Fundamental Shakespeare

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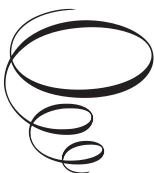
New Perspectives on Gender, Psychology and Politics

Edited by

Ali Salami and Maryam Beyad

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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INTRODUCTION: THE BARD BEYOND GEOGRAPHY AND OTHER BIASES

ALI SALAMI AND MARYAM BEYAD

Diverse responses to and interpretations of William Shakespeare testify to the human complexities of a larger-than-life writer whom Coleridge aptly describes as "myriad-minded Shakespeare."

In the tradition that he wrote, Shakespeare infused within his works the spirit of his age and also drew from all available sources to perfection, thereby giving life to the materials which were already defunct or on the brink of demise. Therefore, what enriches Shakespeare's works is the human quality that he depicts in a vibrant tapestry of drama and the unique perception of human values that he demonstrates.

With this immeasurable arena in view, the versatility and complexity of Shakespeare's mind allow for multifarious readings or misreadings inasmuch as some readers feel so fascinated that their responses become utterly subjective. After all, interpretation is largely subjective and rarely can one encounter an objective criticism, particularly when it comes to writerly texts such as those of Shakespeare. Hence, it is hardly hyperbolic to say that no writer in the world has been so bedevilled by interpretive prejudices as Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's woes and concerns are all human and can be easily perceived by any reader regardless of religious, ethnic, or educational backgrounds. To him, human vices are not only odious but pathetic as well. Hypocrisy irks him tremendously, and he is sharply aware of its stings when he says: "**God has given you one face, and you make yourself another**" (*Hamlet* 3.1.). And this is very reminiscent of the deep impact of the Bible on his mind: "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Mathew 23:28).

Interestingly, there are striking parallels between Shakespeare and Iranian poets such as Hafiz (ca. 1325–89) and Mawlana, known in the West as Rumi (ca. 1207–73). Hafiz is a great enemy of religious hypocrisy

and keeps condemning the duplicity of the preachers: “On the pulpit, preachers, goodness display / Yet in private, they adopt a different way.” In a similar vein, Rumi scolds hypocrisy and warns others against it: “The world's flattery and hypocrisy is a sweet morsel: / eat less of it, for it is full of fire. / Its fire is hidden while its taste is manifest, / but its smoke becomes visible in the end.” To all these great minds, hypocrisy is a malady plaguing humanity.

In the manner of Persian poet Sa’di (ca. 1213, Shiraz–1291, Shiraz), Shakespeare also believes that human beings constitute one big family and are parts of a whole.

Human suffering, depicted so distressingly by Shakespeare, was not new to him. In fact, he had witnessed human sufferings on a scale of epic proportions. Between 1592 and 1603 a bubonic plague ravaged the city of London, and those who were infected burned with an infernally high fever, quivered to their bones, and were subjected to bouts of vomiting, insomnia, and delirium. A keen observer, Shakespeare perceived the pains with all his being and made best use of this hard-earned repertoire of experience, lending deeply human dimensions to his works.

A life fraught with passions and sufferings is readily discernible in *King Lear*, where Shakespeare brings human suffering to a new and inscrutably wondrous level, suggesting that a man’s suffering can be so colossal that it can conjure up the Day of Resurrection:

> Kent: Is this the promised end?
> Edgar: Or image of that horror?
> Albany: Fall, and cease!
>
> (5.3.)

This breathtaking scene, where the King carries in his arms the dead body of his young daughter Cordelia, evokes a profound sense of humanity and compassion in the readers. As for the King, he has by now been transformed into a better human being thanks to his own sufferings and the human compassion he has let flow into his heart. Thus, the untimely and unjust death of Cordelia as the personification of the good in the world seems to spell doom for his human aspirations and passion for life. That is why he calls for the world to come to an end:

> Lear: Howl, howl, howl! O you are men of stones.
> Had I your tongues and eyes, I’d use them so
> That heaven’s vault should crack.
>
> (5.3.)

In the eyes of Shakespeare, King Lear can be considered as an ideal human being at this point, because his soul is permeated with mercy for others. In other words, he seems to be grafted onto the whole as the sufferings of others become his own.

This beautiful mind was later bequeathed to poet William Blake, when he said:

> Can I see another's woe,
> And not be in sorrow too?
> Can I see another's grief,
> And not seek for kind relief?

As an Eastern parallel, we can mention the Persian poet Sa'di:

> Adam's sons are body limbs, to say;
> For they're created of the same clay.
> Should one limb be troubled by pain,
> Others would suffer severe strain.
> Thou, oblivious of people's suffering,
> Deserve not the name "human being."

In fact, here is the bond that binds the poets of the East and the West and builds a bridge between the two, shattering all intellectual yoke and eliminating the myth of supremacy.

