



**THE DECONSTRUCTION IN SHAKESPEARE'S  
KING LEAR AND HAMLET: A STUDY OF  
BOND'S LEAR AND STOPPARD'S  
ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE  
DEAD**

**2023  
MASTER THESIS  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**Sena Nur YILDIRIM**

**Thesis Advisor  
Assist. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN**

**THE DECONSTRUCTION IN SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR AND  
HAMLET: A STUDY OF BOND'S LEAR AND STOPPARD'S  
ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD**

**Sena Nur YILDIRIM**

**Thesis Advisor**

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN**

**T.C.**

**Karabuk University**

**Institute of Graduate Programs**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Prepared as**

**Master Thesis**

**KARABUK**

**September 2023**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>THESIS APPROVAL PAGE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FOREWORD .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ÖZ.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.1. Theoretical Background .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. CHAPTER TWO: OPPOSİNG SHAKESPEARE: LEAR AND KİNG LEAR .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3. CHAPTER THREE: REPLACING CHARACTERS: SHAKESPEARE’S HAMLET AND STOPPARD’S ROSENCRANTZ AND GULDENSTERN ARE DEAD .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>CURRICULUM VITAE.....</b>	<b>72</b>

## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Sena Nur YILDIRIM titled “THE DECONSTRUCTION IN SHAKESPEARE’S KING LEAR AND HAMLET: A STUDY OF BOND’S LEAR AND STOPPARD’S ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assist.Prof.Dr. Samet GÜVEN

.....

Thesis Advisor, Department of English Language and Literature

This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master of Science thesis.  
11/09/2023

Examining Committee Members (Institutions)

Signature

Chairman : Assist.Prof.Dr.Samet GÜVEN (KBU)

.....

Member : Assoc.Prof.Dr. Harith Ismail TURKÍ (KBU.)

.....

Member : Assist.Prof.Dr. Muzaffer Zafer AYAR (KTU)

.....

The degree of Master of Science by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep ÖZCAN

.....

Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname: Sena Nur YILDIRIM**

**Signature :**

## **FOREWORD**

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN for his endless support, help, and insight. His contributions and patience throughout this process have always been of great value for me.

I wish to extend my thanks to my family my father, Aytekin, my mother Ayşe, my brothers, for their unconditional love and support, which helped me to continue my way. They are the source of light in my life.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to my friends and colleagues, especially Serdar ERPAY, who stand by me even the hardest days.

## ABSTRACT

Theatre, as a literary genre, has played a significant role in the history of literature. From the beginning of literary texts, drama has been one of the most preferred genres. The concept developed by Jacques Derrida, deconstruction, targets the Western belief that is groundless. Deconstruction aims to question the established writings, which have contradictions, and which fails to remain valid in modern periods. Parody appears as one of the ways to deconstruct previously written texts. In British Literature, drama is better known with the works of William Shakespeare. However, as postmodern playwrights, Bond and Stoppard reject accept the validity of his plays in contemporary literary world. In this respect, this thesis intends to focus on Edward Bond's *Lear* and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* applying deconstructive reading. With his *Lear*, a rewriting of *King Lear*, Bond tries to reflect his idea that myth of *King Lear* has decreased. For him, the play is replaced by parodies and rewritings in the contemporary literature. In parallel with Bond, Stoppard is another playwright deconstructing Shakespearean plays. Stoppard's play offers a new perspective toward *Hamlet* centring the "two Elizabethan Nobles" of Shakespeare. The author establishes various connections between *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Stoppard mainly wants to achieve different meanings of Hamlet by looking the events from the window of Ros and Guil.

**Keywords:** Edward Bond; Tom Stoppard; Derrida; Deconstruction; Shakespeare

## ÖZ

Bir edebi tür olarak tiyatro, edebiyat tarihi boyunca önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Edebi metinlerin başlangıcından itibaren tiyatro en tercih edilen tür olarak görülmektedir. Jacques Derrida tarafından geliştirilen yapıbozum kavramı, Batı düşünce yapısının temelsizliğini hedef alarak onu değiştirmeyi amaçlar. Yapıbozum, çelişkilerle dolu ve modern dünyada sürdürülemeyen ama kabul gören yazıları yerinden etme amacı güder. Parodi daha önceden yazılmış metinleri yapıbozumuna uğratmak için kullanılan yollardan birisidir. İngiliz Edebiyatında tiyatro, daha çok William Shakespeare'in eserleri ile bilinse de postmodern oyun yazarları olarak Bond ve Stoppard onun oyunlarının günümüzde de devam eden geçerliliğini reddederler. Bu doğrultuda, bu tez Edward Bond'un *Lear* ve Tom Stoppard'ın *Rosencrantz ve Guildenstern Öldüler* eserlerini yapıbozumsal bir okumayla incelemeyi amaçlar. Yazdığı *Lear* adlı eseriyle Bond, Kral Lear mitinin gücünü kaybettiği fikrini ortaya koyar. Ona göre bu oyun çağdaş edebiyatta parodiler ve yeniden yazmalarla yer değiştirdi. Edward Bond ile aynı düzlemde diğer bir oyun yazarı olan Stoppard da Shakespeare'in oyunlarını yapıbozumuna uğratmayı amaçlar. Stoppard'ın eseri, Shakespeare'in 'iki Elizabeth dönemi Soylusu'nu temel alarak yeni bir yaklaşım geliştirir. Yazar Hamlet ve *Rosencrantz ve Guildenstern Öldüler* eserleri arasında köprüler kurar. Stoppard temel olarak Hamlet'teki olaylara Ros ve Guil'in penceresinden bakarak farklı anlamlar çıkarmayı hedefler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Edward Bond; Tom Stoppard; Derrida; Yapıbozum; Shakespeare



## ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

<b>Title of the Thesis</b>	The Deconstruction in Shakespeare's King Lear and Hamlet: A Study of Bond's Lear and Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
<b>Author of the Thesis</b>	Sena Nur YILDIRIM
<b>Thesis Advisor</b>	Assist Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN
<b>Status of the Thesis</b>	Master
<b>Date of the Thesis</b>	11/09/2023
<b>Field of the Thesis</b>	English Language and Literature Department
<b>Place of the Thesis</b>	UNIKA/IGP
<b>Total Page Number</b>	72
<b>Keywords</b>	Edward Bond; Tom Stoppard; Derrida; Deconstruction; Shakespeare

## ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

<b>Tezin Adı</b>	Shakespeare'in Kral Lear ve Hamlet Oyunlarında Yapıbozumu: Bond'un Lear ve Stoppard'ın Rosencrantz ve Guildenstern Öldüler Eserleri Üzerine Bir Çalışma
<b>Tezin Yazarı</b>	Sena Nur YILDIRIM
<b>Tezin Danışmanı</b>	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Samet GÜVEN
<b>Tezin Derecesi</b>	Yüksek Lisans
<b>Tezin Tarihi</b>	11/09/2023
<b>Tezin Alanı</b>	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
<b>Tezin Yeri</b>	KBU/LEE
<b>Tezin Sayfa Sayısı</b>	72
<b>Anahtar Kelimeler</b>	Edward Bond; Tom Stoppard; Derrida; Yapıbozum; Shakespeare

## 1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Drama is one of the branches of art that has had a great impact on societies from the beginning of humanity to the present. The first theoretical views on theatre sprouted in Ancient Greek thought. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle described the features and parts of tragedy and defined it. According to his definition, tragedy “is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions.” (2008, p. 6). The thought of drama in the Roman Period did not focus on theoretical problems in art. On the contrary, the duty of art toward society was emphasized. Roman critics of theatre and theorists did not add a new approach to the Greek theorists. They criticized the plays, guided the authors, and informed them about the methods and forms. The most significant work of theatre criticism and theory of the Roman period is Horace’s *Ars Poetica*.

Church had an enormous impact on literature during the Medieval Era. The conservatism of the Middle Ages was not conducive to producing new views on life. The medieval theatre thought did not produce a new view. However, later in this period, the church discovered the effect of theatre on people and tried to use it to strengthen the bond between believers and religion. The church allowed performing of religious plays and parts of the Bible. The religious plays are called Mystery and miracle plays. “Mystery play is one originating in the liturgy and presenting an event or series of events taken from the Holy Scriptures. A Miracle play is a dramatization of an event or legend from the life of a saint or martyr” (Neilson, 1921, p. 11). The didactic plays have the purpose of educating the audience on religious issues. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, several new genres were developed in the field of theatre. Morality plays like *Everyman* personified Christian virtues and vices. These plays were clearly designed for moral purposes to help the audience adjust their behaviours according to religious morality.

Drama had a huge increase in Elizabethan Era. Elizabethan Theatre witnessed the growth of the first professional actors who belonged to companies performing all around the country. William Shakespeare is among the most influential play writers. It is widely accepted that Shakespeare does not only belong to English literature but to

the literature of the whole world. In line with this idea, Ben Jonson writes in his poem, *To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare*, that “he was not for an age but for all time” (line 43). He produced his works during the Elizabethan Era. During the reign of Elizabeth I, Shakespeare’s plays were performed at the court. This period was followed by the Restoration Period. According to G. Henry Nettleton, who wrote *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, “[t]he advent of Charles II to the throne meant the restoration of drama, as well as of monarchy...It restored to English drama, With the seal of royal authority, rights and privileges of Which it has never subsequently been deprived” (1914, p. 30). The theatre of the Restoration period was entirely directed to the higher classes and was formed considering their tastes. Unlike the Elizabethan Period, when theatre had a nationalist feature, drama became a literary device belonging to a specific class. Expectations of the audience in the Restoration Period were entertainment and humour. Thus, the writings in the field of theatre did not consist of tragedies but comedies.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the social class, which had an aggressive attitude towards morality and religion, began to dominate England. For this reason, there would be a change in the theatre, and plays were written in the genres of sentimental comedy and domestic drama. Sentimental comedy had an intense emotional and romantic relationship. This genre activated the romantic side of the audience. Domestic drama focused on the inner world of a middle- or lower-class family. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the effect of Romanticism shows itself. It is seen that the Romantics approached nature from a more metaphysical approach, with an idea that has an organic and mysterious power and is constantly in motion toward the ideal. This period was “critical, didactic, paradoxical, romantic, but not dramatic.” (Brawley, 1921, p. 200). In the Romantic period, it is possible to mention conflict. From a general view, Romanticism showed its influence on poetry.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world experienced World War I, which affected many countries. At the end of the First World War, the optimistic approach was replaced by a pessimistic perspective. The sufferings of war began to be the subject of novels and poems. British drama, on the other hand, mostly turned to comedy plays in order to relieve the suffering of the people in this period. The tendency toward comedy ends with the Second World War. Absurd drama emerged “just after World War II, in plays that enact people's hopeless efforts to communicate

and that comically intimate a tragic vision of life devoid of meaning or purpose” (*Norton Anthology*, 2006, p. 1844). Accordingly, late 20<sup>th</sup> century drama deals with the ravage of World War II. After two disruptive wars, the focus of the writers turned from nature and natural beauty, as in Romanticism, to the darker side of human beings. Playwrights of this century represented violence and wildness on stage. On the other hand, comedy writers produced comic plays. However, comedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century differed from traditional comedy, which purely aimed at entertainment. New comedies highlighted themes occurring after the world wars such as loss of identity, despair, and sorrow.

In modern and postmodern literature, writers have an impulse to rewrite the works of previous ages. Imitating other plays has been observed during the history of literature. However, it becomes more intense with postmodernism. This period gives the writers the freedom to apply literary devices including parody, intertextuality, and deconstruction. Thus, the rewriting has increased. Parody is described as “a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry” (*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2001). Accordingly, parody is generally a rewriting including the elements of humour. Parodies show the ridiculous features of the original texts. To produce a parody, the source text is required to be about serious themes such as death. As Linda Hutcheon, “[p]arody is a perfect postmodern form, in some senses, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies. It also forces a reconsideration of the idea of origin or originality that is compatible with other postmodern interrogations of liberal humanist assumptions” (1988, p. 11). Based on her explanations, the audience approaches the concept of originality from a new perspective while reading the parody. Although it has similar elements, parody deconstructs the original writing. Furthermore, postmodernism has the notion of intertextuality which “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” (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 118). Postmodern writers believe that original and new literary texts do not exist. Each text carries traces of previous writings. Then, intertextuality allows to establish a bridge between the texts written in the previous periods and written in the postmodern times.

The writings, which have been assumed as the greatest writings, are read from a new view. In this perspective, the place of the classical texts is questioned since they

are accepted as valid for all ages. William Shakespeare is among the most preferred author to be rewritten. Shakespeare produced extended literary works from plays to sonnets and he dealt with different subjects. The variety of Shakespeare's texts provides background for rewritings. To support this idea, John Elsom claims that "Shakespeare left behind a rich wardrobe of clothes, props and ideas which we could wear according to our moods and necessities..." (1990, p.3). Therefore, the reason why Shakespeare becomes the source of parodies is rooted in his varied subjects. As Elsom argues, Shakespeare's writings can be adjusted if the following writers see a necessity.

In addition to providing a diverse issue to concern with, Shakespeare is rewritten because of the ambiguities of his plays. The number of his parodies reveals the dualities of Shakespearean plays. Adaptation of his writings underlines the impossibility of an absolute meaning of a text. Although Shakespeare is accepted as a writer for all ages, the belief that literary works are stable has collapsed. Literature turns into a source for a new adaptation. Thus, replicas of Shakespeare's plays show that his texts cannot be appropriate for all periods. Instead, they need to be reevaluated considering the changing conditions. In accordance with this idea, Antonin Artaud states in his *The Theater and Its Double*:

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 belongs to us, a way that is immediate and direct, corresponding to present modes of feeling, and understandable to everyone. (1958, p. 74)

Therefore, the writers need to consider their times while rewriting Shakespeare. The perception of Shakespeare's readers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and today has changed. The themes of his plays are approached by applying new concepts such as feminism, psychology, and racism. Thanks to the continuous developments in the field of literature, rewriting becomes popular. New improvements and incidents provide varied approaches to the previous literary texts. As the literary theories develop, the former writings are discussed applying different theories. According to the idea that masterpieces need to be left in their times, Shakespeare's plays are deconstructed.

Among the most replicated plays of William Shakespeare, *King Lear* takes a significant place. "A reason why *King Lear* is one of the most adapted Shakespearean works lies in the fact that it inherently possesses indeterminate elements and themes. This quality becomes an important justification for a postmodern revisitation" (Arriola,

2006, p. 564). Edward Bond, as a postmodern playwright, deals with Shakespeare's play while writing his *Lear*. Bond's fundamental concern is the ideological problems in *King Lear*. With reproductions, the writers aim to fill the gap in the original plays. Likewise, as *King Lear* has uncertainties, Bond rewrites Shakespeare's play. For Bond, Shakespeare does not successfully reflect his society. Instead of concerning social problems, Shakespeare approaches the individual suffering of King Lear. On the contrary, Bond believes that an artist needs to be a mirror of society. Therefore, *King Lear* is required to be rewritten from a new perspective. Unlike Shakespeare, Bond focuses on the social issues that Lear has caused. In his community, citizens feel fear due to Lear's violence. In *Lear*, Bond creates a small world combining all the groups of society. Through these characters, he brings to the stage how society oppresses and corrupts innocent, ordinary people because of the monarch. According to James C. Bulman, Bond regards drama as mostly immoral, which causes the writers to be indifferent toward politics. "Edward Bond thinks that playwrights must be morally responsible to their societies. Their plays ought not only to analyze history - how societies became what they are - but also to suggest ways in which societies can better themselves. Too often, he believes, theater is immoral" (Bulman, 1986, p. 60). In accordance with Bond's assumptions, it is not enough for a play to depict social issues. Besides, it also offers solutions for societies to solve problems. Thereby, Bond considers the necessity of rewriting *King Lear* to solve the chaos in Shakespeare's society. Plays like *King Lear* "may have been moral enough in their days. But they have outlived their historical moments and entered the realm of myth; and because myth codifies and perpetuates the values of the old order, it is dangerous" (Bulman, 1986, p. 60). Considering Bulman's statements about Bond's beliefs, claiming that a masterpiece remains its effect after a long time would be an incorrect argument. As time changes, societies replace the old values. Following this idea, Bond deconstructs Shakespeare's classic, *King Lear*, in order to prove that his play fails to reflect modern times although he is known as the writer of all periods.

