

**T.C.  
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN SHAKESPEARE'S  
HISTORY PLAYS**

**PhD. THESIS**

**Kenan YERLİ**

**Department of English Language and Literature  
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**Thesis Advisor.  
Assist. Prof. Dr. Gillian Mary Elizabeth ALBAN**

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17/01/2017

T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ  
DOKTORA TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Lisans Sonrası Doktora Programı Y1212.625004 numaralı öğrencisi Kenan YERLİ'nin "POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS" adlı doktora tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 28/06/2016 tarih ve 2016/14 sayılı kararı ile oluşturulan jüri tarafından ..... ile Doktora tezi olarak ..... edilmiştir.

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Tezin Savunulduğu Tarih :17/01/2017

Sosyal Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yönetim Kurulu'nun ..... tarih ve ..... sayılı kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

Prof. Dr. Özer KANBUROĞLU  
Enstitü Müdür Vekili





*To my spouse and children,*



## **FOREWORD**

It was a long period to complete this degree and there are many to thank who helped me with my dissertation.

First of all, I would like to express my cordial thanks to my advisor, Dr. Gillian Mary Elizabeth Alban, who has always been supportive of my writing, and provided me with insightful comments and encouragement. Her continuous motivation and guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

I would like to thank my thesis committee members, Prof. Cemile Günseli İşçi and Dr. Oya Berk, for their insightful comments and encouragement.

The support of colleagues and friends assisted in ways outside of researching that contributed to the completion of this thesis. In particular, I would like to thank Gülay Kekeç for her friendship and contribution. She has helped in innumerable ways.

I am grateful to my parents, Zeynel and Yurduşen Yerli, who have always been supportive at every stage of my education and have asked nothing in return except for my success.

I owe the most gratitude to my wife Gülbaşak Yerli. Her patience, support, and existence proved invaluable as I worked my way through each portion of my dissertation. No words can efficiently express my appreciation for all she has done while I was lost on my quest for Shakespeare. She has read my dissertation countless times and provided insightful comments. Soon after I enrolled this PhD program in 2012, initially my son, Ilgar Demir Yerli, and then my daughter, Begüm Yerli, entered our life. Whenever things were not going as planned, just looking at them made it all worthwhile. Their existence have provided me with indefinable strength and patience to complete this dissertation. Without the support of my wife and children, I would not have been able to finish this work.

**January, 2017**

**Kenan YERLİ**



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## SHAKESPEARE'İN TARİHİ OYUNLARINDA SİYASİ PROPAGANDA

### ÖZET

Bu çalışmada William Shakespeare'in tarihi oyunlarındaki siyasi propaganda unsurları irdelenmiş ve bu çerçevede Shakespeare sahnesi ile çağımız kitle iletişim araçları arasında Jean Baudrillard'ın gerçekliğin yok oluşu kavramı ve modern çağın öncelik etkisi, bilişsel çelişki teorisi ve klasik koşullanma gibi sosyal psikoloji teorileri bakımlarından ilişki kurulmaya çalışılmıştır.

Shakespeare'in *Macbeth*, *Kral John'un Yaşamı ve Ölümü*, *II. Richard* ve *III. Richard* isimli oyunlarının yeni tarihselci ve yapısöküm teorileri ışığında irdelenmesi, bu oyunlardaki gerçekliğin yok oluşuna dair bulguların iki farklı yöntemle ortaya koyularak ispatlanması bakımından önemli olmuştur. Yeni tarihselci bir okumada yalnızca Shakespeare'in yaşadığı döneme ait kaynakların kullanılacağı görüşünden yola çıkılarak, yapısöküm tekniğinin eklettik bir bakış açısı kazandıracığı düşünülmüş, ve böylece, metnin kendi içerisindeki şiddet hiyerarşisi ve ikili zıtlıkların da kullanılması suretiyle, Shakespeare'in tarihi oyunlarındaki gerçekliğin yokoluşu ikinci bir bakış açısıyla daha irdelenmiştir. Örneğin *III. Richard* oyununda Shakespeare'in Kral Richard'ı fiziksel açıdan kambur olarak tasvir ettiği görülür. Shakespeare'in tarihi oyunlarının kaynağı olarak kullandığı Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall, Richard Grafton ve Thomas More gibi Elizabeth dönemi tarih yazarları da kitaplarında III. Richard'ı benzer bir şekilde kambur olarak tarif etmektedirler. Halbuki, 2012 yılında Leicester Üniversitesi'nden bir grup araştırmacı Leicester şehrinde yaptıkları bir kazı neticesinde Kral III. Richard'ın kemiklerini bulmuşlar ve iskeleti üzerinde modern tıp tekniklerini kullanarak yaptıkları çalışmalar neticesinde III. Richard'ın aslında kambur olmadığını ispatlamışlardır. Bu örnek yeni tarihselci bir yaklaşımın yanında yapısöküm tekniğinin de kullanılmasının önemini gösterir niteliktedir.

Shakespeare'in tarih oyunları *yeni tarihselci* ve *yapısöküm* teorileri ışığında irdelendiğinde, Shakespeare'in tarihi gerçekleri çarpıtarak, dönem hükümdarları olan Kraliçe I. Elizabeth ve Kral I. James'in siyasi propagandalarını yaptığı görülmektedir. Elizabeth Tiyatrosu'nun dönemin en etkili kitle iletişim aracı olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Shakespeare'in siyasi propagandasının geniş kitlelere ulaştığı söylenebilir. Bu nedenle günümüz kitle iletişim araçları ile Elizabeth Tiyatrosu arasında bu bakımdan bir benzerlik bulunmaktadır. Shakespeare'in sahnelediği tarih oyunlarındaki gerçekliğin yokoluşu ile modern medyadaki gerçekliğin yokoluşu arasında benzerlik bulunmaktadır.

Jean Baudrillard günümüz kitle iletişim araçlarına atıfta bulunarak hazırladığı *Simülakrlar ve Simülasyon* teorisine ait bir kavram olan gerçekliğin yok oluşunu kısaca, günümüzde kitle iletişim araçlarında sunulan gerçek ile gerçek olmayanın birbirine karışması durumu olarak açıklar. *Körfez Savaşı Olmadı (Gulf War Did not Take Place)* isimli kitabında da 1991 yılında meydana gelen ve Birinci Körfez Savaşı olarak bilinen durumun aslında medyanın simülakrlar aracılığıyla yani olmayan

gerekçelerle bir savaşı icat ederek bunu televizyon ekranlarında simüle ettiğini iddia eder. CNN gibi ana akım TV ekranlarında savaş öncesi ve savaş sırasında gösterilen pek çok görüntünün kurmaca olduğunun sonradan ortaya çıkması, Baudrillard'ın bu iddialarını destekler niteliktedir. Örneğin, dönemin Kuveyt büyükelçisinin kızının Amerikan Senatosu'nda kendisini bir hemşire olarak tanıtmaya ve Irak askerlerinin Kuveyt'i işgal ettikleri sırada çalıştığı hastaneye girerek küvezdeki bebekleri dahi katlettiklerini iddia etmesi, savaş öncesi kararsız olan Amerikan kamuoyunu savaş desteklemesi için manipüle ettiği bir algı operasyonu olarak kayıtlara geçmiştir. Benzer şekilde CNN savaş muhabiri Charles Jaco'nun Körfez Savaşı sırasında savaş alanından yaptığını iddia ettiği yayının aslında stüdyo ortamından yapılan bir yayın olduğunun ortaya çıkması Jean Baudrillard'ı haklı çıkarmıştır.

William Shakespeare'in oyunlarında simüle ettiği tarihi olayları ise tür olarak ikiye ayırmak mümkündür. İlkinde genellikle önceki dönemlerde meydana gelen iç savaşlar ve taht kavgaları işlenmektedir, ikincisinde ise güncel siyasi konularla benzerlik gösteren tarihi olayların anlatılması söz konusudur.

Modern medya aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilen siyasi propaganda sırasında kullanılan sosyal psikoloji yöntemlerine benzer şekilde, Shakespeare de oyunlarında öncelik etkisi, bilişsel çelişki teorisi ve klasik koşullanma gibi modern çağa ait sosyal psikoloji tekniklerini günümüzden dört asır öncesinde ustaca kullanmıştır. Öyle ki III. Richard'ı oyunun hemen başında sahneye çıkararak söylediği meşhur tiradı ile uzun uzun nasıl fiziksel ve ruhsal olarak kötü yaratıldığını ve iktidar için Makyavelist bir bakış açısıyla önündeki tüm engelleri aşmaya hazır olduğunu anlatır seyirciye. Shakespeare'in bu sahnede kullandığı öncelik etkisi aslında kişiler ile ilgili olarak ilk edinilen bilgilerin onlar hakkında zihnimizde oluşturduğumuz bilişsel şemada önemli yer tutmasını anlatmaktadır. Aynı kişi hakkında edinilecek sonraki bilgilerin değerlendirilmesinde bu edinilen ilk bilgilerin ne kadar önemli ve etkili olduğu bugün modern psikoloji tarafından bilinmektedir. Ancak Shakespeare Richard'ı bizlere öyle bir sunar ki daha ilk sahnede tüm seyircilerin beyninde olumsuz bir bilişsel şema oluşur. Öyle ki son sahnede Bosworth Meydan Savaşı sırasında kahramanca savaşmaktadır. Atından düşer ve yaya kalır. Kendisine geri çekilmesini söyleyen Catsby'i dinlemez. "Bir ata krallığım!" diye bağıran bir at ister. Çünkü savaşmaya devam edecektir. Ama ölür. Krallığını ve ülkesini korumak üzere yaptığı bu cesurca hareket seyirci tarafından rağbet görmez. Benzer şekilde John Watson'un insanlar üzerinde uyguladığı klasik koşullanma metodu yine Shakespeare'in *III. Richard* oyununda başarıyla uygulanmaktadır. Sahnede her görüldüğünde adam öldürme, kardeşleri birbirine düşürme, ensest ilişki, fesatlık, sözüde durmama gibi pek çok fenalığı gerçekleştirmesi nedeniyle, Shakespeare seyircinin artık Richard'ı sahnede her türlü fenalığın kaynağı yani uyararı olarak algılanmasını sağlar. Shakespeare'in Richard'ı her daim bir fenalık yapabilecek birisi olarak sunması, onun çağlar boyu kötülüğün sembolü haline getirmiştir.

İnsanoğlu zamanda, bilimde ve teknolojiye ilerledikçe, tüm zamanların en büyük oyun yazarlarından birisi olan Shakespeare'in oyunlarını modern veya postmodern teori ve metodlarla yeniden değerlendirmek mümkün olabilmektedir. Bu nedenle Shakespeare çağlar boyu her seferinde yeniden keşfedilmiştir, ve keşfedilmeye devam edecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Elizabeth tiyatrosu, William Shakespeare, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, yapısöküm, yeni tarihselcilik, sosyal psikoloji, simülakrlar ve simülasyon*

## POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS

### ABSTRACT

This dissertation has attempted to understand the political propaganda in the history plays of William Shakespeare and draw connection between the Shakespearean Stage and the mass media of our age in terms of the loss of the real concept of Jean Baudrillard and social psychology techniques such as primacy effect, cognitive dissonance theory and classical conditioning of the modern age.

Analysing *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* in the light of new historicism and deconstruction theories has given the chance of crosschecking the findings about the loss of the real through two different methods. Both the outcomes of the new historicist analysis, which demonstrated the distortions of the historical events from the windows of the Renaissance authors like Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall, Richard Grafton and George Buchanan, and the outcomes of the deconstruction which revealed the binary oppositions causing violent hierarchies for the favour of the monarchy have indicated the fact that Shakespeare distorted historical realities in his history plays. Both the loss of the real as the outcome of the new historicist and deconstructive analyses, and Shakespeare's quality in using social psychology techniques such as classical conditioning, primacy effect or cognitive dissonance theory have enabled this dissertation to reinterpret Shakespeare from a different perspective.

William Shakespeare, probably the greatest playwright of all times, always allows us to restudy and reinterpret his plays in the light different methods and techniques. As long as human being advances in time, science and technology, his plays allow us to reinterpret them from different perspectives. Therefore, it is possible to maintain that Shakespeare is never out of date and will always attract the attention of the researchers.

**Keywords:** *Elizabeth theatre, William Shakespeare, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, deconstruction, new historicism, social psychology, simulacra and simulation*



Today we live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, political groups... So I ask, in my writing, what is real? Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms. I do not distrust their motives; I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing.

– Philip K. Dick (1985, p. 4)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare scholars of the mid-twentieth century, like E.M.W. Tillyard (1944) and L. B. Campbell (1947) underpinned the view that Shakespeare's history plays were the reflection of the political life of Renaissance England. For these old historicist authors, Shakespeare was not directly responsible for the political messages in his history plays. According to Campbell "the chief function of history was considered to be that of acting as a political mirror" (1947, p. 15). She maintains Shakespeare's histories "[served] a special purpose in elucidating a political problem of Elizabeth's day and in bringing to bear upon this problem the accepted political philosophy of the Tudors" (p. 125).

However, new historicist critics of the 1980s, like Stephen Greenblatt, Leonard Tennenhouse, Jonathan Dollimore or Alan Sinfield defended the idea that Shakespeare's history plays were part of the state propaganda. According to Leonard Tennenhouse, for instance, there was a bilateral relationship between the monarchy and Shakespeare's history plays which allowed two sides to benefit mutually: "Shakespeare [used] his drama to authorise political authority, and political authority as he [represented] it, in turn [authorised] art" (1986, p. 111). In his work *The Purpose of Playing* Louis Montrose describes theatre as one of the strongest 'ideological state apparatuses' of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras for the political propaganda of the Monarchy (1996, p. 99).

Although some critics maintain that histories of Shakespeare are only fictions, it is important to remember that all the main characters in Shakespeare's histories are real historical figures and Shakespeare rarely uses fictional characters in his history plays. Besides using real historical figures and events in his histories, Shakespeare puts forth to tell historical truth in his history plays. In the prologue of his Henry VIII Shakespeare promises that audiences may find the historical realities in his play: "Such as give/ Their money out of hope they may believe/ May here find truth too" (1.1: 7-9). It is clear from these lines that one of the reasons of Shakespeare to write history plays was to enlighten the audiences with the so-called historical realities. For that reason, it would be simplistic to claim Shakespeare's history plays as only fictions.

Briefly, some scholars like Tillyard and Campbell defend the view that Shakespeare's histories are the political reflection of his time, and some others like Tennenhouse or Montrouse defend the view that Shakespeare's history plays were the ideological state apparatus of the monarchy.

Here, it is significant to delineate the fact that in Shakespeare's time theatre was the only and the most powerful mass communication instrument in England. Therefore, the history plays of William Shakespeare had an important role in the political propaganda of the monarchy. Grasping this function of the Elizabethan theatre is highly important to understand the gist of the hypothesis of this dissertation which attempts to draw connection between the modern mass media and Shakespeare's history plays in the light of simulacra and simulation theory of Jean Baudrillard, and social psychology techniques. It is fact that Shakespeare incorporated real and fictitious elements during the representation of historical events in his history plays. The result of this intertwinement of reality with the fictitious elements was nothing different from the loss of the real concept of Baudrillard. On the grounds that the reality has been replaced with the fictional elements in the history plays of Shakespeare, it would be possible to claim the loss of the real in those plays.

Analyses of *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* in the light of new historicism and deconstruction theories give the possibility of crosschecking the findings about the loss of the real through two different methods. Both the outcomes of the new historicist analysis, which demonstrate the distortions of the historical events from the windows of the Renaissance authors such as Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall, Richard Grafton and George Buchanan, and the outcomes of the

deconstruction, which reveal the binary oppositions causing violent hierarchies for the favour of the monarchy, indicate the fact that Shakespeare distorted historical realities in his history plays. Both the loss of the real as the outcome of the new historicist and deconstructive analyses and Shakespeare's quality in using social psychology methods lead the way for reinterpretation of Shakespeare from a modern or postmodern perspective.

Here, it is useful to begin explaining the essence of simulacra and simulation theory as the loss of reality. It is a fact that, since Plato, there have been some views or theories about the art or media which put forward the idea that art or media<sup>1</sup> is the imitation or reflection of reality in the western philosophy world. According to Plato's theory of forms, there are three levels of reality. The first stage is the idea of an object in the world of ideals. The second stage is the physical copy or imitation of this idea. A bed which is made by a carpenter, for instance, represents the second stage of reality. The third level of reality is a painting of a bed which imitates the carpenter's bed. For that reason, Plato believes that art including painting or tragedy merely reflects people, realities of life or the world. Interpreting this Platonist understanding of reality and imitation relation of the world in an idiosyncratic style, Baudrillard categorises the epiphany of the image into four successive phases. Firstly, he describes the first stage as "the reflection of a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). Secondly he describes a stage which "masks and denatures a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). Thirdly, Baudrillard describes a stage which "masks the absence of a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). Fourthly and lastly Baudrillard depicts a stage having "no relation to any reality whatsoever" of which he says "it is its own pure simulacrum" (1994, p. 6). Both Plato and Baudrillard claim that we live in a world consisting of unrealities, copies, fakes, simulacra, whatever you call it.

*Richard III* is a very important play to interpret the loss of the real concept of Baudrillard in Shakespeare's history plays. In 2012, a group of scientists from the University of Leicester excavated a car park in Leicester city to find the grave of the last Plantagenet King of England, Richard III. Finding his haphazardly thrown skeleton 527 years after his death was enormously exciting and a chance to enlighten the controversial sides of the history of the Tudor Era. Richard III was the last Yorkist king to rule England until 1485. In that year, in the wake of the Battle of Bosworth, his dead body was brought to Leicester city on a horse and buried indiscriminately.

Henry Tudor, on the other hand, was the winner of this Battle. Therefore, he ascended to the throne of England as Henry VII and the Tudors reigned England until the death of Elizabeth I in 1603. In this era, the Tudor Propaganda dominated almost everywhere in England. Thenceforth, as part of a Tudor propaganda, Richard has come to be known as a villainous king of England for ages. Nearly all chronicles written in that period by the authors like Edward Hall, Raphael Holinshed, Richard Grafton or Thomas More were entirely verbatim which slandered Richard systematically. According to More (2005, pp. 9-10), for instance, Richard was born with physical deformation, even with teeth in an unnatural way. William Shakespeare also had an important role in the creation of a so called monster king Richard III. He slandered Richard in a similar way with his contemporary historians. In Shakespeare's play Richard confesses that he has a deformed and unfinished body which was sent before his time. Contrary to the chroniclers or Shakespeare's tale, the findings of a recently conducted research on Richard's skeleton have verified the fact that Richard III was not a hunchback or physically deformed (Grey Friars Research Team, 2015, p. 132). He had a slight scoliosis - curvature of the spine - which could not be figured out easily by other people. In another historical document, John Rous' *Roll Chronicle* which was written and drawn in 1483, before the Tudors, Richard does not seem to have any physical deformation. Both recent researches conducted by the University of Leicester and the illustrated *Roll Chronicle* of John Rous prove the fact that Tudors slandered Richard III systematically and Shakespeare was one of the most important parts of this political propaganda.

Given that Shakespeare represented the stories of the previous kings of Britain in his history plays with both real and unreal information, it is possible to associate the way Shakespeare staged his history plays and Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory. Because, Baudrillard claims that the media of the 21st century provides us with both real and unreal information what he calls hyperreal and in which the reality is intertwined with unreality. Similarly, Shakespeare's theatre stages were simulation areas, too, in which the reality was intertwined with the unreality. For this reason it is possible to say that there is merely a technological difference between the political propaganda realized through Shakespeare's theatre stage and the political propaganda realized by modern mass communication tools like the newspaper, radio, television, internet or cinema in our age. In those years' conditions, the political powers of Renaissance England considered the function of the theatre as an extremely

remarkable mass communication tool as in the example of Essex rebellion. Brian Walsh (2009, p. 31) asserts that Queen's Men as a play company took its power from royal authority and they were requested to perform plays in agreement with the political interests of the royalty such as the evoking of anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish propaganda of the royalty. Briefly stating, both the rulers and opposing politicians in Britain attempted to employ the theatre effectively. It is obvious that in his history plays Shakespeare generally served the political interests of the reigning monarchy. However, there were times when opposing powers used Shakespeare's play company for their own political benefits, too. But most of the time such attempts ended at the court. According to Roslyn L. Knutson (2004, p. 356), for instance, after a performance of *Richard II* commissioned at the Globe in February 1601 by supporters of the Earl of Essex, the players were questioned for their role and relation with Essex rebellion by the lord chief justice. The players defended themselves by emphasizing the commercial side of the theatre and that they were promised a 40 shilling additional payment by the supporters of the Earl of Essex. This is a good example to understand the position of the theatre in the political manipulations and to see the monarchic pressure over the playwrights and actors. Under this circumstance, it is crucial to remember that Shakespeare was a playwright and in order to maintain his artistic life, he had to be in good relations with the monarchy and important to know that his main goal was to attract the attention of the audiences.

In an age, before the publication of the first newspaper and advanced mass communication methods, theatre had a substantial role in mass communication in England. Especially during the reign of Elizabeth I and James I it was the most remarkable communication organ which took over the media role by realizing the functions that would be used by television, cinema, radio, newspaper and internet in our times.

Shakespeare wrote his three history plays *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *King John* in Elizabethan period. When the relation between the roots of the reigning monarch and the distortions in Shakespeare's history plays are analysed, it is feasible to maintain that Shakespeare distorted historical realities for the favour of the monarchy. However, we know that the sources of Shakespeare's history plays were the chronicle writers like Holinshed, Hall, Grafton and More who had already distorted historical realities for the favour of the Tudors. In some cases, Shakespeare made worse distortions

independently from those chronicles. For instance, in his *Richard III* Shakespeare accuses Richard for the death of his brother Clarence and his two nephews in the tower. Neither Holinshed nor other chroniclers accuse Richard for those murders. Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* when King James ascended to the throne of England. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare shows Banquo as a good character who is loyal to king Duncan. However, Scottish historian George Buchanan tells in his *History of Scotland* that Banquo helped Macbeth to kill Duncan (1827, vol. 1, p. 331). We have to take into account that Shakespeare lived in an era ruled by absolutist rulers and under strict monitoring of the Master of the Revels.

In the light of this information it is possible to say that without understanding the political atmosphere, religious and socio-economic changes in England in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, it would be difficult to evaluate Shakespeare's history plays. Conversion of society from Catholicism into Protestantism, plots against both Queen Elizabeth and King James, emergence of capitalism, decline of feudalism and the rise of mercantilism and bourgeois class were the important events of Renaissance England.

The supereminence of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama stemmed from its idiosyncratic style. First of all, it was a kind of drama being performed by professional troupes for both noble and ordinary audiences. Secondly, they performed their plays by troupes travelling to the furthest districts of Britain and in specially built theatre houses like the 'Globe' and the 'Theatre'. Consequently, Renaissance theatre was a kind of entertaining tool to reach the masses by its distinctive troupes and playhouses.

Given that Queen Elizabeth and King James had close relations with play companies and supported them directly as their patrons, it is possible to state that these theatre companies were not free enough to express their political views. Rather, they were a kind of weapon of the monarchy, similar to the media in our age. All theatre companies were under strict censor of the Monarchy through a governmental body called the Master of the Revels. Queen Elizabeth I formed this governmental body in order to control the plays and intervene their scenarios when needed.

William Shakespeare emerged as a remarkable playwright, actor, and shareholder in acting troupes and theatre buildings in this era. Accounting human relations excellently in his plays, Shakespeare wrote numerous plays concerning British history. In this

way, Shakespeare gave messages to the masses about the power struggles and their results for England from his own political perspective.

The successive rulers of England, Elizabeth I and James I, lived in Shakespeare's lifetime and they were closely interested in the theatre. As a famous playwright and actor of his time, Shakespeare was also popular in the court and he had the opportunities of performing his plays before Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Seeing the remarkable strength of the theatre as the most comprehensive way of reaching the masses, the British Monarchy did not miss this chance and showed great interest in the theatre with the wish of employing this effective mass communication tool for their own political propaganda. The number of audiences in Renaissance theatre was so high that a staged play could reach up to 20,000 people in three days time. As Paul Whitfield White (2004, p. 109) stated, approximately 20,000 theatregoers watched pageant plays at Whitsuntide in three days time in the late 16th century. Given the overall population of England - which was only 3,000,000 - and London - which was about 160,000-, the number of the theatregoers reaching between 10,000 and 20,000 was really high. Despite restrictions for female audiences going to the theatre, an average play could reach up to 10% of London's population in just a few days, and which must be considered as a good rate.

Shakespeare's theatre company, Lord Chamberlain's Men, altered its name to King's Men after James I ascended to the throne. The relation between the British rulers and the Lord Chamberlain's Men or later the King's Men was similar with the relations of political powers and media bosses in our century. In other words, the playhouse of Lord Chamberlain's Men or King's Men was a part of the political propaganda of the monarchy in which Shakespeare's history plays were simulated in order to influence the political perceptions of the audiences. Besides the Monarchy, opposing Powers attempted to employ Shakespeare's play company, too. According to Diana E. Henderson (2004, p. 250), the conspirators of Earl of Essex got in touch with Shakespeare's play company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and proposed a good payment to stage Richard II a night before their famous Essex's Rebellion in 1601.

Another claim of this dissertation is that Shakespeare utilized social psychology techniques in his political propaganda successfully. Shakespeare was an extremely successful playwright in convincing audiences by the methods of social psychology

he used in his plays about four hundred years before social psychology emerged as a discipline in the beginning of the 20th century. In order to exemplify this it is crucial to pay attention to the fact that most of the time Shakespeare presents the personalities of the characters that he wishes to vilify or praise in the opening scenes of the plays. In *Richard III* he introduces Richard of Gloucester through a soliloquy in the beginning of his play to increase the persuasive power of the speaker. In other words he employs primacy effect effectively. In the Dictionary of Psychology Andrew M. Colman describes primacy effect as follows: “In impression formation, the tendency for information about a person that is presented first to have a larger effect on the overall impression of the person that the recipient forms than information presented later” (2009, p. 691). For example in *Richard III* Shakespeare makes Richard enter the stage alone in the first scene of the play and introduces him as a disgusting person through a long soliloquy.

I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,  
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them; (1.1: 18-23).

Here Richard confesses his deformity and this reality discomforts him. Therefore, he rebels against his situation and decides to manipulate his two brothers to produce a deadly hate between each other. “Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,/ By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,/ To set my brother Clarence and the king/ In deadly hate the one against the other” (1.1: 32-35).

Thus the audiences see the evil in Richard in the opening scene of the play. He confesses that he decides to be a villain and then he tells his deadly plans for Clarence. This soliloquy of Richard is a kind of confession of his deformity and is important for indicating the devil in him. Presenting Richard as a villain in the opening scene of the play is Shakespeare’s strategy and can be evaluated as a successful way of increasing the credibility among the audiences. A research conducted by Kruglanski and Freund in 1983 indicates that when people do not have much time for making decisions just like in the theatre or in times when a correct or incorrect decision does not have much importance, the power of the primacy effect increases (cited in Kağıtçıbaşı 2010, p. 247).

Today we know that Shakespeare attempted to show Richard as worse than he was. On the official web page of British Royal Family there is an explanation under the portrait of Richard III accounting for the fact that Richard III was the victim of Tudor propaganda. “Richard III (artist unknown) c.1520. This portrait was altered at an early date to give the impression that Richard was a hunchback. It is an example of the Tudors’ dynastic propaganda” (Richard III, 2016).

This dissertation analysed four history plays of Shakespeare; *King John*, *Macbeth*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* in the light of new historicism and deconstruction to find out how Shakespeare distorted historical truth and how he propagated for the Tudor and Stuart Families in his plays. On the grounds that the findings of these new historicist and deconstructive criticisms verify the simulacra and simulation in Shakespeare’s history plays, evaluating them in the light of Jean Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation theory constitutes a highly crucial section of this dissertation. Therefore, it is possible to compare the similarities between the simulacra and simulation of our age and the simulacra and simulation which emerged approximately four hundred years before our time in Shakespearean Stage.

Concisely, this dissertation indicates the fact that Shakespeare’s history plays were employed as a means of propaganda by the political powers in England with similar political propaganda techniques of modern mass media in our age. Secondly, Shakespeare’s knowledge of social psychology was beyond his era and he used social psychology techniques auspiciously in his history plays. The analysis of Shakespeare’s history plays explains to us how he uses modern methods of social psychology in order to persuade the masses successfully in his plays.

Solomon Asch who was one of the leading social psychologists in the USA underlined the importance of the first impression for the first time in his article ‘Forming Impressions of Personality’ in 1946. According to Asch, when people have information about something for the first time, they form a cognitive schema and tend to evaluate the latter information in accordance with this schema (1946, p. 259). That is to say, when people have positive information about someone for the first time, they tend to evaluate the latter behaviour or information of this person in accordance with this schema. When people have negative information about someone initially, they tend to evaluate the latter attitudes or information about this person negatively. This is called primacy effect. As explained previously, in his *Richard III* Shakespeare

introduces Richard in the beginning of the play as a real villain. For that reason when the audiences saw Richard for the first time on the stage, they must have had negative information and formed their cognitive schemas about Richard negatively. In the light of this information it is possible to state that the audiences must have evaluated the latter information they got somewhere inside or outside the theatre about Richard negatively. Besides primacy effect, Shakespeare uses classical conditioning theory perfectly in his *Richard III*. After Ivan Pavlov having found the relation between a voice that his dogs had heard before they got their food, John B. Watson went a step further and applied classical conditioning theory on human beings. In Pavlov's experiment the bell voice was an external stimulus of food that caused the salivation of the dogs. With the beginning soliloquy, Richard himself conditions the audiences that they are going to watch a real villain. In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, *Richard* acts as the stimulus of villainy. This is highly similar to the propaganda methods of the US government made through CNN during the Gulf War in 1990. In his book *Towers of Deception*, Canadian writer Barrie Zwicker recounts how 15 year old daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador pretended to be a nurse who had eye witnessed to the persecution of Iraqi soldiers to the incubator babies in a hospital in Kuwait, before a congressional committee. As a result, using the mainstream media, the US government could condition American society to the idea that Iraqi soldiers who had even killed the innocent babies at the hospital, could do anything harmful with the mass destruction weapons they had (2006, p. 283).

For that reason, this dissertation is important for comparing the relations between the politicians and the mass communication tools of both today and Shakespearean age. Because when Shakespeare's history plays are criticized in the light of Simulacra and Simulation theory, it is easy to realize that there is only technological difference between Shakespeare's Renaissance Theatre and the mass communication tools of the century we live in. Therefore, criticism and comparison of the 16th and 21st centuries in terms of mass communication and political propaganda allow us to understand the similarities and the differences between the conditions of two different eras better.

Briefly stating, there was a systematic political propaganda in the course of the reign of the Tudors and Stuarts. Shakespeare's play company Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men, was one of the most important propaganda methods of both Queen Elizabeth and King James. The similarities between Shakespeare's history plays in

Renaissance Theatre and the modern mass media in terms of political propaganda and the loss of the real enable us to bridge the two different periods and to evaluate them in the light of simulacra and simulation theory of Jean Baudrillard.

On the other hand, Shakespeare was an excellent playwright for embedding modern social psychology techniques, such as primacy effect, classical conditioning or cognitive dissonance theory brilliantly in his history plays to make political propaganda more efficiently, four centuries before the invention of social psychology as a discipline in our modern epoch.

Finally, the findings of this dissertation is sufficient to support Habermas' famous claim 'Modernity- an incomplete project' which has not finished yet at least in the field of art, specifically in the theatre for two reasons. First of all, William Shakespeare was a playwright who lived in early modern era but used modern social psychology techniques excellently four centuries before their invention in the modern age as a political manipulation technique in his history plays. In other words, William Shakespeare proved that he was a modern playwright by using social psychology methods of the modern age four centuries before the emergence of social psychology as a discipline in the twentieth century. For that reason we may assume William Shakespeare as a modern playwright. On the other hand, Jean Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory has been accepted as a postmodern theory by many circles. Thanks to the overlap of the loss of the reality in Shakespeare's history plays with the simulacra and simulation theory of Jean Baudrillard, or our ability of criticising Shakespeare's history plays in the light of simulacra and simulation theory, Shakespeare shows us the existence of the loss of the reality or simulacra and simulation in the early modern period. For that reason the theories which have come to be called postmodern are indeed not anything different from the modern in the field of art. According to Baudrillard it is difficult to differentiate the reality and fantasy presented by contemporary media, film or advertising in our age. That is to say, according to Baudrillard the loss of the reality is a specific situation which belongs to our age. He calls this situation hyperreal in which the real and the unreal are intertwined with each other. Defenders of postmodernism claim that postmodernism is a new condition and different from modernism. However, Shakespeare proves that the loss of the reality existed in the early modern era, too. This fact shows that simulacra and simulation is not a specific theory of postmodernism. It is possible to

criticize Shakespearean stage in the light of simulacra and simulation theory. As Prof. Peter Barry describes in his *Beginning a Theory* simulacra and simulation is a kind of latter day Platonism. With this aspect, the findings of this dissertation is sufficient to support Habermas' famous claim 'Modernity-an incomplete project' which has not finished yet, at least in the field of art, specifically in the theatre. Because there are not many differences between the Shakespearean Stage and the modern mass media except for the technological equipment difference. Secondly Jean Baudrillard himself states in an interview with Mike Gane that he is not a postmodern writer and he says postmodernism is nothing at all "even if I prove that I am not a postmodernist, it won't change anything. People will put that label on you. Once they have done that it sticks" (2003, p. 21).

Shakespeare was a playwright who lived in Renaissance Era but used modern social psychology techniques successfully four centuries before their invention in the modern age as a political manipulation technique in his history plays. On the grounds that no other contemporary theatre of our age excels Shakespearean theatre, the findings of this dissertation endorse Jurgen Habermas' view about modernism in the field of Art, especially in the Theatre.

## **2. POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN RENAISSANCE ENGLAND**

We know that political and social events of the medieval ages were the main sources of the history plays of William Shakespeare, and he took the political agenda of his time into account when he was writing his history plays. For that reason, it is important to know these significant social, political and religious events of the early modern England in order to understand and analyse Shakespeare's history plays better.

In 1500s England's economy was greatly based on agriculture and the political power was in the hands of the land owners. In this feudalist system, the peasants paid great amount of tithes to these local landowner lords for they lived and worked in their lands. The power of the monarchy greatly depended on these lords, who were strongly represented in the House of Lords, the upper house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The king or the queen was the head and biggest of these feudal land owners.

### **2.1 The Tudors**

Coming of the Tudors was an important event in itself, because it ended the civil wars known as the War of the Roses which took place between the two royal houses of York and Lancaster. These wars came about between 1455 and 1485, and ended with the death of the last Plantagenet King Richard III in the Battle of Bosworth. As a result of this war, Henry VII, a member of the Tudor House, ascended to the English throne. Because it was the end of the civil war and the beginning of a new period under the Tudor dynasty, it is seen as one of the turning points in the history of England. During the Wars of the Roses between 1455 and 1485 many powerful lords died in the battles. When Henry VII came into power in 1485, he did not appoint new lords in lieu of the dead lords and he confined the number of the lords to control them more easily (Kavanagh 1985, p. 150).

Commencing with Henry VII until the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, the Tudors ruled England for more than a century. Having ruled England for 6 years, Henry VII

died and his son Henry VIII ascended to the throne. One thing is certain that King Henry VIII (1491-1547), his marriages and his children who ruled England successively had very important roles in the history of England.

