

Revisiting Shakespeare for Young Audiences: Tim Crouch's Shakespeare Adaptation Plays

Genç Seyirciler için Shakespeare'e Yeniden Bir Bakış: Tim Crouch'un Shakespeare Uyarlamaları

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ABSTRACT

Adaptation as an act or process has been used in different disciplines and it has applied in literature and theatre for years achieving certain goals regarding to its time and its society and its adapter's purpose. There is no consensus about the essence of the true adaptation, in addition to this, as literary critic Professor Linda Hutcheon suggests, the borders of adaptation have been enlarged particularly after the year 2006, and broader ideas have been put forward. In this study, the selected adaptation plays from Shakespeare which have penned by contemporary British playwright Tim Crouch establish that adapted works may have both close similarities and differences with the original text under certain conditions. Shakespeare's plays in which the narratives on the upper echelon were unfolded are retold and reperformed in Crouch's plays by placing the emphasis on the ignored secondary characters of the plays. Touching the nature of human beings, the limits of their wishes and drives, Crouch carries these invisible Shakespearean characters on contemporary stage in front of young audiences. With this study, the recreation process of Crouch's plays which are adapted from Shakespeare's plays will be revealed considering his young audience as his addressee and his inclination to use new contemporary theatrical techniques while performing his plays.

Keywords: Adaptation, Tim Crouch, Contemporary Stage, Young Audience

Öz

Bir edim ya da bir süreç olarak 'uyarlama' farklı disiplinler içerisinde kullanılmış ve 'uyarlama' zaman, toplum ve uyarlayanın amacıyla ilintili olarak belirli hedefleri gerçekleştirerek yıllardır edebiyat ve tiyatrodaki uygulanmıştır. Doğru/esas uyarmanın niteliği üzerine fikir birliği bulunmamaktadır, bunun yanı sıra, edebiyat eleştirmeni Profesör Linda Hutcheon'ın belirttiği gibi, özellikle 2006 yılı sonrası adaptasyon teorisinin sınırları genişletilmiş ve daha kapsamlı fikirler ortaya konulmuştur. Bu çalışmada, çağdaş İngiliz oyun yazarı Tim Crouch tarafından kaleme alınan Shakespeare uyarlamaları seçili oyunlar, kimi durumlarda uyarlama eserlerin orijinal metin ile hem yakın benzerliklere hem de farklılıklara sahip olabileceğini göstermiştir. Üst sınıfa ait insanlar üzerine anlatıların sunulduğu Shakespeare oyunları, bu oyunlarda yer alan göz ardı edilmiş ikincil karakterlere vurgu yapılarak Crouch'un oyunlarında yeniden anlatılır ve yeniden üretilir. İnsan oğlunun doğasına, istek ve dürtülerinin sınırlarına değinerek Crouch görünür olmayan Shakespeare karakterlerini çağdaş sahneye genç seyircilerinin gözü önüne taşır. Bu çalışma ile, Crouch'un Shakespeare oyunlarından uyarlanmış olan oyunlarının yeniden yaratım aşaması oyun yazarının muhatap olarak genç seyircileri seçmesi ve oyunlarını icra ederken yeni çağdaş tiyatral teknikler kullanma eğilimi dikkate alınarak açığa çıkarılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uyarlama, Tim Crouch, Çağdaş Sahne, Genç Seyirci

Introduction

Adaptation as a concept situates at the intersection of various disciplines, and refers to "something produced to adjust to different conditions or uses, or to meet different situations" (Cambridge English Dictionary). As a term in literature, it mostly points out the production of a newly created medium that is based on specific literary genre like a novel, a poem or a play. The act of adaptation of a work can evolve into a process that is open for different interpretations and perceptions; regarding this matter, still no consensus is built on what the true adaptation necessitates. Considering different practices applied on the adapted works, it can be claimed that there are various interpretable criteria for adapter who can choose different strategies of adaptation according to the requirements of her/his work and her/his purpose to write/produce it. The chosen adaptation plays of contemporary English playwright Tim Crouch's Shakespeare series; *I, Caliban* (2003), *I, Peaseblossom* (2004), *I, Banquo* (2005), *I, Malvolio* (2010) and then *I, Cinna (the Poet)* can be read as the independent writings, however, they also have close bound with the original sources since the stories are retold from the eyes of minor characters in a way paying regard to the original stories and carrying them in front of the eyes of young audience. This study shows that each of Crouch's plays reveals the strong bound with the past and present, and many different theatrical strategies used in these plays make them original and experi-

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mental. The analyses of Crouch's plays in this study exemplify to what extent the adapter can be free from the original texts and to what extent the addressee -young audiences here- can affect the borders of adaptation.

On Adaptation

Clashing ideas which dwell on preserving loyalty to original text or on updating it concerning time and society lead the theorists to ponder upon the frames of adaptation. Literary critic Professor Linda Hutcheon observes that 'fidelity debates' that focus on the closeness or distantness between the adapted work and the original one have still been prevalent in the field of adaptation until the time of 2006, and particular criticisms on fidelity by some figures such as Robert Stam, Julie Sanders and Thomas Leitch have brought broader point of views for adaptation theory (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. XXVI). New rules, new aesthetics, and new performative elements are produced by breaking the certain devotion to main source; the original narratives are deconstructed for the aim of reconstructions new meanings and narratives. This attitude gives opportunity for the production of unbound adapted works which are organised by their own rules and discourses without worries of complete devotion to the original work.

