



Edward Bond's *Bingo*: A Re-Reading of
Shakespeare's Biography

إعادة قراءه لسيرة الكاتب المسرحي "شكسبير" من خلال مسرحية "بنغو"

للكتاب البريطاني إدوارد بوند

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Authorization

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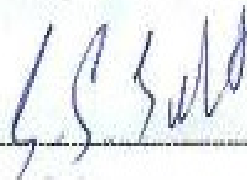
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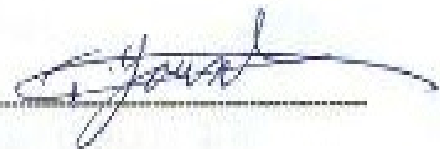
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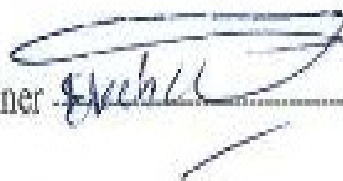
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the ones who are always with me,

My Parents

&

My beloved family

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Edward Bond's *Bingo*: A Re-Reading of Shakespeare's Biography

Abstract

This study, through means of thematic analysis aims to analyze the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction by comparing Bond's fallible Shakespeare to the real Shakespeare. It also debunks the validity of Bond's statement that Shakespeare had been unfair and discriminating in his treatment of his own daughters in particular and his family in general. Moreover, it sheds some light on the real reasons and motives that have driven a writer of Bond's caliber to present Shakespeare in the way he did. To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the researcher raises the following three questions: What are the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction? How far is Bond biased when he accused Shakespeare of being selfish and uncaring in his treatment of his own daughters in particular and his family in general? What are the real drives which stand behind Bond's attempt to investigate Shakespeare, the man and artist? To answer the above questions, the researcher analyzes the play in terms of thematic analysis. However, the researcher finds that Bond is writing biographical fiction about Shakespeare, and he is subjective on documenting him and there are deep political motives behind writing such a play, such as Bond's Marxist ideology which opposes capitalism ideology.

إعادة قراءة لسيرة الكاتب المسرحي "شكسبير" من خلال

مسرحية "بنغو" للكاتب البريطاني إدوارد بوند

مستخلص الدراسة

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى إعادة قراءة مسرحية "بنغو" للكاتب البريطاني إدوارد بوند وتحليل موضوعاتها الرئيسية والتي تظهر أن الكاتب كان يتتبع من خلالها السيرة الشخصية للكاتب الإنجليزي شكسبير وذلك من خلال مقارنة شخصية شكسبير التي قدمها بوند بشخصيته الحقيقية. وكذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى دحض إدعاء بوند بأن شكسبير لم يكن عادلاً في معاملته لبناته بشكل ولعائلته بشكل عام. وكذلك إثبات أن إدوارد بوند كان منحازاً ضد شخصية شكسبير الحقيقية، وأنه حاول أن يظهره ككاتب لم يلتزم في حياته الحقيقية بالمثل التي تناولها في كتاباته، وأن مسعاه الحقيقي كان وراء المال. وسلطت هذه الدراسة الضوء على الدوافع الحقيقية التي دفعت بوند ليهاجم كاتباً آخر مثل شكسبير، والتي كانت في مجملها سياسية بحتة. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، قامت الباحثة بطرح الأسئلة التالية: ماهي العناصر التي جعلت من "بنغو" سيرة روائية؟ وإلى أي مدى كان بوند متحيزاً عندما اتهم شكسبير بأنه كان أنانياً وغير مهتم بمعاملته لبناته وعائلته؟ وما هي الدوافع الحقيقية التي تقف وراء محاولة بوند الانتقاص من شخصية شكسبير، الرجل والكاتب؟ وللإجابة على هذه الأسئلة قامت الباحثة بتحليل موضوعي لمسرحية "بنغو" ومقارنتها بالسيرة الحقيقية والرسمية للكاتب الإنجليزي شكسبير، ورصد ذلك من خلال كل العبارات والجمل التي تناولت سيرة شكسبير بشكل أو آخر. وبناء على ما تقدم توصلت الباحثة إلى أن إدوارد بوند كان يكتب سيرة روائية عن الكاتب الإنجليزي شكسبير، وأنه كان متحيزاً ضده في توثيق حياته وكذلك توصلت الباحثة إلى الدوافع الحقيقية وراء مهاجمة شخصية مرموقة مثل شكسبير، ألا وهي الدوافع السياسية العميقة، والتي تستند إلى الأيديولوجية الماركسية التي تناهض الرأسمالية.

Chapter One

Introduction

1. 1. Background of the Study

One of the characteristics that signify drama is placing discrepancies together and displaying them in a style that raises the controversy that makes us get closer to the truth of what is right and what is wrong. The theatre is not only bound to literary expression and aesthetic performance; it is also rooted in political, social and cultural expressions. Therefore, playwrights who understand the role of the theatre and drama in this way tend to be explicit in using different signals and symbols in reference to a certain issue or character.

Drama has always been associated with serious and instructive purposes. Needless to say, ancient critics such as Aristotle and Horace viewed drama as the mouthpiece of very informative and insightful theatregoers who consciously and unconsciously imbibe important lessons. This noble task is felt in many works of the Renaissance and eighteenth century dramatists such as Jonson, Shakespeare, Dryden, and Dr. Johnson. In the twentieth century, names like Brecht, Bernard Shaw, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Osborne are just examples of the important role assigned to drama and its gracious intentions.

Believing firmly that drama is a tool of reform as well as a literary genre, Edward Bond, through *Bingo: Scenes of Money and Death*, (1973) highlights plainly the shared responsibility between playwrights and their societies. He found it apt to put Shakespeare on the stage to express his political and aesthetic views from a 20th century perspective. Displaying Shakespeare as an old melancholic playwright and a man of wealth who agrees on acting against the rights of the lower class of farmers and workers puts the audience in front of the dilemma when politics interferes in art and imposes itself on such a character. It shows us the discrepancy between what is being said and what is being practiced.

Bond declares clearly that he “was not really interested in Shakespeare’s true biography in the way a historian might be.”(p.4). He employs Shakespeare’s character as the protagonist of *Bingo* to highlight “the luxury of creativity in a world full of institutionalized violence” as the *Guardian* (2012) commented. By having Shakespeare in a fictionalized dramatic work, Bond tries to give himself the freedom to go beyond what was said or done to show what was felt and thought of. These feelings and thoughts cannot be expressed by a normal biography.

Bond used what Mullan (2005) identifies as the “biographical fiction”: a genre that was introduced in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, mainly used to produce novels rather than plays, so as to give

himself the chance to manipulate the solid facts. It starts from changing dates and the way certain events took place to changing names and the real characters. In this sort of biographical fiction, the writer through the fanciful reconstruction of a dead person's life reconstructs the narrative elements.

Although Bond could have used the literary biography to explore Shakespeare's life, he preferred not to. This is because of the dramatic effect that might be created by a biographical fiction written for the stage. Factual biography as Erne (1998) explains, sticks to documentation based on letters, journals, writings, speeches, and articles, which makes it less entertaining and educating. It is restrained to the historical fact and what really happened.

However, featuring the character of another playwright in writing is the work of a biographer not a dramatist, or at least it should be in a biography not a play. The questions raised here, did Bond write a biography exposing Shakespeare's personality or a play that highlights the social responsibility of the artist? Is it his job, as a playwright, to criticise other playwrights? Does Bond, as a playwright, have the right to criticise another playwright, especially someone like Shakespeare? If so, on what basis can he do that?

The present thesis aims to examine whether Bond was writing a biography about Shakespeare or just using some historical events and biographical situations from Shakespeare's life to comment on the duality informing the artistic work; words vs. actions, ideals vs. practices, public vs. private. As one of Britain's prominent contemporary dramatists, Bond associates himself with the experimental theatre of the 1970s. Through powerful arguments about the shared responsibility of the playwright towards his society, Bond constitutes the distinguishing features of 'a new theatre' that attacks capitalism in all its forms. Not bothering himself with having his plays censored, Bond worked hard on a new stage vision that illustrates cruelty and moral degradation of contemporary life. Bond's expertise in creating dramatic effect demonstrates the evils of society, explicitly, "what society does when it is heavy with aggression" (Letters volume I, p.34). As a playwright, he is resolutely committed to humanistic values; he enjoys protesting against social and political injustice in a loud voice. Bond (1994) believes that "the Theatre is a way of judging society and helping to change it; art must interpret the world and not merely mirror it" (Letters volume I, p.34).

Therefore, his works criticise highly the contradictions of a class-structured society, drawing attention to the impossibility of any social improvement as long as political action is ineffective. Apprehended with

the cruelty of class structured society, Bond highlights the social, economic and political factors which shape this society's consciousness. Bond's perspective on the mission of the theatre focuses on the following, "I write about violence as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners. Violence shapes and obsesses our society and if we do not stop being violent we have no future" (Letters volume I, p.34).

Thus, we find Bond's ideology as a Marxist and socialist apparent in all of his works and overwhelms the dramatic work in one way or another. His attack against capitalism extends to most aspects and features that characterize it. He attacks 'institutionalized violence', the brutality of laws, and the society's political figures; as he displayed Queen Victoria in a homosexual relation in *Early Morning*. He refused to take out the stoning scene in *Saved* in rejection of Lord Chamberlain's Office directions. Bond states his views and beliefs by exploiting selected events, characters, or incidents to handle the different social, political, economic or even religious topics. His attack on Shakespeare's duality is not surprising or out of the scene as he looks at him as that type of playwright who pays lip service to fulfil his own personal interest. Of course, this is a very controversial matter about which no consent would be reached. However, Shakespeare's ideology and practices remain a fertile subject for writers like Bond. Seen from Bond's Marxist ideology, Shakespeare appears as a

capitalist writer. So it is natural that he becomes subject to Bond's criticism. However, does Bond have the right to criticize someone of his own profession? Whatever Bond's motive behind this, it will be looked at as part of the professional competition, which moves us to the ethical question, to what extent was Bond objective in his criticism?

Irrespective of the ethical questions behind such a choice, the present research seeks to record Bond's interpretation and its literary implications. Playwrights' sense of what is right and wrong is an ideological standpoint that privileges certain characters, societies, and cultures and disdains others. Feeling that his ideology is rightful and universal, Bond does not hesitate or hide any of his views regarding Shakespeare or what he represents. By using fiction, Bond gives himself the ultimate freedom to comment on and judge Shakespeare in a way that is more effective and representative. *Bingo* is still read as a dramatic and fictional work though it talks about a real character that existed one day.

Besides fictionalizing his work, the writer can adjust and add events and situations that did not exist in reality as they serve his cause or the effect he wants to achieve. The rules here are not the same that are applied to biography writing of courtesy, legitimacy, fairness, and accuracy. Biographers slightly modify some facts, speeches, quotes and events to celebrate the person they write about. Boswell, as one of the earlier and

famous biographers, presented Samuel Johnson's biography in a way that emphasized what is best in Johnson. He created a mythical Johnson rather than a real Johnson. In this respect William Dowling (1986) states:

In a sense, the Life's portrayal of Johnson as a moral hero begins in myth... As the biographical story unfolds, of course, this image dissolves and there emerges the figure of an infinitely more complex and heroic Johnson whose moral wisdom is won through a constant struggle with despair,... . Yet the image never dissolves completely, for in the end we realize there has been an essential truth in the myth all along, that the idealized and disembodied image of Johnson existing in the mind of his public.... (pp. 478-479)

It is apparent that the biographer's goal of writing about a certain character is to polish his image and refine it, a goal that does not apply to a writer of Bond's style.

