

LANGUAGE AND THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE IN EDWARD BOND'S LEAR

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Abstract:

The dramatic action in Edward Bond's Lear (1971)¹ encompasses acts of abuse and violence. The characters involved in the unfolding of the plot stand out as dehumanised beings preyed on by perverted political and social forces. The dramatization of characters highlights them with a deft use of language that is characteristic of their socio-economic positions, the clash of wills and tensed relationships in the play. The characters are alienated by the brutality and aggressive nature of the political power and social discomfiture around them. The purpose of the present article is to look at Bond's use of and violence language as dramatic strategies and how it allows to establish a taxonomy of characters in Lear. This article probes into the language used by Bond and how this use of language suggests a classification of characters into ranges that enforce the conflicts of the play. The article examines the evidence of the sociolect in Lear and sheds light on groups of characters that are made outstanding through the language used.

Keys words: Politics, violence, dialect, class, conflict

Résumé:

L'action théâtrale dans la pièce Lear (1971) d'Edward Bond présente des actes d'abus et de violence. Les personnages dans l'intrigue de l'œuvre paraissent déshumanisés, en proie à des forces politiques et sociales. La mise en scène des personnages les met en exergue à travers un usage babile de la langue qui est caractéristique de leurs positions socio-économiques, des conflits et des relations tendues dans la pièce. Les personnages se révèlent être aliénés par la brutalité et la nature agressive du pouvoir politique et la déconfiture sociale autour d'eux. Le but de cet article est d'analyser l'usage de la langue par Bond et comment cet usage permet de classer les personnages en des types qui ajoutent d'intensité aux conflits de la pièce. L'article examine la réalité du sociolect dans Lear et met en exergue les groupes de personnages qui se distinguent par le registre de langue usité.

Mots Clés : politique, violence, dialecte, classe, conflit.

Introduction

Edward Bond's *Lear* is set in the context of the two World Wars, the Cold War, and the collapse of Marxist-Socialist states. Much of this context has permeated the play

¹ *Lear* is a three-act play written by Edward Bond, a contemporary British playwright. The play is a rewriting of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1603) and dramatizes the demise of a monarch both from the family circle to the state level. In *Lear*, Edward Bond revisits Shakespeare's Elizabethan play borrowing almost the same characters, plot structure and themes, to address human predicament in the contemporary societies of World War I, World War II and the period that extend over the Cold War period in Europe, with an insistence of the abuse of power and how violence and the new trends of economy that pervade European societies.

with clues through which characters' attitude and what they say sets them into social groups moved by vertical relationships of frustration, violence and aggression. Such relationships enforce the plot of *Lear* through the dialectical interaction between the perpetrators detaining the political power and their victims in times of harmony and conflict.

Critics on Bond's dramatic art are unanimous on his contentions on human brutalities. Rosette Clementine Lamont makes this aspect evident when she acknowledges that: "Violence was still his tool, one used by an ex-street urchin as an instrument to deliver his scorn."² As a result, Bond explores his own experience as a brutalised and mishandled young man in order to address man's perverse attitudes in a context of social and political crises. Violence and human aggressiveness are some aspects of irrational attitudes of Bond's time and as he claims in papers about his own masterpieces: "People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them from writing about us and our time. It will be immoral not to write about violence."³ It is this atmosphere of violence that provides dramatic vectors through which Bond constructs the action of the play.

The conflict in *Lear* centres on political excesses. Such excesses in the form of actions are dramatized enough to substantiate the dramatic evidence that "A character's external actions gives us clues to his inner motivations."⁴ This makes it clear that what a character says allows to perceive the motives behind their behaviour. However, as they consolidate character features, such actions are enforced in the dramatic flow of thought and interactions by the choice the playwright makes of the language used by characters as they submit or rebel; love or hate or as they lead or suffer from decisions made by their leaders. Diction or the language attributed to the characters, "shows the characters' relationship to others, reflects the progression of the action indicates what is happening inside characters, reveals their suffering, growth and decline. The language functions therefore as a means of articulating the clash of wills and the conflicting motivations"⁵ about and through which the motives of the characters become outstanding to the audience. The diction of the play appears to have been wrought enough to feature the characters with a tendency to fight and keep the polemic atmosphere on in the plot.