## **2.2 Invention of Printing and the Emergence of Protestantism**

Prior to delineating the important political and social events of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, it is highly remarkable to remember the invention of Gutenberg's printing and its role during the Reformation movement as the basis of the main political, religious and social events of all Europe. Printing had emerged as one of the greatest inventions in the history of mass communication, a century before Shakespeare was born. It triggered the Reformation and Renaissance movements which then started enlightenment or age of reason in Europe, to say nothing of its impact on people's literacy. Gutenberg's printing system soon proved the fact that whoever controls the information had one of the most powerful weapons in the world. That is to say, controlling the media provides politicians with a great power, and all political powers in the world would wish to have it. In the wake of his invention of the printing press, Gutenberg published the Bible as the first important book in 1455 and he could distribute the holy book to all layers of society. So as to appreciate the importance of printing in the history of mass communication, figuring out its role in the Reformation movement would be adequate. Because when all strata of society, initially in Germany and then in all Europe, got the correct information about the real Christianity, they reacted against the Catholic Church and started to protest against the religious authority. Many people followed Martin Luther in his Reformation movement which was a protest against the Catholic Church. The Reformation was launched in Germany during the early sixteenth century. It was a religious movement and started under the pioneership of Martin Luther in order to alter the unfair attitudes and doings of the Roman Catholic Church. "Martin Luther a Catholic Monk... distributed printed documents to promote his religious arguments" (Paxson 2010, pp. 6-7). In the end, their rebellion resulted in constituting a new Christian denomination called 'Protestantism'. As a consequence, I would like to claim that Luther was the first person to control the power of media in the most effective manner which formed a new Christian denomination in the end. After he had declared his *Ninety-five Theses*

against the Catholic Church in 1517, they were printed and quickly spread throughout Europe including England in 1518.

Payton Paxson describes the Reformation movement as an effort “to change what they saw as wrongful beliefs and activities within the church, which resulted in many followers leaving the Roman Catholic Church in protest and forming new Christian sects” (2010, p. 6). This huge power of printing has inevitably altered everything in the western world thoroughly. Firstly, the number of available books augmented day by day and their prices reduced sharply to competitive levels thanks to printing. Secondly, the number of literate people increased. These two factors accelerated the conveyance of knowledge to the furthestmost places and then had a notable role in the commencement of the Reformation movement. This triggered the enlightenment period which later opened the gate of the modern age for the western world.

According to Irving Fang printing was the beginning of the modern world (1997, p. 6). Therefore, Gutenberg brilliantly completed a project which had already started in China with the invention of paper, which accelerated the conveyance of information everywhere on printed documents.

In the same period in England, William Tyndale translated Bible into English for the first time. As Stephen Greenblatt explains in his work *Renaissance Self Fashioning* from 1525 to the death of Tyndale in 1536 approximately 50,000 copies were printed and distributed in England and people could read it secretly because it was dangerous to read it publicly (1980, pp. 95-96). Although Protestantism started to find supporters in England during the reign of Henry VIII, the real proliferation of this new denomination happened during the reigns of his son King Edward VI and his daughter Queen Elizabeth. Like in all other countries of Europe, Reformation of the Catholic Church and the emergence of a new sect was probably the most important event of the 16th century in England. However the transformation of English society from Catholicism to Protestantism had different characteristics than its counterparts in Europe.

### **2.3 Henry VIII and the Anglican Church**

Although people had the chance of reading the English version of the Bible, it is possible to state that the Reformation movement in England started just after King

Henry VIII had a dispute with the Catholic Church. This became the beginning of the transformation of English society from Catholicism to Protestantism. The main reason of the dispute with the Papacy was Henry's demand of annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. Catholic Church did not permit their divorce, and King Henry VIII simply rejected the Papal supremacy. Then he established the Anglican Church and declared himself as the head of this new English Church by the First Act of Supremacy, in 1534. Today this Act of Supremacy is thought as the beginning of English Reformation movement. Having divorced Catherine of Aragon, Henry married with Anne Boleyn and they had a daughter named Elizabeth. When Elizabeth was just three-years-old Anne Boleyn was beheaded with the accusation of adultery. This meant that Elizabeth would not have been able to claim to be the heir to the throne because of illegitimacy.

The fall of Anne Boleyn and the subsequent bastardisation of Elizabeth meant that Henry VIII was temporarily without an heir. A second Act of Succession, announcing Henry's right to nominate his own successor in case Jane Seymour could not give him an heir, was introduced to Parliament in June 1536. The Duke of Richmond was the name on everyone's lips (Childs 2008, p. 111).

But prior to his death, Henry VIII had declared Elizabeth as his legitimate daughter in a third Act of Succession and therefore, she became a legitimate heir of the throne. The dissolution of the Monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII caused a great amount of people working as monk or nun to be homeless and poor. Similarly, agrarian developments in the second half of the 16th century triggered the emergence of capitalist system and this created a great number of jobless poor people in Elizabethan England. The discovery of a new continent and colonies on the other hand, boosted mercantilism. Abundance of raw material which were brought from the colonies caused a high inflation in England.

Transformation of English society from feudalism to capitalism, boosting mercantilism and the dissolution of the Catholic Monasteries after the formation of the new Anglican Church created a poor labourer class, who did not have their own land, and a new bourgeois class getting richer in the 1500s.

Queen Elizabeth was successful in following a susceptible policy between the bourgeois class and the feudal noble lords. She also tried to protect the social rights of the poor through a series of laws put into effect in 1563, 1572, 1576 and 1597. Finally

in 1601, she introduced the Poor Law, which is today considered to be the first government supported welfare programme in the world.

She was successful in balancing the economic relations between the bourgeois class and feudal lords. But this was not the only issue in Elizabethan England. Besides the transformation of society from feudalism into capitalism, there was the transformation of society from Catholicism into Protestantism. After Henry VIII his three children ascended to the throne successively. In 1547 Edward IV, the son of Jane Seymour and Henry VIII, ascended to the throne as the first Protestant ruler of England. Following his early death in 1553, Mary, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, became the Queen of England. She was Catholic and attempted to restore the Catholic traditions in England. She married Philip II of Spain who was the son of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. During her six year reign, Queen Mary arrested Protestants and many of them “were burned at the stake” (Murphy 2012, p. 191). Many Protestants had to move to Germany or Switzerland and most of them were influenced from Calvinistic thought. She fought against the Protestants and Elizabeth fought against the Catholics. For that reason, a big struggle was launched between Elizabeth and Mary. As Stephen Greenblatt explains in his article ‘Invisible Bullets’ both Catholics and Protestants used to call each other atheists (1994, p. 19). Then in 1558, after the death of Queen Mary I, Elizabeth I ascended to the throne and Protestantism prevailed in England again. This time Elizabeth did everything so as to protect her authority: “To meet the threat, the state does what it believes it must. It enacts increasingly harsh penalties on Catholics, and seeks out and confiscates Catholic books and religious articles” (Murphy 2012, p. 194). As we learn from Murphy’s quoting from a historian, it was treason to belong to a particular group of people, the Roman Catholics, in Elizabethan England (2012, p. 194). Protestants who fled to Germany and Switzerland returned when Elizabeth I ascended to the throne of England. These Puritans were influential Protestant minority who had been influenced from Calvinist doctrine during their stay in Germany and Switzerland. When Puritans came into the power, they closed all theaters in 1642.

## **2.4 Elizabeth I**

Elizabeth I was not only the last member of the Tudor Dynasty, but also the second Protestant monarch of England who ruled under Protestantism and fought against

Catholicism for 45 years. Therefore, she had an unprecedented role in converting her country from Catholicism to Protestantism. But the political chaos did not come to an end from her ascending to the throne in 1558 until her death in 1603. She had to struggle with a series of uprisings and plots against her authority nearly all her life. While opposing powers were planning to bring a Catholic ruler to the throne, Queen Elizabeth I was trying to secure her Protestant regime with severe precautions. To put it briefly, Protestantism came to the forefront in England in 1547, when Edward VI ascended to the throne. Following the death of Edward VI in 1553, his Catholic sister Mary ruled England until she died in 1558. In the wake of her death, Elizabeth I ascended to the throne of England. In her reign, Protestantism dominated England for 45 years uninterrupted. During this period, Catholics arranged many plots and uprisings in order to bring Queen Elizabeth I down from the throne and bring a Catholic ruler in lieu of her. Elizabeth I was childless and the next legitimate heir of the throne, Queen Mary of Scotland, was Catholic. There was a competition between the two queens and they did not have friendly relations.

Because Mary Queen of Scots had claimed the throne of England previously, Elizabeth saw her as a threat and imprisoned her in 1568 when she came to England (Pollard 2006, p. 44). Her coming to England triggered the unsuccessful rising of the discontent lords of North in 1569, but Elizabeth could suppress this Northern Rebellion. A year later Queen Elizabeth was excommunicated by the Pope in 1570. In 1571 a banker called Roberto Ridolfi organized another unsuccessful plot to restore the old faith again. Although it was an abortive attempt, the Ridolfi plot drew the attention of English Parliament to the potential threat against Queen Elizabeth I. Similarly in 1584 another plot attempt by Sir Francis Throckmorton was revealed before it was put into practice. The aim of all these plots was to free Queen Mary of Scots and make her the Catholic queen of England.

So as to understand the level of threat coming from the Catholics it is useful to look at the research of David Dean about a bill discussed in the House of Commons in Elizabethan England. According to Dean:

Some MPs thought the bill should provide for an interim government if the Queen was assassinated. Indeed, some had wanted Mary to be specifically named and a suggestion that any heir in league with the Pope be disabled was rejected because it interfered with the succession, 'a thinge most dislikinge to hir Majestie and utterlye forbid- den us to deale with' (2002, p. 64).

Two years later in 1586, Queen Mary of Scots this time organized the Babington Plot in order to assassinate and overthrow Queen Elizabeth I (Cheetham 2000, p. 148). Anthony Babington, the leader of this conspiracy, was appointed by Queen Mary of Scotland. He failed in the plot and “Was destined to play a key role in Queen Mary’s downfall” (Cheetham 2000, p. 147). After the plot had failed and the support of Mary Queen of Scotland for the assassination had been revealed, Queen Mary’s tragic end started. She was initially put in prison and stayed there for some time. Then she was convicted of treason and executed at Fotheringhay Castle on 8 February 1587 (Cheetham 2000, p. XXII).

After the execution of Queen Mary of Scots Spanish King Philip II, the leader of the strongest naval army of the World decided to avenge and invade England. It was a great threat for England and Protestantism. A year later, in 1588, strong Spanish Naval Forces came to England. But England’s decisive victory over the strong Spanish Armada not only secured the Protestant regime of Elizabeth I and protected England from a Catholic invasion but also helped to the creation of England as a nation-state.

Among the plots and uprisings, Essex Rebellion of 1601 was a different one in terms of its characteristics. Although it was an uprising, rebels neither aimed to restore the old faith nor wanted to harm Queen Elizabeth. They just wanted to warn Queen Elizabeth against harmful people around her, especially Robert Cecil (Dickinson 2012, pp. 50-51).

Briefly, from 1558 to 1603 during the Elizabethan Era, Protestantism prevailed in England without interruption. Although Catholics arranged many plots and uprisings in order to bring the Queen Elizabeth I down and bring a Catholic ruler instead, they failed each time.

In accordance with the religious, social and political changes in England, Renaissance English Theatre abandoned its some medieval characteristics like mystery plays or morality plays.

## **2.5 James I**

In the wake of the death of Queen Elizabeth I, in 1603, James VI of Scotland from the House of Stuart ascended to the English throne as King James I of England. Thus, he became the first joint ruler of England and Scotland.

Ironically, sixteen years after the execution of the Queen Mary of Scots, her son James VI of Scots, became King James I of England in 1603. He was born in 1566 and grew up in Scotland while his mother was in captivity from 1568 until her death in 1587.

Therefore, he did not have the chance of knowing his mother. Catholics in England were in great expectations after his ascending the throne. But he was not a Catholic, he was a Protestant king who was influenced from Calvinistic thought. This detail became important in the history of England and Protestantism. Catholics organized the famous Gunpowder Plot against him in 1604, but they could not be successful.

As a king who grew up in Scotland, James was not familiar with the tripartite administration system of England. Instead, he preferred to rule England alone with full absolutism (Tennenhouse 1994, p. 110) since he thought he was an experienced king and he was only responsible against the God. Since he did not understand the value and the importance of the tripartit system, his ignorance of the decisions of the parliaments started to become a problem. The conflicts between the parliaments and the Stuart Kings, successively James and his son Charles, would eventually lead to a civil war which would result in the execution of King Charles and the declaration of England as a Commonwealth.

James was not a successful king in his policies and relations with the parliaments. He tried to be absolutist and did not want to recognise the rights of the parliament. There were high inflation rates and increasing wealth of the bourgeois class. But the wealth of the king and feudal lords did not increase during the same period. For that reason feudal lords supported James I or they had to support James I against the bourgeois class. Most of the time, he underscored the importance of the divine rights of the kings (Patterson 2000, p. 28) and had conflicts with the Puritans over the structure of the Anglican Church.

During his first year as the King of England, James organized a conference at Hampton Court in 1604 and invited Puritans to discuss their demands about the status of the Anglican Church. Puritans proposed to purify the Anglican Church. They believed that Anglican Church had still some Catholic traditions. James I refused all proposals of the Puritans. The only proposal of the Puritans that James accepted at the conference was to get the Bible translated into English (Croft 2003, p. 157). In 1611, the translation of the James I version of the Bible was completed. Today it is still

considered one of the best Bible translations of all times. Political conflicts between the Puritans and the Stuart kings, James I and later his son Charles I caused a civil war in the early 17th century. Puritans who were under the pressure of the monarchy had to move to the new continent to worship and live freely.

William Shakespeare lived in both Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and witnessed the decline of feudalism, the dissolution of Catholic Church and the rise of England as a nation-state in which Protestantism prevailed. Theatre in Renaissance England was the only and most influential instrument so as to reach the masses. For that reason it is not astonishing that both Queen Elizabeth and King James might have wanted to control the theatre in order to influence or manipulate the perception of society in accordance with their political viewpoints. Although the House of Lords and the House of Commons had some powers of legislation and taxation, their powers were not much enough to control the policies of the monarchy (Braddick 2000, p. 24).



### **3. RENAISSANCE ENGLISH THEATRE**

#### **3.1 General Characteristics**

Renaissance was a cultural and scientific revolution which started in Italy in the 14th century and then spread to all Europe. As the result of a great interest in classical studies and values, people started to translate and restudy the classical works and then deserted the darkness of the middle age and its conventions. Therefore this revival of classical learning led to a rise in scientific, cultural and artistic life of Europe which then came to be called rebirth or Renaissance in Europe.

It is fact that these sociocultural, economical, religious and political changes of the Renaissance England affected the theatre and compelled it to change its medieval characteristics and style, too. Owing to the religious alteration of the society from Catholicism to Protestantism, the popular mystery or miracle plays of the Medieval England, which had religious characteristics and recounted biblical stories in pageant wagons, came to be called as heretical by the Protestants after the Reformation movement.

According to Charles Moseley these mystery or miracle plays were unique occasions for collecting significant amount of money for the purposes of church (2007, p. 14). Therefore, morality plays or interludes took the place of these medieval biblical plays in the early 16th century which can be considered as the root of the Renaissance English Theatre. Then in the second half of the 16th century, during the reign of Elizabeth I, English people enjoyed one of the greatest theatres of all times. In accordance with the Renaissance and Reformation movements, English theatre changed its form from the pageant troupes to the permanent theatre houses with box offices.

Queen Elizabeth I is considered to be the symbol of the Renaissance movement in England. It is a fact that after her coming to the throne in 1558 the Renaissance commenced in her country. As the first protestant queen of England, she tried to break

the dominance of the Catholic Church. In the wake of the invention of the printing press, publishers had printed lots of copies of the Bible; thereafter the holy book became accessible to common people. Owing to high increase in the number of literate people who could read and understand the Bible, people started to question the practices of the Catholic Church and the Pope. As a result, the Reform movement started in the first half of the 16th century in Germany and then Protestantism spread through Europe. The independence of the English Church from the Papacy became a great advantage for Queen Elizabeth I in her struggle to break the dominance of Catholicism and establish a secular life-style in England. But there were strong oppositions of both Catholics and English parliament against some royal practices over which Elizabeth I wanted to prevail during her reign. Opposing the parliament, Catholics and Puritans, Elizabeth I and James I supported theatrical activities. During her reign from 1558 to her death in 1603, Queen Elizabeth I became the major supporter of English theater and her endorsement made the English Theatre one of the most prolific and productive theatres of world theatre history. Renaissance English Theatre presented talented playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Kyd to world literature.

### **3.2 Transitional Drama**

Theatre in Medieval England was quite different than the Renaissance English theatre. Renaissance England created a different style of drama which broke the conventional rules of the theatre and had an independent form according to Aristotle's ideas. Only after a year Elizabeth ascends to the throne of England in 1559, she proclaimed a prohibition of "unlicensed interludes and plays, especially those touching upon matters of religion and policy (Montrose 1996, p. 24). However, the effects of interludes and classically inspired plays, which were the common two types of the Medieval English Theatre, were seen in the plays written until 1585. Famous theatre historian Oscar G. Brockett explains that after this date these two different styles were melted in one pot to become a single form. He maintains that although two types employed the same techniques and similar subjects in their plays, both were fundamentally different from each other until university wits started to write for the public stage (1970, p. 158).

Interludes were short morality plays mostly having historical or biblical stories and were usually performed by professional actors in front of a wide miscellany of audiences in which “the numerous bloody deeds, such as beheadings, flayings, and murders, are all shown on stage” (Brockett 1970, p. 158).

Classical drama was the product of English universities like Cambridge and Oxford in the early sixteenth century which performed plays of classical playwrights like Seneca and Plautus usually in Latin to students or private guests. *Ferrex and Porrex*, or *Gorboduc* was a good example of Classical drama. I.B. Cauthen Jr informs that two university students Thomas Sackviller and Thomas Norton wrote the first English tragedy, *Ferrex and Porrex, or Gorboduc* which was staged by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple before the Queen Elizabeth I in 1561 (1962, p. 231).

Briefly stated, the professional actors usually performed conventional interludes and the Universities wrote and performed the classically-inspired plays during the early years of Elizabethan period. Then, they were melted in a pot and contributed to the development of the Elizabethan Theatre. That is to say, the classically inspired plays and the interludes were the roots of Elizabethan Theatre. However, the other type of medieval dramas like Mystery plays or Miracles which usually staged biblical and religious plays did not have the chance of surviving in the Renaissance period owing to the emergence of Protestantism as the dominant sect and secular policy that was adopted by Elizabeth.

### **3.3 The University Wits**

As explained above, the interludes and the aristocratic drama began to unite in the 1580s because of a group of talented playwrights the ‘University Wits’ launched to write for the public stage. University Wits consisted of playwrights like Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, Robert Greene, John Lyly, Thomas Nashe and Thomas Lodge who attended the universities of Oxford or Cambridge. The University Wits “supplied plays for the newly professionalized adult and semi-professional boys’ companies. Achieving a theatrical sophistication unprecedented in secular drama, many of these plays had decades-long lives in repertory” (Braunmuller 2003, p. 53). Another key point to remember is that although Shakespeare and Thomas Kyd did not attend the Oxford or Cambridge they also supplied many plays for those newly professionalized play companies.

### **3.4 Government Regulation of the Theatre**

As stated above, 1580s saw the end of the traditional or medieval English drama and the increase of secular public theatre. As the playwrights produced lots of plays attracting the attention of society, this new style of theatre became so popular that in this period play companies were reaching the masses through their plays. Queen Elizabeth, who wanted to control the playhouses and the content of the drama, founded a kind of censorship mechanism in 1574. It was a governmental body called the Master of the Revels. According to Louis Montrose this office was a kind of ideological state apparatus of the queen and “all plays for public playing were made subject to censorship, licensing and payment of fees to the Master of the Revels” (1996, p. 99). Peter Womack explains that this pre censorship mechanism was responsible for licensing procedures of the play companies until 1642 (2006, p. 21). For the play companies there were both advantages and disadvantages of the Master of the Revels. It was an advantage because it was protective of the companies against the local authorities which usually did not permit the play companies to perform plays in their regions. After 1574, play companies started to acquire their permit from the central authority and it was valid for their performances anywhere in England. On the other hand, the censorship mechanism which restricted the liberty of the play companies was a great disadvantage for the companies. It is a fact that the Royal House used this governmental body for its political purposes. Thus determining and controlling the political agenda of England would be easier. Nevertheless, it is possible to state that as the support of the central authority to the play companies was vital in order to survive, the foundation of the Master of the Revels was a positive regulation or development for the play companies. Despite the fact that the authority of the crown was felt profoundly, “play companies had a clear legal right to perform anywhere in the kingdom” (Brockett 1970, p. 167). However, local authorities were bothered with this regulation and they thought that Queen Elizabeth I was usurping their authority, because the local authorities were responsible for such kind of activities prior to the governmental regulation. Nevertheless, as Brockett accounts, local authorities were usually successful in finding ways of evading the licenses held by actors by making up some artificial reasons in order to refuse the licenses, like the danger of plague, the rowdiness of crowds, and the drawing of persons from work or religious services. Therefore without the support of the crown, actors would have had little chance of

survival (1970, p. 167). Most of the time the local authorities were against the play companies and their theatrical activities. Ergo, the play companies needed the support and governmental regulations in order for their performances to survive. All things considered, both the English Monarchy and play companies needed each other mutually. Monarchy needed to control and manipulate the play companies and their plays, and play companies needed the monarchy in order to survive and maintain their artistic life. As long as English rulers endorsed them, these play companies could maintain their activities.

In his article 'Patronage, Protestantism, and Stage Propaganda in Early Elizabethan England' Paul Whitfield White elucidates that the licensing and censorship mechanism "was not seriously enforced, and that, indeed, Protestant stage propaganda was practised into the early 1570's" (1991, p. 40). He believes that after this date "growing secularism and commercialism of the theatre in London brought polemical interludes into disrepute and decline" (1991, p. 40).

In conclusion, by the Royal Proclamation of 16 May 1559 Queen Elizabeth I controlled the theatre companies and their plays, similar to the political powers' controlling the modern media in our age. As many people will remember the Bush administration and the Pentagon carried out a successful war campaign against Iraq in 1991. During these enormous public relations campaigns, the US politicians employed the mainstream media successfully in order to influence the perception of people all around the world. The mainstream media acted as the propaganda organ of Bush and the Pentagon. CNN was the dominant news channel of the Gulf War. CNN sent many cameras and reporters to Iraq and Israel. The US media helped the "Bush administration to control the flow of representations and thus to manage the global media spectacle of Gulf War I" (Kellner, 2004, p. 136). Similar to the Bush Administration, Queen Elizabeth I encouraged the propaganda. The stage being the most powerful mass communication tool of those years, Queen Elizabeth I employed it in her propaganda. White (1991, p. 40) maintains that stage propaganda was encouraged by the monarchy and all its organisations and institutions. In his article, he mentions the foreign ambassadors' reports concerning how Catholics were satirized in the plays and how Protestantism was praised. Brockett explains the reason why Elizabeth I had to ban the performance of unlicensed works and forbid plays on religious and political subjects, making local officials responsible for all public performances in their towns as a number of steps to

end religious and political divisions. He accuses the acting troupes of religious controversies: “By performing partisan plays, the troupes had also aggravated the religious controversies which had shaken England since Henry VIII’s break with Rome” (1970, p. 167). But indeed Queen Elizabeth I just wanted to use this opportunity in order to employ her political agenda through these play companies and she wanted to control the mass communication through theatre. With this in mind let’s look at the playhouses and play companies.

### **3.5 Playhouses and Play Companies**

#### **3.5.1 Acting Troupes**

There were many acting troupes in England before the 1570’s. The number of operating troupes in England, between 1558 and 1576, was around eighty (White, 1991, p. 39). However, only about twenty of these troupes played at court in the first sixteen years of Queen Elizabeth’s reign (Brockett, 1970, p. 168). These acting troupes usually maintained their performances under the sponsorship of royal authorities or noble people. It was a kind of protection for them. For that reason they usually had names like the ‘Lord Chamberlain’s Men’, ‘Admiral’s Men’, ‘King’s Men’, etc... Otherwise it would be difficult to survive for most of those troupes. “These companies enjoyed the patronage of the monarch and her leading courtiers, including several members of the Privy Council” (Montrose, 1996, p. 28). Brockett accounts the ‘Earl of Leicester’s Men’ as the first important troupe which was led by James Burbage, one of the leading and most important characters of the Renaissance English Theatre. He later built the first indoor theatre in order to access a higher audience size at a more comfortable atmosphere, and this was a dramatic alteration or development in English theatre as it caused the commercialization of the theatre. After this moment, play companies earned large amounts of money. According to Brockett the other most important troupes were the ‘Queen’s Men’, the ‘Lord Admiral’s Men’ and the ‘Lord Chamberlain’s Men’ which later was chosen to become the ‘King’s Men’, once James I became the king. The other important troupes of this period were ‘Queen Anne’s Men’ (1613-31), ‘Prince Henry’s Men’ (1603-12), ‘Palsgrave’s Men’ (1612-31), ‘Prince Charles’ Men’ (1631-42), ‘Lady Elizabeth’s Men’ (1611-32) and ‘Queen Henrietta’s Men’ (1625-42). The most eligible actors had the chance of performing at royal companies. For example the Master of the Revels chose the best

twelve actors from the existing troupes in order to form the 'Queen's Men'. This was a political step. The relationship between the monarch and the Queen's Men was based on mutual benefits:

The Queen's Men performed ideological and practical work for Elizabeth when they toured widely... While it is problematic to characterize their repertory as flatly propagandistic, their plays – not surprisingly – often promote a coherent English nationalism and they celebrate a pious but moderate Protestantism (Ostovich et al., 2009, p. 15)

Similarly, Jane Milling (2004, p. 143) mentions that a recent study of McMillin and MacLean which involves a detailed discussion of the repertoire of the Queen's Men, confirms the earlier predictions of David Bevington. He reported earlier that the political ideas of the patrons of the play companies had been effective on the texts of the plays. The Queen's Men were supported by the Protestants and they were busy with spreading out ideological state apparatuses in order to discourage the recusancy and radical puritanism.

If we put aside political relations, these actors performing in the royal companies were "paid a yearly retaining fee of five pounds and given allowances for food, light, and fuel" (Brockett, 1970, p. 169). There was not a sharp division between the court and public theatres. As the plays performed for the public and court were nearly the same, it is possible to elucidate that there was not a big difference between the court and public theatres which was the characteristic of the Italian stage. As regards to sharing plans of these companies Brockett says:

Most of the acting companies in the years between 1558 and 1642 were organized on the sharing plan, under which financial risks and profits were divided among the members... The shareholders formed a self-governing, democratic body, selecting and producing the plays given by the company. Each shareholder probably had some specific responsibility, such as business management, supervising properties or costumes, or writing plays (1970, p. 169).

It was very popular in Renaissance English Drama for young boys to work as actors in lieu of women. They usually started to work at the play companies at very young ages until they became adult actors.

The company was further augmented by boys apprenticed to well established adult actors. It is normally assumed that they played all of the women's roles, although this is by no means certain. Older women, especially the comic ones, may have been played by men (Brockett, 1970, p. 170).

However, the conditions for the acting troupes were not easy, as they did not have a permanent home. Moreover, they were faced with lots of difficulties especially during

forced closures: “Most troupes sought to acquire a permanent home, and after 1603 most succeeded in doing so. Before that time and during forced closures, many troupes had to tour. Troupes often went bankrupt during closures...” (Brockett, 1970, p. 170). These troupes usually had problems when they went out of London to perform their plays, because there were not suitable theatre buildings outside of London.

Touring entailed many problems, for outside of London there were no permanent theatres. Thus, though a troupe might have a licence to perform, it could be denied the right to play on the grounds that there was no suitable place, that the danger of plague was too great, or for other reasons...In some cities actors were welcomed, but in others they were paid not to perform. A number of troupes went to the continent during closures, and it is from these English troupes that the Professional theatre in Germany descended (Brockett, 1970, p. 170).

It is clear from Brockett’s account that English troupes went abroad to Germany. What’s more, Harry Hoppe (1955, p. 27) underlines the fact that some English acting troupes went to Belgium and France to perform and earn money in the early seventeenth century.

Play companies’ obligation of acquiring a licence from a governmental body is one of the most important evidences that English monarchy used English drama for its political purposes. “Every play had to be submitted to the Master of the Revels for licensing before performance. The principal result was the prohibition of passages thought to be morally or politically objectionable” (Brockett, 1970, p. 171). This proves that theatre plays were giving some moral and political messages to the society. Besides, we can conclude that there was no artistic freedom in Elizabethan England as the Master of the Revels censored the plays which were not in conformity with Elizabethan policy. Here I agree with Paul F. Grendler in many ways; that an “Elizabethan dramatist’s job was similar to that of a modern newspaper reporter” (2004, p. 21). Because both Elizabethan drama and modern newspapers convey information to the society. The other point Grendler stresses is that Renaissance English drama created a new type of drama: the history play. “In these plays, dramatists drew on the events of the past to shed light on their own times. Early history plays appealed to many viewers because they portrayed glorious English victories over foreign enemies” (2004, p. 21). However, “Shakespeare’s history plays about England’s rulers posed difficult questions about the clash between politics and morality: Does a good king have to be a good man? Do national goals reflect national good, or only the ego and ambition of leaders?” (Grendler, 2004, p. 22). Final comment

of Grendler summarizes the fact that “these complex views of history transformed drama from simple entertainment to food for thought” (Grendler, 2004, p. 22). Because the plays could not be performed without the permission of the Master of the Revels, it is possible to claim that Queen Elizabeth principally used this new style of drama for the political messages she wanted to give to the society or to support her political position.

In order to have an idea about the routes of the touring companies and their area of influence, it is useful to have a look at Peter H Greenfield’s ‘Map of touring theatre company routes after 1540’ in figure 3.1.

### **3.5.2 Audiences**

Theatre was the most important source of entertainment, social activity and communication in Renaissance England. Even though there were hard times for the play companies and the actors, theatregoers never deserted the stage. Brockett notifies a royal decree that in 1574 play companies had the right of performing daily. Although James I later forbade playing on Sundays, it is estimated that theatre companies used to stage about 200 days a year in the early 1600s (1970, p. 188). The most important factors decreasing the number of audiences were “plague, official mourning, religious observances, and unseasonable weather” (1970, p. 188).

According to Brockett, the seating capacity of the public theatres was large. He says “contemporary estimates give 3,000 as the capacity, but modern scholars suggest 1,500 to 2,500. The private theatres probably seated about 500. Usually two or more theatres were open in London, whose population was about 160,000” (1970, pp. 188-189). Another key point to remember is that “the theatres normally played to half-filled houses” (Brockett, 1970, p. 189). In the light of this information it is possible to calculate that during the early years of the 17th century, theatre companies used to perform about 214 days a year, by at least two half-filled play houses –one private 250 and one public 750– with a capacity of 1,000 people a day. This means that at least 214,000 audience members a year watched the plays at the playhouses of London, in the early 1600s. It is also possible to calculate the maximum annual number of audience tripled or quadrupled. Then it is possible to claim that yearly average number



**Figure 3.1:** Map of Touring Theatre Company Routes after 1540 (Greenfield, 2007)

of the audience varied between 200,000 and 800,000 in those years. Given that the population of London was approximately 160,000 the total number of the audience of theatre was more than the population of London. This is an indicator of the popularity and power of the theatre in England in Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

### 3.6 Queen Elizabeth and King James' Political Interest in the Theatre

When Queen Elizabeth ascended to the throne in England, she had the chance of maintaining the political ideals of her father Henry VIII and her brother Edward VI.

Protestantism was spreading in all of Europe and Queen Elizabeth I was trying to make her country Protestant. In regard to dissemination of Protestantism in England, she had a vanguard role during her long term of queenship. Elizabeth tried to control the play companies so as to make her propaganda in her fight with her adversaries. In accordance with this purpose, she legislated the controlling and censorship of the plays and play companies. Without the permission of the Queen, it would be impossible to stage a play. The plays which were not in agreement with the political interests of the monarchy did not have any likelihood of being staged. The same system was sustained during the reign of King James I. In addition to disadvantages, there were some advantages of the system for the play companies like having the prospect of flourishing under the protection of nobles, who were in close relation with the royal family, or under direct protection of the queen or the king. Names of the companies like 'the Queen's Men', 'the King's Men', 'the Admiral's Men' or 'the Lord Chamberlain's Men', etc. indicate this close relation between the nobles and play companies. Having ascended to the throne of England, for instance, James I became the patron of Shakespeare's acting company 'Lord Chamberlain's Men' and altered its name to 'King's Men'. Hence, *Macbeth* can be pondered as a good example of figuring out the political relation between King James I and Shakespeare's Company. The reason noble people showed great interest in the theatre was because the theatre was the only and the most effective means of mass communication in those years. Under these conditions, as I evinced earlier, both Elizabeth I and James I saw any kind of propaganda means as a threat to their authority and attempted to control them. For that reason, in 1574, Queen Elizabeth I established a licensing office for the theatre companies named the Master of the Revels which was indeed the censorship organ of the Monarchy. Every theatre company had to get a licence or permission from the Master of the Revels (Womack, 2006, p. 21). Otherwise, staging the plays without the permission of this governmental office would be a great offense for the play companies. Therefore, it became mandatory for printers to secure a licence from the Elizabethan state. According to a historian, printers and pamphleteers who did not obey the rules were severely and primitively punished:

One printer will be executed under Elizabeth, and an unwise pamphleteer will lose his right hand (to a meat cleaver hammered by a croquet mallet). The deposition scene from Shakespeare's *Richard II* will be deleted from a printed version of the play – it is too incendiary (cited in Murphy, 2012, p. 194).

As a result, the abdication scene was absent in the first three editions of *Richard II* because of its “notorious deposition scene in which ‘tired majesty’ resigned absolute power to a talented usurper” (Adams, 1979, p. 5). In his article ‘Despotism, Censorship and Mirrors of Power Politics in Late Elizabethan Times’ Robert P. Adams recounts intense despotism and censorship that “Englishmen experienced under Elizabeth” and tells how Elizabeth was worried by her reportedly spoken sentence: "Know you not that I am Richard II?" (1979, p. 5).

### **3.7 Politics**

Seeing this enormous power of the theatre, the English throne wanted to control and employ it in order to realize its political agenda. Referring to David Bevington’s work *Tudor Drama and Politics*, Suzanne Westfall says that: “Bevington’s argument, that drama was naturally polemical and that patrons either chose or commissioned works that would communicate their own ideologies, has become an assumption for scholars studying patronage and player repertories” (2004, p. 219). Besides Westfall, Jane Milling describes the political usage of the theatre by similar words. Milling says “it is undoubtedly true that the appearance of the professional theatre company was as much a result of political forces as it was of economic ones” (2004, p. 141). Referring to McMillin and MacLean’s argument about the formation of the Queen’s Men in her study, Milling underlines the fact that there were absolutely political relations and benefits between the English throne and the theatre. “The Queen’s Men were ‘a company designed to increase the prestige of their patron throughout the land, to harness the theatre in the service of a moderate Protestant ideology” (2004, p. 143). Milling, raises a question about whether the actors were political creatures or not. Then she explains this question with a case that: “Robert Shaa, along with fellow actor Ben Jonson, was imprisoned when the Privy Council took action against Pembroke’s Men for presenting at the Swan in 1597 a satirical play called *The Isle of Dogs*” (2004, p. 150). Milling says that “the text has not survived, but it contained, in the Council’s view, ‘very seditious and slanderous matter’” (2004, p. 150). Although we do not know the text of Robert Shaa and Ben Johnson today, their imprisonment gives an idea about the position of actors and playwrights of those years. It would not be realistic to call all actors and playwrights marionettes of the English Monarchy who served to their

political interests. However, it is impossible to reject the fact that there was a strict relation between the monarchy and the play companies.

