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Abstract

This research, studies John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016) in relation to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603) from an intertextual dialogic and cultural materialist approach. This study, as a matter of fact, aims to discuss and investigate the two works of John Updike and Ian McEwen, and their connection to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* relying on different theories which might help us in our quest to identify the nature of this link and conceptualise the scope of our study. Among them figures Intertextual dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin, more precisely overt polemic and stylization. Other theoretical concepts include Cultural Materialist developed by Raymond Williams which is organised as such: residual, dominant, and emergent. After analysing the two novels in the light of William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*, and by using the above mentioned theories, we came to the conclusion that both works are intertexts of William Shakespeare's source text. Both writers reflect the issues of their societies in the different eras using texts that are rich in meaning made possible by the use of plot, themes, characters and Shakespearian language.

I. Introduction:

This research is an attempt to study John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016) in relation to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603). Our main concern is basically to conduct this study from quite different theoretical backgrounds mainly, dialogism and cultural materialism. This dissertation, focuses on finding the connection between the two 21st century novels in relation to William Shakespeare's *tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Both novelists have been inspired by a masterpiece written in a different era and a markedly different background. Our aim, then, is to shed light on the textual affinities and parallels that the subsequent works have with Shakespeare's original text; in addition to, studying their contemporary ideological purports.

In this work, our intention, therefore, is to show how both authors have remodeled Shakespeare's text under the heavy impact of their social and cultural backgrounds. McEwen and Updike managed, to a certain extent, to use the English boards text to portray their characters and plot as mirrors which reflect contemporary societies. We intend, accordingly, to establish a kind of connection between the selected novels and the tragedy of *Hamlet*, and this falls in the same vein of thought with Julia Kristeva's perception of intertextuality. The theorist claims that texts are connected; they are compiled from pre-existent texts¹; for her, intertextuality is, thus, to shape the meaning of texts through the reading of other texts. So, relying on concept of dialogism developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, we will try to show how the selected novels are inter-related with Shakespeare's text by analysing different components in both works such as themes, characters, setting and text.

¹ Allen Graham, *Intertextuality*, (Routledge, London: 2000), p. 35.

Our objective then is to apply the concept of overt polemic and Stylization on *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* in an attempt to understand how the two authors used Shakespeare's source text to suit markedly different historical, social and economic contexts in their own texts. We will also appeal to Raymond William's cultural materialism, which is one of the major perspectives for analysing human societies and cultures. We will mainly focus on three concepts coined by the theorist: the Dominant, the Residual and the Emergent. The purpose is to try to produce a critical understanding of the values, beliefs and worldviews as coined by John Updike and Ian McEwen and since John Updike is a social critic, the aim then, is to show how societies are shaped in both works, by determining the residual ideological and cultural aspects as well as the dominant and emergent ones.

We have chosen John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016), for the reason that, these two works has been inspired by one of the famous tragedies of all times, William Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* (1603). Both authors revived this masterpiece, by giving it a new version or a rebirth in their proper way. In addition to the historical background that can be retained from both works and authors, indeed, *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* reflect the 21st Century, and make us reconsider the life of each one of us.

The Review of Literature:

From our readings of the literature written on John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell*, we have noticed that the two novels have been considerably scrutinised from various perspectives and reviewed by many scholars and online magazines. To begin with John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*, many studies have been conducted, explaining a wide range of issues and the novel has been studied by various critics and from different approaches, using different theories.

In the article entitled "*Supremacy: The People and Institutions that Strip Gertrude of her Power in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Updike's Gertrude and Claudius*" (2010), Alana Shuma analyses, from a feminist perspective, how the character Gertrude and Gerutha have difficulties in their lives. Shakespeare and Updike provide a pointed insight into the problems women faced during the medieval period. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Gertrude is seen as being a property to be used and she may even be discarded if necessary, however, her position was high, but this does not give her any permission to be a decision maker. In this sense, Shuma writes:

Although Gertrude is a member of the royal family, the boundaries laid out by the Christian church and the men in the royal court define Gertrude life. Gertrude may appear to permit herself to be a controlled and weak women; however it is her insignificant societal status that does not permit her any power to control her destiny².

Same story line as Gerutha in *Gertrude and Claudius*, Alana Shuma states that the submissive life of Gerutha began early in her early sixteen, when she was ordered to marry a man she does not love. Gerutha knows that, even if she is the Princess of Denmark, she has no more rights than

²Shuma allana, (2010), "*Supremacy : The People and Institutions that Strip Gertrude of her Power in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Updike's Gertrude and Claudius*", *ESSAI*: Vol.8, article 39 Accessed on: Marsh 2021. Available on: <https://dc.cod.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1333&context=essai>.

the peasant on the street when it comes to the king's order³. Her review speaks about Gertrude and Gerutha, whom have less power than man and how did people and institutions contributed to the strip of power from those women⁴.

Another article "*Updike Turns "Hamlet" on Head*" (2000), published by Chris Patsilelis who relied on a historicist perspective introduces the novel *Gertrude and Claudius* as superb, plausible prequel to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*⁵. A dark Elizabethan tragedy about a young prince who in his way for avenging his father, who was murdered by his own family member, pulls almost all of the characters to their death⁶. The author also states that John Updike like William Shakespeare had based his story on the 12th century sources and did also give his characters Scandinavian names which makes him a fervent adherent to the historical details of the middle ages. Patsilelis also studies the differences between the characters in *Hamlet* and in *Gertrude and Claudius*. Gertrude is described as living adulterously while Updike's Gertrude comes off merely as a dissatisfied wife who finds love in the arms of her brother-in-law⁷. The main character Hamlet who is considered as being sweet, sympathetic and justifiably vengeful prince is turned head down into a cold, mocking "foppish rude brat"⁸.

Judie Newman is another critic who examined Updike's work from an intertextual perspective. The author states, in her article "*Supremacy : The People and Institutions that Strip Gertrude of her Power in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Updike's Gertrude and*

³ Shuma allana, (2010), "*Supremacy : The People and Institutions that Strip Gertrude of her Power in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Updike's Gertrude and Claudius*", *ESSAI*: Vol.8, article 39 Accessed on: Marsh 2021. Available on: <https://dc.cod.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1333&context=essai>.

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ Patsilelis, Chris (2000), "*Updike turns "Hamlet" on head*", Accessed on: Marsh 2021. Available on: <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2000-03-26-0003282041-story.html>.

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Ibid.,

⁸ Ibid.,

Claudius”(2010), that the novel is the only one set entirely in Europe and it is dedicated to his second wife Martha⁹. Newman states that only Feng (later Claudius) the adulterous lover of Hamlet’s mother and then her second husband quotes from the troubadours; “one of the class of lyric poets and musicians of knightly rank in the 11th and in the end of the 13th century whose major themes was courtly love. In the classic exposition of courtly love, love cannot exist in marriage; it depends on obstacles, whether distance, a husband or the barriers of class and race”¹⁰. Indeed, Feng in *Gertrude and Claudius* is absent from the Danish court for thirty years, and when he came back, he was unable to bear the sight of his beloved’s marriage to his brother, however, he was entirely devoted to her (Gerutha) until the age of forty-eight.¹¹

Concerning Ian McEwen’s *Nutshell* (2016), many studies have been conducted explaining a variety of issues and the novel has been studied by various critics from myriad perspectives. Biwu Shang in her article “*Ethical Literary Criticism and Ian McEwen’s Nutshell*” (2018) attempted to examine the literary work from the perspective of ethical literary criticism meaning that she reads and analysis the work from an ethical perspective, “taking into consideration ethical dilemma, ethical identities and ethical choices”¹². Ethical dilemma means, a problem in the decision making between two choices which are both acceptable, and Ethical identity is the claims of individuality and identity whereas ethical choice is making an ethical decision between good and evil. Biwu Shang maintains that almost all characters that figure in

⁹ Newman, Judie (2018), “*Intertextual Updike: Gertrude and Claudius*”, Accessed on: Marsh 2021. Available on: <https://books.google.dz/books?id=nuRaDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA166&lpg=PA166&dq=judie+newman+gertrude+and+claudius&source=bl&ots=QNqy2IHWK&sig=ACfU3U2A494UiL6J32kzV9VmfKeDdmgOow&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwic5YyxIzDwAhVxnVwKHaSfBIgQ6AEwDnoECBAQAw#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹ Ibid.,

¹² Biwu Shang, (2018) “*Ethical literary criticism and Ian McEwan’s Nutshell, Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*”, 59:2, 142-153, DOI: 10.1080/00111619.2017.1378612,PDF.

the novel are in some way or another stocked or enclosed either by their ethical identities or by their misplaced ethical identities, as a consequence it restrains them from making their own choices which will lead to ethical tragedies. In other word, Biwu Shang means that the characters are not on free will, but they are led by their ethical and misplaced identities which will lead later to the making of their own ethical tragedies¹³. Biwu Shang attempts to decode the metaphors implied in *Nutshell*. First the nutshell of desire mainly concerned with Claude and Trudy who lost their ethical identities as a consequence of their pursuit of sex and money¹⁴. Second the nutshell of poetry, concerned with the narrator's father John, who tries hard to restore his ethical identity and make peace with his wife by reading poetry, but he fails because of Trudy's rejection of his poetry¹⁵. At last there is the nutshell of womb about the unborn fetus stuck between his identity as an unborn fetus and his identity as dutiful son of his father¹⁶.

The second study about *Nutshell* is concerned with "*The Object Relation Theory from the Perspective of Melanie Klein*" (2018) by Fatemeh Jalali. A theory of relationships focuses on the link between people particularly within a family and especially between a mother and her son. According to Klein "the child creates ambivalent relation to the mother: on the one hand, there is a capacity for love, and on the other, there is discomfort, frustration and pain, as a consequence hatred can emerge"¹⁷. As what happens between the fetus and Trudy; indeed, the fetus have both a feeling of love and hatred towards his mother. Melanie Klein states that, "if the object, the mother has been introjected as good and reliable, it becomes a basis for identification, meaning

¹³ Biwu Shang, (2018) "*Ethical literary criticism and Ian McEwan's Nutshell, Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*", 59:2, 142-153, DOI: 10.1080/00111619.2017.1378612,PDF.

¹⁴Nie Zhenzhao, *Interdisciplinary studies of literature*, (Knowledge Hub Publishing Company Limited, Hong Kong: 2017), p. 28.

¹⁵ Ibid.,

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷Fatemeh Jalali, "*Investigating the object relation theory in Ian McEwen's selected Novel "Nutshell" From the perspective of Melanie Klein*". Accessed on: Marsh 2021. Available on: <http://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/921/pdf921>

that the role of the mother is of crucial importance and the personality of a child develops on the basis of a good identification with the mother and later with the father”¹⁸. She also says that if the experiences are not satisfying the representation will be bad object. Klein believes that the foetus in *Nutshell* introject both bad and good object.¹⁹Indeed, through this review one might understand that the fetus is a bad and good object and this is shaped from his mother’s behavior towards him which, influences him even though his not born yet.