This article explores the Marxist theory of class struggle to investigate how the dramatization of characters is inspired by contemporary social interactions and historical events. The use of conflicts and language in *Lear* suggests a taxonomy of characters into political and socially conflicting groups. In this process, this study

² Rosette Clementine Lamont, "Edward Bond's de - lear - ium", (Internet resource: Retrieved 11/08/2020).

³ Rosette Clementine Lamont, Op. Cit., p.308.

⁴ Theodore W. Hatlen, Orientation to the Theatre, (New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, 1962), p.46.

⁵ Theodore W. Hatlen, *ibid.* p. 52.

seeks to shed light on the dramatization of violence through the use language in the form of a sociolect bestowed on characters that call up the violence and brutalities that marked out the contemporary societies of World War I, World War II and the period that extend over the Cold War period in Europe.

The study is therefore subdivided into two sections. The first section elaborates on the wall as a metonym of violence in *Lear* with an emphasis on social and spatial setting of the action in the play. In this section the dramatization of characters in connection to the place of work and exercise of their socio-political roles as connected to violence will be discussed. The section also sheds light on Lear's change of attitude and views of power after his demise, with an emphasis on the dialectics of socio-political interaction in human societies. I have looked at how Bond has one the monarch and other protagonists change the course of their life and action as a way to envisage social and political reform. In the second section I have dealt with aspects of sociolect in *Lear* and the underlying structures of conflicts. The focus has been put on language as medium used in the dramatization of characters. An attempt is made to show how diction in the play allows to label and classify characters into social groups in perpetual conflict as everyone has their own motives and their perceptions of their social roles according to their groups and socio-economic interests.

1- The Wall as a Metonym of Violent Action and Polity in *Lear*

In *Lear*, the attitude of characters to the issues appears to be determined by the spatial context as set by the stage directions. The action of the play evolves as if the different places such as the *wall*, the *court room* or the *prison cell* are haunted by vectors that deprive the characters of commonsense and push them to irrational behaviors of violence and aggression. Indeed, through his plays, one can see that,

Edward Bond is one of the major British dramatists of the post-war period. He remains arguably one of the most provocative voices in British theatre in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. An integral element helping to assess the value and status of his writing over the past half-century is the wider international contexts in which both his earlier major works and more recent plays are produced.⁶

Bond has, therefore, felt indebted to a reality that has modelled or provided ground for the action throughout the play. It is my belief that Bond couples place and

⁶ Peter Billingham, *Edward Bond: A Critical Study*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.1.

characterization in a well-wrought series of details that enforce the violence and aggressiveness in the story line.

The monarch in the play embodies a political system and motives that do not allow him to give a sensible thought to the decisions he makes and how they affect the social matrix. The early scene of *Lear* appears to substantiate my contention on how the places where the action is set in the play enforce characterization. Set in the fields where construction works are in process, one finds all the characters in a tensed atmosphere:

Near the wall.

A stack of building materials – shovels, picks, posts, and a tarpaulin. Silence. Then (Offstage) a sudden indistinct shout, a crash, shouts. A FOREMAN and TWO WORKERS CARRY a DEAD WORKER and put him down. They are followed by a SOLDIER.⁷

This scene involves the death of a person. It also lays the grounds of Bond's dramatic expression through a strategy of shock on the audience and society. However, one needs to see in terms of setting that The *Wall* which stands as a stage set is conditions the bone of contention that feeds the action of the play. The symbolism behind the wall is the institutionalized strains of contemporary capitalist world and all the social discrepancies that follow it. Verbal and physical abuses happen because and in the precincts of the wall. One could also see how transformed mankind becomes when it comes to defending economic interest, power and authority in the capitalist sense of the world. It is on the precincts of the *wall* that the spectator is confronted with the sad realities of the underlying tensions between Lear and his constituents.

