

THE USE OF TIME AS AN ELEMENT OF ALIENATION EFFECT IN
PETER SHAFFER'S *THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN*, *YONADAB*, AND
THE GIFT OF THE GORGON

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THE GIFT OF THE GORGON

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF TIME AS AN ELEMENT OF ALIENATION EFFECT IN PETER SHAFFER'S *THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN, YONADAB, AND THE GIFT OF THE GORGON*

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This thesis studies Peter Shaffer's use of time as a technique for creating alienation effect. In order to provide the audience with a questioning role, Shaffer primarily employs historical and mythical past as elements of pastness in the Brechtian sense. Shaffer also innovatively contributes to the formation of alienation effect with spatial time achieved through the coexistence of past and present. Distancing the audience in time, the playwright leads them to adopt a critical viewpoint so that they can question and reflect upon the psychological and metaphysical themes such as search for worship, existential disintegration and the eternal conflict between reason and instinct in his plays *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab*, and *The Gift of the Gorgon*.

Keywords: Alienation effect, diachronicity, historical past, mythical time, synchronicity

ÖZ

PETER SHAFFER'IN *THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN*, *YONADAB*, VE *THE GIFT OF THE GORGON* ADLI OYUNLARINDA YABANCILAŞTIRMA ÖGESİ OLARAK ZAMAN KULLANIMI

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Bu tez Peter Shaffer'ın zamanı yabancılaştırma tekniği olarak kullanımını incelemektedir. Shaffer, seyirciye sorgulayan bir rol sağlamak için özellikle tarihsel ve mitik zamanı Brecht'in anlayışı doğrultusunda geçmiş zaman öğeleri olarak kullanır. Ayrıca Shaffer, geçmiş ve şimdiki zamanı eşzamanlı kullanarak, oyunlarında mekansal bir zaman yaratır ve bu eşsüremliliği zaman kullanımı ile yabancılaştırma etkisinin oluşumuna yenilikçi bir biçimde katkıda bulunur. Kullandığı zaman tekniğiyle seyirciyi oyunun kurgusal dünyasına yabancılaştıran Shaffer, seyircinin *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab*, ve *The Gift of the Gorgon*'da eleştirel bir bakış açısı edinmesini ve bu oyunlardaki inanç arayışı, varoluşsal yabancılaşma ve süregiden akıl ve içgüdü çatışması gibi psikolojik ve metafizik temaları sorgulamasını sağlamaya çalışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancılaştırma etkisi, artzamanlılık, tarihsel geçmiş, mitik zaman, eşzamanlılık

To my Family

Faruk, Selma, Bilge and Oscar

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Alienation Effect and Shaffer.....	1
1.1.1 Theoretical Background-Brecht and Epic Theatre.....	3
1.1.2 Shaffer's Distancing Technique of Time and the Analysis of the Themes.....	12
1.2 Aim of the Study	17
2. DISTANCING EFFECT CREATED THROUGH THE USE OF PAST AND SPATIAL TIME.....	19
2.1 Distancing Effect: The Use of Past.....	19
2.1.1 Historical Past in <i>The Royal Hunt of the Sun</i> and <i>Yonadab</i>	19
2.1.2 Mythical Past in <i>Yonadab</i> and <i>Gorgon</i>	27
2.2 Distancing Effect: The Use of Spatial Time.....	37
2.2.1 Spatial Time in <i>Yonadab</i> and <i>Gorgon</i>	42
3. THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE.....	51
3.1 The Search for Worship and Existential Disintegration.....	54
3.2 The Conflict between Reason and Instinct.....	63

4. CONCLUSION.....	73
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	78

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Alienation Effect and Shaffer

The notion of alienation effect is coined by Bertolt Brecht in his theory of Epic Theatre in the beginning of the 20th century. In developing his theory Brecht uses a variety of different terms including *befremden*, *Fremdheit* and *entfremden*, which are later entitled under a single notion *Verfremdungseffekt*. In his theory of V-effect, Brecht proposes the idea that both audience and actors should preserve a state of critical detachment from the play and its presentation in performance. He requires the audience to be reminded from time to time that they are only watching a play and thereupon, they should control their identification with the characters (Cuddon 23). Hence, Brecht's "aim [is] instead to evoke a critical distance and attitude in the spectators, in order to arouse them to take action against, rather than simply to accept, the state of society and behavior represented on the stage" (Abrams 5).

Terms such as estrangement, alienation, and distancing effect are the most suitable translations and established notions of V-effekt in English (Hawthorn 7). Therefore, these three notions are used interchangeably in the thesis. In addition, the concept of aesthetic distance, which appears to be inherent in the 19th century aesthetics in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in E. Bullough's 1912 essay '*Physical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle*', has become established in the 20th century (Cuddon 17). The term can be used in relation to alienation effect, because it "describes the objective attitude of a person in relation to a work of art, irrespective of whether it is interesting to that person or not" (Cuddon 17). Moreover, "in recent literary criticism the term aesthetic distance, or simply distance is often used not only to define the nature of literary and aesthetic experience in general, but also to analyze the many devices by which authors control the degree of a reader's distance, or detachment" (Abrams 69). In this respect, aesthetic distance stands for

the distance between the audience and characters to achieve alienation effect. Now that the terms alienation effect and aesthetic distance do not refer exactly to the same notion, they cannot be used interchangeably, thus the term aesthetic distance is used as a means in the formation of alienation effect in this thesis.

Being one of the most distinguished and controversial playwrights of the twentieth century, Peter Levin Shaffer wrote such well-known plays as *Amadeus* and *Equus*. From the very beginning of his literary career, Shaffer experimented with various dramatic forms and techniques in order to create his unique form of drama. In his eclectic drama, Shaffer underlines the importance of theatricality or the form, yet he never ignores the significant role of the content. Therefore, Shaffer successfully balances the thematic structure with the technical form. That is to say, Shaffer in his “exuberantly and unashamedly theatrical drama” draws the audience emotionally in the play through the psychological and philosophical thematic structure (Gianakaris 6). On the other hand, he concurrently detaches the audience in the Brechtian sense to allow his audience to activate their critical faculties. In this respect, Shaffer capably balances the involvement and detachment of the spectators in his drama which basically defines the role of the audience in the theatre.

“For Shaffer, theatre is a place of wonderment, a means of exploring the mind and the soul”; thereupon, the role of the audience in Shaffer’s drama cannot be strictly and merely reduced to either “critical thinking” or “emotional involvement” (Plunka 40). Hence, although the audience is involved emotionally in the play as the themes have a psychological nature, Shaffer puts a limit to the emotional empathy of the audience with the literary work, for he holds that the audience should be able to analyze, question and understand the meaning beyond the dramatic action. That is the reason why Shaffer’s “plays are not only pleasing to the eye and to the ear, but also present stimulating ideas concerning [...] sociological and philosophical questions” (Plunka 14). Therefore, in order to provide the audience with a critical attitude, Shaffer creates aesthetic distance in his plays. In this respect, Shaffer is fundamentally affected by the most influential twentieth century playwright and theoretician Bertolt Brecht, who is regarded as the father of alienation effect by his theory of Epic Theatre. Like Brecht, Shaffer uses various distancing devices such as music, chorus, mask and the narrator so as to awaken the spectators to the fact that what they are reading or watching is not the reality but an illusive representation of

it. In addition to these Brechtian distancing devices, Shaffer innovatively establishes his technique of time as an element of estrangement. This thesis thus has specifically analyzed Shaffer's peculiar use of time as a distancing device.

To sum up, Brecht's theory of alienation has influenced the twentieth century drama to a great extent, especially his use of time as a distancing device has a great impact on Peter Shaffer. Shaffer not only adopts Brecht's use of historical past as an estranging element, but he also uses myths as elements of pastness in the Brechtian sense; however, Shaffer makes an innovative contribution to the creation of alienation effect with the use of spatial time created through the coexistence of past and present to make the audience question and reflect upon the psychological and metaphysical themes such as search for worship, existential disintegration and the conflict between instinct and reason. To this end, Shaffer's plays *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon* have been studied in detail. In order to comprehend Shaffer's use of time as a distancing device, the notion of alienation effect and its theoretical background have been analyzed firstly.

1.1.1 Theoretical Background-Brecht and Epic Theatre

Bertolt Brecht, a controversial and influential author of the world literature, introduces an innovative dramatic theory as an objection to various naturalist dramatic techniques dominating the theatrical arena in the 19th century which adopted the Aristotelian theory of drama. Fundamentally, Brecht's theory is a reaction and rejection to the idea of the role of the audience, which dates back to the Aristotelian idea of *catharsis*. According to the Aristotelian theory, art is *mimesis*, imitation, "in its root sense: the poem imitates by taking an instance of human action and re-presenting it in a new 'medium', or material-that of words" (Abrams 123). Hence, the verisimilitude of imitation is significant, since the audience should identify with the characters by means of the realistic reflection of life in order to experience *catharsis*, the pleasure of purification of pity and fear.

Aristotle believes that art should directly and truly imitate life in such a realistic way that the audience can identify with the representation of the real and build an emotional bridge between themselves and the characters. Thus, *catharsis*, the release of strong emotions by experiencing pity and fear, is being experienced; and, it is seen

that the audience is conceived as passive observers of the dramatic action, “who, [according to Aristotle], hear the tale told will thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes place” (Dukore 43). Furthermore, another ancient philosopher Horace, who sets the role of drama as ‘teach and delight’, presents another version of the idea of *catharsis*. Because according to Horace’s theory, art should be plausible or true to life so that the audience would identify with the literary characters who then are made to achieve the aim of teach and delight. In other words, through representation the audience become absorbed in the illusion, through which the aesthetic pleasure of the audience is balanced with the moral instruction. In *Art of Poetry* Horace underlines the fact that art should move the audience emotionally:

It is not enough for poems to be fine; they must charm, and draw the mind of the listener at will. As the human face answers a smile with a smile, so does it wait upon tears; if you would have me weep, you must first of all feel grief yourself; then and not till then will your misfortunes, Telephus and Peleus, touch me” (qtd. in Dukore 70).

Aristotelian idea of drama proposes a kind of illusory theatre with its main characteristics of *mimesis* and *catharsis*, by means of which the literary work induces passivity in the audience who are “swept away by the story, characters, the actors who represent [...] them on the stage, and/or the naturalistic devices with which that stage set[s] out to make their representation truly life-like” (Willett, Context 235). The concept of the role of the audience as the emotional participant of the play is also applied well to the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries as explained in the theories of Sydney and Spenser who, like most of their contemporaries and predecessors, consider the theories of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers such as Aristotle and Horace as their guides and frame their works according to these theories. Even though the writers of the period put the artistic creation and the aim of the poet into question, there is an indirect reference to the passive function of the reader/audience.

Dryden, for instance, influenced by Horace’s notion of ‘verisimilitude’ in literature, indicates that in drama a play must be ‘lively’ and true to life in order for the audience to identify with the characters and purge his soul through pity and fear. Joseph Addison, an 18th century journalist, in one of his articles in *The Spectator* confirms Aristotle’s idea of *catharsis* as he states, “Terror and commiseration leave a pleasing anguish in the mind; and fix the audience in such a serious composure of

thought, as is much more lasting and delightful than any little transient starts of joy and satisfaction” (qtd. in Dukore 388). Likewise, the naturalist theatre in the 19th century put forth the idea that “drama required rounded, believable individuals, an effect of verisimilitude, an emotional identification with leading players themselves lost in their role, and in general a suspension of disbelief whose effect could only be a narcotic dulling of the mind and imagination” (Brooker 44).

Many critics claim that dramatists and playwrights from the ancient times to the modern age ascribe a passive role to the audience and this position of them has not been so deeply questioned and opposed from Aristotle until Brecht put forth his theory of Epic Theatre in the beginning of the 20th century. Since Brecht’s theory is regarded as an objection to naturalist bourgeois theatre of the period, which supports Aristotelian theory of drama, Brecht’s drama is labeled as Non-Aristotelian. Brecht in his theory basically denounces the idea of the unquestioning position of the audience in the naturalist bourgeois theatre of his age, which persists from the Aristotelian drama, since he believes that the basic purpose of drama should not be to purge the audience through emotional identification with the realistic imitation of life. As John Willett states, “a synthetic emotional tension wrecks the sense, and ‘the incidents proper to the play disappear like meat in a cunningly mixed sauce with a taste of its own’” (Willett, Theatre 166). Yet, the fundamental aim of drama should be to create a detached and objective attitude in the audience so that they can question and analyze what is represented on the stage. In this respect, through his theory of Epic Theatre Brecht censures Aristotelian notion of *catharsis*, which drags the audience into the dramatic action and puts them in an uncritical frame of mind, no matter how brilliant the production is, as he discloses in *Short Organum* of 1948:

Let us enter one of these establishments, and see the effect which it has on the spectators. [...] True: their eyes are open, but they stare rather than see, just as they listen rather than hear. They look at the stage as if in a trance – an expression which comes from the Middle Ages, the days of witches and priests. Seeing and hearing are activities, and can be pleasant ones, but these people seem relieved of any activity and like men to whom something is being done. (Willett, Theatre 166)

As for Brecht’s reaction and response to the naturalist theatre, he introduces his theory which is initially called the Epic Theatre and then labeled as Dialectical Drama. Yet, now that most of the sources titles it as the former one, the notion Epic Theatre has been used in this thesis. In his theory of Epic Theatre, Brecht calls the

subjective and uncritical role ascribed to the audience in the naturalist theatre into question, which dates back to the Aristotelian idea of imitation and *catharsis*; moreover, he denies the emotional identification of the spectators with the dramatic characters. Because the imitative representation of life as if there was a fourth wall between the audience and the actors create such an illusive idea in the mind of the spectators that the story being enacted on the stage is considered as real. Thereupon, the audience identify with the characters to such an extent that they are led to an unquestioning and passive position which chiefly contradicts with Brecht's idea of objectively questioning audience. As Martin Esslin elucidates in his book *Bertolt Brecht: A Choice of Evils*,

[in naturalist drama] the actor, [...] wants the spectators to participate in his action, to feel the sufferings of his soul and of his body with him, share his embarrassments with him and forget their own personalities for the sake of his. The spectator must not be allowed to rise to thoughtful contemplation; he must passionately follow the action, his imagination is completely silenced. It was this conception that Brecht abhorred. (qtd. in Lauer 2003)

In other words, Brecht's theory proposes that art should not directly reflect life and paralyze the audience by involving them emotionally in the illusive work of art and impeding their critical attitudes towards the literary work; instead, it should enable the audience to see clearly through a questioning attitude as Budel explains,

We go to the theatre not to see reenacted a scene from life, not to see reenacted an experience we may have had in our own lives, but rather to see this experience reenacted in such a way that we may become aware of its essence, of what it presents on the scale of human values. [...] In other words, art should 'illuminate life, not reflect it'. (281)

Therefore, Brecht in his drama tries to awaken the audience by freeing their critical capacity for questioning and understanding which is suppressed via the emotional empathy created in the naturalist bourgeois theatre. Above all, Brecht believes that theatre should appeal to reason rather than emotions, as Arriogo Subiotto confirms,

Certainly, Brecht castigated the established bourgeois theatre in the 1920s for encouraging the spectator to leave his reasoning powers with his hat and coat in the cloakroom and enter the darkened auditorium simply to engage in a trance-like orgy of feeling, as if he were drugged. [...] Brecht had far more active designs on the spectator: he wanted him to use his critical faculties in assessing what was being enacted, [...] thus Brecht sought in the first instance to inculcate in the spectator the attitude of the observing historian who, however excited he may be by them, can stand back from the passions of personalities, register events and evidence, and come to a reasoned conclusion about a situation. (199, 200)

Even though Brecht's emphasis on reason and idea of critical audience are at the heart of his opposition to naturalist theatre, he does not completely exclude emotion; furthermore, he considers any attempt to compel empathy as "barbaric". (qtd. in Brooker 21) Hence, Brecht does not intend to eliminate emotion, stage-illusion and suspense, but he merely wants to reduce the overemphasis on them so as to underline the significance of reason and provide the spectators with a critical approach.

As to Brecht's purpose in literature, he concurs with the aim of art in Horace's theory, which is 'to teach and delight'; however, Horace's idea of drama requires a dysfunctional and unquestioning audience. Brecht, in this sense, seems to employ Horace's idea of teaching and giving pleasure but he objects to the identification of the audience with the literary characters. He discloses his point of view in *Theatre for Learning*, "If learning could not be delightful, then the theatre, by its very nature, would not be in a position to instruct. Theatre remains theatre, even when it is didactic theatre; and if it is good theatre it will entertain" (qtd. in Martin, Bial 27). Therefore, instruction and aesthetic pleasure are in no way mutually exclusive, they both supplement and complement each other. In other terms, although Brecht's and Horace's purpose of art seem to be alike, they differ in their means. Because according to Brecht's theory of Epic Theatre, the writer should balance the aesthetic delight with the moral tone through the rational and objective questioning of the audience, whereas the naturalist dramatist aims at involving the spectators emotionally while teaching in delight.

Briefly, Martin Esslin summarizes why Brecht, by denouncing the role of the audience as a passive observer, calls the traditional idea of identification into question and brings out a new theory to create an attitude of inquiry and criticism in the audience:

Brecht, the rationalist, demanded a theatre of critical thoughtfulness, an Epic Theatre. [...] Brecht regarded a theatre of illusion and identification as downright obscene, and identification with characters on the stage appeared equally indecent to him. Such an audience, Brecht argues, may indeed leave the theatre purged by its vicarious emotions. But it will have remained uninstructed and unimproved. The audience in his view should not be made to feel emotions; it should be made to think. (Lauer 2003)

Hence, "what Brecht wish[es] to do is not flatly either to please people or instruct them. It is something closer to waking them up" (Bentley 259), since he

argues that a critical approach towards the dramatic action can merely be possible through a questioning observer “attached neither to the hero in the play nor to the surge of feeling in an audience that carries people away” (Blau 116). In order to provide the audience with such an objective rational perspective, Brecht puts forth the term *Verfremdung*, the hallmark of Epic Theatre, which has been variously translated as ‘alienation’, ‘estrangement’, ‘distanciation’, ‘defamiliarization’ and ‘eloignement’.

Brecht’s theory of alienation is essentially based on the assumption that the world is too familiar to be understood; in other words, everything is so habitual and self-evident that people take it for granted and do not question it. Owing to this reason, Brecht introduces a method which makes the spectators see the world afresh and arrive at a renewed, real, concrete understanding of the familiar. In order to achieve such a goal, he makes the familiar and self-evident appear strange, unfamiliar and thus questionable (Grimm 41). Brecht’s purpose in drama is not to reflect life realistically and make the audience recognize illusion as real with complacency as in dramatic theatre, but to treat the elements of reality as if they were an experiment in which the self-evident things are defamiliarized.

Through the astonishment created by this estranging process, the role of the audience is changed from the passive participant into a questioning observer, who criticizes the dramatic action objectively and thus comprehends, and becomes familiarized with the alienated object of representation. In this sense, estrangement is essential and crucial in Brecht’s Epic Theatre for it makes the spectators really comprehend what seems to be familiar and well-known. As Brecht confirms “it [is] the alienation that is necessary in order that there may be understanding. Wherever things are ‘matter of course’ [literary ‘self-understood’], the attempt at understanding has simply been given up” (qtd. in Gray 75).

