exaltation Hamlet would feel if he met the Ghost. However, in I.iv. when Hamlet firmly resolves to follow the Ghost and talk to him in order to learn his intentions, Horatio vividly affirms that pursuing the Ghost will be dangerous as it may do both physical and psychological harm to Hamlet. In this sense, Horatio warns Hamlet that the Ghost may take him to the sea or to the scary steep and may frighten and insaniate Hamlet by taking a terrifying form as follows:

> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other horrible form

> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
> And draw you into madness? (69-74)

As indicated above, the appearance of the Ghost is associated with madness even before it reveals the truth about King Hamlet's death and gives Hamlet the duty of revenge which overwhelms him. Horatio further points to the sheer desolation Hamlet may feel and lose the desire to live: "The very place puts toys of desperation, / Without more motive, into every brain" (75-76). In this respect, the feelings of utter despair and weariness which overtake Hamlet particularly after he learns that his father was murdered by his uncle who immediately married his mother are associated with real madness which Hamlet may be suffering from his first direct encounter with the Ghost.

Regarding the problem in Hamlet's madness, it may be said that the breaking point is the very end of I.v. where Hamlet explains to the soldiers how he will behave thereafter. He openly states that he may act strangely and wants the soldiers not to disclose his real intention. In this regard, Hamlet says:

> How strange or odd some'er I bear myself–
> As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
> To put an antic disposition on–
> That you, at such time seeing me, never shall,
> With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
> Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
> As 'Well, we know', or 'We could and if we would',
> Or 'If we list to speak', or 'There be and if they might',
> Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
> That you know aught of me–this do swear (178-188)

As indicated in these lines, Hamlet decides to take an odd attitude towards the people around him. Hamlet asserts that there will be a striking change in his behaviours and he will try to understand whether the Ghost is telling him the truth or not. Thus, John Dover Wilson points out that "[a]s for the relation of the 'antic disposition' to Hamlet's task, that is surely equally natural and obvious. However urgent the command of the Ghost, the difficulty of executing it without injuring the Queen, and the perplexity concerning the Ghost himself, forbid immediate action: Hamlet needs time for consideration. Meanwhile, the assumption of insanity would […] also give him a freedom of speech and action he could not otherwise obtain" (93). Wilson further draws

an exact parallel between Hamlet's being thrilled with encountering the Ghost of his father and his plan to feign madness in his following words: "All that actually happens is that, realising he had displayed intense and uncontrollable emotional excitement in the presence of Horatio and Marcellus, he pretends that he has been acting a part, and warns them that it may occur again […]" (92). Hence, it may be deduced that Hamlet wants to hide his confusion from Horatio and Marcellus through performing, and suddenly but deliberatively he decides to sustain this unstable temper in order to find out the truth. In this respect, Hamlet openly expresses that he aims at deceiving the people around him by acting like an insane man. In other words, the madness he will put on is not real and it will effectively function as the means of not only solving the murder of his father but also discovering the dreadful truth behind the relationships. Thus, in Himmet Umunç's words, "[…] except Horatio and the sentinels, all the other characters, from Claudius and Gertrude to Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz ad Guildenstern, fail to read Hamlet's mind and, instead, judge him only through the veneer of his madness" (150). In this sense, as Gabriel Egan puts it, "Hamlet certainly believes that putting on a play, a falsehood, can reveal a concealed truth in the present" (84). At this point, it is useful to focus on the meanings of the two words Hamlet uses, "antic" and "disposition". The definition of "antic" as provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "[a]bsurd from fantastic incongruity; grotesque, bizarre, uncouthly ludicrous" while "disposition" is defined as "[a] frame of mind or feeling; mood, humour" (n.p.). Thus, it may stated that Hamlet will display inconsistent and meaningless behaviours and he will act or speak in a brutely absurd way. However, it is clearly understood that both at the moment of professing his pretended madness and at the time he will put his ideas into action, he is and will be highly conscious of his behaviours and statements. Harold Bloom also refers to Hamlet's strong awareness even in the scenes where he feels disprited after his encounter with the Ghost and says: "I do not believe in his madness, the antic disposition of a great ironist. Perhaps Falstaff, Cleopatra, and Lear emerge from Shakespeare's 'unconscious intellect'; Hamlet and Iago do not" (Hamlet*: Poem* 146-147). And the question of to what extent Hamlet's melancholy will continue to influence his psychology is left unanswered because now Hamlet has two features in his psychology: his melancholic frame of mind and his pretence of a restless mood so that he can devise schemes. In this regard, Hamlet wants

the soldiers to closely collaborate with him so that notably Claudius and Gertrude will not sense the falsehood of Hamlet's madness. The soldiers will not display any behaviour or use any expression implicating Hamlet's pretence. Hence, Hamlet encumbers the soldiers and says: "And still your fingers on your lips, I pray" (I.v.195).

The first character who mentions Hamlet's madness is Ophelia as she tells Polonius about their meeting in II.i. In their encounter, Hamlet's appearance is unusual as his shirt is unbuttoned, he is not wearing a hat and his socks are fallen to his ankles. Thus, in the first scene where his madness is indicated, Hamlet's inner restlessness is reflected on his appearance. Hamlet does not utter a word; instead, he displays his uneasiness through his acts. He suddenly and firmly grabs at Ophelia's wrist and distances her as if he wants to see her clearly. Then, Hamlet begins to examine Ophelia's face creating the impression that he greatly desires to figure out whether Ophelia is eligible to share Hamlet's secret or she should not be trusted. Ophelia illustrates this scene as follows:

> He took me by the wrist and held me hard.
> Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
> And with his other hand thus o'er his brow
> He falls to such perusal of my face
> As a would draw it. Long stay'd he so. (88-92)

Then, Hamlet jolts Ophelia's arm and nods his head three times and sighs so heavily that Ophelia feels extremely anxious about Hamlet's life. She fears that Hamlet will die at that moment over there. She says: "At last, a little shaking of mine arm, / And thrice his heas thus waving up and down, / He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound / As it did seem to shatter all his bulk / And end his being" (92-96). Thus, Hamlet comes before Ophelia with highly intense emotions and though he does not reveal them through words, he shows them through his untidy outer look and peculiar conduct. Hamlet futher fixes his gaze on Ophelia until he leaves the chamber and disturbs her with his suspicious and puzzled glance. Edward Pechter describes Hamlet as a man "who is at first unable to let go of her with his hand, and who is to the last unable to let go of her with his eyes" (137). Considering Ophelia's account of Hamlet's oddness in their first encounter, it may be deduced that Hamlet's unexpected visit to Ophelia and his attempts to carefully evaluate her through his startling manners and analysing looks can be seen

as Hamlet's desperate urge to tell Ophelia about the Ghost's revelations, yet his failure to disclose the truth due to the vitality of secrecy to which he referred to on several occassions. Kei Maruta comments on Hamlet's silence and his inability to reveal his genuine emotions rather than pretensions as follows: "Our particular predicament with *Hamlet* is that the prince's breaths cram the air. […] That, however, is his private interpretation, which he never communicates to others and which apparently none of the other characters share. A person's self-expression is the dramatist's only means to characterize him as one concrete factor of his drama" (34). Ophelia's following comment strengthens this suggestion as she implies that Hamlet visited her in order to tell the horrible things that he experienced: "And with a look so piteous in purport / As if he had been loosed out of hell / To speak of horrors, he comes before me" (81-83). Therefore, Hamlet manifests his great anxiety which surfaces after he meets the Ghost, yet he cannot express through words. Knight also supports this argument as he points out that Hamlet's visit to Ophelia just after he sees the Ghost "[…] is no mock-madness. […] Hamlet would not first try the practical joke of pretended madness on Ophelia whom he loved. That pallor was clearly no cosmetic. Hamlet was in truth 'loosed out of Hell to speak of horrors': on top of the Ghost's revelation has come Ophelia's unreasonable repulsion of that his last contact with life, his love for her" (21) and as Hamlet was also left alone by Ophelia, "[f]rom henceforth he must walk alone within the prison of mental death" (21). Depending on Ophelia's report and without knowing the true intentions of Hamlet, Polonius directly links Hamlet's above-mentioned strange behaviour to his excessive love for Ophelia and says: "This is the very ecstasy of love" (102). Polonius further claims that Ophelia's returning of Hamlet's letters and keeping her distance from him drove him mad as he says, "[t]hat hath made him mad" (110). Hence, Hamlet's madness takes on a new dimension through Polonius's words and henceforth not only Polonius but also Claudius and Gertrude initially believe that the strong yet unrequited affection Hamlet feels for Ophelia is the primary cause of his sombre mood.

In relation to Hamlet's above-mentioned meeting with Ophelia, it may be argued that Hamlet's encounters with Ophelia form a judgement about his frame of mind. In III.i. Ophelia meets Hamlet in compliance with the plot laid by Claudius and Polonius so as

to understand the motive behind Hamlet’s melancholy. In this encounter, unlike their previous meeting where Hamlet does not feign madness, but acts strangely due to his failure in sharing his sorrow with Ophelia, Hamlet notably targets Ophelia and consciously wants to offend her. Hamlet, moreover, reveals his melancholy as he associates Ophelia with his mother and gets into a depressive mood. In their encounter, Hamlet first questions Ophelia’s chastity and beauty, deeply hurting her. However, Hamlet’s conscious acknowledgment of Ophelia and praise of her beauty at the very end of the ‘To be, or not to be’ soliloquy contradict his subsequent aggressive attitude towards her. In the last two lines of that mentioned soliloquy, Hamlet openly indicates that he will go through a change of mood. He asserts that he will sin against Ophelia through his pretended madness and wants Ophelia to pray for his absolution, too. In this respect, Hamlet says: “The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember’d” (88-89). Thus, it may be said that Hamlet bitterly repents his mistreatment of Ophelia in advance. Then, he refuses to have written letters to Ophelia and hence he denies that they have had a relationship. When Ophelia asks Hamlet to take his letters back as she says, “[m]y lord, I have remembrances of yours / That I have longed long to redeliver. / I pray you now receive them” (92-94), Hamlet pretends not to remember giving any letters to Ophelia and rejects her wish: “No, not I. / I never gave you aught” (95-96). Thereon, Ophelia claims that Hamlet did not only give letters declaring his love but he also expressed his affection for her through his words and behaviour towards her: “My honour’d lord, you know right well you did, / And with them words of so sweet breath compos’d / As made the things more rich” (97-99). Therefore, Ophelia gets angry at Hamlet’s denial and manifests that Hamlet is fully aware of what he did and did not. Suddenly, Hamlet changes the subject and asks Ophelia whether she is chaste or not. Moreover, he does not let Ophelia answer his question and asks another unexpected question about her beauty. Ophelia bewilderedly reacts to Hamlet’s unrelated questions as she asks, “[w]hat means your lordship?” (106). Then, Hamlet explains the relationship between beauty and chastity as if giving a moral lesson and asserts that a beautiful woman cannot be virtuous as pretty women are immoral and deceitful. Hamlet also implies his mother remembering her betrayal of his father’s love when he accuses Ophelia of being indecent. In this regard, Hamlet strongly recommends that Ophelia enter a convent and spend her entire life isolated from earthly affairs and

pleasures. Hamlet says: “Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?” (121-122). Thus, Hamlet thinks that he is also sinful because he descends from a depraved woman. At this moment Hamlet associates Ophelia with his mother and warns her about the evil-doers she will give birth to if she has a sex with men:

> I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all, believe none of us. (122-130)

It is strongly asserted in these lines that Hamlet’s accusations target himself, his mother, Ophelia and men. In other words, he vehemently condemns various people including himself. Correspondingly, Hamlet warns Ophelia against vicious men and tells her not to trust such men. It is evident that Hamlet directly equates himself with wanton men and puts forth the impossibility of his relationship with Ophelia. Moreover, Hamlet’s self-definition strikingly contrasts with his recent behaviour. Hamlet maintains that he is self-confident, determined and vindictive; however, he acts as a self-accusatory, hesitant and irresolute man. In this sense, he accepts that his mind and emotions remain incapable of demonstrating his traits and he does not have enough time to show them through his behaviour. As Ophelia undergoes Hamlet’s bitter accusations and uneven temper, she is concerned about his psychological state and expresses her regrets as she says, “[o] help him, you sweet heavens” (135) and “[h]eavenly powers, restore him” (143). In addition, Hamlet wants Ophelia to stay away from wise men and maintains that women have competency to easily fool men into believing that they are decent and virtuous, but only smart men are not fooled. Hamlet gives contradictory warnings as on the one hand, he wants Ophelia to lead a secluded life and not to have intercourse with men suggesting that any man like Hamlet is likely to deceive and hence dissappoint her. On the other hand, Hamlet asserts that Ophelia should maintain her distance with men because women like Ophelia mislead men by their breathtaking beauty and ostensible virtue. Here, Hamlet is thinking of his mother and refers to her infidelity to his deceased father. Accordingly, Hamlet further disparages women and accuses them of alluring men because women veil their ugliness through makeup and they hide their atrociousness through coquetry:

> I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say we will have no mo marriage. Those that are married already–all but one–shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. (144-151)

As Hamlet underlines, his mother's marriage to his uncle soon after his father's death created a massive impact upon his psychological state and paved the way for his strange behaviours. Therefore, Hamlet manifests that his depression started before the appearance of the Ghost and it is mainly related to the decadent relationship between his mother and his uncle.

Upon her confrontation with Hamlet, Ophelia recalls his previous actions and she feels awfully sorry for Hamlet's dramatic change. For Ophelia, Hamlet is radically transformed from a learned man into an unstable man though she does not call Hamlet's distemper madness. She asserts that Hamlet was a noble courtier, a courageous soldier and a distinguished intellectual; however, his current situation highly differentiates from his former features. Moreover, Hamlet has a fundamental position at the Danish court as he is the heir who is expected to inherit the throne after Claudius. In this regard, Ophelia wofully depicts Hamlet's distant sublimity as follows:

> O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
> Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> Th'observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down! (III.i.152-156)

With these lines, Ophelia maintains that Hamlet was an exemplary character for both the Danish court and the people. However, Hamlet now lacks his profound wisdom and remarkable consistency that he once maintained and his dignity is replaced by excessiveness. In Michael Goldman's words, "[n]o other role offers so much action of so many different kinds. Hamlet is a soldier, scholar, statesman, madman, fencer, critic, magnanimous prince, cunning revenger, aloof noble, witty ironist, man of the people, […] and he is regularly requried to change from one role to another before our eyes or to maintain several–or a disarming mixture of several–at once" (240). In this sense, it may be stated that Hamlet has multiple roles that he has to perform simultaneously and

Ophelia particularly longs for the times Hamlet properly acted like a soldier, scholar, politician and courtier; however, Ophelia now bitterly regrets that Hamlet dramatically changed into a sneering and an unbalanced man. Draper also supports this argument as he asserts that Shakespeare was influenced by *The Spanish Tragedy* not only in terms of the plot but also in creating Hamlet as a soldier and a prince. However, he distinctly demonstrated how a regular soldier and nobleman would respond to betrayal by his immediate family and friends (192-193).

Before Polonius reports Ophelia's meeting with Hamlet to Claudius informing him about his presumption about the reason for Hamlet's uncertain temper, Claudius decides to find out the grounds for the drastic change in Hamlet's personality. In this regard, he calls Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet's childhood friends, to the court of Denmark and appeals for their help in order to discover and resolve the problem about Hamlet's behaviours. Claudius says: "Something you have heard / Of Hamlet's transformation–so I call it, / Sith nor th'exterior nor the inward man / Resembles that it was" (II.ii.4-7). According to Claudius, Hamlet's both appearance and temperament changed to a large extent and the underlying cause should be identified. Claudius, in this regard, further asserts that the death of Hamlet's father is a justifiable reason for Hamlet's mourning; however, Claudius strongly suspects that there is another reason to be uncovered behind Hamlet's strangeness: "What it should be, / More than his father's death, that thus hath put him / So much from th'understanding of himself / I cannot dream of" (7-10). Similar to Claudius's reasoning, Gertrude also argues that King Hamlet's death and her impetuous marriage to Claudius chould be the chief reasons for Hamlet's ill nature: "I doubt it is no other but the main, / His father's death and our o'er-hasty marriage" (56-57). Moreover, Gertrude indicates that she is aware of the problem in Hamlet as she requests Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to see Hamlet so as to unveil the motive of his grief: "And I beseech you instantly to visit / My too much changed son" (35-36). Thus, it may be inferred that though Claudius and Gertrude do not name Hamlet's abnormal manners until Polonius voices his opinion on Hamlet's passionate love for Ophelia, they assert that there is a noticeable change in both his emotional and mental state. Accordingly, Polonius first designates Hamlet's oddness as madness and says: "[…] that I have found / The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy" (48-

49). In addition to this, Polonius explicitly states that Hamlet is mad and asserts that it is difficult to describe the nature of his madness as it is sheer madness to try to depict madness: “Your noble son is mad. / Mad call I it, for to define true madness, / What is’t but to be nothing else but mad?” (92-94). Thus, Polonius acknowledges that he is using the term madness to label Hamlet’s crossness for the first time. In other words, though Claudius, Gertrude and Ophelia are aware that there is something wrong in Hamlet’s psychology, they cannot name his ill temper; however, Polonius is the first character who directly associates Hamlet’s psychological breakdown with madness and shows his love for Ophelia as the chief cause. In this respect, as Gabriel Egan points out that “[i]n the play there is a distinct theme of knowing that something is wrong, but not knowing what it is” (87). Correspondingly, Polonius elaborates Hamlet’s motive of madness and clearly puts forth the impact of the troubled relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia on Hamlet’s insanity:

> And then I prescripts gave her,
> That she should lock herself from his resort,
> Admit no messengers, receive no tokens;
> Which done, she took the fruits of my advice,
> And he, repelled–a short tale to make–
> Fell into sadness, then into a fast,
> Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
> Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
> Into the madness wherein now he raves. (142-150)

As indicated in the above quotation, Polonius regards himself also as responsible for Hamlet’s madness and affirms that his stern warnings to Ophelia about keeping her distance from Hamlet were effective in driving Hamlet to madness. Polonius also maintains that Hamlet’s insanity occured gradually as he was first overcome by a sense of despair and stopped eating. Thus, first his physical collapse occured and then, out of exhaustion, he lost his mental balance. In the light of this information, it may be argued that Polonius diagnoses Hamlet’s emotional stress without persuasive evidence and overconfidently puts forward the reasons for his unbalanced temper.

Though Polonius looks quite determined in argueing that Hamlet’s madness is genuine in the rest of the play, he seriously doubts Hamlet’s intentions in II.ii. after he meets him wandering around the room reading a book. Hamlet pretends not to recognise

Polonius, yet still warns him about protecting his daughter's chastity. Taking Hamlet's sarcastic attitude into consideration, Polonius says: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't" (205). Therefore, Polonius calls Hamlet's mood madness, but he also admits that there is a particular system in it.

Similarly, at the end of III.i. Claudius concludes that Hamlet's strange behaviours do not depend on his love for Ophelia contrary to Polonius's early assertion. Claudius asserts that Hamlet's alienation differs from madness because his remarks do not sound like the statements of a mad person: "Love? His affections do not that way tend, / Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little, / Was not like madness" (164-166). Thus, Claudius vividly puts forward his utter astonishment at Polonius's claim that Hamlet went mad because of Ophelia's love. For Claudius, there is also rationality in Hamlet's speech as his words are not nonsense and there seems to be a particular design in his talk. Claudius further describes the nature of the growing unrest which influences Hamlet deeply. In this regard, Claudius says: "There's something in his soul / O'er which his melancholy sits on brood, / And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose / Will be some danger" (166-169). Hence, Claudius manifests that he is now conscious of the fact that Hamlet's distemper goes beyond mourning for the death of a father or lunacy because Claudius suspects that Hamlet may have a scheme which may pose danger for himself. Hence, as Ekmekçioğlu expresses, "[i]n the early scenes of the play, it is obvious that Claudius does not see any future danger in Hamlet's presence. But, when Hamlet, after having been warned by his father's ghost, starts to put on an antic disposition quite skilfully and to insinuate certain doubts on Claudius, Claudius begins to feel that Hamlet's presence is becoming dangerous for his power" ("The Theme" 130). Accordingly, Claudius makes a counter plan in order to avoid any potential threat from Hamlet:

> […] which for to prevent,
> I have in quick detrmination
> Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
> For the demand of our neglected tribute.
> Haply the seas and countries different,
> With variable objects, shall expel
> This something settled matter in his heart,
> Where on his brains still beating puts him thus

From fashion of himself. (169-177)

As clearly demonstrated in the above lines, though Claudius seems to mean well, he, in fact, plans to send Hamlet away and make him ineffective. In other words, Claudius wills to get rid of Hamlet, who seems disturbed, under the pretext of collecting tax from England. Thus, he expresses that the change of environment and the people around him will do him good. However, though Claudius pretends to consider Hamlet's welfare and seems to want him to completely recover from his bad mood, he plots to have Hamlet killed in England. As Wilson puts it, "[…] Hamlet's madness was a source of grave anxiety and much discussion on the part of Claudius and his consort, and that the former was preoccupied rather with his own safety than with Hamlet's health" (99). For Rossiter, this is "seeming and being" and "can be called maskedness", which is a feature of problem plays (127). In this sense, Claudio is a part of "the world of appearances" which "brings doubt, mixed feelings, an 'edgy' curiosity, a kind of fear" (127). However, Claudius does not openly mention his plan to have Hamlet murdered, he implies his evil intention at the beginning of III.iii. in his conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He declares that he has responsibility to his country as the sovereign and hence he needs to protect Denmark from any internal and external threats. For Claudius, Hamlet poses an immediate threat to Denmark; therefore, for the sake of the country, which Claudius uses as an excuse, Hamlet should be killed. Claudius says: "I like him not, nor stands it safe with us / To let his madness range. […] / The terms of our state may not endure / Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow / Out of his brows" (1-2, 5-7).

In IV.iii. Claudius further asserts that he planned to send Hamlet to England as a gesture of goodwill because after Hamlet killed Polonius, he should not stay in Denmark in order not to be punished. Claudius speaks of Hamlet's journey to England as if it is a new decision and as if it is just for Hamlet's welfare as follows: "Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety– / Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve / For that which thou hast done–must send thee hence / With fiery quickness" (40-43). However, Claudius declares his intention at the end of IV.iii. as he orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to follow Hamlet's every move so that he himself will be certain of Hamlet's murder by the English king. In this regard, Claudius says:

> And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught–
> As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
> Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
> After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
> Pays homage to us–thou mayst not coldly set
> Our sovereign process, which imports at full,
> By letters congruing to that effect,
> The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England. (61-68)

From the quotation above, it can easily be understood that Claudius established military and political superiority over the King of England and to this respect, he sustains that the King of England is obliged to execute his command, which is to murder Hamlet. Thus, it may be said that Hamlet's murder was already planned by Claudius and the parties reached a settlement. Moreover, Claudius's final remark in III.i.,"[m]adness in great ones must not unwatch'd go" (190), displays that Hamlet's transformation from a sensible, loving and respected statesman and son into a man who terribly worries his close kin and the courtiers with his uneven temper should be controlled not to cause any danger at the Danish court.

Hamlet's conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in II.ii. displays that Hamlet sees through the elaborate deception practised by Claudius. In this respect, when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell Hamlet that they came to Denmark with the purpose of visiting him, "To visit you, my lord, no other occasion" (271), Hamlet manifests that he does not believe in the reason stated by them and asks multiple questions to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find out the real motive for their visitation as follows: "Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come. Nay, speak" (274-276). As it is stressed in Hamlet's questions, he clearly perceives that there is another motivation behind Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's arrival in the Danish court because for Hamlet, their coming does not depend on their free will. To put it more clearly, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern came to Denmark at the request of Claudius and Gertrude, so they visit Hamlet not out of their desire to see an old friend but due to the responsibility of undertaking a significant mission, which is to learn the reason for Hamlet's sombre mood. In this respect, Hamlet wants his childhood friends to be completely honest with him and not to fool him. Hamlet further reveals that he is acutely aware of the leading part Claudius

and Gertrude take in the call of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as he says, “I know the good King and Queen have sent for you” (280). After Rosencrantz and Guildenstern confess that they were formally invited to Denmark, Hamlet does not allow them to account for their visit and expresses that they were called with the intent of disclosing his emotional collapse:

> I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. […] Man delights not me. (292-304, 309)

As stated in the quotation, Hamlet knows that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern made a pledge of loyalty to Claudius and Gertrude. And in order not to force them to betray the King and the Queen, Hamlet himself uncovers the truth behind his being observed and expresses that he is completely aware of everything. At this point, it may be said that Hamlet acts sensibly and does not exhibit any signs of madness, but melancholy. He depicts his recent psychological state as if he is confiding his troubles to a confidant and his mood changes from a keen observer to a melancholic lonely man. Accordingly, he tells that he does not take any joy in performing the duties that he conventionally fulfils. Neither Denmark, where he is born and is bound to rule in the future, nor the court gives Hamlet enjoyment. He further does not derive any pleasure from life in general as the sky and the environment surrounding him appear vicious and perilous. In this regard, Hamlet implies that his faith in humanbeings is destroyed due to his mother’s infidelity and his uncle’s hypocrisy after his father’s death. Consequently, Hamlet develops a hostile attitude towards not only his immediate environment but towards humanbeings in general. In other words, Hamlet’s deep pessimism about his father’s death and the degenerate relationship of his close relatives turned him into a misanthrope and alienated him from the people at the court whom he had known for a long time as he himself indicates in the above lines.

The fact that Hamlet feigns madness skillfully is also presented in II.ii. after he is informed by Rosencrantz about the coming of the travelling players to the Danish court. Hamlet, for a while, completely forgets about his immense distress at his father's death and his hatred towards his mother and uncle and he makes comments on the rivalry between the adult theatre companies and the boy theatre companies through the current theatrical success of the travelling group of players. Hamlet first wonders about the reason which led the group of players to leave their permanent playhouse and to travel. In this sense, Hamlet evaluates the nature of the playgoers and questions whether the audience lost their interest in these players. Then, Rosencrantz explains that the players fell out of favour with the contemporary audience due to the emergence of new theatre companies where young boys play the parts and achieve to attract the attention of the audience by their high voice: "[…] but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion […]" (336-339). Accordingly, Hamlet asks various questions about who financially and publicly supports this company of young boys and whether they plan to practise the profession of acting when they grow up: "What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escotted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?" (343-345). In this regard, Harbage indicates that Hamlet functions as the mouthpiece of Shakespeare who comments on the theatrical condition of his own time: "In 1601, the probable year of *Hamlet*, a third adult company has not yet succeeded in gaining a permanent foothold in London, but the boy companies, renewed and vigorous, 'berattle the common stages' while the playwrights berattle each other" (*William Shakespeare* 47). As it is stressed in Harbage's argument, Hamlet's questions about the boy and adult companies put forward the contemporary situation of the Elizabethan theatre and the fierce rivalry between the two theatre companies. It may be inferred that in this scene Hamlet is rational enough to make remarks on theatre companies and criticise the boy companies while defending the adult companies. Hamlet sets both his pretended madness and melancholy aside during his comprehensive evaluations of the theatrical world. However, it may also be said that Hamlet temporarily represses his suspicion about his father's death, his disappointment at his mother's betrayal and his aversion to the flattery of the people towards his uncle, which displays the instability in his psychology. He, however, in an instant, remembers his woe and anger and says: "It

is not very strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mouths at him while my father lived give twenty, forthy, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little" (359-362). However, Hamlet's confusion does not last long and he is easily distracted from his problems by the arrival of the travelling actors. He further openly reveals that he pretends madness just to deceive his "uncle-father and aunt-mother" (372), and he will welcome both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and the travelling players without showing any signs of insanity. In this sense, Hamlet says: "I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw" (374-375). It may be deduced from these lines that Hamlet acts according to the circumstances and he feigns madness when he is with Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia and Polonius whom he sees as threat, but when he is accompanied by the people he trusts, he adopts a reasonable attitude. As John Buxton points out, "[…] we, in our detachment, are not to think of [Hamlet] as Polonius and Ophelia, Gertrude and the King think of him. They are deluded […] but we, of the audience, are reasonable beings who recognize in Hamlet a man conforming to the courtly ideal of the time of the first Elizabeth who is suddenly confronted with a primitive and loathsome task" (311). The drastic change in Hamlet's behaviours after Polonius enters the scene to deliver the news of the arrival of the players is of importance in order to demonstrate towards whom Hamlet develops a hostile and a derisory attitude. Hamlet scornfully mocks Polonius with his meaningless comments. When Polonius says, "My lord, I have news to tell you" (385), Hamlet repeats Polonius's statement and says: "My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome–"(386). Then, Hamlet indicates that he is not seriously listening to Polonius's remarks as he responds with "Buzz, buzz" (389) to Polonius's statement, "The actors are come hither, my lord" (387). Moreover, Hamlet brings the subject back to Polonius's daughter, Ophelia, and uses her in order to insult Polonius. In this sense, Hamlet resembles Polonius to Jephthah and refers to Ophelia as he says, "[o]ne fair daughter and no more, / The which he loved passing well" (403-404). At this point, it is possible to argue that Hamlet uses his 'lunacy' skillfully in order to tease his enemies, one of whom is definitely Polonius, with sarcastic remarks. In Harry Levin's words, "[t]his 'crafty madness' provides [Hamlet] with a means of expressing pent-up emotions, which are communicated to the audience through asides and soliloquies, but which can find no release until they reach the other characters

through a sequence of sharply pointed *contretemps*" (113). The entrance of the players distracts Hamlet from Polonius and Ophelia as he abruptly terminates gibing at Polonius through Ophelia. He directs his interest towards the players and warmly welcomes them as if he is meeting his acquaintance:

> You are welcome, masters. Welcome, all.–I am glad to see thee well.–Welcome, good friends.–O, old friend, why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee last. Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?–What, my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the ltitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.–Masters, you are all welcome. (417-425)

As indicated in the above quotation, Hamlet treats the players kindly and manifests that he is immensely pleased with their visit. In other words, Hamlet adopts a positive attitude towards the actors and he treats them as if they are his close friends in contrast to his close relatives and the courtiers whom he sees as strangers at the Danish court. Hence, Hamlet does not feel like an outsider among the players and finds shelter from doubts and sufferings. In this respect, he attends to each player individually as he deals with the length of the old player's beard, and the voice of the actor who plays the female parts. It may be argued that the scenes of the players have a crucial function in the play to divert Hamlet from the heavy duty imposed on him by the Ghost. The sense of comfort Hamlet feels among the players is also put forward in III.i. through the conversation between Gertrude and Rosencrantz. When Gertrude asks whether Rosencrantz and Guildenstern succeeded in convincing Hamlet to amuse himself, "Did you assay him / To any pastime?" (15), Rosencrantz explains that the arrival of the travelling troupe greatly cheered Hamlet up: "Madam, it so fell out that certain players / We o'erraught on the way. Of these we told him, / And there did seem in him a kind of joy / To hear of it" (16-19).

Hamlet leaves his rational attitude aside and feigns madness with the entrance of Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius and Ophelia just before the play-within-a-play starts in III.ii. Hamlet confesses to Horatio for the second time that he will pretend to be mad as he says, "[t]hey are coming to the play. I must be idle" (90). In this sense, Hamlet suddenly starts to make absurd comments and wanders off, which is regarded as strange. Upon Claudius's question, "How fares our cousin Hamlet?" (92), Hamlet gives

an irrelevant reply and says: "Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so" (93-94). Then, due to the oddness of Hamlet's answer, Claudius does not take Hamlet's statement personally and tries to make sense of it: "I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine" (95-96). However, Hamlet perplexes Claudius saying, "No, nor mine now" (97), then he abruptly and irrespectively questions Polonius about his skill at acting: "[*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i'th' university, you say?" (97-98). As clearly seen in these conversations, Hamlet changes his mood from a sensible one to a restless one instantly and ably. He is comfortable and rational with the players while he is quite nervous and sarcastic in the presence of Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius and Ophelia.

In addition to this, Hamlet makes highly judicious comments on the profession of acting at the beginning of III. ii where he makes helpful suggestions to the players on how to play a part and again alludes to the Elizabethan theatre as the mouthpiece of Shakespeare. Therefore, in this scene, "[…] Shakespeare made his most important pronouncement on the art of playing" (*A Series* 81). First, Hamlet advises the actors not to speak and act exaggeratedly. For Hamlet, moderation is the chief feature of excellent acting, hence the actors should succeed in controlling their fervour for embellished manners and talk:

> Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronunced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. (1-8)

With these lines, Hamlet leaves the role of a confused son and courtier who tries to assign a meaning to the hard facts presented by the Ghost. At this moment, he is not the son who cannot decide whether to avenge his father or whether to act slowly to prove that the statements of the Ghost are true. He turns into a knowing theatre critic who displays his vast knowledge of acting. He further manifests that there must be an absolute harmony between word and action in moderation. The primary duty of the theatre, according to Hamlet, is to reflect the reality; to show both virtue and defect. The people of a particular age should be able to see the presentation of the events of the time

through the institution of theatre. In a sense, everything about human nature and human life should be the subject of theatre and should be boldy shown on the stage:

> Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. (17-24)

In addition, Hamlet emphasises that only learned men can recognise the lack of balance and do not approve it but the ignorant embrace and enjoy the unbalance: "Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others" (24-28). Hamlet also expresses his indignation over the unnecessary compliment paid to undeserving actors who play their parts unnaturally and do not fulfil the necessities of their roles. For Hamlet, these kinds of actors imitate nature and life unsuccessfully because they lack temperance: "O, there be players, and that highly–not to speak it profanely, that neither having th'accent of Christians, not the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have though some of nature's journeymen had made men, and nor made them well, they imitate humanity so abominably" (28-35). In the light of Hamlet's statements about the art of acting, it may be argued that what he asserts about the necessity of consistency and naturalness in acting completely contradicts his own unsteadiness and unresolved inner conflict. Moreover, Hamlet, on the one hand, criticises the excessiveness and extraordinary enthusiasm of the actors; however, on the other hand, he himself lacks even the essential devotion to take action and avenge his father's death as will be demonstrated. In other words, Hamlet's critical comments on acting in III.ii. do not only demonstrate that he temporarily removes stress and states his opinions on a particular subject rationally when he is with the players, but they also mirror Hamlet's own inability to make a move. The first player's reaction to Hamlet's warnings, "I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us" (36), shows that the actors are different from Hamlet's relatives and the courtiers who try to deceive him, and thus Hamlet can show his actual personality among them with confidence.

