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A Presentist, Palestinian, Pedagogical Reading of Language and Gender Politics in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*

Bilal Tawfiq Hamamra

Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

ABSTRACT

In addition to the methodology of new historicism, this article deploys feminism, performance studies and presentism to discuss the effects of the masculine practice of enforced marriage and turning a deaf ear to the female voice in Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* and contemporary Palestine. I explain that Middleton's *Women Beware Women* criminalises the absolute right of the monarch to command through a critique of Renaissance practice of enforced marriage and of male figures' deafness to the female voice. I argue that Middleton's tragedy questions and interrogates the dominant patriarchal discourse by locating subversion within the dominant discourse. While Middleton shows that women are complicit with male figures' voices, male figures show no recognition of the inadequacy of their voices. The eclectic range of critics I am using in this article opens up gender-based readings in the teaching context of An-Najah University where I teach Renaissance Drama. This article seeks to modify the feminist view that tragedy merely suggests that female characters face verbal and physical circumscription. Rather, tragedy ensues because male figures are deaf to female figures' voices and such deafness breeds female figures' subversive plots.

KEYWORDS

New historicism; presentism; speech; silence; gender; absolute authority; masque

In many cases of early marriage, girls are often denied their right to choose and decide their own fate by their fathers, brothers, and other male family members, who force them to marry in order to protect the dignity of the family, as well as to decrease the family's financial burden under the strain of the current political and economic context. (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 11)

The Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs (PM) is a national committee to combat violence against women by improving the legal laws that discriminate against them. The PM attributes the verbal, physical and sexual violence unleashed against women to the interrelated oppressive systems of traditions, legal systems and Israeli occupation (PM 2011, 11–12, 15). The above-quoted lines suggest that in Palestinian culture, many women are denied voices with which to express their desires and choose their husbands and they are exhorted to listen and obey male figures' dictates. PM suggests that the very difficult living conditions Palestinians face due to the Israeli occupation – mobility restrictions, increasing unemployment and high poverty levels – lead families to marry

their daughters young to manage household poverty (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 9). The Palestinian female's defiance of patriarchal voices would tarnish the family honour and this defiance would sanction and force men to kill her so as to restore honour to the family. In this article, I use the contemporary Palestinian issues of arranged and enforced marriage, the female position of subservience and the right of women to choose their husbands as presentist intertexts to examine Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (1625/1999), which depicts the evils of enforced marriage and male deafness to female voices.

Middleton's *Women Beware Women* which privileges female protagonists criticises the absolute authority that shores up King James I's rule through a criticism of enforced marriage and of male figures' deafness to the female voice. King James I's first words in 1603 to England's Parliament were: 'I am the Husband, all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body' (Goldberg 1983, 141). While King James I encouraged his subjects to obey him as they would a father (Hadfield 2003), Middleton's *Women Beware Women* suggests that absolute patriarchal authority breeds female characters' deployment of deceptive silence and speech to defy male figures' authority.

A new historicist reading would argue that the dominant male powers deliberately foster the subversive behaviour of Livia, Bianca, Isabella and the Mother in order to crush it publicly and so assert their dominance. As Greenblatt argues, 'actions that should have the effect of radically undermining authority turn out to be the props of that authority' (1988, 53). However, I suggest that female figures' subversive speeches and silences are a response to the destructive masculine practice of enforced marriage and male figures' deafness to female figures' voices.

I commit myself to the methodology of presentism: 'Deliberately employing crucial aspects of the present as a trigger for its investigations, [presentism's] centre of gravity will accordingly be "now", rather than "then"', as pointed out by Grady and Hawkes (2007, 4). By using this methodology, I immerse myself in the different cultural and historical contexts of both cultures. While Bruce R. Smith argues that 'Presentism ... goes too far in denying continuities between past and present' (2012, 41), the parallels that can be drawn between the situations in Middleton's *Women Beware Women* and those in contemporary Palestine show that this text can transcend its historical context and can be inscribed in different historical and cultural contexts.

While there is a similarity of situations between both cultures, the notion that women, oppression and subversion mean the same thing in each is methodologically controversial. Magda Al-Nowaihi points out that 'Although the general silencing of women appears to be an almost universal phenomenon, cutting across different periods and places, it is nevertheless a phenomenon that needs to be dealt with contextually' (2001, 479). In contemporary Palestine, while religion is sympathetic to women, the construction of gender roles is enhanced by traditions and occupation that reinforce each other (Rubenberg 2001; Abdo 1999). I will, therefore, define the Palestinian reader whose perspective I will implore throughout this article as the one who shares my common understanding of traditions and the feverish situation of the Israeli occupation. I will document the reactions of some students to *Women Beware Women* to solidify the aims of the presentist move and the rationale of the analysis. I have preserved the anonymity of my students whose words I quote in this article.

Critiquing or debating ideas of sexual difference in the Department of English at An-Najah National University is subversive. Drama and Shakespeare courses which are offered focus on genre. The former course teaches students samples of Western and English plays from 500 BC to contemporary times. The course focuses on male authors such as Sophocles, Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Synge, Pinter and Beckett, and traditionally has not focused on issues of gender at all. Shakespearean tragedies that are often taught in the above-mentioned courses include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cymbeline* and *Troilus and Cressida*. Students are traditionally asked to comment on selected lines from the plays, identifying the speaker and context and commenting on figurative language and imagery embodied therein. With respect to gender presentation, instructors focus on male characters and male themes and female characters are depicted from the instructors' points of view as representing a threat to the male characters. My experience of studying the representations of speech and silence in relation to sexuality and politics at Lancaster University for a five-year period has ironically made me a stranger in my own land. In the first month of my teaching at An Najah University, I have faced challenges in introducing the fruits of my research into the curriculum. Students initially complained to the president of the university and he, in turn, advised that I follow the steps of senior colleagues who omit discussion of sexuality in the course texts. While many students have responded positively to my analysis of *Women Beware Women* from a presentist, Palestinian perspective, some students object to my discussions of themes related to sexuality and defiance of conventional gender roles.