Similar to Edward Bond, Tom Stoppard prefers to write parodies of Shakespeare's plays. His *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a rewriting of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Stoppard deconstructs *Hamlet* through the choice of characters. In his play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern become the protagonists while they are the minor characters in Shakespeare's text. The characters in Stoppard's plays sometimes

do not recall the past, and sometimes they have no idea what they are talking about or discussing. This situation reveals that the characters who have no importance in the previous play experienced confusion about themselves when Stoppard brings them to an important position in the play. Stoppard deconstructs Shakespeare as he ignores the minor characters. Their duties and goals are predetermined, and they do not have the power to change. Stoppard does not allow them to take conscious actions except for questioning. Nonetheless, their questions are not answered. The author brings the audience closer to the uncertainty in the play. As stated previously, deconstruction occurs when the original texts have ambiguities. In Stoppard's case, this situation changes. Stoppard criticizes the uncertainty in *Hamlet*, but he does not give an answer. Instead, he leaves the questions to his audiences.

Both Edward Bond's and Tom Stoppard's plays have been analysed under the name of parody and rewriting. Various studies have been conducted to compare Bond's *Lear* to the original play, *King Lear*. Perry Nodelman exhibits a political reading of *Lear* claiming that it is a parody of *King Lear*. He mentions two acceptances about Bond's play. "The first is that the play parodies Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The second, encouraged by Bond's preface to the play, is that it makes a political statement. In fact, most readings of *Lear* assume that Bond makes the political statement by means of the Shakespearean parody" (Nodelman, 1980, p. 269). Considering his arguments, Bond has a critical rewriting of *King Lear* to underline the political problems in the play. In a similar way, another researcher, Hilde Klein, deals with Bond. Klein writes, "Bond argues that Shakespeare gave an answer to the problems of his particular society, which is not valid for our age" (1989, p. 71). Like other researcher dealing with Bond's rewriting, Klein also mentions that Bond questions the accepted solutions offered by Shakespeare since his solutions are not valid today.

Besides Edward Bond's *Lear*, Tom Stoppard has been also analysed with his rewritings. Jim Hunter is among the writers focusing on Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. For him, "[a]rt is sometimes said to draw on previous art as much as on real life. In Stoppard's case this is certainly so." (2000, p. 21). He highlights that previous writers have influenced Stoppard in his writings. Stoppard's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, occupies a great place in his writing career. Despite Shakespeare's emphasis on Hamlet in the play, Stoppard highlights the characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. His purpose to stress these characters is to



reveal people who have remained within certain limits. Stoppard states that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern reflect the individuals in society and wants to show their situation to the audience. While rewriting one of Shakespearean masterpieces, Stoppard uses postmodern writing techniques. His reproduction of *Hamlet* shows similar features to the absurd plays. Stoppard's play contains uncertain events, meaningless, and ambiguous plot. Moreover, absurd plays have comic elements. Therefore, considering the definition of parody, his play is categorized as a parody of *Hamlet*.

Postmodern literature rejects the idea that a text has a single purpose and meaning. Each reader can create new and individual purpose, meaning, and interpretation in relation to any text. Meaning is signified by the individual; that is, it is constructed by the signifier. The reader takes the place of the author. This displacement, which overturns the central position of the author, allows the exploration of other sources of meaning. In this way, the text is detached from its writer who aims to convey a specific idea or message. Derrida, one of the most important names of postmodernism, believes that metaphysics ends. Derrida's deconstruction "was the first version of poststructuralism to reach the United States. Spreading from there, it had an enormous impact on English and American literary studies in general" (Bertens, 2008, p. 93). Societies need to focus on the aspects of modern life rather than nostalgia for the past. To strengthen his ideas, Derrida develops deconstruction that emphasizes the idea that in postmodern times, myths of the previous writings lose their impact. As new approaches towards literary texts emerge, a requirement for rewritings increases. Earlier texts are discussed from recent theories.

This thesis aims to analyse the deconstruction of Shakespeare's selected plays, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, by the postmodern playwrights. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* forms the basis of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard. Edward Bond is extremely affected by *King Lear* in his *Lear*. The study will approach the postmodern rewritings of Shakespeare applying deconstructive theory.

This thesis will include an introduction, two chapters dealing with the selected works, and a conclusion part. Each chapter will be about the deconstruction of Derrida. The first part of the thesis includes an introduction in which historical and theoretical background will be given. The first chapter will analyse Edward Bond's *Lear* as a

deconstructing play. Bond rewrites Shakespeare's famous play, *King Lear*, in a modern world with some changes. This chapter will focus on how Bond deconstructs Shakespeare's play making it a meta-narrative.

The second chapter will focus on *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, which is among the masterpieces of Tom Stoppard. Stoppard is accepted as one of the most important playwrights of postmodern times. The play produces a perspective towards Hamlet from their perspective by centring the "two Elizabethan Nobles" in William Shakespeare's play Hamlet, which is also one of the most important works in the history of theatre. Unlike Bond, Stoppard does not change the plot and characters of Hamlet. Instead, he takes the ignored minor characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and makes them the protagonists of his play. The plot mostly stands the same as Shakespeare's play. However, as Stoppard reverses the characterization, *Hamlet* as one of the Shakespeare's classics begins to be questioned.

The last chapter will compare the way both writers' approach the plays using parody. After discussing Shakespeare's selected plays from a deconstructive perspective, the thesis will be summarised in the conclusion part.

## **1.1. Theoretical Background**

The deconstruction approach is sceptical towards the texts offering that text has different meanings. Thus, deconstructive reading focuses on the possible meanings of a text. Postmodernism forms the basis of deconstruction as it refers to the changes in comprehending the world. According to Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernism has "altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts" (1984, p. xxiii). Postmodernism, then, sceptically approaches the approved traditions. Postmodern writing does not contain the logical elements for meaning. On the contrary, the "meaninglessness and incredulity towards grand narratives of previous literary periods is reflected in the postmodern writerly texts whose purpose was to invite reader to produce his/her own meaning and reality" (Ayar, 2018, p. 131). Thus, the former texts impose an absolute meaning to their readers while rewritings in the postmodern times do not provide the meaning of the texts. Instead, the meaning is dependent on the perception of the audience. Postmodern writers contribute to the construction of

meaning from undervalued parts of a text. Consequently, multiple meanings displace certain meanings.

Jacques Derrida presents a fresh approach to literary criticism developing the concept of deconstruction. Beyond being a philosophical approach, deconstruction is a strategy of reading. Derrida opposes Western philosophy that is based on “logocentrism”. Logocentrism is “the belief that there is an ultimate reality or center of truth that can serve as the basis for all of our thoughts and actions” (Bressler, 1994, p. 76). Therefore, deconstruction tries to damage the fundamental understanding, which believes in the absolute truth. Notwithstanding, the aim of deconstruction is not to destroy Western thought but to comprehend and reconstitute it. Derrida’s theory does not remove the idea that the rule of the universe is determined by established realities. His intention is to offer alternative truths to show that the value of definite realities decreases. “Literature is for Derrida the possibility for any utterance, writing, or mark to be iterated in innumerable contexts and to function in the absence of identifiable speaker, context, reference, or hearer” (Miller, 2001, p. 59). According to Derrida’s thoughts, the meaning of a literary text is correlated to the outer variables such as reader, context, and writer. Depending on the circumstances in which the audience reads the text, the meaning changes. So, claiming that each text carries a certain message for each reader is an incorrect assumption.

Contrary to its initial meaning, deconstruction does not refer to destroying or collapsing a unity. Instead, it refers to reconstituting the unity. The theorist offers a different perspective to approach a literary text to find the little parts and reconstitute the text. As deconstruction benefits from unity, it does not require to collapse it. Deconstruction does not only aim at the literary works, but also the general social understandings that emphasise absolutism. Hence, Derrida rejects the authority that means absolute control over the citizens. Derrida explains his ideas as “[r]ather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how a ‘whole’ was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end” (2008, p. 3). The deconstructive reading technique wants the audience to deconstruct the texts. While deconstructing a text, the reader needs to overcome the endorsed thoughts. Moreover, for Derrida, it is significant to focus on the minor elements of a text. Realizing the secondary elements and building a connection among them to form a unity is the key point in deconstruction. “For Derrida, there is no ‘single’ meaning that can saturate the text, because the text can

always be interpreted beyond its original context” (Hendricks, 2014, p. 5). Hence, deconstructive reading of a literary text intends to reveal the hidden connotations behind the others given by the writer.

Deconstruction questions the assumptions that Western people accept without questioning and analysing. It discloses the polemical sides of judgements. The deconstructive approach wants the readers to criticize the widely accepted thought that there is absolute truth, especially the truths that seem to be certain, by analysing from a different point of view. Depending on Derrida’s thoughts, a single interpretation cannot be valid because the text can be read in various ways. With this belief, he deconstructs the truths accepted unconditionally in the Western tradition. Derrida, in his *Limited Inc*, gives an explanation of deconstruction saying that it “does not consist in moving from one concept to another, but in reversing and displacing a conceptual order...” (1988, p. 21). His explanation underlines that the purpose of deconstruction is not to destroy or remove the concept of the original text but to overturn it. Lois Tyson mentions that deconstructive reading has two fundamental aims, which can be used separately or together. According to Tyson, deconstruction aims “(1) to reveal the text’s undecidability and/or (2) to reveal the complex operations of the ideologies of which the text is constructed” (2006, p. 259). Depending on his statements, deconstructive reading focuses on the ambiguities of a text. Besides, it deals with the complex elements that form the text.

Differance can be described as a semantic distance between the words as well as the distance between the word and its essence. As explained by Derrida, no notion can be considered independently of the language itself. This approach means an attack on the metaphysical principle of universal truth that was created by the Platonic view of language. Since Derrida stands against universal truth, he supports the idea that a text contains multiple meanings instead of a worldwide meaning. This situation differs depending on the signifiers whose positions are determined by the reader. In other words, Derrida suggests deconstructing the standardizing approach based on Western logos. He defends that criticism about language is dogmatic as language itself is inevitably dogmatic. Considering the fact that an argument is based on conceptual acceptance, for Derrida, objective criticism becomes impossible.

From Derrida's perspective, in the contemporary world, the writers and readers need to deconstruct the fundamental notions of Western tradition, including identity, essence, and substance. Based on his statements, these concepts refer to another meaning that "has been overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed throughout the history of Western philosophy" (Sweetman, 1997, p. 230). As a starting point of deconstruction, Derrida expounds that the basis of his theory is the deceptive idea of certainty while attacking the legacy of the Enlightenment which offers a certain truth. His attitude towards tradition particularly shows itself within his principle of existence. This principle is based on Wittgenstein's efforts to form a universal and impeccable language reflecting the world. Derrida tries to provide a strategy to prove the ungroundedness of Wittgenstein's desire.

It is not possible to give a clear definition of deconstruction as it creates different interpretations that vary from text to text. For this reason, deconstruction can be explained with many different definitions. According to Hugh J. Silverman's definition, "deconstruction is the reading of texts in terms of their marks, traces, or indecidable features, in terms of their margins, limits, or frameworks, and in terms of their self-circumscriptions or self-delimitations as texts" (2004, p. 4). From another perspective, the purpose of deconstruction is to reveal an author's intentions and the flow of writing. For this, it is provided to show the tension between the elements of binary oppositions that appear in the text by making a close reading. Thus, deconstruction provides a reading practice that preserves the concepts and strategies the text produces, repeats them, and looks at the possible meanings.

Deconstruction is not meant to destroy something, but also to rebuild it while deconstructing. In addition, this reading technique destroys the texts and understandings that claim absolute truth or try to explain the truth. At the same time, it wants the events to be evaluated from a critical point of view. As an approach rejecting an absolute truth, deconstruction does not accept authority, that is, absolute control and absolute power. Terry Eagleton, the writer of *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, claims that Derrida regards deconstruction as "an ultimately *political* practice, an attempt to dismantle the logic by which a particular system of thought, and behind that a whole system of political structures and social institutions, maintains its force" (2003, p. 128). The term deconstruction refers to a reading strategy focusing on showing the arbitrariness and groundlessness in the operation of the traditional dominant way of

thinking. Deconstruction finds wrong and unfounded is a thinking logic that is called the metaphysics of presence by Derrida and is generally known as Western metaphysics.

In his first texts, Derrida uses the term “deconstruction” and creates deconstructive texts; but Derrida does not explain the word. With deconstruction, Derrida reveals the non-existence of the meaning that the text fixes with the signs he uses, with the displacements and derivations of the signs. In his interview published under the name of Positions, Derrida defines deconstruction as a term used “to avoid both simply neutralizing the binary oppositions of metaphysics and simply residing within the closed field of these oppositions, thereby confirming it” (1981, p.41). In his explanation, Derrida concerns with language problems and the relationship between language and metaphysics. In the following years, in his *Letter to a Japanese Friend*, Derrida mentions the characteristics of deconstruction that are difficult to define:

To be very schematic I would say that the difficulty of defining and therefore also of *translating* the word "deconstruction" stems from the fact that all the predicates, all the defining concepts, all the lexical significations, and even the syntactic articulations, which seem at one moment to lend themselves to this definition or to that translation, are also deconstructed or deconstructible, directly or otherwise, and so on. (2008, p. 5).

Thus, deconstruction examines the meaning of the word and its position with other words because many other words are used to 'describe' a word. For Derrida, deconstruction is not an analysis or critique. Deconstruction cannot be described as an analysis since it is not a regression to an origin that is supposed to exist previously in order to decompose structures into their simplest parts. On the contrary, it questions the origin itself. Deconstruction, then, does not give importance to the previous texts. Instead, it deals with these texts to question them. Likewise, it is not a criticism either, because the concept of 'criticism' is already one of the objects or themes towards which deconstruction is directed.

Deconstruction cannot be named as a set of rules or a set of specific steps to be followed while analysing a work. Derrida underlines that deconstruction is not a mechanical process; therefore, it is not a method. Deconstruction, while dealing with texts, puts interpretations that are recreated from each other in the centre, rather than the meaning. Derrida does not offer a way or method to apply deconstruction. The focus is to create new interpretations from the texts to recreate them instead of searching for a certain meaning in the texts. According to the concept of

deconstruction, the text does not have a single meaning. Derrida locates the reader in the same position as the writer. Deconstruction involves a text or a thought collapsing this thought. It is the philosophy of revealing the hidden, unexposed, hidden contradictions of the text. Derrida's explanation shows that there is no possibility to study a text independently of its universality. In this respect, Derrida says that the deconstructive approach does not analyse but read. He claims that the texts, deconstructed by reading, do not give an objective result as the meaning is determined by the perception of the readers. Additionally, the whole text constitutes meaning. Thereby, a text does not contain meaningful smaller parts. He argues that the understanding, which is made through oppositions, follows a trace. Similarly, another scholar, Hugh J. Silverman, mentions deconstruction and explains it:

[D]econstruction is concerned with offering an account of what is going on in a text—not by seeking out its meaning, or its component parts, or its systematic implications—but rather by marking off its relations to other texts, its contexts, its sub-texts.” (2004, p. 4).

Therefore, the meaning of a text is dependent on its referents.

