



م.م. سفيان عواد حسون.

REFLECTIONS OF THE ENGLISH THEATRE ON THE MENTAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

م.م. سفيان عواد حسون

كلية التربية / جامعة سامراء

Abstract

Theatre or theater is a collaborative form of fine art that uses live performers to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gesture, speech, song, music, and dance. Elements of art and stagecraft are used to enhance the physicality, presence and immediacy of the experience. The specific place of the performance is also named by the word "theatre" as derived from the Ancient Greek (théatron), "a place for viewing".

Many people feel that theatre is a way for them to escape their lives for a while and enter a new reality where there are lessons to be learned and voices to be heard. It is considered to be one of the most collaborative of the arts. People work together, putting together the different arts, like music, singing, acting, and dancing, to make something bigger than themselves. There are many skills and talents that go into a theatrical production apart from the common idea of artistic aspects, including sound engineering, light design, construction, and rigging. This allows people of many different areas to practice their specific skills by participating in theatre. Theatre also gives people a sense of community and belongingness. This is part of the reason why people who are active thespians often have stronger mental capabilities than most non thespians. Along with mental capabilities, thespians tend to be more in shape because of long hours of rehearsals that generally involve dancing and other exercises. Participants of theatre also have a better sense of motivation and drive for their goals because most good thespians are always working to improve themselves. Theatre also gives its participants a sense of culture, and a better understanding of it. There are many plays that are written or perceived to teach about a culture. Overall, this leads to better psychological well-being.

This research consists of three sections and a conclusion.



Section one talks about The English Theatre, the history of the English Theatre and the genres of the English Theatre (domestic, comedy and tragedy). It also talks about the styles of the English Theatre which are: Absurdism, Expressionism, Melodrama, Modernism, Naturalism, Puppetry and Realism.

Section two talks about development, mental development and the principles of mental development .It also talks about Sustainable development, It's definition, dimensions, themes, historical development and approaches.

Section Three talks about the reflections of the English Theatre on the mental sustainable development. It talks about the negative and positive reflections of the English Theatre on the mental sustainable development through comic and tragic plays by William Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Christopher Marlowe's " Dr.Faustus ". This section also talks about the reflections of the English Theatre on the development of the society during the World War I and World War II.

This study aims at showing the importance of the English Theatre on the mental sustainable development. It also aims at showing the positive and negative reflections of the English Theatre on the social development through the study of some selected plays by William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe by using a descriptive approach.

SECTION ONE

1-1. The History of English Theatre

English drama is Catholic in origin. After the 10th century, liturgical drama spread over Europe, representing Biblical history in Latin and in local tongues. These plays are known as Miracle or Mystery plays . An early one is the Anglo-Norman Mystered Adam, probably written in England 1140 C. Suppressed at the reformation, these plays continued in Catholic Europe, as in the passion play at Oberammergau , Bavaria . They were revived in 20th century England in Nativity plays, in Benjamin Britten's " Noyes Fludde and in Tony Harrison's Mysteries ".(**Alexander, 2000: 63**)

The Mystery plays were cycles of religious drama performed by town guilds , craft association of a religious kind . The term " Mystery " may derive from two words : métier (Fr.) or ministerium (Lat.) meaning ' craft; and mysterium (Lat.) , What was performed ' . As Greek tragedy began in religious rite , so Medieval European drama began with the representation of the central Christian story in the Mass , and in the annual cycle of services developed by the early Church . there were Christmas plays , beginning with the angels' declaration to Mary , her reply and dialogues with Joseph , and with shepherds and kings ,



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The Easter plays began with the entry of Christ into Jerusalem , with procession and palm branches . (**Ibid : 64**)

Drama began in Church , with clerics as authors and chief players . These dramatizations of the Bible , from creation to Doomsday , were popular . Records survive from France , Italy , Spain , Germany , Ireland and Scotland . A Cornish cycle survives , and plays from several English towns , with complete 15th century cycles from Chester , Wakefield and an unknown town . The York cycle has 48 plays . After 1311 the feast of corpus Christi , celebrating the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was held on 29 June ; this was a long day , upon which a cycle , the play called " Corpus Christi " , was performed . Each guild staged its play on a pageant-wagon through the streets . They were amateurs , but payments are recorded . In a Cain and Abel play , God is greeted by Cain's question to Abel : Who is that hob [clown] o'er the wall ? " (**Ibid: 65**)

The history of English Drama dates from the eleventh century . The earliest dramatic representation in English is believed to have been performance of a Latin play in honor of St.Katherine , at Dunstable in 1110 . By the time of the Roman conquest (1066) , a form of religious drama , originating from the rich symbolic ceremonial of the Church had already established itself in France , and as a matter of course it soon found its way into England . Its purpose was directly didactic or instructional ; it was the work of priests who used it as the means of conveying the truths of their religion to the illiterate masses . To begin with , the Church had this drama completely under control ; performances were given inside the church buildings themselves ; the priests were the actors and Latin was the language employed . This form of drama was known as the Miracle or Mystery play . The material for Mystery plays was drawn from the Bible and these Mystery plays expanded the mysteries connected with religion , Miracle plays consisted of the stories of the Saints in whose honour they were acted . As the mystery or miracle plays increased in popularity and on great occasions larger and larger crowds came to witness the performances , it became necessary to remove the stage from the interior of the buildings to the porch . Later , it was taken from the porch into the churchyard and finally , from the church premises altogether to the village green or the city street. Layman at the same time began to take part in the performances and soon they superseded the priests entirely . Also the vernacular tongue , first French , then English , took the place of Latin . (**Lall, 2005 : 7**)