However, Carlos Baker wrote the biography of Hemingway and named it *Hemingway: A Life Story*. It can be noticed through the title, that he tracked Hemingway's life in an encyclopaedic style. He went over all the details that his hands reached without giving himself the privilege to comment on them as stated by Lehmann-Haupt (1968) in a review of Baker's biography:

As he explains in the foreword to *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, he would not judge the writer's work; he had already done that in a critical study that appeared in 1952. More important, he would not offer any thesis on Hemingway's character, but simply get the record straight, demythologize the legend. He would, in fact, so purge himself of bias that he would not even presume to judge one fact more significant than another. He

would gather them together and arrange them so as to create a replica of Hemingway's life -- a Papa Hem built from toothpicks of details. (p.1)

Baker's biography as reviewed by Bessie (2009) is no more than a collection of details about a renowned character that can be used for academic purposes rather than for entertaining or educating people. In comparison, Bond's attempt lies in sharing what is hidden and practiced in private in a way that forces the audience to reconsider its understanding and judgements of Shakespeare the artist and man.

On the other hand, we find T.S Eliot and Bernard Shaw write plays that inspired Bond. Expressing their social and moral drama criticism, George Bernard Shaw wrote *Saint Joan*, and, T. S. Eliot *Murder in the Cathedral*. Both plays stick to historical accuracy, reflecting the life of Saint Joan of Arc and Thomas Becket. Felt uncomfortable with their social surroundings, the two created a picture of the saints which ran in line with their own perceptions and intellectual views of life and society in general. This struggle represents Eliot's societal criticism on rising cruelty in Europe at the time when he wrote his drama. Although he was commissioned to write the play in commemoration of the anniversary of Becket's martyrdom, he did succeed in making the dramatic material capable of having great appeal for contemporary audience through its memorable situation, limitless and fascinating fiction. Both writers

represent their world views and their ideas for society through their chosen saints, who were historical personalities. They portrayed them to people as victims of their social systems. The history of modern drama is full of examples that depict political and historical figures to express the writer's own ideological views. Of these examples are George Bernard Shaw's *Cleopatra* (1898), T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Bertolt Brecht's, *Galileo* (1938) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (1964).

1.2 Shakespeare the Mystery

Although many consider Bond as an out of the streamline writer like Saunders (2004), but he is not. It is true he writes in a way that puts him in confrontation with the political systems, but he still emphasizes the role of playwrights and consequently the theatre in understanding the cruelty that has been institutionalized in our societies; the violence which grows with societies and leads them to their destruction. Edward Bond's choice of dramatic material has a clear-cut task to fulfil his ideological leftist perspectives. The present thesis will shed some light on Bond's controversial *Bingo*, in particular the author's striking elaboration of the glaring contrast: Shakespeare between words and actions, art and life. Bond in a careful style highlights certain points in Shakespeare's life which have hitherto remained in the dark. The objective behind all this is to see and

verify the gaps between the structural and literary reading of Shakespeare's texts and those derived from biographical and experiential elements.

Shakespeare is one of the most controversial figures in the literary community which is, according to Farouky (2007), divided into two camps, “Stratfordians”, those who defend him and his legacy, and “anti-Stratfordians”, the ones who are sceptic even about his very existence. This endless argument started during his lifetime by the English playwright Robert Greene and continues up to the present. Robert Greene (1623) attacks Shakespeare by drawing a dividing line between those university-educated playwrights and those who are like Shakespeare; who barely got some school education. In this respect Greene wrote of Shakespeare:

There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country, (Pinksen, 2009, p.1)

An idea that gave many anti-Stratfordians the precedent to argue about the source of knowledge that enabled Shakespeare to talk about travel, politics, love and even the level of language he uses. They are sceptic about school education as he never left his hometown, in search of great knowledge.

As regards what has been said about the real identity of Shakespeare, it is clear that we are in the presence of a case of a playwright who had a significant achievement in the history of drama. He left a legacy that has

been read and played over four centuries; his works displayed a lot of social and political themes of his times. Shakespeare turned to be a symbol rather than a renowned playwright. No other dramatist could match Shakespeare in the quantity and quality of works, analyses, judgements, and views written about him. Indeed, even the great actors like Richard Burton, Laurence Olivier or Mel Gibson find the Shakespearian roles as the best test for their performance skills. Even so, many still doubt his real identity, achievement and ideological and ethical beliefs. The controversy here is obviously endless.

Most of the information about Shakespeare's own life was taken from public documents such as vital records, real estate and tax records, lawsuits, records of payments, and references to Shakespeare and his works in printed and hand-written texts which give biographers a limited space to explore his private life, family relations, and when exactly he was born or died, as much of this information did not provide solid evidence.

The only ultimate fact that most of the literary community agreed upon is that he left us dramatic works of a spectacular and lofty literary value. His dramatic works, ranged from comedies to tragedies and romances, have a superb style that is known typically Shakespearean. He created political, social, and common characters in his plays to crystalize various social values at the times. The political, social and psychological

views he put on the tongue of his characters are of great and living value. The irony is that these views are used against him when he violated them in his own life.

As Halleck (2011) convincingly concludes, Shakespeare is looked at as a businessman rather than a playwright in relationship to the wealth he made out of his dramatic works. His will reveals how rich he was; he gave shares to different people that are estimated of hundreds of thousands in today's money; a sum that could not be made out of artistic works, at least by his fellow partners. His relationship to the royal court and aristocrats associated him with capitalism, where the landlords used to enslave those of the lower class to build fortunes. This is the act that many critics and artists refused to accept or at least shows the duality of such a significant person.

In defining the relationship between Shakespeare and his family, mainly his wife Anne Hathaway and his brother, the Irish novelist James Joyce spent some time reconsidering Shakespeare and his plays mainly the implications of the melancholic character of Hamlet. Ellman (1982) states that Joyce “began to work out his theory that Shakespeare was not prince Hamlet but Hamlet's father, betrayed by his queen with his brother as Shakespeare was — Joyce thought — betrayed by Anne Hathaway with his brother” (Ellmann, p.155). Through *Ulysses*, Joyce focuses highly on the

parents-children relationship within Shakespeare's family. Joyce in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses* comments directly in a biographical tone on how Hamlet was influenced by Shakespeare's life. The argument he raises in this chapter draws upon Shakespeare's psychological life and how it affects his writing of a renowned work like *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's mysterious life turned him into a ghost that can be talked about but never been seen. You can find him through his characters such as Hamlet, and Lear; but the blurred vision of whether he is that character or not dominates the whole scene. His turbulent and mysterious life helped a lot of creating the duality of the artist and capitalist character of Shakespeare; the character that made him subject to much criticism by his fellow dramatists, notably Bond and Shaw.

T.S. Eliot, himself a skilled dramatist, has managed to subvert all the glamour of Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*, for its lack of "the objective correlative". In contrast, as seen in his renowned article, "On Hamlet" (1921), Eliot's vision for the play and its writer remains artistic and structural, i.e., he analysed the play according to its own intrinsic elements rather than drawing on external and biographical information.

Bond here is not concerned with critical judgments and perspectives. Rather he chooses to write a metadrama, a work that explores the life of

another fellow dramatist as well as his works. Bond, in *Lear* (1971) or *Bingo*, inserts material from Shakespeare's life and art to give modern theatregoers his own version of Shakespearian drama and its applications.

1.3 Bond the Dramatist

Violence is the most common word that can be spotted in Bond's works. If we have all his works in a collage, we will have different images of the violence we have in societies: killing, stoning, hanging, bullying, torturing...etc. He depicts all these tyrannies as deeds of systems or groups of people, not as individual acts. Through his various works, he comments on the level of corruption societies have reached. Bond's notion of violence (1983) comes from the fact that he sees that:

Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them writing about us and our time. It should be immoral not to write about violence. (p.lvii)

As a socialist and Marxist and post-modernist, it is natural that he attacks the imperial and capital systems as he finds them corrupting people's lives. He finds that compromise with such systems will continue the destruction of the society. In his Hitler and Himmler parody he raises the big question of the role of theatre, and in turn the role of the creative writer, in changing the society views in relation to what is right and wrong. He wonders if it is acceptable and ethical that playwrights' acts contradict

their literary works. In this respect, he (2010) comments with a lot of sorrow on the consequences of Shakespeare's deed against his society:

When I wrote *Bingo* thirty years ago its argument was somewhat theoretical. It has since become eerily relevant. The great icon of Western culture signs a piece of paper for a wealthy banker called Combe. The consequences spread like ripples of iron-chains across the surface of a pool. Four hundred years later Combe has become so powerful he can gamble with our lives and corrupt our culture. When Shakespeare sold himself to Combe, he sold not only the people of Stratford. He sold us. What followed is more than a theatrical irony, it is fate, the fateful consequence of human actions: Combe now owns our theatre. (p.1)

Many critics, like Spencer (1992) misunderstood Bond's works and accused him of either "having sadistic tendencies" (p.161) or "being obscure or being guilty of faulty craftsmanship" (p.xiii). This is because they wanted him to be that type of writer who writes what appeals to the institutionalized system. However, he sees that "the subject of literature is society". Thus he writes the shared thoughts that are spoken in the language of the society, not in the language of the political system.

Edward Bond's exposure of the violence and terror of World War II during childhood probably shaped themes in his work as he witnessed the bombings on London in 1940 and 1944 (Davis, 2005). Moreover, his experience of evacuation gave him an awareness of social alienation which would characterise his writing. However, he handled topics like capitalism,

violence, technology, post-modernism and imagination. He developed a comprehensive theory on the use and means of drama. His theory is completely based on clarity and being direct (Davis, 2005).

Most of the contexts Bond provides in his plays involve politics and aesthetics. He displayed violence and voyeurism in a comment of the cruelty that emerges in societies, mostly featured in works such as *The Pope's wedding*, (1961) *Saved* (1964) and *Blow-Up* (1967). He made a rereading for history as he did in *Bingo* and *The Fool* (1974); he gave his audience a new perspective of how things happened in the past. He rewrote the classics of Shakespeare, *Lear* and *Euripides; The Woman* (1974) where he shows that the only way to self-satisfaction is to stand in the side of the society. He commented on the social pleasures that societies enjoy in plays like *Early Morning* (1967), *Derek* (1982), *The Sea* (1972), and *Restoration* (1980). Furthermore, he gives us his own reading for the present time, as he sees the world is heading towards its destruction in plays like *The Worlds* (1979) and *Summer* (1981).

Bond (1998) saw a deeply rooted force in the individual's preserving an innate sense of justice that he theorized as 'Radical Innocence'. Subsequently he built on this concept a comprehensive theory of drama in its anthropological and social role that he intended to go

beyond Brecht's theories on political drama. This discovery also gave him the key to write on nuclear war, not to just to condemn the atrocity of war in a general way but, from a political perspective, questioning public acceptance of it and collaboration with it by ordinary citizens.

1.4 *Bingo*

Bingo: Scenes of Money and Death is one of the early works of Edward Bond. Bond (1973) states that the play consists of twelve characters. SHAKESPEARE, his daughter (JUDITH), his WIFE (presented as a second OLD WOMAN who is heard but never seen on stage), the wealthy landowner (COMBE), the OLD MAN (Shakespeare's gardener), the YOUNG WOMAN (a beggar), SON of the old man, BEN JONSON (Shakespeare's rival), JEROME, WALLY and JOAN (the peasants) and the OLD WOMAN who represents Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna. This play depicts Shakespeare in his last days in Warwickshire home between 1615 and 1616. There Shakespeare appears suffering from pangs of conscience because he signed a contract which protects his landholding against the peasants' interests. Shakespeare undertook to help the landowners enclose a common field in Welcomebe near Stratford; Shakespeare found himself forced either to side with the poor peasants and lose his rents or side with the wealthy landowners and hurt the peasants. Thus, Shakespeare chose his own property and his own profits and sided

with the landowners. The peasants wrote to Shakespeare asking him for some help but, unfortunately, he did nothing. Consequently, by the end of the play, the audience perceives Shakespeare dying in his bed after taking some poison pills. The play is considered one of the most popular political dramas of the twentieth century.