Readers from virtually all nationalities read Shakespeare as if he were one of their own. His interminable appeal to all readers actually springs from his disregard for all these geographical biases.

If Shakespeare, Hafiz, Rumi, Sa'di, Goethe, and Blake stand apart from the rest, it is only because they view humanity as the image of God and the reflection of His glory. And in a spirit of brotherhood, they share John Donne's viewpoint that, "Any man's death diminishes me,/ Because I am involved in mankind."

Does Shakespeare Mean or Do We Mean by Shakespeare?

Interpreting a text, Jonathan Culler argues, needs no defence because it is basically the result of reading, but to stigmatise a reading as an instance of misreading or over-interpretation is like labelling an act as illicit. It should be noted that over-interpretation is not only an innocuous activity but is a generative activity per se as it leads to various responses.

As a rule, to envisage a model reader in Shakespeare's works seems to be a remote possibility as we do not have a well-sketched definition of

one. However, we can safely envision an active reader as one who possesses an acceptable amount of linguistic competence, being well-versed in different areas of human knowledge, and above all with the capacity to engage actively in the act of reading and relate the text to the world within or without.

German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer argues that for a reader to understand a text, "he should project before himself a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text" (in Stephen David Ross 1984, 366). But where does this meaning come from? Gadamer, who influenced future reader-oriented critics, says the reader brings some assumptions to the text before embarking on reading it. On the strength of this hypothesis, no interpretation can be objective and all interpretations are influenced in one way or another by the reader's own assumptions and biases.

The "orotund" title of this volume *Fundamental Shakespeare* may lay bare the radically fresh light the contributors shed on Shakespeare. In the past two decades, times have changed drastically and an urgent need for an entirely new outlook on Shakespeare is felt more than ever before. Ergo, the present editors believe that the perspectives presented here, mainly by Eastern critics, can contribute extensively to a re-appreciation of Shakespeare.

Divided into three separate categories, this volume seeks to bring to the fore what has long remained intact in Shakespeare studies.

In the first part, *Political Discourse*, the contributors adopt a political analysis of Shakespeare. For instance, in "The Chomsky-Foucault Debate: Where Does the Bard Stand in *Richard II?*", Ali Salami and Amir Riahi argue that in *Richard II*, Shakespeare exhibits his fascination with politics and stipulates his political view about "political justice" and resisting "political violence" in his historical play. Indeed, *Richard II* is the Bard's political enthusiasm par excellence. Shakespeare becomes enmeshed in politics by the time he casts doubt on Richard's versatility as a true king, or in John of Gaunt's words: "Landlord of England art thou now, not king" (2.1.).

In "Knowledge and Power in *Measure for Measure*," Ensieh Shabanirad and Hossein Keramatfar avail themselves of the theories of French thinker Michel Foucault, arguing that knowledge and power are related and inseparable, and directly imply one another. For Foucault, official power depends on the ability to acquire information about the activities of its subjects. Foucault insists that the historical discourses of power and knowledge constitute the subject. The state creates and controls the subjects through various institutions, such as prison, knowledge, and sexuality. In *Measure for Measure*, the knowledge that the Duke acquires

in disguise enables or empowers him to organise the affairs of the state on his own terms and raises him to the status of undisputable authority at the end of the play. Just as in a Foucauldian world, the Duke seeks to achieve complete control over his subjects, legitimise surveillance and regulatory measures, and accord his power a consummate status; it is through this kind of knowledge that such a dominion can be facilitated.

In "Unsifted in Perilous Circumstances: A Bourdieusian Reading of *Hamlet*," Behzad Sadeghian and Mohsen Maleki use Pierre Bourdieu's idea of "a feel for the game"; that is, a habitus operable within a field is necessary for anyone who wants to be socialised. The result of this compatibility would be the reproduction of the field or system, albeit to the detriment of its members. According to this pattern, in *Hamlet* the protagonist has an understanding of his sense of place, which is not compatible with the doxa—the worldview that reproduces the superiority of the current power. In other words, he is not satisfied with the present state of affairs. He tries to take measures toward changing the situation for the better. Since he is not familiar with the ins and outs of the political field, he fails to decipher the warning signals (the symbolic violence) sent to him. The failure to detect the symbolic violence only triggers physical violence. The protagonist whose habitus does not properly fit the field is removed from it. Even the figures situated at the top of such a social hierarchy might be toppled, but what remains in the end is the social order itself. The tragedy ends when the political field has succeeded in eliminating the fomenters and resolving all the conflicts (that have the potential to endanger it). The machine, by sacrificing the cogs that do not fit, succeeds in reproducing itself.