Middleton's *Women Beware Women* has a sharp resonance for a Palestinian readership living in a cultural scenario that adopts analogues of the tyrannical gendered political codes of early modern England. The Palestine construction of gender difference via the binary opposites of speech and silence resonates with that of Jacobean England. Bilal Hamamra argues that:

Like James's England with its Catholics and Protestants, Palestine is Muslim and Christian, a land of related but conflicting religious traditions, and that conflict fuels a suspicion of difference and a conviction that adherence to dogma is a marker of character and belonging. (Hamamra 2016, 5)

Furthermore, while James's England was an imperial country, Palestine is an occupied country and Israeli occupation reinforces Palestinian male figures' hegemony over women (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2014). Despite the historical and ideological differences between early modern England and contemporary Palestine, in the classrooms where I teach, *Women Beware Women* offers implicit criticisms of the Palestinian practice of enforced marriage and male deafness to female figures' voices. For Palestinian readers and audiences, Middleton's tragedy stages their perception of honour as a signifier that is assigned and confirmed in public rather than inherent. The Mother's alliance with powerful male figures to help Bianca fulfil her sexual desires challenges the role to which the Palestinian mother-in-law is assigned: that of protecting her daughter-in-law's honour which is based on her chastity. Livia's maternal role contrasts with that of Palestinian mothers who guide girls along a culturally established principle of female obedience to male figures. The emergence of Bianca's voice and her defiance of Leantio subvert the Palestinian hierarchy of social relations and the failure of

Leantio to fulfil his role of controlling his wife's sexuality. I argue that Middleton's heroines' destructive participation in the spectacle of wedding subverts Palestinian women's celebration of their honour and that of their female relatives in weddings. Palestinian male figures' verbal disowning of their male and female relations as traitors and sexually transgressive women enables me to scrutinise Livia's usurpation of masculine discourse in her re-naming of Isabella to defy Fabritio's absolute authority. While it is Palestinian male relatives who disown traitors verbally, Livia usurps this linguistic authority in her attempt to delegitimise the relationship between Isabella and Hippolito.

Women Beware Women presents the household as a playing space in which patriarchal perceptions of the female as an object are deconstructed. Leantio expresses his love using commercial imagery, which accentuates his perception of Bianca as property (1.1.12, 14, 43–44, 162, 166–167). However, the fact that Isabella '[has] forsook friends, fortunes, and [her] country' in order to marry him (1.1.131–133) negates his perception of her as a containable possession. Leantio legitimates feminine authority in the household by asking his mother 'to look to [the] keys' (1.1.176) and to keep Isabella as 'lock[ed] chests' (1.1.176). His reference to 'keys' can be read as a pun on the male penis, as illuminated by Bianca's seduction with the Duke's phallus (2.2.275), which leads to what Parker (1996, 9) calls 'the sexual "turning" of women'. While the Mother controls the household, she is one of those 'old mothers [who] know the world' (1.1.175) and may use that experience either to protect Bianca or to teach her rebellion (1.1.71–77). Leantio attempts to re-appropriate the stage and prevent it from providing women with a space to air grievances and infect other women with contagious words (1.1.71–75) which would make his rhetorical control precarious.

In the theatre, silence can be a site of exposure and immodest exchange. Bianca's silence is, arguably, a deliberate strategy on Middleton's part to position her as an object of Leantio's gaze and voice. The dialogue between Leantio and the Mother emphasises Bianca's apartness and their intimacy, as revealed by Leantio's humorous acknowledgement of his mother's sexual knowledge. Arguably, Bianca's silence is a sign of dissatisfaction with the poor surroundings, for she criticises Leantio's house after her rape (3.1.17–25, 45–50, 126–131). When Bianca tells the Mother that 'there is nothing can be wanting/To her that does enjoy all her desires' (1.1.125–126), spectators and readers may recognise that her desires are unlikely to be satisfied in Leantio's house. Although Bianca's appearance at the window seems innocent, Middleton uses a dramatic and cultural convention in which 'women who look from a window onto a public place are to be suspected of harbouring licentious wishes' (Levin 1997, 377). Bianca's silence after the rape is a sign of sexual violation. She hides her shame and appears 'lively' and 'cheerful' in front of the Mother (2.2.447). She denounces Livia as a 'damned bawd' for her 'smooth-browed treachery' and Guardiano as a 'slave' (2.2.426, 442). Bianca's slandering of Livia and Guardiano can be read as a means of projecting her own sense of degradation. From a presentist, Palestinian perspective, the appearance of the female at a window especially in rural areas may undermine her sexual reputation and cause gossip in the community. A working woman from a village in Ramallah says that when a woman 'is divorced, they [her family] start restricting her freedom, requesting her to stay at home, not even looking out of the window' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 37). One of my female students said that 'my father

always tells my mother not to go out the house while he is away and not to allow your daughters stand by the window. The people's talk is merciless'. My student's words show the importance of keeping female sexuality under surveillance and the confinement of women in the domestic sphere that they cannot trespass out of fear that they will bring shame to the family. Thus, Palestinian readers, steeped in traditions, may attribute Bianca's sexual violation to her appearance at the window.

The Mother's assistance of Bianca to express and fulfil her sexual desires undermines the role that Palestinian mothers-in-law play in protecting their daughters-in-law and maintaining male honour, based on women's chastity. The Mother speaks from outside the sphere of the patriarchal voice (like that of Leantio) that casts Bianca as a possession. She reveals what Leantio wants to be secret (2.2.225–226). Potter (1982), Tricomi (1989) and Bradbrook (1980) claim that the Mother is innocently engaged in the chess game of Bianca's seduction. However, I agree with Richard Levin (1997), who sees her as a sophisticated schemer. In saying that Bianca's loneliness 'is uncomfortable,/ Especially to young bloods' (2.2.207–208), the Mother suggests that Bianca needs to express herself sexually. The Mother allies her voice with a powerful male figure's voice to help Bianca voice and act upon her sexual desires (2.2.292, 302–304), whilst 'cunning[ly]' (2.2.292) playing chess to lose (2.2.303). I agree with Levin, who notes that the Mother 'may be living her own life through Bianca' (1997, 377) as she cherishes the courtly flattery and hospitality she receives (2.2.212–217, 3.1.263–268). The Mother endorses Bianca's rape, for the Duke's words of seduction echo her own (2.2.370–371, 380). The Duke says that Bianca's 'own mother' would praise her and 'command' her 'wit' to become the Duke's mistress (2.2.370–371). The play challenges the view that the Mother turns against Bianca. After the banquet in Act 3, Scene 2, the Mother disappears and she is the only major character not present at the masque. Her acoustic and physical disappearance from the masque of destructive voices can be read as Middleton's strategy to dissociate her from condemnation. The Mother's voice stands in contrast to Leantio's didacticism, possessiveness and romantic cliché. The Mother's realistic and concrete concerns (1.1.58–70) are consistent with Bianca's desire to regain the privileges that were hers before she renounced them by eloping with Leantio (1.1.131–142). This early modern representation of liberal family politics, where the Mother helps her daughter-in-law to fulfil her desires, contradicts the conventional hyper-protective role of mothers and mothers-in-law in contemporary Palestine, which can lead to abuse. A working woman from a village in Hebron says: '*Many problems occur as a result of the constant inspection and interference of mothers-in-law with the wives and children of their sons. They practise verbal and even physical abuse*' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 33, original emphasis). Furthermore, while the Mother allies her voice with Bianca's to defy Leantio's attempt to imprison his wife, in contemporary Palestine mothers-in-law often play the role of the patriarchy at the households to oppress and dominate their daughters-in-law. As Cheryl Rubenberg (2001, 95) notes, 'the power relationship between the mother-in-law and the wife is one of pure domination and subordination'. Some of my female students unleash their criticism of mothers-in-law while they criticise Livia's lustful plots. A married female student of mine told me that 'my mother-in-law spies on her and always tells my husband who is working in Israel about the way I behave in the house in his absence and she sometimes complains against me and orders her son to break my ribs when he