Furthermore, Hamlet acts so sensibly with the actors that he deliberately includes them in his plan and asks the first player whether the actors can stage *The Murder of Gonzago* in which the murder of the King bears similarities with the death of Hamlet's father. He further wants the first player to memorise a part of sixteen lines, which Hamlet is going to write, and read it before the play starts: "[…] You could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't […]" (II.ii.534-536). Hamlet puts forth his intention at the end of his soliloquy at the very end of II.ii. and asserts that guilty people react when they see the crime they committed on the stage. In Alvin Kernan's words, "[i]f Shakespeare set out to assert, or to test, the belief that a play could reveal truth and affect the welfare of kingdoms, that belief flounders, like so many other beliefs, in the twisting corridors of Elsinore" (5). Therefore, Hamlet plans to arrange the staging of a play which will display the murder of his father, and while he will monitor Claudius's reactions and if the latter responds in any way in the scene where the King is murdered, then Hamlet will feel certain about Claudius's part in the murder of his father. In this sense, Hamlet uncovers his design as follows: "[…] I'll have these players / Play something like the murder of my father / Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks; / I'll tent him to the quick. If a do blench, / I know my course" (590-594).

Another evidence pointing at the fact that Hamlet's pretended madness has a certain design emerges in III.ii. through his conversation with Horatio. Hamlet extols Horatio's righteousness and loyalty as he says, "Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man / As e'er my conversation cop'd withal" (54-55). Thus, along with the players, the other person on whom Hamlet fully counts is Horatio. At this point, Hamlet talks about self-seeking people and maintains that utilitarian people take advantage of especially wealthy people considering their own interests. However, Hamlet clearly distinguishes his friendship with Horatio, which depends on trust rather than materiality and power relations. In this respect, Hamlet says:

> Nay, do not think I flatter,
> For what advancement may I hope from thee
> That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
> To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd
> No, let yhe candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
> And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee

> Where thrift may follow fawning. (57-62)

With these lines, Hamlet stresses the marked difference in attitude towards notable people and the poor and the common. In this respect, it may be inferred that Hamlet is eminently sensible to comment on self-interest and to put forward the distinctness of Horatio from Claudius, Gertrude and Polonius.

Hamlet further manifests his lucidness as he asserts that he is totally aware of everything occuring around him and he knows the people who scheme to make him ineffective very well: “Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice, / And could of men distinguish her election, / Sh’ath seal’d thee for herself […]” (III.ii.63-66). Hence, Hamlet expresses his absolute trust in Horatio and indicates that Horatio is his sole supporter in his design to find out the guilty and to unveil the truth. In this respect, Hamlet asks for Horatio’s help to discover whether Claudius is guilty of murdering King Hamlet as the Ghost asked:

> There is a play tonight before the King:
> One scene of it comes near the circumstance
> Which I have told thee of my father’s death.
> I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
> Even with the very comment of thy soul
> Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
> It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan’s stithy. (75-84)

As it is stressed in these lines, Horatio will function as Hamlet’s common sense and will be a party to Hamlet’s concerns. Though Hamlet does not exploit Horatio’s riches and high position as he possesses neither, he makes use of Horatio’s firmness in the hard task he is bound to fulfil: “[…] Give him heedful note; / For I mine eyes will rivet to his face, / And after we will both our judgments join / In censure of his seeming” (84-87). Therefore, Horatio will assist Hamlet in proving whether the Ghost is right or wrong in its assertions. At this point, it may also be argued that Hamlet cannot rely on merely his own judgements about whether Claudius is guilty or not; that is why, he wants Horatio to become involved in his decision. In response to Hamlet’s determined effort to include him in the scheme, Horatio devotedly accepts to take sides with Hamlet and to assume

responsibility: “If a steal aught the whilst this play is playing / And space detecting, I will pay the theft” (88-89). In addition, Hamlet implicitly compares himself with Horatio and states that Horatio is patient and endures in silence while Hamlet uses his sorrow for his design to avenge his father’s murder. Hamlet puts forth Horatio’s fortitude as follows: “[…] for thou hast been / As one, in suff’ring all, that suffers nothing, / A man that Fortune’s buffets and rewards / Hast ta’en with equal thanks […]” (65-68). In a sense, Hamlet is not so perseverant as Horatio and can not endure the agony of being wronged; however, he contradicts himself as he fails to take action as will be demonstrated. In this sense, Horatio, whose mind and emotions are in harmony, is a foil for Hamlet as Hamlet also asserts: “[…] and blest are those / Whose blood and judgment are so well commeddled / That they are not a pipe for Fortune’s finger / To sound what stop she please” (68-71). These lines clearly demonstrate that Hamlet blames himself for the sufferings he is going through.

After Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet Hamlet, they immediately recognise that there is something wrong with him, yet they cannot understand Hamlet’s distemper, or they find it difficult to explain the nature of it. In this respect, in III.i. when Claudius asks them whether they achieved to learn about the reason for Hamlet’s peculiar behaviours, “And can you by no drift of conference / Get from him why he puts on this confusion, / Grating so harshly all his days of quiet / With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?” (1-4), Rosencrantz and Guildenstern refer to the state of confusion Hamlet is in. As Claudius underlines, Hamlet’s uneasiness disturbs not only Hamlet himself but also the rest of the royal court and Claudius believes that necessary measures should be taken against Hamlet’s gloomy mood. In response to Claudius’s anxious question, Rosencrantz highlights Hamlet’s skilfull concealment of the reasons for his inner turmoil as he says, “[h]e does confess he feels himself distracted, / But from what cause a will by no means speak” (5-6). Thereupon, Guildenstern emphasises Hamlet’s sudden and subtle twist towards madness as follows: “Nor do we find him forward to be sounded, / But with a crafty madness keeps aloof / When we would bring him on to some confession / Of his true state” (7-9). Thus, it may be inferred that though Rosencrantz and Guildenstern saw Hamlet only once since their arrival in Denmark, they can easily note that he has a design and acts accordingly.

Hamlet's encounter with Gertrude in III.iv. and his confrontation with her over her hasty marriage to Claudius after the death of his father is fundamental to demonstrate the melancholic aspect of Hamlet's distemper. Hamlet forthrightly expresses his regret and puts forward that the major cause of his strange behaviours is his inconsolable grief of Gertrude's disloyalty after the death of his beloved father. In other words, Hamlet maintains that he puts on his antic disposition so as to relieve his distress. He compares his father and his uncle and cannot hide his confusion about his mother's having an affair with Claudius after her marriage to King Hamlet. Hamlet asserts that King Hamlet had so great and unique features that it is possible to compare him with deity; whereas, Claudius is a traitor who pitilessly killed his brother out of extreme envy. Therefore, Hamlet fails to comprehend how Gertrude became the wife of such an evil man after such a dignified man:

> Look here upon this Picture, and on this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
> See what a grace was seated on this brow,
> Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
> An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
> A combination and a form indeed
> Where every god did seem to set his eal
> To give the world assurance of a man.
> This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
> Here is your husband, like a mildew's ear
> Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
> Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
> And batten on this moor? (53-67)

With these lines, Hamlet puts forth his unbearable sorrow and his mother's central role in his depression. Though Gertrude pleads with Hamlet to end his accusations, Hamlet inclemently continues to talk about the distinction between King Hamlet and Claudius and blames Gertrude for licentiousness. In a sense, Hamlet spills out his hatred against not only Gertrude but also Claudius and indicates that their infidelity and abjectness are the chief reasons for his agitation: "A murderer and a villain, / A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe / Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings, / A cutpurse of the empire abd the rule" (96-99). At this moment of Hamlet's outpouring, the appearance of the Ghost and Gertrude's not seeing the apparition lead her to think that Hamlet is

insane. When Hamlet asks about the Ghost's wish, "What would your gracious figure?" (105), Gertrude's reaction, "Alas, he's mad"(106), displays that she now considers that Hamlet has mental problems. Accordingly, the prominence of this scene is that the existence of the Ghost is verified by Horatio and Marcellus who see it too in I.i as has been mentioned; however, the Ghost is not seen by Gertrude, and she believes that Hamlet's frustration results from his madness but not from her relationship with Claudius. Therefore, Gertrude pities Hamlet and says:

> Alas, how is't with you,
> That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
> And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse?
> Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
> And, as the sleeping soldiers in th'alarm,
> Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
> Start up and stand an end. (116-123)

As it is stressed in these lines, Hamlet's talk with the Ghost excites him, which Gertrude is not able to understand as she cannot see the Ghost. She further tries to comfort Hamlet and asserts that it is highly normal for insane people to believe that they see apparitions and says: "This is the very coinage of your brain. / This bodiless creation ecstasy / Is very cunning in" (139-141). Therefore, Gertrude attributes Hamlet's strange conduct to his mental instability, which makes it possible for her to evade responsibility. However, Hamlet's direct and decisive attitude towards Gertrude's labelling him mad demonstrates that he consciously feigns madness in order to punish the murderer of his father. In this sense, Hamlet expresses that his mental condition is as stable as that of Gertrude's and the major problem is rooted not in his madness but in her betrayal:

> My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
> And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
> That I've utter'd. Bring me to the test,
> And I the matter will re-word, which madness.
> Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
> Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
> That not your trespass but my madness speaks. (142-148)

As indicated above, Hamlet openly shows Gertrude's sin and urges her to admit. Therefore, it may be inferred that Hamlet's attitude towards Gertrude during their talk in Gertrude's chamber is shaped by both his melancholy and awareness.

At the end of his conversation with Gertrude, Hamlet also reveals that he is fully aware of the fact that Claudius wants to send him to England with an evil design. He asserts that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are not Hamlet's friends but the tools used by Claudius and they will betray him: "There's letters seal'd, and my two schoolfellows, / Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd– / They bear the mandate, they must sweep my way / And marshal me to knavery […]" (204-207). In this sense, Hamlet maintains that he will not fall into this trap and instead, he will deceive Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and punish them for their treachery: "For 'tis the sport to have the enginer / Hoist with his own petard, and't shall go hard / But I will delve one yard below their mines / And blow them at the moon […]" (208-211). Martin Wiggins comments on Hamlet's plot against Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as follows: "Revenge in Hamlet entails a balancing of deed for deed. When Hamlet learns that the purpose of his trip to England is his immediate execution, 'no leisure bated' (V.ii.23), he arranges the same nasty surprise for his escorts […]" (4). Hamlet puts forth his awareness also in IV.ii when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to persuade him into telling them what he did with the corpse of Polonius. Hamlet does not talk about Polonius's dead body, but he reproaches his friends and implies that he knows that they collaborate with Claudius in his design to have him killed. When Rosencrantz urges Hamlet to tell where he hid Polonius's body, Hamlet implies that he will not reveal his secret, yet he knows Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's secret: "That I can keep your counsel and not mine own" (10). He further resembles them to a sponge which is first used and then thrown away: "Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. […] When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again" (14-15, 18-20).

As regards Hamlet's hesitation, Bradby asserts that there are two options for a man in Hamlet's situation whose father was killed and whose mother married to his uncle: he will either take action immediately and avenge himself or will be overwhelmed with deep and unbearable sorrow despite brief moments of burst of passion. Hamlet is caught in dilemma about whether to act or not to act as Bradby says,

> […] in Hamlet's case, comes the discovery that his father has been murdered by his uncle, and that his mother has at least committed adultery. The shock of such a

> discovery might conceivably startle a man out of himself and sting him into action. If it did not, it would almost certainly plunge him into yet deeper depths, paralyse his will, and reduce him to a state of apathy, broken at times by gusts of passion or remorse. That apparently is what happens to Hamlet; and thenceforth, we watch the conflict between his conscience, which bids him act, and the 'weakness and melancholy' (his own description of his condition in Act II, Sc.2, 1. 630) which makes action impossible. (46-47)

Accordingly, Hamlet's hesitation starts in I.v. when he follows the Ghost to the castle walls. The ghost gradually informs Hamlet about the murder committed by Claudius. He first says: "So art thou to revenge when thou shalt hear" (7). Thus, the Ghost first sets forth the issue of revenge without explaining the reason. Then, the Ghost reveals that the chief cause of revenge Hamlet is bound to take is the murder of King Hamlet which is "[…] foul and most unnatural […]" (25). At this point, though Hamlet does not know who committed the mentioned murder, he asserts that he is ready to act instantly and avenge his father's murder: "Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love / May sweep to my revenge" (29-31). Therefore, Hamlet wants to take action hastily and wishes to reach his goal quickly, which contradicts his subsequent attitudes throughout the play because Hamlet fails to act when he engages too much in meditation as will be demonstrated in this chapter. In response to Hamlet's impetuousness, the Ghost expresses its appreciation and says: "I find thee apt. / And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed / That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf, / Wouldst thou not stir in this" (31-34). The Ghost believes that it created a strong impact on Hamlet and thinks that Hamlet is courageous and determined enough to fulfil the duty. The Ghost is encouraged by Hamlet's boldness and uncloses that the murderer is Claudius. The Ghost first implies Claudius's guilt as he says, "[t]he serpent that did sting thy father's youth, / Now wears his crown" (38-39). Hamlet immediately understands the identity of the murderer and indignantly exclaims: "O my prophetic soul! My uncle!" (41). Then, the Ghost explains how it was murdered by its own brother in detail and grieves for the loss of not only its life but also the loss of its wife and crown to its wicked brother:

> Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
> Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatch'd,
> Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
> Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
> No reck'ning made, but sent to my account

> With all my imperfections on my head. (74-79)

Moreover, as indicated above, King Hamlet did not have enough time for redemption, so he died a sinner and the Ghost of King Hamlet, in this sense, has to suffer. Thus, it may be said that Claudius's crime affected not only the living people like Hamlet but also the dead like the Ghost of King Hamlet. In this respect, the Ghost assigns Hamlet the duty of revenge in order to honour his deceased father's memory and punish his murderer and to terminate the corruption which prevails throughout Denmark because of the immoral relationship between Gertrude and Claudius: "Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damned incest. / But howsomever thou pursuest this act, / Taint not thy mind" (82-85). Hence, the Ghost does not guide Hamlet on how to avenge his father's murder; instead, it leaves Hamlet alone and wants him to find the required means to perform the task. In response to the Ghost's revelations, Hamlet adopts a melancholic, yet still determined attitude. The Ghost wants Hamlet to remember him, which refers to Hamlet's obligation to avenge himself. Hamlet resolutely asserts that it is impossible for him to forget his father and the task imposed on him and says: "[…] Remember thee? / Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe. Remember thee?" (95-97). And Hamlet further states that he will instantly take action and carry out the command of the Ghost as follows:

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven! (98-104)

With these lines, Hamlet vows vengeance on Claudius and asserts that he will give up his old habits and concentrate on his sole purpose of avenging his father's murder. In a sense, Hamlet will deal with nothing except the duty of revenge and punishing the murderer. In this respect, as Derick Marsh points out, "[t]he final command to revenge leaves Hamlet in a highly overwrought state, in which grief, horror at the news of the murder and at this further evidence of his mother's infidelity, and excitement bordering even on elation at the thought of his hated uncle now being within the reach of some

action, all contend for mastery. He does not at this stage seem to anticipate the necessity for any delay […]" (59). In other words, at this point Hamlet feels profoundly relieved by the facts he found out and thinks that no reason can prevent him from taking action.

However, the problem in Hamlet's hesitation is first presented in his doubts about the intentions of the Ghost. Despite Hamlet's initial trust in the Ghost and his intense excitement at the possibility of taking revenge upon his father's murderer, similar to Hamlet's changing temper, his faith in the Ghost is suddenly shaken and he seriously doubts the Ghost's revelations. In accordance with Hamlet's distrust, the ambiguity about the identity of the Ghost is presented at the very beginning of the play by Marcellus who talks about it anxiety. Marcellus describes the Ghost as "[…] this thing appear'd […]" (I.i.24) and "[…] this dreadful sight […]" (I.i.28). Though Barnardo makes a guess at the identity of the Ghost and likens it to the deceased King of Denmark, he still seems to hesitate in his prediction: "In the same figure like the King that's dead" (44). Barnardo further asks Horatio's opinion in order to confirm his estimate: "Looks a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio?" (46). In this regard, Horatio suspiciously asks: "What art thou that usurp'st this time of night" (49). Therefore, it may be said that the initial comments of the soldiers who encounter the Ghost for the first time create uncertainty in the audience/readers and lead them to question the identity and intentions of the Ghost. The question about the identity and intentions of the Ghost is also posed by Hamlet in I.iv. where he first sees the Ghost. Hamlet cannot decide whether the Ghost is a heavenly being or a demon, or whether it has goodwill or evil intentions: "Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd / […] / Be thy intents wicked or charitable, / Thou com'st in such a questionable shape / That I will speak to thee" (40-44). Thus, as Frye also states, "Shakespeare's very choice of a ghost, and particularly of this ghost, to launch the action would have introduced elements of uncertainty, suspicion, and mistrust" (*The Renaissance* 15). Hamlet also voices his grave doubts about the intention of the Ghost in II. ii. at the very end of his soliloquy where he fiercely condemns himself for his inability to act. He maintains that the apparition he saw may be a devil and may have been disguised as his father in order to force Hamlet to do what he demands: "The spirit that I have seen / May be a devil, and the devil hath power / T'assume a pleasing shape […]" (594-596). Hamlet also

expresses his great concern about the Ghost's intentions when he discloses the fact that what he suffers from is severe depression resulting from the deeds of his mother and uncle followed by his father's death rather than a mental illness. In this respect, Hamlet accuses the Ghost of taking advantage of his sorrow and says: "Out of my weakness and my melancholy, / As he is very potent with such spirits, / Abuses me to damn me" (597-599). Hamlet believes that he is obliged to find out not only whether Claudius is the murderer of his father but also whether the Ghost is completely honest with him. Thus, as Hunter maintains, "[Hamlet's] struggle is, in fact, a struggle to remain fully human, and yet capable of controlling a world that is out of joint. It is not […] simply a struggle to bring himself to obey the ghost; but rather a struggle to act meaningfully, which means to translate the ghost's absurdly simplified command into the terms of daylight and responsible activities" (*Dramatic* 246).

However, the central problem of Hamlet's hesitation arises especially after he ensures that Claudius is guilty of King Hamlet's murder at the end of the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in III.ii. After the player pours the poison into King Gonzago's ear, which imitates the murder of King Hamlet, Claudius flounces out of the chamber and Hamlet becomes certain of his role in his father's death. In this respect, Hamlet tells Horatio that in this way the claims of the Ghost were justified and he can now act confidently: "O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound" (280-281). However, though Hamlet has solid proof for the rightfulness of taking revenge on Claudius, he does not kill him and avenges his father's murder the first time he sees Claudius after the play-within-a-play.

Claudius confesses his crimes before Hamlet enters the chamber and professes that he killed his brother with the aim of taking the Danish throne and winning Gertrude:

> O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
> It hath the primal eldest curse upon't–
> A brother's murder.
> […]
> My fault is past–but O, what form of prayer
> Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'
> That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
> Of those effects for which I did the murder–

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen. (36-38, 51-55)

As stated in the quotation, Claudius desperately struggles to pray for redemption from his sins; however, he cannot invoke with the burden of his crimes. He questions the meaning and function of praying and mercy and expresses that he fails to plead for forgiveness no matter how sincerely he wants: "[…] Pray can I not, / Though inclination be as sharp as will, / My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent" (38-40). In this sense, Claudius manifests that praying should prevent man from committing sin and saving his soul if he nonetheless commits an offense. Claudius says in remorse: "And what's in prayer but this twofold force, / To be forestalled ere we come to fall / Or pardon'd being down?" (48-50). Claudius further admits that he is not disposed to renounce Gertrude and the throne for which he killed King Hamlet. He puts forth a conflictive personality as he, on the one hand, strongly desires to pray and ask for salvation from his horrible sins; on the other hand, he is unwilling to abandon the causes of his sins: "May one be pardon'd and retain th'offence?" (56). Claudius's following statement, "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below" (97), at the very end of III.iii. also vividly demonstrates that he asks for salvation, yet he has not thought of giving up the gainings of his sins. Similar to Hamlet's awareness of the hypocrisy of the people around him and his own strange behaviours, Claudius is also conscious of the dreadful cost of the evil he did in the mortal world and says: "In the corrupted currents of this world / Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice, / And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself / Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above" (57-60). Therefore, it is possible to violate the laws and to commit injustice to the good and the rightful. A wrongdoer may not be punished for his crimes while the decent man suffers due to inequity in mortal life; however, justice is always and inescapably served in afterlife. It may also be argued that Claudius's indecision on praying foreshadows Hamlet's following hesitancy in killing Claudius while praying. He first voices his desire to take action and to seize the chance he gets: "Now might I do it pat, now a is a-praying. / And now I'll do't" (73). What is striking and problematic is that Hamlet finds opportunity for his action in III.iii while Claudius is praying alone in his chamber but he does not take this opportunity. Instead, he contemplates on the nature of revenge. Hamlet deeply thinks on the timing of the murder and whether he will really and trully achieve to take revenge upon Claudius if he kills him in the middle of his prayer. In this sense, Hamlet meditates as follows:

> And so a goes to heaven;
> And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd:
> A villain kills my father, and for that
> I, his sole son, do this same villaib
> To heaven.
> Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
> ……………………………………..
> […] And am I then reveng'd,
> To take him in the purging of his soul,
> When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
> No. (74-79,84-87)

As it is stressed in these lines, Hamlet prefers ruminating on the proper way to avenge his father to finalise the action. He thinks that if he kills Claudius while he is asking for mercy, Claudius will be sent to heaven rather than to hell and he will not be punished for all the crimes he committed; therefore, King Hamlet's revenge will not be taken properly. In Peter Alexander's words, "[a]ll [Hamlet] has to do is to drive his sword through a defenceless enemy. Shakespeare shows us the king unprotected and on his knees with Hamlet a sword's length behind him. This is the central scene of the central act, the very keystone of the action, […] Hamlet's adversary must strike the blow first. Not that Hamlet can admit to himself, even for a moment, that this is what holds his hand" (158). However, the problem in Hamlet's hesitation is that the enemy already made the first move and did not only kill Hamlet's father but also married his mother. In other words, Hamlet has the valid grounds for taking action against his foe. Hamlet's resolved and active mood, which is presented as soon as he enters Claudius's chamber, changes suddenly. And he states that he will wait for the right time, which is when Claudius commits a sin, to kill Claudius as follows:

> Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:
> When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
> Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
> At game a-swearing, or about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't,
> Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven
> And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
> As hell, whereto it goes. (88-95)

As indicated above, Hamlet plans to kill Claudius when he is drunk or when he is having sex with Gertrude. For Hamlet, the right moment to avenge his father's murder is when Claudius gambles, swears, or commits an unforgivable sin; otherwise, he is

afraid that his action of revenge will be vain. Hamlet desires to make sure that justice will be done and the Ghost of his father will find eternal peace. However, besides the problem of Hamlet's hesitation, the problem of the timing of murdering a wrongdoer for retribution comes up with Hamlet's decision to deliberately delay his revenge. That is, the question of which one is more fundamental; thus taking revenge or the way when it is taken, occurs and it is left to the interpretation of the audience/readers. In this sense, Francis Bacon's comments on the nature of delay in his essay "Of Delay" are essential in order to evaluate Hamlet's hesitation:

> […] for if a man watch too long, it is odds he will fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived with too long shadows (as some have been when the moon was low and shone on their enemy's back), and so to shoot off before the time; or to teach dangers to come on, by over-early buckling towards them; is another extreme. The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well weighed […]. (67)

As it is stressed in these lines, the timing of taking an action is significant; however, the person who is to act should not wait for a long time as s/he may be overcome by languor and eventually give up, or s/he should not act untimely because taking early action may lead to dangerous consequences. Hence, once s/he concludes that the conditions are mature enough to act, s/he shoud make a move. For Hamlet, particularly after the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago,* the conditions are suitable to avenge himself and kill Claudius, which he fails to do and makes his hesitation problematic.

Assuming Hamlet's indetermination to kill Claudius, it may be argued that his abrupt act and murder of Polonius without knowing the identity of the man he is stabbing behind the arras in III.iv. is thus confounding and problematic. Hamlet goes to Gertrude's chamber to talk to her at the request of Rosencrantz and Polonius and kills Polonius who is hiding behind the arras with the intent of listening to the conversation between Hamlet and Gertrude. After Hamlet kills Polonius, his response to Gertrude's question, "O me, what hast thou done?" (24), is fundamental in order to display Hamlet's unconsciousness at the moment of action. In this respect, Hamlet says: "Nay, I know not. / Is it the King?" (25). Hence, it may be inferred that though Hamlet carried out his design of pretending madness until this time, he exhibits behaviour which contradicts his former self control. It is also clearly seen that Hamlet hopes to have

killed Claudius as he utters Claudius's name in the first instance. Thus, Hamlet, at first, unconsciously, attempts to kill Claudius while he is not committing the particular sins Hamlet mentioned in the prayer scene. Moreover, Hamlet recovers from the shock of committing murder quickly and accuses Gertrude by reminding her of her hasty marriage to Claudius in his following words: "A bloody deed. Almost as bad, good mother, / As kill a king and marry with his brother" (27-28); therefore, "Hamlet diverts attention from his own bloody deed in killing Polonius by his verbal onslaught on [Gertrude]" (Foakes**,** *Hamlet versus Lear* 158). He does not feel remorse for his crime and he negligently treats his murder of Polonius as if it is an insignificant and an expected event. In this regard, Hamlet seems indifferent to Polonius's death and says: "Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell. / I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune: / Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger" (31-33). Therefore, Hamlet admits that he expected to have killed Claudius when he stabbed the man behind the arras; nevertheless, he does not feel sorry that it is Polonius whom he killed. Hamlet further asserts that he was fully aware of Polonius's following him closely throughout the play and spying upon him.

In parallel with this, in his soliloquy at the very end of II.ii. Hamlet once again reveals his anger at himself and curses his hesitation through this soliloquy. After the players leave the scene to get prepared for the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet refers to a part of a play previously acted by the travelling actors and expresses his astonishment at the first player's lifelike acting of the part where Hecuba laments for the death of Priam. He compares himself with the player in terms of committing self to a particular cause. Hamlet expresses that he is furiously jealous of the player's remarkable skill of commanding his body and mind. For Hamlet, the player's becoming wholly absorbed in the necessities of his role and shedding tears from his anguished eyes for the death of Hecuba's husband starkly contrasts with Hamlet's inaction as if he feels nothing for the death of his father. In this respect, Hamlet says:

> 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 his aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

> With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
> For Hecuba! (545-552)

Hence, Hamlet is unable to understand the passionate devotion of the player to a fictitious cause. Though Hamlet has valid grounds for expressing his emotions and taking action in acting, he does nothing in order to undertake the demanding task assigned to him by the Ghost. Instead, he prefers to rationalise his not making a move and observes Claudius and Gertrude through his feigned madness mixed with melancholy. Hamlet also considers what the player would do if he were in Hamlet's position. That is, Hamlet wonders how the player, who achieves to have so intense feelings for an imaginary person with whom he does not bear any close relation and does not hesitate about displaying them, would release his feelings and act if he were in Hamlet's shoes. In other words, the player reflects what is lacking in Hamlet's personality like a mirror and Hamlet is troubled with what he sees. In this regard, Hamlet asks: "[…] What would he do / Had he the motive and the cue for passion / That I have?" (554-556). Then, Hamlet answers his own question and enviously describes the possible reaction of the player if he were in Hamlet's situation. In Peter Waldeck's words, "[…] when Hamlet hears the impassioned player's speech, he is amazed that the player is able to whip himself into outward emotional frenzy, while he, with every reason for such passion, remains paralyzed. The contrast between the facile make-believe of the theatre and Hamlet's reality only accentuates his intimidation by his real problem" (160). Hamlet faces his own fear of taking action and his apparent inability to overcome it through theatre as the illusion of theatre and reality of life clash. Despite the fact that throughout the play Hamlet was remarkably successful at making people believe in his madness by means of pretence, he is paralysed when that make-believe is used against him. Accordingly, Hamlet manifests that the player would show his inconsolable grief unlike Hamlet, who conceals his pain through his pretended madness, and would directly punish the guilty for the crime. Therefore, for Hamlet, the player would not find excuses to charge Claudius with the murder of King Hamlet; instead, he would immediately avenge his father's murder and hence justice would be served:

> […] He would drown the stage with tears,
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

> Confound the ignorant, and amaza indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears. (556-560)

From the quotation above, it can easily be understood that the player with such passion and resolution would instantly make everybody aware of the despicable crime committed by Claudius. However, in contrast to such an audacious player, Hamlet describes himself as an inert and a spiritless man who does nothing for his rightful cause. He greatly suffers in silence, yet fails to put his thoughts into action. According to Lily B. Campbell, this is because “Hamlet is inconsolable, and his grief is of the sort that renders him dull, that effaces memory, that makes him quilty of the sin of sloth” (115). While the player performs Hecuba’s powerful emotions and mourns the death of her husband when he plays the character of Hecuba, Hamlet is incapable of demanding justice for his father who was slayed, whose kingship and wife were seized. In this respect, Hamlet questions his own fortitude and vividly asserts that he pities himself when he compares his own lack of resolve with that of the player’s. Hamlet puts forth his uselessness as an heir and a son as follows:

> Yet I,
> A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
> Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
> And can say nothing–no, not for a king,
> Upon whose property and most dear life
> A damn’d defeat was made. Am I a coward? (561-566)

As stated in the quotation, Hamlet believes that it is his responsibility to act and take King Hamlet’s revenge as the man who was murdered is not only Hamlet’s father but also the King of Denmark. Therefore, Hamlet’s commitment is not only to his father as the son but also to his country as the heir to the Danish throne, and in this sense, the burden of King Hamlet’s death that Hamlet is obliged to assume is heavy and Hamlet is overwhelmed with it. In a sense, the revenge that Hamlet needs to take will not only ease his conscience but also correct a political injustice committed on a rightful monarch, which delays because of Hamlet’s hesitation.

The other soliloquy through which Hamlet vehemently condemns his inability to act in order to avenge his father’s murder is seen at the very end of IV.iv. after Hamlet comes

across the Captain of the Norwegian army which is commanded by Fortinbras. The Captain informs Hamlet that the Norwegian soldiers are marching towards Poland in order to confiscate "a little patch of ground / That hath in it no profit but the name" (18-19) according to the Captain. In response, Hamlet compares his cowardice to take revenge upon the murderer of his father with Fortinbras's outstanding courage to seize an insignificant piece of land which will not provide any profit. In this respect, he questions the reason of his hesitation about taking action and meditates on the nature of man. Thus, he first considers that the human beings should live for noble purposes. They have to use their formidable intellect and reveal their divine aspect as they are different from animals whose mere purposes is to eat and sleep; that is, the basic needs. However, human beings should go beyond meeting the basic needs and should take steps for advancement and change. In this regard, Hamlet asks: "What is a man / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more" (33-35). Hamlet accordingly asserts that using one's wisdom and predicting the future by taking lessons from the past should lead man to act; otherwise, man does not differentiate from animal: "Sure he that made us with such large discourse, / Looking before and after, gave us not / That capability and godlike reason / To fust in us unus'd" (36-39). Hence, he bitterly criticises himself for excessive meditation and consequently not taking action. As Ekmekçioğlu puts it, "[Hamlet] is heavy, because of those roots, and so weighs down, and thus prevents the character from acting impulsively and immediately; so it causes the procrastination of the revenge as a result of too much thinking and philosophizing" ("The Theme" 126). Hamlet, in this sense, associates contemplation with faint-heartedness and concludes that action should precede deep thought. Thus, Hamlet says: "Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple / Of thinking too precisely on th'event– / A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom / And ever three parts coward […]" (40-43). Hamlet regards his meditation as the chief grounds for his hesitation and maintains that he should avoid it in order to achieve his purpose and to be different from animal. In accordance with this deduction, Hamlet also realises the futility of leading an inactive life and reveals the fact that he suffers indignity: "[…] I do not know / Why yet I live to say this thing's to do, / Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means / To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me" (43-46). Hence, Hamlet admits that he has all the necessary means to avenge his father's murder and to

punish the offenders; however, he is not motivated by a strong desire for resolving the inner crisis he is going through. Instead, he uses contemplation as an excuse for his inaction and he ignores the models of courage and dignity before him. In this sense, Hamlet's encounter with Fortinbras and being informed about his determination makes him awaken to his own weakness and leads him to take a firm decision on acting. Hamlet magnifies Fortinbras's valour and resolution in the face of his feeble physical appearance. Though Hamlet is physically powerful, he perceives that he is emotionally powerless:

> Witness this army of such mass and charge,
> Led by a delicate and tender prince,
> Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
> Makes mouths at the invisible event,
> Exposing what is mortal and unsure
> To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
> Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
> Is not to stir without great argument,
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
> When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
> That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
> Excitements of my reason and my blood,
> And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
> The immediate death of twenty thousand men
> That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
> Go to their graves like beds […]. (47-62)

As it is stressed in these lines, Hamlet highlights the conflict between appearance and reality because the people who appear physically weak may turn into solid people who are not afraid of any dangerous situations when their honour is at stake. Similarly, people who seem powerful may retreat for fear of death. Therefore, bold men like Fortinbras risk their lives to protect their reputation no matter how the cause is insignificant while hesitant and spiritless men like Hamlet abstain from acting despite the greatness of their motivation. In this sense, Hamlet goes through a sudden awakening from self-pity to determination and says: "[…] O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth" (65-66). Thus, it may be argued that Hamlet clearly signals his taking action so as to avenge his father's murder, which he achieves at the very end of the play as will be demonstrated.