However, the topic of this study, *Bingo*, connects two famous British names together; Shakespeare, the sixteenth century, well-known playwright and Edward Bond, the twentieth century dramatist; Shakespeare as the main character of this play and Bond as its author. Although both writers are British, still they represent different trends, eras and ideologies. In his introduction to *Bingo*, Bond explained his dialectic view about the relationship between human values and society. Here, he stated that humans are not innately violent; it is society and its arrangements which forces people to be violent. Bond asserted that capitalism makes people behave in an aggressive, selfish way. Indeed, aggressiveness and selfishness are faculties which conflict with the innate human nature as presented in Bond's uncommon play. Bond asserted that we think we are free, but in fact, we are not. However, Bond is still optimistic and he also still calls for society reform. He believes that art must be active against this corrupt, passive version of society.

Bond, with his Marxist view, used the bourgeois, royal prone, wealthy character (Shakespeare) to embody his own ideology. He focused on him as a man and husband rather than an artist. Bond put Shakespeare in context which made him look trapped between his private interests and his artistic sensibility. In *Bingo*, Bond tried to depict a new character of Shakespeare, a version which might make Shakespeare's readers and admirers feel astonished. Bond tried to write a biography about Shakespeare.

Thus, the researcher's role, here, is to answer such questions as: what kind of biography was that? Can it be considered a reliable document? Or was it only an artistic work which merely stemmed from Bond's own speculation?

1.5. Statement of the problem

Edward Bond's critique of Shakespeare's life and art constitutes the core point of his controversial drama, *Bingo*. As a socialist and a Marxist, Bond sees that Shakespeare's reputation is based on a flagrant discrepancy between word and action, between what is professed and concealed. The main premise of the play hinges on the preferential treatment of one of his daughters (Susanna) at the expense of the other (Judith). The present research seeks to verify and assess Bond's claims by means of a thorough and impartial study of Shakespeare's authoritative

biographies and comparing all these with Bond's version. The purpose behind all is to see to what extent certain writers can be right or biased in their representation of a historical matter, especially when it comes to one of the greatest writers in the world.

1.6. Objectives of the study

This study, by means of discourse analysis, aims to:

1. Analyze the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction by comparing Bond's fallible Shakespeare to the real Shakespeare.
2. Debunk the validity of Bond's statement that Shakespeare had been unfair and discriminating in his treatment to his own daughters in particular and his family in general.
3. Shed some light on the real reasons and motives that have driven a writer of Bond's caliber to present Shakespeare in the way he did.

1.7. Questions of the study

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction?
2. How far was Bond biased when he accused Shakespeare of being selfish and uncaring in his treatment to his own daughters in particular and his family in general?

3. What were the real drives which stand behind Bond's attempt to subvert Shakespeare, the man and artist?

1.8. Significance of the study

Bond's *Bingo* raises important questions about Shakespeare's life and domestic affairs. Researchers, teachers, academics and students are in dire need for such a fresh and perhaps unprecedented presentation in a very controversial topic i.e. Shakespeare's life. To make a creative work contribute to the on-going debate about Shakespeare is by itself something worth studying. Herein lies the significance of the current study. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies have been conducted about Bond's work at least in this part of the world.

1.9. Limitations of the study

This research is theoretically limited to one play written by Bond; due to the nature of its topic, the results to be deduced can't be generalized to all Bond's plays. The study is also limited to the available resources; in the future, other resources might be added to this field of research.

1.10. Definition of terms

- 1) **Re-Reading:** in the present context, it is to read the play, *Bingo*, from an angle rather than what the writer intended. In re-reading this text,

the researcher is going to rely on the ideas of the reader –response approach. Advocates of this trend such as Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Jacques Derrida, and Hans Robert Jauss believe that the reader plays a great role when dealing with the text. They declare that each interpretation is valid in the context from which the reader approaches the text; they believe that there is no one correct interpretation of any text, therefore, all readings are subjective and possible and each interprets the text according to his/her own view (Wellek & Austen, 1948). Accordingly, these ideas will lead to Hans Robert Jauss's view. It is Jauss who sought to create a bridge between literary school and history. Most literary schools degraded the role of the reader in interpreting, analysing and evaluating the text. Others tended to limit certain texts to certain places and certain times. Here, Jauss came to give the reader a more flexible role when dealing with any text. Jauss believes that the reader approaches the text equipped with some previous information and knowledge; he gains such knowledge from other texts; these texts can make the new text a little bit familiar to the reader. Thus, Jauss concludes that the reading process is not an autonomous free process; it is a process of gathering and collecting mutual concepts which might correlate with certain time or certain category of people, (Jauss, 1970). It is within this type of reading that Bond's *Bingo* is to be studied and assessed.

2) Rational Theatre: also called Marxist theatre. One advocate of this kind of drama is the English playwright Edward Bond. Bond's rational view states that acceptance is not enough; Man must participate to develop his character and his society. Bond believes that the modern society is irrational. He also suggests that justice may help people evolve.

According to Bond, societies are corrupted by violence, exploitation, oppression, science and technology. Bond believes that it is a myth if we say man is innately born violent and that technology came to solve man's problems.

An example of Bond's rational theatre is *Lear* in which Bond didn't like the end of Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*. In his play, Shakespeare depicted Lear as a helpless weak character who accepts his fate submissively. In Bond's, *Lear* (1971), one can notice Lear's character as a different character. At the end of Bond's *Lear*, one can see Lear as a practical character who can take a more heroic resolution in the modern world. Bond believes that Shakespeare's *Lear* was weak and to correct him, he makes it more visible and more active in society. Whether in *Lear* or in *Bingo*, Bond is capable of viewing the Elizabethan dramatist and his world from a different angle.

3) New Historicism: A school of literary criticism which aims to understand literary works through cultural context and to analyze intellectual history through literature. It take into account the elements and variables of history in perceiving the phenomenon and judging it accordingly.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Literature

In this chapter the researcher reviews the related literature concerning Bond's life and ideology. Furthermore, it reviews the literature related to *Bingo*.

2.1 Theoretical Studies

Bond is considered a skilful and a self-conscious playwright, well aware of his own goals, ideas and methods. Duncan (1976) states that "he probably has formulated a social philosophy more systemically than any dramatist since Shaw." (p.1)

Johns (1979) states that *Bingo* makes the beginning of Bond's career. The plays from the *Pope's Wedding* to *The Sea* were intended as a complete cycle. On the other hand, *Bingo and The Fool*, begin another. One major difference in these two major works is that, for Bond, they are more series of scenes than plays. He subtitles *Bingo* "Scenes of Money and Death", and the Fool "Scenes of Bread and Love. This change reflects Bond's major concern for providing solutions rather than just stating problems.

Stoll (1976) cited Bond's words as he explains the new emphasis:

I haven't called the last two plays (plays) at all, I called them "scenes" of something, in the sense that it would be wrong to say that our problem is such and such now because of something that happened in the past. Our problem is created all the time, constantly recreated. And it's because we don't interfere with the recreations of our problems that we can't solve our problems...That play where you investigate the past in order to pin guilt on somebody, that also is not a play that would interest me. (p.420)

In *Bingo and the Fool*, Bond places a much stronger emphasis upon what he terms "the working out of the rationality of society" as the way to deal with societies constantly recreated problems (Cited in Stoll 1976, 421)

Loveridge (2010) says that she is still not entirely clear why the play is called *Bingo*, a game of chance and money. Shakespeare's final words are reflective, "Was anything done?" Bond's play is one that stays with you and continues to engage your thoughts with his view of Shakespeare, not as a great artist but as a wealthy landowner who seems to be deliberately keeping money and property from his wife after his death. We are told of the bankruptcy of Shakespeare's father, the Stratford glover in this play.

Loveridge concludes that "although Edward Bond's *Bingo* is criticizing Shakespeare for his lack of principle in tackling issues of

poverty and oppression, Bond himself “has never shied away from controversy putting his ideals above popularity and wealth”.(p.2)

Barakat (1990) examines the character of Shakespeare in *Bingo* saying that *Bingo is* examining the individual's role in life; how he lives and how he dies. Shakespeare isolates himself in his garden from the current affairs, a dramatic variation on the enclosure that is taking place around him. His physical enclosure reflects an intellectual one, and both are echoed in the enclosure of the common land. Shakespeare's decision to tie with the upper classes as well as showing his lack of moral responsibility (while as a writer, he is supposed to have the greater responsibility), 'opens up' the exploration of the contradictions between the individual's moral choice and *its* consequence. Around the basic question of rational participation *Bingo* evolves.

He concludes that the practice of juxtaposing social action and its consequences in the first scene has a formal counterpoint: the juxtaposition of historic figures and fictional characters which creates a sort of generic tension, a source of theatricality. This practice creates tension between documentary elements in the play and the fictional world, which is emphasized further throughout the play. However, the historical elements are employed to activate the process of interpretation, and not merely to re-embody a historic occurrence. The practice of giving Shakespeare's lines a

sense of being a 'summary' or a 'reading' of the situation makes him aware of the happening as well as keeping him at a distance from the action, enclosed in his own thought process. This is given a literal representation in Scene Three, which is a clear example of the practice of showing the action from different perspectives, or showing the characters' actions and reactions to a specific happening. But it also shows how Shakespeare is detached or involved in the events.

Torma (2010) analyzes the character type in *Bingo*, stating that it is about the last days of Shakespeare's life. The play presents a different sort of young character from the Gravedigger's Boy, who is a nameless young man, the Son. The Son is developed in opposition to the character of Shakespeare in Bond's play. Shakespeare- apparently both the man and Bond's fictional character - is condemned by Bond for his disregard for humanity. It is in Shakespeare's self-recognition of his own callousness at the end of the play that Bond acknowledges as a positive change in the man. In comparison to the aged Shakespeare, the young man, the Son, is not self-conscious of his old ways; he keeps making one incorrect adjustment after another to his social situation.

He also argues that Bond in *Bingo* wants to show the despair and madness that capitalism brings and the difficulty in finding a way out. Rational attempts go only so far and then fail. Bond remarks that the two

characters of Shakespeare and the Son are stuck in a deadly culture and must play out their parts accordingly. In the case of Judith in *Bingo*, the displaced desire to be secure in a father's love is demonstrated by her trying to find Shakespeare's will at the end of the play, to find comfort in the power of money.

In an interview with Bond, Stoll (1976) states that Bond is considered as one of the most outstanding controversial British modern playwrights. He argues that Bond's plays came to express his rational view, and thoughts. Concerning *Bingo*, he says that it came to depict the last six months of Shakespeare's life (as a desperate man who was unable to do anything to fulfill justice in society). In this interview, Stoll describes Bond as a frank, tense, serious and modest person. When he was asked about his talent, Bond answered-: "I write plays ... to stop myself going mad " (pp.414-415).

Bond adds that his theater is rational because he hopes that one day societies are going to be rational. He explains that a rational, democratic society must be a socialist one. According to Bond, to reach such a rational society, we have two ways: "rational and irrational ones. A rational way can be achieved through writing plays, teaching, discussing, convincing and caring; the irrational one is by practicing political violence." (p.416) Bond proceeds and says that "this is a very old

problem which man tried consistently to solve” (p.417). In this interview, Bond commented on *Bingo* which depicts the irrational, dangerous society which corrupts people. Bond adds that if you are an unjust person, it doesn't matter how educated, knowledgeable or civilized you are. Still, it is you who is going to destroy yourself. Thus, it's the writer's role to put the cards on the table for the public and say: “these are the consequences of your life; they are inescapable” (p.418). Bond concludes, “If you want to avoid violence, it is not enough to say violence is wrong, you must take an action, you must change the conditions which create that violence” (p.418).

