

Evolution of the Tragic Hero: A Shift from God to Man

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This paper is dedicated to,

Kaniz Fatema Rowshan Ara

“It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning, their entire lack of style. They affect us just as vulgarity affects us. They give us an impression of sheer brute force, and we revolt against that. Sometimes, however, a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthralls us.”

— Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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Abstract

The thesis aims to follow the evolution of the figure of the Tragic Hero from the ancient Greek age up to the modern age. This is done in the light of Aristotle, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Miller's concept of the Tragic Hero. The objective is to show how the tragic hero has been redefined throughout history and transformed into a modern day tragic hero who is much different than what was originally defined by Aristotle. My aim is to analyze the diversity of the tragic conception, its continuity and major deviations from the classical order to the modern times.

To examine the diversity of tragic hero over time this paper looked at five plays, *Oedipus Rex* (430 B.C) by Sophocles from the classical time period, *Doctor Faustus* (1604) by Christopher Marlowe from the 16th century, *Hamlet* (1603) by William Shakespeare from the renaissance period, *Death of a Salesman* (1949) by Arthur Miller and *Desire Under The Elms* (1924) by Eugene O'Neill from the 20th century.

The thesis comprises of five chapters where the first chapter deals with the classical concept of tragic hero by including the Aristotelian concept dealt with in *Poetics*. This chapter discusses how Sophocles, placed his tragic hero in the context of the fundamental Greek concepts of religion, law, crime and punishment. The second chapter deals with the renaissance concept of a tragic hero portrayed by Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, which marks a subtle yet significant difference from the Aristotelian form. The third chapter deals with the modern concept of a tragic hero which broke away from the traditional picture of a tragic hero and highlighted the shift from God to Man.

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Introduction

The tradition of writing tragedies from the Classical period to the modern times reveals that tragedy as a genre has passed through a gradual transformation. The change affected not only the meaning and form but was also subjected to the pressure of culture and religion. The core concept of tragedy has remained constant which talks about tradition, culture and religion. It includes sufferings of human life, which brings the source of tragic experience. The change of tragedy over time adopts new ideas and introduces new outlooks and understandings. During the classical age of dramatic glory, the Greeks followed the idea that tragedy is mostly about actions not characters. It revolved around the rituals, religious ideas, belief and gods or goddesses' power and dominance over human beings. Tragic dramas in ancient time were looked at as an 'enactment of rituals'. The famous Greek philosopher Aristotle mentions in his *Poetics* that tragedy is best exhibited in drama because it is mostly about actions not characters. Songs and dance of the ancient rights, rituals and religious festivals were given importance and people tended to attempt to please gods in order to get a better lifestyle.

Aeschylus, ancient Greek tragedian was the first playwright who developed tragedy into a great art form and he was regarded as the founder of European drama. His dramas were concerned with moral judgments, human relationship with gods and their place in universe. He is the writer of *Prometheus Bound* and the trilogy known as the *Oresteia*. He introduced a second actor in his plays and reduced the size of the chorus. In the first play of *The Trilogy*, Aeschylus portrayed Agamemnon, the king of Argos who respects the Greek deities, and as a result, sacrifices his own daughter Iphigenia to god in order to get a favorable wind to carry his Greek fleet to Troy so that he can bring his brother Menelaus' wife Helen back who is stolen by the Trojan prince. This play gives the idea of human relationships with gods, their place and moral

judgments etc.. Humans at that time considered gods as the holders of ultimate power and as they considered themselves helpless, they looked for help to gods and goddesses. Nobody dared to question the system or go against gods because gods were considered as awful forces to be afraid of.

Since the origin of tragedy is connected with the songs and dances of ancient rites, religious festivals and seasons, chorus was an important part of ancient tragedy. They are a large group of singers performing together by singing and commenting on the progress of the play and also on the life of the characters, for example, the tragic hero in the play. The song was called the dithyramb. The plays of Aeschylus and his successors sprang from the ancient dithyramb; the choral song chanted by 50 people who used to perform in honor of Dionysus, the nature god. It was believed that Dionysus died and was reborn every year and to honor him a choral song or a dithyramb was performed. During the 6th and 7th centuries B.C a development was noticed in Greek tragedies. The choral leader was separated from the group. This development led to the possibility of dramatic action.

The two prolific tragic dramatists, Sophocles and Euripides wrote at the time when old legends were looked at with skeptical eyes and the gods were no longer considered as the awful forces to be afraid of. Aristophanes was one of the major dramatists of his times who wrote comedies (Asuamah 3). Among the classical dramatists, Sophocles was much concerned with drama as an art form. This is proven in his play *king Oedipus* one of a Trilogy of Theban plays. The play is the best example of the Greek classical order. Sophocles presented a pitiful tragic situation based on myths and legends considering the Greek concept of religion, law, crime and punishment.

The main element of a tragedy is the tragic hero. He is the person who takes all the sufferings of the world. The German Philosopher, cultural critic poet, composer and scholar

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) mentioned in his book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, chapter XX-XXI that, the two key aspects of tragedy are music and the tragic hero. The hero takes the suffering of the world on his shoulders and relieves us from the burden. He serves as an example to the audience. He prepares himself for higher existence through his destruction but not through his victories. The power of music associated with Dionysian beings is part of Dionysian essence and is too much for anyone to take. Music consults to myth with a metaphysical significance which can never be achieved with words only. If we feel like part of pure Dionysian beings we will collapse from the depth of unresolved world's will. As a result, we demand myth, which uses the hero as negotiator to shield us from the power of music. The hero assists us from the suffering of the world being an Apollonian illusion. He delivers sufferings that are primordial. The Apollonian influence upholds man from his uncontrolled self-destruction and deceives him by making aware of the universality of the Dionysian process in a belief that the picture he is watching is a detached picture of the world.

Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher and scientist, in his book *Poetics*, Chapter XIII, defined the element of the ideal tragic situation and the tragic hero. He states, "This is the sort of person who is not outstanding in moral excellence or justice; on the other hand, the change to bad fortune which he undergoes is not due to any moral defect or depravity, but to an error of some kind. He is one of those people who are held in great esteem and enjoy great good fortune, like Oedipus, Thyestes, and distinguished men from that kind of family" (21).