comes back' (personal communication, 9 June 2017). However, in the classroom, the same student brands Livia as 'a bad female figure', avoiding the use of explicit obscene terms to describe Livia, such as a whore, a strumpet and a bawd – terms that I use in my discussion of the role of Livia in the play.

Livia subversively allies her speech with male figures' hypocritical voices so as to defy male deafness to female voices and to assist other men, such as the Duke and Hippolito, in acquiring the women that they want. Livia's bawdry serves as Middleton's comment on the tyranny of enforced marriage and male deafness to female voice. Livia, 'one of the most consummately artistic bawds in the history of literature' (Dodson 1948, 379), is often viewed by critics as a pawn of masculine authority because she 'can place her man well' and undo other women's chastity (2.1.178–179, 2.2.294), denying Bianca and Isabella control over their own voices. Livia remarks on the 'injustice' done to 'maids' whose marriage choices are determined by men (1.2.29–37); she says that women owe men 'obedience', 'subjection' and 'duty', and men do not respond – a feminist perspective that Isabella and Bianca affirm (1.2.42, 158–160, 174). While Levin claims that 'Livia, Isabella, and Bianca share feminist thoughts and perhaps traits the play associates with their sex' (1997, 372), 'women are set against women and exploited for men's purposes', as Haselkorn (1990, 128) suggests. Middleton shows that Livia allies her speech with powerful male figures' voices so as to allure women to more rewarding relationships, resisting male domination and voices. Middleton's complex representation of women suggests the emergence of feminist ideas, as Levin's new historicist reading suggests, and the exploitation of women by a powerful female figure, as Haselkorn's feminist reading reveals. This relationship between women raises awareness of entrapment and the dangers of complicity with a powerful female figure like that of Livia who lures Bianca and Isabella into relationships with powerful men. While this reading reinforces rather than resists misogynistic discourses at An-Najah University, some of my students recognise that women's exploitation of each other to fulfil their desires is dangerous. One of my female students reiterated the Palestinian proverb that 'obeying women leads to remorse'. However, their reading also recognises that the play raises criticism of male figures' lustful desires, their objectification of, and deafness to, women. A female student said that 'in Palestine and *Women Beware Women*, it is men who initiate women's destructive deception, by treating them as silent objects of sex'.

In the fictional world of *Women Beware Women* and contemporary Palestine, male figures are represented as the initiators of female figures' sexual transgression. Haselkorn proposes that although 'male members of the court are also shown to be corrupt dissemblers, Middleton, nevertheless, seems more often to apply the idea of treachery and lack of loyalty to the female sex' (1990, 128). However, the wickedness of women is undercut by men's hypocritical voices and their deafness to female voices. The Cardinal chastises the Duke's marriage to Bianca as a perversion of an 'immaculate robe of honour' into 'the garment/Of leprosy and foulness' (4.3.14, 16–17). This representation implies that the Duke bewhores Bianca and begets her 'treason' (1.3.43–44, 2.2.41, 3.1.13, 72, 4.1.79). The Duke manipulates Hippolito 'to purge the air' (4.2.14) of Leantio's voice in order to claim Bianca and avoid listening to the Cardinal's moral speech, which does not 'sanctify hot lust' (4.3.18). Bianca's defensive act of pleading and her attempt to shut her ears against the Duke's seductive rhetoric arouses him further (2.2.318, 325–336). The chess scene, which is 'the best example of

wit in action and language', suggests that the Duke is a brutal patriarch who penetrates the defenceless Bianca's ears and rapes her (Ewbank 1990, 204). Students of English at An-Najah University easily read a parallel with what is a familiar phenomenon in the occupied territories in contemporary Palestine. PM notes that while a large number of Palestinian women are subject to physical and verbal violence, 'it is believed that the bulk of sexual violence against women and girls is located within the family' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 10). A male student of my 2015 session said that 'in my village a girl was killed in the cause of honour, but many people gossip and assert that her brother killed her so as to conceal his crime of rape'. While some female students keep silent while I discuss the theme of rape in *Women Beware Women*, others unleash their criticism of my teaching of this theme. One student asserted that 'rape undermines the deep-rooted traditional notion of honour ideology', while another student emphasised that 'the analogy between the Duke's rape of Bianca and the rape of many Palestinian women by their family members is not worth drawing.

Such a presentist reading of the Duke's uncontrollable sexual appetite and his deafness to Bianca's voice of resistance to his tyranny continues an earlier, historicist perspective on the play as critical of sovereign tyranny with reference to King James I's absolute political authority. The Duke's rape of Bianca suggests the Duke's conflation of his body natural and body politic in a figure of the tyrannical sovereign. Laurie Shannon (2002, 154) notes that 'The exercise of a king's private will, unsubordinated to the good of the realm, 'unkings' the king; indeed, it locates him within one of the worst Renaissance categories of moral failure: tyranny'. While the Mother says that the Duke's 'object' is 'only the public good' (1.3.110–111), the Duke's manner of governance proceeds not from love that 'like a good king ... keeps all in peace' (1.3.46), but from lust that begets Bianca's 'treason' (2.2.441).

