Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Programme

LIMINALITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S *AS YOU LIKE IT, HAMLET* AND *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

Kübra VURAL ÖZBEY

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2021

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KABUL VE ONAY

Kübra VURAL ÖZBEY tarafından hazırlanan "Liminality in Shakespeare's *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 26.11.2021 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

VURAL ÖZBEY, Kübra. *Liminality in Shakespeare's* As You Like It, Hamlet *and* Troilus and Cressida, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2021.

While the Elizabethan government exploited the theatre as a propagandist means, the Elizabethan stage was controlled by the regulations of patronage and censorship enacted on the playwrights in order to suppress oppositional voices. Yet the theatre's power resided in its subversive nature so that the playwrights used it as a tool for criticism against the dominant ideologies and practices. In this period, acknowledging the rules of censorship and witnessing the punishment of his contemporaries, Shakespeare developed a cautious approach while problematising serious political issues such as factionalism, the succession crisis, rebellion and tyranny in his plays. In the analysis of Shakespeare's various plays, Shakespearean scholars have widely recognised the playwright's strategies to avoid punishment and censorship such as his use of other sources, distant settings and ambiguity. This dissertation aims to identify liminality as one of Shakespeare's tools for criticism and contribute to such studies by discussing liminality in Shakespeare's three plays in different genres, *As You Like It* (1599-1600), *Hamlet* (1599-1601) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1603). Written during the liminal time of the late Elizabethan period in an atmosphere of transition from one monarch to another, all of the three plays dominantly reveal an aspect of liminality, namely liminal place, character/action and time respectively, through which Shakespeare is observed to critically comment on the problematic politics of the late Elizabethan rule. While Shakespeare judges Elizabeth I's failure in controlling her court and country, he exploits the different dynamics of liminality to implicitly voice his critical remarks, enabling him to avoid punishment. Therefore, Chapter I analyses the setting of *As You Like It,* the Forest of Arden, as a liminal place and contemplates on the liminal setting in relation to Shakespeare's political criticism about Elizabeth's methods of punishment of her opponents, such as banishment and exile. Then, Chapter II on *Hamlet* examines the liminal character Hamlet and his liminal actions through which Shakespeare's critical approach to the issues of the succession crisis, tyranny and rebellion taking place during the late Elizabethan period is discussed. Next, Chapter III reconsiders the period of the Trojan War, syphilis time and the emphasis on the present time in *Troilus and Cressida* as liminal time and examines how Shakespeare uses this kind of liminality to censure the mechanics of factionalism and express his disillusionment with the period of transition during the late Elizabethan era in England. While the dissertation sets out to fill the gap between the analysis of Shakespeare's strategies and the studies on liminality in his plays, it eventually provides an insight into the playwright's political agenda and displays his scope of artistic creativity to avoid censorship and punishment.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, *As You Like It, Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida*, Late Elizabethan Politics, Liminality.

ÖZET

VURAL ÖZBEY, Kübra. *Shakespeare'in Seçilmiş Oyunlarında Eşiktelik:* Size Nasıl Geliyorsa, Hamlet *ve* Troilus ve Cressida, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2021.

Elizabeth hükümeti tiyatroyu propaganda aracı olarak kendi çıkarına kullanmış, Elizabeth Dönemi sahnesi, muhalif sesleri bastırmak için oyun yazarlarına uygulanan himaye kuralı ve sansür uygulamaları aracılığıyla kontrol altına alınmaya çalışılmıştır. Ancak tiyatronun gücü, yıkıcı doğasında görülmektedir; öyle ki oyun yazarları egemen ideoloji ve uygulamalara karşı bir eleştiri aracı olarak tiyatroyu kullanmıştır. Bu dönemde sansür uygulamalarını bilen ve çağdaşlarının cezalandırıldığına şahit olan Shakespeare, oyunlarında hizipçilik, tahtın varisi krizi, ayaklanma ve baskı gibi ciddi siyasi konuları sorunsallaştırırken temkinli bir yaklaşım geliştirmiştir. Shakespeare'in farklı eserlerinin analizinde Shakespeare araştırmacıları, yazarın ceza ve sansürden kaçmak için geliştirdiği diğer kaynakları, uzak yer ile zamanı ve belirsizliği kullanma gibi stratejilerini genel olarak belirlemiştir. Bu tez, Shakespeare'in eleştiri araçlarından biri olarak eşikteliği tanımlamayı ve yazarın farklı türlerde yazılmış üç oyununda –*Size Nasıl Geliyorsa* (1599-1600), *Hamlet* (1599-1601) ve *Troilus ve Cressida* (1603) – eşikteliği irdeleyerek bu tür çalışmalara katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Geç Elizabeth Dönemi'nin eşikte, arada kalmış zamanında, bir hükümdardan diğerine geçiş ortamında yazılmış üç oyunun her biri, Geç Elizabeth yönetiminin sorunlu politikalarına eleştirel bir şekilde yorum yaptığı gözlenen Shakespeare'in kullandığı eşikteliğin bir yönünü, yani eşikte yer, karakter/eylem ve zamanı geniş ölçüde ortaya koymaktadır. Shakespeare, I. Elizabeth'in sarayını ve ülkesini yönetmedeki başarısızlığını yargılarken, üstü kapalı şekilde eleştirel fikirlerini duyurmak için cezadan kaçmasını sağlayan eşikteliğin farklı dinamiklerini kendi çıkarına kullanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Birinci Bölüm, *Size Nasıl Geliyorsa* adlı oyunun geçtiği yer olan Arden Ormanı'nı eşikte, arada kalmış bir mekân olarak incelemekte ve Shakespeare'in Elizabeth'in uzaklaştırma ve sürgün gibi muhaliflerini cezalandırma yöntemleri hakkındaki siyasi eleştirisine ilişkin eşikte, arada kalmış mekânı etraflıca tartışmaktadır. *Hamlet* oyunu hakkındaki İkinci Bölüm, Geç Elizabeth Dönemi süresince ortaya çıkan tahtın varisi krizi, baskı ve ayaklanma konularında Shakespeare'in eleştirel yaklaşımının tartışıldığı Hamlet'in eşikte, anlaşılmaz karakter ve eylemlerini incelemektedir. Üçüncü Bölüm, *Troilus ve Cressida* oyunundaki Truva Savaşı dönemini, frengi zamanını ve şimdiki zaman üzerindeki vurguyu eşikte, belirsiz zaman olarak yeniden ele almaktadır ve Shakespeare'in eşikteliğin bu türünü, hizipçiliğin işleyişini tenkit etmek ve İngiltere'de Geç Elizabeth Dönemi geçiş sürecindeki hayal kırıklığını ifade etmek için nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Tez, Shakespeare'in eleştirel stratejileriyle ilgili analizleri ve oyunlarındaki eşiktelik hakkındaki çalışmalar arasındaki boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflerken, sonuç olarak oyun yazarının siyasi gündemine ışık tutmakta ve onun sansür uygulamaları ve cezalandırılmaktan kaçmak için kullandığı sanatsal yaratıcılığını sergilemektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: William Shakespeare, *Size Nasıl Geliyorsa, Hamlet, Troilus ve Cressida*, Geç Elizabeth Dönemi Siyaseti, Eşiktelik.

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INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) has often been a controversial figure not only because of his disputed life story but also for his perspective on the issues displayed in his plays. His dramatic works, the pinnacle of Renaissance drama, have been discussed throughout the centuries since various scholars re-examined them from a wide range of critical viewpoints. Shakespeare's approach to political, social and religious institutions and his representation of certain problematic issues such as the place of Jews in Christian communities, oppressive rule of tyrants, absolutism and gender fluidity have been explored from opposite points of view. Apparently, his plays are the products of the cultural, political and historical discourse of the age because "[a] theatrical audience sees the material of real life presented in meaningful form" on stage (Turner, *The Anthropology* 27). Stephen Greenblatt, in a similar fashion, claims that Shakespeare centres his plays on the daily life of his period (*Will* 357). Moreover, David Wiles draws further attention to the relation between Shakespeare's use of contemporary allusions and his loyalty to the royal authority, regarding the playwright as "a spokesman for national and hierarchical values" (62).

Furthermore, it is important to note that the circumstances of Shakespeare's age compelled the playwright to conform, at least on the surface, to the dominant ideology of the Elizabethan monarchy. However, this does not mean that Shakespeare did not challenge important issues and notions of the early modern period. This is obviously the flip side in the evaluation of Shakespeare's works since the playwright is called "a public dramatist rather than a servant of the Crown" (Wiles 63). The emergent discrepancy can be referred to theatre censorship enacted through a series of regulations on the Elizabethan stage as well as courtly patronage that Shakespeare depended on. In effect, one of Shakespeare's sonnets drew attention to his silence regarding censorship. In "Sonnet 66: Tired with all these," he referred to his silence, saying "art made tongue-tied by authority" (9). Although it was hard for him to criticise wrongdoings openly, Shakespeare was able to voice his judgmental ideas by using some strategies such as his rewriting of old stories, working with distant settings and creating ambiguous states and characters. More significantly, this dissertation aims to deal with Shakespeare's method of criticism by

claiming that the concept of liminality can be regarded as one of the playwright's strategies of criticism. This approach brings a new light to Shakespeare's critical perspective as liminality, albeit an anthropologic term, points to a transitional and ambiguous phase, and the playwright often made use of liminal characters, actions, places and times to implicitly display his genuine ideas about Elizabethan politics, the court, the society and early modern concepts which became dysfunctional in time. This dissertation aims to consider the hermeneutics of liminality in its diversity through the analysis of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599-1600), *Hamlet* (1599-1601) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1603) in order to prove that liminality was the playwright's tool for criticism in the late Elizabethan period.

Before proceeding with Shakespeare's use of liminality in his plays as a means to criticise his society and age, it might be useful to give the scope of this chapter. Granted that Shakespeare skilfully veils his critical remarks in his plays, it is initially necessary to understand the circumstances that forced him to develop some strategies to hide his critique of contemporary politics, the late Elizabethan court, society and culture. Therefore, the first part of the chapter begins with the function of the theatre in the Elizabethan age by particularly emphasising its subversive power and its use as a tool for propaganda. The chapter then focuses on the regulations imposed on the playwrights, mainly the practices of patronage and censorship, before moving to Shakespeare's methods of criticism. Accordingly, the playwright's strategical use of older texts and stories, distant setting and ambiguity that Shakespearean scholars have dealt with will be highlighted in order to suggest that liminality can be regarded as one of Shakespeare's critical means to comment on the problematic issues of the time without being subjected to censorship or punishment. After unfolding the development and the premise of liminality, the chapter acknowledges the studies that have analysed Shakespeare's plays within the frame of liminality. Moreover, this dissertation centres on the attempt to fill the gap between the studies on Shakespeare's means of criticism and his use of liminality by claiming that liminality can be regarded as one of the playwright's strategical tools for criticism.

To begin with, it is crucial to delve into the perception and function of the theatre in the Elizabethan period. Evolving from the medieval times, the theatre during the Renaissance was a professional business with an established system of playhouses and theatre companies. It was initially a popular cultural activity which offered entertainment to both the nobility and the common people. In addition to the performances taking place at the royal court, theatrical activities in the public areas such as playhouses and halls led the theatre to become "a highly successful business enterprise" (White, *Theatre* 164). Shakespeare was ostensibly part of this commercial world as a member and shareholder of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and his plays were performed at the Globe, the theatre which was founded by James Burbage's sons, Cuthbert and Richard, in 1599. However, the theatre, which attracted a great number of people, was regarded as a threat to moral values and the peace of the country by certain authorities so that many of the theatres were situated outside of the city. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Christianity was mainly split into two streams: Catholicism and Protestantism. As a case in point, the Church of England or, to put it otherwise, the Anglican Church, was against the theatre and counted it among dreadful sins because it was associated with immorality, and the actors were accused of encouraging debauchery. Puritans, in particular, severely opposed the theatre and attempted to prevent people from going to the theatre. Norman Jones explains that

> [s]eeking to create purified communities of worship, and believing that God elected some to salvation and others to damnation, they [the Puritans] sought to control the reprobate in the interest of the godly, in order to take away the punishment. All his life Shakespeare was exposed to their demands that swearing, drunkenness, fornication, bastardy, Sabbath breaking, maypole dancing, ill-rule, gambling, and a host of others crimes be ended. The theater was one of their targets […]. ("Shakespeare's England" 27-28)

Puritans thought that the theatre was one of the reasons lying behind divine punishment, and God was believed to vent His anger on people through plagues as people committed a crime by watching plays and allowing them to be performed. Ostensibly, the sites open to large crowds were also risky in case of contagious diseases, and the theatres were closed during the period of epidemics like plagues although religious ceremonies were still conducted in the church with the mass. E. K. Chambers presents such cases in which the closure of the theatres was announced in the acts of the time. In 1572, for instance, plays were banned on account of their immorality, "these comon plaies were exiled for

altogether, as semenaries of impiety, & their theatres pulled downe" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:269). In another instance, the fear of plague contamination led the Lords of the Queen's Council to prohibit performances in 1574 (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:273). Likewise, in 1586, the Lord Mayor was asked to "geve order for restrayning of playes and interludes within and about the Cittie of London, for th'avoyding of infection feared to grow and increase this time of sommer by the comon assemblies of people at those places" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:302).

Closely allied with the Anglican Church, the city authorities were disturbed by the theatre and complained about playmakers. Louis Montrose illustrates uneasiness about the theatre as follows: "In 1597, the Lord Mayor and aldermen of London petitioned the Privy Council to suppress stage plays, which they accused of causing numerous 'inconveniences'; their petition is a compendium of the complaints that had been lodged against the performance of plays in the public theatres during the previous two decades" (*The Purpose* 48). They constantly condemned playmakers as the source of vice, disorder and corruption as prostitution, stealing and disruption to the social order were believed to be common in playhouses. The city authorities, therefore, caused difficulties by writing petitions or preventing higher authorities from issuing licenses to plays. As a case in point, the Mayor of London wrote to the Privy Council about his request to extend the restraint of play times in 1582 (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:288); the Blackfriars, who were the monks of Dominican order, wrote a petition in 1596 and complained bitterly about the playhouses "which will [would] grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to all the noblemen and gentlemen thereabout inhabiting but allso a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same precinct" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:320).

Some of the literary discussions and debates during the Elizabethan period also asserted with an utmost precision that the theatre was a misleading activity which was harmful to the majority. Although the theatre was defended as an ethical and educative tool by humanists such as Thomas Elyot (1490-1546) and Roger Ascham (1515-1568), the opponents of the theatre made their voices heard in their critical writings. Amid such works, John Northbrooke's (1567-1589) *A Treatise* (1577) can be cited as an example as

he advocates that “Satan hath not a more speedie way, and fitte schoole to work and teach his desire, to bring men and women into his snare of concupiscence and filthie lustes of wicked whoredome, than those places, and playes, and theatres are; and therefore necessarie that those places, and players, sholde be forbidden” (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:198). Undoubtedly, Stephon Gosson’s (1554-1624) *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579) condemns such a popular activity on the grounds that “there keepe a generall market of bawdrie: not that any filthynesse in deede is committed within the compasse of that grounde, as was doone in Rome” (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:203). Likewise, the Bishop of Worcester, Gervase Babington (1550-1610), denounces the theatre because of its immoral content and methods in his work entitled *A very Fruitful Exposition* (1583) (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:225). As can be observed, the theatre was criticised for its relation to perversity, depravity and disobedience in some works of the period.

Nevertheless, royal authority endorsed and approved theatrical activities, which was the main reason for the theatre’s power in the Elizabethan age. In contrast to the Anglican Church, city authorities and those defaming this kind of entertainment, Elizabeth I (1533-1603) supported the theatre and enabled it to flourish. The Queen and the nobility enjoyed watching plays at the court and playhouses. It is claimed that the Queen even requested Shakespeare to write another play about his famous character Falstaff and portray him as a lover (Jones, “The Court” 170). This incident might be indebted to the Queen’s favouring of the theatre, but more than that her personal taste in entertainment was the issue. In addition, it is necessary to deal with the Queen’s perception of the theatre as a tool for state control here. As a matter of fact, Elizabeth tried to restore stability to her country since the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism still troubled people. The establishment of Protestantism in the country had grown in importance, but it was still unsettled with an internal disturbance in England and threats of invasion from Catholic countries such as Spain and France. In the advent of such troubles, the Queen, as the head of the state, adopted tactics to establish political and social order in the country, and the theatre became one of her means to establish Protestantism. The Queen’s Men, for instance, was founded as a theatre company upon Elizabeth’s command in 1583, and the reason for its organisation turned out to “spread Protestant propaganda and royalist enthusiasm through the troubled kingdom” (Greenblatt, *Will* 162). While the

Anglican Church opposed the theatre as an act of Satan, the Queen attempted to take advantage of its popularity to spread the authorised religion. This religious propaganda supported by the monarchy was carried on in the theatres until the first half of the 1570s when the theatres became a more secular part of the commercial world (White, "Patronage" 112).

There was agreement on the government's use of the theatre as a tool to control and guide the society in a way that the state would profit from it for its own purpose. In reference to Althusser, Jean E. Howard notes that the theatre was "an ideological state apparatus, that is, an institution for the discursive, non-violent control of social subjects in the interests of the ruling segments of society" (14). To put the matter simply, the theatre became part of the state ideology and served the aims of the Elizabethan government. The state, aware of the theatre's potential to manipulate people, made it an instrument of the monarchy to exercise power and authority. In effect, the Tudor dynasty, in contrast to the medieval period, constantly empowered their sovereignty with "the suppler skills of the courtier, suave and persuasive, or the administrator, clear-headed and literate, which were in demand" (MacCaffrey 95). This establishment with the different competences of rulers was peculiar in terms of the monarchy's approach to the public events. Christopher Pye clarifies this point that "[t]he Renaissance was an age of monarchic absolutism and an age of spectacle; what one decides about the politics of the stage in the era depends on how directly or thoroughly one concatenates those two facts. Spectacle certainly could be the privileged medium of sovereignty" (2). In particular, the theatre became a symbol of the Renaissance in England, and the principles of the Elizabethan age were observed in the plays of the time considering that they reflected social, economic, religious and political policies and shaped people's minds. The sovereign supported the performance of those plays which entailed the complete power of the monarchy, the maintenance of order and the Protestant cause. Peter Thomson also argues that the theatre had a moral aspect for the Elizabethan audience: "There were lessons to be learned. Mere observation was not enough: the right conclusions must be drawn from it" (129). Like the Church in the Middle Ages, the state allowed people to understand the absolute power of their authority over rebellious forces and its divine presence in an age when England had to struggle with domestic and foreign threats. Therefore, the ideology of the monarch

embedded with national values was believed to be displayed on stage in that the theatre and, hence, the political and social order, were institutionalised by the Elizabethan government through regulations.

Before analysing theatrical regulations of patronage and censorship which induced Shakespeare to find out alternative ways for criticism, it is necessary to identify the subversive structure of the theatre. Although the monarchy used the theatre as part of its exercise of authority, the power of the theatre could also be turned against the government. Janet Clare highlights this idea, saying that "the drama absorbed and exploited fundamental energies of political authority. In replicating the essence of that authority, plays produce both subversion and the powerful containment of that subversion" (5). That is to say, some playwrights employed the tactics of the government and began to unveil their opposing ideas in time through different ways. As up to 20.000 people respectively watched plays every week ("Audiences"), those works became very effective "to manipulate audiences, and to negotiate between the lived world and discursive representations of it" (Howard 10). It seems likely that the Elizabethan stage could develop into a political threat to the authority according to the ideology of the playwright. The political position of playmakers could influence the audience, which contradicted the court's expectations from the theatre. Therefore, the theatre became subversive with its power to spark off a rebellion. Richard Dutton points out the negative perception of the theatre by the court as follows: "The Queen, and doubtless her Privy Council, apparently perceived that the real threat from the drama lay in its effect on the public at large, not in any subversive influence it might have within established institutions" (*Mastering* 23). In other words, the Queen made use of the theatre to maintain her rule, but she was aware of the fact that the theatre could also be used as a means to challenge her power and authority. This amounts to saying that the theatre could be considered a weapon of rebellion against absolute control although its implicit subversion might be ignored as long as it did not provoke people. In the public playhouses, the theatre proved resistant to the reformative aims of the monarchical power and appeared provocative with its political content through the interaction between the play and the audience as plays, for better or worse, transgressed their literary boundaries and belonged to the social sphere. This transcendence of royal control made the theatre a

site of struggle in which plays displayed their own power because "[w]ithin this theatrical setting, there [was] a notable insistence upon the paradoxes, ambiguities, and tensions of authority, but this apparent production of subversion [was] the very condition of power" (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean* 65).

On this basis, it is clear that the Elizabethan theatre had complex dynamics, and one of Shakespeare's plays, *Richard II* (1595), was openly used as political propaganda when his company was commissioned to perform this play in 1601. To perform this play, the members of the company were actually paid by the second Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux (1565-1601), who used this work in his rebellion to overthrow the Queen. When they were questioned on the matter of this rebellion, one of the players, Augustine Phillips (?-1605), "claimed that the company's players had protested the choice of *Richard II* because it was 'so old and so long out of use that they should have small company at it,' but that they agreed to perform it with the guarantee of '40s. more than their ordinary'" (Knutson 353). Essex's insistence on the staging of this play proved that the theatre was a means of provocation, and the Queen was aware of its destructive potential as her power was challenged with it. What disturbed her was the fact that she was associated with Richard II who was beheaded in the play, and this performance took place in a public theatre where a large group of people watched the beheading scene. Paul Raffield asserts that the Queen "is supposed to have told [William] Lambarde that 'I am Richard II, know ye not that?" (87), and her words demonstrated the veiled political context of the play at that time. Regarding this incident, the theatre's provocative nature became most evident as the theatre was both used and abused by the monarchy and its opponents.

In point of fact, the hostility of the local authorities towards the theatre and its employment for political strategies turned the stage into "the ambiguous threshold of spectacle – source of daemonic dread as well as sovereign potency" (Pye 45). The ideological purposes of the playwrights, which contradicted the monarch, also arouse ambiguity since the stage could not be tightly controlled in such cases. In order to avoid civic disorder, the government put into effect regulations on theatrical activities and maintained its dominance over the playmakers. Accordingly, the system of patronage

emerged, and certain rules were followed to censor the plays. Indeed, the operation of patronage was an effective method to control and monitor theatrical activities at the outset. It was essentially the protection of playmakers by the noble patrons who provided financial support. While the Anglican Church and city fathers associated players with rogues, rascals and vagabonds, the nobles were willing to establish companies and protect and support theatrical activities. In fact, the word *patron* in Latin means "patron saint, and lord and master" (Peck 16). The roots of patronage emanated from religious discourse:

> Whiile [sic] the language of patronage was classical and humanist, the Protestant English continued to describe patron-client relationships in a religious vocabulary borrowed from Roman Catholicism, to emphasize the patron or broker as the intercessor with the king, much like the saints or the Virgin Mary in Catholic theology. (Peck 208-209)

However, in the Elizabethan period, patronage did not signify religious discourse, but a secular relationship between the sponsor of the theatre and playmakers. Writing in the Middle Ages was undertaken as an aristocratic pastime, but during the early modern period, people who were not of noble blood, like Shakespeare, produced works which were popular both among ordinary people and the nobles. The theatre, in fact, appealed to the public as well as the court, and this necessitated the tactical supervision over the theatre. Therefore, the monarchy established this controlling mechanism for the propagation of the Protestant faith at the outset. Patronage for theatre companies was initially provided by Henry VII (1457-1509) in 1494 (Streitberger, "Personnel" 338), and it was well-regulated during the reign of Elizabeth. The requirement for the actors to have patrons was set in legal acts of 1572 and 1598, making it necessary for the players and playwrights to be under the protection of noble patrons. The first act, An Acte for the punishement of Vacabondes and for Releif of the Poore & Impotent, was enacted on 29 June 1572, which directly enforced the players to have noble masters:

> [A]ll Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes & Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towards any other honorable Personage of greater Degree; all Juglers Pedlar Tynkers and Petye Chapmen; whiche seid Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes Mynstrels Juglers Pedler Tynkers & Petye Chapmen, shall wander abroade and have no Lycense of two Justices of the Peace at the leaste, whereof one to be of the Quorum, when and in what Shier they shall happen to wander . . . shalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdy Beggers. (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4: 270)

This act was restated on 9 February 1598, and it was again stated that those without patrons were to be severely punished (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4: 324). This enforcement demonstrated that the freedom of playmaking relied on patronage; otherwise, the actors were not recognised as professional workers, but identified with wanderers.

To provide a clear view on the system of patronage, it is possible to dig more into this network of relations. What first emerges here is that the Queen, Graham Parry points out, was not a patron herself and did not reward those dedicating their works to her although she was glad to receive dedications to herself (125). That is to say, the monarch was merely at the top of the control mechanism as she allowed her courtiers to provide the writers with patronage. The Queen, hence, was able to hold her court's esteem, administer the nobility and indirectly control the literary world. In the essence of this system, there were two types of patronage: royal patronage and noble patronage. While the first one indicated being in the service of the royal court, the latter referred to working for a noble patron (Westfall 115-117). Secondly, it is possible to state that theatre companies were named after their noble patrons who hosted great performances in their houses, enjoyed fame and prestige and became more influential figures in the lands where their companies played. The theatre in the Renaissance was cultivated through this mutual relationship between patrons and theatre companies. Along with the promise of protection from punishments, patronage was also an economic contract for the writers and a manifestation of economic power for the patrons. To further illustrate this aspect of the relations regarding patronage, it can be claimed that the writer, seeking a patron, made himself known by writing dedications to his candidate, and the patron would reward him in different ways, presenting "permanent positions to more sporadic offerings, gifts or payments in kind" (Bates 346). The net effect of patronage can be observed in the works of playwrights considering that the patron would be the target audience, and the taste of the patron might play an important role in the composition of plays. What is particularly striking is that the choice of topics for the plays depended on the ideology and political intentions of the patrons, too. Although the system of patronage was carried out by the aristocracy, some patrons turned out to oppose the monarchy. Viewed in this way,

> writers sought support from, or were recruited by, patrons with similar ideological interests and that what they expected in exchange for their efforts was protection from hostile opposition, promotion of their views, and career appointments in positions where they could continue to carry out their own and their patron's ideological views. (White, *Theatre* 6)

To recapitulate, playwrights tended to shape their works according to their patrons with whom they were thought to share the same ideology. In this fashion, plays again became a means to oppose the dominant authority.

To understand the role of patronage in Shakespeare's career, it is necessary to explain that he needed patronage to survive as a playwright. It is true that Shakespeare became a sharer in the Lord Chamberlain's Men[1] which was established by one of the Queen's cousins in 1585 (Dutton, *Licensing* 8). Although Shakespeare was part of the commercial business with his plays performed at the Globe, he still turned to aristocratic protection through patronage. Therefore, it is relevant to name the playwright's patrons here. The Queen, as stated above, never became a patron herself, but Shakespeare's company came to be Elizabeth's favourite (Bradbrook 62). Shakespeare's eminent patron was the third Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley (1573-1624), to whom his sonnets, as well as his poems, entitled *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), were dedicated (Cook 77; Hamilton 21-22). Shakespeare, in particular, addressed Southampton in his sonnets through which he praised his patron and also advised him to marry:

> The opening group of Shakespeare's sonnets clearly has a specific person in mind: an exceptionally beautiful, 'self-willed' (6.13) young man, who has refused to marry and is thus consuming himself 'in single life' (9.2). [. . .] Presumably, if the first seventeen of Shakespeare's sonnets – the sonnets urging the young man to marry and father a child – were written to Southampton, then Southampton constituted the innermost circle: he was the reader who was privileged to know almost everything. (Greenblatt, *Will* 230, 234)

Even though Southampton was generally associated with the playwright, William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, was also recognised as Shakespeare's patron (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 1:41). More interesting still, Shakespeare's First Folio published in 1623 was not inscribed for Southampton. Chambers clarifies this fact,

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[1] According to Chambers, Shakespeare might have written for three other companies, the Lord Admiral's Men, the Lord Pembroke's Men and the Sussex's Men from 1592 to 1594 (*William* 61), but Shakespeare is only affiliated with the Lord Chamberlain's Men by many scholars.

pinpointing that "although Southampton was still alive when the First Folio was published, it was to Pembroke and his brother that Heminges and Condell dedicated it" (*William* 68). Moreover, as mentioned above, the Earl of Essex paid Shakespeare's company to perform *Richard II* so Essex can be regarded as a figure who financially supported the playwright at the dawn of the rebellion which caused a serious problem for the whole country (Bate 78).

Having established the system of patronage and Shakespeare's place within this system, it is possible to consider that Shakespeare's career cannot be disassociated from the stories of those who provided the playwright with patronage such as Southampton and Essex. In fact, Southampton had known Essex from his early ages, and they became close friends in time. Both of them were actually prominent figures of the Elizabethan court, but they fell out of the Queen's favour as a result of their wrongdoings. At the outset, Southampton's relationship with and marriage to Essex's cousin caused his dismissal from the court. Later, Essex was sent to Ireland to lead the Queen's forces there in the late 1590s, but when he chose Southampton as his Master of Horse, the Queen bitterly opposed Southampton's presence (Cook 165; Akrigg 68-86). Yet Essex disobeyed Elizabeth's order which was his first step towards rebellion. She disdained him, and this rejection led him to bankruptcy as he financially relied on her court (Akrigg 107). The Earl then decided to overthrow the government through his military coup. After paying the Lord Chamberlain's Men to perform *Richard II* on 7 February 1601 and watching the performance, Essex with his supporters rebelled, but failed. While Essex, the leader of the coup, was imprisoned and killed, Southampton was only sentenced to imprisonment until James I's (1566-1625) accession to the throne after Elizabeth's death in 1603 (Dzelzainis 107). On the verge of this rebellion, Essex and Southampton were defamed by the Queen; this also troubled Shakespeare. Margot Heinemann unfolds the impact of Essex and Essex's revolt on Shakespeare as follows:

> The Essex circle, where so many contesting ideological viewpoints were articulated and discussed in the 1590s, was a marvellous seedbed for Shakespeare's multivocal historical and political drama. But that complex clash of ideologies – bastard-feudal, politique, scientific-Machiavellian, republican, radical-Puritan crusading and anti-clerical – ended in the disaster of the Essex revolt. (76)

Although Southampton and Essex enabled Shakespeare to develop many ideas for his plays and financially supported him, Essex's misuse of *Richard II* for his own benefit afflicted the playwright's company. According to G. P. V. Akrigg's report, there were no questions about the performance of the play at the trial (124-125), but Shakespeare's company was not exempt from a comparatively light penalty. The players were interrogated and released when they were not found guilty of treason (Patterson, *Censorship* 13). Nevertheless, the company, Chambers claims, was not allowed to play "in the provinces during 1601 and they were admitted to give their full share of Court performances during the following Christmas" (*The Elizabethan* 1:325). That was the reason why *Hamlet* was performed at Oxford and Cambridge and later in London (Chambers, *William* 65). Although Shakespeare's famous patron was imprisoned by the Queen, she was much tolerant towards the company, probably because the Lord Chamberlain's Men was established by her cousin.

After the rebellion, the playwright's relationship with Southampton is not clearly known. However, this case reveals more about the intricate dynamics of patronage and the use of theatre at the time. To be more precise, Shakespeare's connection with Southampton and Essex drew a contrast between the monarch's use of patronage and the aims of patrons. The patrons might be preoccupied with their own political interests, opposing the monarchical authority. Seen in this light, the patron rather than the playwright was accused of treason and punished as in the case of Essex's rebellion, regarding that Essex and Southampton both directly revolted. On the other hand, Shakespeare was able to continue his professional career as it is possible to argue that he did not openly challenge the Queen during her lifetime. Later on, his company became the King's Men after the accession of James in 1603 and "entered into the closest possible relationship an acting company could possess with the monarch and with the monarch's court" (Holderness et al. 132). Although Shakespeare had received noble patronage as he had been previously paid only by the nobles, this change can be deemed a success in his dramatic career because he gained royal patronage under the protection of James. Conducive to the King's

patronage, critics are of the opinion that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* (1606) to compliment the new patron of his company (Leggatt 9; Wells and Shaw 105).[2]

In addition to the use of patronage as part of the regulations for the theatre enforced by the state, there is another issue regarding these regulations which is the practice of censorship in the Elizabethan reign. Broadly speaking, what lurks behind Shakespeare's inability to offer harsh criticism of the monarchy and its institutions was governmental censorship on the theatre. In effect, the system of patronage was closely linked with censorship since, as Clare notes, "[s]ponsored drama produces its own constraints" (100). This kind of restraint can be identified with a permanent system of censorship which was constructed as a means of royal state control of the socio-political sphere when theatrical activities were regulated through patronage in England. In essence, the monarchy was interested in theatrical activities performed at the court and allowed other plays to take place in the playhouses. However, the Queen and her court felt uncomfortable with the idea of their own representation on stage: "By allowing such representations, they would in effect be ceding control of their own persons, and they feared that the theater would only succeed, as the queen put it, 'making greatness familiar'" (Greenblatt, *Will* 339). Although the theatre was a form of entertainment for the court, the nobility attempted to prevent the playwrights from writing about themselves, in particular, with a critical tone. Considering that the plays were censored, the playwrights could not directly portray powerful figures on stage. Viewed in this way, censorship developed into a measure to control the dichotomy between representation and reality, and it was enacted by the particular institutions of the monarchy.

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[2] Although *Macbeth* is regarded as a play to celebrate the new King of England, Greenblatt believes that Shakespeare presents his negative view of governance in this play: "This is, I think, Shakespeare's central perception of governance, and it stands in the place of any higher-minded ethical object. The actions of those in power have consequences, long-term, inescapable and impossible to control" ("Shakespeare" 72). He argues that Shakespeare highlights the system of judgement in the government and suggests that it is merely the practice of punishment by the government ("Shakespeare" 72). That is to say, this play still offers a critical viewpoint even though the aim is thought to have pleased the King. Moreover, the line from *Macbeth* that "I think, but dare not speak" (V. i. 74) may be used to indicate the pressure of censorship which silenced the playwright.

In order to focus on censorship in more detail, it is necessary to dwell on the evolution of this regulation during the early modern period. Although the practice of censorship was not systematic until the end of the 1570s, it was a custom that the plays to be performed at the court were examined before the production by the officers of the Revels Office. As a matter of fact, this office, established in Henry VII's reign, was a constituent of the Lord Chamberlain who was the head of the monarch's household, and it was responsible for organising revels or celebrations for courtly entertainment. Paul Whitfield White explains that "final decisions and plans for court revels were made in the Privy Chamber, with a warrant signed by several of the privy counsellors dispatched by the Lord Chamberlain or one of his deputies to the Revels Office giving instructions" (*Theatre* 47). That is to say, the Revels Office was not initially the direct source of censorship regarding that they arranged masques, supplied equipment and supervised festivals and plays, but their examination of the plays was only limited to the performances at the court. Yet their limited control became extensive as one of the officers, the Master, from the Revels Office gained power in time. According to Chambers's account, the Revels Office was conducted by "a Master, a Clerk Comptroller, and a Clerk, whose services it shared with the analogous Office of Tents, a Yeoman, and a Groom" (*The Elizabethan* 1:71), and the Master's position and duties were defined by the laws. His qualifications as a courtier were officially listed, and his status was detailed as follows:

> The Mayster of the office, whoe oughte to be a man of learned, of good engine, inventife witte, and experience, aswell for varietie of straunge devises delectable, as to waye what moste aptlye and fitleye furnissheth the tyme, place, presence, and state, Shall haue the principall chardge of thoffice, to giue order for that is there to be done, and to see the hole affaires and orders of the same executed as herafter is described. (Chambers, *Notes* 42)

Along with those requirements, the Master's control of the plays wielded power to a broad scope as he began to inspect the plays performed at London theatres. Gerald Eades Bentley classifies his principles of censorship and observes five main categories: "1. Critical comments on the policies or conduct of the government / 2. Unfavourable presentations of *friendly* foreign powers or their sovereigns, great nobles, or subjects / 3. Comment on religious controversy / 4. Profanity (after 1606) / 5. Personal satire on *influential* people" (167). As can be noted, some of the propositions overlapped, and they

were actually a result of the religious, political and moral concerns of the authorities which enabled the theatre to emerge as a national institution.

To further understand the impact of censorship, it is first necessary to illustrate the role and authority of the Master of the Revels in the Elizabethan period. Specifically, during the Elizabethan reign, the Master became the representative of the royal power and regulation when his duties were delineated in the 1581 proclamation. In this year, Edmund Tilney (1536-1610), Elizabeth's distant cousin, was declared the Master of the Revels: "We lett you witt that we haue auctorised licensed and commaunded and by these presentes do aucthorise licence and commaunde our welbeloved Edmunde Tylney Esquire Maister of our Revells, aswell to take and retaine for vs and in our name at all tymes from hensforth and in all places within this our Realme of England" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:285). Although Sir Thomas Cawarden until 1545 and Sir Thomas Berger until 1560 were taken into the service of the Revels Office as the Master (Barroll, "Drama" 15, 20), it was Tilney's position and duties that were specified in the proclamation. Even before this announcement, Tilney actually had an active role in such regulations; for instance, in 1574, he was charged with the patent of the Leicester's Men to perform in London and other places except for forbidden times such as during the plague or religious ceremonies (Archer and Lawrence 283). Yet the proclamation of 1581 marked a crucial point in his career because Tilney was entitled to

> warne commaunde and appointe in all places within this our Realme of England, aswell within francheses and liberties as without, all and euery plaier or plaiers with their playmakers, either belonginge to any noble man or otherwise, bearinge the name or names of vsinge the facultie of playmakers of plaiers of Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes or what other showes soever, from tyme to tyme and at all tymes to appeare before him with all suche plaies, Tragedies, Enterludes or showes as they shall haue in readines or meaane to sett forth, and them to presente and recite before our said Servant or his sufficient deputie, whom wee ordayne appointe and auctorise together with their playing places, to order and reforme, auctorise and put downe, as shalbe thought meete or vnmeete vnto himselfe or his said deputie in that behalfe. (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:286)

As an agent of royal control, Tilney turned into the monarchical gaze watching over all types of theatrical activities in England. His position was initially under the Lord Chamberlain. Tilney selected plays and examined them before their performance at the

court with the officers from the Revels; his authority was exerted when he was held responsible for coordinating the Queen's company, the Queen's Men, in 1584 (Streitberger, *Edmond* 6-8). More interestingly, Tilney's official title also empowered his position in a way that he was entrusted with an extensive authority of punishment, even imprisonment, as defined in the proclamation of 1581 (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:287). Although Jason McElligott comments that Tilney was a mediator between the court and the playmakers (118), his censoring was a serious matter with his warrant to punish. Undoubtedly, censorship was deemed relevant to political and social authority, but it also laid down the financial foundation for the state:

> The role of censor carried with it an increasing potential for financial gain. Tilney was paid £3 a month, plus £100 a year by the queen. A fee of five shillings was charged for considering a play, whether or not it was approved. The master levied extra funds through licensing playhouses, giving dispensations to act during otherwise forbidden periods such as Lent, and other perquisites. (Green 344)

There is little doubt that censorship became part of commercial theatrical activities, and this led the person in charge to have an interest in making profit for himself rather than doing the work right.[3] Although it was not definitely validated, Tilney was said to constantly accept fees from Philip Henslowe (1550-1616) as well as receive payment from companies and theatres for their plays (Dutton, *Licensing* 4). Correspondingly, Tilney granted freedom to the playwrights after he was paid. Dutton resonates the same opinion, claiming that "[t]he link that the Master represented between royal power and commercial self-interest actually made him a peculiarly English figure of compromise, allowing in practice considerable freedom of expression, as long as it was exercised – and paid for – within the circle of his authority" ("Censorship" 304).

Turning now to other principles of censoring plays, one may reconsider the proclamations, as well. It is undoubtedly true that censorship was based on the proclamations which can be regarded as the orders of the monarch and the council about social, governmental and financial matters. The proclamations were less in rank compared to law or statues, and they were valid for limited periods, but they were signs

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[3] The cases of personal profit, according to Green's account, can be observed more in later periods. Sir Henry Herbert and Charles Killigrew at the end of the seventeenth century abused their positions in the Revels Office to gain money for themselves (Green 344).

of a firm government and royal power (Elton, *Tudor* 22; Keir 98). The essential proclamation of censorship was the one enacted in 1559. Upon the constant petitions of the Anglican Church and the Mayor of London, Elizabeth prohibited plays dealing with the issues of religion or the government and required all plays to be licensed (Barroll, "The Question" 41). It was ordered that "her maiestie doth likewise charge euery of them, as they will aunswere: that they permyt none to be played wherin either matters of religion or of the gouernaunce of the estate of the common weale shalbe handled or treated vpon, but by menne of aucthoritie" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan* 4:263). The reason for this proclamation culminates in the fact that the representation of religion and monarchy on stage could not be tolerated since such illustrations could threaten two powerful institutions, the Anglican Church and the state. Therefore, Tilney's enactment of censorship aimed to avoid such matters on stage.

What is more, the current events and strife in the country played an important role in censorship. Put simply, Tilney's principles of censorship were shaped by contemporary situations or events in line with the 1559 proclamation. Subsequent to the petitions or complaints of the Anglican Church or city officers, the state had to enforce regulations, and the Master of the Revels had to observe them rather than only concentrating on courtly standards. In 1588 and 1589, for instance, there were pamphlets written by an unknown writer called Martin Marprelate who attacked the Anglican Church, the bishops and the Archbishop with Puritan ideas. The unidentified writer caused trouble in the country resulting in the abolishment of the Paul's Boys company, a theatre company in the sixteenth century (Chambers, *William* 33). Hence, the Privy Council decided to include Archbishop Whitgift and the Lord Mayor of London among Tilney's commission of censorship with the authority of punishment (Dutton, "Censorship" 295). Also, some playwrights of the court such as John Lyly (1554?-1606), Robert Greene (1558-1592) and Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) were asked to write counter-plays against Martin Marprelate (Bowsher 32). In this commission, Tilney was still the leading figure while the Archbishop, and the Mayor investigated the religious and moral contexts of the texts. Thus, they worked together to grant a license to plays both in and around London (Dutton, "Licensing" 380) and aimed at dismissing the possibility of an attack on the Anglican Church again.

Moreover, there are other instances that need to be highlighted concerning the relationship between contemporary events and censorship. For example, although the Queen willingly supported theatrical activities, theatres were eventually closed down in 1597. What can be observed behind this decision was sedition or the idea of rebellion which could not be acceptable in a period when the absolute power of the monarch was affirmed. In regard to censorship, Debora Shuger points out that "[t]he emphasis on lies and libel is a distinctive feature of Tudor Stuart high-stakes political censorship: the censorship, that is, of what the period generally termed 'scandalous' or 'seditious' libel" (15). The intention of rebellion immediately evoked agency of the individual over the state, and hence, seditious plays were subjected to severe punishment in the country which even caused the closure of theatres for a while. Clare explains that "[t]he Privy Council described in 1597 the lost play by Nashe and Jonson, *The Isle of Dogs*, as 'sedytious matter'" (9). When *The Isle of Dogs* by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson (1572-1637) was performed by Lord Pembroke's Company in 1597, the play was claimed to be scandalous because it openly denounced the English government as well as the ruler of London, the Mayor, so Jonson and the players were immediately imprisoned as a result of their seditious ideas (Thomson 4). The riotous tone of *Richard II* also afflicted the Lord Chamberlain's Men, but the reaction against Nashe and Jonson's play was more severe as it resulted in the closing of the theatres. Glynne Wickham reports on the order of the Queen in 1597 as follows:

> Her Majestie being informed that there are verie greate disorders committed in the common playhouses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages and by resorte and confluence of bad people, hathe given direction that not onlie no plaies shalbe used within London or about the citty or in any publique place during this tyme of sommer, but that also those playhouses that are erected and built only for suche purposes shalbe plucked downe, namelie the Curtayne and the Theatre nere to Shoreditch or any other within that country. (10)

This proclamation, which was clearly a nasty blow for the playmakers, manifested that the monarch exercised her power over her subjects and did not allow them to implement rebellious ideas. Considering that the proclamations were valid for temporary periods, theatres were opened again in the following year, but it has to be recognised that performances were limited to two companies this time. Only the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men, two companies established by the Queen's cousins who

were her Privy Councillors at that time, were allowed to perform, and they, too, were under thorough inspection (Dutton, *Licensing* 18).

With regard to the government's controlling mechanisms of the theatre, what remains to be mentioned is the existing conditions of this institution in the sixteenth century. In fact, public theatres were forced to be located out of the city of London as a result of the protests of the religious and city authorities. These playhouses were built out of London since 1567 with the opening of the Red Lion by John Brayne (1541-1586). Later on, more theatres such as the Theatre, the Curtain, the Rose, the Globe and the Fortune were constructed, and theatre companies supported by the nobility performed their plays out of London. Those playhouses were known as public theatres considering that they hosted large groups of people from different classes at a low-cost fee, and they were located outside the city limits. Although the theatres were out of the control of the London Mayor and the clergy, watching a play was a popular activity for the Londoners so those authorities constantly wrote petitions to the Privy Council against the playmakers because, as stated above, they associated theatrical activities with profanity, blasphemy and immorality. As the Queen and her court supported the theatre as a form of entertainment and a means of propaganda, private playhouses which were small indoor theatres were situated in London with an audience of nobles who could afford to buy high-priced tickets. Those private theatres and their companies, such as Paul's Boys, were directly associated with the Queen and the nobility. While Tilney was easily applying the courtly ideals to the private theatres, he had to inspect the works written for the public theatres. Although the text of those plays could be examined, it was hard to control performances. This was essentially a consequence of the location of those playhouses. Tiffany Stern explains that "almost all the public theatres were situated on the South Bank (the 'Bankside') of the Thames in the county of Surrey. [. . .] None of the South Bank playhouses was subject to London rules" (15). To put it differently, the presence of the public theatres out of the city meant that they were located in the periphery or in the liberties which could be described as adjacent areas very close to the city walls. Such places were in limbo considering that they were essentially under the control of the city authorities, but the control of the public theatres was limited because of their physical location. Raffield comments on this in-between state of public theatres as follows:

> In juridical terms, the geographical situation of the playhouses in the Liberties—outside the City's boundaries—meant that they inhabited a liminal space, on the threshold of established civic jurisdictions. While not exempted from the law, they were not subjected either to the full force of municipal jurisprudence. (113-114)

Those playhouses, being part of yet detached from the city, convoluted Tilney's task as he had to conduct censorship in a cauldron of different dominant groups and in the web of changing situations. More significantly, he was in charge of authorising the written texts, not performances taking place in the playhouses. Licensing was an important aspect of the Master's function to recognise the subversive context of the works which addressed large audiences in the periphery. Additionally, licensing represented courtly protection for the theatres as the playmakers who were able to have a license proved that their plays were legitimate and properly written with respect to the regulations. Tilney evaluated each play, assuming that the monarch could be the target audience. Therefore, the ideas not conforming to the courtly standards could not be approved by the Master. However, his authority was valid only before the performance so the attitudes of the players or any improvisation on stage was out of his authority.

In relation to the Master's role in issuing licenses for dramatic texts and his lack of control during performances, his censorship of satirical comments on prominent figures needs to be emphasised here because it emerged as one of the problematic issues. Bentley clarifies the Master's strife about this intricate matter: "The Master had, essentially, two problems: first, was there satire in the performance which had not been apparent in the text? and second, was the person or persons ridiculed sufficiently influential to count?" (*The Profession* 188). Taking these questions as the premise, Bentley reveals that censorship of mocking remarks about famous figures was only possible after the performances: "Because of the first difficulty, the records we have of suppression for personal satire come mostly from actions taken after performance: most of the plays had scarped past the Master" (*The Profession* 188). To illustrate this case, the Spanish ambassador's complaint in 1559 can be pinpointed. According to the ambassador, the King of Spain was mocked in some English plays, and he asked the Queen to prevent the playwrights from insulting the monarch (Read 27-28; White, *Theatre* 59). Yet it is important to understand that playwrights did not always explicitly satirise eminent people with open remarks or allusions; instead, they veiled those figures while making use of topical issues.

Shakespeare, for instance, is claimed to have attacked William Cecil (1520-1598) in his play *Love's Labour's Lost* (1597), "for urging one of his daughters on Southampton, or Oxford for his affectation of foreign mannerisms, or above all the 'school of night,' whose members had quarrelled with the Essex faction around 1593-1595" (Bevington, *Tudor Drama* 15). However, the attempt to satirise people was daring granted that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London even dictated the Master of the Revels to forbid the writers to publish satires in 1599 (Clare 82). To put the matter simply, the playwrights' satire of powerful figures was a risky endeavour in an age when satirical works in general were indeed banned.

Another line of thought on censorship is related to the regulations regarding publication. In adherence to stage censorship, there were restrictions and supervision to control an incendiary context before printing as can be observed from the prohibition on publishing satires. The strategy of the state aimed at revoking derogatory comments on the exercise of absolute authority, the order of the country and the rules of the Anglican Church. For this purpose, in the first years of the 1550s, William Cecil, William Petre and Thomas Smith were entrusted with the task of evaluating written works, including plays and giving permission for their publication (White, *Theatre* 57). The policy was strictly carried out; the Star Chamber was responsible for punishing those who printed insulting works by destroying their printing houses and imprisoning the printers in 1586 (Barroll, "The Question" 45). The Star Chamber also enforced the printers to report the number of printings, and limited printing only to London, Oxford and Cambridge (Miller 190). Upon the order of Elizabeth in 1559, the process of investigation was handled by another commission, the Stationers' Company. The role of this commission was quite similar to that of the Master of the Revels as both of them were concerned with details in relation to the written work. The members of the Stationers' Company "were subject to the linked supervision of the Privy Council and the ecclesiastical Court of High Commission" (Chambers, *William* 128). The Archbishop and bishops from the Anglican Church were involved in licensing works for printing as they were part of the Court of High Commission. After Elizabeth's death, the process was complicated as the texts of the plays for publication were examined by Sir George Buc, Tilney's assistant, in 1606, and

the previous commission did not have a role regarding the publication of plays (Dutton, "Licensing" 384).

As regards the policies of censorship after Elizabeth's death, it can be observed that similar principles were applied in addition to new requirements that the government regarded necessary. Accompanied by his nephew Sir George Buc until his death in 1610, Tilney continued censoring and licensing plays and the companies (Clare 119). Sir George Buc became the Master of the Revels after Tilney's death (Bowsher 29), and he was succeeded by Sir John Astley in 1622 who, a year later, transferred his duty to Sir Henry Herbert (Dutton, *Licensing* 5). In 1624, however, state censorship for the stage was assigned to the Lord Chamberlain. In the reign of James, censorship was practised in order to ban profanity as the use of offensive language was, for the Jacobeans, "blasphemous, unchristian, diabolical, prohibited by scripture (including by Christ's own prohibitions), discreditable and discrediting and generally iniquitous and harmful to individuals and to the commonwealth and civil life" (Gazzard 498). As swearing on stage was deemed disrespectful against God and disturbing for the devout audience, it was forbidden by the government through an act in 1606, and a fine of £10 was imposed. The prohibition of profanity was enacted in the "Acte to restraine Abuses of Players" as follows:

> For the preuenting and auoyding of the great abuse of the holy Name of God playes, Interludes, Maygames, Shewes and such like, Bee it enacted by our Soueraigne Lord the Kings Maiestie, and by the Lords Spirituall and Temporall, and Commons present Parliament assembled, and by the Authoritie of the same, That if at any times after the end of this present Session of Parliament, any person or persons, doe in any Stage-play, Interlude, Shew, Maygame, or Pageant, iestingly, and prophanely or vse the holy Name of God, or of Christ Iesus, or of the holy Ghost, or of the which are not to bee spoken but with feare and reuerence, [? he or they] Shall forfeit euery such offence by him or them committed tenne Pounds [. . .]. (Gazzard 495)

The Master of the Revels, hence, perused all plays in this light, and after 1606 published texts were even re-examined according to this act. Along with Shakespeare's plays such as *Much Ado About Nothing* (1589) and *Richard II*, Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) *Doctor Faustus* (1592) was edited pursuant to the new regulation (Clare 125-127). Moreover, Jacobean censorship was preoccupied with references to other countries, too.

As the head of the state, the King desired a peaceful foreign policy, and his wish was honoured even in the practices of censorship:

> Safeguarding diplomatic relations with foreign powers was self-evidently one of the principial concerns of censorship during the final decade of James's reign. Several plays incurred censorship – to different degrees – because in dramatising foreign matters, whether explicitly or analogically, they were perceived as jeopardising James's relations with his European allies. (Clare 194)

Accordingly, the King ordered to prohibit all works, whether plays or tracts, about French and Spanish issues (Clare 174); *Marquis d'Ancre* by an unknown playwright about the murder of a French noble in 1617 and Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher's (1579-1625) *Philaster* (1608-1610) about the Sicilian King's alliance with the Spanish Prince in 1612 were heavily censored due to their political contexts (Clare 194-195, 205-209).

Having discussed the scope of censorship, it is relevant to exemplify how this practice shaped Shakespeare's published plays. To illustrate, Shakespeare's *Richard II* can be regarded as the most important of licensed plays on stage and in print. After the Essex rebellion, the deposition scene was removed from the text as the Queen was disturbed by the analogy drawn between herself and Richard II in the Quartos of 1597 and 1598; only in 1608, the original scene was added to the text since Elizabeth was no longer alive (Bentley, *The Profession* 168). Moreover, Shakespeare's history plays, as in the case of his other plays, have different editions. Clare argues that his plays, such as *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI* (1588-1592), were subjected to censorship in different editions when they were written due to their historical context and their association with the present monarch (60). Likewise, some dialogues of the Archbishop of York were omitted from *2 Henry IV* in the text of 1600 due to the idea of rebellion present in the play and the fear of insulting the Anglican Church (Clare 7-8). Additionally, Shakespeare revised one of his characters' name in one of his plays. In *1 Henry IV*, John Falstaff was based on a real figure, Sir John Oldcastle, and called Oldcastle in the first version of the play in 1587. However, Oldcastle was a notorious figure because he had rebelled against King Henry V and he was known as a heretic, so the presentation of this character to the sixteenth-century audience was problematic, and the playwright had to change his name and renamed him John Falstaff

(Corbin and Sedge 9-10). Another play by Shakespeare censored on stage and in print was *Hamlet* (1599-1601) because the references to Denmark were considered offensive during James's reign:

> Manuscript copies of the 1605 quarto of the play containing playhouse annotations by Shakespeare show lines omitted from the second scene of the second act, in which Hamlet tells his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that Denmark is a prison. By this time, King James ruled England joined with his consort, the Danish-born Queen Anne. (Sova 110)

Although all of these plays were performed and published, there was a seditious play, *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, to which Shakespeare contributed by writing a few pages. The play was originally written by Anthony Munday (1560-1633) towards the end of the sixteenth century, but Tilney immediately disallowed its performance and publication; the play dealt with a topical issue of the time in reference to Thomas More's life, and Tilney anticipated that it might cause turmoil in the country (Streitberger, *Edmond* 45).

It has to be stated that Shakespeare was never arrested for or questioned about his plays thanks to his strategies in writing, and he did not even get into trouble after the rebellion of Essex. However, the restrictions of censorship seriously troubled Shakespeare's contemporaries at that time. This fact can be evidenced in Shakespeare's contemporaries who were severely punished and/or their works were censored. John Hayward (1564-1627), for instance, was arrested with the claim of encouraging the analogy between Richard II and Elizabeth in his work entitled *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie IV* (1599). In fact, this work was initially issued a licence without any opposition. However, when Hayward later dedicated it to Lord Essex (Auchter 121), the trouble started. After this dedication, the work posed a problem for Archbishop Whitgift who recognised an affinity between Henry IV and Essex so the Queen regarded the work as a means to criticise herself (Auchter 121). Hayward attempted to amend his mistake, but this was an unsuccessful endeavour: "At Easter Hayward published a second edition with an 'Epistle apologetical', which at Whitsun was called in and burned, while Hayward was confined to the Tower" (Patterson, *Shakespeare* 78). Schoenbaum explains that Elizabeth even ordered to have Hayward executed, but he was only imprisoned for a while when Francis Bacon persuaded the Queen, and he was later released (89). Yet, after the

rebellion, Hayward was arrested for the second time and kept in the Tower of London until James's accession.

To take another instance, Ben Jonson, unlike Shakespeare, was notorious in regard that he was in trouble with the censorship of his plays. As part of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, Shakespeare can be claimed to have had a strong connection with the state. Yet this was not the case for Jonson; he and the actors of the Lord Pembroke's Men were arrested when they performed *The Isle of Dogs* as the play was said to satirise the Queen (Thomson 4). Likewise, his other play entitled *Sejanus* (1603) was also called a seditious work and against the principles of censorship owing to the historian character Cordus's interest in rebellion and Tibernus's despotism in the play (Clare 9). Therefore, Jonson was interrogated about this play. Furthermore, he was forced to omit the scene in his epilogue to *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599) in print form where he used Elizabeth as a character with the courtier Macilente addressing her (Clare 11). Jonson was also questioned or imprisoned because of his other works such as "the epilogue to *Poetaster* (cut in 1602), *Eastward Ho!* [1615], [. . .], *Epicoene* [1609], *The Devil Is an Ass* [1616], *The Magnetic Lady* [1632] and *A Tale of a Tub* [1633] [which] all suffered some measure of censorship" (Burt, *Licensed* 3). Like Jonson, Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), another playwright from James's reign, suffered from censorship when his play entitled *A Game at a Chess* (1624) was licensed by the Master of the Revels, but suppressed after its performance, and Middleton escaped imprisonment by writing an epigram to the King (Burt, "Thomas" 182). This play was placed under rigid censorship because James did not want any playwright to negatively represent foreign countries in their works.

It is clear that secular drama in England developed during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods under the shadow of censorship which led Shakespeare to develop strategies against the oppressive practices of control. Hence, English drama flourished despite the intricate relationships between the dramatists and the control mechanisms of the state. Annabel Patterson highlights an important matter concerning the effects of censorship on playwrights. She puts forward an important argument in the following sentence:

> The 1559 proclamation pointed not only to a new era of local (municipal) supervision and jurisdiction over the theaters, but also to a new hermeneutics of the drama, in

> which playwrights were silently instructed to make plays that could indeed be 'tolerated' (one of the prevailing terms in the lexicon of control), and to develop their own prudential strategies of representation. (*Shakespeare* 20)

To some degree, playwrights were silenced through the enforcements of the government and the Anglican Church. In order to receive a license for their plays, the two companies of the Elizabethan period, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men, survived by obeying the rules of censorship. As mentioned above, Shakespeare responded to this web of power relations and pinpointed his emotional state in one of his sonnets, "Sonnet 66: Tired with all these," saying "art made tongue-tied by authority" (9). His view of censorship became most evident to the reader only with this comment as he was also silenced by the circumstances. In another sonnet, "Sonnet 98: From you have I been absent," Shakespeare's last line "[a]s with your shadow I with these did play" (14) can be also exploited to illustrate censorship as it states that the playwright produced all of his works under the shadow of censorship. What remains to be seen is that Shakespeare accomplished success thanks to the methods he used in order to avoid censorship and punishment. Greenblatt confirms that Shakespeare had to develop certain strategies to deal with serious issues in his plays, and he "thought more clearly about the issues that preoccupied his world when he confronted them not directly but from an oblique angle" (*Tyrant* 3). It is possible to say that observing what happened to his contemporaries like Ben Jonson, Shakespeare strategically avoided his works being censored and escaped from punishment. Although Shakespeare could not openly criticise his age, he developed his own strategies of criticism or participated in "a new hermeneutics of the drama" in Patterson's words (*Shakespeare* 20). It was crucial for him to maintain a courtly standard to continue his career as a dramatist; but when his methods are analysed, his works unfolded critical points about the monarchy and other institutions by creating different levels of ambiguity.

Before moving onto the claim about Shakespeare's use of liminality as his means of criticism, the playwright's other strategies of criticism and some characteristics of his playwriting to avoid censorship will be introduced. Accordingly, as recognised by Shakespearean scholars, Shakespeare's first method is his use of other works to create his own. As a matter of fact, most of Shakespeare's plays are based on old stories, tales or

works. He borrows the story line from other writers, but he gives voice to his own ideas and adds psychological dimensions to his characters. This act of using other works or stories was common among the writers of his age, regarding Sarah A. Kelen's suggestion that "[f]or medieval and Renaissance authors, writing very frequently meant rewriting. Some adaptations and revisions obscure their own origins, but some openly reveal their intertextual affiliations" (1). Yet Shakespeare's use of other texts can be regarded as one of his strategies to avoid censorship since he accredits the source of his play to another piece of work and hints that he has not invented something new. In this regard, he disclaims the responsibility against possible charges of censorship. Patterson notes in a similar fashion that it is censorship which "encouraged the use of historical or other uninvented texts, such as translations from the classics, which both allowed an author to limit his authorial responsibility for the text [. . .] and, paradoxically, provided an interpretive mechanism" (*Censorship* 65). Making use of old texts, therefore, is one of Shakespeare's methods for being on a safe ground, but he thoroughly transforms his sources in his revisiting.

As for his use of old texts, it is known that Shakespeare is familiar with the translations of Latin works; he is even claimed to have read Plautus's plays and Virgil (Muir 4-5). Arguably, his education at grammar school, too, provided him with a background to read in Latin through which it is claimed that he came to know the classics and classical mythology (Martindale and Martindale 6-7). Other than Latin and Greek sources, Shakespeare is recognised for his working on native sources such as Raphael Holinshed's (1529-1580) *Chronicles* (1577). In writing his plays, he appropriates the historical sources, mythological stories and the works of his predecessors and contemporaries. Geoffrey Bullough's series of *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* in eight volumes apparently testifies to the richness of the playwright's sources. For instance, in the composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600), he refers to various sources. Bullough lists and explains the correlations between Shakespeare's play and a variety of texts as the playwright's source for this play. Accordingly, it can be observed that Geoffrey Chaucer's (c.1340s-1400) *Canterbury Tales* (1387) with respect to "The Knightes Tale," Plutarch's (46 AD-119 AD) *The Life of Theseus* (translated by Sir Thomas North in 1579), Ovid's (43 BC-18 AD?) *Metamorphoses* (originally composed

in 8 AD and later translated by Arthur Golding in 1575), *Huon of Bordeaux* (translated by Lord Berners in 1534), Reginald Scot's (1538-1599) *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (1573), *The Tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe* and Clement Robinson's (?-1584) *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584) were exploited by the playwright (Bullough 1:367-422). As another example, Shakespeare's *Richard II* is probably based on sources like Edward Hall's (1498-1547) *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548), Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the anonymous text of *Thomas of Woodstock* and the indirect allusions to *A Myrroure for Magistrates* (1559), *The Chronicle of Froissart* (translated by Lord Berners from 1523 to 1525), *Chronicque de la Traïson et mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* (translated by Benjamin Williams) and Samuel Daniel's (1562-1619) *The First Fowre Bookes of the Civile Wars* (1595) (Bullough 3:353-491).

Although Shakespeare depends on such texts for his plays, his appropriation is not dull because he does not tell the same story as in the original source. On the contrary, he processes the earlier texts carefully and brings out his own versions after this process. In his version of King Lear's story, for instance, Shakespeare refuses the happy ending in a way that he "engages and responds to the highly reformational and at times Calvinistic tendencies of the source play" in *King Lear* (1605) (Lynch 2). Likewise, he also exploits historical documents; when the chronicles or documents are compared to his plays, his abuse of the source materials becomes evident (Nicoll and Nicoll v, x). That is to say, Shakespeare subverts his source texts while reworking with them. Therefore, Shakespeare's use of intertextuality can be related to his subtle criticism because "Shakespeare borrows selectively and artfully from his sources, but also reacts against his sources—often by developing and expanding upon contrary suggestions already present in his sources" (Lynch 2). Earlier texts are shaped by the playwright in line with his point of critique so they help him to veil his critical comments and protect himself against the strict regulations.

Secondly, Shakespeare chooses distant settings in terms of place and time to create ambiguity and avoid censorship in his works. In essence, Shakespeare's different locations may be attributed to the universal aspect of his works. When Shakespeare

"recreated, refashioned and re-modeled the myths, traditions, and literary conventions of diverse countries and cultures, he has also become, in turn, the national poet of a number of other nations and cultural identities, suiting the exigencies and concerns of differing historical and regional realities" (Marrapodi 3-4). In the circumstances of his times, this may be associated with a fascination with the other or the exotic. On the other hand, his disassociation from his society or English sites is deemed relevant to his method of veiling his critical point of view. Greenblatt claims that "Shakespeare was a master of this distancing; if he had a sympathetic understanding of country customs, he also had ways of showing that they were no longer his native element" (*Will* 40). To put it another way, Shakespeare's material is based on his period, the real figures from the court and from Elizabethan or Jacobean politics, but he reflects them by alienating his material in a distant setting and making subtle allusions to the reigning monarch or contemporary issues. This can be traced through Shakespeare's locating his plays in the settings of other countries, his working with Roman history and his making use of the life stories of old English monarchs.

Shakespeare's usage of distant spatial settings draws attention to his strategic method of criticism. Concentrating on the distant settings of his works, the use of the Italian cities comes to the fore to evidence this point. In the early modern period, Italy was actually the palette of new ideas, aesthetic values and classical tradition in that the writings about Italy and translations of Italian works were popular in England and triggered the imagination of many writers (Marrapodi 2). More than these positive qualities, however, Italy was rendered with its dark atmosphere in regard to its court "as synonym of mischief, poison and corruption [which] is another fundamental issue in all Italianate Stuart drama" (Marrapodi 4). Shakespeare makes use of the Italian cities in his works, using them even in his titles, such as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1589-1593), *Othello, the Moor of Venice* (1604) and *The Merchant of Venice* (1605). Agostino Lombardo pinpoints the playwright's motive for choosing Italian settings:

> Shakespeare's Italy is a country in which the 'real' features – social, historical, geographical, political, cultural – are inextricably intertwined with the imaginary. His Italy is the product of the written and oral traditions, and of the imagination, and is itself a mask behind which are hidden the features and problems of London and England. (144)

The strand of this argument indicates that Shakespeare covers his critical points by mirroring England in an Italian setting. Accordingly, the playwright, for example, creates an analogy between Venice and London in relation to their merchantry and economic policies in *The Merchant of Venice*. This play evokes serious questions about the rise of capitalism in England. Although the Jews were merchants rather than usurers in Venice in the sixteenth century, Shakespeare uses Shylock to offer an adverse comment on the early form of capitalism in England (Cohen, "*The Merchant*" 770). Walter Cohen sheds light on the play by stating that in *The Merchant of Venice*, "Shakespeare is criticizing merely the worst aspects of an emerging economic system, rather than the system itself. In this respect, moreover, he deviates from the antiusury tracts and from English reality alike" ("*The Merchant*" 768). Only by using a distant setting, Shakespeare was able to criticise the new economic policies that England embraced in order to progress and revealed the negative sides of such policies in his use of the Venetian atmosphere.

Moreover, Italy was associated with corruption and vice (Mahler 51-52) so it provided Shakespeare with grounds to refer to the political state of his country. To be more precise, it can be stated that the playwright used Italy, a setting to deal with corruption, as a substitute for England. By setting his plays in different Italian cities, he commented on the corruption and socio-political problems of England, hence avoided censorship and punishment because he was seemingly dealing with a foreign setting. *Othello*, for instance, presents the Venetian state as a fictional equivalent to pose ominous power of the sovereign and problematises the idea of absolute authority in the portrait of Othello when his "arbitrary sovereign power as a deconstructive lever [. . .] undermine[s] the functional claim of the civic republican order on its citizens and subjects" (Gil 72). Accordingly, foreign state power becomes a medium and a fictional veil to voice political dissent for Shakespeare. To take a further example, Sicily in *The Winter's Tale* (1609-1610) is also the seat of tyranny with the king, Leontes, in that his despotic manner is manifested not only in his sovereignty but also in his familial relationship with his wife. Leontes's extreme jealousy is a sign of his deteriorating psychological state, and the play depicts that Sicily is governed by this king who cannot control his excessive feelings. His jealousy and concurring madness disrupt his position, as Bradin Cormack suggests: "The opacity of marks an alienation from the possibility of making the world legible through

common speech and common understanding, both as a psychological phenomenon (he is jealous, mad) and, in a perverse extension [. . .], as a political one (he is king)" (491). Moreover, Leontes's court in Sicily is juxtaposed with the pastoral life depicted in Bohemia, and this juxtaposition suggests a political criticism because, in the usage of these two settings, there is a contrast between the atrocity of the state and happiness in nature.

Furthermore, it is not only the Italian setting that Shakespeare strategically uses to put a mirror to criticise his own country. Along with Italian cities, in *Measure for Measure* (1603-1604), for example, Vienna is appropriated as a distant setting in the discussion of the absolute power of the monarch and the legal justice system. In the period when James "said that his will was law" (Gil 44), Shakespeare's play advocates the idea of an independent system for law over the monarch, but it displays that this justice system rests on the ruler who chooses to enact it (Gil 44-45). Therefore, such locations remote from England in general function "as a cover for political dissent, or satire against social and political life in early modern England" (Marrapodi 3).

Moreover, the playwright's use of distant setting with the aim of critique has a temporal dimension, too. As a case in point, Shakespeare's attention strays to the appropriation of the distant temporality, the past, in his recollection of Roman history. Indebted to the historical tie between the Romans and the British, he attempts to mythicise England after ancient Rome: "Being the seat of the court, [London] is also defining itself symbolically as the centre of the State, as demonstrated by the analogy between ancient Rome and London in the Roman plays" (Locatelli 71). Therefore, the stories of the Roman Empire were used by the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights, and Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, explored the concern with the power of the ancients and draws parallels between the past world and his age:

> These Roman tragedies by leading playwrights of the period may be regarded as Renaissance explorations of alterity which also demonstrate the fragility of power as it rests on public demonstrations of torment to sustain itself. [. . .] [T]hese plays [. . .] explicitly condemn[. . .] violence as a mark of the Roman state in decline while also suggesting affinities with the Renaissance world, Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher also implicate the audience within the condemnation levelled at decadent Others. (Smith 65)

In other words, Shakespeare revisits the ancient and mythic past with his keen interest to allude to his own circumstances in early modern England. His artistic creativity enables him to protect his works against the authorities of censorship. To bring a clear focus on the dramatist's intricate strategy, the sense of distance can be related to his persuasion of the reader/audience to their distinction from the Romans:

> The detachment, together with the lack of inwardness in the presentation of historical figures, creates a greater distance between audience and characters than in tragedy as defined by Aristotle. We do not so much find the characters 'like us' and feel pity for them as watch them from outside as it were, if with a rapt and fascinated attention. Many have said [. . .], 'it is we who are Hamlet', fewer 'it is we who are Coriolanus or Antony'. The sense of distance is reinforced by a certain measure of irony which seldom if ever turns to sarcasm, or implies any general disenchantment with antiquity. In all these ways Roman society is seen as 'other', an object of contemplation rather than of direct involvement. (Martindale and Martindale 144)

Shakespeare assures that he introduces a foreign world moving back in time and forges a sense of otherness in the Roman past. Therefore, he obeys the rules of censorship and does not have trouble with the authorities because he keeps "a strategic distance from the present moment" (Greenblatt, *Tyrant* 5). To demonstrate, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) as a topical play corresponds to the political problem of the succession issue towards the end of the Elizabethan period. Irving Ribner notes this parallelism and claims that Brutus's attitude in the play reflects the anxiety of the English people:

> Brutus' fears, we must conclude, far from being foolish, are in Tudor terms, well grounded, and they are probably Shakespeare's fears as well. The succession issue was perhaps the most vital political problem in England when Julius Caesar was written in 1599, and the possibility that a powerful general with no legitimate claim, but with support of the rabble, might make a bid for the throne was a fear not lightly to be discounted. (13-14)

The play, hence, offers a dark scenario about attaining the crown through murder and upon an illegal claim. It fulfils a function by sending a political message about the possible troubles awaiting the English kingdom. Thus, Roman history enables Shakespeare to detach himself from the Elizabethan context and to draw a connection between English history and Roman history to comment on the succession problem. More interestingly, the dramatist subverts the original Roman stories in a way that they refer to current problems. In *Coriolanus* (1609), for example, the cause of the problem is a debt law which is the main conflict between Roman citizens and nobles; Shakespeare borrows

this idea from Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (translated by Thomas North in 1579). Thus, Shakespeare adopts a recent event from his day in his reference to the scarcity of corn which provoked rebellions in Warwickshire and some other counties in 1607 (Martindale and Martindale 150). The hint to the riots familiar to the reader/audience of the time points out that Shakespeare employed Roman history to specify the problems of his time. This kind of familiarity is also developed with his anachronisms or current references such as the use of the costumes of the late sixteenth century in *Titus Andronicus* (1596) or Brutus's reading a book in *Julius Caesar* (Martindale and Martindale 124).

Shakespeare's labour to voice his critical remarks and avoid censorship can be traced also in his writing historical plays in which he recounts the stories of the English kings. As can be observed from the troublesome staging of *Richard II*, this was the most dangerous case for Shakespeare with respect to Elizabeth's discontent with the analogies constructed between herself and other monarchs. Such affinities are even highlighted in *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584) which was the work of an unidentified writer set in the Elizabethan time. This work actually compares Elizabeth with Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI, neither of whom were strong sovereigns and were replaced by more powerful ones. David Bevington points out the uneasiness of the Elizabethan court upon this work's criticism of the Queen and her courtiers, particularly the Earl of Leicester: "Leicester, in this analogy, epitomized the parasitical frivolities of Gaveston and the Spencers, Mowbray, or the Earl of Suffolk. Elizabeth and her courtiers could hardly be unfamiliar with the analogy and its implications. Her closest counsellors were anxious not to be viewed as favorites" (*Tudor Drama* 11). In this context, it is fair to suggest that the plays on these monarchs needed to be tacitly handled by the playwrights. The destruction of the Queen's public image, as previously hinted at in *Richard II*, is of utmost importance to understand the delicate matter.

It is clear that as long as the allusions were hidden under a fictional veiling, Shakespeare did not get into trouble. Moreover, it has to be recognised that the writing of history plays was encouraged to create a national consciousness during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. However, it is important to note that Shakespeare's history plays "peer through

the medium of time into the past, seeing its contents with as much clarity and accuracy as contemporary knowledge could afford; and they bear the imprint of their own present, reflected on their surface along with images of the past" (Holderness, *Shakespeare* 18). In other words, the historical events experienced in the times of the previous monarchs were reconstructed drawing on the dramatist's own ideology and concerns. To exemplify, *Henry V* (1599) provides a critical vision of the Anglican Church as it supports war rather than peace when Henry V insists on fighting against France (Holderness, *Shakespeare* 146). In addition to the criticism of the Anglican Church, this play is known to be placed between Hayward's imprisonment and Essex's rebellion. According to Patterson, Henry V is likened to Essex in Shakespeare's retelling of the historical events; for instance, the Chorus refers to Essex's coming from Ireland in the scene where Henry gains victory at Agincourt ("'Henry V'"165). Sarah J. Scannell, likewise, pinpoints this correlation by stating that "*Henry V* offers insight into how the people of London might have perceived Essex, his relationship with the queen, and the war in Ireland" (28). The lack of the Chorus parts in the quarto of the text alludes to Elizabeth's later anxiety about Essex's plot. Additionally, Shakespeare's riot scene from *2 Henry VI,* (1592) corresponds to Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450, but this account of the event does not depict the rebels as peasants of the Middle Ages, but as the craftsmen from the Renaissance (Wilson, *Will* 26-31). When his contemporary references are taken into account, Shakespeare's works become topical. Nevertheless, he did not have any difficulty with governmental censorship because he did not openly pinpoint the problematic issues but vaguely commented on them by creating ambiguities in his own way.