By mentioning "error" Aristotle meant "hamartia," the flaw in character that results from ignorance or an error of judgment that leads the hero to his downfall. This hamartia or error of judgment is considered as a genuine tragic situation by the Greeks. It is an impulsive act which does not include malice elements. It is mentioned in Adade-Yeaboah Asuamah's paper, "The Metamorphosis of Tragic Hero" that, "there is a line of demarcation between hamartia and tragic

flaw, the latter being a trait inherent in the tragic hero". Hamartia is considered an important element of tragedy which was used by the classical tragedians and also followed by the tragedians and playwrights over time keeping the Greek model as an ideal but with a slight change in it. William Shakespeare used the Greek concept of hamartia to create tragic situations in his plays but did not give it as much importance as Aristotle. Moreover, hamartia has undergone various misconceptions over time. In Greek tragedies, hamartia is crucial and used to determine the tragic situation. Some relevant facts of an Aristotelian tragedy are given below:

- (i) Tragedy is an imitation of an action which is not about men but about action and life.
- (ii) Suffering and joy reside in action not in the characters and what they do.
- (iii) Men act in order to uphold their action and through action they represent their characters.
- (iv) The end is highly important because it reveals the plot and action.

The above mentioned points show that emphasis is on action rather than characters and the skillful presentation of action is to gain the emotion of pity and fear. The inner character of tragic hero comes at second when we focus on the Aristotelian tragic hero. Hence, it is essential to judge the hero by putting him into light in general terms. According to Aristotle tragic hero is a good man but not extra ordinary in virtue. The ideas that he gives in his *Poetics* are,

- (i) Hero must have a flaw or error of judgment.
- (ii) There must be a reversal of fortune because of the hero's error of judgment.
- (iii) A discovery that would say the reversal has been brought because of the hero's own act or fault.
- (iv) The hero must have extreme pride or hubris.
- (v) The hero will suffer more than he deserves.
- (vi) The hero bears no responsibility for his fatal flaw. He must be doomed from the very beginning.
- (vii) He/ she is a person who is noble in nature but not perfect that is why the audience see

their own reflection on the hero.

- (viii) He/ she discover their fate by themselves through their actions.
- (ix) The story of the tragic hero raises pity and fear.
- (x) The hero gets wounded physically and spiritually because of the experience he/she gathers which results them to their death.
- (xi) The hero learns from his mistakes because of his intelligence.
- (xii) His weakness is his pride.
- (xiii) He must face a very serious decision.

The Aristotelian tragic hero dies a tragic death. He falls from a high position by making a mistake and the hero accepts the death courageously.

It is mentioned earlier that the plot of Greek tragedy or the structure of the play is very significant. This is why the audience, according to Aristotle hears the story with thrill and feels pity for the sufferer. He also presents Sophocles' *King Oedipus* as an embodiment of this kind of structure. He includes that a good tragedy involves member of same family or people with mutual ties (6). *King Oedipus* is a play which involves member of same family. It contains a best kind of hamartia or fatal flaw; it includes anagnorisis or critical discovery and peripetia or the reversal of the plot. Sophocles arranged the action of the play by blending with pity and fear. He made the hero a good man acts honestly. The dramatic movement comes when Oedipus realizes that, in spite of all attempts and being cautious to prevent the Delphic Oracles prediction, he has killed his father and married to his mother with whom he has children and this has happened because of the curse of the God Apollo which was impossible to overcome.

On the Contrary, in Shakespearean tragic drama of 16th century which comes much later, the hero and his actions are inextricable. Shakespeare emphasized more on the characters than the plot which is the indication of slightly breaking away the traditional Greek form of tragedy because following the Aristotelian model Shakespeare took the forms into one step further. He

included the idea of hamartia and presented it as Aristotle suggested in *Poetics*.

During the Renaissance time period, the meaning of hamartia which is associated with the tragic hero has gone under a drastic change. This is mainly because of the interpretation of the Italian scholars. As Renaissance period represents rejection of the classical period, the critics were first to translate *Poetics*. They have translated the hamartia as “a weakness of characters” instead of fatal flaw or going wrong. (Asuamah 8). They insisted to include tragic hamartia as the part of characters. Therefore, it became popular and acceptable by the people of that time, considering it the characterization of the post-classical tragic hero.

The main difference of the classical and post classical schools of thought is the influence of religion especially Christianity. “The Greeks were pagans who believed in instant retributive measures. The renaissance men are influenced by the tenets of the Christian religion” (Asuamah 8). As a result, they believed in sin and intuitive corruption. Moreover, the inclusion of fate was necessary in Classical dramas whereas, Christianity replaces the belief on fate with nemesis or providence. For example, there is a belief in Christianity that god has sent different intercession to prevent men from evil. The idea of punishment is for those who do not show guilt or repentance for their crime. This way the literary tradition changed from the classical time and transformed into Christian religious belief. The story remains the same. It talks about a downfall of a prince or of a man fell from a high position but he is responsible for his action. He is no longer the pawn in the hands of gods and goddesses. He makes his own choice from his knowledge.

In the modern time during the 20th century tragedy came out with a new form keeping the classical concept in mind but the writers of modern era portrayed tragic hero as a man who is not a prince or a high born. He does not fall from his position. He does not need catharsis to bring the story to a close. He is an ordinary man living in present society dealing with the problems generally people face in their daily lives. For example; Willy Loman, who is a salesman who has

hopes and dreams of a better life. On the other hand, Ephraim Cabot is a farmer and his tragedy is limited to his life and surroundings.

The modern day tragic hero may have aspirations and ambitions but he does not need to die with an epiphany or sufferings. His story can close without his death and without his realization. For him the belief in religion and fate is not as important as they were in classical times. The modern day tragedy focuses more on man and the inner conflict of the human mind rather than focusing on god or any other super natural being.

This paper is going to focus on the transformation of tragic hero over time. My purpose is to show how the concept of tragic hero has changed from classical concept and taken on new ideas of renaissance and modern tragic hero and how it shows a clear shift of focus from God to man. Different writers, writing in different eras traced the change by portraying tragic heroes who are distinct in characteristics from one to another. With the change of the idea of tragic hero, we see the change of the society over time because “literature is the reflection of life” and tragic heroes are common men like us. Therefore, today’s society is an outcome of what has happened and been practiced over time.

Chapter II

The Tragic Hero of the Classical Period

In the context of literature, architecture and culture of ancient Greece, the classical period refers mostly to the 5th and 4th centuries BC. During that time, art and literature flourished and became a part of human life. Aeschylus (525-456 BC), Sophocles (496-406 BC), Aristophanes (c.448-c.380 BC) and Euripides (484-406 BC) were some of the chief playwrights of 600 and 400 BC when poetry and drama flourished in Athens.

