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

RE-WRITING SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: EDWARD BOND'S *LEAR*, ARNOLD WESKER'S *THE MERCHANT* AND HOWARD BARKER'S *GERTRUDE-THE CRY* IN SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Özlem ÖZMEN

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2018

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Özlem ÖZMEN tarafından hazırlanan "Re-writing Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century: Edward Bond's *Lear*, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* in Socio-Historical Context" başlıklı bu çalışma, 13 Haziran 2018 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

ÖZMEN, Özlem. "Re-writing Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century: Edward Bond's *Lear*, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* in Socio-Historical Context." Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2018.

This study examines re-writings of Shakespeare in British drama, Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971), Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* (1976) and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* (2002) in relation to the socio-political, historical and cultural backgrounds of the periods in which they were generated. These works are considered both as commentary to the events of their historical background, and as plays that question Shakespeare's literary and cultural status. Thus, it is asserted that re-writing has a significant function in terms of creating alternative ideas to the ways in which critical issues are discussed in the canonical texts and their political and ideological foundations. In the Introduction, re-writing's association with adaptation theory and intertextuality as a postmodern practice is considered. Additionally, the development of Shakespearean re-writing, its reception, and its functions are discussed. Within the scope of these ideas, it is concluded that Shakespeare's works are questioned, and their ideological aspects are criticised through reworkings. In the first chapter, Edward Bond's *Lear* is examined as a Marxist-Socialist appropriation written against Shakespeare's uncritical attitude to issues like class inequality and violence in *King Lear* (1606). Considering the problems of the 1970s' Britain such as unequal class structure, student and worker's riots, inefficiency of leftist politicians, violence triggered by Stalinism and the Vietnam War, it is discussed that Bond's appropriation is not only a Shakespeare re-writing but also a play that sheds light on the concerns of its period. In the second chapter, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* is analysed in terms of identity politics as the play criticises Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1605) for its antisemitic discourse. Accordingly, Wesker's re-writing, as a play produced in the post-Holocaust context, is correlated with some events in its historical background such as Arab-Israeli conflict, Six Day War and Yom Kippur War. In the third chapter, Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* is discussed as a response to the representation of the woman figure in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1600) in terms of sexual and gender politics. Considering the issues of the play such as individual will and sexual freedom in relation to the regulations of New Labour as the

ruling party in Britain in the 2000s, Barker's work is also analysed as a criticism of its historical context. In the Conclusion, it is revealed that re-writings of Shakespeare in British Drama reflect theoretical, cultural, socio-political and ideological aspects of the periods in which they are created, and they also adopt a critical attitude to Shakespeare's works. In the light of the plays examined thematically and technically in this study, it is discussed that, Shakespeare's works evolve in a way that reflects the significant events and concerns of subsequent ages.

Keywords

Shakespeare, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, Edward Bond, Arnold Wesker, Howard Barker, *Lear*, *The Merchant*, *Gertrude-The Cry*, re-writing, adaptation

ÖZET

ÖZMEN, Özlem. "Yirminci Yüzyılda Shakespeare'in Sosyal ve Tarihî Bağlamda Yeniden Yazımları: Edward Bond'un *Lear*'ı, Arnold Wesker'ın *The Merchant*'ı ve Howard Barker'ın *Gertrude-The Cry*'ı." Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2018.

Bu çalışma, Shakespeare'in eserlerinin İngiliz tiyatrosunda yeniden yazım örneklerinden olan Edward Bond'un *Lear* (1971), Arnold Wesker'ın *The Merchant* (1976) ve Howard Barker'ın *Gertrude-The Cry* (2002) adlı eserlerini yazıldıkları dönemin sosyo-politik, tarihî ve kültürel art alanına ilişkin olarak incelemektedir. Bu oyunlar hem dönemlerinde yaşanan olaylara birer yorum niteliğinde değerlendirilmektedir, hem de Shakespeare'in edebiyat dünyasındaki konumunu sorgulamak üzere yazılmış eserler olarak ele alınmaktadır. Böylelikle, edebiyatta yeniden yazımın önemli kaynak eserlerde ele alınan konuların işleniş biçimine, politik ve ideolojik altyapılarına karşı alternatif fikirler üretmek bakımından önemli bir işlevi olduğu savunulmaktadır. Giriş kısmında yeniden yazımın adaptasyon kuramı ve postmodern metinlerarasılık ile ilişkisi üzerinde durulmaktadır. Ardından, Shakespeare'in eserlerinin uyarlamalarının edebî tarihteki gelişimi, nasıl karşılandığı ve ne gibi işlevleri olduğu tartışılmaktadır. Bunun sonucunda da yeniden yazımlar yoluyla Shakespeare'in eserlerinin sorgulandığı ve ideolojik yanlarının eleştirildiği gibi çıkarımlar belirtilmektedir. Tezin birinci bölümünde Edward Bond'un *Lear* adlı oyunu, *Kral Lear* (1606) eserindeki sınıf eşitsizliği ve şiddet gibi konulara, aynı zamanda da Shakespeare'in bunlara kayıtsız tutumuna karşı Marksist sosyalist bakış açısıyla yazılmış bir yeniden yazım olarak incelenmektedir. 1970'ler İngiltere'sinde yaşanan sorunlar arasındaki sınıf eşitsizliği, öğrenci ve işçi grevleri, sol görüşlü liderlerin etkisizliği, Stalinizm ve Vietnam Savaşı ile artan şiddet göz önüne alınarak, Bond'un oyununun yalnızca bir Shakespeare uyarlaması değil aynı zamanda döneminin olaylarına ışık tutan bir eser olduğu tartışılmaktadır. İkinci bölümde, Arnold Wesker'ın *The Merchant* adlı eseri, Shakespeare'in *Venedik Taciri* (1605) adlı oyununu içerdiği Yahudi aleyhtarı söylem bakımından eleştirdiğinden kimlik politikaları kapsamında incelenmektedir. Nazi soykırımı sonrası dönemde üretilmiş bir eser olan Wesker'ın yeniden yazımı, yazıldığı dönemde yaşanan Arap-İsrail çatışması, Altı Gün Savaşı ve Yom Kippur Savaşı gibi olaylarla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Son bölümde, Howard Barker'ın *Gertrude-The Cry* adlı oyunu Shakespeare'in *Hamlet* (1600) adlı eserindeki

kadın karakterin temsiline karşı cinsel politika bağlamında bir yanıt olarak ele alınmaktadır. Eserde değinilen bireysel irade ve cinsel özgürlük gibi konular, oyunun yazıldığı 2000'li yıllarda İngiltere'de iktidarda olan Yeni İşçi Partisi'nin kadınlar ve birey özgürlüğü kapsamında çıkardığı yasalar bağlamında düşünülerek döneme karşı eleştiri olarak incelenmektedir. Sonuç bölümünde, İngiliz tiyatrosunda Shakespeare'in yeniden yazımlarının kendi dönemlerinin kuramsal, kültürel, sosyo-politik ve ideolojik temellerini yansıtırken Shakespeare'in eserlerine de eleştirel bir tutum sergilediği ortaya konmaktadır. Bu çalışmada ele alınan üç eserin tematik ve teknik olarak incelenmesi sonucu, Shakespeare'in oyunlarının yeniden yazımlar yoluyla farklı dönemlerin önemli olaylarını ve konularını yansıtacak şekilde evrildikleri tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Shakespeare, *Kral Lear*, *Venedik Taciri*, *Hamlet*, Edward Bond, Arnold Wesker, Howard Barker, *Lear*, *The Merchant*, *Gertrude-The Cry*, yeniden yazım, adaptasyon

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INTRODUCTION

In *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco states that "I discovered what writers have always known (and have told us again and again): books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (20). This statement refers to the repetitive nature of literature and to the fact that literature is an interactive concept as texts are continuously influenced by each other. The process of dealing with the same or similar issues introduced initially by earlier texts is called re-writing. The urge to re-write a work of art, that is to say, to reconstruct an already existing literary product, and deal with an old issue anew is a widespread phenomenon among writers. Renato Barilli defines re-writing, which he calls "rescrittura" as "narrative based on 'topoi' already made famous by previous authors" during the process of which "existing stories would be reformulated in a different narrative register" (13). In other words, re-writing refers to the literary practice in which new works of art are constructed by making use of the already existing subjects presented by older texts. This imitative aspect of literary production functions as a process which comprises reconsideration and remoulding of the issues introduced by existing works into new literary forms through transformation and appropriation.

There are various terms used interchangeably with "rewriting" that correspond to the same practice of using earlier texts in the formation of new works such as reinterpretations, revisions, derivatives, adaptations, appropriations, echoes and transformations. Observing these variations is essential to make sense of the different terms used instead of/together with re-writing within this study. To begin with, while M. H. Abrams talks about "newreading" as a principle which was first used in western hermeneutics for "replacing standard meanings by new meanings . . . to uncover the deep truths hidden within Homer's surface myths and fictions, and to moralize the immoral tales of Ovid" (437), he actually refers to the practice of appropriating some of the inconvenient ideas in classical works in accordance with new literary and cultural ideas and practices.

Some of the other examples that refer to the same practice could be listed as "variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft . . . reworking, refashioning, re-vision, re-evaluation" (Sanders 3). Ruby Cohn's alternative listing that shows the diversity of terms that correspond to the practice of literary transformation is also important in understanding the flexibility and ambiguity in the use of the term. According to him, terms such as "abridgments, adaptations, additions, alterations, ameliorations, amplifications, augmentations, conversions, distortions, emendations, interpolations, metamorphoses, modifications, mutilations, revisions, transformations, versions" (*Modern Shakespeare* 3) have also been used to refer to the practice of reiterating earlier works of art. The terms introduced by Julie Sanders and Ruby Cohn suggest a close relationship between the two texts as it is possible to find the relevance and presence of the first text in the second one. While using these terms along with re-writing itself, it is important to note that this varied abundance of vocabulary used to refer to the practice of re-writing indicates different intentions of the writers, and reflects their perception of the interpretation of source texts in many different forms.

Apart from these relatively lesser-known terms, re-writing is generally used as the common word to refer to the practices of adaptation, appropriation and transformation all of which include "a potent influence and shaping effect" (Sanders 158). Although all these terms might be considered the same, it is important to look for the points where they all meet and slightly differ from each other. Adaptation is broadly defined as "the act of taking an existing book, play text or screenplay and transposing it to another context" (D. Lane 157). In this regard, adaptation's field of practice is broader as it refers to changes within or from any kind of medium whereas re-writing is the name given to the particular practice of adaptation within literary texts. Linda Hutcheon describes adaptation as the general term referring to all kinds of literary and textual reinterpretation between and among genres as follows:

> First, seen as *a formal entity or product*, an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works. This 'transcoding' can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point

> of view, for instance, can create a manifestly different interpretation. (*A Theory* 7-8)

According to Hutcheon's statement, any kind of transformation could be discussed under the heading of adaptation whether the transposition takes place between different mediums or within a particular genre. Concerning the method of transcoding in Hutcheon's remark in terms of change of frame and context in the new versions, adaptation is especially inclusive of re-writing within its definition as it is extensively stated in her later comment in the same work: "Remakes are invariably adaptations because of changes in context" (*A Theory* 170).

Different from Linda Hutcehon's use of adaptation as the general term used for similar practices, Julie Sanders treats adaptation and appropriation as different terms arguing that appropriation is "a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (26) whereas adaptation does not necessarily refer to transformations with critical and subversive purposes. Thomas Cartelli also draws attention to the difference between these two terms by providing the working definitions of each as follows:

> What differentiates the act of appropriation from . . . adaptation is that the one is a primarily *critical*, and the other a primarily *emulative* act. Appropriation . . . both serves, and works in, the interests of the writer or group doing the appropriating, but usually works *against* the avowed or assigned interest of the writer whose work is appropriated. (15)

In light of this opinion, some critics consider adaptation as the kind of transformation not necessarily embedded with a critical import whereas appropriation is seen as a more challenging kind of transformation that takes issue with the source text.

Transformation, as another term, is also charged with the idea of subversion while altering a previous text. In this sense, appropriation and transformation are the names usually given to more diverse adaptations. Considering appropriations and transformations as subversive practices, Sanders argues that they "have a joint political and literary investment in giving voice to those characters or subject-positions they perceive to have been oppressed or repressed in the original" (98). It is believed that once re-writings aim at correcting the source text through various means such as

treating the previously marginal characters as the more important ones, they are seen as transformations with a critical viewpoint. In the same vein, using Ruby Cohn's alternative terms, Kidnie distinguishes the function of the term "transformation" as such,

> 'reduction/emendation' sees lines and words cut or altered, an 'adaptation' involves the addition of new material alongside substantial cutting and rearrangement, while a 'transformation,' the most extreme mode of innovation, offers characters 'simplified or trundled through new events, with the ending scrapped.' (*Modern Shakespeare* 3)

This definition accepts transformations as more deconstructive in comparison to adaptations. While adaptations may have parallel relationship with the preceding texts, or the changes applied in adaptations are seen as less transformative, appropriations and transformations are believed to assert a different perspective by altering narrative elements of the source texts such as characterisation and familiar plots in more radical ways.

Re-writing is an intertextual practice as it uses earlier texts in the construction of new literary works through imitation and subversion. Michael Riffaterre defines an intertext as "the perception, by the reader, of the relationship between a work and others that have either preceded or followed it" (qtd. in Genette 2). Therefore, intertextuality refers to imitative relationship between two literary texts. In order to draw attention to the analogy between re-writing and intertextuality, Julie Sanders clarifies that "[t]he 'rewriting' impulse, which is much more than simple imitation, is often articulated in theoretical terms such as intertextuality" (2). The parallelism between the two terms is evident from the definitions of the two concepts as both illustrate the imitative and subversive aspect of literary construction. In terms of their functions, re-writing and intertextuality share the common objectives of questioning, reconsidering and contemporising the older works as Davies suggests that "[a]mong intertextuality's most practical functions is (re)evaluation by means of comparison, counter-position and contrast" (7). However, Gerard Genette offers an alternative view to the issue as he does not consider re-writing and intertextuality as the same. He differentiates between the types of intertextuality such as metatextuality and hypertextuality. According to his definition of the second term, hypertext is the name that corresponds to the rewritten

text: “What I call hypertext . . . is any text derived from a previous text either through simple transformation, which I shall simply call from now on *transformation*, or through indirect transformation, which I shall label *imitation*” (Genette 7). Genette uses the terms hypertextuality, transformation and imitation to refer to the practice of re-writing, and particularly calls the rewritten text as “hypertext” and the source text as “hypotext” (397). According to this definition, intertextuality is the more general term that refers to mimetic practices between at least two texts whereas hypertextuality is a more specific kind of intertextuality that relates to the kind of literary production through transformation, imitation or re-writing.

Although the practice of re-writing has been observed in most of the literary periods in the form of an imitation process, it has a prominent position in works of postmodern literature. The reason for the increase of re-writings during postmodern period is due to the fact that this literary period provided freedom to the writers who wanted to experiment with innovative kinds of writing including transformative practices through the use of various devices as intertextuality, parody and deconstruction. In postmodern literature, metanarratives that were previously regarded of high value are talked over from new perspectives, and their status as the best forms of literary art is questioned. The assumption that classical texts were original works of art providing universal themes valid for all periods has been scrutinised in postmodern literature. As Linda Hutcheon clarifies, “a postmodern text might be able to subvert (even as it installs) the ideology of originality” (*A Poetics* 81). Consequently, re-writing is among the postmodern literary devices that question and subvert the claims of originality and authenticity of earlier texts. This aspect of re-writing has made it proper for use in the deconstruction of metanarratives. Appropriately, Graham Holderness points to re-writing as a deconstructive process:

> In deconstruction the text is free, expropriated from its author’s intentions, liberated from the historical determinants operating on its original production, stripped even of the apparently accessible public meanings inscribed in its language and form. The text is free – to be arbitrarily manipulated and strategically mobilized by any cause and in any direction. (*Shakespeare Recycled* 38)

Therefore, deconstruction frees a text from its bounds such as its historical and literary context, and takes it as a separate entity from its author’s possession by appropriating its

meaning. Accordingly, considering that re-writing uses a former text to serve different literary or ideological purposes, there is correlation between the practices of re-writing and deconstruction. Re-writing through deconstructing previous texts means the originality and the meaning of a former text are always under question and that they are not stable. As Graham Allen confirms this idea: "In the Postmodern epoch . . . it is not possible any longer to speak of originality or the uniqueness of the artistic object, be it a painting or a novel, since every artistic object is so clearly assembled from bits and pieces of already existent art" (5).

Another term commonly used in postmodern re-writings is parody which helps transforming the source text in not so familiar ways. The use of parody suggests that new texts inevitably reverberate the source texts while at the same time subvert their centrality. As Hutcheon points out the function of parody as decentralising the canonical texts, "[w]ith parody – as with any form of reproduction – the notion of the original as rare, single, and valuable (in aesthetic or commercial terms) is called into question" (*The Politics* 89). As postmodern practices, re-writing, intertextuality and parody do not simply copy older texts, rather they allow reconsidering the established ideas in former works and create alternative literary material with their derivative and subversive aspects.

It is believed that "[w]orks of literature . . . are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of literature" (Allen 1). Considering the fact that works of classical Greek drama took their sources from their native mythological stories and reshaped these stories in different forms, and most Roman dramatic works also followed the Greek examples, the use of re-writing as a literary practice actually dates back to quite earlier times. It should also be noted that in early English literary history, "[t]ravelling bards would add their own variations to the tale of the rhapsodists who were themselves given to embroidering on the Homeric legend" (Lettisier 4). These examples illustrate that literary imitation has been a popular practice as writers needed to use previous examples in order to invent new stories and contexts throughout literary history.

What, then, made it so important for the writers to go back to the already written sources and create their own versions out of these origins? There are several reasons for re-writing depending on the intention of the re-writer, varying from emphasising the significance of a source text and its author to challenging the narrative elements of these texts. Sonya Freeman Loftis draws attention to the initial perception of literary imitation as an entertaining and creative practice as suggested by Aristotle that "mimesis was not only a natural human behaviour but also an enjoyable one – the act of imitation is part of the network of complex reasons that people create (and enjoy) art in the first place" (xv). Consequently, it is believed that re-writing became popular as it made literary reproduction a creative and an enjoyable practice.

The perception of the practice of re-writing throughout literary history is quite a relative one. While there are views that regard re-writing as an imitative and a plagiarist practice, there are others considering it as a thought provoking and challenging method. In relation to the negative views about the practice, Emig reckons that "[a]daptation's challenges are equivalent to those of postmodernity" (18). Since postmodernism has been challenged for breaking away from the customary literary conventions, the practice of textual adaptation has also been considered problematic by those who are against the use of classical texts in disloyal forms. The idea that previous works are not respected by new writers evokes the challenge of postmodernism which is "characterized by . . . incredulity towards master and metanarratives" (Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize" 247). Re-writing necessitates experimenting with older texts to create entertaining, educative or corrective alternatives. Therefore, critics with a more conservative view regarding the protection of the original frame of a work of art have been hostile to such literary recreations. As Sonya Freeman Loftis argues, "Post-Romantic ideologies that prioritize the 'genius' of the author and worship 'originality' have encouraged some modern audiences to respond to appropriations as artificially inferior creations" (xv). For that reason, rewritten texts have often been regarded as inferior works trying to imitate their so-called superior sources.

A negative preconception about re-writing is that it indicates lack of creativity as it reinstates what is already extant. David Cowart, who names source texts as 'host text'

or ‘precursors;’ and the re-writings as ‘guest text’ or ‘symbiotic latecomers,’ respond to such criticism by arguing that the guest text is no less valuable than the host text and that re-writing as a practice does not signal an exhaustion of literature:

> The latecomer artist . . . would seem to run the risk of being perceived by readers as lacking in maturity and originality; readers may, indeed, assume that the production of a guest text is somehow less admirable than the production of a host text. Yet the latecomers with their ‘stolentelling’ rise above such residual cultural disquiet. Neither exhausted, nor effete, they prove agents of renewal. (26)

Cowart uses the term ‘stolentelling’ to refer to re-writing in *Literary Symbiosis* in which he promotes the practice claiming that it is a result of creativity, imagination and efficiency in literature. Jauss et al. also argue that former texts can survive up to day and still remain popular through the agency of their rewritten versions. As it is claimed in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, “[a] literary event can continue to have an effect only if those who come after it still or once again respond to it – if there are readers who again appropriate the past work or authors who want to imitate, outdo or refute it” (Jauss et al. 22). Consequently, the process of reinterpretation is considered pivotal for proliferation in literature and for keeping the earlier texts up to date. M. H. Abrams also evaluates the practice of re-writing, which he terms as ‘newreading,’ as a promising one as it gives an opportunity to view things differently from their reception in the first place. According to him, newreading “provides freshness of sensation in reading old and familiar texts – at least until we learn to anticipate the limited kind of new meanings it is capable of generating; it also makes it easy for any critical follower to say new and exciting things about a literary work that has been again and again discussed” (448-9). This view supports the use of re-writing as alternative interpretations arise out of re-reading older texts, and derivations allow literature to remain a prolific site in which new ideas are accepted. Critical observation is always crucial in literature to make way for different and more recent perspectives. Old texts should not be determinately read in accordance with their accepted and familiar content, rather, new interpretations need to be searched, and new variations must be brought to the fore through intertextual practices.

Philip Thody argues that for Julia Kristeva and other critics in the 1960s and 1970s who were proponents of imitative and adaptive practices in literature, all literary texts are

"reflections or reproductions of different versions of other, pre-existing texts" (86). These critics accept all literary works as products of imitation. In a similar manner, Roland Barthes also emphasises the significance of imitative nature of literary production in his claim that "any text is . . . the intertext of another text" (60). Evidently, critics such as Genette, Kristeva and Barthes consider intertextuality as an imperative practice. Roland Barthes even asserts that re-writtenness of a source text is what determines the value of a literary work: "[T]he history of a work occurs *after* it is written: it is the reading, rereading, the rewriting and reproduction of the text which gives it life and constitutes its history" (qtd. in Walter 40). In his statement, the practice of re-writing is considered as a criterion that measures the permanence and viability of a previous work across different historical and literary periods.

Another critic who accepts re-writing as an indispensable part of literary recreation is William S. Burroughs. He argues that a literary work cannot be the property of one writer or a culture, rather it needs to be used in new contexts: "After all, the work of other writers is one of a writer's main sources of input, so don't hesitate to use it; just because somebody else has an idea doesn't mean you can't take that idea and develop a new twist for it. Adaptations may become quite legitimate adoptions" (78). In consequence, re-writing is considered to broaden limited visions by providing alternative understandings out of prior sources that previously had determinate interpretations. To provide a counter statement against the essentialist view that considers re-writing as a practice sceptical of metanarratives, Sanders' statement also needs to be noted: "[W]e need to view literary adaptation and appropriation from this more positive vantage point, seeing it as creating new cultural and aesthetic possibilities that stand alongside the texts which have inspired them, enriching rather than robbing them" (41). As it is observed, re-writing as a creative technique is also defended as it is thought that rewritten texts may highlight the importance of the source work and update it rather than directly omit its most vital parts.

Different from the view that literary production is all about textual transformation, some critics who observe a certain hierarchical structure among texts argue for the supremacy

of canonical works. Lucy Mazdon believes that the reason for the distaste against re-writings is transformation's potential to alter the hierarchical conventions of literature:

> [T]he difference between production and reproduction is essential to the establishment of power. Rewritings threaten to erode this difference and thus undermine certain power structures . . . copies can usurp the texts upon which they are based thus becoming the original for many people. However, reproduction has typically been perceived as inferior to production and thus maintained in a secondary position from which it can not threaten authentic creation. (51)

This view suggests that re-writing operates and functions in the politics of literary production by subversively altering the determined power structures among authors and texts. Hence, negative references to literary appropriation as "abduction, adoption, and theft" (Marsden, *The Re-Imagined* 1) have been functional in preserving these hierarchies. Apparently, a discrepancy between production and reproduction is maintained for the protection of the superiority of certain literary works.

In response to the claims of authenticity of canonical works, Tony Bennett argues, "there is no such thing as 'the text.' There is no pure text, no fixed and final form of the text which conceals a hidden truth" (121). By deconstructing highly valued classical works and averting their objectives into distant directions, re-writing problematises the idea of ingenuity of certain texts. Most of the classical and canonical works are revered for being exceptional in value. Re-writing helps to discover the intrinsic fallacies of such texts that were previously protected by cultural and literary authority attributed to them. As Mazdon argues, "[r]ewriting and reproduction volatize texts by revealing their fundamental lack; if a text can be reproduced then surely it is not complete, it calls for reproduction" (60). Applying a challenging practice to the well-known works of literature has shown that there is no complete ultimate literary product. In order to draw attention to the idea that most products of literature themselves are also created through appropriation, and that no work could be perfect so as not to be changed, Mazdon states that "no text can exist as a self-sufficient whole; firstly because any producer of texts is also a consumer, situated within a particular socio-historical space, and thus her work will inevitably contain influences, references and quotations of all kinds" (53-54). In this regard, texts should not be seen as flawless products of genuine creativity, but as reproductions in an adaptive chain that are yet to be reproduced by other possible

interpretations. Within the context of re-writing, a text is never a complete whole, but it is always a raw material from which many new meanings are diversified. Therefore, rather than seeing works as finished products, it is necessary to consider each text as a work in progress in intertextual practice. In light of these ideas, re-writing needs to be acknowledged as a literary device which subverts established canonical rules by challenging the perception of metanarratives as "the source of a prior meaning, put there by the god-like author and sanctioned by the dominant culture" (Felperin 83). At this stage, re-writing is an act both against the status of the primary writer considered to be the original creator of a superior text and the preeminent culture that first gives rise to the emergence of such texts. Therefore, like postmodernism itself, re-writing challenges literary and cultural order.

The idea that re-writings defy supremacy among literary productions through twisted interpretations is noted as such: "Rewriting . . . challenges notions of authority and priority, suggesting that derivations need not be derivative, nor works that appear second, secondary" (Hilkovitz 5-6). Similar to the challenge of postmodernism which asserts that "no narrative can be natural 'master' narrative; there are no natural hierarchies, only those we construct" (Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize" 253), re-writing is also useful in bringing down the established premise regarding the authority of master narratives without trying to inaugurate new literary limitations. When the text written in the first place is regarded as the primary work of art whereas the latter versions of it are seen as mere attempts of copying it, it is inevitably assumed that the rewritten work is incomparable in terms of its literary value to the first written text. However, re-writing does not accept the superiority of the previous work and its author as the sole authoritative components, hence rewritten versions claim acknowledgement for being equally valuable and rich as the canonical versions. Accepting canonical works superior is considered to be restrictive for the production of different meanings and perceptions in following works of art. Therefore, rewritten versions of known texts regard literary ranking as an obstacle for literary production and creativity, and question the authenticity of highly rated canonical works by demystifying their inviolable status.

Although re-writings are often criticised for subverting the source texts thereby eroding the difference between high and low literature, they are not necessarily critical of their source texts at all times. Re-writing is sometimes considered as a practice that reflects an avid admiration of the initial versions of certain texts. In this regard, Maissonat et al. refer to re-writing as a practice that makes it possible to follow the development of works throughout literary history as well as one that acknowledges the creation of previous writers: "[Writers] who make of reprising a deliberate practise are honouring their debt to the Fathers of literature, and that their position, between homage and pillage, presupposes the existence of a traceable source of the literary Word" (viii). According to this view, in the process of re-writing, the antecedent text and its author are also recalled to memory, and the new text is considered in comparison and in relation to its primary source. Hence, according to this view, re-writing becomes a process that extends the horizons of possible interpretations without necessarily discarding the source text from which it derives its material.

It is controversial that re-writing mainly aims at correcting the source text while implicitly bringing it to light once again. As discussed previously, re-writing is a bilateral practice "founded on the illusion of filiation" (Maisonnat et al. xi). Not all re-writings have to be subversive, they could, as well, acknowledge the importance of a primary text, justify it or contemporise it to highlight its significance across literary periods. As Hutcheon endorses, "there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying" (*A Theory* 7). It is an antithetical practice to re-write a text because the rewritten text both questions some elements of the earlier work and reinforces the significance of that text at the same time. Much as appropriation is a subversive practice, it is also a way of reviving older works since "the literary adaptation of an older text is ever new and yet ever repeated, and as allusions encourage readers in acts of memory, adaptations can also serve as vessels for maintenance of the cultural past" (Freeman Loftis xviii).

Linda Hutcheon claims that "[p]ostmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to

rewrite the past in a new context" (*A Poetics* 118). While subverting the previous modes of writing, re-writing marks a distinction between past conventions and new experimental forms making it possible to observe the changing attitudes to the same issue through the lenses of two distinct historical times. In this sense, re-writing forms a bridge between the past and the present forms of literary conventions. As it is argued, "[r]eproduction, by revealing the gaps and instabilities in a text, brings about the death of the 'original', it takes away its sacred, untouchable character. Yet at the same time it is effective in ensuring the contained life of a text . . . its 'afterlife.'" (Mazdon 60). Subsequently, re-writing both forms a connection with the literary past and necessitates a break from it in order to produce a different meaning. Ultimately, both functions of re-writing are observed throughout literary history as it reawakens the antecedent text while marginalising the significant works of the canon at the same time.

Alan Sinfield attributes ideological and political function to re-writings as they may reinforce or oppose the ideological stances of their literary antecedents. In this regard, writers' ideological positions shape their interpretation of the previous texts and determine the way in which they construct their own versions. According to Sinfield's analysis of the practice of re-writing:

> When a part of our worldview threatens disruption by manifestly failing to cohere with the rest, then we must reorganize and retell its story again and again, trying to get into shape – back into the old shape if we are conservative-minded, or into a new shape that we can develop and apply if we are more adventurous. (*Literature* 37)

Subversive aspect of re-writings in terms of questioning the relevance of prior texts and the accepted value of earlier writers is conditioned by the new writers' ideological views. The fact that writers reflect on an already existing text rather than composing a new one proves that they have a special interest in establishing dialogue with the narrative elements of a certain work though they risk being criticised for literary theft. What differentiates re-writing from writing is its intimate and sometimes problematic relationship with a former work of art that entails practices such as comparing, correcting, subverting or criticising the preceding version. Producing an alternative interpretation of a work goes hand in hand with the objective to correct the flaws of the

earlier text. Philip Thody notes that by means of re-writing, "[l]iterature consequently becomes a force for demystification and liberation, an instrument for enabling people to see, perhaps not reality itself, but at least a different, a less flattering as well as a less impressive and less imprisoning version of it" (87). Re-writing signifies the freedom of the late writers to introduce new ideas, correct what they think the precursors have overlooked in the source works, and bring about a new if not a better idea with another text. Maisonnat et al. also draw attention to the corrective function of re-writing: "[R]ewriting/reprising may be understood as an endless attempt to heal . . . breaches loaded with silent affects" (xii-xiii). According to the postmodern theory, no text is accepted as the final complete product, hence there can always be gaps to be filled and flaws to be removed in preceding works of literature. For the purpose of substituting such gaps existent in earlier literary works, re-writing is used as an instrumental practice.

As much as the ideological stance of the re-writers, the period in which the practice of re-writing takes place is also influential in the reproduction process. The impact of the time and period on the texts in appropriative practices is acknowledged as such: "[C]ontemporary version attempts . . . to replace the pre-text with itself, at once to negate the pre-text's cultural power and to 'correct' the way we read it *in the present*" (Widdowson 501; emphasis added). In this respect, along with demolishing the supremacy of earlier literary works and questioning the validity of cultural structures in which they were produced, re-writings correct and appropriate the ideas used in the source texts to present day conditions. By this means, the ideological underpinnings of earlier texts are manipulated in order to provide more appealing and relevant versions of familiar stories.

Historical context and the particular group of reader/audience for whom a text is created are indispensable elements of re-writing. In order to understand the objectives and functions of literary appropriation, it is necessary to ask "'why', which is to say, 'why now,' or 'why here, for this audience'" (Edwards 373). Apparently, the relevance of the text to its context and the communication between the text and the reader should be taken into consideration to discuss the function of re-writing, the author's intentions and

reasons for transformation. Situating rewritten texts within particular contexts and trying to understand why they are created in certain historical moments make it possible to realise the more critical function of re-writing for a set group of readers, a practice which Hutcheon names as "the *politics* of intertextuality" (qtd. in Edwards 373). Looking for the ideological reasons behind the practice of re-writing and correlating the texts to certain cultural contexts, ideological concerns and historical periods are key aspects of understanding the politics of intertextuality. This function indicates that revising a previous work should not be simply regarded as imitation but as a more ideological and a political act aimed to raise particular concerns. A justification for the practice of re-writing is that previous works of art lack referentiality as they fail to respond to developing ways of thinking as well as the problems and interests of contemporary reading communities. This idea is clearly summed up in Alan Sinfield's statement that "when we no longer admire the 'art' valued by earlier generations, we put that down to error, rather than remarking that the concept is inherently relative. We select and assemble 'art' to suit current needs" (*Literature* 28). In contemporary literature, early works of art are not always regarded as capable of relating to present day issues, hence the practice of re-writing also functions as modernisation and recontextualisation of the earlier texts. Societies and cultures are reformulated by changing circumstances, and literary works also reflect the close relationship between texts and contexts by displaying the changes between distant historical periods. In this respect, Gillian Beer remarks that

> [l]iterary history will always be an expression of now: current needs, dreads, preoccupations. The cultural conditions within which we receive the texts will shape the attention we first bring to them. We shall read as readers in 1987 or 1988, or, with luck, 1998, but we need not do so helplessly, merely hauling, without noticing, our own cultural baggage. (66-7)

Besides changing historical periods, politics of re-writing points to an evident influence of developing theories such as postcolonialism, feminism, cultural materialism, racism and Marxism on the ways in which older texts are perceived in subsequent periods. It is observed that the approach of re-writers to earlier texts is mostly informed by such cultural and theoretical phenomena. For instance, re-writings that represent the perspectives of particular racial idetities whose concerns were neglected in the earlier

works are influenced from postcolonial theories. Similarly, reworkings that represent the female characters' concerns that were often overlooked in the male-centred canon of literary history develop as a result of feminism as an ideology. Gilbert and Tompkins term such transformations constructed from critical ideological viewpoints as "canonical counter-discourse" which "seeks to deconstruct significations of authority and power exercised in the canonical text, to release its stranglehold on representation and, by implication, to intervene in social conditioning" (16). When canonical literary works are considered to be products of certain ideologies, re-writing, in the form of counter-discourse, turns into a radical change as it alters the power structures established in the previous works. With regard to this subversive aspect of re-writing, Widdowson suggests that texts can "be revised and re-visioned as part of the process of restoring a voice, a history and an identity to those hitherto exploited, marginalized and silenced by dominant interests and ideologies" (505-6). Marginalisation of disadvantaged groups of any kind such as ethnic minorities or subjugated female characters in some earlier works has continuously provoked new writers to challenge the ideologies reinforced by these earlier narratives. This need for transformation can be explained with Beer's argument that "[t]hings mean differently at different historical moments, and different things need to be asserted at different times" (70). As historical periods and dominant ideologies change in time, representation of certain ideas and characters in literary works also changes. This explains the need for constructing new discourses in accordance with the changing and developing ideologies, and socio-cultural structures.

The major objective of this study is to analyse the uses of re-writing in drama, the purposes and instrumentalisation of the practice by the re-writers of Shakespeare's plays in accordance with their social and political backgrounds. The use of re-writing in the formation of new dramatic texts is observed throughout literary history, the earliest examples of which were seen in the classical tragedies as they heavily depended on mythological and historical sources for their subject matter. As David Lane draws attention to the wide use of re-writing in theatre beginning from the classical period:

> Drama has always been a magpie of storytelling forms, stealing and borrowing from existing narrative sources to create new ones. The characters and plots that

> comprise many of the tragedies from the most prominent Greek dramatists – Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides – have their roots in the '*mythoi* (myths or stories) which were expressed in the older narrative epic poems.' (157)

Likewise, the initial examples of Roman tragedies and comedies were based on Greek pioneers. To suggest the centrality of adaptation in dramatic practices, White argues that "[i]n no other area is textuality so central: all the world's no longer a stage but a text, and all the men and women merely readers" (White 293). This statement, which itself re-writes the famous lines of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, "[a]ll the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It* 2.7.108), proposes the idea that the stage is a sphere where any reproduction is another text that potentially points to different ideas.

As re-writings subvert the status of the source text's author as the primary creator, appropriation in drama also renders the idea of authorship problematic. Fischlin and Fortier emphasise the fact that "[t]heatre is always a form of reworking, in a sense the first step toward adaptation" (7). In this sense, each production of a dramatic text is actually a re-writing process. As Michael Scott claims, "[d]ramatic texts are imperfect artefacts in that their creators, the dramatists, do not have complete authority over what is performed" (2). The use of adaptation illustrates that dramatic works, like other works of literature, should not be held to be authentic and complete entities, but as constructions constantly susceptible to change in the hands of writers associated with different literary traditions, and directors that use various theatrical techniques in their stage adaptations.

Accordingly, in terms of the alternative uses of Shakespeare's works in literary history, it is observed that most of his works have been subject to change and textual adaptation. Thomas Cartelli describes Shakespeare as "an unusually charged medium of textual exchange" (23) due to a variety of new forms into which his works have been adapted. Transformations of his works in many forms including new plays, novels, and movies have been produced since the early modern period. In order to emphasise the influence of Shakespeare's plays in the emergence of new literary texts, and point to the fact that his works have always been open to (re)interpretation, Richard Burt argues that "Shakespeare has always been 'Shakespeares,' mediatized and subject to dislocation,

decontextualization, and fragmentation as the texts were revised, performed, printed and otherwise circulated in Elizabethan and Jacobean England and Europe" (3). There is no authorised copy of Shakespeare's works that overrules their production; hence a variety of adaptive forms have been applied to Shakespeare's works. Writers have been interested in experimenting with the Shakespearean material in different literary periods for various purposes, sometimes in the form of film adaptations, sometimes in the form of prequels or sequels in literary appropriations.

Marjorie Garber claims that "Shakespeare is the defining figure of the English Renaissance, and the most cited and quoted author of every era since" (*Shakespeare's Ghost* 3). It is necessary to look for the ways in which Shakespeare's reputation as one of the most popular writers is maintained, and why late writers have been so interested in re-writing his works. One view regarding the reason for the constant interest in Shakespeare's works is that he provided later generations with a rich source of subject matter as his plays concern a variety of issues ranging from history to politics, from tragedy to comedy. This statement is often coupled with the view that upholds Shakespeare as a unique writer. Even prominent figures of English literature have often regarded Shakespeare above other writers in terms of literary proliferation as is exemplified in Ben Jonson's much quoted reference to Shakespeare as a writer "not of an age but for all time" (392). While Ben Jonson compares Shakespeare to his contemporaries, he considers him ahead of his time, and "distances Shakespeare from his peers in the British theatre – Kyd, Lyly, Marlowe – and places him instead in the company of classical Greek and Latin dramatists, icons of high culture" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 24). According to Jonson's contention, Shakespeare's works were closer to the classics. Like classical writers, he was prolific as a writer, and he provided a rich source of literary material that inspired the following periods.

Considering Shakespeare's popularity in the following periods, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was also an admirer of Shakespeare. He expressed his ideas about Shakespeare with the words: "He is of no age – nor I may add, of any religion, or party or profession. The body and substance of his works came out of the unfathomable depths of his own oceanic mind" (301). According to Coleridge, Shakespeare was not a

spokesman for any ideology, any religion, or any period of time, but he was timeless, and his works continue holding their relevance for all times despite the passing of time itself. In more recent literary criticism, Harold Bloom takes up a similar attitude, and asserts that "Shakespeare is the Western Canon" (*The Western* 75), and situates him on a superior status together with Dante on the grounds that "they excel all other Western writers in cognitive acuity, linguistic energy, and power of invention" (*The Western* 46). Bloom's claim sets a precedent to show the general treatment of Shakespeare in the Western canon, which has helped preserving Shakespeare's superior status throughout literary history. However, besides such veneration towards Shakespeare throughout ages, there has been remarkable negative criticism of his works by prominent writers or critics. To name a few, Alexander Pope, Voltaire, Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and more recently George Orwell all voiced their criticism of Shakespeare's legacy and his works in their writings, mainly setting their argument against the aesthetic quality of his works, their lack of moral and didactic aim, and blind reverence to Shakespeare (Sullivan 1). For instance, Orwell criticises Shakespeare for "the irrelevancies, the incredible plots, the exaggerated language" (72) in his much acclaimed works. Obviously, the ideas these writers suggest against Shakespeare's works help criticising bardolatry, and invite the plays to be reconsidered with new perspectives that are relevant to the concerns of subsequent periods.

Despite the fact that Shakespeare's works were products of the audiences and context of his day, it is widely believed that the topics he wrote about transcend their time. The superiority attributed to Shakespeare explains the popularity of his works. As it is assumed that his works are products of an exceptional genius, they are seen ahead of their time and accepted as relevant for all periods. In this sense, Terence Hawkes lists some of the preconceptions about Shakespeare and his works:

> Shakespeare . . . was a 'genius', gifted with astonishing insight into and sympathy for something called 'human nature'. His plays present a wide range of individual characters across the broad spectrum of humanity, capturing our experience of love, hate, life, and death in recognizable and heart-warming detail. Such enormous scope, the ability to speak to all human beings through all the ages, at all times and everywhere, regardless of race, gender, creed, geography, or history, underwrites his work's universal validity. That's why we embrace it. ("Introduction to" 571)

Apparently, Shakespeare's superiority is founded on such assumptions as his ability to create diverse characters. Considering the number and diversity of characters observed in his works, Shakespeare is often credited with the ability to properly represent the concept known as "human nature" without taking into consideration the differences among human beings. In this regard, it is useful to remember Samuel Johnson's admiration of Shakespeare particularly for his representation of "human nature:"

> Shakespeare is . . . the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpracticed by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species. (301)

With these words, Johnson acts as a leading critic who contributed to the wide acknowledgement of Shakespeare as a distinctive writer. In this regard, Edwin Wilson claims that "[a]fter Johnson . . . a sort of adoration set in and Shakespeare was looked on as more a god than a man. He was no longer criticized, he was deified" (xvi). As it is observed in the above statement, the characters in Shakespeare's plays and the discussions that surround these characters have been influential on Shakespeare's popularity up to day. His characters are mostly considered to be accurate representations of real human beings on stage rather than as certain types. It is interesting to observe that Tom Stoppard, the writer of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966), a parodic re-writing of *Hamlet* (1605), also gives Shakespeare credit for his creation of different characters in his works: "To observe human nature with a clear eye, and to understand human behaviour with an unclouded mind, is rare; to express these things in verbal cadences which simultaneously manage to suggest compression and expansiveness, defies analysis" (11).

It should be noted that rather than claims about Shakespeare such as his uniqueness or his works' transcendental nature, it is the adaptability of his works into various literary and dramatic forms that still makes them quite popular. Challenging the premise

concerning Shakespeare's unrivalled ability to represent human nature, Alan Sinfield emphasises that human nature is not something fixed, therefore Shakespeare should no longer be considered exceptional in terms of character creation ("Royal Shakespeare" 202). In this regard, it is also necessary to remember Bernard Shaw's criticism of bardolatry: "Shakespeare is supreme because he embodied most completely the whole range of emotions. But they were human emotions, and his greatness is due to that fact. It is false admiration to worship him as an infallible demi-god" (xvi). These ideas illustrate that most of the unwarranted presumptions about Shakespeare's works have helped to preserve a higher status for him in literary and cultural milieux. However, such ideas have also drawn critical responses from subsequent writers and critics with a more objective opinion about Shakespeare and his works.

Some issues that need to be questioned in relation to Shakespearean re-writing are as follows: Why do writers in the following periods choose to re-write Shakespeare's plays rather than any other writer's works? What is the reason for the continuous appropriations of his works, and why are people so much interested in the new versions of the works along with the initial versions even centuries later they were written? Charles Marowitz points out the necessity to look for the reasons of such intriguing questions rather than coming up with new ways to reinforce Shakespeare's cultural superiority: "The real mystery is not really who he was or where he came from, but why we allow his influence to inhibit our conception of what we are capable of turning him into" (*Recycling* 31). According to this line of reasoning, it is necessary to consider the reasons that necessitate the use of Shakespeare's works in different forms rather than furthering discussions of ungrounded claims about the writer and his plays.

The conservative approach to Shakespeare's re-writings upholds the belief that his works invite reinterpretations as they offer a variety of topics as material for recreation. As Richard Burt observes, for writers who admire Shakespeare such as John Dryden, he "is God's playwright. Shakespeare rules, like a king, by sacred power of divine right. And his immortality is marked not only because his own plays are restaged but also, more importantly . . . because he inspires living playwrights to pen new adaptations of them" (741). It is believed that as Shakespeare provided the literary field with

innovative topics, following writers did not need to invent new ideas, and continuously held on to his popularity by appropriating them over and over again. This idea is clearly manifested in John Elsom's comment that "Shakespeare left behind a rich wardrobe of clothes, props and ideas which we could wear according to our moods and necessities" (3). Similarly, the following statement by Martin Esslin illustrates that it is the richness of Shakespeare's plays that inspires many re-writings: "[Shakespeare's] plays provide a kind of multi-focal viewpoint. You can look at the play as it was written. You can treat it as a historical document. You can consider what it means to you as an expression of continuing human emotions and you can look at it again as a myth which lives through its ability to be modified" (*Is Shakespeare* 26). Attributing a number of positive traits to Shakespeare's works, this view suggests that his works embody different meanings when interpreted from different viewpoints, which eventually leads them to be considered as mythical.

Re-writings mainly emerge out of a need to fill in the gaps left out by the previous writers. Accordingly, multiple interpretations of Shakespeare's plays reveal their ambiguous nature, and aim to clarify their ambivalent parts. Various adaptations of Shakespeare's works with this objective illustrate that his texts have no ultimate meaning, and no final reading. However, Shakespeare's admirers accept the ambiguity of his works as a projection of their mythical quality. For instance, it is known that John Keats praises Shakespeare for his "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts" (193-4). Rather than using this aspect of his works as a means to legitimate claims of Shakespeare's superiority, it should be acknowledged as a viable reason for the emergence of continuous appropriations of his works. With respect to this idea, Bickley and Stevens also claim, "the indeterminacy of Shakespeare's plays makes them especially amenable to deconstruction" (214). Therefore, diversity of interpretations of these works should not be viewed as a result of their exceptional quality, but as a pointer of the various backgrounds from which his works are evaluated. Evidently, each reader's interpretation of his works is different from the other depending on their ideology or identity along with other criteria such as their gender, nationality, and age.

Charles Marowitz, as a director who approaches Shakespeare's works critically in his adaptations, suggests the idea that it is not any extraordinary quality of these works that make them available for transformation but their popularity among the public. Shakespeare's works are familiar to so many people that there is already an existing reader community that has an idea about his works. This allows the re-writers to establish a dialogue with readers/audiences who are already familiar with certain Shakespeare plays. In this process, it is possible for the writers to propose different versions of the already known topics, hence provide different messages and ideas. This practice also explains why writers choose some critical issues of Shakespeare's works as source material, and construct their own plot and make a new point about the chosen topic rather than write a new play. In this regard, it is the widespread popularity of Shakespeare's plays that make them specifically convenient for reproduction.

Re-writing Shakespeare's works has not always been supported as a prolific literary practice as Shakespeare is mostly considered "as a regulative standard or mystified icon of value" (Lanier, "Shakespearean Rhizomatics" 31). In conservative approach, any attempt to reconstruct Shakespeare's works has been seen as disloyalty to his literary heritage. Based on the premise that Shakespeare's works are "authentic," rewritten versions of his plays have sometimes been accepted as denigration and belittling of these works. In terms of the challenge of reiterating Shakespeare's works, Huang and Rivlin comment that "[w]ith its connotations of aggressive seizure and forced possession, it [adaptation] might suggest that Shakespeare is a signifier that can be seized and deployed – against Shakespeare's will, as it were. From this perspective, appropriation might seem inherently unethical" (2). As discussed in the general introduction to the practice of re-writing, appropriations of canonical texts are criticised. Considered in line with this idea, Shakespeare appropriations specifically draw critical reaction for attempting to question the source material's inherent quality.

As opposed to this belief, another view suggests that re-writings of Shakespeare's works are actually what make Shakespeare's popularity and validity still probable in our day. As Douglas Lanier comments "Shakespeare's special status in the literary canon springs from a complex history of appropriation and reappropriation, through which his image

and works have been repeatedly recast to speak to the purposes, fantasies, and anxieties of various historical moments" (*Shakespeare* 21). According to this idea, it is not Shakespeare's popularity that has made the reproductions possible but it is through such reworkings that his works can still be popular and relevant for the following periods. Clearly, Shakespeare is made contemporary through re-writing as his works cannot always respond to the issues of subsequent periods in their original forms.

Shakespeare was also a re-writer himself and he constructed most of his plays by appropriating former works of art and historical chronicles. He is considered as "an active adaptor and imitator, an appropriator of myth, fairy tale, and folklore, as well as of the works of specific writers as varied as Ovid, Plutarch, and Holinshed" (Sanders 46) along with others such as Boccaccio and Thomas Kyd (Marowitz, *Recycling* 15). Considering this fact leads to questioning Shakespeare's status as the superior literary figure as it is obvious that he was not the first creator of most of his works. According to Desmet and Sawyer "[t]he history of Shakespearean appropriation contests bardolatry by demystifying the concept of authorship" (4). Assessing Shakespeare's use of earlier texts in the formation of his own plays on one hand, and reinterpretation of his works on the other, his association with the practice of re-writing is an intimate one because intertextual reproduction has been imperative for both Shakespeare himself and those who followed him. Apart from re-writing other sources, it is also believed that he was even re-writing his own works at times to make them fit for different purposes. According to Coleridge's observation, for instance, "*Hamlet* was itself rewritten and inverted as *Macbeth*: a good man in a rotten state becomes a corrupted man in a good state that needs to be restored, so that treason was now seen from the other side, from the traitor's point of view" (Forsyth 127). Likewise, Edward Bond also gives an example in Shakespeare's own oeuvre to suggest that some of his plays are revisions of his earlier texts such as *Cymbeline*, which he considers a "rehash of *King Lear*" (Bond, "Introduction" x).

Among the works of Shakespeare as appropriations of former texts, "[t]he most famous example is likely to be *Romeo and Juliet*, originally a fifteenth-century Italian novella the plot of which Shakespeare probably encountered through an adaptation itself: a

verse narrative titled *Romeus and Juliet* by English writer Arthur Brooke" (D. Lane 157). Literary texts are kept alive through many different versions throughout history as in this case of a former Italian novella first rewritten by Brooke in English in 1562, later by Shakespeare in 1597, and much later by following writers for different purposes. To further elaborate on the sources used by Shakespeare for the production of his works, one of his problem plays, *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) draws its source from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (1380s); and his other play, *As You Like It* (1599) is an appropriation of Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590). In the latter play, it is argued that Shakespeare "undermines and refutes the implicit gender structures of the source text" (S. J. Lynch 1-2). Moreover, *The Winter's Tale* (1623) is also known to be a re-writing of Robert Greene's romance, *Pandosto* (1588) (S. J. Lynch 2). Additionally, *Othello* (1604) is based on Cinthio's prose work titled *Hecatommithi* (1565) (S. J. Lynch 114), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) is a reworking of Plutarch's *The Life of Mark Antony* (Eyre and Wright 24).

As another illustration of the sources of Shakespeare's plays, the origin of *King Lear* (1606) is an anonymous play called *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir and His Three Daughters* (1590) which, as James Shapiro argues, is the play that Shakespeare "worked most closely from – and against" (*1606* 57) along with Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1587). Some other sources are listed as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (1135), John Higgins' *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1574) and Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590). Additionally, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1596), and the poet, William Warner's play *Albion's England* (1586) are also considered among the sources of *King Lear*. Some correlations are also observed between *King Lear*, particularly in terms of the sub-plot of Gloucester and his sons, and Robert Greene's *Selimus* (1594), "a play about an early-sixteenth-century Emperor of Turkey and his three sons" (Foakes, Introduction 12).

As with most of the other plays in the Shakespeare canon, *The Merchant of Venice* (1605) is also a re-writing of different sources. It is thought that Italian Ser Giovanni's *Il Pecorone* (*The Simpleton*) (1378) written in the fourteenth century provides the motif of Christian borrowing from the Jew usurer (Marowitz, *Recycling* 129). John Gross also

counts a broadsheet ballad titled *The Ballad of Gernutus* (n.d.) as a source upon which Shakespeare reconstructed his Shylock character (*Shylock* 8). Additionally, Arnold Wesker adds other works to the list of sources of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*:

> [F]irst, a story written in Italian at the end of the fourteenth century about a rich merchant of Venice called Ansalado who borrows money against a pound of flesh from a Jew so that his godson, Ciannetto, can seek his fortune. The second, a story about wooing which involves having to chose [sic.] the right casket out of three in order to secure the woman for a wife. And the third, probably a fifteenth century story by Masuccio di Salerno about a daughter escaping with her miserly (not Jewish) father's jewels to her lover . . . (*The Birth* xv)

Additionally, in terms of the sources of *Hamlet,* Saxo Grammaticus' *Historia Danica* (1204?), Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (1587) and a lost play known as *Ur-Hamlet* are among the acknowledged pre-texts. As Shakespeare used previous sources in the construction of some of his most acclaimed plays, it is obvious that re-writing was his "greatest and most persistent professional skill" (S. J. Lynch 118). The fact that Shakespeare constantly used the practice of re-writing defies the belief that his works are impeccable creations that cannot be rewritten in any better form. Regarding Shakespeare's works as adaptations of earlier texts rather than products of his authentic creation demystifies his status in the English canon. Therefore, his cultural and literary authority is contested by treating "Shakespeare script(s) as themselves adaptations, rather than as monumental objects" (Lanier, "Shakespearean Rhizomatics" 31). As the mythical status of his plays is contested, and they begin to be considered in similar terms with any other literary text, Shakespeare's cultural and literary superiority is dislocated. It needs to be noted that the writer is not the only authority behind a work of art, and no work of art is an original one as most literary texts make use of previous sources. In the case of Shakespeare's plays too, it is necessary to view his texts as products of adaptation rather than an exceptional genuine creativity.