In addition to those people mentioned above, Shakespeare represents some other familiar and contemporary people of his age in his plays, as well. In other words, he skilfully appropriates his current time and the recent age by playing with the dynamics of ambiguity in his works. For example, Shakespeare's source of inspiration might be his own acquaintances such as Stephen Sly from Stratford-upon-Avon in the character of Sly from *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590-1591) (Greenblatt, *Will* 68). His touch of the real is evident from the names of his characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598); they were not foreign to the reader/audience of that time:

> Navarre (Henry IV), Berowne (Biron, Henry IV's general), Dumaine (Du Mayenne, brother of the Guise), Longaville (Longueville, Governor of Normandy), and perhaps Armado (Armada) and Moth (Marquis de la Mothe, Henry's amiable diplomat) were unquestionably names in the news during the early 1590's. (Bevington, *Tudor Drama* 15)

Thus, Shakespeare created a topical play in reference to the popular figures of the time, made serious comments on the scholarly interest of the court and criticised the fragility of moral values and the pursuit of intellectual ideals as they were taken to extremes. In *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), this topicality can also be detected since Shakespeare's source of inspiration for the male protagonist is thought to be Lord Burghley, William Cecil. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare is said to have satirised Cecil, Elizabeth's chief advisor at that time, upon an event lived at the time. Algernon Charles Swinburne clarifies the satirical point that

> more direct light was thrown upon the subject by a passage in which 'that kind of fruit that maids call medlars when they laugh alone' is mentioned in connection with a wish of Romeo's regarding his mistress. This must evidently be taken to refer to some recent occasion on which the policy of Lord Burghley (possibly in the matter of the Anjou marriage) had been rebuked in private by the Maiden Queen, 'his mistress,' as meddling, laughable, and fruitless. (277-278)

As can be observed, Shakespeare even makes use of very minute details about the people and events of his time. His construction of characters, hence, depends on reality so it is possible to suggest that the playwright has a keen eye regarding the current issues, carefully observes his contemporaries and exploits them in his plays. What is at stake here is that Shakespeare strategically makes use of uncertainty to veil his own critical remarks.

In the discussion of Shakespeare's strategical tools for criticism, another subversive means used by the playwright is his formation of ambiguous cases through his use of language and plural voices. In effect, the creation of ambiguity is functional as the case in question remains in obscurity in a way that Shakespeare does not appear to take sides, but he offers multiple perspectives. Even John Keats (1795-1821), a Romantic poet, describes Shakespeare's skill in creating ambiguities when he declares him as a "man [who] is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts" (79). Similarly, the scholars' perception of Shakespeare teems with the emphasis on the playwright's mastery

of ambiguity. For Steven Mullaney, ambivalence is not unfamiliar to the early modern playwrights as it helps them present a critique of the problematic issues in their works (*The Place* 31). Ernest William Talbert draws attention to the kind of ambiguity as "a purposeful artistic ambiguity that would not only juxtapose but also fuse opposites" (qtd. in Wells, *Shakespeare's Politics* 189). Ambiguity is an inventive force used by the sixteenth-century playwrights for Patterson who, as stated earlier, calls this strategy "the hermeneutics of censorship" (*Censorship* 18) and further explains the relationship between ambiguity and censorship:

> I offer, in other words, an account of *functional* ambiguity, in which the indeterminacy inveterate to language was fully and knowingly exploited by authors and readers alike (and among those readers, of course, were those who were most interested in control). Functional ambiguity, as a concept, frees us somewhat from more absolutely sceptical conclusions about indeterminacy in language and its consequences for the reader or critic [. . .]. Indeed, what this study of the hermeneutics of censorship shows happening over and over again is that authors who build ambiguity into their works have no control over what happens to them later. (*Censorship* 18)

Ambiguity arises in the works of the playwrights when they have to comply with the regulations yet simultaneously voice their own ideas. Eventually, ambiguity becomes functional and powerful considering that Shakespeare's plays have always been a matter of ardent discussions as a result of their puzzling features.

In Shakespeare, ambiguity initially occurs in the use of language. His play with words and sentence structures creates obscure moments. W. R. Elton argues that "Shakespeare's drama provided an appropriate conflict structure: a dialectic of ironies and ambivalences, avoiding in its complex movement and multi-voiced dialogue the simplifications of direct statement and reductive resolution" ("Shakespeare" 32). The creative power of language emanates from its elusive essence and Shakespeare's skilful use shows his mastery of language to create ambiguity. Pun, imagery, allegory, verbal irony and oxymoron are the devices that he frequently employs. Dilogy, which is the use of obscure words or statements, can be identified in Shakespeare's plays, as well. As Isabel de la Cruz exemplifies, the words "lie" in *Richard II* and "intrinsicate" in *Antony and Cleopatra* are ambiguous (34). Shakespeare creates a pun with the word "lie" while he uses all possible meanings of the latter word in the related dialogue (de la Cruz 34-35). Thus, Shakespeare

makes obscure statements by playing with words so the meaning becomes unclear in these works. This kind of obscurity may distort the meaning, too. For instance, "while glorying in the sheer verbal creativeness of a Falstaff or a Cleopatra, Shakespeare may well also have remembered the undertow of suspicion of metaphors" (Ewbank 63). Thus, this kind of obscurity plays an important role in the plays because it enables Shakespeare to construct a dichotomy between appearance and reality through his words. On the one hand, his words appear to praise a particular person or situation. On the other hand, his use of complex devices seems to enable him to defame or criticise the character or event at hand. Shakespeare's uncertainties, paradoxes and contradictions are functional regarding that his skilful use of language is his strategy to add ambiguity and articulate his critical opinions in disguise.

While ambiguity in language suggests Shakespeare's rhetoric skills, uncertainty enables him to offer plural perspectives which can be regarded as a medium for political criticism in his plays. Oppositional states and ideas are juxtaposed in his works, which set a blurred ground and make it difficult to grasp the intended meaning. Chris Fitter underlines this fact, stating that "Shakespearean plurality of perspective was the brute and bloodstained fact of state censorship" (*Radical* 31-32). Then, Fitter further argues:

> In the period when Philip Stubbes lost his right hand to a meat cleaver for impugning Elizabeth's marital plans, and Thomas Kyd was put to tortures which hastened his death for having shared rooms with the 'atheist' Christopher Marlowe, 'ambiguity' on foundational issues was not, as today, a matter of quietist complexity, but of active political dissent, a conscious destabilisation of official narratives. (Fitter, *Radical* 32)

That is to say, Shakespeare needs to remain obscure while dealing with problematic political issues in his plays. In this context, however, Shakespeare's ambiguous presentation of conflicting points of view may raise a question about his political agenda. In this perspective, Thomas P. Anderson's term "fugitive politics" can be related to Shakespeare's strategy of ambiguity in order to avoid censorship and punishment. Anderson's idea can be clarified in his own words as follows: "The word 'fugitive' might imply a place for politics in Shakespeare that his plays and their characters somehow escape, a boundary or proper scene for the political – and that Shakespeare's radicalism is his rejection of this proper place for a world elsewhere" (1). Seen in this light,

Shakespeare's ambiguous attitude towards politics comes to the fore as he does not have one explicit perspective. Hence, the fusion of the contrasts and the sense of uncertainty are elements of pluralism. The character of Falstaff is a case in point when, in the two parts of *Henry IV*, the atmosphere of the historical play is reconsidered. Shakespeare fuses the serious atmosphere of the play with a sense of carnival that Falstaff is associated with. In contrast to the general mood of the play, this memorable character "performs the function [. . .] of carnival" (Holderness, "Henry IV" 154). Falstaff actually opposes the order and authority of the state so he offers a great challenge throughout the play. According to Graham Holderness, Falstaff's "attitude to authority is always parodic and satirical: he mocks authority, flouts power, responds to the pressures of social duty and civic obligation" ("'Henry IV'" 154). While there is an attempt to create order and achieve stability in the play, Falstaff goes against the authority. That is to say, Shakespeare changes the historical course and order with an oppositional figure and amalgamates different perspectives so he blurs the boundaries between order/anarchy and fact/fiction. This can be an example of Shakespeare's presentation of juxtapositional situations and, hence, multiple perspectives through which he offers ambiguity to the reader, audience and critics. On this basis, it is evident that Shakespeare purposefully evades clear distinctions to avoid censorship. In short, Shakespeare deals with the regulations by using different strategies such as his working with old texts, his use of distant settings and his exploration of ambiguity; however, as a tool for further criticism liminality will be focused upon in this dissertation.[4]

Also of importance is the issue of Shakespeare's own ambiguous position in the world of the theatre which has placed the playwright in the centre of controversy. As can be observed, Shakespeare could not overtly challenge the monarchy and its court if he were to survive and earn a living as a playwright. As he was also in the market of commercial theatre business, he had to depend on patronage and write according to the regulations of

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[4] In fact, Shakespeare makes use of ambiguities in various ways throughout his career. The theme of appearance versus reality can be easily detected in all of his works. He plays with the twin characters to complicate his plot as in *Comedy of Errors* (1594) and *Twelfth Night* (1602). He also works with the idea of fluid identity in terms of gender when the female characters disguise themselves. While such situations create obscurity, the playwright's use of ambiguity will only be limited to his language and veiling of political ideas in this chapter of the dissertation.

censorship. That is to say, his works were shaped by the requirements of the state and the demands of the audience which consisted of people from all classes and different backgrounds. Therefore, Shakespeare was caught between the court and ordinary people because he needed people to watch his plays to earn more and depended on the nobility to protect himself. Patterson argues that "Shakespeare's own situation as a member of the Chamberlain's company would situate him somewhere *between* the court and amateur popular theatricals" (*Shakespeare* 58). On the one hand, the taste of Shakespeare's audience determined what he wrote for the theatre. On the other hand, he reflected his own political ideas in the distorted mirror of his plays. Raffield claims that "there [were] unmistakable parallels between the political ideas expressed therein and the juristic arguments in the wider sphere of the late-Elizabethan legal institution, concerning the direction of the English State" (9). Although Shakespeare never attempted to destroy the political order in the country, his plays intricately criticised current political issues and the monarchical ideology. This makes Shakespeare's position problematic among scholars because his attitude towards authority cannot be clearly identified. For this reason, some critics, like Edmond Malone, believe that Shakespeare's "tender mind was probably impressed with a sense of loyalty" (Malone 154), but, for others, "[t]he apparent orthodoxy of Shakespeare's plays is attributable to the censorship, not to the dramatist's natural loyalty" (Bate 78). As Shakespeare's position cannot be clearly defined, it is possible to regard him as a liminal figure who lingers between these two positions. His liminality leads the playwright to deal with this in-between state in different ways. Therefore, it is understandable for him to construct liminal characters, actions, places and times in his works.

As this study employs the concept of liminality in Shakespeare's plays as a significant tool for criticism, it is now worth laying down the foundations of the term and its context. To begin with the definition, liminality, broadly conceived, refers to in-between situations, transition or passage. The term derives from *limen* in Latin which means threshold and indicates a kind of transition (Larson 519). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, liminal is defined as "[o]f or pertaining to a 'limen' or 'threshold'" ("Liminal"). In its literal meaning, threshold signifies a "[b]order, limit (of a region); the line which one crosses in entering" as well as "the beginning of a state or action, outset,

opening" ("Threshold"). Therefore, liminality can be associated with being on the threshold and in an intermediate state.

Turning now to the background of the term, one may begin by considering the concept of liminality which emerged in anthropological studies. Indeed, the term was initially coined by Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) in his work entitled *The Rites of Passage* (1908). This work deals with van Gennep's observations about the Algerian Kabyle people and their rituals or ceremonies taking place during life crises that individuals experience. The course of life forces individuals to take on new roles, change, metamorphose and move from one status to another, childhood to adulthood, young age to old age and, finally, life to death. The turning points in an individual's life such as birth, pregnancy, death, marriage or puberty can be accounted as examples of such rituals or ceremonies which are tinged with crises. As a matter of fact, ritual "functions as a mechanism for mediating changes of status or the transferral of authority" (Burden 13), and van Gennep applies the term while referring to the ceremonies at moments of change. In tribes, such ceremonies are of utmost significance as the members of tribes experience the turning points of their lives in the symbolic actions carried out during the rituals. After providing an extensive analysis of different rituals, van Gennep comes up with the concept of rites of passage to illustrate the rituals in the time of a change or transition. He explains that the phases of an individual's life are made up of transitions "from one age to another and from one occupation to another [. . .] from group to group and from one social situation to the next" (3). Such transitions are accompanied by the rites of passage through which van Gennep refers to the significant changes in terms of age, social status or occupation in one's life. According to van Gennep's study, the rites of passage have three subcategories: rites of separation, transition rites and rites of incorporation. Also, these rites are respectively named preliminal rites, liminal rites and postliminal rites (van Gennep 11). This structure is universal, and these rites are used by different societies to demonstrate changes (Thomassen, *Liminality* 3). Apparently, liminality occurs in the transition rites as suggested by the literal meaning of the term.

Before explaining liminality in detail, it is necessary to piece together the rites of separation and incorporation to have a clear idea about van Gennep's classification. In

the rites of separation, an individual leaves his/her social environment or status as in funerals. Separation, a preliminal rite, signifies “a de-coupling or break from the world that is being departed from” (Stenner 176). The process of separation, as in other stages, can be detected through certain symbols or symbolic actions. Van Gennep draws attention to the act of leaving, stating that “the acts of embarking and disembarking, of entering a vehicle or a litter, and of mounting a horse to take a trip are often accompanied by rites of separation at the time of departure” (23). Therefore, the act of leaving initiates the preliminal phase in the rites of passage. The rites of separation also include a break away from family, lover, friends or a country. In this respect, separation turns into detachment from the ordinary course of life and even social norms and structures. On the contrary, the last stage of the tripartite structure, namely the rites of incorporation, stands for a reintegration into the social system when “the neophytes are returned from liminality to the world of legal and customary practices and usages, the world of ‘social structures’” (Turner, *Blazing* 133). In the rites of incorporation, the individual gains a new position, name or status and embraces a role in the social structure again. To clarify this stage, Miri Rubin’s examples can be listed: “The last stage, that of incorporation, includes cleansing, receipt of new clothes, the licence to marry and re-birth as a new person with a new name” (3). Therefore, it should be noted that the person changes after the intermediate stage and achieves a new identity: “In the final stage of the rite of passage the initiand is symbolically (and also physically) reincorporated into society, but then as a different person: the child has become an adult, the novice a proper member of the group” (Viljoen and van der Merwe 11). The rituals symbolising reunion such as the ceremonies of eating together (van Gennep 20, 29), marriages and achieving a name (van Gennep 63) can be examples of the rites of incorporation.

It will now be helpful to review liminality in this tripartite structure. It turns out that liminality can be observed in the transitional phase as it occurs between separation and incorporation rites. At this stage, the person finds him/herself in an obscure and ambiguous position and oscillates on the threshold after leaving his/her familiar circumstances. Liminality can be identified during “the transition from one state to another [. . .] giving up the old life and ‘turning over a new leaf’” (van Gennep 183). For van Gennep, any physical or symbolic situation which indicates a change can be related

to the concept of liminality. Accordingly, crossing boundaries or passing through a door symbolically represents the liminal phase. Getting pregnant, marrying, mourning and remaining in purgatory are some other examples of liminal cases (van Gennep 41, 124, 148, 160). Van Gennep emphasises that a liminal state enables the individual to gain independence in most of the cases (11) considering that van Gennep associates the rites of passage with a process of maturation. In this regard, the aim of transition is to achieve a new and liberated position.

Yet it is a central contention in van Gennep's argument that the three types of rites appear in the ceremonies of the life crises, but they do not always develop in the same degree: "[R]ather, the rite of separation would dominate at a funeral, while the rite of incorporation would prevail at a wedding, and in pregnancy, engagements and initiations, the rite of transition would dominate" (Popper 129). In other words, the types of rites in van Gennep's three-part structure do not emerge or develop in the same way when one goes through a rite of passage. However, it should be noted that the individual has to undergo all of the three stages in different degrees; otherwise, for van Gennep, the process of transition cannot be completed (van Gennep 11).

Although it is van Gennep who developed the concept of liminality for the first time, the concept was comprehensively studied by Victor Turner (1920-1983), a British anthropologist, who further delved into the matter and popularised the term. Therefore, it is important to provide all aspects of Turner's understanding of liminality in this section of the chapter. Initially, in *The Ritual Process*, Turner deals with the rituals of the Ndembu tribe and acknowledges van Gennep's tripartite structure of separation, transition and reaggregation (94). He is aware of the fact that the rites of passage can be found in all societies (*The Forest* 93). However, Turner particularly focuses on the phase of transition, that is liminality, with the belief that the rites of separation and incorporation "are more closely implicated in social structure than rites of liminality" (*The Forest* 95). Turner delineates that

> [t]he attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ('threshold people') are necessarily ambiguous, since the condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the

> positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. (*The Ritual* 95)

On this basis, the person who reconstructs his/her self leaves their former habits, status and position. The dissolution of usual conditions leads the individual to an in-between state or, in other words, liminal experience. Liminal subjects have no proper role, status, property or position in the society because of their arbitrary situation. For this reason, Turner claims, "liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (*The Ritual* 95). This in-betweenness brings out ambiguity on the grounds that liminal entities are not limited by any fixed boundaries and remain in limbo. They do not belong to a particular group or place in the intermediate state. The liminal subject "passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner, *The Forest* 94). This state of uncertainty makes liminality a complex and unsettling process because those at this stage are concerned with the act of becoming and attempt to construct a new self after withdrawing from ordinary life and circumstances. Liminality, therefore, encompasses breaking ties with the society "as a rejection of previous social structures and as presenting an opportunity to create a new social order" (Popper 129).

More importantly, Turner associates liminality with invisibility which reveals its complex dynamics. He argues that liminal subjects are invisible on the grounds that they cannot be fitted within the social structure. When they become transitional, their positions remain in limbo so they become invisible according to the standards of the society because they cannot be defined or situated, either. Their invisibility emanates from the lack of a definite status. Turner further comments that this invisibility has a binary structure. On the one hand, liminal people

> are at once no longer classified, the symbols that represent them are, in many societies, drawn from the biology of death, decomposition, catabolism, and other physical processes that have a negative tinge, such as menstruation (frequently regarded as the absence or loss of a fetus). (*The Forest* 96)

The in-between state may be regarded as an adverse situation and, accordingly, liminality is symbolised through decaying images. On the other hand, as Turner asserts, liminality is a nexus of possibilities. The person in limbo is capable of using ambiguity to create a strong and independent self in a way that s/he benefits from the period of transition.

Turner upholds the view that "[l]iminality may perhaps be regarded as the Nay to all positive structural assertions" (*The Forest* 97) and he endorses that "as in some sense the source of them all, and, more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (*The Forest* 97). Put simply, getting out of the structures that restrict people is an opportunity for the liminal being.

As noted above, Turner's observation about liminality and invisibility denotes an arbitrary nature. This is also valid for the concept of liminality in general terms. Broadly speaking, liminality is defined as an ambiguous state since the person is neither here nor there and oscillates on the threshold. Robert T. Tally argues that ambiguity is the basis of liminality (xii), and this ambiguity "literally refers to 'both ways', and one who is located in the space of the liminal must be ever attuned to the presence of adverse or conflicting possibilities" (xii). Liminal situations make it possible to voice new ideas and subvert conventions in an innovative way. The rejection of the present social boundaries can be a chance for the liminal being to create a new system to locate him/herself. However, it is important to grasp the opposite strand of the argument which suggests danger and adversity. Liminal cases do not always end with a reintegration into society so the process of becoming does not lead to a positive result. Liminality becomes dangerous when the subject only lingers in a void without any structural forms. Bjørn Thomassen contends that liminality "involves a peculiar kind of unsettling situation in which nothing really matters, in which hierarchies and standing norms disappear, in which sacred symbols are mocked at and ridiculed, in which authority in any form is questioned, taken apart and subverted; in which, as Shakespeare said, 'degree is shaken'" (*Liminality* 1). In other words, liminality turns out to be a dangerous case if the individual is not able to reconstruct his/her social position after deconstructing it during the transitional period. The ultimate goal of transition should be the restoration of a stable condition; otherwise, one's identity might be destroyed (Thomassen, *Liminality* 92). If the temporary subversion of social order does not come to an end, the liminal subject may fall into a dark and violent world (Szakolczai, *Reflexive* 210).

As stated above, Turner's ideas on liminality broaden the scope of the concept. Within this development of the term, the negative aspect of liminality can be correlated to another

concept which is "permanent liminality" according to Turner (*The Ritual* 107). Turner originally identifies this state with the characteristics of religious groups. In Turner's view, all religious communities, be it Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or Jews, convert transitional states to settled and permanent conditions. He states that "[w]hat appears to have happened is that with the increasing specialization of society and culture, with progressive complexity in the social division of labor, what was in tribal society principally a set of transitional qualities 'betwixt and between' defined states of culture and society had become itself an institutionalized state" (*The Ritual* 107). Then, he claims that "traces of the passage quality of the religious life remain in such formulations as: 'The Christian is a stranger to the world, a pilgrim, a traveller, with no place to rest his head.' Transition has here become a permanent condition" (*The Ritual* 107). Although liminality is a transitional and temporary state, it may evolve into a permanent condition. On the other hand, Turner only focuses on institutionalising the liminal state. It is Arpad Szakolczai who studies this type of liminality. For Szakolczai, it is highly likely that one can be stuck in one of the stages of the rites of passage (*Reflexive* 212). When this happens at the transitional stage, permanent liminality occurs. Szakolczai clarifies this experience of liminality, saying: "This is the familiar experience of 'time stood still': an illness that was supposed to last for a few days becoming acute; a war that was supposed to last for a few months dragging on for years and years" ("Living Permanent" 34). Permanent liminality is apparently a paradoxical situation because liminality is defined as a temporary state. Yet permanent liminality is inevitable when the liminal being cannot complete transition and move to the last stage. In monasteries, for instance, the rites of separation and transition take place, but the last stage cannot be achieved so these places are affiliated with permanent liminality (Szakolczai, *Reflexive* 212). Moreover, globalisation can be another example to illustrate this type of liminality. Granted that globalisation points at destroying fixed boundaries and crossing limits, this process "opens up the realm of the unlimited or the liminal. The world of globalisation is the world of permanent liminality" (Szakolczai, *The Genesis* 241).

Pursuant to Turner's ideas, the concept of liminality has also an anti-structural nature. During the liminal stage, one breaks down the structural orders of the dominant society.

The subversion of social structures makes the liminal being get into an anti-structural order. Turner states:

> I have used the term ‘antistructure’ for many liminal events and relationships not because I consider liminality to be essentially chaotic or amorphous, although some of its central symbols and behavior do hint at a primary void of precosmic freedom, but because its general manner of organization or construction seems to rest on principles different from those governing quotidian social life. (*Blazing* 133)

The liminal state has an anti-structural element since social boundaries and hierarchies are dissolved when the person is in an in-between position on the threshold. The liminal being may be beyond social, moral, class and gender boundaries. Turner pinpoints that such boundaries are actually “structural ties” that bind people together (*The Ritual* 97). Although the society is structured in hierarchical relationships, this structure of society is broken during the liminal period. Moreover, participation in the anti-structure is ambiguous for Turner because each liminal subject has a different experience during this stage.

Another aspect of Turner’s conceptualisation of liminality is about its communal experience by the society. From Turner’s point of view, an individual or the whole society may encounter liminality and anti-structure. Turner calls a liminal being as a liminar whereas he describes a liminal society “as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders” (*The Ritual* 97). He delineates this kind of community as “communitas” which consists of a group of people living out of boundaries. In effect, Turner borrows this term from Martin Buber who exchangeably uses “community” for “communitas” (Turner, *The Ritual* 126). Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann clarify the relationship between anti-structure and communitas as follows: “The antistructure provides a utopian perspective of spontaneous solidarity, unmediated by legal systems and institutionalization, manifesting itself in concrete forms of what Turner calls ‘communitas’” (9). That is to say, those in the anti-structural order instantly feel a sense of community and fellowship. Therefore, liminality can be a common experience of the anti-structural community. In support of this view, Dara Downey, Ian Kinane and Elizabeth Parker explain that liminality in communitas

> becomes not a source of alienation but a communally shared experience as in cultural events such as music concerts or sporting events, wherein everyone who participates (regardless of personal, social, or economic background) shares and revels in the sacredness of community. In another sense, *communitas* is a community without frontiers. (8-9)

In a liminal state, people discard the order and flow of ordinary life; such people come together and constitute an alternative community. In this way, unlike those depending on social structures and norms, communitas shares a similar experience in an unstructured order.

Moreover, it is possible to talk about equality among the members of communitas which presents stark contrast to the people stuck within hierarchical orders. Turner suggests that liminal entities deprived of normative boundaries are in the process of becoming, and there is a sense of equality in this community because they "confront one another as integral entities and not as segmentalized occupants of statuses and players of roles" (*Blazing* 137). Unlike those living in hierarchical structures, liminal beings are not concerned about social prestige or rank, and they stand equal in their liminal community. Edith Turner suggests that the events that jeopardise public safety, such as environmental disasters, force people to create this kind of equality as communitas (36). In other words, ambiguous periods bring people together when they merely focus on their similarities rather than differences. This brings out equality in the liminal community.

Turner is also of the view that communitas is not only related to liminality but also to marginality and social inferiority. The community living without any limitations becomes marginal, and their unstructured system makes them subordinate to the social structure. Turner claims that these three conditions produce "myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art" (*The Ritual* 128). These products, hence, lead people to take action or develop novel ideas. In this respect, the marginal state of communitas may involve political sensitivity because communitas "emerges in the absence of social and political structures (in the in-between), [so] there is considerable political potential inherent in its manisfestations" (Downey, Kinane and Parker 9). Turner warns that communitas may reach extreme political states such as tyranny or absolutism because of its political concerns (*The Ritual* 129).

Bearing this context in mind, it is possible to find different examples to clarify communitas. In *The Ritual Process*, Turner illustrates communitas by providing a literary example. He declares that Gonzalo's commonwealth in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611) is an instance of communitas. According to him, Gonzalo's commonwealth has most of the characteristics of communitas. Gonzalo's community is not limited by structural boundaries; any rank or social position is denied in this community (Turner, *The Ritual* 135). In addition to this sense of equality, these people are also very innocent. Turner states that "among his innocent people there would be no treason, felony, sword, pike, knife, gun – with which he appears to equate the need of any engine, as though war, conflict, or indeed any 'politicking' were necessarily connected with technology, even of the most rudimentary sort" (136). The female community in Aristophanes's (c.446 BC-386 BC) *Lysistrata* (411 BC) can be another literary example to demonstrate communitas. As for examples from real life, people in pilgrimage (Daly 71) and the community of poor people or outcasts (Viljoen and van der Merwe 12) can be accounted as communitas as their social position in limbo makes them experience a liminal state.

What is more, Turner lists three types of communitas: spontaneous communitas, normative communitas and ideological communitas. The first kind of communitas may erratically appear at any time; it cannot be explained with structures because the sense of power in spontaneous communitas does not have any effect on the institutions of social life (Turner, *The Ritual* 137, 139). Spontaneous communitas also has a magical power for Turner. He attempts to define spontaneous communitas as "the wind of which bloweth where it listeth, and which defies deliberate cognitive and volitional construction" (*Blazing* 59). In rituals or public movements, spontaneous communitas can be experienced in that people naturally discard all roles and statuses that define them. In Turner's words, the second type is "the attempt to capture and preserve spontaneous communitas in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules" (*Blazing* 59). Put simply, communitas is organised in a more systematic way in normative communitas which is different from spontaneous communitas. Religious orders can be examples of this kind of communitas. The last one, ideological communitas, is "the formulation of remembered attributes of the communitas experience as a utopian blueprint for the reform of society" (Turner, *Blazing* 59). Therefore, ideological communitas is an experience of the utopic

pattern which can be observed in Plato's (438/427 BC- 348/347 BC) *Republic* (375 BC) or Marxist communist communities (Spariosu 70). When these three types are compared, normative and ideological forms of communitas share more similar traits on the grounds that both of them, unlike spontaneous communitas, consist of basic social structures. Furthermore, liminal state is more dominant in spontaneous communitas as Mihai I. Spariosu explains: "[T]he ideological and normative kinds of communitas would best be seen as imaginary or actual alternative world, while spontaneous communitas would best be seen as a liminal world whose weighting principles and reference frames can shift at will" (71).

As can be observed, Turner tries to further develop van Gennep's earlier discussion on liminality by augmenting the context of the term in his own terminology. To further illustrate this fact, it is possible to introduce another point that Turner discusses in relation to liminality. Accordingly, along with communitas and its types, Turner situates liminality in what he calls "social drama." In *The Anthropology of Performance*, Turner defines social drama as "an objectively isolable sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive or agonistic type" (33). He also delineates it as "units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations" (*Dramas* 37). That is to say, social drama implies a kind of process as a result of a break from social life out of a conflict. Turner presents four phases for social dramas: the breach, crisis, redressive or remedial procedures and reintegration. Apparently, he applies van Gennep's structure in a new fashion and on a broader scale. Turner explains the first phase which is the breach as follows:

> Breach of regular, norm-governed social relations occurs between the persons or groups within the same system of social relations, be it a village, chiefdom, office, factory, political party or ward, church, university department, or any other perduring system or set or field of social interaction. (*Dramas* 38)

When one of the social rules that unite people is openly violated, this phase occurs. Then, the second phase, crisis, takes place "when people take sides, or rather, are in the process of being induced, seduced, cajoled, nudged, or threatened to take sides by those who confront one another across the revealed breach as prime antagonists" (Turner, *The Anthropology* 34). Taking sides may arouse a political concern when the society is divided into opposite groups. The stage of crisis is laced with anxieties, danger, threats of

violence or violence. More importantly, it is this stage which consists of liminality since a public crisis has liminal traits, being a threshold between the fixed phases of social process (Turner, *Dramas* 38). The crisis can be called a kind of liminal moment because it may result in a social disaster or rehabilitation. After the crisis, there comes redressive action as the crisis has to be defused. The redressive phase may appear in different ways "from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal jural and legal machinery and, to resolve certain kinds of crises or legitimate other modes of conflict-resolution, to the performance of public ritual" (Turner, *The Anthropology* 34). The redressive phase may also involve violence such as public execution to end the crisis. In order to assess the events of crisis, a liminal space in a kind of ritual or in a legal process may be created in the redressive stage, as well. Reintegration is the last phase of Turner's social drama, and it refers to the incorporation of a disordered group into the society or the acceptance of the rupture between the opposite parts (*Dramas* 41). In other words, reintegration is the restoration of order and peace in a conflicting society. Moreover, social dramas can be detected during revolutions and rebellions in different societies such as the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Jacobite rebellions and the Mexican Insurgency (Thomassen, *Liminality* 202).

According to Turner, social drama is essentially the source of writing stories which are shaped by the narrator's different perspectives (*The Anthropology* 33). Myths and novels can be accounted as examples of the stories that Turner talks about. More interestingly, in addition to rituals, theatre and movies, Turner regards stories as a genre of cultural performance. In *The Anthropology of Performance*, he asserts that these genres both derive from social drama and keep acquiring meaning from social drama (94). The theatre, in particular, depends on social dramas as it is shaped by the complex dynamics of societies, and social life is theatrical. Social drama comprises "plural reflexivity," indicating intricate interrelations or interactions (*The Anthropology* 106). Turner clarifies this point in his reference to one of Shakespeare's plays:

> Prince Hamlet could brood on his own motives, but the plays *Hamlet* reflects upon the rottenness not merely 'in the state of Denmark' but in the early modern world as old feudal values came to stink in new Renaissance nostrils. It is the total set of interactions which constitutes this metacommentary. (*The Anthropology* 106)

As noted in this example, social drama has a broad extent of interaction owing to its plural reflexivity. One particular social problem which is depicted in a play may stand for a huge crisis, and the theatre effectively displays the society in crisis by drawing on the interaction between social life and social drama.

Moreover, it has to be underlined that Turner applies the term of liminality to the tribal and pre-industrial societies. However, he uses another term "liminoid" to explain liminal-like cases for modern and large-scale societies. For Turner, the societies that underwent the process of modernity did not experience in-between states like pre-industrial societies. Although their experiences are parallel to liminars, they are not quite the same. In modern societies, the sense of individualism and rational thinking head off rituals that Turner relates to the concept of liminality so the experience of ritual in modern societies takes place during certain pastime or leisure activities such as theatre, art and sports. In such activities which replace traditional rites, people get away from the course of ordinary life and get involved in a creative process. The analogous experience of liminality in modern societies is called "liminoid" by Turner who correlates it to cultural experiences. He defines liminoid as the case which "*resembles* without being identical with 'liminal'" ("Liminal" 64).

To clarify Turner's point, liminality and liminoid can be compared and contrasted. First and foremost, it has to be recognised that liminoid experience belongs to industrial societies, "begin[ing] clearly to develop in Western Europe in nascent capitalist societies, with the beginnings of industrialization and mechanization, the transformation of labor into commodity, and the appearance of real social classes" (Turner, "Liminal" 84). Liminoid phenomena actually start from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onwards, and the social structure of industrial communities becomes different from pre-industrial and tribal societies. That is to say, these new societies do not experience liminal situations in a similar fashion to former communities. Secondly, liminality is related to crises or turning points in the course of social life and structures whereas liminoid may occur individually or during collective events such as carnivals, theatre performance and sports, all of which can be regarded as leisure activities (Turner, *Blazing* 56). Modern people do not follow old ritual patterns, but they, too, experience a sense of ritual during

cultural pastime activities. These activities are also a kind of entertainment through which "one plays with the liminoid" (Turner, *Blazing* 55). Moreover, Turner claims that liminality shapes the whole social process, but the case for the liminoid is different; it evolves outside political or economic processes and becomes more experimental ("Liminal" 85). Compared to a liminal experience, the liminoid is harder to define because of its "idiosyncratic or quirky" characteristics (Turner, *Blazing* 57). In capitalistic societies, individuals or groups are in competition with each other. This causes diversity or plurality for the liminoid whereas liminal experience is more unified for the liminars of a community. Lastly, liminality offers a break from social structures and their enforcements, but the liminal subject later reintegrates into the society in most of the cases. From Turner's standpoint, liminoid phenomena are more subversive because they "represent[. . .] radical critiques of the central structures and propos[e] utopian alternative models" (*Blazing* 57). The liminoid presents a severe critique of political and economic institutions even in movies, plays, books or paintings (Turner "Liminal" 86). The liminoid's creativity can be traced in such cultural and art works.

Noting Turner's description of the liminoid, it becomes evident that liminal experience in modern society does not correspond to the experience of liminars. Although the liminoid is a rupture from ordinary life, it lacks the process of transition which defines liminality. There is no real transformation in the liminoid because the individual willingly participates in a leisure activity, and this is not usually undertaken with a purpose to change. To put it another way, liminoid phenomena differ from liminality in regard to their aims. The liminoid cannot usually achieve a new role or identity after s/he is out of the ordinary course of life while engaging in sports, watching a performance or reading a book. Furthermore, Turner believes in the critical perspective of such cultural activities, but criticism is not necessarily aroused. The capitalistic society, albeit its wide range of opportunities, offers similar products to its consumers. This characteristic of capitalism makes it hard to voice an economic or political critique of this system as consumption is the essence of capitalism in all activities that Turner talks about. Therefore, Turner's liminoid appears problematic since it does not thoroughly correspond to the liminal experience. Thomassen, likewise, argues that "Turner seems to suggest an oversimplified

dichotomy between symbolic systems of a 'traditional' and a 'modern' type" (*Liminality* 84).

Hence, although the term liminality was initially coined by Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner elaborated on the concept of liminality and enlarged its context throughout his studies. Van Gennep situated liminality as one step in a tripartite structure whereas Turner regarded it as a state itself. In time, the usage of the term appears to grow in scope as it is appropriated in a wide range of disciplines by many scholars. The frequent use of liminality causes the distortion of its original meaning for some: liminality becomes "a catch-all expression for an ambiguous, transitional, or interstitial spatio-temporal dimension, and critical discourse often plays fast and loose with the term's descriptive terminology, while sliding away from precise definitions" (Downey, Kinane and Parker 3). Conversely, it is possible to suggest that new usages of this term enrich its context. There are other definitions of liminality besides Turner's descriptions. As a case in point, Paul Larson refers to a complete change when he defines liminality: "Liminality is the journey of transformation" (520). Paul Stenner, likewise, illustrates liminality as a breach from the usual conditions: "Any situation involving the removal or erasure of the usual limits that organize life (providing recognizable social identities and positions with allocated rights and responsibilities, etc.) can be considered liminal" (62). Furthermore, Thomassen draws attention to its strong and creative power as he delineates liminality "as a fascinating and necessary shaking of routines, a cultural space of human creativity" (*Liminality* 10). All this reveals that liminality is a process of becoming because the liminal being leaves the old structure behind, but his/her new form is not founded yet. Although the consequences of this process may have positive or negative results, it still signifies a change, potentiality and transition. Put bluntly, transitional and in-between states address liminality as the term is utilised in different fields other than anthropological studies.

Moreover, the concept of transgression is highlighted in the discussion of liminality as new definitions are introduced, and it is of interest to clarify this aspect of liminality to further understand its functions. As a matter of fact, the transgressive aspect of liminality can be related to the word's etymology. Tally explains that while *limen* refers to a

threshold, another word in Latin, *limes* (*limites* in its plural form), means "an end, the outer boundary, or the mark of enclosure" (xi). Although these words are not derived from the same root, they are closely related because "a boundary or border might become a threshold, but only when it is transgressed" (Tally xi). That is to say, a threshold or *limen* can be regarded as a transitional point, hence, a site of transgression. One may transgress any border in a liminal situation since liminality is the state of revoking orders and deviating social norms. Crossing a boundary may suggest a political act considering that one exceeds limits and rebels against the system, and this process includes "the transformation of the *limes* into a *limen*" (Tally xi). In this regard, limits are transgressed, and the liminal also becomes a transgressive entity. Furthermore, Szakolszai emphasises the connection between transgression and liminality. He highlights that "liminal experiences always border on the transgressive" (*Reflexive* 187) and gives examples to illustrate the relationship:

> By definition this is most evident in the case of crime, which explains why criminality gains a paradigmatic status under conditions of modernity, starting from detective stories and leading up to *Discipline and Punish.* However sexuality, madness and even illness can also become transgressive. (*Reflexive* 187)

As noted in this quotation, liminal situations are actually transgressive acts. Violating laws, undergoing sexual maturation or physical and psychological illnesses may create liminal states because the liminal being breaks down social, legal or moral structures in the process of becoming. Therefore, it is not possible to think about liminality without transgression.

Although the connection between liminality and transgression can be clearly established, the relationship between liminality and marginality is problematic in academic discussion. In fact, Turner correlates marginality with communitas, and he even refers to van Gennep's three stages as "separation, margin (or *limen*, signifying 'threshold' in Latin), and aggregation" (*The Ritual* 94). Therefore, these terms are later used interchangeably by some critics such as Jessica Elbert Decker and Dylan Winchock to define liminality in reference to marginality: "Liminality is thus the in-between and marginal state, in which an individual resides before becoming integrated into his or her new position in society" (4). On the contrary, the synonymous usage of liminality and marginality is problematic for others. Thomassen expresses his doubts about the issue and

rejects this usage as follows: "While liminality and marginality share affinities (being boundary-concepts), they are also very different terms: that which is interstitial is neither marginal nor on the outside; liminality refers, quite literally, to something placed in an in-between position" (*Liminality* 7). Spariosu explains this difference from a different perspective. He particularly pinpoints the attitude towards the centre in two cases:

> In my view, marginality refers to an agonistic relation (between the center and the margins of a structure, system, subsystem, polysystem, or world), whereas liminality refers to a neutral relation (between two or more structures, systems, subsystems, polysystems, worlds, etc.), such as obtains, say, in no-man's land between two or more state borders. (Spariosu 38)

According to Spariosu, marginality threatens the centre whereas the relationship between the centre and the liminal does not involve antagonism. He also believes that liminality, unlike marginality, leads the person to new worlds. In this respect, Spariosu claims, "a margin can be liminal, but a limen cannot be marginal. In my view, therefore, liminality can both subsume and transcend a dialectic of margin and center" (19). What is at stake here is that Spariosu focuses on the spatial relations between the margin/the centre and the liminal/the centre. It is obvious that both of them are concepts related to the boundary, but a marginal being is expelled from the border while the liminal transgresses it. When individual experiences of liminality and marginality are examined, another comparison can be suggested as well. On the one hand, the liminal being may be called marginal as s/he goes against the accepted norms. The marginal and the liminal are both regarded as the 'other' (Szakolczai, *The Reflexive* 183). On the other hand, it should be noted that marginality does not cover liminality in all cases because liminality is directly related to a state of in-betweenness, swaying between different positions. Stenner clarifies this point and states that "liminality (or its equivalent) is not simply about experience which is somehow marginal, but, crucially, about *emergence* in the sense of becoming of new processes, forms, structures, patterns, experiences and entities that were previously not present" (16).

Additionally, the concept of liminality is evaluated in terms of social order. S. N. Eisenstadt defines liminality in relation to structures: "Our analysis begins with the recognition of the ubiquity of *liminality* in human societies. By this term I mean seemingly unstructured situations, 'in between' more structured ones, and symbols of

antistructure and communitas" (309). Liminal situations, Eisenstadt argues, are culturally and socially shaped and, accordingly, the behaviours of liminars are constructed. The symbols of liminal situations are ambivalent to the orders of society and culture: "This ambivalence and the strong emphasis on antistructure or communitas, which are built into many of these situations, are as much culturally constructed as the social structural and cultural order against which rebel the patterns of behavior that develop in these situations" (Eisenstadt 309). Social order is actually a result of anxiety, ambivalence and fear of death. This order allows people to cope with the unease of transgressing borders. Eisenstadt explains that "the very construction of any social order, while a manifestation of human creativity, necessarily imposes severe limitations on such creativity and gives rise to an awareness of such limitations" (310). In order to secure the social order, there are various means which appeal to people both to cross boundaries and encourage them to maintain boundaries. Stories, myths and folk tales are some examples of such means to control the whole system of social control (Eisenstadt 310). These works encourage people to keep order and stability in the society. Moreover, the ambivalence in the social order is revealed in the themes of protest. These themes of protest emerge in socially structured situations and consist of two main elements:

> The first is the attempt to overcome the predicaments and limitations of human existence in general and of death in particular. The second is the attempt to overcome the tension and predicaments inherent in the institutionalization of the social order: the tension between equality and hierarchy; the tensions among the social division of labor and the regulation of power, construction of trust, and provision of meaning; and the tension between the quest for meaningful participation in central symbolic and institutional arenas by various groups in the society and the limitation on the access to these arenas, which exists in every society. (Eisenstadt 314)

Liminality is one of the situations from which the themes of protest emerge. On this account, Eisenstadt ascribes the concept of liminality to power relations, structures and even existential crises. Therefore, liminal studies are not only dealt with in the field of anthropology but also become a matter of analysis in other branches such as sociology and literature.

It is undoubtedly true that liminality is scrutinised in different contexts in line with its expanding definitions and connection with other concepts. Yet critics and scholars agree on one particular aspect of liminality, that it is a spatial and temporal concept. Liminality,

in other words, is deemed relevant to space and time. To begin with its spatial dimension, what determines a liminal space is that it is a transitional site. It is a threshold and an in-between space between two zones or sites. Teresa Gómez Reus and Terry Gifford enunciate that a liminal space "may involve actual spaces in which the transition is enacted – places apart, or places to escape through or to escape to, places to occupy temporarily – as well as experiences of transition undertaken by an initiative to act in the decision to separate from a prior state of security" (6). Transition also suggests mobility for the liminal entity; the person in a process of change departs his/her place and moves to a transitional site before constructing a new self. Moreover, a liminal space is not occupied permanently; the liminar inhabits that place for a short period of time. After the experience of transition, s/he transforms and the liminal stage is completed.

It is necessary to exemplify liminal spaces to have a better understanding of such locations. Doors and windows as thresholds can be main examples of liminal spaces as boundaries are physically or symbolically crossed when someone passes through a door or window (Drewery 53). Thomassen, likewise, gives a similar example by touching on the boundary: "Seasides and beaches are archetypical liminal landscapes. The seaside is something more than just the end of dry and inhabited land: it is a coastline with something on the other side of the threshold" ("Revisiting" 21). "The Mediterranean is," Stenner claims, "liminal with respect to Europe" (179) because of its in-between state. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, prison is a liminal space considering that prisoners are separated from the outside world and society and wait for the day to reintegrate with the society (6). Market places, battlefields and forests are liminal as well (van Gennep 18). That is to say, thresholds, border areas and in-between places or larger transitional landscapes are liminal spaces.

As stated earlier, liminality is pertinent to temporality so liminal time needs to be clarified, too. Liminal time refers to temporary periods which may include moments, ages or longer terms. Such a period makes people feel ambiguity and instability on the verge of a great change. There is a temporary suspension of the ordinary course of life pursuant to a break from social order and rules. Individuals experience liminal time during their process of becoming whereas "societies experience wars, revolutionary events and

extended periods of liminality, such as modernity" (Popper 130). The periods of disaster such as floods or earthquakes are liminal. More interestingly, the seventeenth century is an exemplary case to illustrate liminal time. This age was the period of great anxiety and confusion because of changing dynamics in various areas. Thomassen clearly states that the seventeenth century was a liminal period and explains: "The age was in desperate search for new ordering principles within politics, philosophy and science" (*Liminality* 113). Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and René Descartes's (1596-1650) ideas, in particular, directly influenced the way of thinking at that time. Thomassen regards this era as early modernity and sheds light on this liminal period:

> In the confronting of liminality – the loss of taken-for-granted structures – the disorder of the early modern age was overcome with the ideational and political-institutional structures that was established with the 'moment of Westphalia', and with Cartesian science laying the foundations for modern thought. We argue that this new order was in a critical sense liminal at its core, jointly establishing fear and doubt (archetypical liminal experiences) as foundational. (*Liminality* 113)

Owing to new philosophical and scientific ideas, the old world view of the medieval age was totally destroyed because mankind became the measure and centre of the whole universe thanks to his ability to think. Yet this idea created fear and confusion and caused a state of in-betweenness and insecurity for people, making the seventeenth century a liminal period.

More than this, it is possible to highlight some figures and actions associated with liminality. Monsters, androgynes or figures in bestial shapes are called liminal by Turner (*Blazing* 136). Tricksters are also liminal figures since they are outsiders in a community because of their ambiguous nature (Thomassen, *Liminality* 104). Perpetrators, according to James Mensch, become liminars as they "both belong to and do not belong to society. Physically present in it, they are nonetheless excluded" (673). Liminality can also be manifested in a wide range of situations which may have spatial and temporal dimensions. For example, sleeping suggests a liminal state; a sleeper is physically inactive and absent, but the mind is busy albeit its unconscious state (Schwenger xiii). Liminality can be detected in a state of madness as well (Rohr 180). Going on a quest or taking part in a trial is also associated with liminality (Spariosu 177). Mourning (Larson 519), having

multiple identities (Hutchins 152), lacking a status (Turner, *The Ritual* 97) and being in exile (Szakolczai, *The Genesis* 253) are among the examples of liminal situations, too.

As for the relationship between liminality and literature, it seems fair to stress their interconnection on different layers. First of all, the development of literature goes through a transitional stage. The transition from oral traditions to written words is a kind of passage in the literary world. Spariosu argues that

> [i]n the Western world, literary discourse becomes a self-consciously liminal phenomenon during the transition from an oral to a literature culture in ancient Greece, when the central archaic cultural complex [. . .] breaks down into various disciplines that start competing for cultural authority in the polis. (40)

This transition indicates a liminal state for literary works. More to the point, literature also provides a creative ground to examine liminal situations and liminal entities. In principle, literary works analyse in-between experiences and deal with the themes of subversion, marginality and transition from different perspectives. To further argue, the relationship between literature and liminality is quite integral. Peter Schwenger claims that "liminal states throughout are used to speak of the ways in which literature is itself a liminal state; for both the writer and the reader" (xii). In effect, the act of writing is liminal because it involves a process of becoming (Stenner 65). Writing is about creation; the work evolves and transforms into a medium to affect people. Fact and fiction may merge together at certain moments when writers particularly criticise the problems of their societies. In the long run, writers, as in the case of liminal people, cannot be situated in stable social structures since they transgress boundaries while writing.

More tellingly, the act of transgression in literary studies can be pinpointed in relation to the theatre and the concept of liminality. In the framework of this dissertation, early modern theatre in England during Shakespeare's time is claimed to have crossed social, political and moral boundaries. The theatre companies which were situated out of city borders were actually pushed to the margins of the society. Being in the margins of London means that theatre makers and theatrical activities were othered in this community. According to Mullaney, popular theatre in London

> discolat[ed] itself from the confines of the existing social order and [took] up a place on the margins of the society. Erected outside the walls of early modern London in the 'licentious Liberties' of the city, the popular playhouses of Elizabethan England occupied a domain that had traditionally been reserved for cultural phenomena that could not be contained within the strict or proper bounds of the community. (*The Place* vii)

As noted above, early modern plays were constructed outside spatial and temporal limitations, and those works broke down social structures and became transgressive. Nevertheless, they were censored and controlled by the authorities even though they took place out of city walls. Therefore, those circumstances compelled a liminal state of in-betweenness for the theatre in early modern England. The theatre was both a form of entertainment and a medium for criticism, and it conformed to both the official standards of the controlling mechanisms of the government and the demands of common people. This indicated an in-between state in regard to the theatre at that time. In addition to this state, theatrical activities were liminal as they demonstrated that "profane social relations [might] be discontinued, former rights and obligations [were] suspended, the social order [might] seem to have been turned upside down" (Turner, *From Ritual* 27). On this basis, the theatre played with spatial and temporal aspects of liminality, as well. To further argue, in *The Anthropology of Performance*, Turner also asserts that social dramas, for better or worse, are essential elements in the theatres: "My contention is that social dramas are the 'raw stuff' out of which theatre comes to be created as societies develop in scale and complexity and out of which it is continually regenerated" (105). Turner's integration of social dramas with the theatre as an expression of growing conflicts and crises in a society suggests that the plays are teemed with liminal dimensions to be explored. The theatre, in other words, comes out of conflicting situations in the society, consisting of liminal qualities. This idea was valid for early modern theatre, and Shakespeare's plays specifically corresponded to current crises and problems.

More significant as evidence for the theatre's liminality is that liminality is a means to reflect individual or social changes and crises, and it is an instrument to challenge conventions. Julia Maria Hammer declares that liminality is "a tool to open a discourse on alternative ways of being, and to question established norms" ("Crossing" 10). The theatre focuses on alternative political and social scenarios in a way that it challenges settled norms, rules and structures. Liminality also entails ambiguity, and when it is used

as a means of criticism, the critical voice remains in obscurity. Therefore, the plays of early modern theatre, as can be exemplified in Shakespeare's plays, appropriate liminal cases to articulate oppositional ideas, but the ambiguous mode enmeshed with liminality enables the playwrights to unveil their own ideas against the society, state or religious authorities. In this regard, Hammer also believes that liminality is "a useful instrument to vent as well as to seek protection" ("Crossing" 10). Clearly, the use of liminality provides playwrights with protection against oppressive groups.

Drawing on Hammer's claim, it remains to consider the scope of liminality in Shakespeare's works. In fact, the theatre as a social and cultural setting was institutionalised and, hence, restricted during Shakespeare's career. As discussed earlier, this limitation was a result of the monarch's intention to maintain power and order. Shakespeare's works took place in the marginal space of the theatre, and he developed strategies to protect himself against any accusations or punishments while he was criticising social and political systems. Although censorship restricted the playwright's creation, Shakespeare's imagination made it possible to find inventive ways to voice his own views. Liminality was one of Shakespeare's tools to express his disapproval of present conditions covertly and keep himself safe from penalty at the same time.

Undoubtedly, many scholars recognise and elaborate on Shakespeare's various strategies of criticism. However, liminality has not been accounted as his way of criticism in such studies. As a point of interest, some of Shakespeare's works are analysed in terms of the rites of passage and liminality in different contexts. It is worth noting how all of the significant works which analyse Shakespeare's plays in reference to liminality deal with this concept. In *Coming of Age* (1981), Marjorie Garber, for example, is interested in a study of ages in Shakespeare and draws attention to the characters who are about to come of age and reach a kind of development in life. For this purpose, Garber applies van Gennep's concept of rites of passage and makes use of other critics who study liminality to discover more about Shakespeare's characters in his different types of plays. According to Garber, the characters are in crises when they are in a process of maturation, and they appear as more complex and interesting characters (23). She examines the process of maturity in Shakespeare's characters in the light of the rites of passage and discusses

liminality in relation to the transition of characters. In another example, Edward Berry in *Shakespeare's Comic Rites* (1984) deals with the rites of passage in Shakespeare's comedies by drawing on van Gennep's three stages. He analyses the tripartite structure in the comedies separately and attempts to study the different types of rites. While he dwells on the rites of adolescence, courtship and marriage, he exemplifies them in the various examples of Shakespeare's comedies. Berry argues that such rites correspond to the social conventions of the playwright's age (33). Liminality is a matter of analysis in the chapter of transitional rites, and Berry examines Shakespeare's young characters in the process of maturation, and his fools and mad characters within the concept of liminality. Also, in *Returning to Shakespeare* (1989), Brian Vickers displays the transition from verse to prose in Shakespeare's plays and regards it as a rite of passage in the chapter entitled "Rites of Passage in Shakespeare's Prose." He argues that this move from verse to prose is a sign of low status, lack of seriousness, mockery of the institutions represented by the characters or indicates a change in the tone of the play (Vickers 26). As "the shifts between the two levels [verse and prose] are often significant of shifts of value, or collisions between value-systems" (Vickers 38), Vickers believes that such transitions are related to cultural differences and, hence, anthropological studies. Thus, he maintains that the distinction between and transition from verse and prose is a rite of passage. More recently, Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann have scrutinised the prologues of Shakespeare's plays and conceptualised them as liminal parts in *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (2004). They define liminality as a threshold which is related to transition. Shakespeare's prologues address the reader/audience and ask them to maintain a position outside the play before the play starts (Bruster and Weimann 2). Therefore, prologues in Shakespeare's period serve "as interactive, liminal, boundary-breaking entities that negotiated charged thresholds between and among, variously, playwrights, actors, characters, audience members, playworlds, and the world outside the playhouse" (Bruster and Weimann 2). In early modern theatre, prologues occupy a transitional space; they are both within and out of the text/performance as paratexts, and they are an in-between space between the audience and the players. Shakespeare's prologues are on the threshold of the plays and have "a liminal position between the world in the play and playing in the world of Elizabethan London" (Bruster and Weimann 113).

As for this dissertation, it attempts to contribute to the liminal studies of Shakespeare's plays by defining and examining liminality as Shakespeare's tool for political criticism. Liminality, in other words, is claimed to be one of Shakespeare's means to comment implicitly and with ambiguity on his age because he did not always approve of dominant views. In relation to the context of liminality, this dissertation will scrutinise three plays of the playwright, *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, written in three different genres, namely comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy. Within the frame of this dissertation, the focus is on these three plays from a particular period in the playwright's career. As liminality suggests in-betweenness, transformation and change, it will be appropriate to concentrate on the plays written in a period of transition. The transition from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century was obviously a significant historical moment. Moreover, the end of the sixteenth century was a significant juncture in English history since this was a transitional period from Elizabeth's reign to James's rule. Therefore, this period in time can be regarded as a liminal period for England. Furthermore, the last years of Elizabeth's reign – from 1599 to 1603 – were actually a period of unsettled political troubles for her country because the succession problem was not solved; the aging Queen's court was divided into the factions of ambitious members, and her power was challenged in a revolt in 1601. Thus, the political context of the time makes it possible to trace the implications of political criticism in Shakespeare's plays. Additionally, in Shakespeare's career, those years of transition can be regarded as a liminal period, too. In particular, Shakespeare was in the middle of his career at the turn of the seventeenth century. As he was on the way of becoming a more mature playwright, he used the current historical events and political context as his subject matter; he dealt with issues such as political exile, the succession problem and courtly factions in his plays. As Shakespeare could not overtly voice his political criticism of the late Elizabethan period because of censorship and patronage, it would prove appropriate to explore liminality as Shakespeare's tool for criticism.

After stating why *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* are chosen in the frame of this dissertation, it remains to explain the reason why Shakespeare's other plays are left out. Although Shakespeare's use of liminality can also be traced in the later period of his career, his plays written in the late Elizabethan period strongly employ liminality as a

tool for political criticism. Moreover, as stated above, these three plays written in the liminal atmosphere of English politics enable to better examine the different aspects of liminality. In each play, one of the main dimensions of liminality – liminal time, place and character/action – will be focused on in order to analyse Shakespeare's criticism of contemporary politics. Although between 1599 and 1603, Shakespeare also wrote *Julius Caesar* (1599) and *The Twelfth Night* (1601), these two plays are excluded from the dissertation because the addition of one of these plays to the dissertation would make the study fall into repetition in the threefold-analysis structure of liminality since both of the plays illustrate liminal place, character/action and time. Also, Shakespeare's romances are excluded since they were written toward the end of his career in the Jacobean period. He wrote his first romance *Pericles* in the years between 1607-1608 and continued writing this type of play from then on. As for his history plays, these, too, are excluded from the dissertation since Shakespeare wrote them in different periods of his dramatic career. As a case in point, Shakespeare wrote most of history plays at the early stage of his career before the above-mentioned transitional period: *Henry VI Part 2* (1590-1591), *Henry VI Part 3* (1591), *Henry VI Part 1* (1591-1592), *Richard III* (1592), *Edward III* (1592-1593), *Richard II* (1595), *King John* (1596), *Henry IV Part 1* (1596-1597) and *Henry IV Part 2* (1597-1598). As for *Henry VIII* (1613), he wrote this play towards the end of his career. Only one of his history plays, *Henry V*, was written in 1599, but the analysis of this play in relation to liminality would not be feasible considering that only the Battle of Agincourt could have been related to the concept of liminality. Also, it is worth noting that history plays are considered as a canon on their own. Therefore, only the three plays, *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida,* from different genres, a comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy, respectively, which were written between 1599 to 1603, are included in this dissertation.

Furthermore, it may be helpful to provide a general scope of the dissertation here. *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* are selected on the grounds that all of these three plays, which were successively written at the turn of the new century and a new reign, allude to the political crises of the late Elizabethan period. In these selected plays, a major type of liminality – a liminal place, a liminal character and action and liminal time – will be focused on in each chapter, and whenever necessary, examples of other kinds of

liminality will also be pinpointed. The dissertation entails the argument that liminality, mainly a tool for political criticism, is used by Shakespeare as a strategy to criticise late Elizabethan politics defined by issues such as the decline of state power, the failure to solve the succession problem, the factional strife at the court and the Queen's problematic relationship with Essex in terms of his exile, rebellion and subsequent execution. In this regard, the dissertation aims to prove that different types of liminality are functionally exploited by Shakespeare to veil his own political criticism with ambiguity in an age when his contemporaries, like Ben Jonson, suffered from the intricate web of censorship and patronage. In this framework, the conflict between Elizabeth and Essex will be a major political topic while conducting the discussion about the criticism of the late Elizabethan period considering the fact that the Earl's actions against the Elizabethan government marked the course of political events at that time. Liminal cases related to place, character, action and time in the three plays will be used to scrutinise the implicit political messages conveyed in each play, respectively. In addition to Shakespeare's political criticism, the playwright's social, cultural and religious criticism of the age will be highlighted in relation to his use of a particular type of liminality in each chapter.

Before an in-depth analysis of Shakespeare's plays and the critical points he makes in terms of liminality, it is necessary to provide a brief framework of the forecoming chapters. The first play to be scrutinised in this dissertation, *As You Like It,* will be analysed in terms of liminal place[5] that it presents. This play is actually based on Shakespeare's criticism of the late Elizabethan court and its practices of banishment and exile as methods of punishment. Through the female protagonist Rosalind's initiative journey and other courtiers' experience in the Forest of Arden, the playwright plays on the features of the liminal place – in-betweenness, ambiguity, ambivalent potentialities and the transformative and transitional agency of the land – in his setting. Therefore, the forest as a liminal place grants a prudent path for the playwright's criticism of the Elizabethan court, its politics and various practices in relation to Essex's political troubles and the general politics of the age considering the historical background of the time when

[5] In this dissertation, the word, "place," is framed in its literal meaning defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary*: "A particular part or region of space; a physical locality, a locale; a spot, a location" ("Place").

the play was written. *Hamlet* is the second play which will be analysed in terms of its liminal character and his actions. In this play, the liminal protagonist goes through a process of maturation after his father's death and takes liminal actions in his struggle to take revenge. The in-betweenness related to his identity and actions reveals Shakespeare's criticism of the Queen's failure to solve the succession problem and hint at Shakespeare's attempt to restore Essex's image after his execution because of his rebellion. The last play to be dealt with in the dissertation is *Troilus and Cressida* which will be mainly examined in terms of liminal time as well as its liminal genre. While the play dwells on the plots of war and love, its genre as a problem play and/or a tragicomedy suggests a liminal generic category for the text regarding that the play includes the characteristics of both comedy and tragedy. Moreover, the period of the Trojan War, the period of syphilis and the emphasis on the present time will be analysed as liminal time by means of which Shakespeare's criticism of the changing economic dynamics, the failure of the government and the factional strife at the late Elizabethan court will be studied. As can be observed, a different type of liminality will be mainly highlighted in each chapter, and the political overtone of these plays will be discussed in accord with the playwright's critical voice.

To recapitulate, Shakespeare's elusive criticism of English politics, society and culture will be examined through his use of different liminal cases. The three chapters of this dissertation aim to prove that liminality is Shakespeare's tool for political criticism in revealing his own opinions although the monarchy controlled the stage through its oppressive tools of censorship and patronage at that time. Therefore, the dissertation will locate the discussion of liminality within the study of Shakespeare's strategies of criticism by filling the gap between the two debates. In this context, after providing the political context in each chapter, a close reading of the particular play's main liminal features, along with other types of liminality when necessary, will be conducted throughout the chapter in the light of van Gennep, Turner and other critics' definitions of liminality, and how Shakespeare presents his political criticism will be explained in the rest of the chapter as a conclusive argument.

CHAPTER I

"LET THE FOREST JUDGE": THE FOREST OF ARDEN AS A LIMINAL PLACE AND A SITE OF CRITICISM IN *AS YOU LIKE IT*

The second act of *As You Like It* introduces the reader/audience to the setting of the play, the Forest of Arden, with the protagonist Rosalind's exclamation that "this is the Forest of Arden" (II. iv.13). While the first act is set at Duke Frederick's court, the rest of the play takes place in the Forest of Arden. Although Shakespeare appears to use a distant French setting, he merges the elements of English landscape, history and culture into this forest. When the sixteen forest scenes of the play are analysed, one may posit that there are different definitions of Arden. First of all, Arden's exact location cannot be identified; it might be situated in a French, English or other European border. Secondly, Arden is fused with contradictory and ambiguous characteristics. The forest is fraught with economic difficulties, hunger, coldness and dangerous threats for men and women. Yet it is a place of familial and romantic love, friendship and bliss. In addition to its ambivalent traits, the perception of the forest changes from one character to another. Each character adds a different meaning to the forest according to their own experiences in the forest setting. The forest is also a place of transformation and transition as the characters leave the court, go to the forest and return to the court with their new selves in the end. Moreover, Arden becomes a site of resistance against usurpation and banishment and a place of political critique of the court, corruption and exile throughout the play. Therefore, Arden emerges as a multi-layered and ambiguous place, and such qualities make the Forest of Arden a liminal landscape. The aim of this chapter is to claim that the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* can be regarded as a liminal place through which Shakespeare veils his critical remarks on the late Elizabethan court, that is he implicitly questions the practices of banishment and exile in relation to Essex's political troubles and comments on contemporary political, social and cultural issues by using liminality as a tool for criticism.

Before analysing the Forest of Arden as a liminal place and the critical points presented in the play, it will be useful to provide a general framework of the chapter at the outset. The first part of the chapter dwells on the historical and political context concerning the

late Elizabethan reign, the court and Essex's position. After establishing this background and reflecting its resonances in the play, the performance history of the play will be recounted in order to emphasise the political undertones of the play. Then, the chapter concentrates on the pastoral elements and the setting's reliance on this tradition. Acknowledging the pastoral and utopian elements of the setting, the chapter will fill the gap in such interpretations of the play, claiming that the Forest of Arden can be regarded as a liminal place. Then, the discussion revolves around each element of this liminal forest – its in-betweenness, opposite potentials, ambiguity, transformative and transitional power. Eventually, the argument will focus on Shakespeare's use of this liminal place as his strategic tool for the criticism of the late Elizabethan court, its politics and practices in relation to Essex's banishment and exile as well as other ongoing troubles in the country such as problematic land politics and the practice of colonialism.

To begin with, it is necessary to deal with the historical context of the late Elizabethan period considering that Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It* at the peak of the political problems of the time, the source of which was the court. Therefore, the first aspect which illustrates the political issues of the age can be described in regard to the relationship between the Queen and her courtiers and the rivalry between her courtiers. As a matter of fact, the 1590s, the last decade of the Tudor reign, emerged as one of the periods of trouble, decay and chaos in English history. The war with Spain, religious tension in the country, the concurrent succession problem and financial troubles exhausted the aging Queen. Although she empowered her position after the Spanish Armada in 1588, she was still vulnerable as a Protestant and an unmarried queen who did not have an heir to her throne. In the cauldron of problems, she had to depend on her court to grant her authority over the country. "The queen," Curtis C. Breight claims, "seemingly had little choice but to throw herself into the hands of Protestant new men all ambitious to enrich and ennoble themselves at the expense of the established aristocracy and anyone else who got in their way" (27) since the beginning of her reign. It is beyond doubt that the court was a powerful political institution, and Elizabeth was the head of this establishment. Yet the court, particularly, was associated with rivalry, competition, ambition and corruption in the late Elizabethan era. This is most clearly evidenced in the oppositional relationships of the courtiers. Although the Queen entrusted her favourite courtiers with important

governmental duties, the eminent figures of her court tended to plot against each other and the head of the state. More precisely, those, yearning to attain power and status even after the Queen's death, entailed a hard struggle at the court. The rivalry between Robert Cecil (1563-1612), William Cecil's son, and the Earl of Essex was illustrative of such a contest for power. Their antagonism was marked by "intelligence-gathering and covert operations in a brutal game not of who would but of who wouldn't succeed to the throne, the prize being control of the coveted secretaryship and hence domination of the state" (Breight 124). Cecil and Essex's desire to control the succession issue was rooted in their endeavour to dictate the next monarch by becoming his councillor after the Queen's death. This purpose led them to organise conspiracies against each other, and Cecil became victorious over his enemy: "Cecil's astute diplomacy discreetly paved the way for the peaceful accession of James himself as 'guider'" (Ruff and Wilson 5). All this reveals that the late Elizabethan court was the locus of self-interest, corruption and decay because individual profits dominated the political institution.

Moreover, Elizabeth's personal relations with her courtiers brought forth dissent and disorder to the country. As a point of interest, in time the Queen's relationship with Essex posed problems in national and international affairs. Essex was initially a favourite of the Queen, but his ambitious and rebellious nature later deteriorated his connection with her. At first, Essex was a young courtier who drew attention with his bravery and military skills at the court. He appeared to be like a knight of the chivalric world on the Accession Day of 1595 (Dusinberre, "*As You Like It*" 416) and won Elizabeth's favour. He was always willing to lead an expedition in the name of his Queen, expecting and demanding a higher position in the government. Thus, the first half of the 1590s was the years of recognition, reputation and success for Essex. For instance, in 1591, he was sent to Dieppe to aid Henri IV (1553-1610), the King of France; he also aided Henri IV in his siege of Rouen (O'Day 28). When this unsuccessful siege took a long time, Essex, like a knight in chivalric romances, asked for a single combat against the Governor of Rouen although it was refused (McCoy 81; Strachey 27). In 1592, Essex had to return to England upon Elizabeth's command. In 1593, she declared him her Privy Councillor. In the second half of the 1590s, however, Essex's relationship with the Queen became more complicated. When he tried to control the Queen's appointments at the court in order to empower his

own position, he fell from favour and failed in his attempts to regain his status. Between 1596-1597, Essex was on an expedition in Cadiz in order to gain victory against Spain, but his expedition costed the country a lot as he could not bring any treasure home. The Queen was enraged at his failure: “[T]he spirit of avarice was too strong in Elizabeth for her easily to put up with the loss of her anticipated profits” (Devereux 1:389). Yet Essex grew into a more ambitious figure after his unsuccessful return. And when the Queen did not appoint him as Lord Admiral, he withdrew himself from the court. Although he was soon entitled Earl Marshal, his position did not satisfy him (Williamson 420).

To further understand Essex’s problematic position at the court, what happened during and after the Irish expedition of 1599 needs to be explained. It was actually the last straw for Essex when he was sent to Ireland as Lord Deputy to quash the revolt led by the Earl of Tyrone in 1599. Although he knew that his absence at the court would trouble him after his return, he obeyed the Queen’s order. Richard C. McCoy gives an account of Essex’s own words before undertaking this task: “Just before departing in 1599 he wrote that ‘I am not ignorant what are the disadvantages of absence, the opportunities of practicing enemies, when they are neither encountered nor overlooked, the constructions of Princes under whom *magna fama* is more dangerous than *mala*’” (96). It seems probable that Essex was aware of Cecil’s power at the court, and he wanted to try his fortune in Ireland to regain the Queen’s support. Chris Butler claims that Essex aspired to use the Irish as a weapon against Cecil: “Robert Devereux saw the situation in 1590s Ireland as a means of raising a pan-Celtic army that could enforce a challenge to the centralized and centralizing Cecilian status quo” (90). Obviously, it is not clear whether Essex had this purpose in mind, but, undoubtedly, he later made great mistakes. As it was hard for Elizabeth to meet the expense of the Irish rebellions, she resisted the idea of retreat at first. It is known that Essex was troubled because of limited military facilities in Ireland. Even though he sent letters to ask the Privy Council to provide him with more military supplies, Cecil and his supporters declined his demands, leading him to despair (Asquith 176-177). Thus, the Earl constantly delayed the Queen’s plan to march on Ulster. While his failure to re-establish English control over Ireland disappointed the Queen, Essex’s appointment of Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s patron, as Master of Horse and his nomination of his followers as knights angered the Queen because he acted

without royal consent (Loomis 56). Above all, Essex met with the leader of the Irish rebellion to declare a truce even though he did not inform the Queen about his decisions (Ruff and Wilson 4-5). This allowed Cecil and his supporters to damage Essex's reputation at the court. Cecil's comment on Essex's return underlines this point. As reported, Cecil "said, the whole fault of the bad success in Ireland lay in that ominous journey into Munster; that the Earl in all his journeys did nothing but make circles of errors, which were all bound up in the knot of his disobedient return" (Devereux 2:104-105).

In the cauldron of those events, one may speculate that Essex's departure from the court during the Irish expedition was a kind of exile, an early sign of his loss of power and his final fall. Albeit he had struggled to occupy a dominant position at the court, he was sent to Ireland whereas Cecil was given more responsibility in the management of the government. Essex's presence in Ireland might have been a hope and chance to re-establish his reputation, but it was rather like an exile for the Earl, and the circumstances of the time drove him to a different path in the end. While Cecil rose to power, Essex's being kept away from the court made him openly disregard the Queen's orders. On the one hand, Essex's loss of power can be regarded as a result of Cecil's plots against him. On the other hand, it is possible to speculate about the Queen's envy of Essex's charm. Essex's previous military successes and charisma posed a threat to the Queen's dominance. According to Lytton Strachey's account, Elizabeth was disturbed by Essex's potential when she found out that he was complimented like an ancient hero in a sermon at St Paul's Cathedral (72). When she later became aware of a book about Henry IV which had a Latin dedication written to praise Essex (Strachey 121-122), her courtier's influence on people irritated her. Moreover, Essex even knighted Elizabeth's godson John Harington (1561-1612) in 1599 (Kinney and Lawson 221) which meant that he established a feudal bond between him and Harington without royal authorisation. Therefore, his powerful popularity appears to have brought out his growing separation from the court and the Queen.

Eventually, Essex's separation from the court and Elizabeth led him to a forced exile and initiated a spirit of rebellion. To illustrate what happened after his failure in the Irish

expedition, it can be claimed that the Earl finally reached the point of no return. It is known that Essex immediately returned to England without the Queen's order. He lost control of himself and overstepped the limits set by the Queen by intruding into her bedchamber. There is little doubt that he was absolutely disfavoured by the female monarch after this event. Essex was even put on trial on 5 June 1600, and the decision was for him to be put under house arrest. Hence, he was banished from the court and kept under house arrest until the end of that summer. For the Accession Day celebrations of 1600, he attempted to maintain his reputation and attended the tournaments in disguise, but Elizabeth and her courtiers prevented his access to the courtly entertainment (McCoy 99). That is to say, following Essex's intrusion into the Queen's bedroom, he was banished from the court and forced to live in exile in the end. When Essex lost his last hope in 1600, he was soon driven to debt, outrage and rebellion at this stage of his life.

With respect to the course of such intricate events, it is necessary to highlight the strong connection between the problematic politics of the late Elizabethan court and *As You Like It* here. Broadly speaking, Shakespeare's works can be underpinned in relation to complex court affairs and his patron's troublesome circle. *As You Like It*, in particular, deals with the political matters of the time in regard to Essex's experience of banishment and exile since the play was written in the period when Essex was involved in a crisis with Elizabeth. Considering that the play is about the experience of political exiles escaping from a usurped kingdom and corrupt court to the forest, it is possible to observe in this comedy the political context of the late Elizabethan period concerning Essex's troubles. Actually, the play, written at the peak of Essex's troubles between 1599-1600, reconsiders the cases of banishment and exile in a light-hearted manner. Duke Senior with his followers is in exile in the Forest of Arden as his young brother, Duke Frederick, usurped his throne. Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind, remains at the court after her father's exile, but her uncle is later determined to banish Rosalind because she is a political threat for his daughter Celia's future. However, Celia loves Rosalind more than her father Duke Frederick so she does not want to leave her. Hence, these two young women of the court along with the fool, Touchstone, go to the Forest of Arden. Although Celia and Touchstone are not banished from the court, they choose to accompany the banished

subject Rosalind. These complex family relationships enable Shakespeare to dwell on the facts about Elizabethan political and social life.

Specifically, it is possible to trace Elizabeth's methods of punishment in Shakespeare's play at first. To illustrate, Jane Kingsley-Smith emphasises that banishment was a common punishment, and it was the Queen's favourite penalty: "Under Elizabeth, proclamations were issued for the banishment of Anabaptists, the Irish, Negroes and even those whose swords exceeded the length set down in the sumptuary laws" (11). The popularity of this punishment becomes most evident when the proclamations of banishment are examined during the Tudor reign. Moreover, Elizabeth constantly expelled her courtiers; Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) was one of those courtiers as he was banished because he married without the Queen's permission (Williamson 418). Essex's banishment was comparatively a more serious case for Shakespeare since his patron, Southampton, was a part of Essex's network. Therefore, it is possible to analyse Shakespeare's use of political themes in relation to Essex's plight. Nick Potter, for instance, confirms this idea, claiming that *As You Like It* corresponds to Essex's political situation ("Wildness" 83) while Bevington specifically argues that this play illustrates Essex's banishment in the figure of Duke Senior (*Tudor Drama* 18). Put simply, Essex's story can be traced in the sojourn of the characters in Shakespeare's comedy. This chapter, hence, aims to reveal how Shakespeare managed to offer a political criticism of the Queen's practice of exile and banishment without being exposed to censorship or punishment. In this regard, the chapter points to Shakespeare's strategic use of liminal place, the Forest of Arden, to criticise Elizabeth's punishment method, but with much needed ambiguity, in a period when the political content of plays was restrained by the tools of the state.

