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CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

M. A. Part-I : English

Semester-II : (G-1 DSE-3)

British Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies

Text : William Shakespeare - *Hamlet* (1603)

(In accordance with National Education Policy 2020)
(Academic Year 2022-23 onwards)

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Preface

Dear students,

This book contains 'Self-Learning Material' on the core course Paper G-1 DSE-3 'British Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies' Text : William Shakespeare - *Hamlet* (1603). You are advised to read the syllabus prescribed for this paper carefully. The syllabus includes one text and four approaches to study this text. Each unit covers a detailed analysis of the text by using specific approach prescribed in the syllabus. These, four approaches highlights the interdisciplinarity.

Each unit is interspersed with ‘Check Your Progress’ exercises, which are simple questions requiring answers in a word, a phrase or a sentence each. The purpose of these 'Self-check Exercises' is to make you go back to the main unit and get your answers for these questions on your own. The model answers are provided at the end of each unit. But you should not look them up before you have tried to write your own answers.

Each unit gives you a list of reference books. You should find time to visit a college nearby to locate the original book as well as books on understanding the different approaches prescribed.

Exercises are given at the end of each unit, which contain broad-answer type questions which you have to face in the final examination. Try to answers these questions with the help of the course material provided in the units. Write answers in your own English, with the help of prescribed and reference books.

The content is presented in a simple and easy-to-understand mannor interpersed with 'Check Your Progress' type questions to boost the student's understanding of the topic.

We wish you all the best for your examination.

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Text : William Shakespeare - *Hamlet* (1603)
M. A. Part-I English Paper-G-1 DSE-3
British Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies

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Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2022-23 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

Unit-1

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Gender Studies

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1.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

- The meaning, features and historical background of the Gender Studies.
- The various views on Gender Studies.
- The social structure and gender roles in early modern England.

1.1 Gender Studies: Introduction

Gender Studies is an emerging area of study that is gaining a lot of contemplation on various issues in the contemporary world. The concept of gender, gender identities, and gender representations are now widely studied and discussed across the disciplines, and it has given rise to the new academic field called Gender

Studies. In simple words, Gender Studies explores the biological and cultural differences between genders and look at them from a critical angle in the light of the socio-cultural contexts. It is an interdisciplinary subject as many disciplines intervene in its perception and significantly contribute to its corpus of literature. This is an area of study that is constantly being reshaped with many new approaches in different contexts and situations.

Gender is the most important socio-cultural study of men and women on the basis of principles of patriarchy through which we can scrutinize the discourses produced in the different periods of history for totally different and amazing perceptions. The discipline studies the various experiences of women who faced the social atrocities, domestic violence, identity crises and gross inequality due to the patriarchal social system. Gender becomes a complicated term, when it is approached through the waves of Feminism. It is often difficult to understand exactly what is meant by the term 'gender' and in what sense it differs from the term 'sex'. In accordance to the theorists of Gender Studies, 'sex' refers to the biological category that uses the nomenclatures like 'male' and 'female' to categorize humans; whereas 'gender' refers to the stereotypes of social behavior constructed by the society and culture. However, all these nomenclatures become overlapping and bluer, when it is used to qualify Masculinity and Femininity.

1.2 Gender: Etymology and Definitions:

Etymological origin of the term 'Gender' is derived from the Latin word "*genus*" referring to kind or race. Latin word *genus* is based on the Middle English word which was created to mean "birth", "family" and "nation". Such a usage, according to Aristotle, was probably introduced by Pythagoras in the 5th century B.C.

According to Henry Watson Fowler, an English lexicographer, in his Dictionary of *Modern English Usage*, "gender… is a grammatical term only. To talk of persons...of the masculine or feminine g[ender], meaning of the male or female sex, is either a jocularity (permissible or not according to context) or a blunder ".

However, this meaning of the term cannot be considered in the contemporary period as over the course of time it accumulated different connotations from different perspectives. In the contemporary academics, the definition surpassed from its linguistic sense and formulated more valid and acceptable definition in the context of

the gender perceptions of the period. Therein, it has meant more than just an alternative word for "sex", even though one should not say it has no connection with the latter. It is usually said that the distinction between "gender" and "sex" had been introduced by a sexologist named John Money, in 1955, in *An Examination of Some Basic Sexual Concepts: The Evidence of Human Hermaphroditism*. For him, the concept of gender should not be confined to the masculine/feminine dichotomy. It had more to do with social roles, mannerisms, behavior, identity and, ultimately, a "man-made" category (that is, a social construct). This sense of the term, however, would not become popular until the 1970s, when it was incorporated into feminist theory.

He also coined the notion of 'gender role', which consisted of the actions, or responses that may reveal one's status as a boy, man, girl or woman in a given society. Gender roles might refer to activities, clothing, speech patterns, and occupations that are stereotypically assigned by society to individuals according to their sexes. Until recently, household related work, for example, was solely classified as feminine work. Therefore, society expects women to perform such tasks. Although some change has been seen on various fronts, gender divisions can still be widely felt. Notwithstanding, the world of sports and jobs are also divided into gendered notions. In other words, each and every activity of the world is bifurcated according to gender. However, such divisions are not 'natural', but essentially a social construct and therefore susceptible to change. This assumption is advocated for by feminists as well as those in the field of Gender Studies.

In other words, sex is a fixed concept which does not change across the societies; however, gender is in a state of flux and varies from one society to another. The notion of gender is also constantly shows changes and alterations in its perception through the periods of history.

1.3 Gender Studies: A Historical Overview

After studying the meanings of the term "gender" it is necessary to know the initiation of Gender Studies in the academic context and its position in the Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the contemporary period. The historical overview of Gender Studies reveals that the approaches developed in this direction started from its primitive understanding in terms of biological identification; to the socio-cultural perspective; to the Subaltern Studies; to the recently invented Queer Studies. The

modern approach and the well-established principles of Gender Studies, allow the researchers and critics to scrutinize the socio-political discourses produced over the course of history. The discipline examines the ways in which historical, cultural, and social events shape the role of gender in different societies and at the same time how these events were influenced reciprocally due to the gender orientations of the society. Recently, the field of Gender Studies, while focusing on the differences between genders, also concentrates at sexual differences and avoids considering the binary definitions of gender categories.

In the western context, the origin of gender category can be seen as ancient as the holy *Bible*. The popular story of Adam and Eve has not only influenced the gender perception in Western society but also shaped the literature representing men and women in the same direction. Eve is seen as disobedient, seductive, and as a subordinate companion for Adam. This story has communicated religious and social values of Western societies, simultaneously implying that this interpretation is God-ordained and universal. It has provided a good source of living method in family and society with a reason to regulate and restrict the power and freedom of women in social, sexual, economic, political, and religious terms, etc.

The study of Gender issues can also be traced in the work of Ancient Rome. In it Gender and sexuality were both found in fluidity. Such examples are seen in the popular poems of the lesbian poet Sappho. However, even then, misogyny was common, as evident in Homer's *The Odyssey*. According to Thomas Laqueur, the scholar of Gender Studies, in the ancient time all the way up through the Renaissance; gender was structured differently than it was represented in today's literature. Men and women were seen as two 'versions' of one sex, but men were to be treated in greater order. However, up to the eighteenth century in the West, gender categories had been naturalized which later in the twentieth century occupied the strong binary perceptions of gender. During the eighteenth century the western world adopted the principles of reason and science that highlighted the Natural laws which logically explain the world. On this basis the cultural phenomenon of the Enlightenment highlighted the drastic intrinsic differences between the two genders. This idea of sexual polarity between men and women, viewing them as opposites or counterparts, would continue on throughout history thereafter. Unlike the previous idea of two versions of the same sex, men and women were now seen as wholly polar counterparts. However, there were a few counterweights on the tipping scale of strict

gender roles. The eighteenth century emphasized public ceremony and display, and created an environment of continuous 'acting' that many scholars believe may have encouraged a view of gender and other social constructs as performative rather than natural. In other words performance based gender construction was took place instead of natural phenomena of men and women. Furthermore, the idea of absolute rights that originated in Enlightenment was soon applied to women by many feminists in the same period.

Then, the gradual development is seen in the rise of the middle-class in the 19th and 20th centuries birthed the concept of a nuclear family with bifurcation of action and reaction of men and women. Women were encouraged to remain in the private sphere, and make their home as a refuge from the ills of industrialized society. The public sphere encompassed the burgeoning capitalist economy of the time, and was meant for men to do business and politics. The period of postmodernism and post structuralism also influenced gender theory, that loosened the previously fixed identities associated with gender and included the queer theories.

A number of new deliberations concerning Gender Studies were held, which concludes that the gender roles have persisted throughout the history and across the cultures. The masculine roles are based on men's greater physical strength and lack of responsibility for child and hearth, which further have encouraged them to take on more aggressive behaviors in society. As a result, women were confined to the household duties and her social responsibilities were minimized. Thus, the theory of gender at the very beginning was based on biological differences but soon it has been challenged by the scholars. As a result, in the wake of new studies, the Western binary perception of gender was denied.

Throughout history, gender has played an influential role in how people interact and functions in the society, which can be observed by reviewing different historical events. Such different views allow us to open up different interpretations of these literary artifacts.

1.4 Gender: A Brief Theory

After studying the various definitions and observations of historical development of gender it is observed that there is recent development in its approach. It becomes essential to have a review of all the theories which can further promote an eclectic perception of gender that can be applied to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Gender Studies is a well-established theory as it has the strong historical roots. The women's liberation movement was prominent in the mid to late 20th century, and sought to question the traditional gender roles which existed at the time. Gender Studies is new in the academic field and it was not acknowledged until 1960. Women's liberation movement began in the 1960s and feminist scholars set out to unravel the assumptions regarding gender and to determine the differences between women and men. The lesbian and gay movements of the 1970s and onward also brought the discussion of sexuality to the table, and academics rightly noted that gender and sexuality were inextricably linked, and thus needed to be studied together. Soon, these fields were combined into the comprehensive field of Gender Studies. The emphasis on the practical rights of women in contemporary societies, women's identity and the representation of women in media and culture converged with early literary gender work.

As an academic field of inquiry, Gender Studies is relatively new study. In fact, the academic study of gender can be traced back to the 1960s, and it should be understood in its connection with tracing the conclusion of the women's liberation movement from the 1960s to the early 1980s as feminist scholars began to question the characteristics of women and men. This new perspective of gender began by viewing the different events which have created our current attributes of each gender: cultural, social, and historical. Initially, feminist scholar began inspecting the traits that categorize femininity; however, eventually men began looking at ways of masculinity, thus, new approach has created the broader study of gender. Today, this new approach to the study of gender theory has classified previous men and women characteristics as 'historical subjects'. In other words, until the 1970s, besides Sociology, gender had not been a concerned for Social Sciences, the Arts or the Humanities.

In order to refurbish the prejudiced Western patriarchal culture that only considers the male centered views on gender, Gender Studies tried to redefine the gender related terms. English and western literature excluded female place and their values in socio-cultural life. As a result, literature has marginalized not only female characters but also female writers from the literary canon. In this light Elaine Showalter, one of the significant of feminist literary critic in her book A *Literature of Their Own* (1977) intended to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature. Her theory includes three major aspects: (i) – the examination of

female writers and their place in literary history; by means of which one should notice the way women had been "pushed" to its margins or even left out of it (ii) – the analysis of how female characters were treated in books written both by male and female writers; (iii) and, most importantly, the discovery and exploration of a canon of literature written by women. It seems that she attempted to revise the place and space of women that was once denied place for women.

Peter Barry in his Beginning theory scrutinized the expressed views of feminist critics on gender, the space and place given to women in literatures on the basis of political reason and how they were assigned to limited roles. He also investigates whether women are different from men due to biology or social constructions. According to him feminist critics read literature as political in relation to patriarchy and examine female roles as women characters are viewed as 'the other'. In addition to that Barry explains how the feminist perspectives have been changed throughout the formative years of feminist criticism in the context of gender. He says that in the 1970s, the focus was on men and inequality. In the 1980s, the focus switched to the female characters instead of the male character and the focus was laid on reconstruction of the image of women from tradition to modern. Such reconstruction/deconstruction in modern period often empowers women's status and literature and female authors.

Gendered literature seems a complicated literature since the complexity of gender differences observed by feminist critics in the context of class, race, religion, culture, etc. Therefore, the text should be read and understood in the context of patriarchal structure which often creates hierarchical structure in society. Literature too embodies the compound consequences of patriarchal structure for instance few feminists look at domestic enslavement, violence, oppression and some may highlight freedom and identity of women.

There is a huge difference between the way literature written in the early modern period (Elizabethan and Jacobean) and in today. In day- today's literature we have the issues of women empowerment, awareness of one's own freedom and chosen life style, etc. but in the Shakespearian time one has to follow the contemporary norms of social structure and social roles in which women used to live. Though, literature did not reflect the condition of inequality between men and women, it shows women's plight in patriarchy. In other words, Shakespeare's contemporary authors show stereotypical women and men and their roles in society.

In this light Kate Millet argues that, within stereotypes and sex roles, there are differences between femininity and masculinity. She explains that women ('femininity') are domestic, virtuous, and passive while men ('masculinity') are ambitious, aggressive, and active. But she clears that this is not bifurcated on the basis of biology. Thus, one can say that gender is socio-cultural product.

Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* expresses theory of 'gender performativity'. Her view is one becomes a woman, or a man, based on one's behavior and adaption to gendered norms. "Identity is performatively constituted" in other words gender is performative. According to Butler performance of men or women role is assigned and accepted by society and it may vary from person to person and culture to culture. Thus, gender is created in society and can, consequently, be changed or ended. The same society could allow to deconstruct the previous notions of gender that once static and natural constructed accordingly essentialist views. Butler is of the view that sex should not be understood as a natural and biological product as role and performance are advocated by repetition in culture. In other words, since gender entails a role, and roles are the culmination of actions, gender must also be a culmination of actions. In making this claim, Butler extends the idea that there is nothing inherent to gender identity by showing that an individual can vary his or her performance of gender from moment to moment. In other words, though gender roles are constructed/ constituted in society, it doesn't mean that one can follow the same identity forever.

There are number of deliberations and discussions for formation and qualifying characteristics of masculinity and femineity respectively. As pointed out Butler's theory of performativity uncovers that gender is defined on the basis of actual performance in reality. One's performance in society itself is fact and his or her performative characteristics qualify to be a woman and femineity and to be a man and masculinity. In other words, one's gender identity is not created by the biological gender, but by one's behavior and actions. It is the society which forms and create its social structure from which one cannot escape from one's adopted role and acts like a man or woman. However, there is a possibility of overlapping characteristics of gender. One may be a masculine woman or feminine man if he or she possesses mixed efficacies of a man or woman.

However, this approach goes against what essentialist believes in binary opposition of a man and a woman and according to them one is either a man or a

woman. Due to such natural bifurcation a man cannot essentially be a feminine man or masculine woman. Essentialism argues that there are clear differences between men and women. To erase such binary opposition of essentialism, feminist critics concentrate on deconstruction of literature. They challenge the patriarchal based very notions of masculine and feminine identity. Such identity prevents women's freedom and confined to them to their traditional roles. Gender identity often forms on the basis of biological traits and as a result we have gender gap. To fight against patriarchy, the distinction of femininity and masculinity must be erased so that equity allows men and women an equal opportunity to create their own identity without considering feminine and masculine efficacies or traits.

John Stuart Mill expresses his views on women's enslavement. To some extent today's condition is different from that of the history and tradition. By forcefully, as a slave she is confined within family duties for family members before marriage. He compares women to slave who must work for the family maintaining all kinds of healthy relationship. Accordingly, the nod of the father they have to marry without their own consent. He further says that if women refused to do so according to the head of the family, they would be diagnosed with hysteria. Hysteria was often an explanation when women did not behave according to gender stereotypes in patriarchy. In this context Mill remarks that after deliberations on stereotypical role-emotional and irrationality, women were diagnosed and labelled with hysteria by men without having observation on their emotions and irrationality.

In addition to that Ania Loomba, the well-known critic follows Stephan Greenblatt's New Historicism theory. It is the historicist theory that explores how to interpret the text. A school of thought often referred to as New Historicism that advocates literary study has to be based on the historical beliefs of the author's time period. She has argued that the critic always needs to keep in mind the attitudes toward gender and race in the author's time. One has to concentrate on history and its culture and time from which no product of literature is interpreted. Thus, Historicist argument is the dominant factor in studying gender in day today's life. According to her future study is likely to continue these trends, balancing the need to assess what are common gender roles over time and geographic space and what roles are more specific to the specific time and particular place.

1.5 *Hamlet*: Text Summary

Hamlet is a play written by William Shakespeare. It is estimated to have been written between 1599 and 1601. One of Shakespeare's best-known and most highly regarded works. Hamlet is a tragedy which deals with the themes, such as love, revenge, gender, mental destabilization and death, etc.

The play centers on Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. When Hamlet's father is killed by Claudius, Hamlet's uncle who marries his mother and becomes a king of Denmark. In the form of ghost Hamlet's father appears to him and tells that he was murdered by Claudius, and he wants Hamlet to kill Claudius to avenge his death. However, Hamlet thinks he needs evidence before taking any action against his uncle. For proof he pretends to be mentally ill while he investigates the claims made by his father's ghost. While doing so he deeply engrossed and mistakenly kills Polonius, believing him to be Claudius. Polonius is the father of Ophelia. Hearing the death of his father, Ophelia has become a completely mad and out of her mental control she drowns herself into the river. To avenge, Laertes, the son of Polonius accepted the challenge of Claudius, the king and fight against Hamlet. As a result, the series of death occur and ends the lives of Hamlet, his mother Gertrude, and Claudius at the end of the play.

Act Wise Summary:

Act I

The play opens on a cold night on the ramparts of Elsinore, the Danish royal castle; Bernardo and Marcellus, the guards discuss a wandering ghost resembling the late King Hamlet which they have recently seen and they decide to tell Hamlet about it. As usual, the next day the court gathers where the wedding ceremony takes place between the King's widow Gertrude to his brother, Claudius. Hamlet is unhappy about his mother's wedding. Horatio and the guards inform Hamlet about the ghost. The later scene shows us a communication between the new King's advisor, Polonius, and his son and daughter, Laertes and Ophelia. Both her father and brother advise Ophelia against her romantic interest in Hamlet and she agrees not to see him anymore.

That very night, Hamlet is told about his father's appearance in the form of ghost and he sees him and the ghost tells him that he was murdered by Claudius, and

he wants Hamlet to avenge his murder by killing Claudius. However, he doesn't want Hamlet to harm Gertrude in any way. Hamlet agrees to his father's wishes and the ghost vanishes. He tells the actual plan of avenge to Horatio, the friend of Hamlet and act as though he has gone mad but he remains uncertain of the ghost's reliability.

Act II

As per the plan Hamlet starts acting like a madman. Once acting strangely, he reaches to Ophelia in a disgust status that makes her to break her relationship with Hamlet. She tells to her father about Hamlet whose behavior is extremely out of character. Polonius is convinced that Hamlet is still in love with Ophelia, and he tells Claudius. In accordance with Polonius Ophelia start to spy on Hamlet to try and find a reason for his strange behavior.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the batchmates and friend of Hamlet are asked to visit to Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, is also concerned about the change in Hamlet's life style. She asks, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to try and find out what's wrong with him. Though, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern fail to spy Hamlet's actual status, it is Polonius who tells Claudius and Gertrude his theory regarding Hamlet's behavior. As a mad, Hamlet insults Polonius all the while. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive, Hamlet greets them warmly but quickly identifies that they are there to spy on him for Claudius. Meanwhile Polonius is told by a messenger from Norway that the prince Fortinbras wanted to fight against Poland instead of Denmark and his deported military will travel via the region of Denmark to Poland.

Hamlet, after welcoming the actors and dismissing his friends-turned-spies, Hamlet then asks a travelling theatre company then arrives at the palace to stage the following night, *The Murder of Gonzago*, a play featuring a death in the style of his father's murder. Hamlet intends to study Claudius's reaction to the play, and thereby determine the truth of the ghost's story of Claudius's guilt.

Act III

Polonius and Claudius wanted to observe the temperament of Hamlet so as per the forceful instruction given by Polonius to Ophelia, she meets and tries to return back the gifts to Hamlet that she received from Hamlet as a token of love. The returning gift has not been a good omen to Hamlet, after that she declares her breakup with him. Listening her breakup announcement, Hamlet retorts and blames

her changing behavior and accuses her of immodesty and cries. He judges her personality and asks her to be a nun instead to marry someone. This confuses Polonius and Claudius, who are spying on the pair. They conclude that Hamlet's madness hasn't been caused by Ophelia. In order to hide the true nature of Hamlet, Claudius thinks Hamlet should be sent away to live in England if nobody can find out what's wrong with him. After half an hour, the court assemble to see the declared drama. Watching the murder scene of Hamlet's father, Claudius immediately leaves the hall, it seems for Hamlet that the ghost story was a true and Claudius is responsible for his father's death. Quickly Hamlet decides to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

On the way to visit his mother's chamber, Hamlet has listened the prayer by Claudius in his chamber, Hamlet thinks it is good opportunity to kill Claudius but in the very next moment, he withdraws his thought, thinking that if Claudius is killed during his prayer time, he will directly reach to heaven without having any pain. As he reaches in the bedchamber of Gertrude, there is a clash and bitter fight takes place between Gertrude and Hamlet. When Hamlet hears someone moving behind a curtain, he thinks it's Claudius, and stabs the intruder. He then realizes that the killed man is not Claudius but Polonius. Again, the King's ghost appears and asks him not to disturb his mother at any cost. However, Gertrude can't see the ghost, and thinks Hamlet's apparently one-sided conversation is proof that he's gone mad. The scene ends with Hamlet dragging Polonius's body.

