

**Feminine Gender Anxiety within a Patriarchal
structure in Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of women in England renaissance during sixteenth century. Women have often been seen as weak creatures in Renaissance patriarchal society so that I will try to analyze the participations of Renaissance women from different perspectives. Renaissance woman like Queen Elizabeth I has been extremely influential to manage and to change the State into a civilized society. The concept of self identity can be considered in gender relationships that is associated with female's alienation from public life, in other words, women have not any political and social rights because they are limited to the domestic responsibilities in a private environments. As a feminist critics and writer, Simone de Beauvoir believes that an imposed identity which is constructed by society shaped the character of a woman. In this sense, a pure self is ignores by an imposed identity, which is produced by masculine social norms. I will elaborate Shakespeare's point of view about women's self identity in Renaissance. I attempt to examine female's characters in Shakespeare's tragedies: *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. such as Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*), Goneril and Regan (*King Lear*), Cleopatra (*Antony and Cleopatra*). In addition, I will focus on the character of Queen Elizabeth I and her political solution for challenge with her gender identity in order to be seen as a source of power and authority in England. All women that I mentioned above are plagued with their female gender identity in such a way that metaphorically they conceal behind a mask of masculinity in order to justify by a misogynistic society.

Keywords: Renaissance women, imposed identity, political arena, self-identity, Mask. Femininity and masculinity.

ÖZ

Bu araştırma 16. yüzyılda İngiltere Rönesansı'nda kadınların rolünü incelemektedir. Kadınlar, ataerkil Rönesans toplumunda genellikle zayıf varlıklar olarak görülmüşlerdir. Bu çalışmada, Rönesans kadınlarının katkılarını farklı açılardan analiz edeceğim. Kraliçe 1.Elizabeth gibi Rönesans kadınları devleti idare etmede ve medeni bir topluma dönüştürmede çok etkili olmuşlardır. Toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerinde öz kimlik kavramı kadının toplumsal yaşama yabancılaşmasıyla ilişkilendirilir. Bir diğer deyişle, kadınların siyasi ve toplumsal hakları yoktur; çünkü onlar özel alanda aile içi sorumluluklarla sınırlandırılmışlardır. Feminist bir yazar olarak Simone de Beauvoir, bir kadının karakterinin, toplum tarafından inşa edilen bir kimlik dayatmasıyla şekillendirildiğine inanır. Bu bağlamda, saf bir öz, eril toplumsal normlar tarafından üretilen dayatılmış kimlik tarafından yok sayılır. Shakespeare'nin Rönesans'ta kadınların öz kimliği hakkındaki görüşlerini ayrıntılı olarak inceleyeceğim. Shakespeare'in şu trajedilerindeki kadın karakterlerini incelemeye çalışacağım: *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth), *Kral Lear* (Goneril ve Regan) ve *Antonius ile Kleopatra* (Antonius ve Kleopatra). Buna ek olarak, Kraliçe 1. Elizabeth karakteri üzerine ve onun İngiltere'de kendisine dayatılan toplumsal kimliğine itirazı ile şekillenen siyasi iktidarı ve otoritesi üzerine odaklanacağım. Yukarıda bahsedilen tüm bu kadınlar, kendilerine biçilen toplumsal cinsiyet kimliği ile sorun yaşamakta ve kadın düşmanı bir toplum tarafından kabul görmek için bir erkeklik maskesi arkasına saklanmaktadırlar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Rönesans kadınları, dayatılan kimlik, siyasi arena, öz-kimlik, maske, kadınlık ve erkeklik

Dedicated to my parents with love

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my thesis is to investigate the hegemonic and misogynistic structure in England during the Renaissance period by considering William Shakespeare's depiction of gender identity in politics. Historically, gender identities were constructed upon discrimination resulting in male-dominant power. Females' participation has always been an argumentative issue in literature, history, and politics.

The Elizabethan woman who wanted to discover the world of politics had to conceal her female identity behind the mask of masculinity in order to be accepted by the patriarchal society. By using the mask of masculinity, women, in fact, accepted her imposed identity constructed by the male hegemony. In other words, the mask of masculinity legitimized a female's role in the public and political sphere. Drawing upon feminist theories and concepts toward gender limitations as an analytical framework, the present study investigates female ability in politics, focusing on Shakespeare's three tragedies: *Macbeth* (1606), *King Lear* (1605), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607).

In order to make my purpose clear, I will raise some questions related to the subject of the thesis:

What aspects of female identity can be seen through Shakespeare's train of thought?

How did the Renaissance's women adapt to politics?

How have history and politics constructed the dualism of female identity?

The theoretical framework of this study is based upon feminist theory. The definition of feminist literary criticism is, according to Toril Moi (1986) in her article "*Feminist Literary criticism*" as follows:

'Feminist criticism', then, is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism ... feminist criticism and theory must in some way be relevant to the study of the social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes". (p.204)

First, I seek to analyze the term "identity", in order to indicate how female identity is treated with duality, as Jonathan Culler (1997) defines "identity" in his book "*Literary Theory*":

The question of the subject is 'what am "I"? Am I made what I am by circumstances? What is the relation between the individuality of the individual and my identity as member of a group? And to what extent is the 'I' that I am, the 'subject', an agent who makes choices rather than has choices imposed on him or her? (111)

In this context, Jonathan Culler is questioning the duality of identities in which one's pure self is misrepresented by the rise of "imposed identity", in other words, the subject "Am" is shaped by the environment. Furthermore, I try to explore the concept of identity in relation to politics that is imposed by the power of hegemony in England Renaissance. For instance, Jonathan Culler (1997) argues:

The explosion of recent theorizing about race, gender, and sexuality in the field of literary studies owes much to the fact that literature provides rich materials for complicating political and sociological accounts of the role of such factors in the construction of identity. Consider the question whether the identity of the subject is something given or something constructed. (112)

For instance, the notion of gender identity and its role in politics have been viewed from different perspectives. Diane Elam (1994) mentions that feminism rejects the gender differentiation in politics in her book “*Feminism and Deconstruction*”:

Feminist insists that politics is not something that happens between men alone: the supposedly natural order of relations between men and women is itself political, a matter for discussion and struggle. Even traditional notions of the nature of the political, which exclude or severely restrict female participation, have a gender politics (67).

Female manipulation in political power has been marginalized by the hegemony of male power. Diane Elam mentions that women in the political sphere have no place for exhibiting their talents because from past to present they have been isolated from politics. She aims to invent the term “political solidarity” reflecting that women’s identity in politics is a matter of common experience in order to collect all the women together in public circumstances. However, it can be reasoned that Shakespeare moves beyond the hegemony of his day by gender portrayal in these three tragedies because he makes female participation in politics an active endeavor.

The French feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir (1974) in her book “*The Second Sex*” criticizes the hegemony of gender identification, thus:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an *Other*. (301)

According to Simone de Beauvoir, a child is not conscious of any gender differentiation.

It is the hegemonic structure of society that defines its identity by gender roles. A

patriarchal society attempts to deny a pure self-identity by considering gender differentiation. The female gender is represented as a weak creature produced by society. I believe that this imposed mentality fixed the notion of gender identity in a child's memory and it destroys true self-identity. Simone de Beauvoir indicates that gender identity is in a direct relation to politics of hegemony, which is built on patriarchal norms. The aim of this thesis is to consider the problem of gender that causes a female to have to adapt an imposed identity, in order to be allowed to participate in the political arena. As Simone de Beauvoir (1974) states in another chapter:

The historical fact cannot be considered as establishing an eternal truth; it can only indicate a situation that is historical in nature precisely because it is undergoing change. How could women ever have had genius when they were denied all possibility of accomplishing a work of genius – or just a work? (794)

Simone de Beauvoir believes that history refuses women's capacity and participation in intellectual work. Historical phenomena are not associated with the reality of human beings. It can be considered that intellectual work is different from the ordinary role of women in the private sphere. I consider that Simone de Beauvoir's notion of "genius work" indicates the political and historical participation of women in the public sphere because history is made and written by men and is composed according to patriarchal codes. Diane Elam (1994) points out: "To be a political subject, then, is to have a political identity, a self, a consciousness to call one's own. What more could a girl want"(p.70). Political and public position has been controlled by male-dominant power so that when a woman wants to enter the political sphere, she needs to be accepted by the social norms governed by policies of males, Simone de Beauvoir (1974) claims:

Woman is shown to us as enticed by two modes of alienation. Evidently to play at being a man will be for her a source of frustration; but to play at being a woman is also a delusion: to be a woman would mean to be the object, the Other- and the Other nevertheless remains subject in the midst of her resignation (957).