Hamlet meditates on the the causes which restrain man from taking action and make him face up to the severe consequences of inaction in his ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy in III.i. In other words, Hamlet strives to choose between relieving misery tormenting his soul through action and enduring suffering and injustice through hesitation which stems from cowardice. When the ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy is interpreted in terms of Hamlet’s hesitation, it may be argued that Hamlet puts forth his indetermination whether to act or not to act through his meditations on the notions of life, death and afterlife. Hamlet asserts that it is exceedingly difficult to choose between life and death as both present enormous challenges which are hard to face for man. For Rossiter, “conscience […] is also “consciousness, awareness of the mind within itself” and this “awareness […] makes Hamlet […] a mind so torn and dragged between the betrayal of action and the failure of non-action” (176). In accordance with this, Michael Goldman comments on the difficult dilemma Hamlet confronts about the nature of action and inaction. The question under which circumstances an action turns into an inaction and whether these conditions, no matter how difficult they are, should lead one to deviate from his aim arises. Like all the other contrasts in Hamlet’s life regarding his mother, his uncle, pretended madness and revenge, the enormous disparity between ‘to be’ and ‘not to be’ makes Hamlet delay his action:

> The stop-action tableaus play upon a question that recurs in various forms throughout *Hamlet*: when is an action not an action? It is raised of course in the ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy, where Hamlet–who has a moment ago appeared ready to catch the conscience of the King–now analyzes the conditions under which action loses its name or falls into non-being. Hamlet sees his situation as paradoxical–action results in not being. To be is not to act. And the question when is an action not an action? Reappears in a dozen guises, as, for example, when is revenge not revenge? when is a madman not a madman? when is a mother not a mother? when is a funeral not a funeral? when is a suicide not a suicide? when is play in earnest? If there is a ‘question of Hamlet’ it is this. As the role of Hamlet itself directs our attention to the problems of interpreting and making sense out of action, so the play is endlessly varying the motif of doubt as to the significance of action. (244)

In ‘to be’, man may be victimised by fate and greatly suffer. Moreover, man may suffer not only emotionally but also physically as the human body is vulnerable, which is a feature of mortality. Thus, life is full of agonies and pains for both the soul and body of human beings, which is possible to terminate by death as Hamlet expresses as follows:

> To be, or not to be, that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
> And by opposing end them. To die–to sleep,
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd. (56-64)

However, in addition to these emotional and physical sufferings in life, death is also full of uncertainties, which worries man and leads him to hesitation. In 'not to be', the soul of man may suffer because it is impossible for human beings to understand the experiences their souls will go through in afterlife. As Michael Pennington points out, "[…] [Hamlet] proposes that it might be better to end your life than to endure it, but for the cowardly fact that the dreams after death would be bad, and the unknown is terrifying. Helpless to resolve this problem, we sit, courage rained, resolution 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought' unable to do anything at all" (80-81). According to Hamlet, this fear of ambiguity makes man hesitate and not take any step to be freed from the sorrows of life. In this sense, he associates afterlife with having a dream and says: "[…] To die, to sleep; / To sleep, perchance to dream–ay, there's the rub: / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must give us pause" (64-68). Thus, Hamlet reveals that the main cause of his hesitation and inability to take action is rooted in feeling deep sadness before the deed and his fear of uncertainty after the deed. To put it more clearly, both the present adverse conditions and the tragic circumstances which will occur after performing the particular deed preoccupy Hamlet and lead him to meditate rather than take action. In this respect, Hamlet describes the afflictive conditions of life which cannot be ended due to the uncertainty of death:

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
> When he himself might his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that dread of something after death (70-78)

Therefore, Hamlet emphasises that man has to bear the passing of time, the injustice done by the tyrant and the scorns of the arrogant. Moreover, the pain of unreturned love, miscarriage of justice and undervaluing the virtuous man while overpraising the worthless person are the conditions which disturb Hamlet in life and should make not only him but also human beings take action and die. Hence, there is a close link between Hamlet's meditating on life and death and constant struggle to choose between them and his hesitation in killing Claudius and avenging his father's murder. The present situation before the deed is already bleak due to King Hamlet's death, Gertrude's hasty marriage to Claudius and the duty of revenge that was imposed on Hamlet by the Ghost of his father as has already been presented. Hence, Hamlet feels depressed in the moments when he faces these facts and meditates instead of taking action. However, the uncertainty of the events that will happen after killing Claudius also concerns Hamlet and makes him pause. It is ambiguous, despite his being the rightful heir to the throne, whether he will be able to take the throne of Denmark after he murders Claudius. In addition, it is highly likely that he could lose not only his dignity in the Danish court but also Gertrude and Ophelia, the two women whom he esteemed throughout his life, as he will be the murderer of Gertrude's current husband and the present King of Denmark. As James Hirsh suggests, "[i]f [Hamlet] had enough resolution to commit suicide, therefore, he also lacks the courage and resolution to engage in enterprises of great pitch and moment, lacks the fortitude, if he ever came to suspect Claudius, to take revenge on a king" (127). Thus, it may be stated that the circumstances after taking action will not be better than the conditions before acting, hence Hamlet agonises over being torn between action and inaction. In this respect, according to Hamlet, such irresolution makes man spiritless, and determination is overwhelmed by indetermination:

> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is siclied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment
> With this regard their currents awry
> And lose the name of action. (83-88)

As indicated above, Hamlet regards taking action, which refers to taking revenge on Claudius, as a mighty and noble deed which should be done on any ground. However,

the great anxiety about the obscurity of acting prevents Hamlet from putting his thoughts into action and delays his revenge. Despite his assertions about the necessity of death in order to terminate the sufferings in life, the fear of the unknown in afterlife which prevents man from taking action, Hamlet, neither just after the soliloquy nor at any part of the play until V.ii., dares commit suicide and cease his sorrows. In other words, Hamlet does not renounce life for the sake of death just as he does not avoid the troubles he suffers due to the murder of his father and losing his mother to his wicked uncle by murdering Claudius. Thus, Hamlet consents to lead an aguished life which does not differ from an uncertain death. Accordingly, Hamlet regrets not taking action to avenge his father's murder but he is also gripped by the fear of the uncertainty after taking action.

Accordingly, despite the soliloquies through which Hamlet particularly demonstrates his inability to avenge his father's murder throughout the play, he leaves his hesitation behind in V.ii where he kills Claudius at the end of his duel with Laertes. With regard to Claudius's and Laertes's plan to kill Hamlet, Laertes will "anoint [his] sword" (IV.vii.139) with "an unction of a mountebank / So mortal that but dip a knife in it" (140-141). In order to guarantee Hamlet's death, Claudius will prepare a glass of poisoned wine so that if Hamlet escapes Laertes's virulent sword, he will be definitely killed by the poisoned wine. In this regard, it may be argued that Claudius's and Laertes's multi-staged scheme to kill Hamlet completely contradicts with Hamlet's inability to take action and kill Claudius.

Accordingly, before Hamlet takes action and kills both Claudius and Laertes, he mentions the significance of acting without too much meditation as he refers to his murder of Polonius in his conversation with Horatio at the very beginning of V.ii and says: "Rashly– / And prais'd be rashness for it: let us know / Our indicretion sometime serve us well / When our deep plots do pall […]" (V.ii.6-9). Hamlet, furthermore, confesses that he did not think about the rightfulness of the action before he performed it when he tells Horatio how he was saved from the death plot hatched by Claudius in V.ii. In this respect, Hamlet reveals that he stole the letter written by Claudius to the King of England and kept by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet says: "My fears

forgetting manners, to unseal / Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio– / Ah, royal knavery!–an exact command" (17-19). Furthermore, he takes action instantly and writes a new letter commanding the King of England to kill the messengers without knowing that he would be saved because of the pirate attack next day. He tells his scheme to Horatio in detail as follows: "That on the view and knowing of these contents, / Without debatement further more or less, / He should those bearers put to sudden death, / Not shriving-time allow'd" (44-47). Consequently, Hamlet causes the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, his two old friends and school fellows. Though Hamlet kills Polonius thinking that he is Claudius, he does not feel any sense of regret after this act; similarly, he sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death deliberately and does not repent, which contrasts with his former hesitations as has been discussed. In this respect, Hamlet demonstrates his determination to take revenge on Claudius in his following words:

> Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon–
> He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my mother,
> Popp'd in between th'election and my hopes,
> Thrown out his angle form y proper life
> And with such coz'nage–is't not perfect conscience
> To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd
> Tol et this canker of our nature come
> In further evil? (63-70)

As stated in the quotation, Hamlet makes a summary of what he suffered from the beginning of the play. He targets Claudius as the source of his sorrows. He asserts that he lost his father, the throne of Denmark and his mother due to Claudius. The final move of Claudius, which is scheming to murder Hamlet, fiercely motivates Hamlet to avenge himself and kill Claudius. Hence, "[…] every bit of evidence that increases Hamlet's certainty of the guilt of the King increases as well his awareness of the rift created by the King's crime" (Wood 52-53). In this regard, he maintains that his conscience will be clear as Claudius has to bear the penalty of the wrongs he did to Hamlet. In addition, Hamlet reveals to Horatio that he will not hesitate this time and will kill Claudius before his plan regarding Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is uncovered. Therefore, Hamlet leads the audience/readers to think that he will terminate the long and turbulent period of hesitation through his "final vow of revenge" (Bloom, Introduction 1): "It will be short. The interim is mine./ And a man's life no more than to say 'one'"

(73-74). Bertrand Evans comments on Hamlet's determination in the last act of the play as he says, "[Hamlet] cannot possibly determine in advance the precise quarter from which the blow that kills him will be struck, nor can he know exactly when the moment will come for his own blow at the King. But it will come, and when it does he will strike without needing to make a prologue to his brains" (*Shakespeare's Tragic* 107). The long soliloquies where Hamlet meditated on acting or hesitating come to an end. Furthermore, Hamlet, as if he can no longer endure the grief of inaction, desires to execute the task of revenge immediately. In this sense, he wants Horatio not to interfere with his action and highlights the cruciality of not delaying as follows:

> Not a whit. We defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since man, of aught he leaves, knows aught, what is't to leave betimes? Let be. (215-220)

With these lines, Hamlet puts forward that he now feels emotionally ready to act and fulfil his duty of revenge, which creates ambiguity in the minds of the audience/readers regarding Hamlet's previous delays, and poses a problem in terms of Hamlet's hesitation. Harold Bloom emphasises the change in Hamlet in the last act as he asks, "Hamlet is an actor? Yes, earlier, but not in Act V […]" (Introduction 4). When he learns from Gertrude, who drinks the poisoned wine and is about to die, the fact that the glass of wine is poisoned, Hamlet recognises the wicked scheme designed by Claudius and orders the locking of the door so that Claudius cannot escape and Hamlet can eventually take revenge on him: "O villainy! Ho! Let the door be lock'd. / Treachery! Seek it out" (317-318). Moreover, after Hamlet learns that the sword with which he wounds Laertes and he himself is wounded is poisoned and he is told by Laertes that it is impossible to cure the injury done by this poison, he suddenly acts and wounds Claudius with the same poisoned sword: "The point envenom'd too! Then, venom, to thy work" (327). Therefore, Hamlet does not find excuses to delay; instead, he abruptly takes action and avenges not only the murder of his father but also Claudius's hasty marriage to his mother and multiple plots to kill to him. As Goldman asserts, "[i]t is only when [Hamlet] has agreed not to force a significance upon his actions, not to look before and after but to let be, that he is swept to his revenge" (252). To put it more clearly, Hamlet takes action when he does not meditate on the prominence of action but acts without thinking about the present

situation or the uncertainty he will face after taking action. Furthermore, Hamlet is not contented with injuring Claudius with the poisoned sword, but he also forces him to drink the poisoned wine so as to assure his death. Hamlet says: “Here, thou incestuous, murd’rous, damned Dane, / Drink off this potion” (330-331). In this regard, it may be argued that the act of revenge that the audience/readers have been waiting for five long acts occurs swiftly. It may also be stated that Hamlet stops hesitating and takes action when he himself is on the verge of death from where there is no return as he expresses in his ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy as follows: “The undiscover’d country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns” (III.i.79-80). In a sense, Hamlet decides to act and avenge his father’s murder when he realises that he will have no other opportunity, hence he resolutely uses the last chance which he grabs.

Hamlet wants Horatio to tell his story, that is, all the injustices done to him and his struggle to achieve his objective of avenging his father’s murder, to the next generation so that everybody will know Hamlet’s rightful cause and remember him with respect. In this sense, Hamlet begs Horatio not to drink the posioned wine and commit suicide as he is Hamlet’s only hope to protect his reputation after his death: “As th’art a man / Give me the cup. Let go, by Heaven I’ll ha’t. / O God, Horatio, what a wounded name, / Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me” (347-350). Hamlet further assigns Horatio to tell his story as he feels that he will not have enough time to express his emotions and thoughts. Hence, he addresses the actual audience/readers through the fictional audience who are the members of the Danish court and have been watching the duel and witness the deaths, and regretfully tells them that though there are many actions he has to take, he can not carry out them as he will pass from the world of sorrows to the world of uncertainties in spite of his fear. In this regard, Hamlet says:

> You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
> That are but mutes or audience to this act,
> Had I but time–as this fell sergeant, Death,
> Is strict in his arrest–O, I could tell you–
> But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,
> Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright.
> To the unsatisfied. (339-344)

From the quotation above, it can be understood that Hamlet desires his deeds to be known, which directly contradicts with his previous request for secrecy as has been demonstrated. In other words, Hamlet abandons his insistence on secrecy related to his behaviours and plans as he particularly cautioned his friends after his encounter with the Ghost. Hamlet's wish for secrecy is replaced by a desire for openness because he thinks that his sufferings and his fight for justice should be known. In addition, Hamlet wants Horatio to tell his story also to Fortinbras who is about to come to the Danish court after his victory in Poland: "So tell him, with th'occurrents more and less / Which have solicited–the rest is silence" (362-363). Therefore, it may be said that though the rest will be silence for Hamlet, it will not be silence for the Danish people and Fortinbras as they will all learn about Hamlet's fight for his personal and family honour which was stained by Claudius. To put it more clearly, they will know that Hamlet did not kill Claudius in vain but for a rightful cause no matter how long it took. Horatio affirms Hamlet's remarks on the necessity of spreading of his story as follows:

> And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world
> How these things came about. So shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
> Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
> Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I
> Truly deliver. (384-391)

As Horatio underlines, the malignancy of Claudius and the justness of Hamlet will be told. Hamlet's dignified character and noble struggle will be exalted; whereas, Claudius's evil personality will be discredited. However, as it is clearly seen both in Hamlet's wish to be immortalised through Horatio's telling of his story and Horatio's wholehearted acceptance of being Hamlet's spokesman, Hamlet's lasting hesitation and his long delay in avenging his father's murder are not mentioned as the heroic side of his struggle is featured. In other words, neither Hamlet nor Horatio remembers the reasons which made Hamlet hesitate but they emphasise the fact that the action was taken.

In conclusion, Hamlet's character is problematic in terms of his mood and constant delays in taking revenge upon the murderer of his father. Therefore, it may be argued that though Hamlet does not completely become insane as the play progresses and reveals his awareness in particular situations, his melancholic mood develops through his pretended madness. His mother's betrayal, his uncle's murdering his father and violation of Hamlet's right to the Danish throne lead Hamlet to lose his trust in his immediate family, friends and his beloved. In Preston Johnson's words, Hamlet becomes "a soul in distress, a willow bending before the storm of life, bending this way and that […]" (92). In relation to his distemper, Hamlet delays the act of avenging himself, and on the one hand, he finds excuses for his hesitation, and on the other hand, he severely accuses himself of cowardice and passivity. However, Hamlet's sudden change at the end of the play and showing absolute determination to kill Claudius make his hesitation throughout the play problematic. Moreover, within the political context of the play, the succession problem which is seen in Hamlet's losing the throne to Claudius after his father's death and the Essex Rebellion that is presented through the unrest which haunts Denmark from the very beginning of the play, affect Hamlet's melancholic mood and cause Hamlet to be more disappointed and desperate.

CHAPTER III

MEASURE FOR MEASURE: A PROBLEM PLAY IN TERMS OF ABUSE OF JUSTICE AND GENRE

> *Lucio*: Why, how now, Claudio? Whence comes this
> restraint?
> *Claudio*: From too much liberty, my Lucio, Liberty,
> As Surfeit, is the father of much fast;
> So every scope by the immoderate use
> Turns to restraint. (I.ii.116-120)

> Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth (qtd.in Rhodes et.al., *Speach to Parliament 1609*, 327)

Measure for Measure "proves to be a difficult play" (M. Scott 61) in terms of the issues it raises. The Duke's disguise and monitoring all the other characters, Angelo's sensuality and his tyrannical attitude in rule, Isabella's conflicting attitudes towards Claudio and Angelo, and the transitions between the world of lower-class characters and that of the upper class people have been discussed and analysed as complex issues. Furthermore, the problem in the enforcement of laws in both the Duke's and Angelo's rule, Angelo's abuse of justice once he assumes supreme authority, thus "the difficult balance between the just and the unjust exercise of judicial authority" (Kermode 143), and the tyrannical rule imposed by both the Duke and Angelo are the major issues which pose questions about justice and the ideal ruler.

Hence, this chapter aims first at analysing *Measure for Measure* as a problem play with regard to the abuse of justice and generic ambiguity. In this respect, Angelo's abuse of justice through the strict enforcement of laws disregarding the spirit of the law, and the Duke's abuse of justice in his attitudes towards particularly Lucio, Angelo, Isabella and Mariana will be dealt with in relation to the political context of James I's reign. It will be demonstrated that the Duke's delegating his power to Angelo turns him into a tyrant who ignores the importance of mercy in the enforcement of laws and rules by the letter of law. It will be also displayed that the Duke uses his absolute power to punish Lucio and uses Angelo for the maintenance of order which is violated in his rule. He also takes

advantage of Isabella, Mariana and Bernardine through the bed-trick and head-trick. In this regard, both the Duke and Angelo raise questions about the desired features of an ideal ruler. Furthermore, James I's ideas about absolute rule which is based on divine right to rule and royal prerogatives and qualities of an ideal ruler will be presented by his own political writings and speeches to English Parliament. In this respect, his troubled relationship with the Parliament will be analysed.

Moreover, the problem in genre will be analysed in this chapter, and it will be demonstrated that the play can be categorised neither as a tragedy nor as a comedy. Although Claudio escapes death many times throughout the play, and both the lower-class and upper-class characters are oppressed by Angelo's autocratic rule, the play ends with marriages and the characters seem to achieve reconciliation with each other. However, the nature of the marriages and the characters' sudden transformations lead to some questions in the minds of the audience/readers.

First, the composition date of *Measure for Measure* will be dealt with. The presentation of the play's performance history and its literary sources will be followed by the analysis of James I's ideas about absolute rule, the enforcement of laws and justice. His relationship with the Parliaments of 1604, 1610 and 1614 will be studied, respectively. Then, Angelo's tyrannical rule and abuse of justice in particularly Claudio's case will be studied along with the Duke's abuse of justice through his disguise, the bed-trick and the head-trick. The chapter will be concluded with the analysis of the generic uncertainty of the play.

For the composition date of the play, there are diverse opinions by various critics. Edward Dowden places *Measure for Measure* in 1603 (*Shakspere* 57). Since the play was written at about the same time when *King Lear* was written, James Agate calls this period "the *Lear* period, when the dramatist brooded most sombrely over the dark passions and dilemmas of the world" (27-28). Lever asserts that *Measure for Measure* was written before 1604 with regard to the allusions to James I's accession after Elizabeth I's death throughout the play, particularly in I.i where the Duke explains the reason why he leaves Vienna (381). Dowden also supports Lever's argument and asserts

that though the composition date of the play is not certain, the references to James I's entry to London and the succession in the play strengthen the assertion that the play was written before 1604 (*Shakspere* 125-126).

On the other hand, according to the Revels Accounts, *Measure for Measure* was performed by "His Majesty's Players" at the court of King James I on 26 December 1604 on St. Stephen's Night, and the playwright was noted as "Shexberd" (qtd. in Salgado 24). The play was performed in the Hall which was the principle court chamber at Whitehall (Astington 239). As Gabriel Egan suggests, "[t]his record is the first mention of the play in the historical archive […]" (161). When this record is considered, it is possible to argue that *Measure for Measure* was particularly chosen by the Lord Chamberlain and the Master of Revels who consulted the King's Men's about the selection of the play and "opened the festivities of the twelve days of Christmas on the occasion when King James spent the holiday at Whitehall for the first time" (Bennett, *Measure* 7). Josephine Waters Bennett also argues that this play was "selected for the entertainment of the new King and his court on a very important and joyous occasion" (8). However, it is important to mention that *Othello* was also performed in 1604 before the court of James I but it was performed on 1 November and preceded *Measure for Measure* (Parrott 357). In this regard, in Marc Parrott's words, "*Measure for Measure* falls thus in the very center of Shakespeare's tragic period; it is a comedy that goes hand in hand with his most perfectly finished tragedy" (357). Moreover, Martin Holmes asserts that *Measure* was also among the plays which were performed at the Globe between 1603-1608 (xiii).

As for the play's literary sources, two works by Cinthio influenced Shakespeare in the composition of *Measure for Measure*. First, a novella in *Hecatommithi* (1565) by Giovanni Batista Giraldi, "who also called himself Cinthio Giraldi" (Eccles 303), is regarded as a source for *Measure for Measure*. In this novella, the offender is accused of seducing a virgin, and his sister pleads for his life. The novella ends with a happy ending as the emporer spares the criminal's life (Boyce 412). The unfair judge who sets sleeping with the criminal's sister as a condition is a major similar point between *Measure for Measure* and Cinthio's novella while the marriage between the criminal's

sister and the unjust judge by the order of the emporer is the major difference between the two works (Wharton, *An Introduction* 19). Secondly, Cinthio adapted his novella for theatre and wrote *Epitia* (1583) where a dead man's head is used in order to save the criminal's life, and both the sister of the judge and the criminal's wife plead for the criminal's life. It is probable that Shakespeare read Cinthio either in Italian or in French translation, or in English translation which has not survived (Boyce 412). In this respect, Juriste, the governor of Innsbruck, is urged to enforce strict laws on Vico, who assaults a virgin and is sentenced with capital punishment. However, a Secretary insists on the necessity of mercy and justness. Juriste tells Epitia, Vico's sister, that he will not only spare Vico's life but also marry her if she accepts to sleep with him. Yet, though Epitia fulfils the conditions, Juriste still sentences Vico to death and sends his head to Epitia. The Emperor decides to punish Juriste ordering him to first marry Epitia and then to be executed. Angela, Juriste's sister, this time asks for mercy but Epitia does not relent until the Captain reveals that he did not execute Vico but sends the head of another criminal. In the end, Epitia pardons Juriste and asks for both Vico's and Juriste's release (Eccles 304).

Promos and Cassandra (1578), which is a comedy by George Whetstone and never acted, is another sources of *Measure for Measure* (Thornbury 70). The common point between *Measure for Measure* and *Promos* is the world of whores and pimps which functions as a comic sub-plot. In *Promos* the criminal's seduction, which refers to Claudio's and Juliet's premarital relationship in *Measure for Measure*, is presented as an esteemed act rather than a base act (Boyce 412). Another work by Whetstone, *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1584), which mentions Alexander Severus, the Roman Emporer, who observes his subjects in disguise and controls whether they violate laws, was also influential in Shakespeare's creation of the Duke. Therefore, through surveillance the Emporer not only regulates the social order but also punishes the people because they commit immoral acts (Dollimore 102). The legends of Severus also influenced the stories about the princes who controlled and intervened in the operations of the governments in England in the sixteenth century (Boyce 412). Norman Holland puts forth that the most notable difference between Shakespeare's play and his sources is the primary role that the Duke occupies. In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke's

delegating his power to Angelo is elaborately presented because throughout I.iii the reasons why the Duke appointed Angelo were stated (52). Besides, *Measure for Measure* is based on a great variety of literary and historical sources as "the actions of Angelo, Claudio and Isabella are a parallel to the story of the Corrupt Magistrate; the roles of the Duke and Lucio to the legend of the Disguised Ruler; and Mariana's role, to the tale of the Substituted Bedmate" (*Catalogue* n.p.).

As regards the political context of *Measure for Measure*, at the time that the play was written and first performed, James IV of Scotland was ruling in England as James I of England (1603-1625). After the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, the English crown passed on to James VI of Scotland, the Queen's Scottish cousin (Kenyon 32). Akrigg gives an account of the passing of Elizabeth's titles to James I as follows: "[…] Cecil, attented by the heralds, the Privy Council, and various of the nobility, proclaimed at Whitehall Palace that James VI, King of Scotland, was now, by the Grace of God, also James I of England, France and Ireland" (15). In fact, the accession of James I to the English throne was prevented by Henry VIII who expelled the Scottish royal family from the succession in his will. Similarly, before Elizabeth I died, she did not declare James I as her successor through a particular document or statement. And until the death of Elizabeth I, the English Parliament had not consented to James I's succession; however, the noblemen at Elizabeth I's court and the politicians who served in her parliaments were determined to make James I the new King of England (Akrigg 15). In this regard, as Sir Anthony Weldon states, James I was enthusiastically welcomed by the English people during his journey to London for coronation. Many people from all social classes excitedly poured out into the streets to see the new king and cheered over James I's arrival with "a passionate longing and earnestness to meet and embrace their new sovereign" (qtd.in A.F. Scott 5). In *Stuart Tracts*, the tremendous excitement of the English people at James I's accession is presented as follows:

> For the number of people that went forth of the city of London to see His Majesty that day; doubtless they were contained in a number, but, without all doubt, were not to be numbered. I heard many grey heads speak it, that in all the meetings they had seen or heard of, they had never heard or seen the tenth man of those that were to be seen that day, betwixt Enfield and London. Every place in this space was so clogged with company that His Highness could not pass without pausing, ofttimes

> willingly enforced, though more willing to have proceeded, if conveniently he could without great peril to his beloved people. (60)

As indicated above, the English people were pleased to see James I as their new monarch and openly demonstrated their intense excitement. In other words, the English people "all in one, and one in all, most worthily received the Imperial name of King JAMES, and freely consented to his titles as By the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King" (Dugdale 71-72). In addition, Firth describes the apparent content of the people caused by the accession of James I in the following words: "The unfeigned rejoicing by which the accession of James was hailed was due to the relief of the nation at the peaceful settlement of a much disputed question, which might have caused a destructive civil war. The union of the two crowns of England and Scotland added to the public satisfaction" (x-xi). Hence, the possibility of civil war after the death of Elizabeth I which had created tension in the society was relieved by James I's being crowned as the King of England. Furthermore, James I's being "[a]n adult male with two sons and a daughter […] conformed more closely to the image of kingship and promised at last a secure succession" and became "[…] in many ways a welcome change from Elizabeth (Derek Hirst 96). After James I's accession to the English throne, though shortlived, a "period of peace and stability" (R.W. Chambers 21) started. In his address to the first Parliament in 1604, he, first of all, expressed his appreciation for the welcome given to him and said that he would certainly deal with two issues, maintaining peace with foreign countries and the union with Scotland (R.W. Chambers 21-22). In this sense, James I demonstrated that he gave importance not only to peace in England but also to building good relationships with other countries, and in his rule political problems caused by the Tudor monarchs would be resolved. Thus, in Chamber's words, "[t]here is abundant evidence that it was in no spirit of cynicism and gloom that the new reign began" (*The Jacobean* 22). The accession of James I not only withdrew the threat of civil war and secured the succession but also gave hope to different religious groups. Then, "[t]o the feeling of relief was added that of expectancy" (*History* 19), and Catholics held expectations because Mary of Scots was Catholic while the Puritans were also hopeful because James was brought up according to the Puritan doctrines. In addition, his practices in the last years of his rule in Scotland encouraged the Episcopalians. And though James I was in contact with each religious

group throughout his rule in England, he favoured none of them (*History* 10). In this regard, Akrigg highlights the future discontent among the English people with James I's rule but he also puts forth the present satisfaction at the end of an era and the beginning of a new one as follows: "In a few years the English were to become nostalgic about the great days under Elizabeth, but now they were glad to be done with her and confidently expected all their discontents to vanish before this paragon coming from the North" (17). Akrigg, on the one hand, indicates the future unrest which would pervade throughout England due to James I's authoritarian rule and constant conflicts with Parliament; on the other hand, he points to the excitement of change.

In this respect, it will be useful to first deal with James I's rule in Scotland before analysing his administration in England. James I was regarded as a successful king during his rule of Scotland, and in Barry Coward's words, "[r]ecent research confirms what historians of Scotland long suspected: that James IV was the most competent king Scotland ever had" (120). John Cramsie describes the environment in Scotland when James VI became king as "unlikely […] for a king whose writings would restate the thesis of imperial monarchy" and continues: "[T]he reformed Kirk was inaugurated against royal authority, James owed his throne to the enforced abdication of Mary in 1567 and the king's schoolmaster, George Buchanan, was an exponent of the doctrine that rulers were accountable to 'subjects' " (45). In his speech to Parliament in 1609 James I reveals his self-confidence in government along with his experience of administration in Scotland as follows:

> First, that you doe not meddle with the maine points of Government; that is my craft: [Let the workmen handle the tool]; to meddle with that, were to lesson me: I am now an old King; for sixe and thirtie yeeres have I governed in Scotland personally, and now have I accomplished my apprenticeship of seven yeeres heere; and seven yeeres is a great time for a Kings experience in Government: Therefore there would not bee too many *Phormios* to teach *Hannibal*: I must not be taught my Office. (336)

With these lines, James I expresses that his rule in Scotland was his apprenticeship and he would show his mastership in England. In addition, he displays signs of the authoritarian rule he would exercise in England.

In Scotland James VI had administered the Parliament and the general assembly of the kirk, "two representative institutions" that necessiated political skills which he sufficiently possessed (Lee 154). However, as Maurice Lee points out, "[…] in dealing with his English parliament James was far less adroit and far less successful […]" (154) because the prominent feature of James I's rule in England was holding of power through the divine right to rule and royal privileges and the "larger English counterpart [of the Scottish Parliament] required more adroit handling and compromise than James was willing to give" (Fritze 160). In Roger Lockyer's words, "James was an 'absolute' ruler in the sense that he exercised to the full all those powers which belonged to the sovereign" (159). The divine right to rule is defined as follows: "According to the theory of the divine right of kings, God gives sovereigns the right to rule; this power is hereditary and absolute" (Fritze 159). Though this theory did not evolve during James I's reign, "he was a principal exponent of the theory, which was advanced by his heir, Charles I" (Fritze 159). James I presented his ideas about the divine right and the prerogative rights of a monarch along with the qualities of an ideal ruler in his own political writings and speeches.

Basilikon Doron, also called the "king's book', was published in 1599; however, it underwent revision soon after Elizabeth I's death. James wrote *Basilikon Doron* to give his son, Henry advice about the features of an ideal ruler. He particularly emphasises that the monarch is the deputy of divine power and should obey God's laws by maintaining justice and mercy (Wharton, *An Introduction* 33). Thus, his son would take over "the dutifull administration of that great Office, that God hath laide upon [his] shoulders" (*Basilikon Doron* 201). James I himself notes that the book functions as "a just and impartiall counsellour" (*Basilikon* 201). It is probable that Shakespeare knew *Basilikon Doron* before he wrote *Measure for Measure* because there were one Scottish and two English editions of *Basilikon Doron* and it "was unquestionably the Book-of-the-Year in 1603" (Schanzer, "Justice and King James" 236). James I states that an ideal ruler should first love and fear the divine power; otherwise, "[n]either can any thing in this government succeed well with him, […] as coming from a filthie spring […]" (210). According to James I, God "made [a king] a little GOD to sit on his Throne", so he was created superior to other people and should be held in esteem (211). In *The Trew*

Law of Free Monarchies which was published in 1602, James I also puts forth his ideas about the divine right to rule as being "decisive and pithy restatement of current theory" (Kenyon 35). In other words, James I mentions "[kings'] absolute legal sovereignty, their untrammelled freedom of executive action, their sole responsibility to God" (Kenyon 35). Therefore, similar to his ideas in *Basilikon Doron*, James I confirms that monarchs "sit upon GOD his Throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give unto him" (*The Trew* 261). Even in his speech to the Parliament in 1603, on the one hand, he expresses his deep appreciation for his warm reception by both the people and the members of the Parliament saying, "I out of mine owne mouth may deliver unto you the assurance of my due thankefulnes for your so joyfull and generall applause to the declaring and receiving of mee in this Seate"; on the other hand, he lays stress on his birthright to be the King of England and divine right to rule (293). His speech to the Parliament in 1609 is particularly fundamental in terms of highlighting "the absolute power of a king" (326) because he heavily stresses the divine power that is held by the monarch as follows:

> The state of MONARCHIE is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not onley GODS Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon GODS throne, but even by GOD himselfe they are called Gods. There bee three principall similitudes that illustrate the state of MONARCHIE: One taken out of the Word of GOD; and the two other out of the grounds of Policie and Philosophie. In the Scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Divine power. (327)

In the light of these statements, which demonstrate, in Alan Smith's words, "complete royal supremacy, leaving no room for independent parliamentary authority" (161), it may be argued that for James I, a sovereign is the direct representative of God on earth, and hence neither people nor institutions are superior to him. All the subjects are expected to submit themselves to the monarch and obey his orders because his power can be only compared to that of God. Moreover, James had ruled Scotland depending on his divine right to rule besides his birthright and he not only succeeded in administration but also triumphed over his enemies. And now he would rule England depending on the same principle. In this regard, as Clara and Hardy Steeholm point out,

> [l]ong ago [James I] had convinced himself that he was King not by any mere accident of birth but by the Grace of God, and that he must be worthy of this act of divine graciousness. He had, in fact, made his kingship of Scotland a matter which

> lay only between God and himself. His kingship of England was at once put on the same lofty basis, and his management of English affairs was to be conducted in the same intimate-with-God manner which had literally kept him alive in the past and made him master over his enemies in Scotland. (245-246)

Furthermore, James I expresses that as the deputy of God, a king should serve as a model for his people. Both the virtue and sin, which may seem less significant in common people, gain immense importance in a king, and in his advice to his son James I states the prominent place of a king as follows: "A moate in anothers eye, is a beame into yours: a blemish in another, is a leprouse byle into you: and a veniall sinne […] in another, is a great crime into you" (*Basilikon* 211). In this respect, a king shoulders heavy responsibility towards his people; he should be deeply conscious of this burden and act accordingly. In James I's words, "[…] any sinne that you commit, not being a single sinne procuring but the fall of one; but being an exemplare sinne, and therefore drawing with it the whole multitude to be guiltie of the same. Remember then, that this glistering worldy glorie of Kings, is given them by God, to teach them to preasse so to glister and shine before their people […]" (*Basilikon* 211). In relation to the qualities of an ideal ruler, James I openly puts forth the distinction between "a lawfull good King and an usurping Tyran" (*Basilikon* 218). For James I, an ideal king devotes himself to the welfare of his people and assumes full authority as the deputy of God; whereas, an autocrat considers his subjects as his slaves whom he can exploit at his own will (*Basilikon* 218-219). In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* James I uses the father metaphor in order to present the qualities of a good monarch, who "becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation" (262). And a monarch should also be responsible for "the nourishing, education, and vertous government of his children" (262). James I also uses the head and body metaphor and sustains that the monarch is the head while the subjects are the body and "[…] from the head, being the state of Judgement, proceedeth the care and foresight of guiding, and preventing all evill that may come to the body or any part thereof" (272). In other words, the people are cared for and governed by the king just as the body is directed by the head (272). The head has the authority to discard the corrupted parts of the body in order to preserve the whole, but the head should be protected at all costs (273). Apart from these metaphors, James I uses other metaphors to present his relationship with his people as revealed in

his speech to Parliament in 1603 in the following words: "I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; […] I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke […]" (295).