Considering various adaptation works which dissociate one another regarding to usage of different strategies of adaptation, Frances Babbage's neutral tone that suggests "no type of adaptation is more important or worthy of attention than another" (2018, p. 1) can be equalizer for varied discussion on adaptation. In this manner, the time period when it is produced, the purpose of adapter in her/his work and the addressee of the adaptation are crucial elements to be count on in the process of examination of the adaptation work. As specified by Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, "Neither the product nor the process of adaptation exists in a vacuum: they all have a context- a time and a place a society and a culture" (2013, p. XVIII). Many Ancient Greek plays, Shakespeare's plays or many other writings have been adapted for ages and also today they are newly recreated in accordance with the borders of (post)modern stage. The requirements of the modern society and the modern theatrical aesthetics in terms of characterisation, theme, time, place and the narrative/theatrical styles used on the staging on the modern stage are taken into consideration as well as preserving the core principle 'the archetypal readings of human nature' inside the narrative. For instance, in American playwright Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), the adaption of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, he presents the tragedy of a family that is distorted by the civil war in US and brings to the stage the themes of murder, incest and revenge. By blending the ancient story with the modern problems of people, he depicts the inner psychology of characters with reference to the archetypal readings of Electra complex from the Freudian perspective. In contemporary British playwright Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* (1996), adaptation of Seneca's *Phaedra*, she gets help from the Greek myth to reveal the violent, bloody and crooked affairs in the rulers' life and to show the similarities and modern time interpretations of the incidents from the perspective of Kant and capitalist ideology. Moreover, Kane puts the human beings into the centre of the play by eliminating the divine existence that is dominant to the original text, relatively she reshapes the character as she formulates Hippolytus character as an ordinary individual with his own decisions, anxieties, and fears. Many references to contemporary matters are engaged in other plays as in *The Merchant of Venice* to colonisation, in *Othello* to feminism or in *The Tempest* to homophobia (See. Silverstone, 2011, p. 22-23). Edward Bond adapted *King Lear* (1971) on contemporary stage supporting the idea "we now have to use the play for ourselves, for our society, for our problems" (Innes, 1993, p. 193). In these adaptations, strategical attitudes of the playwrights enable the depiction of vivid characterisation and authentic scenography of the chosen contemporary issues through contemporary theatrical aesthetics; and these attitudes provide negotiation between historical and contemporary writings.

Tim Crouch's Idiosyncratic Approach to Adaptation

The chosen adaptation plays of contemporary English playwright Tim Crouch show that the purpose and motivation of the playwright direct and determine the strategies of adaptation. Crouch's Shakespeare series: *I, Caliban* (2003), *I, Peaseblossom* (2004), *I, Banquo* (2005), *I, Malvolio* (2010) and then *I, Cinna (the Poet)* are presented as one-man performances for young audience, however his performances grow prodigiously on stage owing to his unusual live performative tactics and his interactive communication with his audiences. Crouch uses the adaptation techniques not across the genres but within the genres, he goes across the time and carries the plays of Shakespeare to the contemporary stage. Crouch's plays gain completeness with their communication with the past narratives and references to the certain incidents. In his plays, Crouch reproduces "subaltern voices in the Shakespeare canon" (Soncini, 2017, p. 27) and makes invisible Shakespearean minor characters to human eyes. Benefiting from the existence of multiple voices and stories in Shakespeare's plays, Crouch finds vast area to search for his minor characters and their tragic stories. As artistic director John Retallack states in the introduction of the *I, Shakespeare* series, "his plays speak for the under-represented- the minor character, the young person, the audience. He refutes the 'great man' version of history and finds a thrilling formal release by speaking on behalf of the underdog" (quoted in Crouch 2011/1, p. 9). These plays are meaningful in terms of carrying the edges to the centre, of turning invisible to visible for eyes and of showing humanist act of caring each individual life equally. They are as in depiction of Clifford Leech "a number of minor characters whose sudden and cruel deaths do not arise out of a fault of their own. [...] all these can hardly be said to get their deserts" (1963, p. 290). Now the limits of the human drives, the borders of human wishes, individual and social ethics are reexplored from the perspectives of the victimized or marginalized characters of Shakespeare's plays.

It can be claimed that Crouch follows the same path of Shakespeare in the sense of his experimentalism, his universal subjects, his eclectic theatricality, and his moral illumination. Shakespeare took his stories from *Holinshed Chronicles of Scotland*, *The Chronicler Saxo Grammaticus*, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Plutarch, and Trojan War (see Cooper, 2010, p. 157); however, Shakespeare knew how to blend these stories with the condition and expectation of his time and his audiences, and with the aesthetic devices of the theatre. With his stories and styles, as Victor Hugo states, he mingled "in one breath the grotesque and the sublime, the terrible and the clownish, tragedy and comedy" (Steiner, 2013, p. 102). Shakespeare's plays made all the boundaries blurred emphasizing the concept of togetherness of all; highborn and lowborn, poem and prose, reality and dreamlike fantasy, comic and tragic. He made himself free from the frames and limitations and created multiplicity for both for context and form of his plays. This creative writing spirit of Shakespeare that breaks the moulds and gives inspiration for his own original plays guides many other playwrights for their writing process.

