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MEDITERRANEAN EMPIRES, MOBILITY AND  
MULTICULTURALISM IN SHAKESPEARE'S  
PLAYS

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## ABSTRACT

### MEDITERRANEAN EMPIRES, MOBILITY AND MULTICULTURALISM IN SHAKEPEARE'S PLAYS

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This study is an exploration of multicultural exchanges in Shakespeare's plays within their Mediterranean context. It analyses the Mediterranean empires and their multiculturalism which are enabled by the mobility of people, information, and cultures in Shakespeare. The primary sources used in this thesis are *Pericles*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*. The study argues that the mobility in the Mediterranean brings distortive and transformative impacts on individuals and societies in these six texts. It looks at how the people who frequently travel across the Mediterranean lose their identity and the empires which incorporate 'others' through territorial expansion are threatened by degeneration. This study argues that Shakespeare problematizes the mobility and multiculturalism in the Mediterranean that are analysed in his past, contemporary and future empires. Therefore, the thesis points out that Shakespeare's exploration of the dangerous intercultural exchanges in ancient and early modern Mediterranean empires functions as a historical foreshadowing for the newly emerging British Empire in his present time.

**KEYWORDS:** Empire, Mediterranean, mobility, multiculturalism, Shakespeare

## ÖZ

### SHAKESPEARE'İN OYUNLARINDA AKDENİZ İMPARATORLUKLARI, HAREKETLİLİĞİ VE ÇOK-KÜLTÜRLÜLÜĞÜ

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Bu çalışma, Shakespeare'in oyunlarındaki kültürler-arası ilişkileri Akdeniz bağlamında incelemeyi amaçlar. Tezde, insanların, bilginin ve kültürlerin hareketliliğiyle desteklenen Akdeniz imparatorlukları ve bunların çok-kültürlü yapıları, Shakespeare'in oyunlarında yansıtıldığı üzere incelenmektedir. Kullanılan birincil kaynaklar *Perikles*, *Antonius ve Kleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Venedik Taciri*, *Othello*, ve *Fırtına*'dır. Çalışma, bu altı oyundan yola çıkarak, Akdeniz'deki hareketliliğin bireyler ve toplumlar üzerinde yıkıcı ve dönüştürücü etkilere sahip olduğunu savunur. Bu doğrultuda, Akdeniz'de sıklıkla seyahat eden insanların kimliklerini nasıl kaybettiklerini ve bölgesel büyüme yoluyla 'ötekileri' kendi içine dahil eden imparatorlukların nasıl yozlaşma tehdidiyle karşı karşıya olduklarını göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada, Shakespeare'in Akdeniz'deki hareketliliği ve çok-kültürlülüğü sorunsallaştırdığı savunulup, bu fikir onun geçmiş, modern ve gelecek imparatorlukları temsili üzerinden incelenmektedir. Böylelikle, tezde Shakespeare'deki kadim ve erken modern Akdeniz imparatorlukları ve bunların tehlikeli kültürler-arası ilişkileri temsilinin, henüz doğmakta olan İngiliz İmparatorluğuna tarihsel bir gönderme olarak okunabileceği ifade edilmektedir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Akdeniz, çok-kültürlülük, hareketlilik, imparatorluk, Shakespeare

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## Introduction

In the Renaissance period, the English had an intensive interest in the Mediterranean, bringing along an increasing number of interactions with the peoples, cultures, and politics of the region. The re-birth of Greco-Roman intellectual tradition with the Renaissance connected the English to the Mediterranean world and made a great impact on English literature. When the Renaissance contact with the Greeks and Romans met the early modern expeditions of the Englishmen into the region, the Mediterranean occupied a central position in the English literary imagination that I intend to explore in relation to Shakespeare's plays in this study. Especially the imperial societies that the Mediterranean accommodated in Shakespeare's past and present drew his attention as 'colourful' settings for his plots with the multiculturalism that they embody. My purpose in writing this thesis is to investigate how Shakespeare represents the multiculturalism in the Mediterranean empires and its implications for the England of his age.

In such an investigation, Shakespeare's genealogical contact with the Mediterranean of the Greek and Roman sources and contemporary contact through tradesmen and travellers are significant to understand his imagination of the Mediterranean setting. The Mediterranean meant the space of both cultural and political originalities and the commercial centre for the distant island Britain in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Shakespeare's day, Queen Elizabeth I demonstrated a great interest in the Mediterranean trade and made persistent efforts to play an active role in the world commerce as the Mediterranean was the centre of her world.<sup>1</sup> In this period when Shakespeare lived and wrote, interacting with the centre meant connecting to not only the strong political and economic entities of the time, but also to the ancient intellectual world whose rebirth brought energy and progress to the Renaissance England.<sup>2</sup> These horizontal and the vertical connections with the Mediterranean enriched and sophisticated the production of literature in England of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 584.

<sup>2</sup> Fox, Alistair. *The English Renaissance: Identity and Representation in Elizabethan England*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 7.



The political interest in Mediterranean trade and the subsequent interactions with the societies living across the coasts of the sea brought along novel and energetic plots and themes to the Elizabethan stage<sup>3</sup>. In this study, I argue that Shakespeare employs the Mediterranean setting to weave the plots of his plays with multicultural conflicts. The ever-existing interconnectedness that Mediterranean embodies, enabled by the empires throughout history, not only offered a colourful setting but also an opportunity to define Englishness and its position in relation to the other worlds. As a playwright from the age when England was enthusiastic to open its doors to foreigners - and open itself to foreign lands - by engaging with the Mediterranean, Shakespeare utilised the multicultural Mediterranean as a setting for its complexities that put the dramatic actions underway in his plays. It can be argued that Shakespeare employed the multicultural complexities of the centre also to make a critique for the periphery island Britain, which was aspiring to be a centre.

William Shakespeare, who was born in 1564 and died in 1616, wrote his plays in an age when England was just engaging in attempts of sowing the seeds of its imperialism by looking onto the empires of the Mediterranean and setting up commercial and bureaucratic relations.<sup>4</sup> It was in Shakespeare's day that English vessels increasingly set sail in the Mediterranean and Elizabeth I signed the capitulations agreement with the Ottoman Sultan Murad, allowing the Englishmen free trading activities in the vast lands of Ottoman Empire. The Levant Company was founded to trade across the Eastern coasts of the Mediterranean following this treaty. These were the years when the English also started taking their part in the already present connectivity of the Mediterranean world and its multicultural societies. Academic works that study the establishment of the British Empire often point to the Levant Company as the first seed of the British imperialism, which later on gave birth to the East India Company.<sup>5</sup>

One can argue that the Mediterranean functioned as a challenge in transforming the Renaissance England into an empire on which the sun never sets. The cost of having

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<sup>3</sup> Bartels, Emily. "Shakespeare's 'Other' Worlds: The Critical Trek". *Literature Compass*. 5 Sep 2008. p. 1111.

<sup>4</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Works by Daniel Vitkus, Nabil Matar and Jerry Brotton, from which this study has extensively benefitted, can be shown as examples.

an empire was also observed in relation to the Mediterranean empires of different epochs met either through historical connections or contemporaneous trade and travel. “English contact with the Mediterranean continually challenged the borders of English culture, and English representations of its diversity and instability continually confront and express that challenge.”<sup>6</sup> It was the Mediterranean – the Old World – and its mobility that, in a way, shaped the English identity by determining the Englishman’s imagination of the other and the new worlds.

The new worlds that the Englishmen encountered at the Age of Discovery, as Nabil Matar and many other scholars name the early modern period<sup>7</sup>, were multiple. The intensive contacts with the Muslims, Jews and Blacks of the Mediterranean took place at the same time period with their encounter with the Native Americans who were going to be the colonial subjects. The mobility across the sea and multicultural societies of the Mediterranean brought by this mobility were both fascinating and alarming to the English observers who were soon going to be agents both in the Mediterranean and the rest of the world.<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare and his contemporaries like Christopher Marlowe and George Peele put forth this fascination with the multicultural Mediterranean along with its potential dangers and crises. As a Renaissance playwright who received Classics education starting from the early years of his life, Shakespeare took a considerable number of his plots from Greek or Roman sources, which were then necessarily set in the Mediterranean.

Shakespeare’s Renaissance encounter with the interconnectedness of the ancient Mediterranean of Greeks and Romans had many commonalities with the multicultural Mediterranean that the English travellers and tradesmen met in his present time. I think that Fernand Braudel’s notion of mobility of Mediterranean civilizations is quite helpful for understanding the connectivity observed for different eras. Throughout his *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Braudel constructs the history of the Mediterranean around the idea of the

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<sup>6</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Although this name is given for the so-called discovery of the Americas, it also refers to the Europeans’ discovery of the new cultures and peoples.

<sup>8</sup> Stanivukovic, Goran V. *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 7; For a detailed explanation of how the Mediterranean meant both fascination and alarm to the English audience, see Daniel Vitkus’s Chapter 2 in *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*.

connectivity of its shores and the intense communication between its societies. He constantly draws attention to the interactions and borrowings between Mediterranean civilizations through the mobility of people and the trading goods and culture they bring along with themselves; “when in the Mediterranean to live is to exchange – men, ideas, ways of life, beliefs – or habits of courtship”.<sup>9</sup> Thus, “in this Mediterranean world described by Braudel, English travellers found themselves within an environment that was defined by mixture, exchange, and hybridity; and they often reacted with amazement or bewilderment to the cosmopolitanism they observed in renowned Mediterranean centres like Venice, Constantinople, Cairo and Jerusalem”.<sup>10</sup>

I suggest that Braudel’s Mediterranean world can be read to be, in many aspects, identical to that of Shakespeare. It’s a world where empires and tradesmen rival with one another while at the same time their people, both ancient and modern, frequently travel across the shores, trade and exchange goods, get married between each other and settle as communities in distant parts of the sea. What these intercultural exchanges and cross-cultural communication in the Mediterranean meant for Shakespeare and his perception of England is a question that my study investigates. I suggest that Shakespeare’s texts do not favour the Mediterranean empires’ mobility and intercultural activities; in his imagination, the Mediterranean doesn’t appear as a Happy Multicultural Land. It’s one of my thesis’s central arguments that Shakespeare represents Mediterranean as a space where the dangers of shipwreck, conversions, and identity shifts exist alongside the wealth and commercial opportunities. Shakespeare’s plots function, in a way, to say that the intercultural exchanges always end in tragic consequences; intermarriages fail, commercial exchanges are often dangerous, and mobility on the sea has transformative effects on the individual.

I argue throughout my study that Shakespeare’s Mediterranean plays employ the cultural and religious diversity of the region as a plot device for raising the conflicts of the play. Towards showing how the mobility of Mediterranean empires and its

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<sup>9</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 761.

<sup>10</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 15.

societal consequences are problematized in Shakespeare, my first chapter analyses the interconnectedness in the empires of antiquity and its dangerous outcomes as represented in Shakespeare's Greek and Roman plays. *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, is a play that puts forth Mediterranean connectivity which can accommodate a long-distance love affair between a Roman commander and an Egyptian empress. The result of such an affair between a 'western' man and an 'eastern' woman, however, is the tragic deaths of the both. In *Titus Andronicus*, too, the contacts between the Goths, the Romans, and the Moor bring along violently tragic consequences. Such intercultural contacts resulting in tragic ends are strikingly observed in Shakespeare's ancient and modern plays set in the Mediterranean.

It is most probable that Shakespeare's imagination of the empire was shaped by the ancient Greek and Roman empires as well as his contemporary empires such as Ottoman, Venice, and Habsburg, which were all tied up to the Mediterranean. It wouldn't be wrong to claim that Mediterranean was a lake of empires throughout history and each of these empires depended on the legacy of the former. Romans claimed to be the continuation of the Greeks and also the Ottoman Empire regarded itself as the continuing legacy of the Roman Empire especially after the capture of the Roman capital Constantinople.<sup>11</sup> The chain of consecutive empires in the Mediterranean produced a non-ceasing diversity in the region for long centuries.

In analysing the conversations between the Mediterranean empires of different epochs, I use the notion of "chronotope" which was coined by Mikhail Bakhtin. Combining the words "chrono" (time) and "tope" (space), Bakhtin suggests by chronotope that "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history".<sup>12</sup> Drawing on Bakhtin's notion, I suggest that the time and space become one and a concrete whole in Shakespeare's Mediterranean as it presents a palimpsest of historical periods gathered in one space. One can see through the layers of time by looking at Shakespeare's representation of the Mediterranean space. His

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<sup>11</sup> Braudel argues throughout his *The Mediterranean* that empires and civilizations have been built upon one another throughout centuries in the Mediterranean.

<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 84.

plots that deal with the empires of different time periods speak to one another and create a unified understanding of the Mediterranean space. Accordingly, I also explore in my chapters how empires and dramatic elements of time and space dissolve into the Mediterranean chronotope.

Most of Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays, which make about twenty in total, demonstrate the Mediterranean chronotope through mobility of people as well as the plots themselves which constantly move between spaces and time frames in consecutive scenes. However, plays like *Comedy of Errors*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night* etc. where the plot involves movements across numerous settings in the Mediterranean but does not require an intense multicultural contact, which mostly results in tragic ends, will not be discussed in depth in this study although they are set in the Mediterranean. Such plays, in fact, support my thesis's arguments by showing the de facto mobility of the Mediterranean but do not delve into multiculturalism and its implications. By focusing on the representation of intercultural relations, my contention is to show that Mediterranean as a lake of empires - a dominant single empire or rivalling multiple empires depending on the era - is employed by Shakespeare to comment on England's imperial desire and the multicultural consequences that it might bring along.

While speaking of the clashes of diversity in Mediterranean empires, we shouldn't neglect the potential impact of the violent conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants of England on Shakespeare's imagination. Besides being the space of the Biblical and the Classical past, the Mediterranean was also the stronghold of Catholicism in Shakespeare's day. The Catholic threat of Spain and Vatican came from the Mediterranean against the early modern England which was hunting its Catholics in an attempt to homogenize the nation. This was an attempt of eliminating the religious difference in the construction of English identity, which has its reflections in Shakespeare's representation of the multiculturalisms of the Mediterranean. One can even argue that Shakespeare actually talked about this predominant conflict of his age avoiding censorship by setting his plays in the Mediterranean. Even so, Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays offer much more than that in their reflections of the 'popular' topics of the age.

Daniel Vitkus's *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*, which is a work that my study often draws on, attempts to explain the interest in the Mediterranean and its multiculturalism in Elizabethan stage by accentuating the English desire for an empire at this age. What he calls a "discursive imperialism" emerges from the imperial envy which was born of England's inferiority complex, its collective desire for power and wealth which were centred on the Mediterranean.<sup>13</sup> The aspiration to attain the wealth of the Mediterranean that can be traced in the narratives of the early modern era, therefore, manifested itself in the form of a discursive imperialism before the emergence of the material one. We should be careful, though, not to call this imperial envy of this period an empire in order not to fall into an anachronism. As Nabil Matar and Daniel Vitkus recurrently stress<sup>14</sup>, this was an age when England was in the *search* of building an empire, not yet building one. Shakespeare's descriptions of the wealthy Mediterranean with an intense traffic invite us to read such an imperial envy between the lines. I suggest that Shakespeare's representation of Mediterranean empires and multiculturalism can be read as a "dress-rehearsal" for the British Empire to come in that it sets forth the image of the empire in full-suit just before the empire arrives. My intention, however, is not to seek the answer for if Shakespeare wished England to be an empire; I, instead, investigate what empire meant and suggested to him through his imagination and representation of the ancient and contemporary empires.

Surely, as a Renaissance child, Shakespeare's imagination of the empire was greatly influenced by the ancient Greeks and Romans. For the Romans *imperium* meant "rule over extensive, far-flung territories, far beyond the original homeland of the ruler".<sup>15</sup> It is this *imperium* that we encounter in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus Andronicus* which demonstrate the territorial expansions of the Roman Empire. Those outside this *imperium* were the barbarians, which is an idea that originated in ancient Greece<sup>16</sup>, and those inside could also sometimes *turn* barbarian. Such politics of barbarity is, for example, central to *Titus Andronicus*, in relation to both the Goths

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<sup>13</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Matar, Nabil. *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 18; Vitkus names his second chapter of his *Turning Turk* "Before Empire" to emphasize the stage of imperial envy in the early modern English history.

<sup>15</sup> Howe, Stephen. *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Malkin, Irad. *Mediterranean Paradigms and Classical Antiquity*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 61.

and the Moor in the play. The empires' civilizing missions have always existed and manifested itself in different forms and towards different groups of people. Also in Shakespeare's texts, their contacts with the uncivilized world outside their borders are multiple; the Goths and the Moor in *Titus Andronicus*, Egypt in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Caliban in the *Tempest*, Turks in *Othello*, and the examples can be multiplied as I am discussing more at length in my chapters. However, when Shakespeare is in question one should note that such categorizations of outsider vs. insider, the self vs. the other, the civilized vs. the barbarous always come with question marks and the distinctions are never clear-cut. Hence, inclusions and exclusions in the empire are constantly questioned in Shakespeare's texts through his imagination of the Mediterranean empires, which was the centre of his world, past and present.

In my first chapter, I analyse the impacts of Mediterranean connectivity and mobility on the individual and the imperial society through Shakespeare's ancient plays. While drawing a picture of the Mediterranean chronotope in these plays, my focus is on the transformative and distortive effects of frequency of travels on the sea and the multicultural contacts on the land. In this chapter, Shakespeare's Greek play *Pericles* becomes a guiding text in delving into the transformations that the protagonist goes through when too mobile in the Mediterranean. Along with analysing the Roman protagonist of *Antony and Cleopatra* through the same lenses, I also seek the implications of the imperial expansion and the integration of the 'others' in the Roman empire. In my analysis of the Roman plays *Titus Andronicus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, I look at the dissolution and degeneration of the Roman Empire following its expansion and contact with the others.

My second chapter, then, moves on to investigate how Shakespeare imagined the multiculturalism of the Mediterranean empires of his present time, marked by the rivalry between the Ottomans and the Venetians.<sup>17</sup> Although the Roman and Ottoman capital Constantinople is missing as a setting in Shakespeare's plays, its 16<sup>th</sup> century rival Venice occupies a very significant post in the bard's imagination. The commercial activities and the maritime empire built by this city-state seem to have fascinated Shakespeare. Accordingly, these two aspects of the early modern

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<sup>17</sup> Braudel puts a lot of emphasis on the military and commercial rivalry between the Ottomans and Venetians in his accounts of the Mediterranean history.

Venice are emphasized separately in Shakespeare's Venetian plays – the traffic of commerce in *The Merchant of Venice* and the maritime warfare intended to secure its capitalism in *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. The spice and silk trade, for example, is mentioned a few times in the texts for drawing attention to Venice's role in the world trade and economy. The intensive trade that Venice administers as seen in these two plays reminds the audience of the wealth and commercial opportunities that the Mediterranean offered the English in Shakespeare's day.