¹⁸ Fatemeh Jalali, "*Investigating the object relation theory in Ian McEwen’s selected Novel “Nutshell” From the perspective of Melanie Klein*". Accessed on: Marsh 2021.
Available on: <http://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/921/pdf921>.

¹⁹ Ibid,.

Issue and Working Hypothesis:

From our review of literature, we might notice that both *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* have been the center of many critics and had been reviewed by many scholars. Concerning John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*; Alana Shuma analysed the characters of the novel in a way to show that they have difficulties in their lives; certainly how women face difficulties during the medieval times. Another study shows the difference between characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*, describing the novel of Updike as a superb, plausible prequel to *Hamlet*. Concerning *Nutshell*, studies from distinct issues have been conducted on the novel. It has initially been studied from the perspective of ethical literary criticism (ethical dilemma, identities and choices) as done with the characters. Another study is concerned with the object relationship theory from the perspective of Melanie Klein, mainly the relation within a family, particularly, a son and a mother as between the fetus and Trudy. From our previous review of literature, and from our knowledge, no previous studies have combined these works in a single research, and under these two theories: our main concern then, is to study both novels from an intertextual dialogic perspective, focusing on Mikhail Bakhtin's critical concepts such as stylization and overt polemic. In addition, ideology has been under meticulous scrutiny relating on Raymond Williams' concepts: Dominant, Residual and Emergent, in the purpose of understanding culture and society in both John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell*.

Methodological Outline:

This research will be patterned on the IMRAD format, with a general introduction, material and methods, Results and Discussion sections. The discussion section will be divided into two chapters. Chapter one will be devoted to the study of John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwan's *Nutshell* from the perspective of intertextual dialogism, and the second chapter will consider the selected works from a cultural materialistic perspective. This research focuses on finding the affinities between the two selected novels and William Shakespeare's *the Tragedy of Hamlet*, by analysing the different components of the works relating to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism as well as the study of the ideological aspects as presented by both authors in the books.

II. Methods and Materials :

Methods:

1. Theoretical Framework:

This section aims to shed light on our theoretical framework. In the interest of relevance, we intend to undertake our piece of research under the theoretical guidelines of Bakhtin's concept of intertextual dialogism in order to study the link between the selected novels in relation to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, relaying precisely, on the concepts of overt polemic concerning *Gertrude and Claudius* and stylization regarding *Nutshell*. Beside, this study appeals to Williams' cultural materialism in both works, focusing mainly on the concepts of the "Dominant, Residual and Emergent". Subsequently, our choice is based on these theories in order to analyse both works from various issues. First, intertextuality, to study the affinities of the selected novels in relation to *Hamlet*, Second, cultural materialism, to study society as presented by John Updike and McEwen, in different periods of times.

Intertextual dialogism:

Intertextuality is said to have its origin from the Latin word *intertexto*²⁰. The term is first introduced by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s. The primary concern of this theory is to draw relations among texts; a literary device that creates an inter-relationship between two or more texts. Kristeva believes in the unstable nature of language, she makes it clear that all texts have multiple meanings²¹. In addition, she affirms, that authors compile their texts from pre-existent

²⁰ Voicu Mihnea Simandan, 2010, *An Introduction to intertextuality*, accessed on March 2021, Available on: <https://www.simandan.com/an-introduction-to-intertextuality/>

²¹ Voicu mihnea Simandan, 2018. *Brief Consideration on the concept of intertextuality / Literary Theory 101*, Accessed on March 2021, Available on: <https://medium.com/@voicumihnea/brief-considerations-on-the-concept-of-intertextuality-literary-theory-101-18d9ef27290>.

texts that meet and cross each other to result in a textual interaction²². The text is not individual, isolated object, but rather a compilation of cultural textuality²³, which means that texts are made up of all the different discourses and social structures which are the culture as a whole. A cultural or social text, then, holds with it all the ideological structures and struggles that exist in society. Bakhtin who influenced Krestiva's intertextual theory has, accordingly, developed his concept of dialogism in contrast to monologism. In fact, for Bakhtin, intertextual dialogism or the double voiced discourse includes "stylization" "hidden and overt polemic"; first, and since we are concerned with overt polemic; it is a concept developed by Bakhtin, and it studies contrasting discourses that clash inside a text, to shock and create a polemic with the readers who extract these references that authors make to other writers' texts and how they use it to produce new interpretations that are at the opposite of the original text. Thus, the work of Bakhtin contains two discourses that are in conflict due to the major changes that the authors' text adds to the original text. Second, stylization, for Bakhtin it is a concept of intertextual dialogism, for him, all literary works engage in intertextual dialogue with other literary works. Stylization, then, is a rewriting or a remake of someone's writing. As a matter of fact, it is used in the purpose of sharing an idea or an ideology, thus, without, attaining the source's text ideals.

²² Voicu mihnea Simandan, 2018. *Brief Consideration on the concept of intertextuality / Literary Theory 101*, Accessed on Marsh 2021, Available on: <https://medium.com/@voicumihnea/brief-considerations-on-the-concept-of-intertextuality-literary-theory-101-18d9ef27290>.

²³ Allen Graham, *Intertextuality*,(Routledge, London, 2000),p. 36.

Cultural Materialism: Residual, Dominant and Emergent:

Cultural Materialism is mainly based on explaining the cultural similarities and differences as well as models for cultural change within a societal framework. It incorporates ideas from Marxism, cultural evolution, and cultural ecology²⁴. For Raymond Williams Cultural Materialism often identifies three concepts; “dominant, Residual and Emergent” which are the three parts of any cultural group. In his book *Marxism and literature* (1977), he explains how the dominant social structures maintain their dominance while at the same time other patterns, norms, social groups and individuals in fact contradict, subvert or work with those dominant cultures²⁵. Williams states that the dominant is clearly visible in a cultural group; it is the controlling and supreme practices within a group, whether it is political, social or economic. However, to reveal and to speak of the dominant and affective culture, we should rely on the “Residual” and “Emergent”. He writes:

We have certainly still to speak of the “dominant” and “effective”, and in these senses of the hegemonic, but we find that we have also to speak, and indeed with further differentiation of each, of the “residual” and “emergent”[...]which are significant both to themselves and in what they reveal of the characteristics of the dominant²⁶.

The Residual is the influence of old cultural practices on subsequent societies, consciously or unconsciously. Williams, however, stresses the fact that the residue is different from “archaic” which means something outdated and abandoned. He clearly states:

²⁴ *Cultural Materialism*. Accessed on: Marsh, 2021.

Available on: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/culturalanthropology/chapter/cultural-materialism/#:~:text=Cultural%20materialism%20is%20one%20of,cultural%20evolution%2C%20and%20cultural%20ecology.&text=They%20argued%20that%20societies%20go,feudalism%20to%20capitalism%20to%20communism.>

²⁵ Mrjerrio. 2016. *Understanding Raymond Williams: “DOMINANT, RESIDUAL, EMERGENT”*. Accessed on: marsh, 2021. Available on:

<https://eng703.wordpress.com/2016/03/18/understanding-raymond-williams-dominant-residual-emergent/>.

²⁶ Williams Raymond, *Marxism and literature*, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1977). p.121.

I would call the “archaic” that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined or even on occasion to be consciously “revived”. In a deliberately specializing way, what I mean by residual is very different. The residual, by the definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present.²⁷

Williams considers organised religion, rural community and monarchy as the prominent and most important residual traits of a culture, however, he also states that the dominant culture at a certain points cannot allow too much residual practices because it may become a threat and it is risky that it may harm society in a certain degree.

The Emergent, the last concept, is described as the new cultural ideas and practices that are being created constantly in a cultural group or in a society by its community. Williams claims: “by “emergent” I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created”²⁸. These new ideas which are being created continually can become dominant themselves, or alternative as being less confrontational to the dominant culture, or oppositional if they are, at a certain time, more confrontational to the dominant

²⁷ Williams Raymond, *Marxism and literature*, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1977). p.122.

²⁸ Ibid., 123.

2. Materials:

Bibliography of the Authors:

John Updike:

John Updike is an American novelist, poet, short stories writer, art and literary critic born on March 18, 1932 in Reading, Pennsylvania. He is one of only four writers to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction more than one time. Updike has had a rich career that varied from journalism, when he worked for two years for the *New Yorker* in the 1950s for novel, short story, and poem writing. Updike has published an impressive number of novels, among his famous works figures the *Rabbit* Series of novels. These series had such a success that two of his novels called *Rabbit is Rich* (1982) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990) won the Pulitzer Prize. In 1984, Updike published *The Witches of Eastwick* which tells the fantastic story of witches living in Rhode Island. In the year 2000, he wrote a novel called *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000), a work that celebrates William Shakespeare by revisiting his famous play *The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* (1603) with a fresh eye and a contemporary retelling. This novel is, indeed, the focus of this dissertation²⁹.

Ian Russell McEwen:

Ian Russell McEwen is an English novelist and screen writer born on June 21st, 1948, in Aldershot England. During his writing career, he wrote many short stories and novels; the author gained significant critical acclaim because of his new writing style. He later won the man Booker Prize for *Amsterdam* published in 1998. In 2006, he was accused for plagiarism concerning a passage in his novel *Atonement* (2001). A passage from a memoir *No Time For Romance*

²⁹John Updike, *Biography*, accessed March 2022, available on: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Updike>

published in 1977. The incident recalled when he wrote *The Cement Garden*. It is stated that the key elements of the plot were closely similar to the one of *Our Mother's House*(1963) by Julian Glaoug a British author. McEwen denied the charges of plagiarism and declared that he was unaware of the earlier works. He has been firmly defended by John Updike and several authors³⁰. In 2016, McEwen wrote *Nutshell*, a short novel in which he tells us a story of murder, and betrayal through the voice of a foetus. The novel seems to be a retelling of the story of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in a modern outlook; however, we can easily notice the similarity between the two works from two markedly centuries.

Synopsis of *Gertrude and Claudius*:

John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*, tells the story of a young prince named Gerutha who marries at the very young age of sixteen Horwendil and becomes Queen. She gets pregnant with a male child whom Horwendil names Amleth. After years of marriage and going through the different phases of life, such as motherhood, Gerutha faces a crisis questioning every aspect of her existence and not finding the happiness she dreamt about as a child. But something unexpected happens when Horwendil's brother Feng, comes to live with his brother. He slowly starts to build a friendly relationship with Gerutha. Eventually, the inevitable happens. Gerutha and Feng start a love affair, but they have been discovered by the King who plans to banish his brother and behead the lord chancellor Corambus who knew about their relationship, but before he could do anything, Feng poisons him with a liquid that he pours into his ear. He kills him, marries Gerutha and becomes King.

