T.C.

EGE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Social Sciences

MEANS OF SOCIAL CRITICISM: METATHEATRE

PhD Dissertation

Özge ÖZKAN GÜRCÜ

Department of English Language and Literature

İzmir

2024

T.C.
EGE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Social Sciences

MEANS OF SOCIAL CRITICISM: METATHEATRE

PhD Dissertation

Özge ÖZKAN GÜRCÜ

Supervisor:
Prof. Dr. Nevin YILDIRM KOYUNCU

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature PhD Programme

İzmir

2024

	T.C. EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ DOKTORA EĞİTİMİ FORMLARI TEZ ONAY SAYFASI FORMU	Döküman Kodu	SSE-FRDR-023
		Yayınlanma Tarihi	02.01.2025
		Revizyon No/Tarih	-
		Sayfa	1 / 1

DOKTORA TEZ ONAY SAYFASI	
Üniversite	Ege Üniversitesi
Enstitü	Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Numarası	92110005718
Adı ve Soyadı	Özge ÖZKAN GÜRCÜ
Savunma Tarihi	25.12.2024
Danışmanın Ünvanı, Adı ve Soyadı	Prof. Dr. Nevin YILDIRIM KOYUNCU
Tez Referans Numarası	10639493
Tez Başlığı	Means of Social Criticism: Metatheatre

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ			
	Ünvanı, Adı ve Soyadı	**Üniversitesi**	**İmza**
Danışman	Prof. Dr. Nevin YILDIRIM KOYUNCU	Ege Üniversitesi	
Üye	Prof. Dr. Dilek DİRENÇ	Ege Üniversitesi	
Üye	Doç. Dr. Aylin ATİLLA MAT	Ege Üniverstesi	
Üye	Prof. Dr. Nilsen GÖKÇEN ULUK	Dokuz Eylül Üniverstesi	
Üye	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin YAVAŞLAR ÖZAKINCI	Celal Bayar Üniversitesi	

Yukarıda bilgileri bulunan Özge ÖZKAN GÜRCÜ tarafından hazırlanmış ve sunulmuş olan Means Of Social Criticism: Metatheatre isimli doktora tezi savunmada başarılı bulunarak oy birliği (x) / oy çokluğu ( ) ile kabul edilmiştir.

Ünvanı Adı ve Soyadı
İmza
Enstitü Müdürü

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL COMPLIANCE

I hereby declare that in the dissertation I submit to the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Ege University, "**Means of Social Criticism: Metathetare**", all information has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic roles and ethical conduct. I also declare that I fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Özge Özkan Gürcü

To my dear beloved father,

May he rest in peace…

PREFACE

Writing this thesis encouraged me to gain new perspectives while doing research on metatheatre. It was an interesting experience to comprehend how societies change and evolve throughout history, especially in terms of culture and social norms. This has also been illuminating to witness how humans need to improve and reshape their lives, thereby changing the world in various ways. This entails acquiring new approaches to analyse our lives. Likewise, this thesis provided me with a good chance to develop new ways of looking into unquestioned beliefs and customs.

ÖZET

Tiyatronun gelişimini ve özellikle metatiyatronun gelişimini kavrayabilmek için, Antik Yunan'da trajediye karşı tutumun öneminin kavraması gerekir; çünkü bu dönem genel olarak tiyatronun ortaya çıkmasının ve tiyatronun ne özelliklere sahip olduğunun belirlendiği temel dönemdir. Özellikle trajedi, *Poetics*'te verilen tanımına dayanılarak yüzyıllar boyunca geliştirilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu tezde kullanılan eserler trajedi örnekleri olduklarından, Aristotle tarafından tanımlanan trajedi kavramını açıklamak çok önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, Antik Yunanlılara göre hayat, insanların tanrıların kendilerine verdiği rolleri yerine getirdiği bir sahneye benziyordu. Böylece, "bir sahne olarak dünya" olarak tercüme edilebilen Theatrum Mundi teriminin, Antik Yunan toplumuna kadar uzandığı anlaşılır. Antik Yunan'da kabul gören bu görüş, yani *theatrum mundi*, sadece o dönemle sınırlı kalmayıp, ileride dönemlerde, özellikle de Rönesans'ta etkisini göstermiştir. Erken modern dönem İngiliz tiyatro oyunlarının yazıldığı bu dönemde hayatın kendisinin bir sahne olduğu görüşü Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Middleton gibi yazarlar tarafından ele alınmıştır. En belirgin örneklerinden biri de Shakespeare'in *Nasıl Hoşunuza Giderse* adlı eserinde Jaques tarafından söylenen dizelerdir: "Bütün dünya bir sahnedir. / Ve bütün erkekler ve kadınlar sadece birer oyuncu; girerler, çıkarlar. / Bir kişi birçok rolü birden oynar. / Bu oyun insanın yedi çağıdır" (II. vii. 39-41). Bu tezin amacı metatiyatro vesilesiyle toplumsal rollerin aslında kurgusallığını vurgulayıp, bu rollerin sorgulanmasını sağlayarak bireyin hayatta ilerlemesinin ve özgürleşmesinin gerektiğini göstermektir. Bu bağlamda William Shakespeare'in *Hamlet* ve *Kral Lear* adlı oyunları ele alınacaktır.

ABSTRACT

To explore the development of theatre, and especially that of metatheatre, it is fundamental to decipher its progress in Ancient Greece because this is the period in which the emergence of theater and the development of theater are determined. Tragedy's permanence has been carried over the centuries, based on its definition given in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Therefore, the definition of tragedy provided by Aristotle is very important, as the plays employed in this dissertation are examples of tragedy. In this context, for the Ancient Greeks, life was like a stage where people were presented with roles that their gods granted them. Thus, it becomes obvious that "Theatrum Mundi", which can be translated as "the world as a stage," dates to Ancient Greek society. This view, which was accepted in Ancient Greece, was also prevalent in later periods, especially in the Renaissance. Furthermore, this motif was favored by writers such as Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood and Thomas Middleton who wrote early modern period English plays. One of the most prominent examples are the lines spoken by Jaques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage. / And all the men and women are just players; They come in and they go out. / One person plays many roles instantly. / This game is the seven ages of man" (II. vii. 39-41). Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to show how social norms are imposed on the individual by questioning what is taken for granted and reconstructing these roles through metatheatre. For this purpose, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear* will be employed.

CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

In order to grasp the development of theatre, and that of metatheatre specifically, one needs to grasp the significance of the Ancient Greek attitude towards tragedy. Ancient Greek literature is the cornerstone for the emergence of drama in general. In addition, the essence of how theatre, in particular tragedy, has been developed throughout centuries is based on the definition presented to the reader in the *Poetics.* Therefore, it is of crucial importance to refer to the concept of tragedy stated by Aristotle as it forms the foundation of all the theories in the scope of Western drama studies.

As mentioned in Aristotle's *Poetics,* tragedy is "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (Part VI -10). In this definition, what strikes the reader's attention is the reference to *imitation*, a notion which Aristotle asserts is the source of poetry: "[T]he instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons" (Part IV – 7). This idea of imitation can in fact be traced in the ancient Greek view about life.

Thus, what is crucial for the period when Aristotle lived is the notion of human life. According to ancient Greeks, life itself resembled a stage where human beings performed the roles given to them by gods. Thus, the term *theatrum mundi*, which can literally be translated as "the world as a stage", dates to the ancient Greek society: "For the Greeks and Romans, the *theatrum mundi* was a way of conceptualizing a universe in

which human life was subject to the stage-management of supernatural abstractions" (Feldman 7). This idea assumes that ancient Greeks had no other choice but to consent to what the gods decided on their behalf: "Scripted by the Fates, its course subject to the whims of Fortune, and the influence of the Olympians, life for the ancients was circumscribed by divine dramaturges" (8). In fact, that gods manipulate ancient Greeks' lives for their amusement is a concept encountered in Plato's *the Laws*: "May we not regard every living being as a puppet of the gods, which may be their plaything only, or may be created with a purpose" (Plato qtd. in Jowett 166).

Regarding the concept of *theatrum mundi* stated above, it is significant to point out that the notion of the world as a stage was not merely restricted to this period but influenced the writers of the following centuries. This was especially the case for the Renaissance: "[t]he metaphorical identification of life with theatre was commonplace in the Renaissance" (Keenan 59). Indeed, this is also pointed out in the plays written during the Renaissance period, such as Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, in which Jaques comments that "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players. / They have their exists and entrances. /And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages." (II.vii.39-42).

Moreover, the concept of theatrum mundi appears not only in the works of William Shakespeare, but also in the works of his contemporaries such as Thomas Heywood, Thomas Middleton, and Ben Jonson (Bunnell 7). For instance, Heywood states in *Apology for Actors* (1612): "The world is a theater, the earth a stage, / Which God and nature doth with actors fill: /Kings have their entrance in due equipage, / And some their parts play well, and others ill". (xviii) Likewise, these lines illustrate how the idea that

the world is a stage is embedded in the Renaissance world view. Bunnell refers to this motif: “For the Renaissance character, playwright, and audience, the *theatrum mundi* metaphor assumed God, Fate or Fortune as the ultimate director and creator of the cosmic drama” (7).

In this regard, the fact that human life was controlled by external factors was portrayed by means of theatrum mundi during the Renaissance. Similarly, such a reference is made by Arthur F. Kinney, who considers that “[i]n the Renaissance, all the world was a stage and all actions - from private prayers (as we see in Claudius in *Hamlet*) to staged narratives (as we see in Hamlet’s advice to the players, his reaction to the speech about Priam and Hecuba, and his own revised play called “The Mousetrap” – were essentially enactments or re-enactments” (1).

Furthermore, apart from the notion of theatrum mundi that was prevalent in early modern English drama during the Renaissance, another element that was frequently employed in relation to this notion is the element of the play-within-the-play. What is meant by the term play-within-the-play is that the main play hosts another play which enables the audience to figure out some sort of hidden truth or secret as to the lives of the characters in the primary play. In addition, the term the play-within-the-play is “credited to Thomas Kyd, who employed it in the *Spanish Tragedy* (1592) to create an intricate framework of observers and players” (Bunnell 9). Bunnell comments that “[e]specially popular in revenge tragedies, the convention offers another perspective on the world as stage - that of the revenger-hero/ protagonist (9). So, by employing the technique of the play-within-the-play, the protagonist invents a new play to make sure that what he/she suspects is really the case. This term also illustrates life is indeed a play in which

individuals perform certain roles attributed to them. In this respect, the concept of the play-within-the-play will be mentioned further on for further implications.

Not only the concept of theatrum mundi but also the term the play-within-the-play relate to a broader theory called *metatheatre*, which was coined by Lionel Abel in *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (1963). According to Abel, the term metatheatre can be defined as "a comparatively philosophic form of drama" that has a self- conscious nature" (v). Abel also defines metatheatre in his own terms as follows: "Without tragedy, of which we may be incapable, there is no philosophic alternative to the two concepts by which I have defined the metaplay: the world is a stage, life is a dream" (83). Furthermore, according to Abel, "metatheatre first appears in early modernity with the baroque topos of the *theatrum mundi* and the convention of the play within the play" (1). In addition, Abel gives special importance to *Hamlet* by referring to the play as his prime example of a specific dramatic form, metaplays (4). In fact, metaplays show "us at once that the happenings and characters within them are of the playwright's invention" and are "about life seen as already theatricalized" (Abel 59–60). These are central to the concept of metatheatre.

In unison with the above-mentioned concepts, the first chapter of this dissertation will employ the critical framework and the background information about metatheatre to give a comprehensive explanation. The importance of structuralism, especially that of Ferdinand Saussure will be handled at length to show it had an influence on the subsequent critical theories. Moreover, poststructuralism and deconstruction will be discussed comprehensively so as to illustrate how literary criticism developed throughout history. In this respect, the literary theorists whose works have a profound effect in the

analysis of the plays, namely Jacques Derrida and Louis Althusser shall be mentioned. Regarding Althusser's concept of ideology, ideological state apparatuses will be explained at length to depict how metatheatre utilizes them to demonstrate that an individual's life consists of the roles attributed to him / her by the society.

The second chapter will focus on the early modern period during which the Renaissance flourished because the Renaissance is crucial as it paved the way for individualism and the concurrent quest for knowledge. In fact, the plays of this period are embellished with the questioning and in fact criticism of existing values and beliefs. What is taken for granted began to be treated with scepticism. For this reason, this chapter will include the properties of early modern society and life. Concerning the existing view of life during the early modern period, patriarchalism was the norm in terms of both public and private affairs. This led to the priority of not only the king in the domain of politics, but also of the husband or father in in the domestic realm. Especially with the advent of King James's reign, absolute authority gained crucial importance.

Therefore, special emphasis will be made on the concept of sovereignty, as this dissertation is engaged in showing how Shakespeare conveyed metatheatre as a means of criticizing not only the society but also the monarch. The emergence of sovereignty, and how it developed throughout England's history, especially throughout the Tudor dynasty will be illustrated. In addition, as the successor of the Tudors, the profound effect of the Stuart dynasty on sovereignty and the concept of absolute monarchy implemented by King James I shall be the major concern of the section.

As for the last chapter of this dissertation, an analysis of metatheatrical plays will

be employed to put forward how metatheatre functions to criticize and alter the social and familial values taken for granted. For this means, Shakespeare's two plays, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* will be analysed respectively to demonstrate how the playwright deals with the themes of fratricide, regicide (*Hamlet*) and senescence (*King Lear*) that have a tremendous effect on the outcome of the plays.

Finally, the conclusion part will include an overall consideration of the social, and familial properties of early modern England. Furthermore, sovereignty and the flaws of the sovereign that are criticized implicitly in the plays will be highlighted with reference to metatheatrical elements. As a result, the major concern of the dissertation will be to illustrate how social norms inflict roles on individuals, thereby implying that life itself is a stage where people are to perform as expected of their social status.

CHAPTER I
THE EMERGENCE OF METATHEATRE

1.1. Theoretical Background

To grasp the development of poststructuralism, it is inevitable to mention Ferdinand de Saussure and *the Course in General Linguistics* as the cornerstone upon which poststructuralism is founded. In this work, the Swiss linguist suggests that "in language there are only differences without positive terms" (Saussure 120). By this, he meant that language functions as a system of interdependent units in which the value of each constituent unit results solely from the simultaneous presence of other units and the ways each unit differs from the others (Schrift 15). Likewise, this implies that meaning can only be attained through differences: "The meaning of each sign arises from the differences that set it apart from other signs within the overarching system" (Saccio 30).

Regarding structuralism's major principles, they include "sign: the combination of a concept and a sound image", in which case it combines the signified, hence the concept, and" the signifier, namely the sound-image" (Saussure 66). Hence, a word, or "the linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name, but a concept (signified) and a sound-image (signifier)" (66). In addition, Saussure maintains that "some people regard language, when reduced to its elements, as a naming process only – a list of words, each corresponding to the thing that it names" (77). Furthermore, he states that "the bond of the signifier and the signified is arbitrary", thus the linguistic sign itself is arbitrary" (79). Therefore, this means that the words we use are only arbitrary, man-made concepts. As it

can be inferred from Saussure' assumptions, "no ready-made ideas exist before words" (30).

In unison with the information above, Saussure's theory also consists of binary oppositions, the most important four of which are *signifier* and *signified*, *langue* and *parole*, *synchronic* and *diachronic*, *infrastructure* and *superstructure*. Of these binary oppositions, langue and parole stand out as Saussure asserts that "a language never exits even for a moment except as a social fact" (77). In this respect, langue, referring to language as a structured system, "exists only in virtue of a kind of contract agreed between the members of a community" (14). So, the social aspect of language gains priority. Likewise, each pair consists of a word that is given more importance. As a result of "privileging in their analyses the former term in each binary pair, the structuralists were able to develop theories that diminished the role of the individual subject or agent while highlighting the underlying relations that govern social and psychic practices" (Schrift 4).

Moreover, Saussure's "theories of the arbitrary nature of language disrupted even that feeble faith, setting in motion both the structuralist abandonment of absolute truth and the postmodern deconstruction of language itself" (Saccio 31). Furthermore, Saussure's assumption reveals the significance of difference regarding meaning: "The simple inference that meaning is differential, not referential, has profound implications for our understanding of the relations between human beings and the world, and many of them remain controversial even now" (Belsey 10). So, Saussure's groundbreaking notion that differences are fundamental to language can be considered as the inspiration that the poststructuralists seek to demonstrate their view:

> The history of poststructuralism is the story of the way Saussure's ideas

> were taken up by later generations, especially in France, and particularly after the Second World War, when the history of National Socialism, and of French collaboration with it seemed to demand an explanation that existing theories of culture were unable to provide. The key term in this story is 'difference'. (Belsey 10)

In this respect, it is essential to give a summary of historical developments that led to the emergence of such a theory. The 1960s hosted changes not only in terms of culture and society, but also that of philosophy, as "it was also a period of significant transformation in continental philosophy, marked in France by the end of existentialism, the emergence and decline of structuralism as a dominant philosophical tradition and the beginnings of a new *post*-structuralist philosophy" (Schrift 1). Among these changes in philosophy, structuralism emerged as a reaction to existentialism which was prevalent prior to the 1960s: "In France, the emergence of structuralism as a dominant intellectual paradigm in the late 1950s was in part a response to the existentialist emphasis on subjectivity and individual autonomy – personified in the work and person of Jean Paul Sartre – and in part a reflection of the rising influence of research in the human sciences" (Schrift 3).

Indeed, the premise of structuralism was embedded in "the quest for scientificity" (Lundy Craig 70). Regarding the urge to attain scientificity, it was driven by the widespread disillusionment with ideology from the mid to late 1950s. As to the 1950s, which involved the period following the end of World War II, "French culture and politics were dominated by Marxism and existentialism" (71). However, their credibility began

to be questioned with the political events of the period and at this point structuralism came to the fore with its scientific method and "offered an attractive way out of quandary" (71).

Regarding structuralism's methodology, it has "an insistence upon synchronicity" (Lundy Craig 71). As to the importance of synchronicity, it led to a challenge of history and the historical form of explanation based on structuralism's tenet that "meaning was not gained through an analysis of diachronic development, nor was a system to be explained by its elements over time" (71). This was also an essential point for Saussure's linguistic theory which "advanced and relied upon a synchronic notion of system in order to extract constants within and between languages from which general laws could then be constructed" (73).

As to the development of poststructuralism in the early 1960's, it was based on several factors. For instance, "[t]he French workers' and students' revolution in 1968 was a key event for the emergence of poststructuralism and had an enormous influence upon French intellectuals" (Marshall xviii). As a result of this revolution, primary works of the period came to the fore:

> By May-June 1968 many seminal works had been published by poststructuralists. It was this literature that led to the coining of the term. Important works were: Gilles Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in 1962: Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference* in 1967, and *Of Grammatology* in 1968; Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* first appeared in 1961, and *The Order of Things* in 1966; and Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits* in 1966. (Marshall ix)

In accordance with the works mentioned above, it is crucial to note poststructuralism's emergence "as a social and political event in thought in the beginning of the 1960s" (Dillet, MacKenzie and Porter 2). Apart from Gilles Deleuze, a group of philosophers related with poststructuralism could be mentioned, some of whose names are Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Félix Guattari, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida.

Moreover, one of the most fundamental principles pertaining to poststructuralism is that on meaning which forms "a thorough disruption of our secure sense of meaning and reference in language, of our understanding of identity, of our sense of history and of its role in the present, and of our understanding of language as something free of the work of the unconscious" (Williams 3). With respect to disruption, it is not used in a negative way. Instead, it refers to a leading force and poststructuralism's "power to resist and work against settled truths and oppositions" (3).

In addition, poststructuralism is also historically related with structuralism. In this respect, poststructuralism "pursues structuralist arguments about the autonomy of language from the world to the point at which structuralism's own authority is undermined" (Birch and Hooper 690). This has to do with the period of 1960s whose philosophy focused on the event itself: "[P]hilosophy in France from the 1960s onward has been marked by a renewed concern with thinking historically, and in particular, thinking the event" (Schrift 12). Not only the event, but also "the attempt to resituate the subject" gains crucial importance throughout this period, especially in France (12).

In terms of such an approach, the leading philosophical figure "in this new phase was Jacques Derrida, who began to unpick the logic of structuralism in 1966, questioning the founding concepts of 'structure' and 'binary opposition'" (Birch and Hooper 690). Derrida is indeed one of the most prominent philosophers of the period, since "[u]nder his re-examination, fixed structures appear to dissolve, binary opposites appear to contaminate one another, and determinate meanings become indeterminate" (690). In fact, it is one of the prominent features of poststructuralism, more precisely of deconstruction, to demolish the superiority of one over the other in binary oppositions: "[P]oststructuralist analysis subverts the paired oppositions so favoured and instead identifies a covert hierarchy to these binary couplings; focused and intensive readings make prominent the inferior binary pairings or 'other' and so decentre the text" (Cockin and Morrison 130).