The maritime empire established by Venice had to inevitably engage in cultural exchanges brought by the merging of different ethnicities, religions, and cultures, as required by the concept of empire. Paul Cantor suggests in his article "The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean" that "Venice with its colonial outposts like Cyprus, sat at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, and hence at its great cultural crosscurrents".<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, Venice's potential as an interesting setting where cultures meet, exchange and *clash* didn't escape Shakespeare's attention. While Venice was seen as a model mercantile society in the early modern England, Shakespeare doesn't seem to idealize the Venetian society as his texts complicate Venice's multiculturalism and puts forth its potentiality for tragic ends, be it between the Jewish moneylender Shylock and the Venetian merchant Antonio in *Merchant of Venice* or between the black Moor Othello and his Venetian wife Desdemona in *Othello*.

Although the Ottoman-Venetian rivalry for the dominion in the Mediterranean and its trade draws Shakespeare's attention and finds its place in *Othello*, it is interesting that we don't hear the voice of Turks in his texts; they are never put into a character. What complicates the absence of Turks on Shakespeare's stage is that the Ottoman was actually one of the most significant gateways to the Mediterranean for the Elizabethan England especially due to the capitulations agreement and the Levant Company.<sup>19</sup> While the Moors, Jews, and the subaltern Caliban can *speak* in Shakespeare's Mediterranean world, the Turk does not have a voice and is the warlike barbarian who is fought against or whom the noble characters *turn* into if

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<sup>18</sup> Cantor, Paul A. "The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean". *Literature Compass*. Vol.3:4. July 2016, p. 904.

<sup>19</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 625-29.



they end up being cruel. I argue in this chapter that the Venetian empire employs the Jew and the Moor, who are the internal enemies, to rival and fight against the ultimate enemy Turk. I discuss the dramatic function of the offstage Turk more at length in relation to the Mediterranean dangers of conversions and re-conversions that can be observed in Othello the Moor who eventually turn into an enemy in Venice.

It can also be very interesting, in my opinion, to explore the themes of transformation, conversion and *turning* in Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays in the light of the recurrent shipwreck events. I suggest that the shipwrecks that we come across in Shakespeare's almost all Mediterranean plays not only allude to the actual sunken ships of English traders in Shakespeare's day<sup>20</sup> but also denote the threats of transformations and things gone up-side-down which are usually followed by the shipwreck in the plot. *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice* can be examples of Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays where a catastrophic shipwreck changes the course of events and results in conflicts to be resolved in the rest of the play. The danger of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean, therefore, is one of the threads through which I analyse what the Mediterranean Sea stood for in Shakespeare's imagination, both as a metaphor of going up-side-down and a literary device of conflict and resolution. It should also be noted furthermore that the shipwreck is a common theme which connects Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays, ancient and modern, and help us speak of a somewhat unified understanding of the perilous Mediterranean in Shakespeare's works.

*The Tempest* with its opening scene of the "tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning" is probably the play where the 'shipwreck' is the most dominant as is also evident from its name. Being allegedly the last play that Shakespeare wrote on his own, it was written during the reign of King James I, when British expeditions in the Atlantic increased rapidly, resulting also in many shipwrecks<sup>21</sup>. Such attempts of

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<sup>20</sup> For narratives on the dangers that Englishmen faced in the Mediterranean in the early modern period, see *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* ed. Daniel Vitkus, intro. Nabil Matar (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> McCarthy, William J. "Gambling on Empire: The Economic Role of Shipwreck in the Age of Discovery" *International Journal of Maritime History*. 23:2. December 2011, p. 69-84.

Discovery<sup>22</sup> and its consequences did not inevitably escape Shakespeare's attention and his *Tempest* poses the questions of encounter with the 'natives', colonialism, and civilization vs. nature. The context of the play, being the latest by Shakespeare and a Jacobean play, and its content allow room for a post-colonial reading seeking the implications of the establishment of the British Empire. When Edward Gibbon's famous paradigm of the decline and fall of an empire<sup>23</sup> is followed, the birth of the British Empire, then, is tracked back to Shakespeare's time, when both the Levant Company was founded as part of the Empire's Mediterranean wing and the English naval expeditions to the Americas were intensified. The third chapter of my study aims to track this birth of the British Empire and its implications in Shakespeare's imagination in respect to both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in his *The Tempest*. However, it's important to remind, as Matar and Vitkus also often note, that speaking of the British Empire in Shakespeare's plays can be anachronistic but it does help us in understanding the emerging imperialism of the early modern era.<sup>24</sup>

In accordance with the increasing imperialism of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, the Atlantic is so much in question in *The Tempest* that some critics even argued that its setting is not the Mediterranean but the Atlantic against the strong textual evidence for the opposite. I will repeat the post-colonial critics and argue that Caliban character in the *Tempest* corresponds, in many aspects, to the Native Americans encountered by the European man in the Age of Discovery and the phonetic resemblance of his name to Montaigne's cannibals strongly support such an argument. Also, Shakespeare's representation of the "savage and deformed slave" Caliban as the representative of the 'other' bodies can be addressed within the multiculturalism debate and demonstrate Shakespeare's concern with this yet emerging discussion regarding the new 'other', which I aim to analyse in consideration of the old 'others' in the Mediterranean. In the same line with Shakespeare's representation of Mediterranean multiculturalism in ancient empires and the Venetian society that I analyse in my first and second chapters, his questioning of the encounter with the native and its results is much sophisticated and

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<sup>22</sup> Narratives of 'discovery' of the Americas are considered to be imperialist narratives, see Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World*. (London: Reaktion, 1997), p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* has been a leading work for analysing civilizations and empires through the decline and fall paradigm.

<sup>24</sup> Cantor, Paul A. "The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean". *Literature Compass*. Vol.3:4. July 2016, p. 899.

multi-layered. “Shakespeare’s portrayal of Caliban is a remarkable anticipation of the problematic position of the colonial subject as it was emerging in the New World in Shakespeare’s day”.<sup>25</sup> The transformative impacts and dangers of mobility and multicultural contacts are also implied in relation to the British Empire in *The Tempest*. After having explored the complexities and dangers of imperial multiculturalism in his previous plays set in Mediterranean empires, Shakespeare’s last play finally warns against the perils awaiting the newly emerging British Empire.

Shakespeare’s choice of setting his play on the British Empire in the Mediterranean tells much about the centrality of the Mediterranean in his imagination. Daniel Vitkus accordingly suggests: “Even the empires in the New World in Shakespeare’s day were being carved out – not yet by the British – but by Mediterranean people, the Spanish and the Portuguese. Looking for empire as a subject in Shakespeare only leads us back to the Mediterranean as the centre of his imagination”.<sup>26</sup> It’s one of the key points of my study that the Mediterranean was the centre of both Shakespeare’s imagination as the realm of literature, philosophy and culture he was fed with and of the world he was living in with its empires which England aspired to be like. Braudel, accordingly, shows the link between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in the following passage:

[Mediterranean civilization] spread in fact against the current of world history, reaching out to northern Europe which was soon to become the centre of world power: Mediterranean, Latin culture was to Protestant Europe what Greece was to Rome. It rapidly crossed Atlantic both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and with this geographical extension over the ocean, the Mediterranean sphere of influence was finally complete, embracing Hispano-Portuguese America, the most brilliant America of the time.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, Shakespeare’s Atlantic is bound to be also related to the Mediterranean. Because Shakespeare’s imagination was centred on the Mediterranean as the space of

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<sup>25</sup> Cantor, Paul A. “The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean”. *Literature Compass*. Vol.3:4. July 2016, p. 897.

<sup>26</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 99.

<sup>27</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 585-6.

cultural exchanges and diversity, the barren island where Algerian witch Sycorax and her son Caliban lived is also situated in the Mediterranean.

With its stress on the centrality of the Mediterranean in Shakespeare's world, my thesis can be a contribution towards the postcolonial studies by problematizing the dichotomy of the East and West when the Mediterranean is in question. Instead of the dichotomy of East and West which Edward Said suggests to polarize the distinction<sup>28</sup>, I look at it as the distinction between a centre Mediterranean with complexities of multiculturalism and the periphery England which desires to be the centre by looking onto the present empires as an inspiration before its imperial aims. As I have indicated earlier, when Shakespeare's representation of Mediterranean is in concern, we witness a multicultural world which incorporates the Moor, the Christian, the Jew, the barbarian, and the colonial subject in the context of imperial expansion and the mercantile activities. Post-colonial criticism with a focus on empire is, therefore, the primary approach I adopt in this study towards analysing Shakespeare's representation of the multicultural Mediterranean world.

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<sup>28</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage, 1978), p. 46.

## **Chapter 1: Mediterranean Mobility in Ancient Empires: Shakespeare's Greeks, Romans and 'Others'**

As a Renaissance child, Shakespeare was remarkably attracted to classical Greek and Roman sources which made him set a considerable number of his plays in antiquity. Taking ancient Greek and Roman empires as their settings, Shakespeare's ancient plays had to engage in the representation of the multicultural Mediterranean that the concept of empire necessarily gave birth to. While the mobile people, information and cultures in the ancient empires connected the Mediterranean world, they also brought along destructive consequences. In this chapter, I look at the travels of people in the Mediterranean in Shakespeare's ancient plays towards explaining and analysing their impacts in terms of the individual's identity and the multicultural experience of the imperial society. His representation of the ancient multiculturalism sustained by the mobility explores the potentially dangerous results of fast and intense travels inside and across the sea.

In Shakespeare's work, the ancient Mediterranean appears to be a world that can accommodate a long distance love affair between Rome and Egypt which is supported by mobile people, mobile information, and mobile cultures. However, the result of these travels in the sea often appears to be chaos which works towards comic elements in Shakespeare's comedies and tragic consequences in his ancient tragedies. In this chapter, I first look at the representation of the chaotic sea itself as the space of dangerous travels and the impacts of the sea on the protagonists of Shakespeare's ancient plays. After analysing the mobility's impacts on the individuals' identity, I move on to explain the dangers that awaits the Empire for being involved in multicultural relations as part of its territorial expansion. In explaining the distortive impact of the sea travels on the individual, I propose the notion of "identity nausea" which explains the plight and ambivalence that the protagonist experiences following his frequent travels on the sea. For my analysis of the identity nausea and the transformative multiculturalism, I look at Greek play *Pericles*, which accommodates the most amount of sea traffic among all of Shakespeare's Mediterranean plays, and two Roman plays *Antony and Cleopatra* and

*Titus Andronicus* which put forth the transformative impacts of the contact with the ‘others’ and multiculturalism.

### ***Identity Nausea of the Protagonist***

Some of Shakespeare’s ancient plays establish the de facto Mediterranean mobility and converse with his other plays which show the tragic consequences of it in terms of both individuals and the imperial society. To start with the mobility’s distortive impacts on the individual, I suggest that Shakespeare’s protagonists who are too mobile on the sea start losing their sense of belonging to a certain place and experience identity shifts, which I call their identity nausea. They doubt, question, and even forget their own identities following the perilous journeys that they take in the sea. I explore this identity nausea in relation to Shakespeare’s Greek *Pericles* and Roman Antony as they are the most frequently traveling protagonists in his plays.

When mobility in the ancient Mediterranean in Shakespeare’s works is in question, the first text that one looks to is *Pericles* whose plot remarkably unfolds in multiple Eastern Mediterranean port cities and largely the sea itself. The seafaring experience of the titular character Prince of Tyre, who travels across Mediterranean cities such as Antioch, Ephesus, Tarsus, Pentapolis and Tyre throughout the play, tells that Shakespeare imagined the Mediterranean as a much globalized space where mobility is an everyday fact of life. I suggest that *Pericles* is a significant sea play which one can employ as a paradigm to speak about the effects that the frequency of sea journeys can make on an individual’s life and identity, exemplified the best with the play’s protagonist<sup>29</sup>. The play is structured on the protagonist’s perpetual motion on the sea which results in tragic events. I argue that the sea causes identity nausea in *Pericles* who seems to not recognize himself and his social status after the shipwrecks that transform the course of events. So as to convey the internal tides in *Pericles*’s self, the play embodies an extended metaphor of sea journeys and shipwrecks transforming his identity; as he along with the ship “drives up and

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<sup>29</sup> Filippis, Simonetta. “Shipwrecks and Lost Identities in Shakespeare’s Plays: The Case of *Pericles*”, *Shakespeare Seminar* 9, 2011. p. 42.

down”<sup>30</sup> in the Mediterranean, his life turns up-side-down – tossed between shipwrecks (3.1.50).

Shakespeare sets up the sea as a challenging, threatening, dangerous, lawless, and chaotic space where Pericles is confronted by shipwrecks which transform and dissolve his identity. In order to escape the melancholic “tempest” that he goes through because of the dangers that his adventurous journey to Antioch brought at the beginning of the play, Pericles decides to “go travel for a while”<sup>31</sup> (1.2.118). The first act of the play establishes the Mediterranean as a perilous space for Pericles to travel in:

HELICANUS: To show his sorrow, he'd correct himself;  
So puts himself unto the shipman's toil,  
With whom each minute threatens life or death.

THALIARD: He 'scaped the land, to perish at sea.  
...Your lord has betaken himself to unknown  
travels<sup>32</sup> (1.3.24-35)

It is established from the first act of the play that both the shipman and the sea are not to be trusted. Traveling with the shipman is life threatening and sea is an unknown space where men perish. Thaliard foreshadows that Pericles will be perished at sea while escaping from the troubles of the land. The outcome of his unknown travels in this “wat'ry empire” will be the devastating shipwrecks which are followed by recurrent identity losses in Pericles. Pericles's perpetual motion in the sea leads to ambivalences, which he needs to “repair” in order to get the plot to resolution at the end.

Having established the idea of sea as a dangerous place and seafaring a life threatening adventure, the play swiftly moves on to put this idea into action. Gower functioning as the Chorus tells the story of Pericles's first shipwreck:

GOWER: He, doing so, put forth to seas,  
Where, when men been, there's seldom ease  
For now the wind begins to blow;

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<sup>30</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Pericles*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Thunder above and deep below  
Makes such unquiet that the ship  
Should house him safe is wracked and split;  
And he, good Prince, having all lost,  
By waves from coast to coast is tost.  
All perishen of man, of pelf,  
Ne aught escapen but himself;  
Till fortune, tired with doing bad,  
Threw him ashore, to give him glad<sup>33</sup> (2. 1. 27-38).

The sea is described as a place with seldom ease and lots of storms and thunder. The ship that was supposed to keep Pericles safe is split and wracked, which also “shakes” his “fortune”. His travels in the Mediterranean cause cracks also in his self, not only his ship. The fluidity and unruliness of the sea destabilize and control Pericles’s fortune as he also reveals while describing the first shipwreck:

PERICLES: Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks,  
Washed me from shore to shore, and left my breath  
Not to think on but ensuing death<sup>34</sup>(2.1. 5-8).

After this first tempest and shipwreck in “the rough seas that spares not any man”<sup>35</sup> (2.1.133), Pericles loses his sense of belonging when he lands on the shores of Pentapolis. He seems to be going through an inner struggle for defining his own identity when introducing himself to the fishermen on the shore:

PERICLES: A man whom both the water and the wind,  
In that vast tennis court, hath made the ball  
For them to play upon entreats you pity him.  
[ ... ]  
What I have been I have forgot to know;  
But what I am want teaches me to think on:  
A man thronged up with cold<sup>36</sup> (2.1. 60-71)

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 25.



When the water and the wind appearing in the form of a sea storm make a ball out of Pericles as he describes here, he forgets what he has been before. As is also understood from Pericles's passive voice in this passage, he has *been* "played" by the sea storm and transformed into a human that he himself does not recognize. While the storm tosses Pericles around the sea like a ball in a tennis court, it also causes nausea in his identity as well as his body. Thus, he identifies himself to the fishermen only as a man thronged up with cold, not as the Prince of Tyre.

Like in *Pericles*, I argue that the Roman protagonist of *Antony and Cleopatra* also goes through identity shifts and loss of sense of belonging since he frequently travels in the Mediterranean. It will be much appropriate to call *Antony and Cleopatra* a very Mediterranean play, since the word "sea" itself is used 32 times throughout the text. Many of its scenes taking place in the sea, the play portrays the independent and fluid realm, which Antony calls "the empire of the sea"<sup>37</sup> (1.2.201), in contrast to the land's fixedness and immobility. Therefore, because Antony constantly moves between Egypt and Rome via the chaotic and nauseous sea, like Pericles, he experiences recurrent identity shifts and losses throughout the play. As one of the three emperors of Roman Empire and a glorious warrior, Antony finds himself in a duality when his love affair with the Egyptian empress Cleopatra requires him to engage in frequent travels between Rome and Egypt. Antony's identity nausea appears in the form of his duality between Rome and Egypt, and sea and land. His duality is accentuated from the very beginning of the play as the following conversation between Cleopatra and the messenger who brings message from Antony in Rome reveals in the first scene:

ALEXAS: "Good friend", quoth he,  
"Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends  
This treasure of an oyster;  
[...]  
CLEOPATRA: What, was he sad, or merry?  
ALEXAS: Like to the time o' th' year between the' extremes  
Of hot and cold, he was nor sad nor merry.  
CLEOPATRA: O, well-divided disposition!

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<sup>37</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 25.

[...] his remembrance lay

In Egypt with his joy; but between both<sup>38</sup> (1.5.62).

Although the messenger describes Antony's neither sad nor merry disposition, the phrase describing him to be "between the extremes" also applies to his duality between Rome and Egypt which often appear as two extremes. As I will analyse more at length later in the chapter, Antony's duality between Rome and Egypt is also accompanied by his duality between the land and the sea. Because he is too mobile in the sea, he becomes inevitably attracted to the sea which is also exemplified with his choice in gifting Cleopatra the treasure of an oyster in this passage. Shakespeare here uses the word oyster instead of pearl to draw attention to the sea creature that produced the pearl and in this way Antony's attraction to sea.

Antony is well-divided between his joy in Egypt and duties as one of the three emperors in Rome; but what is physically in between the two is the Mediterranean Sea. His movement between the two worlds happens in the realm of the sea, which causes identity losses and shifts throughout the play. Pericles and Antony's persistent engagement with this 'fluid' space, therefore, shakes their balance as established noblemen and causes identity nausea through transformation in their self. As Antony tries to establish a balance between his Roman duties as an emperor and Egyptian love affair with Cleopatra, he fails and his identity is gradually lost as the text suggests.