The similar tendency and enthusiasm can be observed in Crouch's theatrical attitude. He is aware of the prominence of the predecessors in literature, and he knows the borders of his own theatre aesthetics. While adapting Shakespeare's plays to his performances, he chooses his own way to release the stories of the plays and puts a spotlight on to Shakespeare's minor weak characters. As the protagonists and storytellers in his plays, these hardly visible characters gain a prior position and right to tell their own stories and reveal their own world view. As Hutcheon and O'Flynn underline, adaptation can be "a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents" (2013, p. 18). Here, Crouch filters Shakespearean plays and extracts the necessary points for his plays. He clarifies himself:

I also have a healthy challenge to him. There are other ways to think about character, narrative and form. The danger is that you deify him, and his process becomes mysterious and unreachable. His process is not unreachable; it's outstandingly extraordinary for the depth of his perception and language, but I also know he wrote for a different time and we are not in that time (Fisher, 2011).

Time difference is an important criterion for adaptation since as Crouch states above perceptions, stories, characters, forms, narratives, and many things have been changing instantly or gradually in time. As Hutcheon suggests, adaptation as an act or as a process involves certain terms like 'transcoding', '(re-)interpretation', '(re)creation', 'intertextuality' (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 8-9) that refer to a shift in genres or medium, changing perspectives, adjustment, intertextual engagements (7-8). Relatively, Crouch brings his interpretations for Shakespeare's plays while presenting a kind of "a mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 34-61) from the original texts that are used as the reference sources, moreover, he shoulders a duty for his young audience. Crouch as an adapter mostly addresses to the young audience in his Shakespeare adaptation plays and they are designed according to their appreciation. As one of the primary tasks, he aims in these plays to raise awareness of the young generation for theatre and for their lives to contribute their educational process in all sense. He believes that "a child is dignified if they are treated as being part of the world in all its complexity, not protected from it" (Crouch, 2011/2). Crouch shows his motivation to write his Shakespeare adaptation plays with this sentence; "I especially wanted to show young people that there are other stories than the Great Man side of history" (Healy, 2013). Crouch observes that children have encountered difficulties while reading/watching the plays on kings, princess, or gods because these characters are hard to adjust contemporary stage, if this performance is not a fairy tale or a part of a legend. He stars ordinary but unfortunate characters of Shakespeare that are very close to the condition of contemporary people. This can be dual chance for young audience to learn about Shakespeare's plays and also to experience the fictional world of the othered, humiliated and ignored people. Introducing the theatre genius Shakespeare to the young audience, Crouch gives them some lessons about world and directs them to think on incidents:

There are many entirely innocent victims, from the mutilated Lavinia to the loving Desdemona, from Cordelia to Lady Macduff and her sweet young children. These defenceless women and children are the objects of cunning plots and premeditated violence. There are others who simply find themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time: the simple rustic who brings the emperor a gift of pigeons in Titus, the wet nurse who carries Aaron's baby to him in that same play, Cinna the poet in Julius Caesar, and grieving Paris in Romeo and Juliet, who has come to strew flowers on Juliet's grave (Greenblatt, 2008, p. 107-108).

On his stage, believing the power of theatre and also the importance of young generation who will be the adults of the tomorrow, Crouch opens a safe but challenging place for the young audience to discuss on incidents and explore different perspectives. Crouch explains his intention of writing his plays for younger audience with these words:

I have always been interested in the parallels between children's play and adult 'plays'. They are closer than we think. Children are natural dramatists in their play. They structure and create character. I am fascinated by the journey from childhood to adulthood - what we keep with us as we grow up; what we lose. [...] Children play at being adults in an attempt to understand. The emotions we feel as children are no different to those we have as adults - fear, insecurity, jealousy, love. As adults, however, we process and present them differently (Unicorn Theatre).

Children are very keen on catching the nature of theatre and they have very similar feelings with adults. Therefore, in the same way, Crouch has written his adult plays with experimental and original theatrical techniques, his plays for young audiences have been also elaborated with his flexible and idiosyncratic adaptation aesthetics. Most of time the responses of children are more natural, unplanned, direct, and not political; accordingly, their responses give clues about the real impact of play on the audience. Crouch really cares about feelings and experiences of his young audience and believes the centrality of audience experience and audience participation. For that reason, though Crouch has a script for his plays, they are rewritten on stage with the momentarily responses of the audience, mutual interactions, and their spontaneous actions. Additionally, their current status is vital to build up theatre lover adult audiences for future. The audience shares the witnessing act and also rewriting process of the play onstage with the playwright himself. This is an irreplaceable opportunity for unveiling individual and collective experience and for exchanging various ideas.