1-2. The Genres of the English Theatre



1-2-1. Tragedy

Tragedy can be defined as an imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself. This means that a good tragedy deals with one issue that is very “serious.” You can’t have a tragedy about something trivial like breaking a fingernail. “Magnitude” here means great importance. The issue has to be serious and very important. That’s why a lot of tragedies deal with someone’s death “Complete in itself” means that the play must stick to the one issue; otherwise, the audience will get lost in the plot. Ancient Greek tragedy had a chorus whose role was to comment on the action of the play. The chorus sometimes sang their part. Aristotle said that the language should be easy to listen to. It should have rhythm and also good harmony for the lines that were sung. It is in a dramatic rather than narrative form to narrate a story is simply to tell the story, like telling a friend what happened over the weekend. In a play, the story must be dramatized or acted out. They are incidents arousing pity and fear. In a tragedy, the events or episodes in the play should lead the audience to feel very sorry for the main character the tragic hero. The audience should also feel afraid for the hero as he moves toward a destructive end. As the play moves along, the events should build up the emotions of pity and fear. A catharsis is a purging, or cleansing of the emotions --a release of tension. In a tragedy, this is often a moment of revelation when the tragic hero “falls flat on his face,” and the audience can finally explode. (www.dabhub.com)

1-2-2. Comedy

In a modern sense, comedy refers to any discourse or work generally intended to be humorous or to amuse by inducing laughter, especially in theatre, television, film and stand-up comedy. The origins of the term are found in Ancient Greece. In the Athenian democracy, the public opinion of voters was influenced by the political satire performed by the comic poets at the theaters. The theatrical genre of Greek comedy can be described as a dramatic performance which pits two groups or societies against each other in an amusing agony or conflict. Northrop Frye depicted these two opposing sides as a "Society of Youth" and a "Society of the Old".^[2] A revised view characterizes the essential agony of comedy as a struggle between a relatively powerless youth and the societal conventions that pose obstacles to his hopes. In this struggle, the youth is understood to be constrained by his lack of social authority, and is left with little choice but to take recourse in ruses which engender very dramatic irony which provokes laughter. (Marteinson, 2006:133)

1-2-3. Domestic Drama



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Domestic drama expresses and focuses on the realistic everyday lives of middle or lower classes in a certain society, generally referring to the post-Renaissance eras. According to the *English Communications Syllabus*, domestic drama refers to a dramatic story containing an emphasis on its “characters' intimate relationships and their responses to [the] unfolding events in their lives.” The characters, their lives, and the events that occur within the show are usually classified as 'ordinary' events, lives, and characters, but this does not limit the extent of what domestic drama can represent. Domestic drama does, however, take the approach in which it “concerns people much like ourselves, taken from the lower and middle classes of society, who struggle with everyday problems such as poverty, sickness, crime, and family strife.” One scholar suggests that domestic drama is possibly one third of the plays being written. Also known as bourgeois drama, domestic drama deals with problems of members of the middle and lower classes, particular problems of the family and home. Conflicts with society, struggles within a family, dashed hopes, and renewed determination are frequently characteristics of domestic drama. It attempts to depict onstage the lifestyle of ordinary people – in language, in dress, in behavior. Domestic drama first came to the fore during the eighteenth century in Europe and Great Britain when the merchant and working classes were emerging. Because general audiences could so readily identify with the people and problems of domestic drama, it continued to gain in popularity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and remains a major form today. (Wikipedia.com)

1-3. The Styles of the English Theatre:

1-3-1. Absurdism

The phrase " Absurd Drama " or " The Theatre of the Absurd " gained currency as a result of Martin Esslin's book *The Theatre of the Absurd* published in 1961 . Esslin points out that there is no such thing as a regular " movements " of Absurd dramatists ; the term is useful as a " device " to make certain fundamental traits which seem to be present in the works of a number of dramatists accessible to discussion by tracing features they have in common . " Esslin's book deals with a group of plays which incorporate certain beliefs and use certain methods and which , briefly and as a kind of intellectual shorthand . We call Absurd Drama . Absurdism is a school which is found in the fifties of the previous century . Samuel Beckett is the most famous one who wrote in such a style , his plays " Waiting for Godot " and " Endgame " are best examples of the Absurd Theatre .



Absurd drama has certain characteristic features which differentiate it from other genres of drama . such features are : nothing happens , in such kind of plays nothing happened from the beginning till the end of the play . another feature is lack of communication . in such plays there is no communications among the characters and between the characters and the society . another characteristic is circular plot . in absurd plays , the plot is circular , the play ends at the same point of beginning .