The play shows that Antony makes many travels between Egypt and Rome in a very short time. These frequent and fast travels, like Pericles, make it finally difficult for Antony to "hold [his] visible shape" at the end of the play<sup>39</sup> (4.14.17). Before Antony himself admits to have lost his Roman warrior identity, Shakespeare reminds Antony's identity shifts in the first scene when Philo says upon Antony's rejection of the messengers from Rome:

PHILO:            Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony  
                         He comes too short of that great property

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

Which still should go with Antony<sup>40</sup> (1.1.66).

When in Egypt, Antony sometimes is not the old Antony who won wars and became an emperor of Roman Empire. He doesn't hold stable when he keeps recurrently entering the two spaces, Egypt and Rome, which are implied to be antithetical to each other in the play. After many sea journeys that Antony makes throughout the play, he himself becomes unsure if he is recognized as "Antony" from outside due to the identity nausea that he goes through. After the sea war that he fights with Caesar, Antony asks Eros: "thou yet behold'st me?"<sup>41</sup> (4.14.1). As an undefined space occupied by the unruly pirates, Mediterranean is capable of causing identity nausea in a Roman emperor who used to be a glorious, devoted and stable warrior.

### *Sea as an Unruly Realm*

It is essential, I believe, to also understand what the sea stands for in Shakespeare's imagination since it opens ways to analyse how it transforms identities. Shakespeare's ancient plays portray that the Mediterranean world is connected with the frequent travels in the sea but if read more closely it is possible to see that the Mediterranean Sea constitutes a world on its own, apart from the worlds that it connects. Both in *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, Mediterranean is a space that is not bound by the rules and established systems of the land, which is owned by different political entities. It physically connects the distant lands, like Egypt and Rome, allowing communication in between through ships but is disconnected from the land as a realm on its own.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, when Menas proposes to Pompey the plot of cutting the cable between the ship and the shore to "fall to the throats" of the "three world-sharers"<sup>42</sup>, who are Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, and Lepidus (2.7.82), he suggests that the ship when unattached from the land falls into a lawless realm where his plot can be realized. Menas and Pompey can kill the Roman emperors in the sea despite the treaty that they signed a few minutes before; because laws of the land are made invalid when in the middle of the sea. Once it is not connected to the land, Sea seems to be outside the world that the "three world-sharers" share. In Shakespeare, the Sea

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

appears as a chaotic space where assassinations do not count, and dangers of shipwreck, subversion and identity shift constantly challenge the noble characters.

The shipwrecks and perilous travels in this unruly realm not only shake and transform the individual but also subvert the course of events and disturb the social balances. The second shipwreck event in *Pericles* puts forth the sea to have its own rules and regulations where the established identities of the land/civilization melt into the fluidity of water. While sailing from Pentapolis to Tyre, Pericles's wife dies in childbirth during the storm, which brings a moment when he recognizes that his social status is dissolved when in the middle of sea. It is a place where his position in the social hierarchy is of no value as his conversation with the sailors in the storm reveals:

1.SAILOR: Sir, your queen must overboard. The sea works high;  
the wind is loud and will not lie till the ship be cleared  
of the dead.

PERICLES: That's your superstition.

1.SAILOR: Pardon us, sir: with us at sea it hath been still observed;  
and we are strong in custom. Therefore briefly yield'er;  
for she must overboard straight.

PERICLES: As you think meet. Most wretched queen!<sup>43</sup> (3.1. 51-8)

Pericles's resistance against burying his wife in the sea cannot persist as the sailors are "strong" at sea. Even though he is the prince of Tyre on the land, when in the sea Pericles has to submit to the instructions of the sailors and give up the dead body of his wife. Pericles's status as a prince in social hierarchy "dissolves" and he realizes that he is in the kingdom of the sailors and must obey their customs.<sup>44</sup> Noble identities dissolving in the sea in Shakespeare show that the sea can be home to the sailors who are not bound by the social structure of the land and the unruly people like the pirates, not the established noblemen like Pericles and Antony.

Because it is an unruly realm, the sea also appears in opposition to civilization in the plays. Following his first shipwreck, even if Pericles doesn't remember what he has been, as I have analysed above, he knows that he is a man and therefore has the right

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<sup>43</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Pericles*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> Publicover, Laurence. "Shakespeare at Sea". *Essays in Criticism* Vol. 64 No. 2, 2014. p. 139.

to burial – which means to dwell in the land where the human has established civilizations across centuries. That is why he begs Nature: “having thrown [me] from your “wat’ry grave,/ Here to have death in peace is all [I]’ll crave”<sup>45</sup> (2.1. 10-11). He also asks the fishermen that he met on the shore to bury him even if he doesn’t know who he is:

PERICLES: My veins are chill  
And have no more of life than may suffice  
To give my tongue that heat to ask your help;  
Which if you shall refuse, when I am dead,  
For that I am a man, pray you see me buried<sup>46</sup> (2.1.72-77).

Pericles sees burial as an unquestionable right that comes with the quality of being a man. As opposed to the mobile and fluid space of the sea, the land is fixed with civilizations established on it. Having escaped the perils and lawless realm of the sea, therefore, Pericles wants to be part of the civilization ever after. The association of burial with civilization and laws in Shakespeare also alludes to the famous Greek tragedy *Antigone*, which talks about the plight of the protagonist who strives to bury her brother against those who claimed that he was lawless.

This theme of being buried in the land vs. being left in the wilderness can, therefore, be explored within the context of Mediterranean chronotope, which I will address more in depth later in the chapter. In accordance with Pericles’s plea to have a grave and Antigone’s struggle to bury her brother for being civilized, those that are thought to be not civilized are denied burial in the Roman play *Titus Andronicus*. In the first act, Titus denies to bury his “lawless” son that he killed, and the very last scene of the play suggests that the Goth queen Tamora is given “no funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed” and because “her life was beastly and devoid of pity” she is thrown to “beasts and birds to prey”<sup>47</sup> (5.3. 195-198). The uneasiness of not being granted a funeral and a dry grave is also the first feeling that *The Tempest*’s Gonzalo experiences after the catastrophic shipwreck. I suggest that the characters’ desire of being buried in Greek, Roman, and early modern Mediterranean texts not only unite these plays with a consistent understanding of civilization vs. the unruly Nature, but

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<sup>45</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Pericles*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>47</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Titus Andronicus*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 194.

they also show the Mediterranean chronotope in terms of the texts and characters existing in the same space in different times.

The unruly sea appears in contradiction with the notion of civilization also in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Although Antony calls the Mediterranean “empire of the sea” for being a very powerful entity penetrating into a vast geography, it cannot accommodate political establishments which make it a place to dwell for the pirates. This is the reason why the dangers always come from the Mediterranean in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The dangers of the seductive Oriental witch and the threat of Pompey, who allies with the pirates of the sea to attack Rome, are conveyed through the Mediterranean. Almost all characters in the play suddenly become anxious when “Pompey is strong at sea”<sup>48</sup> (1.4.41); because controlling this unruly, fluid and borderless space is a capacity that should be feared. Accordingly, throughout the play those who are strong in the land but weak at the sea are deemed to lose.

#### ***Protagonists’ Attraction to the Sea***

This strength of the sea also has the capacity to dissolve the identity of the traveller so much so that they start becoming a part of it. The sea absorbs the person who is too mobile into its body, which, I suggest, also explains fish imagery used for Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cleopatra imagines fishes to be Antony:

CLEOPATRA: Give me mine angle; we’ll to the river  
...My bended hook shall pierce  
Their slimy jaws, and as I draw them up  
I’ll think them every one an Antony  
And say “Aha! You’re caught”<sup>49</sup> (2.5.14).

Because Antony comes from the sea like fishes for Cleopatra, he is something to be “caught” which is an image that reoccurs when Octavius Caesar comments on Cleopatra’s dead body that “she looks like sleep,/As she would catch another Antony”<sup>50</sup> (5.2.416). Elsewhere in the play he is also called “dolphin-like”. Such fish

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<sup>48</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 37.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

imagery used for Antony echoes Alonso's pearl eyes in *The Tempest*; being involved in the sea brings a state of hybridity between the water and the earth.

Antony's decision to fight Caesar "by sea, by sea..."<sup>51</sup> despite the weakness of his navy further shows his attraction to the sea (3.7.52); as a space of lost and reversed identities, Mediterranean attracts Antony who is stuck between his glorious warrior identity in Rome and lascivious lover identity in Egypt. Shakespeare's Mediterranean shipwreck metaphor that I propose to reflect the chaos, reversed hierarchies, and things gone up-side-down in his plays takes the form of a sea battle in *Antony and Cleopatra*. As a result of his insistence on battling in the sea, Antony loses his power and Roman glory entirely. It is during this battle that Cleopatra betrays him by escaping with her navy which shakes Antony's one of the two loyalties. When Antony follows Cleopatra's fleet leaving his soldiers on the battlefield, this sea battle causes damage also in his Roman warrior self that he had previously been glorified for. His abandonment of the commandership can be read as the elimination of social ranks once again in the middle of the Mediterranean. It is such events taking place in the sea that raise the conflicts of the play which eventually lead to the tragic deaths of the two lovers at the end. The resolution of *Antony and Cleopatra* is prepared by the dissolutions that take place in the sea.

In *Pericles* also, the resolution of the play is prepared by the dissolutions in the sea that make the conflicts of the play. After the second shipwreck where he loses his wife in childbirth, Pericles names his "fresh-new seafarer" daughter Marina "for she was born at sea", which also shows his attraction to the sea like Antony<sup>52</sup> (3.1.45, 3.3.17). Both Marina's birth in the sea and the meaning of her name become the forces to reconstruct Pericles's identity which was lost twice following the catastrophic shipwrecks. Pericles's movements in the sea and the consequent two shipwrecks function as events creating the conflicts of the play which put the dramatic action underway by transforming his life and identity.

The resolution of the conflicts and the reconstruction of Pericles's identity had to be also accomplished by another travel, this time towards his daughter Marina whose name suggests a meeting point between the land and the sea. As marina is a platform

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Pericles*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), p. 47, 54.

that connects the sea to the land, Marina becomes the reconciling force that brings Pericles's lost identity back. The father and the daughter meet after 14 years in Pericles's ship, which acts as another reconciling platform between the land and the sea. It is only when he recognizes his daughter Marina that Pericles finally reveals his identity: "I am Pericles of Tyre"<sup>53</sup> (5.1.240). Restoration of Pericles's identity - which was wracked by the sea movements - and his union with his daughter and wife - both of whom he had lost because of the shipwreck - end Pericles's journey of self-rediscovery and resolves the conflicts of the play.

### *Speed of Mobility and Dissolution of Time and Space*

While the conflicts and resolutions are made possible through the mobility of people in *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the speed of this mobility is also employed as a plot device in making the geographically distant settings appear in the same play. Rome and Egypt, and the rest of the Mediterranean, are closely connected in *Antony and Cleopatra* with the fantastic speed of mobility of people and information, which makes the Mediterranean settings appear as close neighbours. Antony is in Athens in one scene, in Rome in the next scene and in Egypt in the following scene. The audience is not informed of the time distance between these travels, which creates in mind a mystical speed of movements in the Mediterranean.

Indeed, the play itself draws attention to its fantastic speed of mobility. When Toryne is captured by Octavius Ceasar almost in no time, Antony is surprised: "Can he be there in person? 'Tis impossible;/Strange that his power should be"<sup>54</sup> (3.7.71-2). With its unreasonable speed of mobility, the play seems to be set in the age of globalization rather than the antiquity. Braudel's theory of ancient globalization in the Mediterranean before the age of speed<sup>55</sup> is put into action in Shakespeare's plays. This speed of people's mobility is further supported with the speed of mobility of information across the Mediterranean in Shakespeare's ancient plays. The heavy and rapid traffics of letters in *Pericles* and messengers in *Antony and Cleopatra* both serve as the indications of fantastical speed of movements in the sea and as one of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 147.

<sup>55</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 1016, 1119.



the agents connecting the Mediterranean world. Both the plays revolve around many travels between the shores of Mediterranean but it is as if these travels, which would normally take months, are between two neighbouring villages rather than across vast geographies.

Besides containing mobile people and information that travel very fast, I suggest that the plots of both *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are also quite mobile. Their rapid shifts from scene to scene leads to the dissolution of also the time and space elements of the drama, along with the dissolution of the protagonists' identities. Due to the rapid pace of the protagonists' travels in and across the sea, the sense of distance in the audience is gradually lost with the scenes that continuously shift from one place to another and from one time frame to the other. *Pericles*'s scenes with sudden setting shifts such as from Antioch to Tyre and from Ephesus to Tarsus and to Ephesus again arouse the feeling that there is not much distance between these cities. Also in *Antony and Cleopatra*, rapid scene shifts between Rome, Egypt, the sea and other Mediterranean settings with almost no time difference in between dissolve the sense of time and space in the audience's mind. Especially considering the fact that they are all staged on the same stage one after another, not with much décor differentiating the settings from each other in Shakespeare's Globe, the plays embody a palimpsest of Mediterranean settings that are unified within the same space.

### ***Dissolution of Empires and Mediterranean Chronotope***

In line with the sea travels' capacity to dissolve the individual's identity, the Mediterranean Sea also dissolves the Empire as can be explored in Shakespeare's ancient texts. I suggest that Shakespeare portrays a Mediterranean into which the empires of different epochs and regions dissolve and in this way form the different layers of the Mediterranean chronotope. Fernand Braudel also describes how the Mediterranean Sea is a witness to the civilizations that it hosted through centuries in his book *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*:

The best witness to the Mediterranean's age-old past is the sea itself. This has to be said and said again; and the sea has to be seen and seen again. Simply looking at the Mediterranean cannot of course explain everything

about a complicated past created by human agents, with varying doses of calculation, caprice and misadventure. But this is a sea that patiently recreates for us scenes from the past, breathing new life into them, locating them under a sky and in a landscape that we can see with our own eyes, a landscape and sky like those of long ago. A moment's concentration or daydreaming, and that past comes back to life.<sup>56</sup>

This section of the chapter analyses the layers of the Mediterranean past which absorbed empires and how the Mediterranean recreates scenes from the past in Shakespeare's texts, to speak in Braudel's terms. Seeing this sea again and again in Shakespeare makes us notice the Mediterranean chronotope which embodies empires, societies, faiths, texts, and even characters of various eras in a single body.

Mediterranean Sea's capacity of melting empires into its body is most notable in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Despite their different worldviews, Roman and Egyptian empires built on the land, with their states, order, and law are both defined and established. When characters want to free themselves of the established systems and responsibilities of these two civilizations, they turn to the sea as the realm of ambiguity, fluidity and mobility. In an attempt to escape his imperial duties for his pleasure that lies in Egypt, Antony proclaims "Let Rome in Tiber melt and the wide arch/Of the ranged empire fall"<sup>57</sup> (1.1.38). He wishes to attain disorder and escape the solidity and rigidity of Rome by letting it 'melt' into water. The civilization that Rome established along the shores of the Mediterranean, where the wide arch of the ranged empire stands, should be made fall for Antony to escape his sedentariness in order to satisfy his desires to the full extent in Egypt. The empire should melt into a river that flows into the Mediterranean for him to sustain his seductive, chaotic and catastrophic love affair. The same case also applies to Cleopatra who wishes Egypt to melt into Nile and its creatures to turn into serpents<sup>58</sup> (2.5.97).

Tiber and Nile, as two rivers which gave birth to and sustained two big civilizations, both flow into the Mediterranean where their waters become indistinct of each other. Antony's and Cleopatra's suggestion that Rome and Egypt should melt into these

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<sup>56</sup> Fernand Braudel. *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*. (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

rivers means that they are melt into the Mediterranean, into the same water body. This image of civilizations melting into the Mediterranean as a meeting point portrays the Mediterranean chronotope. Timon's cry "Sink Athens!"<sup>59</sup> (3.6.104) in *Timon of Athens* also adds the ancient Greek layer to Shakespeare's imagery of ancient cities and civilizations dissolving into the Mediterranean chronotope where one can find Greek, Roman, Venetian, Ottoman, Egyptian, Moorish, and many other layers of Mediterranean history in Shakespeare that I also explore in my following chapters. This imagery of civilizations melting into the same water represents the layers of the Mediterranean civilizations all built upon one another; and correspondingly *Antony and Cleopatra* shows the incorporation of Egypt into the "wide-ranged empire" of Rome at the end of the play.

Moreover, the fact that Antony's tragic defeat is called "sinking"<sup>60</sup> (3.13.78), along with his identity and glory dissolving into the Mediterranean, shows the Mediterranean chronotope which absorbed glorious civilizations and warriors like Antony. One of the most memorable ones is undoubtedly Hector of *Iliad* who makes an appearance in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* and was also defeated in a Mediterranean shore like Antony. Shakespeare indeed invites his audience to observe the Mediterranean chronotope by implicitly showing the connection between the Trojan hero Hector and the Roman warrior Antony. For praising his soldiers' efforts in Act 4, Antony says "You have shown all Hectors"<sup>61</sup> (4.8.8). In this sentence, Antony not only reminds the layers of the Mediterranean chronotope that he is part of but also foreshadows his defeat by associating his party with Hector.

Shakespeare also shows how interchangeable Egypt and Rome can become at times although the Roman and Egyptian civilizations are attributed separately certain 'essential' characteristics that look in opposition to one another. They not only dissolve into the Mediterranean separately and unite there but also dissolve into one another. Sharing the shores of the same sea, the cultural and physical borders between these two ancient societies are challenged by Shakespeare through both the fantastic speed of mobility in the sea and the frequent exchanges of roles between

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<sup>59</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Timon of Athens*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 141.

<sup>60</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 169.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Antony and Cleopatra throughout the play. The recent criticism on the play accentuated the changing gender roles between the two lovers; Antony often appears as the 'passive' female while Cleopatra is the active 'male' with more agency. With scenes such as cross-dressing where Antony wears Cleopatra's "tires and mantles" and she wears "his sword Phlippan"<sup>62</sup> (2.5.27), Antony as the male representative of the 'rational' Rome is effeminized and Cleopatra as the seductive Oriental woman of the 'emotional' Egypt is masculinized. The opposites of East and West are in a way depolarized or subverted in Shakespeare; and Egypt and Rome are very often explored as interchangeable spaces which dissolve into each other in the Mediterranean chronotope.