The origin of tragedy lies in the songs and dances of ancient rites and religious festivals connected to the seasons. It has its root in choral poetry.¹ Dionysius was the Greek nature god who died and was reborn every year. A chorus performed a hymn in his honor; called a dithyramb.² Aeschylus developed tragedy into a great art form. He was regarded as the real founder of drama and considered as the father of tragedy. His dramas are concerned with general moral judgments, man's relationship with Gods and man's place in the universe. He has written approximately ninety plays. Among them the most famous are *Prometheus Bound* and *The Oresteian Trilogy*. He introduced a second actor into most of his dramas and reduced the size of the chorus which he considered the main part of a tragedy.

A classical tragedy is a story of a hero/heroine, who goes through a reversal of his/her fortune which is a result of his/her hubris and it is set in motion by the gods. The famous Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle has given a model of drama in his *Poetics*. There he mentioned the characteristics of drama depending on the tragedies written during 600 and 400 BC. Tragedy, according to Aristotle, is an imitation of an action. Aristotle in his *Poetics* said, "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors,

not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions.”

(Aristotle 10). Tragedy is an exact copy or model of an activity or exertion that has complete magnitude. Its ‘rhythm and melody’ gives pleasure. It is performed by actors which is so powerful that, it raises pity and fear into the mind of the readers and audiences. On other words, tragedy is a serious drama which typically describes a conflict between the protagonist and a superior force, for example, destiny and it has a sorrowful or disastrous conclusion that elicits pity or terror. Tragedy as a whole necessarily has six component parts which determine the quality. They are, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and melody. (11) *Prometheus Bound*, *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus, *King Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles are some examples of classical tragedies. In *The Harvest of Tragedy*, T.R. Henn, states that, "Tragedy, from its very nature, concerns itself continually with specific attitudes towards the widest possible range of moral problem" (Henn 97). According to T.R. Henn tragedy is concerned with moral problems. It deals with right and wrong behavior of human beings.

The main focus of this paper is not on tragedy but on tragic hero, who holds the great part of a tragedy, who is the protagonist and without whom a tragedy is incomplete. The best definition of tragic hero is given by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, since he has brought the concept of tragic hero to the light. Aristotle contended in his *Poetics* that the tragic hero has to be a man “who is pre-eminently good and just, whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty” (21). Aristotle is not making the hero entirely good, in which he can do no wrong but rather the hero commits an injury or a great wrong that leads him to his misfortune. Aristotle did not mean that the hero has to be perfectly virtuous and eminently good. He is a human and has flaws in his character. Being eminently good is a moral specification to the fact that he is virtuous. He has to be good up to some degree but there has to be a flaw in his character. Aristotle adds another qualification by mentioning that. “He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous.” (22) He goes on to give examples of classical

tragic heroes, such as Oedipus and Thyestes. He is the man who is noble by birth and nature. He undergoes the change of misfortune. He is a great man, stands in great repute and prosperity like Oedipus, mythical Greek king of Thebes and Thyestes, King of Olympia in Greek mythology. He is neither a villain nor a model of perfection but he is a good and decent man. His hamartia or fatal flaw is the reason of his downfall. The great man; the tragic hero falls through because of his error not entirely because of some weakness of his character but because of some moral blindness. The gods are responsible for the hero's fall. For example, Agamemnon, the king of Argos in the first play of *The Trilogy* by Aeschylus, respects the Greek deities as a result, sacrifices his own daughter Iphigenia in order to get a favorable wind to carry his Greek fleet to Troy so that he can bring his brother Menelaus' wife Helen back who is stolen by the Trojan prince. When he returns from war, he is totally unaware of his murder that his wife, Clytemnestra plots against him because of sacrificing his daughter, killing his wife's first husband and bringing a concubine, Cassandra with him. Agamemnon was destined to be killed by his wife. He was totally unaware of his wife's plan. He could not even guess his cousin, Aegisthus' affair with his wife. His fate was pre-destined by the gods, that he would kill his wife's first husband, marry Clytemenestra, sacrifice his daughter and finally lose his life at the hands of his wife along with Cassandra. Similarly, in Sophocles' play *King Oedipus Rex*, the king, Oedipus kills his father, Liaus and marries his mother Jocasta. His fate was pre-destined by the God of sun and light, Apollo before his birth. Therefore, he was born ill-fated and could not go against his destiny. At the end of the play he blinds himself because he could not bear to see his faulty self but it was more or less gods' wish that he would commit such a crime. Mainly, the tragic hero's downfall is a combination of *hubris*, fate, and the will of the gods. Oedipus and Agamemnon both had hubris or extreme pride as both of them are kings. Therefore, they are lead to their downfall at the end.

The tragic hero, according to Aristotle, must undergo a change of fortune; he may achieve some revelation, recognition or anagnorisis (a moment when the tragic hero makes a critical discovery, i.e. the moment Oedipus realizes he is the killer of his father) through oracles or prophets. He gets to know about human fate, destiny and the will of the gods. Aristotle terms this kind of recognition as “a change from ignorance to awareness of a bond of love or hate” (26). The tragic hero does not need to die at the end but he gets his punishment which is more than he deserves. Aristotle also suggests that a hero of a tragedy must evoke in the audience a sense of pity or fear. A classical tragic hero is a man no better than other men in virtue and justice. In chapter 2 of *Poetics* “he uses for people ‘of the same sort’ as ourselves, as distinct from those better or worse than we are” (Heath xiv). “He is a man of good position and reputation, and he is prosperous” who falls into misfortune. (Mullens 149). He said, “The change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity” (Aristotle 21). In other words, the focus of the tragic hero should not be in the loss of his prosperity. He establishes the concept that the emotion of pity stems not from a person becoming better but when a person receives undeserved misfortune. Fear comes in mind when the misfortune befalls upon a man like us. This is why Aristotle points out the fact that, “The change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad.” (Aristotle 21) The tragic hero’s misfortune comes to him not through vice or depravity but by some error of judgment. These are the characteristics of the classical tragic hero.

One great example of a classical tragic hero is Oedipus Rex, who was a high society figure. He was noble by birth and nature in two ways; he was the heir to the city of Corinth and the King of Thebes. He was living in Corinth as if he was born to the King and Queen of Corinth. As a matter of fact, he was the future heir to the throne. On the one hand, he became the king of Thebes by solving the riddle of the Sphinx. On the other hand, he was the heir to the Corinthian crown. It was so obvious that he started thinking of himself as superior to others

because he was the only one who was able to solve the riddle and welcomed as a king by the Theban people. He is brave, noble and just. He saved Thebes from disaster. His people treated him as a superior being because of his qualities. He claims the throne of the former King Laius because he deserves it. If he had been living in Thebes and was not given away by his parents, he would have inherited the throne of Thebes biologically. It is true that when one gets treated as superior and thinks himself as superior it causes a lot of harm because this way the man develops extreme pride known as 'hubris'. It is one of the major characteristics of a classical tragic hero.