(Lall, 2012: 34)

1-3-2. Expressionism

Expressionism is a modernist movement in drama and theatre that developed in Europe (principally Germany) in the early decades of the 20th century and later in the United States. It forms part of the broader movement of Expressionism in the arts. Expressionist plays often dramatize the spiritual awakening and sufferings of their protagonists and are referred to as *Stationendramen* (station dramas), modeled on the episodic presentation of the suffering and death of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross. August Strindberg had pioneered this form with his autobiographical trilogy *To Damascus* (1898-1904). Early expressionism in particular testified to the failure of social values with a predilection for ecstasy and despair and hence a tendency towards the inflated and the grotesque; a mystical, even religious element with frequent apocalyptic overtones; an urgent sense of the here and now.

(Expressionism; 1973: P35)

1-3-3. Melodrama

Historically, a distinct form of drama popular throughout the nineteenth century which emphasized action and spectacular effects and employed music to heighten the dramatic mood. Melodrama employed stock characters and clearly defined villains and heroes. More generally, the term is applied to any dramatic play which presents an unambiguous confrontation between good and evil. Characterization is often shallow and stereotypical, and because the moral conflict is externalized, action and violence are prominent, usually culminating in a happy ending meant to demonstrate the eventual triumph of good. Literally, "a play with music," denoting the nineteenth century's fondness for performing plays with full-scale scores of incidental accompaniment, dances and songs. (Balzac, Henry James; 1995: 81)

1-3-4. Modernism

In the English Literature the Modernism occupied the years from shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century through roughly 1965. In broad terms, the period was marked by sudden and unexpected breaks with traditional ways of viewing and interacting with the world. Experimentation and individualism became virtues, where in the past they



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were often heartily discouraged. Modernism was set in motion, in one sense, through a series of cultural shocks. The first of these great shocks was the Great War, which ravaged Europe from 1914 through 1918, known now as World War One. At the time, this "War to End All Wars" was looked upon with such ghastly horror that many people simply could not imagine what the world seemed to be plunging towards. The first hints of that particular way of thinking called Modernism stretch back into the nineteenth century. As literary periods go, Modernism displays a relatively strong sense of cohesion and similarity across genres and locales. Furthermore, writers who adopted the Modern point of view often did so quite deliberately and self-consciously. Indeed, a central preoccupation of Modernism is with the inner self and consciousness. In contrast to the Romantic world view, the Modernist cares rather little for Nature, Being, or the overarching structures of history. Instead of progress and growth, the Modernist intelligentsia sees decay and a growing alienation of the individual. The machinery of modern society is perceived as impersonal, capitalist, and antagonistic to the artistic impulse. War most certainly had a great deal of influence on such ways of approaching the world. Two World Wars in the span of a generation effectively shell-shocked all of Western civilization.

(www.online-literature.com)

1-3-5. Naturalism

A special form of realism. The theory of naturalism came to prominence in France and other parts of Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The French playwright Emile Zola advocated a theater that would follow the scientific principles of the age, especially those discovered by Charles Darwin. Zola was also impressed by the work of Auguste Comte (1778-1857) and a physician named Claude Bernard (1813-1878). According to Zola's theory of naturalism, drama should look for the causes of disease in society the way a doctor looks for disease in a patient. Theater should therefore expose social infection in all its ugliness. Following Darwin, theater should show human beings as products of heredity and environment. The result would be a drama often depicting the ugly underside of life and expressing a pessimistic point of view. Also, drama was not to be carefully plotted or constructed but was to present a "slice of life": an attempt to look at life as it is. Very few successful plays fulfilled Zola's demands. Some of the works of Strindberg, Gorki, and others came closest to meeting the requirements of naturalism. In the contemporary period, the term naturalism is generally applied to dramas that are super-realistic, that is, those which conform to observable reality in precise detail. Naturalism attempts to achieve the verisimilitude of a documentary film, to convey the impression that



everything about the play -- the setting, the way the characters dress, speak, and act -- is exactly like everyday life. (Morner; 1991:113)

1-3-6. Puppetry

Puppetry is a form of theatre/performance that involves the manipulation of puppets–inanimate objects, often resembling some type of human or animal figure, that are animated or manipulated by a human called a puppeteer. The puppeteer uses movements of her hands, arms, or control devices such as rods or strings to move the body, head, limbs, and in some cases the mouth and eyes of the puppet. The puppeteer often speaks in the voice of the character of the puppet, and then synchronizes the movements of the puppet's mouth with this spoken part. The actions, gestures and spoken parts acted out by the puppets are typically used in storytelling. There are many different varieties of puppets, and they are made of a wide range of materials, depending on their form and intended use. They can be extremely complex or very simple in their construction. (www.wikipedia.org)