Hegel, a great philosopher of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, provides the philosophical formula for Brechtian alienation which is found in the preface to his *Phenomenology*: ‘Das Bekannte ist darum, weil es bekannt ist, nicht erkannt’, which might be paraphrased as: “that which is well-known or familiar is, precisely because it is so well-known or familiar, not really known, or recognized, or understood” (qtd. in Grimm 42). To illustrate, what appears to be self-evident does not mean that it is really known, recognized and understood. In this aspect, Brecht aims at “stripping

the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality” (Thomson 191) and uncovering the familiar by “inculcating in the audience the detached, distancing attitude of the historian towards the events portrayed” (Subiotto 197).

Furthermore, although it is Brecht who is associated with the theory of alienation effect in modern drama, some critics argue that the term is not genuinely and peculiarly introduced by Brecht for he must have been influenced by various theoreticians and writers. Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky, who introduces the phrase of *ostranenie*, estrangement, two decades before Brecht, is the main influential figure in Brecht’s theory of estrangement. Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt* in his theory of Epic Theatre corresponds to Shklovsky’s *ostranenie* as Willett confirms, “V-effekt ‘is a translation of the Russian critic Viktor Shklovskij’s phrase “Priem Ostrannenija”, or “device for making strange” (qtd. in Brooker 64).

In *Art as Technique*, Shklovsky argues that “habitualization devours works [...] and art exists that one may recover the sensation of life, it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony” (qtd. in Richter 741). Like Shklovsky, Brecht states that “wherever things are ‘matter of course’ the attempt at understanding has simply been given up” (qtd. in Gray 75). According to both theoreticians, art is the enemy of habit and the role of art should be de-automatisation, it should renew the perception by defamiliarizing the familiar, in this respect Willett clarifies their mutual purpose in his explanation of Brecht’s *Verfremdung* as “a means of ‘gaining new insights into the world around us by glimpsing it in a different and previously unfamiliar light’” (qtd. in Brooker 64).

Even though critics claim that Brecht is chiefly influenced by Shklovsky in his theory of *Verfremdungseffekt*, this concept can be traced back for at least a hundred years before the Russian Formalists to Shelley, Wordsworth and Schopenhauer, who can be regarded as precedents for Brecht’s alienating device and for the “making strange” of Russian Formalism (Brooker 64). This assumed influence is elucidated by John Willett,

they shared a view of art ‘as a means of productive reorientation’ [and] Shelley’s description of poetry as making ‘familiar objects to be as if they were not familiar’ and Wordsworth’s aim to make ‘the strange familiar and the familiar strange’ alike provide [...] for the complete alienation from the world spoken of by Schopenhauer, ‘so that the commonest objects and incidents appear new and unknown. (qtd. in Brooker 64)

Whereas these Romantic writers' main concern is artistic creation, which is an act of making familiar objects seem strange, Brecht's idea of estrangement is a literary strategy focused on the detachment of the audience from the action on stage and the activation of their critical faculties. Although they differ in the main concern of their theories, they propose the same idea that art is a means of defamiliarization, productive reorientation or making strange. Despite this similarity, Shklovsky should be considered as the theorician who coins the term *ostranenie*, estrangement, and thus basically influences his contemporary Brecht in the formation of his theory of *Verfremdungseffekt*. It is obvious that Shklovsky's estrangement is different from that of Brecht's in that "while Shklovsky's *ostranenie* was a purely aesthetic concept, concerned with renewal of perception, Brecht's *Verfremdung* had a social aim [through which] Brecht wished to strike not merely at the perceptions, but at the consciousness of his spectators" (Brooker 69). However, in spite of this particular distinction they have the mutual notion of defamiliarization that "distanciation is the condition of understanding" thereupon, they both defamiliarize the familiar in order to arrive at a real, concrete comprehension (Ricoeur 144).

In order to estrange the audience, Brecht employs such devices as lighting, music, episodic structure, scenic design and a narrator both in the play and in the stage production. Apart from these technical elements, Brecht underlines the significance of content, as Subiotto puts,

the alienation effect in Brecht's theatre is not confined [merely] to formal techniques, a vehicle for the author's message; it is simultaneously the content itself, namely the matter the author is structuring and his perspective on it [...] thus the integration of content with the formal means of presenting it is the distinguishing feature of the alienation in Brecht's works. (202)

In this respect, by positing the content of the play in the past Brecht creates alienation effect and thus violates the traditional passive role of the audience. Contrary to the naturalist bourgeois theatre which portrays the universal situations of Man through an illusion of reality as if it were witnessed in the eternal present, Brecht proposes an epic theatre that records the world through narrative in the past so as to distance the spectators from the universal, eternally human illusion of the dramatic theatre. Therefore, the very concept of 'epic' is important because it is used as a means of detaching the audience from the dramatic action; in other words, it prepares the ground for distancing effect. As the Russian critic M.M. Bakhtin implies

the creation of the epic distance through the sense of pastness in his explanation of the epic in his book *The Epic and the Novel*:

The epic is never a poem about the present, about its own time. The epic as the specific genre known us today, has been from the beginning a poem about the past and [...] by its very nature the epic world of the absolute past is inaccessible to personal experience and does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation. One cannot glimpse it, grope for it, touch it; one cannot look at it from just any point. (13)

In this respect, Bakhtin's elucidation of epic contributes to the understanding of Brecht's use of the term 'epic'. Making use of the past narratives, Brecht creates an imaginary, past, unattainable epic world which cannot be reached by the audience and thus impossible to identify with. Hence, through the use of remote past "the audience is discouraged from losing his critical detachment by identification with the characters" (Lauer 2003). In other words, since the use of past elements and setting the play in the distant past create a sense of pastness and thus epic distance, which prevents the audience from emotional identification with the characters of the remote past, Brecht uses past narratives such as ancient parables and history in his plays, as Walter Benjamin confirms, "epic theatre sets out 'to make what is shown on the stage unsensational'. Hence an old story will often be of more use to it than a new one" (16). Therefore, since the tense of the epic tends to be past which posits the author and the audience in a detached, observing relationship to the events and characters portrayed, Brecht makes use of past narratives in his plays such as ancient parables and history (Mews 197). For instance, in *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Brecht uses ancient Chinese parables and tales, and thus sets his plays in the remote past to detach the spectators. In addition to these past narratives, in his play *The Life of Galileo* Brecht takes his subject directly from history and thus forms a sense of pastness which leads to the formation of epic distance in the audience.

To sum up, Brecht fundamentally opposes the naturalist drama of the 1920s, which adopts the Aristotelian notions of *mimesis* and *catharsis*. That is to say, Brecht specifically denounces the conventional role of a passive observer attributed to the audience because it makes them become absorbed in the dramatic representation rather than leading them to a questioning position. Therefore, he argues that art should not directly reflect life yet art should illuminate life and make the audience

think objectively by defamiliarizing the familiar. In order to provide the audience with a detached manner, Brecht creates aesthetic distance through various dramatic elements. In this respect, his use of past as a distancing device is significant because the past is remote and inaccessible for the spectators which detaches them aesthetically rather than incapacitating them through emotional involvement.

1.1.2 Shaffer's Distancing Technique of Time and the Analysis of the Themes

Brecht's Epic Theatre and his theory of alienation effect have had a great influence on the twentieth century drama. Peter Shaffer, a controversial postmodern dramatist, is inspired by various dramatic forms and figures as "he has experimented realistic drama similar to Ibsen's middle period, farce, one-act plays, melodrama, Epic Theatre, modern tragedy and musical/operatic theatre" (Plunka 36). Nevertheless, one of the most significant literary impacts on Shaffer is Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre. However, despite this great influence, Shaffer cannot be simply labeled as Brechtian since he adopts some of Brecht's ideas and puts forth his unique notion of '*theatrical drama*'. MacMurrough-Kavanagh confirms that Shaffer has selected certain ideas from Brecht and adapted them to create a version of *theatrical drama* that is unique to him in which his "consistent desire for the theatre is to create an experience that is 'entirely and only theatrical'" (14, 30). Labeling his theory as *theatrical drama* and "stating that the quality of shape is very important to [him]", Shaffer underlines the significance of form in his drama (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 18, 19). Thereupon, Shaffer explores and experiments new and different techniques in his drama which enables him to be regarded as an outstanding dramatist with his innovative theory along with his strong thematic structure.

Even though Shaffer holds the idea that the audience should be involved in the artistic event to some extent through the thematic structure, he cannot ignore the fact that psychological, philosophical and metaphysical issues require an objective and questioning audience rather than a passive observer who is emotionally absorbed in the play. In this aspect, Brechtian theory has a great impact on Shaffer's dramatic technique since like Brecht, Shaffer believes that the audience should have a critical attitude towards what they see on stage.

Further, Peter Shaffer does not want to purge the audience through emotional empathy with the representation of reality on stage, because he believes that although the “theatre must surprise the spectator and prey upon his or her imagination”, it should not render the audience passive through complete emotional involvement in the play (Plunka 47). Instead, it should basically awaken the audience’s sense of awareness by actuating their critical faculties. Therefore, Shaffer adopts Brecht’s concept of alienation effect in Epic Theatre “where the audience are discouraged from identification with character and are therefore persuaded to respond to events intellectually rather than emotionally” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 27). In Shaffer’s theatrical drama, then, the role of the audience is to think actively and self-consciously and thus become objective critics who observe and analyze the work of art rather than losing them in emotional reaction. Hence, in order to ascribe a critical approach to the audience, Shaffer tries to create alienation effect in his plays by detaching the audience through several Brechtian distancing devices such as “the use of a controlling narrator, the use of song, mime and dance and the positioning of the audience as [critical] observers” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 28).

Brecht distances “the audience in time (often setting the play hundreds of years earlier rather than in modern times), in place (anywhere but modern Germany), and in action (just when the audience begin to identify with the protagonist on stage, other characters would be introduced or a different plot would develop” (Plunka 36-37). Shaffer, inspired by Brecht, tries to subvert the traditional idea of the role of the spectators as passive participants and alienates them through various devices and in three basic dramatic sub-structures; however, despite the variety of distancing elements, the focus of this thesis has been on the formation of aesthetic distance in time.

While formulating his theory of Epic Theatre, Brecht adopts the concept of ‘epic’ on purpose which paves the way for alienation effect because the genre and the very notion of ‘epic’ is about the absolute past, as Goethe and Schiller disclose in their article *On Epic and Dramatic Poetry* “the epic writer narrates an event as having happened in the past” which is remote and unattainable (qtd. in Gearey 192). In other words, contrary to the illusive conventional theatre which leads the audience to emotional identification with the dramatic characters through a spurious present, Brecht proposes an Epic Theatre in which the story is positioned in the remote past in

order to create epic distance through time.

Likewise, Peter Shaffer, influenced by Brecht's distancing via time, adopts his use of time to create estrangement effect and adapts it to most of his plays with unique innovations and additions. In other words, Shaffer detaches the audience through the use of time because he does not apply the unity of time or follow the rule of chronological order in his plays. As Gene Plunka underlines "there is often no unity of time or place", instead he sets most of his plays in the historical and mythical past time sometimes in synchronous relation to the present or "in the present, but most of what [is] see[n] on stage is a flashback to an earlier period" (37). Furthermore, he splits time and space and situates past and present synchronically to violate the chronological unity and logic of time and reminds the spectators that they are in "the theatre, a place of illusion that is not to be confused with reality" (Plunka 38).

Even though Shaffer, like Brecht, employs past time as an element of alienation effect through historical time and also applies Brechtian sense of pastness to his drama through myths and thus mythical time, he relatively differs from Brecht in his use of spatial/synchronic time. In this sense, Shaffer's innovative technique of time, particularly his use of synchronous time frame, contributes to the formation and development of alienation effect and therefore calls forth a change in the role of the audience in the dramatic genre.

To begin with, supporting the view that the audience should have a questioning role in drama, Shaffer, like Brecht, tries to detach the audience from the illusive world of the dramatic action. As a dramatic technique and feature the use of time or temporal frames have a crucial function in the definition of the role of the audience. Conventionally, the present temporal setting is applied to plays so as to make the dramatic action as realistic as possible which prepares the ground for the identification of the audience with the literary characters. On the contrary, setting his plays in the remote past or integrating past narratives to his drama, Brecht seems to propose a distancing time-frame that leads to a change in the passive role of the audience. Through historical time as an element of estrangement the audience are provided with a critical viewpoint as they cannot form a direct relation between the illusive world of drama and their real present existence.

Likewise, Shaffer employs historical time in most of his plays as a distancing

device since he similarly holds the idea that the “absolute past” as the subject for epic determines the nature of epic distance because the epic past is walled off from all consecutive times by an impenetrable boundary isolated from that “eternal present” (Bakhtin 17). Hence, Shaffer, “the master of taking a historical incident or a newspaper clipping and turning it into a story for the stage”, uses historical past time in his drama (Plunka 39). That is to say, he either sets his plays in the remote past or fictionalizes historical characters and events so as to create “an absolute epic distance [that] separates the epic world from contemporary reality”, that is from the time and space in which the audience exists (Bakhtin 13). Thereupon, focusing on the presentation of the otherness of the past in relation to the present, Shaffer tries to activate the sense of awareness in the spectators and make them question the dramatic work impartially which “is constructed in the zone of an absolute distanced image, beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present” (Bakhtin 17).

As for the mythical time, similar to Brechtian use of historical past time, Shaffer in some of his plays employs the mythical temporal frame to break the fourth wall between the audience and the characters since mythical time, like historical time, refers to the distant past. That is to say, Shaffer alienates the audience through mythical time in the Brechtian sense, in that, mythical time frame presents and signifies a past and inaccessible world to the contemporary audience for whom it is not likely to identify with. Thus, the sense of pastness expressed through mythical time distances the audience and thus awakens them to their absolute world which is entirely different from the illusive dramatic action.

In addition to the past nature of mythical time, it is by nature unreal as myths are concerned with imaginary events and superhuman beings that are thought to occur in the primitive ages. Hence, unlike historical time, mythical time refers to a vague form of time and space of the ancient events. In this aspect, besides being alienated through the sense of pastness, the contemporary audience is estranged from the dramatic action owing to the visionary nature of mythical time because this illusive presentation is neither accessible nor conceivable for them. Briefly, since myths belong to an indefinite and most probably to an imaginary past period, and present supernatural characters and happenings to the modern audience, the use of mythical time creates an unreal and thus unattainable time concept in the minds of

the audience. Thereupon, they cannot identify with the characters presented in a remote and unreal mythical past time which contributes to the change in the role of the audience from passive to active critical observers.

Apart from the Brechtian use of time as an element of alienation, Shaffer puts forth his innovative technique of spatial time as a distancing device. To begin with the description of spatiality, spatial time is opposed to the diachronic idea of time, which is known as chronological or historical time, since it is concerned with events existing at the same time and ignoring historical antecedents. Contrary to the diachronic idea of time, spatial or synchronic time requires the simultaneous existence of past and present elements which fundamentally violates the self-evident notion of chronological time. In this respect, Shaffer estranges the audience through the simultaneous presentation of past and present in the actual time of the play because the coexistence of remote past and actual present on stage subverts the familiar notion of chronological time and creates a sense of synchronicity which is unusual and incomprehensible for the spectators. In other words, Shaffer with the use of time in an unconventional way defamiliarizes the concept of time in the minds of the audience which brings about their alienation and also their becoming questioning observers rather than passive onlookers.

Shaffer's notion of synchronous or spatial time can be analyzed in relation to Bergson's theory of time. Henri Bergson, a French philosopher, deals with the issue of time and puts forth his idea of *durée*, which is the non-linear heterogeneous real time, in contrast to chronologic homogeneous time. In other words, "real time called by Bergson *durée*, is neither homogeneous nor divisible" (Kolakowski 4). Such kind of a temporal structure underlines the fact that time is "a continual free-flowing flux" that preserves past and present mutually (Gilles 12). In this aspect, *durée* allows "for mutual impregnation of past and present" (Mullarkey 54). Shaffer's plays, thus, can be studied in relation with the Bergsonian idea of time since it overlaps with Shaffer's technique of concurrent blend of past and present. To conclude, through his innovative and unusual technique of time Shaffer alienates the spectators since they cannot identify with the dramatic characters either of the present or the past which are simultaneously presented on stage. Hence, Shaffer by means of the defamiliarized notion of time awakens the audience to the fact that what they are watching is an unreal representation of life and ascribes a questioning role to the

audience.

Through his distancing technique of time, Shaffer tries to enable the audience to think about and analyze impartially the thematic scope of the dramatic work, particularly the psychological and metaphysical themes which are mainly search for worship, existential disintegration, and the eternal internal conflict between reason and instinct. These three subject matters are the recurrent themes in Shafferian drama through which the playwright denotes the meaningless existence and conflicting psyche of man to the contemporary audience to lead them to self-criticism. Shaffer in most of his plays present these themes through two conflicting protagonists one of whom is generally portrayed as an alienated quester of worship and the other as an addicted worshipper. The contradictory characters also indicate the eternal clash inherent in man as one of them stands for the reasonable side while the other signifies the instinctive side of the human psyche.

As to the themes of search for worship and existential disintegration, the protagonists in Shaffer's drama have abnegated their belief in God and existence; thus, they are seeking for the meaningful worship in the course of the play. However, despite their desire and need for belief, they cannot attain this life-affirming force and therefore they undergo a process of psychological fragmentation and alienation. On the other hand, another central theme in Shaffer's plays is the internal clash between man's conscious and unconscious which is called the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict by Shaffer. The eternal battle of the human nature is depicted either through merely the dispositions of two opposing dramatic protagonists or through the contradicting views of them in relation to another issue such as the theme of morality of revenge. Through such a clashing portrayal of man, Shaffer seems to make the audience look into their own contradictory nature and reflect upon this psychological dilemma objectively.

1.2 Aim of the Study

As far as the researcher could establish there are not many publications concerned either with Shaffer's technique or his psychological and metaphysical themes, especially on his use of time as a distancing device which leads the audience to an objective questioning. The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to analyze Peter

Shaffer's use of time as a distancing device. Shaffer does not merely adopt Brecht's use of historical past as a distancing device, but he also uses myths as elements of pastness in the Brechtian sense; however, Shaffer makes an innovative contribution to the creation of alienation effect with the use of spatial time created through the coexistence of past and present in order to make the audience question and reflect upon the psychological and metaphysical themes such as search for worship, existential disintegration and the eternal internal conflict between reason and instinct. To this end, Shaffer's plays *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab*, and *The Gift of the Gorgon* have been studied since these three plays are much more representative in terms of Shaffer's technique of time and appropriate to generate examples as to the technique and thematic scope of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

ALIENATION EFFECT CREATED through PAST and SPATIAL TIME

2.1 Distancing Effect: The Use of Past

Like Brecht, Peter Shaffer holds the idea that the audience should have a critical perspective rather than a passive role. To this end, Shaffer tries to alienate the audience by means of various elements one of which is the distancing use of temporal frames. Brecht as the forefather of alienation effect sets his plays mostly in the historical past, for the past is remote and therefore unattainable for the spectators. Likewise, Shaffer uses historical time in most of his plays and through this past temporal frame he tries to raise awareness in the audience that theatre is a place of illusion rather than reality because the past setting of the dramatic action is entirely different from the actual time of the audience. Hence, Shaffer tries to create a sense of pastness in some of his plays either through positing the plays in the remote past or through integrating past narratives into the play.

