SHAKESPEARE IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD: A STUDY OF SELECTED POSTMODERN PLAYS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Mohammed Hameed Majeed MAJEED titled "SHAKESPEARE IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD: A STUDY OF SELECTED POSTMODERN PLAYS" is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of PhD.

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a PhD thesis. October 25 2023

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FOREWORD

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ABSTRACT

As long as the canonical works of Shakespeare are in the mainstream, there are and will be numerous and continuous adaptations of his plays. Such extensive history of adaptations of Shakespeare's plays reflects various cultures and social movements throughout the time. Accordingly, he was often referred to as the Bard and revered in British society as a great genius. By applying adaptation theory, this study shows that the postmodern playwrights have reinterpreted Bard's plays to make them suitable for the postmodern audience by highlighting their social problems. In addition, by adapting Shakespeare's plays, the postmodern playwrights attempt to strengthen the marginalized Shakespearean characters to fit into the postmodern world. Thus, the present study analyzes adaptations of the Bard in the Western world, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) by Tom Stoppard*, The Merchant* (1976) by Arnold Wesker, and *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1988) by Ann-Marie MacDonald concerning the cultural and social context of the times in which they were written. Accordingly, it has been stated that adaptations have a vital role in producing concepts that are different from how crucial problems are addressed in classical works and their ideological bases.

Keywords: Postmodernism, William Shakespeare, marginalization, Tom Stoppard, Marie MacDonald, adaptation

ÖZ

Shakespeare'in kanonik eserleri ana akımda olduğu sürece, oyunlarının sayısız ve sürekli adaptasyon olacaktır. Shakespeare'in oyunlarının böylesine kapsamlı ve tarihi bir şekilde adaptasyon olması, zaman içindeki çeşitli kültürleri ve sosyal hareketleri yansıtır. Buna göre, 'the Bard' olarak anıldı ve İngiliz toplumunda büyük bir dahi olarak saygı gördü. Bu çalışmadaki temel amaç, postmodern oyun yazarlarının, marjinalize edilmiş Shakespeare karakterlerini güçlendirmek için bazı bağlam sorunları ışığında Bard'ın oyunlarını yeniden yorumlamalarıdır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Bard'ın Batı dünyasındaki adaptasiyon olan oyunları, Tom Stoppard'ın *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), Arnold Wesker'in *The Merchant* (1976) ve Ann-Marie MacDonald'nin *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1988), yazıldıkları zamanların kültürel ve sosyal bağlamıyla ilgili olarak analize etmektedir. Buna göre adaptasyon'un, klasik eserlerdeki can alıcı sorunların ele alınma biçimlerinden ve ideolojik temellerinden farklı kavramlar üretmede hayati bir rolü olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postmodernizm, William Shakespeare, marjinalleştirme, Tom Stoppard, Marie MacDonald, adaptasyon

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SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The study discusses the adaptation of Shakespeare's marginalized characters in postmodern selected plays concerning their cultural and social period, including existentialist, racist and feminist ideologies.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The main significance of this study is to show and demonstrate the changes that have been made and brought about and the essential aims behind them in three post-modern plays: Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* (1976) and Ann-Marie MacDonald *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1988) from the post-modernist standpoint by concentrating on the selected playwrights' deconstruction of traditional views of the time. To address the objectives of the study, the researcher applied Adaptation as a Post-Modernist theory.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Adaptation principles as postmodern practices are defined and illustrated with the support of encyclopedic and archival works through a literature review. The belief that adaptation has a major purpose in terms of constructing different ideas is discussed as well. In addition, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead ,* Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Ann-Marie MacDonald *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* are investigated by referring to the reinterpretation through text analysis in relation to social and cultural aspects.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

The current study applied a postmodern theory as its approach. In this study, two main hypotheses were taken into consideration. First, how the selected postmodern playwrights deconstruct the traditional beliefs concerning Shakespeare's works. Second, what changes the playwrights do to address the problems of their context and the reason(s) behind these changes.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

Studying Shakespearean adaptations has developed into a substantial topic of history throughout the decades. The examination of adaptive methods has shown that it entirely deserves academic consideration within the theatre. Nonetheless, it is hard to miss the shortage of knowledge and theoretical work on adaptations. Thus, this study examined Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead,* Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* and Ann-Marie MacDonald *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* from the viewpoint of adaptation by focusing on the deconstruction of the canonical works and how the postmodern playwrights reintroduce Bard's plays in the light of some context problems to strengthen marginalized Shakespearean characters.

1. INTRODUCTION

No man is an island,
entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main (John Donne, 1996, para. 3).

By quoting John Donne's most famous line, one can easily say that for postmodern playwrights, no text is an island. Throughout the history of literature, postmodern playwrights have proved themselves to be the cleverest borrowers when it comes to writing plays. In the postmodern era, Shakespeare's (the Bard) plays have been the subject of people's focus in drama, including scholars, directors, and dramatists. Hence, the outcome of this focus can be observed in the renascence of some of those plays. Nevertheless, this method of revival has not been, in all matters, a reworking of those plays, even though this occurred frequently. Thus, in many cases, some amendments were brought to re-form the plays to make them suitable for the situation of the society in which the plays were presented. It is worth mentioning that adaptation started in the Restoration and eighteenth century and since then has been going on. The process of adaptation till the twentieth century was usually executed in Britain. Some adaptations were accomplished in Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, in the twentieth century, this phenomenon has been turned into a world-wide practice. The most compelling evidence can be found in Bahum Tate's "audacious" adaptation of *King Lear* with its pleasing end; however, Tate was the only one of the playwrights who rewrote Bard's works. Over fifty adaptations on stage and in print appeared around 1660 in which dramatists supplemented, considerably cut, or rewrote original plays in significant and different ways. Moreover, new scenes, characters, ending, and words with what the plays included had been staged (Thomas, 1997, p. 321).

Umberto in his book points out "…books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (1984, p. 20). This implies that literature is characterized by its repetition and interactive aspect, in which writings are constantly impacted by one another. Adaptation refers to the act of dealing with the same or comparable problems that were first raised by previous writings and then dealt with in new work. When it comes to writing, one typical phenomenon among authors is the urge to reintroduce a piece of artwork, which is to reproduce what is already an

existing literary work while also dealing with old subjects and problems at another time. “Palimpsests”, as defined by Gerard Genette, are a newer and recent text that may illuminate an older one by shining between the lines (1992, p. 40). In the same way, adaptation is described as “rescrittura” which means just a story constructed on previously popularized by earlier writers, in which old tales are reinterpreted in a new narrative form (Renato, 1989, p. 13). In other words, adaptation is the literary method of creating new pieces of artwork by relying on previously published work. By re-evaluating and altering the problems raised by earlier texts into newer literary writing styles via adaptation, distinct and new literary styles are produced as a consequence of this imitative element of literary creation.

Landa Hutcheon argues that adaptation is the portrayal of a work in an intra- or intercultural context in the same or a different context via “a twofold process” that is both “receptive and creative” (1942, p. 20). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymology source of the term “adapt” is adapter, which literally translates as to get it to fit or to alter to fit a new use. Stories develop and transform to suit new eras and “different paces” (Landa, 1942, p. 50). It is pointed out by Genette, who writes that adaptation is the portrayal of a work not just “in another media, such as when a play is converted to a ballet”, but also “within the same medium, as when a drama adapts another drama” (1997, p. 20). The theorist Linda Hutcheon believes that adaptation is both a “creative” and a “receptive” practice (2014, p. 50), with readers identifying and enjoying adaptations much more as a result of what Thomas Leitch defines as a “constant shifting back and forth between their experience of a new story and their memory of its progenitors” (2008, p. 74).

In fact, studying Shakespearean adaptations has developed into a substantial topic of history throughout the decades. The examination of adaptive methods has shown that it entirely deserves academic consideration within theatre. Nonetheless, it is hard to miss the shortage of knowledge and theoretical work on adaptations. The Theorists Fischlin and Fortier, who are experts in the field of adaptations, believe that adaptation works are a “marginalised and under theorized activity” (2010, p. 5). There seems to be little agreement on how to define adaptation. Certain critics have tried to understand and characterize theatrical reactions to the Bard, coining new descriptive ideas. Nevertheless, it seems as if there is no universally applicable and practical definition. In her study, Ruby Cohn attempted to summarize the various designations

in her theoretical work on theatrical reactions to Shakespeare, as she claims "rewriting of Shakespeare is known by an array of names –abridgments, emendations, distortions, adaptations, ameliorations, additions, alterations, versions, modifications amplifications, conversions, interpolations, augmentations, mutilations, revisions, transformations, metamorphoses" (2015, p. 3). Similarly, Julie Sanders indicates "mobility is an aspect of the study and terminology of adaptation" (2016, p. 20). In propping up this claim, she cites Adrian Poole's following list which seeks to describe the interest of Victorian age in reintroducing the artistic past: "borrowing, stealing, appropriating, inheriting, assimilating; being influenced, inspired, dependent, indebted, haunted, possessed; homage, mimicry, travesty, echo, allusion, and intertextuality" (2004, p. 2). In another study, Sanders offers additional suggestions of her own relating this practice "we could continue the linguistic riff, adding into mix: variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, continuation, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, re-vision, re-evaluation" (2016, p. 4). Consequently, the terms presented by Ruby Cohn, Adrian Poole, and Julie Sanders indicate a similar connection between these texts, as the significance and worth of the first text can be found in the second and the third one similarly. In using these terms together with adaptation, it is worth mentioning that these diverse ranges of terms are used to refer to the adaptation theory as they all reflect their own unique interpretations of the original material, indicating the range of possible interpretations that the author himself had. However, Ruby Cohn rejects these terms and chooses to employ the word "offshoot" (2015, p. 4). In addition, she identifies three "offshoot" classifications based on the adaptive practice they use. The first one consists of dramatic reactions that alter Shakespeare's texts by decreasing or changing certain sentences or phrases. The second one includes works that deviate significantly from the source text yet it includes a significant number of cuts, adds, and modifications. The last one is characterized by inventiveness and covers all changes as well as other transformations. It is the playwright's responsibility to transform the source work by introducing new figures, events, actions and even change the narrative, or come up with a completely different conclusion. To employ Cohn's phrase, the plays that are minimally related to their original works are represented by this final type of "offshoots".

Regardless of these less well-known phrases, the word “adaptation” has been used to depict the practice of transformation, appropriation, regenerating, and all of which have a significant impact on shaping the content (Sanders, 2016, p. 158). These phrases are often used interchangeably, but it is vital to note the places at which they overlap and diverge. The term adaptation is described generally as “... best understood for the purposes of this... transposing a previous work of literature, drama, or movie into a new setting” (Lane, 2011, p. 157). Under this respect, adaptation is a more general term that encompasses alterations inside any form or medium. According to Linda Hutcheon, adaptation is a comprehensive word that encompasses all forms of textual and literary reassessment within and beyond genres:

> an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works. This ‘transcoding’ can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance, can create a manifestly different interpretation. Transposition can also mean a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional, from a historical account or biography to a fictionalized narrative or drama (2014, p. 7).

As stated by Hutcheon, the term “adaptation” encompasses any sort of transformation, regardless of whether it occurs across a literary style or through the same literary style. Regarding the approach of adaptation in her statement on transcoding, adaptation includes the rewritten texts as is fully explained in her subsequent response in the same study: “when there is a shift in the context, remakes are almost always adaptations of the original” (2014, p. 169).

In their study, Fischlin and Fortier describe, in their book on anthology, adaptation as a general term that encompasses a broad variety of varied theatrical reactions (2010, p. 11). It is, without a doubt, the most often used phrase to define theatrical reworking today. According to Hutcheon, adaptation is an extensive, thoughtful, and publicized revisiting of a particular artwork (2014, p. 130). Because of the absence of a precise definition, it has become harder to identify whether a particular work is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s play or not. Lynn Bradley argues about the ambiguity of the word “adaptation” and attempts to define it more precisely. She asserts that Shakespeare's adaptation is the term that is used to indicate specific plays in which the writer’s job is to make an obvious link to the Shakespearean works. This connection could be in aspects of the language, plot, title, problems, or figures and it encourages the audience by asking them to make comparisons between the adaptation works and memories of the original work. The direct lineage that can be

traced back to Shakespeare provides the conceptual groundwork for this definition (2008, p. 5). For instance, Bradley accentuates the value of direct references and brings awareness to the rewriter's true purpose. While this explanation is somewhat ambiguous, it does assist in narrowing the definition of the word adaptation.

The works of Shakespeare are referred to as "original versions" and "source texts" by adaptation theorists. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that parts of the Bard's plays are in reality derived from earlier works of art. The Bard also used aspects from previous works and altered old stories to suit his own purposes. As it comes out, none of his plays are very "original". Nonetheless, Shakespeare has developed into a global symbol and his plays have received international acclaim throughout the decades. His works of adaptation are being used as the basis for new adaptations, demonstrating how relative the concepts of originality and uniqueness for him really are (Fortier & Fischlin, 2010, p. 5). Mark Fortier points out in a study on adaptations that Bard's ongoing distortion simultaneously appeals to a concept of the source texts' genuineness and produces a new perception of genuine identity by utilizing the Bard as an indicator of the credibility of individuality itself (Fortier, 1996, p. 13). As a result, adaptations of Bard's works have become a worldwide phenomenon.

Based merely on single or more Elizabethan works, Shakespearean adaptations often take aspects from them. While some adapters stick closely to the source material, others depart from it and add whole new features. Diverse adaptation techniques have found favor among adapters. All these options are available in an adaptation, which may either delete or add to the original play, eliminate characters, rearrange passages, or altogether transform the narrative of the Bard's plays. In fact, many of the adapters go far as completely subverting Bard's plays and reinventing the whole plot. The study of adaptations demonstrates the postmodern adapters' remarkable ingenuity. Shakespearean adaptations are perhaps a very vast area of study, and as mentioned previously, Ruby Cohn's triple categorization is overly restrictive, since it is incapable of defining the ambiguous postmodern dramatic reactions. Instead of classifying an adaptation into well-defined categories, scholars should attempt to place it on a "reception spectrum" (Hutcheon, 2014, p. 160) based on its relationship to the source work. On one hand, adaptations remain faithful to Bard's text, preserving the

narrative, language, and characters of Bard's version. On the other hand, some adaptations violate Bard's canon, revise, change, and reinterpret the source text.

Due to the ever-growing adaptations of Shakespeare's work, it is hard to acquire a thorough understanding of the scope of adaptation and adapting techniques. To fully appreciate the immense variety and ingenuity of theatrical adaptations, a minority group of scholars began anthologizing them. Putting together a collection of adaptations over the past four centuries has been a remarkable undertaking by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier. In their book, *Adaptations of Shakespeare*: *A critical anthology of plays from the 17th Century to the Present,* they go into great detail on various adaptations and, most significantly, offer a comprehensive list of titles for future research and consideration. Throughout this diverse anthology, a variety of answers to Shakespeare from different periods and other cultures can be found (Carson, 2002, p. 100). Fischlin and Fortier's goal was to provide a comprehensive review and encourage scholars to investigate other little known adaptations. Adaptations of Bard's works have been tremendously successful in Canada for the past four decades. Fischlin strives to keep up with the constant stream of fresh content by collecting information about Canadian adaptations and their writers. These inventories are particularly important for future research since they demonstrate the variety and pervasiveness of adaptations.

Numerous efforts have been made over the previous decades to define the precise relationship between Bard's work and their dramatic adaptations. Numerous scholars had examined at how adaptations affect the author and text of the original work. Nevertheless, many of them have thought in binary terms, and as a result, they have simplified the relationship between adaptations and their original works. The conventional approach puts the theatrical reactions into two major categories: adaptations are either giving respect to the Bard or uncrowning him. In the same manner, Hutcheon differentiates between Shakespeare's adaptations that are meant to be homages and those that are aimed at replacing canonical works of him (2014, p. 92). The theorists who embrace this view assert that many adapters want to replace and even subvert, whereas others draw inspiration from Bard's legacy to provide significance for their own work (Fortier & Fischlin, 2010, p. 6). In considering this opposition approach, several rewritings of Shakespeare express admiration for his canonical position, while some others take a more critical stance towards him. For

example, a satirical adaptation of one of the Bard's works both praises and confirms Shakespeare since it is wholly reliant on the source text and assumes the universality of Shakespeare without question (Bradley, 2008, p. 6). On the other hand, a play such as Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* apparently subverts and replaces the Bard's *Hamlet* by focusing on two marginalized minor Shakespearean characters.

This conventional binary opposition, however, no longer works since it has failed in depicting the complicated relationship between numerous postmodern plays with the Bard. For instance, the adaptation theorist Lynne Bradley argues for the abolition of conventional dichotomies and proposes a new model instead. Besides, Lynne claims that some postmodern adaptations represent a complicated double gesture that simultaneously honors and opposes Shakespeare (2008, p. 9). Many postmodern adaptations of Shakespeare demonstrate this new manner of engaging with the Bard. It is necessary to abandon conventional categorization to grasp their link to their theatrical predecessor. Intellectuals should alter the traditional model to broaden its scope of application. The deconstructing of the deep-rooted adaptation method has undoubtedly opened up fresh insights into the adaptations of Shakespeare.

Since they alter and subvert parts of Bard's plays, postmodern adapters have quite a complicated and ambivalent association with Bard. The plays of the Bard are sometimes completely transformed and parodied as a result of the general alterations that are made or they introduce new characters which are different from Shakespearean ones. These adaptations depart significantly from Shakespeare's original material and may even suggest a criticism of the source work. While these rewriters undoubtedly raise questions about Shakespeare's work, they also serve to reinforce his universality of him. Undoubtedly, it is a homage in and of itself when the playwrights refer to Bard's work. Also, adapters rely on Bard's legacy to criticize him. This dual approach of refusal and appreciation serves as the foundation for Bradley's new adaptation method (Bradley, 2008, p. 10). Even though postmodern adaptations criticize the source material, the adapters recognize and appreciate their theatrical predecessor, since they depend on his global appeal, and the reader's knowledge of the source text to determine the impact and distinction between the two works. Even radical adaptations, according to Linda Hutcheon, increase the worth of literary canon (2014,

p. 7). Even though the adaptation is destructive, it nonetheless owes much to Shakespeare since their idea is wholly based on the Elizabethan works.

Literary texts and works are believed to be "based on the existing structures, laws, and customs of earlier literary texts" (Allen, 2022, p. 1). When Greek and Roman dramas both drew inspiration for their tales from mythology and rewrote them into new forms, it would be easily realized that the process of adaptation as a literary approach predates both of those cultures. In the same way, most works of Roman drama are often regarded as Greek norms. It is worth mentioning that throughout the earliest periods of English literature, the famous traveling poem reciters who enjoyed embellishing the Homeric myth would add their personal unique twists to the story (Georges, 2009, p. 4). Such facts suggest that writers wanted to use earlier works to create new works of stories and this in its turn shows that literary imitation was a common practice at that time. Correspondingly, Aristotle proclaimed that the nature of imitation is embedded in the man from his childhood as "mimesis has not merely been a normal human behavior but in addition a pleasant thing…imitation is part of a system of different factors that human beings first generate (art) and enjoy it" (as cited in Woodruff, p. 73). Therefore, adaptation is assumed to have been prominent as it has made reviving literary works more interesting and pleasant.

Previously, many intellectuals regarded adaptations as substandard, unoriginal, or even treacherous imitations of classics. However, postmodern theorists such as Linda Hutcheon has supported the beneficial worth of adaptations. She explains that adaptation is taken off and appropriated from the original works, yet it is not inferior (1993, p. 251). Hutcheon refutes a widespread misconception and demonstrates that adaptations do not parasitize their ancestors. She explains that the process of adaptation is not in any way similar to that of a vampire; it does not drain the original text of its vitality, causing it to rot away or die, nor would it become less vibrant than the text that is being adapted. Instead, it might preserve that text for future generations, thereby providing it with immortality that it might not have had before (1993, p. 253). As a process of both formation and reception, adaptations draw on older texts and draw ideas from them to create new works. As a response to the original text and author, adaptations serve as an aid for the playwright's ideas.

The concept of the adaptation process is very subjective in literary history. Although there are opinions that only see adaptation as a plagiarist and mimetic process, others see it as a means of stimulating reflection and challenge. Regarding the controversial opinions about the process, Emig Rainer suggests that the problems of adaptation are similar to those of postmodernism (2012, p. 19), as postmodernism is indeed criticized for shifting far from the traditional norms related to literature. Those who oppose the use of traditional texts in false ways have also viewed the process of textual adaptation as questionable. Postmodern writers do not value and respect the former works and this, in its turn, provokes the problem of postmodernism which is marked by a lack of belief in "metanarratives and master" (Hutcheon, 1993, p. 247). Thus, adaptation requires working with former texts to produce and create pleasure or give new alternative ideas. The reproductions of the original literary works of art have made some critics with moderate opinions antagonistic to such literary reproductions. Some postmodern audiences who believe in the Post-Romantic philosophies which consider the author as a 'genius' and worship 'originality' have responded to "appropriation as artificially inferior creations" (Loftis, 2016, p. 50). In this sense, for them, the adapted works are considered poor art which tries to copy their supposed high-status texts. Adaptation reintroduces what already exists which is another uncreative and negative aspect of adaptation. As David Cowart shows in his book *Literary Symbiosis: The Reconfigured Text in Twentieth-Century Writing*, adaptation is a "guest text", whereby he indicates to sources text as a "host text". In this regard, he believes that the two texts (guest and host) are equally admirable. It seems that the new writers face the danger of becoming viewed by audiences as missing creativity; audiences might think that the creation of a guest text is not impressive just like the host text. However, the new writers with their "stolentelling" are not fruitless; they are proving to be sources of renewal (2012, p. 27). Thus, the word "Stolentelling" is used to refer to adaptation in which Cowart supports his work by suggesting that it is the product of literary ingenuity and performance. Also, Robert Jauss in his book *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* claims that previous texts 'old' could live to the present day and continue to be popular through the help of their rewritten forms.

literary works have no inescapable aftereffects that persist independent of it and from which a subsequent generations can never be freed. The only way a literary work may keep having an impact is through those who came after it and once again react to

it — either writers who seek to reproduce, surpass, or dispute it or readers who continue to borrow the previous text (2013, p. 22).

As a result, reproduction of the work is thought to be necessary for the expansion of literary works as well as in retaining the former texts to be updated. It is important to observe that in literature, critical observation is often vital for making way for diverse viewpoints and more current ones. According to Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle, the adaptation process provides a new and fresh feeling in reading similar and old texts as well as makes it the job of critics easy to predict newly fresh things regarding works of literature that have been debated repeatedly (2001, p. 236). This viewpoint supports the process of adaptation since various definitions emerge as a result of revisiting previous writings, and derivations enable literature to continue to be a productive place where innovative concepts may be embraced. In addition, it enables literature to stay fruitful and brings new thoughts and notions to the fore which can be accepted by the readers. In literature, critical observation is constantly necessary to create a place for new and more latest ideas to be included. New interpretations of former works must be sought, and new variants should be highlighted via adaptation use, rather than just reading them in line with their established and known meaning.

Every literary text, as Philip Thody believes in his book *Twentieth-Century Literature: Critical Issues and Themes*, is "reproductions and reflections of dissimilar work of others, earlier work...and how earlier images, structures or concepts can be incorporated into new frameworks" (1996, p. 86). Besides, in the sixties and seventies, Julia Kristeva and many other critics and theorists were advocates of adaptation and imitation works in literature. All literary works are recognized by these critics as imitation products. In the same way, the importance of the imitative nature of literary production is also confirmed by Roland Barthes when he concludes that every work is the inter-related of other work (1989, p. 60). As a matter of fact, adaptation is obviously viewed by the critics like Kristeva and Barthes as a necessary work. Barthes believes that the thing which delineates the quality of a work of literature is the adapting of a source text as he says that it is rereading, modification , and adaptation of a source text that bring it to life and create its history (1989, p. 62). Regarding Barthes's perspective, a practice has been seen as a standard that evaluates the continuity and durability of an original work in various literary ages.

William Burroughsis also another critic who considers adaptation as a key factor of literary regeneration. Burroughs believes that literary texts cannot be possessed by merely one author, but they must be utilized in a new context. He claims to not be shy about using other authors' work since it is among the best sources of inspiration for writers. Thus, if someone else came up with an idea, it does not suggest that you cannot take it and give it a fresh turn. Hence, adaptations might end up being perfectly acceptable work (1991, p. 80). As a result, adaptation has been regarded as expanding the narrow perceptions by presenting different and new conceptions from earlier sources that had been formerly established meanings. In contrast, it is worth mentioning that Sanders offers a declaration that stands against the fundamental viewpoint that regards adaptation as an unconvinced work of metanarratives, as she noted perhaps as with some of these more celebrity recognition of the potential of rap or sampling to foster a new aesthetic, we need to view literary adaptation and appropriation from this more positive vantage point, seeing it as creating new cultural and aesthetic possibilities that stand alongside the texts which have inspired them, enriching rather than 'robbing' them (2016, p. 43).

Accordingly, adaptation is often described as a creative method that assumed that rewritten texts might show the value and significance of the original work instead of ignoring its most important aspects.

Far from the opinions which indicate that the production of literary works is through the transformation of the texts, many other critics who note a specific fundamental structure through the works claim for the superiority of the classical texts. Thus, the main reason behind the disfavor against adaptations is the possibility of altering the fundamental convention of the source text, as it is important to the differentiation between production and reproduction for establishing power. Adaptations run the risk of erasing this distinction and undermining particular power structure... "copies may take over the works that are built on and end up being seen by some readers as the authentic works" (Mazdon, 1996, p. 51). Reproductions, nevertheless, are usually seen as less important and beneath the productions and kept in a minor stance that cannot endanger original works. In this regard, adaptation appears to work and serve as a power for producing literary works by simply changing the specified structures between writers and texts. Probably, the differences between

production and reproduction have worked as protection for particular works of literature.