In Part II, "Fundamental Shakespeare," the writers delve into areas that have not been trodden in Shakespearean studies. For instance, in "A Multimodal Study of Blood Imagery in *Macbeth*," Mahmoud Reza Ghorban Sabbagh and Manzar Feyz adopt a multimodal approach to examine the dramatic text, including its stage directions and the verbal representation of blood. They also explore the verbal and presentational aspects of blood imagery in Roman Polanski's adaptation of the same work. Polanski's highly acclaimed 1971 film employs both verbal and visual elements to do justice to one of the bloodiest of Shakespeare's tragedies.

In "A CDA/Deleuzian Reading Of *The Merchant of Venice:* Discourse, City, Politics And Economy," Erfan Rajabi argues the need for re-readings of *The Merchant of Venice*, as it is regarded as relevant to contemporary global issues such as cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, tolerance, assimilation, xenophobia, discrimination, and minorisation. The writer

opts for an integrated micro-macro analysis of the language of the play, aimed at investigating it through Van Leeuwen's (1996) sociosemantic framework of representation of social actors.

Part III, "Psychology and Gender," deals with a psychoanalytical study of Shakespeare. In "Hamlet, 'Poor Wretch' of Elsinore: Trauma and Witness," Abolfazl Ramazani and Naghmeh Fazlzadeh take trauma as a psychological wound that leaves scars in the victim's mind and psyche after experiencing an overwhelming event, and comes back belatedly and somewhere else to haunt him/her with intrusive and compulsive images and re-enactments. The bombarding news of violence all over the world in the past twenty years informs the increasing number of trauma victims, and consequently augments the number of publications devoted to the phenomenon and its representation. They argue that *Hamlet* is a victim of trauma. Having difficulty integrating his traumatic past with his present, he is led to a melancholic and gloomy mood and consequently to the reactivation of his tragic flaw. In other words, Hamlet is a traumatised outcast torn between the clashes in his psyche. Trauma is further clarified as a condition that results from experiencing unusual life-threatening events; its symptoms are characterised by long-lasting arousal, emotional numbing and senselessness, and escaping from that which recalls the traumatic events, which are all evident in the play's tragic hero. In "Androgynous Heroine: *As You Like It* through the Eyes of Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Mary Daly," Leyli Jamali and Farnoosh Pirayesh demonstrate, through the insights of Carolyne G. Heilbrun and Mary Daly, how Rosalind's androgynous self is released via cross-dressing in *As You Like It*. And to achieve this end, their study first focuses on how Rosalind in disguise, while maintaining her feminine subjectivity, grows from a formerly restless yet astute and witty young woman into an astute and witty young man through her interactions with Celia, Orlando, and Phoebe, and secondly, how she ends up an androgyne.

In "Out of the Hurly-burly of Genders and Still Feminine: A Cixousian Reading of Lady Macbeth," Zahra Amini studies Lady Macbeth in the light of French feminist Helene Cixous in order to show that, despite the broad critiques that consider her as masculine and thus valiant, brave, and arguably cruel and ambitious, she still emerges out of this winding maze a "feminine woman." The argument is that "woman" as a separate class of humanity has always been denied her right to her body, her pleasure, her thought, and, in fact, her "self" through centuries of silencing. This has led to a forgetting of her true femininity through an assimilation and internalisation of social and ideological norms. Now, Lady Macbeth, as an epitome of this forgotten femininity, is a woman in search of her true

"self," seeking to redefine her sexual identity through what becomes a fatal course of action. Thus, it is not masculinity but a newly-freed explosive femininity that leads her through the events of this play, as if trying to take revenge for being held imprisoned, choked, and trampled for so long a time.

Indeed, Shakespeare opens up to the readers an inexhaustible source of inspiration, which provokes a diversity of responses at different junctures in time.

No doubt, Shakespeare was a man with astonishingly versatile capacities, a genius of the Renaissance, and the greatest playwright the world has ever witnessed.

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Part I

Political Discourse

THE CHOMSKY-FOUCAULT DEBATE: WHERE DOES THE BARD STAND IN *RICHARD II*?

ALI SALAMI[1] AND AMIR RIAHI[2]

Introduction

The Dutch thinker Fon Elders hosted a political and philosophical debate between Noam Chomsky (1928–) and Michel Foucault (1926–84) on the topic of "Human Nature: Justice versus Power" on a Netherlands' television program in November 1971. Foucault, who concentrated his studies on the fundamental transformations occurring between epochs, promulgates that the purpose of his recent studies has, "been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault 1982, 208). As an illustration, a noteworthy fashion of this objectification of human beings is "dividing practices," through which "the subject has been constituted as an object of research and of techniques of power" (Smart 2002, 104). Noam Chomsky, vigorously challenging US foreign policy and state capitalism, has profoundly influenced voluminous areas such as humanities and arts, cognitive science, logic, mathematics, language theory, and political science.

