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## Diamond or Jewel: Punishment or Reward?

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### ÖZET

Fransız feminist Luce Irigaray'ın kuramsal perspektifinden "Maltalı Yahudi" ve "İyilikle Öldürülen Bir Kadın" romanlarında iki farklı kadın tipinin temsiline odaklanan bu makale, toplumsal dinamiklerin Rönesans dönemi edebiyatına etkisini incelemektedir. Drama türüne özellikle odaklanarak, "Maltalı Yahudi"deki Abigail ve "İyilikle Öldürülen Bir Kadın"daki Susan karakterlerini, homososyal bir dünyada kadınların nesneleştirilmesi ve değiş tokuş edilmesine vurgu yaparak analiz ediyor. Çalışma, erkek karakterler Barabas ve Charles için önemli bir değere sahip olan takaslarıyla, bu kadın karakterlere nasıl bir meta gibi davranıldığını araştırıyor. Analiz, Irigaray tarafından keşfedildiği şekliyle kadınların metalaştırılmasını derinlemesine inceliyor ve "This Sex which is not One" adlı eserinde bakire kadının rolünü inceliyor. Makale, bu edebi eserlerin karşılaştırmalı bir incelemesi aracılığıyla, kadınların homososyal ekonomi içinde konumlandırılma ve değiş tokuşa konu olma yollarını aydınlatmayı ve seçilen metinlerdeki temsillerine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Metalaştırma, homososyal ekonomi, "Maltalı Yahudi", "İyilikle Öldürülen Bir Kadın", feminizm.

### ABSTRACT

Focusing on the representation of two different types of women in "The Jew of Malta" and "A Woman Killed with Kindness" from the theoretical perspective of the French feminist, Luce Irigaray, this paper explores the impact of societal dynamics on literature in the Renaissance period, with a particular focus on the genre of drama. It analyzes the characters of Abigail in "The Jew of Malta" and Susan in "A Woman Killed with Kindness" with an emphasis on the objectification and exchange of women in a homosocial world. The study explores how these female characters are treated as commodities, with their exchange holding significant value for the male characters, Barabas and Charles. The analysis delves into the commodification of women as explored by Irigaray and scrutinizes the role of the virgin woman in her work "This Sex which is not one". Through a comparative exploration of these literary works, the paper aims to illuminate the ways in which women are positioned and traded within the homosocial economy, shedding light on the complexities of their representation in the selected texts.

**Keywords:** Commodification, homosocial economy, "The Jew of Malta", "A Woman Killed with Kindness", feminism.

## INTRODUCTION

Renaissance was a time when a different kind of lifestyle and understanding of life than the Middle Ages were introduced to the people of the age. Starting in Europe, it was a cultural and intellectual movement which depended on ancient texts and thoughts of Greece and Rome. It affected social, political and economic life across the world together with the discovery of ancient texts and brought about a new kind of perspective and thinking. These ideas regarded humans as the most prominent thing in life and emphasized the power of curiosity, the importance of the individual, and amazement of creating new ideas. When English government workers visited Italy in the fifteenth century, they experienced these new perspectives and thoughts. Some philosophers and many artists gave way for this new thinking such as Pico Della Mirandola, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Donatello. They underlined that all must appreciate man and create works to praise the human being and its features. Therefore, humanism flourished, and these new thoughts replaced the ideas of the Middle Ages. (Greenblatt 2006: 488).

Nevertheless, the effects of Renaissance were observed later in England than it did in Europe after Henry VII provided political stability and power and it spread in the reign of Henry VIII who made radical changes in religious life of England. Henry VIII wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Religion was changed into Protestantism in Henry VIII's reign and he got the title of the supreme head of the church of England to be able to get married to Anne Boleyn. After Henry VIII, his children Edward and Mary reigned England consecutively for a short period of time and Elizabeth I, who was his daughter from Anne Boleyn came to the throne in 1558. In her long-lasting reign, England became powerful especially after they defeated the Spanish Armada at sea. Thus, people respected and appreciated Queen Elizabeth's actions (Greenblatt 2006: 492). After Elizabeth I, James I came to the throne in 1601 and it was called the Jacobean age. The Crown had a huge debt when Elizabeth I died, and James had to use tax system to pay this debt. He had quarrels with the Parliament and could not rule as well as the Tudors. These problems with the Parliament continued in the reign of Charles I. Later, when Queen Anne died, the Stuart monarchy was not as powerful as the Tudor monarchy (McDowall 1989: 87).