Shaffer uses mythical time in the same way as he uses historical time. Mythical time by nature denotes a past and inaccessible world to the audience since myth by nature is concerned with imaginary and supernatural beings and happenings which are assumed to occur in the primitive ages. In this respect, mythical time is distant and illusive which is thus neither attainable nor conceivable for the audience. This chapter has analyzed Shaffer's use of both historical and mythical past time as a distancing device in the three plays in question.

2.1.1 Historical Past in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Yonadab*

Dating back to the origins of literature, telling in time is "telling in a temporal medium, where all items and structures and effects must unfold in an ordered [chronological] sequence (Sternberg 901). Thereupon, the literary story unfolds in a

unidirectional temporal order in which the events are narrated diachronically from the initiation story at the beginning to the denouement scene at the end of the play. Telling in time, thus, “means telling in chronological sequence; according to the order in which events have occurred, so that the discourse marches in step with the world” (Sternberg 902).

In this aspect, situating the dramatic work in the chronologically-ordered time, the author tries to represent the fictitious work as true-to-life. Such kind of lifelikeness prepares the ground for audience identification, since similar to the Aristotelian concept of Unity of Time, the use of chronologic time does not violate the illusive representation that unites the real world of the audience with that of the fiction. Instead, by depicting the fictive world in a realistic temporal structure, the playwright represents life truly and directly which attracts the audience emotionally into the world of the play. In this respect, by constructing the story in sequential time, the dramatist does not aim to awaken the spectators intellectually; instead, he/she presents a quasi-life to make them live the fictional story as if it were real. Therefore, the audience is not allowed to obtain a detached point of view towards the dramatic action.

Like the present time, historical time has a sequential order; however, it differs from the contemporary temporal frame in that it refers to the story situated in the remote past. Therefore, the effect of the use of historical time on the audience is also at variance with that of the present time since the sense of pastness created through the diachronic time forms a kind of aesthetic distance between the audience and the characters. That is to say, historical time, stuck in the past in its immutability, is used to be observed more objectively rather than be lived and experienced emotionally (130 Ubersfeld). Owing to the temporal distance, the spectators are likely to identify less with the characters of the distant past. Thus, they are alienated from the illusive world of the dramatic action which provides them with a detached attitude.

In this aspect, the use of historical time as a distancing device paves a new path in the audience-character relationship. That is to say, setting the dramatic action in a historical time frame; the playwright subverts the conventional realistic representation on stage and therefore eliminates the identification of the audience. Brecht discloses the reason why he employs diachronic time in his drama:

If we ensure that our characters on the stage are moved by social impulses and

that these differ according to the period, then we make it harder for our spectator to identify himself with them. He cannot simply feel: that's how I would act, but at most can say: if I had lived under those circumstances. And if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins (Brandt 238)

In this sense, Bertolt Brecht uses "epic" both as a genre and as a title purposefully in order to detach the audience since the epic past in Goethe's and Schiller's terminology the "absolute past", which refers to the monochronic remote past, serves as the subject for epic (Bakhtin 13). As Mikhail Bakhtin explicates, "the epic world is an utterly finished thing, not only as an authentic event of the distant past but also on its own terms and by its own standards; it is impossible to change [as it is beyond the realm of human access]. This defines absolute epic distance" (17). Therefore, the sense of pastness alienates the spectators and attributes a disinterested perspective to them. In this respect, "the otherness of the past in relation to the present is more important than the survival of the past in the present. When curiosity gains the upper hand over sympathy, [the spectator] becomes alienate[ed]" (Ricoeur 149).

Like Epic Theatre, the postmodern drama seeks for critical audience. Peter Shaffer, in this sense, contributes to the change of the function of the audience from passive to questioning observer in his theatrical drama. In this respect, influenced by Brecht's theory of estrangement, Shaffer tries to raise the sense of awareness in the audience by activating their critical faculties through alienation effect. To this end, Shaffer employs various distancing elements, one of which is the historical time either as the setting or the content of the literary work. Shaffer, like Brecht, holds the idea that the dramatists must give up the habit of taking the different social structures of the past periods and stripping them of everything that makes them different so that they all look more or less like that of the contemporary world. Instead, the dramatists must keep their distinguishing marks always before the eyes of the audience, so that the contemporary world can be seen as impermanent and thus be objectively observed by the audience (Brandt 238).

The dramatic use of historical time "then attempts generally to distance the past from the present. It may even aim frankly at producing an effect of something felt as alien over against every wish to become familiar with the unfamiliar" (Ricoeur 148).

In this respect, the past setting in dramatic works determines the nature and formation of estrangement effect since it is in Bakhtin's words "impossible to experience [the past], analyze it, take it apart, penetrate into its core" (Bakhtin 16). The historical past is inaccessible and thus it is beyond the realm of possible identification. Like Brecht, Shaffer in most of his plays detaches the audience in past time, that is, he either situates his plays in the remote historical past or he uses past narratives as distancing techniques. Thereupon, the historical time that governs the narrative does not merely have a temporal function but also acts as a notice to the reader/audience: this is narrative. Therefore, the attitude that corresponds to the narrative would then be disengagement of the audience, in contrast to the tension and emotional identification of them. In this sense, it can be inferred that Shaffer aims to enable the audience to watch what is presented on stage with a critical eye by depicting a quasi-past through the use of historical time. For this objective, Shaffer in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Yonadab* posits the dramatic action in the distant past and fictionalizes historical characters and events in history and past narratives.

Having the privilege of being the first non-classical play to be presented by the National Theatre, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* had its premiere at the Chichester Festival on 6 July 1964. (Klein 69). *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* is a historical epic which takes place on two continents over a period of four years in the sixteenth century. The play is divided into two acts, 'The Hunt' and 'The Kill', each of which is subdivided into twelve sections. The plot of the play generally concerns the Spanish conquest of Peru in the sixteenth century; however, it focuses specifically on the conflict between rival organizational systems, that is, Communist principles depicted through the Inca civilization which contrasts with Capitalist principles of modern Spanish society. Beyond this social criticism, Shaffer deals with the psychic conflict between conscious and unconscious and the faithless and meaningless existence of modern man embodied especially through the protagonists, an emperor and a conqueror.

As to the setting of *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, Shaffer roots the play in the historical Spanish conquest of Peru as he confirms, "this is a large-scale chronicle of the fall of the Inca Empire in the 16th century" (qtd. in Plunka 96). Furthermore, at the very beginning of the play, Shaffer indicates the historically accurate time frame and distant place of the dramatic action which underlines the sense of pastness:

Place

Apart from two early scenes in Spain and Panama, the play is set in the Upper Province of the Inca Empire: what is now South Ecuador and north-western Peru. The whole of Act II takes place in the town of Cajamarca.

Time

June 1529- August 1533. (12)

Setting the play in the distant past serves the formation of alienation effect. As Bakhtin clarifies “the represented world of the [characters] stands on an utterly different and inaccessible time-and-value plane, separated by epic distance” which prevents the audience from becoming emotionally involved in the dramatic action (14). Furthermore, Shaffer opens the play with the monologue of Old Martin, a Spanish hidalgo of the sixteenth century and then the scene fades to that of a town in Spain in 1529. Shaffer implicates the temporal frame of the scene through the stage directions after indicating the time of the play as “June 1529- August 1533”, as he writes, “*Darkness. OLD MARTIN, grizzled, in his middle fifties, appears. He wears the black costume of a Spanish hidalgo in the mid sixteenth century*” (13). In this respect, the representation of the characters and the setting contributes to the detachment of the audience through temporally distancing elements.

Additionally, the depiction of Inca civilization estranges the audience since it refers not only to a remote historical time but to a completely different historical culture and space as well. Shaffer implies this historical, spatial, and cultural difference also through the stage directions, for instance he presents the Inca civilization through a scene in which there is exotic music along with the huge medallion on the stage, which seems to be a cultural sign peculiar to the Incas, signifying their strong belief and commitment to their god and the might of the sun-god. As Shaffer indicates, “Exotic music mixes with the chanting. Slowly the medallion opens outwards to form a huge golden sun with twelve great rays. In the centre stands Atahuallpa, sovereign Inca of Peru, masked, crowned, and dressed in gold” (23). Furthermore, Shaffer depicts some ritualistic scenes throughout the play in which the remote historical Incan culture is presented through music, masks and costumes:

The music crashes over the stage as the Indian procession enters in an astonishing explosion of color. The King’s attendants- many of them playing musical instruments: reed pipes, cymbals, and giant maracas- are as gray as parrots. They wear costumes of orange and yellow, and fantastic head-dresses of gold and feathers [...] [Atahuallpa] is dressed from head to foot in white: across

his eyes is a mask of jade mosaic, and round his head a circlet of plain gold. (48)

Such a ritualistic scene, which is both historically and culturally remote, underlines the pastness and otherness of the dramatic past from the actual present time of the audience. That is to say, the ritualistic scene is by no means adaptable to the contemporary atmosphere of the spectators owing to the historical distancing elements it involves. It may be inferred that the audience is detached also by the presentation of ritualistic or historical scenes belonging to the remote societies.

In addition, Shaffer indicates the historically accurate dates throughout the play in order to emphasize the sense of pastness; for instance, before ‘The Hunt’ scene, the narrator announces the date, “[it was] the sixteenth of November, 1532” (44). In this aspect, the definite historical time given in the fictional work estranges the audience directly for they come to realize that what is being enacted on stage is merely the dramatized presentation of a distant historical event.

On the other hand, since Shaffer fictionalizes a real historical event in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, the play can be regarded as a kind of recounting history since the narrator gives a historical account of the Spanish conquest of Peru, “I am going to tell you how one hundred and sixty-seven men conquered an empire of twenty four million” (13). Now that the narrator tells the history of the invasion, he also informs the spectators about the outcome of the historical account: “So fell Peru. We gave her greed, hunger and the cross: three gifts for civilized life. [...] Peru is a silent country, frozen in avarice. So fell Spain, gorged with gold, disintended; now dying” (90). In this sense, since recounting a real historical event makes the dramatic representation seem much more remote and inaccessible for the contemporary audience, they can question the fictionalized historical events and the meanings beyond the dramatic work with a detached view.

In addition to the historical setting, the past narratives incorporated into the dramatic work create a distancing effect. Brecht, for instance, makes use of past narratives in some of his plays to underline the sense of pastness. Like Brecht, Shaffer in this play utilizes a past narrative, that is, “William Prescott’s classic *History of the Conquest of Peru* as his historical source” (Klein 78). To illustrate, “Peter Shaffer [borrows] liberally from Prescott’s historical account”, and adapts this historical source to his peculiar play in order to create a sense of pastness and inaccessibility to the remote fictional world of the play (Plunka 100). Moreover,

integrating past narratives into the play provides the literary work with an intertextual form which may also lead the audience to estrangement. Once the audience realize the intertextual structure of the work, that is, the presence of other literary elements in the play either of the past or the present, they become aware of the fictitious nature of it. Thus, the aesthetic distance between the audience and the characters is again emphasized.

Peter Shaffer utilizes the same distancing technique in his biblical epic *Yonadab*, a play about King David's nephew, Yonadab's avarice, deceit and search for worship. The play was first performed at the Olivier Theatre in December 1985 which is based on the bloodstained biblical world. Like in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, Shaffer estranges the audience through historical setting and past narratives.

To begin with, Shaffer sets the play in the remote past as he explains at the very beginning of the play, "the action of the play takes place in the city of Jerusalem. The time: 1000 BC" (83). In this sense, the setting of the play evokes the remote and primitive culture of David's Kingdom, three thousand years ago in Jerusalem which apparently creates a temporal and spatial distance between the contemporary world of the audience and the remote biblical world of the play (Klein 66). For instance, the audience is informed from the very beginning of the play that this is a play about a biblical story, which is thought to be real yet takes place in the historical past, as Yonadab, the narrator, indicates,

This is a singularly unpleasant story. The Rabbis of the Middle Ages omitted it entirely, when they read out the Scriptures to spare the ears of their congregations. [...] I alone know it all-and, let me assure you, I don't intend to spare yours. [...] This is a tale of total deceit. Every person in it both deceiver and deceived. And I mean every single one. It is true and secret story of the ruin of the House of David by me- his despised nephew. (87)

Throughout the play the narrator comments on the action even sometimes like a historian who gives historical account to his reader/audience. For instance, towards the end of the first act Yonadab instructs the spectators about David's family, "Some years before, David had had a Hittite man killed in order to possess his wife, Bathsheba. It was said that as a punishment God killed the first son they had together- and then placed a sword for ever in the midst of his children" (90). Furthermore, at the end of the play Yonadab concludes the historical story by recounting the aftermath of the ruin of King David's family, as he narrates like a

historian:

Yonadab: (*To audience*) Women came from all parts of the land to touch [Tamar's] robe. To reverence her with their hands and eyes. And she sat for life in her place and sang to her savage God, the stink of vengeance the incense of her Faith. She knew more joy in the memory of killing than ever she would have known in the making of children. For life she sat, a Chosen Prophetess, and turned all her pain into meaning. [...] Absalom died later- caught in a tree by his famous hair, fleeing the wrath of his father. [...] the father mourned his eldest son, of course- but the mourning for Absalom far exceeded the mourning for Amnon. It was the hardest pain of his life. (180, 181)

Integrating historical accounts into the play and underlining their pastness and otherness from the contemporary reality, Shaffer directly alienates the audience from the illusive world of the dramatic representation.

Furthermore, the characterization of Yonadab does not let the audience identify with him; on the contrary, it leads them to a doubtful and criticizing position because Yonadab is presented as a historical protagonist rather than a contemporary character. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh explains, “Yonadab, the eponymous ‘hero’, is a man born out of his historical time being possessed of a modern cynicism and rationality but existing in a world of contingent bloodshed and, to him, irrational faith”(72).

Additionally, Peter Shaffer roots his play in the Biblical story of Yonadab and a novel. As Klein explains, “The point of departure for the story is Chapter 13 of the Second Book of Samuel [and] the immediate source is Dan Jacobson’s 1970 novel *The Rape of Tamar*” (166). By means of such historical narratives, Shaffer seems to make the audience observe the work of art at a distance and analyze it impartially rather than become absorbed in the play. In this aspect, not only the past setting but also the intertextual structure of the play distances the audience. Yonadab, the narrator, indicates one of the sources right at the beginning of the first act, “I am quoting the Authorized Version of your Bible, Second book of Samuel, Chapter 13” (87). Here, the narration lets the audience know that they will witness the fictionalization of a Biblical story and this ascribes a questioning role to them. Moreover, since Shaffer takes the Biblical story of Yonadab as one of his historical sources, he incorporates the Biblical language into the play, as Yonadab states in the first sentence of the play, “Voolamnown rajah vooshomow Yonadab”(87). The use of Biblical language may serve the creation of alienation effect, for it is an intertextual element stressing the fictitious nature of the dramatic action. That is to

say, the audience is detached from the representational picture on stage since the sense of intertextuality leads them to the idea that the story and action being enacted on stage is a work of imagination.

To conclude, since Shaffer accepts the idea that the epic past “lacks any relativity, that is, any gradual purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present”, he tries to create a sense of pastness through historical setting and past narratives in order to alienate the spectators aesthetically from the illusive world of the dramatic work and enable them to observe the play in a detached manner (Bakhtin 15).

2.1.2 Mythical Past in *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon*

Mythos, ‘anything uttered by word of mouth’ is a set of imaginary stories of ancient origin which is created to provide a rationale for the natural phenomena in the primordial time in terms of supernatural beings and deities (Cuddon 408,409). Mircea Eliade defines myth as an action which takes place in the distant past and thus unavailable ever again, and it is the story of the origins of phenomena: “myth narrates a sacred history: it relates an event that took place in primordial time, a fabled time of the ‘beginnings’. In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence” (qtd. in Tobin 259).

The term mythos, dating back to the ancient times of the Greeks, denotes the “word as authoritative pronouncement” (Heehs 1). Mythos may be defined as unexamined, self-evident assumption, which has been contradicted to Logos, ‘the word whose validity and truth can be argued and demonstrated’ since the time of the Greeks (Heehs 3). In this respect, mythos or myth seems to be involved with imaginary ancient events whose truth cannot be proved unlike history (Heehs 3).

Even though both myth and history are concerned with the distant past, a myth “differs qualitatively from a historical account in that it is vague in its specifications of time and space” (Munz 2). History is a logos-activity which deals with the concrete events involving concrete persons in a definite time in the remote past, and tries to represent the historical facts in a sequential temporal order to demonstrate the truthfulness of the historical account. On the other hand, myth is considered to denote fictitious narratives about superhuman beings and deeds which are assumed to

occur in the primitive ages. Therefore, myth seems to lack any precise indication as to the time and place of the ancient events. Although myth, like history, alludes to the events claimed to have happened in the remote past, it cannot be named as a true story of a definite historical event since the veracity of the ancient story is not likely to be proved owing to myth's visionary nature.

Furthermore, unlike historical time, mythical time does not fundamentally have a sequentially-ordered temporal structure as Tobin clarifies that "history, as it traces the transience of generations and institutions, is situated along the diachronic axis, which always parallels the basic cause of linear time. Myth may be considered the ultimate synchronic structure because it is supposed to represent an eternal pattern" (255). In this sense, although the use of mythical time distances the audience through its inaccessible past and fictitious nature, it may not always bring about alienation. Since mythical time has a synchronic structure in which the borders of past and present are violated and this disruption in diachronic time brings about a timeless structure. This eternal nature of mythical time denotes the universality of the literary work, that is, myths represent universal issues common to all people of all times. In this respect, causing a vision of universality in the minds of the audience, the timeless nature of myths may lead the audience to identify with the literary characters. As Ohmann stresses the eternal temporal structure of myths, "Myths are the essential features of imagined situations or events (a) that occurred once upon a time in the past, (b) that are destined to occur in the future, or (c) that are now recurring, or have recurred and will continue to recur at regular intervals" (22). In this aspect, "although myth refers to events alleged to have taken place in the distant past, its operational value is that the specific model which it describes is timeless" (Tobin 255).

Furthermore, "myths rely on man's most ancient memories and are one way transmitting knowledge about the past", that is, myths consist of primordial happenings which may existentially inherent in man (Gordon 446). As Munz underlines, "myth [...] is an expression of human nature, something embedded or innate in it, a pattern of thought or of action which [human] nature from time to time compels [itself] to express or enact" (16). In this aspect, being intrinsic in man's psychic nature, myths do not hold a diachronic time frame; on the contrary, they overpass time because man's consciousness is timeless, and thus myths are eternal

and common to all people. As Wallace clarifies, “myths deal with the ‘fundamentals of our existence’; it is derived from ‘the word as most ancient, the original account of the origins of the world’; it also [...] carries ‘one of the archetypes from the collective unconscious of mankind’ or ‘the timeless meaning ‘ of an individual’s psychic life” (236). In this respect, preventing the critical attitude of the audience towards the artistic event, the innate and timeless nature of myths seems to serve the process of identification and the portrayal of the audience as passive observers.