When Shakespeare's approach to his sources is considered, it is seen that he "both enshrined and mocked his sources, whether literary, historical, religious or ideological" (Hansen and Wetmore 1). Deconstructing the source text, and turning its purposes into different forms are in the nature of re-writing, and the re-writers of Shakespeare see no reason why his works should not be corrected, subverted, or updated. In response to the

cult of being loyal to Shakespeare in re-writings, Huang and Rivlin put forward the idea that "[s]ince 'Shakespeare' was from the beginning a mutable and mutating signifier, it is difficult to know to whom or what we ought to be faithful" (8). In the process of re-writing, Shakespeare is turned into a complementary figure in a continuous adaptational chain whose beginning is difficult to trace and ending is too distant to guess. Considering the fact that he was a prolific appropriator of former texts, Shakespeare needs to be seen as a link in a cycle of adaptive practices, not as its beginning or its end. Accordingly, Douglas Lanier argues that it is necessary to consider Shakespeare's works and his adaptations in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizomatic structure that "has no single or central root and no vertical structure. Instead, like the underground root system of rhizomatic plants, it is a horizontal, decentered multiplicity of subterranean roots that cross each other, bifurcating and recombining, breaking off and restarting" ("Shakespearean Rhizomatics" 28). Deleuze and Guattari distinguish the rhizomatic structure from "centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths," and they define the rhizome "as an acentered, non-hierarchical, nonsignifying system without a general and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states" (16). According to Lanier's application of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome to the Shakespearean text, Shakespeare cannot be taken as the starting point but as a uniting/combining unit in a pendulum. In this line of thinking, scrutinising Shakespeare's texts by treating them as supplementary elements in rhizomatic structure demonstrates that his works only portray one version of an already existing story, and they should not be regarded as the final form. As it is observed, placing the practice of Shakespearean adaptation into the scope of rhizomatic structure regards all adaptations equal to his productions in terms of value and significance.

In relation to the history of re-writing Shakespeare, Marjorie Garber's comment needs to be remembered: "Every age creates its own Shakespeare" (*Shakespeare's Ghost* 3). The practice of re-writing Shakespeare began in the seventeenth century when he was still constructing his own versions. John Fletcher, Philip Massinger and Francis

Beaumont were the first to take up his plays and transform them in this period[1]. For instance, Fletcher and Beaumont's *Philaster* (1609) is considered as a tragi-comical version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in terms of the use of issues such as "usurpation and rightful succession, tyranny and proper rule, foreign and native marriage alliances," and it is also thought that the play bears resemblance to Shakespeare's history plays (Gossett 20). Additionally, John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611) as a revision of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591), and another re-writing Fletcher produced collaboratively with Philip Massinger, *The Sea Voyage* (1622) which thematically borrows from *The Tempest* (1610) were the earliest practices of appropriating Shakespeare's works in this period.

Fletcher's play, *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* is a sequel of *The Taming of the Shrew,* and it was written nearly twenty years after the initial production of Shakespeare's play. The play deals with Petruchio and his second wife Maria who is absent in Shakespeare's play. In this version, Fletcher subverts the gender roles determined in Shakespeare's work by regarding the treatment of Katherine misogynistic, and presents a contrary approach to the issue with a portrayal of powerful women characters in the same context. Different from Petruchio's first wife Katherina, who is depicted as a shrewish woman in Shakespeare's play, Fletcher's protagonist, Maria is a strong woman who aims to tame Petruchio, the representative voice of patriarchy in both plays. By taking up one of the most controversial plays of Shakespeare, hence revealing its ambiguity and underlying misogyny, Fletcher gives voice to the previously silenced women characters in order to question patriarchal dominance in Shakespeare's play. Following this example, Fletcher and Massinger's collaborative work *The Sea Voyage* "reflects beliefs about the importance of women for the maintenance of well being in the colonies of the early 1620s" (Jowitt 193). In this comical reworking of *The Tempest,* Fletcher and Massinger observe the colonial background of Jacobean England, and discuss the role of women in the sphere of world politics. Apparently, critical approaches to Shakespeare's plays began as early as the seventeenth century since writers used his plays as a means for discussing problematic issues of their context.

[1] A list of Shakespearean re-writings produced in different historical periods and different countries can be found in the Appendix I page.

There are various reasons why Shakespeare's works are selected in different periods for re-writing. For instance, concerning the earliest examples of reproductions of Shakespeare on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage, Margreta de Grazia informs that

> the literature of the Elizabethan age in general was deemed 'barbaric' and in need of rehabilitation and refinement. It is in this age that Shakespeare's plays were rewritten for the stage according to new linguistic as well as literary criteria; and soon after began the massive editorial labour of 'correcting' what had come to be judged Shakespeare's errors, excesses, and irregularities. (58)

Due to the influence of Roman tragedy on Jacobean tragedy, there were several violent plays on stage including Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1593), Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592) and Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) (Foakes, *Shakespeare* 107). In relation to the excessive use of violent scenes on the Jacobean stage, it is argued that

> [w]ith its bloody bombast, hyperactive emotionality and graphic violence, the tragic drama written and performed during the reign of King James I has become coterminous with the ruthless violation of the accepted rules of good taste, moral decency and aesthetic order. These are plays in which characters are mutilated and tortured with apparent gusto, in which intricate assassinations are planned and mercilessly executed. (Müller-Wood 9)

Evidently, one of the reasons why Shakespeare's plays began to be rewritten in the first place is the need to reform the Jacobean stage and clear it from the dominance of savagery proposed by such earlier plays.

Following these much earlier re-writings, the first remarkable adaptations of Shakespeare were observed in the Restoration period when "more than fifty adaptations [of Shakespeare's plays] appeared in print and on the stage" (Marsden, *The Re-Imagined* 1) as the theatres were reopened after a closure of eighteen years. With regard to the transformations of Shakespeare's works in this period, it is known that particularly the female roles were appropriated in accordance with the appearance of the first women performers on the stage. Howe reports the appearance of the woman actor on the stage as follows: "Some time during the last months of 1660, a professional English actress appeared in a play on the English public stage for the first time – a historic moment for the English theatre" (19). This improvement also influenced the

productions of Shakespeare adaptations during this period. As it is informed about the staging of Shakespeare's plays in the Restoration period:

> The appropriation of Shakespeare began in earnest with the reopening of the theatres after the restoration of Charles II. In the succeeding decades, a new generation of playwrights rewrote Shakespeare's plays to please a new audience, adapting them to adjust to the appearance of actresses on the stage and to a changed political climate. (Marsden, *The Appropriation* 3)

Gary Taylor points out the popularity of Shakespeare adaptations in the Restoration as such: "Restoration audiences . . . preferred Shakespeare *á la* Davenant (or Dryden, or Tate, or someone else) to Shakespeare au naturel" (30). The most popular writer preoccupied with re-writing Shakespeare's works during the Restoration was William Davenant with his adaptations outnumbering his contemporaries. Bickley and Stevens argue that "[p]oet, playwright, theatre manager, and staunch royalist, Davenant's support for Charles I during the Civil War had earned him a knighthood and, with the accession of Charles II, the rights to nine of Shakespeare's plays" (95). Concerning Davenant's re-writings of Shakespeare, Spencer claims that

> [t]he idea of substantially altering Shakespeare's plays seems to have come primarily from the ingenious, experimental mind of Sir William Davenant, who, at the Restoration, was anxious to show the new court and a younger generation that his taste was up to date and that Shakespeare, whom he admired greatly, could be made attractive to the new patrons of the theater. (*Five Restoration* 1)

This account informs that Davenant regarded re-writing Shakespeare both as a financial act as he wanted to make profit with the productions of Shakespeare's plays, and he also saw the practice as a political one to please the patrons, and proposed to make necessary changes in the original plays to make them fit for the tastes of the Restoration audience. With regard to the financial aspect of Shakespearean re-writing during the Restoration, it is claimed, "managers of the new theaters felt that many of Shakespeare's plays had to be altered in order to make them marketable" (Marsden, *The Re-Imagined* 13). Consequently, Davenant was no exception as he was interested in financial gain while recreating Shakespeare.

Davenant's first adaptation of Shakespeare was *The Law Against the Lovers* (1662), which is a conflation of Shakespeare's two plays *Measure for Measure* (1603) and

Much Ado About Nothing (1598). In Davenant's version "[t]he sexual and religious issues raised in Shakespeare's play are toned down so that, as the title suggests, the spotlight can shine on the various sets of lovers and the intrigues which bring them to final union" (Bickley and Stevens 95). A second re-writing by Davenant is *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* (1667), which he co-wrote with John Dryden. In this re-writing, "Caliban and Miranda both have sisters and Prospero's extended family further includes a male ward who has never seen a woman" (Dobson 41-42). Bickley and Stevens claim that this re-writing "altered the plot considerably, adding new female characters (sisters for Miranda and Caliban), and transforming the structure of the play with considerably more music and dance, as well as an antimasque of devils" (31). These transformations are also viewed as reflections of the differing conventions and tastes of the Restoration theatre: "Such changes reflected new theatrical tastes and the appearance on stage of actresses rather than the young boys of Shakespeare's time" (Bickley and Stevens 31). Following this cooperative adaptation, Davenant continued with a re-writing of *Macbeth* (1611) in the form of opera titled *Macbeth, a Tragedy* (1674). This was a popular play in which "Shakespearean evil ambition is transformed into Restoration heroic ambition. In the same way Elizabethan values are substituted for neoclassic moral virtues and the new neoclassic conception of character" (Lopez Roman 214). This alteration was in line with the conventional Restoration idea of tragedy that focused on heroic issues with an emphasis on the dichotomy between love and the ideal of heroic duty as observed in the plays of Restoration dramatists such as John Dryden and Thomas Otway. As Branam notes in terms of the emphasis on the theme of love that began in the Restoration and followed in eighteenth-century adaptations of Shakespeare, "perhaps the most striking alterations to be found in the eighteenth century versions of Shakespeare – next to the neoclassic changes – are the love plots" (157).

It is claimed that it was "in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century when the most radically revised adaptations [of Shakespeare] were written" (Marsden, *The Re-Imagined* 4). Concerning these reproductions of Shakespeare, Spencer notes "this practice often meant fitting his work to the stage conditions of the day and adjusting his plot, characters, and language to contemporary taste" (*Nahum Tate* 67). In 1667, John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* became popular with its more comical treatment of

Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591). Lacy's play reflects the conflict between the two sexes in the play and questions "the traditional ideological underpinnings of a husband's claim to authority" (Staves 131). In this same period, John Dryden was also interested in reproducing Shakespeare's works anew. A notable play of Dryden, *All for Love or The World Well Lost* (1677) is a retelling of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606). In this play, the conventional heroic drama is represented with the elimination of the affair between the famous couple, Antony and Cleopatra. Appropriate to the literary conventions of the eighteenth century, the play is also loyal to the neoclassic idea of unities of time and place. Patterson argues that "[i]n place of Shakespeare's vast historical panorama, Dryden concentrates the action according to neo-classical rules, keeping to locations in Alexandria and beginning near the end of the story, so that the action seems to occupy a few days at most" (7-8). Another Shakespearean reworking by Dryden is *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), which again concentrates on the heroic side of Shakespeare's text with a special emphasis on the rivalry between the two heroes, Achilles and Ajax. In this work, Cressida is depicted in a more positive manner in contrast to Shakespeare's relatively misogynist treatment as he turned her into an adulterous female character during the process of transformation from Chaucer's work.

Other notable reimaginings of Shakespeare's works among the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century productions include Thomas Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680), Thomas Shadwell's *The History of Timon of Athens The Man-Hater* (1688), Colley Cibber's *Richard III* (1699), and George Grenville Lansdowne's *Jew of Venice* (1701). In terms of the dominant transformations observed in Shakespeare adaptations in this period, there was an evident aim to make the plays more proper according to the staging conventions of the time such as eradicating the violent scenes of his works. As George Branam claims with respect to this issue, "[s]cenes that achieved melodrama by excess of violence or by shocking the sensibilities of the audience in any other way (the putting out of Gloucester's eyes in *King Lear*, for example, or the death of Arthur in *King John*) were not pleasing to the eighteenth-century audience, and were usually altered" (135).

Though there were conservative adaptations of Shakespeare as seen in the plays of David Garrick as an admirer of Shakespeare, corrective aspect of literary adaptation is also observed in Restoration re-writings of his works. It is argued that dramatists of the period "regarded the Elizabethan style as inferior to their own in sophistication and regularity" (Spencer, *Nahum Tate* 72). Therefore, reiterations of Shakespeare in this period are acknowledged as attempts to "'improve' Shakespeare, i.e. to conform his texts to current cultural and critical norms and update them accordingly" (Felperin 6). In this regard, Nahum Tate has several re-writings of Shakespeare's plays including *The History of King Richard II* (*The Sicilian Usurper*) (1681), and *The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth* (1681) as a version of *Coriolanus* (1609). Among Tate's adaptations, *The History of King Lear* (1681) is the most popular one with its focus on altering Shakespeare's language and changing the genre of the play from tragedy to "romantic melodrama" (Clark lxix) or "sentimental comedy" (Billington, "Lear's Daughters"). In this version, the Fool is eliminated, the two innocent characters of Shakespeare's play Edgar and Cordelia are united, and Lear assumes his right to be the king over a united country (Scott 37). The alterations made by Tate on *King Lear* are suggestive of the theatrical and cultural developments in the Restoration period on a wider scale. For instance, it is argued in relation to his change of language that "[t]he language of *King Lear* is thus made to suit the new Restoration aesthetic of regularity and fitness . . . Tate omits Shakespeare's Fool and his extravagant language for the same reason" (Fischlin and Fortier 66). Likewise, the abundance of Cordelia's role is also commented to be a result of the "new prominence and popularity of actress on the Restoration stage" (Fischlin and Fortier 66). Tate's example once more suggests that both theatrical and cultural changes of the Restoration period such as women performers, lavish scenery and a socially elite audience (Bickley and Stevens 95) influenced the adaptation process of Shakespeare's plays. However, the criticism directed against Tate's work illustrates the extent to which Shakespeare was revered at the same time as H. N. Hudson severely criticised Tate as follows: "Withered be the hand, palsied be the arm, that ever dares to touch one of Shakespeare's plays again" (qtd. in Massai 247). This example demonstrates that as adaptations move away from the Shakespearean text, and try to improve it in their own way, they draw more severe criticism.

The practice of re-writing Shakespeare went into decline after the Restoration until the late nineteenth century. The reason why re-writing Shakespeare was not a commonly applied practice during this period is the establishment of Shakespeare as a cultural icon. Lanier reminds that "[i]t is in the early eighteenth century that Shakespeare emerges as a specifically *British* cultural icon, conjoining Britain's evolving sense of national identity, social class, and canons of artistic evaluation" (*Shakespeare* 31). Evidently, Shakespeare's works were already considered as perfect examples, and there was not much attempt to revise them. Unlike Restoration playwrights who did not see Shakespeare fit for their stage for various reasons, late eighteenth-century writers and intellectuals accepted him as the literary idol (Becker 89). An example is observed in the Bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu's celebratory essay on Shakespeare, "An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear" (1769) in which she praised Shakespeare in comparison to Greek and French dramatists. This reverence of Shakespeare as the national poet explains the lack of many critical alternatives of his works in this period, which illustrates that there is a close relationship between the practice of re-writing and criticism of the source text.

There was again an increase in Shakespeare re-writings in the Victorian period. Critical approach to Shakespeare in Victorian literature was seen in the popular burlesques notable examples of which include John Poole's domestic melodrama titled *Hamlet Travestie* (1811) and W. S. Gilbert's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (1874). Gilbert's play centralised the two marginal characters of *Hamlet,* Rosencrantz and Guildenstern before the contemporary playwright Tom Stoppard did the same in 1966 with his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. As a parodic representation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Gilbert's play marginalises the protagonist, Prince Hamlet, and recreates Rosencrantz as a man who loves Ophelia by transforming the main attention of the play into a romantic love affair.

In modern drama, George Bernard Shaw wrote critical plays in which he retold some of Shakespeare's plays or reconstructed Shakespeare as a character. In an attempt to point out his critical attitude to Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw responds to Ben Jonson's reverential comment by adapting his famous remark: "[H]e was 'for an afternoon, but

not for all time'" (ix). Seminal examples of Shaw's reworkings of Shakespeare include *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (1910), *Heartbreak House* (1919), *Cymbeline Refinished* (1937), and *Shakes versus Shav* (1949). These plays demonstrate Shaw's own critical approach to Shakespeare and his texts. For instance, *Caesar and Cleopatra* is an alternative version of *Antony and Cleopatra* that embodies "Shaw's critical objections to Shakespeare's *Caesar*" (Berst 70). *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* is a reimagining of Shakespeare's sonnets which "reflects his [Shaw's] attempt to demystisize Shakespeare with a comic *menage à trois* of a gently conceited poet, a mysteriously regal woman, and a jealously self-centred dark lady" (O'Sullivan 92). As the title of the next example also suggests, *Cymbeline Refinished* offers an alternative ending for Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* in which a complicated plot is resolved abruptly. As these examples illustrate, Shakespeare was not a favourite writer of Shaw on the grounds that his works were not heavily concerned with the affairs of society. As critic Wilson argues, Shakespeare failed to voice in his works "a concern for contemporary social, political, and moral problems" (xii). For Shaw, Shakespeare was a writer accidentally turned into a mythical figure and falsely admired for many years for which he coined the term "bardolatry." Hence, Shaw's re-writings of Shakespeare are subversive so as to respond to the social problems previously overlooked by Shakespeare.

In the same period, Gordon Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife* (1916) is among the illustrious examples of Shakespearean re-writing. In this retelling, Bottomley creates a feminist prequel to the former play by introducing a woman named Hgyd as Lear's wife who is not even mentioned in Shakespeare's version. By adding a female character to the play and presenting Lear as a disloyal husband in a relationship with one of the waiting-women of Hygd, Bottomley draws attention to the misogynist approach of Shakespeare's play in which Lear's wife is totally ignored. Another Shakespearean prequel by Bottomley is titled *Gruach* (1921), which "tells the story of Macbeth's wife before the events of Shakespeare's play" (Bradley 99). In this play, the focus is again on the female character as Bottomley brings Lady Macbeth to the foreground instead of Macbeth as Shakespeare's tragic hero. In this version, rather than the idea of usurpation as the main theme of *Macbeth*, the story of Gruach's first acquaintance with Macbeth is

told. Prequel re-writings allude to the history of the events that take place in Shakespeare's versions. In this regard, both of Bottomley's prequels trace the reasons why Shakespeare might have constructed his plots accordingly by giving alternative characteristics to his popular female characters or by adding new characters that do not exist in Shakespeare's versions.

Re-writing Shakespeare has not only been popular in the dramatic genre as there are also various novel and poetry reworkings of his plays. For instance, an important re-writing of Shakespeare in the form of poetry is Adrienne Rich's "After Dark" (1964) in which she explores the father daughter relationship in Shakespeare's *King Lear* by projecting from her personal experiences. This is a prominent example in the genre as Peter Erickson notes that Rich, in her collection *Of Woman Born* (1973), "specifies both her father and Shakespeare as obstacles she has had to overcome to achieve the different perspective from which to break the hold of the tradition" (*Rewriting* 156). Rich resembles her relationship with her father to that of Cordelia and Lear as she thinks, like Cordelia she was submissive to her father (Erickson, *Rewriting* 184). Adrienne Rich's focus on the father daughter relationship in Shakespeare complies with the argument that "the relation of women writers to the past has often been thematized as a father-daughter issue" (Novy 5). In the sense that Rich points out the misogynist representation of Cordelia in Shakespeare's play, her poem provides an example of revisionary appropriation of Shakespeare.

In contemporary fiction, there are popular novels that allude to Shakespeare's works such as Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973) that reimagines *Hamlet*. Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991) is among the most well known examples of Shakespeare re-writings in the novel genre. The novel appropriates the context of *King Lear* to "post-war, mid-west America," and "underlines the destructive 'madness' of patriarchal and capitalist 'monopoly' in modern America" (Widdowson 498). Smiley's version makes a point about the possibility that Goneril and Regan might be victims of their father Lear's sexual abuse. In this instance, setting out to explore the contemporary social problems in the 1990s America, Smiley indirectly criticises the corruption in her society as well. Another notable example, Marina Warner's *Indigo* (1992) as a re-writing of *The*

Tempest, brings about a postcolonial reading of the play like most recent adaptations. Widdowson suggests that this novel "explores the Caribbean island of Sycorax, Caliban and Ariel, and traces the scars of colonialism across two continents and three centuries" (497). Among Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Tempest* stand out as the most frequently adapted ones in general. As Richard Burt claims "*The Tempest* took the top spot, based almost completely on twentieth-century writers' use of the play to investigate issues of race and colonialism" (409) an example of which is observed in Warner's *Indigo*. Apparently, these two novel reworkings by women novelists illustrate their critical approach to the misogynist and colonial ideologies observed in Shakespeare's plays. Other significant novel adaptations of Shakespeare include Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988) and Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (1992). However, these two novelists' approach to Shakespeare is not as subversive as in the previously listed examples since these novels do not directly respond to a particular Shakespeare play but offer a combination of various Shakespearean characters or plays in a single work.

Most recently, Hogarth Shakespeare series launched re-writings of Shakespeare's plays from prominent novelist in 2016 to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. Within this ongoing project, contemporary novelists, Jeanette Winterson, Howard Jacobson, Anne Tyler, Margaret Atwood, Jo Nesbo, Tracy Chevalier, Edward St. Aubyn and Gillian Flynn have been commissioned by Penguin Random House Group to revive one Shakespeare play of their choice. Accordingly, Winterson's *The Gap of Time* (2015), a revision of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611), tries to discover the motivations of Shakespeare's characters and reimagines them in the twenty first-century context. Howard Jacobson's re-writing of *The Merchant of Venice* titled *Shylock is My Name* (2015) situates Shylock in the modern context and offers an alternative representation of the issue of antisemitism. Anne Tyler's reproduction *Vinegar Girl* (2016) is an attempt to alter the misogyny of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Tyler introduces a modern spinster Kate whose father makes plans to marry her; however, the novel has not been reviewed very positively due to its weak feminist stance (Walton). Margaret Atwood's reiteration of *The Tempest* is titled *Hag-Seed* (2016) which is one of the names Prospero calls Caliban. As it is obvious, the novel reflects the viewpoint of Felix,

the character that corresponds to Shakespeare's Caliban, and presents his wish to take revenge. Tracy Chavelier introduces Othello in her reworking *New Boy* (2017) as another outsider in the form of a young Ghanaian schoolboy in Washington (McCrum). In *Dunbar* (2017), Edward St. Aubyn reimagines Lear as a contemporary man named Dunbar who is the manager of a media corporation. Norwegian novelist Jo Nesbo's *Macbeth* (2017) is a thriller that deals with drug problem. Besides these examples, a reworking of *Hamlet* by Gillian Flynn will be published in 2021 within the same project. This project shows how much Shakespeare is reused and marketed in the contemporary period. So far, the published novels exemplify the need to modernise Shakespeare's plots in reworkings.

Shakespeare has not only been rewritten in the British context. Due to the widespread popularity of his works, it is a global practice to deal with Shakespeare's plays and construct variations of them. John Elsom argues that "Shakespeare's influence has been immense, especially on foreign dramatists – on Schiller, on the Pushkin or *Boris Godunov*, on Victor Hugo, on Ibsen in his early historical plays" (ix). Moreover, Alfred Jarry, Bertolt Brecht, Eugene Ionesco and Charles Marowitz are among seminal non-British writers who, at some point in their career, took up re-writing Shakespeare. Although this common practice of reiterating Shakespeare is assumed to be an indicator of his ongoing influence, some of these writers have been quite critical of his works as in the example of Brecht's *Round Heads and Pointed Heads* (1931), a satire of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604). In an interview with John Elsom, Ernst Schumacher points out the reasons for Brecht and his contemporaries' critical attitude towards Shakespeare:

> The attacks on Shakespeare began with the idea that 'Shakespeare is the mouthpiece of a very frightened personality.' They were based on the conviction that the great men in his society, the noblemen, were only great because they were standing on mountains of corpses. And where in Shakespeare is the recognition of that fact? Where are the people? Where are the victims of great men? And that led on to the question, what should we do about Shakespeare? (144)

As is evident from this statement, similar to Bernard Shaw's emphasis on the lack of social criticism in Shakespeare's works, Brecht is critical towards Shakespeare for neglecting to discuss social inequality as a problematic issue in his works.

Apart from the literary re-writings of Shakespeare's texts, they have also been adapted into films, cartoons, animations, children's books and TV series. Some of the most popular films based on Shakespeare's plays are Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991) and Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1992). Other popular film adaptations of Shakespeare include Orson Welles' *Othello* (1952), Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Kozintsev's *King Lear* (1970), and Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971) which is "remarkable for its emphasis on extreme violence and brutality" (Bickley and Stevens 183). Besides these, a science fiction movie titled *The Forbidden Planet* (1956) echoes *The Tempest*. Apart from these examples, a Disney production of the animated movie, *The Lion King* (1994) is a remarkable adaptation of *Hamlet*. Additionally, the fact that the BBC once commissioned versions of Shakespeare's plays to be produced for the TV also shows the popularity of the practice of adapting his works for the media. These include the BBC's modern re-workings of four Shakespeare plays *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bickley and Stevens 48). In addition to these, there is also a parodic adaptation of Shakespeare titled *BBC Retold* that situate four of Shakespeare's plays in modern day context.

Beginning from the Restoration period, Shakespeare's works have been adapted into other genres including operas or musical theatres some examples of which are *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938) as a reimagining of *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) (Marowitz, *The Marowitz* 9), Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* (1948) as a version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957) as a take on *Romeo and Juliet* (Proudfoot et al. 15). Re-writing Shakespeare is an increasingly popular practice considering the uses of his plays in popular culture, in social media, in new technological applications such as virtual reality appropriations.[1] Such engagements with Shakespearean material illustrate that the status of Shakespeare in high culture is subverted, and his works are appropriated to suit the needs and interests of the changing historical periods.

There are technical, formal and stylistic variations of re-writings regardless of genres. Usually, main transformations occur in the plot and/or characters of the source as is also seen in Shakespeare's reworkings. Alan Sinfield sums up this practice in his remark:

> It seems that the Shakespearean myth is challenged in two ways: formally, in that the 'natural' flow of the Shakespearean text is disrupted, and the familiar relationship between it and the experienced audience is broken; and thematically, in that the 'tragic hero' is displaced from the centre of his own play and the substitute protagonists . . . achieve no heroic control of themselves or their destinies. ("Making Space" 131)

Sinfield accepts re-writing Shakespeare as a subversive practice in the first instance, then he mentions the two common techniques used for challenging his texts. Major changes that are made to the plot structure are called formal transformations whereas those applied to the characters of the previous text are considered as thematic appropriations. In some re-writings of Shakespeare's plays, protagonists are reframed with different traits and introduced as less important figures, a practice which Widdowson terms as "devaluation" (354). Such changes observed in re-writings along with reinterpretation of familiar characters' motivations are considered as examples of thematic reconstruction.

Douglas Lanier also introduces another way of classifying Shakespearean re-writings depending on how the source text is treated in current versions. In his approach, Shakespeare adaptations could be examined under six headings. The first type is called extrapolated narrative whose "plot material is generated from events mentioned but not developed in the 'master' narrative" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). In this type of appropriation, the major change is observed in an alternative treatment of a topic or a character that is introduced in the source but not maintained until the end. The second type is known as interpolated narrative in which "new plot material is dovetailed with the plot of the source" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). In this approach, the two plots, old and new are brought together instead of leaving the source text's plot aside. The third type is remotivated narrative that "retains the basic plot line or situation of the source but changes the motivations of the characters" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). This type of narrative is the equivalent of Sinfield's thematic alteration that mainly transforms the characterisation of the source text. This practice may attribute different traits to the

previous characters or may introduce new characters that do not exist in the Shakespearean work. The fourth type is called revisionary narrative. In this version of transformation, "the new narrative begins with the characters and situation of the source but changes the plot" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). Different from remotivated narrative, revisionary narrative preserves the original characters of the previous work; however it changes the major plot outline in which familiar characters exist with different motivations. Another form of transformation, reoriented narrative corresponds to "the narrative . . . told from a different point of view" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). In this type, usually the plot of the former play is reinterpreted from another character's perspective. The last narrative type is called hybrid narrative in which "narrative elements of characters from two or more Shakespearian plays are combined" (Lanier, *Shakespeare* 83). Apparently, in general, most re-writings either alter the plot of the former play or its characters. These different approaches in Shakespearean re-writing indicate the variety of ways in which new texts are shaped.

Thomas Cartelli also provides another list of literary adaptation types that mostly depend on thematic appropriations. According to his statement, re-writings that "tend deliberately to fracture and fragment an array of Shakespearean texts, unmooring them from their established contexts and reassembling them in ways that render them absurd" (17) are counted as satiric appropriations. As in other satirical works, the major aim of such reworkings is to criticise the pre-text sometimes through use of parody. Secondly, revisionary re-writings of Shakespeare are considered within the type of confrontational appropriation "which directly contests the ascribed meaning or prevailing function of a Shakespearean text in the interests of an opposing or alternative social or political agenda" (17). According to Cartelli, postcolonial adaptations of Shakespeare such as Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1969), Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), Gus Van Sant's movie *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), Robert Taylor Conrad's *Jack Cade* (1835), and Michelle Cliff's feminist appropriation of *The Tempest* titled *No Telephone to Heaven* (1996) are proper examples of confrontational appropriation (17). Another type of Shakespearean re-writing is transpositional appropriation including works also created from a counter viewpoint. Transpositional adaptation "identifies and isolates a specific theme, plot, or argument in its appropriative objective and brings it

into its own, arguably analogous, interpretive field to underwrite or enrich a presumable related thesis or argument" (18). In such reworkings, a theme or topic in the source text is specifically chosen for subversion or "intervention" in Alan Sinfield's terms ("Introduction" 155). Another group of adaptation style is proprietary appropriations that "involve the application and elaboration of an avowedly 'friendly' or reverential reading of appropriated material" (18). These re-writings are non-subversive adaptations in which Shakespeare's ideas or ideologies in his works are reinforced without a critical approach. The last type in Cartelli's grouping is known as dialogic appropriation which "involves the careful integration into a work of allusions, identifications, and quotations that complicate, 'thicken,' and qualify that work's primary narrative line to the extent that each partner to the transaction may be said to enter into the other's frame of reference" (18). Such reworkings include the use of pastiche and they usually consist of fragments taken from different sources.

In addition to these categories of different styles used in literary Shakespeare adaptations, Charles Marowitz, as a director, discusses alternative ways in which Shakespeare's works are transformed in stage adaptations. The first approach in his listing is the "fundamentalist view" that refers to a conservative type of adaptation and involves works that emphasise the superiority of a Shakespeare play, and highlight its popularity rather than making any considerable radical change. In this regard, the fundamentalist view is similar to Cartelli's proprietary appropriation mentioned above. Peter Erickson also introduces another term, "conciliatory mode," to refer to such adaptations that "maintain the continuity of Shakespeare's cultural role" (*Rewriting* 167). According to Marowitz, the fundamentalist view is adopted either by "conservatives" in response to revisionary re-writings of Shakespeare as they "preserve his integrity" or a second group of writers he calls "middle-of-the-roaders" that "are prepared to accept a change of period or a shift in emphasis, so long as the basic structure and spirit remains intact" (*Recycling* 467).

A second approach Marowitz mentions in his list is the "reform approach" that includes adaptations with more profound alteration. According to Marowitz, reform approach provides a fundamentally different but aesthetically superior version of the first text,

hence such appropriations are most of the time exempt from criticism as they offer a better version (*Recycling* 8). The last approach used in stage adaptations of Shakespeare is called "quantum leap approach" which signifies works that recontextualise Shakespeare's plays and alter their plot or characters to a significant extent. Accordingly, such productions bear only the faintest resemblance to their progenitors (*Recycling* 9). Evidently, among these three approaches, quantum leap approach provides works with most radical changes. This is an approach adopted by experimental producers Marowitz introduces as "radicals" and "lunatic fringe" (*Recycling* 16). As he mentions, "radicals" are those who "eagerly applaud the innovations – the startling reinterpretations which enable Shakespeare's work to deliver new sensations, whether significant or not, whether justifiable or not, the 'novelty of effect' being for them the great justification" (*Recycling* 467). Similarly for the "lunatic fringe," "there are no limits to take transformations that can be made to the *Collected Works*" (*Recycling* 16). Marowitz terms the practice of reiterating Shakespeare's works in such radical ways as "Shakespearean Experience" (*Recycling* 31). According to him, in order to see which interpretive terrains are opened by Shakespeare's works, it is necessary to engage in Shakespearean Experience rather than repeatedly study his works as they are. Different forms and styles of Shakespearean re-writing as mentioned by Douglas Lanier, Thomas Cartelli and Charles Marowitz demonstrate that there are various ways in which his works are treated in literary and stage adaptations. They range from works that prioritise Shakespeare's sources to those that refute and criticise his ideas. As Julie Sanders sums up these contrary practices:

> Some authors are accused of seeking to authenticate their own work by attaching the Shakespearean aura and reputation to their writing. Such writers are assumed to have a celebratory or honorific approach to their source. Others are seen to be more iconoclastic in intention, rewriting or 'talking back' to Shakespeare as an embodiment of the conservative politics, imperialism, and patriarchalism of a previous age. (46)

Reconstructions of Shakespeare's works that are critical and subversive of the source text are considered to be ideological and political. In this regard, Mark Fortier analyses Shakespearean adaptations within the frame of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minor literature." Fortier's definition of the term suggests that a "minor literature is political and revolutionary; it invokes another possible community, one without

masters, literary and otherwise" (2). Accordingly, critical re-writings of Shakespeare exemplify works of minor literature since they question the validity of his works, and indicate the necessity to discuss seminal socio-political issues by using the plays in different contexts. Such reworkings subvert Shakespeare's status in the canon, and they do not intend to create new literary hierarchies. In line with the aim of challenging the superiority of established literary texts in the practice of re-writing, transformations of Shakespeare scrutinise his works as proper examples of high literature.

With regard to the changing nature of literary texts, it is suggested, "[a] literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period" (Jauss et al. 10). Therefore, literary products should not be considered as stable and unchanging entities but as resources that lend themselves to various interpretations ultimately resulting in new adaptations. Accordingly, re-writings of Shakespeare also indicate that his works cannot be pertinent at all times, and that they need to be appropriated in accordance with changing socio-historical conditions. This view is in stark contrast with the common presumption "[t]hat his work is universally valid and speaks to human beings across the ages" (Hawkes, *Alternative* 9-10). It is through practices of recreation that his works could be made more resonant with the necessities of subsequent periods. Reworkings of Shakespeare illustrate that contemporising his works is necessary in order to appreciate the changing tastes, profiles, and characteristics of alternative periods and reading communities. As Lukas Erne suggests, "[t]he play that is being adapted is similarly held not to be a stable object, defined by its originary constitution, available once and for all, but instead a process that evolves over time" (225). Thus, the practice of re-writing defies the established idea of durability of classical texts by producing alternative versions that respond to the seminal issues of different historical periods.

In relation to the function of re-writing to make a previous text relevant again, John Drakakis claims "Shakespeare can never be 'our contemporary' except by the strategy of appropriation" (*Alternative* 24). His claim suggests that Shakespeare's works are dated, and appropriating his plays is a way of modernising Shakespeare and keeping the relevance of his works up to date. At this point, Antonin Artaud's statement about the

historicity of canonical literary texts needs to be remembered: “Masterpieces of the past are good for the past: they are not good for us. We have the right to say what has been said and even what has not been said in a way that does not belong to us, a way that is immediate and direct, corresponding to present modes of feeling, and understandable to everyone” (74). Accordingly, Shakespearean re-writing arises out of a necessity to make them available for use in differing periods. This also explains the variety of the ways in which Shakespeare adaptation has evolved in time. Each period’s interpretation of his works is different in accordance with the changing contexts. Hence, there are differences in the treatment of his works in alternative periods. For instance, while Restoration re-writings reflect the theatrical and political context of the time such as an emphasis on female roles due to the appearance of woman performers, contemporary re-writings mostly engage with the ideological framework of Shakespeare’s texts to respond to the critical issues of these times. This also explains why Shakespeare’s tragedies and histories became more popular among adapters in time while his romances, such as *The Tempest*, were more frequently adapted before the twentieth century (Burt 738). These alternative approaches designate the most important functions of re-writing as subversion and criticism of the literary and cultural importance attributed to Shakespeare and his works. Such adaptations indicate that “Shakespeare’s artistic greatness is not in question, only his use as the ultimate, inviolable arbiter of experience. His work provides not a body of timeless, inexhaustible, or unmodifiable knowledge, but rather a historical baseline that helps us to measure our difference” (Erickson, *Rewriting* 164).

Differences between contemporary recreations of Shakespeare and his works reflect the changing ideologies, socio-economic and political contexts of these two distinct periods. Literary products cannot be interpreted in the same manner in all periods due to the evident changes in the social, cultural, economic and political context. Characters, ideas and cultural background of Shakespeare’s works are difficult to be understood in the present context without having knowledge about the literary and historical circumstances of the Elizabethan and the Jacobean period. The anxieties, desires and motivations of his characters are not interpreted in the same manner in the contemporary context because of the differences in layers of society and politics that

inform the way in which we live, act and experience. Therefore, this difference actually demonstrates that Shakespeare's works are historical in the sense that they portray a human experience that is not stable but a changing one. It is this difference of experience in his time and the present moment that needs to be considered in the transformations of his works. Even continuous use of Shakespeare's language in the modern mainstream productions is criticised as it is believed that his language sounds quite historical now. According to Emma Rice, who was the artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe in London from 2016 to 2018, in contemporary reproductions of Shakespeare's works it is essential to "chop out bits of Elizabethan language which don't make sense to modern audiences" (Furness). People no longer speak the same language that is used in Shakespeare's works. Therefore, it is believed that his works fail to become accessible as long as the same language is maintained in subsequent productions. Concerning the need to re-write Shakespeare in the light of the changing historical contexts, Taylor argues that "[s]cholars are redefining what he [Shakespeare] wrote, how he wrote it, what it meant in his own time, and what it means to ours. Lines are being redrawn, even now; old stories are being told with new twists; our collective image of Shakespeare as a person and a poet is disintegrating and reforming" (4). Evidently, disintegration and reformation of our understanding of Shakespeare's works are not separate from the social and cultural developments throughout periods. As Erickson remarks, "Shakespeare can no longer be treated as an absolute, unframed standard as though his art were fully adequate to the range of thought and feeling possible for us in the present" (*Rewriting* 164). In light of this discussion, contemporary writers who take up the practice of reworking Shakespeare's plays mostly redefine the issues and characters of his texts in line with the concerns and developments of their age.

As there is a need to recreate Shakespeare's texts in order to speak to the concerns of different periods, it is also observed in many of the re-writings that there is an aim to respond to the ideological background of his plays. Such reworkings illustrate a particular preoccupation with a specific idea in his works and create a revised treatment of that issue. Richard Burt considers subversion and rejection of the ideological background of Shakespeare's texts as essential components of recreation: "It is in the

nature of the Shakespeare adaptor to question, to critique, to take a different stance. Even conservative adaptors create their own version of Shakespeare's plays in resistance to someone else's version, and often even in resistance to the original. Resistance is the very spirit of Shakespeare adaptation" (742). Consequently, the attempt to correct contested ideas relating to Shakespeare and his works in general is at the core of subversive revisions. In this respect, the assumption that Shakespeare's works are rewritten because of their exceptional quality is challenged with a more subversive and a political intention. The political aspect of his plays needs to be considered as one of the major areas for contesting his works. Therefore, re-writings pose challenges and subversions to Shakespeare's texts as well as the political ideologies they reinforce.

Since it is thought that there is little congruity between Shakespeare's works and the context of contemporary societies and cultures, recent reproductions of his plays are more directed towards their ideological background. Developing literary and cultural theories along with/as part of other socio-cultural changes throughout periods have paved the way for alternative Shakespearean productions. Initially, for instance, postmodern literature led to more experimental texts, and introduces unconventional forms, ultimately resulting in many examples of minor literatures that challenge metanarratives. Bickley and Stevens state that there is an evident difference between contemporary Shakespeare re-writings and earlier examples in terms of critical attitude. According to their observation, "[w]hile twentieth-century rewritings of Shakespeare by writers such as Marowitz, Bertolt Brecht and Edward Bond have tended to unsettle the theatrical status quo, those undertaken in the Restoration period aimed more at appeasing audiences than challenging them" (94). The primary function to subvert the latent ideas presented by Shakespeare in the contemporary transformations is not as frequently observed in previous examples that were rather determined by elements such as theatrical appeal.

Besides the argument that the motivations for re-writing were different in the past, other elements also need to be acknowledged to understand the change towards more critical and radical re-writings of Shakespeare in the contemporary period. Peter Erickson

ascribes the increase of subversive adaptations to the rise of critical theories in his statement: “This extraordinary ferment and upheaval are in large part a result of the emergence of feminist, cultural materialist, and new historicist modes as distinct critical constellations” (“Afterword” 251). Accordingly, transformations of Shakespeare’s plays in the contemporary period are informed by theories such as feminism, cultural materialism and new historicism along with Marxism and postcolonialism which give these new texts a critical scope. These theoretical developments have provided a more liberal literary environment in which different marginal groups of characters can also be represented in a positive manner. Therefore, the emergence of new theories, ideologies and changing norms in the contemporary period has contributed to the evolution of re-writing as a more critical and subversive form of literary practice in time.

The production of more subversive transformations of Shakespeare as well as other canonical writers has made it possible to consider re-writing as a political practice. As Graham Holderness states, any revisionary attempt to change a previous work of art is more than literary imitation, it is a social, cultural and a political act:

> As they [texts] are manipulated, appropriated and practically applied in criticism and theoretical analysis, in performance and adaptation; as they are installed and reconstituted into canons, traditions and hierarchies by the practices of academic and educational institutions; as they are used and exploited to serve various different and conflicting ideological ends; they become unquestionably, in the broadest sense, political. (*Shakespeare Recycled* 43)

As writers continue to re-write Shakespeare to change the perception of his works, they are involved in a critical, thereby a political practice. In that sense, all re-writings written from a revisionary perspective function as political responses to the ideological issues manifest in Shakespeare’s texts. The reason why Shakespeare is considered as a political concept could be explained with his iconic status in the canon, and with the variety of contestable political and ideological issues he portrays in his works. To cite some of the critical ideas observed in his plays, class issues, racism, feminism, political issues such as usurpation and murder appear as seminal themes. All these ideas embedded in Shakespeare’s texts have prompted the following playwrights to either return to these problems in their reworkings or respond to the way in which Shakespeare presents them. At this point, it is necessary to note that Shakespearean

appropriation does not only subvert Shakespeare's iconic status but also the politics of his works.

Alan Sinfield claims that "the ideologies that Shakespearean texts are customarily read to produce are reactionary (in terms of class, gender, sexual orientation and race), and confrontational reconstitutions may oppose those ideologies" ("Making Space" 134). Radical adaptations portray an evident criticism of the source text when interpreted in light of modern literary theories such as feminism, cultural materialism, Marxism, racism and postcolonialism. As Sanders particularly exemplifies the effect of such improvements on re-writing Shakespeare, "many Shakespearean appropriations are motivated not only by the desire to ascribe motivation . . . but also by political commitment. The theoretical concerns of postcolonialism, feminism, and queer theory, or a vibrant fusion of all these, figure in many adaptations of Shakespeare" (57). Revisionary adaptations are mostly produced from the viewpoint of marginal groups that are presented negatively in the source texts. Shakespeare is criticised for being partial and failing to represent cultural or racial identity groups equally in his plays. Therefore, underrepresented groups in his works are given more important roles in some confrontational contemporary versions.

This practice suggests the idea that Shakespeare neglected the concerns of ignored cultural groups, and that they need to be mentioned in new versions. In this sense, re-writing Shakespeare becomes a functional practice that aims to criticise and correct the problem of representation in the source text. In this way, it becomes possible for previously marginalised characters to be represented in a literary work, a process termed by Alan Sinfield as "making space" ("Making Space" 129). Sinfield argues that in Shakespeare's works there is no space for marginal groups. Therefore, such groups need to reconstruct their own versions to contest the ideas in Shakespeare's plays and explore their own concerns. This can only become possible if such subordinate groups obtain a different position in society. For instance, as ideas concerning racial identity and gender identity have shifted in the course of time, their representation in literature has also changed accordingly. Since minority groups and women have more autonomy in the contemporary period due to postcolonialism and feminism, their concerns could be

voiced through literary recreations. For instance, particularly in terms of the feminist revisionary writings of Shakespeare, Marsden claims, "the changes in women's social role correspond to changes in literary representation, particularly in the drama" (*The Appropriation* 44). Such developments require reinterpreting Shakespeare's works in light of new socio-historical contexts. For instance, women's position is not the same in the contemporary period as it was in Shakespeare's time, likewise race issues are now quite significant in global politics which entails a reevaluation of the treatment of marginal ethnic groups in earlier texts.

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon lists the fundamental components of cultures and societies that have shaping effect on literary production:

> There is a kind of dialogue between the society in which the works, both the adapted text and adaptation, are produced and that in which they are received, and both are in dialogue with the works themselves. Economic and legal considerations play a part in these contexts, as do evolving technologies, as we have seen. So too do things like religion. (149)

According to this statement, political issues such as material and legislative concerns and other socio-cultural entities like the dominant religion of a society or technological innovations play important role in shaping the analysis of earlier literary texts and reflecting specific perspectives. This also explains why and how Shakespearean re-writing has been different in subsequent historical periods. In the contemporary period, the radical changes in literary, social and political domain have resulted in much more critical adaptations.

Jonathan Bate states that "[t]he history of appropriation may suggest that 'Shakespeare' is not a man who lived from 1564 to 1616 but a body of work that is refashioned by each subsequent age in the image of itself" (3). The last words of Bate's sentence, "in the image of itself," are noteworthy as Shakespeare's plays continue to be rewritten throughout ages with allusions to the problematic issues and concerns of individual periods. Criticising their own societies and offering alternative solutions to the problems of their ages are among the main points of writers who appropriate Shakespeare's plays. As well as challenging Shakespeare's works by illustrating that they are problematic

when looked at from certain perspectives, re-writings also intend to give a critical remark about the contemporary world, and subsequently to initiate positive change.

Theatre, as a socio-cultural product, derives its main source from the ideals, norms and beliefs of the culture by/in which it is produced. The aim of referring to a particular culture and historical period is in the nature of theatre as a mimetic art as mentioned by Terence Hawkes in his discussion of "presentist" Shakespeare: "Since plays consist of the performances of human beings on stage, in front of other human beings in an audience, at a particular time and in a particular place, they cannot fail to address to some extent the concerns of a certain way of life, and to shape themselves to the contours of its 'here and now'" ("Introduction to" 573). In order to make sense to a certain group of reader/audience, and to appeal to them, it is necessary for playwrights to relate the subjects of their plays to the present day contexts. Accordingly, the characteristics of a group of people to whom a play is addressed become another determinative factor that shapes the way in which a text is reformulated. This function of the theatre is also relevant for the re-writings of Shakespeare's works as the writers do not fail in grasping the most vital problematic issues of his works that influence and concern a society, and reflect these concerns in their revisions of these works. Hence, there are certain specific transformations observed in transnational and transhistorical Shakespeare adaptations that concern different periods and locations.

In order to draw attention to the interaction between dramatic production and a society in which it is created, Taylor asserts that "[y]ou can hardly recount the history of the theatre, of publishing, censorship, journalism, education, morality, sex, without becoming entangled in the complexity entirety of their host society, its economics, politics, ideology, its total social and material structure" (6). Like other areas of social life, theatre also interacts with the culture out of which it emerges as well as the audience as its target addressee. Consequently, "[t]heatre makers are responding to the time and place in which they live, communicating with a living audience" (D. Lane 181). Theatre production is not simply limited to its technical components such as "generic decorum, audience expectations, the number and quality of available actors" (S. J. Lynch 2), but also to other active agents like the social, political and historical

elements that shape real life. Correspondingly, dramatic re-writings of Shakespeare are already under the influence of technical developments within the theatre; however, it is also significant to search for the reflections of the socio-cultural sphere in the modified versions of the plays.

The practice of using Shakespeare's works for understanding today's concerns is aptly summarised in Terence Hawkes' remark: "Shakespeare doesn't mean, *we* mean *by* Shakespeare" (*Meaning* 3). This statement once more draws attention to the idea that Shakespeare's works cannot meet the expectations of all periods, and that they need to be appropriated in accordance with the concerns of specific contexts. Stephen Greenblatt who states engaging with works of the past is a way of forming contact with the dead, namely the writers of previous ages, duly observes that: "[T]he dead had contrived to leave textual traces of themselves, and those textual traces make themselves heard in the voice of the living" (1). Thus, when a Shakespeare work is put to use in modern times, the emergent product projects the understanding of the work within a certain cultural and historical context. At this point, it is necessary to discuss that the choice of a Shakespeare play for recreation is not an arbitrary process, either. The selection is mostly determined by social circumstances. If, for instance, racial issues are in the foreground in a certain context, it is more probable that plays like *Othello* or *The Tempest* would be selected for re-writing. Therefore, in the process of appropriation, Shakespeare is turned into an instrument through which critical issues of the present moment could be discussed. Considering the possibility of reflecting different historical or local contexts through re-writing, Howard Felperin questions: "Why, after all, should 'the very age and body of the time' shown in the archaic mirror of *Hamlet* be restricted to medieval Denmark? Why may it not, once decorously polished and re-framed, reflect eighteenth-century London as well? Or late twentieth-century Berkeley?" (7). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may potentially reflect the context of medieval Denmark as the play's fictional background or the Elizabethan England as Shakespeare's actual context. However, Felperin's suggestion underlines a function of adaptation that the contextual connotations of the play could be expanded through proper recontextualisation.

There are various adaptations of Shakespeare's plays that use his plots in a different context by introducing modern versions of his characters. This practice has made it possible to discuss recent socio-political issues through the use of Shakespeare's works. As Julie Sanders exemplifies, it is possible to talk about issues such as the "Second World War, Vietnam, the Falkland crisis, and more recently the two Gulf wars" (48) with a re-writing of *Henry V* although the play actually depicts the fifteenth-century conflict between England and France. This example shows that the original topic of the play is no longer familiar; therefore, it is not as interesting to use in the contemporary period without appropriation. However, alterations in accordance with changing world politics and social circumstances can exemplify the renewed relevancy of the Shakespearean text. As another example of this practice is expressed by Felperin: "In the wake of John Kennedy's assassination, *Macbeth* was in fact reproduced as *Macbird* and re-interpreted to be about the assassination" (98). This instance, which indicates Barbara Garson's play *MacBird!* (1966), demonstrates that the idea of usurpation in a traditional reading of *Macbeth* is swapped with the more contemporary issue of a political leader's assassination. With this re-writing, Shakespeare's play is recontextualised and localised with the use of a more recent topic. It is also observed in such re-writings that political aspects of Shakespeare's plays are made more apparent in the contemporary period with various politically loaded reiterations than ever before.

As a re-writer of various sources, Shakespeare himself also used many of the earlier texts to make a point about his current context. As Charles Marowitz reminds, "was it not Shakespeare himself influenced by the Passion Plays he must have seen as a boy in Stratford, and did not those biblical antagonisms seep their way into the work of the older playwright when he decided to depict a conflict between Christian and Jewish ethics?" (*Recycling* 29). Indicating Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, Marowitz questions the possibility that the passion plays might have inspired the construction of the conflict between two religious opponents in this work. Concerning Shakespeare's interest in the socio-historical context of his own period, it is purported that "the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century world is distinctive and Shakespeare is intrinsically involved in it: his poetry and plays demonstrate his involvement with significant events and ideas of his age" (Bickley and Stevens 4). As

Shakespeare was interested in the events of his age, his adaptations of earlier texts are also considered to be about his own period. As David Thacker inquires: "What was [Shakespeare] saying to his own age, when he writes about the Romans?" (24). Although the historical periods and contexts of Shakespeare's works are mostly distinct from his own, it is believed that "it is always his own world about which he is writing, even in plays that are full of images of the pagan world and ancient customs" (Elsom 24). While dealing with issues that concern alternative places and periods on the surface, Shakespeare was sometimes criticising, problematising and historicising the topics and concerns of his age. A notable example of this practice among Shakespeare's works is *Richard II*, which is argued to be a criticism of Queen Elizabeth's reign. As Jonathan Dollimore observes:

> A famous attempt to use the theatre to subvert authority was of course the staging of a play called *Richard II* . . . just before the Essex rising in 1601; Queen Elizabeth afterwards anxiously acknowledged the implied identification between her and Richard II, complaining also that 'this tragedy was played 40 times in open streets and houses.' (Introduction 8)

This example proves that in Shakespeare's time, too, theatre was used as a platform to express ideas that were otherwise not easy to be conveyed to an audience, especially to the authority figures. In this regard, Felperin questions: "Do Shakespeare's plays not show 'the very age and the body of the time his form and pressure,' as Hamlet says all playing should? Are not the historicity of the plays and the case for a historical criticism of them thus grounded . . . in the discourse of his own age and stage?" (2-3). Likewise, the contemporary versions of his re-writings also need to be considered in a similar manner. Obviously, the practice of re-writing is accepted as a functional tool for criticism, reinforcement or subversion of the ideas or events of a particular period. This interpretation proves to be true for both Shakespeare's re-writings of earlier sources and adaptations of his own works in the following periods.

The writers' ideological mindset has been influential in the construction of subversive re-writings as much as the socio-historical context in which they are created. Much of the revisionary adaptation is determined by the writers' cultural, economic or political backgrounds. Contrary to new criticism which suggests that analysing texts in relation

to the writer's ideologies, beliefs, and background, and making a contextual analysis would lead to "intentional fallacy," it is necessary to observe the influence of such concepts in re-writings. As Stephen Lynch claims, "authors neither create nor control texts but are themselves products of preexistent cultural discourses" (2). As they are influenced by their own context, their responses to the earlier sources are mostly shaped accordingly. In the case of Shakespeare reinterpretations, most of these texts are formulated in accordance with the adapter's own ideological or political worldview. Eventually, the ideologies of Shakespeare's plays are criticised in light of the writer's own interpretations of these texts. As Julie Sanders suggests, "a political or ethical commitment shapes a writer's, director's, or performer's decision to re-interpret a source text" (2). For that reason, the association of rewritten texts to the ideologies of their writers is as much significant as the relationship between the text and its context. Apparently, in Shakespeare reproductions, the stage becomes a site for the writers to express their ideas and to pose criticism about their societies through interpretations of his plays.