Act IV

While answering the question asked by Claudius, on whereabout of the dead body of Polonius, Hamlet answers in the form of joke that creates fearful atmosphere. Fearing for his life, Claudius decides to send Hamlet out of nation. Claudius sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany Hamlet to England with a sealed letter to the English king requesting that Hamlet be executed immediately. But on the way, Hamlet discovers the confidential letter, so he decides to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in his place. Drafting a new letter, he handovers to them. Meanwhile, Hamlet sends a letter to his friend Horatio in which he says how he has been caught in the hands of sea spies and now he is returning to the Denmark from the same spy boat very soon.

Due to the grief at Polonius death, Ophelia wanders everywhere in Elsinore. The situation of the murder of Polonius and the madness of Ophelia, makes Laertes forcefully back to Denmark from France. Claudius convinces Laertes that Hamlet is solely responsible for his family's tragedy. Claudius condition has worsened when he receives new of Hamlet that he is returning back to Denmark foiling Claudius's plan. Hearing the news, of Hamlet's arrival safely, Claudius switches his plan to tactics, proposing a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet to settle their differences. And for fight he will handle poisoned sword to Laertes to kill Hamlet immediately and if it is failed, Claudius will offer Hamlet poisoned wine as a congratulation. Later, we see that Gertrude is reported that Ophelia has drowned, though it is unclear whether it was suicide or an accident caused by her madness. In this way the scene ended with a tragic event of death of a daughter and father.

Act V

Laertes has accused Hamlet for his father and sister's death and he decides to avenge against Hamlet soon. So, he plans along with Claudius to kill Hamlet. Hamlet as per his pre-plan and taken decision about Hamlet, he has convinced Laertes to work out on the same plan. Later we see Hamlet meets Horatio at the sight of graveyard, where the funeral procession of Polonius is reached. As hamlet sees the corpus of Ophelia, Hamlet proclaims how he did love than any other person. During the funeral, Hamlet and Laertes have a fight. Later we Back at Elsinore, where Hamlet explains to Horatio that he had discovered Claudius's letter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's belongings and replaced it with a forged copy indicating that his former friends should be killed instead. A foppish courtier, Osric, informs that the fencing challenge is organized between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet, accepts the challenge despite Horatio's plea not to participate in the pre-planned fight.

At the duel, Hamlet refuses to drink the poisoned wine, which has been prepared to offer Hamlet if he wins the battle. However, his mother, Gertrude, drinks it, and dies quickly. On the other hand, Laertes and Hamlet each wounds each other. As he is to die, Laertes confesses the plot that he and Claudius have planned to kill Hamlet. Laertes asks for Hamlet's forgiveness. Hamlet then stabs Claudius with the poisoned sword, killing him. Hamlet, of course, has also been stabbed with the poisoned blade. In his last breath, he asks Horatio to tell the future King about him. The scene ends with Hamlet's deaths and the arrival of prince Fortinbras at the sight of fight where he sees the scattered dead bodies of Hamlet, Laertes, Claudius and Gertrude. He

expresses his deep sorrows on the noble deaths. In accordance with Hamlet, Horatio conveys the message to Fortinbras and Fortinbras wears the crown of Denmark.

1.6 *Hamlet*: Gender Analysis:

(Please note that you must read the play carefully)

In order to perceive Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* from the perspective of gender studies, it is necessary to understand the patriarchal social system of Elizabethan and Jacobean era. The historical literature available on Shakespeare's time reveal that the patriarchal culture was very strong and it was exercised in the form of masculine power and Shakespeare during his time was obligated to stick to contemporary gender norms. Therefore, the fundament of ideological patriarchy should be taken into consideration in relationships between men and women.

In *Hamlet*, almost all the major male characters manipulate the lives of Gertrude and Ophelia in all the way from beginning to the end of the play. These are the only two female characters have been utilized against the backdrop of gender. Such exploitation is clearly seen in the plot where there is a power exercise is carried out not only against the female characters but also against male characters. The patriarchal culture, social structure and social roles are very deeply rooted despite of woman (female) ruler.

The male characters of the play use women as weapons against each other and by using their bodies and emotions against other men, they manipulate their decisions in their favour. However, though Shakespeare has depicted two women characters, they have little or no power. It can be seen that these women do not have any kind of independence from their male counterparts. It should be noted that they try to escape from the clutches of the patriarchal society, but they could not get success in it. Their thoughts, in few occasions may resemble with the modern feminist thoughts, but their efforts are not in terms of female liberation or rejection of social gender norms.

In the whole play Gertrude has no any space to present independently on the stage instead she is often present when Hamlet or Claudius is present. There is no any solid and powerful soliloquy, allotted to her compare to male characters. Her limited physical presence or role typifies something about her character in that she is unable to exist as a person separate from the stronger male characters to which her

relationship is considered nearest and dearest one in the play. For Hamlet, Claudius, Polonius and Laertes, the women characters are nothing but the puppets which they can utilize in different situations for the sake of power politics. Gertrude's role appears as a source of emotion and conflict for male characters, for example, Hamlet expresses his disgust regarding the marriage of Gertrude to his uncle Claudius. Hamlet's feelings regarding her are part of his seemingly uncontrolled rage and madness which is seen in his remark:

> His father is two months—no, not even that much, not two. A king so excellent, in comparison to Claudius he was like a god compared to a goat. My father was so loving toward my mother that he would not let the wind blow too hard on her face. Heaven above, must I remember? She would hang on his arm, as if the more time she spent with him, the more she wanted to be with him. And yet, within a month of my father's death—no, don't think about it. Women, curse your weakness! (Act I, Scene ii)

It seems that Hamlet criticizes his mother's uncontrolled sexual desires and on the basis of his mother's behavior he passes his comment that all women are 'frail', a classically misogynistic view. In other words, Hamlet expresses that all women are weak.

For cunning and crafty Claudius, Gertrude is a symbol of power and victory, because his marriage to her represents the shift of power from his brother to him that he has been waiting to be a powerful king. The way the men used to exercise their power and dominance over each other is possible only because of Gertrude. Thus, she is just an instrument used by men. In addition to that she has very less authority as a mother of Hamlet and Queen of Denmark. It can be evidenced when Hamlet goes mad, instead of Gertrude, his newlywed husband takes the decision that Hamlet should be sent to England.

Like Gertrude, Ophelia has possessed nothing but an empty role but assigned a number of duties within the home and outside the home. She is an important tool to Hamlet, Polonius and Laertes. Throughout the play, Ophelia is used by her family as well as Hamlet, and her speech reflects her purpose as a passive object. Ophelia is treated as a sexual object by Hamlet.

In the very first act when Laertes suspects Ophelia's intimacy with Hamlet, he, warns her to stay away from Hamlet at any cost and teaches socio-cultural morality

to her. He also warns her of the pitfalls of premarital sex. However, he implies that premarital sex is only an issue for women and that man like himself should not be concerned about involvement in it. This double standard for men and women was especially prevalent in Elizabethan times and Ophelia suffers greatly from it. It seems that the way the men utilize the social norms are flexible made for them and not for women. There is no freedom to women. However, after Laertes didacticism with Ophelia in the context of her chastity, she states that it is her most important treasure; Ophelia hits back and addresses the double standard. She sarcastically retorts in Act 1 Scene 3 that:

> "I shall the effect of this good lesson keep/As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother, / Do not, as some ungracious pastors do, / Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven, / Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine, / Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads/ And recks not his own rede" (Act I, Scene iii)

At this moment in the play, Ophelia represents as an honest and feminist voice as she realizes the hypocrisy of men at home and in society. The larger theme represented in this scene is the double standard that suppresses the female characters throughout *Hamlet*. In this scene it can be said that Ophelia, opens a possibility of revolt against the patriarchal suppression, but it is too weak to change it into revolution which we actually observe in 1970s.

Being the father of Ophelia, Polonius too justifies her in various situations. In act III, Polonius asks Ophelia that she should be thought like a baby instead like a mature woman. Like Laertes he too wanted to confine Ophelia's intellectual liberty and her individuality. She follows her father's advice because she accepts his authority over her. In Hamlet's 'mad scene' Polonius wanted to use her innocence so that he could identify the true mindset of Hamlet. Just like Claudius's use of Gertrude, Polonius uses Ophelia to assert dominance and control over other male characters.

Verbal violence and oppression is also seen in Hamlet's attitude and behavior. Whenever there is a verbal conflict between Hamlet and Ophelia, he often treats her as 'other' despite having close relationship with her. He thinks very little of her. In Act III when they get into a fight, he asks her to be nun. He also advises her if she

wanted to marry, she should marry with a fool because he thinks that no wise man can marry a woman like Ophelia.

As pointed above, on the basis of his own observations and remarks on his mother and Ophelia Hamlet generates his idea that women have bad omens through which they influence on men and make them lose honor and virtue. This very idea of Hamlet is introduced as it has been originated from the treatment given by Adam to Eve. The story of 'Adam and Eve' is used to justify in the context of gender treatment which is prevalent in literature. However, it is Ophelia who ignores his harsh words.

Hamlet continues his remarks in Act III referring to women as

> "breeders of sinners" and saying he has "heard of your paintings too, well/ enough. God has given you one face and you/ make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and/ you lisp; and nickname God's creatures and make/ your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no/ more on't. It hath made me mad" (Act III)

According to Hamlet, women's nature is innately deceptive. He thinks that women hide their natural face given by the God through makeup to deceive men. Women do it to please rich men like him to achieve goals. Hamlet says it is naturally men are assigned to achieve the goal they desired in life. It is ironic and hypocritical that Hamlet attacking women making difference between the goals of men and women.

Polonius and Laertes control Ophelia through family relations which are also based on the patriarchal principles. According to which, the women are considered as pride or asset of the family. Ophelia's love relationship with Hamlet is unacceptable for her brother and father, because they think that Ophelia might bring them social stigma by getting pregnant before marriage. Hamlet and Ophelia have a conversation while attending the play. Hamlet makes many sexual dialogues and reference to Ophelia, and Ophelia responds in the most innocent and oblivious way that she can maintain. Many gender theorists have assumed her simple responses to Hamlet's rather clear sexual innuendos are intentional as Ophelia wants to maintain her reputation as pure by not appearing knowledgeable about sex. In this way, patriarchy controls the conversation and social behavior of Ophelia.

In Gertrude's chamber Hamlet kills Polonius, loses his control and goes mad, and leaves Ophelia despite his promises of love. Despite all such abuse, Ophelia does not fight back. Ophelia is used as an object by all the men in her life, yet she accepts it as her fate and duty. In Elizabethan time, women were expected to act as subservient to men. Thus, Ophelia is assigned to play the traditional role of daughter to Polonius and would-be-wife to Hamlet without exercising her freedom.

Shakespeare in Act IV experimented by giving the similar roles in similar situation to Ophelia and Hamlet. In other words, the situation emerged in both lives are similar after losing their fathers. In the beginning of the play the audience get informed that the King Hamlet was murdered. This lose of father enraged Hamlet. He wanted to avenge the true killer of his father and for this he pretended that he gone mad due to such an unbearable tragedy. This reaction, although somewhat doubtful in its authenticity, highlights Hamlet's mental control. His madness is intentional and deliberate. In other words, there is artificiality in his nature of madness.

Ophelia, on the other hand, when faced with the same circumstances, becomes truly insane. Although, both Hamlet and Ophelia have strong emotions about the deaths of their respective fathers, Hamlet's behavior shows that death of his father is not just an emotional loss but beyond that it is the failure of his family to keep the social power. However, the death of father for Ophelia is an emotional loss and as a result she truly gone insane on the very instance. This kind of differences also gave a significant insight in how the patriarchal social system influences the inter-personal and even intra-personal relations. Death of father for Ophelia is also an end of social security, which was endowed on her by the patriarchal system. It is traditionally believed that women are frail and weak which is explored by Hamlet in the death scene of Ophelia's father.

The patriarchal dictum "Boys Don't Cry" can be seen in *Hamlet*, when Hamlet was grieving for the death of his father, Claudius advises him that his sorrow should not be emotional and openly exposed. According to the socio-cultural norms of the period, if Hamlet does so it should be considered as unmanly. Claudius here directly or indirectly suggests that Hamlet's act of showing emotions is feminine and weak. Thus, Claudius projects these traits onto women.

In the case of Laertes' laments on his sisters drown; his grief to Ophelia is also temporal one and once he forgets the womanized things, he will come out from his personality. Laertes claims that once he stops crying, the emotional woman will be out of his personality, and he will be masculine again. It seems that he is pretending over the death of Ophelia. These examples illustrate how emotion is associated with women, and men are simply supposed to get revenge. Hamlet tries to avenge his father's murder and Laertes also plans to avenge against Hamlet as he thought that Hamlet is responsible for Ophelia's death. However Shakespeare shows Ophelia simply gets emotional, instead of thinking of revenge.

In order to show the innate emotional nature of women, Shakespeare introduced mad scene of Ophelia. In this scene, it is revealed that Ophelia becomes mad due to grief. Her ability of thinking rationally is turned into the suicidal ideation. But it can be observed that before committing suicide, she tries to feel her freedom. As her father dies, her role as an obedient daughter ends there and she becomes a free individual who can take her own decisions. The patriarchal norms no longer remained burden for her. In other words, the patriarch in her life is gone. In the mad scene, we see Ophelia who takes off her clothes in front of the King and Queen when she goes mad. She is now in nude position and she doesn't show any shame. It seems that like men she wanted to enjoy her sexual life without having any burden on her mind. This is a way for Ophelia to take back her sexual power, as she does what she wants and finally wields control over her own body. To be a nude means to be free from all sorts of conditions in the life. So being a representative of women, she uncovers that she can do anything like men. Due to the restrictions over her life, she could not enjoy her life fully and not even feel her power as an intelligent being. Her disrobing makes the other characters very uncomfortable, and Ophelia pushes away their attempts to clothe her, in sharp contrast to her passive obedience earlier. Ophelia is using her body as a weapon in a new way. Previously Hamlet, Polonius and Laertes had used her body as a sexual weapon against other men, but now Ophelia is using her body as a weapon for her own sake.

In addition to that her actions of stripping herself changed her position from marginal being to the centre of attraction. Ophelia has that much power and authority through which she makes the king uneasy, when she is mad. In the mad scene visually, she becomes in the focal point of the scene, while Claudius and Gertrude stand on the periphery. As she is free from all the conditions of patriarchy, she

expresses her sexual desires openly and it is seen in her attitudes and behavior. Her puzzling songs have cleared that how she had been in oppression from the men in her life. Her lyrical songs criticize the then existing masculine authority:

By Gis and by Saint Charity,

Alack, and fie, for shame!

Young men will do't, if they come to't.

By Cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me,

You promised me to wed."

He answers,

"So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

An thou hadst not come to my bed."

(Act IV Scene v)

This song of lament seems to uncover how Hamlet has deceived Ophelia. He has promised her to marry but before that he had sex with her. But afterwards refuses to marry saying she is no longer pure. Ophelia seems to hysterically obsess over the double standards. This double standard of her society is the major reason behind her madness, but instead of looking at the main reason, the men feel uneasy as their patriarchal power is disrobed with the clothes of Ophelia. Thus, through this song she tries to uncover her depression which is a result of the patriarchal hypocrisy, oppression and suppression.

In the 'flower giving' scene, flowers are selected and given to the people who existed in the room not by the choices of their own but selected by Ophelia according to the power and authority they have possessed in society. Accordingly, her assumptions she exposes the true people and talks truth in her madness. Before becoming a mad, she couldn't dare to reveal her thoughts about the people who surround her, but now she has power and authority. In her power and authority, she expresses what she desires. Her act of handing flowers to Laertes, Gertrude and Claudius, symbolically revels her true feelings. It should be noted here that Shakespeare also dare not suggest that the patriarchal principles are unjust against women and in order to suggest it indirectly he uses the madness of the character.

Male character's madness is hypocritical and a shroud trick however, female character's madness is her lament for the exploitation she faced during her life.

So, one can claim that if women characters had power and authority like men, such as Hamlet, Polonius, and Claudius, women would have been competed men and exercised peace in life. In the play, power and authority of men is used to encroach other's lives to control others. Most often women lack of such power and authority and that is why women have been victimized. It is also indirectly revealed that if women possess individuality and power, they may have established equity.

But unfortunately, Shakespeare has not sustained this character in the play as the literary motif and the meaning might have formed a rebel against the social strata for whom he is writing his plays. As soon as Ophelia gains her power and rejected the social norms, she dies. She drowned in the water when by felling from the Willow tree branch where she sat. The flowers symbolize her power as a truth-teller. Her heavy clothing, which is considered as a preserver of her chastity, is the thing that ultimately dragged her to her death. Her clothes can be viewed as a symbol of the patriarchal oppression of women's sexuality, which ultimately lead her to death. Thus, patriarchal oppression of her sexuality by men and society in the play is the ultimate cause of her death. As a madwoman, she is seen as a heroine for rebelling against the gender stereotypes and social orders of the Shakespearean era. Almost all the characters were killed each other. William Shakespeare very skillfully suggested his contemporary life and gender conditions.

Summary:

Socio-cultural construction of gender against the background of patriarchal system shapes and influences every person and his/her interactions with the society. Prince Hamlet is influenced from the ideology of his father, King Hamlet. But for him it is not easy to exercise the way his father exercised through power and authority that is why he is unable to kill Claudius to avenge of his father's murder. He thinks more and acts less than Fortinbras. To hide his poor masculinity and his failure, he constantly criticizes Ophelia ironically. Tradition to tradition gender difference between men and women is maintained on the basis of physical and emotional level and such thoughts are pervasive and carried through culture in every society. The treatment of Laertes, Polonius, and Hamlet to Ophelia shows that she has constantly been confined to her limited role which is prescribed by gender. In

other words, for the sake of their individuality, the male characters control over her emotional, intellectual and physical levels. Through, several textual evidences the idea of the belittlement of women is recurring in the play. We observed that women are negatively portrayed in the patriarchal world of Shakespearean time. Overall treatment given to women seems that, women don't have any space and place to establish their footprint in the patriarchal space. Ophelia is victimized by such ideology of difference, but when she is in the state of madness, she breaks all sorts of the limitations of gender and shows gender roles are ever shifting and dynamics.

Thus, the analysis of Hamlet from gender perspective reveals that the women characters were suppressed and oppressed by the men counterparts. In the play women is not treated as an intellectual being, but is seen as a power mandate, object of sexual pleasure, insanely emotional, pride of the family and a soft target to satisfy the male ego. Double standard society uses women for different selfish purposes. The principles of gender studies, revealed a totally different perception of the play which no longer remains only a political and historical conflict for the political power but beyond that it is a picture of injustice carried out against the women by patriarchal society.

1.7 Check Your Progress:

i) In which of the following years was Hamlet most likely written?

a.1601 b. 1570 c.1581 d.1610

ii) Who speaks the famous "To be, or not to be" soliloquy?

a. Claudius b. Laertes c. The ghost d. Hamlet

iii) Who killed Fortinbras's father?

a. Hamlet's father b. Laertes

c. Prince Hamlet d. Fortinbras

iv) Which two characters in the play appear to be "mad" or insane?

a. Ophelia and Laertes b. Hamlet and Ophelia

c. Gertrude and Claudius d. Hamlet and Gertrude

v) How many female characters are staged in Hamlet?

a. One b. Two c. Three d. Four

vi) Which of the following characters survive the play?

a. Fortinbras, Horatio, and Osric

b. Prince Hamlet, Polonius, and Gertrude

c. Claudius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern

d. Ophelia, Laertes, and King Hamlet

vii) How does Ophelia die?

a. She drowns in the river. b. Hamlet strangles her.

c. She slits her wrists. d. Claudius stabs her.

viii) How many characters die during the course of the play?

a. Two b. Eight c. Five d. Seven

ix) In the play's conclusion, who arrives to take over the kingdom?

a. The Ghost b. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

c. Hamlet's cousin d. Fortinbras, the ruler of Norway

x) Which country did Prince Fortinbras rule?

a. Denmark b. England c. Scotland d. Norway

1.8 Terms to Remember:

Sex: The term "sex" refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. In other words, there are anatomical features (male and female reproductive systems are the most mentioned) that are able to determine whether an individual is male or female.

Gender: The term "Gender" is a term usually refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that are commonly associated with being male or female. Therefore, it is a product of social, cultural and psychoanalytical factors.

Gender stereotype: It is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are recurring and be performed by men and women.

Patriarchy: In its literal sense, it denotes as "the rule of the father". Historically, it came to refer to social systems dominated by men only. It resembles power relations

within a “traditional” family in which the father rules over the others. It is one of the significant terms in Gender Studies.

1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

i) a. 1601 ii) d. Hamletiii) a. Hamlet’s father iv) b. Hamlet and Ophelia

v) b. Two vi) a. Fortinbras, Horatio, and Osricvii) a. She drowns in the river.

viii)b. Eight ix) d. Fortinbras, the ruler of Norway x) d. Norway

1.10 Further Exercises:

i) “Hamlet’s attitude towards women is representation of Elizabethan social structure and gender role”. Discuss.

ii) Do other characters in the play share Hamlet’s attitude towards women?

iii) How does Gertrude react against patriarchal life style in *Hamlet*?

iv) What kind of advice does Laertes give to Ophelia in the context of gender role?

v) How does Ophelia use power and authority in her madness?

vi) Gertrude’s manipulation of Shakespearian contemporary gender roles. Explain.

vii) Illustrate Claudius' use of power and authority in *Hamlet*.

viii) Write an essay on gender representation reflected in *Hamlet*.

ix) Write a character sketch of Polonius.

x) What is Shakespeare’s view on gender?

xi) Write Short notes on:

a. Hamlet and Ophelia

b. Hamlet and Gertrude

c. Ophelia and Gertrude

d. Gertrude’s Remarriage

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Unit-2

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Psychology

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2.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

1. What is psychoanalysis and how it is relevant to literary studies,
2. The way Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been interpreted by Sigmund Freud and his followers,
3. The other opinions within psychoanalysis regarding Freud's interpretation of *Hamlet*,
4. The way *Hamlet* has been read and interpreted by Jacques Lacan,
5. The way Hamlet has been read by Feminist psychoanalysts.