When the original text is treated as the superior work, while the later work of that text is simply observed as an effort to replicate it, the rewritten work is invariably considered to be incomparable to the first written text in terms of its literary merit. Adaptation, nevertheless, does not acknowledge the supremacy of the prior work as well as its author as the only definitive entities; therefore, adapted forms assume recognition as being more important and richer as canonical forms. Giving supremacy and recognition to canonical works is believed to have a restricting effect on the new production of various points of view and thoughts in the later written works. In this regard, the adapted forms of famous and well-known literary works, in the case of ranking, operate as a barrier to literary production and ingenuity. Also, it assesses the genuineness of very popular canonical works by revealing and breaking their untouchable prestige. Adaptations are sometimes critical of their own 'original' source texts even though they are mostly criticized for subverting the 'original' source texts. In fact, adaptation is often seen as a process that mirrors the keen appreciation of the 'original' source texts.

Accordingly, Claude Maissonat et al. (2009) in their book state that adaptation practice revives and pays respect to the work of the prior writers as well as allows to observe the development of certain works during the history of literature (2009, p. 8). Thus, in the practice of adapting, the original work and its writer are also remembered, as well as the new work being compared to and assessed in connection to its initial source. Therefore, in this perspective, adaptation turns into a practice that broadens the range of potential readings without essentially omitting the original work from which it draws its inspiration.

It is debatable that adaptation primarily seeks to modify the 'original' source text whilst indirectly getting it to prominence over again. As mentioned earlier, adaptation indeed has a binary function that existed in the delusion of filiation (Maissonat et al., 2009, p. 11). It is worth mentioning that not every adaptation has subversive quality, and the significance of the source text 'original', clarifies or modernizes it to emphasize its importance throughout the literary ages. Hutcheon agrees with the idea that "adaptation is the repeating action but without replication.

Additionally, there are obviously a wide variety of motives that might motivate the practice of adaptation: the impulse to conceal the memories of the adapted work or cast doubt on it is just as probable as the intention to show honor by imitating it" (2014, p. 8). In fact, Adaptation has been regarded as a paradoxical process since the rewritten work investigates some of the aspects of the previous work and at the same time highlights the importance of that work. Adaptation is a dividing line between previous conventions and current ones. This distinction makes it feasible to evaluate the changing perceptions of the same problem through the perspective of two different historical periods. Apparently, between the past and the present, adaptation builds a passage in the forms of literary traditions.

Alan Sinfield in his book *Faultlines: Cultural materialism and the politics of dissident reading* relates an ideological role to adaptation since it might strengthen or contradict the ideological positions of its literary predecessors. Thus, the ideological stances of writers influence their analysis of the prior texts in this respect and choose the mode in which they create their own edition. The process of adaptation in accordance with Sinfield's interpretation is:

> The stories that require most attention- most assiduous and continuous reworking- are the awkward, unresolved ones. They are what people want to write and read about. When a part of our worldview threatens disruption by manifestly failing to cohere with the rest, then we must reorganize and retell its story again and again, trying to get into shape – back into the old shape if we are conservative minded, or into a new shape that we can develop and apply if we are more adventurous. These I call 'faultline' stories. (Sinfield, 1992, p. 46)

The ideological perspectives of the new writers determine the nature of adaptation as far as examining the validity of previous texts and the personal beliefs of the older generation writers are concerned. Although there is a chance of being criticized for plagiarism, new writers take a risk and focus on an already established text instead of formulating a new one, and in their turn, they demonstrate their desire to set up a dialogue with the narrative aspects. In this regard, adaptation produces an alternative (new) version of a preceding work that goes together with the objective and might alter (correct) its flaws. Through adaptation, as Philip Thody in his book *Twentieth-Century Literature: Critical Issues and Themes* indicates, literature has become a power for removing ambiguity and providing emancipation, and a medium to encourage the reader in realizing maybe not the truth itself, yet a distinct work of it that is less plausible, less impressive, and less confining (1996, p. 87). Actually,

adaptation provides freedom for the new writers to present a new if not better notion and brings fresh ideas for the new works that they feel the antecedent writers fail to notice in the 'original' source works. Adaptation might have a corrective role and this is referred to by the critics Maisonnat et al. when he alludes to the fact that adaptation might be also interpreted as a constant effort at healing gaps and violations (2009, p. 13). Thus, no work of literature is accepted as the ultimate final product following the postmodern theory, because there can be indeed gaps that need to be changed and shortcomings that require to be extracted from the previous literary works. In postmodernism, there is no absolute truth but multiple realities. The postmodern writers adapt their plays to make Shakespearean plays objective in nature. More specifically, adaptation has been seen just like an instrumental practice that is used to refill and replace the gaps that existed in the previous works of art.

Notably, many postmodern adaptations are so deep and multidimensional that they may actually operate independently. As a result, these rewritten texts might be interpreted as adaptations or as independent theatrical productions. Linda Hutcheon clarifies that an adaptation should be effective for both the informed and uninformed reader to stand by itself (2014, p. 121). Obviously, the audience who are aware of the similarities and differences between the adapted play and the original one will gain more significance from the performance; nevertheless, the audience who are unaware of the similarities and differences between the original and the adapted play could still enjoy the experience. These postmodern works stand on their own, even without considering intertextual delight (Hutcheon, 2014, 122).

As a result, adaption theorists still have a significant amount of work to do. The concept of adaptations, as well as the nature of adaptations, must be reconsidered by theorists. A constantly growing challenge confronts them, and they must continue to recognize and explain the different adaptive techniques that are now in use to stay ahead of the field. Moreover, it is required to revitalize conventional adaptation approaches to facilitate a broader application in the area of Shakespeare's reception. Postmodern adaptations of Shakespeare's works often include a dual attitude towards him; they simultaneously both honor and refuse him. Several playwrights have drawn inspirations from Shakespeare's works throughout the centuries. The production of anthologies and inventory of Shakespeare adaptations is particularly beneficial for future studies since Shakespeare adaptations are a continuing practice. According to

the researcher's perspective, instead of categorizing adaptations into strict taxonomies, every adaptation should be debated and assessed on its own merits.

Thus, in terms of potential applications for Shakespeare's literary plays across history, it is noted that the majority of his plays have undergone modifications and adaptations. Shakespeare is described as an exceptionally dynamic source for textual adaptation by Thomas Cartelli, who believes that Shakespeare's works have been put into many different forms of adaptation (2013, p. 23). Since the nineteenth century, adaptations of his works in a variety of media, such as new plays, films, and novels, have been created. To highlight the Bard's influence on the development of modern written works and emphasize the idea that his plays have become subject to reinterpretation, it has been believed that Shakespeare is opened to deformation and fragmentation, as his works were performed, revised, copied, and shared throughout Europe (Burt, 2007, p. 743). Accordingly, Bard's texts are subjected to several adaptable forms since there is no official copy that supersedes their versions. In fact, his works have been used by authors for a variety of reasons throughout literary history, often in the type of cinema adaptations and other times in literary adaptations.

Marjorie Garber in her statement says that Shakespeare is the most referenced and quoted playwright of every period since the English Renaissance (2014, p. 3). It is essential to examine how Bard's status as the most well-known author of all time is sustained, as well as why late authors seem to be so fascinated by adapting his masterpieces. An argument for the apparent interest in his plays is that he supplied the following generations with a variety of rich content since his plays cover a range of different subjects, including social, political, and historical ones. This argument is often used in connection with the idea that Shakespeare is a distinctive playwright. Even significant writers of English literature typically ranked Shakespeare higher than other authors in terms of literary development, as demonstrated by Benjamin Jonson who was frequently cited, they remarked to the Bard as a playwright, but it is not meant to be for a specific time age; rather, he is a writer for every age (1947, p. 392). Shakespeare's writings, according to Jonson, were more akin to the classics. His extensive literary output helped shape future periods, and his work was similar to classical authors.

Shakespeare's fame rose in later eras, with the romantic poet and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge being a particular fan. He described Shakespeare as follows: "He is of no age, nor, I may add, of any religion or party or profession. The body and substance of his works come out of the unfathomable depths of his own oceanic mind; his observation and reading supplied him with the drapery of his figures" (1905, p. 301). As per Coleridge, Shakespeare never was a spokesperson for any philosophy, religion, or historical period; rather, he was unique and timeless, and his works retain their significance beyond the passage of time. Harold Bloom adopts a similar position, stating that the Western canon begins with the Bard; he is the Western canon (1996, p. 75), elevating him on the basis that he surpasses almost all other Western authors in logical clarity, rhetorical vigour, and inventiveness (Bloom, 1996, p. 46). Harold Bloom's statement establishes an instance for demonstrating how Shakespeare's general treatment of the Western canons has aided in maintaining Bard's exceptional position in the world of literature. Apart from such reverence for the Bard over the centuries, his works have been criticized by famous authors or critics, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, George Bernard Shaw, Voltaire, A. C. Bradley, Leo Tolstoy, and lately, George Orwell (Sullivan, 2007, p. 1). All of them criticized Shakespeare's works in their publications, arguing mostly against the artistic beauty of his pieces, their absence of didactic and moral purpose, and against dogmatic veneration for Shakespeare. Orwell, for example, criticizes Shakespeare's well-regarded works for their inconsistencies, inconceivable plots, and overly dramatic language (2010, p. 73). Clearly, the arguments advanced by these authors against Bard's plays contribute to the critique of the excessive admiration of Bard and urge the plays to be reassessed through the lens of postmodern concerns.

It is worth noting that rather than asserting Shakespeare's distinctiveness or the transcendental quality of his works, it is the potential of adaptation of his writings to different dramatic and literary forms that sustains their popularity. Alan Sinfield, rebutting the assumption that Shakespeare had an unmatched capacity to portray human nature, emphasizes that the nature of humans is not something fixed, and thus Shakespeare cannot be seen as unique anymore concerning the character construction (2000, p .183). In this respect, it is also worth recalling the bardolatry of Bernard Shaw's critique, as he claims that the Bard is unrivaled due to his embodying the emotions most completely. However, these emotions have been human emotions,

which contributed to his brilliance (2002, p. 16). These concepts demonstrate how the majority of unjustified presumptions regarding Shakespeare's plays have aided in preserving his elevated position in cultural and literary contexts. However, such views have attracted criticism from later critics and writers who have a more unbiased approach to Bard and his plays.

Several points need to be raised regarding the adaptation works of Shakespeare's plays: Why do literary writers in later ages prefer to rewrite plays of Shakespeare more than the writings of any other writer? In addition, why are the audience so excited about new adaptations of his works alongside the originals, centuries after they were published? Charles Marowitz emphasizes the need for delving into the causes of such perplexing issues rather than devising new approaches to enhance the cultural dominance of Shakespeare as he explains that the true question is not concerned with Shakespeare's identity but the true question is the reason that we permit Shakespeare's impact to constrain our notion for what we may make of him (1991, p. 32). Accordingly, instead of pursuing debates on unfounded assertions about the author and his works, it is indeed vital to take into account the factors which call for the usage of Bard's plays in various ways.

The Bard's adaptations are looked at conservatively since they are based on the idea that his plays allow reinterpretation because they provide a range of subjects for reproduction. As we find in Richard Burt's observation, the Bard is the "Divine playwright" for those who adore him like John Dryden (2007, p. 739). It is thought that since Shakespeare introduced innovative themes to the literary world, later writers did not have to create fresh ideas and maintain Bard's fame by adopting them repeatedly. This concept is exemplified by John Elsom's remark stating that the Bard left us a great set of garments and notions that we may use following our needs and preferences (1992, p. 5). Likewise, John Elsom's following remark demonstrates how the depth of Bard's works encourages many to adapt his work: "his plays offer a sort of multi-focal perspective. You may see it as a record from history. You may see the play in its original version, or you might regard it as a legend that survives due to its adaptability" (1992, p. 26). By endowing Shakespeare's plays with a set of positive characteristics, this interpretation implies that they possess a variety of meanings when evaluated from a variety of perspectives, ultimately leading them to be deemed mythical.

Adaptation occurs because there might be gaps left to be filled after earlier authors have finished their work. As a result, different readings of Bard's works show their ambiguity and seek to explain its confusing sections. The Bard's plays have undergone several adaptations, all to demonstrate that his writings give various meanings and cannot be interpreted exclusively. The Bard's devotees, on the other hand, see the ambiguous nature of his plays as a reflection of their mythical aspect. A popular example of this may be found in the book titled *The Letters of John Keats*, which describes Shakespeare as a genius due to his ability to elicit a range of feelings and emotions from uncertainty to mystery (Keats & Rollins, p. 193). As opposed to using this feature of his works to underline Shakespeare's brilliance, it ought to be noted as a cause for the constant adaptations of his plays. Bickley and Stevens likewise argue "Shakespeare's works are particularly open to deconstruction due to their uncertainty" (2019, p. 213). Thus, the variety of readings of these writings should never be used as evidence of their unique quality, but rather as a reflection of the many contexts in which they are assessed. Clearly, every reader's perception of his plays varies according to their identity or ideology, as well as other factors like as age, gender, and nationality.

As a filmmaker who critically considers Shakespeare's plays in his adaptations, Charles Marowitz argues that it is not the exceptional attribute of these plays that makes them adaptable, but their widespread appeal. Shakespeare's writings are so well-known for having established audience that are acquainted with them. This enables the rewriters to engage the audience who are already acquainted with some of Shakespeare's works. Accordingly, authors are capable of giving alternative versions of well-known subjects throughout this process, thus conveying distinct arguments and concepts (1991, p. 47). This also illustrates why authors can pick Shakespeare's most critical topics and use their own narrative to convey their own message about the subject they have chosen. In this sense, it is precisely the vast fame of Shakespeare's works that makes them so commonly reproducible.

Adaptations of Bard's plays have not necessarily been viewed positively as a productive literary activity, as Lanier states that Shakespeare is often regarded as a regulatory guideline and a mystical symbol of worth (2014, p. 30). Any effort in adapting Bard's plays has always been viewed as a betrayal of his artistic legacy by conservatives. Rewritten copies of Bard's works have occasionally been regarded as a

belittlement and degrading of his plays, based on the assumption that his plays are "genuine". Regarding the difficulty of repeating Bard's plays, it may imply that Bard is a referent who is possible to be taken and used essentially without his will (Lanier, 2014, p. 31). In this light, adaptation may look like something intrinsically immoral. Arguments are often made against the concept of including material that originates from the canon. Consequently, these discussions happen to take place in the broad introduction to the process of adaptation. Understood in this perspective, Shakespeare's adaptations particularly elicit criticism for trying to call into doubt the intrinsic integrity of the original material.

In contrast to this idea, another line of thought holds that adaptations of Bard's plays are what sustain his appeal and value in the postmodern day. Just like Douglas Lanier notes that Bard's unique position in the literature derives from a complicated history of adaptation, in which his works had been continually reworked to respond to the objectives, desires, and concerns of different historical eras (2007, p. 96). Accordingly, it is not really Bard's fame that enables his works to be adapted; rather, the adaptation of his works that ensure his works continue to thrive in later periods. Shakespeare is clearly rendered postmodern via adaptation since his plays cannot usually address current problems in their initial form.

Bard himself adapted others writers' works, and the majority of his plays were created via the adaptation of previous historical works. His primary writing style incorporates "adaptation, imitation, appropriation of myths, fairy tales, and folklore, as well as an ability to reuse writings of his predecessors like Ovid, Plutarch, and Holinshed" (Sanders, 2016, p. 47). After finding this out, it is only natural to doubt Shakespeare's position as the all-time greatest literary genius, since it is clear that he was not the real source of the majority of his plays. Desmet and Sawyer argue that by clarifying the idea of authorship, the history of Shakespeare's adaptation challenges the excessive admiration of him (2013, p. 5). When examining Bard's usage of previous writings in the construction of his own writings and subsequent reinterpretation of his plays, his connection with the process of adaptation is deep, since intertextual reproductions have been critical for both Shakespeare as well as those who succeeded him. Other than adapting other works, it is thought that he sometimes rewrote his own plays to adapt them to new uses. For example, Coleridge recognized that *Hamlet* has been reworked and flipped to become *Macbeth*: a lovely

person in a corrupt system who has become a corrupt person in a good system that must be recovered, and such treachery is now viewed from the traitor's perspective (Bridges, p. 128).

One of the Bard's plays that is believed to be adapted is *Romeo and Juliet*. More specifically *Romeo and Juliet* ''originated as an Italian novella from the 15th century called 'Romeus and Juliet' by Arthur Brooke, which Shakespeare may have read and adapted the story and has since become one of the most popular pieces of literature ever written" (Lane, 2011, p. 156). Works of literature are preserved through many various copies across history, like in this instance previous Italian novella that was initially written in English by Brooke in 1562, subsequently by William Shakespeare in 1597, and afterward by other artists for a variety of reasons. To give further examples, *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) was one of his major plays that talked about heroes and peace and was a retelling of the Trojan War in Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (late 1300s and early 1400s). Another play called *As You Like It* (1599) is a comic retelling of the *Forest of Arden*, which was taken from *Rosalynde* by Thomas Lodge. In addition, it is known that *The Winter's Tale* (1623) is a rewriting of Pandosto (1588) by Robert Greene. (S. J. Lynch 2). Moreover, both *Othello* (1604) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) are based on prior prose works of Cinthio and Plutarch, respectively (Eyre & Wright, 2001, p. 24). As is the case with the majority of Bard's other works, *The Merchant of Venice* (1605) is an adaptation of other texts. It is believed that the fourteenth-century Ser Giovanni's *The Simpleton* (1378) offers the theme of a Christian borrowing money from a Jewish moneylender (Marowitz, 1991, p. 130). In addition, *The Ballad of Gernutus* is considered a broadsheet ballad, as a basis on which the Bard grounded his Shylock persona (Gross, 1994, p. 7).

Regarding the development of Bard's adaptations throughout history, Marjorie Garber's remark should be recalled as he points out that each era gives birth to its own version of Shakespeare (2014, p. 4). The approach of adapting the Bard actually started in the 1600s, while he himself was yet creating his new copies. In this period, Beaumont, Massinger, and Fletcher were the first to adapt his plays. For example, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* (1609) has been considered a tragicomedy and adaptation of the Bard's *Hamlet*. This is because the treatment of the play of the aspects like usurpation and legitimate progression, tyranny and right government,

foreign and indigenous marriage coalitions, and the play also looks strikingly similar to Bard's history works (Gossett, 2009, p. 285). In fact, an additional adaptation is by Fletcher who collaborated with Massinger to produce a new comedy play titled *The Sea Voyage* (1622), in which common themes are borrowed from *The Tempest* (1610), which is considered to be the oldest example of this period's practice of adapting the Bard's plays.

It has been suggested that the most drastic versions of adaptation were produced in the middle of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries (Marsden, 2014, p.5). Regarding these Shakespearean adaptations, it has been suggested that such practice is intended mainly to fit Bard's play to the theatrical situation of the time as well as modify his narrative, figures, and language to conform to postmodern preferences (Spencer, 1998, p. 70). The Bard's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591) has been adapted by John Lacy to a new comedy play titled *Sauny the Scot* which was first published in 1667 and became famous because of its more amusing portrayal of Bard's version. This work depicts the struggle between the genders and investigates the conventional ideologies that support a husband's assertion of power. Lacy's play also highlights the conflicting nature of this struggle (Staves, 1996, p. 131). The Bard's remarkable play *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) is also adapted by John Dryden to a new reworked play titled *The World Well Lost* (1677). Dryden, likewise, was involved in adapting Shakespeare's works at this period. The traditional heroic play is portrayed in this work by the abolition of the romance between Antony and Cleopatra. Fitting for 18th-century literary norms, the drama also adheres to the neoclassical concept of temporal and spatial unities. *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), one more Shakespearean adaptation by Dryden, focuses on the courageous aspect of Bard's play. While Bard twisted Cressida in a very misogynistic way, her character is shown more favorably in this play, compared to Bard's work, since he portrays her as an immoral female figure.

Other noteworthy 17th and 18th-century adaptations of Bard's works include *Richard III* by Colley Cibber (1699) and *Jew of Venice* by George Grenville (1701). Regarding the major changes seen in Shakespeare's adaptation during this period, it is clear that the goal was to render the plays more appropriate for the period's staging norms, such as eliminating violent scenes from his plays. George Branam, who talks about this topic, says, "In King Lear, for example, passages that made an audience feel excessively sad or sickened by the excessive violence (for example, Gloucester's

blinding in the play) were changed because eighteenth-century audiences did not accept them" (1990, p. 135).

Even though conservative versions of Bard's plays were made, such as in the works of David Garrick, who was a big fan of the Bard, the corrective element of literary adaptations can be also seen in Restoration adapting of Garrick's plays. The period's dramatists were said to view the Elizabethan approach as "less sophisticated and regular" than their own (Spencer,1972, p.80). Consequently, adaptations of the Bard throughout this age are seen as efforts to enhance the Bard, that is, bringing his writings in line with postmodern cultural and critical standards and to bringing them up to date (Felperin, 2002, p. 6).

Following the Restoration, the process of adapting the Bard declined till the end of the 19th century. The fact that the Bard has become a cultural icon is one of the reasons why adapting Shakespeare was not a frequently practised activity during this time frame. According to Lanier, Shakespeare arises as a uniquely British cultural symbol in the early eighteenth century, conjoining Britain's developing spirit of patriotism, social status, and canons of aesthetic appreciation (2007, p. 30). The Bard's writings had been evidently regarded as excellent models, and hardly any effort was made to modify them. Despite Restoration writers who rejected the Bard for several purposes, early 19th-century playwrights and scholars embraced the Bard as an icon of literature (Becker, 2003, p. 363). In "An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatic poets" (1769), Elizabeth Montagu described how Bard's works were compared well to those of Greek playwrights (Montagu, 2015). Thus, the Bard was revered as the nation's poet, revealing why there were not many critical analyses of his plays at that time.

Adapting Bard's popular work extends beyond the theatrical form since many fiction and poetry adaptations of his works occur. For example, Adrienne Rich's piece of adaptation "After Dark" (1964) is a significant reworking in the manner of poetry. In this work, she investigates the relationships between the daughter and her father in Bard's *King Lear* through the lens of her personal perceptions. Rich discusses the influence of her father and the Bard on her poetry. Rich acknowledges that she had to surpass her father and Shakespeare to be able to see the world through her own lens and free herself from the grips of the traditions (Erickson, 1994, p.160). She relates her

father and herself to Lear and Cordelia because she believes that, as Cordelia, she has been also oppressed by her father (Erickson, 1994, p. 163). By mean of the way that Rich draws attention to Cordelia's misogynistic portrayal in Bard's work, her poem actually has served as an instance of revisionary adaptation of the Bard.

Famous works of fiction in postmodern literature sometimes include references to Bard's plays, such as Iris Murdoch's reworking of *Hamlet* in her novel *The Black Prince* (1973). Also, one of the most famous reworks of the Bard in the fiction form is *A Thousand Acres* (1991) by Jane Smiley. The book highlights the catastrophic lunacy of patriarchal hegemony in postmodern America by adapting *King Lear's* framework to the world after the wars (Widdowson, 2006, p. 500). Smiley's adaptation emphasizes the idea related to the potential that Goneril and Regan may have been sexually abused by their father Lear. Smiley implicitly attacks the immorality in her society in this novel since it is about exploring current societal issues in 1990s America. Another noteworthy example is Marina Warner's Indigo (1992), which, like other postmodern adaptations, offers a postcolonial interpretation of *The Tempest*. Widdowson asserts that this book covers three centuries in the Caribbean, touching on topics like colonization, the island of Sycorax, Ariel, and Caliban (2006, p. 497). The four plays which are the most often adapted in general are *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Richard Burt maintains that "*The Tempest*" takes first place, based entirely on modern authors' adaptation of the work to examine racial and colonial problems, as exemplified in Warner's Indigo (2007, p. 409). Clearly, both novels are reworkings by female writers which demonstrate their critical attitude to Bard's sexist and imperialist ideas. Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (1991) and Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988) are other notable Shakespearean adaptations. Nonetheless, unlike the preceding instances, these two writers' attitudes to the Bard may not be subversive, since both novels do not explicitly address a specific play of the Bard. Instead, they combine many figures and plays of Bard into one single work.

Besides literary adaptations, Bard's works have been transformed into movies, cartoons, kids' books, and television shows. Woody Allen's *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* produced by Orion pictures company is one of the most notable adaptations of the Bard's plays. Other famous Shakespeare film adaptations include *Othello* (1965) by Stuart Burge, *Hamlet* (1990) by Franco Zeffirelli, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967) by Franco Zeffirelli, *The Merchant of Venice* (2004) by Michael Radford, *Romeo and*

Juliet (1996) by Baz Luhrmann and *Macbeth* (1983) by Jack Gold which stands out for putting a heavy emphasis on brutality and harshness (Bickley & Stevens, 2019, p. 200). Beside these instances, a Netflix film version, *The King* (2019), is a noteworthy adaption of the Bard's *Henry V* and *Henry IV*. Furthermore, Shakespeare's plays have been adapted for British TV as a series titled BBC Television Shakespeare, which was produced by Cedric Messina and was first broadcast in 1978. It consisted of thirty-seven episodes throughout seven series. These episode reworkings are the BBC's postmodern adaptations of the Bard (Bickley & Stevens, 2019, p. 50). In addition, there is a parody version of the Bard named BBC Retold, which places four of Bard's plays in a postmodern setting.