In *Basilikon Doron* James I also puts forth his ideas about "Justice and Equitie" and states that an ideal ruler should make proper laws which will not draw negative reaction from his people (218). In the matter of righteousness, a king himself should be the best example for his people through his personal life because in James I's words, "people are naturally inclined to counterfaite (like apes) their Princes maners […]" (218). However, he also openly puts forward that good laws can be passed and enforced where corruption prevails as "good laws are born from bad customs" (219). In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* James I also comments on the enforcement of laws and maintains that "all the lowable and good Lawes made by their predecessours" should be executed and the ones who violate these laws should be severely punished. However, along with the old laws, new laws should also be passed in order to "fore-see and prevent all dangers, that are likely to fall upon [the people]" (261-262). In his speech to Parliament in 1607, he calls a king "speaking law" (308) indicating that a monarch has the ultimate authority in rule. In addition, he expresses his satisfaction with the Common Law in the following words: "the grounds of the Common Law of England, are the best of any Law in the World, either Civil or Municipall, and the fittest for this people" (310). However, he also asserts that new regulations should be made to improve the Common Law. He complains about the uncertainties caused by the various decisions of the Judges: "For where there is varitie and uncertaintie, although a just Judge may do rightly, yet an ill Judge may take advantage to doe wrong; and then are all honest men that succeede him, tied in a maner to his unjust and partiall conclusions" (310). Therefore, the interpretation of laws should not be left to the personal judgements of the judges and necessary improvements should be handled by Parliament (310). However, in his speech to Parliament in 1609, James I completely contradicts himself and says that he definitely preferred the Civil Law to the Common Law in the following words: "The other branch is the anent the Common Law, which some had a conceit I disliked, and […] that I would have wished the Civill Law to have bene put in place of the Common Law for government of this people" (326).

In relation to the enforcement of laws, James I gave the first signs of placing royal prerogatives over laws during his journey to England for his coronation. In Trevelyan's words, James I was "so ignorant of England and her laws" that in Newark he ordered the execution of a pickpocket without trial, which was prevented by the nobles in his company (451). James I's belief in the supremacy of the monarch over law by divine kingship brought him into lasting conflict with Sir Edward Coke, the great Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench (Plucknett 49). The common law courts supported the Commons in their resistance to the royal privileges (Schultz 122) because the common law was against "absolute regal power" (Trevelyan 461). In this sense, there was a controversy between the Law Courts such as Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission which functioned under the king and the ordinary Courts which privileged the Common Law and were headed by Coke (Rayner 192). Coke supported that laws could be changed only by the High Court of Parliament and was also against the Prerogative Courts which used the Roman Law and privileged the superiority of the royal prerogatives (Trevelyan 462). Coke supported that "the law itself was sovereign; and the judges alone understood its mysteries" (Hill 55). According to Coke, law was "divine in its origin and sanction" and was "the basis upon which civil society is built", and it was above not only the people but also the monarch (Plucknett 49). On the other hand, James I believed that "he is the author of the law, he is above it. All other authorities in the State derive their power from him and owe him absolute obedience" (Rayner 184). Coke opposed the king's interference with legal issues during the meeting of James I with the judges. Coke challenged Archbishop Bancroft because the former claimed that "the king had no right to decide cases in person" (Usher 664) while the latter "told the king he might judge any cases he wished, taking the matter out of the hands of the courts" (Usher 671), which was also favoured by the King. James I and Coke also disagreed over the penalty imposed on Sir Walter Raleigh. Coke managed the trial of Raleigh who was accused of treason. Then, in 1618 Raleigh was accused of treason for the second time as he was tried and was found guilty of burning and destroying a town under the control of the King of Spain during the expedition he was sent by James I after he had been pardoned. David Hume expresses the contradiction in James I's suspending Raleigh's execution opposing Coke's judgement and the injustice of his final decision: "No measure of James's reign was attended with more public

dissatisfaction than the punishment of Sir Walter Raleigh. To execute a sentence, which was originally so hard, which had been so long suspended, and which seemed to have been tacitly pardoned by conferring on him a new trust and commission, was deemed an instance of cruelty and injustice" (79). The conflict between James I and Coke resulted in Coke's being dismissed in 1616 as he refused to be subordinate to the royal power in legal matters (Hill 56).

In *Basilikon Doron*, James I also wants his son not to be afraid of maintaining justice because his son will be crowned as the King of England "by right and due discent", and in this respect, he should never abstain from doing justice. He further asserts that justice should not depend on the ruler's will because it should be maintained for the welfare of the people (220). Along with his ideas about justice and mercy, in *Basilikon Doron* James I comments on crimes and categorises them according to their severity. He lists "horrible crimes" as "[w]itch-craft, wilfull murther, Incest, […] Sodomie, poisoning, and false coine" (221). However, for the crimes against the king, James I leaves the decision to his son as he says, "I remit to your owne choise to punish or pardon therein, as your heart serveth you, and according to the circumstances of the turne, and the qualitie of the committer" (221). In addition, the unforgivable crime, in James I's account, is "the false and unreverent writing or speaking of malicious men against your Parents and Predecessors" (221). Regarding the penalty that may be imposed on the monarch, in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* James I maintains that a king should be responsible towards God for any crime he commits because the divine power should be considered as "the sorest and sharpest schoolemaster" and "a king is preferred by God above all other ranks & degrees of men, and the higher that his seat is above theirs, the greater is his obligation to his maker" (278).

In the light of James I's ideas about divine power and royal privileges, it will be useful to examine his practices which are revealed in his relationship with the English Parliament. Until 1641 the monarch functioned as the sole authority to summon, dissolve and prorogue parliament. Hence, until the Long Parliament in 1640, there had been long periods when the Parliament did not meet. James I's first Parliament discontinuously lasted between 1604-1610, and the subsequent parliaments were

summoned in 1614, 1621 and 1624. As only the monarch could decide on whether the Parliament would meet or be dissolved, between 1614 and 1621 James I ruled with absolute authority (Ashton 49-50). Parliament was in meeting for thirty-six months in total during James I's reign which lasted twenty-two years (Durston 37). And as Prothero states, "[h]is Parliaments spent much more time in the defence of their privileges and in discussions which led to no immediate legislative results" (lxii-lxiii). Therefore, "[w]ith the reign of James begins the struggle for supremacy between the Crown and the Commons" (*History* 31). Although James I developed a troubled relationship with Parliament throughout his reign, in *Basilikon Doron*, he describes it as "the honourablest and highest judgement in the land" and adds that Parliament is functional "if it be well used, which is by making of good Lawes in it" (219). However, he, then, advises his son that Parliament should be summoned only when new laws are needed. In this respect, James I says: "And therefore hold no Parliaments, but for necessitie of new Lawes, which would be but seldome […]" (219). The primary reason for the tension between James I and Parliament may be argued to be James I's inefficient administration of Parliament and his ultimate belief in his prerogatives as the deputy of God. As Farmer points out, "James's belief in Divine Right made him anxious to assert that, in theory at least, Parliament enjoyed its privileges by royal goodwill, and not by law or 'right'" (48). Frank Dwyer considers James I's attitude as "a fundamental error of judgment" because "the body that he faced in England was not the powerless, anarchic gaggle of factions he had known in Scotland" (62). In this sense, while Elizabeth I did not intervene in the business of the Commons, and "her personifications of monarchy tended to mute her power" (McEachern 191), James constantly reminded them of his own absolute authority and the limited privileges which they had (A. Smith 168). Thus, in Katherine Brice's words, "he showed great lack of tact in the way he addressed them, often stating that they were totally dependent upon him" (20). As Claire McEachern states, James I used a "heavy-handed tone" in his addressing Parliament (191). William McElwee comments on the distinctive attitudes of Elizabeth I and James I before the Commons and Lords in Parliament:

> Elizabeth's appearances in Parliament had been rare and impressive: brief statements of policy at the start of a session, an occasional rating, or an engaging appeal to Lords and Commons, as she dismissed them, to collaborate in their counties in giving her subjects good government. Only very rarely was there a

> studied oration, such as the famous and brilliant speech which she covered her retreat over monopolies in 1601. James could not resist the temptation to hold forth: to expound not only immediate policy, but large philosophic views in Church and State. (147)

As it is stressed in these lines, Elizabeth I occasionally attended the sessions in Parliament and only made brief speeches on current political issues when required. On the other hand, James I very often appeared in Parliament and directly demonstrated his authoritarian rule, which is based on divine right to rule and royal privileges, through his speeches to the Commons.

The first major confrontation of James I and Parliament was on his proposal for the union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1604. This conflict is also of significance because James I particularly emphasised his divine right to rule in order to convince the Commons of the union. He focused on three matters in his proposal, that are “the acceptance of the idea in principle, the adoption of the name ‘Great Britain’, and the appointment of commissioners to consider the detailed ramifications of the proposal” (Durston 38). Therefore, in Derek Hirst’s words, “[James I] saw in his own person the opportunity to heal the centuries-old enmity between the English and the Scots” (98). In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* James I emphasises his kingly power and ultimate authority to decide on the union and says that “the kings were the authors and makers of the Lawes, and not the Lawes of the kings” and he calls his people “subjects being but his vassals, and from him holding all their lands as their over-lord, who according to good services done unto him” (269). Thus, it may be deduced that James I contradicts his father metaphor in *Basilikon Doron* and maintains that he has the right to act “without advice or authoritie of either Parliament, or any other subalterin judiciall seate […]” (270). He irritatedly expresses that the king has the power and divine right to make laws and decrees without the advice of the Parliament or other institutions; however, the Parliament has no power to pass any statutes without the consent of the monarch (*The Trew* 270). In his speech to the Parliament in 1603, he refers to divine power in order to win the support of the Commons for his proposal of the union. James I asserts that Scotland and England are not geographically separated and that he has the power and right to politically unite them as the king of both countries (294). Similarly, in his speech to the Parliament in 1607, he maintains that the

members of the Parliament owe “subjection and obedience” to him and expresses that he, as their king, desires “a perfect Union of Lawes and persons” (309). However, he received negative response from the Commons, which caused delays in the assessment phase of the project, and the scheme was completely abandoned in 1607 because the Parliament refused to grant the king concessions except for dual nationality which could be held by the citizens born after 1603 in either country (Durston 38). According to Andrew Nicholls, “the merging of [the two] Parliaments, and concerns over the economic cost of union” became the concerns of the English Parliament (31). This conflict between James I and Parliament on the formation of Great Britain led to the deterioration of their relationship and as Conrad Russell states, “[f]rom 1603 onwards, it was a new cause of instability in relations between crown and parliament that they were relations between a king of Great Britain and parliament of England” (14). In other words, James I made his decisions on government considering both England and Scotland; whereas, Parliament represented only England and the English people. Besides the problem of union, James I also ignored the privileges of the first Parliament through his interference in the Buckinghamshire election in 1604. Though Francis Goodwin had been elected as a MP for Buckinghamshire, with the influence of James I, Goodwin was replaced by Sir John Fortescue who was a privy councillor. In Coward’s words, “this was a clear case of undue royal interference with parliamentary business” (115). John Cannon and Ralph Griffiths describe the conflict between James I and the Commons as “a running battle over the right of the Commons to decide their own elections” (361).

Financial reasons were also decisive in James I’s relationship with Parliament. In this respect, “[t]he failure to reach a parliamentary solution to [financial difficulties] was the primary reason for the temporary breakdown of parliamentary government in 1610” (Coward 138). James I consented to renounce some of his rights on the condition that the Commons would accept to provide him with a constant annual revenue. However, this Contract turned into a bargain between James I and Parliament, and the Commons questioned the monarch’s right to collect impositions. Though James I expressed that his prerogative rights were not the question of debate, the Commons supported that “the king’s right and the subjects’ liberty” could not be dissociated. Accordingly, they

demanded James I to limit his power on the impositions through statute (Hinton 61). In this sense, Coward asks: “Why, then, did the Great Contract fail?” (142). The profound mistrust towards James I and the fear that a fixed income would liberalise him at a critical period when the absolutist monarchs maintained superiority over the assemblies in Europe caused the negotiations to end (Coward 142). In addition, the Commons were irritated to provide funding for James I’s lavishness and worried that the Scots would benefit from the funds managed by the English Parliament (Brice 31). Consequently, as Andrew Thrush states, “from at least the end of 1610 James I detested English parliaments, and in particular the House of Commons” because “his cherished plans for a formal Union between England and Scotland had been thwarted, and he was raged at the rejection of the Great Contract” (84).

The Parliament in 1614 was known as the Addled Parliament because it was inactive and did not pass laws. First, James I demanded financial support from Parliament in order to improve his financial position, yet Parliament imposed a condition and wanted James I to abandon his right to collect impositions. However, James I once more severely objected to the claim and dissolved the Parliament (Durston 39). Second, the main concern of the last two Parliaments was foreign policy. In 1621 James I summoned Parliament to win their support to invade the Palatine, and hence wage war against Spain but since Parliament did not pass laws and demanded alternative strategies, James I once again emphasised that the Commons did not have the right to have a say on foreign policy and their privileges completely depended on royal will (Durston 40-41).

In the light of the political and legal context of the play, it may be argued that Angelo’s tyrannical rule through the strict enforcement of laws, which results in his abuse of justice, and the Duke’s sudden disappearance handing authority over to a tyrant but still assuming authority through the tricks he plans, which may be criticised as irresponsible acts for a ruler are all reflected in James I’s authoritarian rule based on the divine right to rule and the royal prerogatives. In other words, both Angelo and the Duke resemble James I in terms of ruling. Through different means they struggle to maintain authority as James I also did by using divine kingship and royal privileges. Angelo and the Duke

abuse justice as a result of their desire to have power just as James I did in his relationship with the members of the House of Commons in Parliament and the judges. In this regard, Angelo's merciless attitude towards Claudio and the lower-class people, and the Duke's controlling his subjects disregarding their rights will be read as an allusion to James I's absolute rule. In Christopher Hill's words, "[…] we describe the early seventeenth-century conflicts as a struggle for sovereignty. Who was to be the boss, the King […] or the elected representatives of the men of property?" (52). Throughout *Measure for Measure* Angelo and the Duke struggle to achieve superiority over each other and their subjects. In addition, David Stevenson argues that Shakespeare might have deliberately used politics directly related to James I in his play because he wanted to secure James I's patronage for his theatre company, the King's Men. In this sense, Shakespeare created the Duke whose conduct as a ruler resembles that of James I's, which would appeal to both the King and the Jacobean audience (189).

The conflict about the kind of authority Angelo should assume as the deputy of the Duke arises at the very beginning of the play when the Duke makes arrangements to leave and delegate his rule. First, in the opening of the play, the Duke contradicts himself in his views about ruling and the enforcement of laws. The Duke tells Escalus that he trusts Escalus's knowledge and judgement as a politician and he does not feel any need to give him further commands about the rule of the country during his absence. The Duke asserts that "[s]ince [he is] put to know that [Escalus's] own science / Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice / [His] strength can give [him]" (I.i.5-7). While the Duke reveals his faith in Escalus, he also emphasises that the nature of the people, the customs and the laws that are applied for the welfare of the people are fundamental. He says:

> […] The nature of our people,
> As art and practice hath enriched any
> For common justice, y'are as pregnant in
> Our city's institutions, and the terms
> That we remember. […] (I.i.9-13)

Therefore, the Duke gives importance to the maintenance of justice in the enforcement of laws before he hands over his authority to Angelo and hopes that order will be preserved during Angelo's rule. However, the Duke also reveals that he held the

ultimate authority during his rule and severe punishments were imposed on the guilty, which acted as a deterrent to all the people. And now Angelo will take over the authority of the Duke and will have absolute right to exercise power over the people. Therefore, on the one hand, the Duke talks about the importance of fairness in the implementation of laws; but on the other hand, he remarks that he also ruled despotically when required in order to maintain social order. In Michael Scott's words, "[the] central character, the Duke, is inconsistent in characterization […]" (61). While the Duke asserts that his choice of Angelo is deliberate, he also puts forth his own strict rule which will be transferred to Angelo as follows:

> What figure of us, think you, he will bear?
> Or you must know, we have with special soul
> Elected him our absence to supply;
> Lent him our terror, drest him with our love,
> And given his deputation all the organs
> Of our own power. […] (I.i.16-21)

Hence, the Duke manifests that he particularly chose Angelo to rule the country in his absence and relies on his abilities in governing. Furthermore, the indispensability of harshness in the enforcement of laws and administration along with flexibility is emphasised in the Duke's words. In other words, a ruler should show leniency to his subjects but he should also hold absolute power even if it necessiates unrestrained legal practices. The Duke's ideas about maintaining absolute control over state affairs and legal issues remind the audience/readers of James I's comments, which he presented in the *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew*, on the necessity of imposing absolute rule and his confrontation with Sir Edward Coke. The Duke asks Escalus for his opinion about Angelo's personality: "What figure of us, think you, he will bear?" (I.i.16). Nicholas Marsh elaborates on why the Duke chose Angelo as his deputy and puts forth the following questions: "The Duke asks Escalus his opinion of Angelo: is this anxiety, or probing? Does the Duke suspect Angelo's character, or already know that he is corrupt?" (28). And Escalus's further comment, "If any in Vienna be of worth / To undergo such ample grace and honour, / It is Lord Angelo" (I.i.22-24), proves that the Duke is right in his absolute confidence in Angelo because he is authoritative.

In his first encounter with Angelo, the Duke extols Angelo's virtues not only as a politician but also as a man. The Duke asserts that Angelo is virtuous and honourable as a person and appearance and reality are not in conflict in his personality. In other words, for the Duke, Angelo does not hide his intentions; on the contrary, he is a genuine man who can be counted on as the Duke magnifies him as follows:

> Angelo:
> There is a kind of character in thy life
> That to th'observer doth thy history
> Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
> Are not thine own so proper as to waste
> Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee. (I.i.27-31)

As indicated above, the first impression in the audience/readers created by the Duke about Angelo's character is favourable. According to the Duke's representation, Angelo is not extravagant in not only his behaviour but also in his spending. Furthermore, Angelo never boasted of his merits and he was not defeated by his ambitions and passions. Angelo is presented by the Duke as an ideal ruler in the opening of the play and his remarks, which are also supported by Escalus, lead the audience/readers to have high and positive expectations about Angelo's rule in the absence of the Duke.

However, the Duke's trust in Angelo is unconvincing as he explains the reality to the Friar in I.iii. In this regard, Melvin Seiden describes the Duke's attitude towards Angelo as a "duplicitous game" because Seiden, on the one hand, refers to the Duke's speech (I.i.27-31) and says that the Duke's aim may be "to delegate a monarch's authority to a trusted and honored deputy precisely because one trusts him and believes in his virtues" (16). On the other hand, Seiden refers to the Duke's being aware of Angelo's vices and handing authority to him on purpose and maintains that "if Angelo's imminent evil is disguised behind a show of virtue, then the duke will camouflage his hostile intentions behind a display of admiration" (17). The Duke wants the Friar to help him hide and to provide him with shelter. He asserts that he "deliver'd to Lord Angelo / […] / [His] absolute power and place in Vienna" (11-13) and further expresses that he is not playing this trick on his people because he is irresponsible and imprudent. His absence is not related to youthful exuberance or unrequited love but the maturity of old age with a certain purpose: "Why I desire thee / To give me secret harbour hath a purpose / More

grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends / Of burning youth" (3-6). The Duke now reveals his real thoughts about Angelo's personality and defines him as an intolerant and a strict man, "[a] man of stricture and firm abstinence" (12). Then, the Duke reveals his design and explains that some strict laws lost validity during his rule as they were no longer enforced. However, the lack of these tough laws led to deterioration in the society and consequently, illegal sexual activities and the number of brothels increased and debauchery spread throughout the country. According to the Duke, such growing corruption in the society also influenced the implementation of laws because the more people enjoyed liberty, the more they violated the laws. According to Cynthia Lewis, the major defects that the Duke aimed to correct were "drunkness, prostitution, and 'disease.' Bereft of self-restraint, these subjects have lost any sense of responsibility for their own actions" (273). In addition, the government was overcome by languor and punishments were not executed while the guilty people were forgiven, which is described as "the disorder resulting from official negligence" by Knights (146). In this respect, the Duke says:

> We have strict statutes and most biting laws,
> The needful bits and curbs to headstrong jades,
> Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;
> Even like an o'er-grown lion in a cave
> That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
> Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,
> Only to stick it in their children's sight
> For terror, not to use, in time the rod
> Becomes more mock'd than fear'd: so our decrees,
> Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead,
> And Liberty plucks Justice by the nose. (I.iii.19-29)

As it is stressed in these lines, the Duke is troubled with the abeyance of these strict laws and the fact that they are mocked by the people who readily adapted to unlimited freedom disturbs him. In Jonathan Dollimore's words, "[…] the Duke, speaking to the Friar, acknowledges that this crisis stems from a failure on the part of the rulers yet at the same time displaces responsibility on to the ruled: like disobedient children they have taken advantage of their 'fond fathers' (I.iii.23)" (101). Wharton stresses that through the use of 'jades' the Duke wants to "imply that the kind of crimes involved are those of youth and wilfulness rather than viciousness" (*Measure* 61) while his calling his subjects 'children' "is a commonplace of paternalistic government" (*Measure* 61).

Thus, the Duke uses a similar metaphor to that of James I's in *The Trew*, and sees his subjects as his children who have to live under his control. Furthermore, he disregards his subjects because they violated the laws and "[h]e will accordingly unleash the lion, and see the birch used on his errant children" (*Measure* 61). As the Duke himself is fully responsible for the laws not to be enforced, he plans that a disdainful and pitiless man like Angelo can easily maintain order throughout the country through the implementation of these biting laws. The Duke accepts his fault, admits that he has a hidden design and makes use of Angelo as a tool. To put it more clearly, the Duke, despite his previous statements about his love for his subjects, now hands authority to Angelo in order not only to restrain them but also to punish them for their abuse of the laws. Lewis attributes the Duke's negative attitude towards his people to his being distant from his own subjects and not knowing them well: "That the Duke at first sees his subjects as more universally corrupt than we do suggests that he has avoided contact with his people: he does not know them well enough to judge them" (277). The Duke says:

> I do fear, too dreadful.
> Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
> 'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
> For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done,
> When evil deeds have their permissive pass,
> And not the punishment. Therefore indeed, my father,
> I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
> Who may in th'ambush of my name strike home,
> And yet my nature never in the fight
> To do in slander. […] (I.iii.34-43)

In this sense, the Duke's distance from his subjects may be associated with James I's attitude towards the English people. Jeffrey Dotty relates James I's authoritarian rule to also his strained relationship with his subjects. In other words, contrary to the close bonds between Elizabeth I and the English people which also increased her power and strengthened her sovereignty, James I remained aloof even from the very beginning of his rule. In this respect, Dotty puts forth that "[Elizabeth's] pursuit of popularity and her encouragement of her subjects' feelings of love engendered a sense of public intimacy with her — a sense of love that fortified her authority" while "[i]n place of interactive demonstrations of love, James wants stillness and silence, behaviors that signify awe and deference to his majesty" (33). Thus, the "absolutist style of monarchy" that James

I wanted to establish in England "was felt not just at court and in Parliament, but also in his interactions with the 'multitude' " (Dotty 33).

Therefore, the Duke does not want to bring discredit to his own name and plans to make Angelo bring order out of the chaos which he himself created in the country. As Harriett Hawkins also maintains, the Duke created "social chaos" as a consequence of his neglect of the enforcement of laws for fourteen years and now "[h]e does not want to take the responsibility, or the rap, for enforcing the law […] and so has brought in Angelo to scourge the vice his own permissiveness had encouraged" (52-53). Lewis also supports that "[t]he Duke's reasoning here may seem sound enough: feeling unable to right his former wrongs as he would wish, he elects what he considers the best of the choices remaining available to him"; however, she also suggests that "for even if Angelo inaugurates a stricter application of the laws, the Duke will still have to answer for Angelo and assume such responsibility later if rigor is to endure" (275). Thus, the Duke temporarily evades responsibility but on his return he will answer for the practices of Angelo. In this sense, it may be said that the Duke wants to keep Angelo under control and surveil how he rules the country and enforces the laws; that is why, the Duke wants to disguise as a clerk and says to the Friar: "Therefore, I prithee, / Supply me with the habit, and instruct me / How I may formally in person bear / Like a true friar" (I.iii.45-48). The Duke delegates the power of a ruler but assumes the power of a clergyman, and though the nature of the authority he holds changes, he still has a say in the governance through surveillance. In other words, like a superior power he observes his deputy and subjects and aims to control the rule of the country without making his presence felt. Nicholas Marsh here compares the Duke to Prospero in *The Tempest* in terms of being the secret controller and says: "Prospero is, also, a dramatist in the same sense that the Duke is: he designs the circumstances in which the other characters find themselves, provides them with testing experiences, and controls the outcome" (239). For Wharton, the Duke's disguise is completely different from the other disguises used in both Shakespeare's other plays and the plays of his contemporaries. He says: "Disguise is the very stock-in-trade of Shakespearean comedy. Yet, the use of disguise as a means to observe others is actually not typical. Disguise is usually donned only for

survival […]. What is more, the disguise as a friar is unique to this Shakespeare play […]" (*Measure* 62).

After Angelo is given authority, he regards the laws as the means which should be used to control the people and punish the guilty. Thus, he does not prefer to enforce the laws with compassion as has been suggested by the Duke. In his statements about the enforcement of laws, Angelo does not mention the place of mercy: "We must not make a scarecrow of the law, / Setting it up to fear the birds of prey, / And let it keep one shape till custom make it / Their perch, and not their terror" (II.i.1-4). Therefore, it may be deduced that for Angelo, the laws should spread terror among the people so that nobody can perform illegal acts and everybody will remain under the control of the government.

The first operations of Angelo as a ruler conform with his thoughts about the operation of laws and they are presented at the opening of I.ii. through the statements of Miss Overdone and Pompey. Overdone first informs the First Gentleman, Second Gentleman and Lucio about Claudio's arrest and his further punishment. According to Overdone's report, Claudio was arrested and he will be executed soon: "I saw [Claudio] arrested: saw him carried away: and which is more, within these three days his head to be chopped off" (61-63). When Lucio does not believe Overdone's statement and thinks that it is a joke, Overdone explains that Claudio was accused of impregnating Julietta out of wedlock: "I am too sure of it: and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child" (66-67). When Lucio soon learns about the punishment of Claudio, he sharply condemns Angelo's decision and asserts that Claudio is about to be punished unjustly. He expresses his support for Claudio in his conversation with Isabella, Claudio's sister, as follows: "Under whose heavy sense your brother's life / Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it, / And follows close the rigour of the statute / To make him an example […]" (I.iv.65-68). Thus, for Lucio, the punishment inflicted on Claudio is cruel, and Angelo particularly chose him as a victim so that he can demonstrate to his subjects that he maintains absolute power. Hence, if somebody breaks the laws or commits even a minor crime, s/he will be definitely punished. In the following words, Richard Wheeler argues

that Angelo's inexperience in state affairs is also effective in his decision on Claudio's death penalty as his first practice:

> Angelo begins the play with a fully developed idea of severe but equitable justice, a strong sense of personal piety, and a high disdain for "filthy vices" (II.iv.42) of the blood. But he seems to have had no experience in wielding authority, has never had his rigid, private morality tested by complex moral situations, and has never felt directly the force of urgent sexual arousal. His first act in office, decreeing the vigorous enforcement of a long dormant law that punishes fornication with death reflects all these factors. (93)

As clearly indicated in the above lines, Angelo is not sufficient as a ruler though he was given authority by the Duke. He does not know how to exercise his authority, and as his personal morality was never confronted with complicated moral problems, he does not know how to handle the problems related to moral issues during his governing. Furthermore, he represses his sexual desires, and hence he first enforces laws against adultery and the brothels.

Secondly, Overdone presents the chaotic situation that recently pervades throughout the country: "Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk" (I.i.75-77). Thus, the country is already in crisis that stems from the war against the King of Hungary, diseases, death penalties and destitution. In addition to these negative developments, Angelo's prohibition of the brothels adversely affects the lives of the lower-class people. It is understood from the statements of the First Gentleman and Pompey that a notice regarding the new implementation was published. On learning about the cause of Claudio's arrest, the First Gentleman puts forth that there is a direct connection between Claudio's arrest and the closing down of the brothels saying, "[b]ut most of all agreeing with the proclamation" (I.ii.73) while Pompey asks Overdone: "[…] You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?" (I.ii.85-86). It may be argued that Angelo started war specifically against crimes related to morality. Then, Pompey explains the new measures imposed by Angelo against the brothels in detail and says: "All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down" (I.ii.88-89). Regarding the brothels in the city, Pompey says that "[t]hey shall stand for seed: they had gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in for them" (I.ii.91-92). Therefore, only the brothels in the suburbs will be demolished,

yet the ones in big cities will be sold to wealthy people in order to derive a profit. Overdone criticises Angelo and his practices as she ironically expresses that closing down the brothels is the only action that Angelo's government takes for the welfare of the people: "Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth! What shall become of me?" (I.ii.96-97). Thus, Overdone puts forth the question of how the lower-class people who live off the brothels will survive. Moreover, she expresses that Angelo should not give priority to the closing down of the brothels while there are so many other burning problems.

The extremism of the new legal practices introduced by Angelo is also criticised by Pompey when he expresses his ideas about the closure of the brothels and the strict control of sexual activities in II.i. When Escalus asks Pompey whether prostitution is an illegal activity, Pompey boldly says that as long as the laws allow, he is free to conduct this business. Then, Escalus openly asserts that according to the new laws, prostitution will not be allowed and all the brothels will be closed down; therefore, there will be a strict control over the practices related to prostitution: "But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be allowed in Vienna" (225-226). Hence, the conversation between Escalus and Pompey refers to the conflict between the old and the new laws. Issues like prostitution and bawdry which were allowed by the old laws are now regarded as severe crimes by the new laws. Hence, the reason why sexual activities which were free in the past are now illegal is not clearly presented and raises questions in the minds of the people who conduct this business. Yet, Pompey mocks the decision with a sarcastic question as follows: "Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?" (227-228). As understood from Pompey's reaction to the restrictions brought to the low life of Vienna, he does not find the prohibition realistic because it is impossible to forbid the sexual desires of the youth. Pompey foreshadows that when the prostitutes, whoremongers and the youth who go to the brothels are extinguished, the problem of corruption throughout Vienna will be solved and the people like Angelo will breathe a sigh of relief: "Truly sir, in my poor opinion, they will to't then. If your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds" (II.i.230-232). Escalus further explains the severity of the situation as he says that whoremongers and prostitutes will be executed if they continue their profession despite

laws: "There is pretty orders beginning, I can tell you. It is but heading and hanging" (II.i.233-234). Escalus, in fact, seriously warns that the current prohibitions may lead to executions in the future. However, Pompey still ridicules the stern warnings given by Escalus and trivialises the situation. He maintains that these tough restrictions on prostitution and pimping will not be recognised by the people and will not last any longer than ten years. He says:

> If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten years together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads: if this law hold in Vienna ten years, I'll rent the fairest house in it after three pence a bay. If you live to see this come to pass, say Pompey told you so. (II.i.235-240)

As indicated in the above lines, for Pompey, such restrictions on sexual activities do not suit the social structure of Vienna, and the efforts to enforce the laws banning these activities are the indications of a tyrannical rule in the country. Though Escalus threatens Pompey with having him beaten and whipped if he continues to work as a whoremonger, Pompey is still determined to pursue the activities which give pleasure and provide money because he affirms that pleasure and money are the two things that nobody can give up, but restrictions and despotism will eventually terminate: "[…] but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine" (II.i.250-251). Pompey further manifests his courage in the face of tyranny as he asserts that he is not afraid of being whipped or severely punished: "Whip me? No, no, let carman whip his jade; / The valiant heart's not whipt out of his trade" (II.i.252-253). Pompey is resolute about resisting Angelo's despotic acts and inhibitions. Pompey's negative reaction to Angelo's practices may be associated with the Commons' resistance against James I's authoritarian rule in the Parliaments of 1604, 1614 and 1621. Thus, the impositions of Angelo are severely criticised by the people as they believe that these acts erode their liberties. In this respect, Holmes says:

> [Angelo] is appointed to enforce all the laws in general, but he makes a bad error of judgement over one law in particular by condemning an offender whose breach of that law has been technical rather than flagrant. Claudio's offence is that of intimacy with someone whom he had intended, and still intended, to marry. Most people regarded this as vaguely reprehensible but not uncommon, while some saw nothing wrong in it at all, provided the parties got married at an early opportunity. (172)

Lucio further openly complains about Angelo's practices during his conversation with Isabella about Claudio's penalty. Contrary to the Duke, Lucio defines Angelo as a man who does not feel any carnal feelings and has blinded his passions through wisdom and firm discipline. In other words, Angelo is a man "whose blood / Is very snow-broth; one who never feels / The wanton stings and motions of the sense; / But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge / With profits of the mind, study and fast" (I.iv.58-61). For Lucio, Angelo reenforces the strict but forgotten laws in order to spread terror throughout the country, maintain ultimate control over people and restrict their freedom: "He, to give fear to use and liberty, / Which have for long run by the hideous law / As mice by lions, hath pick'd out an act" (I.iv. 62-64). Angelo's purpose is not to bring order out of chaos and ensure the well-being of his people but to oppress them. Hence, regarding Lucio's statements about Angelo, it may be argued that Angelo is not a loved and respected ruler but a despot who victimises his people in order to establish his supreme authority.