2.1. Introduction:

Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1603) is one of the most analysed plays in literary history. It has been analysed from political, religious, philosophical, feminist, postcolonial, and many other perspectives. Psychological perspective is an important and popular perspective that has proved very fruitful when employed to analyse this play.

There is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology as both of them deal with human beings, their experiences, emotions and thought patterns, their problems, desires, and their individual and social concerns using a variety of concepts, methods, and approaches. David Lodge in his work entitled *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays* explains the meaning of literature thus:

> "... literature is a record of human consciousness, the richest and most comprehensive we have. (Lodge, 2002:10).

On the other hand, psychology may be defined as

> "the science that systematically studies and attempts to explain observable behaviour and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment" (Kagan & Havemann, 1968:13).

Psychology is a discipline which studies human mind and behaviour. Psychologists study everything related to the human experience - how the human brain works, consciousness, memory, reasoning, language, personality and mental

health. Psychology is both a science and a profession. As a science, psychology applies the scientific method to study psychological phenomena. A goal of psychology is not only to understand the processes that lie beneath human thinking and behaviour, but apply that understanding to solve practical problems.

Psychological theories are heavily used in literary analysis. Wellek and Warren (1963: 81) describe the meaning of psychology in literature as follows:

> "By 'psychology of literature', we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology)".

In the present unit, we shall be looking at psychoanalysis which builds on Freudian theories of psychology. We shall also see how psychoanalysis has been employed by Freud, Ernest Jones, Frederic Wertham, Jacques Lacan and others to come up with different interpretations of the play.

2.2 Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Criticism and *Hamlet*

Psychoanalysis is one of the many specialties in psychology. It has its own body of knowledge and treatment approaches. Freudian criticism or classical psychoanalytical criticism is concerned with the quest, discovery and the analysis of connections between the artists (creators, artificers) themselves and what they actually create (novels, poems, paintings, sculpture, buildings, music, etc.). As far as literature is concerned it analyses characters 'invented' by authors, the language they use and the 'Freudian imagery.' A literary character is treated as if it is a living human being. Twentieth century was to a large extent dominated by the Freudian school of psychoanalysis and hence it is important to understand the key elements of this theory.

A. Key Elements of Psychoanalytical Theory

Psychoanalysis is the treatment and the theories which are related to the unconscious mind which we are not aware of. It was given by Sigmund Freud in early 1890s.

The basic tenets of psychoanalysis include:

1. A person's development is determined not only by inherited traits bust also by events in early childhood which are often forgotten

2. Human behaviour and cognition is largely determined by irrational drives that are rooted in the unconscious
3. When we attempt to bring these drives into awareness , it triggers resistance in the form of defence mechanism, particularly, repression
4. Conflicts between conscious and unconscious material can result in mental disturbances
5. Unconscious material can be found in dreams and unintentional thoughts , including mannerisms and slip of the tongue
6. Patients can get free from the effects of the unconscious by bringing this material into the conscious mind through therapeutic intervention
7. Patients relive their infantile conflicts by projecting onto the analyst feelings of love, dependence and anger and this is called transference.

Now let's turn to Psychoanalytical Criticism. This kind of criticism serves as a lens for readers to use when interpreting texts. It is dependent on the idea that literature can provide insight to the subconscious of the author and characters. However, oftentimes the characters can be considered projections of the author, and their intentions are in fact more telling of the author than themselves. Freud said:

> "The dream-thoughts which we first come across as we proceed with our analysis often strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed; they are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech." (Freud, 1995: 54)

Psychoanalytic criticism requires close reading and insight because it is meant to discover things about the author not by what is said, but by what is left out and repressed. It delves into the subconscious of the author and requires much analysis in order for valid information to surface.

B. Freud's Psychoanalytical Criticism

Let's understand some key terms from Freud's Psychoanalytical Criticism.

I) **The mind:**

Freud believed actions are caused by the unconscious. Human beings are motivated by unconscious desires. The mind, according to Freud, can be divided into three levels of consciousness:

a) The conscious mind: This describes everything we are aware of and is responsible for rational mental processing. This sometimes includes memory, but often memory falls into the next category because we are not invariably aware of memory (we have to consciously retrieve it).

b) The preconscious mind: This describes the greater part of our memories. We are not aware of memory all the time, but it can be retrieved and brought into consciousness when needed.

c) The unconscious mind: This describes feeling, memory and thought that are not included in our conscious or preconscious. This generally includes repressed memory and thought such as pain, conflict, or fear. Although the unconscious mind seems unimportant, it determines much of our action and behavior according to Freud.

II) Human psyche: Freud saw the human psyche in 3 parts:

1. **The id**: This describes the unconscious and instinctive component of the human psyche. To understand this, it helps to think of a newborn child's psyche as only id - instinctive and impulsive. This makes the id primitive and all its traits are inherited, not learned. The id is dependent on instant gratification and the pleasure principle. The *pleasure principle* asserts the idea that every desire and need should be met, no matter what the cost. It is important to remember that the id is driven by *libido*, where desires and impulses stem from.

2. **The ego**: This functions in the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious mind. The ego expands upon the id, meeting halfway between desires and respectability. The ego acknowledges the needs of others while trying to meet desires and deals with reality. The ego depends on the reality principle, which surveys the pros and cons of acting upon certain impulses. The ego attempts to fulfill desires, but only if they are deemed appropriate.

3. **The superego**: The superego is a highly developed ego. It attempts to fulfill wishes and desires but it is more concerned on moral values than desires or consequences. The superego is defined by morality and holds to a higher standard when compared to the ego. The superego has two parts: *ego ideal* (includes guidelines for positive behavior and encourages moral values and good judgment) and *conscience* (encourages moral conduct). The superego functions in the

unconscious, preconscious, and conscious mind. It is responsible for knowing if something is morally right or wrong and encourages good behavior.

III) Oedipus Complex: Freud proposed the Oedipus complex in his book, *Interpretation of Dreams*. He coined the term from Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, in which Oedipus killed his father to marry his mother (without knowing she was his mother). The Oedipus complex applies primarily to males, but it is somewhat applicable to females as well. Essentially, it describes a relationship between child and parent that exhibits qualities of attachment and possession from the child. Boys and girls are extremely attached to the mother from a young age, but girls then branch out to have a more attached relationship to their father. This theory implies that heterosexual women tend to pursue men that exhibit similar qualities to their fathers and heterosexual men tend to pursue women that are reminiscent of their mothers. Freud believed that in the beginnings of childhood, it is vital that parents are attentive (but not too attentive) to their children so that they are not susceptible to the Oedipus complex in later years. The Oedipus complex was at the forefront of Freud's ideas and he was able to apply it to vast amounts of literature.

C. Sigmund Freud and *Hamlet*

Sigmund Freud, Ernest Jones, Otto Rank, and Jacques Lacan, to name a few, have analysed *Hamlet* from different perspectives, especially as a drama where a subject is trapped in his own neurosis due to the imposing intricacies of his Oedipus complex.

For Freud, *Hamlet* is a rewriting of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Freud says:

> The play [Hamlet] is built up on Hamlet's hesitations over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him; but its text offers no reasons or motives for these hesitations and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result. […] The answer, once again, is that it is the peculiar nature of the task. Hamlet is able to do anything— except to take vengeance upon the man who did away with his father and took the father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. Here I have translated

> what was bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind. (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*)

Marine (2015: 26) says,

> "Indeed, Hamlet is a man dominated by excessive thinking which provokes certain paralysis when faced with a situation that calls for taking action. Or more precisely, Hamlet can act, except in the commended moment of true action and desire—to kill a man, Claudius, who has murdered his father and has taken his place in his mother's marital bed. Thus, Hamlet is shaped as such a character because of his impending mourning of his father and the incestuous disgust with his mother."

According to psychoanalysts, there is evidence of the Oedipus Complex in *Hamlet* and it surfaces when Hamlet keeps on postponing killing Claudius. He is keeps on thinking whether or not to kill Claudius. Claudius is in fact an expression of Hamlet's Oedipal urges, having killed his father and married his mother. This has been utilized for an advantage by film makers such as David Tennant. In his film Claudius and King Hamlet are played by the same actor. Claudius is an archetype of Hamlet's deepest subconscious fantasies. Killing Claudius necessitates killing himself. Postponing killing him, Hamlet instead undergoes a phase of hating himself for his inaction. In addition, he hates himself for having such immoral thoughts. Hamlet is caught between the difficult choice – should he kill Claudius and therefore himself, or should he let Claudius live and thus keep himself too alive but in anguish.

Claudius has also been seen as a representation of Hamlet's id. He actually is following Hamlet's impulses when he kills the senior Hamlet and sleeps with his mother. King Hamlet's ghost is interpreted as Hamlet's superego. The Ghost tries to dominate the id and repress and erase Hamlet's desire to sleep with Gertrude. Hamlet does not seem to be deciding between the options of killing Claudius or not killing him. Instead he sees his options as killing Claudius or killing himself. After talking to Claudius and Gertrude, Hamlet in his soliloquy says:

> "Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt
>
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew
>
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!" (Hamlet, Act 1, scene 2).

Claudius brings out the id in Hamlet, encouraging his buried desires to reveal themselves.

Gertrude:

It is sign see how Hamlet treats his mother. At times, Hamlet seems to be more upset with Gertrude than with Claudius, insulting her for her sexual promiscuity. Here too there is an example of Oedipus Complex. His obsession with his mother's supposedly incestual relationship stems from his own desire to have incestual relations with his mother. Thus, Gertrude's hasty marriage puts Hamlet in a state of self-loathing because he feels guilty about his subconscious impulses. Hamlet's insults towards his mother are intended to be directed at her, but they invoke a sense of self-deprecation as well. Hamlet remarks upon his mother's marriage: "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (1.2.67). Although directed at Claudius and in turn, Gertrude, this quote could also be interpreted as to be directed at his id and hidden desires.

Ophelia:

In case of Ophelia's character it can be said that her id and strongest desires are for Hamlet both sexually and romantically. It is unclear when to differentiate sex and love when it comes to Ophelia because there is often discussion of her virginity leading to much ambiguity. Polonius, her father, serves as Ophelia's superego, telling her to back off and not to give her virginity to Hamlet because he will take advantage of her and she will never earn his love. For much of the play, Ophelia's superego controls her id. However, when Polonius dies, Ophelia falls out of balance and her desire for Hamlet cannot be met, so her id leads her to commit suicide. Ophelia's life is a balancing act; she balances her desires with her father's wishes, and she gives Hamlet a sense of balance when he becomes crazed over his father's death.

D. Ernest Jones and *Hamlet*

Ernest Jones essay "The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery" was first published in *The American Journal of Psychology* in January of 1910. It was published in German the following year as a monogram, and then revised and expanded in 1923 when it appeared under the title "A Psycho-Analytic Study of Hamlet" as the first chapter in Jones' book, *Essays in Applied Psycho-*

Analysis. It was further revised and extended into Jones' *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949), a book which was almost immediately taken to be the expression of the official Freudian position on *Hamlet,* largely due to Jones' closeness to Freud himself, both as a disciple and as his official biographer.

Like the Romantics, Jones takes as a starting point that the audience for a dramatic work should relate to the characters on stage as if they were real people, and not simply fictitious creations.

Both Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones accepted the Romantic assumption that the major interest in the character of Hamlet is the reason for his seeming delay. For Freud, finding this reason became the principle focus of his analysis of *Hamlet*. Freud referred to the matter as the "Problem of Hamlet"; as if it were the only major critical question that mattered. In this regard, Farber says:

> It should be pointed out, however, that the bulk of this material [psychoanalytic criticism] is devoted to what we call with impunity, The Problem -- namely, why does Hamlet hesitate to kill the King? -- and that in this regard it contributes to a current of criticism that psychoanalysis did not originate but which psychoanalysis profoundly affected. Nor can we fail to underscore for a second time that it was in attempting to answer the problem of Hamlet's procrastination that the psychoanalytic school of Shakespearean criticism originated. (Farber, 1970: 79).

In a similar vein, Freud wanted to be remembered as the psychological detective who found the solution to "The Problem."

> The play is built up on Hamlet's hesitations over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him; but its text offers no reasons or motives for these hesitations and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result. According to the view which was originated by Goethe and is still the prevailing one today, Hamlet represents the type of man whose power of direct action is paralyzed by and excessive development of his intellect. (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

This focus was further sharpened by Ernest Jones:

> The central mystery in it -- namely the meaning of Hamlet's hesitancy in seeking to obtain revenge for his father's murder -- has been called the Sphinx of modern literature. (Jones, 1976: 22).

According to the Freud, Oedipal feelings are fundamental in all men. What distinguish people is the way these feelings are handled by the individual and the way that handling is represented in everyday life.

> It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that that is so. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laïus and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfillment of our own childhood wishes... (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

The innate desire to kill one's father and sleep with one's mother runs contrary to the very fabric of our society. For Freudian thinkers, the difference between this innate urge and the demands of our civilization is mediated by repression and sublimation. Either the inappropriate urges are repressed (which risks manifesting itself in psychological illness) or they are transformed into some expression which is useful to society.

On the surface, *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet* seem to be far apart in regard to the protagonist's competition with his own father for his mother's affections. Hamlet expresses unwavering affection and loyalty towards his father. He also seems to be motivated throughout the play by the desire justice or fair treatment for his father.

Freud uses the concept of repression to explain this difference between an innate universal psychological mechanism and the accepted range of expression of civilization. Hamlet has fundamental urges which are not visible in the course of the play. This however is due to repression.

> Another of the great creations of tragic poetry, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, has its roots in the same soil as *Oedipus Rex* . But the changed treatment of the same material reveals the whole difference in the mental life of these two widely separated epochs of civilization: the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind. In the *Oedipus* the child's wishful fantasy that underlies it is brought into the open and realized as it would be in a dream. In *Hamlet* it remains repressed; and - just as in the case of neurosis -- we only

> learn of its existence from its inhibiting consequences. (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

Hamlet has evidently repressed entirely any urge to kill his own father. This means not only that he is working hard to repress the urge, but also that he runs greater risk of mental illness. Where there is greater Oedipal urge, there is also a greater need to repress it and the greater the repression, the greater the risk of illness.

> We note -- if the Elizabethan language is translated into modern English -- the symptoms of dejection, refusal of food, insomnia, crazy behavior, fits of delirium, and finally raving madness; Hamlet's poignant parting words to Polonius ("except my life", etc.) cannnot mean other than a craving for death. These are undoubtedly suggestive of certain forms of melancholia, and the likeness to manic-depressive insanity, of which melancholia is now known to be a part, is completed by the occurrence of attacks of great excitement that would nowadays be called "hypomanic", of which Dover Wilson counts no fewer than eight. (Jones, 1976:22).

For Freud and his followers, of the two urges - killing your father and having sex with your mother - the latter produces the greatest feelings of guilt and repulsion.

> Feelings which once, in the infancy of long ago, were pleasurable desires can now, because of his repressions, only fill him with repulsion... (Jones, 1976: 82).

Ernest Jones then goes on to postulate that Hamlet's sexual repression leads to hostile, misogynist behavior regardless of whether the woman is perceived to be virtuous or indecent.

> When sexual repression is highly pronounced, as with Hamlet, then both types of women are felt to be hostile: the pure one out of resentment at her repulses, the sensual one out of the temptation she offers to plunge into guiltiness. Misogyny, as in the play, is the inevitable result. (Jones, 1976: 86).

It's interesting to note that twentieth-century film directors, who are more inclined to accept the Freudian interpretation of *Hamlet*, usually make overt what they consider to be covert in the scene in Gertrude's closet (Act III, Scene iv**).**

For the Freudian psychoanalysts, Claudius represents, in flesh and blood, the embodiment of Hamlet's Oedipal urges. He has actually killed Hamlet's father and is sleeping with his mother.

> Hamlet's second guilty wish had thus also been realized by his uncle, namely to procure the fulfilment of the first - the possession of the mother - by a personal deed, in fact by murder of the father. (Jones, 1976: 83).

Hamlet's hesitation in killing Claudius, according to Freud, has to do with his deeper association with him. Claudius serves as a flesh and blood expression of his own repressed childhood fantasies, and to kill him would be to murder a part of his own inner self already associated with self-loathing.

> Hamlet is able to do anything -- except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. Here I have translated into conscious terms what was bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind.... The distaste for sexuality expressed by Hamlet in his conversation with Ophelia fits in very well with this. (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

The long-awaited event can only take place when Gertrude has died. Hamlet is then free to act because the cause of his repressed guilt has been eliminated, and he kills Claudius immediately.

> In reality his uncle incorporates the deepest and most buried part of his own personality, so that he cannot kill him without also killing himself. This solution, one closely akin to what Freud has shown to be the motive of suicide in melancholia, is actually the one that Hamlet finally adopts... Only when he has made the final sacrifice and brought himself to the door of death is he free to fulfil his duty, to avenge his father, and to slay his other self -- his uncle. (Jones, 1976: 88).

> There are two moments in the play when he is nearest to murder, and it is noteworthy that in both the impulse has been dissociated from the unbearable idea of incest. The second is when he actually kills the King, when the Queen is

> already dead and lost to him for ever, so that his conscience is free of an ulterior motive for the murder. (Jones, 1976: 89).

It is interesting that Freud, in building his argument about *Hamlet*, puts not only the principle character on the couch, but also his author. He supports his position by citing (possibly erroneously) facts from the little that we know of the life of Shakespeare himself.

> I observe in a book on Shakespeare by Georg Brandes (1896) a statement that *Hamlet* was written immediately after the death of Shakespeare's father (in 1601), that is, under the immediate impact of his bereavement and, as we may well assume, while his childhood feelings about his father had been freshly revived. It is known, too, that Shakespeare's own son who died at an early age bore the name of 'Hamnet,' which is identical with 'Hamlet.' (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

(Freud's assumption that *Hamlet* was written after the death of Shakespeare's father is probably not right. *Hamlet* either preceded Shakespeare's father's death or appeared so soon after it that it could not have been conceived and written after his demise.)

E. Opposition to Freudian analysis:

In the early generations, much of support for Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones' interpretation of *Hamlet* came from within the psychoanalytic community and much of the opposition came from outside of it. In his book, *The Design Within*, M.D. Faber speaks of this dichotomy as follows:

> From quarters inhabited by analysts and by critics with psychoanalytic leanings came numerous expressions of belief and gratitude: The mystery had been solved and hats off to those who had solved it. From literary circles, however, came a great many statements of disbelief and shock, as well as critical assaults that aimed at pointing up the erroneousness of regarding Hamlet in the Freud-Jones manner. (Faber, 1970: 111).

However, there was opposition from among Freudian analysts as well. Frederic Wertham, a psychoanalyst himself, led the attack on Freud's interpretation.

> Hamlet expresses in the play his great love and admiration for his father. That this feeling *may* be accompanied by ambivalence must be conceded. But there is no evidence of this hostility against the real father in the text, and certainly no

> evidence either in the text or in the whole psychological setting of the story, that this assumed hostility is so strong and far-reaching that it can serve as the main explanation. (Wertham, 1970: 114).

The response of Freud and his followers was that this is due to the fact that the greater the Oedipal complex, the greater the effort will be to repress it. In the case of *Hamlet*, the fact that there is no visible evidence that Hamlet harbored the wish to kill his father further argues to the point that such a wish exists and that it is very strong. That it is so thoroughly repressed, say the Freudians, attests to the fact that it constitutes the greatest psychological threat to Hamlet.

Freud's contention was that critics who refuse to accept his theory are, themselves, repressing their own oedipal feelings. MD Faber (1970: 80) says:

> Freud also suggests (and this is perhaps the most brilliant stroke) that the difficulty critics have had lies in ... the critics' own unwillingness to consciously recognize the role that the Oedipal conflict has played in their own lives."

F. Frederic Werthem's argument

At the center of Frederic Wertham's argument with Sigmund Freud's interpretation of *Hamlet* is an attack on the universal appropriateness of the Oedipal complex. Wertham suggests that Hamlet might just provide the exception to the rule that could force a reconsideration of the rule itself.

> The real basis of Freud's interpretation is his theory that the Oedipus complex is a universal, biological, normal, unavoidable inheritance of the human race. In the very case of Hamlet, it can be demonstrated -- and for the first time in a concrete case analyzed by Freud -- that this theory has to be modified. - Frederic Wertham, "Critique of Freud's Interpretation of Hamlet" (in Faber, 1970: 114).

Wertham then goes on to recount the case history of a patient whose circumstances were similar to Hamlet's in that after his father's death, his mother had an affair with his uncle. The patient "did not restrain himself -- as Hamlet did" and stabbed his mother to death. Wertham, therefore, suggests that the "Orestes complex" provides a more appropriate model for the action in Hamlet. Here's how Wertham describes the "Orestes complex."

This variety of parent complex which centers on the mother, and more specifically on hostility toward her, can be designated as the Orestes complex.

Orestes killed his mother Clytemnestra and her lover, his father's kinsman, Aegisthus. The legend of Orestes, which historically marks a turning point in the social position of the mother, has far more similarity to the story of Hamlet than has the story of Oedipus. - Frederic Wertham, "Critique of Freud's Interpretation of Hamlet" (in Faber, 1970:120).

2.3 Jacques Lacan's theory and *Hamlet*

Jacques Lacan has influenced many critical approaches such as feminism, film theory, poststructuralism and Marxism. Lacan exemplifies the postmodern break with Sigmund Freud. To understand Lacanian analysis of Hamlet, it is essential to understand Lacanian theory and some key elements and terms from his theory.