Elders initiates the program by comparing Foucault and Chomsky to, "tunnellers through a mountain working at opposite sides of the same mountain with different tools, without even knowing if they are working in each other's direction" (Chomsky and Foucault 2005, 1). Foucault and Chomsky exhibit considerable differences in the second part of the debate by the time the interviewer asks about their specific political beliefs. In this part, each scholar is queried why the subject of politics appeals to them, and why we ought to take political action and fight against political violence.

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Based on the above, Foucault's and Chomsky's viewpoints are studied in order to apply them to William Shakespeare's historical play *Richard II*. Then, their stances on political justice and why one is obliged to fight against political violence are surveyed and applied to the play. Finally, scrutinising the play, the article concludes by considering whose attitudes are corroborated by the Bard in his historical play *Richard II.*

Political Violence

Taking human reasoning and nature for granted, Noam Chomsky declares that every proper society is required to do its utmost to discern these fundamental components. He declaims that advances in science and technology are instruments for obliterating the absurd drudgery of manual labour. In this regard, if this goal has not been achieved, it is not the fault of science. Instead, the social and political structures of the society ought to be rebuked. As a consequence, Chomsky proffers two intellectual tasks in this situation. The first is erecting a society on the basis of human nature and reasoning, "to try to create the vision of a future just society; that is to create, if you like, a humanistic social theory that is based, if possible, on some firm and humane concept of the human essence or human nature" (Ibid., 41).

Chomsky continues to stipulate the other task as identifying the origin of horror, devastation, and suppression in the society. Not only are we obliged to perceive it, but we also need to tilt at it. To achieve this goal, puts forward Chomsky, it is incumbent upon us to ponder deeply over what we crave, providing that we long for a social transformation or revolution. To him, constructing a just society under the aegis of human reasoning and nature should be regarded as the ultimate aim of political action and uprising. Chomsky acknowledges the jeopardy of an abrupt political action and affirms that every sudden political revolution is inclined to culminate with the same problem, since it is based on a partial and limited perception of social and human realities. Notwithstanding the peril, he feels that taking political action is clearly preferable to not taking any measure, since we let the political violence perpetuate if we do not take any political action.

Equally importantly, it seems strategically vital, in accordance with Chomsky, to contemplate what goals are impossible, providing that we are going to reach our possible goals. To be more precise, we are required to be, "bold enough to speculate and create social theories on the basis of partial knowledge, while remaining very open to the strong possibility, and in fact overwhelming probability, that at least in some respects we're very

far off the mark" (Ibid., 45). Thus, it can be alleged that Chomsky is intrigued by politics insofar that he can construct a utopian scheme of a just society.

Foucault, on the other hand, evades the question of why he is engrossed in politics since the answer is glaringly obvious. Therefore, he approaches the question in a different way and changes it to how he is fascinated by politics. In this regard, he demurs at Western societies' attempts to concoct utopian schemes and quips that he is less able to construct a paragon of an ideal society. Contrary to Chomsky's argument, Foucault sounds fairly dubious about the utopian visions that Western societies erect and finds himself enmeshed in how power is exercised in the society.

The government, declares Foucault, has been widely assumed to be the locus of power. In addition, it has generally been alleged that this power is exercised through the disciplinary apparatus of the state, such as police and the armed forces. However, Foucault claims that these institutions are exploited by the state to castigate the individuals who defy its power. Intriguingly, political power is also demonstrated by a number of institutions, such as religious, medical, or educational, which are seemingly not germane to the state power.

Not starkly contrasting with Chomsky, Foucault continues to assert that we ought to criticise and inveigh against these veiled institutions so as to uncover the political violence which surreptitiously demonstrates itself through them. It seems woefully insufficient for Foucault to deem the ruling class as behind the state power alone. We are obliged, exhorts Foucault, to detect the furtive forces that energise and maintain that power. Otherwise, we let political violence propagate by rebuilding itself after a revolutionary rebellion sparks off.

We can strongly feel William Shakespeare's particular fascination with politics in his historical play *Richard II*, which can be claimed as the apotheosis of the Bard's political zest. Alexander Leggatt argues that, "in no other play of Shakespeare's is the office of kingship subjected to such intense scrutiny, from such a wide variety of angles" (Leggatt 1988, 61). Indeed, *Richard II* is particularly political since the King has been explicitly identified with Queen Elizabeth I and Bolingbroke with the Earl of Essex. Not surprisingly, the Earl of Essex, "had *Richard II* staged for his supporters on the eve of his (unsuccessful) rebellion against the Queen" (Spiekerman 2001, 72) in February 1601. In addition, Queen Elizabeth is reported to have complained about the play's, "frequent performances and its applicability to her" (Gurr 2004, 178). It is said that the Queen told William Lambarde, the Keeper of the Records at the Tower

of London: "I am Richard II, know ye not that? … He that will forget God, will also forget his benefactor; this tragedy was played 40 times in open streets and houses" (Schoenbaum 1977, 219).