³⁰Ian McEwen, *Biography*, accessed on March 2022, available on: <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/ian-mcewan#:~:text=Ian%20McEwan%20was%20born%20on,read%20English%20at%20Sussex%20University.>

Synopsis of *Nutshell*:

Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* is a novel first published in 2016. It is a modern adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* (1603). Told by a foetus, the unborn child narrates the undergoing of the story from inside his mother Trudy. He narrates how he discovers the way that his mother betrays his father John Cairncross with her clandestine lover Claude, who seems to be the child's uncle; he reports how they planned to murder him by using poison to get possession of his wealth, a big mansion Georgian House estimated at over seven million. The foetus who never sensed his father, seems to love him and have a feeling to protect his father from the closest persons in his life his wife and brother. The unborn child, in his mother's womb, and through conversations and hearing, understands how the outside world is, making him question life before even getting born; is life worth living in such condition? He is tormented by the fact that his father is going to be murdered and he could not do anything. He even tried suicide inside his mother because of Claude's sexual dominance over Trudy. John Cairncross gets poisoned as planned and the police start the investigation over his death making Claude and Trudy nervous since they are the first suspects of the crime. They wanted to flee the country because of the fear of getting caught by the police officers. That is when the baby decides to be born; Claude hesitating to leave Trudy alone decides to stay and help her. The narrator is born, the police arrive, and Trudy and Claude get arrested.

III. Results

In this part of our dissertation, we will shed light on the results reached throughout our intertextual dialogic and cultural materialistic study of Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* in relation to *Hamlet*. The study has revealed that both John Updike and Ian McEwen have been greatly influenced by Shakespeare's source text while writing their respective works. Each author has revalorised the literature of the seventeenth century by giving it a sense of modernisation paying tribute to William Shakespeare.

In addition, we have noticed that both authors have used the original text which is *The Tragedy of Hamlet* to shape both *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell*. We have obviously also noticed the similarity in the literary production borrowing the words of Bakhtin about intertextual dialogism meaning that the text is a tissue of references or a mixture of other texts, which also suggest the possibility of texts connections not only with the previous texts but also with the social and cultural context. Moreover, though the authors are from different periods of time, yet they have succeeded to make a connection with a literature of a different era; indeed in both *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* the authors have produced a new text based on the source text which is *Hamlet*. The similarities are shown at the level of themes, characters and setting. The representation of characters in both works confirms the theory of intertextuality since its main characters repeats themselves and are of great importance in shaping the stories.

After that, we have also dealt with, John Updike's and Ian McEwen's texts by using Raymond Williams theory and the three concepts of Dominant, Residual, and Emergent aspects of ideologies Which helped us analyse and classify the different themes present in *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell*. Thus our classification takes into account the historical context, the norms, traditions, institutions of the era and the social organisation of western societies which

definitely plays a major role in setting the standards according to the political influence and economic power of each social class.

Indeed we tried to identify in both works aspects of dominant ideology, that is to say the dominant culture that the majority of people share in a given society and in a given period of time, and then we studied the residual ideology; a given ideology which was once dominant; however, now is not but rather just as residue, and last there is the Emergent ideology or the new ideology, the aspects of culture that come to existence as a new way of life, they are the emerging ideologies which might make change in a given society. All this according to the books period of publication as well as the authors historical background. All these findings have allowed us to discuss in depth the issue of intertextual dialogism and Cultural materialism in both works taking into account Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

IV. Discussion:

In this section of our work, we will try to apply Bakhtin's concepts of "Intertextual dialogism" on both John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell*, in relation to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, first we study the former as an overt polemic and then examine the latter as a stylisation. By drawing attention on the different components of the selected novels such as; characters, themes, text, and setting we will try to show and review how intertextuality is displayed in the works of Updike and McEwen. Yet In the second, part we will study the selected novels from a cultural materialistic approach; we will mainly shed light on the cultural aspects and the historical background of the works, taking into consideration Raymond Williams' three concepts "Dominant, Residual and Emergent" which are the three parts of any cultural group. In this second part we will try to identify and discuss these three concepts as it is set by the two authors.

Chapter One:

Shakespeare's Hamlet Seen Through John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016): An Intertextual Dialogic Study

I. *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000): An Overt Polemic Against Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

As the title suggests *Gertrude and Claudius*, John Updike's text has a close relationship with William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. However, this time it is not *The tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark*, it is rather turned upside down and narrated through the perspective of the antagonists 'Gertrude' and 'Claudius' as its heroes. Updike, thus engages in a dialogue with the English bard's play. By doing so, Updike provides a different version of this literary classic, since he uses Shakespeare's narrative as a frame to develop his novel which he combines with his proper narrative. As we read Updike's work, we notice that it is not a rigid entity, that is to say, a text with a fixed meaning, it is rather a fluid one, that discusses, explains, argues, and polimecises with the original text.

1. An Intertextual and Polemical Study of Characters:

a) Gerutha: An Overt Polemic of Woman's Status in *Hamlet*:

In William Shakespeare's play, Gertrude plays a minor role. She is portrayed as a weak character subordinate to her husband King Claudius to whom she so easily succumbs and agrees to be part of his schemes against Hamlet. For instance, when she accepts to arrange a meeting with Hamlet so that Claudius would know his hidden motives behind his strange behaviour. This blind obedience of Gertrude is illustrated by her statement taken from the play "I shall obey you"¹. Gertrude is portrayed in Shakespeare's play as one of the antagonists because first of all: she did not properly mourn the death of her husband; she remarries within two month of his death, and the worst of all is that she took Claudius for husband, the one who cold-bloodedly

¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p. 80.

murdered old Hamlet. This hurried marriage suggests adultery, because they could not have developed this love affair in that short amount of time following the death of her husband till their marriage after two months especially in those circumstances of grief and mourning. For that act of adultery, she is equally made as guilty as Claudius, even though she did not participate in the murder and throughout the work, she is attributed a pejorative image of “seemingly virtuous”² and adulterous wife.

Gertrude in John Updike’s work is portrayed as Gerutha a young Danish princess prior to the events of William Shakespeare’s tragedy. This time, in contrast, she is the protagonist of the narrative, which is unfolded through her perspective. Being a young woman she is different from Gertrude in that she is rebellious, this is illustrated in her refusal to marry Horwendil the Jute proposed by her father. She agrees, however, to her father’s request, and accepts this arranged marriage and then falls under the control of another man, her husband, Horwendil. Neglected and treated with indifference, even though she is a Queen, she has no important role only to ensure an heir to the throne. She did not accept this, unlike Shakespeare’s Gertrude, and rebels against these social restraints by entering into an adulterous love affair with Horwendil’s brother Feng, something which was viewed at that time, and even now as socially unacceptable. The author here unlike the play, tries to build an alternative course of events for this well known universal play in adding this new twist of adultery aiming to create an overt polemic especially among the readers who would read this work in the light of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Updike in his novel, contrary to Shakespeare, takes his time to describe Gertrude as a loving sensible woman with a radiant energy described by her father Rorik in this statement “but your glowing ripeness bear testimony to our love”.³

² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London:2001), p. 48.

³ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000), p. 11.

b) Hamlet the Father versus Horwendil :

Father Hamlet in Shakespeare's source text is described as a knight, a man of action, and even though he is a ghost, he is dressed in armor. This is how Horatio, a soldier, who witnessed this apparition describes him to his son Hamlet "arm'd at all points exactly cap-a-pe [...] and with solemn march".⁴ Another description is his son's Hamlet when he confronts his mother:

Look here upon this picture, and on this,
the counterfeit presentment of two brothers :
See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten or command,
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill:
A combination, and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the assurance of a man⁵

Although this description comes from his son, and is, thus, subjective, it gives us some details about Hamlet the father as being a strong individual with great physical and mental features worthy of a King.

Horwendil is described by Updike as Gerutha's husband and Feng's brother. If we take a closer glance at him in the light of Shakespeare's work, we can contrast him with Claudius who is represented in Updike's work as Feng. Horwendil is similar to Hamlet the Father, he is portrayed as a man possessing knightly characteristics; he is described as a warrior and this is highlighted in the novel by his legendary slaying of King Koll and later on the fact that he defeated King Fortinebras of Norway. However, the author engages in an overt polemic by not following Shakespeare's path and by not presenting him as the ultimate victim of the story. He provides a darker image of him as a too ambitious and pragmatic man, which explains why he

⁴ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p. 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

agrees to marry Gerutha in order to secure the Kingdom of Denmark for himself not out of love. Horwendil treats Gerutha with respect and kindness, but lacking love and passion with his only interest laying in his duties and politics “he was not even in this moment of confiding focused on her; he saw her as a part of a brocade, a bride of silver threads”.⁶ This is done for the purpose of shocking the readers who notice this intertextual connection between these two works due to the fact that Hamlet the father and horwendil are similar in some traits, but what they discover later on is that they are, to a great extent different in important characteristics: one is the protagonist and the ultimate victim, and the other is portrayed as almost being the villain of the story.

c) **Claudius versus Feng :**

Very little attention is payed to Claudius in *Gertrude and Claudius*. He is readily presented as the villain of Shakespeare’s tragedy. He is the one who orchestrated the murder of his brother so as to take his kingdom and wife. Despite all this, he is not totally cold-hearted, near the end of the play he experiences some feelings of guilt “Oh my offence is rank it smells to heaven, it hath the primal eldest curse upon it, a brother’s murder”.⁷

Feng in John Updike’s work is Horwendil’s brother, that is to say the equivalent of Claudius in Shakespeare’s Tragedy. He is different from his Brother Horwendil in that he does not give importance to duties and rank or aspires to win titles whereas Howendil wants to be a leader admired by his subjects. Feng, unlike Shakespeare’s Claudius, is more sensitive which is illustrated by his conflicting relationship with his brother made difficult by the fact that he is always compared to him and his achievements which drove him out of Denmark to explore new territories. This is what King Rorik has to say about the two brothers “the people love him,

⁶ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000), p. 15.

⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p. 100.

Horwendil. They do not love Feng”⁸. This statement tells a lot about Horwendil’s higher status compared to Feng even though they are both princes which may be the source of jealousy and envy between the two brothers. The author develops this complex relation to build a logical path leading to the same conclusions as in Shakespeare. Feng’s passion and warmth has a great effect over Gerutha from the first time they met, this is best seen in this statement:

Dark eyed watchful demeanor bespoke longing? his eyes, it had seemed to her some years ago, when he and Horwendil had freshly come to claim her father’s gratitude, had dwelt upon her with more than the passing interest an adult bestows upon a lively child⁹.