When Derrida puts the concept of deconstruction into use and analyses what kind of meaning it has, he clearly refers to Heidegger and states that the French word *deconstruction* aims to meet the words *destruktion* and *abbau* used by Heidegger. These terms, which appear in Heidegger as a way of understanding the Western metaphysical tradition, become a starting point for Derrida as well. In parallel with Heidegger's conceptualization of destruction, Derrida also underlines that none of the deconstruction and the words *destruktion* and *abbau*, which form its source, can be considered in a negative sense.

When I made use of this word, I had the sense of translating two words from Heidegger at a point where I needed them in the context. These two words are *Destruktion*, which Heidegger uses, explaining that *Destruktion* is not a destruction but precisely a destructuring that dismantles the structural layers in the system, and so on. The other word is *Abbau*, which has a similar meaning: to take apart an edifice in order to see how it is constituted or deconstituted...*Abbau*, was applied to: the whole of classical ontology, the whole history of Western philosophy. (Derrida, 1985, pp. 86-87)

Although Derrida borrows the term from Heidegger, their approaches differ. In Derrida's approach, deconstruction is a tool used to comprehend the construction of a whole. Following the process of comprehending, it tries to reconstruct the whole within a different concept. On the other side, Heidegger assumes that the construction is needed to be broken apart and analysed separately. As indicated by Heidegger

“phenomenology is the name for a method of doing philosophy; he says that the method includes three steps -reduction, construction, and destruction-” (Faulconer, 2000, p. 3). For Derrida, *destruktion* does not refer to destroy and destruction, but to the removal of structural layers, while *abbau* does not refer to destroy, but to the breaking up of something to investigate how it came into being. Therefore, Heidegger’s concepts are referent to “an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics.” (Derrida, 2008, p.2). However, Derrida states that he rejects to use of the word *destruction* in French, as the readers do not deduce the positive meaning used by Heidegger, but rather a negative meaning from Nietzsche meaning to destroy, to smash, and to annihilate. Instead of using this word, Derrida prefers deconstruction he found in the French dictionary, *Littre*. Derrida chooses the word *deconstruction*, which gathers grammatical, linguistic, or rhetorical values in a mechanical value because he believes it is more appropriate in terms of his strategy. Derrida presents the meaning of the word deconstruction in *Littre* as follows:

*Deconstruction*: action of deconstructing./ Grammatical term. Disarranging the construction of words in a sentence. 'Of deconstruction, common way of saying construction'... *To deconstruct*: 1. To disassemble the parts of a whole. To deconstruct a machine to transport it elsewhere. 2. Grammatical term... To deconstruct verse, rendering it, by the suppression of meter, similar to prose. ... 3. *To self-deconstruct* [Se deconstruire] ... to lose its construction. (Derrida, 2008, p.2)

Derrida does not admit that deconstruction even names an essence or procedure, let alone a system of thought. Because deconstruction is not a methodical technique that implements the rules of a program by following them, nor is it a possible or necessary method. According to Derrida, since the impossibility of a single meaning is inherent in texts, a deconstructive reading breaks the text into pieces in order to show that the arguments in the text turn against themselves.

Deconstruction endeavours to highlight the ignored and disregarded elements of a text. Except for the emphasised elements, for Derrida, expressions in the footnotes and neglected parts of the text are required to be in the centre. To apply deconstruction to a text, the reader should find the ignored parts and discuss them from a different perspective. Deconstructive reading arises from the difference. As a result of systematic play between systematic play and signifiers, deconstruction is constantly differentiated and transferred into the future. Deconstruction focuses on a close reading of the text aiming to reveal that some texts refer to others. Such a reading can show



how classical texts, which are thought to be stable and universal, can be re-constructed with reference to other texts.

Jacques Derrida points out binary oppositions, such as good/evil or man/woman. The theorist claims that in established Western point of view, the first side of these oppositions is more accepted. “Derrida shows that such oppositions constitute a tacit hierarchy, in which the first term functions as privileged and superior and the second term as derivative and inferior” (Abrahams, 1999, p. 58). While introducing his thoughts about binary oppositions, Derrida underlines the fact that they need to be overturned. In his interview, published as *Positions*, Derrida states that there are two stages in the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence. In the first stage, binary oppositions and hierarchies, which are the basis of the functioning of the metaphysics of presence, are problematized. These binary oppositions and their hierarchical relations are inverted. It is revealed how the superiority of a term is achieved. Besides, the first stage shows the assumptions by which the term on the negative side of the contrast is subordinated. Following the destruction, in the second stage, the text is reconstructed within a completely different context. Concordantly, deconstruction consistently rebuilds the text instead of referring to destroying it.

According to Derrida’s arguments, Western people express their thoughts and feelings using binary oppositions such as black and white, men and women, presence and absence. For him, these oppositions reflect the hierarchy of Western societies. On one side, the concept with positive meaning has superiority while there is an ignored negative concept seen as inferior. Derrida tries to extinguish the strict barriers between the oppositions. He questions the hierarchy that gives one party supremacy. “Anchored by binary oppositions, texts create structures of meaning where one term is favoured in opposition to the other. Derrida exposes the biases within these oppositions and, at times, reverses them to explore the effects that such reversals may have on a text” (Richards, 2008, p. 147). While applying deconstructive reading to a text, binary oppositions are reversed. Hence, it is necessary to find the oppositions and discuss the neglected side.

Derrida attaches importance to the relationship between the signifier and the signified analysing in which way these terms provide meaning for the reader. The meaning of a signifier is determined by the difference between itself and another

signifier. Then, the meaning is not already valid as it is connected to the different signifiers. In other words, what constitutes a meaning is not only the existing phonemes but also the non-existing ones. The meaning of a language can be only possible through its interactions with other words. In a statement, the signifier is dependent on the signified. Likewise, a meaning needs its opposition to exist in a text. Therefore, each notion becomes meaningful only if it has the oppositions such as good/bad or writing/ speech.

Based on the deconstructive approach, there are two opposite concepts in a text named binary oppositions. The aim of using binary oppositions is to allow the reader to see unmentioned meanings. These oppositions cause the readers to reveal and reconstruct ignored meanings. The author presents a binary opposition while trying to break it. This opposition becomes the basis of the deconstruction of a text. Binary opposition underlines that a text does not convey an absolute meaning as it has two opposite parts. This concept rejects seeing only one side of the opposite. It is more valuable to approach the less popular side. Eagleton explains that

[d]econstruction tries to show how such oppositions, in order to hold themselves in place, are sometimes betrayed into inverting or collapsing themselves, or need to banish to the text's margins certain niggling details which can be made to return and plague them” (2003, pp. 115-116).

As understood from the writer’s explanation, with deconstruction, Derrida aims to collapse the binary oppositions giving the ignored side the superiority.

The value system built on binary oppositions in Western philosophy attributes superiority to the first element while weakness and deficiency to the second. In order to destroy this hierarchy of values Derrida attempts to change all structures built on binary opposition. His purpose is not to remove the oppositions from the text. He aims to create a balance between two sides of the contradictions. Derrida says that opposing concepts will lose their original meaning because they are constructed with the idea of superiority in the text. There is a dominant relationship in the opposition between the concepts. While one of the two concepts is the dominant concept, the other is constructed as the “other” concept. The dominant concept has built its meaning on the opposition of the other concept. For him, both parties of the contradictions need to represent themselves. Deconstructionism does not aim to eliminate contradictions, as it also means to eliminate the meanings of concepts. Therefore, deconstruction aims at

dissolving the text by changing the positions of the sides of the opposition. Thus, Derrida tries to show how the meaning emerges in the text and which concepts are constructed. Based on Derrida's arguments, there has been a conflict between two concepts in Western writings. The reader's responsibility is to reverse the opposition to give each side the opportunity to portray themselves. Deconstruction primarily aims to destroy the binary oppositions in Western thought. However, overturning the opposition to give abandoned elements priority cannot be described as deconstruction. It would be providing supremacy for one side. Instead, one needs to focus on both sides of the opposition to deconstruct the text. Johnathan Culler (1997) defines deconstruction as a commentary on Western oppositions while explaining the justification for deconstruction:

Deconstruction is most simply defined as a critique of the hierarchical oppositions that have structured Western thought: inside/outside, mind/body, literal/metaphorical, speech/writing, presence/absence, nature/culture, form/meaning. To deconstruct an opposition is to show that it is not natural and inevitable but a construction, produced by discourses that rely on it, and to show that it is a construction in a work of deconstruction that seeks to dismantle it and reinscribe it – that is, not destroy it but give it a different structure and functioning. (p. 126)

Derrida finds a solution for the oppositions by examining them as doubled concepts. As “a double gesture, a double science, a double writing”, the contrasts are able to be overturned. Derrida (1988) claims that it is the only requirement “that deconstruction will provide the means of intervening in the field of oppositions it criticizes and that is also a field of nondiscursive forces” (p. 21). Binary opposition aims to provide a new perspective for the reader to see other meanings and not be attached to just one thing. Derrida's deconstruction argues that the concepts in the texts are established within the framework of oppositions and these oppositions form the meanings. Deconstructionism does not aim to abolish oppositions since removing them means removing the meanings of concepts. Therefore, deconstruction tries to dissolve the text by changing the positions of the sides of the opposition. In this way, Derrida gives the neglected part of binary opposition a chance to represent itself. Eagleton (2003) states that “‘Deconstruction' is the name given to the critical operation by which such oppositions can be partly undermined, or by which they can be shown partly to undermine each other in the process of textual meaning” (p. 115). In addition to giving the inferior side a voice to represent itself, deconstruction also offers to analyse the

alternatives of textual meaning. Through such oppositions, Derrida contributes to his belief by denying the absolute truth.

Western traditional metaphysical thought determines the place of these thoughts through hierarchical oppositional relations such as presence/absence, word/writing, soul/body, and woman/man. Deconstruction exposes these conscious or unconscious assumptions and questions them. While revealing these assumptions, he points to the movement that produces meaning within the control mechanisms of the formation of binary oppositions. Derrida basically considers this movement as a game of differences and named this movement itself *différance*. According to Derrida, the *différance* movement is hidden under all texts. As a text analysis device, *différance* has undertaken the task of revealing these hidden elements. Hierarchical relationships that are closed to a single meaning in the text destroy the basic arguments of that text by displacing and distorting the oppositions. Defending that the text can have many meanings, Derrida deconstructs everything that is imposed as absolute truth with the method he developed and resolves the contradictions. According to Derrida, fixing the meaning of any word is impossible.

Derrida does not define his theory as a method because, according to his belief, a method means a mechanical process. Rather than a method, his theoretical framework applies a trace. Nonetheless, this trace does not mean that he follows a certain route. On the contrary, he uses deconstruction to decode traces that are not always clearly visible. In other words, Derrida does not apply a methodology or follow a specific trace as he deconstructs these concepts. Although trace refers to certain roots, it also reflects that a certain root is not possible. He explains in *Of Grammatology* the role of trace in deconstruction, “[t]he trace is in fact the absolute origin of sense in general. Which amounts to saying once again that there is no absolute origin of sense in general. The trace is the difference which opens appearance and signification” (1997, p. 65). In deconstruction, Derrida attaches great importance to the concept of trace. Considering that Derrida rejects the traditional Western view highlighting the significance of speech, trace is regarded as a key term while increasing the position of writing. For the theorist, each written text carries traces of previous ones. Therefore, producing a completely original text seems impossible. Furthermore, the trace is a referent to the erased writing which remains its trace. Derrida discusses this term with a related one, *differance*. According to him, “the

problem of difference is seen as an uncertainty and reading leads to a proliferation of traces and differences” (Oppermann, 1991, p. 42). Traces and differences form the source of meaning. Deconstruction, in a way, follows the text by uncovering the traces left behind and revealing alternative meanings. Ferdinand De Saussure mentions in his book that “in language there are only differences... Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before in linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences that have issued from the system.” (1959, p. 120). Derrida’s claims on difference and trace are based upon Saussure’s ideology. The theorist develops the concept of “differance” referring that every differance means to a meaning which begins with a trace. Therefore, distinctions among the traces bring several meanings, which collapse the idea of an original suggesting the ultimate meaning. Even though Derrida gives place to trace in his theory, he does not accept a central trace. For him, “the trace ... has already taught us that it was impossible to justify a point of departure absolutely” (1997, p. 162). The fundamental purpose of deconstructive reading is to follow the traces for alternative meanings of a text.

Derrida’s assertions about the conventional ideology, which dominates the Western societies, repudiate the belief claiming that widely read and accepted texts last their validity regardless of ages. “The traditional Western view assumes that the concept of structure implies a center, something which is at the heart of the totality and yet is also outside of it since it does not belong to that totality” (Haber, 1994, p. 12). Considering Haber’s statement, Derrida is seen as a theorist who questions the Western perspective due to its ambiguities. Although it focuses on unity, somehow it stands out of this unity. Therefore, the condition of totality in knowledge diminishes. Imposing a central truth, which is valid for everyone and every circumstance, cannot be acceptable in postmodern societies.

Postmodernism, which keeps a distance from the traditional writings because they are totalitarian, approaches all kinds of information, regardless of its accuracy, with suspicion. The rejection of total theories results in the importance of the individual, ordinary, and neglected details. Poststructuralists, who reject the argument that the text is a singular entity, have focused on the capacity of language to produce multiple meanings, considering literature as an art that allows for different readings. According to the poststructuralist approach, it is the reader, not the writer, who

determines the meaning. Therefore, the meaning is dependent on the number of people reading the text. Derrida's deconstruction approach has provided important developments in all fields of social studies, and it makes different readings on literature possible.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: OPPOSING SHAKESPEARE: LEAR AND KING LEAR

Edward Bond is a significant figure in contemporary politic drama. The most remarkable feature of his plays is his interest in William Shakespeare's plays. He uses Shakespeare's writings as a source for his works and tries to overcome him as a playwright. Despite the differences between the times and social conditions, Bond attempts to compete with Shakespeare by evaluating his plays from social aspects. Although there are magnificent differences between the historical period in which Shakespeare lived and recent days, the writer conveys the facts located at the intersection of his times and today in his plays. Its characteristic of presenting both previous and present times enables the rewritings. However, for an opposing thought, "[t]he action of *King Lear* takes place 800 years B.C., and yet the characters are placed in conditions possible only in the Middle Ages" (Holderness et al., 1987, p. 89). Shakespeare's play is questioned to belong to the Middle Ages. Bond criticizes Shakespeare for being an individual writer who ignores social issues and focuses on the self. Bond's interest in Shakespeare roots in Shakespeare's ability to apply dialectic thought to his plays before modern philosophy begins to discuss it. While applying deconstructive reading to Edward Bond's *Lear*, it is necessary to focus on the traces of the original texts and the binary oppositions such as order/chaos and good/evil.

Edward Bond uses his plays as a tool to reflect the politics, economy, and tradition of a society. For him, "[m]en without politics would be animals, and art without politics would be trivial. [...] Art is the most public of activities." (Bond, 2006, p.14). Bond thinks that rationalist theatre aims to form a rationalist community. Therefore, art and artist need to represent social phenomena even though they concern individuals. For this reason, Bond criticizes Shakespeare for not standing for the oppressed people although he has seen the reality of his times. Bond is influenced by Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare is known as a universal writer and the writer of all times. However, Bond believes that Shakespeare fails to represent modern times. His plays, instead, depict the Elizabethan Ages when Shakespeare produced his writings. From Bond's perspective, *King Lear* has ideological problems. For this reason, he

attempts to rewrite Shakespeare's play. His *Lear* leads the audience to approach Shakespeare's *King Lear* from a different perspective.