1-3-7. Realism

Broadly speaking, realism is the attempt to present onstage people and events corresponding to those observable in everyday life. Examples of realism can be found in western drama -- especially in comedies -- in the Greek, Roman, medieval, and Renaissance periods. Sections of plays from these periods show people speaking, dressing, and acting in the manner of ordinary people of the time. Certain landmark plays are considered forerunners of modern realism. These include Arden of Feversham (ca. 1590), an English play about greed and lust in a middle-class family; The London Merchant (1731), about a young apprentice led astray by a prostitute; Miss Sara Sampson (1755), a German version of The London Merchant; and The Inspector General (1836), exposing corruption in a provincial Russian town. It was in the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, that realism took hold as a major form of theater. As the middle class came more and more to dominate life in Europe and the United States, and as scientific and psychological discoveries challenged the heroic or romantic viewpoint, drama began to center on the affairs of ordinary people in their natural surroundings. The plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov showed that powerful, effective drama could be written about such people. The degree of realism varies in drama, ranging from slice-of-life naturalism to heightened realism. In the latter, nonrealistic and symbolic elements are introduced into a basically realistic format. Despite frequent challenges from other forms during the past hundred years, realism remains a major form of contemporary theater.

SECTION TWO

2-1. Development



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Development is a social process aimed at a comprehensive change in the community to move this community from traditional life to the new life that interested in the developed countries, i.e the transition from backwardness to the state of development or urbanization. Developments is defined also as a process of re-establishing a civilized revival with the challenges of the changing times, and relies on the resources and self-energies through the institutional framework to ensure fairness of political and economic power, saves rights and freedoms and protects the development dividend from attempts of internal and external waste attrition. The development is a growth rate of per capita income to the gross domestic product, and others link between the concept and the number of variables in the areas of education, health, population growth and the direction of the last known development on the basis of higher birth rate. And is linked to the concept of development theory of modernization that has developed in the fifties and sixties, and assume this theory, that underdevelopment is due to internal factors related to the structure of the Third World communities and that is no way for development, but inflicting up with the capitalist industrial societies. (Webster ;1968:263)

2-2. Mental Development

As an individual grows and develops, mental development supports the growth of their cognitive abilities." Cognitive development is a field of study in neuroscience and psychology focusing on a child's development in terms of information processing, conceptual resources, perceptual skill, language learning, and other aspects of brain development and cognitive psychology compared to an adult's point of view. In other words, cognitive development is the emergence of the ability to think and understand.

2-3. Sustainable Development

2-3-1. Definition

Sustainable development is that meets the needs of the present without compromising the insurance needs of future generations. It has been adopted by the United Nations and recommended that government and non-governmental organizations and all interested bodies development using the concept of sustainable development in all its programs aimed at combating poverty and improving the standard of living in all developed and developing countries. And it is done in particular with regard to grants, aid and loans from developed countries to developing countries, effective international framework.

And sought United Nations and its subsidiary bodies to develop a definition of sustainable development is to improve the welfare of the rights and meet the basic needs of



the poor and protecting the well-being of future generations and the preservation of environmental resources and life support systems at the global level and in the permissible limits, and work on the introduction of economic and environmental frameworks with taking decision. And with the release of the Human Development Report of 1994, the concept of human security was not limited to the state security but included human security and the security of the society so as to ensure the rights of citizens as well as he took multiple dimensions.

(www.env-pro.org/concept.htm)

2-3-2. Dimensions

- 1- Spiritual Development: it means providing dogmatic or ideological dimension of development that dimension which includes all aspects of life and determines the individual freedom and movement and choices, and the first thing that provided spiritual development is cooperation on the emotional interests of society.
- 2- Self-Development: means relying on local labor and raw materials available in the environment, production, local knowledge and processes developed according to imported technology powers.
- 3- Psychological Development: the sense that the development aspirations of the citizens is a way that pushes them towards looking for the future and the pursuit of a better life and is one of the main causes of sustainable development.
- 4- Administrative and legislative Development: is an effort that must be made continuously to develop the administrative system in the country in pursuit of raising the level of administrative capacity through appropriate organizational structures to the needs of legal self-perceptions and to set life in motion mode.
- 5- Environmental Development: the revolution of human technology made an important shift on the physical levels of modern society in return led to wasteful depletion of natural resources, human being develops his handling of environment but the concern that takes from the environment as much as possible to make it forgets how to preserve by starting uprooting trees and ending with the Chernobyl in former Soviet Union.
- 6- Scientific Research and Technological Development: technological development is the efforts which are being made to provide information or new knowledge that can be used efficiently in production processes and have a significant impact on the cost, quality, amount of the product.
- 7- Human Development: is a process of enlarging people's choices, and those choices are final inherently but determined realistically by economic, social, cultural and political determinants as well as what might be available from goods , services and knowledge to meet these choices scope extends from the needs of the food , drink, housing, education , health



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and a clean environment to raise awareness to participate in everything that is happening in the community.

8- Social Development: It changes the old social conditions that no longer keep pace with the democratic spirit of the times in ways aimed at a new social structure emerges from new relationships and values innovative and allows individuals as much as possible to satisfy the demands and needs.