A. Key Elements of Lacan's theory

Let's understand Lacan's theory by using Dino Felluga's note written on Purdue University webpage (https://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/):

"Whereas Freud could still be said to work within an empirical, humanist tradition that still believes in a stable self's ability to access the "truth," Lacan is properly post-structuralist, which is to say that Lacan rejects all simple notions of "self" and "truth," exploring instead how knowledge is constructed by way of linguistic and ideological structures that organize not only our conscious but also our unconscious lives. Lacan offers a linguistic model for understanding the human subject's entrance into the social order. The emphasis is thus less on the bodily causes of behaviour (cathexis, libido, instinct, etc.) than on the ideological structures that through language make the human subject come to understand his or her relationship to himself and to others. According to Lacan, the entrance into language necessarily entails a radical break from any sense of materiality in and of itself. According to Lacan, one must always distinguish between reality (the fantasy world we convince ourselves is the world around us) and the real (a materiality of existence beyond language and thus beyond expressibility). The development of the subject, in other words, is made possible by an endless misrecognition of the real because of our need to construct our

sense of "reality" in and through language. So much are we reliant on our linguistic and social version of "reality" that the eruption of pure materiality (of the real) into our lives is radically disruptive. And yet, the real is the rock against which all of our artificial linguistic and social structures necessarily fail. It is this tension between the real and our social laws, meanings, conventions, desires, etc. that determines our psychosexual lives. Not even our unconscious escapes the effects of language, which is why Lacan argues that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (Four Fundamental 203).

Lacan's version of psychosexual development is, therefore, organized around the subject's ability to recognize, first, iconic signs and, then, eventually, language. This entrance into language follows a particular developmental model, according to Lacan, one that is quite distinct from Freud's version of the same. Lacan, like Freud, acknowledged that development varied between individuals and that stages could even exist simultaneously within a given individual:

1) 0-6 months of age: In the earliest stage of development, one is dominated by a chaotic mix of perceptions, feelings, and needs. The child can't distinguish your own self from that of your parents or even the world around you. Rather, the child keeps on taking into itself everything that is experienced as pleasurable without any acknowledgment of boundaries. At this stage, one is closest to the pure materiality of existence, or what Lacan terms "the Real." The body begins to be fragmented into specific erogenous zones (mouth, anus, penis, vagina), aided by the fact that the mother tends to pay special attention to these body parts. This "territorialisation" of the body could already be seen as a falling off, an imposition of boundaries and, thus, the neo-natal beginning of socialization (a first step away from the Real). Indeed, this fragmentation is accompanied by identification with those things perceived as fulfilling that which is lacking at this early stage: the mother's breast, her voice, her gaze.

2) 6-18 months of age: This stage, which Lacan terms the "mirror stage," was a central moment in development. The "mirror stage" entails a "libidinal dynamism" (Écrits 2) caused by the young child's identification with its own image (what Lacan terms the "Ideal-I" or "ideal ego"). For Lacan, this act marks the primordial recognition of one's self as "I". In other words, this recognition of the self's image precedes the entrance into language, after which the subject can understand the place of that image of the self within a larger social order, in which the subject must

negotiate his or her relationship with others. Still, the mirror stage is necessary for the next stage, since to recognize yourself as "I" is like recognizing yourself as other ("yes, that person over there is me"); this act is thus fundamentally self-alienating. Indeed, for this reason your feelings towards the image were mixed, caught between hatred ("I hate that version of myself because it is so much better than me") and love ("I want to be like that image"). This "Ideal-I" is important precisely because it represents to the subject a simplified, bounded form of the self, as opposed to the turbulent chaotic perceptions, feelings, and needs felt by the infant. This "primordial Discord" (Écrits 4) is particularly formative for the subject. "The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development" (Écrits 4). This misrecognition or méconnaissance (seeing an ideal-I where there is a fragmented, chaotic body) subsequently "characterizes the ego in all its structures" (Écrits 6). In particular, this creation of an ideal version of the self gives pre-verbal impetus to the creation of narcissistic phantasies in the fully developed subject. It establishes what Lacan terms the "imaginary order" and, through the imaginary, continues to assert its influence on the subject even after the subject enters the next stage of development.

3) 18 months to 4 years of age: The acquisition of language during this next stage of development further separates the child from a connection to the Real (from the actual materiality of things). Lacan builds on such semiotic critics as Ferdinand de Saussure to show how language is a system that makes sense only within its own internal logic of differences: the word, "father," only makes sense in terms of those other terms it is defined with or against (mother, "me," law, the social, etc.). As Kaja Silverman puts it, "the signifier 'father' has no relation whatever to the physical fact of any individual father. Instead, that signifier finds its support in a network of other signifiers, including 'phallus,' 'law,' 'adequacy,' and 'mother,' all of which are equally indifferent to the category of the real" (164). Once you entered into the differential system of language, it forever afterwards determined your perception of the world around you, so that the intrusion of the Real's materiality becomes a traumatic event, albeit one that is quite common since our version of "reality" is built over the chaos

of the Real (both the materiality outside you and the chaotic impulses inside you). By acquiring language, you entered into what Lacan terms the "symbolic order"; you were reduced into an empty signifier ("I") within the field of the Other, which is to say, within a field of language and culture (which is always determined by those others that came before you). That linguistic position, according to Lacan, is particularly marked by gender differences, so that all your actions were subsequently determined by your sexual position (which, for Lacan, does not have much to do with your "real" sexual urges or even your sexual markers but by a linguistic system in which "male" and "female" can only be understood in relation to each other in a system of language).

The Oedipus complex is just as important for Lacan as it is for Freud, if not more so. The difference is that Lacan maps that complex onto the acquisition of language, which he sees as analogous. The process of moving through the Oedipus complex (of being made to recognize that we cannot sleep with or even fully "have" our mother) is our way of recognizing the need to obey social strictures and to follow a closed differential system of language in which we understand "self" in relation to "others." In this linguistic rather than biological system, the "phallus" (which must always be understood not to mean "penis") comes to stand in the place of everything the subject loses through his entrance into language (a sense of perfect and ultimate meaning or plenitude, which is, of course, impossible) and all the power associated with what Lacan terms the "symbolic father" and the "Name-of-the-Father" (laws, control, knowledge). Like the phallus' relation to the penis, the "Name-of-the-Father" is much more than any actual father; in fact, it is ultimately more analogous to those social structures that control our lives and that interdict many of our actions (law, religion, medicine, education).Note After one passes through the Oedipus complex, the position of the phallus (a position within that differential system) can be assumed by most anyone (teachers, leaders, even the mother) and, so, to repeat, is not synonymous with either the biological father or the biological penis.

Nonetheless, the anatomical differences between boys and girls do lead to a different trajectory for men and women in Lacan's system. Men achieve access to the privileges of the phallus, according to Lacan, by denying their last link to the Real of their own sexuality (their actual penis); for this reason, the castration complex continues to function as a central aspect of the boy's psychosexual development for

Lacan. In accepting the dictates of the Name-of-the-Father, who is associated with the symbolic phallus, the male subject denies his sexual needs and, forever after, understands his relation to others in terms of his position within a larger system of rules, gender differences, and desire. (On Lacan's understanding of desire, see the third module.) Since women do not experience the castration complex in the same way (they do not have an actual penis that must be denied in their access to the symbolic order), Lacan argues that women are not socialized in the same way, that they remain more closely tied to what Lacan terms "jouissance," the lost plenitude of one's material bodily drives given up by the male subject in order to access the symbolic power of the phallus. Women are thus at once more lacking (never accessing the phallus as fully) and more full (having not experienced the loss of the penis as fully).” (Felluga, 2011)

B. Lacan’s interpretation of Hamlet as the tragedy of Desire

To understand Lacan’s reading of Hamlet, we shall be using the analysis of Norman Marin Calderon (2015):

> “According to Lacan, *Hamlet* can be read as the story of something that must be done but can never be materialized. This text is indeed considered the drama of such postponement. In sum, Shakespeare’s play deals with a “hole” that, after all, marks the non-realization of an act—Hamlet’s revenge for his father’s death.
>
> Consequently, according to what unfolds in Shakespeare’s drama, desire is the “Thing” to be placed at the heart of psychoanalytic theory and technique. The structural analysis of Hamlet leads the reader to situate the meaning and interpretation of desire as the contraption that mobilizes the characters’ positions and the succession of dramatic events. As previously mentioned, for Lacan, Hamlet is the drama of desire. Desire is here understood as the “lack” that moves a subject to want more. Desire is defined as the lack that constitutes a speaking subject as such. The object that causes that desire in motion is the “phallus.” Contrary to Freud, Lacan conceives the phallus not as the male organ, but as the primordial signifier of completeness and full self-realization—it is the phallic signifier, after all. For Lacan, “the phallus is a signifier” (579).

According to Lacanian theory, the phallus is not a fantasy, nor a partial object, nor a physical organ. The phallus stands for the signifier of what the omnipotent mother is

missing and that which the child can relate to, so he can be identified as the object that the mother is lacking.

There exists an intrinsic relationship between the subject of language and his object of desire which is represented in Lacan by the "Formula of Fantasy", that is, a type of framed subjective ghost (specter) that rules and structures any subject's life—$ ◊ a. In that respect, Lacan explains the importance of the formula of fantasy in relation to the emergence of desire in a subject:

> I express the general structure of the fantasy $ ◊ a, where $ is a certain relationship of the subject to the signifier—it is the subject as irreducibly affected by the signifier—and where ◊ indicates the subject's relationship to an essentially imaginary juncture, designated by a, not the object of desire but the object in desire [the one that causes desire to happen] […]. This is our starting point: through his relationship to the signifier, the subject is deprived of something of himself, of his very life, which has assumed the value of that which binds him to the signifier. The phallus is our term for the signifier of his alienation in signification. When the subject is deprived of this signifier, a particular object becomes for him an object of desire. This is the meaning of $ ◊ a. ("Desire" 22-23)

This formula can be read as "the divided subject in relation to the object that causes his or her desire"—the small object (a). Fantasy is the pointer of desire since desire is processed only through fantasy. Here the small letter (a) names the impossible object of desire—the phallic signifier of lack. In Hamlet, Gertrude and Ophelia will come to occupy, at different levels and under several circumstances, this phallic place.

Hamlet is "the tragedy of desire" for three reasons. First, Hamlet does not act in time, he is always "delayed" due to the dependence of his desire on the desire of the Other, especially the (M)Other's. Second, Ophelia substitutes for Hamlet's phallus insofar as she stands as the lost object that can only be attained when she is dead. In this sense, Ophelia becomes Hamlet's "impossible" object of desire since she is dead. And finally, mourning is the other theme that is incarnated at the end of play when Hamlet is able to mourn the loss of his phallic signifier—Ophelia." (Marín Calderón, 2015: 27-28).

C) Glossary for Lacan (from *Lacan for Beginners* by Philip Hill, 2009):

"Lacan rarely defined his terms, and his use of them changed over time.

A is for ‘autre’, French for ‘other’. See other / object.

DEMAND for an object persists if the object of demand is supplied. So, for example, a child demanding of its motherer, might ask for milk, and on getting milk, he might ask for chocolate, and on getting chocolate, he might then ask for biscuits… The child is not seeking to possess or enjoy any particular physical object, but is seeking something that the motherer cannot or will not provide. Demand arises out of need, and is always the demand for love.

DESIRE is the essence of the subject, at the heart of his existence. His life revolves around it. Desire is a property of language. Desire is often unconscious.

The EGO distorts the truth and makes false connections by negotiating between the world and our unconscious desires. The ego is a complicated concept and includes the image the subject has of himself, especially of his body.

NEED is a set of biological or physiological requirements such as the need for food or warmth.

JOUISSANCE is French for ‘coming’ as in orgasm. It refers to Freud’s and Lacan’s theories of sexuality and our sexual enjoyment of a very wide range of activities that go beyond sexual inter-course, such as eating and having symptoms.

MECONNAISSANCE is misknowing especially used to describe the subject’s beliefs about himself.

THE NAMES-OF-THE-FATHER are those parts of the symbolic father that have had their reference fixed, as proper or paternal names, such as ‘England’, or ‘Jones’

The OTHER is another word for OBJECT. An object is any item that creates or supports subjectivity. These include the little object, which is the cause of desire and the object of desire, the big other, that is, the other of language, the Names-of-the-Father, signifiers or words, and the phallus.

The SIGNIFIER is roughly speaking, a word. For an explanation of ‘The signifier represents the subject for another signifier’, see Chapter Two.

The REAL is not reality but Lacan’s term for everything that is in the category of ‘the mutually exclusive’ for the subject, and which always returns, for instance as the

return of the repressed, when we find ourselves repeating the same patterns. See Chapter Three.

The PHALLUS is not 'The penis' but can be any observable object or item that demonstrates a rate of change, such as a swing with a child on it, a speedometer, a pregnant woman, or a penis. The phallus is one way of making jouissance. Castration is not a surgical procedure but a reduction in the phallic function. Sexuality usually focuses on 'the other' — on the one with the phallus.

The SUBJECT is very roughly Lacan's word for 'person'.

The SYMBOLIC for Lacan is the realm of language, of words, letters and numbers.

The SYMBOLIC FATHER is any agency that separates the mother or motherer from the child. An example might be the mother's work.

The SYMPTOM is related to the idea of the phallus. Both the symptom and the phallus make jouissance or enjoyment, but the symptom speaks the subject's unconscious desire symbolically. Psychoanalytic symptoms can be idiosyncratic and so are unlike symptoms in medicine, which have relatively fixed meanings.

The UNCONSCIOUS or ID is a topological space where hidden desires live. Desires only have expression as symptoms, signifiers or words." (Hill, 2009: 319-324)

2.4 *Hamlet* and Feminist Psychoanalysis

Feminist criticism took on new energy in these late twentieth-century years of experiment and rebellion. Janet Adelman describes how and why the mother's body in Shakespeare functions as the originator, and repository of deformity, pestilence and death. Adelman points out that there are a few powerful mothers in Shakespeare's earliest plays but that these mothers virtually disappear until *Hamlet.* In the plays before *Hamlet*, "masculine identity is constructed in and through the absence of the maternal"; in them, Shakespeare splits his psychic and dramatic world in two (into heterosexual bonds and father-son bonds), isolating its elements "from each other and from the maternal body that would be toxic to both." However, the occluded mother of these plays returns with a vengeance in *Hamlet*, and Adelman argues that the plays from *Hamlet* on "all follow from her return." The tragic burden of Hamlet and the men who come after him resides "in selfhood grounded in paternal absence and in the fantasy of overwhelming contamination at the site of origin." This burden is not borne alone; "again and again, it is passed on to the women, who

must pay the price for the fantasies of maternal power invested in them." (Adelman, 1995: 10)

Juliet Dusinberre's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, 1975, was an inspirational study that brought the feminist concerns of the nineteenth century into a new political context. Lisa Jardine's *Still Harping on Daughters*, 1983, with its title derived from Polonius's response to Hamlet's "mad" discourse about daughters who should not be permitted to "walk I' th' sun," turned the focus of feminist criticism in *Hamlet* to criticism against patriarchal interference in the lives of young women.

According to Jane Dall, in Hamlet and Macbeth, women's actions lead to political instability and a disruption of a natural harmony occurs because of their involvement in the political processes. Although neither of the plays is a direct commentary on the Elizabethan rule, each play reflects social anxieties from decades of female monarchical rule.

The feminist studies have pointed out that in *Hamlet*, Ophelia's tragedy is subordinated to that of Hamlet. According to Elaine Showalter, through Ophelia we can grasp the period's ideas about female psychology and sexuality. Showalter discusses Ophelia's madness as a particularly female malady, showing how from Shakespeare's day to the present time Ophelia has been used both to reflect and to challenge evolving ideas about female psychology and sexuality. For Copellia Kahn, Ophelia and Gertrude are Man's Estate. Cuckoldry masks the fear of psychosocial castration. The masculine anxiety is turned against the women who are then termed 'whores'.

2.5 Check your progress

Q. 1. Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase or sentence each.

1. According to whom Human beings are motivated by unconscious desires?
2. The traits of which part of the human psyche are inherited, not learned?
3. The ……. attempts to fulfill desires, but only if they are deemed appropriate.
4. Who is the author of *Oedipus Rex*?
5. Who acts as Ophelia's superego?

6. Which complex, according to Wertham, provides a more appropriate model for the action in *Hamlet*?
7. Lacan's version of psychosexual development is organized around the subject's ability to recognize..... and .....
8. Which stage is called the “mirror stage” by Lacan?
9. What term does Freud use to refer to laws, control, knowledge?
10. What is the general structure of the fantasy according to Lacan?

2.6 Answers to check your progress

Q. 1.

1. Freud
2. Id
3. Ego
4. Sophocles
5. Polonius, Ophelia’s father
6. the "Orestes complex"
7. iconic signs and language
8. 6-18 months of age
9. Lacan terms them"symbolic father" and the "Name-of-the-Father"
10. $ ◊ a,

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2.9 Exercises

Q. 1. Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase or sentence each.

1. Who maps the Oedipus complex onto the acquisition of language? Lacan
2. Who wrote "Critique of Freud's Interpretation of *Hamlet*"? Frederic Wertham
3. What are the two parts of the superego? Superego has two parts: *ego ideal* and *conscience*
4. What are the three levels of consciousness of the mind according to Freud?
5. What are the three parts of the human psyche according to Freud?

Q. 2. Write short notes on:

1. The "Problem of Hamlet" according to Freud
2. The reasons Hamlet is called "the tragedy of desire"
3. Hamlet and the feminist psychoanalysts.
4. Orestes Complex

Q. 3. Answer the following questions in detail.

1. Bring out Earnest Jones' interpretation of *Hamlet*.
2. "*Hamlet* can be read as the story of something that must be done but can never be materialized." Discuss the statement in light of Lacan's theory.
3. Discuss the role of Oedipus Complex in Freud and Lacan's theory and its importance in interpretation of *Hamlet*.
4. Elucidate the stages of psychosexual development described by Lacan.

❑❑❑

Unit-3

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Culture

Contents :

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 The culture of the period reflected/ depicted in *Hamlet*

A. Renaissance the new world order

B. Renaissance and Religion

C. Renaissance and 'Blackness'

D. Shakespeare and the Postcolonial Question

E. Shakespeare and the Gender Question

3.3 *Hamlet* and cultural studies

3.4 *Hamlet* and Indian/Marathi theatre

3.5 Check your progress

3.6 Answers to check your progress

3.7 Exercises

3.7 References

3.8 Books for Further Study

3.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

1. What is culture and cultural studies?
2. The kind of influence Shakespeare in general and *Hamlet* in particular continues to have on present times and writing
3. The culture of the Renaissance reflected in the play
4. The way Hamlet has been read and interpreted by cultural studies scholars.

5. The way Shakespeare was received in Indian languages in general and in Marathi in particular and what it reveals about the Indian society and culture of the time.

3.1 Introduction:

In the four centuries since Shakespeare's death, Shakespearean plays have been oft performed, imitated, adapted, appropriated. These appropriations have not always been just for the stage but also for many other disciplinary and artistic practices throughout the world. Here are some examples to understand this range and variety of how Shakespeare remains an important cultural force:

1. In recent times numerous publications have come out including young adult novels, adult novels as well as graphic novels which are loosely based on Shakespeare.
2. Similarly, there is exponential rise in film adaptations of Shakespeare in America, India and elsewhere.
3. Shakespeare has not just been performed but reinterpreted in their native languages by companies from Asia and Africa, for example, Maori *Troilus and Cressida* is being performed and reinterpreted in Maori, *Twelfth Night* in Hindi and *Coriolanus* in Japanese.
4. In America, Shakespeare has been used in defence of a wide variety of political standpoints. *Othello* was used by both the abolitionists and anti-miscegenation activists to support their standpoints. Abraham Lincoln and John Booth defended their positions using *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. Not just in America but elsewhere too Shakespeare continues to be used to comment on political situations.

Apart from the Judeo-Christian Bible, Shakespeare is the most studied western author world over. His writing is praised for the insights it provides into human nature and human experiences. Shakespeare's plays are considered a brilliant lens to examine the problems and crises of the present times as well as to apply the present understanding of politics, social justice and culture to reread Shakespearean work.

Seeing this proliferation, Harold Bloom said that Shakespeare has become "the first universal author, replacing the Bible in the secularized consciousness" and Terence Hawkes dubbed Shakespeare as 'International Superstar'. Many factors have

been cited as responsible for this popularity- the success of his plays in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, his canonisation in the English literary tradition, British colonialism, the importance given to his plays in secondary and tertiary level schooling, appropriation of his plays by Hollywood and Broadway, the identification of Shakespeare with high-brow culture in the United States, etc.

Today Shakespeare's plays, his stories, his characters, the language and lines from his plays have become a part of the common person's language all over the world, even if they have never read any of his plays. Longings of Romeo and Juliet, Richard III's cowardice, Hamlet's "to be or not to be", Macbeth's nihilism, Lear's sorrow, Othello's self-doubt, have become a part of the common knowledge of people from all countries. These are used by common people to comment on their experiences. Is this because Shakespeare's plays are "timeless" or because they often seem timely to some particular people at some particular moments?

Ben Jonson said about Shakespeare "He was not of an age but of all time". This kind of praise has seen severe backlash over the last five decades as this kind of claims of "greatest" art and "timeless" art have been used to canonise a small body of works mainly by Western white men. In other words, the values and ideologies of Western white patriarchy have been projected as if they represent notions of a universal humanity that transcends cultural and linguistic differences.

However, art can't be disassociated from the specific political, economic and cultural circumstances which went into its creation.