Moreover, at the heart of poststructuralism lies Derrida's paper "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" delivered at a symposium at Johns Hopkins University in 1966 as a pivotal text of poststructuralism and initiated a new critical movement. The paper "put in question the basic metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy since Plato" (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 164). In his famous paper, Derrida argues that the notion of structure even in structuralist theory has always presupposed a centre of meaning of some sort (164).

At this point, the question why a centre exists in the first place could be asked. This is because "[p]eople desire a centre because it guarantees being as presence (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 150). Derrida calls this desire for a centre "logocentrism" (150). Indeed, "the system of language associated with western phonetic-alphabetic writing is

precisely what has made possible the production of logocentric metaphysics" (Milner and Browitt 115).

In a similar sense, "Western thought has developed innumerable terms which operate as centring principles: being, essence, substance, truth, form, beginning, end purpose, consciousness, man, God, and so on" (Milner and Browitt 150). This is fundamentally the reason why "most of the great Western philosophers have been logocentric in their thinking until the modern period": "Logocentrists consider meaning to emanate finally from some logos or original source that is pure and undefiled" (Saccio 27). Thus, binaries play a vital role in terms of logocentrism because, since a binary consists of a pair of two related terms, it always includes a term that is privileged over the other. Regarding binary pairs, "[t]he most famous (and most defining) binary is found in Plato, where the idea (or form) is always given precedence over the image (or mimesis) of this idea" (Saccio 27).

In this respect, "Jacques Derrida reads the history of Western metaphysics as a continual search for a logos or original presence" (Saccio 33). Consequently, "[t]his logos is sought, for it promises to give meaning and purpose to all things, to act as a universal centre, a transcendental signified that all signifiers can be referred back to" (33). What is more, "behind this search is a desire for a higher reality, a full presence that is beyond the play of structure" (33). In fact, "Western philosophy since Plato has simply renamed this presence and shifted this centre without ever breaking from its centring impulse" (33). However, "Derrida would deconstruct all such attempts to posit a centre or to establish a system of Binaries; he would replace it instead with a full free play of meaning" (33). To illustrate his view, Derrida states:

> Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no centre, that the centre could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the centre had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. (197)

In addition, he asserts that "there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or play of signification henceforth has no limit" (198). As to Derrida's essential contribution to poststructuralism, it is concerned with "the distinctive view of post-structuralism that the 'signifier' (a written word, for example) is not fixed to a particular 'signified' (a concept), and so all meanings are provisional" (Birch and Hooper 690). In this sense, "Derridean analysis of literature is typified by a playfulness and circularity that revels in exposing the labyrinthine technique of chasing the trace meaning of words and phrases, in search of an unstable, unknowable origin" and "[t]here is a rejection of the centre and an emphasis placed on that which is peripheral, where that which cannot be easily contained is relegated" (Cockin and Morrison 130).

What is more, Derrida's statement that "the task of deconstruction is to discover the other of philosophy", as well as his most quoted comment "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" (translated into English as "there is nothing outside the text") are crucial in terms of grasping the concept of deconstruction (1976, 163). This is explained in the following quotation by Derrida:

> What I call the "text" implies all the structures called "real," "economic," "historical", socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents. Another way

> of recalling once again that "there is nothing out of the text." That does not mean that all referents are suspended, denied, or enclosed in a book, as people have claimed…. But it does mean that every referent, all reality has the structure of a differential trace, and that one cannot refer to this "real" except in an interpretive experience. (1988, 188)

Apart from Derrida's assertion that there is nothing outside the text, a similar point Derrida shares with Saussure's favouring of *langue* as more permanent and durable than *parole* is his view that "writing outlives and outlasts its supposed authors": "[W]here Saussure had privileged sign over referent, Derrida privileges signifier over signified" (Milner and Browitt 115). In this respect, "the meaning of meaning is an indefinite referral of signifier to signifier which gives signified meaning no respite […] so that it always signifies again" (Derrida 25). Moreover, Derrida borrows from Saussure "the notion that language is founded on difference, but coined the neologism, différance, to stress the double meaning of the French verb, differer, to differ and deferor, to delay" (Milner and Browitt 115).

As is mentioned above, the coinage of the term "différance", which is situated at the foundation of destructive analysis, hints at an attentiveness to both meanings of the French verb *differer*: to defer in terms of delay over time and to differ in terms of spatial nonidentity (Schrift 12). For Derrida, "[i]nsofar as différance names both the movement and of both temporal deferring and spatial differing, it stands as the transcendental condition for the possibility of differentiation, which is to say, *différance* is what makes differences possible" (22).

Furthermore, the neologism différance also highlights "the divided nature of the sign": "In French the 'a' in 'différance' is not heard, and so we hear only différence", so the difference can also be grasped through writing (Seldon, Widdowson, Brooker 165). Nevertheless, the significance attributed to speech over writing results from the fact that "[p]honocentric thought ignores 'différance' and insists upon the self-presence of the spoken word" because "[p]honocentrism treats writing as a contaminated form of speech" (165).

In this respect, the reversal of the superiority of speech over writing forms the basis of Derrida's deconstruction. In addition, although Derrida agrees with Saussure that language is founded on difference, he maintains that "there is nothing outside of the text" (1976, 158). This is the point which separates his theory from structuralism: "In arguing that there is no meaning outside of the text he is not committing himself to any fixed notion of meaning as in structuralism, for whereas structuralism emphases the search for stable linguistic patterns Derrida privileges differance" (Marshall xxi).

Based on the information given about poststructuralism, the importance thus attached to writing functions as the cornerstone for deconstruction: "The advent of the concept of writing, then, is a challenge to the very idea of structure: for a structure always presumes a centre, a fixed principle, a hierarchy of meanings and a solid foundation, and it is just these notions which the endless differing and deferring of writing throws into question" (Eagleton 116). This also marks the commencement of poststructuralism, namely the passage "from the era of structuralism to the reign of post-structuralism, a style of thought which embraces the deconstructive operations of Derrida, the work of the French historian Michel Foucault, the writings of the French psychoanalyst Jacques

Lacan and of the feminist philosopher and critic Julia Kristeva" (116).

Consequently, Derrida states that "in what one calls real life, there has never been anything but writing" (1976, 158). Therefore, for Derrida, real life resembles a text, so it can be deconstructed. This is noteworthy, as metatheatre shares the same motif that life is a text to be performed. In fact, Derrida argues that deconstruction should deal with "material institutions, and not only with discourses or signifying representations" (1987, 19). Therefore, that meaning is not stable and can be deconstructed has another implication: "Derrida's insistence on the indeterminate openness of meaning is clearly intended as subversive of all authoritarianisms, whether epistemological, ethical or political, and of the fear of change that often inspires such authoritarianism" (Milner and Browitt 116).

Thus, this notion of temporary meaning put forward by Derrida gains crucial importance for the analysis of the plays employed in this dissertation, as the aim is to illustrate how "cultural relativism and the associated view that our models of reality are 'constructed' in language or discourse" (690). Likewise, the idea that reality is constructed in language can be considered in conjunction with the assumption that the World we live in is ruled by a system that defines and controls one's identity and roles in the society. It is at this point that metatheatre comes to the fore to illustrate how we are constantly shaped by the society we live in.

In terms of such an influence of language on the individual, it should also be borne in mind that it is the cornerstone of subject formation as well. Indeed, "[t]he critique of the subject becomes a defining problematic for poststructuralism" (Lumsden 29). So, the poststructuralist critics of structuralism, who regard language as always articulated with

other systems and especially with subjective processes rather than viewing it as an impersonal system, introduce the concept of the "speaking subject" or the "subject in process" (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 146).

In unison with the information given above, deconstruction criticizes Western metaphysical thought by putting forward how it privileges certain ideas and concepts and analyses certain types of metaphysical concepts that are "characterised by the assumption of ultimate sources of meaning which are encoded linguistically (God, Reason, Law, etc.)" (Green and LeBihan 215). Indeed, not only does Derrida assert that in Saussure's theory of binary oppositions, one element in each pair is suppressed and one privileged, but also, he tries to show how the privileged term depended for its meaning upon the suppressed one (215).

So, even the word différance that Derrida coins is an example of how "a deconstructionist can never settle on either one meaning or the other for the invented term – she or he shifts between difference and deferral endlessly" (216). Derrida's description of différance is given in his essay of the same title, which appears in *Margins of Philosophy*. He explains:

> There is no essence of différance; it (is) that which only could never be appropriated in the as such of its name or its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the as such in general, of the presence of the thing itself in its essence. That there is not a proper essence of différance at this point, implies that there is neither a Being nor truth of the play of writing such as it engages différance. (1982, 27)

As to the relation of poststructuralism with Marxism, Louis Althusser gains prominence. Althusser contributed to Marxist theory with "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1969). He maintains that "the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects" (175). His famous dictum, "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals on the one hand and concrete subjects on the other" is the basis of his argument (176).

In this respect, Althusser explains that "ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation […] called *interpellation* or *hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other*) hailing: Hey, you there!" (176). Likewise, Althusser states that "the hailed individual will turn around" as a response to this hailing, and by means of this "mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject" (176). Therefore, Althusser asserts that "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (177). In addition, "[t]his summoning (or 'interpellation') works through the discursive formations materially linked with 'state apparatuses' (religious, legal, educational and so on)" (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 148).

Moreover, the fact that Althusser uses the term ideology has a significant role: "By translating 'discourse' into 'ideology' Althusser gives a political charge to the theory by introducing a domination–subordination model" (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 148). Furthermore, the notion of ideology hailing or interpellating individuals as subjects is

crucial because it shows that "individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects", thus "individuals are always-already subjects" (Althusser 178). To illustrate how an individual is hailed as a subject, Althusser refers to the example of "the forms of family ideology in which the unborn child is expected" (178):

> [I]t is certain in advance that it will bear its Father's name, and will therefore have an identity and be irreplaceable. Before its birth, the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived. (179)

As a result, Althusser points out how "the individual is interpellated as a subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection all by himself" (183). Also, according to Althusser, "each society has its own individuals, historically and socially determined" (153). Likewise, this dissertation will be engaged in illustrating how the society "interpellates", thereby dictating social and filial roles on the individual. This will be carried out by employing elements of metatheatre and applying them to *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

1.2. The History of Metatheatre

As stated before, Lionel Abel's seminal book *Metathetare: A New View of Dramatic Form* is the pioneer of metatheatrical studies, especially in the field of drama.

Nevertheless, even if studies relating to metatheatre gained popularity thanks to Abel's work, in fact research about such a term date even earlier than 1963: "Anne Righter's *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* does not use the term 'metatheatre' (it was published a year before Abel's work) but has proved influential on later critics who do" (Dustagheer and Newman 5). Righter's work focused on Shakespeare's plays, especially on "the medieval and classical history of features of Shakespeare's plays we might retrospectively call metatheatrical: metaphors of playing and acting, shadows and dreams, and the use of disguise" (5).

Thus, this emphasis on Shakespeare's plays in fact is highly related with Righter's view that "Elizabethan playwrights utilized theatrical self-consciousness to achieve three specific objectives: it served to express the depth of the play world; it defined the relationship of that world with the reality represented by the audience; and, finally, this self-referential art allowed members of the audience to recognize the elements of illusion present in their daily lives" (12). Furthermore, Righter believes that theatrical self-consciousness is "the product of a social malaise" (12). The reason for such a social malaise is that "[t]he Elizabethan world, with its turbulent religious and political climate, engendered a feeling of disillusionment" (12). This is indeed obvious in the case of Shakespeare's plays, as "[t]he self-awareness of Shakespeare's art reflects a deep-seated disenchantment with reality" (12). How this disenchantment permeates his plays will be analysed further on to show how metatheatre can be utilized as a means of social criticism.

In addition, among the successors of Abel concerning metatheatre, James L. Calderwood is a prominent figure as he has contributed significantly to the filed with his books *Shakespearean Metadrama* (1971), Metadrama in Shakespeare's *Henriad,* and *To*

Be and Not To Be: Negation and Metadrama in Hamlet (1983) respectively. Calderwood conveys metadrama as a broader concept than metatheatre and defines metatheatre as a "dramatic genre that does go beyond drama (at least drama of a traditional sort), becoming a kind of anti-form in which the boundaries between the play as a work of self-contained art and life are dissolved" (*Shakespearean* 4). Moreover, Calderwood refers to Shakespeare as a playwright: "dramatic art itself— its materials, its media of language and theatre, its generic forms and conventions, its relationship to truth and the social order—is a dominant Shakespearean theme, perhaps his most abiding subject" (5).

Furthermore, another important scholar pertaining to the study of metatheatre is Richard Hornby. He dwells on the concept of metatheatre with his highly influential book, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*. In this book, Hornby claims that "drama is not a mirror held up to nature, but rather a gauge" (27). He also mentions that "metadrama can be defined as drama about drama; it occurs whenever the subject of a play turns out to be, in some sense, drama itself" (31). According to Hornby, this is because "drama is ultimately always about itself and not about reality" (31), thereby challenging the idea that drama reflects life.

Additionally, Hornby lists some metatheatrical components to explain how metatheatre is employed in a play. These components are "the play within the play, the ceremony within the play, role playing within the role, literary and real-life reference and self-reference" (Hornby 32). Regarding the first of these varieties, the play within the play gains a crucial role since it provides the reader with a multifaceted approach to a play's intention: "[t]he common assumption is that the play-within can form a mirror to the play as a whole, a form of mise en abyme, and in turn affect our understanding of the play"

(Rosenmeyer 99). Besides, the play within the play has two kinds. The former is the "inset type" in which "the inner play is secondary, a performance set apart from the main action like the Mousetrap in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" (Hornby 33). The latter is the "framed type" in which "the inner play is primary, with the outer play a framing device, like the Sly episodes in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*" (33).

What is more, Hornby claims that the play-within-the-play works to reveal how life is an illusion and stands out as a metaphor for life:

> The fact that the inner play is an obvious illusion (since we see other characters watching it), reminds us that the play we [emphasis original] are watching is also an illusion, despite its vividness and excitement; by extension, the world in which we live, which also seems to be so vivid, is in the end a sham. We watch a play, within which there is another play ultimately, all is a play. In other words, the play within the play is projected onto life itself and becomes a means for gauging it. (45)

Another figure who dwells on the notion of metatheatre is Thomas G. Rosenmeyer. According to Rosenmeyer, there are several crucial points as to the properties of metatheatre. First, he states that "[i]n metatheatre, the characters show themselves to be aware of being on a stage; they are self-conscious, both about themselves as characters and about their status as actors playing characters, unlike the heroes of tragedy who carry out their missions without looking into themselves" (88). Secondly, "[t]he characters' dramatic life is already theatricalized, but they do not know the kind of plot in which they are engaged" and "[t]he plot is a product of the author's own imagination and not rooted

in a fixed tradition" (88).

Moreover, "[t]he characters tend to improvise, thus usurping the role of the playwright", whereas "the playwright is not fully in control of his own material; the characters and the events are always on the point of eluding his directive" (88). Apart from these, Rosenmeyer proposes other elements made with reference to Abel's book pertaining to metatheatre such as the action being marked by a dream or having the quality of a dream; the subversion of authority, self-centered use of language with words manipulated as pointers to other words more than as signifiers (88). So, all of these are the principal features which are put forward to set metatheatre apart from tragedy.

Apart from the properties of metatheatre mentioned above, it is relevant to explain what the term denotes in terms of semantics. The term *metatheatre* "is made up of two semantic units; the prefix 'meta' and its qualifying term 'theatricality'" (Anwar 24). As to the prefix *meta-*, it means "beyond, above, at a higher level and is often described as self-reflexive or self-reflective" (White 64). Moreover, the prefix's "present position before 'theatricality' suggests both the knowledge of the dramatic presence of the dramaturgical content and its fictive quality" (Anwar 24). Therefore, this suggests that "in a particular metatheatrical situation, a playwright not only creates a generic distance from his or her piece of work by making it the subject of his artistic creation, but the fictive creation also produces a state of psychic distance in the audience" (24).

In addition to the definition of the prefix *meta-* given above, Thomas G. Rosenmeyer also identifies what it signifies: "Standard modern uses of meta- in matters of language and literature, as in Genette's métalangue, postulate one superior entity, in this case a language, existing behind or above or beyond another, a second level, i.e., our

language or languages, to which it stands in a dominant critical relation" (90). Another critic, Witt describes that the prefix, "traditionally used to designate something of a "higher" order, as in *metaphysics*, has proliferated into neologisms such as *metafiction*, *metanarrative* […] in addition to *metatheatre* and *metadrama*, each indicating a phenomenon that reflects on itself" (1).

Regarding the period when the term metatheatre emerged, "it is no coincidence that such terms began to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the time when high modernism was coming to an end and critical studies of the movement were interested in explaining modernist art as art primarily concerned with reflecting on its own nature" (Puchner qtd. in Witt 1). Indeed, this is the case with metatheatre, as it is conscious of its fictionality: "Perhaps the most widely accepted notion associated with metatheatre is that the play recognizes its own status as fiction and performs a hermeneutics of itself, that it examines or judges or raises questions about or is about itself or the tradition in which it stands or raises questions about theater as a whole" (Rosenmeyer 97). This reminds the concept of life as a stage, as "[o]nce the reality of the outside world is perceived as itself illusory, the theater becomes a fitting metaphor for life" (Witt 1). Likewise, the term is described in detail as follows:

> Rather than mimetically representing the real World, metatheatre calls into question accepted notions of that reality, stressing instead the world's theatricality. During the baroque era, this took the form of *theatrum mundi topos*: modernist and postmodernist metatheatre tend to reflect on the nature of theatre itself, calling attention to its identity as a space of "play" rather than mimesis and leading the audience to suspect that their own

> reality is also theatrical. (Witt 14)

Furthermore, another point concerning the definition of metatheatre includes the reference to ancient Greek drama:

> In contrast to the catharsis-oriented Greek tragedy, Abel argues, the hero in the works of Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Calderón remains "conscious of the part he himself plays in constructing the drama that unfolds around him" (167). The device of the play within a play, so important in the Baroque, is present in works such as *Hamlet* or *Life is a Dream*. (Perez-Simon 3)

Owing to such a distinction made by Abel between ancient Greek drama and early modern English drama, the most famous examples of which include Shakespeare's plays, the chapters of this thesis dealing with in-depth analysis of metatheatrical plays will not dwell on any ancient Greek text but will instead focus on some plays written during the Renaissance, hence early modern English plays.

1.3. Elements of Metatheatre

When all the aforementioned information regarding metatheatre is taken into consideration, it is also plausible to define this term as "drama about drama or theatre about theatre, producing self- conscious moments by which a play draws attention to its fictionality" (Anwar 25). Hence, it entails "the conscious awareness of the distance that a play/drama

constructs through its artistic medium" (25). Moreover, there are some techniques or elements peculiar to metatheatre such as "direct address to the audience, prologues, asides, epilogues, chorus, textual and real-life referentiality, play-within-the-play or play about a play, intertextual allusions and linguistic signifiers" (25).

In fact, the prominent scholar who contributed significantly to metatheatrical studies is Richard Hornby, whose book *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (1969) includes various types of metadrama: "the play within the play; the ceremony within the play; role playing within the role; literary and real-life reference; self-reference, and the self-consciousness of perception" (Anwar 32). Regarding texts related to metatheatre, he refers to plays written by Sophocles, Buchner, Strindberg, Ibsen, Pinter and Japanese Noh as well as Kyd, Shakespeare and Pirandello. This shows how metatheatre has been employed by many playwrights writing in different periods of time. So, it proves to be quite a fruitful site for investigation.

In unison with the information given above, metatheatre's function as a method of questioning what is taken for granted in a society comes to the fore. As Hornby suggests, "great drama is parody, but it is a parody of a complex and serious nature" (25). He also mentions that "[i]n parodying the perceived dramatic tradition, the serious playwright is attacking and ultimately altering the means by which people think, behave, and decide" (25). So, it is this method of questioning that metatheatre provides to set up new ways of thinking about the dominant ideology in a society. Likewise, this dissertation shall be engaged in analysing selected plays from early modern drama within the scope of metatheatre to illustrate how not only a play, but also life itself is a work of fiction in which roles are imposed on people.

CHAPTER II
THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

2.1. Social and Familial Background

In contrast with the modern perception of the nuclear family's priority over the external world, the characteristics of a family were quite different in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, the family was widely accepted as a part of a wider network of relationships especially in the early sixteenth century. It was only in the following centuries that the nuclear family gained its central position in the society. Therefore, the development of the family structure from early sixteenth up to late seventeenth century should be explained initially to be able to comprehend the function of family relationships at the time Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet.* Moreover, this is also crucial to comprehend the sixteenth-century state of England: "the family and the state were inextricably intertwined in the minds of English women and men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" to such an extent that "we cannot understand politics without understanding the politics of the family" (Amussen 1).

To begin with, it was a common trait of families to be influenced by the outer world in the late medieval period and the early sixteenth-century (Stone 85). Both the individual members and the nuclear family were oriented to others, such as the kin and the good lord for the elite class and the neighbours for the lower class (85). Owing to the high degree of influence from the outside, the boundaries that separated the nuclear family from the social environment were quite weak. This is apparent in *Hamlet,* for example in the interaction of Polonius's public and private life, in which his duty to the King overwhelms his familial role as a father.