Indeed, King Richard's identification with Queen Elizabeth is not entirely unjustifiable. They had much in common; both were childless, "and in her case, being a woman, unwed, and older, the lack of an heir meant pressure to name a successor and abdicate" (Bolam 2002, 145). Besides, both King Richard II and Queen Elizabeth I encouraged flatterers and played favourites. They were also believed to be responsible for the liquidation of a family member. King Richard is said to have had his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, slain. Interestingly, Essex was a scion of the aforementioned Duke of Gloucester; as a consequence, "Elizabeth's much quoted line, like Shakespeare's play, raises all manner of possibilities" (Ibid.). Last but not least, the play is explicitly political in that King Richard's deposition scene was expurgated during the Queen's life.

Based on the above, it can be construed that William Shakespeare becomes enmeshed in politics and attacks the political violence of his age and the concomitant system of beliefs through which it exercised its power. It has been cogently argued that Shakespeare surveys the divine right of kings and, "Tudor ideas of kingship in the past (where they can be safely criticized)" (Spiekerman 2001, 72). Indeed, paying extra attention to, "the function of alien ideologies such as the divine right of kings" (Arnold 2007, 30) seems absolutely essential, as these ideologies take a substantial role in Elizabeth's political power. Shakespeare's political stance on the divine right of kings in *Richard II* remains an open question throughout the play, and therefore the discussion is thrown open for critical research.

Perusing *Richard II*, one finds it manifest that King Richard is deprived of the fundamental characteristics of a divinely ordained monarch. Richard has been delineated by the Bard in such a manner that we deem him inappropriate for the throne. In other words, it seems incongruous to label King Richard a king by divine right. The following prophetic lines by John of Gaunt shed light on Richard's unworthiness of being a just king:

> Now, he that made me knows I see thee ill;
> Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
> Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land
> Wherein thou liest in reputation sick:
> And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
> Committ'st thy anointed body to the cure

> Of those physicians that first wounded thee:
> A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
> Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;
> And yet, incaged in so small a verge,
> The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.
> O! had thy grandsire, with a prophet's eye,
> Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
> From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
> Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
> Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.
> Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
> It were a shame to let this land by lease;
> But for thy world enjoying but this land,
> Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
> Landlord of England art thou now, not king:
> Thy state of law is bondslave to the law.
>
> (2.1: 93–114)

As can clearly be seen, John of Gaunt goes on a prodigious diatribe against the King and declaims that he has devastated his territory and made a strikingly different land from the ideal England: "That England, that was wont to conquer others, / Hath made a shameful conquest of itself" (2.1: 65–6). What is more, he complains that Richard has downgraded the monarchy, since he is ruled by flatterers. Gaunt further argues that King Richard has besmirched his grandfather's reputation and feels that he is not versatile enough to rule England. He avoids giving Richard a divine right of kingship, and instead calls him the "landlord of England" who has imposed heavy taxes on people and has lost his popularity with them. He is tantamount to an "absentee" landlord, in Michael Hattaway's words, who has plundered his land to, "please himself and … neglected his responsibility to his tenants and the ancient virtue of hospitality" (Hattaway 2008, 63). Indeed, the King is so steeped in gathering taxes that he has lost his reputation with the common people. John of Gaunt concludes that the King, who is obliged to bond with the law, has flouted it and is not able to rule with divine right.

Indeed, John of Gaunt is not the only person to criticise King Richard for his political violence. He is also reproached by York: "Now comes the sick hour that his surfeit made;/ Now shall he try his friends that flatter'd him" (2.1: 84–5), and Northumberland: "The king is not himself, but basely led/ By flatterers; and what they will inform,/ Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all" (Scene 2, Act 1: 241–3). What is more, the Duke of York implicitly enumerates King Richard's political violence by reminding

him of his father's—Edward the Black Prince—virtue and chivalry, and refers to the implication of King Richard in the murder of his uncle:

> But when he frown'd, it was against the French,
> And not against his friends; his noble hand
> Did win what he did spend, and spent not that
> Which his triumphant father's hand had won:
> His hands were guilty of no kindred's blood,
> But bloody with the enemies of his kin.
>
> (2.1: 178–83)

Captivatingly, Richard himself is doubtful about being a king by divine right. He enunciates that kingship is his divine right and nobody on earth is substantiated to uncrown him. While he declaims in a stentorian fashion that his monarchy is inviolable and bulwarked by angels, he falters and wants to know how many soldiers are left to protect him against Bolingbroke:

> Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose
> The deputy elected by the Lord.
> For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
> To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
> God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
> A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
> Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.
> [Enter SALISBURY.]
> Welcome, my lord. How far off lies your power?
>
> (3.2: 54–63)

It is widely accepted that, "governments require legitimacy and legality to be stable and effective over the longer term. Power alone is not sufficient" (Jackson 2007, 56). Consequently, as has already been discussed, Shakespeare consciously wages war against the political violence of his age in *Richard II*; nonetheless, unlike Chomsky, Shakespeare attacks Richard's kingship not to construct a scheme of an ideal society. Instead, in a more Foucauldian manner, Shakespeare endeavours to attack political violence by casting doubt on a hidden system, i.e. the divine right of kings, which slyly supports it. In other words, Shakespeare questions the divine right of kings by enumerating King Richard's follies to unmask the Tudor ideology of kingship and its political violence. That is to say, he strives to prove that kingship does not have an absolute autonomy.