Feng is an overt polemic directed at Shakespeare’s Claudius. Feng is described with more depth, he has characteristics of a Renaissance man; he uses a refined language and with an intellectual mind, and even the way he kills his brother in a subtle way, by poisoning not by duel, is a detail on Feng’s personality as a man who is ready to do whatever it takes to reach his goals even if it means betraying and backstabbing.

d) Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and Updike’s *Amleth*:

Hamlet is portrayed as a smart literate man with an abundant knowledge of Greco-Roman mythology and theatre. This is illustrated in the following passage where he recites Eneas tale to Dido “the rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms black as his purpose, did the night resemble when he lay couched in the ominous horse, hath now this dread and black complexion smear’d with heraldry more dismal”.¹⁰ He has the features of an intellectual man reflecting and questioning which attributed him this famous quote “to be or not to be”¹¹; he even succeeds to counter his uncle’s plan when he was sent to England toward his death. Hamlet displays nervous

⁸ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000), p. 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁰ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p. 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

behaviour when he learns about his father's murder and the pressure of his duty to revenge him which drives him almost to insanity. This indicates a sensitive reflective personality.

Updike's Amleth, on the other hand, shares some features with Hamlet of William Shakespeare. He shares the same love for theatre. This idea echoes Corambus Lord Chamberlain's statement:

you have noticed I am sure, his animation and awe when a troop of players travels to Elsinore- how avidly he studies their rehearsals, takes note of the fine points of their illusions, imitates while private in our lobbies and cloisters the rolling cadence of their recitations.¹²

When talking about his birth, this is what Updike says “[he] was born with a caul , the sign of a great man or a doomed one soothsayers differed”¹³. This is another element that suggests a link with Hamlet's fate in Shakespeare's play. Even Gerutha's description of her son Amleth concords with Shakespeare's main character “his nervous temperament is susceptible to every shock”¹⁴. Hamlet also displays the same nervous behaviour which worsens when he learns about his father's death, and this quote taken from Shakespeare's play, clearly illustrates this “And can you by no drift of circumstance get from him why he puts on this confusion, grating so harshly all his days of quiet with turbulent and dangerous lunacy”¹⁵.

In another scene, Gerutha and her friend Corambus who is lord chamberlain to the King, meet to discuss her concerns about her child Amleth , fearing that she failed to raise him right , after observing how he treats his playmates. Corambus after listening to her complaint reassures her by telling that she has done more than any other noble woman could have done. He argued that raising a prince is not the duty of just his mother, but the duty of all the court; thus, it is natural to share the responsibility of his upbringing. In his turn, he tries to give a description of

¹² John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000), p. 24.

¹³ Ibid.,21.

¹⁴ Ibid.,23.

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p. 79.

Amleth as a clever young man with a refined mind that enjoys theatre with a clear sense of duty “but I have no doubt , when clear duty is set before him , that Amleth , though turning it this way and that in his mind , will end in doing the needful”.¹⁶ This statement contains a meaning that goes beyond the author’s text and reaches to Shakespeare’s text , because we feel like it also infers to Hamlet’s quest to revenge the murder of his father , though at the beginning he is hardly coping with what his father’s ghost had ordered him to do; at the end, he fulfils his father’s revenge. Despite the fact that Updike gives a great description of Amleth, he also portray him as childish, and remote and cold illustrated by his relationship to his mother which is a clear criticism of Shakespeare’s hero.

2. Analysis of *Gertrude and Claudius* Text’s Intertextuality and Dialogue with Shakespeare’s Text :

Despite the wide range of differences between Updike’s work and Shakespeare’s source text there are many analogies between them which make us question the very nature of literary works as not the possession of a sole individual and the outcome of only his creativity producing unique texts as Julia Kristiva believes, but it is the domaine where diffrent texts co-exist, communicate, engage in a dialogue, and convey cultural and historical dimentions. It has not to be a whole text , just one word , one sign for instance in Updike’s work when Gerutha says to Feng “are you triste”¹⁷; the use of French here highlights the importance of France during the Renaissance as a cultural centre and its monarchy and nobility as a reference to other monarchies and nobilities which bring us to Graham Allen argument on literary texts as “No longer the product of an author’s original thoughts , and no longer perceived referential in function , the

¹⁶ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000),p.24.

¹⁷ Ibid,,30.

literary work is viewed not as the container of meaning , but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce”.¹⁸

Updike revisit one of the classics of, not only English, but universal literature taking his time to build Shakespeare’s characters in a more complex, human and less theatrical method focusing on individuals whom the author use to discuss many social themes such as motherhood, marriage, adultery previously discussed by William Shakespeare in the seventeenth century and which are relevant until nowadays. The author succeeds to transmit these social and cultural themes not through his writings only, but with the multitude of texts that intersect in the writers text producing complexity of meaning. Roland Barthes, In this regard, one of the major scholars who studied intertextuality describes these relations between texts:

We know now That a text is not a line of words releasing a single theological meaning (the message of the author-god) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture...the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the authors, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks ‘to translate’ is only a ready formed dictionary.¹⁹

Indeed, in our case, we have a Shakespearean dictionary formed by the multitude of borrowed signs which are disseminated throughout Updike’s work and generate new meanings. It is true that Updike’s text has a great and visible intertextual relationship with William Shakespeare’s tragedy, but this relationship is not a simple one where the source text directly and with no answer, influences the other text; on the contrary, John Updike, has smartly re-interpreted Shakespeare’s text to a point that for someone who has already read Shakespeare’s masterpiece, it would seem that *Hamlet* has a completely new interpretation with a provocative plot in which the heroes are turned to villains, and the villains are the main characters and their actions are

¹⁸ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality the New Critical Idiom*, (Routledge, London: 2000),p. 12.

¹⁹ Ibid.,13.

better understood, removing any negative judgment. Updike's aim in doing re-writes Hamlet's tragedy in his way and this is to shock the readers and create an overt polemic with William Shakespeare's Hamlet with which it enters in dialogue of small similarities and major differences under a polemical roof.

II. Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016): A Stylization of the Play:

By the year (2016) and by the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Ian McEwen has managed to revive the voice of Hamlet through his new novel entitled *Nutshell*. The latter's title has probably been taken from the quoted epigraph from *Hamlet* "bounded in a nutshell"²⁰. In a way or another, it is a modern version of one of Shakespeare's source texts, *Hamlet*. The situation of the main character, however, is not the same. He is, now, portrayed as a fetus in his mother's womb, as he narrates: "So here I am, upside down in a woman. Arms patiently crossed waiting, waiting and wondering who I'm in, what I'm in for."²¹ McEwen's novel as critics agree is a re-telling of William Shakespeare's play. The tale displays intertextuality by almost all its aspects with *Hamlet*. By intertextuality, we mean that the text itself is not original, but it is made up from other texts. Barthes describes the text as "a woven entirely with citations, references, and echoes, cultural languages, antecedent or contemporary."²²

The work of McEwen is a tightly packed drama of lust and murder; the plot mainly talks about the 'heartless' butchers as well as betrayers²³. In other words, it is a new version or a re-telling which discusses, engages in a dialogue with the tragedy of *Hamlet*, written in a different period of time. The question to ask is how these two works can be related or considered as inter-texts? How does McEwen's novel stylize Shakespeare's original text? we will try to, answer these questions by analysing the novel's characters, plot, setting and themes in relation to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

²⁰ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p.11.

²¹ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.09.

²² Allen Graham, *Intertextuality*, (Routledge, London: 2000), p.69.

²³ G. Aarathi, (2020), *Integrality of intertextuality in Ian McEwen's Nutshell*, Accessed on: march, 2021. Available on : <http://www.languageinindia.com/feb2020/mkuliterature2020/gaarathi.pdf>

1. Characters Intertextuality and Stylization:

a) The Fetus in Relation to Hamlet:

By reading *Nutshell*, we are introduced to the main character who has a great importance in shaping the narrative of the novel. The fetus, the unnamed baby or “baby Hamlet”, is the narrator of the story. He is turned upside down by the author in the modern interpretation of the famous tragedy. A normal baby in his third semester, trying to understand what is going outside his little circle, as he says: “I’ve no choice, my ear is pressed all day and night against the bloody walls. I listen, make mental notes, and I’m troubled. I’m hearing pillow talk of deadly intend and I’m terrified by what awaits me, by what might draw me in.”²⁴ The fetus cannot be considered as a noble hero who stood against injustice and betrayal as in the tragedy of *Hamlet*. This is demonstrated through the words of the fetus as he speaks in the beginning of the novel: “I count myself an innocent, unburdened by allegiances and obligations, as a free spirit, despite my meager room, no one to contradict me or reprimand me, no name or previous addresses, no religion, no debts, no enemies.”²⁵ The unnamed and apparently unwanted baby is a passive observer of events, with much energy expended on maintaining the conceit that he can detect what is happening in the outside world using his hearing and fair amount of guesswork.²⁶ The unborn Hamlet if we can call it this way and as already mentioned is not played by a prince as in the tragedy; however, we can obviously see the relation between the Shakespearean Hamlet and the one of McEwen. Both characters feel helpless. McEwen claimed that the only person who

²⁴ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.01.

²⁵ Ibid.,09.

²⁶ The reading bug, 2017, *Book review: Nutshell, by Ian McEwen*. Accessed on March, 2021. Available on : <https://readingbug2016.wordpress.com/2017/10/17/nutshell-by-ian-mcewan/>

could think of as more trapped than a fetus was Prince Hamlet²⁷. They are, indeed, both trapped or bounded in a nutshell since they can do nothing to prevent what is happening.

Baby Hamlet counts himself an innocent; he realises that he is party to a plot, a plot of murder and betrayal devised by his mother and her lover who is his uncle. He started to question himself which side he should take and he decides to take his father's side and he thinks that revenging him is his duty. Besides, he hates his uncle whom he sees as a stupid and greedy man who wants to dispose his brother from his wife and property. Hamlet the prince of Denmark is similar, he hates his uncle for what he did and even for what he really is, since Claudius is also a greedy and a selfish man who wants more power and even went further to take his brother's place at the Kingdom by murdering him. Hamlet was obsessed with the idea of revenging his father just like McEwen's baby Hamlet who was obsessed with the idea of saving his father from murder. It might be argued, accordingly, that McEwen has, to a great extent, stylized the English band's famous tragedy.