The problem of woman's alienation cannot be solved neither in a position of a man nor in a position of a woman, in other words, a woman encounters a kind of dualism in searching for her pure identity. According to Simone de Beauvoir, woman is not able to escape from alienation because she is regarded as an "object" and identified as "other". In "*The Politics of Friendship*", Jacques Derrida (1997) uses the term "fraternity" in the political sphere to illustrate the perspectives of many philosophers such as Michel de Montaigne, Cicero, Kant and Nietzsche. Moreover, Derrida reflects Nietzsche's thought which defines the sense of friendship in a respectful manner. "Nietzsche notes that in Antiquity the feeling of friendship was the highest, most elevated than the most celebrated pride of the sages, who boasted of their independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency"(63). For instance, Nietzsche's theory brings forth the importance of friendship in relation to "other" that can be regarded only through "hospitality" and "equality", in other words, friendship is possible by accepting the "other" as an active role, "a friendship which should agree to depend on and receive from the other". In my opinion, Nietzsche holds a positive view toward the subjectivity of "other"; in this sense, the term "other" could be used to identify a female's function in feminist theory. Derrida (1997) regards Nietzsche's view as follows:

But is there more or less freedom in accepting the gift of the other? Is this reorientation of the gift that would submit friendship to the consideration of the other something other than alienation? And is this alienation without relation to the loss of identity, of responsibility, of freedom that is also translated by 'maleness', this living madness which reverses, perverts or converts (good) sense

makes opposites slide into each other and 'knows' very well, in its own way, in what sense the best friends are the best enemies? Hence the worst. (p.64)

Here I believe that although both Simone de Beauvoir and Nietzsche are expressing the problem of other's alienation and identity, they nevertheless, see this problem from different perspectives. For example, Simone de Beauvoir concentrates on the imposed identity, which brings female's alienation in a patriarchal society. She attempts to achieve equal rights for women in the historical and political sphere; in this sense, she has a pessimistic view of regarding a woman as an objective "other" because it has not been solved through the centuries. Nietzsche, on the other hand, encourages us to think beyond the limitations of oriented society that is constructed on hierarchy so as to attempt to highlight the "other" isolation in a marginalized position. Nietzsche discovers a solution by considering the concept of friendship and equality in terms of a gift from "other". Nietzsche invites other to enter in friendship, allowing and accepting "other". He aims to reconstruct other identity in a respectful and subjective form.

Also, the definition of female's identity in the position of "other" reflects the problem of female's alienation and misrecognition towards her real identity because it is codified by male subjective roles. However, the term "other" can be seen in political thought as being enemy or friend. Derrida (1997) takes up the political problem of friendship by discussing Carl Schmitt's idea of politics.

"For as long as a people exists in the political sphere, this people must, even if only in the most extreme case – determine by itself the distinction of friend and enemy. Therein reside the essence of its political existence... The justification of war does not reside in its being fought for the ideal norms of justice, but in being fight against a real enemy" (246).

Schmitt sees politics as a battle between enemies not friends. According to Derrida, Schmitt relies on the importance of friendship that is only achieved through the challenges between friends and enemy. In contrast to Schmitt's idea, Derrida mentions the concept of "modesty" that is introduced by Immanuel Kant, Derrida (1997) claims:

Modesty has the virtue of saving the other, man or woman, from its instrumentalization... Owing to modesty, the two sexes are equal before the law...It would equalize the sexes by moralizing them, getting the woman to participate in universal fraternity: in a word, in humanity. The modest woman is a brother for man.(p. 274)

In "*Politics of Friendship*", Derrida observes that the existence of friendship between male and female is not possible in history and politics, so the terms "fraternity" and "equality" can only refer to relationships between men and men. Derrida and Kant attempt to find a place for women in a political system as equal to men. In my opinion, Derrida wants to find a democratic place for both women and men in the political sphere. From past to present, women have had no position in the public sphere. Derrida encourages women to break their silences in that he regards them as a friend of man in politics.

Toril Moi (1985) in her book "*Sexual, Textual, Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*" reflects Helene Cixous's vision of gender oppression. As a feminist critic, Helene Cixous is searching for a "Utopia": Toril Moi claims:

In a critique of Norman O. Brown, Herbert Marcuse, himself a vigorous defender of utopianism, describes Brown's utopian ideal as an effort towards the 'restoration of original and total unity: unity of male and female, father and mother, subject and object, body and soul- abolition of the self, of mine and thine, abolition of the reality principle, of all boundaries'(p. 122).

The “Utopia” introduced by Helene Cixous is similar to Derrida’s Deconstruction theory of universal opposites. I think that Nietzsche and Derrida also attempt to find an ideal world based on equality. In the comparison, in the time of the Renaissance men and women were challenged with gender inequality and discrimination to such a degree that I consider it a dystopia. However, although in Shakespeare’s tragedies the seductive role of the female characters is seen as the enemy of the state in the political sphere, nevertheless, Shakespeare’s intention is to engage women in politics.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I consider the gender anxiety in *Macbeth* (1606). In this tragedy, Shakespeare portrays Lady Macbeth as a character who wants to participate in politics and she desires to attain political power. I want to highlight the positive aspects of Lady Macbeth as being an intelligent woman who persuaded Macbeth to murder in order for her to achieve power in a male-dominant society in which all the kings and leaders are men. Shakespeare presents her character as playing an active role so that her participation resulted in political consequences for both Macbeth and King Duncan.

The third chapter discusses the female characters in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear*. This chapter covers female manipulation in a lovers’ relationship and a father/daughter relationship respectively, in the political arena. In fact, the female figures in the three mentioned tragedies are interested in politics but they were forced to show the masculine identity. As a result, they cannot enter as women in a political ground so they must conceal themselves behind their masculine identity and their husband, father, or lover, in order to enter the political area.

In the chapter four, I intend to analyze the political representation of Elizabeth Tudor who is Queen Elizabeth I of England in the sixteenth century. What I am

commenting on in this chapter is Elizabeth's policy in the face of a patriarchal society , i.e, she introduced herself as a virgin queen in order to satisfy her people who regarded a female leader as a weak leader. In Renaissance patriarchal society, man could not accept the fact that a female lead the State,i.e., it is not normal in that culture; on the contrary, Queen Elizabeth becomes the first powerful and successful leader in politics in England's history.

Janet Mueller (2001) in her article "*Virtue and Virtuality*" said, "Elizabeth betrays gender anxiety at intermittent points in her reign when the issue is the attribute of courage—whether a woman can possess courage and what it would mean for her to do so."(p.1). To be a political leader was a function only bestowed on men during the Renaissance. In this misogynistic context, woman's political power is not popular. Jane Mueller (2001) quoting Carlo Levin says: "It may mean that politically [a queen] is a man or that she is a woman who can take on male rights. She may be both woman and man in one, both king and queen together, a male body politics in concept while a female body natural in practice"(p.3). Carlo Levin mentions that a woman must have a male identity to be accepted by society, in other words, a woman should act like a male in the realm of politics. Janet Mueller (2001) continues:

I (Janet Mueller) call this rather odd thought construct the "virtual gender" of Elizabeth I. "Virtual" here signifies that she has full potential to perform feminine roles as a wife and mother but also that it is valid for her, as Sovereign, to leave these feminine roles unactualized, concentrating instead on the office, qualities, and roles of a monarch". (p.3)

Janet Mueller's concept of " virtual gender" reveals the fact that Queen Elizabeth denies her female identity in order to focus on her political life, in other words, her female

identity is alienated by her participation in politics. This thesis highlights how gender anxiety was a problem in the political sphere in England from Shakespeare's and Queen Elizabeth's perspectives.