Although Shakespeare is regarded as the writer of all times, Bond argues against his reputation because Shakespeare does not concern with the social problems of his time. In fact, Shakespeare deals with social issues such as violence, class conflict, and ruler-ruled contradiction, yet he does not offer a solution. Bond claims, "[a]s Shakespeare himself knew, the peace, the reconciliation that he created on the stage would not last an hour on the street" (2006, p.23). With his words, Bond questions Shakespeare's indifference toward the problems of his society. He criticizes that Shakespeare does not picture the real world but pictures a peaceful environment. Bond deconstructs Shakespeare's politics and social interests, as he believes Shakespeare is not able to provide a solution. Bond prefers to focus on the same problems as Shakespeare since they remain as main social issues even today. Unlike Shakespeare, Bond believes that an artist needs to represent the problems of society by offering solutions.

Bond is among the post-war playwrights. Therefore, he witnessed the most violent side of the war. Inherently, he reflects violence, misery, and oppression, which are the inevitable results of war, into his writings. Although he is not a supporter of violence, Bond focuses on this theme because of his will to live in a peaceful world. He not only mentions the violence but also suggests solutions to prevent it. In Shakespeare's play, *King Lear* is portrayed as an authoritarian king using his power to oppress his people. Lear believes that violence causes peace for the whole kingdom. He averts evil when he applies violence to people who potentially generate chaos. Although Bond is inspired by *King Lear*, he mentions the deficiency of social criticism. Shakespeare prefers to concentrate on the King's individual misery instead of his people who are constantly oppressed and violated.

Bond's *Lear* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* share similar plots and characters. Still, Shakespeare's world is completely different from Bond's. Shakespeare produced his work under the influence of the Medieval Era and Medieval thought. In Medieval times, the King was the most powerful element of society. His power was believed to be given by God. Jonathan Bate explains his notion about the effect of the theocentric Middle Age on *King Lear* by writing "of all Shakespeare's tragedies and historical



plays, *Lear* is the one which is most concerned with matters of natural and divine history, the one in which and for which secular humanism is most wanting” (2001, p.2). Unlike Shakespeare’s period, Bond lives in a modern world in which social values have changed. The god-centred belief was replaced by developed scientific thoughts.

Bond’s critical play, *Lear* consists of three acts. In line with Bond’s words, each act represents different issues. “Act One shows a world dominated by myth. Act Two shows the clash between myth and reality, between superstitious men and the autonomous world. Act Three shows a resolution of this, in the world we prove real by dying in it” (2006, p. 22). In the first act, Bond attempts to create a world in which people believe in a myth. Lear has a strong power as a King at the beginning of the act. He devotes his whole life to building a wall around the country. Lear announces that the wall will protect his people from the enemies and bring freedom. However, the wall is the main figure showing the oppression of the King. His reign lasts until his daughters, Fontanelle and Bodice, marry Lear’s archenemies. They take the rule of the country accusing their fathers to be mad. In Act II, the writer wants to establish a contradiction between myth and reality. The starting point of this contradiction is Lear’s self-realization. The act opens with the scene of court. Lear does not recognize his daughters and his own reflection in the mirror. It shows that Lear’s process of realization has begun. “How ugly that voice is! That’s not my daughter’s voice. It sounds like chains on a prison wall. And she walks like something struggling in a sack. No, that’s not the king.” (2006, p.79). Lear’s understanding and recognition deteriorate and he is claimed insane. In prison, the ghost of Gravedigger’s Boy visits Lear and shares his misery. The wife of Gravedigger’s Boy turns into a guerrilla leader heading an uprising against the rule of Lear’s daughters. She put them in the same prison as their father. The last act demonstrates the reality of the world when the main character dies. In the end, Lear achieves the ultimate realization of his mistakes. To correct it, he vainly tries to demolish the wall. Yet, he dies heroically as a result of his errors.

Edward Bond’s *Lear* is regarded as a critique of the myths in *King Lear*. According to Klein, “many critics considered it to be a challenge to the unquestioned craftsmanship of the mythical figure of Shakespeare” (1989, p. 71). Her statement proves that the necessity of analysing Shakespearean plays from a different window emerges in modern times as his myths have decreased. Bond warns his audience to

realize how following the previous values becomes dangerous. The injustice can only be corrected if the myths of old times are left. Therefore, Bond believes that he needs to rewrite Shakespeare's iconic play to make his audience free from past mistakes. Actually, Shakespeare stays against and criticizes the human condition of his time. Yet, he fails to focus on King Lear's society, which is highly repressed. Instead, the author prefers to focus on King Lear's inner world and suffering.

Edward Bond believes that playwrights have a social duty. He criticizes the ones who deal with social and historical problems without offering societies a solution to solve them. Bond mostly concerns traditional and cultural myths. In his *Lear*, it is obvious that he is affected by the myth of King Lear. Bond sees King Lear as a barrier to his career. "I can only say that Lear was standing in my path and I had to get him out of the way" (qtd in Bulman, 1986, p.60). According to Bond, it is a mistake for Shakespeare's Lear to remain silent against social problems. Lear realizes his violence and fault through the end of the play. Nonetheless, he does not choose to correct his fault. Rather, he wants to be in prison where, for him, is safer than outside. Bond's Lear, on the other hand, becomes the victim of murder when he tries to destroy the wall, which was first built by his command. The image of destruction on the wall refers to Lear's realization. In the first place, he believed the wall would make them free but now he understands his mistake. After he totally becomes blind, Lear reaches the greatest awareness. The wall, he has sacrificed his life to make his country freer and more peaceful, terminates his life. Bond believes that artists need to adjust their behaviours for social equality not just their works. According to his claims, the speech and behaviour of an artist should be consistent. However, for Bond, Shakespeare does not have this characteristic. He just mentions the social problems without offering a solution.

Bond's main purpose is to show that acceptance of an error would not be enough if the person does not take any action to change this error. Initially, Lear wants to have a protected life, for which he builds a wall around his country. He assumes to maintain a safe reign until his own daughters take his power. His myth of controlling the country for his time collapsed after the betrayal of his children. Bodice and Fontanelle have faith in their marriage to bring peace. On the contrary, Lear still carries his belief in the wall, which is the only way to protect peace in the country. Warrington warns Lear about his daughters' plan to attack Lear. Although Warrington

offers to retreat from the war, Lear refuses. The war results in Lear's defeat. It is difficult to claim a father-daughter connection between Lear and his daughter. This is similar to Shakespeare's *King Lear* in which Lear's daughters leave him. In both plays, the daughters are blinded by power. The sisters do not hesitate to misbehave to their father who is the source of their power.

Considering the deconstructive theory, binary oppositions and their relationship occupy a crucial place in a text. Edward Bond deals with the opposition between order and chaos. His deconstruction of Shakespeare's *King Lear* is recognizable when he transforms the focus from order to chaos. William Shakespeare's imaginary kingdom remains the order for years. The King attempts to divide the country equally among his daughters. Therefore, the King tries to maintain order. However, Lear fails to protect the order of his country in Bond's play. With the purpose of order, Lear builds a wall covering his country to protect his people from the enemies and liberate them. He forces the workers to work under inhuman conditions. The wall turns into the greatest reason of his life:

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. My wall will make you free. (2006, p.59)

The primary aim of the wall is to provide happiness to people like a religion or a state does. However, it exploits and enslaves them. According to Shakespeare, "monarchs had an obligation to keep order in the state" (Nodelman, 1980, p.269). With the purpose of deconstructing Shakespeare's belief, Bond uses the symbol of the wall. Initially, the wall is supposed to keep the enemies out of the country and provides the citizens a peaceful environment. However, it turns into the reason for violence since people do not experience goodness. They witness the evil side of kingship within the walls. Edward Bond criticizes the monarchy whose purpose is to maintain order by giving place to the other side of the opposition, chaos. Although Bond's *Lear* aims to make an order, chaos appears. As an example of disorder, the audience is given the character of Cordelia in *Lear*. In the beginning, Cordelia is portrayed as an innocent woman having a peaceful life with her husband. The difference between Shakespeare's Cordelia and Lear's Cordelia occurs at the end. When Shakespeare's Cordelia remains a beloved daughter helping her father, Bond's Cordelia becomes a leader of a guerrilla army. In his play, Bond initially pictures a loving innocent wife. Lear, however, makes

her a victim of violence. The Gravedigger's Boy, Cordelia's husband, tries to help Lear while escaping from soldiers. They find Lear, butcher the Boy's pigs, murder him, and rape the innocent woman. Despite the wall of sheets they build for protection, soldiers harm them. Then, Cordelia believes, she needs to rebuild the walls of the country and starts an uprising. Cordelia's characteristic change underlines the binary opposition between order and chaos. Bond draws attention to the transition from order to the chaotic atmosphere via Cordelia.

Inside his walls, Lear creates a country isolated from evil. Yet, his people confront Lear's cruelty and evil. At this point, another binary opposition of the text emerges, good and evil. Shakespeare turns his attention to the goodness in the kingdom despite violence. Brutality occupies the characters including King Lear and his daughters although the main purpose of the writer is to uncover the goodness in every iniquity. To give an instance, Cordelia is a loving and honest daughter of the King. She continues her loyalty towards her father even after he does not believe in Cordelia's love. King Lear's elderly daughters exaggerate the words while praising him for which they take the rule of the kingdom. After losing his kingship, Lear loses his authority even over his daughters. Goneril and Regan, after having the power, betray their father by dismissing him. The reunion of Cordelia and King Lear stands for goodness as they both forgive each other. While the Fool stands for goodness, the Ghost of Gravedigger's Boy tries to seduce Lear by offering him "a selfishly sentimental pastoral idyll" (2006, p. 34). Lear, however, still has a political duty to destroy the wall. He does not allow the Ghost to tempt him. Lear has completed his self-realization process. Now, he is an old man who is fully aware of his faults and responsibilities. He must let the Ghost disappear. "You must die! I love you, I'll always remember you, but I can't help you. Die, for your own sake die!" (2006, p. 114). It shows that Lear does not need a mentor to lead him, as he is completely aware. In another version of *King Lear*, Edward Bond also pictures a character named Cordelia. In his play, Cordelia is not Lear's biological daughter, but it is apparent that they have a special connection. In the beginning, Cordelia is portrayed as an innocent woman having a peaceful life with her husband. Yet, while Shakespeare underlines the goodness of his character, Bond reveals the cruel and evil side of Cordelia. The author aims to deconstruct the binary opposition of good and evil by changing the personality of his character. Shakespeare's Cordelia remains a beloved daughter helping her father.

On the other side, Bond's Cordelia becomes a leader of a guerrilla army starting an uprising against the rule of Fontanelle and Bodice.

Bond reflects the extreme violence in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. He shows the severe violent scenes to prepare "the ground for his exploration of violence and oppression" (Smith, 1979, p. 74). Shakespeare approaches *King Lear* individually instead of socially. He discusses the King's psychological destruction. In *Lear*, Bond states that it would be a more correct approach to create a character who is in the process of perceiving the existence of a destructive society. Bond creates characters from different classes of society. From these characters, he puts how innocent people are oppressed and corrupted on stage. Shakespeare's *King Lear* is correlated to its time's social values. Furthermore, Edward Bond benefits from the violence to reflect the evilness in his writing. Despite the goodness in Shakespeare's play, Bond dominantly gives importance to the cruel side of his characters. Edward Bond discusses violence in his *Lear* explains as follows:

Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them writing about our time. It would be immoral not to write about violence. (2006, p.41)

*Lear*'s daughters are highly affected by the social environment in which they have grown. They learned from his father, the King, violence and they reflect it to the other people. The sexual dissatisfaction in their marriage increases their tendency to violence, which becomes a way of purification. Bodice and Fontanelle enjoy torture and violence: "O yes, tears and blood. I wish my father was here. I wish he could see him. Look at his hands! Look at them going! Kill him inside! Make him dead! Father! Father! I want to sit on his lungs!" (2006, p.65). During her torture of Warrington, Fontanelle wants her father to witness how she applies violence. She refers to the fact that her violence comes from *Lear*. He becomes a role model for his daughter in terms of violence. In their last torture, *King*'s daughters poke a needle into Warrington's ear. After they experience the peak of satisfaction, they warn people that anyone helping her father will end up in a similar situation. Near Fontanelle, her sister Bodice continues knitting. She adopts violence as a part of her daily life. Violent torture of her sister does not bother her. Instead, she asks one of the soldiers to beg for Warrington's life. While refusing his begging, Bodice states "I shall refuse his pardon. That always gives me my deepest satisfaction" (2006, p.65). She enjoys making people beg her. In

addition, sexuality appears as a reason for psychological violence in the play. The dissatisfaction of the sisters in their marriages grows the violence for them. Both Bodice and Fontanelle desire to murder their husbands and get married to Warrington. However, both sisters fail to obtain Warrington. Then, they reveal hatred against him through torture. At the end of the first act, violence becomes more dominant. The soldiers appear on the stage. They kill the Gravedigger's Boy and rape his wife because they help Lear to escape:

The BOY turns slowly away and as he does so the sheet folds round him. For a second he stands in silence with the white sheet draped round him. Only his head is seen. It is pushed back in shock and his eyes and mouth are open. He stands rigid. Suddenly a huge red stain spreads on the sheet. (2006, p. 76)

Edward Bond pictures the Boy's transformation into a ghost, who will be accompany of Lear in prison. Violence in Bond's play not only affects one group of society but also becomes a part of daily life. Wall. Lear, who prevents his people to go beyond his thoughts and rules, is not open to change. Therefore, the wall is for fear to lose control and power except for protection. Bond uses the marriage of Lear's daughters to highlight that conflict of interest is strong enough to make father and children enemies. One of the cruellest pieces of violence in Bond's play is the scene in which Lear's eyes are blinded. The soldiers state that they make him blind for scientific purposes. Using this irony, Bond criticizes scientific and technological development as they are used to destroy human beings. Lear justifies his actions of keeping people in a huge prison because he believes that he protects them from misery. For his people, Lear is the source of fear and terror. He is so arrogant that he regards his people as "sheep". His infinite power gives Lear the right to kill a worker for slowing the construction of his wall. The image of the wall symbolizes the authoritarian ruling system and violence. From Lear's perspective, the wall stands for freedom and security since he is hungry for power. The construction of this wall conquers Lear's whole life. Neither he nor the rulers after him succeed to complete the construction.

The contradiction between freedom and captivity is recognized as a part of binary oppositions in *Lear*. Deconstructive reading opposes the thought, which values the first side of opposition. Thus, a necessity of analysing the importance of captivity in *Lear* emerges while applying the deconstructive theory to Edward Bond's play. Shakespeare provides his characters with the freedom to choose their actions and to

live in a free world. In other respects, Bond's characters are captured without noticing the reality. Bond, therefore, deconstructs the binary oppositions by giving importance to the second side. The metaphor of an animal put in a cage is reflected in *Lear*. Bond's Lear becomes the victim although he has victimized people before his self-realization process. He is not able to recognize his reflection in the mirror and sees himself as a bird in a cage. Lear considers himself an animal put in a cage. In his words,

[t]here's an animal in a cage. I must let it out or the earth will be destroyed. There'll be great fires and the water will dry up. All the people will be burned and the wind will blow their ashes into huge columns of dust and they'll go round and round the earth for ever! We must let it out! (2006, p. 81).

Lear's statements emphasize that his mistakes have captured him. Thus, freedom disappears. Besides, captivity also emerges when the court members of Bond's play decide that Lear is insane, punish him, and send him to a cell. Lear's faults during his reign become the reason for his captivity. The wall, which has been constructed with the aim of protection, is another symbol referring to captivity. Bond stresses that Lear's wall turns into captivity even though it has been intended to provide freedom to the people living inside the walls.