Literary adaptation has an aim of reconstructing meanings through criticism of the earlier texts and their latent ideologies. In this regard, an outstanding aim of re-writing is to bring about social change through the discussion of critical issues. By pointing out what was problematic in the earlier texts, and providing alternative versions, rewritten texts give a message about the discussed topic as to how they should be handled. Considering this function in relation to Shakespeare's re-writings, it is seen that his plays are used for the creation and discussion of more relevant and critical matters. This idea also supports the argument that re-writing is a political practice. Michael Bogdanov asserts, "the principal aim of theatre is not just to illuminate and become the brief chronicle of time. It is also to aid the process of social change. Art . . . at its highest point is an instrument of social change" (17). The writers' intention to point to the irregularities in their societies, and bring about change in the perception of certain issues in every possible means is also observed in their inclination to unite politics and aesthetics through Shakespearean reproduction. Especially in relation to the function of theatre production, it is believed that "[t]heatre is an assembly in which ordinary people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests" (Rancière 6). This belief

attributes theatre with a mission to speak to the audiences about their own situations and enable them to think critically about the ideas relayed to them. The social function of dramatic art is also observed in most of the contemporary dramatic re-writings of Shakespeare that try to initiate critical thinking about a particular issue.

This study discusses three re-writings of Shakespeare's plays – Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971), Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* (1976), Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* (2002) – in relation to their socio-historical and political contexts. All three re-writings of Shakespeare are discussed extensively in relation to the socio-political problems that prompted the playwrights to take up Shakespeare as their starting point. Additionally, ideological transformations in the rewritten texts are specifically discussed in terms of politics of re-writing. In this process, the influence of cultural and literary theories, the actual historical setting of the periods, and the writers' socio-economic background on the adaptation process is analysed. It is also discussed to what extent Shakespeare's legacy is challenged through their transformations. Moreover, the plays are evaluated in terms of certain messages they relay for the realisation of social change. Accordingly, it is concluded that these texts both provide certain responses to Shakespeare the writer, his works, and mirror the socio-historical contexts in which they are constructed.

The plays included in this study are evaluated as critical, subversive and political re-writings of Shakespeare. All of these works embody criticism of Shakespeare either for his literary or ideological attitude in his source texts. As a result of the changing historical backgrounds and the writers' opinions about his works, the plays in this study respond to Shakespeare while at the same time deal with the actual critical issues of their own contexts. Therefore, a special emphasis is made on these works' ideological responses to Shakespeare. His texts have been used to preserve the literary, cultural and political status-quo as they have been especially used in mainstream productions to serve the continuation of ideologies such as capitalism, racism, and misogyny. In this regard, Fischlin and Fortier consider Shakespeare "as a sign of imperial culture" (11), and stress that he is "a 'cultural deity' one of the privileged sites around which Western culture has struggled to authenticate and sustain itself" (8). It is clear that even the use of Shakespeare's plays in their original form illustrates that these works are used as

functional concepts for the subversion or containment of certain ideological views. Therefore, the alternative approaches to Shakespeare included in this study are viable to be considered as political not only because they are critical of Shakespeare but also the conventional uses of his plays in subsequent periods that "serve the interests of a white, Christian, middle-class, predominantly male and heterosexual mainstream" (Bristol 25). Thus, the rewritten versions of Shakespeare's works in this study reject the use of his texts for the containment of conservative ideologies such as capitalism, racism, and misogyny ultimately rejecting Shakespeare's works as ever pertinent for all people.

In the analysis of these works in separate chapters, each of the re-writings is examined first in relation to its deviations from the Shakespearean source with a mention of the various theoretical applications of adaptation observed in their construction. Later, they are analysed in terms of their historical, political, ideological shifts from Shakespeare's works to observe how they interact with these concepts while subverting the source text. After formulating the analysis of these works as adaptations with emphasis on particular aspects of the source, they are read in relation to their contextual background. The reason why the plays are initially discussed in their own right and as adaptations of Shakespeare, and later considered in line with the socio-historical background is to highlight which ideological aspects of these texts are particularly chosen for discussion in relation to the context. In this regard, each play is analysed in accordance with a certain critical topic, and the argument is grounded on the association of that particular topic to the play's socio-historical and political background. The first chapter concerns a socialist approach, the second chapter discusses race issues, and the third chapter elaborates on woman's autonomy as an issue. After these concepts are clearly stated as the main focus of their Shakespearean transformation, the same issues are considered in relation to the specific backgrounds. While the first and the second chapters' analyses are formulated on the 1970s context, the last chapter's discussion is related to the background of the 2000s.

The first chapter discusses Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971) as a re-writing of Shakespeare's *King Lear* from the perspective of Marxist politics by focusing on its representation of British society in the 1970s when people were disillusioned with the failed successive

political leaders of the decade and problems related to class conflicts abounded. Marxist critics and writers believe that "Shakespeare was a representative of aristocracy, of feudalism; because the subject matter of his plays is for the most part feudal society, his heroes belong to the feudal classes" (Anikst 158). Alternatively, Bond recreates the characters of *King Lear* in a way that projects the conflict between lower-class individuals and political figures of his own social context. Mainly, seminal ideas of Bond's play such as representation of a class-based society, prevailing violence, loss of humanity, implication of a capitalist system and lack of socialist empathy refer to actual problems in real society in the 1960s and 70s such as disillusionment with the left, need for establishing socialism, class struggle, institutionalisation and legitimation of violence, obsession with power, rise of capitalism and Stalinism. The brutal acts in the play are also interpreted in close relation to the actual violent events that characterised the period such as the 1968 student riots in Paris, Vietnam War, Civil Rights movements, and the Angry Brigade. In addition to representing the problematic aspect of this particular period and exemplifying a specific politics in his reworking, Edward Bond also aims to bring about a change in the perception of problematic issues of class and violence in society. As he believes, Shakespeare's plays had a potential to be socially edifying with significant questions they raise; however, he failed to answer them, he could not educate his audience, and remained a poet of the bourgeoisie. Hence, this reiteration exemplifies Bond's criticism of Shakespeare's treatment of the ideas in his play by appropriating them to his current context.

The second chapter studies Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* (1976) that depicts social anxiety around the issue of antisemitism in relation to identity politics, to be more specific, religious/ethnic politics. Arnold Wesker was particularly uncomfortable with the persecution of the Jews in Portugal when he saw a production of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and adapted this play to provide a favourable Jewish character to change perceptions about the Jews. Wesker's play questions the motivations of Shakespeare's representation of Shylock as an evil figure and the impracticality of the Venetian law concerning the issue of usury. Wesker's criticism centres on the continuous representation of this play in a way that perpetuates antisemitism. The major transformation in Wesker's version is observed in the positive representation of Shylock

as the central figure of the play. As recent Jewish history has modified the way in which Shakespeare's play is interpreted now, Wesker's play also needs to be considered in relation to the history of antisemitism, especially within the context of "European pogroms, the Hitler 'death camps', the rise of Jewish Nationalism and the Arab-Israeli conflicts" (Marowitz, *The Marowitz* 22). Broadly speaking, the problematic aspects of *The Merchant of Venice* revealed in Wesker's re-writing also shed light on racial discrimination as a more general critical issue in the contemporary context. Therefore, Wesker's attempt to change the perception of the racial other through a portrayal of his Jewish protagonist is evident in this example.

The last chapter discusses Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* (2002), as a re-writing of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which represents sexual/feminist/gender politics with a portrayal of an eroticised Gertrude as opposed to Shakespeare's rather misogynist attitude to the character. As Barker re-writes *Hamlet* from the viewpoint of an unconventional Gertrude, his text points out the misogynist undertones of the previous text. Shakespeare has often been criticised from feminist viewpoints for his weak treatment of female characters in comparison to more extensive representation of male characters. Responding to the moralising interpretation of Gertrude as an adulteress in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Barker puts Gertrude's sexuality in the centre stage in his version in a positive manner. Such transformations in this re-writing are considered in relation to the improvements in the social condition of women in the twenty first century, and they are also observed as criticism of New Labour Socialism that does not really hinge on individual liberty. Deconstructing the conventional plot structure of Shakespeare's play and shifting the set roles of protagonist and antagonist, Barker's re-writing is also mentioned as an example that displays the influence of postmodernism on literary adaptation.

These three plays are chosen for analysis in this study among all other re-writings of Shakespeare for following reasons. First, they are all critical of Shakespeare and their own contexts. Subsequently, they engage with a political aspect of a Shakespearean text. Their concern is not only Shakespeare and subverting his authorial status, but they also object to the uses of his plays in the reinforcement of particular matters that have

implications for the modern societies and politics. For instance, the ideas respectively criticised in the three plays – violence, racism and misogyny – are among the most significant social problems of the contemporary period. Therefore, these plays are chosen as proper samples not only because they are critical of Shakespeare and the source text but also because of the validity of the issues they criticise in our day. Additionally, considering that these playwrights also attempt to create awareness about the perception of these matters and that they aim to bring about a response to the progression of these social ills, their plays try to offer alternatives to the applicable problems of the recent context. Thus, these reworkings illustrate that our reading of Shakespeare's works is not independent from the developing theories, socio-historical background and political events of the present.

CHAPTER I

EDWARD BOND'S *LEAR*: SOCIALIST POLITICS IN *KING LEAR*

Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971) is a subversive re-writing of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606). Bond basically finds the ideological background of *King Lear* problematic, and states that he attempts to use the source as a warning to society: "Shakespeare's handling of that myth was no longer adequate for me . . . it doesn't work for me, and, in a sense, I have to criticize it" (*Bond on File* 24). Bond's aim is to subvert the conventional interpretations of Shakespeare's *King Lear* especially in terms of the play's representation of a hierarchical social structure and violence. Rather than using Shakespeare's work for gaining popularity as an antithetical aspect of the practice of appropriating, with his reworking, Bond obviously questions the perception of Shakespeare as a universal writer, and the reputation of *King Lear* as "our greatest poet's greatest creation" (Bickersteth 1).

Concerning the reasons for the emergent reproductions of *King Lear*, it is observed that the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the play have been influential. In his analysis of the play, Booth points to a "radical instability in the play that permits no confidence in any particular reading" (56). Since Shakespeare's works are sometimes criticised for their vague points and hasty conclusions, *King Lear* also embodies indeterminate points some of which include Cordelia's disappearance for a long time, and her questionable return only to restore Lear to the throne. Foakes also lists some of the obscure parts of Shakespeare's play as such: "[N]o mention of their [the daughters'] mother, no hint as to why or how an eighty-year-old monarch comes to have a daughter of marriageable age, young enough to be a grandchild, and no explanation of Lear's apparent desire for Cordelia to marry the Duke of Burgundy" (Introduction 37). Such questions in the play have intrigued writers in the following periods, hence resulted in numerous re-writings that try to answer them. For instance, only the absence of the daughters' mother has been a reason for the creation of various re-writings from a feminist perspective such as Elaine Feinstein and Women's Theatre Group's coproduction *Lear's Daughters* (1987),

and Howard Barker's *Seven Lears* (1990). Writers in the following periods have been more inclined to read Shakespeare's plays in light of certain literary and cultural criticism, which is also observed in these writers' interpretation of obscurities of *King Lear* in accordance with their ideologies.

Since Bond's motivation to re-write Shakespeare's play is mainly to criticise and challenge the ideas in the previous text, his *Lear* did not meet well reception when it was first produced especially because of the play's loose association with the Shakespearean source. Reviews from the play's first performance reveal that Bond was criticised for complicating the plot "at the expense of the Bard" (Stevens). For instance, Felix Barker of the *Evening News* criticised the play for its "tenuous connection with Shakespeare's" ("*Lear*"). Jason Hillgate also reported "I somehow resented the fact that Mr. Bond had taken the title and a few characters from a Shakespeare tragedy and had used them to write a thematically and systematically different play" (22). Even the fact that Bond uses a similar title to one of Shakespeare's most acclaimed tragedies was criticised as an act of presumption, which is illustrated in the following review of the play's first production at the Royal Court Theatre:

> Bond has further challenged his countrymen by an act of daring few contemporary playwrights could even venture to contemplate: he has written a play, which is not only called *Lear* but actually tells, and retells, reinterprets, the story of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. An act of arrogance? Of presumption? (Esslin, "The Theatre")

Significantly, when Bond's *Lear* first appeared, it was obviously an innovation on the stage both as a confrontational transformation of Shakespeare and for its excessive violence. In the sense that *Lear* allowed people to look at Shakespeare's play and problems of their times from different lenses, the play marks a profoundly critical and subversive Shakespearean re-writing in post-war British drama. However, as it is apparent in the negative reviews the play received, conservative approaches to Shakespeare discredit such attempts and continuously refer back to Shakespeare to affirm his superiority.

While discussing Bond's *Lear*, it should also be noted that his first interest in theatre began when he saw Donald Wolfit's *Macbeth* on a school outing (Donahue 7). In that production, the character Macbeth led Bond to think about Hitler as a problematic figure in his time. Apparently, this was the first time when Bond had the opportunity to observe problems of both daily life and political world reflected on the stage. Moreover, this was the first step for him to trace layers of socio-political meanings of Shakespeare's plays. He refers to his experience in that particular production as such: "[F]or the very first time in my life . . . I met somebody who was actually talking about my problems, about the life I'd been living, the political society around me" ("Drama" 15). The idea of initiating a larger change in society through dramatic production also occurred to Bond after that performance as he admits that he questioned the possibility of change in society after seeing the play: "[O]ther people had seen this play, so how was it that their lives could just go on in the same way?" ("Drama" 12).

Though he was highly influenced from the mentioned production, Edward Bond does not consider Shakespeare as a writer who closely deals with social problems. In contrast to the general understanding of Shakespeare as the national poet who created timeless works of art, Edward Bond does not regard Shakespeare as an exceptional writer. In this respect, Bond shares the same opinion with George Bernard Shaw as he is against "making too much of a fetish of our swan . . . It is false admiration to worship him as an infallible demigod" (xvi). Like his predecessor Shaw, Bond thinks that being such a popular writer, Shakespeare could have been more attentive to the issues of his time and written plays in a way that would influence and change people for the better. Bond especially criticises Shakespeare for not providing solutions to the social problems in his works as he argues in a conversation with Howard Davies: "As a guide to conduct, or to attitudes to work, he's not so good for us. I object to the idea of him being for all ages" (*Edward Bond* 59). Additionally, criticising the lack of relevance of the impractical resolutions in Shakespeare's works to actual social conditions, Bond mentions, "the peace, the reconciliation that he created on the stage would not last an hour on the street" ("Introduction" x).

Actually, Bond's critical attitude to Shakespeare has resulted in several adaptations of Shakespeare's works apart from *Lear*. Some of them include *Early Morning* (1968), which, according to Ruby Cohn, reminds both *Henry VI* and *Hamlet* in certain respects (*Retreats* 62), and *The Sea* (1973) that is considered to be a reiteration of *The Tempest* (*Retreats* 63). Hay and Roberts further assert that, in Bond's *Worlds* (1979), "he drew upon Shakespeare's Timon for the character of his protagonist Trench" (180). *Bingo* (1973) is another play by Edward Bond in which he demystifies Shakespeare by fictionalising him as a poet of the bourgeois whose works are characterised by "limitation on morality" (Bond, *Selections* x). Bond's imagination of Shakespeare as a character in *Bingo* is explained by William May as such: "This portrait of the late Shakespeare finds him unable to write, and more anxious about his land rates than his empty pages" (139). Representing Shakespeare as a man in a feudal structure, Bond criticises him for being concerned about his lands in Welcombe near Stratford. Evidently, this play also projects Bond's Marxist criticism of Shakespeare as a writer who represents the feudal or capitalist order.

Bond's Marxist ideology is deeply influential in his interpretation of canonical literary works as he is restless about the abuse of such texts in the hands of a culture dominated by capitalism. In Marxist thinking, privileging certain literary texts over others serves the purposes of class domination (Jackson 272). Accordingly, Bond believes that the responsibility of a writer is to disregard previous conventional or consumerist uses of classical texts and approach them with novel viewpoints in accordance with the concerns of his/her age. As he argues, "[t]he task of the writer in the postmodern world should not be the providing of the destructive fictions of western capitalism: his or her task should be to rewrite today's world, to recreate the meaning of justice in our situation" ("Modern" 103-104). Bond also criticises the traditional interpretations of Shakespeare's plays that are used to secure the literary, cultural and political status-quo and mainly rightist ideologies like capitalism. With regard to the use of politics of Shakespeare's plays in the containment or subversion of certain ideologies, Alan Sinfield claims that "Shakespeare's plays constitute an influential medium through which certain ways of thinking about the world may be promoted and others impeded, they are a site of cultural struggle and change" ("Introduction" 155). In this sense, as a

Marxist playwright, Bond is especially against presentations of Shakespeare's *King Lear* as the story of one man that do not concentrate on the larger political concerns and potential social(ist) messages.

Bond's *Lear* fits acutely in the scope of this study concerning the discussion of Shakespeare's re-writings in relation to their socio-political contexts. As Shakespeare's own recreation of *King Lear* reflects the Jacobean period rather than "the period when Lear is said to have reigned" (Foakes, Introduction 13), Bond also refers to his own contextual background in his transformation of Shakespeare's work. As Patricia Hern argues, "Bond's objective is to 'provide a meaning to the story' which will make the old tale seem relevant and truthful to a modern audience. In much the same way, Shakespeare filtered the chronicles of the Middle Ages through an essentially Tudor sensibility" (xxviv). Like Shakespeare's re-contextualisation of former stories and historical chronicles to comment on his own age, Bond's use of Shakespearean material is also functional to make the plot accessible to the contemporary audiences and to reflect on their problems. While, for instance, *King Lear* is conventionally seen as a play about the tragedy of a miserable king, Bond's *Lear* relates the play to the current problems such as violence and class-based structure. According to Tony Coult, "Bond writes about the past in order to discover the present problems" (42). In this regard, *King Lear*, with its emphasis on issues of political authority, abuse of power, social inequality and implications of class struggle, appeals to Bond to implement his own criticism of society and politics.

Politics and the problems of society have always preoccupied Bond as he believes that "[a]rt can't escape from politics because society is the problem, the subject, of art" (*Selections* 145). Therefore, Bond believes that an artist's primary concern is to educate the society, and to reflect their problems so that they could possibly be eliminated. In line with Raymond Williams' statement that works of art "may have quite specific features as practices, but they cannot be separated from the general social process" (44), Bond's "rational theatre" speaks to the political circumstances and movements of his period. For this reason, his works, be it his own creations or adaptations such as *Lear*, need to be studied with reference to the social concerns in the background.

Bond's insight for the socio-political events of his period is shaped by his experiences beginning from his childhood. He was raised in a working-class family in north London, and his family was evacuated to Cornwall due to the Blitz during the Second World War. This contributed to his recognition of human beings as vulnerable objects of the war and his conceptualisation of violence, which is manifested in his seminal plays. Apart from this, his military experience also had an immense effect on Bond's response to social violence. Additionally, his status as a working-class individual influenced Bond's concern for the lower classes of society. As it is known, after the Second World War, he worked for dead-end jobs as a "paint mixer, insurance clerk, aircraft factory employee" (Free 82). Apparently, all these experiences provide the background for Bond's concern for the vulnerability of the working class, the horrors of violence, and the oppression of military state projected in his plays.

The concepts of violence, justice, and class that are central to Bond's writing have also been influential in his construction of *Lear*. Edward Bond states that he cannot come to terms with the themes of Shakespeare's *King Lear* such as resignation and endurance, perpetuation of hierarchical social structure, presentation of the play as the tragedy of one man, and emphasis on the familial issues rather than issues of morality, justice and inequality. He argues that conventional treatments of these issues in Shakespeare's text are not practical as the play gives the wrong message that there is no need to criticise the reasons that lead to the downfall of the larger society. He believes that Shakespeare's play fails at this stage as it does not provide a solution to the problem it portrays. He also finds the representation of characters that continually suffer but do not intend to change anything problematic. Such representation, according to Bond, conveys a wrong message in that human beings need to find ways of coming to terms with corruption. As he states, Shakespeare's work prescribes the idea that "a human being can accept an enormous lot and survive it" (*Edward Bond* 18); hence, it does not call for action to eliminate corruption. For him, the play should portray a strong realisation of Lear's faults as the political leader, and the society needs to be enlightened with this character's transformation.

In line with the idea that meanings and interpretations of literary texts change in time, Bond considers that the topics of resignation and lack of revolution in *King Lear* are not suitable in the contemporary context. What the society needs, according to him, is to be warned about degradation, and to find ways to eliminate corruption. Therefore, he considers the resilient characters of *King Lear* as impractical models in the modern context. As he mentions the necessity to reformulate the effects of Shakespeare's play through a comparison of Shakespeare's period and his own time: "For Shakespeare these were the problems of endurance, but for us they have to be symptoms of the necessity of change" (*Edward Bond* 63). Accordingly, Bond argues that a writer should not state the need for accepting the current system, but s/he needs to offer ways of improving social ills. Bond also explains the reasons why he thinks there is an urgent need for change in contemporary society in a conversation with Howard Davies: "[W]e are in a situation in which people are driven mad, and in which people are in despair, in which people are in agony, and all those things are symptoms of the necessity of change" (*Edward Bond* 63). Clearly, the necessity to obtain an alternative stance in his re-writing is easily related to the circumstances that surround his society.

Like his rejection of the theme of resignation, Bond also criticises Shakespeare's *King Lear* for underpinning a hierarchical social structure. While the depiction of a class-based structure in which all characters act with decorum might have been applicable in Shakespeare's period, Bond believes that the representation of this type of society without any critical remark about the lower classes is an act of ignorance. Bond's argument complies with that of Hermann Sinsheimer who notes that Shakespeare "hardly touched the 'people,' in the sense of the lower and middle classes . . . He is interested in them only as accessories, as stage 'padding,' as the subject of paltry jokes and minor intrigues, interludes in the affairs of the great" (83). In line with the idea that Shakespeare's works are used in the containment of particular ideologies, Bond believes that Shakespeare avoided making critical remarks about the socio-economic problems of his age, thereby contributed to the preservation of class inequality. As Ronald Hayman also argues, Shakespeare failed "to intervene in the class war of the early seventeenth century" as, it is believed, he was mainly preoccupied with pleasing his superiors (*British Theatre* 86).

According to Bond, there is no criticism of the aristocracy in Shakespeare's play. Rather, despite his shortcomings, King Lear is pardoned in the end as "a man more sinned against than sinning" (*King Lear* 3.2.58-59). Even Cordelia fights to restore her father back to the throne as a solution to the breaking up of the assumed harmony both in family and in society. Considering such aspects, Shakespeare's work seems to be on the side of the ruling class. As a Marxist playwright, Bond believes that King Lear is too wrong to be forgiven not only because he is a dysfunctional political leader but also because he leads his society to corruption with his hasty decisions. As a projection of his concern for the lower classes of society, Bond criticises Shakespeare for not portraying the experiences of those who are affected by Lear's decisions. While the experiences of the upper classes are heavily represented in Shakespeare's work, the problems of those in subject positions are mostly neglected. In that respect, Bond's understanding of the characters of Shakespeare's play is also informed by his experiences and observations in relation to his socialist ideology.

Bond's criticism of Shakespeare evokes the ideas of George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoy, and Bertolt Brecht, namely writers who previously criticised Shakespeare for appealing to "the irreligious and immoral frame of mind of the upper classes of his time and ours" (qtd. in Orwell 52). In this respect, George Orwell particularly considers Shakespeare as a writer who favoured "stand[ing] well with the rich and powerful, and was capable of flattering them in the most servile way" (81). As Stephen Purcell also mentions Brecht's particular criticism of Shakespeare for the same issue: "For Brecht, Shakespeare's . . . fault was his bias towards the ruling classes: the suffering of the nobility is usually emphasised over that of the workers" (121). With regard to Shakespeare's approach to the establishment in his works, it is believed that "[n]o matter how much in his later plays he analyses the defects of hierarchy, Shakespeare's constant motive is to preserve its true function as the only viable defence against social disintegration" (Bevington 241). As it is observed in *King Lear*, social corruption ensues as a result of the breakdown of Lear's authority, and there is an attempt to restore the system in the rest of the play. Accordingly, Shakespeare's representation of King Lear without an evident criticism of him as an irresponsible political leader has

been interpreted as an example of his evasion from conflict with his superiors as well as his way of reinforcing the establishment.

The approaches of Shakespeare and Bond to ideas of state, authority and political power differ from each other to a great extent. As Alan Sinfield draws attention to this comparison: "*King Lear* suggests that loosening the conventional bonds of authority in society gives rein to all manner of violent disturbance. Bond believes the opposite: that the State, as we have developed it, is the main source of injustice, cruelty and misery" ("*King Lear* versus *Lear*" 5). As re-writings are constructed in accordance with their writers' ideology, Edward Bond constructs his response to Shakespeare directly in accordance with his ideas about the ruling class, and he problematises Shakespeare's support of the themes of hierarchy and leadership.

Bond also criticises the uses of *King Lear* in mainstream productions that tend to ignore its political dimensions. The play has mostly been presented as a family tragedy or the tragedy of Lear as a wronged father. This approach, according to Bond, signals an ignorance of the more important social problems that are hinted in the play. As he voices his discontent with the presentations of the play in mainstream theatres:

> I very much object to the worshipping of that play by the academic theatre, which I dislike very much because I think it is a totally dishonest experience. "Oh, yes, you know, this marvellous man suffering" and all the rest of it. I think that at the time it would have been a completely, totally different experience to see Lear reacting in the Tudor set up and I think he would have meant so much more and more different things. Now, I think it's an invitation to be artistically lazy to say, "Oh, how marvellous[ly] sensitive we are and this marvellous artistic experience we're having, understanding this play," and all the rest of it. ("A Discussion" 24)

Besides such productions of the play, Bond also criticises the audiences who are ready to interpret the play simply as a family tragedy: "I don't attack Shakespeare but the audiences who go to see his plays and misuse them. They imagine that he is solving their problems. He is not" ("Bond's *Lear*"). Accordingly, Bond also argues that the reader/audience is also entitled to engage in intellectual and critical involvement with Shakespeare's works rather than accepting them as they appear. This statement also

illustrates that Bond rejects the acceptance of Shakespeare as a writer who portrays timeless conduct.

The play's emphasis on the concept of family with the presentation of the relationship between Lear and his daughters and with the accompanying Gloucester subplot have led *King Lear* to be viewed as a family tragedy. Through the example of these two family units, Shakespeare's play demonstrates how family members fail due to their lack of love, loyalty, ingratitude and excessive arrogance. Such interpretations were quite common in the productions of the play during the Romantic period in which producers "tended to internalize the play, locating the tragedy within the mind of Lear, and reducing the external action to a domestic drama" (Foakes, Introduction 80). Bond criticises such productions of the play that merely concentrate on the dissolution of family relationships. According to him, the consequences of Lear's fault should not be confined to the portrayal of disintegration within the family, instead, other social consequences of his irresponsible manners need to be reflected. Edward Bond's ideas about proper literary productions is that they should lead the readers/audiences to question and to obtain a critical attitude, and inspire their will to initiate change in larger society. As a result, he believes that merely grasping the artistic value of *King Lear* and failing to decipher its political criticism does not suffice to create a change in the modern audience that see the play. Accordingly, he transforms Shakespeare's play into a political tragedy, making it "a story about a country involved in war and revolution" (Esslin, "The Theatre"). All in all, Bond challenges both the literary interpretations of Shakespeare's play, and subverts the functions of the work through appropriate alterations of plot and characters.

Transformations in Bond's *Lear* concern both the characters and the plot of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. In this regard, it deviates from the source text both formally and thematically to use Alan Sinfield's terminology. In Bond's version, not all of Shakespeare's characters are altered; however, there are major differences in terms of their roles. For instance, Lear is still the central figure of the play but Cordelia is not his daughter. An important transformation is replacement of Gloucester subplot with that of Gravedigger's Boy, which shows, while some seminal characters of Shakespeare's text

are removed, some new characters are added to the play. Examining such changes in Bond's play in terms of alternative technical approaches observed in adaptations, it is seen that, the work fits in the extrapolated narrative type introduced by Lanier, which points to the type of adaptation that develops the overlooked ideas of the source text. Properly, as Bond's play emphasises the political aspects of the source text, it could be accepted as an example of this type of narrative. Similarly, the play can also be counted as a remotivated narrative for its transformation of the characters' relationship to each other and their initial traits. The most evident example of this practice is the reframing of the character Cordelia as a cruel tyrant in Bond's version. However, probably the most suitable technical term to describe Bond's adaptation is Thomas Cartelli's confrontational appropriation. As the play basically criticises the conventional uses of the host text, and transforms its plot to use it for an alternative socio-political purpose, Bond's version provides a proper confrontational appropriation.

Edward Bond chooses *King Lear* as the source of his work particularly because of the latent political content of the play. As Heinemann states, *King Lear* represents "a society divided between extremes of rich and poor, greed and starvation, the powerful and the powerless, robes and rags, and the impossibility of real justice and security" (78). Apparently, issues of class, power, authorial ambition and justice are already inherent in Shakespeare's work. According to Bond, one of the ideas in the play that needs emphasis is class conflict as Shakespeare's version is also concerned with the division of social classes with its depiction of characters from different levels of community. Although the play indicates a class-based social structure, it does not clearly point out the problems that arise from social inequality. Therefore, Bond aspires to develop useful political topics out of the issues Shakespeare hints at in his work.

Another aspect of *King Lear* that has made it appealing to Bond for recreation is its emphasis on violence. Bond uses violence in his Theatre of Cruelty as a tool for social criticism. Through violent acts depicted in his works, he makes a point about the effects of actual violence in society, and shows that violence is an outcome of socio-economic inequality. When his adaptation of Shakespeare's work is considered from this aspect, it is seen that there is even more violence in Bond's version. Accordingly, his characters

are also more corrupt than the characters in *King Lear*. Bond's emphasis on violence and corruption in his reworking is an extension of his idea that people acquire violent attitudes due to socio-economic deprivation. As he presents a degenerate society, his characters are also influenced from their surrounding, hence they are mostly corrupt figures. With this transformation, Bond emphasises the mutual relationship of responsibility between individual and society. According to him, both these concepts are shaped by the other's influence. Bond's correlation of human values with social conditions is opposed to constant accusation of fate for the corruption of humanity in Shakespeare's play. As this attitude in *King Lear* is criticised by Edmund:

> [W]hen we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars, as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on. (*King Lear* 1.2.119-126)

Edmund's contemplation is quite relevant to Bond's belief that human beings are not inherently evil but they are informed by social factors. As Jonathan Dollimore comments, "the fundamental flow is not in them [the characters] but in the world they inhabit: in the political state, the social order it upholds" (*Radical Tragedy* 194). Therefore, the transformations in Bond's text in terms of the portrayal of violence and questioning of human values are related to his ideas about the socio-economic causes of violence.

Edward Bond mainly constructs his critique of the source text with radical transformations concerning the protagonist of the former play. Retitling the play as *Lear*, Bond indicates that main transformations of the work particularly concern this character. As he also mentions the character as a reason for his recreation: "'Lear' was standing in my path and I had to get him out of the way. I couldn't get beyond him to do other things that I also wanted, so I had to come to terms with him" ("Drama and the Dialectics" 4-14). Bond sees Shakespeare's Lear as an ineffective leader who cannot take the responsibility of his faults, and do anything to prevent corrupt cycle of events. As Bulman comments, "Bond loved the old king for his insight, loathed him for neglecting to act on it" (61). As opposed to the representation of Lear in Shakespeare's

play as a man who comes to a realisation only to suffer the consequences of his actions, Bond constructs his Lear as a more active figure whose suffering is accompanied by a much more serious recognition process and ideological transformation.

Despite some radical changes in the characterisation of the protagonist in Bond's re-writing, there are some common points between the two Lear figures. For instance, madness is a central feature of both these characters. Similar to Shakespeare's King Lear, Bond's Lear is first represented as paranoid and later seriously mad. Reminding of King Lear's dementia, Bond's Lear has poor memory as he mistakes a person for a horse (*Lear* 51). Similar to King Lear's fear of his daughters' loyalty, Bond's Lear has imaginary enemies, he is constantly under the illusion that somebody is plotting against him, and he is afraid of almost everything a clear example of which is depicted in the scene where he finds a crust of bread on the floor and wonders if it is poisoned (*Lear* 31). Despite such common points, Bond uses Lear's madness for a different purpose. Unlike King Lear's insanity that is used as an excuse for his mistakes, Lear's madness enables his moral maturation. In relation to Bond's Lear, Hern argues that "[h]is apparent madness and retreat into a nightmare world of tortured images is a phase through which he reaches a more rational understanding of his situation and can *act* morally – that is, in Bond's terms, in a politically responsible way" (xxxv). That is to say, the issue of madness is also used in Bond's alteration; however, its intentions are more radical.

Bond's Lear, in the beginning, is even more obsessed with power than Shakespeare's King Lear who, at least, sets out to confer the cares and business from his age on younger strengths (*King Lear* 1.1.39). After King Lear is deposed by his daughters in Shakespeare's play, he becomes a "slave, / A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man" (*King Lear* 3.2.19-20). However, he cannot accept his fall from power as he continues to wear wild flowers to crown himself (*King Lear* 4.6.79). Bond's Lear also continues to believe that he is still the king although he has been deposed. However, after a while, both of these characters realise the fact that power has blinded them. Lear's words "I must open my eyes and see!" (*Lear* 60) in Bond's version correlate with Kent's words to King Lear after he is bereft of power in Shakespeare's text: "See better, Lear" (*King*

Lear 1.1.159). Apparently, while Shakespeare's Lear needs Kent's guidance initially to understand that he was blinded by greed and power, Bond's Lear goes through this process individually. Subsequently, such warnings in Shakespeare's text are not supported by King Lear's conscious and mature actions as he only goes on suffering without trying to change anything. Alternatively, Bond intends to make it more evident that "[p]ower is impotence" (*Selections* 120), and this idea is conveyed through the depiction of a more conscious protagonist.

Indeed, there are several references in Shakespeare's text that also present King Lear as the responsible figure behind social and domestic decay. To illustrate, the following words display that King Lear acknowledges his share in the evolution of his daughters as corrupt figures:

> But yet thou art *my flesh*, *my blood*, *my daughter*,
> Or rather *a disease that's in my flesh*,
> Which *I must needs call mine*. Thou art a boil,
> A plague sore, or embossed carbuncle
> In my *corrupted blood*. (*King Lear* 2.2.410-414; emphasis added)

In accordance with Edward Bond's response to the play, this remark of King Lear is a significant point that actually needs to be developed and furthered in the following scenes by Shakespeare. However, Shakespeare's King Lear immediately goes on to complain about the ingratitude of his daughters rather than act upon his fleeting realisation above. Conversely, Bond's version provides a Lear who lives through a longer and more convincing process of recognition. When Shakespeare's King Lear realises his mistakes it is already too late for him to change anything. It is only towards the end of Shakespeare's play that King Lear accepts his stubbornness as a fault: "To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything that I said 'ay' and 'no' t was no good divinity" (*King Lear* 4.6.98-100). His words to Gloucester after his blinding also reveal his appreciation of his mistakes: "Get thee glass eyes, / And like a scurvy politician seem / To see the things thou dost not" (*King Lear* 4.6.166-168). However, this late realisation and inability to implicate action upon awareness do not suffice to compensate for his past mistakes. Therefore, as opposed to Shakespeare's resilient type of ruler, Bond suggests a more reformative one though his success remains debatable. Bond's Lear learns from

his mistakes slightly earlier, and he makes an attempt to change things although he is killed during the endeavour. In order to criticise the representation of a resigned Lear in Shakespeare's version who does nothing other than suffer the consequences of his decisions as he is unable to acknowledge his liability, Bond presents Lear as a man whose pathos is accompanied by recognition, and one who goes through a conscious transformation process after he acknowledges his share in the degeneration of his society.

Since Bond thinks Lear is responsible for his society's suffering, and he has to bear the consequences of his decisions, his gradual fall from power is intentionally underlined. As his daughters depose Lear, he expresses his misery to the Old Councillor as such: "My daughters have taken the bread from my stomach . . . I am a famished dog that sits on the earth and howls" (*Lear* 31). After a while, when Lear is put in prison, he resembles himself to a caged animal to reflect more on his victimisation: "There's a poor animal with blood on its head and tears running down its face . . . Is it a bird or a horse? It's lying in the dust and its wings are broken . . . Who cut off his hands so that it can't shake the bars? . . . O god, there's no pity in this world" (*Lear* 49). The metaphor of a caged bird in this scene reflects his defenceless position as he is unable to rebel. In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Lear also uses the same metaphor of birds in a cage that refers to his dream of an idyllic moment for himself and Cordelia even when they are in prison: "Come, let's away to prison; / We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage" (*King Lear* 5.3.8-9). The realisation of Lear's own mistakes in Bond's play is also reinforced in his frame narrative in which he again tells the story of a caged bird who teaches other birds to sing "[t]he king's a fool" (*Lear* 89). As Lear comprehends the futility of enforcement of tyrannical power, he also understands that he was also a fool when he was a king. This is in contrast with Shakespeare's Lear who lacks insight, and dreams of an idyllic place even after he loses everything. Bond refashions the use of Shakespeare's metaphor to refer to the idea of oppression of the state upon its individuals and Lear's "position as a prisoner both of his illusions and of the revolutionaries who take power" (Coult 37).

Bond specifically opposes the traditional viewing of King Lear as a character "representative of Man" (Foakes, Introduction 31) who suffers in order to reach redemption. Hence, his depiction of Lear is in contrast with the productions of the character as "an old man humbled and petted, disarmed and then restored to peace and gratitude" (Bratton 41). Such productions of Shakespeare's play represent Lear as a justified man who is granted with a final union with Cordelia. Shakespeare's Lear is held responsible for "the willful creation of disorder" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 652) since it is believed that he creates chaos with his initial decision to divide his lands. However, there is not enough mention of Lear's fault in the rest of Shakespeare's play, which is interpreted by Bond as a technical problem in terms of poor representation of the character and the correct social messages the work fails to provide. Appropriately, there is a major deviation in Bond's play that reflects his rejection of the idea that King Lear might be seen as a pardonable figure to be rewarded with harmony with his daughter he disowned in the first place, hence there is no equivalent of the soothing reconciliation between Cordelia and Lear. Bond subverts this interpretation of the play because he thinks that if Lear's faults are not pointed at or he does not go through a proper recognition phase, the play cannot function as a conduct for the betterment of society.

According to Bond, "redemptionist" (Foakes, Introduction 75) readings of *King Lear* that are confined to interpreting a single character's psychological decay require a critical new reading and writing of the work as such interpretations overshadow much more critical issues that are potentially embodied in the text. Redemptionist interpretations limit the discussions of the work to one character ignoring the influences of his decisions and actions on other characters and social constructions. As Dollimore also suggests, humanist view of Lear's tragedy "mystifies suffering" (*Radical Tragedy* 190), which is what Bond argues against in his criticism of the work. He believes that if current social order needs to change, there has to be revolution, not resilience and suffering. Therefore, he criticises the play for magnifying endurance as it prevents the creation of any functional solution. This approach explains why Bond does not assume a humanist approach towards Lear in Shakespeare's work but a politically loaded and subversive one.

Concentrating on the experience of one single character also prevents a thorough analysis of the play. In the case of *King Lear*, predominant representation of the protagonist does not leave space for an exploration of the problems of other society members including Lear's subjects, the deprived classes. Since Shakespeare's work primarily hinges on the desires, faults, decisions and imagination of a single figure, Bond thinks that the play functions like a psychological drama which makes it inconvenient for making a critical analysis about society and politics:

> Now society can no longer be expressed politically and morally in terms of the individual . . . The individual is no longer a metaphor for the state and his private feelings can no longer be used to express cause in history or will in politics. Changes in social and political relations make a new drama urgently necessary . . . The bourgeois theatre clings to psychological drama and so it can't deal with the major dramatic themes. (*The Activist Papers* 136)

Evidently, Bond rejects the idea of prioritising one human figure at the expense of a whole society. For that reason, he lays weight on the social adversity besides the tragedy of Lear. In this way, Shakespeare's play no longer functions as merely the tragedy of Lear but the tragedy of a society.

Within this framework, Bond does not intend to stress the importance of Lear's death at the end of his play. Lear's eventual death caused discussions among critics as to whether he is a tragic hero or not. For instance, Richard Scharine accepts Lear as a tragic hero because, according to his interpretation, "he achieves his potential by transgressing society's limits and pays for it with his life" (214). Alternatively, Donahue argues that Lear "travels the greatest dramatic distance of any of Bond's characters" although he may not be considered as a proper tragic hero (91). Besides such arguments, Bond actually aims to emphasise the social message he would like to put across with this death. He makes it clear that Lear dies as he is trying to undo his previous faults. Therefore, the point of reference should not be Lear's death but what he is about to accomplish at the moment of his death. As he comments on the death of his protagonist: "Lear is very old and has to die anyway. He makes his gesture only to those who are learning how to live" (*Edward Bond* 54). This treatment is very different from Shakespeare's depiction of the plight of the tragic hero, which epitomises "man's ennobling by suffering" (Scharine 216). Different from the ennobled tragic hero whose

authority is necessarily acknowledged in Shakespeare's plot, Bond's Lear becomes just like the other sufferers in society by losing his political authority that is never granted to him again.

Apparently, different from Shakespeare, Bond's concern is not an old man but the remaining members of the society whose destiny is preconditioned by a corrupt political monarch. Bond's notes that he took down when he was writing the play reveal his opinion about this issue: "The men who shoot Lear don't know who he is – no one in the final scene knows who he is. But don't make a Victorian-pathos thing out of this – they just don't happen to know who he is" (*Selections* 107). Clearly, the emphasis in the final scene of his work is not the tragic pathos of Lear, but the horrific atmosphere of Cordelia's regime that is ready to do away with any dissident figure. Therefore, his Lear needs not be accepted as a tragic hero in the traditional sense, instead, he is a character with which Bond epitomises a modern man who, when faced with danger or is left deprived of emotional and physical needs, "becomes nervous and tense and he begins to look for threats everywhere. This makes him belligerent and provocative; he becomes a threat to other people, and so his situation rapidly deteriorates" (Bond, "Author's Preface" 4). Since Lear is portrayed as responsible for the suffering of others, he ends up suffering himself, in need of his subjects' protection whom he once obliged to work for the building of his wall. Bond explains the reasons for this major alteration in his play as such: "I wanted to explain that Lear was responsible, but that it was very important that he could not get out of his problems simply by suffering the consequences, or by endurance and resignation. He had to live through the consequences and struggle with them" (Bond, "The Long Road" 29). Different from Bond's version, Stephen Lynch aptly summarises the treatment of Lear in Shakespeare's plot: "Lear is . . . a man more forgiven than he deserves" (52). It is the idea of Lear being immediately forgiven, and his past mistakes suddenly being forgotten that troubles Bond, and he does not end his version without making his Lear pay the price of his faults all the way through.

Bond's degradation of the importance of King Lear as the tragic hero of the source text is also shaped by his Marxist ideology. As it is claimed, modern British playwrights

followed “the steps of the Marx-Brecht tradition of the hero” (Al-Kasim 129). With this practice, conventional representation of the characters in the source text is subverted with unfamiliar ones to reveal the more critical political issues at the background. In this context, Edward Bond also challenges the traditional uses of the tragic hero like his literary predecessors. Marxist criticism does not support the representation of one character as more important than others, hence the concept of the tragic hero is not favoured. This explains why Bond’s Lear is not a conventional tragic hero as Bond does not see the character any more important than others. Marxist critics argue, “by maintaining a fascination with the personal at the expense of the social, modern drama has devolved into absurdity” (Bulman 61). Similarly, Shakespeare is also criticised for neglecting to dwell on the more important issues in his work while emphasising the importance of the central figure: “For a dramatist to allow the play to devolve into a study of one man’s personal adjustment to such wrongs, was a dereliction of his moral responsibilities as a writer” (Bulman 63). This statement also supports Bond’s major criticism of Shakespeare for his lack of guidance for the construction of an equal and nonviolent society.

The transformations in Bond’s re-writing in terms of Lear’s characterisation also indicate Bond’s socialist politics. The change Lear goes through symbolises the journey of a tyrant from capitalist ignorance to socialist awareness. While Lear’s initial representation as an oppressive leader suggests his capitalist phase, later on he obtains values of socialism as he recognises his mistakes. At the beginning, he is a cruel leader who forces his people to work for the construction of a wall to protect himself from imaginary enemies. He considers himself as the only saviour figure, and his wall as the only means of salvation for his society, which is clear in his following words: “I started this wall when I was young. I stopped my enemies in the field, but there were always more of them. How could we ever be free? So I built this wall to keep our enemies out. My people will live behind this wall when I’m dead. You may be governed by fools but you’ll always live in peace” (*Lear* 17). However, as the wall is built, Lear sacrifices the lives of his workers for his own protection much like a capitalist leader exploiting his workers. While he associates the wall with development and freedom in the beginning, after his moment of realisation, he associates it with concepts like prison, suffering,

misery, ruin, and waste. At last, he seems to be mature enough to comprehend his mistake as he asks by the wall "[h]ow many lives have I ended here?" (*Lear* 80). Eventually, Lear acknowledges that his obsession with the wall has ruined the lives of society members. Apparently, this obsession turns into one of his biggest regrets at the end of the play as is illustrated in his following poetic speech about a life wasted in ignorance:

> There's a wall everywhere. I'm buried alive in a wall. Does this suffering and misery last for ever? Do we work to build ruins, waste all these lives to make a desert no one could live in? There's no one to explain it to me, no one I can go for justice. I'm old, I should know how to live by now, but I know nothing, I can do nothing, I am nothing. (*Lear* 94)

As it is seen in the last act of the play in which Lear tries to destroy the wall, he makes one last attempt in his late fight against "new" order of capitalism, tyranny, oppression and inequality. With such instances, Bond demonstrates the painful process of a political figure to learn from his mistakes and express his regret deeply.

Another seminal transformation in Bond's version concerning characters is the addition of the Gravedigger's Boy who is the equivalent of Shakespeare's Fool. Gravedigger's Boy is highly functional in Lear's abovementioned transformation from a tyrant to a member of society sensitive to the concerns of others. As the main function of the Fool in Shakespeare's play is "to emphasise the folly . . . of his royal master" (Bickersteth 15), Gravedigger's Boy also reveals Lear's indiscretion in Bond's play. Considering the fact that Gravedigger's Boy helps Lear see society and its virtues differently, he is on a similar ground with the Fool who also helps "humanizing Lear" (Foakes, Introduction 58). In this respect, both the Fool and the Gravedigger's Boy function similarly in terms of the protagonists' moral maturation. Technically speaking, even the times when these characters enter and exit the play suggest their similar function: "It is no accident that the Fool appears just at the moment when Lear has begun to act like a fool" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 664), and eventually "when Lear is finally convinced that he himself is a fool, the character called Fool disappears from the play" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 674). Obviously, the Fool's function in Shakespeare's play is to subvert interpretation of King Lear as a wise man. Likewise, the Gravedigger's Boy

teaches Lear virtues of pity and compassion, and when Lear really acquires this mentality, there is no need for the Gravedigger's Boy, which is indicated with his death for a second time. In Gravedigger's Boy's lifetime, Lear is an irresponsible and an ignorant ruler; however after he is killed, Lear understands the destructive nature of war and violence. Scharine closely analyses these two characters as follows: "As Lear increases in moral maturity, the body of the Ghost deteriorates. At the moment when Lear completely understands his life and the action he must take, the Ghost dies a second time" (206). As both the Fool and the Gravedigger's Boy are functional in terms of maturation of Lear and they are both foils to the protagonist, the Gravedigger's Boy is created in the image of the Fool in *King Lear*.

The Fool in *King Lear* is one of the wisest characters who voices corruption in the social scale. In this respect, it is quite natural for Bond to imagine the Gravedigger's Boy as a moral character in the image of the Fool. As the following instance provides, the Fool notices a number of degenerate practices in various walks of society which are not mentioned by other characters in the play:

> When priests are more in word than matter,
> When brewers mar their malt with water,
> When nobles are their tailors' tutors,
> No heretics burned but wenches' suitors,
> When every case in law is right,
> No squire in debt nor no poor knight,
> When slanders do not live in tongues,
> Nor cutpurses come not to throngs,
> When usurers tell their gold i' th' field,
> And bawds and whores do churches build—
> Then shall the realm of Albion
> Come to great confusion. (*King Lear* 3.3.81-92)

According to Bond, such critical comments about society need to be more in the foreground throughout Shakespeare's text and used for edifying purposes; however, they mostly remained in passing. Considering the fact that the Fool in Shakespeare's *King Lear* has insight for the reasons of corruption in society, Bond recreates the Fool through Gravedigger's Boy as a seminal figure in Lear's awareness process. It is also necessary to note that such transformation in Bond's version is informed by his socialist ideology. According to his reformulation of the plot, lower-class characters such as the

Gravedigger's Boy, Thomas and Susan are the ones who influence Lear's ideas about social problems with their charitable attitude to Lear when he falls from power and needs shelter. When Lear is deposed, he first finds shelter in Gravedigger's Boy's place, and at the end of the play, he is protected in Thomas and Susan's place. Apparently, Lear learns values of compassion and pity from the hospitability and welcoming of these lower-class characters.

The setting of the Gravedigger's Boy's place also supports the idea that he represents socialist values. According to Worth, the "idyllic pastoral scene" (182) in which the Gravedigger's Boy's place looks like a Russian house, is deliberately used in association with ideas of "charity, fruitfulness and simple contentment" (182), which immediately draws a parallelism between socialism and such virtues. Apart from the fact that this is the first place in which Lear is protected, it becomes such a comfort zone for Lear that even after his blinding he imagines the ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy comforting him with a promise to take him to this place where, as he believes, he will reside in peace (*Lear* 78). This place, in a way, represents a distant period in which, according to Bond, moral values were not yet taken over by monetary values. In this respect, Donahue's interpretation of the Gravedigger's Boy character is noteworthy: "the Gravedigger's Boy belongs to a natural world long past, in which one offered nurture to strangers freely and where digging was for graves or wells or food, not for Lear's wall" (78). Considering that Lear's wall is a symbol of corruption, and Gravedigger's Boy escapes being a part of it, he remains uncontaminated by Lear's ideas, hence he represents rustic past when people used to have compassion for each other. Symbolically, once Lear sets foot in this idyllic place, he brings forth military violence as the soldiers invade the place and ruin their peace. Consequently, Bond uses this scene to suggest the idea that modern values of "militarism, socialized morality, industrialization, technology, and commercialized popular culture" (Booker 302) dehumanise individuals and ruin the natural pastoral life led by the Gravedigger's Boy and Cordelia as lower-class figures in this particular scene.

Since Lear learns essential moral virtues from the characters representing a socialist order in the play, there are several instances that illustrate the idea that these characters

have the power to reform society. Even the name of the Gravedigger's Boy, as the leading figure in *Lear* in terms of representing the characteristics of the lower class, resonates with Marx's reference to the proletariat as the "grave-diggers of capitalism" (Miliband, *Divided Societies* 2). Bond's Gravedigger's Boy embodies the virtue of distilling the class-based structure in the play through the moral virtues he teaches Lear. Similarly, it is believed that Thomas and Susan as other uncorrupted lower-class characters in Bond's *Lear* are "left to build a better world" (Hern xxiv). In this regard, Bond presents these lower-class characters as role models for his own society, and suggests that hope for a better future rests with the lower social stratum.

Concerning the positive influence of the lower-class characters on Lear's transformation and maturation, it is observed in the prison scene that Prisoners 1, 2 and 3 are also pitiful towards Lear when he is captured, and they are ready to share their food with him despite their lack of supply. As Oppel and Christenson observe their attitudes to Lear:

> Even though chained and blindfolded, they help each other. One offers to support his failing companion, they share their water and one even shields the other while he attempts to see where they are, even though he is thus endangering his own life . . . Prisoner 3 is perhaps not as willing to endanger himself as 1 or 2, but he is humane to Lear, giving him water and taking off his chains. (28)

Evidently, in the following scenes of the play, Lear needs the help of the lower classes whom he exploits in the first act. This suggests that these characters are not vindictive and they do not abandon the virtue of fraternity. In this particular scene, Bond criticises the judicial system of an unjust state that forces its moral individuals to imprisonment whereas the actually corrupt authority figures are free. Bond, once more, voices his argument that hope for salvation in modern states rests with the lower classes but only after the establishment of a just socialist system.

Positive representation of the deprived classes in Bond's version brings to mind the depiction of lower-class figures in Shakespeare's work. In the source text, Gloucester's servants are depicted as loyal figures to him when he is blinded, or Kent and the Fool remain loyal to Lear even after he falls from power. Although the depiction of lower-class characters in Shakespeare's text seems quite positive in such instances, it is

obvious that Bond's intentions are not the same with Shakespeare's. In Shakespeare's work, lower-class characters are positively portrayed as long as they submit to the ruling classes' orders. As Oppel and Christenson suggest, Shakespeare tended to provide positive characters from the lower classes of society "so that the 'common man' viewing this play can learn his proper role and place in society – obedience to his master" (40). Conversely, Bond presents his lower-class characters as more virtuous than the upper classes without considering whether they are loyal to their superiors or not. In this regard, Bond subverts the dominant order that is reinforced in/by Shakespeare's play, and this practice marks a clear departure from Shakespeare's text which conducts the lower classes to submit to their 'better' sort.

As Lear acquires socialist values, he practices what he has learned from the lower-class characters by protecting other people in need. The agony of the realisation that he is no longer the king turns into an act of charity in time as he devotes himself to securing the wall workers that are now exploited by Cordelia's regime. Lear's feelings of pity and fraternity reach topmost level in the last act of the play when he protects Small Man from the Councillor who comes to arrest him for execution (*Lear* 92), and he invites other indigent people to Thomas and Susan's place so that they could eat something (*Lear* 83). Behaving as a man of conscience now, he voices the concern of the oppressed people for which he previously had no interest: "How do most men live? They're hungry and no one feeds them, so they call for help and no one comes" (*Lear* 95). As he mentions the impact of Thomas and Susan's hospitability on the values he has obtained: "I came here when I was cold and hungry and afraid. I wasn't turned away. They can eat my food while it lasts and when it's gone they can go if they like, but I won't send anyone away" (*Lear* 88). Clearly, Lear, as a socially aware man now, uses the place as a shelter for other people. From the beginning of the play, he has been preoccupied with finding the right means to protect and save his people from imaginary enemies, and as it seems, he realises only through the end that the solution is with socialist fraternity.

In comparison to Shakespeare's King Lear who is also considered to have acquired values of pity and compassion, these transformations illustrate that Bond's Lear goes

through a radical recognition process. King Lear accepts the fact that false ideal of authority has beguiled him; however, Bond's Lear changes his political ideology and embraces the lower classes. There are instances in Shakespeare's play in which King Lear expresses his concern for others after he loses sanity and power as follows: "I am mightily absused. I should ev'n die with pity / To see another thus" (*King Lear* 4.7.53-54). However, these words are not accompanied with action. His appreciation of moral values is only transitory as it is clarified in Dollimore's observation: "[W]e see him, minutes before his death, boasting of having killed the 'slave' that was hanging Cordelia" (*Radical Tragedy* 193). As it is observed, King Lear is still preoccupied with vengeance even when he is about to die. This instance renders his transformation less convincing and less genuine when compared to Bond's Lear who exercises his feeling of compassion by all possible means. It is also interesting that the significance of Lear's ideological change in Bond's work is reinforced with the simultaneous improvement of his mental condition. As it is noted, Lear "is restored to sanity" only after he learns norms of socialist fraternity (Trussler, *Edward Bond* 26). This also suggests the idea that Bond gives more importance to the protagonist's ideological change, which he considers as the key solution for social corruption.