1. The culture of the period reflected/ depicted in *Hamlet*

A. Renaissance and the new world order:

The play was written around 1600 and as Andrew J. Clarendon claims, it reflects 'the conflict between the richly Catholic culture of the Middle Ages and the rising individualism of the early modern age'. This was a period of a major shift in the worldview of Western Civilization. This shift is a shift of the modern man who started looking at himself as the centre of the universe as well as the centre of all meaning. Earlier, man was just a link in the divine chain connecting him to God. The Renaissance humanists resurrected the sophist Protagoras' phrase, "Man is the measure of all things."

The play *Hamlet* reflects this shift – the doubt in the old certainties and the anxiety brought by the responsibility to locate meaning while relying only on his mind. It also reflects what this anxiety means when the political atmosphere is deteriorating. Hamlet is engulfed in this anxiety while witnessing the rotten state of Denmark and this theme is central to the play.

The play depicts nihilism and doubt to a great extent and ends with multiple deaths. However, Shakespeare also seems to suggest a solution to Hamlet's doubts and anguish which also re-establishes the connection with the great old tradition.

Hamlet is a representative of early modern man and his problem is voiced in Act II scene 2 in the letter that he wrote to Ophelia from the University of Wittenberg and which is read out be Polonius:

"Doubt thou the stars are fire,

Doubt that the sun does move,

Doubt truth to be a liar,

But never doubt I love.

Oh, dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers.

I have not art to reckon my groans. But that I

love thee best, oh, most best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady,

Whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet."

Hamlet's letter has reference to the doubts resulting from the huge changes coming about in the early modern culture. Doubt about the celestial nature of stars and sun is in fact uncertainty regarding heliocentric universe and a shift towards Ptolemaic geocentric model. In the third line Hamlet asks Ophelia to suspect truth itself indicating that he can be no longer be sure of anything other than his own emotions and feelings. This doubt slowly destroys everything, making Hamlet reject everyone close to him, even Ophelia. The theme of nihilism which has been important throughout the play is thrown in sharp relief in Act V scene 1. This scene seems to provide an answer to Hamlet's and the period's nihilism.

It must also be noted that when he wrote the letter, he was at the University of Wittenberg which is associated with Luther and the birth of Protestantism.

In the gravedigger scene, the banter between the gravediggers, the comedy is helpful to remind man of his ephemeral nature. The discussion about the skull of the Yorick is a reminder that everyone ultimately becomes a skull. Immediately after this, Ophelia's funeral procession arrives and now Hamlet realises that not meaninglessness but love is the most powerful force in the universe. Ophelia's death makes him realise his loss due to his mistaken vision of the world.This realisation makes him declare his love for her:

> This is I,
>
> Hamlet the Dane. …
>
> I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
>
> Could not with all their quantity of love
>
> Make up my sum.

Hamlet discovers not just love but also regains himself as a complete person. Hamlet after this reaffirms his belief in the old order. He tells Horatio that "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will," that "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow," and, in a clear answer to the most famous speech in the play, "The readiness is all. … Let be." This is the painfully acquired knowledge.

B. Renaissance and Religion:

Hamlet is seemingly a student of Wittenberg university that was famous in the early sixteenth century for its teaching of Martin Luther. Hamlet's reference to "a politic convocation of worms" is seen as a secret allusion to Luther's famous theological confrontation with the Holy Roman Emperor at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

In addition, there are hints in the play of predestinarian theology of John Calvin, an influential Reformer in early 17th century England. According to this doctrine, God writes the script and sets up a stage for each of his creations. God has also decided the end from the beginning.

"After the world had been created, man was placed in it, as in a theatre, that he, beholding above him and beneath the wonderful work of God, might reverently adore their Author."

The doctrine of predestination was considered dangerous by rulers (as people might openly say that God has predestined them to be traitors or even to be Kings) and religious leaders (English Puritans believed that conscience was a more powerful force than the law). King James, as well, often wrote about his dislike of Protestant leaders' tendency to not agree with the kings.

The doctrine of predestination can be compared with the frequent references made to the theatre in *Hamlet* as well as in the tragic predestined ending.

Before joining the sword-game of Laertes, Hamlet says to Horatio:

"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet will it come—the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows what is't to leave betimes, let be." (*Hamlet,* Act V, scene 2, 202-206)

Hamlet seems to believe in his predestination as the killer of the king, no matter what he may do.

The play also expresses many Catholic views. The Ghost describes himself as being slain without receiving 'Extreme Unction', that is, his last rites. He also implies that he has been living in Purgatory:

"I am thy father's spirit

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,

And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purg'd away" (*Hamlet* Act I scene 5, 9-13).

The belief in Purgatory was explicitly rejected by the Protestant Reformers in the 16th century.

Catholic doctrines manifest themselves elsewhere in the play too. For example, there is discussion over whether Ophelia should have a Christian burial because those who commit suicide are guilty of their own murder. Laertes asks, "What

ceremony else?" and the priest overseeing the funeral answers that since her death was questionable, they will not give her the full funeral. Many things are missing in her funeral that would normally make up a Christian burial and Hamlet calls the funeral the "maimed rites". In cases of suicide, sharp rocks, rather than flowers, were thrown into the grave. However, the priest allows her "maiden strewments", or flowers. The difficulties in this deeply religious moment reflect much of the religious debate of the time.

C. Renaissance and 'Blackness':

There are many allusions to blackness in various texts from the Renaissance period. These abound especially in Sir John Mandeville's *Travels* , Leo *Africanus's History and Description of Africa*, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra, The Tempest*, Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*, in works by Emilia Lanyer, Philip Sidney, John Webster, and Lady Mary Wroth as well as in visual and decorative arts. Kim F. Hall's book *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* reveals the vital link between England's expansion and the world of difference and otherness experienced and reflected in the writing and arts of the time. It also shows how race, sexuality, economics, and nationalism contributed to the formation of a modern (white, male) identity in English culture.

Hall reveals early modern anxieties about race, gender, sexuality, commerce, economics, nationalism and imperialism. 'Blackness' was constructed and represented in opposition to a desired whiteness and this way of defining 'blackness' played an important role in the development of England as anation and empire. It also had an impact on individual subjectivity of the English people. The notions regarding racial differences in the writing of the time is intertwined with the ideas of gender roles and difference. The notions of proper gender relations shape the terms for describing proper colonial organization. Such references to blackness abound in discussion regarding travel, slavery, cosmetics, sunburn, trade, class, Cleopatra, colonialism, politics, etc.

In case of Shakespeare's play, *Antony and Cleopatra and The Tempest* are more important in this regard, however, even in *Hamlet*, there are traces of the Renaissance mind-set, especially regarding 'sunburn'. In Renaissance literature, 'sunburn' becomes a mark of encounter with otherness. However, its significance differs for men and women. In case of men, sunburn is a metaphor for poetic influence. Sometimes it is a power that

captures a traveller. On the other hand, in the case of women, 'sunburn' represents the danger of seduction.

In *Hamlet*, Hamlet tells Polonius to keep his daughter safe from the sun:

> Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a blessing,
>
> but, as your daughter may conceive—Friend, look to 't. (Act II, scene 2)

(Don't let her walk out in the sun. Pregnancy is a blessing, but if your daughter gets pregnant-–think about it, friend.)

D. Shakespeare and the Postcolonial Question:

In the book *Postcolonial Shakespeares*, the editors say:

> "Shakespeare lived and wrote at a time when English mercantile and colonial enterprises were just germinating. Although the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch ventures began earlier, European colonialism as a whole was still in its infancy. But this infancy was also an aggressive ascendancy: four hundred years later, both Shakespeare and colonialism have left their imprint on cultures across the globe. The nature of their global presence, and the historical interactions between 'Shakespeare' and colonialism, have been, in the last decade, subjected to new and exciting critiques. Such critiques have shown how Anglo-American literary scholarship of the last two centuries offered a Shakespeare who celebrated the superiority of the 'civilized races', and, further, that colonial educationists and administrators used this Shakespeare to reinforce cultural and racial hierarchies. Shakespeare was made to perform such ideological work both by interpreting his plays in highly conservative ways (so that they were seen as endorsing existing racial, gender and other hierarchies, never as questioning or destabilizing them) and by constructing him as one of the best, if not 'the best', writer in the whole world. He became, during the colonial period, the quintessence of Englishness and a measure of humanity itself. Thus the meanings of Shakespeare's plays were both derived from and used to establish colonial authority." (Loomba and Orkin, p. 1)

The reactions from the colonised came in the following ways:

1. Mimicking the colonial masters and admiring Shakespeare
2. Challenging the colonial authority of Shakespeare and the colonisers

3. Turning to authors from their own languages and countries in search of alternative wisdom and aesthetics
4. Using Shakespeare and re-interpreting and adapting him in their protest against colonialism
5. Endeavouring to scrutinize the ways in which the colonial and racial discourses of early modern Engla ndmight have shaped Shakespeare's work
6. Scrutinising how Shakespeare performances as well as Shakespearean studies became a 'colonial battlefield' (Loomba and Orkin, p. 2)

During the 1980s and 1990s cultural materialists, new historicists and feminists utilized the insights of Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and semiotics to reinterpret class, gender and sexual relations in early modern Europe and to reflect on the dynamic interrelation between cultural forms (including literature) and social power. English colonialism had previously been acknowledged only as source material or backdrop for Shakespeare's play. Now however, they showed instead how colonial discourse was central to the play's thematic as well as formal concerns, forming not a background but rather one of its 'dominant discursive contexts' (Barker and Hulme 1985:198)

These studies have attempted to scrutinize the ways in which the colonial and racial discourses of early modern England might have shaped Shakespeare's work, and also the processes by which Shakespeare (in performance and study) later became a colonial battlefield.

E. Shakespeare and the Gender Question:

Feminist scholars have examined the play's portrayal of women, arguing that the female characters are often marginalized and subjected to male dominance. They also argue that the play's portrayal of gender reinforces patriarchal norms. Some prominent feminist scholars who have written about Hamlet include Elaine Showalter, Carolyn Heilbrun and Coppélia Kahn.

The plays of the time to some extent reveal the gender system of Early Modern England. For example, women as commonly referred to as either maid, or wife or widow. Only whores are outside this trilogy and perhaps that is the reason that Hamlet talks of his mother as a whore due to her failure to remain faithful to Old Hamlet.

Carolyn Heilbrun and many other feminists have argued that the text of *Hamlet* never hints that Gertrude knew of Claudius poisoning King Hamlet. Heilbrun in her essay 'Hamlet's Mother' argued that critics have always misinterpreted Gertrude, believing what Hamlet said about her rather than the actual text of the play and in the text there is no clear evidence that suggests Gertrude was an adulteress.

Similarly, Opheliahas also been defended by feminists. Conventional readings of the play have argued that Ophelia was surrounded by three powerful men (her father, brother and lover) who were making decisions for her, and then all three are gone because of which Ophelia was driven into madness Elaine Showalter points out that Ophelia goes mad with guilt because, when Hamlet kills her father, he has fulfilled her sexual desire to have Hamlet kill her father so they can be together. Showalter points out that Ophelia has become the symbol of the distraught and hysterical woman in modern culture, a symbol which may not be entirely accurate nor healthy for women.

3.3 *Hamlet* and cultural studies

In the last three decades, Shakespearean Cultural Studies has grown considerably. As Lanier (p. 228) says, this field studies how the works of Shakespeare have been "used, plundered, recrafted, and reinflected by generations and cultures not Shakespeare's own". Thomas Certelli (p. 88) in this context says:

> "the reading and transmission of culturally privileged texts (and there are no texts in the West that are as privileged as Shakespeare's) play influential roles in the development of those imaginary representations of the world Althusser identifies as ideologies."

Book length studies such as *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Lanier), the *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (Shaughnessy), *Shakespeare after Mass Media* and *Shakespeares after Shakespeare: An Encyclopaedia of the Bard in Mass Media and Popular Culture* (both by Richard Burt), as well as the appearance of a journal volume dedicated to Shakespearean adaptations, a scholarly catalogue of Shakespeare and popular culture, a comprehensive searchable database of mass media adaptations of Shakespeare, all prove that Shakespearean Cultural Studies is coming of age.

Cultural Studies took Shakespearean studies beyond the established canon to popular culture, identity subcultures, and postcolonial literature has been very important. This kind of study started with books such as *Political Shakespeare* (Dollimore and Sinfield) and *The Shakespeare Myth* (Holderness).

Shakespearean Cultural Studies is an ever-expanding field of study, and hence its nature is not easily definable. Unlike New Historicism which focuses on studying Shakespearean work by locating it properly in the original conditions of production of Shakespeare's work, Shakespearean Cultural Studies is more concerned with two things:

1. The cultural afterlife of Shakespeare
2. The way in which Shakespeare's works; his image and his life are used and re-crafted across time and culture

The focus is not on Shakespeare, but rather on 'the author-function' as Michele Foucault calls it. It begins with Shakespeare's extraordinary cultural authority, and seeks to examine how that authority came into being and how it has been and continues to be appropriated, reshaped and fought over in a variety of cultural contexts, and how that authority might be reinvented or redeployed in the future. Terence Hawkes characterises this approach as "presentism" to distinguish it from the historicist studies of Shakespeare. Furthermore, Shakespearean Cultural Studies has added concerns such as –the way Shakespeare is popularized/ re-popularized through pop culture and mass-media, the way his work is reshaped to suit the new mass media, and the way Shakespeare is globalised, that is, the way Shakespeare's work is approached from various non-British forms and contexts, and postcolonial perspective.

The aim is to study Shakespeare's place in the postmodern society vis-à-vis the cultural stratification – the high and low or canonical and pop cultures. Let's remember that the 19th Century division between the canonical and popular cultures got further widened during the early 20th century Modernist phase. In the Modernist phase academic study and mass-market journalism were increasingly differentiated from each other. English departments and academicians got involved with the first. In a similar vein, theatre was increasingly seen as a concern of specialised audience and of educated elite and was increasingly separated from film, radio and TV. And thus, Shakespeare's work became a part of the academic concerns and high or elite

culture. On the contrary, by the end of the 20th Century, the distinctions between high and low culture broke down completely under the influence of postmodernism. With this,Shakespeare was shifted from elite to pop. The popular culture continued using Shakespearean works in different ways, often retrofitting it with new forms, idiom and imagery. Pop culture used Shakespeare sometimes to bring cultural prestige to itself and sometimes to establish itself as a non-elite, democratic and subversive form. The studies of "popularization" of Shakespeare are concerned with answering questions such as:

- Does pop Shakespeare actively preserve, subvert, or simply ignore cultural hierarchies?
- Does Shakespeare's presence in popular culture indicate a serious medium for political and artistic discourse?
- Or does it indicate that Shakespeare has become just one of the many postmodern retro styles/ icons used as a ready-made narrative or for ornamental effect?
- Is the Shakespeare of popular culture a vehicle for genuinely populist, pseudo-populist, conservative, or even reactionary politics?

Let's understand this with reference to Kenneth Branagh's Shakespeare films. Branagh's desire was to make Shakespeare accessible to common people through films. Response to the films from academia was not very positive. Some saw them as conservative; some felt Branagh was not engaging with controversial political issues such as class hierarchies, race, gender and state violence as he tries too hard not to offend anyone. Branagh was criticised that in his pursuit for maximum accessibility and commercial success, progressive populist themes were excluded.

Burt in *Unspeakable ShaXXXspeares* has focused on ''trash'' genres and motifs –pornography, teen, horror, and action films, Nazi imagery, comic book fantasy, etc. – to yield what he calls ''Schlockspe are'', a degraded hybrid that, he argues, has become American culture's dominant form of Shakespeare.

Another direction in which Shakespearean Cultural Studies is developing is their attempt to question the nature of the "popular" as a category by asking questions such as:

- In what way is Michael Alereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) or Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) a popular film?
- How can popularity be measured solely using box office success?

One more interesting development is the rise of a genre comprising of adaptations of Shakespeare directed towards children. A foundational text in this genre is Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807). Shakespearean Cultural Studies has also started scrutinising children's Shakespeare.

The studies on mediatisation of Shakespeare focus on understanding how the typical qualities associated with Shakespearean theatre change when Shakespeare is produced in mass-media forms and how does it influence the ideological content. As mass-media is more easily available across various boundaries than the live theatre, these studies are also interested in understanding how mediatisation influence the globalisation of Shakespeare. However, these studies are still dominated by discussions of Shakespeare on film, and particularly by the Anglo-American Shakespeare films of the 90s apart from a few studies such as Richard Burt's *Shakespeare After Mass Media*, which also discusses Shakespeare and the musical, comic books, radio, and theme parks.

The political economy of contemporary Shakespeare– how economic calculation influences Shakespearean adaptation/production, distribution, and re-issue in an age of corporate media–is an under investigated area in Shakespearean Cultural Studies, with the exception of Ric Knowles' *Reading the Material Theatre*.

On the whole, Shakespearean cultural studies is deeply sceptical about popularized Shakespeare, preferring instead to stress its shortcomings, its lack of progressiveness, and historical inaccuracies.

Through these engagements, Shakespearean Cultural Studies seeks to explore the place of Shakespeare in the postmodern public sphere.

3.4 *Hamlet* and Indian/Marathi theatre

Shakespeare's plays reached other parts of the world beyond England with the merchant traders. *Hamlet* and *Richard II* were staged on the ship 'the Dragon', commissioned by the East India Company, on 5thand 30thSeptember 1607 while anchored at Sierra Leone. Shakespeare was performed in India for the English traders in Calcutta (1775) and Bombay (1776). Soon after European style theatres were set

up in India, some plays were performed at the Calcutta Theatre and of these, at least eight were of Shakespeare.

Systematic study of English Literature began in India with the opening of institutions like the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817. With this, exposure and enshrining of Shakespeare began in the Indian classroom. Indians started discovering the "real" Shakespeare for themselves. Early teaching emphasized both performative and literary aspects. Teachers like Henry Derozio and D. L. Richardson were celebrated for their expository as well as histrionic abilities. It was considered important for Indians not only to be able to read Shakespeare but also to be able to "elocute" him with style. And so, declamation contests were invariably organised in schools.

However, things changed after the Education Act of 1835. English was established as the language of administration and of government-funded education. With this, there was change in the way Shakespeare was studied. Shakespeare was moved from the fashionable and cultural to the imperial and ideological axis. The effect of this policy was to produce a split (which lasts till today) between the English-educated elite and the vernacular-speaking masses. It had its consequences on the reception of Shakespeare too: there developed two mutually exclusive streams— of an "academic" literary Shakespeare led by Anglicized Indians and a popular Shakespeare on stage, transformed and transmuted in translation.

Most of these early translations were rough adaptations meant to introduce Shakespeare to common Indians. These translations attempted different degrees of localization:

1. Some translations simply Indianized the names
2. Some translations had a relocation in a specific period of Indian history
3. Some translations were complete retellings with the removal and addition of characters, scenes, and subplots. There were often additions of song and dance.
4. Some translations attempted a total indigenization of the plays into a traditional Indian theatre form.

The 'Shakespeare Theatrical Company', a part of the Parsi theatre that was established in 1876, had the explicit purpose of presenting Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati translation, but in Elizabethan costume. Through a small number of plays,

Shakespeare was popularized, commercialized, and insinuated into the psyche of these audiences. The audience didn't even know that what they had seen, loved and accepted was Shakespeare.

The most popular mode of playing was a conscious universalization in which audiences were ready to accept a Shakespeare performed straight without Indianizations, interested more in the ideas of the play than in a cultural equivalence. Based on assumptions of a stable and authoritative text, it believed in letting the text speak for itself, by playing up its foreignness. Ebrahim Alkazi's *Raja Lear* (1964), in Urdu translation but in Western dress, was one such monumental production. The performance was often criticized as imitative and essentializing. However, in the postcolonial context this universalist staging practice still functions as an empowering mimicry. Doing it like them becomes a mastering of what was once a master colonizing text.

In contrast, the effect of the second, indigenizing stream was to assimilate Shakespeare not just into the traditional performative but also the philosophic fabric of India. It produced some of the most creative outcomes of this encounter between Shakespeare and India. Some of the most creative directors in the country, chose to engage with Shakespeare using Indian art forms. For example, B. V. Karanth, for example, used *yakshagana* in his *Macbeth* (1979). K. N. Panikkar presented *The Tempest*(2000) in the form and rhythms of Sanskrit drama and *kudiattam*. A recent trend is to assert a playful postcolonial freedom to cut, critique, and rewrite the text of Shakespeare in contemporary terms. For example, Ekbal Ahmed's productions of *Gombe Macbeth* (*Puppet Macbeth*) and *Hamlet* are considered milestones of contemporary Kannada theatre. Ekbal makes innovative use of gestural and imagistic language, adapted mostly from the local indigenous theatre form, *yakshagana*, a non-realistic and stylized acting.

Translations into Indian languages:

Towards the end of the 19thcentury, mostly due to the growth and spread of English education, there was an increased desire to translate and perform Shakespeare more faithfully. Some of these translations were done as acts of sycophantic flattery, but for the others, translation of Shakespeare was "an act of measuring up to the might of the master language" (Trivedi and Bartholomeusz, p. 16)

Harivansh Rai Bachchan, a well-known Hindi poet, began to translate *Macbeth* in 1957 and by 1972 translated the four major tragedies in verse form into Hindi. Hindi poet Amrit Rai was convinced that the ability to translate the ideas and emotions of Shakespeare is a touchstone of a language's maturity and capability and so undertook to translate *Hamlet* in 1963 'on behalf of Hindi'. Many scholars are of the view that the act of translating Shakespeare and other canonical English texts into Indian languages was a compensatory act for the loss of political power.

During the first thirty years of the twentieth century, Shakespeare was translated into the major Indian languages to a very large extent. The most popular play amongst the translators was *The Merchant of Venice* (translated more than fifty times) followed by *The Comedy of Errors* (translated nearly thirty times in different languages). Among the tragedies, *Othello* and *Macbeth* were very popular. *Hamlet* has been translated fifty times. The least translated plays were the history plays.