The fetus also condemns, just like Shakespeare's Hamlet, his mother Trudy because of her cheating and her unpermitted love making with his uncle who is her brother in law named Claude. The Shakespearean Hamlet, likewise, is upset and angry with his mother Gertrude because she marries her brother in law just after the death of her husband a few months later. This made Hamlet very upset and he wanders how she could do that, forgetting a brave warrior and beloved husband and marry a greedy man. We can see it when he meets his mother in the end of the play that he organises:

This was your husband. Look you now, what follows.

²⁷ Decca Aitkenhead, 2016. "*Ian McEwen: 'I'm going to get such a kicking'*", Support the guardian. Accessed on, March, 2021.
Available on : <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/27/ian-mcewan-author-nutshell-going-get-kicking>

Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment. And what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion. But sure that sense
Is apoplexed, for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such difference.²⁸

Same for Ian McEwen's unnamed Hamlet, who questions himself throughout the novel, should he love his mother? Should he hate her for what she is doing, cheat and murder her beloved and 'saint' husband for a 'stupid' and 'unwilling' man, he narrates:

I try to see her and love her as I must, then imagine her burdens: the villain she's taken for a lover, the saint she's leaving behind, the deed she's spoken for, the darling child she'll abandon to strangers. Still love her? If not, then you never did. But I did, I did. I do.²⁹

From the two passages above we can clearly notice the similarity between the two characters, we may say that the second one is a stylization from the first since *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare is the source and McEwen had inspired his character from Shakespeare's play. By doing so, McEwen might claim that the idea of revenge and honor is a universal theme that lead two different characters to meet in the same way in spite of their two opposed backgrounds, this is the essence of the author's stylization.

b) Trudy/ Gertrude and Claude/ Claudius: a Stylized Duality:

Trudy and Claude are the main characters in *Nutshell*. Trudy can be seen as an interpretation or a shortened form of Gertrude in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Claude, on a similar vein, is a shortened version for Claudius. There are, indeed, a variety of similarities and

²⁸ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Penguin Popular Classics, London: 2001), p.4.

²⁹ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.25.

affinities between the two characters although they belong to different historical backgrounds. Trudy, in McEwen's text, is described as a pregnant, young beautiful lady living in her husband's house in London. She married John Cairncross whom she no longer loves, now she has a lover Claude. He is her brother-in-law; that is to say, he is John's brother. The couple has an illegitimate affair to maintain their clandestine relationship and to achieve their biggest purpose of getting possession of John's property. They conspire, together, to kill John Cairncross. The fetus narrates: "I used to think that their discretion was no more than ordinary amorous intimacy, but now I'm certain they airily bypass their vocal cords, because they are planning a dreadful event."³⁰ McEwen revives and stylizes in some way the Shakespearean Gertrude and Claudius duality, through Trudy and Claude. As mentioned above, Trudy no longer loves her husband; now, she is with another man Claude. We can draw parallels between the two female characters since they both are in a relationship with their brother in law. The story of murdering husbands also follows both women. Either were involved to a certain degree; yet, Trudy is more involved in the death of John, because she was planning from the beginning to murder her husband, aside of her lover Claude who was pushing her more and more, convincing her that this is the best thing that they should do to succeed on their plans together.

Claude, the stylized character of King Claudius, is a stupid selfish and greedy man, a villain model who does not feel sorry for committing such a crime. Even his habits do not show any troubles in his life. He commits a murder; yet, he sleeps peacefully, sings and whistles as he usually does in a normal day life. He even takes on a casual and dismissing tone while reading about John's sudden death. Claude acts like that the death of his brother sounds natural. The fetus narrates:

³⁰ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.11.

Claude unlike Trudy, owns his crime, this is a renaissance man, a Machiavel, an old-school-villain who believes he can get away with murder, the world doesn't come to him through a haze of the subjective it comes refracted by stupidity and greed.³¹

This shows the similarity between him and Shakespeare's King Claudius the play's antagonist, the play's villain, a greedy calculating politician thirsty for power, and driven by his sexual appetite, however, he sometimes shows signs of guilt and human feelings. Still, they both sacrifice humanity and humanness for the acquisition of power and wealth.

Claude and Trudy are too much close to each other and even though Claude is portrayed as a 'banal' person, we realise that Trudy falls for his words most of the time. Her love for him and the affection between them is so high, same as for the Shakespearean Gertrude who married Claudius and continued to defend him even if her son, Hamlet, tries to raise her awareness. In fact, she never disagreed with the king. Both Shakespearean Gertrude and McEwen's Trudy, ignore Hamlet and the fetus by not giving them much consideration by going away with their new lovers. This, indeed, makes the sons, the fetus and Hamlet, very upset. They both criticise their mother and accuse them of leaving their beloved father for a foolish man Claudius and Claude respectively. Indeed, Hamlet and the fetus stand as the protector of the patriarchal family and think that their parents adultery and illegal relationships threaten the family ties. According to the two "Hamlet" these illegal practices should be banished because they do not go in adequacy with the "Renaissance, chivalry" codes of honor and dignity. Ian McEwen wanted to revive these codes through stylization.

³¹ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.64.

2. A Stylized Setting:

Elsinore, from its real name Helsingor,³² is the name given to the town and the castle in which the play takes place. It is the castle or the Kingdom which is behind the will of King Claudius to kill his own brother King Hamlet. Instead of Elsinore, *Nutshell*'s setting is replaced by a grand Georgian house which may represent the castle of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The home, as a matter of fact, represents a kind of Kingdom that Claude and Trudy were trying to gain from their murder of John Cairncross, just like Claudius gained the throne from King Hamlet. The setting, in both works, therefore, can be considered as the purpose behind the whole story of murder; the greed for getting possession of such places made the characters forget what is the sense of value and family and did make them do the worst.

3. *Hamlet* and *Nutshell*: Stylization of the Main Themes:

This thematic analysis revolves around an examination of the themes to demonstrate textual affinities of both *Hamlet* and *Nutshell*, after reading William Shakespeare's and Ian McEwen's respective works, we have noticed that existence, Poison, death, love and betrayal are the apparent and shared themes that both works deal with. *Nutshell* and *Hamlet*, indeed, are concerned with the same themes, through the characters and the undergoing of story.

a) Existentialism:

Existentialism is a common theme in the two novels. It questions and explores problems of human existence. In both literary works, the worth of existence including life of Hamlet and

³² Rapti Christina, 2017, "*Elsinore- Home of Hamlet*", Accessed on, March 2021.
Available on : <https://christirapt.wordpress.com/2017/11/22/elsinore-home-of-hamlet/>.

the fetus is questioned by themselves. Hamlet is a very complex character that experiences extreme melancholy after the death of his father and Gertrude's quick marriage to his uncle Claudius. This shaped or changed the view of life of the protagonist of the play. He nearly questions everything, his existence included: Is life worth living? Is it worth all the sufferings? He clearly says:

To be, or not to be? That is the question—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished! To die, to sleep.
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect.³³

In this passage, Hamlet thought also about suicide. He is thinking if it is better to deal with the pain or stop suffering at once; however, he is afraid of taking the step to end his existence. He is afraid of death because he is uncertain that death will bring him peace, questioning the type of existence that might come after death. Hamlet is the model of existential man who lives in a symbolic exile and permanent uncertainty; he can passionately desire Ophelia but now that nausea has pervaded his world, he can never truly love her.³⁴ Hamlet feels also that death can bring more suffering than life, even worse. He is always uncertain about things that happen to him; he even chooses in some situations to not be part and not act. He does not choose an active position and he prefers passive observing of life and becomes an outsider. Hamlet seems to do not know who he is because of his deep melancholic mood, and puts into questions nearly everything around him. His reflections over death and life make him very dramatic; he

³³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (London, Penguin Popular Classics: 2001), p.62.

³⁴ Tekiney ash, *Shakespeare to Kierkegaard: An Existential Reading of Hamlet*. Accessed on: March 2021. Available on: http://journal.dogus.edu.tr/index.php/duj/article/download/221/pdf_57

cannot understand his place on earth. Hamlet is between death and life and his soul is so confused and tired that he does not have forces to make a decision on anything; That is when he becomes an existential hero³⁵.

Ian McEwen, on a similar vein, shares and stylizes the same theme in *Nutshell*, which is an attempt to question the nature of existence of life and death. In the story narrated by a fetus in his mother's womb, the narrator exists because he is within the physical world, but he does not seem to see it this way. He questions himself, should he come to life or to do not exist at all. Through the novel, the narrator asks some existential questions such as to be born or not. Seeing the world through his mother makes him afraid to join the real world, to live and interact with such people, as he notes:

the person the poem addressed I think of as the world I'm about to meet. Already, I love it too hard. I don't know what it will make of me, whether it will care for me or even notice me. From her it seems unkind, careless of life, of lives. The news is brutal unreal, a nightmare we can't awake from.³⁶

Focusing on himself and the pending murder plot, he quickly takes offense, particularly when he feels that he is forgotten and not at the center of all things, since Trudy when she is with Claude, she forgets about him sometimes, as if he does not take part in her life. The narrator thinks that he understands what is happening around him, however, as time passes, the fetus starts to question himself and things are more complicated than what he first thought. The examination of the world also makes him worry about everything and he states that life no longer thrills him and that everything is scary. The fetus like Hamlet thinks of suicide when he realises that John his father

³⁵ Card Accelerated, *Hamlet and existentialism*, Accessed on: March, 2021. Available on : <https://sites.google.com/site/cardsaccelerated/rosencrantz-and-guildenstern-are-dead/hamlet-and-existentialism#:~:text=Hamlet%20is%20between%20death%20and,knowning%20anything%20for%20sure%2C%20forever.&text=Boklund%2C%20Gunnar.,Hamlet.%E2%80%9D%20Essays%20on%20Shakespeare>.

³⁶ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.39.

is about to be murdered and that what he was imagining, what his life is going to be with his father has just faded away and all he wants now is avenge John Cairncross. He speaks to himself:

I need the use of my arms, my hands, but there is so little room. I'll say it fast: I'm going to kill myself. An infant death, a homicide in effect, due to my uncle's reckless assault on a gravid woman well advanced in her third trimester. His arrest, trial, sentence, imprisonment. My father's death half avenged.³⁷

Hamlet and the fetus are facing a dilemma; to act or not to act? To avenge or not to avenge? To exist or not to exist? These existential questioning shape their complex characters. The fetus loses fate upon this world awaiting him. The latter like Hamlet is lost between the will to live and the fear of life's sufferings, which makes them both reconsider the worth of existence.

b) Poison and Death:

The theme of poison and death clearly dominates the undergoing of *Hamlet* and *Nutshell*. In both the play and the novel, poison can be identified in many views: poisonous people such as characters like Claudius, Claude, Gertrude and Trudy and Poisonous ideas like murdering, greed for power and betrayal. There is also the poisonous environment as well as the poison itself or death.