In showing the different layers of the Mediterranean chronotope, the play also absorbs many other settings which are associated with different civilizations that existed in the Mediterranean history and space. Though the primary settings of *Antony and Cleopatra* are Rome and Egypt, a large proportion of the plot actually takes place in the Mediterranean itself and some of its other shores, which are sometimes offstage. Antony and Cleopatra's first meeting, for example, takes place in Tarsus, which is the capital of Roman Empire's Cilicia province that we come across also in *Pericles* as part of the ancient Greece. The different historical layers of these Mediterranean shores are displayed in Shakespeare's various ancient and modern plays. References to other cities and regions such as Jewry, Athens, Arabia, and Syria in *Antony and Cleopatra* make it a truly Mediterranean play, also with half of the scenes taking place in the sea itself. Similarly, the Levantine cities such as Antioch, Ephesus, Tyre, Tarsus, Pentapolis, and Mytilene in *Pericles*, which is also a very sea play, recall multiple civilizations that they hosted. Although the two plays put forth the ancient Mediterranean chronotope in the eastern coast, one cannot resist thinking of the most recent layers of the Mediterranean chronotope that were added in Shakespeare's own time: the Ottomans and the British. The British Levant Company operated its trading activities in cooperation with the Ottomans along the same coasts that Pericles travelled and that were also mentioned in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The Englishmen taking their ships and goods across these then Ottoman coasts were the most recent agents of Mediterranean mobility at the time when Shakespeare was composing his plays.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

Furthermore, along with the Greek, Roman and British layers of the Mediterranean chronotope, the plays are concerned with another layer which is equally significant in Shakespeare's imagination of the Mediterranean: the Biblical past. Although Shakespeare's Renaissance allegiance pushes for reading his Mediterranean plays based on Greek and Roman legacy, the texts show that he was also concerned with the Biblical layer of the Mediterranean chronotope. The Biblical name of the North African Aaron the Moor of *Titus Andronicus* reminds the Jewish heritage of the place that he comes from. Frequent references to the Jewry in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the images of figs and serpents, and the close contact between the serpent and Cleopatra causing her 'fall' in the play can be shown as some other examples for Shakespeare's concern with the Biblical Mediterranean. In *Antony and Cleopatra* Egypt indeed appears as Bible's Eden in the first scenes especially for Antony, whose "pleasure" and "soft-beds" lie there<sup>63</sup> (2.4.46, 2.6.63).

Shakespeare's Egypt corresponds to Eden and the tragic end of two lovers to the fall of Adam and Eve, also in terms of its flora and fauna that recall Eden. The snakes hidden in the fig basket become the instrument for Cleopatra's suicide, and hence her 'fall', and she puts them on her breast as if nursing her child. The reptile imagery is strikingly used in association with Egypt and Cleopatra quite often in the play; she is referred as "serpent" multiple times by different characters, including herself. Along with its Biblical association with Satan and seduction of Eve pointing to Cleopatra's seductive power and the fall of the two lovers, I suggest that the reptile imagery in the play also refers to the transformative effect of the movements in the Mediterranean. The characters' identity shifts and exchanges could be related to the serpents' ability of changing skins, as Antony also adopts the serpents of the Nile as his own. The images of seductive and transformative reptiles go hand in hand in the play, intertwining the Biblical connotations with the subversive force of mobility in the Mediterranean.

The image of the crocodile exemplifies it the best as it is not only used to represent Egypt and Cleopatra's fake tears to manipulate Antony, but also Antony's mobility and identity shifts with its "transmigration". The conversation between Lepidus and Antony reveals how crocodile can be both Cleopatra and Antony:

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77, 93.

LEPIDUS: What manner o' thing is your crocodile?  
 ANTONY: It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it had breadth. It is just so high as it is, and moves with its own organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and the element once out of it, it transmigrates.  
 LEPIDUS: What colour is it of?  
 ANTONY: Of its own colour too.  
 LEPIDUS: 'Tis a strange serpent.  
 ANTONY: 'Tis so, and the tears of it are wet<sup>64</sup> (2. 7. 43-52).

While Lepidus's sarcastic question about Antony's serpent and the mention of crocodile's tears in the passage associates the reptile with Cleopatra, its transmigration and movements between water and the earth refer to Antony's transformation and hybridity. The crocodile being an amphibian, an animal of both water and earth, is an embodiment of hybridity. Its movements to live in two different habitats parallel Antony's movements between Rome and Egypt and his transitions between sea and the land. The image of the crocodile, therefore, incorporates different kinds of dualities and transformations in one single body as both the Mediterranean and the play also do.

### ***Integration of Others and Degeneration of the Empire***

The two geographical and political spaces of Rome and Egypt that *Antony and Cleopatra* contradicts and reconciles at the same time are both connected and divided by the Mediterranean. The resolution of the clash between Rome and Egypt, which also makes the resolution of *Antony and Cleopatra*, depends on Rome's capacity to conquer both Cleopatra and her Egypt which are referred interchangeably throughout the play. The unification of these two distant - in every sense - places brings the plot to an end together with the tragic deaths of the two lovers. However, the possible results of this unification between the rational and rigid Rome and the emotional and decadent Egypt are unanswered in *Antony and Cleopatra*. What dangers that incorporation of Egypt, which had been established as a place of "pleasure" and "sport" from the very beginning of the play<sup>65</sup> (1.1.54), could bring to the military-

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 11.

oriented and orderly Roman Empire is a question that the play poses and leaves hanging.

I suggest, on the other hand, that Shakespeare answers this question in his *Titus Andronicus* by showing the possible outcomes that integrating the ‘others’ into the Empire can bring along. I argue that *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus Andronicus* are two Roman plays that are in conversation, complementing one another by one answering the questions that are posed in the other. The parallelisms that can be drawn between Cleopatra and the Goth Queen Tamora and between Cleopatra and Aaron the Moor allow room for such a reading. Tamora, for example, lives the fate that Cleopatra always feared and committed suicide to escape: being displayed in the Roman streets to be humiliated as the conquered queen. Tamora and the Goths are represented in general to be sexually-oriented and lustful like Cleopatra and the Egyptians. With these parallelisms, hence, her incorporation into the Roman royal house and the integration of her sons and Moor lover into the city demonstrate the potential results of Egyptians’ integration in the imperial society following the empire’s territorial expansion that is witnessed in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The opening scenes of *Titus Andronicus* accentuate the integration of the Goths into the Empire as Demetrius reveals in the first scene that it was before the conquest that “Goths were Goths”<sup>66</sup> (1.1.140). Furthermore, their queen becomes “incorporate in Rome./A Roman now adopted happily” when she marries the emperor Saturninus after her colonization<sup>67</sup> (1.1.462-63). However, once they are accepted and incorporate in Rome, these ‘others’ start degenerating Roman society, politics and laws. Tamora’s sons rape and mutilate Lavinia, they get Titus’s sons killed or banished from Rome, consequently Titus goes mad and kills and makes pie out of Tamora’s sons, Lucius allies with the Goths to attack Rome and at the end of the play he buries Aaron alive and becomes the new emperor of Rome. In unceasing acts of violence, which include murders, rape, dismemberment of body, cannibalism, and live burial, *Titus Andronicus* lists the potential outcomes that the integration of others in the city can give birth to, in the most shocking way. The violation of Rome’s walls

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<sup>66</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Titus Andronicus*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 90.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

that protect it from the outsiders and barbarians leads to Rome's becoming a "wilderness of tigers"<sup>68</sup> (3.1.54), a place that is away from civilization.

As I tried to show in relation to the two sea plays *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, perpetual motion on the sea creates nausea in the protagonists, who are too much involved with the unruly, and shakes their balance. In *Titus Andronicus* too, even if he doesn't engage in the sea, Shakespeare's noble protagonist's balance is disturbed by the contact with the unruly spaces and their people. Having fought for long years against the barbarous and "lawless" Goths, Titus Andronicus embodies contradicting identities and goes through transformations throughout the play. He appears to be a devoted Roman warrior but a cruel father at the same time, a patriarch filled with pride and a self-dispraising person, civilized yet very often barbarous. Victorious over the Goths, he is praised by the Romans in the first act for his Roman nobility but his decision to sacrifice the Goth prince in exchange of the Roman bloodshed in the war sets him as "barbarous"<sup>69</sup> (1.1.131). Like Antony, his contact with the others who are not Roman shakes and transforms his identity, into a cruel revenger in his case. When he kills his son in a flash without hesitation, Titus's brother warns him: "Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous"<sup>70</sup> (1.1.378). The play, therefore, establishes a contradiction between Roman and barbarous in the first scene and explores the obscurity of the lines that draw this contradiction in the later scenes. The contact with the other and the uncivilized transforms the Roman protagonist, in similarity with Shakespeare's other ancient plays.

The conflicts and the resolution that are made possible by the transformative impacts of the Mediterranean mobility in the sea plays function in a slightly different way in *Titus Andronicus*. The catastrophic impact of the sea movements that are observed in *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra* is indirectly conveyed through the manipulative character Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus*. The black Moor Aaron, who moved from Africa to Rome, is the moving force behind the perpetration of violence that dominates the play. It is Aaron who convinces the Goth princes to "take [their] turns" and "serve [their] lust" on Titus's daughter Lavinia, which brings along more shocking violence throughout the play. His plots and manipulative villainy, in strong

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 101.



resemblance to Iago and Lady Macbeth, are what brings the violent and tragic events of the play into action, finally leading to the Roman Empire's degeneration.

Besides his presence in Rome as an African from across the sea, I suggest that Aaron's black skin is itself employed as a dramatic device informing his 'black' deeds that helps the violent dramatic action take place. His skin colour and physical appearance tell a lot on the stage for the Renaissance audience of Shakespeare before he opens his mouth to speak his plots against the Romans<sup>71</sup>. It should not come surprising to the audience that this sinister figure is the chief engineer behind the evil plots and actions in the play.<sup>72</sup> Aaron's African ethnicity and indirectly his movement across the Mediterranean are the triggering force for the tragic end of *Titus Andronicus* although the sea and characters' movements in the Mediterranean are not foregrounded like in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Pericles*.

Although Shakespeare's audience might have associated that his African black colour is the reason behind Aaron's "heinous deeds" that he doesn't repent and declares that he would do "a ten thousand more"<sup>73</sup> (5.1.123-4), what indeed motivates him is his desire to move upwards in the social hierarchy. His movement from Africa to Rome, like many migrants in history and today, and love affair with Tamora are for the purpose of attaining social mobility as he reveals himself:

AARON:        Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top  
                  Safe out of fortune's shot, sits aloft,  
                  Secure of thunder's crack or lighting flash,  
                  Advanced above pale envy's threat'ning reach;  
                  [...]  
                  Then, Aaron, arm thy hear, and fit thy thoughts  
                  To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,  
                  [...]  
                  Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!  
                  I will be bright, and shine in pearl and gold,

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<sup>71</sup> Sale, Carolyn. "Black Aeneas: Race, English Literary History, and the "Barbarous" Poetics of *Titus Andronicus*". *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol. 62 No 1, Spring 2011. p. 30-46.

<sup>72</sup> William Shakespeare. *Titus Andronicus*. Introduced by Eugene M. Waith. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 64.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

To wait upon this new-made Empress<sup>74</sup> (2.1.1-20).

It is in order to shine in pearl and gold that Aaron seduces Tamora who has advanced in Roman hierarchy to become an imperial mistress. The following villainous plots that he designs and realizes are also for the end of climbing up the social ladders in Rome where he migrated.

I suggest that the issue of the other aspiring for social mobility is another point from where *Titus Andronicus* speaks to *Antony and Cleopatra*. Although they are both African and black, Aaron's blackness is highlighted for his evil plots while Cleopatra's "tawny" skin is not accentuated or implied to be the driving force for her 'plots' against Antony. Whereas Cleopatra's black beauty receives appraisal from Roman emperors Antony and Caesar, Aaron's colour is persistently despised and shown as the mere motivation behind his villainy by many characters in the play. As the above passage reveals, Aaron's motivation is indeed social mobility which Cleopatra does not need as an already established empress. At the top of the social pyramid, Cleopatra is never troubled due to her black colour while Aaron needs to speak the following words to convince the other characters, who call his son a devil for being black, and the audience that his and his son's colour is beautiful:

AARON:       Coal-black is better than another hue,  
                  In that it scorns to bear another hue;  
                  For all the water in the ocean  
                  Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,  
                  Although she lave them hourly in the flood.  
                  [...]

CHIRON:       I blush to think upon this ignomy

AARON:       Why, there is the privilege your beauty bears.  
                  Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing<sup>75</sup> (4.2.  
                  99-117).

Aaron argues that his black skin is superior to white skin since it is more persistent and does not reveal the feelings of its wearer. He, therefore, dissociates the heinous deeds that he has committed and doesn't repent from his colour. Though Aaron

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 106-7.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

makes this speech in defence of his new-born son, it also reminds Aaron's real motivation behind his evil acts since it is not his colour.

Hence, if *Antony and Cleopatra* tells the story of Egyptian tawny empress's colonization by the Roman emperor and incorporation of her lands into the Empire, *Titus Andronicus* tells the aftermath of this event, also in consideration of the black others who aspire for hierarchal mobility. This conversation between the two plays and their plots separately serve to warn against the violent exchanges that territorial expansion and building an empire may bring along and to show its threat of shifting and dissolving identities. Because of the integration of the others in the society, the lines between Roman and the 'other' often turn obscure. In *Titus Andronicus*, moments when the Goths or the Moor are barbarous are mostly followed by a similar act of a Roman character, showing the interchangeability of the barbarous role that the imperial Romans associate with those outside the walls. The violence exercised on Lavinia can be the best example of the mutual barbarity of Goths, Romans and the Moor; she is raped and mutilated by the Goths to satisfy their lust, her rape is plotted by Aaron to get Titus's sons executed but she is killed by her own father because her violated body disgraces him. Thus, it appears that once the Romans conquer others their contact transforms both the sides, making the borders in between less rigid and occasionally obscure.

## **Chapter 2: Maritime ‘Empire’ Venice and its Aliens: The Moor, the Jew, and the offstage Turk**

As much as Shakespeare’s Renaissance ties attracted him to ancient empires, the image of an empire in his mind was also shaped by his present-time empires centred on the Mediterranean. The rivalry between the Venetian and Ottoman empires in controlling the Mediterranean shores, islands and trade routes marked the history of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the following decades, when Shakespeare was actively writing. His choice in Venetian setting for two of his plays shows Shakespeare’s particular attraction to the maritime empire of Venice, not only for its control in the Mediterranean trade but also for its warfare in defending its colonies against the Ottomans.

Shakespeare’s *Othello* is set in Venice and mostly its colony Cyprus demonstrating the Venetian-Ottoman military rivalry, whereas his other Venetian play *The Merchant of Venice* is concerned with the mercantile activities of the city. As Shakespeare’s texts show, military and mercantile wings of the Venetian empire required contact with the aliens who were sometimes fought against and sometimes incorporated into the empire. In this chapter, I look at the Venetian Empire’s relation with the aliens as represented by Shakespeare, both within and outside its borders, in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* taking into consideration the context of Venice’s contact with the others. I argue that Shakespeare’s Venetian plays portray an empire which employs the Moor and the Jew in order to sustain its warfare and trade against the threat of the Turk and this incorporation of the ‘aliens’ in the society do not bring pleasant outcomes. Towards exploring the ‘dangerous’ multicultural experience in Venetian Empire and the potential message that it gives to Shakespeare’s audience, I firstly look at the 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice and its significance for Renaissance England.

### ***Venice as a Commercial Empire and Role-Model for England***

Although Venice was a city-state which was officially called a republic, I suggest that it holds the qualities of an empire with its colonies acting as a web of commerce across the Mediterranean and its navy operating to protect the colonies and the trade routes. Accordingly, Shakespeare’s Venetian plays portray the maritime empire with

its mastery in navigation and merchandise. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Shakespeare's Venetian plays are set, Venice was a trading hub as a city-state and held a great proportion of the world trade in its hands. Especially after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, Venice gained the control of most of the Eastern Mediterranean islands such as Crete, Cyprus, and Rhodes, along with several Albanian and Greek ports. With its colonial outposts and strong navy, Venice acted as the domineering force in the Mediterranean trade for many centuries through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Considering that the Mediterranean was the centre of the world trade until the 'discovery' of the Americas, controlling the trade routes of the centre made the Venetians a model society of intense trading, which England of Shakespeare's time could have aspired to be like. In the following passage, Braudel explains the trading scale of Venice for the time only a few years before Shakespeare composed his Venetian plays:

In 1599, there was a drop in turnover, but Venetian trade was still reaching the respectable figure of a million and a half ducats, the total figure for the whole of Christendom being in the region of 3 million...So in 1600 as far as pepper and spices are concerned the predominance of the ocean route was far from established...The dates and circumstances of the ultimate eclipse of the Mediterranean have yet to be ascertained. It cannot have been very far off as the seventeenth century began, but it was by no means yet accomplished – a hundred years after the date usually suggested as that of the death of the old queen of the world, Mediterranean, dethroned by the new king, the Atlantic.<sup>76</sup>

In an attempt to express the significance of the Mediterranean trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century despite the discovery of the Americas, Braudel points to the Venetian factor in the region. Although this was a period of stagnation for Venice mostly because of its navy's recurrent defeats against the Ottomans, it held in its hands half of the trade revenues in the whole Christendom. That is why Shakespeare sets two of his plays in the sea-city and its colony Cyprus at a time when England was aspiring to share some proportions of these revenues. It was not, therefore, a coincidence that England

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<sup>76</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 403-4.

was desperately engaging in diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire when Venice had just lost its Eastern Mediterranean outposts like Cyprus.

It has long been argued<sup>77</sup> that 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice functioned as a role-model for England which was just engaging in attempts of building a strong navy in order to have a share in the world trade. When the commercial opportunities that it presented met with its strong navy, Venice appeared as a role-model for England. Its truly global and modern face can also be shown as a reason for the early ‘modern’ England to look up to Venice. Both in Shakespeare’s plays and the historical accounts, Venice is portrayed as a very global city-state, perhaps in resemblance to today’s Hong Kong or Singapore which are super-global commercial city-states with their vibrant ports. As Braudel also argues, the Mediterranean was already globalized with its speed of mobility long before the age of globalization and Venice was the most striking example of the early global city. Surely, what made Venice so global at the time was also the existence and opportunist tolerance of people from multiple ethnicities and religions in the city. Therefore, it appeared as not only a role-model for the newly-globalizing England but also an ideal setting to be staged in Shakespeare’s Globe. “In the imaginative geography of early modern England, Venice stood for wealth, commerce, multicultural exchange, political stability, wisdom and justice, tolerance, neutrality, rationality, republicanism, pragmatism, and openness”.<sup>78</sup> I argue, on the other hand, that the multiculturalism that Venice accommodated was not idealized by Shakespeare and he employed the multicultural setting to explore the questions such as the ‘other’, inter-marriage, race, integration, and conversion. Venice appeared both as a model with its commercial opportunities and a complicated society with its dangerous multicultural exchanges.