In relation to the works on the wall, Lear appears to be right while every other person is wrong. His focus lies in the success of his enterprise and nothing could stand in his way lest he gets destroyed by Lear's fury. Such features in Lear sound cultural in the contemporary world because 'In a capitalist society, crime makes an honest man of you.'⁸ The honesty referred to in this excerpt is ironic and borders perversion. There is a reference to man's perverted morality to serve the mechanic urges of maximum profit, "a centralization and brutalization of the use of power, and a market economy aggressiveness that are each in part to the wall or its philosophy."⁹

The death of a worker is not enough disaster for Lear to pause and think; he rather thinks about how to preserve the wall, he rather proceeds to add another victim to

⁷ Edward Bond, *Plays: 2 Lear, The Sea, Narrow Road to the Deep North, Black Mass, Passion*. Great Britain: Methuen Drama, 1988 (first pub. 2013).

⁸ Ian Stuart (ed.), *Selections from notebooks of Edward Bond*, (London: Methuen, 2000), p. 106.

⁹ Lou Lappin, *The Arts and Politics of Edward Bond*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), p.128-9.

the first one by court-martialing the alleged murderer. Even attempts to describe how the accident occurred are vain. "Lear. [...] They'll never finish! Get more men on it. The officers must make the men work!

"[...] Lear. It is a flogging crime to delay work. (TO WARRINGTON) You must deal with this fever." (*Lear*, I,1, p.2) The fever in these last words is an allusion to any incidents, casual or planned that might interrupt or stop the progress of the works on the wall. All the focus is on how to keep the enterprise going against all odds. Lear is the image of modern man under the influence of capitalist incentives towards the maximization of profits and the issues of insecurity which results in nothing else but sinister on the social specter.

However, it needs to be noted that, the connection *wall* and the *brutal* waywardness that prevails in the play are aesthetically wrought to address the devastating issue of violence which in the thought of Bond's play is the new value of modern societies. The wall is therefore an epitome of Bond's reference to the root cause of man's defrauded values embodied in the mercantile and brutal practices that make the bourgeois and working-class clash constantly. Bond seems to combine the wall and Lear's violent reactions into a dramatic whole which allows him to enforce the ideological motif in the play. As an artist, it sounds emergent to him and as he would say,

If reason is orphaned from imagination and wilfully constrained by the actual and ideological barriers of a wall that Bond's *Lear* built, consciousness is not liberated but rather has all the autonomy and freedom of the ventriloquist dummy.¹⁰

Lear is not the only one entrapped by the construction of the wall, his workers and even his daughters are all victims of the aftermaths of how Lear manages his kingdom and the enterprise to protect the kingdom. The same motif of the works on the *wall* is the vector that moves the workers and Lear's daughters to aversion and open antagonism. There is a widespread frenzy to oppose, verbally aggress or brutalize because of the *wall*.

Lear. They dug the wall up again last night.

Officer. Local farmers. We can't catch them, they scuttle back home so fast.

Lear. Use spring traps. (TO FOREMAN). Be quick!

¹⁰ Peter Billingham, op. cit. p.28.

FORERMAN and SOLDIER push THIRD WORKER
forward.

Lear. Court martial him. Fetch a Firing squad. A
drumhead trial for sabotage. (*Lear*, I, 1, p.3.)

The excerpt above triggers the part to be played by each token character in connection to the wall which stands as the incentive for every reactions and backlashes. Against the apparent resistance to his project, Lear invests his life and energy to preserve and see its building completed. He proves ready to do this even at the cost of human lives for he has not hesitated to order the execution of a worker even though another on has died accidentally.