In medieval times people do believe that the health of a nation is all connected to the court especially the King.³⁸ In *Hamlet*, Claudius is the present King of Denmark. This land is often described as poisoned and corrupt, as Marcellus speaks: "something is rotten in the state of Denmark."³⁹ The scenery of nervous soldiers may also say that something is not going well with the kingdom since they are closer to the royal court, as if the poison which is used to kill the true

³⁷ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.56.

³⁸ Tanner Alexandra, (2013), *Poison, Corruption, Death*. LitCharts. Accessed on: Marsh, 2021. Available on: <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hamlet/themes/poison-corruption-death>.

³⁹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (London, Penguin Popular Classics: 2001), p.48.

King Hamlet spread all over the country.⁴⁰ Throughout the play, poison and death are recurrent as dominant themes in the tragedy. The use of poison showcases the themes of death through the falling of myriad characters in the play, beginning with the King's death till the duel between Hamlet and Laertes in which scene, we see the falling of Gertrude, King Claudius, Laertes and Hamlet himself all dead with poison.

In Shakespeare's play, poison is seen not fair truly as a substance that ends life, but moreover metaphorically as something that hurts the hearts, souls and minds of characters within the play and most of the poison can be traced back to Claudius who starts the tragic chain of events when he poisoned his brother.⁴¹ In *Nutshell*, poison and death are also permanent in the story. As in the tragedy of Hamlet, poison does not only refer to the substance that stops life, but also a poisoning world, environment and people. Throughout the novel, the fetus is surrounded by poison. Speaking of figurative uses of poison, we can start with his mother leaving his father, the clandestine relationship between Trudy and his uncle Claude, who, we can also consider as a poisonous person. He is the sources of the entire narrator's worries as well as for Trudy and John his own brother.

Time passes and the baby sees the life which he is destined for is not that simple. This makes him reconsider the idea of taking part at this world even though he is still in his mother's womb. The fetus narrates the way he sees the outside world through his mother and for him, it seems that the real physical world is not perfect, but it is rather poisoned, corrupt and always changing. He says: " free speech no longer free, liberal democracy no longer the obvious part of destiny, robots stealing jobs, liberty in close combat with security, socialism in disgrace,

⁴⁰Booboosmoosh, *What is Shakespeare Saying about the Theme "Poison" in Shakespeare's Play, Hamlet*. enotes, Acceded on: Marsh, 2021.

Available on: <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-shakespeare-saying-about-themes-action-and-257876>

⁴¹Ibid.,

capitalism corrupt, destructive and in disgrace, no alternatives in sight.”⁴² Poison of medieval times is stylized and, thus, makes its appearance in *Nutshell* as a tool to end life as in *Hamlet*. Baby Hamlet relates: “As they kiss again she says into her lover’s mouth. Baby’s first word. ‘Poison’.”⁴³ and when Claude said to Trudy: “Yup. And here’s the business. Enough to fell ten ox.”⁴⁴ The business means poison. It is used by Claude and Trudy to murder John Cairncross the fetus’s father in order to get possession of his property in London. The stylization of the theme poison and death means that McEwen claims that in contemporary society, capitalism and industrialized world has poisoned the world. The renaissance’s greed and power of king Claudius is reviewed by Claudius is revived by Claude’s own greed and ambition in the midst of a capitalized society dominated by profit and domination.

c) Love and Betrayal:

“Love and trust are fine, but a story becomes gripping when betrayal is introduced”⁴⁵ and Shakespeare is no exception while someone is speaking about the theme of love and betrayal. Love and betrayal are two powerful tools used to gain power throughout history; in literature, characters are often involved in these kinds of practices in order to give the plot more weight. When reading *Hamlet*, such themes are easily seen once the reader is familiar with the relationships in the play. Love can turn into hatred. This happened to Hamlet when his life starts to fall apart. Hamlet’s relation with Ophelia fades because of his disillusionment about women. Ophelia is now mad and destroyed as a consequence of her loss and she commits suicide.

⁴² McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.18.

⁴³ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁵ AbeBooks. *Literature and betrayal – backstabbers, adulterous, Traitors and Double Crossers*. Accessed on: March, 2021. Available on: <https://www.abebooks.com/books/villains-traitors-treachery-books/literature-of-betrayal.shtml>.

Hamlet loses the one he loves. Betrayal is also seen in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who now work for the services of Claudius the new King. The latter also betrays Hamlet: first by killing his own brother and then pretending that he has interests by sending him to England; at the same time, he sends a letter in which he orders to kill Hamlet once in England. Similarly to Claudius, Gertrude also betrays Hamlet, first by marrying Claudius quickly that he becomes depressed and haunted by the story; she also betrays him by taking the side of his uncle and Laertes. She is also the one who told Claudius that her son is the murderer of Polonius. She tells to Claudius:

Mad as the sea and wind when both contend
Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out the rapier, cries, "A rat, a rat!"
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.⁴⁶

In this play about betrayal, nobody can be trusted, but when speaking of love and considering characters such as Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia and Polonius, his friend Horatio is the only one who has ever shown love and loyalty to Hamlet, from the starts till the end, Horatio and Hamlet were always in trust. When Hamlet died, it is him who tells Fortinbras about the story of his friend who will have a proper burial.

In *Nutshell*, as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, love and betrayal repeats itself all along the story, from the beginning till the end. The characters show love, however, they can backstab each other at any moment. The relationships between the characters say a lot about the story of murder and deception. We can start with the fetus, like Hamlet, he is Betrayed by his mother Trudy, because she is leaving his father for his uncle, the same story line as Gertrude and Claudius. McEwen writes:

⁴⁶ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (London, Penguin Popular Classics: 2001), p.110.

Trudy has betrayed her husband, John. She's still in the marital home – a dilapidated, priceless London town house – but John's not here. Instead, she's with his brother, the profoundly banal Claude, and the two of them have a plan. But there is a witness to their plot: the inquisitive, nine-month old resident of Trudy's womb.⁴⁷

The fetus also thinks that his mother betrays him every time she forgets that he is a part of her life and he is afraid of what she might do with him once he is born; however, he loves her. She is his mother, yet he is uncertain of her love, he says: “[i] In short, I am uncertain of her love”⁴⁸ Claude the ‘banal’ and the ‘stupid’ man is the one who commits the greatest betrayal in the story. He betrays his brother for being in a clandestine relationship with his wife, and he even tries to get possession of his property trying to take away all what John has as the fetus narrates: “[m] My uncle has stolen his brother's wife, deceived his nephew's father, grossly insulted his sister in law's son. My father by nature defenseless, as I am by circumstances.”⁴⁹ With Trudy, they conspired and murdered him, for the will of power and greed.

John, the father of the fetus, is the only character who does not betray anyone. Like Horatio he is the most loyal one. His love for Trudy is real and still exists, and he has no greed and no purpose than to conquer his beloved one; he had always come to see her in his house, and asks about her, trying to revive the love and even though Trudy was always putting him away, finding excuses. The narrator says: “he knows nothing of Claude, remains moonishly in love with my mother, hopes to be back with her one day soon, still believes in the story she has given him that the separation is to give them each ‘time and space to grow’ and renew their bonds.”⁵⁰ However, the dreadful event happened and John Cairncross's end was really tragic. McEwen did make reference through this character to King Hamlet, the great warrior, murdered by Claudius,

⁴⁷ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.03.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*,20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*,20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*,12.

his own brother. As king or as a father, they accomplish their patriarchal role in spite of their corrupted environment by protecting the unity of the household, keeping the family bonds intact.

Chapter Two:

John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's

***Nutshell* (2016): a Cultural Materialist Study**

John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016): A Cultural Materialist Study:

This section of the research is an attempt to study ideology and culture in both John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In order to accomplish this task, we will mainly rely on Raymond Williams' thoughts of ideology and his three concepts: "Dominant", "Emergent" and "Residual" ideologies and cultures. Using these concepts, we will try to achieve the purpose of this research by drawing parallels between both *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* with their historical background focusing mainly on the ideologies and Culture of each time.

1. The Cultural Materialist Analysis of John Updike's Text: Its Cultural and Ideological Structures:

1.1 Residual Cultural Features in John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*: Sexism and Patriarchy:

John Updike uses his work to point out cultural elements, especially the ones that are linked to woman's rights and their status in the social scene. In his work, one of the main characters is Gertrude, a woman of the Renaissance; he uses her as an example to highlight the consequences of patriarchy on woman's happiness and freedom in their lives and this theme is not proper to the Renaissance only, but relevant even in these modern times and still has validity as a residual cultural element which is according to Raymond Williams:

Usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but some part of it, some version of it – and especially if the residue is from some major area of the past – will in most cases have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense of these areas. Moreover, at certain points the dominant cannot allow too much residual experience and practice outside itself, at least without risk. It is in the incorporation of the actively residual – by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and exclusion.¹

¹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1977),p.123.

And this is true in the case of John Updike, his work contains many social and cultural elements that existed in the Renaissance as dominant and still exist, but as residual, and the author's aim in exposing them is a negative representation of these elements. To begin with, Gerutha marries at a very young age of 16 to a man older than her and all this was not with her consent, but was forced by her father king Rorik who was looking for what is best for his kingdom first and his daughter second and this excerpt taken from the novel can definitely prove this :

The king was irate. His daughter, Gerutha, though but a plump sixteen, had voiced reluctance to marry the noble man of his choice.²

Another residual element which might be spotted in Updike's text is the theme of motherhood and what is interesting to see is how he presents it in a negative light embodied through Gerutha's failure as a mother and her tense and distant relationship with her son as illustrated by this statement of the author:

As he aged into the first stages of manhood, growing suddenly a silken proto-mustache, Gerutha, nagged even more strongly by a sense of estrangement from all that should gratify her.³

All these themes developed by Updike can be considered as residual elements of the past if contrasted with the time of writing this novel which is The twenty hundred an era marked by woman emancipation and the progression of feminism.

1.2 Dominant Cultural Features in John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*:

Capitalism:

Raymond Williams starts his study of the dominant by linking it to bourgeoisie in this statement "a cultural process is seized as a cultural system, with determinate dominant

² John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*, (Ballantine Books, New York:2000),p.10.

³ Ibid.,23.

features: feudal culture or bourgeois culture or a transition from one to the other”⁴. The bourgeoisie is the dominant social class of any European monarchy with all the land, and political influence, which thus explains why its culture is seen as a reference and its relation of dominance over other cultures of inferior social classes. In Updike’s work, because it is inspired by William Shakespeare and characters and events relate to the Danish monarchy, contains many dominant elements of feudal and bourgeois cultures of the Renaissance period. Then, our main purpose here is to identify these dominant features in *Gertrude and Claudius*.