Aristotle, in his *Poetics* mentioned the extreme pride of a tragic hero; he called it a reflection of dignity and conceit that suggests superiority over man. Oedipus says, "I, Oedipus, / Whose name is known afar. (Sophocles 25). A group of numerous citizens of Thebes gathered in front of the king's place, came to Oedipus for solving their problem as the city was cursed with plague and people were dying. They wanted Oedipus to free the city from this curse. Oedipus standing near the central door promises in his speech that he will help his people by bragging of his fame and revealing his sense of self importance. He has a self centered, impulsive and arrogant attitude toward life. His state implies that he is above other men and his name is known afar. Sophocles through his words presented Oedipus as an egoistic king who is impulsive and arrogant and it is clear in his speech that he thinks high of himself. He is also an ill fated high born man. His one mistake, which he was unaware of leads him to his downfall. It is mentioned in the Introduction of *Poetics* that, someone who unwittingly harms a person close to them is to be pitied; so in these situations we can pity the agent as well as the victim. Oedipus was not aware of his mistakes and he unwittingly harms King Laius. His murder was committed completely out of his impulse. His hubris made him commit this crime. His action raises pity and fear in the readers' mind.

Oedipus says, "all that you suffer; / And while you suffer, none suffers more than I" (Sophocles 27). This line proves that, Oedipus is a good king who loves his people. He suffers

the pain of the ordinary people of his kingdom. He was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. This prophecy was bound to happen. Prophecies in Greek tragedies are bound to happen according to their true interpretation. Prophecies are the only way through which man sees the power of the gods. This way gods leave man in a wide scope of his thoughts and plans. In the play *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles shows that man is not only a passive sacrifice to his fate or destiny but he takes an active part in it. The gods arrange things in a way that all steps Oedipus takes to go against his fate bring him ever nearer to it. This shows the power of gods exerted over men.

The main theme of the play is the prediction of the oracle or the “credibility of oracular pronouncements.” Gods were considered as incapable of making mistakes and it is clearly shown that it is impossible for the oracles to go wrong. They never gave untrue prediction. If it were possible for them to predict wrong, human life would be meaningless. The sanctity is represented by the chorus who persists that oracles can never predict wrong even if they appear to be. Doubting them means doubting gods, which is a great sin. Therefore, nobody goes against god’s will.

According to Aristotle, the hero starts the tragic sequence, not his baseness. His strives are interpreted as either ‘blunder or ‘flaw in the character. Greek mind was dominated by the idea of ritual uncleanness. Aristotle had Oedipus in his mind continually and he was referring to the unwilling parricide and incest (Mullens 152). The tragic hero must be a hero in the full sense of the word, one who struggles and fights a power on his own; this frees him from the full control of fate. But Oedipus could not make himself free from his fate. He made a blunder unwillingly because he is not pre-eminent in virtue and righteousness because he is a common man with his flaws. If he were the man who could fight against his fate and if he were pre-eminent in virtue and righteousness, he would be too far removed from life. Moreover, he would not be a man at all. There would not be the struggle of good finding itself because perception of virtue and righteousness would have no growth. It would be static and dead; or at any rate quite

beyond human sympathy (Mullens 152). Oedipus appeals to each of us as a person. He is the artistic expression of a universal principle. He is great enough to contain humanity. Only because of his fate he turns into a beggar from a proud king.

The error of judgment is an important characteristic of the classical tragic hero. Oedipus does not exhibit a clear vision which could have enabled him to examine every side of a matter. He does not see all things in their due perspective. Due to his impulsive nature and his fervent desire to get to truth of the matter, he sees one side of the matter and acts upon it depending on his half knowledge. His intentions are not wrong but he acts without knowing the full truth. His emotions, thoughts and errors have an ardent generosity which stirs our deepest sympathy but his nature is imperfect, as Aristotle says the nature of a tragic hero should be good but not perfect. The tragic hero “from the beginning was not likely to attain perfect happiness” (Friedman 368). Without knowing the entire truth he starts blaming Teiresias just because he refused to answer who is the killer of king Liaus. Oedipus says to Teiresias, “I tell you I do believe you had a hand in plotting,” (Sophocles 35). Moreover, he suspects Teiresias to be in league with Creon in a conspiracy to unseat him from the throne, whereas in reality, Teiresias is trying to save Oedipus and does not want the truth to come out in public. Furthermore, he accuses Creon, Jocasta’s brother and his brother-in-law for bribing Teiresias which is not true at all. He assumes that Creon and Teiresias are against him. “He harbors unjustified suspicions against Teiresias and Creon” (O’Brien 19). Oedipus is not a person to leave this matter easily. He kept on blaming and scaring Teiresias until he reveals the truth. Oedipus is arrogant and so he refused to listen to the person who tries to save him. Teiresias gives him the sign that he must not know the truth for his own good but the truth has to be revealed and he was destined to act like this to bring the truth in front of everyone.

Once at a feast in Corinth, a man heated with wine had taunted him with not being the true son of Polybus. These idle words of a man in his cups affected Oedipus’ excitable nature,

and as a result he could not think of anything else. This is the proof of his single mindedness. He thinks of one thing once at a time paying no attention to the other sides of the story. The words of the drunk man rankled in his heart day and night. Therefore, he eagerly hastened to the sacred Oracle at Delphi to learn the truth. The only response he got was the prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother. He was so absorbed in this new suggestion that he failed to consider its bearing upon his question and wholly forgetting his former suspicion he decided never to return to Corinth where his supposed father and mother lived and hurried off in the direction of Thebes. Therefore, his disposition to act without thinking dragged him on his way to ruin. Moreover, this nature also made him kill his father Laius, King of Thebes. When the old man Laius, rudely accosted him, “Oedipus, with his usual misguided promptness knocked him from the chariot and slew all but one of his attendants” (Barstow 3). As a matter of fact, Oedipus fulfilled the first part of his prophetic destiny. Later on, he reaches Thebes and becomes king by solving the riddle and marrying the widowed Jocasta which fulfills the entire prophecy.

“The downfall of a tragic hero never wholly satisfies the individual reader’s sense of justice, for the poet by the necessity of his art is bound to make the particular embodiment of a universal truth as terrible and as pitiful as he can. Surely this result is attained in *Oedipus Rex*. Every sympathetic reader will agree with Aristotle that even without the aid of the eye he who hears the tale told will thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes place” (Barstow 4). Reader will be thrilled to hear the tragic story of Oedipus Rex and his downfall will raise pity and fear into the mind of the readers because this is what the classical tragedy requires. Oedipus is nothing but a pawn in the hands of Apollo. His father’s mistake made him suffer as long as he was alive. He could not go against his faith. Therefore, his story is such an emotional creation of Sophocles, which is successful to make the readers feel from the bottom of their hearts.