Angelo's malicious intentions regarding Claudio's arrest and penalty are presented when the Provost takes Claudio to the prison. Thus, Lucio's statement that Angelo aims to punish Claudio to make other people greatly fear his authority is confirmed through the Provost's attitude towards Claudio. Claudio complains that the Provost does not take him directly to the prison but makes him walk among the people to be seen and judged by everybody. Claudio asks the Provost: "Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th'world? / Bear me to prison, where I am committed" (I.ii.108-109). The Provost's response, "I do it not in evil disposition, / But from Lord Angelo by special charge" (I.ii.110-111), demonstrates that Angelo shows no mercy to Claudio because Claudio is not only punished with death but he is also being humiliated among the people. As Darryl Gless points out, "[…] Claudio is undergoing a form of punishment often used in Shakespeare's England for the correction especially of sexual offenders and for the edification of the public" (91). Claudio criticises Angelo's increasing authoritativeness and asserts that Angelo acts like God, which may be regarded as a direct allusion to James I's belief in the divine right to rule, although the divine power is forgiving unlike Angelo: "Thus can the demi-god, Authority, / Make us pay down for our offence by weight. / The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will; / On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just" (I.ii.112-115). Therefore, according to Claudio, Angelo's maintenance of

the ultimate power and oppressing the people relying on his absolute authority are in vain. Claudio further comments on Angelo's personality and rule as he tries to understand the reasons of Angelo's punishing him so severely. Claudio asserts that Angelo's tyrannical rule may result from his inexperience in state affairs or pressure from the lords around him. However, in both cases Claudio considers Angelo's behaviours and actions reckless and dangerous for the welfare of the country as he says,

> [a]nd the new deputy now for the Duke–
> Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,
> Of whether that the body public be
> A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
> Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
> He can command, lest it straight feel the spur
> Whether the tyranny be in his place,
> Or in his eminence that fills it up,
> I stagger in […]. (I.ii.146-154)

As indicated above, Claudio considers that Angelo may be intoxicated with power and cannot think of the adverse outcomes of his tyranny. Furthermore, when Angelo put the old legislation into practice, Claudio becomes the first victim of the new oppressive state order that Angelo established. For Claudio, the old laws which were not used for years and "like unscour'd armour, hung by th' wall" (I.ii.156) are now misinterpreted and misused under Angelo's command. Claudio reacts against Angelo's despotism and says: "[…] that nineteen zodiacs have gone round, / And none of them been worn; and for a name / Now puts the drowsy and neglected act / Freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name" (I.ii.157-160). Hence, Claudio openly puts forth that though the old laws were strict and retributive, Angelo enforces them more harshly so that there will be no possibility of escape. In addition, as it is also implied in Claudio's words, besides Angelo's authoritarian regime, Angelo bears enmity towards Claudio and he particulary chose Claudio to enforce the old laws. Lucio also supports Claudio's assertion in the following words: "I warrant it is […]" (I.ii.161).

The matters of the spirit of law and the place of mercy in the enforcement of laws are first put forth by Escalus in his conversation with Angelo in II.i. He expresses that the government should be fierce in the implementation of laws but certain principles like mercy still should not be ignored. Escalus says: "Ay, but yet / Let us be keen, and rather

cut a little, / Than fall, and bruise to death" (4-6). In other words, assuming a relentless attitude towards criminals will lead to irremediable situations and cause a deadlock. Moreover, Escalus emphasises the significance of showing mercy to the guilty in certain cases as he reminds Angelo of the fact that he himself might have committed a similar crime to that of Claudio's in the past. Escalus expresses that it is highly possible that Angelo was also overwhelmed by his sexual drives:

> Let but your honour know–
> Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue–
> That in the working of your own affections,
> Had time coher'd with place, or place with wishing,
> Or that the resolute acting of your blood
> Could have attain'd th'effect of your own purpose,
> Whether you had not sometime in your life
> Err'd in this point, which now you censure him,
> And pull'd the law upon you. (II.i.8-16)

As clearly indicated in the above lines, the crime which Claudio is accused of should not be punished with the death penalty as it is an unfair punishment. To put it differently, everybody can be overwhelmed by her/his passions, which is humane, and nobody should be sentenced with capital punishment for such a common crime. If Angelo has the right of being forgiven for such a crime, then Claudio should have the same right to be pardoned. In this sense, if Angelo makes use of the laws in order to punish Claudio severely, it means that he does not enforce the laws properly but to avenge and punish the people he does not support, and this is not the act of a good ruler who thinks about the welfare of his people. What Angelo does then becomes despotism and abuse of justice. However, Angelo's attitude towards Claudio's crime is rigid as he resolutely refuses to show mercy to Claudio and asserts that the people who committed the same crime or even more serious crimes were not punished as severely as Claudio in the past; however, this should not be used as a criterion for Claudio's case. Angelo regards the previous lenient sentences to serious crimes as a mistake which should be corrected. Angelo, moreover, sees Claudio's impregnating a woman out of wedlock as a major crime and expresses that Claudio committed this crime consciously. For this reason, even if he himself committed a similar crime in the past, he is still as innocent as people who are sexually tempted but do not put their urges into action:

> ’Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
> Another thing to fall. I not deny
> The jury passing on the prisoner’s life
> May in the sworn twelve have a thief, or two,
> Guiltier than him they try. What’s open made to justice,
> That justice seizes. What knows the laws
> That thieves do pass on thieves? (II.i.17-23)

Hence, Claudio’s sexual relationship with Julietta should be regarded as a sin because he was not only aroused but also put his sexual drives in action; however, Angelo argues that he was only tempted by women but he never fornicated with them. As also demonstrated above, Angelo vividly asserts that the previous legal practices were mostly unlawful, and in some cases the members of the jury favoured the person of interest and made illegal decisions. Here, Angelo’s comments on the abuse of justice in court are parallel to James I’s assertions in *The Trew* about bad judges who abuse law. According to Angelo, the negligence of the laws deteriorated the legal system and the social order in the country, and appropriate measures should be immediately imposed in order to prevent the country’s collapse. Angelo reveals that he is determined to take the necessary steps and if he himself commits such a crime thereafter, then he should be punished too so that his punishment would serve as a model for the establishment of a decent legal system. Angelo confidently expresses that the death penalty for Claudio is inevitable:

> You may not so extenuate his offence
> For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
> When I that censure him do so offend,
> Let mine own judgement pattern out my death,
> And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die. (II.i.26-31)

Hence, Angelo is quite determined that he will not show mercy to Angelo and the death penalty will be executed. He refuses to ignore the crime unlike the previous judges and does not accept to forgive Claudio. At this point, though Escalus has to resign himself to Angelo’s judgement, he puts forth the wrongness of his final decision and hostile attitude towards Claudio as he says, “Well, heaven forgive him; and forgive us all. / Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall. / Some run from brakes of ice and answer none, / And some condemned for a fault alone” (II.i.37-40). Thus, Escalus highlights that an evil person may rise while an honourable man may fall because people cower in

the face of evil acts and oppression but a good man may be easily accused due to a mistake s/he has never made, which is unfair. However, Escalus contradicts himself at the very end of II.i. and maintains that Angelo has valid grounds for punishing Claudio though he personally feels deep sadness due to the penalty. Escalus's obligation to serve Angelo as his deputy may be shown as a reason to explain his incompatible manner. To put it more clearly, no matter how sharply he criticises Angelo's decisions, Escalus feels compelled to justify Angelo's practices to other people and side with him. When the Justice expresses that "Lord Angelo is severe" (II.i.278), Escalus asserts that he is obliged to be so; otherwise, showing mercy to a guilty person may lead to more serious problems: "It is but needful. / Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so; / Pardon is still the nurse of second woe. / But yet, poor Claudio! There is no remedy" (II.i.279-282). Thus, on the one hand, he still feels sorry for Claudio and thinks that he hardly deserves to be killed for his crime; on the other hand, he stresses the necessity of adopting a rigid attitude towards guilty people in order to maintain order. Knights explains the dilemma that Escalus faces as "[t]he perplexity of the ordinary man confronted with the application of the laws to a particular fellow human […]" (146).

Similarly, at the very begining of II.ii. the Provost expresses the wrongfulness of Claudio's punishment and puts emphasis on the fact that all the young men may commit the crime of fornication and the sentence of this crime should not be the death penalty: "All sects, all ages smack of this vice, and [Claudio] / To die for't!" (II.ii.5-6). The Provost further puts forward that Angelo maintains ultimate power and everybody is subordinate to him: "I'll know / His pleasure, may be he will relent" (II.ii.2-3). The objections of the Provost against capital punishment imposed on Claudio continue even after he encounters Angelo. He asks whether Angelo ordered him to kill Claudio the next day and Angelo irritably orders that his command be carried out and despotically says: "Did I not tell thee yea? Hadst thou not order? / Why dost thou ask again?" (II.ii.7-8). At this point, the Provost makes similar comments to those of Escalus's and defends Claudio's righteousness and maintains that after the execution takes place, feeling regret is unendurable as the damage is irreversible. He wants Angelo to reconsider the sentence and not to make a wrong decision for which he will repent, and says: "Lest I might be too rash. / Under your good correction, I have seen / When, after

execution, judgement hath / Repented o'er his doom" (II.ii.9-12). However, Angelo harshly rejects the Provost's suggestion and wants him to resign if he does not want to carry out his orders: "Go to; let that be mine; / Do you your Office, or give up your place, / And you shall well be spar'd" (II.ii.13-15). Angelo's indifferent attitude towards the Provost also demonstrates that he is overconfident. As Bennett points out, "[t]he absurdity of the 'law of Vienna,' whose injustice is repeatedly indicated, by the protests not only of Claudio, Lucio, Mistress Overdone, and Pompey, but also of the just Escalus and the honest Provost, puts the sympathies of the audience so fully on the side of Claudio that his execution is [unthinkable]" (*Measure* 25). Furthermore, Angelo reveals that Julietta, whom he calls "the fornicatress" (II.ii.24), will be soon punished as well. Though he does not pronounce the sentence that will be imposed on Julietta due to her being with child, he orders that Julietta will be treated gently: "Let her have needful, but not lavish means; / There shall be order for't" (II.ii.25-26). Thus, in the eyes of Angelo, not only is the wrongdoer guilty but also other people who are complicits in the crime are guilty and should be punished.

The extent of the arrests at Angelo's command is also presented by Pompey after he accepts to help the Provost in the executions of Claudio and Barnardine. He lists his colleagues, clients and acquaintances who are put in prison for various reasons. According to Pompey's account, "[Master Rash]'s in for a commodity of Brown paper and old ginger, nine score and seventeen pounds; of which he made five marks ready money […]" (IV.iii.4-7). Then, Master Caper is accused of knavery and begging due to his failure to pay the cost of "some four suits of peach-coloured satin" (IV.iii.10-11). Pompey further gives the names of the people who suffer imprisonment as follows: "Then have we here young Dizie, and young Master Deep-vow, and Master Starve-Lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Fortright the tilter, and brave Master Shoe-tie the great traveller, and wild Halfcan that stabbed pots, and I think forty more, all great doers in our trade, and are now 'for the Lord's sake' "(IV.iii.12-20). Thus, the people who had been in the brothel and bawdry business and who were not punished during the Duke's rule are now swiflty and severely punished by Angelo.

The fact that Isabella may help Claudio and persuade Angelo into forgiving Claudio is first mentioned by Claudio in his conversation with Lucio at the very end of I.ii. As the Duke suddenly disappeared, Claudio thinks that the only person who can save him from death is Isabella. Claudio wants Lucio to talk to Isabella who "[…] should the cloister enter, / And there receive her approbation" (167-168). Hence, it is understood that Isabella has not vowed to become a priestess and lead a life in reclusion yet and she still has a chance to act in order to save Claudio's life. In this sense, Claudio expects Isabella to win Angelo's trust through friendship, and if this **is** useless, then Isabella should use all the means to make Angelo pardon Claudio: "Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends / To the strict deputy: bid herself assay him" (170-171). Moreover, Claudio defines Isabella as a young, charming and wise woman who can easily influence men and make them do whatever she wants. In this regard, Claudio says: "I have great hope in that. For in her youth / There is a prone and speechless dialect / Such as move men; besides, she hath prosperous art / When she will play with reason and discourse" (172-175). Isabella is not only beautiful and flirtatious but also has natural ability to use the art of persuasion. Hence, Isabella is Claudio's only hope to be freed and he does not care about the means that Isabella will use to save him because he is result-oriented. At the request of Claudio, Lucio wants Isabella to meet Angelo and beg him for his brother's life and further asserts that a man can hardly resist a woman's shedding tears: "Go to Lord Angelo, / And let him learn to know, when maidens sue, / Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel, / All their petitions are as freely theirs" (I.iv.79-83). As Corinne Abate points out, "Lucio greets Isabella outside the convent by citing her physical attributes only […]. Lucio's first words, then, are in the context of her body's sexual state […]. Lucio continues in this vein, for when he outlines the role in which she is to assist her brother" (22).

Isabella pleads for mercy and wants Angelo to pass a lenient sentence on Claudio instead of the death penalty. However, Angelo clearly asserts that he will act according to the letter of the law, and the perpetrator and the crime cannot be regarded as separate things:

> Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it?
> Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done:

> Mine were the very cipher of a function
> To fine the faults, whose fine stands in record,
> And let go by the actor. (II.ii.38-42)

With these lines, Angelo maintains that he will not show mercy to Claudio because the laws, which Isabella finds "just but severe" (II.ii.42), are quite explicit and leave no room for interpretation. He asserts that he is only the legislation officer and is responsible for acting by the law. In a sense, he claims that he does not have power before the laws. For Angelo, Isabella "seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant, / And rather prov'd the sliding of [her] brother / A merriment than a vice" (II.iv.114-116). In other words, Angelo accuses Isabella of not only disrespecting but also opposing the laws and underestimating her brother's guilt. Angelo further asserts that his duty is to enforce the laws without being influenced by any personal judgement. However, Muriel Bradbrook criticises Angelo's lack of flexibility arguing that his adherence to the laws is merely in appearance and does not reflect his true feelings: "Angelo stands for the letter of the Law, for a false Authority: he also stands for Seeming or False Semblant" ("Authority" 8-9). In the face of Angelo's firm stand on Claudio's punishment, Isabella is insistent on the importance and necessity of mercy in the enforcement of laws and says: "[…] I do think that you might pardon him, / And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy" (II.ii.49-50). Then, a heated argument over the essentiality of Angelo's pardoning Claudio breaks out between Angelo and Isabella. Lucio encourages Isabella not to give up insisting on her brother's release from the death penalty saying that she is very aloof and should be more intimate. However, Angelo, in an autocratic manner, sustains that Claudio's absolution is out of question in accordance with the enforcement of the present laws. In Bennett's words, "[a]lthough she begins to warm up as Lucio continues to encourage her, hers is not a spontaneous but a coached performance. Isabella is as much acting under the direction of Lucio in this scene as she will be under the direction of the Friar later" (*Measure* 67). Though Angelo determinedly says that he will not have pity on Claudio as he says, "I will not do't," (II.ii.51) and "He's sentenc'd, 'tis too late" (55), Isabella repeteadly asks whether death penalty is necessary: "Must he needs die?" (II.ii.48) and "But can you if you would?" (52). At this point, Isabella changes her cautious and submissive stance, turns into an outspoken woman and severely criticises Angelo's despotic manner. She first asserts that the position of a person does not make her/him excellent but his sense of mercy does; therefore, a king, a

deputy, a judge and a person of high degree are no superior to each other and other people if they do not feel compassion. Isabella feels certain that if Claudio were in Angelo's position, he would definitely relent and she says:

> No ceremony that to great ones longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does.
> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipp'd like him, but he like you
> Would not have been so stern. (II.ii.59-66)

As indicated in these lines, Isabella vividly puts forth that maintaining absolute power does not give a person the right to oppress other people and punish them with severe punishments which they, in fact, do not deserve. She expresses that a judge should not behave unjustly towards a prisoner because in that case the judge will be acting in a prejudiced and biased manner: "And you were Isabel! Should it then be thus? / No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge, / And what a prisoner" (II.ii.69-71). Hence, for Isabella, the judge should not aim at victimising the accused but should enforce the laws within mercy. Angelo holds power to save Claudio's life but he deliberately evades responsibility saying that Claudio's penalty is required by law. And it would be only possible for Angelo to realise the extent of injustice he does only if he were in the position of the wronged but not the wrongdoer. Angelo argues that these strict laws are not new or his own invention but among the old laws of the country which were not applied, and hence were forgotten. In Angelo's words, "[t]he law hath not been dead, though it had slept" (II.ii.91). He asserts that nobody can blame him for upholding these old laws which already existed and says:

> Those many had not dar'd to do that evil
> If the first that did th'edict infringe
> Had answer'd for his deed. Now 'tis awake,
> Takes note of what is done, and like a prophet
> Looks in a glass that shows what future evils,
> Either new, or by remissness new conceiv'd,
> And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
> Are now to have no successive degrees,
> But ere they live, to end. (II.ii.92-100)

With these lines, Angelo himself admits that Claudio's death penalty will set an example and will be dissuasive. By this way, the people who tend to commit a similar crime will be afraid of the harshness of the punishment and avoid it. In addition, these old strict laws guarantee the future welfare of the country and will be fully effective in fighting against depravity.

Throughout their argument though Angelo constantly rejects Isabella's appeal for mercy, he decides to reconsider Claudio's punishment, which echoes James I's decision to re-evaluate Raleigh's penalty, and declare his decision to Isabella next day and says: "I will bethink me. Come again tomorrow" (II.ii.145). Isabella's efforts to save Claudio's life did not fail, and Angelo was convinced to give some more time to Claudio. Isabella allures Angelo as she says that she will return his favour if he accepts to forgive Claudio and says: "Hark, how I'll bribe you: good my lord, turn back" (II.ii.146). Though Isabella further says that she will glorify Angelo through her prayers as a blessed virgin who is about to start leading a religious life in seclusion as she says, "[…] but with true prayers, / That shall be up at heaven and enter there / Ere sunrise: prayers from preserved souls, / From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate / To nothing temporal" (II.ii.152-156), Angelo's reaction indicates that he is seduced by Isabella: "[f]or I am that way going to temptation, / Where prayer's cross'd" (II.ii.158-159). Angelo suddenly changes his mind about Claudio's guilt and considers to forgive him as follows: "[…] O, let her brother live! / Thieves for their robbery have authority, / When judges steal themselves. […]" (II.ii.175-177). Thus, Angelo maintains that even the judges who try guilty people and punish them are not honest and commit the same crimes, and hence it is hypocrisy not to forgive accused people like Claudio. Angelo, despite his former comments on the essentiality of punishing all the people who commit crimes, now expresses that showing mercy is necessary where decision makers are as guilty as the wrongdoers. He, in this respect, strongly condemns himself and says: "[…] O fie, fie, fie! / What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?" (II.ii.172-173). According to Rosalind Miles, this "tormented question" demonstrates "the breakdown of [Angelo's] previously secure self-image" (218). It may be deduced that Angelo's being allured by Isabella changes his ideas about the enforcement of laws, which leads the audience/readers to question whether he possesses the essential attributes to be a ruler

and whether he is sincere in state affairs. Accordingly, as Maurice Roy Ridley points out,

> [Angelo] finds himself suddenly in a position where he can exercise his power, and the repressed instincts erupt with a violence which at once terrifies and puzzles him. He is no weakling, and it is just such a woman as Isabella who can throw him off his balance, since her cold virtue challenges the predatory, dominating, side of him, where 'easy virtue' would leave him as cold (and as repelled) as it would leave Isabella herself. He can, as ruler, dominate the state by his cold enforcement of legal enactments; if he can also, as man, enforce Isabella to his (even to himself) unexpected will, then all his desires will be satisfied. (157)

It is strongly asserted in these lines that Angelo is overwhelmed by his sexual drives and his tyrannical rule and merciless enforcement of laws are replaced by sexual urges which mislead him. And from that point on Angelo's primary aim is to satisfy his passions. Hence, Angelo gradually reveals his repressed feelings for Isabella and first alludes to his design in the following words: "I – now the voice of the recorded law– / Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life: / Might not there be a charity in sin / To save this brother's life?" (II.iv.61-64). Angelo implies that if Isabella accepts to have an affair with him in return for sparing her brother's life, it will not be sinful because she will ultimately save her brother. In Foakes's words, "Angelo's inflexible addiction to the letter of the law in the case of Claudio is followed by his equally outrageous demand that Isabella commit with him the very offence for which he has sentenced Claudio to death" (*Shakespeare* 21). Then, Angelo brings forward his proposal directly and maintains that the sole remedy for Isabella to save her brother's life is to sleep with him; otherwise, Claudio will be definitely executed:

> Admit no other way to save his life–
> As I subscribe not that, nor any other,
> But in the loss of question–that you, his sister
> Finding yourself desir'd of such a person
> Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,
> Could fetch your brother from the manacles
> Of the all-binding law; and that there were
> No eartly mean to save him, but that either
> You must lay down the treasures of your body
> To this suppos'd, or else to let him suffer:
> What would you do? (II.iv.88-98)

As stated in the quotation, Angelo uses his absolute power in order to persuade Isabella to sleep with him because Isabella is an object of desire in his eyes. He maintains that

he is the only person who can save Claudio's life but he has a condition which should be fulfilled by Isabella. Therefore, he offers her two options both of which are undesirable for Isabella; that is, she will either let her brother die or she will lose her virginity to Angelo and will abandon her plan to become a nun. In other words, Isabella has no other choice except for sleeping with Angelo to persuade him to show mercy to his brother. Arthur Percival Rossiter comments on Angelo's proposal as follows: "With the development of the Angelo plot, this 'disorder' theme enwraps the whole. The Puritan has been specifically appointed Deputy to clean up a very dirty city; but when Claudio's life is in his hands and his sister comes to plead for it, lust determines him to rape the Nun, by blackmail" (158). Isabella chooses to die and asserts that death is more honourable than losing one's virginity to someone in this manner. Isabella, in this sense, rejects Angelo's allusive proposal through the following words:

> As much for my poor brother as myself;
> That is, were I under the terms of death,
> Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
> And strip myself to death as to a bed
> That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
> My body up to shame. (II.iv.99-104)

Therefore, Isabella would rather die than be placed in a dishonourable situation and she hopes that her brother would prefer death to tarnishing his honour. For Isabella, Claudio's death is "the cheaper way" (II.iv.105) and "[b]etter it were a brother die at once, / Than that a sister, by redeeming him, / Should die for ever" (II.iv.106-108). To put it more clearly, Isabella seems resolute in sacrificing her brother's life for the sake of her virtues and she fiercely argues that virtuous people should choose death in such a case. At this point, Angelo accuses Isabella of being as strict as the laws she constantly disapproves of and asks: "Were you not then as cruel as the sentence / That you have slander'd so?" (II.iv.109-110). Isabella accuses Angelo of being hypocritical and pragmatist. She asserts that Angelo disregards the laws on which he put extreme emphasis because he pursues his own benefit: "[…] Little honour, to be much believ'd, / And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming! / I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't" (II.iv.148-150). Isabella calls Angelo dishonest and threatens him to voice his insincerity and his use of the laws according to his own interests. For Isabella, Angelo's intentions are different from his acts, so he presents the conflict between appearance and

reality. However, Angelo's indifferent attitude towards Isabella's threats displays that he relies on his authority and fears nobody. Angelo says:

> Who will believe thee, Isabel?
> My unsoil'd name, th'austereness of my life,
> My vouch against you, and my place i't'state
> Will so your accusation overweigh,
> That you shall stifle in your own report,
> And smell of calumny. […]. (II.iv.153-158)

With these lines, Angelo sustains that his word is much more credible than that of Isabella's and she will struggle to slander him in vain because nobody will believe in her when he claims the opposite. Moreover, Isabella will also be accused of being a maligner because Angelo's "false o'erweighs [Isabella's] true" (II.iv.169). Thus, there is an obvious power imbalance between Angelo and Isabella, and Angelo believes that his ultimate power is enough to abuse the laws and even to cover up the truth. Angelo further becomes tougher in his attitude to Isabella and asserts that apart from the death penalty, he will brutally torture Claudio if Isabella continues to treat him negatively:

> […] Redeem thy brother
> By yielding up thy body to my will;
> Or else he must not only die the death,
> But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
> To ling'ring sufferance. Answer me tomorrow,
> Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
> I'll prove a tyrant to him. […]. (II.iv.162-168)

With these lines, Angelo manifests that he knows no bounds as he forces Isabella to do what he demands and he does not hesitate about resorting to unlawful violence. At this point, it is clearly indicated that Angelo's practices as a deputy do not lead to the proper enforcement of laws, but suit his own benefits and pleasures. In Vivian Thomas's words, Angelo "descends far below Pompey and the traders in flesh: what he attempts is sexual violation and judicial murder" (175). Isabella, however, believes that Claudio will definitely prefer upholding his sister's honour to his own life, and Angelo's proposal, in this respect, does not worry her. She praises Claudio's sense of dignity and trustfully says: "That had [Claudio] twenty heads to tender down / On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up / Before his sister should her body stoop / To such abhorr'd

pollution" (II.iv.179-182). As indicated in Isabella's words, she idealises her brother and does not doubt that he may prefer life to her virginity. Hence, she is not anxious about Angelo's threats and does not give in to his proposal.

In *Measure for Measure* Angelo is not the only self-contradictory ruler who abuses the laws and causes the obstruction of justice. The Duke leaves Vienna saying that he "[…] haste from hence is of so quick condition / That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd / Matters of needful value. […]" (I.i.53-55). He asserts that he has reasonable grounds to leave the country because there is an emergency case that necessiates his abrupt leave. Thus, he seems to disregard the state affairs and expresses that the rule of his country is subordinate to the reason why he instantly leaves. Ridley criticises the Duke's sudden leave for whatever reason and says: "There is the duke, who runs away from his plain job, and leaves it to others to do his duty for him […]" (154). Wharton argues that the Duke wants to try a new method in governing, which may be one of the motives that lie behind the Duke's leave. Wharton questions "whether, for instance his exercise in the ethics of justice and mercy might not turn out to be no more than a useful part of his experiment in power which is thoroughly human, and not at all 'divine'" (*Measure* 56). In this regard, Wharton exemplifies this point by referring to the staging of the play by Hugh Landwehr in 1979 where the setting is a clean laboratory and "designers and directors have been drawn to the idea of esperiment; implying curiosity and the urge to tamper are truly the impulses motivating the Duke" (*Measure* 56). As to Bevington, on the one hand, the Duke "is often seen as manipulative intruding into people's lives, playing with them insensitively for his own purposes" (*This Wide* 105); on the other hand, he "is the embodiment of theatrical contriving" because he acts like a dramatist and in the background he directs the characters; places them in insecure situations; tests them but at the same time prevents them from greatly suffering (*This Wide* 106). Bevington further asserts that the Duke also "operates like that divine power through mercy and justice. […] he is an absolute ruler in a culture that often idealized kingship as embodying divine authority on earth" (*This Wide* 106). Louise Schleiner, on the other hand, asserts that "although the Duke attempts to imitate God he is not God but a ruler dissatisfied with his past government whose efforts to imitate God in justice and mercy (as rulers were theoretically supposed to do) produce comic results" (96).

The Duke's sudden absence is criticised by the common people because they find it timeless and they are not content with Angelo's rule. When Lucio asks the Duke in disguise whether he has any news about the Duke saying, "[s]ome say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other some, he is in Rome: but where is he, think you?" (III.ii.85-86), the Duke in disguise expresses good wishes about the Duke in order to challenge the common people and learn their opinions about both himself and Angelo: "I know not where: but wheresoever, I wish him well" (III.ii.87-88). Accordingly, Lucio's reaction towards the Duke's leave is not positive as he criticises the Duke for leaving the government so suddenly saying, "[i]t was a mad, fantastical trick of him to steal from the state and usurp the beggary he was never born to" (III.ii.89-90). Hence, Lucio believes that the Duke's disappearance is not a noble act because he suddenly abandoned the state. For Lucio, this is an utterly irresponsible act for a ruler. Moreover, Angelo spreads fear throughout the country by making use of the old and forgotten laws: "Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence: he puts transgression to't" (III.ii.91-92). Not only does the absence of the Duke but also the surrogate to whom he delegated his power adversely affect the social order and government. Thus, it may be argued that the Duke's leave disappointed the common people who were victimised by Angelo's strict rule and unmerciful enforcement of laws. As Robert Ornstein states, "[s]o the Duke […] tries to keep the love of the rebels by putting his ugly duties upon the shoulders of a deputy […]. Shakespeare does not condemn him, but permits him to learn from the careless talk of Lucio that he has gained no credit by his default of duty" (69). In addition, Lucio asks the Duke's opinion about Angelo's rule: "A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him. Something too crabbed that way, friar" (III.ii.94-95). When the Duke approves of Angelo's rigid attitude towards lechery saying, "[i]t is too general a vice, and severity must cure it" (III.ii.96), Lucio expresses that it is an extremely widespread crime among particularly wealthy and powerful people, and that is why, a more tolerant attitude towards the common people would be just: "Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. […]" (III.ii.97-99). Lucio further expresses that the Duke also enjoys drinking and womanising just like Angelo. Though the Duke in disguise does not agree with Lucio's description of the Duke in rule saying, "I have never heard the absent Duke much detected for women; he

was not inclined that way" (III.ii.118-120), Lucio continues to reveal the Duke's debauchery as he says, "[w]ho, not the Duke? Yes, your beggar of fifty; and his use was to put a ducat in her clack-dish; the Duke had crotchets in him. He would be drunk too, that let me inform you" (III.ii.122-125). According to Lucio, the Duke is a womaniser who sleeps with women even from the lower and under classes and he is an alcoholic, which are undesirable features in a ruler. However, Lucio also points at the Duke's forgiving nature and his tolerance towards these kinds of crimes, which are severely punished by Angelo. Lucio asserts that in terms of ruling he definitely prefers the Duke to Angelo: "Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man! Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hanged a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand" (III.ii.110-115). Lucio does not regard one's having sexual urges and acting accordingly as a sin; on the contrary, he thinks that imposing the death penalty on a man for this reason is a wrong decision. According to him, the Duke, if he were in Angelo's position in this case, would definitely tolerate people who act according to their sexual drives. Thus, for Lucio, the Duke "had some feeling of the sport; he knew the service; and that instructed him to mercy" (III.ii.115-117), which Angelo lacks.

However, the Duke's abuse of justice is also presented in his harsh treatment of Lucio just because he severely criticises the Duke's personality and rule. John Wain calls the Duke's attitude "his self-importance" (97). While the Duke expects to test Angelo's government, his own rule is also tested and he learns about the opinions of the common people about himself. Lucio asserts that the Duke is not only a careless and factitious but also an unwise man: "A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow–" (III.ii.136). Herbert Weil explains the transformation in Lucio's attitude towards the Duke in the following words: "Lucio shifts subjects in a tantalizing, ambiguous manner (very much like that often employed by his listening ruler) […]" and " […] now takes the opposite stance" ("The Options" 32). Lucio, moreover, distrusts the Duke and does not think that he will reveal Angelo's illegal and unmerciful practices on his return: "The Duke yet would have dark deeds darkly answered: he would never bring them to light: would he were returned!" (III.ii.170-172). Therefore, though Lucio complains that the Duke also

has shady deals, he still desires him to return as he is a more impartial ruler than Angelo. According to Lewis, Lucio accuses the Duke of not being clear on carrying out sentences as she says, "[b]ut the audience-suspecting that the Duke has not been administering the law at all (I.iii) – infers from Lucio's lines that the Duke's real failing has been his refusal to make public his stance toward crime and punishment" (280). However, the Duke in disguise blames Lucio of envying the Duke for his virtuous and decent character and says: "Therefore you speak unskilfully: or, if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice" (III.ii.142-144). He further threatens Lucio that he will deeply regret his insults to the Duke because once the Duke comes back, Lucio will be forced to express his views before him. The Duke wants to learn Lucio's name, which indicates that he will remember him on his return and implies that he will punish Lucio as soon as he stops disguising himself as a friar. The Duke says: "O, you hope the Duke will return no more; or you imagine me too harmful an opposite. But indeed, I can do you little harm" (III.ii.159-160). In Harriett Hawkins's words, "the Duke finds Lucio's insults harder to pardon than any other offences in the play–major or minor, attempted or committed, including murder" (51). The Duke's rigid attitude towards Lucio contradicts James I's advice to his son about the crimes against the king in *Basilikon Doron*. James I tells his son not to tolerate disparaging remarks about his predecesors but to pardon people who criticise the king. Although the Duke indicates that he does not abstain from using his authority against the people who harshly criticise him, he also puts forward the helplessness of man in the face of heavy criticism: "No might nor greatness in mortality / Can censure 'scape. Back-wounding calumny / The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong / Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?" (III.ii.179-182). Therefore, it can be clearly seen that the Duke accuses people like Lucio of besmirching him, and he "gives voice to outrage against Lucio's idle, scandal-mongering remarks" (Stevenson 197). With these lines, the Duke manifests that people with political or social authority should not be exposed to heavy criticism because, for the Duke, the power they hold should be intimidating. However, the Duke's hostile reaction to bitter criticism poses questions in the minds of the audience/readers about how an ideal ruler should handle such a situation and what the content of criticism from common people against a ruler should be. Based on Lucio's

account of the Duke, it may be deduced that the Duke is tolerant towards illicit sexual activities but he does not tolerate negative criticism.

Accordingly, Lucio is punished at the end of the play. When the Duke in disguise recognises Lucio and says, “I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice; / I met you at the prison, in the absence of the Duke” (V.i.326-327), Lucio pretends not to have spoken ill of the Duke and accuses Friar Lodowick of insulting the Duke: “Do you so, sir? And was the Duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?” (V.i.331-333). Hence, Angelo is mistaken when he says, “[h]ark how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses!” (V.i.340-341) because Lucio distorts the facts. After the Duke’s identity is revealed, Lucio is first arrested and the Duke takes pride in his unmasking Lucio: “Thou art the first knave that e’er mad’st a duke” (V.i.354). Then, in order to save his own life, Lucio tries to convince the Duke that he was not sincere in his comments about the Duke’s character: “Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to the trick […]” (V.i.502). He requests the Duke to reduce his sentence and to have mercy on him: “if you will hang me for it, you may: but I had rather it would please you I might be whipped” (503-504). The Duke pitilessly orders Lucio to marry the woman whom he impregnated, then to be whipped and executed: “As I have heard him swear himself there’s one / Whom he begot with child – let her appear, / And he shall marry her. The nuptial finish’d, / Let him be whipp’d and hang’d” (V.i.508-511). However, he suddenly forgives Lucio’s all offences including his harsh criticism against his personality but he is resolute about his forcing Lucio to marry a prostitute: “Thy slanders I forgive, and therewithal / Remit thy other forfeits. – Take him to prison, / And see our pleasure herein executed” (V.i.517-519).