In addition to its political power, the Tudor court had vigorous cultural activity and it supported the development of literature and art. The court was a prominent place in which masques, plays, and elaborate speeches were performed. The court costumes, paintings, poetry, and music affected the English society and their taste of art, so the literature in England was supported by the court and had a vigorous effect on the cultural life in the country. To make it clear, the attitude of the Renaissance court especially in Elizabeth I's time towards art and literature influenced the behavior of English society towards art and this aroused interest in these fields (Greenblatt 2006: 493).

Although England was powerful at that time and supported cultural activities, social condition of women was not promising. Renaissance was a patriarchal era, and many women could not own a property, enter university or defend themselves at court. Women had to obey their fathers, husbands, and brothers so they had to adhere to the patriarchal power (Robin, Larsen and Levin 2007: 298). Nobody was called a feminist at that time, but some women rejected the inferiority of women and their rights. Christine de Pisan, for instance, presented the revision of Boccaccio's *On Famous Women* in her work *The Book of the City of Ladies*. According to Pisan's book, the perspective of women in Renaissance was the result of their lack of education and it was not related to their sex (Robin, Larsen and Levin 2007: 298). In Boccaccio's *On Famous Women*, there were 106 biographies of women that were successful, and he introduced them as they were more successful than the inferior women. He presents Zenobia of Palmyra as monstrous and Semiramis of Assyria as exotic, yet Pisan introduces them as scholars and builders of towns in her work. In addition, some male writers also supported women's equality in the Renaissance. Writers such as Sir Thomas Elyot and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa

wrote some works to criticize Juan Luis Vives' *On the Education of Christian Woman* which offered an educational program for women because of their oppressed nature. Agrippa's *Declamation* defended women and this work represented women's difference from men in terms of their body parts and claimed that they were not inferior to men (Robin, Larsen and Levin 2007: 141-142).

Although there were objections to women's inferiority, these notions did not have a considerable effect on the thinking of that era, and this was observed in one of the most famous genres of this period which was drama. In the medieval times, there were morality plays which were concerned with the struggle between good and evil, mystery plays which included the life of Christ and the Bible and miracle plays which displayed the aspects of saints and miracles. In Renaissance, however, there was a different type of drama. Being one of the most prominent one, tragedy had an enormous effect on literature of this time (Grendler 2004: 16). Playwrights used ancient times and their values, but they were later affected by Machiavelli and Seneca (Grendler 2004: 12). Since there was the impact of Seneca, the tragedies were concerned with revenge and bloodshed (Watson 302). Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca wrote plays, and he influenced Renaissance drama with its use of extensive verse, observation of psychology, its reflection on the plays and efficient staging, themes of revenge, evil within a family, the strong belief in destiny and the right of kingship (Boyle 1997: 15). In addition, they wrote domestic tragedies which centered on the issues and problems within a house (Watson 304). As they presented the society of Renaissance, they were concerned with the problem of female oppression and their being a victim in society (Grendler 2004: 18). Women were expected to behave as the patriarchal system wanted them to behave and if they did not, they were not seen virtuous and they were victimized. Men were regarded as powerful and women as weak, so men had power over women. They were the object in the hands of men so that men decided women's actions and perspectives. This paper ventures to study the commodification of Renaissance women. It analyses how women are objects of exchange in the homosocial economy. In this respect Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* will be studied in respect of French feminist Luce Irigaray's notion of homosocial economy, commodification of women and the role of virgin woman in *This Sex Which is not One*.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Being a French feminist, Irigaray in her work *This Sex Which is not One*, reconsiders Freud's notions of penis envy and his general views on women. She also refers to Marx's notion of value and then reconnects it with women and their status in society. According to her, commodification of women is experienced through the transaction between the father and the husband or the brother and the husband. This homosocial economy uses a woman as a tool for exchange:

What makes such an order possible, what assures its foundation, is thus the exchange of women.