It has been argued that due to the dynamic structure of literary works, "a literary text is not an entity that stands alone and presents an identical aspect to every audience in each time" (Jauss, 2013, p.9). Thus, literary works must not be seen as static and unchangeable objects, but rather as assets that allow for numerous perspectives, thus eventually giving rise to different adaptations. As a result, adaptations of Shakespeare demonstrate that his plays cannot be valid at all periods and must be adjusted to evolving social and historical circumstances. This perspective is fundamentally opposed to the widespread assumption that "his works are globally relevant and appealing to people of all eras" (Hawkes, 2013, p. 245). His works might be made to resonate more with the needs of later eras via recreational activities. Shakespearean adaptations show how his works should be modernized to understand the altering preferences, personas, and traits of various eras and reading groups. According to Lukas Erne, "the work that is being modified is likewise considered not to be a fixed entity, characterized by its original structure, that is accessible once and for all, yet a process that develops through time" (2010, p. 225). Therefore, adaptation challenges the accepted notion of the permanence of classical works by providing different versions that address the main challenges from various historical ages.

In reference to the role of adaptation to re-establish the relevance of prior work, John Drakakis asserts that the Bard cannot be hardly considered our contemporary unless subversion is used (2002, p. 25). His assertion implies that Bard's plays are out of date and that reworking his works is a means of updating him and ensuring his works' continued relevance. Concerning the heritage of canonical literary works, Antonin Artaud points out that the best works from the past are great for the past but

not for the present. We have the freedom to tell what is being told, as well as what is still not told, in a manner that does not relate to us, in a manner that is clear and straightforward, consistent with current emotional states, and universally comprehensible (2004, p. 74). As a result, Shakespearean adaptation occurs as a result of the need to adapt them for usage in various historical ages. This also reveals why Shakespeare's adaptations have developed in such a varied manner throughout time. Every period's perception of his works varies according to the changing circumstances. As a result, his works are treated differently in various periods. For example, while contemporary adaptations primarily involve the ideological and social context of Bard's works to react to the vital problems of these periods, Restoration adaptations reveal the political and theatrical framework of the period, such as the increased focus on women's roles in response to the presence of female actors. As a result, it has also illustrated the reason why Bard's histories and tragedies become widespread among the adaptors over time, whereas his romances, like *The Tempest*, have been adapted more often before the 20th century (Burt, 2007, p. 738).

According to Alan Sinfield, the philosophies that Shakespearean plays are traditionally acknowledged to create are reactionary (regarding class, race, and gender), and oppositional reconstitutions may challenge those beliefs (1988, p.140). When seen through the lens of postmodern literary theories, radical adaptations demonstrate obvious criticism of the original work. Sanders illustrates the impact of such enhancements on adapting Shakespeare by stating "many Shakespearean adaptations are driven not just by the need to assign motive, but furthermore by social conviction. The theoretical concerns of the modern period figure in most of the rewritings of Shakespeare adaptations" (2016, p. 57). Shakespeare has been condemned for being biased in his representation of ethnic and racial identity categories in his works. As a result, in certain confrontational postmodern adaptations of his works, underrepresented minorities are given more importance.

This approach implies that Shakespeare ignored the issues of marginalized cultural groups that should be addressed in later versions. In this way, adapting the works of Shakespeare involves a functional activity aimed at criticizing and rectifying the original text's representational problems. This enables formerly marginalized figures to be reproduced in literary works, and such a practice is referred to by Alan Sinfield as "making space" (1988, p. 130). Sinfield claims that there is no place for

marginalized groups in Shakespeare's plays. To question the notions in Bard's plays and discover their own issues, these groups must rebuild their own editions. This is only conceivable if such marginalized groups achieve a separate social status. For example, as views about race and gender identities have evolved throughout time, their depiction in literature has altered accordingly. Due to the increased liberty granted to minorities and women in modern time by postcolonial theory and feminists, their concerns can be expressed via literary recreations. Marsden asserts that "changes in female social roles correlate to adjustments in literary depiction, especially in drama" (1992, p. 44). These changes need a reinterpretation of Shakespeare's plays in response to postmodern social and historical settings. For example, women's status in postmodern society is not the same as before in Shakespeare's day, and racial problems have gained prominence in global politics, thereby necessitating a re-evaluation of previous works' handling of minority ethnic groups.

Shakespeare, as an adapter of different sources, also utilised several previous works to convey a message about his present setting. As Charles Marowitz points out, Shakespeare should have witnessed passion plays when he was young in Stratford, and even those biblical tensions should have crept into the elder writer's play when he chose to show a struggle between Jewish and Christian morals (1991, p. 30). Marowitz, using Bard's work *The Merchant of Venice*, has questioned if the structure of the confrontation between two theological foes in this play was influenced by the passion works. Regarding Bard's curiosity in the historical and social matters of his era, it has been asserted that the period between the 1590 and 1690 centuries is unique and that the Bard is profoundly engaged in it since his plays and poems illustrate his engagement with the major incidents and concepts of his time (Bickley & Stevens, 2019, p. 19). Due to Bard's interest in the happenings of his time, his adaptations of previous works are often believed to be about the time that he lived in. As David Thacker begins by speculating on what the Bard was expressing in his own time when he wrote about the Romans.? (quoted in Smith, 1995, p. 35). Even in works that are replete with depictions of the pagan settings and old traditions, and even if the historical eras and settings of his play are largely different from his own, it is claimed that the Bard himself was writing about his realm (Smith, 1995, p. 24). Although Shakespeare was apparently dealing with problems about alternative locations and times, he was sometimes questioning, problematizing, and historicizing the events and

issues of his time. Among Bard's plays, Richard II is a noteworthy example of this approach, since it is considered to represent a critique of Queen Elizabeth's rule. Clearly, adaptation is recognized as a useful instrument for criticizing, reinforcing, or transforming the beliefs or occurrences of a specific period. This view holds proper for both Bard's adaptation of previous texts and postmodern writers' adaptations of his own plays.

The present study examined three Shakespearean adaptations, namely *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) by Tom Stoppard, *The Merchant* (1976) by Arnold Wesker, and *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet*) (1988) by Ann-Marie MacDonald, in relation to their ideological matters. The plays that are examined in the present study respond the Bard while also addressing the real vital problems that are relevant to their own contexts. As a result, a particular focus is placed on the ideological reactions that these plays have to the Bard. His works are utilized to sustain the social and literary aspects of the present status, as they are utilized particularly in popular productions to support the upkeep of concepts including existence and discrimination against race and women. In the examination of these texts in distinct chapters, each rewriting is analyzed in terms of its variations from Shakespeare's original texts, as well as with a reference to the numerous theoretical use of adaptation noticed in their production. In this respect, each work is examined in light of a specific critical issue. More specifically, Chapter one introduces the theory of adaptation as a postmodern process. Furthermore, the development of the adaptation of the Bard and its purposes are addressed. It is determined, therefore, that Bard's plays are evaluated within the context of these concepts, and their social elements are criticized via reinterpretations. Chapter two analyses *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* from an existentialist reworking written to respond to the problems of Bard's marginalized minor characters (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) in *Hamlet*. The absurdist atmosphere of the war years is carried over into the post-war context of Stoppard's play. It was a time when a common man was seeking for purpose in life since he is left devastated by the aftermath of the war. Stoppard aims to illustrate that the fundamental qualities of life are the same for everyone, including famous people and ordinary people. After all, everyone's life has equal worth, regardless of their position or class. It is proposed that Stoppard's play focuses on restoring the dignity of these characters (Ros and Guil). In chapter three, *The Merchant* is racially and

religiously examined in response to Bard's *The Merchant of Venice* from an anti-Semitic point of view. Arnold Wesker attempts to strengthen the character of Shylock in his adaptation who is racially marginalized in Shakespeare's work. Chapter four discusses *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* as a reaction to the marginalized female characters in Bard's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* in light of the feminist ideology. Anne Marie MacDonald significantly rewrites Shakespeare's original text to address postmodern female problems. By presenting Constance's metamorphosis into a strong individual, the work emphasizes the necessity for females to achieve psychological power through the process of spiritual healing and self-development. To sum up, as seen in the examined works, Bard's plays thrive in a way that ensures the key problems of succeeding eras.

2. STRENGTHENING MARGINALIZED MINOR SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS IN STOPPARD'S VERSION OF *HAMLET*

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a theatrical adaptation of the Bard's *Hamlet.* This play, which premiered in 1966, is a significant turning point in Stoppard's dramatic career since it enabled him to gain his first notoriety as a playwright. Even though Stoppard gets the idea of the plot of his play from the Bard, he nonetheless manages to include postmodern elements that make the play similar to other postmodern works. While some critics attempted to demonstrate the play's debt to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, others have associated it with other contemporary works such as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* by T.S Eliot's (Esslin, 1968, p. 12). However, the presence of two characters are resembling Beckett's tramps Vladimir and Estragon, the play's prominent absurdist milieu, the fragmented language employed in the play, and the sense of hopelessness with which the play concludes brings it closer to Beckett's work rather than any other work. Stoppard's proclamation that he is "an enormous admirer of Beckett" is not any less important within this context (quoted in Hayman, 1982, p. 7).

Stoppard's work was initially performed in a period devastated by the Second World War's aftermath. It was a period when ordinary people were searching for meaning and purpose in life, having been left battered and hopeless by the war. All ethics and principles had been destroyed in the vicious conflict, and the majority of people were fighting to live meaningful life amid this hopeless scenario. Stoppard witnessed the Nazi's occupation of Czechoslovakia and after a while fled to Singapore. The family then transferred to Australia before the Japanese took over Singapore. As a physician, Stoppard's father stayed in Singapore as a volunteer in the British army, believing that he would be required for Singapore's defense. Although it is generally believed that his father perished on board a ship attacked by the Japanese troops, in his work, Stoppard describes how his father died as a war prisoner in Japanese custody. His parents were Jewish and came from Jewish heritages. Hence, after their flee, he discovered that his grandparents died in the Auschwitz camp a along his mother's sister. Thus, his play is set after world war II and follows the same absurdist spirit as that of war years. Stoppard's goal is to portray the grotesque of existentialism from the

perspective of an ordinary, common, and everyman in postmodern society in a favorable light. More specifically, Stoppard's play focuses on restoring the credibility, dignity, and emotions of these marginalized Shakespearean minor characters (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) in a society damaged by social prejudice.

As a matter of fact, what Stoppard is doing in his play is presenting the tragedy of *Hamlet* in a grotesque form. He does this by transferring the focus of his play away from the protagonist Hamlet toward two of the characters who were originally marginalized as minor characters in Bard's version. At this point in Stoppard's adaptation, the characters Ros and Guil are brought to the foreground and elevated to the role of the play's protagonists. This method of foregrounding, according to Nada Zeineddine, has "the effect of breaking the magnetic hold of Hamlet over the audience, and democratizing thus rendering it that of 'common man' rather that the privileged prince" (2012, p. 150). The play depicts the sad and tragic story that occurs in the lives of two courtiers who come to represent the ordinary, common, and everyman. The story of their lives, on the other hand, is built in such a way as to demonstrate the meaninglessness, absurdity, and pointlessness of life. For the playwright to accomplish this goal, he relegates Hamlet's case to a secondary role and places more emphasis on Ros and Guil, as they are referred to in Stoppard's adaptation of the play.

Stoppard's adaptation focuses on the actions of two apparently minor characters - Ros and Guil from Hamlet. Nonetheless, Stoppard emphasizes Ros and Guil in his play, while diminishing the positions of conventional strong characters such as Hamlet. He sought significance and legitimacy for ordinary people and their lives via the transformation of minor figures into main figures. Taking this into account, he employs existentialism as a means of restoring ordinary people's grandeur and attractiveness. Stoppard's adaptation takes its title from the last line of the Ambassador's speech in *Hamlet* which he uttered "The sight is dismal / And our affairs from England come too late/ The ears are senseless that should give us hearing, / To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd, / That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead…" (Act 5, scene 2, 368-371). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has two minor characters named Ros and Guil. These individuals are close friends with Hamlet, the prince of England, who is on a journey for vengeance. In Denmark, Hamlet's father was killed by his uncle Claudius while Hamlet was undergoing intellectual instruction. Following the news of his father's death, Hamlet travels back to England and discovers that his

uncle has ascended to the throne. On top of that, the ghost of his father appears to him and demands that he gets vengeance on Claudius for his father's death.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead takes place during the Victorian age when theatre was at its peak in terms of its popularity and splendor. Minor characters were treated with less significance back then, both in terms of their labor and their dignity. These figures were mostly restricted to the function of page boy or simple joker, who would do ridiculously idiotic antics to amuse and delight the audience. However, Stoppard was able to effectively restore the positions of these characters and transform them into big and strong people, who are capable of bringing delight and amusement to the audience as the situation demanded. During the two world wars, the notion of so-called aristocratic (high class) and common or ordinary men (low class) have been changed, and the relevance of figures such as Ros and Guild came to the head to soothe the tension between them.

In addition to being known for his creative use of ironic political and language metaphors, Stoppard is also linked with the theatre of the absurd, and such a movement criticizes and mourns the absurdity of the man's situation and the meaninglessness of existence. By focusing on the subtle and humorous daily conversation within a broader historical context, he merged the English culture of the "comedy of manners" (a work that lampoons the aristocratic) with postmodern societal issues. He received his education in both India and England and started out as a journalist and then as a writer for television and radio before becoming well-known as a result of the performance of his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* 1966, which brought him worldwide fame. Stoppard's play, initially produced as a satirical reflection on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, centers on the painfully existential yet trivial babblings of two marginalized minor characters in *Hamlet*.

Aside from being criticized for his lack of character development, Stoppard's plays, such as *Hapgood* (1984), *The Real Thing* (1982), *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor* (1977), Travesties (1974), *Jumpers* (1972), *The Real Inspector and Hound* (1968), were fueled by ingenious linguistic shows and narrative inversions. In addition, he has adapted many foreign-language works and has written several radio scripts as well as the screenplay, including the movie version of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1990), for which he also served as a director (Kelly, 2006, p. 15). He earned

an Academy Prize for the best inventive screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). In his later works, Stoppard maintained his concern for language and intellectual notions. *Indian Ink* (1995) discusses Ophelia's character in the context of disputes about the value of art between Americans and Indians. *Arcadia* (1993) examines the consequences of contemporary actions using modern ideas of randomness and complexity. The play *The Invention of Love* (1997) is a work that depicts the poet A. E. Housman's life, with a particular emphasis on his private inner life (Kelly, 2006, p. 16). The play is presented from Housman's perspective, focusing on his final memories, and includes numerous classical allusions. *The Coast of Utopia* is a trilogy of plays that premiered in 2002. The three plays, namely "Salvage", "Shipwreck", and "Voyage" are about intellectual arguments that took place in pre-revolutionary Russia in the mid-19th century. *Rock 'n' Roll* is a play that had its world debut in 2006 at the Royal Court Theatre in London. The action of the play takes place across many decades, extending from the late 1960s to 1990, and finishes with a performance by *The Rolling Stones* in Prague in the same year. Two points of view are presented: those of anti-Communists in Czechoslovakia, Prague, and Marxists in Cambridge, Britain (Kelly, 2006, p. 18). Stoppard, who received the distinction of knighthood in 1997, seems to be profoundly fascinated by metaphysical level that goes beyond just aesthetic pleasure.The logical, symmetrical, and implosive qualities that characterize him are apparent. Harry Blamires writes in his work that Stoppard's plays "at their most brilliant, are well plotted, rational trips that systematically find their ends and their beginning" (Blamires, 2020, p. 620).

Ros and Guild, who are two minor Shakespearean characters in *Hamlet*, are brought into the forefront. The plot, however, takes a different path. Stoppard transforms the borrowed figures into his own individual creations, thereby resulting in a dramatically different impression. He alters the minor characters Ros and Guil of Shakespeare into the major leading characters in his version. Stoppard makes an effort to track down and determine the identities of these unimportant individuals. According to Ronald Strang, "this is Stoppard's version of Shakespeare's play, a reduction to absurdity of everything noble and weighty in *Hamlet*" (1992, p. 242). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are portrayed as traitors in the Bard's *Hamlet* and are given the punishment that is rightfully theirs in the play, whereas Stoppard does not consider them to be traitors. According to Stoppard, he has a great deal of sympathy for them:

> As far as their involvement in Shakespeare's text is concerned, they are told very little about what is going on; and much of what they are told, is not true, so I see them much more clearly as a couple of bewildered innocents rather than a couple of henchmen (Brassell, 1987, p. 38).

Innocence and confusion are the two main pillars whereby the characters of Ros and Guil are built because the challenges they experience and the outcomes of their stories are not the direct consequence of actions they have taken on their own behalf. They are not responsible for what occurs to them, nor do they have the power or will to alter the outcome of their situation in any way.

When it comes to the treatment of the main characters by Shakespeare, Stoppard takes a critical approach to the work. Apart from that, Stoppard demonstrates existential philosophy, merging it with his intellectual ability, and provides a critical review of Shakespeare's apathetic treatment of Ros and Guil and their problems to some degree. While surrounded by confusion and chaos, the two bewildered friends pursue a clear identity for themselves and attempt to comprehend the significance of events that are happening around them at breakneck speed. However, they are eventually dispatched. Stoppard ruminates on severe and important issues, yet he does it in a light and humorous manner, as was suited for the period. In this regard, Gabriele Scott Robinson states "among Stoppard's principal means of generating both the uncertainty and the laughter is the intermingling of the logical with the absurd: fantastic incidents are made to appear logical, while ordinary and apparently rational occurrences are presented as if they were absurd and inexplicable" (1977, p. 37). He highlights *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead's* central technical element. The subject matter is presented in two distinct events, on-stage scenes, which are driven by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and the off-stage scenes, which include Stoppard's creative and analytical work.

Since the publication of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, many critics have pointed out the resemblance between the two works. In fact, Stoppard himself has made a point of highlighting how much of Beckett's impact comes from his books as well as Godot.

It's only too obvious that there's a sort of Godotesque element in Rosencrantz. I'm an enormous admirer of Beckett, but if I have to look at my stuff objectively, I'd say that the Beckett novels show as much as the plays .... There's an element of coincidence in what's usually called influence. One's appetites and predilections are

obviously not unique. They overlap with those countless other people, one of whom- praise be God- is Samuel Beckett (Hayman, 1977, p. 7).

In terms of character portrayal, there is a lot of similarities. Little men, who lack both knowledge and authority, are shown in both plays as they struggle to comprehend a world filled with ambiguity. For instance, Rosencrantz is more like Estragon (also known as Gogo) who represents the body while Guildenstern is more like Vladimir (also known as Didi) who represents the head. Didi is in agony as he waits for Godot, and he confides in Gogo that he senses things that his pal does not notice or understand. At the opening of the play, Guildenstern exhibits significant tension and anxiety. He also does the majority of the deep thinking and appears to be more intellectually aware than Rosencrantz. Gogo is preoccupied with his feet, sleep, and food; he is a poet and has visions, but he is completely oblivious to Godot's presence.

Both Estragon and Rosencrantz have extremely weak memory. Vladimir and Guildenstern believe that they must wait for Godot or wait for the king to come to them. Estragon is having difficulties comprehending how to reply to Pozzo and Lucky, and simultaneously Rosencrantz is having far more problems comprehending how to play at interrogating Hamlet. Guild's scene in which he acts as Ros's nursemaid reminds of Didi's confronting and singing to Gogo. Similarly, Rosencrantz's appeal to Guildenstern, "Don't leave me!" (*Ros & Guil*, p. 76) after the player treads on his hand, appears to be a reiteration of Gogo's cries, "Stay with me!" (*Waiting for Godot*, p. 39) after he has been beaten. Didi might grow frustrated by Gogo's indecision and "whining", whilst Guild can become progressively enraged by Ros's lack of awareness and action, eventually knocking him to the ground. Stoppard departs from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where Ros and Guild are almost similar to adopt the major patterns of *Waiting for Godot's* portrayal of the characters. Stoppard's Ros and Guild, nevertheless, face a dilemma and reflect an event that is fundamentally distinct from Beckett's two tramps. Whilst Beckett's protagonists spend an endless waiting, Stoppard's experience quick and unexplainable transformation. The fact that Godot appears in Tom Stoppard's play is one of the most significant differences.

If Stoppard was keenly aware of his reliance on Beckett and wanted his reader to recognize it, he was also offering ideas, actions, and a dramatic event that was

clearly distinct from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Although Vladimir and Estragon's complaints "nothing to be done", a significant amount occurs in Stoppard's work in a short period of time. Time passes too slowly for Didi and Gogo, however, Ros and Guil rarely mention it, believing that time is an illusion "Never a moment's peace!" (*Ros & Guil*, p. 13). They do use activities to kill time and refuse to face their personal plight; nonetheless, they simultaneously are imprisoned in the rapidly moving and action-packed of Hamlet's story and are getting deeply concerned with their imprisonment. Guil and Ros are concerned primarily with freedom of choice, and they are astounded that the one who picked them to travel to England considered them so significant. In summary, Beckett's work is about the indecision and despair felt by Vladimir and Estragon while they are stuck in a never-ending cycle of time, whereas Stoppard's work is about the indecision and despair experienced by Ros and Guil while they are seeking to comprehend the origin of events that they eventually recognize are leading them to their doom.

Therefore, the case in the play of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is both similar to and unlike the case in *Waiting for Godot*. Many critics seek to draw parallels between these two plays in terms of their themes and cases. Michael Alexander expresses his perspective on Stoppard as a Becket disciple in the following statement:

> The effect of Beckett can be clearly apparent in Tom Stoppard's work ... The characters are imprisoned and isolated; they have nothing to do other than philosophizing; they have known little about themselves than the reader does; speech, actions, and ideas all appear to be irrelevant (Alexander, 2000, p.450).

As seen in this passage, Michael sees in Stoppard several absurdist qualities, such as characters' alienation, lack of understanding about their backgrounds, and meaningless behaviors.

Robinson, in a similar manner, classifies Stoppard's work as an absurdist work which is characterized by the characters' portrayal of a fragmented unchanging world, as well as their use of dispersed dialogue and action (1977, p. 14). Robinson's inclusion of Stoppard's work into the absurdist cannon is suitable in and of itself, since the absurdist world is alienated, has no definite time and place, and does not involve action in the normal way. Martin Esslin holds a similar point of view and believes that Beckett had an impact on Stoppard. He argues that *Rosencrantz and*

Guildenstern Are Dead utilizes essential features from *Waiting for Godot* under the insignificant development of the character's personality (1987, p. 434).

The common men are born to admire and be impressed by the boldness of what is called high-status men. Guil and Ros, the commoners' representatives, take enjoyment in the ordinary act of fingernails growing after death. Ros while cutting his fingernails indicates "Another curious scientific phenomenon is the fact that the fingernails grow after death, as does the beard" (*Ros & Guil*, p. 17). Although it is a normal occurrence, it pleases Guil and Ros, which is Stoppard's manner of educating the reader about their ignorance.