This translation activity as well as performances of Shakespeare witnessed a decline with the intensification of the nationalist movement in the 1920s. During 1880 to 1900, fourteen Hindi translations appeared, from 1900 to 1930, twenty-three translations appeared, whereas, from 1930 to 1956, only one translation was done. In Marathi, where there were sixty-five translations from 1867 to 1915, there are only two in the next thirty-nine years.

These translations have two aspects – one literary and the other social. The literary aspect reveals the anxiousness of Indian writers to make their works understood and acceptable to the larger section of the reading community and to "educate" the people. The social aspect is intimately connected with the questions of caste, gender, conventions, tradition and change. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-95) translated *Hamlet* as *Vikaravilasita* (1883). In the preface he writes that one of the objectives of reading plays of different cultures is to realize the limitations of one's own society:

> "Those who advocate child marriage, or the tonsuring of the heads of young widows, or are engaged in debates on the appropriate size of one's turban or codes of dress during meals, or whether the husband should address the wife by her name and feel proud of such things need not read *Othello* or *Lear* or *Romeo and Juliet."*

The social aspect reveals many facets of the Indian society of the time too. *Romeo and Juliet*, was adapted as *Gulzar am Gulnar* (1900) in Gujarat. Under popular pressure, the tragedy was changed to a play with a happy ending. The performance was criticised by the elders of the D. J. Sindhi College Dramatic Society for the excessive boldness of its love scenes. In a society where marriage was strictly utilitarian and arranged by the guardians and where premarital love was almost impossibile, *Romeo and Juliet* was seen as a serious threat to social norms.

The distinguished Bengali poet Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay, in his translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, omits the line "I will kiss thy lips" (Act 5, scene 3, line 164) but retains the next lines: "Haply some poison yet doth hang on them/ To make me die with a restorative."

Even if expressions like "I will kiss thy lips" were not unusual in Indian/Sanskrit non-dramatic literatures, it was considered extremely offensive in plays intended to be staged. To translate or not to translate such "foreign" texts, therefore, was not an innocent literary question; it was a political act in a deeper sense, a choice between defending the social codes and challenging them.

Let's look at the translations into Marathi and Hindi for example.

Hamlet has a glorious stage history in Maharashtra and to some extent in Tamil Nadu. R. K. Yajnik in *The Indian Theatre* (1970) writes,

> "no Shakespearean play, most faithfully rendered, has ever evoked such unbounded enthusiasm and admiration in India as the Marathi *Hamlet*."

It has been translated into Marathi by at least six different writers at different times, including Nana Saheb Peshwa in 1857 and by Nana Jog in 1959. Jog's translation is an abridged version of the play in three acts. All characters, including Hamlet, have been Indianised, yet the book is entitled *Hamlet*. Agarkar's *Vikaravilasita* (1883) had great stage success mainly because of Ganapat Rao Joshi, the legendary actor of the Marathi stage, who played the role of Hamlet (Chandra Sen) and Balwantrao Jog, who played the role of Ophelia (Mallika). Agarkar's interpreted *Hamlet* as a "tragedy of thought" which has not found favour with many scholars, but its popularity was phenomenal. Yajnik informs us that "despite its having been acted by [Joshi] hundreds of times, [it] was always in demand wherever the company toured." It went into five editions, the last being in 1956.

The secret of its popularity both as a play and as a translation lies in the strategies adopted by Agarkar. The play is Indianized to a great extent. All the proper names have been replaced by Sanskrit words so that their European identity is completely effaced. Claudius is Bhujanga; Horatio, Priyal; Gertrude, Madanika; Hamlet, Chandrasena; Polonius, Shaleya; and Ophelia, Mallika. Place-names have also changed: Elsinore is Kunjapur; Denmark, Balabhadra; France, Uttal; Italy, Sagaranta, Greece, Dashama; Paris, Hemakuta; Poland, Polon and England, Svetadvip.

Allusions to European myths and legends (e.g., the death of Priam in the play-within-the-play scene) have been replaced by Indian equivalents (the Ashwathama-Dron episode of the *Mahabharata*). The Marathi Polonius (Shaleya) quotes didactic verses in Sanskrit. The translation on the whole does not deviate from the original in its narrative sequence and arrangement of materials. The famous passages have been translated fully and ably. The lines of Shakespeare that have acquired the status of a proverb or aphorism have not caused much problem. Agarkar incorporates phrases and expressions from well-known Sanskrit plays of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Visakhadatta and Sanskrit *niti* (didactic poetry) and Subhashita (epigrammatic poetry). The dominant tradition of didactic poetry in Sanskrit and other languages provided the necessary linguistic and cultural contexts for the translation.

Problems came from a different front – the colloquialisms and cultural metaphors. Translations of expressions of social behaviour and profanities proved to be more difficult than those of the rhetorical and lyrical passages. The lines such as those given below from *Hamlet* created great difficulty for the Indian translators because of their bawdy suggestiveness.

Hamlet: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Ophelia: No, my lord.

Hamlet: I mean, my head upon your lap

Ophelia: Ay, my lord (*Hamlet*, 3.2. 110-14)

Agarkar deleted the lewd line "That fair thought to lie between maid's legs" that followed in the conversation, but he also attempted to preserve the decorum of his hero Chandrasen: a compromise between Shakespeare and the taste of his Indian audience.

Hamlet: Apalya sejari jaga dyalka?

Ophelia: He kaye maharaj

Hamlet: Bhiu naka mi dusre tisre kahi karit nahi apalya payavar doke tekto teku ka nako.

[Hamlet: Will you (allow me) to sit beside you? Ophelia: What is this, Maharaj? Hamlet: Don't fear. I am not going to do anything Shall I keep my head on your feet?]

If we look at a Sanskrit translation done seven decades later, we see that the translator is faced by a similar dilemma and solves the problem in almost a similar manner.

Translating the cultural part was another problem and translators used different strategies. Here sre some examples of the way the cultural parts were Indianised:

Horatio**:** My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Hamlet: I prithee do not mock me, fellow studient, I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio: Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Hamlet: Thrift, thrift, Horatio, the funeral bak'd-meats Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

(*Hamlet*, Act1 scene 2, 180-83)

Agarkar Indianizes the passage and the cultural milieu entailed here quite cleverly:

Hamlet: Kharc bacavila Sraddhaca brahman-lagnala ani lagnaca sraddhala sate-lotekele in kay?

[Only to reduce the expenditure. (An exchange between) the brahmin for the last rite ceremony and the brahmin for the wedding. Has he done intermarriage?]

Nana Jog, in his translation, done after several decades, follows the same strategy with a more extended and vivid metaphor of cooking:

Hamlet: Are katkasar! Kat Kasar mhanatat hila ekac talnat sraddha barobar lagnacyahi bundi padun ghetla

[It's thrift! Sweets for shraddha (the last rite) and sweets for marriage are prepared in the same frying pan.]

Translators chose to undertake transformations of Shakespeare through using acceptable equivalents from Indian culture for certain metaphors, imagery and allusions in the original. Sometimes they added or deleted certain components.

Shakespeare and Indian Films

Shakespeare has had a limited place in the Indian film world. *The Comedy of Errors*, which was filmed both in Bengali and Hindi, had considerable success. Gulzar's *Angoor*; based on this play, does not mention its debt to Shakespeare, but at the end of the film a portrait of Shakespeare winking at the audience is flashed on the screen. *Hamlet* is the only tragedy to be filmed in Hindi. This was done in the mid-1950s. The Tamil film industry, however, has taken greater interest in Shakespeare. Shylock (based on *The Merchant of Venice*) was produced in 1940. *Cymbeline*, rendered as *Katakam*, was released in 1947. Both failed at the box office. There are also Tamil films of *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen o f Verona*, *The Taming o f the Shrew* (Arivali, with Shivaji Ganesan and P. Bhanumati in the main roles) and *Romeo and Juliet*.

3.5 Check your progress

Q. 1. Answer in a word/ phrase or sentence each:

1. On which play is Gulzar's *Angoor* based?
2. Which critic in her essay 'Hamlet's Mother' argued that critics have always misinterpreted Gertrude?
3. When did the distinctions between high and low culture broke down completely under the influence of postmodernism?
4. Who used form and rhythms of Sanskrit drama and *kudiattam* in his *The Tempest* ?
5. What Indian art form was employed by B. V. Karanth in his Macbeth?
6. Which play did Harivansh Rai Bachchan, a well-known Hindi poet, began to translate in 1957?
7. How many times has *Hamlet* been translated in Indian languages?

8. In Agarkar's *Vikaravilasita*, what name is used for Poland, Polon and England?
9. What Indian myth is used in place of the death of Priam in the play-within-the-play scene in Agarkar's *Vikaravilasita*?
10. What name is used for Polonius in Agarkar's Marathi translation?

Q.2. Elaborate with examples how the play *Hamlet* has been read in Cultural Studies.

3.6 Answers to check your progress

Q. 1.

1. The Comedy of Errors
2. Heilbrun
3. By the end of the 20th Century
4. K. N. Panikkar
5. Yakshagana
6. *Macbeth*
7. At least fifty times
8. Svetadvip.
9. The Ashwathama-Dron episode of the Mahabharata
10. Shaleya

Q. 2. The play *Hamlet* has been extensively analyzed from various perspectives in cultural studies.

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that explores the relationships between culture, society, and politics.

The play Hamlet has been analyzed in cultural studies through the following lenses:

Postcolonial Analysis

Postcolonial analysis of Hamlet examines the play's representation of colonialism and imperialism. Some scholars argue that the play reflects the cultural and political anxieties of Elizabethan England, a time when England was establishing its colonial empire. They argue that the play's portrayal of the relationship between Denmark and Norway reflects England's relationship with its colonies. Edward Said,

a prominent cultural studies scholar, has written about Hamlet as a representation of the colonizer-colonized relationship in his book "Culture and Imperialism."

Another lens through which Hamlet has been analyzed in cultural studies is feminist analysis. Feminist scholars have examined the play's portrayal of women, arguing that the female characters are often marginalized and subjected to male dominance. They also argue that the play's portrayal of gender reinforces patriarchal norms. Some prominent feminist scholars who have written about Hamlet include Elaine Showalter and Copperier Kahn.

Queer Analysis

Queer analysis of Hamlet explores issues of gender and sexuality in the play. Some scholars argue that the play has homoerotic undertones, particularly in the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio. They also argue that the play's portrayal of gender roles and masculinity is complex and nuanced. Alan Bray, a cultural studies scholar, has written about the homoeroticism in Hamlet in his book "Homosexuality in Renaissance England."

Race and Ethnicity Analysis

Race and ethnicity analysis of Hamlet examines the play's representation of race and ethnicity. Some scholars argue that the play reflects Elizabethan England's attitudes towards race and ethnicity, particularly towards non-white people. They argue that the play's portrayal of the relationship between Denmark and Norway reflects England's relationship with its European neighbors. Kim F. Hall, a cultural studies scholar, has written about the representation of race in Hamlet in her book "Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England."

Shakespeare and current cultural and political context:

William Shakespeare and 21st-Century Culture, Politics, and Leadership edited by Kristin M.S. Bezio and Anthony P. Russell, is a comprehensive volume that explores the continuing relevance of Shakespeare's work in the 21st century. The book features contributions from scholars across various disciplines, including cultural studies, political science, and leadership studies, and examines how Shakespeare's plays continue to offer insights into contemporary issues such as leadership, gender, race, and globalization.

The book highlights the importance of Shakespeare's work in understanding the cultural and political context of modern times. It is divided into four sections, each of which explores a different aspect of Shakespeare's continuing relevance. The first section examines the cultural context of Shakespeare's work and how it continues to influence modern culture. The second section explores Shakespeare's relevance to contemporary politics, including issues such as leadership, power, and democracy. The third section analyzes the intersection of Shakespeare and gender, exploring how his work challenges traditional gender roles and offers new perspectives on masculinity and femininity. The final section examines Shakespeare's portrayal of race and ethnicity, exploring how his work reflects historical attitudes towards race and ethnicity and how it continues to speak to contemporary debates on race and diversity.

The play *Hamlet* reflects the cultural and political anxieties of Elizabethan England, a time when England was establishing its colonial empire. The play's portrayal of the relationship between Denmark and Norway reflects England's relationship with its colonies. These insights may be relevant to discussions about present-day nation-state relationships and the legacy of colonialism.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Hamlet has been analyzed in cultural studies through various lenses, including postcolonial, queer, and race and ethnicity analysis. Prominent cultural studies scholars such as Edward Said, Alan Bray, and Kim F. Hall have written about Hamlet in relation to these perspectives, providing valuable insights into the cultural and political context of the play.

Edward Said, a prominent cultural studies scholar, has written about Hamlet as a representation of the colonizer-colonized relationship in his book "Culture and Imperialism." Alan Bray, another cultural studies scholar, has written about the homoeroticism in Hamlet in his book "Homosexuality in Renaissance England." Kim F. Hall, yet another cultural studies scholar, has written about the representation of race in Hamlet in her book "Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England." Other experts in the field of cultural studies have also contributed to the analysis of Hamlet, including Kristin M.S. Bezio and Anthony P. Russel, who edited the book "William Shakespeare and 21st-Century Culture, Politics, and Leadership."

3.7 Exercises

Q1. Answer in one word/phrase/ sentence each:

1. According to whom Ophelia goes mad with guilt?
2. Ebrahim Alkazi's *Raja Lear* (1964) was performed in which language?
3. What is Ekbal Ahmed's production of Macbeth called?
4. Who translated Hamlet earlier – Gopal Ganesh Agarkar or Nana Jog?
5. Which plays of Shakespeare have been least frequently translated into Indian languages?

Q2. Write answers to the following questions in detail:

1. What aspects of differences in culture are revealed by various translations of Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet in Indian languages?
2. Write a critical note on Shakespaeare an cultural studies.
3. Bring out with examples the culture of the period reflected/ depicted in *Hamlet.*

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Unit-4

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Film Adaptations

Contents :

4.0 Objectives
4.1 Introduction
4.2 Four Film Adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet:*
4.2.1 *Hamlet* (1948) Run time : 2h 34m
4.2.2 *Hamlet* (1990) Run time : 2h 15m
4.2.3 *Hamlet* (1996) Run time : 4h 2m
4.2.4 *Hamlet* (2000) Run time : 1h 52m
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4.3 Summary
4.4 Terms to Remember
4.5 Answers to check your progress
4.6 Exercises
4.7 Reference for further Study

4.0. Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit, you will

- learn what is adaptation,
- know four different film adaptations of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- know about Laurence Olivier's handling of '*film-noir*' in his *Hamlet*
- know about Franco Zeffirelli's use of 'tradition of action-adventure genre movies' in his *Hamlet*
- learn Kenneth Branagh's use of 'epic dimensions' in his *Hamlet*
- know about Michael Almereyda's use of modern setting in his *Hamlet*
- be able to answer the questions on film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

4.1. Introduction:

As the upshot of late 19th century technology and inventions, a new form of entertainment emerged in the form of 'cinema'. In a short span of 130 years, that is from Thomas A. Edison's kinetoscope (1891) to the present day multiplex, cinema passed through various phases and witnessed spectacular evolution. In the initial stage films were very short, in black and white version and had no sound. On December 28, 1895, Lumière brothers presented motion pictures on a screen at the Grand Café in Paris, and it is considered as the giant step towards the public performance of films. Undeveloped editing skills and single shot scenes were the reasons of short length of early films. Further, as early films were in the silent mode, film makers had to struggle a lot to narrate their stories. So in order to cope with the problem, filmmakers used intertitles (subtitles). Robert W. Paul was the first British director to use intertitles in his film *Our New General Servant* (1898). Another method used to tackle with the silent mode of film was the appointment of lecturer, who would simultaneously narrate the story of moving pictures.

Although in silent era inertitlles (and lectures) were used to bring smoothness in narrating story, they could not solve the basic problem, on the other hand the presence of intertitles and lecturers created obstacles in the process of watching films. Many filmmakers of this early stage turned towards literature, because literary stories were familiar to the readers, who were their potential viewers. But due to the short length of films, whole literary work could not be adapted, so some well-known and popular incidents were filmed and viewers enjoyed these familiar scenes on the screen.

The years from 1907 to 1913 are known as transition period of cinema. By this time the film had become the multi-reeled. *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) is considered as the first multi-reeled film. Judith Buchanan's quotation elucidates the vogue of adaptation in silent era: "In the five-year period between 1907 and 1912 alone, they produced two films adapted from Dickens, three from Victor Hugo, two from Greek mythology, five from the Bible, twelve from Shakespeare, three from classic fairytales, and one from each William Thackeray, Oscar Wilde, Ellen Wood, Arthur Conan Doyle and Arthurian legend".

The very titles of the early films are sufficient to know the vast range of adaptations. *Julius Caesar* (1908), *Richard III* (1912), *Romeo and Juliet* (1916) and *Hamlet* (1920) are noteworthy examples of films adapted from Shakespeare's plays.

Now we will try to understand what is '**adaptation**'? Literary adaptation to film is a long established tradition in cinema starting, for example, with early cinema adaptations of the Bible (e.g. the Lumière brothers thirteen-scene production of *La Vie et passion de Jèsus Christ*, 1897, and Alice Guy's *La Vie de Christ* 1899). By the 1910s, adaptations of the established literary canon had become a marketing ploy by which producers and exhibitors could legitimise cinema-going as a venue of 'taste' and does attract the middle-classes to their theatres. Literary adaptations gave cinema the respectable catchet of entertainment-as-art. In related way, it is noteworthy that literary adaptations have consistently been seen to have pedagogical value, that is teaching a nation (through cinema) about its classics its literary Heritage. Note how in the UK the BBC releases a film made for screen and subsequently television viewing, and then issues or teaching package (video plus a teacher and student text book). A literary adaptation creates a new story; it is not the same as the original, but takes on a new life, as indeed do the characters.

Essentially there appear to be three types of literary adaptation: first, the more traditionally connoted notion of adaptation, the literary classic; second, adaptations of plays to screen; and, finally, the adaptation of contemporary texts not yet determined as classics and possibly bound to remain within the canon of popular fiction. Of these three, arguably it is the second (adaptations of plays to screen) that remains most faithful to the original although contextually it may be updated into contemporary times as with several Shakespeare adaptations (for example, Michael Almereyda's 2000 film version of *Hamlet* is set in contemporary modern New York City, with Ethan Hawke starring as the title character).

Fidelity criticism focuses on the notion of equivalence. This is fairly limited approach, however, since it fails to take into account other levels of meaning. More recently a few critics have stressed the importance of examining the 'value' of the alterations from text to text. For example, films are more marked by economic considerations and the text (especially novel) and this constitutes a major reason why the adaptation is not like the text. Furthermore, it is clear that the choice of stars will impact on the way the original text is interpreted; adaptations will cut sections of the

text that are deemed uncinematographic or of no interest to the viewers. In other words, there is always a 'motivation' behind the choices made.

Now we will turn our attention to another important aspect of film studies, that is '**genre**'. As a term 'genre' goes back to earliest cinema and was seen as a way of organizing films according to type. The French critic André Bazin was already talking of it in the 1950s with reference to the **western**.

Genre is more than mere generic cataloguing. A few critics point out that genre does not refer just to film type but to **spectator** expectation and hypothesis (speculation as to how the film will end). It also refers to the role of specific institutional **discourses** that feed into and form generic structures. In other words, genre must be seen also as part of a tripartite process of production, marketing (including distribution and exhibition) and consumption. Prior to the nineteenth century it was literature or high art that was generic. But with the impact of new technologies which made popular entertainment more accessible, the position has reversed.

Genre serves as a barometer of the social and cultural concerns of cinema-going audiences. Genres have codes and conventions with which the audience is as familiar as the director (if not more so). Therefore, some genre films 'fail' because the audience feels that they have not adhered to their generic conventions sufficiently or because they are out of touch with contemporary times (one should see what has happened to the **epic**). Alternatively, the nonconformity of a film to its generic conventions can lead an audience to make it into a cult film. Film genre, therefore, is not as conservative a concept as might at first appear: it can switch, change, be imbricated (an overlapping of genres), subverted.

It is true, of course, that Shakespeare texts are themselves genre products. Whether seen on stage or purchased as books, plays are thought of as belonging to specific 'types', and are scarcely to be understood outside the conventions of genre. Genre establishes particular areas of understanding – specific subject matters and settings, recurrent narrative patterns and themes, characteristic techniques and tone. We speak of the novel – and then we speak of sentimental novels, crime novels, novels of manners and so forth; we speak of film; and then of Westerns, screwball comedies, horror movies and so forth. Genres of different films suggest different settings: the drawing-room, the seedy office, the dusty street, the country estate, the

haunted castle; and we expect certain character types, themes, situations and conflicts, and resolutions.

Genres change over time, impelled by the imperatives of form, commercial pressures or historic events, but they compose coherent and recognisable types of literature with their own appropriate patterns and traditions. Genre – no less for us than for Shakespeare – shapes the form of the artwork and mediates its reception. It serves artists, audiences, marketers and critics.

Genre gives artists a shape and vocabulary for their work and constitutes a specific tradition to which they may contribute, by way of continuity or innovation (usually both). More significantly, genre dictates the psychology and philosophy of an artwork, and has a decisive influence upon its incidents and themes, moral values, characterisation, plot outcome, treatment of gender, use of language and degree of naturalism.

There are number of film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In the following sections (Section 1 to 4), an attempt has been made to illustrate the relationship of Shakespeare movies to movie genre by comparing four film *Hamlet*s and their cinematic traditions: Laurence Olivier's *film noir*, Franco Zeffirelli's action-adventure, Kenneth Branagh's epic and Michael Almereyda's media savvy, self-reflexive 'Indie' take on the material. The characters and plot situations of Shakespeare's large and open text accommodate itself to the template of the genre in which each production is conceived.