By the same token, the influence of the kin on the nuclear family was common for the landed elite, so the nuclear family was devoid of central importance in contrast with lineage and kin relationships. The extent of the kin interaction with the nuclear family relied heavily on the social level. According to Stone, due to this kin involvement, the family could not be dealt with on its own, as it was not only continuously influenced by kin relatives but was also in strong interaction with them (85).

In this respect, kinship constituted a community who had social, economic and psychological interests in common. Furthermore, patriarchy, "the leadership of the head of the clan", was the main tenet of this kinship (Stone 86). This meant that in societies which favoured patriarchy and hierarchy, the interests of the lineage as whole surpassed the wishes and needs of the individual. Consequently, the political framework of the society was formed by these lineage and kin relationships which led to "bonding of patronage and good lordship on the one hand, and loyalty and deference on the other" (86).

Likewise, regarding the social conduct accepted in the Elizabethan era, individual happiness could only be acquired within the limits of the social norms. Therefore, it was unacceptable to violate norms such as filial obedience, or loyalty to the lineage for the sake of individual happiness (Stone 87). In this respect, the parent-children's relationship within the family should be mentioned. In the sixteenth century, relations among the upper-class parents and children were mostly quite distant. On the one hand, this was due to the high average of infant and child mortality, which inhibited adults from forming strong parental attachments so as not mourn deeply at their loss (Stone 105). On the other hand, it was owing to the practice of "wet-nurse", which meant that babies were sent away

from home to be breast-fed and nurtured by another figure other than their mother (106). In addition to the system of wet-nurses, it was common that the infant's seclusion from its mother kept on even after they returned home as in different levels of the society, children grew up either at boarding-schools or at their master's houses, instead of at home by their parents (107).

Consequently, children did not stay in the company of their parents for a long time. This led to very formal relations among family members, an important aspect of which was obedience to parents. Owing to this remoteness in family affairs, family ties were not necessarily formed on grounds of love, but rather on that of duty. For instance, the close tie between the father and the eldest son emerged due to the expectation that the position, title and property of the family would pass on to this son, hence the son's role as an heir providing the family with continuity (Stone 112). Such remoteness seems to exist between the father and the son in *Hamlet*, as Hamlet hardly refers to any intimate bond with his father except for praising his glory in war and regal talent.

Moreover, there was a central focus on economic interests within the family, so the unity of the family members depended upon the financial status and political interests in common. In this respect, this sort of materialistic family type matched ideally with the social and economic aspects of the sixteenth century, "in which property was the only security against total destitution, connections and patronage were the keys to success, power flowed to the oldest males under the system of primogeniture, and the only career opening for women was in marriage" (Stone 118).

As seen above, domestic life was quite patriarchal during the sixteenth century. Indeed, this was the case in the seventeenth century as well:

> Family and religion as two governing principles of the inner life of most people in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Puritan thinking, the family took precedence over religion as it was the very first society that by the Direction and Providence of God is produced among the children of Men. The Puritans believed that God laid the foundation both of State and Church, in a family, making the mother Hive, out of which both these swarms State and Church, issued forth. (Singh 1)

As the importance of the nuclear family increased among the upper class, this brought by widespread support for patriarchy: strict authority of the father and the husband (Stone 151). Both the Church and the State happened to endorse such strict authority (151). In terms of the State, patriarchy within the family was associated with strong authoritarian state systems. Patriarchy was intentionally promoted because "the subordination of the family to its head was analogous to, and also a direct contributory cause of, subordination of subjects to the sovereign" (152). Much attention was drawn to the similarity between the authority of the father in family and that of the King, as the King was "the politic father of his people" (152).

From the perspective of families, patriarchy was adapted in such a way that the husband and father could have authoritarian dominance over the women and the children within the nuclear family (Stone 154). Patriarchal justifications of obedience to political authority were regularly taught by the Church of England, which provided most people with their only formal contact with the world outside. The religious interpretation of duty to one's parents merged with social and political implications and was taught in the

reading of the Fifth Commandment: "the simple requirement to 'Honour thy father and thy mother' was expanded to include loyalty and obedience to the king and all magistrates, as well as to masters, teachers and ministers" (Schochet 6).

2.2. Microcosm and Macrocosm as two Influential Concepts

Regarding two distinct features pertaining to the Elizabethan period are order and obedience. Both were associated with a combination of medieval and Reformation ideas. The former included a society that was "seen as a community of individuals united by the common purpose of living virtuously in accordance with God's commands" (Wells 66). In this respect, the term microcosm gained crucial importance, as thirteenth century philosopher St Thomas Aquinas employed it with reference to governance:

> In things of nature there is both a universal and particular government. The former is God's government, whose rule embraces all things and whose providence governs them all. The latter is found in man and it is much like the divine government. Hence man is called a *microcosmos* [little world]. (53-54)

Furthermore, the topos of man as "little world", hence a microcosm, is also a widespread notion of the Renaissance, and is regarded to be "in tune with the macrocosm – the universe on its largest scale" (Hopkins and Steggle 50). In fact, the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm represented how "a set of identical laws operated throughout the universe: bodies, families, states, the cosmos itself were all framed according to the same

universal law of being" (Wells 11).

Likewise, the analogy of the body and state became a recurrent motif in early modern England. As a well-known writer, Thomas More stated in a poem entitled, "On the Good King and His People" that "[a] kingdom in all its parts is like a man" in which "the king is the head, the people form the other parts" (More qtd. in Wegemer and Smith 236). Sir Thomas Elyot as a writer of the sixteenth century also refers to this analogy in *The Governour*. He mentions that "a public weal [state] is a body living, compact or made of sundry estates and degrees of men, which is disposed by the order of equity and governed by the rule and moderation of reason" (1).

Apart from such an analogy, a simile as to the role of the monarchy in the state includes that of husband and wife. In this respect, in his speech to his first Parliament upon his succession in 1603, James I told the House of Commons: "I am the Husband, and the whole Isle is my lawful wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke" (11). So, the monarch represents the head whereas the subjects represent the body, and both should exist in conformity for the kingdom's welfare.

2.3. The Great Chain of Being

In fact, the dominance linked with patriarchy during the sixteenth century had the concept of "The Great Chain of Being" in its origins. This concept dates to the Middle Ages and consists of a hierarchy among God and all those created. According to E. M. W. Tillyard, there were six main links in the Chain of creation, at the top of which was found God, the source of everything (25). The second group beneath God involved the

class of angels, whereas the third group comprised humans (25). As to humans, the Emperor or King was granted with dominance over his subjects. This made the King central on Earth and subject solely to God. Regarding the other levels in the chain, the fourth was made up of animals while the fifth included flowers and plants, all of which formed the Vegetative class. And finally at the bottom of the Chain was the inanimate class (25). So, the Elizabethans thus looked at the world at this time as being kept rigorously in a special order by God (25). Moreover, it was usually believed that if one of the links in the Great Chain were destroyed, then the system would fail.

Owing to the Elizabethan worldview that accepted the Great Chain of being, the King had the right to expect obedience from his subjects. This also caused a hierarchy not only in the public sphere in the society, but also in the private sphere among family members: "The Elizabethan assumption of the inequality of man was the basis for the hierarchical, pyramidal view of society which resulted both in gradations of moral esteem and in class distinction" (Watson 190). A prominent figure of his time, Robert Filmer reconciled political authority with the rule of a father over his family and asserted that all kings ruled as successors to the power God had given to Adam at the creation. Therefore, the patriarchal authority attributed to the head of the State and the family gained a religious perspective as well, as it was related to the very first male existing in the account of human history. Likewise, Filmer asserted that kings were presented with the absolute obedience of their subjects:

> It was Filmer's contention that kings were entitled to the absolute obedience of their subjects. Disobedience to one's ruler was contrary to God's law. That this was so, he reasoned, from the fact that all kings

> ruled as successors to the power God had given to Adam at the creation. Sir Robert argued that political authority was identical with the rule of a father or patriarch over his family. (Filmer qtd. in Schochet 7)

Therefore, the sixteenth-century family life formed the basis of "an analogy between the structure of authority in the family and the state" (Amussen 196). This was the case because "[n]ot only Adam, but the succeeding Patriarchs had, by right of fatherhood, royal authority over their children" (Filmer 57). Furthermore, "[i]n the 1640s, royalist contract theorists added to the image of king's father the analogy between the relationship of king and people to that between to that between husband and wife: once the marriage had been entered into, it was indissoluble, as was the contract between king and subjects" (Amussen 198).

In addition, "this subordination of children is the foundation of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself" (Filmer 57). Thus, "the fathers of families were described as having the same powers in their families that kings had in the state" (Amussen 197). In Renaissance England, the parent child relationship was based on the fifth commandment, which stated, "Honor thy father and mother" but most importantly was "honor thy father." (Singh 33). Regarding the period, England was a patriarchal society and, "Daughters are perhaps the greatest victims of a patriarchal family, and Elizabethan daughters were no exception" (33). Fathers tried to marry their daughters off to acquire more land, titles and increase social status, but they also had to provide a dowry for their daughter. A dowry could include anything from money to land, and the larger the dowry the more desirable the girl was to her future husband and his family.

2.4. The Concept of Sovereignty

To comprehend the concept of power attributed to kings in the early modern period, it is essential to grasp what the term sovereignty refers to in a broader sense. In this respect, the origins of sovereignty and the sovereign-subject compact should be highlighted. Initially, the term sovereignty can be described as “the highest, final decision-making authority, which lent its holder power over others” (Howard 13). The concept also entailed power to the ruler: “the king was the primary sovereign” (14). Nevertheless, the king was not granted unlimited power. In fact, a king could only rule “in conformity with legal guidelines” (16). Moreover, “[t]he holder of sovereign rights could not unilaterally change the conditions of its exercise” (17). In addition, sovereignty did not imply that the ruler had “the right to autonomous lawmaking” (17). This was based on the idea that “[t]he social order was established by God-given or natural law, but, in any case, not by man-made law” (18).

As Kristin M. S. Bezio suggests, in “ancient and medieval Europe, kings were thought to possess a connection to or aspect of the supernatural” (2). This is related with the belief in the connection between king and God, which dates to the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries (2). At that period, the common belief that the monarch had a connection to divinity reflected the metaphoric understanding of God himself as a monarch (the King of Kings) and of the world as a reflection of divine law (2).

Apart from this connection between the king and God, it produced the understanding that the monarch served as the community's representative to those higher powers (2). Therefore, [i]t was the king's duty to be the symbolic manifestation of his people's needs and will, a characterization that gave rise to the common use of the "royal

we" as a linguistic signifier of the king's collective identity". (2) In short, this means that the ruler represents his/her subjects, thereby hinting at "[t]he role of king as the collective head-a bodily metaphor common to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (2). Thus, that the king is resembled to a head whereas the body is comprised of the citizens signifies how both the sovereign and his /her subjects depend upon one another. Moreover, this formed the basis of "an awareness of the self as a part of a unified national whole that encompassed all levels of the social hierarchy up to and including the king" (2).

In fact, even the term "'king' (Old English cyning) as well as its cognates in other Germanic languages is derived from 'kin'" (Myers 3). So, it is the duty of the king to "act as intercessory for the nation on both material and spiritual levels" (3). This involves the king's "primary responsibility was the safety and security of the realm-and, by extension, of its people" (3). Furthermore, the king's representation of the kin has a deeper meaning on the spiritual level. As Sergio Bertelli explains, "the king was both the advocate of his people before heaven and the sacrificial hostage of heaven among his people" (22). It means that metaphorically speaking, the king "assumed the traits of a scapegoat for the sins of his subjects" (22).

In addition to this spiritual role of the monarch, another crucial duty of the sovereign is related with the function of law in a nation. Whereas the king's role was to declare law, "it was not in his power to manufacture it arbitrarily" (Gough 26). Therefore, even if the king was "the recorder of the law, he was not its ultimate author, that role being reserved for God" (Bezio 4). In this respect, it was considered that the monarch was "subject to "natural law," or the law of God, which the king could neither make nor unmake" (Baumer 5).

Regarding the concept of natural law, Burgess states that “the common law, and consequently, the ancient constitution itself, were customary” (4). This implied two things. Whereas the former meant that English common law was unwritten unlike the written Roman law, the latter meant that “common law became seen as the national law of England” (4). It can thus be inferred that English common law of the period involved “the rights of and limitations upon both sovereign and subjects and took precedence over written law” (Bezio 5).

Furthermore, among the essential parts that constituted English common law, the subject-sovereign compact has a substantial role. The compact stood out principally as guarantee against absolutism because “[a]s long as a compact existed between king and people, there would be some restraint upon the freedom of the sovereign” (Nenner 40). According to Jean Bethke Elshtain, such a compact indicates that the monarch’s authority is conditional since “the communitas is seen as the source of the monarch's authority, it has the ability to limit or even rescind that authority as it sees fit” (7). It can thus be inferred that monarchical authority could be limited in favour of subjects' rights (7). The justification put forward for the limitations placed on the monarchy by the sovereign-subject compact may be found in the nation's foundational mythos, as “the compact was predicated on the origin of the nation in the communitas rather than the king” (Bezio 7).

Taking the sovereign-subject compact’s influence on the nation’s law into consideration, it illustrates how both sides of this compact were interdependent: whereas the subjects were required to be obedient, the monarch was “expected to rule with the assistance of his subjects” (7). Regarding this kind of mutual policymaking, one of the basic tenets was avoiding tyranny. Concerning the relationship between the king and his

subjects, Magna Carta came to the fore upon its declaration by King John in 1215 (Hollister 180). In fact, even if Magna Carta was signed by King John, its foundation dates to the reign of Henry I. Known as the "Charter of Liberties of Henry I", the document includes Henry's promise "to correct certain injustices and oppressive actions to which his brother […] and to some extent his father had subjected the realm when each of them was king" (Blick 30).

Written in Latin, Magna Carta is translated into English as "the Great Charter", and it was the first written document to limit the king's power, thereby accepting that the monarch was not above the law (Hollister 180). Therefore, the law was hence granted supremacy over the ruler. This is inferred from the final clause of Magna Carta, in which "the king agrees to submit himself to the judgment of his barons, who are permitted to elect representatives from among themselves for the express purpose of passing judgment on the king's ability to uphold Magna Carta and the rights contained therein" (Bezio 13).

Besides the establishment of Magna Carta in 1215, another crucial instance regarding the notion of sovereignty came with the deposition of Edward II. Succeeded by his son Edward III, Edward II was dethroned for his notorious acts. According to Prestwich, even though Edward III was deposed, "no attempt was made to alter the constitutional position of the monarchy" (76). Therefore, the Parliament did not have the intention of changing the existing order of common law. However, the aim was to "indicate that a monarch who contravened that law was subject to removal and punishment enacted by the communitas within the extant framework of the English polity" (99). Indeed, this was the case by the beginning of the fifteenth century when Parliament was held "responsible for the deposition of two kings-Edward II and Richard

II-and had established itself as capable of altering the line of succession, a right it would reassert again under Elizabeth" (Bezio 18). Nevertheless, owing to the rise of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, the role of the monarch himself (or herself) would change dramatically (18).

Concerning the concept of sovereignty that existed during the reign of both dynasties, Jean Bodin could be considered a vital influence. Bodin is a central figure born in France in 1530. His work reflected the effects of "the collapse of the medieval order in the wake of the religious schism and the emergence of […] the modern state" on the notion of sovereignty (Howard 17). Moreover, internal peace could solely be obtained by a superior power, and this referred to the king: "From a historical perspective, this could only be done by the king, who, at the tip of the medieval feudal pyramid, had no lord above him and already possessed a large number of sovereign rights" (Howard 20). In addition, it was necessary for the king to have power not only "to end the war but also to create and implement a new, peaceful order" (20). For this means, the power to make law was also required and according to Bodin, "the most important characteristic of the sovereign is that he makes law for the subject, abrogates law already made, and amends obsolete law" (32).

In addition, Bodin's work called *Les Six Livres de la Republique*, published in 1576, "attributed sovereignty to the Monarch and criticised without any reservations, as Machiavello had done before him and Hobbes would do later, the theory of the 'mixed state', as the characteristic element of sovereign power was the unity and indivisibility of power" (Carpegna 276). This idea of indivisibility of power became a prevalent concept for the succeeding monarchs across the continent. Consequently, Bodin's work reached

continental fame, thereby being translated into many European languages such as Italian in 1588, Spanish in 1590 and English in 1606 (Howard 23). Indeed, his work had such an influence that it triggered "a process of change in political rule from which the state emerged as a new form of government (Howard 24). Therefore, Bodin's work had the crucial effect of illustrating how accumulating "scattered sovereignty rights into a unified public authority" gained importance for a ruler (24). It also showed that once this was attained, a state could be established since "[p]ublic authority and state authority thus became one" (25). So, the person holding this authority was called the sovereign, and hence the monarch.

However, as the feudal system had not been abolished yet, this was not simple to achieve, especially in England: "in England, where the influence of Roman Law was weaker than in the Continent […], the supreme power of the State continued being imputed to Parliament" (Carpegna 276). Nevertheless, the monarchy strived to achieve absolute authority, as well aiming "to end the institutional and regulatory limits of the Monarchy" (276). For this means, the monarch even broke from Rome in the 1530s, thereby removing "papal pretensions to exercise spiritual jurisdiction in England" (Harris 14). Therefore, the king of England did not have to share sovereignty with the pope any longer, so he gained absolute power in terms of religion, too. Likewise, the sixteenth century rulers strictly adhered to the idea of the king's divine authority, just as the case with the Stuarts.

Regarding the Stuart dynasty, their reign commenced in England when James VI of Scotland ascended to the throne of England and Ireland as King James I in 1603. Indeed, as Elizabeth's legitimate male heir, James I supported the sovereignty of the

monarch, thereby writing his essay "The True Law of Free Monarchies". For the sake of defending the monarch's sovereignty over everyone or any institution, James I referred to the analogy of the king and God. Such a claim is obvious in *The Political Works of James I*, as he addressed the British parliament in 1609:

> Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power vpon Earth. For if you will consider the attributes to God, you *shall see how they agree in the person of a king. As for the father of a family*, they had of old under the law of nature patriam potestatem, which was potestatam vitae at necis, over their children or family. Now a father may dispose of his inheritance to his children at his pleasure: yea, even disinherit the eldest upon just such occasions and prefer the youngest according to his liking. So may the king deal with his subjects. (528)

Apart from thus declaring his divine right of sovereignty, King James tried to dismiss any threats against his autonomy in the religious realm, hence his "sponsorship of a new Bible translation that firmly countered any association between the Bible and anti-monarchism" (Houlbrooke 4). So, as the first representative of the Stuart reign, James I was aware of religion's importance and to support his cause. James I's successor, Charles I also defended the absolutist power of the monarch just like his father. Indeed, he was supported by the philosopher Sir Robert Filmer, who wrote *Patriarcha* during Charles I's reign, but the book was not published till 1680. It was Filmer's intention to express the divine right of kings via his book, and he maintained that "men are not by nature free, and hence it does not belong to them either to govern or to determine how they shall be

governed, and that it is impossible for them to make any compact with their rulers" (342). Despite having such support, the reign of Charles I led to a civil war that broke out in 1642. Consequently, Charles I could not avoid being sentenced to trial and eventually being executed in 1649.

As a result of Charles I's execution, England underwent the first revolution of the seventeenth century: The Puritan Revolution (Coward 102). This ended in England's becoming a commonwealth as well as Oliver Cromwell's taking power as Lord Protector, who was succeeded by his son Richard in 1658 (Coward 103). However, Richard Cromwell's reign could not last long, and he ended up signing a document that dissolved his position (111). Afterwards, monarchy was restored and Charles I's son, Charles II ascended to the throne in 1660 (113).

Upon Charles II's death in 1685, James II acceded to the throne. James II attempted to gain an absolute control of power, but this prompted backlash against their authority from both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which "aimed not to establish a new order but to defend the old one", resulted in the exile of King James II and the increasing rights of the Parliament (Howard 26). In addition, as Margaret Thatcher later expressed, "The Glorious Revolution established the tradition that political change should be sought and achieved through Parliament" (Thatcher qtd. in Vallance 1).

So, even if the Glorious Revolution led to the accession to the throne of William and Mary (the Protestant daughter of King James II), it represented a pivotal instance of the Parliament's supremacy of power. Likewise, Shakespeare also deals with the concept of absolute authority pertaining to a king. His plays include several rulers who govern

their nations. Furthermore, "[i]n his many allusions to kinship, Shakespeare referred frequently to the Christian notion that the king was God's divine representative on Earth" (Watson 190). However, his plays unfold both sides of the coin: "Shakespeare's Jacobean plays both weave and unpick the triple analogy of god/king/man, thereby enabling audiences to perceive a troubling correlation between royal and anthropocratic absolutism" (Borlik 219).