This, in the process of the play, highlights Bond's attempt to expose human debasement before seeking to rationalise it. It is in this line of thought that the action of the play quickly wraps with the daughters' opposition to their father. In the play, the playwright exposes "The destruction of family and the betrayal of human relationships, the image of an incomprehensible world reduced to a play for pure power, [...]"¹¹

The antagonism of Lear's daughters to their father is set in the precincts of the *wall* and while the spectator will basically expect it to remain a family feud, we are quickly brought to see its political implication as to how power is used to brutalise people on a larger scale. "Both Bodice and Fontanelle have endured constrictions of their father's authority? It is an authority embodied on both the ideological and psychodynamic site."¹²

Bond has therefore been able to show through the retaliation of the daughters how the effects of wrong doings return to the people who first commit them. Indeed, "The daughters attack Lear for what he's deprived them of."¹³ But the rational as it applies in Bond's aesthetics is that the daughters do worse when they dispossess their father of the wall and his political authority. They seem to have learned little from the mistakes of their father. The degree of violence they wage against their father and some of his constituencies proves worse than the father's own. In his role as statesperson on the side of Lear and his regime, Warrington undergoes horrible treatments on the part of Lear's daughters. They even torture him and kill all the war captives just because they once sided with the old monarch.

Here, they both authorize, witness and sadistically
participate in the torture of Warrington, Lear's former

¹¹ Lou Lappin, op. cit., p.125.

¹² Peter Billingham, op. cit. p.43.

¹³Ibid. p.43

senior councillor and advisor. The older, desperately vulnerable man, provokes a totemic fetishized anger from women. He is a ruptured embodiment of despised phallic power and the displaced, sepulchral after-image of their father. His political and psychodynamic destruction and savagely rendered impotence is authorized and choreographed by them. It is a scene of unbearable cruelty, morbidly enhanced by an underlying gallows (sic) of humour and sense of the grotesque.¹⁴

In scene four of *Lear*, one can read the treatment Warrington has to undergo:

Fontanelle. Throw him up and drop him. I want to hear him drop.

Soldier A. Thass a bit 'eavy, yer need proper gear t' drop 'em –

Fontanelle. Do something. Don't let him get away with it. O Christ, why did I cut his tongue out? I want to hear him scream.

Soldier A. (*jerk's WARRINGTON's head up*). Look at his eyes, Miss. Thass boney-fidey sufferin'.

Fontanelle. O yes, Tears and blood. I wish my father was here. I wish he could see him. Look at his hands! Look at them going! What's he praying or clutching, Smash his hands!

Soldier A *and* Fontanelle *jump on Warrington's hands*.

Kill his hands! Kill his feet! Jump on it – all of it. He can't hit us now. Look at his hands like boiling crabs! Kill it! Kill all of it! Kill him inside! Make him dead! Father! Father! I wanted to sit on his lungs! (*Lear*, I, 4, p. 14)

The above extract gives us an idea of the chaos created by Lear's regime because of the wall and how it has conditioned other characters enough for them not to be able to act differently from the brutality that power abuse has brought with it. However, the playwright seems to have exploited such character features in order to emphasise the extent of Bodice and Fontanelle's deformation by the reign of their father. The two characters have turned monstrous enough to play with empathetic situations that

¹⁴ Ibid. p.43-44.

may make an audience horrified. Such an expected reaction enters into the aesthetic strategy of shock envisaged by Bond in order to attract modern man's attention on the implication of acts that undermine social welfare and how they can concur to disastrous social relationships. Lear's daughters in their practices feature the theatre of Aggro-effects advocated by Edward Bond. They also serve Bond's aesthetic purposes for,

Bond has chosen a path very different from politically committed writers [...] his handling of dramatic techniques mirrors precisely his treatment of social and political structures. Just as he sees it as necessary to understand the history of Britain's social and political institutions in order to change them, so too he has progressively come to realise that as particular dramatic genres are representative of ideals and ideas of their time, it is by [...] adapting them that the responsible playwright can most effectively operate.¹⁵