To deconstruct *King Lear*, Edward Bond criticizes Shakespeare to ignore social problems. For Bond, Shakespeare is a writer who cannot offer solutions for critical issues in his society. Furthermore, Edward Bond supports the idea of rejecting the stereotyped beliefs, which have been established as a part of society:

His Marxist theatre attacks what he believes are society's dominant and too readily accepted myths: that man is innately violent; that science and technology will solve all of man's problems; and that the free-market system is best because it appeals to man's natural aggressiveness. (Jones, 1980, p. 505)

In Shakespeare's period, social classes and conflicts among them becomes more dominant in the Western countries. Aristocracy is always the upper side living dream lives while the lower class struggles to have an average life. Bond questions Shakespeare's disregard for the oppressed people despite having a consciousness of the realities of his time. The writer shows his reader a king whose inner circle belongs to aristocracy. At the same time, he ignores the others such as citizens from the working class. In the beginning of the play, Lear endeavours to build a wall regardless of the working condition of his workers. Like a stereotypical ruler, Lear's only concern is his benefit. However, Bond deliberately pictures a similar character as Shakespeare.

Lear begins a process of self-realization that arouses awareness about the consequences of capitalism. He changes his attitude to understanding his mistake when he says “[h]ow many lives have I ended here?” (2006, p.100). Lear regrets his attitudes thanks to the progress of self-realization. On the other side, the original text, *King Lear*, is a traditional tragedy whose main character belongs to the aristocracy. Bond, however, rejects the idea of representation of aristocratic characters ignoring others. Then, in his parody, he gives life to many minor characters except for the main ones. The writer not only focuses on the aristocracy but also on each class of society. According to him, his minor characters build a society.

Shakespeare’s period is famous for with hierarchical social structure. There was a sharp difference between the aristocracy and the lower class. Bond argues that Shakespeare, as a national poet, needs to deal with the class system. However, he ignores the lower class and concerns the aristocracy. Considering the idea that an artist should be a representer of society, Bond criticizes the general acceptance of Shakespeare as a universal writer. Moreover, Shakespeare justifies King Lear’s actions despite his corruption. It shows that Shakespeare fails to be a representer of his society. Instead, he becomes the justifier of the aristocratic ruler class. To reverse widely accepted beliefs, Edward Bond pictures his lower-class characters. Although the major characters are corrupted, the minor ones belonging to the lower class remain virtuous. For instance, Bond shows his audience the characters of Thomas and Susan who “are left to build a better world from their understanding of the rationale behind Lear’s assault on the wall” (Hern, 2006, p. 23). Accordingly, the writer introduces his lower-class characters as role models for Lear’s community in which corruption has become usual.

Bond deals with the opposition between ruler and ruled and the pressure that the system puts on people. Lear assumes that violence is the only way to presume the system. Bond does not give Lear the power of God, unlike Shakespeare. Instead, Lear is responsible for providing social order. In the Shakespearean Period, all actions of the king are justified since he is endowed with divine authority. Bond changes Lear and makes him enlightened refusing the divine authority. Both *King Lear* and *Lear* include themes of misuse of power, corruption, and injustice. Shakespeare wants his audience to pity King Lear even though he causes the down of his kingdom. Shakespeare focuses on the King’s family tragedy rather than the suffering of his



people. Bond, on the contrary, tries to prove that Shakespeare does not convey the true moral message. Instead of an ambitious, self-centred king, Bond's Lear dies as a more mature man who understands his faults. Even though his power is dependent on God, King Lear misuses his power:

The sphere of the state is only one of the levels on which the action of *King Lear* occurs, but in the Elizabethan world view the state was a middle link between the physical universe and individual man, and thus Lear's initial crime may make its reverberations felt both above and below, corrupting the entire scale of God's creation. (Ribner, 1958, p. 37)

The statement above justifies Edward Bond's consideration of Shakespeare's approach, which focuses on the individualism of King Lear. Despite being the ruler of a kingdom, King Lear does not fulfil his responsibilities. Primarily, he is expected to establish a bridge connecting the dynasty to the citizens. Yet, he fails to focus on his people who does not a member of the court. Moreover, Lear fails to use authority as a corrupted king.

In deconstructive reading, the trace is among the most significant terms. According to Derrida, it is impossible to exist itself for a text since each text has a mark of previous texts. While analysing Edward Bond's *Lear*, traces of *King Lear* are worth mentioning. The reader is able to realize the traces in terms of mental disorder, the self-realization process, and the importance of language in the play. In the first instance, both Shakespeare's King Lear and Bond's Lear suffer from mental disorders. Furthermore, their psychological inconsistency causes ambition and corruption. Lear in Bond's play is portrayed as a paranoid person. He has the illusion of his daughters who, Lear believes, try to poison and kill him: "LEAR. Is that bread? / BOY. Yes. / LEAR. Is it poisoned? / BOY. No. / LEAR. Then my daughters didn't send him. They'd never miss a chance to poison good bread. Who's it for?" (2006, p.67). In this scene, Lear has a suspicion about the bread being poisoned. He distrusts his daughters as they betray him. When he learns the bread is clear to eat, Lear says his daughters have not sent a person to chase and poison him. Likewise, King Lear struggles to remember happenings around him. His dementia causes his mistakes. Lear's suspicion reminds the audience of the character of King Lear who is also betrayed by his daughters.

Both king figures become blind because of their ambition. The readers, being aware of the fact that Bond's play is a rewriting of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, realizes the trace of previous text in *Lear*. After his daughter's death, Lear says, "I must open

my eyes and see!” (2006, p. 79). His words refer to his blinded eyes during his reign of the country. He has tortured and been cruel to his people. In the process of moral maturation, Lear notices his ignorance towards violence. Lear reaches purification by going through greedy, immoral kingship. At the end of his mental journey, Lear metaphorically opens his eyes although he is blinded in reality. In Act II, Lear becomes more aware of his violence. In the scene of the autopsy, Lear states “[l]ook! I killed her! Her blood is on my hands! Destroyer! Murderer! And now I must begin again” (2006, p. 96). Therefore, Lear is guilty of the evil in his kingdom. In the same way, Shakespeare’s King Lear is blinded by power. At the beginning of the play, Kent warns Lear to “see better” (2011 p.12). His warning illustrates the excessiveness of Lear’s greed and ambition to have power. King Lear needs to open his eyes to see his faults better.

The character of Lear in both plays is described as the reason for corruption in society. King Lear is able to understand his corruption. “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.” (2011, p. 59). Shakespeare’s aim to create Lear is representing kingship. However, his Lear “had knowledge of social ills but chose to tolerate them by either remaining silent or turning inward to lament his own failure” (Bulman, 1986, p.63). Lear regrets all the violence he has caused, and he wants to destroy the wall. Despite the change of ruler, the construction of the wall does not stop. Lear is shot while trying to destroy the wall. He becomes a victim. However, in the beginning, he kills a worker for slowing the construction. Lear realizes the error in his belief. He is killed when he tries to fix it.

Although both Shakespeare’s and Bond’s characters achieve the realization of their mistake in the end, there is a great difference. After Shakespeare’s Lear understands his fault, he wants to be captured in prison. Bond’s Lear, on the other hand, attempts to correct his mistake, which results in his death. Bond, in *Lear*, focuses on Lear’s learning process and gives place to the minor characters. Bond mentions that even the minor characters are worth mentioning because they represent society. According to Hilde Klein (1989, p. 72), he goes through “progress from moral blindness and inhumanity to moral insight and humanity”. Depending on her statements, Lear has experienced a learning process. At the end of Bond’s play, Lear becomes a mature man being aware of his previous faults and tries to correct them.

Lear's process of realization is spread throughout the play. In the first act, his daughters betray him. The Gravedigger's boy helps Lear to hide from the soldiers. They finally find Lear, torture the Boy's wife, and kill the Boy. Lear feels misery but he does not open enough to understand the reason behind it. He is so self-centred that he does not realize he is the reason for all the misery of his people. In the following act, Lear sees Fontanelle's dead body. Then, he refuses the temptation of the Boy's ghost. Finally, Lear completely understands his mistake and wants to destroy the wall. When his daughter gives him a mirror to Lear in Bond's play, he is not able to recognize himself: "No, that's not the king ... This is a little cage of bars with an animal in it. (Peers closer.) No, no, that's not the king! ... Who shut that animal in that cage? Let it out. Have you seen its face behind the bars?" (2006, p. 90). After experiencing a psychological development, Lear rejects that the reflection is his own face. This quotation refers to his current position as an old king whose daughters obtain the reign by force. Later in the same speech, Lear says "[t]here's a poor animal with blood on its head and tears running down its face. Who did that to it? Is it a bird or a horse? It's lying in the dust and its wings are broken. Who broke its wings?" (2006, p. 90). Lear sees imaginary an animal that is bleeding and crying. His picture of an animal underlines that his despair after his daughters betrayed him. He regards himself as an animal with broken wings, which cannot fly. It indicates Lear's loss of power. Blood in his body refers to the deaths caused by Lear when tears is a referent to Lear's misery. Furthermore, Lear's words "there's no pity in this world" also mean his sorrow. Lear's process of mental journey in which he realizes the violence that he has caused leads to his misery.

Lear's difficulty in recognizing himself is one of the similarities with Shakespeare's work. The old king surrounded by the fear of madness after his daughter's murder, asks the question: "Doth any here know me? This is not Lear: / Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus/ Where are his eyes?" (2011, p. 31). Both of the characters lose their consciousness. Thus, they begin their journey to realize themselves. Before these scenes, Both Lear and King Lear are violent, corrupted rulers. The audience of Edward Bond recognizes the marks of *King Lear* in his parody. Lear's psychological development reminds the readers King Lear's attitudes. Bond, therefore, has rewritten Shakespeare's play to deconstruct his play.

King Lear and Lear have a supporter during the way to awareness. King Lear is supported by the Fool of his old palace. Shakespeare's Fool has the general characteristics of the jesters in his time, yet he is not actually a fool. During the Elizabethan Era, the fools were expected to cheer the King. He has to behave as if he was to fulfil the requirements of the environment. This old man needs to support Fool and endure the storm to learn. Only this way, Lear will be able to learn and be conscious of seeing the truth. The reason for Fool to behave like a real fool is based on the contradiction between madness and wisdom. When Fool reveals the truth as humour, the King does not get angry. He does not face the truth directly. The Fool appears as a mentor showing the reality through sarcasm and humour. The Fool tries to warn King Lear using foreshadowing. For instance, after Goneril expels him from her house, the Fool alerts Lear that his other daughter, Regan, will not behave nicely toward him. Besides, Shakespeare portrays the Fool as one of the loyal characters. Even though his elderly daughters disappoint Lear, the Fool has always been near him. Likewise, Cordelia, the loyal daughter, has been abandoned. The Fool struggles to illustrate that Lear's decision is a mistake.

Shakespeare's Fool and Bond's Ghost contribute to the realization of progress. Lear, in Edward Bond's writing, becomes a mature person. He accomplishes questioning and understands his condition. In his awareness, the ghost of a gravedigger's boy who stands with Lear in prison has a huge impact. Lear begins to see what happens around him after he goes blind. He criticizes himself trying to adjust his fault. "You've turned me into a king again" (2006, p. 98) he claims because his blindness opens his inner eye. Lear admires the life of Gravedigger's Boy since he is able to protect his family and does not suffer. Then, Lear attempts to keep his family safer. When his enemies arrive at the house, he helps the Boy's wife to build a wall made of sheets. Before the Boy is shot, the audience hears his wife's name for the first time, Cordelia. Regardless of Lear's effort to keep them safe, the soldiers kill the Boy. In prison, Lear tries to escape from reality. He regrets his evil behaviours. Thus, his mind forms a ghost representing the better times. First, he sees the ghost of Gravedigger's boy. Then, Lear hallucinates his daughters' ghosts as young innocent girls. The ghosts make Lear admit that he made mistakes during his reign.

In Derrida's deconstruction theory, he presents the contradiction between phonocentrism and logocentrism. With a general explanation, phonocentrism focuses

on verbal texts while logocentrism on written ones. Based on the claims of deconstructive reading, in Western belief, speech is considered superior. Derrida offers to deconstruct the opposition between speech and word. Likewise, Shakespeare is interested in speech in his popular play, *King Lear*. The use of language appears as a strong theme proving the power of the king over his people. King Lear in Shakespeare's play "uses the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I'" (Mahmoudi-Tazehkand, 2019, p.190). His imperative language use underlines his self-centred behaviours despite being the ruler of the kingdom. Language is the reason why King Lear does not believe in his daughter, Cordelia. While the sisters are trying to explain to which degree they love their father, Goneril and Regan use complimentary language. Cordelia, on the contrary, wants to speak sincerely and simply. Cordelia announces her love by stating that "[a]ccording to my bond; nor more nor less" (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 10). For King Lear, Cordelia's speech is not enough to express her love. Instead of using sincere language, he expects her to speak flattery in order to satisfy the king. Contrary to their sister, Goneril and Regan aim to benefit from the heritage of their father. Their greatest desire is to rule the country. Thus, in order to take the reign from King Lear, the elderly daughters use compliments while declaring their love. Goneril, for instance, says "Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter / Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty, / Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, / No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor" (2006, pp. 8-9). As it is understood from her speech, Goneril does not reflect her actual feelings. Her sister, Regan, benefits from Goneril's speech when she sees their love as equal. Without adding any special words, Regan wants her father to "prize me at her worth" (2006, p. 9) since they love King Lear at the same degree. At the end of his game, King Lear decides to give his heritage to his elderly daughters who clarify their love using false sentences. Thus, William Shakespeare positions the phonocentric thought claimed by deconstructive theory in a central place. His characters focus on the speech regardless of its accuracy.

Similarly, language plays a crucial role in Bond's *Lear*. According to Bodice, Warrington is a dangerous character. She wants to prevent him to talk about her letters. With Fontanelle's command, Warrington's tongue is cut. However, it is not enough for Bodice, who assumes that Warrington can find another way to speak. "He can't talk or write, but he's cunning – he'll find some way of telling his lies" (2006, p. 66). Fontanelle also believes in the power of language. After she is put in prison, the same

cell with his father, Fontanelle wants Lear to negotiate. She does not attempt to offer negotiation to the soldiers since she does not have enough power over them. She says “[t]alk to them! Say you know something the government ought to know. Promise them something. Anything. Make them – negotiate! – put us on trial! O father, you must think!” (2006, p. 94). Therefore, the characters of *Lear* are aware of the power of language. Edward Bond gives an important place to language use to reflect that Shakespeare dignifies speech instead of words.

### **3. CHAPTER THREE: REPLACING CHARACTERS: SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET AND STOPPARD'S ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD**

Tom Stoppard, as a contemporary absurd writer, benefits from previous writers, especially William Shakespeare. His reproduction of Shakespeare's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, focuses on the uncertainties of the source work, *Hamlet*. The writer does not provide extensive information about the physical and personal characteristics of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as their characteristics do not occupy a crucial place. Except for the title, Stoppard names his characters with the short version of their names. Besides, in his play, there are various dualisms. He presents life and death, illusion and reality, and free will and fate during the play. Guil has a more philosophical approach toward their existence. He constantly asks questions about the reason why they are spending time there. Stoppard aims to deconstruct into an accepted writing that emphasizes universality. His demand from the audience is to question and evaluate the events and the characters of Ros and Guil, whose fates are predetermined in advance. Both characters are not able to go beyond their destiny and limits. With these two characters, Stoppard actually opens a new window for his audience to see the predicament that they have escaped from or that they do not want to see. To deconstruct Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Stoppard reverses his character choice and binary oppositions such as free will/ determinism, protagonist/ ordinary characters, and existence/ non-existence.