In fact, life in the early modern English society was quite patriarchal, and the members of the society had to abide by the roles dictated by the authority. Whereas citizens had to obey the rules of the governors on public sphere, the household had to obey the rules of the father in the domestic sphere. So, it was a male-dominated society, and women were often deprived of the right to rule. Therefore, during "the Renaissance, all the world was a stage and all actions – from private prayers (as we see in Claudius in Hamlet) to staged narratives (as we see in Hamlet's advice to the players, his reaction to the speech about Priam and Hecuba, and his own revised play called "The Mousetrap") – were essentially enactments or re-enactments" (Kinney 1).

Moreover, the authority of the king that is attributed to hierarchical status is also a subject matter for Shakespeare. In fact, Shakespeare's plays do not merely support the monarchy but instead reveals how God-like power may be the cause of injustice in the society. Indeed, Shakespeare's "late plays consistently spotlight the convergences between god/king/man in order to illuminate the fault-lines of the analogy" (Borlik 222). In addition, Shakespeare "emphasizes their propensity to generate into tyranny" (222).

CHAPTER III

METATHEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

3.1. Metatheatre in *Hamlet*

Shakespeare's *Hamlet- the Prince of Denmark* has attracted immense attention as one of the most prominent plays of its kind, the tragedy. Beyond being based on a revenge plot at surface level, at the deeper level the play is comprised of an intricate design of marital and familial relationships. It is highly concerned with filial duty and the expectations of family members from one another. At the centre of these relationships lies the bond of father, mother and son: that of Hamlet, his father and Gertrude, his mother. The play thus provides the reader with the opportunity to examine the roles attributed to each member and expectations within the family, mainly the nuclear family. Thanks to the concept of metatheatre, *Hamlet* reveals how social roles that are taken for granted should be questioned and personal freedom should be sought. This idea will be analysed throughout this chapter with references to elements of metatheatre from the play. Moreover, special emphasis on the play-within-the-play called "The Mousetrap" will be made as the major constituent of metatheatre in the play.

In this respect, *Hamlet* provides the reader with families in which relationships are interwoven with one another. For instance, the nuclear family of Hamlet, Gertrude and Claudius are depicted in relation to the nuclear family of Ophelia, Laertes and Polonius. All the mentioned characters have duties dictated by norms, and thus the play illustrates how each character's deeds are in fact governed by such societal rules and values. So, it is not due to personal choice, but instead social expectations that dictate the way everyone lives. Not only is this notion conveyed throughout the play, but also Hamlet

as the central figure represents one's inner struggle to either abide by such rules or fulfil one's own wishes. This struggle is triggered by the appearance of the ghost, and metatheatre helps us decipher Hamlet's as well as other characters' struggles of independence form societal norms.

As it is mentioned above, Hamlet has a vital function throughout the play. His first speech with his appearance in the play sheds light on the relationship between the King and Hamlet. Indeed, the first encounter between Hamlet and Claudius reveals how Claudius benefits from this marriage and his new position in the family. As the brother of the King, Claudius would have remained excluded from the King's nuclear family, albeit his blood ties. So, it is a gross issue that Claudius has thus acquired the roles of both the father and the husband, with special emphasis on the latter, as it provides him with a big advantage over Hamlet regarding the ascent to power:

> *King.* But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son-
>
> *Hamlet.* A little more than kin, and less than kind.
>
> *King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
>
> *Hamlet.* Not so my lord, I am too much in the sun.
>
> (I.ii.64-68)

In fact, Hamlet would have been Claudius' kin, merely his cousin and would have been King if Gertrude had remained a widow, instead of his current role as the next in line to the throne. In this respect, Hamlet's punning on *kin* and *kind*, as well as *sun* and *son* in response to being depicted as the *cousin* and *son* hint at Hamlet's discontentment with the present situation and his repudiation of Claudius's claim to be his father (Muir 72).

Besides, Hamlet is aware that they do not have the natural feelings of a father-son relationship: “Hamlet knows he is not Claudius’s son, and the same knowledge tells him that Claudius is not Gertrude’s husband, nor Denmark’s king” (Edwards 43). Therefore, it is no wonder that for Hamlet, “[i]t is this knowledge, as well as grief for a father’s death and the shallowness of a mother’s love, which makes the whole world an unweeded garden” (43).

In addition, not only the King but also the Queen is anxious about the intensity of Hamlet’s suffering after the loss of his father. Gertrude tells her son to “cast” his “knighted colour off” and let his eye “look like a friend on Denmark” (I.ii.68-69). This refers to the physical appearance of Hamlet in black clothes, and his dark thoughts of misery as well as his attitude towards the King. Judging from the King and Queen’s statement, it seems that Hamlet’s mourning is excessive. Indeed, Hamlet confirms that he is in deep sorrow, and that his feelings are genuine; not pretended:

> Together with all forms, moods and shapes of grief / That can denote me truly. These indeed seem, / For they are actions that a man might play, But I have that within me which passes show – /These but the trappings and the suits of woe. (I.ii.82-86)

Furthermore, Hamlet seems to be suffering from melancholy, as he perceives life to be futile. He would even consider committing suicide, had it not been an offence against God, which he admits in his soliloquy:

> O that this too too solid flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into a

> dew, Or that the Everlasting had not fixed /His canon against self-slaughter. O god, God /How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world. (I.ii.129-134)

Moreover, the reason for Hamlet's profound sorrow is not merely the death of a family member. Even if the loss of his father has a great portion, his pain is triggered by another factor - a marriage that would normally defy the norms of incest. The emergence of the mother's new spouse thus intervenes in the proper functioning of the mother-son relationship at a period when their mutual support is quite essential. According to Hamlet, not even two months had passed when Gertrude married Claudius, who he contrasts with his father as "hyperion to a satyr" (I.ii.138-140). Hamlet's depictions tend to privilege his father, which might be due to his anger at the uncle. However, no matter how much Hamlet dislikes his stepfather, he must respect him both in private and public spheres of life owing to social norms. This is implicitly criticized in the play via the emergence of the Ghost who claims he was murdered by his kin.

Consequently, the appearance of the Ghost has a crucial role in the play, which could be explained by referring to what seeing a ghost could have meant at that time. According to the orthodox Protestant in the Elizabethan time, the appearance of recently deceased people's spirits "were generally nothing but devils, who "assumed" the form of departed friends or relatives, in order to work bodily or spiritual harm upon those to whom they appeared" (Wilson 62). Moreover, the appearance of a ghost can also be a clue of strange things that happened or are about to happen in Denmark. Characters in the play perceive its appearance in this way:

> Horatio surmises that that its appearance 'bodes some strange eruption to our state'; Bernardo thinks it has something to do with the threatened war; Horatio, again, compares it to the portents that heralded the assassination of Julius Caesar and asks if it is privy to its country's fate". (Muir 72)

This is most obvious in Marcellus's comment that "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (I.iv.90). Nevertheless, the ghost succeeds in telling Hamlet that he was murdered:

> It's given out, that sleeping in my orchard, / A serpent stung me: so the whole ear of Denmark, /Is by a forged process of my death rankly abused: but know thou noble youth, / Thee serpent that did sting thy father's life, / Now wears his crown. (I.v.42-7)

It is thus inferred from the ghost's claim that he was murdered, "stung", by "the serpent", the new King, thus his brother. The ghost requests from his son to avenge his murder, because he was "by a brother's hand, of life, of crown and Queen, at once dispatched" (I.v.82-3). Therefore, Claudius does not only possess the royal title, but also acquires new roles in the family structure, the former being Gertrude's spouse, and the latter being the stepfather of Hamlet.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty whether the ghost is a spirit from purgatory, or the devil, Hamlet is struck upon the news he gets from the spirit. He "is well aware of the dangers he runs in conversing with spirits" when "'lapsed in time and passion', he confesses that there may well be a danger to his soul" (Muir 60). He thus doubts the

truthfulness of the ghost's story and even the ghost's existence. The idea of the devil taking the shape of the dead to deceive people seems to be in Hamlet's mind as well:

> The spirit that I have seen / May be the devil: and the devil hath power T'assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps / Out of my weakness and my melancholy, /As he is very potent with such spirits, / Abuses to damn me. (II.ii.551-56)

Moreover, the murder of King Hamlet by his brother resembles the biblical narrative about the two brothers born in the first family, namely Cain and Abel who were sons to Adam and Eve. According to the narrative, Cain and Abel, who are a farmer and a shepherd respectively, make sacrifices to God. Cain is resentful at God's refusal and jealous of Abel upon God's rejection of his sacrifice and approval of Abel's. Consequently, the first nuclear family witnesses the first murder in human history: Adam and Eve grieve over the death of their younger son Abel, who is murdered by his brother Cain due to envying his brother (Belsey 129-30).

Likewise, *Hamlet* bears the theme of fratricide. Claudius's murder of King Hamlet resembles that of Abel's: "O, my offence is rank, it smells to Heaven, / It hath the primal eldest curse upon't / A brother's murder" (III.iii.36-8). The ulterior motive is the same: sibling rivalry, which causes King Hamlet's death. This initiates the series of deaths within the play: that of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius, Ophelia and Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius and even Hamlet himself (Belsey 139). Claudius confesses his envy of the brother later in the play. While he is praying to God, he repents of his sin; however, he is self-aware that he cannot be forgiven for his sin:

> But oh, what form of prayer /Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murther: That cannot be, since I am still possess'd / Of those effects for which I did the murther, / My crown, mine own ambition, and my Queen. (III.iii.51-5)

So, whereas Claudius ponders upon his crime, Hamlet wants to find out the truth by devising a plan that arises from the urge to prove the ghost's claim. Therefore, Hamlet seeks to ground his choice upon reason rather than relying solely on intuition to make a sound decision. Since any kind of opposition to or defiance of the king means rebelling against divine authority as well, Hamlet must be very careful so as not to cause any suspicion that he is plotting against Claudius. The evidence he plans to obtain serves two functions. On the one hand, Hamlet needs to come up with a very cogent reason of rebelling against Claudius to justify himself in the public eye. On the other hand, whatever method he applies to find out the reality, Hamlet must first be sure himself that Claudius is guilty of the crime before he fulfils his duty of vengeance.

At this point, metatheatre comes to the fore as a crucial step in the play. To have proof that the ghost is honest, Hamlet comes up with "The Murder of Gonzago". This stands out as a prominent example of metatheatrical device in the play employed to acquire information. In this respect, it also represents the intellectual mind who acts according to proof and research, contrary to a typical avenger who commits revenge without evidence. In this way, metatheatre thus supplies the reader with Shakespeare's intention to show how an individual should first question before taking action.

Thanks to this play-within-the-play, Hamlet gains sufficient evidence to ensure that Claudius committed the murder. But such a device also gives away that Hamlet knows about the murder. Therefore, it would be wise of Hamlet to take immediate action and carry out his revenge plot before Claudius plots against him. Nevertheless, Hamlet remains hesitant to fulfil his role. His delay hence stands for the questioning of the roles that for granted.

In fact, he should have just carried out his duty as soon as he found out the truth. The fact that Hamlet insists on gaining proof and delays the act of vengeance expected of an obedient son conveys clues about his character. Hamlet does not act like a primitive avenger who would kill his father's murderer without hesitation but chooses to test the sincerity of the Ghost: "He cannot, in any case, kill his uncle on the unsupported words of a Ghost, a word no other person has heard, not merely because he could not justify his action in the eyes of the world but because, being a man of scruple, he would wish for more objective evidence" (Muir 74).

Therefore, thanks to the depiction of Hamlet, Shakespeare points out how certain roles dictated by social norms should not be taken for granted. In addition, he strives to illustrate how in fact such roles should be reconsidered in accordance with personal choices of family members. Indeed, Shakespeare employs characters such as Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildernstern to show how their unquestioned acceptance of the king's authority just for the sake of their benefit leads to their downfall and eventually death. Instead, Shakespeare highlights another motivation for human deeds: love for another.

So, love within the family constitutes filial obedience. "The patriarchal imperative equates love with obedience; love not being granted unconditionally; the son proves his

loyalty by performing his duty as the father sees it" (Erickson 67). Likewise, taking revenge of a murdered father is not only a duty but also a sign of love for the father according to the ghost: "If you didst ever thy dear father love" (I.v.23). This shows that the ghost relies on both familial emotions to encourage his son, as both affection and obligation are products of genetic inheritance (Belsey 158).

Likewise, the familial emotions that the ghost tries to invoke in Hamlet apply to the mother, Gertrude as well. Even though the ghost accuses her of giving in to her lust and being easily deceived by Claudius's wit and gifts, he does not want to punish Gertrude. Nor does he want his son to get revenge from his mother, hence her exemption from the vengeance plot. He requests that Hamlet avoid contriving against the mother, and let the divine do justice so that she would be troubled by her guilty conscience:

> Taint not thy mind; nor let thy soul contrive/ Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven, /And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge, / To prick and sting her. / Fare thee well at once. (I.v.85-89)

In response to the ghost's other warning to remember him, Hamlet swears his commitment to his duty and considers everything else trivial. Nevertheless, the task turns out to be much graver than Hamlet expected. At the beginning, the ghost seems to be the best remedy for Hamlet's loneliness after his father's death because his existence assists Hamlet in regaining the right to the patriarchal heritage that forms his heroic identity (Erickson 68). However, Hamlet cannot perform the deed apace. It is not simply a case of an eye for an eye: Hamlet cannot just do the same to Claudius what he had done to his father and kill him instantly. In this case, Hamlet is entangled in the discovery of a crime

in which his father is the victim of homicide. Moreover, the perpetrator is his kin and is married to his mother, thereby constituting an unlawful union and eliminating his ascent to the throne.

As it is obvious, the injustice done aggravates Hamlet; however, to set it right will be considered treasonable, now that the offender is the King (Jardine 45). Henceforth, Hamlet must prove his cause beyond a matter of personal hatred, as Claudius is not an ordinary person but the King of all the Danes. Contemporary with the reign of Claudius, it was mandatory for all members of the society to obey the king. As stated previously, the common Renaissance conception was that the king was the representative of God on Earth, and father to all. As a result, it was compulsory that everyone abided by the laws, commandments administered by the king, or prince (Schochet 38).

Therefore, all subjects owed obedience to the King. No matter what happened, it was out of question to rebel against him. This was stated in the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies,* in which King James I "compared political obligation with filial duty" and claimed that "as children could not rebel against their fathers even when their fathers' acts were wicked and foolish, so subjects could not rebel against their rulers**"** (James I qtd. in Singh 2-3). This renders Hamlet incapable of punishing Claudius, whereas even the slightest attempt could end in stern retribution on his part. Besides, such an attempt could result in disapproval in the public eye, since Hamlet has a lower rank in both familial and royal order than Claudius:

> In Elizabethan England, patriarchalism is in fact merely a reflection in Domestic relationships of the larger 'Elizabethan world picture' according to which the universe is a divinely planned hierarchical structure where man

> has to accept the place assigned to him.... Order in society, therefore, was entirely dependent on the recognition, that all human relationships, including those in the family, are hierarchical. (Singh 8)

Therefore, Hamlet would commit a serious offence to threaten Claudius, let alone kill him. Besides, now that Gertrude is married to Claudius, Hamlet's crime would be a familial offence as well. However, neglecting his filial duty would be a failure in his compliance with the loyalty and love to his father. Moreover, his revenge would also be a denial of the tie bound to the uncle, so it would have dire consequences within the boundaries of both the nuclear family and the kin system. Finally, it would have a huge effect especially on Gertrude:

> Revenge means killing her husband, his uncle and his King; it entails a breach of both family values and the authority structure of a patriarchalist Renaissance regime, where the king lays claim to the obedience due precisely to a father. Uncles in general, as everyone knows, are (or ought to be) indulgent Incarnations of family feeling, embodiments of the father's affection, without his fearful power to prohibit. (Belsey 161)

In this respect, Hamlet's sorrow at the death of his father proceeds in two respects. Not only is this marriage unlawful, but it also substantiates that Hamlet's legal right to accede to the throne has been overthrown by Claudius. It is customary for the son to be next in line to the throne as the legitimate heir; however, the marriage of the Queen to her husband's brother disrupts this order. This means that Hamlet is deprived of such priority

due to the new husband's entitlement to ascend the throne.

In addition, the marriage of those who belong to the same family should be declared void due to "consanguinity", which forbids marriages with close blood ties and in the generations such as parent, sibling, offspring, and grandchild (Jardine 40). According to the law, a widow's marriage to the brother-in-law is prohibited in terms of "affinity", which refers to the marriage of those who do not have any blood tie but are in close familial relationship. Such marriages intervene in the natural order of inheritance and might offend the heir first in line:

> A man may not marry his father's wife, his uncle's wife, his father's wife's daughter, nor the daughter of his wife's son or daughter. None of these are blood ties, but each creates complications over the line. In particular, the marriage of a widow to her dead husband's brother threatens the son's inheritance claim. The son is first in line, his father's brother second; the marriage of the dowager widow to the second in line threatens to overwhelm the claim of the legitimate heir. (Jardine 40)

The influence of the ghost on Hamlet reveals that even if a member of the family has died, the ties and responsibility of the individual in the family, especially that of the children, remain unchanged in terms of loyalty and obedience to the parents. The loyalty and obedience expected of children to their parents is what persists between Hamlet and his father, even though the father is already dead. This constitutes the tragedy of the play's protagonist: Hamlet is torn apart between his conscience and his duty as an obedient son. Hamlet strives with taking the revenge of a murdered father; however, it is not only on

the grounds of personal choice that he tries to take vengeance, but also because it is the role attributed to him as the son. His conscience bestirs him at this point: Hamlet as an individual questions how just it is to kill someone upon the claim of a ghost whose identity, let alone sincerity is sceptical.

However, that Hamlet becomes the active agent of the play does not mean that he is exempt from any restrictions as to his plans of vengeance. To the contrary, Hamlet cannot behave according to his own wishes as an individual due to both private and public status. Besides, he must look out for any potential threat that might be triggered by his display of intention. Therefore, although at first it seems that Hamlet is privileged in action, with no limitations to his freewill, this is not the case. As a member of the society, he is part of an interwoven system of relationships that correlate to one another. Moreover, his social status belonging to the royalty, that of being the prince in line to the succession of the throne, entails a greater degree of foresight and duty upon him. So, Hamlet needs to consider every step he takes with precision to keep the chain of relationships in harmony and to avoid any risk that might interfere with his successful implementation of his revenge.

In this respect, in unison with the practice of patriarchy in the early seventeenth century, male dominance seems to take the lead in *Hamlet*. In both families, Polonius and Claudius have authority over other members in their families. Claudius's authority increases double fold: he is the head of his family as well as the nation. Therefore, he can demand the obedience of his family in the private realm, and that of all the subjects in the public realm. This provides him with the right to implement a new approach to the affairs of both family and state. So, he subordinates moral considerations to political

considerations, which he accomplishes through his marriage with his brother's wife, hence in the nuclear family.

Even his marriage to Gertrude is a case of patriarchal dominance. Claudius informs the public that he has married his brother's wife, who was thus his sister-in-law before. Strangely, nobody seems to oppose such a marriage which contradicts the moral values of the time. Marrying the wife of one's brother could not be accepted as it was regarded as incest, and was forbidden by the Church:

> In marrying Claudius, Gertrude was marrying her brother-in-law; and, according to [canon law], such a marriage was indeed incestuous and prohibited. A peculiar anomaly in the play is, therefore, that while Hamlet and the ghost are well aware of the scandalous event, and though the remarriage of Gertrude was fully and ceremonially public, nobody in the court seems to have noticed any incest at all. (Watts 39)

Contrary to the above-mentioned social norms, it is quite surprising that the public does not point out to the immorality of such a marriage. To the contrary, they seem to have accepted it without any opposition, as the King reveals: "your better wisdoms, which have freely gone / With this affair along – for all, our thanks" (I.ii.15-16). This may be because it is the King, the head of the State who has committed incest. As his subjects, the public cannot protest the corruptness of their sovereign's marriage. This is an instance of Claudius's subordination of the moral to the political. His political power outdoes the moral norms of the society, and overcomes the social restraint imposed on marital suitability.

Nevertheless, despite having the authority to suppress any potential rejection, Claudius seeks to validate the legitimacy of his marriage in the public eye. Therefore, even if Hamlet might be unwilling, he has no other choice but to accept this marriage as his stepfather is the King of the State. This implies that he cannot do anything about this marriage explicitly since it will be a case of disobedience against the ruler. Nonetheless, Claudius is aware that such a marriage is incestuous according to moral values at the time.