Political Justice

As has already been stated, Chomsky strongly prefers political transformation and revolution to not taking any political measures. He believes that people need to take direct political measure against political violence in order to halt the state's acts of violence. Regarding political uprising, Chomsky points out that waging war against the state's atrocities is as essential and appropriate as going through a red light to frustrate a serious crime. He finds it acceptable to break the law so as to preclude a felon from machine-gunning the crowd. From this standpoint, what the government avers as civil disobedience is indeed not civil disobedience. We therefore ought to reconsider and redefine what is categorised as illegal.

Chomsky further states that the violation of international law is justifiable—and even to some extent imperative—when there is a basic defect with that law: "now that's a fundamental defect of international law and I think one is justified in opposing that aspect of international law as having no validity" (Chomsky and Foucault 2005, 48). That is to say, the law is merely an instrument in the hands of the official elites to demonstrate and preserve their power. Thus, political transformation is not only understandable but also obligatory when we endeavour to neutralise a criminal act, even if the state deems it illegal.

Chomsky, in the same way, refers to social struggles and expresses that one is fighting a just battle as long as they ascertain they are taking a right role in the war. From his viewpoint, one who is not fighting a fair war is unable of such a way of thinking. Although Chomsky approves of such a war, he avoids labelling the aforesaid political action a war for the creation of justice because nobody possesses sufficient knowledge to construct an ideal society. Instead, he declares that we should wage war against political violence to create better justice, though this better justice is not utterly impeccable.

Chomsky, furthermore, acknowledges some extent of violence and injustice in the new system of the society after the subjugation of the political violence; however, he asserts that this injustice is likely to be justified if a more just consequence is expected to arise. To summarise, Chomsky goes on a long diatribe against political violence and encourages individuals to take political action in the name of justice to construct a more just society.

Foucault, on the other hand, takes issue with Chomsky regarding the fight against political violence in the name of justice, and points out that the question of political justice is rife in all political struggles. In response

to Chomsky's stance on declaring war against social violence to make better justice, Foucault feels that the proletariat does not engage in the battle against the dominant class to construct a more just society, and does not resist the prevalent ideology because it is a just war. The proletariat fights because, according to Foucault, it desires to wrest power. In other words, we wage war because of triumph, not justice.

Foucault, furthermore, affirms that the proletariat is inclined to evince dictatorship, injustice, and political violence against the vanquished culture as soon as it gains power. That is to say, the proletariat has the potential to exercise power over the class that it has subjugated. Thus, justice in the fight against political violence is merely a sham to seize power. Foucault expresses his pessimism about political justice, and enunciates that:

> If you like, I will be a little bit Nietzschean about this; in other words, it seems to me that the idea of justice in itself is an idea which in effect has been invented and put to work in different types of societies as an instrument of a certain political and economic power or as a weapon against that power. But it seems to me that, in any case, the notion of justice itself functions within a society of classes as a claim made by the oppressed class and as justification for it.
>
> (Chomsky and Foucault 2005, 54–55)

Scrutinising *Richard II*, one finds little evidence to prove that Bolingbroke fights against Richard's political violence and takes his place to promote better justice. Besides, it is not entirely justifiable to deem Bolingbroke a more just king in comparison with King Richard II. Indeed, King Henry IV, somewhat akin to King Richard II, taints monarchy not only by annexing the crown, but also by the criminal act manifested in his implication in the murder of his predecessor. In Act 1, Bolingbroke demands justice and sets out to take revenge for the murder of the Duke of Gloucester, whom he compares to Abel:

> That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,
> Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,
> And consequently, like a traitor coward,
> Sluic'd out his innocent soul through streams of blood:
> Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
> Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
> To me for justice and rough chastisement;
> And, by the glorious worth of my descent,
> This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.
>
> (1.1: 100–8)

Nonetheless, akin to Cain, he has King Richard II murdered by Exton. Indeed, "Richard and Bolingbroke are each other's doubles; the surrogated murder puts Bolingbroke in the position not of avenger but of fratricide" (Liebler 1995, 74–5). Seeking revenge, Bolingbroke, "thought he would purge the throne of a stain left on it by Richard's having committed the sin of Cain, but he is constrained to commit the same sin in order to found his rule" (Bloom 1981, 51). Therefore, Bolingbroke's revolt against King Richard's political violence is merely a pretext to wrest power and succeed to the throne.