According to Shaffer’s concept of drama, the role of the audience should not be either only identification or only alienation. Although not rejecting the involvement of the audience in the dramatic action completely, Shaffer mainly underlines their alienation from the fictional world of the dramatic work. In this respect, even though Shaffer involves the audience to some extent in the artistic event through the use of myths, he limits and balances this identification process through emphasizing the past and fictitious nature of mythical time. Since the thesis is concerned with time frames as distancing devices, this part of the thesis is limited to the analysis of how Shaffer technically employs mythical time in his biblical epic *Yonadab* and Classical play *The Gift of the Gorgon* as an alienating device.

To begin with, the sense of pastness conceived through the mythical time in *Yonadab* detaches the spectators aesthetically in time and awakens them to the actual time of the dramatic performance. In addition, mythical time refers to an imaginary world in an indefinite past time involving supernatural events and beings; hence, the contemporary audience “can no longer recognize other-worldly person-like beings [and events] as [their] own” (Biderman 48). In other words, the past and fantasized form of mythical time puts the dramatic presentation in a remote, inaccessible structure which creates aesthetic distance for the objective and intellectual observance of the audience as Murray indicates, mythical time is “believed to be defunct, [and] a thing of the past” (108). Thereupon, the mythical time and world are unattainable for the contemporary spectators as they “can no longer connect that time with the time of [contemporary] history” (Ricoeur qtd in Biderman 45).

Yonadab is based on the biblical story of Yonadab, the thirteenth chapter of second book of Samuel in the Old Testament, where Yonadab, a nephew of King David, advises Amnon, the King’s eldest son, to commit incest with his half-sister Tamar, the King’s only daughter and fruit of the union with Bathsheba, the Princess

of Israel. Shaffer in *Yonadab*, is concerned with the evil and desperate nature of man who is in need of worship; hence, he employs sacred mythological accounts and accordingly sets the play in Jerusalem long before the Christian era as he states right at the beginning of the play, “Time: 1000 BC” (83).

Setting his biblical epic in the distant mythical past, inaccessible for the contemporary audience, Shaffer tries to estrange them. For instance, in *Yonadab*, Yonadab the narrator while recounting the biblical story, reminds the distant past time of the play, as he continuously restates, “the world three thousand years ago [or] one thousand years BC” (88,89) which awakens the audience to the actual time of the fictional presentation and puts them in a critical position. Even though the play seems to be positioned in a definite historical period, it presents the story in a sacred mythological time frame. Yonadab implicates the biblical origin of the story when he claims that his story is more accurate than that of the Bible, which is familiar to the audience, as he states, “What follows now is the truest story: I swear it. Not the events recorded in your Bible- but the reason for the events” (155). Therefore, it cannot be labeled as a real historical account; instead, this biblical story is supposedly a fictional narrative belonging to the religious mythology. As Ohmann underlines, “believers may be annoyed to hear Christianity called a myth, or mythology [but] the Bible is far from a mere historical text” (13).

In addition to the distancing temporal frame of the play, Shaffer integrates mythical references or elements stressing the alienating role of mythical time. For instance, like the mortals who challenge the deities in the mythical stories, Yonadab “hungers for finite proof of God’s existence; [thus] he challenges Him on every front” (Gianakaris 17). For instance, in the scene where Yonadab wickedly plots the ruin of the House of David, he apparently challenges the God and questions His existence, “let him defend Himself! Prove that he exists, finally! Let him stop me if He is there. Yaveh the Prohibitor!” (98). In this aspect, the mythical element of mortal hero is used in the characterization of Yonadab, who dares to challenge the almighty God. Such kind of a mythical device creates an unreal and unavailable atmosphere for the contemporary audience.

The incorporation of other mythological stories into the play is another distancing mythical element which through underlining the intertextual structure of the dramatic work reminds the audience of the fictional nature of the fictional

presentation. For instance, the name 'Yonadab' intertextually refers to the biblical story of the Original Sin. At the very beginning of the play Yonadab himself explicates the meaning of his name, "Yonadab was a very subtle man. Meaning devious- the usual adjective used in my tribe for anyone of intelligence. [...] It gives me two mentions- one as cunning, one as kind- creating between them a kind of invisibility" (87). Here, the name Yonadab is an allusion to the biblical story of the serpent in the Garden of Eden as Klein discloses, "Shaffer used a translation [of the name] from the other end of the spectrum- subtle or cunning, the same words used in English to describe the serpent in the Garden of Eden" (Klein 176). Moreover, the Egyptian myth about the union of the sibling King and Queen which causes the Kingdom of Perpetual Peace to come into being and makes the King and Queen gods, serves as an essential mythical story of the play. Since Yonadab uses this myth to tempt Amnon for his evil plot "just as the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden" (Klein 168). Lastly, the biblical story of the union of King David and Bathsheba, the Princess of Israel, is another intertextual element underlining the ancient mythical time of the play. According to this sacred myth, David has a Hittite man murdered to possess Bathsheba as his wife and thus punished by the God with the death of their first son and the enmity among their other children. "That punishment is the genesis of the story of the play" because Yonadab sets his malicious plan on the basis of the sibling rivalry and enmity especially between the two brothers Amnon and Absalom (Klein 186).

The Gift of the Gorgon is the other play in which Shaffer employs mythical time and various mythical elements as distancing devices. *Gorgon* had its official opening on 16 December 1992 at the Pit in London. Shaffer names his play as a 'Greek play' about two opposed notions of morality represented through the love, achievement and estrangement between Edward, a turbulent writer, and Helen, his wife. Shaffer uses the term 'Greek play' since the play's setting, images, subject matter and staging devices refer to the Classical theatre, and also its theme incorporates ancient mythological figures and stories (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 145). As for the setting, the play is set in the present time at the widow Damson's villa in Greece after the death of Edward Damson, and in flashbacks in England. Moreover, there are mythological allusions woven into the play which also works upon the time and setting of the play. MacMurrough-Kavanagh explains the mythical

structure of the play,

In *The Gift of the Gorgon*, there is a 'play-within-the-play' structure, which involves the relationship between Athena and Perseus, Helen and Edward's dramatic projections; and the ancient mythical story of Agamemnon, whose murder by his wife Clytemnestra is revenged by Orestes, their son. The mythical story of Agamemnon is the underlying story of the whole play to which Shaffer refers as 'the base, lower strata of the play', upon which the Athena/Perseus myth is developed. (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 145, 146)

Like *Yonadab*, this play involves a variety of mythical stories; however, Shaffer uses the myths in *Gorgon* in a distinctive way in terms of the origin and the situation of the mythical allusions, for he uses ancient Greek myths and situates these past narratives in the present context of the play which emphasizes the difference of mythical time frame from the contemporary time of the audience through its past and fictional nature. He incorporates such mythological elements in his play functionally so as to posit fundamental questions about the existence and man's nature such as the ongoing battle between reason and instinct, the search and need for worship, and the social and self alienation of man. Moreover, while asking such metaphysical and psychological questions to the audience, he wants them to think about the play and question the meaning of being, the internal conflict of man objectively. To this end, Shaffer tries to detach the spectators through the mythological infrastructure woven into the modern play with which the audience cannot identify owing to myths' inaccessible past and fictitious nature.

The main mythical story in the play is the ancient myth of Agamemnon; the King of Kings who sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia, at the time of the Trojan War in order to obtain favorable winds, and for this reason was killed by his wife, Clytemnestra. Later on their son Orestes murdered his mother to avenge his father. (Comte 57) The Agamemnon myth provides the ground for the play's argument upon the morality of revenge because Edward uses the myth to change Helen's rejecting mind about the righteousness of revenge. That is to say, throughout the play Helen and Edward contradict with each other about the idea of revenge since Edward, signifying the instinctual side of man, claims that there are unforgivable deeds and revenge is instinctually necessary and right. Whereas Helen, the representative of reason, denies Edward's view and puts forth her own idea that blood brings more blood and revenge causes a vicious bloody circle; thus, man should be merciful rather than revengeful. Completely objecting Helen's moderate perspective, Edward

makes a plan based on the Agamemnon myth to make Helen understand the rightness of revenge, in which Helen, like Clytemnestra, will chop up her husband. This involuntary act, then, will raise a sense of hatred and desire for revenge in her that will lead her to the understanding of the morality of revenge. Edward, thus, continuously “raises [the myth of Agamemnon] as a topic of debate early in his relationship with Helen, declaring the ‘rightness of Clytemnestra’s chopping up her husband in that bath’ and celebrating its ‘cleansing’ potential in his invented rendition of Clytemnestra’s Stamp” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 148). The Agamemnon myth is employed as a framework for the modern play which underlines the fictitious nature and the past time frame of the myth in the present dramatic action. In this respect, the integration of such a visionary ancient narrative distances the audience temporally and aesthetically. This distance not merely leads the audience to have a critical view upon their own psychological nature but also makes them question the rightness of the idea of revenge. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh underlines, “dealing with fiercely divisive issues such as the morality of revenge, this drama [through mythical stories] forces its audience to think actively about what it sees and hears on stage and rejects the option of passive neutrality” (145).

In this sense, since by nature myths denote an unavailable distant past setting and a fictional construction, the use of mythical time operates as an estranging device through which the audience is detached from the psychologically impressive world of dramatic presentation. For instance, at the beginning of the play after claiming the rightness of Clytemnestra’s revenge, Edward performs her ritualistic cleansing dance as if in the ancient myth of Clytemnestra, and Helen explains it to Philip in the present time,

Helen: (*to Philip*) In the corner of our room was a tiny shower. Your father shed his clothes, just where he stood, stepped into it, turned on the water, then called to me. [...] He was standing there naked, holding a cube of soap, [...] he raised his arms and I soaped him all over. [...] He told me to sit like an audience, then he stepped out from behind the curtain, [...] and he danced. (29)

The Perseus myth is another mythical story which is thematically and technically essential to the play. Shaffer not only calls the theme of morality of revenge and the eternal conflict between reason and instinct into question through this myth but he also alienates the audience in time and narration. In the original

Perseus myth, Polydectes, evil King of the island of Seriphos, wants to marry Danäe, the mother of Perseus; therefore, he aims to get rid of Perseus. To this end, Polydectes makes Perseus undertake a deadly mission that is to behead the dreaded monster Gorgon. Gorgons are monsters who have bronze hands and hissing snakes for hair. Anyone who meets their gaze is turned instantly to stone. Of the three Gorgons, Medusa is the only mortal one so it is her head which Perseus will get. Receiving the help of Hermes and Athena, as well as the three nymphs, Perseus reaches the lair of the Gorgons, whom he finds asleep, and beheads Medusa with Hermes's sickle. When he returns back to Seriphos, he turns Polydectes to stone with the head of Medusa. Eventually, in gratitude for her protection, Perseus gives the head of Medusa to Athena who sets it on her shield (Comte 161,162).

To begin with, stressing the pastness of the myth Peter Shaffer in *The Gift of the Gorgon* adapts Perseus myth to his modern play in order to remind the audience of the unreal nature of the dramatic presentation and attribute a critical role to them. In the play, the original Perseus myth is depicted through the letters in the form of plays written initially by Edward and then replied by Helen to express themselves to each other. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh clarifies, "Edward is forced to concoct fictional projections through which he can express the fears that torment him: he selects the Perseus myth where a heroic adventurer presents himself before the Goddess Athena and begs for help, strength and deliverance" (148). In addition to the adaptation of the original mythical story through letters, Shaffer reconstructs the Perseus myth to fit the mythical story to the content of the play. Shaffer in this sense tries to form a parallel relation between the Perseus myth and the dramatic story. To this end, he depicts Helen like Athena who helps Edward, Perseus, to be glorious by limiting Edward's passion for presenting violence on stage. In this respect, Helen, like Athena, becomes the representative of reason, to whom Edward should obey, yet he rejects Helen's instructions and accuses her of being his Gorgon, the one who turns his mind into stone. However, it is Edward who embodies Gorgon that destroys their life. In this aspect, Shaffer reconstructs the original Perseus myth by attributing new features to the story, especially to the disposition of Perseus. This new presentation of the mythical story alienates the audience by defamiliarizing them from the familiar mythical story. That is to say, an unfamiliar version of the well-known Perseus myth raises a sense of awareness in the audience about the fictional

nature of the integrated myth. Hence, recognizing the unreal nature of the dramatic action, the audience become detached and gain a critical perspective towards the play. The reconstructed version of the myth is presented through the letter-plays of Edward and Helen. For instance, both Helen and Edward have realized the additions and changes in the original story presented through their letters, as Helen firstly indicates the change in the presentation of Athena, the goddess of reason, who is against revenge, as a tyrant when she reads Edwards letter-play, “Athena never actually ties [the Furies] to her chariot. She wouldn’t have dared. She simply persuades them to give up vengeance” (38). Edward, on the other hand, realizes the change in the story while reading Helen’s letter where Helen makes Perseus judged by Athena, who in the original story accepts Perseus’s reverence and gift of the head of Medusa with appreciation, as Edward recognizes angrily, “Judgment? What judgment? Perseus was never judged! When he died he became a constellation. He shone in heaven brighter than the Goddess” (78).

Shaffer brings about the most significant change to the original mythical story after Helen disapproves Edward’s idea of a revengeful play. Edward writes another Perseus scene which denotes a completely different interpretation of the helpful Goddess Athena. This interpretation directly estranges the spectators via not only the past time of the play but also its fictitious narration. In this new story, Athena tries to prevent Perseus, ready for his task of rightful slaughter, from slaying Gorgon. Because the Goddess seems to lead Perseus to true greatness as she states “there is only one way to win the glorious prize you seek. Renounce this butchery that has turned the earth of Greece into a chopping block” (60). To lead Perseus to the rightful deed and wisdom, Athena sets another task for him which is to conquer the Gorgon face to face through kindness. However, Perseus, blinded by his passionate desires, denies the ordeal in an exploding rage, “No! I know you, who you are! [...] Generous no longer, but jealous! ... Jealous of what man must do alone- Without gods! [...] I am no puppet to be walked by strings of your instruction” (61). In this reconstructed mythical story, Edward tries to indicate that he, like Perseus, denies Helen’s moderate instructions as his guide, since “to his mind, Helen has become his Medusa” (Klein 229). Since Edward holds the idea that Helen’s logical point of view, devoid of instinct and passion, turns the instinctual desire and creativeness in him into stone. Hence, he rejects Helen’s advices on his plays. In this respect, the

helpful goddess Athena is changed to a jealous deity for Edward.

Another crucial addition to the Perseus myth is presented through Helen's reply to Edward's letter with the same mythical story. In Helen's narration of Perseus myth, Perseus is portrayed as a desperate quasi-hero crying out for help, and a guilty man who will receive Athena's judgment due to his malicious deed that brings emptiness to Athena. Here, Helen explains the reason of the Emptiness, the meaninglessness of their existence, the lack of love, which destroy their life, by adding to the original Perseus myth through Athena, "Poor man there is another truth that concerns the Gorgon. The fate of him who keeps that dreadful head himself. [...] All its Keeper's virtues are paralysed: not just his achievement, but everything that changes him for good" (78, 79). Therefore, Perseus, crown with the head of the Gorgon, transforms into a monster which signifies Edward's void existence through which he ignores and hurts everyone, who loves him, and thus in the end he has lost all that makes his life meaningful. As Helen and Helen's mythical projection Goddess Athena disclose to Edward,

Athena: So where you have lived these past years: Wasteland. Your own island of Immobility! [...] First- your son!

Helen: Turn him to stone! You had the power and the desire! Oh you damned man! Look harder. She's there too- your wife! [...] For years she heard your voice in her head. 'I can't be doing with children, Learned.' [...] But what did you give her in the end? [...] Made barren. Barren. Barren- by you! She could have shone as well. She could have been a scholar and you know it!

Athena: The art is not dead. It cannot die. Only the artist dies. [...] The father. The husband. Only the man. Go now and walk. Trudge-and fall. [...] You will never reach sky again. (80, 81)

In this respect, Helen uses the Perseus myth in her reply since she wants to awaken Edward to the fact that his emotional paralysis, which is caused by his failure in his art and life, like that of Perseus after slaying the Gorgon, "has stranded them both in a self-centered Wasteland of frozen psychological attitude and emotion" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 152). Shaffer, in this sense, estranges the audience through the reconstructed version of the myth because the audience comes to realize that the familiar mythical story is being reshaped throughout the play. Thus, they are continuously reminded of the fictitious nature not only of the myth but of the dramatic presentation as well.

The use and reconstruction of mythical stories woven into the modern play denotes another alienating element which is the intertextual structure. That is to say,

the fictional narratives integrated in another fictional work, like in *The Gift of the Gorgon*, puts a great emphasis on the illusive nature of the literary work. In this sense, the use of the Agamemnon and Perseus myths indicates to the audience the unreal and unavailable nature of literary characters; therefore, they are made to observe the dramatic performance with a critical eye rather than being emotionally involved in the course of the play.

Additionally, involving supernatural beings and happenings, which are fictitious and thus inaccessible for the audience, the myths lead the audience to a detached position since it is not likely for them to identify with such fantasized characters. For example, in the Perseus myth there are some superhuman beings such as the Goddess Athena and the Gorgons which technically add to the alienation of the audience for they are neither attainable nor believable for the contemporary audience.

To conclude, the distant past and fictitious nature of myths prepare the ground for audience alienation since the integrated mythical elements and the use of mythical time in the play lead the audience to a detached position for the objective analysis of the dramatic action. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh indicates about *The Gift of the Gorgon*, “the integration of these mythological impulses is effected not simply on the dramatic level in this play (plot, characterization, event, and so on), but in the very staging of the drama which moves the audience towards an altered state of experience” (152).

2.2 Distancing Effect: The Use of Spatial Time

Shaffer peculiarly contributes to the formation of alienation effect through the innovative technique of spatial time as a distancing tool in his plays *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon*. Spatial time in its simplest sense stands for the coexistence of past and present which basically subverts the chronological sequence. Contrary to the diachronic time, the juxtaposition of past and present in a sequential continuum, spatial time proposes a new model of time in which the synchronic existence of the pastness in the present violates the self-evident notion of time and conceives a multilienar temporal structure.

Identifying the past with “the loss” or “absence” and the present with “the

existence”, conventional idea of time is based upon a “before and after” order, whereas spatial time requires the elimination of temporal distinctions in a chronological order and the copresence of various temporal modes in a multilinear structure. In this respect, the accustomed concept of time is challenged by the synchronic idea of time as “time is no longer felt as an objective, causal progression with clearly marked-out differences between periods;[instead], now it has become a continuum in which distinctions between past and present are wiped out” (Frank 63). Thereupon, the idea, in John Barth’s dictum, that “what is forever past is eternally present” (Uhlig 289) has paved a new and controversial path both in philosophy and in literature.