The circulation of women among men is what establishes the operations of society, at least of patriarchal society. Whose presuppositions include the following: the appropriation of nature by man; the transformation of nature according to "human" criteria, defined by men alone; the submission of nature to labor and technology; the reduction of its material, corporeal, perceptible qualities to man's practical concrete activity; the equality of women among themselves, but in terms of laws of equivalence that remain external to them; the constitution of women as "objects" that emblemize the materialization of relations among men, and so on. (Irigaray 1985: 185)

In the light of the words above it is seen that Irigaray puts emphasis on the exchange of women and how it cements bonds between men. Therefore, it is the males who exchange women, and this makes women objects in the hands of men. She also underlines that society establishes women's social status with circulation of women. Thus, their social status is defined by the patriarchy in society. Irigaray underlines Karl Marx's suggestion of a commodity's use value and exchange value. While use value is the physical qualities of a commodity, exchange value is the value that results from the possibility of exchanging the

commodity (1985: 178). Irigaray applies this notion of Marx to women and states that there are three types of women as a result of homosocial exchange: virgin, mother and prostitute. From these, virgin is the most prominent one since it has an exchange value:

The virginal woman, on the other hand, is pure exchange value. She is nothing but the possibility, the place, the sign of relations among men. In and of herself, she does not exist: she is a simple envelope veiling what is really at stake in social exchange. In this sense, her natural body disappears into its representative function. (Irigaray 1985: 186)

Accordingly, the virgin woman has an exchange value since she can be exchanged at any time, so her body represents her exchange value. Hence, women function as a commodity and besides virgin woman is more valuable than other women. As it is stated before, this function of women is observed in Renaissance too and it is identified in Renaissance playwrights.

## DISCUSSION

Being one of these playwrights, Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury in 1564. His father was a shoemaker, and he won a scholarship at King's School in Cambridge at the age of 15. He learned Latin there and won another scholarship at Cambridge University. Although he died young, he had a long-lasting effect throughout the world (Grendler 2004: 49). His one of the most well-known plays, *The Jew of Malta* tells the story of Barabas and how he takes revenge of Christians in Malta for their taking his wealth to pay the tribute to Turkish governors. Being a revenge tragedy, it was first performed in 1592 by Lord Strange's Men and has both tragic and comic elements (Grendler 2004: 51). T.S. Eliot calls this play a tragic farce (Hattaway 1990: 105). According to Hattaway, Barabas has Machiavellian aspects in his character as he is very cruel and murderous (106). He also states that he looks like vices in medieval drama (105). At the beginning of the play, it is seen that Abigail and Barabas have a close relationship:

Enter Abigail, the Jew's daughter.  
What, woman! Moan not for a little loss.  
Thy father has enough in store for thee  
ABIGAIL. Not for myself, but aged Barabas,  
Father, for thee lamenteth Abigail.  
But I will learn to leave these fruitless tears,  
And urged thereto with my afflictions,  
With fierce exclams run to the senate-house,  
And in the senate reprehend them all,  
And rend their hearts with tearing of my hair,  
'Til they reduce the wrongs done to my father (I. II. 36)

It is observed in the lines of Abigail above that she and her father have a firm bond. When Barabas rejects to pay money for Ferneze's debt, Ferneze orders to turn Barabas' house into nunnery. Since Barabas takes revenge after this and feels sorrowful, Abigail also feels sorry for Barabas. She thinks that what Ferneze did to Barabas is not right and she utters that she will help Barabas. Since Barabas knows that she will help him, he says he needs the help of Abigail to get back his fortune which he hid in his converted house:

BARABAS. Be ruled by me, for in extremity  
We ought to make bar of no policy  
ABIGAIL. Father, whatever it be, to injure them  
That have so manifestly wronged us,  
What will not Abigail attempt?  
...  
BARABAS. This shall follow then:  
There have I hid, close underneath the plank

That runs along the upper chamber floor,  
The gold and jewels which I kept for thee.