Stoppard's work encourages to reexamine the value of common people, who were relegated to the role of page boy, clown, or chamber servant whose sole purpose was to please their lords during the Victorian and Elizabethan eras. Their presence was barely noticed in the dramas. They hardly enjoy a starring position, and when they do, it is usually because of the favors of the main figures. Their activities were bizarre, foolish, and amusing, with no attempt at civilized behaviour, as demonstrated by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Ros and Guil, two courtiers, flip a coin at the beginning of the play. Guil is holding a nearly full bag, while Ros is carrying a nearly empty bag. The explanation for this is that they are placing a bet on the outcome of a coin flip, such as Guil – Head and Ros – Tail. As the game continues, Guil proclaims "head" and places the coin back in the bag after each round is completed. 76 times, a similar act of seemingly unimportant coin flip is performed, and each time Ros proclaims 'tail' and loses as the game continues. However, it appears that he is unaffected by the loss. Thus, all the coins that Guil tosses come up heads which is something that cannot be explained according to the rules of probability ratio. He explains "The law of averages, if I have got this right, means that if sex 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 […]" (Ros *&* Guil, 13). This situation which is governed by sheer chance makes the audience realize that he is "in that pale region of Theatre of Absurd where knockabout and arid philosophical speculation mix or alternate while the awaited never comes" (Taylor, 2013, p. 320). The process of waiting, as in Beckett's play, is the central issue that the playwright uses to demonstrate the absurdity and aimlessness of life. Nevertheless, this

is not the only issue given to the audience in Stoppard's play for there are additional connected cases of considerable importance to the postmodern spectator. Mona Al-Alwan identifies three plot strands or rather three scenarios in the play; the plot of Ros and Guil, the plot of Hamlet, and the plot of the players. She refers to the structure of the play, which is intentionally constructed as an absurd drama and states "the threads of plot are brilliantly intermingled and interwoven in an absurd universe" (Al-Alwan, 2000, p. 85)

The absurdity of existence is also represented in all of the characters who are engaged in the three plots, but it is crystallized specifically well in the case of Ros and Guil, who constitute the core concern of the play. The two characters, Ros and Guil, seem to be modeled by Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon, with whom they share a variety of common qualities. Their conversation, for example, conveys the ridiculousness and absurdity that pervades the whole of the play. The majority of their speeches are fragmented and give the impression of having no sense; they are made up of sentences that give the impression of uncertainty, anxiety, and dread. They include repeated words, fragmented and incomplete remarks, as well as meaningless speeches; still, they often turn to philosophical speculation, particularly when attempting to examine their existence in such a confusing situation. Guil, on the other hand, is the more intellectual and philosophical one of the two characters. The two conversations below are examples of their communication style:

Guil: Too late for what?
Ros: How do I know? We haven't got there yet.
Guil: Then what are we doing here, I ask myself.
Ros: You might well ask.
Guil: We better get on.
Ros: You might well think.
Guil: Without much conviction; we better get on.
Ros (actively): Right! (Pause.) On where?
…….
Ros: (eagerly): I knew all along it was a band.
Guil: (tiredly): He knew all along it was a band.
Ros: Here they come!
Guil: (at the last moment before they enter - wistfully): I'm sorry it wasn't the unicorn. It would have been nice to have unicorns. Guil: Are you happy?
…….
Guil: Are you happy?
Ros: what?
Guil: Content? At ease?
Ros: I suppose so.
Guil: what are you going to do now?
Ros: I don't know. What do you want to do?
Guil: I have no desires. None. (Ros & Guil, pp.11- 12)

Like Beckett's tramps, these two characters exhibit the futility that links them to the nonsensical world of the Absurd. They are uncertain about almost everything, including their identity, past, and plans for the future. They have found themselves in a condition that they did not choose. They are consequently clueless as to the reason why they are in this condition. The only thing that they are sure of, according to their beliefs, is that they were sent for, and at this point, all they can do is to wait to find out what happens next. This dilemma is reminiscent of Albert Camus's lines when he wrote in *The myth of Sisyphus*

> A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and light, man feels like an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity (Bloom, 2011, p. 117)

In 1942, Camus accomplishes his most well-known book, which is titled *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The book raises the question of how should one face the absurd? In Camus's work, the word absurd involves a conflict between people's attempts to find meaning in this absolutely meaningless world. When someone knows that life has no meaning and without any point, they feel obliged to pursue the meaning in it (Camus, 2016, p. 35). According to Albert Camus, there are seven different ways that one might react to Absurdism. The first and most obvious risk is that one may end up killing yourself. The second option is to make an effort to disregard it by focusing on the positive aspects of his/ her life, such as the pleasures of good food, companionship, and drink. The third option is to simply reject Absurdism. For example, one may become religious and asserts that there is a meaning in life since it is driven by God. One might also conform to the existentialist view and assert that even if a person is not very interested in practicing organized religion, they are still the ones who, ultimately, are responsible for determining the significance of their life. The fourth option to address Absurdism is to have an artistic mission and by pretending of living a life that is full of meaning within the framework of the work. The fifth option is to pursue a career of becoming an artist, such as a painter, who produces artwork that has a meaning as a substitute for his everyday life. Number six is to be a political figure who derives his/her purpose and meaning in life from things related to power and governance. Camus takes each of these options into consideration and substantially

denies them. Acceptance, however, is not just the seventh and last strategy but also the one that he really advocates when trying to deal with absurdity. In another way, accepting life is meaningless yet feeling obliged to find meaning in it anyway. However, this acceptance is not gloomy and depressing, as one does not simply reject it, divert it, and continue to live life even though they are fully aware of its aimlessness (Bowker, 2016, p. 94). Sisyphus in Greek mythology has been condemned to spend forever pushing a rock up a hill every day, only to see it rolling all the way down the hill every evening. According to Camus, the only way for Sisyphus to find true happiness is to acknowledge the aimlessness of his work, thus making the decision to do so, and then he smiles as he makes all the way down the mountain each night (Quoted in Sagi, 2002, p. 87). On the other hand, the very same number seven response of Albert Camus's philosophy can be applied to Ros and Guil. The third act has taken place in the sea. A letter that Ros and Guil are bringing with them, which requests Hamlet's execution by the hand of King (Hamlet's uncle), is discovered throughout their sea trip by the two courtiers. However, they do not do anything to the letter to spare his life. They accept the fact that he will die at some point in the future. As a result, they believe that there is no need to be concerned about his death. It is accepted that Hamlet's death was a natural occurrence. However, they subsequently discover that the content of the letter has been changed with the lines that commands their execution. Even though they are well aware of their dilemma, they do not dare to alter the content of the letter to save their own lives. Thus, Ros and Guil already know that their destiny is death, yet they do not dare to escape; they accepted their situation like a Sisyphus and enjoy it because they know the pointlessness of their escape as Ros says "We've got nothing to go on, we're out on our own", "what are going to say" (*Ros & Guil*, p. 53). They have a free will to escape death, yet they willingly choose to accept their death. It is worth noting that one of the characters in *Waiting for Godot* eventually accepts Absurdism and comes to terms with the absurdity of the situation. This character is expected to endure a tremendous burden, yet even when he is provided with comfort and solace, he continues to voluntarily return to that burden and takes it back up again. It is Lucky the character from *Waiting for Godot*, who is referred to as the slave. It is possible to interpret Lucky as Albert Camus's example of the absurdist hero; someone who is aware that their life is worthless and terrible, yet

continues to live it. In addition, when Lucky eventually talks to Pozzo, Estragon, and Vladimir, they and other readers cannot comprehend a word he says.

Gassner and Quinn in their book *The reader's encyclopedia of world drama* state that the essential voice in Stoppard's play is the concept of a French symbolist poet who aimed to fill the gap between music and language (2002, p. 129). Stoppard communicates directly to our senses and emotions by using pauses, rhythm, suggestion, imagery, and ultimately the sound of silence itself. As a consequence, his idea is often felt but not fully comprehended. Accordingly, one may argue that Stoppard's work is meant to be felt rather than comprehended. The misery of life is a world in which people have no option but to adjust to ridiculous small things since the experience of living must be felt within instead of comprehended outwardly.

Consequently, more than half percent of Stoppard's adaptation version is viewed as a series of questions, cliches, and pointless repetitions. M. H. Abrams and Harpham remark about the playwright's work that is "lucid but the dialogue is eddying and pointless and often funny, and pratfalls and other modes of slapstick are used to project the alienation and tragic anguish of human existence" (2015, p. 2). Abrams and Harpham argue in this passage that the unproductive and meaningless language used in the play creates and intensifies the absurd emotion that the readers feel. Through the course of his work, readers are made to feel alienated and powerless. Similarly, Neil Sammells believes that Stoppard's work is possibly the best example of a play that repeats an outdated idea in an incongruous context, "in which the eternal triangle and hackneyed rhetoric of domestic melodrama are relived by three characters immersed in urns, blinded and thrust into sporadic speech by a probing, unnameable light" (1988, p. 7). Sammell's opinion suggests that Stoppard uses obsolete methods in inappropriate settings, thus demolishing the language's inherent communicability. Therefore, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* ridicules or rather destroys all of our beliefs of meaning by utilizing language against itself to avoid concealing their profound weakness.

The essential point of Stoppard's contradiction is that he presents low or minor characters as main figures. He lauds the idea of language and demonstrates via language that a man must be responsible and proactive enough to assume responsibility for himself. One's existence has a significant impact on the decisions

that he/she makes. Throughout his play, he demonstrates the importance of taking responsibility and acting on it. Stoppard's idea on the necessity of action is clarified by Ronald Hayman as follows: "By placing modern speaking style into Ros and Guil's mouths and placing side by side humorous prose scenes with Shakespearean tragedy, Stoppard helps make modern cliches look weak and dimwitted, in contrast to Hamlet's bravery and language" (1982, p. 26). Furthermore, Stoppard's text frequently generates humor by immediately shifting from the heavenly to the secular. It also serves a dual purpose first by introducing the major idea of the play, which is that life is full of horrible agony, and second, it sets a tone of cynical comedy, which is observed throughout the play. For instance,

> Ros: Or just as mad.
> Guil: Or just as mad.
> Ros: And he does both.
> Guil: So there you are.
> Ros: Stark raving sane.
> (Pause.)….
> Guil: Ah. (To ROS.) Why?
> Ros: Exactly.
> Guil: Exactly what?
> Ros: Exactly why.
> Guil: Exactly why what?
> Ros: What?
> Guil: Why?
> Ros: Why what, exactly?
> Guil: Why is he mad?!
> Ros: I don't know! (Ros & Guil, p. 125)

In this instance, the discourse has a comical tone, which is the result of Ros's perspective. He utilizes expressions such as, 'mad' and 'so there you are' to indicate that individuals are scattered and fatigued. This is a cynical comedy intended to keep people active in this pointless and lifeless world.

It is not often that Stoppard's work contains elements from the Bible. Rather than criticizing or condemning any religious authority, his goal is to convey the notion that human beings should decide what they become. He does not comment on the subject of God or morality. It is accurate in the case of ordinary people since they lack both religion and ethics. On the other hand, he uses a tone that is light-hearted and comedic while presenting his viewpoint. Margret Litvin writes in his review of Stoppard's work that the whole work consists of intellectual scenes interrupted by moments of seriousness (2011, p. 39).

In Ros and Guil's world, even the most serious events, including births and deaths, are treated with the same level of casualness as any other day. They go about their routine as though nothing else could possibly disturb them. As they proceed to sacrifice their lives for others, as in war, which is started by someone else and fought for the advantage of another party, it is excellently illustrated in the following speech how these figures express life and death, and how they are identical to the foolish little activities Guil and Ros undertake:

> Guil: Were you addressing me?
> Ros: Is there anyone else?
> Guil: Who?
> Ros: How would I know?
> Guil: Why do you ask?
> Ros: Are you serious?
> Guil: Was that rhetoric?
> Ros: No.
> Guil: Statement! Two-all. Game point.
> Ros: What's the matter with you today?
> Guil: When?
> Ros: What?
> Guil: Are you deaf?
> Ros: Am I dead?
> Guil: Yes or no?
> Ros: Is there a choice?
> Guil: Is there a God? (Ros & Guil, p. 30)

Here, terms such as dead, deaf, choice, serious, who, when, what, and addressing me and God convey absurdity. In other words, these figures and their existence are constrained to these minor activities; therefore, politicians and other people of the upper class may use and discard them at the same time.

While Ros and Guil are kept waiting, they attempt to pass their time by engaging in a variety of activities, such as throwing coins, attempting to come up with ideas using philosophical jargon, or participating in a game in which they ask and answer questions that are completely unrelated to the situation. However, this seeming activity does not conceal their unavoidable feeling of weariness and uneasiness. In fact, a sad feeling of hopelessness has left them immobilized and unable to act. When people are in this state, they get the impression that they are not only disoriented but that they are also a kind of unidentifiable "creatures". They seem to be "intensely aware of their lack of identity" (Alwan, 2000, p. 183). They are unidentifiable, so everyone gets them confused: Hamlet, the king, the queen, and occasionally even they themselves forget who they are. Stoppard illustrates for us in this sense the agonizing

condition that men find themselves in when confronted with the absurdity of life. They are lifeless men who are incapable of realizing themselves, forgetful of their origins and the position into which they have been irrationally plunged. A mental condition like this drives a person to hopelessness, and finally leading them to commit suicide. Within the context of the Theater of the Absurd, death is often presented as a substitute for life or as a solution to the last choice to the dilemma of life. In Stoppard's adaptation, the idea of death is quite prevalent throughout not just this particular episode of Ros and Guil, but also the other two episodes that are connected with this one. It seems as though Stoppard is trying to convey his opinion by saying "life is absurd, everywhere, whether on the road with two alienated courtiers, or in the court amidst society, or in the world of make-believe, the world of the play" (Alwan, 2000, p 185).

Ros and Guil only stay together because they are terrified of being abandoned in this confusing universe and do not want to risk losing each other. The deaths of the other characters in Hamlet, such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are acted out by the play's performers on many occasions during the play. This serves as a type of foreshadowing for the audience. While this does address wider metaphorical problems, such as how death is the absence of our existence and how death is a fact in daily life, it does not solve the question of how death comes about. The failure of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to understand this scene's foreshadowing is what makes it such a fascinating part of the play. Because the absurdity and pointlessness of their lives have had such a profound effect on them, they have entirely lost their sense of selfhood. As a result, they are unable to identify that it is in fact their own characters who are being represented by players on stage in front of them.

Stoppard connects the three parts of the plot by making the scene of Ros and Guil the primary focus of the play by assuming that the reader is acquainted with Bard's Hamlet. As a result, Hamlet's story is presented within the events of the play by strategically integrating scenes into the action of the play in which Hamlet, Ophelia, the King, and the Queen are all presented. Nonetheless, the actors who are simply minor characters in the source play and participate solely in acting "the Mouse-trap within the main events of the play, are given here a wider role in the events" (Scott, 1989, p. 14). It is during Hamlet's visit to Ophelia in his madman state that he makes his first appearance in the scene. The grotesque aspect is apparent in the

portrayal of the scene as a pantomime depicting a madman approaching a young lady. As it depicts a phase in Hamlet's character development in the original play, the scene loses its glamour. It is expected to serve as a reminder to the audience of the Bard's original work. Consequently, it is included within the scenes of an absurd scenario that centers on Ros and Guil. Hamlet's presence in such an abrupt way gives the impression that he is a relatively minor character in the absurd world of Ros and Guil. The appearances of Claudius, Gertrude, and Polonius within the plot of Stoppard's play are also reminiscent of Shakespeare's Hamlet in other ways. Nevertheless, the scene in which these characters are involved is adapted directly from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

It is important to note that when Ros and Guil interact with the King or Queen, they also speak the identical words that are existed in the Bard's work. These taken scenes serve as connections between the source work and Stoppard's work. Act II begins with Stoppard's instruction to the audience to return to Shakespeare's Act II, Scene II. This method of taking lines or scenes from Shakespeare persists in the play's second and third acts. Stoppard wants his audience to have Shakespeare's play in mind while watching Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (Scott, 1989, p. 16).

Stoppard's intention in his adaptation of the work is unquestionably different from the Bard's. Nevertheless, as a context in which Ros and Guil's event is meant to be occurring, Stoppard keeps the structure of the plot but does not keep the contents of the main plot. Consequently, the tragic story of Hamlet is simplified to the point of pantomime to emphasize the misery and tragedy of the two courtiers. Therefore, Stoppard is not only shifting the emphasis of the play, but also "altering the Shakespearean tragic genre" (Scott, 1989, p. 20), by emphasizing the comic quality of the actions of Ros and Guil from the very first moment of the work through all of the subsequent events. The idea of death, nonetheless, continues to lurk there as the inevitable conclusion to all of this absurdity. The concept of death is the prevalent motive of many of the actions in Stoppard's play, just like in *Hamlet*. The two plays make use of this motif in a variety of different ways. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it is employed in a tragic context, but in Stoppard's play, it takes on other new dimensions.

Stoppard focuses primarily on the deaths of Ros and Guil, which nearly causes him to ignore the deaths of other characters, such as Hamlet, Claudius, and Gertrude.

As in Hamlet, here, these two protagonists are forced to an end that is not of their own will. Stoppard's depiction of them as innocent individuals trapped in a predicament situation that is not of their own choice reveals fatalism and hopelessness of human existence. Even though they are certain of their innocence, the protagonists, ironically, surrender to the notion of their inevitable death. Ros and Guil are now completely aware that they are powerless in a world where their destiny is predetermined and that the only way out is to submit to the one end that is imaginable, which is death. There is no other way out but for them is to accept death as their only option.

> Guil : A man standing in his saddle in the half-lit half-alive
> dawn banged on the shutters and called two names. He was
> just a hat and a cloak levitating in the Grey plume of his own
> breath, but when be called we came. That much is certain-we came.
> Ros: Well I can tell you I'm sick to death of it . I don't care one
> way or another, so why don't you make up your mind?
> Guil : We can't afford anything quite so arbitrary. nor did we come
> all this way for a christening. All that-preceded us. But we are
> comparatively fortunate; we might have been left to sift the whole
> field of human nomenclature, like two blind men looting a bazaar
> for their own portraits … At least we are presented with alternatives
> Ros: Well as from now-
> Guil :-But not choice.
> Ros: You made me look ridiculous in there.
> Guil : I looked just as ridiculous as you did.
> Ros (an anguished cry): Consistency is all I ask!
> Guil (low, wry, rhetoric): Give us this day our daily mask.
> Ros (a ding fall) : I want to go home (moves). Which way did we come in? I've lost my sense of direction.
> Giul: the only beginning is birth and the only end is death-if you can't count on that, what can you count on ? (Ros & Guil, p. 29-30)

Ros and Guil are unable to comprehend any idea clearly due to the chaotic world in which they are situated. They not only have lost their sense of direction, but they have lost their sense of nearly everything else as well. Consequently, their perception is diminished. Everything seems murky and gloomy to them. They are conscious of the fact that they are moving in the direction of a deadlock, which is represented by England, the country to which they are sent; nonetheless, the actuality of that end is not clear or evident to them. John M. Perlette claims "England is a dead end--end of their function, their mission, their journey, their lives-in more than one sense. Yet their destination ultimately makes no sense; it can be neither imagined nor explained" (1985, p. 665). No wonder why Ros questions whether "death could possibly be a boat" (*Ros & Guil*, p. 108)? Death, although it is inconceivable, it becomes the primary preoccupation of these two characters.

If death is considered an unimaginable concept for Ros and Guil, it is also an unreal fictitious occurrence for the Player. It is possible to act it out in a play. This fictional method of death is the only one that the Player is familiar with. Ros explains to Guil that the reality of death ruins the image that was created by fiction, and he tells the story of how he once presented a real act of hanging in one of his plays, which resulted in the failure of the play. In fact, Guil cannot regard the kind of death described by the player to be the sole sort of death that may be accepted by others. Meanwhile, Guil himself is unable to conceive it as something true, and can only see it as something unreal and without existence. "These positions", as John M. Perlette suggests, "are actually complementary, opposite sides of the same coin, each in its way a recognition of the fact that we have no direct access to the reality of death" (1985, p. 667). This demonstrates that the concept of death continues to be the primary focus of the play right up until the very end. When Ros and Guil mysteriously disappear, this causes the audience to feel a sense of absurdity due to the fact that their deaths are not the result of a chain of logically consistent causes and effects.

It seems that Stoppard is drawing inspiration for his new play from both *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot*, as Ruby Cohn has considered "a witty commentary rather than a theatrical exploration into either great work" (2015, p. 413). One may, however, consider Stoppard's play to be more than a simple remark on the topic. It is an insight into the human situation in general, embodied by the two protagonists who gain deeper significance throughout the play. Despite the fact that the play takes place in the same historical context as the original play, it is characterized by a universality that makes it a representation of the state of oppressed human beings everywhere and whenever they exist. The irreparable disparity between life and death affects man in an absurd universe in which man's existence is seen as random and pointless. In this condition, man is seen as a hopeless lost, and powerless being who has no will to enter or exit in the world. If Ros and Guil had been given the option to choose their own fate, neither of them would have embraced death. Except, like everyone else, they are denied this option, leaving them with no alternative but to accept what is determined for them (Zeineddine, 2012, p. 155.).

The spirit of apathy to the future emerges as a direct result of this demoralizing attitude of submission. This helplessness becomes predominant throughout their journey to their deaths. When Ros and Guil are in the middle of the ocean, they find

out that the royal letter they are carrying to the king of England has been changed and replaced with another letter that orders their immediate execution. They are aware that they are coming closer and closer to the end. They are aware of the inevitability of death approaching fast to them, and despite the opportunities, they have to avoid it. They provide no indication that they are attempting to rescue themselves in any way. They submit without resistance, and regardless of the opportunities, they have to flee the situation.

Guil(quietly) : 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...

> Ros: They had it in for us. Didn't they? Right from the beginning. Who'd have thought that we were so important?
> Cuil: 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?
> Player: you are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. That's enough.
> Guil: No-it is not enough. To be told so little to -such an end-and still, finally, to be denied an explanation...
> Player: In our experience , most things end in death.
> Guil (fear, vengeance, scorn): Your experience?-Actors!... And no blood runs cold anywhere… (Ros & Guil, p. 93)

This situation of absurdity can be seen not only in the story of Ros and Guil, or the story of the players but also in the story of Hamlet, which is deeply embedded in the play in such a way that it serves as a background to the new play. This is because the story of Hamlet is interwoven into the fabric of the play. Even though it concludes with Hamlet's death, the plot of Hamlet is not a tragedy anymore but rather a grotesque image that has been stripped of its beauty and magnificence. In the last scene of the play, Stoppard again depends on the audience's familiarity with the original Hamlet to provide a summary duplication of Shakespeare's final scene. Due to the lack of information on Hamlet's death in Stoppard's play, death is made to seem as insignificant as those of Ros and Guil. Hamlet's death appears to reflect absurdity since it is a grotesque of actual death. The players' lives are meaningless and pointless and are therefore equal to death, and Ros and Guil's lives and deaths on the other hand are considered the ultimate loss, or a chaos, as Guil describes in his last statement in the play "Guil : Our names shouted in a certain dawn… a message... a summons... there must have been a moment, at the beginning ,where we could have said-no. But somehow we missed it" (Ros & Guil, p. 95).

The characters Ros and Guil in Stoppard's play are forced to fulfill a certain requirement. They are acutely aware of the absurdity of the condition and may at times engage in conversations with a philosophical tenor about the laws of probability and causation in an attempt to find some kind of explanation and meaning for their life situations (Cohn, 2015, p. 415). Notwithstanding, the ultimate reality is that their attempt is doomed to be unsuccessful since "their proofs are cerebral speculations divorced from the reality of the situation in which they find themselves" (Scott, 1989, p. 17). Due to the chaotic and absurd situation they are surrounded by, their condition is forced upon them, and they cannot alter it. Therefore, they believe that speculating is the only alternative to taking action.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been rewritten by Stoppard in such a manner that the resulting play is distinct from the one that Shakespeare wrote. It seems that the reason why Stoppard has chosen this play is connected to the fact that he has seen the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as being innocent victims of the royal plot. As a result, the emphasis of the play is shifted away from the central story of Hamlet to these minor characters, thus making them the protagonists and major characters of his play. Stoppard employs Beckett's techniques in his work, despite the fact that the story of the Bard's *Hamlet* serves as the basis for the structure of his play. This is because the primary objective of the play is to shed light on the absurdity of the situation in which these two characters are placed. Stoppard magnifies the spirit of absurdity to the point that it overshadows everything else that happens in the play. As a result, Stoppard's play becomes an interpretation of *Hamlet* in which the absurdity of the whole situation established by Shakespeare is reflected in the play.

In terms of character development, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Hamlet* have a lot in common and similarities. Ros and Guil have invented games in order to take their minds off the absurdity of their situation. Similar to Shakespeare's characters, Stoppard's characters are also confused. They also have no idea where they came from. They become pawns in the game played by time and circumstances that seem to be beyond their power. Their manner of speech, gestures, and actions are very similar to those of Beckett's tramps. They flip coins as a way to pass the time, and the most intriguing part about it is that they always land on the same spot (tail), despite the fact that they are aware that the chance of landing on the tail is quite low. They play king and make decrees to escape the boredom of inaction, which

is comparable to the events that Beckett's tramps engage in throughout the play, such as playing in shoes and hats and performing endless fall on one's buttocks.

By moving the focus to minor characters, Stoppard creates a grotesque picture of Hamlet, and by developing the tragic story of the innocent Ros and Guil, he seems to be reinforcing the picture of Hamlet as a self-centered person. The details of Hamlet's character development are ignored since his picture is formed via brief episodes in which he is depicted pantomimically. As a postmodern interpretation of the play, Stoppard's play offers a theatrical image that may be appreciated for its insight into issues pertaining to the existence of man in the world. The popularity of the play at its period in the 1960s might be seen as proof that it successfully reflects the predominant feeling of the time. In this regard, Michael Scott observes:

> Stoppard's play can only appear as on extravaganza enjoyed by audiences who may be content with its flippancy concerning the play's metaphysics but are happy not to be provoked into considering those issues in Shakespearean template which cry out in the 1980s to be heard (1989, p. 27).

Scott thinks that audiences in the 1970s and 1980s are not able to accept Stoppard's treatment of Hamlet. This is partial because the political situation has changed, thus creating new types of audiences, and partially because he sees Stoppard's work as an 'extravaganza' that does not do justice to Shakespeare's masterpiece. Partially, this is true, but from a humanitarian standpoint, Stoppard's play, even though it focuses on minor characters from Shakespeare, can be seen as a reflection of how the playwright feels about a very important question: how valuable is a human being in this world?

Stoppard's renewal of the Bard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as main figures has not only altered the significance of these figures but also elevated the spirit of ordinary people's lives via these common individuals. In fact, Stoppard is positive about human existence inasmuch as it involves giving up control to others in both life and death since, in his opinion, it is what it is to really live. Stoppard emphasizes that the existence of Ros and Guil is equally worthy and valuable to all individuals, regardless of class or rank. The upper class might have been the subject of power and privilege, but even the most ordinary of individuals have rights and dignity that, in many situations, is more significant than that of the well-known and high class.

To suggest that *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* may be used as a replacement for *Hamlet* ignores the reality of the situation, whereby the original play will continue to serve as a source of speculation for playwrights both now and in the future. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that for each ear, there is a Hamlet for its own. Stoppard's Hamlet was from the 1960s, and it successfully reflected the atmosphere of the time. The Hamlet of the twenty-first century will undoubtedly be different, but neither the original nor Stoppard's can be eliminated.

3. STRENGTHENING RACIALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY MARGINALIZED SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTER IN WESKER'S VERSION OF *THE MERCHANT OF VINCE*

In the postmodern era, racial and religious problems are emphasized in Arnold Wesker's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. The play explores racially and religiously marginalized Shakespearean character (Shylock) through a society damaged by politics of racial and religious aspects. There is a significant dispute about whether the Bard was a bigot because of his literature. Therefore, Shylock's role as a Jewish protagonist in Arnold's adaptation becomes the main focus on restoring the honour and emotions of this marginalized character. In this regard, while a few critics have identified some increased anti-Semitism in Bard's plays, a few writers such as Wesker have spoken about the clear evidence of an increase in anti-Semitism in Bard's plays. As a result, a few adaptations of the work arose, either with a sympathetic portrayal of the Jewish identity or with an alternate history of the Venetian Jew. Being from a Jewish background, Wesker in *The Merchant* (1976) expresses his critique of the Bard and represents his society's issues about racial and religious issues. Thus, Wesker makes the decision to adapt Bard's version from a new viewpoint. His goal is to reinterpret *The Merchant of Venice* in the context of postmodern problems and concepts to highlight how man is trapped.