Henri Bergson, a French philosopher, put forth the idea of synchronic time and coined the term *durée* in the very beginning of the twentieth century through which he questioned the diachronic structure of time. In his theory, Bergson analyzes time on the model of space, that is, he presents time as a non-linear and heterogeneous coexistence of past and present. Therefore, Bergson’s concept of time contradicts with the accustomed notion of diachronic time because “for Bergson the coexistence of past and present is not a matter of the holding together in unity of a succession of discrete states [as it is in chronologic time], but rather a coexistence of different elements in one state. The past is not ‘lost’; for it is never really separated out from a present whole existence” (Lloyd 101). In this aspect, time is neither uniform nor unidirectional; instead, it is heterogeneous and multilinear which simultaneously involves various temporal frames. Referring to the concept of spatial time, Bergson’s *durée* is the real continuous time which involves in Bakhtin’s words “the absolute past” synchronically with the “eternal present” (Bakhtin 13), and thus “extends to the past the movement of the present; and to the present the determinacy of the past” (Lloyd 107).

Analyzing Bergson’s theory of time, Deleuze denotes that the accustomed idea about the relation between past and present privileges the present, in that, only the present time is thought to exist. It is usually believed that the past is sequentially constituted after it has been present and it is also reconstituted by the new present whose past is now. That is to say, now is repetitiously rendered past by the appearance of new present moment in the diachronic system. As Bergson explains,

A present is only past when it is replaced by another present. If a present is to

pass it must be past at the same time as it is present [...]

So past and present do not, as we are accustomed to think, denote two successive moments, but rather two elements which coexist: the present, which does not cease to pass, and the past, which does not cease to be but through which all presents pass. Rather than following the present, the past is presupposed as the pure condition without which the present could not pass. (qtd. in Lloyd 107)

In this respect, Bergson's idea, in Deleuze's words, that the past is "contemporaneous" with the present reverses the usual ways of considering past and present as sequentially separate time frames (qtd. in Lloyd 107).

As for the literary arena, the conventional literature is based on the tradition of mimesis and thus the concept of verisimilitude according to which the literary work should truly imitate and directly reflect external reality. Hence, the time of the artistic creation should overlap with the real diachronic time of the audience. As Ubersfeld confirms, "a good play is one whose real-life duration is not out of proportion with the duration of play's action perceived according to its historical duration in real time, a time that is measurable by clock and calendar" (127). In this aspect, the temporal structure of the work should be constructed in terms of the convention of unity of time which requires the audience to form a proportional relation between the illusive diachronic time of the play and the actual time of the dramatic performance, and thus to consider them as homogeneous (Ubersfeld 128). In other words, the time in the dramatic work "must be situated in relation to a here and now which is the here and now of performance and also the audience's present time. [...] Anything that is to become a sign of time [in theatre] is thus by nature understood in its relation to the present" (Ubersfeld 134).

The temporal structure of the literary work is not merely a matter of form but it is also a matter of effect and thus aesthetic perception. To begin with, in the conventional drama, the verisimilitude of the dramatic presentation is the fundamental aim in terms of the tradition of mimesis. In this respect, the dramatic work must "demonstrate the 'realistic' qualities of life in action- in sequence, in causality, in time" (Smitten and Daghistany 40). Therefore, the temporal setting of the literary work must be conceived in a proportional relation to the actual time of the audience. Such kind of appearance of reality formed through the representational use of time directly influences the aesthetic perception. Since the spectators, involved in a realistic depiction of life not only in terms of time but also in terms of place and

action, are led to identification with the fictional characters and story. That is to say, the unity of time from classical dramatic art leads the spectators to construct a quasi-real and proportional relationship between the illusive time of the play and the real present time of the performance and the audience. By means of lifelike representation through sequential time, the audience are made to identify with the fictional characters regardless of the aesthetic distance between the real and dramatic world, and are, thus, passively involved in the dramatic action.

The audience, then, do not have a functional role rendering them critical about the literary work and the meanings beyond the dramatic work. On the contrary, they serve as passive observers who are made to emotionally participate in the dramatic performance through identification with a view to realizing the tradition of teach and delight. On the other hand, the use of spatial time does not only eliminate the unity of time and diachronic temporal frame but also the verisimilitude of the literary work which directly violates the identification process. As Smitten and Daghistany underline, “with the elimination of [diachronic] time and sequence in contemporary fiction has come the elimination of verisimilitude, the representation of familiar reality that operates according to causal/temporal patterns” (22).

In this sense, “the unity of time has always been a constraint” (Ubersfeld 128) for the objective relation between the dramatic performance and the audience since the use of diachronic time on stage does not activate the spectators and allow them to question the literary work, yet it drags them emotionally into the core of the dramatic action. On the contrary, subverting the sequential order, the employment of spatial time leads the audience to a critical position. In other words, suppressing the causal/temporal relations through spatial time, playwrights undermine the accustomed notion of time. The suppression of these sequential connectives, in Smitten and Daghistany’s words, alters the whole character of the literary work and forces the audience to perceive it in a new, unconventional way, for the spectators cannot conceive a coherent dramatic situation referring truly to external reality (17). Hence, owing to the synchronicity in the temporal setting of the play, the audience come to realize the aesthetic distance between the illusive world of the play and external reality.

In this respect, chronologizing or diachronic time may be equated with mimesis and thus identification, whereas dechronologizing through spatial time may be

identified with defamiliarization. In his critical essay *Art As Technique*, Victor Shklovsky assumes that everything disappears when it becomes familiar “as schemata to which [people] respond automatically”; art, in this sense, should defamiliarize the self evident things and events, and make them perceptible again (qtd. In Smitten, Daghistany 81).

“Formalists such as Shklovsky have often touched upon the distortions of the natural passage of time in narrative construction; [however], time as a medium of [defamiliarization and aesthetic] perception, a necessary medium for the apprehension of the work [...] remains [to some extent] outside of their field of interest” (Smitten, Daghistany 133). Nevertheless, even though Formalists did not fundamentally deal with temporal structure as an essential distancing element in narration, they applied a non-chronological time to the plot. As Sternberg discloses, elevating the jump *in medias res* the Russian Formalists suggested that the orderly *fabula* (story), the chronological sequence of events, must be disordered in the finished non-chronological *sujet* (plot) for the sake of aesthetic ‘making strange’. (902) In this respect, spatial form denotes a direct relationship between the audience and the fictional work; thus, it is a matter of effect and aesthetic perception.

The direct relation between the temporal setting of the dramatic work and the aesthetic perception of the audience has continued to be an important and controversial dramatic matter in modern and postmodern drama. Some contemporary dramatic movements and playwrights contradict with the paralyzing effect of the representational time on the audience and thus they are concerned with the elimination of the tradition of mimesis and also the act of identification. In this sense, they violate not solely the unity of time but the tradition of identification as well through various uses of temporal frames in the plays.

Shaffer, in this respect, utilizes spatial time in order to subvert the diachronic and realistic temporal presentation of the fictional work and the passive role attributed to the audience via identification. To begin with, influenced by Brecht’s notion of alienation effect, Shaffer aims to detach the audience in action, place and time. Through this distance he ascribes a critical role to the audience. In addition to some Brechtian estranging devices, Shaffer innovatively employs spatial time as a distancing element in his drama. That is to say, he applies synchronic concept of time in some of his play with the aim of reminding the spectators of the fact that it is

“impossible to draw up a precise chronology of the play [and] locate [themselves] within the cascade of temporal simultaneities and breaks” (Ubersfeld 133). Since “the theatrical text indicates a reported time; [...] therefore, the time in a theatrical text refers us, not to the real time of performance, but rather to an imaginary and syncopated time”(Ubersfeld 135).

Spatial time by its very nature suggests the dechronologizing of the linear form of diachronic time as Bergson put forth the idea that time is not homogeneous and unidirectional, and thus it is not chronologically-ordered. Instead, having a multilinear structure, synchronous time refers to the coexistence of different temporal modes. In this aspect, Shaffer’s dramatic use of spatiality seems to overlap with the Bergsonian concept of *durée*; hence, Shaffer’s technique of spatial time can be analyzed in terms of Bergson’s philosophical approach.

Presenting past and present elements concurrently in his theatrical drama rather than in a successive order, Shaffer forms a synchronic temporal setting on stage through which he violates the accustomed notion of diachronic time. In this aspect, the violation of unity of time requires spectators “to reflect upon the autonomous nature of theatrical time, because the time of performance appears not to be homogenous to the time of referential history” (Ubersfeld 131). That is to say, Shaffer technically defamiliarizes the audience in time because facing a puzzling temporal structure, the spectators “cannot locate characters and events in space and time, [what] he reads [or watches] do not describe a coherent dramatic situation referring immediately to external reality” (Smitten, Daghistany 17). Such kind of aesthetic awakening leads the audience to objective questioning and concrete understanding of the dramatic action. To this end, Shaffer in his plays *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon* employs spatial temporal setting.

2.2.1 Spatial Time in *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon*

In his biblical epic *Yonadab*, Shaffer disrupts the tradition of unity of time and the sequential order of the story through spatial time. The play involves two distinctive time frames: the story time set in the distant past, and the narrative time which takes place in the present. In this respect, instead of overlapping the story time with the narrative time in a chronological order or presenting past and present elements

through the model of successive moments, Shaffer blends these two distinctive temporal frames and presents them synchronically. In other words, the narration occupies the same time frame as the action, and the story is not presented according to the chronological order. (Klein 167)

The past story or action is continuously interrupted by the present narration in the play through the role of Yonadab in the play. That is to say, Shaffer merges past and present synchronically by means of Yonadab who is not only the protagonist of the past story but is also the present narrator of the dramatic action. Hence, Yonadab both as a past and present dramatic figure “is never at rest, participating in each scene and even appearing in past and present [...] simultaneously” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 75).

In this aspect, the temporal frame of the play is constructed according to the synchronic idea of time, and this distancing use of time is presented mainly through Yonadab’s copresence in the past and the present. For instance, at the beginning of the play, addressing directly to the audience Yonadab, the present narrator, introduces King David in the present time of the narration which is then immediately related to the past action with the appearance of David:

Yonadab: David ben Jesse, my tremendous uncle!-strongest figure in the world three thousand years ago. [...] Banish from your minds all images of cowed men cringing in ghettos, or kind men creating cultural centres. We were not cringers then- or kind. [...] Just don’t make the mistake of imaging David as a gentle ex-shepherd always lying down in green pastures. His pasture was a stony city on a stony hill.

David: (*sternly*) These men are foes of the One God: wherefore they die. Let them be taken to the Place of Stones, and there let stones be cast upon them till they be broken into death. Selah. (88)

Here, not only the use of spatial time but also the narrator functions as a distancing device since both of the dramatic elements awaken the audience to the fact that what they are experiencing is a fiction that cannot be put in parallel relation with external reality.

Additionally, as the narrator and protagonist of the play, Yonadab may be considered as the basic distancing figure that simultaneously unites past and present, and thus synchronize the traditional diachronic structure. To this end, Yonadab, as the present time character, generally interrupts every scene in the past. In other words, the past action, which is being enacted on stage, intermingles with the present narration of the past action or commentary on it presented by Yonadab directly to the

audience. For instance, at the beginning of the play Amnon wants Yonadab to visit him since Amnon cannot hide the disturbing secret anymore, which is his sexual desire and love for his sister Tamar. Thus, Amnon recounts his nightmares and his mental disturbance to Yonadab and Yonadab tries to calm him down. This mentioned scene is a part of the past story since the characters and the events belong to the distant past. However, since Yonadab is both a past and present character, who has a vital role in the past action and present narration, he can interrupt the ongoing past story and comment on it addressing directly to the spectators. In this scene, for example, after relieving Amnon's psychological pain in the past, Yonadab discloses to the audience in the present how he abused Amnon's disturbance for his own benefit:

Amnon: A month! In the palace. She was singing that same song- snapping her fingers to the music. That's all! Snap, snap: then suddenly she was here, in my head. All day- all night! [...]

Yonadab: Hush, Amnon. Hush now! Rest a moment. Here- on the breast of a friend.

(He clasps Amnon to him. Amnon freezes)

(To audience) So close he filled my nose: the Bull rancid in chains. There and then a demon sprang up in me! The one which lives in the guts of all despised men waiting to be summoned. A lust greater event than the one in him: to bring things down. (98)

Furthermore, the distancing intermingling of past and present employed throughout the play is not merely given through Yonadab, but also through other characters yet not so frequently. For example, towards the end of the play Tamar discloses her plot and the story unfolds. In this scene, while explaining in the present time how she found Absalom's house after having been raped by Amnon, the past conversation between Tamar and Micah is being enacted in the present time of the play:

Absalom: Oh, Tamar- don't play! Remember your dream.

You chose me- led through a hundred streets to my love!

Tamar: *(coldly)* To your Tower. [...] Your Tower. Your house has a tower, Absalom. *(Micah appears: in the past.)*

Micah: *(To Tamar)* The highest in all the city, Madam.

Tamar: My maid Micah pointed it out when I came to Amnon in the litter.

Micah: That is your Absalom's house. The King's gift to him. Isn't it fine?

Tamar: *(To Micah, smiling)* It's as handsome as he is! (175)

In addition, "central to the simultaneous representation of 'past' [and] 'present' is the technique of 'freezing' characters to allow [...] Yonadab's narration and

commentary and to indicate when he is involved in the action or is temporarily leaving it” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 75). Shaffer utilizes the technique of freezing characters as a distancing element, which absolutely disrupts the internal logic of time, because through freezing past and present are given concurrently. For instance, after being influenced by Yonadab’s vicious idea that Amnon will become immortalized when he unites with his half-sister Tamar, Amnon applies Yonadab’s plot and acts as if he were seriously ill and thus he is carried by the bondsmen and helpers. In this scene, the characters freeze and Yonadab comments on the past action in the stage time of the play, then he continues to act his role in the past:

Amnon: Bed! Get me to bed! Quick! Ahhh!

(They support him; the group freezes)

Yonadab: *(To audience)* Incredible. Absolutely incredible. Within ten minutes of my suggesting it, he actually became ill. I mean violently. [...]

([...] The two bondsmen lay their master on the cushions and cover him)

Amnon: Let me die! Let me die, O God! Kill me! Strike me to death! Kill me!

(He rins off his amulet and hurls it away)

Yonadab: *(To the bondsmen)* Send for the King! Hurry! (106-107).

The technique of freezing is frequently employed by Shaffer as a means to create synchronicity in the play. When the characters in the past action are frozen, the present narration takes place and merges the past with the present elements. For example, after the rape of Tamar, Yonadab viciously tries to become closer to Absalom so as to ruin David’s family. In this past scene, Yonadab advises Absalom to kill his brother Amnon which is continued with his monologue addressed to the audience in the present:

Yonadab: *(Impressively to Absalom, hands raised aloft)* I say to you Everything on earth begins in blood. [...] Let me see it- even I, who was his friend. [...] Just one act of blood and no more.

(Tamar claps: all freeze)

(To audience) Wasn’t that splendid? Just one more blow, and everything will be all right ever more! (164)

Additionally, the stage directions denoting the three-cornered scenes, in which the characters from the past and present act simultaneously at the different corners of the stage, add to the synchronous blend of past with present. For instance, after ruining Amnon through his own evil deed, Yonadab aims to continue his plan of ruin through Absalom. For this objective, Yonadab tries to be close with Absalom and make him believe in the same story of perpetual peace. Thus, to convince him Yonadab presents some evidences, which were found out by Amnon in the past,

about Absalom's divine blood and his being the chosen one to establish this peaceful kingdom with his sister Tamar. In this scene, Yonadab discloses to Absalom Amnon's discovery of these signs, while the past conversation between Yonadab and Amnon about Absalom's divine and immortal origin is being enacted simultaneously on the other corner of the stage. In addition to the synchronic depiction of past and present scenes, Shaffer prepares the ground for such scenes through stage directions in advance, as he indicates before this mentioned scene, "there is now a Three-cornered Scene: Amnon in the past addressing Yonadab; Yonadab continuing in the present" (147).

Moreover, another estranging stage direction is integrated towards the very end of the play where Tamar explains the events happened after the murder of Amnon by his brother Absalom:

Tamar: He came to me after the killing. He said, 'Now, Tamar!'

Yonadab: Yes?

(Absalom enters, bloodstained and smiling. Another Three-cornered scene begins. Absalom in the past addresses Tamar and she replies. Yonadab remains in the present.) (174)

In this respect, the stage direction again functions as a distancing device, in that, it announces the synchronic presentation of the story time and the narrative time to the audience. This staging technique therefore forms a temporal and aesthetic distance between the audience and the fictional characters which brings about the alienation of the audience.

Furthermore, anachronisms are written into the text through which Shaffer breaks the logic of chronologic time and presents another distancing element as to the coexistence of the past and the present. For instance, in one of the monologues of Yonadab, he is speaking as a twentieth century character who seems to have an idea on modern life, as he states,

If you could have your choice, my dears- smart and modern dears as you are, festooned with your computers and calculators- which would you finally rather witness? Men and women walking out into the sky on to further and further stars, filling the universe with more of You- or you walking here, but in another state of Being, freed from the conditions which enslave you now? (134)

The Gift of the Gorgon is another play in which Shaffer uses his innovative distancing technique of spatial time. Even though the play is positioned in the present, it is mainly consisted of the present narration of the past through flashbacks.

Therefore, while the present action is being enacted on stage, the past action is simultaneously integrated into the present narration without any indication of change in temporal frame. In the play, the story of Edward Damson, a past character, is narrated to his son Philip, a character in the present action, by Helen who serves both as a past and a present dramatic figure. Throughout the play, Helen narrates Edward's life to his son Philip in the present time which is continuously interrupted not only through the immediate enactment of the mentioned scenes in the past, but also through Edward's comments on the narrated actions in the past.

In this respect, there seems to be two interrelated stories within the play which take place simultaneously: the first "frame-work" story involves the present relationship between Helen and Philip; and the second "retrospective" story involves the past story narrated and enacted by Helen which deals with her life with Edward (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 145). Even though such kind of a structure should conventionally be presented in chronological order, Shaffer disrupts the chronologic sequence through depicting the past along with the present. In this aspect, the narration and the action of the play either in the present or in the past take place synchronically; therefore, the past and present elements are interrelated and thus presented concurrently through the events and speeches of the characters on stage. That is to say, while "unfolding the play's action through a continual interplay between past and present, [Shaffer also creates] scenes in which characters interact with the past and the present simultaneously and become both narrators and participators in the events described" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 146).

Shaffer, in this sense, utilizes a complex staging strategy in which "two scenes (often in differing tenses) are presented side-by-side on stage" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 146). For instance, while Helen and Philip, two characters in the present time are talking about Philip's book/dissertation on his father and Edward's reaction when he receives it, Edward, a character from the past, can hear and react to the conversations of the present time:

Helen: (*gently*) How you must have longed for his reply.

Philip: (*shyly*) Tell me did he in fact ever read it? Be honest.

Contemptuously Edward tosses the book into the basket of other books

Edward: Generation, my dear, is a form of amoebic dysentery. Man's lot, if he produces at all, is to give birth to his own parasites. You may consider yourself lucky you've been kept from risk.

Philip: My God! (70)

Helen, on the other hand, can speak to Edward and Philip simultaneously since, as the narrator of the story, she moves between the past and the present concurrently.

Helen: Entirely typical of his later style of address. All the same, when he suddenly went off to America, I hoped perhaps he may have changed his mind and see you. [...]

Philip: (*urgently*) But why? What reason did he give for going?