In addition to banishment and exile, *As You Like It* critically deals with other political issues that echo the political problems of the late Elizabethan reign. The theme of usurpation represented in the comedy is such a key issue, adding to the political overtone of the play. The conflict between Duke Senior and Duke Frederick is about the ownership of the throne as Duke Frederick usurped his elder brother's right. Moreover, a similar problem is observed in the relationship between Sir Rowland de Boys's two sons. De

Boys's younger son Orlando's access to his father's heritage is prevented by his elder brother Oliver. When Orlando complains about his lack of financial support and education, Oliver plans to destroy him in a wrestling match so Orlando escapes from the court to the Forest of Arden. As can be observed, the play with these parallel stories becomes a record of usurpation regarding the fact that the act of usurpation triggers the course of other events in the play. In this context, Edward Tomarken calls *As You Like It* "a drama about political usurpation" (5) when he especially reconsiders the play's perception at the times of political troubles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Shakespeare's working with the theme of usurpation apparently depicts the struggle to seize the throne and power. Probably, the idea of usurpation might meet with a critical acclaim in the last years of Elizabeth's reign considering that her court had become a site of contest among her courtiers. Cecil and Essex's political ambition at the Elizabethan court may allude to the strife to seize power in the play. They initially endeavoured to retain control over the Queen's government and later undertook a struggle to have a strong position in the reign of the next monarch. As the Queen was aging, there was a serious discussion on the appointment of an heir for throne. In other words, in the last decade of her reign, the Queen's power was fading while her courtiers attempted to maintain their places at the new court. In this atmosphere, Elizabeth was reluctant to choose her heir whereas her courtiers, Cecil and Essex in particular, were in touch with James on the Scottish throne. The succession crisis led the country into an ambiguous stage, arousing a fear of usurpation on the part of the Queen. It was during this period that Shakespeare rendered two family portraits – Duke Senior/Duke Frederick and Sir Rowland de Boys's sons – in which he handled the problem of usurpation in a delicate manner.

Additionally, this subject matter of usurpation is embedded in the concept of primogeniture in Shakespeare's play. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare's use of this political concept needs to be clarified in relation to the storyline of the play. In fact, the practice of primogeniture as an allusion to the political troubles of the age is discussed in the play when England was going through a period of ambiguity since Elizabeth had no heir and refused to choose a successor. On the one hand, Duke Frederick seizes the throne, violating his elder brother's right to succeed to the throne. On the other hand, this abuse is juxtaposed with Oliver and Orlando's case; Orlando's objection to Oliver's usurpation

of his powerful position unfolds different aspects of primogeniture. The elder brother's privilege of inheritance appears to be a form of political corruption when Orlando is mistreated by Oliver. That is to say, the play foregrounds the practice of primogeniture in an oppositional approach. In essence, this principle of inheritance is open to discussion as it gradually turned into an abusive practice. More than this, the debate on inheritance rights may be related to the succession crisis at that time. The comic nature of the play brings out reconciliation between opposing parts in the end: it is announced that Duke Frederick decided to give up his earthly desires when he met a hermit in the forest, hence, Duke Senior's regime is restored; and, Orlando's saving Oliver from the attacks of a snake and a lioness helps him get the highest position at the court. Moreover, Orlando and Oliver's decision to marry the cousins, Rosalind and Celia, enables them to solve their familial and political problems. While the debate about the rightful heir in *As You Like It* is settled, this crisis represents the unsettled troubles in England in the last years of Elizabeth's reign.

Actually, *As You Like It*'s political themes make it a daring play and shape its performance history. It should be noted that this comedy has not been a popular play to be performed on stage since its first performance. According to Chambers's account, the play was first recorded in Stationers' Register on 4 August 1600 (*William* 248) although Juliet Dusinberre focuses on the references to pancake in the play and claims that it "was performed at Richmond on Shrove Tuesday, 20 February 1599, we know it was for a traditional Shrovetide festivity, because a special store was provided for powdered beef. Courtiers were eating an Elizabethan version of pancakes, stuffed with meat" ("Pancakes" 401). Even though its performance date is a matter of discussion, it is known that the play had no quarto edition, but it only appeared in print in the Folio of 1623. Moreover, after its first performance, there was no record of its being staged in the Elizabethan period which suggests that the political content of the play might pose a threat to the playmakers following Essex's rebellion in 1601. As for its later performances, Richard Wilson declares that the play was staged for James in December of 1603 ("Like" 19). Then, it took a long time for *As You Like It* to be on stage as it was only revived in 1740. After this date, it was regularly performed (Tomarken 7). What is striking about this comedy is that there is a long gap in its performance history from the seventeenth to the eighteenth

century. This might be because of the play's political messages owing to its political subject matter. The themes of the play such as the right to inherit the throne, usurpation, banishment and exile were alarming for the reader/audience during the political upheavals of English history. When Essex was executed and Southampton was imprisoned, Shakespeare's theatre company did not choose to stage this play. Also, after the restoration of the monarchy in Charles II's (1630-1685) reign, the representation of usurpation and exile on stage was not popular because of its political implications. That is to say, the play has political innuendos at its heart which has made it, at times, unpopular on stage.

In addition to *As You Like It*'s political themes and performance history, the setting of the play contributes to its liminality. In fact, most of the discussion about the Forest of Arden revolves around the pastoral traits of the setting. The fact that the play presents the court only in the first act whereas the rest of the four acts is set in the Forest of Arden shapes the play's highly recognised connection with the pastoral vision. In the play, the forest becomes a site in which an alternative community is established to provide a critique of corruption and decay at the court. Broadly speaking, the community in Arden is contrasted with the members of the court in terms of their virtues and manners, and there appears a contrast between the two worlds. At this stage, the forest is framed as a pastoral setting with an access to the natural world with its shepherd characters and their concerns. From this vantage point, the play is referred to as a pastoral comedy: David Erskine Baker in 1764 called it "the truest pastoral drama that ever was written; nor is it ever seen without pleasure to all present" (25); and, in 1817, William Hazlitt defined the play as "a pastoral drama, in which the interest arises more out of the sentiments and characters than out of the actions or situations" (33). Conversely, John Powell Ward later questioned the perception of this work as a pastoral play, calling attention to the minor roles of shepherds and shepherdesses in the plot and Shakespeare's omission of details in relation to their lives (4). Nevertheless, it should be noted that *As You Like It* draws on the characteristics of the pastoral tradition in a way that Shakespeare's use of the pastoral makes it possible to underline the liminal dynamics of the play's genre and the forest setting. Therefore, the rest of the argument will explore these facets of the liminal setting.

Here a brief look at the characteristics of the pastoral tradition may be helpful to pursue its influence on Shakespeare's play. Broadly conceived, pastoral works depict an idealised country life with a specific emphasis on the simple lives of shepherds. Set in a rural landscape, pastoral works are designed to offer a comparative perspective in two different world views as natural world is juxtaposed with urban lifestyle. The focal point of such works is to reflect modesty, humility and contentedness of shepherds, living in the country with limited facilities. Their world is tinged with the images of Eden, Arcadia or the Golden Age myth because shepherds and shepherdesses are usually presented as living in spring air, enjoying the pleasures of their surroundings and not encountering the harsh realities of life. The pastoral's utopian atmosphere may suggest an escape from the real world, but it should be noted that it actually fuses reality and imagination in a way that it creates an alternative world to comment on the concerns of the real world. In other words, the representation of an ideal world is a tool to express a disapproval of its suggestive opposites. There occurs a critical mode in the pastoral convention as it aims to produce a critique of ambitious courtly life in opposition to the peace and bliss of rural life.

Crucially, the pastoral's critical mode is significant in this tradition so it is important to reveal more about this issue. Initially, it can be stated that the veiled criticism of the pastoral convention is a result of its ambivalent relationship with its reader/audience. Granted that the juxtaposition of contradicting values is the issue in the pastoral tradition, Patrick Cullen points out that "in its straining to break its own bonds to attach itself to, or progress to, greater things, pastoral manifests an ambivalence, a tension between opposing values" (12) and states that "[t]his ambivalence is perhaps even more obvious in Renaissance pastoral than in classical pastoral; for the issues involved in pastoral – art and nature, the active life and the contemplative life, complexity and simplicity – were possibly even more acute then than in classical times" (12). This ambivalence can be related to the ironic tone of the Renaissance pastoral. As a case in point, Renaissance pastoral drama is a courtly entertainment written to "please a king or queen with shepherds who dance, sing, and turn compliments to the royal patron" (Young, "Pastoral" 199). Although the monarch and court members are the target audience, their lifestyle in the representation of country, nature and love is criticised and satirised on stage. All this

reveals that the pastoral mode in the early modern period takes on a new role to handle the contemporary concerns of the age other than the presentation of idyllic life. As Helen Cooper lists, "politics and panegyric, religious comment, ecclesiastical and social satire, personal allusion, moral instruction, peasant life, prophecy, age and youth, the changing seasons and death" (144) are the popular topics in the early modern pastoral works. While pastoral drama aims at entertaining the nobles, it delicately challenges the reader/audience, pinpointing the decadence, corruption and destructive ambitions of their world. This indicates that the pastoral is an ambiguous and arbitrary literary convention in regard to its themes and its address to the reader/audience.

Moreover, it has to be recognised that the pastoral form is adapted by and combined with different types of narratives such as romance and satire. As the pastoral addresses the court, there is a tendency to mingle the pastoral convention with romance because it tells the story of aristocratic love and adventure. This combination becomes highly functional when playwrights work with the pastoral for the stage. David Young explains the essence of the pastoral romance: "What is of particular is the way in which the play begins to sketch out the pastoral romance pattern of extrusion from society – the characters choosing disguise and a rustic existence until justice and equilibrium are restored – which was to become the basis of English pastoral drama" (*The Heart's* 15). Therefore, the sojourn of the courtiers in a pastoral landscape enables the playwright to contrast the opposite worlds, values and manners when the characters from the upper class get involved with the simple lives of shepherds and shepherdesses and have an adventure together. In addition to romance, satire is embedded in the pastoral tradition which empowers its social and political criticism. Catherine Bates clarifies the integration of the pastoral and satire, stating that "[s]atire more often took the form of a generalised invective which managed, by attacking the many, to spare the few, making blame not infrequently an inverted form of praise. This explains why the pastoral genre lent itself so well to the deliberate cultivation of ambiguity" (366). Evidently, the ambiguous tone of the pastoral can be regarded as functional when it makes use of satire to highlight the differences between the court and country. Considering that the pastoral is also a means to offer political and social criticism, the use of satirical tone is inevitable in such works.

As can be observed, the pastoral is fused with the elements of other genres particularly when it is employed in dramatic works.

In order to establish the connection between the pastoral and Shakespeare's play, one may claim that the playwright adapted this genre when pastoral works were popular on the early modern stage. Considering the form and content of *As You Like It*, it appears that he appropriated the pastoral tradition in a peculiar way which can be reviewed. It has to be acknowledged that this comedy is actually Shakespeare's reworking of Thomas Lodge's (1558-1625) *Rosalynde; Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590) which is a pastoral romance. Shakespeare borrows most of his plot from this work and creates a pastoral surrounding in the Forest of Arden. The play presents the familiar traits of the pastoral tradition and anti-court satire regarding that the characters escape from the court to a pastoral setting in which the themes of this tradition are elaborated in the love affairs of shepherds and rustics, and the privileged position of the natural world. Silvius, a shepherd in Arden, suffers from his love for Phoebe, a shepherdess, while Touchstone decides to marry Audrey, a country girl. Moreover, life for these newcomers in the pastoral landscape is not associated with restriction and confinement; on the contrary, it suggests freedom and liberty from oppressive boundaries. From the start of the play, the characters and nature reciprocally define each other. As the courtiers in exile regard the forest as a place of liberation, the forest metamorphoses and takes on the meaning that is attributed to it by means of the characters' experience. While shaping the pastoral world, Shakespeare equally pays attention to the development of his characters. This interest, Jeffrey S. Theis argues, makes the play take on a specific type of the pastoral which is sylvan pastoral. Theis explains that it is "a mode that is as active as it is reflective in defining and transforming humanity's relationship to nature. Instead of being a sophisticated reaction to the way things are, sylvan pastoral creates the way things are by helping characters engage with the land" (42). In this regard, Shakespeare brings together diverse opinions about nature through the perspective of his characters.

By focusing on Shakespeare's own way of constructing the pastoral world, it is possible to say that the play is not about the native inhabitants of Arden, but it is preoccupied with those coming from the court. What is at stake here is that the courtiers in the forest bear

the trace of chivalric values in that the romance tradition is blended with the pastoral in the play. The implications of courtly life in Arden indicate that the play is more than a pastoral writing with an interest in depicting the natural world; however, these suggestions enable the playwright to deal with the political and social crises of his age. While this pastoral romance illustrates the Elizabethan court and its atmosphere in a rural setting, Shakespeare satirises both urban and pastoral worlds as well as the mode of the pastoral writing. Cynthia Marshall argues that

> [Shakespeare] works on some complex changes on the tradition: rather than evoking on stage the idealised descriptions of classical pastoral, *As You Like It* offers down-to-earth country figures and treats them as if they were ideal. In the process, Shakespeare mocks the literary ideal as well as the rural folk. Through this process the pastoral convention is itself exposed as hollow, contributing to the play's multifaceted inquiry into the nature of reality. (4)

That is to say, Shakespeare uses the pastoral for satire by taking advantage of the satirical approach to urban life in pastoral works, and his satire is double-edged. On the one hand, he ridicules and juxtaposes the characters who gather in the pastoral site despite their class differences. In this regard, the playwright satirises their values and world views by putting a mirror to the nature of rustics and courtiers. On the other hand, he aims to mock the pastoral tradition because the rural setting is not idealised, and the characters suffer from the problems of the real-world such as economic difficulties and hunger. Therefore, he appears to suggest that the heavenly atmosphere of the classical pastoral is impossible to achieve. While the court is associated with usurpation, deceit and counterfeit, Arden is associated with ambiguity in Shakespeare's work, suggesting the playwright's ambivalent attitude that cannot be clearly defined.

Regarding Shakespeare's use of the pastoral, it seems reasonable to argue that his working with this tradition has a characteristic common to liminality since it cannot be identified in one way. This amounts to saying that Shakespeare plays on the dynamics of liminal ambiguity in his work. Young's conceptualisation of the pastoral is significant to grasp this point as he posits that the pastoral "was a form in which you could have something both ways, thus was potentially comprehensive and resonant" (*The Heart's* 35). The pastoral's inclusion of "both ways" indicates a liminal aspect of the genre as it suggests in-betweenness and ambiguity. Taking this as the premise, it can be observed that *As You*

Like It operates at the crossroads of the pastoral, romance and satire. It shares certain traits of these three categories so that the play can be classified in different ways although it is associated with one main type of drama which is comedy. Nevertheless, the play is a combination of the three conventions which makes it hard to classify it. It can be called a pastoral play, a pastoral romance or a pastoral which hovers between romance and satire. Seen in this light, the play is on the threshold of different modes of writing, and this complex categorisation makes it a liminal play.

More importantly, the landscape that the pastoral provides shows the trace of liminality, too. As part of Shakespeare's use of liminality in the play, one may need to think about the social and cultural limbo that the pastoral landscape offers to the characters. The pastoral setting, as the one in *As You Like It,* gathers a wide range of figures, and fuses and contrasts their values in a way that the setting becomes a multifaceted site. In reference to the pastoral's use of other genres, Judy Z. Kronenfeld emphasises the liminal quality of the setting as follows: "The high and the low, the rich and the poor, may literally confront each other in those forms of pastoral in which the chivalric romance has combined with the eclogue to yield the pastoral romance plot of exile, sojourn in a pastoral place, and return to the court" (334). As noted in this quotation, the pastoral setting turns into a place which encompasses the distinct perspectives of the characters, and constitutes an in-between state between opposite values and, accordingly, disallows a particular meaning with a state of ambiguity. To some extent, the pastoral landscape offers different meanings to the characters depending on their social status.

Moreover, the setting itself becomes a place of becoming. Peter V. Marinelli points out that the Arcadian land of the pastoral is

> a middle country of imagination, half-way between a past perfection and a present imperfection, a place of Becoming rather than Being, where an individual's potencies for the arts of life and love and poetry are explored and tested. It points two ways, therefore, backward into the past and forward into a possible future. (37)

The pastoral landscape, in other words, has an in-between nature since it mediates between the past and the future. Viewed in this way, the pastoral landscape has a liminal

quality as it evokes a fusion of values, in-betweenness and transformation by offering a process of becoming.

The Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* is a liminal place. In fact, the forest, in general terms, is associated with liminality in anthropological studies. Initially, the forest is listed among liminal places by van Gennep who claims that any person in the forest "physically and magico-religiously" oscillates between two realms and goes through a transitional state (18). Turner, too, delineates the spatial aspect of liminality as a "place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action" (*The Ritual* 167). Accordingly, Shakespeare's forest in *As You Like It* can be counted as a liminal place. Duke Senior, Rosalind, Celia and Orlando leave the court and go to the forest after they have a crisis with authority figures. Therefore, they retreat from their usual course of social life at the court to the forest. In this withdrawal from courtly life, the forest provides a refuge to the characters, but Arden is not simply an Arcadian or utopian pastoral setting. While the forest is a temporary host and enables the characters to transform themselves, it is actually fraught with contradictions and ambiguity.

To provide a clear focus on the discussion of the liminal forest, the etymological root of the word "forest" is important in this sense. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the forest as "[a]n extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth, sometimes intermingled with pasture" and "[a] wild uncultivated waste, a wilderness" ("Forest"). The meaning is also framed within the law of monarchy since the forest is "[a] woodland district, usually belonging to the king, set apart for hunting wild beasts and game, etc. [. . .]; having special laws and officers of its own" ("Forest"). As noted in these definitions, the landscape can be regarded as a forest when it is either cultivated or like a desert. Simply put, the delineation of the forest is laden with contradiction considering that the forest might be a wasteland or a store of trees as a woodland. Moreover, it is imposed by law that the forest belongs to the king who uses this place to hunt. This indicates that the forest is a restricted area which makes it inaccessible to a certain group of people. The forest is also defined by John Manwood who wrote a documentary work about English forests in the Elizabethan period. Manwood's *A Treatise of the Laws of the Forest* (1592), later enlarged by William Nelson in 1717, is a significant popular document of that period

as it gives an account of the historical forests. In this documentary work, Manwood defines the forest, narrates its historical background and lists the rules of forest life. According to Manwood's definition, the forest is "a certain Territory of woody Grounds and fruitful Paftures, privileged for wild Beafts and Fowls of Foreft, Chafe, and Warren, to reft and abide there in the fafe Protection of the King, for his Delight and Pleafure; which Territory of Ground fo privileged is meered and bounded with unremoveable Marks, Meers and Boundaries" (143). Compared to the definition of the forest by *The Oxford English Dictionary* above, Manwood's definition is a more specific one, depicting the forest area in the Elizabethan era. Interestingly, Manwood also suggests an English combination of the word forest, stating that "we [the English] have made an *Englifh* Word, Foreft, which is compounded of *For* and *Reft*, the Name being derived from the Nature of the Place which is privileged by the King for the Reft and Abode of the Wild Beafts" (Manwood 151-152). Therefore, the forest is claimed to be a place for resting, particularly for the king, indicating its privileged position for the monarch. What is more, the word is derived from the Latin word *foresta* which first appeared as a legal term in the Merovingian reign in France (Harrison 69). There are other possible etymological roots from Latin words such as *foris* and *forestare*. The first word means "outside" whereas the latter signifies the verb "to keep out, to place off limits, to exclude" (Harrison 69). Thus, the forest comes to be seen as a marginal and peripheral land: the forest is outside of central constructions in a city or kingdom. David Rollason, likewise, refers to this point, stating that the forest

> seems to have applied to areas which were peripheral or marginal, such as Ardennes, and earlier texts, notably those by George of Tours, as well as some later documents, used the term *silva* with a clear meaning of 'wood,' or *saltus*, a term deriving from Roman usage and meaning an uncultivated and lordless area which, in the Roman context, therefore belonged to the emperor. (431)

Rollason's explanation not only comments on the marginal status of the forest but also points at another significant word, *silva*. When this word is looked up in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, it directs the reader to examine other related words *selva* and *selvage/selvedge*. The first one is defined as "[a] tract of densely wooded country lying in the basin of the river Amazon" ("Selva"). Evidently, selva is associated with a particular woodland. The second one is claimed to be a combination of words "self" and "edge" which is used as a noun and verb, meaning "[a] marginal tract, border, edge" and

"[t]o form a boundary or edging to" ("Selvage, selvedge"). This definition lays the ground for the perception of the forest as a liminal place because it notably correlates the site with the state of being on a threshold, border or edge. Regarded in this light, even the etymological root of forest as a word is embedded in the basic meaning of liminality.

Taking all these into consideration, the rest of this chapter deals with the detailed scrutiny of the Forest of Arden as a liminal place. The first feature of Shakespeare's liminal forest can be explored in the playwright's construction of this place. The Forest of Arden, to be more precise, oscillates between fact and fiction, revealing a liminal state of in-betweenness. In other words, Shakespeare creates both a real forest and an imaginative one in his presentation of Arden and situates it on this threshold. One strand of argument about the fusion of reality and imagination suggests that this is a common characteristic in Shakespeare's works. It is quite natural for him to remain rooted in the real world, be inspired by the events of real life and enrich it with his imaginative power. On the other hand, this combination designs an in-between state as well as ambiguity both of which is a liminal quality. "In spatial terms," Rory Slater and Adrian Coyle posit, "liminality refers to a threshold or realm of in-betweenness [. . .], creating a space of alternative ordering and possibility (372). The Forest of Arden, hence, reveals this aspect of liminality in Shakespeare's play. While the general discussions about *As You Like It* are entailed with a specific focus on the identification of the real forest and the fictive one, the presence of this in-betweenness can be reconsidered in terms of liminal spatiality. To put it differently, the analysis of the real and imaginative aspects of Arden can be directed to Arden's liminal trait since the forest emerges as an ambivalent place which is real and fictive at the same time.

To begin with the forest's physical location, it is telling that the sources that Shakespeare borrows from provide a point about the development of this liminal place in his play. In one particular respect, Lodge's *Rosalynde* is functional in the context of *As You Like It*'s liminal setting since the play's setting is a locale on the threshold. In essence, Shakespeare's source text is set in the French court and the Forest of Ardennes. The details of play do not cast doubt on the setting's Frenchness as it is located between the French cities of Bordeaux and Lyons. Although Anne Barton claims that Lodge's

Ardennes resembles Waltham Forest in London (130), the play does not appear to have any suggestions to indicate that it is an English setting. What is peculiar about this forest is that Ardennes is actually like a borderland among countries. Maurice A. Hunt suggests that "the forest of Ardennes in Lodge's *Rosalynde* [is] a territory straddling the boundaries of modern France, Belgium, and Luxembourg" (78). That is to say, Ardennes is a forest on the edge of the three European countries. Its being on the threshold reveals the place's liminal quality. Furthermore, the European context of this forest can be evidenced in Italian sources. Matteo Mario Boiardo's (1440-1494) *Orlando Innamorato* (1483-1495) and Ludovico Aristo's (1474-1533) *Orlando Furioso* (1532), which are Italian epics elaborated with the elements of romance, might be other sources for Shakespeare's Arden (Forsyth, "Shakespeare's Italian Forest" 374). Sarah Elizabeth Morris amasses evidence that these texts in translation were popular in England during Shakespeare's lifetime, and the name Arden was introduced in these Italian stories (16). She highlights Shakespeare's combination of the French setting, Italian epic and England references, saying that "the basis for Shakespeare's Arden and his other sylvan settings arrived in England as a French setting hidden within an Italian story" (Morris 17). Such a complex structure in the depiction of Arden signifies a multiple layer which again makes it hard to define. Shakespeare, therefore, seems to use this distant French setting and benefit from Italian works to name it, but he obviously uses the forest's English spelling in a way that he purposefully raises ambiguity about the forest's exact location.

As seen above, the ambivalence about the Forest of Arden emanates from its unidentified location. In one respect, Shakespeare forms a close tie with Lodge's text, suggesting that it is the same French forest. The play indicates it in the details as follows: Orlando "is the stubbornest young fellow of France" (I. i. 133-134); Duke Frederick's court is a distant French court where the courtiers use some French words (I. ii. 96), and some characters like Le Beau and Jaques have French names. The distance from England is also emphasises in Charles's depiction of Arden in comparison to Robin Hood's English forest (I. i. 111). At this moment, the Frenchness of the setting is emphasised, and the playwright cautiously voices his critical remarks on the English court by means of the distant setting of play. According to Dusinberre's account, the attempt to identify Arden with France has a political dimension:

> The first act of the play is at pains to stress the 'Frenchness' of the court, perhaps in order to avoid its seeming too near home. The Flanders Ardennes would have evoked Elizabethan memories of Leicester's campaign in the Low Countries in the 1580s which constituted Essex's military debut and made him the natural heir to the chivalric world of Leicester and Sidney. ("*As You Like It*" 415)

Clearly, Shakespeare plays on the in-between setting and tries to avoid a direct reference to Essex so he emphasises that the setting is in France. In another respect, however, the exact location of Duke Frederick's court remains unnamed. This detail destroys the design of the French setting as it causes ambivalence and confusion. Besides, the use of English spelling of the forest's name is problematic considering that it recalls an English setting. Anne Barton asserts that Ardennes is actually a Celtic name, and it literally means forest or woods even in its English spelling (128). Hence, it is possible to argue that Shakespeare may be using the name Arden to evoke a general sense of a forest. More likely, however, the green world in this play can be particularly identified with an English setting when the historical and political context of Shakespeare's age is reconsidered.

The current debate about the forest's liminal location illustrates that the play strategically works on this ambiguity to allude to England from a safe distance. This leads to reconsider the liminal in-betweenness of the forest in relation to the realistic aspect, that is the setting's being established in a real place, particularly in England. If one begins thinking about Arden and England, it should be noted that the site of a forest is an important aspect of English history and culture so it has an influence on Shakespeare's creation of Arden. Indeed, England has hosted many green acres, woodlands and forests throughout its history. After the Norman Conquest, the kings protected forest lands as their hunting sites and kept them under laws and rules in that the concept of royal forest emerged in England (Young, *The Royal* 2-3). The designation of royal forests introduced a privilege to the monarchy and royalty whereas it signified a limitation for common people. Therefore, there occurred transgression in the sense that the special laws of royal forests were violated when the borders were crossed by common people. In this regard, the forest became a site of resistance for the outlaws since power relations turned the forest into a battleground between owners and intruders. Yet it has to be recognised that all forest lands were not protected by the king even in the medieval period, and the Forest of Arden has never been included in the list of royal forests. B. K. Roberts states: "Never Royal

Forest, Arden developed its distinctive landscape of villages, hamlets, single farms, and small hedged fields as a result of being colonized relatively late" ("A Study" 101).

Thus, the Forest of Arden's story can be traced within the borders of England, and this can be related to Shakespeare's forest in the play. It is possible to speculate that Shakespeare's setting is the Forest of Arden in England as its name immediately recalls. When the play was written, Arden was situated on the northern side of Avon in Warwickshire, Shakespeare's hometown. Before Shakespeare's birth, the Forest of Arden was heavily filled with trees (Hunt, *Shakespeare's* 140), but the area was not much dense in Shakespeare's time. The forest covered some woodlands, pastures, a few agricultural lands and mines at the end of the sixteenth century (Barton, *The Shakespearean* 8). In the forest in the play, it is not easy to identify whether it is densely occupied with woods or trees. The references to the forest in the play focus on the use of words such as forest, wood, tree or forester. Although the type of trees is not generally clarified in these references, a palm tree, olive trees and an oak tree are specifically mentioned (III. ii. 171-172; IV. iii. 76; IV. iii. 103). However, the forest is called a desert six times throughout the play: Duke Senior, Rosalind, Orlando, Celia and Oliver refer to Arden as a desert place (II.i.22; II.iv.71; II.vi.17; II.vii.111; III.ii.122; IV.iii.140). Thus, Shakespeare's depiction of the forest becomes complex on the grounds that he renders the place both as a green land and a desert at the same time.[6] Obviously, this creates an ambiguous state

[6] The performance history of the play reveals that the setting is designed either as a green site or as a wasteland. Evelyn O'Malley acknowledges that *As You Like It* is among Shakespeare's plays which are frequently performed in open-air sites, and its performance at Coombe Woods, Surrey in 1884 is an early example of the Victorian conception of the green forest in an outdoor performance (55). The performances taking place in and out of England in different times – at Barrett's Park in Henley-in-Arden in 1887 (Dobson 174), at St Leonards in 1922 (Dusinberre "Introduction"), in Regent's Park in 1933, in Boboli Gardens, Florence in 1938 (Speaight 164, 192), in the Central Park, New York in 2012 and in the parks of Wales in 2014 (O'Malley 130) – indicate that outdoor settings have been used to create a realistic green site for the play. The natural scenery is also portrayed in indoor theatres with the use of "seemingly real trees and grass" (Snow 45), with one apple tree on stage (Bevington, "Performance History") or symbolically represented with simple tools of "tree property" (Habicht 81). On the other hand, some productions focus on the play's illustration of the wasteland rather than the vision of the green habitat with trees. To demonstrate, Nigel Playfair's use of a dead deer on stage in 1919, Harcourt Williams's winter setting in 1932, Clifford Williams's usage of plastics and metal in 1967, George Roman's application of steel for the setting of the performance in 1977 and Stephen Pimlott's production with metal, aluminium and steel objects are some examples of staging the Forest of

because the topography of the forest cannot be clearly identified. Yet the approach to the forest appears to be in tune with its definition which can be an area full of trees or a desert, as stated above. Moreover, the forest in the play might illustrate the historical process of change taking place in Arden as its green areas diminished in time (Barton, *The Shakespearean* 128).

Indeed, the inhabitants of the forest are portrayed in line with Arden's real population at that time. Hunt claims that there were various kinds of people in the Forest of Arden in the Elizabethan period: "Hunters, gatherers, masterless men and women, and cottage industries populated this rapidly thinning woodland" (*Shakespeare's* 80). Likewise, Shakespeare's foresters are exiles, outlaws, courtiers, shepherds and country people. More interestingly, a real Arden family appears in this work. The surname of Orlando and Oliver, de Boys, is Shakespeare's version of Bordeaux in the original text, and it has an English spelling of "y" for "i" in the surname, standing for the French "de Bois" which means "of the forest" (Halio 201). While the meaning intensifies the emphasis on the forest, this surname, Anne Barton declares, belongs to a family living in Warwickshire and having a manor in Arden (130). This is to say that Shakespeare builds up his real Arden image in reference to the real inhabitants of the forest land, too.

Besides, the use of Arden can be related to the playwright's personal family story. Shakespeare's use of Arden may be a result of his childhood memories considering that the name of the forest also reminded Shakespeare of his mother's surname, (Mary) Arden. According to Greenblatt, the Ardens were an eminent family whose records of estate and properties were even kept in the Domesday Book of 1086. "It is possible, of course," Greenblatt assumes, "that his mother had filled her eldest son with tales of the Arden of Park all or even of Turchill of the Forest of Arden, the lordly ancestor whose lands merited four columns in the Domesday Book" (*Will* 85). This idea obviously adds a personal dimension to the choice of the name Arden for the forest in the play.

Arden as a kind of wasteland (Dusinberre, "Introduction" 69-71; Bevington, "Performance History"). This record of *As You Like It*'s production history suggests that the directors intend to highlight only one aspect of the forest in their productions.

Additionally, the different aspects of Arden's history can be observed in Shakespeare's forest which contributes to the setting's construction with a tinge of contemporary troublesome economic policies and practices on forest land in the late Elizabethan era. To begin with a reference to the facts of the time, one may report Ward's account that there were four million acres of forest in sixteenth-century England (6), but the number of such lands went into decline, especially in the Elizabethan era, because of the enforcement of enclosure. The practice of enclosure aimed to change the use of forests as a result of industrial and economic concerns. In the sixteenth century, certain English forest areas were privatised and transformed into agricultural areas or lands to raise livestock and produce wool, and the Forest of Arden was among such converted sites (Borlik 183). Elizabeth not only burnt down green areas to create material sources for the wood industry but also sold royal forests to avoid possible financial trouble since the Irish wars costed much (Theis 52; Barton, *The Shakespearean* 6-7). Viewed in this way, forests were converted into a battlefield for market economy which resulted in enclosure riots. In fact, enclosure generated severe problems for the common people because the price of food rapidly rose, resulting in a shortage of food. Thus, poor and hungry people rebelled so that "the 1590s were especially marked by social disorder and protest" (Suzuki 181). Although the Forest of Arden was not a royal forest, it was exposed to the practice of enclosure at that time, adding to the troubles of the common people in Warwickshire. The great lands were cleared and enclosed for industrial or agricultural purposes which led the local people to compete with each other to obtain land and survive without starvation (Wilson, "Like" 9).

Behind such consequences were some problems related to the forest itself that can be recognised in Shakespeare's play. The Forest of Arden had been highly populated owing to the surrounding villages and lands during the time that the forest was being usurped from the eleventh century up to the fourteenth century (Roberts, "A Study" 101-102). This process which can be regarded as a kind of colonisation in the Forest of Arden resulted in an increase in the forest population which is the first problem illustrated in the play. In the 1550s, in particular, its population was quite high because people moved to the forest after experiencing financial crisis with the rise of prices in the city (Russell 11). In Arden, animals and woodlands were exploited for economic reasons, and the forest

lands were later enclosed or deforested. Along with demographical changes, such practices, as stated, posed problems about finding land and producing food. Even though Arden did not witness striking violent events, the riots in Oxfordshire were extremely tense (Wilson, "Like" 5). Shakespeare might be alluding to the ongoing unrest in the country in his representation of Arden because the crisis is interwoven into the details of the play. Initially, the newcomers of the forest illustrate the constant changing population in the Forest of Arden. As in the sixteenth century, the population in Arden is seen to be on the rise in the play. Before the play starts, Duke Senior and his followers have settled in the forest. Then, Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone first arrive in Arden (II. iv. 13). Later on, Orlando and Adam reach the forest in Act II scene vi. And finally, Oliver joins the community of the foresters (IV. iii. 74-76) while Duke Frederick is reported to go into exile somewhere in the woods of Arden at the end of the play.

Secondly, the play displays the process of deforestation and the subsequent problems that the foresters have after this practice. The clearing of forest land is indicated in Oliver's question "[w]here in the purlieus of this forest stands / A sheepcote fenced about with olive-trees?" (IV. iii. 75-76). The word "purlieus" is "the legal term for a cleared area on the edge of a forest retaining certain privileges within – and Arden itself" (Barton, *The Shakespearean* 208). That is to say, Shakespeare mentions the deforested area in this detail, illustrating that the forest is cleared to open land for rearing sheep. In Act III, scene ii, the play also depicts hungry foresters and the inequality between shepherds and masters. As the practice of enclosure ended in the riots of the foresters in the 1590s all over England, Shakespeare's comedy presents such rebellious actions in a delicate manner as well. For instance, it is known that the rioters disguised themselves with masks at nights and dressed like women to damage the surrounding areas (Wilson, "Like" 10). The same practice of crossdressing, albeit for different purposes, is used as an important element of the play considering that crossdressing initially triggers the course of events in the forest when Rosalind disguises herself in male attire in Arden. Moreover, carving trees and hanging poems on them can be regarded as a destructive act which might allude to the devastation of the green world by the rioters. Wilson explains Shakespeare's reference to the rebellions and points out that "[p]oaching, damaging trees, sending letters in fictitious names, blacking, and crossdressing: *As You Like It* parades all the felonies

associated with forest rioters" ("Like" 13-14). In other words, Shakespeare reminds his reader/audience of enclosure riots by means of the details about these characters' relatively non-violent ways of protest. In reference to the protests taking place in the 1590s and the play's topical allusions, Chris Fitter even calls *As You Like It* "a protest play" which obviously highlights the play's political content ("Reading" 114). Accordingly, the record of historical facts in the play suggests that Shakespeare critically responds to enclosure in his reference to the economic and social problems that the practice of enclosure caused. For this reason, it is necessary to keep firmly in mind that Shakespeare's play may be a political reaction to such changes taking place in the forest.[7]

Although Shakespeare colours the Forest of Arden with details from real life in relation to the English history, the forest straddles between fact and fiction which empowers its liminal quality. This liminality can be observed in terms of the forest's in-betweenness on the threshold of fact and fiction. In addition to the references to the real forest, Shakespeare also borrows from previous literary works and traditions, other than the pastoral, in his presentation of the natural world in the play. To start with, one basic point about the fictive essence of the forest is that the underlying tension of the play with enclosure riots and outlaw foresters recalls the outlaw legend of Robin Hood. Indeed, this suggestion is directly made in the play when Charles tells Oliver that Duke Senior "is already in the Forest of Arden and a many merry men with him, and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England" (I. i. 109-111). The reference to Robin Hood is clearly an element to stress the Englishness of the setting which evokes a sense of familiarity and enables the reader/audience to comprehend the correlation between Arden and England. It is important to note that the plays with Robin Hood as the protagonist were especially popular probably because of the ongoing social disorder and protests in the 1590s when the play was written. This popularity is highly possible regarding that the figure of Robin Hood originally struggles with social injustice done by authoritative institutions.

[7] Kevin A. Quarmby claims that Shakespeare actually made a profit from buying lands in Stratford after enclosure in the first years of the seventeenth century (12-13) and argues that the playwright did not aim at criticising such deeds; on the contrary, he was a capitalist who was interested in his own profit (3). Although he has a point in his claim, it should be noted that Shakespeare's financial concerns in his private life do not change the fact that he mentioned the troubles of common people in his work. In *As You Like It,* the playwright at least voiced contemporary issues on stage.

Although he is a figure of a national legend in the medieval period, he is claimed to have been a real figure whose life was narrated in the chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Barton, *The Shakespearean* 210). His image was represented on stage in the last decade of the sixteenth century. According to the records of the Stationer's Company, there was an anonymous play called *A pastoral pleasant Comedie of Robin Hood and Little John* in 1594 (Marks 158); and in 1598, there were two other Robin Hood plays written by Anthony Munday (1560-1633), namely *The Downfall of Robert Earl Huntington* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, which were staged by Henslowe's Company (Tolman 75). Despite the popularity of Robin Hood plays in the Middle Ages, their performance in public was later suppressed as a result of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics; however, the growing interest in local stories and the revival of the pastoral allowed the writers to bring Robin Hood back to life in the 1590s (Phillips 113). When this English folkloric tale was recovered, it was modified in the frame of the pastoral tradition considering that Robin Hood's values and the forest that he occupied were in harmony with the merits of country people and the perception of the green lands as places of liberty in the pastoral. As in the case of the pastoral, the story of Robin Hood allowed the writers to contrast the court with the country and comment on the wrongdoings of the upper classes. Therefore, the anarchical atmosphere of the original tale might also have led Shakespeare to vaguely allude to the unrest in his country and its current troubles that he observed.

More tellingly, the important place of the forest in Robin Hood's story is necessary to understand the Forest of Arden as an ideological locus in Shakespeare's play. In essence, Robin Hood is located in Sherwood Forest which becomes a site of resistance against the oppressive government and its powerful institutions. Robin Hood violates the king's rule since he illegally resides in the royal forest by turning the place into a site of refuge. The forest somehow protects him from the tyranny of the court and kingdom and becomes a home for the outlaw. Robert Pogue Harrison draws attention to the necessity of hiding and disguise in Robin Hood's case and explains the function of the forest in relation to Robin Hood's name:

> The phenomenon of disguise appears in the very name of 'Robin Hood,' which most certainly derives from it. The hood is that which hides, providing a protective cover

> for the outlaw's head. The name 'Robin,' in turn, derives from the French *robe*, the garment that cloaks the body. We could say, then, that from head to foot Robin Hood exists under cover, in the shadow of the law. But the first and most essential cover of all for the outlaw is none other than the forest itself. The forest represents this locus of concealment. Its canopy is his hood, and its foliage his robe. In its shadows the outlaw finds safe haven from the established order and can harass his enemies like an invisible presence that every now and then reveals itself, suddenly and unexpectedly, only to withdraw again under the forest's cover. Robin Hood wears the forest's protection wherever he goes. (79-80)

All this is to say that the forest is the locus of shelter and safety in the case of Robin Hood. This trait is maintained in the Forest of Arden which hosts the banished duke, his followers and the courtiers in exile escaping from tyranny and corruption. The setting again imposes itself as a site of resistance to the court. Arden is the new home of Shakespeare's outlaws who protect themselves from the oppressive practices of the court. As already implied in Charles's words, among the characters, Duke Senior can be associated with Robin Hood as the leader of the foresters living in Arden (I. i. 111).[8] After his dukedom is usurped by his brother Duke Frederick, Duke Senior chooses to live in the forest with other banished courtiers. The new community of the forest under Duke Senior's guidance regards Arden as their safe home. Their peaceful environment is depicted in Amiens's song: "Under the greenwood tree / Who loves to lie with me / And turn his merry note / Unto the sweet bird's throat" (II. v. 1-4). The green world offers happiness to those courtiers as the song declares that "[h]ere [in Arden] shall he [they] see no enemy" (II. v. 6). Therefore, the Forest of Arden and Robin Hood's forest appear quite similar since they both provide a shelter for the refugees, enabling them to live in a protected environment.

The play's fictional forest also resembles the forest in medieval romances considering that the forest is the archetypal landscape of such works. Broadly conceived, an eminent knight has an adventure outside the court where he is challenged in a series of events. At a certain moment of the narration, the knight is generally left alone and retreats into the forest. The green land which belongs to the king and provides an area for hunting echoes the knight's maturation process in romances. The knight is tested, becomes more mature

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[8] Todd A. Borlik's claim about Duke Senior also deserves mentioning here because he remarks that the duke's portrait is based on a real-life Robin Hood figure, Richard Gardiner, who was said to feed poor people with his own efforts during the food shortage in the late 1590s (185).

and gets closer to the ideal that he represents as an icon of chivalry. The process is marked by the experience taking place in the green landscape. The forest is also a site of escape and/or exile for the knight who discovers his strength and weakness and transforms himself in this place (Saunders 26). While the forest is constructed on the legal, economic and social realities of the medieval period, it becomes a significant part of the narration in romances. Therefore, it has to be recognised that the forest is the essential setting of romances because the knight is rehabilitated in the forest, and this experience contributes to the resolution of the narration. Thus, the forest, for the knight, carries its historical and literary resonances. Corinne J. Saunders argues that "[i]t is a geographical actuality, an economic necessity, a royal preserve, and a wilderness of exile, escape, test and vision, all elements which formulate the romance forest" (19). The landscape, hence, becomes a turning point for the knight's development in this literary topos.

As Shakespeare's play is originally based on Lodge's work, it is possible to reconsider the forest with respect to the elements of romance that the playwright exploits in a complex way. It seems reasonable to argue that Arden is constructed as a romance forest at first sight: In the romances, the knights get away from the court, seek adventure out of the court and find themselves in the natural environment of the forest. The setting apparently provides a shelter for the knights and those excluded from the society. In romances, lovers also inhabit the forest. In Shakespeare's play, the Forest of Arden can be related to the green setting of medieval romances, but in a subverted manner. Shakespeare both uses and abuses the romance elements in his construction of Arden. Arden is a place of escape, exile and transformation all of which fit into the characteristics of the romance forest. Yet, unlike the romances in which the forest is introduced to the reader through a knight's adventure, this play enables the reader/audience to go into the forest with Rosalind after her banishment from the court. Although it is the knight who leads the reader to the forest in romances, it is a female character who disguises herself as a male figure and guides her group into the forest in Shakespeare's play. There are other male courtiers who retreat into the forest, but Rosalind triggers the action by moving into the forest in the course of the play. This is the beginning of subversion of the conventions of romance. Rosalind's adventure, despite her male disguise as Ganymede, revolves around love. When Rosalind-as-Ganymede meets Orlando in the forest and

teaches courtship to him, she makes him get involved in the adventure of love through complex sexual dynamics on the verge of homosexuality.

Like Rosalind, Orlando, too, challenges romance conventions in the play. First of all, he fights in a wrestling match at the beginning of his adventure. As a code of chivalry, the knights are expected to succeed in tournaments in order to prove their military capacity. Wrestling is not an appropriate challenge for a knight because it was a sports practised by common people in the Middle Ages. Although Orlando is actually a member of an aristocratic family, he has to defend himself against Charles in the wrestling match (I. ii. 191-206). It can be suggested that wrestling replaces aristocratic tournaments in a mocking manner. Orlando's masculine power is also affirmed when he beats a lioness and a snake to save his brother Oliver. The fighting in Arden can be considered as an element of romance regarding the adventure of a knight. At this moment, E. C. Pettet argues, "the background changes suddenly to an older romance type, to the 'desert place' of deadly, exotic serpents and fierce lionesses of the medieval bestiary, a 'desert inaccessible' not only to the imagination of Orlando but to the knowledge of any human geographer" (90). Although this scene reminds one of the romance atmosphere and renders Orlando as a brave figure, his complex affair with Rosalind satirises the ideals of romance. To be more specific, Orlando's love adventure evokes pseudo-homosexuality which is quite different from romances. When Rosalind-as-Ganymede teaches him how to love and dedicate himself to his beloved, her male disguise makes them appear in a homosexual relationship, which is obviously against the masculine codes of chivalry emphasised in romances. The scene in which Ganymede and Orlando exchange marriage vows in front of Celia disguised as Aliena (IV. i. 119-148) mocks the position of Orlando with respect to the knights of romances. Although Rosalind-as-Ganymede and Orlando seem to have a homosexual affair, their interest in love and sexuality leads them into a process of maturation since they go through a rite of passage. After they leave their home, they become more mature by reaching womanhood and manhood with their marriage. As the forest is the place where they transform into adults, Arden appears to function like a forest in romances in which the knight is reformed and improves himself. However, the details in Orlando's story lay down the subversion of romance in a satirical manner.

Noting that the Forest of Arden tells the story of an actual location and uses early literary examples, it straddles between fact/fiction and reality/imagination. This in-betweenness also extends to the concept of time in Arden because it is possible to observe that the green site is stuck between the past and the present. It seems, in other words, that this fusion of fact and fiction in Arden's design can also be ascribed to its approach to time. The references to Robin Hood and the subversion of romance elements associate Shakespeare's play with the past. One immediately thinks of the medieval past as the details of the play refer to the old times. In a similar fashion, as Borlik claims, the play elicits an image of the Middle Ages in relation to its green landscape (183). However, it is important to note that the sense of the past is interwoven into the temporal part of the setting. As long as Arden is identified as a medieval landscape, it is also situated in the past time. Yet Shakespeare creates an ambiguous state for the perception of time considering that there are some details about Arden and England's contemporary history such as the enclosure riots taking place in Shakespeare's era. Needless to say, this situates the play in the early modern period. Such an entanglement of the past and the present implies an in-between state for the composition of time. Moreover, the liminal quality of time can be pinpointed in other respects. For instance, the traces of medieval time indicate a kind of transition on the grounds that the values of past time cannot be thoroughly discarded. The use of Robin Hood and the romance atmosphere suggests that the medieval past is still alive in the early modern period. Therefore, the play displays liminal temporality.

Moreover, the sense of time causes an ambiguous stage in the setting of the play, and this unfolds liminal spatiality in *As You Like It.* This is mostly evidenced in the debate over time conducted by Orlando and Rosalind. When Rosalind-as-Ganymede asks about time, Orlando promptly replies that "[t]here's no clock in the forest" (III. ii. 292-293). Orlando's words demonstrate that there is no artificial time in Arden. The use of clock time is not necessary in the natural course of day in the forest. In the context of the pastoral world, Orlando appears to stress the simplicity and spontaneity of natural life. Crucially, however, the lack of clock time becomes particularly important within the context of liminality. "Since liminal time is not controlled by the clock," Piret Pungas and Ester Võsu assert, "it is a time of enchantment when anything might happen, even should,

happen" (87-88). The inability to specify time by the clock can be regarded as an aspect of liminal time in the play because there is a break from the conventional perception of time. The rupture signifies a change from everyday life, and such a period can be considered as liminal time. Liminal time is also tinged with possibilities for the characters as Orlando tries to explain that the course of time cannot be exactly pointed. Rosalind's view, however, is at odds with Orlando's perception of time although her sense of time resonates with liminality. She emphasises that time makes a crucial point in a lover's life as minutes and hours that s/he spends without the beloved are desperately measured. Then, Rosalind highlights the multiple perception of time, saying: "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons" (III. ii. 299-300). The pace of time depends on an individual's perception: One's happiness makes him/her spend time at too fast a pace whereas a desperate person perceives time at a slow pace. This corresponds to an individual perception of time which suggests multiplicity and ambiguity. As there is no measurable time, but only a personal experience of its pace, there is multiplicity in the perception. This diversity, for better or worse, causes ambivalence since time cannot be properly measured in Rosalind's point of view. The debate between Orlando and Rosalind points to the liminal quality of time in Arden since its comprehension remains unclear and evinces a state of change both on a personal and temporary level. Such a perception of time also lays emphasis on Arden's liminality as a place because "[l]iminal zones appropriate their own chronological, systematic, or spatial extension" (Achilles and Bergmann 6). That is to say, the concept of time presented in the forest indicates the setting's liminality.

Furthermore, the perception of liminal temporality supports a correlation between Arden and the myth of the Golden Age considering that the latter refers to "a timeless realm, a perpetual spring of happiness and innocence and leisure" (Hunt, *Shakespeare's* 31). From the outset, the landscape operates according to the elements of the pastoral in that it bears a close resemblance to the Arcadian land and fits into the utopian myth of the Golden Age. This point is significant to highlight the setting's other liminal quality which is about its ambiguous potentiality. As a liminal land, Arden plays on different aspects of potentiality because the land is betwixt and between both an idyllic and dangerous site. The forest offers a utopian vision to its visitors. In this respect, the play essentially reveals

that the Forest of Arden provides the foresters with a comfortable zone as well as pleasure and peace. It originally appears that Arden is a utopian land since Duke Senior and his men live like those in the Golden Age (I. i. 111-113). Duke Senior conceptualises Arden as an ideal place as he declares that they "[h]ere feel [. . .] not the penalty of Adam" (II. i. 5). Even in its name, the Forest of Arden evokes the garden of Eden and recalls a heavenly atmosphere. In contrast to the Biblical story, the courtiers are not expelled from Eden; conversely, they are driven into the forest after they leave the court. Therefore, the image of an ideal place is created in a reverse manner. The characters who suffer from the corrupt policies of the court dwell in Arden where peace prevails. While the court is the home of ambition and degeneration, Arden is immediately associated with contentment and serenity. Duke Senior's address to other lords indicates the difference between the two worlds: "Are not these woods / More free from peril than the envious court?" (II. i. 3-4). Likewise, Rosalind, with Celia and Touchstone, willingly goes to the forest "in content / To liberty" (I. iii. 134-135) to make the most of the idealised land. After a while, they all find happiness in the forest where "love is crowned with the prime" (V. iii. 36). While the forest enables its inhabitants to lead an alternative life in which they reject the adverse qualities of court life, their lives are devoted to pleasure, peace and idleness. This establishes a utopian feature for Arden on the grounds that utopia depicts an alternative social order better than the real world. As Dragan Klaić delineates, "utopia is a spatial concept, a land on the edge of the world" and "a picture of an alternative society" (30). The spatial aspect of utopia is liminal since it ambivalently indicates a no-place, being on the threshold. As a characteristic of utopia, the concept of time becomes irrelevant, and Orlando's vision of time pinpoints this aspect of the forest. That is to say, the creative potential of the liminal place reveals itself when Arden is initially depicted as an ideal setting which welcomes the guests from the court.

In the heavenly atmosphere of Arden, the utopian quality of place is also displayed as wishes are fulfilled, and dreams are realised through the love affairs of various characters. In this way, love and marriage can be regarded as part of the forest's positive potentiality and integrated into the discussion of liminal place. In the play, the theme of love contributes to Arden's depiction as a site of happiness and pleasure. The forest's green landscape and spring time are functionally used to dwell on Arden's being a utopia for

lovers. Orlando, for instance, writes love poems on the trees (III. ii. 252-255). To take another instance, one of the songs in the play presents the forest as a heavenly atmosphere for lovers in the lines repeated four times: "In spring-time, the only pretty ring-time, / When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding, / Sweet lovers love the spring" (V. iii. 19-21, 25-27, 31-33, 37-39). Moreover, at the end of the play, Hymen arranges the marriages of four couples – Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Phoebe and Silvius and Audrey and Touchstone (V. iv. 126-138). Therefore, the forest takes on a special significance, developing into a medium of fertility rites when romantic relationships blossom into the marriages of characters. Berry acknowledges that "courtship too was associated with spatial dislocations, although not as dramatic or extended as those resulting from travel abroad. Since most courting took place in adolescence, the alien landscapes [. . .] provided the settings for the rites of love" (146). In the case of *As You Like It*, the liminal place allows the characters to experience courtship and accomplish fertility rites as the comedy achieves its traditional aim in the end. As marriage symbolises fertility, virility and procreation, the forest manifests its creative potentiality to host lovers and bring happiness to the foresters and serves as a limen to love.

Moreover, the liminal setting functions as a place where young characters grow into experienced figures before their marriage. While Berry proposes that courtship and its rites are endowed with "a time of testing" (154), this idea can be picked up in a spatial aspect. What emerges here is that courtship takes place in a place of "testing," and the forest is constructed as such a site in the play. The setting's liminal transformative power challenges and tests the characters in a way that the liminal site forces them to undergo a process of maturity there. In exile, Rosalind and Orlando learn to survive in this new environment. Needless to say, this situation initiates the process of maturation for each figure. Both of them experience a crisis of life by leaving their familiar environment. At this stage, they go through a transitional phase in Arden where their old selves are destroyed, and they experience a process of becoming. In the forest, they appear different from their previous roles. Both of them take the responsibility of leading their companions and learn how to survive. Rosalind protects Celia and herself by disguising herself in male attire and turns into a saviour when she offers to buy "the cottage, pasture and the flock" of Corin who is very desperate in the absence of his landlord (II. iv. 91). As for Orlando,

he struggles hard to save Adam from hunger and appears to be ready even for a fight to provide the old man with food (II. vii. 88-100). Then, in their courtship, despite Rosalind's disguise, she and Orlando test themselves. Before creating new selves of womanhood and manhood, Rosalind and Orlando remain in limbo and undergo a liminal state as they prepare themselves for a further act of marriage. After their separation from the court, Arden, thus, becomes the locus of courtship for these characters. Granted that the characters reshape their identities according to the requirements of the forest's environment, Arden enables Rosalind and Orlando to bolster liminal identities. Put simply, the liminal place helps them produce liminal selves and initiate their transformation.

In line with the forest's positive potentiality, Rosalind and Orlando's process of becoming through love can be analysed. Indeed, love initiates sexual maturation which evolves into a more sophisticated state, that is marriage. In the web of love affairs, Orlando and Rosalind overtly go through a rite of passage because they reach adulthood at the end of their sojourn in the forest. To start with Orlando, in his process of maturation, he is introduced to the reader/audience as a lover when he is tested by Rosalind in the forest. In fact, even before Orlando meets Rosalind-as-Ganymede in Arden, he has turned the forest into his temple of love. Suffering from Rosalind's love, Orlando writes poems to express his feelings and hangs them on trees: "Hang them, my verse, in witness of my love. / And thou, thrice-crowned queen of night, survey / With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above, / Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway" (III. ii. 1-4). In Orlando's process of becoming, the play identifies and comments on contemporary cultural details considering that the act of writing love poems inevitably reminds one of the code of Petrarchan love: "From the east to western Inde / No jewel is like Rosalind / Her worth being mounted on the wind / Through all the world bears Rosalind" (III. ii. 85-88). In the early modern period, the ideals of Petrarchan love poetry had shaped English sonnet writing. Actually, the practice of sonnet writing was popular, and Shakespeare also wrote sonnets at that time. However, the plays of the period, comedies in particular, conventionally tend to mock the practice of sonnet-writing in love affairs, and Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is not exempt from it. The play appears to both mock and criticise the misuse of sonnet writing which is reduced to only a note of artificiality when

this type of poetry is applied in courtship. For this purpose, Orlando is rendered as a comic caricature of a Petrarchan lover. As in the convention, Orlando initially writes his verses to voice his love for Rosalind and praise her in the manner of Petrarchan lover. Although Orlando complains that he did not receive a proper education, his practice of writing poems indicates that he is actually a learned man. In a similar fashion to the sonnet tradition, Orlando refers to mythological figures, uses conventional metaphors and idealises Rosalind in an elaborated way. Albeit he makes use of all components of the Petrarchan poetry, being the works of a clumsy lover, his poems are only cheap copies. Thus, Touchstone makes fun of Orlando's verses: "If a hart do lack a hind, / Let him seek out Rosalind. / If the cat will after kind, / So be sure will Rosalind" (III. ii. 97-100). In Orlando's portrait, Shakespeare appears to ridicule and criticise the writing of love poetry in an abusive manner. Therefore, there occurs a difference between an idealised lover and Orlando because his poetry is a matter of ridicule in the play. Orlando's case allows Shakespeare to pinpoint that the use of conventional materials does not make a poem perfectly expressive of genuine feelings. Although Shakespeare himself wrote sonnets, he appears to criticise the misuse of this tradition in courtship through Orlando's writing artificial love poems. In the play, Orlando's poetry is a pale imitation of the sonnet tradition because he is not able to express sincere emotions and true love. Therefore, the playwright makes a critical point about sonnet writing and criticises the limitations and artificiality of this tradition when it is applied in courtship. In the play, Touchstone mocks Orlando's lines and ridicules his hanging and carving poems on trees, saying that "the tree yields bad fruit" (III. ii. 113). Touchstone scorns Orlando's rhymes and imitates his lines in a comic way (III. ii. 97-109). This demonstrates that when love poetry is artificially composed, it does not reflect the authenticity of the lover's feelings. The scene, hence, becomes functional on the grounds that the playwright teaches the need to write a good poem albeit in a reversed manner.

To further argue, sonnet writing goes beyond its conventional use in the comedy or its function in the criticism of contemporary literature in Orlando's case. To be more precise, Orlando's urge to express his feelings in poems unfolds the process of maturation. In this regard, Berry's account of liminality may be useful to comprehend the course of maturation. Granted that role-playing or the act of imitation is at the heart of one's growth,

Berry regards impersonation as a liminal characteristic, and he thinks that young lovers experience liminality in courtship. "The conventional behavior of young men," Berry argues, "– the writing of sonnets, wearing of love-locks, posturing in romantic attitudes – fulfills many of the conditions of a liminal experience, both in Elizabethan society and in the comedies" (30). Orlando's attempt to be like a Petrarchan lover can be attributed to his youth while his act of imitation makes him a liminal figure. In the course of the play, Rosalind enjoys reading Orlando's poetry written to immortalise his beloved and she, in disguise, decides to play a game of courtship with Orlando. Orlando's close tie with Rosalind-as-Ganymede develops him into a mature figure. The moment of Orlando's saving Oliver symbolically illustrates how he achieves his manhood. According to Oliver's account, Orlando bravely fights a snake and a lioness and rescues his elder brother from whom Orlando had to escape at the beginning of the play: "But kindness, nobler ever than revenge, / And nature, stronger than his just occasion, / Made him give battle to the lioness" (IV. iii. 127-129). At this moment, as Hunt claims, "Orlando makes himself worthy of Rosalind's trust and love by forgiving his vicious brother and by risking his own life to save another's" (*Shakespeare's* 18). Orlando's growing into adulthood is symbolically depicted in his battle with these wild animals. In Montrose's words, Orlando "undergoes such an allegorical purgation" considering that these animals epitomise the negative feelings of wrath and envy ("The Place" 44). In contrast to his first encounter with his brother, Orlando now overcomes his anger and earthly passion, proving himself a brave and wise man. That is to say, the use of wild animals in the play is not simply a fantastic element to draw the attention of the reader/audience; it attaches an allegorical meaning to Orlando's maturation. Beyond Orlando's showing himself worthy of love, wrestling, in Peter Erickson's words, symbolises a "traditional male rite of passage" ("Sexual Politics" 48) after which he establishes a solid identity. While having lingered between immaturity and manhood during his courtship, he now achieves full maturity and enters into a marriage.

With regard to Rosalind's liminal progress, it seems fair to suggest that Rosalind's liminality and her role in courtship are more complex when compared to Orlando's case. What is behind is her crossdressing when she disguises herself as Ganymede in her sojourn in Arden. Plainly, the reason why she changes her appearance and identity lies in

the patriarchal order and male hegemony of early modern England. When Celia offers to go to Arden, Rosalind expresses her fear: “Alas, what danger will it be to us, / Maids as we are, to travel forth so far! / Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold” (I. iii. 105-107). Considering the vulnerable place of women in the patriarchal society, Rosalind has to self-fashion herself in male attire. Rosalind and Celia both decide to disguise themselves: Celia is determined to discard her courtly lady clothes for “poor and mean attire” (I. iii. 108), while Rosalind dresses up like a man. Disguise functionally helps them avoid danger during the journey. More significantly, this builds a strong case for the discussion of Rosalind’s liminality. Under the cover of this guise, Rosalind crosses gender boundaries and forms a liminal self in an in-between state on the edge of two gender roles. Therefore, her affair with Orlando turns into a pivotal moment for her transitional status since Arden allows her to experience a passage from girlhood to womanhood/wifehood. At this moment, her liminality remarkably manifests itself in her disguise. As her transition is marked by her being in the forest, the setting functions for her as a liminal place, making her experience transformation in a quite symbolic transitional and in-between state through her disguise.

Broadly conceived, disguise is an element of Shakespeare’s comedies, complicating the storyline. While it enables the heroines to get into the male world, it perpetuates misunderstandings, reverses gender roles and causes confusion. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind-as-Ganymede acts freely in Arden and gets involved in an amusing love affair with Orlando. When she defines love as a kind of madness and illness and claims to solve Orlando’s problem, she begins to test and teach the desperate lover (III. ii. 408-409). In their game, she in her male disguise acts as if she were Rosalind and guides Orlando in his possible union with Rosalind. Being a symbol of transition, this act of disguise is of particular interest in regard to liminality. Berry explains that the disguise of female figures in Shakespeare’s comedies “occurs as a phase in a process of self-discovery and self-revelation. In this sense disguise functions very much like the face-painting, masking, or sex reversal characteristic of novices during the liminal period of rites of passage” (84). According to Berry’s account, in the play, Rosalind’s split self as Rosalind-as-Ganymede and Ganymede-as-Rosalind actually reflects the process that makes her ready for a future marriage since disguise helps Rosalind discover herself and prepares her to get

accustomed to a new role in marriage. Therefore, her disguise practically provides an initiation into their marriage. Before establishing a new identity as a wife, Rosalind undergoes a process of becoming so it is possible to observe her liminality. Therefore, adopting a disguise represents her in-between identity as a daughter and a wife. In this period, Rosalind also wavers between learning and teaching in her complex affair which pinpoints her transition from girlhood to womanhood. In this process of maturity, Rosalind can be regarded as a liminal character in that "the liminal phase can be characterized as one of confusion, testing, and education" (Berry 3). Rosalind's multidimensional disguise leads to confusion; she tests Orlando's love; and, she both teaches her lover and prepares herself for her future identity as a liminal figure.

When Rosalind-as-Ganymede initiates a game of courtship in Arden, she actually embraces an identity tinged with liminal ambiguity and in-betweenness. She sways between femininity and forged masculinity. Thus, she acts and thinks in two minds. She questions her position by asking Celia: "Good my complexion! Dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition? One inch of delay more is a South Sea of discovery. I prithee tell me who is it quickly and speak apace" (III. ii. 189-193). She appears to be like a man whereas she acknowledges her femininity: "Do you not know I am a woman?" (III. ii. 242). Her in-between identity creates a limbo as she wavers between two different gender roles. This indeterminate state is mostly evidenced in the scene in which Rosalind is given a bloody napkin belonging to Orlando. Believing that Orlando is dead, she faints, but this moment creates confusion about her appearance as Ganymede for fainting is believed to be a hysterical and sentimental reaction strongly connected with femininity. Oliver, hence, questions Rosalind-as-Ganymede: "Be of good cheer, youth. You a man? / You lack a man's heart" (IV. iii. 162-163). The scene illustrates Rosalind's liminality since she is on the edge of appearing like a man and being a woman. There occurs ambiguity not only as a result of the conflict between appearance and reality but also related to her liminal self. The play offers different shades of Rosalind: in the beginning, she is introduced as Rosalind; she puts on a disguise as Ganymede; and Rosalind-as-Ganymede plays the role of Rosalind in the game of courtship. The three personalities obviously lay emphasis on Rosalind's liminality as she oscillates between her different male and female appearances.

Most of the studies based on Rosalind's gender binary refer to the homoerotic dynamics of the play. (Crawford 142-147), but her fluid identity and her subsequent transgression can be related to her liminal position. Noting that female roles are played by young male actors on the Elizabethan stage, Rosalind and Orlando's affair may arouse homosexual desire in some readers or the members of the audience. Even the choice of name, Ganymede, implies male homoeroticism bearing in mind that Zeus, according to the mythical story, snatches Ganymede in the form of an eagle and later makes him a cup bearer. Under the name of Ganymede, the role that Rosalind decides to adopt "– by both soliciting homoerotic dynamics and drawing attention to the 'boy beneath' the layers of costume – is ultimately the object of male homoerotic desire" (Crawford 142). Moreover, Rosalind's two-layered role-playing obscures the target of the play's homoeroticism. This is demonstrably the case in the epilogue part in which Rosalind addresses the reader/audience, both women and men. Recalling the title in the epilogue, Rosalind asks both of them "to like as much of this play as please you" (12-13). Then, Rosalind or the actor playing her character in the epilogue makes a wish, challenging sexual norms: "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not. And I am sure as many as have good beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths will for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell" (16-21). Although the actor plays a female role in the play, the last lines of the epilogue put forward the actor's wish to be a woman and have a liaison with other men: "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not" (16-19). Although the epilogue opens with Rosalind speaking, the actor leaves his role of Rosalind and transgresses sexual boundaries at the end of epilogue. The idea of transgression can be traced throughout the play in Rosalind's crossdressing and role-playing as well. In order to achieve a new status, that is wifehood, Rosalind transgresses social and gender norms. The act of crossing boundaries can be related to liminality since Rosalind oscillates between two gender roles. Although the play and the epilogue share a similar approach in overstepping boundaries in terms of gender, the latter obscures the line between illusion and reality. The epilogue acts as a limen leaving the reader/audience in confusion. Robert H. Bell calls the epilogue "a spectacular demonstration of counterfeit, role-playing, and make-believe in a play in which the oscillation between artifice and reality is both the

subject and the method" (128). Furthermore, Bell asks some questions about Rosalind's identity and then offers a solution: "Who is this figure before us – Rosalind dressed as Ganymede? Rosalind arrayed as the bride? A boy actor half-costumed, toggling between himself and his role? Like uncanny Hymen at the wedding, and like many Shakespearean fools, Rosalind of the epilogue is splendidly liminal" (128). In this regard, it is reasonable to argue that Rosalind's crossdressing has significance for her liminal self; in other words, it is not merely a tool to arouse homoerotic desire, but it can be also attributed to her liminality. This idea helps to uncover Rosalind's portrait as a liminal figure in different dimensions from the beginning of the play to its ending.

To further argue, the female protagonist's liminality is of significance in terms of the setting's liminality since Rosalind's role-playing draws further attention to the forest's liminal quality. In addition to its realistic attributes, Arden is coloured with Rosalind's imagination and fancy as she turns the forest into a stage. When Arden is regarded as Rosalind's theatre, the place takes on another dimension, having the potential for creating different realities and possibilities. When she plays a wide range of roles in her theatre, Rosalind becomes a player, director and playmaker at the same time. Her performance of Ganymede and Ganymede-as-Rosalind directs the course of events. Besides her own love story, she mistakenly finds herself in another love affair between the shepherd Silvius and the shepherdess Phoebe. Although Phoebe does not respond to Silvius's love, she falls in love with Rosalind-as-Ganymede at first sight. Clearly, Rosalind does not foresee such a turmoil so she cannot handle this part of her play skilfully. Rosalind-as-Ganymede keeps Phoebe away and constantly warns her: "I pray you do not fall in love with me, / For I am falser than vows made in wine" (III. v. 72-73). Yet she cannot find a proper solution, but this situation makes the reader/audience question sexual boundaries again. In order to settle complex affairs, Rosalind introduces the element of magic and brings supernatural power into the forest. Therefore, Arden as Rosalind's stage is rendered as a place where the supernatural prevails. When Rosalind declares that she is capable of doing "strange things" and connects with a magician (V. ii. 57-60), she openly reveals another persona, adding to her liminal portrait. More important still, the appearance of the magician Hymen in Arden in the later scene indicates a magical facet for the forest land where anything is possible to happen. At first sight, this corresponds to Northrop Frye's conceptualisation

of the forest as a natural world in which extraordinary and unusual things strange to the society living out of the forest take place because the green world is identified with supernatural power and elements (*A Natural* 142-143). From Frye's standpoint, magic is a part of common life in the forest. Approached within the concept of liminality, however, magic constitutes another attribute to recognise the in-between state of the land; Arden is both a realistic and supernatural landscape, lingering between the two realms. As a magical stage, the forest has "the poetical reflex of a *life as you like it*, light and smooth in its flow, unencumbered by serious tasks, free from the letters of definite objects, and from intentions difficult to realize; an amusing play of caprice, of imagination, and of wavering sensations and feelings" (Ulrici 308). On the threshold of reality and fantasy, Arden offers an opportunity for the characters to reach their goals and a happy ending.

Also of importance is the issue of the forest's transformative agency through its positive potentiality – love in the case of this play – within the context of spatial liminality. In fact, the play demonstrates that liminal "power acts upon 'self' and identity at specific points in space" (Slater and Coyle 385) as the characters "let the forest judge" (III. ii. 119) from the beginning of the play. This kind of spatial power pinpoints the liminal land's transformative agency that influences the characters in the play. Although there is always a possibility of destruction in liminality, *As You Like It* pinpoints the positive transformation of the characters through different kinds of love in the forest thanks to its generic structure as a comedy. Specifically, the play makes it possible to conceptualise Arden as a liminal place because of its transformative quality more than its utopian trait. The claim that early modern forests are the locus of change and transformation (Theis 39) adds to this point because this characteristic of early modern forests can be grounded on the concept of liminality, too. As liminality is fundamentally deemed relevant to the process of becoming, the play unfolds that the foresters undergo transformation in this liminal site. In their process of becoming, the forest helps these characters alter their personalities and gain new selves. Saunders, likewise, states that "Arden both fulfils the function of the forest as a place of metamorphosis and takes on a new role as the landscape in which characters effect their own transformations by consciously playing upon convention" (201). The play, written at the turn of the century or on the threshold of a

new century, lays emphasis on the idea of transformation for the courtiers through the theme of love.

In the play, it turns out that the transformative power of Arden is entailed in different types of love among which romantic love is strikingly underlined. It is not unusual in the conventional structure of comedies that love is the greatest force that changes the characters. As Arden reveals its creative potentiality as a happy land, these characters complete transitional rites and incorporate into the society that they left before. In other words, Arden is designed as a limen to maturity which leads them to a happy ending through the manifestation of love. Therefore, it is inevitable for these characters to transform themselves before their reintegration process. Considering that "[t]he theme of the comic is the integration of society, which usually takes the form of incorporating a central character into it" (Frye, *Anatomy* 43), the play celebrates the marriage of Rosalind and Orlando in the end. When they get married, they are integrated into the society. In this case, it becomes clear that it is the liminal forest which functionally leads the characters to love and marriage as a sign of their reintegration. Therefore, the last phase of rites of passage takes place in the forest when the end of the play illustrates a wedding ceremony, which is a rite of incorporation. In addition to Rosalind and Orlando's union, the play emphasises the positive transformation of the characters with the other three couples who marry in the end. As the forest becomes a home of romantic love, the characters transform themselves and embrace stable identities in the society through marriage.

Furthermore, the forest transforms the characters that cause troubles in their families. In addition to romantic love, Arden's positive potentiality comes to the fore in familial love with its transformative power. In Orlando and Duke Senior's cases, it appears that violation takes place both on the domestic scale, that is in the family, and on a larger context of governance. Denton J. Snider asserts that Shakespeare "has here [in the play] portrayed society in contradiction with its fundamental object; it has driven off those whom, by every tie of blood and of right, it was bound to protect, both State and Family have become the instruments of the direst injustice; on all sides we behold *the world of wrong*" (317). The happy atmosphere of Arden, too, enables the characters to redress the

wrongs of family and state. Although Oliver previously plots against Orlando to harm him, Orlando makes peace with his elder brother Oliver after saving his life. Moreover, after this reconciliation, Orlando regains his property when Oliver tells him that "[i]t shall be to your good, for my father's house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I estate upon you" (V. ii. 9-11). Familial love, accompanied by the characters' romantic love experience, restores the relationship between Oliver and Orlando so that the problem of inheritance is solved in the end. When Oliver also falls in love with Celia and marries her, he takes his wife's family property in the end, as well. Therefore, familial love and the constitution of family through marriage both enable them to solve problems. As it is the forest that allows this change to take place, the liminal setting's transformative function manifests itself again.

Lastly, Arden's transformative potential comes out in the form of religious love in the play. Precisely, in the usurpation plot concerning Duke Senior, religious love becomes influential in the metamorphosis of Duke Frederick. In the last act of the play, it is announced that Duke Frederick who intends to kill Duke Senior in the forest meets a religious man on his way and totally becomes a different person: "And to the skirts of this wild wood he came, / Where meeting with an old religious man, / After some question with him, was converted / Both from his enterprise and from the world" (V. iv. 157-160). This transformation taking place in the forest is significant for Duke Senior because Duke Frederick decides to dedicate himself to religious life and gives up earthly ambitions: "His crown bequeathing to his banished brother, / And all their lands restored to them [those in exile in Arden] again" (V. iv. 161-162). Lesley Coote peers into the spiritual change taking place in the forest and ascribes it to its infinite sacred power: "As an unlimited landscape, the greenwood is a place for spiritual quest and struggle against [evil] forces" (52). The spiritual aspect of the green site can be identified in another definition of the forest which has traces of the medieval forest. Duke Frederick's reformation in Arden immediately recalls the function of the forest in the Bible. The fact that Arden is called a desert can be reconsidered in line with the following statements:

> The definition of the forest as uncultivated landscape, rather than simply as woodland, allowed the writers of the Middle Ages to equate easily the forest of their own times and the desert of the Bible. This desert landscape carried with it specific

> associations of solitude and divine inspiration which were to be appropriated as part of the forest's symbolism in the romances. (Saunders 10)

The forest as the desert of the Bible appears to be a symbol of devoutness, spirituality and unearthliness. In this regard, Arden echoes the medieval Biblical desert because Duke Frederick devotes himself to religious seclusion and becomes an unworldly figure in his dedication to divine love. The discussion on the spiritual power of the forest can be further developed in the sense that it actually resonates with the liminal place's transformative agency over the characters. In the case of Duke Frederick, religious love plays a role in the manifestation of the forest's creative potentiality. As can be seen, in different types of love, Arden becomes a transformative place because these characters develop into different figures in the forest. Therefore, the forest's transformative power reveals its liminal trait as a threshold to new identities. Moreover, this transformation also brings a solution to the political problems such as the act of usurpation and the issue of primogeniture as the reconciliation of the characters makes them restore their positions at the court. Thus, the liminal transformation is caused by the creative potentiality of the forest in the play.