Through this radical change, Bond offers the idea that the solutions to the problems of a disintegrated society are compassion for one another, and establishment of "*sensitivity* . . . to the needs of a larger and larger variety of people" (Rorty 81). In stark contrast with his characterisation at the beginning of the play, Lear seems to have recognised by the end that the real enemy of society is tyranny and injustice, and that the right way to protect people is through mercy and understanding for the other. Although Lear is initially driven by hatred and ambition, at the end of the play, he is ruled by feelings of empathy and compassion. As he warns Cordelia in their final encounter: "Our lives are awkward and fragile and we have only one thing to keep us sane: pity, and the man without pity is mad" (*Lear* 98). What Bond illustrates through Lear's alteration is the need for establishing a similar concern for the other in real society with a necessary socialist revolution. Such messages Bond conveys in the play are suggestive in his context when moral concepts such as common sense and social equality were easily dispensed with in favour of monetary values (Blackwell and Seabrook 148). In this

sense, the play questions commercial modern culture, and criticises the decay of moral values.

Another substantial transformation of the source text's characters for ideological purposes concerns Cordelia. In Bond's reworking, Cordelia is not Lear's daughter, but the next tyrant after him. Although the character's representation is very different from that of Shakespeare, Bond uses the same identification to portray a very different natured woman. It is also interesting that her name is revealed only some time after she first appears in the play. David Ian Rabey observes that "the withholding of Cordelia's name until the end of Act One . . . is specifically aimed to destroy any lingering notions on part of the audience that someone in the play will represent conventional goodness" (*British* 108-109). Challenging the cultural memory about this character's traits in the source text, Bond strategically reveals the name of the character after laying bare some of her characteristics in an attempt to assert his work's difference from Shakespeare's play one step further.

As opposed to Shakespeare's Cordelia who embodies moral virtues, Bond's Cordelia is presented to be even more dangerous than Lear. This change is another sign of Bond's rejection of "redemptionist interpretations" of *King Lear* in which "Cordelia was seen primarily as the agent of Lear's regeneration, and idealized as a saintly figure, or an embodiment of love" (Foakes, Introduction 34). As Bond rejects the depiction of Lear as a sympathetic man, he is also against the portrayal of Cordelia as a forgiving character that reinforces King Lear's ennobled representation. Bond imagines Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear* as "an absolute menace – a very dangerous type of person" ("Drama" 8) because he believes that her representation as an idealised daughter even after her banishment is not realistic. In Shakespeare's play, King Lear refers to Cordelia with the words "new adopted to our hate, / Dowered with our curse" (*King Lear* 1.1.204-205), and to suggest his disappointment with her, he marries her off to Duke of France as a "cast away" (*King Lear* 1.1.255). Despite King Lear's ill treatment of Cordelia, she reappears near the end of the play to help Lear in an attempt to "[r]epair those violent harms that my two sisters / Have in thy reverence made" (*King Lear* 4.7.27-28). Considering this representation, it is obvious that Cordelia is used as a foil

character to emphasise the need to restore Lear back to throne. As Richard Knowles also questions the problematics of this representation in terms of its lack of credibility: "Why . . . should she return so soon, almost instantly, to her native country, now alien and hostile to her, only to lose everything, including her life?" (33). According to Bond, this action lacks rational impetus, and does not seem true to life considering the injustice Cordelia endures. To make his criticism of Cordelia's representation clear, Bond depicts her as a corrupt violent figure who brings about Lear's fall rather than as his daughter with a mission to re-establish his authority.

Bond's alternative depiction of Cordelia also projects his ideas about the destructive nature of social violence. In his play, Cordelia's transformation into a tyrant follows her victimisation earlier in the play as she is raped when she is pregnant, and her husband is killed in front of her eyes. When she first appears in the play, Cordelia is a vulnerable pregnant woman, and when she reappears in Act Three, it is seen that she has turned into a tyrant military figure. Evidently, Cordelia becomes a corrupt character after the atrocities she goes through. At the end of the play, she voices her lack of pity with the words: "[I]f you listened to everything your conscience told you you'd go mad" (*Lear* 97-98). The change observed in Cordelia indicates Bond's idea that human beings are not inherently evil, but they are shaped by their social circumstances. In his article "On Violence," Bond properly clarifies the idea that human beings are not violent of necessity, but they are shaped by their society: "I only want to make clear that the cause and solution of the problem of human violence lie not in our instincts but in our social relationships . . . we are violent because we have not yet made those relationships civilised" ("On Violence" 12). It is apparent through these changes in Bond's work that he uses Shakespeare's play also in order to support his ideas about violence.

The same idea is also applicable to the transformation of Lear's two vile daughters, Bodice and Fontanelle. At the beginning of the play, they object to Lear's cruelty towards his workers. As they warn Lear not to kill a worker: "Father, if you kill this man it will be an injustice" (*Lear* 18), he says, "you're right to be kind and merciful, and when I'm dead you *can* be – because you will have my wall" (*Lear* 18). However, the next time the daughters appear, it is seen that they practice even more violent deeds

than their father. This draws a parallelism between Lear's cruel regime and the daughters' evolution into corrupt figures. As Bond points to Lear's responsibility for the corruption of his daughters, "they *were* his daughters – they had been formed by his activity, they were children of his state, and he was totally responsible for them" ("Drama" 8). At this point, Bond stresses the idea that Lear fails as a father, as a citizen and as a ruler. Richard Scharine also argues that "[e]vil is not inherent biologically in Lear's daughters. They are the victims of the social morality he has taught them" (194). Therefore, it is necessary to see Bodice, Fontanelle and Cordelia as subjects of Lear's regime. Similarly, their transformation into even more violent figures illustrates the immediate impact of society upon the individual. Bond makes it apparent that the daughters are products of Lear's cruelty, and having done similar mistakes, they endure the same fate as their father. A strong emphasis on this idea is made in the scene where "Bodice and Fontanelle are defeated, captured, and, finally, executed in the same cell in which they imprisoned their father – never realizing that they have been entrapped in it ever since they chose to follow their father's principles as children" (Scharine 200). The fact that the daughters are put in the same cell as Lear suggests the similar practices they exercise when they get the power, and indicates their equal share in the decay of their society. This scene illustrates that although all corrupt leaders find themselves in prison after some time, injustice somehow continues to prevail in a different form throughout the play. These differences in this play portray Bond's belief that there is no place for virtue in a society that has once been contaminated by evil.

The character transformations in Bond's re-writing need to be read in relation to the historical and political events of the period in which he constructed his work to assess which ideas have primarily informed his approach to Shakespeare's work. Although it is not certain which period is reflected in Bond's *Lear,* the play clearly portrays the problems of the time in which it is created. In this play, Bond refers to an unknown period and a location, but obviously talks to and about his own society and Britain in the wake of the 1960s. Lear, as the protagonist of the play, seems to be a man that could belong to any period and any geography, not very much like a contemporary one, and not necessarily a monarch of the old times as in Shakespeare's work. The wall, as one of the most important symbols in the play, is a prehistoric one but modern workmen are

used in its construction (Scharine 220). This paradoxical representation makes it difficult to situate the play to a certain time. As Dark refers to the variety of contexts represented in the play: "It is set in a world at one time medieval – the building of a wall, the shackling of prisoners – and at the same time almost contemporary – electric lights, rifles" (22). Harry Andrews, the first actor who performed the role of Lear at the Royal Court in 1971, observes the correlation of the play to various contexts in his following comment: "The sort of impression I get would be late Russian Revolution, or 1918 in the First War. I suppose the setting should be England and perhaps it is, but to me it is more like Germany or behind the Iron Curtain" (qtd. in Hastings). The actual period and the location to which the play refers is rather difficult to speak of precisely; however, what is common in these possible settings is the horrific atmosphere of war, tyranny, and injustice both on the social and economic level.

On the grounds that Edward Bond is not always preoccupied with openly reflecting contemporary setting and time in his works, Kerensky argues that his plays "are mostly placed in historical or exotic settings, and are more noticeable for their extremes of violence than for their direct relevance to present-day social and economic problems" (19). This is why *Lear* does not, at first sight, seem to be a play of the contemporary period but a play about a violent society in an unspecified period. However, it needs to be noted that violence was a significant part of the British society when Bond was re-writing Shakespeare's play. In this respect, the importance placed on violence and corruption in the play should be seen as criticism of real society. It is quite evident in a number of interviews and Bond's prefaces that he intends the play to be seen as a criticism of his society. Some elements of the play make this attempt clear such as the language of the play in the form of "modern slang and idiom" or the setting like a "work camp" (Bradley 148). These alterations in the play are deliberately appropriated by Bond to situate Shakespeare's play in a modern day context so that the topic and the play itself become more familiar.

Despite the vagueness of time and place in the play, *Lear*'s references to the context of Britain in the 1970s are still recognisable. In many aspects, the society represented in the play evokes the real society with the advancement of capitalism, class-based

structure, violence, injustice and disillusioned individuals with the establishment. Edward Bond believes that a work of art should be situated in a certain period so that its meaning and the messages are understood comprehensively. He believes that the task of a writer should be to point out the problems of their own society, and the function of a work of art is to reflect and comment on the problems of its age. In this respect, he states that "[i]t doesn't matter how great an artist is, his art has no meaning until it is placed in a social context" (*Selections* 140). It is known that Marxist cultural theory refuses to separate art from other social practices (Haslett 8). Accordingly, as a Marxist writer, Bond's criticism of Shakespeare's text and its uses in the subsequent periods is also related to this idea. As Bond comments on the uses of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, "as a society we use the play in a wrong way. And it's for that reason I would like to rewrite it so that we now have to use the play for ourselves, for our society, for our time, for our problems" (qtd. in Hay and Roberts 106). With this remark, Bond points to the necessity of using the play for a reassessment of more central political and social problems by providing a new insight. The transformations in characterisation and plot in Bond's appropriation are better appreciated when social and political background of his period is taken into consideration.

In Bond's re-writing, representation of a class-based society, hierarchical social structure, prevailing violence, loss of humanity, implication of a capitalist system and lack of socialist empathy refer to the actual problems of the 1960s and 1970s. These two decades were characterised by issues such as disillusionment with the left, socialist tendencies in politics, class struggle, institutionalisation and legitimation of violence, and rise of capitalism. In this respect, Peter Holbrook sees *King Lear* as a proper work that enables the discussion of these topics as it is "powerfully attuned to the experience of (political) disillusion and defeat – as more eloquent on issues relevant to 'the left' now than any other play by Shakespeare" (343). This also explains why Bond chooses to re-write *King Lear* of all other Shakespeare plays. In his version, he appropriates the latent political issues of the play to refer to the problems of his context with the addition of issues of the modern period like "labour within a military state, the economic costs of slavery and the injustice of political authority" (Bradley 149). In accordance with

Bond's socialist ideological background, these are dangerous for a society, and he correlates such problems to Britain's political and economic decay at the moment.

1970s, as the exact period of the construction of Bond's re-writing, is mostly remembered as a period of socio-political unease, economic decay, racial conflicts, and violence. Referring to the frustrating atmosphere of the decade in such respects, Andy Beckett claims that "since the Second World War, by common consent for decades now, the worst of times came between the election of Edward Heath in 1970 and the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979" (1). There was an evident disillusionment with the political leaders of the period, namely, Conservative leader Edward Heath (1970-74), and Labour leaders Harold Wilson (1974-76) and James Callaghan (1976-79). The political problems of 1970s' Britain that were not successfully handled by the leaders of the period are listed by Kate Dorney as such: "When Edward Heath was elected Prime Minister in 1970 . . . he was faced with a growing and articulate body of 'minorities' (in terms of race, gender and sexuality) and workers demanding equal rights" (137). Apparently, Heath was basically expected to deal with minority problems and class division, which remained among the most significant problems of Britain. Moreover, concerning capitalist tendencies of Heath's policies, it is claimed that "he appealed not to the electorate's principles but to its pockets, committing his government to rolling back the state, controlling the unions, reprivatizing the mixed economy, cutting welfare and abandoning Keynesian policies aimed at maintaining low levels of unemployment" (Davies and Saunders 48). Therefore, Heath's government is now remembered as "a period of continuous crisis marked by industrial chaos, social division and international instability" (Billington, *State of the Nation* 206). Additionally, Michael Lynch lists the problems that marked Wilson administration as "rising unemployment, inflation, wage controls, attempted restriction of trade union freedoms . . . support of the USA's involvement in the Vietnam War" (163). In addition to the problems of race and class, economic issues with the ensuing labour strikes and Britain's policy concerning global problems such as the Vietnam War characterised the period. With respect to the economic instability of the decade, Hubble et al. state "unemployment rose to 1 million in the spring of 1975, amounting to 5% of the workforce" ("Introduction" 1). Sked and Cook also consider inflation, the Irish problem, the Rhodesian question, the Welsh and

Scottish devolution among the continuous problems of the decade that created economic and social division among British citizens (324).

Edward Bond considers such problems as immediate outcomes of capitalism, hence he criticises the establishment in accordance with Marxist criticism. It needs to be noted that there was an increasing interest in Marxism in the 1970s as argued by Forster and Harper:

> The 1970s was a period in which some parts of society expressed intensified interest in varieties of Marxism . . . Marxism told silently on the minds of a whole generation, and extreme change in the political arena – varieties of Labour administrations, Heath's governmental style, and the rise of Thatcherism – had unpredictable impacts on the cultural level. (9)

A major problem that most significantly influenced and concerned Bond like other playwrights with similar ideology was the lack of a successful socialist movement and establishment. Despite the fact that the 1970s dominantly saw left wing governments, dreams of a socialist order resulted in disappointment for many. It is mostly suggested that the Labour party was unable to cope with the seminal primary problems of the period. As James E. Cronin informs, "the [Labour] party was . . . unable to establish close and stable linkages with . . . immigrants, women, public sector workers, community activists, environmental groups – whose votes the party so desperately needed" (208). Evidently, successive Labour governments of the period could not manage the problems of the groups that supported them most. Particularly in respect to the failure of establishing socialism due to successively failing politicians, Sked and Cook point out that the wrong political practices of the left, "which if carried out by a Conservative government would have been denounced by every member of the Labour movement, were being carried out by a supposedly Socialist government" (250). As a result, with increasing disillusionment, belief in a socialist revolution faded. In this respect, Forster and Harper claim that "[t]he 1970s in Britain . . . was a decade of great early optimism, which slid into a general sense of decline" primarily because of the government's inability to cope with problems like "gender, race, class" (3).

As the Labour party was not seen competent enough to eradicate the mentioned problems of subordinate groups, failure of a desired socialist order remained a topic that was extensively employed in the works of British dramatists of the period including Edward Bond. As Lappin observes, dramatists of the period with social concerns were frustrated with "the failure of the Labor movement to institute a productive socialism" (Lappin 3). Therefore, they mostly reflected their complaint about the period in their works. In the case of *Lear* and actual problems that are central to its construction, it is apparent that socialist movement's "failed purpose and public despair" (Lappin 3) resonate with the representation of a failed leader and the prevailing despair in the play. The inadequacy of the left led to a growing discontent with the period's political figures, which could be read in association with the lack of a leader who could reform the society as an issue both in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Bond's *Lear.* Bond also makes this association clear in a statement about the 1970s, "there is no viable political system in existence in the world at this moment" ("A Discussion" 8). In accordance with this condition, his play also portrays the problems of a society that lacks a revolutionary leader, and a useful alternative system.

In Bond's *Lear*, there is a special emphasis on the idea that if there is not a useful socialist revolution, corruption is doomed to continue in the society he presents. This idea is mostly manifested in continuous representation of successively failing authority figures. The play begins when the society is under Lear's tyranny, it continues with his daughters' Bodice and Fontanelle's even more vicious rule, and eventually the system is overtaken by Cordelia's army. Bond represents these three different phases in three separate sequential acts. According to Bond's vision of Lear as the main source of corruption in his society, he constructs these acts in a way so as to reflect the effect of the past (Act I) on the present and possibly the indicated future (Act II, III, and the play's afterlife). For that reason, it is observed that the overall plot of the play is weaved in the form of cyclical events in terms of repetitive appearance of tyrant regimes and violence. Regarding consecutive representation of corrupt order and failing leaders, Bond's play makes a reference to its context that is also characterised by similar problems.

The negative representation of two major political figures of the play, Lear and Cordelia, also needs to be considered in relation to the real anxiety about the lack of a political leader that could reform society. Bond does not refer to a certain actual political authority with his characters Lear and Cordelia; however, the fact that both these characters fail to bring about the true formation of a socialist system alludes to the problematic context of Britain following the Second World War. In terms of Lear's portrayal as a tyrant who abuses his power and embodies the characteristics of "cruelty and ruthlessness" that are "greatly esteemed qualities in the personality of leadership" (Margach 23), he resembles a failing modern authority figure. He is obsessed with power but fails to realise his irrational desires, and becomes foil to his own corrupt morality. Evidently, he is the only controlling figure behind all matters social and political. In that sense, he represents a very stubborn but an impotent political authority figure.

Apart from Bond's recreation of Lear as a political leader, some other modern productions of Shakespeare's play have tended to represent King Lear in the image of a modern political figure. A recent production of *King Lear* at the Royal National Theatre in 2011, for instance, illustrates an attempt to recontextualise the play with an emphasis on King Lear's portrayal as a modern authority figure. The director of this particular production, Sam Mendes clarifies their intention as such: "[W]e talked about Tito, Stalin, and more recent figures like Mubarak, and Gaddafi – figures we could somehow use as a way in to a modern understanding of the story" (National Theatre Archive). Mendes' statement demonstrates why *King Lear* as a play has been appealing for reiteration in the contemporary period in terms of political reference. Specifically the protagonist of the play is available for appropriation bearing the modern political concerns in mind. This also sheds light on Bond's similar attempt to portray Lear and Cordelia in the image of corrupt political figures of history. Particularly with regard to Cordelia's representation in Bond's play, he casts her as another tyrant to display "a rural female Castro" (*Selections* 97), which explains her socialist agenda at the beginning and how she turns out to be another oppressor.

As another ideology following the Second World War, Stalinism is strongly criticised in *Lear*. Considering that Stalin was expected to form a socialist establishment, and that he turned out to be even more oppressive than capitalist leaders, Bond's depiction of Lear and Cordelia's regimes shares similarities with Stalin's practices. Moreover, Lear's paranoid need for protecting himself from imaginary enemies draws him closer to the figure of Stalin whose regime caused the death of thousands of people on the grounds that the leadership accepted them as its enemies. As Bond clearly states, he intends *Lear* as "an attack on Stalinism" (qtd. in Findlater 130). According to Bond, Stalinism was a failed ideology and it was a result of the equally irresponsible regime of Lenin. As Bond argues, "Lenin thinks for example that he can use violence for specific ends. He does not understand that he will produce Stalin, and indeed must produce a Stalin" (qtd. in Hay and Roberts 129). Metaphorically speaking, like the regime of Lenin that gave birth to Stalin's regime, Lear produces Bodice and Fontanelle's and subsequently Cordelia's tyranny in *Lear*. Evidently, the influence of the past on the present as represented in the play actually provides a critique of the same cycle in actual history.

In terms of the correlation between Stalin's dictatorship and Lenin's rule, Cordelia's violent acts remind the practices of Lear's regime. It is observed that in many instances Cordelia does the same mistakes as Lear. For example, like Lear, Cordelia forces people into labour, and she lacks mercy. After Lear is restored to sanity, this time Cordelia promotes the building of the same wall as she is afraid of imaginary enemies (*Lear* 98). Although Lear tries to break the cycle of corrupt events by warning Cordelia that "[t]he wall will destroy you" (*Lear* 98), Cordelia, as an ignorant leader now, continues the decay, and her revolution does not bring reform, either. As a result, her regime also creates malcontent individuals such as Small Man who voices the horrors of exploitation: "I ran away! I couldn't work! Anyone can see I'm sick. I spit blood . . . But if yer can't work they don't feed yer!" (*Lear* 85). These words recall Gravedigger's Boy's words as he talks about the exploitation during Lear's regime: "The king was mad. He took all the men from this village . . . They'd worked with their hands all their lives but when they started on the wall their hands bled for a week . . . You died of work or they shot you for not working. There was a disease – . . . 'Wall death'" (*Lear* 39). In this regard, the suffering of Small Man is quite identical to the labourers Lear exploited

at the beginning of the play. Obviously, Bond depicts many parallels between Lear and Cordelia's regimes in order to suggest that once corruption is ingrained in society, it is almost impossible to eliminate.

Scharine draws another important parallelism between Cordelia and Lear by arguing that "[l]ike Lear, she [Cordelia] kills more in her altruism than do the others in their hedonism" (218), which suggests that both these characters are not aware of the fact that they harm their society with their blind attachment to their false ideals. They believe they contribute to the salvation of society with foul practices. As an example, Lear kills a worker believing that "[h]is death will make the others work faster and the wall will be finished more quickly" (Scharine 193). Likewise, in an ironic gesture, Cordelia believes she will form a better society if she kills soldiers that cannot "hate" without hesitation (*Lear* 58). As she voices her opinion about a soldier: "He's a child, he crawls where he's put down. He'd talk to anyone who caught him. To fight like us you must hate, we can't trust a man unless he hates" (*Lear* 58). In such respects, both Cordelia and Lear act like benefactors, they seem to be caring more for the people than for themselves; however, they force their subjects for the fulfilment of their obsessional targets. Considering these aspects, Lear and Cordelia's successive rotten orders remind the actual decline and increasing violence during Lenin and Stalin's successive regimes.

To support this idea, Hay and Roberts argue, "Cordelia's is a revolution which demonstrates how violence may be used to reinforce the very things it initially revolts against. She therefore for Bond becomes a Stalin-figure as the play proceeds" (115). There is an implied criticism in the play that although Cordelia's regime seems to support the ideals of the lower class, the violence bred in the system actually does more harm to the ideology of socialism itself. At first, she sets out with socialist fidelity as clearly demonstrated in her words, "we'll live a new life and help one another" (*Lear* 97). However, the system gradually turns into a hierarchical one in all aspects with Cordelia at the top as the power holder and her subjects at the bottom. Cordelia's revolution, which ultimately fails to carry out the ideals, is suggestive of the violent and failed revolution of Stalin. Bond's deliberate depiction of Cordelia as initially an innocent figure who turns out to be the worst dictator depicts his intention to criticise

the real political figures reminding how tyrants set out with allegedly good intentions and how brutal they could be once power is granted to them. Accordingly, with their pride, oppression and inefficiency to establish a desired socialist order, both Lear and Cordelia, at some point, remind Stalin's faults in actual context.

Other ideas in Bond's play that connect it to its socio-political context are lack of loyalty among society members, and increasing selfishness of the modern human being. Oppel and Christenson associate the transformations in Bond's text with these ideas as such: "In a world where it is 'every man for himself,' Bond finds no place for loyalty to another or for interest in a fellow-man. Bond seeks the emptiness as a part of the modern world, and modernizes Shakespeare accordingly" (41). Different from Shakespeare's play, Bond's version presents much more corrupt figures that represent the selfishness mentioned in the statement. In *King Lear*, some characters remain "uncontaminated by evil" (Muir lii) such as Kent, Cordelia, Edgar or Albany through which hope for restoring humanity is kept alive. Alternatively, Bond does not represent any of his characters as purely virtuous, and this is also in line with the idea that the type of society represented in the play prevents the existence of innocent virtuous characters. This suggests that, in Bond's version, evil seems to triumph each and every time even though power changes hands. There is always someone who wins the war, and each time the winner gets tougher and harder on the people whom they are ruling. Therefore, the society presented in the play lacks characters with shared responsibility but contains those who seek sheer benefit from one another. Bond believes that compassion for one another is scarcely found in modern societies. In this regard, the changes in his re-writing in terms of the appearance of self-seeking characters are more meaningful considering his opinions about the modern individual in his time.

According to Marxist theory, the emergence of self-interested individuals in modern societies is due to capitalist socio-economic system in which every person works for their own profit. Capitalism creates strict class divisions, hence social inequality. Edward Bond argues that this is not an appropriate and natural way for human beings: "We are not designed for our production lines, housing blocks, even cars; and these things are not designed for us. They are designed, basically, to make profit" ("Author's

Preface" 8). This statement illustrates that people are made to adapt to unnatural ways of living due to unequal economic standards that turn people into slaves of monetary values. In line with his criticism of modern British society as a class-based one, Bond demonstrates class conflict as a seminal issue in his play. Commercial order imposes competence, aggression and intolerance on modern individuals, which is a criticism implicitly conveyed through the type of society based on violence in *Lear*. In this regard, Weintraub also interprets the depiction of a violent and degenerate society in *Lear* as an extension of Bond's reaction to capitalism: "At the heart of Bond's response to society is the powerful conviction that industrial capitalist civilization, the whole system of political and economic arrangements on which British society is based, is fundamentally unjust and dehumanizing" (85). Just as the society depicted in *Lear* is oppressed and corrupt with alternately failing tyrants, Bond's contemporary society is also in decline as he thinks moral values are abandoned for the sake of material values.

Bond particularly opposes the practice of totalitarianism in capitalist establishments as he believes that people cannot form their individual identities but forced to act in accordance with the conventions of their predetermined class and social status. Therefore, he criticises this practice in *Lear* by using numbers and letters while referring to the lower-class characters instead of individual names. The soldiers, for instance, are mentioned with letters from Soldier A to Soldier O. Likewise, the Prisoners are numbered from 1 to 4 as are the Workmen from the 1st to the 3rd. These references suggest the idea of standardisation that turns people into puppets of a state to function in accordance with its operation. As Oppel and Christenson also draw attention to this aspect of the play, the numerical and alphabetical references to characters purposefully show that these characters "are mere functionaries of the system, thereby losing their individuality or personal identity" (25). Standardisation of the individual in the play is clearly an example of the denigration of human beings into nonentities as a result of consumerism, that is, "the diminution of the individual to a nobody, another entry in computer lists marking the insignificance of each person in a mass society" (Foakes, *Hamlet* 214). Unlike Shakespeare's text where each individual, either from the lower or from the upper class of society, has a definite name, Bond's *Lear* demonstrates all characters representative of a certain class in modern society because he believes all

individuals are invariably influenced and shaped by particular socio-economic conditions.

Similarly, in accordance with the criticism of consumerist order that enslaves the working class, Bond's representation of the exploitation of labourers both by Lear and Cordelia's regimes reminds the real problems of the working class in the 1970s' Britain. It is known that "there was a great and rising upsurge of strike activity between 1968 and 1972" in Britain (Marwick 261). Ranging from "dirty jobs strike" (Megson 23-24) of dockworkers, refuse and sewerage workers to miners' strikes, labourers of all kinds expressed their disillusionment with the system. Such riots were accepted as "an attack from the Left on the injustices inherent within a capitalist system" (Nicholson 25). Blackwell and Seabrook's work on the lives and experiences of the working classes in Britain in the 1970s suggest that their concerns were not taken seriously by the upper classes: "We saw each day just how unreliable people are, how rapacious and irresponsible, cruel and insensitive to the suffering of others" (147). This eventually led to a larger economic crisis in the country, as Michael Billington states, "through Heath's intransigence and refusal to negotiate with the striking miners, Britain was reduced . . . to conditions that recalled the worst deprivations of wartime" (*State of the Nation* 206).

Observing the problems of the working class in his period, Bond also portrays an evident class conflict between the ruling class represented by Lear and Cordelia in his work and other characters as the deprived classes of the state. The apparent class conflicts in the play are meaningful considering the real conflicts between the working class and the establishment in the 1970s. For instance, both Lear and Cordelia's indifference to the needs and sufferings of the lower-class characters recalls the actual atmosphere in which the demands of the workers were ignored. Marxist critics argue, "owners and controllers of capital . . . extract the largest possible amount of surplus value from the labour force" (Miliband, *Marxism* 19). Accordingly, the oppressive expectations of Lear and Cordelia from the workers specifically for the construction of the wall in Bond's work epitomises this observation. Likewise, the farmers of the state are also exploited as their lands are seized, and they are forced to labour. The play's emphasis on forced labour has led some critics to regard the society depicted as a

"proletarian state" (Stevens). In this regard, Lynne Bradley interprets the sort of social formation in *Lear* as a "working-class world of manual labour, suggestive of an economic system in which a person is valued only for his or her ability to work" (148). Apparently, as Bond deals with the problems of the working class in his transformations of Shakespeare's text, he disregards the domestic concerns of Lear subverting the extant interpretations of the text, and turns it into a means to discuss the political matters of his time.

On the basis of Bond's concern for the conflict between socialism and capitalism, the wall in his work is mostly interpreted as a viable symbol that contributes to this dichotomy. There are various interpretations of the wall as a symbol such as "western attempts to guard against Communist infiltration" (Kerensky 22), the Iron Curtain, or the Berlin Wall (Kretzmer; Nicholson 155). Whether Bond intended or not, especially the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 seems to be an appropriate reference while interpreting the wall in *Lear* as a symbol for social segregation and chaos. Apart from these possible explanations, Scharine's perception of the wall as "a symbol of those social institutions such as government and religion that are created to help men and end by enslaving them" (191) also seems quite appropriate given Bond's misgivings concerning the function of such institutions in actual society. In a number of interviews, Edward Bond has claimed that "the human being is physiologically and psychologically unsuited" for the inconvenience of capitalist institutions (Scharine 256). As Bond believes modern institutions and workplaces abuse workforce, the wall in his play also provides an atmosphere in which the subjects of the state are enslaved by the demands of Lear and Cordelia's regime. Therefore, his concern for the deprived classes of real society is manifested in the presentation of the victimised wall workers in the play. In this respect, the wall is a major change in Bond's work in terms of transforming the intentions of Shakespeare's play and depicting his anxiety about the working class.

For Bond, literature and arts in general need to embody a political agenda. Thus, he sees art as a force of ameliorating society, and he writes plays to instruct socialist principles. In this regard, Bond's criticism of the idea of resignation in relation to Shakespeare's *King Lear* is also linked to his concern for the inaction of the working class. It is

suggested that the workers of the 1960s and 1970s could not really be effective in the change of the capitalist system though they rioted several times. As Marwick compares the reactions of the working class in Britain in the 1940s and 1970s, he observes that "a certain optimism and sense of confidence in the former period had now been replaced by a sense of bloody-minded resignation" (208). Obviously, the working class in Britain at the time lacked a revolutionary movement. In this regard, it is possible to draw another parallelism between the real working class in 1970s' Britain and the deprived groups in *Lear* who "are oppressed, but . . . make no move to reject their oppressors" (Oppel and Christenson 31). Through these characters, Bond makes a critique of the lower ranks of his society. Bond, as other like-minded Marxist intellectuals, thought that it was necessary for the workers to seek their rights and fight for them rather than silently complain about the establishment. He believes that if there are problems in a society, these problems could only be solved by recognising them, and providing solutions. This criticism explains why Bond thinks Shakespeare's *King Lear* provides a dangerous morality to the modern individual with its themes of resignation and predestinarianism. In this regard, his re-writing of the play functions as a warning to the working class in his society with its emphasis on the oppressed lower-class characters. As Bond is "personally convinced of the revolutionary potential of the working class" (Coult 62), he believes that the working class has to reject the exploitation of the dominant class, and they need to be provided with a model to be activated. Believing that Shakespeare's play only perpetuates the existing power structures in a capitalist system as it reinforces the authority and preaches the proletariat to remain silent, Bond subverts the source play's structure as well as its politics.

Relevance of Bond's *Lear* to its socio-historical context is underpinned by the use of several technical devices in the play such as the costumes, props and setting. In the first production of *Lear* at the Royal Court Theatre in 1971, for instance, presentation of soldiers in "modern uniform with guns and hints of concentration camp equipment" (Worth 177) resonates with the memory of Nazi concentration camps. This particular choice of costume and props demonstrates that a military state is deliberately imagined as the context of the play. In this sense, it is necessary to discuss the play in relation to the threat of military state observed in European states, though not specifically in

Britain, following the Second World War. Regarding the perceptions of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in the context of Europe in the post-war period, R. A. Foakes claims that there has been an "increasing consciousness of the play's relevance to Europe and America in the wake of the Second World War, the use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki . . . and the wanton cruelty of concentration camps" (Introduction 83). This statement supports the idea that meanings of canonical texts are redefined in different historical backgrounds. Accordingly, Bond focuses on issues of violence and political conflict in Shakespeare's *King Lear* to offer useful conduct for modern states threatened by a tendency towards military formation.

The play's context alludes to a military state in many respects as observed in the scene in which Lear subjects one of his workers to "court martial" (*Lear* 17). Moreover, as a major difference from Shakespeare's protagonist, Bond's Lear is more self-confident even after he falls from power thinking his army will protect him, which signals a strong presence of a military power at the background. Within this context, Bradley argues that the soldiers' presence in the play refers to military power and police surveillance as relevant problems of the contemporary period (148). The soldiers in *Lear* are depicted as violent and morally decadent characters in keeping with Bond's concern for the dangers of military government. He believes that the military, as an institution, does not protect people but drags them into chaos and forces them to endure violence. Bond's dislike of the military institutions mainly results from his experience as a clerk when he was sent to Austria in 1953 as part of the Allied Army of Occupation. Based on this experience, he criticises the army as "one of the most outrageous institutions I'd ever encountered . . . It was the nearest thing I've been to prison" (qtd. in Coult 12). This instance demonstrates that, much as the context of the production, the ideas and experiences of the playwright also determine the objectives of a literary adaptation. In this example, Bond's transformation of Shakespeare is clearly informed by his own experiences within the military.

Bond's reworking also portrays a critical representation of Britain through issues of violence and social aggression. Britain in the 1970s was characterised by global violent events such as 1968 Paris student riots, the Angry Brigade, terror activities, and the

Vietnam War. According to Bond, the most dangerous type of violence is politicised, romanticised and institutionalised violence, as he terms it, "violence that goes with anger" ("The Long Road" 30). He argues that this type of violence is a reflection of a degenerate society, and he illustrates a proper example of it in *Lear* in the form of violence supported by the government. In this regard, Bond's experience of the Second World War also needs to be taken into account as an immediate impact on his response to violence. Lou Lappin also suggests that the construction of a dreadful atmosphere in the play is an example of the influence of Bond's past experiences on his writing: "*Lear* was conceived by a man who has experienced the shock of absolute evil: the devastation of World War II, Dachau, Hiroshima, Viet Nam [sic.] – a world overwhelmed by a savage order of pain in which peace is short-lived" (126). Therefore, excessively violent scenes in Bond's work project his criticism of an unjust and violent society, and they recall the real atmosphere of violence witnessed in the 1970s.

As it is argued, "[a]mid terrorists, strikers, streakers, scroungers, muggers, punks, and soccer hooligans, the 1970s were the apogee of decline" (Black 174). Commenting on the violence in the 1970s' Britain, Steve Nicholson notes that the amount of violent crimes during the period had tripled the number of recorded crimes of violence in the 1950s (3). It is known that the 1968 riots, though initiated by a group of students, soon reached to a larger scale including working-class protests. Similarly, the Angry Brigade, the name given to a cycle of bombing events, also indicates the extent to which violence penetrated into the lives of the civilians. Chris Megson summarises the Angry Brigade as such: "A group of young anarchists launches a year-long bombing campaign from 1970. Targets include banks, embassies, army recruitment offices, the Imperial War Museum . . . and the residences of Conservative politicians" (3). Nicholson also adds that youth based violence in the country continued in this period with increased "violent clashes between mods and rockers" (22) and "between Catholics and Protestants which mark the beginning of 'the Troubles'" (28). It is also known that there were seriously damaging conflicts between Britain and terror groups like IRA and INLA in the 1970s, which also continued in the following decades. Some examples include "seven deaths in Aldershot in 1972 and 21 in the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 . . . the death of Airey Neave in 1979 from a bomb placed by the INLA on his car and which exploded

as he left the carpark of the Palace of Westminster" (Hubble et al., "Introduction" 1). It is claimed that the effects of these events reached to large scales with the destruction of several public places and buildings such as the London Post Office Tower and the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin in 1972 (Hubble et al., "Timeline" 246). Since most of these events were met with police surveillance and oppression, they have remained as protests of violent revolution in public memory.

Bond's depiction of violence in his text is also informed by another critical issue of the period, the Vietnam War. Chambers and Prior correlate the dominant representation of violence in the play as a comment on this war by informing that "*Lear* . . . was written as the Vietnam War rose to its final genocidal peak" (159). The fact that Vietnamese civilians were attacked by several modern states' troops illustrates an example of institutionalisation and legitimation of violence shunned by Bond as the cause of degeneration in modern societies. Alongside the war, ensuing protests against the American army throughout the world provided significant context for Edward Bond's *Lear* in terms of discussion of issues like resignation and insubordination. Another idea that relates *Lear* to the Vietnam War context is the representation of political figures. As it is informed about the real life authorities at the background of the Vietnam War, "whatever the end to the Vietnam War and whoever took the place of the brutalized government then in power, they could not fail to be brutalized by the experience" (Chambers and Prior 160). In this respect, endless violence illustrated by Bond first with Lear's regime as a malicious leader and subsequently with Cordelia's ruthless practices functions as a projection of the actual context of the Vietnam War that is also characterised by continuous violence. Considering the point in the play that Cordelia cannot reform the society despite her idealism in the beginning, the play resonates with the context of the war in which, as it seems, no political figure could reform the state. Considering such correlations, Bond's *Lear*, which projects his criticism of violence as a natural outcome of unequal and unjust societies, comments on the actual critical events of the period at its historical background.

Bond's criticism of violence in society is also linked to his Marxist-Socialist stance as he constructs all devices and themes of his play to demonstrate the ills of capitalist

establishment. Bond discusses capitalism breeds violent societies by dividing people into polar opposites in terms of economic standing. According to Marxist politics, violence has become a political device in capitalist states because the preservation of unfair hierarchical order requires legitimation of violence. In this context, Bond claims that "[the ruling class] maintains its existence by using violence" ("On Violence" 11), which in return dehumanises the deprived individuals by turning them into dangerous human beings who attempt to compensate for their deficiencies with violent action. For Bond, people who are left deprived get more aggressive in time, and this leaves no room for a humanitarian and equal social structure. In line with this ideological background, his play demonstrates a violent society that lacks moral values as it is ruled by unfair power structures.

Edward Bond is particularly opposed to "violence bred by oppression" (Hirst 139), which corresponds to violence caused by economic inequality. This type of violence is observed in certain scenes of *Lear* which presents lower-class characters acting violently only to please their superiors. For instance, it is observed in Warrington's torturing scene that Soldier A acts most fiercely as he has to obey Bodice and Fontanelle's unreasonable orders such as: "Use the boots! . . . Jump on him! . . . Jump on his head!" (*Lear* 28). Moreover, the same soldier also mentions that he once "'ad t' cut a throat for some ladies t' see" (*Lear* 27), which suggests that he uses violence as a device to satisfy others. This kind of violence, which is totally shaped by social class formations, is deliberately given in the play to support the idea that violence is obviously not innate but a means to protect one's socio-economic position. Illustrating the same idea, other soldiers in the play also admit that they have done very violent deeds as they were commanded to do so. Bond is against actions of necessity, and thinks that human beings should act in line with actions of reason and rationality. Violence is neither a rational nor a natural concept, hence he especially despises this type of violence by integrating it into a plot of class struggle to reflect how people can turn into brutal figures under obligation.

Lear is a play for the twentieth century in many respects including the violent scenes that are used to illustrate how and why a society could end up in such a corrupt state.

According to Bond, human beings have been so much inured to violence that they are not even conscious of their own violent practices. Therefore, he suggests that people should be made aware of the fact that violence is not natural, and that if it remains unquestioned, it gets justified. Bond criticises Shakespeare's treatment of the issue of violence in *King Lear* as the play does not portray violence as a sickness of society but displays it as a kind of cathartic device and a part of human nature. In order to contrast this representation, Bond portrays violent characters in his play in a manner as to show that violence is not innate but a social construction. Bond's use of sadistically violent scenes in this play complies with his concern about the increasing use and legitimation of violence to such an extent that he almost considers it his responsibility to reflect this violence in order to shock his audiences into realisation. In this respect, one of the major departures of Bond's re-writing of Shakespeare's work is the lack of cathartic effect as he aims to make an effect on his audience through representation of violence, hence initiate social change with his art.

To this end, a major transformation in Bond's reworking concerns the blinding of Lear, which illustrates the function of violence in his play is different from that of Shakespeare. In Bond's version, Lear is literally blinded instead of the metaphoric blinding of King Lear in Shakespeare's play. While Shakespeare provides this metaphoric interpretation to convey the idea that power blinds the authority figures, Lear's blinding in Bond's play reveals a more tangible reason as it is an act carried out to prove the "added ruthlessness of Cordelia's revolutionary regime" (Hirst 135). In this sense, Bond subverts a device previously used by Shakespeare so as to convey a political message. Simon Trussler compares the uses of violence in two works upon this specific example: "[T]he effect of blindness, which Bond has himself called a 'dramatic metaphor for insight,' works for this Lear as it did for Oedipus and Tiresias, as well as for Gloucester. But violence here is not cathartic: it is dehumanizing, the product of a dehumanizing social structure" (*Edward Bond* 23).

While Lear's blinding may also be seen metaphorically as it corresponds to his moral maturation, Scharine argues that the other blinded character in the play "Warrington, unlike Gloucester before him, does not necessarily gain in understanding" (219). This

shows that Bond does not necessarily use blindness as a means of moral insight but rather as another criticism of social and institutionalised violence. For instance, through Lear's blinding with a scientific device, Bond suggests that technological and scientific developments are products of commercial culture, and they degenerate humanity in the modern world rather than indicate progress. As he comments on this idea, "[modern] science has been mis-used to formulate the doctrine of necessary human violence" (Bond, "On Violence" 10). To emphasise this point, while this violent deed is carried out in the play, the Fourth Prisoner states pointing the device that "this isn't an instrument of torture, but a scientific device" (*Lear* 77). Ironically, this brutal action is considered as a scientific experiment, which indicates that modern capitalist societies turn human beings into insignificant subjects of experimentation for the sake of profit. As Booker comments on this particular scene, "Lear's eyes are removed not in anger or from spite, but with cold, scientific detachment as a purely political strategy" (303). Obviously, this blinding scene, as a device to criticise the use of medical and technological torture in the name of advancement in modern world, is very different from the sadistic blinding of Gloucester by Regan and Cornwall in Shakespeare's play (*King Lear* 3.7.65-70).

With the employment of such aggro-effects, Edward Bond makes both emotional and intellectual involvement not only possible but also inevitable on part of the audience. As Christopher Innes comments about Bond's alternative use of violence, "Bond sees outraging the audience emotionally as a sort of shock therapy designed to galvanize their consciences into life and provoke them into viewing society 'objectively' and 'rationally'" (93). Bond aims to influence the audience with such effects to make them more alert and active after seeing the play so that they can change themselves for the better. Aggro-effects in *Lear* include shooting of the worker as the play opens, torturing of Warrington as Bodice and Fontanelle have his tongue cut out, blind and deafen him with knitting needles, murder of the Gravedigger's Boy and killing his pigs, rape of Cordelia, autopsy of Fontanelle, and finally blinding of Lear. These violent practices are also accompanied by constant noise of gunfire and rifle shots coming from a distance throughout the play as suggested by the stage directions (*Lear* 63, 68, 70), which actually represents the horrific atmosphere at the background. Bond portrays these

violent scenes in the form of aggro-effects to make a point about his ideas concerning the continuation of violence and corruption. For instance, Fontanelle's autopsy scene is described as "sickening" (Scharine 22); however, this scene is actually designed to reinforce Lear's process of recognition of his past mistakes. During the autopsy, believing that she is congenially violent, Lear wonders "[w]here is the beast?" (*Lear* 73) looking among Fontanelle's organs after which he eventually ends with a poetic statement: "Did I make this – and destroy it?" (*Lear* 73) recognising his own share in his daughter's corruption. This scene substantially displays Bond's belief in the immediate influence of society and upbringing on the emergence of violent acts in human beings. Apparently, violence in Bond's play is used as a device for socio-political message, which illustrates the fact that he criticises Shakespeare's use of violence without a certain critical objective. As Foakes also argues in relation to Shakespeare's play, "[i]ts exposure of the horror of torture and suffering no longer seems outrageous in the context of concentration camps, napalm bombs, anti-personnel mines, and acts of terrorism" (Introduction 2). Therefore, Bond's transformation is an attempt to refashion Shakespeare's text in light of the violent atmosphere of his background to respond to the serious problems that concern his society.

While portraying problematic sides of his society, Bond's main aim is to initiate change, which attributes a significant dimension to the purposes of Shakespearean re-writing. Bond's major interest in taking up *King Lear* is to situate the problems that were ignored in Shakespeare's version to a modern context in order to point out the urgency of finding solutions for the salvation of an unjust, violent, class-based society as depicted in *Lear*. Evidently, Bond reckons that "[w]estern capitalist society is fundamentally unjust and needs to be transformed" (Nicholson 160). To this end, his re-writing of *King Lear* seeks to offer a critical impetus to the social concerns. It was thought, particularly in the 1970s, that "change was necessary, because the early 70s were tough times for many people with strikes, threatened food shortages, financial hardship and blatant inequalities for various sectors of society" (Forster and Harper 5). Apparently, by offering possible explanations for the rise of such problems in society, Bond aspires to make a change through the function of his art.

The idea that dramatic productions are capable of inciting change is observed in Bond's *Lear*. He states that although theatre cannot change the world magically, it "can co-operate with all those who are in any way involved in rationally changing society and evolving a new consciousness" ("A Note" 129). He also mentions his motivation to use art functionally for social transformation in a letter: "Theater is a way of judging society and helping to change it; art must interpret the world and not merely mirror it" (*Letters* 34). Hence, it is obvious from the transformations in Bond's re-writing that he constructs almost all aspects of his play to reinterpret notions of capitalism, violence and economic inequality as major problems of modern states. In order to suggest the idea that it is necessary to demolish a corrupt establishment of capitalism and reinstate socialism instead, he provides certain messages in his text with appropriate transformations of characters and the main plot.

In accordance with Bond's belief in the transformative function of art, a major alteration in the play that provides a message for social change is Lear's attempt to demolish the wall. The idea of dismantling the wall as an act, symbolic of undoing capitalist establishment, is in stark contrast with the final scene of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in which Edgar voices a stoic comment on the necessity of accepting whatever comes: "The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (*King Lear* 5.3.322-323). Consequently, this major transformation illustrates that Bond criticises the idea of resignation in Shakespeare's ending which, according to him, lacks the potential to provide the audiences with any criticism or crucial message. As Tony Coult mentions, "[t]he answers [in Bond's plays] will be social and cultural, and the problems will be solved only by political action" (43). Thus, the final act of *Lear* is a symbolic portrayal of the need for taking action against the establishment. Steve Nicholson, similarly, interprets this scene in Bond's version as a social message for the possibility of improvement: "[T]he closing image includes not only the dead body of Lear but a wall which has been partially dismantled, and implements – not only the shovel Lear has been using, but a 'stack of tools' that are beside the wall. They are ready, perhaps, for us to take up and carry on what Lear has begun" (159).

Although Lear does not accomplish anything in the end, Bond argues that he "sets an example . . . to the young people who are left . . . at the end of the play. They are the really important people in the play – they represent for me a new possibility for change in society. They are my equivalent for Fortinbras" (qtd. in Hay and Roberts 137). Considering that Thomas and Susan survive in the last act of the play, Bond attributes them with a mission of fighting against capitalism. The survival of these characters might be considered as a manifestation of Bond's belief in the eventual triumph of goodness over evil as he says, "I think that a minority of people will always not side with power, but will want to be kind, generous and merciful" (*Selections* 120). It is clear from the treatment of his lower-class characters that Bond is hopeful about the future, and targets the real working-class members to acknowledge their power to change the society for the better. In this regard, Scharine claims, "Bond will continue to be optimistic about man's ability to change his disastrous and self-destructive course, and to search artistically for the means to effect that change" (288). Consequently, the fact that one of the workers stops to look at Lear's dead body at the end of the play indicates Bond's powerful belief that "[h]umanity will continue to exist as long as one person remembers its existence" (Scharine 215). Similar to the optimistic scenes in Bond's other plays for which he has been criticised such as the "almost irresponsibly optimistic" (Bond, "*Saved*: Author's Note") representation of Len trying to fix the chair at the end of *Saved* (1965) as a symbolic act against an irreparable social construction, Bond's hopeful attitude to the future of his society is also evident in the ending of *Lear*.

Bond's statement in his preface to *Lear,* "[w]e do not need a plan of the future, we need a *method* of change" ("Author's Preface" 11), evidently explains that his reason for undertaking the task of re-writing a Shakespeare play is to consider the problems of his age and search for an effective way to overcome these difficulties. In this regard, Booker acknowledges that Bond offers possible solutions to extant class conflicts with this reworking while registering the seminal problems of the time: "Bond's purpose in this play is to contribute to the identification of such a method [method of change] by suggesting a diagnosis of the existing workings of bourgeois society, thereby presumably providing his audience with some of the insight they need to resist those workings" (304). This correlation between the play and its context reveals that Bond

warns people about the consequences of ignorance towards the ills of society. Specifically with the representation of corrupt figures, he presents the idea that the future will not be better unless urgent action is taken: "[I]f society goes on as it's going on now, it will destroy itself. Not will it, could it, might it – it *will*" ("Drama" 9). Accordingly, theatre critic Darlington also reviews *Lear* as Bond's advice to contemporary society interpreting the message of the play as: "'Mend your ways, and quick, or these horrors are what you will come to'" ("Why the Budgeon Fails").

Although Edward Bond's *Lear* is mostly regarded as a pessimistic play due to its dystopian allusions to its context, it should be emphasised that "[h]is politics insist that despite the compromises and failures, a commitment to human freedom must not be lost, that change is possible, that human beings can take control of their lives" (Coult 63). Bond's approach to Shakespeare is obviously subversive particularly because he considers Shakespeare's deductions and solutions insufficient and far behind the modern times. The changes in his re-writing are mostly under the influence of his ideological position as a Marxist writer, hence socialist politics influence his transformations that are mostly concerned with the reformation of the modern individual for the construction of an equal society. Finally, considering Edward Bond's type of drama as "rational theatre" (Bond, *Edward Bond* 27) or "Theatre of Humanism" (Bond, "Bond's *Lear*"), it should be noted that he basically recreates Shakespeare's play in an attempt to comment on the problems following the Second World War, specifically the 1970s, with specific allusions to issues of violence, rise of capitalism, failure of socialism, injustice and inequality of class-based establishments, corrupt leaders and degeneration of human beings.

CHAPTER II

ARNOLD WESKER'S *THE MERCHANT*: IDENTITY POLITICS IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

Arnold Wesker's re-writing of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1605) serves as a criticism of the source text through which the politics of modern times in terms of racial and religious issues are brought to the fore. Wesker's critical approach to the play is based on the source text's exploration of the existence of polar opposites in an atmosphere of racial and religious hostility. There has been much controversy concerning the intentions of Shakespeare's work as an antisemitic text. For this reason, the representation of Shylock as the Jewish protagonist of the play has been the focus of discussions around the question whether Shakespeare's portrayal of the character signifies a certain belief about the Jews or if it introduces a particularly unamiable Jewish identity. Usually seen in comparison to his contemporary Christopher Marlowe's representation of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* (1592), Shakespeare's Shylock has often been considered as a sympathetic figure (Davidson 337). However, some critics and writers like Arnold Wesker have pointed to the evident antisemitism intensified by/in Shakespeare's play, hence some critical re-writings of the work emerged either with a positive treatment of the Jewish character or with an introduction of an alternative history of the Venetian ghetto. In this respect, Arnold Wesker, as a writer coming from a Jewish background, reflects his criticism of Shakespeare in *The Merchant* (1976), and mirrors his society's anxiety around the issue of ethnic/religious minority and identity politics.

Wesker's own Jewish background is evidently influential on his response to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Arnold Wesker was born to a Jewish-Russian father and a Hungarian mother in 1932. He spent his childhood in London's East End, which is densely populated by working-class Jewish immigrants. During his childhood, he witnessed several racist and antisemitic attacks on the Jewish community residing there. He comments on his experience of antisemitism as a child and how it has been

influential on his conception of identity as a Jew as follows: "[Y]ou are suddenly aware that you have inherited a shared consciousness of your community's suffering. I didn't experience much anti-semitism as a child . . . But there does remain an inherited sense of a history of persecution. And it is that which I think gives one a sense of identity" (qtd. in Hayman 5). Correspondingly, although Wesker did not experience antisemitism himself, he was quite conscious of his identity as a Jew and he remained attentive to the problems of his race. One of the seminal antisemitic events during Wesker's childhood was the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 between Jewish immigrants and Oswald Mosley's racist group, the Blackshirts, also known as the BUF (British Union of Fascists). Witnessing such ethnic discrimination against his racial group, Wesker became actively involved in activist groups against antisemitism such as the Young Communist League, and the Zionist Youth Movement. At the age of fourteen, he was a member of the Zionist group called Habonim. These biographical elements illustrate that Wesker was always concerned about the problem of antisemitism in his country. He voiced in his speeches his anxiety about the minorities that had to face violent racial discrimination, and he also reflected his ideas about these issues in his dramatic works.

The general approach Wesker maintains towards antisemitism is also apparent in his re-writing of Shakespeare. Wesker's attitude to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* also supports the idea that re-writings are mostly constructed in relation to the writers' ideological or biographical backgrounds. As Wesker states, "like Shylock, I'm unforgiving, unforgiving of the play's contribution to the world's astigmatic view and murderous hatred of the Jew" (Preface L). This remark provides the idea that he cannot help but associate himself with the Shylock character. Clearly, it is primarily the discrimination of Shylock that has instigated Wesker as a Jewish playwright to revise Shakespeare's play and subvert negative notions about his race reinforced by the work. Wesker also sees antisemitism not as a historical problem but a current one that concerns his own context in which he constructed this play. For this reason, he enthusiastically recreates Shakespeare's play in an alternative way, and by extension, transforms the negative perceptions of the Jews in actual society.