But here they come. Be cunning Abigail. (I. II. 38)

Therefore, it is observed that Barabas uses Abigail to regain his fortune. Since Abigail is a virgin woman and can enter nunnery, he wants her to enter in order to take back his wealth. Although it is a dangerous mission to do, Abigail accepts it to help her father. Thus, this is the first action which shows that Barabas uses Abigail for his own matters. Reigle puts forward the view that Abigail's virginity helps Barabas in her entering into the convent (2012: 500). Hence, as Irigaray states being a virgin is the most prominent role of a woman in homosocial economy (1985: 186). Besides, Barabas is aware of the commodity function of Abigail and her virgin richness of her. This is observed later when Abigail brings the fortune of Barabas, and he exclaims as such:

BARABAS. O my girl,  
My gold, my fortune, my felicity,  
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy.  
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss.  
Oh Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too,  
Then my desires were fully satisfied.  
But I will practice thy enlargement thence.  
Oh girl, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my bliss! (II.I. 46)

After Abigail brings him the jewels and gold, Barabas becomes joyful and thanks Abigail. Cocoris Whitehouse suggests that he uses Abigail as a tool to get what he desires. In addition, his words "Oh girl, oh gold" highlights how he sees Abigail as a commodity just as his gold and jewels. It is true that Barabas is very fond of his wealth and his daughter. Nevertheless, it is obvious that his love of her daughter results from the capacity of Abigail to help him in matters of money. When he takes his bags of gold, it is observed that he considers Abigail as an object like his gold. Reigle underlines that the words of Barabas display the equal function of Abigail to gold and jewels (2012: 502). His use of Abigail for his own ends and her being an object are also seen when he uses Abigail as a tool to set Lodowick against Don Mathias:

LODOWICK. Well, Barabas, canst help me to a diamond?

BARABAS. Oh sir, your father had my diamonds;

Yet have I one left that will serve your turn.

*[Aside]* I mean my daughter, but erehe shall have her,

I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood.

I ha' the poison of the city for him,

And the white leprosy.

...

LODOWICK. How shows it by night?

BARABAS. Outshines Cynthia's rays.

*[Aside]* You'll like it better far a-nights than days.

LODOWICK. And what is the price?

Your life, if you have it. Oh my lord,

we will not jar about the price.

Come to my house and I will give't your honour *[Aside]* with a vengeance) (II.III. 51)

Accordingly, it is understood from the conversation between Barabas and Lodowick that Barabas does not have an affection for his own daughter, yet he uses her like a pawn. Lodowick asks him a diamond and he says that all of his wealth is in the hands of Lodowick's father, Ferneze. However, he has only one diamond which is Abigail. Despite Lodowick's serious tone, Barabas means that the mentioned

diamond is Abigail. On these grounds, Abigail is a commodity to be exchanged between Lodowick and Barabas. As Irigaray suggests father and husband exchange the virgin woman in homosocial economy (1985: 186). In Abigail's situation Barabas is aware of Abigail's value as a virgin and he is treated like a jewel to be exchanged between Barabas and Lodowick (Chedgzoy 1990: 254). Nevertheless, Barabas desires to take revenge of Ferneze by setting Lodowick against Don Mathias. To this end, he uses Abigail as an object to carry out his plan. When Lodowick visits Barabas to see the diamond, Barabas wants Abigail to please Lodowick:

LODOWICK. Oh, Barabas, well met;  
Where is the diamond you told me of?  
BARABAS. I have it for you, sir. Please you walk in with me.  
What, ho, Abigail! Open the door, I say.  
*Enter Abigail*  
ABIGAIL. In good time, father. Here are letters come  
From Ormus, and the post stays here within.  
BARABAS. Give me the letters. Daughter, do you hear?  
Entertain Lodowick, the Governor's son,  
With all the courtesy you can afford,  
Provided that you keep your maidenhead.  
Use him as if he were (Aside) a Philistine.  
Dissemble, swear, protest, vow love to him;  
He is not of the seed of Abraham. –  
I am a little busy, sir; pray, pardon me.  
Abigail, bid him welcome for my sake.  
ABIGAIL. For your sake and his own he's welcome hither.  
BARABAS. Daughter, a word more. Kiss him, speak him fair,  
And like a cunning Jew so cast about  
That ye be both made sure ere you come out.  
ABIGAIL. Oh, father, Don Mathias is my love.  
BARABAS. I know it. Yet I say make love to him. (II. III. 53)

The quotation above aims to illuminate the commodity function of Abigail who loves Don Mathias. Even though Barabas is aware of Abigail's love for Don Mathias, he sees Abigail as a commodity to be used for his own revenge plans. Because Barabas desires to take revenge of Ferneze, he intends to benefit from Abigail for this mission. The underlying meaning of Barabas suggests that Abigail is the tool to satisfy Lodowick. In spite of Abigail's intentions, her father makes her act as he wants. In the light of Irigaray's notion of women's commodification, it is observed that Abigail is a commodity to be exchanged in the hands of Barabas (1985: 177). He does not acknowledge Abigail's own will because of his revenge for Ferneze. Therefore, this conversation above shows how Barabas acts to take revenge of Ferneze by controlling Abigail. Similarly, he carries out the same plan for Don Mathias too:

BARABAS. Well, but for me, as you went in at doors  
You had been stabbed: but not a word on't now.  
Here must no speeches pass, nor swords be drawn.  
MATHIAS. Suffer me, Barabas, but to follow him.  
BARABAS. No; so shall I, if any hurt be done,  
Be made an accessory of your deeds.  
Revenge it on him when you meet him next.  
MATHIAS. For this I'll have his heart.  
BARABAS. Do so. Lo, here I give thee Abigail.  
MATHIAS. What greater gift can poor Mathias have?

Shall Lodowick rob me of so fair a love?

My life is not so dear as Abigail. (II. III. 64)

The conversation between Barabas and Don Mathias displays that Barabas promises Abigail to him. Nonetheless, he also promised her to Lodowick earlier. He, therefore, tries to set Lodowick against Don Mathias and he will get rid of both of them. In this respect, Abigail's commodity function is on the foreground. Her being a commodity in the hands of Barabas signifies Irigaray's notion. Although she loves Don Mathias, she acts as if she also loves Lodowick for the sake of her father. In the homosocial economy, the father or the brother have the right to perform the transaction, so Barabas actively does this mission and Abigail confides her own body to Barabas. Nevertheless, Abigail revolts against her father's wishes when she learns that he planned the death of Don Mathias and Lodowick. When she enters the convent for the second time with her own will, Barabas vows to take revenge of her:

BARABAS. Very well, Ithamore, Then now be secret,

And for thy sake, whom I so dearly love,

Now shalt thou see the death of Abigail,

That thou mayst freely live to be my heir.

ITHAMORE. Why, master, will you poison her with a mess of

Rice porridge? That will preserve life, make her

Round and plump, and batten more than you are aware.

BARABAS. Ay, but Ithamore, seest thou this?

It is a precious powder that I bought

Of an Italian in Ancona once,

Whose operation is to bind, infect,

And poison deeply, yet not appear

In forty hours after it is ta'en. (III. IV. 74)

A close look at the quotation above suggests that Barabas arranges to kill Abigail because of the fact that she became a Christian. Her entering into the convent after learning that Barabas is the main reason of Don Mathias' and Lodowick's death brings about Barabas' plan of killing Abigail. Since he does not need her commodity function and she revolts against Barabas by becoming a Christian, he decides to poison her. Beskin highlights that Abigail chooses to act as she wants for the first time in the play, and this angers Barabas (2007: 28). As a result of this decision, thus, she is killed by her own father.