I suggest that Shakespeare makes a critique of and warns against the potential dangers of Venice’s multicultural society. Staged in London which had just started to become a multi-ethnic city, Shakespeare’s plays on Venetian empire and multiculturalism suggest that the intermarriages end in tragic consequences, as in

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<sup>77</sup> Daniel Vitkus gives an overview of various studies which argued that Venice was seen as a role-model for early modern England in his article “Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor”. He particularly draws attention to David McPherson’s study *Shakespeare, Jonson, and the Myth of Venice*.

<sup>78</sup> Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p. 163.

*Othello*, and commercial exchanges with the alien may cause irreversible consequences if not dealt carefully, as *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrates. Operating mostly at the perilous realm of the sea, the maritime empire is at war with the pirates and the Turks outside of its borders and with the Moor and the Jew on the inside.

### ***Mobility and Dangers of the Sea***

Since Shakespeare sets his *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* in maritime Empire of Venice, the Mediterranean Sea and the trade routes on the sea hold much significance in explaining the connectivity of the region that enabled Venice to have a multicultural society. Both the plays are intensely engaged in sea imagery, ships, and shipwrecks which make the travels of people both possible and dangerous in the Mediterranean. *The Merchant of Venice* opens as:

ANTONIO: In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.  
[...]  
And such a want-idiot sadness makes of me  
That I have much ado to know myself.

SALARINO: Your mind is tossing on the ocean,  
There where your argosies with portly sail,  
Like signors and rich burghers on the flood,  
Or as it were the pegeants of the sea,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers  
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven wings<sup>79</sup> (1.1. 1-14).

Salarino suggests the reason for Antonio's melancholy to be his risky investment in ships that are sailing in the perilous Mediterranean, which foreshadows Antonio's plight later in the play that results from his shipwrecked argosies. From its very opening, the play sets the sea as a perilous realm which may cause shipwrecks with devastating impacts, in this case, on merchandise. The image of the ships and maritime movements is quite significant in understanding the course of events, the conflicts and resolution of the plot in *The Merchant of Venice*. Acting as the

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<sup>79</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 103.

instrument of trade to sustain Venice's web of commerce across the ports of the Mediterranean, Antonio's large argosies and "petty traffickers" are symbols of Venice's penetrating influence in the region. They not only take the goods and the traders across the shores, but also the cultures and worldviews. However, the ships also pose dangers and risks for Venice's economy as the sea on which they travel is mostly unpredictable. Salorino's following warning that "dangerous rocks" in the sea can possibly "scatter all [the ship's] spices on the stream, / Enrobe the roaring waters with the [trader's] silks" indicates the potential risks of trading on the sea<sup>80</sup> (1.1. 33-34). As the above passage by Braudel also reveals, spice and silk were the main goods that Venice traded and *The Merchant of Venice* portrays these goods as the sources of Venice's wealth that are vulnerable to be scattered in the sea in case of a shipwreck.

It is because of this threat of shipwreck that Antonio nearly loses a pound of flesh from his body as a requirement of the contract that he signs with the Jewish money-lender, which makes the main conflict of the play. Shylock indeed depends on the perils of the sea when he makes the contract with Antonio as he reveals:

SHYLOCK: Yet his means are in supposition. He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies. I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad. But ships are but boats and sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves – I mean pirates – and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond<sup>81</sup> (1.3. 15-26).

The word "dangerous" is used multiple times in the play to describe the sea and the man's operations on it. Towards showing how dangerous the sea can be, Antonio's shipwrecked argosies in the Mediterranean tangle the plot and create multiple dramatic nodes that need to be untangled for the play to reach a resolution at the end.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 119.



As it is a sea-city and a maritime empire that depends on operations on the sea, analysis of Shakespeare's setting of Venice requires, to a certain extent, to investigate what the sea and the mobile ships, people, and information stand for.

In the same line with the sea's capacity of dissolving identities and social establishments that I explored in my first chapter, *Othello* introduces the idea that information is distorted when conveyed through travels on the sea. The following lines show both the speed of mobility of information in the maritime empire and - perhaps consequently - the inconsistency of the mobile information. The Duke comments on the news of Ottoman preparation of attacking Cyprus:

DUKE:           There is no composition in this news,  
                    That gives them credit.

1 SENATOR: Indeed, they are disproportioned;  
                    My letters say, a hundred and seven galleys.

DUKE:           And mine a hundred and forty.

2 SENATOR: And mine two hundred<sup>82</sup> (1.3. 1-6).

The passage reveals that several messages have arrived in Venice in a short time to inform the Turkish fleet approaching Cyprus; but they all contradict with one another. A few lines later, a new messenger comes with different news; and as soon as he delivers his message, another messenger comes on the stage. Such speed of messengers and the information they convey creates the illusion that Cyprus is a neighbourhood of Venice rather than an island miles away. The distorted messages, on the other hand, inform of the perilous journey that the information goes through in the Mediterranean.

Othello is sent to Cyprus upon such inconsistent news transformed on the way, foreshadowing the transformations that the Moor will go through following his "boist'rous expedition" on the sea and dwelling on the island of Cyprus<sup>83</sup> (1.3. 261). It is not only his journey to Cyprus that is perilous, but the island itself is portrayed as a warlike frontier between the Turks and Venetians. I suggest that the text draws parallelisms between the colony Cyprus and the general Othello, who has been appointed to rule the island, in that they are both two sets that protect the Venetian

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<sup>82</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

civilization from the barbarous Turks. As “a town of war”, Cyprus is a colonial outpost which sustains the warring wing of the empire and is ruled by Othello who is also assigned to keep the warring wing of the empire in operation (2.3. 227) “Warlike” is used as an adjective for describing both Othello and Cyprus in the play (2.1.30, 2.1.48). As I will argue in the next section, Othello is an “erring barbarian” employed by the “super-subtle Venetians” to fight the Ottomans by taking advantage of his warlike and barbarous ‘race’. He demonstrates characteristics that can be qualified as Venetian and Ottoman, just like the island Cyprus. The maritime empire is shown to utilize both the Mediterranean island and the Moor as warlike frontiers against the fierce Turks.

### ***Function of the Others in Venetian Empire***

Shakespeare tells of the wars that Venice has to fight in order to protect its colonies in the Mediterranean in his *Othello*, which is necessary for the continuation of the maritime empire’s trading activities and the capitalist system in the city. I suggest that Shakespeare’s Venice is a proto-capitalist society, which also approaches the outsiders who migrated to the city in a very opportunistic way. Othello the Moor and Shylock the Jew are tolerated – to a certain extent – in Venice because they are needed for the Empire to continue its operation so that the Venetians can eat the fruits of wealth coming from the commercial activities. In order for Antonio the Merchant of Venice and his company to live extravagantly and enjoy the wealth of the Empire, Venice employs the Jew as money-lender who does the job that is forbidden to the Christians. Shylock lends money to the Venetian merchants who take on commercial enterprises and in this way fills a gap in the economic system by ensuring the circulation of money in the city. Othello, on the other hand, functions as the barbarous warrior who militarily defends Venetian wealth against the barbarous Turk.

In accordance with Venice’s opportunistic relationship with its aliens within, *The Merchant of Venice* sets the city of Venice as a place where everything is perceived as a commodity. The friendship, or arguably the homosexual love affair, between Antonio and Bassanio which opens the play is utilized by the latter in order to marry

“a lady richly left” in Belmont<sup>84</sup> (1.1. 161). Antonio is ready to “unlock” his “purse” to Bassanio so that he is well-suited to marry Portia and in this way can pay his debts<sup>85</sup> (1.1. 138-39). Overloaded with very commercial vocabulary, the play introduces both friendship and marriage as commodities that the characters utilise for their economic benefits in Venice. Having established the city as a place where human relations can be made into a commodity, the first scene of the play ends with Antonio’s words to Bassanio, which makes sure that the audience pictures a capitalist city in their mind before the plot develops further:

ANTONIO: Thou knowst that all my fortunes are at sea,  
Neither have I money nor commodity  
To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth —  
Try what my credit can in Venice do;  
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,  
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.  
Go presently inquire, and so will I,  
Where money is, and I not question make  
To have it of my trust or for my sake<sup>86</sup> (1.1. 177-85).

Almost all lines of this short passage are filled with words that address monetary affairs: “fortunes”, “money”, “commodity”, “sum”, “credit”, “furnish”, “money”, and “trust”, respectively. The first scene closes having portrayed Venice as an overwhelmingly mercantile city. In this realm of commodities, Antonio’s credit in Venice as a merchant, who has invested all his money in trading ships, is the only commodity that the two friends can use at exchange value for investing in Portia who will bring more profit. At this point, Shylock the Jew’s function as a usurer in Venice comes forth to serve this commercial exchange between Venetians.

Third scene of the first act opens with the bargaining between Bassanio and Shylock for borrowing money on Antonio’s name and ends with the agreement of the bond between Antonio and Shylock. This scene, where Shylock and Antonio explicitly express their hatred for each other, reveals that Venice is in need of the Jew for his job in sustaining the economic system of its empire. This necessary inclusion of the

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<sup>84</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 111.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Jew in the Venetian society is put into words by Antonio later in the play when he has to abide by his bond with Shylock:

ANTONIO: The Duke cannot deny the course of law,  
For the commodity that strangers have  
With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
Will much impeach the justice of the state,  
Since that the trade and profit of the city  
Consisteth of all nations<sup>87</sup> (3.3. 26-32).

As the passage reveals, it is for the essential function of the outsiders in Venice that justice cannot be denied to them. The fact that Venice consists of all nations is also for the sake of trade and profit of the city. Therefore, the city's profit is kept alive with the utilisation of the money and trade brought into the city by people of different ethnicities and religions. In Antonio's thought, Shylock's bond cannot be invalidated by the Duke since he contributes his money to the Empire's survival. Because Othello also has an essential function in the survival of the Empire, the law works in favour of the alien in *Othello*, too.

Accordingly, *The Merchant of Venice* stresses the foreigners' dependence on the rule of law in Venice throughout the play. In exchange of their contribution to the survival of the capitalist system, they receive justice and assurance of the law. Shylock constantly emphasizes that he will have his bond that allows him to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body. He is indeed very self-confident and sure about putting his bond into force:

SHYLOCK: I'll have my bond. Speak not against my bond.  
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.  
[...]  
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,  
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond  
To come abroad with him at his request.

ANTONIO: I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHYLOCK: I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.  
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool  
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yielded  
To Christian intercessors. Follow not.  
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond<sup>88</sup> (3.3. 4-17).

Shylock's repetition of the phrase "I will have my bond" four times and his confidence that the "Duke shall grant [him] justice" show his sense of being protected and assured by the law in Venice. Shakespeare presents Venice as a city where law prevails, even if it is against the merchant *of Venice*, which I will explore also in relation to *Othello*. The helplessness of the Venetian noblemen before the law is also narrated by Salerio:

SALERIO: Twenty merchants,  
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes  
Of greatest port have all persuaded with him,  
But none can drive him from the envious plea  
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond<sup>89</sup> (3.2. 277-81).

The Duke and the "magnificoes" – Venetian noblemen – can only try to "persuade" Shylock to give up his bond, but it doesn't seem within possibility that they will invalidate the bond and prevent Shylock from having his "justice". In lawful Venice which Shakespeare introduces as the "greatest port" in this passage, Antonio himself submits before the requirements of the bond and asks the court twice to give the judgment<sup>90</sup> (4.1.82, 4.1.241). I suggest that Shylock's full-trust in the law of Venice is because it is the only means that assures the protection of his identity which is alien to the Venetian society, in exchange of his services. That is why the manipulation of Venetian law by Portia of Belmont at the end of the play leads to Shylock's forceful conversion into Christianity. Even though it is not included in the text, the manipulation of Venetian law is expected to lead to economic problems in the future. When Shylock is a Christian he will be forbidden to do moneylending business which will eventually create a gap in the capitalist system. Furthermore,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 192, 200.

Lancelot worries in relation to Jessica's conversion that the pork prices will increase when the Jews convert into Christianity.

Hence, the rule of law enables Venice to maintain its imperial system by keeping the function of the aliens in operation. Accordingly, Shakespeare portrays Venice as a city where law is the supreme power also in *Othello*. The word "Law" is capitalized in the play and the Duke ensures Brabantio, whose daughter is "stolen", that the law is applied to everyone in Venice including his own son:

DUKE:           Whoe'er he be, that in this foul proceeding  
                  Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,  
                  And you of her; the bloody Book of Law,  
                  You shall yourself read, in the bitter letter,  
                  After your own sense: yea, though our proper son  
                  Stood in your action<sup>91</sup> (1.3. 77-83).

However, Venice's immediate need of Othello's warring skills invalidates the law both for the Duke and Desdemona's father. This conversation between the Duke and Brabantio happens in the presence of Othello who has been called to the council to be sent to Cyprus for defending the island against the Turks. It is implied that the law could only be manipulated in order to keep the imperial system functioning. Although the Duke promises Brabantio that the Law will be applied to anyone who has stolen his daughter, when he later learns that it is Othello who married Desdemona and Brabantio learns that the Turks are to attack Cyprus, they both give up on the law. Because "The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus" and "the fortitude of the place is best known" to Othello<sup>92</sup> (1.3. 255-56), Brabantio as a magnifico, whose wealth would be shaken by the loss of Cyprus colony, easily reconciles with Othello. While he has been angrily calling Othello a thief and a magician a few lines before, Brabantio becomes convinced of their marriage upon the Turkish threat and asks him to "proceed to the' affairs of State"<sup>93</sup> (1.3. 254).

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<sup>91</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 35.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40-41.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Being aware of the Venetian empire's need of him at warfare, Othello, on the other hand, counts on his services. Because he is the warring force of the maritime empire, Othello could challenge the law of the city. While Shylock dwells in the city which needs and therefore protects his business, Othello serves at the navy and the colony islands which put him in contradiction with the civility of the city. In contrast to Shylock's tight dependence on law, Othello disregards the law:

BRABANTIO: To prison, till fit time  
Of Law, and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

OTHELLO: What if I do obey?  
How may the Duke be therewith satisfi'd  
Whose messengers are here about my side,  
Upon some present business of the State<sup>94</sup> (1.2 106-12).

Othello draws attention to the fact that Venice would be at disadvantage if he obeyed the law and is quite self-confident that the Duke will not execute the law. The tone of his speech indeed sounds quite assertive and conceited due to Venice's reliance on his services. In both the plays, however, the law is manipulated to take advantage of the alien – to make the Moor fight the war in *Othello* and to usurp the wealth of the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Venice employs Othello as a soldier and promotes him to become a high-ranked general in the navy so that he keeps the warring wing of the Empire in operation. The Moor, who is a black barbarian as frequently referred in the play, functions to ensure the security of Venetian merchants' ships that carry spices, silks and other goods across the Mediterranean. Venetian Empire hires the blackamoor Othello to protect its commercial interests against the barbarous Turks, pirates and other military threats in the sea. The Duke and Brabantio accept the marriage between black Othello and white Desdemona because Venice immediately needs Othello's barbarous and warlike 'blood' in their war against the fierce Turks. In Paul Cantor's words, Venetian empire hires "barbarian to fight its battles, to fight with fire without

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

getting burned itself'.<sup>95</sup> Although the Venetian society constantly despises Othello's race and colour by calling him a "Barbary horse", "black ram", "thick-lips", and "black Devil", they turn to his 'race' in fighting the barbarous Ottomites.

In its opportunist accommodation of the Moor, Venice also takes advantage of Othello's hostility against the Ottomans. When the news of Cyprus comes, the Duke turns to Othello: "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you, /Against the general enemy Ottoman"<sup>96</sup> (1.3. 56-57), by which he means the common enemy of Othello, the Venetian Empire, and the whole of Christendom. The text implies that Othello's hostility against the Turks is not only related to his Venetian or Christian identity, but also his Moorish past. When Othello tells how Desdemona fell in love with him through his story, he re-narrates that he was "taken by the insolent foe/and sold to slavery" which led to his disastrous journey from "antres vast, and deserts idle" to Venice<sup>97</sup> (1.3. 159-60). The insolent foe that sold Othello to slavery can be read to be the Turk as the Duke makes use of Othello's grudge in fighting the "general" enemy. The Turk acted as the ultimate enemy which Venice and Othello shared as their common ground when Othello's journey from Africa to Venice resulted in his conversion into Christianity and his social mobility from a slave to a general in the navy. That is also why Othello refers to the common enemy in his attempt to unite the Venetians who are fighting amongst themselves:

OTHELLO: Are we turn'd Turks? and to ourselves do that  
Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites.  
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl<sup>98</sup> (2.3.  
161-163).

Othello here refers to Islam's ("Heaven") prohibition of fighting among Muslims and asks the Venetian soldiers to stop the act which is forbidden even by the barbarous Turks' religion. This passage is very significant not only because it shows Othello's sophisticated knowledge of Islam which was probably his former religion but also because it indicates his integration, or self-integration, in the Venetian society. These

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<sup>95</sup> Cantor, Paul. "Othello: The Erring Barbarian among the Supersubtle Venetians". *Southwest Review*. Vol. 75 No. 3, Summer 1990. p. 93.

<sup>96</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 35.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.



words by Othello are also an ironical foreshadowing to the fact that he will turn Turk at the end of the play. Othello here identifies himself as a Christian Venetian with his words “we” and “for Christian shame” while also putting it in opposition to “Turks”, “Ottomites” and “barbarous”. On the other hand, the text brings the Turk into the stage in Othello’s body, which I will explore more at length in next sections, by showing his re-conversion to his Moorish self which has a lot in common with the enemy Turk.

### ***The Question of Integration***

As a converted Christian, Othello seemingly integrated into the Venetian society, supported by his mobility in the social hierarchy into a high ranked commander and his ‘civilized’ attitudes, which are frequently hindered by his warrior identity. His contempt of the barbarity of the Turks and zeal to defend the Venetian civility and values reflects Othello’s psychology as an alien who doesn’t want to be marginalized and is eager to integrate in all senses<sup>99</sup>. Throughout the play, Othello emphasizes his contributions to the state to make sure that he is socially recognized. The first lines of Othello in the play, in response to Iago’s report of Brabantio’s appeal to the law, are as follows:

OTHELLO: Let him do his spite;  
My services, which I have done the Signiory  
Shall out-tongue his complaints<sup>100</sup> (1.2. 20-23).

Othello counts on his services to the state in Venice as an alien whose status is vulnerable to be shaken as Shakespeare shows in the case of Shylock. Accordingly, Othello decides to commit suicide not when he discovers that he killed Desdemona unjustly but only when his social status is dissolved by Lodovico who declares that “Cassio rules in Cyprus” and that Othello’s crime will be delivered to the Venetian State<sup>101</sup> (5.2. 391). It is also because Othello seeks social recognition even after his death that he starts his suicide speech with the line “I have done the State some service, and they know’t”<sup>102</sup> (5.2. 337) at the end of the play. The tragedy of Othello

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<sup>99</sup> Nachit, Mohssine. “Shakespeare’s Othello and the Challenges of Multiculturalism”. *Arab World English Journal*. 4 Oct 2016. p. 101.