In regard to the way the plays were advertised, it is possible to say that lots of devices were employed in advertising plays involving posters and handbills. Brockett accounts that the theatre companies sometimes held a procession with drums and trumpets which was indeed the typical device of touring companies, and a waving flag on the roof of the theatre was the signal of the day of performance. And one of the important rituals of those play companies was that actors usually announced the coming plays from the stage (1970, p. 188).

In conclusion, Renaissance English Theatre is considered to be one of the most effective and excellent achievements of the world theatre history. There was a great change in the form of the theatre in this period. Medieval conventions were left and a new style of commercialized indoor theatre emerged. What is more, it presented many valuable playwrights like Shakespeare, Marlowe, Kyd, etc., whom the modern people of our age still love to read and watch their plays with great love and interest. Another key fact to remember about this period is that political powers employed the theatre effectively in order to disseminate their political views or propaganda. Therefore, it is possible to claim that Renaissance English Theatre felt the political pressure profoundly, but given the political conditions of those years it was impossible to resist those pressures in order to survive.

In the end of this chapter, it is important to underline the fact that in our age there are many ways of reaching the masses like TV programmes, cinema, newspaper, internet, social media etc. In Shakespeare's time, the theatre was the most important mass communication organ (In order to see the drawings of the playhouses in Renaissance England, please look at A.1, A.2, A.3, A.4 in Appendices). To that end, English monarchy employed the theatre for its own political propaganda. Jean Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory, which is used to explain the relation of the mass media and the political powers in our age, enable us to bridge between the Renaissance English Theatre and the mass media of our age in terms of their employment by the political powers, and the loss of the real. The simulacra and simulation theory of Baudrillard can be contemplated as a chance for re-interpreting Shakespeare's history plays from a different point of view and thus enhance our understanding of Shakespeare better.



## 4. SIMULACRA AND SIMULATION IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS

### 4.1 Jean Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation Theory

French sociologist and cultural critic Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) was an eminent intellectual of his time. In 1981 when he published his most famous book *Simulacra and Simulation*, in which he criticized the power and importance of mass communication and mass consumption as a result of capitalism and advanced technology of our age, he started to be seen as one of the leading symbols of postmodernism. Nevertheless he never accepted to be a postmodern thinker. When he was asked by Mike Gane in an interview he declared himself not to be a postmodernist:

*MG Many people think of you as the high priest of postmodernism. What do you think of this?*

This reference to priesthood is out of place, I think. The first thing to say is that before one can talk about anyone being a high priest, one should ask whether postmodernism, the postmodern, has a meaning. It doesn't as far as I am concerned. It's an expression, a word which people use but which explains nothing. It's not even a concept. It's nothing at all. ... even if I prove that I am not a postmodernist, it won't change anything. People will put that label on you. Once they have done that it sticks (Gane, 2003, p. 21).

Although he does not call himself a postmodern, his simulacra and simulation theory is accepted to be one of the pioneer theories of postmodernism, and it is one of the most important theories to understand the power of mass media in our age. On the grounds that the power of the media is an incredible tool to influence the masses by certain media techniques and theories, political powers have always wanted to control the media of their age. Therefore, they have the chance of setting the agenda or making manipulations in accordance with their policies. In their book *Agenda-Setting*, for instance, James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers believe the necessity of setting an agenda. They underline the fact that “every social system must have an agenda if it is to prioritize the problems facing it, so that it can decide where to start work. Such prioritization is necessary for a community and for a society” (1992, p. 2). Another

key fact to remember is that agenda setting is a political process. Especially when the political powers need to lessen the tension arising from their political failures or they do not have a word for explaining their unsuccessful policies to the public, they use this technique. Thus, they have got the power of deciding or determining the agenda. Besides agenda setting theory Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory is highly important to understand the power of media in our age.

First of all, it is useful to begin explaining the essence of simulacra and simulation theory as the loss of reality. It is a fact that, since Plato, there have been some views or theories about the art or media which put forward the idea that art or media<sup>1</sup> is the imitation or reflection of reality in the western philosophy world. Interpreting this Platonist understanding of reality and imitation relation of the world in an idiosyncratic style, Baudrillard categorises the epiphany of the image into four successive phases. Firstly, he describes the first stage as "the reflection of a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). To give an illustration of this first stage let's imagine a painting which reflects exactly the same appearance of the London Bridge. Indeed, it is just an imitation of that reality but just in appearance. Secondly he describes a stage which "masks and denatures a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). That is to say, there is a distortion when reflecting the reality. Let's think about the London Bridge again. But this time the painter paints the London Bridge slightly different than its original appearance which makes the bridge—either in size or in position—in a slightly different form than the original. Therefore, we can describe this stage as a distorted copy of the original. Thirdly, Baudrillard describes a stage which "masks the absence of a profound reality" (1994, p. 6). Here Baudrillard mentions a stage which is the pretence of reality. To give an illustration, I would like to go on with the painter example again. But this time we see a surrealist painting on which there is a painter painting a bridge on a canvas and he stands next to a window through which we can see the bridge he paints. Differently from the first two examples, in this example there is the pretence of reality. To put it another way, the bridge in the painting which we can see through the window pretends the real. Indeed, it has no connection with reality. We are not sure whether it

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1. Several other studies point out that plays and public oratory were the medium of Plato's day and were used for behaviour control. For more detailed explanation, see Clowney <[http://www.rowan.edu/open/philosop/clowney/Aesthetics/philos\\_artists\\_onart/plato.htm](http://www.rowan.edu/open/philosop/clowney/Aesthetics/philos_artists_onart/plato.htm)> Brown 673 and Stecker 51.

represents a real bridge or not. Here it takes the place of reality. But in the first two examples, the paintings were reflecting the real objects; the first stage was a good representation, the second stage was a distorted representation of a real object.

But in the third stage we are faced with something pretending reality. In this stage there are replicas preceding and taking the place of reality. Here I give these examples of paintings, since they have merely the reminiscence of Baudrillard's different stages of sign in terms of their representing or signifying the things. Baudrillard explains this third stage with the example of Disneyland which misrepresents the USA and thus Disneyland hides the absence of the depicted USA.

Baudrillard tries to draw our attention to how the capitalist system bewitched our perception of reality. We live in a world where the reality and unreality are intertwined with each other. Baudrillard calls this situation a hyperreality. When we turn on a TV channel, we watch the news consisting of both real and unreal information. In his work *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* Baudrillard (1995) explains his observations about the Gulf War which was the first live broadcasted war on TV channels. According to Baudrillard, it was merely a simulation of reality. He calls this blurriness hyperreality. What we watched on TV channels was just the simulation of the Gulf War not reality. We did not watch all realities of the war. Although about 100,000 Iraqi people died or were wounded in the war, we watched the ecological disaster and dead birds more than Iraqi casualties. TV channels made us watch whatever they wanted including reality and mendacity. More than a war it was like a TV show. Fourthly and lastly Baudrillard depicts a stage having "no relation to any reality whatsoever" of which he says "it is its own pure simulacrum" (1994, p. 6). What we understand with this definition can be explained by an abstract painting<sup>2</sup>. Because it is its own pure simulacrum. Baudrillard explains the loss of reality in his distinctive style. Today it is not possible to distinguish the real and unreal, fake and fact, as everything is intertwined with each other. For this reason, it is really difficult for people to differentiate the real and the unreal. People do not know what to and who to believe. "The result is a culture of 'hyper-reality' in which distinctions between these are eroded" (Barry 2002, p. 87). Political powers try to control the reality perception of people through the media which

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2. In order to explain Baudrillard's four stages of sign, Peter Barry gives several examples by using different artists' paintings which inspired me in my illustrations. For more information, see Barry 87

are very crucial part of their manipulation means. In other words, political powers trying to control the societies attempt to control the media, as the media are a very crucial part of this manipulation and control system. It is a fact that any kind of political power seizing the power uses media efficiently in order to propagate. Baudrillard gives multitudinous examples of such kind of *simulacra and simulation* involving the Vietnam War, Watergate Scandal, etc. in his work. Famous film director Coppola made a film *Apocalypse Now* about the Vietnam war and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. He made his film in the Philippines for her similar geographic features with Vietnam and spent lots of money to create the same war atmosphere in his film. He used amazing military equipment including helicopters, planes, napalm bombs etc... Baudrillard depicts this situation as "the real war is waged by Coppola as it is by Westmoreland: without counting the inspired irony of having forests and Philippine villages napalmed to retrace the hell of South Vietnam" (1994, p. 59). He thinks that whoever watches this film revisits everything through cinema. He maintains that the cinematographic power is as much as the power of the industry and military or the Pentagon and governments. He says "Apocalypse Now is a global victory" (1994, p. 60). Baudrillard claims that "Watergate is not a scandal because it is what everyone is busy concealing, this dissimulation masking a strengthening of morality, of a moral panic as one approaches the primitive scene of capital" (1994, p. 15).

Baudrillard thinks that "the scandal effect [hides] that there is no difference between the facts and their denunciation (identical method on the part of the CIA and of the Washington Post journalists)" (1994, p. 14). He thinks that there is the same scenario as in Disneyland.

For Peter Barry the loss of the real concept of Baudrillard "is the view that in contemporary life the pervasive influence of images from film, TV, and advertising has led to a loss of the distinction between real and imagined, reality and illusion, surface and depth" (2002, p. 87). In order to understand Baudrillard's the loss of the real concept better it is good to look at his book which begins with a misquotation of Ecclesiastes: "The simulacrum is never what hides the truth – it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (2002, p. 1). Here we are faced with a kind of pun and forced to imagine or contemplate the reality. The simulacrum does not hide the truth. So then what is the simulacrum? The definition of simulacrum (plural simulacra) is "1. image, representation 2. an insubstantial form or semblance of

something: trace” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). What does Baudrillard mean with the misquotation from Ecclesiastes? Quite controversially Baudrillard points a different function of Simulacrum which he calls truth that hides the fact that there is none. The most striking part of his book is the beginning quotation of Ecclesiastes which is indeed not available in Ecclesiastes. That is to say the book itself starts with a simulacrum. The reason why Baudrillard made up this quotation is an enigma. But he might have wanted to include his own definition of Simulacrum or wanted to make a strong entrance to his work or just wanted to exemplify what he wanted to enunciate by simulacrum. Baudrillard calls this insubstantial form, unreality, fake or lie a simulacrum. At this point I would like to argue that both Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation theory and Plato’s art theory have some certain fundamental similarities. Therefore, it is important to enunciate Plato’s theory of art for two reasons. First of all, there are similarities between Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation theory and Plato’s art theory. Secondly Plato was the first philosopher to resemble the work of art to a mirror which reflects the realities of life. By explaining Plato’s view here, we may have the chance of enhancing our viewpoint and comparing Plato’s view in ancient Greece with Baudrillard’s contemporary theory. In order to endorse this, I would like to refer to Peter Barry who claims that one might see Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation theory as “a kind of latter-day Platonism” (2002, p. 89).

For Plato, whatever we see in the work of art is the reflection of nature, human or something about life. In other words, a work of art including painting, poetry or tragedy reflects the realities of life like a mirror which Plato calls *mimesis*. Here, remembering Plato’s theory of forms is crucial to understand the theory of *mimesis* better. According to Plato there are two worlds; the first one is the physical world we live in or the world of forms which consists of nature including people, animals and all other living and unliving things created by God, as well as any kind of goods manufactured by human beings. The second world is the world of ideas which stands beyond the physical world we live in and it is only possible to feel it by our perception.

According to Plato, all art - including poetry-is a *mimesis* of nature, a copy of objects in the physical world. But those objects in the material world, according to the idealist philosophy that Plato propounds, are themselves only mutable copies of timeless universals, called Forms or Ideas. Poetry is merely a copy of a copy, leading away from the truth rather than toward it (Leitch, 2001, p. 33).

Plato asserts that everything in the world we live in is *mimesis*, and they are all just a reflection of reality. The original forms of goods are merely in the world of ideas.

When we read the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon in the second book of the Republic, Socrates explains that a painter reflects the world with his paintings. He says:

You have only to take a mirror, and catch the reflection of the sun, and the earth, or anything else—there now you have made them. ‘Yes, but only in appearance.’ Exactly so; and the painter is such a creator as you are with the mirror, and he is even more unreal than the carpenter; although neither the carpenter nor any other artist can be supposed to make the absolute bed. ‘Not if philosophers may be believed.’ Nor need we wonder that his bed has but an imperfect relation to the truth. Reflect:—Here are three beds; one in nature, which is made by God; another, which is made by the carpenter; and the third, by the painter. God only made one, nor could he have made more than one; for if there had been two, there would always have been a third—more absolute and abstract than either, under which they would have been included. We may therefore conceive God to be the natural maker of the bed, and in a lower sense the carpenter is also the maker; but the painter is rather the imitator of what the other two make; he has to do with a creation which is thrice removed from reality’ (Plato, 2002, p. 113).

Plato briefly claims that there are three levels of reality. The first stage is the idea of bed which Plato believes is made by God, the second one is the bed which is a copy or imitation and made by a carpenter, and the third level of the reality is the painting of a bed which imitates the carpenter’s bed. Therefore Plato believes that art including painting or tragedy merely reflects people, realities of life or the world. But when doing so, art moves away from the reality. According to Plato the tragic poet, like the painter, is three times far away from the reality. Similar to the painter who imitates the bed made by the carpenter, not the original bed, the tragic poet imitates the reflection of reality (Plato, 2002, p. 113).

If we return to Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation theory, we can find similarities between the stages of reality in both Plato’s and Baudrillard’s theories. Plato considers everything in our physical world as unreal or imitation, a table produced by a carpenter or a tree created by God for example are all mimesis and represent the first level of imitation. Baudrillard evaluates that a painting representing an exact and pure picture - without any distortion - of something in the physical world is the first stage of imitation. For Plato a painting or any other branch of art, representing anything from this physical world, is an imitation of reality. Therefore, art is mimesis and represents the reality, too. Baudrillard, on the other hand, depicts the second level of reality for cases when a painting or any kind of work of art misrepresents the reality. Baudrillard claims that the third level of reality in a work of art hides the fact that there is not any reality behind that work. He gives the example of Disneyland which he describes as

the miniaturized America with wonderful roads, vehicles, heroes and order that people admire when they are enjoying themselves as if the real America were the same. However, there is no connection with reality. Furthermore, this hides the fact that Disneyland is not a miniaturized America. Here Baudrillard uses the term simulacrum for this counterfeit situation. Baudrillard maintains that, today, contemporary life including all aspects of media, advertising and life style has no certain border between the reality and unreality as everything is intertwined with each other. He describes this chaotic world as simulation area consisting of simulacra. This world is not the world of realities any more. This third stage shows a similarity with Plato's definition of the world of forms which is the physical world we live in and Plato claims that nothing is real in this physical world.

#### **4.2 Shakespeare's Life and History Plays**

William Shakespeare, the greatest playwright of all times, was born in 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon in South Warwickshire, England as the third child of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. His father John Shakespeare was a leatherworker and his mother Mary Arden was the daughter of a yeoman farmer (Armstrong, 2000, p. 325). His two elder sisters having died at very early ages, William grew up as the eldest of his siblings and studied major Latin authors, Christian works like the Catechism, grammar, Erasmus and the arts of rhetoric and embellishment at the grammar school he attended in Stratford (Armstrong, 2000, p. 326).

In late 1582, when he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway who was pregnant and eight years senior of Shakespeare during their marriage (Nichols, 2002, p. 7). Ergo, just a few months after their marriage they had their first child, Susanna. Three years later, their twins Judith and Hamnet came to the world. But William and Anne lost Hamnet when he was just eleven in 1596.

It is unclear how Shakespeare initiated theatre business or what inspired him to be a playwright. Nevertheless, we know he came to London and lived in Shoreditch where the theatres were adjacent (Nichols, 2002, p. 7). So as to sustain his artistic life, he left his family in Stratford and moved to London. Having spent nearly all his life in Stratford and London, Shakespeare died in 1616 and was buried in Stratford at the same church in which he had been baptised (Armstrong, 2000, p. 325).

Without any doubt William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was one of the most important playwrights in Renaissance English Theatre. He was not only a playwright but also an actor and shareholder in the theatre company he worked for. Besides his all-round trait, he was a prolific playwright and wrote 38 plays including a few he wrote partly with others. John Heminge and Henry Condell were Shakespeare's actor friends and collated Shakespeare's plays after his death and published the first folio as the first collected edition of Shakespeare's Works, in 1623 (Craig, 1966, p. V). Since then Shakespeare's plays have been translated into many languages and many of them have been adapted to film.

He usually borrowed his stories from many different sources. The stories of his plays like *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* were already known for Renaissance people in those years. However, Shakespeare usually succeeded in changing the properties of the plays and characters with his genius. In some cases, his unique and innovative way of writing his plays included some modern techniques such that their values could be understood only a few centuries later. In order to explain this I would like to refer to Ernest Jones (1976) who associates *Hamlet* with the beginning of modernism in his work *Hamlet and Oedipus*. He underlines the fact that Shakespeare's sagacity lies in his ability of analysing human psychology profoundly a few centuries before the development of psychoanalysis as a scientific method to understand the human mind by Sigmund Freud. Jones therefore, describes Shakespeare as the first modern playwright who used psychoanalysis, as a technique of the modern age, successfully. Brockett praises this feature of Shakespeare: "He ranges freely through time and place, creating a sense of a fully developed life behind the scenes. His large casts are composed of well-rounded, complex characters" (1970, p. 161). This is only one reason for considering simply him to be the best playwright of all times by many authors.

Similarly in her article 'Hamlet before Its Time', Margreta De Grazia (2001) evinces that Shakespeare was an author ahead of his time owing to the fact that the psyche of Hamlet could only be figured out better after the theories of the modern age. Therefore, his quality could only be exactly valued in the modern era. According to Grazia, Hamlet had to wait "Freud's theory of repression, Lacan's language of the other and Abraham and Torok's phantom effect," (2001, p. 372) to be understood better by the modern authors. Shakespeare was not only an all-around playwright composing comedies, tragedies and history plays but also a poet, an actor and a sharer in an acting

company. His versatility, therefore, made such a fabulous contribution to English literature and language in multitudinous fields.

His quality in analysing the inner feelings and psychological profoundness of his characters like Lady Macbeth or Hamlet or his challenge to classical unity of drama in terms of time, place and action have become a subject of many a study of modern authors. These can be considered as the clue to his unprecedented place in English drama. Pointing out Hamlet, Grazia remarks that Shakespeare's characters are superior to the plot in his plays, contrary to Aristotlean idea that characters are secondary and come after plots (2001, p. 362). Similarly, Shakespeare's violating the Aristotelian unities has been a subject of study for many authors at different centuries. Thomas Ranesford Lounsbury, for instance, proclaims in his *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* that Shakespeare utilized techniques to be employed in the modern age:

It is equally evident that it is Shakespeare's practice which is the one followed upon the modern stage. Stress is no longer laid upon the unities of time and place. In regard to these the doctrine is now so thoroughly discredited in theory and discarded in practice that there are playwrights of our day who, so far from accepting it, do not even know of its ever having had an existence (1901, p. 13).

One of the greatest dramaturges of our time, Bertold Brecht, describes Shakespeare as a great realist owing to his excellent observation of the real life and persuading manner of his telling a story. He sees Shakespeare "as an experimental writer trying out different ways to tell a story, and compares his work with that of Galileo and Bacon at the same period" (Heinemann, 1994, p. 233). It is also important to remember that Brecht did not hesitate to "attack the contemporary theatre, which he called (somewhat misleadingly) bourgeois or Aristotelian" (Dollimore 2010, p. 63), but he praised the quality of Shakespeare for his manner.

Shakespeare wrote plays concerning English history such as *King John*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, *Richard III* and *Henry VIII* and wrote some plays having historical elements about Roman Empire like *Julius Cesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, etc. In addition to these plays *Macbeth* as a political play can be categorised among the history plays of Shakespeare by reason of its plot having historical elements about Scottish History.

All these history plays of Shakespeare are extremely valuable for enabling us to understand the way Renaissance people or at least William Shakespeare looked at and commented on historical events. Unquestionably, Shakespeare wrote these plays under

certain political circumstances. For that reason, it is useful to explain the political conditions of Elizabethan and Jacobean England in the succeeding section so as to figure out Shakespeare's history plays better. Because in some of his history plays Shakespeare reflected some historical events differently than what had been in reality or sometimes did not mention significant events in the plays. To give an illustration of what I mean, I would like to exemplify King John, Richard II, Richard III and Macbeth respectively. In *King John* for instance, Shakespeare accounts the life of a king who sealed the famous constitutional document Magna Carta in 1215. Even though the sealing of Magna Carta was one of the greatest achievements in terms of human rights and democracy in the history of England, Shakespeare did not mention a word of it in his *King John*. Similarly in his *Richard III*, Shakespeare narrates a period of civil war known as the War of the Roses between the two royal houses of Lancaster and York from a Lancastrian viewpoint. On the grounds that Queen Elizabeth I was the crowned queen of England and her ancestors descended from the house of Lancaster, Shakespeare preferred to present Richard III, the Yorkist King, as a monster and physically deformed in order to make Tudor propaganda. In the play, Shakespeare depicts Richard III with a hunchback. However, a recent scientific study conducted by Isabel Tulloch<sup>3</sup>, from University College London Medical School, has made it perspicuous with incontrovertible X-ray examination evidences that Richard III was not a hunchback (2009, p. 317). With respect to *Richard II*, it is also feasible to put forth that it was one of the plays with which Shakespeare made Tudor propaganda. *Richard II* starts with a scene in which Henry Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of betraying King Richard. Without knowing the previous parts of the events, it is quite difficult to understand the events impartially. Vilifying Richard II and accounting why and how Richard II is not a good king, Shakespeare evokes the feeling that Richard II should leave the kingship in favour of a Lancastrian King. Although Elizabeth I censored the deposition scene of *Richard II* and interrogated some actors of the Lord Chamberlain's Men after a performance of this play in relation to the Essex Rebellion, *Richard II* was mainly a part of Tudor propaganda (Henderson, 2004, p. 250). Briefly enunciated, *Richard II* was written under the political pressure of Queen Elizabeth I

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3. Tulloch explains the medical misrepresentation of Richard III that a recent X-ray examination in the portrait of Richard III in the Royal Collection proved the alteration in the right shoulder line of Richard III. She claims that the shoulder deformity could have been produced after the Battle of Bosworth, as part of Tudor propaganda. For more detailed information, see Tulloch 317.

and it was Tudor propaganda. But it was also utilized by Essex rebels in pursuit of reinforcement prior to their uprising. According Diana E. Henderson, the conspirators of Earl of Essex got in touch with Shakespeare's play company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and proposed a good payment to stage Richard II a night before their famous Essex's Rebellion in 1601 (2004, p. 250).

By the same token, Shakespeare narrated the story of *Macbeth* differently. *Macbeth* was about Scottish kings who lived in the 11th century, overthrowing and downfall of kings. Shakespeare wrote this play soon after King James I had ascended to the English throne as the king who merged England with Scotland. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare accounts the real story differently than its original. In reality King Duncan "was faced with revolt among the lords, particularly those led by his cousin Macbeth, mormaer (or lord) of Moray. In a skirmish at Bothgouanan Duncan was slain" (Fry and Fry, 2005, p. 48). But in Shakespeare's account Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth plot to kill King Duncan during his visit to their castle. In this perspective, Henry N. Paul evinces that Shakespeare wrote and staged *Macbeth* in front of King James I for the first time in order to compliment to the new king (cited in Williams, 1982, p. 12). It is possible to deduce this conclusion for two reasons. First of all, King James was the first Scottish ruler of England and *Macbeth* is a play about the life of a Scottish King. Secondly it is possible to affiliate the moral message of the play, divine right of kings<sup>4</sup> with the result of the famous Gunpowder plot which was organized by the Catholics against King James during the early years of his reign.

### **4.3 Distorted Realities and Political Propaganda in Shakespeare's History Plays**

As discussed in the previous section, Shakespeare and all other playwrights of Elizabethan Era were under a strict political pressure of Elizabeth I. According to Robert P. Adams, playwrights "walked a razor's edge" (1979, p. 5) in Elizabethan England. Similarly, David Bevington contends that playwrights "obviously dared not hint at dictatorial abuses in Elizabeth herself. Instead, they implicitly or explicitly flatter Elizabeth by the contrast between her and the conventional tyrant" (cited in

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4. According to the political theory or doctrine of King James I, kings derive the right of ruling a country directly from God. Therefore, only God can judge a king. This is called the 'divine right of kings'. Owing to this doctrine no earthly man has got the right of judging a king. To get more information about this theory of King James please see *Basilikon Doron*.

Adams, 1979, p. 5). These quotations explicitly depict the level of the political pressure of those years. What is more, as part of the political pressure, Queen Elizabeth I established the Master of the Revels in 1574 to control the play companies more comfortably (Womack, 2006, p. 21). Thus the members of the Monarchy could easily censor and license the plays. They did not allow the plays to be staged when they were not in compliance with the policy of the Monarchy.

Being the most important means of communication in Shakespeare's time, Renaissance theatre was under an extreme political pressure and intensively employed for the propaganda of the Monarchy. Because the theatre was the only mass communication organ, both Elizabeth I and James I supported play companies in order to make their propaganda. Queen Elizabeth I owned a play company, the Queen's Men. Similarly, King James I became the patron of a play company, the King's Men where Shakespeare was a share holder and staged his plays, and which had been known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men before James I owned it. These play companies were travelling all around England in order to represent and stage the plays approved by the Monarchy. For the play companies there were not more options other than underpinning the policy of the Monarchy. Otherwise their artistic life could not survive or flourish. For that reason, it is possible to make a connection between these political conditions and William Shakespeare's distorting the realities in some of his history plays. Above all, Shakespeare was a playwright and tried to do his job in the best manner. It is certain that he wanted to prolong his artistic life comfortably under the reign of oppressive rulers. We should not forget that Shakespeare did not only write history plays, but also wrote comedies and tragedies. However, in his history plays he usually made the political propaganda of the monarchy. Shakespeare wrote lots of history plays such as *Richard III* and *King John* that were quite suitable for fulfilling the political requirements of the crown. In such history plays of Shakespeare, there were some distortions or simulacra. For common people it was not easy to realize these simulacra or distortions. Because there were neither enough source books to acquire the correct information nor great number of literate people. Owing to the fact that Gutenberg's printing press technology was not developed well in Shakespeare's time, the number of the books were very limited to the Bible and some religious books with such high prices. Literacy rate of the society was very low. Therefore, it was not easy to reach correct information for common people.

Due to aforementioned factors, like illiteracy and limited number of printed source books, the audience of Renaissance England did not have much chance to get correct information about the history of England and it was not easy for the audience to distinguish the correct and incorrect information in Shakespeare's history plays. That is to say, reality and unreality were intertwined with each other and it was difficult to find out what was real and what was unreal for the Renaissance audience. On the grounds that Shakespeare and his actor friends simulated historical events differently on the stage, it is possible to call these distortions of Shakespeare as simulacra, and theatre stages like the Globe or the Blackfriars as simulation area.

Today, we watch the news and some programs containing political messages on TV Channels, but we cannot easily separate the correct information from the incorrect information, because all information, correct or incorrect, is intertwined with each other. Similar to TV channels like CNN, Shakespeare's history plays, in his time, misinformed people with historical truths while being "simulated" on the stage. In order to exemplify this I would like to mention Richard III's so-called deformity. In Shakespeare's play, the eponymous Richard III was presented and staged as if he had a deformation of his body. Today we know that the purpose of misrepresenting Richard III as a hunchback was part of Tudor's dynastic propaganda (The Official Website of Royal Collection Trust). Another instance of simulacra can be seen in *Macbeth*. Contrary to historical records, in Shakespeare's play, Banquo is presented as one of the loyal men of King Duncan. However, he was the chief man of Macbeth during his revolt against King Duncan. Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicle of England, Ireland and Scotland* tells the position of Banquo very well. "Banquo was the chiefest, vpon confidence of their promised aid, he slue the king at Eneuerns, Mackbeth [...]th king Duncane or (as some say) at Botgosuane, in the sixt yeare of his reigne" (1808, vol. 5, p. 133). According to Holinshed, Banquo was the most important man of Macbeth in his fight with Duncan.

#### **4.4 Social Psychology as a Propaganda Method in Shakespeare's Plays**

As a playwright William Shakespeare was considered ahead of his time for using psychological techniques perfectly (Grazia, 2001, p. 355). His quality in using psychoanalysis in Hamlet became the subject of criticisms realized by modern and contemporary authors such as Sigmund Freud, Ernest Jones, Jacques Lacan, Jacques

Derrida, Maria Torok and Nicolas Abraham. In his famous work *the Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud criticized the repressed emotions of Hamlet to illustrate his newly developed psychological theory of psychoanalysis, which had new techniques and principles such as Oedipus complex, super ego, id, ego, Freudian sleep, free association, etc in order to understand the human subconscious by interpretation of the symbols in dreamworks:

Another of the great poetic tragedies, Shakespeare's Hamlet, is rooted in the same soil as Oedipus Rex. But the whole difference in the psychic life of the two widely separated periods of civilisation, and the progress, during the course of time, of repression in the emotional life of humanity, is manifested in the differing treatment of the same material. In Oedipus Rex, the basic wish-fantasy of the child is brought to light and realised as it is in dreams; in Hamlet it remains repressed, and we learn of its existence -- as we discover the relevant facts in a neurosis -- only through the inhibitory effects which proceed from it (1900, p. 111).

People having learned psychoanalysis as a method to understand the human subconscious nearly three centuries after Shakespeare's time, *Hamlet* started to become one of the popular subjects of psychoanalytic criticism. Today many authors agree that psychological traits of Shakespeare's characters show as a fact that Shakespeare was very good at understanding the human psyche. For that reason, he could create psychologically powerful characters the values of which can only be understood by the people who know modern psychology. Today psychoanalysis is among the significant contemporary theories of literary criticism. It is clear that Shakespeare was a cognoscente in employing psychoanalysis. But I would like to argue that Shakespeare was not only connoisseur in psychoanalysis, but also in social psychology. Because, when some of his history plays are pondered in detail, the available evidence seems to suggest that as a playwright William Shakespeare was excellent in using social psychology techniques in his plays although he lived centuries before the emergence of social psychology as a science in the nineteenth century. It is useful to explain here that besides the quality of Shakespeare in using social psychology techniques, the theatre stage itself was a powerful instrument to make use of social psychology techniques, too.

Prior to delineating Shakespeare's quality in social psychology techniques or how he used them successfully in his plays, I would like to make a definition of social psychology. According to Baron and Branscombe, social psychology is:

A scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behavior, feelings, and thought in social situation and researches the ways in which our thoughts,

feelings, and actions are influenced by the social environments in which we live (2012, p. 5).

In connection with this description, Bohner and Wanke underline that “Attitudes are central to social psychology because they are central to our social lives” (2014, p. 13). Obviously, Shakespeare and his plays were in direct interaction and relation with the audience. In the nature of theatre business, thousands of people from different strata of social life came and watched Shakespeare’s plays. In my postulate, I argue that as a playwright who knew the human psyche very well, Shakespeare was good at understanding human behaviour and thought in a social environment and knew how to influence the audience very well.

In order to explain this claim it is crucial to delineate some significant theories and techniques as regards to attitude and attitude changing. Thus, it will help to figure out the role of Shakespearean Drama as the propagandist of the English Crown within its social context. To do this I will try to explain the foot in the door technique, role playing, cognitive dissonance theory, primacy effect and classical conditioning theory. Then I will evaluate these theories and techniques as part of a relation or interaction between the Shakespearean Theatre and its audience. The foot in the door technique and role playing must be evaluated as the two powerful techniques that already exist in the nature of the theatre. That is to say, because theatre contains these two techniques; role playing and the foot in the door technique in itself, it would not be convenient to attribute these two techniques to Shakespeare. However, it is important to know these two techniques to understand the power of theatre in social psychology. Shakespeare’s excellence in using classical conditioning, primacy effect and cognitive dissonance theories successfully in his plays, allows us to reinterpret his plays.

#### **4.4.1 The Foot in the Door Technique**

In 1966, Jonathan L. Freedman and Scott C. Fraser conducted two experiments to test the proposal that when people have agreed to small requests, it is likely that they will comply with the larger requests (1966, p. 195). In order to prove their hypothesis, Freedman and Fraser contacted with a group of people in their first experiment. These people were the performance subjects and were initially requested to comply with a small request. Three days later they were contacted again to comply with a related but larger request. On the other hand, the people in the control group were contacted only one time with a large request. Then, in the end of their field experiment Freedman and

Fraser were faced with interesting results. “Subjects who had agreed to and carried out a small request (performance condition) were subsequently more likely to comply with a larger request than the subjects who were asked only with the larger request (one-contact condition)” (1966, pp. 197-198). While more than 50% of the performance subjects were complying with the large request, only 22.2% of the one-contact subjects agreed. Another remarkable point as regards the results was that none of the people who rejected the initial small request later accepted the larger request.

Freedman and Fraser conducted another field experiment in California which was similar to the first one. This time, they initially requested performance subjects to write a petition or put up a small sign regarding safe driving or beauty. However, they did not request anything from the people in the control group in the first step. As the second step of their experiment, they requested the people in both performance and control group to comply with a larger request by installing a very large sign stating ‘Drive Carefully’ in their front lawn. The result of this experiment was similar to the first one. Freedman and Fraser shortly explain this principle as “the foot-in-the-door or gradation technique” the gist of which is hidden in the following statement: “if you give them an inch, they'll take a mile” (1966, p. 195). We learn from Freedman and Fraser that “It was, for example, supposed to be one of the basic techniques upon which the Korean brainwashing tactics were based (Schcin, Schneier and Barker, 1961), and, in a somewhat different sense, one basis for Nazi propaganda during 1940 (Bruner 1941)” (1966, pp. 195-196). It is clear from their quotation that political powers used this technique effectively at different times in the history. They also underline the fact that many advertising campaigns implicitly employ this technique. They state advertising companies try to “induce the consumer to do anything relating to the product involved, even sending back a card saying he does not want the product” (Freedman and Fraser, 1966, p. 196).

So, how could this technique be used in Shakespearean Theatre? In their study Freedman and Fraser proved that once you are able to convince the people for a small request then your possibility of persuading the same people for a larger request increases. Theatres in Shakespeare’s time became commercial places as discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Big Theatre Houses like The Globe or The Blackfriars were built and people had to pay money for the first time when they wanted to watch a certain play. The play companies used to employ numerous methods such

as posters, handbills and announcements of coming attractions in the early Elizabethan years so as to advertise their plays (Brockett, 1970, p. 188). When a play was advertised as a commercial product, it made a small, initial request from the people indeed. The people who bought the tickets were the people who complied with the first small request of Shakespeare's Play. Therefore, theatregoers, who paid and went to the theatre house, were in the same position with the people who complied with the first small request as in Freedman and Fraser's experiment. To put it another way, when Elizabeth I or James I wanted to propagate their political views through the history plays of Shakespeare, they used a quite powerful method. Because when compared with the people on the street, theatregoers were more likely to be influenced with the implicit or explicit political propaganda of the play. I would like to come to a point that owing to the foot in the door technique, it was easier to influence the political perception of the people who came into the theatre house than the people who refused to watch the same play. Thus, in the light of this theory it is possible to state that using the theatre as a propaganda instrument was an incredibly powerful method for both Elizabeth I and James I. It is clear from Freedman and Fraser's study that the theatre in Shakespeare's time was a pretty powerful instrument for mass propaganda or influencing the society.