Bond seems to have made it an aesthetic manifesto to readjust the social structures that cause suffering to humankind. We can also see why he points at both the superstructures and individual characters with an insight into how power abuse is a problem to the individual before turning into a large-scale social and political problem. The play reveals that Bond explores another variant of characters to achieve his purposes,

In Bond's deconstruction of the Shakespeare's classic Jacobean tragedy, Cordelia is portrayed, not as Lear's youngest and compassionate daughter, but as a rural female Castro', as Bond described her. She is a young woman catapulted into radicalised political consciousness. Driven to action by her own experience of being raped by the soldiers under the authority of the new regime established by Bodice and Fontanelle.¹⁶

We also know that Cordelia has defeated Lear's daughters but also fails to shake herself from the snare of violence and therefore perpetuates the violence and aggressiveness as the institutionalised form of social and political instrument. Hers is

¹⁵ Peter Billingham, *op. cit.* p.29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.40.

a totally distorted image of human relations caused by the strictures of power and the wall. Though she blames most of the disaster on the monarch, her own “morality is a form of violence.” (*Lear*, III, 3 p.85.) in her determination to fight Lear and his regime, Cordelia takes over but does worse. It could be inferred in the light of what has been said that the wall embodied Lear’s regime and as such has conditioned the other characters to do what they used to blame. However, it needs to be noted that the atrocities dramatized took form through crafty construction of characters and language.

2- The Sociolect in *Lear* and the Underlying Structures of Conflicts

In *Lear*, there transpires a kind of sociolect that enforces the conflicts and clashes that keep the plot unfolding. The language Bond bestows on his characters is characteristic of violence, brutality and a tendency to verbally or physically abuse one another. This section of my study seeks to highlight the violent imageries that run through the play by looking at the authors diction and how the language of the play enforces the standing of the social groups in conflict. Indeed, Bond’s diction in *Lear* sculpts the characters, determines their class and sets the scene for the various contentions we derive from the play. One can even assume that characters live in a kind of semantic confinement that makes it lively for readers and spectators to follow the unfolding of conflicts to the end of the action. “In *Lear*, we see shifting minimalist sets, witty or terrifying props [...] and general linguistic exercises. Bond plants hints throughout his elusive enactment. Its boundless cruelty is rooted in surrealism [...]”¹⁷ In the light of the language and the way it helps build characters in *Lear*, one can find trends of sociolect which is:

a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers’ social background rather than geographical background’ [...] In other words, it is the language spoken by a particular social group, class or subculture, whose determinants include such parameters as: gender, age, occupation, and possibly a few others.¹⁸

In the light of the excerpt above, the leaders, the constituencies, fathers and their children in families, male and female characters and army men constitute the tropes used in the dramatic interplays of *Lear*. The sense of violence and cruelty that overshadows the play is worked out through a use of language that labels the strong

¹⁷ Rosette Clementine, Lamon, op. cit. p.311.

¹⁸ Jeanette R. Malkin, *Verbal Violence in Contemporary Drama*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.2.

and the weak, the dominant and the oppressed with a tint of local colour that emphasises the playwright's relation to modern societies and the human predicament. One can also see that in *Lear* "...language is shown to embody a control of political power, the unceasing vituperation and reality replacement [...] In which verbal cruelty defines human relationships.¹⁹ Such relationships as constructed by Bond are tightly connected to politics and societal realities.

We can easily see that the characters that detain and exercise political power as the strong who impose and create issues on the weak who are their constituents. They are featured with a verbal abuse and acts of brutality as discussed in earlier developments of this paper. The action of the play kicks off on a notion of violence. In addition, to the situation of brutality and emergency with which the play opens are verbal and seem to have power and authority as motifs. We discover Lear with the mindset to brutalize and subdue his constituents in case they resist his authority.

Lear. It is a flogging crime to delay work. (To WARRINGTON.) You must deal with this fever; [...]
COUNCILLOR (Making a note). I'll appoint a hut inspector.