Please note that you must read the original play carefully, and then watch these film adaptations. Reading only the summary of the play will not be sufficient.

4.2 Four Film Adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

4.2.1 *Hamlet* (1948) Run time: 2h 34m

Crew:

Directed by: Laurence Olivier; **Produced** by: Laurence Olivier (producer - uncredited), Reginald Beck (associate producer), Anthony Bushell (assistant producer), Herbert Smith (executive producer); **Music** by: William Walton; **Cinematography**: Desmond Dickinson; **Film Editing** by: Helga Cranston; **Art Direction** by: Carmen Dillon, Roger Furse (designer); the film was released by J. Arthur Rank.

Cast:

John Laurie: **Francisco**; Esmond Knight: **Bernardo**; Anthony Quayle: **Marcellus**; Peter Cushing: **Osric**; Stanley Holloway: **Gravedigger**; Basil Sydney: **Claudius**, the King; Eileen Herlie: **Gertrude**, the Queen; Laurence Olivier: **Hamlet**, Prince of Denmark; Norman Wooland: **Horatio**, his friend; Felix Aylmer: **Polonius**, Lord Chamberlain; Terence Morgan: **Laertes**, his son; Jean Simmons: **Ophelia**, his daughter.

This adaptation **won** several prestigious Awards in various categories: Academy Awards (**Oscar**) for Best Picture, Best Actor in Leading Role (Laurence Olivier), Best Art Direction (Carmen Dillon, Roger Furse), Best Costume design (Roger Furse) in 1949; BAFTA Award for Best film from any source in 1949; Bambi Award for Best Actress (Jean Simmons) in 1950 etc. Moreover it was also **nominated** for these awards in several categories: Academy Awards (**Oscar**) for Best Actress in Supporting Role (Jean Simmons), Best Director (Laurence Olivier), Best Music (William Walton) in 1949, etc.

Laurence Olivier's black-and-white film version of *Hamlet* (1948) [for which he won Academy Awards for both acting and directing] cuts Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Fortinbras out of the play and emphasizes Hamlet's inability to make up his mind and his oedipal fixation on his mother.

Now we will turn our attention to the term '*film noir*', because Olivier's *Hamlet* is in that tradition. (In her book *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, Susan Hayward not only defines but also discusses various terms, including 'film noir' as follows.) 'Film noir' is a term coined by French film critics in 1946 to designate a particular type of American **thriller** film. After the liberation of France in 1944, which saw the lifting of the ban (imposed by the occupying Germans) of the importation of American films, French screens were inundated with Hollywood products, including a new type of thriller. By analogy with the label given by the French to categorize hard-boiled detective novels – *roman noir* – the term film noir was coined to define this new-looking film. The film noir, predominantly a **B movie**, is often referred to as a sub**genre** of the crime **thriller** or **gangster** movie – although as a style it can also be found in other genres (for example, **melodrama**, **western**). That is why other critics see film noir as a movement rather than a genre. These critics point to the fact

that, like all other film movements, film noir emerged from a period of political instability: 1941–58, the time of the Second World War and the Cold War.

Rather than a genre or movement it might be safer to say that film noir is above all a visual style which came about as a result of political circumstance and cross-fertilization. Film noir has a style of cinematography that emphasizes the impression of night-time photography with high-contrast lighting, occasional low-key lighting, deep shadows and oblique angles to create a sense of dread and anxiety. The French claimed a first with Marcel Carné's *Le Jour se lève* (1939) – a very dark film. Certainly the visual **codes** given to express the deep pessimism of the **French poetic realist** films of the latter part of the 1930s (exemplified by the work of Carné, Julien Duvivier and Jean Renoir) were in part antecedents to the film noir. But so too was the 1920s **German expressionist** style in so far as the distorted effects created by **lighting**, **setting** and use of shadows reflected inner turmoil and alienation so associated with film noir.

There are three main characteristics of the film noir which emanate from its primary founding on the principle of contrastive lighting: *chiaroscuro* (*clair–obscur*/light–dark) – the highly stylized visual style which is matched by the stylized narrative which is matched in turn by the stylized **stereotypes** – particularly of women. The essential ingredients of a film noir are its specific location or setting, its high-contrast lighting as well as its low-key lighting, a particular kind of psychology associated with the protagonist, and a sense of social malaise, pessimism, suspicion and gloom (not surprising given the political conjuncture of the time). The setting is city-bound and generally a composite of rain-washed streets and interiors (both dimly lit), tightly framed shots often with extreme camera angles – all reminiscent of German expressionism. The cityscape is fraught with danger and corruption, the shadowy, poorly-lit (illit) streets reflecting the blurred moral and intellectual values as well as the difficulty in discerning truth. Characters are similarly unclear, as is evidenced by the way their bodies are lit and framed: half in the shadows, fragmented. The net effect is one of claustrophobia, underscoring the sense of malaise and tension. The protagonist (according to classic canons the 'hero' is a male) is often sidelighted to enhance the profile from one side and leaving the other half of the face in the dark, thus pointing to the moral **ambiguity** of this main character. He usually mistreats or ignores his 'woman' (either the wife, very much tucked away out of the city, or the moll with the golden heart who invariably sees the

‘truth’) and gets hooked on a *femme fatale* who, more often than not according to the **preferred reading**, is the perpetrator of all his troubles. This ‘hero’ is often obsessive and neurotic and equally capable of betrayal of his *femme fatale.* The ambiguity of his character is paralleled by the contortions of the plot, whose complexities seem unresolvable, particularly by the hero, who, until the very end, seems confused and unclear about what is happening. In this respect, film noir is about power relations and sexual identity. The power the *femme fatale* exerts over the hero is his own doing, because he has over-invested in his construction of her **sexuality** at the expense of his own **subjectivity**. He has allowed her to be on top because of his own insecurities about who he is.

But that’s only half the story, because film noir is not so clearcut in its misogyny. Film noir gives a very central role to the *femme fatale* and privileges her as active, intelligent, powerful, dominant and in charge of her own sexuality – at least until the end of the film when she pays for it (through death or submission to the patriarchal system). In this respect, she constitutes a break with **classic Hollywood cinema**’s representation of woman (as mother/whore, wife/mistress – passive). These women are interested only in themselves and in getting enough money, by all means foul, to guarantee their independence.

Ultimately film noir is not about investigating a murder, although it might at first appear to be. Generally speaking, in the film noir the woman is central to the intrigue and it is therefore she who becomes the object of the male’s investigation. But it is less her role in the intrigue that is under investigation, much more her sexuality because it is that which threatens the male quest for resolution. The ideological contradiction she opens up by being a strong, active, sexually expressive female must be closed off, contained. That is the **diegetic** trajectory and visual strategy of film noir. However, there are obvious difficulties in containing this woman. And this is reflected by the **narrative** strategies inherent in film noir. The devices used in film noir – voice-over and **flashbacks** (which primarily privilege the male point of view), diegetic narratives issued by different characters (the woman, the police, the private eye) – are just so many discourses vying for dominance. In the end, film noir is about which voice is going to gain control over the storytelling and – in the end – control over the image of the woman. This struggle occurs both between men and between the man and the woman, but, more importantly what this struggle

foregrounds is the fact that the woman's image is just that: a male construct – which 'suggests another place behind the image where woman might be'.

In the light of aforesaid discussion, if we write Olivier's *Hamlet* into the history of *film noir*, we are likely to begin with the obvious technical similarities – extensive tracking shots through Elsinore, inventive dramatisations of subjectivity (including the voice-overs and the camera's memorable passage through Hamlet's skull during 'To be or not to be'), the wonderful use of shadows and deep focus to express the isolation that afflicts the protagonist. But beyond these technical connections, we can see the familiar characters of the play fitting themselves into the genre's template.

Another important aspect of Olivier's *Hamlet* is his effective and successful handling of psychological complexity, and especially Freudian and Oedipal, of the Prince Hamlet.

It is generally assumed that the famous oedipal inflection of Olivier's Hamlet began when he was introduced to the work of Ernest Jones, Freud's disciple and biographer. As is well known, a visit to Jones by Olivier was instrumental in developing their Freudian approach. Olivier has set a new standard for filming a soliloquy, one that does justice to his character's complexity.

Check your progress:

i) What is the run-time of Laurence Olivier's film adaptation of *Hamlet* (1948)?

a. 2h 15 min, b. 1h 52 min, c. 2h 34min, d. 4h 2min

ii) Which role did the actress, Eileen Herlie, play in Olivier's film adaptation of *Hamlet* (1948)?

a. Gertrude, b. Player Queen, c. Ophelia, d. Osric.

iii) Who has played the role of Ophelia in Laurence Olivier's film adaptation of *Hamlet* (1948)?

a. Kate Winslet, b. Julia Styles,

c. Helena Bonham Carter, d. Jean Simmons

iv) _____'s film adaptation of *Hamlet* is considered as 'in the tradition of *film-noir*'. Laurence Olivier

v) In which year Laurence Olivier's adaptation of *Hamlet* was premiered?

vi) To which psychologist a visit by Olivier was instrumental in developing his Freudian approach?

a. Sigmund Freud, b. Carolyn Heilbrun,

c. Ernest Jones, d. Jacques Derrida

4.2.2 *Hamlet* (1990) Run time: **2h 15m**

Crew:

Directed by: Franco Zeffirelli; **Produced** by: Dyson Lovell (producer) and Bruce Davey (executive producer); **Music** by: Ennio Morricone; **Cinematography**: David Watkin; **Film Editing** by: Richard Marden; Art Direction by: Carmen Dillon, Roger Furse (designer); **Screen Play** by Franco Zeffirelli and Christopher De Vore; the film was released by Warner Bros. Pictures.

Cast:

Mel Gibson: **Hamlet**; Glenn Close: **Gertrude**; Alan Bates: **Claudius**; Ian Holm: **Polonius**; Helena Bonham Carter: **Ophelia**; Stephen Dillane: **Horatio**; Nathaniel Parker: **Laertes**; Sean Murray: **Guildernstern**; Michael Malony: **Rosencrantz**; Trevor Peacock: the **Gravedigger**; John McEnery: **Osric**; Richard Warwick: **Bernardo**; Christien Anholt: **Marcellus**; Dave Duffy: **Francisco**; Vernon Dobtcheff: **Reynaldo**.

For his 1990 film version of *Hamlet,* director Franco Zeffirelli rearranged and cut the text but fully retained the spirit of the original, with Mel Gibson performing admirably as Hamlet.

Now we will turn our attention to the term 'action movie', because Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is in that tradition. Action movie is a rather broad and all-encompassing term for a type of film that, generally speaking, will cost a great deal of money to produce, and whose primary aim is to offer the spectator an endless rollercoaster of violent, action-packed images. It is a type of film with a look that relies heavily on visual effects to thrill its audiences. Action movies have at their core fast action-packed fight scenes, chase and escape routines. Any top ten list of the 'best-ever' action movies will count amongst its favourites, **science-fiction**, spy thrillers, **fantasy** films, disaster and martial arts movies. Action films are 'vengeful cops and car chases,

lunatic villains and martial arts masters, male-bonding, gun fights and super secret agents, swords and sorcerers, wartime Nazi-bashing, boys' own adventures, casual destruction and general death-defiance'. In a word, the motivation behind action films is pure escapism. 'Forget the plot … focus on the mayhem'. Shoot-outs, car chases and crashes galore pack fast-action thrillers; climaxes of fireball explosions and destroyed buildings (even worlds) are the very essence of science-fiction films, disaster and hijack movies; explosive conventions of all sorts, flying bodies, tanks and planes on fire, torpedo point-of-view shots are all the familiar grist of war films. What a feast for the eyes! We thrive on the vicarious fear; enjoy being physically stimulated.

Although the action movie is primarily identified with Hollywood, it is worth making a couple of important points in this context. First, the Bond movie, is first and foremost a British product. Bond movies – with their awesome sets, breathtaking stunts, lavish visuals, extravagant fantasy, to say nothing of Bond's gadgets doing battle against the monster machines of the evil enemy – bespeak an almost overzealous fascination with technology and design. Indeed, we are invited to sit back and admire the spectacle 'based on lavish plenitude'. Each Bond movie boasts bigger production values than the previous one. As such, the Bond movie has set the tone for many of the subsequent action series or action franchise movies as they are also known (for example, the *Rambos*, *Die Hards*, or the *Lethal Weapons* – three of the biggest grossing of Hollywood's action spectacular series). However, whereas with Bond we are allowed to get the full picture-show of the action in a big frame, including the special futuristic design of the sets and exotic spaces visited by Bond, the newer action spectaculars offer us a curtailed sense of space in that they are full of rapid editing and discontinuity (a sort of montage-style but without the montage-effect).

The second important point worth making is that the martial arts action films from Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea constitute a very important part of the action-movie heritage – dating back as it does to the early 1970s, with the Hong Kong movies (*The Big Boss*, 1971; *Fist of Fury*, 1972, starring Bruce Lee); followed by Jackie Chan's *Police Story* series (1985). Interestingly, there has been a similar shift in film aesthetics to the one described above.

It is not easy to talk of **codes** and **conventions** where action movies are concerned. What we can say is that narrative coherence is not an uppermost concern,

but that excess is key and there is a great deal of 'male swagger' about. Spatial and temporal incoherence are also a big part of this action cinema. The audience is engulfed in a flurry of images and sounds, and yet – paradoxically – has no sense of direction. With the action movie the spectators remain disoriented. They never feel time or space passing as they hurtle from one action to the next. So, ultimately, there is neither spatial nor temporal freedom for us to know where we are or where we might be going.

Our action hero embodies the tradition of its earliest, courtly meaning whereby it referred to the swank of knights and nobles who would carry this swagger into battle (jousting, swordsmanship, etc.). For some of our modern action heroes the swagger begins in the verbal and ends in supremely cool action. Sean Connery as Bond is exemplary. In the 1980s to 1990s, Claude Van Damme, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger are at one extreme of the swaggering hulk, whereas Mel Gibson (*Lethal Weapon* series) and Bruce Willis (*Die Hard* series), with their lighter frames, are at the other end.

Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is a Mel Gibson movie, with discernable connections to his earlier films. (The director has said that he cast Mel Gibson in the role after watching his character contemplate suicide in the first *Lethal Weapon* film.) *Hamlet* also contains material for a Hollywood action movie, a natural format for a star like Mel Gibson because it provides the occasion for enjoyable violence. In action movies, especially those centring on revenge, the social institutions charged with providing justice either don not exist, fail to function or have become corrupt. The victims themselves may retaliate, or their cause may be taken up by avengers who become champions of justice. Gibson's previous films tended to be revenge entertainments, melodramas in which the line between villains and heroes is clearly drawn. In *Mad Max*, the Gibson character tracks down the gang responsible for killing his best friend and his family. In the *Lethal Weapon* movies he plays an outrageous police detective whose sanity is in doubt.

Hamlet is entertaining, but it is not an entertainment: it is a revenge tragedy, in which the protagonist manifests flaws that lead to his death. One of the challenges that Zeffirelli faced in joining actor and role was to assimilate an icon of revenge entertainment into the format of a revenge tragedy, to combine optimal Gibson with optimal Hamlet.

One of the critics, Daniel Quigley, has observed that the 'semiotic "noise"' created by the casting of Gibson makes the actor himself 'part of the performance text' and 'encourages the audience to see the Gibson that they have come to expect from his other films'. In evidence, he cites the way Hamlet confronts the Ghost. Olivier is 'turned inward, concerned about his soul and the internal damage a potentially evil spirit might inflict'; he adopts 'a protective, defensive posture, holding his sword in the form of the cross'. Gibson, on the other hand, 'pursues the Ghost with the point of the sword outward, ready to strike'; his Hamlet 'does not ponder the best way to act in a situation; he simply reacts, usually in a physical manner'.

Other production choices also seem influenced by the presence of action-star Gibson. For example, the careful unfolding of the mystery of the Ghost that opens the playtext is replaced by a direct plunge into the Hamlet–Gertrude–Claudius relationship during the invented scene of King Hamlet's funeral service.

Whatever else Zeffirelli's film did, it aimed to satisfy fans who went to the theatre to see a Gibson movie. Gibson's fans seem to take special pleasure in the actor's explosive moments – his startling bursts of temper and flashes of violence. His Hamlet has an interesting way of reading a book, for example: as he finishes each page, he tears it out and throws it away – an existential gesture if there ever was one. In a cinematic strategy that sharpens the revenge theme by encouraging us to adopt the protagonist's frame of mind, Zeffirelli lets his audience share Hamlet's vivid impressions of the decadence of Claudius's court.

Check your progress:

i) The run-time of Franco Zeffirelli's film adaptation of *Hamlet* (1990) is _____ .

ii) Whose film adaptation of *Hamlet* is considered as in the tradition of action-adventure movies?

a. Laurence Olivier, b. Kenneth Branagh,

c. Franco Zeffirelli, d. Michael Almereyda.

iii) Who has played the role Hamlet in Franco Zeffirelli's film adaptation of *Hamlet* (1990)?

a. Ethan Hawke, b. Laurence Olivier,

c. Kenneth Branagh, d. Mel Gibson

iv) In whose adaptation of *Hamlet*, the actress Helena Bonham Carter played the role of Ophelia?

v) What is the name of the actress who has played the role of Gertrude in Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of *Hamlet*?

vi) Match 'A' with 'B'

A	B
Jean Simmons as Ophelia	Franco Zeffirelli
Helena Bonham Carter as Ophelia	Michael Almereyda
Kate Winslet as Ophelia	Laurence Olivier
Julia Stiles as Ophelia	Kenneth Branagh

4.2.3 *Hamlet* (1996) Run time: **4h 2m**

Crew:

Directed by: Kenneth Branagh; **Produced** by: David Barron (producer); **Music** by: Patrick Doyle; **Cinematography**: Alex Thomson; Film **Editing** by: Neil Farrell; **Art Direction** by: Desmond Crowe; **Screen Play** by Kenneth Branagh; the film was released by Columbia Pictures.

Cast:

Brian Blessed: **Ghost** of Hamlet's father; Kenneth Branagh: **Hamlet**; Richard Briers: **Polonius**; Julie Christie: **Gertrude**; Billy Crystal: First **Gravedigger**; Gérard Depardieu: **Reaynaldo**; Reece Dinsdale: **Guildenstern**; Kenn Dodd: **Yorick**; Nicholas Farrell: **Horatio**; Ray Fearon: **Francisco**; Derek Jacobi: **Claudius**; Jack Lemmon: **Marcellus**; Ian McElhinney: **Bernardo**; Michael Maloney: **Laertes**; Rufus Sewell: **Fortinbras**; Timothy Spall: **Rosencrantz**; Don Warrington: **Voltimand**; Robin Williams: **Osric**; Kate Winslet: **Ophelia**.

Kenneth Branagh's four-and-a-half-hour film version of *Hamlet* (1996) is a monumental rendition of the complete play set in the nineteenth century. Branagh adapted the play, directed the movie, and starred as the title character.

Now we will turn our attention to the term 'epic', because Branagh's *Hamlet* is in that tradition. In the beginning there were *The Ten Commandments* (1923) and *Ben Hur* (1920), and they were so successful they went forth and multiplied and, born anew in sound, there were *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and *Ben Hur* (1959). Because epics cost so much to make, it is a case of economies of scale. Epics not only cost a monumental amount of money, they require huge sets, casts of thousands and, above all, a monumental hero played – at least since the advent of sound – by a monumental star. And as for topic, it is usually taken from history: biblical or 'factual'; certainly most preferably from a distant past so that the ideological message of national greatness would pass unremittingly. Generally speaking, in Western society the nation is the United States because the epic is predominantly an American genre, Hollywood having the resources necessary to produce it.

Arguably, D. W Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was the first great epic and David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) the last. The heyday of the sound epic was the 1950s, starting with *The Robe* (Henry Koster) in 1953, the first colour film to be made in cinemascope. The major reason for a resurgence in production of this genre was of course economic but there were also ideological reasons for its re-activation. Hollywood's popularity was on the decline. Home leisure, especially television, was keeping audiences away from the movies. To attract them, film studios were compelled to produce big spectacles that no television set could muster. So, on the economic front, colour, cinemascope and epics seemed a surefire cocktail to seduce audiences back in. The other factor in their appeal was the grandeur of the themes – biblical or historical – based in heroic action and moral values which of course fed into the dominant cultural climate of the time: the Cold War conflict between Western capitalism and Eastern/Soviet communism. The ideological function of these epics became one of reaffirming the image of the United States as a superpower; of asserting the need of its citizens to be cleaner than clean in the face of the threat of communism.

Branagh's *Hamlet* (1996) seems, in terms of pacing, settings and scope, to follow the cinematic model of the epic – to court comparison to *Ben Hur*, *The Ten Commandments* and *Dr. Zhivago*. Epic films tend to be paced majestically, prizing plenitude and variety over compactness and consistency of tone. Events tend to be broken up into episodes that are linked but self-contained, and enacted in a wide assortment of places. The movie epic 'defines history as occurring to music –

persuasive symphonic music underscoring every moment by overscoring it'; it employs 'spectacular, fantastic costumes' and displays an 'extravagance of action and place'; its massive sets mythify the mundane into '"imperialist" and "orientalist" fantasies of History'; the costs and difficulty of production, often stressed in promoting epic movies, elevate them 'into a *historical eventfulness* that exceeds its already excessive screen boundaries'. The use of recognised stars 'doubles the film's temporal dimension'; they serve to '*generalize* historical specificity through their own *iconographic* presence. Stars are cast not *as* characters but *in* character – as "types" who, however physically particular and concrete, signify universal and general characteristics.' 'Stars literally lend *magnitude* to the representation.'