King Oedipus was abandoned by his parents after his birth just because of a prophecy made by Apollo. His parents wanted him to be killed because he was born as a curse on his

father; king Laius of Thebes was a divine hero and key personage in the Theban myth. Laius was the Son of Labdacus. He was raised by the regent Lycus after his father's death. When he was young, Amphion and Zethus usurped the throne of Thebes. Therefore, he lived as an exile in the Peloponnesus during the reign of Amphion. Laius was hosted by Pelops, the king of Pisa in the Peloponnesus. There he fell in love with the king's bastard son Chrysippus while teaching him to drive the chariot during the Nemean games. He raped and abducted Chrysippus and carried him off to Thebes. Pelops' legitimate sons, Hippodamia, Atreus and Thystes pursued and attested him. Later on Laius gained mercy from Pelops. Hippodamia wanted to kill Chrysippus because she thinks he can become a contestant for the kingship. She wanted her sons Atreus and Thystes kill him but they refused. As a result, at night, Hippodamia wounded Chrysippus with the Theban sword while Laius and Chrysippus were sleeping. She fixed the sword on his body so that everyone suspects Laius. "However, Chrysippus acknowledged the truth before dying and Pelops banished his wife, who, according to some, committed suicide" (Parada).

Laius became the king of Thebes and Married Jocasta, , the daughter of Menoeceus and a descendant of the Spartoi, after the death of Chrysippus, He received an oracle from Delphi saying that he must not have a child because the child will kill him and marry Jocasta. He was warned that he cannot have child because of the crime he committed in Peloponnesus by raping Chrysippus. The warning came from the God Apollo. But it was not possible for him to stay away from Jocasta since he was married to her. Therefore, Oedipus was born but he was not welcomed by his parents. "Remembering the oracle, Laius pierced his son's ankles with brooches or spikes and gave it to a herdsman to expose it on Cithaeron, a mountain between Boeotia and Attica. However, the horsemen of King Polybus⁴ of Corinth found it and brought it to the king's wife Queen Periboea, who adopted him. Then she, having healed his ankles, called him Oedipus, because of his swollen feet" (Parada). This story reveals the ill fate of Oedipus and the

domination of Greek gods over man. The gods influence is so high that human beings are nothing but the pawns in the hands of gods.

The Greek gods are indifferent to man beings and their sufferings. The Greek theology was polytheistic. There were many gods and goddesses in ancient Greek religion and there was also a hierarchy. Zeus was the king of Gods. He had control over other deities but he was not omnipotent. Different deities dominated different aspects of nature. Zeus was the god of thunder and lightning. Poseidon was the god of sea and earthquakes. Helios was the good of sun. Hades had power over the realm of death and underworld. Aphrodite was the god of love and many more. All the gods and goddesses are not “all-good” or “all-Powerful.” They obeyed fate which was beyond their powers and wills. For example, Odysseus fate made him return to Ithaca after the Trojan War. The gods and goddesses could only make his journey longer and harder but they could not stop him.

In the book, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*, Simone Price mentioned that The Greek gods and goddesses acted like humans and had human vices. They interacted with humans and they have children with them. Sometimes gods goes against other gods. They try to outdo each other. For example, Zeus, Aphrodite, Ares and Apollo supported the Trojan side in the War and Athena, Hera, Poseidon supported the Greeks. The Greek religious Myths mainly revolved around heroes and their actions. For example, Odysseus and his voyage, Heracles and his twelve labor, Jason and the quest for the Golden Fleece. Sacrifice was an important part in their religion. They sacrifice animals like goat, pigs, cows, and sheeps to honor several gods in their festivals. They in fact sacrifice human to please gods For example; Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia in order to get favorable wind for his journey.

The Oracle plays an important role in Greek religion. Oracle is the massager of god's will. They provide information to humans. They know what god decides for humans based on that they predict the fate but they have limits given by god. The Oracle of Delphi tells Oedipus

that he must not return to his parents because he the son who will kill his father and marry his mother. This prediction is based on the prophecy that has been made by Apollo. Oedipus did not know who his real parents are. Therefore, he runs away to save his parents. “What an oracle predicts is bound to happen” because it came from gods. Oedipus Rex tried hard but could not deny his own fate. “He does what he can to evade his destiny: he resolves never to see his supposed parents again” (O’Brien 21). But his efforts turned out to be useless. He could not change what Apollo decided for him He suffered because of the punishment his father got. Both Oedipus and Laius are the pawns of the hands of Apollo. Neither Laius Nor Oedipus could get out of god’s will. In Christianity if a man does anything wrong and later on repents god forgives him but in Greek religion man has to suffer if he commit any crime. There is no chance to repent. If they offend gods and goddesses they are doomed forever.

The Greeks had the fear of committing hubris. Pride and vanity were not considered sins but when it became extreme it became hubris which was considered as a crime. Anything done to excess was not proper. Pride was not evil until it became all consuming and hurtful to others. Oedipus had extreme pride which led him to his downfall. The punishment he got was more than he deserved. He blinded himself so that he could never see the light. He tried hard to run away from his fate but eventually he called his doom upon himself in search of the truth without knowing it. Oedipus says, “I’m a man whom none would call well-used by fortune” (Sophocles 76). He is an example of an ill fated man who failed to go against his fate. He was so unlucky that he called himself not well used by fortune.

From the previous statements it is clear that king Oedipus, the Aristotelian ideal classical tragic hero was bound to follow what god wished for him. He could not go against it. Which also proves that the influence of religion in classical drama is so severe that men feared gods and believed that without gods wish nothing happens. They prayed and worshiped gods in order to

live a good life. They punished themselves if they did anything wrong because they believed going against gods is a great sin.

The Greeks attract our attention not only for their intellectual and artistic achievements but also for their significant role in shaping perspectives and tastes for Western civilization. Their tragedy provides a convenient approach to their spiritual contribution. Their tragedy combines high art and intense thought. Reading a Greek play is not traveling through territory which is unexplored because most of the people have read and seen their plays and know the general aims and techniques. It can be misleading if one sit to judge the Greek tragedy in terms of appropriation beside the modern tragedy because the root of tragedy came from the Greeks but Greeks plays are very different from the moderns regarding premises and objective.