Hilde (1995) interviewed Bond who appeared to be an overwhelmed, bold, serious person. In that interview, Bond revealed some of his ideas; he explained his new ideas about history and its relation to drama. He also explained his late achievements about the techniques he used in modern theatre. Bond also revealed theatrical techniques which he used in his trilogy, *The War Plays* (1985). In the same interview, Bond explained that his trilogy sums up all his previous works. It can be considered as the history of theatre. In this trilogy, Bond used several techniques, from the "simple theatre" to the "camera theatre". Bond talked about his works and how the audience receives them. He talked about humanity, society, morals, the Greek theatre, the

psyche, Brecht and the epic theatre. He talked about Shakespeare and the soliloquies in his great tragedies.

Raby (1986) argues that as Bond goes back to history in order to examine the cultural and ideological father figures in the plays of the second phase, the artist occupies a central role, but his treatment of the figure remains the same. Bond concentrates on the artist as a father figure, as a 'wise fool' whose knowledge and experience affect the younger generation. To simplify the issue, *Bingo* and *The Fool* are two aspects of examining the artist's role: the intellectual, deliberate withdrawal in the first play, and the enforced one in the second. These two 'options' are examined to prove the human being's need for a humanizing culture: the two 'old' cultures and figures are doomed to failure because they do not provide the necessary guidance for the individual. The artist, though creator of these cultures, is the first to suffer this dehumanization, unawareness brings disasters upon him/her as well as upon the younger generation which he is supposed to guide and guard.

Bond takes the author of *King Lear* to be an example of resignation and withdrawal, an example of the dramatist's refusal to or incapability of playing his role: to 'come down' and help shape his society. Bond has chosen Shakespeare's last days for an assessment of the wisdom of the fool in his detachment, and a judgment upon the act of detaching himself and

the consequences of this detachment. The choice of depicting the last days enables Bond to avoid depicting Shakespeare's art: he is already an established artist and his reputation is beyond doubt. The play tries to answer the question of how such a figure responds to his discovery that he failed his nation and offspring. The choice of Shakespeare as a protagonist is deliberate as an extreme example of a 'cultural' father figure. Bond's choice "has the effect of subverting a popular literary stereotype with its associations of serene humanism, which Bond demonstrates as teetering on the edge of bland inhumanity in certain social conditions" (pp.110-115).

When Bond first conceived the idea of writing his own version of *King Lear*, he approached Shakespeare's version in a skeptical and questioning spirit. Smith (1979) cited:

I very much object to the worshipping of that play by the academic theatre...because it is totally dishonest experience. Oh, yes, you know, this marvelous man suffering, and all the rest of it. I think that at the time it would have been completely different experience to see Lear reacting in the Tudor set up... now, I think it's an invitation to be artistically lay, to say, Oh, how: sensitive we are and this marvelous experience we're having, understanding this play, and all the rest of it ...he's renaissance figure and he doesn't impinge in our society as much as he would. So that, I would like to rewrite the play to make it more relevant. (p.6)

He argues that in Shakespeare's *king Lear*, Cordelia aroused a strong hostile reaction in Bond:

One of the very important things in the play was to redefine the relationship between Cordelia and Lear. I don't want to make this seem easy or slick, but Cordelia in Shakespeare's play is an absolute menace. I mean she's a very dangerous type of person. (p.68)

Bond in the early notes for the play describes Cordelia as a sort of unsuccessful Robespierre, the greatest force that destroys Lear. In Bond's play, Cordelia is not one of Lear's daughters. Bond changed the relationship, but keeps the name of Cordelia to be given to the counter force which will destroy Lear. Yet, both Lear and Cordelia, in Bond's play, are defeated by their premise of violence. Both perpetuate and moralize violence and the suppression of truth.

Hay and Roberts (1980) think what is important for Bond is not the question of inheritance and authority, but how society creates one of inheritance, the perpetuated violence:

It's not question of inheritance, who gets to the top: it's to do with the total structure, the complete dance, the force that holds it together. In my play, there can be no Albany waiting in the wings. (p.109)

In Bond's play, Cordelia's revolution demonstrates how violence may be used to reinforce the very things it initially revolts against. Bond says "violence has its own logistics and terror and fear will follow from its use. If the use is large, the terror and fear will be large and this will enforce the use of more violence." (p.114)

Bond argues that:

Society has to bear the consequences of what is. If you want to avoid those consequences, the only way you can do it is not by applying a remedy on top, but by altering the nature of the problem below. So, it seems to me that *Bingo* is a demonstration of the working out of certain truths about society which are rationale and coherent and from which the audience can learn (Cited in Stoll, 1976, p.421).

In brief, for him the emphasis upon "scenes" instead of plays demonstrates his ideas more effectively.

According to Hunts (1975), "Bond seems to me a playwright who has been trapped by his own literary aspiration, and who has lost true touch with the society he is trying to explain..." (p.76). Briefly, Bond is guilty of a kind of elitisms, and he appears no longer concerned with the problems man faces in contemporary society.

Bond explains why the writer is of central concern in many of his plays:

I've dealt with other writers (as I have with people who are very much not writers) for one reason: to show how human nature and social culture are formed. I wanted to show that human nature doesn't exist independently of the society which forms it ... Obviously, I've dealt with other writers as symbols of culture—not of self or of literature for the sake of literature. The literature of an age is the summary of its view of human nature and at the same time part of the process of forming that human nature. (Bond, 1978)

For Bond, vision or creative imagination is what gives man his moral perspective in a world where there are no absolutes. He states that he simply asserts a certain moral experience by imagination and provides an example to illustrate what he means:

It's like standing in a gas chamber, and someone hands me baby and says push it through on their heads. I don't do it, because I know what that means. If I hear an order, and I am a person who obeys an order, then something has been killed in me, and imagination is to understand what it means when you push a baby on somebody's head, and there's no reason that you can provide about that. You can't argue about that rationally, you can't say it's wrong, why should it be wrong? Who says it's wrong? (Hay and Roberts 1978, p. 63)

Chambers (1985) refers to what Edward Bond calls his theatre, "rational theatre" in the sense that it says there is a meaning to history, there is an explanation for human miseries and that writers can discern a pattern in history and enhance the human condition, "I call my plays rational but they are often very passionate and very emotional plays, because passion and emotion are part of a rational life". (p.24).

Chambers (1985) continues by stating that Bond disliked the theatre of the absurd because it is fundamentally pessimistic and, therefore, cynical theatre. Its ultimate effect is to destroy in people a confidence and trust in themselves. "I call my theatre the rational theatre for this reason: it is in opposition to the absurd theatre" (p. 26). He deals with the problem of irrationality because they are the problems that break the society. And

when he deals with irrational subjects, as he often does, it leads some to imagine him as an irrational or the one writing for the theatre of the absurd. He is not interested in the theatre of the absurd at all, because according to him, it is culturally disastrous and that life is not absurd, but the society is. He contends that if life is absurd, then everyone knows that we are some sort of freaks in some corner of the universe and we are all going to destroy ourselves. For Bond, the only justification for going to theatre is that it is a public institution in which our problems are made clear, are made real for us, and at the same time we are given hope and confidence in order to change the situation in which we find ourselves:

I would like to be able to create individuals on the stage...to be able to present people in such a way that you can understand their social relationship and be able to read the rest of their society in them, to understand them as living processes (Chambers, 27).

Chambers also adds that Bond's plays tend to get connected to things like the theatre of the absurd but this is not true, because if a play like *Bingo* (1973) ends with a suicide, it does not mean it is a pessimistic play. He sees it as the working out of the rationality of the society. So *Bingo* is a demonstration of the working out of the rationality of society which are rational and coherent and from which the audience can learn. Bond believes “if an optimistic play is one where the people come at the end and say hurrah, that is a false optimism. All one can do to write an optimistic play is to show that human activity has meaning” (Stoll, 1976, p.417),

which all of Bond's plays display. His plays must be judged by the truth that has been demonstrated in them, and his plays demonstrate some truth about our lives. The optimistic tendency of Bond can be discerned in plays like, *Saved* (1965), *Lear* (1971) and *Bingo* (1973) where it is quite possible for audience to learn something at the end, Bond (1973) says "to go out in order to start a new life" (p.167).

Lamont (2003) explains Edward Bond's ideology through an article titled DE-LEAR-IUM. Lamont states that Bond's "Rational Theatre" expresses his patient and bold character. He concludes that Bond's experience in factories as a youth and his experience as a soldier helped him write more than 41 different plays. Lamont also adds that Bond draws in his words all the Chaos and Courage scenes before they actually exist in reality. About Bond's play, *Lear*, Lamont says this rational author suggests that our societies are dangerously aggressive; children are forced to live among strange objects and institutions. According to Lamont, Bond also believes that one clear form of violence is what he calls "socialized morality". Bond also adds that technology came to destroy humanity.

Lamont's argument states that despite the fact that most of Bond's plays end with a ray of hope, Bond seems to be pessimistic about the future of humanity. Thus, the technological revolution aided by "Socialized Morality" carries the seeds of man's destruction. Lamont (2003) suggests

that Bond has an absurd view. Bond wrote: "something whispers in our ear: - You Have No Right to Live" (p.309).

Lamont states that many of the contemporary dramas depend in their topic on Shakespeare's works but modern playwrights have altered their characters so as to make them tell the truth. Referring to Bond's introduction to "The Rational Theater", Lamont says that Bond has expressed his social view and stated that "Morality has become a form of violence" (p.312).

Lonely (1976) states that Bond wanted his play *The Sea* (1973) to be an optimistic play, to be able to reassure people about their ability to cope not only with their private problems but also with their political problems, "that human beings have the strength to do that, provided, they have the political will" (p.45). He wanted to create in audience a genuine confidence in their ability that would encourage people to realize that they can find meaning in their activities and lives. Bond's optimism rests on his belief that "destruction is finally petty and in the end life laughs at destruction" (p.168). Lonely argues that it is important to understand that Bond, often seen as a nihilist whose plays are filled with images of violence, retains a stubborn faith in humanity, what he calls the contradiction of "humanness". If Bond looks into the abyss, he also points to something beyond.

Billington (2008) quotes Bond's argument "you have to see how people deal with the crisis, but in the end you cannot despair. If you are going to despair, stop writing" (p.27).

Klein (1989) shows how the character of Lear is a problem for Bond saying that: Bond's greatness lies in his attempt to confront the greatest dramatist, "Lear was standing in my path and I had to get him out of the way" (p.71).

Heinz (1976) suggests that Bond maintains that *Bingo* is pessimistic "a total misunderstanding of that play, because it says that Shakespeare may be the greatest dramatist of all times, but he is subject to the same laws as you and I or the man who drives your bus" (p, 412).

Eagleton (1984) criticizes Bond for an insufficiently dialectical theory of human violence. Bond, he argues, too often appeals to an uninterrogated concept of human nature and then stigmatizes aggression as "unnatural." The problem with this idea is that, by assuming a definition of human nature, it assumes a sense of the human as a fixed, natural state rather than as an ongoing process, which is the very idea at the heart of *Lear* that makes it undialectical. In *Lear* the peaceful nature of the human animal is portrayed as corrupted by socialization, giving rise to a nostalgic lament for lost human nature. If Bond's theory is caught in a contradiction "between culturalism and biologism," (p.130) Eagleton is prepared to offer

an escape from that contradiction via Freud and structuralism: “The nature of human beings is culture.”(p.132). He suggests that Bond’s art must come to terms with the dialectic between creation and destruction. Eagleton asserts that technology is of our nature. Thus, he offers to Bond a theory of “nature” as sediment culture. In a sense, he practices an estrangement upon Bond’s principles, one that recalls Brecht’s theorizations of nature and technology.

As Brecht (1964) points out, when we drive a model T Ford it estranges us from the current achievements of technology: henceforth,

[w]e understand cars, by looking at them as something strange, new, as a triumph of engineering and to that extent something unnatural. Nature, which certainly embraces the motor-car, is suddenly imbued with an element of unnaturalness, and from now on this is an indelible part of the concept of nature. (pp. 144-145)

Technology, like language, is our hope and our curse. In and of itself technology cannot be trusted to bring about social change, because technology is always already entrenched in dominant class interests:

What is technologically developed is on the whole a matter of what the ruling social relations require to sustain themselves. Technology, while potentially liberating, is only so when driven by a dialectical struggle for freedom. (p.134).