In other words, the play *The Jew of Malta* exemplifies Irigaray's notion of women's commodification which is argued in her *This Sex Which is not One*. In addition to its theme of revenge, this play illustrates how Abigail functions as a commodity in the homosocial economy. The fact that Barabas makes use of her for his own ends brings about Abigail's commodification in society. Since she is a virgin, she serves as a diamond for Barabas who is fond of money and wealth. Nevertheless, the revolt of Abigail against Barabas by being a Christian prepares her end since she does not conform to the rules of homosocial economy and does not obey the patriarchy.

Being a different kind of tragedy, Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* also employs the commodification of a woman. Born in 1575 Lincolnshire, Thomas Heywood was a translator, playwright, literary critic, and writer of many works. *Oenone and Paris* was the first literary work he published. Although he started with poetry, he was well-known with his dramatic works too. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* which was published in 1607 and produced in 1603 is known as his masterpiece (Cook 2006: 258). Since it is a domestic tragedy, it is not concerned with noble characters and realms but employs the circumstances within a household together with ordinary characters. Bennet propounds the view that this play has two plots. While the first plot centers on Mrs. Anne Frankford and Mr. John Frankford's marriage and Mrs. Anne Frankford's adulterous relationship with Mr. Wendoll, the second plot is concerned with Sir Charles Mountford's arrest, his sister Susan's efforts to get him

out of prison and Sir Charles Mountford's intention to use Susan to pay his debt to Mr. Shafton. In the second plot it is observed that Susan has a commodity function in the homosocial economy. To portray it in Irigaray's terms, Susan acts as a commodity to strengthen the bonds of this economy. (1985: 181) When Charles and Susan are first introduced in the play, they are presented as siblings who are strongly attached to each other. Charles, for instance, attempts to flee after the hawking match he played with Sir Francis Acton but he cannot because he does not want to leave his sister:

SIR CHARLES. Call me a surgeon, sister, for my soul;  
The sin of murder it hath pierced my heart,  
And made a wide wound there, but for these scratches,  
They are nothing, nothing.

SUSAN. Charles, what have you done?  
Sir Francis hath great friends, and will pursue you  
Unto the utmost danger of the law.

SIR CHARLES. My conscience is become my enemy,  
And will pursue me more than Acton can.

SUSAN O fly, sweet brother.

SIR CHARLES. Shall I fly from thee?  
What, Sue, art weary of my company?

SUSAN. Fly from your foe.

SIR CHARLES. You, sister, are my friend,  
And flying you, I shall pursue my end.

SUSAN. Your company is as my eyeball dear;

Being far from you, no comfort can be near. (12-13)

Charles attempts to flee, yet he cannot leave his sister Susan on her own and he is arrested. Like the beginning of *The Jew of Malta*, these lines from *A Woman Killed with Kindness* above underlines the love between two relatives. Although it is a father and a daughter in the former, the latter employs a brother and a sister. When Sir Acton and Charles went to a hawking match, Acton claims that Charles cheated and that is why Charles won. The fact that Charles kills both of Acton's men alarms Charles and Susan pities him. Even though he wants to escape, he cannot go in order not to leave his sister alone. Therefore, it is observed that Charles and Susan have a firm bond between each other. He succeeds to do away with prison by paying money for his punishment, yet he loses all his wealth as a result. Thus, he borrows money from Shafton and he cannot pay it back later on. Despite Susan's efforts to borrow money from their relatives, they do not intend to lend money to Susan. Bennet puts forward the view that Susan fails in the homosocial economy inasmuch as this role is not appropriate for women (2000: 43). However, Acton pays Charles' debt to be able to win Susan's favor. The time when Charles learns that it is Acton's money, he at first refuses it but then he ponders on and decides to use Susan as a commodity to pay back Acton's money:

SUSAN. Brother, why have you tricked me like a bride?  
Bought me this gay attire, these ornaments?  
Forget you our estate, our poverty?