Greek drama mainly born out of religious rituals and became a part of religious cult. “The religious association is indicated by the place and occasion of presentation, and it controls the structure of the plays and the mode of their presentations, the choice of subjects and themes, the attitude of the playwrights and of their audience.” (Asuamah 12). The plays were presented at the theater of Dionysus situated in Athens. The plays were part of religious practice. As a result, they were presented as a segment of “sacred precinct of the divinity” (Asuamah 12).

The plots of Greek tragedies were mostly produced from the traditional myth which was appreciated by them and considered a kind of scripture. Only the essential facts are given. For example, Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon and Orestes avenges the murder. The playwright presents the character and motivation of personages who could so behave and what their behavior can mean to the audience. All the principal personages have to be of heroic stature; the fate of men has to be sad and tragic.

The religion which Greek tragic poets explored and served was not what generally understood by religion. ‘Hero’ in the technical Greek sense is “one whose career has somehow extended the horizon of what is possible for humanity and who has therefore, after his death,

been deemed worthy of religious commemoration. It is not expected that the hero should be without a flaw; often, like Aeschylus, Ajax or Oedipus, he is a self-willed brute. But then a flawless man is not apt to possess the determined energy heroism requires" (Asuamah 14). The tragic hero Greeks portray is a person who presents the humanity, who is still remembered after his death because of his achievements. He remains as an example of virtue or vice. The hero will not be without flaw because flawless man is not what heroism requires.

If the god intentionally plans to make Oedipus fall from his stage, then god is to blame. The audience surely wonders why a good man should be brought to his ruin without letting him know. People may consider it a plain cruelty. The suffering of the hero is intense and extreme. It originates from the impetuosity of a defenseless moment but the punishment allocated is immense. It is agreeable to the audience that Apollo commanded that Oedipus should suffer. Therefore, he suffers immensely in an unusual way. This play enables the readers to experience absolute tragic pleasure. Since the time of Greeks, the concept of tragedy has been profoundly analyzed as a literary genre and adequately justified as a philosophy. Sophocles, like the other Greek writers and philosophers, has attempted to relate the genre to real life. His concept describes and rationalizes the problems and distress of life Oedipus goes through. The frequent references to this drama by Aristotle in his *Poetics* specify his high admiration for it as a tragic work.

Chapter III

The Renaissance Form of Tragic Hero

The Renaissance is the bridge between the middle ages and modern history. This time period began in the 14th century and ended in the middle of the 17th century. During that time it represented a cultural rebirth which started in Italy and spread to the rest of Europe later on. The knowledge of making concrete, development of perspective in oil painting, furnishing natural reality in painting, development of linear perspective, innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, and invention of metal movable type⁵ are remarkable eventuation of that time. Renaissance saw revolutions in social and political upheaval and also in many intellectual pursuits but it is best known for its artistic development. This time period is associated with great figures, for example, the father of the Latin revival Petrarch, the humanist philosopher Pico Della Mirandola, the great artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci, the poet Dante Alighieri, the artist Michelangelo, the political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli and many others. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo are the two contributors who inspired the term “Renaissance man.”

The term “Renaissance man,” *Uomo Universale*³ (Universal man In Italian) or the Greek term; polymath is used for a person who is very intelligent, ambitious and good at several areas. Leonardo da Vinci was a famous Renaissance man during Renaissance time period. He was a painter but being a painter was not only the reason of his fame. He was also a Scientist, engineer and mathematician. On the other hand, Michelangelo who was known as the Renaissance man was a sculptor, painter, architect and poet. “A Renaissance man or woman is a person with knowledge and ability in many different areas of life, a well-rounded generalist or polymath. The modern phrase "Renaissance man" refers to the popularity of this concept during the Italian Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, when writers such as Baldassare Castiglione wrote admiringly of men and women who excelled in many areas of life rather than specializing in a

single narrow skill” (Thompson 1). According to "A History of Knowledge -- Past, Present, and Future" by Charles Lincoln Van Doren, the concept of the Renaissance man had precedents in the work of Aristotle. Doren mentioned that, according to Aristotle, a person with a "universal education" ought to be able to think critically about every significant branch of human knowledge, and that this type of education was superior to specializing in a single field. The Renaissance writer Baldassare Castiglione in his work "The Book of the Courtier" of 1528, first translated into English by Sir Thomas Holby in 1561, set out the qualities of what he called the "universal man." There he mentioned, an ideal courtier must be, nobly born, with a pleasant disposition, wit, and “a comely shape of person and countenance.” If a man’s profession is to be a soldier, he needs to train himself in all the skills so that it makes him an able warrior. For example, riding, handling weapons, wrestling, swimming, and everything that increase his strength and agility. The courtier also needs certain social talents, easy conversation, wit, the ability to dance, and, above all, a certain grace that makes all his activities seem effortless and unconscious. Only then he will be called a courtier or a renaissance gentle man.

The Renaissance man is a man of several qualities. It does not mean that living in a Renaissance time period is the reason of calling a man renaissance. The term can be used for any man who is knowledgeable or proficient in a variety of fields. Albert Schweitzer was a 20th century “Renaissance man” who was a theologian, a musician, musician, philosopher and doctor. Benjamin Franklin; who lived in the 18th century (1700s) was a “Renaissance man" and also an author, printer, politician, scientist, inventor and soldier. Leon Battista Alberti, the Italian humanist author, architect, linguist, artist, poet, priest, philosopher and cryptographer epitomized “Renaissance Man.” He said, “a man can do all things if he will.” The ideal embodied the basic tenets of Renaissance Humanism which considered man the centre of the universe, limitless in his capacities for development and led to the notion that men should try to embrace all knowledge and develop their own capacities as fully as possible.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), the playwright, poet, actor and of English drama during the reign of Britain's Queen Elizabeth I, wrote the renowned play *Doctor Faustus*. His plays are known for the use of blank verse and overreaching protagonists. He greatly influenced William Shakespeare, who was born two months after Christopher Marlowe, on April 26, 1564. *Doctor Faustus* is Christopher Marlowe's greatest play and masterpiece which is considered as first great tragedy in Elizabethan period written in 1592. In this play, he portrayed a renaissance man of curiosity and intelligence named Faustus, who is at the same time a tragic hero. In the play, Faustus strives against human limitations conceived in medieval Christian tradition. He sells his soul to the devil for knowledge which is an old motif in Christian Folklore.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is based on a German prose book titled *Historia von D. Johan Fausten* published in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1587. This work was translated into English within five years as *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*. The historical persona Johannes Faustus was a strolling German astrologer who had a reputation for possessing magical powers. He lived during the period 1510-1540, and after his death his fame spread far and often this name took a strongly anti-papal nature.⁴ Marlowe took his plot from an earlier German play about Faustus, but he transformed an old story into a powerhouse of a work. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is first famous version of the story. Later in nineteenth century, Romantic writer Goethe was inspired by its grandeur and he used the concept in his poem. Now Faustus' name has become part of our language. "Faustian bargain" has come to mean a deal made for earthly gain at a high ethical and spiritual cost (Rajeeb 5).