Like Edward Bond, Arnold Wesker's approach to Shakespeare's play was also influenced by a production of his source text, *The Merchant of Venice*. Wesker states in an interview that he was uncomfortable with a particular antisemitic production of *The Merchant of Venice*, that is, Jonathan Miller's production of the play at The National Theatre in 1973 in which Laurence Olivier performed Shylock as a negatively stereotypical Jew. As Wesker mentions the specific impact of this production, he "was struck by the play's irredeemable anti-semitism" (Preface L). He was specifically against the scene in which the Jew was portrayed as keenly insistent on cutting the pound of flesh. As he comments on this specific scene later on, "it flashed on me that the kind of Jew I know would stand up and say, 'Thank God!'" ("A Sense" 155). Wesker believes that this particular production was a mistake, and he argues that this type of portrayal of the Jew should not be used in contemporary performances as it perpetuates negative conceptualisations of the Jews as greedy beings. For that reason, in his version, Wesker subverts all ideas primarily known about Shakespeare's character Shylock, and specifically casts him as a sensitive and humane person so as to rehabilitate the representation of the Jews as a race. In his appropriation, as Wesker states, he attempts to "lift that caricature out by its four-hundred-and-fifty-year-old roots" (*The Birth* 4) because he believes that Shakespeare's version of the play has reinforced antisemitic beliefs so far.

Wesker's sensitivity about issues as race, equality, social class and violence are apparent in his earlier plays. Other than *The Merchant,* Wesker was socio-politically concerned in his earlier and much more popular plays of kitchen sink drama such as *The Kitchen* (1959), *Chips with Everything* (1962) and *The Wesker Trilogy* (1960) which includes *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1956), *Roots* (1958) and *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* (1960). While *The Kitchen* represents his concern for the conflict between the working class and the ruling class, the plays in *The Wesker Trilogy* primarily illustrate Wesker's preoccupation with the problem of antisemitism and fascism in Britain through a depiction of the Jewish Khan family. Although these plays have paved the way for Wesker's success, it is interesting to observe his special confidence about *The Merchant* that turned out to be a relatively unsuccessful work. He attributed special importance to the staging of this work, and he was particularly concerned when many

directors turned down his play (*The Birth* 34). Wesker wrote his diary *The Birth of Shylock and the Death of Zero Mostel* (1999) in order to explain his experiences while writing this play and trying to get it performed in Britain. This also indicates that he was quite concerned with making a point about the issue of antisemitism by confronting the ideologies reinforced by Shakespeare's work.

Considering the fact that Wesker constructs his Shakespeare adaptation with a particular emphasis on the Jewish issue, it is observed that his position among other Anglo-Jewish writers is a significant and partly an exceptional one as he is not negligent about the issues that concern the Jews in general. Most Jewish writers are criticised for not efficiently emphasising antisemitism as a social problem in their works. As Kerbel et al. claim, "when a Jew writes about Jewishness he or she is perceived to be self-serving, parochial and/or hysterical" (10). Conversely, Wesker's position as a Jewish dramatist who voices matters that pertain to the Jews illustrates his sensitivity about antisemitism as a socio-political problem. Apparently, his ideological standing and his own background as a Jewish playwright have framed some of Wesker's seminal works and his particular response to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

It is quite interesting to observe that Wesker does not clearly admit the fact that he is against Shakespeare's play, rather he chooses to criticise the echoes of the play. Although he does not approve Shakespeare's characterisation of the Jew by any means, he still abstains from blaming Shakespeare for creating such a character. Rather, he openly states his criticism of the antisemitic productions of the play that continue in the contemporary period. As he argues, "[i]t was not that Shakespeare's *intentions* were anti-Semitic. Not at all. His genius is a generous one. But the *effects* were anti-Semitic" (*The Birth* xvi), and he also believes that "Shakespeare today would be ashamed of his contribution to the world's image of that poor, old battered race" (Preface Liv). Moreover, Wesker mentions Shakespeare's superiority by talking of him as the "Master" (*The Birth* 7). In this respect, his position among other re-writers of Shakespeare is different as he does not openly criticise Shakespeare nor the source text itself but its subsequent productions and ideological effects. This attitude might be a result of his anxiety concerning the idea that his attempt to re-write *The Merchant of*

Venice would be considered as "lunacy to take on Shakespeare" (*The Birth* 6). Although he is straightforward in his intention to cast a positive, alternative representation of Shylock, at first, Wesker acknowledges the challenges of attempting to create an alternative to Shakespeare. In line with the idea that Shakespeare is a difficult material to subvert, Wesker observes the challenges of adapting his works, and avoids voicing his criticism openly. In this regard, although Wesker seems to be in a "conciliatory mode" (*Rewriting* 167), in Peter Erickson's words, for seemingly revering Shakespeare, his transformations actually prove that his attitude towards the play is rather antagonistic. Though he says he finds Shakespeare's intentions innocent but his characterisation of Shylock and productions of the play problematic, his re-writing is, in fact, a response to the understanding of Shakespeare's text in the modern context, which suggests there is also an evident criticism of the source text as created by Shakespeare.

Examining Wesker's work in terms of the various techniques observed in Shakespearean re-writing introduced by critics such as Douglas Lanier, Thomas Cartelli and Peter Erickson, his appropriation complies with the remotivated, revisionary and reoriented narratives listed by Lanier. Wesker mostly uses the same characters in the source text but alters their motivations; therefore, his text is an example of a remotivated narrative. This illustrates that the characters of Wesker's play are already familiar from the source text, but they are also different as they are ascribed with unusual characteristics and presented with different relations to each other. Similarly, as the play employs the same characters albeit with different features, but alters the plot structure significantly, the play also exemplifies a revisionary re-writing of Shakespeare. Although the play refers to the relationship between the Jew and the Christian through a depiction of Shylock and Antonio, the cycle of events in which these characters are situated is different. Additionally, for prioritising an alternative point of view, that of the Jew this time, signalling a move from the initial intentions of the source text, Wesker's play could also be accepted as a reoriented narrative. With this practice, initial interpretations of the source text are transformed by foregrounding the previously ignored character's problems.

According to Thomas Cartelli's list, Wesker's appropriation is an example of both the confrontational and the transpositional types of re-writing. The confrontational approach in literary adaptations entails subversion of the intrinsic ideas of the source text, and reusing some of its elements for a discussion of alternative politics. In this respect, as Wesker's work makes it possible to discuss problems about the Jews, it confronts the common representations of Shakespeare's work, hence approaches the source from an alternative socio-political standing. Similarly, transpositional approach singles out one theme or an idea in the source text and develops it for the exploration of an alternative issue. In this regard, Wesker's *The Merchant* maintains an antithetical approach to the issues of usury and social contact between the Jew and the Christian as the central themes of Shakespeare's work. Consequently, using these topics in a different frame, Wesker makes a point about identity politics of the Jews.

Arnold Wesker particularly chooses *The Merchant of Venice* of all Shakespeare plays for re-writing as he finds the representation of Shylock especially problematic, and he aspires to offer an alternative depiction of the Jew with much more positive traits. In accordance with the idea that literary adaptations of Shakespeare provide criticism of his texts, Arnold Wesker's criticism of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* is beyond mere reprimand, he is rather enraged at the play's overt antisemitism and its contribution to the world's hostility against the Jewish race. In a column in *The Independent*, he specially denounces *The Merchant of Venice*: "One play in the canon of world theatre will always arouse unease and controversy . . . *The Merchant of Venice* is beyond embrace. Whoever clasps it must bleed" ("Theatre"). He believes that the text's representation of the two religious groups is not politically and ideologically objective. Alternatively, he believes that the representation of Shakespeare's characters serves the purposes of the dominant class, hence contributes to the discrimination of the Jews in general. In this regard, Wesker is interested in identity politics as discussed in Shakespeare's play, and his primary concern while reconstructing this work is to subvert the set interpretations of his source.

There is much controversy in scholarship regarding the question whether *The Merchant of Venice* is an antisemitic text or not. To consider the echoes of *The Merchant of*

Venice in the contemporary period, Marjorie Garber claims that "[o]f all Shakespeare's plays, none perhaps has stirred as much controversy in modern times as *The Merchant of Venice*" (*Shakespeare After All* 302). To cite some of the varied responses to Shakespeare's work, while Martin Yaffe sees the play as "pro-Jewish" but "anti-Shylock" (Holderness, *Shakespeare and Venice* 68), Graham Holderness does not consider Shakespeare's Venice as a place where "ethnic minority is forced to exist in a condition of cruel subjugation" (*Shakespeare and Venice* 87). Much of the problematics of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* arises from the complexity of interpretations of the Shylock character. With regard to the centrality of Shylock in literary and cultural criticism of Shakespeare's work, Susannah Heschel explains that

> [i]n *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, who appears in only five of its scenes, looms as its major character because he is a polysemic figure; as a tragic, ridiculous, threatening, and unfathomable person, he is an emblem of the complexity of the Jew in both Jewish and Christian imaginations. He symbolizes both Jew and Christian because he portrays himself as a Jew and, at the same time, mirrors the projected "jew" of the Christian imagination. (431)

This statement explains why the emphasis of most criticism of *The Merchant of Venice* centres on the Shylock character. Ranging from the view that regards the representation of Shylock as a sympathetic image of the Jew to the one that blatantly observes the character as reinforcing the already existing hostile attitude towards the Jews, there have been controversial ideas about Shakespeare's depiction of the character. As there is much ambiguity around the representation of this character and intentions of Shakespeare's text, his approach to Jews in general has been considered as an issue in scholarship and in various literary adaptations of his play. In accordance with the idea that uncertainties in Shakespeare's works have resulted in many interpretations and re-writings, Arnold Wesker's response to the play is an attempt to clarify the ambivalence of Shakespeare's work in terms of its depiction of the racial other.

Emphasising the centrality of the Shylock character in the discussions of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Wesker's re-writing is mostly based on the transformation of this character and Antonio's attitude towards him. This practice reminds Richard Burt's observation that "adaptors of Shakespeare often see it as their particular mission to give voice to the characters in Shakespeare who are mistreated, misunderstood, or just plain

missing" (739). Transforming the features of minor characters and prioritising the stories of those whose concerns are overlooked in Shakespeare's works are common practices observed in reworkings of his plays. In this regard, even the fact that Wesker changes the title of his play from *The Merchant* to *Shylock* some time after the play was written reflects his concern for making the work "primarily Shylock's play" (Drakakis, Introduction 1) as opposed to Shakespeare's version, which rather focuses on Antonio's story.

The transformations in Wesker's play that are specifically based on characterisation reveal that his major reason for re-writing the Shylock character is to subvert the memory of Shakespeare's character accepted as the most vivid and memorable representation of a Jew in the postbiblical literature (Bloom, *William Shakespeare's* 6). Considering the powerful echoes and the lasting impact of Shakespeare's Shylock on literary interpretations, Wesker's reworking is a challenging one. The Shylock figure in Wesker's work is a response to the way in which Shakespeare introduced the character, which is now criticised as "the heaviest curse under which the Jews have laboured" (Landa 3). Shylock has been interpreted as a character symbolic of the Jewish race, hence, his representation is criticised as it ascribes certain characteristics to the Jews in general. In this respect, for Wesker, re-writing the Shylock character actually means re-writing these negative notions about the Jews. As Wesker draws attention to the direct connotation of the name "Shylock" to being a Jew: "To be called 'a Shylock' is to be insulted for being mean like a Jew" (*The Birth* 359). Appropriately, the character has historically been used to refer to the whole Jewish race pejoratively as observed in the 1809 Old Price Riots when the rioters who were not content with the hiring of Jewish thugs were reportedly carrying placards "bearing the slogan 'Oppose Shylock and the whole tribe of Israel'" (Endelman 76). Considering this example, Wesker's response to Shylock is actually his criticism of Shakespeare for attributing certain characteristics to the Jews, and causing this representation to be naturalised throughout history.

As contemporary Shakespearean criticism observes that some of his works have been used to encourage the continuation of particular ideologies, *The Merchant of Venice* is an appropriate example that is believed to serve the interests of racist and antisemitic

groups. Negative traits attributed to the character in Shakespeare's play echo the prejudices about the Jewish race in medieval and early modern periods. Due to such historical and ideological associations of the text, even critics like Harold Bloom who has almost never failed to venerate Shakespeare consider *The Merchant of Venice* as a flaw in the Shakespearean canon (*Shylock* 7). Therefore, the evident objective in Wesker's portrayal of a positive Jewish figure is primarily to alter the negative stereotyping of the Jews throughout history. In order to suggest the idea that a Jew is nothing like Shylock as introduced by the Venetians in Shakespeare's play, Wesker casts Shylock as a friendly, knowledgeable man who is admired by his friend Antonio.

Criticism of Shakespeare's work in terms of its partial attitude to its Jewish protagonist could be supported with several examples from the relevant parts of the play in which the Jew and the gentile are juxtaposed. Considering a comparative representation of the two groups in the play, it is observed that Shylock's experience and problems are mostly neglected in favour of the Christian characters. Reinforcing the Biblical myth at the root of the enmity between the Jews and the Christians, much of the conflict between Shylock and Antonio in the play is projected to be a result of religious animosity. Considering Antonio and Shylock as representatives of the two religious groups, a dichotomy is created between Shylock as the villainous Jew and Antonio as the Christian sufferer. To this end, while Antonio is almost always depicted in a positive light, and other Christian characters are pardoned for their mistakes, it is only Shylock who is believed to be the villain, and the one who actually proves to be the villain acting in the stereotypical manner expected of him. The Christian Venetians are almost never mistaken in their prejudices about Shylock, and he is mostly represented to be virulent without a certain motive.

In Shakespeare's work, Shylock is predominantly portrayed as a ruthless man rather than as a victim of the state as it is observed in Antonio's remark, "no lawful means can carry me / Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose / My patience to his fury" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.8-10). Shylock's anger seems unceasing and inevitable which helps to represent him in an almost cannibalistic manner. Probably the most typical characteristic of Shylock in Shakespeare's play is his stubborn pursuit of the bond. No

matter how hard the Venetians such as Portia and the Duke try to dissuade him from his persistence in the court scene, Shylock is dedicated to get his pound of flesh: "The pound of flesh which I demand of him / Is dearly bought; 'tis mine, and I will have it" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.98-99). Such instances in the play introduce Shylock as a merciless, stubborn man who deserves forfeiture in the end. In such respects, the play seems to be on the side of the Christian while there is no questioning of why Shylock behaves in an obviously hostile manner.

Alternatively, Antonio is represented as a man who embodies the Christian virtues of perseverance and forbearance against Shylock's unexplained hatred. The contrast between the Jew and the Christian is also suggested in scenes that portray monetary affairs of these characters. In this regard, besides his brutal side, Shylock is also introduced as a miserly man who dreams of money-bags (*The Merchant of Venice* 2.5.17-18) as opposed to Antonio who is presented as a true gentleman, a dear lover of the lord (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.4.7). Since Antonio borrows from Shylock on behalf of Bassanio, and eventually finds himself in a difficult situation for he cannot pay the money that does not even belong to himself, Antonio is presented as a self-sacrificing Christian. Contrary to this, Shylock's lending is seen as his weakness and a sign of his immoral nature. The portrayal of Shylock as a brutal man in Shakespeare's play is considered to mirror the religious conflict between Judaism and Christianity. The juxtaposition of one character's hatred with the forbearance of another conveys the idea that Christianity is a religion of suffering and pardoning while Judaism is a religion of hatred and villainy. Shylock's rebuke in the play, "[t]ell not me of mercy" (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.2.1) suggests that he denies mercy which is among the most important Christian virtues. In such regards, a comparative analysis of these two characters illustrates a certain ideological attitude in Shakespeare's work.

The discriminatory approach to Shylock in favour of the Christian characters in *The Merchant of Venice* is observed in the constant use of the term "Jew" while referring to Shylock instead of his own name. The use of the word "'the Jew' twenty-six times in the play and . . . 'Shylock' only nineteen times" (Della Gatta 34) intensifies the criticism of *The Merchant of Venice* as an antisemitic text. Graham Holderness also

points out the court scene as a moment in the play in which Shylock is discriminated in a similar manner: "The Doge, as presiding judge, does not at first sight seem quite so even-handed, since he refers to Antonio by name ('What, is Antonio here?') and to Shylock as 'the Jew' ('Go one, and call the Jew into the court')" (*Shakespeare and Venice* 77). Considering the fact that the Duke secretly confers with Antonio, and mentions his prejudice of Shylock by describing him as "[a] stony adversary, an inhuman wretch, / Uncapable of pity, void, and empty / From any dram of mercy" (4.1.332), discrimination against Shylock's racial/religious identity is also apparent. The same idea is applied to the criticism of the play's unjust treatment of the two central characters. According to Derek Cohen's observation: "Even when he [Shylock] and Antonio are presumed to be on an equal footing, Shylock is referred to as the Jew while Antonio is referred to by name" (307). Cohen underlines the fact that this approach inevitably causes a discrimination of identity: "As in our own daily life, where terms like *bourgeois, communist* and *fascist* conveniently efface the humanness and individuality of those to whom they are applied, the constant reference to Shylock's 'thingness' succeeds in depriving him of his humanity while it simultaneously justifies the hostility of his enemies" (307). Apparently, these uses explain why Shylock is actually a marginalised character of Shakespeare although he holds the position of the main character. In Wesker's opinion, his subjugation to the allegedly superior Christian figures and authorities of Venice requires a positive re-write of the character.

Transformations in Shakespeare's version in comparison to one of his sources provide another reason for the critics who hold the belief that *The Merchant of Venice* bears an antisemitic approach. It is believed that Shakespeare intentionally gave the kind of twist to the Christian and Jewish characters while reconstructing his work based on several previous sources. For instance, Adelman claims that Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* is a reworking of a play titled *Three Ladies of London* (1581), and in this process, he purposely modelled Antonio to represent "Christian Hospitality" and Shylock in the image of "hard-hearted Usury" (*Blood* 22). In view of the idea that Shakespeare also appropriated his sources in accordance with his ideology and social problems of his period, portrayal of these characters as the opposite of one another is considered to be a deliberate ideological choice.

In a similar manner, another idea that explains the criticism of Shakespeare's text for its underlying antisemitism is the initial publication of the text of *The Merchant of Venice.* It is observed in the title page of *The Merchant of Venice* in the First Quarto that the play is mainly introduced as the story of the Merchant Antonio, "with the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Jewe towards the fayd Merchant, in cutting a iuft pound of his flesh" (Drakakis, Introduction 9). Obviously, the emphasis here is on the cruelty of Shylock, and the merchant Antonio is immediately introduced as the target of the Jew's rage. Moreover, the fact that the full title of Shakespeare's play is *The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice* reinforces arguments about his intention to regard the critical issues of the play as comical. This has also led to the interpretation of the Shylock figure as a comic one with no emphasis on his plight. As John Hales criticises the comical representations of the character in mainstream productions which lead to neglecting the play's crucial ideas:

> Certainly never again can Shylock be 'a comic character,' to whatever extent he may have seemed so to the Elizabethans in his benightedness. Now and for the future we behold and shall behold him with shame and confusion of face. He is the victim of coarse and gross religionists, the offspring of a pseudo-Christian fanaticism, a fellow-creature direfully and tragically demoralised and degraded, but yet a fellow-creature, God-made, man-marred. (658)

Various representations of Shylock in different productions of *The Merchant of Venice* in dramatic history reveal that the character has mostly been treated either as a villain or a comical Jewish figure, which again points to the fact that the play has been used as a means for antisemitic purposes. The representation of a vengeful Jew by Edmund Kean in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century is an example to discuss the negative portrayal of Shakespeare's popular Jewish figure in performance history. Concerning an alternative treatment of the character, it was first in 1879 when "Henry Irving played the part of Shylock as high tragedy, and from that time to this the play has been Shylock's play" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 302). Irving's subversive depiction of a justice demanding Jew was an important transformation, and it, for once, placed emphasis on the victimisation of the Shylock character. Considering these ideas, it is observed why Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* has been a point of controversial discussion with its plot, characterisation and subsequent productions. As the play's antisemitism is also discussed extensively among scholars, it is interesting to note that even Harold Bloom,

who reveres Shakespeare, suggests that "to recover the comic splendor of *The Merchant of Venice* now, you need to be either a scholar or an anti-Semite, or best of all an anti-Semitic scholar" (*William Shakespeare's* 3). These points illustrate that Arnold Wesker particularly intended to construct an alternative portrayal of this familiar approach in order to challenge the assumptions about the Jews formed by such prejudiced readings of Shakespeare's work and subsequent modern mainstream productions of the play.

Wesker disapproves the unwaveringly negative representation of the Jew as opposed to the Christian characters in Shakespeare's play: "[N]o matter how thuggishly or foolishly the Venetians are portrayed . . . the image comes through inescapably: the Jew is mercenary and revengeful, sadistic, without pity" (Preface L). The idea concerning a particularly hostile representation of the Jews in *The Merchant of Venice* is not only limited to the depiction of Shylock as the main character but it also includes a minor character in the play, Tubal. Apparently, the hostility of the Christians towards this character is even deeper than their hatred of Shylock as he is described as a man that "cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew" (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.1.71). Observing the portrayal of one more negative Jewish character in Shakespeare's work intensifies the criticism towards *The Merchant of Venice* as a biased text. It seems, as though, Shylock's villainy needs reinforcing with an addition of one more Jewish hate figure. Possibly for this reason, Wesker also uses Tubal in his version as a more dominant character who voices his criticism of the partiality of the Venetian law concerning usury as such: "[T]o deprive the people of an opportunity to obtain help is a sin against humanity!" (*The Merchant* 72).

The transformations in Wesker's version need to be seen in relation to the outcomes of a historical research although the influence of his ideological standing should not be undermined on the construction of his work. Believing that antisemitism of *The Merchant of Venice* could be unearthed through historical research about the social context of the Renaissance Venice, Wesker suggested his students of a summer school at the University of Colorado when he was teaching there in 1974 to help him with the construction of his play (Leeming xix). As a result of this study, the students provided the material for him to work with, such as the information that the bond between Jew

and gentile was a prerequisite of the Renaissance Venetian law. This constitutes a major step in terms of Wesker's departure from Shakespeare's play, and the most powerful supporting idea for him to point out Shakespeare's antisemitism. According to the Venetian law, a bond was already necessary between a Jew and a Christian unlike Shakespeare's representation of the bond plot as another epitome of Shylock's cruelty. Historical research reveals that the bond plot was actually an instruction of the law, hence, the insistence of Shylock upon the bond in Shakespeare's play only reveals the character's personal villainy. In order to problematise this aspect of the play, Wesker makes it evident in his version that it is required by the law to have a bond if one needs to have dealing with a Jew in Venice. In this manner, Wesker also eliminates the assumption that Shakespeare's play is based on history and facts. As this research carried out by a group of university students illustrate, Shakespeare was apparently under the influence of certain politics or motives in his period, and therefore, his representation of Shylock and Antonio in contrast to each other is seen as a subjective construction rather than an objective representation of an actual historical context.

Basing his work on this information about the history of the Jews in Venice, Wesker specifically subverts the scene in which the pound of flesh idea is produced in Shakespeare's play. Believing that Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* mainly deals with the issue of the bond beginning with how it first emerges, and continuing with its repercussions, Wesker's transformation of this part eventually helps restoring the characterisation of Shylock as a friendly Jew. In this regard, Wesker frames an alternative dialogue between Antonio and Shylock to posit the idea that the bond issue is not invented by Shylock, and that he actually refuses a compelling contract between him and his friend Antonio:

> Antonio: What shall you want as a surety in the contract?
> Shylock: The *what*?
> Antonio: The contract, Shylock. We must draw up a bond.
> Shylock: A bond? Between friends? What nonsense are you talking, Antonio?
> . . .
> Antonio: Shylock! The law says, in these very words, 'It is forbidden to enter into dealings with a Jew without sign and sealing of a bond, which bond must name the sums borrowed, specify the collateral, name the day, the hour to be paid, and – Together: – and be witnessed by three Venetians, two patricians and one citizen, and *then* registered! (*The Merchant* 23-24)

As this interaction illustrates, in Wesker's re-writing, it is not Shylock who comes up with the pound of flesh plot. Rather, the scene is rewritten in accordance with the historical information revealed by Wesker's student Lois Bueler that "Venetian law demanded that no citizen could have dealings with a Jew unless a contract existed. Gentlemen's agreements were unacceptable – the Jew was no gentleman" (*The Birth* xviii). Apparently, it is also revealed that the Venetian law of the time was partial as there was an evident lack of trust in the Jews. In response to this, Wesker suggests that Shylock only accepts to sign the bond proposed by his friend Antonio as it turns out that they need to have a sort of binding contract.

In a manner that reveals the absurdity of the bond plot in Shakespeare's work, Wesker represents the pound of flesh idea as a mockery invented by the characters against the system. In his re-writing, the pound of flesh bond is actually Antonio's idea rather than Shylock's, and it is designed as a way of deriding the unreasonable practices of the Venetian law. The two characters are agreed that the idea of making a contract is nonsense and they could mock it if they really have to sign one:

> Antonio: Barbaric laws, barbaric bonds?
> Shylock: Madness for the mad.
> Antonio: Idiocies for the idiots.
> Shylock: Contempt for the contemptible.
> Antonio: They mock our friendship –
> Shylock: – We mock their laws.
> Antonio (*pinching himself*): Do I have a pound of flesh? I don't even have a pound of flesh. (*The Merchant* 25-26)

The transformation of the pound of flesh plot in Wesker's version suggests that the two characters are tied to each other with a powerful friendship rather than a senseless inhuman bond. This scene also shows that it is not Shylock who makes an attempt on Antonio's life as in Shakespeare's play, but it is Antonio who suggests they should sign a bond to protect his friend from the penalty of the law as he says: "Not only is your race a minority, it is despised. Your existence here in Venice, your pleasures, your very freedom to be sardonic or bitter is a privilege, not a right" (*The Merchant* 25). In this example, it is observed that Arnold Wesker makes Antonio voice his own ideas about Venice as a partial society. Emphasising the idea that a Christian and a Jew could

actually be friends even in such an inimical context, Wesker's play focuses on Shylock's denial of this contract and Antonio's protective attitude towards his friend from the law that is already hostile to his race. When Shylock rejects Antonio's offer, Antonio insists so that Shylock would not find himself in difficulty because, in principle, it would be Shylock who would be penalised for not complying with the law if they did not make a bond. By making this idea apparent in the play, Wesker points out another aspect of the injustice of the Venetian legal system.

The characters' eagerness to protect each other against the system shows that they have a mutual trust relationship. As Antonio invents the pound of flesh idea to guard Shylock from the law, he is also supported by Shylock against the system when he cannot really pay the sum. As opposed to Shakespeare's representation of Shylock who keenly waits to take revenge when Antonio cannot pay his debt, Wesker's Shylock is the most affected one when it turns out that he has to practice what the bond decrees. Refuting the representation of a greedy Jew in Shakespeare's version, Wesker proposes another Shylock figure who himself tries to find the money to save his friend Antonio or to find a way that would free him from the bond's hold. However, despite Shylock's helpful attitude in this instance, the law once more turns against him as it is informed by the rules that a Jew who intends to harm a Christian also meets severe punishment. In this regard, the characters' attempt to mock the law turns out to be a failure. The hope for the individuals' autonomy against the establishment is lost, which reinforces Wesker's idea that the law is too cruel for a peaceful unity of the Jew and the gentile. Accordingly, the following dialogue displays the disillusionment of the two characters:

> Antonio: . . . We shall both be put to death.
> Shylock: I know.
> Antonio: I by you. You by them.
> Shylock: I know.
> Antonio: For the foreigner who takes the life of a Venetian –
> Shylock: I know, I know! (*The Merchant* 63)

Evidently, both of them are to be punished by the law, Antonio for not paying his debt, and Shylock for intending to take the life of a Venetian. This scene also constitutes a major transformation in Wesker's re-writing in terms of illustrating the idea that

although Shylock is an innocent man who only wants to help his friend, he is still helpless in the face of the unfair legal system.

Re-writing the character in a positive manner, Wesker also questions Shakespeare's representation of Shylock as a vicious person with no evident criticism of the hostile context of Venice. In Shakespeare's play, it is presented as if Shylock is virulent without a certain motive. Alternatively, Wesker believes that the reason for Shylock's antagonism is the context in which Christian characters and the system itself cast out Shylock, hence, he has to behave in a certain manner as a way of protection against others' enmity. Implicitly, Wesker provides the idea that Shylock would definitely be a better character if he were treated better. Obviously, in this re-writing Wesker seeks to find a possible answer to the question "what [Shakespeare's] Shylock would have been like, if he had grown up in an environment of true Christian love" (W. Saunders). For that reason, although not all Christians in Wesker's play are friendly towards Shylock, Antonio's protective attitude to him, at least, serves this purpose. By means of this particular transformation, Wesker suggests the idea that most of the behaviours or characteristics attributed to Shylock should not be taken as general characteristics of the Jewish race but as natural responses of a suppressed individual when situated in a hostile atmosphere.

Considering the information that "there were many examples of friendly contact between the Jews and the Christians" (F. C. Lane 301) in Renaissance Venice, Wesker's representation of a close friendship between the two central characters does not seem so far from the actual historical context. Actually, the depiction of these two characters as close friends is a response to the dominant theme of animosity between the two races/religions in Shakespeare's play. In the source text, it seems as if hatred is an always already extant concept between these two groups in the context of Venice. As opposed to this, Wesker provides the power of the individual over the rules of the state. This is why he situates the idea of friendship in a societal background that separates the characters on the basis of race and religion, and he hopes that his play "would not be about bonds of usury but about bonds of friendship and the state laws which could threaten that friendship" (Preface liii). In this respect, Wesker's play criticises

Shakespeare's emphasis on hatred rather than a possible harmony between the Jew and the Christian.

As Shakespeare's work focuses on the conflict between the two racial/religious groups, much of this is represented to be Shylock's fault rather than the Christian characters. In *The Merchant of Venice*, there is much more emphasis on Shylock's aversion of the Christians than on the Christians' antisemitism. While the Christians seem to be on good terms with Shylock, he is presented to be the brute. For instance, Shylock is considered to be full of hate when he declines Antonio's dinner offer: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you and so following. But I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.3.31-34). Moreover, Shylock mentions that the first reason why he detests Antonio is because of his religion: "I hate him for he is a Christian" (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.3.38). This indicates that Shylock's dislike of Antonio does not rest on a logical reason but mere hatred. Additionally, the fact that Shylock is represented as the first character to voice his hatred against the Christians in Shakespeare's version somehow justifies the punishment decreed for him as well as the obnoxious attitude of the other characters towards him. These aspects of Shakespeare's work intensify Wesker's critical approach to the play. Accordingly, in response to Shakespeare's antagonistic Shylock who does not accept Antonio's offer, Wesker's re-writing casts Shylock as a Jew who enjoys sharing his wine and knowledge with Antonio. To emphasise that Shylock is actually a welcoming person, Antonio is most of the time presented in his house. As another epitome of these characters' potential power over the system, Shylock, taking the risk, offers Antonio to stay at his place even when the doors of the ghetto are closed. These changes are obviously formulated in stark contrast to Shakespeare's representation of Shylock to shatter the image of an overprotective and possessive Jew.

In Wesker's re-writing, Antonio and Shylock respect each other's religion and do not allow their differences to hinder their solidarity despite the strict rules of the law that limit any friendly contact. One of the best examples of this idea is provided in the scene in which Antonio arranges a dinner for Shylock, and tells other Christians "I'm entertaining my friend, Shylock, so no pork" (*The Merchant* 21), which suggests that he

respects the orders of Shylock's religion. This scene clearly functions as a subversion of the portrayal of Shylock who does not want to be together with the Christians only because they consume pork. Similarly, Antonio expresses his respect towards Shylock with the words: "You *are* religious, for all your freethinking, you're a devout man. And I love and envy you for it" (*The Merchant* 5). This also forms a contrast with Antonio's antisemitic discourse in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Apparently, such transformations illustrate that Wesker believes in the possibility of a union between these two identity groups through mutual respect and understanding.

In accordance with the practice of repositioning the characters of the source text in re-writings, Wesker's play attributes different features to Antonio as well as the other characters of Shakespeare's play. In this process, Wesker suggests the idea that not all Christian characters are necessarily antisemites. For instance, Wesker presents Antonio as closer to Shylock than he is to other characters to stress the difference among the Christian characters in terms of their attitude to the Jews. This is a contrary treatment of the unanimity among Shakespeare's characters in terms of their antisemitic ideas and remarks. To this end, in Wesker's reworking, Bassanio, Gratiano and Lorenzo remain to be antisemites as indicated in their prejudiced remarks about Shylock. Although Wesker subverts the idea of animosity between Shylock and Antonio, he still demonstrates the idea of subordination of the Jew through the representation of other characters who retain the same hostile attitude towards Shylock as in Shakespeare's work. Specifically Bassanio's depiction as an antisemitic man despite the fact that he has never met a Jew before indicates Wesker's ironic approach to the formation of prejudices about the Jews without a certain logical reason. As it is illustrated in the play when Antonio and Bassanio talk about Shylock:

> Bassanio: And that is a Jew?
> Antonio (*reprimanding*): *He* is a Jew.
> Bassanio: I don't think I know what to say.
> Antonio: Have you never met one before?
> Bassanio: Talked of, described, imagined, but – (*The Merchant* 17-18)

Similarly, Lorenzo humiliates Shylock in several cases as in one instance he says "[t]he Ghetto *is* notorious for its smells" (*The Merchant* 39). However, it needs to be noted

that there is no solidarity between Antonio and these characters which is evident in his immediate response to Lorenzo's prejudiced remark: "I will not have discourtesies in my house" (*The Merchant* 39). Accordingly, Wesker's work alters the close relationship between Antonio and other Christians in Shakespeare's play. For instance, different from the intimate relationship between Antonio and Bassanio in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, in Wesker's version, Antonio is not content with having a godson like Bassanio as he complains: "I should never have had godsons. Not the type" (*The Merchant* 6). Likewise, Antonio thinks that Gratiano is not a mature man, he "has no real opinions, simply bonds with the wind, quickly rushing to agree with the next speaker" (*The Merchant* 15). These cases illustrate that Wesker casts Antonio as closer to Shylock than he is to such ignorant Christian types, which supports the idea that not all Christians are the same in terms of their attitude to the Jews. In this regard, in Wesker's revision, Antonio provides a role model for the considerate attitude that needs to be maintained towards the Jews.

Another idea Wesker criticises and subverts in Shakespeare's play is its particular emphasis on the association between money and the Jews. He claims that "Shakespeare chose the less important of the two major causes of antipathy towards Jews: their ability to handle money. Mistake! Jews are more hated for their cleverness" ("Theatre"). The topic of usury as it is represented in Shakespeare's play is a controversial one in this regard. It is argued that "[s]temming from a common source and confronting one another for nearly two millennia, Judaism and Christianity have often created serious problems for Jews and Christians in their dealings with one another" (Freedman 205). It is known that usury was forbidden to the Christians as stated in Deuteronomy, XXII, vv 19-20: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury" (qtd. in Auden 223-224). This means that usury as the basis of the confrontation between the Jew and the gentile in Shakespeare's play was actually a real social problem. After the Jews had been expelled from England in the thirteenth century, they were readmitted to the country by the Cromwellian government in the seventeenth century with Resettlement, and their association with financial matters commenced thereafter. Garnett and Weight comment that "the prominent role they [the Jews] played in establishing the country's financial

institutions during the eighteenth century cemented ancient stereotypes of them as usurers [and] Roman Catholic emancipation in 1829 left them as the only religious group to be legally denied access to institutions of state" (268). As this example illustrates, since Christianity forbade usury, it was used as yet another reason for the condemnation of the Jews for dealing with a false profession. Chazan also states, "Jewish activities, such as usury, viewed negatively in and of themselves, were increasingly seen as tools utilized by Jews for damaging their neighbors" (75). However, this prejudice is proved to be unsubstantial by socio-historical research as it is informed that usury was actually a forced profession on the Jews as they were "shut out of practically every other form of earning a livelihood and frequently robbed of their gains by methods unspeakably foul" (Landa 17). In Wesker's play, Antonio emphasises this inequality in an attempt to protect Shylock in the court scene: "The usurer's a Jew, and the Jew the people's favourite villain. Convenient! Easy! But the Jew pursues what he hates to pursue in order to relieve us of the sin. Usury must exist in our city, for we have many poor and our economy can't turn without it. Do we condemn the Jew for doing what our system has required him to do?" (*The Merchant* 75). The fact that usury was actually a forced profession also reveals the problematic aspects of Shylock's representation in Shakespeare's work in which there is no mention of such an obligation but constant emphasis on Shylock's immoral dealings.

In light of this knowledge, Wesker sets out to deconstruct the cultural image of a rich yet stingy Jew with his alternative depiction of Shylock as a multidimensional and a very well read man whose dearest possession is not his moneybags as in Shakespeare's work but his huge book collection. One of the most important transformations in Wesker's work that subverts Shakespeare's emphasis on the association between Shylock and finance is the scene that portrays Jessica's elopement. Similar to *The Merchant of Venice*, Jessica is again deceived by Lorenzo, and elopes with him. However, as the major transformation centres on the Shylock character, his response is quite different in this version as he says upon learning her disappearance: "Nothing I treasure more, except my daughter" (*The Merchant* 3). In Shakespeare's work, the same scene is used to indicate Shylock's stinginess as he says: "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; would she were hearsed at my foot, and the

ducats in her coffin" (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.1.80-82). Apparently, Wesker re-writes this part of the play particularly to give the idea that Shylock values his daughter more than his goods, hence, implicitly questioning the assumptions about the Jews as a greedy race.

In Wesker's re-writing, Shylock's books replace his goods in order of priorities. At times, it is obvious that Wesker attempts to portray Shylock positively at all costs as he places Antonio in an inferior position as an ignorant man in comparison to Shylock. For instance, Antonio's words upon seeing Shylock's book collection demonstrate this idea: "Those books. Look at them. How they reminded me what I am, what I've done. Nothing! A merchant! A purchaser of this to sell there. A buyer up and seller off" (*The Merchant* 3). Wesker deliberately positions his characters in comparison to each other to emphasise the idea that Jews were not simply moneylenders but among them there were also educated people, which was not remarked in Shakespeare's play at all. Instead, Wesker puts Antonio in an inferior position to put forward the idea that he actually knows nothing other than merchandise. In this regard, Wesker points out another biased reading of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* that holds Shylock responsible for an immoral profession while presenting Antonio in a positive light. Therefore, in order to reformulate the associations of the Shylock character with the Jewish race, Wesker subverts the representation of both characters.

Considering the play's echoes in the post-Holocaust context, Ronald Hayman interprets the importance given to reading in Wesker's play as a response to "the Nazis in their hostility to learning and literature" (*Contemporary* 115). Wesker was much influenced from the history of the Holocaust, therefore, his representation of a knowledgeable Jew is a deliberate response to the subordination of the race by continuous threat and oppression throughout history. In this regard, Ulrike Hattamer's observation of the books mentioned by Wesker's Shylock is noteworthy:

> Beginning with 'A Guide to the Perplexed' by Maimonides, Wesker places his Shylock in the tradition of Jewish learning, citing one of the greatest Jewish scholars and theologians. Written in Cairo during the twelfth century, the manuscript evokes one of the early Diaspora centres of learning and thus the theme of Jewish learning and the Jewish geniuses living all over the world. (125)

It is obvious that Arnold Wesker subverts the negative preconceptions about the Jews with alternative ideas taken from Jewish history. He emphasises the Jews' interest in learning as opposed to Shakespeare's work that mainly foregrounds the Jews' dealings with money. In order to question the established ideas about Jews and to point out the lack of information about Judaism and its principles, Wesker's Shylock also mentions a sermon that talks about "the Talmudic laws on cleanliness" (*The Merchant* 7). Considering these ideas, Wesker's reconstruction of Shakespeare demonstrates an example of Alan Sinfield's term "making space" ("Making Space" 129) which refers to the process in which the marginal characters or groups in Shakespeare's works are taken and attributed with alternative, mostly more positive traits. Wesker's attempt to inform about the principles of his race/religion illustrates that he "makes space" for an exploration of Jewish principles and seminal events in the history of Judaism.

Another idea in Wesker's play that supports the significance of learning in Jewish culture is confiscation of Shylock's books at the end of the play. David Ian Rabey defines this scene as young Venetians' "neo-Maoist infantile violence upon Shylock by seizing the library (rather than the wealth) which he counts as his crucial possession" (*English* 39). As illustrated, this scene also suggests that, for Shylock, his books are more important than his wealth. When it is decided in the court scene that his books should be taken from him, Shylock, this time, consents to the confiscation of his books reminiscent of his stoic consent to conversion in Shakespeare's work: "Take my books . . . what need do we have of books? Distressing, disturbing things . . . they'd even make us question laws" (*The Merchant* 81). Finally, though his books are taken from him, Shylock makes a point about the power of learning, reading and questioning over the set rules of the Venetian law.

In order to address the issue that Jews are not only money dealers but there are also prominent people of arts and science among them, Wesker employs other Jewish characters in his play that are preoccupied with different professions such as the playwright Solomon Usque, a Jewish translator of Petrarch, and an "old Jewish portrait painter" (*The Merchant* 32) friend of Shylock, Moses of Castelazzo. The introduction of these characters in the re-writing also marks a significant departure from Shakespeare's

source. They are not only used to add new material to the work to render it different from Shakespeare's, but they actually "display the cultural richness of ghetto life" (Picker 76). As mentioned, there are no positive depictions of the Jews in *The Merchant of Venice* considering the treatment of the characters Shylock and Tubal. In this regard, the inclusion of these Jewish characters that are based on real people from Jewish history suggests that the Jews were not only usurers, and that Shakespeare overlooked this fact while reorganising his sources. This major transformation concerning characters of the source text is substantial in the disintegration of established stereotypes and prejudices.

Another major transformation in Wesker's play concerning the narrative elements of Shakespeare's work is the famous "Hath not a Jew eyes" speech. Although this is the only part in his reworking where Shakespeare's words are used (Sinfield, "Making Space" 139), the function of these words is completely altered. Despite the fact that this particular scene is mostly used to justify Shakespeare's sympathetic representation of the Jew, Wesker completely disregards this type of humanising. According to his interpretation, this part is the only moment in Shakespeare's play in which Shylock is pitied and seen as a human. Until that point, he is only remembered as a hateful, villainous person. As Wesker states his ideas about this particular speech, it "enables an uneasy, potentially hostile audience to breathe more freely and with a clear conscience as this beleaguered Jew utters his apologia to help them feel merciful and generous while at the same time perpetuating its cherished image of the cruel Jew" (Wesker, "Re-Revisiting Shylock" 50). For Wesker, this part was created with dramatic rather than ideological interest since it does not change any of the characters' ideas or treatment of Shylock, nor the audience's perception of the character. That is, Wesker believes that Shakespeare does not introduce this popular speech as he is really concerned with Shylock's discrimination and as he would like to make a point about it. Rather, he believes that this speech demonstrates Shakespeare's concern for "dramatic instinct for not making the opposition too black, which would lessen credibility and impact" (Preface l).

Therefore, maintaining a dubious approach to the speech, and offering a possible function of these words, Wesker makes Lorenzo utter the same words in the court scene to humiliate Shylock's humanity. Appropriately, Shylock's response to Lorenzo's words illustrates that he does not accept this means of humanising asserting that he is human like everybody else, and he does not need pardoning for anything: "I will not have my humanity mocked and apologised for. If I am unexceptionally like any man then I need no exceptional portraiture. I merit no special pleas, no special cautions, no special gratitudes. My humanity is my right, not your bestowed and gracious privilege" (*The Merchant* 77). Shylock's statement confirms Wesker's own ideas about this speech. As a writer's own ideas about an issue are quite determinative in the process of reiteration, Wesker's own critique of this part of the play is clearly manifested in Shylock's response. In this regard, Shylock's lines given above are very similar to Wesker's criticism of this scene as follows: "Jews do not want apologies to be made for their humanity, they ask for no special pleading. If they are unexceptionally like all men then they need no exceptional portraiture. Their humanity is their right, it is not for anyone – not even Shakespeare – to bestow it upon them as a gracious privilege" (Wesker, "Theatre"). According to Wesker's opinion, any attempt of humanising the character is only an even more discriminatory act. In this regard, his transformation illustrates that Wesker has a political aim of altering the established preconceptions about the Jews. The fact that he challenges one of the most memorable lines of Shakespeare by using it in an alternative context is a strong indicator of this approach.

The ending of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* is also a problematic part of the work in terms of the discussion of politics of identity. As a biased approach is observed throughout the work concerning the representation of two different identity groups, the end of the play also portrays the Jew as a character that deserves punishment, and the Christians continue their ignorant manners in reunion. This idea constructs a seminal reason for Wesker's re-writing of the play. It is observed that he particularly finds two aspects of the source text's ending problematic; one concerning the ambiguity as to what happens to Shylock, and secondly the mood of celebration of the couples immediately after Shylock's punishment. The negative portrayal of Shylock throughout the play suggests that the ending is a happy one, which is often interpreted as the

triumph of "love over hatred, humane values over economic ones" (Mousley 60). Accordingly, Wesker sees the ending of the play as another point that reinforces antisemitism, and he reconstructs this part in the same attempt to restore the representation of the Jewish protagonist.

The court scene in Shakespeare's work functions as a testing ground for Shylock's humanity because this is the point in which he is expected to make a decision; he will either choose to be an avenger or a pardoner. In line with the depiction of Shylock as a man incapable of embodying mercy in the rest of the play, he chooses to cut Antonio's flesh, which justifies Christian characters' previous prejudices about Shylock. At this point in the play, Shylock whets his knife earnestly (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.120), which also reinforces perceptions about the character as a "wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.137) Jew. As a result of his inhumane manners, the idea of forced conversion is seen as a "just" punishment for his villainy. In order to clarify the burden of this particular punishment for Shylock, Em McAvan claims that Shylock is "metaphorically sacrificed, sublated into Christianity through his 'inclusion' but not killed" (9). Sinsheimer also notes, "[t]hat Shakespeare makes Shylock agree to be baptised is the worst offence of all" (99). As Lindsay Kaplan mentions the catastrophic effects of conversion in Judaism: "[F]rom a Jewish perspective, conversion is a form of self-destruction, a death; the term for conversion in Hebrew, (*shamad*), also means to destroy or annihilate" (349). In Shakespeare's play, as in most of the mainstream productions of it, this scene has not been regarded as violation of Shylock's freedom but as a celebratory idea as he is evangelised. As a response to this representation, Wesker's Shylock, instead of remaining silent, makes a final remark defending his race in the court scene targeting Christians' motiveless hatred of the Jews:

> Your wars go wrong, the Jew must be the cause of it; your economic systems crumble there the Jew must be; your wives get sick of you – a Jew will be an easy target for your sour frustrations. Failed university, professional blunderings, self-loathing – the Jew, the Jew, the cause the Jew . . . If we are silent we must be scheming, if we talk we are insolent . . . Well, damn you then!" (*Drawing knife.*) I'll have my pound of flesh and not feel obliged to explain my whys or wherefores. (*The Merchant* 77).

Eventually, Shylock is not forced to conversion, and he dreams of leaving Venice for Jerusalem dreaming of a better place for himself: "Perhaps now is the time to make that journey to Jerusalem. Join those other old men on the quayside, waiting to make a pilgrimage, to be buried there" (*The Merchant* 82). With this major transformation, Wesker draws attention to the problematics of the ending of Shakespeare's work where Shylock is converted to Christianity, and nothing else is disclosed about him. Alternatively, in Wesker's play, when Shylock decides to go to Israel, Antonio says he would like to visit his friend there, and Portia tells Jessica to follow Shylock with a suggestion "there is a Jerusalem, where he [Shylock] can be followed" (*The Merchant* 83). These examples demonstrate that Wesker designs the ending of his work as a compensation for the enforcement of Shylock's conversion in Shakespeare's play.

Ambiguity has already been noted as one of the most important reasons for the emergence of critical revisions of Shakespeare's works. Regarding the ambiguities in *The Merchant of Venice*, Marjorie Garber argues:

> It is a play in which the question of intention, of what Shakespeare may have intended, is relevant but not recoverable, and finally not determinative. Portia the goddess, or Portia the spoiled rich girl, the wealthy heiress? Shylock the noble man of suffering and dignity, or Shylock the small-minded patriarch who prizes spiteful victories? Bassanio the impassioned lover, or Bassanio the fortune-hunter? Comedy or tragedy? (*Shakespeare After All* 311)

Such questions seep into interpretations of this work, hence re-writings also try to bring explanation to these controversial ambivalences from various viewpoints. In light of the issue of ambiguity, the last thing one can remember about Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is that he leaves the stage as a man forced to conversion, all his goods are confiscated, and his daughter is lost to him. While there is no questioning whether this punishment is a just one, the court is presented to be right and even a merciful one as the Duke pardons Shylock's life instead of hanging him at the state's charge for attempting on a Christian's life as is suggested by the Venetian law (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.364-365). Shakespeare's work seems to end at this point as there is no further information as to what happens to Shylock, and how he continues his life from thenceforth. With regard to this part of the play, John Drakakis supports the idea that the work represents the Biblical judgement of the Jew as the enemy of the Christ in its

particular depiction of the enmity between Shylock and Antonio, hence interprets the ending of the play in Biblical terms: "[T]he Jew Barabbas gets his just deserts, and Christ is released from his agony" (Introduction 58). The Jew Barabbas in the Biblical account is projected in the image of Shylock in this case, and Christ is manifested in Antonio's figure. Consequently, the final treatment of these two characters in Shakespeare's play also represents the just punishment of the heinous Jew and the salvation of the victimised Christian.

Actually, the last scene of Shakespeare's work is not the only one in which Shylock is presented as a man who deserves punishment. Another example is Jessica's desertion, which is seen as a justified punishment since Shylock is an oppressive father and an anti-Christian Jew (Drakakis, Introduction 78). Since he is illustrated as a Jew that denies her any contact with Christians, Jessica believes she would be free if she marries Lorenzo and converts to Christianity as she discredits her past:

> [W]hat heinous sin is it in me
> To be ashamed to be my father's child!
> But, though I am a daughter to his blood,
> I am not to his manners. O, Lorenzo,
> If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
> Become a Christian, and thy loving wife (*The Merchant of Venice* 2.3.16-21)

Providing a criticism of this idea in Shakespeare's work, Wesker does not turn Jessica into a Christian although she still elopes with Lorenzo. She refrains from betraying her past as she does not allow the anti-Semite characters to talk about her father and her religion with contempt: "My rhythms still belong to the Ghetto. I can't slip so quickly from God to God like a whore" (*The Merchant* 65). Subsequently, as Lorenzo manipulates her to convert by giving her false information about Judaism as a doomed religion, Jessica resists as mentioned in the stage directions: "Jessica, slowly realising with disgust his meaning, rises angrily, and backs away" (*The Merchant* 67). Apparently, this time, Jessica is represented as a more enlightened woman who does not readily accept Lorenzo's manipulations, and the question of Jessica's conversion as a controversial issue in Shakespeare's play is subverted.

Approaching Shakespeare's texts from a contemporary perspective requires an alternative treatment of the historical ideas presented or neglected in his works. It is known that Wesker constructed his play in line with the information he gathered from history books about the period such as D. S. Chambers' *The Imperial Age of Venice* and Cecil Roth's *History of the Jews* (Hayman, *Contemporary* 115). In light of his research, Wesker mentions various atrocities the Jews suffered at the historical moment *The Merchant of Venice* is situated. By this means, he also draws attention to the continuous violent events in the history of antisemitism. To begin with, Shylock talks about the burning of the Talmud and other Hebrew books in 1553: "'The Talmud and kindred Hebrew literature? Blasphemy!' they said, 'burn them!' And there they burned, on the Campo dei Fiori in Rome, decreed by Julius the Third of blessed origin, August the 12th, 1553, and followed swiftly by our very own and honoured Council of Ten in Venice" (*The Merchant* 2). It is known that the Inquisitors of the sixteenth-century Venice ordered the burning of Hebrew books like the Talmud on the grounds that "[t]he Church and Christian states viewed the Talmud as a book hateful and insulting toward Christ and gentiles" (Fogelman 112). Wesker's mention of such events in the history of antisemitism once more reveals the ignorance of Shakespeare as his play does not touch upon such issues that were actually significant events of its historical backdrop.

In like manner, the news of the persecution of the Jews elsewhere in Europe is delivered to Shylock by the Jewish playwright Solomon Usque, a character introduced in Wesker's re-writing. He mentions tribunals set by the Inquisition in places such as Coimbra, Lisbon and Evora in Portugal that are used to force the Jews into conversion (anusim), and burning some at the stake (auto-da-fé): "In the last year the Coimbra Tribunal, which has jurisdiction over the Northern provinces of Portugal, has held thirty-five autos-da-fé drawn from different towns and villages of Traz-os-Montes and Beira alone" (*The Merchant* 12). Rebecca also adds, "the Lisbon and Evora Tribunals have tried Anusim arrested in towns situated in the Eastern department of Braganza" (*The Merchant* 12). Such characters who inform about the history of antisemitism are introduced in Wesker's appropriation to suggest the idea that forced conversion was not only a fictional element used in Shakespeare's work but also a real issue of the time. However, Shakespeare is criticised for projecting this idea with no apparent criticism.

As opposed to this, Wesker points out several other historical atrocities towards the Jews throughout history. For instance, at one point, Shylock mentions Rabbi Yom Tov of Joigny's elegy composed on the Martyrs of Blois, which also unearths the older history of persecution of the Jews in Europe. As it is understood, Rabbi Yom Tov of Joigny is one of the martyrs of York in 1190 who drew up an elegy in memory of the martyrs of Blois, France who had been executed in 1171. Apparently, Wesker brings these ideas together in his work in order to point out Shakespeare's ignorant attitude to such issues of his time, and equally importantly, to create awareness about antisemitism through a discussion of these past global events.

In addition to offering information about these historical events, this particular part also provides information about the charges put against the Jewish race in the past. It is suggested that in Blois, "as a result of an unsubstantial claim that a Jew had killed a Christian boy, charges were brought against the whole community" (Hillaby 196). Jacob Marcus also marks this as a seminal historical moment due to the fact that "[t]he accusation that Jews require Christian blood for their Passover ritual has been made against the Jews from that time on down to the present day in practically all lands and has cost the lives of hundreds of innocent Jewish men, women, and children" (127). Shakespeare's work depicts this actual fear of the Jew in his context through his representation of Shylock as the motif of the Jew who insists on cutting the innocent Christian Antonio's flesh. As Chazan comments on the portrayal of Shylock as a Jew "consumed with hatred for Christianity and Christians; his demand for his pound of flesh represents a remarkably faithful rendition of the malevolence and cruelty that twelfth-century northern European Christians began to attribute to their Jewish neighbors" (139). James Shapiro also observes that representation of Shylock as a blood-thirsty man is based on "16th century English ideas of Jews ritually circumcising and then murdering Christians" (*Shakespeare and the Jews* 10), which displays that Shakespeare was influenced by the general Christian perception of the Jews in his period. At the time, the widely believed idea that the Jews were responsible for the crucifixion contributed to the ensuing understanding that the Jews constitute a blasphemous and murderous race (Chazan 59). This conception exemplifies the extent to which Christians were fearful of the Jews in Europe in the medieval and early

modern periods, and it has also been used as a reason for the persecution of the Jews in the following epochs.