The emergence of Bianca's voice once the Duke rapes her verbally and physically challenges the Palestinian construction of gender roles where the female's identity is subsumed to that of her husband whose role is to control his wife's movement and sexuality. As Diane Baxter notes, 'males are charged with directing the lives of females (and younger men) while women are expected to serve the interests of the family's males' (2007, 744). Bianca's subjectivity, which is expressed in her disapproval of Leantio's discourse, is constructed by the Duke's authority and voice. While she has begged him to '[m]ake me not bold with death and deeds of ruin' (2.2.349), he makes her 'bold' by releasing her suppressed voice and making her 'wiser of [herself]' (3.2.132). Bianca's transgression beyond the walls of the house signals her progression from silence and self-effacement to outspokenness and hypocrisy. The Mother comments that since Bianca spent 'one day abroad', she has 'grown so cutted, there's no speaking to her' (3.1.3–4). Bianca rewrites her marital position and resists Leantio's order to 'mew [her] up/Not to be seen' (3.1.47–48, 219–220), stating that '[r]estraint breeds wand'ring thoughts' (4.1.32). Hearing of the Duke's invitation, she extends the invitation to the Mother (3.1.263) and controls the Mother's choice (3.1.263–268). Reproducing Leantio's logic, she calls her new status as the Duke's mistress 'the best content/That Florence can afford' (3.1.121–122). She returns Leantio's demand of a kiss with her defiant speech, 'Let's talk of other business and forget it' (3.1.153), for her sexual desires and thoughts are directed at the Duke. From a presentist, Palestinian perspective, Bianca's challenge of Leantio is a grave offence that disrupts the Palestinian harmony in the hierarchy of social relations and the failure of Leantio to control his wife.

The sub-plot provides a commentary on the main plot's dramatisation of enforced marriage and male figures' deafness to the female voice, and both are united by Livia's speech. More verbally aggressive than Leantio, Fabritio, 'a foolish old man' (1.2.12), directs his household and daughter through speech, asserting that Isabella lacks a discourse of 'reason' (1.2.15) and thus her voice is circumscribed by his. From a historicist perspective, Fabritio's speech on behalf of Bianca and his deafness to her voice can be read as another indirect political critique of King James I's assertion of absolute authority. Fabritio conceives of marriage as a mercenary agreement that brings the Ward's 'acres' (3.2.113) into his sphere. He describes Isabella as 'a-breeding', a commodity for creating heirs (1.2.78). In Palestine, women are traded as commodities and transferred from the father's household to that of the husband in order to increase the material wealth and symbolic power of the males (Shalhoub Kevorkian 2011; Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011). The treatment of Isabella in the play would thus parallel the situation in contemporary Palestine and its dramatisation could encourage critical discussion of the practice amongst students. One of my male students said that 'arranged marriage consolidates patriarchal control and diminishes a woman's agency'. Another female student, aged 28, evoked her criticism of men's deafness to the female voice and choice. She said that 'my father did not allow me to join university till I got married. I wasted six years and I was married to my cousin against my will'. Fabritio repeatedly uses the modal verb 'shall' to convey Isabella's absolute obligation to follow his command (1.2.2, 128, 137). Fabritio ignores Isabella's voice, which contradicts his. No sooner does Isabella voice herself – 'Good father!' (1.2.79), than he silences her: 'Tell me not of tongues and rumours ... I'll hear no more; he's rich' (1.2.80, 83). Isabella is spoken for rather than speaking, constructed rather than self-constructing (1.2.77, 127–128).

In terms of gender politics, from my own presentist perspective as a Palestinian critic and Professor of Renaissance Drama, Fabritio's deafness to Isabella's voice and his construction of the role she has to play can enact a dialogue with my female students who assert that they have no choice of marriage partners. Fabritio's speaking on behalf of Isabella and his insistence that she follow his dictates has striking affinity with contemporary Palestine where women's voices are wrested away from them when choosing husbands. PM states that 'women's role and status in the society has been marginalised as women's power and control to decide of their fate and make their own decisions has been taken away from them' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 10).

Isabella becomes caught between her belief that she has been 'born with that obedience/That must submit unto a father's will' (2.1.86–87) and her desire to choose her own husband. The female character's function as a listener or as a marginalised speaker opens the possibility of responses that would disrupt the authority of male voices. As a critical listener, Isabella can subvert the authority of Fabritio's dominant voice by providing a point of focus for off-stage female auditors whose experiences are also marginalised. While her father may 'force [outward] consent' (2.1.88), he cannot control her silent thoughts and feelings. I think that Middleton's text implies the existence of an alternative inwardness of dissent where grievances are concealed or '[l]ocked up in modest silence' (2.1.77); Middleton identifies female grieving subjectivity with inexpressible inwardness.

Middleton suggests that complaint can be a subversive form of speech for female characters, proving difficult to discipline once it is expressed openly (Bloom 2007). Isabella vocally

constructs a position counter to Fabritio's, voicing her grievances (1.2.156–184) and protesting against a system that objectifies women as sexual and linguistic commodities traded among men. However, while Isabella decries Fabritio's voice of injustice, on his demand she dances and sings for the Ward, displaying her physical and vocal skills even though she does not revere a fool who 'has not wit' (2.2.189).

Isabella's struggle contrasts with Livia's authoritative voice. Livia begins the play as a privileged speaker. She criticises Fabritio's absolute authority and his claim that Isabella should subsume her voice and choice to his (1.2.29–37), asserting that he cannot compel love (1.2.131–136). Modern editors have observed that Livia's affection towards Hippolito suggests an incestuous desire for her brother, as revealed through her speech (2.1.45–49, 50–52, 71, 5.2.86). Her procurement of Isabella is a game of substitution whereby she lives through her niece, thus mirroring the main plot where the Mother lives through Bianca (Dutton 1999; Dodson 1948). However, Livia manipulates familial relations to usurp patriarchal discourse and shape the course of events. She tells Hippolito that she 'wears a tongue in Florence' that can nullify Bianca's aversion to him with 'strong argument' (2.1.37, 39). Middleton shows that the agency of the speaker emanates from the powerful material means of speech (Bloom 2007). Hippolito describes the influence of Livia's rhetoric to transform Isabella 'beyond sorcery this, drugs, or love-powders' (2.1.232) which shows that Isabella, as a listener, is absolutely vulnerable to the seductive power of Livia's speech.