Chapter 2

SHAKESPEARE'S LADY MACBETH AND DESIRE FOR POWER

Elizabethan drama generally reflects the fact that it is the male who has dominant power over the women in all aspects of society; “all forms of public and domestic authority in Elizabethan England were vested in men” (MacDonald, 2004,p.484). These hegemonic and gender ideologies are represented in Shakespeare's tragedies, for example in *Macbeth (1606)*. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare portrays the hegemony in the patriarchal structure of Renaissance England during the sixteenth century. In this tragedy, the destructive and seductive power of a female figure either as a mother or as a wife is represented by depicting the personality of Lady Macbeth,as Jane Dall mentions in her article “*The Stage and the State: Shakespeare's Portrayal of Women and Sovereign Issues in Macbeth and Hamlet*”:

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare implicitly suggests the danger of women's involvement in politics at the sovereign level. Through Gertrude's marriage to Hamlet's uncle and also through Lady Macbeth's unbridled political ambition, Shakespeare dramatizes real political concerns that evolved from and during the reign of Elizabeth Tudor (p.1)

This quotation indicates the desire of Lady Macbeth for leadership; Lady Macbeth has an active part in leading Macbeth into the murder of a king who was the symbolic

representation of authority and patriarchy, moreover, this symbolic representation reveals the fact that leadership was governed only by a male figure such as King Duncan. My intention in this chapter is to analyze why Shakespeare engages a female character in a political battle which is identified by a misogynistic culture and why Lady Macbeth should engage in politics. In this sense, Lady Macbeth has a significant role in persuading her husband to murder and to gain leadership. The question is, however, why she did not interfere directly in politics. Commenting on this, Simone de Beauvoir (1974) said that “women have never constituted a closed and independent society; they form an integral part of the group, which is governed by males and in which they have a subordinate place” (p. 664). Simone de Beauvoir makes it obvious that women have always been marginalized in male dominant societies. This is why Lady Macbeth does not have the courage to enter directly into the political sphere, so she conceals her intention behind the name of Macbeth by persuading him to kill King Duncan.

In this chapter, I will focus on the textual analysis of this tragedy by considering the dialogues and relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In the first act of the play, Lady Macbeth highlights her weakness by ignoring her femininity:

Come you Spirits/ That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,/ And fill me,
from the crown to the toe, top-full Of direst cruelty!/ Make thick my blood, Stop
up th'access and passage to remorse;/ That no compunctious visiting of nature/
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between/ Th' effect and it ! Come to my
woman's breast,/ And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers (I.v. 41-
48).

This quotation indicates unsatisfied Lady Macbeth's gender identity, in other words, she thinks that her femininity has a non-essential role in her life. Lady Macbeth doesn't want to be a female neither biologically nor spiritually; for this reason, she asks the

spirits to destroy all the signs of her femininity. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1959) said about Lady Macbeth “ So far is the woman from being dead within her, that her sex occasionally betrays itself in the very moment of dark and bloody imagination” (p.198). This leads her to challenge her female identity because her femininity makes her marginalized in politics. As a woman, she is not able to kill a king and to enter into the political battle. In this case, Carla Spivack (2008) in her article “*From Hilary Clinton to Lady Macbeth*” expresses the idea of Lady Macbeth as: “ Her speech (Lady Macbeth) suggests that the only way for a female body to exhibit male traits, like ruthlessness and aggression, is to change its very biology” (p.72). To gain political influence in a patriarchal society, Lady Macbeth would need to have a desire to change her female body to a masculine body, so as to legitimize her participation in male politics.

Comparing the image of Lady Macbeth with that of Queen Elizabeth I, Jane Dall said: “While Lady Macbeth wishes to be “unsexed,” Elizabeth asserted the title King as frequently as Queen and sought to establish her own power by transcending the gender issue. It can be said that both Lady Macbeth and Queen Elizabeth I had an anxiety toward gender identity in such a way as to ignore their femininity in order to access a political position. I believe that her desire for kingship should not be regarded as a natural tendency for a woman in the Renaissance hegemonic context. Carla Spivack (2008) believes that “As the play progresses, the figure of Lady Macbeth rewrites the iconography that legitimated Elizabeth’s rule not only to foreground the anxiety awakened by female rule, but to dismantle the symbolic system linking the female body with political power”(p. 750). Shakespeare reflects the gender alienation of Elizabethan society by considering the concept of intelligent women who are isolated from public and political life such as Lady Macbeth. Furthermore, Queen Elizabeth and Lady

Macbeth could not participate in political arena with their female identities because femininity is regard as the domestic and private responsibility.

Simone de Beauvoir(1974) claims: “ Women are always trying to conserve, to adapt, to arrange, rather than to destroy and build a new; they prefer compromise and adjustment to revolution”(p.669). Shakespeare’s perspective is far above the boundaries of patriarchy because he introduces Lady Macbeth as a different female character who is in conflict with her biological and gender identity. Lady Macbeth and Queen Elizabeth are not following the stereotypical role of women to adapt to an imposed misogynistic identity, furthermore, they deconstruct their identity imposed on them by society. In fact, Lady Macbeth even puts an end to the norms of her masculine society by planning for political leadership. In other words, she wants to ignore all the signs of her femininity and her gender identity that stand in the way of her desire for participation in politics.

In this first act, Macbeth firmly states that he is not interested in entering the political battle and to kill the king. Macbeth hesitated to murder the king, in other words, he wanted to escape from the murder because kingship was not a serious matter for him. As Macbeth said: “We will proceed no further in this business:/ He hath honour’d me of late;/ and I have bought golden opinions from all sorts of people,/ Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,/ Not cast aside so soon”(I.vii. 30-34). Macbeth was satisfied with his position as a brave warrior that King Duncan had bestowed upon him. Consequently, Lady Macbeth has to belittle Macbeth’s male identity and pride to achieve her goal, because without Macbeth she cannot fulfill her plan. As she said to Macbeth “letting “I dare not” wait upon “I would,” / Like the poor cat I’ th’ adage?” (I.vii. 44-45).

Most of the dialogues between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are focused on gender identities and defining masculine principles. It is clearly seen that Lady Macbeth lived in a masculine world so that her desire for political leadership is hidden behind her husband in order to accomplish her plan; she seduces Macbeth to be immoral by defining the positive characteristic of a man so that Macbeth has to hold firmly on to his gender identity: “Bring forth men children only! For thy undaunted mettle should compose Nothing but male” (I.vii. 73-75). Lady Macbeth constructs a kind of male identity to an end that a man must be a powerful figure who bravely fights with politics to be an honorable warrior. In this sense, Lady Macbeth defines manhood to be in a direct relation with power and politics so that Macbeth is a man when he acts like a man. As she said to Macbeth: “When you durst do it, then you were a man; And to be more than what you were, you would be so much more than the man.” (I.vii. 49-52).

The patriarchal society did not allow Lady Macbeth to come to the fore in politics. As Michael Mangan (1991) in his book “*A preface to Shakespeare’s Tragedies*” says:

In the world of *Macbeth* it seems to be taken for granted that manliness means, essentially, the ability to kill. Womanliness, which Lady Macbeth defines in theory even as she rejects it in her heart, is seen to be the nurturing and life-giving principle. Western culture has long assigned these values to the sexes: boy children are given toy guns to play with; girls are given dolls to nurse. But although *Macbeth* to that extent merely reflects and respects the cultural norms of its society, it takes such a polarization to an extreme. (p.209)

In this quotation, Lady Macbeth accepts the patriarchal definition of manhood, which is based upon power, in fact, she implicitly makes the audience aware that she lives in a hegemonic world.