Clearly, Crouch uses simple language to be open and understandable for the young audience, anyway he encolours and livens up the performance with storytelling technique by which he can easily address the audience and blurs the fact and fictional stage. Crouch presents co-existence of the fictional and real spaces, the tragic and the comic moods and the performer and audience's perception simultaneously. In this way, he can unfold the tragic stories of these minor unfortunate characters with playfulness in words, black humour in laughter and irony in his questions. He can collect any elements of art, literature, music, or dance under his theatricality if they are beneficial to catch and feel true emotions for his young audience.

Analyses of the Plays

In his rewritings of Shakespeare's plays, Crouch's plays can be read as independent writings, beside this they also have close bound with the original sources since the stories are retold from the eyes of minor characters in a way paying regard to the original stories and carrying them in front of the eyes of young audience. For instance, Crouch's character Malvolio appears before his young audience dressed in "filthy long johns", "devil's horn on his head" and "a turkey wattle crudely attached under his chin" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 13), but, contrary to his comic appearance on stage, Malvolio appears as furious character who is highly serious in his pursuit of revenge. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601) finalizes with Malvolio's swear of revenge and Crouch lets this character to take his revenge that is not given place in Shakespeare play since it focuses on the melodramatic happy ending. As a part of *I Shakespeare* series Crouch writes *I, Malvolio* (2010) to give voice to the deluded character Malvolio and he is now on stage to testify his sanity and to take his revenge. Malvolio says "I promise that, by the end of this performance, I will be revenged on the whole pack of you". Malvolio is full of anger and disappointment because he is fooled, humiliated, labelled as mad, tortured and locked a dark place without toilette. And here on stage while he is telling all the happenings in their homeland Illyria, he simultaneously tries to hang himself and wants help from his young audiences, 12-year-old and above, to kill himself. Crouch opens a multifunctional stage for his young audiences who can experience the fun and blues at the same time. In this hanging scene, one of the volunteers will hold the rope and the other one will whip the chair away. Crouch performs this suicide scene such a comic way with farcical actions that audiences torn between feeling sorry for this character who wants to die and laughing the comically described situation. About the responses of children to this scene, Mark Fisher mentions his experiences in an Off-Broadway theatre with 150 students as the audience:

"Is this the kind of thing you like to see?" Mr. Crouch asked from atop the chair, after drafting two teenagers to help with the suicide.

"Yes!" some cried.

"No!" others said.

"Pull the chair!" one boy yelled, to laughter, nervous and not.

After a lingering look of disgust at the audience, Mr. Crouch hopped down (Healy, 2013, par 4).

These divergent answers show that even if we are young, adult or old, we can act with empathy or we can be ignorant to human struggles, or even enjoy watching other people's sufferings. Malvolio reminds the audience that in the process of the hanging they become the accomplice to his suicide; "You don't love me. Do you? Do you? Who loves me here? See? You've just helped me try to kill myself. Nobody loves me. Nobody loves me" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 27). With these words, on the one hand Malvolio shows his desperate and loveless life; on the other hand, he invites his audience to their responsibilities, in theatre space as audience, and in the real life as a part of the society. Crouch reminds their real autonomy in theatre; he creates self-reflexive audience who can present simultaneously in the fictional performance and also in real theatre space. The audience witnesses, explores and lives together the different circumstances from bullying, maddening, mourning or joy with laughter. Malvolio walks around with a "kick me" sign on his back and asks his audiences to kick him. He is angry with the people who torture and label him and now the audience continues bullying him with their kicks. As Crouch says, "the act of cruelty perpetrated by the audience on the performer is the same act of cruelty perpetrated by Sir Toby Belch on Malvolio" (Fisher, 2011). That means Malvolio is not a simple play written for only watching and enjoying, it needs an exploration for deeper meanings and deeper emotions. Malvolio says; "Some are born mad. Some achieve madness. And some have madness thrust upon them" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 31). He is assigned as mad, and he cannot prove his sanity. He is labelled by other people and forced to live his life with this stigma. And one of perpetrators of his tragic condition is so-called noble Blech who behaves improperly by "exploiting weakness in his grieving niece, [...] like a wild animal" (p. 24), and having fun and dancing, drinking ignoring the grief of his niece. So-called mad Malvolio puts the discussion on the social hierarchies and the problem of stigmatisation. Even Malvolio mocks the melodrama in the *Twelfth Night* that seeks amusement in cross-dressing and shows the life through rose-coloured glasses with love and happy marriages. To Malvolio, this melodramatic story is very simple, artificial, and not true to life. He comments on their story with these harsh words; "And they say I am mad (...) the costumes are removed, and everyone is revealed for what they are- IDIOTS and MORONS and LUNATICS. (...) and off they all go, hand in hand into the MIRE of filth and corruption and insanity and theatricals" (p. 33). Clearly Malvolio warns his young audience about the real world that is so sophisticated to finalise simple clear-cut happy endings.

The revenge of Malvolio comes at the end of the play. Before that, the audience watches Malvolio's "transformation from a clown to a king" (qtd in. <https://www.britishcouncil/>). On stage Malvolio gradually changes his outfits, and he takes off his clown's costume and puts costume of a noble/ king. He changes himself to a noble outlook probably emphasizing that this is his story/destiny and now he is determining it by himself choosing to be a visible important person. Finally, he reveals his revenge:

And now for my revenge. Are you ready? Here it is. I will leave you sitting here. Sitting here with nothing to do. Sitting here. With the lights on. With the blood on your backsides...Feeling a little foolish. (...) This theatre is closed. But before that, I just want to fetch something to show you. He exits. He does not return. End (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 34).