#### **4.4.2 Role Playing**

Role playing itself has been being used as a method to increase the effectiveness of teaching or attitude changing in different disciplines from education to psychology for decades. Irving L. Janis and Bert T. King from Yale University conducted a research on 'the Influence of Role Playing on Opinion Change' in 1954. In their experimental study they concluded that "Certain types of role-playing experiences can facilitate changes in personal opinions has been suggested by various impressionistic observations" (p. 211). Their study indicated that overt verbalization of the role playing influenced the persuasive communication positively (1954, p. 218). Their researches showed that not only the active participants of the role playing changed their attitudes positively, but also the passive participants of the role playing changed their attitudes positively. In another study, Janis and Mann tested the smoking habits of a group of heavy smokers who had actively taken part in the role playing activity as a person suffering lung cancer and under the risk of early death (cited in Bohner and Wanke, 2014, p. 169). The participants in the control group did not actively take part

in the role playing activity, but they listened to the tape recordings of the role playing. The results indicated that the role players' attitudes changed positively "and also reported to have reduced their consumption from 24 to 14 cigarettes daily...the reduction reported by control participants was from 22 to 17" (Bohner and Wanke, 2014, p. 170). Here it is clear that not only active participants but also the passive participants of the role playing were affected by the opinion advocated in the role playing at different degrees. Here, I would like to bring a fact to the fore, that the participants in the control group only listened to the tape recordings of the role playing. It is conceivable that if they had watched the role playing like the audiences in the theatres, they could have been affected more. As a result of this research, it is viable to conclude that when it is employed properly, the theatre is a powerful tool in influencing and changing the attitudes of people.

So as to explain the power of theatre in influencing the attitudes of individuals, it is useful to remember how the copycat effect "The incorporation of elements from a media-portrayed crime, either real or dramatized, into a subsequent crime" (Sullivan, 2009, p. 112) influence people's behaviours. Following the suicide of Marilyn Monroe, for instance,

197 individual suicides –mostly of young and blond women- appear to have used the Hollywood star's suicide as a model for their own. The overall suicide rate in the U.S. increased by 12 percent for the month after the news of Monroe's suicide" (Coleman, 2004, p. 2).

#### **4.4.3 Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

According to Cognitive Dissonance Theory, developed by Leon Festinger in 1954, when people have got cognitive dissonance or inconsistency in their attitudes, beliefs, etc. they have got a self-motivation which evokes inside them and compels their minds for trying to efface the dissonance to make the conditions logical, as part of their bodies' defense mechanisms. In his article 'A Theory of Social Comparison Process' Festinger had two hypotheses. The first one was "There exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities" (1954, p. 117) and the second one was "to the extent that objective, non-social means are not available, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions and abilities of others" (1954, p. 117). In order to prove his hypotheses, Festinger conducted three experiments and achieved positive results about his theory. According to this theory when people who smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day learn that smoking may lead to

lung cancer, this information causes a cognitive conflict and dilemma in the brain of these people. In order to correct this imbalance inside their cognition, they change this attitude. They give up smoking or reduce the daily cigarette consumption. To put it another way, when we know something inconsistent with our beliefs, thoughts and attitudes, the possibility of our being bothered and attempting to correct them increases.

Similarly, Shakespeare, who made the political propaganda of the English Monarchy in his plays, hesitated to reveal some historical realities about the monarchy which may cause an imbalance and cognitive dilemma among the common people. Rather, he preferred to make distortions in his plays. In other words, Shakespeare's history plays generally do not cause any imbalance or inconsistency inside the cognition of Elizabeth I or James I, and in the cognitions of the audience in terms of Elizabethan or Jacobean policies. In Shakespeare's plays, there is a tendency that most of the time the members of the house of York are bad characters and the members of the house of Lancaster are good characters. Although the Yorkist kings, Richard II and Richard III were the rightful heirs of the crown according to religion or the conventions of the Monarchy in Renaissance England, in Shakespeare's plays Richard II was recounted as a king who deserved to be deposed and Henry IV was recounted as a king who was right when usurping the throne. In nearly all history plays Shakespeare attempts not to cause any imbalance or inconsistency between the cognitions of the audience and the Elizabethan and Jacobean policy. For example Magna Carta was a kind of barons' uprising against King John and all the Lords of England restricted the rights of the king by forcing him to seal the Magna Carta. In the end King John died as King John Lackland. Shakespeare did not mention these details and narrated a slightly different story without a word of Magna Carta in his *King John*. Magna Carta is the symbol of democracy and means more freedom for the commons. If Shakespeare had mentioned Magna Carta in his *King John*, those scenes might have caused a conflict in the cognition of the audience. Magna Carta symbolizes the common people, freedom and democracy, whereas King John personally symbolizes the authority, monarchy and anti-democracy. One may claim that, owing to the Master of the Revels and the political pressure of the Monarchy, Shakespeare might not have found a way of mentioning Magna Carta and the uprisings against King John in a way. However, regardless of his reasons or purpose, I would like to argue that if Shakespeare had

mentioned Magna Carta and similar scenes in his *King John*, they might have created a cognitive dissonance in the mind of the audience. Briefly, Shakespeare, by making distortions, uses cognitive dissonance theory in his history plays so as to make a clear propaganda of the monarchy.

In the same manner, in his *Richard III*, Shakespeare introduces Richard as a monster to the audience so as to make the propaganda of the Lancastrians. On the grounds that Richard was from the house of York, Shakespeare wanted him to be disliked by the audience. In accordance with the cognitive dissonance theory, Shakespeare did not want to leave the audience with a question in mind. He distorted realities about Richard III and made the propaganda of Elizabeth I.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare gives a certain message to the audience: If you rebel or betray the king and affect the natural order of the world, then you will be punished by God. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare underscores the legal and divine rights of the kings in a powerful manner to the audience. The Renaissance audience who watched *Macbeth* might not have had any cognitive dissonance as regards the divinity of the kings and accordingly their full authority over their citizens. Besides Shakespeare's message, Christianity also gives certain messages to the common people. In contrast, in his *Richard II* Shakespeare does not say a word of divine right of the kings. Furthermore he convinces the audience for the deposition scene of Richard II. When we read the play we feel that it is better if Richard II abandons his kingship because he is not a good and fair king.

#### **4.4.4 Primacy Effect**

According to the researches, when we are forming our impressions about something, the initial information we get is more effective than the information we acquire later. Psychologists have conducted multitudinous experiments proving the primacy effect until now. In his article 'Forming Impressions of Personality' Solomon Asch (1946, p. 259) claimed that when people have information about something for the first time, they form a cognitive schema and tend to evaluate the latter information in accordance with this schema. Therefore, when people formed a positive impression about a person they usually tend to evaluate the latter information positively, and vice versa. Asch says that "it is quite hard to forget our view of a person once it has formed" (1946, p. 259). Similarly, Kruglanski and Freund conducted an experiment to test the primacy

effect under a high degree of time pressure. Their study indicated that under a high degree of time pressure, the primacy effect had greater impact (1983, p. 453). Briefly, when people do not have much time for making a decision just like in the theatre or in times when a correct or incorrect decision does not have much importance, the power of the primacy effect increases (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010, p. 247). In the light of this information, I would like to point out how Shakespeare perfectly uses primacy effect in his *Richard III*. Shakespeare starts the play with a soliloquy of Richard who has a physical deformity, hunchback, in the play and accounts his devilish personality to the audience: “Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,/ By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,/ To set my brother Clarence and the king/ In deadly hate the one against the other (1.1:32-35).

Richard alone comes onto the stage and introduces himself as badly as possible. As we know that the first information forms our impression, when Shakespeare’s Richard is on the stage with this soliloquy, it is clear that he affects the audience negatively. Because, in the beginning of the play the audiences watch and hear Richard’s cruelty directly from himself. He introduces himself to the audiences as a bad person who has cruel plans for the innocent members of the English Royal House. First he causes his elder brother to be imprisoned and then be killed. Then he slaughters every obstacle on his way to the throne. When we see Richard in the opening scene, Shakespeare conditions us to watch a Richard who is a real devil and can kill everyone in order to ascend the throne. His excellent usage of primacy effect in his *Richard III* shows the power of Shakespeare’s pen. The play commences with Richard’s famous and powerful soliloquy to convince the audience that they are going to watch a monster in the rest of the play.

#### **4.4.5 Classical Conditioning**

This first soliloquy of Richard of Gloucester can also be pondered as an example of classical conditioning theory of Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov developed this theory while he was studying to understand the relation between his dogs’ saliva and their digestion system. However, one day he accidentally realized that his dogs had made salivation before he gave food to them. Then, he revealed the relation between the voice that his dogs had heard before they got their food. Later, John B. Watson went a step further and conducted studies where he applied classical conditioning theory on human beings. In Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, Shakespeare depicts Richard as a physically

deformed person with a hunchback and having a devilish heart. He is so cruel that whenever he appears on the stage he either kills someone, or plots to do harm to people around him. As a result, similar to the bell voice which is a stimulus of food in Pavlov's experiment, Richard of Gloucester acts as a stimulus of villainy or disgrace when he is on the stage. When the audience see him, they can easily understand that he will do something bad.

Concisely, Shakespeare employed social psychology techniques such as cognitive dissonance theory, primacy effect and classical conditioning theory successfully. On the other hand, the foot in the door and the role playing techniques are used as a matter of course in the theatre due to the nature of this business. Today, we know that these techniques are influential methods in changing attitudes of societies and being used widely by modern people. Shakespeare's talent in using above mentioned techniques powerfully along with the techniques used in every theatre stage like the foot in the door and role playing demonstrate the incontrovertible power of Renaissance theatre as a strong mass communication tool in influencing the attitudes or opinions of the masses.

In the end of this chapter, it is significant to state that Shakespeare lived in the golden age of the theatre. In this era, Monarchy employed the theatre as part of their political propaganda and Shakespeare wrote history plays to propagate the Monarchy. One of the most important aspects of this theatre and Shakespeare's history plays was that although Shakespeare lived four centuries before our age, he used modern social psychology techniques successfully in his plays. Contemporary researches reveal the fact that drama was one of the most influential methods to influence the opinions of the people. From this viewpoint it is important to analyse Shakespeare's history plays and Renaissance Theatre in the light of Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory. Because there are similarities between our age and Shakespeare's time in terms of the loss of the real and the psychological methods being used in both eras which prove the genius of Shakespeare once again.

## 5. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The major argument of this dissertation is to claim that Shakespeare's history plays simulated *simulacra* on the stages of the Globe and Blackfriars. In other words, this dissertation puts forward the idea that some history plays of Shakespeare included historical distortions and they served the political propaganda of the Monarchy. When, all these distortions are evaluated in the light of new historicism and deconstruction theories along with social psychology techniques, it is feasible to allege that Shakespearean Theatre in Elizabethan and Jacobean period employed simulacra in the same manner with the mass media tools of our modern era. Therefore, in the wake of criticising Shakespeare's history plays it is useful to criticize those plays in the light of Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory.

Having explained new historicism and deconstruction theories, I will successively analyse four history plays, *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* in the light of new historicism and deconstruction theories in each section. Before criticising the plays, I will account the brief history of the period and the summary of the play. I will make a new historicist reading in order to reveal the distortions concerning historical realities. Then, I will analyse the plays in the light of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory so as to reveal the hidden meanings in the texts that might be evaluated as the propaganda of the monarchy.

Consequently, having completed the new historicist and deconstructive criticisms and verified the political propaganda and distortions in *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III*, this study will evaluate the findings in the light of simulacra and simulation theory of Baudrillard in the end.

### 5.1 What is New Historicism?

New historicism emerged in the early 1980s as a literary theory in North America. Stephen Greenblatt, English Professor at Harvard University, was the leading figure of this new movement. It was a kind of reaction against traditional approaches. New

historicists do not study the literary work autonomously. On the contrary, they build a bridge between literary and nonliterary texts and forms so as to evaluate the literary work as a product of specific political, cultural and social contexts (Leitch 2001, p. 27). In other words, new historicists' main aim is to figure out the literary work within its own historical context. Therefore, a simultaneous study of literary work and its historical context is essential in order to figure out the literary work. According to Peter Barry it is crucial to read both literary and non-literary texts of the same period in order to make a new historicist criticism (2002, p. 172). History books, chronicles, newspapers, letters or any other historical records are extremely significant to understand the age in which literary work was written. Because of this dependence of new historicist criticism on the texts, both literary and nonliterary, Peter Barry claims that new historicism is influenced by Derrida's deconstruction theory which claims that there is nothing outside the text (2002, p. 175). According to deconstruction theory it is only possible to understand the text by only reading the text itself. New historicists employ any kind of printed historical material like legal documents of courts, parliaments or churches, diaries, letters or newspapers in their analysis of a literary work. By doing so, they try to show how the literary work was influenced by the political, cultural, religious or social context. Deconstructionists, on the other hand, try to understand the hidden meaning or inconsistencies in a literary work by utilizing only the literary work itself.

Peter Barry defines new historicism as a theory which is "based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period" (2002, p. 172) and states the idea that new historicism is influenced by Derrida's deconstruction theory as new historicists also believe that there is nothing outside the text (Barry, 2002, p. 175). It is a fact that we learn most of the historical events as regards our past through texts. Therefore, text is crucially significant both in the new historicism and in deconstruction. In this respect, new historicists employ any kind of printed historical documents like legal documents of courts, parliaments or churches, diaries, letters or newspapers in their analysis of a literary work. By doing so, they try to show how the literary work was influenced by the political, cultural, religious or social context.

## 5.2 Deconstruction

In 1960s, poststructuralism emerged as a reaction against structuralism in France and Jacques Derrida was one of the leading figures of this new movement. Some authors including Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault took part in this new movement and commenced to defend the views of poststructuralism. Poststructuralists, in those years' France, started to defend the concept of 'self' and underlined the paramount nature of the different perceptions of the same signifiers. Saussurean understanding of signification which consists of a signifier and a signified combination left its place to a contingency of multiple meanings in poststructuralist criticism.

Jacques Derrida's famous works *Of Grammatology*, *Speech and Phenomena* and *Writing and Difference* have had a great impact on the intellectual world since their publication in 1967. In these works, Derrida strictly criticized the Saussurean point of view as regards the meaning and text. He not only rejected the structuralist point of view, but also founded a new way of criticism so as to figure out the relation between the meaning and text called deconstruction. On the grounds that Derrida's deconstruction method has a philosophical background, it is pretty difficult to grasp its gist. Therefore, it is crucial to know Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Ferdinand de Saussure, Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan and their philosophical views in order to understand Derrida's deconstruction theory. According to Barry "Derrida sees in modern times a particular intellectual 'event' which constitutes a radical break from past ways of thought, loosely associating this break with the philosophy of Nietzsche and Heidegger and the psychoanalysis of Freud" (2002, p. 66).

In order to explain Derrida's deconstruction theory clearly, I will try to explain it in detail. First of all, Derrida refuses Saussure's signification theory concerning meaning. As it is well known, Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* defends the view that a language is a system of signs. All the words in a language system are signifiers and the images emerging regarding the meaning of those signifiers in our minds are the signifieds. According to Saussure, this signification system of a language can be studied synchronically and there is no need to study the system of a language diachronically.

However, Derrida opposes this idea in his *Writing and Difference*. Referring to the verbs ‘defer’ and ‘differ’ Derrida coins a new word ‘différance’ so as to focus on the temporal and spatial differences in a language. He explains his views through this new word ‘différance’. According to Derrida there are two axes of difference. The first one is spatial difference. A word for instance can be understood differently in different cultures, countries or places. The second one is the temporal difference. Because the level of knowledge of a human being changes as long as time goes by, or owing to different factors, a word can be understood differently at different ages, for instance Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Prior to Sigmund Freud’s invention of Psychoanalysis theory in 1900, understanding the repressed feelings of Shakespeare’s Hamlet was impossible without Freud’s Oedipal interpretation.

Secondly, Derrida was influenced by Platonic and Kantian ontologies. As is known, both philosophers have similar theories concerning the presence of knowledge. While Plato is describing two worlds, the perceptible world and the world of ideal forms; Immanuel Kant similarly depicts two different worlds of noumenal realm and phenomenal realm in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant’s noumenal realm and Plato’s world of ideals represent the spatial difference from the phenomenal realm and the world of forms. Because both the noumenal realm and the world of ideals are untouchable and unphysical realms, they demonstrate the spatial difference with regard to substance and presence. Derrida believes that there are both temporal and spatial differences regarding the meaning, knowledge and truth.

Thirdly, Derrida rejects the binary oppositions that were initially introduced by Aristotle in the tenth book of *Poetics*. Aristotle was the first philosopher to introduce us to the Pythagorean opposites (table 5.1).

“Aristotle associated moral prestige with the left-hand column, because the “good” things appear in that column” (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2016). Derrida totally opposes to binary oppositions and he believes that there are no logical reasons behind the binary oppositions. According to Derrida binary oppositions create ‘violent hierarchy’. Instead, he defends a decentered world. When he says “There is nothing outside the text” he means, there is no centre for the certain truth and there are different meanings perceived by different readers at different places and at different times. By doing so, Derrida rejects all kinds of hierarchies and binary oppositions of western metaphysical opinion. He deconstructs the buildings of texts

**Table 5.1:** Pythagorean opposites

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Limited	Unlimited
Odd	Even
Unity	Plurality
Right	Left
Male	Female
At Rest	In Motion
Straight	Curved
Light	Darkness
Good	Evil
Square	Oblong

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**Source:** Aristotle's table of the Pythagorean Opposites (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2016)

from the hierarchies, binary oppositions and logocentrism. This decentered point of view of Derrida is profoundly associated with the philosophies of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Apart from Sigmund Freud, Nietzsche and Heidegger were presumably the most important philosophers in influencing Derrida in his *deconstruction* theory. According to Barry, for instance, "Derrida sees in modern times a particular intellectual 'event' which constitutes a radical break from past ways of thought, loosely associating this break with the philosophy of Nietzsche and Heidegger and the psychoanalysis of Freud" (2002, p. 66). Nietzsche was among the few philosophers questioning the accuracy of knowledge in the age of positivism. In his 1873 essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-moral Sense' he started to question the assumptions about the certainty of knowledge (cited in Rivkin 2000, p. 262). According to Rivkin, "When the Post-Structuralists declare that there is no "transcendental signified," they are echoing Nietzsche's claim that there is teleology, no theological origin or goal to the world" (2000, p. 266).

Martin Heidegger as one of the important philosophers influencing Derrida's deconstruction theory elaborated on the necessity of difference to any determination of identity in his essay 'Identity and Difference' (Rivkin, 2000, p. 271).

French psychiatrist Jacques Lacan, who applied Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis to the language system, found out the fact that the language system and subconscious of human beings have got the same working principles. To put it another way, Lacan proved that the working system of a language is similar to the working system of the subconscious. He claimed that metaphors and metonyms demonstrate the subconscious of the human mind. Similar to Freudian slip of tongue which suddenly reveals the repressed feelings or opinions of the speaker, metaphors and metonyms have the same duty and are the symbols of the repressed feelings. Therefore, when a text is read deeply in the light of psychoanalysis, it is possible to grasp the underlying or hidden meaning of the text.

According to Derrida the text itself is enough to understand the full meaning of the text. Most of the time there are hidden messages behind the written texts. In order to acquire the subconscious of the text deconstructive critics employ psychoanalysis.

Different from Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's view as regards the signifier and signified, Derrida claims that the signified existed before the signifier. Similar to binary oppositions like black and white, up and down, good and bad, woman and man, when we read a text we are faced with two different meanings. The first one is expressed meaning and the other one is hidden meaning of the text.

## 6. MACBETH

*Macbeth* is the shortest tragedy of William Shakespeare, but it is one of the most popular and staged of his plays. It is a play about the political relations and throne fights of Scottish kings in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is considered to have been written in the early years of the ascendance of King James VI of Scotland to the English throne as King James I. In brief, Macbeth, a loyal thane of King Duncan, plays an important role in defending his country in a civil war. As a result he gets a promotion and becomes a lord. However, on his way back from the battlefield he sees three witches who prophesy that he will be the king of Scotland in the future. He starts to formulate a plan with his wife Lady Macbeth so as to kill King Duncan to usurp his throne. Although he kills King Duncan and usurps his throne, later Malcolm, the son of King Duncan, kills Macbeth. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare gives a clear message about the divine right of kings and the harms of witches. According to Jan Kott *Macbeth* is one of those plays of Shakespeare which shows us an example of the Grand Mechanism<sup>5</sup>.

### 6.1 History of Scotland in the 11th C

Scotland is believed to have been a nation in the ninth century under the kingship of Kenneth. The year 840 is believed to be the beginning of Scotland. Although we do not have much detailed information concerning the first kings of Scotland, we have some rough information including their reigning dates and style of ascending to the throne. There was not a lineal succession system in the early Scottish kings. Kenneth, for instance, was the first king of Scotland and after his death his brother Donald succeeded him. Then the nephew of Donald (Kenneth's son) Constantine I followed

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5. Grand Mechanism is a simile that Jan Kott uses to describe the quick rises and inevitable tragic downfalls of the kings in Shakespeare's history plays. For more information, please see *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*(1964) Jan Kott.

Donald (Fry and Fry, 2005, p. 42). Being a king of Scotland required different qualifications other than lineal succession. Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry clearly state in their work *The History of Scotland* that “the succession was an alternate and an unusual system” (2005, p. 42). They maintain that early kings of Scotland had to be an adult, prove himself in the battlefield, successful and liked by the majority of the royal people. Therefore, there were some disadvantages of the system:

If one candidate was supported by some people, he would have been opposed by others who preferred another, and the latter generally continued to back the rival until they had got rid of the king. Kings therefore had little chance of living out their reigns to a natural death. Seven kings in succession, from Malcolm I to Kenneth III, were killed, most of them murdered. Then, between 1040 and 1058, three more were killed. It is a terrible record, more so for a kingdom newly formed and struggling to establish good government and to fight off the endless attacks of the Vikings along its coasts (2005, p. 43).

Duncan I was not more than 40 years old when he became the king of Alba in 1034. He reigned the country until 1040 when Macbeth defeated and killed him in the battlefield and became the king of Scotland (Woolf, 2007, p. 252). Macbeth was one of Duncan I's dukes and revolted against him with other lords after the unsuccessful war policies of Duncan I. In spite of his advisors' recommendation, Duncan attempted to invade Northumbria and Durham, but he failed. As a result, an army under the leadership of Macbeth fought against the king and Duncan I was slain in the Battle of Bothgouanan (Fry and Fry, 2005, p. 48). Macbeth ruled the country for seventeen years. But according to Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry Malcolm, the son of King Duncan, acted as a pawn of the English:

They offered him military support to win the throne of Scotland from Macbeth, but only because they thought this would serve their end. But once Macbeth was slain, Lulach deposed, and the Scottish crown safely on Malcolm's head, he chose to forget his obligations to England. He looked instead to the Vikings in northern Scotland for help and he made an alliance with them. (2005, p. 51)

In 1057, Malcolm who got the support of England went to Lumphanan, Scotland and killed Macbeth in the Battle. Then Macbeth's step son Lulach was chosen king of Scotland. But few month later Malcolm came again and killed Lulach and became the king Malcolm III of Scotland.

## **6.2 New Historicist Criticism of *Macbeth***

Being one of the shortest tragedies of Shakespeare, *Macbeth* tells throne struggles of Scottish Kings in the 11th century. It is generally accepted that Shakespeare wrote this play so as to compliment to King James I in the wake of famous Gunpowder Plot

against him. Apparently, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare gives clear messages concerning the divinity of the kings and the end of the usurpers. This was in accordance with the general policy of King James I. We know that James I was a king who endorsed a doctrine called the divine right of kings in his essay “The True Law of the Monarchies” in 1579. According to this political theory or doctrine of King James I, kings derive the right of ruling a country directly from God. Therefore, only God has got the right of judging a king. That is to say, no earthly man has got the right of judging a king. In his *Basilikon Doron*, a private letter that King James wrote to his son Henry in 1599, he tells the importance of being a good Christian and a good king. He also repeats his political doctrine the divine right of kings one more time. In the part titled “anent a king’s Christian duty towards God” King James advises his son to know and love God and reminds his two obligations to God.

Therefore (my son), first of all things, learn to know and love that God, to whom ye have a double obligation; first, for that He made you a man; and next, that He made you a little god, to sit on His Throne and rule over other men. Remember that as in dignity He hath erected you above others, so ought ye in thankfulness towards Him go as far beyond all others (James I, 1598).

James overtly describes the positions of kings as little gods who sit on the throne of God. Owing to the sacred positions of kings, James I maintains that kings have got the right of ruling over other people on behalf of God. For that reason, by underscoring the importance of divine right of kings, James I attempted to empower his absolutist attitude when he ascended to the throne of England.

Apart from the philosophy of the divine right of kings, King James explained his interest towards witchcraft and witches in his *Daemonologie* in 1597 before he became the King of England. In the preface of *Daemonologie* James I endorses the witch hunt practices:

The fearefull aboundinge at this time in this countrie, of these detestable slaues of the Deuill, the Witches or enchaunters, hath moved me (beloued reader) to dispatch in post, this following treatise of mine, not in any wise (as I protest) to serue for a shew of my learning & ingine, but onely (mooued of conscience) to preasse thereby, so farre as I can, to resolute the doubting harts of many; both that such assaultes of Sathan are most certainly practized, & that the instrumentes thereof, merits most severely to be punished (1597, p. 1)

He describes the people who are interested in witchcraft as the slaves of the devil who deserve to be punished severely. Later in 1604, after he had ascended to the throne of England, King James I declared witchcraft as a crime to be punished with the penalty of death with the Witchcraft Act of 1604. In the light of this information, it is possible

to assert that Shakespeare had already known James' interest in the witches and his rigid political view about the divine right of the kings, before he wrote his *Macbeth*. Given that the political views of King James I concerning the witchcraft and divine right of kings match with the messages of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, it is possible to claim that Shakespeare made the political propaganda of King James I.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is mostly based on the stories accounted in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* and George Buchanan's *History of Scotland*. However, Shakespeare made a number of alterations about the characters and events in his play. With this in view let's look at Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to see the distortions. Macbeth, for instance, did not kill Duncan in his castle, rather, he killed King Duncan in a battle field, in 1040. Shakespeare might have borrowed the story of slaughtering a king in his bed from King Duff of Scotland who ruled Scotland between 961 and 966. According to Medieval Scottish historian John of Fordun, King Duff was murdered in his bedroom in his fifth year of his reign.

wicked robbers, who seizing an hour at the death of night, entered the king's bedchamber, which had been carefully bolted, and secretly snatched him away, while reposing in bed, with only one servant of the bedchamber; and dragging him with them through their secret haunts, they slew him (1872, p. 161).

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth* King Duncan is murdered in a similar way. While he is sleeping in his bed during his visit at Inverness Castle, Duncan is murdered by Macbeth. However, in reality Macbeth did not kill Duncan in his bed. Macbeth killed Duncan in a battle in Bothgouanan (Buchanan, 1827, vol. 1, p. 331). An important point to remember is that every country has its own distinctive convention and it is meaningful to evaluate an event in its historical context. For instance, during the early years of Scotland kings were not selected in the form of a lineal succession. Although the kings were coming from the royal house, they were selected according to their merits. It is overt here that the divine right policy of King James I does not match with the conventions of the ascendance of the early kings in Scotland. However, in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* one can clearly see the adaptation of the political messages of James I concerning the divine positions of the kings and the devilish witches who intend to the divine order of life by their prophecies. By hiding the historical reality about the death of King Duncan in terms of its place and method, Shakespeare might have wanted to present King Duncan as innocent as possible and show Macbeth as a coward person who listens the prophecies of the satanic witches and cannot dare to

duel Duncan when he is awake. Rather, he prefers stabbing the king in his bed. Here, Shakespeare does not prefer to account unsuccessful war policies of King Duncan and the discontent of the people from his policies. In order to figure out the influence the policy of King James I over Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, it is useful to remember some other history plays that Shakespeare wrote during the reign of Elizabeth I. In *Richard II* and *Richard III* Shakespeare does not defend the divine right of the kings. Rather he describes both Richard II and Richard III as incompetent rulers and the usurpers as the rightful kings. Because the political priorities of the monarch change after the ascendance of King James I, Shakespeare's political messages change in accordance with the political attitude of the monarchy. Similarly, in Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth* sees three witches with three different prophecies. In the course of their appearance in act 1, scene 3, these witches initially greet Macbeth as the 'Thane of Glamis', later as the 'Thane of Cawdor' and finally as the future 'King of Scotland' (1.3.48-50). In Buchanan's book, one night Macbeth has a dream and he sees three women with three prophecies. "On a certain night, when he was far distant from the king, three women appeared to him of more than human stature, of whom one hailed him thane of Angus, another, thane of Moray, and the third saluted him king" (1827, vol. 1, p. 331). This clearly points to the likelihood that Shakespeare was inspired from this dream and utilized this anecdote in his play by changing the figure of a dream into three superstitious weird sisters who suddenly appear, foretell and disappear. In the play, their appearance and prophecies trigger Macbeth's usurpation of the throne. As soon as witches disappear, Macbeth is promoted and becomes the Thane of Cawdor. For that reason Macbeth starts to believe that he is going to be the next king of Scotland. Macbeth tells these prophecies and developments to his wife Lady Macbeth. Upon these developments, they decide to regicide when King Duncan visits them in Inverness Castle. Macbeth kills the king brutally in his bed, while he is sleeping. However, in reality Macbeth did not murder King Duncan when he was sleeping during his visit as explained previously. We know that King James I was against the witches and witchcraft. Given that King James I supported the witch hunting in England, it is easier to understand why Shakespeare adapted the figure of a dream into three superstitious witches as the representative of Satan in his play. That is to say, this might have encouraged Shakespeare to put three witches as the source of the satanic activity of Macbeth against the representative of God in the earth. These three weird

sisters show that witches and witchcraft are harmful. Because they lead Macbeth to overthrow the rightful king of Scotland.

Another important character, Banquo is a very good and loyal person to King Duncan in the play. But according to the chronicles of the 16th century, Banquo helped Macbeth for his usurpation the throne from King Duncan contrary to Shakespeare's tell.

Wherefore, having consulted with his most intimate friends, among whom was Banquo, and having found a convenient opportunity, he waylaid the king at Inverness, and killed him, in the seventh year of his reign; then, collecting a band together, he proceeded to Scoon, where, trusting to the favour of the people, he proclaimed himself king (Buchanan 1827, vol. 1, p. 331).

As Buchanan states Macbeth proclaimed himself king trusting to the favour of his people. Otherwise, if he had not obtained the trust of the people, Macbeth would not have been the king of Scotland. Among the people who trusted most to Macbeth was Banquo. According to Mark Noble (please see Appendix A.5 for further details about the Genealogy of the Lenox Branch of the Stuarts.), James I was a descendant of Banquo (1795, p. 2). For that reason, it seems highly probable that Shakespeare does not want to show Banquo as a person who plots because he is the ancestor of King James I. But in reality, Banquo was among the rebels supporting Macbeth against King Duncan. In the play Banquo remembers the prophecies of the weird sisters that his offspring will be the king of Scotland after Macbeth. Therefore, Banquo becomes the target of Macbeth.

Banquo. Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,  
As the weird women promised, and I fear  
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said  
It should not stand in thy posterity,  
But that myself should be the root and father  
Of many kings. If there come truth from them  
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine  
Why, by the verities on thee made good,  
May they not be my oracles as well,  
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more (3.1.1-10).

Here Shakespeare softens the position of Banquo. Although he was among the people who helped Macbeth to overthrow King Duncan in reality, in the play he does not take any role in the usurpation of the throne. He does not approve of the ascendance of Macbeth to the throne and he suspects Macbeth of having achieved this title through indecorous methods. He also hears a prophecy from the weird sisters which promises the throne to the posterity of Banquo. For that reason Macbeth hires murderers to kill

Banquo. Banquo is an important character in the play. Because it is through Banquo that we learn the prophecies of the three weird sisters are not correct all the time. Although the prophecies about Macbeth come true, the prophecy about the posterity of Banquo does not actualize. This proves the fact that it is not possible to make prophecies correctly all the time. This shows that it is not possible to rely on the witches and their prophecies. Although some of their prophecies seem to be correct initially, they soon prove the fact that they bring disaster and it is against the divine order of God. This unreliable and satanic depiction of the witches is in accordance with the political view of King James I that he explained in his *Daemonologie*.

In Shakespeare's play, Macbeth's reign does not last long and soon after he usurps the throne, he loses it quickly. But indeed Macbeth's reign did not last only one year. Contrary to Shakespeare's narration, he reigned Scotland for 17 years. This shows that Macbeth was a successful and powerful king. Contrary to Shakespeare's play, chronicles of his time consider Macbeth a good king. "Macbeth was a man of a penetrating genius, a high spirit, unbounded ambition, and, if he had possessed moderation, was worthy of any command however great" (Buchanan, 1827, vol. 1, p. 328). In reality, King Duncan was not an old man as depicted in Shakespeare's play. In the play Shakespeare does not directly say the age of King Duncan, but as far as we understand he is an old and fatherly figure.

Lady M. Alack! I am afraid they have awaked,  
And 'tis not done: th'attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready,  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't (2.1.9-13).

Lady Macbeth resembles King Duncan to her father. But in reality his husband Macbeth and King Duncan are the people of the same generation. When Duncan was murdered, he was around 40 years old. According to a historian, Alex Woolf, he is considered to have been born around the years 1000 (2007, p. 265). Shakespeare depicts Macbeth as a usurper of the throne who dethrones the rightful king unchivalrously during his sleep upon the encouragement of the witches and describes Duncan as an old, fatherly figure who is murdered at his most vulnerable moment by one of the most trusted thanes of him. Both killing a person unchivalrously at his unguarded moment and an attitude of irreverence towards old people are believed to be the two unacceptable or untrustworthy behaviours in a society. By these distortions, while making Macbeth a coward usurper, Shakespeare increases the sacredness of

Duncan. Especially the impossibility of defending himself during his sleep and his fatherly, innocent appearance influences Lady Macbeth emotionally. She cannot dare to kill him as she resembles him to her father. All these distortions mainly underline the importance of the political ideas of King James concerning the divine right of the kings and the witchcraft.

### **6.3 Deconstructing *Macbeth***

It is crucial to remember that Queen Elizabeth was the last member of the house of Tudor and she was succeeded by James I who was also the king of Scotland as James VI. Because Elizabeth died without a child behind her, James VI of Scotland, a descendant of Margaret Tudor, became the king of England according to the act of succession. Therefore, James I became the first joint king of England and Scotland.

As I mentioned before, in his *Macbeth*, Shakespeare endorses the political views of King James I both about the divine right of the kings and the witches. Given that the divine right concept of the play, and the bad luck that the three weird sisters bring to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, it is clear that Shakespeare makes the political propaganda of King James I. As a playwright, Shakespeare's language supports the superiority, nobility and divinity of the kings and right of their blood succession, in *Macbeth*. To put it another way, *Macbeth* endorses a discourse which defends the divinity of kingship, lineal succession from father to son and unlimited, arbitrary power of the kings. Therefore, we can conclude that *Macbeth* propagates the lineal succession. Otherwise, God finds a way to bring the righteous king according to the genealogy. Similarly, James I ascended to the throne of England by lineal succession. Otherwise, it would be impossible for him to be the king of England. The discourse and the prophecies of the witches support the view that unnatural practices sooner or later prove that they are harmful for the natural order of life.

By deconstructing *Macbeth*, this study aims at demonstrating how *Macbeth* defends the monarchical status quo or lineal succession from father to son against a change or a more democratic manner of governing. Binary opposition of monarchical status quo versus change prevails throughout the play. It is contingent to categorize the discussion under three headlines. First of all, in *Macbeth* there is a language which supports the idea that a king is mandatory in a country and succession should be from father to son. Secondly, the play defends the idea that ruling a country arbitrarily with an unlimited

power is the legal and divine right of a king. Although a king does not necessarily take part in a war, for instance, he can rule his country arbitrarily and do whatever he wants. Everything in a country belongs to a king and he can get them back whenever he wants. Thirdly, harming or usurping a king is eventually resulted by the punishment of God.