Perhaps, Wesker's Jewish heritage had a strong influence on his interpretation of Bard's version. Born in 1932, Arnold Wesker's father was Jewish and his mother was Hungarian. As a youngster, he grew up in the Jewish East End, a working-class neighborhood in London. He saw racist and antisemitic assaults of the Jewish people in his hometown throughout his youth. As he was growing up, he was certain that he had gained common knowledge of his community's suffering, as he reports his experience of antisemitism as a youngster. As a youngster, "I did not encounter any antisemitism. However, they still have a lingering feeling of persecution because of their history. My belief is that one receives a feeling of identity from it" (qtd. in Hayman, 1979, p. 5). Although Wesker never encountered antisemitic acts, he nonetheless had strong ties to his Jewish background and often took notice of the discrimination against Jews. One of the antisemitic incidents that occurred while Wesker was a youngster was the 1936 clash between the Blackshirts (the fascist

organization led by Oswald Mosley) and the immigrants (who included a lot of Jews) on Cable Street in London. Having seen such racial prejudice targeted towards his race, Wesker has become an active member of Jewish "anti-antisemitism" organization. Thus, he joined the Zionist organization group Habonim when he was only fourteen years old. It may be shown that Wesker's personal priorities included resolving his country's problem with "anti-Semitism". Regarding the matter of racial violence against minorities, he frequently spoke about his anxieties during speeches and then used his works to express his opinions.

Besides his adaptation of the Bard, the overall attitude Wesker takes to "anti-Semitism" is also evident in his other works. Furthermore, the way in which Wesker views Bard's *The Merchant of Venice* lends credence to the notion that adaptation is very often produced in connection to the author's ideological or personal antecedents. "Shylock's forgiveness is not like mine", as Wesker argues, since, he is filled with resentment. Because the drama is committed to the murderous hatred of the Jewish people (Wesker, 1977, p. 2), it is obvious that Wesker's frustration at how the Bard portrayed his people throughout the character of Shylock drove him to reinterpret the play and alter any anti-Semitic sentiments the Bard might have otherwise instilled. In addition, Wesker has drawn parallels between "anti-Semitism" and contemporary issues to contextualize his play, which he views as more significant than mere historical issues. Thus, he takes on the challenge of revisiting Bard's play by providing new interpretations, and in doing so, he can influence society's unfavorable attitudes against Jews. On this point, Wesker's adaptation of the Bard's work has been equally unique.

Wesker confirmed in one of his meetings that he felt unhappy with anti-Semitic staging of *The Merchant of Venice*, wherein Laurence Olivier played Shylock as a stereotypically bad Jew. Wesker felt particularly opposed to the scenario whereby the Jew is shown as adamant about chopping the piece of flesh. After reading it, Wesker thought it was awful, and he thinks that it is not a good idea to continue using this depiction of the Jews, who are shown as greedy characters. Therefore, in his interpretation, Wesker alters the figure of Shylock, by casting him as a more compassionate and sympathetic person to re-associate the Jewish race with a better portrayal. In his adaptation, Wesker believed that Shakespeare's rendition of the play has perpetuated prejudice and anti-Semitic attitudes; therefore, Wesker aims to remove

that bad image from its roots. His respect for this work extended to the directorial aspect, and he was disappointed that he could not get as many producers as he wished to take part (Wesker, 1999, p. 34). Since Wesker was having difficulty staging his work Shylock in England, he published his book *The Birth of Shylock 1999* to describe his motivations and problems to better understand what he went through when he first came up with the play. It appears that he felt a strong need to speak out more about "anti-Semitism" by highlighting the ideas found in Bard's works. The vast majority of Jewish authors are chastised for failing to accurately portray "antisemitism" as a social issue in their writing. According to Kerbel Sorrel's definition,

> ...when a Jew writes about Jewishness he or she is perceived to be self-serving....or hysterical. When a non-Jew writes about Jewishness, on the other hand, they are ambitiously demonstrating their "range" to the world. All this, needless to say, has nothing to do with Jewishness and everything to do with the Britishness of the wider culture (2010, p. 11).

Oppositely, as a Jewish playwright writing about issues that are relevant to the Jewish community, Wesker emphasizes his awareness of antisemitism as a social issue. In his key works and his answer to *The Merchant of Venice*, some say Wesker's ideological stance and Jewish heritage have come into play.

It is necessary to keep in mind that Wesker does not explicitly state of being opposed to the Bard's *The Merchant of Venice* ; instead, he wants to question the play rather than the Bard himself. Wesker expresses his dissatisfaction with the anti-Semitic performances of the work that continues to be staged in the modern era in uncertain terms. The Bard really was not prejudiced towards Jews; as Wesker claims, his attitudes were a reflection of his time. His mind is nonetheless well-gifted (Wesker, 1999, p. 16). However, Wesker considers that the Bard would have been appalled by the damage his plays caused to the reputation of the oppressed race "Jew", which he believes the Bard considered worthless. Wesker also discusses Bard's excellence by referring to him as the "Genius" (Wesker, 1999, p. 7). In this regard, his views are differentiated from other authors who adapted Shakespeare's plays, because, unlike his contemporaries, he does not directly attack the Bard or his original text; rather, he engages with the interpretations and consequences of the text on succeeding ideologies. Perhaps, he developed this mentality due to anxiety over his worry that attempting to rework *The Merchant of Venice* was "madness" because he was reinterpreting Bard's work (Wesker, 1999, p. 6). Wesker believes that the difficulties

of creating an alternate image of Shylock are worthwhile, despite being clear about the effort required. Wesker knows that it is impossible to subvert the Bard; therefore, he notices the difficulties of adapting his work, and because of this, he remains silent about his critique.

The Bard's version has a group of characters with unchanged objectives, whereas Wesker has instead given them altered objectives. The characters from Wesker's play are easily recognizable due to their appearances in the original text, but their attributes are wildly different from the characters in the original source, as are their relationships with one another. Similarly, because the play utilizes the same characters, although, with somewhat altered characteristics, it drastically changes the story framework. In addition, because it emphasizes a different perspective, that of a Jew; therefore, it shifts away from the original purpose of the original source. Thus, Wesker's play may be considered a reoriented story. Initial readings of the original text are altered as a result of adaptation, which brings the issues of the formerly overlooked character to the forefront.

Scholars disagree over whether *The Merchant of Venice* is anti-Semitic. The contemporary relevance of Bard's version, in Marjorie Garber's opinion, is seen in many controversies that continue to arouse in the modern period (2014, p. 302). Martin Yaffe has seen Bard's work as an appreciation and respect for Jewish people, but it is against the character of Shylock (Holderness, 2016, p. 68). However, Holderness simply has not thought that the city of Venice in Bard's work was "a location in which 'oppressed minority' was obligated to survive in a state of harsh repression (Holderness, 2016, p. 87). The intricacy of Shylock's interpretation, along with other aspects of *The Merchant of Venice*, causes several problems. The debate around Shylock is one of the most significant factors in *The Merchant of Venice's* confusing representation. In Shakespearean literary and cultural criticism, Susannah Heschel notes that the Bard's Shylock has a very essential role in the work. As a polysemous character, he emerges as the key character in *The Merchant of Venice* because of his marginalized, tragic, ludicrous, frightening, and incomprehensible nature. In addition, he represents both the Jewish and Christian faith by appearing like a Jew while simultaneously reflecting the "Jew" that the Christian mind has projected (2006, p. 420). Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, as explained in this statement, accounts for why most of the play's criticism concentrates on him. This marginalized

character in Bard's play has elicited controversy among critics over its depiction of the Jewish character. One view considers him as a compassionate representation of the Jewish people, whereas others perceives him as strengthening the previously existing hostility towards Jews. Critics and literary scholars believe that this character's vagueness, as well as the uncertainty in Bard's text about the character's motives, influences how others have dealt with him in diverse adaptations of the work, which is of a special interest in Shakespearean criticism. Because there are several various interpretations and rewritten versions of Bard's work due to uncertainty, Arnold Wesker's play was written to be clearer about Bard's portrayal of racism.

The *Merchant of Venice* involves extensive debates on Shylock's character, thus Wesker cantered his adaptation mainly on strengthening this racially and religiously marginalized Shakespearean character. The writers who adapt the Bard often give the "voices" in their work to the marginalized characters like Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Shylock, and Desdemona, who have been victimized, completely misinterpreted, or are simply missing (Burt, 2007, p. 700). The changes and emphasis on the characters who are minors or have been marginalized in Bard's Plays are highlighted in the postmodern adaptation of his plays. The use of this approach is highlighted, even more so, when it is noted that the postmodern playwright has renamed his play *The Merchant of Shylock* numerous times after it had been penned, is a clear indication that he intended to focus his adaptation on Shylock's part rather than Antonio's (Drakakis, 2014, p. 1). However, in comparison to the edition created by Shakespeare, this study finds that the Bard emphasizes mainly the role of Antonio's character.

The character alterations that are particular to character development in Wesker's work show that the primary purpose for his reinterpreting of Shylock is to change the commonly accepted and unforgettable image of a Jew created by the Bard (Bloom, 2005, p. 8). Since Shakespeare's Shylock has left a permanent impact and strong effect on literary readings, Wesker's adaptation is rather a demanding one. It has been suggested that Shylock's character in the postmodern playwright's play is a reaction against the manner in which Shakespeare portrayed the character, which has currently been regarded as the greatest scourge wherein "the Jews have labored" (Landa, 1942, p. 5). Consequently, Shylock's portrayal has come to be regarded as a figure which represents the Jews, and thus Shylock's portrayal has come under

criticism since it attributes negative attributes to Jews in particular. In this regard, Wesker believes that re-examining Shylock's character entails changing the racial stereotypes of Jews that have persisted throughout history. Wesker believes in his book *The Birth of Shylock* that being labeled as the Bard's Shylock is like being criticized for being like a Jew since it means you are wicked (1999, p. 359). Shylock in Bard's work is also known for referencing to the entire Jewish race in a negative sense (Endelman, 2002, p. 76). Wesker's comments in the play reflect his critical view of the Bard since the Jewish character Shylock was given certain attributes by the playwright, which have been picked up by Shakespearean scholars and have remained throughout history. In Shakespeare's play, the character Shylock possesses qualities that mirror anti-Semitic attitudes against Jewish people in the middle ages and Renaissance era.

There are several interpretations of how Bard's plays have influenced the promotion of various ideologies in postmodern society. One specific example is *The Merchant of Venice*, which is used to promote racist and anti-Semitic views according to certain Shakespearean scholars. Many stereotypes that existed in the middle ages and early modern era regarding the Jewish race are mirrored in Bard's play by negative qualities ascribed to the character. Because of the text's connection between ideology and history, Bloom, who has virtually never missed a step in venerating the Bard, calls his play a weakness in Bard's literary legacy (1991, p. 7). This means that Wesker wants to change the widespread unfavorable stereotypes about Jews through his depiction of a positive Jewish character. Wesker depicts Shylock as a pleasant, respected figure who is liked by his companion Antonio.

Shylock in Bard's play is typically represented as a cruel character, but in Antonio's statement, "…but since he stands obdurate /And that no lawful means can carry me / Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose / My patience to his fury, and am arm'd / To suffer, with a quietness of spirit, / The very tyranny and rage of his" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.7-13), he presents him as a victim of the law. In terms of his angry disposition, Shylock's wrath seemed to flow ceaselessly and inevitably, which serves to portray him as nearly in a state of cannibalism. In Bard's play, one of the most distinctive traits of Shylock is his unwavering determination to get his money back. However, regardless of Portia and the Duke's best efforts to stop him, Shylock remains steadfastly focusing on re-entering the court stage in order to obtain his piece of flesh: "…The slaves are ours: so do I answer you: / The pound of flesh, which I

demand of him, / Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it. / If you deny me, fie upon your law!/ There is no force in the decrees of Venice. / I stand for judgment" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.97-103). In the work, the marginalized character of Shylock is introduced as a cruel, obstinate character who ends up forfeiting everything. In these regards, the play takes an allied position with regard to the Christian, who is shown as being unflinchingly antagonistic against Shylock.

On the other hand, Antonio symbolizes the Christian qualities of patience and tolerance when he meets up with Shylock's inexplicable malice. The contrasts between the Christian and the Jew are also alluded to in the acts in which their money and finances are featured. *The Merchant of Venice* in Act 2, Scene 5, shows how, in addition to his vicious side, Shylock is indeed depicted as a pitiful character who aspires for wealth. In contrast, Antonio is shown as a man of honor. Although Antonio lends money to Bassanio, Bassanio ends up in financial difficulty when he owes Antonio more money than he possesses. Antonio is shown here as someone who sacrifices himself for others. In contrast, Shylock's borrowing is viewed as proof of his unethical personality; it is in fact his moral failure. Shylock is thought to represent the theological strife between Judaism and Christianity in Bard's play. While Christianity is regarded as a religion of sorrow and toleration, Judaism is marked by hostility and evilness. The statement attributed to Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*: "Jailer, look to him: tell not me of mercy; / This is the fool that lent out money gratis: / Jailer, look to him" (3.3.1-3) appears to reject pity, which is a distinctly Christian quality. To show an ideological stance in Shakespeare's play, a comparative examination of these two characters is suggested.

The usage of the epithet 'Jew' to refer to Shylock instead of his actual name in *The Merchant of Venice* is a clear discrimination against him in favor of the Christian characters. Since the epithet 'the Jew' was used in the play fifty-eight times, whereas 'Shylock' was used merely seventeen times, *The Merchant of Venice* has come under criticism as an anti-Semitic work. In the court scene, in which the Duke indicates to Shylock as "Jew" (4.1.14) whereas calls Antonio directly with his name "Antonio" (4.1.1) is another instance of discrimination against Shylock in Bard's work (Holderness, 2016, p. 71). It is obvious that Duke has prejudice towards Shylock racially and religiously when he talks to Antonio privately and indicates to Shylock as "I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer / A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch /

Uncapable of pity, void and empty / From any dram of mercy" (4.1 3-6). Another way to look at it is that critics are upset over the play's unfair treatment of its two main characters. Antonio is addressed by his name, whereas Shylock is addressed as the Jew. Derek Cohen emphasizes how this method ultimately results in racial discrimination:

Calling the play's villain by a name which generalizes him while at the same time ostensibly defining his essence is, in a sense, to depersonalize him. As in our own daily life, where terms like bourgeois, communist and fascist conveniently efface the humanness and individuality of those to whom they are applied, the constant reference to Shylock's 'thingness' succeeds in depriving him of his humanity while it simultaneously justifies the hostility of his enemies. The word Jew has for centuries conjured up associations of foreignness in the minds of non-Jews. (1988, p. 106)

It seems that these examples help clarify why Bard treats Shylock as a minor character despite his central role in the play. A favorable reinterpreting of Shylock is needed, according to Wesker, because of his submission to Venice's purportedly higher Christian figures and authority.

When it relates to the Jews in Bard's play, regardless of how violent or naively they are depicted, one thing that comes over clearly is that the Jew is greedy vicious, cruel, cold-blooded, and lacking sympathy. This is what Wesker found repugnant about Bard's depiction of the Jews (Wesker, 1977, p. 5). Shylock is the major character in the play, but a minor character named Tubal is also included in the idea that the Jews are treated particularly poorly in *The Merchant of Venice*. This character appears to be much more despised by Christians than Shylock, when Solanio calls him a man "Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be / match'd, unless the devil himself turn Jew" (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.1. pp. 77-78). *The Merchant of Venice's* depiction of another anti-Semitic Jew strengthens the case for calling Bard's play a prejudiced text. It would appear that Shylock's evilness requires the insertion of another anti-Semitic person. It is important to look at the changes made by Arnold's adaptation in light of the historical study, yet his philosophical position should be also considered when constructing his play. Arnold, while teaching at the University, recommended his friends from a school there to help him establish his play because he believed that anti-Semitism in Bard's play would be uncovered throughout

the study of history and social condition of early modern "La Dominante" Venice (Leeming, 1983, p. 19). In the course of his study, it was the friends' hard work that made his research possible, because they gave him facts and useful information like how important the bond between Jews and non-Jews was to Renaissance Venetian law. This is a significant deviation for Arnold Wesker from Bard's work, and the strongest argument in defence of his claim that Bard's play was anti-Semitic. History demonstrates, therefore, in Bard's *The Merchant of Vince*, that Shylock's persistence on the bond only exposes his individual evilness, and the bond scheme had essentially been a requirement of the rule in the state. When it comes to negotiating with Jewish people in Venice, it is obliged by law to get a bond. Wesker uses this fact in his adaptation to challenging this element of the Bard's *The Merchant of Vince*. Arnold Wesker, therefore, criticizes the notion that Bard's *The Merchant of Vince* is grounded on historical facts. According to the findings of a recent study, Shakespeare appears to have been influenced by the politics or beliefs of his time, and as a result, Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock and Antonio as opposite characters has been viewed as a personal form and does not depict the true historical background (Wesker, 1999, p. 8).

As a result of this previous knowledge of the background of the Jewish society in Venice, Wesker deliberately has altered the part and the idea in Bard's *The Merchant of Vince* which talks about cutting a piece of flesh from the character Antonio. Considering the fact that the Bard's play primarily deals with the subject and issues of the bond from its beginning until the end, Wesker alters and transforms this scene in order to strengthen and re-establish Shylock's reputation as a kind Jew. As a result, Arnold Wesker creates a new conversation between Shylock and Antonio in order to illustrate that Shylock has not created the bond problems and thus he rejects to sign the agreement with Antonio.

Antonio: I have a great favour to ask you.
Shylock: at last! A favour! Antonio of Shylock!
Antonio: To borrow three thousand ducats.
Shylock: Not four? five? Ten?
Antonio: I'm not making jocks, Shylock.
Shylock: And why do you think I make jokes?
Antonio: For three months?
Shylock: Your city borrows forever, why not three months for you?
Antonio: You know my position?
Shylock: I know your position…
Antonio: You're a good man, old man.
Shylock: Old man – forever! Good – not always. I'm a friend.

Antonio: what do you want as a guarantee in the contract?
Shylock: in the what?
Antonio: in the contract…
Shylock: a contract? Between friends?...
Antonio: The law demands it.
Shylock: then we'll ignore the law.
Antonio: The law demands: no dealing may be made with Jews unless covered by a legal bond.
Shylock: That law was made for enemies, not friends. (The Merchant, p. 22-23)

Though this discussion demonstrates that Arnold Wesker's Shylock is not the one who devises the piece of flesh scheme in his adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, the event has been revised in line with history and facts exposed by Lois Bueler the friend of the playwright Wesker, who discovered that legislation of Venice "required that no civilian engage with a Jew without a contract. Contracts between nobles were prohibited Because the Jew was not a nobles" (Wesker, 1999, p. 18). Venetian legislation was biased at the time since the Jews were clearly distrusted. According to Arnold Wesker, Shylock should accept the contract offered by Antonio if they require some types of legal agreement.

Arnold Wesker depicts Bard's "piece of flesh concept" as a satirical attack on the state, revealing the ridiculous bonding story of the play. In Arnold Wesker's adaptation, Antonio, rather than Shylock, is the one who brings the piece of flesh bond idea, and it is meant to mock the system of Venetian legal irrational procedures. Antonio and especially Shylock believe that signing a contract is pointless and would scorn it if forced to sign one:

Antonio: you must not, cannot, bend the law.

Shylock: (angry, with the law). You can have three thousand ducats but there will be no bond, for no collateral, and for no time limit whatsoever.

….
Shylock: A nonsense bond.
Antonio: A nonsense bond?
Shylock: A lovely, loving nonsense bond. To mock the law.
Antonio: To mock?
Shylock: Barbaric laws? Barbaric bonds! Three thousands ducats a pound your flesh.
Antonio: My flesh?
Shylock: You're like an idiot child suddenly.(Mocking) A nonsense bond? My flesh? Yes, if I am not repaid by you, upon the day, the hour, I'll have a pound of your flesh, Antonio…. Your heart, dearheart, and I'd take that, too, if I could, I'm so fond of it.
Antonio: Barbaric laws, barbaric bonds. (The Merchant, p. 24-25)

Instead of a monstrous relationship, Wesker's alteration of the "piece of flesh" concept shows that the two friends are bound together by a strong friendship. This moment also illustrates that, in contrast to Shakespeare's portrayal, it is Antonio who offers the idea of signing a contract to preserve Shylock from the consequences of the rule, as he explains in the dialogue: "I understand. And it brings me closer to you than ever. But the deeper I feel our friendship the more compelled to press my point, and protect you. You are a Jew, Shylock…your life, the lives of your people depend upon contract and your respect for the law. The law, Shylock, the law! For you and your people" (*The Merchant*, p. 24). Accordingly, this speech shows that Wesker tries to show the prejudge of the Venation community throughout Antonio's explanation. Wesker's work concentrates on Antonio's defensive position to protect Shylock from the state's rule, which is already antagonistic to his ethnicity, to emphasize the concept of a Jew and a Christian may truly get fellows regarding antagonistic situation. As soon as Shylock refuses Antonio's proposal, Antonio persists to keep Shylock out of trouble since conceptually, if they failed to create a contract, Shylock is the one who would be punished for violating the rule. Wesker exposes another flaw in the Venetian judicial system by bringing this issue to light in the play.

Shylock and Antonio's desire to preserve one another from the rule demonstrates that they do have a strong bond of reciprocal respect and admiration between them. When Antonio comes up with the "peace of flesh" concept to keep Shylock out of trouble with the authorities, Shylock backs him up against the authorities. While Shakespeare's Shylock eagerly hopes of having the opportunity to seek vengeance on Antonio when he fails to make good on his obligation, Wesker's Shylock by far has been upset when it becomes clear that he must put into effect what the contract stipulates. As a rejection of Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock as a money-loving Jew, Wesker presents another Shylock character who attempts to either acquire the money to save Antonio or discover a method to liberate him from the contract's control. When it comes to the law, Shylock's helpfulness does not go unnoticed, as the regulations clearly state that a Jew who seeks to hurt a Christian would be harshly punished. Accordingly, Shylock and Antonio's effort to make fun of the legislation has completely and utterly failed. There is no longer any chance for personal rights in the face of the system. This only serves to confirm Wesker's belief that the rule is too harsh to allow for a harmonious union of Jews and non-Jews.

Consequently, the following exchange between Shylock and Antonio demonstrates their sense of frustration:

> Antonio: I cannot raise the money now.
> Shylock: I know
> Antonio: Nor can you lend it me again.
> Shylock: The Ghetto's drained, I know.
> Antonio: your yellow hat belongs to both of us. We would be sentenced to death.
> …
> Shylock: They'll let us drop the bond.
> Antonio: we cannot, we must not.
> Shylock: you understand?
> Antonio: I Understand.
> …
> Shylock: just promise me silence in the trail.
> Antonio: Will me make no explanations? The court must understand.
> Shylock: understanding is beyond them! I protect my people and my people's contract…just promise me silence at the trail. (The Merchant, p. 62)

According to the legislation, Antonio's refusal of repaying his obligation and Shylock's attempt to murder a Venetian must be both penalized. In addition, this passage represents a significant shift in Arnold Wesker's adaptation in that it illustrates how powerless Shylock feels in the presence of the unjust courtroom, even though he is honest and simply tries to support and aid Antonio.

Wesker's depiction of a strong relationship between Antonio and Shylock is not distant from the real historical background, given the knowledge that "but there were numerous examples of amicable interaction between Christians and Jews in Venice during Renaissance, and no mob attack on Jews ever occurred there. Jews were separately taxed, however, and their right to reside in Vince was limited to a stipulated period" (Lane, 2005, p. 302). As it turns out, the portrayal of Shylock and Antonio as good friends is a reaction to Shakespeare's main subject of hostility between race (race) and religion. According to the original source, animosity between Christians and Jews in Venice already existed. Wesker, on the other hand, asserts the person's authority above the government's laws. Thus, he places the concept of friendship in a social context that segregates individuals along with racial and religious lines.

Due to Bard's emphasis on race and religious matters, a lot of the blame is placed on the character Shylock instead of the Christian characters in the play. The anti-Semitism of the Christians is overshadowed in *The Merchant of Venice* by Shylock's being disliked by them. Shylock is depicted as a savage despite the Christians' friendship with him. To give an example, after Shylock refuses Antonio's

dine invitation, he is viewed as hateful: “Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which / your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. / I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, / and so following, but I will not eat with you, / drink with you, nor pray with you. / What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?” (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.3.33-39). To make matters worse, Shylock says his dislike of Antonio stems in part from the man’s religious beliefs: “How like a fawning publican he looks! / I hate him for he is a Christian, / But more for that in low simplicity / he lends out money gratis and brings down / the rate of usance here with us in Venice” (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.3.41-45). Therefore, Shylock’s animosity for Antonio is based on nothing more than blind hatred. Moreover, Bard’s portrayal of Shylock as the first figure to express his anti-Christian sentiments gives grounds for his penalty and the other characters’ unpleasant treatment of him. Thus, such facets of Bard’s work heighten Wesker’s critical stance. As a result, Arnold Wesker’s alteration and strengthening of Shylock portrays him as a Jew who loves exchanging his drink and expertise with Antonio, in contrast to the Bard’s hostile Shylock who rejects Antonio’s proposal. Antonio’s frequent presence in Shylock’s place indicates how hospitable he really is.

Even though there are rigorous regulations of the law restricting pleasant contact between Antonio and Shylock in Wesker’s adaptation, they still tolerate each other’s religious beliefs and do not let their disagreements ruin their friendship. When Antonio hosts Shylock for dinner and informs other Christians “Yes, take a message to my assistant, Graziano Sanudo. Tell him I won’t be in today, but to arrange for dinner on Wednesday. I’m hosting my friend, so no pork. Join us, Bassanio, I keep a good wine cellar” (*The Merchant*, p. 22), it shows that he tolerates Shylock’s faith. Antonio, in the same way, shows his admiration for Shylock when he says: “You are religious man… I love you more and more, Shylock. You have a sanity I could not live without now. I’m spoiled, chosen also” (*The Merchant*, p. 5-6). Additionally, it is a contradiction to the character Antonio in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, who uses anti-Semitic rhetoric. According to Wesker, these changes demonstrate the potential of unity between Jews and Christians mostly through trust, tolerance, and communication.