Retallack dwells on the final point of the play, he states that; "Like a Beckettian clown, the more Malvolio embraces despair, the more we laugh at him. His revenge, ultimately, is to abandon us to ourselves-perhaps the only way a victim can deal effectively with their bully" (quoted in Crouch, 2011/1, p. 10). Malvolio walks away from the stage by leaving his young audiences alone with their own judgements, maybe with the feelings of mercy, guilt, relief, despair or enjoyment. His revenge can be interpreted as a lesson for introspection, self-judgement, and self-realisation as well.

Crouch's other play *I, Peaseblossom* (2004) that is the adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) has also warnings for the young audience about tricks for lovers, the forced marriages and distrustful relations. Labelled as "a gloriously anarchic dream of a 'dream'" (www.fairymonsterghost.co.uk, p. 11), this play can be read as a satire for the original story that disdains human

relations and love. The unfortunate neglected fairy speaks wisely even if he/it is costumed comically. Restaging Shakespeare's comedy by adapting in his own theatricality and his own peculiar narrative style, Crouch settles in front of his audience as a bold, tall Shakespearean fairy with his little wings. Appealing to the young audience 6-year-old and above, Crouch forms this play funny with many comic elements like clownish acts and funny costumes. As in his other play *I Malvolio*, in this play Crouch uses the comic element as a tool to take the young audience's attention on the story and on the performance in general. He begins to tell the story where it is left, from the late wedding night. Demetrius and Helena, Lysander and Hermia and Theseus and Hippolyta get married, and these three weddings are celebrated at the same night. Peaseblossom mentions how tired he is because of that busy night and he also finds energy to comment on upon the institution of marriage addressing to young audiences:

PEASEBLOSSOM: *Can I ask you a personal question? Can I? ('Yes'). Which of you here are... actually MARRIED? Serious question. Please don't shy away from it. How many?... Now, how many of you are NOT married? Yes? Yes? Well this question is for you:*

WHAT ON EARTH DO PEOPLE SEE IN IT? (I, Peaseblossom, p. 75).

Choosing 'marriage' as a theme for young audiences, Crouch invites them the grown-up's world. As a fairy, Peaseblossom cannot understand the importance of marriage and he says, "so-called love and so-called marriage" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 76), and most probably the young audience cannot apprehend the adult world and its necessities, too. As it is presented in the prologue, when the audience gets into the theatre, they see Peaseblossom "carrying a shapeless teddy bear, or old comforter - dancing, trippingly, wings down" (p. 73). And he is casting spells everything on the stage from chairs, audience to the pool of vomits and wedding confetti; "Half under his breath, half sung. Bless the chair... Bless this bit of wall... As the audience enter, he starts to bless bits of them and theirs, too" (p. 73). After the prologue, Peaseblossom has six different dreams in which his anxieties, desires and fears are revealed. Spell and dreams in the play make easier the limitless representation of images and incidents. At the end of the play, Peaseblossom wakes up, points at his watch and says only 3 minutes pass from beginning to the play to the end. He asks "Have I been asleep? ("Yes" from the audience. "No" from PEASEBLOSSOM-.)" (p. 94). These dreams are closely relevant with the incidents of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, however Peaseblossom has some words for his audience at the end of each dream that reveals the world of grown-ups and warns about the false appearances. In the disguise of clownish fairy costume and via the different dreams he has, Peaseblossom presents and shows both serious matters in life and dreams people wish for.

I, Banquo (2005) is Crouch's another Shakespeare adaptation play in which the great tragedy *Macbeth* (1606) is retold from the eyes of the murdered friend, Banquo. Contrary to Crouch's some funnier adaptations like *I, Malvolio* and *I, Peaseblossom*, this play includes blood and seriousness which are not fun at all. Besides narrating the general story of the original play, this performance invites the young audience, 11-year-old and above, to think about many important themes like friendship, betrayal, greediness, manipulation, and murder. Banquo is assassinated by his oldest and dear friend Macbeth's order. When he is murdered, his son Fleance is beside him, luckily, this boy achieves to escape and stays alive. On Crouch's stage, again Banquo and Fleance appear together, Fleance sits aside as a teenage guitarist and in some scenes, he accompanies the narrative with loud chaotic notes of his electric guitar, and Banquo stays in front of the audience to retell the story from his own perspective. These two unfortunate characters who are tragically separated from each other in original play meet the audience together in this play.

Banquo tells the incidents one by one, their encounter with the weird sisters and their prophesies and the murder of the king and more. The stage is designed very functional by Graeme Gilmor; there is a big cauldron of blood in the middle of stage and there is a blank wide page/paper that covers the back wall of the stage. This design is very symbolic because during the performance Banquo plunges his hand into this cauldron of blood and sprinkles blood on the blank page while he is revealing the killings and assassinations. As the play progresses, the violence of the incidents rises and the number of the victims increases, for that reason in his retelling Banquo dips his hands more and more to the blood; first he daubs his fingers with blood then his all hands then his arms, then his head, his throat and all his body. This big white page is filled with blood again and again in every violent action happened in the story. It is a symbolic representation of the human ill choices that stain their life. If the life is supposed as the white page, people's decision and actions will colour it with goodness or malignancy.