Branagh's *Hamlet* participates in the epic tradition by several means. First, by producing a 'full text' *Hamlet* that runs over four hours, he required a commitment of audience time, and he required of himself a lavish production that would supply a variety of incidents, an epic arc and pace, and above all a sense of scope – enough 'to bring back memories of the early-Sixties heyday of blockbuster filmmaking, the days of *Spartacus* and *Lawrence of Arabia*'. He cautions us that 'streamline' Shakespeare, while achieving sharp narrative focus, also sacrifices the messy abundance that the playwright offers: '*Hamlet* is a much more interesting and surprising work – and, with its roundabout strategies and gradual buildups and contradictions of tone, a more realistic one – when all of it is allowed to be heard.'

Branagh's use of flashbacks adds to the effect: they bring many elements of the Hamlet 'story' into the *Hamlet* plot; they undertake, through flashback, to explain what the play leaves unsettled (such as Hamlet's affair with Ophelia) and make elements of exposition explicit (the affection of Hamlet for Yorick).

The film is certainly visually opulent: Blenheim provides a lavish setting for the action. The 'Elsinores' of Olivier and Zeffirelli are not frugal, but the former is filmed in austere black and white and the latter is more functional than decorative. Branagh impresses by the inclusion of luxurious exteriors and props (like the miniature train that brings Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Elsinore). Hamlet's sense of isolation is well dramatised by the very extravagance of the set for Act i scene 2, culminating in the great shower of confetti that accompanies the departure of Claudius and Gertrude. By showing soldiers training and providing other signs of a functioning bureacracy, Branagh suggests the practical needs of a nation threatened by invasion. Indeed, the cast seems large enough to be a small state.

Branagh's use of the statue of King Hamlet as an emblem of his reign – to be torn down to mark the advent of Fortinbras – gives the film a sense of expansiveness by alluding to the cycles of history, making the individual story of Prince Hamlet an episode in a larger process.

Check your progress:

i) Whose film adaptation of *Hamlet* is famous for its epic dimensions?

a. Kenneth Branagh, b. Michael Almereyda,

c. Franco Zeffirelli, d. Laurence Olivier

ii) Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of *Hamlet* was first released in _____ .

iii) In whose adaptation of *Hamlet*, the actress Kate Winslet played the role of Ophelia? Kenneth Branagh

iv) What is the runtime of Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of *Hamlet*?

v) Whose film adaptation of *Hamlet* is considered as the "full-text *Hamlet*"?

a. Laurence Olivier, b. Kenneth Branagh,

c. Michael Almereyda, d. Franco Zeffirelli

4.2.4 *Hamlet* (2000) Run time: **1h 52m**

Crew:

Directed by: Michael Almereyda; **Produced** by: Andrew Fierberg and Amy Hobby (producers), Jason Blum and John Sloss (executive producer); **Music** by: Carter Burwell; **Cinematography**: John de Borman; **Film Editing** by: Kristina Boden; **Art Direction** by: Jeanne Develle, Jeff Nelson; **Screen Play** by Michael Almereyda; the film was released by Miramax Pictures.

Cast:

Ethan Hawke: **Hamlet**; Kyle MacLachlan: **Claudius**; Diane Venora: **Gertrude**; Sam Shepard: **Ghost**; Bill Murray: **Polonius**; Liev Schreiber: **Laertes**; Julia Stiles: **Ophelia**; Karl Geary: **Horatio**; Paula Malcomson: **Marcella**; Steve Zahn: **Rosencrantz**; Dechen Thurman: **Guildernstern**; Rome Neal: **Bernardo**; Jeffrey Wright: **Gravedigger**; Paul Bartel: **Osric**; Casey Affleck: **Fortinbras**;

Dave Duffy: Francisco; Vernon Dobtcheff: Reynaldo

The director Michael Almereyda set his 2000 film version of *Hamlet* in modern New York City, with Ethan Hawke starring as the title character.

The films of Olivier, Zeffirelli and Branagh discussed so far have fit comfortably, into familiar commercial genres. Michael Almereyda's 2000 *Hamlet* enters this mix with mischief on its mind, resisting easy categorisation. As an 'Independent Film', Michael Almereyda's work is the product of a movement that often disregards Hollywood's genre system, potentially freeing creators to fulfil their personal visions, adopt distinctive forms, and play imaginatively with and against the expectations of commercial cinema. Sometimes, of course, these efforts go on to great financial success, but 'indies' more generally create an alternative space for filmmakers to work outside 'the system'.

Almereyda's film sets *Hamlet* in contemporary New York City, transforming the 'state' of Denmark into the Denmark Corporation, which, following the death of its 'King and CEO', has passed into the hands of his younger brother. For this setting, Almereyda has acknowledged the inspiration of another quirky product, Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki's 1987 *Hamlet Goes Business*, a satirical work, set in Helsinki, in which Hamlet- and Claudius-equivalents struggle for control of a toy factory which the latter wants to turn into the world's leading manufacturer of rubber ducks. (Almereyda's homage to Kaurismäki comes when a little rubber duck appears among the 'remembrances' that Ophelia has 'longed long to redeliver' to Hamlet.) Almereyda's film differs, however, by restoring Shakespeare's language and by largely eliminating Kaurismäki's satire, opting instead to respect the play's tragic spine.

Perhaps we would do well to think of Almereyda's film as a 'metageneric' *Hamlet*, playfully aware of its place among cinematic forms. By turning Hamlet into a filmmaker and showing him as a creator and consumer of video images – e.g., by setting the 'To be or not be' soliloquy in the 'Action' aisle of a video store – Almereyda wittily references the alternative world of commercial cinema without participating in it.

Moreover, Almereyda's Prince is an experimental filmmaker, a category of artist that disdains even the limited commercial market cultivated by 'independents'. Hamlet's cluttered apartment contains various kinds of film and video technology, used not as means to make a living, but as instruments of selfreflection and self-

understanding. The film opens with Hamlet's film of himself expressing his personal misery ('I have of late lost all my mirth') and his disillusionment with the world ('A sterile promontory'). In other clips, he rehearses suicide or compulsively replays images of his parents and Ophelia.

Almereyda points out that in the screening of Hamlet's film *The Mousetrap: A Tragedy* – what Almereyda has called 'the film within the film' – 'the audience of the movie is watching an audience watch a movie. It's a hall of mirrors'. Hamlet attempts to use cinema as a weapon: screening *The Mousetrap* is his effort to break out of that hall of mirrors and 'catch the conscience of the king'. A collage of home movies, symbolic stop-action cinema, and pornography, its shots linked by associative editing, *The Mousetrap* shakes Claudius's complacency and propels Hamlet to action. That his action leads inadvertently to disaster – Polonius is shot by Hamlet, yes, while he is hiding behind a mirror – fulfils the play's sense of the irony of fate, leaving us aware of both the power and the speciousness of the image.

We can consider Almereyda's work a critique of the effects of modern media culture, maintaining that the director 'appropriates Shakespeare to define the state of the art of film in the new millennium', in which the ability of technology to store images of reality defeats rather than forwards an ability 'to generate sincere connection and presence'. Echoing this idea, Almereyda's film contains a film clip of Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh unpacking Hamlet's 'big question' ('To be or not to be') by posing the impossibility of anyone 'being' alone, and the need, rather, to 'inter Be'. Using the freedom accorded him as an independent filmmaker, Almermeyda gives cinematic form to metadramatic elements present in Shakespeare's original playtext, thereby making his film a contribution to the genre of introspective, self-referential films that his own Hamlet might have been proud to make.

Check your progress:

i) Which well-known American playwright played the role of Ghost in Michael Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet*?

   a. Brian Blessed, b. Sam Shepard, c. John Gielgud, d. Paul Scofield

ii) What is the name of the actress who has played the role of Gertrude in Michael Almereyda's adaptation of *Hamlet*?

iii) _____ has played the role of Hamlet in 2000 production of *Hamlet*.

iv) Whose film adaptation of *Hamlet* is considered as the shortest version of the play?

a. Laurence Olivier, b. Kenneth Branagh,

c. Michael Almereyda, d. Franco Zeffirelli

v) Which actor received the Academy Award (Oscar) – Best actor in leading role – for his role in *Hamlet*?

a. Ethan Hawke, b. Mel Gibson,

c. Laurence Olivier, d. Kenneth Branagh

vi) Match 'A' with 'B'

A	**B**
Hamlet	Glenn Close
Ophelia	Derek Jacobi
Claudius	Julia Stiles
Gertrude	Paula Malcomson
	Kenneth Branagh
	Sam Shepard

2.2.5 *Haider* (**2014**) Run time: **1h 40m**

Directed by: Vishal Bhardwaj.

Cast:

Shahid Kapoor: Haider Meer (Prince **Hamlet)**; Kay Kay Menon: Khurram Meer (**Claudius)**; Tabu: Ghazala Meer (**Gertrude)**; Irrfan Khan: Roohdaar (**Ghost)**; Narendra Jha: Dr. Hilaal Meer (Haider's Father) (**King Hamlet**); Lalit Parimoo: Pervez Lone (**Polonius)**; Aamir Bashir: Liyaqat Lone (**Laertes)**; Shraddha Kapoor: Arshia Lone (**Ophelia+Horatio)**; Sumit Kaul: Salman-1, Courtier (**Rosencrantz)**; Rajat Bhagat: Salman-2, Courtier (**Guildernstern)**; Ashwath Bhatt: Zahoor Hussain (**Fortinbras)**;

The director Vishal Bhardwaj set his 2014 film version of *Hamlet* amidst the insurgency-hit Kashmir conflicts of 1995, and the film is also based on Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night* with Shahid Kapoor starring as the title character.

Adapting Shakespeare is no easy feat, but Vishal Bhardwaj's mastery of the Bard enables him to capture the conventions of the classic, while making it feel like an entirely original cinematic experience.

It is remarkable how an adaptation maintains such close fidelity with its source, even though there are quite a few variations made in the cinematic adaptation of the bard to better suit the premise and the time it's set in. The stage is set in Srinagar, 1995, in an era when insurgence was gaining a strong-hold in Kashmir, and the beautiful paradise was in pain. A Kashmiri doctor, much to his wife Ghazala's (Tabu's) displeasure, accommodates some militants in his home for treatment. The doctor suddenly disappears, leaving Ghazala 'half-widowed'. Haider, a poetry student, returns home to find his uncle Khurram (Kay Kay Menon) joyously dancing and giving way too much attention to his mother, as the latter chuckles to her brother-in-law's actions. In the torrential center of grief, anger, cluelessness and madness, he's the most sensitive subject in emotional conflict, and he's in this very state when a mysterious man enters his life to replace his disgust with rage, changing his life as well as his world for ever.

Set in Srinagar in 1995, in the milieu of militancy and martial rule, Haider (Shahid Kapoor) returns to his hometown, after receiving news that his father has been abducted by the Indian army, charged with harbouring a militant. Their home burnt to the ground, his mother Ghazala, (Tabu) takes up residence with her brother-in-law, Khurram (Kay Kay Menon), unaware of his part in her husband's murder and his planned seduction of her. Grappling with both his unnatural love, and hatred for his mother as she succumbs to the advances of Khurram, Haider makes a murderous vow to avenge his father's death.

Vishal Bhardwaj wonderfully blends the black of politics with the grays of personal agony (there's no white in the entire story, jut slight shades of it.) The narrative is such that you would be siding with one person a moment, believing he is right, and in the next instant you are siding with someone else.

The often quoted famous line, "To be or not to be..." is substituted by a poem that goes something like, "Hum hain ya hum nahin" and that inclusive, the poetry

that surrounds the story telling has been artistically chosen and filmed. To comment on the story is futile since Shakespeare seldom falters at narrating a story. The presentation, the setting, the cinematography and the script are all immaculate and deserve all the accolades.

4.3. Summary:

There are number of film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The *Hamlet*s of Laurence Olivier, Franco Zeffirelli, Kenneth Branagh, and Michael Almereyda (and even Vishal Bharadwaj) are remarkably successful films. They succeed as highly intelligent and original interpretations of the play capable of delighting any audience. Most of all, they are innovative and eloquent translations from the Elizabethan dramatic to the modern cinematic medium. It is clear that these directors have approached adapting *Hamlet* much as actors have long approached playing the title role, as the ultimate challenge that allows one's "reflexes as a film-maker" to be "tested, battered and bettered."

In the aforesaid sections (Section 1 to 5), an attempt has been made to illustrate the relationship of Shakespeare movies to movie genre by comparing four film *Hamlet*s and their cinematic traditions: Laurence Olivier's *film noir*, Franco Zeffirelli's action-adventure, Kenneth Branagh's epic and Michael Almereyda's media savvy, self-reflexive 'Indie' take on the material. The characters and plot situations of Shakespeare's large and open text accommodate itself to the template of the genre in which each production is conceived.

4.4. Terms to Remember:

(important terms in the Unit along with brief meaning)

Director: The person responsible for putting a scenario or script onto film. In film studies, the term more commonly used for director is filmmaker, since it refers very clearly to their function.

Discourse: Discourse replaces the more imprecise word language. Discourse refers to the way in which texts are enunciated (brought into being). For example, cinematic discourse differs from that of a novel or a play, since it tells the story through image and sound. Discourse also refers to the social process of making sense of and reproducing reality and thereby of fixing meanings. Cinematic discourse reproduces 'reality' and tells stories about love and marriage, war and peace, and so

on. In cinema, for example, there is mainstream/dominant cinema which is the dominant discourse and then the marginal discourses of, say, Black, gay and lesbian or women's cinemas.

B-movies: Cheap and quickly made, B-movies first came into prominence in the United States during the Depression (early 1930s) when audiences demanded more for their money – a double bill: two films for the price of one. B-movies were screened as a second feature, alongside a major feature film (called an A-movie).

Codes and **conventions**: All genres have their codes and conventions (rules by which the narrative is governed). These are alternatively referred to as classic canons or canonic laws. For example, a road movie implies discovery, obtaining some self-knowledge; conventionally the roadster is male and it is his point of view that we see. Codes and conventions should not be viewed just within their textual or generic context but also within their social and historical contexts. Codes and conventions change over time and according to the ideological climate of the time

Fantasy: Generically speaking, fantasy films englobe four basic categories: horror, science-fiction, fairy tales and a certain type of adventure movie (journeys to improbable places and meetings with implausible creatures, such as Planet of the Apes, Franklin Schaffner, 1967). Fantasy films are about areas 'we don't really know about' and, therefore, areas we do not see as real. However, fantasy is the expression of our unconscious, and it is these films in particular that most readily reflect areas we repress or suppress – namely, the realms of our unconscious and the world of our dreams.

Flashbacks: A narrative device used in film (as in literature) to go back in time to an earlier moment in a character's life and/or history and to narrate that moment. Flashbacks, then, are most clearly marked as subjective moments within that narrative. Flashbacks are a cinematic representation of memory and of history and, ultimately of subjective truth.

Gangster: The gangster film is the one most readily identified as an American genre.

Lighting: In the earliest cinema, only natural lighting was used; most of the shooting was done in exteriors or in studios that had glass roofs or roofs that could open to the sunlight. As narratives became more complex (early 1900s) and as increased demand for products meant working to tight shooting schedules, using ordinary sunlight was

not satisfactory enough since it was not easily controllable. Thus, artificial lighting was introduced to supplement existing light.

Melodrama: Earliest roots of melodrama are in medieval morality plays and the oral tradition. Subsequently, the tradition found renewed favour in the French romantic drama of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the English and French sentimental novel of the same period. These dramas and novels based in codes of morality and good conscience were about familial relations, thwarted love and forced marriages

Mise-en-scène: Originally a theatre term meaning staging, it crossed over to signify the film production practices involved in the framing of shots. Thus, first, it connotes setting, costume and lighting; second, movement within the frame. In more general terms, however, mise-en-scène refers to what is visible in the frame (décor/setting, lighting, costume, the actors) and how the interaction of these elements provides meaning which the spectator interprets.

Narrative: Narrative involves the recounting of real or fictitious events. Narrative cinema's function is storytelling not description, which is, supposedly, a part function of the documentary. Narrative refers to the strategies, codes and conventions (including mise-en-scène and lighting) employed to organize a story. Primarily, narrative cinema is one that uses these strategies as a means of reproducing the 'real' world, one which the spectator can either identify with or consider to be within the realms of possibility.

Psychoanalysis: What follows is a mapping of the major debates in psychoanalysis as they have been introduced into and developed in film theory. Psychoanalysis did not fully enter into film theory until as late as the early 1970s. This might surprise, given that cinema is a contemporary of Freudian psychoanalysis (both emerging at the end of the nineteenth century) and that film narratives (whether realist or surrealist) are projections of our imaginings and therefore deeply linked to both our consciousness and our unconscious. It would take the coincidence in the late 1960s of two occurrences in theoretical thinking to bring about the entry of psychoanalysis. On the one hand, the late 1960s witnessed a reaction against the effects of structuralism and its 'total theory' strategy. On the other hand, this period saw a widening of the debates in Freudian psychoanalysis thanks to the impact of the

writings of Jacques Lacan. These were subsequently taken up in critical theory in general and film theory in particular.

Science-fiction films: These are considered by some critics to be a sub-genre of the horror movie; by others as a genre distinct from horror films; by others yet again as a sub-genre (along with horror movies) of fantasy films. These varied critical positions point to the difficulties in demarcating and categorizing genres in general and this one in particular. Science fiction as a literary genre came about in the mid- to late nineteenth century in response to advances in science and technology. Two exemplary authors of the genre, Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, from opposing positions, described science's prowess in making possible what up until the turn of the century had seemed impossible (e.g. submarines and space craft). Film, insofar as it can make visible what is invisible, seems a natural medium for this kind of narrative. However, science-fiction films have been more erratic in their appearances onscreen than most other genres.

Setting: Part of the total concept of mise-en-scène, the setting is literally the location where the action takes place, and it can be artificially constructed (as in studio sets) or natural (what is also termed location shooting).

Thriller: A very difficult genre to pin down because it covers such a wide range of types of films. Thrillers are films of suspense, so clearly film noir, gangster, science-fiction or horror films are in some respects thrillers, as are political and spy thrillers (e.g. the Bourne trilogy, 2002 to 2007), and detective thrillers. A thriller relies on intricacy of plot to create fear and apprehension in the audience. It plays on our own fears by drawing on our infantile and therefore mostly repressed fantasies that are voyeuristic and sexual in nature. The master of the thriller is Alfred Hitchcock, the greatest creator of anticipation and builder of suspense. Almost unquestionably he is the filmmaker who invented the modern thriller. His secret is of course in the construction of his films. Often at the centre of the narrative is a fairly basic theme, usually a struggle around love and/or money, so it is not that which grabs and enthralls the spectator. Thriller films are, then, sadomasochistic. Indeed, the psychological thriller bases its construction in sadomasochism, madness and voyeurism.

Voyeurism: Voyeurism is the act of viewing the activities of other people unbeknown to them. This often means that the act of looking is illicit or has illicit

connotations. We pay to go to the movies, but once we are sat before the screen we are positioned as voyeurs, as spectating subject watching the goings-on of the people on-screen who are 'unaware' that we are watching them. It is from this positioning that we derive pleasure (known as scopophilia, pleasure in viewing). Voyeurism is not limited to the spectator, however. The camera that originally filmed the action is also, technically speaking, a 'voyeur'.

Western: Also known as the Horse Opera or Oater, the Western became a genre that was incorporated very early into the film industry's repertoire. The first, official, Western was by the American filmmaker Edwin S. Porter, *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). Although the Western is considered an exclusively American genre, this is not the case. The French, for example, were making Westerns and exporting them successfully to the United States at least until World War One.

4.5. Answers to Check your progress:

Section-1:

i) c. 2h 34min; ii) a. Gertrude; iii) d. Jean Simmons;

iv) Laurence Olivier; v) 1948; vi) Ernest Jones

Section-2:

i) Run time: 2h 15m**;** ii) c. Franco Zeffirelli; iii) d. Mel Gibson;

iv) Franco Zeffirelli; v) Glenn Close;

vi) Jean Simmons- Laurence Olivier; Helena Bonham Carter- Franco Zeffirelli; Kate Winslet- Kenneth Branagh; Julia Stiles- Michael Almereyda

Section-3:

i) a. Kenneth Branagh; ii) 1996; iii) Kenneth Branagh;

iv) 4h 2m; v) Kenneth Branagh;

Section-4:

i) b. Sam Shepard; ii) Diane Venora; iii) Ethan Hawke;

iv) Michael Almereyda v) c. Laurence Olivier;

vi) Hamlet- Kenneth Branagh; Ophelia- Julia Stiles; Claudius- Derek Jacobi; Gertrude- Glenn Close

4.6. Exercise:

i) "Branagh's *Hamlet* (1996) participates in the epic tradition by several means". Discuss the statement with reference to Branagh's adaptation of the play.

ii) "The relationship of Olivier's *Hamlet* to *film noir* is obvious". Discuss.

iii) Consider Olivier's film of *Hamlet* as psychoanalytic interpretation.

iv) "Branagh's *Hamlet* (1996) seems, in terms of pacing, settings and scope, to follow the cinematic model of the epic". Discuss the statement with reference to Branagh's adaptation of the play.

v) Consider any one of adaptations of *Hamlet* as original interpretation of the play capable of delighting any audience.

vi) "Whatever else Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* did, it aimed to satisfy fans who went to the theatre to see a Gibson movie". Discuss the statement with reference to Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of the play.

vii) Compare Zeffirelli's 'action-adventure' *Hamlet* with Branagh's 'epic' *Hamlet*, and elucidate these cinematic traditions.

viii) "*Hamlet* contains material for a Hollywood action movie, a natural format for a star like Mel Gibson because it provides the occasion for enjoyable violence." Discuss the statement with reference to Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of the play.

ix) "Michael Almereyda's 2000 *Hamlet* resists easy categorisation of film genre". Discuss.

<u>Write Short notes on</u>:

a) Kenneth Branagh's Gertrude.

b) Mel Gibson as Hamlet.

c) Glenn Close as Gertrude.

d) Kate Winslet as Ophelia.

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