Christopher Marlowe in his *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, he introduces the reader to the title character; a proud man who has learned all there is to learn in medicine and philosophy and still urges for more. He decides that black magic will be his next frontier, and calls upon a demon named Mephistopheles to teach him necromancy. In return, Faustus agrees to give his

soul to the devil after 24 years of glory with Mephistopheles. Faustus turns his back on God and reason with this deal, and in the end all of the knowledge, fame, and glory he gains are lost because of his selfish desires to be essentially greater than God. What Marlowe creates out of the story of Faustus is a medieval morality play with a Renaissance temper. Marlowe's readers can see in Faustus a complex modern man who carried a bit too far by ambition and love of pleasure.

Doctor Faustus is not only a man but also a myth. He is a seeker of knowledge and also the driving force of pride and ambition. He wants to test the outer limits of worldly experience. But he is sacrificed on the pyre of his yearning desires and failures. According to Lindgren's explanation, "man is the result of the situation into which he is born and the situation in which he finds himself at various times in his lives" (Lindgren 56). In other words, man's situation or environment of the family, his society or even the circle of his friends can mold one's life. Thus, all the aspects above influence Faustus's life beside his own free will. John Faustus, though a man of common birth, sees his bright future because of his brilliant mind. The chorus' speeches show that he gets his doctor's name for mastering theology in a short time:

The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd,

That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,

Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute

In th' heavenly matters of theology; (Prologue 16-19)

Faustus is not only an expert in theology but also is an expert in philosophy, law and medical skill. Despite possessing all this knowledge, his life becomes miserable because he is depressed about the limitations of human knowledge. His dissatisfaction comes from his pride. Like Icarus, he attempts to transcend human limitations in search of knowledge. Faustus desires the freedom to pursue necromancy. This freedom involves a deed with the devils because

Faustus must shed his blood to seal a deed for his soul with Lucifer in order to gain the power of magic. Rejecting submission to God, Faustus chooses to be like a God himself and enters his fatal contract. With the rejection of medieval, God-centered universe and its embrace of human possibility, Faustus represents the spirit of Renaissance. Faustus's magic can be compared with the magic of Prospero in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Though Prospero has same thirst for knowledge that Faustus has, difference can be seen in their motivation. Where Faustus is motivated by pride, greed and desire for power, Prospero is willing to lay aside his power for knowledge but there is no deed with devil on that play.

According to Mephistophilis, Faustus "Begets a world of idle fantasies". From the statement, we can understand that Faustus lives in fantasy and illusion. His fantasy is too far from reality and it is impossible to make it come true. The impossibility of realizing his fantasy causes a feeling of limitation in his heart and encourages him to find a way to overcome. His mind dwells longing on satisfaction of material appetite. This man has appetite for knowledge, beauty, wealth and power, and his pleasure is to satisfy them. In pursuing physical pleasure, he neglects spiritual values and becomes to such a weakness of will that he cannot assert him against the temptation of the devil even though the penalty is near at hand.

Faustus is an abyss of will power. He is a typical Renaissance Humanist scholar with classical education behind him. Faustus insists on believing only that which he can experience. He calls Hell and Heaven fables because they are abstract. What he can experience is the twenty four years of sensuality. Like a typical Renaissance man who wants more from everything, Faustus wants to have the good of both the worlds. He wants to experience Hell but wants to keep the option of Heaven open. This is the ultimate dilemma of Faustus, the Renaissance Humanist. He expresses his feeling by saying "Knew you not, traitors, I was limited/ For four-and-twenty years to breathe on earth?" (174) though throughout the play Faustus repeatedly

confronts by the choice of Good and Bad Angel, pride and continuing ambition prevents him from repent. Pride, presumption and self-conceit are his major sins. Ironically, in trying to become more than human, Faustus at the end of his life rejects his humanity and wants to escape from the torment of hell but damns himself by his own choice and own choice is the cause of his ultimate sufferings.

Marlowe's heroes; Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta are the men of high ambitions. They believe that there is no limit to their passion for power, honor, glory and self-gratification. They are the men who dream exceedingly. Tamburlaine became a world conqueror from a Scythian shepherd. The Jew of Malta urges for infinite bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts, emeralds, rubies and diamonds. Doctor Faustus swollen 'self-conceit' aspires to attain a world of profit and delight. This is the Renaissance quality of a man. Faustus' thirst for limitless knowledge drives him to tire his brain to think himself equal to God. Mephistophilis illuminates him on a secrets earth and sky, hell and heaven, seas and oceans, stars and planets. He forgets God and scriptures, divinity and its legacies and pledges his soul to Lucifer for twenty four years of uncontrolled self-indulgent. Christopher Marlowe in his play *Doctor Faustus* shows us that motivation always encourages someone to do something great. The protagonist of the play Dr. Faustus also has a great motivation that drives him to fulfill his desires. This motivation makes him sell his soul to the devils without intellectualizing the effect. This motivation is nothing but his over ambition, which is a solid Renaissance quality.

Ambition is a natural desire which helps to reach higher levels of completeness and fulfillment but over ambition is a blindness that always leads to destruction. Doctor Faustus has a great ambition that drives him to reach his desires. Faustus was born in the town of Rhodes in Germany. He grew up in Wittenberg and attended the best school and university where he excelled in scholarly achievements and obtained his doctor of letters degree in divinity and

matters of theology. This good condition encourages him later to be an ambitious man to get the things beyond human reach. He is not satisfied with his own achievements in many fields of studies because he finds them illiberal. This thirst for knowledge turns him from the grace of God and leads him to his own destruction.

In the prologue, the chorus, tells us that Faustus is different from the heroes commonly meet in stories so as his ambition. Because of his pride, his ambition turns to be a negative one. He desires freedom from the normal restraints upon man. That is why he chooses necromancy and dedicates himself to practice it. He looks for a power greater than emperors or kings. He imagines ruling all things between the poles. Faustus delights to the promise of power. He resolves to send the devils to India, to the bottom of the ocean and to the new world for riches and delicacies. He will have them interpret difficult ideas and tell the secrets of all kings. Faustus's greedy nature reveals here. He wants to become as learned and skillful as reputed magician Agrippa, who could raise the dead. Trained in Classical Literature and excited about possibilities in the renaissance age, he wants to rise above the old constraints of man. To fulfill his ambition, Faustus decides to trade in his soul for twenty-four years of sinful pleasure. Faustus excitedly speaks of his treaty and of the results, he foresees. Faustus:

Had I as many souls as there be stars,

I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.