Through such examples from the past, *The Merchant* actually emphasises the repetition of the history of antisemitism in the world. To stress the same idea, Shylock, in Wesker's play, also talks about the continuation of such events against the Jews throughout history: "From the massacre of Rouen they fled into the massacre of London; from the massacre of London into the massacre of York, and from the massacre of York no one fled!" (*The Merchant* 4-5). Shylock's introduction of the history of the massacre of the Jews in France and in England sheds light on the discrimination his race faced both before and during the time the play is set. By bringing these events to public memory, Wesker's re-writing aims to inform about the Jewish history, and to question the objectivity of Shakespeare's play as a work set in such a historical context with no remarkable mention of these atrocious events for the Jews as a minority race.

Wesker's appropriation is informed by his concern for identity politics. Considering the changes he applies to the Shylock character to preserve the reputation of his race, his work demonstrates that he is concerned with the representation of a certain group of identity. In works of British drama produced in the 1970s, the influence of identity politics is crucial as Chris Megson states that "the 1970s saw the emergence of 'identity politics' – feminism, anti-racism and gay rights – premised on the notion that 'the personal is political'" (36). Therefore, considering the idea that seminal ideologies or literary and cultural criticism determine the multiple ways of reading previous works, Wesker's appropriation points out the problematic parts of Shakespeare's play in terms of the particular representation of the Jewish identity. In this regard, *The Merchant* stands out as a response to antisemitism reinforced by Shakespeare's version through a negative representation of the Jewish character. John Drakakis points out the fact that Shakespeare's play also projects a certain identity politics since the play's central character's "presence as a 'type' and his designation as a 'stranger' expose a politics of identity" (Introduction 12). Gil Anidjar observes that Shylock is seen as a "theological enemy . . . who hates and is hated on the explicit basis of his religion" (108), and as Em

McAvan also adds, “he equally hates and is hated for monetary reasons” (6). As Wesker particularly transforms these aspects that are used to define a certain identity of the Jew, his work also confronts the political underpinnings of Shakespeare’s work. Therefore, Wesker’s adaptation needs to be read as an exploration and reaffirmation of the Jewish identity. As opposed to an essential perception of identity attributed to the race in Shakespeare’s play, Wesker’s appropriation destabilises the assumptions created by the pre-text.

As regards identity politics, it is also necessary to consider the transformation of female characters in Wesker’s reworking. Though this does not contribute to the exploration of Jewish identity specifically, it is a significant transformation in terms of demonstrating the concern for different forms of identity as an issue in Wesker’s plays. Women characters are especially powerful in his works, and they subvert conventional representations of silent female figures. Michelene Wandor observes that “[t]he women in Wesker’s plays are strong, fierce, even articulate” (101). It is also interesting to observe that Wesker’s approach to the representation of gender is also manifested in his ideological response to Shakespeare. Accordingly, Wesker’s reconstruction of the female characters in his appropriation indicates that he is not only against Shylock’s representation in Shakespeare’s version but also the way in which the female characters are portrayed in the source text. In this regard, Shakespeare’s play seems to be problematic for Wesker because of its antisemitism and its underlying misogyny.

For example, Jessica, in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, is treated as a material object as Lorenzo refers to her wealth: “What gold and jewels she is furnished with” (*The Merchant of Venice* 2.4.32) indicating the commodification of the female in the patriarchal discourse of Venice. Likewise, Portia is simply portrayed as a woman who has to accept the fate her late father designed for her. As she states her lack of liberty to choose how she likes to live: “I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father” (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.2.22-24). In Shakespeare’s text, although Portia can determine the fate of another character, she can only do this in the guise of a man. Alternatively, Wesker’s Portia is educated and she is capable of formulating and thinking in the

fashion of philosophical poets of the classical convention. Portia in Wesker's play affirms herself to be the "new woman" (*The Merchant* 48) of the Renaissance, and criticises misogyny as an ideology as such: "For centuries the Church has kept me comfortably comforting and cooking and pleasing and patient . . . But – Portia reads! Plato and Aristotle, Ovid and Catullus, all in the original! Latin, Greek, Hebrew" (*The Merchant* 48). In this instance, Wesker makes his departure from Shakespeare's play evident in terms of gender politics with an emphasis on an autonomous female identity. Moreover, Wesker's Portia is also different from Shakespeare's in her approach towards the Jewish character. Contrary to the initial version of the character who despises Jews, and interprets the law to Shylock's disadvantage, Wesker's Portia, as a learned woman, is more educated about Jewish practices and Judaism in general as she believes learning Hebrew is essential for understanding the real meaning of what the prophets said (*The Merchant* 47). Clearly, it is observed that Wesker forms his criticism of Shakespeare through transformations that are mainly based on representation of identity. As he is against *The Merchant of Venice*'s attitude in terms of antisemitism and misogyny concluding from the play's treatment of marginal characters, Wesker juxtaposes these ideologies to point out the problematic aspects of their maintenance in his own period.

All these transformations and socio-political references in Wesker's play illustrate that there is a strong tendency to view Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* as a work that potentially triggers anti-Jewish belief and activities in the contemporary period as it did in the past. Some earlier antisemitic productions of Shakespeare's work in theatre history have led to the containment of racist discourse against the Jews. For instance, it is claimed in various circles that *The Merchant of Venice* was used "as a vehicle for anti-Semitic propaganda in productions mounted in Berlin and Vienna during the Third Reich" (Hawkins 53). James Shapiro also informs that *The Merchant of Venice* has been appropriated for various political and ideological means as, for instance, following the Kristallnacht in 1938, in which the Nazis destroyed Jewish properties, the play was used "for propagandistic ends . . . in Nazi territory" (*Shakespeare and the Jews* 23). John Gross, stressing the influence of the work on the interpretation of history, believes that, with Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, "[t]he ground for the Holocaust was well prepared" (352). This interpretation illustrates that not only does Holocaust inform

readings of Shakespeare's play in the present but the play itself might also have been instrumental in the emergence and ingraining of antisemitism as an ideology. Evidently, Shakespeare's controversial material was used for manipulative purposes against the Jews in a historical epoch that is regarded as one of the most hostile to the race. As opposed to such uses of the play, Wesker recreates it so that the former play's faults are discovered, and its historicity is underlined.

Wesker's re-writing is an intertemporal adaptation (Laera 7) as it shares the same subject matter with Shakespeare's play and it is set in the same historical era, in 1563 Venice. However, despite the fact that the same context is used in both works, Wesker's play needs to be situated in the context in which it was written rather than the plot's background. Regarding the idea that the present moment should be foregrounded in the discussion of Shakespeare's reworkings rather than his milieu, Grady and Hawkes question that "given that what we term history develops out of a never-ending dialogue between past and present, how can we decide whose historical circumstances will have priority in the process, Shakespeare's, or our own?" (3). It is the context of the present, or rather the context that surrounds the production of the rewritten text that needs to be considered as the reference point. In order to appreciate the transformations in relation to certain events and ideas of a period, it is necessary to try and observe how Shakespeare's source is modernised in a new context.

As an example of the view that re-writings subvert and criticise the ways in which the source text was interpreted in the past, Wesker's version re-contextualises *The Merchant of Venice*'s seminal ideas to reflect on current issues of racial/religious identity. The need to reframe Shakespeare's work in the contemporary period already portrays that the problematic aspects of the source text are unacceptable in an already hostile atmosphere regarding race issues. Therefore, Shakespeare's work is contemporised through the process although the plot still takes place in the sixteenth century. As Wesker points to the need to interpret the play in relation to the ideologies and events of the relevant moment instead of debating whether Shakespeare's representation of the Shylock character was a sympathetic one or not: "If we are presenting the play in 'our times' what is the relevance of pointing out it was a

sympathetic vision in past times? We're not living in those times. The vision of Shylock may have been sympathetic then but by no stretch of imagination can it be viewed as sympathetic now" (Preface li). Obviously, Wesker's approach is informed by the recent history of the Jews such as the Holocaust, and he believes that it is necessary to consider such problematic issues while interpreting the representation of Shakespeare's Jewish character. In this regard, Wesker suggests that recent contextual background needs to be taken as the point of reference while evaluating the play and the character rather than discussing possible interpretations of the text when it was first produced.

With regard to the influence of the socio-historical context on reinterpretations of Shakespeare's play, it is observed specifically about *The Merchant of Venice* that post-Holocaust context has necessitated transformation of the work so that it would be cleared of its antisemitic aspects. In accordance with the idea that Shakespeare's works are historical, and they do not transcend their time to refer to current events, John Gross mentions that in the post-Holocaust context Shakespeare's "play can never seem quite the same again" (326). It is known that Jews did not exist in Shakespeare's England since Edward I had expelled them from the country in the thirteenth century. Therefore, the antisemitic echoes of his work might have been irrelevant to his context with the exception that Shylock is arguably based on Queen Elizabeth's Jewish physician Dr. Roderigo Lopez who "was executed in 1594 for plotting to poison the queen" (Endelman 17). Apparently, Shakespeare's representation of Shylock mirrors the general concepts about the Jews prevalent in his context. However, given the sensitivity about racial issues in the contemporary period among which antisemitism is a major one, reproduction of the ideological elements of Shakespeare's work is considered necessary, and the relevance of the play's antisemitism to the contemporary context is considered even more immediate.

Dennis Kennedy also observes that the events of the recent past determine our understanding of Shakespeare's work: "The fate of the Jews under Hitler, and our almost continual subsequent awareness of the horrors of the death camps, have completely transformed our ability to read it" (200). Especially the enduring memory of the Holocaust has made the play more problematic, which resulted in numerous literary

ideological adaptations. As observed in *The Merchant*, which is particularly under the influence of this historical event, Wesker attempts to transform the problematic parts of Shakespeare's work seeing it as his responsibility to correct the ideas indirectly proposed by the text in a different context. With regard to the influence of the Holocaust on his interpretation of the play, Wesker admits that "nothing will make me admire it [*The Merchant of Venice*], nor has anyone persuaded me the [H]olocaust is irrelevant to my responses" (Preface xlix). In relation to the influence of the Holocaust on his re-writing, Wesker states in his diary that he was even more driven to reconstruct the play upon reading the news about the "attempts to deny six million Jews were slaughtered in the gas chambers" (*The Birth* 7). Therefore, the transformations in Wesker's play need to be read as his response to the Holocaust and racism as a more general problem of his recent context.

Besides the Holocaust as a seminal event in exploring the incentives of Wesker's reworking, there are other ideas in the socio-historical background that make the problem of antisemitism relevant to the time Wesker wrote the play. For instance, in the 1970s as the specific context of Wesker's re-writing, antisemitism continued specifically on an economic level as it is noted that "[t]he boycotts, or attempts at boycotts, continued, and pressure was exerted in the 1970s on the business establishment to sever financial connections with Jewish banks" (Brook 385). Daniel Tilles' work that explores the influence of literary stereotypes on the perpetuation of antisemitism and discrimination of other minority races in actual context illustrates that the representation of Shylock as a money-driven man by Shakespeare has made a paramount effect on the "negative association between Jews and high finance grounded in political discourse" (70). This idea explains that literary stereotypes like Shylock have led to the association of the Jews with commercial success in modern Britain, which has also contributed to the already existing hostility towards the race. With respect to the prevailing assumption that the Jews are detested for their economic success in the modern period, Robert Wistrich observes: "In modern times, new and no less sinister variations have been added to the theme of the 'Jewish peril' – that the Jews are striving for world domination by achieving control of the international financial system, by promoting revolutionary socialist ideologies, or through the alleged

machinations of Zionism and the State of Israel" (1). Apparently, hatred against the Jews not only continued in the form of religious atrocity but also as a means of racial discrimination to the modern day. In light of this idea, different from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* that treats antisemitism as merely a religious matter, it is considered as a more general social problem in *The Merchant*, which portrays it in the form of hatred that is based on both religious and racial differences. Therefore, Wesker's Shakespearean reworking, in terms of regarding "ethnicity as a contemporary form of politics" (Ross 417), reminds that racial hatred which also includes antisemitism is a resonant issue in the contemporary period.

Although the Jews were not easily welcomed in Britain, the number of Jews rose from 51,000 to 430,000 between 1876 and 1950 as European Jews migrated to the country (Garnett and Weight 268). Concurrently, there was especially an increase in the number of Jewish asylum seekers in Britain following the Second World War. It is informed that 50,000 Jews migrated to Britain at the time aided by "refugee funds set up by Simon Marks and by William Beveridge" (Garnett and Weight 269). Since their arrival in England in the seventeenth century, they have been effective majorly in the development of the retail trade in Britain as in the case of Marks and Spencer founded in 1884 and Tesco in 1898, hence the association of the Jews with financial success is reinforced. It is believed that the reason for discrimination of the Jews is different from the type of discrimination of the other minor races/religious groups. While the other groups have been thought to lack adaptation skills to the dominant culture, the Jews have integrated to the British culture easily. As the Jews were mostly successful in business and entertainment industry, they were considered as self-sufficient and they did not experience the kind of difficulties like homelessness or unemployment that affected other minority groups in the country. However, they faced some socio-cultural difficulties such as violence and racist remarks of hateful groups. As Gilbert also notes: "Whilst Jews have for a number of years been viewed as providing a model for successful assimilation into British life it is also true that anti-Semitism still surfaces in some more or less subtle ways and that anti-Semitic attacks are reportedly rising" (265). Although Jews are mostly considered as one of the least discriminated minority groups in Britain, they have been excluded from various social circles as Freedman informs,

"some seaside resort hotels and London landlords refuse accommodation to Jews. Jews have been known to find it difficult to get membership of certain clubs" (224). As observed in such examples, antisemitism is experienced as any other form of racism in Britain. Specifically in the context of the 1960s and 1970s, racism remained a constant problem. For instance, Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was passed in order to restrict Commonwealth citizens' entry to Britain (May 257). Despite the passing of some protective acts such as the Race Relations Act of 1976 which "intended to make racial discrimination and segregation illegal" (Forster and Harper 4), and tried to ameliorate the first two Race Relations Acts that had been passed in the 1960s, the problem of racial discrimination was still ripe in those years.

Concerning the problem of antisemitism in the modern British history, it is observed that there were serious attacks against the Jews in the country in the 1930s when the BUF (British Union of Fascists) emerged. It is argued that the leader of the union, Oswald Mosley "adopted antisemitism as official policy" of the party (Garau and Tilles 5), and targeting the Jews specifically for their economic standing, he attempted to "scapegoat Jews for the Great Depression" (Garnett and Weight 270). BUF activists bore a special enmity towards the Jews as it is reported that they wrote lots of swastika graffiti on the walls of East End of London, they put pig heads on synagogues and they smashed the shop windows owned by the Jews (Julius 311). Following the serious hate crimes of this political group, another antisemitic establishment known as the National Front emerged in 1967 consisting of Nazi sympathisers that "enjoyed significant levels of support in the 1970s" (Cardaun 45). Antisemitism in Britain is still noted in a variety of sources as an incontrovertible social problem. Given the fact that there have been attempts to prevent free speech of the Jews and considering violent action against their institutions, antisemitism has remained a topical issue.

Although the number of the Jews that moved to Britain increased following the Holocaust, antisemitism still remained a problem as "polls showed that half the UK population still had strong anti-semitic views" (Garnett and Weight 270). Endelman mentions the problematic reception of the Jews in Britain as such: "While Britain was more hospitable to Jews than most European states, its acceptance of Jews *as* Jews was

never absolute" (260). The most important reasons for modern day antisemitism remained as the Jews' economic success, easy integration to the larger society, and the strong unity among the Jewish members of community. In order to prevent the circulation of national or religious views among the group, there have been attempts to limit their freedom of speech. For example, as Lipman informs, "[u]niversity Jewish societies were denied facilities and at Salford University a visiting rabbi was banned from giving a religious talk on campus" (235). Furthermore, in addition to such restrictions on free speech, Endelman lists more violent forms of antisemitism observed in Britain in the post-war period such as "daubing swastikas on synagogue walls, desecrating Jewish gravestones, chanting anti-Semitic jibes at football matches" (246). He also reminds the arson events in the 1960s when "there was a wave of fascist-inspired violence: sixteen synagogues in London and the provinces were set on fire or attacked by petrol bombs" (Endelman 246). As it is evident from such atrocities, the context in which Wesker formulated his response to Shakespeare's play was actually full of violent antisemitic incidents. Reading his play in relation to such events explains why Wesker applies the particular transformations on the Shylock character, and how he tries to change the ways in which Jews are treated or considered in real society. Especially the scenes in the play in which Jewish characters mention previous forms of violence towards their race throughout history gain another dimension when examined in relation to the more resonant context of antisemitic violence in Britain.

The violent events that concern the Jewish community as listed above explain the claim that the Jews remain the only community in Britain that "has to provide a permanent system of guards and surveillance for its communal institutions, schools, synagogues, and cultural centers" (Wistrich 1). This illustrates that the Jews consider themselves as target of public violence, and they need to protect themselves with such organisations. As Maurice Freedman states, to provide security, the Jews in Britain "take institutional action against many forms of utterance and deed" including The Defence Committee of the Board of Deputies, the Trades Advisory Council, and the Association of Jewish Ex-Service Men and Women (223). For the same purpose, the CST (Community Security Trust) operates as a "charity that protects British Jews from antisemitism and related threats" ("About CST"). The formation of such self-defence organisations can partly be

explained with lack of state action concerning the issue as the government is mostly criticised for not taking enough measures to prevent hate crime against racial minorities. In the case of the problems that concern the Jewish minorities in Britain, it was only in 2006 when Labour MP, John Mann initiated the publication of the British-All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism (Wistrich 3). Apparently, it is relatively a recent development for the government to consider antisemitism as a serious threat in British society and to take necessary action.

The challenging production process of Wesker's play in Britain also reveals the problematic context of the country in terms of antisemitism. In his diary, Wesker extensively talks about the production process of his play and his disillusionment with his work's continuous rejection in Britain. Although Wesker's play was quite successful in other countries like the US and Sweden, he could not get his play *The Merchant* performed in Britain except for the one and only production at Birmingham Repertory Theatre on 12 October 1978 as he could not negotiate with other theatre directors. *The Merchant* was first performed at the Stockholm Royal Dramaten on 8 October 1976 while its first English production was in New York's Plymouth Theatre in 1977 (Weintraub 557). However, the play did not receive much acclaim or support from the British theatre producers. Weintraub claims that Wesker's works in the 1970s were "recognized more favourably in non-English speaking countries such as Sweden, Norway, Germany and Spain" (557). Wesker also believed that he was supported more elsewhere as he compares the reviews of his work in Britain to the ones that appeared in other countries: "[A] leading critic wrote extensively that Wesker was now 'one of the world's greatest dramatists.' Not a word in the British press" (*The Birth* 48). Wesker suspects that the resistance to his politically loaded re-writing of Shakespeare illustrates that mainstream theatre producers actually rejected the practice of re-writing Shakespeare as well as his conversely positive portrayal of the Jew character. As he questions their constant rejection of his play in his diary: "Why is there such resistance? I am beginning to suspect it is other than artistic. 'Leave us the Jew,' the theatre establishment seems to be saying, 'we need to be allowed the pleasure of forgiving the Bard's Semitic villain whom we hate. Tamper with him not" (*The Birth* 358). Obviously, Wesker also interprets the establishment's resistance to his play as another

indicator of antisemitism and a cultural precedent of bardolatry. The fact that Wesker's work has not been well received is an appropriate example of Gidley and Kahn-Harris' term 'new antisemitism' (29), or Tony Kushner's "Judeophobia" (434) both of which refer to the type of antisemitism that hinges on racial discrimination and denial of the Jews' cultural practices or means of expression. The rejection of a Jewish writer's work that is also about Jewish identity is actually a restrictive practice of the predominant ideology that denies a minority group its right of expression.

Considering the 1970s' Britain as the backdrop of Wesker's play, it should be noted that racism was a general problematic issue. Hubble et al. specify that "the 1970s are bracketed by two subsequently definitional incidents in post-war British history: Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech in Birmingham in April 1968 and the Brixton Riots of April 1981" ("Introduction" 4). Both of these events have had an immense influence on reconsidering the notions of race, racism and ethnicity in Britain. These events concerned hatred against non-British minor ethnic groups in the country; therefore, these might not be directly related to the issue of antisemitism as neither of these issues involved the Jews. However, considering the hostile atmosphere in the country towards other racial minority groups helps comprehending the continuation of antisemitic practices as part of this wider antagonistic attitude towards minorities at the time.[2]

A contextual reading of Wesker's re-writing should not be restricted to British history alone. Possibly a broader political discussion that has influenced the way in which Wesker formulates his appropriation is the Arab-Israeli conflict of the mid-1970s. During the writing process of his play, Wesker was influenced from the anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic propaganda campaigns and the news he read in the papers about this issue. Therefore, it is clear that Wesker views antisemitism not as a historical problem but one that immediately affected his own context and country even though the setting was different. In this regard, as Wesker constructs his response to these issues in his re-writing, his approach to Shakespeare is a political one. The parallelism Hattamer draws between the ending of Wesker's text in which Shylock decides to go to Jerusalem (*The Merchant* 82) and the actual context of the Arab-Israeli conflict is interesting in this regard:

> Israel's situation surrounded by hostile Arab states had proved to be highly insecure and constantly threatened. While the Six Day War in June 1967 against Syria, Egypt, and Jordan ended with an overwhelming victory for Israel, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 was a traumatic experience for Israel and sympathetic Jews all over the world who witnessed how precarious the situation of the State of Israel really was and how close it came to being annihilated . . . Wesker's presentation of Israel as the only safe haven for prosecuted Jews has to be seen in this context, supporting the view that the State of Israel has to be preserved by all means. (126)

In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, while there is much emphasis on Shylock's religion as a Jew, the idea of his attachment to a specific race or state is not mentioned. Apparently, Shylock's racial background is neglected in Shakespeare's work in which the emphasis is more on his religious identity as he is dejudaised as a punishment. However, as Susannah Heschel observes, "[r]ace remains ineradicable even in the presence of baptismal sacrament" (422) in the play. This ambiguity is projected in Wesker's re-writing in the form of Shylock's attachment to the state of Israel. The fact that Shylock's identity as a Jew was only treated as a religious matter in Shakespeare's play as different from Wesker's emphasis on both race and religion demonstrates the changing historical, ideological and political implications of Judaism in different epochs. This transformation suggests that while race was not considered as a serious issue as religion in Shakespeare's work, it constitutes a crucial part of identity politics in Wesker's appropriation, which is constructed in accordance with the understanding of identity in the modern period.

Reading Wesker's re-writing in relation to the actual context of the Arab-Israeli conflict depicts the idea that literary adaptations are shaped by the writer's own experiences or ideologies. As Arnold Wesker was involved in the Zionist Youth Movement, he was also interested in the issue of Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, his concern with this issue should not be ignored while discussing the politics of his reconstruction of Shakespeare's play. Two seminal events as part of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Six Day War in 1967 and Yom Kippur War in 1973, correspond to the historical context in which Wesker reworked Shakespeare's play. It is believed that in 1967, "Jews once again faced mass destruction, the Jews of Britain . . . experienced what one historian called 'a collective trauma'" (Endelman 237). The Six Day War that was fought between Arab states and the Jews of Israel also resonated in the rest of the world. As

Tony Kushner emphasises the global violence that ensued the war: "The early 1960s . . . saw the return of violent neo-Nazi activities leading to the death of several Jews in an arson-related attack and a swastika epidemic that also affected the rest of Europe" (444-45). One of the seminal historical records of antisemitism in Europe in this period was the 1972 Black September raid in Munich in which eleven Israeli Olympic team members were killed by Arab terrorists (Billington, *State of the Nation* 223). Specifically in the British context, the Arab-Israeli conflict reverberated as "pro-Palestinian terrorists struck at Anglo-Jewish targets, most notably in 1973, when a gunman broke into the house of J. Edward Sieff, president of Marks and Spencer and a well-known supporter of Israel, and seriously wounded him" (Endelman 245-46). Moreover, in this decade, there was an increase in activities of the "far right racist and antisemitic National Front [and] [m]any Jews were individually involved in the campaigns against this" (Gidley and Kahn-Harris 29). These instances demonstrate that although it was geographically a distant part of the world where the war emerged, other Jews around the world were somehow affected by ensuing events, and they regarded it as their own problem.

This particular incident inaugurated a collective behaviour among the Jews living elsewhere including those in Britain. For instance, as a form of solidarity with the Jews of Israel, in Britain, "[a]n emergency appeal collected £11 million . . . Eight thousand young people volunteered to fly to Israel to fill jobs left vacant by workers serving in the military . . . Even 'non-Jewish' Jews, like the writers Harold Pinter and A. Alvarez, signed public letters, defending Israel's right to exist" (Endelman 237). Obviously, Arab-Israeli conflict initiated a collective movement among the Jews as they started to react against violence exercised on their race. As a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Zionism also became more common among the Anglo-Jewry as claimed by Maurice Freedman: "[A]mong most of the Jewish population of Britain there is at the present time a positive attachment to the Jewish state, at least in the form of a special interest and affection directed towards a nation of Jews" (235). Interpreting Wesker's play in view of the general approach of the British Jewry to the problems of the state of Israel, Shylock's decision to leave for Jerusalem at the end of his play reflects the common tendency to regard Israel as an ideal state for the Jews. Discussing this transformation in

relation to its context, Wesker's play sheds light on the global political issues of its time. In this regard, Wesker's re-writing functions as his contribution to the collective solidarity among the Jews at the time as it poses a response to a recent form of antisemitism, and tries to shatter the image of a negative Jew in public memory.

Although the term "anti-semitism" is "anachronistic for Shakespeare's time," (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 296) his play is mostly read in relation to antisemitism rather than any other concept or ideology. Sinsheimer mentions the resonances of Shakespeare's treatment of Shylock with today's antisemitism as he claims that the medieval prejudices against the Jewry would not be as resonant today without the creation of Shylock (114). This illustrates that a work of art reflects the historical and ideological context of the times in which it is revived, making it obvious that history and ideology determine various alternative meanings attributed to a work. In this regard, Wesker's approach to Shakespeare's play from a specific ideological perspective reflects serious concerns of his own context. Considering the fact that antisemitism, like other kinds of racism, is still a problem in Britain as elsewhere, and was still so when Wesker re-wrote Shakespeare's play, his play evokes a certain awareness concerning this social problem. In line with the idea that Shakespearean re-writings also attempt to bring about change in the perception of certain problematic concepts, Wesker's adaptation obviously tries to make a point about the relevance of antisemitism in the modern context, and suggests a need for taking necessary action for its elimination.

Though Wesker formulated his response in the 1970s and his transformations are mostly related to the events of that particular historical moment, it should still be remembered that racism and antisemitism continue to exist as global problematic concepts. To specify, Tony Kushner points out that certain historical events have caused an increase in racial discrimination as with the example of 9/11 after which there have been a "need for minority groups, especially Muslims, to conform, to be good British, French and Dutch citizens" (436). Similarly, a more recent and relevant example would be Brexit which has again resulted in an increase in xenopohia in Britain. A recent article on *Evening Standard* dated 2017 points to the increase in antisemitic discourse and violence in the UK as follows: "[T]here were 813 incidents of hate crime reported

against London's Jewish communities last year, an increase of 65 per cent. There were also 205 in Manchester, which has the second largest population of Jewish people in the UK" (Grafton-Green). Such statistical information illustrates that as antisemitism and racism increasingly disturb the society, Wesker's reworking still deals with a relevant problem, hence points out the necessity of taking action concerning the amelioration of these issues.

As a playwright, Wesker is "deeply concerned with his function in relation to society," (Weintraub 549) and believes in the writer's responsibility concerning the society's change and education about certain matters. In this regard, his work derives its material from the real problems of society, and aims to initiate consciousness for the betterment of those critical issues through appropriate transformations. Exemplifying the idea that "[t]heatre . . . does not reshape its coordinates simply to remain alive or to remain itself through time, but also to change the world around it" (Laera 2), Wesker aspires to change and challenge assumptions about the Jewish race and to point out the difficulties they still encounter in *The Merchant*. Additionally, considering antisemitism as a form of racism and xenophobia in contemporary Britain, he also underlines the need for mutual tolerance between different ethnic groups. Drawing on Hassler-Forest and Nicklas' argument that "existing social, cultural, and economic hierarchies . . . can be reaffirmed but also challenged by the new ways in which adaptations are circulated and appropriated" (1), Wesker's re-writing subverts the plot and characterisation of *The Merchant of Venice* so as to challenge the containment of antisemitism as an ideology. Providing an example for recent critical engagements with Shakespeare's works, Wesker's play reveals the incomplete, neglected aspects of *The Merchant of Venice*. With its emphasis on the central character of the source text, *The Merchant* provides a reading of identity politics, and illustrates the close affinity between the motivations for the practice of reworking and the exploration of ideologies and politics of the actual socio-historical context.

CHAPTER III

HOWARD BARKER'S *GERTRUDE-THE CRY*: SEXUAL AND GENDER POLITICS IN *HAMLET*

Howard Barker's *Getrude-The Cry* (2002) is a challenging appropriation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in terms of the subversion of dominant ideas such as determined gender roles and morality through the reworking process. In Barker's work, the familiar plot and characters of *Hamlet* are transformed so that Gertrude becomes the new protagonist. This particular transformation makes it possible to discuss the play from her perspective rather than from Hamlet's melancholic and accusatory viewpoint. Concerning the intended uses of this reworking, Barker's aim is quite different from the other playwrights' as he does not necessarily point to a social criticism or a moral lesson. However, a careful reading of his play still allows one to grasp the underlying motivation of social criticism in this particular Shakespeare re-writing with its elaboration on topics such as politics of identity, gender and sexuality.

It is already noted that the popularity of Shakespeare's works invite multiple readings, thereby re-writings of them. In this respect, *Hamlet*, being possibly the most acclaimed one of all the collected plays, also has various reworkings. Remembering T.S. Eliot's reference to this work as "the 'Mona Lisa' of literature," (57), *Hamlet* holds an unprecedented place in literary criticism. All in all, motifs of usurpation, adultery, murder and revenge, all of which are intriguing topics, have rendered *Hamlet*'s popularity vibrant. For instance, in terms of responses the play has drawn from popular culture, *Hamlet* is known as "the world's most filmed story after Cindrella" (McKernan and Terris qtd. in Thompson and Taylor 17). It is apparent that even certain phrases in the soliloquies of the play are well known by the public. In order to exemplify this, Thompson and Taylor argue that "'[t]o be or not to be' must be the most frequently quoted . . . speech in western and indeed global cultural tradition" (15). Considering this popularity as an evident reason for the emergence of re-evaluations of the work, there are numerous adaptations of *Hamlet* in different mediums.

Another reason for the emergence of reworkings of Shakespeare's plays is known to be their ambiguity. As seen in other plays of Shakespeare, *Hamlet* also has ambivalent aspects that make it problematic, hence open to reinterpretation. One of these ambiguities concerns the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius as to whether there was already an affair between the two prior to Old Hamlet's death. Due to the mystery behind it, this relationship constitutes the focal point of Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry*. In a similar vein, another ambiguity is considered to be about Old Hamlet's death. In an attempt to imagine a possible answer as to why Claudius murders Old Hamlet, Michael Bogdanov suggests that he probably kills the king to protect his country from decay rather than for Gertrude:

> [Claudius] sees that his country is falling apart and his brother is not doing anything about it. Why does he kill old Hamlet? It can't be just because he loves Gertrude. *Nobody* just takes over a country, killing the king or the president or the dictator and taking over every aspect of ruling, governing and controlling, just for love. (19)

As Laurie Osborne sumps up the vagueness and incoherence of the presentation of the murder issue in Shakespeare's play:

> [H]ow does the sleeping king, instantly paralyzed, know who poisoned him? How . . . does he know that he has been poisoned, given that the poison's effects invoke the natural, if inexplicably swift, details of leprosy? The play . . . offers no explanation of his curious, contradictory narrative perspective: both asleep and awake, both dying instantly and alert to complex medical diagnosis. (118)

The murder of Old Hamlet in Shakespeare's work is a contradictory moment because the motivations of Claudius, and perhaps Gertrude, are left dubious. It is only given that Claudius wants to seize the throne and marry Gertrude; however, there is no ultimate answer to this question as not much is disclosed about Old Hamlet and his relationship with any of these two characters. The murder issue as it is handled in Shakespeare's play is nothing more than a foul act that attributes certain characteristics to Claudius and Gertrude by which they are judged in the rest of the play. This scene primarily displays Gertrude and Claudius as the murderous and sinful couple, and justifies Hamlet's anger and revenge, making it solely *his* play.

Additionally, together with the mystery that there might have been a relationship between Gertrude and Claudius earlier, there is also uncertainty concerning Gertrude's involvement in Claudius' murder plot. In Janet Adelman's words, "[g]iven her centrality in the play, it is striking how little we know about Gertrude; even the extent of her involvement in the murder of her first husband is left unclear" (*Suffocating Mothers* 15). As a character whose story is neglected by the writer, Gertrude remains a topic to be investigated by subsequent writers. As the play has mostly been performed and read from the perspective of Hamlet the protagonist, intentions of other characters are overlooked, which points to one of the imperfections of the Shakespearean classic. The fact that slightly minor characters' ideas and motivations are not emphasised in the source text explains the emergence of different retellings that attempt to clarify such obscurities. Accordingly, Barker's alternative perspective that gives a new dimension to the death of Old Hamlet and specifically to Gertrude character provides an example of the influence of ambiguities of the source text on the construction of the appropriations.

Another reason for the emergence of multiple re-writings of *Hamlet* is the play's underlying misogyny. As Shakespeare's works are used in the containment of certain ideologies including patriarchal social structure, *Hamlet* also denotes a certain gendered perspective that invites re-writings from feminist standing. Speaking of Shakespeare's works as functional constructs in the reinforcement of the patriarchal structure, feminist criticism of Shakespeare has observed that male roles in his plays are more developed in terms of characterisation than female ones. Most of his female characters are introduced in relation to a male figure whereas male characters do not need to be considered in relation to a female character for full recognition. Mostly, the primary purpose of female characters in his plays is to comply with the rules of their male counterparts around whom the plot is situated. For instance, in an analysis of female characters in Shakespeare's comedies, *As You Like It, The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *Twelfth Night*, Hilda Smith remarks that "[w]omen were more concerned with virtue and with not appearing at odds with husbands or the wishes of male family members. Men were more concerned with their social standing and their egos to ensure they were not belittled or cuckolded by the women around them" (44). Clearly, this observation points to inequality in terms of (positive) representation of the male and female characters in

Shakespeare's works. Shakespeare does not always portray female characters in a positive light (as with Lady Macbeth or Gertrude), he tests some of them in terms of their loyalty to their husbands (Desdemona), he does not give adequate voice to some of them (Ophelia), and at times he does not include them in his plots at all (as is the case of the absent mothers in his works *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure* and *Cymbeline*). Furthermore, even if they are included in the plays as important figures, as Sue Parrish compares the representation of two sexes in Shakespeare's works, "[t]he female characters are, in general, powerless to influence the outcome of events; and because they are powerless, they are presented more as types than characters" (66). For that reason, Shakespeare's works have been criticised in numerous feminist re-writings constructed by contemporary women dramatists such as Deborah Levy, Bryony Lavery and Elaine Feinstein.

As for gender inequality in relation to the characters of *Hamlet*, it is observed that the play includes two female figures that are seemingly important but mostly marginalised by the male figures. The female characters of the play, Gertrude and Ophelia are depicted as silent and subjugated women. Specifically in the case of Gertrude, as a woman of high social standing, one would expect her to embody more power and act with free will. On the contrary, she is one of the most oppressed female characters in Shakespeare's oeuvre. Clearly, her contribution in Shakespeare's work is measured with her relationship to the male characters. She is not, at any moment in the play, represented as a prominent figure other than her role as Hamlet's mother, Claudius' wife and as a widow. She is mostly silent, and much of the ambiguity in the play stems from her silence. Questions about her such as whether she was happy with Old Hamlet, if she was aware of the murder plot, why she was attracted to Claudius remain unexplained as she is a reserved character. Possibly the most apparent oppression exercised on Gertrude is sexual since Hamlet continually attacks her feminine side in his accusations. Kate Millett argues that "[t]he connection of woman, sex, and sin constitutes the fundamental pattern of western patriarchal thought" (54). Accordingly, sexual oppression is a means through which patriarchy sustains itself. As Hamlet's approach to Gertrude displays a similar attitude, Shakespeare's text contributes to the reinforcement of patriarchal ideology by misrepresenting the female subject.

Similarly, the other female character of the play Ophelia is one of the most supressed figures among all Shakespeare characters regardless of gender. Specifically discussing her representation in comparison to other female characters, Bradby claims that "[s]he has indeed less character than any other of Shakespeare's heroines. She has no initiative, no will-power" (26). Shakespeare's particular treatment of Ophelia has led the character to be viewed as a weakling. Judging from her depiction in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Ophelia stands out with no other feature than her portrayal as a sister of Laertes, the daughter of Polonius, and a victim of Hamlet. It is seen that she is not apt at all to contradict any one of the male figures of the play as she is easily manipulated in terms of her possible affair with Hamlet by the patriarchal figures of her family. Polonius' influence on Ophelia in this matter is clearly observed in his command that "she should lock herself from his resort, / Admit no messengers, receive no tokens" (*Hamlet* 2.2.140-141). In this regard, the representation of Ophelia recalls Millett's depiction of the psychologically subjugated female who "is continually obliged to seek survival or advancement through the approval of males as those who hold power" (54). Considering that Ophelia obeys everything Polonius and Laertes say to her, she does not seem to have a real developed character of her own as she cannot decide for herself and cannot direct the course of events that concern her.

Dash argues that the obedience and dependence of women in the patriarchal society depicted in *Hamlet* hampers their individual growth (112). Dependence of the female characters on their male counterparts displays that they do not act as mature individuals. Taking the closet scene as an example in which Hamlet tells his mother not to sleep with Claudius, which is similar to Polonius and Laertes' prohibition of Ophelia to see Hamlet, it is observed that these women are manipulated by their male superiors, hence they lack initiative. This aspect of the play makes it problematic in terms of contemporary feminist politics, which constitutes another reason for the production of different re-writings that attempt to give such oppressed women agency in new twisted plots. Howard Barker's version *Gertrude-The Cry* is such an example that illustrates freeing the will of its central female figure.

Hamlet is considered by most as "the best, the greatest, or the chief masterpiece of Shakespeare" (Foakes, *Hamlet* 1). However, Barker's attempt to re-write this play stems from a certain critical impulse against the play's approach to issues of femininity, sexuality and morality. In an interview, when Barker is asked to name the writers who have influenced him most, he sarcastically says "Shakespeare, of course. I say of course because you gauge his power from even a slight acquaintanceship" ("The Small Discovery" 191). This statement indicates his criticism of the cultural and literary authority credited to Shakespeare as well as the conventional tenet that Shakespeare's "genius" inspires following writers. Contrary to this argument, Barker has an antagonistic view of Shakespeare's works and their uses in performance, which is evident in his two challenging transformations of his plays, *Seven Lears* (1990) as a reworking of *King Lear*, and *Gertrude-The Cry* (2002). Besides these two Shakespearean re-writings, Barker's other appropriations also need to be remembered such as *No One Was Saved* (1970), which is a response to Bond's *Saved* (1965), a BBC radio play titled *Henry V in Two Parts* (1971), an adaptation of Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* written in 1986 with the same title, an appropriation of Anton Chekhov in *(Uncle) Vanya* (1991), and a play titled *Knowledge and a Girl* (2002) which is an adaptation of "Snow White" by Brothers Grimm.

Howard Barker is considered among the most controversial playwrights of contemporary British drama. In the 1970s, at the beginning of his career as a playwright, he was significantly known for his overtly political plays that were critical of the state of Britain. Later on, his focus in his works slightly shifted and he turned to elaborate on more challenging matters such as sexuality. Barker's work is assessed by some as avant-garde because, "[l]ike the avant-garde theatre, it wants to perplex its audience" (Zimmermann 189). Additionally, for its subversion of conventional dramatic practices, his theatre is also acknowledged as postmodern (Angel-Perez 38). Besides these labels used appropriately for his works, Barker's drama is now more precisely known as 'Theatre of Catastrophe,' a term he invented to describe the type of subversive and challenging plays that are hard to digest. Karoline Gritzner describes Theatre of Catastrophe as a dramatic practice that "seeks to disrupt an audience's moral certainty and ideological security" ("(Post)Modern" 333) for this type of drama

unsettles the accepted norms of morality with its emphasis on sexuality and eroticism. In Theatre of Catastrophe, there are images of nakedness, obscene language, violence and sexuality which also appear in Barker's transformation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. At this point, it is necessary to point out that Barker's intention with catastrophe is quite different from the concept of catastrophe in Greek drama. According to Zimmermann's reflection:

> Whereas in Greek drama, 'catastrophe' meant the turn of the action either to a good or fatal ending, in Barker's theatre it signifies a historic event which has shattered the political, cultural, and moral order, and entails the protagonists' 'utter transformation,' impelling them to disregard the laws of reason and of ethical norms. (184)

This type of dramatic production is also known as "theatre of obscurity" or, as Gritzner names "theatre of plethora" ("Poetry" 344), which introduces unfamiliar ways of dramatic production based on the exploration of the feeling of ecstasy. Known to be an alternative to "Humanist Theatre" and to "Brechtian Theatre of Enlightenment" (Zimmermann 184), Barker's catastrophic theatre points to a dramatic experience in which there are "no messages, no ease of understanding, no totally graspable experience" (Shepherd 168). As a proponent of such a controversial type of drama, Barker is against the conventions of naturalist drama as well as instructive nature of social realism dominantly prevalent in contemporary British drama.

Barker criticises the humanist theatre for preaching audiences how to formulate their critical responses to a certain issue. In an article, he names this traditional practice as "Illumination System" associating the attempts of this type of dramatic production with the idea of "throwing of light" on significant social issues ("The House" 30). As opposed to theatre with a social mission, Barker frees Theatre of Catastrophe from such responsibilities. Similar to his rejection of the humanist theatre, he also objects to the conventions of "the theatre" by introducing his alternative concept of "the art of theatre" (Barker, *Death* 17), which he uses to express a dramatic form that does not force itself to be functional. According to this distinction, for Barker, conventional theatre has a moralist, humanist language, and a socially edifying function whereas the art of theatre has an amoral, sexual discourse, and offers no solutions whatsoever. For him, the art of

theatre is, and should be, an arena where experiment finds an aesthetic space to present challenging works of art. This discrepancy could be better understood with an observation of his ideas in his subjective work *Death, The One and the Art of Theatre* (2005) in which he associates "the theatre" with moral teaching: "*The theatre* – why did the moralists collect there? Why had they always brought their gnawing missions to the stage, and why were they so enraged when *the art of theatre* revealed its aesthetic incompatibility with morality?" (*Death* 23). This statement reveals that his art of theatre's main function is to challenge the perceptions of morality, and also indicates why its practices are not adopted by the mainstream.

Although Barker claims that most of his works are examples of tragedy, or "catastrophism" (Barker, "Theatre") as he would like to call the experience, they do not really observe Aristotelian conventions of tragedy, nor do they follow any plotline similar to any Shakespearean tragedy. The tragic, according to his vision, lies in the experiences of contrarian characters, lack of catharsis and resolution. In his Theatre of Catastrophe, tragic effect is certainly aimed; however, the purgation of the audience's feelings is avoided. With challenging topics that are mostly about sexuality, politics and ethics, he hopes that "his audience's moral confusion will force them to examine their ethical standards and judge for themselves instead of receiving a message" (Zimmermann 188). Thus, Barker's re-writing fractures the recognised features of both Aristotelian and Shakespearean tragedy.

Within the frame of Theatre of Catastrophe, Barker wrote plays like *Scenes from an Execution* (1990) in which he depicts a naked woman painter in the image of Artemisia Gentileschi, and *Brutopia* (1993) which is also a challenging reworking of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). Such plays question the moral standards by which literary and artistic production is evaluated. Due to Barker's dramatic style that is highly elusive and amoral, his work is not very much supported in Britain while he is more acclaimed in other European countries. To express this, he calls himself an "internal exile" ("Death" 119). For him, this is simply because of the fact that the other countries are ahead of Britain as the English are, as he says, "frightened of a writer who dares to think the unthinkable" ("Death" 117). As for the criticism Barker received upon *Gertrude-The*

Cry, he states, "many Oxford-educated people were profoundly outraged and tried to ridicule my work" ("On Shakespeare" 164). In line with the idea that Shakespearean canon is very strongly supported, and reworkings of his plays are mostly criticised, Barker's re-writing with highly erotic undertones was also criticised when the play first appeared.

Despite the fact that Barker has difficulty in getting his controversial plays acted in mainstream theatres in Britain, he is actually associated with a theatre company, the Wrestling School established in 1988. Dedicated to present Barker's plays in uncensored ways, the Wrestling School is considered as "a unique development in British theatre" for being "a touring theatre company dedicated to the production of work by just one living dramatist" (Deeney 26). The function of the Wrestling School is described by Nicholas Le Provost et al. as such: "The Wrestling School is aptly named; the actor's role is to wrestle with the text, and to try and understand, not to teach or feel for an audience, and not to entertain" (43). Apparently, the company's performance philosophy is the same with Barker's theories of dramatic production. In line with the challenging topics of Barker's plays, the Wrestling School performs these works in controversial manners. *Gertrude-The Cry* was also first staged by the Wrestling School at Kronberg Castle, Elsinore in 2002. Even the fact that such a controversial Shakespearean appropriation was performed in Elsinore is a challenging practice considering the place's mythical significance as the fictional setting of *Hamlet*.

In compliance with Barker's norms of Theatre of Catastrophe, his adaptation of Shakespeare is also challenging, subversive, and it aims at startling effect. Howard Barker's analysis of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in his reworking shows that he has a critical approach though his intention to create a subversive retelling is not absolute. Different from the other two playwrights included in this study, Howard Barker does not openly state that he tries to correct the ideological and conventional underpinnings of Shakespeare's text. However, his depiction of the same characters that appear in Shakespeare's work in an unusual manner is an indicator of his subversive attitude towards the Shakespearean source.

In terms of his engagement with Shakespeare's texts, Barker rejects the moralistic and authoritarian aspects of these works as seen in his two Shakespeare adaptations. Barker's criticism of Shakespeare is mainly based on the moralising message at the end of his plays. He finds it problematic that the evil characters in the Shakespeare canon are eventually surpassed by social norms or poetic justice with a concern for a moral message. As he observes, Shakespeare "denies his characters the integrity they deserve" and wonders why strong Shakespeare characters are eventually punished: "Why should Edmund apologize? Why should Macbeth apologize?" ("On Shakespeare" 166). According to Barker, this representation does not agree with real life experiences as he questions: "Do you know any evil men who apologize?" ("On Shakespeare" 166). Clearly, Barker does not consider Shakespeare's treatment of evil characters as realistic. In his Theatre of Catastrophe, there is no poetic justice, and the definition of evil in naturalist drama is questioned. Therefore, he finds Shakespeare's vision of justice and his moral judgement unsuitable for the theatre he promotes. In this respect, Barker's criticism of the moralising attitude in Shakespeare's work is most evident in his displacement of characters that were previously considered as foul. In the case of the depiction of Gertrude as the central figure of Barker's transformation, he believes that the character is judged according to Shakespeare's own moral criteria: "Shakespeare's moral sense and his role in a Christian/Reformation society compelled him to routinely punish transgression with guilty feeling, and Gertrude's sketchily described character is soddened with shame and regret" ("Gertrude-The Cry"). This criticism somehow explains why Barker particularly reimagines this character as a transgressing woman who does not observe any limitations on her sexuality.

Considering Barker's work in terms of the critics' classifications of re-writing techniques, the play could be considered as a mixture of the remotivated, revisionary and reoriented narrative types of Douglas Lanier's listing. In terms of giving different characteristics to the familiar figures of Shakespeare's text and introducing three different characters that are not existent in the source play, it is a remotivated narrative. In this play, main characters of Shakespeare's work are retained such as Gertrude, Claudius and Hamlet, but Barker adds four other characters, Cascan, Isola, Ragusa and Albert that are not even mentioned in Shakespeare's play though some of them may

bear resemblances to the secondary characters of the source text. For instance, Albert, a Duke of Mecklenburg first bears resemblance to Horatio as he is a friend of Hamlet, and then seems more like Fortinbras as he is victorious at the end of the play (Kilpatrick 704; Khamphommala 144; Chinna 108).

Even more than the characters, the plot of the source text is altered to a great extent, which makes Barker's play also a revisionary narrative. Barker's play is a radical transformation of Shakespeare's source. As Lynne Bradley argues, in the process of re-writing, Barker "deconstructs Shakespeare until there is no Shakespeare left" (184). Moreover, in this transformation process, the source plot is twisted particularly from a marginal character's perspective, which makes it a reoriented narrative. Alternatively, in Thomas Cartelli's distinction of appropriation types, Barker's play exemplifies confrontational and transpositional appropriation. To illustrate, since Barker subverts the patriarchal structure of the source text by turning it into an instrument for exploring gender politics, his re-writing is confrontational. Likewise, as the play specifically focuses on the idea of sexuality, as an issue that is hinted at in Shakespeare's play but left uncovered, Barker's appropriation is an example of transpositional appropriation. Additionally, since it is not so easy to associate Barker's play with Shakespeare's apart from the characters' names and the setting of the play, Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* could also be included in Charles Marowitz' quantum leap approach that points to transformations that differ from the sources to a significant extent.

It is interesting to observe that Barker is particularly interested in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* rather than any other play. Apart from the doubts and contradictions of the play's protagonist, there are other aspects that make the play equally intriguing such as the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius, which is actually the force behind Hamlet's psychological inconsistencies throughout the play. Barker reimagines this relationship in a highly eroticised manner, and forms a contrast between this relationship and Hamlet's moral standards. In general, *Hamlet* is particularly appealing for such a transformation because it is possible to form a contradiction between the already incompatible characters of the play, namely, Hamlet and all others, and also because of the play's implication of female sexuality that calls for investigation.

It is apparent that sexuality is ever present in Shakespeare's works as Paula Berggren observes the importance attached to female sexuality in his plays: "[T]he central element in Shakespeare's treatment of women is always their sex, not as a focus for cultural observation or social criticism . . . but primarily as a mythic source of power, an archetypal symbol that arouses both love and loathing in the male" (18). Specifically considering this idea in relation to *Hamlet*, though it is much repressed, Gertrude's sexuality is actually a symbol of her transgressing potential, her rejection of norms dictated to her by society, which eventually arouses hatred in her son, and leads to the deterioration of his psychological condition. This signifies that female sexuality actually plays an important role in the course of events in the play. However, Hamlet's misogyny is the more discussed topic in relation to this play rather than Gertrude's sexuality. Some of Hamlet's famous attacks against Gertrude such as "[f]railty, thy name is Woman" (*Hamlet* 1.2.146) are problematic in terms of reaching totalising conclusions about the loyalty of women. Hamlet's presentation in Shakespeare's play as a woman-hater leads the play to be considered as a reinforcement of "patriarchal society where men not only control the political and social avenues of power but also demand women's love, affection and nurturance" (Dash 111). The existence of two silent female figures as opposed to a misogynist protagonist and an oppressive society in *Hamlet* seems to be a convincing result of this attitude in the play. In order to portray the problematic patriarchal aspect of *Hamlet*, Barker places the centrality on female sexuality, which he sees as a conceivably very important topic in Shakespeare's work. Therefore, it is seen that sexuality is potentially embedded in *Hamlet*; however, Hamlet's misogyny overcomes the former's importance. In order to subvert this approach, Barker sees this play as a viable source for exploring sexual and gender issues.

Apart from Gertrude, the play's emphasis on female sexuality can be extended to Ophelia as another female character whose sexuality deeply concerns the male figures of her family. Though Ophelia is a weak character, which makes it difficult to elaborate on the representation of her sexuality, it is apparent that her desires are suppressed by the warnings of her father and brother. For instance, Laertes warns her against Hamlet with such words of persuasion: "Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister / And keep you

in the rear of your affection / Out of the shot and danger of desire" (*Hamlet* 1.3.32-34). These lines suggest that Laertes envisions desire as a dangerous temptation, and warns her accordingly. Ophelia's response that suggests her much vulnerable position against patriarchal power, "I shall the effect of this good lesson keep / As watchman to my heart" (*Hamlet* 1.3.44-45) indicates the play's conservative representation of female chastity. Thus, Ophelia is projected as a character assigned to keep her "maiden presence" (*Hamlet* 1.3.120) against Hamlet's immoral temptation. Patriarchal oppression on Ophelia is to such an extent that she always gives an account to Polonius about how she behaves when she sees Hamlet. Though Ophelia's sexuality mostly remains undiscovered in the play, her madness is seen as a projection or rather a natural outcome of repressed female sexuality. As Thompson and Taylor comment on the difference in the depiction of male and female madness in *Hamlet*, "[m]en may go mad for a number of reasons, including mental and spiritual stress, but women's madness is relentlessly associated with their bodies and their erotic desires" (28). In this respect, Ophelia's madness is seen as a dangerous consequence of her repressed sexual desires, which might even be considered as a warning to the audience about the dangers of female sexuality evoking Laertes' warning to her about the dangers of yielding to desire. Apparently, there are various associations between *Hamlet* and female sexuality, which explains why Barker specifically chooses this play for re-writing.

Along with the employment of sexual and gender issues, Barker's work deals with the conflict between individual and society. In this respect, *Hamlet* again provides a suitable source for him with its depiction of moral conflict in the form of "a medieval world of impulsive revengers struggling with the humanist and individualist Renaissance world view" (Chinna 113). Barker's characters go through a similar moral conflict in contemporary society. In both plays, characters find themselves in difficult situations due to their not so rational impulses belittled by the social order. *Hamlet* is a play that is on the side of the social order against the exercise of individual desires, which is evident in the cycle of events in which wrong characters are duly punished. Catherine Belsey even observes a close resonance between *Hamlet* and the morality tradition on the grounds that "Hamlet has to make a moral choice and in this he is the heir of Mankind and Everyman, heroes of the tradition that dominated the popular stage

in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that consistently analysed, with varying degrees of subtlety, the process of ethical conflict" (141). Thus, *Hamlet*, of all Shakespeare's plays, poses a moral problem and a protagonist whose ethical dilemma forms the backbone of the plot. Another instance that portrays a moral matter in the play is observed in the gravediggers' scene in which there is a discussion about whether Ophelia should be given a Christian burial as she is seen a sinner for committing suicide (*Hamlet* 5.1.1-2). In this particular scene, the possibility that Ophelia might have committed suicide opens up a debate among the characters concerned with religious norms. As Barker's theatre is opposed to reinforcement of such moralist and traditional form of tragedy, preaching of morality in *Hamlet* is an appealing idea for him to challenge, and subsequently construct his own plot about (im)morality.