Livia usurps both legal power and the masculine discourse of naming. Naming, as Butler notes, is an act that exerts authority and encodes a power structure: 'The one who names, who works within language to find a name for another, is presumed to be already named, positioned within language as one who is already subject to that founding or inaugurating address' (Butler 1997, 29). Livia challenges Isabella's identity through re-naming her. As Louis Althusser argues, 'the fact of calling you by your name, the fact of knowing, even if I do not know what it is, that you "have" a name of your own ... means that you are recognised as a unique subject' (1971, 173). Livia takes up Fabritio's masculine position of speaking for Isabella and aligning herself with Middleton as the instigator of the play's subsequent action of incest grounded on deceptive silence. In a book-length study on 'character-dramatist' or 'actor-playwright', as she calls them, Lillian Wilds asserts that a character-dramatist 'dramatises themselves', 'creates roles' and even creates 'plays-within-the-play for other characters' (1975, 139). Livia is, therefore, a playwright-character who composes scripts for other characters like a playwright setting up his or her play.

Livia's manipulation of familial relations through language challenges Palestinian male figures' linguistic authority in disowning traitors and sexually transgressive women. In contemporary Palestine, some examples reveal that familial relationships and their dissolution depend on language and linguistic authority in that familial bonds are matters of speech rather than blood. For example, traitors are verbally disowned by their families – a disownment that is based on the father's or brother's public declaration that the villain is no longer their relative. For example, 'A Hamas leader has publicly disowned his son, days after he announced he had secretly spied for Israel and helped authorities hunt down members of the Islamic militant group'. The Mail Foreign Service (2010) says that this 'announcement means the family now considers their son to have never existed. He loses his inheritance and the family will never speak to him, or about him, again'. While most families kill their sexually transgressive female relatives, some families denounce and

disown their sexually deviant women to rid themselves of shame. As Baxter notes, 'short of murder, a particular harsh response is to renounce the female and cut her off from the family' (2007, 753–754). Therefore, Livia subverts the Palestinian patriarchal privilege of naming because it is male figures who verbally announce disownment as they are supposedly the guardians of honour.

Livia's role as an avid listener who understands the dynamics of patriarchal authority enables her to subvert men's voices. Livia's dissolution of familial relations could be a radical departure from the absolutist patriarchal regime that King James inaugurated. While King James insists on his possession of his subjects, Livia delegitimises the relationship between Isabella and Fabritio. While Isabella, by birth, is obliged to subordinate her voice to Fabritio's, Livia devalues his commands by delegitimising Isabella's relationship to him. She voices the fictional tale that Isabella is 'no more allied to any of us [the family],/Save what the courtesy of opinion casts' (2.1.135–136). Livia (like Iago) is a magician of language, who conjures up the unheard with words. She 'fill[s] Isabella's] ear with wonder' (2.1.145), weaving a tale of Isabella's mother's confession of adultery (2.1.152–157) to 'start [her] blood' (2.1.134). Livia appropriates the masculine role of confessor and elicits 'penitent confession' (2.1.154) of adultery from Isabella's mother. By insisting that the 'Marquis of Coria' (2.1.144) is Isabella's father, Livia induces change in the listening Isabella, making her believe that she is no longer obliged to listen and obey Fabritio's voice (2.1.158–161). Livia reveals the vulnerability of the male voice, as it depends upon a woman's voice to confirm the paternity of the child. Isabella's fictional father's silent authority dislocates the incest prohibition originated by her real father's voice, for Isabella's family name is changed. Judith Butler notes that the name 'functions as a kind of prohibition, but also as an enabling occasion ... the name is a token of a symbolic order, an order of social law' (1993, 152). Isabella's new familial relationship brings forth 'the means to know [herself]' (2.1.182).

Livia's role as an active controller resonates with the maternal role in contemporary Palestine where girls turn to mothers should they require assistance. PM refers to the words of a university student from Gaza, saying:

I would not advise [a woman] to refer to her family, because she may have aggressive brothers who may beat her husband or his family and the problem will be bigger, but the woman could speak directly with her mother who can advise what to do without informing anyone else. (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 49)

Many of my female students emphasise their cordial relations with their mothers. A female student of mine said that 'my mother is the keeper of my secrets and she is the one whom I consult about my social and academic plans'. Another female student asserted that 'my mother's care and support is the reason for my success'. However, some mothers are complicit with male violence against women, reinforcing an oppressive male culture on their daughters. For example, one of my female students, a mother to two children, asserted that 'my mother persuaded me to get married by telling me that the ultimate goal of any woman's life is marriage even though I sought her help to convince my father not to get me married then'. Thus, while Livia allies herself with male figures to enable Bianca and Isabella to fulfil their sexual desires, Palestinian mothers guide girls and women along a culturally established principle of female

obedience to male figures, assisting men to subjugate women. A housewife from a village in Ramallah says: 'I think that mothers have to raise their daughters and teach them to obey their husbands in order to be able to live with them and to have a family' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 33).

Middleton criticises patriarchal voices and their deafness to female voices through Isabella's incestuous relationship with Hippolito, which makes a mockery of the marriage that Fabritio has made. Molly Smith notes that 'Middleton, like Tourneur, presents incest as a direct result of abuses in the exercise of patriarchal authority' (1998, 118). Leantio's figurative buying of a 'horse' (1.3.52) is acted out by the Ward, whose inspection of Isabella's body is an example of male commodification of the female body that becomes an object of visual pleasure. This voyeuristic examination by male figures (2.2.100–115, 3.3.40–42, 74–76, 90–92), which moves from Isabella's mouth to peep beneath her skirts, invokes the Renaissance conflation of mouth and genitalia (Newman 1991, 11). Isabella's refusal to open her mouth for the Ward to inspect her teeth (3.3.87–88) deconstructs the Renaissance convention that equates silence with chastity and an open mouth with sexual lasciviousness. While the open mouth is akin to the openness of the genitals, Isabella's closed mouth is a sign of sexuality. She harbours sexual desires towards Hippolito. Indeed, she decides to marry the Ward as a cover for her relationship with Hippolito.