It can be concluded that Bond has extreme and contradicted views in relation to the present and future life driven by political systems and social

institutions. He wants to give his audience the spark of hope they need to leash the cruelty they live.

2.2 Review of empirical studies

Hay & Robert (1980) conducted a study on Bond's plays. Talking about *Bingo*, they found that *Bingo* is a play which asserts the corrupt view of man and society. The play starts with Shakespeare, the old man sitting calm in his garden. The garden looks like a sanctuary for him. Suddenly, this peaceful atmosphere is sometimes interrupted by poor, simple people (the old woman, the old man and the beggar) those people who are the victims of society and of the system. It describes a man who ignores the integrity between his artistic talent and his sense of what is human. It depicts the story of the great writer, Shakespeare who, in the present context, shares in a conspiracy against the poor peasants defending his own interests and security. Here Bond presented the life of Shakespeare, the great writer to make it represent anyone's in society. Bond says that Shakespeare, in *Bingo*, might be me, you or anyone. *Bingo* suggests that even though Shakespeare is a great writer of all ages, he still remains subject to the laws of society and life. *Bingo* reveals the writer's life, his function and the relation between the two. Thus Bond maintains that the

writer has a greater responsibility in society than others, the writer's main function is to help people live peacefully in their societies.

Hay & Robert (1980) continue that the appearance of such characters reminded Shakespeare of the miserable realities outside his walls. Here, Shakespeare found himself trapped between his sick wife and embittered daughter (Judith) from one side and the outside miserable world represented by Comber, the land lord, and his oppressing of the poor from another side. Such matters and characters forced Shakespeare to leave his sanctuary and merge with the outside world. Still, Shakespeare tried to flee such bitter situations spending some drinking time with his friend Ben Jonson. Ben Jonson was a kind of refuge for him. This might indicate Shakespeare's deep longing for his early peaceful days in his garden. However, incidents like hanging the beggar, baiting the bear and the killing of the gardener again brought Shakespeare back to face the ugly reality of his society, reality which he tried consistently to avoid and at last made him "accept his part in the perpetuation of those evils" (p.183). Consequently, by the end of the play, Shakespeare commits suicide, as a sign of acceptance; acceptance that he was part of his society betrayal. Here the significance of Bond's ending is not the suicide action; it is Shakespeare's recognition of how bad his role was, "it is a self-critical comment" (p.197).

Barakat (1990) studied the theatricality of Edward Bond's plays. He studied his techniques, methods and aspects through which he drew his characters. He also investigated Bond's dramatic strategies and their relation with political consciousness. Barakat studied the relationship between Bond's drama and the social reality through the above mentioned aspects. He also studied Bond's anti-illusory devices, his words, his actions and his trial scenes. He focused on what he called the play-within- the play, Bond's dramatic lyrics and songs. Barakat found that *Bingo* came to make people speculate about themselves, how they live and how they die. Barakat summarized Bond's play, *Bingo*, as a deposition of Shakespeare's life.

Barakat concluded that in his physical enclosure, Shakespeare has also enclosed himself intellectually and spiritually. Shakespeare's support for the high class reflects his low morality. Barakat found that Bond tried to show the contradictions between man's behaviors and their consequences. In this study, Barakat analyzed some of Bond's plays (*The Fool, Bingo, Human Cannon, The Pop's Wedding, The Sea, The Bundle, The Worlds and The War Plays.*). He found that although Bond's plays supported revolutionary violence, they became accepted in the "big" theatres of London. He found that the theatrical devices Bond used made more possibilities to connect the world of stage with the auditorium. He

asserts that Bond's historical words and actions have sustained that point, so the audience became more aware that it is sitting in a theatre. Barakat focused on Bond's use of tragedy which supported the publicity of Bond's drama. For Bond humans need tragedies since they represent something which they would endure in life. It makes them sympathize and feel with each other.

Turley (1992) conducted a study through which he compared selected works of a group of modern British playwrights: (Edward Bond, David Hare, Caryl Churchill and Pan Gems). Turley noticed that all the works of these dramatists explore political and social issues. He also noticed that they explore human values, class struggle, and family relationship through history.

Turely analyzed some of these dramatists' works and concluded that this group of English modern dramatists makes a unique category because of their clear interest in the relationship between myth and culture. They concentrate on myth which sustains oppressive social and political practices. Turley also stated that the style of these groups of dramatists reflects Brecht's concern for combining history with theatre. This group of playwrights had followed Brecht's style and applied it in the contemporary stage. It was clear that Brecht was their inspiring reference which made them create their historical plays. Like Brecht, it

was proved that these writers tended to make their audience know history better.

Henderson (1994) conducted a study about the importance of Jacobean drama in the plays of four contemporary British playwrights (Peter Barnes, Edward Bond, Howard Brenton and Howard Baker). He aimed at identifying the correspondence between these four modern playwrights and those of the Renaissance playwrights. He also tried to find out how much these modern playwrights adopted from the Renaissance playwright, in addition to the way of using violence in their own works. He analyzed some of the dramatist's works and concluded that some of the great modern playwrights adopted Shakespeare's works and wrote similar works but in modern standards. Such dramatists include Edward Bond who wrote *Lear* following Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

Henderson (1994) also added that dramatists of the political theatre owe a lot to the drama of the English Renaissance. He also pointed out that violence is the key element which relates these dramatists together as it is derived from the Renaissance Age. He also stated that body violence is a key element which relates the four dramatists on the one hand and the dramatists of the Renaissance on the other. The study also showed that modern playwrights are interested in the political action. They are

influenced by the twentieth century changes (the technological, scientific and astronomical revolutions). These changes produced elements of conflict and violence in their writings.

Kim (1999) conducted a study on how three of the English modern dramatists (Edward Bond, Peter Barnes and Caryl Churchill) viewed history in their works. He showed that these three dramatists tried to criticize the present time through depicting the violence of history. Thus he suggested that social reform can be achieved through theatre. He also discussed the post-war era which participated greatly in forming the three writers' views about violence and violent characters. The researcher also discussed Bond's ideology and his view about the role of violence in man's life.

He concluded that Bond, Barnes and Churchill depended on the element of violence to express their critique of the present time and they used history to point out these dramatists' views of the theatre as a means of creating moral sensibility through raising human consciousness. To achieve this, these dramatists tended to analyze historical situations and graphic pictures which had been violated by history. They used the theatre as a forum to conduct social self-examination and reform. They so often raised the question of who is responsible for war atrocities. Their answer always was "History"; human beings are not criminals. This is the

main line of their argument. Here there are some exceptions like Shakespeare's character in *Bingo* where he was viewed as irresponsible, violent and indifferent character.

In the case of *Lear*, it was obvious that Lear was a helpless character who stands silent in the process of history. Kim concluded that the three dramatists felt the pressure of history; they recognized that it is unbearable and they also were keenly aware of the impossibility of escaping it.

Nazki (2013) conducted a study in which he studied six of Bond's plays (*Lear, Saved, Bingo, The Sea, The Woman, and Early Morning*). Nazki stated that Bond associates himself with the experimental theater of the 1970s. He also asserted that Bond's most popular topics are related to moral standards, stylistic pluralism, violence, justice and moral degradation (p.4). He also added that Bond is committed to the humanistic values and he always protests against political and social injustice. Thus "Theater is a way of judging society and helping to change it; art must interpret the world and not merely mirror it." (Bond,1994, p.34). Nazki added that bond's plays concentrated on the idea of action. According to him, it is not enough to accept the occurrences of errors, humans must be active and must do something to correct that error; Bond's Theater insisted on rejecting the idea of acceptance and being submissive. Bond believes

that modern society is irrational; it denies justice which maintains the evolution and happiness of human being. Nazki concluded that this perceived need for immediate action is one major reason for Bond's conflict with Shakespeare. Bond sees that Lear's character in Shakespeare's *king Lear* is a weak submissive character. He believes that the model which Shakespeare created in Lear is an inadequate one. So "acceptance is not enough, anybody can accept." (Bond, 1971, p.7).

Discussing *Bingo*, Nazki said this play focused on Shakespeare's character, the artist who risked the life of the poor to save his own interests. Nazki added *Bingo* is a play which reflects the corrupt view of man and society. *Bingo* depicts the issue of the social responsibility of the artist in an unjust society. In his introduction to *Bingo*, Bond tells how he was bothered by the contradictions in Shakespeare's character. Bond believes that art must be sane and just, it must help people live peacefully in societies. Consequently, despite the fact that Shakespeare's works concentrate on sanity and justice, Shakespeare's life still reveals something else. One finds Shakespeare in *Bingo* share in a conspiracy against the poor peasants to save his own private interests. For Bond, this is considered a great and direct violation of the sanity and justice which Shakespeare always calls for in his plays. Bond sees that the artist's life must be a little close to his

art. In *Bingo*, he sees that our societies are irrational and dangerous; they exist at the expense of corrupting humanity.

All previous studies were either about Bond and his works in general, or about Bond as a part of a group of writers; only few of those studies concentrated on Bond's *Bingo*. Thus the researcher is trying to study this specific work of Bond, to analyze it in detail and to study the depiction of Shakespeare's character as perceived by Bond. It is hoped that this study might add something to both Shakespeare's and Bond's literature.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

This chapter presents the methodology and the procedures followed in this study. It describes the techniques followed to answer the questions of the study and achieve its goals.

To answer the first question of the study, “What are the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction?” the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of *Bingo*. She analysed the text to find the elements that make this play a biographical fiction. For this reason, the researcher categorized the elements related to Shakespeare’s real life situations which were wealth, family, professional life and death. The researcher analysed the whole scenes of the play to find how Bond exhibited these aspects of the great writer and to what extent he went deep in detailing his life. The researcher attempted to find the links between the manifestations she analysed and the elements of a biography.

However, to answer the second question of the study, “How far was Bond biased when he accused Shakespeare of being selfish and uncaring in his treatment of his own daughters in particular and his family in general?” the researcher compared Shakespeare’s real life as depicted in authoritative biographies to the image drawn by Bond to find to what extent these two

depictions are authentic and whether Bond was biased against Shakespeare or not. The researcher depended highly on two authoritative biographies written by Halleck (2010) and Alchin (2014) to compare Shakespeare's *Bingo* to. By means of analysis and comparison the researcher sorted all the related quotes and manifestations that help to better understand the way Bond stated his argument.

Finally, to answer the third question, "What were the real drives which stand behind Bond's attempt to subvert Shakespeare, the man and artist?" the researcher analysed Bond's characterization and ideology to find out the real drives that led Bond to draw such an image of the great writer of the Western culture.

The researcher analysed all the written works she was able to access related to both writers, William Shakespeare and Edward Bond. This helped much to have the complete perspective related to both writers and reach the proposed goals.

Furthermore, the researcher set all the conclusions and recommendations she reached in a separate chapter to summaries her findings in light of the discourse analysis she conducted. As will be shown in the following chapter, the study concentrates on the textual aspects of

Bond's *Bingo* in order to clarify the thematic and structural lines of the play.

Chapter Four

The Discussion of the Study

In this chapter the researcher answers the questions of the study by means of discourse analysis and comparison. To answer the first question of the study, the researcher analyzes *Bingo* as a type of biographical fiction through which Bond focuses on certain aspects of Shakespeare's personal life rather than just imposing the relationship between the artist and the society.

4.1 What are the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction?

By selecting fragment scenes from Shakespeare's life, it appears that Bond attempts to reproduce an image that he concluded about Shakespeare's life rather than giving us a detailed biography based on facts and records. He chose to produce a fictional image rather than an image based on facts to be able to manipulate the various events he selected. Bond, through *Bingo*, demonstrates that Shakespeare's life depended highly on luck and chance though it appears to be logical and sequenced, and when he ran out of luck he turned into a melancholic character whose life became a misery.