To begin with, in *Gertrude and Claudius*, great attention is given to the institution of marriage, and this is demonstrated by King Rorik’s statement when Gerutha told him that Horwendil feels that he is perfect and does not want a wife: “no unwived man feels so, though he may not proclaim it”⁵. All the events in the novel evolve around Gerutha’s marriage and its failure which leads her to adultery with Feng, and then to him killing the king, and taking the throne, so we see how it is central to this chain of events and its success or failure linked to the fate of the monarchy. That is why marriages in the nobility were so important due to the financial and political benefits they generate, that they were arranged.

John Updike’s novel starts with the marriage of Gerutha to Horwendil, decided and planned by Gerutha’s father. This was a dominant practice in the middle ages and renaissance especially in the nobility, that marriages are arranged between families to strengthen their political influence and position in society.

“During the Renaissance period, arranged marriage was very common due to the fact money, power, and land would result from the marriage...every marriage in the Renaissance time included a dowry. The dowry was all the property or money

⁴ Raymond, Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. (New York, Oxford University Press : 1977), p.121.

⁵ John Updike, *Gertrude And Claudius* (New York, Ballantine Books : 2000),p.11.

brought forth by the bride to her husband on their wedding day. Once the dowery was finalized the bride was essentially her husband's property"⁶

Horwendil's dowery was a manor, and the status of monarch that came with marrying Gerutha a Danish princess. Another strong cultural element that dominated and dictated the lives of many during the renaissance is monarchy. This is represented in many statements in John Updike's work; one of them is king Rorik's Statement "To disobey a king is treason"⁷. During that period, European Monarchs ruled their subjects with an iron fist, dragging them to wars with other European Nations whenever they wanted. This was an era that saw the application of Absolute Monarchy. Here is a short definition of the term absolutism:

"Absolutism is a term used by historians to describe a form of monarchical power that is unlimited by any other institution, such as the church, parliament, or social elites. The absolute monarch exercises ultimate authority over the state and his subject, as both head of state and head of government"⁸

The Renaissance was also an era of religious wars all over Europe due to the rise of the Protestant faith which lead to clashes between Catholic states against protestant states. These religious conflicts gave power to European Monarchs who fought each other over these religious differences and lead their armies across Europe as illustrated by this statement:

"Absolutism was primarily motivated by the crises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) had led to a series of violent and bloody wars of religion in the course of which thousands of innocents met their deaths"⁹

Due to major changes in Europe like the weakening of the Roman Catholic Church, and the fall of feudalism which gave birth to Mercantilism, all contributed to the strengthening of Absolute Monarchy all over Europe, because in this growing trade inside and

⁶ *Woman In The Renaissance And Reformation*, Encyclopedia.com accessed, September 10, 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/women-renaissance-and-reformation>

⁷ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*. (New York, Ballantine books : 2000), p.10.

⁸ André Krowke, *The Age of Absolutism(17-18 century)* viewed on October 2, 2021, accessed on:

https://rfb.bildungrp.de/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/The_Age_of_Absolutism_01.pdf

⁹ Ibid.,

outside European nations, monarchs being the head of state, had a share of these profits by way of taxation which is shown in this statement:

“At the end of the Middle Ages feudalism declined. While the old feudal system had been defined by a weak monarchy attempting to control the lands of the realm through mutual agreements with regional leaders of the nobility, the modern age was characterised by a rise of the king’s power in some parts of Europe. The kings were soon to become absolute monarchs with a much greater power over the nobles and the common people. Thus historians generally regard the growth of the absolute monarchy as the origin of modern state. Most of the characteristic features of the modern state were more or less instituted* in the France of Louis the fourteenth and other contemporary monarchies in Europe (see below) As for the economy, the decline of the feudal order also gave rise to the earliest forms of Capitalism in most European nations through the 1800’s, the established guild* system was dissolved and replaced by the idea of free trade (i.e. an economic system in which goods and capital are traded in markets and profits distributed to owners”¹⁰

This theme is also present in *Gertrude And Claudius*, expressed by Horwendil anger on merchants in his conversation with Feng :

“And the merchants, the merchants, Feng, are such tiresome rascals, they flourish on the security the state creates, they use our roads, our harbors, our safe cities, and must be taxed”.¹¹

1.3 Emergent Cultural Features in John Updike *Gertrude and Claudius*:

Third Wave of Feminism:

The third wave of Feminism is dated from the early 1990’s to the 2010’s with the rise of media and just before the inauguration of the fourth wave, it was a period of political activism that sought to expand civil rights and social equality for women.¹² John Updike’s *Gertrude and Claudius* does not just copy William Shakespeare’s, but is the vessel for many contemporary ideas, one of them is feminism. This idea is present already in the first pages of the work in this passage:

¹⁰ André, Krowke. *The Age of Absolutism(17-18 century)*, viewed on October, 2021, accessed on: https://rfb.bildungrp.de/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/The_Age_of_Absolutism_01.pdf

¹¹ John, Updike. *Gertrude And Claudius*. (New York, Ballantine Books : 2000), p.36.

¹² The MasterClass, *Third-wave Feminism: A History of Third-Wave Feminism*. 2022, Accessed on: October 2022, available on: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/third-wave-feminism#6gBFEisXMEZRx5afstZEZ6>

Sela was a warrior, a rover, to equal a man she deserved a man's death the phrase piqued Gerutha Is a woman's death less than a man's, I wonder ? I think death for both is exactly as big as it must be.¹³

John Updike's work also attacks many institutions that restricts woman not only in the Renaissance but also in our modern times such as marriage and motherhood. He exposes them in a new light and with new interpretations saying that they don't bring the joy they are supposed to. This idea is best represented in a passage where the author expresses Gerutha's failure as a mother:

Her heart felt deflected. Something held back her love for this fragile, high-stung quick tongued child she had become a mother too soon, perhaps ; a stage in her life journey had been skipped, without which she could not move from loving a parent to loving a child.¹⁴

In other words, John Updike's centered his novel on Gerutha (Shakespeare's Gertrude) and her struggles as a woman of the Renaissance era, where women were relegated into a secondary position, so they formed a society of their own whose cultural elements and feminist ideas expressed by John Updike were at the opposite of a male dominated society as expressed by Raymond Williams:

The case of the emergent is radically different. It is true that in the structure of any actual society, and especially in its class structure, there is always a social basis for elements of the cultural process that are alternative or oppositional to the dominant element.¹⁵

As we have already seen, Updike's work strongly emphasises woman's rights, and has a remarkable presence of feminist ideology due to the fact that he wrote this work in a time that witnessed the rise of a feminist movement called the third wave which started in the 1990's. In addition to other feminist movements, it focused on reproductive rights, and the access to birth control and abortion as demonstrated by this statement:

¹³ John Updike, *Gertrude and Claudius*. (Ballantine Books, New York: 2000).p, 10.

¹⁴ Ibid.,21.

¹⁵ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, (New york, Oxford University Press: 1977),p. 124.

The Third Wave of feminism was greatly focused on reproductive rights for women. Feminists advocated for a woman's right to make her own choices about her body and stated that it was a basic right to have access to birth control and abortion.¹⁶

This gave them more rights and brought them forward as major actors in society. And Updike as a writer was influenced by these feminist ideologies and we see it in his work.

¹⁶Tara Anand, *A Brief Summary of the Third Wave Of Feminism*, 2018. Accessed on January 2022, Available on: <https://feminisminindia.com/2018/04/27/brief-summary-third-wave-of-feminism/>

2. The Cultural Materialist Study of Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016):

2.1 Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* and the Residual Ideology: Eurocentrism and Nationalism:

The residual as Raymond Williams explains is the influence of old cultures on modern societies, consciously or unconsciously. Indeed, they are the ideologies and cultures which came into existence in a previous period of time, but now are only a residue as a consequence of the emergence of the new dominant ideologies. Williams states that the dominant culture can allow some residual aspects and practices, however, only at certain points since it may become a threat to the dominant one. In McEwen's novel, we can identify two aspects of ideology which might be considered as a residue; in other words, they have existed in a given period of history and now they can also be seen as residual practices in the present time.

In *Nutshell*, two aspects can emerge as a residual ideology, first we have Eurocentrism. The latter, is the fact of seeing the world from the point of view of Europe, considering it as being the most important and as being privileged from other regions and continents. It has been a discourse of the dominant ideology for over two centuries, from 1780 till 1980s¹⁷ With the free circulation of people and the Schengen agreement.

In McEwen's *Nutshell*, Eurocentrism can be spotted through the story. the foetus or baby Hamlet narrates, one might see that this ideology is still existant as a practice in modern times. In fact, Europe and Europeans still stress on the fact that Europe is the more stable and offers a better environment for a 'saint' life, making prejudice on 'the third world'. In this passage extracted from the book, we clearly notice that aspects of Eurocentrism are present in modern Europe:

¹⁷ Hervé Inglebert, 2014, *La Question de l'eurocentrisme*, accessed On: January 2022. available on: <https://www.cairn.info/le-monde-l-histoire--9782130631286-page-1109.htm?contenu=article>

Confusion about values, the bacillus of anti-Semitism incubating, immigrant populations languishing, angry and bored. Elsewhere, everywhere, novel inequalities of wealth, the super rich a master race apart. Ingenuity deployed by states for new forms of brilliant weaponry, by global corporation to dodge taxes, by righteous banks to stuff themselves with Christmas millions. China too big to need friends or counsel, cynically probing its neighbours' shores, building islands of tropical sand, planning for the war it knows must come. Muslim-majority countries plagued by religious Puritanism, by sexual sickness, by smothered invention. The Middle East, fast-breeder for a possible world war. And foe-of-convenience, the United States, barely the hope of the world, guilty of torture, helpless before its sacred text conceived in an age of powdered wigs, a constitution as unchallengeable as the Koran. Its nervous population obese, fearful, tormented by inarticulate anger, contemptuous of governance, murdering sleep with every new handgun. Africa yet to learn democracy's party trick –the peaceful transfer of power. Its children dying, thousands by the week, for want of easy things –clean water, mosquito nets, cheap drugs.¹⁸

In contrast, we obviously see that on the other side of the world; Europe and its privilege, its safety and 'saint' life. As the foetus narrates in the beginning of the novel:

I'll inherit a condition of modernity (hygiene, holidays, anaesthetics, readings lamps, oranges in winter) and inhabit a privileged corner of the planet-well-fed, plague-free Western Europe. Ancient Europa [...].My immediate neighbourhood will not palmy Norway – my first choice on account of its gigantic sovereign fund and generous social provision; nor my second, Italy, on grounds of regional cuisine and sun-blessed decay; and not even my third, France, for its Pinot Noir and jaunty self-regard.¹⁹

In a way to say that Euro-supremacy ideologies are present, in fact, as a residue in Europe. media and people still think and take into account that, this part of the planet is the more privileged from any other region of the world, even though, many countries and continents have been so much better and offer a better life and environment for their populations.