Even though Wesker reverses Bard’s depiction of hostility between Shylock and Antonio, he nevertheless shows the Jew’s subjugation via the portrayal of other

characters who have the same hatred against Shylock. Even though Bassanio has not seen a Jew, he is shown as an anti-Semitic character, which shows Arnold's sarcastic attitude to the development of biases towards Jews without a rational basis. This is demonstrated by Antonio and Bassanio in the scene when discussing issues related to Shylock:

> Bassanio: Is this a Jew?
> Antonio: I think you haven't seen one before?
> Bassanio: spoke of… thought, but—
> Antonio: Shylock is my sepecial friend.
> Bassanio: then, sir, he must be a special man. (The Merchant, p. 18)

Similarly, Wesker's Shylock is often humiliated by Lorenzo, who says things like "*(with evangelist fervor*)They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statues, that I have set before you and before your fathers" (*The Merchant,* p. 40). Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that Antonio and the other characters do not share the same values, as shown by his quick reaction to Lorenzo's racist comment: "rudeness is not permitted in my place" (*The Merchant*, p. 40). In Shakespeare's work, the strong connection between Antonio and Christian figures has been changed by Wesker's play. in contrast to Bard's *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio and Antonio were close friends to each other, whereas in Arnold Wesker's adaptation, it seems that Antonio does not have an intimate relationship with Bassanio and he is almost forgotten by Antonio when he says: "… And I'd forgotten him also. Poor young Bassanio. Probably a very young nobleman. I even think he must be a young patrician. His father was born in Venice, if I remember, of patrician stock, if I remember" (*The Merchant*, p. 7). Such instances show that Wesker portrays Antonio as being friendlier to Shylock than other naive Christian characters. Thus, this case reinforces the notion that all Christian characters' behavior is not similar toward Jews. These examples prove that Wesker's adaptation features Antonio as a good example of how to treat Jews with respect.

In contrast, Wesker presents Shylock as a multifaceted and extremely educated character, with his favorite privilege not being rich bastard as in the Bard's play but enormous book collector, in an attempt to reinterpret the conventional notion of a wealthy and stingy Jew. The moment depicting Jessica's escape is among the most significant changes in Wesker's play. Jessica is duped by Lorenzo in the same way she

was in *The Merchant of Venice* and finds love with him. Considering this, since the central alteration revolves around Shylock's figure, his reaction when he learns of her daughter's absence is significantly different in Wesker's edition: "Oh, Jessica. And where are you now? What wretched, alien philosophy has taken up your mind? … Which of the world's fervourists has lighted your sweet nature with its ephemeralties? Oh, vulnerable youth. You must be lonely. So lost and lonely, so amazed and lost and lonely. Oh daughter, daughter, daughter" (*The Merchant*, p. 59). The identical moment from Bard's play is used to illustrate Shylock's greediness when he asserts:

> The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! (The Merchant of Venice 3.1.84-92).

To convey the impression that Wesker's Shylock appreciates his child much more than his property, Wesker transforms this section of the scene in order to challenge subtly the stereotype of Jews as stingy people.

As a result of Wesker's adaptation, Shylock's library which is full of books has taken the place of his commodities as the top priority. It is clear that at moments Wesker is doing all he can to strengthen and paint a favorable picture of Shylock, even if it means portraying Antonio as a stupid fool compared to the character OF Shylock. When Antonio sees Shylock's personal library, for example, his remarks show this concept: "So many books!... A lawyer, a doctor, a diplomat, a teacher--- anything but a merchant. I'm so a shamed" (*The Merchant*, p. 4). While Bard's work depicted Jewish people only as usurers, Wesker portrays them as an intelligent race, which is something that is completely absent from Bard's work. To make sure of Antonio's claim that he understands nothing about anything except commerce, Wesker places him in a weaker state. As a result, Wesker identifies a different prejudiced interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, placing the blame entirely on the character of Shylock for his unethical trade whilst depicting Antonio more favorably.

There is also a significant alteration in Wesker's work that relates to the narrative features of Bard's play, and that is the popular speech of Bard's Shylock "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions: bodily

proportions. dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?" (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.1. 58-64). Regardless of the reality that this specific passage is often used to support Bard's compassionate portrayal of Jewish people, Wesker has entirely rejected the humanizing interpretation of this sort. He believes that this is the only time in Bard's work that the character of Shylock is sympathized and viewed as a human being (Luk, 2018, p. 188). Before then, he is solely known as a cruel, wicked man who did terrible things. Because it does not alter the characters or the reader's views on Shylock, Wesker has rewritten this section with theatrical instead of personal interest in mind. After all, according to Wesker, Bard has not presented this well-known passage because he is deeply worried about Shylock and wants to present a statement about this issue. Wesker's viewpoint is that this statement displays Bard's care for theatrical intuition in order to avoid "making the opposing too dark, that would also diminish believability and effect" (Wesker, 1977, p. 2). Consequently, to keep the statement in doubt while also suggesting a potential use for these remarks and in order to degrade Shylock's humanity, Wesker in his work lets Lorenzo say the lines that have already been said in the courtroom stage: "No, no, No! I will not have it. (*Outraged but controlled*) I do not want apologies for my humanity. Plead for me no special pleas" (*The Merchant*, p. 67-77). Wesker's statement regarding Shylock's speech is confirmed by his own words. There are many ways to express oneself creatively, and Wesker's criticism of this particular section of the work comes through the way Shylock responds. Consequently, Shylock's comments, as quoted previously, are indeed very identical to Wesker's critique of the act, which he has described in his statement that a particular begging from Jews is not what they desire or expect as long as they are just like the rest of us. "No one – not even Shakespeare – has the authority to confer on them humanity as a generous favor" (Wesker, 1999, para 4). Trying to humanize the character is, in Wesker's perspective, a prejudiced behavior itself. Therefore, his adaptation shows his racial and religious goal which is to change the stereotypes about Jewish people that have been developed. A good indication of this method is the way that he confronts one of Shakespeare's most iconic sentences by placing it in a different context rather than the original one.

As a matter of fact, there are several scenes in Bard's play where Shylock is depicted as a villain deserving penalty. Jessica's abandonment is perhaps a further instance, that is considered an appropriate penalty because Shylock is an overbearing parent and a Jew who stands against Christianity. Because Shylock is shown as a Jew who forbids Jessica from having a relationship with Christian men, Jessica feels that marrying Lorenzo and converting to the Christian religion might set her free from her father's restriction and allow her to forget about her troubled previous life:

> Jessica: I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
> Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
> Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
> But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
> And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
> Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
> Give him this letter; do it secretly;
> And so farewell: I would not have my father
> See me in talk with thee. (The Merchant of Venice 2.3.1-9)
> ….
> I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made
> me a Christian. (The Merchant of Venice 3.5.19-20)

When Jessica eventually runs away to marry Lorenzo, Wesker criticizes Bard's use of this notion by refusing to convert Jessica to Christianity. In Wesker's work, when anti-Semite individuals make negative remarks against Jessica's faith or her father, she refuses to let them speak disrespectfully against them: "Yes, I'm also angry. You misrepresent the bond. Whatever else my father's flaw you know the bond had mockery not malice in it" (*The Merchant*, p. 66). Also, when Lorenzo tries to get Jessica to change her religion by spreading rumors about Jewish religion as being a declining faith, she fights back with fury and does not accept this kind of act: "*With controlled fury*, Sometimes I think the sadness in my eyes comes from the knowledge that we draw from men their desperate hates" (*The Merchant*, p. 68). Jessica has been portrayed as an even more intelligent female character who is less willing to fall a victim to Lorenzo's machinations, and the problematic topic of Jessica's dialogue in Shakespeare's work is therefore altered.

To understand Shakespeare's plays from a postmodern viewpoint, one must reconsider the historical concepts he presents or ignores in his plays. Wesker discusses plenty of crimes committed against the Jewish race during the historical period in which *The Merchant of Venice* takes place. In doing so, he also refers to the historical past of long strong violence against anti-Semitism. Wesker's Shylock discusses the

1553 fire that destroyed the Torah and other Jewish manuscripts: “And all hidden for ten years. Do you know what that means for a collector? Ten years? Ha! The scheme of things!... The day of the burning of the books (Talmud and Hebrew literature)… to this day, the Talmud is forbidden” (*The Merchant*, p. 3). Some historical evidence suggests that in the 16th century in Venice, some Hebrew literature like the Talmud was destroyed because they regarded them to be cruel and offensive against the Christian faith (McQuitty, 2000, p. 112). Because Bard’s work does not deal with historical concerns like anti-Semitism or racism, Wesker’s reference to these in the play demonstrates Bard’s unawareness once again.

Similarly, the Jewish writer Usque, a new figure in Wesker’s adaptation, presents to Shylock information related to Jews race oppression that took place somewhere in the European countries. He describes the institution of interrogation court in “Portuguese”, like those in “Coimbra”, “Lamego” “Guard” and “Lisbon” where Jewish people were forced to convert and others were burned alive. The following conversion between Usque and Rebecca demonstrates the catastrophic incidents that happened to Jewish people :

> Usque: Fifty people burnt at the stake.
> Rebecca: Old women, young men, relatives, friends.
> Usque: Marian Fernandes, a cousin from Lisbon.
> Rebecca: Maria Diez, my old aunt from Guarda.
> Usque: Sebastian Rodrigo Pinto, a friend from Lamego.
> Rebecca: Diego Della Rogna, his wife Isabelle Nones, their four daughters and two sons.
> Usque: An entire family burnt.
> Rebeeca: facing each other. (The Merchant, p. 12-13)

These figures that provide information regarding the development of anti-Semitism have been inserted in the playwright's adaptation to imply the impression that religious persecution might not have been a fictitious feature in Bard’s play but a serious concern at the period. Wesker puts these notions with each other in his play to draw attention to Shakespeare’s obliviousness to such concerns of the day, and more significantly, to raise the consciousness of anti-Semitism by engaging in a debate of historical world events.

The Merchant uses instances to highlight how anti-Semitism has been repeated throughout history. On the other hand, in Wesker’s work Shylock, the protagonist, also discusses the ongoing persecution of the Jewish people through the historical past:

"From Rouen, they fled to London, and from London, they fled to York, and from York, no one escaped the slaughter that followed" (*The Merchant, p.* 4). The history of killing Jewish people in England and France, as was mentioned by Wesker's Shylock, offers insights into the persecution that his people endured simultaneously during and before the historical period in which the play is situated. Wesker in his adaptation seeks to educate the audience about Jewish people's historical background.

Wesker's interpretation of *The Merchant of Venice's* central notions is an instance of the concept that adaptation sometimes challenges and questions the manner of the original work that had been explained previously. In addition, the playwright has re-contextualized the key notions to reflect on the present problems of religions and race. According to Wesker, it is important to look at Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock in the context of the time and ideology in which it was written rather than arguing over whether it had been a sympathetic portrayal: "The idea of emphasizing that the play was originally presented as a sympathetic perception is irrelevant when the play is presented in the current time. We do not live in those days anymore" (Wesker, 1977, p. 2). Clearly, the playwright's perspective is inspired through the previous historical past of Jewish people, particularly Shoah "Holocaust", and Wesker feels that it would be important to address such controversial problems while understanding Bard's portrayal of the character of Shylock. According to Wesker, instead of debating various readings of the text when it was initially created, current contextual information should be used to evaluate the play and the characters.

It has also been noticed that the interpretation of Bard's play is influenced by incidents in the near history: "As a result of our knowledge of the Holocaust, we have an entirely different way of reading this text" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 200). In particular, the play has become increasingly controversial as a consequence of the Holocaust's long-lasting history, which has produced several literary ideological adaptations. Wesker's *The Merchant*, which has been notably influenced by this historical incident, is a good example of Wesker's efforts to change the controversial elements of Bard's work, believing that it is his obligation to rectify the notions implicitly offered by the play in a new context. Wesker acknowledges that the disaster of the Holocaust had an impact on his reading of the play: "I revere Shakespeare . . . But nothing will make me admire it [*The Merchant of Venice*], nor has anyone persuaded me that the holocaust [sic] is irrelevant to my responses" (Wesker, 1977, p. 5). In relation to the Holocaust,

Wesker has written in his diaries that the announcement that more than five million Jewish people were murdered in extermination camps made him much more determined to rewrite the play (Wesker, 1999, p. 7). Consequently, Wesker's adaptation of the work must be viewed as a reaction to the Holocaust and anti-Semitism as a much more widespread issue in his current world.

Garber claims that Bard's plays are often analyzed in light of anti-Semitism instead of another notion or ideology despite the term's historical incongruity (2014, p. 296). Hermann draws parallels between Bard's handling of Shylock and present anti-Semitism, claiming that without the invention of Shylock, medieval biases and antagonism against Jewish people might not be poignant today (1947, p. 114). Using this example, it is clear that the history and ideology of the time in which a piece of art is resurrected determines the interpretations and the meanings that may be attached to it. Accordingly, Wesker's response to Bard's work with a certain ideological standpoint displays significant considerations about his own social and political environment. Because anti-Semitism, along with other types of discrimination and racism, is still an issue in Britain like in other parts of the world, it was an issue at the time of Wesker's adaptation of Bard's work. Wesker's work awakens specific knowledge and awareness about this societal issue. Shakespearean adaptations have a history of changing people's views about serious issues, and Wesker's adaptation is no exception. He makes a good point about the significance of antisemitism in today's world and calls for concrete steps to be taken to eliminate it.

Throughout his career, Wesker was interested in his role in society and feels that the writer has a duty to help shape the public's perception of specific issues (Weintraub, 1982, p. 549). When it comes to the content of his work, he takes inspiration from real-world concerns and strives to raise awareness for the improvement of these vital issues via suitable changes. In this regard, Theater alters its coordinates not only to get survive or to be the same across time, but also to alter its surroundings. It may be said that theater constantly adapts both to the outside world and to its own characteristics. Theater creators and scholars debate the various ways that theater goes back to, rewrites, and repeats its goal and intention (Laera, 2014, p. 2). As a Jewish writer, Wesker seeks to dispel stereotypes about the Jews and brings to light the problems they face through his works like *The Merchant*. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of equal acceptance between various ethnicities, viewing

antisemitism as a kind of discrimination and bigotry in post-modern British society. Based on the claim that "... a continuous negotiation of existing social, cultural, and economic hierarchies that can be reaffirmed but also challenged by the new ways in which adaptations are circulated and appropriated" (Pascal & Hassler, 2015, p. 1), Wesker's adaptation deconstructs the storyline, characters, and the depiction of the Bard's *The Merchant of Venice* to call into question the ideologies found in anti-Semitism. *The Merchant* offers an interpretation of race and religious problems by relying on the original text's major character.

Since the human-being is influenced by the current issues of the society, it thus makes sense for Wesker to advocate peace. He seeks a peaceful milieu that is free from war, racial and religious prejudice, violence, and hardship. Thus, Wesker's version shows a profound humanistic perspective and this is evident through the words expressed by Antonio:

> Justice? For the people of Venice? The people? When political powers rest firmly in the hands of two hundred families?. . . Do we condemn the Jew for doing what our system has required him to do? Then if we do, let's swear, upon the cross, that among us we know of no Christian, no patrician, no duke, bishop or merchant who, in his secret chambers, does not lend at interest, for that is what usury is, Swear it! On the cross! No one, we know no one (Pause.) Who's silent now? (Pause.) You will inflame the people's grievances in order to achieve power, Lorenzo, but once there you'll sing such different songs I think. (The Merchant, p. 75)

Wesker thinks that the creation of humanistic values is essential, and people should benefit from ideas like education, particularly people who are from the working class or otherwise underprivileged. He produced this work to demonstrate that Bard's *The Merchant of Venice* misrepresents Jews. Wesker believes that Bard's portrayal of the Jews was unfair because he was unfamiliar at that period with life in Venice (Hayman, 1979, p. 95). He is conscious that he produced *The Merchant* in the light of the Bard, yet he shows respect, praise, and appreciation for Bard's greatness and is pleased to work in his light (Wesker, 1977, p. xiv). The Bard's plays, according to Jon Kott, go beyond the limitations of the era in which they were created. The theatergoers in the postmodern period are exposed to issues that are pertinent to their own time while viewing the play of the Bard on stage (1990, p 5). Wesker attempts to reinterpret Bard's thoughts once again employing his own life experiences and perspective on the world. Thus, he emphasizes how impossible it is to bring about global peace as long as there is religious and racial prejudice.

However, to claim that Wesker's play is a substitution for Bard's *The Merchant of Vince* overlooks the truth since the original text remains a source of speculation for dramatists at present and in the future. It is important to say that Wesker's *The Merchant* was that of 1976 and succeeded in reflecting the mood of the time. Definitely, the adapted play of Shakespeare will be different in the 21st century, but it can delete neither the original one nor Wesker's.

4. STRENGTHENING MARGINALIZED SHAKESPEAREAN FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MACDONALD'S VERSION OF *OTHELLO* AND *ROMEO AND JULIET*

In the postmodern era, misogyny and feminism problems are tackled in Anne Marie MacDonald's adaptation of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. In contrast to the opposing beliefs, the work investigates women's hatred and feminism. This is the premise on which MacDonald bases her analysis. As a result of her works, there is much debate on whether the Bard was prejudiced. For instance, *Othello* can tell us a lot about our present postmodern society. The work makes connections to views about misogyny, male bonding, and discrimination, among other things. The Bard tells his story via the use of these universal and everlasting defects in human nature, as well as the use of words and reality. The character of Iago exploits these elements of mankind to persuade Othello against his beloved Desdemona and good friend Cassio over the course of the play. Throughout the play, Othello exposes the struggles of both people in Britain in the early 16th century and people in the rest of the world in the 20th century against misogyny and racism. Furthermore, in terms of the relationship between sex and violence, the male and female characters' relationship in *Romeo and Juliet* is rife with sexism. More specifically, the play's obsessive advocacy of marriage leads to the racist attitude towards women as weak and sexual objects; this is a postmodern problem. Women in the Elizabethan age were expected to submit to the authority of their male peers and hardly ever dared to speak out for what they believed in. When it comes to stepping up for what she believes in, Juliet is a role model. Juliet had to overcome numerous challenges before Romeo and Juliet took their own lives so that destiny could no longer play a part in their relationship. It was deemed rebellious behavior for a woman to ignore her parents' orders (Djordjevic, 2003, p. 90). Another truth was that women were considered as things, with males wielding greater authority. In addition, women sought assistance from other males because of their perceived inferiority in comparison to their male counterparts. Thus, most of MacDonald's works address the cultural, social, and gender variety of people; she seeks to question dominant ideologies and societal norms and offers voice to marginalized characters.

For ages, the Bard has amazed and fascinated the audience everywhere. Nevertheless, the patriarchal concepts portrayed in his works and his proclivity for

portraying women in his plays as powerless, inferior, and innocent victims have attracted the attention of several postmodern writers seeking to alter his stories by introducing postmodern perspectives (Djordjevic, 2003, p. 95). Ann-Marie MacDonald, a Canadian feminist dramatist, in her work *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, basically rewrites the original source of Shakespeare's work to shed light and address the postmodern female problems. Her narrative depicts the struggles and accomplishments of a single protagonist, Constance Ledbelly, and includes instances of her liberation after severe personal problems. By illustrating her protagonist's transformations into strong individuals, the play conveys the necessity of women developing psychological strength and emphasizes the vital role of assistance in emotional healing and personal growth.

MacDonald's adaptation of Shakespeare does change some actions in the source text, and she tries to give voice to the "women" in Shakespeare's tragedy plays to the same story but from another completely different view through a female character. Indeed, the Canadian playwright's *Good night Desdemona (Good morning Juliet)* (1990) has been transformed into a new postmodern framework that tackles the issues of women from different societies and cultures instead of the original text. For a feminist writer, Anne Mary MacDonald, "writing back" adaptation is an important factor of women's resistance to the patriarchal society. This group has its own set of regulations that restrict what women may and cannot do. Resistance to persecution and inequality is an essential need for feminists. In this regard, feminist writers think that women's identity is produced by their patriarchal society; Simone de Beauvoir believes "a woman is not born a woman"; rather, she gets it via portrayals of women in a patriarchal culture (2015, p. 60). Consequently, French feminists headed by Helene Cixous think that women must rewrite history via what they refer to as feminist writings (qtd. in Penrod, 2007, p. 40). According to this, the Bard's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, are plays for feminist groups that depict women from a patriarchal standpoint, whereas plays like MacDonald's postmodern play are rewritten to represent Bard's women from a feminist point of view, thereby strengthening their position against their patriarchal male counterparts.

The work of the Bard is probably well-familiar to MacDonald, who is known as an intellectual artist. It is true that she takes the risk of reinterpreting two of Bard's most well-known tragedy plays, *Othello* and *Juliet and Romeo*, but it does not suggest

that she is not appreciating Bard's dramatic skills. The Canadian playwright makes no attempt to undermine Shakespeare's credibility. Instead, she claims in her interview with Melanie Lockhart:

> And in terms of Shakespeare, it's really the centre of the canon. When I went to the National Theatre School, and through high school, there was this idea that there's no greater writer than Shakespeare. But I didn't come to love Shakespeare until I started to screw around with Shakespeare. Then I developed a love of Shakespeare. I approached it simply as raw material that I thought was probably kind of boring and this was going to be fun. I think [Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)] ended up as a tribute to Shakespeare. It's a testimonial. Because it was done in the spirit of ransacking– and that's what Shakespeare did. And I think the greatest thing you can do for an author is to make free with hem, ultimately, or they won't survive. If they're going to survive, they have to survive all kinds of things (Lockhart & MacDonald, 2005, p. 143).

MacDonald's version embodies two aspects toward Shakespeare. As a playwright of the twentieth century, MacDonald conveys an understanding of her gratitude to him as well as her differences from him. In her connection with Shakespeare, she expresses a desire to honor him while also writing in opposition to the views he is seen to represent. Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize that any adaptation, regardless of whether it seeks to replicate or subvert, is fully dependent upon Bard and his works because there is no way to be conceivable without the pre-existing presence and reputation of Bard's work. Consequently, it must be admitted that the Canadian author Ann-Marie MacDonald, is the same as any other writer, who reinforces Shakespeare's cultural authority and canonical primacy.

Since Ann Marie MacDonald is a feminist author, many of her works reflect her ideas and thoughts concerning women's issues. By looking into the complex connection between people and national identity, Ann-Marie Macdonald reveals women's survival experiences through narratives that were previously hidden behind the comfy pages of patriarchal history. *Fall on Your Knees*, a fiction by a Canadian author, is inspired by a study of early North American colonization. The work addresses the relationships between humans and nature, especially via the development of identity as it is confined by a patriarchal society. A common thread running through her work is the assault of social preconceptions, particularly those presented to the reader in relation to nation and gender. This theme is central to her exploration of what lies in the gap between binary oppositions. Macdonald's works present contradictory concepts of nation and gender as potential sources of dramatic action and inspire readers to examine prevailing societal narratives, especially family backgrounds. They

second fiction of her, *The Way the Crow Flies*, has a closer similarity to *Fall on Your Knees* in terms of its examination of nation and gender. For those who believe that *Fall on Your Knees* is a warning tale, alerting the audience about the risk of a single notion of society, in this case, *The Way the Crow Flies* shows the inability of tolerating multiplicity. Each of the works offers vivid depictions of landscapes as well as educational comments, implying that land exploitation is similar to woman's oppression (Wasserman, 2013, p.10). Indeed, the sufferings that have been concealed under the patriarchal grip are revealed by Macdonald. In Canada, Macdonald's work ranges from cinema to television acting. She was born in 1959, in West Germany, and she has won honors for her work as an actor in films, a novelist, a television actress, and a dramatist. She graduated from Canadian Theatre School and her cinema works contained (1987) *Mermaids Singing*, (1999) *Better Than Chocolate,* and (1987) *Love Song* (Wasserman, 2013, p.11).

Macdonald's theatrical work, which has received international acclaim, demonstrates a similar ambition in challenging society's limiting ideas of women. Both *The Arab's Mouth* and *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* have been published by her. In 1995, she was selected for a Dora Award, and in 1990 she received the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, Canadian Authors Association Award, and Governor General's Award; all of which were given to her. *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* has been performed on stage in Canada and throughout the globe more than fifty times. Through the viewpoint of an underdog heroine, both plays examine the lives of female characters in a world whereby they have little authority (Fischlin, 2002, p. 321). Even though none of the main characters defie traditional gender roles, they are supported by strong female role models who give them the confidence to follow their own paths without fear of social repercussions.

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet) is a complicated adaptation of Bard's two works that are "most ambiguous and least Aristotelian" *Othello and Romeo and Juliet* (Fischlin, 2002, p. 329). The play was first staged by Night wood Theatre in 1988 at Toronto's Annex Theatre, "a small company devoted to women's theatre" (Porter, 1995, 365). In 1990, MacDonald's adaptation version of the play toured the country and earned the Canadian Governor general's Award for Drama. Banuta Rubess writes in the preface to the "Coach House Plays" edition that "For myself, the greatest pleasure of the piece is its scope…in terms of content, in terms of theatricality,

and ultimately, in terms of the place it gives women" ("Introduction", 1998, p. ix). MacDonald's work seeks to reproduce situations from Shakespeare's plays, including direct quotations in some events and is written in a font distinct from that used by Shakespeare. Thus, to put MacDonald's play in perspective, it is vital to know the summary of the play.

Macdonald's play tells the story of a mousy Shakespeare scholar who is magically transported to the world of Shakespeare's plays and must discover her true identity to return home. Constance Ledbelly, who is an Assistant Professor at Queens University working on her doctorate dissertation, attempts to break the arcane code of an Elizabethan manuscript; Constance believes that the documents include secret Shakespearean source materials which would prove that *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* had been primarily comedies lacking only a wise fool.