The first thing to start with is the title of the play itself. *Bingo: Scenes of Money and Death* is a very suggestive in the sense that

Shakespeare's life depended highly on luck and chance; the choice of the board game bingo as a title for this play has a tri fold meaning; the first is drawn from the nature of this game which depends highly on chance and luck, the complete representation of Shakespeare's stand in this play as Bond sees him.

However, the second meaning is drawn from the strategy of this game; as players try to put fragment pieces together to have a complete set of logically sequenced numbers; a stand that is represented by Mr. Combe as a landowner who tried to enclose his lands and ensure that neither Shakespeare nor anybody else opposes him or stands against his plans. "COMBE. This is the only way men have so far discovered of running the world. Men are donkeys, they need carrots and sticks... I make all the effort, I expect to keep my carrot." (Bingo.1. 20)

The third meaning is drawn from the design of the game, as a board game, where moves and actions are strictly defined; when Shakespeare had to sign a contract that protects his right in the rents and ensures his silence. "COMBE. After all if we sign an agreement it wouldn't pay you to attack me: you get your present rents guaranteed at no extra cost. Free insurance. It pays to sit in a garden." (Bingo.1. 21)

Consequently, the relationship between the three parts of this game, as Bond demonstrates, shows that the logical part of the game depends highly on the luck and design parts, as the fortunate player wins if he draws the appropriate numbers before the others, not because he was more logical.

However, the rest of the title “Scenes of Money and Death” is represented in the selected fragments from Shakespeare’s life, related to family, society, wealth and death that reflect Bond’s views rather than the facts related to Shakespeare’s life. Bond did not take Shakespeare’s life as whole but some scenes of his choice to build up a case against Shakespeare’s stand in relation to his responsibility towards his family and society. Bond manipulated the real events he chose and defended that “as it was made for dramatic convenience” (p.4). However, he was not objective in his choice as he chose the worst moments of Shakespeare’s life and highlighted them as the most decisive moments of his life. He displayed him as the man who is in conflict with his family, society and even with himself. Conversely, biographers should spot out the best moments of the people they write about rather than attacking them, or at least show both sides of their subject’s life. The matter that makes us ask whether Bond was really commenting on the relationship between the artist and his society or he was just attacking Shakespeare.

Although Edward Bond stated clearly in his introduction to *Bingo* that he was “not interested in Shakespeare’s true biography” (p.4), it seems he was. This was apparent in his choice of incidents from Shakespeare’s life which focused on his real life rather than his artistic or professional life. Bond discussed Shakespeare’s family life, social interactions, psychology, and even his wealth and death. He also gave himself the right to introduce some disputed aspects of Shakespeare’s life as if they were facts: namely Shakespeare’s relationship to his two daughters and wife. In one way or another, he wrote a biographical fiction about Shakespeare as *Bingo* resembles what Barber (2014) described as a biographical fiction:

Writers’ biographies are commonly written not by historians but by literary critics, who draw extra biographical ‘evidence’ from interpreting the author’s works. Through fiction, we have license to construct alternative narratives, rethinking histories so widely assumed to be ‘true’ that they have not been properly examined in the light of contemporary scholarship.

Resorting to fiction, Bond found it easier to comment freely on Shakespeare’s life and even attack him in one way or another without being blamed for deteriorating facts or being biased as a biographer. Bond admits that he did not tell the truth or the whole truth while writing a play as he said: “If I tell the historical, social truth, then the institutions of the society work against that. It's not a black and white matter, sometimes society will be more open, sometimes it will be more repressive.” (1995, p.34)

Moreover, writing an introduction that defends and interprets Bond's writing choices raises some doubts concerning his motives. Playwrights, novelists or even critics don't need to justify their choices as the text should interpret itself and functions as an independent work that clarifies itself. Such an introduction, which goes deeply defending and clarifying his choices, is needless. However, he insisted on having it be read along with his play. Obviously, Bond had in mind Shaw's famous introductions and prefaces.

In his introduction to *Bingo*, Bond delivered a kind of highly eloquent political speech commenting on the corruption of the political system represented by capitalism, the insanity of societies governed by capitalism, and the conspiracy that takes place between artists and governing systems. In such an introduction, the reader senses that Shakespeare was responsible for the deteriorated situation that societies experience. This is explained by Bond (1995) when he spoke on how the theatre should presumably change the society by working on its psyche:

Psyche and society come together in the theatre and in order to change society you've got to change the psyche and that means a new way of acting so that the psyche can be looked at. People look at an act on the stage as if they were looking at a mirror, and somehow you've got to be able to break that mirror and reassemble it, and that requires a new form of acting. I don't think it exists at the moment, I think one has to work at that and try to find ways of making that possible. (p.5)

Shakespeare for Bond is the artist who did not show any responsibility towards his society; he was only interested in building his fortune and fame on the account of his family relations and society. Although most of Shakespeare's artistic works were highly dominated by political themes, such as, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Tempest*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*...etc. they are of no significance for Bond Shakespeare himself was a corrupted person. In this respect, Bond comments:

Shakespeare's plays show this need for sanity and its political expression, justice. But how did he live? His behaviour as a property-owner made him closer to Goneril than Lear. He supported and benefited from the Goneril-society- with its prisons, workhouses, whipping, starvation, mutilation, pulpit-hysteria and all the rest of it. (p.6)

It is apparent that Bond refers to the conspiracy that took place between creative writers and the political system at Shakespeare's time, the Jacobean era, which in her biography to Anne Hathaway, Alchin (2014) describes as:

They would have been appalled that a criticism of William had been put into print. His first play had just been produced and the family would have been concerned that William might get involved with political and religious propaganda. (p. 9)

Through their writings, the artists justify the deeds the political system goes through. They beautify the ugly face that governing systems have as they show that there is a space of freedom and democracy.

With his reference to ‘Welcomebe Enclosure’, Bond blames Shakespeare to be part of the established situation where money becomes the dominant factor of all aspects of life and how human relationships become of no great value:

We have no natural rights, only rights granted and protected by money. Money provides food, shelter, security, education, entertainment, the ground we walk on, the air we breathe, the bed we lie in. People come to think of these things as products of money, not of the earth or human relationships, and finally as the way of getting more money to get more things. (p. 7)

Bond blames Shakespeare for keeping silent at the time he should say something against what was wrong. It is true that Shakespeare’s attitude towards the Welcomebe enclosure was not certain, but it seems that his agreement on being compensated for any loss that may happen was the price he received for keeping silent:

They gave him a guarantee against any loss – and this is not a neutral document because it implies that should the people fighting the enclosures come to him for help he would refuse it. The struggle is quite well documented and there’s no record of opposition from Shakespeare. (p.6)

Bond demonstrates Shakespeare’s silence throughout the whole play as avoidance of issues related to family or his professional life as a writer. He avoided talking to his daughter Judith all the time and when he responded to her questions, he responded briefly:

JUDITH. Aren’t you going away at all this year?

SHAKESPEARE. (still irritated). I don’t know.

JUDITH. Have you told mother?

SHAKESPEARE. She's not interested.

JUDITH. You'll get old sitting there all day.

SHAKESPEARE. I am old. (Bingo.2.26)

Nevertheless, when he decided to respond and talk to Judith he talked with great hostility that reveals great hatred and antipathy to his family. Shakespeare showed the same feelings when he was with Jonson, he almost got “nothing” as an answer to many of his questions. However, readers find him talking and reacting positively when it comes to money; discussing his rights in the rents with Combe. Bond displays him as that person who is only motivated by money.

To prove his point, Bond continued documenting Shakespeare by screening some aspects of his personal life to reflect it as a corrupted life, which is part of writing a biography. Biography writers' mission is to highlight the personal life of the subject they write about and uncover the hidden facts of that person's life.

Bond gave us a detailed record of some stages of Shakespeare's life, good examples of this can be seen when he states the facts that are related to the 'Welcombe Enclosure', when he described the relationship between Shakespeare and his daughters and wife, and when he made a clear

reference to his professional life as a writer in the “The Golden Cross” (Bingo.4.43) where he met Jonson, his rival writer.

Concerning Shakespeare’s irresponsibility towards his society, we find, in the dialogue taking place between Shakespeare and Combe concerning the enclosure in scene one, that Shakespeare’s words are not that different from Combe’s. They were discussing pure business with high level of selfishness regardless of the consequences. Shakespeare finally agreed to keep silent as long as his rights served and protected. His silence as projected by Bond was as if he were acting against the poor’s interests and rights. The dialogue reflected him as conspirator rather than a person who chose not to interfere:

SHAKESPEARE. The town will oppose you. A lot of the small holders don’t have written leases. ...

COMBE. ...But – in the meantime the town council will oppose me. They don’t want to feed the new poor while they wait for history to catch up with the facts. They’re writing to you for help.

SHAKESPEARE. Who told you-

COMBE. My friends in the council. You’re one of the biggest rent holders. You’re respectable. ...You could make a strong case against me.

SHAKESPEARE. We’ve come to the river.

COMBE. ... Will you reach an agreement with me?

SHAKESPEARE. ... you can afford to guarantee me against loss. And the town councilors.

COMBE. Don’t support the town or the tenants.

SHAKESPEARE. I'm protecting my own interests. Not supporting you, or fighting the town. (Bingo.1. 20-21)

Through this dialogue, Bond illustrates that Shakespeare's personal interest is more important than shouldering his responsibility towards his society as a writer and artist. Bond (2010) comments on the status that is created by the artist who refuses to take action to stop something wrong as follows:

The great icon of Western culture signs a piece of paper for a wealthy banker called Combe. The consequences spread like ripples of iron-chains across the surface of a pool. Four hundred years later Combe has become so powerful he can gamble with our lives and corrupt our culture. When Shakespeare sold himself to Combe, he sold not only the people of Stratford. He sold us. What followed is more than a theatrical irony; it is fate, the fateful consequence of human actions: Combe now owns our theatre. (p.1)

Bond continues giving us more examples of how Shakespeare was just making use of writing as a business rather than for the benefit of the society, "The rents. I bought my share years ago out of money I made by writing" (Bingo.1.19). Such words are really stunning as they reflect high materialism. To what extent was Bond fair to Shakespeare in this? He cancelled all the reputation that his writings have achieved in making them just works of business. In this respect, we may ask to what extent a businessman can be creative to produce a large legacy of creative writings that have been read over centuries? It seems that Bond addresses the stage

of Shakespeare's life when he was so busy building his fortune and fame as quoted in Alchin's Anne Hathaway biography (2014):

In 1602 Shakespeare bought land in Stratford for £320, a considerable sum of money in the Elizabethan era. It was an estate consisting of 107 acres in the open fields of Old Stratford, together with a farm-house, garden and orchard, 20 acres of pasture and common rights. The standing of Anne Shakespeare in the town and surrounding districts of Stratford continued to increase. The properties owned by her husband would have required servants including a gardener. Her responsibilities as the wife of Shakespeare would have substantially increased. (p.12)

Bond goes further in discussing the financial problems that John Shakespeare, Shakespeare's father, faced. He conjured up that image of Shakespeare's life when Shakespeare went into financial difficulty that he was forced to leave his family to go to work in London.

SHAKESPEARE. (gives Combe his sheet of paper). I want security. I can't provide for the future again. My father went bankrupt when he was old. Too easy going." (Bingo.1.21)

In Shakespeare's words "I can't provide for the future again." a direct reference to his old age and inability to be as active as he was before. It is the image of the helpless person in front the power of money. Bond in this scene tries to show that although Shakespeare was so powerful that the selfish Combe came to ask him for his silence. He did not use his power to defend the others; it was a discrepancy that Bond wants to highlight.