All these dialogues illustrate the fact that Shakespeare gives a major role to Lady Macbeth in order to change the political scene. As Kenneth Muir (1962) says in his introduction: “Macbeth speaks of ambition being only spur; but he would never have overcome his reluctance to commit murder without the chastisement of his wife’s tongue”(p.lxi).Although Macbethkills King Duncan but he is not the main player and planner of the murder because it is the desire of Lady Macbeth that imposed her idea upon him. Moreover, it is obvious that Macbeth is an instrument in fulfilling Lady Macbeth’s striving for political leadership.

In contrast to Macbeth, who was satisfied to be the king’s best warrior, Lady Macbeth is strongly motivated to pursue political power and influence. Lady Macbeth changes the event in the tragedy by challenging Macbeth to commit murder, As Micheal Mangan (1991) says:

It can be played to show an iron-willed woman bullying a weak man into action, or as a guileful temptress persuading a less intelligent man into evil. Macbeth can end the scene in reluctant compliance or in enthusiastic admiration of his wife’s brilliance. Which- ever way the scene is played, it is inevitably dominated by Lady Macbeth. (p. 200)

This quotation represents Lady Macbeth’s character in a positive sense by regarding her intelligence as a contributing factor in overcoming Macbeth’s mind. Macbeth is considered a weak man who easily accepts his wife’s opinions. Undoubtedly, Shakespeare portrays Lady Macbeth to be more intelligent than her husband , on the other hand, she is less courageous than he is because she is not prepared to kill King Duncan, As she said to Macbeth in the second act: “ I laid their daggers ready,/ He could not miss ’em./ Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done’t. – My husband!”

(II.iii. 11-13). It can be said that when she saw King Duncan in bed, she remembers her gender weakness toward the patriarchy of her father. The similarity between King Duncan and her father can be found in the heart of Renaissance misogynist culture because Kingship and Fatherhood are symbolic representations of authority and patriarchy. Lady Macbeth as a female figure is afraid to encounter a man in a position of Kingship and Fatherhood, in other words, she has not the courage to engage with the absolute power of a masculine figure.

Although she plays a masculine role in order to attain a superior position in politics, nevertheless she is not successful because she suffers from her real gender identity. Jane Dall notes in her article "*The Stage and the State: Shakespeare's portrayal of Women and Sovereign Issue in Macbeth and Hamlet*" that "Shakespeare de-feminizes Lady Macbeth to give her ambitions credibility. Such unnatural positioning created tension in the play and reflected anxiety in the Elizabethan world". (p.4). In fact, Lady Macbeth must forget her femininity to approach to a masculine world of power and politics. This leads her to be introduced as an instable female character who almost challenges her own gender identity. The instability of Lady Macbeth is exacerbated her gender anxiety resulting in her alienation from her femininity. Her dreams of being a politician did not come true because she could not escape from her gender identity to accomplish her desire for political power. Diane Elam (1994) in her book "*Feminism and Deconstruction*" mentions the idea of Parmer as follows:

The other danger of identity politics is that difference and identity become a matter of hierarchies, where identity is reduced to a place within a hierarchy of oppressions. Individuals battle for the right to speak by collecting oppression markers: the more oppressed and victimized the individual identity, the more moral and political currency it has. (p.74)

From Palmer's perspective, the oppression of a self identity in a hegemonic society reinforces the moral anxiety. In this sense, Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth as an evil and confused character seems to indicate the oppressive situation of a woman who wants to go beyond her domestic responsibilities in a misogynistic culture. In contrast, Shakespeare portrays Lady Macduff as a typical obedient Renaissance woman whose only identity comes through her domestic responsibilities. Lady Macbeth could not have been regarded as an evil character if she had stayed in the position of Lady Macduff; but Lady Macbeth's political aspirations motivate her to behave as an evil person. The victimization of female identity in Lady Macbeth leads her to add to her gender identity a masculine cruelty and brutality. Her moral values as both a woman and a human being are being destroyed by her desire to gain access to political power which is forbidden by the patriarchal boundaries of her time. In other words, her desire for leadership motivates her to act as a cruel and criminal personality because the hegemonic structure of her society refuses the participation of a woman as a leader. Lady Macbeth's alienation from her gender identity must have seemed very strange in the sight of Renaissance audiences, consisting mainly of men. Diane Elam (1994) believes that "To be a political subject, then, is to have a political identity, a self, a consciousness to call one's own. What more could a girl want?" (p.71)

In my opinion it can be said that Lady Macbeth wanted to have a political identity without violence and immorality, but she learned from her patriarchal society that she had to behave like a criminal in order to attain power in such a case violence is justified. At the beginning of the play, Macbeth kills a man and King Duncan

encourages him as a brave warrior. Commenting on this, Alan Sinfield (1992) in her article "*Macbeth: History, Ideology and Intellectuals*" said:

Violence is good, in this view, when it is in the service of the prevailing dispositions of power; when it disrupts them it is evil. A claim to a monopoly of legitimate violence is fundamental in the development of the modern state; when that claim is successful, most citizens learn to regard state violence as qualitatively different from other violence. (p.168)

Violence is here regarded as a kind of state policy in maintaining the kingdom, in other words, violence committed for political gain and state benefits is an ordinary act in the eyes of the citizens. Since Lady Macbeth obviously lived in a society based upon inequality and injustice, it could not be expected of her to be a moral character. She could not easily fulfill her desire without violence and disaster. Leah S. Marcus (1988) points out:

"Lady Macbeth is a "woman on top" whose sexual ambivalence and dominance are allied with the demonic and mirror the obscure gender identifications of the beard witches. Her "unnatural" dominance blasts orderly succession and unleashes a series of catastrophes which nearly destroy a kingdom" (p.104).

It does not seem fair to judge the character of Lady Macbeth to be a source of evil and cruelty, clearly, if she could have attained power without any conflicts, she would have done so. She could not achieve the political position in a peaceful manner.

Macbeth plays the role of a supporter and mediator for his wife. Lady Macbeth's cowardice is hidden behind Macbeth. Her pure self and desire is concealed behind his mask of masculinity. Lady Macbeth's character is far from typical when it comes to identification of femininity. The audience perceived her female identity as being

different from the stereotypical definition current in the hegemonic society of those days.

Barbara Bellow Watson (1975) says in her book *“On Power and Literary Text”*: “A sex object lives by someone else’s sexuality, not her own; a victim, a “power object,” lives by somebody else’s power” (p.114). There is no difference between sex and power because both are related to each other and both of them bring slavery in feminist theory. A woman can be regarded as male’s object of desire in sex and power. Lady Macbeth plays the role of an object in a male- dominant society; furthermore, she is a victim of male power in policy. As Leah S. Marcus (1988) notes “One possible reading of Lady Macbeth is as a revived scapegoat figure who gathers up yet once more of the image of Elizabeth”(p.105).

Lady Macbeth becomes mad and at the end of the play, she commits suicide. Feeling of disappointment lay behind it because she finds suicide as the only solution for her unsatisfied desire, in fact, she is unable to escape from her female identity, and this inability leads her to commit suicide.

In the fifth act, when Macbeth was informed that his wife had died, he says: “ She should have died hereafter; /There would have been a time for such a word” (V.v. 16-18). This indicates that Macbeth thought that his wife deserved to die and he does not get upset because of her death. Simone de Beauvoir (1974) also indicates objectifying of women: “the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute -- she is the other”(xix). After the death of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth remains as the main actor to finish the tragedy and he continues to kill more in order to be a king. Here, Macbeth plays a subject who follows up the idea of his wife but he never sympathizes with the death of his wife and he never regarded Lady Macbeth as an essential subject in

his life. Macbeth neglected his wife's political ambitions, in other words, she embodied as a weak "other" who is in clash with her gender identity. Shakespeare portrays the destiny of Lady Macbeth with suicide and madness at the end of the play. Leah S. Marcus (1988) believes that "Such a local Macbeth would celebrate the Jacobean succession and blacken the barren female authority associated with the previous monarch—James I is one of the kings reflected in the play's prophetic glass." (p.105). I think that Shakespeare wants to arouse the sympathy of his audiences towards the weakness and alienation of Lady Macbeth whose intellectual thought leads her to commit suicide.