So, as the King of Denmark, Claudius tries to validate his marriage by giving the reason for his hasty marriage to Gertrude. It is on grounds of the State's interests, as the state is under threat of attack by the young Fortinbras of Norway, whose father was defeated by King Hamlet in war. Claudius informs the public how Fortinbras is prepared to war against Claudius to get back the land his father had previously lost to Denmark. As Claudius delivers a speech on Fortinbras's intention (I.ii.17-25), he refers to how Fortinbras considers Denmark to be in a state of turmoil owing to the death of its King, wherein lies the cause of the "rottenness in Denmark". Thus, the health of the nation is regarded to be dependent on the health of its ruler:

> The practice of calling the king by the name of his country enforces an identity between king and kingdom, the health of the one reflecting the health of the other, so that the old king's death seems to mark the end of an era. 'The king that's dead' is referred to as 'the majesty of buried Denmark'. (Edwards 40)

Accordingly, the whole nation – the body – has lost its balance with the loss of the King – the head, as the family is a microcosm of the society in which it exists, where the nation

is considered as an entity comprised of families, hence the macrocosm which each family, a microcosm of the nation, belongs to (Callaghan 14). Furthermore, marriage is very significant at this point, as it is a constitution of the macrocosm. The microcosm of family is established with marriage, and the state would not exist but for this microcosm: "Marriage is the foundation of the family which is in turn the foundation of the State, society and cosmos in analogical order" (Callagham 14). Consequently, this means the state cannot exist without the existence of its constituent families.

In conjunction with the relevance given to both the head of the family and state, *Hamlet* provides the reader with an intricate web of social relations in Denmark. The interaction of individuals extends beyond that in the nuclear family unit, thus attains the key role in both the public and private life of all the characters. The intervention in the lives of others makes up the core of familial and interpersonal world of relations. Characters are continuously assigned by others to act in a particular way. For example, whereas the ghost assigns Hamlet to take revenge, Claudius assigns Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find out the truth about Hamlet. It is thus apparent that for some characters in the play, such as Polonius, the role of serving as the go-between is unremitting:

> Agency, then, is a central theme in *Hamlet*: society is present and is present to each character, as a continuous network of causes, agents, and effects, a network of men reciprocally using and exploiting one another. The reciprocity is important: men both use others and are used, and as a result they have two senses of themselves, as source and as agent (or object). (Eagleton 40)

It is this agency which Claudius as the King exploits to gain his authority over others, especially over Hamlet, who he regards as a threat to his existence. He makes use of various "baits", subjects to the sovereign, to figure out what Hamlet is contriving. Consequently, he confides in his comrade, Polonius, who stands by the King at all costs, even placing his own family, especially his daughter in jeopardy for the sake of the king's approval. For Polonius, the end justifies the means: there is nothing Polonius will not do to prove his loyalty to the king and thus secure his social position. With such intentions, he does not refrain from spying on others, including his own children, and intervenes in the private life of others.

In relation with the theme of agency, others define the identity of the individual in *Hamlet,* just like the way how the other male characters in the play define Hamlet's identity. Each attributes a different role to him, even though it would not be adequate to restrict Hamlet's character with any of the designated roles in isolation: "For the Ghost, Hamlet is a dutiful son who should sweep to his revenge and forget about his mother" and "[f]or Claudius, Hamlet is a possible rebel who should be either made tractable or banished and killed" (Leverenz 291). However, all these roles result from the others' personal judgement about or expectations from Hamlet, thereby not revealing his own emotions or intentions: "But for Hamlet, the roles of a dutiful son, ambitious rebel or mad lovesick heir are just that: roles to be played for others but not felt for himself" (291).

As it was mentioned earlier, Claudius uses others to spy on Hamlet, which reveals that the son is always kept under observation, lest he plots against his stepfather. Claudius knows that he cannot cope with Hamlet on his own, as he is aware that his son cannot be easily manipulated. He must resort to external assistance for this means and asks Hamlet's

schoolfellows Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to gather information about his son's "transformation"; to find out the motivation behind Hamlet's change in mood and behaviour (II.ii.4-18). Both obey the king's demand, bearing in my mind that the king has the sovereign power to put his "dread pleasures more into command than to entreaty" (II.ii.229-30).

However, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern fail to carry out their mission. Hamlet is too wise to suspect that they have been sent for by the king and queen. He thus realizes that the rights of their fellowship have already been given up in favour of the king, rather than the preservation of friendship. Therefore, they willingly betray their fellowship with Hamlet for the sake of the king's approval, thereby not existing beyond their role as agents:

> Both men voluntarily surrender themselves to be controlled, and by actively consenting to being Claudius's puppets they authenticate their appointed roles, make them personally real; from this point on we see them only in this function. (Eagleton 41)

Apart from being an agent for Claudius, in relation with Polonius's authority as the father, the language he uses to communicate with his children mostly conveys the desire of unconditional filial obedience. Loyalty to his commands seems to lie central to the functioning of this family, disregarding any mutual understanding between the children and their father. Furthermore, Polonius's insistence on obedience intervenes in his children's interaction with the outside world, notwithstanding their individual thoughts and feelings.

In addition, this family has a triad of relationships. In contrast with Laertes, Ophelia is more under pressure from the father. She is confined to domestic life, not being given the chance to do anything on her own. The conventional roles of the daughter and the sister are attributed to her by both male members of the family. As her brother, Laertes projects his father's authoritarian behaviour onto Ophelia. He tries to prevent her from binding emotionally with Hamlet, warning her that Hamlet cannot keep his promise of love for her as he is of noble birth and must keep up with the expectations of his status.

Moreover, Laertes is deeply concerned with his sister's relationship with Hamlet lest she gives in to his charms (I.iii.32-8). The chastity of a woman was rather significant at that time, mainly in the Elizabethan period. Society viewed the loss of virginity as a total disaster, the fear of which also troubles Polonius regarding Hamlet's interest in Ophelia (Singh 53). It also affected the woman's right to inherit in the upper-class families. Such a high value was set on chastity that a law amongst the aristocracy required that an heiress who was proven to have been unchaste be deprived of her inheritance (Singh 53).

Ophelia responds that she will conform to her duty; however, she does not hesitate to tell her brother that the same applies to him, as he should not preach the virtues of chastity to her but act in the other way himself. Therefore, Ophelia's response to her brother has great importance, since it is one of the rare occasions throughout the play in which Ophelia is assertive and objects to giving merely an affirmative response to what she has been told. This is put forward by Leverenz: "Her advice to him shows awareness of his possible double self, the pastor and the Libertine, the very division he used in used in describing Hamlet" (300).

Thus, the son takes his father as the role model in terms of authority, because the father and the son form a dyad in the family. In a way, Laertes substitutes for his father's position, wherein his attitude to his sister mirrors the division between mind and body forced on children by fathers themselves divided (Leverenz 300). This leads to a boundary which triggers the separation of the only female member from both male members in the family system. So, Polonius keeps on about Ophelia's chastity just as his son has previously done, stating that she is required to act as befits her honour and her role as his daughter. This serves to illustrate how a domineering father can intrude on the private life of his children, especially on that of his daughter.

In order to comprehend the functioning of Polonius's family, it is very significant to analyse the father and daughter relationship between Polonius and Ophelia. As a father, Polonius can be said to be trying to control his children's lives for his own sake; in other terms his position in the eyes of the others, especially the king's. Contrary to a caring father who seeks for his children's good, Polonius is merely concerned with his own good. This is apparent when he warns his daughter not to believe in Hamlet's vows of love. Initially, it seems as if he was only trying to save her daughter from the misery that she may suffer lest Hamlet breaks up with her. However, this soon proves false as he sacrifices his own daughter as a bait to find out the reason for Hamlet's strange behaviour.

Having listened to Ophelia's account of Hamlet's visit to her chamber, Polonius takes it for granted that the Hamlet has gone mad for her love. Polonius is enthralled by this news, considering it an urgent matter to be reported to the King. Therefore, the way how Polonius reacts to the news provides an insight into the parent-child subsystem of this family. On the one hand, his public role of serving the King overcomes the privacy

of the father and daughter relationship, as Polonius immediately wants to relate what his daughter told her to the King. On the other hand, his confession that he has been mistaken in his doubts as to the sincerity of Hamlet's love for his daughter reflects how Polonius realises that people of his age can make false assumptions. Consequently, this is the first, and probably the only occasion throughout the play when Polonius does not assert his self-righteousness.

In unison with his role as the agent of the king, he informs that he has found the reason for Hamlet's change in behaviour: the prince is "mad" (II.ii.92). He is quite keen to come up with "the cause of this defect" (II.ii.102), with the aim of which he mentions about his daughter to the king and queen. His depiction of her as obedient is straightforwardly given: "I have a daughter – have while she is mine - / Who in her duty and obedience, mark, / Hath given me this..." (II.ii.106-08). He thus gives away the secret of his daughter – perhaps Ophelia had only wanted to confide in his father, but Polonius neglects her feelings as usual.

As to Claudius's inquiry whether Ophelia has accepted Hamlet's courtship, Claudius takes it personally, responding with "What do you think of me?" (II.ii.127). This shows how Polonius is offended as if he was criticised for his daughter's behaviour. It is obvious from the way he depicts his daughter many times as obedient that he implies to the king that his children would not act against his decision and thus protects his reputation of himself. It also indicates that he does not grant his daughter any freedom except conforming to his decisions. In relation with his role as an assistant for a state whose king has ascended to the throne with the aid of immoral means, he reflects this corruptness in his own deeds to ensure his position:

> Fathers perceive their children as they do their wives and bodies, as beasts to be controlled for the magnification of their self-images, or, rather, for the expression of their divided selves […]. These divisions grow from their complicity in playing a leading role in a corrupt state. (Leverenz 302)

A connection can be made between this quotation and how he intrudes in his children's private life by "spying" on them, just as the case when he sends Reynaldo to Paris to learn more about how his son lives there. His children are his possesions to be controlled and even used according to his plans, by which he can gain the respect of the King and thus fulfil his desire of having a highly redeemed self- image. An example to this is his spying on Ophelia, an occasion in which he convinces his daughter to take part in his eavedropping plan, thereby presenting his daugther as an object: a trap to hear more from Hamlet while they are talking. How he tells the King that he will "loose" her to Hamlet reveals once more his perception of children as possesions.

Hamlet is most probably aware of Polonius's obsession with getting the King's approval, even at the cost of usurping his own daugther. That Hamlet has somehow overheard him propose loosing his daughter to him might be the reason for his sarcastic words and anger at him. As Wilson further suggests, Hamlet had told the king that he was too much in the "sun" (I.ii.64), which is related with his advice not to allow Ophelia to "walk i' th' Sun", thus Hamlet's hint at himself as the "Sun", since he is the "son" of Denmark (106). Nevertheles, Polonius does not realize what Hamlet implies to him as fishmonger, as he is too involved in Hamlet's questions about his daugther. For him, Hamlet is still harping on his daughter (II.ii.187).

The fact that his mother married soon after his father's death distorts the moral, ideal world image Hamlet has created in his mind. Consequently, Hamlet treats Ophelia according to his general opinion of women as frail, and does not refrain from insulting and emotionally hurting her although she does not deserve it. It is to a certain extent true that she should not have allowed her father's eavesdropping, but to be fair and consider such a conduct in terms of the period they lived in, if she had refused to do likewise, she would have behaved contrary to the expectations of the society that idealizes the preservation of chastity and submissiveness of women.

Having been told by the two authority figures in her family that Hamlet's intentions for her are only aimed at satisfying his lust, Ophelia starts doubting his love and realises that she might be faced with losing her honour. She tries to stay away from him to avoid such a threat on her reputation, as it is demanded that she remain chaste:

> Both her brother and father warn her repeatedly to defend her honour, her virginity, the fragile basis for woman's respectability and personal value in patriarchal society.The patriarchal upholds the traditional ideal of the sweet, innocent, and fundementally passive young woman who obeys her father and elder brother. (Dreher 78)

Therefore, Ophelia can be said to be a typical example of what Elizabethans thought as a good daughter. In late Elizabethan drama, the struggle for woman was to be human in a world which declared them only female and in which freedom of conscience for them was still a new concept (Dusinberre 94). Notwithstanding this new concept of freedom, Ophelia is still not given the chance to make decisions according to her conscience: To

the contrary, she is a young woman who remains in the shadow of the others:

> Ophelia has no chance to develop an independent conscience of her own, so stifled is she by the authority of the male world. Her whole education is geared on relying on other people's judgements, and to placing chastity and the reputation for chastity above even the virtue of truthfulness. (Dusinberre 94)

When Hamlet comes to her room in Act II.i, Ophelia is frightened by his behaviour. As she seeks protection, her father's means of 'protection' is not of the customary type. His way of providing security for her conveys using her like a puppet in a plot to arrange her meeting with Hamlet so that he can listen eavesdrop with the king. Both male figures in her life fail to understand her. Hamlet can not emphaty with her: he does not take into consideration how Ophelia strives as a young woman under constant pressure to save her chastity. He rebukes her for having trusted in him: "You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not." (I.iii.118-21), which must have been more heartbreaking than his insults.

In this respect, Hamlet's "Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" (III.i.128-9) might have some further meaning. He might have noticed that her father is hidden somewhere to listen to them . Therefore, Hamlet might be mocking Polonius's fear that he will seduce Ophelia by referring to a nunnery and advising her to go there. From another perspective, it might show how he perceives Ophelia from a view that is "entirely dependent on his male desciption." :

> Ophelia is honest or bawd depending on how Hamlet now chooses to

> describe his own behaviour towards her. If he loved her, declared that love to her, and she accepted his gifts and embraces, then she is chaste. If he never loved her, but attempted to seduce her only, then she is lewd and lascivious, because Hamlet trifled with her. (Jardine 72)

It must have been hard for Hamlet to have a stepfather who takes his father's place both as the King and his mother's husband; however, he should not have interpreted Ophelia's rejection as a confirmation of his belief in the frailty of women. Ophelia might only be trying to supress her feelings for him in order to conform to the role of an obedient daughter. By accepting to be part in her father's plan, she might even have intended to help him get rid of his current strange. She is thus constantly being used by others: "Everyone has used her: Polonius, to gain favor; Laertes, to belittle Hamlet; Claudius, to spy on Hamlet; Hamlet, to express rage at Gertrude; Hamlet again, to express his feigned madness with her as a decoy" (Leverenz 302).

As the play moves on, upon reading the message that Hamlet is returning to Denmark, the king is worried that this time Hamlet will accomplish his aim to revenge. He tells about Polonius's death and Ophelia's madness to Laertes in such a way so as to evoke hatred for Hamlet in Laertes, thereby accusing Hamlet for both the deaths of his sister and father. Having succeeded his aim to provoke Laertes into thinking that Hamlet is his enemy, the king tells him his plan to summon both to a sword fight. Laertes willingly accepts to be the agent of the king, as he will revenge the destruction of his family, thus the loss of the parent-child and sibling subsystems: "Laertes positively demands to become the King's agent, his tool, because he sees this as a role within which he can enact

his own subjective resolution to kill Hamlet" (Eagleton 51).

When Osric tells Hamlet that the King has made him inform Hamlet that a great wager has been laid, Hamlet accepts to take part in this wager. Moreover, Hamlet succumbs to immediate response this time, without any hesitance to act. Therefore, the sword fight will host the rivalry of both nuclear families in the play, each represented by the son. This might have something to do with the sword fight's association with the fight for honour, as was stated earlier in the part related with the family in the past. Up to now, the two sons were in indirect interaction due to the coalition of the king and Polonius: Polonius carried out his mission to spy on Hamlet in whatever he could for the sake of the king, and Laertes had always warned his sister against Hamlet's intentions for her. Hence, it is with the swordfight that the sons, both confined to their role as avenger, "come into physical conflict", at which Laertes is determined to "reduce Hamlet to the purest objectivity possible to a man, a corpse" (Eagleton 51).

At the sword fight, something that the king did not consider what happens, and the Queen takes the poisoned cup instead. This, like a hammer breaking a chain, destroys the arrangement to cause harm to Hamlet only. Just when both wound each other, Hamlet's mother falls to the floor, telling them that she has been poisoned by the drink. Laertes, the rival son, realises only at this point the cost of being the king's agent with his agency, and confesses that the king, hence his stepfather had plotted against Hamlet to poison him. Upon the confession, Hamlet can finally do the long-delayed deed to kill the King and stabs him with the same sword. At last, he could get his father's revenge but only after he had learnt that he will be no longer living and the Queen had already died. However, even if Hamlet dies soon after he has finally performed his duty of avenging

the father, thus the role of the obedient child, he still remains to be "a source rather than an agent: he kills Claudius, instructs Horatio to stay alive to tell his story, and gives his 'dying voice' to Fortinbras", and so "reaches out beyond his death as an active voice, transmitted in both Horatio and Fortinbras" (Eagleton 52).

Moreover, Horatio serves as a refuge for Hamlet. Hamlet, who cannot trust anyone else, feels secure to confide in Horatio. Horatio compensates for Hamlet's mistrust in others, especially for his disappointment with the important female figure in his life, his mother. His generalization of all women as frail, which is rooted in his mother's hasty marriage, is the reason why he cannot accomplish a healthy relationship with them. This turns out to be the case for his relationship with Ophelia, who Hamlet considers to be another figure of female inconstancy. As he is thus depraved of the affection of a lover, or that of a mother, he tries to compensate for this lack with male bonding: his friend Horatio. "The idealizations of his father and of Horatio's friendship show a hunger for male closeness" (Leverenz 294).

Furthermore, Horatio has a double function in the play, as he provides Hamlet with an alternative not only to the crucial women in his life, Gertrude and Ophelia, but also to the ghost. Consequently, this male bonding provides Hamlet with the intimate relationship that he could not achieve with his father. "Horatio serves as a refuge for Hamlet not only because he provides momentary relief from anguish but also because he occasions a sense of trust through which Hamlet might recover a portion of the identity negated by his submission to the ghost" (Erickson 69).

In this way, with Horatio's fellowship, Hamlet finds a remedy for his loneliness in a world of agents spying on him. Moreover, Horatio possesses qualities that Hamlet is

striving to achieve, such as constancy. Whereas his other friends Guildenstern and Rosencrantz have yielded to the king's command, and so broke their loyalty of friendship with Hamlet, Horatio remains to be by Hamlet's side. Hamlet is aware that Horatio cannot be easily manipulated by the others, for Horatio is "not a pipe for fortune's finger/ To sound what stop she please" (III.ii.60-61). In this respect, Hamlet perceives Horatio as the sole dependable figure in his social surrounding.

Therefore, as Angus has stated, "[m]etadrama thus becomes the loadstone of the Renaissance text; its conceptual self-reference generates a centripetal impetus almost irresistible to the audience, which can be utilised either to form or to deform ways of perceiving structures of authority" (49). So, by employing metatheatre in *Hamlet* Shakespeare aims to highlight the theme of regicide and its dire consequences for the prospect of sovereignty.

In unison with fulfilling such an aim, Shakespeare thus questions the legality of attaining sovereignty upon committing such a crime. In this sense, the uncle's crime of murdering his brother for the sake of becoming a king is shown to be disastrous not only in terms of the private sphere, but also in public sphere. Such an effect is achieved via the use of metatheatre: "The various metadramatic modes employed range in scope from the particular to the expansive and often engage the audience in the process of meaning-making in order to attempt to shape their interpretation of the inner dramatic scene" (Angus 49). This means that any "concern with the interpretative power of the audience is one of the main motive forces behind metadramatic production in any era" (49). Indeed, thanks to metatheatre, the play gains an insight into an elaborate web of relationships dictating the individual to perform as they are "hailed" by the ideology of the period.

3.2. Metatheatre in *King Lear*

Among Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear* stands out as a prominent play involving the theme of old age and its effects on sovereignty. The relationship among King Lear and his three daughters functions as the pivotal element in this play. In fact, familial relationships abound in many of Shakespeare's plays, and *King Lear* is no exception. Indeed, "Shakespeare is engaged in presenting a special, deep interest in the murderous rivalry of brothers and in the complexity of father-daughter relations" (Greenblatt 127). In this respect, *King Lear* represents an aging monarch whose decision to abdicate his throne and divide his kingdom among three daughters turns into a huge failure. As a monarch, King Lear's choice to favour the daughter who expresses her love for him the most reveals how King Lear's judgement is erroneous.

Therefore, *King Lear* hints at how senescence leads to a lack of rationality for the sovereign, thereby resulting in loss of authority not only in public realm as a king but also in private realm as a father. *King Lear* thus portrays a vivid illustration of sovereign incompetence to sustain the continuity of the kingdom. In this respect, Shakespeare employs metatheatre to implicitly criticize an aging monarch's irrationality and the plot he chooses to divide his kingdom, which will be conveyed thoroughly in this analysis of the play.

Regarding the outset of the play, *King Lear* commences with King Lear's statement of his wish to divide the kingdom into three, so he blatantly affirms that it is time that he retired due to old age:

> Know that we have divided
>
> In three our kingdom, and 'tis our fast intent

To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburdened crawl toward death (I.i. 39-43)

Nevertheless, he acts contrary to the wisdom expected of his age and desires to hear the reassurance of his daughters' love for him to get 'a slice of the pie'. In other words, he requests that they tell him how much he is loved for the sake of receiving a share of the kingdom. In fact, the relationship among the father and his daughters in *King Lear* thus reflects "the standard Renaissance image of the family being like an organism or body" (Young 70). Thus, Lear desires to ensure he is still the head of the family even if he is getting old.