<sup>100</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 30.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

starts and ends with his reminder of his services to the state; and what the reader reads and the audience watches in the between is the tragedy of his dis-integration in the Venetian society.

Othello's vulnerability to Iago's manipulations shows that no matter how he is seemingly integrated into the Venetian society with his conversion, high social rank, and intermarriage, the Moor is deemed to remain as the other both in his own imagination and in the society's view. Othello's services to the state which he counts on in Venice are not helpful in his marriage with Desdemona and therefore his self-confidence starts to be dissolved. Iago takes advantage of Othello's insecurity about Venetian culture when he is trying to put suspicion about his wife in his ears:

IAGO: I know our country disposition well:  
In Venice, they do let God see the pranks  
They dare not show their husbands.  
Their best conscience,  
Is not to leave't undone, but keep it unknown<sup>103</sup> (3.3. 230-36).

Iago here addresses Othello's foreignness with his words "our" and "in Venice" for making him believe that the Venetian women are unfaithful, while he actually makes use of Othello's inexperience with women for having been a dedicated soldier. He projects Venice as a place that Othello has little knowledge about and Othello buys this argument because he is already insecure as a migrant. Some lines later we see that Iago's alienating language worked on Othello as he admits:

OTHELLO: This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
And knows all quantities with a learn'd spirit  
Of human dealings.  
[...]  
Haply, for I am black,  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have: Or for I am declin'd  
Into the vale of years (yet that's not much)

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

She's gone. I am abus'd, and my relief  
Must be to loathe her. Oh curse of marriage!<sup>104</sup> (3.3.  
299-309)

In this speech, Othello takes on the society's association of his blackness with barbarity and lack of civilized attitude. He feels that he is ignorant of human dealings while Iago as a Venetian has a learned spirit, which can be called Othello's self-dehumanization. The self-confident Othello, who speaks to the Venetian councillors with excellent rhetorical skills at the beginning of the play, starts feeling, after Iago's alienating language, that he does not have the soft conversation skills of the noblemen. Although he made Desdemona fall in love with him through his storytelling and language, Othello's internalized insecurity "for [being] black", as he rationalizes in the above passage, leads him to think that he does not hold the Venetian 'cultural capital'<sup>105</sup>.

Iago, therefore, is able to plant the seeds of doubt in Othello's mind by picking out his insecurities as the alien in the society, hidden beneath his self-confidence as a general who has done the state many services. Shakespeare implies, I suggest, that Othello's lack of confidence stems from his aspiration to integrate into the society rather than his blackness as he indicates. Correspondingly, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare gets the Prince of Morocco appear and speak on the stage among Portia's all other suitors from Naples, France, England, Germany, and Scotland, building a conversation between the representations of the two Moors. The Prince of Morocco is a Moor whose name appears as "Morocco" in the play and his understanding of his Moorish identity seems to be contradicting with that of Othello. He seems quite confident about whom he is, and does not turn into an existential problem as Othello does. Because they are also both black, Shakespeare invites for a comparison between the self-images of the two Moorish characters introduced in his Venetian plays.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>105</sup> Pierre Bourdieu coined the term "cultural capital" which refers to a set of social elements such as tastes, behaviours, attitudes, clothing, education, style of speech etc. that allows an individual to feel comfortable in and belong to a certain society or social group. In the mentioned passage of *Othello*, Iago makes use of his cultural capital to alienate Othello from the Venetian culture. Othello, in return, doubts his "linguistic cultural capital" – another phrase coined by Bourdieu to suggest an individual's mastery of language and speech – in comparison to the Venetian noblemen.

The second act of *The Merchant of Venice* opens with the scene description of a “tawny Moor” who speaks the first line: “Mislike me not for my complexion”<sup>106</sup> (2.1.1). As he proceeds to convince Portia in marriage with him, the Prince of Morocco says “I would not change this hue, /Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen”<sup>107</sup> (2.1. 11-12). He seems to be well-aware of the racism that he might face by Portia, who indeed called his hue “complexion of a devil” in the previous scene even before he made his appearance on the stage, and expresses his pride in his black colour. Unlike Othello, Prince of Morocco draws a clear picture of himself to be content and unapologetic about his identity. He also refers to his alliance with Sultan Suleiman in drawing on the political power of the Ottoman Empire at the time and establishes himself as a noble warrior. Shakespeare’s characterization of the Moor in *The Merchant of Venice* as a self-confident and established prince contradicts with Othello’s disowning of his past and his shakeable social position within Venice. I suggest that Othello’s vulnerability to identity crisis and self-contempt of his race stems from his desire to integrate into the Venetian society. And on the other hand, the Prince of Morocco’s awareness of and pride in his difference renders him immune to racism’s impacts on his self-image. Because he does not need to integrate in order to gain any social recognition, unlike Othello, the Prince of Morocco is at peace with his African identity.

Between the scenes of Portia’s racist introduction of Morocco and his first words defending his skin colour, Shakespeare places the scene where the other alien of Venice – Shylock the Jew - who is equally proud of his identity appears for the first time on the stage. The dramatic structure of the play works to draw a parallelism between Shylock and Morocco and the identical racist discourse against both of them; Portia’s comment on Morocco’s devil complexion is followed by Antonio calling Shylock a devil in the next scene. In response to Antonio’s racism in this scene, Shylock accentuates his difference from the Venetians and recurrently expresses his pride in being a Jew with phrases such as “our sacred nation”, “my tribe”, and “our tribe”. Unlike the Moor of Venice, the Jew of Venice does not aspire to be integrated into the Venetian society; he is, on the contrary, engaged in

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<sup>106</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 127.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

deliberate efforts to preserve his Jewish identity. When Bassanio, for example, invites him for dinner, Shylock thinks to himself:

SHYLOCK (aside): Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you<sup>108</sup> (1.3. 31-35).

Shylock firstly draws attention to his difference from the Christian Venetians that he doesn't eat pork as an observant Jew. He is actually sarcastic here that he knows Christianity better than the Christians by pointing to the Biblical story that Jesus, 'their' prophet, drove the devils into a herd of swine as his reason for not eating pork. Shylock's sophisticated references to Biblical stories quite frequently throughout the play serve to support his self-differentiation based on genealogical differences and the legacy of Christian-Jewish theological tensions. Therefore, he expresses his disinterest in intermingling with the Venetians and clearly rejects integration by refusing to eat, drink or pray with them.

On the other hand, the above passage is also significant to reveal the only kind of relationship Shylock can have with the Venetians: commercial exchange. Shylock is interested in integrating into the Venetian economic system, not the society. He agrees to buy and sell with the Venetians and not to eat and pray with them, emphasizing his religious identity along with the commercial function of a Jew in Venice. The financial affairs, therefore, appears as the only ground where a Jew and a Christian can contact in Venice.

Shylock's disinterest in integrating and keenness on keeping his relations with the Venetians on commercial grounds also explain his conflict with the Christian society. I suggest that the economic affairs are the ground of not only the exchange but also the clash between Shylock and Antonio. As several passages indicate, along with the religious motivations, monetary interests equally, if not more, play a great role in creating and shaping the tensions between the merchant and the Jew. In explaining his hatred for Antonio, Shylock reveals:

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

SHYLOCK (aside): I hate him for he is a Christian,  
But more for that in low simplicity  
He lends out money gratis and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.  
[...]  
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,  
Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,  
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe  
If I forgive him<sup>109</sup> (1.3. 39-49).

Shylock starts with his religious motivation behind hating Antonio “for he is a Christian” but he continues that he hates him “more for” that he brings down the rate of interest in Venice by giving out money gratis to his friends like Bassanio. He also indicates that his hatred against the merchant is a reflection of Antonio’s hatred of the “sacred” Jewish nation, which is again immediately followed by economic grounds of their clash as Antonio has despised Shylock’s business in merchant gatherings. Shylock intertwines the religious/ethnic reasons with the economic grounds while talking about his clash with Antonio also in the following passage:

SHYLOCK: He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million;  
laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my  
nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated  
mine enemies. And what’s his reason? I am a Jew<sup>110</sup> (3.1.  
51-55).

The fact that Antonio caused Shylock half a million ducats loss and thwarted his bargains seems to have hurt Shylock as much as his scorn of the Jewish nation, since his income is the only reason why he dwells in Venice. Actually, the money-related reasons that Shylock lists for his revenge on Antonio outweighs the ethnic/religious related ones: hindering him half a million, laughing at his losses, mocking at his gains, thwarting his bargains vs. scorning his nation. As is also the case with Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* that I explored in the previous chapter, the motives of the other’s

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

hatred and cruelty are deeply related to economic and class-oriented issues as much as, possibly more than, the difference in religion or ethnicity. Therefore, the others' rejection to integrate into the society draws on economic reasons as much as the 'essential' differences.

### *Aliens and Enemies of the Empire*

Also from the perspective of the Venetian society, economic interests are the reason behind its accommodation of the barbarous Moor and the cruel Jew, as I have also indicated earlier. In *The Merchant of Venice*, it is always emphasized throughout the play that the Venetian society stands Shylock's presence only because of the commercial contribution that he makes. I suggest that Shylock is perceived as an alien and potentially an internal enemy and his wealth as booty in Venice. Being also the "mere enemy" of the merchant of Venice<sup>111</sup> (3.2. 260), Shylock acts as a threat to the Venetian society with his desire to spill Christian blood by cutting a pound of flesh from Antonio's heart. If Antonio represents the trading wing of the Venetian empire as *the* merchant of Venice, Shylock's knife targeting Antonio's heart is indeed to attack the core of Venice. Shylock's goal of spilling the blood of a Christian echoes the blood libels<sup>112</sup> against the Jews and reminds that the Jew is an eternal enemy to the Christian society. Along with the desire of defeating the enemy and saving the merchant from the cruel Jew, Christian characters in the play also fantasize about Shylock's wealth which they see as an invaluable opportunity to seize.

Shylock's wealth along with his Jewish identity stands almost as a conflict in the play, something that needs to be dissolved and resolved for the plot to reach an end. The adjective "rich" and "wealthy" are used alongside the adjectives "villain", "cruel", "faithless", and "dog" to describe Shylock in the play. Shylock's business and money are the factors that allow him to live in Venice while also make him seen as a threat to the capitalist society. This threat of Shylock's wealth needs to be equally dismissed along with the threat of his knife against the merchant. The dissolution of his wealth is firstly started by his daughter Jessica while eloping with

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>112</sup> Blood libel is an accusation that the Jews killed Christian children to bake pastry with their blood in Jewish festivals. Such accusations were widespread in Europe in the Middle Ages and caused the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290.

her Christian lover. She splurges Shylock's money by spending eighty ducats in one night and exchanging his turquoise ring for a monkey, which deeply upsets Shylock. The text also suggests that Lorenzo's motivation for marrying Jessica was partly about usurping Shylock's wealth as he reveals in the final act:

LORENZO: In such a night  
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew  
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice<sup>113</sup> (5.1.  
14-16)

In similarity with the marriage of Bassanio and Portia, Lorenzo utilises Jessica's "unthrift love" in order to "steal from the wealthy Jew". Shylock's wealth, which recurrently stands out as an invaluable opportunity, is finally dissolved and seized by the Duke along with the dissolution of his Jewish identity through forceful conversion at the end of the play. Because it is Shylock's money and religious identity which give way to dramatic action in the play, they are both usurped for the plot to reach a conclusive end. Venetian multiculturalism fails for the Jew who is seen as an enemy and whose bond is made invalid, money is usurped and religion is converted by force as the happy ending of the play.

While the defeat and conversion of the Jew is the happy end which makes *The Merchant of Venice* a comedy, Othello's re-conversion into the enemy is what makes *Othello* a tragedy<sup>114</sup>. When Othello's marriage with Venetian Desdemona fails and ends in his murder of Desdemona, his dis-integration in the Venetian society is completed. When his integration fails also because his social status as the general of Cyprus is taken away, Othello *turns* Turk, into the ultimate enemy.

As I have argued earlier, Venice employs the Jew and the Moor against the economic and military threat of the Turks in the Mediterranean and therefore they haunt Shakespeare's Venetian plays. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the Duke compares Shylock to "stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained" and asks him not to be like the

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>114</sup> Kiss, Attila. "The Semiography of Iago, the Merchant of Venice: Liminality, Abjection, and the Imagery of the Mediterranean in Othello, the Moor of Venice". *The International Journal of the Humanities*. Vol. 5. Melbourne: Common Ground Publishing, 2007.



Turk and be merciful<sup>115</sup> (4.1.31). By rejecting to give up his bond as a response, the Jew of Venice proves to be holding the qualities of the Turk. Numerous references to the offstage Turks in *Othello* also work to draw parallelisms between the outside enemy Turk and seemingly integrated Othello who turns Turk at the end.

I suggest that the Turk as the ultimate enemy is left offstage in the play for Othello to be able to come in the likeness of the Turk. The storm at the sea and the consequent shipwreck are again employed by Shakespeare for subverting the turn of events in the plot. While Othello is expected to fight with the Turk, he is made to fight within himself, with his Moorish past and Venetian identity when the Turks are drowned in the Mediterranean. By not bringing the dangerous enemy Turk into the stage, Shakespeare allows his audience to focus on the dangers of the internal enemy. Accordingly, the text unifies the internal enemy Othello, who shares a common past with the Turks, with the ultimate enemy of the empire. The Turk finally comes on the stage in the body of Othello as his suicide speech reveals:

OTHELLO: I have done the state some service, and they know't:  
No more of that. I pray you in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me, as I am. Nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice.  
Then you must speak,  
Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well:  
[...]  
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant, and a turban'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the State,  
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him, thus.

*He stabs himself*<sup>116</sup>(5.2. 337-56).

In his last attempt to settle his identity as a Venetian against the Muslim Turks, Othello indeed becomes the Turk, reflecting his ultimate duality. He kills himself in

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<sup>115</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 189.

<sup>116</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 137-8.

re-enactment of his killing of a Turk in Aleppo, putting himself in the body of the circumcised dog that he killed. In this moment, Othello becomes both the killer and the killed, both the Venetian and the Turk, both the defender of Venice and its enemy, and finally both the converted Christian and the circumcised Muslim. His final efforts to prove his Venetian identity indeed functions to remind his Moorish identity, which had a lot in common with Venice's long-standing enemy.



### Chapter 3: Arrival of the British Empire: Mediterranean Setting and the Colonial Subject

Shakespeare lived and wrote in an era marked by the imperial desires of the British who were building bureaucratic and commercial relations with the empires of the Mediterranean and at the same time setting expeditions to the Atlantic. This emerging interest of the English in territorial expansion and global trade seems to have also occupied Shakespeare's imagination. His *The Tempest* has been suggested by post-colonial critics to be addressing the birth of British Empire and the potential outcomes of its expansion in the world. The play engages in the question of the colonial subject with the characterization of Caliban who appears to correspond to the Native Americans met by the English in Shakespeare's day.

My aim in this chapter will be to reassess the current post-colonial criticisms of *The Tempest* by explaining the Mediterranean setting and its function as a literary device in the text. I argue that the extended literary device of Mediterranean mobility and multiculturalism, which I also explore in my previous chapters, is employed by Shakespeare in speaking of the encounter with and the dangers of the colonial subject. Shakespeare represents the Atlantic 'other' within the context of the Mediterranean because it has been the realm of intercultural exchanges, perilous journeys and transformations in his imagination. The dangerous sea travels and intercultural exchanges that take place in ancient and early modern Mediterranean empires in his previous plays continue also in relation to the 'future' British Empire. *The Tempest*, allegedly Shakespeare's last play<sup>117</sup>, is concerned with the birth of British Empire and the potential dangers it poses for the society.

#### ***"What is Past is Prologue": The Birth of British Empire***

The question of whether Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a play about the British colonialism and the colonial subjects embodied as a character in Caliban has been subject to heated debates in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century literary criticism. The play has been interpreted from many different schools of criticism, but the one which made the greatest impact has been the post-colonial criticism seeking the implications of

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<sup>117</sup> *The Tempest* is the last play that Shakespeare wrote on his own in 1610-1611. After this date he only co-authored several plays.

the Empire in the text. According to post-colonial critics, Caliban, a strange creature possessing certain humanly and monsterly characteristics, stood for the Native Americans met by the Englishman in the Age of Discovery. He is the creature of the New World which the people of the Old World cannot quite understand and make sense of within their known world and worldview. In later sections of this chapter, I will address the question of the colonial subject and the characterization of Caliban more in depth; however, I find it significant to firstly look at Shakespeare's implication of the British Empire in relation to his previous plays set in other empires of earlier eras.

As many critics have suggested, the text of the play invites us to seek the implications of the British Empire which was yet emerging in Shakespeare's time, with intense Mediterranean trade in Elizabeth I's reign and increased expeditions to the Atlantic in James I's. Shakespeare's concern with the birth of the British Empire and its colonial subjects in *The Tempest* reflects the "dress-rehearsal" stage of the Empire, which I suggested earlier in this study. Before it comes on the world stage as an established empire, the British Empire is shown in full suit by Shakespeare in his last play. He doesn't only signal the arrival of the Empire but also addresses the dangers and costs that building an empire brings along in strong similarity to his representation of the ancient and early modern empires.

I suggest that Shakespeare's representation of the earlier empires that I analysed in my first and second chapters can be read as a background to his concern with the British Empire. I will here bring a quote from *The Tempest* out of its context in conceptualising this relation between Shakespeare's representation of the empires of his past, present, and future. Antonio's suggestion at the Act 2 Scene 1 that "What is past is prologue" summarizes the idea that divides the chapters of my thesis. Although Antonio means the shipwreck to be the prologue as an opportunity to use in changing the current situation in politics, I suggest that it is very much applicable to the idea of the past and present empires of the Mediterranean being the prologue for the arrival of the British Empire. The classical and modern Mediterranean past is a role model before the British expansion, which prepares for the birth of an empire on which the sun never sets. Furthermore, Shakespeare's co-imagination of the ancient and modern Mediterranean empires also explains why he sets his play on the

British Empire in an island in the Mediterranean, which had always been a lake of empires. Braudel also emphasizes the impacts of the Mediterranean background on the empire-building in the Atlantic and says that “the Mediterranean shaped the Atlantic and impressed its own image on the New World”.<sup>118</sup>

As I have indicated earlier, representation of Caliban corresponding to the colonial subject met in the New World is seen as the strongest textual evidence for the implications of the British Empire in *The Tempest*. Shakespeare’s characterization of Caliban is an intriguing foreshadowing and also a kind of warning for the problematic position of the Native Americans following the establishment of the British Empire in future decades and centuries. This foreshadowing, on the other hand, could only be implied by making use of the Mediterranean world that Shakespeare had set as the place of dangerous travels and encounters in his previous plays. Considering the fact that the British Empire was very much involved in North Africa and the Levant as it was in America, the Algerian witch Sycorax and the marriage between Naples and Tunis which led to the shipwreck also put forth the dangers of these to-be-colonized lands. Such foreshadowing regarding the dangers awaiting the British for setting up an empire was conveyed within the Mediterranean setting as it was the space of cultural exchanges, diversity, conversions, and shipwrecks in Shakespeare’s imagination.