First of all, the text defends the idea that the correct way of ruling a country should be by succession of kingship from father to his son. Indeed, this is a debatable issue. On the grounds that a country consists of millions of people and different political ideas, all constituting elements of a country should have the right of deciding on the administration. Because only a king himself cannot constitute a country and he is nothing alone. Therefore, it is illogical equipping a king with endless power. "Duncan. Sons, kinsmen, thanes, /And you whose places are the nearest, know, / We will establish our estate upon / Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter / The Prince of Cumberland" (1.4.35-39). Malcolm is declared as the next king of Scotland just because he is the oldest son of Duncan. We do not know if he has got enough capability of ruling a country. It is a known fact that long ago, there were times children became kings at very early ages due to blood succession system. This status quo can be assumed as an advantage for a small group of people such as the royal family, lords, thanes or dukes who delight the advantages of holding power. Having usurped the throne, Macbeth remembers the prophecies of the weird sisters which heralded that after Macbeth, Banquo's son would be the king of Scotland. Because Macbeth does not have any children to leave the throne after his reign, he asks a question to himself whether he had murdered King Duncan for Banquo's issue. He underlines the fact that kingship is a heritage from father to son.

Macbeth. He chid the Sisters,  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like  
They hailed him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind,  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings! (3.1.56-69).

Macbeth does not have any children. Therefore, questions if he had killed Duncan to make Banquo's children next kings of Scotland. He cannot bear this idea and go crazy.

Secondly, the text argues that ruling a country arbitrarily is the legal and divine right of a king. Another important side of being a king is the belief that a king has got an unlimited power and this is his legal and divine right. Duncan, as a king, does not participate in the war. But he gets reports of the war from his men. Although he does not afford in the battlefield, he always gives the final decisions.

Duncan. What bloody man is that? He can report,  
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt  
The newest state.  
Malcolm. This is the sergeant,  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity.. .Hail, brave friend!  
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil  
As thqu didst leave it (1.2.1-7).

King Duncan does not take part in the war. He learns the developments in the battlefield from his messengers, but he rules the country as he likes it. In the eye of King Duncan, the sergeant who is wounded in the battlefield is only a bloody man who can report the latest information about the uprising. The sergeant recounts the bravery and decisive influence of Macbeth over the result of the war. Having learned the latest developments about the war, King Duncan allows the wounded sergeant to be taken to the doctor. All his desires and wills are orders and done quickly. “Duncan. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive / Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death, / And with his former title greet Macbeth. / Ross. I'll see it done” (1.2.65-68). Everything such as the citizens, thanes or lords belongs to the king. Whenever he desires, he can get them back arbitrarily. When he was titled thane of Cawdor, Macbeth says:

The service and the loyalty I owe,  
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part  
Is to receive our duties: and our duties  
Are to your throne and state children and servants?  
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing  
Safe toward your love and honour (1.4.22-27).

Here, Macbeth accentuates the importance of being loyal to the king and he describes being in the service of a king as the duty of every citizen to the state. Briefly, everyone should be respectful to the king. Furthermore, Macbeth underlines that everything in life shall be devoted to the king. Macbeth says “The rest is labour, which is not used for you: / I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful / The hearing of my wife with your approach; / So humbly take my leave” (1.4.44-47). All these dialogues of Macbeth support the divinity and highness of the kings.

Similarly, Lady Macbeth says that everything they have belong to the king, and whenever he desires, they are ready to give them back to the king. “Lady M. Your servants ever / Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt, / To make their audit at your highness' pleasure, / Still to return your own” (1.6.25-28). It is contingent to conclude from these lines of *Macbeth* that succession of the kings should be by blood and they can do everything arbitrarily as their legal and divine right.

Thirdly, harming or usurping the throne of a king is eventually resulted by the punishment of God. According to the text of *Macbeth*, kings have got divine power. Whoever gives any harm to a king, then God punishes those people severely. So as to make the propaganda of the monarchy, Shakespeare presents kings as if they had got divine powers. Whoever gives harm or kills a king, then a great divine punishment comes from God. There is a strong possibility that Shakespeare must have intended to give a message after Gunpowder Plot against King James I. Before killing Duncan, Macbeth explains that he is going to commit a great sin. But he cannot resist his and Lady Macbeth’s desire. He believes that the consequences of killing a king will be a severe punishment by God both in this and in the other World.

Macbeth. if th'assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,  
With his surcease, success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all...here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgement here (1.7.2-8).

Is killing a king different than killing an ordinary person? In Christianity it is not. Bible defends the equality of people. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians, p. 3:28). When Macduff learns that King Duncan is murdered he describes this as the ‘most sacrilegious murder’ to Macbeth and Lennox.

Macbeth, Lennox. What's the matter?  
Macduff. Confusion now hath made his master- piece!  
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope  
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence  
The life o'th' building.  
Macbeth. What is't you say? the life?  
Lennox. Mean you his majesty? (2007, 2.3.64-70).

Macduff maintains to tell how holy was King Duncan by describing the place where Duncan was murdered as an anointed temple. Although Duncan was murdered in the castle of Macbeth, Macduff describes the assassination site as the God’s anointed

temple. Here Shakespeare wants to underline the fact that kings are the representatives of God. According to the text when you kill a king, you steal something from God. If you steal the life of a king from the Lord's anointed temple, then God punishes you. This message of Shakespeare overtly propagates the divine right of the kings doctrine of King James. Similarly, in front of Macbeth's castle two men talk about the supernatural events after Duncan's death. Horses eat each other and an owl eats a falcon.

Old Man. 'Tis unnatural,  
Even like the deed that's done.  
On Tuesday last A falcon towering in her pride of place  
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.  
Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain-  
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make  
War with mankind.  
Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.  
Ross. They did so, to th'amazement of mine eyes,  
That looked upon't (2.4.9-20).

Old man shows the murder of the king as the reason of some unnatural events. An owl hunts a falcon; horses turn wild and start to eat each other. Here, Shakespeare presents the examples of unnatural events. According to the text, these unnatural events are the reactions of the animals to the murder of King Duncan. Emergence of supernatural or magical events after the death of King Duncan shows that killing a king is contradictory with the natural flow of life. When the natural flow of life is spoiled, it is indispensable to be faced with unnatural events. Considering that Shakespeare gave messages about the divine right of the kings and the witchcraft, it is possible to claim that Shakespeare made the propaganda of *Basilikon Doron* and *Daemonologie*. In the end of the play Shakespeare defines the king of England as a person who has divine power through a doctor who explains that a certain type of illness is only being cured by the king.

Doctor. Ay, sir: there are a crew of wretched souls  
That stay his cure: their malady convinces  
The great assay of art; but at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,  
They presently amend.  
Malcolm. I thank you, doctor, [the Doctor goes  
Macduff. What's the disease he means?  
Malcolm. 'Tis called the evil:  
A most miraculous work in this good king,  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,

Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue  
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,  
And sundry blessings hang about his throne  
That speak him full of grace (4.3.141-159).

This king is Edward the Confessor. The important point here is his miraculous power. According to the text both king of Scotland and king of England are holy representatives of God. When Scottish king Duncan is murdered the other representative of God, King Edward of England helps the son of Duncan to protect Scotland from an unholy king Macbeth. That is to say, the holy king Edward is opposed to unholy king Macbeth. Malcolm, the son of Duncan, also witnesses the miraculous power of King Edward during his stay in England.

Malcolm. A most miraculous work in this good king,  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction (4.3.147-156).

Malcolm verifies the divine power of King Edward. Because this king has got the ability of treating people who are in despair of surgery. The most important message Malcolm gives is that the divine power of the healing benediction will pass to the natural, lineal successors of King Edward.

Finally it is possible to conclude from the text that unnatural practices soon or later prove that they are harmful for the natural order of life. The discourse and the prophecies of the witches support the view that unnatural practices sooner or later prove that they are harmful for the natural order of life. In the opening scene of the first act three witches appear and they talk with each other in a cavern. In the end of their dialogue they say “fair is foul and foul is fair” (1.1.12). When this phrase is evaluated in the light of binary logic there is an ambiguity of the meaning. After this confusing sentence witches disappear and in their first appearance they give a prophecy to Macbeth about his future. Macbeth coincides with these witches, when he

is Thane of Glamis. The first witch greets him as the Thane of Glamis, but the second one greets him as the Thane of Cawdor and the third witch greets Macbeth as the king of future. Macbeth who takes these prophecies seriously into account, cannot wait for recounting them to his wife in a letter. According to the text, witches are unnatural creatures who suddenly appear and disappear. They seem to know the future, but indeed they do not know everything. Although their prophecies about Macbeth come true, their prophecy about Banquo and his posterity does not come true. The ambiguity of their discourse reflects the ambiguity of the unnatural. Being the opposition of natural order, unnatural practices do not bring anything apart from a disaster. We see this in the practices of Macbeth. Before he kills King Duncan Macbeth confesses that he is going to do something wrong. He says:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; (1.7.1-8)

Although Macbeth wishes to kill King Duncan immediately, he knows the fact that there are punishments for such a crime both in this and in the other world. He confesses that it is a crime to assassinate a king. Witches as the only encouragers of this crime have supernatural powers. But their prophecies about Macbeth do not influence or supersede the natural order of life. Although Macbeth usurps the throne of Duncan, his son Malcolm takes his revenge and kills Macbeth in the end of the play. Therefore the natural order of life is constituted by the son of Duncan again.

Briefly stated, through Macbeth Shakespeare endorses the political views of King James I that he defended in his *Daemonologie* and *Basilikon Doron*. Considering King James defended the divine right of kings and the existence of witchcraft in these works, it is predictable why Shakespeare gave messages of divine justice and the presence of witches in his *Macbeth*. It is clear that *Macbeth* made the propaganda of the political views of King James I.

## 7. KING JOHN

*The Life and Death of King John* is one of Shakespeare's plays about English history and recounts a period in King John's reign between 1199 and 1216. The play starts with the entrance of the messenger of the King Philip of France into the court of King John. The messenger demands King John to abdicate his kingship in favour of Arthur, the son of his elder brother Geoffrey. King Philip of France believes that Arthur is the rightful heir of the English throne. However King John refuses this demand and is threatened with war by King Philip of France. Then two brothers suddenly come into the court with a controversial issue to be solved by King John. One of the brothers claims that they are not from the same fathers. Then their mother comes there and she confesses in front of King John and his mother Eleanor the fact that one of his sons' father is Richard the Lionhearted. Eleanor loves the Bastard because of the contingency of his being her grandson. So, she advises the Bastard to leave his lands to his younger brother and join her army with the name Bastard of Richard the Lionhearted. Both King Philip of France and King John come in front of Angiers, an English town, and ask its citizens whom they endorse as the king of England. The citizens state that they support the rightful king. The two armies fight with each other but no side dominates the other. Therefore, the citizens of Angiers cannot decide who to choose. Then the Bastard proposes that the two kings unite against Angiers to conquer the city and then going on fighting with each other again. The kings accept this proposal and decide to attack Angiers. But at that very moment, the citizens of Angiers make a proposal of marriage between King Philip's son and King John's niece as a method of solution between the two kings. They accept the proposal and Philip's son Louis and John's niece Blanche marry. With this marriage John reinforces his ties with France and therefore Arthur and his mother Constance become displeased due to the changed mind of Philip.

John not only fights with a claim of illegitimacy about his kingship, he also copes with the pope who excommunicates him and causes his death in the end of the play. John

reacts against the Pope and dislikes to be ruled from a distance. As a result of this, the Pope gets in touch with King Philip of France and demands him to break his relations with King John. Pope, King Philip, uprising barons and Arthur all fight against King John. Barons change their side in the end of the play and apologize to King John. But, King John dies at the end of the play because he is poisoned by the men of the Pope.

### **7.1 High Middle Ages (1066 - 1272) and Late Middle Ages (1272 - 1499)**

Coming of Normans in 1066 changed the cultural, political, military, religious and social life of England profoundly. Therefore, William the Conqueror played a crucial role in the emergence of today's England. First of all, Normans Christianized the island. Shortly after Normans had invaded England, Nicholas Breakspear became the first and only English Pope as Adrian IV from 1154 to 1159. English people nurtured an English Pope and actively started to take part in the Crusades. Richard I or Richard the Lionheart, the King of England from 1189 to 1199, was one of the Christian Kings participating in the third Crusade and he captured Cyprus, Acre and Jaffa. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that Christianization of England and her relation with the Papacy is among the most significant events of the High Middle Ages in England. King John, for instance, refuses Pope Innocent III's appointing Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. In response, the Pope deposes King John and places him under interdiction.

Another significant influence of the Norman invasion was in the field of administration of England. These kings preferred feudalism in governing England and built up a network of castles in order to control the newly invaded country. These Royal Castles were important features for the Monarchy for both military and political reasons. According to George Burton Adams, there were two reasons for employing feudalism in ruling England. The first purpose was economic and the other was political obligations (1905, p. 15).

As it is clearly seen on the map of Norman England in Appendix (fig A.6), during the reign of William I, England holds an important part of French territory owing to William I's French roots. Norman invasion causes England and France to be closer to each other during the first centuries after the invasion in terms of many aspects involving language, religion, marriage and cultural matters. However, getting closer by royal marriages becomes one of the main reasons of conflicts or wars between the

two countries as regards the kings' claims to be the heir despite the other monarchy, or their demand for dual monarchy of France and England during the Late Middle Ages. In 1152, former queen of France married with Henry II of England. For that reason her dowry, Aquitaine joined to English territories. From 1152 to 1362 the Duchy of Aquitaine was ruled by the house of Plantagenet. This was one of the reasons of the Hundred Years' War between France and England.

The king of England, as duke of Aquitaine, still counted as one of the great princes of France. Indeed, it was the continuing English involvement in French affairs that formed the background to the struggle we know as the Hundred Years' War (Saul, 2008, p. 50).

Consequently, the conflict between the reigning monarchies, the House of Valois of France and the House of Plantagenets of England, started the Hundred Years' War in 1337. The war came to an end in 1453 by the Battle of Castillon. The Hundred Years' War helped both England and France to develop their military forces both tactically and technologically. It also caused the development of nationalistic feelings of both countries. French, for instance, was the official language of the English court after the Norman invasion. However as a result of the Hundred Years' War, people started to use English more widely in England.

## **7.2 King John (1199-1216)**

John, the fifth son of King Henry II became the King of England in 1199, in the wake of his brother Richard I's death. Although his nephew Arthur, the son of Richard I, was the heir to the throne, John maintained his kingship until his death in 1216. Arthur claiming his royal descent went to France in search of help. For that reason, Philip II of France declared war against England and Arthur turned out against John in England. Arresting Arthur, King John ordered the murder of his nephew in 1203 (McLynn, 2007, p. 387).

The murder of Arthur caused new uprisings by the feudal lords in England. On the other hand, King John was deposed by Pope Innocent III after King John had refused the appointment of Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. This conflict between King John and Pope Innocent III ended with the excommunication of King John in 1209 (McLynn, 2007, p. 378).

King John, who had been in a difficult situation both politically and militarily, had to accept the terms of Pope Innocent III in order to raise the interdiction. "And on 15

May, in the presence of the nuncio, Pandulf, surrendered his kingdoms of England and Ireland to the pope to receive them back as fiefs of the Roman see” (Rothwell, 2004, p. 297).

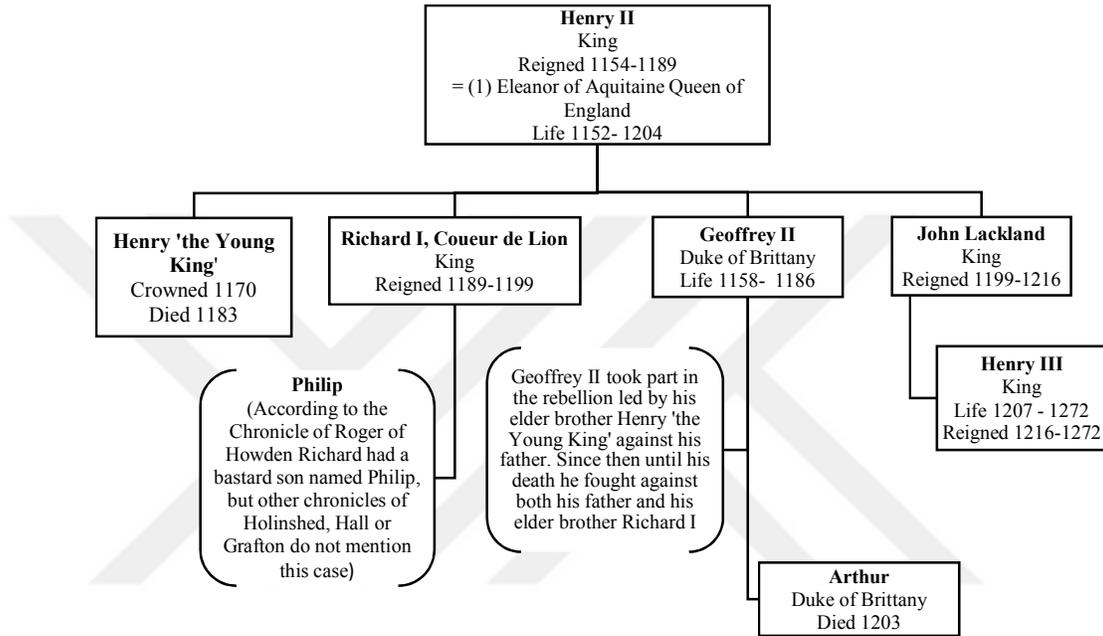
The Barons under the leadership of Robert Fitzwalter were not happy with the policies of King John and dissatisfied with the high taxes and wars. They renounced their loyalty to King John and attacked Northampton in 1215 (Pillai, 2015, p. 29). The First Barons’ War between the uprising barons and King John ended with the sealing of the *Great Charter of Magna Carta* by King John on 15 June 1215. This *Great Charter of Magna Carta* is still believed to be the foundation stone or symbol of human rights and democracy by the modern people. King John who had been defeated in the end of the First Barons’ War was exiled from England and died in 1216 as John Lackland.

### **7.3 New Historicist Criticism of *King John***

In order to understand the life and events during the reign of King John, it is crucial to know the relations and political atmosphere between his brothers, Henry the ‘Young King’, Richard I the ‘Lionhearted’, Geoffrey II the ‘Duke of Brittany’ and their father King Henry II as well as political relations between England and France (see fig. 7.1). Because, during the reign of King John, English dominance prevailed the majority of French territory of our time. For instance, English possession in France involved Normandy, Maine, Touraine, Brittany, Anjou and Poitiers (see figure A.7 in Appendix). Furthermore, when Henry II married with Lady Eleanor, former Queen of France, her dowry, Aquitaine joined to English territories. Queen Eleanor (1122-1204), one of the strongest woman figures in the world history, bore two daughters when she was the Queen of France and eight children when she was the Queen of England (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2016).

There was a rivalry between the two kings, Louis VII of France and Henry II of England. During the reign of Louis VII, France lost great part of her land to England. However, his son Philip II aimed at gaining Angevin possessions back to France and followed an aggressive policy against England. Besides the intrigues and political rivalry with France, Henry II had to suppress his rebellious sons in order to protect his throne. In 1170, Henry II tried to divide his lands among his sons. But his policy by keeping the real authority in his hand and favouring his youngest son John caused dissatisfaction among his other children and in 1173 his older sons Henry, Richard and

Geoffrey rebelled against their father but could not be successful. Henry II forgave his three sons, but he did not his wife. Therefore, Eleanor who had supported her three rebellious sons against King Henry II, was kept in custody until the death of Henry II. Their second attempt was in 1181, but Henry ‘the Young King’ died in 1183 (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2016).



**Figure 7.1:** Family Tree of the House of Angevins

When Geoffrey died in 1186, he had a son Arthur, Duke of Brittany. Richard I as the oldest living son of Henry II acquired the support of Philip II of France. Then defeated his father and usurped his throne in 1189. After his death, his younger brother John became the King of England in 1199. But his nephew Arthur, son of his elder brother Geoffrey, opposed to John’s ascendance to the throne and claimed that he was the best heir to the throne of England.

In his play, Shakespeare tries to propagate the policies of Elizabeth I by telling the same political issues from King John’s perspective. That is to say, Shakespeare tries to correlate the life of Queen Elizabeth I with the life of King John in the play, in terms of their legitimacy, struggle with the Papacy, throne struggle and war with foreign countries. When King John is criticized from a new historicist perspective, it appears that one can see four clear messages in the play.

The first message is about the threat of invasion by foreign countries. When England is weak or in turbulence, the threat of invasion by external forces increases. There are countries that are looking for the opportunities to weaken England by either invading directly or collaborating with the rebels inside. There were the threats of invasion by Spain in Elizabethan Era and by France in John's Reign. Queen Mary of Scots was a Catholic and the rival of Elizabeth I for the throne. However, having revealed the Babington Plot, Elizabeth I executed its organizer, Queen Mary of Scots. Spanish King Philip II, who was also Catholic and strong ties with Mary, decided to invade England by his famous naval force called 'Spanish Armada' which was believed to be unbeatable in those years. England's second but first most influential Protestant ruler, Queen Elizabeth was in a great struggle with Catholics during her reign and her defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588 brought an enormous prestige to her. Similar to Elizabethan period, England was under the threat of French invasion owing to English expansion in France both by marriage of John's mother Queen Eleanor and by war. Rivalry between Louis VII and Henry II went on during King John's time. French Kings sought for opportunities to weaken England by supporting rebels or making collaboration with the Pope against England during her hard times. Similar to the threat of Spanish invasion in Elizabethan age, the French prepares a very big army for the invasion of England in *King John*. A messenger who comes near to King John describes the power of French army as follows: "Messenger. From France to England. Never such a power / For any foreign preparation / Was levied in the body of a land" (4.2.110-112)

Elizabethan audience used to live with the threat of Spanish invasion during the late sixteenth century. Although Elizabeth defeated the Spanish Navy in 1588, this did not change the balance of power in the sea (Doran, 2001, p.55). On account of this, the fear of invasion in Shakespeare's *King John* might have been understandable for the Renaissance audience because of the similarity. In *King John* Bastard explains the fear of people he saw during his travel:

Bastard. But as I travelled hither through the land,  
I find the people strangely fantasied,  
Possessed with rumours, full of idle dreams,

Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear. (4.2.143-146)

In the play the source of fear is the invasion menace of France. A few lines later Bastard says "The French, my lord; men's mouths are full of it" (4.2.162). Through

this big invasion threat of France, Shakespeare successfully makes connection between the Elizabethan era and King John's period in terms of invasion threat.

Second message in the play is that other countries interfere with the internal affairs of England. In the play King Philip of France sends a messenger to King John to leave the throne for the favour of his nephew Arthur. The play starts with this scene in which France interferes with England and declares Arthur as the rightful heir. Chatillion is the messenger of King Philip of France.

Chatillion. Philip of France, in right and true behalf  
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,  
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim  
To this fair island and the territories,  
To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword  
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,  
And put the same into young Arthur's hand,  
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.  
K. John. What follows if we disallow of this?  
Chatillion. The proud control officer and bloody war,  
To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld (1.1.7-18).

Here, Shakespeare exaggerates the French interference by a messenger. According to Grafton's Chronicle Philip II of France pledges help to Arthur against his uncle King John but does not send a messenger to King John. "King Philip taking homage of Arthur for the Duchye of Normandie and all other the possessions of king John beyond the sea, promised him helpe against king John" (1809, vol. 1, p. 231). Similar to the French interference, King Philip of Spain interferes with the internal affairs of England during the reign of Elizabeth I. King Philip wishes England join the Catholic League again. On account of this he makes a marriage proposal to Queen Elizabeth of England. Elizabeth does not accept this.

Thirdly, the play underlines the importance that a ruler has to secure the throne against the rivals. When a king does not secure his throne by terminating his rivals for the throne there is a risky situation which can cause a political turbulence and be employed by foreign powers.

Arthur, son of King John's elder brother Geoffrey claimed the throne and got the support of France. According to the dynastic rules, elder brother's offspring has the right of getting the throne. For that reason John's claim for the throne was weaker than Arthur's. Similarly, Elizabeth's claim for the throne was weaker than her rival Queen Mary of Scots for many people because she was believed to be illegitimate and she

was Protestant. Queen Mary of Scots, on the other hand was the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor who was the elder sister of Henry VIII. Therefore both John's and Elizabeth's claim to the throne were weaker than their rivals. In spite of their weaker claims, both John and Elizabeth ruled England until their death.

In order to exterminate the threat for their crown both John and Elizabeth executed their rivals and secured their throne. In Shakespeare's play, King John does not kill Arthur. However, at first John orders him to be executed by Hubert, for he sees Arthur as the only rival for his throne.

King John. Do not I know thou wouldst?  
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye  
On yon young boy: I'll tell thee what, my friend,  
He is a very serpent in my way;  
And whereso'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
He lies before me: dost thou understand me?  
Thou art his keeper. (3.3.168-174)

But Hubert cannot kill Arthur for his innocence. At this point, John confronts with the fear of reaction of his people. We understand this reaction from a dialogue between Hubert and King John:

Hubert. Old men and beldams in the streets  
Do prophesy upon it dangerously:  
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths:  
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads  
And whisper one another in the ear; (4.2.185-189)

On the one side the fear of French invasion, on the other the fear of uprising of his people, John steps back and feels regretful for the result of his decision. He accuses Hubert for this crime: "Thy hand hath murder'd him: I had a mighty cause / To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him." (4.2.205-206). However, when Hubert confesses that he has not murdered the young prince, King John gets relaxed and orders Hubert to inform the Lords that Arthur is alive: "Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers, / Throw this report on their incensed rage, / And make them tame to their obedience!" (4.2.260-262). However Arthur leaps down from the Castle and dies. According to Holinshed the death of Arthur was mysterious.

But now touching the maner in verie deed of the end of this Arthur, writers make sundrie reports. Neuertheless certeine it is, that in the yeare next insuing, he was removed from Falais vnto the castle or tower of Rouen, out of the which there was not any that would confesses that ever he saw him go alive. Some have written, that as he assaied to have escaped out of prison, and proving to clime over the walls of the castle, he fell into the river of Saine, and so was drowned. Other write, that through very grief and languor he pined away, and died of natural sicknesses. But some affirm, that king

John secretly caused him to be murdered and made away, so as it is not thoroughly agreed upon, in what sort he finished his days (1808, vol. 6, p. 165)

Different from the rumours mentioned in Holinshed's chronicle, in Shakespeare's play although Hubert does not obey it, King John orders the execution of Arthur. When King John sees the reaction of the citizens for the murder of Arthur, he fears from an uprising. Similarly, Elizabeth I imprisons her rival Queen Mary of Scots to secure her position. Then, she faces the rising of the Northern earls who believe Queen Mary of Scots as the real heir of the throne. In Shakespeare's tale although King John seems to be the murderer of his nephew initially, in the later scene we learn that Arthur dies accidentally by his own hand. By the same token, Elizabeth I seems to be the murderer of Queen Mary of Scots. Given that Queen Mary of Scots wrote a letter to Babington for the assassination of Elizabeth I, it is possible to conclude that Mary prepared her end by her own hands.

Both Queen Elizabeth I and King John were brave and respectful rulers of England, since they both rejected being ruled by a distant person, the Pope. As a result of this both of them were excommunicated by the Pope.

Queen Elizabeth I chose to become a Protestant leader and the head of the Anglican Church. For that reason, her practices like executing Queen Mary of Scots caused a great crisis among the Papacy and in the Catholic World. On account of this, she was excommunicated by the Pope. John did not have good relations with the Papacy, either. Selection of Archbishop became a great problem in England during the reign of John. The Monks and King John wanted different candidates to be the new archbishop, but Pope Innocent III selected a different, third person, Stephan Langton in 1207 whom John refused and banished. This finally caused a series of problems between the Papacy and England. In the end, Pope Innocent III excommunicated King John in 1209. This also strengthened the position of rebels and France against England.

In Shakespeare's play, John is poisoned by the Cardinal and all rebellious barons apologize to King John in the end of the play. Shakespeare who underlines a correlation between the political matters of King John and Queen Elizabeth gives a clear message; If England can overcome the problems of herself, than no one can dare to give any harm. When every citizen or noble people of England support the ruler, than no other country or Papacy can give any harm to England. Shakespeare does not

mention Magna Carta in his play. It was known as a Charter which shows the weakness of King John during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Finallie, when the king measuring his owne strength with the barons, perceived that he was not able to resist them, he consented to subscribe and seale to such articles concerning the liberties demanded, in forme for the most part as is contained in the two charters Magna Charta, and Charta de Foresta. (Holinshed, 1807, vol. 2, p. 185)

I think the reason why Shakespeare does not mention Magna Carta in his play may be because it shows the weakness of the king. According to Holinshed, King John measured his power with his barons, but he could not resist them. However in Shakespeare's play rebelling barons who support French King change their side and request King John to forgive them: "Hubert. Why, know you not? the lords are all come back, / And brought Prince Henry in their company, / At whose request the Icing hath pardoned them, / And they are all about his majesty" (5.6.33-36). Here the message of the play is that when the nobles of England are united around their king, they can successfully defend their country against any kind of foreign menace. When the date of composition of *King John* is taken into account as the mid 1590s which is just after the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the renewal of the bull of excommunication against Queen Elizabeth I by Pope Sixtus V in the same year, the message of the play becomes more meaningful for the Elizabethan audience.

#### **7.4 Ahistoricism - Chronological Disorder of the Events**

Arthur, his mother and grandmother had already died when Pandulf came to England as one of the Legates of Pope Innocent III for the first time in 1209. According to historical documents Arthur died in 1203 (Holinshed, 1807, vol. 2, p. 165), her mother Constance died in 1201 (Hoveden, 1997, vol. 2, p. 533) and Queen Elianor died in 1204, "in this yeare 1204 ... queene Elianor the mother of king John departed this life" (Holinshed, 1807, vol. 2, p. 167). Pandulph came to England as one of the legates of Pope Innocent III for the first time, in 1209 (Grafton, 1809, vol. 2, p. 237). In Shakespeare's play all these characters are alive when Pandulph come to England as the Legate of Pope and they all speak in the same time period. For instance in Act III, scene I, one can see all these characters in a discussion. When Arthur and his mother, Constance are in the French King's camp, Elianor and King John come with some other people and in the end of the scene Pandulph joins to them.

*Pandulph.* Philip of France, on peril of a curse,  
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic,

And raise the power of France upon his head,  
Unless he do submit himself to Rome.  
*Elinor.* Look'st thou pale, France? do not let go thy hand.  
*Constance.* Look to that, devil, lest that France repent,  
And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul (3.1.191-197).

On the grounds that Constance and Elinor were not alive when Pandulph came to England as the Legate of Pope Innocent III, it was not possible for them to speak with each other as a matter of historical fact.

One of the important characters of the play is Bastard the illegitimate son of Richard the Lionhearted and Lady Faulconbridge. Among the historians of Elizabethan Era, only Roger de Hoveden confirms that Richard the Lionhearted had a bastard son named Philip. Hoveden does not mention the mother of Philip, but neither Holinshed's nor Hall's chronicle does not mention this bastard son of Richard. "In the same year, Philip, bastard son of Richard, king of England, to whom the said king, his father, had given the castle and the manor of Cuinac, slew the before-named viscount of Limoges, in revenge for his father" (Hoveden, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 464-465). Although the mother of this bastard son of Richard is not clearly declared by the historians of Shakespeare's time, in Shakespeare's play *Lady Faulconbridge* is introduced as the mother of this bastard. When King John learns that Philip is his nephew, he starts to call him Sir Richard Plantagenet.

Bastard. Philip, my liege, so is my name begun,  
Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.  
K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose  
form thou bearest:  
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great—  
Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet (1.1.158-163).

Both Bastard in Shakespeare's play and Elizabeth I have got a common point as regards to being thought as an illegitimate child by some part of the society. After the execution of Anne Boleyn, the mother of Elizabeth, on charge of adultery, Parliament of England declared Elizabeth bastard by the Second Succession Act in 1536. On account of this, Elizabeth had been thought bastard until the Third Succession Act was put into effect in 1543. In *King John* Shakespeare exalts the illegitimate relation or adultery, if it is done with a king. In his dialogue with his mother, Bastard says:

Bastard. Now, by this light, were I to get again,  
Madam, I would not wish a better father.  
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,  
And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly: (1.1.259-262)

Here Shakespeare proclaims and propagates the privileges of the kings for adultery through the mouth of Bastard. He describes this privileged adultery as a fault to simplify it. Bastard maintains his sublimation:

Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well  
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.  
Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin;  
And they shall say, when Richard me begot,  
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin:  
Who says it was, he lies; I say 'twas not. (1.1.271-276)

Here, Bastard overtly challenges to people who criticizes his father's relation and its outcome. He says it is sin to reject a king's intercourse proposal. With this dialogue of Shakespeare, one may conclude that Shakespeare takes adultery of a king as a normal action and a child from this intercourse as a legitimate child. King Henry VIII tried to divorce his first wife Catherine of Aragon for the sake of Anne Boleyn. Pope did not annul this marriage. Henry was decisive and established Anglican Church for the annulment of his marriage. Then, he married with Anne Boleyn. For that reason Catholics did not recognize the marriage of Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn and declared Elizabeth illegitimate. According to Catholics, Queen Mary of Scots was the real heir of the throne and Elizabeth I was illegitimate. Therefore, it is possible to draw connection between the bastard of Richard the Lionhearted and Elizabeth I.

Richard the Lionhearted died in 1199 during a siege of a castle in Chalus. In the play Richard is killed by Austria. According to Roger de Hoveden, Richard I was killed by a crossbowman, Bertram de Gurdun during the siege of a castle in Chalus (1997, vol. 2, p. 452). Although King Richard ordered Bertham de Gurdun to be released before his death, Marchadés did not listen to him. In the wake of king's death, Marchadés seized Gurdun "first flaying him alive had him hanged" (Hoveden, 1997, vol. 2, p. 454). However, in Shakespeare's play Austria is the murderer of King Richard I and is still alive after the death of Richard in act II. "K. Philip. Before Angiers well met, brave Austria. / Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood, / Richard, that robbed the lion of his heart / And fought the holy wars in Palestine, / By this brave duke came early to his grave" (2.1.1-5). Briefly, all these chronological disorder of the events serve to the political messages to be more dramatic.

## 7.5 Deconstructing *King John*

This part of the study focuses on deconstructing the two hidden messages including violent hierarchy between royal people and commons, and the dialogue between King John and the Papacy.

When the text of King John is deconstructed, it clearly appears that royal people are not equal with other people even when they commit a sin which is not in agreement with their religion, Christianity. It seems that royal people have some privileges. Although, there is not privilege according to the hierarchy or social status of the people in Christianity, in the play the rules do not seem to be the same for everyone.

In the first scene of the play, two brothers come to the palace in the wake of their father, Sir Robert Falconbridge's death. One accuses the other for not being the son of Sir Robert Falconbridge. This dialogue of two brothers which reveals that one of the sons of Lady Falconbridge is from King John's late brother Richard the Lionhearted, takes place in front of King John and his mother Queen Elianor. Although the text reveals an infidelity of Lady Falconbridge with Richard I, the text praises this relation and the illegitimate son of King Richard I. Furthermore, he is appointed a knight, an honorary title, by King John.

Bastard. Philip, my liege, so is my name begun,  
Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.  
K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose  
form thou bearest:  
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great—  
Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet (1.1.158-163).

In other words, infidelity of Lady Falconbridge is rewarded with a noble title. King John wants Bastard kneel down and then rise as Sir Richard Plantagenet. However, he was just the eldest son of good old Sir Robert's wife. In a dialogue with her mother Lady Falconbridge, Philip the bastard thanks to his mother for her infidelity, and claims that her infidelity was not a sin.