In fact, as a king, Lear's main motivation in devising such a plan to distribute the kingdom to prevent "a future strife" had political grounds. Since he is aware that senescence is impending, he accepts that it is high time retired, albeit with preserving the "name and all the addition to a king" (I.i.152). For this purpose, his initial strategy was to divide the north and southwest parts of the kingdom between Goneril and Regan whose marriages he had arranged due to geopolitical concerns. As their titles "presumed to indicate their respective ducal domains", the Duke of Albany represents the lord of Scotland and northern England, whereas the Duke of Cornwall represents "what was once called Wessex (the southwest portion of England)" (Leon Craig 120).

So, thanks to these marriages that knit both regions to the sovereign, Lear succeeded in governing the kingdom from the centre, which consisted of the biggest and richest share of the kingdom. As to Cordelia, Lear reserves the central part for her and

her future husband. Given that Cordelia is Lear's favourite, this does not seem surprising at all. Moreover, he will reside at the centre with Cordelia and his son in law. Thus, Lear will "continue to employ his prudence in supervising matters however necessary - and most especially, assist Cordelia's husband to establish himself securely as Lear's replacement" (Leon Craig 121). Nevertheless, things do not turn out to be as simple as Lear had mistakenly presumed.

In unison with Lear's request, Goneril and Regan express their love of their father exaggeratedly. Goneril states: "I do love you more than word can wield the matter, / Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty, / Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, / No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour" (I.i.55–8). So, Goneril and Regan act in conformity with their father's wish, as by means of the love test, they state "the strongest possible public declarations of their dutiful devotion to him and his will" (Leon Craig 122). What is more, both daughters seem to have experienced such a "pledge of love" before, since it is a common practice to express "declarations of love, loyalty, and selfless dedication […] virtually wherever there have been courts" (122).

In this sense, that Goneril and Regan please their father in their declaration of love has a deeper function. In order to grasp it, it is necessary to focus on the husbands of Goneril and Regan, Lord of Albany and Lord of Cornwall respectively, who must have pledged their loyalty to Lear so as to be allowed to marry his daughter. Therefore, "the daughters' vow of everlasting devotion are meant to reinforce and reaffirm the oaths of fealty we may presume already bind their husbands" (Leon Craig 123). Indeed, both Goneril and Regan do their best at the love test lest they fail to please their father; however, things do not go well with the third daughter Cordelia. Cordelia, who in fact

loves her father sincerely, simply answers with “Nothing, my lord” (I.i.96). As soon as Lear hears this, he is puzzled as he cannot make any meaning out of it. He requests more, but Cordelia prefers not to overstate her feelings: “Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth.” (I.i.100-01). Cordelia thus resists speaking like her sisters.

Therefore, contrary to Lear’s expectations, Cordelia denies her father the love he is so willing to hear, as she asserts “I love your Majesty According to my bond, no more nor less” (I.i.101-02). Upon her remark, King Lear becomes baffled and irritated, too: “How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little, / Lest you may mar your fortunes” (I.i.103-04). Moreover, the refusal to explicitly pledge her love entails the refusal to obey the king, too. In this respect, the reason why Lear feels exasperated at this point reflects not only his disappointment at his child but also rage at the disobedience of a subject because “political life is only as strong as the confidence that can be placed in personal commitments publicly witnessed” (Leon Craig 123).

Nevertheless, despite Lear’s warning that she may lose her right, Cordelia rejects to express her love abundantly: “Good my lord, / You have begot me, bred me, loved me. / I return those duties back as are right fit: /Obey you, love you, and most honor you. / Why have my sisters husbands if they say / They love you all?” (I.i.105-10). Whereas Cordelia refrains from using exaggerated verbal language to express her love, Lear is enraged since he considers her speech an act of disrespect for a king. In fact, Cordelia behaves thus on the grounds that she considers it dishonest to speak only to flatter her father.

What is more, Cordelia deems it an insult to herself to employ “that glib and oily

art / To speak and purpose not' (I.i.225–6) at which her sisters are very successful. In unison with such an idea, she respects her integrity "more than the land, wealth and sway that pleasing Lear with fawning words would purchase" (Ryan 177). Furthermore, Lear ignores that being a young woman with barely little or hardly any public role, Cordelia might have felt uncomfortable or insecure sharing her intimate feelings in public. Leon Craig also highlights this possibility, stating that Cordelia can scarcely "in her circumstances - suddenly, unexpectedly required to make a public speech before the most eminent personages of one's society, a vitally important matter at stake, one's effort to be judged against those of older, more experienced speaker" (126). Nonetheless, such a possibility never crosses Lear's mind. As public speeches are customary for Lear, he takes it for granted that Cordelia can express herself well in public.

In addition, Lear's disappointment with Cordelia's conduct is also based on the hierarchical structure of the family that was prevalent during the Elizabethan era. As Singh expresses, "order in society was entirely dependent on the recognition that all human relationships, including relationships in the family, are hierarchical" (8). Regarding the highest level in this hierarchy was the father who represented patriarchy in the domestic realm. Moreover, as the family unit represented the microcosm in the world, obedience to the head of the family was analogous to obeying the king, the head of the nation, and any violation from this norm meant to go against the rules of the deity.

Apart from the hierarchical system that boosted patriarchalism in the Early Modern Period, the predominant socio-political ideology of the period needs to be stated. According to Bruce W. Young, "the world was thought of as being made up of several related entities: the individual human being, the family, the state or commonwealth and

finally the entire cosmos" (29). Young also explains how these entities were part of a great system of interrelations – "ranging from the 'little world of man' (or 'microcosm') to the 'great world' (or 'macrocosm') of which he was part – in which all created things were interdependent, and all were ultimately dependent on God" (29).

As a matter of fact, when considered from the moral perspective of the period, Cordelia violates the norms of the society she lives in: "people looked up in obedience to the authority above: children to parents, wives to husbands, men to magistrates, and through them up to God" (Dreher 16). In this respect, in the traditional Renaissance world order, women were regarded as inferior to men, thereby spending their life in submission to their father's or husband's authority. So, the disobedience of a child, especially that of a daughter, was considered unacceptable during the early modern period.

Regarding the social norms stated above, Cordelia's refusal to confess her love entails resisting the authority of a father, as well as that of a king: "Cordelia rejects the role of dutiful, adoring daughter that her father expects her to play like her sisters and in doing so declines to obey her sovereign as his subject, too" (Ryan 177). Cordelia thus inflicts on Lear a huge wound as he had counted the most on her and had considered her as his "kind nursery" (I.i.124) for his upcoming retirement. Moreover, Lear feels humiliated by her speech which not only his court and but also the Kings of France and Burgundy hear.

Therefore, under these circumstances, Lear considers Cordelia's conduct as inappropriate in both the microcosm of a family and in the macrocosm of the monarch and his subjects. So, from Lear's perspective, Cordelia's manner causes a public breach of respect for the father and the king, too. As a daughter in a patriarchal world, Lear

misinterprets her conduct and takes offence. So, due to Cordelia's opposition to the wish of a monarch, Lear disinherits and banishes her in retaliation for her defiance:

> Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
> Propinquity, and property of blood,
> And as a stranger to my heart and me
> Hold thee from this forever. (I.i.125-28)

As it is obvious, Lear can hardly contain his fury as he considers Cordelia's speech disrespectful. Unlike the mischievous Polonius in *Hamlet*, King Lear has a trustworthy counsellor, Kent. In this respect, Kent warns Lear against his misjudgement: "Be Kent unmannerly / When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man? / Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak /When power to flattery bows?" (I.i.162-65). Kent also advises Lear to "Reserve thy state, / And in thy best consideration check / This hideous rashness" (I.i.167-69). Unlike Lear who is deceived easily by flattery of his other daughters, Kent realises the sincerity of Cordelia's words, and states that "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least, / Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds / Reverb no hollowness" (I.i.171-73).

Despite such warning, Lear gets furious at Kent: "Hear me, recreant; on thine allegiance, hear me! / That thou hast sought to make us break our vows— / Which we durst never yet—and with strained pride / To come betwixt our sentence and our power, / Which nor our nature nor our place can bear" (I.i.190-95). Lear also orders Kent to leave the kingdom within five days. As his subject, Kent has no other option and is obliged to obey his king's order. However, as the symbol of faithful servant in the play, he disguises

himself and remains in Lear's service despite his banishment.

In fact, Kent's attitude bears similarity to the House of Commons that declares its loyalty to "a constitution which governed the people, and of which the monarch was the head, rather than to the monarch independent of the constitution, so Kent argues that he knows better how Lear ought to govern himself in order to rule his people" (Hadfield 105). In this sense, Lear resembles King James I in that both show blatant disregard for the advice given by their subjects. Such a notion is indeed obvious in James I's treatment of his subjects, as he considered "the monarch ruling as head of state, his subjects only aspiring to be advisers who could be ignored if the monarch so chose" (105).

Therefore, by employing a wise figure such as Kent, Shakespeare illustrates how Lear should have trusted his loyal followers "who reserve the right to advise him for his own good – Cordelia, Kent and the Fool – and not the base flattery of Goneril and Regan" (Hadfield 105). Moreover, this might be an inherent warning to King James I that a good counsellor should not be ignored. So, it could be inferred from the fate of Lear as a king who refuses to take advice that lest James neglects or dismisses his loyal critics, and promotes flatterers, the same misfortune might befall him.

In this sense, the influence of previous historical events on Shakespeare's play should be mentioned. Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth, hence the end of the Elizabethan age in March 1603, James I's succession to the throne relieved the public of the fear that "when she died there would follow vast confusion and anarchy" (Harrison 189). Nonetheless, even if the possibility of anarchy was prevented with James I, the initial peaceful atmosphere of his reign could not last long as "in the summer of 1603 the Plague broke out in London most violently and about 30000 of the citizens died in the

weeks following, that is, about one in seven of the whole population" (189).

In this respect, the plague proved to be a serious disruption in the society which affected the public realm in many ways. In terms of its intense effect on the psychology of the citizens, it caused tremendous dread of death and since there was not sufficient scientific explanation as to its cause, people began to base their explanation on religious grounds. (Harrison 190). Apart from the effect of the plague on the nation, another grave issue that confronted the nation was the social unrest caused by "indiscriminate knighthoods and the promotions too generously bestowed by the new King" (190). However, regarding all the issues that succeeded King James I's ascending to the throne, none was as crucial as the Gunpowder plot.

As to the Gunpowder plot, it refers to the plan to assassinate the king during the reign of James I. Black states that "[t]he plot involved a small group of Catholics who had put gunpowder in the cellars under Parliament, planning to blow it up when James opened the session on November 5, 1605 and hoping that the destruction of the royal family and the Protestant elite would ignite rebellion" (61). The plot was exposed when the Catholic William, Fourth Baron Monteagle was warned against taking part in the session in the Parliament. It was Guy Fawkes who was found with the gunpowder and "was tortured to reveal the names of his coconspirators and then brutally executed" (61). Apart from the trials of the convicted, the plot led to the Oath of Allegiance. The oath meant that King James I was acknowledged as "the lawful and rightful King of this realm" and the king demanded from his subjects to affirm that the pope did not have more power than the king (Ryan 162).

Consequently, when the historical events given above are taken into consideration,

a similar case to the Gunpowder plot takes place in *King* Lear. However, the difference is that there is no external threat, instead the king's two daughters are those who attempt to overthrow the king after they gain their share of the kingdom. In this sense, the dialogue between Lear and his three daughters in Act I gains a deeper meaning, as it functions as the catalyst of events in the king's downfall. Whereas Lear thinks Cordelia is the riotous subject, he is not wise enough to notice the real villains in his kingdom. Likewise, Ryan shares a similar opinion as he states that "Cordelia's confrontation with her father is the catalyst in the Lear plot for the transvaluation of values and transfiguring of perception on which the play is bent" (179). In addition, it illustrates how even if Lear believes that Cordelia disrespects him, the retribution he inflicts on Cordelia raises doubts concerning his rationality as sovereign.

In fact, a king's choice to divide his kingdom according to his daughter's declaration of her love for him needs to be questioned in the first place. It causes doubt as to the wisdom expected of a king, since it does not seem befitting a monarch to select his successor(s) based on personal feelings rather than on their merits. Even though Lear states that "[. . .] future strife / May be prevented now" (I.i.43–4) by distributing the kingdom to his daughters, "his action has a catastrophic set of consequences that throw the country into chaos" (Achilleos 82).

In this respect, even Lear's two daughters are aware that such an idea is folly, and both relate this with Lear's impending old age. Likewise, Regan affirms that "Tis the infirmity of his age, yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself" (I.i.294-95). Likewise, Lear's lack of wisdom and his failure to carry out some of the principles of good rulership have been debated for many years. Among Lear's implementation of poor policies comes

his inability to see how the love contest in Act I, Scene i invites his daughters' flattery, as well as his failure to take advice from such loyal followers as Kent (Achilleos 82).

Concerning the pernicious mistake that Lear makes in terms of sovereignty is the way he treats his kingdom as if it were a personal belonging that he could give away as he pleases. In fact, John Fortescue, who was an English jurist notable for his *Governance of England* (1407), treated "the extravagant distribution of royal property in the form of gifts as a sign of bad governance" (90). Similarly, it was regarded as "a peculiar kind of kingly self-cancellation" (Sheerin 793). Moreover, such an act of dividing a kingdom into three parts also raises an important question in respect to the legality of such land distribution by the sovereign. During the Elizabethan period, the Queen's counsellors' advice on the possibility of distributing property was that "any property [. . .] had to be regarded as part of the royal estate and not as owned by the monarch as an individual" (R.A. Foakes qtd. in Achilleos 82). So, the sovereign had no right to dispose property as he / she wished.

Regarding the distribution of his kingdom, Lear considers that he will still possess some of the benefits pertaining to being a king, referring to them as "th'addition" (I.i.137). Apart from the title and ceremonies of kingship, what he desires to keep is his right to maintain an army of a hundred knights. However, both Goneril and Regan object to this demand on the grounds that it causes a threat to their newly gained power, thus authority. Act I, Scene iv comprises the fierce debate about this matter between Goneril and her father. As Lear initially resides in Goneril's home accompanied by his hundred knights, Goneril confesses her dissatisfaction:

> As you are old and reverend, should be wise.

> Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires,
> Men so disordered, so debauched and bold,
> That this our court, infected with their manners,
> Shows like a riotous inn. (I.iv.247-51)

Furthermore, Goneril's request to "a little disquantity" (I.iv.256) his army is strictly dismissed by Lear. In fact, Lear bursts into a rage upon hearing such a demand and remarks: "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend, / More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child / Than the sea monster" (I.iv.270-272). Furious at his daughter's treatment, Lear curses Goneril and defends his army against her accusation as he departs in a hurry:

> My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
> That all particulars of duty know
> And in the most exact regard support
> The worships of their name. (I.iv.275-78)

Contrary to Lear's intention of residing in Regan's house with his company, Regan does not accept to stay with his hundred knights, either. Hinting at the impossibility of maintaining peace where there are two representatives of sovereignty, she asserts: "How in one house / Should many people under two commands / Hold amity? 'Tis hard, almost impossible". (II.iv.275-77)

Therefore, *King Lear* embodies an elderly monarch who cannot entirely give up his reign despite being aware of his old age. Charney depicts Lear as a king at the end of his reign, who "is trying to abdicate yet unwilling to part with 'the name, and all

th'addition to a king' (I.i.137)" (11). In this case, one cannot help but wonder how a king can abdicate a kingdom without parting with the titles and honours of a king. By the same token, the prerequisite he demands from his daughters for the acquisition of a share in the kingdom stands out as an instance of this hesitancy to withdraw from his position completely.

Likewise, the desire to appoint one's successor seems unnecessary, since the law requires that upon the death of a monarch, his/her child should ascend to the throne unless stated otherwise. So, one of Lear's children would have succeeded to the throne after he passed away, even if he had not distributed his kingdom among his daughters. Therefore, Lear's action contradicts with his words, thereby casting doubt on his mental health. It is at this point that Shakespeare employs metatheatre to question the reliability of a senile king's actions or decisions. Moreover, Shakespeare calls attention to the debate whether one should still be the sovereign in such cases of mental issues and makes an implicit criticism of an elderly king who refuses to give up his status.

In unison with what has above been mentioned, Shakespeare employs Goneril and Regan who perform their duty of submissive daughters till they obtain their share of the kingdom. With reference to Althusser's concept of interpellation, both women act in compliance with the role of the submissive daughter their father imposes on them. But despite their confession of their love for their father, the reader witnesses how they are deceitful, as they consider him suffering from "the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them" (I.i.299-300). These terms that Goneril and Regan employ to depict their father are associated with dementia or Alzheimer's disease (Charney 13).

Indeed, as the play moves on, once the kingdom has been shared, the daughters' treatment of their father changes. Upon realizing that their father no longer has the authority he once possessed, they cast aside their obedient role regarding both filial and monarchical affairs. Goneril even despises her father, thinking he is an "idle old man, that still would manage those authorities that he hath given away". (I.iii.17-19). In this sense, Lear is obsessed with the loss of authority, which is "a natural part of the addition, or title of a king" (Charney 15). Given that being a king thus entails authority over subjects, giving up the title of sovereignty also brings about being deprived of authority, hence of power.

Furthermore, the play highlights Lear's struggle to maintain the authority he once possessed even if he abdicates his kingdom. So, this also elucidates Lear's dread of the impending old age, since senescence causes repudiation. This is indeed the case when Regan and Goneril regard him as feeble due to his age. Concerning their opinion of their father, both daughters consider that Lear's political and personal decisions are both signs of and reasons for a changeover in the position of power and social hierarchy. Since they are now granted a share of the kingdom, thereby becoming sovereign, they are no longer daughters – women – but monarchs.

> O sir, you are old, Nature in you stands on the very verge
> Of his confine. You should be rul'd and led
> By some discretion that discerns your state
> Better than you yourself (II.iv.146-50)

As it is obvious, both women change roles with their father upon gaining power. Instead

of being the submissive side, the daughters treat Lear with contempt as they have become dominant. Similarly, Lear acknowledges this as he admits “Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;/ Age is unnecessary” (II.iv.154–155). So, not only does Lear’s authority wane, but also his body’s strength weakens. In addition, Lear quickly realises that without his crown, he is neither the powerful king, nor the authoritative father any longer, but has instead become simply an old man. And since Lear lacks his former masculine authority in the domestic sphere as well, Goneril and Regan regard their father not as the patriarchal head of the household that he once used to be. On the contrary, they consider him merely as a weak and effeminate old man, just as in Regan’s remark “I pray you, father, being weak, seem so” (II.iv.201).

In association with a notion, Shakespeare brings up the question whether sovereignty should cease with old age, as the faculty of reason faces decline with aging. Furthermore, the fact that he decides to divide his kingdom into three also has a further connotation: “*King Lear* portrays a series of catastrophes unleashed by an aging monarch’s decision to segment Britain into three parts, and those three parts can easily enough be identified with England, Scotland, and Wales” (Marcus 150). Indeed, even with the notion of separating a kingdom into parts, while maintaining “the name and all the additions to a King” (I.i.151), “Lear has performed just the kind of hideous dismemberment of his sacred royal identity that King James and his advisers warned the nation so vehemently against” (Marcus 151-152).

Additionally, Lear’s desire to intervene in the future of his kingdom hints at a lack of principles regarding the hereditary rules of sovereignty. So, the play gives the impression from the outset that unless there are rules concerning succession, a kingdom’s

continuity is placed in peril. Regarding the Stuart rule, James I was aware of such a risk, thereby implementing the principle of primogeniture. As defined in *Merriam-Webster*, primogeniture is "an exclusive right of inheritance belonging to the eldest son", thereby referring to "the state of being the firstborn of the children of the same parents" ("Primogeniture", def. 1).

As to the title of "Duke of Albany", which also exists in *King Lear*, it gains a crucial role in the Stuart dynasty. Its purpose is "to reinforce the succession through primogeniture by giving second sons a special but secondary place in the kingdom's hopes and expectations" (Wortham 111). Furthermore, "[t]he title of Duke of Albany was not just a Scottish title, but a very particular title" because the Stuarts granted their second born sons with the title of Duke of Albany (111). Consequently, despite not being explicitly mentioned, it can be inferred that the divided portions of the kingdom are England and Scotland. Goneril and Regan are married to the dukes of Albany and Cornwall, thus representing north and south. Indeed, Albany was usually identified with Scotland during Shakespeare's day (111).

Moreover, "during the early years of the Stuart rule, the Project for Union was so prominent in public discourse that it provided an uncommonly rich matrix for theatrical topicality" (Marcus 148). In this sense, "*King Lear*'s immersion in contemporary materials relating to the Union of the Kingdoms" reveals how "James I's notions about the organicism of Britain under the king as head are themselves placed on trial" (153). Besides, as James I had already ascended the throne in the time of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the political message changed: "the play warns that not to recognize Britain as a *de facto* union may be as dangerous as to take a hatchet to a united kingdom" (156).