Lady Macbeth destroyed her self -identity imposed by the male dominant power. She could not accept the reality of Renaissance hegemonic society and she could not solve her problem with masculine politics. In this tragedy, Shakespeare introduces a new image of female identity different from what was prevalent in his time.

Chapter 3

GONERIL, REGAN, AND CLEOPATRA IN A POLITICAL POSITION

In the sixteenth century, it was far from expected that men could accept women to control the State. However, in *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare naturalizes the position of women in war and the political arena as a head of state and as politicians, thereby inventing a new conception of female gender identity.

The central argument in this chapter is about the challenge of Shakespeare's female characters: Goneril, Regan, and Cleopatra as they fight for power. It can also be noted that the difference between Lady Macbeth and these characters is that Lady Macbeth only had a desire to be a politician but never achieved it, on the other hand, the other three female characters were governing a State and also participated directly in war. In terms of similarity, all four women were unsuccessful, in other words, women's superiority in politics brought collapse and anarchy to the State. Shakespeare has consistently demonstrated the female anxiety of the current discriminating society of his day.

In the first act of *King Lear*, King Lear decides to distribute all his power and authority to his three daughters. In this sense, the youngest daughter Cordelia does not obey her father and is rejected by him. Lear divides his kingdom only for the other two daughters: Goneril and Regan. As he says: "With my two daughters' dowers, / digest

this third/Let pride, / which she calls plainness, marry her./ I do invest you jointly with my power, /Pre-eminence and all the large effects/ That troop with majesty” (I .i. 129-133). Lear assumes that Goneril and Regan love him much more than Cordelia because they obey him. Goneril said to her youngest sister Cordelia that she should obey if she wants a political position “ Let your study/ Be to content your lord, who has received you/ At fortune’s alms./ You have obedience scanted, / And well are worth the want that you have wanted (I. i. 278-279). Goneril explicitly suggests to Cordelia that she experiences hypocrisy in order to achieve power, but Cordelia prefers to be honest and refuses her sister’s suggestion.

Goneril expresses her anxiety toward her father’s authority, in other words, Goneril criticizes Lear for his inability to govern and to keep a State. In fact, She is humiliating her father’s authority as can be understood from what she says to Regan: “If our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, / This last surrender of his will but offend us” (I. ii. 305-307). Goneril as a renaissance female character observes her father’s instability in authority and she is able to ignore the role of masculinity in politics, in other words, she deceives her father in order to attain a position. Here, I consider the idea of Kathleen McLuskie (1996) in her article “The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and King Lear”:

“ The representation of patriarchal misogyny is most obvious in the treatment of Goneril and Regan ... the narrative, language and dramatic organization all define the sisters’ resistance to their father in terms of their gender, sexuality and position within the family”.(p.139)

She believes that Goneril and Regan’s hypocrisy for achieving power illustrated their characters against the norms of patriarchy because they bring chaos and violation to the

state, on the other hand, Cordelia is defined by many critics as the symbol of the innocent woman. McLuskie (1996) goes on to say: “ Goneril and Regan are not presented as archetypes of womanhood for the presence of Cordelia” (p.140). She argues that the stereotypical representation of Cordelia restored the patriarchy. It can be argued that, many critics encourage understanding of the role of Cordelia as an innocent woman who is the symbol of kindness and redemption. In other words, Cordelia’s salvation as a loyal daughter who does not desire to attain power reinforced the patriarchal norms. “ A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch, / Past speaking of in a king. Thou hast one daughter who redeems nature from the general curse which twain have brought her to.” (IV. Vi. 200-203).

In fact, Goneril and Regan’s motivation for political power pushes them into cruelty. They found hypocrisy as the only strategy for being politicians. Furthermore, Goneril and Regan represent the different female characteristics in a royal family. In fact, the oppressions of patriarchy in politics forces Goneril and Regan to experience immorality. As Mcluskie (1996) believes “ daughters’ power over Lear is the obverse of his former power over them. His power over them is socially sanctioned” (p.145). Social obligations prevent the legitimization of female power over a man, in other words, the male has rights to govern a women in patriarchal society. It is obvious that the relationship between Lear and his daughters is based upon gender and political hierarchy.

D. A. Traversi (1969) in his book “*An Approach to Shakespeare*” makes a comparison between King Lear and Macbeth: “Lear’s fatherhood bears a “symbolic” value similar to that of Duncan’s Kingship in Macbeth”. As I mentioned in the second chapter, King Duncan resembles a father to Lady Macbeth. In Renaissance misogynistic society,

politics is related to patriarchy and that monarchy and authority is defined as a property of male identity. In other words, the role of a father as a source of authority legitimizes man's power over women in all aspects of society.

For instance, the patriarchal imposed identity over a female, which attempts to ignore assertiveness in the personality of a female, is clearly represented in King Lear's speeches: "I might have saved her; now she's gone forever. / Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha? / What is't thou sayst? Her voice was ever soft,/ Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman" (V. iii. 268-271). This imposed identity is reaffirmed by Lear at the end of the play when he sees the death of Cordelia. As Catherine S. Cox in her article analyzes this quotation : "'Gentle" silence is "excellent" in an ideal woman, even if the idealized status is contingent upon the death of the heroine" (p.11). Lear implicitly admires the domestic role of a woman by emphasizing the feminine aspects of Cordelia such as 'soft, gentle and low voice' which also indicates the patriarchal thought of a renaissance royal man. In this sense, the "other" defines femininity as domestic and passive. Lear defines the characteristic of an ideal woman according to his hegemonic culture that reinforced the marginalized the role of women. His masculine eyes imposed the weakness of a female identity and shaped her femininity as an object. Simon de Beauvoir (1974) said that:"She stands before man not as a subject but as an object paradoxically endured with subjectivity; she takes herself simultaneously as *self* and as *other*, a contradiction that entails baffling consequences." (p.799).A woman misrecognizes her true self identity in such a way that she becomes confused in choosing and to understanding the dualism which is constructed between her own pure self identity and other's imposed identity. On the other hand, Goneril and Regan abandon all conventions of patriarchal culture by participating in war and the political

arena. Their assertiveness leads them to challenge male's hegemony. Moreover, Goneril and Regan discover a pure self-identity that is against Lear's imposed identity. Goneril suggests a tactic to overcome the battle, she says: "Combine together 'gainst the enemy, / For these domestic and particular broils/ Are not the question here" (V. i. 29-31). This quotation indicates that Goneril instructs Regan to follow a political strategy and free herself from the domestic values of family. For Goneril public and politics is more essential than private life, moreover, She has enough self- esteem to be able to criticize the weakness of her father in State. Goneril's intelligence illustrates her capacity to be a politician, at least a more successful one than her father . Goneril and Regan introduce a new definition of femininity far from domestic values, in a way they define subjectivity of a female identity.

Shakespeare also highlights the subjectivity of a female identity in *Antony and Cleopatra*. He indicates the character of Cleopatra at the heart of political conflicts, for instance, she is portrayed as an independent woman who breaks the patriarchal boundaries of renaissance thought. As a royal Egyptian queen, Cleopatra humiliates the patriarchal hegemonic custom that insists on the passivity of a female in both marital and sexual life. Moreover, she refuses the objective role of a woman in the traditional depiction of sex and marriage by playing a different function of femininity in the political arena. She plays an active role in sex and politics which results in her freedom and independence. Cleopatra said "Sink Rome, and their tongues rot /That speak against us!/ A charge we bear I' the war, / And as the president of my kingdom will appear there for a man./ Speak not against it, / I will not stay behind. (III. Vii. 15-19). Cleopatra has a desire for overcome the Roman Empire and to maintain her kingdom in Egypt.