From the very beginning of the play, Banquo addresses to the audience firstly giving their roles as the oldest friend of Banquo. Now the audience is not the viewer or observer of the performance, the audience is given the task of imagining themselves as Macbeth, oldest friend of Banquo. Banquo says:

BANQUO: *"Just imagine even if it isn't true, ...You and me. We're friends. Imagine that we go back a long way. You've known me for a long time. We are friends when my son Fleance, was born. ...Through victories and defeats. We were friends standing back to back in battle, our swords sparkling and smoking and carving through muscle and bone and gut and brain"* (I, Banquo, p. 37).

Banquo opens an empathetic space for the audience in which they can feel and measure the possible emotions of Banquo as a loyal friend of Macbeth. Unluckily, the extreme trust of Banquo to his oldest friend brings his tragic end. He cannot read the incidents happened around him; the murder of King Duncan should give Banquo some lessons about the human desires and about the possible evil sides of people, even of the most kind-hearted ones. He relies on their friendship so much that he blindly behaves without taking any precaution to protect himself and his family. When he realizes the truth, it is too late; "I think you played most foully or it. BUT I DO NOTHING, but to take my horse to ride. And I think as well what they said to me; that I will be the father of many kings. BUT I DO NOTHING, but to take my horse ride" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 44). The ignorance of Banquo to analyse the events around him and his insistence to

feel endless confidence on people do not bring bliss for him. He should have been on the alert against Macbeth's evil plans of assassinations. Sara Soncini comments the stage direction by saying that "Banquo literally getting his hands dirty through his act of witnessing" (2017, p. 29). Similar way, in Crouch's performance while telling the cruel acts of Macbeth, Banquo blends with blood on the stage as if he was accompanying with Macbeth in his crimes.

While depicting his frustrations, regrets and finally his tragic death, at the same time Banquo reveals the ultimate end for Macbeth who comes more tyrant and cruel each passing day like a lesson for human being, "You're beginning to envy me, to envy Duncan in his grave, those two guards you slaughtered. And it's this torture of the mind that pushes you further and further, deeper and deeper. You will gain no peace until every doubt is removed, every enemy destroyed, until the snake is dead" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 47). From its theme to its staging, this play reveals many vital issues and warnings for its young audience about human nature and relations such as friendship, personal benefit, trust, ambition, and power. The narratives of Banquo unfold the importance of people's choices in their life and the importance of a strong discernment to realise virtue and vice or friend and foe.

In a similar way Crouch organizes his *I, Caliban* (2003) that is adapted from *The Tempest* (1610-1611) by focusing the minor character of the play and presents an alternative perspective from the eyes of ignored outsider character Caliban. Now the young audience can compare Shakespeare's Caliban who is depicted as monstrous and untamed with Crouch's Caliban who is described with loneliness, nostalgia for his mother and sadness for his ugly figure. While performing this play, Crouch stands on stage wearing his everyday clothes, an old life jacket, and he does not need any costume to present his Caliban character differently; however, in addition to this ordinariness in this play he wears "a pair of 'monstrous' feet" (Fairymonsterghost). Caliban starts to tell what has happened on the island where he calls "my island" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 55). He stands alone on this island even questioning his loneliness and freedom since everyone has gone leaving him behind. Calling himself a monster, he introduces himself to his audiences and reveals a part of his life story.

While he is living on his island alone, Prospero and his daughter Miranda come to the island and disturb Caliban's ordinary life. At first, Caliban thinks that Prospero is a virtuous man since he treats him very gently and softly. Prospero helps him, feeds him with berries, teaches him playing music and teaches about words, moon or island. Unfortunately, these good treatments do not last long and Caliban realizes how cruel and cold-hearted he can be: "he gets into his stride and starts to treat me like a sullen dog and beats me and orders me and shouts me and I become his servant even though I WAS THE KING" (p. 60). Prospero turns into a tyrant who behaves Caliban like a servant. Crouch explains the relationship between Caliban and Prospero in general sense and says, "he's discovered by Prospero who tries to turn him into something that he's not. Prospero tries to 'civilise' Caliban- to make Caliban into someone like a Duke or a gentleman" (<http://www.fairymonsterghost>). Most probably while teaching something to Caliban, Prospero wants a civilized servant not a civilized friend for him. He is exploited in the island by Prospero to do any labour in or out the house, despite this, he is not allowed to mix their 'civilized' word in Italy.