After the analysis of the forest's appealing aspects, it has to be clarified that liminal places, unlike utopian places, do not merely embody positive possibilities. What is unique about the forest's liminal potentiality is the fact that this place is hedged around with destructive capability. That is to say, the forest's potentiality has a flip side as a liminal land so it appears to be a site of danger, peril and savagery in the play. Although Ryan Farrar explains this aspect of Arden by commenting on the play's "mode of utopian optimism with a mode of artistic realism" (367), it is actually the liminal place's destructive potentiality. While the forest is presented as an alternative world to the court, the setting is endowed with uncertain potential capacity of liminality. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the play both renders the natural world as a comfortable place, providing the courtiers with peace and happiness, and also packs it with potential danger that could destroy them. In other words, Arden cannot be merely characterised as a utopian and ideal place of wish-fulfilment, but it straddles between ideal and detrimental qualities. The liminal forest constitutes perils, discomfort and natural danger at certain moments. The presence of threatening possibilities makes the forest a landscape halfway between a

wonderland and an insecure zone. As Arden contains both positive and negative features, it manifests itself as a liminal land on the threshold of paradise and unease. In this liminal site, the destructive potential of Arden can be evidenced when the foresters are shown to be vulnerable to harsh weather conditions, animal attacks, hunger and economic problems there.

The first negative potential of the liminal zone is about the problem related to living in nature, which is the struggle in the harsh weather conditions of the forest. Broadly speaking, living in open air in a close tie with nature is advocated in the pastoral tradition, but this pleasure of life is only limited to the spring and summer seasons. This fact emphasised in Arden gives a realistic detail about the foresters' lives. It is Duke Senior who first voices their suffering from cold weather, but he prefers this cold to the corruption at the court. He declares that "[t]he seasons' difference – as the icy fang / And churlish chiding of the winter's wind, / Which it bites and blows upon my body / Even till I [he] shrink[s] with cold, I [he] smile[s] and say[s]" (II. i. 6-9) and continues that "'[t]his is no flattery. These are counsellors / That feelingly persuade me [him] what I am [he is]" (II. i. 10-11). A follower of Duke Senior, Amiens, also sings a song about winter and cold (II. iv. 175-194). This song also delineates the bitter conditions of living in the forest. In this song, Amiens, in a similar fashion to Duke Senior, praises the solidarity among the foresters. Again, another song sung by Amiens makes it clear that "winter and rough weather" are their enemies in the forest (II. v. 7). Even though these courtiers try to deny the disadvantages of living in open air, the harsh conditions of their life in the forest are realistically depicted. The fact that nature is not always kind to these characters renders a realistic picture of Arden and pinpoints another facet of a liminal site by placing the forest halfway between an ideal land and harsh reality owing to its negative potentiality.

Secondly, the ordinary life of the foresters is threatened by wild beasts inhabiting Arden. Possible attacks from animals indicate the insecurity of inhabitants. The animals that

attack Oliver obviously demonstrate that Arden is a dangerous and savage world;[9] thus, the rural reality is far from the Eden-like conceptualisation of Arden. People and animals both fight to survive, and the appearance of the lioness and serpent suggests untamed wilderness and savagery dominant in the forest. Undoubtedly, this kind of ferocity is peculiar to the forest considering the fact that the word "savage" emanates from the Latin word *silva* which refers to the forest so the green land is associated with untamed animals and people breaking the laws (Kingsley-Smith 110). Put differently, the wilderness that animals represent reveals that savagery is a part of Arden life. Moreover, this wilderness calls attention to the perception of the forest in a medieval mind-set which again emphasises this site's adverse potential. In addition to the concept of a royal forest, the forest is claimed to have instilled fear in medieval people because they "had an innate fear of natural areas: unfamiliar territory, the lack of home comforts, and potential encounters with the unknown 'Other'" (Bolt 4). Considered in this respect, Arden is still a site of dangerous potentiality since the foresters confront the non-human other in unfavourable circumstances. Furthermore, the serpent seems fraught with another medieval symbolism because this animal is illustrative of Satan and stands for the evil that Satan represents in the biblical story (Smidt 47). Therefore, it is possible to view that Arden hosts conflicting values and displays dualistic dynamics by shifting on the borders of paradise and hell. By this point, Arden becomes an ambivalent liminal land at the crossroads of safety/danger and good/evil while it has medieval resonances in the early modern period.

More significant as evidence for Arden's adversity is the problem of finding food and economic troubles through which Shakespeare grows critical of economic policies in the late Elizabethan period. In stark contrast to the idealised version of shepherds' lives,

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[9] In one particular aspect, the lioness and snake, as previously mentioned, are regarded as symbols of Orlando's rage and wrath, and his defeat of animals is associated with his ability to free himself from such earthly passions. In another perspective, these animals can be evaluated on a different symbolic base. Put simply, animals are figuratively related to sexual dynamics. Although lions are typical symbols of patriarchy, the lioness as a female animal is a symbol of a matriarchal order, and it becomes a threat to the patriarchy as the animal attacks Orlando (Roberts, *The Shakespearean* 78; Montrose, "The Place" 50). The serpent, on the other hand, can be thought of as a phallic image (Hayles 66). That is to say, there are readings of these animals in terms of symbolic sexual representations. In the framework of the dissertation, however, it is useful to pertain to animals to emphasise savagery and danger as potential realities of the forest.

Arden is a hostile place for its inhabitants. As Shakespeare subverts the idyllic representation of the natural land, the play pinpoints the lack of food and subsequent hunger in the forest. Although natural life may be regarded self-sufficient with its resources, Orlando and his family servant Adam's first appearance in Arden points to the hardship of survival in the forest. When Adam is dying of hunger (II. vi. 1-4), Orlando finds food at Duke Senior's banquet. The inability to find food in Arden is probably detailed in relation to the real history of the forest. In line with the process of usurpation in the forest and its consequences discussed above, Victor Skipp, in his specific research on Arden's history from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, highlights the rapid change in Arden in the late sixteenth century and claims that "the local food supply – and in particular the local com supply – simply was not increased quickly enough to feed all the additional mouths" (53). Such circumstances make life unbearable for those who inhabit the Forest of Arden. Significantly, when Celia and Rosalind come to the forest, they come across Silvius and Corin. Celia asks these shepherds to give them food, but Corin unexpectedly refuses to share their food. He discloses that he cannot afford to offer food because he has to answer to his absent master:

> But I am shepherd to another man
> And do not shear the fleeces that I graze.
> My master is of churlish disposition
> And little recks to find the way to heaven
> By doing deeds of hospitality. (II. iv. 77-81)

In these lines, Corin indicates that shepherds do not enjoy natural life; on the contrary, they are stuck in a master-servant relationship and have to work hard. Corin is simply a "labourer" who tries to consent to his own status (III. ii. 70-74). Moreover, his speech reveals the economic system that dominates Arden. The economy of Arden is stimulated by a system prioritising private ownership and profit, that is capitalism. To make more money in this system, the forest's land and the shepherd's flock are both put on sale. Corin announces that his master's "cote, his flocks and bounds of feed / Are now on sale, and at our sheepcote now, / By reason of his absence, there is nothing / That you will feed on [. . .]" (II. iv. 82-85). Thus, Rosalind offers gold to buy "the cottage, pasture and the flock" (II. iv. 91). Corin's selling the pastoral land draws attention to the changing dynamics of natural life in which the power of money prevails above all. Therefore, Shakespeare situates the forest between the shepherd's pastoral idyll and capitalist order,

placing it on the edge of different value systems. Although the forest is a land of escape and freedom, it is not easy to survive in this money-based economy. At a time when the timber of the forest is abundantly used and destroyed to manufacture industrial products under Elizabeth's rule, the play strikingly presents the ongoing economic changes by drawing Arden as a liminal land on the threshold of new dynamics. Challenging the view that a green site offers many opportunities to its inhabitants, the play suggests that Arden is not a suitable place for those who lack financial power. The economic realities that shape the forest uncover the hardship of living in this place even as a shepherd.

Altogether, Arden is replete with good and bad qualities. The forest is on the edge of peace and danger and straddles between a pleasant dream and a nightmare. Bearing in mind all these liminal potentialities of Arden, it is possible to discuss the setting's liminality in relation to its ambiguity. As stated, "*ambiguity* literally refers to 'both ways', and one who is located in the space of the liminal must be ever attuned to the presence of adverse or conflicting possibilities" (Tally xii). As Arden operates in the multiple views that the characters have, the setting's liminal ambiguity comes to the fore. Another way to put it is that when the forest is delineated in a different way by each character, the setting's liminal ambiguity unfolds itself in the opposing perceptions of Arden. Therefore, throughout the play, the ambiguity of the setting is reliant on the characters, their language and experiences. Briefly, it is possible to observe that the definition of the forest changes with the characters' viewpoints, indicating its ambivalent liminal status. As a case in point, Orlando's definition of the forest is significant to illustrate this point. When he first approaches Duke Senior and his followers with a sword in hand, he is shocked by their attitude towards him and says that "I [he] thought that all things had been savage here" (II. vii. 108). Orlando's words suggest that in contrast to the civilisation that the court represents, the forest initially may denote the ideas of barbarity and savagery. The animals that Orlando later fights show the brutal nature of the forest that he illustrates. However, Arden is threaded with liminal ambivalence as Orlando acknowledges at that moment in this particular scene. To take another example, the physical depictions of the forest display the setting's indeterminate quality. While the pastoral scenery is enriched with different trees, lambs and peaceful mountain skirts, the implications on the barren land, cold weather and other difficulties remind the reader/audience of the real world, as stated

above. Moreover, although the forest resolves the problems between the brothers and the lovers, it is not a source of happiness and joy for all characters. Touchstone, for example, calls himself "the more fool" and the court "a better place" as he expresses his regret for his presence in Arden (II. iv. 14-15). Specifically, the forest is also a ground for Jaques's melancholy. After a stag is killed, he laments over the forest life. A lord in the forest depicts Jaques's melancholy upon this event: "And thus the hairy fool, / Much marked of the melancholy Jaques, / Stood on th'extremest verge of the swift brook, / Augmenting it with tears" (II. i. 40-43). Consequently, all of these conceptions give distinct meanings to Arden so it cannot be defined in a singular way. In Theis's words, "*As You Like It'*s forest begets multiple, conflicting definitions so that a single site can be repository to multiple meanings based upon individuals' differing, lived experiences" (xii). The multiple voices that define Arden also bring out an ambiguous state for the perception of the forest, contributing to its liminal position. Because of the different definitions of Arden, the forest remains in flux and appears to be as each character "likes it" in reference to the play's title.

What is more, the setting's liminality can be grounded on its transgressive quality, particularly in line with the courtiers' banishment and exile. As the characters pass the limits of the court in the forest, the setting enacts transgression. At stake here is that this transgression constructs Arden as an ideological place regarding the fact that the banished courtiers choose to be in exile in the borders of the forest and create an alternative society in opposition to the court of Duke Frederick. When the courtiers are expelled or escape from the court, the forest becomes a liminal place as a transgressive threshold for the banished courtiers before their return to the court. On the whole, it is important to bear in mind that places cannot be dissociated from people who occupy them and their connection with each other and the places and, accordingly, Arden is a composite of the foresters' experience. As most of the foresters are in exile, the place is associated with the experience of exile. According to Spariosu, exile is one of the conditions that establishes a liminal realm (68). Therefore, Arden's transgressive feature as a site of exile and banishment remains rooted in the concept of liminality because the condition of being away from one's homeland is a liminal experience, and this turns the forest into a liminal land. That is to say, the liminal situation of being in exile defines the forest's transgressive

liminal quality in a way that the banished courtiers' experience in Arden makes the place an ideological zone.

The particular argument of this chapter is that the liminal place is exploited as a site of criticism. This can be evidenced in the case of the forest's construction as a political zone in relation to the contemporary political troubles surrounding Essex and the late Elizabethan court at the turn of the century. From this vantage point, this section of the chapter will evaluate how the play critically approaches the current political issues by means of the liminal forest. First, this idea can be pursued to the point at which Arden is essentially depicted as a site of exile. It becomes clear that Shakespeare's use of the forest as a liminal land of exile adds to the political undertone of the play. As a matter of fact, in the historical records, it is possible to observe that English forests were occupied by the poor, the criminals and those who were deprived of property, land or job; such people were called vagrants by the government (Hoskins 128-129; Russell 15). Those people actually took refuge in the forest within different aims in mind. Therefore, such realities are represented in the literary works of the time, as stated. Similarly, Shakespeare uses Arden for this purpose, and it is interesting to note that a medieval text examined by Philippe de Commynes and translated in 1596 situates Ardennes as a border land where people escaping from the war between France and Burgundy sought refuge (Hopkins, *Renaissance* 93-94). Inspired by Lodge's play, Shakespeare's play enables the banished courtiers to protect themselves in Arden which is a place for the dispossessed. That is, the liminal forest of exiles is functionally used by Shakespeare to deal with the political issues of his time. When the conflict between Elizabeth and Essex grew bitter, Essex was in exile in Ireland and later retreated from the court. The play alludes to the current political crisis under the cover of the foresters' story in Arden. In other words, Arden is designed as an ideological place. As a territory for the exiles, Arden's liminality helps Shakespeare to criticise Elizabethan politics.

In her introduction to Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Dusinberre clarifies that Essex is not directly impersonated in the play, but his character is embedded in the portraits of different characters (104). The characters inhabiting the forest help to unfold the story of Essex in a way that the liminal setting enables the playwright to create ambiguity in order

to avoid censorship or punishment while representing Essex and his troubles in this play. To begin with, the Earl can be associated with Duke Senior in the first place. Duke Senior's dukedom is usurped by his brother, and he is in exile with his courtiers in Arden. By the same token, Essex believes that he is forced into exile in Ireland, and he goes against the Queen's orders with his supporters there. Essex thinks that his place at the court is seized by Cecil. Thus, it is possible to say that in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, the court, like Duke Frederick's court in the play, is tinged with envy, rivalry and discontent. In Shakespeare's Arden, the political aspects of usurpation, tyranny and exile do not pose a direct threat to the Elizabethan rule, but the political tone of the play sheds light on serious matters. In the alternative world of the play, Duke Senior becomes a fictional counterpart of Essex so the restoration of Duke Senior's position seems to be an imaginary solution to the unfair usurpation of Essex's place at the court. In this regard, Shakespeare may be claimed to have a constructive attitude towards Essex's troublesome position by siding with the banished courtier.

In another respect, Orlando might mirror Essex's identity as a lover in the play. The young and brave courtier, deprived of inheritance and other rights, writes love poems to Rosalind, recalling Essex's fashioning himself not only as a chivalric figure but also as a lover (Shenk 12). In fact, the unmarried Queen encouraged her courtiers to praise her in a manner of a courtly lover. As Elizabeth allowed the courtiers to put her image on a pedestal in their love poems, the courtiers struggled to win her favour. In 1595, for instance, Essex and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) wrote a work called *Of Love and Self-Love* in which Essex was depicted as a devoted lover willing to serve his queen (Shenk 164-165). Essex also supported some musicians and poets to write love songs to the Queen in his name. Katherine Butler argues that Essex was "the most prolific musical politician" since he frequently wrote some lyrics and supported the musicians to turn them into songs (65). Considering Essex's adaptation of a lover's manner and style, Orlando's attempt to write poems can be related to the courtier's yearning to gain Elizabeth's favour. Although Orlando's poetry is ridiculed, it amusingly reflects Essex's persona as a courtly lover.

Moreover, Essex can be identified with Rosalind's dual personality.[10] Dusinberre explains the intricate parallelism between the two figures as follows:

> [. . .] Rosalind's impersonation of Ganymede, and fictional creation of herself as wayward mistress, recreates the terms of Essex's courtship of Elizabeth. The effeminizing of the male courtier was a condition of Elizabeth's dominance, and Essex's behavior and writing style make him an exemplar of that situation. He played the great warrior but he was temperamentally as capricious as the courtly lady invented by Ganymede as a means of curing the passion of a lovesick suitor. Essex's letters to Elizabeth suggest a man divided between gender roles, obliged to be a chivalric warrior of the Virgin Queen, and at the same time the rejected mistress of a woman perfectly capable of assuming a 'mannish' role, as Essex learnt to his cost on innumerable occasions. ("*As You Like It*" 413)

Seen in this light, Essex wavers between two gender roles in his complex relationship with the Queen. Since Elizabeth is his superior and self-fashions herself as a prince, Essex appears to act both in masculine and feminine roles to approach the monarch. Therefore, Rosalind-as-Ganymede resonates Essex's position in the complex dynamics of his affair with the royal power.

Significantly, the references to animals are used to represent Essex in the play, too. For instance, when Duke Senior hunts the deer, Jaques, a sensitive and melancholic character, laments. This animal symbolically stands for Essex in the play. In the medieval age and early modern era, hunting was a privilege of the monarchy and aristocracy. Whenever this privilege was revoked by common people, it was considered to be a political protest against one's superior. Thus, killing a deer or a stag was regarded as a subversion of authoritative power. It is also acknowledged that many people suffered from hunger in the 1590s during the Elizabethan reign so it was a common practice to hunt deer and violate aristocratic rule to avoid starvation (Fitter, "The Slain" 206). More than this, the act of hunting is a symbol of love-chasing and a means to manifest political oppression in literary works (Gibbons 172). Accordingly, killing deer is a sign of cruelty and oppression in reference to Jaques's lament for the loss of this animal. According to one of Duke Senior's followers, Jaques believes that Duke Senior's killing the stag is an act

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[10] Rosalind's crossdressing is a matter of various discussions which focus on her identification with real-life figures. Elizabeth, for instance, is associated with Rosalind because the Queen is claimed to have a habit of wearing male clothes to disguise herself and, more significantly, she introduced herself both as a man and a woman to her people as a political strategy to secure her position (Marcus, "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines" 137).

of usurpation which is not different from Duke Frederick's seizing his dukedom (II. i. 26-29). The lord recounts Jaques's bitter grief over the deer and their sinful act: "Yea, and of this our life, swearing that we / Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse, / To fright the animals and to kill them up / In their assigned and native dwelling-place" (II. i. 60-63). Moreover, Jaques refers to the ecological devastation caused by humans in the natural environment. Jaques also appears to mourn for Essex considering that one of the symbols in the Earl's coat of arms was "a stag *trippant*" (Dusinberre, "*As You Like It*" 413). When the slaughter of deer is symbolically interpreted, it can be immediately associated with Elizabeth's forsaking Essex. The walking deer represented in Essex's coat of arms may suggest that it stands for Essex destroyed by the Queen who was really interested in hunting during her lifetime. The strife between Elizabeth and Essex is alluded through animal symbolism, and Jaques's remorse foreshadows Essex's imminent death. Moreover, Rosalind indirectly invokes Essex's image in her reference to Ireland. She first calls herself "an Irish rat" (III. ii. 173) and later calls Orlando's address to absent Rosalind "the howling of Irish wolves against the moon" (V. ii. 105-106). As can be observed, both of the references, as indicated in the play's Arden edition notes in both scenes, situate Essex in Ireland. The first one indicates the crisis that Essex encountered in his Irish expedition in 1599 whereas the latter associates Essex with the Irish in opposition to the Queen who is represented as the goddess of the moon.

In the political context of the play, the design of Arden as a place of exile is related to Essex's exile in Ireland. In addition to rather homonymous Ireland and Arden, the forest can be affiliated with Essex and becomes a realm that mirrors the political conditions of the time. The play, written during Essex's exile in Ireland, is endowed with political dynamics with reference to Ireland. As a case in point, Chris Butler refers to Thomas Smith's (1513-1577) political pamphlet of 1572 *A Letter Sent by I.B*. in which he suggests that the younger sons of families disadvantaged by the law of primogeniture should go to Ardes in the northern part of Ireland and colonise the land (89-90). According to Butler's account, this idea was even supported by the first Earl of Essex, Walter Devereux (1541-1576), Robert Devereux's father, who also cooperated with the Earl of Tyrone (90). His son who was later in Ireland wanted to empower himself against his enemies at the Elizabethan court and refused to fight against Tyrone. In the play, Shakespeare does not

bring a practical solution to Orlando's problem with primogeniture, and he does not promote a war over inheritance rights between Orlando and Oliver. He rather avoids a serious conflict between Duke Senior and Duke Frederick, announcing the younger one's spiritual retreat in the end. As Chris Butler suggests, Shakespeare follows a similar pattern: "Prior to Essex's Irish campaign, though, the play's presentation of forgiveness and reconciliation offers counsel for Essex *vis-à-vis* the tricky situation in which the earl finds himself" (93). Put differently, when all problematic matters of the play are peacefully settled, Shakespeare probably tries to arouse hope for Essex. Viewed in this way, Arden is an alternative construction of Ireland through which Shakespeare deals with a specific topical issue in line with Essex's problematic position.

The connection between Essex and Arden can also be established when the poems attributed to Essex are reconsidered. In the 1590s, John Dowland (1563-1626) was a courtly composer and lyricist whose songs were quite popular. It is highly probable that Essex was an acquaintance of Dowland considering the claim that some of his poems, including the poems which attacked courtly life, were actually written by Essex at a time when his style was compared to Dowland's (Poulton 59). Kirsten Gibson, for instance, argues that the authorship of "Can she excuse" is problematic since there are similar points between this poem and Essex's style of writing poems, and the poem expresses a kind of displeasure that Essex had in his relationship with the Queen at that time (230-231). More strikingly, however, there is one particular poem by Dowland, "O sweet woods," expressing a withdrawal into the pastoral world after banishment as in the case of Essex. The speaker of the poem regrets his past "false pleasures" (5) and has "sad remembrance of my [his] fall" (6) associated with courtly life. His life at the court causes bitter despair and regret as he appears to be disappointed by his lover. Therefore, he chooses to retreat into the natural world: "To birds, to trees, to earth, impart I this, / For she less secret, and as senseless is" (7-8). As this love makes him lose liberty, he tries to gain freedom in a pastoral milieu. The repeated lines of the poem, "[o] sweet woods the delight of solitariness, / O how much do I love your solitariness" (1-2; 9-10; 17-18; 25-26; 33-34), precisely illustrate the retreat into the woods or forest which is juxtaposed with the court. In a similar fashion to the speaker of the poem, Essex is also claimed to have secluded himself in a rural environment. Accordingly, in one of his letters to Lord

Keeper, Essex directly talks about his withdrawal from the court and defines himself as a hermit: “Do I leave my friends? When I was a courtier, I could yield them no fruits of my love unto them. Now I am become an hermit, they shall bear no envy for their love towards me. [. . .] Do I ruinate mine honor, because I leave following the pursuit, or wearing the false badge or mark of the shadow of honor?” (Devereux 1:500). What is significant about Essex’s exile and the poem is that Essex’s seclusion took place in the forest when he was out of favour, and Wanstead was his frequent address in those years (Ruff and Wilson 38). Strikingly, the poem also gives the exact location of the Wanstead woods in the last stanza: “You woods in whom dear lovers oft have talk’d, / How do you now a place of mourning prove, / Wanstead my mistress saith this is the doom, / Thou art Love’s childbed, nursery and tomb” (29-32). This reference corroborates Essex’s voice in the poem so the banished courtier withdraws into the forest on a self-imposed exile. The poem and Shakespeare’s play, therefore, have a common point which is the idea of taking refuge in the forest following departure from the court. From this standpoint, it is possible to propose a correlation between Essex’s retreat into a rural place and Shakespeare’s depiction of the banished figures in Arden. This parallelism colours the play with a political innuendo because political exile takes place in the forest. Thus, Arden is an ideological place since the forest with its transgressive power is positioned in opposition to the court and the values it represents. The dichotomy is functional to understand the political tone that Shakespeare sets in the story. The playwright illustrates Essex’s exile by justifying his retreat, but Shakespeare is able to veil his own views thanks to the liminal place that is created.

With regard to the dichotomy created between the forest and the court, another point of the play’s political criticism, which is related to the late Elizabethan court in general terms, can be identified. It seems that Shakespeare makes use of the pastoral convention of the juxtaposition between the country and court and represents “different social states or ways of life” in regard to the social and economic conditions of two worlds (Alulis 38), highlighting two different value systems. The opposition between the two worlds takes on a political significance in the play as Shakespeare functionally presents Duke Frederick’s court in the first act. The play concerns itself with a political critique of the court which was “marked by tension and watchfulness as the ageing Gloriana became

more conscious of her declining powers, and as those around her became aware of this as well, with feelings of compassion, or of ambition, or of alarm. [. . .] The anxiety and caprice of Duke Frederick's court reflects the contemporary actuality" (Holderness et al. 123-124). In other words, the representation of the court in the play is illustrative of the late Elizabethan court so Arden emerges as an ideological site, pointing to the decay and malpractice of the courtiers of the time.

The critical allusion to the Elizabethan court can be pinpointed in another comparison between these two realms. The juxtaposition between barren and fertile sites is particularly noteworthy to understand this parallelism. Arden's liminal traits both as a desert and a green land amplify this reading. Following Rosalind and Celia's departure, Duke Frederick's court is left barren because the future generation is in the forest. Even though Arden is called a desert a few times in the play, the presence of young lovers and their final decision to marry promise a future involving procreation and regeneration. In her essay on the play's political references to the Queen, Samantha N. Snively claims that the forest and animals serve as a mirror symbolising the old and infertile Queen:

> Reading the landscape as an allusion to an aging, non-productive Elizabeth reframes the animals' potential meanings as well: the threats in the landscape of a barren, aging sexuality highlight the serpent's dominance through the threat of oral penetration and the lioness's monstrous nonmaternal body that disrupts patriarchal success and succession. (335)

For Snively, the delineation of the forest as a desert reiterates the association between Elizabeth and the barren land while the animals of the forest, also recognised in the Queen's coat of arms, can be politically interpreted as symbols representing her in the play. Alternatively, it is also possible to associate the Queen's infertility with the sterile court of Duke Frederick. While Duke Frederick's court is devoid of young people and love, Arden becomes a fertile land where marriage and fertility rites take place. This amounts to saying that the empty and barren court of Duke Frederick stands for Elizabeth's childless and decaying court. The play offers a solution to infertility first in Arden and then, with the return of these courtiers to the court after their marriage. Therefore, the potential future created in Arden signals a political opposition in relation to its contrast to Duke Frederick's court in a way that the play critically deals with the Queen's current position with no heir to succeed her.

Another political suggestion is put forward in the alternative community of Arden which grows into a communitas in Turner's terms (*The Ritual* 97) and functionally becomes an issue to criticise the atmosphere of the late Elizabethan court. From the beginning of the play, the alternative community of Duke Senior in the forest foregrounds the sense of equality and solidarity among its members. Although it seems that Duke Senior guides the community as a leader, he always emphasises their equal status by calling them his "co-mates and brothers in exile" (II.i.1). In contrast to the competition and ambition of Duke Frederick's court, the Arden community endorses collective support, sharing and contentment. The play strongly demonstrates that the court, rather than the forest, is a centre of savagery and cruelty when Orlando observes a civilised community in Arden considering the fact that he fights hard in order to save his life and escapes from death at his brother's court. Thus, the community in the forest transgresses the clichéd boundaries about the courtly life without posing a serious challenge. In opposition to the restrictions at the court, the Arden society is liberated from the structures and norms that limit them. The dynamics of the Arden community, in other words, is out of structures or boundaries when these characters are at a transitional liminal stage. In addition to the sense of equality, fellowship and freedom, the anti-structural form of the society connects it with the concept of communitas in Turner's understanding. Turner points out that "there tends to go a model of society as a homogeneous, unstructured communitas, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of human species" (*The Ritual* 132). For Turner, communitas is "spontaneous and self-generating" (*Dramas* 243) because the sense of outsiderhood enables a group of people to unite and exist together without restrictive social, cultural and/or economic divisions. In their liminal state, the union and cooperation of communitas is harmonious since "a new creative and collective *communitas,* or unstructured community, emerges and traditional boundaries of class, race, religion, and personality dissolve" (Downey, Kinane and Parker 9). Arden's community, thus, fits into the description of Turner's communitas considering that they immediately come together, get out of boundaries and live in a harmonious way following a transitional period. Communitas in Arden does not pose a serious threat to the court, but it still offers an alternative and independent state of life. This can be regarded as a political criticism of the court because the Arden community appears a different and alternative world coloured with ideal features. This classifies Arden as an ideological communitas,

considering that ideological communitas consists of a community without constraints or limits, living in a utopian mode and proposing an alternative (Spariosu 70). This kind of communitas is functionally used to underpin a criticism of the court since the Arden society which breaks hierarchical boundaries lives in a harmonious state and offers an opportunity to challenge the negative atmosphere implicitly.[11]

While Arden as a site of resistance against the corrupt court adds to the play's political context, Shakespeare's political criticism appears to be convoluted in this setting. In addition to Essex's strife and exile and the negative implications of the atmosphere at the late Elizabethan court, the play dwells on another political practice, that is colonialism, in the rural setting. Lisa Hopkins and Leah S. Marcus both refer to *As You Like It's* source, Lodge's work, *Rosalynde*, by highlighting the fact that Lodge wrote it during his journey to the Canaries ("Orlando" 4; "Anti-Conquest" 171). The voyage to the Canaries, for both critics, acquires a special topicality with respect to English colonialism. The claim that Shakespeare was probably in Ireland in 1599 (Barton, *Links* 66) and Ireland and Arden's etymological and nominal correlation, as stated above, make it plausible to suggest that the play problematises the practice of colonialism in an ambiguous manner with references to Ireland's colonisation. Hopkins emphasises that the use of the Golden Age world in the play can be deemed relevant to the material search and abuse in English colonialism ("Orlando" 5), and she specifies the practices on Ireland in the portrait of Rosalind because the female character "in particular is strongly associated with references to the foreign and the exotic" ("Orlando" 11). Hopkins extends her argument to Shakespeare's mocking of Raleigh's colonialist ideals represented in his work entitled *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana* (1596) ("Orlando" 17-20). On the other hand, Marcus mostly focuses on Jaques and his ambiguous attitude to

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[11] In the context of this argument, it is reasonable to comment that Rosalind and Celia constitute another communitas in Arden. Living "in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat" (III. ii. 324-325), they separate themselves from the male community and establish a female communitas. The general characteristics of communitas are applicable to their case. When they decide to leave Duke Frederick's court together, they spontaneously unite in their outsiderhood, and their female identity makes them connect even further. They have a strong sense of sisterhood and solidarity while they transgress the patriarchal restrictions together. From their escape to their crossdressing, they violate the structures and rules that limit the female self in the early modern period.

colonialism. Although Jaques takes side with the victims of colonialism in the forest, he is, from Marcus's point of view,

> a colonizer – in the forest but not of it, critiquing its customs from the perspective of an observer convinced of his moral superiority, and identifying its victim, the fallen deer, without recognising that his extravagant sympathy for its plight is essentially narcissistic, a displacement of his own feelings of unfair rejection at the hands of the dominant culture. ("Anti-Conquest" 179)

While Hopkins and Marcus rightly observe the characters' relation to colonialism in the play, the argument can be extended to Shakespeare's use of the forest setting to deal with this political matter. Bearing colonial practices in Ireland and deforestation in England in mind, the play unveils the story of colonised lands in its details. From this standpoint, one may look anew at Arden's liminal ambiguity and in-betweenness. The forest's unclear depiction both as a green land and a barren land, the killing of deer and the attack of animals may echo the negative impact of the colonial practices of usurpation on the forest and the forest's struggle to preserve itself. In this regard, Arden not only turns into a political territory, but also its liminal features enable the playwright to approach the issue of colonialism in a critical manner. While Shakespeare does not directly attack the ongoing abusive practices, he is able to show their negative consequences by working with the liminal setting.

Additionally, another topical allusion is employed in relation to the religious institution. The priest Oliver Martext, a representative of the church in the play, is caricaturised as an unreliable figure. Despite Jaques's doubts about his capability, Martext conducts Touchstone and Audrey's mock-marriage ceremony (III. iii. 76-81). The priest's surname, suggesting the idea of spoiling or damaging, hints at "the notorious biblical ignorance of Elizabethan Protestant ministers" (Hunt, *Shakespeare's* 100). What is more, his surname is reminiscent of the contemporary problem of the Marprelate tracts which caused a great controversy in the country. The topical allusion, once again, associates Arden with the English forest and specifically Shakespeare's hometown. Dusinberre claims that Martext relates Arden to the English context:

> The defiance of authority in the printing of unlicensed Marprelate tracts centred on Warwickshire, where Job Throckmorton was convicted at the Warwickshire Assizes in 1590 for his taking part in illegal printing. [. . .] The Forest of Arden had its own makers and marrers of text, and there is an inspired congruity in Touchstone's

> encounter with one of their representatives in a Warwichshire Arden. ("Topical Forest" 248)

Evidently, one of Warwickshire habitants was questioned about his participation in the printing of problematic tracts. In the context of the play, Shakespeare's presentation of Martext in Arden suggestively recalls this historical background. Moreover, the playwright refers to the issue in his comic representation of the priest, and Martext is somehow punished when his position is not respected as his role in Touchstone's marriage ceremony is mocked. Noting that the anti-Protestant figure is ridiculed in the play, Shakespeare appears to criticise fanatical religious views and highlights a topical controversy. Furthermore, he "mars" his own text to allude to a topical issue.

Moreover, the play presents liminal spatiality with reference to its ending. In particular, the last scene of the play culminates in the idea of transition which is the last feature of Arden's liminality, contributing to the play's political innuendo. According to Carol Corrine Davis, the forest is a symbol of a threshold (300) so the place is grounded on not only an experience of in-betweenness but also transition when one occupies the forest. This definition sheds light on the fact that the concept of liminality remains rooted in transition so that transitional places hovering between two realms are akin to liminal sites. In this regard, the emphasis falls upon transition in the conception of liminal places. In the play, the characters come from the court and meet in Arden. The banished characters no longer belong to the court, but they find a new place to stay. After the separation from their usual circumstances at the court, they are in the forest to gain new and independent selves. Yet they cannot be thoroughly a part of Arden so they occupy the forest for a temporary period. Then, Arden grows into a liminal transition place because the characters decide to return to the court at the end of the play.[12] This act of returning

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[12] Only Touchstone and Jaques choose to remain in the forest. Touchstone appears to enjoy his new marriage in Arden, but Jaques's situation is quite different. In his portrait, it is possible to observe that he is cynical and critical. He does not trust courtly values and criticises Duke Senior. He laments the fact that violence is anywhere. The deer's death is a kind of tyrannical power and violence committed by Duke Senior and his community so he refuses to return. His harsh criticism tinged with a melancholic attitude may be regarded as a threat to the happy community so he does not leave Arden. Jaques is considered a satirist, too. More tellingly, it is claimed that Jaques in Arden is a representative of the satirists whose works were banned at that time (Muir 64). This appears to explain his choice to stay. Although he is able to satirise the courtiers in Arden, it is impossible for him to behave in the same manner at the court so he chooses self-exile and remains

unfolds the fact that Arden is a transitory place. The forest, situated in-between the two courts, becomes a passage for the courtiers who come and go back. As an intermediate place, Arden is a liminal site which positively contributes to the establishment of a good government since the courtiers do not return to the same court. Actually, the first court belongs to Duke Frederick, and the courtiers are expelled from this court. Between Duke Frederick's tyrannical court and Duke Senior's restored court, Arden becomes a temporary place of residence for the courtiers. In this regard, Arden as a transitory zone "constitute[s] both suspension and motion. It is also a place of meditation, in the general sense of looking at oneself and also of group reformation" (wa Thiong'o 6). Thus, not only the transformation of characters but also the restoration of Duke Senior's court pinpoints this fact because the good leader is given back his dukedom. Thus, the ending of the play displays that the oppressive and corrupt court is reformed which positively affects the whole community. While the liminal forest becomes an intermediate zone between the opposite representations of the court, the idea of reformation and the community's contentment in the end suggest a political message. Joseph Zajac remarks that "[i]n a historical moment beset by 'factionalism, self-interest and instability,' Shakespeare invests communal contentment with a deep political significance" (311). As noted in this quote, Shakespeare places stress on the political issues and criticises the deterioration of the late Elizabethan court. He elicits his critical response by associating gratification with the liminal landscape and contrasting it with the court. As the usurped dukedom is returned to its real leader, the play ends in a positive political atmosphere.

From this, it can be concluded that at the historical juncture of the late Elizabethan period, Shakespeare creates a liminal landscape in the Forest of Arden. Arden whose location is purposefully blurred has the traces of English history, politics and culture in Shakespeare's time. As a borderland, the forest remains on the edge of different values in a way that it forms an arena to comment on the problems of Shakespeare's age. As Duke Senior declares that their life "[f]inds tongues in trees" of Arden (II. i. 16), Shakespeare uses the forest to allude to the political, social and cultural crises of the late Elizabethan period. All elements that constitute the liminal forest – ambiguity, in-betweenness,

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in the forest. Viewed in this way, he stands for the satirists whose critical remarks and powerful language are strictly restricted so that Shakespeare criticises the practice of punishment here.

uncertain potentialities, transformation and transition – become functional to veil Shakespeare’s criticism of the late Elizabethan court and the problematic political practices of banishment and exile. Opposing the practices of the late Elizabethan court and siding with Essex, the playwright forms a site of resistance and criticism in the liminal forest. As the representation of Essex and other political problems in a courtly setting could have troubled Shakespeare, the playwright is observed to have dealt with serious political problems in a liminal setting through which he is able to criticise the matters ambiguously and therefore on safe grounds. Moreover, in the case of this play, liminality is treated as “a state in which the capacity for change, for inventiveness and communion is maximised, where the polluting and dangerous properties associated with it can be productively harnessed to effect social critique and social reform” (Duffy 25). Before Essex’s total demise, Shakespeare hinges on the positive potential of liminality considering that his comedy conventionally has a happy twist because there is still some hope for Essex’s return to the court in a period of transition at the turn of the new century.

CHAPTER II

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE": HAMLET'S LIMINAL ACTIONS AND CHARACTER AS A MEDIUM FOR CRITICISM IN *HAMLET*

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare creates a liminal setting, the Forest of Arden, by means of which he comments on the political practices of the late Elizabethan court and government in an ambiguous way without any fear of punishment. However, while writing *Hamlet*, the playwright must have acknowledged that Denmark was "a foil for Elizabethan London" (McInnis 96). Referring to the lost plays which most probably used Denmark as a setting in the 1590s, David McInnis argues that the connection between Denmark and England was quite clear for Shakespeare and his reader/audience at that time so that the playwright's "Elsinore as a foil for Elizabethan London didn't come from nowhere, but rather trapped in a stage history of the two nations' shared fortunes and England's progression towards independence" (McInnis 104). Drawing on the common history of the two countries and the current succession crisis in England, Shakespeare might have decided to use the Danish setting in his play to benefit from its popularity on stage, too. Although the setting suggests an obvious correlation for Shakespeare's historical resonances, he appears to have created one of the most ambiguous characters on stage in *Hamlet*. Even though the protagonist Hamlet can be grouped among the melancholic-type characters in Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, it has to be acknowledged that the playwright goes beyond this type by creating ambiguities within the character hence portraying his most acclaimed character in the history of the theatre. That is to say, this time it is not the setting, but rather the character that provides Shakespeare with a main ground to dwell on the dynamics of the age in *Hamlet.* Therefore, the protagonist and his actions will be the centre of the analysis of liminality in this chapter.

Shakespeare's pivotal tragedy, *Hamlet*, concerns itself with the complex identity and ambiguous actions of the title character. After his father King Hamlet's sudden death and his mother Queen Gertrude's hasty marriage to his uncle Claudius, Hamlet goes through a period of crisis in his life. The new circumstances deeply shatter his life, transforming Hamlet's private and public identities. In the chaotic atmosphere of the play, Hamlet not only has an uncle-father and aunt-mother, but also he is denied accession to the Danish

throne. While he is not even allowed to mourn properly for his late father, he is informed about the truth of Old Hamlet's death. When the Ghost of Old Hamlet returns from purgatory to reveal that he was murdered by Claudius, Hamlet is held responsible by the Ghost for taking the revenge of his late father. On the one hand, Hamlet as a son is forced to act on behalf of his father. On the other hand, Hamlet as a prince has to turn into an avenger who is expected to murder the new King of Denmark. As a young man growing into adulthood, Hamlet goes through a rite of passage in this revenge story. Obviously, this process of transition causes Hamlet to oscillate between his family and his country, leading him to a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity since he delays revenge, spends his time in inaction and wavers on the edge of madness. Although most of the studies on *Hamlet* focus on the personal trouble of the protagonist, this chapter offers a political reading of the liminal character's story. By drawing on Hamlet's in-betweenness as a son and as a prince, it is possible to reveal more about how Shakespeare deals with the political concerns of the late Elizabethan period. More specifically, what constitutes Hamlet's actions and character can be analysed in terms of liminality which enables Shakespeare to convey his political critique of the succession problem and discuss Essex's rebellion in the last years of Elizabeth's reign. The aim of this chapter is to claim that Hamlet is a liminal character taking liminal actions through which Shakespeare presents the problematic issue of succession and the dangerous subject matter of the revolt against the monarch in his allusions to the late Elizabethan period while critically dealing with the social and cultural matters of his time in his use of liminality as a tool for criticism.

At the outset, it will be helpful to give a broad outline of this chapter. After giving the summary of *Hamlet*, the chapter begins with an account of Shakespeare's sources by later offering an argument about the play's genre as a revenge tragedy which is tinged with liminal traits. The chapter next reviews Shakespeare's personal and political memory as his source for the play's composition. In this context, the political issues of the time when *Hamlet* was written will be highlighted, suggesting that this play needs to be reconsidered in relation its historical resonances. Referring to the publication and performance history of the play, the chapter then establishes the connection between Shakespeare's work and contemporary politics along with the published text's connection with liminality in this

context. The discussion is further developed by clarifying the main argument about Hamlet’s liminal character and his liminal actions. Accordingly, Hamlet’s liminal character can be analysed in his basic in-betweenness in terms of Hamlet’s domestic role as a son and his public identity as a prince. While this in-betweenness essentially defines Hamlet’s liminality, his liminal actions such as mourning, taking revenge, being a stranger and acting feigned madness are closely examined in his process of becoming. Although Shakespearean scholars tend to pinpoint Hamlet’s familial struggle in his story, this chapter stresses the political undertones in this play. Drawing on the contemporary political events concerning the succession crisis and Essex’s rebellion, the last part of the chapter argues that Hamlet’s liminality is used as a tool by Shakespeare for his criticism of Elizabeth’s failure to solve the succession issue while the playwright alludes to Essex’s story of rebellion after the Earl’s execution.

Before analysing the liminal character and his actions as Shakespeare’s critical means in *Hamlet*, it is necessary to summarise the play and explain that Shakespeare did not write an original story in his play. In effect, Shakespeare strategically retold the old story of the Danish Prince Amleth by using a distant setting in his tragedy. Set in Elsinore, Denmark, the play is situated in a medieval atmosphere, however, Shakespeare refers to the early modern period in the details of the play. Hamlet, a student at the University of Wittenberg and the Prince of Denmark, returns to his country upon his father’s death and his mother’s hasty remarriage. He is totally disappointed by the marriage of his mother to his uncle. Although Hamlet does not approve of this marriage, his uncle Claudius gains the approval of the council for his marriage and election for the crown. After the Ghost informs Hamlet that he was poisoned and murdered by Claudius, Hamlet promises to avenge Old Hamlet’s death. However, he doubts the intentions of the Ghost as he is not sure whether the Ghost is a devilish spirit or not. Therefore, Hamlet needs to find evidence to prove Claudius’s guilt so he “put[s] an antic disposition” (I.v.170) and pretends to act like a mad man. The counsellor, Polonius, believes in Hamlet’s madness, however misinterprets it by claiming that the Prince is mad for his daughter Ophelia’s love. On the other hand, Claudius suspects Hamlet’s real intention. Meanwhile, Hamlet benefits from the players visiting the court and arranges a play, “The Murder of Gonzago,” to be performed. His plan is to observe the King’s response to the play since its plot mirrors the recent murder

and the marriage of Claudius and Gertrude. Subsequently, although Hamlet convinces himself that the Ghost is telling the truth, he cannot bring himself to take action in order to take his revenge. Hamlet avoids killing Claudius while he is praying, thinking that Claudius would go directly to heaven. As Claudius considers Hamlet a threat to his authority, he is sent to England accompanied by his friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, on his voyage. This journey is designed to end Hamlet's life. Indeed, Claudius sends a letter to England, ordering Hamlet's death. However, Hamlet realises this plot and avoids his own death. He changes Claudius's letter, causing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be murdered in England. He also takes advantage of the pirate attack on their ship and safely returns to Denmark. Upon his return, he attends Ophelia's funeral where he is challenged by her brother, Laertes. The mournful brother wants to take the revenge of his dead father Polonius and his sister Ophelia and attacks Hamlet because he learns that Hamlet had stabbed his father and probably caused his sister to become mad after Polonius's death. Claudius later manipulates Laertes to take revenge from Hamlet and arranges an unfair duel between them. Claudius arranges a poisonous sword and a cup of poisoned wine to kill Hamlet. However, in the end, it is Gertrude who mistakenly drinks from the cup and dies, and Laertes himself is mortally wounded by the poisonous sword and dies, too. Hamlet kills Claudius and later dies himself as he is also wounded by the same sword. Before his death, Hamlet declares Fortinbras of Norway as the new King of Denmark and entrusts his friend Horatio to tell this story to Fortinbras. The play ends with Fortinbras's order to arrange a military funeral for Hamlet.

As a matter of fact, Shakespeare borrowed from different sources and took advantage of literary, cultural, personal and political memory when he wrote *Hamlet*. With regard to the literary sources of the play, it is possible to identify a variety of works that helped Shakespeare compose his play while he was working within the genre of revenge tragedy. In order to frame this genre in the context of liminality, it is important to give an account of Shakespeare's sources here as they enabled the playwright to build his plot based on Hamlet's revenge. Accordingly, Shakespeare rewrote the Amleth saga, and his first literary source was Saxo Grammaticus's *Historiae Danicae*. Originally composed in the twelfth century, this work in Latin was known to be published in 1514; François Belleforest (1530-1583) later recounted the same story in his French work entitled

Histories Tragique in 1570 (Hadfield, *Republicanism* 187). According to the legendary story set in Jutland, there arises a fraternal rivalry between King Horvendil and his brother Feng which ends in Feng's triumph over Horvendil when he kills the King in public. Then, he not only seizes the crown but also the Queen Gerutha while Amleth, the King's son, is too young to oppose his uncle. As Amleth grows up, he puts on the mask of madness and makes everyone believe in his foolish state. Nevertheless, Amleth's madness is put on trial by Feng in the different plots designed against him. In the first plot, a woman who is Amleth's childhood friend is ordered to seduce him, but Amleth is warned about the trick and escapes the danger. Secondly, Feng's spy secretly listens to Amleth's talk with his mother in her chamber. When Amleth becomes aware of the spy's presence, he kills him, savagely cuts the body into pieces and cooks them to be eaten. Although he gains the support of his mother after this event, he is sent to Britain by his uncle Feng with a letter ordering his death. In a similar fashion to Shakespeare's Hamlet, Amleth changes the letter, but, different from Hamlet, Amleth marries a British princess in Britain. Upon returning to Jutland, he brutally takes the revenge of his father. He starts a fire at Feng's palace, burns the King's followers and kills Feng in the end. Although Shakespeare's play ends with the death of various characters, it does not include the original story's ferocity. As Paul A. Cantor explains, the original source "is considerably more primitive than Shakespeare's, incorporating all the brutal and barbaric elements typical of the blood feuds portrayed in Norse saga" (34). Moreover, Shakespeare's version does not result in the avenger's total victory as Hamlet himself is also killed in the end. Shakespeare also adds original elements to his tragedy such as the Ghost's appearance to Hamlet, a troupe of players visiting the court and performing a functional play-within-a-play, Ophelia and Laertes's roles and Fortinbras's unique contribution to the plot. All of these additions are functional in the course of the story considering the fact that Shakespeare alludes to the culture of the early modern period and the political context of the late Elizabethan period.

In addition to Grammaticus and Belleforest's works,[13] it is claimed that there were "Hamlets" on the English stage before Shakespeare wrote his play. As a case in point, writer Thomas Nashe, Shakespeare's contemporary, pointed out the influence of Seneca on the English playwrights and referred to the "Hamlets" on stage in 1589. In his comment, Nashe satirically declared that "English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as *Blood is a beggar*, and so forth; and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches" (qtd. in Mangan 114). His reference probably alluded to a popular play about Hamlet at the end of the 1580s, and this was confirmed by Phililp Henslowe's (1550-1616) note in his diary in 1594 as Bevington observes that Henslowe "entered in his diary for 11 June 1594 a record of performance of a Hamlet at Newington Butts by 'my Lord Admiral's Men' or 'my Chamberlain's Men,' probably the latter, though Henslowe does not specify. The item is not marked as 'new,' as was Henslowe's custom for a new play" (*Murder* 16-17). Moreover, writer Thomas Lodge dramatically cited the ghost's demand for revenge in a Hamlet play in 1596 (Dutton, "*Hamlet*" 178). It is a safe assumption that these three writers were pointing at a common play, *Ur-Hamlet,* which is thought to have been written before Shakespeare's play and is lost now. Attributed to Thomas Kyd (1558-1594), *Ur-Hamlet* is believed to have had a similar plot line and inspired Shakespeare to create his famous tragedy (Holderness et al. 61).

Moreover, another play by Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), is accounted among Shakespeare's sources, enabling the playwright to make use of the genre of revenge tragedy. Despite their different settings, both plays, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*, mirror each other with their parallel story lines. In the reversed revenge stories of the fathers and sons, these plays mainly deal with the themes of madness and revenge, the intervention of a ghost in the revenge plot and the death of innocent figures in a comparable manner.[14] While these components define both of the plays as a revenge

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[13] Although Grammaticus and Belleforest tell the same story of Amleth, there are some differences in their works. According to Bevington's account, Belleforest draws the portrait of a melancholic figure in Amleth; Gerutha and Feng commit adultery before the king is murdered; and the atmosphere of the story can be likened to the contemporary French court and culture unlike Saxo's depiction of a medieval world (*Murder* 13).

[14] Bullough gives a detailed account of the similarities between *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy* by listing twenty points to suggest that Shakespeare used Kyd's play in his tragedy (7:16-18).

tragedy, the parallelism between *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* indicates that Shakespeare exploited this work to construct his own.[15]

What is significant regarding Shakespeare's sources is that the playwright not only uses a familiar story but also works with a well-worn genre of revenge tragedy. Shakespeare's use of revenge tragedy is actually a telling case because it is possible to pinpoint a correlation between this genre and liminality. Actually, the features of revenge tragedy help Shakespeare define his protagonist with a series of liminal actions. Revenge tragedies elaborate on the protagonist's process of becoming because the character transforms him/herself in search of revenge after the death of a close figure. It is generally the ghost of the dead one who persuades the protagonist to take revenge, and hence, turn into a different person. As can be observed in Kyd's design of revenge tragedy, the elements of which are derived from the Senecan tradition, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, such plays depict the revenger in hesitation to take action, a prolonged struggle against a Machiavellian figure, the use of real or feigned madness as a device and the resolution of the revenge plot in a bloody scene of death (Bowers 71-72). As in the case of *Hamlet*, the revenger is observed to mourn, act in a melancholic mood and question life in sophisticated soliloquies (Bowers 73). Considering the actions in revenge tragedies and the revenger's development, it is possible to argue that the genre thrives on depicting a process of becoming for the revenger who experiences in-betweenness and ambiguity during his/her transformation. While van Gennep reconsiders the act of revenge in the rites of passage consisting of transition (186), the characteristics that define revenge tragedy and the revenger protagonist can also be deemed relevant to the features of

[15] There are many studies about the literary sources that might have been used by Shakespeare or can be compared to his tragedy owing to certain parallels. As a case in point, Julia Reinhard Lupton touches upon the comparison between *Hamlet* and *Orestes* (408 BCE) by Euripides (480-406 BC) and observes some similarities between Shakespeare's tragedy and *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus (525-455 BC) (186). Julie Maxwell claims that Shakespeare probably exploited Johannes Magnus's (1488-1544) work entitled *Historia de ombinus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus* (1544) which consists of the story of Amleth's father, Horvendil (520-560). Bullough also lists fifteen works which consist of Shakespeare's direct or possible sources and the texts with some analogues and allusions to *Hamlet* (7:x). More recently, McInnis has argued that the lost plays about Denmark from the 1590s can be regarded as Shakespeare's sources for *Hamlet.* Grouping *Hamlet* among "'Danish matrix'," McInnis refers to the plays such as "the anonymous 'Hamlet' performed during the Admiral's/Chamberlain's joint run at Newington Butts in June 1594," "the taner of denmarke" (performed on 23 May 1592 by Strange's Men, 23 May 1592) and "Cutlack" (performed in 1594 by Admiral's Men) (94).

liminality. Particularly, as argued below, the actions that the protagonist takes comply with liminal actions which will be subsequently analysed in Hamlet's story in this chapter.

Furthermore, Shakespeare's other sources of inspiration, his personal memory and contemporary politics, contribute to the play's undertone of criticism. First, Shakespeare's personal memory, to some degree, can be traced as a source for *Hamlet*. His first personal record, for instance, can be related to his local memory. As Chambers states, Ophelia's drowning scene in *Hamlet* may be related to the playwright's recalling the death of a girl drowned in the river of his hometown, Avon, in 1579; the girl's name was Katherine Hamlet (*William* 25). More significantly, Shakespeare's loss of his son Hamnet, named after his god-father Hamnet Sadler, in 1596 can also be reconsidered in relation to the play. As a father, the playwright's story about a son called Hamlet hints at his attempt to immortalise his own late son. What is more, Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, died in 1601, the year the playwright completed writing *Hamlet*. It appears that Shakespeare might have been haunted by the recent memory of his father considering that Hamlet in the play suffers from the loss of Old Hamlet and struggles to remember him and his order to take revenge. In the face of those deaths, Shakespeare was probably paying tribute to his family memory at a time when he was personally sensitive about the loss of figures close to him. Moreover, the playwright's memory of John Shakespeare, in particular, is functional in revealing the religious dynamics of his country in an intricate way that the appearance of the Ghost reminds the reader/audience of the Catholic past of the country. As politics and religion are two subjects intertwined during Shakespeare's time, it is reasonable to unravel more about his critique of religious politics in his play in the subsequent part of the chapter.

Moreover, Shakespeare dwells on late Elizabethan politics in the details of his play. That is to say, the current political issues are his special concern in *Hamlet* so the political matters and historical events of the time can also be regarded as the playwright's source material. Therefore, the political context of the age has to be reviewed by exploring the succession matter, the courtly rivalry between Essex and Cecil and Essex's rebellion against the Queen in more detail. To start with, throughout the play, the emphasis is implicitly placed on the succession problem because Elizabeth, albeit she is old, still

refused to name an heir at the turn of the seventeenth century when *Hamlet* was written. Thus, the influence of the problem of the succession on English politics in the last years of Elizabeth's reign can be observed in *Hamlet.* In effect, the succession problem was a recurrent political issue since the beginning of the Queen's reign. To put it simply, the Queen's social position as an unmarried woman was a public and political matter as the future of England depended on her marriage and her becoming a mother. After ascending the throne in 1558, Elizabeth constantly had to confront the succession problem at her court. To give an example, when the Queen became seriously ill in the winter of 1562, the court was alarmed that she could die and cause a problem related to the succession. For this reason, Cecil

> composed a document which aimed to 'tackle the potential problem of England without a monarch'. Cecil's paper, 'an act for the succession but not passed', was composed in February-March 1563. It contained a clause which enabled parliament to establish a 'conciliar interregnum' and then nominate a successor, thus activating the familiar distinction between the two bodies of the monarch, the office and person of the queen, in order to preserve the realm in a stable state. (Hadfield, *Republicanism* 17)

As the Queen recovered, Cecil's document became redundant. Later on, the issue of the succession became more complicated as it became a topic of discussion in the academic circle of Oxford University in 1566 when it was declared by the lawyers that hereditary blood rights had to be considered for accession to the throne (Doran and Kewes 24). In the same year, the Parliament was asked to take proper steps to solve the matter legally.

The religious conflict between the Catholics and Protestants also played a role in the succession problem. Even though the Queen lacked an immediate successor, her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), was the first in line to succeed her. Evidently, this possibility was a threat to the Protestant community of England so Elizabeth had to settle the problem delicately. At the time when the Queen was forced to make a decision about her cousin's position, Mary faced a serious crisis as her husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545-1567), was killed in 1567, and she married the murderer, James Hepburn, the Earl of Bothwell (1534-1578). Obviously, Mary's complicated remarriage defamed her public and political image in England. In the middle of this scandal, Elizabeth delayed her decision about Mary's position, but she was later forced to sign the

death warrant of the Queen of Scots when, in 1587, Mary was claimed to be plotting against her.

It is important to bear in mind that Elizabeth believed that naming an heir while she was alive would be a direct threat to her own reign. So, she constantly postponed her final decision in order to secure her political position. Thus, another issue regarding the succession is about the Queen's struggle to avoid a resolution. Allegedly, the Parliament passed an act in 1571 which officially forbade the discussion of the succession issue outside the State's council (Tennenhouse 86). Whenever this serious issue was publicly voiced, the Queen punished those challenging her power and order. As a case in point, when Tobie Matthew gave a sermon and used the issue of the succession in his prayer in 1577, he was immediately denounced and questioned about his speech (Hunt, "The Succession" 156). In another instance, Peter Wentworth was imprisoned when he conducted a debate on the succession issue with some members of the Parliament in 1593 (Pollnitz 119). In particular, Elizabeth became stricter on the succession problem toward the end of her reign. However, as she was getting older, she could not always preserve her dominance in the power struggle at the court. In 1559, for instance, while the Queen affirmed her powerful position with the Act of Supremacy which laid emphasis on her political authority and control over the Parliament (Raffield 25), she was at pains to avoid the threats of protest and rebellion at the turn of the seventeenth century. Similarly, the Queen's position at the court was also problematic. Precisely, the Queen's decaying old body metaphorically suggested her declining power in England. Although she attempted to draw attention to her bodily strength by dancing at the Christmas entertainments in 1600 (Tennenhouse 85), the signs of her old age were clearly observed the next year: "At the opening of Parliament in 1601, it was reported, 'her robes of velvet and ermine had proved too heavy for her; on the steps of the throne she had staggered and was only saved from falling by the peer who stood nearest catching in his arms . . .'" (Tennenhouse 85). The monarch's physical weakness signified the decline in her political supremacy. Even, the Queen's death was expected in the early days of the 1600s. Those circumstances compelled the courtly circles to seek a successor to follow Elizabeth. It is during this period that a great number of candidates were proposed for the English throne. The list of candidates was quite long:

> Edward and Thomas Seymour, the sons of Katherine Grey of the Suffolk line; Arbella, the English Stuart from a cadet line; [. . .] the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia of Spain whose claim dated back to her fourteenth-century Lancastrian ancestor [,] Ferdinando Stanley, briefly fifth Earl of Derby, from the cadet Suffolk line [,] Henry Hastings, third Earl of Huntingdon [,] the Duke of Parma and the Earl of Westmorland. (Doran and Kewes 4)

In addition to those on the list above, the strongest candidate was Queen Mary's son, James VI of Scotland. It is no surprise that Elizabeth refused to choose any of those potential names. However, her court speculated on the possible accession of James and secretly discussed the succession of the Spanish Infanta.

To further understand the impact of the succession problem, it is of interest to treat the matter in relation to James and his family story. It can be claimed that James appeared to act strategically. In this regard, since his childhood, James had learnt how to act in a struggle for power because of his mother's marriage life. In fact, James personally observed the consequences of the political conflicts in his own family as Queen Mary's problematic relationship with her husband, Lord Darnley, had caused political trouble in Scotland. The power struggle between Mary and her husband endangered the Scottish Queen's political stability, and the scandalous events in her life caused unrest and unease among the Scottish people as they thought that their female monarch had defamed herself, hence the country. After Mary got pregnant, her relationship with Darnley became worse as she rejected to give him political right to reign the country together. Moreover, Darnley regarded their baby as a reason for his "permanent exclusion from succession" (Mallin, *Inscribing* 126). This situation made Darnley cooperate with the lords who did not support the Queen. They arranged a plot to kill Mary's secretary, who was a close figure to the Queen, and cause a miscarriage, but while the Queen saved herself and her baby's life, her secretary was brutally killed (Mallin, *Inscribing* 127). Although Darnley later tried to save his marriage, the couple did not really reconcile with each other after this event. Moreover, Mary was said to be having an affair with the Earl of Bothwell who helped her escape from Darnley's plot, and Darnley was claimed to continue getting involved in different plots against Mary. Amid such claims occurred Darnley's suspicious death. After an explosion in his house in 1567, Darnley was found dead in the orchard, and Bothwell was charged with his murder (Frye, *The Renaissance* 31). Moreover, shortly afterwards, Queen Marry married Bothwell which created a scandal not only in Scotland

but also in Europe, and the Queen was severely criticised while her authority was questioned. Needless to say, this family story affected James as he witnessed how the personal relationships of a monarch deteriorated his/her political power and relations. According to Roland Mushat Frye's account, James's grandparents expected him to take the revenge of his dead father (31-32). However, James never took such action for after being captured as a prisoner in Denmark, Bothwell was reported to die as a mad man (Hopkins, *Shakespeare* 34). In the course of all those events, James grew up as a patient prince. Although Elizabeth had ordered Mary's execution, James never turned into a rebellious figure; instead, he only waited for his accession to the English throne without taking any risks.

Despite James's strategic patience, the emergent succession problem disturbed one of his fervent supporters at the Elizabethan court. Deprived of Elizabeth's economic and personal support, Essex aimed to play a significant role in the succession and attempted to settle his position after the Queen's death. What emerges here is that Essex's approach to the succession problem is one key issue to understand and deal with the political dynamics of the time. At first sight, it appears that Essex was driven into the succession problem since he was put in a difficult situation when the book entitled *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland* was dedicated to him in 1594. Written by Robert Parsons under the pseudonym of Robert Doleman, this work analysed the succession issue in detail by unfolding the potential accession of the Spanish Infanta. Therefore, the dedication was highly dangerous for Essex since he appeared to be supporting the Spanish invasion of England. "The purpose of the dedication," Alexandra Gajda recapitulates, "was almost certainly to undermine Essex's relationship with the Queen and James VI and to unsettle his growing body of Puritan and Catholic supporters" ("Essex" 119). Gajda also highlights this dedication's influence on Essex's further actions: "First, the tract invoked the dreadful spectre of civil war that would likely follow Elizabeth's death if the succession were not settled. And the *Conference* seemed to be proof that the Infanta's claim had serious support – and from ingenious enemies of Essex" ("Essex" 119). On the other hand, Essex delicately formed a close relationship with James in his secret correspondence. Since in time, Essex fell from the Queen's favour, he became more aggressive in his support of James. This is clearly evidenced in one of his

letters to the Scottish King. In 1600, Essex convinced himself that the Cecilian faction was against him and claimed that he supported the Spanish succession. With this belief, Essex demanded James to take immediate action in order to seize the English throne:

> In fierce rhetoric Essex defined their common cause: the faction that sought his own destruction tyrannized over the queen, and impelled him to act to destroy those evil foes who would 'oppress innocencie, cancel merit, justify conspiracy, make lawe, inspire Judges, overawe the people, bury freedome, usurpe sovereignty for the present, *and prepare a way for an unjust succession* hereafter' [. . .] – the succession of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, daughter of Philip II, and archduchess of Austria and the Netherlands. (Gajda, *The Earl* 38-39)

As can be observed, Essex was anxious not only about James's accession but also his rivals' influence on Elizabeth. In particular, he assumed that Cecil and his followers endorsed the Spanish succession and feared that they would achieve their aim by oppressing the Queen. As Essex was not in contact with Elizabeth, his unease led him to an unusual path, that was his rebellion in 1601.

Concentrating more on Essex, one may recognise that the factional strife over the succession problem is quite significant to provide the historical context of the late Elizabethan period. So, the intricate relations between the two factions need to be clarified. In effect, Cecil's approach towards Essex can be deemed as an ambiguous matter when their relationship is examined. There is some disagreement about Cecil's enmity towards Essex. One strand of argument indicates that Cecil was not Essex's enemy; on the contrary, Essex created this image of Cecil in his own mind. Janet Dickinson throws light on the relationship between the two political figures and even emphasises Cecil's cooperation with Essex. Until 1601, Dickinson claims, Cecil supported Essex both abroad and at the court, and that they both congenially served Elizabeth together, and Cecil aided Essex's important political assignments at the court (*Court* 91, 96). However, as Essex lost his privilege in the political arena, his friends were claimed to make him believe in the presence of an enemy. After being excluded from the Queen's environment, Essex created an alternative society for himself with the support of his followers. Gathering in Essex's house, his circle of friends placed a high value on the conduct of friendship and honour through which they revived "the powerful and passionate sense of Cicero's *De amicitia*" and the Arthurian "swordsmanship and the heroic style for which there was no place in the dominant *regnum Cecilanum*" (James,

Society 332). Situating themselves in opposition to Cecil, this group of men was of the opinion that Essex's political power was suppressed by Cecil and his followers. Reading and discussing a Roman politician, Tacitus's (c. 56 AD- 120 AD) ideas, the Essexians felt that the oppressive rise of the Cecilians in the courtly faction caused them to lose power (Dickinson, *Court* 104). That is to say, Cecil was metamorphosed into Essex's arch-enemy under the influence of Essex's supporters following the Earl's displacement. In stark contrast to this view, courtly factions were known to be a common characteristic of the Tudor reign. In point of fact, the court was a political unit riddled with different groups of courtiers whose mutual concerns brought them together in factions. The Elizabethan court was known for the conflicts and rivalry of the opposing factions of the time. Particularly after Sir Walter Raleigh, an English soldier and writer, was out of the Queen's favour at the beginning of the 1590s because of his marriage, it turns out that the Elizabethan court was divided into two: "the new party of Essex and his followers – aggressive and adventurous – and the old party of the Cecils, entrenched in the strongholds of ancient power" (Strachey 31). At the end of the sixteenth century, Essex's aggression and ambition caused his failure in that he and his circle suffered from the Cecilian control in domestic and foreign affairs. It is highly probable that this rivalry with Cecil was not simply Essex's paranoia. Accordingly, the last years of Elizabeth's reign were called "regnum Cecilianum" because the aging Queen lacked the power to rule while Cecil exercised power over all affairs of the state (Dickinson, "Leadership" 90).

In this factional strife, Essex wanted to triumph over Cecil for the last time. However, the circumstances put the Earl into a difficult position in the end. Here, it is worth explaining the chain of events leading Essex to his final fall during the course of the succession problem. When Essex was in contact with the Scottish King, he strongly believed that Cecil was preparing for the Spanish succession. Moreover, he feared that his life was in danger; he was anxiously afraid of being assassinated by his enemies at the court. Although it is not clearly known whether his life was under threat or not, at that time Essex suffered from a kind of mental or psychological disorder. Indeed, he was claimed to be in a melancholic state, even mad. Karin S. Coddon claims that "Essex seems to have suffered from what Timothie Bright would have called a 'melancholie madnesse,' replete with bouts of near-stuporous despair and religious mania" (51). It is still a question

whether it was this melancholy that made him think about being assassinated. More interestingly, it should be noted that his madness acquires a special topicality since it is related to his rebellion. Peter Lake mentions John Harrington's perception of Essex's madness by correlating it to his rebellion:

> John Harrington reported after a visit to Essex that 'it resteth with me in opinion that ambition thwarted in its career, doth speedily lead on to madness: herein I am strengthened by what I learn in my Lord of Essex, who shifeth from sorrow and repentance to rage and rebellion so suddenly, as well proveth him devoid of good reason or right mind; in my last discourse, he uttered such strange designs that made me hasten forth, and leave his absence [. . .]. (525)

As noted in this quote, Essex's mental disorder, or his state of madness, was claimed to be a result of his political ambition. It may be reasonable to take account of Essex's madness related to his rebellion since his revolt plan was unprepared and unorganised. However, it is undeniably true that Essex was still a military leader who initiated a treasonous action. In 1601, Essex and his friends frequently gathered at his house, and those meetings alarmed the government so Essex was asked to explain their purpose to the Council. However, he made up an excuse and did not appear before the Council. Yet, in order to arouse a rebellious spirit among the public, he financially supported Shakespeare's *Richard II* which was notorious for creating an analogue between Richard II, an oppressive king who was deposed from the throne, and Elizabeth. After the performance of this play, a commission was sent to Essex's house on 8 February. Although the commission advised Essex to reconcile and warned him, the Earl and his followers kept the members of the commission under surveillance. Then, Essex and his supporters left the house and stirred up the rebellion. Essex's revolt was preoccupied with three main aims: "the removal of his enemies, the restoration of his own political fortunes, and the formal declaration, ideally by Queen-in-Parliament, of James's title" (Gajda, "Essex" 117). Despite his ambitious endeavour, Essex had neither military nor public support for his rising. When he reached St Paul's Cathedral, he attempted to convince people to take his side. At the cathedral, Essex cried out to those at the sermon to save the Queen as well as his own life. The report of those moments was as follows:

> At St Paul's, one eyewitness, John Bargar, heard 'a confused noise, crying, Murder, murder, God save the Queen', and rumours of a plot by Sir Walter Ralegh and his associates to murder Essex. At Ludgate by St Paul's, William Masham saw Essex himself come forward, declaring 'to the people that he should have been murdered,

> and came to them for safety'; Ellis Jones 'heard the Earl say there was a practise to take away his life, and therefore he would insist upon his own courses'. But, for all their lurid claims, the rebels excited nothing more than a mixture of mild interest and bewilderment. (Dickinson, *Court* 44)

Without the support of the majority, Essex and his men later had to fight against the troops of the government. Devoid of a proper strategy, Essex lost some of his men and, then, he was forced to retreat. When he desperately reached his home, he realised that the members of the commission who had been forced to stay were not in his house because they were released. As Essex had lost his last chance, he immediately began burning his personal documents and letters before he and his followers surrendered.

One may easily sense that Essex's last attempt ended in complete chaos. Although Essex tried to disassociate himself from the accusations of treason, his rebellion was regarded as a *coup d'état*. At the trial, Essex initially defended his loyalty to the Queen by refusing the accusations of his treachery. He insisted that his only intention was to contact the Queen. Dickinson deduces that Essex's actual rebellion was his bold attempt to ask for direct communication with Elizabeth: "The events of 8 February represent a typically Essexian magnification of the countess's plan and would have been a suitably dramatic and spectacular return to royal favour" (*Court* 61). However, it is worth noting that Essex wanted to retain full control over the aging Queen and force her to declare James's succession. Therefore, he directly accused Cecil of betraying Elizabeth and demanded him to make a statement about the Spanish Infanta. Yet Cecil defended himself, and Essex was found guilty in the end. Although Essex at first struggled to defend himself, he finally had to make a confession on 21 February 1601 and was immediately executed on 25 February (O'Day 32). After his death, however, the Queen was afraid that some people still had strong sympathy for the Earl. In order to avoid another revolt, Elizabeth and her court officially branded Essex as a traitor. Moreover, Francis Bacon was assigned to record the trial. Upon the Queen's order, Bacon wrote *The Declarations of the Treasons of the Late Earl of Essex* which was revised by Elizabeth and her council and published in April 1601 (Butler, "Imagination" 115). The image of Essex was thoroughly denounced in this work as Bacon explicitly narrated the Earl's overreaching political ambition to seize the crown for himself which led him to treason in the end.

While Essex and some of his followers were executed, Southampton, the Earl's close friend and Shakespeare's patron, was only imprisoned in the Tower for his participation in the *coup d'état* of 1601 until the accession of James. While Southampton was in prison, Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* in which he alluded to the serious political issues of the period. At the time when the discussion of the succession issue was strictly disallowed, in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, by choosing a different setting and depicting an ambiguous character, implicitly recounted a story about a problematic succession and the fall of a dynasty. Broadly conceived, the succession problem is a central contention in Shakespeare's play regarding that Hamlet as the Prince of Denmark loses the throne, and the murderous King Claudius is elected by the council, but his authority is threatened covertly by Hamlet's ambiguous actions and overtly by Laertes's revolt. The play's course of events draws further attention to the political problems of the late Elizabethan period since the play deals with a political crisis in the Danish monarchy similar to the current troubles of Elizabeth's government. As for the narration of the delicate issues, Shakespeare chose to write a tragedy which may be considered a political type of writing since it "manifests the decentering of authority; it is the image of authority in crisis. The problem of sovereign (central, supreme, ordering) authority is enacted in the crisis faced by the tragic protagonist whose behaviour reflects a disruption or discontinuity, both producing and produced by the behavior" (Liebler 14). In other words, Shakespeare depicts the late Elizabethan atmosphere by making use of tragedy within a political context.