Based on the above, it is not unacceptable to argue that Richard II and his successor have much in common. Both perpetrate a crime against one another. Richard banishes Bolingbroke from England and seizes his possessions. Bolingbroke usurps Richard's throne and is implicated in his murder. In other words, it can be asserted that, "Bolingbroke and King Richard exchange roles of victim and victimizer" (Paris 1991, 54), though Bolingbroke can be claimed to be less just than Richard. Equally importantly, both are alleged to degrade the idyllic and paramount England delineated by John of Gaunt. To be more precise, in Act 4, the Bishop of Carlisle, who believes that Richard's deposition is not an effectual solution for political violence, replaces the prophet role of John of Gaunt and prophesies bloodshed, terror, and rebellion for England in the reign of King Henry IV:

> My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,
> Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king;
> And if you crown him, let me prophesy,
> The blood of English shall manure the ground
> And future ages groan for this foul act;
> Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
> And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
> Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;
> Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny,
> Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd
> The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
> O! if you raise this house against this house,
> It will the woefullest division prove
> That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
>
> (4.1: 134–47)

In the final analysis, Bolingbroke avows his bona fide commitment to justice and proclaims his movement against King Richard a just one. However, as can be inferred from the play, he attacks political violence so as to not avenge Gloucester's death or achieve justice. By contrast, he

challenges King Richard II since he endeavours to seize power. To summarise, William Shakespeare's representation of Bolingbroke's revolt against Richard II cannot be considered compatible with Chomsky's definition of political justice since Bolingbroke does not construct a better society after his accession to the throne. In contrast, Bolingbroke is depicted, in a manner close to Foucault's expectations, as fighting with Richard to achieve victory rather than justice. Moreover, as anticipated by Foucault, King Henry IV perpetrates violence and injustice against the vanquished King and his attendants.

It should be noted that neither King Richard nor Bolingbroke is the subject of Shakespeare's attack since they are delineated as different individuals by the Bard after Richard's deposition. Richard II, who is depicted as an unjust despotic monarch, a murderer, and a bandit, gains the reader’s sympathy and becomes a pathetic figure as soon as he abdicates and becomes an ordinary person. Similarly, Bolingbroke, who demands justice in Act 1, takes King Richard's violent role and employs violence and injustice against the culture he has subjugated.

Based on the above, it is kingship, to be more precise, which is, "the play’s central idea, and when it becomes relative, not absolute, other absolutes fall with it" (Leggatt 1988, 75). Indeed, what Shakespeare sees in kingship is well expressed in King Richard's extremely poignant lines in which he locates death in the hollow of the royal crown. Shakespeare reminds us that the King is artificially allowed to play the role of the sovereign, "monarchise," and intimidate his subjects; however, whoever gives him this part and lets him enjoy his monarchy: "Comes at the last, and with a little pin/ Bores through his castle wall, and farewell, king" (3.2: 172–3). Hence, Shakespeare's prime target in *Richard II* is not a particular king. Instead, he sharply criticises kingship as well as the institutions that defend it. Shakespeare deprives Richard II and Bolingbroke of their divine mandates.

Conclusion

In conclusion, William Shakespeare's historical play *Richard II* can be regarded as the epitome of the Bard's fervid interest in politics in which he closely scrutinises kingship and its ideological bulwark, namely the divine right of kings. As has already been stated, power alone is not adequate to legitimise and stabilise itself for a long period. As a consequence, in contrast to Noam Chomsky's stance in the 1971 Chomsky-Foucault debate, Shakespeare sets out to criticise the veiled institutions through which political violence exercises its power. Besides, Shakespeare is not

enmeshed in politics since he aims to proffer an ideal scheme of the society. Contrarily, in a more Foucauldian manner, Shakespeare inveighs against a seemingly neutral system, i.e. the divine right of kings, through which the Tudor ideology of kingship demonstrates its power. Equally importantly, Shakespeare eschews advocating Bolingbroke's political action against King Richard II in the name of justice to depose him and ascend the throne. Much akin to Foucault's expectations in the aforementioned debate, Shakespeare regards Bolingbroke's uprising as a fight to gain power and seek victory. Neither King Richard II nor Bolingbroke is the subject of the Bard's political attack. Instead, it is monarchy that is the subject of Shakespeare's criticism in *Richard II*, since if it becomes relative, other absolutes will grow more inclined to cracking.