...

SIR CHARLES. Dost love me, sister? Wouldst thou see me live  
A bankrupt beggar in the world's disgrace  
And die indebted to my enemies?  
Wouldst thou behold me stand like a huge beam  
In the world's eye, a byword and a scorn?  
It lies in thee of these to acquit me free,  
And all my debt I may outstrip by thee.



SUSAN. By me? Why, I have nothing, nothing left;  
I owe even for the clothes upon my back;  
I am not worthy –  
SIR CHARLES. O sister, say not so.  
It lies in you my downcast state to raise,  
To make me stand on even points with the world.  
Come sister, you are rich! Indeed you are,  
And in your power you have without delay  
Acton's five hundred pound back to repay. (V.I 72-73)

The conversation between Charles and Susan underlines the notion of Susan's commodity function. As Irigaray suggests a woman is circulated among men and this is the most prominent function of a woman in homosocial economy inasmuch as it establishes and strengthens the patriarchal notions in society (1985: 184). Bennet utters that Charles realizes he does not have to pay back to Acton since he will use Susan to repay his debt (2000: 43). The quotation above also highlights how valuable Susan is in the eyes of Charles on account of her virginity. He states that she is rich because she is a virgin. To illustrate it in Irigaray's terms, the social role of a woman indicates her value and Susan's virginity represents her pure exchange value (1985: 186). Similar to Abigail in *The Jew of Malta*, Susan is also used by the patriarchy for its own ends. Like Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, Charles represents the patriarchal role of men in society:

SIR CHARLES. I know thou pleasest me a thousand times  
More in that resolution than thy grant.  
[*Aside*] Observe her love: to soothe them in my suit  
Her honour she will hazard, though not lose;  
To bring me out of debt, her rigorous hand  
Will pierce her heart. O, wonder, that will choose,  
Rather than stain her blood, her life to lose.  
[*Aloud*] Come you sad sister, to a woeful brother.  
[*He takes her hand*]  
This is the gate; I'll bear him such a present,  
Such an acquittance for the knight to seal,  
As will amaze his sense and surprise  
With admiration all his fantasies. (V.I 75-76)

Accordingly, Charles intends to use Susan as a pawn to get the attention of Acton. Although Charles is aware of Susan's love for himself, he acts in a selfish manner to do away with his debt. The use of the word "present" for Susan suggests that Susan will be exchanged like a present between Charles and Acton. With this in mind, it is observed that Susan is a sacrifice for the sake of patriarchal exchange in society. According to Findlay, this exchange is useful for the homosocial bonding in the patriarchal society, however Susan is sacrificed within this act (507). As it is mentioned before, Irigaray's notions of the establishment of society with the circulation of women among men strengthens the order in society (1985: 184). Therefore, Susan's circulation will be beneficial both for Charles and patriarchal society. It is seen that Charles judges Susan in terms of a commodity:

SIR CHARLES. Stand not amazed to see me thus attended.  
Acton, I owe thee money, and being unable  
To bring thee the full sum in ready coin,  
Lo, for thy more assurance, here's a pawn:  
My sister, my dear sister, whose chaste honour  
I prize above a million. Here. Nay, take her:

She's worth your money, man; do not forsake her (V. I. 76)

At the beginning, Charles was affectionate towards Susan and it is recognized that he cared about her. However, it is observed that Charles is not a virtuous character as Susan and this results in Susan's being a "pawn" even if she does not want to. Bennet propounds the view that this play underlines how heterosexual relationships are shaped by the male homosocial society (2000: 36). As Barabas forsakes her own daughter for his own ends, Charles also controls her own sister for his own interests. He even tells Acton to behave Susan however he wants:

SIR CHARLES. Acton, she is too poor to be thy bride,  
And I too much opposed to be thy brother.  
There, take her to thee. If thou hast the heart  
To seize her as a rape, or lustful prey;  
To blur our house that never yet was stain'd,  
To murder her that never meant thee harm,  
To kill me now whom once thou sav'dst from death,  
Do them at once; on her all these rely  
And perish with her spotted chastity. (V. I. 77)