Although Stoppard discussed Shakespeare's plot and characters, he rejects to put *Hamlet* in the central place. On the contrary, he deals with the minor characters of *Hamlet*, which are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He makes the minor characters, major ones in his play. Shakespeare privileges the nobles and puts them in the foreground considering Ros and Guil as "others" in *Hamlet*. Stoppard, on the other hand, supports the others rather than the nobles. He chooses them as main characters while giving *Hamlet* and other nobles secondary roles. Stoppard's play reflects the deceptive lives of people, who believe that there is an absolute truth, which is accepted by the whole world. In his play, Stoppard applies the narrative techniques of postmodernism including parody, metanarrative, and play within play. As a parody of *Hamlet*, play within play is used as an important technique in *Rosencrantz and*

*Guildestern Are Dead*. The theatre company that Hamlet uses in Shakespeare's play to reveal reality also takes place in Stoppard's text. Although Stoppard's characters are dependent on Shakespeare's play, The Player of the Company is seen as the only character who is allowed to act freely from the previous text.

Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildestern Are Dead* involves elements of the parody genre criticizing the reality of life and the themes of absurd theatre such as aimlessness and nothingness. The absurd theatre covers the examples of fool and madness seen in various Shakespearean plays. Stoppard presents Rosencrantz and Guildestern, two characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in a play where the concept of time is not clear, characters cannot establish meaningful relationships with each other, and they do not know how to react to events. While dealing with humour in his plays, Stoppard is inspired by Shakespeare's tragedies. These plays, with the pen of Stoppard, turn into new plays, which question the problems of the modern age such as meaninglessness, aimlessness, communication disorder, and memory loss.

Stoppard produces his works under the impact of absurd theatre. Thus, while writing the parody of *Hamlet*, the writer deconstructs the traditional tragedy. In his work, which is an absurd rewriting, uncertainty is used as a way to reflect the fundamental feature of absurd theatre. Throughout the play, the characters want to comprehend the reason behind their existence. They try to understand their mission. Yet, they are not able to obtain an answer. The world around them contains uncertainties. He does not give his characters a memory from their previous lives. As in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the characters have a duty to reach the royal castle to understand the reason for Hamlet's problem. However, they are not aware of their mission, which they remain questioning. They ask about the place they are coming from and the starting point of their journey. The characters remain to ask questions about their existence, which seems pointless. However, they fail to find an answer. They do not stop asking these kinds of questions to comprehend their past.

Playing game seems one of the most dominant themes in Stoppard's play. Stoppard uses coin flipping and question-answer games to contribute to the uncertainty of the play. The characters try to understand ambiguities in their life through the games, yet even the games do not help them. Ros and Guil use the games when they are given the responsibility of observing Hamlet's behaviours. The characters effort to



understand the reasons for Hamlet's strange behaviours by playing a question-answer game. Their attempt to interpret his actions is a reference to the original play, *Hamlet*. Through his characters, Stoppard analyse and criticize Shakespeare's writing. Moreover, Ros and Guil play another role-playing game to find a reason to accompany Hamlet on the ship. They are submissive characters who follow the orders of others. Therefore, they cannot refuse to go on the voyage, but they begin to question the reasons. The couple has the desire to reveal the reason behind the letter sent by Claudius to the King of England. This time, their game includes two parts. The first one continues until Ros opens the letters and sees Hamlet's death command. Then, pirates attack the ship and Hamlet escapes. Later in the play, the couple tries to find an excuse to explain how Hamlet gets out of the ship. For them, it is again time for role-playing. They want to decide what they will say to the King of England. The second part of their play ends when Guil opens the new letter ordering their death. All their plays indicate their inability to find reasonable answers.

During the play, Ros and Guil play various games. In addition to solving the uncertainties, Stoppard uses a coin-tossing game as a way to show hierarchy in society. Every time Ros flips the coin, it comes heads. A coin involves two different sides, heads and tails. "Heads" represents the powerful kings, rulers, and commanders who have authority and financial superiority. On the other side, "tails" stands for workers and ordinary people who are always under the ruler class. Heads are the winners of society. Hamlet is a member of the "heads" while Ros and Guil belong to the "tails". Repeatedly playing the game demonstrates that they do not accept the predetermined places in society. Ros and Guil try to spend time playing different games. They constantly ask questions that remain unanswered. As a result of uncertainties, many mysteries continue unsolved. Their game is interrupted when they meet a group of tragedy writers. After Hamlet's invitation, the group wants to perform "The Murder of Gonzago" which is a play set in a court. However, when they are preparing for the performance, the couple is suddenly seen in court.

The first act opens with a game of coin tossing. Ros and Guil repeatedly toss the coin, which shows heads every time. In the next act, they have a confusion about Hamlet's problem. The couple begins to play a game to solve their friend's bizarreness. The tragedians, whom the couple met in the first act, perform "The Murder of Gonzago". Its plot is parallel to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The play includes

the execution of “two smiling accomplices-friends-courtiers-two spies”. The friends accompany a prince on the way to England and they are betrayed. Without noticing the clues the inner play gives to them, Ros and Guil continue to their predetermined route. In the final act, Ros and Guil realise that the ship carries a letter from the Danish King to the English King demanding the death of Hamlet. Considering Guil’s philosophical characteristics, he questions the explanation of Hamlet’s death warrant. Ros, on the other hand, does not support the idea to carry his friend’s death precept. However, they do not prefer to take any action. Similar to *Hamlet*, Hamlet replaces the letter with another one. The new letter orders the death of Ros and Guil. Thanks to the confusion occurred when pirates attack their ship, Hamlet escapes from the ship. While discussing with the tragedians about dramatic acting of death, characters begin to disappear from the stage one by one. The final reminds the audience of *Hamlet* that all characters lie dead on stage. An ambassador comes to announce that Ros and Guil are dead without giving the details.

The opening scene of the play, containing a coin-tossing game, becomes the beginning of uncertainties. Guildenstern tries to figure out how long they are tossing. However, he does not reach any answer since Stoppard does not inform his characters about the events that happened before the play. After the game of coin tossing, Guil tries to search for an explanation for heads. He believes that it “must be indicative of something”. Uncertainty of his life, then, begins to disturb him. As Guildenstern is a philosophical character, he constantly attempts to open a sophisticated conversation. Similarly, his words, “[w]e have been spinning coins together since I don't know when...” underline that Guil tries to understand the meaning of his life questioning the absurdity of playing the same game (2000, p. 8). The characters do not know when and why they started the game because they do not have an exact memory. Ros and Guil are unaware that they are playing a game. The couple is surrounded by uncertainty, and this forms the essence of Stoppard’s play. Ros and Guil are always confused and unconscious; they play games and try to understand where they came from. While questioning the purpose of their life, Ros states that “[t]hat’s why we're here. (He looks round, seems doubtful, then the explanation.) Travelling.” (2000, p. 10). As Stoppard mentions in the explanation, Ros is suspicious. Subsequently, Guil mentions his thought about what is the first memory he can remember and about the reason for their travel:

GUIL: Practically starting from scratch... An awakening, a man standing on his saddle to bang on the shutters, our names shouted in a certain dawn, a message, a summons... A new record for pitch and toss. We have not been.. picked out... simply to be abandoned... set loose to find our own way... We are entitled to some direction... I would have thought. (2000, p. 10)

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to understand the logic behind their trip. They have limited information about their mission and the reason for their existence. Stoppard describes his characters who have no past, remembering almost nothing about their past. Their knowledge about the past contains only limited information given by the other characters in the play. As they do not remember their previous life, they have no choice but to believe in what they are told.

Likewise, another character, the Player is fully aware of the uncertainty of the world when he says, “[u]ncertainty is the normal state”. However, Guildenstern does not accept to be pointless and searches for a reason. When Guildenstern questions Rosencrantz’s memory, Rosencrantz has difficulties remembering what is in his mind:

GUIL: ...What's the first thing you remember?

ROS: Oh, let's see...The first thing that comes into my head, you mean?

GUIL: No - the first thing you remember.

ROS: Ah. (Pause.) No, it's no good, it's gone. It was a long time ago. (2000, pp. 6-7)

Stoppard refers to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* when Rosencrantz highlights “long time ago”. It is a reference to Shakespeare’s play in which Rosencrantz was also one of the characters. Stoppard directly quotes *Hamlet*. His aim is to arouse a realisation that both his play and Shakespeare’s play are fictional. At the end of Stoppard’s play, Ros and Guil receive a letter, which was changed by Hamlet. The letter writes that the King demands their execution. The couple gets confused thinking about the reason behind this demand. “But why? Was it all for this? Who are we that so much should converge on our little deaths? (*in anguish to the PLAYER.*) Who are *we*?”. Guil regards their death as “little” referring to Shakespeare’s play in which they are characterized minor. Likewise, the Player does not give them special personalities. “You are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. That's enough.” (2000, p. 114). Based on the Player’s speech, Stoppard only gives them names instead of personality, life, or memory. This situation legitimizes that *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a rewriting of *Hamlet* since the characters of the first play cannot live without the source play.

Stoppard tries to rewrite Shakespeare's play by applying new attitudes, events, and conversations. The royal family confuses Ros and Guil one another. Hamlet, for instance, gets confused when he calls Guildenstern instead of Rosencrantz. However, the play *Hamlet* does not contain similar confusion. Stoppard deconstructs Shakespeare's play considering the characterization, speeches, and rules. He adds new imagination to his work. His purpose is to show that Ros and Guil are so neglected that the nobles confuse them. In Stoppard's play, the hierarchal order has broken. None of the characters, including the protagonists, has a guaranteed place.

Although they are not aware of their mission to go to England, Ros and Guil want to understand Hamlet's problem. To overcome the uncertainty, which is reflected through the strange behaviours of Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern create a question game. Guil pretends to be Hamlet when Ros asks him questions. In the end, Ros summarizes what he understands from the game:

To sum up: your father, whom you love, dies, you are his heir, you come back to find that hardly was the corpse cold before his young brother popped on to his throne and into his sheets, thereby offending both legal and natural practice. Now, why exactly you behaving in this extraordinary manner? (2000, p. 42)

With this summary, Stoppard attempts to show that the whole plot of *Hamlet* can be given in a paragraph. Therefore, the play of Shakespeare fails to maintain its validity. Stoppard deconstructs the famous play to make his audience understand that there is always a new perspective. Thus, a certain truth does not exist. It can be always questioned and replaced. There are various references to death throughout the play. The characters have a tendency to live in an illusionary world. They try to find the truth by asking questions. The conclusion of their questions will be the truth is inconsistent. It depends on a person's perception. Everyone, then, has his or her own truth. There is no exact and certain truth.

Derrida's deconstructive approach focuses on binary oppositions. While analysing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* from a deconstructive perspective, it is necessary to mention the binary oppositions of the play. The characters of Ros and Guil are rooted in *Hamlet*. The least information to be given to the reader in the play is about these characters. Stoppard pictures them as noble characters. Yet, they do not belong to the dynasty. Thus, Ros and Guil are not important considering the other noble characters' behaviours towards them. By making the characters the protagonists of his play, Stoppard offers a new reading of *Hamlet* displacing the oppositions such as

royal/ordinary or protagonist/secondary role. Therefore, the author deconstructs the established thought in Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare emphasizes on the first side of the opposition. On the other hand, Stoppard focuses on the less preferred side of these contradictions. He highlights the ignored, neglected parts of Shakespeare's writing. While describing Ros and Guil, Stoppard describes them as two Elizabethan courtiers. This description gives the readers a clue about who are the characters. Instead of introducing them as humans, Stoppard asks his audience to regard them as theatrical characters. The play mentions the actor/ordinary person oppositions. In addition to protagonist / minor character opposition, other oppositions in the play that Stoppard reverses are determinism/ free-will, existence/ non-existence, and actor/ audience.

Stoppard rejects the traditional way of understanding. He deals with the historical event, deconstructs them, reviews them according to his ideas, and creates a new story from them. The protagonist is no longer a protagonist in his plays. The sympathy of the audience turns from popular characters to the ignored, neglected ones. The audience feels deluded by the original play. To deconstruct the traditional thoughts of the audience and allow them to think, Stoppard makes ordinary characters the strongest ones in his plays. In his play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the characters who do not have expectations from life, which is meaningless. They are not aware if they have any identity in Stoppard's play. Moreover, having an identity is not important for them. Regardless of whether they have a personality, their only knowledge is that they were born, they live, and after a certain time, they will die. As in *Hamlet*, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have no consciousness of their life, or whether they have any position in Stoppard's play. The author tries to reveal individuals who have remained within certain limits and oblivion by emphasizing the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Shakespeare overlooks these characters in his writing. Stoppard, on the contrary, argues that Ros and Guil reflect the individuals of society. He wants to exhibit the situation and position of ignored people in society.

Stoppard tells the story of two ordinary characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. These characters are unaware that Hamlet is ruled by the ghost of the murdered king. They do not know the social, political, or moral implications and consequences. Claudius not only ascends to the throne but also becomes the husband of Hamlet's mother. Ros and Guil have limited information about the newest events in the country. Their knowledge includes that they are wanted in the court of the King of Denmark.

Their responsibility is to help figuring out what happened to their childhood friend, Hamlet. Stoppard gives them a great responsibility beyond their abilities despite being the minor characters of the play.

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a parody play based on *Hamlet*. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor side characters in the play *Hamlet*, seem to be the main characters of the play, but they differ from the descriptions in Shakespeare's play. Despite all the efforts of these characters to find their identity, whose fates are predetermined in the event flow of the play *Hamlet*, cannot change their inevitable end. When they go beyond Hamlet, Ros and Guil begin to discuss why they are here, and how they can fulfil the duty given by Claudius. Consequently, they start to question their existence. The characters, as they are also the characters of *Hamlet*, observe the events from outside making comments as if they are the audience of the play. However, at the time when they are given a role in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, they have no choice but to follow their destiny. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Ros and Guil are requested to the court by the new king, Claudius. Hamlet begins to assume that they are assigned by Claudius. After finding a letter to the king of England demanding his execution, Hamlet escapes from the ship. However, before escaping, he replaces the letter with a new one ordering the execution of Ros and Guil instead of himself. As a result, they are executed which is later declared as a piece of minor news. Stoppard believes Hamlet deceives Ros and Guil and he thinks that Hamlet is mistaken to treat them as enemies. For Stoppard, they are innocent because they are not aware of the events around them.

Stoppard reveals the confusion of the two neglected characters of *Hamlet*. They are not able to comprehend or change the events that they are put in. The audience is already familiar with the plot of Stoppard's play because he is highly influenced by Shakespeare. He applies the plot structure as well as the characters. In this sense, *Hamlet* can be accepted as a meta-narrative that is deconstructed by *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Stoppard uses numerous devices involving play-in-play technique. He not only tells his story but also gives place to Shakespeare's story. He shows more sympathy for his characters than Shakespeare does. Shakespeare pictures Ros and Guil as the courtiers who betray their childhood friends. Nevertheless, in Stoppard's writing, they are innocent victims of murder who are not able to understand their death.

Considering the title of Stoppard's play, a question arises: Are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern already dead? Stoppard gives his audience the end of his story with the name of his play. However, his fundamental purpose is to refer to the original work, *Hamlet*. Although Stoppard does not provide specific information about his characters, the audience understands from the flow of the play that it is connected to Shakespeare's play. Stoppard criticizes Shakespeare as he does not attach importance to his minor characters. Therefore, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* performs a similar ending in which Ros and Guil die due to Hamlet's betrayal. Furthermore, in Stoppard's world full of uncertainty, the death of Ros and Guil appears as the only certain event. Therefore, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are already dead in *Hamlet*.

The title of his play contributes to another dominant binary opposition in the play, determinism/ free-will. Stoppard argues the predetermined fate of the characters as he mentions in the name of his play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. The name of the play suggests that the characters do not have a choice except for living their fate. Every event in the play "is predestined in a number of ways, most obviously because there is no future for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern but their death, in spite of their attempts to imagine an alternative" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 46). Accordingly, Ros and Guil fail to find an alternative future other than following what is written for them. In *Hamlet*, the audience meets Ros and Guil when they are with Hamlet. Then, their existence is dependent on Shakespeare's Hamlet. The situation continues the same in Stoppard's play in which Ros and Guil's existence also depends on Hamlet. Since he changes the letter commanding his death with the one commanding Ros and Guil's death, Hamlet determines their end.