Even if King James I proved not to have such a purpose during his entire reign, that a Scottish king had succeeded to the throne initially caused doubts as to his intention of dividing the union. So, by employing a king that violates Jean Bodin's principle of the indivisibility of sovereignty, Shakespeare might have intended to warn King James I at the outset of his reign that a king should refrain from making any attempt to abolish the kingdom's union. In conjunction with the principle of indivisibility of sovereignty, King James I's purpose was to attain a perpetual and absolute authority. Moreover, King James I was aware of the Pope's influence and power over his subjects. Accordingly, King James I desired to gain absolute authority as he declared in his *The True Law of Free Monarchies*. Since he realised the potential threat to his monarchy after the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, King James I decreed that "English Catholics were required to take the controversial Oath of Allegiance that stipulated their obedience to James and their allegiance to him over the Pope" (Achilleos 83).

In this respect, James I was a keen supporter of the divine right of kingship, and resembled Shakespeare's Richard in *Richard II* who claimed that "The breath of worldly men cannot depose / The deputy elected by the Lord" (III.ii.56–7). This reveals how James I strictly prohibited any resistance to the king, as he defended that a king was the representative of God on Earth. No matter how wicked a king was, this was never an excuse for an uprising. This is also evident in his writings that advocate an absolutist regime of kingship, as is stated in his *True Law* and *Basilicon Doron*. As to the former, Johann P. Sommerville states that "[b]asing his case on Scripture, reason and history, the king argued that subjects must obey their monarch's 'commands in all things, except directly against God' and that they could never actively resist him" (xvii).

Concerning the latter work by King James I is *Basilicon Doron*. This is "purportedly written for James' son and heir Henry, to whom it was dedicated" (xviii). In this sense, it consists of advice for a ruler. Furthermore, the book maintained that a king's decisions could never be questioned: "[a]s for the absolute Prerogatiue of the Crowne, that is no Subiect for the tongue of a Lawyer, nor is it lawful to be disputed" (James I qtd. in Sommerville 214). James I added that "it is presumption and high contempt in a Subiect, to dispute what a King can do" (214). In short, as a strong adherent of absolutism, James I's basic tenet of absolute monarchical rule is influenced by Jean Bodin's theory of sovereignty. Apart from Bodin, Sir Robert Filmer also defended the absolute power of the kings over the society. Along with Filmer and Hobbes, the king was one of the most important British theoreticians of absolutism of the early modern period.

Likewise, the fact that absolutism gained prominence with James I dates to the reign of Elizabeth I who reigned from 1558 to 1603. In fact, absolutism's inclusive property of the monarchy's association with divinity "was developed in elements of the cult of Elizabeth I and was keenly promoted by James I" (Hadfield 11). Relying on such an association, James I asserted that subjects must comply with their ruler notwithstanding the character of the monarch or the outcome of their deeds:

> Obedience [. . .] ought to be to [the king], as to Gods Lieutenant in earth, obeying his commands in all things, except directly against God, as commands of Gods Minister, acknowledging him a Iudge set by God over them. (*The True Law of Free Monarchies* 137)

Nevertheless, James I regarded a king's duty to his subjects as significant, thereby stating

in *True Law of Free Monarchies* that monarchs should obey the law: "a King that governs not by his law can neither be countable to God for his administration nor have a happy and established reign" (187). He adds that "a good King will not only delight to rule his subjects by the law, but even will conform himself in his own actions thereunto; always keeping that ground, that the health of the commonwealth be his chief law" (187).

As to another principle that James I adhered to is the hereditary right of monarchies: "[T]he duty and allegiance, which the people sweareth to their prince, is not only bound to themselues, but likewise to their lawfull heires and posterity." (188). So, according to James I, monarchy as a "divinely ordained institution" also entails the indissoluble hereditary right to the throne. At this point, Lear's plan to divide the kingdom into three parts for his descendants stands for the representation of this right. Since the king believes his daughters shall be the rightful heirs to the throne, he devises a test to choose whoever will deserve the designated part. In this sense, the test functions as a proof of male dominance.

Likewise, it is a common feature of patriarchal societies to impose restrictions or boundaries for women, with Lear's kingdom being no exception. Regarding such societies, Jonathan Thacker mentions that "[h]istorically, in pre-feminist societies, patriarchy's rule was less successfully challenged and more absolute than it is today; the imposition of male desires upon the female was formerly more brutal" (20). Even if what Lear demands of his daughters does not seem to be either brutal or abusive, it still renders them as objects of power. Moreover, their status as not only obedient daughters, but also as dutiful subjects oblige them to fulfil such a wish of the male authority. As to the effect of social status, its crucial role has been acknowledged by various critics, such as Thacker.

He asserts that "the growing individual gains a social status within patriarchy, which is dependent on such factors as sex, blood, religion, wealth and achievements, and it is this status which allows the individual to play his / her social role" (22).

So, Goneril and Regan perform their role of compliant individuals in terms of both filial and public realms. This reminds the reader of Louis Althusser's remark that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals on the one hand and concrete subjects on the other" (176), as is mentioned in the theoretical part of this dissertation. Their obedience enables them to earn their prize of a good share of the kingdom. However, things do not turn out to be as Lear expected. Notwithstanding their declaration of love in public, both daughters cast off their submissiveness as soon as they have been granted with power.

Another important point to be considered regarding *King Lear* is the subplot of the father and son relationship between Edgar and Gloucester. Indeed, Gloucester has two sons. The former, Edgar is his legitimate child, whereas the latter, Edmund, is illegitimate. In terms of inheritance, as born of wedlock, Edgar will be the heir of the land, title and status of the earl in social hierarchy. Contrary to Edgar, Edmund lacks the right to his father's inheritance. Acutely aware of his inferior status, Edmund conspires not only to disrupt this natural order but also to become the heir himself.

In fact, Edmund detests being called the bastard according to social constructs, as he deems such a label an insult to his identity: "Why 'bastard'? Wherefore 'base,' / When my dimensions are as well compact, / My mind as generous and my shape as true / As honest madam's issue?" (I.ii.6-9). What is more, he criticizes the socially accepted association of bastardy with baseness: "Why brand they us / With 'base,' with 'baseness,'

‘bastardy’” (I.ii.10-11). Indeed, this quotation could be considered as an instance of Shakespeare’s criticism of labels – considering a person as the other and not accepting him/ her in the social sphere. Likewise, the society hence affects the identity of such an individual, and this is represented by Edmund in *King Lear*.

In order to achieve his aim of displacing his stepbrother Edgar, Edmund devises his plan by means of a letter: “Well then, Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land”, he confesses as he sends a letter that is feigned to be written by Edgar whereas in fact Edmund has written every single word therein (I.ii.16-17). The purpose of such a plot is becoming the favourite son, as he states, “Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund / As to th’ legitimate” (I.ii.18-19). So, Edmund is a treacherous figure who believes that the end justifies the means: “Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed / And my invention thrive, Edmund the base / Shall top th’ legitimate” (I.ii.20-22). As Gloucester sees Edmund hiding a letter in his pocket, the father insists on being informed of what is written. Therefore, Edmund succeeds in his plan, since the letter he made up implies that Edgar desires to get rid of his father to replace him. Thus, Edmund reads the letter:

> I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways not as it hath power but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue forever and live the beloved of your brother. Edgar (I.ii.52-56)

In accordance with Edmund’s plot to change the line of succession, Gloucester is enraged and wants to punish Edgar immediately, calling him “unnatural, detested, brutish villain”

(I.ii.80). Gloucester falls for the assistance Edmund offers him to reveal Edgar's real motivation for writing such a letter. For this purpose, Edmund expresses his method: "If your Honor judge it meet, I will place you / where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an / auricular assurance have your satisfaction" (I.ii.95-97). Just as is the case with Lear who is easily taken in by Goneril and Regan, Gloucester is beguiled by Edmund's speech. In this respect, the relationship between Gloucester and Edgar resonates with what takes place between Cordelia and Lear as both children are erroneously considered as disloyal to their fathers.

In unison with his intention, Edmund deceives Gloucester into believing that Edgar has stabbed him since he could not convince Emund to murder their father: "I told him the revenging gods / 'Gainst parricides did all the thunder bend, Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond / The child was bound to th' father—sir, in fine, / Seeing how loathly opposite I stood / To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion / With his preparèd sword he charges home / My unprovided body, mine arm" (II.i.54-61). So, whereas Edmund is in fact the real villain, Edgar is no longer regarded as loyal but instead is regarded as a traitor. As to Edgar's expulsion, it demonstrates his loss of status in the social hierarchy, showing how he no longer can remain at the centre because he has lost the possibility of being the future earl. With the disguise of Poor Tom of Bedlam, Edgar is now located at the base of the hierarchy as a beggar and thus becomes decentred. Such an idea is suggested by Stephen Greenblatt:

> Shakespeare insists not only on Edgar's perilous fall from his father's favor but upon his marginalization: Edgar becomes the possessed Poor Tom, the outcast with no possibility of working his way back toward the

center. (117)

In this respect, prior to the function of the disguise as Poor Tom, a definition of the term should be given. M. C. Bradbrook refers to disguise as "the substitution, over- laying or metamorphosis of dramatic identity, whereby one character sustains roles" (159). In addition, "[t]his may involve deliberate or involuntary masquerade, mistaken or concealed identity, madness or possession" (160). Moreover, Edgar's shift of his role from Gloucester's son as the legal heir into a man disguised as a beggar can be considered as "embodiments of negation and self-alienation most cryptically expressed in a string of orphic negatives, from 'Edgar I nothing am' (II.iii.21) through 'in nothing I'm changed / But in my garments' (IV.vi.9-10) to 'Know, my name is lost' (V.viii.121)" (Carroll 426). In fact, this type of self-alienation applies not only to Edgar but also to King Lear as well, since the change in their social status transforms them as individuals. Thanks to the disguise motif employed by metatheatre, Edgar's transformation reveals how an individual's identity is influenced by social circumstances and the essence of individuality is suppressed by social and filial norms.

So as to express how such concepts of negation and self-alienation are applicable to Edgar's transformation, it is essential to illustrate how he is introduced to the reader in the first act of the play. As Kent praises Edmund, Gloucester responds: "But I have son, Sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account" (I.i. 19-21). This shows that with reference to his identity, the focus is on Edgar's legitimacy unlike Edmund's illegitimacy. This is also highlighted by Carroll, who suggests that "Edgar's nature seems essentially indistinguishable from the order of law, but in depicting

Edgar's dispossession and abasement, the play will suggest that 'legitimacy' might be a legal, not a biological category; written, not natural" (427). In unison with Carroll's statement, Shakespeare thus implies that legitimacy is merely a social construct that does not provide a certain privilege of status in the social hierarchy, as is the case with Gloucester's disownment of Edgar.

Instead, being dispossessed of his biological identity as the lawful son, Edgar loses his socially favoured status as the legal son and transforms into an outcast. Therefore, "[l]egitimacy has now been decoupled from the natural body, the 'order of law' set aside as arbitrary" (Carroll 428). In terms of social status, Edgar becomes the marginalised figure that had previously been associated with Edmund due to his bastardy. Besides, their reversal of roles functions as proof that what is crucial for the society is maintaining the status quo, notwithstanding the individual qualities of its members. Another point to be considered is that "when the legitimate body of the son and heir is displaced, the play reveals a translation of son and heir into man as mere body, as Poor Tom" (429).

In conjunction with the above-mentioned concept of Edgar's transition to a mere body, such a representation manifests that once an individual lacks the right(s) or roles socially attributed to people of a certain status, the real identity of that person comes to the fore. Indeed, Edgar disguised as Poor Tom "incarnates everything antithetical to the 'order of law' represented in his initial identity" (Carroll 430). This is accomplished with the means of disguise as a type of metatheatre employed in the subplot of Edgar in *King Lear*, since it provides the alienation required to demonstrate how life is indeed nothing but a stage itself in which we perform the roles designated by cultural or social norms.

In terms of Edgar's transition into a lunatic beggar, the body functions as "the

residue remaining once all the bonds of life and social order have been stripped away" (Carroll 430). As Edgar states, "The country gives me proof and precedent / Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices, / Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms / Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary; / […] / Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!" (II.iii.13-20). In this respect, Edgar performs the role-within-the-role element of metatheatre, as the character of Poor Tom entails the theatrical qualities expected of a bedlam beggar such as a filthy face, nakedness and roaring voice.

In fact, Edgar's disguise is so successful that Lear mistakes him for a real beggar, thereby pitying him: "Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies" (III.iv.103-5). As it is thus inferred from Lear's words, Poor Tom's existence is reduced only to being a body that is hardly clothed. Indeed, Lear is deeply stirred by the beggar's appearance, as he considers it pathetic to live under such conditions. For this reason, Lear asks: "Is man no more than this?" (III.iv.106). In response to such a question, the reader is aware that this figure of Poor Tom is just fiction, hence a role made up by Edgar to escape from his father's punishment but nevertheless experiences a beggar's suffering from "marginality, exclusion, and dispossession" (Carroll 435). In this sense, "what seems to be the basest shape of nature is also seen by the audience to be a social construct: a stereotypical beggar's role fantastically performed by an Edgar who far out-tops even his brother's histrionic genius" (435).

Apart from this pivotal function of disguise in terms of Edgar's transition, another crucial instance is the Dover scene. This is the point of reversal for Edgar, as Dover enables him to present his real identity to his father. In Act IV, scene i, Gloucester speaks to an old man and requests that this man "bring some covering for this naked soul, /

Which I'll entreat to lead me", since he wants Poor Tom to take him to Dover. (IV.i.51-2). Upon the man's response that the beggar is mad, Gloucester tells him "It is the time's plague when madmen lead the blind" (IV.i.54).

Moreover, as Gloucester asks if he knows the way, Edgar replies that "Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits" (IV.i.65). He also states that "Five fiends have been in Poor Tom at once: of lust, / as Obidicut; Hobbididance, prince of dumbness; / Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, / of mopping and mowing, who since possesses / chambermaids and waiting women" (IV.i.67-71). So, there is a reference to evil spirits that were believed to seize the human soul, and Poor Tom mentions that he was once possessed by them. In this respect, the Dover scene presents "a Poor Tom whom the devils have released and who therefore has begun the process of turning back into Edgar" (Carroll 437).

In fact, the reason why Gloucester desires to go to Dover is to commit suicide. His remark that "[f]rom that place I shall no leading need" is the proof that he no longer wants to live (IV.i.87). As Edgar tries to convince Glouster that they have reached the top of the cliff, he makes up a vivid image: "How fearful and dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low! / The crows and choughs that wing the midway air / Show scarce so gross as beetles" (IV.vi.17-9). Now that Gloucester believes he is on the verge of the cliff, Gloucester bids the beggar farewell to jump off.

In unison with Edgar's transition, Gloucester's counterfeited jump stands for the metaphorical death of Poor Tom as well as Gloucester's escape from melancholy. Apart from such a function, Gloucester's attempt to commit suicide represents the plays "spurious exorcism" (Greenblatt 215). This is especially the case when Gloucester

assumes he has jumped off the cliff. At this point, having switched his role to a bystander, Edgar tells Gloucester that he has witnessed the devil's departure from the old man: "As I stood here below, methought his eyes / Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses, / Horns welk'd and waved like the enridged sea" (IV.vi.69-71). He adds: "It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father, / Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours / Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee" (IV.vi.72-74).

Moreover, Greenblatt also refers to this scene's importance for the subplot of the play: "Edgar tries to create in Gloucester an experience of awe and wonder so intense that it can shatter his suicidal despair and restore his faith in the benevolence of the gods" (215). This is also apparent when Edgar tells Gloucester that his life is a miracle (IV.vi.55). Concerning the scene at Dover, Greenblatt mentions how it provides an analysis of not only religious, but also theatrical illusions (215). As to the former, it provides an illusion of exorcism that was commonly believed at the time the play was written. As to the latter, even if they are not walking up any hill, but instead are just "on a perfectly flat stage", Edgar pretends to be walking on a steep ground (215). Therefore, by employing such a stage illusion, metatheatre is conveyed in the subplot of *King Lear*.

In this respect, metatheatre is achieved thanks to Edgar's performance of climbing up a fictitious hill: "Edgar does to Gloucester what the theatre usually does to the audience: he persuades his father to discount the evidence of his senses" (Greenblatt 215). Just as Edgar's successive role as a bystander is fiction, the audience is aware that the scene of Gloucester's exorcism is similarly a "theatrical fraud, designed to gull the unsuspecting: monsters such as the fiend with the thousand noses are illusions most easily imposed on the old, the blind, and the despairing; evil comes not from the mysterious

otherworld of demons but from this world, the world of court and family intrigue" (216). So, as far as Shakespeare's play is concerned, "demonic possession is a theatrical imposture" (217). In fact, that there is no soul in the play that needs exorcism is displayed, on the grounds that Shakespeare intends to show how "the evil was not visited upon the characters by demonic agents but released from the structure of the family and the state by Lear himself" (217).

As to Edgar's return at the end of the play, the reconciliation between Edgar and Glocester as well as Edgar's victory over Edmund serve as proof that what matters is being a qualified person who does not live solely for personal benefits. That Edgar gains the potential to be the future king at the end of the play illustrates that Shakespeare favours an individual who acts rationally rather than one who acts on impulse as a leader. This is the case for Edgar whose choice to disguise himself as a beggar leads to the alienation that he experiences due to his suffering as Poor Tom and paves the way for the retrieval of his real identity as a rational and mature figure.

Apart from the reversal of fortune that Edgar finally accomplishes at the end of the play, that Shakespeare does not conclude his play with the victory of Lear's daughters also hints at the criticism of hereditary right to the throne. Indeed, Shakespeare opts for the qualified individual as the future successor of the monarchy, thereby implying that Edgar deserves this title in *King Lear*. Hadfield also highlights this feature in Shakespeare's plays, stating that "[t]he emphasis throughout the tragedies and histories is placed on the virtue and ability of the individual as qualifications for rule, rather than simply inherited rights" (11).

Nevertheless, Shakespeare could not express his criticism of royal matters

explicitly because he was a member of a theatre company named Lord Chamberlain's men which was taken under James I's patronage upon his accession in March 1603 and thereafter was called King's Men (Hadfield 15). Therefore, Shakespeare employs the device of a love test and the pertinent role-playing-within-a-role to illustrate how a king brings about his own downfall due to his error of judgement. In terms of Lear's misjudgement, he is too late to realise that he has been beguiled by Goneril and Regan's flatteries. Additionally, he fails to recognize that both women are feigning their role as docile daughters for the sake of attaining personal merit. Once Goneril and Regan are sure that Lear has lost his sovereign power, their attitude changes dramatically.

In this respect, Lear's "failure to distinguish between the respect shown his power and that shown his person, so long melded into one, proves his – and Britain's – undoing" (Leon Craig 131). Therefore, Lear is deceived by their performance whereas he treats Cordelia unfairly just because she could not act in compliance with his demand. Finally, that one should refrain from making hasty decisions based on feelings rather than rationality could be another implication that Shakespeare engages in via the use of metatheatrical elements in the play.

So, on the one hand, metatheatre is employed to criticize the monarch in an implicit way which would otherwise have been impossible to express in explicit terms. On the other hand, the subplot also includes disguise as metatheatre to display how social status is a culturally constructed notion, as is the case with Edgar whose social status changes after he is expelled. He transforms into an outcast but nevertheless earns his status back at the end. Apart from the usage of disguise as an element of metatheatre, the scene of Gloucester's exorcism also functions as a demonstration of metatheatre as

neither does the blind man jump of a cliff, nor any devil is witnessed to leave his body. Poor Tom, namely Edgar, pretends as if they were on the verge of the hill to so that Gloucester could commit suicide. However, what the reader witnesses is just a kind of role-playing that shows how life is thus an instance of performing roles.

CONCLUSION

Both *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are plays which consist of metatheatrical elements to illustrate how the roles one performs in life are dictated on the individual by social norms. In this respect, metatheatre is employed in different ways. As to the former play, *Hamlet* displays how the family in the early modern society functioned as a microcosm of the state in which the king had superiority over all the nation's constituents. In this case, it is essential not only to bear the importance and influence of patriarchy in mind, but also to realise the extent to which Claudius as the king dominates over the public. Whereas the marriage of a widow to her husband's brother would be declared void as it was incest, the public in *Hamlet* do not protest such a marriage. This is due to the notion of the period that just as the head of the household is attributed with unquestioned obedience, so is the head of the State attributed with the right to demand obedience of his subjects.

Therefore, that the subjects are required to obey their king is related with the idea that the King is the head of all families, thereby allowing him to have complete authority over all the households of the nation. Likewise, *King Lear* entails a similar motif of obedience, as the King requests that his daughters confess their love for the father in public. When Lear's wish is denied by his youngest daughter Cordelia, the king does not hesitate to usurp his authority. As a result, Cordelia is dispossessed of both legal and familial rights. Indeed, absolute sovereignty, which was especially the case for the Stuart dynasty starting with King James I, is one of the major issues thus implied in *King Lear*.