Considering the transformations in Barker's work, the setting of the play is still Elsinore; however, the time in which the play is set is not clear at any point. In terms of character transformations in Barker's re-writing, it is observed that different from the other Shakespearean re-writings included in this study, this work does not focus on the protagonist of the source text; instead, it develops a character of lesser importance. Though Gertrude is an important character in the development of the plot outline, it is claimed with regard to her appearance in the play that "Gertrude appears in only ten of the twenty scenes that comprise the play; furthermore, she speaks very little, having less dialogue than any other major character in *Hamlet*" (R. Smith 199). In this respect, Barker's work exemplifies the general tendency to recreate silenced characters in re-writings of Shakespeare. This transformation, itself, is a subversive act as it marginalises Hamlet who actually has the largest part in the entire Shakespeare canon (Thompson and Taylor 25). This provides an example of the function of appropriations to criticise Shakespeare's handling of minor characters in his works. Evidently, Barker's response is formulated as a result of his criticism of the pre-text's presentation of Gertrude as a submissive woman. Therefore, radical transformations in his version mainly concern this character. Even the fact that Barker turns Gertrude into the new protagonist of the play, hence re-titling the work in her name, illustrates that he is basically concerned with the representation of Shakespeare's ignored yet important female character.

Shakespeare's Gertrude is only considered as an individual with free will in the closing scene of the play in which she disobeys Claudius' attempt to stop her from drinking the poisoned cup. In this scene, as Claudius warns "Gertrude, do not drink," Gertrude asserts "I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me" (*Hamlet* 5.2.273-274). As Dash compares Gertrude in this scene with her earlier moments in the play, "the woman who reiterated his [Claudius'] words, reshaping them for acceptability in act 1, the woman who sought to save him from Laertes in act 4 and began to see her own strength, the woman condemned by her son as a whore in act 3, perceives herself as an individual" (126). However, the moment when she transgresses her role also marks the moment of her death, which implies that her attempt to transgress the boundaries causes her death. In most other cases, she "never loses her sense of values" (Dash 153), that is, she never fails to obey the patriarchal norms. Even the comment she makes about the player queen's acting as "[t]he lady doth protest too much" (*Hamlet* 3.2.224) suggests that she does not approve the manners of a woman that reacts. On such occasions, she acts as a proper woman shaped by the interests of the patriarchal establishment. Therefore, with a transformed version of this character, Barker's re-writing provides a response to the representation of Gertrude as a deprived woman in the source text.

Barker mentions his starting point for reconstructing Shakespeare's play as follows: "In shifting the focus to her [Gertrude's] fatal eroticism (a hypnotic regard which engulfs Claudius and wounds him grievously), I have set out to reinvigorate an ancient theme, annexed by Shakespeare from earlier texts, and turn it as he did to yet further extremes" ("Gertrude-The Cry"). Obviously, the emphasis of Barker's text is on the eroticism and sexuality of the figure that has been represented so far as guilty of adultery, incest and instigation for usurpation. Gertrude's sexuality is presented as very dangerous in *Hamlet* because of the implication that it is her sexual relationship with Claudius that causes Old Hamlet's death. This approach perpetuates the essentialist patriarchal belief shared in the male centred canon that "women are inherently (that is decreed by God and nature to be) pure, and therefore any sexual misdemenanour is a violation of their deepest 'feminine' self" (Morris 31). Taking the character from this conventional representation, Barker displays a very different Gertrude who transgresses the boundaries of her sex and the limits of morality imposed by society. To this end, in

order to challenge social norms that are readily accepted as true for all, Barker's play presents the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius as a passionate affair as opposed to the censorious approach as reflected in Shakespeare's text.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, this relationship is much reprimanded by Hamlet, and even by the ghost of his father who believes that though Gertrude is "a most seeming-virtuous Queen" (*Hamlet* 1.5.46), Claudius is the "incestuous . . . adulterate beast" (*Hamlet* 1.5.42). Despite his father's excusive approach to Gertrude, after Hamlet learns the truth concerning his father's murder, his attitude to his mother shifts for the worse, which leads him to be obsessively interested in her sexual nature. Though his father's ghost tells him not to revenge on his mother, Hamlet, rather than accusing Claudius for the marriage, accuses his mother for betraying her husband with harsh words: "O most pernicious woman, / O villain, villain, smiling damned villain" (*Hamlet* 1.5.105-106). There are several other references to Gertrude's sexuality by Hamlet in Shakespeare's work. For instance, he cannot help but wonder how her mother, only within a month, can marry Claudius: "O most wicked speed! To post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets" (*Hamlet* 1.2.156-157). Accordingly, Hamlet accuses Gertrude not only for the hasty marriage but also for engaging in an incestuous relationship.

In Shakespeare's work, the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius is much denounced, and it mirrors the corruption in the state in a larger scale. As Marcellus remarks "[s]omething is rotten in the state of Denmark" (*Hamlet* 1.4.90), the corruption of the state is coupled with the corrupt relationship of Gertrude and Claudius. Hamlet, as the Prince of Denmark, is not interested in the political condition of the state but he is obsessed with trying to solve how his mother could marry his uncle in such a short time after his father's death. Hamlet's insistence in unearthing the mystery behind this affair gives the implication that "the ideal society is based upon the sacrifice of the mother's desire" (Rose 307). The corruption in the state is closely linked to the corruption in the morals of the court, which interests Gertrude closely. As, for instance, the Ghost's warning illustrates the dangers of degeneration in the court: "Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damned incest" (*Hamlet* 1.5.82-83), it is the sexual union of Gertrude and Claudius that is projected as the cause of evil in the court.

Different from this treatment, Barker's play does not mention state politics, but focuses on the sexual relationship without necessarily forming any association between the relationship and the general condition of the court.

Considering the male characters' interference with Gertrude's sexuality, it is necessary to remember Rebecca Smith's contention that the Ghost, Hamlet and Claudius, namely all prominent male figures of the play, see Gertrude "as a sexual *object*" (207). Indicating this objectification, Hamlet's assaults against Gertrude reach to such an extent that she does not seem to have any function in the play other than being an embodiment of sexual infidelity. As opposed to this particular presentation, in his appropriation, Barker reimagines Gertrude as a sexually knowing and erotic woman who is not remorseful after murdering her husband and marrying his brother. Namely, this play projects a Gertrude who could be held responsible for all unjustified accusations set against her in Shakespeare's version except that she does not regret them.

In an attempt to unravel the mystery behind the extent of Gertrude's guilt in Shakespeare's play, Barker turns her into a character that represents a typical heroine of his Theatre of Catastrophe. As Ruth Shade observes the female characters in Barker's drama, "[m]any of his women are promiscuous, prostitutes or have bizarre sexual fetishes," which she sees as Barker's way of attributing political power to these characters (105). Accordingly, Gertrude is represented as an erotic, guilty, amoral woman who poses a challenge for the spectator. In accordance with this idea, Barker presents the character in scenes of (im)moral extremity. For instance, removing one of the central ambiguities in Shakespeare's text, Barker's play opens with the murder scene in which Gertrude insists killing her husband herself:

> I should
> Surely
> . . .
> HE IS MY HUSBAND WHY NOT ME. (*Gertrude* 9)

Opening the play with this scene eliminates any possible interpretation of Gertrude as an innocent character; she is utterly guilty of murder as well as incest and adultery. With

regard to the presentation of the murder scene in Barker's work, Gertrude is more like the Player Queen of the mousetrap scene whose murderous intentions are clearer with the words: "A second time I kill my husband dead / When second husband kisses me in bed" (*Hamlet* 3.2.178-179). It remains one of the ambiguous points of *Hamlet* whether Gertrude was responsible for the killing of the king. Based on her surprised response to Hamlet's accusation in the closet scene "[a]s kill a King?" (*Hamlet* 3.4.27), it is more likely that she was not involved in the murder. Looked at from this perspective, Gertrude is actually another one of Shakespeare's victimised figures on false accusation. However, Barker's play takes no notice of this ambivalence in the source text as the play immediately begins with Gertrude and Claudius arguing over who should kill Old Hamlet. This transformation illustrates that Barker aims to portray a woman whose guilty character is palpable. In the same scene, Gertrude's sin is even more intensified as she and Claudius are presented making love over Old Hamlet's dying body. As a feature of Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe that seeks to challenge moral standards, the opening scene of his Shakespearean adaptation poses a strong challenge. On top of the murder act, presentation of the couple's sexual union makes it even more subversive. With such a transformation, Barker questions the conventional presentations of this relationship.

When Barker is asked to comment on his intentions for re-writing this character, he states that "[w]hat I'm trying to do is to expose something that convention has made too solid. The conventional treatment of Gertrude, for instance, dismisses her as an oversexed bad mother. Something in me wanted to pose an alternative, to refocus, to put the light on different areas" ("On Shakespeare" 164). Though this statement looks more like a defence on part of the character, he actually does not turn her into a chaste, innocent woman who knows her responsibilities as a parent. Instead, he presents her in a way that is even more controversial than in Shakespeare's play; however, there is no condemnation of her overt sexual manners. In this context, Barker's presentation of the character is in stark contrast with Shakespeare's treatment of transgressing female characters in general as it is argued that Shakespeare is not very tolerant towards his female characters with overt sexual traits. According to Linda Bamber's analysis of sexualised women in Shakespeare's tragedies, "[t]he tragedies . . . are obsessed with the

dark side of women's sexuality . . . The tragedies *are* populated by castrating mothers, fiendish daughters, bearded witches. The question of a woman's sexual constancy *is* raised with surprising frequency, and the sexuality of an inconstant woman is imagined in the language of disgust" (3). This observation is also applicable to the presentation of Gertrude in *Hamlet* who is assaulted for adultery and incest throughout the play. Alternatively, Barker's version liberates her from the accusation of incest and adultery though he attributes even more corrupt features to the character.

The emphasis on Gertrude's exceptionally challenging sexuality in Barker's work was also prominently projected in the staging of this play. For instance, as a way of intensifying the sexual representation of Gertrude, in the 2001 Wrestling School production of the play, the actor Victoria Wicks, who performed the Gertrude character, "was referenced visually through a selection of high style costumes, vibrant pastel colours that contrasted with the other female characters' dark browns and blacks, who were covered up from neck to toe in a metonymic suppression of their sexuality" (A. Smith 50). Correspondingly, the contrast between Gertrude's obscene costume and the other female characters' covered costumes highlights the play's specific emphasis on the protagonist's sexuality. In this respect, her nakedness is symbolic of her defiance of social order whereas the others, in their covered forms, act as the embodiment of normativity against which Gertrude fights. As Barker mentions his intentions with the representation of nakedness on the stage: "The body is a symbol of liberty, of disorder. Free sexuality, the liberty of desire is a threat to political power, to the order of the state. The human body is the object of all political power. It is the control of each body that is the object of the state" (qtd. in Obis 74). Clearly, Barker's representation of a naked Gertrude needs to be considered as a political act.

To further confront the preestablished moral judgement about Gertrude, Barker portrays the character in really challenging scenes. Throughout the play, there are images of Gertrude's undressing on the stage, which intensifies her representation as an indecent character as opposed to the moral standards the character is expected to meet in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The sex scenes in which she is involved are all acted on the stage. On top of being involved in an incestuous relationship with Claudius, she also

sleeps with Albert, Duke of Mecklenburg who is actually Hamlet's friend. She dresses and wears make-up that is not proper for her age or social status, and she enjoys being an object of desire for the male characters of the play. Despite Claudius' obsession for Gertrude, her attitude in the relationship displays that she merely wants to satisfy her ego with his admiration. She likes to see Claudius suffer, but she also enjoys being Claudius' source of pleasure. She even equates her sexual hold over him with a divine power as she asks "[i]t is God my nakedness?" (*Gertrude* 61). Besides such indecency, Gertrude also defies the norms of society with her words:

> I AM NOT ASHAMED
> I SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED
> WHEN DID I KNOW SHAME
> NEVER
> AND NEVER WILL I KNOW IT (*Gertrude* 56)

Going against the notions of shame, decency and propriety, Gertrude is presented with quite subversive aspects. This idea reminds Hamlet's assaults against her for not behaving as a woman of her age in Shakespeare's work: "You cannot call it love, for at your age / The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble / And waits upon the judgement" (*Hamlet* 3.4.66-68). In a manner that defies the restraints posed against the character in Shakespeare's play, Gertrude exercises her sexuality and womanhood to the full extent in Barker's appropriation.

The characters' alienation from moral concepts such as shame and guilt in Barker's adaptation forms a stark contrast with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in which characters are driven by guilt. Specifically considering Gertrude in this sense, it is observed that she is quite defenceless in the face of Hamlet's accusations:

> O Hamlet, speak no more.
> Thou turn'st my very eyes into my soul
> And there I see such black and grieved spots
> As will leave there their tinct. (*Hamlet* 3.4.87-90)

As it is revealed in these lines, Gertrude is not an autonomous figure since she readily accepts the accusations of her son without advocating herself. Different from the idea of defying sin and guilt in Barker's work, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* closely deals with themes

of conscience and repentance. For instance, Hamlet forces Gertrude into contrition: "Confess yourself to heaven, / Repent what's past, avoid what is to come" (*Hamlet* 3.4.147-148). Likewise, the most evil character of the play, Claudius also faces accusation in the play within the play scene with which Hamlet tries to catch his conscience (*Hamlet* 3.1.540). After this scene, the character is observed to be remorseful for his offence, which he acknowledges as "the primal eldest curse" (*Hamlet* 3.3.37). In contrast to the importance given to morality and repentance in Shakespeare's play, Barker's persistence in defending impenitent characters against such regularity marks his departure point. The fact that Shakespeare's characters are more inclined to retribution illustrates the work's attempt to provide a moral message, which is rejected in Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe. Subverting the idea of using Shakespeare's plays for moralistic reasons, he disagress with *Hamlet*'s ethical function, and uses the text as a tool to shatter established value systems.

Barker's Gertrude is one of the most emblematic characters of his Theatre of Catastrophe that "sense the warping, shaping and distorting effect of society upon themselves and then . . . struggle against it" (Barker, "Articulate" 43). Appropriately, Gertrude resists the determinacies of rules and morals of society in which she lives. In this context, David Ian Rabey summarises the character's traits aptly:

> *Gertrude* depicts the mature woman as sexual existential heroine, in the Nietzschean sense of possessing the will to overcome her surroundings and her self – a woman who says 'yes' to everything questionable and terrible, defiant of a resentful majority who prefer to be only half alive and who sneer at those who choose to live dangerously, conducting experiments in living beyond the usual obligations (of family, class, nation and gender). (*Howard Barker* 171)

Though she embodies such features that go against the moral establishment, she does not have to feel sorry for her actions, or she does not submit to any patriarchal figure in her surrounding. In this sense, Barker's re-writing poses a challenging alternative to the social conducts imposed on women determined by the patriarchal establishment.

What makes the scenes that involve Gertrude's sexuality even more startling is her orgasmic cry. In relation to Gertrude's ecstatic cry, David Kilpatrick suggests that "[a]s the king dies and the queen cries, her mad, ecstatic (orgasmic?) sob itself becomes the

play's protagonist" (704). The cry, which is also the subtitle of the play, is equally important as Gertrude because of its continuous impact on other characters, specifically Claudius. As Carney describes the cry, it is "the object of the play's subtitle, which will go on to manifest itself as an inhuman and disembodied force of desire, beyond the Queen's agency" (110). Drawing on Rabey's comment that "it occurs only at moments of betrayal and transgression" (*Howard Barker* 176), and as Gertrude also confirms in the play that "[t]he cry's betrayal" (*Gertrude* 44), the cry actually stands for the transgressive aspect of the character, her much feared boldness. For the certain associations of Gertrude's cry with sexual transgression, Andy Smith considers the cry in terms of Kristeva's concept of "amatory flash" (47), which, as Kristeva explains, "sparks forth at the moment of transgressive eroticism and is a commingling of the 'erotic fantasy' with 'philosophical meditation'" (qtd. in Fakhrkonandeh 239). In Barker's play, the cry really comes out at moments when Gertrude is involved in an indecent act. At first, her cry is heard when she couples with Claudius after murdering Old Hamlet, another is heard when she sees her son Hamlet dead for which she could also be held responsible. By implication, both of these scenes in which the cry is heard define Gertrude as a sinful character. Clearly, the cry marks moments that portray the conflict between Gertrude's larger than life temptations and the rules of social or religious norms. As Barker prioritises the cry as much as Gertrude, it is observed that another objective of his reworking, besides challenging the representation of Gertrude, is to question social taboos concerning the private nature of sexuality.

The transgressive nature of Gertrude's cry is strengthened as Claudius associates it with a power compatible with God. The cry is Claudius' object of desire rather than Gertrude herself as he seeks it throughout the play, which is evident in his following words:

> I must have it
> . . .
> The cry Gertrude
> I must drag that cry from you again if it weighs fifty bells or one thousand carcasses I must
> IT KILLS GOD. (*Gertrude* 22)

Apparently, Claudius' obsession with Gertrude's cry is so great that, for him, it means the death of God; it is his religion (*Gertrude* 12). He believes that hearing the cry gives

him agency to fight with God: "[Y]our body for all that it's revered by me is flesh and being flesh is ground ground trodden ground to which I'm bound a dirt poor labourer who tills and spills and fights and fails in his possession Gertrude it is God I'm fighting when I fight in you" (*Gertrude* 44). Clearly, Claudius, as the patriarchal superior of Gertrude in Shakespeare's work, is turned into a character of lesser significance in Barker's play. Considering Claudius' attachment to the cry and his subsequent state of melancholy during the process of seeking the cry, he is inferior in comparison to Gertrude because Gertrude has the power of individual will, which signals her enslavement of Claudius. In this respect, the cry not only becomes a symbol of her transgression of social and moral boundaries, but also a symbol of female power. This also points to the idea that the cry also helps subverting the gender roles appointed in Shakespeare's work. The silenced female character of the source text is literally given a "voice" that makes her superior in Barker's version.

In order to prioritise Gertrude's sexuality, Claudius is used as a foil character in the play. Different from the depiction of Claudius in Shakespeare's play whose motivation to usurp the throne is more in the foreground, Barker's Claudius does not have any interest in state matters and political authority; rather, he is only interested in Gertrude and her ecstatic cry. He shows no interest in becoming king and ruling the state as he considers no other authority could be above Gertrude's rule over him:

> The king governs the kingdom
> Gertrude governs me
> To him the armies and the acres
> My whole life's in her belly in my opinion a superior estate. (*Gertrude* 67)

In Barker's play, the idea of usurpation is not discussed as an issue because Hamlet is already the king, and Claudius does not have any intention to seize the throne. The emphasis is totally on his obsession with Gertrude, not with the state, which is made evident at the beginning of the play as he tells Gertrude to strip naked when he is about to kill Old Hamlet: "Let me see the reason I am killing" (*Gertrude* 9). Obviously, Claudius does not kill Hamlet to take the authority from him but because of his passion for Gertrude. Clearly, Barker imagines that Claudius and Gertrude already had a sexual affair prior to the murder of the king, and he focuses on this ambiguous point of the

source text rather than the fight over ruling to make it evident that the focal point of this play is the figure of Gertrude and sexuality.

In his depiction of these characters in an overtly sexual relationship, Barker places them in conflict with the normative discourse of society. In a manner that supports Barker's emphasis on an emancipated representation of female sexuality, Claudius tells Gertrude to behave indecently as he says "[s]hame is our enemy shame alone will spoil us" (*Gertrude* 56). Acting as a slave of Gertrude's body, Claudius encourages Gertrude to behave immorally. Claudius sanctifies Gertrude's nakedness throughout the play as he describes her body as "[t]ime-smothering / Self-abnegating / World annihilating" (*Gertrude* 61). Such instances demonstrate that these characters carry typical Barkerian characteristics as his drama "emanates from the crucial proposition that morality must be invented by each individual for him – or herself" (Rabey, "Howard Barker" 34-35). As these characters do not care about the social codes, they define their own moral understanding with willpower while subverting what is customarily accepted as ethical. Namely, Barker transforms the familiar characters of Shakespeare that were previously bound by a certain kind of moral determinism into human beings that act with free will.

As opposed to Shakespeare's representation of Gertrude as an insignificant woman, her importance in Barker's work is intensified with her centrality for all male characters in the play. It is known that Claudius and Albert, even her servant Cascan, are all sexually attracted to Gertrude. Similar to Claudius' obsession with her body, Albert soon becomes attached to her as is clear in his obscene remark: "I dream your arse I dream your legs wide open and my tongue already aches with anticipation of the deep searching it will do" (*Gertrude* 83). His attachment to Gertrude is also similar to Claudius' irrational admiration of her as he kisses Gertrude's pants he carries in his hand (*Gertrude* 40). As Albert says "[b]e my death Gertrude" (*Gertrude* 59), it is again apparent that he is also under the spell of Gertrude's sexual charm. Discussing her influence on other characters in terms of their responses to her cry, David Ian Rabey notes that "Claudius is haunted by it, addicted to it, seeks to provoke it and command it, though it can never be the same; Cascan listens out for it, Hamlet . . . seeks to police it, subdue it and extirpate it; but it proves uncontrollable" (*Howard Barker* 176). By

transposing the male characters as subservient to the female character, Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* poses an alternative to the representation of male characters as more important in Shakespeare's work. In contrast to the depiction of female characters in relation to the male figures in Shakespeare's play, all male characters are situated in relation to Gertrude in Barker's work. As Rabey claims concerning Gertrude's influence on other characters:

> Gertrude's characteristic struggle and her mesmeric power are both erotic, frequently manifested in the play by her nakedness, beauty and pain in/of searching, as physicalized through visual contact and the effect of the gaze – on her, and on those around her – as her energy transforms and unsettles the surrounding characters, particularly the men. (*Howard Barker* 173)

Gertrude's hold over the male characters of the play is through her sexuality. At this point, Barker's ideas concerning sexuality are convenient: "Sexuality is the only thing that draws us completely out of ourselves and exposes the extreme, the will to conquer and submit on both sides of the partnership, the desire to conquer, own, possess, and simultaneously to surrender and be possessed" (qtd. in Rabey, *Howard Barker* 14). By extension, within the context of this play, sexuality means power for Gertrude, and she takes the control of Claudius and other men in her hands through her sexual power, as it is notably demonstrated with the impact of her cry. Apparently, Barker displays his criticism of Shakespeare's marginalisation of this character by placing her in the centre stage for all other characters of the play. Some admire her like Claudius, Albert, Cascan and Isola, some criticise and loathe her like Hamlet and Ragusa to some extent. Either way, Gertrude remains the central and possibly the only triumphant figure of this play.

Much as Gertrude is transformed drastically in Barker's adaptation, the transformation of the male figures of the source text also needs attention. Barker believes that in order to change perceptions about issues that concern women, it is also necessary to alter the male characters: "[T]he challenges of feminism cannot simply be met by an attempt to re-represent women without at the same time also re-representing men" (qtd. in Shade 105). For this reason, in order to reinforce Gertrude's moral conflict, Barker portrays Hamlet as an anti-hero who contradicts Gertrude morally in almost all scenes. In contrast to her inclination to go wrong against the norms, rules and order, Hamlet acts

as the spokesperson of these values. The contrast between the two characters is great as both are presented to be extreme in their stubbornness to reject the other's moral sentiment. Much as Gertrude's sexuality is in the extreme, Hamlet's defence of legitimacy and his insistence on the exercise of social graces are also excessive. For that reason, his grandmother Isola refers to him as such: "You are a prig / And a prude / And a moralist" (*Gertrude* 24). Likewise, the servant Cascan also thinks Hamlet should be killed as he is a dangerous moralist (*Gertrude* 67).

Barker's depiction of Hamlet, in fact, maintains Shakespeare's presentation of the character that sees female sexual desire as "something out of control" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 494). Similar to Hamlet's verbal misogynist attacks against Gertrude in the source text, this time he is more ruthless in his accusations against his mother. Shakespeare's Hamlet constantly tells Gertrude that she should be ashamed as it is seen in the closet scene in which he yells out: "O shame, where is thy blush?" (*Hamlet* 3.4.79). In an assertive remark concerning the closet scene in the play, Robert M. Smith claims that "[n]owhere . . . in the whole realm of dramatic literature has a sexual union ever been so loathsomely described as by Hamlet in his passages of vituperation in the closet scene" (85). Hamlet criticises Gertrude's relationship with his uncle all the time, even to the point of ridicule as he addresses the two as "uncle-father and aunt-mother" (*Hamlet* 2.2.313). Reminiscent of these moments in the source text, Barker's Hamlet overtly abhors his mother's excessive sensuality. Because of that, throughout the play, Hamlet voices seriously misogynist remarks such as "WOMEN ARE SO COARSE" (*Gertrude* 13), and he tries to keep Gertrude under control with the words "Your skirt and your sex / EMBARRASS ME" (*Gertrude* 24). Correspondingly, the apples in Hamlet's hands at the beginning of the play symbolically allude to the initial sin of Adam and Eve, which suggests that Gertrude's sexuality is considered to be as dangerous as Eve's tempting. With this implication, Barker's play displays the problematics that there has always been an excuse to accuse women for certain sinful acts since the beginning of history and religion.

Another transformation concerning the Hamlet character in Barker's play is that he is more obsessed with his mother's sexuality than his father's murder. As he learns the news of his father, he says:

> I expected to be more moved than this
> Cascades
> Storms of
> Torrents of emotion. (*Gertrude* 13)

These words function as commentary on Hamlet's response in Shakespeare's work as he is moved by his father's death to a great extent. In addition, his expression also marks a difference from Shakespeare's work in terms of suggesting the idea that this time, Hamlet's problem is not with his father's death but with the moral degeneration of his mother. Actually, considering Janet Adelman's argument on Shakespeare's Hamlet that "[d]espite his ostensible agenda of revenge, the main psychological task that Hamlet seems to set himself is not to avenge his father's death but to remake his mother: to remake her in the image of the Virgin Mother" (*Suffocating Mothers* 31), Barker's Hamlet, exemplifying an extreme version of Shakespeare's character, acts as the figure of patriarchal oppression. He hates Gertrude's sexual functions, he always condemns her for not behaving like a woman of her age, and he criticises the dresses she wears. For instance, knowing that Gertrude intentionally wears seductive dresses, he warns her about the length of her skirt: "The skirt's too short / However excellent your legs might be" (*Gertrude* 23), which paradoxically portrays that even Hamlet adores Gertrude's body despite his struggle to suppress her. Similarly, when Gertrude puts on high-heeled shoes after her delivery, Hamlet warns her furiously:

> REMOVE
> THE
> UNMATERNAL
> CLUTTER
> CLINGING
> TO
> YOUR
> FEET. (*Gertrude* 75)

Apparently, "Gertrude is . . . mutinously unmaternal and persists in her spectacular eroticism" (Rabey, *Howard Barker* 177), which increases Hamlet's state of madness. In

this regard, Hamlet's intolerance of his limitless mother in Barker's work is a manifestation of his notion that "drama is about rapturing of tolerances" (Barker, *Modern British* 210). It is observed that Hamlet's disgust reaches its highest point when he hears Gertrude's cry during the labour:

> The woman I decline to employ a word like mother biologically correct though it might be the woman . . . [i]s 43 and by the laws of nature if nature were not so contaminated with disease should have shed her last egg whole easters and christmases ago . . . and . . . should be seated in a rocking chair with black blankets spread across her knees. (*Gertrude* 64-65)

Apparently, Gertrude is not a suitable woman for Hamlet's ideal vision of a proper mother. According to him, Gertrude is a sinful, unashamed woman who is far from being a proper parent. This is also clear in his response when he is told that his newly-born sister has just smiled: "[W]ho would not smile to have escaped the fetid dungeon of my mother's womb" (*Gertrude* 65). Furthermore, as in Shakespeare's work, Hamlet's disapproval of his mother's manners disinclines him from the concept of love altogether as he says "I hate it all manifestations of the thing called love fill me with horror and contempt" (*Gertrude* 55). Actually, the moralising tone of Barker's Hamlet is only an extreme version of Shakespeare's Hamlet who also sees much wrong in his mother's sexual manners. In this particular respect, he shares some features with Shakespeare's Hamlet whose notion of love is also altered by his conclusions about women based on his mother's relationship.

Much of Barker's attempt to force the limits of toleration hinges on his controversial representation of female sexuality in his works. Specifically in this play, another female character, Isola who acts as the mother of Claudius is also portrayed in a way that breaks the taboos of propriety. As it is implied in the play, she was also a promiscuous woman in her youth who frequently slept with a married man. Apparently, Gertrude knows this fact from her childhood, and there are certain implications that Gertrude actually learned obscene manners from Isola as she says "Gertrude you thrive on men men are your ecstasy I was the same I know you watched me fuck through infant eyes I do not criticize you Gertrude I lavish you" (*Gertrude* 37). Though she is not represented in an act of sexual indecency as Gertrude at any moment in the play, it is suggested

through certain implications that she is not an honest woman, either. As, for instance, Claudius also refers to her involvement in sexual relationship out of wedlock:

> She was a whore in her own time
> MOTHER
> . . .
> My brother for example
> NAME HIS DAD (*Gertrude* 50-51)

Apart from such references to her infidelity, Isola also acts immorally as she tempts Gertrude to sleep with Albert, and then she warns Claudius against Gertrude telling him that she has never seen "a darker and more vicious face it's like a wolf's it's like a bat's" (*Gertrude* 35). In such respects, Isola exemplifies yet another negative character in Barker's play that represents a woman living against the social and familial norms.

Considering Barker's re-writing as a criticism of Shakespeare, he principally criticises the ending of his works because of their objective of proving a moral message. As he states in this respect: "The end of the Shakespeare play is usually weak . . . What weakens a Shakespearean ending, for me, is its attempt to tie up a moral message" ("Death" 117). Obviously, Barker repugnates the moralistic language of Shakespearean drama used to reinforce certain values. For this certain reason, the ending of his play deviates a lot from that of Shakespeare. As Barker is against tragedy with cathartic end, his play does not end with a just punishment or reward for any of the characters. In his own words, Theatre of Catastrophe "does not seek retribution; there is no punishment, no catharsis; the characters go like that, there is no payment" ("A Rupture" 159). Accordingly, despite Gertrude's lack of morals throughout the play, she is not fashioned in a certain manner at the end of the work to give a message about ethics.

For the same reason, Barker's use of language is also very different from Shakespeare's poetic language. According to his vision of tragedy and his objective to unsettle with dramatic productions, Barker's plays are loaded with obscene language, which complements his characters' ecstatic and erotic nature. As he mentions in *Arguments for a Theatre* (1997): "I place the words in the mouths of certain characters sometimes abusively, sometimes erotically, and sometimes with calculated excess, and always with

the deliberate intention of creating the unease in the audience which is for me the condition of experiencing tragedy" (*Arguments* 30). Barker's emphasis on "theatre of promiscuity," as part of his art of theatre, is a response to a society that produces theatre of "moral certitudes" (*Arguments* 87); thus, the use of obscene language in his plays accompanies his response.

Shakespearean re-writings mostly reveal that his texts do not refer to the concerns of the following ages, and that they are specifically appealing to a specific period. In this regard, *Hamlet*, as a play that is admired for being one of the greatest works of art, also seems to fail the pressures of relevancy in different contexts. As Terence Hawkes points out the changing reception of the play in time, "[a]t one time, this must obviously have been an interesting play written by a promising Elizabethan playwright. However, equally obviously, that is no longer the case" (*Meaning* 4). As subsequent re-writings of the play have revealed the inconsistencies of the text, the practice of appropriation also illustrates the differences in the handling of the familiar ideas in accordance with the change in the historical background. For instance, in the case of Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry*, it is observed that the play transforms the ethical aspects of the source text in line with the changing ideologies about this particular matter.

As Hugh Grady observes in his reading of Shakespeare's works in terms of presentist theory, "works like *Hamlet* are reinvigorated and re-interpreted from one age to the next as societies, culture, and aesthetics change in an interconnected historical process" (142). Appropriately, Barker's re-writing, which differs from the source text to a great extent, exemplifies the possible ways in which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be interpreted at the present moment under the influence of modern literary theory and criticism. As Grady aptly sumps up this process exercised in the re-writings of Shakespeare, "[t]he past continually changes its shape and meaning for us as we move further into the future, gain new experiences and new perspectives, and research, re-think, and re-evaluate the past" (143). Therefore, Shakespeare's texts are reshaped in accordance with the changing perspectives, research, and new ideas.

Concerning the particularity of *Hamlet* in the Renaissance context, Lawrence Stone identifies the play's containment of patriarchal ideology as a requisite of Renaissance understanding of hierarchy: "The growth of paternalism was deliberately encouraged by the new Renaissance state on the traditional grounds that the subordination of the family to its head is analogous to, and also a direct contributory cause of, subordination of subjects to the sovereign" (110). Thus, the play's note on the idea of obedience to the patriarchal power largely implies the importance of royal obedience in this period. Considering *Hamlet* specifically in this regard, the patriarchal power is equal to the royal power in the play, which verifies Stone's statement. Possibly for this reason, it is noted that "there was a broad consensus in Elizabethan dramaturgy on the dangers of assertive women and the need to warn others" (Mann 22). In this sense, *Hamlet* follows the common approach of the Elizabethan period to the women issue in its depiction of subjugated female characters. With regard to this idea, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* reflects the hegemonic discourse of the Renaissance concerning patriarchal and authorial power, which indicates the play's lack of potential to reflect the concerns and anxieties of the following ages.

It is observed that the ideological references in Shakespeare adaptations are mostly related to the problems of the actual context. To discuss Barker's work as a feminist response to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it is necessary to refer to the real context concerning women in society in order to understand this particular attitude. This also illustrates that re-writings reveal the source text's failure to speak to the concerns of the contemporary period. For instance, as is indicated in Barker's re-writing, *Hamlet* is a play of the past because of its lack of attention to female characters and their presentation as silent, obedient figures which must have been appropriate for the time. In this respect, it is apparent that Shakespeare's work cannot observe and represent the evolution of gender roles through time. As the play's treatment of the female characters is now considered to be problematic in various feminist adaptations of the play, rereading canonical works from the perspective of contemporary literary criticism and changing ideologies reveals that they are not transhistorical entities. In this context, various feminist appropriations have demonstrated that *Hamlet* cannot be modern unless its gender politics are transformed.

Major transformations of character in Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* depict the writer's attempt to point out the difference between the contemporary moment and Shakespeare's time. With his treatment of the Gertrude character as a shameless figure that uses obscene language, Barker challenges the moralistic language of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan age. His representation of Gertrude, the sexual relationship and explicit language in the play confirm Barker's opinion that "morality needs to be tested and reinvented by successive generations" (*Arguments* 49). According to the principles of postmodernism that require disintegration of determined notions and norms, in his drama, "Barker feels, the shared principles that structure people's lives – morality, religion, science, language – cease to apply and begin to break down" (Bradley 174). Therefore, he introduces alternative treatments of all these concepts in Shakespeare's play in a way that illustrates the difference in the perception of such matters in a modern context.

Appropriate to the practice of subversion in contemporary Shakespearean re-writing, *Gertrude-The Cry* is a play of extremity in its treatment of taboo subjects such as sexuality, murder and guilty conscience confirming Barker's own statement that "[t]he more daringly he [an artist] dreams . . . the more subversive he becomes" (qtd. in Rabey, "Howard Barker" 32). While questioning the use of these ideas in Shakespeare's work, Barker actually investigates the idea of attachment to ethical and moral function of dramatic art. His assessment of art's use in the formation of certain norms even leads him to criticise Aristotelian tragedy, which he believes to be conditioned by the objective of preaching morality. He states his opposition to conventional tragedy thus: "Traditional tragedy was a restatement of public morality over the corpse of the transgressing protagonist" ("The Triumph"). As Lamb draws attention to how Barker views previous texts in terms of their treatment of the individual: "Barker sees historical narratives as ideological constructions which seek to assimilate and annex the individual" (*Howard Barker's* 53). In light of this, his response to Shakespeare also stems from a rejection of convention, and his unusual portrayal of female sexuality confirms his defence of the individual will against public morality.

As opposed to traditional theatre's objective of giving ethical conduct, Barker's theatre "reveals the negative side of virtue and the positive side of vice, thus dismantling the bipolar opposition of good and evil and erasing the dividing line between both" (Zimmermann 185). Evidently, this idea is manifested in *Gertrude-The Cry* in which the evil deeds are celebrated and what was formerly evaluated as an immoral relationship is turned into a passionate love affair. Rejection of Gertrude's initial representation as a woman forced into submission in Shakespeare's play also defies the essentialist interpretation of his female characters that embody "accurately the whole range of specifically female qualities . . . supposed to be fixed and immutable from Shakespeare's own day down to our own" (Jardine qtd. in Dollimore, "Shakespeare" 473). Apparently, the assumption that Shakespeare's characters are embodiments of "human nature" is considered in a different context in this claim that mainly concerns the female characters. However, subversive reconstructions of Shakespeare's characters as seen in Barker's play undermine such claims as totalising conceptions made up for the preservation of Shakespeare's authority. As a playwright and a citizen, Barker is against "authoritarianism" (Lamb, *Howard Barker's* 47). Therefore, his play *Gertrude-The Cry* is a manifestation of this opposition as it both poses a challenge to the canon through adaptation and subverts social norms with a noncompliant portrayal of subjects like sexuality, seduction and eroticism.

Adaptations recontextualise Shakespeare's plays in accordance with certain ideologies and some seminal historical or political events. Accordingly, as Barker subverts the source text both formally and thematically, he also challenges the theatrical and social norms prevalent in his day. For instance, the representation of a naked Gertrude whose sexuality is elevated is not only contrary to the Shakespearean canon but it also pushes the limits of moralist mainstream theatre production with its overt portrayal of a taboo issue. In this matter, Rabey comments that Barker's treatment of Gertrude "challenges the audience's appetites for a protagonist who is readily or consistently sympathetic, but instead offers and demonstrates a freedom and courage" (Rabey, "Introduction" 9).

In terms of politics of re-writing, specific transformations in Barker's text point to sexual politics, gender politics, and identity politics from the specific to the general.

Considering the fact that Shakespeare's works are used to reinforce certain ideologies, *Hamlet* also presents a particular worldview about the role of the women in family and in society. In various productions of the play, Gertrude's sexuality has been reprimanded and certain morals are preached. Since Barker's work hinges on the sexuality of the female that is repressed in the source text, it engages with sexual politics. Similarly, as the play questions and subverts the socially accepted behaviours of the woman, it is also interested in gender politics. Therefore, Barker's reworking not only demystifies Shakespeare's work as a canonical text but also questions the political ideology predominant in the play by overturning the preconditioned gender roles.

Pointing out the uses of Shakespearean legacy in the formation and containment of certain ideologies, Lynne Bradley claims that "Shakespeare is as English as a cup of tea, and his plays promote the assumption of certain shared principles of morality, religion, politics and language" (174). Correspondingly, presentation of Gertrude's morality in Shakespeare's work provides a set example as to how a woman should behave, and demonstrates the consequences unless she remains within the confines set for her by the patriarchal order. This idea is specifically scrutinised in Barker's re-writing, which illustrates that he has a contradictory approach to Shakespeare and his work's cultural impact. This is also evident in his other Shakespearean reworking, *Seven Lears*, which is again a feminist appropriation as it is based on the dubious absence of the queen in *King Lear*. Barker states that among Shakespeare's plays "[t]he ones I find interesting are *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, of course, and also *Macbeth*. I suppose I find them interesting because of what I have referred to before, as their absences, their silences" ("On Shakespeare" 163). Apparently, in terms of the idea that dramatic adaptations of Shakespeare's works offer a new understanding by talking about characters that are either absent or that are overlooked in the source texts, Barker's two revisions of Shakespeare explore their silenced figures thereby giving certain ideas about identity and gender politics.

Despite the explicit feminist transformations in his work, it is interesting to see that Barker rejects being regarded as a feminist: "I wouldn't describe myself as a feminist. I have no theory to refer to, and my plays will not be feminist plays any more than they

are socialist plays" ("Howard Barker" 39). Although Barker does not support the use of theatre or a dramatic text in the circulation of certain ideologies, his engagement with the identification of the woman figure in one of the most popular works of the western canon actually indicates his work's feminist agenda. The reason for a special emphasis on the central female character of the source text instead of any other character can be explained, in terms of politics of re-writing, with the play's interest in feminist ideology. As David Lane argues, "[a]daptation relies on creativity as well as the search for exact equivalents, and choices will always be dependent on the adapter's individual understanding of the source text's intentions" (183). In this sense, Barker's appropriation demonstrates what he considers precarious in Shakespeare's work. In light of this discussion, Barker's adaptation is an attempt to destroy the image of a woman who is expected to go by the decisive standards of morality. In a remark that actually contradicts his own statement about the lack of feminist intention in his work, Barker states his rejection of the representation of Gertrude in *Hamlet*: "[W]hy is that woman rendered so horrific, when she is driven by love? That was my intervention" ("On Shakespeare" 167).

Accordingly, in Barker's version, Gertrude's position as a sexually powerful woman is an appropriate example of the play's interest in sexual politics. As Kate Millett describes the construction of sexual politics under the domination of social patriarchal politics, "[s]exual politics obtains consent through the 'socialization' of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temperament, role, and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female" (26). Along this line of thought, Gertrude in Shakespeare's work seems to be conditioned by the interests of patriarchal politics. Alternatively, Barker confronts this type of politics by asserting her as a headstrong woman who really does anything she wills. Though she is of interest to most of the male figures of the play, she is not tied to any one of them as she is involved in multiple relationships. Even though the male characters of the play want to possess her, she takes hold of them with her attraction instead. As observed in the murder scene, when Claudius asks Gertrude to strip naked, he asserts "[l]et him see what I have stolen / What was his / And what now belongs to me" (*Gertrude* 9). Though this is a fleeting moment in the play that gives

authority and power to Claudius over Gertrude, he is eventually enslaved by Gertrude's cry. It is only at this moment of ecstasy that Claudius supposes he possesses Gertrude; however, he is soon agonised by the lack of her cry. This illustrates a tangible example of the power Barker attaches to the female body and female sexuality.

Barker's work also elaborates on the conflict between individual's free will and restrictive social norms. In this regard, his re-writing projects a certain politics of identity by siding with the individual in this dichotomy as opposed to the support of normativity in Shakespeare's work. Barker's characters' free will is presented in terms of the extent to which they can freely express their desires. It is primarily the characters' sexual identity that is suppressed by the establishment; therefore their weapon against the system is considered to be their overt sensual exercises. In this regard, Karoline Gritzner draws analogy between Barker's approach to sexuality and Bataille's concept of erotic desire that leads the individual to solitude and alienation from society. Accordingly, the emphasis on sexuality in Barker's works primarily illustrates the individual's wish to break free from the confines of society ("Towards" 89). Analysing sexuality as a form of political power, MacKinnon also argues that sexuality is "a force for freedom while being shacked and distorted and channelled in twisted directions by patriarchal controls" (xiv). If the oppression of sexual expression is viewed as a form of patriarchal dominance as is suggested in this remark, Barker's presentation of a female figure together with an emphasis on her sexual side poses a political response against male hegemony that tries to subdue it. In this respect, sexual and gender politics go hand in hand in the ideological background that shapes Barker's appropriation.

One of the most significant functions of appropriations is to comment on, reflect and sometimes criticise the problematic issues of the contexts that surround these productions. As Linda Hutcheon condenses, "[a]n adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context – a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum" (*A Theory* 142). When considered from this perspective, Howard Barker's dramatic works in general are considered as criticism of the establishment of his day. Though this was more apparent in his earlier overtly political plays, much of Barker's recent work also refers to the socio-historical and political condition of contemporary

Britain. Above all, Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe is actually a project he invents to subvert the predominant notions of his society. As Boon and Price suggest in this respect: "Barker's despair at the all-pervasive nature of the liberal humanist regime has led him to conceptualize a theatre beyond the states of non-freedom that he perceives as characterizing contemporary Britain" (647). Evidently, the challenging presentations in Barker's theatre criticise the dominant ideologies of his society and the theatre establishment. As he mentions the intended function of his plays about history: "I use history not for nostalgia, but to hack away at comforting images of the past in order to evoke, or unlock, feelings about the present" ("Howard Barker" 35). In line with this motivation, his Shakespearean re-writing illustrates a similar practice. While subverting the canonicity of the source text, his re-writing also invites a reconsideration of the common ideas in the present context, and unsettles customary responses.

In accordance with the proposition that contemporary re-writings of Shakespeare refer to the problems and issues of their contextual background while subverting the source text, Barker's work also projects some of the critical issues of its time. Considering his re-writing as a product of the early twenty-first-century British context, it is observed that the play reflects some real socio-political concerns such as the place of women in society as part of the larger problem of the conflict between individual and society, and some New-Labour policies such as liberalism and communitarianism. When the play is analysed in relation to the predominant issues of its context, much of the criticism embedded in the text is directed against contemporary British society's norms and policies that limit individual freedom.

Contemporary re-writings treat canonical works as cultural artefacts of the past and offer new meanings that are more resonant for the modern period. In this respect, the relation of Barker's play with women's issues has already been pointed out as a result of the changing gender roles in modern culture. In terms of dealing with the issue of female transgression and female sexuality, Barker points out the problem of equality of opportunities for men and women in his society. It is interesting to observe that Howard Barker, as a male playwright, formulates a feminist response to Shakespeare rather than projecting another dominant ideology. This practice illustrates an actualisation of Ruth

Shade's recommendation to the British socialist male writers in that "writers of the left . . . have to find a way of reconciling socialism from a male perspective with a socialist view of oppression, which must, inevitably, embrace the position of women in society" (108).

Representation of women's issues in contemporary British theatre started in the 1970s. Considerable progress about women's place in society also began to be observed in the 1970s in Britain with the passing of acts designed to protect their rights such as Equal Pay Act of 1970, Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act of the following year. As the objectives of such acts are clarified by Andrew Rosen:

> The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 made it illegal for an employer to treat a member of one sex less favourably than a member of the other. The 1975 Employment Protection Act made it illegal to dismiss women because they were pregnant and gave women a right to maternity pay and the right to return to their jobs in due course. (102)

Beginning with such improvements concerning the place of women in society, their presence in the social arena became much more visible in the course of time. As a result of such ameliorating acts, the number of employed and educated women has risen as it is demonstrated that "[t]he employment rate of women of working age in the UK rose from 47 per cent in 1959 to 70 per cent by 2000" (Rosen 102). Although most of the problematic aspects of womanhood and femininity were handled in the plays written in this period and afterwards, it took some time for women's sexual independence to be accepted as a topic. Concerning the lack of attention paid to such issues in British theatre, Michael Billington finds out in his observation of the past sixty years of British theatre that neither the experience of women nor ethnic minorities have been adequately represented, and he claims that "to all intends and purposes, British theatre was still a White, male-dominated club" (*State of the Nation* 204). In this regard, Barker contributes to the discussion of women's issues in British drama with his elaboration on female sexuality instead of another topic in his engagement with Shakespeare.

Barker clarifies that the context in most of his works is an oppressive one, which helps exploring the conflict between the individual and society: "The social context might be oppressive or catastrophic, but few of the protagonists allow that to extirpate their spiritual or erotic ambition. It is this resistance to the moral and political climate that might be said to constitute the milieu of the action" ("Crisis" 128). In this regard, Barker's emphasis on the alienation of the individual through the character of Gertrude is his response to the British society, which, during New Labour years, saw many conflicts between individual rights and state regulations. Correspondingly, his vision of the need for liberation of individual free will falls in contrast with New Labour politics' dominant vision that emphasises the need for individual responsibility in society. As Driver and Martell mention the government's approach to the relationship between individual and society, "in New Labour thinking . . . individuals are created by society. Community is also used ethically to suggest that the life of the individual has value and meaning only within the context of society" (28). Apparently, the idea of communitarianism of the establishment necessitates each individual to bear responsibility to the state and to the society to a certain extent. Barker, in his imagining of individual figures that do not feel such responsibility, goes against the stream of his time.

One of the most significant changes in the 2000s concerning the preservation of public welfare was the introduction of Asbos (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) under the legislation of The Crime and Disorder Act of 1998. These orders together with other acts such as the Sexual Offences Acts of 2000 and 2003 were legislated by New Labour government in order to ensure public safety and welfare against certain individuals with "extreme" sense of freedom that violate the rights of others. Although these laws were passed with the intention of making Britain a peaceful state, soon they were criticized for limiting individual liberties. For instance, "[i]n one extraordinary case, a woman was forbidden from making excessive noise during sex anywhere in England" (Travis). Though the practice of such preventive regulations received much criticism from the public, Tony Blair defended them claiming that "it is an attempt to protect the most fundamental liberty of all – freedom from harm by others" (Blair). This statement clearly contributes to the extant contrast between the individual and society, and

indicates that the wellbeing of the larger society is held to be more important than the liberty of individuals, an idea much contested by Barker. Specifically considering the above example concerning the punishment of a woman for making excessive noise during sex in comparison with Gertrude's orgasmic cry in Barker's play, it is observed that his work functions as a criticism of such advanced control measures of the state. Additionally, his representation of moralist characters such as Hamlet also recalls these norms of the state that are excessive and limiting on individual liberty.

As Barker is against authoritarian social principles, he presents this conflict in his work by siding with the individual. Barker particularly focuses on this conflict by imagining eroticism and sexuality as powerful constructs of the individual against social normativity, which is to say that his play supports "the erotic's potential to disrupt order" (G. Saunders, "Howard Barker's" 150). In this respect, Barker sees sexuality as an anarchic attack on social regulations. As Barker emphasises the overturning potential of sex and desire as much oppressed concepts in contemporary culture: "[I]n an era in which sexuality is simultaneously cheap, domestic and soon-to-be-forbidden, desire becomes the field of enquiry most likely to stimulate a creative disorder" (*Arguments* 38). Apparently, sexual desire studied in most of his plays is actually intended to create disorder and to draw reaction. Similarly, his insistence on immorality in his works, specifically in *Gertrude-The Cry*, poses a rejection of the emphasis given to morality and religious values in the period. This shows that his response to Shakespeare also becomes his response to such major problems in his society.

Barker considers that "[s]tates are mechanisms of discipline" (*Arguments* 203). Against this background, he situates his protagonist as the dissenting individual struggling to transgress certain boundaries. In this respect, Barker's art in general, and *Gertrude-The Cry* specifically, is an attack on the moralising, informative, and prescriptive form of society and theatre he observes in his context. In terms of the idea that dissenting individuals in Barker's works pose a challenge against the establishment, Karoline Gritzner interprets such characters as "counterforce against the dominant liberal-humanist ideology of mass-culture" (*Towards* 332). In order to highlight such individuals' power over social norms, Barker uses sexuality as it remains one of the

most debated topics among society members and as it is of importance in social and identity politics. As Charles Lamb notes, "we seem to live in an age which is saturated with sex; it's ubiquitous and normal. On the other hand, the regulation of sexual activity still provokes anxiety and hysteria" ("It Has Always" 98). Apparently, sex as an issue dominates recent cultural history of western cultures, yet it still remains as a taboo issue. Even its discussion and representation in dramatic texts and productions are challenging tasks. Therefore, Barker finds it useful to base his plot on sexuality while studying the conflict between the modern individual's place in society and its forceful norms. In his Shakespearean appropriation, he explores "the disorientating effects of the individual's collisions with the unsatisfactory prescriptions of the world" (Gritzner, "(Post)Modern" 333) with a portrayal of sexuality as a matter that creates a great tension and distinction between Gertrude and social regulations directed by her son.

In Barker's work, Hamlet's insistence on moral values, conformism and order resembles the emphasis given to legislation and regulation of social ethics during New Labour government. Barker voices his criticism of the state's emphasis on rules and ethical norms in an interview with Aleks Sierz in which he states that England is "an empiricist, moralist, utilitarian culture" ("Death" 113). Although British political context was dominated by the left wing between 1997 and 2010, it is widely believed that the practices of the Labour did not really meet the expectations of the socialists in the country. Tony Blair, as the prime minister at the time Barker's play was written, intended his party to be aloof from both the Old Labour policies and the conservative notions of Thatcherism. However, as it is argued New Labour government was "heavily influenced – as no other Labour leadership in British history – by Christianity" (Coote 129), obviously, the party had strong conservative tendencies. In most of the leaders' statements at the time and the acts passed during New Labour rule, there was much emphasis on conventions, values of family and patriarchy and the need to police dissenting individuals. As this practice is illustrated in Tony Blair's following remark: "Social democratic thought was always the application of morality to political philosophy. One of the basic insights of the left, one of its distinguishing features, is to caution against too excessive an individualism" (Blair). Though New Labour intended to draw a profile that is markedly different from both Thatcherism and the Old Labour,

its emphasis on conservative notions of topics such as family and gender leads to questioning whether New Labour was really 'new' in terms of its approach to liberalism. Discussing Barker's re-writing of Shakespeare in relation to this context, it is observed that the state's preoccupation with setting moral standards for the citizens is manifested with Hamlet's controlling attitude towards any indecency. Such correlations between the text and the context illustrate that Barker does not only recreate Shakespeare's ideas and challenge them, but he also voices his disillusionment with the establishment through the depiction of characters that represent both sides of the larger social conflict.

Barker's criticism of modern Britain as a moralist country is actually directed against the shared norms of the Conservatives and the Labour in terms of upholding the society above individual liberty. As it is noted concerning the interpretation of norms and ethics in contemporary Britain in both Conservative and Labour thinking: "They have a shared view of moral order as based on shared values and traditions which transcend individual morality: ethics are not rooted in individual choice and individualism is corrosive of social cohesion" (Driver and Martell 169). In such matters, New Labour is seen only slightly different from the Conservative government, which is why New Labour under the leadership of Tony Blair is also known by the name "post-Thatcherism." Considering that "many of the government's policies harked back to images of family and parenting based on traditional gender roles as the source of moral order" (Newman 3), New Labour's agenda concerning gender equality, family and morality remains highly conservative. Therefore, when Barker's response to Shakespeare is situated in this particular context, it becomes more than mere subversion or rejection of Shakespeare's values but also that of the society's highly revered concepts.