In early modern England, protestant theologians described marriage as a type of friendship that depends on language. Robert Cleaver suggests that 'there shall be in wedlock a certain sweet and pleasant conversation, without which it is no marriage, but a prison, a hatred, and perpetual torment of the mind' (1621, 84). This marriage that is based on communication and mutual love is in opposition to absolute authority and lack of communication between King James I and his subjects. Guardiano voices the role of language in marriage; he tells the Ward, 'I bring you both to talk together' and 'gr[o]w familiar in your tongues' (3.3.7–8). However, the Ward cannot speak well. When Sordido tells the Ward 'fall in talk with her', the Ward says that '[i]t shall go hard' (3.3.77, 78). The Duke asserts that there is no harmony of discourse between the speaker and listener in the relationship between the Ward and Isabella: 'such a voice to such a husband/Is like a jewel of unvalued worth,/Hung at a fool's ear' (3.2.157–159). As he 'has no wit himself' (3.2.189), he is 'not so base to learn to write and read' (1.2.124). In showing kindness and affection towards his niece, Hippolito has unleashed Isabella's desiring voice just as the Duke has reawakened Bianca's voice. The harmony between Isabella and Hippolito is that of affection and language (1.2.63–64). Isabella asserts that she and Hippolito 'passed through so many arguments' and '[w]alked out whole nights together in discourses' (1.2.196, 198). Once Hippolito voices his sexual desire for her, Isabella not only turns a deaf ear to his protestations of love (1.2.220), but she also refrains from speaking about incest so as not to shame her tongue (2.1.75–78). However, as she hears Livia's tale of her mother's adultery, she loses all revulsion to Hippolito, urging him, 'pray make your love no stranger' (2.1.226) and kissing him (2.1.203). 'The virtuous Isabella' (2.1.58), therefore, speaks the words that Livia breathes into her ears.

Isabella's deployment of deception to fulfil her desires to which her father turns a deaf ear offers a point of focus to many Palestinian girls whose voices have been stifled by male figures' dictates (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011). Palestinian

women are unable to defy violence against them and their acceptance of verbal and physical violence elicits their feelings of powerlessness and weakness. A schoolgirl from Ramallah said: 'I am afraid of being urged to marry at an early stage of my life or being urged to get married to someone who I do not like' (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 35). A university student from a camp in Nablus says:

I have another friend who used to be in love with a man and before he could ask for her hand in marriage, her parents forced her to marry another man under the pretence that she was 21 years old and too old to marry (she was like an old maid); they forced her into another marriage. The marriage decision is not in her hands, not like the young men; they choose. (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs 2011, 35)

Some of my students, as I pointed out, assert that that they got married with their consent. While these Palestinian women are unable to defy gender restrictions, I think that Isabella's deployment of cunning and deception to resist gender restrictions provide such Palestinian girls with a point of focus to defy male figures' authority. Livia insists that Isabella 'call [her] aunt still' (2.1.167) to conceal Isabella's mother's adultery and not to, unknowingly, reveal Livia's deceptive speech. Isabella's decision that 'this marriage shall go forward' (2.1.206) and to have a secret relationship with Hippolito suggests that a woman's subordination to her father before marriage and to her husband in marriage facilitates her lasciviousness. Isabella's unquestioning acceptance of her new status shows that her desire for Hippolito has made her an easy victim to Livia, whose tale is in the mind of the listening Isabella. However, while Isabella thinks she is deceiving her husband, Isabella is herself deceived by a more powerful, seductive female voice (that of Livia) into transgressing even further.

Middleton endorses the stereotype of the widow as lusty (4.1.142) and outspoken. Livia gets entangled by her schemes when she becomes enchanted with Leantio and uses her 'discretion', 'skill' and 'judgement' (3.2.308) to pursue a sexual relationship with him. While Leantio is immersed in imaginary conversation with Bianca, he is deaf to Livia's voice. She 'enjoy[s]' eavesdropping on his soliloquy (3.2.259). James Hirsh suggests that '[t]he proliferation in late Renaissance drama of self-addressed speeches indicates that, like Livia, playgoers were attracted by listening to what a character says when he thinks he has only himself for an audience' (2012, 28–29). Livia initially experiences a sense of dislocation, 'I am as dumb to any language now/But love's, as one that never learned to speak' (3.2.136–137). However, she offers Leantio 'good counsel' which 'never could come better' (3.2.268–269), telling Leantio that Bianca is 'a strumpet' (3.2.271). Ornstein notes that Livia is 'a masterly seducer because she knows her victims far better than they know themselves' (1965, 193). She uses the Duke's tactics from when he finally silenced Bianca (2.2.366), appealing to Leantio's love of wealth (3.3.281, 286–290).

While Bianca resists the Duke's persuasive rhetoric, Leantio gives a too-credent ear to Livia's tongue. I think that Middleton shows the dangers of listening on the part of the male figure, who configures aural openness with personal and material growth. While Leantio criticises Bianca's 'guilt', he is unable to express and acknowledge his own. He accepts Livia's offer, turning into a male prostitute who will 'love enough, and take enough' (3.2.371), contradicting his earlier speech on marital content. Like Isabella, Leantio reproduces Livia's

words, denouncing Bianca as 'a whore', a 'court saint' tied to a 'devil' (4.1.61, 77–79). He says that Livia is a 'beauteous benefactor', rich in 'the good works of love' (4.1.71–72). Bloom argues that 'hearing functions as a site of gender differentiation: aural obstruction is disruptive for men, but constructive for women, whose chastity is contingent on aural closure' (2007, 18). In an inversion of Renaissance conventions on listening, Leantio dies because he listens to, and reproduces, Livia's speech.

Leantio's 'spiteful' and 'dangerous' utterances, which 'made [Isabella] almost sick' (4.1.109, 121–122) also undo him. His unfolding of Livia's letter and 'vows' (4.1.120–121) and threatening speech to her and the Duke urge Bianca to use her position as the Duke's whore so as to get rid of Leantio and silence his complaints. Bianca's 'I love peace, sir' (4.1.125) shows a disparity between what she says and what she does, as she is persuading the Duke to silence Leantio (Bromham 1986). The Duke flatters Hippolito with an alleged favour to Livia of which he has conceived, 'but nev'r meant to practise/ Because I know her base' (4.1.137–138). Hippolito, with 'a blood soon stirred' (4.1.131), holds the 'reputation of his sister's honour's/As dear to him as life-blood to his heart' (4.1.134–135). While honour is expressed in terms of wealth (4.1.160–161), the Duke and Hippolito are more concerned with reputation than with honour.

From a presentist, Palestinian context of reading, this concern with the veneer of public reputation has immediate resonance in contemporary Palestine where the families whose female members voice and act on their sexuality keep the act out of the public sphere; they consider honour a signifier that is assigned and confirmed in public rather than inherent. In other words, secret desires may be indulged, provided the veneer of masculine honour and men's public voices are not challenged by gossip. In her discussion of honour killing and the forces of gossip, scandal and shame that perpetrate this violence in the Middle East, Amani M. Awwad notes that '[o]nce the illicit sexual activities become public knowledge, the community will exert tremendous pressure on the family to correct the situation' (2001, 45). Likewise, in Middleton's tragedy the killing is justified because, instead of making use of '[a]rt, silence, closeness, subtlety, and darkness' (4.2.7), Leantio has chosen to be 'an impudent boaster' (4.1.150) who 'tells the midday sun what's done in darkness' (4.1.152). Hippolito silences Leantio so that '[t]his place shall never hear thee murmur more' (4.1.178). As the word 'murmur' denotes, even Leantio's feminised, soft voice and complaining will not be heard; Leantio's death ends his performance on stage. Hippolito's killing of Leantio suggests the family's appearance of honour is restored by killing Leantio, who violated it by his verbal boast about his relationship with Livia.

From a presentist, Palestinian context of reading, Middleton's heroines' retributive and destructive voices in the masque scene are a foil to Palestinian women's celebration of male figures' authority and honour in weddings. While the majority of Palestinian women are deprived of their voices, they unleash their voices in weddings in the form of ululations and songs that celebrate the bride and the groom and their families. They praise the groom's sexual abilities and the bride's beauty, shyness and virginity which form the idealised Palestinian constructions of masculinity and femininity (Libbes 2007). Baxter notes that 'virginity until marriage, and sexual faithfulness are highly valued by most Palestinian women and men. Women who uphold these values gain respect, credibility, and honour for themselves and for their female relatives' (2007, 751). The wedding party is an arena of performing public honour between the families because marriage prevents girls from the

shame of being spinsters and men from being bachelors. Palestinian women are subject to double systems of subordination – occupation and patriarchy. However, in weddings, they confront the former and submit to the latter. While Palestinian women celebrate the honour of the patriarchal family, they defy Israeli occupation, singing songs for the honour of Palestinian martyrs and Palestine. While Palestinian women uphold their honour and that of their male relatives in wedding ceremonies, Middleton's text shows how female figures' participation in weddings defies male figures' authority and that female figures destroy themselves in a process of verbal retribution.

The masque, an orgy of murder and suicide, is a locus for women's retributive voices. While the women's masque seems a masculine text designed to honour the Duke's marriage to Bianca (4.2.199–200), it is a female-dominated stage. Livia loses control over her plot after Leantio is silenced, since 'Tis harder to dissemble grief than love' (4.2.228). She retaliates against Hippolito and Isabella by revealing that Hippolito is Isabella's uncle. In an aside, Isabella expresses her perception of Livia's feigned reconciliation (4.2.125–145), plotting her revenge (4.2.144–146) within the sphere of a court masque to restore her reputation and self-worth. Isabella casts Livia into the role of Juno, the panderer 'that ru'lst o'er coupled bodies' (5.2.74), while Isabella will play the 'nymph/That offers sacrifice to appease [Juno's] wrath' (4.2.214–215). Livia is killed by breathing in a poisoned 'precious incense' (5.2.100–101); 'the action', Potter has noted, 'is a kind of pun on incense/incest: like the incest, the incense is poisoned, so Livia dies from her own corruption' (1982, 380). While Livia asserts that she will fund the masque, saying 'the cost shall all be mine' (4.2.206), she is destroyed by her own performance, discourse and transgression of gender roles (5.2.135). Isabella appropriates the formalised ritual of Livia's false tale of her mother's adultery so that 'revenge ... becomes ritual', as Inga-Stina Ewbank noted in an early, perceptive feminist reading of the play (1970, 443). While Isabella throws Livia's words and text back at her, she is controlled by Livia's plot.

While Livia's control has been destabilised through Isabella and Bianca's scripts and Hippolito's restraint of her sexual endeavours, she reclaims authority, writing a script that 'swerves a little from the argument' (5.2.123) into a dance of death. She calls on the arrows of Cupid to kill Hippolito, and she drops Jove's 'burning treasure' on Isabella, appropriating an Ovidian narrative in order to silence Isabella (5.2.116–119). Isabella's death in a shower of flaming gold criticises Fabritio's deafness to her voice and his financially motivated agenda for Isabella's marriage to the Ward. Her death, wordless and unnoticed for 10 lines (5.2.146), expresses her powerlessness throughout the play. As the Duke and Fabritio are frustrated by the unforeseen events (5.2.120–124), their deaths are a relief to their puzzled understanding. The Duke is not given a last speech of self-realisation, only 'my heart swells bigger yet' (5.2.191) – 'his lust has destroyed him' (Potter 1982, 381). While in the seduction scene the Duke's language is filled with the rhetoric of masculine domination, this terrifying private space of seduction prophesies the emergence of the Duke's feminised voice and Bianca's powerful voice. The Duke's publicising of his marriage dooms himself to failure. The Duke's silencing can be a criticism of his former sovereignty and absolute authority and his subordination of his body natural to the feminised domestic space. Middleton shows that the Duke is destroyed by his discourse; orally, he swallows the 'poisoned cup' (5.2.209), which devours his voice. Fabritio's silence undermines the authoritative voice he believes he

has in enforcing Isabella's marriage. As the men think that the 'plot's drawn false' (5.2.131), Middleton reveals the women masquers as the authors and the male viewers as the ignorant interpreters (5.2.124–125, 130–101). Levin has noted that Middleton 'loses artistic control of the masque' (1971, 169). Like a dramatist, Middleton's heroines are playwright characters who compose scripts and engage in manipulatory plots for others. Female figures interrogate Middleton's exclusive ownership of the text from within the performance. In this sense, female figures' participation in the wedding is a form of subversive complicity as they turn what is supposed to be a spectacle of honour to male figures into a dance of death. From a Palestinian context of reading, it subverts Palestinian women's construction of a wedding as a spectacle of honour to the bride and groom and their families that women uphold and perpetuate, as I pointed out earlier.

While Livia and Isabella claim authoritative positions on the masque stage, Bianca creates an antimasque that disrupts the 'model of/What's presented' (5.2.30–31). The male figures' puzzlement over what is presented (5.2.65) shows that they are marginalised spectators. As the three mythical figures 'enter', they address her: '[t]o thee, fair bride, Hymen offers up/Of nuptial joys this the celestial cup' (5.2.50, 51–52). Rather than operating as a passive viewer of the first scene, Bianca participates in the action, responding to Hymen, '[w]e'll taste you, sure, 'twere pity to disgrace/So pretty a beginning' (5.2.55–56). In authoring this dialogue, she articulates her position as a bride and positions herself within the sexualised masculine discourse of marriage that re-writes the Cardinal's accusation of her as 'a fair strumpet' (4.1.244). She dies voluntarily as a loving wife, committing suicide by kissing the Duke's poisoned lips (5.2.220–223); this is a suicide that eliminates any chance of further voicing and acting on her sexual desires. Bianca, therefore, is a self-fashioning figure who transcends Livia's attempts to dictate the action of the whole play.

The masque and the macabre carnage it enacts have been read as Middleton's attempt to resolve personal lusts by 'creating a superficial impression of tragic doom' (Ornstein 1965, 191). Sutherland observes that the 'fatal nuptial masque ... is not in any of Middleton's known sources or analogues' (1983, 89). By using a performance perspective and paying attention to the masque as a theatrical mode in which women could and did perform, it is possible to see how the masque, which concludes *Women Beware Women*, enables women to present themselves as authors and actors capable of retributive expression. However, while female figures attempt to wrest control of the play, they are punished by the dramatist, Middleton, who suggests that the female figures' defensive voices are self-destructive ones.

Middleton seems to reassert patriarchal voices in silencing the female characters whose speeches and licentiousness are intertwined. This ending demonstrates that 'unorthodox female behaviour must be exorcised' (Haselkorn 1990, 129) to bring about order, while the 'tragic masque expounds the court's corruption and the abiding truths of individual responsibility and moral judgement' (Tricomi 1989, 73). However, while the Cardinal, who voices orthodox moral authority (1.3.95, 5.2.224–227), may represent 'a grotesque phoenix' that 'ris[es] from the ashes' (Levin 1997, 386), his position as the 'next heir' (5.2.20) complicates the ending. He can no longer govern a fallen court whose amoral attitudes are engrained in men and women's tongues and ears. Furthermore, the stage is left with Fabritio and the foolish Ward, whose base

voices embody the dehumanisation of female characters and the tyranny of enforced marriage. Middleton thus suggests the root causes of tragedy may not finally lie with transgressive female voices.

My discussion of Middleton's *Women Beware Women* has drawn on new historicist readings which argue that this is a political drama which critiques Jacobean ideologies of sovereign paternalism, absolute authority and the tyranny which is closely allied to it. Within that political critique, Middleton's *Women Beware Women* is also a protest against the role to which women are assigned: the object of exchange between male lustful voices. Middleton shows that the patriarchal ideology of gender difference, based on male deafness to the female voice, encourages deceit and secrecy, which in turn undermines masculine control. In response to male figures' absolute authority (that, historically, shores up James I's rule), Middleton's heroines subversively inscribe their silences and speeches within the framework of masculine authority in that the agency of their voices and silences is made possible by their subversive subordination to the voices of male figures. Middleton shows that the subversion caused by the masculine ideology is not contained; the Duke, Fabritio and Hippolito do not acknowledge their contribution to the female figures' destructive speeches and silences.

From a presentist, Palestinian perspective, I have argued that Middleton's *Women Beware Women* offers a criticism of the Palestinian practice of enforced marriage and male figures' deafness to female voices. Middleton's unusual representation of sexually liberal family politics, where the Mother helps her daughter-in-law to fulfil her sexual desires, contradicts the protection of family honour, sometimes to the point of verbal and physical abuse, by mothers and mothers-in-law in contemporary Palestine. Livia's role in enabling women to fulfil their sexual desires with powerful male figures subverts the role of mothers in contemporary Palestine where maternal figures advise girls to follow the established conventions of gender roles. Moreover, Livia's masculine manipulation of familial relations through language has parallels in contemporary Palestine where it is male figures who verbally announce the disownment of Palestinian traitors and sexually transgressive female figures. Finally, I have considered how Palestinian women's celebrations of their honour and that of their male relatives in wedding ceremonies are rewritten as subversively destructive forms of control in the tragic conclusion of the masque which is dominated by Middleton's heroines' retributive voices.

This tragedy challenges and upsets cultural conventions and offers a model for contemporary Palestinian teachers and students to challenge the destructive traditions of enforced marriage and male figures' deafness to the female voice. However, the possibilities of interpretation are complicated by received ideas and traditions. Middleton's heroines' subversive plots that lead to their ultimate deaths can be read as a warning against disobeying male figures' dictates rather than a comment on the destructive practice of turning a deaf ear to female figures' voices. While my feminist and presentist approaches to *Women Beware Women* triggers my students' discussions of gender roles, concepts of shame and honour, enforced marriage and male deafness to the female voice, many of my students, the majority of whom are girls coming from different rural areas, internalise the masculine construction of gender difference, based on the inferiority of women and the principle of male supremacy. Feminist views are taken by many students, especially those who are living in rural areas, to symbolise the

immoral and blasphemous Western world. In fact, my feminist and presentist reading of early modern texts does not receive a welcome response or recognition from the majority of my students who viewed me with suspicion, spreading rumours that I am an immoral and blasphemous instructor. While many students vocalise their complicity with traditional viewpoints, the seeds of change that my ideas may have sown in my students' minds continue to inspire me to employ a presentist approach to early modern English texts.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Bilal Tawfiq Hamamra has published articles on Shakespeare, Webster and Thomas Heywood. His research interests are in Early Modern Drama, Shakespeare and Women's Writings. He is a presentist who uses an eclectic approach to analyse early modern literature from a Palestinian perspective. He has a PhD in Early Modern Drama from the University of Lancaster, UK and works currently as an assistant professor of English Literature at the Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.

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