Regarding the political thread of the play, one may think about the editions of *Hamlet* because the text was revised and censored according to the political upheavals during the transitional period from Elizabeth's rule to James's reign. Before dealing with the exercise of state control, or, in other words, censorship, on this play, it is necessary to introduce the three versions of the play and discuss which text can be regarded liminal. Although *Hamlet* was originally recorded in the Stationers' Register in 1602, it was published in 1603 for the first time. Known as the First Quarto, Q1, this text was published "by Valentine Simmes for Nicholas Ling and John Trundell" in 1603 (Kastan, "Introduction" 3) and entitled *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke* (Lambert 49). Indeed, it is a short version of the play as it only consists of 2154 lines. In addition to the first edition, there was another edition of the play called the Second Quarto,

Q2, consisting of 3668 lines. Published in 1604, Q2 was entitled *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* and printed with the note that "[n]ewly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie" (Lambert 50). Until 1611, Q1 and Q2 were the two editions of *Hamlet* available to the reader, but "John Smethwick had Q2 reprinted in 1611 by George Eld [. . .] and this new edition (Q3) introduced some variants. A few years later Smethwick had Q3 reprinted in another, undated quarto (Q4), again introducing a small number of new variants" (Thompson and Neil 511-512). Although Q3 and Q4 have never been in use throughout the play's performance and publication history, the edition of *Hamlet* in the First Folio of 1623 is the third main text, playing a role in the discussion of *Hamlet*'s publication history.[16] As a matter of fact, among these three texts, Q1 has been the centre of various debates since it lacks many lines compared to the other editions. Precisely, Q1 has a different version of the "To be or not to be" and different names for some characters – Gertred for Gertrude, Ofelia for Ophelia, Corambis for Polonius and Montano for Reynaldo – while it does not mention the pirate attack during Hamlet's voyage (Hadfield, *Republicanism* 185). Focusing on Q1's length and the differences in the text, Shakespearean scholars consider it a "bad" quarto, pirate copy and performance text memorised by the players. This approach to Q1 was initially adopted by A. W. Pollard in *Shakespeare's Folios and Quartos* (1909). Furthermore, Zachary Lesser explains that "by dividing the quartos into 'good' and 'bad,' depending on whether they were authorized by the players, Pollard had begun the process of identifying Shakespeare with the agency behind the publication of Q2" (61). Interestingly, Pollard's idea was supported and developed by many scholars (Muir 112; Dodsworth 3), and the debate over this classification of the quartos has been eventually resolved. Recent discussions on Q1 not only question the approach advocating Shakespeare's authorial power but also make it possible to define Q1 as a liminal text among the three versions of *Hamlet.*

To further argue, Q1 can be regarded liminal in two respects. First of all, the idea that Q1 was reproduced by the actors performing the play evokes a liminal sense of ambiguity

[16] In this dissertation, all references to *Hamlet* are derived from Q2 edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor in the Arden Shakespeare. However, whenever necessary, Q1 and the First Folio edition of the play will be mentioned.

and in-betweenness in terms of Shakespeare's authorial power. Paul Menzer's interpretation of the discussions on the quartos is of significance to reveal more about this point. Challenging the generally accepted arguments, Menzer refuses to recognise "Q1 to be a 'memorial reconstruction' as conventionally understood" (24). He rather argues that "Q1 has no scribal link with Q2 and F. It is a text apart, and its writer was not making a serious attempt to 'reconstruct' either Q2 or F exclusively" (Menzer 38). Menzer's main idea is that Q1 is a text of its own independent of Shakespeare. Therefore, in a comparative analysis of *Hamlet*'s three versions and with a particular focus on the cues of Q1, Menzer defends the idea of "multiplitic y" by defining Q1's authorship as "Anonymous" who "may be one man or many: player, poet, printer, scribe, or scrivener. Whether Anonymous played Marcellus, Voltemand, Lucianus, Corambis or none of them is of less concern to me [him] than is a focus on the potential multiplicity of material that comprise the manuscript from which Q1 was set" (116). Accordingly, Q1 can be considered as a liminal text as Menzer's idea of multiplicity suggests a sense of authorial ambiguity or in-betweenness which disrupts the connection between Shakespeare and this text. Secondly, the history of Q1 reveals temporal liminality. Lesser studies the discovery of Q1 in the nineteenth century, explaining that Q1 was not known to the reader/audience for a long time until Sir Henry Bunbury revealed that he had the copy in 1823 (1). This copy was not exactly similar to the available *Hamlet* text at that time, that was Q2, and it lacked parts of the play compared to Q2. This created a kind of hierarchy between the two texts in which Q2 was regarded as an ideal version whereas Bunbury's Q1 was not regarded a good one. Moreover, the last page of the play was missing in Bunbury's Q1, but when a student in Dublin sold the second copy of Q1 to M. W. Rooney in 1856, the mystery of the last page was solved because this copy had the last page of the text (Lesser 16). What is particularly interesting in Lesser's interpretation of Q1's reappearance is that he depicts a liminal process for the text. To illustrate, while Q1 was originally published in 1603, it later reappeared in 1823. Although it was the oldest text of Hamlet, it was treated as a new text, and this temporal in-betweenness of Q1 was clearly expressed in the *Literary Gazette*'s identification of the text as "a 'new' (old) play'" (Lesser 10). Lesser calls it "uncanny temporal oscillation" (10-11), and his terming can be directly related to liminality. To be more precise, Q1 was chronologically in-between, standing midway between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, it can be linked to

liminality, timewise. Additionally, the rediscovery of Q1 in 1823, for Lesser, definitely locates *Hamlet* in a "process of *becoming*" (83) since there have been some changes in the interpretation of Shakespeare's play after that moment. Undoubtedly, Lesser's observation suggests a rite of passage for the play and its literary criticism, establishing a connection between *Hamlet*'s publication history and liminality.

As noted above, the change in the interpretation of *Hamlet* after the rediscovery of Q1 in 1823 reveals the slippery ground in relation to the liminal context of this play. After having established the liminal context for Q1, another line of thought on the publication history can be offered in relation to the political background of the transition period during Shakespeare's time. In accord with the change in the monarch from Elizabeth to James, the editions of *Hamlet* can also be reconsidered here in terms of their political context. Accordingly, Q1 is associated with the Elizabethan reign since it was published "when the memory of Elizabeth was still fresh and the presence of a king was a novelty" (Mallin, *Inscribing* 64). Dutton acknowledges a similar point by laying emphasis on how the succession problem and the rebellion are delicately recounted in Q1 ("*Hamlet*" 185). In contrast to the first edition, Q2 is claimed to be riddled with the problematic issues of the succession and revolt in a more evident way. Taking into consideration its publication date, 1604, it is clear that this edition of the play was revised under the influence of James's reign, which suggests that the political concerns of the time were a contributing factor to the composition of *Hamlet.* Compared to Q1, Q2 overtly dwells on the theme of revolt, depicts the process of change in the reign and, more significantly, "considers the rights and wrongs of succession, and the mechanisms that affect it, even in a constitution like this, which was alien to the English" (Dutton, "*Hamlet*" 184). More importantly, this edition makes the reader aware of the relation between the state and theatre in the new era since Q2 was subjected to the rules of censorship. As Anne of Denmark (1574-1619) was James's wife and Queen, the reference to Denmark as a prison and the comment on Danish people's drunkenness were omitted because they were regarded as an insult on James's Danish Queen. Additionally, the criticism of the children's theatre company was excluded from Q2 because the company, renamed as the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel, enjoyed Queen Anne's patronage after James's accession to the throne so the

scene in which Shakespeare depicted the rivalry between adult and children companies did not appear in Q2 (Chambers, *William* 414).

Although Q2 was censored, this text equivocally depicted the social and political atmosphere of the Jacobean monarchy in its references to the images of disease, particularly the plague, as a sign of decay and corruption of the state. Thus, the use of the disease images in the play can be identified here with respect to the political and historical undertone of Shakespeare's work. As a matter of fact, Europe suffered from the bubonic plague in the first years of the seventeenth century, and England was not exempt from the spread of this disease. When James succeeded to the throne, his coronation was postponed because of the ongoing pandemic. The failure to have an official ceremony caused a kind of anxiety among people who thought that they did not have a monarch until the coronation took place in public. Moreover, there was a common belief that the new King's monarchical power was not absolute because his human body and kingly rule appeared to be vulnerable during the period of the plague (Mallin, *Inscribing* 108-109). Although in a sermon delivered in the Parliament in 1563, Elizabeth's lack of an heir was declared as "a 'plague' to the kingdom" (Hunt, "The Succession" 155), the perception of the plague in the Jacobean period was entirely different. According to Eric S. Mallin's account, the plague was initially related to James's succession. Mallin proposes a correlation between Q2's reference to the plague and the new King of England as follows:

> Interpretively disturbing possibilities are embedded deep within the history of national health that is inscribed in the second quarto of *Hamlet*. The great general treason of the bubonic plague of 1603 is that it seemed to be England's bodily reaction against the presence of a new king. In the wake of Elizabeth's death, the sickness seriously impaired the prestige or the charisma of the Scots monarch. Whatever the eventual ramifications, the closer James got to London, to the seat of power and to his own visibility as a power, the more disorder accrued, and the closer he drew to infection. Disease in *Hamlet* bears ironic historical lineaments. For the play bitterly imagines an accession tableau in which deadly treason takes over authority's place – at least until the true prince, the proper heir, can bring unmitigated disaster to the state. (*Inscribing* 110-111)

In this regard, James appears to have been an ineffective king who could not perform an active role in his reaction to the plague. Moreover, as Mallin further argues, such diseases are believed to emerge in corrupt states (*Inscribing* 80) and destroy a nation's social unity (*Inscribing* 82). This amounts to saying that James's rule was either exposed to corruption

or unable to construct a cultural harmony for England in reference to Shakespeare's use of the plague in Q2. The concern about corruption in *Hamlet* is also noted by Andrew Fitzmaurice. As the action of the play culminates in the decline of state power, Fitzmaurice finds the reference to Rome in Q2 important. In Fitzmaurice's words, the transition from Old Hamlet's rule to Claudius's reign suggests "a state of republican-like virtue to imperial corruption. Significantly, this passage on the fall of the Roman republic was added to Q2, first published in 1604, when the new rule of James was even more deeply marked by concerns about corruption" (142). Therefore, such changes in the editions of *Hamlet* are illustrative of the fact that contemporary politics shaped the text.

What is more, following its publication, *Hamlet* takes on a political significance as a historical narration. For instance, in Russia, the historical account of the Russian Tsar, Boris Godunov's (1551-1605) collapse was described in relation to Shakespeare's tragedy. Margreta de Grazia explains how *Hamlet* was used in the context of Russian history immediately after it was published:

> In 1605, the anonymous author of *Sir Thomas Smithes Voiage and Entertainment in Rushia* likened the demise of Russia's regime in 1605 to the tragedy of Hamlet. At the time of writing, Boris Godunov, who had obtained the throne in 1598 after allegedly poisoning the rightful heir, died suddenly, and the empire passed to his own son Theodor. Within a month's time, a young man claiming to be the rightful heir appeared from obscurity to avenge Godunov's usurpation by slaying his relations and supporters. To the anonymous English reporter, the episode possessed all the makings of an Aristotelian tragedy. (*Hamlet* 45)

As can be observed, Shakespeare's tragedy is exploited to comprehend the course of historical events, particularly the fall of the ruler. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that within a range of possible interpretations of the play, reading *Hamlet* as a comment on contemporary politics would not be irrelevant as exemplified in the case noted above. The political commentary on the declining power of the state and the atmosphere of rebellion in *Hamlet* can be strongly highlighted to unfold the political innuendo within the layers of the text.

More interestingly, the political tinge of *Hamlet* can be unravelled in its performance history, too. Particularly, the popularity of *Hamlet* on stage can be related to the play's political content. In effect, this tragedy has been the most popular play of Shakespeare on

stage all around the world since its first performance. As indicated in the play's printed copy, *Hamlet* was originally performed at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge – probably first at Oxford – and later at the Globe in London (Croall 5). Later on, the play was on tour because the theatres in London were closed when the plague broke out in 1603. Therefore, the play reached large audiences in other cities of the country. What is more, as the play was performed in various places, it earned a worldwide reputation. In 1607, for instance, the play was performed "on board a ship of the East India Company, the Red Dragon, on September 5, 1607, off the coast of Sierra Leone. The players were sailors and most of the playgoers also were sailors" (Yachnin, "*Hamlet*" 88). It is also recorded that *Hamlet* was performed by soldiers in the castle of Elsinore in 1816 to commemorate Shakespeare's death (Croall 179). This popularity of the play can be deemed relevant to *Hamlet*'s potentiality for raising a critical voice. Regarding that *Hamlet* can be interpreted as a political mirror reflecting the troubles of its age, the play has maintained its reputation as an expression of political criticism throughout the centuries. Also, as Bevington comments, "[t]he mood of interpretation veered sharply in new directions, responding to widespread disillusionment following World War I. The era between the two great world wars saw productions that made use of *Hamlet* to ponder the uncertainties and anxieties of a world in economic and political stalemate," and he adds that "[p]ost-world War II *Hamlets* often interpreted the play as an attack on political tyranny and the curtailment of individual freedom, whether in Russia or Germany or indeed just about any country" (*Murder* 6). As a matter of fact, the play, performed on various stages all around the world, has been accordingly adapted in order to voice the problems peculiar to each age. Jan Kott resembles Hamlet to "a sponge" and declares that "[u]nless produced in a stylized or antiquarian fashion, it immediately absorbs all the problems of our time" (52). That is to say, the political issues embedded in Shakespeare's tragedy, such as the declining power of the ruler, tyranny, rebellion and political unrest, define not only the play's political context but also its popularity. In line with its original perception, *Hamlet,* Shakespeare's most popular tragedy, has always been an embodiment of political critique in each age since it was written.

It is important to bear in mind that in *Hamlet,* Shakespeare could not openly criticise Elizabeth's failure to solve the succession problem and the tyrannical rule of the monarch

because of the practices of censorship and patronage during his age. In the middle of his career when his country was going through a transitional period from the late Elizabethan rule to the Jacobean reign, Shakespeare chose liminality as a tool for his political criticism in *Hamlet*. Therefore, through Hamlet's liminal actions and character, Shakespeare offers political criticism on the problems of the late Elizabethan age. Taking the components of liminality into consideration, Hamlet's portrait can be analysed in terms of in-betweenness, ambiguity and transformation in order to unfold how this character is used as a means of political criticism by Shakespeare.

The first liminal aspect of Hamlet's character can be evidenced in his in-betweenness in terms of his domestic/familial role as a son and his public/political role as a prince. Hamlet's process of becoming and the first stage of his liminality begin after his father's death. At the beginning of the play, Hamlet is observed to be going through a crisis in life because of the new circumstances in his family as he has lost his father, Old Hamlet, who was the King of Denmark, and shortly afterwards his mother, Queen Gertrude, married Hamlet's uncle Claudius. These recent events ruin Hamlet's life and force him to go through a rite of passage and create a new self after his father's death. In view of the tripartite structure of the rites of passage, Old Hamlet's death symbolises the stage of separation. Hamlet the son loses his father and is separated from him forever. Obviously, this makes a significant change in his life since the detachment from the father forces Hamlet to turn into a mature figure, and the play focuses on his growing into adulthood.

In addition to the physical separation from the father, Hamlet appears to experience a kind of abstract separation regarding the fact that he has to abandon his old self in new circumstances. Hence, this aspect of his separation leads him to the liminal action of mourning. Following his father's death, Hamlet's separation from his old self, in Stenner's words, "denotes an existential departure from what a person was before the event" (63). That is to say, Hamlet goes through both a physical and spiritual separation process after Old Hamlet's death. The stage of separation leads Hamlet to the second transitional stage, that is liminality, before his reintegration into the society. The liminal stage in this phase can be defined by Hamlet's liminal action which is mourning. Since the mourner is "caught in the indeterminate position between life and death" (Downey,

Kinane and Parker 7), the act of mourning can be associated with liminality. Moreover, the act of mourning signifies a break from the causal course of life. The mourner keeps away from the society, wears symbolic clothes and avoids getting involved with the social activities. Therefore, mourning functions as a liminal act. In the first scene where Hamlet is introduced to the reader/audience, he appears to be mourning for the loss of his late father. In this scene, Hamlet's mournful attitude is depicted at first by Claudius who asks Hamlet: "How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" (I. ii. 66). Gertrude also refers to her son's clothes' "nighted colour" (I. ii. 67) while Hamlet describes them as "inky cloak" and "suits of solemn black" (I. ii. 77, 78). In contrast to the court whose members had almost forgotten about Old Hamlet's death, Hamlet's clothes and his lamenting attitude indicating that he is on the threshold of life and death remind all at court of the former King's death. Obviously, his liminal act of mourning differentiates Hamlet from those who continue their lives without thinking about the dead.[17] Although Claudius and Gertrude advise Hamlet to give up mourning, he bitterly refuses to do so. When his words to Gertrude (I. ii. 76-86) are taken into consideration, it can be revealed that Hamlet feels angry because Gertrude appears to be indifferent to her husband's death. As mourning is thought to be a communal act, after the death of Old Hamlet, the whole family is supposed to mourn together. However, Hamlet is the only one to mourn so this leads him to a state of loneliness and melancholy.

What is more, Hamlet's melancholic mourning is vividly illustrated in his most famous soliloquy which can be explained in terms of liminality. When Hamlet raises the question, "[t]o be, or not to be" (III. i. 55), his in-between position, oscillating between life and death, comes to the fore. The protagonist's grief is so overwhelming that he thinks about afterlife. He appears to be on the edge of life and the ultimate end as he expresses his thoughts by resembling death to the acts of sleeping and dreaming: "Devoutly to be wished – to die: to sleep - / To sleep, perchance to dream [. . .]" (III. i. 63-64). The liminal figure, Hamlet, comes up with a liminal connotation in this correlation because the acts of sleeping and dreaming represent concurrent absence and presence, and hence, standing

[17] It has to be acknowledged that the play specifically concentrates on Hamlet's perception of the world in Elsinore. Only from his perspective, the reader/audience observes the course of events so Hamlet can be regarded as the only character who mourns according to the story that he tells the reader/audience.

midway between life and death. Also, the act of dreaming is ambiguous since it might be a pleasant dream or turn into a nightmare. As no one returns from the afterlife, the idea of death implies uncertainty for Hamlet as well. What is at stake here is that the protagonist, engaging in the liminal action of mourning, explains his state of mind in relation to other liminal actions and confirms his in-between position as a liminal being.

Moreover, Hamlet's mourning is enmeshed with anger and melancholy as pointed at in his first soliloquy, and this soliloquy is a case in point to clarify the problematic transitional rites in the play. For Hamlet, the world is "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable" now (I. ii. 133) while his mother celebrates her new marriage:

> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourned longer – married with my uncle,
> My father's brother (but no more like my father
> Than I to Hercules). Within a month,
> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married. O most wicked speed! [. . .] (I. ii. 150-156)

The first soliloquy unfolds the problematic transition from funeral rites to marriage rites. In other words, it is possible to view that mourning is denied when the rituals of death and marriage collide. As a matter of fact, Gertrude and Claudius renounce the transitional stage of liminality. After her husband's death, Gertrude immediately remarries. This marriage can be regarded as a kind of refusal to mourn and this is actually against the rituals of death conceptualised in the early modern period. Frye sheds light on the place of mourning in such rituals as follows:

> Death in the Renaissance was not quickly dismissed or easily forgotten, but involved social as well as liturgical rituals devised over the centuries to dignify the ultimate *rite de passage*. These social rituals would be observed not just for a few hours or a few days but for weeks and even months. For the death of a king, the whole kingdom should indeed be 'contracted in one brow of woe.' On the simplest level, this entailed not only mourning clothes but also mourning hangings and appointments for the royal household. (*The Renaissance* 83)

Seen in this light, the court appears to be ignoring the customs since Claudius, Gertrude and other courtiers are initially described as enjoying a festive atmosphere in contrast to the mournful protagonist. This marriage is problematic in the sense that this causes a gap between the stage of separation and the phase of incorporation. While Old Hamlet's death

is the separation phase, remarriage stands for Gertrude's reintegration into the society. However, she skips the mourning period which is supposed to make a smooth transition from one dramatic event to the other major event. This hasty shift from death to marriage creates an ambiguous state which is presented in Claudius's words: "With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, / In equal scale weighing delight and dole, / Taken to wife [. . .]" (I. ii. 12-14). Hamlet also rebukes the sudden change in their lives when he states to Horatio: "Thrift, thrift, Horatio, the funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" (I. ii. 179-180). Obviously, the collision of the funeral and marriage rites complicates Hamlet's mourning, and hence, he is marginalised in his own community because he is the only one suffering from the loss of Old Hamlet.[18]

What is of more interest is that Claudius and Gertrude's merging death with marriage impinges on the identities of the whole family. Accordingly, the family's liminality is another issue to illustrate here. In the play, while Hamlet is not allowed to properly go through the mourning period, his new family acquire liminal identities. Claudius, for instance, describes Gertrude's complex position after their marriage as such: "Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen / [. . .] Taken to wife [. . .]" (I. ii. 8, 14). In this new family, Hamlet is "my [Claudius's] cousin [. . .], and my [his] son" (I. ii. 64). Therefore, Hamlet has an uncle-father and an aunt-mother now. While Hamlet pinpoints his in-between position by declaring that he is "[a] little more than kin, and less than kind" (I. ii. 65), he addresses Gertrude, drawing attention to their ambiguous relationships: "You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife, / And, would it were not so, you are my mother" (III. iv. 14-15). As can be observed, their familial positions and roles are fused in a way that the members of the family achieve in-between states which are not exactly identified. These betwixt states prove the liminal identities of those characters since their positions in the family cannot be named easily. After the marriage of relatives, multiple and ambiguous identities are created which can also be confusing. James L. Calderwood

[18] One of the differences between Q1 and Q2/F concerns the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude. Gertred in Q1 objects to Hamlet's mourning behaviour, but she is depicted as a supportive mother in this version as she promises to help Hamlet in his plan to take revenge from Corambis. However, Gertrude in Q2 and F does not cooperate with Hamlet. As this dissertation makes use of Q2 edition, Gertrude's portrait is evaluated by how Q2 delineates her from Hamlet's misogynistic perspective.

ascertains the liminality of the family by referring to the collapse in their ties as a result of the concurrent death and marriage: "The running together of funeral and marriage signals a breakdown of the borders between other entities. [This state causes] a hyphenisation of relations that leads to the total undifferentiation of Hamlet's reference to Claudius as 'My mother'" (77). That is to say, an element of uncertainty surrounds Hamlet's familial relationships which leads him to remain in limbo in the domestic sphere.

It is clear that Claudius and Gertrude do not experience a transitional phase before their marriage. However, their union creates liminal identities which contribute to Hamlet's liminal character. What emerges here is that the liminal act of mourning problematised in Hamlet's family leads to further states of liminality, and the Ghost of Old Hamlet's appearance initially triggers forthcoming liminal actions in Hamlet's story. Before dealing with Hamlet's subsequent liminal actions in the play, the Ghost's liminality can be analysed at first. Although Claudius and Gertrude's failure to mourn does not disturb others, – but Hamlet – it happens to unsettle the dead, resulting in the return of the dead father. Turner relates the return of the dead to the lack of mourning ritual and claims that

> without the ritual of mourning the shade would never lie quietly in the grave, but would be constantly interfering in the affairs of the living, jealous of every new adjustment, such as the remarriage of its widow or the appointment of a successor of whom it would have disapproved, and indeed it might afflict with illness all those people who should have honored its memory by holding a funeral gathering but omitted to do so. (*The Forest* 9)

This is exactly the case in the appearance of the Ghost who looks like Old Hamlet. The Ghost is initially seen by the guards on the castle walls of Elsinore. The first appearance of those guards, Barnardo, Francisco and Marcellus, point to the ambiguous and insecure atmosphere before the Ghost's arrival. The question – "[w]ho's there?" – is repeated for three times (I. i. 1, 18, 78), hinting at the guards' anxiety and preparing the ground for the Ghost's coming. By relating the guards' speech to Stephen Booth's understanding of "ceremonies of safety," Naomi Conn Liebler argues that this repeated question and the guards' search for "a safe answer" are actually "the play's earliest evidence of unease, confusion, danger, indefinition, liminality" (189). Liebler further claims that the guards are disturbed by the fact that the funeral rites and the mourning period have not properly

taken place in Denmark so a sense of anxiety prevails (190). When Horatio, Hamlet's friend from Wittenberg, attends the guards, they witness the visit of the Ghost who looks like Old Hamlet. Horatio vividly describes the Ghost's appearance in the dead King's armour when he fought against Fortinbras, the King of Norway, and killed him (I. i. 58-63). At that moment, despite their attempt to talk with the Ghost, the spirit does not respond to them. When Horatio later informs Hamlet of the Ghost's presence, Hamlet becomes the only person who speaks to the supernatural being. The Ghost defines himself as Old Hamlet's spirit who has come to reveal the secret about his death. It has to be recognised that the Ghost can be defined as a liminal being on the edge of life and death. Coming from the otherworld, the Ghost intrudes into Hamlet's world. Therefore, he mediates between the world of the living and the world of the dead. The Ghost is also at a liminal place in liminal time. For the first time, the Ghost is seen on the castle walls, a border area which keeps outsiders out of Denmark and fends possible attacks. On the threshold of Denmark and the outside world, the Ghost becomes visible at a liminal time, that is at dawn, which is a short period of time from the darkness of night to the first light of morning, and he visits the world of the living.

Moreover, the place that the Ghost comes from can be also regarded as a liminal place, that is purgatory. It is necessary to note that revenge tragedy makes use of the ghost figures to introduce the idea of revenge. As Zackariah C. Long states, in the Senecan tradition, "in classical pagan thought violent passions were understood to be inherently otherworldly" (117) so the ghostly figures in demand of revenge and violence are generally situated within the classical underworld. In *Hamlet*, the Ghost claims that he is living in a "prison-house" (I. v. 14) among "sulphurous and tormenting flames" (I. v. 2), and he is "[d]oomed for a certain term to walk the night / And for the day confined to fast in fires" (I. v. 10-11). Although his depictions may be relevant to "the vividly depicted torments of the classical underworld familiar from Senecan convention" at first (Belsey 11), the Ghost's further comments locate him in purgatory. The reason why he can be claimed to be in purgatory is that he was deprived of the last rites: "Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, / Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled, / No reckoning made but sent to my account / With all my imperfections on my head" (I. v. 76-79). Although he does not directly name them, the last rites are "three crucial Catholic sacraments" received by

the dead to make a smooth transition to the after world (Thomas 137), and this place is conceptualised in Catholic Christianity as purgatory. According to his account, the Ghost lingers between heaven and hell as he has to stay and suffer for his sins in purgatory which is an intermediate site between the places of eternal bliss and damnation.

What is of significance concerning purgatory as a liminal place is that the play illustrates the religious dynamics of the time. As part of the play's political context, religious politics is of importance, too. Evidently, when the play was written, England and Denmark were Protestant countries. Noting that Shakespeare uses the distant setting of Denmark to allude to the current events in England in *Hamlet*, the religious issues in the play can be reconsidered in relation to the ongoing religious conflicts in the late Elizabethan period. After the serious clashes between Catholics and Protestants, Protestantism in England seems to have been firmly established during Elizabeth's reign. However, the allusion to the Ghost's coming from purgatory in Shakespeare's tragedy poses a problem about the Protestant stance of England because purgatory was a part of the Catholic belief and denied in Protestantism. In fact, behind the Protestant disbelief in purgatory was the corruption of the Catholic Church which abused people's anxiety about afterlife by forcing them to pay for religious services. Catholics believed that purgatory was a transitory place before the soul of the dead would enter heaven or hell. They held the belief that the souls in purgatory needed the religious rituals conducted by their relatives in order to attain relief while suffering from the burden of their sins. This was a kind of a ritual of remembering since the dead person was still a part of the relatives' lives. Those mourning for the dead tried to comfort the souls in purgatory by praying. This kind of connection was not only regarded as a support for the dead but also as a remedy for those suffering from the loss of beloved ones. Then, the Catholic Church benefitted from this kind of a spiritual relation by abusing the believers through certain practices. Greenblatt explains how the Catholic Church increased its material wealth through such religious services: "The whole social and economic importance of Purgatory in Catholic Europe rested on the belief that prayers, fasts, almsgiving, and masses constituted a valuable commodity – 'suffrages,' as they were termed – that could in effect be purchased, directly or indirectly, on behalf of specific dead persons" (*Hamlet* 19). It was supposed that those practices were necessary for the souls in purgatory since the souls suffered from the agony

of their sins and the Church was thought to "reduce the intensity and duration of this agony" by selling prayers and masses (Greenblatt, *Hamlet* 19). As such practices turned into abusive acts which materially enriched the Catholic Church, the concept of purgatory was officially abolished by the Protestant Church in England in 1563. Thus, as a Protestant country, England was in denial of purgatory at the time Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. In addition to the Ghost's reference to Catholic rites and purgatory, Hamlet's reference to Saint Patrick (I. v. 135), "the patron saint of purgatory" (Greenblatt, *Will* 319), affirms the fact that the play undergirds Catholic belief through some suggestive details.

Furthermore, Shakespeare's personal memory is interknitted with the political context of religion represented through liminal purgatory in *Hamlet*. For some critics, Shakespeare's family story impacted an interest in the playwright in presenting the Catholic perception of purgatory. Mallin ascertains that *Hamlet* "becomes a personal mourning ritual, encoding the author's own difficulty in processing the terrible knowledge of the past" (*Inscribing* 164) as Shakespeare's son and father died at the time while the play was written. Greenblatt draws further attention to John Shakespeare's Catholic faith by referring to a document later discovered at Shakespeare's house. The document openly declares John Shakespeare's Catholicism since it pinpoints his wish for the family to pursue Catholic rituals after his death particularly when he needed their prayers in purgatory (*Hamlet* 248-249). For Greenblatt, this document indicates that Shakespeare

> was brought up in a Roman Catholic household in a time of official suspicion and persecution of recusancy. And there is[. . .] a further implication, particularly if we take seriously the evidence that Shakespeare conformed to the Church of England: in 1601 the Protestant playwright was haunted by the spirit of his Catholic father pleading for suffrages to relieve his soul from the pains of Purgatory. (*Hamlet* 249).

Furthermore, Shakespeare's allusion to the Catholic faith should be considered in a broad way since it problematises the religious politics of the time. It seems reasonable to suggest that the Catholic past of the country still had a cultural imprint despite all restrictions. Although England had converted to Protestantism in 1534, Catholic rituals and beliefs still played an important role in the lives of people. Shakespeare pinpoints this dichotomy through Claudius and Hamlet. In the play, Claudius can be regarded as a representative of the Protestant establishment since he appears to forbid the Catholic way of

remembering the dead. Conversely, Hamlet's mourning is an embodiment of Catholic anguish. In their conflict, Claudius's attitude mirrors the contemporary English "Protestant campaign against both the expression of grief and the expression of comfort or condolence towards those in mourning" (Mullaney, "Mourning" 81). In Protestantism, the dead were supposed to go either to heaven or to hell so there was no need for the rituals of remembrance or, in other words, mourning. In this respect, it is reasonable to assume that in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare reflects that Catholicism was still alive as can be observed in the Ghost's purgatory and Hamlet's mourning. As Alfred Thomas claims, "Catholicism, then, was not only a religious belief but also a political discourse in Elizabethan England. The survival of Catholicism as a belief system long after its official prohibition meant that recusant resistance to the Tudor state was political as well as religious" (15). Although Shakespeare's religious faith cannot be exactly associated with Catholicism, he appears to imply that England was still going through a transitional period in terms of religious politics even at the turn of the seventeenth century since a group of people – like John Shakespeare – refused to believe in the official religion which was actually a kind of resistance against the state policy.

Accordingly, it is possible to consider Hamlet's in-betweenness in terms of his religious thoughts since he is in two minds while questioning the Ghost. Shakespeare, hence, represents the religious conflict while strategically maintaining an ambiguous attitude through Hamlet's doubtful approach to the Ghost. When Hamlet pursues the Ghost, Horatio voices a Protestant view about the Ghost that he is a devilish being, who may lead Hamlet to death or madness (I. iv. 69-74). Before meeting the Ghost, Hamlet, too, suspects "some foul play" (I. ii. 254). Even after talking with the Ghost, he doubts the real intention of the Ghost:

> [. . .] The spirit that I have seen
> May be a de'il, and the de'il hath power
> T'assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me to damn me! [. . .] (II. ii. 533-538)

Horatio and Hamlet's suspicion can be deemed relevant to the Protestant perception of ghosts as evil creatures. As Protestants did not believe in purgatory, they did not think

that there were visitors from the otherworld. On the contrary, Catholicism accepted two opposite views on ghosts. As Frye states, “Catholics recognized that ghosts could be devils in disguise, come from hell to tempt and destroy on earth, and were therefore highly suspicious of spectral visitors” (*The Renaissance* 19). On the other hand, Fry argues as follows: “At the same time, the doctrine of purgatory provided an intermediate state between earth and heaven from which a human soul could conceivably return, so it was possible to grant legitimacy to ghosts who for some reasons were granted temporary release from purgatory” (*The Renaissance* 19). The Ghost, thus, represents the Catholic view while Hamlet’s point of view at first mirrors the Protestant stance, but later Hamlet believes in the Ghost coming from purgatory. Therefore, Shakespeare ambiguously offers his presentation of the Catholic doctrine through Hamlet’s changing views about the Ghost in the play.

Moreover, with the problematisation of contemporary religious dynamics in England at that time, the play illustrates Hamlet’s in-betweenness as part of his liminal identity. It is possible to consider the protagonist’s perception of the world as that of the early modern period. In fact, the play concerns itself with the depiction of the early modern culture through Hamlet by providing certain details. First of all, as a student of the University of Wittenberg, Hamlet represents the early modern mind-set. In effect, this university is not only the epitome of Lutheran Protestant belief but also a centre for Renaissance ideas and humanism. It is possible that Hamlet is a sceptical figure owing to his educational background: “[H]umanist education [at Wittenberg] placed an emphasis on scepticism regarding traditional authorities” (Curtis 57). Hamlet, too, questions the Ghost’s nature. After learning the truth about the Ghost’s death, Hamlet, therefore, needs to vindicate the Ghost who is the representative of the patriarchal authority in his family and Claudius who is the political authority in Denmark. Moreover, his references to mythological figures (I. ii. 149-153; III. iv. 54-56) and his memorisation of some parts from a play about the fall of Troy (II. ii. 388-402) demonstrate Hamlet’s humanist education. His interest in the theatre and acting (II. ii. 285-290) is also a direct result of his education and the Renaissance culture both of which privilege the place of art in the society. More importantly, Hamlet’s comment on the position of mankind acquires a specific topicality in relation to the Platonic ideas in humanist education. “What piece of work is a man,”

Hamlet claims, "how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals" (II. ii. 269-273). Like a philosopher, Hamlet contemplates the in-between position of man wavering between the world of the Almighty and the world of the inferior creatures. Evidently, Hamlet conceptualises the intermediate position of mankind in the hierarchical system of the early modern world view. As a representative of Renaissance culture, Hamlet is able to recognise both the potential power and the limitations of humankind.

Hamlet's melancholy and sadness characterises him as a Renaissance man, too. His melancholy, a topic of medical analysis at the time, was common among the courtiers of the Elizabethan age. Dr. Timothy Bright (1549-1615), for instance, analysed melancholy in relation to the theory of humours in his work entitled *Treatise of Melancholy* (1586) (Muir 120), and his ideas became quite popular in explaining the influence of melancholy on the human body and soul. Later on, Robert Burton (1577-1640) dealt with the same issue in his work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), in which he studied black bile as a type of humour leading to melancholy and depression (States 66). Therefore, Shakespeare fashions Hamlet as a melancholic young man who is a product of that period. Moreover, in the play, Ophelia's description of Hamlet is important to grasp the protagonist's character as a Renaissance figure. In Ophelia's allusion to the change in Hamlet, she identifies his former self as an ideal Renaissance man: "The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword, / Th'expectation and rose of the fair state, / The glass of fashion and the mould of form, / Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down" (III. i. 150-153). This depiction accords with the ideals of the Renaissance man who has multifaceted qualities. Michael Davies confirms Ophelia's point by stating that "Hamlet appears to be an archetypal Renaissance figure. Like the English courtier-soldier-poet Sir Philip Sidney or the Italian artist-technologist-anatomist Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare's Hamlet is a multi-talented creature: an educated prince-philosopher, a cultured courtier-player, a ferocious fighter-rhetorician" (50). Despite Hamlet's ideal characteristics, however, it has to be recognised that Shakespeare does not thoroughly glorify a typical portrait of the early modern man. In the play, Hamlet's intellectual capacity puts him in a difficult position because he thinks too much, and he is not able to

act properly on time. This indicates that as the play progresses, Hamlet cannot embrace all the roles attributed to the early modern courtier. His over-thinking weakens his motivation to act so he appears to be an ineffective courtier who lacks the soldier's skill. In this regard, Shakespeare criticises the fact that the new rationalism of his age may prove insufficient to make one act properly on time and pinpoints that it is not possible to achieve all of the ideal qualities easily.

In addition to Shakespeare's critique of the requirements expected of the courtier, the details about the early modern culture and the characteristics of a Renaissance man are at odds with the medieval atmosphere of Hamlet's world. It should be noted that Shakespeare uses a medieval story set in a medieval setting while he embellishes the old story with the features of the early modern world. The Ghost of King Hamlet makes this sense of in-betweenness felt throughout the play, creating a liminal atmosphere with a great impact on Hamlet. The Ghost in his warrior clothes declares that Hamlet's father was poisoned and killed by Claudius, and he demands Hamlet to take his revenge: "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!" (I. v. 25). Therefore, the Ghost appears to be the embodiment of the old culture and world not only because of his Catholic position but also his demand for blood-feud. That is to say, the Ghost's insistence on revenge can be regarded as a medieval type of political strategy while Claudius relied on diplomacy in the Renaissance manner to solve political problems. In Thomas's words, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, accordingly, "is not a radical Renaissance departure from a crude medieval tale but a subtle revision of the same basic narrative tension between the rites of religious memory and the rights of political revenge" (25). Clearly, Shakespeare's depiction of the early modern period cannot be totally separated from the medieval world. The play presents the society as still going through a transitional period because the medieval air is observed to permeate the Elizabethan world. The relationship between Hamlet and the Ghost bespeaks this state considering that "[i]t is through the cultural discontinuities between Old Hamlet and his son, with their different ideologies of revenge, that Shakespeare traces the tragic failure of the new age to be born" (Holderness et al. 58). More significantly, Shakespeare's use of the old and new world orders side by side contributes to Hamlet's liminality as the protagonist oscillates between the demands of the two worlds. Reta A. Terry calls attention to this liminality by stating that Hamlet

"stands as a transitional character who has, on the one hand, the medieval code of honour which requires him to kill a king to avenge his father's murder and, on the other hand, a new code of honour that requires both absolute obedience to the state and adherence to moral virtue" (32-33). Behind Shakespeare's emphasis on the problematic transition is Hamlet's liminality.

Hamlet in the domestic sphere is liminal in another way, as well. After his father's death, Hamlet does not feel at home because of the new circumstances in Denmark. In fact, Gertrude's remarriage estranges Hamlet from his family. As Hamlet does not approve of this marriage, he opposes his own new position in the family, too. Therefore, he goes through the process of becoming through which he loses his familiarity with those around him and appears to be a stranger in Elsinore. According to Stenner, "[a] change in status might be a change [. . .] from familiar to stranger" (174), and such a change signifies a transitional act for the one who experiences this shift. Hamlet in the process loses his parents and becomes a stranger. Old Hamlet's death literally signifies for Hamlet the loss of the father while Gertrude's marriage symbolically represents his loss of the mother.

Moreover, Hamlet's estrangement from the family seems to be that Hamlet is disturbed by Gertrude's sexuality. As a case in point, Hamlet refers to his mother's lust and develops a misogynistic attitude in the first soliloquy: "[. . .] Why, she should hang on him / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on. And yet within a month / (Let me not think on't – Frailty thy name is Woman)" (I. ii. 143-146). As Gertrude's marriage takes place after a very short time following his father's death, Hamlet accuses Gertrude of unfaithfulness. For Hamlet, his mother betrays Old Hamlet and his memory. What is more, he feels uncomfortable since this marriage is incestuous. Hamlet and the Ghost both voice this fact about the marriage (I. ii. 156; I. v. 42), but it is known that the council never opposes this union throughout the play (I. ii. 15-16). However, the play suggests that Gertrude's marriage is unlawful. Lisa Jardine refers to the Elizabethan law concerning incestuous marriage:

> No person shall marry within the degrees prohibited by the lawe of God, and expressed in a table set forth by authority in the year of our lord 1563; and all marriages so made and contracted shall be adjudged incestuous and unlawful, and

> consequently shall be dissolved as void from the beginning, and the parties so married shall by course of law be separated. (39-40)

Although most of the characters in the play ignore the incestuous union, it is only Hamlet who is aware of the crime committed by the heads of the state. As Hamlet struggles in vain to end this sinful and unlawful union, he becomes a repulsive stranger at the court. Moreover, it is possible to observe that Hamlet is troubled with Gertrude's active sexuality in her old age. In her bedchamber, Hamlet tells his mother that "[y]ou cannot call it love, for at your age / The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble / And waits upon the judgement, and what judgement / Would step from this to this?" (III. iv. 66-69). From Hamlet's point of view, Gertrude is not supposed to be sexually active. Thus, her sexuality – and her remarriage – is a transgressive act not only for the family but also for the country. Mullaney explains that "Gertrude's aging sexuality [is] conceived at times as a contradiction in terms, at times as a violation of her own body akin in its unnaturalness to a rebellion in the body politic: [. . .] At her age the queen's sovereignty should extend to and rule over such [sexual] desires" ("Mourning" 79). Hamlet, hence, accuses Gertrude of violating her role and boundaries as a mother and a queen since she cannot control her sexual impulse despite her old age.[19] Therefore, Gertrude's marriage causes disappointment, unease and aggression in Hamlet. In addition to her active sexuality, Gertrude's being on the side of Claudius and supporting his decisions make Hamlet feel that he has lost his mother; hence, he becomes a stranger at home.

Another line of thought concerning Hamlet's status as a stranger reveals a different aspect of liminality, that is his ambiguous potential for acting either dangerously or benevolently. At the court, Hamlet is regarded as an ambivalent stranger whose actions are doubted. Stenner pinpoints the liminal potentiality of strangers who "find themselves [. . .] simultaneously malevolent and benevolent: equally open to abuse and high praise" (185) and argues that "[t]his is precisely because such liminal occasions generate an *indeterminacy* of status, and this indeterminacy carries both negative and positive (and

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[19] It is highly important to note that Hamlet misogynistically judges Gertrude's maternal sexuality in Q2 as exemplified above in Hamlet's words from this version. While F maintains the same attitude towards Gertrude, Q1, as previously mentioned, offers a different portrait of Gertred. Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that Gertrude experiences her own process of becoming throughout the evolution of *Hamlet*'s text. As the text of the play transforms, Gertrude is observed to change in a negative way through a misogynistic attitude.

indeed neutral) *potentials*: we do not know if the stranger is a dangerous threat, a purveyor of good tidings or merely a figure passing through" (185). This is exactly Claudius's and the court's attitude towards Hamlet. As Hamlet behaves oddly particularly after learning about the murder of Old Hamlet, Claudius tries to understand his intentions. Therefore, as Hamlet appears to be a stranger to his family and court, his potential for causing problems at the court becomes a matter of investigation. For this reason, the figures close to Hamlet are used by Claudius to test him. Hamlet's lover Ophelia and his friends from Wittenberg, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, support Claudius's plans against Hamlet. While Ophelia is used as a bait to reveal Hamlet's madness, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accompany him to England on Claudius's order. As Hamlet becomes aware of these figures' loyalty to Claudius, he feels a sense of betrayal which leads him to alienate himself from them. Hamlet, a complete stranger at home now, is potentially dangerous since he, however mistakenly, kills Polonius at his mother's bedchamber and sends his friends to death in England. That is to say, Hamlet displays his ambivalent potentiality for destruction as can be observed in his violent actions.

Hamlet demonstrates liminality in his public appearance, too. Although Hamlet turns into a stranger, he is actually the Prince of Denmark so his public identity and his problem with Claudius in the political arena contribute to his liminality. In effect, Hamlet was next in line to the throne when Old Hamlet was alive. After the King's sudden death, Hamlet's political status does not change. Arguably, this is Hamlet's main political problem considering that although he still remains a prince, he does not ascend the throne after his father's death. Most of the studies on *Hamlet* do not always address Hamlet's political ambition, but his interest in the throne has to be acknowledged. Even though Hamlet expresses his resentment about his political misfortune very late in the play, his claim that Claudius "[p]opped in between th'election and my [his] hopes" (V. ii. 64) is highly important in revealing Hamlet's political crisis which has been ignored in many studies. To put the matter simply, although one may claim that Hamlet is seeking personal revenge, it cannot be denied that he has also been left without a proper title and inheritance. While this situation invites a political reading of the play, it also renders Hamlet a liminal character. Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry argue that liminality "involves namelessness, absence of property, nakedness or uniform clothing" (23). While

Claudius defines Hamlet as "the most immediate to our throne" (I. ii. 109), and Polonius acknowledges that "Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy [Ophelia'] star" (II. ii. 138), Hamlet states the truth about his political position in his letter to Claudius: "You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom" (IV. vii. 43-44). As expressed by Woodbridge and Berry (23), this nakedness refers to Hamlet's absence of inheritance and property as a king. As in the case of Hamlet's being estranged, his lack of inheritance makes him a liminal figure in the play. De Grazia explains that "[t]he patrimonial properties that secure lineal continuity – land, title, arms, signet, royal bed – do not pass to the son. Hamlet's father appears to have died without having made provisions for either his estate or his soul [. . .]. After his death, no paternal directive secures Hamlet's inheritance" ("Weeping" 364). In this regard, Hamlet's sense of insecurity causes him to take dangerous actions while he goes through a transitional state as he cannot fulfil his role as the next king after Old Hamlet's death. Therefore, Hamlet's liminality is tinged with a political dimension because he also appears to mourn for the loss of the throne and tries to take revenge for his political rights as his father's sudden death prevents him from becoming the new king of Denmark.

To further understand the political undercurrents of the play, the succession problem concerning Hamlet should be closely examined. In the context of the English political system, Hamlet as the son is supposed to replace Old Hamlet because of his blood tie. However, to speak again in terms of the English succession system, the play depicts the suspension of blood rights to ascend the throne and this suspension troubles Hamlet. Yet it should be noted that Shakespeare points at a problem about inheritance rights by bringing forth the idea of election. In Denmark, the son of the king does not have a natural right to succeed;[20] on the contrary, he needs to be elected and supported by the council of the state. In the play, Denmark is an elective monarchy where Claudius is the rightful ruler since he is chosen by election. Because of the political structure, Hamlet cannot object to Claudius's reign. What disturbs Hamlet is the fact that Claudius paves the way for his election through a crime. In other words, the problem is that Old Hamlet's untimely

[20] De Grazia remarks that there was a general tendency in the history of Denmark to choose the dead king's son as the next successor until the beginning of the 1660s even though the country had a system of election (*Hamlet* 85). However, the play offers the election of the uncle as Hamlet is not a candidate in the election.

murder prevents the King from nominating his son as his candidate in the election for the next king of Denmark. As Old Hamlet is killed by Claudius when Hamlet is in Wittenberg, away from Denmark, Hamlet cannot be present at the election. His uncle Claudius murders the King to replace him so he himself becomes a candidate for the throne in the election. As for Gertrude, it appears that she supports Claudius rather than her son considering that she remarries shortly after Old Hamlet's death. It seems that Hamlet's presence in the election is prevented by Claudius because he strategically kills Old Hamlet when Hamlet is away from his country. The Ghost tells Hamlet that Claudius stole the former's crown, wife and life (I. v. 75). In a similar fashion, Claudius also steals Hamlet's future as a king as the protagonist declares that Claudius "that hath killed my [his] King and whored my [his] mother, / Popped in between th'election and my [his] hopes" (V. ii. 63-64). As can be observed, Hamlet complains about Claudius's keeping him out of the election. Thus, the emphasis is on Claudius's usurpation and corruption. It should be noted that Claudius is legally elected, but he can still be regarded as a corrupt usurper and tyrant because he initiates a chain of events to seize the throne and murders the former King in order to achieve his aim. In this regard, Hamlet's opposition to Claudius turns out to be a political conflict since he struggles against Claudius's usurpation and tyranny, too.

Furthermore, Claudius's marriage to Gertrude is of importance in his accession to the throne. From Claudius's perspective, his marriage is functional for his election as king because he empowers his position by marrying the widow Queen. From Hamlet's standpoint, this marriage leads to his mother's failure to support him as future king because she appears to support her husband Claudius rather than her son. Actually, for Hamlet, this marriage links sexual politics with political power. In the play, Gertrude's bed as a symbol of her sexual power is associated with the throne in that "the kingdom is obtained by both seducing the queen and seizing the crown" (de Grazia, "Weeping" 364). That is to say, Gertrude's sexual life not only affects Hamlet's personal story but also determines his political future as prince. Claudius and Gertrude's incestuous affair is not only about Hamlet's familial honour, but also it ruins Hamlet's political career. For this reason, in Hamlet's opinion, Gertrude's bed is "[s]tewed in corruption" (III. iv. 91) because she smooths the way for Claudius's plan to take the throne. As Gertrude devoutly

supports her new husband, Hamlet blames his mother for taking part in Claudius's usurpation.

Hamlet's problem in the political arena reveals more about the play's political implications in relation to Shakespeare's own time. It is necessary to deal with the political context of the time in relation to contemporary Scottish history because Shakespeare draws certain parallelisms between the contemporary historical issues and the political events of the play, and hence, he uses liminality to convey his critical views. As a case in point, the Danish landscape takes on a special significance in relation to Scotland because both of the countries are elective monarchies (Hadfield, *Renaissance* 88). While the succession is conducted according to the rules of primogeniture in England, parliamentary support for the election of a king is necessary in Scotland. The Danish elective monarchy, thus, recalls the Scottish political system. The link between Denmark and Scotland is further established in the play's presentation of the religious conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. In the play, Claudius is the head of the Protestant state, and Hamlet is associated with the Catholic faith while Scottish history reflects the same dichotomy in a distorted mirror. Hadfield highlights the religious friction in Scotland where "aggressive and implacably divided factions of Protestant and Catholic nobles fought for control over the monarch. It is no accident that while Mary Stuart was a Catholic, her son, James VI, was brought up as a Protestant" (*Republicanism* 191). In Scotland, this religious conflict is sustained through generations of the royal family. In a striking manner, this dichotomy is presented in the relationship between Hamlet and Claudius who compete with each other also in personal and political matters. In other words, the religious opposition between Mary/James and Claudius/Hamlet supports a correlation between Shakespeare's Denmark and Scotland.

Particularly noteworthy is the parallelism between Hamlet and James's personal stories which determine their political positions. At first sight, Shakespeare's play appears to echo the death of James's father in Old Hamlet's death. In the play, the Ghost depicts Old Hamlet's death as follows:

> [. . .] Sleeping within my orchard –
> My custom always of the afternoon –

> Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
> With juice of cursed hebona in a vial
> And in the porches of my ears did pour
> The leperous distilment whose effect
> Hold such an enmity with blood of man
> That swift as quicksilver it courses through
> The natural gates and alleys of the body
> With a sudden vigour it doth possess
> And curd like eager droppings into milk
> The thin and wholesome blood. [. . .] (I. v. 59-70)

As can be observed, Old Hamlet is poisoned in the orchard while sleeping. The fact that James's father, Darnley, was found dead in an orchard and is sometimes claimed to be poisoned (Erskine-Hill 106) recalls Old Hamlet's death.[21] In addition to this similarity, one may identify a common point between Queen Mary and Gertrude's marriages. Both of them appear to forget the loss of their husbands easily and marry those who murdered their husbands. That is the reason why Queen Mary is severely criticised when she marries Bothwell, and Hamlet bitterly reacts to his mother's marriage when he tells Gertrude: "A bloody deed – almost as bad, good mother, / As kill a king and marry with his brother" (III. iv. 26-27). In the face of this correlation, Shakespeare's play is of a political significance because it "reminded its audience of events in Scotland which had already had a bearing on English history and were probably going to have a more significant influence in the next few years" (Hadfield, *Republicanism* 203). Hadfield also states that "the *Hamlet* that did the rounds in the late 1580s and early 1590s suggested that political assassination was a viable solution to the problem of an unwanted and dangerous monarch" (*Republicanism* 203). That is to say, the parallelism between Darnley and Old Hamlet gives a political message to the reader/audience by highlighting political assassination as a solution to get rid of persona non grata.

Yet a major difference between James and Hamlet's lives derives from their mothers' in/ability to secure the throne for their sons, and the role of the mother in their political career can be contextualised within the Elizabethan succession problem. In the play,

[21] There is also an interesting detail about the death of Queen Mary's first husband, Francis II of France (1544-1560). It is claimed that he "died from an abscess *in the ear*, but it was a common rumour that it was caused by poison inserted *in the ear*" (Winstanley 55). Although this rumour recalls Old Hamlet's death, it is more relevant to focus on Darnley's death since Darnley was James's father.

Gertrude does not have the strength to support Hamlet's right to be the Danish king. On the other hand, in relation to the Scottish succession, Queen Mary's execution enables James to access to the throne. What is of more interest in the play is that Gertrude's attitude towards Hamlet forms a parallelism in terms of Elizabeth's reluctance towards James's succession to the English throne. In Mallin's words, "Hamlet's specifically marital, sexual hostility toward the mother who has not helped him secure a monarchy shields a more immediate historical antagonism: James's frustration with his political mother, Elizabeth, for her prolonged deferral of his English kingship" (*Inscribing* 114). According to Mallin, Gertrude can be considered as a representation of Elizabeth while Hamlet's political struggle stands for James's desire to get the English throne. Although James inherits the Scottish kingship from his natural mother, Queen Mary, he waits for the final decision of his "political mother," Queen Elizabeth, about his succession. Therefore, Hamlet's antagonistic attitude towards Gertrude reflects James's disappointment with the Queen. Despite their frustration, Hamlet and James cannot be defined as violent princes in terms of their approach to Gertrude and Elizabeth. While James waits for the Queen's death, Hamlet is ordered by the Ghost not to harm his mother: "Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven" (I. v. 85-86). That is to say, Hamlet and James do not take violent actions against the female monarchs. Moreover, it is known that James remained silent whenever there was a dangerous threat to his sovereignty in Scotland and postponed punishing the rebellious figures, thus avoiding inflicting violence on his subjects (Winstanley 43). On that point, Hamlet's and James's non-violent approach can be regarded similar in relation to their representation of "a new kind of prince [. . .]: not wild, not warlike, but, if ambitious and passionate, predominantly contemplative and intellectual" (Erskine-Hill 107). Neither of them have martial ambitions to reach their political aims.[22]

The discussion about the play's elaboration on the succession issue can be further developed in relation to Shakespeare's criticism of Elizabeth's tyranny in *Hamlet*. In this regard, Shakespeare refers to the Scottish figures and history because of the union of

[22] To further argue, James's marriage to Anne of Denmark can be reconsidered as a point suggesting the allusion to Scotland and Denmark. The presence of the Danish Queen in Scotland may establish a correlation between the play's setting and Scotland, hence evoking a political reading of the play.

England and Scotland through James's future accession after Elizabeth's death. Therefore, Scottish politics in the early modern era has to be recognised as elements contributing to political criticism in the play. Hadfield claims that "Scottish political thought was a source of inspiration and a means of [Protestant] fighting back against corrupt and tyrannical rulers; for many monarchs and their advisers, keen to preserve the status quo, the same ideas threatened to undermine stability and their legitimacy" (*Republicanism* 191). This is to say that Shakespeare possibly criticises tyranny in England by alluding to Scottish history in his play. It is possible that Shakespeare's emphasis falls upon a specific way of tyranny in relation to the succession problem in England. By definition, Shakespeare describes a kind of tyrant who is "a ruler who governs arbitrarily, dispensing with positive or natural laws, guided by will rather than reason, private interest over concern for the public good" (Gajda, *The Earl* 159). Accordingly, the "tyranny" that the play reveals is marked by Elizabeth's unwillingness to name an heir. Elizabeth, too, disregards the public interest by refusing to marry and have an heir and also by postponing to name an heir. Thus, Elizabeth's rule appears to be an arbitrary regime based on her will to exercise power because her refusal to choose a successor creates a political problem for the future of her country. In the play, the monarch's misuse of power is problematised in relation to the transmission of power from one monarch to another.

It seems that the political crisis that Hamlet goes through is an expression of the succession crisis in the late Elizabethan period. As stated above, Claudius is responsible for the emergence of the problem of the Danish succession because of his personal interest in the throne. Claudius acts like a tyrant who does everything to sustain his personal interest by disregarding the laws or national profit. He achieves power through political assassination as he kills his elder brother Old Hamlet, marries Old Hamlet's widow Queen, and seizes the crown. He becomes a criminal usurper who uses all means to empower his status. When Claudius's rule is threatened by Young Fortinbras of Norway who wants to conquer Denmark after Old Hamlet's death, Claudius uses a non-violent strategy and sends ambassadors to the uncle of Fortinbras who is the King in Norway. Also, when his political position is under threat from the inside, he becomes manipulative. When Laertes revolts against Claudius with the support of the public because Polonius

has not been given proper funeral rites, Claudius provokes him into a fight against Hamlet. As Claudius is also afraid of the public's love and support for Hamlet, he manipulates those at the court by persuading them that Hamlet is dangerous; and hence, he uses the figures close to Hamlet to exercise his own power over him. Polonius and his family work for Claudius; Hamlet's mother protects her husband instead of her son; and Hamlet's friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, obey Claudius's orders. In its entirety, Claudius's succession and rule merely suggest the presence of villainy, usurpation and the presence of an evil force in Denmark.

Hamlet's liminality can be observed in his strategies to cope with the political problems. Thus, Hamlet's madness is the first issue to unfold his liminal state because madness is an in-between transitional stage in Hamlet's attempt to transform himself into an avenger. Undoubtedly, in order to fight against Claudius's corruption, take his father's revenge and solve the succession issue, Hamlet chooses to "put an antic disposition on" (I. v. 170). Hamlet purposefully avoids an open attack or revolt against Claudius since such an action would be regarded as treason. He acts like a mad man to hide his real intention. In Hamlet's own words, he "essentially [is] not in madness / But mad in craft" (III. iv. 185-186). In effect, his appearing mad is derived from the original saga as his name can be related to madness considering the fact that "Hamlet comes from Amleth" and Amleth "comes from Aml-ód, i.e. Onela the mad" (De Madariaga 5). Unlike Amleth's madness in the original story, Hamlet's madness, however, manifests the protagonist's transformation in Shakespeare's play. Hamlet's strange behaviours make all characters aware of his transition. First, Ophelia recognises the sudden change in Hamlet and describes his unusual appearance:

> Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
> No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
> Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle,
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> 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. (II. i. 75-81)

Ophelia is not only aware of Hamlet's physical change but also of the change in his behaviours. She observes that Hamlet becomes violent when he "took me [Ophelia] by the wrist and held me [her] hard, / Then goes he to the length of his arm / And with his

other hand thus o'er his brow / He falls to such perusal of my [her] face" (II. i. 84-87). Upon this description, Polonius claims that Hamlet is mad for Ophelia's love because he does not allow his daughter to connect with the young lover (II. i. 82, 99). Gertrude also notices the change in Hamlet (II. ii. 36) and accuses herself of playing a role in Hamlet's transformation: "I doubt it is no other but the main - / His father's death and our hasty marriage" (II. ii. 56-57). When Hamlet kills Polonius and talks with the Ghost in Gertrude's chamber, she totally believes that her son is mad. As she forgets Old Hamlet and does not even mourn his death, it is possible to claim that Gertrude cannot see the Ghost. For instance, although the Ghost is previously seen by the guards, Gertrude does not see him. Therefore, she convinces herself that Hamlet is "[m]ad as the sea and wind when both contend" (IV. i. 7) and "his very madness like some ore / Among a mineral of metals base / Shows itself pure" (IV. i. 25-27) when he kills Polonius.

In the play, Shakespeare not only draws attention to Hamlet's ambiguous state of madness but also makes him use madness as his political strategy against the corrupt uncle-king. Throughout the play, Ophelia, Polonius and Gertrude naively emphasise Hamlet's personal troubles to answer for his madness; however, it is only Claudius who senses that Hamlet has political aims. Claudius openly declares his doubt about Hamlet: "[. . .] 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 – which for to prevent" (III. i. 163-166). Although Claudius does not take immediate action, Hamlet's murder of Polonius gives him a reason for keeping the former away from the court: "His liberty is full of threats to all, / To you yourself, to us, to everyone. / [. . .] This mad young man" (IV. i. 14-15, 19). Thus, Claudius decides to send Hamlet to England with a letter which actually orders his death. That is to say, Hamlet's alleged madness enables Claudius to take serious action to eliminate the risk of Hamlet's seizing the Danish crown. Hamlet chooses to use madness as a mask in order to fight against Claudius. It is reasonable to argue that Hamlet rebels against the corrupt King of Denmark by means of his madness since he cannot openly oppose the head of the state. As a matter of fact, Hamlet empowers himself through madness as it gives him freedom of speech. Like Jaques in *As You Like It*, Hamlet appears to be a satirist who bitterly voices the truth about the figures around him. He calls Polonius "a fishmonger" (II. ii. 171) who is, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*,

"a person whose job is to sell fish in a shop" ("Fishmonger"). However, Hamlet does not use the literal meaning of the word. In fact, he implies that Polonius is an old man who uses and abuses his daughter for the sake of Claudius's plans. As indicated in the Arden edition's footnote to the use of the word "fishmonger," this word suggests "fleshmonger" (280). Considering that Polonius willingly uses his daughter in Claudius's plan to prove Hamlet's madness; hence Polonius, from Hamlet's standpoint, acts like an abusive father, a pimp. Furthermore, Hamlet reproaches Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for betraying their friendship as they take part in Claudius and Gertrude's plan (II. ii. 244-246). Hamlet also reveals the truth about Claudius's murder of his father to Gertrude. More interestingly, as stated in the Folio edition of the play, because of all this corruption, he does not hesitate to utter that "Denmark's a prison" (II. ii. 5). In this quotation, Hamlet's words contain severe criticism of the state of Denmark. As Hamlet is constantly watched by other characters at the court, he states that he is living in a prison where the authority figures try to restrict and control him. In this regard, his madness becomes his way of expressing the truth and voicing political criticism. As can be observed, Hamlet verbally opposes the authority figures and their oppression. Thus, he becomes the bitter satirist who severely criticises his mother and uncle while he reveals the folly of Polonius in a mocking attitude under the mask of madness. Thus, the way that Hamlet uses a satirical tone and feigns madness suggests that he challenges these figures of authority by having verbal dominance when he puts on the mask of madness.

To further argue, Hamlet's madness can be associated with his playing the fool. Crudely speaking, folly means "lack of reason, wisdom, or understanding – hence error, misperception, confusion. Derived from the French *folie*, it means madness" (Bell 1). According to this definition of folly, Hamlet, hence, can be regarded as an artificial fool who acts the fool on purpose to entertain and criticise others unlike a natural fool who simply lacks reason and acts in a silly way. It is clear in the play that Hamlet is not a lunatic who has lost his mind. On the contrary, he mocks the authoritative figures as a wise fool by using language skilfully. For instance, after Polonius is murdered, Hamlet's conversation with Claudius is an epitome of his discourse as a fool. He emphasises the idea of death as the moment which equalises all people from different statuses. When he suggests that Polonius is eaten by worms, he furthers his argument and claims that not

only Polonius, but also an emperor may become food for worms (IV. iii. 19-24). Then, he comments on the cycle of life which makes all equal: “A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm” (IV. iii. 26-27). To take another instance, Hamlet mockingly calls Claudius “dear mother” (IV. iii. 48) because he believes that marriage unites a man and a woman in a way that they become reciprocally identifiable: “My mother. Father and mother is man and wife. / Man and wife is one flesh. So – my mother” (IV. iii. 49-50). As can be observed, Hamlet plays with the King and insults him through his words. Sam Gilchrist Hal argues that “Hamlet’s engagement with the discourse of folly is unique” as “Shakespeare’s philosophical masterpiece abounds in the circumlocutions, puns, riddles, paradoxes and oxymora characteristic of the loquacious patter of the wise fool” (140). Therefore, hiding behind the mask of a fool, Hamlet’s language becomes a weapon against the corrupt rule of Claudius, and challenges the status quo.[23]

Either as a mad man or an artificial fool, Hamlet finds a way to rebel against tyranny by oscillating between madness and wisdom. It is important to understand that those around Hamlet regard him as a mad man as he puts on a mask of madness. On the other hand, the reader/audience observe that Hamlet feigns madness. However, Hamlet later confuses the reader/audience by ascribing his violence to his madness although he strategically uses madness and folly against Claudius. This case of madness essentially points to an

[23] In particular, Hamlet’s madness and folly take a linguistic form considering his transition from verse to prose. When Hamlet’s soliloquies and his dialogues with other characters are reconsidered, it becomes clear that Hamlet is feigning madness in the scenes where he shifts from verse to prose. Throughout the play, he always speaks in verse in his direct address to the reader/audience and in his dialogues with the Ghost and Gertrude. Conversely, Hamlet is observed to speak in prose with the rest of the characters from time to time. Stern explains the reason for this change by referring to the text’s guidance of the actor: “Indeed, whenever he is fooling, he seems to speak prose: in this way, the actor himself, and all who perform with him, can see that he is ‘mad’. When he is not fooling – generally in the soliloquies, where he reveals to the audience his rational side – he returns to verse” (133). While Hamlet oscillates between poetry and prose, his liminal state of madness can be detected in his linguistic transition. Only after Hamlet completes the liminal stage and moves to the last phase of incorporation, he talks in verse in the last scene of the play. Therefore, the play unfolds that “in the final act, Hamlet’s verse becomes a mainly ‘public’ register” (Palfrey and Stern 337). As Hamlet establishes his new identity after the liminal process of becoming, he linguistically makes it clear to the reader/audience by only speaking in verse.

ambiguous in-between state for Hamlet, revealing more about his liminality. While Hamlet's folly and madness provide him with a political strategy, they actually can be comprehended in terms of his liminal identity because of the sense of in-betweenness and uncertainty that Hamlet is on the threshold of madness, folly and reason. In essence, madness is a liminal state because a mad person challenges the social hierarchy and opposes the prevailing rules of his/her society. This can be related to liminality's anti-structural element. As Hamlet is able to subvert the King's rule and order owing to his madness, he goes beyond the structures of the society. Therefore, madness turns out to be anti-structural which allows Hamlet to disregard the hierarchies. For Turner, the anti-structural aspect of the action offers freedom because the person becomes "different from those governing quotidian social life" with a "capacity for experimentation and critical reflection" (*Blazing* 133). Obviously, Hamlet's madness differentiating him from the rest of the characters who merely obey Claudius's rule enables him to be more critical in his approach to the dominant authority, hence this anti-structural madness consists of ambiguity as its effect cannot be easily defined. In the play, it is possible to recognise that Hamlet has this kind of an ambiguous position as he stands midway between madness and reason. On the one hand, Hamlet first regards his use of madness as a craft. On the other hand, he himself blames his madness for causing all those troubles. When he apologises to Laertes for Polonius's death and Ophelia's subsequent madness and death, he discloses his madness:

> What I have done
> That might your nature, honour and exception
> Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
> Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
> If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away
> And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
> Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
> Who does it then? His madness. (V. ii. 208-215)

Evidently, Hamlet makes ambiguous and contradictory comments on his own madness. Hamlet's state of madness is definitely in-between and ambivalent, disclosing his liminal identity. This can also be clarified in comparison to Ophelia's real madness. The form that Ophelia's madness takes is totally different from Hamlet's. She is purely mad, losing her ability to act in a reasonable way. Polonius's death traumatises Ophelia to the extent that this loss drives her to real madness and suicide in the end. Unlike Hamlet who is

observed to speak wisely in his soliloquies, Ophelia talks and behaves in a way that she manifests emotional pain which troubles her mind and psychological state. Thus, the difference between Ophelia and Hamlet in terms of their experience of madness stresses Hamlet's liminal condition in the play.

As noted above, Hamlet's in-between and ambiguous state draws further attention to the belief that he is like a fool. What is more, Hamlet's position as a fool, as in the case of his madness, provides a focal point for his liminality because "[f]olly is a liminal state, and the fool a liminal being" (Berry 109). His strange behaviours make Hamlet an ambivalent figure who creates uncertainty and chaos at the court. While he spends time making silly jokes and mocking people, he actually disguises his aim to take revenge. He acts like a fool, but he voices the truth about the nature of other characters. Also, he goes through a transitional phase before becoming a revenger. Therefore, Hamlet plays on the qualities of liminality on the threshold of madness, folly and wisdom.

As discussed above, Hamlet uses madness tinged with liminal traits as part of his political opposition to Claudius, and his political strategy can be further explored in relation to his use of the theatre. In point of fact, Hamlet is wise enough to trap Claudius from the beginning of the play. As a case in point, Hamlet's cooperation with the troupe to stage "The Murder of Gonzago" shows that he wisely aims to use theatre as a mirror to demonstrate Claudius's murder. In line with the Elizabethan conception of the theatre, Hamlet believes that the aim of a play "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" (III. ii. 21-24). Even though Hamlet knows that some are capable of creating outward illusions, he is still determined to make use of the theatre to observe what Claudius "inwardly" is. Katharine Eisaman Maus who studies "the difference between an unexpressed interior and a theatricalized exterior" (2) in her work about inwardness and the early modern theatre comments on Hamlet's awareness of the gap between appearance and reality. She refers to Hamlet's words as follows: "[. . .] These 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" (I. ii. 83-86). While analysing the clash between the use of the theatre to unfold truth and the idea about the inability to

understand one's inward feelings/thoughts, Maus observes that "Hamlet claims that theatrical externals conceal an inaccessible inwardness, but stages a play to discover his uncle's secrets" (29). Resonating the idea that the theatre even triggers the kings (Maus 29), Hamlet definitely wants to observe Claudius's reaction to the play which renders a story of fratricide and marriage through an ambitious figure's struggle to usurp the throne. In another sense, the play chosen by Hamlet to be staged by the actors visiting Elsinore echoes Claudius's plan to seize the throne. The-play-within-the-play scene is shocking and threatening for Claudius not because it mimics his story of usurpation, but because he becomes aware that Hamlet is a threat to him, hence his political rival. In a more precise sense, "The Murder of Gonzago" amasses evidence that Hamlet knows about Claudius's secret act of murder and gives a threatening political message to him because the play staged by the company invited by Hamlet performs the story of the nephew who steals the crown from his uncle. This detail of the play is quite significant as it "turn[s] the relationship of Hamlet/nephew to Claudius/uncle from that of victim to perpetrator. In this way the play becomes the means not only to 'catch the conscience of the king' but to undermine his power" (Thomas 143). It is possible that Hamlet succeeds in his plan as Claudius irritably leaves the performance. Frye draws a parallelism between Claudius's reaction to the play and Elizabeth's sudden interruption of a play. "[O]n one occasion when Queen Elizabeth was infuriated by a performance before her," Frye points out, "she rushed from the room taking all the lights with her as a sign of passionate disapproval, and leaving the indoor stage in darkness. In her case, the disapproval was of religious irreverence, whereas the Danish court would have assumed Claudius to be offended by the obvious lese majesty of the players and the Prince" (*The Renaissance* 134). Immediately after the performance, Claudius is observed to confess his murder of Old Hamlet (III. iii. 37-44). This confession obviously confirms that Claudius is offended by the play. Moreover, it suggests that Hamlet devises a clever tactic to give the political message that he is Claudius's rival and knows how he has become the King of Denmark. Indeed, Hamlet's use of the theatre with a mimetic effect to convey his message responds to the way that the Elizabethan stage is used. Like Essex who gave patronage to Shakespeare's company to perform *Richard II*, Hamlet directs the players and even adds certain lines to the play.

While Hamlet's use of the theatre against Claudius suggests the provocative function of the stage in the early modern era, it also shows the liminal atmosphere of the theatre. Taking into consideration that the fictional plots on the Elizabethan stage unveil political truths about the age, Hamlet constructs a liminal scene to challenge the boundaries between Claudius's reality and the play's fictional story. This indicates that he knows the truth about his uncle's act of murder. Claudius is forced to watch his act of murder in "The Murder of Gonzago," and this performance affects the course of his actions since he immediately sends Hamlet off to England. That is to say, a play about the political assassination leads the King of Denmark to take action against Hamlet in order to destroy an inside threat to his crown.[24]

In addition to Hamlet's fusion of fact and fiction on stage, he is observed to manifest his liminality in the play-within-the-play scene. During the performance, Hamlet plays a liminal role as a writer, a director, a player and an audience. Ophelia, for instance, realises Hamlet's active engagement in the play and tells him that he is "as good as a chorus" (III. ii. 238) since he continuously explains the events of the play to the audience. Therefore, he almost acts like a player in the play like the chorus in classical plays while he is actually among the audience. Echoing Ophelia's observation, Tanya Pollard highlights Hamlet's in-betweenness: "Armed with a privileged knowledge of the plot, he hovers in a liminal position between the play and its audience, meting out information to the other audience members at intervals" (1083-1084). Taken together, Hamlet perpetuates ambiguity

[24] As Hamlet blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction during the performance of this play, Shakespeare actually creates a fictional veil to deal with the political matters of the age. In order to reveal political conflicts, Hamlet and Shakespeare both exploit the theatre as a liminal stage because they cannot directly communicate through the ordinary structural means to voice political truth. That is to say, Shakespeare creates an in-between state in *Hamlet* as he blurs the line between fact and fiction by making use of history in his fictional story. Likewise, Hamlet in the play has the same approach when he supports the actors to stage "The Murder of Gonzago." In addition to this common point, *Hamlet* and "The Murder of Gonzago" can be associated with liminality because of the theatre's anti-structural and marginal position in the Elizabethan age. Through the theatre with its anti-structural element, it is possible to experience "what Turner calls a 'liminal' phase of unfettered possibilities, a rebellious, revolutionary, radically new set of suddenly plausible ordering principles [because it] 'takes up its menacing stance in the forum itself and, as it were, dares the representatives of order to grapple with it'" (Raybin 25).

through his tactic to use the play in a way that he gives up the act of madness and adopts wise strategies in his rebellion against Claudius.

While Hamlet remains within the liminal boundaries, “The Murder of Gonzago” enables him to signal that he is going to take revenge from Claudius. Simply put, Hamlet endeavours to be an avenger. Considering that the action of taking revenge is regarded liminal, it is relevant to ascertain another liminal aspect of Hamlet’s character by showing his attempt to avenge the late King of Denmark’s death. As mentioned earlier, taking revenge is a liminal action, taking place in the transitional rites. In the play, it is also obvious that this liminal action which affects Hamlet’s liminal character is introduced to Hamlet by the liminal Ghost. As van Gennep argues, the dead who cannot situate themselves in the otherworld for various reasons tend to “have an intense desire for vengeance” (161). After Hamlet’s interaction with the Ghost, the act of taking revenge is suffused with Hamlet’s liminality since he has to transform himself from his former self to an avenger. Undoubtedly, this requires a transitional period because Hamlet cannot easily turn into a revenger. In the play, revenge does not come immediately. It is clear that Hamlet oscillates between taking action and postponing revenge when it comes to kill Claudius. On the one hand, he promises his father to remember him and show his determination for the revenge of the murder. He appears to carry out his mission as he realises that he “was born to set it right” (I. v. 187). He admires those who have courage to take immediate action. For instance, he appreciates Fortinbras who bravely acts to achieve his aims: “Witness this army of such mass and charge, / Led by a delicate and tender prince / Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed / Makes mouths at the invisible event” (IV. iv. 46-49). On the other hand, he himself is stuck in inaction. After witnessing Claudius’s confession at prayer, Hamlet hesitates to take his revenge. Although he draws his sword, he begins to muse about the consequences of such an act: “And so am I revenged! That would be scanned: / A villain kills my father, and for that / I, his sole son, do this same villain and sen / To heaven” (III. iii. 75-78). Hamlet, thus, delays his revenge with the belief that Claudius will go to heaven if he is killed while praying. He fails to achieve his aim by crossing his boundary as a human and acting like God believing that he decides upon Claudius’s place in heaven.

Hamlet's in-betweenness with regard to taking revenge or not is actually a result of the liminal nature of revenge as conceptualised in the early modern period. Revenge has a liminal tinge since it stands midway as a sin and crime in terms of the Christian understanding of Hamlet's civilised world. This aspect of revenge can be highlighted in relation to Hamlet's liminality, as well. Put simply, the act of taking revenge is regarded as a matter of honour in terms of heroic ethics. However, Christianity forbids revenge because "'[v]engeance is mine,' says the Lord, in both the Old and New Testaments, 'I will repay'" (Levin 24). In compliance with this belief, laws were regulated and individuals were legally forbidden to take vengeful actions in England in the early modern period (Callaghan 50). In this regard, it is reasonable to argue that Hamlet spends time in inaction as he is not willing to commit a sinful crime. Needless to say, to kill a king who is the representative of God on earth is a serious problem for Hamlet, as well. As stated, in contrast to the religious view, revenge is still regarded as a duty within the context of heroic ethics. The Ghost asks for blood feud in his claim for revenge. His appearance in military clothes prompts the reader/audience to think about warfare. Horatio's account of Old Hamlet's combat with Old Fortinbras indicates that Hamlet's father belongs to the heroic world in which the act of revenge is a necessity within a more primitive ethical system. Therefore, the Ghost's demand – "the need of blood for blood – may appear both to the ghost and the revenger as a duty, a moral imperative beyond the constraints of law, but it is always, also, a cruel, primeval lust for death, a lust which consumes the revenger as surely and completely as it does the villain" (Mercer 21). While the Ghost's insistence on revenge is also a convention of the revenge tragedy, the action of taking revenge in Hamlet's case reveals how it situates Hamlet in an in-between state because of this action's liminal conceptualisation in the early modern period. Noting that Hamlet is fraught with opposite views on the concept of revenge,[25] he oscillates between action and inaction throughout the play.