Cleopatra decides to betray the Roman man by her sexual and feminine attractiveness, in other words, she needs to seduce the political man in order to maintain her kingdom. In fact, she conceals and keeps her political power behind Julius Caesar and Marc Antony because her kingdom could not be justified and guaranteed in a political sphere that is built on masculine principles. In an essay: "*Power and Being in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra*" the purpose of Antony is expressed as follows: "She enjoys reminiscing those days and most of the time she loves listening to Iras and Charmian reminding her of the time when Julius Caesar "plough'd her and she cropp'd". It seems that her power comes from her previous mighty lover, as inherited through love." (p.2). On the other hand, Cleopatra attempts to participate in the male policy as an active female character. Her intelligence presents her subjectivity in renaissance hegemonic society. It seems that Cleopatra uses her female attractiveness to overcome the male politics. She states: "I laugh'd him out of patience;/ and that night/ I laugh'd him into patience,/ and next morn,/ Ere the ninth hour,/ I drunk him to his bed;/ ...I wore his sword Philippan. O, from Italy! (II. v. 19-23). "The sword philippan" is a symbol of Antony's masculinity. Cleopatra, therefore, is saying that she has usurped Antony's masculinity, emasculating herself. Later, she says that she dressed Antony in her clothes, thus suggesting a reversal of roles. She has a dominant role over Antony in sexual pleasure and it can be said that she intentionally plans to seduce Antony in bed. Furthermore, she considers Roman man as an instrument in order to keep her power.

Shakespeare represents Antony as a weak man, who could not control his lust. Antony is not able to make a balance between his political duty and his emotional personality so that Cleopatra can seduce him to control the political tension in Egypt. As Carol Cook in her article "The Fatal Cleopatra" says, "Caesar and Cleopatra stand as

two poles between which Antony vacillates” (p.246). It can be said that Antony is indecisive of his Roman identity so that he behaves as opposed to the masculine principles of Roman patriarchal society. In this sense, Rome and Egypt are symbolized in gendered terms as two opposite poles where Rome represents the land of masculinity and Egypt represents the land of femininity. As Robert Ornstein (1967) said in his article:

The hard Masculine world of Rome is imaged in sword, armour, and terms of war, in geometry and stone, and in the engineering that builds or destroys. The soft yielding feminine world of Egypt is poetically imaged as uniting the artifices of sexual temptation to the naturalness of fecundity. (p.393).

Cleopatra as the Egyptian archetype of womanhood stands in political competition with Octavianus Caesar who presents the Roman patriarchal principles. Cleopatra's influence on Antony pulls him far from political duty so that it can be said that Cleopatra breaks the political unification of Roman men: Antony, Lepidus, and Caesar who were sharing the Roman Empire. Pompey states: “I know they are in Rome together / Looking for Antony: but all the charms of love/ Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!” (II. i. 19-20). For this reason, Agrippa suggests to Antony that he marry Caesar's sister Octavia in order to improve the political unification between Antony and Caesar, as Agrippa says “To hold you in perpetual amity,/ To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts” (II. ii. 125-128). Agrippa's strategy for reunification becomes unsuccessful because after Antony's marriage with Caesar's sister, Octavia, Antony could not forget Cleopatra and he again escapes from his political responsibility.

Antony's instability is similar to King Lear's and Macbeth's instability, in constant to the superiority of women such as Goneril and Regan, Lady Macbeth, and Cleopatra ..

In fact, Antony finds his identity in the love of Cleopatra and also Cleopatra attempts to encourage him to discover his identity in a love relationship. As Cleopatra says “ Sir, you and I have lov’d, but there’s not it” (I. iii. 88). Antony’s passion leads him to become separated from the Roman Empire because Cleopatra’s love inspires him more than politics and occupies all his mind. Cleopatra governs the love affairs in both Caesar and Antony. The weaknesses in Antony and Caesar become a source of strength and power in the kingdom of Cleopatra. From the beginning of the play, Antony is lead by Cleopatra in love relationship. It indicates the victory of Cleopatra to suspend political men in order to achieve her purpose to keep her kingdom. Cleopatra said about Antony: “He was dispos’d to mirth;/ but on the sudden/ A Roman thought has struck him” (I. ii. 79-80). It is obvious that Cleopatra has a political strategy to accustom Antony in love. As she continues: “Seek him, and bring him hither” (I. ii. 82). She does not want Antony to follow his political duty and stay in Rome for a long time so that she provides Egypt as a home for Antony in order to separate him from his Roman identity and responsibility.

In contrast to Cleopatra, Shakespeare portrayed another female character in a royal family, defined by a stereotypical female identity such as obedience, loyalty, and purity. Octavia’s subordination resembles stands for Roman virtue, furthermore, Carol Cook points out “Roman womanhood, represented by Octavia, is not seductive but “ Holy, cold, and still.” Octavia is “a piece of virtue” (3.3.24), a piece of roman virtue, a man manqué” (p. 249). It can be noted that, Octavia becomes the victim of male policy, as I mentioned above, the marriage of Octavia with Antony is a political strategy in order to guarantee the unification between Antony and Caesar. Octavia’s comment is: “ ‘O, bless my lord, and husband!’/ Undo that prayer, by crying out as loud,/ ‘O, bless my brother!’/

Husband win, win brother,/ Prays, and destroy the prayer, no midway’/ Twixt these extremes at all” (III. Iv. 16-20). Octavia was not satisfied with her Roman patriarchal society because she should fulfill the political link that is between her husband and her brother.

The last scene of the play indicates Cleopatra as a strong woman who challenges her fate by committing suicide. In fact, her suicide can be illustrating her self-esteem and royal proud that refuses slavery. She chooses suicide because she is seen from a Roman masculine point of view as a whore, as can be seen when Ceasar says: “He hath given his empire/Up to a whore” (III. vi. 66-67). Cleopatra is aware that if she becomes a slave in the hand of Ceasar, she will explicitly be humiliated by the Roman people. Cleopatra says in the last act of the play “Antony shall be brought drunken forth,/and I shall see some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness/ I’the posture of a whore.” (V. ii. 217-220). Carol Cook points out that she escapes from the humiliation which Ceasar plans for her, “choosing to stage her own death to escape a scene of representation which would reduce her otherness to the limits of its own terms” (p.245).

Feminine manipulation is considered as the collapse of State in all these plays *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Macbeth* because Renaissance audiences were not able to accept woman in political positions. Simone de Beauvoir(1974) points out:

But we shall be able to understand how the hierarchy of the sexes was established by reviewing the data of prehistoric research I have already stated that when two human categories are together, each aspires to impose its sovereignty upon the other. If both are able to resist this imposition, there is created between them a reciprocal relation, sometimes in enmity, sometimes in amity, always in a state of tension. (p.69).

The concept of enmity and amity can be analyzed in the gender relationship in Shakespeare's male and female characters where two different relationships are seen in his tragedies. Shakespeare in all these three plays portrayed both obedient and disobedient females and different male reactions to them. As the submission of Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* makes her participation as a positive role and this obedient female character is repeated in *King Lear* where Cordelia remains as the loyal daughter to her father and in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Octavia plays the role of Roman virtue. These subordinate women are regarded as friends in male society but 'other' women are regarded as enemies who seduce and make masculine worlds collapse.

Chapter 4

QUEEN ELIZABETH I' S POLICY OF VIRGINITY

Masculine interpretations of a female identity are constructed on the objectifying femininity. For this reason, some intellectual women such as the Renaissance women who lived in patriarchal societies attempt to find a social position and to deceive masculine thought by using the mask of masculinity. For instance, women need to be accepted by society and the majority of the public, which consists of males. In this chapter, I will elaborate an intellectual woman who does not belong to any of Shakespeare's tragedies because she persuades his male audiences to consider her as a subject in a real masculine world. She is Elizabeth Tudor, the daughter of King Henry VIII, who sat on the throne from 1558 to 1603. In the history of English Monarchy, she was one of the most successful female politicians.

Queen Elizabeth challenges patriarchy with masculine norms in order to follow her interest in politics successfully. Simon de Beauvoir (1974) in her introduction believes "Now, what peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds her living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object." (xxxiii). Although Queen Elizabeth wants to emphasize her subjectivity it is clear that she still needs to justify her female gender identity in a male-dominated

society as head of state. Elizabeth shows herself as a clever woman who can play both masculine and feminine roles in order to accomplish her political desires and duties.