Edward: Money. A lecture tour of the East Coast. Five weeks fully paid- by the most out-of-touch foundation in America. They don't seem to have heard I've become a leper. (71)

Hence, like Yonadab, Helen is the mediator who invalidates the thin line between the past and the present, and unites them in the present context of the play. Shaffer in this sense does not divide the scenes into past, which is traditionally presented in flashbacks entirely separated from the actual present time of the play, and the present. Instead, he simultaneously merges the past with the present.

Spatial time by nature denies the superiority of one time frame over another; likewise, in the play neither the past temporal setting nor the present time can be considered as more significant and functional. On the contrary, it is not likely to separate present temporal modes from that of the past and depict them in a sequential order as well. For instance, in the beginning of the play Helen narrates how she and Edward met in Cambridge when they were young. Whilst she is recounting the story in the present, the past action is simultaneously enacted on stage which violates the borders between temporal frames:

Helen: The very first moment we met... Cambridge: Summer, 1975. I was living there with my father.

Philip: He was a professor, wasn't he?

Helen: An eminent one. I was hoping to follow in his footsteps. Somewhat haltingly, at twenty-five.

Philip: You mean you were an academic?

Helen: Post-graduate. Like you, I'd written a dissertation people approved. I was trying to work it up into a proper book: that meant spending most of my life in the library. Which is where I met Edward, and I mean really met. I was running out of the door and he was running in ... Ow! It really hurt. [...]

Edward: Hell! What are you doing?

Helen: What?

Edward: Women shouldn't run. They can't pull up. (*He picks up her books*)

Helen: He picked up my books rather than me. (14)

Additionally, the mythical infrastructure of the play contributes to the formation of aesthetic distance through synchronicity. Since normally situated in the distant past thus should be irrelevant to the present context, myths are integrated into the present context of the play. In other words, the mythical stories of the remote past

are woven into the play to such an extent that they become elements of the present context of the play.

To begin with, the Perseus myth overlaps with the contemporary story of the play, in which, Perseus and Athena are identified with Edward and Helen. Perseus myth is narrated through the letters in the form of plays written initially by Edward and then replied by Helen. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh clarifies, “Edward is forced to concoct fictional projections through which he can express the fears that torment him: he selects the Perseus myth where a heroic adventurer presents himself before the Goddess Athena and begs for help, strength and deliverance” (148). Edward sees himself as Perseus and Helen as Athena; for instance, like Perseus, he vows to Helen that he “will write a complete play, one totally finished play!” (38) through the words of Perseus as he says, “May I die in torment if I break this oath!” (38). Helen in this sense is the Goddess Athena who helps Perseus, Edward, through her wisdom. Philip, Edward’s illegitimate son, who wants to write his father’s life, recognizes how Edward associates himself and Helen with the mythical characters after he reads Edward’s letter-play given by Helen,

Philip: I get it! The foolish vow Perseus talks about- the one he couldn’t fulfill alone- that was his promise to write a finished play. The whole scene was a cry for help- a learned cry made to a learned reader! [...] He was drawing for you a playwright’s picture of the Goddess of Restraint [...] making you his personal Athena to help him conquer his personal Gorgon: paralysis through excess. (39)

In this respect, not only the synchronic presentation of past and present stories and time frames but also the doubling of past and present characters contributes to the concept of alienation effect. Since experiencing the unusual concurrent blend of the past and the present elements on stage, the audience come to recognize the aesthetic distance between the fictional and real world. Such kind of a distance makes the audience observe the dramatic performance at a distance and with a critical attitude.

Additionally, the mythical scenes in the play are all mimed by masks and sometimes through taped voices of the present characters. Edward and Helen, the present time characters of the play, provide the voices for Perseus and Athena. In this respect, technically staging Perseus and Athena scenes through Edward’s and Helen’s voices Shaffer emphasizes the synchronicity of temporal structure of the play which subverts the traditional idea of diachronic time,

Out of this- to primitive triumphant music- walks the figure of Perseus, wearing the costume and mask appropriate for a young Greek hero. [...] When he speaks

we hear Edward's voice, on tape, as Perseus vigorously mouths his speeches with his lips. [...] Behind him appears the Goddess Athena, in her chariot. She stands carrying her spear and huge shield of brass. The mask she wears beneath her helmet denotes immense serenity and command. While she mouths words with her lips we hear Helen's voice, on tape.

Another mythical story woven into the present context of the play is the Agamemnon myth. Like the integration of Perseus myth, the use of Agamemnon myth functions as a spatial time frame, that is, the past time of the mythical story merges synchronically with the present time of the play. There is “a recurrent ‘doubling’ of characters” through this mythical story (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 153). That is to say, the archaic characters of mythical stories overlap with the contemporary characters of the play, which on the one hand thematically underlines the universality of the thematic scope of the myth and the dramatic story, and on the other hand, technically detaches the audience since they can identify neither with the present characters nor with their ancient projections. For example, Agamemnon myth presents the projections of three present characters. Firstly, Helen is identified with Clytemnestra as there is an “echo of Agamemnon’s death in the revenge that Edward plans and enacts on Helen’s behalf”, in which Helen is made to kill Edward by himself in the same way Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 147). Furthermore, similar to Orestes, who avenges his father by killing his mother, Clytemnestra, Philip prevents Helen from getting her revenge on Edward for making Philip write a debasing biography of Edward. Therefore, there seems to be an Orestes in Philip’s characterization.

To conclude, in his theatrical drama Shaffer violates the unity of time and the diachronicity in dramatic narration and presentation through spatial time. In the plays, *Yonadab* and *The Gift of the Gorgon*, Shaffer synchronously employs past and present dramatic elements and temporal frames. Contradicting with the accustomed notion of diachronic and thus representational time of the dramatic genre, this innovative technique of time, like other temporal frames, alienates the audience and enables them to obtain a questioning viewpoint.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE

Alienating the audience through various aspects of time as a distancing device, Shaffer tries to ascribe a critical role to the audience in order to make them question and reflect upon psychological and metaphysical issues. Shaffer also touches upon some socio-political issues; however, his main concern has never been either political or revolutionary. On the contrary, Shaffer in his theatrical drama aims to pose questions to the audience about the nature of being, the essence of existence and the human nature, and lead them to ponder on these psychological and metaphysical matters. The playwright, thus, mainly employs such recurrent dramatic themes as the search for worship, existential disintegration or alienation, and the eternal conflict between reason and instinct.

To begin with, the protagonists in Shaffer's drama have lost their belief in God and life, and thus need something to attach themselves to and to give meaning to their void existence. In this aspect, Shaffer presents protagonists as questers who are in search of worship and meaning. Nevertheless, these 'lost' men, being devoid of worship, do not manage to break out of their meaningless existence and thus cannot attain the meaning they are seeking. As meaning in self and existence becomes insufficient and as existence becomes untenable, the search of the protagonists gives rise to their fragmentation for they feel alienated to the others who have a strong belief in God.

In this respect, the theme of existential disintegration is incorporated into the plays in relation to the former theme. "Shaffer dramatizes people as alienated questers in search of meaning of both self and existence" who do not belong to anywhere, yet eternally "exist in a vacuous no-man's-land [and] remain forever stranded in an eternal limbo" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 57). Hence, these characters, belonging to nowhere, always remain in the middle and are thus burdened with a sense of existential disintegration. Furthermore, the alienated questers undergo a process of self-alienation since they cannot overcome the gap between the self and

society, man and God, and this gap causes a crisis of identity in the protagonists who cannot identify the 'self' with the 'I' (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 60).

As for the theme of the conflict between reason and instinct, this basic opposition or conflict located at the core of his drama can be referred as the Apollonian- Dionysian conflict. This is an eternal conflict inherent in man, through which Shaffer leaves the audience in between and makes them think upon such kind of a metaphysical and psychological dilemma. To this end, Shaffer takes the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict as a major theme that unites all of his plays and situates this conflict at the heart of his dramas through attributing each impulse to two conflicting protagonists. The characters, who are portrayed as conformists, men of roles and rules, are the representatives of reason or the Apollonian side in man in Shaffer's drama. On the other hand, "the models of behavior are the 'free spirits', the young primitives often engrossed in their own meaningful ritualistic means of communication or worship" and therefore these characters stand for the instinctual, passionate or the Dionysian side of human psyche in the ongoing battle between reason and instinct (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 33). However, although Shaffer places basic systems of opposition, which seem to be unlikely to reconcile, he adopts the idea of conflict and employs it in a completely innovative way. That is to say, Shaffer conflates the contradictory points in his plays so as to indicate that the opposing impulses inherent in man's nature must be reconciled. As the critic Rodney Simard notes, "the audience is forced into 'the position of moral arbiters between the oppositions', often frequently concluding that, by the end of the play, these 'oppositions' have become little more than different facets of the same impulse, argument or personality" (102).

Additionally, the thematic structure in Shaffer's plays seems to be a combination of themes, in that, they unite in the end as Shaffer himself confirms, "I like plays to be like fugues- all the themes come together in the end" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 2). Thereupon, in Shaffer's drama considering one theme as separate from the others will probably culminate in a gap in the perception of the literary work by the audience. For instance, the recurrent dramatic themes of the search for worship, the conflict between reason and instinct, and alienation are inextricably connected emphases in Shaffer's plays. Thus, in such a chain of interrelated themes "any attempt to regard one as separate from the others will always give rise to reductive

interpretation (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 65).

Another significant point in Shaffer's thematic structure and its relation to the role of the audience is the fact that he never offers or arrives at easy answers in his plays which may cause a hindrance in the questioning attitude of the audience. On the contrary, Shaffer, approving of the audience as critical thinkers rather than passive observers, asks questions and presents conflicts either about metaphysical or psychological issues, and somehow leaves them unresolved with the aim of leading the audience to a critical position. In this respect, by means of these psychological and metaphysical themes, Shaffer tries to present "the sickness of modern man" as Fitzpatrick Dean reveals, "Shaffer's target is the basic structure of modern life and its diminished capacity to channel constructively man's spiritual impulses"; this 'structure' inevitably leads to a 'multi-lane' wasteland of 'plastic' emotion, reaction and capacity (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 81). Through either ancient or modern characters, Shaffer implicitly refers to the position of contemporary man in a civilized world, who has lost his belief and also meaning in life and existence, and thus becomes an alienated being. Therefore, Shaffer typically posits a questioning protagonist at the centre of his plays who is obsessed with mankind's metaphysical status and is suspicious about the existence of God, and thereupon undergoes a series of psychological inner conflicts and identity crises (Gianakaris 4). In this aspect, Shaffer tries to make the contemporary audience, detached technically through the use of time, to question and understand their own position while analyzing the dramatic characters and the themes through a critical eye. As none of the questers in Shaffer's drama can find the meaning they seek, and therefore remain as questioning beings, "Shaffer aims to arouse in his audience the same doubts and send them looking for new meaning" (Gianakaris 110).

In this chapter, then, the theme of search for worship in relation with the issue of existential disintegration, and the eternal internal conflict between reason and instinct will be analyzed in relation to the three plays, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab*, and *The Gift of the Gorgon*, whose temporal structures as distancing elements are studied technically in the previous chapters.

3.1 The Search for Worship and Existential Disintegration or Alienation

Being one of the main themes in Shaffer's drama, the search for worship and meaning is located at the core of his plays *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Yonadab*. Since "[in] many of Shaffer's plays [...] the characters, especially the protagonists, are closely bound to the play's themes", the Shafferian protagonists are portrayed as nonbelievers who are in search of belief as they have abnegated their faith in God, and lost their belief in the meaning of existence (Klein 175). The correlation between worship in divine existence and the meaning of human existence is a recurrent motif in Shaffer's drama, in that, he generally presents the belief in God as a life-affirming feature or power. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh asserts, "it would appear, then, that Shaffer's attitude towards worship in his work is fairly straightforward- the capacity for worship is equated with the capacity for life, instinct and passion; the absence of worship is equated with half-life, alienation and despair (81). However, although Shaffer presents the capacity of worship as something admirable and meaningful, he underlines the questionable aspects of religious credo. In this respect, not presenting a definite concluding Right to the audience, Shaffer seems to situate them in the middle of the opposing ideas and enable them to realize the fact that there must be a balance between blind faith and questioning attitude in order to have a meaning in existence.

As to the protagonists in relation to the metaphysical theme of the plays, having lost their faith in God and in the meaning of being, the protagonists are in need of belief to dedicate themselves to. To this end, they seek worship and try to break free from their estranged position. Furthermore, these characters generally seem to deny and even challenge the God in order to prove his nonexistence and thus their righteousness in their view; however, they instinctively desire the God to evince his existence and power so that they can find the essence of their being. However, the search for worship mainly ends in eternal limbo- emptiness or nowhere- since none of Shaffer's nonbelievers manage to find the meaning they seek. In this respect, the disillusionment of the protagonists or the incapacity for worship culminates in the alienation of these "lost" characters who are "cut off from the life-affirming extremities of instinct and passion, and [are] depicted as only half-alive, drifting like a ghost towards a point of spiritual crisis" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 81). The reason

why Shaffer insistently portrays such a pessimistic and also paradoxical picture of man is explicated by Gianakaris, as he states, “According to Shaffer’s metaphysics, we do not and cannot know with any certainty the meaning of life or whether God exists. Despite this harsh reality, we nevertheless seek meaning and worship. Shaffer’s oeuvre can be seen as an exploration of this poignant paradox” (81).

Shaffer’s focus on the idea of search for worship leads to and also overlaps with another significant and recurrent subject matter in his drama which is the theme of existential disintegration or alienation. To begin with, it should be noted that the word ‘alienation’ is used to denote disintegration or estrangement of the characters. The protagonists, firstly due to their abnegation of faith in God and then due to their disillusionment as they cannot reach the meaning they are searching for, come to experience a crushing sense of alienation. Since a sensation of numbness or of void caused by the lack of faith make them feel as if they belong to nowhere. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh clarifies, “an essential cause of these characters’ sense of estrangement and ghostliness is their incapacity to ‘feel’ in direct terms: [...] an ‘Incapacity for Immediate Life’” (63). On the other hand, the sense of alienation towards the society may bring about a serious crisis of identity. “The connection between alienation and the crisis of identity is readily definable in these plays; where alienation connotes the unbridgeable gap between ‘I’ and society, man or God, the crisis of identity connotes the gap between ‘I’ and ‘self’” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 60). In this respect, the protagonists, experiencing a sense of existential disintegration, are not merely subject to alienation but to self-alienation as well.

For Shaffer, then, theatre is “for expressing and experiencing the territories of being alien to modern existence” and to civilized life of modern world (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 18). In this aspect, Shaffer alludes to the state of modern man through the tragic picture of the protagonists trying to exist in meaninglessness of existence. Shaffer, in this sense, tries to awaken the contemporary audience to their own position in modern life and make them question their existence and its meaning. Hence, “what is at stake in Shaffer’s plays is not simply a tenuous and ultimately meaningless triumph where one vague and abstract belief-system defeats another: what is at stake in these conflicts is the meaning of existence itself” (101).

The Royal Hunt of the Sun, being concerned with the relationship between Atahuallpa, the sun-god, and Pizarro, Spaniard conqueror, and the narrator Old

Martin's story of change from commitment to his belief to the loss of it, focuses on the themes of search for worship and existential disintegration. Pizarro, the protagonist, is presented as "the empty shell of a man [...] who is given to pondering the big questions in life, the kind that philosophers never resolve: Religion, Time, Immortality" (Dennis 76). Throughout his life Pizarro tries to transcend his plebian origins and seeks glory in order to immortalize his name:

Pizarro: For twenty-two years I drove pigs down this street [...] twenty-two years without one single hope. [...] Once the world could have had me for a petty farm, two rocky fields and a Senor to my name. It said 'No'. Ten years on it could have hold me double- small estate, fifty oranges-trees and a Sir to them. It said 'No'. Twenty years more and it could still have had me cheap: Balboa's trust lieutenant, marched with him into the Pacific and claimed it for Spain [...] But the world said 'No'. Said 'No' and said 'No'. Well, now it's going to know me. If I live this next year I'm going to get me a name that won't ever be forgotten!" (19)

As a glory seeker Pizarro desires for omnipotence and is interested in immortalizing himself since he is obsessed with the ideas of time and immortality. That is to say; Pizarro is possessed by an awareness of death that has spiritually and emotionally incapacitated him. When he becomes aware of the fact that 'everything we feel is made of time' and the transience of life dominates the existence, everything becomes trivial to him and life seems futile to him. (MacMurryugh-Kavanagh 84) As Pizarro explains to De Soto, second in command:

Pizarro: Everything we feel is made of Time! All the beauties of life are shaped by it. Imagine a fixed sunset: the last note of a song that hung an hour or a kiss for half of it. [...] What I mean is: Time whipped up the lust in me and Time purged it. I was dandled on Time's knee and made to gurgle, then put to my sleep. I've been cheated from the moment I was born because there's death in everything. (43)

Due to being obsessed with the idea of Time and in a sense scared of transience of it, Pizarro is haunted by the desire of immortality as he implicates through his dream:

Pizarro: When I was young, I used to sit on the slope outside the village and watch the sun go down: if only I could find the place where it sinks to rest for the night, I'd find the source of life, like the beginning of a river. I used to wonder what it could be like. Perhaps an island- a strange place of white sand, where the people never died. Never grew old, or felt pain, and never died. (43, 44)

In fact, the reason for the fear of death, and obsession with the idea of time and immortality seems to be the loss of faith in god as Pizarro sarcastically implies his disbelief when he addresses to the Christian god at the beginning of the play when he

has heard about the existence of the sun-god,

Pizarro (*calling up*): Do you hear that, God? You're not going to like that! Because we've got a god worth a thousand of yours. A gentle god with gentle priests, and a couple of big cannon to blow you out of the sky. [...] Christ the Merciful, with his shackles and stakes! ... So enjoy yourself while you can. Have a glorious shine! (26)

Even though Pizarro seems to be a good Christian towards his officers and soldiers, his worship is merely a pretense. For instance, his incredulity and rejection of god is emphasized more directly in the scene where the officers try to convince him to kill Atahualpa in order to save the soldiers from the wrathful avenger of the sun-god,

De Nizza: To save love in the world you must kill lovelessness.
Pizarro: Hail to you, sole judge of love! No salvation outside your church: and no love neither! Oh, you arrogance! (83)

Owing to the loss of belief, which brings about the loss of meaning in existence, Pizarro becomes alienated and somehow spiritually dead. Thereupon, he is in need of meaningful worship to make sense of life. In this respect, Pizarro's desire to invade Peru is not the greed for gold, which is just a means for motivation to entice the soldiers, yet it is the need for belief and the desire for the search of the source of life which according to him will immortalize his name. As Dennis confirms, "Pizarro is searching for the sun, for the source of life and of eternity" (76).