[25] As a further comment, it is possible to highlight Denmark's liminal position in relation to Hamlet's approach to the action of revenge. Cantor states that "Shakespeare's Denmark is a kind of borderland, lying on the fringes of modern Europe, halfway between the old world of pagan heroism and the new world of Christian civility" (54). Obviously, the heroic atmosphere forces Hamlet to take revenge whereas Christian ethics prevents him from committing a violent action. Therefore, the geographical in-betweenness resonates with Hamlet's liminal oscillation between seeking revenge and delaying it. All this reveals that Denmark, on the edge of the two worlds with

Evidently, the liminal quality of revenge contributes to Hamlet's liminal character in that he brooks delay while waiting for the right moment to kill Claudius. His constant postponement of revenge is another liminal action functional for the development of the plot in the play. To further argue, one only needs to think of his future in the face of killing a king while trying to figure out the reason for Hamlet's delay of revenge. In other words, Hamlet has to replace Claudius when he takes his revenge from the murderer. That is to say, Hamlet defers his becoming the head of Denmark after the death of the present sovereign. David Pan develops a similar idea about Hamlet's delay but with an emphasis on his need for an audience:

> Hamlet delays his transformation from melancholy madman to avenging prince until he can, in a moment of audience insight, transform the loyalties of the audience and establish a new legitimate rule, which is to be not only his rule, but the rule of a kind of sovereignty in which personal convictions and outward representation are aligned and presented for public acclamation. (117)

All this is to say that Hamlet who believes that Claudius has spoiled his chance to ascend the throne is at pains to transform himself to a king so the process of becoming makes him avoid taking violent action against Claudius. Yet it is no surprise that Hamlet's suspension of revenge is ambiguous as he promptly resorts to violence in other cases. While Hamlet undergoes a metamorphosis from a Renaissance prince to a revenger by pretending to be mad and delaying action, he mistakenly kills Polonius. This outrageous action radically separates Hamlet from his former self in that R. A. Foakes calls it "a rite of passage" which "makes it easy for him to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths, and to resign himself to his own. His initial act of violence changes his nature, so that he reconstructs himself as the agent of providence in punishing others" ("Hamlet's Neglect" 98). After his first act of murder, Hamlet becomes more violent and ensures his power over other figures.

When the court officially declares Hamlet mad and he is sent to England where "the men are as mad as he [Hamlet]" (V. i. 145-146), Hamlet goes through another phase of his transformation. Before giving the details about how Hamlet goes through this stage of transformation, it is initially necessary to understand the political dynamics of his actions

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opposite systems of belief, geographically determines Hamlet's liminal approach to the issue of revenge.

during this period. Specifically, Hamlet's manifestation of his political power and superiority on the ship can be clarified on the grounds that Hamlet acts strategically to thwart Claudius's plan to murder him. On his sea voyage, Hamlet changes the King's official letter by using his father's seal because he realises that Claudius's aim in sending him to England is not to seek remedy for his madness but is supposedly a solution to get rid of him. Upon reading that his head "should be struck off" (V. ii. 24) in England, Hamlet writes a new letter and commissions England to murder Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Horatio asks Hamlet how he sealed the letter, Hamlet replies that he "had my [his] father's signet in my [his] purse – / Which was the model of that Danish seal –" (V. ii. 49-50). Evidently, Hamlet has power to struggle against Claudius. On the ship, Hamlet finds another clever strategy to fight against Claudius, and acts like a king himself. His possession of the seal calls the reader/audience's attention to the fact that he has the royal power to change the course of events. In this regard, Old Hamlet's seal symbolises Hamlet's claim to the throne because he acts like a king now. His changing the letter is a sign of his desire to survive and his wish to reclaim his right on the Danish throne. Instead of feigning madness, Hamlet now appears to take a decisive step to solve the succession problem.

As a matter of fact, Hamlet is about to complete his transformation with a two-tier experience in two liminal places. The first stage takes place during his voyage at sea which can be regarded liminal for a couple of reasons. Apparently, the sea is a liminal place situated between the two lands of Denmark and England. The sea is also liminal considering that it positions Hamlet between life and death. After Hamlet leaves Denmark, he is supposed to be killed in England upon Claudius's order. Therefore, Hamlet wavers between life and death on the sea. His voyage can also be regarded as an exile since he is obliged to leave his homeland. This short-term absence symbolises his separation from Denmark, and his voyage is a liminal experience until he returns to his country. Hamlet's experience on the ship is significant for his transformation since he takes a step towards maturity and shows his determination to fight against Claudius as he turns into a man of action. Thus, the voyage acts as another turning point in Hamlet's transformation. The transition is marked by Hamlet's use of his father's seal at first and,

then, his return to Denmark. On their way to England, the ship is attacked by pirates. Hamlet recounts what happens on the ship in his letter to Horatio:

> Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a turn for them. (IV. vi. 15-21)

The attack of pirates turns out to be a chance for Hamlet to go back to his country. Tom Rutter points out that the attack on the ship alludes to piracy and danger at sea during the Elizabethan reign (124). More interestingly, he argues that Heinrich Bullinger's (1504-1575) text, *Fiftie Godlie and Learned Sermons, diuided into fiue Decades, conteyning the chiefe and principali pointes of Christian Religion*, which was translated into English in 1577, deserves mention to understand Hamlet's change (124). Rutter quotes a passage from Bullinger's work as follows:

> You shal finde other some contending that soules can not come into heauen, vnlesse they bee perfectlie purified with clensing fire, which they call purgatorie, as though they were intercepted by pyrates and robbers in the middest of their iourney, and cast into tormentes, vntill either they themselues make satisfaction, or other for them haue paide as it were the debt which they had else-where borrowed. (125)

Rutter is of the opinion that the pirate attack that Hamlet narrates symbolically suggests his journey into purgatory like Old Hamlet (137). Accordingly, Hamlet goes through a symbolic death on the ship and recognises his oscillation between life and death in a figurative purgatory. Yet Hamlet is determined to return from this in-between place and makes himself ready for his reintegration into society. Now the Prince of Denmark wants to confront Claudius. When he reaches Denmark, he comes to be seen as a more confident figure as he does not disguise himself under the mask of madness.

Although Bernard McElroy believes that Hamlet does not change after the voyage since he still insists on "contemplating [. . .], but not doing very much about dispatching Claudius" (85), Hamlet completes the second stage of his transformation in the graveyard scene. Following the experience on the ship, Ophelia's grave where Hamlet challenges Laertes becomes the second liminal place in which Hamlet completes his transformation. After his return, Hamlet meets Horatio in the graveyard where they secretly witness the funeral of Ophelia. When Queen Gertrude laments Ophelia's death and states her wish

that Hamlet and Ophelia should have married, Laertes condemns Hamlet for his harmful deeds and leaps into the grave, holding his sister in his arms for the last time. At that moment, Hamlet shows himself, but he is not welcome by Laertes. Laertes curses Hamlet and holds him responsible for Ophelia's death. Hamlet has the strength to directly challenge Laertes and leaps into Ophelia's grave to attack him. He reclaims his own identity by pinpointing his royal self: "[. . .] This is I, / Hamlet the Dane" (V. i. 246-247). As can be observed, when Hamlet threatens Laertes, he also admits that he has changed. He also tells Laertes that "[f]or, though I am not splenative rash, / Yet have I in me something dangerous / Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand" (V. i. 250-252). In this scene, Ophelia's grave can be regarded as a site of transformation considering the fact that it is an area of passage into the afterlife. To put it another way, the grave is a threshold between life and death. In this liminal site, Hamlet completely transforms himself as he affirms his nobility and power over Laertes. His eminence manifests that he has reached maturity, and his eloquent speech can be regarded as a sign of his having grown into adulthood. As can be observed in Hamlet's declaration of his royal identity and his openly challenging Laertes, his following words indicate his change and give a strong message to Laertes:

> 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do.
> Woul't weep, woul't fight, woul't fast, woul't tear thyself,
> Woul't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?
> I'll do't. Dost come here to whine,
> To outface me with leaping in her grave?
> Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
> And if thou prate of mountains let them throw
> Millions of acres on us till our ground,
> Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
> Make Ossa like a wart. Nay, an thou'll mouth,
> I'll rant as well as thou. (V. i. 263-273)

Thus, Hamlet reconciles with the world around him, ready to take the final challenge at the end of the play.

As noted in Hamlet's change, he no longer conceals that he, too, is involved in the rivalry for the crown. Although Hamlet's political rivalry which is subtly depicted in the play has been ignored in most of the studies about *Hamlet*, it can be stated that Hamlet voices his political concerns from time to time throughout the play. Indeed, it is possible to claim

that Hamlet is concerned about the misgovernment in Denmark from the beginning of the play. For instance, according to Hamlet, Claudius defames his country owing to his habits of entertainment and drinking. He feels acute discomfort and discloses his unease as follows:

> This heavy-headed revel east and west
> Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations:
> They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
> Soil our addition, and indeed it takes
> From our achievements, though performed at height,
> The pith and marrow of our attribute. (I. iv. 17-22)

That is to say, Hamlet does not want his country to be ruled by his drunk uncle. While he criticises the head of the state, he thrives on his challenge of the King. His puns on son/sun (I. ii. 67) and air/heir (III. ii. 90) imply his problematic position as a prince and his complaint about the succession. He later refers to his problem by saying that "I [he] lack [lacks] advancement" (III. ii. 331). Although Rosencrantz reminds him that he will be the next successor after Claudius, Hamlet harbours a resentment against the King of Denmark for his present state: "Ay, sir, but while the grass grows – the proverb is something musty" (III. ii. 335-336). As the note in the Arden edition clarifies, Hamlet refers to the proverb "while the grass grows, the horse starves" by suggesting that he cannot meet his expectation of succeeding his father. In other words, while Claudius enjoys his new status, Hamlet passes up the chance to attain kingship. As Hamlet does not openly complain about his political status except in these above-mentioned moments, it seems that the play does not manifest Hamlet's interest in the throne. However, it is necessary to understand that the details employed in Hamlet's speech alert the reader/audience to the fact that the play implicitly illustrates Hamlet's interest in the throne and suggests the ongoing succession problem in Denmark.

As stated above, Hamlet mostly seems to be silent about the political matters, but it can be observed that he implicitly talks about and criticises Claudius's influence on the country and his own future at critical moments. While his statements provide the reader/audience with material to read the play from a political perspective, Hamlet's political struggle against Claudius can also be regarded as a reflection of the political problems in the late Elizabethan period. To be more precise, the political strife between

Claudius and Hamlet is reminiscent of the succession issue in the late Elizabethan period. The political context of the play invites different readings of this problem. In effect, Hamlet's liminality becomes functional when it comes to the political interpretation of the play because his liminal actions and character arise ambiguities to veil the political matters presented in Shakespeare's work. This amounts to saying that Shakespeare uses Hamlet's liminality as a tactic to bring his own insight into the problems of the late Elizabethan period. The playwright strategically circumvents censorship by means of Hamlet's liminality while presenting his own views about the current issues. At a time when public interest in politics was strongly criticised by Cecil (Weimann 122), Shakespeare, whose plays were popular among common people, was able to allude to and comment on the political agenda of the age. In this regard, *Hamlet* portrays Essex's troublesome position in the late Elizabethan politics, particularly in relation to the succession problem. The play latently points at certain moments from Essex's life and attempts to restore his story as he is officially declared a traitor. Although the works alluding to Essex's image were censored during this period, it has to be underlined that the liminal traits and actions that have been discussed above provide Shakespeare with a necessary state of ambiguity to deal with the Earl's story from a safe distance. Put simply, Hamlet's liminal actions and character help the playwright develop Essex's portrait without any fear of punishment because Hamlet cannot be clearly associated with the Earl because of his ambiguity, in-betweenness and his process of becoming in the play. The rest of the chapter henceforth will examine the play's link with Essex's story in more detail because historical resonances in the play single out the Earl's political strife at the time the play was written.

The first aspect of Essex's story in *Hamlet* can be examined through the political conflict between the Earl and the Queen and the problematic relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude. As a matter of fact, notably after his return from Ireland, Essex became a threat to the state power in the last years of the 1590s. As his conflict with the Queen grew bitter, Essex appeared to be more critical of her court and government. Essex presumed Elizabeth to be a tyrant. In Gajda's words, "Essex's indictment of Elizabeth's government through passion and emotion, her anger and jealousy of his virtue, and her rejection of natural justice are typical of sixteenth-century neo-stoic critiques of tyranny that

emphasized the moral qualities of rulers, especially their capacity for emotional self-government" (*The Earl* 160). Essex's belief in the tyrannical power of the Queen led him to challenge her several times, culminating into his *coup d'état* in the end. In the first phase of his struggle against the status quo, Essex's political ambition was recognised so he was sent to Ireland as an exile. The hardship of his military duty put Essex in a difficult position so that he had to return to England after a while. The decision to send Essex away reverberates in Hamlet's enforced journey to England. After Essex returned from Ireland in 1599, he attempted to communicate with the Queen without the presence of others. Actually, he forced a meeting with Elizabeth when he violently went into her bedchamber without her permission in 1599. This intrusion alarmed the Queen about Essex's potential power to challenge her so she prevented any further violent action by pacifying him at the palace and later putting him under house arrest. *Hamlet* resonates powerfully with this historical event since Hamlet terrorises Gertrude in a similar fashion. Although Hamlet is invited to his mother's room, their meeting echoes uninvited Essex's intrusion into Elizabeth's bedroom. As seen above, Hamlet acts frantically and resorts to verbal violence while talking to the Queen of Denmark (III. iv. 7-215). "This scene," Erickson argues, "briefly calls up the potential for male violence against Elizabeth as expressed in Essex's quarrel with the queen in 1598 when he angrily reached for his sword or in the sexually toned violation of her private chambers when, against orders, he secretly returned from Ireland in 1599" (*Rewriting* 87). A major difference between the two events, however, derives from the fact that Hamlet appears to have his own reason to persuade Gertrude to keep away from Claudius since he is the murderer of his father. In this course of events, Hamlet reminds the reader/audience of Essex's rebellious character by conducting impromptu acts of disobedience and violence in a way that he fashions himself as a danger to the state.

Drawing on Essex's rebellious nature, it is necessary to mention the play's criticism of the irrational devotion to the authority figures. In this context, Essex's problematic relationship with other strong courtiers like Cecil has to be emphasised in relation to Hamlet-Polonius interaction to understand the political message that the play dwells on. In effect, Essex's critique of the state destroyed his relationship with Cecil who became the Earl's arch-enemy in time. There is no doubt that Essex charged Cecil with causing

him to lose his prestigious position at the court. At first sight, Polonius in *Hamlet* bears a resemblance to Cecil as both of them are the secretary of state.[26] Polonius is the elder statesman who devoutly supports and assists the King of Denmark. Along with his children, Polonius offers his service and his life to Claudius. His loyalty to the monarch recalls Cecil's support of Elizabeth, but Polonius is not exactly an illustration of Cecil. Polonius is functionally presented as a figure representing those who blindly serve without questioning the orders. Although Polonius, the King's secretary, is supposed to be the voice of wisdom, he is obsessed with Hamlet's madness as he tries to prove that Hamlet is mad because of Ophelia's love. Polonius is subjected to Hamlet's ridicule and he is finally killed by the Prince of Denmark. In fact, when Polonius goes into Gertrude's chamber to reveal Hamlet's madness, he trespasses his political position. When Hamlet mistakenly kills Polonius, the old man pays the price for his transgression and his selfless devotion to the monarch. In this regard, Polonius's characterisation extends further to convey a political message about blind devotion to the sovereign. The play makes it clear that Polonius cannot distinguish the limits between his personal life and his political status. All the time he works for Claudius without hesitation, which causes his death. According to Martin Orkin, such devotion to the authority "implies a ready acceptance of whatever it is that the state demands of the individual; a multitude of sins may be committed in the name of the security of the state and the preservation of order" (180). Evidently, Polonius willingly obeys the King's orders and never thinks about the consequences of his actions either on himself or his family. His blind commitment costs his life, and this suggests that he is punished for this dedication. The unquestioning acceptance of state orders is challenged in the play which can be regarded as a significant political message to the reader/audience.

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[26] It may be useful to remind that Essex's rival was Robert Cecil when *Hamlet* was written. Cecil's father, William Cecil, died in 1598 so his son replaced his political position at the court. Therefore, Essex's struggle with Robert Cecil is a topic of discussion in this dissertation. Nevertheless, it is possible to note that Lilian Winstanley lists a number of similarities between William Cecil and Polonius. Polonius's assurance of his political power, his university education, his reference to a past romantic story, his son's presence in Paris, his aphorisms to guide and warn his son, his interest in the details of events and his tendency to secretly listen to private conversations bear a strong resemblance to William Cecil's character (Winstanley 114-121).

Another issue regarding Essex is notably the political strife between him and Cecil. The rivalry between Old Hamlet and Claudius in *Hamlet* carries some resonances with the political opposition in the late Elizabethan period. In essence, the opposition between Old Hamlet and Claudius does not take place in the play because Old Hamlet is already dead when the play opens. However, Claudius's killing of Old Hamlet and stealing the crown evidence his jealousy of the elder brother and his ambition to gain power. Although Old Hamlet was not aware of his brother's real intention during his lifetime, the brothers are in a kind of struggle even before the play begins, and Claudius kills his elder brother by using poison while the latter was sleeping. Old Hamlet and Claudius's rules in Denmark can be reconsidered in line with Essex and Cecil's struggle. In the case of Essex and Cecil, their political stance stands for two different types of government. Dickinson states that "whereas Essex was interested in military action and foreign affairs, Cecil ably managed the domestic bureaucracy, so the two occupied different – albeit interconnected and to some extent interdependent – fields" ("Leadership" 94). A brief look at Essex's career makes one immediately think that he belonged to a different age. During his political career, Essex's military pursuit was a sign of his chivalric endeavour since he was regarded as the heir of Sir Philip Sidney who was the epitome of aristocratic chivalry: "Sidney himself identified Essex as his natural heir. Five days before he died, he added a codicil to his will: 'I give to my beloved and much honoured lord the Earl of Essex, my best sword'. It was an inheritance that Essex was keen to accept – he consciously fashioned himself as Sidney's heir, as the ideal courtier knight" (Dickinson, *Court* 15). By the same token, Old Hamlet represents military precision and chivalric tradition since he wins a victory over Norway in his single fight against Old Fortinbras and gains lands thanks to his military skill. In a stark contrast to Old Hamlet, Claudius is a ruler who skilfully uses diplomacy to solve political problems. When young Fortinbras plans an attack on Denmark, Claudius sends ambassadors to the King of Norway, Fortinbras's uncle, and prevents a possible war between the two countries. He also avoids openly taking violent measures against his enemy Hamlet by preferring the diplomatic solution to send his nephew to England. Additionally, he displays his manipulative rhetorical skills when Laertes rebels against him. Claudius puts down Laertes's rebellion without using any violent force and persuades him to take his revenge from Hamlet. Cecil's diplomatic success can be evinced in the transition from the Tudor reign to the Stuart dynasty.

Although James blamed William Cecil for Queen Mary's execution and suspected his connection with Bothwell (Gajda, *The Earl* 185), James later aligned himself with Robert Cecil. In fact, Robert Cecil appeared to pledge loyalty to James after Essex's death as it is known that he was secretly in contact with James. When James was crowned as the King of England, his acknowledgement of Cecil hinted at their earlier cooperation. Alexander Courtney recounts that "[f]reshly proclaimed as King of England, James VI and I addressed his thanks to Sir Robert Cecil: 'How happy I think in the conquest of so faithful and so wise a counsellor'" and claims that "the shift from the last Tudor to the first Stuart should prove a 'change changeless', that the King of Scotland should accede to the throne without trouble and that Robert Cecil should remain in favour" (134). Thus, unlike Essex, Cecil was able to maintain his political position owing to his diplomatic skills. It is possible to observe that Cecil developed a policy to persuade James to govern the country together. Although James held a grudge against Cecil's father when his mother was executed, he declared Robert Cecil as his secretary.[27] Despite their strong military genius, Essex and Old Hamlet failed to survive while Cecil and Claudius proved their political success to a certain extent. Yet Shakespeare does not celebrate Cecil's achievement or diplomacy in his play since Claudius is rendered as a tyrannical ruler who does not hesitate to use violence in order to maintain his own supremacy. Therefore, Claudius's political tactic perpetuates violence in the country whereas Old Hamlet is idealised as a good leader who is still admired by his people even after his death. In the course of the play, Claudius becomes vulnerable to attacks as his authority is challenged by foreign and domestic figures so his political diplomacy does not lead him to a powerful position and his strategy brings the end of the Danish dynasty in the end.

To further argue, Hamlet shares similar traits with the character of Essex in some respects. They are both popular with the public which can be observed in the play. Claudius concedes that he cannot directly attack Hamlet because the Prince of Denmark is admired

[27] According to Gajda's account, James accused William Cecil of influencing Elizabeth's final decision about Queen Mary's execution: "Not unfairly, he [James] held William Cecil chiefly responsible for the death of his mother, an animosity that he transferred to the lord treasurer's son" (*The Earl* 185).

by common people. The King explains to Laertes the reason why he does not kill Hamlet as follows:

> [. . .] The other motive
> Why to a public count I might not go
> Is the great love the general gender bear him,
> Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
> Work like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
> Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrows,
> Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,
> Would have reverted to my bow again
> But not where I have aimed them. (IV. vii. 17-25)

Like Claudius who is afraid of the public support for Hamlet, Elizabeth was aware of Essex's popularity among the English. Although she punished him several times, Essex's reputation was not defamed in the country. Even after his death, the Queen recognised this fact so she ordered Bacon to write about the popular rebel's crime committed against the monarch in order to bring discredit on Essex. There is no doubt that Hamlet and Essex benefit from their popularity to a certain extent, and more interestingly, they both make use of popular means with a political purpose to send critical messages. Essex's use of court entertainment, that is the theatre, is mirrored in Hamlet's strategy to "catch the conscience of the King" (III. i. 540). On the Accession Day of 1595, according to Erickson's account, Essex, like Hamlet, prepared a masque for the Queen in which he used a dumb show and wrote certain parts of the play (*Rewriting* 84). Moreover, Essex's masque had a political purpose since the characters of this work who symbolically represented Essex and Elizabeth on stage were portrayed as equal to each other and the play criticised the Queen's self-love (Erickson, *Rewriting* 85). Undoubtedly, Essex's masque did not please Elizabeth in 1595, but she was not in a foul temper on that day. However, Essex's later engagement with the theatre proved troublesome when he paid Shakespeare's company to perform *Richard II* in 1601 before his uprising. In the play, Hamlet also challenges Claudius's authority by means of a play as previously discussed. Therefore, Shakespeare hints at Essex's political manipulation of the theatre when Claudius is disturbed by Hamlet's choice of the play, "The Murder of Gonzago."

In addition to these parallelisms, Essex's *coup d'état*, or his political transgression, finds a counterpart in Shakespeare's play. While the discussion of rebellion is a strong point to

reveal the play's political resonances, it can be contemplated in different respects. The rebellious nature that Essex and Hamlet share and their common methods of revolt are the initial points to be highlighted here. As seen earlier in the bedchamber scene, the play puts forward a similarity between Hamlet and Essex both of whom cross the boundaries through what is attributed to them, that is madness. Kott claims that "Hamlet feigns madness, he put on, in cold blood, a mask of madness in order to perform a *coup d'état*; Hamlet is mad, because politics is itself madness, when it destroys all feeling and affection" (50). This idea reminds Essex's case regarding the fact that the themes of madness and rebellion acquire a special topicality because of the political problem caused by Essex in the late Elizabethan period. Coddon argues that "the political drama of Essex's madness, rebellion, and noble death shares marked affinities with the tragedies contemporary to it" (59), and *Hamlet* is one of those tragedies. The politics of the age disturbed Essex's state of mind in that some associated his ambition with madness as stated. Hamlet's awareness of the corruption in Denmark also causes him to act strangely. Essex and Hamlet both fashion themselves as a threat to the state, and their madness becomes functional in sparking a rebellion as they use madness as a motive for transgression. While Hamlet never threatens Claudius publicly, but positions himself as an enemy to the King, Essex opposes the Elizabethan rule in his attempt to change his desperate situation by using military force.

Evidently, Essex's struggle with the political authorities is embedded in madness which fits well into Hamlet's story. More interestingly, Essex's rebellion is delicately implied in the play. There is only one veiled reference to Essex's uprising in the dialogue between Hamlet and Rosencrantz. When they discuss the condition of the players, Hamlet learns that the players are prohibited to perform in the city so they go on tour to stage their plays. While Hamlet contemplates that travelling will be more profitable for the company, Rosencrantz explains that "their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation" (II. ii. 295-296). His reference to "the late innovation" is tinged with a topical allusion to Essex's rebellion. De Grazia affirms that Rosencrantz's words have a political innuendo in relation to Essex's riot in 1601 (*Hamlet* 69), and the compulsory travelling of the players recalls Chambers's claim on Shakespeare's company's banishment from London after the performance of *Richard II* (*William* 65).

More strikingly, the play hinges on Essex's rebellion by proposing an alternative ending. It is not only Hamlet's rebellion that echoes Essex's uprising, but also Laertes's riot against Claudius is associated with Essex's story of rebellion. Upon Polonius's death, Laertes immediately returns from France and stirs up a rebellion against the King of Denmark because his father was murdered and buried without final rites: "His means of death, his obscure funeral – / No trophy, sword nor hatchment o'er his bones, / No noble rite, nor formal ostentation – / Cry to be heard as 'twere from heaven to earth" (IV. v. 205-208). "Laertes in a riotous head" (IV. v. 101) is rendered as a powerful threat against Claudius's rule since he has the full support of the public. The King's messenger reports the open rebellion as follows:

> [. . .] The rabble call him lord
> And, as the world were now but to begin,
> Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
> The ratifiers and props of every word,
> They cry, 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king!' –
> Caps, hands and tongue, applaud it to the clouds –
> 'Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!" (IV. v. 102-108)

On the one hand, this scene illustrates the Danish government as vulnerable to a riot, and, hence, a possible civil war. Similarly, this was the atmosphere of England at the beginning of the seventeenth century when Essex attempted to rise against the Queen with his group of supporters. John Guillory pinpoints that "[i]f Shakespeare glances at all at Essex's rebellion, it would have to be with Laertes' chaotic march into Claudius' palace, a rebellion quickly defused by the king himself" (96). On the other hand, the common people's support of Laertes may be deemed relevant to the popularity and power of Elizabethan politicians among the public. While the public and strong politicians bolstered the Elizabethan courtier, the courtier himself might pose a direct threat to the state, as can be observed in the case of Essex. In this regard, the play alludes to the late Elizabethan political relationships, but, in contrast to Essex's insoluble political problems, *Hamlet* presents an alternative ending to Essex's story since Laertes reconciles with the King at the end of his uprising. Lake highlights the play's resolution of the political conflict and states that "the course adopted by Laertes in the play [is] a staging of one of the options before the earl [of Essex]" (527).

Indeed, Laertes's riot appears to be a candidate for the throne as the public demands him to be their chosen king when they declare their own will: "They cry, 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king!'" (IV. v. 106). This utterance is quite significant to examine the political resonance of the play because the play problematises the right to proclaim kingship and reveals the reason why Elizabeth was troubled by Essex's involvement in the succession issue. The public cry advocates the idea that Laertes is chosen by the people's own will so the concept of the divine rights is ignored in their rebellion. From Elizabeth's standpoint, she was the rightful ruler empowered with her divine rights on the throne. However, Essex, who was supposed to be a servant to the Queen, attempted to be involved in her decision in choosing the next successor. Although Essex was of a noble heritage, he could not be accepted as Elizabeth's equal to decide upon an issue about kingship. Therefore, it appears that if the Queen had affirmed Essex's choice of heir or accepted to solve the succession issue by taking any other's advice, she would have chosen a ruler according to the demands of the common people. While the Queen, as an unmarried female monarch, tried to maintain her political power during her life, she also refused to consider the political recommendations of a representative common figure, like Essex. In this regard, it seems plausible to argue that Laertes's revolt – and also Essex's riot – represents a problem about how to choose a ruler. To put it another way, Shakespeare's play problematises the succession problem and Laertes's rebellion is just one indication that Shakespeare deals with the succession issue in the late Elizabethan period.

The last issue concerning the historical parallelism between Hamlet and Essex is about how the problem of succession was solved. Despite Essex's efforts to solve the succession problem, he did not live long enough to witness James's accession to the English throne owing to his uprising. Apparently, Shakespeare's play elucidates the solution of this political matter in a tragic way. As mentioned, Hamlet's waiting in line to succeed Claudius recalls James's expectation to achieve the English throne. Like Hamlet, James waited for Elizabeth to officially declare him as her successor. In the play, Hamlet first accepts Claudius's arrangement of the duel with Laertes. The duel is actually the King's design to murder Hamlet, but the whole Danish dynasty and Laertes die in the end. In the face of his death, Hamlet surprisingly empowers himself and, at the time of his death, takes on a powerful role when he acts like a king and chooses the next king of Denmark

at the end of the play. It is interesting to note that Hamlet manoeuvres a quick change in his position from an inactive prince to a king. Although the Danish king is supposed to be chosen by an election, Hamlet without any elective process appears to declare himself as the new king after Claudius dies and starts acting like the king. Although his kingship is illegal according to the rules of his country, he can be regarded as a *de facto* king: "Hamlet becomes *de facto* king for the brief interval between Claudius's death and his own. In that short period of about thirty lines, he manages to do what his father apparently failed to do during his thirty-year reign: give his voice for the succession, even as the lethal poison runs through his system" (de Grazia, "Weeping" 361). At the moment of his death, Hamlet paradoxically exercises absolute political power over the succession issue that impinges on his life. Like a king, he has the last say on the new King of Denmark. When he is about to die, he tells Horatio that "[t]he potent poison quite o'ercrown my spirit, / [. . .] / But I do prophesy th'election lights / On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice" (V. ii. 337-340). Hamlet's last words take on a special significance as his final decision represents Elizabeth's nomination of James as her successor when she was on the verge of death. In other words, Hamlet's concern with the succession is like a historical record of the Queen's last resolution. Put bluntly, Elizabeth's death is the end of the Tudor reign and James's accession is the birth of a new dynasty in England. Likewise, Hamlet's death symbolises the demise of the Tudors because there is no one left from his family to govern Denmark.

Reading Hamlet's nomination of Fortinbras in comparison with Elizabeth's last decision before her death, one may easily assume that Fortinbras represents James. This correlation turns out to be consistent with the historical timeline when the date of the play is taken into consideration so it is worth explaining here. As the Queen was aging without an apparent heir, a change in the ruling dynasty was inevitable for the country. In the play, Fortinbras at first illustrates the dangerous atmosphere of the late Elizabethan period because of his threat to invade Denmark. In the last years of Elizabeth's rule, as the next successor was not clear, the atmosphere in the country was tense due to an invasion threat, particularly from Catholic Spain. In addition to this correlation, the play alludes to James by means of Fortinbras. In the play, Fortinbras, who initially attempts to attack Denmark, seems to wait for the right time to seize the crown. After his uncle's cooperation with

Claudius, Fortinbras uses Denmark as a passage to make a military expedition on Poland. On his return, he appears in Denmark on time when Hamlet is about to die. In a similar fashion to James, Fortinbras remains silent for a while, and, then, he is promised the Danish crown when Hamlet nominates him as his successor. Another common point between Fortinbras and James is that they both come from the north of Denmark/England and unite the two countries – Denmark-Norway and England-Scotland, respectively – as a result of their kingship. Moreover, Lisa Hopkins discloses a minute detail about the relation between Fortinbras and James by "noting that his [Fortinbras's] name translates as 'Strong in arm', and that the Armstrongs were among the most notorious of the Border Reivers who disturbed the frontier between James VI and I's own two kingdoms" (*Drama* 131). All of these parallels between James, the historical figure, and Hamlet, the fictional character, reveal that the play dwells on the problematic process of the succession in England and brings forth the transition from one dynasty to another.

While Hamlet's previously mentioned liminal actions and traits can be regarded as a safe ground for Shakespeare to deal with the issues concerning Essex, there remains other aspects of Hamlet's liminality through which the playwright criticises the method of Elizabeth's government. In fact, *Hamlet* was written at the dawn of a new era in English history and politics. While early modern society was going through an in-between state in terms of religion, politics and culture, the country was to experience more changes at the decline of the Elizabethan state power. In similar circumstances, *Hamlet* depicts the present situation of England stuck between its past and unknown future. During the passage from Elizabeth's reign to the Jacobean rule, Liebler asserts, "Hamlet reminded his original audience [of] their participation in a transitional culture, a culture in the process of change [which] is resisted by memory" (194). Hence, the liminal feature of the transition is tinged with Hamlet's oscillation between acts of remembering and forgetting which he goes through his political adolescence. Put differently, Hamlet's growth in the political arena mirrors the change in the country. On that point, there is an interesting detail that needs to be recounted here: while Elizabeth was travelling around the country in 1559, she experienced a memorable reaction to her by an unknown person in Cheapside. As recited in the recollection of tracts edited by A. F. Pollard, the Queen "had heard one say, *Remember old King Henry VIII*!' A natural child! which at the very

remembrance of her father's name took so great a joy; that all men may well think that as she rejoiced at his name whom this Realm doth hold of so worthy memory, so, in her doings, she will resemble the same" (*Tudor* 393). According to Garrett A. Sullivan, Elizabeth responded positively to this remark as she was determined to "*be* her father's daughter" (11). So she willingly imitated her father's model of government in her political journey. In the process of political maturation, the idea of constructing a young ruler's identity upon an ancestor is also echoed and problematised in Shakespeare's play. After the Ghost demands Hamlet to take his revenge, he bids farewell by asking to be remembered by his son: "[. . .] Fare thee well at once: The glow-worm shows the matin to be near / And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire. / Adieu, adieu, adieu, remember me" (I. v. 88-91). Unlike the Queen, however, Hamlet does not quite remember his father's request since he rather oscillates on the edge of remembering and forgetting.

It is possible to analyse Hamlet's liminal situation between the acts of remembering and forgetting in more detail, and this can be further related to the changing dynamics of the early modern period. Undeniably, Hamlet is at pains to emulate Old Hamlet's role and obey his order to avenge. Hence, his endeavour in the revenge plot can be associated with his desire to remember his father. During his pursuit of revenge, Hamlet recalls his father after he takes an oath to take his revenge and idealistically searches for the truth before taking action. Like Old Hamlet, who engaged in a single combat against the King of Norway, Fortinbras, Hamlet is courageous enough to participate in a duel against Laertes, and, like his father, he is poisoned in Claudius's plot and dies. While Hamlet tries to take the revenge of his father and remember his request, he even appears like a ghost. Ophelia's depiction of Hamlet's change in appearance as "pale," with a "piteous" look and "loosed out of hell" (II. i. 78-80) presents him like a ghost. His demeanour, in other words, recalls his father's ghostly image and suggests Hamlet's "embrace of Death, an ardent desire to follow the departed" (Mercer 96). To a certain extent, he establishes his political identity by resembling his father because his remembering means to enliven his father's memory in his own image. The same name that the father and the son share is also meaningful in reviving the late King's memory in Denmark. Yet the act of remembering cannot be detached from its opposite, that is the act of forgetting. Isabel Karreman argues that "remembering and forgetting are complementary forces rather than

mutually exclusive opposites. They do not work against each other but are integral aspects of the process through which cultural memory is formed and transformed" (7). This amounts to saying that Hamlet grows into a politically mature figure as a result of passing through an in-between state. Although Hamlet tries not to forget Old Hamlet, remembering the father is not an easy process for the young Prince considering the fact that Hamlet cannot associate himself with his idealised father. Janet Adelman explains Hamlet's trouble as follows:

> Hamlet had promised the ghost to remember him in effect by becoming him, letting his father's commandment live all alone within his brain; but the intensity of Hamlet's need to idealize in the face of his mother's failure makes his father inaccessible to him as a model, hence disrupts the identification from which he could accomplish his vengeance. As his memory of his father pushes increasingly in the direction of idealization, Hamlet becomes more acutely aware of his own distance from that idealization and hence of his likeness to Claudius, who is defined chiefly by his difference from his father. (*Suffocating* 13)

Although Adelman touches upon Gertrude's disappointment with Hamlet, his disassociation with Old Hamlet stems from the epochal shift from old aristocratic heroism to a new world order in the early modern period. At the beginning of her political career, Elizabeth was able to construct her identity upon the image of her father, but this is not an option for Hamlet now. The new dynamics of the age does not allow Hamlet to pursue the old order represented by his father. The values of the dead King fade away whereas the demands of the age force Hamlet to fashion himself according to the new requirements.

Regarding the new dynamics of the age, Hamlet's connection with Claudius should be identified in order to examine Hamlet's political process of becoming. Accordingly, Hamlet begins to employ tactics similar to Claudius's strategies against the new king of Denmark, and hence, he adopts the new king's villain-image. It is possible to observe that Hamlet becomes like Claudius. As a case in point, Hamlet practises violence by killing Polonius, and, like Claudius, he makes an enemy in Laertes since Laertes is determined to take his father's revenge from Hamlet. He also seems to have developed his own diplomatic stratagem when he uses the theatre to threaten Claudius and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death via his change of the letter to avoid his own death. Moreover, Hamlet displays his rhetorical skills as much as Claudius masters deception, intrigue and

persuasion. While Hamlet shocks the court with the sheer venom of his words, Claudius designs murderous plans to poison and destroy his enemies. At the court of Elsinore, towards the end of the play, Hamlet experiences political adolescence on the threshold of remembering and forgetting. Although he uses Old Hamlet's seal on his journey, he appears to forget his father afterwards. As Hamlet becomes more like his uncle, he first delays his revenge and, then, forgets his father. Moreover, at the end of the play, Hamlet once again resembles Claudius in that he learns to act for his own benefits. In the last scene of the play, Hamlet kills Claudius as the uncle tries to kill his nephew in his plan with Laertes. Moreover, Hamlet does not want Horatio to commemorate his father, but his own story. His final oblivion indicates that he has become an independent figure since he does not even recall his father's memory. Garber, likewise, states that Hamlet "learns in the course of the play that he cannot be his father [and] he is different from those around him, not in the absolute, negative ways that he has feared, but instead in the uniqueness of his individual persona" (205). All this is to say that Hamlet's maturation process is shaped by the shift in the political culture of the time. Hamlet's transformation from remembering to forgetting signifies the changing dynamics of the age since the conjuncture of Elizabeth and James's reigns forced a complete shift in and a replacement of old values with new ones in order to survive in an epochal change.

After the in-depth analysis of Hamlet's liminality, what remains to be discussed is the final stage of his rite of passage, that is the rite of incorporation, taking place at the end of the play. As for this stage, it is worth trying to piece together the undertone of the protagonist's last words and his last wish. While Hamlet's final speech can be examined in relation to his reintegration process, the ending of the play can be related to the political content with respect to Essex's story. Before Hamlet dies, he insistently wants Horatio to tell his story and addresses his friend: "[. . .] Horatio, I am dead. / Thou livest: report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied" (V. ii. 322-324). Although Horatio feels deep grief and has a suicidal tendency, Hamlet charges him with an important duty: "To tell my [his] story" (V. ii. 333). In one particular respect, Hamlet's last wish has at its heart his aspiration to complete the last rite of passage, that is the phase of reincorporation. After the graveyard scene, he completes his transition, but he cannot thoroughly integrate into the society. Although Liebler argues that the moment of Hamlet's nomination of

Fortinbras is "Hamlet's very brief reincorporation in Denmark" (185), his last wish can be related to the last stage of his rite of passage. While Hamlet is now dying, his demand for his story's narration points to a symbolic act of becoming a part of the society again. As long as Horatio reports his story, Hamlet will make his presence felt in the society again. Michael Cohen lays emphasis on the same idea and further argues that "Hamlet lives on in Horatio for as long as the fiction lasts. In the fiction, as we might extend it, Horatio tells Hamlet's story, which becomes legend, is reported, is made a play and performed for audiences like us" (157-158). Whenever Hamlet's story is told, the ambiguity about his character and actions will be cleared up in the narration. Therefore, Hamlet eventually will have established a stable identity in his new status. This is how Hamlet completes his reintegration.

In addition to Hamlet's reincorporation, the act of telling Hamlet's story can be regarded as Shakespeare's attempt to restore Essex's fame. First, what Hamlet leaves untold at the moment of his death may be related to Essex's story. Before his last wish, Hamlet tells Horatio: "That are but mutes or audience to this act, / Had I but time [. . .] / [. . .] – O, I could tell you – / But let it be" (V. ii. 319-322). As can be observed, Hamlet wants to say something about his own death to those witnessing it. What is unmentioned creates tension and mystery here. Although Hamlet does not have time to explain it, his request for the narration of his story may relate the untold thing to Essex's story. Drawing on this idea, Hamlet's last wish may be intended as a veiled endeavour to tell Essex's story at the time when he was defamed following his execution. Considering the fact that Shakespeare's play alludes to Essex's rebellion and his condition at the very end of his life, Hamlet's story to be told takes on an additional meaning in relation to Essex's case. When all of Essex's supporters were punished for their participation in the riot either by being imprisoned or executed and the Queen had mounted a smear campaign against Essex, his story told in pieces throughout *Hamlet* can be considered as a valiant attempt to save his image. Taking this as the premise, it is also possible to view Fortinbras's order to prepare a proper funeral for Hamlet as another reconstructive deed for the honour of Essex. Fortinbras administers Hamlet's funeral rites as follows:

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,

> For he was likely, had been put on,
> To have proved most royal. And for his passage
> The soldiers' music and the rite of war
> Speak loudly for him. (V. ii. 379-384)

As noted in Fortinbras's words, he orders a funeral for a soldier although Hamlet's military skills have not been foregrounded in the play. Simply put, this militaristic rite may reiterate Fortinbras's demonstration of his own rule, but one may sense that "[t]he restoration of a grant military image has Essexian cultural overtones" (Erickson, *Rewriting* 90) in reference to Essex's martial character. Provided that James mourned for Essex (Mallin, *Inscribing* 142), and it is recorded that James returned to Essex's wife his property which was impounded by the Queen after the execution (Schmitt 17-18), Fortinbras's organisation of the funeral may symbolically stand for James's determination to make amends for Essex's loss. It seems that the ending of the play reclaims Essex's reputation.

In short, *Hamlet* lays bare that Shakespeare created the most well-known character in dramatic history at a time of political change. Like Shakespeare who was going through a transitional state in his career, his country was experiencing a transformational change in the late Elizabethan period. Therefore, the playwright creates a liminal character who displays liminal actions such as becoming a revenger, turning into a stranger, delaying the action of revenge, constantly waiting for the right time, putting on a mask of madness and being sent on exile. Moreover, Hamlet's liminal actions and character are functional in emphasising the political anxieties about the succession issue of the late Elizabethan period.

All aspects of Hamlet's liminality offer an implicit criticism of Elizabeth's failure to solve the succession problem. At the time when the Queen's power was in decline, Shakespeare's play illustrates that the succession problem remained unsettled, and this perpetuated ambiguity and chaos in England. In this regard, Elizabeth's rule is associated with tyranny because of her self-interest as she did not take necessary action to choose her successor. Moreover, *Hamlet* carries resonances of Essex's story. As argued above, the underlying political strains of liminality in Hamlet enable the playwright not only to present social, religious and political transitions in the late Elizabethan period but also

dwell on Essex’s rebellion and death. Hence, Shakespeare purposefully renders a liminal character, Hamlet, observed in undertaking liminal actions through which he reconstructs Essex’s image and protects his reputation without engaging in mere propaganda.

CHAPTER III

“WHAT’S PAST AND WHAT’S TO COME”: LIMINAL TIME IN SHAKESPEARE’S VERSION OF THE TROJAN WAR AS A RECORD OF CRITICISM IN *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

In Act II, scene ii, Hamlet refers to “an excellent play” (II. ii. 376-377) from which he distinctly recalls a passage from Aeneas’s speech to Dido about Priam’s death. After he quotes Aeneas’s lines, he allows the player, visiting Elsinore to entertain the court, to act the scene in which Priam’s murder by Pyrrhus and Hecuba’s deep grief are vividly recited. In Hamlet’s interaction with the players, the tragedy alludes to the fall of Troy by pointing to an unknown play. Later on, Shakespeare aptly deals with the Trojan matter in *Troilus and Cressida*, an issue which he mentioned previously in *Hamlet*. *Troilus and Cressida* lays bare four days from the seventh year of the Trojan War in a linear plot structure. While the play goes back to the prehistory of the war and looks forward to its aftermath in limited details, it mainly focuses on a short period of time before the Trojans are defeated by the Greeks. In a similar manner to epic conventions, *Troilus and Cressida* begins in *medias res* as Shakespeare lays emphasis on the present moment of the war and seems to leave the play incomplete by avoiding the depiction of Troy’s final doom. In a period when English nationalism promoted the Trojan ancestry in a search for the English heritage in the Trojan myth and with London’s being named after Troy as Troynovant, the play could have been a popular work on stage. However, Shakespeare’s thematisation of this subject matter somehow did not appeal to his contemporary audience. In fact, written after Essex’s execution, *Troilus and Cressida* presents a version of the Trojan War and deals with a sense of disillusionment, the loss of heroic ideals and the state of corruption. Following Essex’s demise and Southampton’s imprisonment, Shakespeare appears to have ventured his political innuendo in this play which has been regarded as a problematic work in terms of its genre and subject matter.

This chapter argues that Shakespeare critically approaches the political and social problems of the late Elizabethan period by taking advantage of the ambiguous atmosphere of the war story of the Trojan War in *Troilus and Cressida*. It is possible to claim that the playwright shapes the temporal setting of his play within liminal dynamics of the war

period. In a transitional moment of English history to a new economic system and a new reign, the play provides a liminal temporality by means of which Shakespeare records, with strategic ambiguity, his criticism of the late Elizabethan politics in a disillusioned tone. Therefore, this chapter aims to analyse the period of the Trojan War as a liminal time which functions as the playwright's tool for the criticism of the economic, political and social policies at the advent of change in *Troilus and Cressida*. At this point, it has to be recognised that time is fundamentally an abstract notion, and the study of time may inevitably remain elusive. In order to measure time and position it in its liminal dimension, all components of *Troilus and Cressida* are suffused with their relations to liminal temporality. Bearing this in mind, the chapter first locates the background materials of the play's subject matter, sources, genre and publication/performance history in relation to the concept of liminality. After pursuing the historical atmosphere of Elizabeth's last years, the chapter further elaborates on the play's conceptualisation of uncertainty, ambiguity and in-betweenness in the transitional and transformational moment of the Trojan War. A close reading of the play is framed within the analysis of temporal liminal dimensions which serve to veil Shakespeare's critique of the growing spirit of capitalism and the changing values of the society. Drawing on the Trojan War, the argument about the liminal period in the play concludes with a remark about the Elizabeth's failure to control her courtiers in relation to Essex's demise and factionalism.

Before examining the wartime as a liminal period, it is crucial to understand liminal strains of Shakespeare's subject matter in *Troilus and Cressida*. It is telling that the Trojan story oscillates within the boundaries of fact and fiction in the Elizabethan era because not only the matter of Troy was treated as part of English history but also it was a fictional story for the English at the same time (Kreps 18). Therefore, it is possible to state that the Trojan story consists of liminal in-betweenness in terms of its subject. To provide a clear focus on the fictional position of the matter, it is necessary to trace the evolution of the Trojan story from its ancient sources to the Renaissance period. To begin with the ancient sources, the Trojan matter was accessible to the Elizabethans through Homer's (c. 8-9? BC) narration of the mythological story about a war between the Trojans and the Greeks in the *Iliad*, an epic composed in the eighth century BC and translated into English during the revival of the classical works in the early modern period. Indeed, Homer's military

legend takes place in the tenth year of the long war and dwells on the bulk of ancient heroic culture. Michael Wood asserts that after Homer, other epic poems about the war, such as the *Kypria* (attributed to Stasinus) and the *Sack of Ilios* (attributed to Arctinus of Miletus), were composed approximately around the seventh century BC, and both of them focused on a larger context of the story (19). However, *the Iliad* was the most popular source of the Trojan matter. The famous war story was also a subject of other ancient works such as Virgil's (70-19 BC) *Aeneid* (19 BC) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* According to Vivian Thomas, Shakespeare must have been familiar with the translations of those works while working on his play (23).

Moreover, the myth of Troy was recontextualised in the medieval period which made it more accessible to Shakespeare's time. The story was exploited as a material of different writings, particularly romances, in Europe and Britain during the Middle Ages. The mythological matter was retold and adapted to the chivalric culture of the period while the main plot evolved into a love story as a source of inspiration for Shakespeare. Although Homer's epic was a source for upcoming works, and it did not recount Troilus's story, the successive compositions eventually developed Troilus's character and invented a love story for this character. In line with courtly love conventions, Troilus got involved with Cressida as new texts added this female character to the Trojan story. In the sixth century, Dares the Phrygian first wrote about the Trojan war in *Historia de Excidio Trojae* in which he favoured the Trojans, rendered a vivid picture of Troilus and created the Briseis character (Boas 370-371). Although Dares the Phrygian did not make up a love story for Troilus in this work, it was later in the twelfth century that Benoît de Saint-Maure composed *Le Roman de Troie* (1154-1160), a romance, in which he told a love story. This poem was retold in different languages and inspired thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Italian poets, Guido Colonna and Giovanni Boccaccio. Boccaccio's poem *Il Filostrato* (c.1335-1340) was later appropriated by Geoffrey Chaucer when he wrote *Troilus and Criseyde* (1381-1386). In Chaucer's work, Troilus and Criseyde's love was treated with the courtly love conventions of romances. Troilus had an affair with the widow, Criseyde, with the help of her pandering, but affectionate uncle, Pandarus. Although the lovers had been together for a while, Criseyde later betrayed Troilus out of passion for the Greek soldier, Diomede, after she was sent to the Greek camp. Then,

Robert Henryson wrote in the fifteenth century a sequel to Chaucer's poem, *The Testament of Cresseid* (probably first printed in 1508), narrating the aftermath of Cressida's betrayal and depicting her as a leper as a punishment for her passion. Also, John Lydgate wrote a poem, *Troy Book* (1412-1420), on the fall of Troy by rewriting the preceding sources about the matter. Moreover, in 1473, William Caxton printed his translation of the fifteenth-century author Raoul Lefèvre's romance about the matter of Troy, *Le Recueil des Histories de Troye* (1464), under the title of *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye* and promoted it "as a prose alternative" to Lydgate's poem (Kuskin 144). It is known that Lefèvre derived his story from "Giovanni Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* and [. . .] Guido delle Colonne's 1287 *Historia destructionis troiae*, itself a silent version of Benoit de Sainte-Maure's twelfth-century *Roman de Troie*" (Kuskin 144). Up to Shakespeare's time, it appears that the matter of Troy was re-formed and expanded through an amalgamation of interrelated works in different genres such as epic and romance.

In addition to the literary background, the matter of Troy was also a part of historical discourse in the Elizabethan period. In turning to the factual strain of the story, it is possible to reveal the liminal in-betweenness of the Trojan matter. As a point of interest, the literary past of the Trojan story played a prominent part in the Elizabethan culture because the English, like other Europeans, believed that the Trojans were their ancestors. Heather James claims that the "Trojan myth awaited only transcription into the culture, history, and language of European governments in need of a legitimate history. France had its Francus, son of Priam; Denmark claimed Danus; Ireland, Hiberus; Saxony, Saxo" (15), and England, Brutus. In *The History of the Kings of Britain* (1136), Geoffrey of Monmouth (1095-1155), a medieval bishop and chronicler, narrated the foundation of London by Brutus, Aeneas's grandson, and, hence, reclaimed the Trojan ancestry of the English. After being sent into exile, Brutus set the descendants of Trojan Helenus free in his adventure in Greece and later sailed to the island which he named Britain after his own name. In Monmouth's narration, Brutus "came to the river Thames, [and] walked its banks and found the very spot for his plans. There he founded a city which he called New Troy" (Monmouth 30). His Troy had been called Troynovant and later London, and the English were proud of their ancestry although the idea sprang from a myth rather than an

accurate historical record. As a case in point, Edward III of England (1312-1377) once referred to his country's Trojan lineage in his letter to the Pope in order to prove England's superior rank over the Scottish (Stapfer 201). Elizabeth, likewise, was praised for being "the leader of 'a second Troy' tracing its mythological lineage from Aeneas but avoiding the errors of the past" (Bevington, *Tudor Drama* 170). Therefore, the Elizabethans tended to regard the Trojan matter as a historical record more than a fictional piece of ancient authorities. Their interest in Troy was also excited when they developed a trade relation with the Ottoman Empire in the late sixteenth century. Although the exact site of Homer's Troy had not been discovered at that time, the English travellers latched on the search for ancient Troy in the Ottoman lands. Michael Wood explains the enthusiasm of English travellers as follows:

> Elizabeth's ambassador, John Sanderson, twice 'put into Troy', in 1584 and 1591, and Richard Wragg, taking the queen's second present, saw the two big mounds on Cape Yenisehir in 1594: 'not unlikely the tombs of Achilles and Ajax,' he thought. Others followed: Thomas Dallam, the organ-builder, taking an elaborate hydraulic organ to the Sultan, put into the same place and saw ruins which he took to be Troy (probably the foundations of Constantine's abortive city on the Sigeum ridge); and in the winter of 1609— William Lithgow was shown round a ruined site in the Troad by a Greek guide. Some, like William Biddulph in 1600 and Thomas Coryate in 1603, published their accounts, the latter being the first detailed modern description of the plain. (39)

Although those travellers could not discover the site,[28] they appeared to have a passion for tracing their ancestral roots. Considering the Elizabethan conceptualisation of the Trojan story in real life and narrative accounts, David Scott Kastan's reference to the early modern meaning of the word "history" is quite significant: "Too often 'history' only means story" (*Shakespeare* 39). However, the Elizabethans had an ambiguous attitude towards the concept of history since they located it in a fluid strain of fact and fiction. Thus, they transgressed the line between the two realms in their understanding of the Trojans. Accordingly, the Trojan story remained between reality and imagination as the English used the myth as a historical record. This in-betweenness may identify the matter

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[28] The archaeological excavations took place in north-western Turkey, beginning from the second half of the nineteenth century to the last two decades of the twentieth century. The search for the *Iliad*'s site was conducted initially by Heinrich Schliemann and later by William Dörpfeld, Carl Blegen and Manfred Korfmann (Thomas and Conant 22-25). While Hisarlik in Çanakkale from modern Turkey is identified as the ancient land of Troy, the historical research on Homer's epic indicates that the epic is probably a narration of the conflict between two Late-Bronze-Age communities, the Hittites and the Ahhiyawa (Korfmann, Latacz and Hawkins 40).

of Troy as a liminal subject. Therefore, Shakespeare worked on this liminal matter as his strategy to avoid censorship and extended the liminal dimension of the story by setting his play at the intersection of the Trojan story and contemporary Elizabethan history.

Having established the background of Shakespeare's liminal subject matter, it is time to focus on how Shakespeare worked with the Trojan story by referring to the two plotlines in his play. In fact, from the sixteenth century onwards, the myth of London's foundation as New Troy and the ancient ancestry was celebrated by the Elizabethan writers in their various works. Leo French Haynes pinpoints the popularity of the story at the time when Shakespeare wrote his play: "There were at least twenty-five plays, and four non-dramatic works of some note, to say nothing of numerous short poems dealing with some episode of the Troy cycle" (77). Undoubtedly, Shakespeare did not recount an authentic story, but he probably attempted to benefit from Troy's commercial power on stage. In his version of the Trojan War, the play entails a double plot line, building on the themes of love and war. In this way, Shakespeare revisits the literary sources of the play and develops them into a new story in line with the changing dynamics of his age. As a case in point, the playwright derives the love story of Troilus and Cressida from medieval romances, but adds the concept of love reconstructed in the early modern period. In the play, the young Trojan warrior, Troilus, is rendered as a desperate lover of Cressida whose father Calchas betrays the Trojans by changing his side during the long war. Left in the Trojan camp with her uncle Pandarus, Cressida becomes in love with Troilus though she cannot express her feelings and depends on Pandarus's bargain with him. When the uncle brings them together at his house, the title characters consummate their love during that night. In the morning, however, Cressida is asked to leave Troy upon Calchas's request to exchange his daughter with Antenor, a Trojan prisoner in the Greek camp. Despite her protest, she has to be an object of exchange, and Troilus does not reject their separation; the lovers exchange love tokens, a sleeve and a glove, and Troilus asks Cressida to be loyal to him. When Troilus later visits the Grecian camp, Ulysses leads him to Cressida's tent where she meets Diomedes that night, and Troilus observes that she gives his sleeve to the Greek warrior and betrays him. Shattered by this betrayal, he wants to take revenge in the battlefield and tears up Cressida's letter brought by Pandarus. This plot unfolds Shakespeare's dependence on the medieval sources. As can be noted in the play's title,

Chaucer's poem is the immediate work which reminds the reader/audience of this love story. However, the narrative of the play corresponds to a contemporary understanding of love. Kenneth Muir points to Shakespeare's use of Chaucer and further refers to Henryson's influence and the changing conception of love:

> The general outline of the love-plot is therefore to be found in Chaucer's poem, but of the four main characters only Troilus is left more or less unchanged, and the atmosphere of the play is totally different from that of the poem. This is partly due to Henryson's sequel, but it is due much more to the change of customs and ideas in the intervening centuries, to the Inns of Court audience for which Shakespeare probably wrote, and to the dramatic purpose of the whole play. (81)

This amounts to saying that the ancient story retold by medieval authors is Shakespeare's source of inspiration, but the playwright goes beyond this story since he plays with the dynamics of Petrarchan love in Troilus's portrait and critically stresses his character's shallow understanding of love.

As for the war plot, the play does not illustrate much the military struggle between the two parties, but it rather elaborates on the perception of the war by different groups. Similar to the love plot, the course of the war distances itself from its original sources. In the Trojan council, Priam and his sons discuss their further action in this long war. Although Helen's abduction by Paris causes this conflict, Hector wants Helen to return to her husband, Menelaus, and Greece as he argues that this woman is not worth the blood of the Trojans. Yet Hector's idea is challenged by Troilus and Paris, and he eventually agrees to keep Helen and continue the war. Hector also sends Aeneas to the Greek camp in order to announce his challenge. In the Greek camp, the famous heroes under Agamemnon's leadership consider the reason for their failure in their council. Ulysses convinces others that the collapse of order and hierarchy in their camp makes them lose their military superiority over the Trojans. Achilles's withdrawal from the war justifies Ulysses's claim as he believes that Achilles perpetuates disorder by spending time with Patroclus in his tent and teasing Greek leaders. Achilles's pride and his mocking of the elders challenge their authority so an immediate action has to be taken to tame Achilles and win the war. Therefore, Ulysses proposes that they send Ajax to fight against Hector and ignore Achilles and let him damage his pride. Although this plan is put into action, Hector refuses to fight against Ajax in a duel because the latter is half Trojan, the son of

Priam's sister. The only battle scene takes place in the last act after Hector and Troilus spend the night as the guests of the Greeks in the camp. Notwithstanding Cassandra's prophecy, Andromache's dream and Priam's opposition, Hector decides to fight in the battlefield in the morning. When Patroclus is killed in the war, Achilles returns to the battle and makes his followers, the Myrmidons, murder unarmed Hector. The war plot closes with Hector's death and Troilus's return to Troy. Although Shakespeare does not depict the ultimate end of Troy, he obviously borrows the tale from Homer. It is highly probable that Shakespeare read George Chapman's (1559-1634) partial translation of Homer's epic in *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homere* and his other work *Achilles' Shield* published in 1598 (Muir 81; Haynes 77). Haynes also claims that Shakespeare owes to Ovid the portraits of some Greek figures such as Ajax, Ulysses and Nestor (129). Additionally, the framework of the war comes from Lydgate and Caxton (Kuskin 145). However, Shakespeare again distances himself from the ideals of heroism represented in classical works and from the codes of chivalry in medieval romances. As Rosalie L. Colie argues, the playwright "does a low version of the Homeric story in a period which openly idolized Homer, a low version of the Chaucerian narrative in a period when Chaucer's reputation was reaffirmed, and a satire on romance and epic" (318). While Shakespeare, like his predecessors, embeds the classical story in a medieval chivalric atmosphere, he does not idealise the world of the warriors. Actually, he attacks their values because he uses the story as his tool for criticism of the fall of ideals in the late Elizabethan age, as explained below.

As can be observed, the literary history of *Troilus and Cressida* is tinged with liminality in terms of its in-between subject matter. Moreover, it can be noted from the play's publication and performance history that it was put forth in different genres, hence contributing to its ambiguity and subsequent liminality. To start with its first record and publication history, the play initially appeared in the Stationers' Register on 7 February 1603 with a reference to its performance by the Chamberlain's Men (Kimbrough 17). In 1609, it was printed in two quartos which had the same text, but with a slight difference in their titles. Published by Richard Bonian and Henry Walley, one version was entitled *The Famous History of Troylus and Cresseid* while the other was named *The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida* (Lambert 64). Both of the titles indicate that the play was about

the history or story of Troilus and Cressida. Yet, in the preface of both quartos, there is an attempt to define the play as a comedy with the use of the words, “comical” and “comedy,” nine times (3, 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 20, 27, 28). However, the plot does not prioritise a love story, and the ending of the play complicates its identification with one particular genre. Put more simply, *Troilus and Cressida* does not fit into the traditional framework of a tragedy or a comedy because there is neither really a cathartic moment after the fall of the protagonist nor a happy ending with a marriage scene. This ambiguity must have been a challenge when the play was published in the First Folio of 1623. Initially, the play’s title was not entered into the table of contents, and its placement among other plays was quite problematic. W. W. Greg explains that *Troilus and Cressida* was originally placed to be published after *Romeo and Juliet* in the Folio edition; however, the printing halted after three pages, probably because of a dispute over its copyright by Bonian and Walley (273-275). Later on, the conflict must have been resolved since the play was located between *Henry VIII* and *Coriolanus*. Clearly, the publication history demonstrates the ambiguity of the play’s genre. The title offers a history play; the first print, a comedy; and the Folio, a tragedy. Then, the final placement embeds *Troilus and Cressida* into an intermediate place between history plays and tragedies. Therefore, the ambiguity concerning the genre of the play during its publication process indicates that Shakespeare’s play is a liminal text as it oscillates in different categories.

In this context, Kinga Földváry rightly observes that “it is [. . .] the practically liminal placement proved to be prophetic – no single genre category seems able to lay absolute claim to this play” (16). Since the early editions of the play, most of the editors and critics engaged in a discussion, putting forward various definitions to classify the work. Some critics, like the Folio editors, define the play as a tragedy. Northrop Frye, for instance, divides Shakespeare’s tragedies into three categories and puts *Troilus and Cressida* into the group of tragedies of passion, arguing that the play is mainly about the theme of love or passion and dwells on the conflicts caused by this strong feeling (*Fools* 16). William B. Toole believes that this play might be a tragedy, too, but he acknowledges that the ending of the play makes it “less satisfying” as Troilus cannot recognise his own fall (228). On the other hand, there is a tendency to fit the play into the group of comedies. The scholars who differentiate *Troilus and Cressida* from tragedies call it a comedy,

exploring its nuances from traditional comedy. Chambers considers it as a critical comedy with irony (*Shakespeare* 193); Foakes, a dark comedy (*Shakespeare* 60); and, Lawrence, “a new type of comedy” (21). Drawing on the title of the quartos, some tend to regard *Troilus and Cressida* as a history play. Accordingly, the matter of Troy is a historical subject which includes “a complex social and national situation [. . .] as comprehensive as [. . .] the English history plays” (Bayley, *Shakespeare* 96). John Wilders, likewise, highlights the connection between public and private matters in history plays and argues that political troubles in such works are treated as individual concerns. For Wilders, the Trojan council’s discussion about the war is a matter of Priam and his family as in the case of history plays (3). On the contrary, some argue that Shakespeare’s work is not a history play, but it can be related to romance. As a result of its medieval sources, *Troilus and Cressida* still comes closer to romance in terms of its plot, subject matter and setting (Lawrence 20; Chambers, *Shakespeare* 193; Rossiter 110). However, there is some disagreement about the use of classical and medieval sources to define the play’s genre considering its attack on the concepts of epic-heroism and romance-chivalry. According to Colie, Shakespeare satirises Homer’s epic world by reducing its high values (317). From Pettet’s point of view, Shakespeare’s play is a satire on the conventions of chivalry (140). By the same token, George W. Keeton regards the play’s connection with its medieval sources as “the medievalism of satire and not of romance” (370) since the world of warriors depicts a state of corruption and degeneration in *Troilus and Cressida*.

It is possible to comment on Shakespeare’s satirical approach in different ways. Broadly speaking, Shakespeare’s satirical tone can be identified in the presentation of the Trojan War as a representative of any war undertaken for a trivial reason. Moreover, Shakespeare’s style can be compared to his contemporaries such as Ben Jonson, John Marston (1576-1634) and George Chapman who make use of “loosely-knit plots and the episodic display of social, moral, and linguistic corruption (in contrast to the strongly narrative form of conventional drama), as well as by the prominence of self-conscious erudition, high-flown language, and satiric commentary” (Yachnin, “The Perfection” 317). *Troilus and Cressida* displays such features, but it has to be recognised that Shakespeare is not tactless in his satirical manner because “in 1599 the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London issued an order prohibiting the printing of *any*

satires thereafter and requiring that works of Hall, Marston, Nashe, and others be burned" (Elliott 261). As Shakespeare uses a distant setting and story to satirise his contemporary world, he is able to avoid censorship and punishment. Therefore, he maintains a satirical tone in the play while its genre remains obscure. To further argue, the critics also delineate two categories of satire, depending on their perception of the play's tone. Hector's death and the fall of Troy make some critics recognise the play as a "tragical satire or a "tragic satire" (Muir 96; Ure 33; Slights 50). These critics highlight the satirical comments and the sense of tragedy in the play, particularly in relation to the ending of the work. Camille Slights argues that *Troilus and Cressida* is a tragic satire and argues that in this play,

> Shakespeare exposed sin and folly in a world of fools and knaves but the fools suffer most and the knaves control conclusion in the end. Such a conclusion is not a cynical comment on established values, but it is a bitter comment on human beings. The world of the play is not meaningless, but it is a world with little hope. [. . .] In *Troilus and Cressida* the satiric acid is strongly concentrated; we see man stripped naked and lashed by the satirist's whip, and, because we too are men, we are deeply sorry for the victims at whom we sometimes laugh. (50-51)

Other studies, however, entail an argument on the play's being a "comical satire" (Cole 77; Maquerlot 131; Foakes, *Shakespeare* 44). Oscar James Campbell's *Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* was the forerunner of this idea. At the time when satirical works were destroyed and punished, the writers, Campbell argues, formulated the genre of comedy for their satirical purposes, and Ben Jonson was a pioneer in English drama as he made use of comedy to satirise the folly of a particular group in the English society as a response to the changing social, cultural and economic dynamics. Thus, Shakespeare constructed his play on the satiric comedy genre in a subtle way so that he was able to criticise the decadence, folly and corruption of his society at the end of the late Elizabethan age. Campbell puts forward his belief that Shakespeare employed this popular form of comedy to reflect his political views about a turbulent time of social, moral and economic changes (234). In the face of such comments on the play's genre, it is clear that Shakespeare's play makes the critics have diverse opinions about the playwright's satirical approach, alluding to the play's ambiguity.

Troilus and Cressida, owing to its in-betweenness in terms of genre, can be simply called a tragicomedy as John Fletcher defines this liminal genre in his address to the reader at the beginning of his play, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608):

> A tragie-comedie is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie: which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kinde of trouble as no life be questioned, so that a God is as lawfull in this as in a tragedie, and meane people in a comedie. (22-29)

Obviously, *Troilus and Cressida* fits into this definition with respect to Shakespeare's representation of the Trojan story. The sense of in-betweenness in terms of the use of tragedy and comedy suggests liminality for this play. However, the scholars come up with another literary term, problem play, to deal with Shakespeare's plays which oscillate between tragedy and comedy by focussing on their themes in their discussion. First, Frederick S. Boas claims that *Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* consist of a similar treatment in their examination of a young man's failures. Written after Essex's death in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, these plays cannot be exactly identified either as comedies or as tragedies (Boas 345). Also, Boas observes their similar manner to Ibsen and Shaw's plays in the nineteenth century, and, hence, provides a new definition: "We may therefore borrow a convenient phase from the theatre of today and class them together as Shakspere's [sic] problem-plays" (345). Boas's definition yields a new understanding for other critics to interpret Shakespeare's tragicomical plays although the plays that each critic analyses are different from one another. Although *Troilus and Cressida* is excluded from William B. Toole and Ernest Schanzer's studies on problem plays, other Shakespeare scholars definitely label it as a problem play owing to its instability in terms of its genre and its thematisation of moral, ethical and metaphysical complexities.[29]

[29] In *Shakespeare's Problem Plays,* Toole differentiates *Troilus and Cressida* from his own framework of problem plays because of its moral perspective, but he still studies it along with *All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*. In *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare*, Schanzer offers a distinct list for problem plays since he only includes *Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in this category of Shakespeare's plays. On the other hand, similar to Boas's analysis, E. M. Tillyard (*Shakespeare's Problem Plays*), William W. Lawrence (*Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*), Peter Ure (*William Shakespeare: The Problem Plays*), Northrop Frye (*The Myth of Deliverance*), Vivian Thomas (*The Moral Universe of Shakespeare's Problem Plays*), Jean-Pierre Maquerlot (*Shakespeare and the Mannerist Tradition*) and Paul Yachnin ("Shakespeare's Problem Plays") deal with *Troilus and Cressida* as a problem play in their different readings of the text.

What is more, it has to be recognised that the play's technical and thematic problems lead to further definitions. It is defined as "a philosophical work of art" (Kimbrough 182), a railing play (Prendergast 69-101), "a contribution to the War of the Theatres (directed against Ben Jonson)" (Walker x) and "a modern play" (Kott 63). More recently, Brandon Centerwall calls it a competition drama and comes up with a novel explanation:

> *Troilus and Cressida* does not primarily concern the Trojan War, but instead concerns the two companies performing it, the play. [. . .] *Troilus and Cressida* bring[s] onstage the members of two acting companies who are absolutely not members of a single acting company and in fact are known to be stiff competitors in the free market of public entertainment. (72)

Evidently, all these interpretations call attention to Shakespeare's experimentation either on staging methods or genre. What remains to be seen in such definitions of the play is that *Troilus and Cressida*, like Shakespeare's other tragicomedies, establishes itself as a liminal text. As Shakespeare's experiment brings out some ambiguities and creates a sense of in-betweenness regarding the genre of the play, *Troilus and Cressida* displays the characteristics of liminality. This liminality protects the playwright from censorship and a possible punishment while it allows him to use his work as a medium of criticism.

Moreover, *Troilus and Cressida*'s performance records illustrate its relation to liminal time. Compared to the performance histories of *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*, this play concretely manifests its liminal agency when its record of performances is reviewed in this vein. Considering the first entry of the play in the Stationers' record in 1603, it seems that Shakespeare probably wrote it in the aftermath of Essex's execution. This date was actually significant in English history since the aging Queen was about to die and leave her throne to the Stuart monarch. This historical juncture can be regarded as a liminal moment because it signals a transitional stage midway between the Tudor and Stuart reigns. However, it should be noted that the first record of performance presented a problem when the play was published in 1609. Although the first document refers to the play's performance by Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1603 (Kimbrough 17), the publisher's preface of 1609 notes that "you have here a new play, never staled with the stage, never clapped-clawed with the palms of the vulgar" (1-3). This advertisement poses a problem since the play was promoted as if it had not been acted before. Undoubtedly, it raises a question on the validity of the previous register, with regard to whether it was not

performed or not. Thus, it is possible to speculate about the political atmosphere of the time. After Essex's execution and James's accession, Cecil re-established his powerful position at the court so the play's allusions to Essex and the factional strife might have made it hard to be published and performed. In such a political atmosphere, the company might even have wanted to detach themselves from this play. To further argue, the preface is still problematic because it offers an indication of a specific target reader/audience. Then, the discussion becomes complicated regarding the identification of the particular audience. If not for the applause of "vulgar" hands, the play must have addressed to a more intellectual audience. Granted that Essex was declared as chancellor at Cambridge University in 1598, E. A. J. Honigmann argues that "*Troilus and Cressida* was written in the early months of 1601 and privately performed, perhaps at Cambridge. The play's unintended echoing of the Essex story being noted, it was not performed in public, even though Shakespeare had changed his plans while writing act 5 and was prepared to write a sequel" (53-54). However, Honigmann's speculation about the Cambridge audience does not mark a high point in this discussion. Actually, it was rather the debate on the Inns of Court students as Shakespeare's audience, an idea which meets with critical acclaim. Accordingly, the play is thought to have been written for the law students who were already familiar with Shakespeare's plays. Among these discussions, W. R. Elton convincingly provides an in-depth analysis of *Troilus and Cressida* in relation to its target readership/audience. Elton first deals with the characteristics of the Inns of Court revels, treats the play as a burlesque and pinpoints the parallelism between Shakespeare's work with law students' revels. The play's parodic and mocking elements with its complicated references appear to be "consistent with an Elizabethan law-revels tradition" (Elton, *Shakespeare's TC* 168) so W. R. Elton strongly argues that "[i]ts spectators, as is now believed, would rather have been such as those who attended licensed and wittily suggestive entertainments, or world-upside-down misrule revels, at London's 'Third University', the Inns of Court" (*Shakespeare's TC* 168).