Second, we can also refer to Nationalism as a residue in McEwen's novel. In The 19th Century, nationalism has known its largest spreading in Europe;²⁰ it was the time where Europeans were the most attached to their native soil. Nationalism can inspire people to break

¹⁸ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.18.

¹⁹ Ibid.,10.

²⁰Kohn Hans, *Nationalism*, accessed on December 2021, available on: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nationalism>.

free from a foreign oppressor, and as a matter of fact, in the 20th Century, Nationalism has largely contributed, to world War Two, since countries led by their nationalist leaders can be considered as one of the major causes of war declarations.²¹

In McEwen's *Nutshell*, written in the 21st century, aspects of nationalism such as pride and identity are often spotted in the work. The foetus narrates that countries like Russia and China are making big efforts to regain their power that they had held already in the world. Russia's nationalism is starting to get reborn by its greed to regain more territories certainly by taking over Ukraine (Crimea). Following this, the foetus narrates:

In combination, for groups or nation, a noxious brew that lately intoxicated the Russians in Ukraine, as it once had their friends, the Serbs in their part of the world. We were belittled, now we will prove ourselves. Now that the Russian state was the political arm of organised crime, another war in Europe no longer inconceivable.²²

2.2 Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* and the Dominant Ideology: Capitalism:

In the years following, and before the novel's publication, the world has become more interested in money the new world ruling ideology. Speaking of capitalism with which the power of money has become not just a way to live, but rather a controlling and dominant ideology in modern societies. People have become more dependent on money.

Raymond Williams states that the dominant ideology is the central, effective and dominant system of meanings and values, which are not merely abstract, but which are organised and lived.²³ In *Nutshell*, Ian McEwen has been under the influence of the world's dominant ideology, which is Capitalism. The story is merely related to this word; Trudy one of the main characters of the novel is doing everything just for the purpose of gaining power

²¹ Lisbdnet 2021, "**How did Nationalism Lead to WW2**", accessed on January 2022. Available on: <https://lisbdnet.com/how-did-nationalism-lead-to-ww2/#:~:text=Nationalism%20and%20imperialism%20encouraged%20each,the%20country%20supporting%20their%20allies>

²² McEwen Ian, *Nutshell* (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.17.

²³ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism*, (bookmarque, London:1980), p.38.

and money and satisfying herself sexually and financially all along with her clandestine lover Claude leaving behind her 'poor' husband.

Capitalism is highly present as the dominant ideology in McEwen's adaptation of *Hamlet*. Through his narrator "the foetus", the English writer describes society as being materialistic, interested in gaining money and getting wealthy. Even the foetus himself, in some way or another, is influenced by the capitalist way of life, as he says: "I like to share a glass with my mother, you may never experienced, or you have forgotten, a good burgundy (her favourite) or a good Sancerre (also her favourite) decanted through a healthy planceta,"²⁴ or when he says: "but oh, a joyous, blushful Pinot Noir, or a gooseberried Sauvignon."²⁵ From these two passages, we have noticed that baby Hamlet is influenced by his mother, who likes to get drinks of high quality, as she likes to have an entertaining life, as she wanted to get rid of John Cairncross and take his big Georgian house. It is worth to note that John's family mansion is estimated at over seven million pounds; this is good enough to entice pure capitalists like Trudy and Claude to do whatever it takes to get a tight grip of the mansion.

Trudy and Claude, the pure capitalists of McEwen's novel, had gone so far with their sake of gaining wealth, in fact, they even committed a crime for it. The clandestine couple wanted to sacrifice their own member of family, the foetus's father, John Cairncross, they wanted to get his family mansion for their own. Their greed for money, as the foetus narrates, is beyond any other character in *Nutshell*. We can see it when the couple had a discussion together about John, a brother and husband, a discussion as the foetus reports; about money, accounts, taxes, debt's²⁶, and by the end of the discussion they exchanged these few words:

If I land my brother money it'll be good cover

²⁴ McEwen, Ian. *Nutshell* (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.10.

²⁵ Ibid., 11.

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

But not too much. We won't exactly be getting it back.²⁷

2.3 Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* and the Emergent Ideology: Technology and Automation, Climate Change and GM Crop:

The emergent ideologies or cultures are those new practices, new relationships and all what emerges as a new way of life which comes to appear as being different from what is already in circulation in a given society, at a given period of time. According to Williams an emergent culture consists of “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships that are continually being created.”²⁸ Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* contains many aspects that can be identified as emergent cultures or ideologies, these aspects are the rise of technology automation, climate change and GM corp.

To start with, the novel *Nutshell* was written in the 21st Century, in the post-post modern ages where technology has become a part of people's lives; indeed it has spread as quickly that it has become a dominant aspect of many societies, however, bad or good. Automation and robots are taking place everywhere that many people have come to consider them as a threat. Businesses are increasingly turning to automation and robots are being introduced more and more in hospitals, supermarkets and many other environments, as a consequence jobs are being stolen or if we can say that they are being destroyed by this new technology which invades people's lives. It is said that more than 73 million jobs will be eliminated by the year 2030 as a result of automation and companies spend billions to improve efficiency through automation and the use of high technology such as “Robots.”²⁹ This post-postmodernist era is dehumanizing the world. However, some people think that automation is not always a bad thing because as much as it is rising it has improved the life of

²⁷ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p.19.

²⁸ Williams Raymond, *Marxism and Literature*, (New York: Oxford university Press, 1977), p.123.

²⁹ Phil la duke, 2019. *Robots Are Stealing Our Jobs*. accessed on November 2021. Available on : <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/332468>

the humans. As “baby Hamlet” reports what he learned about the world: “Free speech no longer free, liberal democracy no longer the obvious port of destiny, robots stealing jobs, liberty in close combat with security.”³⁰

Climate change is also a very important aspect of the emergent ideology in the twenty first century. One of the biggest problems that face the planet earth since the last centuries had began to influence people’s lives, making the world’s population in constant anxiety and fear from the consequences of such phenomena. In *Nutshell*, The foetus narrates what is it like living in such bad planet conditions as the human being is the first cause of the increased temperature on earth causing more and more global warming the first threat of life since the beginning of times. He says:

Worldwide, rising sea levels run ahead of predictions. But none of these is first. That’s reserved for a new catastrophe. A combination, poverty and war, with climate change held in reserve, driving millions from their homes, an ancient epic in new form, vast movements of people, like engorged rivers in spring, Danubes, Rhines and Rhones of angry or desolate or hopeful people, crammed at borders against the razor-wire gates, drowning in thousands to share in the fortunes of the West. If, as the new cliché goes, this is biblical, the seas are not parting for them, not the Aegean, not the English Channel. Old Europa tosses in her dreams, she pitches between pity and fear, between helping and repelling. Emotional and kind this week, scaly-hearted and so reasonable the next, she wants to help but she doesn’t want to share or lose what she has.³¹

The narrator also talks about something very interesting, and it can be identified as an aspect of emergent ideology which is the GM corp. In one of the passages, he, for instance rhetorically questions: “and GM crops will save us from the ravages of chemical farming and the poorest from starvation?”³² GM corps or genetically modified corps which are being used certainly in agriculture to modify the nature of plants, by introducing modified DNA. This is meant to have a more resistant and profitable result. The narrator questions if this new aspect will save humanity from starvation and the ravages done by the chemical farming.

³⁰ McEwen Ian, *Nutshell*, (Jonathan Cape, London: 2016), p18.

³¹ *Ibid.*,82.

³² *Ibid.*,18.

V. General Conclusion:

Throughout this dissertation, we have attempted to make an intertextual dialogic and cultural materialist study of both John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* (2016) in relation to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603). Divided into two chapters, our research has first dealt with the dialogic study and second it has continued with the study of ideology in the above mentioned works. First, we have explored how Updike's and McEwen's novels are intertextually connected to William Shakespeare's play, relying on the theoretical framework of Mikhail Bakhtin. This theory has allowed us to delve into both texts' components and show the ways in which they intersect with Shakespeare's source text at the level of characters, themes, setting and language.

Although *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* were written in a different period of time with the tragedy of *Hamlet*, both works have, to a certain extent, reproduced Shakespeare's: story lines, themes and characters. John Updike takes a classic of universal literature and gives it a new spirit. An interpretation of the storyline where the protagonists become the antagonists and Shakespeare's antagonists Gertrude and Claudius become the Heroes of Updike's story. We have used intertextual dialogism to prove this connection between these two works, through analysing the characters in the two works. Updike has written a story that resembles William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and used characters with the same names, but with different roles. He has done this on purpose to spark a polemic which leads us to the precise concept we have relied upon which is Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Overt Polemic. We have used this concept to explain how the author used Shakespeare's discourse and then openly reversed its message and taking the side of Shakespeare's antagonists creating an overt polemic.

Ian McEwen, on the other hand, did a stylisation of Shakespeare's master piece giving it a modern version. He revives the voice of Hamlet through his character "Baby Hamlet", the foetus, turning him upside down. Hamlet has become a baby in his mother's womb, however, they both have the same purpose, avenge their father. McEwen did also a stylisation of Shakespeare's Gertrude and Claudius. In his novel, McEwen has transformed them into Trudy and Claude, The main characters of the story. They share the same trait: greed, disloyalty, betrayal and, most importantly, murderer. Beside, the stylisation is also located at the level of themes, speaking of existentialism, love, betrayal, poison and death. We have, in brief, studied the different components of both *Gertrude and Claudius* and *Nutshell* through an intertextual dialogic study in relation to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Second, we have tried to explore both novels from an ideological perspective, relying on Raymond Williams' concepts of culture: "Residual, Dominant and Emergent". Taking into consideration the period of publication of each work, as well as, the historical backgrounds of both authors. Updike's work represents many social and cultural elements of many social classes of the Renaissance period. Dominant aspects of ideology such as Capitalism. Emergent themes represented by various feminist themes and residual themes such as sexism and patriarchy. Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* offers a vast amount of ideological aspects that can be analysed and studied, so we tried to identify some of them as being dominant, residual and emergent. Capitalism can be spotted as a dominant aspect of culture while Eurocentrism and Nationalism as residual ideologies. Concerning the emergent ideology we viewed technology and automation, Climate change and GM crop as a rising and emerging ideology in the 21st Century following the date of publication of *Nutshell*.

John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* and Ian McEwen's *Nutshell* remain rich for workable issues. Coming researchers can for example undertake an intertextual study

between these two work, others can deal with the experience of loss and death in the selected novels.

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