Gender discrimination in Renaissance England forces women into a complicated identity, which is not chosen by them. As Janel Mueller (2001) points out the situation of Queen Elizabeth I : “She would not fulfill her responsibility and authority through the social and biological roles of wife and mother, only through the metaphoric yet dynamic roles of her country’s mother and God’s handmaid” (p.14). If Queen Elizabeth had introduced herself as a married woman who engaged with domestic responsibilities, then she would have been rejected by her parliament and people because the masculine perspective considers her role as a stereotypical woman who is not able to govern a state. Furthermore, she was compiling to play another role, which was to adapt to masculine norms.

Elizabeth attempts to find a fit and a fix position for her kingdom, for this reason she constructs a very different and strange female identity that justified her presentation as a leader. Janel Mueller (2001) continues “She would seek justification for her sovereignty in every crucial register of her time” (p.15). In my opinion, it seems that without any justification of her female identity she is regarded by her people as a weak politician who indulged with her female characteristics. She played with both masculine and feminine gender identities in order to maintain her political position. Leah S. Marcus (1988) in her book “*Puzzling Shakespeare*” says :“ Queen Elizabeth’s self-portrayal as both man and woman, a “woman who acted like a man” (p.62). Following this idea, Mueller argues that it does not matter for Elizabeth to be a king or a queen because the only purpose she desires is her absolute authority and the monarchy of England. Mueller regards Queen Elizabeth as the first woman in England’s history who

discovered a new social identity for the women of her time. She played an active role to change the Renaissance English attitudes towards gender identity. She encouraged her people to think beyond the gender anxiety and she naturalized the political position of women in such a religious and hegemonic society. As Mueller (2001) said “Elizabeth I may be the first social constructivist of gender identity who is on record in her own words, as a principal agent of her own public formation” (p. 15).

It can be considered that Queen Elizabeth excludes her female roles to persuade her male’s audiences, moreover, Elizabeth legitimized female authority over men by evoking the gender anxieties of her time. Louis Adrian Montrose (2004) in his article “*Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture*” mentions Elizabeth’s speech to her Parliament in 1563 as follows “Though I can think [marriage] best for a private woman, yet I do strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince” (p. 498). Although her parliament consisted of males and they tried to convince Elizabeth for marriage, she was cleverer than her members of parliament and she denied her domestic roles. Louis Adrian Montrose (2004) continues by saying, “the political nation, which was wholly a nation of men, seems at times to have found it frustrating or degrading to serve a female price” (498).

It seems that as a head of a State, Elizabeth did not want to be possessed by a man neither in marriage nor in politics so she becomes an independent woman whose nations relied upon her intellectual thought and policy. One of the reasons she escaped from marriage was that she desired absolute power for her kingdom without the male’s interference. For this reason, she reconstructed public opinion of gender discriminations. De Beauvoir (1974) indicates the passivity of a woman “ She remained all her life a perpetual minor, under the control of her guardian, who might be her father,

her husband, the latter's heir, or, in default of these, the State, represented by public officials" (p.99) . On the other hand, Elizabeth's refusal to marry indicates the fact that she could not accept male control over her which would have enslaved her as a kind of male property. Her people required her as an independent woman.

Elizabeth sacrificed her femininity for her political ambitions. She guaranteed her professional future by pushing down her femininity to keep her kingdom. De Beauvoir (1974) points out " In so far as a woman wishes to be a woman, her independent status gives rise to an inferiority complex; on the other hand, her femininity makes her doubtful of her professional future" (p.777). In this sense, Elizabeth formally introduced herself as a virgin queen and symbolically as married to her people and country. Leah S. Marcus (1988) said "she was already married to her kingdom" (p. 59), and she said in her Parliaments "all my husbands, my good people" (p.59). She is aware of her imposed gender identity and her femininity becomes as an anxiety for her that makes her separate from the State and people who can judge her kingdom as a weak and fragment. Leah S. Marcus (1988) continues "Her "body natural" was the body of a frail woman; her "body politic" was the body of a king, carrying the strength and masculine spirit of the best of her male forebears" (p.54). Although Elizabeth introduces double identities of masculinity and femininity to satisfy her male audiences, Queen Elizabeth as a female archetype of Renaissance England challenges the patriarchal boundaries, which reinforced the sense of male superiority over women in all aspects of society especially in the political arena. Mueller (2001) notes Queen Elizabeth's speech in her parliaments as follows "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king of England too" (p.12). As I mentioned in the introduction, the concept of "virtual gender" represents Queen Elizabeth gender anxiety in a way she

refuses her female responsibility so that she introduces a double identity in order to achieve her political purpose. Elizabeth manipulates her male audiences to accept her kingdom as a powerful political kingdom. Her policy of her double gender identity is to convince her patriarchal society.

De Beauvoir (1974) notes, "The domain in which she is confined is surrounded by the masculine universe, but it is haunted by obscure forces of which we are themselves the plaything; if she allies herself with these magical forces, she will come to power in her turn. Society enslaves Nature; but Nature dominates it" (p.687). It can be said that Queen Elizabeth is surrounded by a masculine perspective in her parliaments and society so the only way to satisfy them is to put a mask of masculinity on her female face. According to De Beauvoir's idea, nature dominates society in which nature can overcome the social values, for this reason, it can be considered that Elizabeth as a woman had the ability and the policy to change the social values of her time. Her female intellectual mind leads her to persuade her people. Furthermore, her natural female identity overcomes the masculine hegemonic and hierarchical mind in the political arena because she persuades her parliaments to accept her role as a virgin queen and she convinces her people to consider her as both a King and a Queen.

Most significantly, Elizabeth had been extremely influential on her society in a way that the concept of female subjectivity in the political arena was represented by male Renaissance dramatists such as Shakespeare and Edmund Spenser. The image of political women is represented not only in Shakespeare's tragedies in a way that his tragic heroines are in a challenge between the domestic and political responsibilities but also in Spenser's famous poem: *Faerie Queen* in which he praises Queen Elizabeth.

In this sense, Michael Mangan(1991) refers to Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* that Shakespeare addressed Queen Elizabeth's future " In her days every man shall eat in safety" (p.17). As Mangan continues, Shakespeare predicts the future of the next successor after Elizabeth's regime, which was composed ten years after the death of Elizabeth:

Nor shall this peace sleep with her; but as when / The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix, / Her ashes new create another heir/ And great in admiration as herself,/ So shall she leave her blessedness to one-/ When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness-/ Who from the sacred ashes of her honour/ Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was, / And so stand fix'd. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,/ That were the servants to this chosen infant,/ Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him (p.18).

In my opinion, Shakespeare has an optimistic view toward the kingdom of Elizabeth . Shakespeare compares Queen Elizabeth to a phoenix and he symbolically represents the virgin Queen as "maiden phoenix" whose "sacred ashes" brings renewal and salvation for Renaissance England. Furthermore, I believe that Shakespeare's positive words such as " peace, plenty, love, truth" makes it clear that he is one of those under the patronage of Elizabeth. De Beauvoir points out "but a woman takes no part in history, she fails to understand its necessities; she is suspiciously doubtful of the future and wants to arrest the flow of time" (p.669). As a Renaissance dramatist, Shakespeare considers the role of Elizabeth as a successful ruler and admires her participation in the political arena as can be seen by his writing. In fact, Shakespeare perceives woman's roles as an effective and active subject in England's history so that women can take positive part in history.