The play opens with a dumb show in three parts: Othello smothers Desdemona, Juliet awakens to find Romeo's corpse and kills herself, and Constance throws away her manuscript. Act I scene 1of the play happens in Constance Ledbelly's office which starts with a brief prologue. She describes her theories to the audience by giving examples, the *Othello*/ lago handkerchief scene in Act iii. Scene iii, and the death of Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* in Act III. When professor Claude Night (with whom she is secretly in love and for whom she has been ghostwriting) tells her that he will be going to Oxford with a graduate student and that she can go to Saskatchewan, Constance decides to quit. As she prepares to get rid of the old manuscript, as revealed in the prologue, Constance has dragged magically into the realms of Bard's tragedies *Othello and Romeo and Juliet,* where she has to figure out her real identity and the actual author of the play (*MacDonald*, p. 21). Dissatisfied standing idly to see innocent people get hurt, Constance intervenes in the action of the plays, preventing the tragedies from occurring. Thus, she uncovers Iago's plot to Othello in the second act and reveals Romeo and Juliet's wedding in the third act. As a stranger in Bard's world, she does not always know how to act properly and gets swept into the action of the plays. Along the way, she discovers that she has some surprising characteristics of both Desdemona and Juliet within her.

MacDonald's "reinterpretations a few of Shakespeare's well-known figures" (Porter, 1995, p. 369) employs a new structure in which an assistant professor,

Constance Ledbelly, joins the events of *Othello and Romeo and Juliet*, hence radically altering the context of the plays. It is shown in Act one of *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* that Constance has been studying for her doctoral dissertation. She reads loudly as she notes, attempting to convey her theory about the two plays' missing Fool:

> Constance: Or would our Fool defuse the tragedies by assuming centre stage as comic hero? Indeed, in Othello and Romeo and Juliet the fool is conspicuous by his very absence, for these two tragedies turn on flimsy mistakes—a lost hanky, a delayed wedding announcement—mistakes too easily concocted and corrected by a Wise Fool. I will go further: are these mistakes, in fact, the footprints of a missing Fool? a Wise Fool whom Shakespeare eliminated from two earlier comedies by an unknown author?!' Non obstanter; although a Fool might stem the blundering of Othello and Romeo, the question remains, would he prove a match…(MacDonald, p. 21)

Her argument, on the other hand, is based on the deciphering of an old text, which, as she claims, would establish that the Bard has utilized comedies as inspiration for his tragedies—that by excluding the role of the Wise Fool, Shakespeare "made" the tragic plays. Constance Leadbelly played and took the role of the "Wise Fool", who is capable of "defusing disasters by claiming the center stage as comic figure" (MacDonald, p. 22). By transforming Bard's tragedy into a comedy, MacDonald in her work creates a place for positive female action via the character of Constance.

Constance has stressed out as she works on her dissertation because her work is interrupted all the time. Eventually, Professor Claude Night has shown up to pick up an article he requested Constance to write as a ghostwriter. Constance seems to have dedicated most of her emotional and professional efforts to Night in seemingly one-sided love. He mocks her concepts and her attempts to do her own Doctoral studies. Constance is taken aback when Night presents her a diamond, fools her into thinking she is about to be proposed to, and then reveals his engagement to a younger student. Night continues to say that he has been promoted to a professor and has accepted a position in Oxford in order to be closer to his Rhodes student fiance. Following Night's departure, the scene instructions remark that this is "the nadir of her passage on this earth" for Constance (*MacDonald*, p. 26). In a moment of desperation, she contacts the Dean's office and asks for her resignation. Constance's plans for the rest of the day have been put on hold because of her bad day. She takes advantage of the

opportunity to clear her desk, disposing personal belongings in the bin. Eventually, she prepares to throw away the intriguing antique manuscript, however, a sudden pause enables her to interpret the writing on the cover, which had previously been incomprehensible:

> Constance: (reads the inscription aloud)
> You who possess the eyes to see
> this strange and wondrous alchemy,
> where words transform to vision'ry,
> where one plus two makes one, not three;
> open this book if you agree
> to be illusion's refugee,
> and of return no guarantee —
> unless you find your true identity.
> And discover who the Author be. (MacDonald, p. 27-28)

Three pages of the manuscript fall into the rubbish bin when she lifts the cover of the document. When Constance leans in to collect them, she is transported into a strange time/space rift that looks to be the setting of Shakespeare's play *Othello*. Just as Iago is ready to persuade Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful, Constance appears in their presence and interrupts their plans for the evening. Constance uncovers Iago's intention to discredit Desdemona by revealing to Othello the handkerchief he has concealed behind his back. Othello is overcome with gratitude, while Iago swears vengeance in private. Desdemona and Constance have become good friends as a result of a number of plot developments, but Iago has poisoned Desdemona's mind by instilling suspicions about Constance. Desdemona becomes outraged and attempts to murder Constance. As Desdemona has found Constance and is willing to stab her when Constance spots a piece of paper and grabs it only to discover that she is capable of reading what it says:

> Constance: It certainly looks like the real McCoy.
> (Constance plucks the foolscap off the sword)
> It is page one! I must be getting warm.
> (reads) 'Thou'rt cold, …
> there find a third to make a trinity,
> where two plus one adds up to one not three.'
> Hm. How strange.
> (Warp effects. Constance starts to be pulled off. Desdemona grabs
> her by the skirt. When the warp effects are over, all that remains of
> Constance is her skirt which is speared onto Desdemona's sword). (MacDonald, p. 51 -52)

As Act III begins, Constance is transformed into the street brawl that occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*. She finds herself in Verona, watching Tybalt's and Mercutio's duel

which results in both men being killed and Romeo being labeled "fortune's fool". Constance interrupts the battle just as Romeo was ready to interfere tragically, as she is now wearing tights or long jeans that were under her skirt. Because they believe Constance is a boy, she introduces herself as Constantine from Cyprus and clarifies that she "couldn't let them kill each other for, / young Juliet and Romeo have wed" (*MacDonald*, p. 53) making Romeo and Tybalt become cousins as a result of their marriage. Constance, just like she did when she was originally twisted into *Othello*, prevents *Romeo and Juliet* from being a tragedy by interceding and averting a stupid error.

The comedy in this section of the play is mostly due to the fact that both Romeo and Juliet are interested in wooing Constantine. The couples rapidly become disinterested in their marital life "after only one night". They growl at each other and quarrel only over a pet turtle, and they are usually unpleasant as a result of this. Constantine is a pleasant change for both of them. When Romeo enters the Capulet family masked party (now in celebration of Juliet's wedding), he explicitly pursues "the Greek youth" Constantine, provoking the ire of Tybalt, who accuses Romeo of being a "Hellenic deviant" for interfering. Constantine is introduced to Juliet, who arrives looking a little untidy after a brief encounter with a servant. Instead of being upset with Romeo, Juliet falls passionately in love with Constantine. When Constance and Juliet dance together, Romeo gets the impression that Constantine prefers women. He departs to put on Juliet's clothes when Juliet is told that Constantine prefers man's company, she decides to disguise herself as Romeo in an attempt to appease her. While Constance is relaxing on her balcony after the party, Juliet comes and begins reciting Romeo's words from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. She ultimately makes it up to Constance's bedroom and tries to woo Constantine, who is later shown to be a woman character.

Constance's disruption action in *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* aid to prove her idea about the impact an absent character would have had in comedic source works for Shakespeare's tragedies, but the presence of a Wise Fool who stops every plot's major blunders turns out to be Constance herself. The concepts of the original and autonomous writer (Shakespeare) are questioned, and, as Fortier states, "Ann-Marie MacDonald proposes something more creative than the text written by Shakespeare, something that Shakespeare, along with the rest of us, was serving and altering" (2002,

p. 341). Constance's venture is defined by MacDonald as digging into her subconscious to uncover the bravery and enthusiasm that she lacked in her life. Constance should be able to attain her task with more determination as a result of these characteristics, as well as develop her own (academic) writing voice. However, as an unintentional playwright, Constance has rewritten Shakespeare and reinvented herself as a futuristic feminist writer. Martha Rozett poses the following question in response to *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*: "Will scholars like Constance have to go one—or more—steps further and redefine comedy and tragedy altogether to make sense of the new possible roles available for Shakespeare's women? These, surely, are questions for the [future] for teachers, scholars, and would-be revisers of Shakespeare's plays" (1996, p. 166). Although Constance is warped back into her Queen's University classroom, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* has left Constance's future in a state of uncertainty. Constance joins *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* as the absent Fool, purportedly to retrieve pre-tragic storylines, and succeeded in shattering the narrative convention of confining female figures via death or marriage by composing herself into the adventure.

The Bard's literary legacy continues to captivate people's imagination decade after decade, demonstrating that people from many various periods and places of the globe find his works relevant, fascinating, and significant. For instance, the postmodern Canadian playwright Ann-Marie MacDonald demonstrates such levels of enthusiasm and appreciation. Her response to Shakespeare's effect on her has been to write adaptations of his plays, rather than just accepting his cultural viewpoint in its entirety. When MacDonald was asked about her attitude toward Shakespeare and his works, the postmodern playwright expresses her appreciation and admiration for him. Although it contains humor and critical commentary, MacDonald's comedy version serves as a kind of homage to Shakespeare (Yachnin, 2005, p. 52). MacDonald expressed her gratitude for Shakespeare's skills while speaking about him. As she explains, she would not ever make fun of anything that she had such strong feelings. It is only possible for it to be something that intrigues her for some reasons, and if there is a profound attraction to it, then it must be something that fascinates her (Rudakoff & Much, p. 136). Consequently, despite reinterpreting and subverting some of his ideas, she still holds him in high regard, appreciating his contributions to literature throughout the world. Even though MacDonald revises Bard's plays, she does not

utilize Bard's plays as the only source of inspiration for her adaptations (McKinnon, 2013, p. 218). As the title implies, MacDonald's version is mostly based on Bard's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and she also draws and quotes from *Sonnet 116*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* for inspiration (Porter, 1995, p. 373). More importantly, the playwright makes great use of the psychological analysis of Carl Gustav Jung to strengthen the woman by transforming her (Constance) into an independent woman of her own self.

As a feminist, MacDonald often criticizes Bard's patriarchal beliefs. By responding to him via postmodern adaptations, she appears to be responding to the mistreatment of women in his works, which encompasses unfair accusations, disregard for their preferences, and the husband's supposed right to murder his wife for alleged adultery (Wasserman, 2013, p. 193). As a result, in contrast to his penchant to demolish his tragic protagonists' women, MacDonald depicts her central characters' paths toward recovery, growth, and completeness after profound emotional traumas. Her approach as a consequence is to use Bard's tragic plays to represent various stages of strengthening women who contribute to the positive transformations in the lives of their respective characters.

Despite the fact that Shakespeare was patriarchal in that his works generally supported his culture's patriarchal viewpoint, Shakespeare has produced complex compositions that allow for a variety of interpretations to be developed. Linda Burnett, for instance, states "In terms of women, Shakespeare may possibly do a poor job depicting Gertrude and Ophelia's 'ways of seeing.' When these ladies do come on stage, though, they are intriguing characters who are so 'really' written" (2002, p. 7). As a result, in her efforts to defy the Bard, MacDonald aims to disassociate her plays from him in order to achieve her own objectives while still acknowledging him and expressing her thoughts via his works and personae. As it has been remarked, MacDonald's version is "radical adaptations of Shakespearean source materials" (Fischlin, 2002, p 321). Additionally, James McKinnon notes notable distinctions between Bard's dramatic works and this of the Canadian playwrights: "To differentiate themselves from Shakespeare, these works [postmodern works] have used new narratives, postmodern settings, and new heroines" (2013, p. 220). Accordingly, they clearly explore the issues and circumstances that Shakespeare's plays show or provide for imagination. Emphasizing postmodern writers' responsibility to the Renaissance composer of multi-level, complicated plays, Burnett

asserts that MacDonald offers new perspectives and ideas for examining the Bard. According to Burnett, "While MacDonald uses Shakespeare to further her counterbalancing purpose, her plays imply that her main complaint with Shakespeare is with conventional interpretations that only allow for a patriarchal perspective of the playwright"(2002, p. 7). When it comes to Desdemona and Juliet, MacDonald's work accentuates their characteristics that are addressed in Bard's works (particularly Desdemona's concern for the horrific tales and Juliet's inclination of experiencing intensive love), yet they have been frequently overlooked by some critics. Therefore, MacDonald's adaptation version seems to reintroduce the intricacy that initially existed in the Bard's manuscripts (Scott, 2006, p. 32).

Despite the fact that Bard's manuscripts are rich in detail and convey a variety of ideas, they are obviously patriarchal, thus provoking and prompting the feminist dramatist MacDonald to tackle the issue of strengthening women in her adaptations of the classic plays. As a result, the patriarchal nature of Bard's theatrical stories may be understood and partially acknowledged by the fact that his plays had been moderately reflections of the patriarchal society of the British Renaissance (Porter, 1995, p. 362). As a result of the patriarchal society in which he produced and lived, the Bard was not particularly considerate of women while writing his works. Examining this subject, Laurin Porter remarks "In the comedies, Shakespeare seems if not a feminist then at least a man who takes the woman's part. Often the women in the comedies are more brilliant than the men, more aware of themselves and their world, saner, livelier, more gay" (1995, p. 363). In addition, Porter claims that the Canadian dramatist Ann-Marie MacDonald in her work of adaptation "is keenly aware of the difference between Bard's humorous and tragic protagonists" (1995, p. 364). MacDonald undoubtedly recognizes this distinction in Bard's portrayals of women. Constance Ledbelly, the heroine of MacDonald's play, is preparing a doctoral thesis and is dissatisfied with Juliet and Desdemona's unavoidable death, and she attempts to demonstrate in her dissertation that the Bard's plays *Othello and Romeo and Juliet* were once comedies and that the Bard tragically has altered them into tragedies. Since Macdonald's writing changes the destinies of Desdemona and Juliet and transforms them into comedy characters, it is reasonable to assume that MacDonald is reacting against the mistreatment of female protagonists in Shakespeare's tragic plays. Further, Mark Fortier claims that the tragedy of Shakespeare depicts women as helpless, pathetic and

vulnerable (Fortier, 1989, p. 47). As a result, MacDonald discovered that Shakespeare's tragedy lacks really tragic women of will and courage, and she tackles this problem by creating a story of strengthening women.

A serious personal crisis catalyzes strengthening women in MacDonald's adaptation. While the play does not begin with a description of the characters' traumatic experiences, it is notable for the fact that it begins with a discussion about magic before depicting the protagonists' crises. Thus, it emphasizes the protagonists' desire for strengthening women while calling attention to the ancient, unofficial methods of acquiring specific information and special new aptitudes that have been passed down the generations.

Obviously, the concept of magic and how it affects people's lives have been inspired by the Bard; therefore, it is not surprising to see it in the adaptations. The positive and at the same time the negative sides of drugs in fact are shown in Bard's tragedy plays *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. For instance, according to Brabantio's compliment to the Duke of Venice, Othello is accused of witchcraft by Desdemona's father, Brabantio: "Ay, to me/ She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted/ By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks/ For nature so preposterously to err,/ Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,/ Sans witchcraft could not" (*Othello* I. 3. 60-64). It seems that, as this speech indicates, the distinction between medicine and alchemy was somewhat blurred throughout the Renaissance in England. However, at the beginning of the play, Othello has denied any magical effect on Desdemona but subsequently claims to have given his wife a handkerchief with extraordinary supernatural abilities. He angrily tells Desdemona that an Egyptian was a charmer (seer) "That's a fault. That handkerchief\ Did an Egyptian to my mother give\ She was a charmer, and could almost read\ The thoughts of people" (*Othello* III. 4. pp. 55-58), has given it to his mother. Othello (the Moor) proclaims fiercely: "She told her, while she kept it\ 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father\ Entirely to her love, but if she lost it\ Or made gift of it, my father's eye\ Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt\ After new fancies." (III. 4. 58-63). As a result, according to the story, a woman's fate might be affected either positively or negatively by the handkerchief despite the fact that it was embroidered with pure intentions and seemed to safeguard the joy of the Moor's (Othello) mother. Nonetheless, the loss of the handkerchief results negatively on Desdemona and leads to her death. Similar to the handkerchief, the elixir

Friar Laurence gives to Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*: “Take thou this vial, being then in bed\ And this distilling liquor drink thou off\ When presently through all thy veins shall run\ A cold and drowsy humor, for no pulse\ Shall keep his native progress, but surcease” (IV. 1. 93-97) is meant to aid the marriage, but unfortunately his plot results in their demise.

Ann-Marie MacDonald’s play is a reaction to Shakespeare’s romantic tragedy plays *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, which she uses to convey her story of women strengthening. Like the Bard, MacDonald is also fascinated by magic, utilizing this subject to summon up the mystical transformation of assistant professor Constance. MacDonald’s comedy play has begun with a dumb show that contains three scenes at the same time, which show three different things. Among the shows are scenes from Othello’s murder of Desdemona; Juliet’s committing suicide by self-inflicted stabbing; and Constance Ledbelly in her workplace taking up a manuscript from her table and tossing it into a waste container. The play creates a parallel between all these three events by displaying them all simultaneously. This parallel conveys the sorrows that women go through and their powerlessness and helplessness in changing their situation. (Wilson & Much, 1992, p. 4). Consequently, because of magical intervention in MacDonald’s narrative, these three female figures prevent certain destinies depicted by MacDonald. The Chorus then goes on to describe the meaning of alchemy in the prologue in the most astoundingly confused way:

> What’s alchemy? The hoax of charlatans?
> Or mystic quest for stuff of life itself:
> eternal search for the Philosopher’s Stone,
> where mingling and unmingling opposites,
> transforms base metal into precious gold.
> Hence, scientific metaphor of self:
> …..
> Swift Mercury, that changing element,
> …Here is the key to her Philosopher’s Stone-
> The psychic alter that will alter fate.
> But she has not the eyes to see it…yet. [indicates manuscript] (MacDonald, pp. 13-14)

The main character (Constance) aims to utilize this ancient, presently unintelligible manuscript, named “the Gustav Manuscript”, to show that the original texts were actually comedies and have been written by an anonymous dramatist, which the Bard changed them into tragic plays through removing a Fool (Dvorak, 1994, p. 79). The playwright MacDonald, nevertheless, argues that the Bard delivered his

original text “to his old fellow, the alchemist Gustav, to enfold in an cryptic code” (*MacDonald*, p. 18). As is clear, an allusion to Carl Gustav Jung[1] is indicated in the title of the document (Whitted & Yachnin, 2002, p. 253). Further, the storyline defines Constance in the individuation process as Hilary Knight argues that she has to individuate herself. In other words, for Constance in order to find her real and true ‘self’, she must abandon her persona (which is the constructed version of herself that she exhibits to the public) and should also go and dive deep into the depths of her unconscious mind (2004, para. 2). Knight emphasizes that Constance in order to accomplish this goal, she needs bringing together many elements or archetypes[2] that reside inside her unconscious mind. According to Carl Jung’s psychological theory, these archetypes are the “core, original aspects of the self” (qtd. in Adamski, 2011, p. 564) that are found inside the unconscious mind of a man. Thus, Jung argued that based on culture and race, these archetypes might be utilized to get an understanding of what motivates human attitude and personality. Carl Jung took his archetypes from a variety of references, such as literature and mythology. Consequently, many archetypes contain figures such as the Magician, the Wise Fool, or the Trickster. Therefore, Constance has to manage with three of these archetypes as she searches for finding herself in her unconscious mind. Due to the fact that she has spent a significant amount of time working on her dissertation about Shakespeare’s *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, her unconscious organizes itself within the context of both of these works.

The Animus and the Anima are the first two archetypes. These archetypes in Carl Jung’s psychological theory relate to the ideas of feminine and masculine parts inside ourselves; the Animus is associated with our masculine attributes, whereas the Anima is linked with our Feminine (Adamski, 2011, p. 565). Constance’s Anima and Animus are represented by Julite and Desdemona. Juliet, as knight argues, represents Constance’s willingness to take emotional risks and “remaining open to the prospect of embracing love again”(2004, para. 3). On the other hand, Desdemona

[1] A Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist, was most prominent around the beginning of the 20th century. His contributions to analytical psychology, individuation, continue to be fundamental works in the fields of psychology and psychiatry.

[2] According to carl Jung’s psychological theory archetypes is a primitive intellect imagery that inherits from the old predecessors and considered to be preserved in the unconscious mind.

represents Constance's own internal female warrior, and she may encourage her to become more self-assured and advocate for herself. Thus, for Constance to develop into a complete individual, she must fundamentally strike a balance between the two archetypes.

The Shadow self, the third archetype, presents a persistent challenge. It should be defeated on its own, and Constance should repair the harm that has been done to her Animus and Anima. Hilary Knight provides a concise explanation of the Shadow archetype by stating " [...] The Shadow self is the antithesis of our conscious mind... and it is representative of the traits and intentions that we abhor in ourselves and struggle against" (2004, para. 5). In the same way, Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams in their book *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature* say that Carl Jung define "the shadow self" as the repository of repressed impulses, feelings, and desires that exist outside of our conscious sensibility (1991. P. 240). The extreme behaviors of Constance's Anima and Animus (Juliet and Desdemona) are manifestations of the traits and intentions that Constance hates most about herself. Desdemona is bold and courageous, yet Iago corrupts her to attack Constance, mirroring the corruption of Constance at the hands of Claude Night. Constance, in Act I scene II, gives professor Claude Night an article that he requested her to write for him, as she states "I wish my destruction of Doctor Hallowfern's work has satisfied you" (*MacDonald*, p. 24). Constance's misguided wish to do harm to other people is reflected in Desdemona's decision to attack Constance. In the meantime, Constance's Anima reveals that she has the desire to inflict pain on herself in the name of love. Constance must prevent Juliet from using dagger to stab herself while she is in her unconscious state of mind and when she spends long amounts of time with Juliet. Constance nearly agrees with Juliet's idea of poisoning each other. Juliet's willingness to die for the sake of love is evident from the moment she and Constance first met, whereby she says "tomorrow will they find one corpse entwined/ when, having loved each other perfectly/ our deaths proclaim one night, eternity…. When love goes to its grave before we do, / then find another love for whom to die" (*MacDonald*, p. 78). The fact that Juliet's wish to die for the sake of love is representative of the idea that Constance wishes the same thing in relation to Night. After he has left her alone and gone to Oxford with another lady,

Constance is totally devastated and begins a soliloquy in which she describes a plan about how she desires to end her life.

The most important thing does not lie in Constance's ability to vanquish her Shadow, but in her ability to identify it and balance the two aspects. Constance should realize that her Animus may offer her immense character strength, allowing her to be more forceful and stand for her own. Thus, Desdemona assists her in seeing that Claude Night exploited and robbed her to satisfy his demands. Constance's Anima, on the other hand, may educate her that she is attractive and that she has to embrace greater chances passionately to fulfill and recognize her full capability as an individual. Juliet enables Constance to understand the legitimacy of her emotions for Claude Night, embrace them, and put an end to their unsuccessful relationship so that she would go on and pursue greater chances. Thus, MacDonald explains in her work Constance's psychological a magical transition into a powerful female character. However, this transformation has been presented in a way that conceals the indications and stages of Constance Ledbelly's psychological transition from viewers or readers who are unfamiliar with Carl Jung's psychological theory. As a consequence of depending upon Carl Jung's interpretation, the playwright's portrayal of alchemy has been built around postmodern ideas of the hidden workings of psychology and so varies considerably from Shakespeare's depictions of Renaissance magic.

Even though MacDonald's adaption begins with a description of alchemy, the true reason for Constance's transformation is not magic, but rather a severe personal problem that she is experiencing. MacDonald's adaptation does not depict the downfall of its protagonist at the conclusion of the play in contrast to Bard's plays in which the married couple (Desdemona and Juliet) died at the end. Instead of that, MacDonald's play revolves around the protagonist's grief as a result of her failed romantic relationships with men. In Act I, scene I, MacDonald in her play illustrates the worst of Constance Ledbelly's condition. Professor Claude Night, the man she has adored for more than a decade, discloses his dual treachery to Constance in this important scene. Constance then confronted both his betrayal firstly in the shape of his new girlfriend Ramona and secondly Claude Night's accepting of the job at Oxford Universty (Snyder, 2006, p. 45) that she had believed could be granted to her. Additionally, the heroine recognizes that she has been taken advantage of by Professor Claude Night. To get his attention, Constance has been pening essays for Claude Night as a ghostwriter

for their whole time of the relationship. Professor Claude Night has capitalized on this event, and as a consequence of her hard work, he has received widespread publications and positions (Wilson, 1992, p. 4), whereas Constance has been unable to complete her doctoral thesis. The protagonist, filled with disappointment and despair, resolves to contact the Dean and announce her resignation.