9- Political Development: the mobilization of the people and their interaction with the existing system and the lack of standing attitude of indifference and characterized by a degree of broad public participation.

10- Economic Development: It is affecting the physical aspect of development attaches importance to a way to improve and arrange the utilization of economic resources in order to achieve an increase in the total output of goods and services at a faster rate than the increase in population, which includes all economic, agricultural, industrial, financial and commercial areas .(Alhasnat;2010:246-247)

2-3-3. Themes

1-Progress

Progress can be defined as an improvement in the well-being of human beings. Although some may consider this an excessively anthropocentric view, the author and the reader are part of the human race. Under most circumstances everybody would put himself or herself and his or her kin ahead of other lives human and non-human and especially prior to the inanimate world. Of course, under special situations men and women do sacrifice themselves and, if need be, their families for a cause, but such behavior is the exception rather than the rule. Self-preservation and preservation of one's family has always been an inherent human instinct. Moreover, if intelligent life fails to survive and observe the universe, does the cosmos' existence matter?(Mankin,2010:34)

2-Measurement

Measurement is the foundation of scientific inquiry. In order to test our hypotheses, we must observe our theoretical concepts at the operational level. In simple words, we must measure what we have defined. But there are different levels of measurement, which provide differing amounts of information about the theoretical construct. There are also some basic issues about the adequacy of measurement which we must address.(www.cios.org)

SECTION THREE



3-1. Reflections of the English theatre on the mental sustainable development.

3-1-1. Theatre and the theory of performance:

Theatre is a very important genre in literature. It is the literature that walks and talks before us. Drama has certain elements such as: plot, characters, conflict, dialogue, setting, the conventional elements and stage directions. All these elements differentiate drama from other types of literature. Drama always has a message to be delivered to the audience; it may be moral message, or social message talking about certain problem to be presented in a comic or tragic way. Performance has a long and distinguished history that is founded on the premise that performance is an important way of both knowing and being. Performances are means to knowing about experiences and they are also ways that we defined our personal, social and cultural identities. Performance studies include a diversity of work, ranging from the study and performance of literature to the use of performances to achieve political impact, to criticize, challenge or change social system and practices. (Wood; 2000:123)

Performance occupies an important place in the field of communication. For all over two thousand years both scholars and lay persons have appreciated the ways in which performance can move us to tear, laughter, and new knowledge. In the field of drama, performance operates under the authority of the playwright, whose vision actors and directors are supposed to embody. (Diamond, 1996:2)

Theater is used for development and can be defined as a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more dialogical process, where theatre is practiced with the people or by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and then encouraging them to voice and solve their own problems.

(Sydney, 2013:20).

Hundreds, if not thousands, of organizations and initiatives have used theatre as a development tool: for education or propaganda, as therapy, as a participatory tool, or as an exploratory tool in development. An account of an early (Hurd, 2004:53).

3-1-2. Dramaturgical Theory (Performance in Everyday Life)

Dramatism begins with the premise that life is a drama and that it can be understood in dramatic terms. Thus, communicators involved in situations are seen as actors performing dramatic scenes on the metaphorical stage of life. Dramatism includes both rhetorical and sociological theories. Probably the best known tradition in sociology is Erving Goffman's dramaturgy, which studies individuals as always engaging in the presentation of self in everyday life. Life is as drama, which involves conflict and division that threatens some



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existing form of order. For example, a strike by workers creates the division between workers and factory owners and threatens the existing order, in which owners define the terms of work in ways that suit them. One also believes that drama involves scenes that invite or discourage specific action by actors. For example, a new conference called by workers invites actions that highlight their grievances and that condemn owners' lack of concern and respect for workers. The conflict inherent in drama results in suffering and gives birth to new ways of understanding self, others, and situations. Thus dramatic conflicts opens new possibilities.

(Wood.2000:105)

3-1-3. Theatre and society:

Theatre has a culture of its own that many people don't understand. To those that do understand it, they often make it a very large part of their lives. Plays are sometimes attempts to spread awareness about problems like racism, sexism, homophobia, and other types of persecution. The playwrights write about something that matters to them as their form of expression. These issue plays help our society better function because they cause individuals to realize what is happening and take action. It builds a passion in many groups of people because they realize what is really important to them and that they have the power to make a change. Theatre is a powerful medium for exposing problems because those who understand it know how real and active theatre is in the world.