The Duke, who is disguised as Friar Lodowick, learns about Claudio’s sentence given by Angelo in II. iii. after his conversation with the Provost. The Provost introduces Julietta to the Duke in disguise and gives information regarding the illicit sexual relationship between Claudio and Julietta. In the Provost’s words, Julietta is “[…] a gentlewoman of mine, / Who, failing in the flaws of her own youth, / Hath blister’d her report. She is with child, / And he that got it, sentenc’d […]” (II.iii.10-13). The Duke in disguise visits the prison in order to see the convicts and provide them with religious

service before the execution of their sentences. In this regard, the Duke asks the Provost's permission to contact the convicts as follows:

> Bound by my charity, and my bless'd order,
> I come to visit the afflicted spirits
> Here in the prison. Do me the common right
> To let me see them, and to make me know
> The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
> To them accordingly. (II.iii.3-8)

As indicated in these lines, the Duke aims to see whether Angelo enforces the laws properly or whether he abuses them and victimises the people after he gave him full authority to rule. In a sense, the Duke wants to check the types of the crimes that are punished by Angelo and the severity of the punishments. Then, the Duke meets Julietta and learns that she committed fornication and both she and her lover will be punished; however, the punishment of her lover will be more severe as he will be executed. The Provost emphasises the harshness of the penalty imposed by Angelo as follows: "[…] a young man / More fit to do another such offence, / Than die for this" (II.iii.13-15). On learning of Julietta's situation, the Duke asserts that Julietta's and Claudio's crime is not a severe one and should definitely not be harshly punished. He maintains that such a crime can be forgiven if the offender displays remorse. In this respect, the Duke asks Julietta: "Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?" (II.iii.20). Julietta shows her repentance in the following words: "I do repent me as it is an evil, / And take the shame with joy" (II.iii.34-35). The Duke supports Julietta in her feeling regret, and moreover expresses that he will teach Julietta how to ease her conscience and suffer the consequences of her crime, of which she repents. Hence, she will be able to pay the penalty of her crime and the severe sentences imposed by the judge under the present legal system will not be necessary: "I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience / And try your penitence, if it be sound, / Or hollowly put on" (II.iii.21-23). For the Duke, one's feeling regret and being ashamed of her/his crime are two signs which should be enough for forgiveness because once one feels remorse and shame, s/he will not commit the same crime once again:

> 'Tis meet so, daughter; but lest you do repent,
> As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
> Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,

> Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,
> But as we stand in fear– (II.iii.30-35)

With these lines, the Duke highlights the necessity of divine retribution which has mercy unlike the laws that are strictly enforced by cruel rulers. In other words, he sustains that if a criminal achieves divine retribution, then the penalty imposed by the judge becomes insignificant. In addition, in the light of the Duke's attitude towards Julietta's and Claudio's crime, it may be argued that he adopts a different approach which is completely opposite to that of Angelo's. On hearing of the nature of the crime committed by Julietta and Claudio, the Duke maintains that repentance by the two convicts is enough for them to be forgiven. The Duke leaves the scene in order to see Claudio and asks for his repentance as well: "Your partner, as I hear, must die tomorrow, / And I am going with instruction to him" (II.iii.37-38). The Duke, here, acts in order to save Claudio's life and protect both Claudio and Julietta from Angelo's oppression. As the Duke is disguised as a friar, he uses divine means to reach his goal. The Duke, who controls "an action he never participates in directly until he proposes to Isabella" (13) in Wheeler's definition, both monitors and dominates the course of events behind the scenes and in the disguise of a friar he aims to find solutions to the problems created by Angelo's severe legal practices. In Augustus William Schlegel's words, "[the Duke] takes more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than governing them in the customary way of princes" (388).

The Duke first reveals that he plans to control the course of the events in his talk with Claudio after Claudio and Isabella dispute over Angelo's proposal. Though the Duke knows about Angelo's hidden motive behind his proposal, he consoles Claudio that Angelo made that proposal to Isabella to test her virtues and to see the extent of his own authority. The Duke also lies to Claudio about his own relationship with Angelo as he says that Angelo mostly confesses his sins to the Duke, and that is why the Duke is already informed of Claudio's case. The Duke wants Claudio to be ready to die because Angelo will not forgive him and says:

> Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an assay of her virtue, to practise his judgement with the disposition of natures. She, having the truth of honour in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive.

> I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore prepare yourself to die. (III.i.159-167)

Therefore, the Duke reveals that he is fully aware of every incident because he not only knows Angelo's thoughts about Claudio's penalty but also the conversation between Claudio and Isabella. Bertrand Evans points to the lies that the Duke tells in the above lines as follows: "The seven lines contain three falsehoods apparent to us: Angelo did indeed mean to corrupt Isabella; the Duke is not Angelo's confessor; and, finally, now aware of all the facts, he can truly intend to let Claudio die" (*Shakespeare's Comedies* 197).

Then, the Duke in disguise tells Isabella not only about Angelo's evil nature but also his own plan in order to take revenge on Angelo and save Claudio's life. The Duke further expresses that Isabella's only option is to accept the Duke's proposal because it is impossible for her to convince other people that Angelo made her an indecent proposal: "That shall not be much amiss. Yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation –he made trial of you only. Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings, to the love I have in doing good; a remedy presents itself" (III.i.194-198). The Duke demonstrates that he knows Angelo very well and can easily predict his moves. However, ironically, though Isabella struggles not to submit to Angelo's proposal, this time she is forced to accept the Duke's proposal. In a sense, in order to save her brother's life, Isabella is compelled to yield to either Angelo's wishes or those of the Duke's. Before the Duke explains his plan in detail, he first tells the wrongs Angelo did in his past. The Duke reveals the story of Angelo and Mariana whom he was about to marry but changed his mind when Mariana's brother Frederick was killed at shipwreck and Mariana lost her dowry. Mariana was highly affected by Angelo's indifferent and relentless attitude towards her afterwards and according to the Duke, she still suffers. Angelo "[l]eft her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort: swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour: in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake; and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not" (III.i.225-230). As indicated in these lines, Angelo was always a self-interested man who could ignore his lover for the sake of monetary gain. And the Duke tells this story to Isabella because he wants to include Mariana in

his plan; hence, according to the Duke, “[i]t is a rupture that [Isabella] may easily heal: and the cure of it not only saves [her] brother, but keeps [her] from dishonour in doing it” (III.i.235-237). For Seiden, the Duke deliberately includes Mariana in the bed-trick because he wants to undermine the ethical aspect of the bed-trick. In other words, he aims to convince not only Isabella and Mariana but also the audience/readers that the bed-trick is essential in punishing Angelo and maintaining justice:

> To introduce the story of Mariana in the middle of the explanation of the bed trcik is a diversionary tactic. By causing us to attach our concern to Mariana, Shakespeare leads us away from posing the hard moral questions raised by the trick. The morality of the jilting of Mariana is unequivocal: the ‘marble’ (and vicious) Angelo cannot be melted by Mariana’s futile tears, and because she continues to desire him as husband, the consequence of the bed trick (which began as a device to save the life of Claudio and the honor of Isabella) is that it serves to restore a husband to a once-betrothed wife. (110)

Hence, according to both Seiden and the Duke, this plan will be profitable for all the parties, and not only Claudio but also Isabella and Mariana will get what they want while Angelo will suffer the consequences. The Duke then elaborates the bed-trick he plans to arrange and explains that Mariana’s love for Angelo never ended; on the contrary, it turned into great passion.

On the one hand, Weil explains the importance of the Duke’s actions including the bed-trick for the development of the action of the play in the following words: “The Duke opens the descending action with praise for Isabella at her most brutal moment, with deceptive lies to Claudio that would deprive him of all hope to live, and with his proposal of the bed-trick” (“Form” 65). In this sense, it is apparent that the Duke will change the course of the events through the bed-trick. On the other hand, Carolyn E. Brown refers to the hypocrisy of the Duke and Isabella and says that “[s]cholars […] are unsettled by two celibate figures, repulsed with illicit sexuality as a ‘vice that most [they] do abhor / And most desire should meet the blow of justice’ (2.2.29-30), deciding on a sexual remedy – the bedtrick – to disentangle complications” (189). Furthermore, Honigmann also criticises Shakespeare’s use of bed-trick, which he calls “a desperate expedient” (“Shakespeare’s” 27) and asserts that it distorts the realistic aspect of the play:

> It was Shakespeare's error, we have been told often enough, that he chose to solve the problems of a realistic plot by resorting to pure folk-tale. After the 'realism' of the early scenes, of Angelo's passion for Isabella and of his demand that she buys her brother's life by yielding her virginity, comes the bed-trick – Angelo's betrothed, Mariana, takes Isabella's place in his bed – a hangover from folk-tale or romance, it is said, quite out of keeping with what has gone before. ("Shakespeare's" 27)

From the quotation above, it can easily be understood that the introduction of a bed-trick by the Duke eases the severity of the earlier scenes and trivialises Angelo's abusing justice by his authoritarian rule; his sexual attraction to Isabella and the indecent proposal. In a sense, according to Honigmann, the realism of these scenes and the lifelikeness of the characters are completely undermined through the use of the bed-trick.

Depending on the Duke's accounts, Isabella feels deep compassion for Mariana while she is filled with intense hatred for Angelo and asks, "[b]ut how out of this can she avail?" (III.i.235). Accordingly, the Duke reveals the rest of his plan as follows:

> Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with his demands to the point. Only refer yourself to this advantage: first, that your stay with him may not be long; that the place may have all shadow and silence in it; and the time answer to convenience. This being grated in course, and now follows all. We shall advise this wronged maid to stead up your appointment, go in your place. If the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense; and hear, by this is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame, and make fit for his attempt. (III.i.243-257)

As indicated in these lines, Isabella will accept Angelo's offer but she will lay down some conditions such as meeting at a silent and dark place at a time she will herself determine. For the Duke, both Isabella and Mariana will benefit from this plan because Isabella's honour will not be tarnished while Claudio will be saved, and Mariana will unite with the man she desires. Moreover, Angelo will be punished for what he did to Mariana when the truth is revealed. For Janet Adelman, in the bed-tricks that are used in *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well* quickness and secrecy rise to prominence while the parties callously have sex and desire turns into lust rather than love or attraction. Men are not emotionally involved and they only fulfil their fantasy of sleeping with virgins. And once women not only lose their virginity but also their

appeal for men, men do not desire them anymore (122). The Duke further says in order to convince Isabella: “If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?” (III.i.257-259). In these lines, the Duke implies that his plan to make use of the sexualities of Isabella and Mariana is not thoroughly decent and that is why, he puts emphasis on the advantages of the plan rather that its negative sides. In parallel with this, the central problematic aspect in the Duke’s proposal is that Mariana’s dignity is disregarded while Isabella’s honour is aimed to be defended. In a sense, Isabella will not lose her virginity but she will be able to avenge Angelo’s insulting proposal but Mariana will have sex with a man who abandoned her. As Wheeler states, “[t]he bed trick is the key element in the Duke’s master plan. Although it leads eventually to the marriage of Angelo and Mariana, the bed trick *in Measure for Measure* is designed primarily to prevent the unacceptable sexual union of Angelo and Isabella and to preserve the already consummated union of Claudio and Julietta” (13). This attitude towards Mariana becomes more problematic when Isabella also supports the Duke’s offer and expresses her delight: “The image of it gives me content already, and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection” (III.i.260-261). These lines clearly demonstrate that Isabella, who fiercely rejects Angelo’s offer of sex and accuses both Angelo and Claudio of indecency, now ignores another woman’s dignity when it is for her own benefit. Moreover, Philip Edwards emphasises that Isabella now agrees “without question to the bed-trick by which Mariana performs the same act that Isabella had disapproved of Juliet” (*Shakespeare* 165). Thus, both the Duke and Isabella contradict their previous statements and collaborate on the bed-trick scheme. And, it may be said that this trick will be beneficial for the Duke and Isabella, yet what Mariana will eventually get is open to the interpretation of the audience/readers, which is defined by Nicholas Marsh as “this mess of double standard” (54). According to Lewis, the Duke’s reviving the story of Angelo’s and Mariana’s broken relationship is also significant in terms of questioning why the Duke, though he was fully aware of Angelo’s wrongdoing to Mariana, chose Angelo as his deputy. In this respect, she says:

> That the Duke should have left such a man in power becomes an increasingly unsettling source of curiosity to us, especially when we learn that, before giving Angelo his rule, the Duke has already known about Angelo’s perfidy toward Mariana. From one point of view, the Duke’s choice of exorcists seems completely

> rational: Angelo's rigid adherence to the law appears to be the perfect physic for Vienna's vice, as Escalus implies (I.i.22-24). And even if Angelo should eventually become a mere "seemer," as the Duke implicitly suspects (I.iii.54), the disguised ruler will be on hand to correct his deputy's errors. Yet the fact that the Duke, despite his incipient misgivings, bestows his power on Angelo prevents us from completely accepting his perspective: if Vienna's moral landscape is really as bleak as the Duke portrays it to Friar Thomas (I.iii. 19-31), then why should he entrust Vienna's care to Angelo, who, in respect to his dealings with Mariana, reflects that landscape. (274)

With these lines, Lewis puts forth that since the very beginning the Duke knew about Angelo's immoral character and he deliberately entrusted his country to a wicked ruler. Though he continuously monitors the people and Angelo's practices, his leaving his country which is already corrupted at the hands of a tyrant makes the problem worse. In Robert Smith's words, "[…] the Duke, who knows everything or finds out everything, as he should, is aware of Angelo's dubious past, for the icy judge is a slippery rascal who has violated his marriage promise to Mariana for convenience, and is not in fact as righteous a puritan as he seems to be" (211). The Duke's sudden unveiling of Mariana's story confirms the audience/readers that he has a certain design since the beginning of the play.

As for the bed-trick, Isabella follows the Duke's instructions and proves that she is highly skilful in scheming. She informs the Duke about her meeting with Angelo and tells how she easily deceived him by saying she would sleep with him: "I have ta'en a due and wary note upon't; / With whispering and most guilty diligence, / In action all of precept, he did show me / The way twic o'er" (IV.i.38-41). These lines also demonstrate that not only is Isabella extremely careful with the execution of the plan but also Angelo is very eager to have sex with Isabella. In addition, Isabella tells the Duke that she will keep to the plan step by step and says:

> No; none, but only a repair i'th'dark;
> And that I have possess'd him my most stay
> Can be but brief: for I have made him know
> I have a servant comes with me along,
> That stays upon me; whose persuasion is
> I come about my brother. (IV.i.43-48)

As demonstrated in these lines, Mariana will accompany Isabella as her maid but she will be at the centre of the bed-trick as Angelo will sleep with Mariana surmising that

she is Isabella. The Duke reveals that Mariana does not know about the bed-trick and she will eventually learn about the plan: “I have not yet made known to Mariana / A word of this” (IV.i.49-50). Therefore, the Duke, acutely conscious of the possible undesirable effect of the bed-trick on Mariana, needs to regardfully tell her about the plan in order not to degrade her and to convince her to be part of the plot against Angelo. In this sense, he first wins her trust and asks: “Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?” (IV.i.53). On Mariana’s response, “Good friar, I know you do, and so have found it” (IV.i.54), he introduces her to Isabella so that they will organise the bed-trick as he says, “[t]ake, then, this your company by the hand, / Who hath a story ready for your ear” (IV.i.55-56). The fact that Mariana resolutely accepts the offer is presented through Isabella’s and Mariana’s brief walk as Isabella says: “She’ll take the enterprise upon her, father, / If you advise it” (IV.i.66-67). Thus, Mariana’s ideas about the bed-trick are not given to the audience/readers in her own words and unlike the detailed conversation between Isabella and the Duke about the nature and terms of the bed-trick, the talk between Mariana and Isabella is not presented. Thus, the audience/readers do not know how Mariana is persuaded by Isabella to take part in the plot and whether she objects to any part of the plan and wants to change it. The Duke’s and Isabella’s ideas about the bed-trick and its consequences are heard; whereas, Mariana is in silence and Isabella becomes her mouthpiece. The Duke relieves Mariana saying that Mariana and Angelo were engaged; therefore, their having sex is not a sin and they will not commit a crime:

> Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.
> He is your husband on a pre-contract:
> To bring you thus together ’tis no sin,
> Sith that the justice of your title to him
> Doth flourish the deceit. [...] (IV.i.71-75)

With these lines, the Duke indicates that Isabella’s sleeping with Angelo is a sin because they are not engaged or married; but, Mariana was Angelo’s fiancee and that is why, it is not wrong for them to have a sexual relationship even if it is still out of wedlock. However, the Duke’s reasoning as such completely refutes the argument that Claudio is guilty of impregnating Julietta because Angelo’s and Mariana’s relationship does not differ from that of Claudio’s and Julietta’s. In this respect, if Angelo and

Mariana are not regarded as guilty of fornication, then Claudio and Julietta should not be condemned, either.

At this point, it will be useful to deal with the regulations of engagement and marriage in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After a couple flirted for a certain period of time, they promised each other to marry and thus started the process of marriage, which was followed by a public engagement, which was "a public contract" (L. Marcus 114). After the exchange of promises, the man and woman could call each other husband and wife, respectively. The marriage was consummated only after the ceremony was held at church, a feast was given and marriage was consummated. However, despite the ecclessiastical law that necessiated the legal marriage at any time during the engagement, according to the social norms, the couple were committed to each other since the time of the exchange of promises, which grew stronger throughout the engagement (Hayne 147-148). In this regard, it became widespread for the couple to have sex during their engagement before the church ceremony. Accordingly, Victoria Hayne focuses on "a social question: how should society respond to a betrothed couple who conceive a child before their wedding day?" and further points out that "Claudio and Juliet's offense was, in fact, a very common one in Tudor-Stuart social life" (147). Moreover, according to Hayne, the Church considered sexual intercourse before the wedding ceremony as a sin; however, it "was also a widespread practice" (148). At this point, Ernest Schanzer emphasises the "inherent contradictions in the Church's attitude to clandestine marriages" (*The Problem* 76) as follows:

> On the one hand it wished to make the contradiction of a legal marriage as easy as possible in order to encourage people to live in a state of matrimony rather than 'in sin'. It therefore decreed that any de *praesenti contract* (i.e. one in which a man and a woman declared that henceforth they were husband and wife) constituted a legal marriage. Such a contract did not need the presence of a priest, nor, indeed, of any third person to witness it, nor any deposition in writing. All that was required was the mutual consent of both parties. […] the Church also insisted that, though valid and binding, such secret marriages were sinful and forbidden, and that, if they took place, the offenders were to be punished and solemnize their marriage […]. (75-76)

Therefore, a couple could either make vows to each other and engage in sexual intercourse without appearing before the priests or they could follow all the above steps

and consummate their marriage after the church ceremony. Accordingly, Wharton highlights the former option and points out that "for two Elizabethan lovers, all it took was that they made a promise of marriage and then made love. They were then legally married, and could not be unmarried, since divorce was an extraordinary rarity, needing remarkable measures such as an Act of Parliament" (*An Introduction* 30). In this respect, in the relationship between Claudio and Julietta, in Harrold Goddar's words, "[t]he judgement [of Angelo] is the more reprehensible because the worldy circumstances of the guilty pair demanded a certain concealment, their union was a marriage in fact if not in law, and no question of premeditated infidelity or broken vows was involved" (26). Kermode supports this assumption as he argues that Claudio should not be guilty according to the English laws because the intercourse between Claudio and Isabella was a contract that became operative before the witnesses, and though it was not sanctified by the Church and it was reprobated, it is still legally-binding (144). At this point, Leah Marcus comments on the sentence imposed on the couples who were in Claudio's and Julietta's situation and explains that before 1604 they would be taken to the local bawdy court and were either obliged to confess before the community or were made to pay a fine; however, after 1604 harsher measures were implemented against having child out of wedlock (115-116). But the punishment inflicted on the couple was not as severe as the death penalty imposed by Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. Regarding the relationship between Angelo and Mariana, R.W. Chambers argues that it had already been announced unlike the contract between Claudio and Julietta which necessiated announcement, and they openly had the right to live like wife and husband (34). Therefore, "[s]uch a betrothal as Mariana's was held in Elizabethan days to have much the binding force of the complete marriage ceremony, and to confer marital rights" (R. Lawrence 94).

The other trick that the Duke plans to play to save Claudio's life and to deceive Angelo is the head-trick. In the opening of IV.ii. the hints about the head-trick are given and it is mentioned that along with Claudio, another prisoner, Barnardine will be executed. The Provost wants Pompey to help him during the executions of the two prisoners and says: "Tomorrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his Office lacks a helper; if you will take it on you to

assist him, it shall redeem you from your gyves […]" (IV.ii.6-10). The disguised Duke enters the scene hoping that Angelo forgave Claudio. He states that there is still some hope for Claudio and it is probable that they will soon be informed by a messenger of Angelo's forgiveness and says: "There's some in hope" (IV.ii.75). He relies on the bed-trick and thinks that Claudio will be released after Angelo believes that he slept with Isabella. In this regard, he tenaciously asks: "Have you no countermand for Claudio yet, / But he must die tomorrow?" (IV.ii.90-91). The Provost, unaware of the bed-trick, confirms that Claudio will be executed and that there is no possibility that Angelo will forgive him:

> Happily
> You something know: yet I believe there comes
> No countermand. No such example we have.
> Besides, upon the very siege of justice
> Lord Angelo hath to the public ear
> Profess'd the contrary. (IV.ii.93-98)

As indicated in the above lines, the Provost implies that the Duke waits for the news of Claudio's release on valid grounds, yet he feels utter despair. In addition, the Provost emphasises that Angelo made a public announcement about Claudio's execution on the basis of laws; therefore, he cannot change his decision. Ross Lawrence lays emphasis on "[t]he suspense so carefully built about the arrival of Claudio's pardon" and asserts that not only does the Duke have expectations but also the audience/readers feel the same tension" (*On* Measure 108). The letter brought by the messenger also justifies the Provost's statements as it commands the Provost to execute Claudio in the morning and Barnardine in the afternoon and continues as follows: "For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed, with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril" (IV.ii.120-124). Thus, the letter sent by Angelo does not meet the Duke's expectations and not only does it disappoint him but also surprises him. Before the letter is read, the Duke believes that the bed-trick worked out, and Claudio was saved. In this regard, he says: "This is his pardon, purchas'd by such sin / For which the pardoner himself is in" (IV.ii.106-107). With these lines, the Duke reveals that, in fact, an evil-doer forgives another wrongdoer because according to the agreement made between Angelo and Isabella, Angelo should free Claudio after he

himself commits the crime of fornication and sleeps with Isabella out of wedlock. However, on hearing that Angelo orders Claudio's execution, the Duke understands that the bed-trick was not successful. The Duke's plan fails due to Angelo's breach of trust, which is something unexpected for the Duke. Foakes, in this regard, stresses the point that Angelo who is deceived by the Duke in the bed-trick now deceives others: "[…] as now Angelo, having, as he thinks, possessed Isabella, fails to keep the promise he made, and sends an order for the execution instead of the pardon of Claudio" (*Shakespeare* 25). With this, the Duke asks questions about Barnardine in order to play a new trick, which is the head trick. When the Duke learns that Barnardine is "[a] Bohemian born, but here nursed up and bred; one that is a prisoner nine years old" (IV.ii.12129), he wonders why he himself did not impose Barnadine's penalty when he was in rule and asks: "How came it that the absent Duke had not either delievered him to his liberty, or executed him? I have heard it was ever his manner to do so" (IV.ii.130-132). Barnardine's case not only serves the Duke for his head-trick but also shows the consequences of the ill practices during his own rule. As Barnardine's case was ignored and his punishment was not inflicted by the Duke, Angelo now gives a verdict against Barnardine. The fact that Barnardine himself confesses his guilt also demonstrates that the Duke was slow in passing judgements about guilty people and decisions were delayed; that is why, laws were not properly enforced. When the Duke in disguise asks, "[i]t is now apparent?" (IV.ii.136), the Provost vividly puts forth the problem in the implementation of laws during the Duke's rule: "Most manifest, and not denied by himself" (IV.ii.137). On hearing that Barnardine is guilty, drunk and unconcerned about death, the Duke turns to the Provost and wants him to delay Claudio's execution relying on valid reasons:

> […] There is written in your brow, Provost, honesty and constancy; if I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me. But in the boldness of my cunning, I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenced him. To make you understand this in a manifested effect, I crave but four days' respite: for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy. (IV.ii.152-161)

Hence, the Duke now contradicts his previous statements and manifests that Angelo is not a honest and trustworthy man because he himself also committed the crimes which he now severely punishes. At this point, the Duke does not pretend anymore and

expresses his true feelings about Angelo as he himself was deceived by the latter. In this regard, he wants the Provost's support in the new trick he will play. Though the Provost rejects the Duke's request for help highlighting that he is obliged to carry out the tasks ordered by Angelo, the Duke in disguise persuades him saying that the Duke in rule would certainly approve of the Provost's act if he were there and shows him the Duke's letter bearing his seal and says: "[…] Yet, since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke: you know the character, I doubt not, and the signet is not strange to you?" (IV.ii.187-193). The Duke in disguise further asserts that the Duke in rule will return in two days but Angelo will be informed via another letter that the Duke is either kept in a monastery or he is already dead. In this way, while the Duke returns and ends the injustices committed by Angelo, Angelo will be deceived thinking that the Duke is still away and there is no possibility that he will return shortly. These statements by the Duke demonstrate that he had already made a detailed plan against Angelo's unfair practices even before he learned that the bed-trick failed.

However, the problem in the Duke's attitude is that he prefers to respond to Angelo's unjust practices through tricks rather than intervering in his acts and directly avoiding injustice. In this regard, the Duke's attitude in state affairs delays justice and causes people like Claudio, Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine to suffer in different ways. After the bed-trick, the Duke reveals the head-trick in the following words: "By the vow of mine order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide: let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo" (IV.ii.168-171). He further sustains that the Provost may change Barnardine's cut head so that Angelo cannot differentiate between Angelo and Barnardine: "O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard, and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death: you know the course is common" (IV.ii.174-177). Therefore, after the failed bed-trick, the circumstances are ready for the head-trick. The Duke's attitude towards Barnardine may be likened to his treatment of Mariana when he discloses the bed-trick. As he neglects the indignity Mariana will suffer as a result of the bed-trick, he now does not take into consideration Barnardine's life and thinks that it

can be sacrificed for the sake of his head-trick. When Claudio says that Barnardine “as fast lock’d up in sleep as guiltless labour / When it lies starkly in the traveller’s bones. / He will not wake” (IV.ii.64-66), the Provost states that nobody can save Barnardine and asks: “Who can do good on him?” (IV.ii.67). The Duke asks the Provost how Barnardine reacted to his death warrant: “Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? How seems he to be touched?” (IV.ii.138-139). Accordingly, in order to take advantage of his situation, the Duke does not want to talk about Barnardine’s drunkenness and sluggishness and interrupts the Provost, who talks about Barnardine: “More of him anon” (IV.ii.152), which vividly demonstrates the Duke’s ignorance of Barnardine. However, the Duke’s plan is interrupted when Barnardine refuses to be executed as he does not feel ready bodily and mentally. Barnardine says: “I swear I will not die today for any man’s persuasion” (IV.iii.59). The Duke, who comes to the prison in disguise to say the last prayer with Barnardine, also accepts that Barnardine is “[a] creature unprepar’d, unmeet for death; / And to transport him in the mind he is / Were damnable” (IV.iii.66-68). The Provost, the Duke’s partner in the head-trick, however, comes up with a solution and offers to send Angelo the head of “[o]ne Ragozine, a most notorious pirate, / A man of Claudio’s years; his beard and head / Just of his colour” (IV.iii.70-72) and “[t]here died this morning of a cruel fever” (69). The Duke immediately accepts the offer saying that the death of this pirate is providence: “O, ’tis an accident that heaven provides” (IV.iii.76). In other words, he gets the chance he longs for. The Duke tells the last part of his plan to punish Angelo as follows:

> Now will I write letters to Angelo,
> The Provost, he shall bear them, whose contents
> Shall witness to him I am near at home;
> And that by great injuctions I am bound
> To enter publicly. Him I’ll desire
> To meet me at the consecrated fount
> A league below the city […]. (IV.iii.92-98)

With these lines, the Duke expresses that he will put an end to his disappearance and pretends to return to the country. He also asserts that this is the last step of his settlement with Angelo: “By cold gradation and well-balanc’d form, / We shall proceed with Angelo” (IV.iii.99-100). According to the Duke’s plan, Angelo and Escalus will meet him outside of the city and he will withdraw the authority he gave to Angelo.

Moreover, his arrival will be announced to the public one hour before he comes and the ones who complain about Angelo's rule will have the opportunity to come to the meeting place and express their grievances. Both Escalus and Angelo find the Duke's demands meaningless and reproach him. Escalus points at the imbalance among the letters the Duke sent to them saying, "[e]very letter he hath writ hath disvouched other" (IV.iv.1). Angelo fears that the Duke lost his sanity and says: "In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness; pray heaven his wisdom be not tainted" (IV.iv.2-4). Furthermore, Angelo openly expresses the discomfort he feels due to the Duke's arrival and the public meeting. He fears that Isabella may disclose his indecent proposal. However, he also thinks that Isabella cannot dare to accuse Angelo and reveal the truth because she must be ashamed of losing her virginity. Angelo also believes that his authority is respected by the people, and anyone who accusses him of any crime will ruin their own reputation. Angelo, in this sense, expresses his fear and anxiety in the following words:

> This deed unshapes me quite; makes me unpregnant
> And dull to all proceedings. A deflower'd maid;
> And by an eminent body, that enforc'd
> The law against it! But that her tender shame
> Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,
> How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no,
> For my authority bears so credent bulk
> That no particular scandal once can touch,
> But it confounds the breather. […]. (IV.iv.18-26)

With these lines, Angelo confesses that he is guilty of Isabella's losing her virginity by force, and of violating the laws. He also admits that he did not keep his word after sleeping with Isabella as he still insists on the execution of Claudio. Thus, he is fully aware of his vices and the crimes he committed in the absence of the Duke. However, he justifies his dishonesty asserting that if Claudio was released, he would seek revenge against him: "[…] He should have liv'd; / Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense, / Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge / By so receiving a dishonour'd life / With ransom of such shame. […]" (IV.iv.26-30). Angelo, who imposes a death penalty on Claudio disregarding the fact that his crime did not necessiate such a severe punishment and he himself committed the same crime in his youth, now terribly worries

about his own life. Just like Claudio, he, in fact, does not want to die and uses his fear of death as an excuse to have permitted of Claudio's death.

The Duke not only deceives Angelo but also Isabella who visits him after the bed-trick in order to learn about Claudio's situation. Though the Duke places Isabella in the centre of his bed-trick, he does not want to inform her about the head-trick and the fact that Claudio will be saved. Though he claims that he hides the truth from Isabella for her own sake saying, "[b]ut I will keep her ignorant of her good, / To make her heavenly comforts of despair / When it is least expected" (IV.iii.108-110), he lies to Isabella disregarding her deep sorrow for Claudio's execution. The Duke says that Claudio was saved through death: "He hath releas'd him, Isabel,– from the world. / His head is off, and sent to Angelo" (IV.iii.114-115). Isabella, in a rage, vows to avenge Claudio's death. However, the disguised Duke includes Isabella in the last part of his plan and wants her to wait for the arrival of the Duke in rule who will definitely help her with her revenge:

> The Duke comes home tomorrow;–nay, dry your eyes–
> One of our covent, and his confessor
> Gives me this instance. Already he hath carried
> Notice to Escalus and Angelo,
> Who do prepare to meet him at the gates
> There to give up their power. If you can pace your wisdom
> In that good path that I would wish it go,
> And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,
> Grace of the Duke, revenges to your heart,
> And general honour. (IV.iii.127-135)

The Duke will take over the government, and Angelo's rule, along with all the injustices he did, will end. Thus, though the Duke left the country putting a question mark in the minds of the people, he will now return as a saviour who will terminate the oppressive regime. Isabella, who unquestioningly follows the disguised Duke's orders in the bed-trick, vows to yield to his demand and says: "I am directed by you" (IV.iii.136). However, it may be argued that Isabella in the head-trick is no different than Angelo in the bed-trick because both of them are deceived by the Duke so that he can reach his own goal.

The last act of the play, where the Duke returns in his own character without disguise, is significant in two aspects: the Duke's abuse of justice and the ambiguity in the genre of the play. As regards the former, though the Duke does not disguise physically, he still conceals his intention and pretends to be unaware of all the events that happened in his absence. He pretends not to know Friar Lodowick and calls him "[a] ghostly father" (V.i.129). He further asks "[w]ho knows that Lodowick?" (V.i.129). Lucio, taking advantage of the situation, denigrates Friar Lodowick saying that he is "a meddling friar" (V.i.130), "a saucy friar, / A very scurvy fellow" (V.i.138-139) and continues as follows: "I do not like the man; had he been lay, my lord, / For certain words he spake against your Grace" (131-132). However, Friar Peter refutes Lucio's statements about Lodowick and asserts that he knows "him as a man divine and holy, / Nor scurvy, not a temporary meddler" (V.i.146-147). Therefore, the Duke hears two conflicting views about his covert identity but does not make any comments about the conflicting statements and calls them "the vanity of wretched fools" (V.i.166).