The opposition between free will and fate shows itself within the uncertainties throughout the play. The audience witnesses the uncertain journey of Ros and Guil ending in death. The uncertainty of death is the last point of the uncertainties. These two characters also experience uncertainty about their own identities. They are not able to identify themselves. When the letter announcing their death decision is received, the characters do not oppose the decision, they do not attempt to reverse this decision. As their fate is determined, Ros and Guil do not take free action. By overturning the opposition between free-will and determinism, Stoppard deconstructs the theme of death. For Stoppard, the protagonists do not have a right to choose their end. Instead, he writes a sequence of events for his characters, from whom Stoppard wants to obey

the sequence. Although in the source play, *Hamlet*, the main characters are able to make a choice between right and wrong, Stoppard's play is absent from this choice. Shakespeare provides his heroes an opportunity to select murder or suicide. The first side of the binary opposition, which is free-will, is more dominant in Shakespeare's play as his characters have alternative choices. As for instance, Hamlet has the power to control his future when he considers suicide:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die-to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end... (2002, pp. 86-87)

In his speech, Hamlet disputes the meaning of existence, and he regards death as equal to sleep. Likewise, Claudius kills Hamlet's father in order to obtain the kingship. Shakespeare allows Claudius to change the fate of another character. Despite the free will of the major characters, the side characters such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, do not have an alternative reality both in *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

Shakespeare gives Hamlet the right to determine his identity and fate while he ignores the minor characters' destinies by giving his characters a chance to search for their identity. Stoppard deconstructs Shakespeare's approach towards them. According to Hamlet, a person is "[b]eing nature's livery, or fortune's star" (2002, p. 57). Accordingly, not anybody has an opportunity to choose fate. Through the end of Stoppard's play, Guildenstern comments on their destiny that was predetermined for them: "Where we went wrong was getting on a boat. We can move, of course, change direction, rattle about, but our movement is contained within a larger one that carries us along as inexorably as the wind and current" (2000, p.114). His speech reveals the fact that their destiny has been determined without any possible alternative. For Guil, accepting travel is the wrong choice. However, he is fully aware that there is no second choice. Besides, thanks to Stoppard's description of Guildenstern as a wise character who continues asking questions about their existence, Guil is able to comprehend that Ros and Guil are the least important characters in *Hamlet*. Stoppard criticizes Shakespeare for ignoring the minor characters with his characterization of Guildenstern who states that "[w]ho are we that so much should converge on our little deaths? (In anguish to the PLAYER.) Who are we?" (2000, p.114). Based on



Guildenstern's speech, their position in the universe of *Hamlet* is so negligible that the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is seen as "little".

In Shakespeare's play, the characters have an authority over their life whereas Stoppard does not provide his characters any choice. For Guildenstern, "[t]he only beginning is birth and the only end is death - if you can't count on that, what can you count on?" (2000, p.31). As shown in Guil's statements, he has accepted his predetermined end. Stoppard, thus, aims to deconstruct Shakespeare's approach toward death by preventing his characters to have an alternative end. For the characters, there is not any alternative way except for following the routes determined by the writer. They do not have freedom or free will. The last scene gives the audience some clues about their fate. Ros and Guil are on a ship from where they are not able to escape. The ship stands for their inevitable death. The ship is heading to a prearranged destination, England. Their limited world only includes the ship, symbolizing a prison, and a destination where they will be executed.

Tom Stoppard discusses the opposition between existence/non-existence. In his play, the protagonists appear as characters who do not have a background. Stoppard starts his writing in the middle when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern play a game. Ros and Guil do not have enough memory of their past. They remember a messenger who wakes up them to inform them that the King of Denmark wants to see the couple. Since they do not remember what they have experienced, the only source is what people tell them. They are completely dependent on the other characters' sentences to learn the past. Guil, as a questioning man, indicates his doubt:

ROS: ... We're his friends.

GUIL: How do you know?

ROS: From our young days brought up with him.

GUIL: You've only got their word for it.

ROS: But that's what we depend on.

GUIL: Well, yes, and then again no (2000, p.101)

Furthermore, since they do not have their own past memories, their identities are also dependent on others. As a result, they face an identity crisis. While introducing themselves, Ros gets confused; "My name is Guildenstern, and this is Rosencrantz. I'm sorry - his name's Guildenstern, and I'm Rosencrantz" (2000, p. 13).

As well as the characters, the noble people of the play confuse them. This confusion is a reference to *Hamlet* in which Ros and Guil are the minors. Other characters, except for Ros and Guil, have their identity. Thus, they have free will. Hamlet, for instance, escapes from the ship. Unlike him, Ros and Guil have to accept their fate. Their existence also continues in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. When Hamlet is not around them, Ros and Guil doubt their existence. Ros and Guil are in search of a trace in every event they witness or remember that reflects themselves. They look for their identity although they have difficulties remembering their past. Guildenstern tries to understand what happens around them. Despite his questions to Rosencrantz about his memories, Ros remains unconcerned. Guil explains what he remembers:

The sun came up about as often as it went down, in the long run, and a coin showed heads about as often as it showed tails. Then a messenger arrived. We had been sent for. Nothing else happened. Ninety-two coins spun consecutively have come down heads ninety-two consecutive times ... and for the last three minutes on the wind of a windless day I have heard the sound of drums and flute... (2000, p. 8)

This quotation underlines that the characters do not have a background. They hardly remember their previous life. According to Joseph E. Duncan, “[t]he music heralds the Tragedians, the first characters from the entrapping *Hamlet* plot whom Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet” (1981, p. 61). Thus, the characters are trapped within the plot of *Hamlet*. Their existence is based on their position in the previous writing, not Stoppard's play. In Stoppard's play, the theme of fate is highly effective. Regardless of their awareness of their existence, Ros and Guil are meant to live their destiny. Their death is the ineluctable end. Stoppard underlines that they are condemned to Shakespeare's plot of *Hamlet*. Ros and Guil persist in asking questions to find the meaning of their life and existence. However, they are not capable of comprehending their end. For them, it is enough to be identified as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern because they obey their predetermined roles. In the final act, Guil realizes their fate telling the audience “[t]here must have been a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said-no. But somehow we missed it”. This act is the most different from *Hamlet*. In Shakespeare's play, the audience does not witness the travel to England. Instead, Hamlet narrates his adventure, which has happened off-stage. Stoppard aims to put Ros and Guil's confusion on stage. He writes the final part, inspired by Hamlet's narration, to show the couple's unaware voyage toward their death.

The fact that Ros and Guil do not have a correct memory and that they cannot be sure about anything about the past cause the characters to experience uncertainty about their identity and even to lose their identity. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern often forget who they are. The fact that the characters forget their own names is the most important sign that they have lost their identity. Jim Hunter compares *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in terms of identity:

Hamlet himself, in Shakespeare, is a brooding intellectual, questioning everything: already what in the 1950s was called an anti-hero. Stoppard effectively transfers such doubts to Ros and Guil: in this modern view, attendant lords have minds and feelings too. Additionally, they are far more likely than a tragic hero to experience problems of identity. Shakespeare doesn't even allow Rosencrantz and Guildenstern separate personalities. (2000, p. 23)

The difference between Shakespeare and Stoppard is the character choice. Stoppard gives the characteristics of Hamlet to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern while putting them into the centre. In the opening scene of *Hamlet*, Bernardo asks, "Who's there?" (2002, p. 1) referring to the search for identity throughout the play. On the other hand, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* begins with the coin-flipping game as a referent to fate as a lack of identity. Stoppard provides the characters with a new identity who are previously insignificant. His play concerns the characters within the scope of *Hamlet*.

Derrida underlines the idea that each text has the trace of previous texts. According to his claims, it is possible to see the marks of the original texts in the rewriting. Considering Derrida's theory, as Tom Stoppard reproduces Shakespearean play, the audience recognises the trace of the source work. In Stoppard's play, the traces are seen in terms of his description of characters and speeches. At the beginning of the play, Stoppard portrays "two Elizabethans passing the time". The audience is not aware of the fact that it is a rewriting of Shakespeare's play because Shakespeare does not give major roles to Stoppard's protagonists. Two characters play the coin-tossing game repeatedly until Shakespeare's major characters appear with their words in *Hamlet*. By using Shakespeare's sentences directly, Stoppard tries to arouse awareness about the characteristics of the plays, which are illusionary. The first act begins with the game played by Ros and Guil with their moneybags. Although Shakespeare does not assign them distinguishing personalities, Stoppard pictures his characters with unique characteristics. The author portrays Ros as a shy and thoughtful man. Guil seems very comfortable despite being aware of the events. For instance,

seeing the heads ninety-two times is against the laws of physics. Even though he realizes this truth, he does not give up playing. It shows their personality from the beginning. Stoppard gives the information that “[t]he run of "heads" is impossible, yet ROS betrays no surprise at all - he feels none” (2000, p. 1). Guil argues that nothing can change the fact that life starts with birth and ends with death. He accepts the unchangeable fate.

While writing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard specifically benefits from the method of intertextuality. Using postmodern techniques such as intertextuality contributes to Derrida’s theory offering the concept of trace. Thanks to referring to the other writings, Stoppard increases the traces in his play. To obtain intertextuality, Stoppard borrows some parts from previous works and presents them to his audience after adding his creativity to the existing text. The characters in Stoppard's play sometimes have no recollection of the past, and sometimes they have no idea about their discussions and communications. This situation is an explanation of the fact that the characters have a confusion about their identity as they did not have any important place in the previous text and Stoppard gave them a significant position in his play. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are portrayed with their Elizabethan lines in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, while in Stoppard's work, they are known as characters who speak contemporary English and evaluate the events happening around them. Stoppard tries to bring together different worlds and periods within the framework of postmodern discourse. He reflects both the real world and stage life in his play. The duties and aims of Ros and Guil, who do not have the authority to change, are obvious. The couple does not seem to have a specific purpose to achieve any goal except for the ones they have been told. Stoppard allows them to question in his play. His main purpose is to establish a connection between his characters and the audience. In fact, he wants the readers to question the uncertainty of life.

In most of the scenes, Stoppard also uses intertextuality to underline that both his play and Shakespeare’s play are fiction. The similar conversations used in the two plays stress Derrida’s argument about trace. He interrupts Ros and Guil’s scenes with Shakespeare’s major characters who use the same utterances as *Hamlet*. Stoppard mostly writes new speeches for Ros and Guil while keeping his minor characters’ speeches. As the play continues, Guil’s disturbance about the writer’s interrupts shows itself: “As soon as we make a move they'll come pouring in from every side, shouting

obscure instructions, confusing us with ridiculous remarks, messing us about from here to breakfast and getting our names wrong” (2000, p. 78). Stoppard’s purpose is to criticize Shakespeare’s play in terms of the places of the characters. Ros and Guil are neglected and put in a secondary place in *Hamlet*. For Stoppard, they are under the control of nobility. He wants to deconstruct the social classes making Ros and Guil the protagonists. Yet, they are still confused and ignorant men. Moreover, Stoppard benefits from the speeches of characters in Shakespeare’s play to make a parody of *Hamlet*. He directly quotes the dialogues, but he does not refer to the same meaning. To give an example, Stoppard takes the speeches of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when they are welcomed by Claudius and Gertrude:

ROSENCRANTZ: Both your majesties  
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
Put your dread pleasures more into command  
Than to entreaty.  
GUILDENSTERN: But we both obey,  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent  
To lay our service freely at your feet,  
To be commanded. (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 69; Stoppard, 2000, pp. 27-28)

In *Hamlet*, the utterance is presented to the audience who has been already aware of Hamlet’s tragic difficulty to uncover the reality behind his father’s death. On the contrary, Stoppard’s audience is given the same dialogue right after Hamlet enters the scene and behaves strangely. Therefore, the reason why Ros and Guil accept the duty given by the King and Queen is understandable to Shakespeare’s audience. However, in Stoppard’s play, the scene contributes to the uncertainties of the play, as the audience does not comprehend the reason behind Hamlet’s behaviours.

Besides, Stoppard copies other parts of *Hamlet* by adding direction to the conversations. Despite using the same dialogues, Stoppard aims to raise a different effect on his audience. At this point, another binary opposition occurs for Stoppard to deconstruct. When Shakespeare focuses on his actors with the aim of reflecting the play as if it was a reality, Stoppard believes that his play is an imaginary world. Therefore, he includes directions to the speeches of Shakespearean characters. Stoppard emphasizes the ignored side of the opposition which is the audience. Stoppard wants his audience to be a part of his play. In order to accomplish his aim, the writer directs the readers:

*He [GUIL] turns upstage in time to take over the conversation with CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE and ROS head downstage.*

GERTRUDE: Did he receive you well?

ROS: Most like a gentleman.

GUIL: (*returning in time to take it up*) But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROS: (*a flat lie and he knows it and shows it, perhaps catching GUIL's eye*) Niggard of question but of our demands most free in his reply. (2000, p. 64)

Although Stoppard takes the verbal utterance the same as Shakespeare, this scene involves some differences. Contrary to *Hamlet*, in which all the characters enter the stage at the same time according to the directions, in Stoppard's play Ros and Guil are on the stage. This difference underlines the fact that Stoppard gives the most significant roles of his play to Ros and Guil because the King and Queen go to them, unlike Shakespeare's play that puts the dynasty in the central position. Besides, Stoppard helps his audience to understand the real meaning of Ros and Guil's speech. Via using the stage directions, Stoppard deconstructs *Hamlet* since he destroys the ultimate, certain meaning of a text.

In deconstructive theory, Derrida rejects the logocentric idea of Western thought. Similarly, Stoppard does not present a certain and logocentric text having a definite meaning. Instead, he challenges his audience with ambiguity. Stoppard offers his readers to be a part of the play to discover the meaning. Metaphysics of presence is not valid in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as the characters are claimed dead before the play begins. Stoppard eliminates this opposition through his characters. Before being the protagonists of his play, Ros and Guil have died in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which refers to their absence. In Stoppard's play, the audience encounters them showing their presence. Thus, Stoppard deconstructs the traditional opposition between presence and absence. The writer underlines the fictionality of drama. For him, a dramatic text does not have a responsibility to carry the values of previous periods. Supporting this idea, he deconstructs Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In the coin-flipping game, Stoppard also deconstructs the physical and mathematical rules of the world. The coin consecutively shows heads without any exception. Guildenstern applies the law of probability, a mathematical formula, to explain how the situation is absurd:

GUIL (musing): The law of probability, as it has been oddly asserted, is something to do with the proposition that if six monkeys (he has surprised himself) ... if six monkeys were... The law of averages, if I have got this right, means that if six monkeys were thrown up in the air for long enough they would land on their tails about as often as they would land on their - (2000, pp. 2-3)

This quotation is an important example of the fact that the characters are in search of the truth and difficulty to find the truth. Therefore, the truth can never be easily obtained in one way. It shows the unreliability of the accepted truth. Tom Stoppard questions the widely accepted laws such as the law of probability by deconstructing them. For him, the world cannot be explained with established rules as there are multiple truths.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern take place in Shakespeare's play as Hamlet's friends who are given a duty to observe Hamlet. However, Hamlet causes their death. Unlike Shakespeare, Stoppard's text, placing Ros and Guil at the centre of his own play and giving them the primary roles, is not enough to change their end. Likewise, at the end of the play, the audience witnesses Hamlet's tragic death. Although his death is considered the death of a tragic hero because he is a representative of the noble class, the death of Ros and Guil is not given importance. Stoppard's purpose in Ros and Guil's death is to question whether a character can be a tragic hero in the modern age. As Shakespeare's play was produced during the Elizabethan Era, it contains an order created by the writer. Shakespeare's tragedies require a tragic hero whose death is pictured as the most significant event of the play. In Stoppard's play, he combines traditional tragedy with the concept of Absurd Theatre showing his audience that tragic endings do not exist in this age. The world created by Stoppard does not include criteria to distinguish between right and wrong, real and unreal. The world is represented as a place where value judgments, which are accepted as real, turn into illusions. The identity of humans has transformed from being an unchangeable and understandable reality to a concept that needs to be reconsidered and redefined. Following the deconstructive reading, Stoppard replaces his new approach to the events with Shakespeare's approach.