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KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

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Introduction

Michel Foucault, the French thinker, is one of the most influential writers of the second half of the twentieth century. He made great contributions in such fields as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and literature. He was a controversial thinker who challenged many of the accepted ideas in the above-mentioned fields. His work, which can be viewed as a historical analysis of social conditions, has influenced those analysing the relationship between literature and society. Foucault's theories have been concerned mainly with such concepts as discourse, knowledge, and power. He investigates these concepts from historical and critical points of view in works such as *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), and *The History of Sexuality, volume 1, An Introduction* (1976). One of the central themes of his works concerns the methods with which modern society creates and controls human subjects through different institutions such as prisons, education, and knowledge. Related to these investigations, Foucault examines power and its administration and distribution.

For Foucault, society is a complex field in which different discourses compete for power. Power actually works through discourses and discursive practices. Foucault stresses that discourse is associated with relations of power. In fact, discourses are vehicles of power. The power of the human sciences derives from its policing of "abnormal behaviour" in what is claimed to be knowledge. Foucault calls such claims to knowledge "discourse." In other words, a discourse is a loose structure of interconnected assumptions, cultural artefacts, social practices and the like

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that makes knowledge possible. Foucault, in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, defines discourse as, "a group of acts of formulation, a series of sentences or propositions … discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements … the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse" (Foucault 2004, 120–1). He asserts that discourse determines the reality that we perceive. For instance, in the discourse of "perversion," statements and propositions about sexuality are formulated to identify the "perverts." As M. Keith Booker, in *A Practical Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism* (1996) states: "For Foucault, sexuality is not so much a matter of natural instinctive impulses as of socially and discursively conditioned responses" (126). Such a discourse produces claims to knowledge that give it its power. Therefore, knowledge and power are interrelated. Knowledge is a way to define and categorise others. It does not emancipate us from ignorance, it leads to surveillance and discipline. Knowledge is actually a crucial technique through which power is exercised.

Foucault asserts that power can be exercised through the production of truth. Society is composed of different discourses that arise from and function around various institutions such as prisons, knowledge, and sexuality. For Foucault, knowledge and sexuality are intimately related. M. A. R. Habib, in *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory* (2008), asserts that: "Foucault's investigation of the discourse on sexuality is equally an investigation into the workings of power, which will be seen as far more complex and subtle than a procedure of mere repression" (770). In fact, Foucault depicts a very carceral and disciplinary world in his *Discipline and Punish*, and analyses how vast, invisible structures of official power control and even produce subjects. Based on his notion that "power is productive," Foucault challenges and rejects Freud's "repressive hypothesis" that societies gain and strengthen their power by repressing or even destroying sexual energies and making sexuality a subversive act. It is traditionally believed that power represses behaviours that it finds unacceptable, undesirable, or threatening. Foucault argues that society does not repress sexuality but produces and administers it, and uses it to society's advantage. He argues that power produces the very categories, desires, and actions that it tries to regulate. The identification of such categories and the law labels some actions as crimes and accentuates their presence. Thus, sexuality does not necessarily oppose power and may actually sanction it. As Foucault writes in *The History of Sexuality*: "Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against one another; they

seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another" (Foucault 1978, 48). In particular, sexuality functions as a force to determine and describe different practices through which society can constitute and dominate subjects. Apparently, power is afraid of sexuality and tries to suppress it, but in actuality power works through it and empowers itself.

The social constitution of the subject is one of the main preoccupations of Foucault. Foucault insists that the category of the subject is a means to study the historical discourse of power and knowledge that constitutes it. Foucault is also interested in the way that power operates through different forms of regimes in particular historical periods. For Foucault, official power depends on the ability to acquire information about the activities of the subjects of that power. Foucault insists that the historical discourses of power and knowledge constitute the subject. The state creates and controls the subjects through various institutions such as prison, knowledge, and sexuality. In his work *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault describes the way that power has been exercised in different eras in Europe, and documents a shift in political practice from the display of power as spectacle to the exercise of power through making its target more thoroughly visible and audible. There was a gradual development of techniques of surveillance, whose function was far more complex and subtle than massive and spectacular displays of force. Previously unknown people became more audible as well as visible. In "The Carceral," the final section of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault investigates the formation of modern society and presents a bleak and all-pervasive portrait of this society, consisting of prison-like institutions that attempt to constitute and administer people as docile subjects. A dominant image in this work is that of the Panopticon, a late eighteenth-century prison designed by the English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham. In this prison, inmates can be constantly observed and monitored. As Booker mentions: "For Foucault, this design is symptomatic of a general tendency in modern society in which official power depends more and more on the ability to acquire a constant flow of information about the activities of the subjects of that power" (Booker 1996, 125). Constant observation acted as a control mechanism; a consciousness of constant surveillance is internalised. The Panopticon was actually a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation, and the power-knowledge concept. In his view, power and knowledge come from observing others, marking the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movement supervised and all events recorded. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations and docility. Suitable behaviour is achieved not through total surveillance, but by