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QUALIFICATION WORK

**to obtain Bachelor's Degree on Specialty 5120100 – English
Philology on theme
*“ANALYSIS OF PECULIARITIES OF RENAISSANCE
PLAYWRITING TRADITION”***

Supervisor: O'razboyev X

Done by: Ruzieva Sh.

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INTRODUCTION

Drama is a unique tool to explore and express human feeling. Drama is an essential form of behaviour in all cultures, it is a fundamental human activity.

Drama comes from Greek words meaning "to do" or "to act."¹ A play is a story acted out. It shows people going through some eventful period in their lives, seriously or humorously. The speech and action of a play recreate the flow of human life. A play comes fully to life only on the stage. On the stage it combines many arts those of the author, director, actor, designer, and others. Dramatic performance involves an intricate process of rehearsal based upon imagery inherent in the dramatic text. A playwright first invents a drama out of mental imagery. The dramatic text presents the drama as a range of verbal imagery. The language of drama can range between great extremes: on the one hand, an intensely theatrical and ritualistic manner; and on the other, an almost exact reproduction of real life. A dramatic monologue is a type of lyrical poem or narrative piece that has a person speaking to a select listener and revealing his character in a dramatic situation.

Topicality of the research. Drama being solely the art of theatre it is also considered literature. Thus studying drama and its interpretation is important as most of the authors who are studied during the course of History of English literature and American literature are playwrights who left their heritage and contribution to the development literature. Plays are also important because they bear the biggest share of verse which are studied and analyzed during the courses of literature. In order to understand and interpret the peculiarities of dramatic text one has to know how to interpret drama and must be familiar with the literary elements and content of dramatic texts, the history of drama. The given research work is an attempt to give deeper information and study how to interpret the history of drama, types of drama, elements of drama and significance of drama.

¹ Webster's School Dictionary. A Merriam Webster. Merriam Co. USA 1980. p. 1003

The novelty of the research. During the completion of the qualification research we made a historical approach and studied the stages in the development of drama, as the history of drama can give fuller information about drama itself, its purpose and characteristics. We also studied different approaches in analyzing and interpreting plays, and as an example we gave interpretation of two famous renaissance plays, namely Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus".

The aim of the research is to study the interpretation techniques of drama.

According to the aim of the research we put the following **tasks** of the work:

- to study the history of drama;
- to study the stages in the development of drama;
- to study interpretation techniques and key elements of dramatic texts (plays);
- to analyze the Renaissance drama and to study the interpretation of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus".

The practical value of the research. Materials and results of qualification paper may serve as a material for students and teachers who are taking the courses of English Literature, Theory of literature, comparative literature, information about the periods of literature are also important in studying the history of English literature as we mainly emphasized on the stages in the development of English drama.

The structure of the qualification paper. The paper according to the requirements on compiling and writing qualification papers in higher education institutions, consists of introduction, two chapters of the main part, conclusion and the list of materials used during the research work.

The first chapter of the qualification paper and its paragraphs are dedicated to the common trait of drama. The paragraphs overview such issues as the origins of drama, history of drama and stages in the development of drama. The third and

the fourth paragraphs of the chapter also deal with the common interpretation techniques of drama.

The second chapter gives an interpretations of two famous Renaissance plays: Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus".

The results and outcomes achieved from the research are summarized in the concluding part of the paper.

The list of used literature comprises more than 30 titles and addresses of materials and literary items.

The object and methods of research. In compiling the qualification paper the drama and its traits were set as an object of research.

The methods of investigation used in the research include the method of literary analysis in analyzing the works of dramatists, the method of translation in working with the literature and materials. We also used the method of comparison and contrasting during the comparative study of literary devices and periods of development of drama.

The overview of literature. In doing the research and writing the paper we studied many books and internet materials devoted to the study of drama and its periods and literary and nonliterary devices used in the art of drama. The first source of our investigation was Baqoeva M., and Muratova E.D. "Иंगлиз адабиёти" where we could find introductory materials about the art of drama in English literature. William J. Long. English Literature Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World the book taken from internet introduces to the brief history of development of drama and presents vast examples of drama in the age of Renaissance and other ages of English literature.

Chapter 1. Literature Review. Historical Background of Drama and Playwriting

1.1 Historical Background of the Art of Drama

First the deed, then the story, then the play; that seems to be the natural development of the drama in its simplest form. The great deeds of a people are treasured in its literature, and later generations represent in play or pantomime certain parts of the story which appeal most powerfully to the imagination. Among primitive races the deeds of their gods and heroes are often represented at the yearly festivals; and among children, whose instincts are not yet blunted by artificial habits, one sees the story that was heard at bedtime repeated next day in vigorous action, when our boys turn scouts and our girls princesses, precisely as our first dramatists turned to the old legends and heroes of Britain for their first stage productions. To act a part seems as natural to humanity as to tell a story; and originally the drama is but an old story retold to the eye, a story put into action by living performers, who for the moment "make believe" or imagine themselves to be the old heroes.¹

To illustrate the matter simply, there was a great life lived by him who was called the Christ. Inevitably the life found its way into literature, and we have the Gospels. Around the life and literature sprang up a great religion. Its worship was at first simple,--the common prayer, the evening meal together, the remembered words of the Master, and the closing hymn.

Gradually a ritual was established, which grew more elaborate and impressive as the centuries went by. Scenes from the Master's life began to be represented in the churches, especially at Christmas time, when the story of Christ's birth was made more effective, to the eyes of a people who could not read, by a babe in a manger surrounded by magi and shepherds, with a choir of angels

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

chanting the “Gloria in Excelsis”.¹ Other impressive scenes from the Gospel followed; then the Old Testament was called upon, until a complete cycle of plays from the Creation to the Final Judgment was established, and we have the Mysteries and Miracle plays of the Middle Ages. Out of these came directly the drama of the Elizabethan Age.

1.2 Stages in the Development of Drama

The Religious Period. In Europe, as in Greece, the drama had a distinctly religious origin. The first characters were drawn from the New Testament, and the object of the first plays was to make the church service more impressive, or to emphasize moral lessons by showing the reward of the good and the punishment of the evil doer. In the latter days of the Roman Empire the Church found the stage possessed by frightful plays, which debased the morals of a people already fallen too low. Reform seemed impossible; the corrupt drama was driven from the stage, and plays of every kind were forbidden. But mankind loves a spectacle, and soon the Church itself provided a substitute for the forbidden plays in the famous Mysteries and Miracles.

Miracle and Mystery Plays². In France the name “miracle” was given to any play representing the lives of the saints, while the “mystère” represented scenes from the life of Christ or stories from the Old Testament associated with the coming of Messiah. In England this distinction was almost unknown; the name Miracle was used indiscriminately for all plays having their origin in the Bible or in the lives of the saints; and the name Mystery, to distinguish a certain class of plays, was not used until long after the religious drama had passed away.

¹ World Book Encyclopedia. – Chicago, London, Sydney, Toronto: A Scott Fetzer Company, 1995, 26 volumes.

² William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

The earliest Miracle of which we have any record in England is the “*Ludus de Sancta Katharina*”, which was performed in Dunstable about the year 1110.¹ It is not known who wrote the original play of St. Catherine, but our first version was prepared by Geoffrey of St. Albans, a French school-teacher of Dunstable. Whether or not the play was given in English is not known, but it was customary in the earliest plays for the chief actors to speak in Latin or French, to show their importance, while minor and comic parts of the same play were given in English.

For four centuries after this first recorded play the Miracles increased steadily in number and popularity in England. They were given first very simply and impressively in the churches; then, as the actors increased in number and the plays in liveliness, they overflowed to the churchyards; but when fun and hilarity began to predominate even in the most sacred representations, the scandalized priests forbade plays altogether on church grounds. By the year 1300 the Miracles were out of ecclesiastical hands and adopted eagerly by the town guilds; and in the following two centuries we find the Church preaching against the abuse of the religious drama which it had itself introduced, and which at first had served a purely religious purpose.² But by this time the Miracles had taken strong hold upon the English people, and they continued to be immensely popular until, in the sixteenth century, they were replaced by the Elizabethan drama.

The early Miracle plays of England were divided into two classes: the first, given at Christmas, included all plays connected with the birth of Christ; the second, at Easter, included the plays relating to his death and triumph. By the beginning of the fourteenth century all these plays were, in various localities, united in single cycles beginning with the Creation and ending with the Final Judgment. The complete cycle was presented every spring, beginning on Corpus Christi day; and as the presentation of so many plays meant a continuous outdoor

¹ Kearns George. *English and Western Literature*. -The USA: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987. Kitchin L. *Mid-Century Drama*. 1960.

² William J. Long. *English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

festival of a week or more, this day was looked forward to as the happiest of the whole year.

Probably every important town in England had its own cycle of plays for its own guilds to perform, but nearly all have been lost. At the present day only four cycles exist (except in the most fragmentary condition), and these, though they furnish an interesting commentary on the times, add very little to our literature. The four cycles are the Chester and York plays, so called from the towns in which they were given; the Towneley or Wakefield plays, named for the Towneley family, which for a long time owned the manuscript; and the Coventry plays, which on doubtful evidence have been associated with the Grey Friars (Franciscans) of Coventry. The Chester cycle has 25 plays, the Wakefield 30, the Coventry 42, and the York 48. It is impossible to fix either the date or the authorship of any of these plays; we only know certainly that they were in great favor from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The York plays are generally considered to be the best; but those of Wakefield show more humor and variety, and better workmanship. The former cycle especially shows a certain unity resulting from its aim to represent the whole of man's life from birth to death. The same thing is noticeable in "Cursor Mundi", which, with the York and Wakefield cycles, belongs to the fourteenth century¹.

At first the actors as well as the authors of the Miracles were the priests and their chosen assistants. Later, when The town guilds took up the plays and each guild became responsible for one or more of the series, the actors were carefully selected and trained. By four o'clock on the morning of Corpus Christi all the players had to be in their places in the movable theaters, which were scattered throughout the town in the squares and open places. Each of these theaters consisted of a two-story platform, set on wheels. The lower story was a dressing room for the actors; the upper story was the stage proper, and was reached by a

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

trapdoor from below. When the play was over the platform was dragged away, and the next play in the cycle took its place. So in a single square several plays would be presented in rapid sequence to the same audience. Meanwhile the first play moved on to another square, where another audience was waiting to hear it.

Though the plays were distinctly religious in character, there is hardly one without its humorous element. In the play of Noah, for instance, Noah's shrewish wife makes fun for the audience by wrangling with her husband. In the Crucifixion play Herod is a prankish kind of tyrant who leaves the stage to rant among the audience; so that to "out-herod Herod" became a common proverb. In all the plays the devil is a favorite character and the butt of every joke. He also leaves the stage to play pranks or frighten the wondering children. On the side of the stage was often seen a huge dragon's head with gaping red jaws, belching forth fire and smoke, out of which poured a tumultuous troop of devils with clubs and pitchforks and gridirons to punish the wicked characters and to drag them away at last, howling and shrieking, into hell-mouth, as the dragon's head was called. So the fear of hell was ingrained into an ignorant people for four centuries. Alternating with these horrors were bits of rough horse-play and domestic scenes of peace and kindness, representing the life of the English fields and homes. With these were songs and carols, like that of the Nativity, for instance:

As I out rode this enderes (last) night,
 Of three jolly shepherds I saw a sight,
 And all about their fold a star shone bright;
 They sang "terli terlow",
 So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow.
 Down from heaven, from heaven so high,
 Of angels there came a great companye
 With mirth, and joy, and great solemnitye;
 They sang "terli terlow",

So merrily the shepherds their pipes can blow¹.

Such songs were taken home by the audience and sung for a season, as a popular tune is now caught from the stage and sung on the streets; and at times the whole audience would very likely join in the chorus.

After these plays were written according to the general outline of the Bible stories, no change was tolerated, the audience insisting, like children at "Punch and Judy," upon seeing the same things year after year. No originality in plot or treatment was possible, therefore; the only variety was in new songs and jokes, and in the pranks of the devil.

Childish as such plays seem to us, they are part of the religious development of all uneducated people. Even now the Persian play of the "Martyrdom of Ali" is celebrated yearly, and the famous "Passion Play," a true Miracle, is given every ten years at Oberammergau.

The second or moral period of the drama is shown by the increasing prevalence of the Morality plays. In these the characters were allegorical personages,--Life, Death, Repentance, Goodness, Love, Greed, and other virtues and vices. The Moralities may be regarded, therefore, as the dramatic counterpart of the once popular allegorical poetry exemplified by the "Romance of the Rose". It did not occur to our first, unknown dramatists to portray men and women as they are until they had first made characters of abstract human qualities. Nevertheless, the Morality marks a distinct advance over the Miracle in that it gave free scope to the imagination for new plots and incidents. In Spain and Portugal these plays, under the name "auto", were wonderfully developed by the genius of Calderon and Gil Vicente; but in England the Morality was a dreary kind of performance, like the allegorical poetry which preceded it.²

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

² История зарубежной литературы. Раннее средневековье и Возрождение. Под ред. В. Жермунского. - М., 1964.

To enliven the audience the devil of the Miracle plays was introduced; and another lively personage called the Vice was the predecessor of our modern clown and jester. His business was to torment the "virtues" by mischievous pranks, and especially to make the devil's life a burden by beating him with a bladder or a wooden sword at every opportunity. The Morality generally ended in the triumph of virtue, the devil leaping into hell-mouth with Vice on his back.

The best known of the Moralities is "Everyman," which has recently been revived in England and America. The subject of the play is the summoning of every man by Death; and the moral is that nothing can take away the terror of the inevitable summons but an honest life and the comforts of religion. In its dramatic unity it suggests the pure Greek drama; there is no change of time or scene, and the stage is never empty from the beginning to the end of the performance. Other well-known Moralities are the "Pride of Life," "Hyckescorner," and "Castell of Perseverance." In the latter, man is represented as shut up in a castle garrisoned by the virtues and besieged by the vices.¹

Like the Miracle plays, most of the old Moralities are of unknown date and origin. Of the known authors of Moralities, two of the best are John Skelton, who wrote "Magnificence," and probably also "The Necromancer"; and Sir David Lindsay (1490-1555), "the poet of the Scotch Reformation," whose religious business it was to make rulers uncomfortable by telling them unpleasant truths in the form of poetry. With these men a new element enters into the Moralities. They satirize or denounce abuses of Church and State, and introduce living personages thinly disguised as allegories; so that the stage first becomes a power in shaping events and correcting abuses.

It is impossible to draw any accurate line of distinction between the Moralities and Interludes. In general we may think of the latter as dramatic scenes, sometimes given by themselves (usually with music and singing) at banquets and

¹ Michael Alexander. *A History of English Literature*. Macmillan Press LTD. London 2010 p. 73
Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. 2008. *Greek Tragedy*. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World ser. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

entertainments where a little fun was wanted; and again slipped into a Miracle play to enliven the audience after a solemn scene. Thus on the margin of a page of one of the old Chester plays we read, "The boye and pigge when the kinges are gone." Certainly this was no part of the original scene between Herod and the three kings. So also the quarrel between Noah and his wife is probably a late addition to an old play. The Interludes originated, undoubtedly, in a sense of humor; and to John Heywood (1497?-1580?), a favorite retainer and jester at the court of Mary, is due the credit for raising the Interlude to the distinct dramatic form known as comedy.

Heywood's Interludes were written between 1520 and 1540. His most famous is "The Four P's," a contest of wit between a "Pardoner, a Palmer, a Pedlar and a Poticary." The characters here strongly suggest those of Chaucer¹. Another interesting Interlude is called "The Play of the Weather." In this Jupiter and the gods assemble to listen to complaints about the weather and to reform abuses. Naturally everybody wants his own kind of weather. The climax is reached by a boy who announces that a boy's pleasure consists in two things, catching birds and throwing snowballs, and begs for the weather to be such that he can always do both. Jupiter decides that he will do just as he pleases about the weather, and everybody goes home satisfied.

All these early plays were written, for the most part, in a mingling of prose and wretched doggerel, and add nothing to our literature. Their great work was to train actors, to keep alive the dramatic spirit, and to prepare the way for the true drama.

The artistic is the final stage in the development of the English drama. It differs radically from the other two in that its chief purpose is not to point a moral but to represent human life as it is. The artistic drama may have purpose, no less than the Miracle play, but the motive is always subordinate to the chief end of representing life itself.

¹ Л.И.Тимофеев, С.В.Тураев. Словарь литературоведческих терминов. Москва, 1994. - 418 с.

The first true play in English, with a regular plot, divided into acts and scenes, is probably the comedy, "Ralph Royster Doyster." It was written by Nicholas Udall, master of Eton, and later of Westminster school, and was first acted by his schoolboys some time before 1556. The story is that of a conceited fop in love with a widow, who is already engaged to another man. The play is an adaptation of the "Miles Gloriosus", a classic comedy by Plautus, and the English characters are more or less artificial; but as furnishing a model of a clear plot and natural dialogue, the influence of this first comedy, with its mixture of classic and English elements, can hardly be overestimated.¹

The next play, "Gammer Gurton's Needle" "(cir". 1562), is a domestic comedy, a true bit of English realism, representing the life of the peasant class.

Gammer Gurton is patching the leather breeches of her man Hodge, when Gib, the cat, gets into the milk pan. While Gammer chases the cat the family needle is lost, a veritable calamity in those days. The whole household is turned upside down, and the neighbors are dragged into the affair. Various comical situations are brought about by Diccon, a thieving vagabond, who tells Gammer that her neighbor, Dame Chatte, has taken her needle, and who then hurries to tell Dame Chatte that she is accused by Gammer of stealing a favorite rooster.² Naturally there is a terrible row when the two irate old women meet and misunderstand each other. Diccon also drags Doctor Rat, the curate, into the quarrel by telling him that, if he will but creep into Dame Chatte's cottage by a hidden way, he will find her using the stolen needle. Then Diccon secretly warns Dame Chatte that Gammer Gurton's man Hodge is coming to steal her chickens; and the old woman hides in the dark passage and cudgels the curate soundly with the door bar. All the parties are finally brought before the justice, when Hodge

¹ Kholbelov M., Tojiev Kh. History of British Literature. V-XIX centuries. Jizzakh, Sangzor, 2010. 218 p.

² Leila Borges. British and American Literature. Centro Universitario da Cidade. 2010
 Miller, Arthur. 1949. "Tragedy and the Common Man." In Dukore (1974, 894-897). Originally published in *The New York*

suddenly and painfully finds the lost needle--which is all the while stuck in his leather breeches--and the scene ends uproariously for both audience and actors.

This first wholly English comedy is full of fun and coarse humor, and is wonderfully true to the life it represents. It was long attributed to John Still, afterwards bishop of Bath; but the authorship is now definitely assigned to William Stevenson.¹ Our earliest edition of the play was printed in 1575; but a similar play called "Dycon of Bedlam" was licensed in 1552, twelve years before Shakespeare's birth.

To show the spirit and the metrical form of the play we give a fragment of the boy's description of the dullard Hodge trying to light a fire on the hearth from the cat's eyes, and another fragment of the old drinking song at the beginning of the second act.

At last in a dark corner two sparkes he thought he sees
Which were, indede, nought els but Gyb our cat's two eyes.
"Puffe!" quod Hodge, thinking therby to have fyre without doubt;
With that Gyb shut her two eyes, and so the fyre was out.
And by-and-by them opened, even as they were before;
With that the sparkes appeared, even as they had done of yore.
And, even as Hodge blew the fire, as he did thincke,
Gyb, as she felt the blast, strayght-way began to wyncke,
Tyll Hodge fell of swering, as came best to his turne,
The fier was sure bewicht, and therfore wold not burne.
At last Gyb up the stayers, among the old postes and pinnes,
And Hodge he hied him after till broke were both his shinnes,
Cursynge and swering othes, were never of his makynge,
That Gyb wold fyre the house if that shee were not taken.²

¹ Leila Borges. British and American Literature. Centro Universitario da Cidade. 2010
Miller, Arthur. 1949. "Tragedy and the Common Man." In Dukore (1974, 894-897). Originally published in *The New York*

² William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

“Fyrste a Songe:”

“Backe and syde, go bare, go bare;

Booth foote and hande, go colde;

But, bellye, God sende thee good ale ynoughe,

Whether it be newe or olde”!

I can not eate but lytle meate,

My stomacke is not good;

But sure I thinke that I can dryncke

With him that weares a hood.

Thoughe I go bare, take ye no care,

I am nothings a-colde,

I stuffe my skyn so full within

Of ioly good ale and olde.

“Backe and syde, go bare”, etc.

First English tragedy, "Gorboduc,"¹ was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, and was acted in 1562, only two years before the birth of Shakespeare. It is remarkable not only as our first tragedy, but as the first play to be written in blank verse, the latter being most significant, since it started the drama into the style of verse best suited to the genius of English playwrights.

The story of "Gorboduc" is taken from the early annals of Britain and recalls the story used by Shakespeare in "King Lear". Gorboduc, king of Britain, divides his kingdom between his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The sons quarrel, and Porrex, the younger, slays his brother, who is the queen's favorite. Videna, the queen, slays Porrex in revenge; the people rebel and slay Videna and Gorboduc; then the nobles kill the rebels, and in turn fall to fighting each other. The line of Brutus being

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

extinct with the death of Gorboduc, the country falls into anarchy, with rebels, nobles, and a Scottish invader all fighting for the right of succession. The curtain falls upon a scene of bloodshed and utter confusion.

The artistic finish of this first tragedy is marred by the authors' evident purpose to persuade Elizabeth to marry. It aims to show the danger to which England is exposed by the uncertainty of succession. Otherwise the plan of the play follows the classical rule of Seneca. There is very little action on the stage; bloodshed and battle are announced by a messenger; and the chorus, of four old men of Britain, sums up the situation with a few moral observations at the end of each of the first four acts.

Classical Influence upon the Drama. The revival of Latin literature had a decided influence upon the English drama as it developed from the Miracle plays. In the fifteenth century English teachers, in order to increase the interest in Latin, began to let their boys act the plays which they had read as literature, precisely as our colleges now present Greek or German plays at the yearly festivals. Seneca was the favorite Latin author, and all his tragedies were translated into English between 1559 and 1581. This was the exact period in which the first English playwrights were shaping their own ideas; but the severe simplicity of the classical drama seemed at first only to hamper the exuberant English spirit. To understand this, one has only to compare a tragedy of Seneca or of Euripides with one of Shakespeare, and see how widely the two masters differ in methods.¹

In the classic play the so-called dramatic unities of time, place, and action were strictly observed. Time and place must remain the same; the play could represent a period of only a few hours, and whatever action was introduced must take place at the spot where the play began. The characters, therefore, must remain unchanged throughout; there was no possibility of the child becoming a man, or of the man's growth with changing circumstances. As the play was within doors, all

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

vigorous action was deemed out of place on the stage, and battles and important events were simply announced by a messenger. The classic drama also drew a sharp line between tragedy and comedy, all fun being rigorously excluded from serious representations.

The English drama, on the other hand, strove to represent the whole sweep of life in a single play. The scene changed rapidly; the same actors appeared now at home, now at court, now on the battlefield; and vigorous action filled the stage before the eyes of the spectators. The child of one act appeared as the man of the next, and the imagination of the spectator was called upon to bridge the gaps from place to place and from year to year. So the dramatist had free scope to present all life in a single place and a single hour. Moreover, since the world is always laughing and always crying at the same moment, tragedy and comedy were presented side by side, as they are in life itself. As Hamlet sings, after the play that amused the court but struck the king with deadly fear:

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.¹

Naturally, with these two ideals struggling to master the English drama, two schools of writers arose. The University Two Schools Wits, as men of learning were called, generally of Drama upheld the classical ideal, and ridiculed the crudeness of the new English plays. Sackville and Norton were of this class, and "Gorboduc" was classic in its construction. In the "Defense of Poesie" Sidney upholds the classics and ridicules the too ambitious scope of the English drama. Against these were the popular playwrights, Lyly, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, and

¹ William J. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World. e-book taken from: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

many others, who recognized the English love of action and disregarded the dramatic unities in their endeavor to present life as it is. In the end the native drama prevailed, aided by the popular taste which had been trained by four centuries of Miracles. Our first plays, especially of the romantic type, were extremely crude and often led to ridiculously extravagant scenes; and here is where the classic drama exercised an immense influence for good, by insisting upon beauty of form and definiteness of structure at a time when the tendency was to satisfy a taste for stage spectacles without regard to either.

In the year 1574 a royal permit to Lord Leicester's actors allowed them "to give plays anywhere throughout our realm of England," and this must be regarded as the beginning of the regular drama. Two years later the first playhouse, known as "The Theater," was built for these actors by James Burbage in Finsbury Fields, just north of London. It was in this theatre that Shakespeare probably found employment when he first came to the city. The success of this venture was immediate, and the next thirty years saw a score of theatrical companies, at least seven regular theaters, and a dozen or more inn yards permanently fitted for the giving of plays,--all established in the city and its immediate suburbs. The growth seems all the more remarkable when we remember that the London of those days would now be considered a small city, having (in 1600) only about a hundred thousand inhabitants.

A Dutch traveler, Johannes de Witt, who visited London in 1596, has given us the only contemporary drawing we possess of the interior of one of these theaters. They were built of stone and wood, round or octagonal in shape, and without a roof, being simply an inclosed courtyard. At one side was the stage, and before it on the bare ground, or pit, stood that large part of the audience who could afford to pay only an admission fee. The players and these groundlings were exposed to the weather; those that paid for seats were in galleries sheltered by a narrow porch-roof projecting inwards from the encircling walls; while the young nobles and gallants, who came to be seen and who could afford the extra fee, took

seats on the stage itself, and smoked and chaffed the actors and threw nuts at the groundlings. The whole idea of these first theaters, according to De Witt, was like that of the Roman amphitheater; and the resemblance was heightened by the fact that, when no play was on the boards, the stage might be taken away and the pit given over to bull and bear baiting.

In all these theaters, probably, the stage consisted of a bare platform, with a curtain or "traverse" across the middle, separating the front from the rear stage. On the latter unexpected scenes or characters were "discovered" by simply drawing the curtain aside. At first little or no scenery was used, a gilded sign being the only announcement of a change of scene; and this very lack of scenery led to better acting, since the actors must be realistic enough to make the audience forget its shabby surroundings. By Shakespeare's day, however, painted scenery had appeared, first at university plays, and then in the regular theaters. In all our first plays female parts were taken by boy actors, who evidently were more distressing than the crude scenery, for contemporary literature has many satirical references to their acting, and even the tolerant Shakespeare writes:

Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness.

However that may be, the stage was deemed unfit for women, and actresses were unknown in England until after the Restoration.

1.3 Literary Terms Associated with the Art of Drama

Drama, as a genre of literature, is unique in the way that it presents and develops its story, characters, and themes. Because there is no narrator or narrative in drama, as there is in the novel or the short story, the audience must rely on the setting of the play and the characters' dialogue, facial expressions, and actions to tell them the story. Readers must also consider these elements in order to develop their interpretations of the play's themes and characters. Below are some suggestions on how to analyze the different elements of drama and explore their

relationships with one another. As you proceed through the following steps, take notes, highlight, or underline what you notice in the play.¹

PLOT

Begin by considering what happens in the play. What kind of conflict is dramatized in the play—is it serious, light, satirical? How is the conflict staged? Are there flashbacks or flash-forwards? Does any important action take place off-stage or before the beginning of the play? What is the significance of this particular staging? How does the play draw our attention to particular issues by focusing on particular events or conversations? How might the nature of the conflict in the play and the play’s dramatic arc (the introduction, development of conflict, and resolution) develop a theme or shed light on a particular issue?

Although twentieth-century drama has come to include plays that are made up of only one act, plays are typically organized into separate acts and scenes within each act. It may help to construct a brief outline of each act of the play, including where it is set, what happens, and which characters are introduced. How is the dramatic arc of the play divided among the acts? How does each act provide a particular context for the act that follows it? Does the particular organization of the play’s events contribute to the play’s themes?

CHARACTER

In drama, characters are portrayed through what they say and do rather than through narrative descriptions, so it’s helpful to think about what the dialogue tells us about each character. The following exercises can help you work out some character analysis:

- For each primary character in the play, make a list of characteristics—“selfish,” “cowardly,” “generous,” “condescending,” “noble”—and give the lines of that character’s dialogue which reflect this characteristic. It

¹ Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. 2008. *Greek Tragedy*. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World ser. Malden, MA: Blackwell

may help to complete this exercise separately for each scene or act of the play in order to see how the character changes or develops through his or her dialogue throughout the course of the play, or how different acts of the play, containing different dialogue, reveal different aspects of the character's personality.

- Make a list of characteristics for each character as you did in the exercise above, this time using other characters' dialogue in order to consider what you learn about a character through what others say about him in the play. This helps to show how characters are developed not only through their own words but through other characters' dialogue.

As you work on this, consider how characterization in the play may contribute to the development of any theme¹.

DIALOGUE

As mentioned above, dialogue is a crucial element of drama that is used to develop the plot and characters of the play. In addition to considering what the dialogue can tell you about the characters themselves, it's also important to take note of the word choice and any metaphors, imagery, or puns that are present. Take note of any instances of verbal irony—moments when the speaker's words convey a meaning that is different or even opposite from the surface-level meaning. How does the language of the play itself work to establish a particular tone or set a mood in the play?

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Stage directions are parenthetical comments that give us further description of the setting, characters, and action in the play. These comments, which are typically placed within brackets, contain information that supplements the dialogue.

¹ Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. 2008. *Greek Tragedy*. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World ser. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Consider this example from Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Earnest*:

“ALGERNON: Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in heaven—[Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. ALGERNON at once interferes.] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]”¹

The stage directions in this excerpt clue us into the bit of comedy that is taking place at this moment—Algernon's act of eating the cucumber sandwich, which we would not know about without the stage directions, contradicts the seriousness of his words and shows the audience his hypocritical nature. Make sure to examine the stage directions in play and consider how they contribute to the dialogue or tell you something important about the characters.

Plays have many different elements or aspects, which means that you should have lots of different options for focusing your analysis. Playwrights—writers of plays—are called "wrights" because this word means "builder." Just as shipwrights build ships, playwrights build plays. A playwright's raw materials are words, but to create a successful play, he or she must also think about the performance—about what will be happening on stage with sets, sounds, actors, etc. To put it another way: the words of a play have their meanings within a larger context—the context of the production. When you watch or read a play, think about how all of the parts work (or could work) together.

For the play itself, some important contexts to consider are

- The time period in which the play was written;
- The playwright's biography and his/her other writing

¹ *Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English*. Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English. "Dictionary: Tragical character". <http://www.dictionary.reference.com>

- Contemporaneous works of theater (plays written or produced by other artists at roughly the same time)
- The language of the play
- Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characters

Language

There are countless ways that you can talk about how language works in a play, a production, or a particular performance. Given a choice, you should probably focus on words, phrases, lines, or scenes that really struck you, things that you still remember weeks after reading the play or seeing the performance. You'll have a much easier time writing about a bit of language that you feel strongly about (love it or hate it).

That said, here are two common ways to talk about how language works in a play:

How characters are constructed by their language

If you have a strong impression of a character, especially if you haven't seen that character depicted on stage, you probably remember one line or bit of dialogue that really captures who that character is. Playwrights often distinguish their characters with idiosyncratic or at least individualized manners of speaking. Take this example from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*:

ALGERNON: Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

LANE: I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

ALGERNON: I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

LANE: Yes, sir.

ALGERNON: And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?¹

This early moment in the play contributes enormously to what the audience thinks about the aristocratic Algernon and his servant, Lane. If you were to talk about language in this scene, you could discuss Lane's reserved replies: Are they funny? Do they indicate familiarity or sarcasm? How do you react to a servant who replies in that way? Or you could focus on Algernon's witty responses. Does Algernon really care what Lane thinks? Is he talking more to hear himself? What does that say about how the audience is supposed to see Algernon? Algernon's manner of speech is part of who his character is. If you are analyzing a particular performance, you might want to comment on the actor's delivery of these lines: Was his vocal inflection appropriate? Did it show something about the character?

How language contributes to scene and mood

Ancient, medieval, and Renaissance plays often use verbal tricks and nuances to convey the setting and time of the play because performers during these periods didn't have elaborate special-effects technology to create theatrical illusions. For example, most scenes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* take place at night. The play was originally performed in an open-air theatre in the bright and sunny afternoon. How did Shakespeare communicate the fact that it was night-time in the play? Mainly by starting scenes like this:

BANQUO: How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE: The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO: And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE: I take't, 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO: Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out. Take thee that too. A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

¹ *Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English*. Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English. "Dictionary: Tragical character". <http://dictionary.reference.com/>

And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers, Restrain in me the cursed thoughts
that nature Gives way to in repose!

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch

Give me my sword.

Who's there?

Characters entering with torches is a pretty big clue, as is having a character say, "It's night." Later in the play, the question, "Who's there?" recurs a number of times, establishing the illusion that the characters can't see each other. The sense of encroaching darkness and the general mysteriousness of night contributes to a number of other themes and motifs in the play.

1.4 Genre Specifications of Drama and Playwriting

In a strict sense, plays are classified as being either tragedies or comedies. The broad difference between the two is in the ending. Comedies end happily. Tragedies end on an unhappy note. The tragedy acts as a purge. It arouses our pity for the stricken one and our terror that we ourselves may be struck down. As the play closes we are washed clean of these emotions and we feel better for the experience. A classical tragedy tells of a high and noble person who falls because of a "tragic flaw," a weakness in his own character. A domestic tragedy concerns the lives of ordinary people brought low by circumstances beyond their control. Domestic tragedy may be realistic seemingly true to life or naturalistic realistic and on the seamy side of life. A romantic comedy is a love story. The main characters are lovers; the secondary characters are comic. In the end the lovers are always united. Farce is comedy at its broadest. Much fun and horseplay enliven the action. The comedy of manners, or artificial comedy, is subtle, witty, and often mocking. Sentimental comedy mixes sentimental emotion with its humor. Melodrama has a plot filled with pathos and menacing threats by a villain, but it does include comic

relief and has a happy ending. It depends upon physical action rather than upon character probing. Tragic or comic, the action of the play comes from conflict of characters how the stage people react to each other. These reactions make the play.

In a dramatic story or play, the dynamic characters draw in an audience because they promise to take a story's audience on a journey to experience a story's fulfillment. The key issue to understand is that it is because characters in stories act out to resolution issues of human need that they engage the attention of an audience. When introducing a story's characters, then, writers need to suggest in some way that their characters are "ripe." This means that a character has issues that arise from a story's dramatic purpose and the story's events compel them to resolve it. For example, if courage is the main issue in a story, the storyteller can set a character into an environment designed to compel them to act. That's how a story's dramatic purpose is made visible. It establishes both why characters act and why a story's audience should care. Viewers want to care, to believe in the possibility of what a story's characters can accomplish. In that way they experience that belief in themselves. That's why a storyteller often arranges a story's elements to deliberately beat down and place characters in great danger, so the story's readers can more powerfully experience their rising up unconquered. Just as we secretly imagine ourselves, standing in their shoes, doing as well. Once the storyteller understands the role their characters serve for an audience, they can better perceive why such characters should be introduced in a particular manner: In a way an audience can understand and identify with a particular character and their goals. In a way that the audience is led to care about the outcome of a character's goals and issues while also perceiving how they advance the story toward its resolution and fulfillment. That's why it's important a storyteller introduce characters in a way that allows an audience the time to take in who the characters are and what issues they have to resolve. Often limiting the number of characters introduced in a scene can do this simply. Many popular movies, for example, have only one or two main characters in a scene. Large group scenes are the exception,

not the rule. The purpose of this is so the audience can clearly identify with and understand a character's issues. Second, the actions of a story's characters should advance a story toward its resolution and fulfillment along its story and plot lines in a discernible way. If characters serve no dramatic purpose in a scene -- if their actions don't serve to advance the story -- save their introduction for a later time. Characters in a story should be designed by the storyteller to have emotions that suggest how they will react to a story's events. As an example, a story about courage, characters might confront their feelings about lacking courage. That's the internal side of the equation. The storyteller then puts them into an environment that compels them to react. By how they react, they set out the story's dramatic purpose and give voice to their feelings and concerns as the action of the story exerts pressure on them. By resolving questions based on the inner conflicts of characters, a story has meaning to those in the audience with similar feelings and issues. Story events that have no real effect on a character's inner feelings -- a character's sense of mattering -- serve no purpose in a story. Worse, they can confuse an audience. They see characters with certain issues reacting to events that don't clearly elicit those responses. Or that elicit responses that seem out of sync with what they know about a character. Or a character's issues have been kept hidden in a way the audience has no way to feel engaged over how or why characters are responding to a story's events. The deeper issue here is that the storyteller have a sense of how the types of characters that populate a story arise from a story's dramatic purpose. That their emotions arise from setting out that purpose. That the events of the story clearly compel those characters to respond based on a sense of who they are. That all of these are blended together to recreate a story's journey along its story line from its introduction to its fulfillment. Well-told stories populated with dynamic, dramatic characters with larger than life passions and needs act out issues those in the audience might struggle with. Such characters battling with other determined characters to shape a story's course and

outcome bring a story's dramatic purpose to life in a fulfilling way. Creating such characters is another art in the craft of storytelling.

What makes a Drama a Drama?

- A dramatist should start with characters. The characters must be full, rich, interesting, and different enough from each other so that in one way or another they conflict. From this conflict comes the story;
- Put the characters into dramatic situations with strongly plotted conclusions;
- The plot should be able to tell what happens and why;
- The beginning, should tell the audience or reader what took place before the story leads into the present action. The middle carries the action forward, amid trouble and complications. In the end, the conflict is resolved, and the story comes to a satisfactory, but not necessarily a happy conclusion;
- It should be filled with characters whom real people admire and envy. The plots must be filled with action. It should penetrate both the heart and mind and shows man as he is, in all his misery and glory.

Chapter 2. Practical Part. Analysis of Peculiarities of Renaissance Playwriting Tradition

2.1 Shakespeare's Playwriting Style on the Example of "Hamlet"

William Shakespeare is usually considered the greatest dramatist and finest poet the world has ever known. No other writer's plays and poetry have been produced so many times or in so many countries or translated into so many languages. One of the major reasons for Shakespeare's popularity is the variety of rich characters that he successfully creates, from drunkards and paid murderers to princes and kings and from inane fools and court jesters to wise and noble generals. Each character springs vividly to life upon the stage and, as they speak their beautiful verse or prose, the characters remind the viewers of their own personalities, traits, and flaws. Shakespeare also made his characters very realistic. The dramatist had an amazing knowledge of a wide variety of subjects, and his well-developed characters reflect this knowledge, whether it be about military science, the graces of royalty, seamanship, history, the Bible, music, or sports.¹

In Shakespeare's time, few biographies were written, and none of the literary men of the Elizabethan Age was considered important enough to merit a book about his life. The first portfolio of his works, collected as a memorial to Shakespeare by members of his own acting company, was not published until 1623, seven years after his death. His first biography was written one hundred years later. As a result, many of the facts of Shakespeare's life are unknown. It is known that he was born in Stratford-on-Avon in England, sometime in early 1564, for his Baptism is recorded on April 26 of that year. His mother Mary had eight children, with William being the third. His father, John Shakespeare, was a fairly prosperous glovemaking and trading company who owned several houses in Stratford and became the town's mayor when Shakespeare was a boy. The young Shakespeare

¹ Hecker M., Volosova T.D., Doroshevich A. English Literature. - Moscow: Prosvesheniye, 1975.

probably studied in the local grammar school and hunted and played sports in the open fields behind his home.¹

The next definite information about William Shakespeare is that the young man, at age 18, married Anne Hathaway, who was 26, on November 28, 1582. In 1583, it is recorded that Anne gave birth to their oldest child, Susanna, and that twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born to the couple in 1585. By 1592, the family was living in London, where Shakespeare was busy acting in plays and writing his own dramas. From 1592 to 1594, the plague kept most London theaters closed, so the dramatist turned to writing poetry during this period, and his poems, which were actually published unlike his plays, became popular with the masses and contributed to his good reputation as a writer. From 1594 to the end of his career, Shakespeare belonged to the same theatrical company, known first as Lord Chamberlain's Men and then as the King's Company. It is also known that he was both a leader and stockholder in this acting organization, which became the most prosperous group in London, and that he was meeting with both financial success and critical acclaim.

In 1594, Shakespeare was popular enough as an actor to perform before Queen Elizabeth. By 1596, he owned considerable property in London and bought one of the finest houses in Stratford, known as New Place, in 1597. A year later, in 1598, he bought ten percent of the stock in the Globe Theatre, where his plays were produced. In 1608, he and his colleagues also purchased The Blackfriars Theatre, where they began to hold productions during the winter, returning to the Globe during the summer months. Throughout the rest of his life, Shakespeare continued to purchase land, homes, and businesses. He obviously was a busy man between handling his business ventures, performing on the stage, and writing or collaborating on the thirty-seven plays that are credited to him.

Shakespeare's most productive years were from 1594 to 1608, the period in which he wrote all of his great tragedies, such as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King*

¹ Hecker M., Volosova T.D., Doroshevich A. English Literature. - Moskow: Prosvesheniye, 1975.

Lear, and Romeo and Juliet. During these fourteen years, he furnished his acting company with approximately two plays annually. After 1608, it appears he went into semi-retirement, spending more time in Stratford and creating only five plays before his death on April 23, 1616. He was buried before the altar in the Stratford Church, where his body still lies today. Many literary students and visitors make a pilgrimage to this shrine each year in order to honor William Shakespeare, still recognized after 400 years as the world's greatest poet and dramatist.¹

Information about the Play

Probably written in 1601 or 1602, Hamlet is probably one of Shakespeare's most studied and popular plays. Loosely based on Danish history, the play most likely has its origins in *Histoires Tragiques*, written by Belle-Forest in 1570; much of Belle-Forest's information is drawn from the *Historica Danica*, written by Saxo Grammaticus in 1208. In Belle-Forest's version of Hamlet, it is a known fact that Claudius, the King's brother, murders him and takes the throne. Claudius then tries to find reason to have Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, put to death in order to ensure his retention of the throne. Realizing her error in marrying Claudius, Hamlet's mother begs forgiveness from her son and acts with him to seek vengeance on Claudius. During a banquet, Hamlet sets fire to the dining hall and beheads his uncle, the guilty King of Denmark. Hamlet is then crowned King.²

As usual, Shakespeare has researched information about his main character and then changed him into the dramatic personage that he becomes. Although the Shakespearean version of Hamlet has similarities to the Belle-Forest version, there are also obvious differences, including the introduction of the Ghost to heighten dramatic interest and the death of Hamlet at the end of the play to heighten the

¹ Hecker M., Volosova T.D., Doroshevich A. English Literature. - Moskow: Prosvesheniye, 1975

² Michael Alexander. A History of English Literature. Macmillan Press LTD. London 2010 p. 73
Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. 2008. *Greek Tragedy*. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World ser. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

tragedy. The end results of Shakespeare's changes are the creation of a powerful and memorable protagonist and a dramatically effective play.

Setting

The play is set at Elsinore, the royal court of the King of Denmark. The play begins in the open battlements of the castle on a bitterly cold night, then shifts inside the castle to the formality and conventions of the court. A total of two scenes take place on the battlements; the rest occur in various locations inside the royal court, except for a brief scene at the cemetery.

Protagonist

The protagonist of the play is Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. When the play opens, Hamlet has been summoned from the University at Wittenberg on account of the sudden death of his father, who supposedly died from snakebite. He returns to find that his mother has already wed his father's brother. The hasty marriage and sudden death cause Hamlet a considerable degree of unhappiness. His trouble is intensified when the Ghost of his dead father tells him his death was not accidental; instead it was a murder carefully perpetrated by his own brother Claudius, the new King of Denmark. The Ghost asks Hamlet to avenge his death. Hamlet struggles with the duty left to him, unsure of how to proceed. In the end, he does exact vengeance, but at the cost of his own life and the lives of those dearest to him.

Antagonist

Claudius is Hamlet's antagonist and the villain of the play. He begins his evil deeds by murdering his own brother (Hamlet's father), then marrying his widowed wife (Hamlet's mother). Hamlet learns from the ghost of his father that Claudius is the murderer; as a result, he spends the entire play trying to gain his revenge against Claudius. When Claudius realizes that Hamlet has begun to suspect him, he arranges to have the Prince killed. When his first plan fails, he creates several back-up plans with the assistance of Laertes, a hasty and impulsive young man whose sister Ophelia has been in love with Hamlet. Though his plot succeeds in

killing Hamlet, he also dies in the final moments of the play. Hamlet stabs him, then forces him to drink poisoned wine.

Climax

The climax of the play is the Hamlet-Laertes duel. Claudius has fixed the outcome of the duel in such a way that Hamlet will perish no matter what. But there are also several events related to the duel. Queen Gertrude accidentally drinks some poison intended for Hamlet and dies. Hamlet, wounded by Laertes' poisoned sword, stabs his opponent. Before he dies, Laertes tells Hamlet about the evil plots of Claudius and the poison now coursing through Hamlet's veins. He tells the wounded prince his death is very near. Before he dies, Hamlet stabs Claudius and forces him to drink poison. When the Prince of Norway enters, the dying Hamlet makes him ruler over Denmark.

Outcome

The play ends in tragedy for Hamlet, for he is overcome by Claudius, his antagonist, and dies; at least, however, he does get his revenge against Claudius, stabbing the king. Fortunately, Denmark is at least spared. Hamlet's friend Horatio acts as a witness to all that has transpired. He absolves Hamlet of guilt in the bloody tragedy and reveals to all the treachery of the King. Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, prepares a military burial for Hamlet and assumes control of the country, restoring order.

The King of Denmark is killed by an apparent snakebite while sleeping in the garden. His brother Claudius assumes the throne and marries the widowed Queen, Gertrude, within weeks of the King's death. Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark and the dead King's son, mourns for his father and anguishes over his mother's hasty remarriage, considering it as unnatural as incest.

The play opens outside the castle grounds, where three guards have been witnessing the appearance of a Ghost who looks like the dead King. They ask the Prince and his friend Horatio to come see the Ghost. Prince Hamlet speaks to the apparition, who claims to be the spirit of his dead father. In a private conversation,

the Ghost tells Hamlet that Claudius, in fact, murdered him. The Ghost asks Hamlet to avenge his murder. Hamlet takes his responsibility to seek vengeance for his father very seriously, perhaps too seriously.

Hamlet is in love with Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius (the Lord Chamberlain); however, the father commands Ophelia to reject Hamlet's advances. Polonius and his son Laertes believe Hamlet will never marry Ophelia since her rank is beneath his. Although Ophelia is very much in love with Hamlet, she is an obedient child; as a result, she complies with her father's commands. Satisfied that his sister is now safe, Laertes goes off to France in pursuit of a good time. Ophelia and her father are left to look after one another. When Hamlet feigns madness in order to observe the new King and his mother, Polonius tells the King that Hamlet's madness is because of unrequited love for Ophelia. He orders Ophelia to return Hamlet's advances to test this theory. Hamlet spurns Ophelia, however, breaking her heart.

The King begins to suspect that Hamlet knows about the murder, but Hamlet is hesitant and full of anxiety over how to proceed. When at last he moves to punish Claudius, he accidentally kills Polonius. Ophelia, on hearing the news of her father's death, loses her mind and drowns in the river. Claudius, now more fearful than ever that Hamlet will eventually expose him, makes arrangements for Hamlet to die. Hamlet, however, escapes Claudius' plans and returns to Elsinore to exact revenge.

Laertes, now seeking revenge against Hamlet on behalf of his father and sister, challenges Hamlet to a duel. Secretly, he has conspired with Claudius to make sure Hamlet dies in the battle. The sword he uses is poisoned, as is Hamlet's drink. During the duel, the Queen accidentally drinks the poisoned cup and dies. Hamlet and Laertes are both seriously wounded. Before dying, Laertes confesses all to Hamlet, telling him the details of Claudius' plot against him, including the fact that he will die shortly from the poison. Hamlet kills Claudius, then implores

his friend Horatio to tell the world the truth about the tragedy. Horatio lives to clear Hamlet's name, and the Prince of Norway comes to restore order to Denmark.

Hamlet

Hamlet's character dominates the play, lending the tragedy its greatest philosophical and metaphysical dimensions. Shakespeare has brilliantly raised Hamlet above a stock figure of an avenger; as he answers the call of revenge, he also proves he is an intellectual aristocrat. As a scholar and a thinker, Hamlet often reveals the high quality of his mind, pondering many weighty matters. He is also a perceptive student of drama and obviously well read in the classics.

Hamlet is a noble and sensitive hero, an ideal Renaissance gentleman with a fair "mould of form." His refinement of spirit is evident when he criticizes Claudius for his drunkenness. His sensitivity is seen in his horror over his mother's too rapid remarriage to the new king. His humility is seen in his love for Ophelia; he cares little for the fact that she is socially beneath him¹.

Hamlet is, however, a tragic hero and victim. When the play begins, Claudius has already violated the natural order of the kingdom, and Hamlet, although profoundly disturbed, is only partially aware of the evil that has been perpetrated by his new stepfather. Although he has weaknesses, Hamlet never has a part in the creation or evolution of evil in the play. His fatal flaw is his procrastination over avenging his father's death. Although he finally achieves vengeance and justice, it is at a terrible cost, for every major character is killed as a result of Hamlet's past hesitations.

Hamlet is an emotional young man, deeply disillusioned by his mother's incestuous marriage to his uncle and full of grief at his father's sudden death. He is so disenchanted with life that he views it with disgust and disappointment, saying that the world is "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable. . .an unweeded garden." The revelation by his father's ghost that he was murdered by Claudius aggravates

¹ Michael Alexander. *A History of English Literature*. Macmillan Press LTD. London 2010 p. 73
Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin. 2008. *Greek Tragedy*. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World ser. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hamlet's distress. The ghost's demand to "revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" and to not let "the royal bed of Denmark" become "a couch for luxury and damned incest" thrusts upon Hamlet a duty to take extreme action. Unfortunately the Prince's mind at the moment of revelation is unstable from grief, and the ghost's command is almost more than he is able to bear. While he is at first full of fire to exact revenge, Hamlet quickly realizes the heavy burden of the duty given to him and says, "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite / That ever I was born to set it right!"

Hamlet's feelings of inadequacy set him apart from Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, who tend to act confidently and immediately. Hamlet, however, is charged with a responsibility that he does not really know how to fulfill. As a result, he is unsure of himself and unable to arrive at a quick decision and take action. Despite his determination to carry out revenge, he procrastinates too long and allows time to slip by without doing a thing to avenge his father's death. He gives up an ideal opportunity for killing

Claudius because he cannot bring himself to strike at him while he is kneeling at prayer. He apathetically allows himself to be taken to England even though he knows of Claudius' evil intentions to get rid of him. Hamlet is very aware of his indecisiveness and inaction and criticizes himself for these weaknesses. In fact, he contrasts his own lack of follow through with the determination of young Fortinbras.

The real problem is that Hamlet has been given a task that is essentially foreign to his nature. He is not a passionate person, but believes that reason and moderation should rule supreme. Furthermore, he finds that he has been thrown into an emotional situation that demands a decision against which his morals revolt. Raised a Christian, he believes in forgiveness rather than in revenge; therefore, the responsibility for avenging his father's death completely transforms him, and he pretends to be mad in order to fulfill the dreaded task. In fact, he is so worried about the act of vengeance that at points in the play he often seems to be

really mad; but Hamlet is in control of his craziness and acts normally when he wishes to do so. Even Polonius, recognizing that the Prince is pretending, realizes that there is a method in Hamlet's madness. In truth, the madness provides Hamlet with a means to hide his own irresolution while his mind struggles to reach a decision.

As Hamlet frets over his own lack of inaction in avenging his father, his reason gives way to passion. His first soliloquy is not a logical assessment of his situation and the alternatives that he has, but an impassioned outpouring of deep grief and bitter disgust, culminating in a stoic acceptance of heartbreak and silent inactivity.

His second soliloquy constitutes a passionate response to the player's speech and a passionate denunciation of his own irresolution. As he continues to fail to take action, Hamlet's melancholy deepens, and his character deteriorates; in his misery he is often bitter and sarcastic. He even reflects on the futility of life and contemplates suicide in the famous line, "To be, or not to be, that is the question."

His mind remains doubt-ridden and perplexed at the uncertainties of life until the very end of the play. Finally, as the tragedy moves towards its end, Hamlet becomes more stable and resolute, resigning himself to God's will. He tells Horatio that "there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come - the readiness is all."

Although Hamlet is a very complex character, he seems much more accessible than most of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. Many critics judge him as the bard's best character, an imperfect, but perfectly drawn, "melancholy Dane;" his great weaknesses are that he simply does not know how to do the thing he must do and, therefore, procrastinates about it until it is too late. In the end, his humanity destroys him and everyone he loves; but most members of the audience identify with this tragic hero and see at least a little of themselves in Hamlet.

Claudius

Claudius is the present King of Denmark, Hamlet's paternal uncle, and Gertrude's new husband. By nature, he is coarse and vulgar, a man who enjoys drinking and debauchery. The stark contrast between his vulgarity and his dead brother's goodness is emphasized repeatedly throughout the play. Portrayed as a completely corrupt and power-hungry villain, he murdered the king, his own brother, then took his wife and his crown as his own. Threatened by Hamlet's presence and popularity, he also plans to have him murdered.

Claudius is completely given over to hypocrisy, appearing to be one thing when he is the complete opposite. He pretends to be a doting stepfather, when all he cares about is protecting himself. Suspicious by nature, he is always on guard and immediately perceives a threat in Hamlet's madness and makes plans to do away with him. He effortlessly makes fond references to his late brother with no trace of guilt or shame. In Act IV, when he has issued orders to have Hamlet killed, he hypocritically remarks that he has made arrangements for his "especial safety." Hamlet is perceptive enough to see through the treachery of Claudius and disgustedly says of him "that one may smile and smile, and be a villain." Even when Claudius kneels in prayer after he has shown his guilt at the play, there is no sincerity in his action. Without remorse, he soon plans the death of Hamlet in a fencing match.¹

Besides being a hypocrite, Claudius is a cunning and unscrupulous schemer who will have his own way at any price. He poisons his own brother in order to satisfy his ambition to become the King of Denmark. This foul murder is so cleverly perpetrated that King Hamlet's death appears to be snakebite. Additionally, in order to secure his own position, Claudius craftily hatches a scheme to eliminate the young Prince by sending him to England. When this attempt fails, he contrives a duel between Hamlet and Laertes with an unscathed foil. He also drops a poisoned pearl into a cup of wine intended for Hamlet.

¹ <http://drb.lifestreamcenter.net/Lessons/Drama.htm>

Fortunately, his plan backfires on him, and Hamlet stabs him with the poisoned, unscathed foil and makes him drink the poisoned wine. In the end, therefore, Claudius gets his just reward.

Ophelia

Ophelia is a simply depicted character whose main plot functions are to be Hamlet's long-standing girlfriend and to suffer greatly and eventually die because of the corruption in Denmark. The daughter of Polonius and brother of Laertes, she is a soft-spoken and beautiful female. She is also an obedient and tender-hearted young lady who willingly obeys her father even when it means being separated from Hamlet, her true love. Ophelia is characterized by simplicity, innocence, faithfulness, honesty, and a total lack of deceit. Her purity is symbolized by flowers, especially by the violets, that are so much a part of her being.

Ophelia is portrayed as a weak character. Although her love for Hamlet is genuine and absolute, when her father and brother demand that she separate herself from Hamlet, she does not have the strength of character to stand up to them. In turn, she becomes a helpless pawn, used by her foolish father and the scheming Claudius to test the truthfulness of Hamlet's madness. When Hamlet speaks rudely to her, she dissolves into tears, unable to control her emotion. After her father's death, she breaks down under the strain and becomes truly mad. She dies, probably through intentional suicide, when she falls into the river and drowns. During her funeral, Hamlet and Laertes clash over their love for her, creating the most dramatic graveyard scene ever written. Ophelia is an important character, despite her one-dimensionality; she represents uncompromised goodness in a cast of compromised people.

Queen Gertrude

Although the Queen is a devoted mother to Hamlet, she is a weak-willed woman who seems to walk blindly through life. She marries Claudius too hastily, but has no idea that she is a pawn in his hands or that he has murdered her husband in order to seize the throne. She cannot understand why her son is so upset about

her remarriage; she also reprimands Hamlet for his excessive grief over his father. She becomes a key instrument in the tragedy when she begs Hamlet to stay at Elsinore instead of returning to Wittenberg for his studies. Had Hamlet been away at school as planned, many of the deaths that occur in the play could have been prevented.

The weak Gertrude allows herself to be used by both Claudius and Polonius. She arranges a meeting with her son so that the King can spy on him; she even allows Polonius to hide behind her curtain and eavesdrop on the mother/son conversation. When Hamlet bitterly attacks Gertrude for her lustful, incestuous marriage, she cries out in fear, an action that causes Polonius' death. She tells Hamlet that he has "cleft my heart in twain," but she still does not accept the guilt of her husband or realize the heinousness of her own crime.

Throughout the play, Gertrude is a flat character who does not change. She is always depicted as a passive being, never acting on her own. Even as she watches the tragedy of the duel scene, she remains a spectator rather than a participant. It is ironic that she insists on drinking from the poisoned cup intended for Hamlet even though Claudius warns her against it; her only independent action in the play results in her death.

Polonius is the elderly Lord Chamberlain of Denmark and Claudius' loyal accessory and trusted advisor. An outstanding aspect of his character is his ceremonious verbosity; he obviously derives immense pleasure from hearing his own voice. Even the simple-minded Queen cannot bear the tediousness of his speech and at one point sharply asks him to give "more matter with less art."

Hamlet totally derides him for his verbosity and treats him as a doddering old fool. In fact, after realizing that he has killed the Chamberlain and not Claudius, Hamlet dismisses him as "a foolish prating knave."

Polonius is habitually interfering in affairs that do not concern him. Since he is cunning and deceitful himself, he spies on the activities of his own children. He sends Reynaldo to spy on Laertes' conduct in Paris and arranges to eavesdrop on

Ophelia's meeting with Hamlet. Appropriately, he is killed by Hamlet when hiding in Gertrude's closet to spy on her encounter with her son. After killing him, Hamlet appropriately denounces him as a "wretched, rash, intruding fool."

The basic structure of the plot of Hamlet is remarkably simple; a wrong occurs and the hero seeks revenge to make it right. In the process, everyone is destroyed. Shakespeare develops the plot of his "revenge" tragedy in classical form. Act I is largely expository in nature, introducing the main characters and the conflict. Acts II, III, and IV contain the rising action of the plot as the conflict develops, largely in Hamlet's mind. Act V contains the climax, a short period of falling action, and the denouement, or conclusion, in which Fortinbras takes control of Denmark to bring order to the country once again.

The genre of "revenge tragedy" or "tragedy of blood" was immensely popular among English Elizabethan dramatists. In typical revenge tragedies, such as Hamlet, the plot arises largely out of a situation for which the hero is not responsible. Additionally, even though the hero may have a tragic flaw that contributes to his downfall, he is usually undone by circumstances over which he has no control. Accordingly in Hamlet, the crime that calls for vengeance has already been committed before the play begins. The real cause of the tragedy is the evil and intolerable situation surrounding Claudius' murder of Hamlet's father, the King. As Hamlet tries to find a way to avenge his father's death, murder, madness, and ghosts are all brought to the front of the stage, creating interest and tension in the audience.

The plot of the play is not complex. It progresses in a linear fashion, with all events happening in chronological order. There are a few flashbacks, as when Hamlet recounts the events that happened on the ship some time after they occurred, but they are easily followed and understood. The play-within-a-play even functions as a flashback as it reveals how Claudius has murdered the late King Hamlet. There are also many foreshadowings to indicate what will happen later in the play; for example, the stabbing of Polonius foreshadows the stabbing of

Claudius and the victorious return of Fortinbras foreshadows his ascension to the Danish throne.

The climax of the plot is a masterfully written conclusion to a tense drama dominated by internal and external conflict. All of Act V is filled with dramatic irony, as many of the characters, as well as the audience, know that Laertes' sword is unscathed and bears a poison tip; also they are aware that the wine for Hamlet to drink has been poisoned by Claudius. Only Hamlet and his naïve mother seem to be unaware of the tragedy that is to unfold. The entire scene is made more tense by the fact that Hamlet at first seems to be winning the conflict -- making the first two strikes, remaining untouched by Laertes' foil, and refusing to drink the poisoned wine. In presenting a recovered Hamlet, now acting with determination and control, Shakespeare hints that tragedy may be avoided. Unfortunately, the tragic hero has procrastinated too long, and the rotten state of Denmark seems to have affected everyone. As a result all must die; Hamlet is stabbed by the poisoned sword, Laertes is killed by Hamlet, Gertrude drinks the poisoned wine and dies, and Claudius finally gets his just rewards when Hamlet drives the poisoned sword into his flesh and forces him to drink from the poisoned wine. Fortunately, Horatio is left behind to explain the villainy of Claudius and the innocence of Hamlet; additionally, a savior, in the person of Fortinbras, is left to restore order to the corrupt state of Denmark.

The Theme of Vengeance

The main theme in Hamlet is one of vengeance and family honor. Initially Fortinbras is the representation of vengeance. Hamlet's father, the late King, has defeated Fortinbras' father in battle. As a result, young Fortinbras aspires to recover the lands and power lost by his father as a way of honoring and avenging him. Though he eventually finds another means of vengeance, his example is duly felt. Hamlet does not act as quickly as Fortinbras; his own indecision and fear paralyze him. Eventually his revenge occurs, but at great cost to all. The irony is that Hamlet, by fulfilling his revenge, has destroyed the family whose honor he

sought to avenge. His mother and he both perish, as well as the woman who would have willingly borne his children. Laertes is the third son to avenge a father, but he, too, causes great destruction. He allows his base emotions to rule him, and he becomes a cohort of the evil Claudius. Rather than approach vengeance as a task to be carried out in the most acceptable fashion, Hamlet and Laertes fix themselves on murder as the only means of revenge. Unfortunately, this decision ultimately destroys them both¹.

Appearance vs. Reality

Shakespeare also examines his favorite theme of the discrepancy between appearance and reality. The dilemma of what is "real" is established at the very beginning of the play. The dead King appears to have been bitten by a snake. In reality, he has been poisoned. The Ghost appears as an apparition from the depths of hell; in truth, he is the medium of reality, revealing the facts to Hamlet. Since Hamlet doubts the veracity of the Ghost's revelation, he decides to put on the appearance of being mad; in the process he really drives Ophelia mad, causing her death. At times it also seems that Hamlet's appearance of madness has become a reality. The duel scene also presents an appearance vs. reality. The duel appears to be an innocent competition between two rivals; in reality, it is a deadly match that causes the death of the four main characters. The most obvious, and perhaps the most clever, symbol of "Appearance vs. Reality" is the play-within-a-play. The actors, representing mythical figures, appear onstage and act out the events that have happened in reality. Hamlet carefully orchestrates this appearance so that he can gauge the degree of reality by Claudius' reaction. In summary, the theme of appearance vs. reality is so well developed that everything in the play must be questioned, for nothing appears certain.

The Approach of Wilson Knight

¹ Бакоева М., Муратова Э.Д., Очилова М. Инглиз адабиёти. – Тошкент, 2006. – 256 б.
Дюришин Д. Сравнительное литературоведение. – М.:ИМО, 1989. –286 с

Until the 1930s, the evaluation of Hamlet was mostly a continuation of the nineteenth century approach to the character of its tragic hero. After Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* was published in 1904, an entire generation of critics remained obsessed with Hamlet's delay in killing Claudius. They blamed the whole tragedy on the fact that it took the Prince too long to act on his revenge. They never acknowledged the basic premise that Hamlet was a sweet and noble prince, that Claudius was a treacherous villain, and that the tragedy of Hamlet lay in the fact that a "good" character was destroyed because of an "evil" usurper.

In 1930, Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* questioned the delay premise. Instead, Knight described the story of Hamlet as an "Embassy of Death" with the Ghost being a true devil, setting all the evil doings within the plot in motion. He even questioned if Claudius was truly a treacherous villain. He referred to the image of Claudius at prayer, repenting of his crimes, while Hamlet refuses to kill him, not wanting his soul to go to heaven. Further, Knight stated that Hamlet was a very unpleasant person -- rude, callous, and sometimes ruthless -- to his mother, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern. Knight thinks that most critics have over sentimentalized Hamlet's being. Many critics do agree that Hamlet embodies both good and evil. Although he is basically innocent and pure, he has been tainted by the evil around him. As a result, his procrastination leads to further ruin.

2.1.1 Renaissance Peculiarities in the Play

Hamlet Seen Solely as the Victim of External Difficulties

To see Hamlet solely as the victim of external problems is the simplest approach to the play. Many critics argue, however, that Hamlet's tragedy is not a result of the supposed weaknesses/flaws in his character or even mistakes in his judgement/action, but from the evil and intolerable situation into which he is cruelly thrust. With his father dead and his mother remarried to his enemy, Hamlet has no one to turn to for help; therefore, he is totally a victim of circumstance. The

critics further argue that the external situation prevents him from taking swift action. After all, Claudius is an extremely powerful man now that he is King; any person would have faced enormous difficulties in scheming against him. They excuse Hamlet's lack of action, and in so doing, make him a much less interesting character.

The Romantic Interpretation of Hamlet

The Romantic critics of the nineteenth century, led by Coleridge, were more interested in the character of Hamlet than in the plot construction of the play. For them, Hamlet was one of the greatest artistic creations ever drawn by an author or playwright. They saw Hamlet as an individual torn apart by doubt and fearful of taking action. As an idealist, Hamlet was unable to deal with the harsh realities of life; as a result, he paid a tragic penalty. These critics often quoted Hamlet's own words in support of their interpretation.

Many Romantic writers came to identify themselves with Hamlet. Coleridge went so far as to admit that he had much of Hamlet in himself, for, like the Prince, he was more prone to thought than to action. In fact, many Romantics felt that Hamlet's overdeveloped intellect made it impossible for him to act. Instead, he became a sentimental dreamer, just like many of the Romantics¹.

The Psychoanalytical Approach

The psychoanalytical approach focuses on the neurotic tendencies of Hamlet and judges him to suffer from an Oedipus Complex. In ancient Greek mythology, Oedipus is the unconscious instrument of an old curse, a destiny to murder his father and marry his mother. Today, many psychologists feel that there are many sons who have developed erotic feelings for their mothers and, as a result, they resent and hate their fathers. Normally, these feelings about their parents are repressed, pushed into the unconscious; but from time to time, these feelings may

¹ Бакоева М., Муратова Э.Д., Очилова М. Инглиз адабиёти. – Тошкент, 2006. – 256 б.
Дюришин Д. Сравнительное литературоведение. – М.:ИМО, 1989. – 286 с

overcome repression and re-emerge due to crisis situations. The psychoanalysts believe that Hamlet's possessiveness towards his mother proves his Oedipal Complex; they defend their arguments in specifics from the play. Hamlet explicitly urges Gertrude not to have intercourse with Claudius; moreover, he advises her to curb her desire to have sex as well. The psychoanalysts then argue that Hamlet's repressed Oedipal Complex prevents him from killing Claudius. They feel that Hamlet procrastinates because, in his subconscious, he does not really want to murder the man who killed the father that he so envied. They also argue that it is Oedipal Complex prevents him from committing himself to Ophelia.

The Historical Approach

The historical approach holds that only those theories prevalent in Shakespeare's time should be utilized to interpret his texts. Supporters of this school of thought argue that the clue to Hamlet's madness and his hesitancy in killing Claudius lies in his melancholic disposition. Indeed, Shakespeare calls Hamlet the "melancholy Dane." The malady of melancholy was well known in the Elizabethan age, and several treatises were written on the subject. Shakespeare had probably read or heard about these treatises, which state that the primary characteristics of melancholy are sadness, fear, distrust, doubt, despair, and diffidence. Sometimes the negative feelings are interrupted by a false laughter or sardonic humor.

Hamlet displays all these traits of melancholy. He is extremely sad over the death of his father and hasty remarriage of his mother; he is fearful and distrusting of the Ghost; he behaves with diffidence as he procrastinates about taking revenge on Claudius; he falls into despair over his inaction, even contemplating suicide. But from time to time, Hamlet jests sardonically with people he dislikes, making it seem that his mood fluctuates between depression and elation. While Hamlet's behavior can be reasonably explained in terms of melancholy, it is an extremely simplistic approach to the problems of the tragic hero.

2.2 Marlowe's Specific Style and His "Doctor Faustus"

The legend of Faust had its origin in Europe in the legends and chapbooks of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It developed around a real person, one Doctor Johann Faust, who gained a reputation as a notorious magician and worker in black magic. He was said to have sold his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge. It is the same legend, which was the basis for Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588) in England. This legend was brought to England by the translation of a German chapbook (a small book of poems, ballads and tales) on the subject. This translation appeared shortly before Marlowe's play and appears to be its immediate source. Marlowe's is the first of many dramatic treatments of the story. His version of the Faust tale was very popular in Europe. In 1587 the stories about Faust had been collected as a biographic story entitled *Historia Von D. Johann Faustus*. The book was published in the same year in English translation in England. Goethe's *Faust* is a poetic drama in two parts (1808 & 1832). Goethe's version of the legend is different from Marlowe's version. In Goethe's poem Faust is saved. God's angels are sent to snatch his soul from the legion of devils, and he is borne off to heaven.¹

Setting

Doctor Faustus is set in fifteenth-century Germany, mostly in Faustus' house at Wittenberg. In Act III, the setting shifts to Rome. Having traveled through France, Germany and Italy, Faustus and Mephistophilis arrive at the Pope's palace at the Vatican, Rome. Thereafter he goes to the Court of the Emperor Charles V at Innsbruck, Germany. In Act IV, Scene 5, the setting shifts to the Court of the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt, Germany, where Faustus exhibits his magical powers. The final act of the play is set in Faustus' house at Wittenberg.

¹ Бакоева М., Муратова Э.Д., Очилова М. Инглиз адабиёти. – Тошкент, 2006. – 256 б.
Дюришин Д. Сравнительное литературоведение. – М.:ИМО, 1989. –286 с

Major

Faustus - The protagonist, a scholar in Wittenberg, who sells his soul to Lucifer in exchange for unlimited power for twenty-four years.

Mephistophilis - Lucifer's assistant, who comes from hell to serve Faustus for twenty-four years.

Lucifer - The prince of hell; his business is to persuade men to turn away from God.

The Good And Bad Angels - The two figures who visit Faustus periodically in order to influence his behavior.

The Old Man - A spiritually strong man, who tries to prevent Faustus from being forever enslaved by worldly desires.

Minor

Wagner - Faustus' servant.

Valdes and Cornelius - Fellow-magicians and friends of Faustus; they encourage Faustus to attain powers through the practice of magic.

The Clown - He becomes Wagner's servant.

Horse-Courser - A fellow who is cheated into buying Faustus' horse, which disappears when it is taken to a pond.

Robin - He steals some of Faustus' books on magic and attempts to conjure spirits.

Ralph - A friend of Robin's; he witnesses Robin's act of conjuring.

The Pope - The head of the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican; Faustus and Mephistophilis play practical jokes on him.

Charles V - The Emperor of Germany, at whose court Faustus demonstrates his magical powers.

Knight - A haughty fellow who offends Faustus and incurs his wrath.

Duke and Duchess of Vanholt - A couple whom Faustus visits and for whom he performs magic.

The Seven Deadly Sins, Alexander, Alexander's paramour, Darius (the King of Persia) and Helen of Troy - All of these are spirits which appear before Faustus in the course of the play.

Chorus - Personages who comment on Faustus' intellectual achievements and his fatal choice of "cursed necromancy."

Protagonist:

Faustus is the protagonist of the play. He makes the fatal choice of "cursed necromancy" (black magic) in order to gain absolute power for twenty-four years.

Antagonist:

Lucifer, who is assisted by Mephistophilis and the bad angel, receives Faustus' soul in exchange for granting him twenty-four years of absolute power.

Climax:

It is reached in the scene in which Faustus agrees to sell his soul to Mephistophilis in exchange for twenty-four years of faithful service.

Outcome:

The outcome of the play is tragic. Faustus has to pay heavily for his rebellion against the fixed laws of heaven and for practicing "more than heavenly power permits." He is dragged off to hell, and the real tragedy lies in the fact that Faustus does not believe that repentance can save him.

Doctor Faustus

Faustus is the central character of the play. The attention of the audience is certainly focused upon him. Faustus was born of poor parents in Rhine in Germany. Like so many outstanding men who were humbly born, it was through learning that he was able to rise above his lowly beginnings. He was brought up by relatives who sent him to the university at Wittenberg. There he excelled in the study of divinity and was awarded his doctorate. He was so outstanding in scholarship and in learned argument that he grew proud of himself and his powers.

At the beginning of the play, he is no longer content with the pursuit of knowledge. He has studied all the main branches of learning of his time and is

satisfied by none of them. He demands more from logic than the ability it gives one in debate. Medicine has brought him fame and riches but confers upon him only human powers. The study of law is for slaves and leads to nothing significant. Divinity is preferable to all of these but cannot get beyond sin and death. It is magic that promises to open up new worlds of power and to make man into a god.

Aristotle stated that the tragic hero is a predominantly good man, whose undoing is brought about by some error of human frailty, “the stamp of one defect.” The audience sees three such defects in Faustus that lead to his ultimate domination by Mephistophilis: his pride, his restless intellect and his desire to be more than man (to possess the power and the insight of a god.) Any one of these three defects would have been sufficient to ensure his downfall in terms of the theory of tragedy. In his pride, he is guilty of hubris, a quality which in Greek tragedy was certain to arouse the wrath of the gods. His desire to be equated with God is a sin in Christian terms as well. His restless intellect and deep dissatisfaction with the normal life inevitably lead to misfortune. Step by step, Faustus falls into damnation.

In some ways, Faustus’ aspirations are admirable. It was the glory and the ambition of the Renaissance man to have an “aspiring mind.” Faustus, on one level, represents the new man emerging from the womb of the Middle Ages. The authority of the Church, which had limited the thought of the Middle Ages, was lessening. There was a movement of power from the Church to the State, which meant, to a limited extent, the transfer of power to the individual man. The classical spirit was certainly a source of influence for Marlowe and his fellow dramatists. The Greek attitude to their gods was very different from that of the medieval Church. The Greeks encouraged a spirit of inquiry in their thought that was quite foreign to the attitude of the medieval Church.

This is the key to much of the duality of Faustus’ thoughts and attitudes. He looks sometimes backwards to the medieval world, and sometimes forward to the modern world. Above all, he is a Renaissance figure, adventurously surveying a

world whose horizons were widening every day as a result of voyages and exploration. Faustus is full of excitement for geographical discovery. The Renaissance men were in love with life and its possibilities. They lived dangerously but wholeheartedly. In other words, they were secular. Fundamentally, Faustus' choice is that of a Renaissance man, not a medieval man. He sacrifices eternity for twenty-four years of full life in the here and now. That is the basic conflict in the mind of Faustus, a man caught between two worlds.

It is a commonplace for critics to state that Faustus derives little satisfaction from his acquired powers. This is a problem of character; it is also a question of human limitation. Faustus' desire for knowledge cannot be satisfied fully. In one sense, Faustus is satisfied. Mephistophilis refuses to give him a wife, but he does promise him the possession of any woman he desires. His longings find their realization in Helen of Troy. This represents an important facet of Faustus' character: his willingness to carry things to an ultimate conclusion. Helen is a spirit raised by the devil, and therefore, one may presume, a spirit of evil. She certainly portends evil for Faustus.

Faustus is given to bouts of despair. Mephistophilis, despite his own rather melancholy disposition, tries to cheer him through a series of "spectacles." Even Lucifer provides the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins. Faustus is excited by all facets of life. He is determined to live it to the full, but he is unhappy in it. This melancholy and despair may well have influenced his agreement to the compact with Lucifer.

There is, in Faustus, no serious motivation towards good when he speaks of it. The reference is always outside himself. He does not seek a genuine relationship with Christ or with God. He sees Christ's blood as something separate from his reality. He is concerned, at the end, with the clock and with time, rather than with God. Faustus throughout the play does not accept the limitations imposed upon man by human life, the world and the social order. So, in his last moments, he struggles both to resolve and escape from the idea of eternity, which means for him

eternal damnation. He is honest here as elsewhere. He places the blame upon himself and upon Lucifer. In his desire to burn his books, he recognizes that his greed for knowledge and his insatiable curiosity have led to his damnation. The Chorus leaves the audience with a tragic sense of waste. Faustus, who might have been a force for good, remains as a warning to those who desire a power beyond what God is prepared to grant.

Mephistophilis

Mephistophilis is an agent of Lucifer. Like Faustus, he is on the devil's side. He is not without his good qualities. He is bluntly honest with Faustus from his very first appearance. He obeys Faustus' command and returns as a Franciscan Friar. On that occasion Faustus remarks: "How pliant is this Mephistophilis/ Full of obedience and humility." Once the pact is made, Mephistophilis carries out his side of the bargain faithfully. In addition to satisfying Faustus' intellectual curiosity, he attempts to keep him entertained. He is wholly honest on the subjects of hell and damnation.

Mephistophilis is no moralist. He has nothing to do with the conventional morality of marriage. He promises Faustus that he can have any woman he desires. Indeed, he does a fine job of producing before Faustus Helen of Troy.

Towards the end of the play, the relationship between Mephistophilis and Faustus changes. Instead of providing the despairing Faustus with amusement, he gives him a dagger. He even threatens to tear Faustus apart if he does not remain faithful to Lucifer.

The name of Mephistophilis is the last word Faustus utters before he dies. He has been Faustus' companion in his passage towards damnation. He is at once servant, companion, master, teacher and entertainer for Faustus. He does not destroy Faustus. Faustus does that for himself.

Valdes and Cornelius

Valdes and Cornelius are instrumental in instructing Faustus in the rudiments of magic and in the conjuring of spirits. They both speak glowingly of

the power and glory of magic and astrology and begin by associating themselves with Faustus in the enterprise; they speak of “the audience three,” but significantly, they do not join him when he conjures Mephistophilis. Apparently they are not prepared to push their art to any real conclusion.

Lucifer

Lucifer is the prince of Hell. “Lucifer” is another name for Satan, the archangel who was hurled from heaven for rebelling against God. Marlowe’s Lucifer is less majestic and terrible than Mephistophilis, who is the key representative of evil in Doctor Faustus. Yet when Mephistophilis speaks of Lucifer, it is with considerable respect. His actual appearance in the play is disappointing.

Doctor Faustus is a well-constructed play. In the opening of the play, the audience is given the exposition: an explanation of the subject matter of this tragedy. Faustus the man is presented by the Chorus. In the first act, Faustus surveys different branches of knowledge and chooses to practice the black arts. In this section of the play, Faustus has a foretaste of what magic can do for him when he commands Mephistophilis to perform certain magical feats, with which the action rises.

The climax is reached in Act II, Scene 1, in which Faustus signs a pact with Lucifer. Following this pact, the audience sees a series of demonstrations of Faustus’ magical powers. The action falls in Act IV, in which Faustus as a magician, is challenged by Benvolio, as well as Robin, Dick, the horse dealer and other plebeians.

The outcome of the protagonist’s pact with the devil is seen in Act V. In this act the devils come and carry Faustus away to hell. Faustus is perpetually damned. The Epilogue presents the moral of the play. Men should not delve into forbidden territories. They should go only where “heaven permits” one to tread.

Throughout the play the comic scenes parody Faustus' magical feats, which are imitated by the clown. They serve as a sub-plot that runs parallel to the main plot of the play.

Pride:

The major theme of Doctor Faustus is pride, which goes before a fall. Faustus' real sin is not his conjuring, but his denial of God's power and majesty. It is pride that damns him completely. All his other sins are different aspects of this cardinal sin. Even his despair, at the end of the play, is another aspect of the same thing. Pride refuses to acknowledge God's power in the same way in which despair denies God's mercy.

The theme of pride is seen in Mephistophilis' discussion with Faustus on the subject of hell. Mephistophilis replies honestly to all Faustus' questions about hell. However, Faustus, out of pride in his own "resolution," refuses to accept the truth. When asked how Lucifer fell from grace, Mephistophilis says, "by aspiring pride and insolence/ For which God threw him from the face of heaven."

The theme of pride recurs throughout the play. Like Lucifer, Faustus rebels against God. However, he realizes that the freedom he hoped for is only another form of slavery. It is true that at the end of the play, Faustus is no longer proud, but he is afraid to turn to God and despairs of receiving His mercy.

The Quest for Power:

The theme of the quest for power in Doctor Faustus is connected with the theme of the quest for knowledge. Knowledge bestows power on the knower. The kind of knowledge pursued by Faustus is practical knowledge, bestowing upon him practical powers.

However, Faustus' quest for power transforms him into a magician. With the help of Mephistophilis, he demonstrates his powers in the papal court and in the palace of the Duke and the Duchess of Vanholt. His power reduces him to the position of a mere court entertainer.

Faustus' quest for power does not take into account the need for acquiring spiritual power. Faustus' magic is magic divorced from spirituality. Hence, it is shown to be dangerous. Instead of leading to his salvation, his quest for power results in his damnation.

The Quest for Knowledge:

Marlowe's Faustus embodies the Renaissance aspiration for infinite knowledge. In the first scene of the play, Faustus reviews all the existing branches of knowledge. He rejects them all and opts for the study of the black arts, since they will bestow upon him "a world of profit and delight/ Of power, of honor, of omnipotence."

Faustus' pursuit of knowledge involves every aspect of his complex being: spiritual, intellectual and physical. Faustus' choice of magic make more sense if the audience imagines him in the modern world rejecting theoretical studies and choosing technology. He commits himself to the world of experience. This appeals to his creative instinct, but in the process it leads to his destruction.

Faustus' knowledge gives him power. He exhibits his magical power to emperors and dukes. He descends to the level of a court entertainer by invoking the spirits of Alexander and his paramour and of Helen of Troy. He is reduced to the role of producing grapes out of season for a pregnant duchess. All this is far removed from his initial assertion: "A sound magician is a demi-god." The knowledge of magic and its powers makes a buffoon of him. In this way, Faustus' quest for knowledge is shown to be inadequate, unsatisfying and incomplete.

2.2.1 Features of Renaissance Drama in Doctor Faustus

Doctor Faustus has many features of a morality play: the conflict between good and evil, the creation of Good and Bad Angels, the Old Man as Good Counsel, the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins and the appearance of Faustus' enemies to ambush and kill him.

The conflict between Good and Evil was a recurring theme in the medieval morality plays. From this point of view, Marlowe's play is a dramatization of the medieval morality play, *Everyman*. Doctor Faustus becomes a morality play in which heaven struggles for the soul of a Renaissance Everyman, namely Doctor Faustus.

The Good Angel and the Bad Angel are characters derived from the medieval morality plays like *The Castle of Perseverance*. They are sometimes regarded as an externalization of the thoughts of Faustus. This is a twentieth-century view. The Angels are independent absolutes, one wholly good and one wholly evil. They appear in Doctor Faustus like allegorical figures of a morality play. They reflect the possibility of both damnation and redemption being open to Faustus. A close examination shows that the Evil Angel declines in importance as the play advances. The angels work by suggestion, as allegorical characters in morality plays do.

The audience also observes the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in Doctor Faustus. This is another feature borrowed by Marlowe from the tradition of the morality play. In Marlowe's play, to divert Faustus' attention from Christ, his savior, Lucifer, comes with his attendant devils to rebuke him for invoking Christ and then presents the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins as a diversion.

Benvolio's attempts to ambush and take revenge on Faustus is also a device taken from the medieval morality play. Faustus loses his head, only for it to be revealed as a false one. This theatrical device was originally used in the medieval morality play, *Mankind*. Similarly, Faustus' attempt to strike Dick, Robin and the others dumb in the Vanholt show scene is also derived from the medieval morality play. Doctor Faustus has many features of the morality play of the Middle Ages.

Doctor Faustus as a Renaissance Play

Marlowe's play deals with the ambition of the Renaissance to cultivate an "aspiring mind." The Renaissance aspiration for infinite knowledge is embodied in Faustus. However, Faustus shows little discrimination in his pursuits. He delights,

for example, in the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, ironically remarking: “O this feeds my soul.” Throughout the twenty-four years, he seeks experience of all kinds in the true Renaissance manner. Finally, instead of freedom, his knowledge brings him despair.

Another quality possessed by the ambitious Renaissance humanist is his desire to reach the highest peaks of life experience. This is manifested in Faustus in his desire to be none other than a god: “A sound magician is a demi-god”.

A third characteristic is the Renaissance worship of beauty for its own sake. Faustus’ address to Helen of Troy makes it evident that he feels something of the Renaissance quest for beauty. In this way Doctor Faustus is seen to be a play preoccupied with Renaissance concerns.

CONCLUSION

My qualification work's aim was to study the drama as an art and type of literature, to study and analyze materials about the interpretation of drama texts or plays.

In the first stage of our work we studied the origins of drama and its development in England and in the world. According to the study drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "action" (Classical Greek: δράμα, drama), which is derived from "to do" (Classical Greek: δράω, drao).

Western drama originates in classical Greece. The theatrical culture of the city-state of Athens produced three genres of drama: tragedy, comedy, and the satyr play. Their origins remain obscure, though by the 5th century BCE they were institutionalised in competitions held as part of festivities celebrating the god Dionysus.

One of the great flowerings of drama in England occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of these plays were written in verse, particularly iambic pentameter. In addition to Shakespeare, such authors as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, and Ben Jonson were prominent playwrights during this period. As in the medieval period, historical plays celebrated the lives of past kings, enhancing the image of the Tudor monarchy. Authors of this period drew some of their storylines from Greek mythology and Roman mythology or from the plays of eminent Roman playwrights such as Plautus and Terence.

There were several periods in the development of drama. They include:

- Medieval mystery plays – dealt with Bible stories and allegorical mysteries.
- Chronicle plays (Histories) - dealt directly with historical scenes and characters.

- Masques – were slight plays involving much singing and dancing and costuming. They were usually allegorical.

According to the materials we studied, types of drama include:

1. Tragedy - In general, tragedy involves the ruin of the leading characters. To the Greeks, it meant the destruction of some noble person through fate, to the Elizabethans, it meant in the first place death and in the second place the destruction of some noble person through a flaw in his character. Today it may not involve death so much as a dismal life, Modern tragedy often shows the tragedy not of the strong and noble but of the weak and mean;
2. Comedy – is lighter drama in which the leading characters overcome the difficulties which temporarily beset them.
3. Problem Play – Drama of social criticism discusses social, economic, or political problems by means of a play.
4. Farce – When comedy involves ridiculous or hilarious complications without regard for human values, it becomes farce.
5. Comedy of Manners – Comedy which wittily portrays fashionable life.
6. Fantasy – A play sometimes, but not always, in comic spirit in which the author gives free reign to his fantasy, allowing things to happen without regard to reality.
7. Melodrama – Like farce, melodrama pays almost no attention to human values, but its object is to give a thrill instead of a laugh. Often good entertainment, never any literary value.

In the second stage of our paragraph we studied the ways and methods of interpreting or analyzing dramatic texts or plays. We concluded that in order to understand the drama or a specific play one should:

In understanding the conflict of the play:

One should answer:

- What did the leading character want?

- What stood in his way? (People - environment- personality, etc,)
- What was the high point of tension or the crisis? (This is where the leading character must make a crucial decision that will effect the outcome of the play.)

In analyzing the setting:

- to ask whether the characters true to life or are they types or caricatures;
- how the character is revealed;
- to know the driving force of each leading character;
- If a character changes, are the causes convincing and true to life?

In analyzing the drama critically one should answer the following questions:

- What is the chief emphasis (ideas, character, atmosphere)?
- What was the purpose? (entertainment, humor, excitement)?
- Is it realistic or romantic?
- Does it show life as it really is or distort life?
- Does it present any problem of human relationship?
- Does it glamorize life and present an artificial happy ending?

In conclusion we would like to say that drama being the type of literature and theatrical art at the same time involves greater attention and knowledge in analyzing and interpreting the structure, plot, characters, themes, literary elements and intentions of a playwright in giving the situations and events depicted in a play.

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