The lines of Charles above suggest that Acton can behave however he pleases towards Susan. He utters that he can rape her or murder her, yet he should do them all at once. Even though this implies a contradictory meaning in it, Charles underlines the commodity function of Susan in these lines inasmuch as it is him who gives her to Acton. In the light of Irigaray's notions, the homosocial economy identifies women's social values and the practice of exchange between men labels them as commodities (1985: 181). In Susan's case, she is exchanged between her brother and her future husband Acton. The fact that she is a virgin situates her in the most prominent place on the market. Since she does not rebel against her brother and conforms his notions, she is rewarded with her life:

SIR FRANCIS. I cannot be so cruel to a lady  
I love so dearly. Since you have not spared  
To engage your reputation to the world,  
Your sister's honor which you prize so dear,  
Nay, all the comforts which you hold on earth,  
To grow out of my debt, being your foe,  
Your honoured thoughts, lo, thus I recompense:  
Your metamorphosed foe receives your gift  
In satisfaction of all former wrongs.  
This jewel I will wear here in my heart,  
And where before I thought her for her wants  
Too base to be my bride, to end all strife  
I seal you my dear brother, her my wife.  
SUSAN. You still exceed us. I will yield to fate  
And learn to love where till now did hate. (V.I 77-78)

Francis accepts Charles' gift for repaying his debt for he was in love with Susan in the first place. Despite Susan's reluctance to be with Acton, she accepts it for the sake of her brother. Acton uses the word "jewel" for her as Barabas uses the word "diamond" for Abigail. Therefore, both women have a commodity function in the homosocial act of exchange. Because of the fact that Susan confirms Acton's marriage proposal, she survives in the patriarchal world unlike Abigail who revolted against the patriarchy.

To put it in another way, Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* exemplifies Irigaray's notions of commodification of women in the patriarchal society. The exchange of Susan between Charles and Acton illuminates the idea of a woman's function as a commodity within this transaction.

The use of Susan by Charles to repay his debt displays the foundations of patriarchal exchange and the prominence of a virgin woman in society. For she obeys her brother's instructions and intentions, she is not killed like Abigail.

## CONCLUSION

As a result, Renaissance was a time when new ideas spread around the world from Italy to other countries in Europe. It came to England later than some of the countries, yet England flourished with novel concepts and notions. Although new ideas and concepts flourished in Renaissance, the condition of women did not change. With some writers supporting the equality of women and men such as Christine de Pisan, Sir Thomas Elyot and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, Renaissance did not witness an extensive change in women condition. All of these had its impact on literature and art too. Being one of the most prominent genres of the era, drama also prospered with well-known playwrights of the era. Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* were two of the most well-known plays of the era. While the former exemplifies the revenge tragedy, the latter demonstrates a domestic tragedy. However, they both employ woman characters that function as a commodity in society. In the light of French feminist Luce Irigaray's notions of exchange of woman and their being a commodity in homosocial world, the character Abigail in *The Jew Of Malta* and Susan in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* present a valuable illustration. Both female characters are controlled by their male relatives, and they obey their instructions to be able to help them. In addition, both male characters use them as a commodity to achieve their ends. In Barabas' case, it is his wealth and in Charles' case it is repaying his debt. Both female characters are virgins, thus as Irigaray believes this heightens their value on the market. The fact that Barabas refers to Abigail as "diamond" and Charles signifies Susan as "jewel" brings about their commodification by the homosocial economy. Therefore, both female characters are treated as a commodity and their exchange is valuable for Barabas and Charles. While Abigail cannot survive in the patriarchal world because of her revolt against her father, Susan is rewarded with marriage because of her adopting the patriarchal norms. Hence, this elucidates that Renaissance playwrights also illustrate the place of women who behave according to norms and who do not conform to the norms. In Abigail's case it is punishment and in Susan's case it is rewarding.

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