Pizarro seems to find the object of worship he is seeking for a long time when he meets Atahualpa, the Incan sun-god, and learns about the Incan religion as he holds that the sun is worthy of worship. "In Atahualpa, an apparently immortal man, Pizarro believes he has found an answer for Time, and the idea of death that has 'for years rotted everything for [him] all simple joy in life' begins to retreat" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 85). Influenced by the sun-god's pure belief, Pizarro begins to accept and believe in Atahualpa's divinity. For instance, being certain that Atahualpa will resurrect, Pizarro tries to persuade Young Martin of his rebirth and his divine nature,

Young Martin: How can a man die, then get up and walk away?
Pizarro: Let's hear your creed, boy. 'I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried' ... and what? [...]
Young Martin: 'He descended into Hell, and on the third day He rose again from the dead...' [...]
Pizarro: But Christ's to be the only one, is that it? What if it's possible, here in a

land beyond all maps and scholars, guarded by mountains up to the sky, that there were true gods on earth, creators of true peace? Think of it! Gods free of time. [...] It's the only way to give life meaning! To blast out of Time and live forever. [...] What if it was really true, Martin? That I've gone god-hunting and caught one. A being who can renew his life over and over? (85, 86)

Pizarro, then, finally comes to believe in a deity which brings meaning to his existence on spiritual and physical terms, and prevents Pizarro from being unattached to nowhere and being an outsider. However, Pizarro is bound to fail in his search for meaningful worship because the sun-god does not regenerate which leads Pizarro to disillusionment and a state of despair. His tragedy, in MacMurrough-Kavanagh's words, is that "he is finally betrayed by [Atahuallpa] just as he has always been betrayed by all faith" (85). When Atahuallpa does not resurrect, Pizarro cries out at the lifeless body of the sun-god: "Cheat! You've cheated me! Cheat..." (89). Lying silently next to his body, Pizarro dies spiritually that day (Dennis 75). Hence, being devoid of belief and meaning in existence, Pizarro remains 'unattached' to anywhere which foments his psychological fragmentation and alienation.

As for the theme of alienation, Pizarro is an outsider since he does not belong to anywhere and cannot attach himself to any system of belief. Hence, he envies the ones who unquestioningly have faith in divine beings and belief systems. As he declares in his conversation with Young Martin and then in his talk with De Soto about Young Martin, who are both believers of Christianity,

Pizarro: And there's nothing else you want?

Y. Martin: a sword, sir. [...]

Pizarro: Hope, lovely hope. A sword's no mere bar of metal for him. His world still has sacred objects. How remote... [...]

Pizarro: This is probably our last night. If we die, what will we have gone for?

De Soto: Spain. Christ.

Pizarro: I envy you, Cavalier. [...] Your service. God. King. It's all simple for you. (41)

Furthermore, believing in the sun-god, Atahuallpa, Pizarro begins to integrate with the others, at least with the believers of Incan religion. However, after he is disillusioned and has again lost his faith, Pizarro becomes more alienated and does not anymore belong to anywhere or any system of worship.

existence is Yonadab's anger for Yaveh the Prohibitor who as a god allows all this bloodshed in Jerusalem, as Yonadab implies:

Yonadab (*To audience*): The air stank of blood. Human blood in the gutters: animal blood from the altars. And beyond in the desert, for miles, the blood of

our chopped enemies soaking the sand. [...] The thing was, you see, alone in all the tribe I was delicate. [...] God clearly was not. How could He possibly have made me in His image? I saw no resemblance. Here was Yonadab the Sensitive- there was Yaveh the Savage. (89)

Yonadab requires and seeks proof of divinity before he can commit himself to it, for he cannot associate the idea of God with the act of tyrannical genocide. In this respect, Yonadab questions the existence of god and cannot understand the vicious essence of His existence. Thus, he has abnegated his faith in god and religion as he discloses, “to put it bluntly, this religion is not good enough for me” (89). Furthermore, since Yonadab rejects Yaveh and his divinity, he challenges Him throughout the play in order to prove his non-existence. For instance, while plotting to destroy the House of David, who has always treated him as an outsider to the royal family, Yonadab challenges the great Prohibitor to prove his existence. Calling up to the god, he says:

Yonadab: Ruin to the great who sneer! To the House of David for whom I didn't exist! Ruin even to the God of David! - why not? Let Him defend Himself! Prove that he exists, finally! Let Him stop me if He is there- Yaveh the Prohibitor! (98)

Even though Yonadab seems to rage against the god and challenges him bravely to affirm his non-existence, he prays that God intervenes and thus proves the opposite so that he can commit himself to worship and give meaning to his life. As he implies his wish and somehow his fear of the deity when his plot begins to work out, “Surely Yaveh must show His hand now and stop it! How far would He let it go? - and what would His punishment be?” (111). However, Yaveh never intervenes in the evil deed of Yonadab and let him ruin David's family with the rape of Tamar. In this respect, Yonadab proves god's absence, as he angrily discloses, “Ruin! Ruin to the House of David! And I the ruiner! Yonadab the family joke- Lord over them all! Lord over Him too above- Yaveh the Non-God!” (131).

Since Yonadab has lost his faith in god, he does not have anything to attach himself to. The life, then, becomes meaningless for him which raises a wish in him for “escap[ing] from the basic entanglement with being human” (Dennis 178). Envyng the men around him who can commit themselves unquestioningly to the god, Yonadab desperately wants to find the meaningful worship, that is, an alternative belief system, so as to give meaning to his existence. That is to say, “Yonadab longs to believe what those who surround him accept unthinkingly: he

needs to know that there is a God who orders the universe and a creed which connotes value and truth” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 73). Thereupon, he wants to create his own alternative God and credo against Yaveh the Prohibitor which will bring perpetual peace to the world.

In this respect, the Egyptian legend he used as a means to inflict Amnon to destroy the House of David, in which the royal siblings become immortal King and Queen after a sexual intercourse, will be an end for Yonadab rather than a means to achieve meaningful worship. Since influenced by his dream in which “Absalom and Tamar, riding together upon huge golden horses” (151) are immortal gods with golden crowns on their heads, Yonadab begins to believe that Tamar and Absalom are the real objects of worship who will realize his dream of the “Kingdom of Perpetual Peace ruled over jointly by a King and Queen, young and deep in love, both beautiful and both eternal” (Dennis 186). As Shaffer implicates in the scene where Yonadab secretly watches Tamar and Absalom mingling their beauties, “he finally thinks he understands the force of prayer, and again dares to hope that he too can know belief” (Dennis 191). In this scene, Yonadab’s desire for worship becomes evident as he discloses:

Yonadab: (*To audience*) In a trance I watched it happen. Those two enfold-mingling their beauties together. And for the first time in my life I knew the force of prayer. [...] I know Gods cannot walk on earth: *let it be!* I know lovers cannot infect Kingdoms: *Let it be!* Let there be an end to this world of blood-soaked worship- and to my own world too, which owns no worship. *Make me see it!* Change my unchanging world! Set this manipulating man at last in ways of *Meaning!* *Why else was I born with such urgency of spirit, and nothing for urgency to move?* (160)

What is significant and paradoxical in Yonadab’s doubtless belief in Tamar and Absalom’s divinity is the fact that although he knows that he himself has fabricated this myth and deifies these mortal beings in his imagination, he starts to believe it himself. In this sense, it can be inferred that he is desperately in need of meaningful worship and a glimpse at divinity to such an extent that his desire for divinity begins to incapacitate him to see the truths.

As a result, like Pizarro, Yonadab is cheated and thus cannot find the meaningful belief he is seeking for which alienates him not only from the others and divinity but from himself as well. Thus, he is doomed to lead his void life without belonging to anywhere and therefore he will always suffer from existential

disintegration. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh explicates, “Yonadab is now condemned to hang alone on his world, forever unattached in death as he had been when alive, an eternal watcher robbed always of ‘Immediate Life’. The final unanswered question, ‘who will cut me down?’ offers as complete an image of alienation as any we have been offered in the play” (78).

As for the theme of alienation, “the sense of unbelonging, of standing apart from society/God/man, is stressed whenever possible throughout the play and is communicated in a variety of ways” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 73), as Yonadab announces right at the beginning of the play that he lives “in limbo for eternity” (87). Like many of the protagonists, Yonadab “complains of a sense of invisibility, of not feeling *there* to be accounted for” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 60). Since Yonadab is mainly alienated by the members of the royal House of David, especially by the King as Yonadab discloses, “his despised nephew. Yonadab the Despised, son of Shimeah Ignored” (87). They debase him because according to them he does not belong to their rank and family, for instance Amnon, who seems to be his friend though, continuously reminds him of his status,

Amnon: Your face is still clouded, my friend.

Yonadab: Perhaps I have the sickness you had earlier.

Amnon: Impossible. That was a royal affliction, unavailable to commoners.
(113)

On the other hand, Yonadab feels alien towards the others who unthinkingly commit themselves to the Yaveh the Prohibitor, for he has abnegated his faith in god. However, even though he cannot integrate with the believers, he has always wished for such kind of a commitment to god. In this sense, he envies the ones who “can prostrate themselves in prayer and believe that someone is listening to their pleas” (Dennis 178). As he clearly states at the end of the play, “to watch for ever unmoved. To see the gestures of faith in others, but no more. The consonants of credulity, but never the vowels which might give its feeling” (181). Yonadab, thus, needs worship and acceptance of society so that he can break free from the invisibility that sticks to him. Nevertheless, even though he tries hard to give meaning to his existence, he cannot attain worship. Thus, being unsuccessful in his search for worship, Yonadab becomes alienated not only to the others but to himself as well which leads him to a crisis of identity.

“The crisis of identity which many of protagonists experience in Shaffer’s

plays is revealed in forms of role-playing and role-appropriation [...], it is undoubtedly true to state that when a character feels himself to be a 'shadow', a 'ghost', a 'chameleon' or invisible, the desire to create and solidify an identity becomes manifested in terms of mimicry and 'acting'" (MacMurraugh-Kavanagh 61). Yonadab, the unbeliever and the despised who insidiously ruins the House of David, takes on various pretences to attain an identity and acceptance. As MacMurraugh-Kavanagh explains,

Belonging simultaneously to nowhere and therefore anywhere requires developed survival skills and specifically, a talent for camouflage. The chameleonism mentioned earlier reaches its most extreme form in the character of Yonadab who finds it relatively effortless to adopt the roles of a friend, servant, spy and confidant at will. (74)

For instance, Yonadab is not only a scholar, from whom Amnon takes advice, but also a friend he trusts in, as Yonadab himself declares, "Luckily for me he regards me as a scholar" (92). Furthermore, he pretends to be a confidant to Amnon, a spy to Absalom, and a believer to society yet he is none of them. On the contrary, he is an unattached disbeliever, an alien, and a ruiner.

Additionally, the image of curtain is presented in relation to the theme of alienation, that is, the curtain throughout the play denotes the difference and distance between Yonadab and the others. Although Yonadab desperately needs acceptance, he is aware of the curtain, symbol for his alienation, since it is always there, as Yonadab asserts, "I saw all their transports, this royal family, their lusts for transcendence- and I saw nothing. Always the curtain was between us" (181). Furthermore, even when he desires desperately to believe in divinity, the curtain falls between him and the others preventing him from satisfying his need for belief and acceptance. Yonadab emphasizes this distance when he begins to believe in the divinity of Absalom:

Yonadab: How strange it was. I, who had entered his house so frightened, now hated to leave. He seemed to me as his father must have once seemed- the boldest spirit shining through the flesh. I stood there in my own new boldness spying on him- and as I did, something astounding happened. Another curtain fell! (149)

Finally, no matter how hard he has tried to find a meaningful worship and attach himself to a system of belief, Yonadab is bound to remain as "an anguished figure forever caught between the impossibility of religious credo and the equal

impossibility of perpetual credulity” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 73). As Yonadab discloses his paradoxical situation, “hateful to me are they who stink in Faith, and murder in its name. But hateful to me as fully are they who bear King David’s curse and stink of Nothing” (181). Hence, Yonadab is doomed to lead his void existence and remain “attached to the Tree of Unattachment” (182).

3.2 The Conflict between Reason and Instinct

The idea of conflict is vital and central to Shaffer’s theatre; thus, he recurrently posits a conflict at the heart of his dramas either through opposing characters or through two contradictory notions. The conflict Shaffer mainly focuses on is the ongoing battle within the human psyche which Shaffer loosely calls “the Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of interpreting life”, as he explains the oppositional impulses that he feels conflicting within himself:

There is in me a continuous tension between what I suppose I should loosely call the Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of interpreting life [...] I just feel in myself that there is a constant debate going on between the violence of instinct on the one hand and the desire in my mind for order and restraint. (qtd. in MacMurrough-Kavanagh 103)

In this respect, Shaffer’s plays hold within them the clash between reason and instinct which are generally presented, in MacMurrough-Kavanagh’s words, through “an Apollonian representative [...] pitched against the darker, more passionate forces of Dionysian man” (103).

Even though Shaffer employs the most contradictory sides of human psyche in his plays, he never belittles either side of conflicting impulses. On the contrary, Shaffer presents a system of oppositions and tries to melt their difference into likeness in order to demonstrate to the audience that the opposing forces of human psyche cannot be classified as right and wrong or good and bad, yet they must be complement one another. Hence, neither side of interpreting life has superiority over the other and neither reason nor instinct can vanquish one another in the ongoing battle of human psyche. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh explains Shaffer’s original use of conflict,

Shaffer is taking the idea of conflict and using it in an entirely original way [in that] the fundamental differences between characters, ideologies or belief systems [...] are gradually eroded as the plays progress. One of the reasons why conflation

between apparently oppositional forces occurs in these plays is that [...] the most powerful drama emerges not from a clash between 'right' and 'wrong' (where oppositions would be unambiguous) but from a clash, in his words, 'between two kinds of Right'. (102)

In this aspect, instead of presenting the irreconcilable poles of right and wrong, Shaffer focuses on the conflict between 'two kinds of Right' in his dramas. However, despite his aim of reconciliation of reason and instinct, and his equal presentation of two conflicting impulses, Shaffer ends most of his plays with the triumph of reason over instinct.

Shaffer mainly conducts the theme of conflict through two opposing characters, especially protagonists, situated in absolute positions that dramatically collide. MacMurrough-Kavanagh describes 'the Shafferian pattern of dueling protagonists',

Apollonian man represents conscious forces of logic and rationality, order and control. He is a creature of intellect. [...] Dionysian man represents contrasting unconscious forces of instinct and passion, individualism and excess. His intellect is not developed and he relies on direct experience, [...] a creature of extremes, his 'behavior' falls outside the boundaries of 'normative' values. (103)

The theme of Apollonian and Dionysiac conflict is a psychological subject matter since it directly refers to the battle between reason and instinct; in other terms, between the conscious and unconscious. In this respect, Shaffer seems to allude to the Jungian theory, in that, he incorporates contradicting characters and issues into the heart of his dramas so as to underline the reconciliation of man's conflicting conscious and unconscious. As MacMurrough-Kavanagh clarifies Jung's theory about the harmonization of two levels of being,

Central to Jung's theory of the human psyche is the idea that 'man becomes whole, integrated, calm, fertile, and happy when [...] the conscious and the unconscious have learned to live at peace and to complement one another. [...] The unconscious mind is no more the repository of 'dark' or 'nefarious' impulses than the conscious mind is of 'good qualities, normal instincts and creative impulses': rather, just as the conscious mind can contain destructive qualities, so too can the unconscious mind imply positivity. The two levels of 'being', then, each propose a 'kind of Right', are not fundamentally opposed, and are theoretically capable of reconciliation, harmonization and mutual accommodation. (104, 105)

Briefly, Shaffer plants the idea of conflicting Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of human psyche; however, while presenting the opposing impulses of man, the playwright tries not to glorify one aspect over the other. Instead, through the theme of conflict Shaffer aims to illustrate the idea that these contradictory sides of man's nature must be reconciled. However, since the reconciliation or harmonization between the

two opposing impulses is not basically possible, Shaffer also needs to underline the fact that the battle between the conscious and unconscious is eternal. Hence, in some of his plays Shaffer ends the play in the destruction of the protagonists, the representatives of the conflicting sides of the human psyche. In this part of the thesis, then, the fundamental conflict between reason and instinct common to his plays, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *The Gift of the Gorgon*, will be analyzed. Furthermore, since Shaffer typically fuses themes, the idea of conflict will be studied in relation to the theme of morality of revenge only in *The Gift of the Gorgon*.

In *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, the clash between reason and instinct is presented not merely through characters but through the setting and cultural motifs as well. Since on the one side there is the unhappy, selfish and greedy man of Spanish Christianity and individualism, while on the other there are the passionate and naive believers of Incan religion who lead a peaceful life away from the avarice of civilization. Shaffer's idea of conflict between Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of interpreting life is thus depicted in the play by means of the clash between Spanish civilization and the primitive Incan society. That is to say, Shaffer employs and treats the theme of clash through "an encounter between European hope and Indian hopelessness; between Indian faith and European faithlessness" (Dennis 69). In this respect, "Apolonianism ensures civilization, order and survival (but implies spiritual incapacitation and removal from 'Immediate Life'), and Dionysianism ensures primitive passion and the life-affirming values of direct experience and extremity (but implies destruction and self-destruction)" (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 104). Although these conflicting impulses must be conjoined in order to have peace not merely in human psyche but in society as well, the battle is eternal and the harmonization seems to be impossible to attain as it is presented through the destruction of Incan society at the end of the play. The fall of this primitive society does not only denote the collapse of the Dionysiac side of man, but also the meaningless existence of man without the harmonious relation between reason and instinct in the barren world of civilization which is devoid of passion, spiritual commitment and meaning in existence. As Old Martin comments on the fall of two nations and refers metaphorically to the two opposing sides of man's psyche that cannot be harmonized,

Old Martin: So fell Peru. We gave her greed, hunger and the cross: three gifts of the civilized life. The family groups that sang on the terraces are gone. In their place slaves shuffle underground and they don't sing there. Peru is a silent

country, frozen in avarice. So fell Spain, gorged with gold; distended; now dying.
(90)

As for the characters representing the conflict between conscious and unconscious, Pizarro stands for the Apollonian side of human psyche; whereas Atahualpa is the representative of Dionysiac side. Pizarro is the hopeless man who is spiritually incapacitated and has thus lost belief in religion which detaches him from the 'Immediate Life'. As he mentions about his loss to Martin, a passionate believer in Christianity and in chivalric codes, "Little Lord of Hope, I'm harsh with you. You own everything I've lost" (29). Furthermore, Atahualpa, the Dionysiac side, also underlines the fact that Pizarro is a passionless man since he does not hold the belief the others have, "You do not believe them. [...] You do not believe them. Their god is not in your face" (64). On the other hand, Atahualpa is the instinctual man who commits himself unthinkingly to the god. The sun-god has such a strong faith in god and his being the son of Him that he rejects any attempt to direct him to Christianity which for Atahualpa is not a real god. As he bellows with rage when De Nizza, the Franciscan Friar, tries to bring him to the true God:

De Nizza: Atahualpa, I will not rest until I have brought you to the true God.
Atahualpa: No! He is not true! ... Where is he? There is my Father-Sun! You see now only by his wish; yet try to see into him and he will darken your eyes forever! With hot burning he pulls up the corn and we feed. With cold burning he shrinks it and we starve. These are his burnings and our life. Do not speak to me again of your god. He is nowhere. (63)

MacMurrough-Kavanagh explicates this clash between Pizarro's and Atahualpa's natures and their different dispositions which represent the battle between conscious and unconscious,

Pizarro is a tough, internally wrecked man of action: he is an elderly, worshipless commander who has clawed his way up from peasant stock. Atahualpa, on the other hand, is an impressive, serene, bird-like vision; he is youthful, elegant and aristocratic in his bearing and manner. Above all, he has unquestioned faith in a credo he interprets as 'fact' rather than 'belief', a capacity Pizarro profoundly envies. (108)

Even though the dramatic characters are presented in opposition to each other, they actually depend on one another which implicitly indicates the fact that the conflicting impulses existent within man's nature must be harmonically conjoined. That is to say, "Atahualpa depends on Pizarro to preserve his physical life, and Atahualpa is Pizarro's last hope for acquiring the ability to worship, a wish he tries to

suppress but secretly envies in the Inca” (Dennis 77). Shaffer presents this demanding relationship between reason and instinct as a mutual one; however, what is dramatically dominant about the battle between Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of man is that the Apollonian character, Pizarro, the one who experiences a lack and therefore searches for the Dionysiac side or passion he has suppressed or lost. MacMurrough-Kavanagh underlines Pizarro’s desire for instinctual impulse which is represented by Atahualpa in the play,

Pizarro finds in Atahualpa a projection of unconscious impulses lying dormant, or at war, within him. In Pizarro lies a deep well of worship waiting to be channeled: Atahualpa is a living embodiment of this impulse. Within Pizarro lies a longing for direct life but an incapacity for it because he constantly feels the shadow of death around him: Atahualpa represents the life-force through his status as son of the sun which both gives life and is immortal. (109)

Martin, on the other hand, is the mediator between two conflicting impulses. In a sense, he may be what Shaffer tries to attain by the reconciliation of reason and instinct since he is the “physical representation of two ‘selves’ within the single individual” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 106). That is to say, Young Martin has the passion to commit himself unthinkingly to Pizarro yet he also has the reason to see the truths such as Pizarro’s weaknesses and failures, and the unfair genocide of the Incans by the Spaniards. Even though Martin’s story beginning with his youthful hope and optimism “when [he] would have died for Pizarro, or for any worship” (13), and ending in the cynicism and defeat of Old Martin as he has lost his faith and joy in life is a narration about the two opposing poles of man’s psyche. In this sense, Shaffer implicitly mediates the Apollonian and Dionysiac sides of human nature through a single character.