Lear. They dug the wall up again last night.

Officer. Local farmers. We can't catch them, they scuttle back home so fast.

Lear. Use spring traps. (To FOREMAN.) Who dropped the axe?

WARRINGTON (to FOREMAN) Be quick! [...]

Lear. Court martial him. Fetch a firing squad. A drumhead trial for sabotage. Quiet murmur of surprise.
(*Lear*, I,1,p.3)

Moments of violence and brutality are devoid of common sense. What appears to be a situation worth thinking over in order to find a solution rather becomes a backlash from the monarch who sees it as a challenge to his authority and therefore needs to be handled the hard way. From the excerpt above, the fact that Lear calls up *spring traps* and the *firing squad* is justified by nothing else but the political jargon of his time and his frustrated sense of a disobeyed leader. In line with Handke's views of language and its effect on personality, the embodiment of what Lear says alludes to

¹⁹ Jeanette, R. Malkin, op. cit. p.61.

“[...] The scaffolding of his consciousness, determine his thoughts and values and thus the limits of his humanity.”²⁰ Verbal and physical violence have become a *kind of value* and their atrocity has been made so trivial that it is used as an instrument of leadership when we listen to characters holding political positions.

The result of such wayward obstinacy is the centrality and the brutal imagery of the word “*kill*” throughout the play. From Lear’s angle of view “killing” is a form of mediation towards the blossom, peace and breakthrough in his kingdom. Such an exercise of power is highlighted in a confrontation the monarch has with his own daughter who seeks to dissuade him from brutalizing the workers.

Bodice. Father, if you kill this man it will be an injustice.
Lear. My dear, you want to help me, but you must let me deal with the things I understand. Listen and Learn.
Bodice. What is there to learn? It is silly to make much out of nothing. There was an accident. That’s all. (*Lear*, I,1,p.4)

Bodice’s attempts come to no avail as the play reveals that the worker gets shot in the end to the satisfaction of Lear who thinks that in his position, the institution he embodies requires him to brutalize and nullify the aspiration of the constituents in order to lead them.

Unnatural attitudes were considered normal. When told about the Duke of Cornwall and the Duke of North’s intent to marry his daughters Lear uncovers the type of animosity that conditions his attitude to the Dukes as follows: “Lear: They’re my sworn enemies. I killed their fathers and therefore the son’s must hate me. And when I killed the fathers, I stood on the field among our dead and swore to kill the sons.” (*Lear*, I, I, p.5). Killing a person is no more an alarming issue. It has turned into a political necessity. Lear kills for power and the enterprise. Mere objections to authority are seen as iniquity and must harshly be dealt with in the kingdom of Lear. Lear belongs to the social group of leaders, and use their power to harm or kill their constituents, just like his daughters and Cordelia after Lear’s defeat.

Quickly as opposition tightens up against Lear, his daughters brutally depose him and take over but are no better than their father. The attitude of all characters involved in the leadership and or interested in accessing to power calls up Lord Acton’s statement

²⁰ Jeanette R. Malkin, *ibid*, p. 8.

that “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”²¹ The characters holding political power and whom I hold to be among the strong, have a sociolect opposed to that of their constituents. As leaders they made use of a type of diction that highlights them as abusers. Bond’s language in *Lear* “provides tools for interpreting reality, and imposes on its users a group-specific image of the world by strengthening the social values that a particular group holds dear.”²² Verbal abuse and aggressiveness marks out Lear, Fontanelle, Bodice and Cordelia as rulers, when they take over from their father.

As a matter of fact, when Cordelia becomes a revolution leader and defeats the armies of Fontanelle and Bodice, she also makes violence an instrument of her leadership. There seems to transpire a dialectic in the exercise of violence whereby the former victims of violence and aggression revert to imposing the same sufferings on their former detractors.