In this regard, Hamlet's attempts to bring Gertrude to reason in the work mirror the state's efforts to overpower individual liberty with a totalising attitude of social conduct. In a manner that reflects this larger conflict between the totalitarian state and the dissenting individual in contemporary British society, Barker juxtaposes the idea of excessive morality with excessive sexuality as represented by two characters, Hamlet and Gertrude. Against Gertrude's excessively eroticised manners, Hamlet makes

extreme moral remarks that almost seem like parody such as the following words he utters in a patronising manner:

> Decorum please
> Decorum
> Now I am king the entire emphasis of government will be upon decorum sitting still for example
> HOW FEW PEOPLE CAN SIT STILL. (*Gertrude* 15)

The expectation of "sitting still" imagined as a requirement of dignity in this particular example functions as a parody of the not so rational laws regulated by New Labour government in the name of maintaining public welfare. The extent of the absurdity of Hamlet's rules is also evident in his friend Albert's definition of Elsinore as a place ruled by Hamlet's preposterous methods: "Danish court is so quaint in its manners so archaic Hamlet says he wishes it were more so and intends to bring back all those penalties that have fallen out of use regarding for example bowing" (*Gertrude* 46). As it is observed in such moments in the play, Hamlet acts like the voice of the normative establishment. In such scenes, Barker questions the establishment with his depiction of moralist Hamlet's irrational expectations from others, primarily from his mother as the embodiment of transgressing individual.

Association of Hamlet in Barker's play with the conservative notions of the state can be further elucidated. As he believes everybody should behave properly, he voices his support of an ordered society as follows: "Manners are a maze / Beautiful is the maze of manners" (*Gertrude* 25). It is indicated in the play that Hamlet attempts to rebuild Elsinore in glass because, as it is stated in the play: "All acts of love he wanted under scrutiny" (*Gertrude* 84). To further elaborate on this matter, Isola talks about some of Hamlet's practices to eliminate secrecy in Elsinore:

> It started off with curtains
> Down came all the curtains
> Then he had the workmen take the locks of all the doors
> Then it was the doors (*Gertrude* 84)

Clearly, Hamlet's obsession with the idea of keeping what he calls as "clandestine" acts under control is in the extreme. Hamlet's attempt to turn his court into a transparent

state is similar to the modern society's practices to prevent any aberrant activity. Similar to Hamlet's practices to discipline any disagreeable action, some of the laws introduced during New Labour rule such as Antisocial Behaviour Acts also aimed to ensure that all citizens act normatively. Through an absurd depiction of Hamlet's ideas about the moralisation of the state, Barker voices a criticism of obsession with propriety, morality and decorum as he considers these among increasingly rightist policies of the Labour government. Especially the moment in the play when Albert states that Hamlet wants to turn back to the archaic order resonates with New Labour's not so leftist politics as they mostly follow previous Conservative practices.

With regard to the Labour's social policy, Driver and Martell observe: "Labour is more concerned with a moralistic community – society held together by strongly shared values" (163). By contrast, Barker is against the mainstream notion that an ideal society is shaped by shared moral responsibilities. In this regard, his work rejects the values shared by many in his "morally prescriptive" society (Driver and Martell 163). In his Shakespearean re-writing, Barker formulates his response to the restrictive practices of the state with excessive and overt portrayal of vices. Taking the opening scene of the play as an example in terms of depiction of controversial issues such as murder, sex, lack of secrecy, adultery and incest all in one scene, Barker's work manifests itself as a challenge to the norms of ethical conduct. It is observed that all characters, except for Hamlet, are somehow involved in immoral action. For instance, as it turns out at one point, Albert has flirted with Ragusa before he sleeps with Gertrude. Similarly, Ragusa flirts with Albert and then she invites Claudius to bed although she seems to be in a relationship with Hamlet. Apart from betrayal, murder is another theme that intensifies the play's emphasis on foul activities. As the play begins with Old Hamlet's murder scene, it follows with further examples such as Claudius' smothering of his mother Isola and Ragusa's drowning of the baby. Specifically concerning Ragusa as a character once seen as a moralist and then a corrupt figure liable to promiscuity and murder, Barker's hostility towards the moralists becomes more apparent. The exercise of such foul deeds by an allegedly moralist character questions the notions of honesty and decency as handled by the moralists themselves. Obviously, Barker's work presents most of the characters as sinful beings. However, his intention in portraying such characters is

definitely not to form a contrast between good and evil, but to assert the idea that individual will can overcome state surveillance based on morality.

Another point that illustrates Barker's support of dissenting individuals against oppression is the resolution of his play with the victory of the rebellious side as Hamlet is killed upon Gertrude's manipulation. Following Hamlet's death in the play, it is revealed by Ragusa that they had planned Gertrude's execution with Hamlet, and all the details of it were fixed (*Gertrude* 85), which points out that if Hamlet was not dead, Gertrude would be executed for moral offence upon Hamlet's order. In terms of thinking about the dichotomy between the normative state and the dissenting individual, between rationality and ecstasy, Barker projects that individual overcomes the state and the irrational triumphs over reason. It is at this moment that Gertrude, attaining her personal freedom, sincerely cries in ecstasy for a second time after her husband's death. Noticing that Gertrude's cry marks the death of the male figures of her family, her cry also becomes a transgression of her femininity over patriarchism. In this respect, her cry becomes a symbol of asserting her self, free will and sexuality against those that have tried to discipline her. The ending of *Gertrude-The Cry*, with the celebration of Gertrude's rebellious nature, illustrates an example of David Ian Rabey's analysis of Barker's drama as "political and revolutionary, but not in the sense that it has an agenda or politics to describe; rather, his work explores vulnerabilities in systems of (self-) fortification, and how forces of control, circumscription and immobilisation will always be (particularly) prey to anarchic upheaval" (*Howard Barker* 5).

The fact that Barker chooses a female transgressing protagonist to make a point about a social conflict enhances the discussion of his specific concern for the female individual. As Tony Dunn observes, with his defence of female sexuality against moral norms, Barker continues "his courageous attack on the crass sentimentality that permeates the latest nostrum of the Left, sexual politics" (38). What is more important than the presentation of a woman as the central figure in Barker's work is the portrayal of this character as a sexual, obscene and unapologetic woman. With this depiction, the play goes against the social notions of propriety in terms of gender roles. At this point, it is necessary to mention the place of the women or treatment of feminism in British society

during New Labour years. As it is noted, in the 2000s, the Labour party "did/does not challenge patriarchy; the feminist revolution has not been part of its agenda" (Collette 416). Although there have been promises to improve women's condition such as the establishment of a separate Minister for Women (Newman 159), the party mostly remained unable to cope with the problem of equality of opportunity for both sexes. Therefore, as Barker's text problematises the suppression of the female character in Shakespeare's work as an issue, his work also makes a point about the need to establish equality for men and women in larger society. Considering his portrayal of a controversial female figure in relation to this context, his work also indirectly projects a critique of the establishment's neglect of women's issues.

Other ideas used in Barker's play as challenging the normative establishment are family and parenthood. It is known that New Labour philosophy placed great emphasis on the concepts of family and parentage as it is "evidenced by efforts to make divorce more difficult and strong endorsement of the family as 'society's most important unit'" (Coote 129). Barker dismisses this idea in his re-writing by presenting Gertrude and Claudius as utterly irresponsible parents thereby eroding the traditional perceptions of set roles within the family. The most striking example in the play that challenges the norms of parenthood is the moment when Claudius drinks Gertrude's milk while the new born infant cries. After giving birth, Gertrude rejects her duty to feed the baby as a mother and instead says "I MUTINY / Drink me Claudius / Let my daughter queue" (*Gertrude* 68). Reminiscent of Edward Bond's play *Saved* in which the baby's crying for neglect of parental duties is unsettling, this scene in Barker's work also contests received tenets of proper roles among family members. However, Barker's attitude also differs from Bond in this respect since he does not use this as an opportunity for providing ethical conduct to the audience.

In terms of her involvement in the death of Hamlet and her lack of attention to the baby's needs, Gertrude does not act like a conventional mother type. Especially when it is considered that Gertrude helps with the murder of Hamlet by making him drink the poisoned cup (*Gertrude* 77), Gertrude does not portray any maternal characteristic. Furthermore, the fact that Claudius drinks Gertrude's milk, and subsequently the two

refuse to name the child show an intentional rejection of conforming to the duties of parenthood (Khamphommala 141). This particular scene is unacceptable for Ragusa who witnesses Claudius while drinking Gertrude's milk. Acting as a moralist in this scene, it appears that she lays a complaint against Gertrude. Gertrude's irresponsibility forms a contrast with the moral standards of the state concerning the care of the infants, hence the baby is removed from her on the grounds that "[t]he welfare of the child must be of paramount consideration," and that Gertrude is unsuitable for parenthood (*Gertrude* 74). This idea forms yet another correlation between Gertrude as public offender and Ragusa as the spokesperson of state norms. The act of removing the baby from the family for its good closely reminds New Labour's Asbos that also included parenting programs to control whether it was suitable for children to grow up in certain families. Considering this aspect of the play in light of the dominant context that upholds values of family, the roles of wife and husband as paramount, Barker's work stands out as highly subversive of such precepts.

Barker's criticism of proper family structure could also be explained with the political uses of the family unit in the containment of patriarchal ideology. As Millett suggests, "[s]erving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state" (Millett 33). Considering the actual context of the 2000s' Britain in this issue, Tony Blair's following statement illustrates an example of Millett's theoretical claim: "[T]he core onus rested with individuals to be more responsible to themselves, their families, and society generally, rather than vice versa" (qtd. in Bashevkin 409). Clearly, conformism, which is denounced by Barker, is actually perpetuated by the formation of state imposed constructions such as the family. Accordingly, New Labour politics required the individual to be subservient to the state and to the family. As opposed to the dominant idea in this period that supported the society above the individual, Barker's play forms a viable contrast with its depiction of individuals that do not really take any notice of the concepts that are held sacred by real society. Even the play's beginning sets out a scene in which the family unit is broken by the act of murdering the patriarchal symbol by the wife. Similarly, a second family unit Gertrude constructs with Claudius never rests on bonds of loyalty; therefore it is bound to fail, too. Even the

moralist Hamlet cannot form a proper family unit with Ragusa as she cannot fulfil his moralist demands. Claudius also kills his mother, which marks another failure of family relations in the play. None of the characters behave loyally to their family members. Betrayal is at the heart of this work, which is also against the notions of propriety in family. In this respect, Barker's dissolution of proper family structure functions as a response to the notion of collective conformism that characterised his period.

New Labour's emphasis on the family unit is also considered to be in favour of the preservation of patriarchal social structure. It is claimed that the state expected women to be more sacrificial than men for the protection of the family unit. As Newman claims in this matter: "Labour's links with communitarianism tended to strengthen the moral and conservative emphasis on the family, and of women's role in the building of the 'responsible society'" (156). It is even believed that the government's improvements of women's conditions at the time were intended to make it more available for women to be active in the public sphere without neglecting their duties in the private sphere. The importance given to family was to such an extent that even improvements concerning women such as minimum wage, child benefit, economic support for lone parents, family friendly working conditions were considered to be more in favour of the preservation of traditional family values than as actual attempts of improving women's life standards (Newman 155). In this respect, New Labour was criticised for lacking a properly devoted feminist agenda to ensure gender equality. Instead, improvements concerning social welfare for women were seen as instrumental for the preservation of the family unit indicating the government's moral principles. Drawing a close analogy between patriarchal norms and attachment to the concept of proper family structure, Kate Millett confirms that "[p]atriarchy's chief institution is the family" (33). Considering Labour politics and regulations about family with respect to this assertion, the emphasis on the need to preserve the family also supports the protection of patriarchal social structure. As Barker's play criticises the traditional family structure with a depiction of loose family ties and irresponsible parenthood, it also poses a criticism against the dominant ideology of patriarchal hegemony supported by the state.

Apart from re-writings' function of contextual referentiality, there is also the objective of creating a change in the perceptions of critical issues through transformations of the source texts. By subverting the customary readings or interpretations of Shakespeare's plays, appropriations try to create awareness about certain problems pertaining to the relevant contexts. In this regard, Barker attempts to initiate a current of critical thinking about the issues concerning female liberty, sexual politics, individual's position in society, and the oppressive forces of morality. Specifically his transformation of Gertrude recalls the function of feminist criticism "to understand the social and psychic mechanisms that construct and perpetuate gender inequality and then to change them" (Morris 1). Although Barker's work is highly political in this sense, David Ian Rabey observes that he differs from other political dramatists as he does not provide direct messages to his audiences: "Barker does not propose an artistic experience which prescribes, or aims to issue in, an identifiable social action or outcome, like . . . Marxist-revolutionary writers" (*Howard Barker* 21). However, the aim of initiating a response to the normative values of society among the audience is one of the most important objectives of Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe. As he mentions, "[i]n catastrophe, whose imaginative ambition exposes the reactionary content in the miserableness of everyday life, lies the possibility of reconstruction" ("The Triumph" 34). Despite Barker's attempts to remain aloof from the transformative function of theatre, his insistence on the revival of the tragic genre in the contemporary period is also believed to be a projection of his intention to activate the audience. As Graham Saunders argues, Barker "believes tragedy still has the capacity to enervate the modern audience" (*Elizabethan* 86).

Contrary to the argument that dramatic production is closely related with socio-political background, Howard Barker rejects the idea of art's capacity to ameliorate society: "I do not think theatre is about social correction" (*Modern British* 208). As he also states in a questionnaire, "the tragedy of this culture is that it is utilitarian. The idea of something needs to be functional is not true" ("Pre-show"). For this reason, it is not possible to say that Barker is specifically concerned with relaying a message to his audience with his Shakespearean appropriation. However, when his play's social and political connotations are considered, it is seen that the play alters the perception of

Shakespeare's text, and forces the imagination of the audiences by offering alternative ways of thinking about received ideas about women, individual liberty and social oppression. With respect to the relation between Barker's dramatic texts and liberal-humanist values, Liz Tomlin discusses that "[b]y creating protagonists whose political philosophies are so clearly in opposition to those held by the 'social democratic' consensus he claims for his audience, Barker hopes to provoke in his spectators a reassessment of their own ideological preconceptions" (67). Accordingly, in *Gertrude-The Cry*, Barker aims his audience to reflect upon the functionality of social norms and regulative orders in relation to their own society.

In conclusion, Howard Barker's response to Shakespeare is one of the most subversive examples among recent appropriations of his plays. Barker precisely criticises the way in which a female figure is presented in *Hamlet* as well as the play's support of traditional values of morality and patriarchy that limit the freedom of the central female character. Accordingly, Barker's transformations are mostly shaped by sexual and gender politics as the play depicts both concerns in one character by reformulating Gertrude as an assertively sexual woman. Applying the basic principles of his Theatre of Catastrophe to his Shakespearean recreation, Barker challenges both the cultural reception of the source text and the handling of its issues by mainstream producers. Transformations in Barker's work also point to a certain difference in terms of the time frame that surrounds his text. As he reformulates the source text in the context of the 2000s, his criticism also reaches out to the problematic issues of this particular period. All in all, by foregrounding the experience of the female and the centrality of sexuality for her liberty, Barker's re-writing alludes to the specific British context during New Labour government that is characterised by a preoccupation with social and moral values.

CONCLUSION

Literary appropriation is a challenging practice as re-writings are mostly undermined in comparison to their source texts in terms of their acknowledged value within the canon. Shakespearean re-writings have faced similar criticism due to conservative approaches to his works that simply hold them above any other literary transformation. This study has sought to illustrate that re-writings are actually instrumental practices that enable looking at familiar topics from new perspectives, offer new ideas, hence open new terrains for critical and political analysis of canonical works. Specifically re-writings of Shakespeare reveal the ambiguities and ideological aspects of his texts through subversion, engage with a different form of politics, and even more evidently, refer to the problems of their own context. To illustrate these ideas better, this study has examined three Shakespearean re-writings that represent the ideas discussed in each chapter, Edward Bond's *Lear*, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry*. They all demonstrate that Shakespearean re-writing in British drama has other functions than revering his works. Their primary concern is to address the problematic issues of their own socio-historical and political backgrounds through certain transformations of Shakespearean sources. Their use of the Shakespearean material, therefore, is a projection of their critical responses to the treatment of certain ideological matters in his plays.

Evaluation of these works reveals that literary revival has a more political and ideological function as it makes it possible to address the problems of the current context in the process of adaptation during which the source work is also scrutinised and demystified. As observed, these reworkings point out specific problematic aspects of their sources by unearthing the previously overlooked subjects, and giving voice to the marginalised characters. Particular transformations in these works indicate that they are far from revering Shakespeare contrary to what is generally believed. Therefore, the widely held assumption that Shakespeare's works are recreated because of their mythical quality is shattered with the critical and subversive attitudes of subsequent writers. Accordingly, such radical transformations of Shakespeare's works overturn the

superior status attributed to him and question the assumption "[t]hat Shakespeare is an all-wise, all-knowing genius, possessed of astounding capacities of insight into the human psyche" (Hawkes, *Alternative* 9-10). Correspondingly, the most evident function of Shakespearean re-writing is critical intervention with current socio-political establishments at the backdrop of these plays as well as contradicting Shakespeare as a metonym for an idealised literary convention.

Alan Sinfield differentiates between the two approaches in Shakespearean re-writing as "conservative reproduction" and "radical intervention" ("Introduction" 156). With regard to this distinction, it is observed in the appropriations analysed in this study that they are examples of "radical intervention" as it is evident from the transformations of both formal and thematic aspects of Shakespeare's texts. Edward Bond's play changes the plot of *King Lear* extensively and adds new characters though it retains most of the central figures. Arnold Wesker's work alters the motivations of the characters of *The Merchant of Venice*, and twists the bond plot and the ending of the source text. Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* experiments with the source by playing with almost all of its components like the characters and the main plot. Since all three plays apply radical transformations to the source texts, they were all criticised by the mainstream theatre establishment as evinced in numerous execrative comments about them in theatre reviews. For instance, Bond's *Lear* was criticised for using one of the most important tragedies of Shakespeare in an excessively violent manner, Wesker's play *The Merchant* has not even been accepted for production in London, and Barker's work is also criticised for its abundant portrayal of sexuality and naked female body on the stage. Therefore, these texts illustrate the challenge in the practice of transforming Shakespeare in radical ways.

Affirming the view that Shakespeare's works are also rewritten to clarify the ambivalent points in his works, these re-writings come up with alternative explanations to the points that are left unclear in the sources. This idea is specifically evident in the second and the third chapters. Arnold Wesker's version *The Merchant* is an outcome of Wesker's attempt to resolve the ambiguity around the presentation of the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice.* In relation to this work, there is a long lasting obscurity whether

Shakespeare's representation of the Jew character is sympathetic when compared with the works of his contemporaries or not. As an alternative response, Wesker's transformation of the character without any of the prejudices reflected previously in Shakespeare's work reveals his answer that Shakespeare was not sympathetic while constructing this character. Similarly, in *Gertrude-The Cry*, Howard Barker seeks to understand the motivations behind the previously condemned relationship between Gertrude and Claudius in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Since Gertrude's desires and her personality are neglected in the source text, there is an attempt to discover the mysterious motivations of her deeds in Barker's version. Thus, these works also attempt to criticise Shakespeare's texts and revise them, which exemplifies the seminal objectives in the process of re-writing.

The main concern while discussing re-writings of Shakespeare should be to examine which social conditions necessitate recontextualisation of his works. Certain associations between the text and the context could be observed by correlating the ideas handled in the re-writings to the seminal issues or events of the periods in which they are generated. Accordingly, this study draws the conclusion that re-writings of Shakespeare tell us more about the context in which they are written than reinstate the Shakespearean text. Therefore, rewritten versions of Shakespeare's texts should not only be interpreted in terms of their relation to the Shakespearean play, rather they should be considered as responses to the contexts in which they are born. It is necessary to discuss that the transformations of these playwrights, their approaches to Shakespeare are shaped by certain historical and political events that characterise their historical periods. Therefore, the constant practice to recontextualise Shakespeare's plays forms a contrast with the general assumption that his works nevertheless preserve their relevance.

For instance, despite the fact that Bond's *Lear* does not have a precise historical frame, the ideas in his work refer to the actual problems of his context such as capitalism, Stalinism, violence, economic inequality and dysfunctional political leaders. This observation displays that Shakespeare's characters and plots are reframed in a manner that allows the discussion of more related issues. It is deduced from the analysis of

Edward Bond's *Lear* that the use of Shakespearean text is functional in terms of social criticism by way of references to certain critical issues at the time such as the Angry Brigade, 1968 Student Riots, labour strikes, Vietnam War and Civil Rights Movements. Edward Bond's contention, notwithstanding his Shakespearean re-writing, is that "literature [itself] is always an expression of the historical circumstances in which it is created" ("Introduction" xii). Therefore, Bond's objective to discuss matters that concern the modern period is ever apparent in his plays as well as in his Shakespeare re-writing, which shows that he uses Shakespeare's text as a tool for social criticism.

Even though there is no apparent transhistorical or transnational adaptation in Wesker's work as it is still situated in the sixteenth-century Venice, it is necessary to consider his transformations in the post-Holocaust context in which there was an increasing anxiety among minority groups about discrimination based on ethnicity, religion and race. Moreover, the 1970s in which Wesker's work was written also witnessed another event that concerned the Jewish race, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Additionally, considering actual antisemitic events in the 1970s' Britain such as burning the synagogues and suppression of Jewish university communities, the resonances of Wesker's re-writing to its context become more apparent. When his work is evaluated in relation to such events and his concern for such matters, it is seen that Shakespearean material is again used to refer to the more relevant historical problems. Furthermore, considering racism as a much earlier problem in the history of Britain, the discussion of the play could be extended in relation to related contextual material such as Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech, Brixton Riots, increasing xenophobia and islamophobia following the 9/11 events and most recently the Brexit, which has triggered racist attitude in the country.

Likewise, in Barker's work, the eroticised representation of Gertrude as opposed to Shakespeare's play in which the character is expected to be loyal and virtuous signals the difference in the understanding of liberty of female sexuality in the contemporary period. The play's emphasis on female sexuality and liberty is considered in relation to a context dominated by New Labour conservatism that upholds principles of family, patriarchy and ethical norms above individual liberty. Although Barker himself denies

the socio-historical and political resonances of his work, it is evident that the text refers to the problematic issues about the female identity in the contemporary period as it has implicit associations with certain laws and regulations introduced by New Labour concerning familial matters and women's place in society. This idea also makes it possible to question which element is more influential in the analysis of a literary adaptation. Is it possible to determine the critical terrain applicable to the work based on the author's intentions given certain associations between the text and its historical backdrop that invite alternative responses defying the authority of the writer over the work? It is observed that the texts' relation to their historical period, the theories and political events that surround the adaptation process are more significant than the source text or the writers' intentions. While all these components need to be considered crucial in an overall analysis of an appropriation, the works studied here show that a rewritten text is mostly in conjunction with its own context, the writer's ideological mindsets, and the dominant theoretical and historical ideas that shape the periods in which they are constructed.

Such radical transformations render these works as examples of "transfocalization" that refers to the practice of "seeing things from a different point of view" (Sanders 49). Based on the plays' emphasis for ideological shifts in the process of adaptation, the plays selected in this study are studied in terms of politics of re-writing. As these works subvert the ideological background of Shakespeare's texts and offer counter arguments, they engage with alternative political and ideological views. Hassler-Forest and Nicklas refer to the political affinities of the practice of adaptation as follows: "Since the act of adaptation by its very definition involves a process of transformation and rewriting, any adapted text must by necessity also involve the repurposing of ideas that implicitly or explicitly articulate a sense of political engagement" (1). In this respect, textual appropriation is not the same as imitation; rather, it is an attempt to make the older text look different to suit alternative ideological and political purposes. With this practice, these re-writings object to the use of Shakespeare's works in the containment of literary, cultural and political status-quo and perpetuation of ideologies like capitalism, racism and misogyny respectively.

In terms of politics of re-writing, the plays chosen in this study complement each other as they represent samples of different politics. Bond's *Lear* engages with Marxist politics in an attempt to unearth the underlying unequal class structure in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Bond's socialist ideology and working-class background lead him to reveal the necessary political dimensions of the Shakespearean text, and to take the lower-class characters into consideration. Certain transformations in Bond's play and his accompanying comments in various interviews suggest his criticism of Shakespeare as a writer that neglects to address social decadence and inequality in his day. With the transformations in his work, Bond suggests the idea that socialist revolution is not only possible but also necessary. Likewise, Wesker's work *The Merchant* displays an intervention from racial and identity politics, which demonstrates that he is critical of the way in which the Jew is represented in Shakespeare's play. In this reworking, Wesker is also under the influence of his own Jewish background that causes him to specifically deal with the issue of antisemitism in Shakespeare's work. His transformation warns about racial discrimination, and stresses the importance of mutual tolerance in a multicultural context. Additionally, by transforming stereotypical associations between the Jews and money, Wesker also aims to shatter the ingrained prejudices about the race. Concerning the same issue, Barker's work obtains sexual and gender politics as it subverts the ideological and normative background of the source text and its misogynist undertones with a work that stresses the need to preserve female liberty. Barker's re-writing of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is obviously assessed as a political response to the usual interpretations and productions of the text as perpetuating dominant patriarchal and conservative structure. As it is observed in the transformations in these works that carry political aims and alternative ideological claims, they exemplify "interideological" adaptations in Margherita Laera's words because they do not "retain the ideological landscape of their source[s]" (7).

In terms of the functions of politics of adaptation, these works aim to bring about certain changes in the perception of matters that are particularly chosen for subversion. There is an attempt to question the source material as well as to provide new messages in order to appropriate familiar topics to the contemporary context. While transforming the previously discussed issues in Shakespeare's works, writers actually single out

certain aspects for emphasis, and these points need consideration as writers especially suggest a necessity for social change concerning these ideas. The emphasis on certain ideological or political matters in these re-writings discloses that the Shakespearean text overlooks certain political matters and ignores characters that are actually of importance. This practice also points to the fact that representations in Shakespeare's texts are not arbitrary, but they are shaped with certain ideological stances. Therefore, the practice of revising a previous work is loaded with a particular purpose of creating positive change. As Shakespearean reworkings in this study are dramatic examples, their attempt to initiate social change also reinforces the function of a theatre work to comment on and criticise the social, cultural, and political events of its context.

The plays' ideological subversion of Shakespeare's works is strongly manifested in their emphasis on character transformation, which also constitutes another common point in their approach to Shakespeare. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer view appropriations with a particular focus on character transformation as a form of "character criticism" (qtd. in Sanders 49). Apparently, each re-writing included in this study focuses on one character of Shakespeare to provide an alternative story. Actually, the major transformation in each play is around the central characters of the source texts. Imagining what Shakespeare's characters would be like if they were freed from his ideological frame, these playwrights offer their own interpretations by situating them in substitute contexts. Bond presents Lear as a corrupt political leader as opposed to Shakespeare's elevating attitude to the character in order to point out Lear's responsibility in the degeneration of his society and family. Wesker's alternative treatment of Shylock as a respectable individual of the Venetian ghetto is an attempt to rehabilitate the character's reputation, which also functions as an attempt to disrupt the prejudices about the Jewish race. Barker's eroticised Gertrude functions as a critical intervention to Shakespeare's representation of the character as an unchaste woman easy to be manipulated by the male characters of the play. These examples illustrate that character transformation plays an important role in Shakespearean re-writing in terms of revealing the subversive intentions of the adaptations.

A common point in the critical approaches of these texts is that they all point out Shakespeare's partiality in his representations of these characters. It is observed in all three characters' representations in the source texts that Shakespeare sides with the powerful group. Considering Shakespeare's depiction of Lear as a repentant tragic hero rather than as a responsible man, Bond believes that Shakespeare places emphasis on the idea of the restoration of the royal power. Wesker's version illustrates that he believes Shakespeare to be more sympathetic towards his Christian characters and hostile towards the Jew as observed in the building of the bond plot. Similarly, Barker's assertion of Gertrude's freedom in terms of sexual expression contributes to the discussion that Shakespeare is on the side of the patriarchal power in his version. Therefore, character transformation in adaptations plays an important role in terms of providing certain ideas about Shakespeare criticism. Additionally, these re-writings especially present Shakespeare's characters in relation to their place as individuals in the larger society. Bond's *Lear* discusses the issue of the individual's responsibility towards society through a depiction of a failed politician. Wesker situates Shylock as opposed to a discriminatory public and legal system. Likewise, Barker's representation of Gertrude in an oppressive state places her as a marginal character vulnerable against forces and norms/laws of an entailing society.

Moreover, the works discussed here are also typical representations of the styles these writers dominantly employ in their other works. Characteristics of Bond's Theatre of Cruelty are apparent in his reconstruction of *King Lear* with its emphasis on violence and employment of aggro-effects. Wesker's "melancholy optimism" (Rabey, *English* 36) observed in his other works is also evident in *The Merchant* with an ending that presents misfortune but signals hope for a change. Moreover, Wesker's concern for the exploration of problematic experiences of the Jews as observed in his earlier works collected in *The Wesker Trilogy* (1959) is also repeated in his response to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. In a similar vein, the challenging characteristics of Howard Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe are also seen in his approach to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with a depiction of a woman that is a typical heroine of his controversial "art of theatre." Barker's socio-political criticism in his Shakespeare transformation also resembles his earlier State of England plays in which his criticism of the establishment

was more apparent. Evidently, the writers' own ideological and political opinions are also manifested in their emphasis on the latent political ideas in the Shakespearean text. Furthermore, it is also observed that the writers' biographical backgrounds, as in the case of Edward Bond's working-class background and Arnold Wesker's Jewish identity, also play an important role in terms of shaping their response to Shakespeare's works.

In conclusion, this study argues that Shakespearean reworkings can be read as reflections/responses/criticism of particular socio-political backgrounds. Experimenting with Shakespeare's works entails responding to the themes of the plays, the plots, the story, the characters and even more so to the ideological concepts ingrained in them. Therefore, this study offers an alternative approach to Shakespeare by discussing the critical attitudes of contemporary playwrights to his works as well as his cultural status. In this process, it is seen that the Shakespearean text does not determine the ultimate meaning due to the emergence of various possible readings with the practice of re-writing. Thus, it is argued that he is rewritten as a result of a subversive and critical impulse. Similarly, it is also shown that Shakespeare's texts can be made relevant through adaptations that recontextualise his works and make them more appealing to the concerns of modern times. To remember Alan Sinfield's remark about this issue: "If Shakespearean texts are truly for all kinds and conditions of people at all times, then the pressure upon them to speak meaningfully to current society . . . becomes overwhelming, and the need for cunning adaptation becomes very great" ("Making Space" 133). Considering the uses of Shakespeare's works by the playwrights included in this study, other Shakespeare appropriations should not be considered as mere attempts of copying his works, rather, they should be treated as works in their own right that reflect their own socio-political and historical milieux. Besides these three plays, other Shakespearean re-writings in different genres that belong to various eras and locations can also be examined with a similar approach to discover their specific critical engagements with Shakespeare in accordance with the concerns of their contexts.

NOTES

[1] In terms of the various ways in which Shakespeare's works are transformed or reused, Douglas Lanier marks that "'Shakespeare' has become a byword for a set of qualities that have been attached to an astonishing variety of texts and products – bank cards, £20 notes . . . beer, crockery, fishing tackle, book publishing, cigars, pubs, and breath mints, to name a few" ("Shakespeare" 93). It is even known that "his [Shakespeare's] image actually appears on VISA cards issued by certain banks in the UK, and a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* is depicted on the back of £20 notes" (Bristol 5). The practice of using Shakespeare's plays in such ways in popular culture is termed by Kitchin as "Pop Shakespeare," meaning "Shakespeare packaged and marketed in such a way as to reach people living at our tempo, in our world, inhabiting our environment of supermarkets, advertisements and television" (21).

[2] Another seminal racial conflict that reached its height during this period was between Ireland and Britain. Combined with the violence of armed groups on both sides, the Irish problem was one of the troubling aspects of the race issue in Britain. At this time of constant strife between Ireland and Britain, The Troubles, as it is also called, Bloody Sunday of 1972 marks one of the most violent events in history in which "British paratroopers opened fire on peaceful demonstrators in Londonderry, killing thirteen people" (Billington, *State of the Nation* 206). There were also demonstrations in Northern Ireland against the introduction of internment without trial in Ulster on August 1971 (Cook and Stevenson 45), which meant the British government could detain Republicans without trial through the diplock courts in the internment camps they established in Ireland. Consequently, these demonstrations also resulted in a devastating end. Subsequently, violent IRA bomb attacks took place in major cities of Britain like London and Birmingham. Considering these larger issues of race in the history of Britain, it is possible to consider the hate crimes directed against the Jews in the country as an extension of this larger ethnic identity problem, and it is appropriate to discuss antisemitism as part of a larger problem of xenophobia. For that reason, Wesker's re-writing actually functions as a response to the ideology of racism and fascism in general.

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APPENDIX I

A LIST OF SHAKESPEARE RE-WRITINGS[2]

Examples from British Drama:

Thomas Middleton – *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) (*Hamlet*)

The Witch (1615) (*Macbeth*)

John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont – *Philaster* (1609) (*Hamlet* and history plays)

John Fletcher – *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Philip Massinger – *The Sea Voyage* (1622) (*The Tempest*)

John Suckling – *The Goblins* (1638) (*The Tempest*)

John Lacy – *Sauny the Scot* (1667) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

John Dryden and William Davenant – *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* (1670)

William Davenant – *The Law Against Lovers* (1673) (*Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing*)

Macbeth, A Tragedy: With All The Alterations, Amendments, Additions, and New Songs (1674)

The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark (1676)

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[2] The sources from which these re-writings are constructed are stated in the brackets.
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John Dryden – *All for Love or The World Well Lost* (1677) (*Antony and Cleopatra*)

Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late (1679)

Thomas Otway – *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Nahum Tate – *The History of King Lear* (1681)

The History of King Richard II (*The Sicilian Usurper*) (1681)

The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth: Or, The Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus (1682)

Thomas D'Urfey – *The Injured Princess, or The Fatal Wager* (1682) (*Cymbeline*)

Edward Ravenscroft – *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia* (1687)

Thomas Shadwell – *The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-Hater* (1688)

Colley Cibber – *Richard III* (1699)

Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John (1745)

Charles Gildon – *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700)

George Granville Lansdowne – *The Jew of Venice* (1701) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

John Dennis – *The Comical Gallant: or The Amours of Sir John Falstaffe, A Comedy* (1702) (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)

The Invader of His Country, or The Fatal Resentment (1719) (*Coriolanus*)

Charles Burnaby – *Love Betray'd; or, The Agreeable Disappointment* (1703) (*Twelfth Night*)

Lewis Theobald – *The Tragedy of King Richard II* (1720)

Charles Johnson – *Love in a Forest* (1723) (*As You Like It*)

Aaron Hill – *Henry V* (1723)

Theophilus Cibber – *Henry VI* (1723)

John Sheffield Buckingham – *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* and *the Tragedy of Marcus Brutus* (1723)

James Miller – *The Universal Passion, A Comedy* (1737) (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

George Lillo – *Marina* (1738) (*Pericles*)

John Lee – *The Historical Tragedy of Macbeth* (1753)

David Garrick – *Catherine and Petruchio* (1754) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Thomas Sheridan – *Coriolanus: or, The Roman Matron* (1755)

Charles Marsh – *The Winter's Tale, a Play* (1756)

William Hawkins – *Cymbeline* (1759)

George Colman – *A Fairy Tale. In Two Acts* (1763) (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

The Sheep-Shearing: A Dramatic Pastoral (1777) (*The Winter's Tale*)

Benjamin Victor – *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1763)

Richard B. Sheridan – *Songs and Chorusses in the Tempest* (1777)

Henry Brooke – *Antony and Cleopatra* (1778)

William Woods – *The Twins; or, Which Is Which?* (1780) (*The Comedy of Errors*)

John Philip Kemble – *All's Well That Ends Well* (1793)

Katharine and Petruchio (1801) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Henrietta Maria Bowdler – *The Family Shakespeare* (1807) (Miscellaneous)

John Poole – *Hamlet Travestie* (1811)

Richard Gurney – *Romeo and Juliet Travesty* (1812)

Richard Wroughton – *King Richard the Second; an Historical Play* (1815)

John Keats – *King Stephen: A Dramatic Fragment* (1819) (*Richard III*)

Maurice Dowling – *Othello Travestie* (1834)

James Morgan – *Coriolanus; a Burlesque* (1846)

Francis Talfourd – *Macbeth Somewhat Removed from the Text of Shakespeare* (1853)

Shylock; or, The Merchant of Venice Preserved (1853)

Andrew Halliday – *Romeo and Juliet Travestie* (1859)

W. S. Gilbert – *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (1874) (*Hamlet*)

George Bernard Shaw – *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898) (*Antony and Cleopatra*)

The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (1910)

Heartbreak House (1919)

Cymbeline Refinished (1937)

Shakes versus Shav (1949)

Gordon Bottomley – *King Lear's Wife* (1916)

Gruach (1921) (*Macbeth*)

Clemence Dane – *Will Shakespeare: An Invention* (1921)

St. John Ervine – *The Lady of Belmont* (1924) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Emlyn Williams – *Spring, 1600* (1945)

Margaret Wood – *Instruments of Darkness* (1955) (*Macbeth*)

Robin Maugham – *Mister Lear* (1956)

Peter Ustinov – *Romanoff and Juliet* (1956) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Samuel Beckett – *Endgame* (1957) (quotes from *The Tempest*)

Ashley Dukes – *Return to Danes Hill* (1958) (*Hamlet*)

John Barton – *The Hollow Crown* (1960) (*Richard II*)

John Barton and Peter Hall – *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) (History plays)

Bernard Kops – *The Hamlet of Stepney Green* (1964)

Ian Davie – *A Play for Prospero* (1966) (*The Tempest*)

Tom Stoppard – *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967) (*Hamlet*)

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet (1976)

Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth (1979)

Howard Brenton – *Revenge* (1969) (*Macbeth*)

Measure for Measure: A Comedy, after Shakespeare (1972)

Thirteenth Night (1981) (*Macbeth*)

David Hare – *Slag* (1970) (*Love's Labour's Lost*)

Paul Baker – *Hamlet ESP* (1971)

Harold Frederick Rubinstein – *Shylock's End* (1971) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

David Edgar – *Death Story* (1972) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Edward Bond – *The Sea* (1973) (*The Tempest*)

Bingo (1973)

The Worlds (1979) (*Timon of Athens*)

David Edgar – *Dick Deterred* (1974) (*Richard III*)

John Bowen – *Heil Caesar!* (1974) (*Julius Caesar*)

Warren Graves – *Chief Shaking Spear Rides Again, or The Taming of the Sioux* (1974) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Derek Walcott – *A Branch of the Blue Nile* (1983) (*Antony and Cleopatra*)

Steven Berkoff – *Shakespeare's Villains* (1998) (Miscellaneous)

The Secret Love Life of Ophelia (2001) (*Hamlet*)

Howard Brenton and David Hare – *Pravda* (1985) (*Richard III*)

Adrian Mitchell – *The Tragedy of King Real* (1985) (*King Lear*)

David Henry Wilson – *Shylock's Revenge* (1986) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Philip Osment – *This Island's Mine* (1987) (*The Tempest*)

Elaine Feinstein and Women's Theatre Group – *Lear's Daughters* (1987) (*King Lear*)

Barrie Keeffe – *King of England* (1988) (*King Lear*)

John Osborne – *A Place Calling Itself Rome* (1989) (*Coriolanus*)

Howard Barker – *Seven Lears* (1990) (*King Lear*)

John Cargill Thompson – *Every Inch a King* (1992) (*King Lear*)

Richard III for Windows (1994)

Lear: A Mythconception (1995)

Romeo and Juliet: Happily Never After (1995)

Macbeth Speaks (1997)

What Shakespeare Missed (1998)

Lynn Redgrave – *Shakespeare for My Father* (1993)

Jean Betts – *Ophelia Thinks Harder* (1995) (*Hamlet*)

Revenge of the Amazons (1998) (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Bryony Lavery – *Ophelia* (1996) (Miscellaneous)

Peter Whelan – *The Herbal Bed* (1996)

Marina Carr – *Portia Coughlan* (1996) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Ariel (2002) (*The Tempest*)

Meat and Salt (2003) (*King Lear*)

The Cordelia Dream (2014) (*King Lear*)

Sharman MacDonald – *After Juliet* (1999) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Julia Pascal – *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (1999) (*King Lear*)

The Shylock Play (2009) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Deborah Levy – *Pushing the Prince into Denmark* (2000) (*Hamlet*)

Macbeth-False Memories (2000)

Edward Hall and Roger Warren – *Rose Rage* (2001) (*Henry VI* trilogy)

Lee Simpson and Phelim McDermott – *Theatre of Blood* (2005) (Miscellaneous)

David Greig – *Dunsinane* (2010) (*Macbeth*)

Gareth Armstrong – *Shylock* (2011) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Tim Crouch – *I, Shakespeare* (2011) (Miscellaneous)

The Complete Deaths (2016) (Miscellaneous)

Toni Morrison – *Desdemona* (2012) (*Othello*)

Charlotte Jones – *Humble Boy* (2015) (*Hamlet*)

Alice Birch – *Ophelias Zimmer* (2016) (*Hamlet*)

Other Dramatic Adaptations from Different Countries:

Johann Wolfgang Goethe – *Romeo and Juliet* (1812) (German)

Ernest Renan – *Caliban: A Philosophical Drama* (1896) (French) (*The Tempest*)

Alfred Jarry – *Ubu Roi* (1896) (French) (Miscellanous)

Kâmil Rıza – *Arabın İntikamı* (The Revenge of the Arab) (1908) (Turkish) (*Othello*)

Percy MacKaye – *Caliban By the Yellow Sands* (1916) (American) (*The Tempest*)

The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark (1950)

Luigi Pirandello – *Henry IV* (1922) (Italian)

Jean Sarment – *The Marriage of Hamlet* (1922) (French)

Walter Mehring – *The Merchant of Berlin* (1929) (German) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Federico Garcia Lorca – *The Public* (1930) (Spanish) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Bertolt Brecht – *Round Heads and Peak Heads* (1931) (German) (*Measure for Measure*)

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (1941) (*Richard III*)

Coriolan (1952) (*Coriolanus*)

Elmer Rice – *Cue for Passion* (1958) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Leonard Peterson – *The Great Hunger* (1958) (Canadian) (*Hamlet and Macbeth*)

Eugène Ionesco – *Exit the King* (1962) (Romanian-French) (*Richard II*)

Macbett (1972) (*Macbeth*)

Robert Nathan – *Juliet in Mantua* (1966) (American) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Barbara Garson – *MacBird!* (1966) (American) (*Macbeth*)

William Gibson – *A Cry of Players* (1968) (American-Canadian)

Charles Marowitz – *The Marowitz Hamlet* (1968) (American)

A Macbeth (1969)

An Othello (1972)

Measure for Measure (1973)

The Shrew (1974)

Variations on the Merchant of Venice (1977)

Julius Caesar (1991)

Murray Carlin – *Not Now, Sweet Desdemona* (1969) (Ugandan) (*Othello*)

Aimé Césaire – *A Tempest* (1969) (French)

Wolfgang Bauer – *Shakespeare the Sadist* (1970) (Austrian)

Friedrich Dürrenmatt – *Titus Andronicus: A Comedy after Shakespeare* (1970) (Swiss)

King John (1970)

Beklan Algan – *Hamlet 70* (1970) (Turkish)

Ephraim Kishon – *It was the Lark* (*Oh, Oh Juliet!*) (1973) (Israeli) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Herbert Blau – *Elsinore* (1975) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Don Nigro – *The Curate Shakespeare As You Like It* (1976) (American)

Loves Labours Wonne (1981)

Heiner Müller – *Hamletmachine* (1977) (German)

Anatomie Titus: Fall of Rome (1985) (*Titus Andronicus*)

Ken Mitchell – *Cruel Tears* (1977) (Canadian) (*Othello*)

C. Bernard Jackson – *Iago* (1978) (American) (*Othello*)

Augusto Boal – *A Tempestade* (1979) (Brazilian) (*The Tempest*)

Melissa Murray – *Ophelia* (1979) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Ronald Harwood – *The Dresser* (1980) (South African) (*King Lear*)

Libby Appel and Michael Flachmann – *Shakespeare's Lovers* (1983) (American) (Miscellaneous)

Shakespeare's Women (1986) (Miscellaneous)

Talat Sâit Halman – *Kahramanlar ve Soytarılar: Shakespeare'in Dünyası* (Heroes and Clowns) (1986) (Turkish) (Miscellaneous)

Müge Gürman – *Cadıların Macbeth'i* (The Witches' Macbeth) (1986) (Turkish)

Paula Vogel – *Desdemona: A Play about a Handkerchief* (1987) (American) (*Othello*)

David Malouf – *Blood Relations* (1987) (Australian) (*The Tempest*)

Tadashi Suzuki – *The Tale of Lear* (1988) (Japanese) (*King Lear*)

Ann-Marie MacDonald – *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1990) (Canadian) (*Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*)

Paul Rudnick – *I Hate Hamlet* (1991) (American)

Normand Chaurette – *The Queens* (1991) (Canadian) (*Richard III*)

Jeff Wanshel – *Ophelia* (1992) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Lee Blessing – *Fortinbras* (1992) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Judith Thompson – *Lion in the Streets* (1992) (Canadian) (*Julius Caesar*)

Ken Gass – *Claudius* (1993) (Canadian) (*Hamlet*)

Savaş Dinçel – *Gürültülü Patırtılı Bir Hikaye* (A Turbulent Story) (1994) (Turkish)

Robert Lepage – *Elsinore* (1995) (Canadian) (*Hamlet*)

Müjdat Gezen – *Hamlet Efendi* (1995) (Turkish)

Welcome Msomi – *uMabatha* (1996) (South African) (*Macbeth*)

Caleen Sinnette Jennings – *Casting Othello* (1996) (African-American)

Playing Juliet (1998) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Djanet Sears – *Harlem Duet* (1997) (Canadian) (*Othello*)

Thornton Wilder – *In Shakespeare and the Bible* (1997) (American)

Raquel Carrio – *Otra Tempestad* (1997) (Cuban) (*The Tempest*)

Joe Calarco - *Shakespeare's R&J* (1998) (American) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Chris Alexander and Hille Darjes – *Shakespeare in Trouble* (2000) (Canadian and German)

Amy Freed – *The Beard of Avon* (2001) (American)

Sulayman Al-Bassam – *The Al-Hamlet Summit* (2002) (Kuwaiti) (*Hamlet*)

Craig Wright – *Melissa Arctic* (2004) (American) (*The Winter's Tale*)

Caridad Svich – *Twelve Ophelias* (2004) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Harold Bloom – *Macbush* (2004) (American) (*Macbeth*)

Sebastian Seidel – *Hamlet for You* (2004) (German)

Semih Çelenk – *Hamlet Renkli Türkçe* (*Hamlet in Colour in Turkish*) (2004) (Turkish)

Botho Strauss – *Rape* (2005) (German) (*Titus Andronicus*)

Bernard Marie-Koltès – *The Day of Murders in the Story of Hamlet* (2006) (French)

Naomi Iizuka – *Hamlet: Blood in the Brain* (2006) (Japanese)

Yiğit Sertdemir – *Kral* (*Soytarım) Lear* (My Fool Lear) (2014) (Turkish)

Çiğdem Selışık Onat and Hayati Çitaklar – *Derme Çatma Hamlet (Hamlet the Patchy)* (2014) (Turkish)

Elçin Efendiyev – *Shakespeare* (2014) (Azerbaijani)

Erkan Uyanıksoy and Elif Temuçin – *Macbeth/İki Kişilik Kabus* (Macbeth/Double Trouble) (2016) (Turkish)

Serhat Yiğit – *İkinci Katil* (The Second Murderer) (2017) (Turkish) (*Macbeth*)

Ali İhsan Kaleci – *Gün Batımı* (2018) (Turkish) (Miscellaneous)

Re-writings of Shakespeare in the Novel Form:

Sir Walter Scott- *Kenilworth* (1821) (*Macbeth* and *Othello*)

Michael Innes – *Hamlet, Revenge!* (1937)

Alethea Hayter – *Horatio's Version* (1972) (*Hamlet*)

Margaret Laurence – *The Diviners* (1974) (*The Tempest*)

Gloria Naylor – *Mama Day* (1988) (Miscellaneous)

Nicolas Freeling – *Lady Macbeth* (1988) (*Macbeth*)

Margaret Atwood – *The Cat's Eye* (1988) (Canadian) (Miscellaneous)

Hag-Seed (2016) (*The Tempest*)

Jane Smiley – *A Thousand Acres* (1991) (American) (*King Lear*)

Marina Warner – *Indigo* (1992) (*The Tempest*)

Angela Carter – *Wise Children* (1992) (Miscellaneous)

Barbara Trapido – *Juggling* (1994) (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Kate Atkinson – *Human Croquet* (1997)

Carole Corbeil – *In the Wings* (1997) (Canadian) (*Hamlet*)

John Updike – *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Jasper Fforde – *Something Rotten* (2004) (*Hamlet*)

Lisa M. Klein – *Ophelia: A Novel* (2006) (American) (*Hamlet*)

L. Jagi Lamplighter - *Prospero Lost* (2009) (American) (*The Tempest*)

Christopher Moore – *Fool* (2009) (American) (*King Lear*)

Michelle Ray – *Falling for Hamlet* (2011) (Canadian)

David Foster Wallace – *Infinite Jest* (2011) (American) (*Hamlet*)

A. J. Hartley – *Macbeth* (2011)

Julia London – *Beauty Queen* (2011) (American) (*King Lear*)

Rachel Caine - *Prince of Shadows* (2014) (American) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Jeanette Winterson – *The Gap of Time* (2015) (*The Winter's Tale*)

Howard Jacobson – *Shylock is My Name* (2015) (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Ann Tyler – *Vinegar Girl* (2016) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Ewan Fernie and Simon Palfrey – *Macbeth Macbeth* (2016)

Elizabeth Nunez – *Even in Paradise* (2016) (Trinidadian American) (*King Lear*)

Malorie Blackman – *Chasing the Stars* (2016) (*Othello*)

Ian McEwan – *Nutshell* (2016) (*Hamlet*)

Tracy Chevalier – *New Boy* (2017) (*Othello*)

Edward St. Aubyn – *Dunbar* (2017) (*King Lear*)

Jo Nesbo – *Macbeth* (2017) (Norwegian)

Re-writings of Shakespeare in the Novella Form:

Charles and Mary Lamb – *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807)

Mary Cowden Clarke- *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines in a Series of Fifteen Tales* (1850) (Miscellaneous)

Nikolai Leskov – *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1865) (Russian)

Henry James – *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) (American) (*Othello* and *Hamlet*)

Lillie Buffum Chace Wyman – *Gertrude of Denmark: An Interpretative Romance* (1924) (American) (*Hamlet*)

Iris Murdoch – *The Black Prince* (1973) (Irish) (*Hamlet*)

Matt Haig's *The Dead Fathers Club* (2006) (*Hamlet*)

Short Story Re-writings:

Ivan Turgenev – "A Lear of the Steppes" (1870) (Russian) (*King Lear*)

Margaret Atwood – "Gertrude Talks Back" (1992) (Canadian) (*Hamlet*)

A Poetry Collection of Re-writing of Shakespeare's Sonnets:

Editors: Hannah Crawforth and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann – "On Shakespeare's Sonnets" (2016)

Some Musical Adaptations:

George Abbot, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart – *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938) (*The Comedy of Errors*)

Bella Spewack, Samuel Spewack and Cole Porter – *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948) (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Arthur Larentz, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim and Jerome Robbins – *West Side Story* (1957) (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Cheryl L. West and Duke Ellington – *Play On!* (1997) (*Twelfth Night*)

Diane Paulus – *The Donkey Show: A Midsummer Night's Disco* (1999) (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

APPENDIX II

ORIGINALITY REPORTS

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Ph.D. DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

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

Date: 12/07/2018

Thesis Title : "Re-writing Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century: Edward Bond's *Lear*, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* in Socio-Historical Context."
According to the originality report obtained by my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 12/07/2018 for the total of 218 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 2 %.

Filtering options applied:

1. ☒ Approval and Decleration sections excluded
2. ☒ Bibliography/Works Cited excluded
3. ☒ Quotes excluded
4. ☐ Quotes included
5. ☐ Match size up to 5 words excluded

I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

12.07.2018
Özlem
Date and Signature

Name Surname:	Özlem Özmen
Student No:	N11128290
Department:	English Language and Literature
Program:	English Language and Literature
Status:	☐ Ph.D. ☒ Combined Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. Hande Seber

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORİJİNALLİK RAPORU

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

Tarih: 12/07/2018

Tez Başlığı : "Yirminci Yüzyılda Shakespeare'in Sosyal ve Tarihî Bağlamda Yeniden Yazımları: Edward Bond'un *Lear*'ı, Arnold Wesker'ın *The Merchant*'ı ve Howard Barker'ın *Gertrude-The Cry*'ı."

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 218 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 12/07/2018 tarihinde tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 2 'dir.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

1- ☒ Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
2- ☒ Kaynakça hariç
3- ☒ Alıntılar hariç
4- ☐ Alıntılar dâhil
5- ☐ 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

12.07.2018
Özlem
Tarih ve İmza

Adı Soyadı: Özlem Özmen
Öğrenci No: N11128290
Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Statüsü: ☐ Doktora ☒ Bütünleşik Dr.

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.

Prof. Dr. Hande Seber

APPENDIX III

ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS COMMISSION FORM FOR THESIS

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

Date: 12/07/2018

Thesis Title: "Re-writing Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century: Edward Bond's *Lear*, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Howard Barker's *Gertrude-The Cry* in Socio-Historical Context."

My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, interview, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board/Commission for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

12.07.2018
Özlem
Date and Signature

Name Surname: Özlem Özmen
Student No: N11128290
Department: English Language and Literature
Program: English Language and Literature
Status: ☐ MA ☐ Ph.D. ☒ Combined Ph.D.

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Prof. Dr. Hande Seber

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KOMİSYON MUAFİYETİ FORMU

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

Tarih: 12/07/2018

Tez Başlığı: "Yirminci Yüzyılda Shakespeare'in Sosyal ve Tarihî Bağlamda Yeniden Yazımları: Edward Bond'un *Lear*'ı, Arnold Wesker'ın *The Merchant*'ı ve Howard Barker'ın *Gertrude-The Cry*'ı."

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, mülakat, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kurul/Komisyon'dan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

12.07.2018
Özlem
Tarih ve İmza

Adı Soyadı: Özlem Özmen
Öğrenci No: N11128290
Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Statüsü: ☐ Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☒ Bütünleşik Doktora

DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI

Prof. Dr. Hande Seber

Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr
Telefon: 0-312-2976860 **Faks:** 0-3122992147 **E-posta:** sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr