

1.1 Historical Review

Elizabethan 1 was queen of England when Shakespeare was born in 1564 . He was the son of a tradesman who made and sold gloves in the small town of Stratford-upon-Avon , and he was educated at the grammar school at that town . William Shakespeare did not go to university after he left school, but worked in his father's business . When he was eighteen he married Anne Hathaway who became the mother of his daughter Suzanna and of twins .

There is nothing exciting or even unusual in this story ; and from 1585 until 1592 , there are no documents that can tell anything at all about Shakespeare . However in 1592 , he was known in London and that he had become both an actor and a play right . Nothing is also known as to when he wrote his first play and the order in which he wrote his works. But what is commonly held to be true amongst critics is that he started by writing plays on subjects taken from the history of England . This because he was an intensely patriotic man , but he was also a shrewd businessman . He could see that the theatre audiences enjoyed being shown their own history , and it was certain that he would make profit of this kind of drama .

The plays were mainly comedies , with romantic love stories of young people who fell in love with ne another and at the end of the story marry and live happily ever after. At the end of the sixteenth century , the happiness disappears and Shakespeare's plays become melancholy , bitter and tragic . This change may have been caused by some sadness in the writer's life of the death of one f his twins . It was not only Shakespeare whose writing were sad , the whole of England

was facing a crisis . Queen Elizabeth 1 was growing old , she was greatly loved , and the people were sad to think she must soon die , there were also afraid for the queen had never married , and so there was no child to succeed her .

When James 1 came to the throne in 1604 ; Shakespeare continued to write serious drama – the great tragedies and the plays based on Roman history (such as Julius Caesar)for which he is most famous . He wrote a long poems and a collection of sonnets , the sonnets describe the love – affairs , but we do not know who the lovers were . Although , there are many public documents concerned his career as a writer and a businessman , Shakespeare has hidden his personal life from his audience , so William Shakespeare lived in a time of great change and excitement , it was a time of geographical discovery , international trade , learning and creativity , it was also a time of international tension and internal uprisings that came close to civil war .

Under Elizabeth 1 and James 1 , London was a center of government , learning and trade and Shakespeare's audience came from all three worlds . His plays had to please royalty and powerful nobles , educated lawyer and scholars , as well as merchants , workers and apprentices many of whom couldn't read write , to keep so many kinds of people entertained , he had to write in to his plays such elements as witches , places for the actors to dance and sing the hit songs of the time , fences matches and other kinds of fight scenes and emotional speeches for his star actor . There is very little indication that he was troubled in anyway by having to do this , the stories he told , were familiar ones from popular storybooks or from English or Roman history , sometimes , they were adapted as

Hamlet was , from earlier plays that had begun to seem old fashioned part of his success had come from the fact that he had a knack(talent)for making these old tales come to life .

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study set out to examine the theme of ghosts in Shakespearean plays . What makes this problematic is the fact directly attributed to Shakespeare style of writing that tends to provide the reader with a host of information through myriad variety of dramatic dialogues , more than a human brain can store and process . Shakespeare lived during a time in which myth and fairytales are rampant , and that the type of mentality was not well developed to accept any kind of rational thinking .Ghost in his plays have played the role of the informant whose testimony was never questioned .

However , Shakespeare was not the only dramatist of his day to put ghosts on the stage , yet the apparitions in his plays have effects on the living that are unparalleled elsewhere in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama . In order to understand how he uses ghosts in some of his plays it is useful to compare him with other playwrights of his time , and to examine contemporary debates about apparitions . When we do so , we will see how dramatically daring Shakespeare was especially in Hamlet . Hamlet learns from King Hamlet's Ghost that he was poisoned by King Claudius , the current ruler of Denmark . The ghost tells Hamlet to avenge his death but not to punish Queen Gertrude for remarrying ; it is not Hamlet's place and her conscience and heaven will judge her ... Hamlet swears Horatio and Marcellus to silence over Hamlet meeting the ghost.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study takes as one of its prime objectives the investigation of the role of ghosts in two selected plays . In these plays , ghosts either play the role of the informant that provides the hero with information which he desperately needs In Hamlet ,it is his father's ghost that sets events in motion . It appears in the evening and starts talking to the guard who told Hamlet about his father's ghost and the time of its appearance King Duncan's ghost kept haunting lady Macbeth until she passed away .

1.4 Questions

1—Are ghosts play the role of an informant in Shakespearean's drama ?

2—Is Supernatural a dominant theme in Shakespeare's plays ?

3— In Shakespeare's plays Is Supernatural provides a catalyst for action ?

1.5 Hypotheses

This study shall examine the following two hypotheses :

1—Ghost play the role of an informant in Shakespearean's drama .

2—Supernatural is a dominant theme in Shakespearean's plays and provides a catalyst for action by the characters .

1.6 The Research Methodology

The best technique to approach such kind of study is through an analytic qualitative method . Such kind of blend – methodology will readily bring in to focus the elements to be explored . According to Wellek (1984) there are two kinds of approaches in analyzing a literary work . They are the extrinsic approach which relates the literary works to the other subjects such as psychology , society , thought , and biography ; and the intrinsic approach that emphasizes the elements of literature itself , such as characters , theme , point of view , plot , and others . In this study both kinds will be absorbed to give full view of the problem in question .

Literature Review

This chapter review relevant literature on the issue of ghosts in Shakespeare's plays and other related topics with some emphasis on the nature of supernatural in general . Important findings and arguments from opponents and proponents of an English – only teaching method will be discussed . The chapter is divided in to two parts , the first one is on the theoretical framework , and the other is on previous studies .

Part one : Theoretical framework

2.1 Ghosts in Shakespeare

During the Middle Ages it was believed that the living and dead could communicate . The Bible was one source advocating belief through its stories of dreams and visions . The unusual story of King Saul and the shade of Samuel also added theological support to the role of ghosts (Felton 59) . Ghost stories emerging from the pre – Reformation period show a male bias . Most of the ghosts were male as were the living who saw them .

The Catholic Church promoted the realm of Purgatory as a source for ghost stories though many of these were used to re-enforce Church doctrine . However , the Protestant Reformation caused additional challenges to ghosts as Purgatory was debated and rejected by new doctrines . Though the Catholic clergy endorsed Purgatory through the Concil of Trent (1545 -1563) , the newly – formed Church of England denounced it in 1563 (Marshall 145). Protestants had to either explain the ghosts or sermonize against them .

Shakespeare wrote during the Elizabethan Era . Drama of that time drew subjects from history , popular religion and local folklore . Many of the stage based specters hail from the middle Ages , which derived their entities from the prototypes produced by Seneca . Ghosts of this genre tended to be loud , angry , and obvious . By the time of Shakespeare spirits had lost some of their melodrama . They were less crude , left more of the horror to the imagination of the viewer , and stopped shrieking . Ghosts typically displayed an intention or a purpose . Revenge remained a major topic along with protection of loved one as did prophesy , requesting burial , or warning of impending doom to a character in the play (Roges 88;Stoll 205)

Additional influences for the Shakespearean spook may have come from his reading materials . It is known that he read *The Discovery of Witchcraft* by Reginald Scot (1584) . Scot's writing focused more on the witchcraft craze sweeping through England , but included information on ghosts . Scot was a skeptic and wrote about unfounded beliefs regarding the supernatural . While he ridiculed those who completely denied devils or spirits he also mocked the over-promotion of ghosts by Catholic scholars . His belief was that most apparitions arose from mental issues such as melancholy , timidity , drunkenness and false reporting . Shakespeare also read *a Declaration of Egregious Popishe Impostures* by Samuel Harsnett which presented more arguments against the Catholic Church , witchcraft and ghosts (Muir 232 ; Marshall 145)

There were other contemporary publications that also dealt with the role of ghosts though it is not known if Shakespeare read them . In 1594 , Thomas Nashe published *The Terrors of the Night or a Discourse of Apparitions* . It was tongue-in-cheek writing , but it offered a skeptical argument against ghosts ,

citing imagination and dreams as their sources . Three years later the future king , James , presented his own interpretation of ghosts with *Daemonologie* , in form dialogue . His belief-based scrip argues against skepticism and presents the devil as "the source of all ghostly apparitions ... {to} delude the living ("Felton 95) .

Shakespeare draws upon these traditions and makes something new with his ghosts . Unlike the emotional and moaning ghosts of the Middle Age Shakespeare's are reasoning entities . They come with a purpose and for their acts (Rogers 88) . Often , the ghosts continue to desire revenge , though they take it in different ways . The ghost of Caesar predicts the death of Brutus , while Macbeth's silent specter simply stares at him in accusation . Hamlet's father requests revenge upon his murderers and Richard's ghosts confront their murderer and wish him dead . Each ghost is specific to his desires .

With the shifting alliance to religious beliefs Shakespeare utilizes his own "explanatory ambiguities" when utilizing ghostly characters (Marshall 147) . He presents enough story and dialogue to make the viewer question the reality of the ghost . Aspects of facts frame the haunting while spectral activity focuses primarily on the guilty party alone . Macbeth's charged reaction combined with no other witnesses to the ghost indicates that he is hallucinating . Caesar's ghost reveals itself as Brutus deals with a guilty conscience of inadvertently creating a civil war in Rome . Richard is asleep and alone experiences the rash of ghostly visits in the astral plane . The only exception to the lone witness is the ghost of Hamlet's father who is first seen by the guards and Horatio before Hamlet engages in dialogue with him . Though the Church of England abandoned Purgatory it does appear that this is the

source of the kingly shade . Hamlet is innocent of his father's death but descends into madness by trying to avenge it " .

Shakespeare , perhaps in response to the Protestant Reformation , also mixes in symbolic interpretation with his ghosts . They go against the normal worldly order . As such , they cause chaos not only for those who see them but for nearly all of the characters within the play . Shakespeare's specters also represent social disorder and political chaos (Marshall 143) . Elizabethans prospered under its regent but question of political succession remained . England's sense of security hinged upon the health of its ruler and a seamless transfer of power from one generation to the next . Elizabeth's lack of children and long reign was already remarkable but easily threatened . The specter of ruler-ship remained and manifested in Shakespeare's plays .

2.2 The Supernatural in the time of William Shakespeare

There was a strong belief in the existence of the supernatural . Thus , the supernatural is recurring aspect in many of Mr. Shakespeare's plays .

In two such plays , Hamlet and Macbeth , the supernatural is an integral part of the structure of the plot . It provides a catalyst for action , an insight in to character , and augment the impact of many key scenes .

The supernatural appears to the audience in many varied forms . In Hamlet there appears perhaps the most notable of the supernatural forms , the ghost . However , in Macbeth , not only does a ghost appear but a floating dagger , witches , and prophetic apparitions make appearances . The role of the supernatural is very important in Hamlet and Macbeth . A ghost appearing in the form of Hamlet's father ,

makes several appearance in the play . It first appears to the watchmen , Marcellus and Bernardo , along with Horatio near the guardsmen post . The ghost says nothing to them and is perceived with fear and apprehension , it harrows me with fear and wonder . It is not until the appearance of Hamlet that the ghost speaks , and only then after Horatio has expressed his fears about Hamlet following it ,What if it tempt you toward the flood , my lord, or to the dreadful summit of the cliff .

The conversation between the ghost and Hamlet serves as a catalyst for Hamlet's later actions and provides insight into Hamlet's character . The information the ghost reveals incites Hamlet in to action against a situation he was already uncomfortable with , and now even more so . Hamlet is not quick to believe the ghost , The spirit that I have seen may be a devil ... and perhaps out of my weakness , and my melancholy .. abuses me to damn me , and thus an aspect of Hamlet's character is revealed . Hamlet , having no suspicion of the ghost after the production by the players , encounters , encounters the ghost next in his mother's room . In this scene the ghost makes an appearance to whet Hamlet's almost blunted purpose . Hamlet is now convinced of ghost and he no longer harbors any suspicion . He now listen to it , Speak to her , Hamlet .

In Hamlet , the supernatural is the guiding force behind Hamlet . The ghost asks Hamlet to seek revenge for the King's death and Hamlet is thus propelled to set in to action a series of events that ends in Hamlet's death .

The supernatural occurs four times during the course of Macbeth , it occurs in all the appearances of the witches , in the appearance of Banquo's ghost , in the apparitions with their prophesies , and in the air drawn dagger that guides Macbeth

towards his victim .

Of the supernatural phenomenon evident in Macbeth the witches are perhaps the most important .The witches represent Macbeth's evil ambitions . They are the catalyst which unleashes Macbeth's evil aspirations . Macbeth believes the witches and wishes to know more about the future so after the banquet he seeks them out at their cave .

He wants to know the answers to his questions regardless of whether the consequence be violent and destructive to nature . The witches promise to answer and at Macbeth's choice they add further unnatural ingredients to the cauldron and call up their masters . This is where the prophetic apparitions appear . The first apparition is Macbeth's own head(later to be cut off by Macduff)confirming his fears of Macduff . The second apparition tells Macbeth that he can not be harmed by no one born of woman . This knowledge gives Macbeth a false sense of security because he believes that he cannot be harmed , yet Macduff was not of woman born , his mother was dead and a corpse when Macduff was born . This leads to Macbeth's downfall . A child with a crown on his head , the third apparition , represents Malcolm , Duncan's son . This apparition also gives Macbeth a false sense of security because of the Birnam Wood prophesy .

The appearance of Banquo's ghost provides insight into Macbeth's character . It shows the level that Macbeth's mind has recessed to . When he sees the ghost he reacts with horrors and upsets the guests . Macbeth wonders why murder had taken place many times in the past before it was prevented by law . statute purged the gentle weal – and yet the dead are coming back .

The final form of the supernatural is the air-drawn dagger

which leads Macbeth to his victim . When the dagger appears to him , Macbeth finally becomes victim to the delusions of his fevered brain . The dagger points to Duncan's room and appears to be covered in blood . The dagger buttresses the impact of this key scene in which Macbeth slays King Duncan . The supernatural is a recurring aspect in many of the plays by William Shakespeare . In Hamlet and Macbeth the supernatural is an integral part of the structure of the plot . In these plays the supernatural provides a catalyst for action by the characters . It supplies insight in to the major players and it augments the impact of many key scenes . The supernatural appeals to the audience 's curiosity of the mysterious and thus strengthens their interest .

2.3 The Supernatural in Shakespeare's Tragedies

Shakespeare is great , not only because of his writing skills but also because of his art of borrowing combining and recreating something new with a twist . It is true excellence reflects through his tragic plays which are read and performed even today . His tragedies are highly influenced by Greek drama and Aristotle's notion of tragedy . It was Aristotle who had first described the genres of tragedy in his poetic which is followed even today to analyze modern drama . Take a look at the following characteristics shared by most Shakespearean plays .

Most of the tragedies written by William Shakespeare are revenge and ambition tragedies , for instance , Othello , Hamle King Lear , and Macbeth are the dark tragedies showing revenge and ambition, however there is an exception to this in the form of a romantic tragedy , rather the only romantic tragedy written by Shakespeare and that is Romeo and Juliet unlike the revenge-ambition tragedy there are two tragic

characters in Romeo and Juliet , Romeo becomes impulsive and acts without thinking about consequences , which causes the separation and ultimately the death of the two lovers .

Most revenge tragedies share some basic elements , a play with in a play , mad scenes , a revengeful ghost , one several gory scenes and most importantly , a central character who has a serious grievance against a formidable opponent . This central character takes matters in to his own hands and seeks revenge privately , after justice has failed him in the public arena .

Drama in which the dominant motive is revenge for a real or imagined injury it was a favorite form of English tragedy in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and found it highest expression in William Shakespeare's Hamlet .

The revenge drama derived originally from Roman tragedies of Seneca but was established of the English stage by Thomas Kyd with the Spanish tragedy performed 1587 . This work , which opens with the ghost of Andrea and Revenge deals with Hieronimo , a Spanish gentleman who is driven to melancholy by the murder of his son . Between spells of madness he discovers who the murderers are and plans his ingenious revenge . He stage a play in which the murderers take part , and while enacting his role , Hieronimo actually kills them , the kills himself . The influence of his play , so apparent in Hamlet , is also evident in other plays of the period . In John Marston's Antonion's revenge (1599-1601) the ghost of Antonio's slain father urges Antonio to avenge his murder , which Antonio does during a court masque .

In George Chapman's Revenge of Bussy Ambois (performed 1610) , Bussy's ghost began his introspective brother Clermont to avenge his murder . Clement hesitates and

vacillates but at last complies , then kills himself . Most revenge tragedies end with a scene of carnage that disposes of the avenger as well as his victims . other examples are Shakespeare's (Titus Andronicus) Henry Chettle's (The Tragedy of Hoffman) and Tomas Middleton's (The Revenge Tragedy) Shakespeare uses elements of supernatural to expose the tension between destiny and Freewill , particularly in Macbeth and Hamlet . However , this tension can also be observed from the perspective of reverse , causality , a modern physics concept which hypothesizes that time is multi-directional and can flow backward , allowing the future to affect the present (and the present to affect the past) . In Macbeth three witches inform soldiers Macbeth and Banquo of their futures , and this prediction causes Macbeth to commit many anomalous actions . Similarly in Hamlet , the ghost of a murdered king appears to his living son Hamlet , stating that Hamlet's duty and destiny is to avenge his father .

Shakespearean tragedy consist of a story and factors in it that lead to the death of an individual of high estate . In this tragedy the hero has a flaw that helps lead his / her death , because it is not the main cause . It only accompanies the fact that the hero's action is influenced by other things . They are many factors involved , such as supernatural entities , madness , someone else's actions and chance allowing several things to happen .

2.3.1 The Supernatural as a tragic Dimension

The supernatural in the work of Shakespeare may be taken as involving a study of such themes as grace , regeneration or morality that- is , a study of elements strictly supernatural – or it may be considered as encompassing

elements better called praeternatural --- ghost , witches and fate as distinguished from providence . The latter group however , make up universe different from that of man , though they imping upon it .

Such praeterntural elements from a dimension through which the greater Shakespeare's tragedies (Hamlet , Macbeth , King Lear , Othello) move ; this dimension may also involve the supernatural (in the strict sense) , but since this proposition seems uncertain and since the distinction is often tenuous , the term supernatural will be used to encompass both sets of phenomena .

To-posit a supernatural dimension to the tragedies require more than the mere mention of angels , ghosts or witches in the play , more even than the appearances of these on the stage . The supernatural element must be so inextricably intertwined with , so blended in to the tragedy that , without it there would be either no play or an entirely different play . The fact of the development of supernatural dimension is quite clear . A study of an early tragedy such as Romeo and Juliet , demonstrates a striking absence of the supernatural element even when the stage is quite adequately prepared for it :as in the case , for example, with Juliet's purely verbal conjuring up of the most of Tybalt . while there is much religious imagery in this play , it is extrinsic , a part from the action , more poetic than dramatic . When Romeo contemplates suicide , ths act is conceived more as a logical dimension of his rash character than as a moral or philosophical dilemma , the suicides themselves are considered as no more than the tragic ending of the feud of the houses of Capulet and Montague . While suicide need not always be taken in Shakespeare as a moral evil , the attitude here contrast notably with that seem in Hamlet and

King Lear , in Othello too there are overtones not present in Romeo and Juliet . In Julius Caesar there is a further development . The introduction of Omens and of a ghost , neither of these however is new in this play , nor do they at all advanced the plot the Omens are better integrated than those say of Titus Andronicus or of Richard 111 ; they develop character and mood , as well as portend the future , but they could be excised without maiming the play . The ghost of Caesar , as ghost, serves merely on omen of Brutus death and heighten the tone of the play , which had been diminished from that of Act 111 by dwelling on the largely political disputes in each camp . It too , could be excised . The Soothsayer is apart from his influence on the atmosphere of the early scenes no more a part of the fabric of the drama than is Artemidorus . Nevertheless there remains development , for the ghost serves also as a symbol of Brutus doubts of the rightness of his action and of the motives of his follow-conspirators , as a symbols of the perdurance of "Caesarism" as much it becomes a more organic part of the play . The supernatural becomes not a mere verbalized symbol , such as Romeo's " bright angel" , but enters the stage physically , un summoned by those on it Further though physically on stages only briefly 1v iii its influence reaches from Antony's prophecy n 111,i .

The effect of the ghost , however does not continue throughout these final three acts of the drama when it is not adverted to on stage , the supernatural element is grafted on to the play , not in grained in to it .

These remains in Julius Caesar are other supernatural elements more subtle and more successfully carried through : that is the ritualistic aspect of much of the plot . The murder , conceived by Brutus as a sacrifice to the Gods , this takes on

something of the supernatural element for it passes the level of mere human policy and relates to that which is without the sphere of men . By the time of Hamlet , the change is complete , Hamlet operates as much in the supernatural order as in the natural and the supernatural order in a very real sense operates the events in the natural order and gives rise to the most perplexing problems of the play .

The varying importance of the ghost to the plot has already been noted

The Omens in Julius Caesar are remarkable and obtrusive ; the omens in Hamlet , on the contrary fit so smoothly in to the play that we are almost unaware of them they have become part of the fabric of the play . Both plays deal with the slaying of a ruler , but where as in Hamlet it is possible to say that the theme is regicide . In Julius Caesar such an interpretation would be well off the mark .

In general speaking , Shakespeare's interest in the supernatural has caught the attention of generation of literary critics . The ghosts , witches and spirits that populate so many of his plays together with omens and prophecies that galvanize his plots , are used to achieve particular dramatic effects and make his audiences think and feel . On stage they can be real like the ghost of old Hamlet , or hallucinatory , like the blood on lady Macbeth's hands , they can work different effects on different characters embody fantasy and break possibility the bounds of physical .

However as well as drawing on the resources of the spiritual world to enrich the narratives of his plays . Shakespeare also explores early modern debates about the supernatural itself , probing the ambiguities surrounding it and portraying the passions and convictions that it arouses in his

contemporaries . Lastly we can say that , Shakespeare's audience and his play were the products of their culture : since the validity of any literary work can best be judged by its public acceptance , not to mention its lasting power , it seems that Shakespeare's ghost and witches were and are enormously popular .

Supernatural in Hamlet and Macbeth

Hamlet and Macbeth are two Shakespeare's greatest tragedies they are great in theme , in dramatic power , and by the key role that the supernatural play in them . In a less abstract way , they also have much in common . Both open in the country in which the action takes place elective monarchy , threatened by foreign invasion , and the threat comes from Norway . The murder of a king is at the center of the plot of both plays . In both plays the King's murderer , who is a kinsman of his occupies the throne , but at the end of the at the end of the drama is punished for his crime by death .Both the play are psychological dramas : the central conflict in each takes places in the mind of the leading character . The action of is based on historical events set in the distant past and somewhere else than England , Hamlet's in Medieval Denmark , Macbeth , in Medieval Scotland . In both plays , bloody violence is a prominent ingredient .

But what these two great tragedies have most strikingly in common and what more obviously than anything else sets them apart from Shakespeare's other major tragedies in that , in both , the supernatural plays a key role. The ghost of the old king in Hamlet and the werid sister in Macbeth are central to the play's plots , they are a major force in determing the two heroes actions and from the plays' opening scenes they are an important element in establishing the plays' atmosphere . It is not surprising that every important character , every turn of plot and every aspect of theme in them has been subject to different interpretations . The purpose of this chapter will be to explore the forms and the roles of the supernatural in Hamlet and Macbeth .

The basic Hamlet story was known to Shakespeare's time ,although not necessarily to Shakespeare himself through two works : the Latin Historia Danica (History of Denmark) by the Danish writer Saxo Grammaticus , which was written around 1200 but was first printed in 1514 , and the Histories Tragedies

3.1 Supernatural in Hamlet

(Tragic Histories)of 1574 byFrancois de Belleforest which had been translated in to English by 1608but may have been known to Shakespeare sometime before that in the original French . Whether Shakespeare knew either of these works or is not know ? Nevertheless scholars agree that his immediate sources for Hamlet were two : Thomas Kyd's bloody revenge tragedy from around 1589 , The Spanish Tragedy (first published in 1592) , which was one of the most popular plays of its time and started a fashion of revenge drama that lasted several decades , and a lost play from the 1590's on the same subject as Hamlet , which scholars refer to as Ur Hamlet (original Hamlet) and which may have been written by Shakespeare himself but more likely was written by Kyd (Muir) . Whoever the author was, he got his basic plot from either the Historia Danica or Historics Tragiques or from both (Muir). The plot of the Spanish tragedy is the revenge of the Hamlet plot , a father revenging the murder of his son , and the ghost in the story is not the ghost of the murdered son but of a Spanish nobleman . This ghost accompanied from the under – world by the spirit of revenge , is a spectator of the play's bloody events and not an actor in them . (Muir) Shakespeare's great innovation was to give the traditional stage ghost vitalit(West) He accomplished this by making it recognizably Christian , the ghost comes from Purgatory and not from the classical Hades

like Kyd's ghost and many others before and after by involving it in the play's action , and by creating a spirit that is "an epitome of the ghost Lore of his time "as described by the age's leading ghost authorities , Regional Scot in his Discovery of witch craft with its discourse upon Devils and Spirits (1584) and Ludwig Lavater in his Ghostes and Spirites walking by Nyght (1572 ,1596) . What Wilso calls this unique creature of Shakespeare's imagination is not a bystander but a character in the play in the fullest sense of the term (Wilson)

(iii) Supernatural Appearances in Hamlet

In Hamlet the supernatural makes fewer appearances than in Macbeth and it takes only a single form , as the ghost of the dead king Hamlet , Prince Hamlet's father . Out of the play's total of twenty-two scenes the ghost appears in just four (1.1, 1.4, 1,5,11.4) and in two of them (1.1 and 1.4) it does not even speak , of the play's almost four thousand line , the ghost speak just ninety one, which does not seem like much for such a key figure until you remember that it is speaking from the dead, whose words by their nature generally carry more weight than the words of the living especially when spoken by a king .

In the opening scene of the play , set at midnight on the rampart of the king's castle at Elsinore , it appears to the two sentinels . Barnardo and Marcellus , and Hamlet's friend and fellow-student Horatio , who has been asked to come to witness what the other two had witnessed on two previous nights. At first , Horatio is skeptical about the sentinels report of a ghost looking like the dead king , but the ghost 's sudden appearance shocks him in to belief . The two sentinels urge Horatio to speak to it . This is what Shakespeare's audience would have supposed him better qualified to do than they are

since , as an educated man , he would know what kind of language to use in addressing a spirit and the verbal formula that will protect him in case it is a spirit from hell that can harm him . Horatio calls on the ghost to speak

"What art thou that usurp'st

This time of night .. speak.. speak

I charge thee speak "

But instead of answering the ghost disappears , Horatio suggests that the ghost's appearance is to warn Denmark of the threat .

At this moment , the ghost suddenly reappears . Horatio confronts it and agitated , asks whether he can do anything to comfort it , if it is trying to warn the country of danger , or if it is restless because it buried treasure during its lifetime as Shakespeare's contemporaries thought this was one of the reasons why a ghost might come to haunt people . The cock crows and the ghost vanished without answering . Horatio advises Barnardo and Marcellus that they tell "young Hamlet "what they have just experienced and expresses his belief that this spirit , dumb to us will speak to him .

The resentment and bitterness towards his uncle- and now his step-father and his king that Hamlet expresses prepares the audience for the ghost's shocking revelation in its next appearance on stage . Horatio has brought Hamlet to the Castle's ramparts to see if the ghost will appear . He has told Hamlet of what he and the sentinels had witnessed the night before and Hamlet has vowed that " If assume my noble father's person , speak to it though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace "

To himself he has expressed a belief that " All is not well " and a suspicion of " foul play " .

The way " hell" enters Hamlet's thoughts here shows that from the very first he recognizes the possibility that the ghost may intend to do him harm rather than good , that it is a bad ghost .

Hamlet commenting scornfully to Horatio on the king's noisy and vulgar partying . His hostility towards Claudius and his contempt could not be plainer just as he comes to the end of his long and bitter denunciation , the ghost appears . Hamlet is immediately struck by its resemblance to his dead father , but at the same time shows that he is aware that it can be a spirit of health or goblin damned "that its purpose in coming can be wicked or charitable that it may be accompanied either by airs from heaven or blasts from hell .

Hamlet frantically calls on the ghost to tell why it has come and " what should we do ?" The ghost beckons him to follow and , showing a great deal of courage as it takes courage to follow ghost , especially when you know that it may be a spirit from hell , Hamlet does in spite of Horatio and Marcellus effort to that it may intend to lead him to his death or to drive him mad . Horatio and Marcellus follow after Hamlet with Marcellus famous by remarking that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark .

The ghost commands Hamlet's attention saying that it must shortly return to Sulph'rous and tormenting flames which at first sounds as though the flames must be the fires of hell but then it goes on to identify itself as "thy father's spirit " .

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night

And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul rimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away .

Abruptly the ghost orders Hamlet to revenge his father's "foul and most unnatural murder . To Hamlet's horror it goes on to relate how Claudius first seduced Gertrude "my most seeming virtuous queen "and then poisoned his brother .

Thus was I .Sleeping by a brother , of life of crown , of queen at once dispatched all this without King Hamlet having had the chance to confess his sins and receive the church's last rites that would have helped settle his account with God .

The ghost again commands Hamlet to revenge but this time puts the emphasis not on the murder but on the adultery :

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest

And it goes out of its way t warn Hamlet not to harm his mother in the process but to leave her to be judged by heaven and her own conscience . This seems to suggest that the ghost does not believe that Gertrude was a party to her husband's murder and was only guilty of adultery urging Hamlet to remember me the ghost vanishes .

Hamlet passionately agrees to fulfill the ghost's commandment , where Horatio and Marcellus catch up with him , he first confuses them with wild and whirling words then declares that it is an honest ghost that a genuine spirit and not a devil , and finally makes them swear to keep the events of the night secret swear .

The Scene and Act ends with Hamlet swearing Horatio and Marcellus not to give him away even if he

"Perchance here after shall think meet to put an antic disposition on "that is to pretend to be mad the ghost's echo from beneath the stage " swear by his sword , is the last he is hear . from until the scene in Queen Gerfudes boudoir , fifteen hundred lines later . A great many things happen between this scene and the ghost's next appearance in the play .

There is Hamlet's arrangement with the troupe of visiting players to perform " The number of Gonzago " whose plot mirrors the ghost's account of king Hamlet murder , Hamlet suggests that he inserts " some dozen or sixteen lines " so that , by watching Claudius's response , he will know whether or not the ghost was telling the truth , whether it was a good ghost or bad ghost .

Most important of all there is Claudius guilty reaction at the moment when the player Lucianus " pour the poison in (the player king's ears)"and Hamlet's moment of certainty : " O good Horatio , I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound " . At this point, the many members of Shakespeare's audience who would have fully understood Hamlet's doubts about the ghost's nature and share them , would also have been satisfied that it is in fact " an honest ghost " , and of course a modern audience ignorant to Elizabethan ghost belief is satisfied too .

The ghost's last appearance comes in the middle of Hamlet's feverish interview with his mother in her boudoir . It is different from the other because only Hamlet sees and hears the ghost . his mother does not and she understood the speech he

addresses to the ghost as further proof of his madness :Is he audience supposed to think that this appearance is a hallucination , a product of Hamlet melancholy , and the spirit of Act 1 which Horatio , Barnardo , and Marellus also see , "a real ghost "? or has Shakespeare simply been careless "?

The stage time between Hamlet's confirmation of Claudius guilt and the ghost appearance in the boudoir scene is short but it is filled with drama .

Hamlet has been called to see his mother , Polonius has gone off to hide behind a tapestry in the queen's apartment so that he might over hear her meeting with her son . And the audience witness Claudius kneeling in solitary prayer and Hamlet who has happened to enter passing by the chance to kill his uncle and revenge his father out of concern that Claudius unlike king Hamlet , would die confessed and so go to heaven .

There is even more drama than this when Polonius overhears Hamlet's threatening speech his mother and from behind the " arras "echoes her cry of alarm causing Hamlet who thinks it is Claudius and that his life is in danger , to thrust his sword through the tapestry and kill the old man . Hamlet processes in to a fit of bitter accusation against his mother over her adultery . It is at the height of this out pouring of accusation and verbal abuse , and as a kind of climax to the series of dramatic events that have just taken place on stage , that the ghost suddenly enters .

The long span of time since it last appeared makes its entrance seem that much more explosive . This time it is dressed not in battle armor but "in his night gown "that is in a

dressing gown, what this change in dress is supposed to signify is hard to guess . Does the ghost dress according to the occasion ? And this time it speaks only a very few lines . The first two reproach Hamlet for not yet having carried out the ghost's command to revenge his father's murder .

Do not forget . This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose

Clearly the ghost has been keeping an eye on things

No sooner has the ghost chided Hamlet than it directs him to observe his

But look , amazement on thy mother sit

O step between her and her fighting soul !

Can cease in weakest bodies strongest works

Speak to her Hamlet (111.4.112-115)

These are the ghost's last words in the play and its last appearance .

3.2 Supernatural in Macbeth :

Much of what is true of the Elizabethans beliefs about ghost is also true of their beliefs about witches , the attitude toward witchcraft in Shakespeare's was anything but single and anything but overwhelming credulous (Moore). As with ghosts probably the majority of Elizabethans from all ranks of life did believe in the actual existence of witches , there were some who did not , and the skeptics tended to come from the educational classes . As with ghosts even among those who did

believe , not everyone believed in the same way meaning
(Willard Farnham) .

Some believed that witches were essentially " Tragic beings" who had "sold themselves to the devil "and had the demonic power which they claimed to have , the power to command nature , to see in to future , to harm people or livestock by the use of magical charm (Curry) , but who themselves were human and not supernatural being (Farnham) . Other believed that witches not only had supernatural powers resulting from their bargain with the devil , but were themselves supernatural 'devils' or' fiend or 'demons' or furies 'from hell who were able to fake on human from in order to deceive and harm their victims (Farnham)

Although witches could be of both sexes , the worst kind of witch was thought to be female , and there were many more women accused of witchcraft than men , and although female witches could be young or old , in the popular mind they were traditionally pictured as old women ugly and wrinked (Robbins 542-543) as they still are today , probably at least in part because of how Shakespeare represents them in Macbeth .

2.4.2. Shakespeare's Sources for the weird sisters :

Shakespeare's source for the weird sisters was Raphael Holinshed's historical Chronicles of England , Scotland and Ireland , which was his basic source for almost everything else in Macbeth . The chronicles was first published in 1577 and was one of the leading historical works of its time . Shakespeare is believed to have used an enlarged edition published in 1587 (Muir) . Just as he did with other characters and events in Holinshed's chronicles of early Scottish history , Shakespeare

freely combined various parts of Holinshed's account of the "weird sister ". In Holinshed , the sister are not called witches and are not disgusting old women (Farnham). In Shakespeare of course they are . Holinshed calls the women "the weird sister" but leaves open the question of whether they are supernatural beings or not , whether they are good or evil , and whether they are the voices of destiny as "werid" (old English "fate") suggest or else some nymphes or feiries , indued with knowledge of prophecies by their necromanticall science, because everything came to passé as they had spoken (Farnham) . The prophecies Shakespeare's Weird Sister make to Macbeth in Act 1v , scene 1 ,, in Holinshed are told to him by Certeine Wizzards , in whose word he put great confidence and when he has consulted throughout his reign as king and by a certeine witch , whom he had in great trust Farnham) .Shakespeare does away with all of these characters and gives their roles to the weird sisters Shakespeare's " show of eight Kings "that climaxes the weird sisters Act 1v prophecies is based on a long genealogy in Holinshed that unhistorically traces Fleance's descendents down to king James himself whose claim to have descended (from Banquo and whose interest in which craft are both thought to have turned Shakespeare to the story of Macbeth in the first place (Muir)Scholars have identified other likely or possible source for Shakespeare's conception of the weird sisters . One is King James's Daemonologie , published in 1579 when James was still king of Scotland only . Kenneth Muir in Shakespeare Source says of Dae monologue , that it has clearly left its mark on all those scene in which the weird sisters appears . As examples he cites its telling of how witches can faretell the future , but in strictly the devil's means to creepe in creative with princes " by

telling half truth and then deceiving them in the end with a trifle once for all , I meane the everlasting perdition of their soul and body (Muir) suggests that Shakespeare idea about witches may also have .

3.3 Witchcraft

Witchcraft and the supernatural has been a prevalent theme throughout theatre history , taking place in characters and issues of witches , wizards , magic , ghosts , and other mysticisms . The world's most famous playwright , William Shakespeare , who wrote during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1 was definitely no stranger to otherworldly premises .

On account of the fascination and fear of preternatural creatures and the persecution of witches and in Elizabethan England , Shakespeare included an abundance of supernatural elements in to his works . The presence and significance of magic is most prevalent in Shakespeare's play of Macbeth , with the Three Witches and their influencing , visionary power of dark sorcery and the ostensibly mad lady Macbeth .

The witchery exhibited in Macbeth , (written around 1600-1606) , is arguably a reflection of the societal climate of Europe at the time it was composed – an era where witches evoked feelings of major suspicion and panic , yet were also intriguing . The overall tone of the play and the correlation between the witchcraft of Macbeth and the society of Elizabethan England is best explained by Shakespeare himself through the Three Witches , Fair is foul , and foul is fair , Hover through the fog and filthy air (Shakespeare , 1,I 12-13) .

The Three Witches or 'Weird Sisters' are the first characters that appear in Macbeth , and their words is that

opening act set the mood for the overall story and their malicious intentions . Whether or not they are the cause of King Macbeth's downfall and homicidal tendencies is debatable , but it is certain they used their sorcery to influence him , The Three Witches are only responsible for the introduction of these ideas and for further forming ideas in Macbeth's head but they are not responsible for his actions throughout the play (Mabillard 2000 : 1) .

They use cunning forms of temptation when they say Macbeth is destined to be king of Scotland and show him their foretelling visions / apparitions (Shakespeare 1, iii , 1-57). Consequently , by placing these initial ideas in his mind , the Witch essentially put him on the path to his own ruin . The Three Witches use of sorcery and divination is obviously for malevolent intent ; and "They are clearly agents of a darker power , in league with Hecate , the goddess of the underworld , and their purpose is to foment ' toil and trouble ' for mankind " , (Fallon 2002 : 165) .

The Weird Sister themselves serve to represent the darkness and evil in Macbeth , Lady Macbeth , and in the larger context of the play itself . As the characters first shown in Macbeth and the subsequent prophecies they reveal to Macbeth , the Three Witches are probably the catalysts for all the bloodshed and craziness that occurs throughout the rest of the story , although that has been debated for years (Fallon 2002 :163-164) . The Witches are described by Shakespeare to be androgynous , and not definitively male or female , and not clearly human or a form supernatural creature – which only adds to their mystery and function . On the stage , the Witches are normally played by women but are represented differently

and with which creative liberty , depending on the era , location , director and version of the performance . The Witches appear to have inspired very different reactions and emotions in the history of theatre and drama , from voodoo prophetesses , upper- class royalty , to choruses of singers , (Dickinson 2005 :195-196). Yet , in the original version of Shakespeare's Macbeth , The Bard describes his Weird Sisters (via Banquo) as, "So withered and so wild in their attire , That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth and ' You should be women , and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so (Shakespeare , 1,i , 40-41 , 46-48) .

While the Three Witches may not be definitively women , it is probable that the leading woman of the play , lady Macbeth could be in league with the Witches , and be a dark witch herself . Lady Macbeth is clearly insane , but she also acts much like a woman practicing witchcraft – calling evil spirit to her and influencing Macbeth to kill , much like the Three Witches do (Shakespeare , 1 , v 28 – 33) . Witches and sorceresses in the fifteenth – century England were thought to be in covenant with the devil / satan himself , and lived on the cusp between the material and spiritual – mystical worlds ; they were nearly always /stereotypically women . Lady Macbeth develops the qualities associated with the cunning , evil Weird Sisters as the play progresses – no regard for integrity , devious wicked , and signs of mystical powers .

Further adding to the notion of the lady being somewhat otherworldly , she wants to be "unsexed" to achieve her murderous ambitions , reflecting the androgyny of the Witches themselves , (Dicknson 2005: 196-197) . Lady Macbeth behaves androgynously , with the strength and ambition of a

man , the resourceful evilness of an insane woman , and possesses influences of another world – but the truth remains that she is a woman , and is consistently understood to be and depicted as one on the stage . Accordingly , the fact that Lady Macbeth acts as a mad ,power –hungry murderess that mirrors great resemblance to the Weird Sisters reflects highly on Elizabethan culture, and their common portrayals and ideas about witches .

The European societies of the late sixteenth through the seventeenth-centuries were remarkably fascinated with mysterious and supernatural phenomenon like fairies , ghosts , magic , and most especially witches and witchcraft .The people of Elizabethan England were constantly facing uncertainty of life and death with the Bubonic Plague and wars raging through out the continent , while famine, diseases and other catastrophes were also constant concerns . Logically , the European people needed someone or something to be held responsible for these terrible events and religion or God was a major source for explaining the disaster – At the same time , witches , witchcraft , and otherworldly wonders were also frequently regarded as culpable . William Shakespeare , among other writers , incorporated these otherworldly elements in to his plays most likely for the same reason ; to find some kind of rationale for all the misfortune in the world . Throughout Elizabethan England , witches bared the brunt of most of this blame , which is cleverly emulated in written works and artistic pieces of the time period , principally in Macbeth .) (Alchin 2005:1-4.

Being a male –chauvinist society , supposed witches inEngland were nearly always women –Either female healers who had

knowledge of medicinal remedies (herbs , plants , etc) or women who were too old , poor or widowed to combat the rumors of their sorcery ; Thus , the combination of fear , panic and lack of culpability for all the calamity , caused riots and tremendous upheaval regarding witches magic , and witch hunts . Queen Elizabeth herself actually issues a statute in the mind – sixteenth century , the Witchcraft Act of 1562 , condemning any form of magic or mysterious behavior , which was further expanded upon by her successor , James I IN 1604 . The Witchcraft Act of 1562 sated that , "Anyone who should " use practices or exercise any witchcraft enchantment , charm , or sorcery , whereby any person shall happen to be killed or destroyed , was guilty of felony without benefit of clergy , and was to be put to death , (Alchin 2005:6-9) .

William Shakespeare lived amidst all the supernatural phenomenon infatuation and witch – hunting chaos , which had clear influence on his compositions . As such , Shakespeare's use of magic , witchcraft , and mystical elements play a more meaningful purpose in his works . The mysticisms and themes serve as vehicles in to the feelings and beliefs of English culture throughout that era .

Macbeth , on an elementary level , is a play about ambition , sorcery , treachery , murder , and revenge ;it is a play about ambition , sorcery , treachery , murder , and revenge ; it is a dark and somewhat ambiguous work , which is a seamless channel in to the society and mood of England during its composition . As stated before , the sixteenth – seventeenth centuries were a time of unrest , change , and uncertainty in Europe and Macbeth is a murkier reflection of this . The homicidal tendencies of Macbeth , Lady Macbeth ,

and nearly every other character make the possibility of death all the more likely in the play , much like the odds of death due to the Bubonic Plague , war and or famine are all the more real.

In connection to the murderous characters , the incredible violence and additional bloodshed that occurs throughout Macbeth can also be another representation of the calamitous history surrounding Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth 1 . History acts as a part of nearly every Shakespeare play , and considering he was a product of the past English history and a medium to the future history of England – the fact that he wrote a dramatic piece about the history of Scotland , presents a fascinating connection between the Elizabethan era and his writing .Furthermore , the historical aspect of the play adds to the conspiracy , mystery , and ambiguity of Macbeth . The manipulation and treachery by the three Witches and Lady Macbeth paradoxically mirror the betrayal faced by women of Elizabethan England who were wrongly accused of being witches and doing sorcery .

The Weird Sisters and Lady Macbeth are all that women are not supposed to be in Elizabethan society , which is ironic as well since there was a powerful , single , woman monarch . The Witches are androgynous , power – seeking , independent , strong – willed , manipulative , otherworldly , scary , and ultimately insane . The women in Shakespeare 's day had no rights (legal or otherwise) , and their jobs were to get married , raise babies , and obey their husbands or whatever man is in charge ; (Alchin 2005 : 12-15) . The Witches , while supernatural , are depicted as single woman with a manipulative and wicked nature , which is why so many woman were accused of and persecuted for supposedly being actual

witches . Lady Macbeth , as a probable agent of the witches , is equally as manipulative and wicked , but also extremely strong-willed , power hungry , and evidently mad – Characteristics which also were condemned as being sorceress-like , but more importantly for the context of Shakespeare's writing they were characteristics essentially unattributed to women in fifteenth-sixteenth centuries .

"Fair is foul , and foul is fair . Hover through the fog and filthy air (Shakespeare , 1,I, 12-13) . The infamous quote by the legendary Three Witches is perfect idiom to describe the historical and cultural frame work during William Shakespeare's composition of Macbeth , and the supernatural mysticisms so prevalent throughout it . The correlation between the witch fearing and otherworldly fascination of Elizabethan England and the dramatic play of Macbeth is undeniably the Three Witches , their influences of dark magic and prophesy , sand the passionate , scheming , yet ethereal nature of Lady Macbeth . The supernatural has been a theme throughout the history of theatre and drama , and William Shakespeare through the play Macbeth , makes the paranormal enthralling , but also historically reflective of his time ; yet still significant to modern times-nearly five centuries later .

2.6 Characteristics of Elizabethan Drama

Of the three types of plays recognized in the Shakespeare First Folio – Comedies , Histories , and Tragedies – the last has been the most discussed and is clearest in outline .

1—Tragedy must end in some tremendous catastrophe involving in Elizabethan practice the death of the principal character .

2--- The catastrophe must not be the result of mere accident , but must be brought about by some essential trait in the character of the hero acting either directly or through its effect on other persons .

3—The hero must nevertheless have in him something which outweighs his defects and interests us in him so that we care for his fate more than for anything else in the play . The problem then is , why should a picture of the misfortunes of someone in whom we are thus interested afford us any satisfaction ? No final answer has yet been found . Aristotle said that the spectacle by rousing in us pity and fear purges us of these emotions , and this remains the best explanation , just as a great calamity sweeps from our minds the petty irritations of our common life , so the flood of esthetic emotion lifts us above them .

In the drama of Marlowe the satisfaction appears to depend , not on the excitement of the catastrophe , but on the assertion of the greatness of man's spirit ; and this seems to have been the theme also of Senecan tragedy . It will be remembered that the first part of Tamburlaine ends , not in his death , but in his triumph , and yet we feel that the peculiar note of tragedy has been struck . We have the true magic sense of liberation . Kyd also asserted the independence of the spirit of man , if he is prepared to face pain and death .

It is really much more difficult than is always recognized to be sure what constituted Shakespeare's view of the tragic satisfaction or even that he believed in it . It is possibly true that Lear is a better man at the end of the play than he was at the beginning , and that without his suffering he would not

have learned sympathy with his kind ; but this does not apply either to Hamlet or to Othello , and even in the case of King Lear it does not explain the aesthetic appeal . That depends on something more profound .

The student , after getting the story of the tragedy quite clear , should concentrate first on the character of the hero . Ask yourself whether his creator considered him ideally perfect – in which case the appeal probably lies in the spectacle of a single human soul defying the universe ; or flawed – in which case the defect will bring about the catastrophe . It is true that in the Revenge Play type we have frequently the villain-hero , but the interest there depends rather on his courage and independence of man and God than on his villainy . This is particularly true of pre-Shakespearean drama was apt to combine plots involving unnatural crimes and vicious passions with a somewhat shallow conventional morality .

History plays seems in Shakespeare's hands to represent the compromise of life . They may end in catastrophe or n triumph , but the catastrophe is apt to be undignified and the triumph , won at a price . Again , we may say that in the histories Shakespeare is dealing with the nation as hero . The hero in this case is immortal and his tale cannot be a true tragedy ; while on the other hand there can never be the true comedy feeling of an established and final harmony . Apart from Shakespeare , Histories are almost entirely inspired by patriotism , often of a rather rabid type .

There is the greatest variety in the section entitled "comedy" , and critics generally distinguish sharply between Comedies and Romances in Reconciliation plays . We are apt to

expect a comedy to aim chiefly at making us laugh , but , although there are extremely funny passages , it is clear that this is not the main character of any but one or two early plays . The Romances are four – "Cymbeline" , "Winter's Tale ,"----- "The Tempest" , and the play not contained in the First Folio ---- " Pericles" . " Cymbeline, " " Winter's Tale ," "The Tempest ,"and the play not contained in the first Folio –"Pericles". "Cymbeline" was actually printed at the end of the Tragedies for reasons which can only be conjectured . Romances are always concerned with two generations , and cover the events of many years . There is an element of the marvelous in them , and the emphasis on repentance and forgiveness is very marked . But they are , indeed , the natural development of the plays of the great period . " As You Like It " deals also with two generations with wrongs committed and then repentance , forgiveness and restitution . In the earlier play the stress is laid on the actions and emotions of the younger folk , while in the later plays the older generation is most fully portrayed .

But before Shakespeare arrived at this conception of comedy, he had tried various types. In " The Comedy of Errors founded on a translation of a Latin comedy , he had produced an example of pure farce . The humour in a farce generally consists of violent action provoked by misunderstanding of a gross kind . There is an element of farce , therefore , in the "Taming of the Shrew " though the main appeal of the play is the stimulus of Petruchio's high spirits. Probably the original conception of the " Merchant of Venice " was much the same . A youthful Shakespeare was probably pleased with the outwitting of the churlish old miser Shylock . It is the theme of youth and crabbed age . An older Shakespeare must have

revised it and seen the story more through the eyes of Shylock and of Antonio , and the unity of the play has been destroyed .

" Love's Labour's Lost " and the Midsummer Night's Dream" are probably both Court Comedies , and have the superficiality of emotion which for whatever reason was associated with Court Comedy . A graceful and fanciful working up of the occasion for which the play was produced was the special character of a Court play , and it has been conjectured that the " Midsummer Night's Dream " was written for a noble marriage .

But the Shakespearean theory of comedy went much deeper than this , and has no classical exposition , Meredith's "Essay comedy" is quite inapplicable . It may be suggested that his intent was to present a picture of an harmonious society in which each person's individuality is fully developed and yet is in perfect tune with all the others . At the beginning of the play there is always an element of discord , which is resolved before the close . As in History the hero of the play is rather Society as a whole than any person in it , and because of this we get at the end a sense of happiness ever after . In the last plays we had generally an incorrectly reported death , and the discovery of these mistakes gives a curious sense that " there's nothing serious in mortality " All existence is seen as one great web of being , so that, although in tragedy , Hamlet sickens at the thought :

" Imperious Caesar , dead and turned to clay ,
May stop a wall to keep the wind away " .

In " The Tempest " the same thought becomes :

" Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea – change
In to something rich and strange

2.7 Religion in Shakespeare's England

Protestantism had been finally established as the national religion the year before Shakespeare was born . Hence , from his earliest days , he would be familiar with its rites and ceremonies . The images would have been torn from the church by the gentle river Avon , and the fires of the Marian martyrdom , as well as the burning of Marys and John , would be memories of the past . John Fox , the author of the " Acts and Monuments , " had published the first volume of his history before the poet's birth , and he had been tutor to the children of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote .

The accession of Elizabeth , November 17, 1558, had lifted a dark cloud from the country . Bell rang , bonfires lit up the sky , -imprisoned priests and people experienced the throbbing of a new hope , and far –off exiles gathered themselves together to take ship for their old homes , bringing with them the leaven of the Genevan theology . More anticipations were indulged than could ever be realized . The picture of the time has all the light and darkness of a work of Rembrandt . The Protestants were strong in the large towns and the seaports , but , in the north , the ennobled families were nearly all Catholics , though the common people had espoused the cause of England against the encroachments of Rome .

Many churches were closed , and there were hundreds of parishes without incumbents , devoting the Sunday to sports and licentiousness . The windows of the sacred edifices were broken , the doors were unhinged , the walls in decay , the very roofs stripped of their lead . " The Book of God " , says Stubbes , "was rent , ragged , and all be –torn . Aisles , naves , and

chancels , were used for stabling horses . Armed men met in the churchyard , and wrangled , or shot pigeons with hand-guns . Pedlars sold their wares in the church porches during service . Morrice – dancers excited inattention and wantonness by their presence in costume , so as to be ready for the frolics which generally followed prayers . " Many there are

'said Sandys preaching before Elizabeth even after her reforms , that hear not a sermon in seven years , I might say in seventeenth . " Several towns and cities were notoriously irreligious . In the city of York , according to Darke , the reformation " went so far as almost to put an end to religion ."

The friends of the new doctrine expected that all the evils of the time would be instantly remedied . But the work of reform was extremely gradual . Until a month after her accession , Elizabeth did not interfere Camden has pithily described the successive steps :

" The 27th of December it was tolerated to have the Epistles and Gospels , the Ten Commandments , the Symbols , the Litany , and the Lord's Prayer, in the vulgar tongue . The 22nd of March , the Parliament being assembled , the order of Edward v1 was re-established , and by Act of the same the whole use of the Lord's Supper granted under both kinds . The 24th of June , by the authority of that which concerned the uniformity of public prayers and the administration of the Sacrament, the Sacrifice of the Mass was abolished , and the Liturgy in the .English tongue more and more established . In the month of July the Oath of allegiance was proposed to the Bishops and other persons ; and in August images were thrown out of the temples and churches and broken or burnt " .

The fervour of the last part , carried out by the common people , filled the streets with bonfires and crowds . The proceeding in London are described as being " like the sacking of some hostile city ." Vestments , Popish Bibles and books , ornaments and road-screens , were ruthlessly destroyed . The

Articles, revised and reduced from forty-two to thirty-nine, the changes in them being chiefly of Lutheran character, were sanctioned and published in 1563.

The dispossessed Catholics strove to regain their place and power by resorting to artifice and intrigue. Some remained in England sheltered in the houses of the nobles. Others fled the country, taking the pay of the monarchs who were hostile to England. The charm of a freebooter's life on the open seas overcame others. The more desperate plotted against Elizabeth's person, or for the elevation of Mary Queen of Scots to the English throne, even taking arms, as in Northumberland and Yorkshire, for her cause. Elizabeth herself wavered. She was fond of an imposing ritual.

Though she had been persecuted for her faith, she still leaned more to Rome than Geneva. She restored the Carnival. At times it seemed as if little were required to make her a Catholic after the Pope's own heart. One of the matters which troubled her greatly was the marriage of the clergy. On her visit in to Essex and Suffolk she found many of them had availed themselves of the altered law, and had given up celibacy. Accordingly she issued her injunction to Archbishop Parker against the marriages of deans and canon. Mr. Froude's picture of cathedral establishments is worth giving:

" Deans and canons, by the rules of their foundations, were directed to dine and keep hospitality in their common hall. Those among them who had married broke up into their separate houses, where, in spite of Elizabeth, they maintained their families. The unmarried 'tabled abroad at the ale-houses'. The singing men of the choir became the prebend's private servants 'having the church stipend for their wages'. The cathedral plate adorned the prebendal sideboards and dinner-tables. The organ-pipes were melted into dishes for their kitchens; the organ-frames were carved into bedsteads, where the wives reposed beside their reverend lords; while the

opes and vestments were coveted for their gilded embroidery and were slit into gowns and bodies . Having children to provide for , and only a life interest in their revenues , the chapter , like the bishops , cut down their woods , and worked their fines , their leases , their escheats and wardships , for the benefit of their own generation . Sharing their annual plunder , they ate and drank and enjoyed themselves while their opportunity remained ; for the times were dangerous , and none could tell who should be after them " .

The Protestant party was growing in strength , but the Queen manifested her dislike of their proceedings , at times in a very irritating manner . It was considered disorderly for any State affairs to be mentioned from the pulpit . Subservient archbishops and bishops were instructed to admonish any clerks daring enough to discuss ecclesiastical changes and necessities . When Dean Norwell was preaching before Elizabeth at St. Paul's he rather " roughly handled " so un-Protestant a subject as images . The Queen got excited , and cried out from her seat " To your next , Mr. Dean ! Leave that ; we have heard enough of that ! To your subject ." of course the preacher was unable to proceed . The Queen and De Silva , the Spanish Ambassador , left in a hurry , and some of the Protestants present burst into tears .

In the southern churches the Protestant clergy held informal meetings for a service , in which preaching was the prominent feature . These meetings were known as "prophesyings" and afterwards as "Grindalings " , because Archbishop Grindal had encouraged them in the north , and , when promoted Canterbury , had addressed a remonstrance to the Queen on the subject , against her wishes to cut down the number of preachers . For his freedom Grindal was sequestrated . " We admit no man to the office " he had said , " that either professeth Papistry or Puritanism . Generally the graduates of the Universities are only admitted to be preachers

, unless it be some few which have excellent gifts of knowledge in the Scriptures , joined with good utterance and godly persuasion ."

In vain he assured her that they were loyal subjects , and that in the Catholic rebellion in the north " one poor parish in Yorkshire , which , by continual preaching , had been better instructed than the rest – Halifax , I mean – was ready to bring three or four thousand men in to the field to serve against the said rebels" . The prophesiers , sometimes termed lecturers , had to be restrained , as their sermons were often three hours in length . Modern statesmen would have judged it prudent to leave them liberty to weary out their hearers and themselves . But , as it was , when the preacher turned his hour- glass , saying , "one glass more , " the people murmured their delight , such was the eagerness of many of them to receive spiritual edification . There were objections , however , and worldly – wise Selden states them . They ran away with the affections of the people , as well as with the bounty that should be bestowed on the ministers ."

Preaching at St Paul's Cross in London was carefully regulated . When not a Londoner , the preacher was lodged in the Shunamites ' House hard by . It was at this house that Richard Hooker asked the lady to find him a wife , and Mrs. Churchman successfully recommended her daughter Joan , whose peculiarities afterwards tortured the "judicious " mind of her husband , without preventing him from writing his exposition of ecclesiastical polity .

The services in the church were indeed uniform in certain externals ; but they varied greatly , according to the amount of Protestantism in the bishop f the diocese , or the incumbent of the parish . Congregational singing was one of the conspicuous changes made by the reform- movement . Psalm – singing and heresy were both supposed to be of foreign origin . Free living and free thinking were common in Italy , and hence to be

"Italionated ", was equivalent to being styled an atheist , a republican , or a worldling . To sing psalms was to be strongly Lutheran , but not Puritanic . According to Neale, the Puritans allowed congregational singing in a plain tune , but not of tossing the psalms from one side to another , with intermingling of organs . "Time and tune seem to have made the difference between the two schools of song .

The Puritans drawled their tunes and psalms , Geneva – fashion ; the Portestants sang them in a lively and tossing style . The clown in the Winter's Tale was thus speaking ironically when he says of the singers coming to the sheep – shearing feast , " but one Puritan amongst them , and he sings psalms to hornpipes . " The other Shakespearean reference to the services of the time also put in to the mouth of this privileged character . "Though honesty be no Puritan " says the clown to the Countess of Rousillion , in All Well that End Well , " it will wear the surplice of humility over the back gown of a big heart. Considering how freely he touched the life of his time , it augurs either absolute indifference , or calm neutrality , on his part , that so little was said by Shakespeare that could be considered offensive to reasonable hearers , or that can now be tortured by sectaries into proof of his special leaning and faith . Besides the references just given two others may be quoted , if single passages mean anything . " I'll have thee burned " , says Leontes to Paulina , in the Winter Tale , one of his latest plays . She replies

"I care not .

It is an heretic that makes the fire ,

Not she which burns in it ."

On the opposite side there is a slap at the Norwich divine , when Sir Andrew Aguecheek confesses , in Twelfth Night , he would "as life be a Brownist as politician ."

Pews did not make their appearance in the parish churches until the reign of James I. They were then stuck about immediately under the pulpit, or any where, as may still be seen in some out-of-the-way village churches. The pews were of oak, and they were built in the first instance by the families sitting in them. "The faculty pew", intended for the medical men for the time being, appears, in one or two instances we have noticed, to have been constructed at the expense of the parish. Green baize from Norwich was used to line them, and hence some very suggestive entries in churchwardens' books for such interesting curative arts as "salting the fleas".

The Puritan movement received its highest expression in the allegorical poem of the "Fairy Queen." The Red Cross Knight is the Church militant, and when Arthur gives him the diamond-box, holding the water of life,

"The Red-cross Knight him gave

A book, where in his Saviour's testament

Was writ with golden letters, rich and brave,

A work of wondrous grace, and able soul to save "

Una is Elizabeth symbolised, and the scarlet-cald Duessa is Catholicism, as typified in Mary Queen of Scots, Puritanism, to his poetic mind, was simply the ideal religion invested with the grace of chivalry, and informed with a tender Platonism. It is not for us to write the history of this great movement. It welled up, like a fine spring, and ran its rippling way in many directions, not always as pure as its source, or to be recognized as coming from its original impulse. Earnest and intense religion could hardly be bright and cheerful when gaiety of heart was associated with fine clothing and loose manners. Hence it became poor in dress, plain in ceremony, austere in temper, and Calvinistic in theology.

It was a revolt against luxury and a certain intellectual effeminacy—preaching duty against pleasure and the attraction of a life beyond the grave to compensate men for what they were required to surrender in sublunary things. It branched out in many forms. With the intellectual few it was purely philosophic. With the many it ran in to Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, and other non-conforming varieties. Meetings were held in private houses. Wealthy persons sheltered its notable leaders, and endowed chapels and charities. The growing middle classes were charmed by it. It was healthy, vigorous, and pronounced. The Protestantism of Elizabeth was at best a compromise. The Puritans wanted a discernible change, an earnest ritual, powerful preaching, a New Testament Church. They were ready to suffer for their faith, and when James succeeded Elizabeth, they were haled to prison with painful care. Bishops grew bold and judges were severe.

Closely connected with religion was the new Poor Law. Settlement dates back, as Professor Stubbs shows, to the Statute of Labourers, and the Acts by which it was confirmed and amended. Henry VIII compelled the respective parishes to keep their own poor. Edward VI had beggars branded with the letter V, and Elizabeth was severe as to "stalwart and valiant" mendicants, who flooded the country. No doubt the dissolution of the religious houses had made the question of pauperism more pressing. If the monks gave too little to the poor, still it was possible to say, as Selden did, that now where xx. Pound was yearly given to the poore, in more than c. places in Ingeland is not one meale's meate given."

Trade guilds had assisted in providing for their own poor. Compulsory alms were ordered by Elizabeth, and a three years' residence was made a settlement. But her two most notable reforms were the Act of 1575 and the final Act of 1601. The first ordered corporate towns to deliver wool, flax, and iron,

to the overseers of the poor , " so that , when poore and needy , persons , willing to work , may be set on work " . The second transformed the annual poor collection of the parish church in to a fixed burden to be levied on the parish itself , and the churchwardens , who had hitherto had the care of the poor were to be assisted by over-seers , nominated annually in Easter week , with power to elect a special body for large parishes . Support was to be provided for the disabled poor , and work for the rest . Entries of flax in the parish books are , in many instances, the only records of this change ; the Poor-house or Workhouse , being of late date .

Apparently , there are only two allusions in Shakespeare to such things . The " working-house of thought " in the chorus to the fifth act of Henry v is doubtful , because the play is usually dated before 1601 . But the second is clear , and it has a touch of satire in it . Pericles was written after the 43rd of Elizabeth " that Carlyle so studiously reviles . The second fisherman drawing up his net in Act ii scene 1 , says , " Help , master , help ! . here 's a fish hangs in the net like a poor man's right in the law , " will hardly come out

2.8 Shakespeare's Pathos .

Shakespeare's pathos is one of the ground tones of his passionate genius , like his humour , his pure joyousness , his serene exaltation , his voluptuous melancholy , his sense of thrilling excitement , his stirring heroic strenuousness , his sense of weirdness and mystery , his romance , his imperious tragic grandeur . Such a list of qualities is perhaps not strictly categorical . It merely enumerates some of the dominant Shakespearean moods and might be measurably condensed or enlarged , at will . It has a different basis from the scheme of the elementary passions as they are ordinarily classified . Possibly no two men would exactly coincide in their analysis or their characterization of phenomena which are so complex and in which subjective elements play so large a part . At the same

time , there will be a fair agreement among educated persons as to the general effect produced by an exhibition of passions in any given case .

Representations of the passions may excite in us their like , but not necessarily so ; the same elementary passions make very different appeals according to the conditions under which their effects are shown . The passion of fear , so terrible in Macbeth , is ludicrous in Sir Andrew Aguecheek , is both comical and prettily pathetic in Viola , and passes in to the realm of supernatural awe in the ghost scenes of Hamlet , with a varied key for each character that encounters the dreaded sight .

Clearly the passions are only working colors of the dramatist and their emotional appeal depends upon the manner in which they are blended with one another and the objects to which they are applied . We may be amused by an exhibition of anger or roused to an emotion resembling anger by an exhibition of levity ; we may be frightened or appalled by a powerful presentation of rage , or we may be kindled to indignation or scorn by a dastardly exhibition of fear . The sight of grief begets in us , not a precise imitation of the passion but a modified form of it which we call pity , and the nature and intensity of our sorrow is determined by the character of our sympathy . The amenities of art require , moreover , that the emotion awakened by such representations shall be of such nature and intensity only as make for a generally pleasurable result , and this is effected through the capacity of the representation to awaken sentiment in us : that is , emotionally modified thought or fancy whereby we are guided to a perception of the causes and relations of things , their meaning , fitness , and proportion , mingled with a sense of the adequacy or beauty of the representation .

Passion , like action , awakens emotion partly through its revelation of character , and our response is regulated by our

sympathy or antipathy toward the character our conception of which it augments . We are further excited by passion on account of its bearing , through character , on fate ; we feel in it an immediate or a potential force which may influence the fate, either of the character in whom it is exhibited or of other characters in whose fate we are interested . Such , in part , is our state of mind while witnessing the intemperate outbursts of Lear in his first scene , the overwrought transports of Othello When returned with his wife in Cyprus , the first ecstasies of Romeo and Juliet , the abnormal melancholy of Hamlet , or Lady Macbeth's devouring ambition .

In one respect , all these violent moods thrill us to admiration , exalting our sense of the powers of the human soul ; but , also , they alarm us ; they are " too like the lightning " ; we feel them to be charged with fatal potentialities . Action in turn excites us not only because of its immediate occasion for the expression of human nature , that is for demonstrations of passion and revelations of character , but , likewise , because of " some consequence yet hanging in the stars " which may produce joy or suffering in the actor himself or in the persons acted upon . We respond to representations of passion , therefore , first as excitants , through suggestion and sympathy , of similar , but agreeable , activities in ourselves ; second , as revelations of character ; third as consequences of previous action or as sources of further trains of action which may , in turn , produce further consequences , together with new manifestations of passion and new revelations of character .

In a work of representative art , in drama especially , all these dynamic elements are ultimately resolved into a static condition of feeling in which we received , not the impact of the final scene alone , but in which the imagination turns backward upon its series of experiences and the whole related scheme of passion , character , act , and consequence, streams through us like the related notes of a musical chord leaving us ,

thoughtful , hushed , impressed , appalled , warmed , delighted , touched , refreshed , invigorated , exalted , or in some similarly stilled and passive mood of unified but unvolitional excitement , according to the nature and intensity of the representation

The "pathetic" mood , then , is one of the general modes of feeling , or complex states of emotion awakened by representative art , and " pathos " is a quality of the representation by which this effect is produced . The attempt to set metes and bounds to a field of emotion where all terms are variable and many of them imply the others may seem a foolhardy undertaking ;and yet some further discrimination seems necessary . The most obvious process of pathos is the awakening of sympathy for suffering or misfortune , the emotion which we call pity . But pity itself is a constituent of numerous moods not all of which possess the quality of pathos . In popular usage there is a tendency to attend exclusively to the pitiful element in pathos so that almost any misfortune which awakens emotion will be referred to as " pathetic " , especially if the sense of it be sharpened by some irony of circumstance or association . This is plainly indiscriminating . The effect of pathos is most frequently obtained through an appeal to the sense of misfortune combined with a further stirring of tender sentiment through the coincident revelation of some gracious or admirable trait in the object of compassion. By these means there is produced a commingling of warm and sympathetic emotions which is extremely pleasurable , is allied to the passive side of our natures and is the effect of what we call "pathos " .

The quality of a pathos depends upon the proportions in which are mingled the elements of pity , on the one hand , and of other tender emotions such as affection , gratitude , admiration , or joy , on the other . An example of the interoperation of pity , admiration , and affection , is well delineated in Othello's

analysis of the witchcraft by which he won Desdemona , ending
She loved me for the dangers I had passed

And I loved her that she did pity them

And yet , despite the touching elements in it , Othello's story of his wooing is not pathetic , for we have yet to reckon with his dignity of manner which carries the entire recital out of the domain of pathos and this , it should be noted , is in accord with Othello's main purpose as an orator , which is not touch merely , but to convince .

On the other hand, in some cases of true pathos , the elements of compassion is so light that the emotion appears to depend upon a response to beauty or admirableness alone , or even to joy itself . Ruskin somewhere describes a natural landscape as possessing "pathetic beauty " . It is doubtful , however , if beauty or joy are ever truly pathetic save through some (however delicate) *arriere pensee* of their transiency , helplessness , insecurity , or the like ; as of " beauty whose action is no stronger than a flower "and "joy whose hand is ever at his lips , bidding adieu". Pathos may arise from a sense of contrast between present joy and foregone hardship , suffering , or peril .

In these last cases , of course , the emotion of pity is deflected from the present , to a past , or an imagined condition , and the two emotions , of joy in the present happiness , and of pity for the contrasted condition , coalesce to produce a pathetic mood in which a feeling akin to gratitude is predominant . The converse of this situation is too commonplace to require analysis .

All of these conditions of sentiment , it will be readily seen , if they become habitual or constitutional , or if they be too little relieved by the brighter emotions , will be depressed to the mood which we call melancholy . Pathos and melancholy are adjacent , there for , but not identical.They may even coalesce ;

but they are, in most cases ; easily distinguishable . There is a rich vein of melancholy in Shakespeare ; but his pathos is not , usually , an outgrowth of his melancholy ; rather is his melancholy a deepening of his pathos .

Shakespeare's pathos , and it may be added his melancholy also , lies quite close to his humour , and the reason for this is manifest when we enquire in to the nature of both . Since his pathos consists largely in a conflict of agreeable and painful emotions , a slight change in texture may readily give us , instead of a pathos enlivened by humour , a humour sweetened with pathos .

One further important distinction remains to be made ; but , as it has been often discussed elsewhere , it may be briefly disposed of here . This is the distinction between the pathetic and the sublime . Shakespearean commentators not infrequently refer to the pathos of his great tragic scenes , and although this is not necessarily wrong , it can easily be misleading . Of course , no one with an eye to their total effect would think of applying the term "pathetic" to the finales of Lear, Othello , Hamlet or indeed , of any of the tragedies .

The fact is , that Shakespeare never , whether in comedy or tragedy , ends in the pathetic key , a point to which I shall return later . That there is an admixture of compassion in these great scenes is true ; but the passions with which it is commingled are so agitating , the action so frantic , the consequences so prodigious , that pity is smothered up in dismay . At the very end , to be sure , the winds fall and cease , and the waves break back on themselves in a mighty subsidence ;but it is the calm of a supreme exaltation . We ourselves , like the hero at his last breath, seem to be snatched up out of the storm and the struggle which roll harm lessly backward below us , and the emotion we feel , if emotion that mood can be called which consist in a momentary superiority to all finite agitation, is " that emotion of detachment and

liberation in which the sublime really consist " . {Santayana, The Sense of Beauty }

The emotion of the sublime is like that of pathos in that in both cases we are totally passive ; but in the one case our passivity is that of a breathless , almost benumbing contraction , as if for a sudden spring ; the passivity of the pathetic mood is relaxed , unnerved , deep breathing , as of the languor which precedes contraction . In the one we are close to the infinite ; in the other , we feel our kinship with mortality , deliciously ,warm , in every cell .

Chapter 4

Analysis of Shakespeare's use of ghosts

Most critics agree that the past lives on in memories and in that sense even the dead are alive in us . What are ghosts if not an embodiment of our own memory ? The ghost in a literary setting almost always directs attention backwards in time and causes the living characters to reflect on prior events . Shakespeare's Hamlet is no different . In the first act of the play young Hamlet's father , the late king Hamlet of Denmark appears to some guards on the castle walls . while the guards and Hamlet are able to see the ghost , the king wife , Gertrude ,and her new husband , the king's brother , Claudius , cannot see the ghost . It is this discrepancy that will be examined .

3.1 King Hamlet's Ghost

Upon the walls of Hamlet's castle , a specter appears and Hamlet , Consider their reaction to the appearance of Old Hamlet spirit :This bodes some strange eruption to our state , "says Horatio (1.1.69) "My father's spirit in arms ?All is not well " , states Hamlet (1.2.255) . it is interesting how the characters upon seeing a figure from their memories immediately begin speculating about the present or the future. While the ghost portends an ominous future by its very nature , we must also consider why he shows up in the first place . While many may argue that Old Hamlet appears simply to have his death revenged , there are deeper reasons which can only be found when we analyze the psychological state of Hamlet and fellow cast of characters . We must consider who of them can and cannot see the ghost in order to understand that the ghost is an embodiment of memory . Those that can see remember , those that cannot have forgotten .

Upon the first glimpse in to the dichotomy between Hamlet and his uncle and stepfather , Claudius , the poles of memory are defined . Hamlet having lost a father two months prior and helplessly witnessing the hasty marriage of his mother and uncle , is in mourning . The memory of his father's death is physically lodged in his mind and so he is forced to remember and continue to mourn , on the other hand , Claudius the late king's brother and murderer finds himself with a new bride and a crown upon his head . He is , essentially , living the dream , or at least attempting to . In an effort to bring Hamlet out of mourning and in to the present he states m " T is unmanly grief It shows a will most incorrect to heaven / A heart unfortified , a mind impatient , / An understanding simple and unschooled (1.2.94-97) .While being a rather insensitive means of cheering a nephew up , this statement also reveals the character of Claudius in regards to his view of the past . After having murdered his own brother , Claudius undoubtedly attempts to forget what has been and only focus on what is or what will be .

3.2 Gertrude and Claudius

While Hamlet and Claudius struggle to cope with their memories Gertrude , Claudius , new Queen and old Hamlet's widow , appears to be oddly passive , even apathetic about her husband's death . Consider the way she discusses the notion of death with Hamlet :Thou know's 'tis common ; all that lives must die , passing through nature to eternity " (1.2.72-73) . She has a rather realistic view on death , accepting it as a simple fact of life . Her acceptance of death and the great influence Claudius has on her will causes her to forget her former husband rapidly .

Gertrude's ambivalence causes her will to be weak, and we often see her easily swayed. In the middle of Act 2, the queen in a conversation about Hamlet's prolonged depression states, "I doubt it no other but the main / his father's death and our o'erhasty marriage". However, immediately after Polonius the king's aide offers his hypothesis that Hamlet is heartbroken; Gertrude states "It may be very like" (2.2.153). Her opinion always seem to parallel those of the people around her, namely Claudius. Furthermore, before the theater performance in act 3, Hamlet remarks to Ophelia, "For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two /hours" (3.2.128 -131). While Hamlet may be exaggerating about his mother's "cheerful" demeanor, he certainly touches on the notion that she does not appear to be thinking much about her late husband.

A third group that must be considered is the trio of guards from the first scene: Horatio, Bernardo, and Marcellus. Each of these characters recall and openly discuss the late King Hamlet. Horatio, in his recount of the king's slaying of Norway calls King Hamlet "our valiant Hamlet" and further mentions "(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)"(1.1.84 85). Horatio and the two soldiers with him represent a more objective view of the past and present because they hold no familial relation to the king. Unlike Hamlet who is being pressed to forget the past by the new king, the three men are able to freely remember the king as they know him.

When the three men see the ghost upon the wall, they immediately begin to question it. They ask the ghost why he has appeared before them. Horatio berates the ghost, beginning him to speak his purpose. He implores, "If there be

any good thing to be done .../ Speak to me / If thou art privy to thy country's fate .../ O' Speak !" (1.1.130 -135). Instead of simply standing in awe at the appearance of a spirit , the men assume that he has appeared for a purpose . After the ghost leaves , the three men begin to discuss the current state of the kingdom , specifically the present conflict with Norway . Barnardo , upon reflecting on the current affairs of Denmark , concludes , Well may it sort that this portentous figure / Comes armed through our watch so like the king / That was and is the question of these wars (1.1.109 -1111).Barnardo , though a small character in the larger story , is the first to bring up the idea that the king has appeared to them for a specific reason . The impending war has them all wondering what will happen next and so , without a competent king ruling , their minds naturally drift to their former " valiant" king .

Hamlet's encounter with the ghost adds to the nation that it has appeared due to the memory of the living . Hamlet , more steeped in grief and mourning for his father , remembers King Hamlet better than anyone around him and it is this memory that brings Hamlet to confront the ghost . This meeting sparks the entire driving force of the play in which Hamlet seeks to fulfill his dead father's orders of avenging his death . King Hamlet tells young Hamlet , "If thou didst ever thy dear father love-Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder "(1.5.23-25) . King Hamlet words his request more as a challenge in which Hamlet's love for his late father can only be proven by carrying out his wishes . Furthermore , king Hamlet's final words to Hamlet are "Adieu , adieu , Remember me"(1.5.91). Hamlet responds to his father by stating , "I'll wipe away all trivial fond records ,/ ...And thy commandment all alone shall live "(1.5.99-

102) . In other words , the memory of Hamlet's father , embodied in embodied in the form of a ghost , gives Hamlet his sole purpose for the remainder the story .

Not long after Hamlet receives his mission from King Hamlet , he begins to doubt the noble nature of his father's ghost . During the meeting he calls the ghost "honest" and addresses him as "truepenny"! however , in Act 3 Hamlet has second thoughts and states , The spirit that I have seen / May be a devil... " (2.2 710 - 611) . It is at this point that Hamlet decides to find out the truth about his father using his own methods .

Hamlet utilizes the theater company as a way to force Claudius in to remembering the murder of his brother and hopefully externally show his guilt . In a way the appearance of the ghost was a performance put on for Hamlet in order to solidify King Hamlet in his memory .The theater company acts as reminder to Claudius just as the ghost is a reminder to Hamlet . By seeing with his own eyes a clear picture of the past reflected on a stage ;Claudius is forced into confronting his memory head on and as we see in Act 3, he demands the play end and leaves abruptly thus solidifying Hamlet's suspicious . Claudius ' reaction to the performance renews Hamlet's faith in his father's ghost . He states , " I'll take the ghost's word for / a thousand pound " and continues on with his mission under the impression that it is his duty to his father . Claudius never sees King Hamlet's ghost , but through young Hamlet's mission , Claudius is reminded of his brother anyway .

The scene in which Gertrude and Hamlet quarrel in the queen's chamber solidifies the notion that only those who truly

remember the king can see him . Gertrude opens the argument by stating , "Hamlet , thou hast thy father much offended " (3.4.10) . The "father" she is referring to is Claudius , not king Hamlet . This distinction shows us that Gertrude has moved so far beyond king Hamlet's memory that she already sees Claudius as Hamlet's father . Hamlet begins berating Gertrude with insult . He speaks of her heart thus : "If damned custom have not brazed it so / That it be proof and bulwark against sense "(3.4.38-39). Hamlet believes the infidelity seen in Gertrude's action shows that her emotion and sense is veiled m causing her to forget her past and the husband she once loved . Even as Hamlet tells Gertrude of all her faults and openly reminds her of her dead husband m she will not listen and constantly tells Hamlet to "speak no more " . Because Gertrude will not listen to Hamlet , she is unable to see the ghost when it appears . When Hamlet asks if Gertrude can see anything she replies , "Nothing at all ;yet all that is I see"(3.4.133). This response insights the notion that Gertrude believes only in what is in front of her . She can't see the king because she doesn't truly remember him .

Memory is a powerful tool in determining the way we perceive the present and future . The player king in the Murder of Ganzago encapsulates the entire notion of this play perfectly . He states , "Purpose is but the slave to memory "(3.2.194). Hamlet's memory of his father is so powerful and so encapsulating that it drives him to commit multiple murders culminating in his own death . Hamlet understands the power of memory and in his final moments of life he speaks to Horatio : "Horatio ,"he says , " lam dead ;/ Thou livest ;report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied "(5.2.339-341). Hamlet

knows that people will remember his deeds without knowing why he did them . He knows that memories will misconstrue the truth and so he calls upon Horatio , just as Hamlet was called upon by his father , to remember him and promise .

3.3 The Significance of the Ghost in Hamlet

So much is said in the play about the ghost's warlike form that great significance must be attached to that fact . On its appearance on the stage Horatio speaks of it as having on ,

" that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march ."

(1.i.47-49.)

And when Marcellus asks ,

"Is it not like the king?"

Horatio replies :

"As thou art to thyself ;

Such was the very armor he had on

When he the ambitious Norway combated "

(1.i. 58-61.)

When Marcellus further observes its "martial stalk , "Horatio suggests that ,

"This bodes some strange eruption to our state".

Then after Horatio has explained to Marcellus and the others the reason for the warlike preparations and the impending danger from Norway , Bernardo remarks :

"Well may it sort , that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch m so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars "

(1.i. 109-111.)

It is quite clear then, that they regard the king's appearance in arms as a portent of grave danger to the state from the ambitions of young Fortinbras of Norway . When they inform Hamlet of the apparition , one of the points they specially mention is that he was "arm'd" Horatio describes the ghost as ,

A figure like your father ,
Armed at point exactly , cap-ape."

(1.ii. 199-360 .)

Hamlet seems not more impressed with the appearance of the ghost than with the fact that he was "arm'd" . After being apparently convinced that the ghost had actually appeared , in great excitement he questions his friends until all three assert that the ghost was "arm'd" . Then he cross-questions them ,and when convinced of the truth of their statement, he begs them to keep the matter secret ,and

"Give it an understanding , but no tongue."

(1.ii 249.)

When alone he observes ,

"My father's spirit in arms I all is not well ;

I doubt some foul play ."

(1.ii. 254-5)

It is the general opinion , then that great significance is to be attached to the fact that the king appeared in armor .When we take this in connection with the fact that he appeared to the guards as they said ,

" Upon the platform where we watch'd ," it is impossible not to infer that the king came upon a patriotic mission , and that his appearance was intended to have a relation to the defence of Denmark .

All that Hamlet's friends had told him was soon confirmed by the appearance of the ghost to him in the same guise . As if to confirm the words of his friends he notices that the "dead corse" of his father is again clad "in complete steel " .(1.iv.52.)The apparition will say nothing , however , in the presence of all , though he makes it clear by beckoning Hamlet that he has something for his ear alone . As the ghost and Hamlet withdraw for their private interview , Marcellus feels that it is upon the business of the state that the ghost appears and remarks :

To this Horatio replies " Heaven will direct ."The inference they all appear to draw is that the visit of the late king's spirit is in connection with the impending danger to the state of Denmark . This seems to imply that the task that is falling to Hamlet is not merely a personal matter between him and his father , but a momentous undertaking of great national import

Supernatural in Macbeth

The supernatural occurs four times during the course of Macbeth , it occurs in all the appearances of the witches , in the appearance of Banquo's ghost , in the apparition with their prophecies , and in the air-drawn dagger that guides Macbeth towards his victim .

Of the supernatural phenomenon evident in Macbeth the witches are perhaps the most important . The witches represent Macbeth's evil ambitions , they are the catalyst which unleash Macbeth's evil aspirations .

Macbeth believes the witches and wishes to know more about the future so after the banquet he seeks them out at their cave wants to know the answers to his questions regardless of whether the consequence be violent and destructive to nature . The witches promise to answer and at Macbeth's choice they add further unnatural ingredients to the cauldron and call up their masters . This is where the prophetic apparitions appear . The first apparition is Macbeth's own head (later to be cut off by Macduff) confirming fears of Macduff . The second apparition tells Macbeth that he cannot be harmed by no one of woman . This knowledge gives Macbeth a false sense of security because he believes that he cannot be harmed , yet Macduff was not of woman born , his mother was dead and a corpse when Macbeth was born . This leads to Macbeth's downfall . A child with a crown on his head , the third apparition represents Malcolm , Duncan's son . This apparition also gives Macbeth a false sense of security because of the Birnam Wood prophecy .

The appearance of Banquo's ghost provides insight in to Macbeth's character . It shows the level that Macbeth's mind

has recessed to , when he sees the ghost he reacts with horror and upsets the guests . Macbeth wonder why murder had taken place many times in the past before it was prevented by law-statute purged the gentle weal and yet the dead are coming back .

The final form of the supernatural is the air-drawn dagger which leads Macbeth to his victim . When the dagger appears to him , Macbeth finally becomes victim to the delusions of his fevered brain . The dagger points to Duncan's room and appears to be covered in blood . The dagger buttresses the impact of this key scene in which Macbeth slays king Duncan .

The supernatural is a recurring aspects in many of the plays by William Shakespeare . In Hamlet and Macbeth the supernatural is an integral part of the structure of the plot . In these plays the supernatural provides a catalyst for action by the characters . It supplies insight into the major players and it augments the impact of many key scenes .The supernatural appeals to the audience 'curiosity of the mysterious and thus strengthens their interest

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation

This chapter provides a summary of the study , conclusion and suggestions for further studies

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

In the time of William Shakespeare there was a strong belief in the existence of the supernatural . Thus , the supernatural is a recurring aspect in many of Mr. Shakespeare's plays . In two such plays , Hamlet and Macbeth , the supernatural is an integral part of the structure of the plot . It provides a catalyst for action , an insight in to character , and augments the impact of many key scenes . The supernatural

appears to the audience in many varied forms . In Hamlet there appears perhaps the most notable of the supernatural forms in the ghost .However , in Macbeth , not only does a ghost appear but a floating dagger , witches , and prophetic apparitions make appearances . The role of the supernatural is very important in Hamlet and Macbeth .

This study has set out to confirm and verify the following hypotheses :

- 1—Ghosts play the role of an informant in Shakespearean's drama .
- 2—Supernatural is a dominant theme in Shakespearean's play and provides a catalyst for action by the characters .

To achieve the set objectives and verify the hypotheses ,the study adopted analytical critical point to some of the events in which the elements of the supernatural are clearly portrayed . Hamlet and Macbeth were such good examples that were thoroughly discussed here to account for the two hypotheses .

A ghost , appearing in the form of Hamlet's father , makes several appearances in the play . It first appears to the watchmen , Marcellus and Bernardo , along with Horatio near the guardsmen's post . The ghost says nothing to them and is perceived with fear and apprehension , It harrows me with fear and wonder . It is not until the appearance of Hamlet that the ghost speaks , and only then after Horatio has expressed his fears about Hamlet following it , what if it tempt you toward the flood , my lord , or to the dreadful summit of the cliff . The conversation between the ghost and Hamlet serves as a catalyst for Hamlet's later action and provides insight in to

Hamlet's character . The information the ghost reveals incites Hamlet in to action against a situation he was already uncomfortable with , and now even more so . Hamlet is not quick to believe the ghost , The spirit that I have seen be a devil and perhaps out of my weakness and my melancholy .. abuses me to damn me and thus an aspect of Hamlet's character is revealed . Hamlet , having no suspicion of the ghost after the production by the players , encounters the ghost next in his mother's room . In this scene the ghost makes an appearance to whet Hamlet's almost blunted purpose . Hamlet is now convinced of the ghost and he no longer harbors any suspicion . He now listens to it , speak to her Hamlet .

In Hamlet , the supernatural is the guiding force behind Hamlet . The ghost ask Hamlet to seek revenge for the king 's death and Hamlet is thus propelled to set in to action a series of events that ends in Hamlet's death .

The supernatural occurs four times during the course of Macbeth , it occurs in all the appearances of the witches , in the appearance of Banquo's ghost , in the apparition with their prophesies , and in the air-drawn dagger that guides Macbeth towards his victim .

Of the supernatural phenomenon evident in Macbeth the witches are perhaps the most important . The witches represent Macbeth's evil ambitions , they are the catalyst which unleash Macbeth's evil aspirations .

Macbeth believes the witches and wishes to know more about the future so after the banquet he seeks them out at their cave wants to know the answers to his questions regardless of whether the consequence be violet and

destructive to nature . The witches promise to answer and at Macbeth's choice they add further unnatural ingredients to the cauldron and call up their masters . This is where the prophetic apparitions appear . The first apparition is Macbeth's own head (later to be cut off by Macduff) confirming fears of Macduff . The second apparition tells Macbeth that he cannot be harmed by no one of woman . This knowledge gives Macbeth a false sense of security because he believes that he cannot be harmed , yet Macduff was not of woman born , his mother was dead and a corpse when Macbeth was born . This leads to Macbeth's downfall . A child with a crown on his head , the third apparition represents Malcolm , Duncan's son . This apparition also gives Macbeth a false sense of security because of the Birnam Wood prophesy .

The appearance of Banquo's ghost provides insight in to Macbeth's character . It shows the level that Macbeth's mind has recessed to , when he sees the ghost he reacts with horror and upsets the guests . Macbeth wonder why murder had taken place many times in the past before it was prevented by law-statute purged the gentle weal and yet the dead are coming back .

The final form of the supernatural is the air-drawn dagger which leads Macbeth to his victim . When the dagger appears to him , Macbeth finally becomes victim to the delusions of his fevered brain . The dagger points to Duncan's room and appears to be covered in blood . The dagger buttresses the impact of this key scene in which Macbeth slays king Duncan .

The supernatural is a recurring aspects in many of the plays by William Shakespeare . In Hamlet and Macbeth the

supernatural is an integral part of the structure of the plot . In these plays the supernatural provides a catalyst for action by the characters . It supplies insight into the major players and it augments the impact of many key scenes .The supernatural appeals to the audience 'curiosity of the mysterious and thus strengthens their interest .

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study , the following recommendations are suggested :

1-When teaching Shakespeare to students in such a Sudanese setting where the concept of ghosts and apparitions are only mythological , tutors have to explain that these are only used as catalysts to stir to motions events .

2-Tutors have to explain that during Shakespearean time , England is just emerging from the dark ages and that a huge body of knowledge was built on myth.

3-Supernatural adds pleasure to the play and cultivate the interest of the audience who are varied from philosophers to carpenters and craftsmen in general .

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

This study puts forwards the following suggestions :

1-Supernatural is a vast and virgin area in Shakespearean plays and needs to be further explored

2-Acomparative study could be conducted on Sudanese concept of supernatural and that of Shakespeare's .

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Dedication

To My Beloved

Mother and Father

Mercy Upon them

Sudan University of Science & Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Investigating the Role that ghosts play in Shakespeare's plays

A thesis submitted for the Degree of M.A in English

By

Maha Mirghani Hassan Hammad

Supervised by

Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed

August 2016

الاستهلال

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
فَإِنَّمَا أَهْمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْنَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ
وَالَّذِیْنَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ"
صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ الْعَظِیْمِ
سُورَةُ الْمَجَادِلَةِ
الآیة (11)

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Abstract

The present study analyzes the of ghosts in two of Shakespeare's plays namely Hamlet and Macbeth .
The present study tries to achieve the following goals :

To show how ghosts play the role of a catalyst that stir up and accelerated the movement of events on the stage .

It also seeks to show that the audience during Shakespearean time is enamouredly infatuated by the prospect of ghosts .

The study also touches on and analyzed critically the personalities of king Claudius , Hamlet and Gertrude .

The study show the religion in Shakespearean time , witchcraft and the stance of the church against that .

The study tapped on issues connected with the community as the types of audience .

The study concluded by making specific recommendations and suggestions for further studies .

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