A confrontation with the altered figure of Desdemona is important for Constance in order for her to learn to believe in herself and her own views, as well as gain the confidence to write about and defend them. Like in Carl Jung's interpretation, Constance is instructed to integrate the "Desdemona" portion over her own psyche as a piece of the "two" has been added to the "one" alluded to in the manuscripts. In other words, by adding Shakespeare's two protagonists "Desdemona and Juliet" to one "Constance", the result will be not three different personalities, but a completely single individuated Constance. According to Banuta Rubess, who demonstrates a few of Carl Jung's notions that MacDonald employs:

> The real story happens in the zone of the unconscious mind. Constance stews in her office like base matter in an alchemical dish; she reaches the nigredo/ nadir of her existence, and this allows her to reconsider her life, herself as if in a dream. Desdemona and Juliet are archetypes of her own unconscious, Othello and Tybalt are permutations of Professor Night, and the Chorus, Iago and Yorick can be seen as versions of her own goading animus. But if we push the alchemical and Jungian concepts aside, the story still stands- perfectly- as a re-visioning of some of Shakespeare's best characters. ("Introduction", MacDonald, 1998, p, xii)

Throughout the play, MacDonald draws obvious connections to Carl Gustav Jung's psychology. Thus, Chorus begins the preface as follows:

> divide the mind's opposing archetypes
> – if you possess the courage for the task –
> invite them from the shadows to the light;
> unite these lurking shards of broken glass
> into a mirror that reflects one soul.
> And in this merging of unconscious selves,
> There lies the mystic 'marriage of true minds'
> Portrayed as Gemini, hermaphrodite and twin,
> Now steers the stars of Constance Ledbelly,
> And offers her a double-edged re-birthday. (MacDonald, p. 13- 14)

According to MacDonald's view, Desdemona and Juliet symbolize two ignored parts of Constance's personality or her shadow selves, which reflect hidden characteristics and features of the personality. The essence of the shadow selves, according to Carl Jung, is an identical gender as the subject "-- for its nature can in large measure be inferred from the contents of the personal unconscious" (1985, p. 147), which is exposed in dreams and legends. It is clear that Constance's 'trip' through *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* is dreamy like, and Constance underlines this dreamy matter when she first encounters Desdemona (Everyone turns and stares at Constance) "Hi… Desdemona?... This is like a dream… you're just as I imagined you to be" (MacDonald, p. 33) then also once again as she comes face to face with Juliet:

> Constance… For years I've sought to penetrate your source,
> And dreamt of meeting you a thousand times-
> …
> Julite… Awake. Or let me share thy sleep of dreams.
> I'd have thee penetrate my secret source,
> And know me full as well and sleep as thou
> Dost know thyself o dreamer, Constance. (MacDonald, p. 65)

The shadow, according to Carl Gustav Jung in his book Aspects of the Feminine, is a morality issue that threatens the whole ego-personality system:

> … no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real… Closer examination of the dark characteristics… that is, inferiorities constituting the shadow… reveals that they have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality. Emotion, incidentally, is not an activity of the individual but something that happens to him (1982, p. 165).

Although the shadow presumably comprises the concealed, suppressed, and undesirable qualities of a person's psyche, it is possible to misinterpret the shadow as merely exhibiting the negative sides of a person's nature. Yet, excellent characteristics, creative ideas, and natural "instincts may also be found in the shadow" (Jung & Franz, 1976, p. 118). When Desdemona and Constance meet in Constance's realm of dreams, Desdemona reveals what Constance wants to know. Desdemona's aggression and bravery are suppressed sides of Constance that must be acknowledged and controlled; Desdemona's perseverance and acute inquiry are good characteristics that Constance should emphasize. Desdemona assists Constance in defining her quest at the level of the plot: Constance "That's it, you see, I can't return until- That is… \my Queens have charged me with a fearful task: I must find out my true identity,\ and then discover

who the author be" (MacDonald, p. 35). Besides, Desdemona coerces Constance into confessing her affection towards professor Claude Night.

An improbable method for a feminist drama is the use of Jungian analysis, with its ahistorical and maybe essentialist idea of archetypes. It is still uncertain to what degree MacDonald embraces Jung's concepts without question, or if she appropriates Carl Jung for her own objectives, as she did with Shakespeare. When it comes to tone, the final speech of Chorus is a parody:

> Chorus: The alchemy of ancient hieroglyphs
> has permeated the unconscious mind
> of Constance L. and manifested form,
> where there was once subconscious dreamy thought.
> The best of friends and foes exist within,
> where archetypal shadows come to light
> and doff their monster masks when we say 'boo'.
> Where mingling and unmingling opposites
> Performs a wondrous feat of alchemy,
> And spins grey matter, into precious gold. (MacDonald, p. 87)

This attitude to ideas of "archetypal shadows" might indicate that, despite MacDonald's use of depth psychology's discourse, her play stays irreverently comedy.

However, MacDonald's feminist formation does not seek to end with her heroine's experiences of hopelessness; instead, she wishes to depict how such experiences result in positive personality transformation. As a result, the protagonist of MacDonald's play is bound to go on a path toward rehabilitation and completeness. Her play illustrates an unanticipated and magical metamorphosis of Constance's undeveloped self throughout the theory of individuation --a theory that Carl Jung has praised greatly since he believed it allows for the creation of a powerful, complete and harmonious self. While the protagonist waits for the Dean's department to respond to her call, she resolves to toss the Gustav Manuscript into the waste bin. Nevertheless, she stops her attempt when she notices that a piece of the texts has become readable and reads "You who possess the eyes to see\ this strange and wondrous alchemy\ where words transform to vision'ry\ where one plus two makes one, not three;\ open this book if you agree … and of return no guarantee– \unless you find your true identity" (*MacDonald*, p. 27- 8). Constance accepts this challenge and when she opens the manuscript as the Chorus explains, it drops through the waste container into the domain "of the unconscious mind" (*MacDonald*, p. 28). Considering

how critics have responded to this scene, the status of this fictitious domain becomes a controversial question: Mark Fortier argues that it is a more widespread aspect of the feminine psyche (2002, p. 320). According to Shelley Scott and Laurin R. Porter, the depicted dreamy realm corresponds to Constance Ledbelly's personal unconscious mind (2006, p. 33). In any event, within this part of unconscious, Constance enters the theatrical realm of the Bard's *Othello*, where she reveals Iago's dishonesty to the Moor and dramatically transforms the storyline of the tragic and remarks: "I've wrecked a masterpiece. I've ruined the play, / I've turned Shakespeare's 'Othello' to a farce" (*MacDonald*, p. 30) by disclosing the truth. In fact, Constance Ledbelly's intervention in Shakespeare's plays has a profound influence on the lives of Shakespeare's figures. Constance realizes that her actions are having a devastating effect. In several scenes, later, Constance observes "The Mona Lisa and a babe float by. / Which one of these two treasures do you save? / I've saved the baby, and let the Mona drown-- / or did the Author know that I'd be coming here" (*MacDonald*, p. 37) implying to her disruptive behavior. Certainly, MacDonald's adaptation has taken an entirely different approach to Bard's two tragic plays. Thus, MacDonald reinterprets and changes some of Bard's most fascinating and famous events and figures in her adaptation.

Additionally, when Constance intervenes in Bard's world, she encounters a courageous and adventurous Desdemona, a character who differs significantly from the Bard's delicate, obedient and naive Desdemona, who symbolizes the "passive embodiment of virtue", yet curiously enjoys hearing "horror tales" (Wilson, 1992, p. 7). Marta Dvorak sarcastically describes Desdemona in MacDonald's play as an Othello in dress (1994, p. 129). Despite the fact that Desdemona lacks gentleness, yet determination to please her husband can be seen easily. Desdemona expresses her likability to Constance through "soldierly embracing" (*MacDonald*, p. 30) after Othello presents her to Desdemona. According to the Renaissance patriarchal conventions, her actions would be regarded as inappropriate for a woman and would be more appropriate for a powerful man like Othello or Tybalt. As a result, many critics believe that MacDonald in this scene draws attention to Desdemona's masculinity and tries to show the reader that women are independent and have the power to choose and build their own identities.

On the next page of the manuscript, Constance has been transformed to Bard's realm of *Romeo and Juliet*, where she saves Mercutio from certain death by Tybalt

"*She tackles Romeo. They fly into the sword fight, knocking Tybalt and Mercutio aside. Tybalt and Mercutio jump to their feet and immediately points their swords at Constance while Romeo sits on her*" (*MacDonld*, p. 52-53; italics in the original). Changing this classic as well, the postmodern protagonist "Constance" encounters Romeo and Juliet, who behaved like "spoilt, petulant and moody teenagers" (Kerslake, 1994, p. 138). Moreover, an overtly erotic portrayal of Juliet, utterly at variance with the purity generally associated with her, has been particularly distressing for the audience admiring Shakespeare's work. For example, Juliet seduces Constance when she recognizes her as a young boy named Constantine:

> Juliet: Thirteen! Tomorrow will I be fourteen
> Constance: You will? So will! I mean, be a year older.
> Juliet: We share the self-same stars! We're truly matched.
> Constance: Juliet?
> Juliet: My love?
> Constance: I'm flattered…
> . . .
> Juliet: Then are thy vestal senses all intact.
> O let Juliet initiate
> Thy budding taste of woman's dewy rose.
> Learn how the rose becomes a sea of love;
> Come part the waves and plumb Atlantic depths.
> I'll guide thee to the oyster's precious pearl…
> We'll seek out wat'ry caves for glist'ning treasure,
> Spelunk all night until we die of pleasure. (MacDonald, p. 69)

In light of Jungian theory, MacDonald's disrespectful and unpleasant portrayal of Juliet, which emphasizes her inclination to feel excessive love, is understandable. According to Jungian theory, Juliet serves as a part of Constance's psyche, which Constance must accept to develop into a well-rounded character.

The support and assistance of other female characters (Desdemona and Juliet) serve as a method of strengthening MacDonald's protagonist (Constance). To put it simply, Juliet and Desdemona in MacDonald's adaptation version are Constance's unconscious archetypes. More specifically, both characters Desdemona and Juliet work as establishing elements of their personality that have remained inactive for a long period (Djordjevic, 2003, p. 103). As a result, Constance must merge Desdemona's and Juliet's traits into her personality to be a much more complete entity. Desdemona helps her in finding strength and bravery, whereas Juliet assists her in recognizing her love. Thus, Desdemona and Juliet along with Constance constitute the Carl Jung's Trinity—a tripartite, well-rounded woman characters, who embody the

smart woman “Constance”, the courageous woman “Desdemona” and the passionate woman “Juliet” (Djordjevic, 2003, p. 99). To stress out the oneness of this formation, the Chorus portrays the mystic union of Constance Ledbelly’s selves as “when you add one to two does not equal three, but one” (*MacDonald*, p. 27). Constance, as the “smart side of the tripartite concept of perfect femininity” (Djordjevic, 2003, p. 95), influences Juliet and Desdemona to alter their behavior and personalities. While Desdemona is foolish and aggressive, Juliet is infatuated with death, as Constance realizes at the end of the narrative. In an attempt to assist these protagonists, she convinces them that their overwhelming traits and unreasonable or risky behaviors may result in fatal consequences.

Furthermore, Jungian theory offers a rather detailed demonstration of how Constance, Desdemona, and Juliet are complementary to one another. Women, according to Jung, are predominantly guided by the rule of Eros, whereas men are mainly controlled by the notion of Logos. According to Carl Jung, Eros implies “passive, submissive, emotional, receptive, psychic relatedness” (qtd. İn Samuels, 2015, p. 171) which encourages women to identify themselves in terms of their relationships with others instead of independent, self-sufficient individuals. In Bard’s tragedy plays *Othello* and *Rome and Juliet*, both heroines Desdemona and Juliet are subjugated by Eros, as mild and sweet women who are entirely dependent on their husbands. A similar claim may be indeed made about Constance in the outset of Ann-Marie MacDonald’s adaptation, when she conforms herself to the concept of the submissive nice female, who does not object to Professor Claude Night’s rather negative opinion about her, “Oh Constance. You have such an interesting little mind” (*MacDonald*, p. 23). In this domain, Logos implies “active, assertive, intellectual, penetrative, objective interest”(qtd. İn Samuels, p. 171) that has an autonomous entity controlled not by emotion, sympathy or love, but by reason and logic. In contrast to the source texts, Juliet and Desdemona in MacDonald’s play are portrayed as archetypes (aspects) of Logos that help in growing conventionally masculine features in Constance’s psyche. In this case, Desdemona taught Constance to “acquire a taste for blood. I’ll help thee. Come” (*MacDonald*, p. 37), whereas Juliet is infatuated with poetic tragic death and sensuous love, “The time for innocence is sped!/ I’ll love once more before I’m dead!…Wouldst love me if I told thee who it be?” (*MacDonald*, p. 69). In fact, Desdemona’s and Juliet’s traits have been permitted to males (men) rather

than females (women). As a result of the process of incorporating their male characteristics into her character, the protagonist (Constance) can acquire integrity since her opposing characteristics are now in harmony.

It is important to remember that, in *Good night Desdemona (Good morning Juliet)*, strengthening a woman does not just imply acquiring strength but also involves using that strength to achieve psychological balance and control inside one's own personality. MacDonald's adaptation reveals several methods of strengthening women as it progresses. One is alchemy, which has unexpected outcomes in *Good Night (Good Morning Juliet)*. She portrays magic as a catalyst for Constance's development. Nevertheless, the author's depiction of alchemy in her text is not strictly conventional; rather, she exploits the notion of alchemy in the context of Jungian interpretation. Alchemy is used by Carl Jung as a representation of personal metamorphosis. According to this interpretation, the Gustav Manuscript serves just like a distinctive medium for Constance to uncover her actual self via the process of "where mingling and unmingling opposites/ transforms base metal into precious gold" (*MacDonald*, p. 13) inside her psyche into a harmonic and steady union.

In the play *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning* Juliet), female unity serves as a powerful form of strengthening women. However, not only the female characters who assist the heroine (Constance) in MacDonald's adaptation in her recovery and development; men also assist and participate in these processes in various ways. Consequently, without the presence of the male Ghost in MacDonald's play, Constance's transformation would be incomplete. The Ghost appears on two different occasions in the play in Act three scene six and scene nine in front of Constance informing her of clues that eventually lead the protagonist to discover her actual identity. As Mark Fortier explains that the ghost's closest approach to identifying itself is to remark, "You are it" (*MacDonald*, p. 86), implying that the specter is the heroine (Constance) (Fortier, 2002, p. 345). Similarly, Laura Snyder believes that the Ghost represents a hidden masculine aspect of the Constance's psyche that she must confront and embrace to "identify her own power" (2006, p. 50). As a result, Constance finds out that she is at the same time "the Author and the Wise Fool are one and the same…" (*MacDonald*, p. 86) when she finally figures out the Ghost's clues. Thus, as a woman she proves herself to be talented with certain capabilities and power.

Consequently, Anne Marie MacDonald dramatizes transformation. Ann Wilson states that MacDonald's *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* is a work about strengthening women (1992, p. 12). Indeed, its conclusion may be classified as quite cheerful. The playwright MacDonald admits in an interview with Rita Much that she regards her work to be a "Jungian fairy tale" (1991, p. 128). A final scene in MacDonald's adaptation depicts Constance Ledbelly at university in her office as the strong woman of a higher position and a writer of her own self and much more confident and feminine, with her pen transformed into "precious gold" (*MacDonald*, p. 87). Even though Constance's profound sensitive transformation and ongoing psychological development have not been explicitly shown as Shannon Hengen claims (1995, p. 98), the readers have been assured, at the end that her transformation has been accomplished positively when Chorus states "Where mingling and unmingling opposites\ performs a wondrous feat of alchemy,\ and spins grey matter, into precious gold" (*MacDonald*, p. 87). In conclusion, MacDonald's feminist attitude is affirmed in her dealing with the character Constance by strengthening women.

CONCLUSION

It is unquestionable that adaptations in theatrical works may be ascribed to varying and, occasionally paradoxical causes that stem from the adapters' motives and compulsions. Nevertheless, regardless of the diversity of such motivations and compulsions, this phenomenon became a fad, a tendency, and, most importantly, a way of viewing a particular social issue via the universal face of Bard's plays. Any investigation into the motivations behind adaptations discloses a wide range of goals, but the most explicit goal is the adapter's special and personal consideration in Bard's play, which prompts him to consider domesticating, transforming, altering, or adapting it to fit into his own viewpoints of a different period and social context. By following this uncreative method, the adapter may highlight or concentrate on one idea or feature of the original play while ignoring or minimizing the other idea accordingly. Therefore, the subject of the adapted play differs from the original one like in the situation of Tom Stoppard and Arnold Wesker, who utilized the postmodern connotations of Bard's *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Vince* to convey and depict their social protest.

It is important to note, in light of this context, that the Bard himself was a practitioner of adaptations in one way or another. For example, he borrowed the plots or narratives for his plays from a variety of ancient European sources and altered them to suit the tastes of the Elizabethan audience (Bullough, 1996, p. 250). Adaptations of his own plays started in the seventeenth century and have continued ever since. It was fashionable in the seventeenth century because it reflected the spirit of the period. Subsequently, over the centuries, it solidified into tradition, especially as aspiring dramatists insisted on imitating a great master of the craft like Shakespeare. This is in addition to the master imitators who sought to sound like the Bard or who used Shakespearean themes as measures of success to evaluate their proficiency.

In the twentieth century, when a number of theatrical trends emerged, experimenting with certain dramatic forms was confirmed to be an adaptation-friendly literary trend, as the various methods available to the playwright enabled him to conceptualize plays of the Bard with new viewpoints. In many situations, however, the outcome turns out to be a rejection and/or the destruction of the content of the source text. Occasionally, the structure of Bard's text, notably its length, vocabulary,

complexity, and language may require omissions, and such a process would result in the creation of a new play, if not a deformed one. Thus, the adaptation of Bard's plays has received similar critique because of the conservative views of his plays which basically elevate them above all other literary metamorphosis. The purpose of the present study is to demonstrate that adaptations are, in fact, useful processes that allow looking at well-known works from different viewpoints, giving new concepts, and establishing new paths for the social and critical interpretation of the canonical works. Particularly, the adaptation of Bard's plays discloses the complexities and ideological features of his works via subversion, interacts with a distinct type of society, and most obviously alludes to the issues of their own setting. To explain these notions well, the present study examined three adaptations of Bard's plays which depict the notions covered in each chapter: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard *The Merchant* by Arnold Wesker, and *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Julite)* by Anne-Marie MacDonald. These works illustrate how the adaptation of Bard's plays has purposes beyond his plays. Through particular reworking of Bard's materials, their major goals are to tackle the challenging problems that arise from their historical and social context. Thus, these playwrights' usage of Shakespeare's texts is a representation of their critical attitudes to the way particular social problems and marginalized characters are handled in Bard's works.

The analysis of these texts discloses that literary rebirth serves a deeper social and ideological purpose by allowing the adaptation process to tackle contemporary issues while also scrutinizing and demystifying the original work. Noticeably, these adaptations highlight certain problematic elements of their origin texts by uncovering formerly ignored topics and providing a voice to marginalized individuals. In contrast to the popular belief, several modifications in these plays show that they are far from adoring the Bard. Due to the critical views of later authors, the generally held belief that Bard's plays are reproduced because of their fantastic aspects is disproved. In fact, the adaptation of Bard's works takes two distinct ways, either conservative or radical reproduction (Sinfield, 1983, p. 45). Regarding this difference, it is noted that the adaptations examined in the present study are instances of radical reproduction as shown by the modifications made to Bard's texts' structural and theme elements. Wesker's play modifies the character's motive in Bard's Version and changes the ending and main storyline of the original play. MacDonald's *Good Night*

Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet) engages with the original text by changing almost all elements including the figures and the primary storyline. Stoppard's work significantly alters the storyline of *Hamlet*, although most of the essential characters are still there. As a result, these works highlight the difficulty of really changing Shakespeare in new directions.

Supporting the idea that Bard's plays are also reworked to explain the problematic parts in his plays, these adaptations provide other interpretations for the parts that are left confusing in the original texts. The second and third chapters in particular make this point clear. For instance Wesker's work is the efforts to resolve the uncertainty surrounding the Jew's portrayal in the source text. Concerning this play, it has been debated for a significant amount of time whether Bard's portrayal of the Jewish figure is fair enough when measured against the works of his postmodern writers. Wesker's alteration and strengthening of the figure with no biases which was formerly portrayed in Bard's play demonstrate that he had not been friendly enough when he created this figure (Shylock). Similarly, in *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, Anne Marie MacDonald attempts to find out the motivations and reason behind the formerly portrayal of women characters as helpless, subordinate, and inferior way in the Bard's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Since women's persona and rights are ignored and mistreated in the original work, there has been an effort for strengthening the female characters through the character of Constance in MacDonald's version. Therefore, these plays make an effort to modify Bard's materials, exemplifying the fundamental goals of the adaptation process.

It should be highlighted that the personal touch and, behind it, the personal motivation of the adapters are essential in determining the adaptation, its approach, and its aim. Nearly all the adapters have shown that personal interest has a major role in selecting Bard's works for adaptation. This does not imply that no other more extensive or general causes lay behind the adapter's personal feelings. On the contrary, personal interest is overshadowed when adaptation is prompted by humanitarian, historical, or social reasons or issues confronting the postmodern world.

It is unquestionable that the universality and generality of the themes in Bard's plays offer the possibility for them to be reshaped to fit a specific period. This characteristic makes any of Bard's works adaptable to several interpretations and

treatments by numerous writers. In fact, Shakespeare's works are amenable to a variety of theatrical approaches and styles in accordance with what each playwright seeks to portray. In general, adapting a particular viewpoint on particular societal problems has necessitated the process of adapting a particular play to meet the requirements of exhibiting those problems or even providing solutions to them. In this regard, Tom Stoppard, Arnold Wesker, and Anne Marie MacDonald were motivated by a sense of the necessity of action in the face of ideological problems of existence, racism, and feminism, respectively. They were prompted to express their belief in social reform as a way to solve the problems facing their societies. Using absurdist, racial, and feminist problems, they convey their thoughts in various ways via the plays adapted. Here, they seem to be acting after the principle that art should have a social function.

Tom Stoppard, for instance, has sought a variety of methods to add a humanitarian and personal dimension to his version. This remake demonstrates how Bard's plot and characters are reframed to make room for the consideration of more pertinent problems. It is inferred from the examination of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* that due to the living conditions of the twentieth century, such as the second world war and the Nazi's extermination, with all injustices committed against humanity, he attempted to draw the audience's attention to the necessity of observing everyman's right of free life. Thousands of marginalized, exploitation and belief in superiority or priority can be seen in the world today. Regardless of any religious or ideological beliefs, the humanist pulse pushes one to sympathize with marginalized persons wherever they are. From this standpoint, Stoppard's work seeks to expose the theme of a better world. Stoppard's play and his adaptation of Shakespeare, therefore, demonstrate that he used Bard's work as an instrument for social criticism since his goal is always to address issues pertaining to the postmodern time.

Likewise, Since Wesker's version is still set in 1500s Venice, it is important to evaluate his adaptations in the perspective of the context after the Holocaust, when minorities became more concerned about being discriminated against because of their race and religion. It becomes obvious how Wesker revised the text to fit the situation. In fact, Shakespeare's work is again utilized to speak to the more historically important issues when Wesker's work is examined in light of such occurrences and his interest in such issues. Also, in MacDonald's play, the strengthened and confident depictions of

Desdemona, Juliet, and Constance, in contrast to Shakespeare's play, in which the female characters are meant to be more submissive and subordinate, indicate a difference in the postmodern notion of female liberty.

Such significant alterations refer to the process of viewing things from a new perspective. The plays chosen in the present study are examined in terms of adaptation based on the works' focus on ideological transformations throughout the adaptation process. As these plays reshape the social context of Bard's plays and provide new interpretations, they interact with various social issues. In fact, it has been pointed out about the social ties of the process of adaptation that any adapted work must necessarily entail the reframing of notions that indirectly or directly communicate a sense of social involvement since adaptation by itself implies a process of alteration (Hassler & Nicklas, 2015, p. 2). Thus, adaptation aims to modify the appearance of the earlier text to serve new ideological goals. These adaptations react to the usage of Bard's works socially, as well as prompt the ideas, such as existence, racism, and feminism.

These works' social alteration of Bard's plays has been displayed clearly in their focus on character metamorphosis, which also forms other essential elements in their depiction of the Bard. In fact, adaptation has been viewed as "a type of individual criticism with a specific emphasis on individual metamorphosis" (Sanders, 2016, p. 50). It seems that each of the adaptations used in the present study concentrates on one or two Shakespearean characters in order to tell a different story. As a matter of fact, the most significant alteration in each work is centered on the marginalized figures of the original works. By placing them in different contexts, these writers provide their own personal interpretations of these figures. For example, unlike the Bard, Stoppard presents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as main characters instead of Hamlet to highlight the life of the common men in order to direct the audience's attention to the necessity of observing every man's right to free life. In the Elizabethan period, Hamlet is served by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two unimportant courtiers. They are figures with no apparent purpose, dedicated to ridiculous tasks like spying on prince Hamlet or pleasing the King. Nevertheless, Stoppard's resuscitation of these individuals as the main characters has transformed not only their value but also elevated the spirit of everyday life for the common people via these ordinary figures. In an effort to restore Shylock's reputation and debunk misconceptions about Jews,

Wesker depicts Shylock in a different way by portraying him as an honorable member of the Venetian. MacDonald's transformations of Constance into a strong individual and depicting Desdemona and Juliet as self-dependent characters serve as a critical response to Bard's depiction of the figures as subordinate women who are easily manipulated by the male figures of the work. The Bard's works are both upheld and challenged by the postmodern playwrights. Thus, this study also raises the question of whether these plays praise the canonical position of the Bard or critics him. Both are the proper responses to this question. The Bard is obviously the subject of two distinct gestures made by the playwrights in their works by imitating and distancing, praising and criticizing.

To sum up, the present study claims that the adaptations of Bard's plays might be seen as a response to a certain social context. Thus, this study provides an alternate way to the Bard by examining the postmodern attitudes of the dramatist toward his plays. In addition, it has been observed that Shakespearean works can be given new significance via adaptations that reinterpret his plays to appropriate them more to the issues that are prevalent in a postmodern society. In light of the utilization of Bard's plays by the writers in the present study, further Shakespeare adaptations must not be seen as mere efforts to duplicate his plays, but instead as independent works that address their own societal issues. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that this literary phenomenon of adapting Bard's plays is and will continue to provide the playwrights with new ideas that serve their own context. The resourcefulness and richness of the plays might be one of the factors that encourage adaptation. Further, experiments in theatrical forms continue and this helps look at the same plays from various angles and produce them in new forms to reflect their own background milieux.

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