The afore mentioned characters lord it over their constituents and victimize them. From Lear to Cordelia, leaders see the constituents as people who “[...] live in their own fantasies.” (*Lear*, I, 1, p.9) and thus have no awareness of social issues and realpolitik. The play perpetually shows them in the same cycle of *power-autocracy-brutality*. They are dramatized with actions involving *army parade, terror, councils of war, attacks, war, shooting, armies, torture, brutalities, deaths, enemies* and strategies to maintain the status quo. The reader and spectator are therefore left to discover them in a bonded class of characters that could be stereotyped for their sense of power abuse and the hardships it may cause on the constituents against whom Lear says, “I am not free to be kind and merciful.” (*Lear*, I, 1, p.5) Bond seems to share the same process of dramatic representation through language when we look at “Handke’s stated aim of “encircling” his audience with words is a dramatization of how language functions upon us: closing us in within its own laws and restrictions, coercing our obedience to its forms, rules, limitations.”²³ This starts with how Bond couples language and characterization to the same effect of channeling the audience’s understanding of human predicament. Lear brutalizes, kills, verbally aggresses his daughters take torture on top of their father’s brutalities. Cordelia as the Leader coming from the working – class steps in with a sense of hatred and does worse in terms of violence and aggression.

²¹ John Emerich Edward Dalberg, Lord Acton, “Letter P” in *Lectures on Modern History*, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1906), p.9.

²² Jeanette R. Malkin, op. cit. p.61.

²³ Jeanette R. Malkin, *ibid*, p.12.

In endowing such a diction to his characters, Bond is able to enact a categorizing system of his characters in their position as leader on the one hand and on the other, we have the workers on the wall, the Carpenter and the Gravedigger's Boy who lay under the yoke of successive brutal regimes.

The language characterizing the weak or working-class highlights with a submissiveness before they grow into rebellious victims to resist to the socio-political hardships wrought on them by the abusive authority of Lear and his regime. As part of the constituents' resistance, Lear's daughters and their suitors are the people who *dissociate* themselves from his wayward decision and thus add up to the monarch's black list of *enemies, wolves, agitators and poor people* who dress in ragged clothes. They also appear as the *malcontents* who threaten peace and prosperity in the kingdom. We also learn to appreciate them from the beginning of the play to the end, as people who work in *swamps* and sleep in *wet huts*, due to the system in which they are. It is against such a backdrop that they unceasingly dig up the wall. They quickly become the outlaws against whom there is a witch hunt in the play.

They live in the limits of forced labor on the wall, hunger and death. Throughout the play, they draw the empathy as to the poor living conditions in which we find them. While the word *victory*, means maintaining order for the leaders, the workers see it as an overthrow of the status quo and liberation from tyranny and abuse that the construction of the wall embodies. *Work* is enslavement and hardships for workers while it is seen as a medium to ensure security and prosperity of the kingdom. In the same way, the *wall* retains a meaning of disaster for them. Evidence to these realities come to our awareness when Lear and his daughters lose power and are brought to experience the same dire life conditions as the workers and or prisoners of war under the former monarch.

In the category of the constituents, we have soldiers who in the execution of orders get featured with the same language of violence and abuse as the leaders from whom they take orders. They appear prone to execute orders.

Conclusion

In *Lear*, language has strongly contributed to characterization. Characters from various social strata and professions stand out to readers and spectators through what they say and do. The present study has shown that the different places where characters get set in the play have a connection with what they say and do to others in terms of aggression and brutality. The socio-economic forces that the leaders and their constituents represent have been wrought in a polemic action which language

has helped materialize as characters speech and actions remained in the line of the opposing forces clashing throughout the action of the play. The study has reached the evidence that in the exercise of power, characters standing for decision makers use a language characteristic of violence and aggression which they find obvious to keep the authority going. The constituents (Workers and victims of abuses) in their turn resort to a diction materializing submission and devotion to service. The sociolect in the expression of violence follows a dialectic process through which leaders own verbal aggression and violence and then lose it to those who overthrow them. And vice versa.

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