3-2. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in the village of Stratford-on-Avon in the county of Warwickshire. His father John Shakespeare was a farmer's son who came to Stratford about 1531 , and began to prosper as a trade in corn, wheat, leather, and agricultural products. His mother Mary Arden was a daughter of a prosperous farmer, descended from an old family of mixed Anglo-Saxon and Norman blood. It is generally believed that neither the poet's mother nor his father could read or write. Shakespeare educated at Grammar School at Stratford where he picked up little " small Latin and less Greek ", his education at the hands of Nature came from keeping his heart as well as his eyes wide open to the beauty of the world. Because he noted and remembered every significant thing in the changing scenery of earth and sky, no other writer has ever equaled him in the perfect natural setting of his character. (Lall , 2005:1)

3-2-1. Shakespeare's Drama, the Mirror of Life



Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of Nature ; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers or by the accident of transient fashion or temporary opinions; they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. ,his persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writing of other poets, a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species. (Ibid: 18)

3-2-2. Shakespeare's Play "Hamlet"

1- Plot Summary

Prince Hamlet of Denmark is urged by his father's Ghost to avenge his murder at the hands of the dead king's brother, now King Claudius; to make matters worse, Claudius has married the widow, Hamlet's mother, Queen Gertrude. Denmark is under threat of invasion from young Fortinbras, who seeks to regain lands lost to Hamlet's father by Fortinbras's father. Claudius sends word to the King of Norway (Fortinbras's uncle) to curb Fortinbras's aggression. In the meantime, Hamlet feigns madness with his family and friends, including his beloved, Ophelia, sister to Laertes and daughter to Polonius. Both Polonius and Laertes warn Ophelia against Hamlet's amorous advances. Polonius believes Hamlet's "madness" to be love sickness. Laertes is given permission to return to his studies in Paris.

Claudius directs Gertrude to try to learn the cause of Hamlet's odd behavior; they suspect it is the old king's death and their own recent marriage. Meantime, Claudius and Polonius eavesdrop on Ophelia and Hamlet, who spurns her and appears mad. The King reveals to Polonius his plan to send Hamlet to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Hamlet seizes the opportunity presented by a traveling troupe of players to expose the King's guilt with a "play within a play." Soon after, Hamlet delays killing Claudius because the King is at prayer and Hamlet does not wish to send him to heaven instead of hell. When Gertrude meets with Hamlet as Claudius has directed, Polonius hides behind the arras in Gertrude's room to eavesdrop on the conversation. Hamlet, suspecting the interloper is Claudius, stabs and kills Polonius.

When Polonius's body is discovered, Claudius summons Hamlet and tells him he must sail to England for his own safety; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accompany Hamlet,



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carrying letters to the English, threatening war unless they kill Hamlet. Hamlet eventually escapes, returns to Denmark, and is met by Horatio.

Ophelia has gone insane after Hamlet's departure and her father's death. Laertes returns and vows to avenge Polonius's death. Claudius contrives a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, during which Hamlet is to be injured with a poisoned sword tip and poisoned with a drink, thus assuring his death. When news arrives that Ophelia has drowned herself, Laertes is grief stricken. Hamlet and Horatio happen upon the burial site and funeral cortege; Hamlet tries to fight Laertes but is restrained.

Hamlet tells Horatio that he rewrote the papers carried by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and that the letters now call for their own deaths. Osric invites Hamlet to the duel with Laertes; Claudius has supposedly bet on Hamlet to win. Gertrude mistakenly drinks from the cup poisoned by Claudius for Hamlet, and dies; Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned sword, and then Hamlet wounds Laertes when they accidentally exchange swords. When Laertes reveals the conspiracy, Hamlet wounds the King and forces the poisoned drink upon him. Laertes and Hamlet reconcile, and Laertes dies; Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking the poison so that he can live to tell the truth. Hamlet names as his successor young Fortinbras, who arrives and orders Hamlet buried with all dignity. (www.enotes.com)

2- The Impact of Hamlet on the Audience

Many of the plays written by Shakespeare in his time were performed to influence his audience and provoke thought and debate the social, cultural and economic events that were taking place at that time. Shakespeare's Hamlet, in particular, was a reflection of the events happening during the Elizabethan era. Here the focus is mainly on Act IV scene IV and the speech of Hamlet and the focus on answering the question of the effect Hamlet had on the audience in the Elizabethan era, specifically culturally, socially, and economically. It is the purpose to demonstrate that due to the religious turmoil of the Elizabethan era, Hamlet's reference to God in Act IV was significant to show that people of this era had the same god, whether Catholic or Protestant. Furthermore, due to the culture at the time of studying humours, the melancholic character and psychology of Hamlet would have been of great interest to the audience. Lastly, being under the constant threat of war from the neighboring countries of Spain and France, the audience would have related to the message of war in the play. Are you a Catholic or a Protestant? Being either a Catholic or a Protestant, is not



important today but was of great importance in Shakespeare's time and depending on whether they had a Catholic or Protestant ruler, people's perspective on religion changed. For example, during the Elizabethan era and in Shakespeare's time, Queen Elizabeth the first was a protestant and so England was under the Protestant rule. (studymode.com)

3- Positive and Negative Reflections of Hamlet on the Mental Sustainable Development .

Throughout our study for Shakespeare's play Hamlet, we have found positive and negative reflections on the mental sustainable development of the audience. In the very beginning of the play, there is the appearance of the ghost. The appearance has a positive message, through this appearance the audience know that there is an impending disaster that is going to happen. it may be in the form of a military attack or something which is very dangerous that is going to happen in Denmark.