*Bastard.* As faithfully as I deny the devil.  
*Lady Faulconbridge.* King Richard Cordelion was  
thy father.  
By long and vehement suit I was seduced  
To make room for him in my husband's bed:  
Heaven lay not my transgression to thy charge,  
That art the issue of my dear offence,  
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.  
*Bastard.* Now, by this light, were I to get again,  
Madam, I would not wish a better father: 260  
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,

And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly.

...

Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well  
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell....  
Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin,  
And they shall say, when Richard me begot,  
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin:  
Who says it was, he lies; I say 'twas not (1.1.252-277).

We understand that Bastard is a religious person since he denies the devil. But in contrast, he praises his mother for her forbidden relation with Richard the Lionhearted. What is more, he claims that her infidelity was not sin as she had this relation with a private privileged person.

Another message given through the text, English people should live their religion freely, without the interference of the Papacy. In the text of the play, Catholic Church has contradictory, inconsistent and sordid policy with its self seeking agenda. The Pope initially declares King John as a holy king who is the representative of God. However, when King John reprimands cardinal Pandulph and does not recognize the policy of Papacy, Pandulph changes his approach and excommunicates King John with the authority he acquired from the Pope. In the beginning Pandulph greets King John with beautiful words and says “Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven! / To thee, King John, my holy errand is” (3.1.136-137). However, when King John explains why he is against the Papacy and says “no Italian priest / Shall tithe or toll in our dominions” (3.1.153-154). Pandulph excommunicates King John. “Then, by the lawful power that I have, / Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate,” (3.1.172-173). This dialogue, between Cardinal Pandulph and King John, shows how King John refuses the exploitation of the Papacy. John calls the Pope ‘meddling priest’. He, as the king of England, opposes the Papacy and is determined to rule his country with his own rules rather than an Italian priest’s. According to King John, the Pope is an Italian priest who tries to meddle England and usurps the authority without any reverence. This is an important indicator of the freedom feeling of English people. As already mentioned above, the Papacy is not a reliable authority which initially greets John as ‘anointed deputies of Heaven’, then suddenly excommunicates King John upon his opposing ideas.

Briefly stating, deconstruction of King John points out two clear messages. The first one underlines the fact that the members of English Royal family are superior than common people and they are privileged in any case including moral and religious

matters. The other message is about the importance of the independence of England. That is to say, the main aim of the Pope, who always interferes with England, is to exploit England. These two messages were extremely significant for the Queen Elizabeth I, as she was under the threat of Catholics. King John was written and staged in the wake of famous Babington Plot which had been organized by the Catholics in order to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I.





## **8. RICHARD II**

*Richard II* is the first play of a tetralogy which comprises *Henry IV* (part I and part II) and *Henry V* besides *Richard II*. In the play, Richard II is described as a young inexperienced king who cannot rule England well. In the beginning of the play the Duke of Lancaster Henry Bolingbroke and the Duke of Norfolk Mowbray come into the court. Henry Bolingbroke, the cousin of Richard II, accuses Mowbray of conspiring against the uncle of King Richard II, the Duke of Gloucester. Richard II is not able to analyse the events clearly and as a result he exiles Mowbray forever and Henry for six years. Henry Bolingbroke, who gets the support of the other Dukes, returns to England and rebels against Richard II. By the end of the play Richard II is dethroned and Henry Bolingbroke ascends as King Henry IV of England. Richard II is murdered by Henry's agency. This play is especially controversial for its deposition scene which was censored by the Master of Revels during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

### **8.1 King Richard II (1389-1399)**

Richard was born in Bourdeaux, the capital of Aquitaine, in 1367 (Saul, 2008, p. 50). His father, Edward the Black Prince, died in 1376. Therefore, Richard II became the King of England after his grandfather King Edward III had died in 1377. When Richard became the king at the age of ten, no regency was instituted owing to a disagreement over the candidates for the regency (Saul, 2008, p. 51). However, his uncles the Dukes of Lancaster, York and Gloucester became very influential in governing the country in the early years of this boy-king (Hughes, 2007, p. 325). Especially, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, was the most influential of his uncles and he behaved like a regent.

Continuing the Hundred Years' War with France was probably the most important event of Richard's early years. Richard II was not ready for unexpected attacks of the

French and their Castilian allies on the south coast of England. Wars caused increasing military expenditures and nearly £ 500,000 a great amount of money, was spent from 1376 to 1381 (Saul, 2008, p. 52). In order to cover these expenditures, parliament decided on a poll tax. But the third and the highest poll tax in 1380 (Saul, 2008, p. 52) became the main reason of a great uprising in London.

During this uprising which took place in Richard's minority years, John of Gaunt and Thomas of Woodstock, Richard's uncles, had all responsibilities concerning the administration of England. According to historians like David Hughes, citizens did not like the policies of John of Gaunt and the council. Consequently, the policies of John of Gaunt resulted in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. "100,000 rioting peasants occupied London for three weeks, ransacking, burning, and looting, and murdering government officials, lawyers and foreign merchants. The peasants demanded reform and one aim of their uprising was to free the boy-king from 'evil councillors'" (Hughes, 2007, p. 325). The 14 year-old young king decided to face the peasants and speak to their leader, Wat Tyler. At Richard II's words and promise of reform particularly about the ending of villeinage, the peasants returned to their homes (Saul, 2008, p. 53). However the Parliament did not accept to reform and the council took terrible measures to repress the peasants' demands and killed Wat Tyler. These developments caused citizens to lose their faith in King Richard II (Hughes, 2007, p. 325). In the wake of this rebellion, Richard made a visit to Essex where he formed bloody assizes (Saul, 2008, p. 54). The Peasant's Revolt was probably one of the most important events of Medieval England. It was a kind of awakening of the labour class in appraising their power and was the first movement in pursuit of labour rights and against the villain system of the feudalism.

In 1387, Richard lost his authority because of a group of opposing lords known as Lords Appellant who did not recognize the authority of Richard II and defeated his army near Burford and entered London at Christmas (Saul, 2008, p. 58). These Appellant Lords were Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, Thomas de Beuchamp, Earl of Warwick and Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby later King Henry IV. They gathered the *Merciless Parliament* in 1388, through which they accused Richard II's favourite men of high treason. "Richard never forgot the humiliation that he suffered at the hands of the Appellants in this parliament" (Saul, 2008, p. 58).

When Richard regained the full control of reigning England he started to avenge his humiliation from the former Appellants. First of all three Appellants, Arundel, Gloucester and Warwick, were arrested in the summer of 1397. Arundel was executed, Warwick was exiled and Gloucester was found dead in prison (Saul, 2008, p. 61). Richard II who became an oppressive king exiled Henry Bolingbroke for ten years and Thomas Mowbray for life after a dispute between the two dukes. What's more Richard II did not allow Hereford to succeed to his father's inheritance in the wake of John of Gaunt's death and extended his exile to life (Saul, 2008, p. 64). In 1399, when Richard II was in Ireland, Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, came to England to usurp the throne. Richard II could not resist Henry Bolingbroke and had to accept to leave his throne to Henry Bolingbroke. "Richard II, the ex-king, was imprisoned in Pontefract Castle and plots to restore him forced the new king Henry IV to have him murdered by his jailors early Year 1400 (14 Feb.) (Age 34)" (Hughes, 2007, p. 327).

## **8.2 New Historicist Criticism of *Richard II***

As the first play of a tetralogy, *Richard II* accounts the last two years of King Richard II and his deposition by Henry IV from a Tudorian perspective.

In the course of the new historicist criticism of *Richard II*, Raphael Holinshed and Richard Grafton's Chronicles are used as they seem to be the main sources of Shakespeare's work. In the beginning, it may be useful to see the figure 8.1 to understand the relations and positions of main characters of the play.

Richard II was born in 1367 and died in 1400 when he was 33 years old. According to the contemporary chronicles of Shakespeare's time, there were numerous serious events during the reign of Richard II from 1377 to 1400. However, Shakespeare prefers to tell only some part of Richard's reign can be affiliated with Shakespeare's tendency to Tudor propaganda. Without the delineation of previous events such as the administration of England by a council, Richard's uncles roles, Hundred Years' War, Parliament's decisions on poll taxes, Peasants' Revolt, Appellant Lords and their Merciless Parliament it seems highly difficult to tell the life of king Richard II truly and impartially. That is to say, Richard's uncles and Appelant Lords; Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, Thomas de Beuchamp, Earl of Warwick and Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby had trapped King Richard II, before Bolingbroke usurped

his throne. Having neutralized King Richard II, these lords formed the famous 'Merciless Parliament' in 1388 and through this parliament they executed Richard II's most favourite men with accusing them of high treason (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 453). Later, when Richard II grows up and gets the power and control of his country again, he tries to revenge from these Appellant Lords. Without this background information, Shakespeare starts the play with a quarrel scene of Mowbray and Henry Bolingbroke. In Shakespeare's play we do not know the fact that Mowbray and Bolingbroke were the members of Lords Appellants who had controlled the Parliament and mercilessly executed King Richard's close friends, in 1388. According to Grafton, Merciless Parliament does not accept the accusation of the three members of Lords Appellants.

Richard by the grace of God. &c. We will that it be knowen to all our liege people throughout our Realme of England: That where as Thomas Duke of Gloucester, Richard Erie of Arondell, and Thomas Erie of Warwike haue, bene defamed of Treason by certeyne of our counsaylors: We, as it apperteineth, diligently searching the cause and ground of this defamation, finde no such thing in them, nor any suspicion thereof. Wherefore we declare the same defamation to be false and vntrue, and do receyue the same Duke and Erles into our speciall protection. And because their accusers shall be notoriously knowen, their names are Alexander Archbishop of Yorke, sir Lionel Vere The nme.o (but in the boke of statutes he is call sir Robert Vere) Duke of Ireland, Mighell de la Poole Erie Suffolke, Robert Tresilian chiefe lustice of Englande, and Nicholas Brimbre of London Knight: Who in likewise shall remaine vnto the next Parliament, and there shall stande to their aunswere, but in the meane time we take them into our protection, streightly (1809, vol. 1, p. 453).

As declared in the decision of the Parliament, although three members of Appellant Lords Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel and Thomas de Beuchamp, Earl of Warwick had been accused of treason, parliament did not find them guilty and took them under special protection. On the contrary, the parliament declares the accusers as notoriously known people. As declared in the decision of the Parliament, although three members of Appellant Lords Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel and Thomas de Beuchamp, Earl of Warwick had been accused of treason, parliament did not find them guilty and took them under special protection. On the contrary, the parliament declares the accusers as notoriously known people.

Briefly stating, Shakespeare starts his tale from the middle of the events and does not tell some important events at all. With this in mind, we should interpret Shakespeare's tale as a play which may cause a different perception or misunderstanding of the events. For instance, according to Shakespeare Richard II is not a competent and a

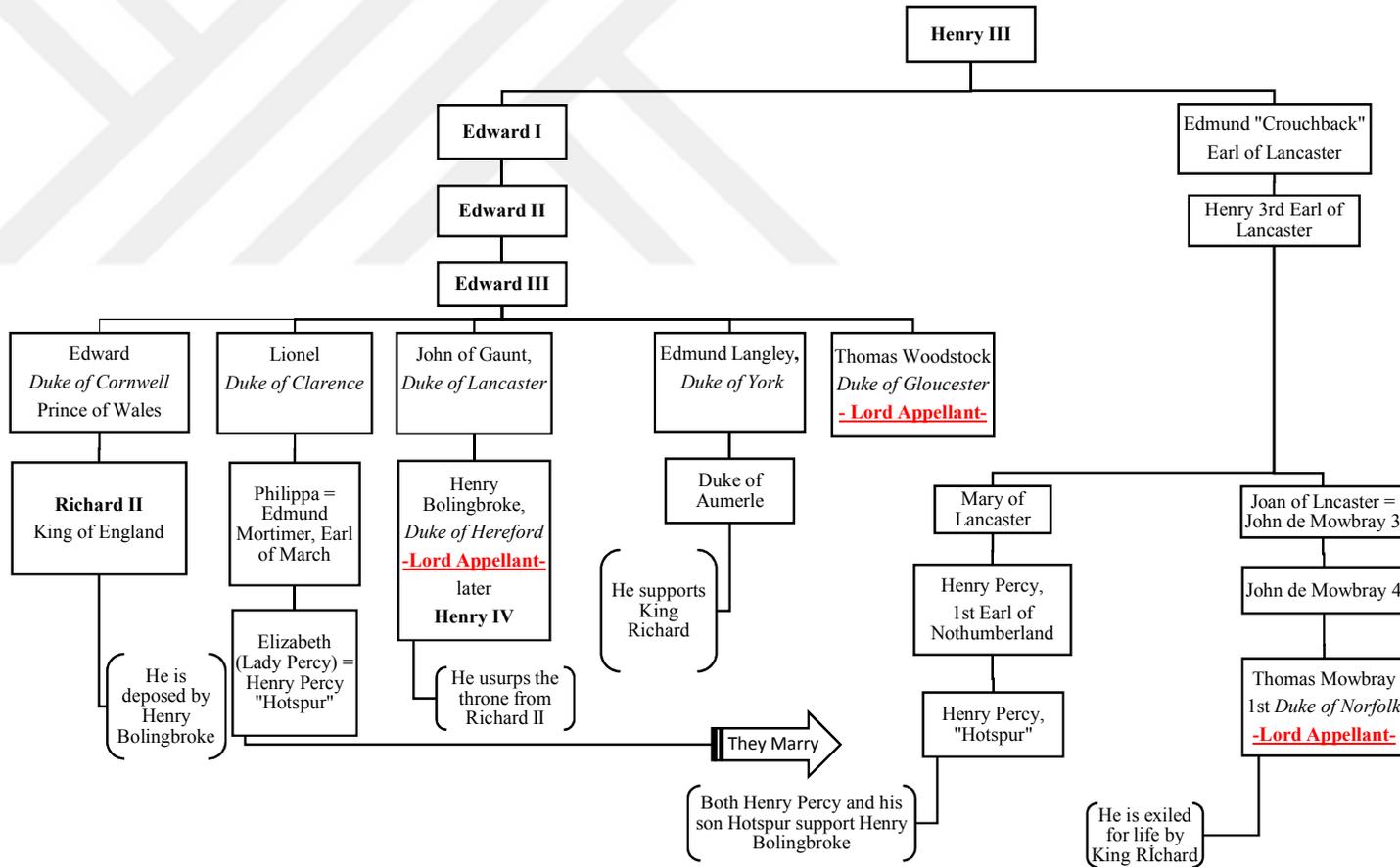


Figure 8.1: Family Tree of the House of Plantagenets

good king to rule England:

Ross. The commons hath he pilled with grievous taxes,  
And quite lost their hearts. The nobles hath he fined  
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.  
Willoughby. And daily new exactions are devised,  
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.  
But what i' God's name doth become of this?  
Wars hath not wasted it, for warred he hath not,  
But basely yielded upon compromise  
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows.  
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.  
The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.  
The King grown bankrupt like a broken man.  
Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him (2.1.256-268).

In this dialogue Ross and Willoughby explains how all strata of the society suffer from the heavy taxes and both the commons and the nobles have lost their faith in the administration of King Richard. Indeed, Richard II was not a kind of king who oppressed to his citizens. On the contrary, the council preferred to continue the Hundred Years' War with France. For that reason, they increased poll taxes in order to recover the expenditures of this war.

And in this yere a Parliament was called, and therein was graunted to the king foure pence of euery man and woman beyng of the age of. xiiij. yeres and vpward, that were within the realtne, at the which Subsidy the people did greatly murinure, and much mis chiefe came thereof, as in the yere folowyng shall appere. But yet with that money, an armie was prepared and sent ouer, whereof Sir Thomas of Woodstock Erie of Cambridge, and Vncle to the King was chiefe Capitaine: The which beyng accompanied with. vij. or. viij. thousand men, passed the water of Some, and came vnto Soysones, and passed also the Ryuers of Oyse, and Marne, and other, and came before Troys, and wanne it, and after lodged them betwene the newe Towne and Sens (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 416).

As Grafton recounts Parliament decides on four pence tax from everyone over the age of fourteen. These policies of Richard's uncles finally cause a great uprising known as Peasants' Revolt in London in 1381. However, Richard II follows a successful policy and inspite of his young age, 13, he bravely goes to speak with the rebels and can convince them. This is a good example which explicitly indicates the political and reigning skills of King Richard II during the Peasants' Revolt. Richard goes and speaks gently to the rebels.

And the King entered in among them, and spake vnto them gently and sayde. A good people, I am your king, what lacke ye? what doe ye save r Then such as heard him sayd, that ye will make vs irte for euer, our seines, our heyres, and cure landes, and that we be called no more bondmen, nor from henceforth so to Le reputed or taken. Sirs, sayde the king, I doe gladly graunt your request: withdraws you home to your

awne houses, and into suche Villages as ye came from, and leauc behind you of euery Village two or three, and I wyll cause wry tinges to be made and seale them wyth my scale, the which they shall haue with them, contenting euery thing that ye demaund. And to the entent that ye shall be the better assured, I will cause my Banners to be delyuered vnto euery Baylwike, Shire and Countie. These wordes quieted well the common people, and suche as were simple and good plaine men that were come thetlier, and wist not wel whertbre: They aunswered the king, it was well sayde, they desyred no better. And so they beganne to withdrawe themselues, and came into the Citie of London. And the king sayde also one worde, the which greatly contented them, and that was: syrs, among you good men of Kent, ye shall haue one of my banners, and ye of Essex another, of Bedford, of Cambridge, of Stafford, of Lyncoine, and of Lyn, eche of you shall haue one. And also I pardon euery thing that ye haue done hetherto, so that ye folowe my Banners, and returne home to yourhouses. They all aunswered they would so doe. Thus these people departed and went to London. (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 432).

This shows that Richard II was a good king who was able to take the responsibility without any fear, even under hard conditions.

Secondly, when he seized the royal power again, Richard II tried to finish the war with France. For that reason he married with the princess of France, Lady Isabel in 1395 (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 460). His marriage with Lady Isabel in 1395 can only be explained through his policy of bringing an end to the Hundred Years' War. It is clear that his marriage with Lady Isabel was based on political reasons such as bringing peace between the two countries. In Shakespeare's play Lady Isabel is an adult queen or in any way we cannot understand that she is a child under 10 years old.

And the xvij. day of Nouember, the saydc King Richard maryed the sayd Lady Isabell in Calice, beyng within the age of. viij. yeres, as saith Fabian. And Polidore also sayth that she was not of ripe and mete yeres to accompany with a man" (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 460).

His policy during the Peasants' Revolt and his marriage with the princess of France to bring an end to the Hundred Years' War are two good examples to prove that Richard II was not an incompetent king. On the other hand, it is highly probable that King Richard II might have wanted to revenge from Appellant Lords. But, Shakespeare's narration of the only last days of Richard's reign must not have allowed the audience to interpret the events in a healthy and objective manner. It is fact that, Richard II became the king of England when he was just 10 years old. Therefore, England was ruled by a council led by Richard's uncle John of Gaunt during the first years of Richard. The play starts with a quarrel scene between Henry Bolingbroke, the Duke of Hereford and Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk. Hereford accuses Norfolk for a high treason. According to Grafton this quarrel of Norfolk and Hereford happens in 1398 in front of the King Richard II and the council members. Richard II banishes

Norfolk forever and Hereford initially for ten, later six years and John of Gaunt dies in a year's time after the banishment of his son, Henry Bolingbroke (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 470). The beginning scene of *Richard II* of Shakespeare is in accordance with Grafton's account. His reign was in turmoil and he had already struggled with lots of serious events during his reign. Owing to his young age and the influence of the council, he could not be an effective figure during the first years of his reign. His uncles ruled the country instead of him. There was a struggle between the Appellant Lords and Richard II. Consequently, Henry Bolingbroke a member of Appellant Lords won this struggle with the support of other lords and usurped the throne. Richard II who grew up without a father and succeeded directly after his grandfather Edward III, at the age of ten, could not escape losing his throne to his uncles. Apparently, Richard's uncles could not have digested his ascendance to the throne and ruling England. It seems that initially they tried to control the administration of England through a council and then when Richard grew up and wanted to reign on his own, they deposed Richard and made Henry Bolingbroke ascend as the new king of England.

Having returned to London, Henry Bolingbroke as the Duke of Lancaster calls the parliament soon. According to Grafton, the Parliament in which there were more friends of Lancaster than King Richard declared that King Richard was found guilty for the activities defined in 28 articles and was deposed as a result of his unprofitable, injustice and unlawful activities during his reign (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, pp. 473-475). According to Holinshed, Richard II voluntarily resigned from his post and then Henry Bolingbroke became the King Henry IV of England after a consensus of both lords and commons.

When king Richard had resigned (as before is specified) the scepter and crowne; Henrie Plantagenet borne at Bullingbroke in the countie of Lincolne, duke of Lancaster and Hereford, earle of Derby, Leicester, and Lincolne, sonne to lohn of Gant duke of Lancaster, with generall consent both of the lords & commons, was published, proclaimed, and declared king of England (Holinshed 1808, vol. 3, p. 1).

As Grafton clearly explains in his work, the Duke of Lancaster was able to call the Parliament where the majority of the members were the friends of Henry Bolingbroke (Grafton, 1809, vol. 1, p. 473). Therefore, through this biased Parliament Henry could depose Richard and he himself ascended to the throne of England.

As part of the Tudor propaganda, Shakespeare tries to introduce Henry Bolingbroke as a good king. In the end of the play, when Richard is murdered by Exton, King Henry does not approve this act.

Exton. Great king, within this coffin I present  
Thy buried fear. Herein all breathless lies  
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,  
Richard of Bourdeaux, by me hither brought.  
King Henry. Exton, I thank thee not, for thou hast wrought  
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand  
Upon my head and all this famous land.  
Exton. From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.  
King Henry. They love not poison that do poison need,  
Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead,  
I hate the murderer, love him murdered (5.6.30-40).

Shakespeare shows Henry Bolingbroke as a king who hates the murderer of Richard II. It is clear that Shakespeare affords to praise King Henry IV and submits him as a lovable king to the audience. On the other hand, he presents Richard II as a king who deserves to be deposed.

### **8.3 Deconstructing *Richard II***

*Richard II* is a good example of Tudor propaganda. By deconstructing this play it would be possible to demonstrate how the text of *Richard II* praises Lancasters and deteriorates Yorkists.

The text of the play describes John of Gaunt and his son Henry Bolingbroke 'noble' and 'loyal' English citizens. Deconstruction of the text clearly reveals the binary opposition between Richard II who represents devilry and Henry Bolingbroke who represents divinity. According to play Henry Bolingbroke does not want to be the king of England, but political conditions and unlawful decisions of Richard II force him to be the king of England.

Throughout the text, Richard II is vilified as a king who does not deserve his position. On the contrary, it defends Lancastrians. In order to show this binary opposition between the divinity of Henry Bolingbroke and devilry of Richard II, the text is analysed under three headings.

In the beginning of the play, Henry Bolingbroke and his father John of Gaunt are introduced as two loyal people to King Richard. The play starts with a question of King Richard to his uncle. While he is asking a question to his uncle, John of Gaunt, King Richard calls him 'time-honored Lancaster' and his son Henry Hereford 'bold

son'. Within this first dialogue between King Richard and his uncle John of Gaunt, audiences learn that Henry Hereford accuses Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray for making dangerous plans for high treason.

Richard II. Old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster,  
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,  
Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,  
Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,  
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,  
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray? (1.1.1-6).

Here, it is clear that, the text introduces Henry as the bold son of John of Gaunt who does not hesitate defending his king and country from a high treason. Then, coming into the presence of Richard II, Henry Bolingbroke initially wishes a long and happy years to King Richard: "Many years of happy days befall / My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege" (1.1.20-21). Then, challenges Mowbray to a duel in order to prove his rightness. Besides being a loyal person, Bolingbroke also takes the risk of dying for the sake of his king by challenging Mowbray to a duel: "Bolingbroke. Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage, / Disclaiming here the kindred of the King, / And lay aside my high blood's royalty, / Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except" (1.1.69-72). But while he is challenging to a duel, Bolingbroke underlines the fact that he is coming from a royal family by saying "lay aside my high blood's royalty." He is ready to die to prove that he is righteous. Otherwise, there is no meaning of life for him: "And, by the glorious worth of my descent, / This arm shall do it, or this life be spent" (1.1.107-108). However, when Henry Bolingbroke's utterance is deconstructed, one can realize that he is as noble as Richard II is. Because he refers to his nobility and royal side by saying 'high blood's royalty'. He just reminds the audience about his royalty. In the first act of the play, Shakespeare introduces Henry Bolingbroke as a very brave and loyal duke who is ready to die for his king Richard II and his country. On the contrary, he later usurps the throne of England from Richard II.

When King Richard orders Bolingbroke and Mowbray to stop dueling and gives a decision of exiling Bolingbroke and Mowbray from England, Bolingbroke says: "Your will be done. This must my comfort be: / That sun that warms you here shall shine on me, / And those his golden beams to you here lent / Shall point on me and gild my banishment" (1.3.144-147). Here we are faced with two different meanings. The first one demonstrates compliment and loyalty to King Richard II. Because, he says that

being away from his country, family and King Richard will be difficult and he will miss them all. However, there is one thing that will comfort Henry Bolingbroke during his banishment. He will have 'the same sun and its light' with King Richard. The sun that warms King Richard II will shine on Henry Bolingbroke, too. On the other hand, it is possible to interpret these lines as a hint of Henry Bolingbroke's challenge to King Richard II. Because the sun is the only source of the light in the earth. Without the energy and light of the sun it is impossible to survive. In other words, the sun is the source of life on the earth and located in the center of the orbits of all planets of the solar system. Similarly, kings are the leaders of their countries and are located in the centers of the orbits of all worldly matters in their countries. Here in these lines the sun, which warms Richard, shines on Henry, too. The sun lends its golden beams or its sunlight to Richard II, but it gilds Henry's banishment. For that reason, this may be an omen which signs the usurpation of the throne. Here Shakespeare stresses the fact that the sun lends its sunshine to Richard II, but it shines on Henry. 'Shining' has got a stronger emphasis than 'lending golden beams'. What is more, when you lend something, you get it back. Here we see the comparison of Henry with King Richard II for the first time in the play.

Initially, Richard II declares Henry's banishment for ten years, but later decreases it to six years. Richard's decision of banishment about Henry seems quite unjust. Because Henry, as a loyal duke of King Richard II, just informs a treachery of Mowbray. In order to prove his rightness, he challenges Mowbray to a duel. Although he is ready to duel and even die for the sake of his king, Richard II orders them to stop dueling and banishes them. From this point of view, Shakespeare presents Henry Bolingbroke as highly innocent, bold and loyal duke of England. Henry Bolingbroke's father John of Gaunt is a loyal citizen to his king and thanks to King Richard for decreasing the period of banishment from ten years to six. As he is so old, he is in fear of not being able to see his son before his death anymore. He never loses his respect to King Richard II. Here, Shakespeare's presentation has potential of making audience think that Richard II is a cruel king and Lancastrians are persecuted by the king.

Gaunt. I thank my liege that in regard of me  
He shortens four years of my son's exile.  
But little vantage shall I reap thereby;  
For, ere the six years that he hath to spend  
Can change their moons and bring their times about,  
My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light  
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;

My inch of taper will be burnt and done,  
And blindfold death not let me see my son (1.3.216-224).

Although Henry is exiled for six long years, he is full of hope. When he bids farewell to England, he underlines that he is proud of being a real Englishman. “Bolingbroke. Then, England’s ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu, / My mother and my nurse that bears me yet. / Where’er I wander, boast of this I can, / Though banished, yet a trueborn Englishman” (1.3.306-309). King Richard, on the other hand confesses that indeed he is jealous of Henry Bolingbroke and exiled him in order to make him away from English people because of his popularity. Although Henry is a loyal duke, King Richard II sees Henry as a real threat for his throne. Richard says:

He is our cousin, cousin, but ’tis doubt,  
When time shall call him home from banishment,  
Whether our kinsman come to see his friends.  
Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here, and Green,  
Observed his courtship to the common people,  
How he did seem to dive into their hearts  
With humble and familiar courtesy,  
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,  
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles  
And patient underbearing of his fortune,  
As ’twere to banish their affects with him.  
Off goes his bonnet to an oysterwench;  
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well  
And had the tribute of his supple knee,  
With “Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends,”  
As were our England in reversion his (1.4.20-36).

When these lines are deconstructed we see a different and cruel Richard II. Because, these lines show the real reason why King Richard II banishes Henry Hereford. Richard II is jealous of the quality of Henry Hereford and his strong relation with the common people. He sees him as a direct rival for the throne. In these lines, jealousy of Richard II seems to be the real reason of the banishment of Henry Bolingbroke.

Shakespeare’s language implies that King Richard II is a very bad king who cannot rule his country peacefully and in justice. Because Richard II fails to explain the reason of the banishment convincingly, the audience may believe that he is an unreliable king.

Apparently, Richard II seems to be trying to protect his country from chaos and banishes Henry and Mowbray. However, as previously stated, King Richard II banishes Henry Hereford owing to his jealousy. Shakespeare continues to discredit King Richard II from different point of views like his arbitrariness in ruling England, declaring war against Ireland, collecting heavy taxes from both common or rich

people, being jealous and ill-disposed toward Henry Hereford, John of Gaunt, common people or others around him. Before he goes to Ireland he says:

King Richard. We are enforced to farm our royal realm,  
The revenue whereof shall furnish us  
For our affairs in hand. If that come short,  
Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters,  
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,  
They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold  
And send them after to supply our wants,  
For we will make for Ireland presently (1.4.45-52).

Bushy comes in and Richard asks about the news. When Bushy informs that Richard's uncle John of Gaunt is so ill Richard says: "Now put it, God, in the physician's mind / To help him to his grave immediately!" (1.4.57-58). This dialogue between King Richard II and Bushy explicitly indicates that Richard is a bad intended king who declares war arbitrarily, collects great amount of tax from the citizens and wishes his uncle to die before he visits him. Thus he makes up a reason for capturing his all lands and assets. His uncle York confirms the misbehaviours of King Richard II and explains the reasons: "York. No, it is stopped with other flattering sounds, / As praises, of whose taste the wise are fond. ./ Direct not him whose way himself will choose. / 'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou lose" (2.1.17-30). According to York, his nephew King Richard II, has lost his control in governing the country. Richard does not listen to anyone and he rules the country arbitrarily. For example, when his uncle John of Gaunt tries to warn him for not listening to rightful advisors and crediting the flatterers around him, Richard II easily punishes his uncle by seizing all his lands and money.

Richard threatens his uncle John of Gaunt and seizes his assets in order to use them during the war against Ireland: "Think what you will, we seize into our hands / His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands" (2.1.209-210). We hear and witness how Richard rules his country very badly in a conversation between Northumberland, Ross and Willoughby.

Ross. The commons hath he pilled with grievous taxes,  
And quite lost their hearts. The nobles hath he fined  
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.  
Willoughby. And daily new exactions are devised,  
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.  
But what i' God's name doth become of this?  
Northumberland. Wars hath not wasted it, for warred he hath not,  
But basely yielded upon compromise  
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows (2.1.246-254).

Shakespeare skillfully manipulates the audience to the idea that Richard was not a good king and he had already deserved to be dethroned. In other words, when the following words of the Duke of York are deconstructed one can grasp the meaning that although Richard II was a Yorkist king he was not loved by his relatives, either. Therefore a Lancastrian usurpation of the throne should be understood by everyone:

God for His mercy, what a tide of woes  
Comes rushing on this woeful land at once!  
I know not what to do. I would to God,  
So my untruth had not provoked him to it,  
The King had cut off my head with my brother's! (2.2.99-103).

Uncle of Richard II, the Duke of York criticizes the king because of his cruel practices. So when a king is not loved by people around him, his tragic end is inevitable. Richard's uncle John of Gaunt dies owing to grief. Richard initially banishes his son Henry Hereford for six years and then he seizes all his lands and asset illegally. Finally Richard II causes the death of his uncle John of Gaunt as a result of his cruel practices. However, nearly all dukes and most of the citizens who complain from the unfair and illegal practices of Richard II, decide to support Henry Bolingbroke, the new Duke of Lancaster, to return England. Richard II who starts to lose his authority in England changes his decision cowardly and welcomes Henry's return to England before the fulfillment of six years time. "King Richard. Northumberland, say thus the King returns: / His noble cousin is right welcome hither, / And all the number of his fair demands / Shall be accomplished without contradiction" (3.3.121-124). When these lines are deconstructed, it is seen that Richard II does not have a strong personality and deserve to be the king of England. He does not have any quality that a good king should have like being fair, merciful, self confident, wise or brave.

King Richard. What must the King do now? Must he submit?  
The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?  
The King shall be contented. Must he lose  
The name of king? I' God's name, let it go.  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,  
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage (3.3.143-148).

It is highly probable that no English people wish to have a king who is described like Richard II in Shakespeare's play.

The third message is that Henry Bolingbroke is a noble person who has got the quality of a good king. Although he does not intend to be a king the conditions cause him to be the king of England. Shakespeare gives the chance of comparing two kings Richard II and Henry IV as the representatives of two different mentalities. According to the

subconscious of the text, while Henry has got the qualities of a good king, Richard does not have. Although Henry IV usurps the throne of Richard II, it is not easy to accuse him owing to some reasons. For example, when we look at the dialogue between Percy and King Henry, we have got the chance of comparing King Henry with King Richard.

Percy. The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,  
With clog of conscience and sour melancholy  
Hath yielded up his body to the grave.  
But here is Carlisle living, to abide  
Thy kingly doom and sentence of his pride.  
King Henry. Carlisle, this is your doom:  
Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,  
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life.  
So, as thou liv'st in peace, die free from strife;  
For, though mine enemy thou hast ever been,  
High sparks of honor in thee have I seen (5.6.19-29)

While Henry is merciful, Richard is not merciful and banishes innocent people arbitrarily with no mercy. Or when Exton kills Richard II in order to flatter to the new king, Henry reprimands Exton and explains what he did was a mistake in a wise manner. "King Henry. Exton, I thank thee not, for thou hast wrought/ A deed of slander with thy fatal hand/ Upon my head and all this famous land" (5.6.34-37). Henry shows his quality and does not appreciate Exton for the murder of Richard II. Briefly stating, it is possible to maintain that Richard II of Shakespeare distorts the realities in different manners so as to make the Tudor propaganda and praise the house of Lancaster.



## **9. RICHARD III**

Being one of the most popular tragedies of Shakespeare, *Richard III* accounts the War of the Roses between the royal houses of Lancaster and York. In the beginning of the play Richard is the Duke of Gloucester and the brother of King Edward IV of England. In order to be the king of England Richard kills his brothers, nephews and any other obstacles in front of his way to the throne in a Machiavellian way. He becomes King Richard III of England but he cannot escape a tragic downfall. At the end of the play Henry Tudor returns to England and kills Richard III, the last Plantagenet King, on the battlefield and becomes King Henry VII of England.

### **9.1 King Richard III (1483-1485)**

Richard III was born as the youngest of the three sons of Richard of York, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of York in 1452. He grew up and lived in England during the War of the Roses. Since the deposition of Richard II, three Lancastrian kings had ruled the country when Edward IV recaptured the throne as a Yorkist king in 1461. The War of the Roses was the name of a civil war which took place between the two Royal Houses of Lancaster and York to get the throne from 1455 to 1487.

In 1461, Edward IV, the oldest brother of Richard, became the king of England and ruled until 1470. Although the infant Henry VI took the throne back in 1470, Edward IV retook the kingship a year later and continued as king until his death in 1483. When he died in 1483 his son Edward V was the heir of the Monarch. But Richard as the uncle of Edward V became the regent of him in his minority and started to rule the country in lieu of him. Within few months after Edward IV's death Richard III declared himself as the king of England. Upon a sudden and questionable death of Edward V, Richard III reinforced his position as the king of England. Although some historians claim that Richard had murdered his nephew, some others like Phillippa Langley and Michael Jones reject this possibility.