### ***Mobility as a Plot Device and Mediterranean Chronotope***

The image of the perilous mobility in the sea, which I explored in depth especially in my first chapter, is often conveyed through catastrophic and transformative shipwrecks in Shakespeare. Being one of the threads through which I analyse what the Mediterranean Sea stood for in Shakespeare’s imagination, I have previously suggested in this study that almost all of Shakespeare’s Mediterranean plays include a catastrophic shipwreck which changes the course of events in the plays. It is also very dominant and in the foreground in *The Tempest*, which opens with the “tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning” that gives the play its name. The opening of the play puts forth how the shipwreck can be transformative by

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<sup>118</sup> Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 226.

subverting the social hierarchies as the sailors challenge the noblemen when in the middle of a sea storm:

ANTONIO: Where is the Master, Boatswain?  
BOATSWAIN: Do you not hear him? You mar our labour.  
Keep your cabins. You do assist the storm.  
GONZALO: Nay, good, be patient.  
BOATSWAIN: When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for  
the name of king? To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not.  
GONZALO: Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.  
BOATSWAIN: None that I more love than myself. You are a  
councillor; if you can command these elements to  
silence, and work the peace of the present, we will  
not hand a rope more. Use your authority. If you  
cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and  
make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance  
of the hour, if it so hap. — Cheerly, good hearts! —  
Out of our way, I say!<sup>119</sup> (1.1. 12-28)

As can also be supported with this passage, the shipwreck can be read as a metaphor of going up-side-down for both the characters and the social system. The hierarchy between the boatswain and the noblemen of the entourage is subverted when a shipwreck takes place in the middle of the sea. It is the boatswain who gives the orders such as “Keep your cabins”, “To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not”, and “Out of our way”; and the presence of a king in the ship suddenly becomes of no significance whatsoever. The noblemen’s presence, in fact, only assists the storm and mars the labour of the sailors. In strong similarity with the shipwreck scene in *Pericles* that I analysed in my first chapter, the shipwreck allows the boatswain to command the lords of the land as their authority is of no use when in the middle of a shipwreck in the perilous sea.

The shipwreck dissolves the social statuses of the noble characters once again in Shakespeare’s text and transforms the course of events. It’s this shipwreck that

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<sup>119</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 7-9.

brings King Alonso's entourage to the island and causes the following scenes of chaos and mourning, which further raises the conflict and climax of the plot. While functioning to put the dramatic action underway by raising conflicts, the beginning shipwreck event in *The Tempest* also works towards the resolution of the play. The distorted social hierarchy as seen in the passage above has to be restored for the plot to be resolved at the end. Following these imperative words of the Boatswain in the passage above, Gonzalo reminds that his tone of speech would cost him his life if they were in the land:

GONZALO: I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him. His complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging. Make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable<sup>120</sup> (1.1. 29-34).

Because Gonzalo can do nothing about the sailor's denial of his aristocracy during the tempest, he puts his hope in the hanging of the boatswain. Gonzalo prays that the rope to hang the boatswain for his rebellion against the ruling class may be his rescue from the catastrophic shipwreck. He cannot imagine a world where the boatswain can speak in such an imperative tone to the aristocrats; therefore, for the order to be restored the boatswain needs to be hanged or tamed. Accordingly, the hierarchical relations that were subverted in the shipwreck at the beginning of the play should be restored at the end for the plot to achieve its resolution. When they come together on the land at the final act, Gonzalo and the boatswain exchange the following conversation:

GONZALO: I prophesied if a gallows were on land,  
This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,  
That swear'st grace o'erboard, not an oath on shore?  
Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

BOATSWAIN: The best news is that we have safely found

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

Our king and company<sup>121</sup> (5.1. 261-67).

The boatswain cannot speak once out of the unruly realm of the sea where he was the boss. In this passage, not only the hierarchal structure is restored by the boatswain's reverence to the king, but the separation between the sea and the land is also set forth. "Overboard" and "on shore" are projected to be two different spaces where the servants and the aristocrats rule, respectively. I should remind here that the sailors held the upper hand also in *Pericles* during the shipwreck, and the sea was outside the realm where the three world-sharers ruled in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Again in parallelism with *Antony and Cleopatra*, the protagonist who is too mobile on the sea gets attracted to the sea and often becomes unified with it also in *The Tempest*. Having travelled the Mediterranean Sea and ruling the small island surrounded by the sea, Prospero appears to be belonging to the sea at several points in the play. While describing to Miranda their perilous journey from Milan to the island in the first act, Prospero says that he "decked the sea with drops full salt"<sup>122</sup> (1.2. 185). Prospero's periphrasis "drops full salt" for describing his tears functions to picture Prospero's salty tears dropping into the salty sea which are implied to be identical. Furthermore, the body of the newly shipwrecked king of Naples is also described with sea imagery in Ariel's song sung in Ferdinand's presence:

ARIEL:        *Full fathom five thy father lies.*  
                  *Of his bones are coral made.*  
                  *Those are pearls that were his eyes.*  
                  *Nothing of him that doth fade*  
                  *Burt doth suffer a sea change*  
                  *Into something rich and strange*<sup>123</sup> (1.2. 474-79).

Ariel likens the eyes of the king to pearls which are also reminded to come from oysters in *Antony and Cleopatra*. I have explored the attractions of the protagonists who are too mobile to the sea and the way they become part of the sea in my first chapter. This song is also particularly significant for its reference to "sea change" that Shakespeare explores in his multicultural Mediterranean plays. The sea

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 41.



transforms and dissolves the individuals into its body by causing shipwrecks and nausea.

The plot of *The Tempest* revolves around the sea journeys made in the Mediterranean by different characters for different purposes at different times in the play. The first is by Caliban's mother Sycorax for being exiled, the second by Prospero and his daughter for being ripped of their royal titles, the third by King Alonso and his entourage for his daughter's wedding in Tunis and the last is by all of them to Italy as the resolution at the end of the play. It's for these frequent travels that the plot of the play can move from one scene to another and let Shakespeare weave the events, the characters and the action. It's Sycorax's exile from Algeria that brings Caliban to the island where we witness his encounter and clash with Prospero. Also, if it wasn't for the marriage between Naples and Tunis, for example, it would perhaps be impossible for the entourage to end up near the island. I suggest, therefore, that these travels in the Mediterranean function in Shakespeare's works to bring people from different backgrounds into the same setting and in this way raise the conflicts of the dramatic action.

I have suggested that Shakespeare employs the mobility in the Mediterranean as a device in weaving his plot with conflicts and resolution for speaking of the implications of the British Empire. While this mobility of people across the shores of the sea shows that the Mediterranean incorporates different ethnicities and religions in one single body, the connections that Shakespeare makes with older civilizations also puts forth that Mediterranean is connected not only space-wise but also time-wise. The frequent sea travels in *The Tempest* connects the space of the Mediterranean whereas Shakespeare's allusions to ancient texts set forth the Mediterranean chronotope displaying the different times of the same place.

The text's insistent reminder of Tunis's place in the plot highlights Mediterranean connectivity in the form of a marriage. Such a union calls to mind the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra and puts the present time Mediterranean in conversation with the classical ages. Shakespeare indeed explicitly shows this conversation in the following passage from *The Tempest*:

SEBASTIAN: 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

ADRIAN: Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to their queen.

GONZALO: Not since widow Dido's time.

ANTONIO: Widow? A pox o' that! How came that "widow" in? Widow Dido!

SEBASTIAN: What if he said "widower Aeneas" too?  
Good Lord, how you take it!

ADRIAN: [to Gonzalo] "Widow Dido" said you? You make me study of that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

GONZALO: This Tunis, sir, was Carthage<sup>124</sup> (2.1.75).

The references to Claribel's marriage to Tunis in the play do not only show the interconnectedness of the Mediterranean in the present time but also remind the audience of the classical connectivity that Shakespeare explores in his Mediterranean plays set in antiquity. Bringing the ancient city of Carthage in Africa and its classical narratives into *The Tempest*, which speaks of the implications of the birth of British Empire, Shakespeare makes the Mediterranean connection between the classical ages and the contemporaneous empires, which constitutes the core of this study.

The marriage between Claribel and the king of Tunis also alludes to the love affair between Dido and Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas as a Trojan warrior, in strong similarity to Shakespeare's Pericles and Antony, travels across the Mediterranean to finally found Rome in Italy. Filled with sea journeys and storms, Virgil's *Aeneid* seems to have inspired Shakespeare in his representation of the Mediterranean world. The connectivity that Virgil builds as a Roman poet both across the Mediterranean and between Greeks and Romans is also sustained and furthered by Shakespeare as a Renaissance playwright. By bringing the tragic love affair between Dido and Aeneas into the conversation, Shakespeare not only points to the frequency of intermarriages in the Mediterranean across centuries but also the tragic results that they bring. The parallelism drawn by Dido and Claribel, therefore, foreshadows a potential tragedy in

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

Claribel's marriage. These parallelisms between characters and stories of different eras in relation to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* set forth the Mediterranean chronotope that I have previously proposed.

The inclusion of Africa in *The Tempest* also functions to demonstrate the connectivity of the Mediterranean and the problems that the intermingling of different cultures can give birth to. The Mediterranean mobility is observed in the play through two journeys which are both related to Africa; Algerian witch Sycorax's exile from Africa and Naples's princess Claribel's marriage to Tunis. The journeys of these two absent women of the play are the prime movers for the action to take place. That's why, therefore, the play constantly draws our attention to the relations between African and Italian cities and the balance of the two in the play. While Algiers and Tunis can be put in one block, Naples and Milan are another and the Mediterranean island of the play stands in the between, connecting and showing the contradictions of these two blocks. Africa is as much part of the play as the Italian cities of Naples and Milan, starting from the very beginning of the play. The emphasis made on Sycorax's origins in Act 1 Scene 2 is the first attempt to absorb Africa into the play:

PROSPERO: Hast thou forgot  
The foul witch Sycorax who with age and envy  
Was grown into a hoop? Hast thou forgot her?  
ARIEL: No, sir.  
PROSPERO: Thou hast. Where was she born? Speak. Tell me.  
ARIEL: Sir, in Argier<sup>125</sup> (1.2. 308-13).

The significance of the fact that Sycorax was born in Algiers is accentuated in this passage by Prospero's rhetorical question. Rather than introducing Sycorax's origins with an adjective such as "Algerian witch", Shakespeare draws our attention to the contribution of Africa to the plot by giving this information in Prospero's rhetorical question answered by Ariel. Black feminist criticism of the play by Abena Busia also addresses this emphasis on Sycorax's African origins and claims that "once it

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

has been established that Sycorax was born in Algiers, Prospero takes up her tale”.

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To continue with the feminist criticism of the play, another absent but influential woman of *The Tempest* is Claribel, Alonso’s daughter. Her marriage to the King of Tunis in Africa is what brings Alonso and his entourage near the play’s island. Claribel’s acquaintance with Africa, though what she feels or thinks about it is silenced, is accused by Sebastian and Antonio to have caused the shipwreck. Like Sycorax, Claribel is also made the scapegoat for the tragic consequences in the play. If Sycorax makes the first connection between the island and Africa, Claribel is the one who sustains that connection by acquainting Naples with Tunis permanently with a royal marriage.

By including Algiers, Tunis and Carthage in the same text, Shakespeare reminds the audience how much Africa was part of the Mediterranean, both classical and present. Carthage as an important ancient city where the queen Dido was from is within the Mediterranean and connects to the north of the sea. Shakespeare reminds that these ancient cities along the coasts of the sea were connected to each other from North Africa to the Levant and from the Aegean to Italy, as part of the territorial expansion of the empires in the Mediterranean. As the above passage from *The Tempest* also tells, the empires of the Mediterranean in different epochs, from Greeks and Romans to Venice and Britain, connect the shores of the sea with each other, in display of the Mediterranean chronotope.

### ***Encounter with the Colonial Subject***

The Mediterranean is the inter-connected multicultural world for Shakespeare so much so that it is also the place where the ‘multicultural’ encounter between Caliban and Prospero takes place in his imagination. Only a mysterious island in the Mediterranean can accommodate the encounter between the European noblemen and the earthly monstrous barbarian. The mobility in the sea with ships sailing for different purposes, such as exile and marriage, is what allows the plot incorporate cultural encounters which raise conflicts for which post-colonial critics have been recently interested in *The Tempest*. I argue, therefore, that the Mediterranean was

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<sup>126</sup> Busia, Abena. “Silencing Sycorax: On African Colonial Discourse and the Unvoiced Female”. *Cultural Critique*. No. 14, Winter 1989-1990, p. 86.

chosen by Shakespeare as the setting of the encounter between the Native American and the European for it offers an already existing ground where different cultures can meet and *clash*.

Since I have been already referring to Caliban as the Native American, I should address the grounds upon which this reading sits and how *The Tempest* is a story of colonization, along with the shortcomings of this post-colonial interpretation. One striking fact about the play which went unnoticed by the critics is that it introduces the audience the connection between Bermuda and the Mediterranean before even introducing Caliban, ‘the colonial subject’. Although the “Bermoothes” reference in the play is often shown as one of the textual evidence for Shakespeare’s interest in representing the Atlantic in *The Tempest*, the fact that it was immediately followed by a reference to the Mediterranean has not been spotted and taken into account. In the Act I Scene II, right after Ariel reminds Prospero that he had asked him to “fetch dew from the still-vexed Bermoothes”<sup>127</sup> (1.2.272), we are reminded of the ships sailing in the Mediterranean to look for their king who was shipwrecked by a tempest caused by Prospero. Bermoothes and the Mediterranean mentioned as two places which are tempestuous and “still-vexed” with the threats of shipwreck demonstrate how Shakespeare imagined the Atlantic in strong parallelism with the Mediterranean. Reports of both the Mediterranean and Bermuda shipwrecks in Shakespeare’s time resulting from the intense contacts with the two waters of English trade and expeditions in the early modern age, can be shown as an inspiration for this parallelism drawn by him.

It is mainly because of the depictions of Caliban that allude to the narratives on Native Americans in Shakespeare’s day that *The Tempest* is seen as a story of colonization of the Americas. Caliban’s adoption of Stephano as his god in Act 2 Scene 2, alluding to the widespread narrative of Native Americans mistaking the white man for god<sup>128</sup> is one of the most striking examples of such a connection. This connection is furthered by Caliban’s admiration of alcohol offered by Stephano followed by his intolerance to this ‘old world’ elixir, which is in many ways in line with colonialist reports on Native Americans’ reactions to alcohol in the so-called

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<sup>127</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 29.

<sup>128</sup> Berkhofer, Robert. *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

Age of Discovery<sup>129</sup>. Caliban reminding the audience such reports about the Native Americans has been, therefore, much discussed, re-written and re-read in the last couple of centuries. As Shakespeare's one of the most controversial characters, Caliban's invention holds much significance in English literature in terms of the question of colonialist-native encounters as one of the first implications of British Empire.

The fact that Caliban was invented by Shakespeare feeds into my proposed argument that Shakespeare's *The Tempest* speaks of the newly emerging British Empire, an entity that Shakespeare himself tries to understand by exploring its implications and complexities. It's one of the interesting aspects of the play that Shakespeare did not take the plot of *The Tempest* from any other source, at least not any source that we know today, unlike most of his plays. When Shakespeare had to set his ancient and Venetian plays in the Mediterranean due to the necessities of the plot source, it was completely his own imagination that set *The Tempest* in an uninhabited island in the Mediterranean. I suggest that the reason for Shakespeare's invention of the play's plot and consequently the character of Caliban is because it speaks of the British Empire's interests in the Atlantic which was a yet emerging phenomenon and required a new narrative. The new man met by the English in the Americas had to be also accordingly represented through the invention of Caliban in Shakespeare's imagination.

However, there has also been criticism that read *The Tempest* as a text speaking of the colonization of Africa rather than the Americas. This reading also draws on Caliban as a colonial subject who is, on the other hand, from Africa because of his genetic connection through his mother. Plausibly, this connection calls for the implications of colonization of Africa by the British in later centuries and the association of Caliban with the African 'natives'.

To respond to the reading seeking colonization of Africa in *The Tempest*, I suggest that Shakespeare did not need to invent Caliban to talk about the Africans, as is evident from his African characters in the plays *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Merchant of Venice*. Caliban doesn't resemble Shakespeare's

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<sup>129</sup> Berkhofer, Robert. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

African characters, other than being the 'other' like them. Othello, Aaron and the Moroccan suitor all have human bodies and a language and culture of their own. Caliban, on the other hand, corresponds to a more primitive version or stage of the human species, as different from a 'black' or 'barbarous' man. We may well claim that Caliban is the homo erectus who evolved into the homo sapiens, which is supported by the Native Americans' image as the primitive man in Shakespeare's time.

Though Caliban is an invention, as I have pointed out, one cannot disregard the potential influence of Montaigne's essay "Of the Cannibals" on Shakespeare's imagination of Native Americans and hence of Caliban. Mostly due to the phonetic similarity between Caliban and cannibal, Montaigne's cannibals stands as the strongest source of inspiration behind the "deformed slave" of *The Tempest*.

Montaigne's essay seems to have made a great impact on Shakespeare's imagination in writing the play, in terms of not only the sound similarity between Caliban and Cannibal, but also the themes discussed in the two texts. In his "Of the Cannibals" Montaigne looks at cannibals as people who are more integrated into nature and act in more 'natural' ways than the civilized societies of the old world. Shakespeare's Caliban accordingly is a creature of nature, a mix of earth and water, who is called both an earthly monster and a fish. Montaigne's description of the inhabitants of the new world portrays the cannibals as people who live by Nature in an ideal way that is not manipulated by the civilization. What he calls the "golden age" of human history is already being lived by the people of the new world and the civilized man can learn from them how to be one with Nature and return to his original state of being. Montaigne's cannibals and Shakespeare's Caliban, therefore, are both representatives of the primitive human, who has not yet evolved into a civilized man.