Another positive message, the audience knows that they should be brave enough in taking decision, and not to be hesitated like Hamlet. Hamlet always hesitates in taking revenge, always tries to find excuses to delay his revenge from his uncle Claudius.

The audience knows that they should not be corrupted, they should be faithful, honest, sincere and reliable because they have seen the real story of the prince Hamlet, and the corruption in Denmark, that is why Denmark collapsed in such a way while Norway succeed in reconquering the lands and they have won finally and the appearance of Fortinbras at the last moments of the play is a fine example of this truth, that honesty and faithfulness are supporting in everlasting nations.

The negative reflections in Hamlet are found from the very beginning of the play, for example murder is very negative aspect that can be found in a man. We have seen the murder of the king by his brother when the latter pouring poison into his ears and killing the king, and not only this but also seduced the queen and married her too shortly after the death of her husband. This action encourages and teaches people how to commit crimes.

Another negative message is corruption, we have found that Denmark is corrupted, the king Claudius is corrupted, he committed murder by killing his brother and marrying his wife, and he always makes intrigues in order to kill his son-in-law Hamlet. At the beginning, he sent him to France for study and sent his men to spy on him, and trying to kill him, at the end also trying to kill him by poisoning the sword in the duel.

3-3. Christopher Marlowe



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Christopher Marlowe was the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors. He may be regarded as the true founder of English drama. He was born in 1564, two months before Shakespeare, in the town of Canterbury. He was the son of a poor shoe-maker. Through the kindness of a patron, he was educated at the town Grammar School and then at the University of Cambridge. He graduated at the age of nineteen; and then went to London where he became an actor, living in a low-tavern atmosphere of excess and wretchedness. In 1587, at the age of twenty –three, he produced his first play, *Tamburlaine*, which brought him instant recognition. Thereafter, although he led a wretched life, he remained loyal to a high literary purpose. In five years, while Shakespeare was serving apprenticeship, Marlowe produced all his great work. Then he was stabbed in a drunken fight and died wretchedly as he had lived. He was only twenty-nine when he died.(Lall, 2010:4)

3-2. Marlowe's play Dr-Faustus

1- Plot Summary

Doctor Faustus, a German scholar, feels that traditional sciences don't satisfy him any longer and is tempted into exploring what magic can offer. Helped by two colleagues, Valdes and Cornelius, he summons Lucifer, the Devil, and is visited by his minister, Mephistopheles. Through him, he makes an agreement with the Devil: he will get twenty-four years of unlimited power in exchange for his soul. Faustus's servant, Wagner, hires an assistant for himself, Robin. Robin and his friend Rafe will try to use Faustus's books to earn benefits for themselves. Armed with unlimited knowledge and magic, Faustus visits the courts of all powerful kings and earns a reputation as the most skillful scholar in Europe. Always seconded by Mephistopheles, he visits Rome, where he plays tricks on the Pope, and the King of Germany, for whom he brings the spirits of Alexander the Great and his wife. He is ruthless to those who doubt his powers or defy him in any way. When the twenty-four years come to an end, and having tasted heaven when he kissed Helen of Troy, whom he has asked Mephistopheles to make his lover, Faustus wants to repent but, with his soul under the control of the Devil, he can't. Even though his fellow scholars want to help him, at midnight on the twenty-fourth year he is taken by Lucifer and Mephistopheles into eternal hell, while the story-teller warns the audience to learn from Faustus's downfall and see how he has failed to turn knowledge into wisdom.(Lall,2010: 15-16)



2- Positive and Negative Reflections of Dr-Faustus on the Mental Sustainable Development

Throughout studying Marlowe's play Dr.Faustus, we are going to conclude many views, and we can get a lot of moral lessons. We can discuss the Dr-Faustus as a morality play. Morality play is rather a play conveying a moral truth or lesson by means of personified abstractions. The morality at bottom dealt with some problems of good and evil. All the moral lessons are positive reflections on the mental sustainable development of the audience.

Dr. Faustus has many features of a morality play. The conflict between good and evil, theme of sin, redemption and damnation is shown. The pageant of the seven deadly sins is also shown in the play. The appearance of the seven deadly sins (pride, covetousness, wrath, envy, gluttony, sloth and lechery) has a positive impact on the audience that they are going to know the negative effect of these sins and this is a mental development.

Dr. Faustus has element of Christian morality. It takes place in an explicitly Christian cosmos: God sits on high, as the judge of the world and every soul goes either to hell or to heaven. There are devils and angels, the devils tempting people into sin and angels urging them to remain true to God. We also know that God's power is the strongest power, even the devils are afraid and cannot do or hurt anyone, for example , the old man, when Mephistophilis said that he cannot touch his soul, means that even Mephistophilis and Lucifer admit that God's power is stronger than theirs.

Faustus's story is tragedy in Christian terms, because he gives into temptation and is damned to hell. His principal sin in his great pride and ambition which can be contrasted with Christian virtue of humility; by letting this traits rule his life, Faustus allows his soul to be claimed by Christian cosmology's prince of devils Lucifer.