It can be said that, Elizabeth has reinforced her subjectivity by introducing herself as a virgin Queen. As Louis Adrian Montrose (2004) notes:

for the woman to whom all Elizabethan men were vulnerable was Queen Elizabeth herself. Within legal and fiscal limits, she held the power of life and death over every Englishman; the power to advance or frustrate the worldly desires of all her subjects. Her personality and personal symbolism helped to mold English culture and the consciousness of Englishmen for several generations.(p.494)

In fact, she introduced a very different female character who remained as an independent maiden because in Renaissance patriarchal society a virgin woman could not be a free person without others who deny her independence, for example a virgin should be controlled by a brother or a father. On the other hand, Elizabeth lived in a complete independent situation that did not allow any man to take her as an object of desire, so She chose to live in freedom with her pure self identity. She changed the functions of Renaissance woman from an obedience and domesticity to an independent character. She recognized the gender discrimination in her society so she solves the problem by considering the two equal identities for herself as both a Queen and a King.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis attempts to seek a different perspective, that of Shakespeare toward Renaissance women in the three plays *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Moreover, the thesis attempts to analyze Queen Elizabeth Tudor's representation of herself as shaping, Shakespeare's representations of women in positions of power, and the English imagination of such women during her regime.

Indeed, Renaissance women have experienced subjectivity by using the mask of masculinity. As Lady Macbeth desires powerful situations in a way she uses her husband's political power in order to fulfill her political ambitions, in other words, Lady Macbeth stands behind Macbeth so he becomes as a mask for her political desires. Queen Elizabeth also had a desire of power for this reason she introduced herself as a virgin Queen, moreover, she explicitly conceals her female identity so she plays a masculine role. These women challenge their gender identities in order to achieve an equal position with man in a patriarchal society. However, Simon de Beauvoir (1974) points out "The doubtful concept of "equality in inequality," which the one uses to mask his despotism and the other to mask her cowardice" (p.803). According to her, equality is always for men that encourage them to use the mask of violation and brevity; on the other hand, women who put the mask of fear and weakness have inequality. In this sense, Renaissance women use the mask of male despotism in order to attain equality.

In my opinion, these women have courage to overcome their imposed identity because these masks of courage help them to increase their self-esteem as being equal to their male successors in political arena.

If the Renaissance had been able to shift the perspective of men towards women altogether the women would have had equal rights to stand in political position by a respectful manner through friendship and fraternity with men. In the Renaissance hegemonic culture, women were considered as enemies of a State by being a threat to destroy the social order and bring chaos to the State. The reconciliation between males and females in politics requires the recognition of each other's true gender identities through fraternity and equality. Jacques Derrida (1997) quotes the idea of Michelet's *L'Amour* and says: “ ‘ She can spell the sacred word of the new age, *Brotherhood*, but cannot yet read it’ , the author of *L'Amour* continues: ‘ She sometimes seems to be above the virtues of the new age. She is *more than just* - She is chivalrous, and extremely generous. *But justice transcended destroys justice itself*” (p.239). It can be said that women have this ability to understand the word “ Brotherhood” in their relation to men but still they could not experience this “brotherhood”, moreover, the author of *L'Amour* admires women's role. This indicates that women can be the friends with males in a kind of “brotherhood” in an ideal world, but in reality, in a masculine world this remains only a dream for women to experience it . Consequently, I believe that women could not feel equality because justice is not seen in its real meaning and purpose, in other words, the pure justice is accessible only by a pure self identity so that in a non democratic society, where the pure self is destroyed by the power of hegemony , one cannot find justice and fraternity. Simone de Beauvoir (1974) says that:

No, woman is not our brother; through indolence and depravity we have made of her a being apart, unknown, having no weapon other than her sex, which not only means constant strife but is moreover an unfair weapon of the eternal little slave's mistrust---adoring or hating, but never our frank companion”(p.796).

This can be seen in the character of Lady Macbeth who is not satisfied with her femininity and her husband is not able to understand her participation as an equal to himself. I tried to analyze the experience of Lady Macbeth as a clever woman who has this ability to persuade her husband. In this context, Lady Macbeth is not regarded as an evil woman but rather as an ambitious woman who wishes to assert her identity. She thinks beyond her required domestic responsibility so that she wants to be considered a subject in the male political world. As Coleridge (1959) says : “ Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakespeare , is a class individualized:---of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt” (p.193). It is far from expectation that an evil character kills her/him, in other words, Lady Macbeth's act of suicide indicates that she had a bad conscious of her evil ambitions for this reason she is aware of her guilt.

This is repeated in *King Lear* as Goneril and Regan could not be political friends of King Lear.I focused on the characterizations of Goneril and Regan who use hypocritical behavior in order to achieve the status of queen, in other words, they achieve a position by deceiving King Lear. They told King Lear that they love him much more than a girl loves her father and at the end of the play Goneril kills Regan in order to achieve a better position so Goneril's desire for power leads her to sacrifice her sister and like Lady Macbeth she commits suicide.

Furthermore, these women cannot be as a brother so that Queen Elizabeth represents a male identity in order to be as a brother of her male audiences.

As I stated earlier, Renaissance women have attempted to battle against objectifying in order to engage in male politics such as Lady Macbeth, Goneril and Regan, Cleopatra and Queen Elizabeth. Therefore, these women were plagued with their gender identities. Shakespeare aims to construct female gender identity in the political arena. Woman had no participation in politics before Elizabeth's regime, furthermore, this gender anxiety is obviously seen in King Henry VIII who had six marriages. Henry VIII represents the male hegemonic order and his anxiety is largely that he has no son who will take charge or control of England after his death. This shows that Henry had no faith in his daughters simply because they were female. Ann Boleyn is the mother of Elizabeth who is the second wife of King Henry VIII. He sacrifices his women for his political ambitions because they are not able to bring a son in order to maintain the dynastic power of the Tudors. As Simon de Beauvoir (1974) says:

Society, being codified by man, decrees that woman is inferior: she can do away with this inferiority only by destroying the male's superiority. She sets about mutilating, dominating man, she contradicts him, she denies his truth and his values. But in doing this she is only defending herself (p797).

Henry VIII saw women as slaves who are forced to fulfill his desire, in other words, women are a kind of commodity or a vessel who can provide him with a true ruler, a son. On the other hand, Shakespeare was a man who matured during the kingdom of Elizabeth and as a Renaissance dramatist he draws his audience's attention to the female manipulation in politics. In addition, Shakespeare portrays many female characters in

both his comedies and tragedies that play different roles of obedience or disobedience. Indeed, Shakespeare must have had a purpose to consider females in positions of power in his plays. Shakespeare's women have no way to overcome the male world except by violence such as Lady Macbeth, Goneril and Regan because they should fight to become a subject, moreover, without violence it is not possible for them to have access into the political arena. These females' violations in politics can be seen from a positive view, as Jacques Derrida (1997) points out:

every time a faithful friend wonders whether he or she should judge, condemn, forgive what he decides is a political fault of his or her friend: a political moment of madness, error, breakdown, crime, whatever their context, consequence, or duration." (p. 183).

The violation of women can be justified as "*a political moment of madness*" because being a politician; one must have the courage to challenge the discrimination of a hegemonic society.

Another character I take is Cleopatra as the Queen of Egypt. Cleopatra manipulates her political male rivals by her sexual attractiveness, for example, she plays with Julius Caesar and Marc Antony in order to keep her political position as a queen. The difference between Cleopatra and other female characters like Lady Macbeth, Goneril and Regan is that Cleopatra already was a Queen and she was satisfied with her femininity because she just attempt to keep her power by her female attractiveness, on the other hand, Lady Macbeth fights for a powerful position which makes her alienated and unsatisfied with her femininity, as I explained in Chapter two that Lady Macbeth asks the spirit to "unsex" her. L. T. Fits (2004) says in her article "*Egyptian Queens and Male Reviewers: Sexist Attitudes in Antony and Cleopatra*": "By granting Cleopatra

motivation and the chance to speak in her own defense, Shakespeare lifts her from the level of Caricature, which would be appropriate for satiric treatment, to the level of fully developed individuality, which qualifies her for treatment as a tragic figure” (p.582).

I examined the character of Queen Elizabeth I who introduced herself as a virgin Queen. In fact, there is a kind of policy beyond this virginity because Queen Elizabeth I ignores her feminine roles and domestic duties in order to persuade her people to see her as a powerful and intelligent woman. The concept of virginity introduced Elizabeth as an ideal woman in a misogynistic society. Her virginity becomes a weapon to reinforce her monarchical authority as a woman.

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