As for the king and his authority in *Hamlet*, Claudius achieves this with the help of his Counsellor, Polonius. Since his ascent to the throne entails some sort of corruption, that of murdering his own brother and marrying his brother's wife, it is no wonder that

he tries to implement a new order in both public and private level. In terms of the public level, he "plants" the "seeds" of a new approach to forming marriage alignments, in which the end satisfies the means: if one would take the possession of the throne, then it would not be an offence to commit fratricide. Nevertheless, Claudius tries to be on the safe side and give the impression that his marriage was in part for the sake of the nation. With this aim, he informs the public how an external threat emerged in the absence of a king. This threat is the son of Norway's king, Fortinbras, who seeks to revenge his father's defeat and take back the land his father had lost to King Hamlet.

In his attempt to ascertain his family's survival, hence his reign, Claudius must be sure that no internal threat exists either in familial or state level. In this respect, he considers Hamlet as a potential threat, as he is aware how Hamlet is offended both as a son and a prince with the new marriage. Being disposed of his right to the throne might have secondary influence, but Claudius seems to know beforehand that Hamlet's grief for his father's death might turn him into an avenger once he is informed about his father's murder. Therefore, Claudius considers that he cannot manage to dismiss such potential threat on his own, and succumbs to the assistance of Polonius, who is the representative of how Claudius's ruling can turn his subjects into mere agents, thus their surrogate for the "rottenness" that Denmark hosts. Consequently, "Polonius symbolizes the rottenness of the State of Denmark" (Singh 87).

Likewise, Polonius willingly accepts the manipulation of the king and his role to spy on others, since he strives to win the approval of his king. Together with the king they form a coalition, which is based on mutual interests. This coalition passes beyond the boundary of public level, as the counsellor and his king are not only in interaction in their

public roles, but it also persists in the private sphere of families. At this point, the authority of both male figures ceases to be merely restricted with the affairs of the State but spreads to family life. This shows how the "rottenness" of the ruling system can become contagious on the family, which is the foundation of society. As the macrocosm of the state is comprised of the total of families, each a microcosm on its own, the breakdown of the family's healthy functioning causes the downfall of the state to which it belongs.

In order to comprehend how the family has such an importance in the continuity of the state as a macrocosm, it is of primary concern to find out more about the relationships within the system of the nuclear family. In this respect, *Hamlet* as well as *King Lear* consists of various interwoven relationships that resemble a chain, at the centre of which lies the nuclear family. The nuclear family is under perpetual influence of both external and internal factors. For example, on the one hand, the family of Hamlet is susceptible to the manipulation of the king and Polonius. On the other hand, King Lear feels obliged to choose the prospective ruler of the kingdom and puts his own daughter Cordelia at stake for the sake of testing one's loyalty to the monarch.

Moreover, the parent-child relationships have a decisive role in both plays. As to the former, *Hamlet* consists of the stepfather and son who perceive each other as rivals. Owing to this rivalry, Claudius as the father on the one hand makes a dyad with the wife to prevent her from keeping by the son's side; thereby not relinquishing control over Gertrude. On the other hand, he relies on the intervention of others to ascertain his position within the hierarchy of the family. Probably the most prominent of these external figures is Polonius, who consciously resorts to his role as the agent for personal merits: "Polonius consciously turns himself into an object, by becoming a self-appointed spy: he

uses himself" (Eagleton 43).

As to the latter play, *King Lear* demonstrates the relationship of an aging king with his three daughters. The older siblings, namely Goneril and Regan, are aware of the submissive role expected from them by their father. They obey for the sole purpose of attaining their share of the kingdom as dowry on their marriages to Dukes of Albany and Cornwall respectively. In this respect, once the daughters realise that their father has "hailed" or "interpellated" them in Althusser's terms, they put on the coat of obedience to perform their duty of declaring their love to the father in public. Nevertheless, they cast off their coat of docility as soon as they have been granted with their prize. Therefore, the device of role-playing-within-the-role is thus employed here by Shakespeare to imply that a king should refrain from being deceived by flatteries, otherwise such a deception will bring about the unavoidable downfall of not only the monarch himself but also the kingdom.

Furthermore, *King Lear* hosts the relationship among Gloucester and his sons in the subplot of the play. Especially the clash between Edgar and Edmund forms a vivid representation of what it means for an individual to be socially or legally accepted or cast out. In this respect, Edgar's former identity as the legitimate son who has a certain status in the society transforms as his stepbrother Edmund achieves his goal of replacing him through a web of deceit. Edgar's disguise as Poor Tom, hence his latter transformation of identity upon his dismissal from the centre, functions as the major display of metatheatrical elements in the play.

Regarding how metatheatre is employed with Edgar's disguise, the role-within-a-role enables the reader to witness the impact self-alienation has on a person in terms of

realising that one's identity is based upon the socially / culturally designated roles. For instance, being a legitimate child is a cultural construct, meaning that it exists insofar as the law permits such a distinction. Edgar thus has the hereditary right to his father's title, thereby revealing how he is granted with a certain position within the social hierarchy thanks to the social construct he was born into. Nevertheless, that he is socially interpellated as the future earl of Gloucester is challenged by his stepbrother Edmund who tries his best to change his inferior social status due to being an illegitimate child.

Whereas at first Edmund has not got any legal birthrights unlike Edgar, he does his best to tilt the scales and change his fortune. Thanks to Edmund's cunning character, his father is easily tricked into believing that Edgar plots to murder him. In consequence, Edgar becomes an outcast and endures the life of a beggar contrary to Edmund's rise in the social hierarchy after he replaces the legitimate child. So, Edgar's social transition illustrates that social roles are susceptible to change under certain circumstances whereas the essential qualities that form an individual remain unsullied whatever happens. This is exactly the case for Edgar who maintains his rationality, good-heartedness and determination even if he is allegedly dismissed from his social position.

Apart from the significance individual qualities have in both plays, the theme of agency also sheds light on the structure of both the society and the family. In terms of *Hamlet,* on social level, it reveals how each member is kept under observation and is objectified. That people are constantly being objectified may be a sign of fear on the part of the king so as to sustain his authority and be prepared against any potential opposition. It may also hint at the manipulation of others for one's benefits. Obviously for Hamlet, there is a vicious circle of objects and the same subject: the king and his subjects, who

are all trying to discover his real intentions. This prompts Hamlet's isolation, as he is aware how people can surrender themselves to the king's power even if they are Hamlet's friends, such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In relation to the isolation Hamlet experiences, even his mother seems to have turned against him, since her remarriage spoils their relationship that Hamlet was so desperately in need of after his father's death. Consequently, Hamlet is left alone in a world of agents, apart from Horatio. Notwithstanding Hamlet's separation from the other male figures in the play, *Hamlet* remains to be within the domain of male dominance, where women are expected to abide by the norms that this male world dictates. For example, both men in Ophelia's family, namely her father and brother expect her to comply with their demand of submission.

In this respect, both male figures define the limits of Ophelia's interaction with the outside world and intervene in her life. The significance of chastity, which confines Ophelia to domestic pressure, reflects the notion of the ideal woman at the time the play was written. Likewise, both male figures treat her as their possession, and especially her father does not hesitate to misuse her submission for the interests of the king.

Similar to *Hamlet, King Lear* includes the theme of agency as well. However, unlike Polonius who stands by Claudius for his benefit, loyal counsellors remain by Lear's side even if they acknowledge their king's mistakes. Kent is indeed one of these trustworthy agents who keep their word and do not abandon their king whatever happens. Regardless of being banished from the kingdom by the monarch, Kent is so faithful that he disguises himself for the sake of protecting his king. Notwithstanding the insult he suffers due to Lear's rage, Kent stands by Lear at all costs.

Apart from Kent, Gloucester is also a loyal figure dedicated to Lear's welfare. Indeed, Gloucester is such a committed figure to Lear that it leads to his blinding by the Duke of Cornwall lest he assists Lear and the upcoming French intervention. Besides, Gloucester's blindness has a crucial role in the play not only in terms of his relationship with Lear, but also due to the scene of counterfeit exorcism he experiences with Edgar disguised as Poor Tom. In this sense, this scene serves as a vital aspect of metatheatre because it draws attention to its nature as a play, as well as employing role-playing-within-a-role at the same time.

As to the latter function of metatheatre in both plays, it employs the intricate web of social relations to depict how social roles need to be reconstructed as change is an inevitable process of development for humanity. This is apparent in the conclusions of the plays. Whereas both kings intend to preserve the unquestioned link between kinship and family, not only Claudius but also King Lear ends up with losing the authority of this chain. Whereas in *Hamlet* the rottenness in Denmark befalls on its inventors and furthermore constitutes a tragic end for almost all characters in the end, the same applies to Lear's kingdom as he insists on keeping his authority despite getting old.

As a result, both plays conclude with the deaths of all avengers, agents, and their kings, which proves that a nation needs to evolve and progress with time to compensate for the needs of the individual. This can merely be achieved via the implementation of social reformation not only in terms of public spheres, but also in private spheres. Therefore, by developing the role of each individual within a certain family, societies can also function in a better way and members of the society can live in harmony. With reference to the plays employed in this dissertation, Shakespeare employs metatheatre to

show that the culturally constructed roles of individuals should be deconstructed for an individual to attain improvement in all aspects of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abel, Lionel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.

Achilleos, Stella. "Shakespeare on Sovereignty, Indivisibility, and Popular Consent". *Reading Texts on Sovereignty.* Stella Achilleos and Antonis Balasopoulos (eds.). London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 81-88.

Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers. Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest.* New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc. 11-37.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Ben Brewster (trans.). New York: Monthly Review Press,1969.

Amussen, Susan Dwyer. *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Anwar, Nadia. *Dynamics of Distancing in Nigerian Drama: A Functional Approach to Metatheatre*. Germany: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Aquinas, Thomas. *On Kingship, To The Kings of Cyprus*. Gerard Bernard Phelan (trans.). Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2007.

Aristotle. "Poetics". *Classical Literary Criticism*. Penelope Murray and T. S.Dorsch (trans.). London: Penguin, 2004. 57-97.

Baumer, Franklin Le Van. *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.

Belsey, Catherine. *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

---. “Sibling Rivalry: ‘Hamlet’ and the First Murder”. *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. 129-174.

Bertelli, Sergio. *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. R. Burr Litchfield (trans.). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press. 2001.

Bezio, Kristin M. S. *Staging Power in Tudor and Stuart English History Plays: History, Political Thought, and the Redefinition of Sovereignty*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2016.

Birch, Dinah and Katy Hooper (eds.). *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Black, Jeremy. *Historical Atlas of Britain: The End of the Middle Ages to the Georgian Era*. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2000.

Blick Andrew. *Beyond Magna Carta: A Constitution for the United Kingdom*. Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006.

Bodin, Jean. *Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Richard Knolles (trans.) Oxford: Blackwell, 1967. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Borlik, Ted Andrew. *Shakespeare Beyond the Green World: Drama and Ecopolitics in Jacobean Britain*.

Bradbrook, M.C. "Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama", *Essays in Criticism, II* (1952) 2.2: 159-168.

Bunnell, E. Charlene. *All the World’s a Stage*. Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

Burgess, Glenn. *The Politics of The Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-1642.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993.

Calderwood, James L. *Shakespearean Metadrama*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.

Callaghan, Dympna. *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International Inc, 1989.

Carpegna, Joaquín Varela. "Sovereignty in British Legal Doctrine". *Historia Constitucional*. 4 (2021): 271-333. Web. 24 September 2024.

Carroll, William C. *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare*. New York: Cornell University, 1996.

Charlton, H. B., "Hamlet". *Shakespearian Tragedy.* London: The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1948. 83-112.

Charney, Maurice. *Shakespeare's Villians*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012.

Cockin, Katharine and Jago Morrsion. "Introduction". *The Post-War British Literature Handbook.* Katharine Cockin, Jago Morrison (eds.). London: Continuum, 2010. 1-32.

Coward, Barry. *The Cromwellian Protectorate*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Craig, Leon Harold. *Of Philosophers and Kings: Political Philosophy in Shakespeare's Macbeth and King Lear.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

Craig, Lundy. "From Structuralism to Poststructuralism". *The Edinburgh Companion to*

Poststructuralism. Benoit Dillet,Robert Porter,and Iain Mackenzie (eds.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2013. 69-94.

Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosphy*, Hertfordshire: Harvester, 1982.

---. "Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences". *Writing and Difference*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1878.

---. "Sending: On Representation". *Social Research* (1982) 49.2: 294-326.

---. "Differance". *Margins of Philosophy*. Alan Bass (trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Dillet, Benoit, Iain MacKenzie and Robert Porter. "Introduction". *The Edinburgh Companion to* Poststructuralism. Benoit Dillet, Robert Porter, and Iain Mackenzie (eds.) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2013. 1-22

Dreher, Elizabeth Diane. "Dominated Daughters". *Domination and Defiance Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare.* Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986. 96-114.

Dusinberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Dustagheer, Sarah and Harry Newman. "Metatheatre and Early Modern Drama". *Shakespeare Bulletin.* 36.1 (Spring 2018): 3-18. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 November 2022.

Eagleton, Terence. "Hamlet". *Shakespeare and Society. Critical Studies in Shakespeare's Drama.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1970. 39-65.

---. "Post-Structuralism". *Literary Theory, An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996. 2nd Ed. 110-130.

Edwards, Philip. "The Play and the Critics," *Hamlet, Prince of* Denmark. Philip

Edwards (ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 32-61.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Sovereignty: God, State and Self, The Gifford Lectures.* New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Elyot, Sir Thomas. *The Governor*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1970.

Erickson, Peter. "Maternal Images and Male Bonds in *Hamlet, Othello* and *King Lear*". *Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. 66-122.

Feldman, Alexander. *Dramas of the Past on the Twentieth-Century Stage: In History's Wings*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Filmer, Robert. *Patriarcha; Or, The Natural Power of Kings*. London: R. Chiswell, 1685.

Fortescue, John. *The Governance of England.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1885.

Gough, J.W. *The Social Contract: A Critical Study of Its Development*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.

Green, Keith and Jill LeBihan. *Critical Theory and Practice: A Coursebook*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* London: Jonathan Cape, 2004.

---. "Shakespeare and the Exorcists". *Shakespearean Negotiations, The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. California: University of California Press, 1988.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.

Harris, Tim. *Rebellion: Britain's First Stuart Kings, 1567-1642*. Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2014.

Harrison, G.B. *Shakespeare's Tragedies*. London: Routledge, 1951.

Heywood, Thomas. *Apology for Actors*. London: Garland Publications, 1973.

Hollister, C. Warren. *The Making of England: 55 B.C. TO 1399, Seventh Edition.* Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996.

Hopkins, Lisa and Matthew Steggle. *Renaissance Literature and Culture.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006.

Hornby, Richard. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. Cranbury, Associated University Presses, 1986.

Houlbrooke, Ralph (ed.). *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority and Government.* London: Taylor & Francis, 2017.

Howard, Nenner. *By Colour of Law: Legal Culture and Constitutional Politics in England, 1660- 1689*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

James I Stuart, *The Political Works of James I*, Charles H. McIlwain (ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918.

Jardine, Lisa. *Still Harping on Daughters Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare.* Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1983.

---. "No Offence I' Th' World Unlawful Marriage in *Hamlet*". *Reading Shakespeare Historically.* New York: Routledge, 1996. 35-47.

Jardine, Alice and Anne M. Mencke. *Shifting Scenes: Interviews on Women, Writing, and Politics in Post-68 France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Jones, Norman. "The Politics of Renaissance England". *A Companion to Renaissance*

Drama. Arthur F. Kinney (ed.) Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. 1-12.

Jowett, B. *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 4*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*. London: Bloomsbury, 2004.

Hornby, Richard. *Drama, Metadrama and Perception.* London: Associated University Press, 1986.

Keenan, Siobhan. "Drama." *Renaissance Literature*. Edinburgh University Press (2008): 59–127. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 February. 2023.

Kinney, F. Arthur. "Introduction: The Dramatic World of the Renaissance". *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*. Arthur F. Kinney (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Leverenz, David. "The Woman in Hamlet: An Interpersonal View". *Signs*. 4.2. (Winter, 1978): 291-30. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 July 2022.

Lumsden, Simon. "Poststructuralism and Modern European Philosophy" *The Edinburgh Companion to* Poststructuralism. Benoit Dillet,Robert Porter,and Iain Mackenzie (eds.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2013. 23-46.

Marcus, Leah Sinanoglou. *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents*. California: University of California Press, 1988.

Marshall, J.D. (ed.) *Poststructuralism, Philosophy, Pedagogy* J.D. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004.

Milner, Andrew and Jeff Browitt. *Contemporary Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. Oxon: Routledge, 2002.

Muir, Kenneth, "Hamlet". *Shakespeare's Tragic Sequence.* London: Hutchinson & CO (Publishers) Ltd, 1972. 55-92

Myers, Henry Allen. *Medieval Kingship.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982.

Nenner, Howard. *By Colour of Law: Legal Culture and Constitutional Politics in England, 1660-1689*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977.

Pérez-Simón, Andrés. "The Concept of Metatheatre: A Functional Approach". *TRANS [Online]*. 11 (2011). Web. 11 March 2020.

Prestwich, Michael. *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377*. London: Routledge, 2003.

"Primogeniture", N.(1)." *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/primogeniture. Accessed 15 September 2024.

Righter, Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.

Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. '"Metatheater': An Essay on Overload". *Arion* (Fall 2002) 10.2: 87-119. *JSTOR*. 25 April 2022.

Ryan, Clarance J. "The Jacobean Oath of Allegiance and English Lay Catholics," *Catholic Historical Review* 28 (1942): 159-183.

Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Charles Ballay and Albert Sechehaye with the colloboration of Albert Riedlinger (eds), Wade Baskin (trans.) New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

Schochet, Gordon J. *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1975.

Schrift, Alan D. "Introduction". *Poststructuralism and Critical Theory's Second Generation*. New York: Routledge, 2014. 1-18.

Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary*

Literary Theory. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005 Fifth Edition

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet, Prince of* Denmark. Edwards, Philip (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

---. *King Lear*. John Dower Wilson and George Ian Duthie (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

---. *As You Like It*. *As You Like It*. Juliet Dusinberre (ed.). London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006.

---. *Richard II*. Anthony B. Dawson and Pual Yachnin (eds.). New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sheerin, Brian. "Making Use of Nothing": The Sovereignties of *King Lear*". *Studies in Philology*. 110.4 (Fall 2013): 789-811.

Singh, Sarup. *Family Relationships in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy Of Manners.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Sommerville, Johann P. "Introduction". *King James VI and I: Political Writings*. Johann P. Sommerville (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. (xv-xxviii).

Stone, Lawrence. The *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 1800*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979.

Thacker, Jonathan. *Role-play and the World as Stage in the Comedia*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002.

Tillyard, E.M. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. Columbia: Chatto & Windus, 1943.

Vallance, Edward. *The Glorious Revolution: 1688 - Britain's Fight for Liberty*. London: Little, Brown Book Group, 2013.

Watson, Curtis Brown. *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Watts, Cedric. *Hamlet*. *Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare*. Harvester: London, 1988.

Wegemer, Gerard B. and Stephen W. Smith. *A Thomas More Source Book*. New York: Catholic University of America Press, 2004.

Wells, Headlam Robin. *Shakespeare's Politics: A Contextual Introduction*. London: Continuum, 2009.

White, R.S. *Avant-Garde Hamlet, Text, Stage, Screen.* London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015.

Williams, James. "Poststructuralism, Pyschoanalysis, Linguistics: Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*". *Understanding Poststructuralism*. New York: Routledge, 2014. 133-12.

---. "Introduction: What is poststructuralism?", *Understanding Poststructuralism*. New York: Routledge, 2014. 1-24

Wilson, Dover J. *What Happens in Hamlet*. London: The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Witt, Mary Anne Frese. *Metatheater and Modernity, Baroque and Neobaroque*. Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013.

Wortham, Christopher. "Shakespeare, James I and the Matter of Britain", *Journal of the English Association*, Vol. 45, No. 182 (Summer 1996): 97–122. *English.* Web. 10 September 2024.

Young, Bruce W. *Family Life in the Age of Shakespeare*. Westport: Greenwood, 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was a great opportunity to write this thesis with my advisor, Prof. Dr. Nevin Yıldırım Koyuncu. I would like to thank her sincerely for her guidance and support throughout the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank my committee members, Prof. Dr. Nilsen Gökçen Uluk and Prof. Dr. Dilek Direnç for their continuous advice and fruitful comments during this process of study. I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Şebnem Toplu as the head of the department of English Language and Literature and my other committee members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aylin Atilla Mat and Asst. Prof. Yasemin Yavaşlar Özakıncı.

As my role model in life, I express my love for my father, who had always been by my side whenever and wherever I was in need. I hope he now rests in peace. I would like to thank my mother and my brother for their love and everything we have shared in this life.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my husband and of course, my beloved daughter Nehir for their continuous love and happiness they have given.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Özge Özkan Gürcü received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the department of English Language and Literature at Ege University in 2008. She gained her Master of Arts degree from the joint degree of English and American studies at Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg, Germany in 2010. She worked as a research assistant at the department of English Language and Literature at Manisa Celal Bayar University from February 2011 until October 2015. Later, she started working at the School of Foreign languages at Yıldız Technical University as an instructor. Her main areas of research include modern British drama, gender studies and comparative literature.