Richard's reign lasted just two years, from 1483 to 1485. Henry Tudor, who defeated Richard III in the Battle of Bosworth, brought an end to the War of the Roses and became King Henry VII of England. Thence, Tudor dynasty ruled England from 1485 to 1603 for more than a century until the reign of King James I.

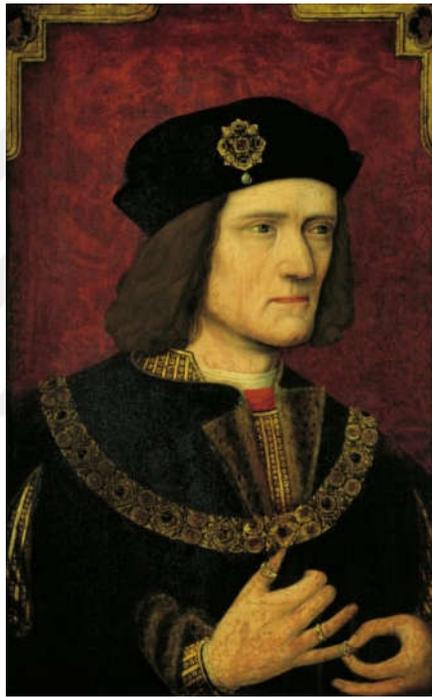
## 9.2 New Historicist Criticism of *Richard III*

Cautious readers of Shakespeare's history plays may easily realize the influence of Tudor propaganda and myths about Yorkist kings. In Shakespeare's time, Elizabeth I was the Queen of England from 1558 to 1603. In order to evaluate the influence of Tudor propaganda, a new historicist criticism of *Richard III* in the light of its contemporary documents is crucial. However, when the history books of Shakespeare's time are scrutinized, they give the sense that they systematically slander Richard III and make the propaganda of the Tudors. To put it another way, nearly all history books that have been utilized in this research such as Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicle of England, Scotland and Ireland*, Edward Hall's *Chronicles*, Richard Grafton's *Chronicle; or History of England* and Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* point to the Tudor Propaganda. To illustrate this, I would like to refer to the cover page of Richard Grafton's *Chronicle; or History of England* (1809) where Richard Grafton must have felt the necessity of praising Queen Elizabeth by saying "So, by continuance vnto the first yere of the reigne of our most deere and sovereign lady Queene Elizabeth" in the cover page of his book (Appendix A.8). As already mentioned in the previous chapters of this study, Elizabeth I was an authoritarian ruler who strictly controlled or censored the theatre plays during her reign. It is significant to remember that, as a result of her censoring policy, it was not easy to criticize the house of Lancaster or Tudor.

From a new historical perspective, this study compares and criticizes Shakespeare's *Richard III* by reading these five different contemporary history books written in Renaissance England. Prior to delineating the influence of Tudor propaganda in the history books or Renaissance Era, I would like to come out with two different scientific studies conducted very recently both about the portrait of King Richard III (Fig. 9.1), painted between 1504-1520 and the bones and grave of Richard III (Figures 9.3 and 9.4).

### 9.2.1 Contemporary Researches about the Excavated Skeleton and Historical Painting of King Richard III

Initially it is significant to explain the scientific studies as regards to the portrait of Richard III (fig. 9.1), which is a piece of English Royal Collection today. According to the explanation of the Royal Collection Trust, King Richard's right shoulder was re-painted to make it much higher than the left shoulder during the reign of Tudors (Richard III, 2016). That is to say, as a result of Tudor policy, the portrait of Richard III was repainted to show Richard as a hunchback or deformed.



**Figure 9.1:** King Richard III (Royal Collection 2016)

Similarly, an article of Isabel Tulloch (2009) from University College London Medical School also confirms that Richard III was not a hunchback. Isabel Tulloch declares in her article about the medical misrepresentation of Richard III that a recent X-ray examination in the portrait of Richard III in the Royal Collection proved the alteration in the right shoulder line of Richard III. She then maintains “the alteration is enough to hint at shoulder deformity, a deformity which is then reproduced in all versions of this portrait...The alterations are consistent with Tudor propaganda, and could have been made following the Battle of Bosworth” (2009, p. 317).

John Rous' painting of Richard III (Fig. 9.2) verifies Tulloch's claim. Contrary to the painting in figure 9.1 which was painted in Tudor Era, John Rous' (1483-1484) description of Richard III was quite different than other historians like Holinshed, Hall, More or Grafton who lived in the age of Tudors. In Rous' Roll Richard III seems as a quite healthy and normal man with an innocent facial appearance. He is not hunchback and his arms seem quite normal and healthy in proportion to his body.



**Figure 9.2:** Illustration of Richard III (Rous 1483)

Since the reign and death of Richard III was one of the most debated issues in English history, a research team led by University of Leicester conducted a research to find the skeleton of Richard III. Finally, in the wake of an excavation in 2012, they could find the skeleton of King Richard III in a car park, in Leicester City (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Then, in order to shed light to the unknown sides of Richard III, the skeleton has been subject to serious scientific studies by this research team called the Grey Friars consisting of many academics from different disciplines and institutions of England.



**Figure 9.3:** Excavation of the Skeleton of Richard III (The Grey Friars Excavation 2013)

Having completed the DNA analysis and matched the results with the living descendants of Richard III, Department of Genetics from University of Leicester confirmed that the skeleton belonged to King Richard III. The results of this research were published in an article ‘Identification of the remains of King Richard III’ in Nature Communications Journal, in 2014. The DNA analyses report that there is a positive mitochondrial DNA match between the skeletal remains of Richard III and his today living relatives Michael Ibsen and Wendy Duldig through Richard’s eldest sister Anne of York (King Turi E., et al. 2014, p. 3). However, the most speculating result of this research is strangely about the male-line relatives which is indeed, according to the experts, much easier than tracing female-line relatives. While a mitochondrial DNA analysis is conducted in female line researches, Y-chromosome match is expected in male line analysis. Contrary to mitochondrial DNA match, the

researchers could not find any Y-Chromosome match between Richard III and five male line relatives through the Henry Somerset, who was the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Beaufort between the years 1744 and 1803 (King et al. 2014, p. 2). According to the experts, this evidence indicates that there is a legitimacy problem as a result of false paternity event(s) between Edward III and Henry Somerset. In case a false paternity event occurred between Edward III and his son John of Gaunt this means that all his descendants including Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Henry VII, Henry VII, Elizabeth I were illegitimate. The research team also underlines the importance of this finding. One can speculate that a false-paternity event (or events) at some point(s) in this genealogy could be of key historical significance, particularly if it occurred in the five generations between John of Gaunt (1340–1399) and Richard III. A false-paternity between Edward III (1312–1377) and John would mean that John's son, Henry IV (1367–1413), and Henry's direct descendants (Henry V and Henry VI) would have had no legitimate claim to the crown. This would also hold true, indirectly, for the entire Tudor dynasty (Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I) since their claim to the crown also rested, in part, on their descent from John of Gaunt. The claim of the Tudor dynasty would also be brought into question if the false paternity occurred between John of Gaunt and his son, John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset. If the false paternity occurred in either of the three generations between Edward III and Richard, Duke of York, the father of Edward IV and Richard III, then neither of their claims to the crown would have been legitimate" (King Turi E., et al. 2014, p. 4).

I believe that, the findings of this research are important for two reasons. First of all, today we know that legitimacy of Henry VII is problematic. Secondly, after a series of medical and forensic researches, the Grey Friars have just confirmed in their book *The Bones of a King* that Richard III did not have a hunch back as described in Shakespeare's play (2015, p. 132). According to Piers Mitchell an osteoarchaeologist and expert on scoliosis (curvature of the spine), Richard had only a scoliosis causing his right shoulder slight higher than the other which was quite difficult to be realized by other people. He says "the thick layers of aristocratic fifteenth-century clothing, and custom-made armour may have disguised this almost entirely" (The Grey Friars Research Team, 2015, p. 72).



**Figure 9.4:** Skeleton of Richard III (The Grey Friars Excavation 2013)

Today, we know that Richard III was the last English King to die in a battle field and his death became the end of a civil war between the Royal Houses of York and Lancaster. In the end of this war, the Tudor Monarchy came in to power and Richard III became the victim of Tudor propaganda. As a playwright, William Shakespeare also took part in this systematic propaganda of the Tudors. When scrutinized, it is easy to realize that, not only for the physical description of King Richard III but also for the other parts of the play Shakespeare used Holinshed's, Hall's, Grafton's or More's accounts as the basic source of his play. Additionally, it is possible to assert that Shakespeare did not do so many changes on the historical accounts of the events. He just adapted them into his play with little changes. On the grounds that nearly all history books written in the Tudor Age distorted historical realities for the favour of the Tudor propaganda, it is possible to assert that some of the distortions in Shakespeare's history plays stemmed from these history books. Then again, Shakespeare himself made distortions and exaggerated some realities when he was slandering Richard III.

Therefore, he succeeded in creating one of the most impressive villains in the history of the tragedies. In order to understand the personal relations in *Richard III* of

Shakespeare it is useful to see the genealogy of Richard III and Henry VII in figure 9.6. Henry Tudor was the son of Edmund Tudor, the first Earl of Richmond and Margaret Beaufort. She was the great granddaughter of Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt. For that reason Henry was a claimant of the heir through his mother, Margaret Beaufort. She was the great granddaughter of Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt, the third son of King Edward III and the first Duke of Lancaster. Marrying with Anne of York, Henry tried to secure his legitimacy.

### 9.2.2 Physical Appearance of Richard III (Hunchback - Deformation)

Today, in the light of modern technology and researches we know that Richard III was not a hunch back both as a result of researches directly conducted on his bones and his portrait painted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, when Shakespeare's *Richard III* is criticized in the light of history books written in Tudor period, there are evidences to indicate the Tudor propaganda. For instance, when describing the physical appearance of Richard III, Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall, Richard Grafton and Thomas More are all nearly the same verbatim. That is to say, when describing Richard III, all these books distort the realities about the physical appearance of Richard III and they are the copies of each other. Similarly, Shakespeare's description of Richard III, for his physical appearance and characteristic, is obviously the same of its contemporary history books and propagates the Tudors. Owing to this viewpoint, it is contingent to claim that Richard III was a victim of Tudor propaganda and he was slandered for political reasons. Before illustrating the Tudor propaganda of similar expressions in different books, initially let's remember Shakespeare's description of Richard. In Shakespeare's play, Richard is physically deformed with a hunchback. He describes his physical deformation as follows:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricles,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,  
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt *by* them (1.1.14-23).

Simply reading the descriptions of Richard III from different historians in a row is sufficient to see the similarities between Shakespeare and those historians' description

of Richard. Briefly all in Thomas More, Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall and Richard Grafton's books Richard III is rendered verbatim<sup>6</sup>. Below a short description from Thomas More is presented.

Richard, the third son, of whom we now entreat, was in wit and courage equal with either of them, in body and prowess far under them both: little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favored of visage, and such as is in states called warly, in other men otherwise. He was malicious, wrathful, envious, and, from afore his birth, ever froward. It is for truth reported that the duchess his mother had so much ado in her travail that she could not be delivered of him uncut, and that he came into the world with the feet forward (as men be borne outward) and, as the fame runneth, also not untoothed—whether men, of hatred, report above the truth, or else that nature changed her course in his beginning which in the course of his life many things unnaturally committed (2005 More, pp., 9-10).

It seems that Shakespeare had read and been influenced from these history books and their description of Richard III, before he wrote his play. When we compare all these depictions of Richard III with Shakespeare's account, we can see lots of similarities with Shakespeare's description of Richard III. Holinshed and other historians describe Richard with ill featured limbs, crook-backed and one shoulder much higher than the other. According to Shakespeare's description, Richard is also deformed, unfinished and sent before its time with his hunchback. Today, we know that Richard III was not a hunchback. Therefore, we can conclude that both contemporary historians and William Shakespeare felt themselves have to describe Richard's physical appearance as deformed and malicious in order to make Tudor propaganda. Shakespeare says "Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature" (1.1.19) while Holinshed and others say "nature changed her course in his beginning which in the course of his life many things unnaturally committed" (Holinshed, 1808, vol. 3, p. 10). Contrary to modern time researches and findings, nearly all historians of Tudor period failed to describe the physical appearance of Richard III correctly. This can be thought as a tangible evidence that contemporary historians of Shakespeare made Tudor propaganda in their books.

### **9.2.3 Clarence**

According to play George, the Duke of Clarence is innocent and killed by Richard III.

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6. As part of Tudor Propaganda nearly all chroniclers described Richard III verbatim and Shakespeare's Richard was quite the same of those depictions. See Thomas More 9-10, Raphael Holinshed 3:362, Richard Grafton 81, Edward Hall 342-343



**Figure 9.5:** Richard III after a Facial Reconstruction (The Richard III Society 2016)

In reality, he was murdered with an accusation of treachery by his elder brother King Edward IV. In Shakespeare's *Richard III* George, the Duke of Clarence is a loyal brother of King Edward IV, but Richard makes his brother King Edward believe a prophecy that he is going to be killed by a person whose name starts with a letter 'G'. As a result of Richard's intrigues, Clarence finds himself in prison and is murdered by Richard just before King Edward IV forgives him. According to Holinshed's account, Clarence was executed by his eldest brother, King Edward IV after he had been accused of treason.

His brother the duke of Clarence, insomuch that where one of the dukes seruants was suddnlie accused (I cannot saie whether of truth, or vntrulie suspected by the dukes enimies) of poisoning, sorcerie or incbantment, and thereof condemned, and put to execution for the same (Holinshed, 1808, vol. 3, p. 346).

According to Holinshed some people believed that King Edward had killed his brother George, the duke of Clarence after a prophecy which is highly similar with the

prophecy in Shakespeare's play. According to this prophecy a person whose name starts with letter 'G' would reign the country after Edward IV. Although both prophecies are not verbatim, they are so similar. But in Holinshed's story the death of Clarence is not associated with Richard III.

Some haue reported, that the cause of this noble mans death rose of a foolish prophesie, which was, that after K. Edward one should reigne, whose first letter of his name should be a G. Wherewith the king and queene were sore troubled and began to conceiue a greeuous grudge against this duke, and could not be in quiet till they had brought him to his end. And as the diuell is woont to incumber the minds of men which delite in such diuelish fantasies, they said afterward, that that prophesie lost not his effect, when after king Edward, Gloucester vsurped his kingdome" (Holinshed, 1808, vol. 3, p. 346).

Briefly, Holinshed's account of the death of the Duke of Clarence does not match with Shakespeare's account. As regards to physical appearance of Richard III, it is possible to suggest that both history books of Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's play *Richard III* slander King Richard III collaboratively. But in this case of the death of Clarence, it seems highly probable that Shakespeare preferred to accuse Richard III for the murder of his brother by distorting the historical truth.

#### **9.2.4 Death of King Henry VI and Prince Edward**

In play, Richard III is described as a devilish king who says "I am determined to prove a villain" (1.1.30). In order to achieve his goal he kills his brother George, the Duke of Clarence, his nephews, Lady Anne, her father, husband and some other people who Richard sees as a threat in front of his accession to the throne of England. In act 4, scene 2 King Richard speaks to himself:

I must be married to my brother's daughter,  
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass...  
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!  
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in  
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin (4.2.58-62).

According to the historical documents, King Richard III did not kill his brother George, the Duke of Clarence, his wife Lady Anne Neville, her ex-husband, Edward, Prince of Wales and his father King Henry VI. Neither Hall's nor Holinshed's Chronicle claims that Richard killed Prince Edward ex-husband of his wife Lady Anne Neville and the son of King Henry VI. According to historical sources, Prince Edward died in the War of Tewkesbury in 1471. But he was not killed by Richard III: "Kyng Henry the sixte whiche begat prince Edward that was slayne at Tewkesbury, and diseased without issue" (Hall, 1809, p. 2). However, the death of King Henry VI is

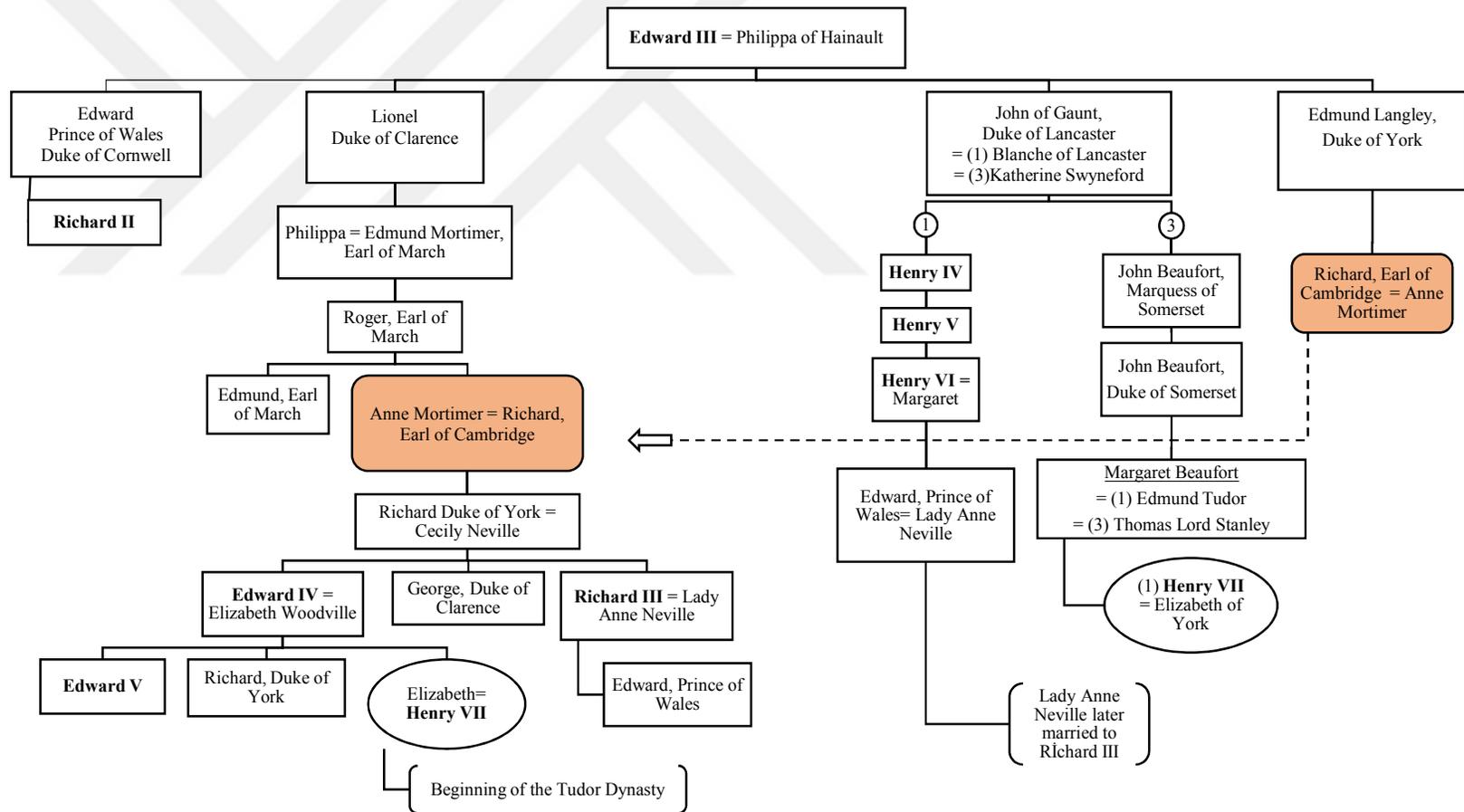
more controversial. According to Edward Hall, Richard of Gloucester was responsible from the death of King Henry VI. For Hall, Richard murdered the king with a dagger (Hall, 1809, p. 303). According to Holinshed, there were two views about the death of King Henry VI. The first view was that Richard of Gloucester was responsible from the death of King Henry VI. Here, Holinshed and Hall's accounts are the same. But Holinshed adds a new paragraph and explains another view about the death of Henry VI:

Howbeit, some writers of that time, fauoring altogether the house of Yorke, haue recorded, that after he vnderstood what losses had chanced vnto his friends, and how not onelie his sonne, but also all other his cheefe partakers were dead and dispatched, he tooke it so to hart, that of pure displeasure, indignation, and melancholie, he died the three and twentieth of Maie. (Holinshed, 1808, vol. 3, p. 324).

According to this view, King Henry died few months after his son had died in 1471 as a result of sorrow and melancholy. When King Henry died in 1471, Richard was a nineteen year-old young boy and his elder brother Edward IV became the king of England until 1483. Therefore, it seems highly probable that during the imprisonment of Henry VI in London Tower, it was difficult for a nineteen years old boy to kill Henry VI, without the authority or order of King Edward IV. King Henry VI was imprisoned into the London Tower and died there during the reign of King Edward IV. Therefore, it seems that Henry VI might have been killed by King Edward IV. As a matter of fact, he was the king and only authority who could be responsible from such an act. According to historical sources it is only a slight possibility that Richard might have killed King Henry VI because there were different views about the death of Henry VI. But it is certainly clear that no historical documents accuse Richard of the murder of Edward, Prince of Wales.

In Shakespeare's play, Richard kills both Henry VI and his son Edward. Then, their ghosts come to the dream of Richard III before the war of Bosworth. In Holinshed's Chronicle, Richard has a fearful dream but Henry and Edward do not appear in the dream. For that reason, their appearance in Richard's dream in Shakespeare's play is highly meaningful. Holinshed delineates the dream of Richard III as follows:

And least that it might be suspected that he was abashed for feare of his enimies, and for that cause looked so pitiouslie; he recited and declared to his familiar freends in the morning his wonderfull vision and fearefull dreame. But I thinkc this was no dreame, but a punction and pricke of his sinfull conscience: for the conscience is so much more charged and agreeued, as the offense is greater & more heinous in degree (Holinshed 1808, vol. 3, p. 438).



**Figure 9.6:** Formation of the House of York and the House of Lancaster

### 9.2.5 Anne Neville

In the play, there is a scene which demonstrates that Lady Anne Neville who walks in the funeral cortege of King Henry VI gets a marriage proposal from Richard. She then accepts and marries with Richard. Indeed this scene is not correct. When her husband Prince Edward and Henry VI died, Lady Anne was just 15 years old. Her sister Isabel Neville was the wife of Richard's brother George, the Duke of Clarence. For that reason Richard and Anne must have known each other for a long time before their marriage. Since Richard did not kill her ex-husband, Edward, there must have not been a problem between Richard and Lady Anne. As described in two different scenes of Shakespeare's play, Edward is killed by Clarence. First of all when Queen Margaret Anjou was cursing she says: "Thy Clarence he is dead that stabbed my Edward" (4.4.67). Similarly, in act 1, scene 4 one of the murderers accuses Clarence for murdering Prince Edward: "And, like a traitor to the name of God,/ Didst break that vow, and with thy treacherous blade/ Unrip'st the bowels of thy sov'reign's son" (1.4.205-207). However, in the end of the play when the ghosts visit and frighten Richard, Prince Edward comes and accuses Richard of the murder of him. This causes an ambiguity in the play. Because, initially, in two different scenes Clarence is accused of being the murderer of Edward. However in the end of the play Richard is accused of being the murderer of Edward: "*Ghost. [lto Richard']* Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!/ Think how thou stab'st me in my prime of youth/ At Tewkesbury: despair therefore, and die! (5.3.117-119). Similarly, when Richard meets Lady Anne Neville on the Street, during the funeral cortege of King Henry VI, he says "What! I, that killed her husband and his father" (1.2.230). However, as shown and described in John Rous' illustrated armorial roll-chronicle in 1483, Lady Anne Neville and Richard III were a very happy couple (see fig. 9.7). Holinshed, Hall, Grafton or More do not mention the death of Lady Anne Neville, Queen of Richard III. Anne Neville died a year after his son Edward's death, in 1484 which became the second agony for Richard III before his death the same year in the war of Bosworth.

### 9.2.6 Margaret of Anjou

Margaret of Anjou was the wife of King Henry VI and she lived between the years 1430 and 1482. She had already died, before Richard became the King Richard III of England in 1483. But she appears in Shakespeare's play in Act 4, Scene 4 during the

reign of King Richard III. She curses Elizabeth. This is another distortion of Shakespeare.

### **9.2.7 Margaret Beaufort – Countess of Richmond**

Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry Tudor, took over a critical role in making his son Henry VII the king of England. In Shakespeare's *Richard III* we cannot see her in any scene. But, indeed, she is married with one of the most powerful lords of Northern England, Lord Stanley, in order to gain his support against King Richard III. She also engages with Elizabeth Woodville, former queen and wife of prior King Edward IV, in order to make their children Henry Tudor and Elizabeth of York marry to guarantee the legitimacy of his son Henry VII. The audience does not see her existence in the play. Richard III warns Lord Stanley not to go and join to Richmond. In order to prevent his join to Richmond's army, Richard holds his son as hostage in the play. In reality, Lord Stanley collaborates with Lady Margaret Beaufort and helps Henry VII to ascend to the throne of England (Holinshed 1808, vol. 3, p. 435).

### **9.2.8 Buckingham**

According to Holinshed, Buckingham initially claims that he is the heir after the death of King Henry VI and his son Edward, Prince of Wales. But he cannot get support from Margaret Beaufort. Instead, she asks his help for his son Henry VII. Buckingham supports Henry Tudor. Therefore, Richard III executes him for treason. Below there is a reference to Holinshed's account of Buckingham and his claim for the throne:

But at the last, in all this doubtfull case there sprang a new branch out of my head, which suerlie I thought should haue brought forth faire floures; but the sunne was so hot, that they turned to drie weeds. For I suddenlie remembered that the lord Edmund duke of Summerset my grandfather, was with king Henrie the sixt in the two and three degrees, from lohn duke of Lancaster lawfullie begotten: so that I thought sure, my mother being eldest daughter to duke Edmund, that I was next heire to king Henrie the sixt of the house of Lancaster (Holinshed, 1808, vol. 3, p. 410).

### **9.2.9 Two Innocent Princes**

Today the fate of two innocent princes is still a mystery and a controversial issue. What happened to those missing young princes or who killed them is still unknown. According to different theories, it is possible that Richard III might have ordered their murder or Lady Margaret Beaufort might have ordered their death in order to open his son's way to the throne. According to Holinshed Richard III killed those little princes:

these two noble princes, these innocent tender children, borne of most roiall blond, brought vp in great wealth, likelie long to Hue, reigne, and rule in the realme, by traitorous tyrannic taken, deprived of their estate, shortlie shut vp in prison, and priuile slaine and murthered, their bodies cast God wot where, by the cruell ambition of their vnnaturall vncl and his despiteous tormentors (1808, vol. 3, p. 402).

Other chroniclers like Hall, Grafton or More endorse the same view with Holinshed. Briefly stating it is clear that Shakespeare used mostly Holinshed, Halls, Grafton or More's Chronicles as the base of his *Richard III* which were written under the political



**Figure 9.7:** Anne Neville, Queen of Richard III (Rous 1483)

pressure of the Tudors. Shakespeare's *Richard III* is important for us to understand the political atmosphere and perception in Elizabethan England.

### 9.3 Deconstructing *Richard III*

Richard III is a play which accounts the quick rise and tragic downfall of King Richard III of England. In accordance with the nature of deconstruction, I attempt to read the text of Richard III in order to reveal the unclear messages given inside the text. Binary oppositions of *devilry* vs. *divinity* and *tragic downfall* vs. *heroic regal rise* cause a violent hierarchy from a theocentric viewpoint. When these binary oppositions are scrutinized in the text, it becomes possible for the readers to see the hidden messages given through the text. In other words, deconstructing the text allows the readers to realize the differences or different sides of both King Richard and Henry Tudor given directly by the text.

#### 9.3.1 Binary Oppositions ‘Devilry vs. Divinity’ and ‘Tragic Downfall vs. Heroic Regal Rise’

Divinity is an important and expected quality of kingship, while devilry is not. Shakespeare’s Richard III is a liar, cruel, unreliable and killer king in the play. He has a hunchback, and he is physically deformed. He eliminates every obstacle he sees in front of him to be the king of England. He kills, intrigues, lies, betrays and finally becomes the king of England. But his kingship is not sustained for a long time. Because he uses his power so arbitrarily and cruelly that many people start to hate him. As a result of his bad practices, some of the lords betray and rebel against Richard III. Thus, his tragic end starts. But this tragic end of Richard III causes a regal rise of Henry Tudor. In the end of the play, Henry Tudor kills Richard in the battle field. While Henry Tudor was rising as a new king of England in a heroic manner, Richard III downfalls in a tragic manner. In the beginning of the first act Richard confesses himself as a person who is unhappy because of his deformed body and wishes to prove that he is a villain:

Richard. And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determined to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.  
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,  
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,  
To set my brother Clarence and the king  
In deadly hate the one against the other (1-1-28-35).

He is so cruel and unreliable that he prepares the end of his brother Clarence as a result of his intrigues. But Clarence learns this fact only when he is faced with his killers

before his death. When Clarence understands the intention of his killers, he urges them to go and speak to his brother Richard for help. But, they say that Richard is the person who hired them to kill him. Thus, Richard shows that he is an unreliable person even for his brother. As long as days go by and the number of people being killed increase, Richard proves to be a villain. A kind of villain that does not hesitate to be in an incest relation with her own niece: “Richard. I must be married to my brother's daughter, / Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass...” (4.2.58-59).

Both Richard and Henry want to marry with Elizabeth, King Edward’s daughter, in order to make their claim for the throne stronger, Richmond claims Elizabeth and himself as the true heirs of each royal house.

England hath long been mad, and scarred herself;  
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,  
The father rashly slaughtered his own son,  
The son, compelled, been butcher to the sire:  
All that divided York and Lancaster  
Divided in their dire division,  
O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,  
The true succeeders of each royal house,  
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together! (5.5. 23-31).

Richmond describes himself as one of the two real succeeders of royal houses of England. He prays to God to marry with Elizabeth of York to be the king of England. This is an indicator of a fact that Richmond himself is not a strong heir of the throne. Therefore, in order to make his claim stronger, he employs Elizabeth. Because of his cruelty and bad policy, his mother, Duchess of York does not even love Richard. “*Duchess*. He is my son, ay, and therein my shame;/ Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit” (2009, 2.1.29-30). All these qualities of Richard III indicate that he represents devilry which does not fit to a good king. However, when the text is deconstructed it is possible to see different messages both about Richard and Henry in the subconscious of the text. For instance, although the general message of the text claims that Richard is the representative of devilry in the earth, indeed he believes in God. In, act five, scene two, a night before the battle ghosts visit Richard in his dream. It becomes a real nightmare for King Richard. He wakes up and says: “*King Richard*. Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft, I did but dream” (5.3.178). Although King Richard III kills many people and proves to be a villain, it is clear that he is a Christian and requests mercy from Jesus Christ. Although he is a villain, he is a Christian and believes in

God. When the text is evaluated from a theocentric notion, it is impossible to claim that King Richard is an atheist.

In many cases, Henry Tudor states that he acts for the sake of God and future of England. However, it is a fact that he collaborates with rebelling Dukes and kills King Richard III. From a theocentric point of view, kings are the representatives of God in the earth and Henry kills the king of England and usurps the throne which is not an acceptable behaviour from a theocentric notion. He collaborates with Buckingham who was among the actors of King Richard's rise. Having supported all policies of Richard, he changes his side and decides to support Richmond not for moral reasons, because King Richard has not kept his promise. "*Buckingham*. My lord, I claim the gift, my due by promise, / For which your honour and your faith is pawned— / Th'earldom of Hereford and the movables / Which you have promised I shall possess" (4.2.85-88).

In the beginning of act two, scene seven Buckingham says to have slandered to citizens about the bastardy of Edward's children. "Gloucester. Touched you the bastardy of Edward's children? / Buckingham. I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy, / And his contract by deputy in France" (3.7.4-6). As it is clear from Buckingham's speech, he is a person who can do everything for his personal benefits. He is not a moral person. Therefore, his collaboration with Richmond does not show any Messianic sign. If King Richard is devil, then Buckingham, due to his close relation with Richard in the past, can be considered as devil, too. Richmond collaborates with Buckingham to usurp the throne of England. For that reason, it is possible to claim that the divinity of Richmond is a matter of question.

King Richard fights bravely in the battlefield in order to defend his country from the invasion of Richmond and rebels until he dies in the battlefield. Besides being a villain, he proves to be a brave king, too. Some may call this as a tragic downfall, but some may call this as a heroic downfall of a king. Because he does not escape from the battle field.

King Richard. A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!  
Catesby. Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.  
King Richard. Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,  
And I will stand the hazard of the die.  
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;  
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.  
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! (5.4.6-13).

Although Catsby urges Richard to withdraw, Richard refuses this. He fights bravely and dies in the battlefield. This heroic fighting scene of King Richard is a noble behaviour. Richmond, on the other hand, claims that he comes to protect England and its people from the wrath of Richard III and to give an end to the civil war between the Yorkists and Lancastrians. Peace is one of the most important features of a good country. From this point of view, Henry Tudor, who brings peace and harmony to England again, represents the divinity of God. A good king should be aware of his responsibilities and his position requires to be divine instead of being devilish.

Richmond repeats in many occasions that he is the representative of God. He wishes to bring an end to the War of the Roses in England. “Richmond. In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,/ To reap the harvest of perpetual peace/ By this one bloody trial of sharp war” (5.2.14-16). Contrary to King Richard, Richmond prays in many occasions. Before the War of Bosworth, when he is alone he prays and requests support from God. For instance:

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,  
Look on my forces with a gracious eye;  
Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,  
That they may crush down with a heavy fall  
Th'usurping helmets of our adversaries!  
Make us thy ministers of chastisement,  
That we may praise thee in the victory!  
To thee I do commend my watchful soul,  
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:  
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! (5.3.108-117)

During his oration to his soldiers, Richmond underlines the divine reason of his fight with King Richard. “God and our good cause fight upon our side; / The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls, / Like high-reared bulwarks, stand before our faces. / Richard except, those whom we fight against” (5.3.240-243). However, he collaborates with rebels against a king who is the representative of God. Richard III may be a bad king but he is still the representative of God in England. But, Richmond slains Richard and usurps the throne of England. When we analyse this scene from a theocentric viewpoint, Richmond commits a sin as killing a king and usurping the throne is not a divine act. Although Richmond claims that he is acting for the name of God, indeed he does something God prohibits. From this point of view, his regal rise has not got a divine characteristic because of this usurpation.

## 10. CONCLUSION

William Shakespeare, probably the greatest playwright of all times, always allows us to restudy and reinterpret his plays in the light of different methods and techniques. As long as human being advances in time, science and technology, his plays allow us to reinterpret them from different perspectives, and they always glitter like a gold. He was not merely a vanguard dramatist of his time, but also inspired subsequent playwrights in modern times. Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, which is believed to be the first example of the absurd theatre by some authors, was an adaptation of Shakespeare's plays; *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. In his famous book, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1974) Jan Kott (1914-2001) bridged between Shakespeare and the theatre of the 20th century, and claimed Shakespeare a modern playwright. Then Ernest Jones in his book, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1976) underlined the fact that human being had to wait until the invention of psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud to understand the subconscious of Hamlet and the motives in his delay. Finally, Slavoj Žižek claimed in his *Looking Awry* that "Shakespeare had read Lacan" (1991, p., 9). It is evident that, as long as time goes by Shakespeare is understood better.