Moreover, as soon as the Duke sees Angelo and Escalus, he compliments them for their successful rule in his absence. The Duke praises Angelo and Escalus as statesmen: "Many and hearty thankings to you both. / We have made enquiry of you, and we hear / Such goodness of your justice that our soul / Cannot but yield you forth to public thanks" (V.i.4-7). Therefore, the Duke openly lies to Angelo and Escalus, and though he not only watched the process closely but also took an active role in the events, he asserts that his impression about Angelo's rule is highly positive. In other words, the Duke continues to act and still does not reveal his real feelings about Angelo's misdeeds and tyrannical rule. In response, Angelo continues the discrepancy between appearance and reality as he says, "[y]ou make my bonds still greater" (V.i.9). However, Angelo's commitment to his duty is, in fact, imposing strict laws on people and disregarding justice and mercy as has been demonstrated. The Duke, moreover, emphasises Angelo's importance for the state and maintains that he should be rewarded for his fair and good rule:

> O, but your desert speaks loud, and I should wrong it
> When it deserves with characters of brass
> A forted residence 'gainst the tooth of time
> And razure of oblivion. Give we our hand,

> And let the subject see, to make them know
> That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
> Favours that keep within. […] (V.i.11-17)

Therefore, as these lines suggest, the Duke deceives Angelo and makes him believe that he has won his trust. The Duke also subtly mocks Angelo and tells that his practices were very good and successful, and that this should be known by everybody. The Duke, in fact, refers to the wrongs Angelo did during his rule and implies that the injustice of committing minor crimes but being punished with severe penalties under Angelo's rule will be always remembered. The Duke also foreshadows the ending of the play and how justice will be maintained for each character. Furthermore, after Isabella enters the scene revealing Angelo's misdeeds, the Duke pretends not to know about Angelo's unjust rule and immoral deeds. Isabella accuses Angelo of being a liar, murderer and an adulterous man in the following words:

> Most strange: but yet most truly will I speak.
> That Angelo's forsworn is it not strange?
> That Angelo's a murderer, is't not strange?
> That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
> An hypocrite, a virgin-violator,
> Is it not strange, and strange? (V.i.39-44)

Thus, Isabella puts forth all the sins committed by Angelo and sustains that despite Angelo's honourable position in the state and within the society, he, in fact, committed vicious crimes and achieved to conceal them. In other words, Isabella unmasks Angelo and highlights that on moral grounds Angelo is not the man as he seems to be. While the Duke, in fact, supports Isabella's statements about Angelo's ill nature, he pretends to be surprised at Isabella's accusations and ironically says: "Nay, it is ten times strange!" (V.i.45). Isabella further expresses that Angelo is extremely skilful in pretending to be a dignified, moral and fair man; however, his rule in the absence of the Duke was vile and unjust: "[…] 'Tis not impossible / But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground, / May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute, / As Angelo […]" (V.i.55-58). Hence, according to Isabella's description, Angelo is able to mask his evil nature through his rank, title and position: "In all his dressings, caracts, titles, forms, / Ben an arc-villain. […]" (V.i.59-60). Isabella once more puts forward the conflict between appearance and reality in Angelo's personality. On the one hand, in appearance, Angelo

is an honourable and a fair ruler to his subjects while he is a well-behaved man. On the other hand, in reality, he is an unjust ruler and not only an opportunist and a corrupted man but also a womaniser. Isabella begs the Duke to value her statements and "[…] neglect [her] not with that opinion / That [she is] touch'd with madness" (V.i.53-54). In a sense, Isabella fulfils the task which was given to him by the Duke in disguise. Then, the Duke, pretending that he will hear Angelo's sins for the first time, wants Isabella to reveal the crimes of which she accusses Angelo and says: "Many that are not mad / Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you say?" (V.i.70-71). Thus, the audience/readers feel that the ending of the play is close as the truth about Angelo's wrongs is gradually disclosed. On the Duke's request, Isabella uncovers Claudio's unjust punishment, her begging Angelo for Claudio's life but Angelo's indecent proposal and his killing Claudio though Isabella lost her virginity to Angelo:

> In brief, to set the needless process by–
> How I persuaded, how I pray'd and kneel'd,
> How he refel'd me, and how I replied
> (For this was of much length)–the vile conclusion
> I now begin with grief and shame to utter.
> He would not, but by gift of my chaste body
> To his concupiscible intemperate lust,
> Release my brother; and after much debatement,
> My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,
> And I did yield to him. But the next morn betimes,
> His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant
> For my poor brother's head. (V.i.95-106)

With these lines, it may be argued that Isabella is right about the severity of Claudio's punishment and her appealing to Angelo for mercy and forgiveness. She also reveals Angelo's expectation of sleeping with her in return but she hides the bed-trick which she planned with the Duke in disguise and Mariana. In addition, as Isabella is unaware of the head-trick, the Duke also dissembles the head-trick and still hides the fact that Claudio is alive saying, "[t]his is most likely!" (V.i.107). Therefore, though the truth is gradually revealed, there are still some facts that are hidden by both Isabella and the Duke. In other words, both Isabella and the Duke blame Angelo for dishonesty and unfairness but they themselves do not act honestly and still cover up the bed-trick and the head-trick and accuse only Angelo of his misdeeds ignoring their own deceptions. In this sense, the Duke expresses that Isabella's statements may be partly correct: "This is

most likely" (V.i.107). However, the Duke is determined to continue to play a trick on Angelo and deceive him because he does not terminate his scheme; instead, he objects to Isabella's accusations and maintains that Angelo is held in esteem, so Isabella must have the intention of besmirching Angelo's reputation. According to the pretending Duke, it is impossible for a man to penalise another man for a crime he himself also committed; therefore, Isabella must be deliberately provoked by someone to accuse Angelo of the mentioned sins. The Duke maintains that he does not believe in Isabella's statements:

> By heaven, fond wretch, thou know'st not what thou speak'st,
> Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour
> In hateful practice. Fist, his integrity
> Stands without blemish; next, it imports no reason
> That with such vehemency he should pursue
> Faults proper to himself. If he had so offended,
> He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself,
> And not have cut him off. Someone hath set you on:
> Confess the truth, and say by whose advice
> Thou cam'st here to complain. (V.i.108-116)

The above lines clearly demonstrate that the Duke acts as a double-dealer because he, in disguise of Friar Lodowick, urged Isabella to appear before the Duke and complain about Angelo. But now he orders her to be put in prison claiming that Isabella's act is a conspiracy against Angelo and he pretends to punish Isabella in order to show that he sides with Angelo: "Shall we thus permit / A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall / On him so near us?" (V.i.124-126). Thus, the Duke's opinions about Angelo's personality and administration at the end of the play remind the audience/readers of his views about him at the beginning of the play when he handed authority over to him to rule the country in his absence. To put it more clearly, the Duke still acts as if he did not in the meantime witness Angelo's unjust practices and immoral behaviours. And instead of instantly uncovering the truths about Angelo's practices and taking over the management, he plots against Angelo. The Duke still sustains his indirect intervention in the state affairs, which caused Angelo to undertake the management at the very beginning and to impose a problematic rule.

Mariana's entrance after Isabella is arrested also provides a basis for the development of the Duke's scheme against Angelo. Friar Peter wants the Duke to listen to Mariana's confession about Angelo's misconducts and tells the Duke that he represents Friar Lodowick and Lodowick himself will appear before the Duke after he recovers:

> […] Upon his mere request,
> Being come to knowledge that there was complaint
> Intented 'gainst Lord Angelo, came I hither,
> To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know
> Is true and false; and what he with his oath
> And all probation will make up full clear
> Whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman,
> To justify this worthly nobleman
> So vulgarly and personally accus'd,
> Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,
> Till she herself confess it. (V.i.154-164)

Then, the Duke asserts that he will remain impartial and wants Angelo to deal with the situation himself: "Come, cousin Angelo, / In this I'll be impartial: be you judge / Of your own cause" (V.i.167-169). The Duke leaves Angelo alone to confront his own misdeeds and account for his sins at the very end of his plot. In a sense, he wants Angelo to face himself and go through the process of self-discovery. In this respect, Mariana plays a key role in the revelation of the bed-trick. Mariana confesses that she is not a virgin but not a married woman or a widow, either. She says: "My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married; / And I confess besides, I am no maid. / I have knwon my husband; yet my husband / Knows not that ever he knew me" (V.i.185-188). Then, Mariana expresses that as a part of the bed-trick she slept with Angelo instead of Isabella. Hence, Angelo is Mariana's husband, yet as Angelo is unaware of the trick and thinks that he slept with Isabella in accordance with his indecent proposal, he does not recognise Mariana as his wife, whose face is covered with a veil: "Why just, my lord, and that is Angelo, / Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body, / But knows, he thinks, that he knows Isabel's" (V.i.201-203). However, after Mariana removes the veil, Angelo is obliged to confess that Mariana was his fiancee but they were separated five years ago because she could not provide him with the dowry. Thus, Angelo had his first confrontation with himself and the other characters and he felt obliged to tell the truth. Angelo further accuses Mariana of being wanton and shows her loose behaviours as a reason for their separation:

> My lord, I must confess I know this woman;
> And five years since, there was some speech of marriage
> Betwixt myself and her; which was broke off,
> Partly for that her promised proportions
> Came short of composition; but in chief
> For that her reputation was disvalu'd
> In levity […]. (V.i.215-221)

These lines clearly demonstrate that Angelo still tries to ignore his own licentious acts and blames Mariana for indecency. The Duke is now faced with two declarations both of which contradict each other. On the one hand, Mariana states that Angelo wedded her when they had sex upon Angelo's request. She puts emphasis on the promises Angelo made her during their intercourse and asserts that these promises are enough to declare them as a married couple. Mariana begs the Duke to believe in her statements:

> As there is sense in truth, and truth in virtue,
> I am affianc'd this man's wife, as strongly
> As words could make up vows. And, my good lord,
> But Tuesday night last gone, in's garden house,
> He knew as a wife. […]. (V.i.225-229)

Though the Duke is fully aware of the fact that Mariana is the one who is telling the truth, he nevertheless pays attention to Angelo's statements. On the other hand, Angelo expresses that both Isabella and Mariana slander him and they do not act by their own will but are motivated by a man who is more powerful and creditable. Angelo senses that he is drawn into a scheme and suspects that someone else who is in a high place is personally involved in this plot, and Isabella and Mariana are used as tools. He asks for the Duke's assistance in order to find out who the person behind this vicious scheme is and says:

> I did but smile till now:
> Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice.
> My patience here is touch'd: I do perceive
> These poor informal women are no more
> But instruments of some more mightier member
> That sets them on. Let me have way, my lord,
> To find this practice out. (V.i.232-238)

Thus, Angelo clearly puts forth that he did not take Isabella's and Mariana's statements seriously until Mariana claimed that they were married. Additionally, he desires to

unmask the person who took advantage of these two women and aimed to ruin his reputation both as a man and a ruler. The Duke, carrying on with his plot, authorises Angelo to find the person who conspires against him and to punish him at his own will: “And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin, / Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth, / Do with your injuries as seems you best / In any chastisement” (V.i.253-256). Through this authorisation, the Duke pretends to show that he still relies on Angelo and does not hesitate about empowering him for the second time. Then, the Duke asks for Angelo’s permission to leave him alone for a while. It may be stated that the Duke’s giving Angelo authority to uncover the plot is similar to his granting Angelo full authority disappearing at the very beginning of the play. Thus, the beginning and the ending of the play show similarity in terms of the Duke’s attitude towards Angelo. Both at the beginning and at the ending of the play, the Duke is not sincere in his approach to Angelo and though he knows about Angelo’s dishonesty, he furnishes him with authority.

At the end of V.i. the Duke this time returns in disguise of Friar Lodowick in order to terminate the scheme and Lucio welcomes him saying, “[m]y lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of, here with the Provost” (V.i.281-282). Escalus queries the Duke in disguise and accuses him of provoking Isabella and Mariana against Angelo: “Come sir: did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo?” (V.i.286-287). Escalus further lies to the Duke in disguise and asserts that the women admitted that Friar Lodowick organised the conspiracy and they got involved in it at his request: “They have confess’d you did” (V.i.287). However, the Duke denies the accusations and, implying Angelo, he maintains that offices are not always taken up by honest people: “Respect to your great place; and let the devil / Be sometime honour’d for his burning throne” (V.i.290-291). He, furthermore, refers to his own inconsistency in the rule of the country and states that an ideal ruler should not allow a corrupt man to decide on justice and to be empowered to solve the problems in state affairs. Otherwise, he himself becomes unfair: “The Duke’s unjust / Thus to retort your manifest appeal, / And put your trial in the villain’ mouth / Which here you come to accuse” (V.i.298-301). He makes similar statements to his early statements about depravation pervading through the country. And he manifests that there is no difference between his existence and

absence because the laws regulating the rule of the country were in abeyance both in his rule and in Angelo's administration. The Duke says:

> […] My business in this state
> Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,
> Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
> Till it o'errun the stew: laws for all faults,
> But faults so countenanc'd that the strong statutes
> Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
> As much in mock as mark. (V.i.314-319)

Thus, the Duke ends where he actually starts and expresses that himself and Angelo do not differ from each other in terms of government. In this respect, the audience/readers ask the question that they, in fact, have asked throughout the play; that is, why does the Duke himself not enforce the laws or why does he not intervene in the course of the events in order to maintain justice? Though Escalus considers the Duke's statements as "[s]lander to th'state" (V.i.320), he, in fact, vividly puts forth the current degenerate condition of the country. At the request of Lucio, the Duke in disguise reveals his real identity and ceases his scheme. Lucio says: "Come, sir! Come, sir! Come, sir! Foh, sir! Why, you bald-pated, lying rascal! – You must be hooeded, must you? Show your knave's visage, with a pox to you! Show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged an hour!" (V.i.349-353). After his identity is revealed, the Duke declares that he favours Mariana, Isabella and Friar Peter saying, "[f]irst, Provost, let me bail these gentle three" (V.i.355). He also pardons Escalus; however, he is determined to punish Angelo. In this regard, he wants Angelo to defend himself for his wrongdoings; otherwise, the Duke will judge him: "Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence, / That yet can do thee office? If thou hast, / Rely upon it till my tale be heard, / And hold no longer out" (V.i.360-364). Thus, the Duke not only puts forth his resolution to uncover the truth but also reveals that he is fully aware of all the problems that occured in his absence. On the one hand, he ends monitoring and directing the course of events and assumes full responsibility for undoing the wrongs; on the other hand, he still hides the facts about Claudio's life. He consoles Isabella on Claudio's death and explains that he wanted to prevent Claudio's execution but he was deceived by Angelo. Therefore, he also puts forth his helplessness against Angelo's plots:

> Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart:
> And you may marvel why I obscur'd myself,
> Labouring to save his life, and would not rather
> Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power
> Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,
> It was the swift celerity of his death,
> Which I did think with slower foot come on,
> That brain'd my purpose. (V.i.387-394)

With these lines, the Duke shows "considerations of common decency and kindness" to Isabella (Leech 160). He also acknowledges that he devised a scheme which failed because Angelo intended not to abide by his word and ordered the execution of Claudio. He expresses that Angelo not only did wrong to Isabella but also fooled her: "[…] but as he adjudg'd your brother, / Being criminal in double violation / Of sacred chastity and of promie-breach / Thereon dependent, for your brother's life" (V.i.401-404). The Duke goes further and though he knows that Claudio is alive, he maintains that Angelo should be put to death because he severely punished Claudio for the crime he himself had also committed, that is fornication: " 'An Angelo for Claudio; death for death. / Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure" (V.i.407-408).

The ending of the play is also significant in terms of presenting the generic ambiguity. At this point, it will be useful to first deal with various critics who analyse *Measure for Measure* in terms of its generic uncertainty from different viewpoints. Mary Lascelles asks the following questions in order to shed light on the reason why it is difficult to categorise *Measure for Measure* as either tragedy or comedy:

> Is this indeed the phase, in the development of romantic drama, to which *Measure for Measure* belongs? Did the taste of the audience, at the Christmas revels of the new court, demand of the dramatist that he should frame a situation from which a tragic issue was to be expected, and then exploit his power in bending the course of the play away from tragedy? Were the conventional improbabilities of romantic comedy no longer good enough for them? (40)

Therefore, Lascelles questions whether Shakespeare wrote *Measure for Measure* in order to appeal to the taste of the play's original audience. She wonders whether the royal audience who saw the play in 1604 during the Christmas celebrations demanded a play which was at the edge of tragedy but did not end tragically. Dowden defines the

play as "serious, dark, ironical" along with *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida* (*Shakspere* 57). Referring to the bleak atmosphere of the play, Bennett also argues that *Measure for Measure* "is a 'dark comedy' belonging to Shakespeare's 'tragic period' " (*Measure* 2). According to Thomas Marc Parrott, *Measure for Measure* is a tragic-comedy and he quotes Fletcher's definition of tragi-comedy in the following words: "[I]t wants death which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet it brings some near it which is enough to make it no comedy" (qtd. in *Shakespearean Comedy* 362). Hence, Parrott emphasises that in tragic-comedy the events become so serious that the audience/readers expect death to end the play. The play does not end with death but the audience/readers still do not feel relieved. In addition to this, Parrott refers to the "conventional devices of this genre" (362) and asserts that disguise and mistaken identity, as used by the Duke; complicated plots such as bed-trick and head-trick and the ambiguous ending are all used in *Measure for Measure* (362). Charles Boyce also categorises the play as tragi-comedy and points out that "*Measure for Measure* purposefully combines tragic development with a comic resolution […]" (409). Similarly, Wharton expresses that the only way to resolve the persistent conflict between the tragic and comic aspects of the play is to call it tragic-comedy rather than comedy (*An Introduction* 21). Melvin Seiden supports Parrott's, Boyce's and Wharton's statements about the tragic-comic nature of the play and asks: "Is this a TRAGI-comedy or a tragi-COMEDY?" (13). Hence, for Seiden, *Measure for Measure* embodies the features of both genres as they mingle together. He further asserts that the critics who are confused about the genre to which the play belongs "find an essentially tragic seriousness in the play, an unhonored commitment to tragic irrevocability that, in their view, is violated by hasty, unconvincing, and melodramatic resolutions" (13). *Measure for Measure* neither promises a happy ending where all the conflicts are solved nor presents a gloomy atmosphere that is darkened by the existence of death and hence, in Seiden's words, the play "does not place us securely and unequivocally either in a dark tragic world or in a green comic garden" (13). According to Abate, the play was categorised as comedy, which, on the one hand, should be challenged but on the other hand, the couples whose marriages are arranged by the Duke are sufficient to call the play comedy. However, it cannot be catalogued as "full-fledged tragedy" because the main characters do not die at the end (20). William Witherle Lawrence, on the other

hand, develops a distinctive approach to the generic ambiguity and lays stress on the realistic nature of the play. Lawrence emphasises the difficulty of choosing "between conflicting demands of honour and affection" which is presented through Isabella's and Mariana's begging "a tyrannical official" for Claudio's and Angelo's lives, respectively. According to Lawrence, this is "not only poignantly real, but intensely dramatic" and has "the essence of tragic drama" (81). Contrary to Lawrence's ideas, Northrop Frye points at the elements of folktale such as the disguised Duke and asserts that realistic aspects are not dominant in the play. He also divides the play into two parts and "the first part is a tragic and ironic action apparently heading for unmitigated disaster, and the second part an elaborate comic intrigue which ends by avoiding all the disasters" (24). In the light of these views, the reconciliation between the characters and the marriages which mark the end of the play will be particularly analysed in relation to the generic uncertainty. It will be argued that the play is neither tragedy nor comedy but embodies the features of both genres. Moreover, the relief provided by the lower-class characters before and/or after the scenes with tension will also be analysed in relation to the generic ambiguity.

As regards the reconciliation, after the revelation of the Duke's plots, Angelo accepts his faults and leaves himself to the Duke's justice. He expresses that he deeply feels ashamed of his acts and will embrace the Duke's judgement about himself. He willingly submits to the Duke, whom he defines as "power divine" (V.i.367). However, the Duke does not plan to impose "[i]mmediate sentence, then, and sequent death" (V.i.371) on Angelo and wants him to compensate Mariana, Isabella and Claudio for the wrongs he did to them. He first asks Angelo whether he promised that he would marry Mariana as follows: "Say: wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?" (V.i.373). On Angelo's response, "I was, my lord" (V.i.374), he orders him to marry Mariana: "Go, take her hence, and marry her instantly" (V.i.375). However, when he insists on Angelo's execution, first Mariana, then Isabella plead for Angelo's life. First of all, Mariana asks Isabella to help her and convince the Duke to spare Angelo's life. She says: "[…] sweet Isabel, take my part; / Lend me your knees, and all my life to come / I'll lend you all my life to do you service" (V.i.428-430). These lines vividly put forth that Mariana is in

despair and cries for Isabella's support. In the face of the Duke's objections, Mariana determinedly asks Isabella to kneel with her and pray for Angelo's life:

> Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;
> Hold up your hands, say nothing: I'll speak all.
> They say best men are moulded out of faults,
> And, for the most, become much more the better
> For being a little bad. Som ay my husband.
> O Isabel! Will you not lend a knee? (V.i.435-440)

Therefore, for Mariana, Angelo is, in fact, a kindhearted person but he needs to learn from his mistakes to become a better man. In this sense, as committing sin is inherent, Mariana asserts that Angelo should be pardoned. Despite the Duke's opposition, "[h]e dies for Claudio's death" (V.i.441), which becomes "[t]he voice […] arguing the dead brother's claims upon [Isabella] to stand up for avenging justice" (Ross 132), Isabella emphasises the essentiality of having mercy and maintaining justice. According to Stephen Urwin, Mariana's and Isabella's pleading for mercy together "marks the climax of this extraordinary play" because "that is the moment when love and forgiveness triumph over […] hypocrisy and cruelty […]" (2). According to Isabella, Angelo's and Claudio's crimes are not the same as the former just intended to commit the crime while the latter actually committed it:

> My brother had but justice,
> In that he did the thing for which he died:
> For Angelo,
> His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
> And must be buried but as an intent
> That perish'd by the way. (V.i.446-451)

As demonstrated in these lines, Isabella acts moderately and does not want to avenge upon Angelo though she still supposes that Claudio was executed by Angelo's order. Instead of measure for measure, she is filled with compassion for Angelo. She, moreover, asserts that nobody should be held responsible and punished due to thoughts that are not put into action: "Thoughts are no subjects; / Intents, but merely thoughts" (V.i.451-452). Thus, it may be said that Isabella's attitude towards Angelo is highly humane because she, without hesitation, consents to pardon a man who pitilessly killed her brother.

Along with Isabella's abundant sense of mercy to Angelo, Angelo's sudden repentance arouses ambiguity about his intentions in the audience/readers. Angelo, leaving his tyrannical rule and attitudes behind, expresses that he feels genuinely upset about the misery he caused: "I am sorry that such sorrow I procure, / And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart" (V.i.472-473). For Wheeler, "Angelo, a smaller person, bears the full burden of recognizing his own smallness, its contemptibility, and his helplessness before compelling demands that issue from within him. As he grossly subverts justice, he suffers full awareness of the motives and the implications of his acts" (101). Angelo further asserts that he prefers death to mercy because he does not believe that he deserves compassion and pardon: "I am sorry that such sorrow I procure, / And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart / That I crave death more willingly than mercy; / 'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it" (V.i.472-475). However, after it is revealed that Claudio was not killed, the Duke spares Angelo's life saying, "[b]y this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe" (V.i.492). And once the Duke announces that Angelo will not be executed, Angelo does not yearn for death anymore and feels pleased, which is reflected in the Duke's words as follows: "Methinks I see a quickening in his eyes" (V.i.493). Therefore, it may be deduced that Angelo's conflicting attitude before the Duke poses questions about his sincerity in repentance.

The fear of death prevails throughout the play through Claudio's being sentenced with death penalty and Angelo's unmerciful attitude towards him. The Duke's comments on life and death also increase the tension in the play. First, before Isabella meets Claudio in order to tell him about Angelo's proposal, the Duke in disguise sees Claudio under arrest and makes a long speech on the difference between life and death and the supremacy of death over life. According to the Duke, life is temporary and human body is in great torment in life while death has permanency and is the ultimate destination that man reaches. The Duke comments on the helplessness of man against death as follows:

> […] Reason thus with life:
> If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
> That none but fools would keep. A breath thou art,
> Servile to all the skyey influences
> That dost this habitation where thou keep'st

> Hourly afflict. Merely, thou art Death's fool;
> For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
> And yet run'st toward him still. […]. (III.i.6-13)

Thus, the Duke brings a new perspective on the issue of death and asserts that it is an utterly futile struggle to attempt to escape death. Furthermore, the Duke tells in detail the vanity of life as the happiness of man is not real and his earnings are meagre. According to the Duke, the most intimate relationships are false and youth is passing while old age is full of suffering. The Duke continues to comment on the miseries of life as follows:

> […] Happy thou art not;
> For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,
> And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not certain;
> For thy complexion shifts to strange effects
> After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;
> For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
> Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
> And Death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;
> For thine own bowels which do call thee sire,
> The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
> Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum
> For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth, nor age. (III.i.21-32)

Therefore, the living person is covetous as he never contents with what he has. He is also changeable and unreliable because he changes according to the phases of moon. Hence, not only that one person but his relatives and acquaintances wish that he dies soon when he becomes sick disregarding the severity of the disease. In other words, though it seems that living has more advantages than death, the vanity of life makes death superior in comparison. On hearing the Duke's statements about life and death, Claudio suddenly realises that he does not need to fear death and says: "I humbly thank you. / To sue to live, I find I seek to die, / And seaking death, find life. Let it come on" (III.i.42-44). Claudio shows maturity and resigns himself to death. Yet, Foakes criticises Claudio's easy acceptance of death and says: "Claudio's initial acceptance of the Duke's counsel, 'To sue to live, I find I seek to die' (III.i.42) is a contradiction of that natural urge that brought him and Juliet together to create a new life […]" (*Shakespeare* 23). However, Claudio reveals that he does not want to die after he learns about Angelo's proposal to Isabella. Despite Isabella's vehement rejection of the proposal,

Claudio tells her to accept Angelo's offer and says: "Yes. – Has he affections in him, / That thus can make him bite the law by th'nose? / When he would force it? –Sure, it is no sin; / Or of the deadly seven it is the least" (III.i.107-110). These lines demonstrate that Claudio exhibits an attitude contrary to that of Isabella's and justifies Angelo's proposal for his own benefit. Thus, in Adelman's words, "[t]he solution to the dilemma registered in Juliet's body at first seems to be Isabella: the life that one woman has ruined, another can repair–or so Claudio hopes" (125). Claudio further explains Isabella the reason for his insistence on her considering Angelo's proposal and says:

> Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
> To bath in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent World: or to be worse than worst
> Of those that lawless and incertain thought
> Imagine howling,–'tis too horrible. (III.i.117-127)

As indicated above, Claudio makes a speech on the horrors of death which reminds the audience/readers of Hamlet's speech about the fear of the uncertainty after death in III.i. in *Hamlet*. In Frederick Boas's words, "Claudio's gloomy meditations on death sound like an echo from the soliloquies of the Danish Prince. […] and this concern with the deepest issues of life here and beyond the grave, that give the play a massive weight" (*Shakspere* 357-358). Like Hamlet, Claudio emphasises the ambiguity of afterlife and asserts that decaying in this uncertainty is as terrible as leading a life full of shame. According to Claudio, along with man's perishing, the fear of the uncertainty of the things which await man after death is also maddening. Hence, the agonies of life like poverty, diseases, old age and confinement are sufferable when compared to the fear of death and Claudio says: "The wearist and most loathed worldy life / That age, ache, penury and imprisonment / Can lay on nature, is a paradise / To what we fear of death" (III.i.128-131). Goddard describes Claudio's reaction after he learns about Angelo's proposal as he says, "[b]ut Claudio is made of more human stuff than his sister, and, held as she has held him to an extremity of courage and resolution almost beyond his nature, the law of reaction asserts itself and he drops into fear" ("Power" 29).

At the very end of the play, all the conflicts seem to be suddenly solved. First of all, it is understood that Claudio did not die as he was brought by the Provost before the Duke. The Duke accuses the Provost of executing Claudio "at an usual hour" (V.i.456) through a "private message" (459) rather than the lawful practice, and discharges him from his position: "For which I do discharge you of your office. / Give up your keys" (V.i.458-459). The Provost asks for his pardon and expresses that he regrets violating the laws. In order to vindicate his statements, he further asserts that he did not kill a man whose execution was also privately commanded: "For testimony whereof, one in the prison / That should by private order else have died, / I have reserv'd alive" (V.i.462-464). The Duke maintains that the Provost should not have acted differently in Claudio's case, and in this sense, his saving one prisoner's life does not demonstrate that he is innocent but he still wants the Provost to bring the prisoner whom he did not kill and says: "I would thou hadst done so by Claudio. / Go, fetch him hither, let me look upon him" (V.i.466-467). Along with Barnardine, the Provost also brings Claudio whose face is covered before the Duke and introduces him as "another prisoner that [he] sav'd, / Who should have died when Claudio lost his head" (V.i.485-487). Moreover, he emphasises the prisoner's resemblance to Claudio saying, "[a]s like almost to Claudio as himself" (V.i.487). Thus, the audience/readers, who are aware that Claudio was saved by the Duke through the head-trick, know that the prisoner brought on to the stage is Claudio, and it will also be revealed to Isabella. Secondly, the Duke not only forgives Claudio's offences but also declares his love to Isabella. In this regard, he says: "If he be like your brother, for his sake / Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake / Give me your hand and say you will be mine. / He is my brother too […]" (V.i.488-491). These lines openly demonstrate that the Duke is, in fact, attracted by Isabella and once the conflicts are settled, he seizes the opportunity to win her consent. However, Isabella's comments about neither Claudio's being alive nor the Duke's declaration of love are not heard by the audience/readers. In other words, it is not presented whether she rejoices at seeing Claudio alive or whether she is surprised or confused because the account of Claudio's being alive is put forward only through the Duke and the other characters do not make any comments. Similarly, Isabella's answer to the Duke's declaration of love and proposal is not put forth. According to Gabriel Egan, Isabella's silence may be associated with her intent to return to the nunnery, and the Duke's

purpose to declare love to Isabella is the same with that of Angelo's, that is to have sex with her:

> The obvious question to ask is whether Isabella really wants to be a nun? If she does, and if she anticipates that once it is all over with Claudio's release she can get back to entering the nunnery, then the duke's proposal of marriage is especially awkward. She must be grateful to him for saving her brother, but she really wants a contemplative religious life without sex. Indeed, looking at all these events with a most cynical eye, you might say that Angelo tried one way to get sex with Isabella and failed, and the duke is trying another way and looks like he could succeed. Such a view of the duke would certainly make sense of all the unnecessary grief he puts Isabella through in deliberately making her think that Claudio had died, which is one of the play's real conundrums regarding motivation. (167)

With these lines, the Duke reveals that he wants to have an emotional and a financial relationship with Isabella in the following words: "Dear Isabel, / I have a motion much imports your good; / Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline, / What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" (V.i.531-534). In addition, he also implies that he wants to have sex with Isabella, which may correspond to the relationships of Claudio and Julietta and Angelo and Mariana, respectively, and says: "So bring us to our palace, where we'll show / What's yet behind that's meet you all should know" (V.i.535-536). Hence, it may be said that the play ends with an indication of a type of relationship between the Duke and Isabella which causes the couples to be punished and to suffer throughout the play. It is also not openly presented whether the relationship of the Duke and Isabella will resemble that of Claudio and Julietta's or that of Angelo and Mariana's. The Duke's statement, "but fitter time for that" (491), indicates that despite his declaration of love to Isabella and his desire to have a relationship with her, he, in fact, postpones the ceremony and the celebrations. In this sense, the play ends posing a question in the minds of the audience/readers in terms of the relationship between the Duke and Isabella and Isabella's reaction to the Duke's proposal. For William Witherle Lawrence, this is "a human problem" because "there is nothing about it which is illogical or unbelievable" and though "different solutions" may be provided, "the fundamental tragic complication remains the same" (81).

However, despite the ambiguity that marks the end of the play, Isabella and Claudio are re-united. Furthermore, Angelo's marriage to Mariana is secured as has been mentioned and the marriage of Claudio and Julietta is formally announced. As for Angelo and

Mariana, the Duke says: “Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well. / Look that you love your wife: her worth, worth yours” (V.i.494-495). Thus, the Duke maintains that all the evils committed by Angelo had good results for particularly himself because he married a virtuous woman. He further addresses Mariana, whom he made use of in his bed-trick, and wishes happiness to her in the following words: “Joy to you, Mariana […]” (V.i.524). He, once more, strongly advises Angelo to show genuine affection to Mariana as he highlights his intimacy with her: “[…] love her, Angelo: / I have confess’d her, and I know her virtue” (V.i.523-524). As regards Claudio and Julietta, the Duke wants Claudio to consummate his marriage to Julietta and make the marriage public. In this regard, he says: “She, Claudio, that you wrong’d, look you store” (V.i.523). The only character whom the Duke shows no mercy is Lucio because as has been demonstrated, his life is spared but he is forced to marry the whore with whom he had sexual intercourse. Lucio vehemently rejects to be the husband of the whore and begs the Duke not to force him into this marriage as he says, “I beseech your Highness, do not marry me to a whore. Your Highness said even now, I made you a duke; good my lord, do not recompense me in making me a cuckold” (512-515). However, the Duke does not relent and as if he seeks revenge on Lucio, he says: “Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her” (516). Lucio’s last words, “[m]arrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, / Whipping, and hanging” (520-521), vividly demonstrate that he is given the heaviest penalty. The Duke openly puts forward his forgiving attitude towards all the characters except for Lucio in the following words: “I find an apt remission in myself” (V.i.496). In other words, the fact that the conflicts between the characters are resolved, the offences are pardoned and the couples are united is presented through the Duke’s unifying speech. Escalus and the Provost are also rewarded by the Duke for their assistance. He calls Escalus “good friend” (V.i.525) and highlights his honesty. He also implies that Escalus deserves promotion: “There’s more behind that is more gratulate” (526). Similarly, he explicitly tells the Provost that he will be promoted due to his fidelity and discretion because the Duke feels that he can thereafter fully rely on the Provost and says: “Thanks, Provost, for thy care and secrecy; / We shall employ thee in a worthier place” (527-528). The Duke also wants Angelo to forgive the Provost for presenting “[t]he head of Ragozine for Claudio’s” (530). And, except for Lucio, the happy ending seems to be maintained for all the characters in the play. According to Rossiter, the play is

tragi-comic in this sense because “tragic calamity” which slowly increases in the first half of the play is reversed by the Duke as “the observer Duke turns *Deus ex machina*, and the puppet-master makes all dance to a happy ending” (122). However, it may also be argued that despite this festive atmosphere marking the end of the play, Angelo’s reluctant acceptance of marriage to Mariana, whom he despises and never considers to reunite with, Lucio’s being forced to marry a whore involuntarily and Isabella’s silence before the Duke’s proposal create tension even at the very end of the play and lead the audience/readers to uncertainty about the genre of the play. In this respect, Adelman puts out that “[t]he marriages that end these comedies fail to satisfy the desires of either the characters or the audience […]” (123). In a sense, except for the marriage of Claudio and Julietta, who openly put forth that they are deeply committed to each other from the beginning of the play, the other couples do not seem content to be married. Wheeler presents the sense of incompleteness presented at the end of the play in the following words: “[…] an uneasy sense both of a let down and of something left over–that undermines my satisfaction when I try to take in its whole action” (6). Therefore, for Wheeler, the ending of the play is not only disappointing but also unfinished and the struggles between the characters to maintain justice throughout the play does not conform with the reconciliation achieved at the end of the play. Moreover, the “psychological tensions” they go through are not relieved at the end, and “Shakespeare seeks unearned reassurance in a comic ending that cannot fully acknowledge previous developments in *Measure for Measure*” (Wheeler 12). In Wheeler’s words, “[…] the complications that terminate the plot […] cannot integrate into the precarious comic conclusion of this play complex developments that lead into it” (7).