The play gives a very basic Christian message that one should avoid temptation and sin and repent. If one cannot avoid, its conclusion can be interpreted as straying from orthodox Christianity in order to conform to the structure of tragedy.

In Christianity, as long as person is alive, there is always the possibility of repentance, so if tragic hero realizes his mistake, he may still be saved even at the last moment. But though Faustus in the final wrenching scene comes to his senses and begs for a chance to repent, it is too late, and he is carried off to hell. At the end of the play, we have got a



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lesson that is the end of extra ambition. We have ambition and we have to achieve our aims but not through the help of Lucifer, but through our working hard.

These ways, the play has many element of Christian morality. It's base is on Christianity. We can say the play Christian moral tragedy with the reasons given above.(www.spaqrknotes.com)

3-4. The Role of the English Theatre during the World War I and II.

From 1914 to 1918, theatres in all major European cities staged plays – comedies, operettas, revues, classical and modern dramas, music hall shows or sensational plays – day after day. The lively theatrical culture of the metropolis remained largely active but was profoundly influenced by the war. The first months of hostilities brought about many quickly produced topical war plays which were intended to foster feelings of national unity and strength within the audience. Soon, escapist entertainment replaced the patriotic furor. Exotic settings, nostalgic afterglows, beautiful bodies, music and dance were the ingredients of most successful productions. In the later war years, formal innovation and pessimistic undertones increased. Still, theatre preserved its function as an apparently war-free refuge until the last days of fighting.

This paper focuses on wartime theatre in the four largest European capitals, London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna which were the leading theatre and entertainment cities of the time period. This paper discusses theatrical events and developments on the home front and theatre's functions for the civilian population as well as for soldiers. This does not imply that there were not lively theatrical activities at and behind the several fronts in the First World War. However, this is a huge and quite distinct field of research which could not simply be treated on the sidelines of this paper.

The atmosphere in the streets shifted significantly towards the well-known “war enthusiasm,” or at least towards the mobilization of society as a whole for the war effort. Everyday life was “refracted” through the lens of war, as Maureen Healy has brilliantly shown for the case of Vienna. Shopping, cooking, child-rearing, reproduction, homework, leisure and neighbor relations were no longer considered private but became a matter of state, a matter of the war effort.

The beginning of the Great War in August 1914 took theatres by surprise in their planning of the fall season's programme. Some directors used the special war clauses in



their license and contracts to close down their theatres. After a relatively short moment of shock in the fall of 1914, most entertainment venues in European cities reopened their doors and were highly frequented throughout the war years. Their programs and spectacles, however, changed significantly from those of the pre-war years.

The lively and diversified theatrical culture in all big European cities was profoundly transformed by the onset of the First World War. During the first wartime season, topical and patriotic plays dominated theatre programmes, mostly integrated into the popular genres of the day, the operetta, revue, comedy and music-hall show. These often made use of an aggressive form of humor.

After the illusion that the war could be rapidly won slowly vanished, escapist entertainments such as operettas with remote settings, nostalgic farces and outdated comedies showing the “good old times” increasingly replaced topical plays. Nevertheless, a deeper analysis of these wartime productions which were supposed to keep the war at bay for the duration of the performance, shows implicit traces of war such as a *carpe diem*-mentality given a completely unpredictable future. The gap between the reality of technical warfare and the cozy world of make-believe on stage was often noticed by critics and the public. It was also this gap that made the theatre so attractive for new audiences such as working women as well as soldiers on leave and war refugees.

Although living conditions deteriorated across Europe in the late war years, especially in the big metropolises of the Central Powers, Berlin and Vienna, but also in Southern and Eastern Europe, theatres remained active and successful throughout the last months of the war. Whether the public found humorous relief, pessimist reflection, patriotic perseverance or "senseless" diversion depended very much on the particular venue. It certainly found in theatre-going a certain sense of normality, a way to gather and to warm up again in winter. (Zullo, 2007: 101-102)

CONCLUSION

The research has offered an evaluative perspective on an important subject, The Reflections of the English Theatre on the Mental Sustainable Development. Throughout this research, we have talked about the reflections of the English Theatre on the sustainable development; there is a great influence of the theatre on the improvement of the mental development. Theatre is a very important genre in English Literature because it has a message to deliver to the audience. Theatre is different from the other types of English Literature like; novel and poetry. People who are going to theatre are interested in



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the plays performed in it. They are going there for entertainment, means that they are ready to get the moral lesson and also to develop their abilities.

The research also has discussed the role of the English Theatre during the world war I. The theatre played a very important role in encouraging people to take part in the war. The role of theatre was patriotic and enthusiastic during the war.

This paper focuses on wartime theatre in the four largest European capitals, London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna which were the leading theatre and entertainment cities of the time period. This paper discusses theatrical events and developments on the home front and theatre's functions for the civilian population as well as for soldiers. This does not imply that there were not lively theatrical activities at and behind the several fronts in the First World War. However, this is a huge and quite distinct field of research which could not simply be treated on the sidelines of this paper.

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