The main purpose of this dissertation has been to draw connection between the history plays of William Shakespeare and modern mass media in terms of the loss of the real concept of Jean Baudrillard and social psychology methods such as primacy effect, classical conditioning and cognitive dissonance theory. In other words, this dissertation has examined the political propaganda in Shakespeare's history plays to understand the similarities between the political propaganda methods of the mass media in our age and Shakespearean stage. Although many Shakespeare scholars of the mid-twentieth century, like E.M.W. Tillyard (1944) and L. B. Campbell (1947) underpinned the view that Shakespeare's history plays were the reflection of the political life of Renaissance England, and new historicist critics of the 1980s, like Stephen Greenblatt, Leonard Tennenhouse, Jonathan Dollimore or Alan Sinfield defended the idea that Shakespeare's history plays were part of the state propaganda,

they did not compare the political propaganda methods of Shakespearean Stage and modern mass media in terms of the loss of the real concept of Jean Baudrillard and social psychology methods that both Shakespeare and modern mass media use successfully.

In the course of the reinterpretation of Shakespeare's history plays, *Macbeth*, *The Life and Death of King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* I have used an eclectic approach. Having explained the loss of the real concept of Jean Baudrillard, and the social psychology methods that Shakespeare used in his history plays, I have analysed *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* in the light of new historicism and deconstruction theories. The findings of the new historicist and deconstructive analyses have supported the views of Jonathan Dollimore, Leonard Tennenhouse, Stephen Greenblatt, Alan Sinfield and Louis Montrose in terms of the political propaganda in Shakespeare's history plays. The distortions of the historical events and political propaganda of the Tudors and the Stuarts in Shakespeare's history plays can be contemplated as the signal of the loss of the reality in Shakespearean stage. Although the focus of Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation theory is about the situation in our age, his theory is based on Plato's theory of forms. For that reason, the gist of the loss of the real concept of Baudrillard has been helpful in understanding the loss of the real in Shakespeare's history plays.

Different from Plato's description of sign at three different stages in his theory of forms, Jean Baudrillard describes the epiphany of sign at four stages in his theory. According to him there is a new condition in our age in which it is highly difficult to distinguish fiction from reality. According to Jean Baudrillard, it is highly difficult to distinguish reality from unreality in our age. Baudrillard describes this as the loss of the real. This hyperreality does not allow us to see the truth. Mass media is the simulation area in which simulacra hide the truth. His book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1984) explains the four stages of sign and the loss of the real in our age. He explains how the mass media, as a powerful communication tool, turns into a lethal weapon of the political powers which use media to manipulate the minds of the masses and propagate.

Today, we know that mainstream media is one of the strongest ideological state apparatuses of the political powers. They successfully use plenty of psychological techniques to influence the perceptions of their audiences. In his work *Towers of*

*Deception* Canadian writer Barrie Zwicker recounts the techniques and methods CNN used to manipulate the perceptions of American society before and during the Gulf War in 1990. Similar to the relations between the political powers and TV channels in our age, there was a similar relation between the monarchy and Shakespeare in Renaissance England.

Before the invention of modern mass media vehicles, in Shakespeare's time the theatre was the most influential mass media and the troupes staged their plays in the furthest bounds of England. After the erection of the first permanent theatres in 1576, a play had the chance of being watched by approximately 2,500 people at once (Brockett, p. 188). Given that the overall population of London was around 160,000 the capacity of these permanent theatres were high enough to reach the masses.

In Elizabethan and Jacobean England, monarchy employed the theatre as part of its political propaganda. In this respect, by distorting some realities for the favour of the monarchy and employing some social psychology techniques or theories like primacy effect, classical conditioning or cognitive dissonance theory in his history plays, Shakespeare made the political propaganda of the monarchy.

Owing to its unique features and the political support it got from the monarchy, Shakespeare simulated the history of England in the permanent theatre houses like the Theatre, the Globe or the First Blackfriars with his history plays. With Shakespeare's history plays permanent theatre houses turned into the simulation areas of the English history and the political propaganda area of the Monarchy. We do not have scientific reports as regards the perceptions of the Renaissance audience. However, it is a fact that most of the theatregoers who watched Shakespeare's history plays did not have the chance of learning real history about their previous kings like Richard II or Richard III from other sources. On account of this, Shakespeare's history plays were an important source for many people in Renaissance. Today, we know that nearly all history books written in Tudor age like Raphael Holinshed, Richard Grafton or Edward Hall's Chronicles made the Tudor propaganda and distorted realities. On the grounds that Shakespeare utilized these history books as the source of his history plays, it is possible that in some cases Shakespeare might have directly used the distorted information of these chronicles unintentionally.

According to Malcolm X “The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses” (cited in Cohen, 2010, p. 99). New historicist and deconstructive criticisms of Shakespeare's history plays confirm that approximately four centuries before Malcolm X, theatre undertook the same role as TV undertakes today in which the audience could not differentiate reality from unreality. Elizabeth I and James I used theatre as the mass media of their age to manipulate the public opinion in England. Theatre stages simulated historical events through a large number of distortions or simulacra in order to influence the public opinion. Therefore, through the modern theory of simulacra and simulation it is contingent to evaluate these new historicist and deconstructive criticisms of Shakespeare's history plays for they involved a great many simulacra, binary oppositions and violent hierarchies, when they were simulated on the stages of Blackfriars or Globe.

New historicist and deconstructive criticisms of all four plays, *Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II* and *Richard III*, approve that Shakespeare's simulation of the political and historical matters on the theatre stage was the same with the method that mass media apply in our age. The only difference between Shakespeare's time and our age is the technology. Although the monarchy in the 16th and 17th Centuries did not have modern TV channels or internet of our age, they used theatre as their political propaganda tool through which they simulated simulacra. It is clear that when Shakespeare's history plays were staged in the Renaissance theatre, realities and unrealities were intertwined with each other and this can be considered as the loss of the real in Renaissance England.

In accordance with the major argument of this dissertation, new historicist analyses of these plays confirm that Shakespeare distorted historical realities in order to make the political propaganda of the English Monarchy. In some cases he accounts or distorts historical events from the point of view of monarchy and in some cases he accounts a similar event from the life of an earlier king in order to endorse the current policy of the Monarchy. For instance, in his play *King John* Shakespeare praises King John's policy for his opposition to the Pope in order to support Queen Elizabeth's policy against the Papacy. Indeed when Shakespeare wrote *King John* in the mid 1590s, Elizabeth had already been excommunicated by Vatican after the execution of Catholic

Queen Mary of Scots. Similarly in *King John*, Shakespeare does not mention *Magna Carta* in order to emphasize the greatness and holy position of the monarchy. In the end of the play, rebellious barons apologize for their mistake and King John forgives them before his death. However, in reality those barons and the Pope brought the end of King John. Shakespeare tells the life of Richard II and Richard III from a Lancastrian point of view with a large number of distortions which must have caused the misunderstanding of the real history among the audience of the Renaissance theatre. In two Richard plays, there are clear evidences which distort realities and praise the qualities, virtue and values of Lancastrians. One thing is certain that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I, a great censor mechanism not only affected the theatre, but also affected the history books written in those years. Nearly all history books like Holinshed's Chronicle, Hall's Chronicle, Grafton's Chronicle, etc were written under the political pressure of the Monarchy. Therefore, not only Shakespeare's history plays but also history books of Elizabethan Era distorted realities. When the text is deconstructed, it is possible to see a language supporting the monarchy. In *Macbeth*, the text underlines the divinity of the kings and the tragic results of usurpation of the throne. Macbeth, for instance, says "the rest is labour, which is not used for you" (1.4.44) to King Duncan. Similarly, when King John says "Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great—/ Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet" (1.1.161-163), he makes illegitimate son of his brother a noble knight. These are the examples of violent hierarchy between the commons and royal people.

Another important point of this study is the quality of Shakespeare in employing social psychology techniques such as primacy effect, classical conditioning and cognitive dissonance theory in his history plays four centuries before the emergence of social psychology as a discipline in our modern age. From this perspective, it is possible to maintain that the findings of this dissertation support the views of the authors like Jan Kott, Ernest Jones, Slavoj Zizek or Margreta de Grazia, who claim Shakespeare knew human psychology very well and was a modern playwright. Being a versatile and connoisseur playwright, Shakespeare used modern techniques of social psychology in his plays successfully. For that reason there are similarities between the Shakespearean stage and the mass media of the 21st century. Jan Kott and Ernest Jones acknowledge that William Shakespeare was a modern playwright and our contemporaneous who lived four centuries before our age. Both Shakespeare's quality in employing some

social psychology techniques a few centuries before their invention in the modern age and evaluation of Shakespeare's history plays in the light of simulacra and simulation theory demonstrate that Shakespeare offsetted the time shift between the Renaissance theatre and our modern epoch.

Findings of this dissertation are important for they can be helpful to understand Shakespeare from a different perspective. First of all, drawing connection between the history plays of William Shakespeare and modern mass media in terms of the loss of the real concept of Jean Baudrillard is important. Secondly, as explained in chapter four, Shakespeare had used modern social psychology techniques as a propaganda method in his history plays, before the emergence of social psychology as a discipline in the 20th century. Therefore, it is possible to underline a fact that he was a playwright beyond his age.

Bridging between the mass media of our age and the Shakespearean stage in Renaissance England in terms of their relations with the political Powers and *the loss of the real*, this dissertation has claimed that there are similarities between the two eras in terms of employing similar social psychology techniques and the loss of the real concept of Baudrillard. Consequently, it is possible to claim that simulacra and simulation theory does not only explain the loss of the real of our age but also explains the loss of the real in Elizabethan England.

When the famous modernism and postmodernism debate of Francois Lyotard and Jurgen Habermas is evaluated in the light of Shakespeare's history plays it is contingent to conclude that some features of a period or of an artist or of a playwright can be discovered centuries later. To put it another way, some new periods or productions especially in the field of art may not supersede the prior epochs or productions. Similarly, Shakespeare's qualities in theatre have not been excelled by our contemporary (modern or postmodern) drama. From this viewpoint, it is possible to maintain that Shakespeare's quality and excellent techniques still shed light on our age, and to modernism and postmodernism debate which took place between Jurgen Habermas and French philosophers in the early 1980s.

Given that the Renaissance theatre is still believed to be the most influential theatre of all times and Shakespeare is the most important playwright of this early-modern epoch,

it would be significant to highlight Shakespeare's history plays and Renaissance theatre from a modern - postmodern perspective.

Polemical article of Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project" triggered the famous *modernism postmodernism* debate in 1980. His article starts with a criticism of the first architecture biennial organized by Paolo Portoghesi in Venice in 1980. The theme of this postmodern biennial was 'The Presence of the Past'. Habermas describes this architecture biennial as a disappointment for some reasons (2005).

Before delineating the viewpoint of Habermas, it would be useful to explain what is modernism<sup>7</sup>. As Peter Barry states without knowing modernism it is not easy to grasp the gist of the culture of the twentieth century (2002, p. 81). As known well, postmodernism came to be known only after 1980s. Therefore, understanding modernism as a movement or the culture of the 20th century will be quite helpful in understanding the modernism – postmodernism discussion in the field of art.

It seems that modernism and postmodernism debate will go on for a long time, but the

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7. Modernism: According to Barry, Modernism was an earthquake which shook and overturned the values and practice in the field of arts like painting, literature, music and architecture. Vienna was one of the leading epicenters of this earthquake, but *modernism* showed itself through new kinds of movements like *surrealism*, *dadaism*, *futurism* and *cubism* in other countries like France, Germany, Italy and England (Barry 2002, p. 81). According to Barry, "its after-shocks are still being felt today, and many of the structures it toppled have never been rebuilt" (2002, p. 81). So how *modernism* overturned the traditional practice in the field of art? According to Barry all traditional forms and practices in all fields of art were challenged and rejected by *modernism*. In music for instance, melody and harmony were set aside, in painting abstraction replaced direct pictorial representation and perspective, in architecture new plain geometrical forms and materials like concrete, plate or glass started to be used instead of traditional forms and materials like wood, stone or pitched rooftops. Its reverberations in literature were in the form of challenging and refusing traditional realism. For instance omniscient storytellers, sequential plots and close endings in the novels left their place for different sorts (Barry 2002, p. 82). In other words to understand the earthquake effect of modernism in literature it is crucial to remember the Pioneers of this movement like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, Marcel Proust or Franz Kafka. According to Barry, there are five characteristics of this literary modernism: First of all, how we see the things is more important than what we see in modern literature. We evidently see this feature of modernism in the stream of consciousness technique. *To the Lighthouse* of Virginia Woolf is a good example of this where the thoughts and observations excel the plot. Secondly, it is not possible to see a set of features providing objectivity such as omniscient storyteller, certain moral messages or close ending in novels. Thirdly, we see blurriness of the borders between the genres. It is possible to see more poetic or lyrical novels or vice versa. Fourthly, there is an inclination for impermanent tale and fragmentation in modernism. The fifth and last feature of modernism in literature, according to Barry, is its reflexivity. Literary Works like novel, poem or play, pay more attention to the matters of their own nature in modernism (2002, p. 82).

main aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate how Shakespeare's theatre and his history plays had a role in the political propaganda of the monarchy and used similar techniques with the mass media of our age. As this dissertation claimed earlier, Shakespeare distorted historical realities, and utilized social psychology techniques in his history plays. Similarly, the function of the theatre stage was similar to the mass media of our age. Therefore, it seems highly possible to claim that Shakespeare was a modern playwright who lived about four centuries before our time.

Discovering new features of Shakespeare's plays and reinterpreting them under modern or postmodern techniques prove the fact that Shakespeare is never out of date and will always attract the attention of the researchers in any time. As Margreta de Grazia explains in her article 'Hamlet before its Time' (2001) as long as time goes by, the quality of Shakespeare is appreciated more and more. Especially after the invention of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud in our modern age, researchers could understand the psychological factors why Hamlet delayed to kill his uncle Claudius correctly.

Here, I would like to turn back to the criticism of the first postmodern architecture biennial. For Habermas, this architecture biennial in Venice was a disappointment and he accused these postmodernists for attacking to the values of modernism by producing nothing new or different from modernism. He says: "who exhibited in Venice formed an avant garde of reversed fronts. I mean that they sacrificed the tradition of modernity in order to make room for a new historicism" (2005, p. 163). In order to see the selected photos of this architecture biennial, which Habermas criticizes and sees as an attack to the tradition of modernism see figure A.9 in Appendix. For Habermas what he saw in the biennial was nothing different from avant garde -a term used to describe several modern art movements of early twentieth century, like surrealism, dadism, etc.-. Because both avant garde and postmodernist architecture use the same technology and material in their buildings and have similar non normative forms and designs, it is extremely difficult to realize the differences between the two movements. With this point of view, Jurgen Habermas claims postmodernism as an attack to modernism and its ideals, and accuses French postmodern philosophers as neo-conservatives who, according to Habermas, welcomes the development of modern science only when it serves to technical advancement, capitalist development or rational administration. For Habermas, postmodernists insists on a policy soothing the detonating content of cultural modernity (2005, p. 173). He states that starting from the mid 19th century

aestheticism arose in art and developed the perception of art for art's sake which led to the decentered subjectivity of the artists or literarians (2005, p. 169). Therefore, literary masters like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, T.S. Eliot emerged as the pioneers of modernism.

In response to Habermas, Francois Lyotard states that we are in a slackening period in which we are being forced to put an end to experimentation in art and every fields of life. Lyotard accuses Habermas for not being able to defend the project of enlightenment in every field of life. According to him Habermas is able to defend the project of enlightenment only in art by *Aesthetic Theory* of Theodor W. Adorno and politics by *The Open Society* of Karl R. Popper (1984, p. 71). So, then what is *postmodernism*? For Lyotard, "it is undoubtedly a part of modern" and "a work can be modern only if it is postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant" (1984, p. 79). I argue that, with this description, Lyotard means that although it is a part of modernity, postmodernity objects to the unitary and overarching statements in modernity. Postmodernity celebrates the individual differences and plurality. For Lyotard modernity tries to suppress the multivoicedness of life. For that reason he contends that *The Essays* of Montaigne is postmodern due to its feature (1984, p. 82). According to Lyotard a *postmodern* artist or writer should be like a philosopher whose literary work or artwork should not be in agreement with the normative rules and "the artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done" (1984, p. 82).

Briefly, it is possible to state that modernism is based on the values of enlightenment and uses various experimental forms to reject the traditional forms of the past and thus creates an earthquake effect. Postmodernism, on the other hand attempts to deconstruct modernism and all its values for the creation of a multivoiced world which allows individual differences and plurality. Although Lyotard does not make an evident explanation, it is possible to state that for him postmodernism is not an era or period which is a sequential movement continuing modernism. That is why he calls *The Essays* of Montaigne as postmodern work. Although fragmentation is an important part of both modernism and postmodernism, according to Barry, "the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it" (84).

Having explained the viewpoints of Habermas and Lyotard about modernism and postmodernism along with simulacra theory of Baudrillard, here I would like to evaluate modernism postmodernism debate in the light of Shakespearean stage and history plays of Shakespeare.

From this viewpoint simulacra and simulation is not only a theory to be used to explain postmodern situation but also a theory that can be used to explain Shakespearean stage in Elizabethan England. Therefore, it is possible to reinterpret the postmodernism concept in the field of literature/art, and defend the views of Habermas about modernity for if we can compare our age with Shakespearean theatre and cannot see any difference apart from the technology, then, this can be considered as the proof of a fact that William Shakespeare's history plays help us to understand that the simulacra and simulation is not a concept belonging only to our age, rather it was used in Shakespeare's time, too.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A.1:** The Theatre

**APPENDIX A.2:** A view inside the Theatre

**APPENDIX A.3:** Inn Yard Stage

**APPENDIX A.4:** White Hart in Southwark

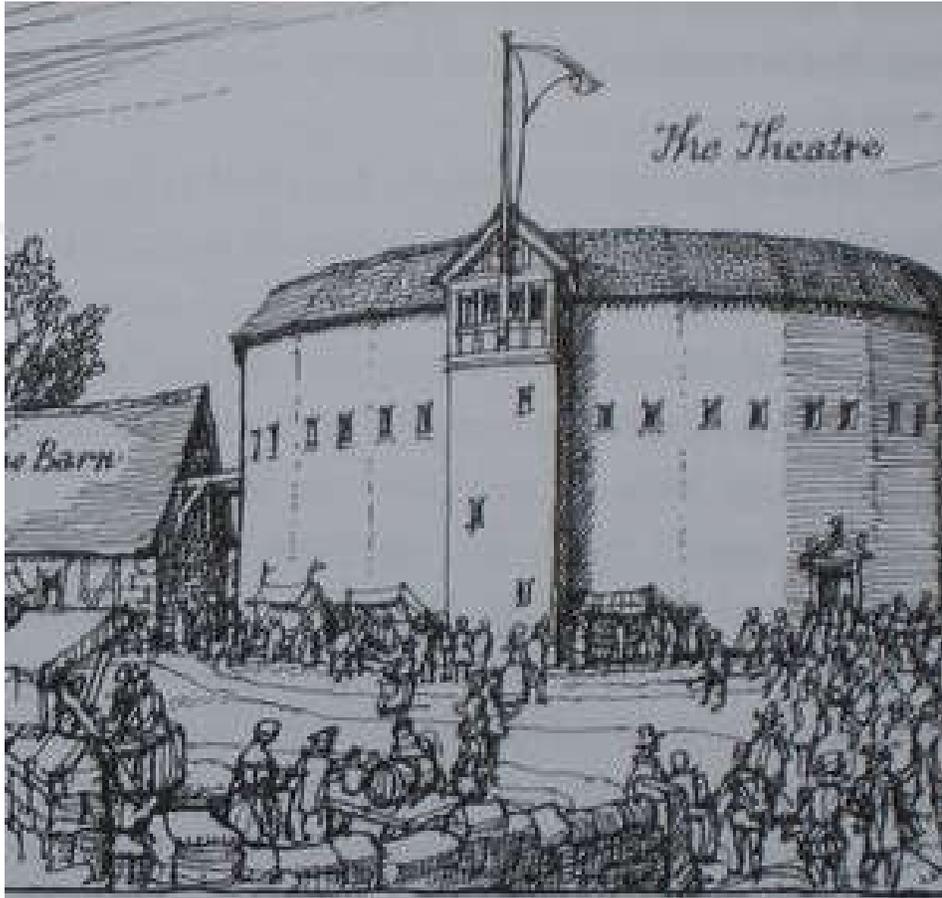
**APPENDIX A.5:** A Genealogy of the Lenox Branch of the Stuarts

**APPENDIX A.6:** A Map of Norman England

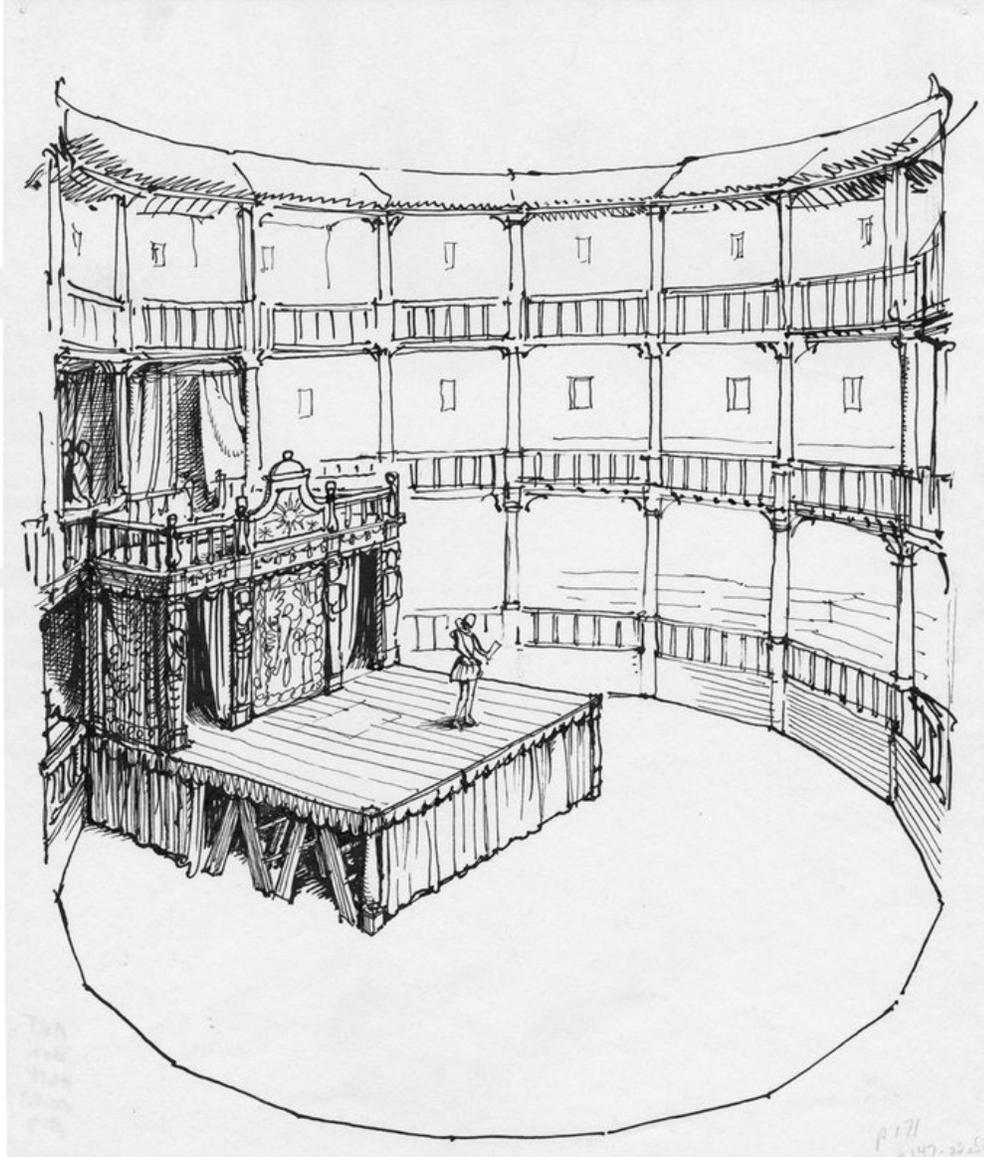
**APPENDIX A.7:** Map of England and France between 1152 and 1327

**APPENDIX A.8:** Title Page of Richard Grafton's Chronicle

**APPENDIX A.9:** Strada Novissima Venice Biennale, Italy, 1980



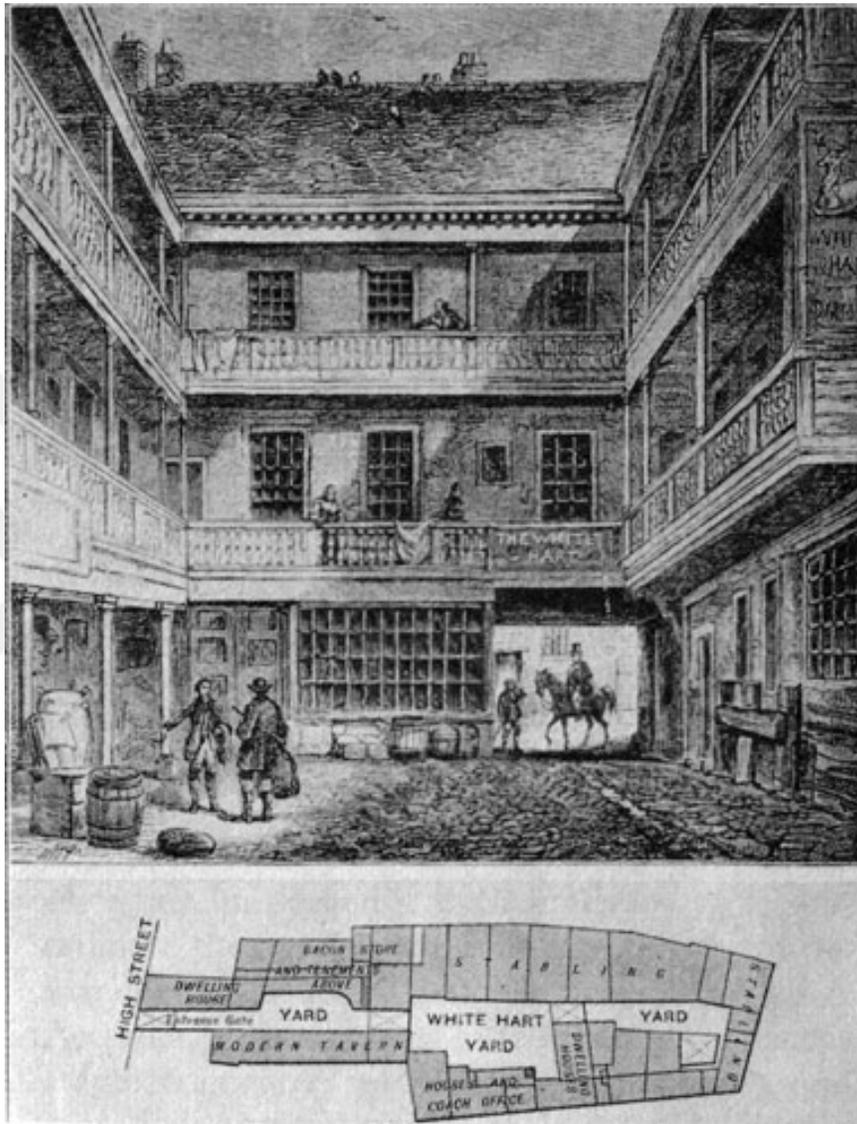
**Figure A.1:** The Theatre. Reprinted from *Shakespearean London Theatres*, by Walter C. Hodges, 2016, Retrieved from URL



**Figure A.2:** A view inside the Theatre. Reprinted from *Shakespearean London Theatres*, by Walter C. Hodges, 2016, Retrieved from URL



**Figure A.3:** Inn Yard Stage. Reprinted from *Shakespearean London Theatres*, by Walter C. Hodges, Retrieved from URL



**Figure A.4:** White Hart in Southwark. “The ground-plan shows the arrangement of a carriers’ inn with the stabling below; the guest rooms were on the upper floors” (Adams 1960, p. 4).

## A GENEALOGY of the LENOX Branch of the STUARTS.

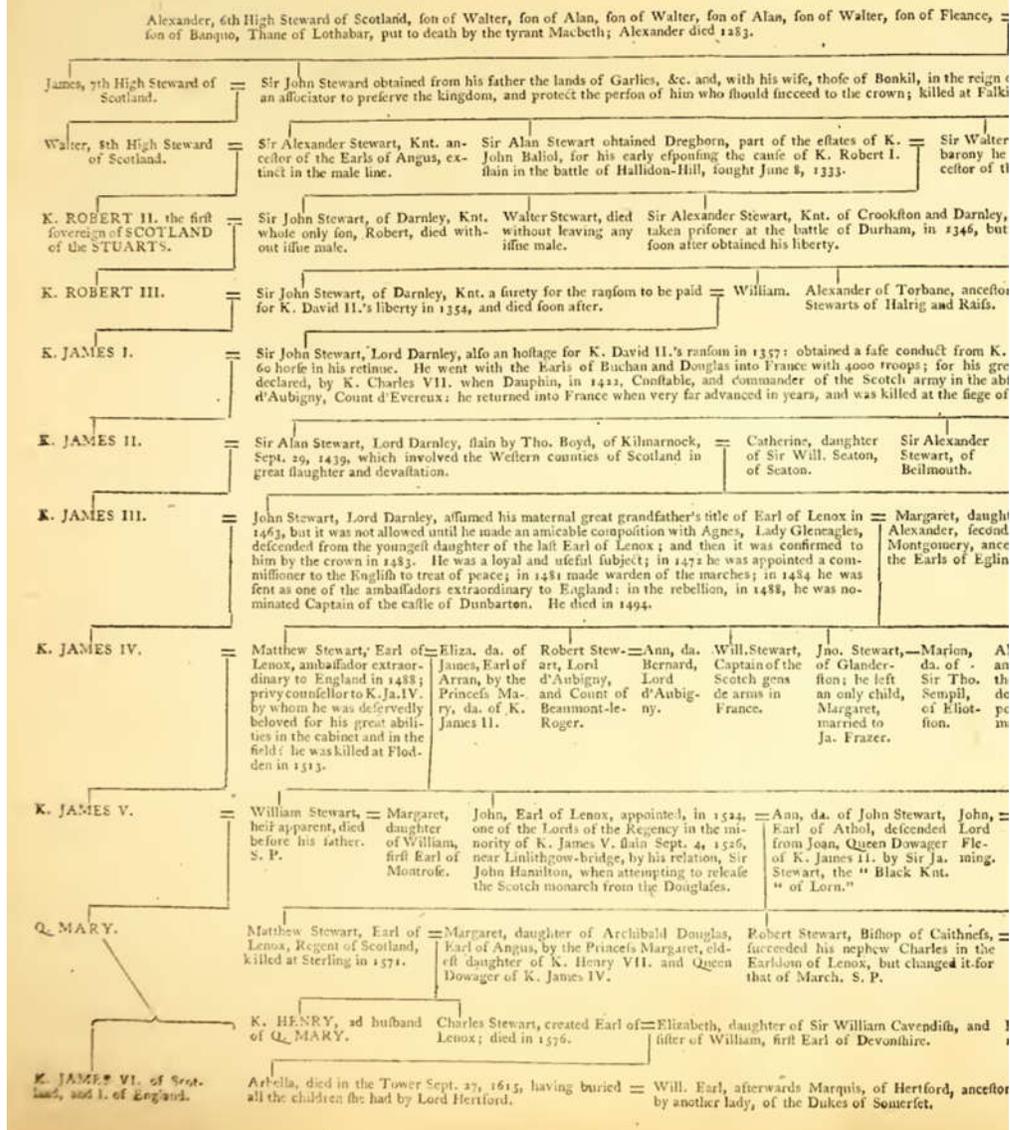


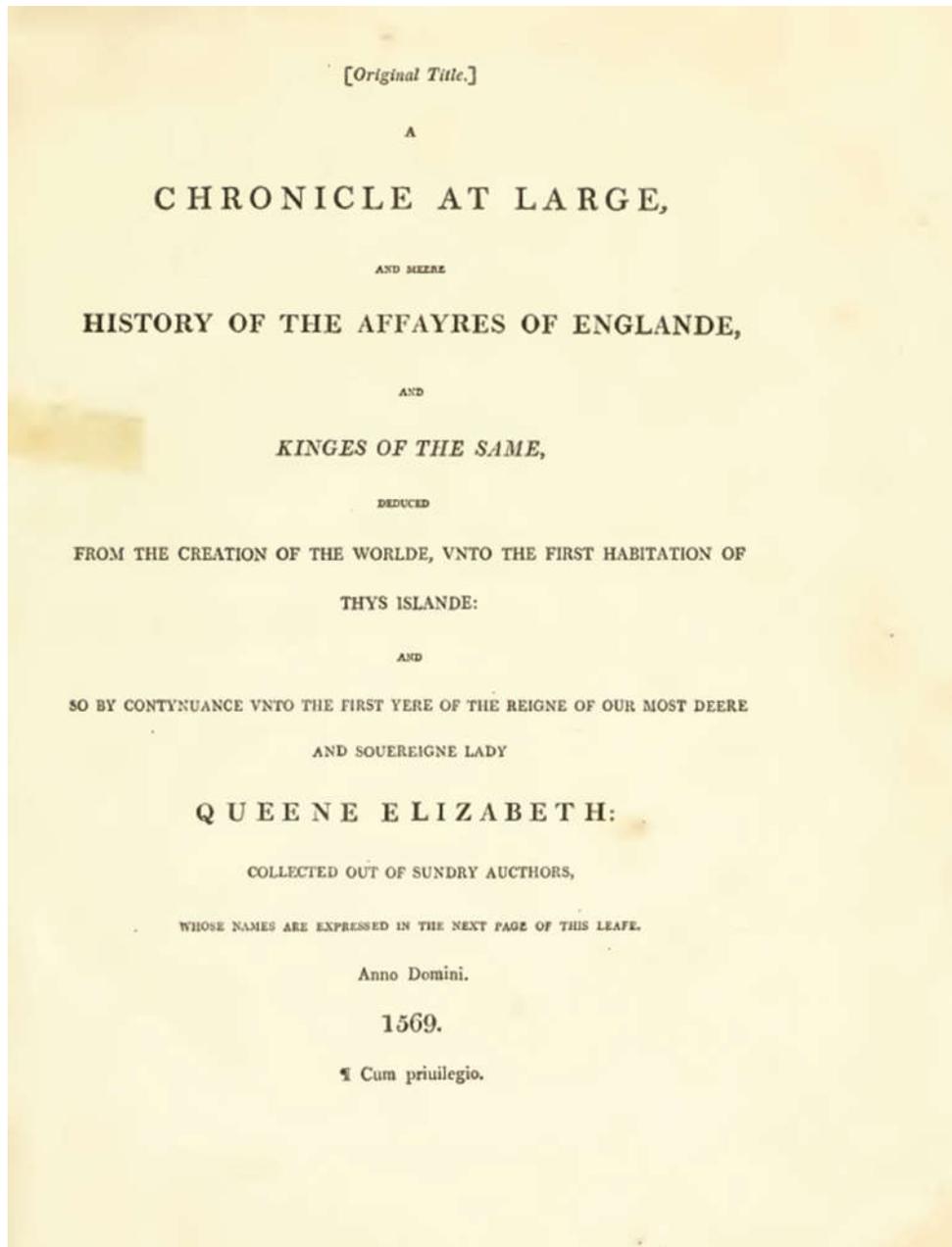
Figure A.5: A Genealogy of the Lennox Branch of the Stuarts (Mark Noble 1795)







Figure A.7: A Map of England and France, 1152-1327 (Colbeck 1905)



**Figure A.8:** Title Page of Richard Grafton's Chronicle (1809)



**Figure A.9:** Strada Novissima Venice Biennale, Italy, 1980

“From left to right: Ten of a total of twenty facades that were constructed in cardboard, wood, papier maché and plaster; Hans Hollein facade, from the Strada Novissima installation.”(Architect.com)



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