Stoppard indicates the contradictions through his characters, and he deconstructs Shakespearean characters. Ros and Guil, like every tragic hero, face their tragic ends, death, at the end of the play. When compared to the traditional tragic hero, Ros and Guil become the parodies of tragic heroes, as they are not capable of being real ones. In a traditional tragedy, the tragic hero has free will to choose his actions. This action is generally called a tragic mistake; it destroys the balance of the world. At the end of the play, the balance of the world is re-established with the death of the tragic hero. However, instead of acting according to their free will, Ros and Guil do

not even know exactly who they are, where they are, and what their aim is. In *Hamlet*, Ros and Guil do not seem to have an important effect on the play. If their characters are removed from the play, the story and flow of events do not completely change. Hamlet experiences his tragic end again.

In the script of *Hamlet*, Denmark has been corrupted as understood from Marcellus's statements; "[s]omething is rotten in Denmark" (2002, p. 58). From this decay, Hamlet is seen as the only character who is an exception. In Stoppard's play, however, Hamlet becomes a part of decay after changing the content of the letter and causing the death of Ros and Guil. They are not involved in any court intrigue in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Even when they read the original letter, they question if they are able to change the situation. Tom Stoppard, then, reads Shakespeare's play from a different angle. As he finds problematic issues, Stoppard applies deconstruction to bring a new approach toward Shakespearean play. In the postmodern world, in which Stoppard produces his masterpieces, meta narratives lose their power, and are replaced by parodies.



## CONCLUSION

Drama has been among the most influential literary genres regardless of whether it is tragedy or comedy. As the literary period changes, drama has witnessed differences. Undoubtedly, William Shakespeare is among the most significant figures in drama whose plays are frequently rewritten by the following writers. Postmodern literature has caused various literary criticism that rejects the idea of absolute truth. Among the theorists who do not agree with the previous myths of literature, Jacques Derrida coined new terms the literary theory named deconstruction. In a deconstructive reading, Derrida offers to re-read a text from a new perspective. The deconstruction technique asks the readers to analyse the fact that there is no absolute truth, especially the truths that seem to be certain in Western metaphysics, by approaching them from different angles. Derrida underlines that the audience is faced with ambiguities while he expresses that any text carries various meanings. Therefore, there is no single and absolute meaning or truth for Derrida. According to Derrida, every written text is a trace of previous texts. Even after it is deleted, the trace remains. Then, a new literary text both has the trace of previous writings and becomes the source of trace for the following texts. Furthermore, binary opposition is a key term in deconstructive reading. Derrida argues that binary oppositions are seen in a text.

The results of this dissertation indicate that a universal truth which maintains its validity throughout the history is not more than a delusion. The position of knowledge, language, and literature has been replaced. The meaning in the postmodern era is dependent on the perception of the addressee. Likewise, deconstructionist approach focuses on the association of a text whose signifiers and signifieds are connected. Deconstruction focuses on the alternative perspectives as in its position against binary oppositions. Accordingly, in the case of *Lear* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, the status of the oppositions is questioned. As an instance, Edward Bond targets on chaotic conditions in Lear's country while Shakespeare on the order. Furthermore, he is interested in evil as the reader can realize through the characterization such as Cordelia. Similarly, Stoppard's concern is the ignored parts of the oppositions in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He provides a central place to the minor and neglected characters while Shakespeare ignores them. He establishes his play on the unknown

and ambiguity. The oppositions including existence/non-existence or reality/fiction makes it possible to be read concerning multiple truths.

Edward Bond has rewritten it to deconstruct the stereotyped beliefs in Western philosophy. Bond's *Lear* adds new a plot and characters to the previous play despite the similarities between them. Bond's main purpose in rewriting Shakespeare's play is to recontextualize it in terms of social differences. According to Edward Bond, Shakespeare cannot successfully reflect the conditions of his period. Therefore, his plays are necessarily deconstructed to represent postmodern times. Bond believes that Shakespearean plays have become meta-narratives whose influence has decreased. If a critic approaches the worlds of Shakespeare and Bond, she/he would realize that they have experienced completely different periods. Shakespeare produced his plays under the influence of the Medieval Era when Bond's parodies are seen in the postmodernist period. With this difference, Bond tries to show his audience that Shakespeare does not belong to all literary periods. His texts have lost their validity. Bond focuses on the social problems that remain unsolved in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. He emphasises that the authors are not only responsible for dealing with the social issues but also for offering them some solutions. For Bond, Shakespeare has dramatized the rise and fall of a powerful person, portrayed this fall as destiny and kept the other characters ignored. The writer takes the tragedy from a personal dimension to a social dimension while criticizing Shakespeare's treatment of the old king. Lear is the reason behind the violence, who imprisons his community. However, Shakespeare does not deal with his king as a violent old man.

Concerning the deconstructive reading of Derrida, binary oppositions and trace are seen as deconstructed elements in Edward Bond's *Lear*. Firstly, the most recognizable binary opposition that the writer reverses is order/chaos. In the original play, Shakespeare highlights the value of keeping order in society. On the other side, Bond underlines the events causing chaos in his play. For instance, the image of the wall stands for the chaotic environment that Bond deconstructs. His intention is to reveal that peaceful society in the Shakespearean play is false when Bond's *Lear* builds a wall for protection and peace. Instead, the wall becomes the reason for violence and chaos. Following this opposition, another opposition occurs, good/evil. Shakespeare focuses on the good side of his characters although they make mistakes. At the end of his story, the goods are rewarded when others are punished. Bond,

however, continues to discuss evil in his rewriting. Even his good characters, like Cordelia, evolve from goodness to evil. For reflecting the theme of evil in his play, Bond uses more violent scenes on stage. As a noteworthy binary opposition in the play, the contradiction between Marxism and capitalism requires to be examined. Fundamentally, the Marxist approach in literature necessitates the representation of all social classes in a literary work. Yet, Shakespeare's tragedies do not provide a place for lower-class characters. In opposition, Edward Bond asserts that a playwright needs to concern with the lower-class people who establish a society. Thus, his play contains characters from higher and lower classes.

Along with binary oppositions, *Lear* carries the traces of previously written *King Lear*. Despite living in different fictional universes, *Lear* and *King Lear* show similar characteristics. As an example, both writers picture their main characters suffering from mental problems. *Lear* has paranoid schizophrenia while *King Lear* is under the influence of amnesia. Their common point in mental issues is that they cannot distinguish reality and imagination. Besides, Bond characterizes *Lear* benefiting from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Two of the characters from different plays follow the same progress of realization. They understand the fault that causes disorder and try to correct themselves.

Except for *King Lear*, *Hamlet* is also one of the most rewritten and adapted plays in the literature. The play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, written by Stoppard based on *Hamlet*, takes its place among the best plays of the last century. As a postmodern writer, Stoppard benefits from postmodern techniques including intertextuality, parody, and satire. Although Shakespeare has an influence on Stoppard considering his parodies, Stoppard's play differs from *Hamlet*. The most eye-catching difference is seen in his character choice. By using the characters Ros and Guil, Stoppard mirrors the powerlessness, meaninglessness, and aimlessness of the postmodern world. The audience of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* watch the play of *Hamlet*, which has turned into a legend, with a new and different interpretation from the perspective of Ros and Guil, the two insignificant characters of the play.

In his famous parody, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Stoppard applies deconstruction. For instance, he deals with binary oppositions, such as free will/fate, and protagonist/ordinary characters. When compared to *Hamlet*, Stoppard's

text does not give its major characters the freedom to determine their future. In both plays, characters except for Ros and Guil has free will and identity. Following Hamlet's speeches, it is realized that Hamlet is given the power to choose his path. In Shakespeare's text, Hamlet mentions suicide. Moreover, his father is murdered by Claudius. Therefore, Shakespearean characters are given the authority to change the future of the characters. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are pictured as unimportant secondary characters who have no conscious choice. Although Stoppard provides these minor characters primary roles in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, they remain weak. Hamlet, on the other side, continues to use his power to determine. He causes Ros and Guil's death. Stoppard deconstructs the Western belief that the protagonists belong to the upper class by making the ordinary characters his protagonists. Moreover, the writer ignores the aristocracy in his play.

Traces of *Hamlet* as a source book are followed throughout Stoppard's rewriting. The foremost mark is the character choice. Stoppard takes Shakespeare's characters, who are already known by the audience. As his audience recognizes these characters, he does not introduce them. Intertextuality helps Stoppard to connect his play to the previous one. Besides, he directly copies the speeches of *Hamlet* in his play. In accordance with Derrida's theory of deconstruction, Stoppard discovers the oppositions in Shakespeare's text to reverse them. While writing a parody of a well-known play, the playwright prefers not to mention the personalities of his characters with the thought that it carries the marks of the source play.

As a conclusion, deconstruction appears as a literary theory, which aims to replace the metanarratives. Using techniques such as parody makes it easier to deconstruct a text. To give an example, Edward Bond and Tom Stoppard approach Shakespeare's plays from a new window. While deconstructing *King Lear*, Bond fundamentally focuses on the ideological and social problems in Shakespeare's play. His critical view of the violence of Shakespeare strongly emerges in the last scene of *Lear*. In spite of spending his life building the wall, Lear tries to break down it in the end. He tells the people the truth that the idea of constructing the wall has been always wrong. He describes it as the source of all problems and corruption in his country. Stoppard does not follow the same strategy to deconstruct Shakespeare in his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Instead of changing the plot structure and

characterization, Stoppard prefers adding a fresh view to the almost same plot. He changes the positions of Shakespeare's characters.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahams, M. H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
- Aristotle. (2008). *Poetics*. (S. H. Butcher Trans.). The Project of Gutenberg.
- Arriola, J. L. (2006). *Postmodern Shakespeare*. Postmodern Filming of Literature: Sources, Contexts and Adaptations. University of Santo Tomas Publishing House. 549-616.
- Artaud, A. (1958). *The Theater and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press.
- Ayar, M. Z. (2018). *Writerly Texts Concolidates Incredulity Towards Grand-Narratives in Night Train by Martin Amis and The French Lieutenant's Woman by John Fowles*. NALANS, International Journal of Narrative and Language Studies Book of Proceedings, 130-138.
- Bate, J. (2001). *Shakespeare's Foolosophy*. Shakespeare in Southern Africa, 13, 1-10
- Bertens, H. (1995). *The Idea of The Postmodern*. London: Routledge. (2008). *Literary Theory: The Basics* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Best, S. & Kellner, D. (1991). *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Bond. E. (2006). *Lear*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Brawley, B. (1921). *A Short History of English Drama*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.
- Bressler. C. E. (1994). *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Bulman, J. C. (1986). Bond, Shakespeare, and the Absurd. *Modern Drama*, 29 (1), 60-70. <https://doi.org/10.3138/md.29.1.60>
- Culler, J. (1997). *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Literary-Theory%3A-A-Very-Short-Introduction-Culler/011729c451dc2be6a8db63e08c88c05df20a5310>
- De Saussure, F. (1959). *Course In General Linguistics*. New York: Philosophical Library.

- Derrida, J. (1981). *Positions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (1988). *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. (1997). *Of Grammatology*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. (2008). *Psyche*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Duncan, J. E. (1981). Godot Comes: Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 12 (4), 57-70.
- Eagleton, T. (2003). *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Minnesota: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Elsom, J. (1990). *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203359112>
- Faulconer, E. J. (2000). *The Word "Deconstruction". Different Notions According to Heidegger and Derrida*, <http://mural.uv.es/rovisan2/word.html>
- Greenblatt, S., & Abraham, M. H. (Eds.). (2006). *The Norton anthology of English literature* (Vol. 2). WW Norton & Company.
- Haber, H. F. (1994). *Beyond Postmodern Politics: Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault*. London: Routledge.
- Hendricks, G.P. (2014). *A Derridean critique of Logocentrism as opposed to Textcentrism in John 1v1*. *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 79 (1), 1-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/koers.v79i1.50>
- Holderness, G., Potter, N. & Turner, J. (1987). *Shakespeare: The Play of History*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Hunter, J. (2000). *A Critical Guide Tom Stoppard*. New York: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Hutcheon, L. (1988). *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Jones, D. R. (1980). *Edward Bond's 'Rational Theatre'*. *Theatre Journal*, 32 (4), 505-517. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3207412>
- Jonson, B. *To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44466/to-the-memory-of-my-beloved-the-author-mr-william-shakespeare>
- Klein, H. (1989). *EDWARD BOND: «LEAR WAS STANDING IN MY PATH...» - LEAR'S PROGRESSIVE JOURNEY FROM BLINDNESS TO MORAL INSIGHT AND ACTION*. *Atlantis*, 11 (1/2), 71-78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41055419>
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Mahmoudi-Tazehkand, F. (2019). *Language Kingdom in William Shakespeare's King Lear and Edward Bond's Lear*. *Critical Literary Studies*, 1 (2), 185-205.
- Malpas, S., & Wake, P. (Eds.). (2006). *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Malpas, S. (2002). *Jean- François Lyotard* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203986905>
- Miller, J. H. (2001). *Derrida and Literature*. In Cohen, T. (Ed.), *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*. (pp. 58-81). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511483134>
- Mitchell, M. (2007). *Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: Transformations and Adaptation*. *Sydney Studies in English*, 33, 39-55.
- Nettleton, G. H. (1914). *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1642— 1780)*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Nodelman, P. (1980). *Beyond politics in Bond's Lear*. *Modern Drama*, 23 (3), 269-276.
- Oppermann, S. T. (1991). *The Emergence of Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 8 (1-2), 33-50. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/huefd/issue/41175/497674>
- Prickett, S. (2002). *Narrative, Religion and Science Fundamentalism versus Irony 1700–1999*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Readings, B. (1991). *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Ribner, I. (1958). *The Gods Are Just: A Reading of 'King Lear'*. *The Tulane Drama Review*, 2 (3), 34-54. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1124951>
- Richards, K. M. (2008). *Derrida Reframed*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd.
- Shakespeare, W. (2002). *Hamlet*. London: Wordsworth Classics. (2011). *King Lear* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). İstanbul: Dejavu Publishing.
- Silverman, H. J. (2004). *Continental Philosophy II: Derrida and Deconstruction*. London: Routledge.
- Sim, S. (1998). *Postmodern and Philosophy*. (S. Sim Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Smith, L. (1979). *Edward Bond's "Lear"*. *Comparative Drama*, 13 (1), 65–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41152817>
- Stoppard, T. (2000). *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.



Sweetman, B. (1997). *The Deconstruction of Western Metaphysics: Derrida and Maritain on Identity*. Postmodernism and Christian philosophy, 230-247.

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today*. London: Routledge.

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Sena Nur YILDIRIM studied in the Department of English Language and Literature at Karadeniz Technical University between the years 2015-2020. In the same year, she was certificated in Pedagogical Formation at Samsun Ondokuz Mayıs University. She started the MA in the Department of English Language and Literature at Karabuk University in 2020. She graduated from the Department of International Relations, Anadolu University, in 2021. Currently, she works as an English teacher in Ardahan, Hanak.