In this particular scene, readers notice that Combe is eager and enthusiastic to take an action against the poor farmers and even the city council. He conceals none of his intentions of gaining more money and being more authoritative. Though, Shakespeare did not resist him at all, and his only reservation was “SHAKESPEARE. I’m protecting my own interests. Not supporting you, or fighting the town.” (Bingo.1.21)

Another image was drawn for Shakespeare’s life by Bond that highlights his family life. Bond changed some facts such as giving Judith more powerful role in Shakespeare’s life, replacing Susanna by the OLD WOMAN, and changing the dates of a number of events in Shakespeare’s life. Bond went deep on the level of family relations in detailing the family conflicts. He discussed real life situations from Shakespeare’s life, such as his relationship to his wife which was so stale and flat that he barely talks to her or notices her existence, and the problematic relationship between Shakespeare and his daughter Judith. The question here is: in what ways is Shakespeare’s relationship to his wife of importance to the cause he treads into? How does this affect the shared responsibility between the writer and his society? Bond exceeded the issue he raises to deep family relationships to be discussed in such a dramatic work, unless he wants to show his audience that Shakespeare was the mischievous who was not able to

manage his life, and the model of love and intimacy he presents readers with is ideal and away from reality.

Judith was presented as stressed and in dispute with her father; she is the voice of those who are angry with Shakespeare. Bond, in his introduction, assumed that the relationship between them was not strong and he interpreted it as a superficial one. Based on that interpretation, we find him putting her in confrontation with her father and insisting on making her opposing the way her father reacts against things around him:

JUDITH. How could I let him enjoy himself while his wife...? She's had a hard life, father. You don't notice these things. You must learn that people have feelings. They suffer. Life almost breaks them... People in this town aren't so easily impressed, you know. We can all sit and think. (SHAKESPEARE is silent.) I feel guilty if I dare to talk about anything that matters. I should shut up now – or ask if it's good gardening weather. D'you know why mother's ill? D'you care? (Bingo.2.32)

She is addressing him as prosecutor rather than a daughter, and he retorts as an absent-minded and helpless person who is detached from the rest of the world. The level of tension between them as depicted by Bond reflects strained family relation. They barely talk, and when they talk it turned into an argument that ends by one of them leaving out. Bond draws an image of Shakespeare, the great icon, who cannot communicate with his family members, “you could have warned me! You ignore me – you always do! You talk to servants more than to your family.” (Bingo.2.33)

The moment the audience finds some intimacy between Judith and her father, i.e. when she invited him to come inside and try to put up with his family, Bond turned it into another argument that deepens the dispute between them:

JUDITH. I can't leave you out here. It's against common humanity. You'd better come inside and learn to put up with us.

SHAKESPEARE. Go in.

JUDITH. You'll catch cold and expect to be nursed. I've enough to do with mother on my hands. Why are you so stubborn? Your family's tearing itself to bits and you sit in the garden and –

SHAKESPEARE. Yes, yes.

JUDITH. Yes, yes – it's easy to make us sound stupid. You ignore the people you share a house with and when they try to talk, you sneer. (Bingo.2.34)

Later, in scene five, Bond put it bluntly that Shakespeare and his family had deep problems that exceeded the normal levels that they turned into hatred and cruelty. Shakespeare as depicted in this scene, drunk, talked to his daughter with lament and sorrow that showed his regret about the way he led his life, mainly that part related to his family:

When I ran away from your mother and went to London – I was so bored, she's such a silly woman, obstinate and you take after her. Forgive me, I know that's cruel, sordid, but it's such an effort to be polite any more... I couldn't cut you out, you were my flesh, but I thought I could make you forgive me...I loved you with money. The only thing I can afford to give you now is money... I treated you so badly. I made you vulgar and ugly and cheap. I corrupted you." (Bingo.5. 55-56)

This very long epilogue shows us how deep Bond went into Shakespeare's life. He referred to family disputes, problems and conflicts. Through this dialogue Bond emphasizes his theory about Shakespeare's discrimination and preferential treatment of his two daughters. It also shows that although Shakespeare lived with his family physically, he didn't live with them mentally. Bond's point that Shakespeare had a problem to communicate with his family can be understood by just mentioning one or two examples, but why should he continue sorting examples that have more details addressing real life situations, such as:

JUDITH. Have you been up to mother?

SHAKESPEARE. What?

JUDITH. Shall we carry her down? The spring weather will help her.

SHAKESPEARE. She's happy in her room.

JUDITH. When are you going back to London?

SHAKESPEARE. I don't know.

JUDITH. I thought you were buying some property at blackfriars.

SHAKESPEARE. That's done. (Bingo.2.25)

Although Bond is handling the last days of Shakespeare's life, which were depicted as melancholic and tragic, this quote refers directly to Shakespeare's time when he was pursuing his successful life as a playwright in London, leaving his family away in Stratford which Alchin (2014) documented as follows:

Although some doubts may have lingered with Anne and his family, William was clearly making his name in London society. The aristocrats, courtiers and nobles of the Realm were his friends.

In 1594 he would even play before the Queen in the banqueting hall at Whitehall ... William Shakespeare was enjoying the life of a single man in London and the time spent with Anne would have been minimal. The marriage between Anne and William might have suffered. William however was making his name as a poet and in 1593 his poem, *Venus and Adonis*, was registered. Poets, as opposed to playwrights, were held in high esteem. (p.9)

Bond's reference to this stage of Shakespeare's life as joyful and playful on the tongue of Judith, gives readers more details about Shakespeare's personal life rather than his dramatic or poetic works. She was discussing her father's melancholic mood and his relation to her mother, whom he gave no attention:

JUDITH. Aren't you going away at all this year?
 SHAKESPEARE. (still irritated). I don't know.
 JUDITH. Have you told mother?
 SHAKESPEARE. She's not interested.
 JUDITH. You'll get old sitting there all day.
 SHAKESPEARE. I am old.
 JUDITH. You used to be so busy. Striding about. Laughing. It's all gone. You look so tired these days. (*Bingo*.2.26)

By sinking deep into the details of Shakespeare's life, Bond gets closer to writing a biography rather than discussing his role as an artist towards his society. He gives us the image that he concluded about Shakespeare through the interpretation of certain events in his life.

Through the last scene of *Bingo* which exhibits Shakespeare's moment of death, Bond restricts Shakespeare's family relationship to money; this time represented in Judith's agitated search for the 'will' that

ensures her material rights. The scene of her father's death did not change her feelings towards him, all what she needs is the will:

JUDITH. Nothing. A little attack.

She hurries to the bedside stand. She searches through it agitatedly. She throws papers aside. She tears some. SHAKESPEARE whimpers and shivers.

JUDITH (to herself as she searches). Nothing. Nothing.

JUDITH runs to the door and shouts up.

Nothing. If he made a new will his lawyer's got it.

JUDITH runs back to the bed. She is crying. She searches under the pillows. SHAKESPEARE has killed himself.

JUDITH (crying). Nothing.

JUDITH searches under the sheets. She kneels down and searches under the bed. She stands and searches under the bed. She cries. She stands and searches under the mattress. (Bingo.6.66)

If Bond is asking that playwrights should have perfect social and family life, he asks everybody to stop writing. Family life is a personal affair and it has nothing to do with what someone writes about. It may influence his mood and thoughts but we can't see this clearly in Shakespeare's writings. It is true that the artist should be a reformer, but should he be perfect?

In the Shakespeare-Jonson scene, another reference is made to Shakespeare's life, but this time it is related to his professional life as a playwright. It depicts the relationship that was between Jonson and Shakespeare as contemporaneous poets and playwrights. Bond gave his audience a detailed scene that addresses the real situation of that time; poets used to meet in road houses like "The Golden Cross" on their way to

different towns and cities; they talk, exchange experiences, and even challenge each other. He added the comfortable atmosphere they enjoyed at such houses, represented by the drink, tables, fire, and lamps. However, the Shakespeare-Jonson meeting in *Bingo* was of another nature, it was reflecting the psychology that both writers go through; Jonson was so distracted that he was exhibiting his life with all its tragic events and misfortunes, while Shakespeare was so desperate that he barely talked.

Bond's reference to the burning theatre resembles the burning of Shakespeare's theatre in 1613. For Shakespeare, theatre is his life, so having it burned means the end of his life. For this reason Bond manipulated the date of the theatre burning; he made it the night Shakespeare died in. Here as he stated in his introduction to *Bingo* "I made all these changes for dramatic convenience. To recreate in an audience the impact scattered events had on someone's life you often have to concentrate them."(pp.4-5). However, Shakespeare's calm reaction to that event reflects his melancholic psychology and agony; Bond is preparing the audience to Shakespeare's death.

Jonson's inquiry about Shakespeare's latest writings was faced with vagueness. The great Shakespeare has nothing to write about, he is declining! However, Jonson, as a critic was shocked that he couldn't believe that he is declining. He thought that Shakespeare was avoiding his

questions or even avoiding him. This was really apparent in Shakespeare's several attempts to leave. Despite the comfortable environment that Bond set his scene in, he revealed unease in their relationship as if it was based on suspicion:

JONSON. What are you writing?

SHAKESPEARE. Nothing.

They drink.

JONSON. Not writing?

SHAKESPEARE. No.

JONSON. Why not?

SHAKESPEARE. Nothing to say.

JONSON. Doesn't stop others. Written out?

SHAKESPEARE. Yes.

They drink.

JONSON. Now, what are you writing?

SHAKESPEARE. Nothing. (Bingo.4.43-44)

Bond continues with Jonson's reference to Shakespeare's level of education:

SHAKESPEARE. What are you writing?

JONSON. They say you've come down here to study grammar. Or history. Have you read my English Grammar? Let me sell you a copy. I've got a few up in my room. (Bingo.4.44)

This leads the audience to another aspect of Shakespeare's life that was subject of discussion over centuries; many scholars find Shakespeare's low level of education an excuse to enforce the alleged theory that he is not the writer of his own works. It seems that Bond adopts this theory as he finds Shakespeare a person who is after wealth and fame rather than writing for human or aesthetic reasons:

JONSON. Down here for peace and quiet? Find inspiration – look for it, anyway. Work up something spiritual Refined. Can't get by with scrabbling it off the noisy corners any more. New young men. Competition. Your recent stuff's been pretty peculiar. (Bingo.4.44)

In this part of the dialogue, Bond shows Shakespeare as a man who ran out of thoughts and ideas. It reflects his shallowness. This situation addresses Jonson's real words on Shakespeare as he was quoted in Halleck (2010) taking pleasure in saying to a friend: "Shakespeare in a play brought in a number of men saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia, where is no sea near, by some hundred miles" (p.1).

By having Shakespeare with Jonson in the same scene, Bond initiates a comparison between them. It is a comparison between "Jonson who was known as the most learned poet of the age" (p.1) Halleck (2010), and Shakespeare who had received only some basics of English and Latin in the Stratford grammar school according to Mabillard (2000). Jonson, despite all the miseries he had in his life, is displayed as more lively and eager to pursue his career as a writer; "I'm off to Scotland soon."(p.44), in reference to King James I, king of Scotland, as Halleck (2010) states "When 'James I' ascended the throne in 1603, Jonson soon became a royal favorite" (p.1). On the other hand, Shakespeare is fed up with life and work and wants to resort to his family:

"JONSON. What d'you do? SHAKESPEARE. There's the house. People I'm responsible for. The garden's too big. Time goes. I'm surprised how old I've got." (Bingo.4.45)

This deepens the belief that Bond is writing a biographical fiction about Shakespeare. The various references that address real life situations of Shakespeare's life continue in many directions, as if every dialogue matched a certain event of his life.