In addition to the ambiguity concerning the date of the first performance of *Troilus and Cressida*, the play met a real challenge to survive on stage until the twentieth century. Also, it is worth noting that the play was mainly staged in times of crisis, that is liminal times. While the play's performance time cannot be fixed at a certain date in

Shakespeare's time, its future on stage becomes more interesting since it was not produced on the English stage for almost three centuries.[30] Although Robert Kimbrough dates *Troilus and Cressida*'s return to the English stage back to 1905 (7), Barbara E. Bowen clearly explains that Christopher Fry directed the first performance of the play at the Great Queen Street Theatre in 1907 after so many centuries (38). In fact, Shakespeare wrote his text at "the *fin-de- siècle* pessimism" of the late Elizabethan period (Bruster 108). Then, the play became popular on stage at another turning moment in world history. In the ambiguous atmosphere of the world wars, Shakespeare's play was used as part of anti-war propaganda. Francesca Rayner gives an account of important productions of this play in England before the First World War in 1912 and 1913, and then refers to the productions in the 1930s preceding the Second World War (56-57). It is interesting to note that the play was rediscovered in liminal times of ambiguity. During the destructive world wars, the play's productions were highly critical of the absurdity of the upcoming violence. Shakespeare's critical voice made the play popular again whenever military conflicts later occurred. Robert Shaughnessy gives an account of significant moments in the play's performance history as follows:

> Thereafter the play has featured sporadically in the programmes of the major national theatres, its action often transposed to more recent scenes of conflict and tending to tap into contemporary anti-war sentiments (notably as directed by Tyrone Guthrie at the Old Vic in 1956, where it coincided with the Suez crisis; by John Barton for the RSC in 1968 and 1976, with the Vietnam War in the background; and by Sam Mendes for the RSC at the Swan in 1990, on the eve of the First Gulf War); more recently, it was staged with a multi-ethnic cast at the National Theatre in 1999 (directed by Trevor Nunn) and, in a production seemingly indifferent to the Second Gulf War, the so-called War on Terror, or any other contemporary conflict, in an 'original practices' staging at Shakespeare's Globe in 2009. (208-209)

In 2012, the play was also staged at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, hence reflecting the recent strife in the Middle East. In addition to these periods of military conflicts, this work drew the attention of the directors when gender politics was debated during the 1960s. Efterpi Mitsi emphasises the success of the play during a "socio-political change

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[30] It is known that John Dryden (1631-1700) adapted Shakespeare's play and wrote *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* in 1679 (Földváry 16). While this rewriting was performed several times in England in the late seventeenth century, Bevington explains that there might have been a performance of Shakespeare's original play in Dublin in the sixteenth century ("Introduction" 94). Moreover, the play was performed in Germany in 1898 before the play was revived on the English stage in the early 1900s (Kimbrough 7).

unsettling western societies" (3) and ascribes this success to the text's presentation of "the conflict between past and present through the subversion of conventional interpretations of classical literature and the demystification of great heroes and grand narratives, pertinent to periods witnessing crises of the systems of values and beliefs" (4). Mitsi's point can be deemed relevant to the play's incorporation of liminal time considering that its stage history indicates its popularity during liminal times of ambiguity and crises. Written on the threshold of a historical change during political turmoil in Elizabethan times, *Troilus and Cressida* later appealed to the reader/audience of other liminal times, as well. It is no surprise that the play has been regarded as a work ahead of its own time when its performance history is reinvestigated. Thus, this study may invite another perspective that *Troilus and Cressida* is a play for liminal times.

As Shakespeare constructs his work for a liminal period, he also uses liminal time to veil his socio-political criticism in this play. Actually, Elizabeth's last years determine the historical atmosphere of the play**.** The social unrest in England, factionalism at the court, corruption in the society and the international and economic policies of the state provide a better understanding of Shakespeare's play. The first issue is the ongoing social disorder during the Queen's last years. John Guy, calling the period from the 1590s to the Queen's death as Elizabeth's second reign, states: "A sense of *fin de siècle* is crucial to an understanding of Elizabeth's 'second' reign. Contradictory forces charged the atmosphere: ambition, apprehension, expectation, insecurity, authoritarianism, self-interrogation" (7-8). The aging Queen had to deal with more social and political conflicts at home. Roger B. Manning mentions the ongoing unrest and protests in London:

> Between 1581 and 1602, the city was disturbed by no fewer than 35 outbreaks of disorder. [. . .] Tudor London was an orderly city until the early 1580s, but the rapid growth of population thereafter produced serious problems of maintaining public order in both the city and the suburbs. Under Elizabeth these problems were exacerbated by the frequent interference of the Queen and the Privy Council in the city's affairs. Something like two out of every three riots in the London area during the reign of Elizabeth occurred within the city and many were protests against harsh punishment imposed by city magistrates at the Crown's insistence. (187-188)

On the one hand, Elizabeth's government could not effectively deal with the disorder in the society. On the other hand, Elizabeth's method of control caused more problems as can be deduced from Manning's account. In the parliament, the House of Commons

vehemently opposed Elizabeth's practice of distribution of monopolies to her favourite courtiers while common people suffered from poverty and hunger. Christopher Paris sheds light on the destructive effect of this practice:

> Patents and monopolies perpetuated growing poverty for the peasant class, displaced them in the countryside and in cities, and deprived them of agrarian occupation for subsistence. Agrarian lands were exploited by monopolists for grazing acreage to raise livestock, and monopolies caused rapacious escalations of prices in domestic goods. (131)

Despite Elizabeth's dislike of their rising power, the House of Commons struggled hard in the parliament and passed bills to provide a temporary remedy to poverty. Although the Queen attempted to prevent the House of Commons from getting involved in such issues, her policies were moderately questioned.

Although the power struggle in the House of Commons did not pose a serious threat to the Queen's position, her controlling method of courtiers, factionalism, led the country to a dangerous political situation as was the case with Essex's rebellion. Therefore, factionalism and Elizabeth's position and Essex's role within this system can be regarded as a second issue worth exploring in relation to the historical context of the play. Suffice to say, the female monarch had not overcome the fear of being suppressed by all the male figures around her. Therefore, she wanted to design a system to sustain her control over them. Broadly speaking, she benefitted from a kind of rivalry among her courtiers who desired to achieve more power. She aimed to prevent those men from challenging her own power so "she chose to divide and rule. It was Elizabeth herself, for example, who made sure that Essex and Francis Bacon heard that the Lord Treasurer was 'the sole obstacle' to Bacon's appointment in December in 1593" (Hammer, "Patronage" 77). Therefore, her courtiers displayed hostility towards one another by taking sides either with Cecil or Essex. However, the factional system resulted in Essex's rebellion or, in other words, the threat of a civil war in England.

It is beyond doubt that Elizabeth had to depend on her courtiers, like Essex, for their military abilities and service. What is at stake here is that Essex' military power shaped his political views and masculine conduct in a way that it later destroyed his relationship with the Queen. In fact, Essex had pursued military conduct and constructed his courtly

competition on courtly rivalry since the early days of this practice. Whenever a possibility of war was discussed in the parliament, he devotedly supported military action so that Lord Burghley once addressed Essex's "bloodthirsty" attitude by quoting from the Bible when "he pointed to Psalm lv. verse 25., *The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*" (Devereux 1:483). Essex's military ambition, however, caused him a lot of trouble at the court since he was severely criticised by the Cecils after each failure. After the failure in the Cadiz expedition, for instance, Essex had to defend himself against all accusations of the opposite party. Moreover, Essex's popularity and his appetite for power repelled Elizabeth, and she did not promote Essex's candidates for certain positions while Robert Cecil gained more control. When Essex became more aware of his loss of power at the court, he vented his anger by acting disrespectfully and violently against the Queen. As a case in point, in 1598, Essex first turned his back on Elizabeth when she did not listen to his advice on the Irish expedition. Then, he attempted to draw his sword after she reacted angrily to him in front of other courtiers. After his failure in Ireland, Essex's political ambition turned into pure rage and finally culminated in his rebellion.

It seems reasonable to argue that Essex's outrage and disobedience is a result of his neo-chivalric masculine ideals. According to Robin Headlam Wells, Essex rejected the Queen's authority over himself in his reconceptualisation of honour, masculinity and military affairs in the neo-chivalric atmosphere of the age (*Shakespeare on Masculinity* 53). Although he tended to put Elizabeth on a pedestal, he never regarded her as a military leader, hence disregarding her military orders (Wells, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* 53). This view can be pursued to the point that Essex's masculine ideals led him to a total rejection of the Queen's political superiority. Only the factional male rivalry at the court mattered to him. As Essex's masculine honour was at stake, he led a rebellion against Elizabeth and the Cecilian faction.

While the pursuit of individual profits at the court suggests political corruption in the case of factions, the pursuit of sexual appetite by common people hints at the corrupted state of the society. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, London life was recognised for its licentiousness, debauchery and decadence in all classes. Greg W. Bentley explains

that there was a growing number of brothels and stews in London although the government tried to limit and control such places (*Shakespeare* 47). Shakespeare was also aware of ongoing sexual license and reflected this problem in *Troilus and Cressida.* According to Bentley, Shakespeare also stresses the corruption of the Inns of Court students as "the moral universal problem, for [. . .] people from all classes – from the bourgeois merchant to the nobleman – were buying, selling, or trading human flesh" (*Shakespeare* 51-52). What is more, sexual corruption caused syphilis. The disease ravaged the body as the person suffered from infection, higher bodily temperature, headache, bone-ache and eye irritation (Healy 126-127). Valerie Traub pinpoints that from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, each nation ascribed the source of the disease to an enemy or the foreign "other" (71). Although the English referred to syphilis as the "French disease, Neapolitan bone-ache or Spanish pox" (Harris 15), this "foreign" disease overran in the country as a consequence of sexual degradation. The connection between the disease and sexual license appears to have a counterpart in late Elizabethan drama and Shakespeare's plays in that it captures, in Margaret Healy's words, a sense of "a medico-social construction" (125) as "the disease became a familiar motif in literature preoccupied with morals, vice and the fallen condition" (150-151). Therefore, the disease as the epitome of social decay was presented in the works of the time.

While protests, disorder and corruption on all levels were spreading in England, the country was at pains to protect national security in the face of foreign threats. In 1588, the Queen once "could be greeted at Gray's Inn as 'that sweet remain of Priam's state: that hope of springing Troy'" (Wood 34) when she gained victory over the Spanish Armada, but Elizabeth's Troy struggled hard in her last years. Therefore, it is worth looking into the international affairs of England at that time. As a matter of fact, the international relations were mostly preoccupied with political and military conflicts. At the turn of the new century, England had been at war with Spain for many years; the forces in the Low Countries campaigned for the English supremacy; and, the troops in Ireland still could not resolve military conflicts there. According to Mallin, England's military policy was pertinent to the factional strife at the court. He affirms the close association of foreign and domestic issues in the following words: "England's disengaged, perpetual militancy in the 1590s was replicated in the hostile atmosphere at

court. The protracted struggles with Spain and Ireland magnified tensions within the upper levels of government, the nobles dividing along anti- and pro-war lines" ("Emulous Factions" 146). Although the factions of Cecil and Essex advocated opposite views on military actions, England continued to wage war on other countries. One may recognise that the wars against Spain and Ireland were originally rooted in religious conflicts and national interests, but the endless wars without a peaceful solution induced not only weariness but also meaninglessness. Long years of warfare might have eroded the original cause of military conflicts, and the mismanagement of military affairs provoked a sense of disillusionment with Elizabeth's government. To put the issue another way, the failure in military conduct prompted the questioning of Elizabeth's misgovernment and the corruption of the state at that time.

The last issue about the historical background is related to the change in the contemporary economic policies and its influence on the society in different ways. Indeed, at the crossroads of internal conflicts, foreign rivalry and corruption lies the rise of capitalism in the early modern period. From the fifteenth century onwards, there was a gradual transition from a feudal economic system to capitalism owing to a growing interest in international trade and commerce. Broadly speaking, in the Middle Ages, the feudal economic system depended on agriculture or, simply, the cultivation of lands. Therefore, the agrarian society adopted a local system for economic activities. Later on, the expansion of trade routes inspired many pirates and merchants to take on adventures, and hence their monopoly of commerce transformed the limited feudal economic structure through new dynamics of buying and selling in a global landscape. Thus, international trade produced a shift in the economic paradigm, and the new market economy brought about a rapid growth in the exchange of goods. Commercial enterprise marked a high point in world history considering the fact that the countries with strong naval forces competed against each other in fierce rivalry. England's conflict with Spain grew into such a competition in trade that "privateering incidents increased the tensions leading to war, and [. . .] much of England's finances as well as military strategy revolved around the predatory mariners" (Bruster 110). Therefore, the conflict between England and Spain turned into an economic rivalry.

In addition to military threats, commercial ventures created more tension about the perception of foreign rivals in England. Gerard de Malynes's (1586-1641) *Treatise of the Canker of England Commonwealth* (1601) expressed worries about the English currency as the uncontrolled practice of sending coins to trade partners reduced the value of English money (Harris 8). De Malynes argued that this exchange had a negative effect on the country's treasure and he resembled this situation to an illness harmful to the body politic (Harris 8). The disease was called "canker" owing to its "connotations of complexional imbalance and external agency" since "Malynes believes such [economic] imbalances to stem from the plottings of malevolent aliens, European bankers whom he accuses of manipulating the rates of exchange to England's detriment" (Harris 9). Clearly, the rise of trade relations perpetuated hostility towards foreigners and unsettled the English as if an illness had spread in the country.

To further argue, the new world of commerce began to change domestic politics and social life in England, too. As the old feudal aristocracy gave way to a middle class, the representation of this new group created political tensions in the parliament. Now, it was the House of Commons who challenged the superiority of the upper class: "Although the gentry, the city merchants, and the manufacturers were developing into a formidable political power, with a capable leadership in the House of Commons, many aristocrats continued to believe in an unchanging social order based on fixed social hierarchy or 'degree'" (Clarke 211). Commerce provided those traders with an economic and political power, enabling them to reject the established social system. In other words, capitalism set new values which led to a lot of changes in the social and cultural systems. Apart from the struggle in the parliament, commerce stirred up a change in the socio-cultural milieu as it introduced consumerism and the practices of commodification. Granted that the economic system focused on gaining more wealth and property, the society mostly promoted commercial endeavours and developed ethical and moral values based on materialism. Obviously, this shattered the feudal principles of morality and destroyed the idealism of chivalric service and honour. Broadly conceived, the pursuit of individual profit altered social values and affected all kinds of relations.

Consequently, the early modern society reconstructed the perception of time. Alfred von Martin articulates this shift as follows:

> Money capital and mobile property naturally linked up with the kindred power of time for, seen from that particular point of view, time is money. Time is a great 'liberal' power as opposed to the 'conservative' power of space, the immobile soil. In the Middle Ages power belonged to him who owned the soil, the feudal lord; but [. . .] he who knew how to exploit money and time fully could make himself the master of all things: such are the new mean to power of the bourgeois. Money and time imply motion [. . .]. (15)

Owing to the change in market economy, the pace of life increased, and time became the measure of value. In the medieval period, time belonged to the realm of the divinity. Kastan states that medieval people regarded "time as a dimension of God's providence" (*Shakespeare* 5) so Christian faith enabled them to dismiss anxious thoughts on the past or the future. In stark contrast to this understanding, Renaissance temporality suggested that "time was not plentiful but rare and precious. Since it was constantly slipping away, man must utilize available means of controlling it and, in some measure, ward off the termination it promoted. One must work as much as possible to see that events turn out favourably or, as in business, limit risk" (Quinones 7-8). So, time was to be controlled and measured as a limited resource. Trading business played an important role in the new measurement of time in that commerce laid a foundation of time consciousness, prioritising the present moment.

Before dealing with an in-depth analysis of liminal time in *Troilus and Cressida,* it may prove useful to give an account of how time has been broadly conceptualised in Shakespeare's plays. For instance, Arthur Sewell proposes three basic categories of time in Shakespeare's plays: "stage time," "the time of the plot" and "ideal time" (212). Sewell's categories, respectively, explain Shakespeare's use of the duration of the performance, the temporal setting of the play and his presentation of "[the] constant concreteness of duration" (Sewell 220). Moreover, Ricardo J. Quinones groups Shakespeare's plays, depending on their genre, by three categories of time. The realistic aspect of time with its destructive power is called "augmentative time," laying the foundation for Shakespeare's sonnets and history plays (Quinones 328). The second one is "contracted time" upon which tragedies are constructed. In contracted time, the themes of love, passion and desire offer a psychological understanding of temporality (Quinones

336), and *Troilus and Cressida*, accordingly, uses this time. The last concept of time, "extended time," prevails romances, and it extends to a large period of time, playing on the opposite dynamics of the first two categories (Quinones 328). In a similar fashion, Kastan makes a genre-based analysis of time in Shakespeare's plays. Excluding comedies, Kastan works with history plays, tragedies and romances in which Shakespeare deals with different conceptions of time. Kastan argues that the playwright exploits the Renaissance concept of time and adjusts it to his dramatic form so that he creates an "imaginative confrontation with time" in "his artistic rather than his philosophical achievement, in the structures of his plays rather than in the sentiments of his characters" (*Shakespeare* 6).

Alternatively, there are some other studies that undertake temporal perspectives in relation to the change in the different elements of the play or the shift in the flow of time. These studies carry resonances of liminal perspective on time. John Wilders, for example, places emphasis on the processes of time in Shakespeare's plays and offers three dimensions: "the regular annual cycle of the seasons," "the growth of the individual from birth to maturity and his decline to old age and death" and "the random, irregular changes in society with its revolutions of government, victories and defeats in battle and shifts of popular allegiance" (12). Apparently, Wilders's classification incorporates a perspective closer to the rites of passage and liminality with respect to the process of change. More significantly, the flow of the past, the present and the future adds another dimension to such studies. Matthew D. Wagner works with these dimensions of time and builds up his analysis of Shakespeare's plays on the categories of "temporal dissonance," "temporal thickness" and "temporal materiality" (2). From Wagner's standpoint, time's disharmony, the dominance of the past and the future over the present and time's physicality pinpoint the fluidity of temporality in Shakespeare's plays. This fluidity can be attributed to a state of liminal in-betweenness. Wagner suggests: "As time gains form and shape on the stage, it does so most often in ways that are neither literally seen or heard, nor only understood; rather, such temporal embodiment acts more holistically upon our sensory and cognitive modes of perception, turning the abstraction of time into a present – that is, immediate, in both the *here* and the *now* – reality" (5). J. K. Barret, likewise, explores the three periods of time in the Renaissance literature. In her work, including Shakespeare's plays,

Barret initially proposes that her analysis "recovers from that literature assorted perspectives on past, present, and future by attending to an artistic generativity and experimentation particularly focused on uncertainty, flexibility, and possibility" (3). Actually, Barret's work scrutinises the intricate relationship among the three periods of time as she investigates the complex connection between the past/the present, the past/the future and the present/the future. Therefore, she reconsiders how texts "look to reconstruct a history of the future [. . .] through their extensive experimentation with literary techniques for capturing, pacing, arranging and reimagining linear time" (Barret 9). This fluid interaction of timeline and the idea of experimentation may be associated with liminality, as well.

Taking the preceding arguments as the premise, the rest of the chapter aims to present an extensive discussion of liminal time in a close reading of *Troilus and Cressida*. The chapter is intended as a further commentary on the studies of time consciousness in Shakespeare's plays considering that a liminal dimension of temporality is offered to comprehend this play. Also, the chapter points to Shakespeare's use of liminal time as a tool for his political criticism in the late Elizabethan period. In this context, Shakespeare's use of the Trojan War, the period of syphilis and the capture of the present moment can be analysed within the framework of liminal time. Thus, it is possible to unfold the play's political innuendos and deal with the playwright's critical apprehension about the current state in England.

One aspect which illustrates liminal temporality in *Troilus and Cressida* can be immediately identified as the play begins. Although Kimbrough claims that *Troilus and Cressida* concerns itself with place rather than time (50), the play is actually time-oriented from the very beginning. The Prologue provides a focal point for observing this idea in the first place in a way that it brings out liminal temporal dynamics. The Prologue initially introduces the scene of Troy and explains the reason for the war between the Trojans and the Greeks: "To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures / The ravished Helen, Menelaus' queen, / With wanton Paris sleeps; and that's the quarrel" (8-10). Yet the play does not aim to narrate the past of this military conflict. The Prologue comes to the conclusion with an emphasis on the course of time in the play: "Beginning in the middle,

starting thence away / To what may be digested in a play. / Like or find fault; do as your pleasures are; / Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war" (28-31). While the Prologue establishes that the play begins in *medias res*, or in other words in the middle of events, time-wise, this resonates a typical beginning of epic. To put it differently, the play starts in the middle of the ongoing war, in a manner of an epic. It has to be recognised that Shakespeare's use of this convention is functional in two respects. From the outset, the play's invocation of this oral tradition pinpoints Shakespeare's strategic use of the Trojan past to allude to his contemporary age. This stems from the "flexible" structure of the epic as Kurt A. Raaflaub explains: "Taking advantage of the flexible composition technique of oral epic, each poet and each generation create a new song and with a new picture of the past with a story that uses old elements but is meaningful to the present" (395). That is to say, Shakespeare makes use of this epic story and opens the Prologue in a similar manner so that he is able to exploit the ancient material as a means of criticism. Therefore, the past is turned into a meaningful subject matter to deal with the present moment in the late Elizabethan period. Granted that the Trojan story "is about the translation of historical moments" (James, *Shakespeare's Troy* 15), Shakespeare also appears to find a suitable distant matter to safely express the change in his society.

More significantly, the narration of the Trojan War by starting in the middle suggests a liminal period. Precisely, the narrated time positions the temporal setting between the past and the future of the war. To borrow from Heather James, this can be called "the interim temporality of *Troilus and Cressida*" (98). There is also another way of defining the play's temporality in relation to liminality. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the temporal setting points to liminal in-betweenness as the Trojan War is presented in the play without its beginning or its end. From this standpoint, the play reveals the liminal dynamics of time beginning from the Prologue.[31]

[31] Interestingly enough, as mentioned earlier, Weimann claims that the prologues in Shakespeare's plays occupy a liminal space. Broadly speaking, the prologue "constituted a somewhat different threshold. On this liminal site, there was space for various gestures, those of welcome, introduction, argument, apology, the assurance of entertainment, service, and the promise, if need be, to make amends" (217). All this reveals that Shakespeare begins to establish the liminal temporality of his play in this liminal site. The Prologue of *Troilus and Cressida* as a midway between the world of the play and the world of the reader/audience situates the liminal atmosphere of the upcoming narration.

While the Prologue positions the war in the middle of the long years of warfare, it is important to clarify the play's timeline. The course of the play is helpful to identify the time of the narration. At a glance, it is Agamemnon who gives the exact date of the war as he talks about the Greek failure, saying that "[. . .] after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand" (I. iii. 12). Undoubtedly, Agamemnon's reference situates the reader/audience in a definite time in the long war. However, it is hard for reader/audience to follow how many days have passed in the play. The play ambiguously enables us to count the passing of four days with the use of temporal words more than fifteen times. As P. A. Daniel charts, the first day begins in Act I; the second day starts in the last scene of Act I and extends to Act II and Act III; the third day takes place in Act IV and ends in the first part of Act V scene ii; and the fourth day covers the rest of the play (183).[32] While the battle only takes place in the last act, the repetitive sound alarum (in stage directions) and the sound of trumpets suggest that time passes in the present moment of the war. On and off stage, these sounds remind the reader/audience of the ongoing war while the love plot of Troilus and Cressida gets complicated. To put the matter simply, the passage of time in the play is rendered in such details which are functionally used to underpin the course of the play's time.

As can be observed, Shakespeare actually sets his play within a short time span, but the depiction of these four days is densely fraught with liminal temporality. The analysis of liminal time can be reconsidered in terms of the Trojan War, the period of syphilis and the emphasis on the present time in Shakespeare's play. Accordingly, the first aspect of liminal time in *Troilus and Cressida* is the Trojan War itself. In essence, the war is primarily related to the concept of liminality because "[t]he state of being 'at war' is an archetypal experience of social liminality" (Carson 67). As stated, liminal time suggests a temporary suspension of the ordinary course of life, and natural disasters and other calamities temporarily interrupt the usual flow of time for a community. Obviously,

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[32] As a matter of fact, the count of the days is one of the problems of the play. Maquerlot, for instance, argues that the warfare happens in three days (122). Ann Thompson and John O. Thompson, likewise, claim that the play after Act I scene iii takes place in three days although they cannot exactly locate the day of the first scenes (13). However, Haynes, similar to Daniel, pinpoints the time of the narration as four days (101). It is beyond doubt that such different views add up to the play's ambiguity in terms of time. However, as the discussion on the three days is not precise, this chapter follows the four-day timeline.

wartime is such a period during which a society undergoes a critical life crisis together. As a result of political unrest, the whole community goes through a transitional period, trying to return to the previous stable order. In van Gennep's words, "the transitional period is sufficiently elaborated to constitute an independent state" (11), and this is exactly the case during wartime. In this liminal period, a general atmosphere of ambiguity, chaos, uncertainty and disorder dominates the society. On the edge of life and death, people experience an in-between state because of the violence and atrocity of war conditions. Moreover, the state of in-betweenness takes on another aspect as liminal potential for both victory and final demise for each side in the military conflict can be observed. The tension of winning or losing the war perpetuates ambiguity and unease. Furthermore, the unsettled conditions force people to transform their identities so that the whole society encounters a process of becoming. Broadly conceived, the play alludes to all aspects of this type of liminality.

Liminal dynamics of the Trojan War in *Troilus and Cressida* shows that the Trojans and the Greeks have suspended the usual course of time for long years, and the prolonged war intensifies the sense of ambiguity and unrest for both sides. For instance, in the last scene of the first act, Greek heroes meet in their council to assess their war conduct. Agamemnon introduces the ambivalent process of warfare when he tries to find out a reason for their failure:

> Nor, princes, is it matter *new* to us
> That we come short of our purpose *so far*
> That *after seven years'* siege yet Troy walls stand,
> Sith every action that hath gone *before*,
> Whereof we have *record,* trial did draw
> Bias and thwart, not answering the aim
> And that unbodied figure of the thought
> That gave't surmised shape. (I. iii. 10-17, emphasis added)

In Agamemnon's speech, the italicised words point out the passage of time during the Trojan War. As Agamemnon states, the duration of the war has gone beyond the Greeks' planned time to win. Emphasising the passing time, the Greek leader illustrates that the war against the Trojans is not a smooth process; on the contrary, the wartime is riddled with ambiguity. While Agamemnon associates the ambivalent process with fortune (I. iii.

23), Nestor later elaborates on the idea of chance (I. iii. 33) to make sense of ambiguity as the period of the war.

In the Greek council scene, it is Ulysses who portrays the atmosphere of chaos and disorder in the liminal period of the war. He claims that in the Greek camp, "[t]he specialty of rule hath been neglected; / And look how many Grecian tents do stand / Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions" (I. iii. 78-80). In his long speech on the idea of degree, he argues that the whole universe is in order as long as degree is maintained. According to him, the sun sustains an ultimate order over other things. Therefore, he refers to a chain of beings which composes a hierarchical order to dominate a stable state. Only in this way, Ulysses believes that the sun "[c]orrects the ill aspects of planets evil / And posts, like the commandment of a king, / Sans check, to good and bad" (I. iii. 92-94). However, the loss of degree collapses everything: "[. . .] O, when degree is shaked, / Which is the ladder to all high designs / The enterprise is sick" (I. iii. 101-103). When degree is not observed, the course of life is turned upside down, and the harmonious order is destroyed. "This chaos," Ulysses says, "when degree is suffocate, / Follows the choking" (I. iii. 125-126). According to Ulysses, the Greeks go through this phase of disorder, and he resembles it to sickness and fever. He believes that the Greeks fail in the war as a result of the loss of degree and the subsequent disorder. Although Ulysses depicts the state of anarchy and chaos to highlight the reason for their failure, the period that he delineates appears to display liminal time's characteristics which will be referred to subsequently.

What is important about Ulysses's speech for many critics is that he illustrates the function of the monarchical rule to sustain order. Johannes Kleinstück explains Ulysses's analogy: "In the heavens, it is the glorious planet Sol who preserves order and degree, in the body politic it is the king" (59). In regard to this correlation, it is possible to recognise that Ulysses throws light on the Elizabethan world order. The Queen as the head of the state is responsible for maintaining order, degree and hierarchy in the society. As Lorraine Helms highlights in reference to E. M. W. Tillyard's acknowledged work, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, this speech is "sometimes celebrated as Shakespeare's most eloquent statement of 'the Elizabethan world picture' of a divinely instituted hierarchy"

(32). However, this celebration is quite misleading because Ulysses does not intend to praise Agamemnon as an ideal ruler. While Ulysses delicately explains the process of this political order, he tries to pinpoint that there is a lack of such an ideal order at the time. As the sun/the king preserves degree, Ulysses actually criticises Agamemnon's failure to govern properly. Because of Agamemnon's ineffectual leadership, the Greeks experience chaos and disorder. Yet Ulysses veils his criticism in his philosophical speech, and even Agamemnon cannot deduce his failure from the former's speech so Ulysses's accusation on Agamemnon remains unpunished. Moreover, it is a clever move for Ulysses to attack directly Achilles who mocks his Greek elders and withdraws from the battlefield (I. iii. 142-184). This strategic approach can be deemed relevant to Shakespeare's subtle criticism of Elizabeth's failure to preserve the social order of her country. In the cauldron of protests, unrest and disorder, the Queen becomes powerless like Agamemnon. Moreover, as in the Greek camp, Elizabeth's court is divided into factions. Ulysses's further plan to stir up rivalry between Achilles and Ajax recalls the Queen's "divide and rule" policy (Hammer, "Patronage" 77).

To further argue, the lack of degree can be related to the liminal time in relation to warfare. In the play, the beginning point for Shakespeare's analogy between the Greek and the Elizabethan governments is the time of disorder. As a matter of fact, the chaotic atmosphere and the lack of order are both a part of the wartime tinged with liminal temporality. As the duration of the Trojan War is prolonged, the sense of ambiguity pervades all. This period of uncertainty makes one question the authority figures who lack power to control the progress of the war. As in the case of Achilles, some resist the dominant ideology through their withdrawal from the war. Neil Powell argues that Achilles "is fed up with his superiors – Agamemnon, who is incompetent, and Nestor, who is senile, who are sustained only by their status in Ulysses' hierarchical view of things – and he is not going to play their game any longer" (18). While his love for Trojan Polyxena is another motivation for this decision, Achilles's disruption of order is only a natural consequence of the liminal wartime. As the period of the war is extended, uncertainty is perpetuated which inevitably brings out disorder in the society. Thus, liminal temporality of the war provides Shakespeare with a means to allude to Elizabeth's failure to preserve order.

In the council of the Trojans, the play dwells on another liminal moment loaded with a sense of in-betweenness and ambiguity. When the Trojan king, Priam, and his sons discuss their war strategy, Priam's opening speech delivers the news from the Greek side:

> After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,
> Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:
> 'Deliver Helen, and all damage else –
> As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,
> Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed
> In hot digestion of this cormorant war –
> Shall be struck off.' [. . .] (II. ii. 1-7)

Ostensibly, Priam draws attention to the passing of time during the war at the beginning of his speech. It appears that Priam and Nestor both regard this war as a loss of time in addition to many other things. The Greeks offer an agreement of peace on the condition that the Trojans send Helen back to her husband Menelaus. This news puts the Trojans in a dispute over their final decision about the war. Thus, the Trojans experience an in-between moment, oscillating between war and peace. They are on the brink of ending the war. More tellingly, both sides at war already experience this in-betweenness as they "live in an ambiguous situation where there is neither peace nor war. [. . .] [C]ould it be the Trojans' decision to give back Helen? Or, on the Greek side, Achilles' decision to leave his tent and take up arms again [. . .]?" (Maquerlot 123-124). As the battle scene does not take place until the last act, the play definitely presents the wartime on the ambiguous threshold of peace and more violence. When Hector and Troilus visit the Greek camp as the guests of the Greeks in Act IV, Achilles's address to his enemy alludes to such an in-between moment in the war as follows: "Tomorrow do I meet thee, fell as death; / Tonight all friends" (IV. v. 268-269). In the course of the war, the enemies go through liminal moments of in-betweenness and ambiguity because the experience of peace and atrocity goes hand in hand. The Trojan council scene, likewise, embodies such a liminal moment of ambiguity. The growing conflict among Priam's sons – Hector on the side of peace in contrast to Troilus and Paris in support of the ongoing war – reveals the uncertainty of wartime, making the opposite parties feel more unsettled.

When Priam asks Hector's opinion about Nestor's offer, the members of the council take different attitudes. In the beginning, Hector is willing to end the war. "Let Helen go" (II. ii. 17) is Hector's immediate response because he claims that "she is not worth what she

doth cost" (II. ii. 51). Although Helen does not belong to them, the Trojans, Hector asserts, sacrifice their lives to keep her. Helen's presence costs the death of many Trojans and still drives them to the edge of life and death. Therefore, the ambiguous time and the unknown future of warfare initially encourage Hector to end the war by sending Helen back. Conversely, Troilus supports the continuation of the war in his reference to past events, and their motivation at the beginning of the war:

> [. . .] It was thought meet
> Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks.
> Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;
> The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce,
> And did him service; he touched the ports desired;
> And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive
> He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness
> Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning. (II. ii. 72-79)

Troilus believes that they once decided to take Helen as the Greeks kept Priam's sister so the war was an act of revenge to compensate their loss. While the past event triggers their future plan, Troilus suggests that they should not change their mind now although time has passed since their first decision. Paris also supports Troilus's argument, stating that they all reached a consensus on the matter of Helen so he took necessary action with their support in the past: "But I attest the gods, your full consent / Gave wings to my propension, and cut off / All fears attending on so dire a project. / For what, alas, can these my single arms?" (II. ii. 132-135). Moreover, Troilus is hopeful about their future as he declares that their "present courage may beat down our [their] foes / And fame in time to come canonize us [them]" (II. ii. 201-202). As can be observed, Troilus and Paris reject a change of mind in time because of their endeavours in the past. The violent war of the present moment must be sustained to determine their victorious future. Yet the ambiguous course of wartime forces Hector to alter their current situation by resolving the unknown future. That is to say, the indeterminate war betwixt bloodshed and peace leads the Trojans to contemplate their future in different ways.

It is interesting to note that the opposite views on Helen's return evolve into a philosophical debate about the concepts of worth and honour. While the debate changes Hector's decision to give up Helen, it also calls attention to the changing dynamics of value in the new market economy of Shakespeare's time. It is worth focusing on this part

of the economic scene as it shows the change in the values of the society following the rise of capitalism. The changing economic structure impacted the concept of honour already privileged in heroic and chivalric cultures. After Hector proposes to send Helen back, Troilus begins to question his brother's understanding of value. Hector offers a holistic view of value with an emphasis on intrinsic worth: "But value dwells not in particular will; / It holds his estimate and dignity / As well wherein 'tis precious of itself / As in the prizer" (II. ii. 53-56). Conversely, Troilus opposes the idea of the object's internal value. He reminds Hector of their manhood and honour and urges that they keep Helen: "We turn not back the silks upon the merchant / When we have soiled them; nor the remainder viands / We do not throw in unrespective sieve / Because we now are full" (II. ii. 69-72). Troilus's vocabulary is tinged with trade images. In his defence of the Trojan honour, Troilus first objectifies Helen as their symbol of honour, and, then, paradoxically damages her image by resembling her to sullied silks in his language of commerce. In this discussion, he reconsiders the war and its cause in a commerce-oriented mindset. Their honour, accordingly, is at stake in the trade market, and they have to fight for Helen. She is worth the struggle because "she is a pearl, / Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships / And turned crowned kings to merchants" (II. ii. 81-83). Troilus's view is at odds with Hector's perspective considering that the desirability of the object in the market determines what Troilus defines as worthy. Therefore, Helen's value is merely external, appraised by her purchaser. In other words, it is the market value that makes Helen worthy of the Trojan sacrifice. Paris also echoes Troilus's commercial discourse and positions the Trojan honour in a similar fashion. For Paris, it is "honourable keeping her [Helen]" (II. ii. 149); this possession confers their honour: "What treason were it to the ransacked queen, / Disgrace to your great worths, and shame to me, / Now to deliver her possession up / On terms of base compulsion!" (II. ii. 150-153). Later, Troilus concludes that Helen "is a theme of honour and renown" (II. ii. 199). Although Hector claims that this argument does not comply with moral laws, he is intent on keeping Helen "[u]pon our [their] joint and several dignities" (II. ii. 193). Notwithstanding Troilus and Paris's wrong principles, Hector feels an urge to maintain a sense of collective honour.

What remains to be seen is that Troilus's commercial discourse puts a new spin on the concept of honour, and, hence, the codes of chivalry. Granted that the Trojan collective

honour takes hold on the possession of Helen, the legendary heroes are actually in a commercial struggle with the Greeks. The military conflict is simply a commercial rivalry to possess the most desirable object on the trade market. In effect, the language of trade employed here alludes to the mercantile attitude of the Elizabethans at the turn of the century. In this regard, Shakespeare attempts to emphasise transitional temporality at that time. Bearing this in mind, Shakespeare's use of the Trojan story is not an arbitrary choice. As Douglas Bruster explains, "[a]lready possessing celebrated mythological/historical links to London, the city of Troy provided an especially attractive model which dramatists could use to describe and anticipate the social implications of a commercial culture" (xii). That is to say, Shakespeare's play functionally underpins the commercial undertone of the ancient military conflict in a way that the playwright calls into question the contemporary capitalist spirit. Read in this way, the culture of commerce redefines the chivalric idealism of honour in the play. The precept of honour in feudalism thrives on the struggle for a worthy cause and the idea of justice. However, the theme of honour in *Troilus and Cressida* is hedged with trade metaphors. Although the Elizabethans tend to enliven chivalric culture through various rewritings of the Trojan War as part of nationalistic rhetoric, Shakespeare attacks this illusory idealism. A. M. Potter states that "the interpretation of the world inherited from the past had always been illusion, something like a vast cultural and political confidence trick foisted upon Englishmen for centuries, with no basis in reality whatsoever" ("Troilus" 26). Thus, the play works with trade imagery and deconstructs the principle of honour as a matter of commercial exchange. In contrast to his source materials and even the works of his contemporaries, Shakespeare demystifies the idealised theme of honour through its entanglement with the prevailing commercial culture. Heather James points out that this play "reflects a developing capitalist society which promoted social mobility and generated strong tensions among rivals for economic and cultural capital" (113). On this basis, the play highlights the shifting values of the society based on commercial culture. It may be concluded that this transitional moment is a way to trace the play's liminal temporality.

It seems very probable that the ambiguity of the temporal setting helps to uncover a criticism of the Elizabethan policies on commerce and the conduct of war in the play.

With the emergence of capitalism which can be regarded as an economic transitional period, the war takes place in a more ambivalent background. The turning point in relation to the economy plays on a different aspect of this liminal period as it offers a process of change for the Elizabethan society. On the whole, the temporal ambiguity acts as a safe ground to avoid any attack on the play for its political commentary. Put bluntly, the Trojan War can be regarded as a struggle to achieve commercial supremacy because it was the possession of Helen that broke out the war. As Troilus calls Helen a pearl, the play symbolically narrates a strife in the international arena for commercial success. This amounts to saying that Shakespeare does not depict a glorious mythical war as the play elucidates the cruel realities of war. In addition, it is possible to speculate that the Trojan War mirrors the ongoing war between England and Spain at that time. In point of fact, the Elizabethan interest in their Trojan origin and the commemoration of London as new Troy invite this correlation. In the course of the play, the military conflict pinpoints the destruction of the current war and the meaningless ambition of people in a subtle way. In a more precise sense, the play "describes the heady spirit of ambition in England in the decade following the Armada" (Bruster 110). Although the threat of a Spanish invasion terrorised the English throughout Elizabeth's reign, England never gave up their political ambition and desire to dominate more. The Trojan council scene picks up on this attitude considering that the Trojans refuse to negotiate peace with the Greeks. What lies behind this decision is the material ambition of the Trojans. Although Hector is idealised as the epitome of chivalric conduct in Shakespeare's sources, he is degraded for his mercenary values in *Troilus and Cressida*. When Hector chases a Greek warrior to take his "goodly armour" (V. ix. 2), he epitomises the material greed of the Trojans, leading them to a fall. This possession not only violates chivalric ideals in return for material gain but also symbolically embodies a destructive ambition at the cost of his life and Troy's fall. Therefore, the play displays the Trojans "driven by political and economic hunger to supersede, control, be recognized as a powerful, single essence" (James, *Shakespeare's Troy* 89). In this regard, using the Trojan War as a mirror for history, the play offers a critique of the English political strategies and greed for material wealth.

Although the commercial ambition of England finds a counterpart in Troy, Kott associates the Trojans with the Spanish and the Greeks with the English (63). Considering Kott's approach to the two parties in the war, it can be suggested that the Trojans and the

Greeks are not different from each other as in the case of the English and the Spanish. To a certain extent, both sides in the play are in the business of trade, and Diomedes's comment on Paris and Menelaus highlights their similarity. When Paris asks his opinion about who "merits fair Helen most" (IV. i. 55), Diomedes declares that their war over her is meaningless, and each party is the same: "Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more, / But he as he" (IV. i. 67-68). With respect to Shakespeare's critical attitude, the sameness of the enemies is quite functional. Despite certain nuances in their attitudes, the Trojans and the Greeks agree to continue a futile war for the sake of Helen.

Thus, while the play instances the contemporary military struggle between England and Spain, it interprets the war as a corrupt action characterised by the capitalistic endeavour of the age. Thus, the theme of corruption is functionally used to suggest that both sides at war are the same. In the play, Thersites is the spokesperson for the corruption when he insistently repeats that war is merely lechery: "Lechery, lechery, still wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion" (V. ii. 201-202). The play "implicitly condemns the reduction of life to the pursuit of appetitive satisfaction because it is a reduction; it is life depressed to a level at which gluttony and lechery become its dominant qualities and man is devoted to the pursuit of the demands of his appetites and the means to satisfy them" (Southall 231). More specifically, *Troilus and Cressida* undermines the celebrated history of the Trojan War for the Elizabethans. Thus, the play presents the war as a source of disillusionment and meaninglessness. Whether the Trojans or the Greeks represent the English contemporaries, war is still observed to be a futile action devoid of a noble cause. This recognition renders the play "a sneering political pamphlet" (Kott 63) as it approaches the matter of war as a corrupt and hollow commitment.

Moreover, with the Trojan War, liminal time manifests itself as a juncture when a process of becoming takes place. Liminal time cannot be separated from the characters' experience since "the transitional time is [. . .] a testing of one's capacity to live in time" (Berry 154). Before the fall of Troy, the transitional moment of the war forces the characters to confront change in a way that it transforms them. Timothy Carson stresses the process of becoming for the warriors during the war:

> For the warrior class [. . .], war is a rite of passage and warriors, especially in preindustrial traditional societies, were carefully prepared and initiated into their identity as a valued part of the tribe. As they separated from the structure of pre-war into anti-structure of war, they became liminal persons. As such their identities became charmed and even dangerous. (67)

In *Troilus and Cressida,* anti-structure entails transitional temporality and uncovers the rites of passage of the characters who go through a change during the war. This is to say that the liminal trait of time is manifested through a transitional period, and this period changes the characters. Thus, the process of becoming for the characters is related to liminal temporality. However, the play does not idealise this process since all warriors become a part of the corruption when they transform.

The discussion on the play's temporal liminality can be further observed in the characters' process of becoming. Specifically, the warriors' and the lovers' experience can be henceforth analysed. To begin with the main characters of the war plot, Hector's change can be reconsidered in relation to the transition during the Trojan War. The play shows the course of his transformation from the first meeting of the Trojan council. Although he first proposes to end the war, he finally declares that he has sent the news to challenge the Greeks in a single duel: "I was advertised their great general slept, / Whilst emulation in the army crept. / This, I presume, will wake him" (II. ii. 211-213). In this scene, he appears to take this action as a sign of his dedication to his nation. Up to this point, he still fits into the ideal image constructed by the Elizabethans. In Shakespeare's time, Hector "was the true hero of the *Iliad*. He was magnanimous, wise, and manly – a true knight, one of the Nine Worthies, in spite of his being allied with a doomed people. Chivalry during the Middle Ages was a personal matter, a moral concern, and Hector's reputation could flourish in spite of Trojan folly" (Kimbrough 112). The play shows that the war metamorphoses such an ideal figure of chivalry. At the end of his passage, Hector does not grow into a mature and wise warrior. On the contrary, the wartime puts him in a midway between his old chivalric self and his new status as a tradesman. In effect, the Hector that refuses to fight against Ajax because of their blood tie (IV. v. 120-139) and the Hector that offers to stop fighting when Achilles is tired (V. vi. 15-20) evidently portray chivalric attitudes. Although the principles of knighthood and service are tied to the chivalric codes, Hector denounces them by highly regarding his own honour and

interest than that of the Trojans. Even though he challenges the Greeks in the name of his mistress like the knights of medieval romances, he later denies his service to his lady. In Act V, scene iii, when Andromache recounts her prophetic dream about Hector's battle on the last day of the play, her husband does not listen to her warnings. He also declines King Priam's order to leave the battlefield and ignores his sister Cassandra's prophecy about their fall.

It turns out that Hector serves his own interests rather than Troy's future, and, hence, changes in line with the dynamics of the new age. He believes that his withdrawal from the battle will ruin his own honour: "Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate" (V. iii. 26). At that instant, Hector wavers between the past idealism and the new ideals of the age because his conceptualisation of honour is merely about his value on the war market. Concerning himself about his appearance in the battle, Hector attempts to prove his external value when he displays his military skills. His liminal self comes to the fore when he first allows Achilles to quit fighting, and, then, he chases a soldier to obtain his armour. In the fast pace of the last scenes, it can be recognised that Hector concurrently seems to maintain a chivalric attitude and his interest in material gain. Matthew A. Greenfield notes that "[t]he chivalric Hector views the accumulation of honor in economic terms, but the honor he covets entails a disdain for actual material wealth" and claims that the Hector in the play "operates as a privateer, a John Hawkins or a Francis Drake rather than a Philip Sidney" (197-198). In reference to the Elizabethan worldview, the play works on Hector's image as his emblematic chivalry is contaminated by greed and materialism. As the war resonates with the capitalistic concerns of the Elizabethans, Hector stands in between the old and new value systems. Therefore, the changing dynamics of the war leads Hector to the threshold of the two opposite worldviews, and this sense of in-betweenness defines his liminality.

During the war, Achilles also goes through a transitional stage and develops a liminal identity. Precisely, he exploits the anti-structure of the wartime from the beginning of the play to its ending. The atmosphere of disorder and uncertainty allows him to quit fighting temporarily, resulting in his experiencing an interim period until he returns to the battlefield. In other words, he creates his own liminal temporality during his absence from

the war, and his portrait in this liminal period can be explored here. In this period, Achilles is observed to experience different in-between roles in the process of becoming, and his indeterminacy in his love affairs defines his liminality. At the outset, the reader/audience observes that Achilles transforms his identity as a warrior by withdrawing from the battle. For Ulysses, Achilles turns his tent into a playhouse with Patroclus, and they spend time by mimicking the Greek leaders and mocking them. Ulysses explains how they spend time in the tent as follows:

> The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
> The sinew and the forehand of our host,
> Having his ear full of his airy fame,
> Grows dainty of his worth and in his tent
> Lies mocking our designs. With him Patroclus,
> Upon a lazy bed, the livelong day
> Breaks scurrile jests,
> And with ridiculous and awkward action –
> Which, slanderer, he imitation calls –
> He pageants us. (I. iii. 142-151)

Ulysses complains that Achilles wastes his time. Instead of fighting on the battlefield, he devotes his time to the act of imitation "like a strutting player" (I. iii. 153). Moreover, the warrior appears to extend his role beyond a player since he also acts as a director. It is Achilles who gives Patroclus directions to deliver a brilliant performance. Achilles, for instance, "laughs out a loud applause, / Cries 'Excellent! 'Tis Agamemnon just. / Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard, / As he being dressed to some oration'" (I. iii. 163-166). Therefore, Achilles mocks Greek patriotism and disrespectfully scorns the legendary leaders in his tent, which can also be regarded as an alternative and liminal site of transgression and subversion. As his tent/playhouse enables him to transgress the hierarchical boundaries, he "takes precisely those most underlined aspects of authorized 'identity' and destabilizes them" (Charnes 430) in a liminal place. Achilles, thus, subverts his identity as a warrior when he temporarily withdraws from the war. He takes on different roles in his playhouse during the interim until he returns to the war.

To further argue, the ambiguity in Achilles's love affair defines his liminal position, too. Achilles is initially condemned for his pride because the Greeks believe that his proud nature prevents him from fighting in the war (I. iii. 368-381). In order to tame his pride, Ulysses and Nestor agree to send Ajax to fight against Hector: "Our project's life this

shape of sense assumes: / Ajax employed plucks down Achilles' plumes" (I. iii. 386-387). While Ulysses uses Ajax in this challenge to avoid any significant loss for themselves, he tries to encourage Achilles to reclaim his military position. Therefore, Ulysses voices the real reason for his withdrawal: "'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love / With one of Priam's daughters?" (III. iii. 194-195). Although Achilles assumes that his love for Polyxena is a secret affair, Ulysses unfolds his relationship and gambles on the future of his love: "When Fame shall in our islands sound her trump / And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing: / 'Great Hector's sister did Achilles win, / But our great Ajax bravely beat down him'" (III. iii. 212-215). Undoubtedly, Ulysses exploits this affair to stir up rivalry, but this revelation indicates the ambiguities in Achilles's character. After revealing the truth, Ulysses leaves Achilles and Patroclus alone, and Patroclus blames himself:

> To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you.
> A woman impudent and mannish grown
> Is not more loathed than an effeminate man
> In time of action. I stand condemned for this;
> They think my little stomach to the war,
> And your great love to me, restrains you thus. (III. iii. 218-223)

Subsequent to Ulysses's claim, Patroclus's lines increase the ambiguity because he pinpoints Achilles's love for himself rather than Polyxena. Although Patroclus intends to encourage Achilles to return to the war in these lines, he suggestively alludes to the hero as "an effeminate man." Therefore, while emphasising Achilles's love for himself, Patroclus attributes gender fluidity, and, hence, a liminal identity to Achilles. Likewise, Achilles's in-betweenness in terms of his love affairs comes to the fore with Thersites's reference to Patroclus as "Achilles' male varlet" and "his masculine whore," implying a homosexual affair between Achilles and Patroclus as well (V. i. 15, 17). In both cases, Achilles chooses to leave the war for the sake of his love. In the midst of the warfare, he tries to live in another realm.

Additionally, it is possible to discuss Achilles's liminality in terms of his in-betweenness when his love affairs with Polyxena and Patroclus are considered. Concentrating on Achilles's love affairs, Greenfield recognises that Shakespeare borrows from the homosexual Achilles of the *Iliad* and the Achilles in love with Polyxena from the

medieval romance tradition: "While the first Achilles abstains from battle out of pride, in order to highlight his pre-eminence among the Greeks, the second honors an oath to his lover and her mother, attempting to protect a space which intimacy can unfold, a space sealed off from the public struggle for reputation" (192). While the portraits of Achilles, drawn from the sources of the two different eras, may allude to his inconstancy, his love affairs draw further attention to his liminal in-betweenness. At the beginning of the last act, Achilles first receives a letter from Queen Hecuba, sending a token from Polyxena and reminding him of his promise (V. i. 38-45). On the other hand, when Hector kills Patroclus towards the end of the play, Achilles later returns to the battle to take revenge in support of his followers, the Myrmidons (V. v. 30-35). Although he retreats for Polyxena, he returns for Patroclus. In this regard, heterosexual desire and homosexual desire both motivate Achilles during the war through which he displays two different versions of himself. He is poised between the two sexualities and embraces the two identities. Heather James calls Achilles "an indeterminate creature" (104) as the character oscillates between his love for Polyxena and his love for Patroclus. It is possible to claim that Achilles renders a liminal portrait since he ambiguously commits himself to both sexes.

Another issue regarding Achilles's liminality is his process of becoming in the play. During the interim period, Achilles transgresses the established boundaries in his political and private relationships. The interim operates as a period of change for him since he undergoes a process of becoming. In the beginning, Achilles grows weary of the war, and the Greek patriotism does not appeal to him. He was once worthy of praise for his victories in the name of the Greeks. However, the play makes it clear that Achilles fights against the Trojans only when he wants to take revenge for the death of Patroclus. When he reappears in the battlefield, he emerges as an avenger. Taking into consideration the fact that Achilles is after personal revenge now, there is little doubt that he has changed at the end of the war. While his seeking revenge detaches the play from the epic and transforms it into a revenge play (James, *Shakespeare's Troy* 95), Achilles himself turns into a brutal and revengeful Machiavellian figure. Although Hector shows chivalric courtesy to Achilles, the latter finds Hector unarmed and exploits his vulnerability. Despite Hector's warning, Achilles orders his Myrmidons to attack and kill his enemy:

"Strike, fellows, strike! This is the man I seek" (V. ix. 10). Then, he drags Hector behind his horse towards the Trojan borders. This murder scene displays "Achilles' final transition from the role of mythic hero, in which he had entered the action, to that of doomed coward" (Lake 560). As can be observed, Achilles avoids fighting against Hector in a fair combat so he acts cowardly in the final scene. Moreover, he acts as if it was his own victory: "On, Myrmidons, and cry you all amain, / 'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain'" (V. ix. 13-14). Hector's fall stems from his material greed whereas Achilles's butchery turns out to be his appetite for reputation. As a legendary warrior, Achilles is supposed to attack Hector in a single combat and build his reputation in a fair fight for an honourable purpose. Yet he seeks fame upon a pretension of victory so he is portrayed "as a man of any pretensions to honour in battle" (Bevington, "Introduction" 30). That is to say, Achilles's military honour is based on the superficiality of fame and reputation. In this way, he experiences a process of becoming as he detaches himself from the ideal portrait of a warrior. He finally transforms into a figure who concerns himself with his public appearance and pursues a personal interest even at the moment when he claims to take the revenge of Patroclus.

When it comes to analyse the liminal experience in the love plot during the Trojan War, it is first necessary to deal with Troilus and Cressida's liminal identities. To begin with Troilus's liminality, it becomes clear that the young Trojan, like Achilles and other warriors, experiences a process of change throughout the play. First, the course of the war displays its transitional power on Troilus. As with the love plot, this character oscillates between his private desire and his public duty during the fluctuating moments of the Trojan War. In the play, his transition is marked by his change from a lover to a revengeful warrior. What is striking about his transformation is that the prevailing paradigm shift entails his change. More tellingly, the transitional period and its changing values have an impact on Troilus's perception of love and Cressida. The medieval love story is reproduced by Shakespeare, entangling the threads of the plot in the early modern period. Troilus's love story takes a twist with contemporary references to Petrarchan idealism and commercial interests. While the transitional period frames Troilus's love in its new meanings, the couple is destined to be overwhelmed by the realities of the war. Immediately after Cressida is sent to the Greek camp, Troilus observes that she now

belongs to Diomedes, and the loss of his possession enrages the lover. The sense of betrayal prompts Troilus to take revenge by defeating Diomedes in the battle. Seen in this light, Troilus in the two plots undergoes a period of change in line with the transitional values of Shakespeare's age. Within four days, the protagonist of medieval romances grows into a merchant, renounces his love and seeks revenge.

It is possible to analyse the process of Troilus's day by day change. On the first day, the opening scene of the play introduces Troilus as a desperate lover. He fights a war within himself rather than the war outside: "Why I war without the walls of Troy, / That find such cruel battle here within? / Each Trojan that is master of his heart, / Let him to field; Troilus, alas, hath none" (I. i. 2-5). He is constantly thinking about Cressida, and he tells Pandarus that "I am [he is] mad / In Cressid's love" (I. i. 48-49). As the beginning of the play delves into Troilus's love for Cressida, this scene lays bare that Shakespeare's play "is not epic, but romance, and Troilus is no hero, but a pining lover. The palace wall marks a boundary between ancient epic and medieval romance, between what is known from Homer and what is inherited from Boccaccio and Chaucer and Caxton" (Shohet 106). While Hector's portrait resonates with the knightly codes of chivalry, Troilus comes to be seen as a lover from medieval romances. In other words, his love can be reconsidered in line with courtly love conventions. Troilus, accordingly, acts as a courtly lover in his romantic courtship. His rhetoric of love reminds us of a courtly lover's conventional expression of his desire to find truth in love: "Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can speak truest not truer than Troilus" (III. ii. 92-94). He is observed to keep this attitude until the end of the second day when the lovers unite in Pandarus's house and spend the night together.

Yet it has to be recognised that the courtly love tradition employed by Shakespeare heralds an encounter with Renaissance Petrarchism. Larry R. Clarke claims that the conventions of courtly love corroborate a new version in the Petrarchan love tradition which appears in the Elizabethan sonnets (211). The play, likewise, locates Troilus's love between the two concepts of love, signifying a transitional stage in Shakespeare's time. Actually, Troilus's Petrarchism can be observed when he depicts his love and idealises Cressida. As can be observed in Troilus's opening speech above, he defines his love as

a state of war. He constantly returns to this image when he tries to express his feelings until the end of the second day. While waiting for Pandarus to bring Cressida, Troilus voices his complex feelings in his soliloquy: “I fear it much; and I do fear besides / That I shall lose distinction in my joys, / As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps / The enemy flying” (III. ii. 24-27). When he meets her, he again refers to their love as a kind of war: “O virtuous fight / When right with right wars who shall be most right” (III. ii. 166-167). As Marry Ellen Rickey recognises, Troilus employs a common Petrarchan conceit since he depicts his love as a war (4). His association of love with war is probably the reason why he fervently supports the idea to continue the Trojan War in the Trojan council scene. Moreover, his idealisation of Cressida aligns him with the Petrarchan convention:

> [. . .] Thou answer’st ‘She is fair’,
> Pour’st in the open ulcer of my heart
> Her eyes, her hair, her check, her gait, her voice;
> Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,
> In whose comparison all whites are ink
> Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure
> The cygnet’s down is harsh, and spirit of sense
> Har as the palm of ploughman. (I. i. 49-56)

As noted, Troilus’s hyperbolic expressions aim to praise the ideal beauty of the beloved and prove her irresistible power over the desperate lover. Therefore, he suffers from the pains of love which make him weak: “But I am weaker than a woman’s tear, / Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance, / Less valiant than the virgin in the night, / And skilless as unpractised infancy” (I. i. 9-12). As in the Petrarchan convention, Troilus turns Cressida into an abstract ideal and undergoes the pain of his unrequited love for a while.

Although Troilus is rendered as a desperate lover on the first day, the play goes beyond the limitations of courtly and Renaissance traditions of love. Eventually, Troilus’s approach to Cressida unfolds his self-interest rather than an ideal devotion to the beloved. Rajeev S. Patke articulates that Troilus’s hyperbolic praise is

> a means to the end of self-esteem. For Troilus to value his beloved is to value his valuing of her as it gives value to himself his own eyes. Loving, for Troilus, is a curiously self-centred and self-ministrating activity. In a startlingly literal way he loves her for his own sake, because the activity of loving contributes to his sense of selfhood and identity. (8)

It is possible that Troilus is self-centred in his perception of Cressida. Devoid of genuine devotion, he loves Cressida as long as she serves as a mirror to his own ideal image. This sets up a paradox when his love is reconsidered either in courtly love or Petrarchan love conventions. Indeed, the play shows the shallowness of Troilus's love. Therefore, the concept of love is problematised in the play as it paves the way to disillusionment.

As a matter of fact, the passage of time influences the love plot in an intricate way. This can be first evidenced in the transition in Shakespeare's age. Broadly speaking, the playwright reconstructs the ancient love story through the lenses of the seventeenth century. While he already situates the plot between the medieval and Renaissance dynamics of love, he further lays out the mercantile spirit at the heart of the love story. This amounts to saying that Shakespeare updates the love affair as times have changed for his reader/audience in the seventeenth century. The economic shift at the time impinges on this story of love. In this new culture, love is a part of consumption and commerce. When Pandarus and Troilus describe the young lover's waiting for Cressida in comparison to the process of baking a cake (I. i. 14-24), the food image is not only used as a "physical manifestation[. . .] of time" (Wagner 74) but also as an association of love with consumption. Later on, it becomes clear that Troilus grows into a merchant in his bargain with Pandarus over Cressida. That is to say, Troilus as a merchant not only appears in the war plot but also in the love plot. Therefore, Cressida, like Helen, is called a pearl by Troilus. "Her bed is India," Troilus declares, "there she lies, a pearl" (I. i. 96). Then, he resembles himself to a merchant sailing to his pearl: "Between our Ilium and where she resides, / Let it be called the wild and wand'ring flood, / Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar / Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark" (I. i. 97-100). These lines illustrate that Pandarus is just a means like a sail to help the merchant reach his treasure. From the first day to the third day in the war, Troilus maintains this discourse and refers to the images of trade. In his portrait, the play refers to "the flood of merchant adventurers, who, like Troilus, were seeking their own pearls in India and the Americas [. . .] throughout the decade" (Bruster 117). That is to say, the activities related to trade have changed the course of life, and Shakespeare puts forward the desire to possess and

gain material achievement in the love story. In this age, even the meaning of love has been lost at the cost of commercial ambition.

In the play, while Troilus is the merchant, Pandarus also acts as a go-between, trying hard to sell his commodity. When the uncle finally brings the lovers together, he announces that "a bargain made" (III. ii. 192). However, when the commodity is sent back to the market, Troilus realises that he made a bad bargain. Upon her father Calchas's demand, Cressida is exchanged for Antenor in the Greek camp so Troilus loses his pearl. However, he knows the rules of trade and consumption so he does not reject this exchange; he only resents his loss: "How my achievements mock me!" (IV. ii. 71). After he possesses the object of his desire and consumes it, Cressida has to leave Troy, and he explains their separation: "We two, that with so many thousand sighs / Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves / With the rude brevity and discharge of one" (IV. iv. 38-40). Obviously, Troilus's explanation unmasks his mercantile attitude towards love and Cressida. As the lover himself regards Cressida as a commodity, he essentially attaches on her an exchange value so Cressida, "a passive object [,] within the control and ownership of men, [is] available for their exchanges and transactions in a wholly unproblematized way" (Spear 421). In this age, Troilus grants that love is diminished to a market item, and Cressida to be consumed, sold and bought in trade exchanges. Therefore, Troilus's understanding of love represents the paradigm shift because he cannot stand for the ideals of courtly love and Petrarchism in this period of change in the late Elizabethan age.

Apparently, Shakespeare exploits "the materials for a merciless satire of the high-flown ideal of love" in Troilus's portrait (Boas 373). The appetite for capitalism corrupts love in a way that the legendary love story is satirised. More than this, however, the mercantile approach indicates that time passes quickly in the trade market which transforms the dealers at a fast pace. At the end of the third day, when Troilus visits the Greek camp, he wants to see Cressida. Ulysses leads him to her tent where Troilus witnesses her dialogue with Diomedes. As Cressida gives Troilus's love token, his sleeve, to Diomedes, he realises that she does not belong to him anymore. Now, Troilus is enraged at the total loss of his possession and reflects his anger to Diomedes: "That sleeve is mine that he'll bear in his helm. / Were it a casque composed by Vulcan's skill, / My sword should bite it"

(V. ii. 176-178). Although Troilus seems to be a lover until the second day, he turns into a revengeful warrior towards the fourth day. He clearly states his desire to avenge himself on the battlefield when he tells Hector that "[t]he venomed vengeance ride upon our swords, / Spur them to ruthful work, rein them from ruth" (V. iii. 47-48). Therefore, he first denounces himself as a lover. Although Pandarus brings Cressida's letter to him, Troilus voices the change in himself. Tearing the letter, he says: "Go, wind, to wind! There turn and change together" (V. iii. 109). Then, he comes to be seen as a warrior, chasing Diomedes in the battlefield. The intermittent fight between Troilus and Diomedes represents the former's struggle to take revenge. Although the war does not come to an end, the revengeful warrior is left on the verge of loss since Diomedes takes his horse, and Hector is slain by the Greeks. Hence, during the war, Troilus is observed to traverse from a lover to a merchant and finally to a revengeful warrior in the end.

Furthermore, the love plot highlights liminal temporality when the passage of time is reconsidered from Cressida's perspective. In fact, Cressida is the only character who utters her rite of passage during the Trojan War. After Calchas betrays the Trojans and changes his side in the war, she is left alone in Troy. When the news of her exchange is announced, Cressida clarifies that she has already gone through a rite of passage in the absence of her father. She clearly states that she does not want to return to Calchas as she is not a daughter to him any more: "I will not, uncle. I have forgot my father" (IV. ii. 97). Instead, she tries to establish her identity as Troilus's lover: "I know no touch of consanguinity; / No kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me / As the sweet Troilus" (IV. ii. 98-100). By constructing her identity as a lover, she goes through a process of becoming and transgresses her familial role as a daughter during her affair. She is aware of the fact that her leaving will initiate a rite of separation, leading her onto another role: "O you gods divine, / Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood / If ever she leave Troilus!" (IV. ii. 100-102). Her remarks are highly significant to grasp her liminality since the conditions of the war make her waver in different shades of womanhood. The wartime does not allow her to firmly build her identity. Simon Palfrey articulates that Cressida "hovers in between various forms of definition and possession. Cressida is neither daughter nor orphan, wife nor widow, virgin nor courtesan" (313). Beyond doubt, she has a liminal identity as she oscillates between different female roles. Therefore, she

comes to the fore as a character who deeply understands the transitional agency of the war since she goes through various layers of liminality in this liminal period.

To a certain extent, Cressida's transition is marked by her father before the play begins. In the course of the play, Calchas again forces her to experience a transitional stage. This time, transition for Cressida takes place through the act of exchange which is itself a liminal action. Without her consent, male figures shape her destiny by turning her into an object of exchange. Considering the war as "sexual and political, honour economy," Lake argues that "women are the central mediums of exchange and token of value [. . .] Cressida is valued only as a means to get back Antenor" (548). As a male possession, Cressida is diminished to an item passed on from hand to hand. From Pandarus to Troilus, Troilus to Calchas and Calchas to Diomedes, she becomes the victim of the war in the world of masculine strife.[33] While her exchange can be regarded as a rite of separation, it turns out to be a liminal action and a liminal process. As Cressida comes to the threshold as her exchange takes place at the port, a liminal zone (IV. iv. 110), she transgresses the Trojan borders in this threshold place and goes to the Greek side. After the liminal act of transgression, she experiences an in-between state, too. As Calchas initiates her exchange, he appears to make Cressida experience liminality by causing a "crisis in his daughter, splitting her into a Trojan self, Troilus's lover, and a Greek self, which Troilus calls 'Diomed's Cressida'" (Greenfield 193). During the rest of the war, she has to remain in this limbo. Troilus unconsciously proclaims her liminal in-betweenness when he watches her with Diomedes: "This is and is not Cressid" (V. ii. 153). Cressida herself acknowledges her ambivalence and indicates that she has to change after her exchange.

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[33]Although Cressida's betrayal has framed misogynistic comments on her portrait in the play, and Shakespeare's play does not challenge the core of this tradition, Howard Davies's production of the play for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1985 is noteworthy for the feminist interpretation of the text on stage. This production's emphasis on Cressida's victimisation as a woman in the war is regarded as "a growing collaboration between Shakespearean performance and the academy, [because] Davies's Troilus clearly exhibited the influence of feminist cultural criticism and analysis of Shakespeare in the past fifteen years" (Bowen 55). For the analysis of Cressida's character from the feminist point of view, the following sources can be listed: Carolyn Asp, "In Defense of Cressida," Janet Adelman's "'This Is and Is Not Cressid': The Characterization of Cressida," Barbara E. Bowen, *Gender in the Theater of War: Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida,'* E. Talbot Donaldson, "'Cressid False, Criseyde Untrue: An Ambiguity Revisited," James O'Rourke's "'Rule in Unity' and Otherwise: Love and Sex in *Troilus and Cressida*," Melvyn R. Leventhal's "Cressida at the Tailhook Convention: 'A Woeful Cressid 'mongst the Merry Greeks!'"

In her soliloquy, she bids Troilus farewell and refers to her present state: “Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee, / But with my heart the other eye doth see” (V. ii. 113-114). However, the play does not totally render her change. In Act V, scene ii, she gives Troilus’s sleeve to Diomedes, but she snatches it back from him. Then, she tries to decline their meeting next night. After this scene, she disappears, but her letter is given to Troilus by Pandarus. Her indeterminacy suggests that she still thinks of Troy and Troilus. As her change is not completed, she is observed to go through a transitional period and experience liminal temporality in this respect.

What is more, Cressida’s exchange may disclose another temporal liminality characterised by disease. While the Trojan War and the characters’ process of becoming unfold the different aspects of liminal time in the play, the period of syphilis helps to uncover more about liminal temporality, as well. Cressida’s exchange becomes a starting point to reveal “syphilis time” within the play’s liminal time. In particular, the symptoms of syphilis dominate the play. As Jennifer Forsyth reports, the play consists of “61 references to syphilis alone” (“Kisses” 90). Broadly speaking, in a similar manner to the period of the war, the period of this plague, or any kind of epidemics and pandemics, can be considered as part of liminal time since the outbreak of the disease leads the society to an ambiguous period of crisis. Accordingly, Thomassen describes the experience of liminal temporality as follows: “A whole society facing a sudden event (sudden invasion, natural disaster, a plague) where social distinction and normal hierarchy disappear” (*Liminality* 90). From its outbreak to its disappearance, the disease, like the war, takes place for a temporary period while this period detaches people from the usual course of life as well as social structures, hierarchies and norms. What emerges here is that the plague period is tinged with temporal liminal traits as it functions like an interim period. When syphilis occurred in early modern Europe, it spread as a pandemic, transgressing borders and contaminating different nations. On this historical threshold, “the origin of syphilis was further displaced onto the New World: according to this new theory, the disease was introduced to Europe by Spanish sailors who engaged in sexual relations with Haitian women during the second Columbus’ voyages” (Traub 71). As in the case of the war, the historical context of the disease must have influenced Shakespeare since he refers to the symptoms of venereal disease throughout the play. Moreover, Bentley claims that

Shakespeare embarks on the identification of the Greeks with debauchery to criticise the sexual corruption of his society and states that "the close association of Greece, lechery, and syphilis may suggest one reason why Shakespeare chose the story of Troilus and Cressida as the vehicle through which he satirizes the loose, licentious behavior of his contemporaries" (*Shakespeare* 59). Although Shakespeare in his plays, unlike his contemporaries like Ben Jonson or Thomas Middleton, does not aim to give strong moralistic messages, the liminal period of syphilis in this play may serve Shakespeare's aim to criticise the corruption of the Elizabethans. For this purpose, it appears that the play focuses on Cressida, and the moment of her exchange is a critical moment. When Diomedes brings Cressida to the Greek camp, the generals welcome her with kisses. Ostensibly, this is not an act of a warm reception. Although kissing is a courteous custom in early modern England, the attitude of the Greeks is an insult to Cressida: "Whereas the English custom is for hostesses to welcome men to their homes with polite kisses, the Greeks assault Cressida with theirs" (Forsyth, "Kisses" 91). While Agamemnon, Nestor, Achilles and Patroclus kiss her, Cressida tries to avoid more kisses and rejects Menelaus and Ulysses (IV. v. 19-53). Her decline angers Ulysses so he verbally attacks her after she leaves. He condemns her sexuality, implying that she is a prostitute: "There's language in her eye, her cheek, hep lip, / Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out / At every joint and motive of her body" (IV. v. 56-58). Forsyth refers to the male characters' attempt to depict Cressida as an agent of the disease. Ulysses's words, "a pain in joints," imply the symptoms of syphilis and associate her with the disease and contagion ("Kisses" 92). Forsyth further points to Pandarus's description of Cressida's breathing like a patient with fever as another symptom of syphilis and highlights Troilus's implications about the same disease ("Kisses" 92). Therefore, the speeches of these male figures render Cressida as a carrier of disease, hinting that the play takes place during the period of the plague.

However, it is not Cressida, but the corruption of the warriors that spreads the disease during the Trojan War. The rivalry for Helen and Cressida highlights their greed for material possessions, and Thersites, the artificial fool of the play whose witty dialogues reveal the truth about other characters, refers to the decadence of the warriors. While commenting on their true nature, Thersites first provides the reader/audience with

unfiltered depictions of the warriors. Being a fool, he has freedom of speech, and, without any fear of punishment, he challenges his master Ajax, stating: “Thou sodden-witted lord, thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an asinico may tutor thee. Thou scurvy-valiant ass, thou art here but to thrash Trojans, and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave” (II. i. 42-46). He also uses animal images to emphasise the unreasonable attitudes of his superiors. Thersites thinks of Ajax as the monstrous dog, Cerberus, (II. i. 30-33), a camel (II. i. 52), an elephant (II. iii. 2) and a peacock (III. iii. 253). Menelaus is depicted as a bull (V. i. 53) and called “both ass and ox” (V. i. 58). Ulysses is also a “dog-fox” (V. iv. 10), Paris a dog (V. viii. 2) and Troilus a “young Trojan ass” (V. iv. 5). Therefore, Thersites pinpoints not only their beastly nature but also their lack of intellectual capacity to comprehend the real dynamics of the war. He is aware of the fact that even the warriors are commodities to be exploited in the course of the war. The fool, for instance, realises Ulysses and Nestor’s plan to use Ajax for bait to induce Achilles to fight against the Trojans. He describes the warriors as “draught-oxen [to] plough up the war” (II. i. 103-104). Clearly, Ajax and Achilles are both important because of their physical capability which will enable the Greeks to achieve more during the war. Among all of Thersites’s bitter comments, it is possible to detect that he is the one who reports the period of illness. Although he does not particularly specify temporal indicators about the period, his reflection of the symptoms of syphilis on the characters definitely suggests that they go through this liminal period. His descriptions are entwined with the symptoms of syphilis in which he defines the disease as the “plague” (II. i. 12; V. iv. 31) and “the Neapolitan bone-ache” (II. iii. 17-18). Furthermore, Thersites portrays Agamemnon’s body full of boils (II. i. 5-6), condemns Ajax of having “[a] red murrain” (II. i. 18) and curses Patroclus for having serpigo (II. iii. 71), all of which are the dermatological signs of the venereal disease. More tellingly, he states that their time is contaminated by the destructive disease:

> Now, the rotten diseases of the south, guts griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o’ gravel i’th’back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten rivers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas, limekilns i’th’palm, incurable bone-ache and the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take again such preposterous discoveries! (V. i. 17-23)

Although Thersites does not use time references, this period can be called "syphilis time" since Thersites presents the influence of the disease on the characters and perpetuates its presence. His narration, in other words, lays out the period of illness.

As mentioned above, the time of diseases can be considered as liminal periods, and Thersites benefits from syphilis time to criticise the ongoing corruption. While Thersites's recurring references to syphilis time point out the physical atmosphere of illness, they also unmask the corruption of the body politic destroying the whole society. It is important to note that he has a misogynistic attitude towards Cressida when he accuses her of being a "whore" (V. ii. 120) and situates her in the themes of war and lechery while watching her and Diomedes together (V. i. 94-96; V. ii. 201-203). Nevertheless, Thersites truly observes the corrupted nature of the Trojan and the Greek warriors and attributes the reason for the spread of syphilis to both groups. Although Thersites is from Greece, his being a fool leaves him out of national or any definitive boundaries because he is essentially a liminal character. Berry posits that the fool, whether a natural or an artificial one, gets involved with the liminal sphere because "[f]olly is a liminal state, and the fool is a liminal being" (109). On the edge of folly and wisdom, Thersites condemns all for their corrupted appetite: "The vengeance on the whole camp! Or rather, the Neapolitan bone-ache! For that, methinks, is the curse dependent on those that war for a placket" (II. iii. 17-19). His curse indicates that war cannot be disassociated from male sexual desire, and it is this lechery that brings out the disease. Both parties at war are the same for Thersites. His depiction of Diomedes and Troilus on the battlefield unveils his approach:

> That dissembling abominable varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm. I would fain see them meet, that that same young Trojan ass that loves the whore there might send that Greekish whoremasterly villain with the sleeve back to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless errand. (V. iv. 2-8)

The enemies fight over the possession of Helen in the war plot whereas the love plot is designed to possess Cressida. The only difference lies in the way that each party manifests their excessive desire. Katherine Stockholder explains that "[i]f the Trojans disguise their lechery under a veneer of chivalry, Greeks are as open about theirs as they are about kissing Cressida when she enters the Greek camp" (549-550). Thersites plays a significant role in unmasking their lechery by claiming that the war is "[n]othing but lechery," (V.

ii. 95) and "lechery eats itself" (V. iv. 34). To put it another way, the sexual appetite of both sides has driven the societies to war, and the Trojan War exposes their corruption and spreads it through syphilis which is an embodiment of degradation. Therefore, lechery is the reason for the eventual fall of the whole society since these warriors represent the body politic. According to Raymond Southall, "terms such as 'gluttony' and 'lechery' [. . .] serve as terms of political appraisal, applying to the state of super-individual, the body politic" (232) in the societies where desire governs all. Thersites's references to the sexual disease, hence, suggest the afflicted and corrupted state of the society. Moreover, his critical voice is noteworthy for Shakespeare's criticism of the degeneration in the late Elizabethan society. As Thersites takes on the role of the commentator, the fool figure becomes the medium of Shakespeare's criticism. "At a time when Elizabethans were confronting the highly contagious nature of syphilis and related diseases," Maria Teresa Micaela Prendergast points out, "Thersites depicts the Trojan war [and] dismantle[s] illusions of aristocratic grandeur by projecting sexual and skin disease upon the warrior elite" (78). That is to say, Thersites mirrors the corruption of the English society through his references to the images of disease or syphilis time. Thus, the play invites the contemporary audience to locate themselves in a state of corruption as they also suffer from the same disease at that time.