Montaigne's essay is also generally interested in the relativity of human experience along with the dichotomy of Nature and civilization. *The Tempest's* concern with nature vs. civilization can also, therefore, be attributed to Montaigne's essay. While Montaigne idealizes Nature over civilization in his essay, Shakespeare on the other hand problematizes and complicates this distinction. His portrayal of Ariel along with Caliban draws a picture where Nature has two aspects to it: air and earth. The scenes between Prospero and Ariel followed by scenes between Prospero and

Caliban and vice versa highlight the juxtaposition of two 'natives' and also two aspects of Nature. While Ariel representing the air aspect of Nature is the good obedient native, Caliban representing the earth and water is the rebelling bad native. Both Montaigne and Shakespeare, however, seem to be speculative about the relativity of good-bad and what we find barbarous or distasteful. Both dehumanization and humanization of Caliban in the play are in line with Montaigne's treatment of cannibalism. He accepts the shocking effect of such a practice in the natives but suggests that the reason why it sounds shocking is because of our presuppositions in a civilized culture. Montaigne implies that the new world people can offer a worldview and way of living that is superior to the civilized Europe despite their 'weird' practices such as cannibalism.

This idealization of Nature by Montaigne is, I suggest, also tackled by Shakespeare; he is not only inspired by this essay but he is also critical of it to parody Montaigne's opinions on nature vs. civilization. Shakespeare problematizes Montaigne's idealization of the new world in Gonzalo's speech of his utopian vision, which is extremely optimistic and idealized regarding the potential of the island. Gonzalo tells his 'commonwealth' which appears rather comically unrealistic:

GONZALO: I'th' commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things, for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none: contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
No occupation; all men idle, all,  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty –

SEBASTIAN: Yet he would be king on 't.

ANTONIO: The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the  
beginning.

GONZALO: All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavour; treason, felony,



Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine  
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth  
Of its own kind all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people.  
[...]  
I would with such perfection govern, sir,  
T' excel the Golden Age<sup>130</sup> (2.1.162).

Gonzalo's commonwealth where letters are not known, social contract does not exist, and there is no sovereignty seems to be an anti-civilizational utopia, in strong similarity to Montaigne's world of the cannibals. When other characters in the play make fun of Gonzalo's commonwealth, Shakespeare furthers the parody that ridicules Montaigne's idealization of Nature; "nature should bring forth of its own kind all foison, all abundance"<sup>131</sup> (2.1.179).

Gonzalo's daydreaming, along with the other characters' dreams about the island and making use of Caliban, is not only a parody of Montaigne's essay but also alludes to the common colonialist discourse by different groups in Shakespeare's England. Trinculo's dream of taking Caliban to England where "he will make a man"<sup>132</sup> and Stephano's plans of presenting him to the king as a gift are references to the Native Americans who were used as commodities after the so-called discovery of the Americas (2.2.31). The colonial subject is treated as an 'opportunity' by working class characters to achieve social mobility. The idea of the 'new' world and the American dream sought the ideal life in these 'discovered' lands with no civilization. The island of *The Tempest*, therefore, is dreamt to be ruled by different characters in the play and *is* ruled by the European authoritarian figure Prospero by making use of the slave Caliban.

Although we know the accounts on the natives by different sources that might have inspired Shakespeare, it is unfortunate that we do not know how Caliban was performed in Shakespeare's Globe and how the early modern audience reacted to this 'invented' creature, half monster half man or neither fish nor man. However, the way the European lower class characters Trinculo and Stephano and the 'noble' Prospero

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<sup>130</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 63.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

describe Caliban gives some clues as to how his reception might have been. The first reactions by Trinculo and Stephano trying to recognize and describe what Caliban is are quite striking in setting the theme of human vs. non-human and the question of the subaltern in the play. One of the first reactions by Trinculo is the idea of taking Caliban to England and exhibiting him there so as to earn money by making use of him as a commodity. He says that he will make a man in London, which is another evidence of Caliban corresponding to the colonial subject Native American as some years before Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* a traveller brought back a native and exhibited him in London, which drew a lot of attention from the public.<sup>133</sup>

Trinculo does not only find Caliban exotic enough to be displayed in London but it is also through him that the audience is introduced to the sub-human Caliban who appears to be quite monstrous. Some of the references used for Caliban in the text are mooncalf, puppy headed monster, most scurvy monster, half man half fish, neither man not fish, and a very weak monster. The confusion if he is a fish, a man, a monster, all of them together or none of them creates an image of a monstrous creature that the European man is not sure of what to name. Being a completely unknown and un-encountered figure that is difficult to comprehend, Caliban does not belong to the 'known' world for the Englishman.

Even though the fact that there was no uninhabited island in the Mediterranean in Shakespeare's time may seem to be complicating the choice of the play's setting, I suggest that it reinforces the idea of the imaginary island connecting the Mediterranean to the Atlantic in Shakespeare's imagination. I will here repeat that Shakespeare could represent the Atlantic and its 'sub-human' beings only by making use of the Mediterranean mobility for the play's action to take place. He puts the island in the Mediterranean because he is familiar with this body of water and its societies who are mobile. If it was not for the Mediterranean mobility, the characters of the play traveling from different parts of the shore for different reasons could not end up in this uninhabited island, where the European meets the colonial subject. And hence it wouldn't be very possible for Shakespeare to set up the conflicts of human vs. non-human, white magic vs. black magic, and nature vs. civilization.

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<sup>133</sup> Skura, Meredith Anne. "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in "The Tempest". *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol:40 No:11, Spring 1989. p. 56.

### *Dangers of the Colonial Subject*

When I say that the play engages in the conflict of human vs. non-human, I mostly refer to the dehumanization and humanization of Caliban in the play. Caliban, like Shakespeare's other 'other' characters that I have analysed in the previous chapters (Aaron, Othello, and Shylock), is exposed to violence and cruelty by white Christians but this doesn't stop him from being brutish himself. However, although Shylock, Aaron and Othello are exposed to discrimination first before being brutish, in the case of Caliban, we learn that he has committed sexual assault against Miranda when Prospero was initially kind to him. With his ungratefulness and heinous 'plots', Caliban poses dangers to the imperial society. Despite his dangers, on the other hand, Shakespeare also gives him chances to speak and attract sympathy from the audience like his other alien characters.

The following passage demonstrates how ungrateful the colonial subject can be by making Caliban speak the kindness Prospero showed him and letting the audience know what he has done in return:

CALIBAN: When thou camest first,  
Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst give  
Water with berries in 't, and teach me how  
To name the bigger light and how the less,  
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee,  
And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle,  
The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile.  
[...]

PROSPERO: Filth as thou art, with humane care, [I] lodged thee  
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate  
The honour of my child<sup>134</sup> (1.2. 397-418).

This passage reveals that Caliban has sexually assaulted Miranda despite the kindness that he has seen from them. It sets Caliban as an ungrateful colonial subject who needs to be kept in control and watched. In the following scene, Caliban accepts to have attempted to rape Miranda in order to fill the island with Calibans.

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<sup>134</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 37.

The first dehumanization of Caliban in the play is accomplished when the audience hear that he attempted to rape Miranda in order to continue his own 'species' - Calibans-, which can be interpreted as his first attempt to free himself of dependency of the colonial master. When we consider that this information is given at the same time with his claim to the ownership of the island, Caliban appears as the colonized native. First appearance of Caliban in the play is with his curses on Prospero and claiming the island due to his mother's existence there before Prospero and his daughter. Also the fact that he knows what plants are poisonous and what are edible, the flora and fauna of the island and how to survive in this space, I suggest, is enough evidence for his 'nativity' to the island. Caliban's claim of his native rights to the island is what we first hear from him in the first scene, which is followed by the dangers that he can bring when closely engaged with.

While Caliban poses dangers, he also exhibits a kind of dependency on the colonial master as he rebels against Prospero by choosing Stephano as his new master<sup>135</sup>. The second plot of Caliban against Prospero is when he tries to convince Stephano to topple Prospero and willingly proposes to be his slave: "I, thy Caliban, for aye thy foot-licker"<sup>136</sup> (4.1.243). Caliban's dependency on the colonialist is a foreshadowing for the colonial discourse of later centuries in that it refers to the colonialists' rejection of granting autonomy to the natives on the ground that they are 'dependent' people. However, his plot of rebellion against Prospero by taking the support of another white character can be treated as another warning for the empire's relationship with colonial subjects. These dangers that Caliban pose for Prospero are one of the elements raising the conflicts of the play which need to be resolved at the end.

Accordingly, the resolution of the conflicts in the play should be made possible by either dismissing the dangers of the other or showing the tragic results of these dangers, in similarity with the other multicultural plays. Since *The Tempest* is a comedy, the resolution partly depends on Caliban's conversion and so-called

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<sup>135</sup> Octave Mannoni presents a psychoanalytic post-colonial criticism of the play in his book *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* where he points to Caliban's 'native dependency' on Prospero. His eagerness in adopting Stephano as his new master shows how he is in the search of dependency rather than freedom. Mannoni argues that Caliban's psychological dependency on a more superior figure caused him to be exploited "for he could not support freedom" (p. 107).

<sup>136</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), p. 137.

epiphany, in resemblance to Shylock's conversion as the resolution of *The Merchant of Venice*. After Prospero 'owns' Caliban by saying "This thing of darkness I Acknowledge mine"<sup>137</sup> (5.1.330), Caliban is in a way 'tamed' and 'civilized' which resolves the most crucial conflict of the play as the following passage illustrates:

PROSPERO: Go, sirrah, to my cell.

Take with you your companions. As you look  
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

CALIBAN: Ay, that I will, and I'll be wise hereafter  
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass  
Was I to take this drunkard for a god,  
And worship this dull fool!<sup>138</sup> (5.1. 348-54)

Caliban's declaration that he will be wise in future solves one of the nodes of the plot and dismisses the dangers that the colonial subject poses. His epiphany that he should not have taken Stephano for god is the first indication that he will be wise and obedient to Prospero. At the final act of the play, Caliban is tamed into a human from the sub-human that he projected throughout the play.

The changing human and sub-human images of the 'native' Caliban that continue throughout *The Tempest* complicate Shakespeare's representation of the colonial subject. Despite the threats that he embodies, Caliban is also given opportunity to speak to attract sympathy, like Aaron, Othello and Shylock, with a beautiful and musical poetry given to him by Shakespeare. It is through Caliban's poetry in Act 3 Scene 2 that we learn about the compassionate Caliban as opposed to sexual assaulter and cursing character at the beginning of the play. Although Caliban says that he learnt Prospero and Miranda's language in order to curse them, we see in this beautiful poetry with assonances and musical elements that he can *speak*<sup>139</sup> his inner feelings and express care and compassion for others. Differently from Othello, Shylock and Aaron, though, Shakespeare does not give Caliban a speech where he distinctly speaks to prove that he is human and should be therefore treated equally.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>139</sup> Gayatri Spivak addresses the silencing of the subaltern by the colonialists in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?".

Rather, it is his poetry – art – that presents him as a human, which can open a discussion of which one of these two ways make the ‘other’ more human.



## Conclusion

I had initially designed this study to be an investigation of Shakespeare's representation of the inter-cultural exchanges and the multicultural experience in his plays. Looking at his multicultural plays made me realize that they were all set in the Mediterranean coastal cities and islands. Once delved into these Mediterranean texts, I have discovered the frequency and speed of mobility of people, goods, and information in the sea that allowed the Mediterranean to appear as a very globalized and multicultural place. The frequent travels of people often resulted from the territorial expansion and the trading activities of the empire, as well as the individuals' love affairs and marriage. Therefore, when I was researching for this study, I was hoping to find answers to questions such as what Mediterranean meant in Shakespeare's imagination, why he was drawn to the multicultural Mediterranean for setting a number of his plays in the region, what function the Mediterranean mobility and multiculturalism has in Shakespeare's texts, what could his representation of Mediterranean empires tell us about the arrival of the British empire of his time and how it would help one in analysing his plays as literary works.

Initially setting out to investigate Shakespeare's representation of the multicultural Mediterranean, this study has also been an attempt to explain the implications of the multiculturalism of the ancient and Renaissance empires for the newly emerging British Empire, as represented in Shakespeare. I have tried to sketch out the impacts of intercultural relations in the Mediterranean in terms of both the individual and the empire. The simplest conclusion that I drew at the end of my exploration is that Shakespeare makes a critique of the dangers of multiculturalism that he explores through the past and present empires centred on the Mediterranean. Because the concept of empire requires engagement in territorial expansion and multicultural relations, building an empire means interacting with 'dangerous' people. The plots of Shakespeare's multicultural plays reveal that the intercultural exchanges sustained by mobility of people in the Mediterranean are always accompanied by distortive and transformative effects both on the individual and the imperial society.

In my analysis of Shakespeare's imagination of the empire, mobility and multiculturalism, I have looked at the images of sea, shipwreck and island, and the

themes of conversion, integration, and identity shifts. Looking at what the sea stood for opened ways to understand and analyse the transformations and identity crisis that the characters go through by traveling in the Mediterranean, be it for imperial purposes, trade or for personal affairs. The Mediterranean Sea appeared as an unruly and perilous realm with a capacity of transforming the identity of the individual who is too mobile on it. I have explored how the sea also transforms and indeed subverts the social hierarchies and established social statuses. I claimed that the shipwreck has been used as a metaphor for such subversions and transformed course of events in the plot. When a shipwreck happens while the people are mobile in the Mediterranean, the characters' identities are dissolved to an extent that they do not recognize themselves, social statuses of princes, kings or noblemen are disregarded by the sailors, and the plot itself becomes tangled by conflicts that need to be resolved at the end of the plays. The plays set on an island such as *Othello* and *The Tempest*, on the other hand, demonstrated that the perils of the sea penetrate into the islands as they are small land masses surrounded by the sea. Cyprus appears as a warlike frontier between the barbarous Turks and the Venetian civilization in *Othello*, while the mysterious island of *The Tempest* is a realm occupied by sub-humans, witches, magicians, and spirits.

While exploring the dissolutions of individuals and empires that are mobile on the sea, especially in my first chapter, I have argued that their dissolution into the sea reflect the Mediterranean chronotope. Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope that describes the layers of time in a given space has been useful in arguing and analysing that Mediterranean is a world where empires drew on the legacy of the former and have been built upon one another. This argument has also drawn the structure of my thesis where I organized the chapters to look at ancient, contemporary and future empires of Shakespeare. In this way, my chapters conversed with one another in showing the common settings of different epochs in Shakespeare's different plays. Furthermore, it was not only the settings that demonstrated the Mediterranean chronotope but also the characters that were in conversation with each other from one era to the other. Parallelisms are drawn between Greek and Roman warrior noblemen and Moors of antiquity and early modern era. Shakespeare's plays portray a Mediterranean chronotope that is



occupied by Greeks, Romans, Venetians, Ottomans, Moors, Jews, and lastly the English.

In my analysis of this connected world, both time-wise and space-wise, Fernand Braudel's work on the Mediterranean history has been very applicable to Shakespeare's representation of the Mediterranean interconnectedness and multiculturalism. Braudel argued that the Mediterranean was marked by exchanges between its communities – commercial and cultural – and such exchanges were so frequent, fast and intense that the Mediterranean accommodated globalization centuries before the age of speed. I firstly explored Shakespeare's globalized Mediterranean in my first chapter on ancient empires. The fantastical speed and frequency of mobility of people and information across the sea that we observe in *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra* work to create the image of the ancient Mediterranean as a global village. The same image is furthered in Shakespeare's Venetian plays that I explore in my second chapter; the frequency of messengers from Cyprus to Venice in *Othello* creates a sense that the island is a neighbourhood within Venice rather than a geographically distant place. The marriage between Tunis and Naples in *The Tempest* also sounds as if between two neighbouring villages with the sense that intermarriages are casual in the Mediterranean.

However, I have argued that Shakespeare does not idealize the globalization and multiculturalism that he explores in his Mediterranean plays; rather he shows the problems and distortive impacts that they create on the individual and the society. To start with the individual, I have proposed the notion of “identity nausea” in my first chapter for analysing the identity losses and shifts that Shakespeare's protagonists experience when they are too mobile on the sea. Both Antony and Pericles start losing their sense of belonging to a certain place and occasionally question and doubt and do not recognize their own identities. On a societal level, on the other hand, the contact with and the integration of the others cause the degeneration of the Empire which can be most evidently observed in *Titus Andronicus*.

Compared to Shakespeare's plays set in ancient empires, it was less challenging to explore the transformative impacts of multiculturalism in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Both set in Shakespeare's contemporary Venetian empire, these two plays demonstrated the dangers of incorporation of the others in the imperial society in a

more explicit way. Shakespeare shows how the maritime Venetian empire employs the Jew and the Moor in its economic and military rivalry against the Turks and how this opportunist multiculturalism could lead to tragedy in *Othello* and potentially tragic consequences in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shakespeare also hints the beginning of capitalism in his portrayal of Venice where all human relations are used as commodities by the characters. The dangerous multicultural exchanges that take place in the proto-capitalist society of early modern Venice work towards warning England which sees the maritime empire as a role model before its imperial desires. Reminding the dangers of trading and warring in the Mediterranean, Shakespeare's Venetian plays critique the idealization of the maritime empire of Venice in early modern England.

Shakespeare establishes the dangers of Mediterranean mobility and multiculturalism in relation to ancient and early modern empires before he talks about the complexities that the newly emerging British Empire's expansion might bring along. My last chapter explores the implications of the British expansion to the Atlantic and the contact with the colonial subjects in Shakespeare's last play *The Tempest*. Shakespeare's previous plays on the multiculturalism of the past and present empires can be read as a background for the arrival of the British Empire. His *The Tempest*, set in a mysterious island in the Mediterranean, makes use of the already existing diversity, mobility and multiculturalism of the Mediterranean world in informing of the problematized position of the colonial subject met in the Atlantic in his present time. Shakespeare here again warns that building and sustaining an empire requires dangerous exchanges with other people, which he employs as the main conflicts of the plots of his multicultural comedies and tragedies.

In the six plays that I have analysed in this study, Shakespeare weaves his plots around the extended literary device of dangerous mobility and multicultural exchanges in the Mediterranean. The clashes between civilizations, religions, and ethnicities – such as between Rome and Egypt, Venetian and Jew, European and colonial subject – raise the dramatic conflicts of these plays. With its colourful multicultural setting, the Mediterranean presented exotic characters and dynamic plots for the early modern English audience. The resolution of the multicultural conflicts on the favour of the European or Christian characters, on the other hand,

functioned as dramatic relief. Although I have mostly focused on the dangers of multiculturalism and territorial expansion of empires, the performances of these plots in Shakespeare's Globe and their reception by the original audience could also be interesting to look into. Looking at the historical atmosphere of the birth of British Empire and its reflections in newly globalizing London of Shakespeare's time can potentially bring better explanations to the questions that I addressed in this study. Although Shakespeare has been, and continues to be, studied extensively all around the world, conducting this study has made me realize that Shakespeare Studies remains as a wide ocean which has been only partly explored.



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