After his leaving, Prospero's domination ends in the island, however, it could not be easy for Caliban to accustom to his new freedom. His dependence for Prospero does not seem to finalize instantly; and clearly, he feels hurt for being left behind. That makes Caliban think himself again as a monster, a creature people want to stay away. Caliban cannot understand the reason of ill-treatments towards him and by means of Caliban's character development Crouch stresses the nature of people as the social creatures. Caliban confesses that "he treats me like a dog I begin to behave like a dog. Well you would, wouldn't you?" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 60). Human beings develop their characteristics and attitudes interactively with other people around them. Crouch organizes this interactive setting on stage with Caliban and his young audiences. In the same vein, Caliban is ignored and humiliated on the island, he anticipates that he will be laughed at on stage. He directly addresses to the opinions of his audiences by being ready for listening to different comments that can be harsh and bitter. He daringly says, "You're thinking what an ugly man. [...] You're thinking Sir, Miss, why have we come here to see such an ugly man?" (p. 55). Crouch ironically ridicules his character's appearance and impels the audience to think about it, in fact he does not think this character is monstrous or frightening. In the prologue, by drawing attention to his physical appearance he puts on rubber to his face and asks the audience "Am I ugly now? Now? Am I?" (p. 55) then a 'yes' comes from audience that feeds Crouch's intention in this play. Crouch conveys his experience and his aim through these words:

One of my favourite moments in I, Caliban is when I cover my face in rubber bands and ask the audience to agree that I'm ugly. I then tell them that they'd be ugly if they'd had a life like mine. I get the audience to laugh at me; then I immediately get them to feel bad about laughing at me, and to understand why I am the way I am (Fairymonsterghost).

Crouch approaches Caliban from very different perspective and he does not approve that Caliban is a monster. He says, "lots of other characters in *The Tempest* describe Caliban as a monster. But I don't think he's a monster like the Abominable Snowman or Frankenstein's monster. I just think he's different from everyone else- and people who are different are often thought of as freaks" (<http://www.fairymonsterghost>). Crouch persistently dwells on how ugly Caliban looks in order to reveal this sickening feeling he experiences any time. Because of his ugly appearance and his outcast witch mother, Caliban is condemned to be alone and sorrowful outsider. Nonetheless Crouch allows for his sincere missing to his mother as a sample of his emotions that are valuable as any people. He talks to his audiences; "Her name was Sycorax. Much as your mum's name might be Pauline or Julie or Linda or Karen or Christine. [...] (*He takes mother's name form the audience*) But she was my mum. MY MUM. [...] *He leaves the stage and returns with a framed photograph*" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 57). Crouch does not permit Caliban to be left alone with these emotions, he motivates the audience to think about their own mothers asking about their names and then with the help of the photograph of Caliban's mother the audience also feels more intimate to Caliban's feeling. In an empathetic way, the audience can see Caliban in another perspective as the seeker of any kind of love.

As it can be observed, this play *I, Caliban* is full of detections on stigmatisation, outcasting, humiliation, prejudice, and social barriers. Through this character Caliban, the young audience can re-evaluate human relations, nevertheless Crouch does not aim to preach his

audiences while exposing these issues. He turns the stage a fun place with Caliban's magic tricks performed accompanied by a cheesy music and with the revitalisation of the scenes with the contribution of young audiences. As Crouch says, "There's a bit of all of us in Caliban" (<http://www.fairymonsterghost>) but he knits his play unwearingly for his young audiences, they can explore fun and laughter, and also take lesson at the same time.

In his other Shakespeare adaptation play *I, Cinna (The Poet)* (2012), Crouch uses the stage like a workshop for his young audiences. At the beginning of the play, they are given a pen and a notebook, and in the course of the play they can use them according to the instruction of Crouch. Rather than presenting farcical comic representation, this play is staged in a serious but a collaborative atmosphere. The play starts with the scene from William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) where the little scene of the Cinna the poet takes place in the Act 3. Cinna the poet is killed by the citizens while he is going to attend the funeral of Caesar as his friend. The citizens mistakenly confuse him with the Cinna the conspirator and without listening to his rejections they kill him. Crouch starts his play where Shakespeare ends for Cinna the poet. In the tragedy, his unfortunate death is not taken account by anyone, and Crouch wishes to give a chance to announce his tragic death and to tell his story. In this solo show, he appears as the character Cinna the poet and the other characters are also vocalized by him through storytelling technique. During the play, the narration is supported by audio-visual materials like mobile phone, computer videos, and sound effects.

While Cinna is exposing the story of Caesar and Brutus, he invites the audience to correlate the fictional events with the current political events and ponder upon them. In the play, many incidents from the assassination of the Caesar, the attempts of Brutus for democracy, his misinterpretation by the people, the outrage of the public to their easy manipulated nature create discussable issues for the audience. As Sally Hales indicates, "Crouch weaves a rich tapestry of meaning that encompasses revolution, republicanism, democracy, the power of the written word, freedom and personal responsibility in a digital age" (Hales, 2020). Past events are carried on stage, moreover, they are organised like a bridge between past and present. Crouch reveals Caesar as the great general and Brutus as the great politician. While reading the news about Caesar coronation and ongoing riots, Cinna wants the audience to write "I am free" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 20), then the words conspiracy, republic and equality are written together, and their meanings are questioned. He continues asking them to write the name of the country, the name of the leader, king, queen, dictator, and a name to describe him/her. This is a query time when the audience can think about the real world.