More significant as evidence for syphilis time is Pandarus's epilogue. At the end of the play, Pandarus apparently draws attention to the period of syphilis as he develops its symptoms. In his direct address to the reader/audience, he explains that he suffers from "aching bones" (V. xi. 35), and that this disease will destroy him within two months (V. xi. 52). Up to this point, it is possible to speculate that he has been experiencing the effects of the disease throughout the play. His confession, hence, indicates that Thersites definitely comments on such moments of illness so the play records syphilis time. This instance emphasises that the play concerns itself with liminal temporality as it recounts an ambivalent present moment while the future is unknown. Pandarus accepts that the disease causes "Pandar's fall" (V. xi. 47), but he is still determined to cure himself: "[. . .] I'll sweat and seek about for eases" (V. xi. 55). As mentioned in Bevington's note in the Arden edition of the play, sweating in a tub is a common treatment for syphilis (378)

so Pandarus is trying to find a way to recover, but as the play closes, his future with syphilis remains ambivalent.

More significantly, Pandarus affiliates the reader/audience with the disease in his direct address: "Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans, / Though not for me, yet for your aching bones" (V. xi. 49-50). Then, he clarifies his target with a particular reference to the late Elizabethan age: "It should be now, but that my fear is this: / Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss" (V. xi. 53-54). Bentley explains Pandarus's image of the Winchester goose as

> an epithet for a Southwark prostitute, so called because many brothel houses were located in that part of the city and because the Bishop of Winchester held jurisdiction there. A 'galled' prostitute, moreover, was one infected with syphilis. In fact, the phrase 'Winchester goose' became a common epithet denoting a prostitute infected with syphilis. (*Shakespeare* 95)

At this point, the play makes a foray into the Elizabethan society and the Church as Pandarus associates both of them with the venereal disease. This is a pivotal moment in the play considering that it portrays the corruption of Shakespeare's age with reference to syphilis. Furthermore, Pandarus's syphilis turns out to be consistent with his image in the play when his name and his role are considered. His "pandering," in other words, suggests that he becomes a part of the trade business so that corruption in the capitalist world contaminates him in the end. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the noun, a pander, etymologically emanates from the Latin name Pandarus, meaning "a go-between in clandestine love affairs; a person who provides another with the means of sexual gratification; a pimp, a procurer" ("Pander"). Pandarus acts as a go-between in the love affair of Troilus and Cressida and becomes more like a merchant agent. Comparing Cressida to Helen, he attempts to mark up his niece's value in the market and arranges a bargain over her. Therefore, he gets involved in a flesh trade so he is punished for his greed and lechery in the end. Also, Pandarus reveals that he and the reader/audience are both the same, "traders in the flesh" (V. xi. 45). In other words, the late Elizabethan society shares his syphilis at the time when the number of brothels was increasing in London. The market of prostitution contaminates the society, and the moral corruption causes the spread of syphilis. In the play, sexual license resonates with trade, suggesting the moral and social decay after capitalism. Therefore, Pandarus in the epilogue discloses

that the excessive desire to exploit more is the source of the problem. As Traub notes, the dominant image of syphilis "supplies the central signifier of desire: desire is disease" (73). As for his final words, when Pandarus eventually "bequeath[es] you [the reader/audience] my [his] disease" (V. xi. 56), syphilis moves from the page/stage to life. The play directly addresses the contemporary Elizabethan reader/audience by narrowing the gap between the period of the Trojan War and the seventeenth-century London through syphilis on the basis that the appetite and desire of both those in the Trojan War and the contemporary reader/audience spread the contagion of corruption. Either literally or symbolically, syphilis time, hence, is reflected onto the audience/reader. The sense of contagion carries liminal vibes for the audience/reader by leaving them to face the period of disease and corruption.

More strikingly, liminal temporality forms the core of the play as there is particular emphasis on the present time from the beginning to the end of the play. Up to this point, the play's liminal flow mostly resides in "where becomings happen" in the ambivalent course of time, and it will now be convenient to review that liminal time also takes place when "the present lives out its relation with [the past and] the future" (Zhang 3). In one particular respect, it has to be acknowledged that the consumer society gives priority to the present time in the capitalistic market, and Shakespeare's play focuses on the here and now in the atmosphere of capitalism. Kiernan Ryan picks up on this idea, drawing on certain lines from the play as follows:

> The mentality that thinks what matters most is now, that privileges 'the present object' over 'things past' and recycles 'things past' as 'new-born gauds', is the accomplice of 'emulation', the brutal competitive ethos bred by capitalism that forces us into 'a strait so narrow / Where one but goes abreast', leaving us little choice but to 'Take the instant way' or ends up 'O'er-run and trampled on'. There is no escaping the stark truth that *Troilus and Cressida* presses upon us. (179)

While capitalism and competition put great emphasis on the present time, the play's setting in the present can be deemed relevant to liminality. The in-between moment separates the past and the future of the war in a way that a continuous emphasis on the present captures liminal temporality which evolves into permanent liminality in the end.

To further understand the emphasis on the present time, it is necessary to refer to the representation of the past and the future in the play. In this respect, John Bayley is partially right in claiming that “in the formal impact of *Troilus* there is neither past nor future: everything takes place in and ends in, the present” (“Time” 222). Although Bayley draws attention to the right time, he totally disregards the past and the future in the play. However, the play actually denounces the past and the future to provide a focal point for the present moment. To begin with the past, Nestor is personified as the time gone by. In each scene that Nestor appears, the play deliberately stresses his old age. Ulysses describes Nestor as “hatched in silver” (I. iii. 65), referring to his white hair, and alludes to his wisdom of age, “[i]nstructed by the antiquary times” (II. iii. 245). Hector also addresses Nestor as “good old chronicle, / That hast so long walked hand in hand with time” (IV. v. 203-204). Nestor himself accepts that he is old now, refers to his “silver beard” (I. iii. 296) and announces that “I have [he has] seen the time” (IV. v. 210). All of these descriptions present him as old time. When he narrates his memories about Perseus and Hector’s grandsire (IV. v. 184-198), Nestor makes it clear that he symbolises the mythical past in the play. It is only Nestor who enables the reader/audience to sense the bulk of the ancient story as he stands for the past. However, the Greek council scene shows that Nestor is not able to understand the undercurrents of the present moment. He rather “speaks sterile words which are doomed to be the tautological gloss of the leaders’ discourse. The past is powerless to guide the action” (Maquerlot 129). In other words, the past epitomised in Nestor’s image cannot harness the present so the connection between the past and the present is symbolically broken in the play. As the past cannot govern the characters, they are observed to lose the ideals such as heroism, chivalry or courtly love that define their roles in Shakespeare’s source texts. Now, the present gains momentum in dominating all, and they cannot disregard the impact of the present time.

In a similar manner to the past, the future is also presented through a character, Cassandra in this case, and in particular, her prophecy about Troy. When she interrupts the Trojan council, she voices her future vision: “Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilium stand; / Our fireband brother Paris burns us all. / Cry, Trojans, cry! A Helen and a woe! / Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go” (II. ii. 109-112). Troilus defies her prophecy, claiming that she is mad (II. ii. 98, 122). Even though she is gifted with a prophetic vision, Troilus

scorns and belittles her agential power and marginalises her. In this scene, Hector, in stark contrast to Troilus, acknowledges Cassandra's "divination" and "discourse of reason" (II. ii. 114, 116), but Cassandra, the voice of the future, is powerless to persuade them to send Helen back. When she later voices her prophecy about the fall of Hector and Troy, Andromache's narration of her dream about blood and violence supports Cassandra's claims. Priam, too, upholds Cassandra's vision, but Hector ignores her warnings this time. As Hector insists on joining the battle, Cassandra foretells his ultimate end:

> Look how thou diest! Look how thy eye turns pale!
> Look how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!
> Hark, how Troy roars, how Hecuba cries out,
> How poor Andromache shrills her dolour forth!
> Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement,
> Like witless antics, one another meet,
> And all cry, 'Hector! Hector's dead! O, Hector!' (V. iii. 81-87)

Before the battle scene takes place, Cassandra looks into Hector's future and faces the immediate future of Troy: "Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive" (V. iii. 90). Once again, the future is dismissed because Hector aims to gain a victory to maintain his honour and name. "Victory over time," Quinones notes, "is the measure of [. . .] heroism; a need for special distinction, one which rises above the anonymity of the everyday, compels [. . .] to seek the arduous, the unusual" (3). Hector, likewise, desires to achieve this kind of heroism as he wants to govern the present moment by disregarding Cassandra's future voice. It appears that he deliberately avoids the future because he acknowledges that time, with a destructive agency, will bring an end to all and Troy: "The end crowns all, / And that old common arbitrator, Time, / Will one day end it" (IV. v. 224-226). Therefore, it is the present that dominates Hector's actions as he goes to the battlefield to save the day.

As the characters decline to lean on the past and the future, the play "traps its characters in an eternal present of impending catastrophe from which the disparity of the past and the difference of the future have been drained" (Ryan 180). First, the emphasis on the present is strongly felt in the war plot, and it seems that the characters initially feel the dominant influence of the present. As a case in point, the dialogue between Ulysses and Achilles draws attention to the fact that the present moment is at the heart of the play. When the Greeks decide to injure Achilles's pride, they plan to "put on / A form of strangeness" (III. iii. 50-51) by ignoring his presence while passing by his tent. Their

disdainful attitude makes Achilles question the past: “What, are my deeds forgot?” (III. iii. 145). Achilles wants the Greeks to return to the past and recollect his respectful image. Ulysses’s response to Achilles’s question propounds the view that the passage of time consigns them to oblivion: “Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back, / Wherein he puts alms for oblivion, / A great-sized monster of ingratitudes” (III. iii. 146-148). The past is completely lost: “Those scraps are good deeds past, which are / Devoured as fast as they are made, forgot / As soon as done” (III. iii. 149-151). Viewed in this way, Ulysses scrutinises the negative potential of time as he personifies this abstract notion as a monstrous figure carrying a kind of a torn bag filled with heroic deeds. Time as a monster is obviously fraught with a destructive capacity, and it abolishes the past by means of forgetfulness. After the past is lost in memory, it has no impact on the present so the glorious past of Achilles is not a permanent record now. Ulysses states that what is past cannot be carried into the here and now.

It is important to see that the war requires the warriors to live in the present, condemning them to a perpetual presence on the battlefield. Even a figure like Achilles has to keep pace with the flow of time by constantly capturing the present moment. Thus, Ulysses advises him to occupy his image currently: “Perseverance, dear my lord, / Keeps honour bright; to have done is to hang / Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail / In monumental mock’ry. Take the instant way” (III. iii. 151-154). In this claim, one may sense that the war period destroys the collective memory because only the actions taken in the temporary present time determine the destiny of the nation. Put differently, one’s past deeds can no longer determine his/her present situation in the society. Considering that the warfare creates its own present reality, it is inevitable for Achilles to become invisible to the Greeks when he withdraws from the battlefield. Therefore, Ulysses entails that “what they do in present / Though less than yours in past, must o’ertop yours” (III. iii. 165). To clarify his point, he personifies time once more by comparing it to “a fashionable host” who “shakes his parting guest by th’hand, / And, with his arms outstretched as he would fly, / Grasps in the corner” (III. iii. 166, 167-169). This host’s welcomes and farewells shift quickly as things pass by. In the war, the dynamics of time changes at a high pace granted that it embraces newcomers at the instant moment. Put more simply, Ulysses highlights the fact that they are just living in the present during the course of the

war. He reiterates the fact that "[t]he present eye praises the present object" (III. iii. 181). As their time is essentially about the moment happening now, Achilles needs to remain in the present.

Agamemnon's welcoming Hector echoes Ulysses's conceptualisation of time with a particular emphasis on the present, as well. In this scene, Agamemnon presents an extensive version of Ulysses's claim on time and oblivion. When the Greeks briefly suspend the war, Agamemnon greets Hector as their guest in this interval as follows:

> What's past and what's to come is strewed with husks
> And formless ruin of oblivion;
> But in this extant moment, faith and troth,
> Strained purely from all hollow bias-drawing,
> Bids thee, with most divine integrity,
> From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome. (IV. v. 167-172)

What Agamemnon accentuates is that he welcomes Hector in the present without any concern about the past or the future. In a similar fashion to Ulysses, Agamemnon associates the past with the act of forgetting, and, more strikingly, he ignores the future by leaving it in oblivion. Mitsi finds this approach to the future unusual: "Although the notion of the forgotten and ruined past may be conventional, Agamemnon's inclusion of the future, of 'what's to come', in the bleak picture is unexpected" (2). Viewed in this way, Agamemnon's conception of the future is unique as he equates the past with the future on the ground of forgetfulness. Thompson and Thompson see the logic behind Agamemnon's correlation and explain that the past which is left behind is lost in memory and becomes "unknown totally; the future is unknown in a different way because one cannot know what has not yet happened; so past and future are both sites of the unknown in comparison to the present" (36). From Agamemnon's standpoint, the present situated between the obscure past and the unknown future is a concrete moment. During the war, despite the present time's own ambiguity, Agamemnon tries to hold on to the present as he acknowledges that it is the only time that matters to them. And, consequently, he hinges on the existing moment.

The present time of the play is pertinent to liminal time considering that the characters are located within the two timelines, and the existing time is liminal betwixt the past and

the future. To bring a clear focus to this claim, it is worth borrowing Turner's definition that liminality is "an interval, however brief, [. . .] when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun" ("Liminal" 75). This is to say that liminality's temporal dimension manifests itself in the present in which the characters rule out the past and the future. This is the reason why Nestor is disrespected, and Cassandra's warning is disregarded. After Hector is welcome by Agamemnon, the sense of being in the present is vividly shown. When Hector reminds Menelaus of his wife, and clearly the past reason for their war, Menelaus tells him, "Name her not now, sir" (IV. v. 182). The betrayed husband is observed to focus on the instant moment. Additionally, Agamemnon's approach to the future is later affirmed by Achilles who aims his attention to the current minute. Although Achilles declares that he will later fight against Hector, the present time makes him reconcile with his enemy: "Tomorrow do I meet thee, fell as death; / Tonight all friends" (IV. v. 268-269). Thus, to a certain extent, all of these characters are aware of the liminal time surrounding them.

While Agamemnon embraces the enemy from Troy at this moment, the scene evocatively shows that the present is illustrative of liminal temporality in another respect. Although the Greeks host the Trojans as their guests in their camp, the current moment does not totally promote peace. On the contrary, the present is fraught with danger and threat. Therefore, this scene illustrates liminal time as the present resides in its potentiality. To put it differently, liminal time manifests its potential danger because it consists of inconsistency and both destructive and positive vibes at the same time. In a moment of peace, for instance, Achilles threatens Hector before his suspension of enmity and asks him: "Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body / Shall I destroy him? Whether there, or there, or there?" (IV. v. 242-243). Then, he tells Hector to "guard thee [himself] well" (IV. v. 253) and declares: "For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there, / But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm, / I'll kill thee everywhere, yea, o'er and o'er" (IV. v. 254-256). That is to say, an air of menace immediately disrupts their peaceful union, but, then, the mood changes again when Agamemnon invites them to his tent. This scene, thus, manifests that their present time is ambiguous and unsettled since it turns out to be concurrently a moment of reconciliation and hazard. This can be attributed to the liminal quality of the present in the play since liminal time is tinged with the opposite dynamics

of positive and negative qualities. The indeterminate transition from war to reconciliation and from peace to threat is illustrative of liminal time in the play.

Moreover, the love plot, like the war plot, reveals the dynamics of liminal time with the present's dominant influence and its indeterminate potentiality as Troilus and Cressida spend time together. As their love affair unfolds, the present entraps them with its contradictory powers. When Troilus and Cressida come together in Pandarus's house, Cressida confesses that she has been in love with Troilus for a long time: "Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day / For many weary months" (III. ii. 110-111). Yet she keeps her love as a secret since she believes that Troilus "will play the tyrant" (III. ii. 115) upon her confession. As a woman, she is aware of the fact that men only desire the things that they cannot achieve: "Men prize the thing ungained more than it is" (I. iii. 280). Therefore, she has remained silent until the present moment, but now she is determined to confess her love. With a particular emphasis on the present time, Cressida tells Troilus: "I love you *now*, but till *now* not so much / But I might master it" (III. ii. 116-117, emphasis added). As can be observed, she asserts her love by highlighting the present time, and she is bold enough to confess her love now. Although she focuses on that present day, Troilus aims to dominate time by asking a promise of faithfulness. He wants to maintain their love for a long-time period, and, like a speaker in a sonnet, he claims that "[t]rue swains in love shall in the world to come / Approve their truth by Troilus" (III. ii. 168-169). Cressida responds to his verses in a similar manner and depicts her concern about love and time in fourteen lines (III. ii. 178-191). At the beginning of these lines, she refers to the destructive effects of time when she says:

> If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,
> When time is old and hath forgot itself,
> When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,
> And blind oblivion swallowed cities up,
> And mighty states characterless are grated
> To dusty nothing, yet let memory,
> From false to false, among false maids in love,
> Upbraid my falsehood! (III. ii. 179-186)

As noted in these words, Cressida alludes to the passing of time and replies to Troilus's promise. Yet her use of a conditional clause is significant in the sense that "the future will not take place, Troy's stone will not be slowly worn way" (Bayley, *Shakespeare* 105).

This implies that she still concentrates on the present time by acknowledging that time has a destructive potential not only for lovers but also for all of them in the end. Although the present time brings the lovers together, they receive the news of Cressida's exchange the next morning. While the present provides them with happiness of love at night, it destroys their relationship in the morning. "The action of time," Derek Traversi notes, "which is at the same time creative and destructive, which both makes love possible and destroys it, is the unavoidable flaw at the heart of passion" (27). These contradictory potentials of time actually illustrate liminal time which dominates Troilus and Cressida's affair.

Furthermore, when time becomes destructive for the lovers, they find themselves in a struggle against it. Now, Troilus accuses time of stealing their joy when he resembles it to a thief: "Injurious Time now with a robber's haste / Crams his rich thiev'ry up, he knows not how" (IV. iv. 41-42). In Troilus's words, the destructive capacity of time is revealed again as it harms them and inflicts suffering on their love. Despite a short moment of bliss, time turns into their enemy. Although Troilus does not take action to make Cressida stay, he definitely wants to be victorious over his enemy. Therefore, he insists on the promise of truth in love which can be labelled as a search for "continuity" so that his lover's faithfulness will make Troilus achieve "a triumph over time" (Quinones 366). When Cressida asks him about their future, "[w]hen shall we [they] see again?" (IV. iv. 56), his reply calls for her fidelity: "My sequent protestation: Be thou true, / And I will see thee" (IV. iv. 65-66). Although Troilus's insistence on Cressida's promise to be faithful is his attempt to conquer time, this situates Cressida in a struggle against time. During her affair, Cressida goes through a process of becoming by defining herself as a lover, but her future is threatened by Troilus's claim on the possibility of her falsehood. As Troilus repeats his warnings about temptation in the Greek camp, she suspects her own future: "Do you think I will?" (IV. iv. 91). It is fair to suggest that Cressida will go through another process as an unfaithful lover in the immediate future. She herself recognises this fact when she previously accuses the gods of "[m]ak[ing] Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood" (IV. ii. 101) upon her leaving. However, as Troilus does not support her, she cannot later resist their predestined story. Therefore, their love has no

future, but only remains in the present. And this present moment finally destroys their connection.

What is beyond dispute is that the reason for Cressida's change in the Greek camp has remained an open question in the discussion of the play. Although she has been regarded as an archetype of an unfaithful woman in the misogynistic development of the love story, she is actually the victim of the wartime so she has to accord with the current time and its requirements. It may be useful to recognise her as "a consummate actress who has already learned to assume roles others demand of her" (Asp 262). Accordingly, she first fashions herself as a cold lady as in the Petrarchan love tradition, later as Troilus's devoted mistress and finally a betrayer in Troilus's eyes. As a woman in the Trojan War, she has to survive in the masculine domain, and her playing of expected female roles helps her get through the war. After noticing that Troilus does not love her enough to save her, she is in need of a protector in the Greek camp so she has an affair with Diomedes. What is behind her change is that she admits the dominance of the instant moment. As she cannot seize the past or the future, she acts in the immediacy of the day. Her perception of the present time is so vivid in that there are thirteen references to the current time, "now," in her betrayal scene, observed by Troilus, Ulysses and Thersites (V. ii. 7, 8, 32, 48, 67, 75, 79, 84, 97, 120). Acknowledging that "'tis done, 'tis past. And yet it is not" (V. ii. 103), Cressida, along with those watching her, repeats "now" and shows that they are entrapped in the present. Arnold Stein defines Cressida as "an ephemeral creature of the present with no intensity of attachment to the present" (157). On the contrary, it is possible to argue that Cressida stands out from the rest as she consciously occupies the present time. Unlike Troilus, she does not want to triumph over time by means of fidelity. Thus, she acts according to the demands of the existing time and lapses into silence after admitting that her sex is powerless in the circumstances of the war.

After Cressida's disappearance from the scene, the battle scene thoroughly presents the dynamics of liminal time and turns into a permanent liminal zone which is another point of discussion about liminal temporality. The scene opens with Thersites's narration of the present moment: "Now they are clapper-clawing one another. I'll go look on" (V. iv. 1-2). In his description of the war, the liminal fool figure degrades all heroes from each side

by describing them as animal figures as mentioned earlier, and, then, the reader/audience observes the collapse of ideals in the instant of the war. What is more, this scene illustrates the shifting dynamics of this liminal moment regarding that each party in the war oscillates between victory and defeat. In other words, time is fused with creative and destructive potentials for the Trojans and the Greeks. At the beginning of the battle, for instance, Agamemnon desperately leads the Greeks and thinks that the Trojans will triumph: “Haste we, Diomed, / To reinforcement, or we perish all” (V. v. 15-16). Nestor, likewise, pinpoints to the Trojans’ military superiority and fears that they will lose the battle: “There is a thousand Hectors in the field” (V. v. 19). While the destructive capacity of time surrounds the Greeks, the Trojans, despite their superiority, are not promised with any victory. It is obvious that Troilus, who is called “[a] second hope, as fairly built as Hector” by Ulysses (IV. v. 110), cannot beat Diomedes. Even though Aeneas declares themselves as “masters of the field” (V. xi. 1), Hector is slain by the Myrmidons. Hector’s death must be a turning moment in the war, and Troilus wants the Trojans to return to Troy to mourn for their loss. Then, addressing the gods, Troilus states: “Sit, gods, upon your thrones and smite at Troy! / I say at once: let your brief plagues be mercy, / And linger not our sure destructions on!” (V. xi. 9). However, the war does not come to a final conclusion. Although Hector is dead, the Trojans have not been totally devastated or the Greeks have not gained a final victory yet. The fourth day ends in the middle of the war, leaving a sense of incompleteness.

The ending of the play in *medias res,* not unlike its beginning, has turned into one of the problematic parts of Shakespeare’s work for some critics who claim that the play is not complete. Speaking in terms of liminality, however, the ending does not emerge as a problem, but this ending becomes important to understand how Shakespeare works with permanent liminality in the play. It is no accident that *Troilus and Cressida* seems to have an open ending. In his preface to *Truth Found Too Late*, John Dryden questions Shakespeare’s genre in relation to the ending of the play, stating that “the latter part of the Tragedy is nothing but a Confusion of Drums and Trumpets, Excursions and Alarms. The chief Persons, who give Name to the Tragedy, are left alive” (15). In a similar manner, the unusual ending of the war enables later critics to claim that “nothing is concluded” (Lawrence 24); the play “displays a strength against resolution” (Bowen 86);

and “[f]or lack of a real battle which would victory or defeat the only battle, at the end of the play, is inconclusive” (Maquerlot 124). More than a technical shortcoming, however, the play’s ending can be deemed relevant to the concept of permanent liminality, the state “between the times, suspended between the present and future” (Carson 9). It is important to understand that the ending in the middle has a specific function with respect to this kind of time. The absence of a death scene, except for Hector, and the lack of a proper reconciliation signify a sense of continuity at the end of the play. As Foakes suggests, “Hector is dead, and Cressida proved false, but the war goes on” (“*Troilus and Cressida*” 274). The flow of continuity locks the characters into the present time without any projection on the past or the future. Although the characters prioritise the present moment, it is actually the force that imprisons them, and the ending of the play clarifies this fact. Maquerlot also interprets the play’s ending and emphasises the dominance of the present: “The characters are stuck in an everyday world that has run short of history, [. . .] they are all prisoners of a palsied present, unable to place their actions within a time process” (132). On this basis, the power of the current moment may elicit a new definition in line with permanent liminality which suggests a “frozen” state, “as if a film stopped at a particular frame” (Szakolczai, *Reflexive* 212). Although liminality is essentially a transitory phase, it may turn into a permanent condition in certain cases. The characters in *Troilus and Cressida* cannot move onto another stage in their lives and merely occupy the present in the suspension of the future. Thus, their liminal temporal condition becomes perpetual.

Moreover, wartime also contributes to the state of permanent liminality. Carson argues that the warriors are generally led to a new stage of life by the elders at the end of the war without being “left to transition by themselves” (67). As can be observed in the play, the leaders from each camp prove ineffective in the course of the war and do not play a significant role to bring the war to an end. Therefore, the warriors are left alone in the middle of the war, and the play does not concern itself with dealing with a resolution. While wartime is a liminal period, it turns into permanent liminality because “[w]ithout those communal mechanisms of return they [the combatants] become stuck in an involuntary state of permanent liminality, a war that never ends, and a war that they can never leave” (Carson 67). This is exactly the case in the last scene of the play. Since the

characters are left alone in the middle of the endless war, and the present captures them, *Troilus and Cressida*'s liminal temporality evolves into a permanent condition in the end.

In turning now to the significance of the use of liminal time in the play, it is necessary to acknowledge that Shakespeare's reader/audience knows the past and the future of the Trojan story which are not narrated in this work. Therefore, Shakespeare's focus on the four days of the war may seem problematic in the first place. Yet this plays on an aspect of liminality granted that liminality "is about the process of *becoming* and not about explaining what already exists" (Stenner 178). While the matter of Troy is accessible for the reader/audience through different sources, Shakespeare may be claimed to remind his addressee to think closely about the present as he offers a process of becoming and a passage of time during the four days of the war. For this purpose, the playwright also employs anachronistic details to create liminal ambiguity about time. The chivalric notions of warfare, Hector's reference to Aristotle (II. ii. 166) and Ulysses's reading a book (III. iii. 93-95), to name a few, amass evidence of anachronism through which the text signals that it is not about ancient history. While Evrim Doğan Adanur calls it Shakespeare's "culminating the distant and recent past and the present [and] offering a kairotic understanding of time over a chronological one [. . .] in the face of the contravening ideologies of the Elizabethan era" (1048-1049), anachronism can be regarded as another liminal overlay of temporality in the play. As *Troilus and Cressida* reveals all of these dynamics of liminal time, the temporal setting allows the playwright to deal with social, moral and political problems of the late Elizabethan period. More than a distant setting, the Trojan War provides liminal temporality as a period of crisis with in-between and ambivalent moments, and functions as a strategical means to pinpoint the contemporary troubles of the Elizabethans in a secure way for the playwright. In other words, this wartime, owing to its liminal qualities, becomes a medium to veil Shakespeare's criticism of contemporary social corruption, moral decay and the political strife arising from factionalism.

Accordingly, Shakespeare's depiction of wartime in the middle of events is initially to deconstruct the contemporary interpretation of the Trojan history through which the play underpins the unsettling present turning point in England. "The story of Troy," Foakes

remarks, "had a meaning for the age of Shakespeare that it has now lost" ("*Troilus and Cressida*" 151), and this meaning crucially lies in the discourse of nationalism that

> there appeared Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britannica*, which narrates the progress of the Trojan war, and ends by tracing the ancestry of James I back to Brutus, a grandson of Aeneas who gave his name to Britain, and founded Trinovantum, New Troy, later known as London, or Lud's Town. The legend was popular [and the] poets were all celebrating the famus origins of Britain, and the ancestry of Queen Elizabeth, as these were described in the common histories and chronicles of the age, including those of Raphael Holinshed and John Stow. The Queen even quartered the arms of a mythical Trojan in one version of her official coat of arms, so acknowledging the antiquity of her line. (Foakes, "*Troilus and Cressida*" 151)

As noted above, the current monarch and the next one were both associated with the Trojan lineage. Thus, the matter of Troy was used in nationalistic propaganda at that time in England. However, in this transitional time, Shakespeare appears to have challenged this ideology because his recollection of the war period does not glorify either the Trojans or the English. His use of liminal time enables him to express his pessimism and disillusionment because he depicts a transitional period in the Trojan War before Troy's fall. While the story of Troy is essentially about "painful transitions" (James, *Shakespeare's Troy* 13), the process of becoming in Shakespeare's version of the Trojan War does not appear to promise a hopeful change for the country. Suffice it to say that leaving the characters in a permanent state of liminality, Shakespeare not only challenges the use of the Trojans as part of nationalistic propaganda but also shows that the immediate future will be an extension of the present moment. Therefore, the liminal period of warfare in the Trojan legend mirrors London's unsettling present time of crisis with social disorder, economic corruption, decadence and political troubles. Owing to the ambiguity intrinsic to liminal temporality, Shakespeare finds a means to voice his critique of the late Elizabethan society by protecting himself and his work from an attack.

On the one hand, the play unfolds a physical likeness between ancient Troy and Shakespeare's England. According to Paris, Troy as "Priam's six-gated city" (15) and sixty-nine ships sent to Troy (5-6) recounted in the Prologue draw the parallelism between Troy and London from the beginning considering the fact that London also had six gates, and sixty ships with nine ministers were sent to fight against Spain in the Armada of 1588 (132-133). On the other hand, the parallelism is symbolically sustained in the illustration

of the corrupt state. Unlike his predecessors or contemporaries who praise London as New Troy, Shakespeare offers "a more sinister reflection, that of London as the fallen Troy, the corrupt city, which engaged in all sorts of excess that would lead to its decay and transformation to an inglorious residue" (Markidou 161-162). Once the Scottish poet, William Dunbar (1460?-1530?), celebrates London, calling it "Troynovaunt" and "New Troy" (9-10), and ennobles his country's endeavours in trade – "Of merchauntis full of substaunce and myght: / London, thou art the flour of Cities all" (7-8) in his poem entitled "London, thou art of townes per se." However, Shakespeare's play manifests that England's adventure in trade impinges on the country, perpetuating an atmosphere of materialism, ambition and greed which brings the country to the edge of fall as illustrated in the fall of Troy because of the characters' greed. As referred to earlier, Hector's death is iconic in the sense that his chasing the armour stands for the excessive material greed and decadence of the society that will cause his country's demise. By this point, Shakespeare criticises the degeneration of the English society as a result of the dominant capitalistic spirit. The analysis of the wartime, hence, unfolds this socio-economic problem during the late Elizabethan period.

Moreover, avarice is accompanied by lust and sexual corruption in the play, and the playwright draws attention to the issue to investigate the moral degradation of the Elizabethans. In essence, drawing on the Platonic view of Troy "as a symbol of sensuality," Shakespeare speaks of Troilus and Paris's sexual desire, a reason for the downfall; thus, the play might "be using the Platonic interpretation of Troy to make a contemporary social point" (Clarke 216). It becomes evident that morally corrupt Troy provides a dark mirror to England in Elizabeth's last years. The moral rottenness, as mentioned, comes to light in reference to syphilis, and the play aims to satirise its specific reader/audience, "the riotous and philandering gentlemen of the Inns of Court whose physical and moral corruption was apparently undermining the social and political structure of the country" (Bentley, *Shakespeare* 44). In a broad sense, however, the venereal disease, jeopardising the physical and moral health of the Elizabethan society at that time, addresses the reader/audience of all classes with a direct message that moral corruption leads to physical deterioration and death. In his allusions to syphilis, Thersites's condemnation of lechery, hence, remains to be seen as Shakespeare's attack

on the Trojan myth in which the Elizabethans were searching for their ancestral roots. Even though Shakespeare's plays, unlike some of his contemporaries like Jonson, do not generally have a punitive or moralistic tone, *Troilus and Cressida* can be regarded as a moralistic attack which was a popular approach at that time.

Of special interest to these two critical points that Shakespeare dwells on in the play, corruption and disease, is that "the legend of Troy was an *exemplum* of disaster through disorder, moral and ethical" (Kimbrough 169). The stratagem of the play builds up the theme of disorder on the grounds that the leader figures of both sides – Priam, Nestor and Agamemnon – are weak to control their subjects while their communities, pursuing their pride, lust or greed, are divided into groups or factions to determine the course of the war on their own. In conjunction with this idea, it is possible to state that Shakespeare marks these problems in his play to portray England's disastrous state in relation to the politics of the age. Lake points out that this play "might be thought to conjure up a vision of a late Elizabethan world bedevilled by the politics of faction, on the one hand, and the politics of an increasingly spurious and contradictory honour, pride and popularity, on the other. Commenting upon the resulting mess, [the play is] using the full range of (venereally) diseased metaphor" (561). Apparently, the examples of corruption and disease images are entangled in order to reflect the contagion in late Elizabethan politics, which is mainly about factionalism, an important aspect of Shakespeare's political criticism in the play. Although it was the Queen's method to "place her principal servants in antagonism to one another" (Devereux 1:277), factionalism – the rivalry between Essex and Cecil – harmed her country when the opposing factions exploited their power and popularity to destroy each other and led the country to the edge of a civil war in the end. As the Queen was aging and losing her political power at the turn of the new century, factionalism, like syphilis, became a chronic condition in her politics. To put the matter simply, the system of factions turned into a source of disorder, contaminating the whole nation. Mallin considers that the factions "seemed to manifest a pathological disunity of political structure and spirit, a contagious emulation of disorder. The most prominent feature of the reign in its last years was this spreading agon inside it; internal strife prolonged external problems and diseased the realm" (*Inscribing* 29). Therefore, factionalism was the disease of the late Elizabethan politics. Broadly conceived in the play, the disease

spread through individual, social and moral corruption represents England's political contagion and the current catastrophe following Essex's fall.

To be more precise, from the outset, *Troilus and Cressida* unravels the political trouble of factionalism through the two main enemies in the war plot. In effect, the Trojan War is used as an allegorical narration to depict the enmity between the Essexians and the Cecilians in the late Elizabethan court. At first glance, it is possible to associate the opposing parties of the play with the Elizabethan factional courtiers. Accordingly, the Trojans in general may stand for the party of Essex with his supporters. In line with Essex's neo-chivalry, the characteristics that define the Trojans provide evidence for this correlation. As mentioned, the codes of chivalric knighthood and honour, though they turn out to be problematic, express the spirit of the warriors in Troy. Their attachment to "a traditional ideal of knighthood and 'honor': courage, loyalty, dedication to cause and ruler and lady" not only draws attention to the medieval undertone of the story (Mallin, "Emulous" 154) but also establishes the chivalric spirit of Essex and his supporters. Considering that Essex is an epitome of chivalric ideals and considered by his supporters as Sidney's heir, his faction may be associated with the Trojans. The Trojans' insistence on the continuity of the war and the chivalric call for a duel in the name of the lady are also significant signs to piece together evidence to comprehend the Essexian undertone of the Trojans' war conduct. The Cecilian faction is represented through the Greeks who reason out possible solutions to win the war. In stark contrast to the Trojans, the Greeks, like Cecil and his supporters, do not pursue medieval romanticism, but locate themselves in the early modern world. G. Wilson Knight's attribution of "intellectual reasoning" and "cynicism" to the Greeks (51) indicates that this group of warriors knows how to play this game in the new world. Therefore, the Greek generals' approach to the war echoes the policy of Cecil's faction based on political intrigue and manoeuvring strategies to achieve supremacy against the opposite side. In this regard, the Trojan War stands for the battle of the two factions in the Elizabethan court, and the story is exploited by Shakespeare to criticise the reason for and the consequences of factionalism.

In Elizabeth's reign, the rivalry of the factions increased as a result of Cecil and Essex's ambition to control the Queen and her government. And the military conflict between the

camps in Shakespeare's play is simply about the possession of Helen. From this vantage point, the war about the female figure resonates with the courtly battle in Elizabeth's reign, and the allusions to the Queen in this play can be evaluated here. Although Elizabeth aimed to fashion herself as a central object of male desire and rivalry in her court to receive good service, the play does not support her method of control by presenting Helen's powerlessness. Precisely, the play criticises the factional system and its creator, the Queen. As a point of interest, Helen's portrait lays emphasis on the fact that she cannot retain a value on her own. Although she must be at the heart of the war, she lacks agency to control neither her fate nor the course of events. This proposes a correlation with Elizabeth's situation in that the system that she has created goes beyond the bounds of her main plan. Therefore, the factions lead the game by denying her control. Linda Charnes explains that "[t]hat Helen serves both as enabler of conflict and as enabler of erotic commerce reveals her central signifying power in the play. But this power is not hers to wield. Rather, it is available to the men in the play to use on a number of different fronts in their own relations to each other" (426). To put the issue another way, the war is merely about the masculine conduct through which the parties get engaged in a rivalry to manifest their virility. The dominance of men also determines the value of Elizabeth and Helen like a commercial object rather these women's possessing an intrinsic value. As illustrated in the Trojan council scene, Helen is worth fighting as long as the warriors advocate a value, a materialistic value in particular, upon her. The reason why Helen is called "a pearl" (II. ii. 81) can be related to Elizabeth's throne: "The iconographic 'pearl,' with all its religious, artistic, and political allusions appended to her sovereignty, associates a cultural Renaissance monarchal cosmology about, with, and behind Elizabeth and her seat upon the throne" (Paris 137). The spirit of mercantilism that the Queen's government proposes turns her courtiers into merchants who even evaluate their monarch based on her financial power. Although Elizabeth's position weakens, the factions attempt to construct her value, based on her financial power and patronage. In Essex's case, it is apparent that the Queen's disfavour of the courtier puts him in a serious financial trouble so she, as a pearl, is a source of wealth and power for the factions. Therefore, factionalism can be regarded as a commercial enterprise similar to the real cause of the Trojan War. Additionally, the play illuminates Helen's weakness by shedding light on the Queen's loss of power as she is getting older. Upon this point, Rob Maslen comments on

their identification in the play as follows: “The association of Helen with cosmetics and rotting flesh suggests that she is ageing, like the late portraits of England’s queen, so that the on equality that’s been ascribed to her, bodily beauty, is fading fast” (122). All this reveals that the Helen “soiled” like a merchant’s silks (II. ii. 69-70) calls attention to the ageing Queen’s weak position at the court. Taken all together, the play bears a relationship between Helen and Elizabeth in a way that it illustrates the latter’s fall in the battle of her courtiers. Even though the Queen adopts the strategy of factionalism, she is entrapped in their fight which degrades her to a passive object in the search for power.

More interestingly, Shakespeare’s approach to the factions is ambivalent. The play depicts a general atmosphere of factionalism in the main opposition between the Trojans and the Greeks. On the other hand, the critique of the factional leaders is blurred as the play ambiguously uses the characters of each side to comment on Cecil’s and Essex’s policies and practices in the late Elizabethan court. To begin with the Cecilian faction, it is possible to reconsider the web of relations in the love plot in line with the Cecilian influence over the Queen. Accordingly, Helen represents “the Elizabeth of the public domain” whereas Cressida stands for “the Elizabeth of her intimates, such as the exclusive members of her Privy Council and her closest advisers” (Paris 134). Fundamental to this claim is that Pandarus represents the influence of William Cecil over Elizabeth. The thread of relations between Pandarus and Cressida serves to criticise Robert Cecil’s father who, in Paris’s words, not only “served as Elizabeth’s agent or intermediary in policy issues between her and both Houses of Parliament,” but also “acted as a liason for all suitors – both gentry and royalty – who petitioned for patronage from the Queen, usually granted in land or monopolies” (136). Therefore, the emphasis in the play is retained on Pandarus’s control over Cressida to reveal that William Cecil, who first positioned himself and his son against Essex, directed all the choices and policies of the Queen. What remains to be seen is that this kind of influence was strongly established in the secretaryship, and William Cecil transmitted his power to his son, Robert Cecil. As the Cecils maintained their authority and faction at the court, their control manipulated the Queen’s decision so that she was claimed to allow the death penalty of Essex under the supremacy of the Cecilian faction (Devereux 2:184). Read in this way, Pandarus’s arrangement of Cressida’s affair is substantial in illustrating that Elizabeth was subdued

by the leading faction. The play denounces Cecil's power by focusing on its malign influence. The implication that Pandarus spreads illness suggests the devastation that Cecil caused in the Elizabethan reign.

More intricately, the Cecilian faction can be detected in their counterparts in the Greek camp, as well. In this case, Shakespeare exploits the cooperation between Nestor and Ulysses by resembling them to the head of the Cecil family and his son. And the play attacks the Cecils by exposing their political practices. Noting the representation of the Cecilian faction in the Greek camp, Agamemnon may stand for Elizabeth who is not capable of controlling the military men as in the cases of Achilles and Essex, respectively. In this instance, Nestor and Ulysses, William and Robert Cecil respectively, plan their own plots in private to control the course of the war. Honigmann draws attention to the relationship between the two characters and clarifies the historical parallelism: "Now Lord Burghley [William Cecil], in his last years, was described as England's 'Nestor,' and in the play, Ulysses and 'father Nestor' (2.3.247) work as a team, as Sir Robert Cecil and his father had seemed to do" (41). Predictably, the son, Ulysses, is now more powerful, manipulating every means to govern all. In the play, when Ulysses designs the plot by abusing Achilles and Ajax, Nestor ardently supports him: "Our imputation shall be oddly poised / In this wild action; for the success, / Although particular, shall give a scantling / Of good or bad unto the general" (I. iii. 340-343). As can be seen, Nestor and Ulysses claim to conspire together for collective success. This point of view corresponds to what Natalie Mears defines as the essence of the Cecilian power as "though they sought personal advancement and profit this was always in respect of royal service" (50). However, the play calls this practice into question through Ulysses's degree speech. His advocating hierarchy, order and degree merely creates an illusion of reality because the ideas that Ulysses supports serve his interests to exercise control over other groups. His design of the plot without Agamemnon's noticing indicates that Ulysses does not simply serve the leading figure. To a certain extent, Ulysses is subversive in the Greek hierarchy, but the appearance of maintaining order and degree helps him establish his political supremacy without being seen as a threat to the sovereign. The critique of the Cecil faction hereof becomes most evident to the reader/audience through Ulysses as he is

depicted as a manipulative politician benefitting from the weakness of the main government.

As for the figure of Essex, his portrait, too, is rendered in the double, and opposing, mirrors, each from the Trojan and the Greek sides. Among the Trojans, Hector, in particular, comes to the fore in representing Essex in this group. As with Essex's fashioning himself with the cult of honour and chivalry, it is inevitable to align Hector with the Earl since the Trojan warrior mostly conducts the manners of a knight in the play. It is worth noting Hector's challenge of the Greeks here since it proffers an opportunity to acknowledge the connection between the Trojan and Essex. In effect, Hector's invitation recalls Essex's chivalric challenges in his previous military conducts during the 1590s. Mallin points out this parallelism: "Hector's challenge is a peculiar hybrid of two different chivalric events, both of which enjoyed a rebirth in Elizabeth's reign" ("The End of Troy" 77). Mallin depicts the first one as "an individual duel" and explains: "The Earl of Essex and his prototype, Sir Philip Sidney, both delivered such challenges to avenge perceived insults to their honor" ("The End of Troy" 77). The second one, according to Mallin's account, is about the tournaments organised in the honour of the Queen, symbolically representing the chivalric endeavour of the courtiers ("The End of Troy" 78). In this context, Hector's challenge responds to Essex's chivalric posture that he assumed before his fall and death. Moreover, when Hector refuses to obey Priam's call for his retreat from the battlefield, he actually echoes Essex's political motto that "natural and martial law had precedence over civil and common law" (Mears 50). This stance enmeshed with Essex's defence of personal honour put him out of favour in Elizabeth's circle as the Earl began to threaten the monarch's rule over him. At this point, one may look anew at Essex/Hector's chivalry with the suggestion that the chivalric dedication does not help Essex and Hector endure the factional rivalry. The reaction of the Greeks to the single combat and Hector's death in the hands of the Myrmidons allude to this fact. After Essex's death, hence, Shakespeare appears to accuse the opposite party for this fall and reimagines Hector's death: "Essex and the Trojan both meet their ends as failed heroes against strategic conspiracy, the victims of a gang killing" (Mallin, *Inscribing* 56). In Hector's death scene, it is possible to view that Shakespeare cannot ignore Essex's ambition and illustrates this aspect of his character in Hector's material

pursuit. However, as the brutalism of the opposite faction dominates the scene, the play re-centres the attention on Essex's victimisation by Cecil and his supporters. When Troilus declares that "Hector is dead. There is no more to say" (V. xi. 22), the play exhibits the sense of despair and disillusionment in England among Essex's followers after his death. The Earl's fall and Southampton's imprisonment must have embittered and disappointed Shakespeare in that "there was now (for the moment) nowhere to else to turn" at the end of the play (Lake 562). Therefore, the future of his country is foggy for the playwright at that moment so he leaves his characters in the permanent liminality's temporal present.

A brief look at Hector-Essex association may suggest that Shakespeare approaches the Trojans with "sympathy" either because of the literary tradition of the Trojan matter (Stapfer 5; Muir 96) or because of his political alignment with Essex's circle. However, it has to be noted that Shakespeare's allusion to Essex is more complex since he offers a liminal portrait of the Earl by providing a close resemblance between him and Achilles, in which the playwright's political criticism falls upon the intricate dynamics of the state. In the Greek camp, the narration initially revolves around the problem of factionalism. The political trouble is fully materialised when Ulysses complains about Achilles and Patroclus's "hollow factions" (I. iii. 80) and refers to the general atmosphere "[o]f pale and bloodless emulation" (I. iii. 134). This exactly sums up the political environment of the late Elizabethan court as factional rivalry drove the country nearly to an alarming state. This time, Ulysses as the Cecilian party and Achilles as Essex are used to mirror the parties at factional strife. What lies behind is that the details employed in Achilles's story make it possible to trace the pieces of Essex's immediate past and Shakespeare's comment on the contemporary political events. For instance, Achilles's disengagement from the battle, his excuse of illness to avoid the Greek leaders and his subsequent retreat to his tent evoke Essex's withdrawal from the court. Therefore, the tent is reminiscent of Essex's house where his supporters frequently met. Essex's close companion, Southampton, can be identified as Patroclus with whom Achilles spends most of his time in the tent (Bevington, *Tudor Drama* 23; Akrigg 253). More strikingly, Ulysses's mention of theatrical activities may offer an indication of Essex and Southampton's interest in the theatre, or literature in general, since both of them supported Shakespeare. It is known

that Shakespeare dedicated his poem *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) to Southampton in which he alluded to the Trojan War (Mitsi 8) while Essex paid for the playwright's company to perform *Richard II* on the eve of his rebellion (Akrigg 250). Evidently, Shakespeare was under the patronage of these two figures who financially supported his works. In reference to Ulysses's denunciation of the theatre in the tent, the play focuses on the subversive power of the theatre that Essex attempted to use before his rebellion. Regarded in this light, Achilles's withdrawal and his activities in the tent may suggest a revolt against the authority akin to Essex's rebellion. Powell claims that Achilles's struggle in the Greek camp is a "quest for firm personal values" (22), and from Essex's point of view, his uprising was motivated by such a pursuit to re-establish his position at the court.

Furthermore, under cover of the struggle between Ulysses and Achilles, the play augments the frame of political allusion and throws light on the mechanism of the Elizabethan state. Particularly noteworthy is that the methods of the state to control its people can be subversive more than those challenging the authority. When Ulysses reveals that he knows Achilles's secret love and his intention, his explanation to the sulky warrior unfolds the controlling method of the government as follows:

> The providence that's in a watchful state
> Knows almost every grain of Pluto's gold,
> Finds bottom in th'uncomprehensive deeps,
> Keeps place with thought, and almost, like the gods,
> Do thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.
> There is a mystery – with whom relation
> Durst never meddle – in the soul of state,
> Which hath an operation more divine
> Than breath or pen can give expressure to. (III. iii. 198-206)

Thus, the play refers to the power of the state and its controlling instruments. James emphasises the significance of Ulysses's account and notes that "Ulysses introduces a politically topical form of the speculations and eye metaphors involved in the constitution of social subjects: spying. The state gains a divine soul – its arcana imperii – when it uses intelligence agencies to search into, appropriate, and reform its citizens" (*Shakespeare's Troy* 114). What is more, Ulysses's criticism of Achilles, his plot against the latter by abusing Ajax and his tactics in the war are actually illustrative of the strategies that the

state maintains to suppress its opponents. Therefore, the opposition between Ulysses and Achilles functions for Shakespeare as an opportunity to criticise the Elizabethan government's destructive agency. More to the point, it is again necessary to mark James's claims that Shakespeare

> comments on the censors, state officials, and delators who adopt theatrical tactics – disguise, plots, and entrapping dialogue – to keep citizens from overmighty lords to recusants, printers, players, or rogues and vagabonds from 'meddling' with state practices. Taking Ulysses's lines as a point of departure, it is possible to see how *Troilus and Cressida* engages the aftermath of the Essex rebellion, suffered by the citizens of London as well as Essex himself. (*Shakespeare's Troy* 114)

Although it seems that Achilles's use of the theatre is directly evocative of Essex's strategy, Shakespeare's reference to the Earl's personal story points to his criticism of governmental practices during and after Essex's fall in this alternative reading.

Finally, it remains to reconsider Achilles's final act of murder with regard to Shakespeare's representation of Essex in this character, and his criticism of factionalism. Although Achilles avoids involvement in the war at the cost of risking his honour and fame, he finally returns to the battlefield and orders the Myrmidons to kill Hector. At this moment, the parallelism between Achilles and Essex may seem problematic, but it is convincing that Shakespeare goes beyond the mythical image of Essex just as he demystifies the Trojan War and reviles the factional system in this way. In Douglas Cole's words, the play "provided its significant implication or resonance as an image of human behavior" (78) with his good and bad sides. This is to say that Shakespeare plays with Essex's positive and destructive potentials and he represents the Earl as a liminal character. In the scene where Hector is killed, Achilles becomes "'bad Essex', an epitome of all the earl's negative characteristics, of what his virtues turned into, as, under the pressure of circumstance and the machinations of his enemies, they became vices" (Lake 560). In other words, Essex's dark side brings out his own end, and Shakespeare grows critical of the Earl's own destruction. Walter Bourchier Devereux comments on Essex's demise by recalling his liminal traits: "Brave, eloquent, and sincere, – proud, imprudent, and violent, – his fate is a lesson. Endowed with talents and qualities that placed him far above the majority of men, his unrestrained and ungoverned passions ruined himself and some of his dearest friends and brought on them the traitor's doom" (2:190-191). In the

transitional period of English history after Essex's death, Shakespeare, different from his attitude in *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*,[34] briefly judges the late Earl's downfall. However, it is not only Essex judged here but also the whole system of factionalism. In effect, Shakespeare expresses his sense of disillusionment and despair in the end while he directly attacks the system that brings doom to the whole country. Nahum Tate (1652-1715) clearly identifies that "[f]action is a Monster that often makes the slaughter 'twas designed for; and as often turns its fury on those that hatcht it" (24-26)[35] in the dedication part of his play, *The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth, or the Fall of Laius Martius Coriolanus* (1682), a rewriting of Shakespeare's work, *Coriolanus*, after eight decades from *Troilus and Cressida*. According to Tate's words, it becomes most evident to the reader/audience that Essex is criticised for having a part in the factional system that disposes of its participants. Broadly conceived, factionalism begets this end, leaving the playwright in an ambiguous state and unsure of the immediate future.

Lastly, it is worth noting that Shakespeare's use of liminality as a tool for criticism in his play about the Trojan War makes his work different from his contemporaries. To illustrate, in 1598, when Chapman translated seven books of the *Iliad* in *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homere* and dedicated this work to Essex, he deliberately focused on the figure of Achilles to glorify Essex. It is known that Chapman manipulated the source text in his translation. In a propagandist manner, he reconstructed Achilles's portrait because "he seems determined to make good his hyperbolic flattery, to prove that Essex can discover himself in Homer's story of Achilles" (Briggs 59). However, Chapman had to revise his translation after Essex's execution. In 1608, he published a new version of the *Iliad* in which he added five more books and excluded all topical allusions to Essex. In the political circumstances of the age, Chapman was not alone in censoring his work. Honigmann mentions that "other writers either destroyed their own work or abandoned it, in 1601, because they feared that allusions to Essex would be read into it" (117) and

[34] This dissertation argues that Shakespeare criticises the practices of banishment and exile as Elizabeth's punishment methods in relation to Essex's story in *As You Like It* and restores Essex's image after his execution in *Hamlet*. Different from these two plays, Shakespeare appears to criticise the Earl in *Troilus and Cressida* by reflecting Essex's dark side.
[35] I am indebted to Vincent Carlson's presentation entitled "Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* in Adaptation: Restoration *Ingratitude*" on 5 March 2021 for this interpretation.

refers to Fulke Greville (1554-1628), Abraham Colfe (?-1657) and Samuel Daniel's attempts to disassociate their works from their previous allusions to Essex (117). In such a period, Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, despite its unpopularity on stage, survived unrestrained by censorship or a fear of punishment. Shakespeare's use of liminal time is compelling to underpin this point.

Clearly, Shakespeare's critical points are mainly veiled in his use of liminal time in *Troilus and Cressida*. This liminal text, written during a liminal period and addressing the reader/audience of liminal times, functionally dwells on the conceptualisation of the Trojan War with its liminal temporality. While the war itself is an ambiguous and transitional period, Shakespeare expands the wartime's liminal aspects by setting the play in the middle of the events. The focus on the present in the play makes it more clear that the temporal setting is liminal in its dominant sense of in-betweenness which also influences the characters' development of liminal identities. In addition to these aspects of liminal time manifested in the war and syphilis time, the presence of uncertainty prevails the end of the play; thus, temporal liminality evolves into permanent liminality.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that with this play, Shakespeare makes use of liminality's temporal dimensions to comment on the problems of the late Elizabethan period as England's transitional age. The Trojan War reflects England's endless wars, the shift to commercial economics, social unrest in the country, and factionalism, hinting that the Elizabethan society is going through a destructive transformation. While these troubles dishearten the playwright, Elizabeth's policies and strategies of government are severely criticised. The ending of the play can be regarded as a sign of Shakespeare's approach to the future and the next monarch. Bearing James's assertion of the Trojan lineage in mind, the play seems to support that the future is only a continuation of the present so the eternal present dominates temporal layers. Considering that the factional rivalry and capitalistic ambition that Shakespeare criticises become the reason for a real civil war in England in the 1640s, his liminal perception of the present presages the upcoming political disasters.

CONCLUSION

In *As You Like It*, Jaques says to Duke Senior: "Give me leave / To speak my mind, and I will through and through / Cleanse the foul body of the th'infected world" (II. vii. 58-60). Even though Jaques's bitter satire of the courtiers is tolerated in the Forest of Arden, Duke Senior attempts to silence him in this scene. What is particularly important in this quotation is that Jaques asks for permission to talk freely in order to cure the diseased body, or, in other words, to find a remedy for the problems. Similarly, Shakespeare turns to the theatre in order to criticise the late Elizabethan politics, but he encounters some obstacles like state censorship and punishment. Although the controlling mechanism for the theatre suppresses the playwright's freedom of speech in terms of his criticism of political issues, he raises his voice by veiling his critical arguments in an artistic way. In this context, there has been an ongoing debate about Shakespeare's strategies to find suitable means to comment on and criticise the problems of his society, with a particular emphasis on the contemporary politics of his age. Therefore, his use of old texts and stories, the distant setting of his plays and the deliberate ambiguities created in the plays are widely recognised in such studies, arguing that the playwright takes up some serious matters by introducing uncertainty to veil his critical ideas and judgement. This dissertation embarks on this vein of Shakespearean studies and contributes to the discussion by claiming that liminality is one of Shakespeare's strategies to criticise the late Elizabethan policies in this transitional period at the turn of the seventeeth century. Offering a three-fold analysis of the concept of liminality in terms of liminal place, character/action and time, the dissertation bridges the gap between the research on Shakespeare's use of liminality and the analysis of his strategical tools for criticism as it argues that liminality can be identified as a means of political criticism in *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*. Accordingly, this chapter sets out to offer conclusive remarks about the foregoing interpretations in line with the dissertation's assertion.

Before proposing the final remarks, it will be helpful to review the discussion of each chapter here. The dissertation highlights that the above-mentioned plays written in the transitional era of the late Elizabethan period are packed with considerable material to analyse the political problems related to the last years of Elizabeth's reign. The strength of such an analysis is that it helps to uncover how different types of liminality are

functionally used to deal with critical issues with ambiguity. Accordingly, the first chapter about *As You Like It* reads Shakespeare's exploration of punishment, namely the practices of banishment and exile, in the light of Essex's story. Drawing on the date of the play, it reconsiders these practices of punishment with respect to the current events at the late Elizabethan court. Shakespeare's use of the liminal place, the Forest of Arden, shows that the playwright works on the spatial aspect of liminality to embed his criticism of the Queen's punishment of Essex into the play by means of the setting. Moreover, it is observed that the liminal setting enables the playwright to criticise the policies of deforestation, capitalism and usurpation, as well. The second chapter analyses *Hamlet* in terms of its liminal character and actions. The chapter develops the idea through Hamlet's liminal characteristics that Shakespeare dwells on Essex's rebellion, Elizabeth's failure to solve the succession problem and the matter of tyranny and criticises the affairs of the state. Additionally, the religious politics of the period is highlighted as part of the play's political allusions. Lastly, the final chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* entails the political argument with respect to the late Elizabethan courtly relations, factionalism and the uncertain future of the country. It argues that the period of the Trojan War, hence, is used as liminal time to allows the political criticism of the Elizabethan era. Furthermore, the play includes the criticism of the rise of capitalism, material ambition and corruption in different degrees in the context of liminal time in this work.

As stated, each chapter takes up a different aspect of liminality. Evidently, the types of liminality, liminal place, character/actions and time, are defined according to all aspects of the definition of the concept such as the process of becoming, ambiguity, in-betweenness, uncertain potentials, transformation and transition. Moreover, the examination of other kinds of liminality concentrating on the analysis of one major type is necessary. The reason for the use of other liminal types stems from the fact that time, place, action and character are all intertwined. It is beyond doubt that these concepts are essential elements of a play. On the basis that the main elements of the play are interknitted, the analysis of any type of liminality cannot be separated from another. Accordingly, in the first chapter on *As You Like It*, the forest reveals its liminal traits in relation to the characters' experience and actions, and the place is a concept substantially related to time so that it is inevitable to refer to the characters' liminal process of

becoming and the existence of liminal time in the Forest of Arden throughout the chapter. Therefore, the analysis of the liminal forest includes Rosalind and Orlando's process of becoming, Duke Senior's communitas, the liminal state of being in exile and the sense of in-betweenness and ambiguity time-wise. In the second chapter on *Hamlet*, likewise, Hamlet's liminal actions and character cannot be thought separately from other aspects of liminality. Therefore, the Ghost's appearance in a liminal place and liminal time, the influence of the liminal places on Hamlet and the problematic period and action of mourning are recounted when it becomes necessary to refer to these points within the discussion of the chapter. Moreover, the last chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* deals with liminal time in reference to the characters' liminal transformations since the war period manifests its liminal features by shaping the characters in accordance with such traits. Thus, this chapter involves the analysis of the warriors and lovers' liminal process of becoming in the case of Hector, Achilles, Troilus and Cressida's experiences and alludes to the liminal sites that they occupy like Achilles's tent.

This study shows that it is possible to consider each type of liminality in a comparative manner. To be more precise, the liminal places, characters, actions and times that the chapters examine can be compared and contrasted. To begin with the liminal places, it appears that the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* displays all aspects of spatial liminality as the setting manifests its in-betweenness, ambiguity, contrasting potentials and its transformational and transitional power. The characters' experience of exile is a liminal action, and the forest comes to be seen as a political site, used for political commentary. Furthermore, in line with the basic definition of liminality, Arden remains a temporary threshold for the characters who come from the court and return to it after a positive integration process through love and marriage. Although the forest is tinged with all features of liminality, the use of liminal places in the next two chapters is observed to be limited. That is to say, other liminal places do not consist of most of the components of spatial liminality, but they function according to the limited definitions of liminality, contributing to the characters' development. In *Hamlet*, the liminal places that the liminal Ghost occupies, the castle walls and purgatory, are both thresholds and borderlines which emphasise the Ghost's in-betweenness. In addition to the Ghost's liminality, this sense of in-betweenness plays a role in unravelling Hamlet's liminal self since the protagonist first

thinks of avenging his late father, which is a liminal action, when he meets the Ghost on the castle walls. Moreover, Hamlet's journey on the ship and his fight against Laertes in Ophelia's grave are related to the character's liminal process of becoming. In the play, it becomes clear that the sea and the grave situate Hamlet between life and death, playing on the dynamics of liminal in-betweenness. To further argue, these two liminal places share one more trait of liminality considering that Hamlet transforms himself following a two-tier experience in both places before his final transition to a mature figure in his death scene. Spatial liminality works differently in *Troilus and Cressida*. Its prologue can be regarded as a liminal threshold between the world of the play and actors/actresses and the real world of the reader/audience. What is more, *Troilus and Cressida* effectively explores the liminal place as a site of transgression. Cressida's being exchanged between the Trojan and Greek camps, a liminal action again, takes place in the port which is a liminal site between the two camps of the Trojans and the Greeks. On this threshold, Cressida has to transgress the borders of the Trojans and leave Troy and Troilus. While Cressida's is a physical transgression of borders, Achilles's case reflects another aspect of transgression in the play. When Achilles and Patroclus spend time in the tent rather than the battlefield, this place turns into a transgressive zone because the characters go against the rules and boundaries imposed on them by the Greek generals in the tent. Thus, it can be concluded that although liminal places do not constitute the bulk of the main argument in the chapters following *As You Like It*, they still can be traced to a certain extent. While the characters are led to liminal places or occupy them at the key moments of their stories, these places augment the liminal experience of the characters.

In a comparative manner, liminality is observed in the characters' process of becoming, defining their liminal identities and actions. However, their rites of passage do not draw the plays to a similar conclusion. To further understand how liminality is used in the case of characters, the different progress of the liminal characters in the three plays can be comparatively evaluated. Among all of the characters, Hamlet's liminality strikingly comes to the foreground. Even though the Ghost in this play can be considered as a liminal being, the liminal character is mainly observed through Hamlet's identity and his actions. It is fair to suggest that the problems in Hamlet's family and kingdom force him to experience liminality. Hamlet's rite of passage starts with his separation from his father

and mother, and his liminality initially unfolds in his liminal act of mourning. Moreover, his aim to avenge makes him a liminal figure because the action of revenge is essentially liminal and it forces Hamlet to transform himself. During his process of becoming, Hamlet also performs other liminal actions like his oscillation between madness and wisdom. In the course of events, Hamlet goes through a process of maturity which leads him to the last rite of passage, his reintegration into the society. However, his liminal journey does not promise him a happy ending because he dies when he tries to reintegrate into the society by asking his story to be told by Horatio. Although Hamlet, who is no longer under the influence of his late father at the end of the play, declares himself as the King of Denmark and wants his own story to be narrated, he dies at that moment when he is ready to achieve a new and independent self. To take a different situation, Rosalind and Orlando's liminality in *As You Like It* can be pinpointed here. In a similar manner to Hamlet, these two characters undergo a process of becoming when they are troubled by their family members who hold authoritative power over their lives. However, their experience of exile and love in particular differentiates them from Hamlet. Rosalind and Orlando grow into mature beings in their process of becoming in which romantic love plays a role. In other words, sexuality and love define their liminal selves. In Rosalind's process of maturity, she is observed to go betwixt the two gender roles in her liminal act of disguise as Ganymede. Engaged in Rosalind's plot in the forest, Orlando, too, experiences a rite of passage. His love for Rosalind and his love for his brother finally make him grow into a mature figure. Both of the lovers happily incorporate into the society through their marriage. Thus, this play endorses the communal experience of liminality, which can be exemplified in Duke Senior and his followers' communitas. They collectively experience the liminal action of being in exile in an atmosphere of collaboration and equality. While the Forest of Arden as a liminal place provides them with this experience, the forest's transformative agency reveals itself to the late-comers, Oliver and Duke Frederick, who positively change in the end. That is to say, the liminal place collectively influences all of these characters in their process of becoming. In stark contrast to *As You Like It*, the characters in *Troilus and Cressida* do not collectively experience the same aspects of liminality although they undergo the liminal period of the Trojan War together. While those in the same camp do not always share similar opinions and oppose each other, the lovers, Troilus and Cressida, do not achieve liminality in their

love affair in the same way. It has to be recognised that liminal time plays on different aspects of liminality in different characters. As a case in point, while Hector remains in limbo between an ideal warrior and a capitalist merchant, Achilles's liminality consists of transgression. As for the liminal characters in the love plot of *Troilus and Cressida*, it is possible to state that love and sexuality, similar to Rosalind and Orlando's liminality, initiate Troilus and Cressida's process of becoming. However, these characters are not incorporated into society through marriage. Instead, the liminal action of exchange entails their transformation. Cressida is ambiguously left in an in-between state in her process of becoming in the Greek camp whereas Troilus grows into an avenger in the course of the play. More strikingly, different from the other two plays, all of the characters in this play are locked into a state of permanent liminality, that is, the liminal state continues without a particular end. Consequently, liminality of the characters in the three plays highlights that the characters achieve liminal identities and conduct liminal actions, but their rites of passage are unique, operating differently according to the circumstances of each play. Evidently, the process of becoming does not necessarily lead them to a similar finale.

Another form of liminality that can be compared in the plays is temporal liminality. It is better to start with *Troilus and Cressida* since the chapter about this play is mainly dedicated to the analysis of liminal time. The periods of the Trojan War and syphilis constitute the dynamics of liminal temporality in a way that the characteristics of liminality time-wise unveil themselves in terms of liminal potentialities, ambiguity, in-betweenness, transition and transformation. The sense of liminal in-betweenness is intensified through the emphasis on the present time throughout the play. As the war does not end at the closure of the play, liminal time pervades all, growing into a permanent state in the end. Unlike the permanent liminal time in *Troilus and Cressida*, *As You Like It* and *Hamlet* have temporary liminal time. In fact, these two plays do not deal with all aspects of liminal time. *As You Like It*, for instance, focuses on the temporal dimension of liminality because the concepts of time and place are intermingled. In the course of the play, the place emerges with its liminal temporality, and this kind of liminality is observed in the intersection of the medieval past and early modern period. Secondly, the individual perception of time by the characters and the discussion of clock time make it create liminal ambiguity in terms of time. To take a further example from *Hamlet*, dawn, the

period that the Ghost appears, is obviously liminal, signalling the state of time-wise in-betweenness at the edge of night/morning and darkness/light. *Hamlet* also shows the protagonist's liminal time. Hamlet reaches maturity and acclaims his royal identity by acting like a king in the end. As he completes his process of becoming, the period that he struggles to reach this stage can be regarded as a liminal period from his own perspective. Therefore, one may sense that the play demonstrates liminal time's temporariness in this way. In short, all of the three plays, one way or another, demonstrate a sense of liminal temporality. Compared to the other plays in question in terms of temporal liminality, the use of liminal time in *Troilus and Cressida* is more dominant while *As You Like It* and *Hamlet* simply represent liminal time as a natural consequence of a liminal place and liminal characters' engagement with time.

In relation to Shakespeare's use of liminality, also of importance is the issue of differences pertaining to genre. To pursue this point, the analysis here starts with the broader categories of comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy respectively for the three plays in this dissertation. Initially, in line with Shakespeare's comedies, it is inevitable to think in general terms that such plays, as in the case of *As You Like It*, present the positive potentials of liminal processes through the characters' rites of passage. "The conclusions of the plays," Berry claims, "not only announce the joining of lovers in marriage but in many cases dramatize the actual rites of incorporation prominent in Elizabethan weddings – the exchanging of rings and oaths, kissing, feasting, and dancing. [. . .] The comedies, in short, might be called comic rites of passage" (5-6). In other words, liminality is a fundamental feature of comedy as the characters go through a process of becoming. What is more, the rites of passage in the comedies generally take place in a temporary threshold site, transforming the characters to achieve a happy ending. Therefore, the Forest of Arden appears to be a transitional and transformative liminal place that the characters temporarily occupy until their return to the court. Shakespeare's tragedies conventionally end with the fall of dynasties or the destruction of monarchs. Thus, it is important to observe that Shakespeare's tragedies, like many others of this genre, do not necessarily deal with the rites of passage. *Hamlet*, however, is different because the play thoroughly focuses on the young protagonist's liminal character and actions in his rite of passage. Naturally, the character's experience of liminality in the tragedy is not threaded with the

creative and positive potentials of liminality because he dies in the end. Nevertheless, Hamlet is able to complete the last rite and finds a way to reincorporate into the society at the moment of death. Hamlet interestingly empowers himself with his order to recount his story after his death. Therefore, he constructs death as his means to reintegrate with the society even though he completes his process of becoming in a destructive way. Lastly, Shakespeare's tragicomedies emerge as a liminal genre as its definition immediately signifies. The in-betweenness related to the genre, and the ambiguity in *Troilus and Cressida* become evident to the reader/audience, and the classification of this play in many different ways – most notably as a problem play – highlights the liminal dynamics of the work. From this vantage point, it becomes easy to draw a general conclusion about the liminal genre of the tragicomedies as the structure of this genre makes these plays oscillate between comedy and tragedy. This in-betweenness regarding the genre makes *Troilus and Cressida* a liminal play. Compared to the tragicomedies, it is the theme of courtship and the rituals of love and marriage that cement the genre of comedy with the concept of liminality as the main characters go through a rite of passage by means of love affairs and marriage. Nonetheless, it is possible to claim that liminality does not become particularly important within the context of Shakespearean tragedies, but as in the case of *Hamlet*, it appears that the protagonist's rite of passage can be entailed in the central argument of liminality in this tragedy. That is to say, while tragicomedy is a liminal genre itself, the use of liminality in comedy or tragedy can be analysed in relation to the characters or themes of the plays.

Another line of thought on liminality and the plays' genre is to be reconsidered in relation to Shakespeare's use of the concept of liminality as a strategical tool for criticism. As stated above, the comedies with their transitional and transformative agency illustrate the rites of passage of young characters at a threshold. What stands out in *As You Like It*'s use of the liminal place is that the Forest of Arden's liminal traits are functionally displayed to veil the political criticism of the play. Thanks to the ambiguity that the forest's spatial liminality provides, the playwright constructs the place as a site of criticism while avoiding the oppressive control of censorship. Bearing the date of the play in mind, the play deliberately elaborates on the liminal forest to critically comment on Elizabeth's methods of punishment in the case of Essex. It is interesting to note that

Shakespeare does not radically explore this liminal landscape. As the characters complete their process of maturity and return to the court, it is possible to claim that liminality ends at the moment when they leave the forest. This is to say that Shakespeare relies on the conventions of comedy to solve conflicts at the end of the play while he temporarily makes use of the liminal place to offer a criticism of the late Elizabethan politics and court with strategical ambiguity. After Essex's rebellion and death, the playwright then turns towards tragedy as a genre while digging into the concept of liminality within the liminal character and his actions. Although Shakespearean scholars usually tend to relate Hamlet's personal troubles to his mother, the analysis of Hamlet's liminality illustrates the political undertones of the tragedy through which the playwright severely censures the succession issue and the Queen's failure to govern her court and country. Hamlet's liminal character and actions equivocally unfold Essex's story of rebellion and subsequent fall in a way that Hamlet's essential ambiguous portrait does not suggest a propagandist reading of the play at the time. Working with the elements of revenge tragedy, Shakespeare comments on the current political troubles by means of liminal Hamlet. The tragic tone of *Hamlet* later leaves its place to a tone of disappointment and rage in *Troilus and Cressida*. In the transitional period following Essex's execution and preceding the Queen's death, this play draws attention to Shakespeare's bitter tone and harsh criticism when the play's application of liminality, unlike the other two plays, expands to the extreme state of permanent liminality. It appears that the playwright is uncertain about the future of his country so having explored England's political problems, he concludes this play by displaying a pessimistic approach to the future. Throughout the play, the use of liminal time allows the playwright to question the reasons for Essex's fall through factionalism and criticise the general atmosphere of material ambition and corruption. The liminal period that England goes through creates a sense of unrest which locks the play in a state of in-betweenness and uncertainty in the end. Shakespeare's critical tone by means of his use of liminality becomes stronger from that in *As You Like It* to *Troilus and Cressida* while the playwright's attitude towards the political problems of his country changes following Essex's death.

As a final remark, the liminal elements of the three plays can be regarded as a reason for their staging in the current liminal period during the global pandemic of the Covid-19

crisis. Like the theatres closed owing to the plague in the Elizabethan period, the theatres have been closed in the second decade of the twenty first century because of the pandemic. However, the playmakers and the theatres all around the world alternatively have begun to use online platforms to produce plays. What is interesting about such productions is that all of the three plays analysed in the dissertation were performed digitally in our contemporary liminal time. The Globe Theatre, for instance, started broadcasting filmed productions of Shakespeare's plays, and *Hamlet* was the first one on stream on 6 April 2020, claimed to have reached more than 600,000 people on their official YouTube channel ("Shakespeare's Globe in Lockdown"). As part of Shakespeare's birthday celebrations in 2021, Seattle Shakespeare released *Troilus and Cressida*'s online reading performance from 22 April to 25 April ("Ruff Reads"). Moreover, after the interim period of the theatres' closure in England, the Globe returned to in-person performance of Shakespeare's plays among which *As You Like It* was on stage during the summer of 2021. From this, it can be inferred that the three plays with their liminal dynamics continue addressing liminal reader/audience during liminal times.

In short, it can be concluded that *As You Like It, Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* illustrate particular features of liminality in their structural and contextual frames. Accordingly, it is chiefly the hermeneutics of liminality that enables to unfold and reclaim Shakespeare's tool for criticism. This dissertation clarifies that the different types of liminality provide Shakespeare with strategical means to veil his critical opinions about the late Elizabethan politics, society and culture. Therefore, the concept of liminality can be put at the heart of the studies that deal with Shakespeare's strategies of criticism. Also, the examination of liminality as Shakespeare's tool for criticism reveals more about his artistic creation and vision in defiance of the restrictions over the theatre. The analysis of liminality in Shakespeare's plays makes us discover a new medium of criticism and offers an insight into the hidden depths of the playwright's political agenda.

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Tarih: 10/12/2021

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