Another aspect that makes *Bingo* a biography or semi-biography is Shakespeare's psychology as reflected by Bond. Shakespeare was so melancholic and depressed that he killed himself by the end of the play. He was almost silent all through the play and he barely comments or says anything. The play directions repeated the word "Shakespeare says nothing" or "kept silent" or even "doesn't react" for many times and when he says anything it was so short and reflects lack of interest. This melancholic psychology is a reflection to what Halleck (2011) called the third period of Shakespeare's life:

We may characterize the third period, from 1601 to 1608, as one in which he felt that the time was out of joint, that life was a fitful fever. His father died in 1601, after great disappointments. His best friends suffered what he calls, in *Hamlet*, "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." In 1601 Elizabeth executed the Earl of Essex for treason, and on the same charge threw the Earl of Southampton into the Tower. Even Shakespeare himself may have been suspected. The great plays of this period are tragedies, among which we may instance *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. (p.1)

What Bond did not explain, is Shakespeare's relationship to the *YOUNG WOMAN* who was hanged in the street. Was she a resemblance to the Earl of Southampton who was sent to the tower by Queen Elizabeth for

treason? Again, Bond manipulated the facts to create the dramatic effect but this time he says nothing about it in his introduction. The relation between Shakespeare and his patron the Earl of Southampton was so strong that Shakespeare as quoted in Brown (2009) expressed his deep affection to his lordship:

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden: Only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content: which I wish may always answer your wish, and the world's hopeful expectation. (p.2)

However, Shakespeare's relationship to the Young Woman in *Bingo* was not more than a trespasser whom he met in his garden; it can be interpreted as another change he made to create the alleged dramatic effect. Shakespeare's sympathy with the Earl of Southampton was reflected in writing the famous tragedy of *Julius Caesar* as Brown (2009) explained:

Shakespeare doubtless found himself in a curious position; he could not pen a poem on the treasonable outbreak or defend Southampton as he may to some extent have wished to. The poet was, however, equal to the occasion; he clearly, we find, desired to express his regard for him, and he has done so, not by writing a poem, but by penning a drama after the earl's doom of imprisonment in the Tower, a period destined to be at least as long as Elizabeth's reign lasted. The drama he has selected for his purpose is the noble play of *Julius Caesar*, written probably late in 1601, in which the opening scenes largely reflect the Essex plot and the closing years of Elizabeth. (p.11)

However, Bond portrayed Shakespeare's sympathy to the hanging of the *YOUNG WOMAN* in the baited bear scene:

SHAKESPEARE. The baited bear. Tied to the stake. Its dirty coat needs brushing. Dried mud and spume. Pale dust... but it looks as if it's making a gesture to the crowd. Asking for one sign of grace, one no. And the crowd roars, for more blood, more pain, more huddled together, tearing flesh and treading in living blood. (Bingo.3.39)

In this allegory, Bond likened the earl to the *YOUNG WOMAN*, Shakespeare's reaction was not more than words he writes or says. He amused himself with the earl and he was about to amuse himself with the *YOUNG WOMAN* but he did nothing to help any of them. This reference gets us back to the scenes of Shakespeare's real life; the unrest he faced at that stage of his life which biographers like Halleck (2011) refers to as the period of tragedies.

However, Bond displayed Shakespeare's last days as moments of regret and remorse. He made him appear as a man of great guilt that drives him to act like those who are able to see the truth late, as the fools in Shakespeare's works, who are wise but can do nothing. This is what Bond displays as a theatrical effect:

With the process of artistic creation or practice comes self-evaluation; within contacts with society, the artist is bound to judge society and self. For employing the artist as the protagonist of three plays, and for the employment of other theatrical devices in this period, the theatrical effect of the object-language is exceptional. In *Bingo*, Shakespeare responds aesthetically to the social confrontation of the characters around him. He, linguistically, aestheticises their experiences and suffering in terms of self-dramatisation on many occasions. Lou Lappin observes that Judith,

the Son, and the Old Man, 'each 'theatrically" confronts Shakespeare, but this is not a performance and they are not actors. (Barakat, 1990, p.15)

Bond continues to exhibit Shakespeare's psychology in the last scenes of his play by showing his death as a tragic event. This time he used soliloquy to show the deep psychological influence that drives him to commit suicide. Shakespeare, like Hamlet, can now see the absolute truth that he was not able to see all his life; the truth of life as Bond sees it. This soliloquy shows the deep sadness that Shakespeare felt before he died; the sadness that becomes a kind of visionary; he is now able to see the truth, and "thoughts come so easily" (Bingo.5.57). He realized his role as a writer who should defend his ideals in real life, not only in writing. "Not this hand that's always melted snow..." (Bingo.5.57)

All in all, Bond went too far in commenting on what a playwright should do towards his society, to discuss deeply details that are related to his family life, social relations and even the way he lived. Bond found it easier to attack Shakespeare through his personal life rather than through his writings and works.

4.2 How far was Bond biased when he accused Shakespeare of being selfish and uncaring in his treatment to his own daughters in particular and his family in general?

To answer the second question of the study, the researcher compared the personal life of Shakespeare that was manifested in authoritative biographies to what was exhibited in *Bingo* by Bond.

Bond built his argument on theories that were hypothesized about Shakespeare more than relying on the documented resources. Bond supposed that there was a preferential treatment by Shakespeare to one of his daughters, Suzanna, at the expense of the other, Judith. He based his argument on the way Shakespeare wrote his will. It is true that Shakespeare gave Suzanna more than he gave Judith, but that was, according to Alchin (2014), because of Judith's husband not because of Judith herself. Judith married Thomas Quiney, who, later, was accused of having made another girl pregnant. It then appeared that Quiney did not receive the special licence necessary for a wedding during lent before his marriage. This scandalous situation was really serious that Judith and Thomas were excommunicated from the will. Later Shakespeare modified his will to make sure that Judith would receive (£300) while the rest of his fortune goes to Suzanna and his wife to make sure that his fortune in the right hands

On the other hand, Alchin goes further to show that the relationship between Judith and her father was not that bad one. She named her first son after her father, Shakespeare Quiney; a matter that reflects her love to her father even after his death. If the situation had been as bad as depicted by Bond, she wouldn't have kept any memories of her father. This also, shows that the relationship between Shakespeare and his family was not based on money as it was exhibited by Bond.

Furthermore, Bond in the words of Shakespeare in *Bingo*, claimed that Shakespeare left for London to run away from his family. However, this, as Alchin (2014) states, was not true; he left to London to pursue his career as a writer and to be able to gain money after his father's bankruptcy. When he achieved his goals Shakespeare returned to Stratford to be with his family:

With his fortune made and his reputation as the leading English dramatist unchallenged, Shakespeare appears to have retired to Stratford. Anne had her husband home at last. His business interests took him back to London on occasion but the majority of his time is spent at home. He would have been able to enjoy life with his family including his daughters and granddaughter, Elizabeth. (p. 16)

Shakespeare's last days were described by Bond as being full of misery and melancholy. However, not much was known about Shakespeare's last days according to records. Bond exaggerates his psychological situation to carry a dramatic effect through his play. This

dramatic effect was proposed to show the influence of money on such a person, but it abused Shakespeare's character and showed him as a decaying person who has nothing left but a fake image of a great writer.

4.3 What were the real drives which stand behind Bond's attempt to subvert Shakespeare, the man and artist?

To answer the third question of the study, the researcher discussed Bond's political and ideological motives in writing his dramas. As shown earlier in chapter one, Bond's political and ideological views were the dominant factor in his style of writing. His major focus was on discussing the institutionalized cruelty and violence that influence societies. Readers can sense the amount of violence he exposes through his works clearly as in *Saved*, *Pope Wedding*, *The Fool*, and *Bingo*.

As a playwright, Bond believes that he is responsible for the sanity of the society he lives in and so every playwright. For Bond, Shakespeare is not more than an example of the playwright who did not stick to the ideals he called for. He had two lives; the life of the landlord who lash people's backs to take money, and the life of the playwright who defended their rights in his writings only.

Driven by his socialist ideology, which opposes capitalism, Bond attacked Shakespeare's duality as a playwright who did not show a clear stand in the face of those who destroyed society's ideals. His ideology

stands on the principle that playwrights should act as reformers in their societies rather than as people who make money of their writings. He wanted the audience to reconsider its understanding and judgements of Shakespeare the artist and man. Bond wanted them to see things from a different angle where reality and ideals depart, and cruelty prevails. He wanted his audience to experience a kind of rationality, to be able to see beyond the ordinary image that is offered by the institutions of the society that are controlled by politicians and money.

Destroying the image of the iconic character of Shakespeare gives the Marxist Bond the chance to direct a hit for capitalism. As shown in *Bingo*, he believes that Shakespeare, as a symbol of many artists, lead a conspiracy with the governing systems against societies and he needs to uncover the hidden facts behind their success stories.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigated the elements that make *Bingo* a biographical fiction and to what extent was Edward Bond fair to Shakespeare in investigating his personal life. It also attempted to find the real drives that were behind subverting Shakespeare the man and artist. In this chapter the researcher states the conclusions and recommendations that she found.

Based on the analysis of *Bingo* and compared to Shakespeare's real life situations the researcher concluded that Edward Bond was writing a biographical fiction about Shakespeare. He sorted various family details in relation to Shakespeare's daughters and wife, tracked his fortune and wealth, commented on his social life, and epitomised his death, which makes *Bingo* closer to a biography rather than a commentary on the role of the artist towards his society.

Moreover, Bond went deep illustrating family details that are not of a direct relation to the topic he discusses. He manifested the relation between Shakespeare and his two daughters Judith and Susanna, and Shakespeare's relationship to his wife as if they were based on money and interest rather than love and intimacy, which makes him appear as a horrible personality

whose family relations were so weak and fragile that he was not able to win their hearts even at the moment of his death.

Bond manipulated Shakespeare's life events, by resorting to biographical fiction genre; he changed some names, some dates, and even some facts. Through this genre of writing, Bond was able to attack Shakespeare freely and without being blamed of being biased or unfair to him. He demonstrated him as a mean landlord who made use of his status as a reputed and respected playwright to build up fortunes.

Pivoted on Shakespeare's negative attitude towards the enclosure issue, Bond, also, commented freely on Shakespeare's social life as a person who did not show any responsibility towards his society. His preference to keep silent and protect his own interest was considered by Bond as a conspiracy against the society rather than neutrality. As the analysis shows, playwrights, for Bond, cannot be neutral, they should take a clear stand.

Bingo is not different than the other plays written by Bond; it embodies violence, cruelty and insanity of the societies. Through the baited bear allegory and the killing of the YOUNG WOMAN, Bond exemplified the institutionalized violence that emerges in societies. He

wanted societies to think rationally about what goes around them rather than being submissive.

However, Bond was unfair to Shakespeare as he built his play on selected scenes from Shakespeare's life. His selection was random and based on his own choice to carry out his own point of view to his audience. He selected and manipulated the most horrible scenes of Shakespeare's life and introduced them as if they are the whole representation of Shakespeare's life. He showed his audience that Shakespeare's latest life was so gloomy and melancholic and full of regret and sorrow; an image that is different from the one that is depicted in authoritative biographies of Shakespeare.

Finally, Bond's real drives were political and ideological rather than personal in attacking a personality like Shakespeare. As a socialist and Marxist, Bond tries to attack capitalism through its ideals and prominent figures like Shakespeare. He set his argument on how these figures, namely playwrights, institutionalized the cruelty and insanity of the governing systems. His attack on Shakespeare was based on blaming him for helping the emergence of that type of society which believes in money more than anything else.

5. 3. Recommendations

In the light of the above mentioned analysis and conclusions, the researcher recommends that a further research be taken to analyse *Bingo* as it is rich with aesthetic and literary values. Although the researcher analysed the elements that make this play a biographical fiction, there still other aspects to be focused on.

The researcher also recommends that a further study to be conducted to analyse *Bingo* in terms of discourse analysis to explore the language register used by Bond to achieve his dramatic effect. It also can be convenient if further studies analyse *Bingo* compared to other works of Bond to highlight the sequence of themes he presents in his plays in general and in *Bingo* in particular.

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