Cinna watches/reads the news on his mobile phone, and he transfers to the audience the information about the assassination of Caesar by the conspirators Cassius, Casca, Cinna and Brutus who kill Caesar with their daggers. The streets are full of terror and confusion. Crowds are furious with their hero's death and they want the reason of his assassination, they want to see their punishment. Cinna is indecisive about taking any step to show his ideas on the happenings around him; "what do poets do? Tell me? What is their purpose, to get involved or to stand on the sidelines? What do I do? The world is changing outside my door. Do I make myself part of that change?" (p. 37). Here additionally his individual responsibilities, Cinna questions the duties of the poets. How they should function in that kind of circumstance; should they take a side or be outsider to all these happenings? Cinna says "I have lost my voice as a poet. I want to write about love and freedom and peace, but the world won't let me" (p. 25). Cinna is not brave enough to put his ideas into words loudly, and the world is not peaceful enough for a safe and uneventful life. Cinna knows that he must stand upright and take responsibility as a poet, unfortunately he struggles to take any action and to raise his voice. He knows the power of the words mentioning the existence of 'powerful words' and 'the slave words' which can create heaven or hell. Anyway, his lack of self-confidence discourages him from taking a step further.

CINNA: *What can I do to stop that? How will my words change the world?*

And life will continue- the same corruption, the same stupidity, the same poverty, the same hunger. Hunger! (I, Cinna, p. 29).

Chaos is everywhere and Cinna thinks he couldn't achieve anything with his poems. Then he sees that the words of Brutus and then Mark Antony change everything. Firstly, Brutus speaks to the crowd and he defends republicanism, equality, and freedom for everyone by condemning dictatorship and tyranny. His words are highly effective on people, even so, the crowd is also impressed and influenced by Mark Antony's words who speaks later as a supporter of Caesar. People angrily head towards the conspirators to defeat them. Although Cinna as a poet sees himself as "a small man on the high tide of history" (p. 43), and refrains from taking big steps for himself and for society, Antony's speech proves how effective the poems can be and how the words can manipulate people so easily. Even though Cinna wishes to be away from chaos and riots, he finds himself in the centre of a big confusion. He encounters the angry citizens when he goes out and his name is confused the conspirator Cinna. Without listening to his explanation about his name, the crowd kills and tears into pieces Cinna the poet on the street. The unfortunate coincidence costs for Cinna's life; he is at the wrong place at the wrong time.

During the performance, Crouch gives an important task to the young audience. Cinna wants his audience to write their own poem entitled THE DEATH OF CINNA as a commemoration and also a warning for all the world:

CINNA: *Write why I die? For having the wrong name? For being in the wrong place at the wrong time? Was I innocent because I wouldn't get involved? Or I was guilty because I wouldn't involve? Write my last thought My last feelings [...] You have three minutes. Bring my death to life with your words* (I, Cinna, p. 45).

Each poem written about Cinna provides immortality for him and also, they are like mitigant for his tragic death: "My body is left in the street, twisted and broken. It is ignored by commuters and pecked at by crowds. Collected by council workers, I am slung into the back of a truck, placed in a common grave and consigned to eternity" (Crouch, 2011/1, p. 46). If Crouch does not give voice to Shakespeare's character Cinna, like the other minor characters of Shakespeare, most probably he will be shadowed by the nobility and priority of main characters of the original text. Now young audiences can ponder upon Cinna's victimisation in an accidental death, the power of words and the changing policies of the states.

Conclusion

For his Shakespeare adaptation plays *I, Caliban*; *I, Peaseblossom*; *I, Banquo*; *I, Malvolio* and then *I, Cinna (the Poet)*, Crouch opens the flexible limitless stages of contemporary theatre for these newly recreated characters and the young audience as the potential addressee. Crouch's plays are reformulated according to new aesthetics with the possibilities of different forms and rewritten plots, and additionally they achieve to build a historical bridge from past to present. Crouch also knows to unfold a critique for the status quo presented through the well-known stories. Shakespeare's perfection in dealing with the real human nature and true emotions of people enables him to appeal any people from educated elite groups to simple men (See. *The Norton Anthology*, 2005, p. 1059), since Shakespeare appeals all that group, now Crouch follows a different path and directs his attention to the young audience while adapting Shakespeare's plays to contemporary stage. Through his Shakespeare series and *I, Cinna*, as John Retallack says, "Crouch shows us that young people's theatre is alive, is aware of its heritage and is moving forward" (quoted in Crouch, 2011/1, p. 9). Accordingly, Crouch organises his adaptation plays by waving aside the rule of the strict fidelity to original text. Concerning his motivation to write these plays, Crouch produces his own theatre aesthetics and presents different theatrical experience in these plays to mix his young audiences into his plays mentally and physically. Along with the colourful and entertaining performances of the plays, a kind of didacticism is possibly felt since these plays focus on the crucial themes that impel the audience to think about them and to take lessons from the experiences of these fictional characters. While having fun with the comic atmosphere of the performances, simultaneously young audiences learn vital considerations related to the nature of human beings. Leaving aside any stigmatisation or marginalisation, these plays show the young audience that every individual is unique and precious. They can feel that these chosen secondary characters are the main characters in their own life stories, even though they are the minor invisible characters in someone's story.

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