Even though Shaffer aims to indicate the reconciliation of two opposing impulses and in a sense achieves this through the interdependence among the protagonists and particularly through the character of Martin, the harmonization does not seem to be likely to attain. Since the battle raging within the psyche is eternal. The continuity of this innate conflict is underlined in the play as Pizarro is made to kill Atahualpa, who has come to represent and embody his own unconscious. Towards the end of the play, Pizarro breaks his promise of setting Atahualpa free since he knows that if he lets him go, Atahualpa will destroy Pizarro’s army and thus he cannot attain immortality. In this respect, Pizarro, the Apollonian character, destroys the sun-god in order to save his

name, though he envies the instinctual power of Dionysian character:

De Soto: You have to let him go.

Pizarro: And what happens then? A tiny army is wiped out in five minutes, and the whole story lost for always. Later someone else will conquer Peru, and no one will even remember my name. [...] You know the law out here: kill or get killed. You said it yourself. The mercies come later. (80)

To conclude, the conflict between reason and instinct is eternal and continuous; moreover, it is unlikely to be reconciled. In addition, this lack of balanced relationship between Apollonian and Dionysiac impulses seems to culminate in either physical or spiritual destruction of the characters in the play. Pizarro, living according to his materialistic values and his reason dominating over his instincts, is bound to remain in his void existence after he has lost his last chance for attaining meaningful worship, and awakening his instinctual side through faith. On the other hand, committing himself unthinkingly and in a sense blindly to his belief, Atahualpa is doomed to die since his passionate belief in divinity and in his own resurrection incapacitate him to question his existence reasonably. In this sense, the presence of both extremities without reconciliation between each other causes destruction.

As for the conflict in *The Gift of the Gorgon*, the clash between reason and instinct is presented in relation to the theme of morality of revenge. The question “Should acts of atrocity be revenged through blood or should these evil deeds be pardoned?” is placed at the heart of the play. Presenting two conflicting moral aspects, this debate is posited through various mythic or historic tales of violence. The interpretation of these stories by the characters, Edward and Helen, one of whom stands for the Apollonian side of man’s psyche and the other for the Dionysian aspect, directly indicates the eternal conflict between conscious and unconscious. Since Edward, the unconscious side of the psyche or namely the id, represents and advocates the superiority of human instinct over reason, while on the other hand Helen, denoting the conscious side of man, underlines the righteousness of the rational deeds and thoughts.

To begin with, since the theme of conflict in Shaffer’s drama is typically treated through the contrast between individuals of passion versus those of reason, the two central characters in the play, Edward and Helen, indicate the opposing aspects of human psyche in relation to the theme of revenge. As the Dionysian representative in the play, Edward supports the idea that man should not repress his instinct yet he

should respond to it. In other words, man should live according to his instinctive impulses rather than his reason which incapacitates him and drags him into a passionless and to a meaningless existence. In this sense, revenge, which is an instinctual, emotive and in a sense an irrational deed, according to Edward “purifies not only man but society as a whole” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 155) as he indicates, “pure revenge [...] means pure justice” (17). The Agamemnon myth woven into the play clearly indicates Edward’s view of revenge as a righteous act, in that, Edward endorses Clytemnestra’s murder of her husband Agamemnon as a justified deed. As Edward discloses his idea about the Agamemnon myth to Helen while they are talking about the lecture of Helen’s father on the myth which underlines Edward’s instinctual and Helen’s logical approach to the theme of revenge:

Edward: I heard enough of his lecture on the Agamemnon to realize it in ten minutes. And he took no account whatever of the rightness of Clytemnestra chopping up her husband in that bath.

Helen: Rightness?

Edward: Certainly. It was an absolutely right thing to do. You don’t agree?

Helen: Of course I don’t. Agamemnon was completely helpless. In a bath for God’s sake!

Edward: Well, so was his daughter when he sacrificed her on an altar. His wife simply cleaned the slate. Sacrifice for sacrifice ... That’s what bloodshed can do- clean things. (16)

For Helen, in this aspect, revenge is not justice and can never be. Since for Helen revenge inevitably leads to a vicious circle of destruction which damages more than it restores; therefore, the idea of revenge is not reasonably acceptable. In this sense, Helen holds the idea that there is no deed which is “beyond the pale of pardon” (56); on the contrary, every act no matter how evil it is can be forgiven. Hence, Helen, unlike Edward whose “position constitutes a Dionysian demand for extreme reaction to extreme horrors [...], proposes an Apollonian plea for moderation and understanding in the face of obscenity, a call for restraint which guards man and society from the archaic taint of blood-soaked instinct” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 157). The conflict between Edward and Helen about the concept of revenge is introduced at the very beginning of the play where Edward tries to convince Helen about the righteousness of violence and revenge. In this scene, Edward as an instinctual man advocates the idea that one should take revenge in order to have justice; whereas, Helen, the representative of reason, strictly contradicts Edward’s thought:

Edward: Pure revenge, which means pure justice.

Helen: Revenge? That's not justice.

[...]

Edward: Tell me first: if a thug killed your dad tonight- brutally and deliberately- wouldn't you wish him killed in return? In your deepest heart?

Helen: Possibly- But it would be wrong.

[...]

Edward: (*seriously*) I tell you, if it was someone *I* loved who was killed, I would need to honour life by killing the killer. Preferably with my own hand.

Helen: And you call that honouring?

Edward: (*hard*) So should you- or you honour nothing. (17)

Additionally, the mythological infrastructure of the play is essential to its thematic construction since the recurrent theme of conflict between reason and instinct is portrayed through an overlapping relation between Athena, the goddess of wisdom and restraint, and Helen, and between Perseus, a passionate mortal desiring for reputation, and Edward. To state in detail, "Athena (daughter of Metis, Cleverness) embodies the wisdom of the world and, [...] moral and spiritual light: Helen similarly represents these values" (MacMurrugh-Kavanagh 149). Helen is the voice of temperance and reason who tries to dissuade Edward from the idea of revenge and his attempt to use violent and bloody scenes in his plays as Athena tries to awaken Perseus to the injustice of violence. In this respect, Helen is Athena to her Perseus, Edward, who restrains the violent scenes in his plays and reveals the beauty in them. As she does after she reads a ferocious scene from his bloody play about Impress Irene,

Helen: (to Edward) No...! No, Edward.

Edward: What's the matter?

Helen: It's appalling.

Edward: It actually happened. She did it.

Helen: I don't care. You still can't show it.

Edward: Why not?

Helen: Because it's too much. Measure is everything. The Greeks know that. They never showed violence on stage. (42)

Even though Helen is the voice of wisdom and thus does not approve of the idea of revenge, she has an instinctual side as well which makes her conscious be defeated by her unconscious desires. That is to say, throughout the play, namely in the past scenes with Edward, Helen is the representative of the Goddess Athena for she listens to her reason and behaves according to her conscious rather than her instinctual impulses. However, she undergoes a change in her present dramatic depiction in her scenes with Philip as she continuously implicates her revengeful plot. After Edward makes Helen kill himself, as Clytemnestra does in the Agamemnon myth, in order to

awaken her to the fact that the unforgivable act may exist and such an act calls for cleaning, Helen seems to lose her reason and be defeated by her unconscious impulses. As Dennis A. Klein asserts, “Helen, who has always been the voice of moderation, now wants revenge. She wants to hurt her late husband by destroying his posthumous reputation, and she will do it through the book that his own son had pledged at the beginning of the play to write” (231). As Helen indicates her vengeful intention to Philip at the end of the play,

Helen: You have to write the book now. That’s your priority.

Philip: But you can’t ... You can’t publish this! [...] It’ll finish him! A *freak* that’s all! It’ll be the story of a freak! That’s all he’ll appear! ... His work- your work together- all your past! –and mine- they’ll be *obliterated*! No-one will remember anything good when they mention his name. Just *this*! That’s all they’ll speak of – the horror! There won’t be a playwright left! [...] Is that what you want?

Helen: Exactly. [...] That will be our gift to him. Yours and mine. Our Sacred Gift. [...] All I want now is to hurt him. Hurt and hurt and hurt him forever! (Pause) And you’re the one who has to do it. (86, 87)

However, although Edward seems to ruin her rational logic and her reasonable idea of clemency in the face of violence by evoking her unconscious urges, Philip is the one who awakens Helen to the righteous act and dissuades her of taking revenge from Edward, as he states in an encouraging tone, “You are your father’s daughter. Honour him now, better than he honoured himself. He could never forgive – with far less cause” (89). Instead, Philip proposes “to write a book that will make his late father ‘live and glint’, and give no hint of his suicide” so that they can contrarily to Edward prove that there are no evil deeds beyond the pale of pardon (Dennis 231). Helen finally forgives Edward which indicates that even in the face of personal rage and desire for vengeance, her reason cannot be defeated. In other words, “her final rejection of the revenge ethic suggests that the essentiality of Apollonian plea for reason, order and restraint (emanating from the conscious realm of man’s psyche) at last stands triumphant on Shaffer’s stage” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 158).

To sum up, throughout the play Shaffer presents the conflict between two opposing poles of man’s psyche which highlights the fact that this internal battle is eternal. The playwright in a sense tries to enable the audience to confront their own instinctual and reasonable sides in relation to the theme of revenge. To this end, dealing mainly with presenting a clash between two kinds of right rather than between right and wrong, Shaffer does not seem to resolve the conflict in his plays

and indicate the righteous side of the battle. However, in *The Gift of the Gorgon*, although he leaves the audience between two kinds of right throughout the play as it is not likely to decide on the rightfulness of either Apollonian or Dionysian impulses, he ends the play in the triumph of reason, Helen, over the instinctual side of man represented by Edward. Since through depicting Helen as right and thus triumphant in relation to the theme of revenge, and Edward as wrong, Shaffer may demand the contemporary audience to “understand at a conscious level that ‘blood’ does not solve the problem of violence” (MacMurrough-Kavanagh 158).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The role of the audience has undergone a variety of changes from Aristotelian drama to modern and postmodern drama. The most significant winds of change in the audience-literary work relationship occurred in the twentieth century with Bertolt Brecht's theory of *alienation effect*. Attributing an objective role to the audience, this modern theory has influenced many playwrights such as Peter Levin Shaffer.

Peter Shaffer does not endorse a complete identification of the audience with the literary characters and work since such kind of a close relationship does not provide the audience with more than the role of a passive observer. In this respect, he mainly aims to actuate the audience's critical faculties and lead them to question the dramatic work of art. Hence, Shaffer uses various distancing elements either in the Brechtian sense or in an innovative way. Shaffer's technique of time, in this sense, indicates a peculiar and significant characteristic of his drama, in that he employs different kinds of time frames- historical, mythical, and spatial- as means of estrangement. The alienation effect conceived through the distancing use of time leads the Shafferian audience to objectively question the psychological and metaphysical themes such as search for worship, existential disintegration, and the eternal internal conflict between reason and instinct. Hence, it has been the aim of this thesis to attempt to study Shaffer's peculiar use of time and to make a detailed analysis of the thematic structure in his three major plays, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Yonadab*, and *The Gift of the Gorgon*.

With regard to the alienating use of historical time, like Brecht's use of historical past as a crucial dramatic element forming the epic distance, Shaffer sets some of his plays either in the distant past or incorporates historical narratives into the dramatic narration. He holds the idea that the remoteness of past time prepares the ground for aesthetic detachment of the audience as the past is beyond the realm of human access and thus renders identification impossible. For this objective, in his historical epic, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* Shaffer gives the sense of pastness through

both historical setting and past narratives by setting the dramatic action in the sixteenth century invasion of Peru and incorporating William Prescott's classic *History of the Conquest of Peru* as the historical source. Additionally, in his biblical epic *Yonadab*, Shaffer posits the dramatic story in primitive and temporally remote world of David's Kingdom; moreover, the playwright is directly inspired by the biblical story and its fictionalization in Dan Jacobson's 1970 novel *The Rape of Tamar*.

Similar to the historical time, mythical time also detaches the audience and provides them with a critical role through the sense of pastness and its fictitious nature. Since the mythical time denotes imaginary events and characters thought to occur in an indefinite past time, the use of mythical temporal structure in drama detaches the audience doubly, both through the distant past setting of the dramatic action and through the fantasized and thus inaccessible world of the myths. For instance, the biblical story of *Yonadab* is based on the thirteenth chapter of second book of Samuel in the Old Testament; thus, it presents the story in a religious mythological time frame which indicates the inaccessible unreal and past nature of the dramatic action. Moreover, the incorporation of several mythical stories to the dramatic narration adds to the estrangement of the spectators via mythical time. In *Yonadab*, Shaffer refers to a variety of mythical tales such as the biblical story of the Original Sin and the Egyptian myth about the union of the sibling King and Queen to become immortal. Like *Yonadab*, *The Gift of the Gorgon* includes a variety of mythical stories such as Perseus and Agamemnon myths. Since by its very nature myths involve superhuman beings of the remote past time such as the goddess Athena and the Gorgons, they are neither attainable nor conceivable for the contemporary audience. In this respect, such mythological allusions through its past and fictitious nature prepare the ground for the alienation of the spectators as they cannot identify with the past and illusive characters and events.

Indicating the coexistence of past and present, spatial time presents a multilinear temporal structure contrary to the chronological sequence. In this aspect, the elimination of diachronic time prepares the ground for the elimination of verisimilitude of the dramatic work and thus the identification of the audience. The audience cannot form a realistic relation between the real and fictitious world due to the confusing temporal structure which is entirely different from their own

diachronic view of time. In *Yonadab*, Shaffer violates the tradition of unity of time and the chronological order of the story through spatial time as there are two overlapping but different time frames in the play which are presented simultaneously: the story time, which is set in the distant past, and the narrative time posited in the present. Furthermore, the stage directions in *Yonadab* indicating the three-cornered scenes add to the disruption of the internal logic of time and to the synchronous blend of past with present. *The Gift of the Gorgon*, on the other hand, is set in the present, yet the story consists of the present narration of the past in flashbacks. In this sense, while the present narration is taking place on stage, the past actions are being enacted without any sign of temporal change in the course of the dramatic action. For instance, throughout the play the bygone memoirs of Helen with Edward are given through the present narration of Helen to Philip, into which the immediate enactment of the mentioned scenes in the past is continuously integrated. Moreover, the mythical narratives woven into the present context of the play underline the distancing effect of spatial time frame, for the coexistence of past and present proposes an unfamiliar notion of time which is inaccessible and unconceivable for the contemporary spectators.

Alienating the audience through the peculiar use of time, Shaffer tries to lead them to analyze and question the psychological and metaphysical themes which are search for worship, existential disintegration, and the eternal internal conflict between reason and instinct. Shaffer in his drama typically presents protagonists as questers of worship and meaning since they are the lost members of society who have abnegated their belief in God and existence. These protagonists generally cannot attain the meaning they are seeking for and this unfruitful search gives rise to their psychological fragmentation and alienation. In *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and *Yonadab*, the protagonists, Pizarro and Yonadab, have both lost their belief in God and are thus in search of meaningful worship; however, none of them can break free from their isolated and void existence. This isolation paves the way for their existential disintegration which denotes their becoming outsiders not merely to the society they live in but to themselves as well. Shaffer in his drama tries to present the situation of modern man to the spectators so that they can analyze and understand the themes in relation to their own values and thoughts.

As for the theme of the conflict between reason and instinct, this internal clash

between man's conscious and unconscious is located at the heart of Shaffer's drama which is by himself referred as the 'Apollonian- Dionysian conflict'. Presenting each impulse through two conflicting protagonists, Shaffer seems to leave the audience between these two basic impulses and make them reflect upon this psychological dilemma. In *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, for instance, Pizarro represents the Apollonian side as he is the man of civilization who has lost his belief in God and life and thus experiences a psychological dilemma between his materialistic values and his desire for instinctual passion. On the other hand, living according to his passionate belief in divinity Atahuallpa the sun-god is the instinctual Dionysian man. In *The Gift of the Gorgon*, the clash between reason and instinct is related to the theme of morality of revenge. The protagonists, Edward, the Dionysian aspect of man's psyche, and Helen, the Apollonian side, underline the eternal conflict in man through their viewpoints about the theme of revenge. For example, Edward advocates the rightness of violence and revenge, while Helen rationally supports the idea that revenge can be acceptable on no account. Through this internal clash of impulses Shaffer makes the audience face their own conflicting nature in relation to the theme of morality of revenge.

To conclude, as far as the researcher could establish most of the research on Shafferian drama have been concerned either with the psychological features in his plays as works of psychological drama or with the dramatic technique in Shafferian drama in relation to the theatre of Brecht and Artaud. However, his innovative and peculiar technique of time as a distancing device and, the cause and effect relation between the technical and thematic structure of his drama have not been dealt with thus far. In this respect, this thesis aims to indicate how Shaffer reconstructs Brechtian theory of alienation effect through his innovative technique of time as an element of estrangement and how Shaffer's themes and their perception are formed in parallel relation to the technique. Through his unconventional and inventive technique, Shaffer ushers a new era in the dramatic genre; in other words, he brings about a new viewpoint to the audience-character/play relationship which subverts the conventional idea of audience as a passive observer. In this aspect, Shaffer contributed greatly not merely to the British drama but to the world drama as well. This thesis, thus, is expected to illuminate and help further research about the related issues such as alienation effect, technique of time, audience-character relationship

and the role of the audience in drama.

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