At this point, Harriett Hawkins compares the Duke to Prospero in *The Tempest* in terms of leading the course of the events and asserts that though throughout the play both characters “[impose] [their] own dramatic and moral designs upon the action” (51), they differ at the end of the play. As Hawkins points out, “[…] at the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero set everyone free to pursue their own destinies, for good or ill. In legal jargon, Prospero dismissed the jury and let the defendants go. […] By contrast, Duke Vincentio limits the freedom of his subjects to the incongruous futures he selects for them” (51). In other words, the Duke decides on the future of each character in their names.

Concerning this matter, Abate points at the Duke's inability to receive from Isabella a response to his proposal despite his considerable influence on other characters and says: "Though his authority allows the duke to render judgment upon everyone before him, he is unable to secure from Isabella before the play ends a verbal acceptance to his bluntly stated hopes" (21).

The other point about the generic ambiguity in *Measure for Measure* is that the scenes which reveal the tension of the play are preceded or followed by comic scenes where the lower-class characters play a part and develop the sub-plot of the play. In William Witherle Lawrence's words, "[d]espite tragic occurrences, the tone of the whole is less depressing. Instead of the bitter Lavache and the despicable Parolles, a whole series of strikingly contrasted figures offers comic relief – the fantastic Lucio, Mistress Overdone, Elbow, Pompey, Froth, and their fellows" (80). In a sense, the tension created because of Angelo's strict enforcement of the laws in the absence of the Duke, his insistence on Claudio's execution, his indecent proposal to Isabella which poses a difficult dilemma for her, the Duke's disguise as Friar Lodowick and interference with the course of the events through the bed-trick and the head-trick, which have all been analysed in detail, is relieved through the acts and speeches of the characters in the sub-plot. Foakes particularly focuses on Pompey and Lucio and describes them as "a striking feature of the almost from the beginning" (*Shakespeare* 17-18). First, in II.i. after Angelo sentences Claudio to death and before Escalus expresses his deep sorrow at the death penalty imposed on Claudio, the dispute among Elbow, Pompey and Escalus provides the audience/readers with relief. In this respect, Elbow, "the poor Duke's constable" (47), enters the scene with Froth and Pompey and accuses them of visiting the brothels and acting against the law: "If these be good people in a commonweal, that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law" (41-43). Elbow, ironically, introduces them to Angelo as "two notorious benefactors" (50) which is negated by Angelo through the following words: "Benefactors? Well, what benefactors are they? Are they not malefactors?" (51-52). Elbow further explains that Pompey works as a "tapster" and a "parcel bawd; one that serves a bad woman" (62-63). Then, a long conversation starts between Pompey, Froth and Escalus which is about Elbow's wife and full of play on words and detailed and obscure statements. Elbow calls Angelo

and Escalus "varlets" (85), which is corrected by Escalus in his following words to Angelo: "Do you hear how he misplaces" (87). Pompey starts to tell how Elbow's wife craves for "stewed prunes" (89) and Froth eats all the prunes on the plate, which he describes as "a dish of some three-pence" (92) and asserts that Escalus must have definitely seen such plates before: "[…] your honours have seen such dishes, they are not china dishes, but very good dishes" (92-93). However, Escalus gets angry as Pompey digresses and wants him to directly deal with the main issue as follows: "Go to, go to: no matter for the dish, sir" (95). Thus, it may be argued that Pompey's story is not only absurd but also is a digression from the subject. Pompey irrelevantly also talks about the uses of the prunes saying, "if you be remembered, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet" (109-112), but Escalus orders him to come straight to the point: "Come, you are a tedious fool. To the purpose: what was done to Elbow's wife that he hath cause to complain of?" (115-116). Angelo cannot stand to listen to Pompey's accounts and leaves as he says, "[t]his will last out a nigth in Russia / When nights are longest there. I'll take my leave" (133-134). However, Pompey continues playing on words saying, "Once, sir? There was nothing done to her once" (140) when Escalus asks: "What was done to Elbow's wife, once more?" (138-139). Elbow also tenaciously wants Escalus to ask Pompey about what Froth did to his wife as follows: "I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife" (141-142). Escalus secures justice at the end of the conversation as he advises Froth not to rely on the servants and orders him to leave: "Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you" (203-204). He further orders Pompey not to appear before him again; otherwise, Pompey will be severely punished. According to Weil, "[f]rom this use of comic characters for exposition, atmosphere, and rhythm, we, of course, receive no certain proof that the story will end happily. But such frequent comic interruptions […] should help prevent our feeling that there has been no adequate preparation for the relaxed optimistic mood of the final acts" ("Form" 65).

Secondly, IV.i. temporarily relieves the audience/readers of the tension of the bed-trick planned by the Duke in IV.i and the stress caused by Claudio's upcoming execution. The Provost charges Pompey to be the "helper" to the "common executioner" (8) in the prison and Pompey accepts the task saying, "[s]ir, I have been an unlawful bawd time

out of mind, but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman" (14-15). Then, the conversation between Pompey and Abhorson about the nature of being an executioner not only distracts the attention of the audience/readers away from the bed-trick but also creates a comic effect. Pompey expresses his first impression about Abhorson as he says, "[p]ray, sir, by your good favour you have, but that you have a hanging look […]" (30-31). He further cannot hide his confusion over the profession and he deridingly asks: "[…] do you call, sir, your occupation a mystery?" (32). He compares his profession to that of the executioner's and says that as the whores make up, his occupation as a pimp should be regarded as "a mystery" (34) while being a hangman does not arouse curiosity. Pompey says: "Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do prove my occupation a mystery. But what mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine" (34-38). A philosophical talk follows because Pompey wants Abhorson to prove that being a hangman is an enigma. Abhorson tells the features of his profession emphasising that the line between honesty and wickedness is thin because "[e]very true man's apparel fits your thief. If it be too little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough. If it be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough" (41-44). Pompey concludes that the executioner needs his assistance because it is difficult to live with remorse. In this respect, he says: "Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness" (47-49). However, he still mocks Abhorson and expresses that after he learns the trade, he is willing to practice it on Abhorson.

Last, IV.iii. where Barnardine refuses to be hanged provides the audience/readers with relief because at the end of IV.ii, the Duke and the Provost learn that Claudio will be executed by Angelo's order and the Duke feels intense disappointment. The conversation between Abhorson, Pompey and Barnardine relieves the audience/readers. Both Pompey and Abhorson ask Barnardine to be prepared for the execution as Pompey says: "Your friends, sir, the hangman. You must be so good, sir, to rise and be put to death" (27-28). However, Barnardine ignores the order saying, "[a]way, you rogue, away; I am sleepy" (29). Thus, Barnardine expresses that he does not want to be executed at that moment because he feels drowsy. Pompey this time requests him to get

ready and asserts that after he is hanged, he can sleep as much as he desires: "Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and sleep afterwards" (31-32). Hence, it may be argued that the severity of Claudio's execution is reduced through the humorous aspects of Barnardine's execution. On the insistence of both Pompey and Abhorson, Barnardine comes out of his cell and openly expresses that he does not feel ready to be hanged because he drank all night and accuses Abhorson of being aware of this fact but still insisting on executing him: "You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not fitted for't" (42-43). But Abhorson ridicules him and says: "O, the better, sir; for he that drinks all night, and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the sounder all the next day" (44-46). Barnardine makes the same request when the Duke in disguise comes to the prison in order to "advise [Barnardine], comfort [him], and pray with [him]" (50-51). Barnardine uses his drunkennes as an excuse and maintains that he cannot die that day as he says: "Friar, not I. I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they shall beat out my brains with billets" (52-54). In other words, as the prisoner, he intends to decide on the day of his execution himself and does not want to leave the decision to the authorities. Hence, on the one hand, in IV.ii. Claudio's execution is certainly determined by Angelo and the Duke is desperately forced to devise a scheme, which is the head-trick, to save Claudio's life; on other hand, in IV.iii, Pompey, Abhorson and the Duke in disguise are unable to persuade Barnardine to getting prepared for the execution. Then, Barnardine decisively returns to his cell and tells the authorities to visit him in his cell and make their request: "Not a word. If you have anything to say to me, come to my ward: for thence will not I today" (61-62). Thus, Barnardine establishes overwhelming superiority over the authority and demonstrates that he himself is involved in the decision of his execution. Harold Wilson comments on the function of these scenes through an analogy to the relieving scenes in *Hamlet*:

> The contrasting comedy of the following prison scenes, where Pompey becomes Abhorson's apprentice and Barnardine proves indifferent to the sentence of death, is in Shakespeare's best macabre vein. This passage shows us the ordinary workings of human justice, an ironical light upon the hypocritical pretensions of an Angelo; and the linking of these scenes with the story of Isabella and Angelo and Claudio has somewhat the same effect as the grave-diggers'scene linking the death of Ophelia with the return of Hamlet to Denmark. There is the same contrast of the

> comic with the deeply serious, and the same jesting with the theme of mortality. (377)

In addition, the end of IV.iii. functions to reduce the tension of Isabella's sorrow at learning that Claudio was executed by Angelo. Though she is deceived by the Duke and the audience/readers are fully aware that Claudio is still alive, Isabella is grief-stricken and desires to avenge the execution of Claudio and says: "Unhappy Claudio! wretched Isabel! / Injurious world! most damned Angelo!" (121-122). In this regard, Lucio's appearance and the dispute between the Duke in disguise and Lucio over the Duke's character distract the audience/readers. First of all, Lucio consoles Isabella on Claudio's execution; however, he considers Isabella's pain and his hunger as equal. Though he expresses that he shares Isabella's grief saying, "[o] pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thine eyes so red: thou must be patient" (150-151), he also asserts that he lost his appetite due to Claudio's execution but now he is starving and wishes to have a feast in the following words: "I am fain to dine and sup with water and bran: I dare not form y head fill my belly: one fruitful meal would set me to't" (151-154). Moreover, he blames the Duke for Claudio's execution because he maintains that "if the old fantastical duke of dark corners had been at home, [Claudio] had lived" (156-157). The Duke in disguise strongly objects to Lucio's accusations and negative statements about the Duke's personality. Though Lucio calls the Duke "a better woodman" (161), the Duke in disguise does not enter into an argument and wants to leave saying, "[w]ell! You'll answer this one day. Fare ye well" (162). Lucio wants to accompany the Duke in disguise in order to tell more stories about the Duke and he also reveals his impregnating "a wench" (167) in the past, which is used by the Duke againt Lucio at the very end of the play. Lucio puts forth his obtrusiveness in the following words: "By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end. If bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay, friar, I am a kind of burr, I shall stick" (175-177). In a sense, Isabella's agony and the audience/readers' confusion over the Duke's plots are replaced by Lucio's acts and statements. Considering the ending of the play and the transitions between the scenes where tension is high and the relieving scenes, in Arthur Symons's words, "*Measure for Measure* is neither the last of the comedies nor the first of the tragedies. It is tragedy and comedy together, inextricably interfused, coexistent in a mutual contradiction; such a tangled web [...]" (44).

In conclusion, *Measure for Measure* poses questions first about the authoritarian rule and the strict enforcement of laws without showing mercy, which results in the abuse of justice. James I's absolute rule which is based on divine kingship and royal privileges is reflected in Angelo's and the Duke's practices. Angelo's dictatorial rule bears resemblance to James I's attempts to exercise authority over Parliament and the judges. He, moreover, abuses justice through disregarding the spirit of law. Along with the harsh punishments he imposes on the lower-class people, he also punishes Claudio with the death penalty for a crime he himself committed in the past and is ready to commit with Isabella at present. In David Margolies's words, "[t]he emotion aroused by the threat to Claudio makes the state – his persecutor – into an oppressor without any explicit critique" and "since his arrest and sentencing seem at best illogical and, more seriously, contrary to the law" (167). The Duke also poses questions whether he is an ideal ruler or an irresponsible one who does not intervene in the unjust practices and maintain justice. His disguise and monitoring the course of the events remind the audience/readers of James I's strict control over state affairs. The Duke, further, abuses justice through the bed-trick, where he makes use of both Isabella and Mariana, and the head-trick, where he uses Barnardine. Therefore, in both cases the Duke does not regard other people's lives but takes advantage of them for his own interest. Secondly, the ending of the play presents the generic uncertainty because the threat of death that pervades throughout the play particularly through Claudio's death penalty and the tension created through Angelo's strict rule and his indecent proposal to Isabella end in reconciliation and marriages that create uncertainty in the minds of the audience/readers. The questions whether the reconciliation between the characters is convincing and whether all the couples are happy to be married are posed. The lower-class characters also reduce the tension of particular scenes and provide relief, which puts forth the generic ambiguity of *Measure for Measure*.

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's plays were first grouped by John Heminges and Henry Condell as comedies, tragedies and histories in the First Folio of 1623. However, throughout the centuries, it became evident that these three groups were not enough to deal with Shakespeare's plays in terms of genre and content. In a sense, it was impossible to limit Shakespeare's plays only to the boundaries of comedy, tragedy and history because his plays offered enormous variety in relation to generic features along with the political, social and historical issues which were presented and discussed. In this sense, new categories like romances and problem plays were used to group his particular plays.

Shakespeare's plays have been called problem plays according to four criteria which are genre, character, endings and the issues dealt with. To begin with the problem in genre, since the early seventeeth century some of Shakespeare's plays have particularly created controversy among Shakespearean critics. Before the late nineteenth century, critics dealing with *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra* put forth the idea that there were certain problems in these plays. However, they did not generically categorise these plays and only mentioned the uncertainties in the characters, defects in the texts, inconsistency in plot hence positing their generic ambiguity. In this sense, these critics were dissatisfied with various aspects of the above-mentioned plays but listed the problems in each play rather than generically grouping them. However, after the late nineteenth century, critics were not content with only presenting the problems in Shakespeare's particular plays. Hence, they not only put forward the problematic features in these plays but also showed their distinctness by collecting them in specific groups. Consequently, the plays were called dark-comedies, tragi-comedies and problem comedies to emphasise the problem in their genre. The intermingling of the shortcomings of humanbeings which created comic situations and the serious aspects of life shown in these plays led critics to call them neither comedy nor tragedy. For critics, there were two sides to every human affair, the serious and the comic, and both sides were presented in these plays. The similarities between Shakespeare's problem plays and Shakespeare's romantic comedies were put forth to demonstrate that they were

close to comedy rather than tragedy. Hence, critics did not reach a compromise on how to define these plays in terms of genre, which remained a problem.

In both *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* the problem with genre comes up at the end of the plays, and comic relief is created through particular scenes. In *The Merchant of Venice*, first, the tension created through the conflict between the Jew and the Christian in the play, the dark atmosphere of the trial scene and the severe punishment of Shylock is relieved by the ring trick played by Portia and Nerissa, which also prepares the audience/readers for reconciliation at the end of the play. Then, the play ends with the celebration of the lovers' union and the marriages but the tone's transition from the tragic effect of Shylock's defeat to the happiness of the lovers perplexes the audience/readers. Similarly, in *Measure for Measure*, the only marriage which indicates a happy union is that of Claudio's and Julietta's. Due to Angelo's sudden and unconvincing repentance, the marriage of Angelo and Mariana cannot be considered as sincere, while Lucio is forced into marriage. The union of the Duke and Isabella leaves the audience/readers uncertain because Isabella neither rejects nor accepts the Duke's proposal. The Duke's control over the characters who are not allowed to decide about their own lives is also problematic and confounds the audience/readers at the end of the play. As for comic relief, in *The Merchant of Venice* the casket scenes release the tension of the serious scenes; primarily the tension between the Christian and the Jew. In *Measure for Measure* the conversations between Elbow, Pompey, Escalus, Abhorson and the Duke function as digressions for the audience/readers from the grave atmosphere of Angelo's ruthlessness, Claudio's waiting for death and the futile attempts to save his life and the Duke's disguise. In this respect, it is important to state that neither play can be categorised as either comedy or tragedy because the above-mentioned uncertainties render it impossible for the audience/readers to put the plays into a particular category.

Correspondingly, the endings of problem plays were problematic because, along with the unanswered questions which confused the audience/readers, the uncertainty created through particular situations and characters at the end of these plays left the audience/readers unsatisfied. The endings, in this sense, were both unsettled and open to

the interpretation of the audience/readers. The ambiguous nature of the marriages at the end of *Measure* poses multiple questions in the minds of the audience/readers. Similarly, Angelo's transformation at the end of *Measure* leaves the audience/readers uncertain about the character.

As regards the third criterion, in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* questions about character are posed within religious and political context, respectively. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shylock's character is problematised because Shakespeare presents two distinctive representations of Shylock, which leaves the audience/readers uncertain in terms of Shylock's intentions. On the one hand, he is associated with evil by the Christians, he is disdained and affronted by particularly Antonio and he is excluded from Christian society. On the other hand, Shylock himself despises the Christians and although he seems to help Antonio, he rather sets him up through the bond so that he will be able to avenge himself. At the end of the play the following questions are raised in the minds of the audience/readers and are left for their interpretation: Does Shylock really deserve such a severe punishment? Then again, does Antonio deserve such victimisation by Shylock? Moreover, concerning Shylock's rightfulness the audience/readers ask the following question: Is it not atrocious to demand a pound of flesh from someone's body and keep insisting on it avoiding all the requests for mercy? Shakespeare takes sides with neither the Christian nor the Jew. One feels pity for Shylock and blames the Christians for his sufferings, while at the same time shocked on his insistence upon his revenge. As for the religious context of sixteenth century England, anti-semitism, which, in fact, dates back to the twelfth century, reached its peak with the Lopez Case. Like the Jews who were accused of being murderers, rapists and plunderers and were initially expelled from the country only to be re-admitted by the monarchs and to become a part of political and social life later on, Shylock was presented sympathetically and unsympathetically.

Regarding the problem with character, in *Hamlet* Hamlet's changing psychological state is reflected in his behaviour and statements. His pretended madness reveals both his melancholy and sanity. Though Hamlet is melancholic from the beginning of the play, his melancholy increases gradually through his pretended madness and hesitation which

leads to his constant delays to take action. Although Hamlet is overcome by melancholy as his increasing restlessness shows in his subsequent encounters with Polonius, Ophelia and Gertrude, he also reveals his awareness of the schemes prepared against himself especially through his conversations with Horatio, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Particularly, Hamlet's talk with the travelling players and preparation of *the Mousetrap* demonstrate that he temporarily gets out of his sombre mood. Therefore, the role of the mad person that Hamlet plays fosters his melancholy but the instances where he shows his sanity render the audience/readers uncertain, thus becoming problematic. Like the confused audience/readers, the other characters in the play are perplexed because none of them can be certain whether Hamlet is mad. They all describe Hamlet's state differently but cannot exactly call it madness. Though they suspect that Hamlet has a particular design in his words and deeds, they cannot thoroughly comprehend it. Within the political context of the play, the succession problem and the Essex Rebellion at the end of Elizabeth I's rule are presented. The lack of an heir after Elizabeth I is reflected through Claudius's accession after the death of King Hamlet, which is one of the reasons for Hamlet's initial melancholy. Furthermore, the chaotic situation created in England due to the Essex Rebellion is reflected in the gloomy atmosphere in Denmark after King Hamlet's death and the moral decadence which pervades throughout the country. All the characters are suspicious of each other and prepare schemes or take part in them. Moreover, Hamlet's disillusionment with particularly his mother, his uncle and Ophelia brings to mind Elizabeth I's frustration with Essex, who was accused of treachery against the Queen.

As for the last criterion, the problem was that in Shakespeare's problem plays various questions in moral, social, political, religious, personal and psychological matters were posed but remained unanswered. Thus, the interpretation of unresolved issues was left to the audience/readers who occupied an important position in the interpretation of these plays because they were expected to find answers to complicated questions that were raised. Therefore, diverse interpretations by the audience/readers from different social, political, religious and moral backgrounds were possible, which could result in multiple meanings and rewritings of particular scenes and characters in these plays.

In *Measure for Measure* the question about the issue of justice is posed. In the play, justice is problematised and the reflections of James I's administration and his approach to the exercise of justice are reflected through Angelo's and the Duke's rules. Angelo abuses justice in Claudio's case as he ignores the spirit of law and insists on the death penalty. The Duke abuses justice because he disguises himself and controls the course of events instead of fighting corruption as the ruler or intervening with Angelo's practices. As a result, the following question is posed: Why does the Duke not appear and prevent Angelo from abusing justice but instead prefers to escape? Additionally, the Duke's use of Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine in his bed-trick and head-trick is problematic because he exploits them in order to establish control over other characters. His relationship with Lucio also demonstrates his abuse of justice because the reason why he angrily reacts to Lucio's criticism and severely punishes him in the end is not openly presented, which leaves the audience/readers confused. Hence, when Angelo and the Duke are considered in terms of administration, both of them suppress people and abuse justice through their authoritarian rule. Though they use different means, as Angelo uses enforcement of the laws and the Duke utilises disguise, both abuse justice by restricting the rights and liberties of their subjects, which was also seen in James I's rule. Within the political and legal context, James I's attempts to exercise supreme authority over Parliament drawing his strength from his authoritarian rule and his claim to be over the law as the representative of God on earth are reflected in the Duke's desire to hold absolute control over the lives of his subjects and Angelo's merciless use of strict laws in order to punish people.

In the light of this information, in this dissertation, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* have been analysed as Shakespeare's problem plays with regard to their historical background taking into consideration the religious, political and legal issues of the period. The problematic nature of *The Merchant of Venice* has been studied in terms of character and genre. Moreover, the problem in character has been examined in relation to the Jewish problem both in Europe and in sixteenth-century England. In *Hamlet* the problem in Hamlet's character has been analysed with respect to the succession problem and the Essex Rebellion at the end of Elizabeth I's reign. Lastly, in *Measure for Measure*, the problem has been analysed in terms of the problematic

exercise of justice with respect to James I's authoritarian rule that depended on royal privileges and divine right of kings considering itself above Parliament and laws. Thus, each play has been studied as a problem play from different perspectives.

Thus, this dissertation concludes that *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* form a specific group of problem plays primarily due to their generic uncertainty, endings, problems in portrayal of characters and unanswered questions on issues which leave the audience/readers uncertain. It is also constraining for the audience/readers to try to read and understand these plays within the definition of classical genres. Therefore, it is essential to collect them in a new group and read them with a new perspective. So far different scholars and critics have grouped different plays of Shakespeare as problem plays in regard to different criteria; however, in this dissertation the grouping of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure* as problem plays is new and these three plays have been for the first time grouped as problem plays according to the four criteria mentioned above.

The challenging questions posed but left unanswered for the interpretation of the audience/readers make these plays universal because in each century these questions may be evaluated with a new approach. In other words, they are not subject to the boundaries of time and place. Hence, it is possible to derive distinctive meanings from these plays in different ages and this renders it possible for the audience/readers to experience diverse readings. In a sense, the complex questions, which are raised on various issues and are problematic because they create uncertainty in the minds of the audience/readers, add richness and give profundity to these plays. With *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare sheds light on the religious, political and legal issues of his time and makes the audience/readers of different periods read them through the complex questions posed in relation to certain issues. In a sense, the attempt to find answers to the difficult questions raised in these plays initiates the audience/readers to understand the age of Shakespeare. In this way, it is also possible to comprehend the problems presented in these plays through the historical background. Thus, the problematic nature of some of Shakespeare's plays proves that no matter how

much they are studied, it is still possible to find new meanings and bring new perspectives to the Shakespearean canon.

APPENDIX

It will be also useful to present brief analyses of Shakespeare's problem plays which were not included in this dissertation. *All's Well That Ends Well*, which is dated to circa 1601-1602 by Dowden (*Shakspere* 57) and was first performed in 1741 (Halliday, *Shakespeare and His Critics* 235), is also problematic in terms character that is presented through the ambiguous character of Helena. Furthermore, the ambiguity in the characters of the King and Bertram make the ending of the play uncertain. The major problem in *All's Well That Ends Well* revolves around Helena who, on the one hand, is "a simple maid" (II.iii.66), and seems to be highly naive, but on the other hand, acts notably determined to conquer Bertram. In other words, it may be argued that there is an ambiguity in Helena's characterisation as the audience/readers may feel anger with her being denigrated by Bertram due to her lower-class background along with pity for her desperate love for Bertram. However, her cunning schemes and seizing control of the play and the characters may surprise the audience/readers as well. According to Henry Wells, *All's Well That Ends Well* "[...] is one of the 'she comedies' so popular in the times or, in other words, a play dominated by a woman" (147). On the one hand, she expresses how great her love for Bertram is in elaborate words and refers in pain and despair to the impossibility of their union. Therefore, she pretends to be a devoted lover who is not loved in return. On the other hand, she professes that she exploits the illness of the King and uses it to make a plan to conquer Bertram. In this sense, as Wheeler points out, "Helena, though she gives voice to a love for Bertram that is humble, adoring, and beyond consummation, acts resourcefully to get her man anyway, with vigorous, cunning, determined pursuit" (63). According to Josephine Waters Bennett, "the ending has proved inexplicable" ("New Techniques" 338). The sudden transformations of the King and Bertram create obscurity and raises questions about the personalities of both characters at the end of the play. While the King, though he appreciated Helena and praised her virtues, wants Bertram to marry Lafeu's daughter and not to mourn Helena's death anymore, Angelo declares his love for Helena when Helena reappears and the whole story is revealed. Thus, it may be deduced that Bertram's instant change is not convincing as it leads the audience/readers to think

about the authenticity of Bertram's love for Helena as well as for Diana. Rossiter refers to "all those various and complicated states of mixed feelings which are at the heart of the 'experiences' of the Problem Plays [...]" (89) and comments on the obscurity of the ending through Bertram's character as he notes, "[...] the disagreeable qualities of this male have been so convincingly built up, the Beast made so unbeautifully beastly, that the effect is to shake to its fairy-tale foundations the very convention we are expected to accept" (92).

The other two plays which can be analysed as a problem play in relation to character are *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Timon of Athens*. As for *Antony*, it was written in 1607 (Dowden, *Shakspere* 57) and as Margaret Lamb notes, "[t]here is no direct evidence that *Antony and Cleopatra* was performed at all before the closing of the theatres in 1642" (25). The contradictions in the character of Antony make the play a problem play. Schanzer states that "[Shakespeare] [buries] the Antony of *Julius Caesar* and [creates] an entirely new and different dramatic character" (*The Problem* 141). He further says: "In spite of the attempts of many critics to find links and similarities between them, I do not see how a belief in the unity of conception of the two Antonies can be maintained" (*The Problem* 142). While in *Julius Caesar* he is presented as a keen politician who knows how to manipulate people by his rhetoric, and a courageous man of action rather than a man of inaction, in *Antony* he is a passive man who is in love and is devoid of the virtuous and gallant qualities of a soldier. He is patronised by Cleopatra who disdains not only the politics of Rome but also Antony's character as a soldier and politician. However, Antony's sudden decision to leave Cleopatra and his life full of pleasure in Egypt in order to take over matters which are left incomplete by Fulvia's death is problematic because he displays a disorienting behaviour which leads the audience/readers to question the stability of his character. Then, his sudden return to Egypt after Caesar wages war against Pompeius and sides against Antony indicates that he may easily give up his political ideals in Rome and take shelter in Cleopatra, leaving his virtues as politician and soldier behind. As Nahum Tate points out, "[y]ou find [Shaespeare's] Antony in all the defects and excellencies of his mind, a soldier, a reveller, amorous, sometimes rash, sometimes considerate, with all the various emotions of his mind" (qtd. in J.R. Brown, Introduction: *Antony* 26). In a sense, Antony is a

character who plays diverse roles at once and features different sentiments and states of mind, which makes him an unsettled character. In this regard, Schanzer asserts that Antony faces a complicated moral problem which requires an ordinary solution as he does not experience any inner conflicts to settle the matter (*The Problem* 154). However, I disagree with Schanzer's remark on the lack of dilemma in Antony's character as I argue that he reflects the difficulties he suffers from in his unstable attitudes towards Cleopatra along with his inconsistent statements and in the fragmentation he experiences as a lover, soldier and politician.

In *Timon of Athens*, which is considered to be written between 1607-1608 (Dowden, *Shakspere* 57), the character of Timon who extravagantly and needlessley acts as a very generous person and dissipates his wealth is problematic because it is not a realistic portrayal of the man. In the very opening of the play it is presented that Timon is tricked by the hypocritical people around him, and his wealth is abused. In William Hazlitt's words, this is the "general picture of selfish depravity" (49). In other words, the insincere environment which Timon lives in is portrayed and the audience/readers are introduced to the opportunists around Timon along with Timon's selfless character. Ure puts forth the different opinions about the presentation of Timon's character at the beginning of the play as follows: "He has been seen in the first half of the play as a godlike image of perfect friendship, a universal or supreme lover, of boundless, unjudging charity […]" (45). However, on the other hand, "[o]thers claim that Timon is set before us only as an object of satire, illustrating the old adage that a fool and his money are soon parted" (45). Throughout the play the presentation of Timon's character is full of contradictions because while he talks and behaves as a well-intentioned and a naive person who does not bear ill-will towards anybody, he, through some of his statements, implies that he is fully aware of the malice in the world and perceives that people take advantage of his financial power. In this sense, Timon presents a contradictory approach to the nature of friendship, while on one hand, he constantly claims that friendship should be selfless, and on the other hand, he puts forth that he, in fact, expects favour in return from his friends when he himself needs one. In addition, though there are characters like Apemantus and Flavius who warn Timon many times about his extravagance and excessive confidence in people, he does not pay attention to

what they say. Thus, it is important to note that it is impossible for Timon not to be unconscious of his doom, hence his personality as an unknowing and a naive person is unrealistic.

Julius Caesar also raises the question of justice through the dilemmas of Brutus, Caesar's personality as a leader, and his murder. It was among the first plays performed at the Globe in 1599, and it is possible to state that it was written for the opening of this new theatre (S. Wells, *Shakespeare* 191). Dowden classifies *Julius Caesar* as a 'Middle Tragedy' along with *Hamlet* and dates the play to 1601 (*Shakspere* 57). In Jo McMurtry's words, "Plutarch's biographical works are the main source for *Julius Caesar*" (19). The first record of the performance of the play comes from Thomas Platter, a Swiss traveller, who saw *Julius Caesar* on 21 September 1599, probably at the Globe Theatre during his visit to London between 18 September and 20 October (Ripley 13). Platter wrote down his opinions about the London playhouses, the staging conventions of the period and *Julius Caesar* in his diary as follows:

On September 21st after lunch, about two o'clock, I and my party crossed the water, and there in the house with the thatched roof witnessed an excellent performance of the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar with a cast of some fifteen people; when the play was over they danced very marvellously and gracefully together as is their wont, two dressed as men and two as women ... Thus daily at two in the afternoon, London has two, sometimes three plays running in different places, competing with each other, three plays which play best obtain most spectators. (61)

At the very beginning of the play the contrast between the old rule of Rome represented by Pompey and the new regimen represented by Caesar is vividly put forth, and it may be argued that the discrepancy between the old and the new sovereigns foreshadows the oncoming controversy between the supporters of Caesar and the conspirators who murder him claiming that he has turned into a dictator. Mary Hamer points out that "[a]s he takes the first step into the world which is moving towards the crisis of Caesar's death, Shakespeare chooses to invite us to make our own entrance, with him, at a point of collision. We are thrown immediately off-balance into confusion" (12). The first

impression created in the audience/readers about Caesar's character is highly negative and makes the audience/readers believe that he acts like a dictator. He is presented as a man who boasts about his deeds and rule. He may also maintain ultimate power while the senators and the commoners turn into his slaves if nobody interferes with the affairs of state. However, particularly the scene where Caesar refuses to be crowned by the people and shows humility is fundamental in making judgements about his rule. Another scene where Caesar behaves unpretentiously and ignores his status as an emperor is the scene where he refuses to read Artemidorus's letter which reveals the plot against him. Though Artemidorus persistently wants Caesar to read his letter first, he implies that he values the issues related to the public in the first instance. Then, he deals with the matters concerning himself. Thus, it may be deduced that Caesar maintains a humble stance as a ruler in both instances and he does not show any signs of turning into a dictator. As Schanzer puts it, "[i]n *Julius Caesar* the double vision and problematic response is created principally through the series of contradictory images of Caesar presented throughout the first part of the play" (*The Problem* 185). In addition, before the conspirators carry out their plot and murder him, Caesar opens the Senate by asking the wishes of the senators and whether they have any complaints, which is a behaviour a dictator will not display. Therefore, Caesar sounds like a democratic leader who cares about the needs of his subjects and peers unlike an unmerciful sovereign. As for the inner conflicts of Brutus, Cassius first makes use of Brutus's inconsistent state of mind to react against Caesar. He tries to influence Brutus to make him develop a negative attitude towards Caesar asserting that their cause is just. He mentions the ills of Caesar's rule, emphasises the weaknesses of Caesar and aims to display that he is not a noble man with ultimate and divine powers but an ordinary human being with flaws. In this respect, on the one hand, Brutus reveals that he has serious doubts about Ceasar's being crowned, hence establishing ultimate authority in Rome. On the other hand, Brutus also questions the justness of his denunciations because the opponents of Caesar judge him on conjectural incidents and statements, which raises doubts in the minds of the audience/readers about the legitimacy of his assassination. As Stanley Well points out, "Caesar is to be executed for a crime he has not yet committed" (*Shakespeare* 194). Brutus constantly attempts to justify the murder of Caesar as he refuses to swear an oath before the act and opposes the following assassination of Antonius. Brutus clears his

conscience emphasising that they killed Caesar out of necessity but not because of personal interests or matters. As Henri Fluchére puts it, “the theme of the conflict between order and disorder, good and evil, presented as a struggle between the sentiment of honour and the attraction of a crime committed for a ‘noble reason’ ” (192) is a point which makes the play a problem play.

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EK 1: ORİJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih:20/02/2017

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: *The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 239... sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 17/02/2017 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 6 'tür.

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2- Kaynakça hariç
3- Alıntılar hariç/dâhil
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Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Tarih ve İmza
20/02/2017

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Prof. Dr. Deniz BOZER

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 20/02/2017

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ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. Deniz BOZER

EK 2: ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 20/02/2017

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*

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Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Tarih ve İmza
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HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY

Date: 20/02/2017

Thesis Title / Topic: Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: *The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*

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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

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