By him I'll be great emperor of the world,

And make a bridge through the moving air,

To pass the ocean with a band of men; (Act I, scene 4, 101-105)

Faustus bargains with Lucifer in order to gain knowledge and power. The gain of knowledge and power is largely equalized by egocentric self-satisfaction. In his arrogance, he gives away his soul and eternal happiness for just twenty-four years of knowledge and magic tricks. Marlowe portrays his hero as a wretched creature who for lower values gives up higher ones. In Act 1, we see the first result of Faustus's choice, which involves the deliberate rejection of God. Faustus, in his rejection of orthodoxy, parallels the pride of Lucifer. Other personalities of Faustus such as, selfishness, perfectionism, egocentricity and greed cause himself to be an over ambitious man who requires accomplishing his unreachable desires.

Doctor Faustus has been blinded by the wealth and power promised by the treaty with the devil, he can't think of God rather he has placed his trust in Beelzebub. For the petty earthly power and delight such as bestowal of crowns and rich apparels and the dance of devils, he rejects the possibility of hell and pains as he thinks, "Hell's a Fable". He is not terrified by thoughts of damnation. This kind of belief draws Faustus in a state of complete skepticism. Marlowe may be causes his protagonist for taking risk to entry to the unknown and forbidden zones, and areas of exploration and experience. After gaining power, he like Ulysses, the profound adventurer, wants to travel to the various countries and gather knowledge, which can interest any Renaissance man. But he does not use the powers to do great deeds. Mephistophilis diverts his attention from delight of all kinds to the child's delights by encouraging him to harass the Pope or by making horns sprout from the knight's head. For these minor mischievous acts, he says, Faustus will be admired in Rome. This scene can be viewed as ironic, for it points out the awful over ambition, which declines him great, prideful scholar into a bored, mediocre magician. Faustus is so proud and his ambition is so large that he can't escape from his own ignorance. If he uses his god-gifted brain and does some noble deeds then he would be respected by all.

Doctor Faustus also longed for the thoughtful feeling of love. For him love is physical. To fulfill his ambition toward such desire, he asks Mephistophilis to bring a beautiful woman. His “faithful servant” brings him a woman which doesn’t bring him complete satisfaction. His ambition, to achieve a woman to get rid of his loneliness, drives him to do anything as long as it can satisfy him. Therefore, he fancies Helen of Troy because of his love for beauty, which is a Renaissance quality. The love relationship between him and Helen is nothing but the love relationship between men and evil that disguises itself as Helen.

As it is stated here that Faustus’s ambition is different from others not only because he becomes so prideful about his knowledge that he aspired to know more than any mortal should know but also a devotee of necromancy who can gratify his desire to feel secure from something. His decision to practice the black magic is to provide him with physical security as well as freedom from fear, pain and death that he can’t supply. That’s why he rejects medicine as he can’t make men live eternally or raise dead men to life. Faustus says:

The reward of sin is death: that’s hard.

Si peccassenegamus, fallimur, etnullaest in nobisveritas;

If we say that we have no sin, we deceives ourselves,

And there is no truth in us.

Why, then, belike we must sin, and so consequently die:

Ay, we must die as everlasting death.

What doctrine call you this, *Che sera, sera,*

What will be, shall be ? Divinity, adieu !

These metaphysics of magicians,

And necromantic books are heavenly;

Lines, circles, scenes letters and characters;

Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires. (Act I, scene I, 40-51)

Here, the study shows that he is searching for a protector or a stronger person on whom he can be dependent. He cannot accept that the reward of sin is death. He fills this is injustice done by God. Therefore, he builds a close relationship with the devils for they are promising a great power on his hand. He believes that his chosen way is the appropriate way to overcome his problem. With the help of black magic, he even dares to mock the friar in the religious ceremony and is not afraid when the knight plans to kill him. His power changes him into a confident person. He believes that through black magic he will secure himself. This feeling of security and safety has helped him to get rid of his fear and pain of anything, especially death. He then rejects the idea of heaven, mocks Mephistophilis for being so faint-hearted, and tells him to scorn unattainable heavenly joys as he does. Then he gives orders to Mephistophilis: Faustus.

Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:

Seeing Faustus hath incurred eternal death,

By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity:

Say he surrenders up to him his soul, (Act I, scene 4, 87-90)

Faustus for earthly pleasures chooses the eternal damnation rather than the salvation. He becomes dauntless man who is never afraid of God's punishment because of following the evil plan. He, being a Christian scholar goes against God and refutes bible which is the presage

toward modernity and agonistic approach toward God, doubting the power of God which Greeks could hardly think in the ancient time.

Marlowe has showed excessive desire of Doctor Faustus for knowledge. Doctor Faustus wants to achieve all kinds of knowledge. He becomes so prideful about his knowledge that he aspired to know more than any mortal should know and “heavens conspired his over-through”. In a sense, he wants to accumulate wealth from the four corners of the globe; he also wants to reshape the map of Europe along with gaining access to every piece of knowledge of the universe. Overall, we can say that his ambition is to seize the world. By seizing the world, he will be admired and respected throughout the world. This will be done with the help of the power of devil. These are all his desires which he wants to make true. Later he realizes that what he had already done is only vanity. He fails to actualize his potential to be immortal. As human being, he can't escape from death. As an ambitious man, Dr. Faustus wishes to attain worldly success but he ends up breaking God's law.

Christianity is a monotheistic religion. The followers believe in one God. They believe that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe. God's attributes include; holiness, righteousness, immutability, merciful, graceful and eternity. Any one goes against god is considered a convict of great sin but if he repents God forgives him. They consider God very powerful but kind who is totally opposite of the Greek gods and goddesses who sent men on earth as pawns of their hands. People used to fear Greek god and goddesses but gradually the fear has been reduced over time. Man started to portray God as less fearful than the Greek God and worshiped them but worshiping was not the only purpose of their lives. In ancient Greek times, there were a few people who questioned the divine explanation of everything and the power of deities. They excepted what they heard and believed but later on many people started finding it hard to believe in a God who loves everyone yet causes disasters and ruins in human life and punishes for going

against his law and order. In one hand they worship God on the other hand has doubt in their minds.

Faustus has gone against god in order to get power which shows an atheistic approach of Marlowe during his time which is reflecting in his play, *Doctor Faustus*. The practice of necromancy is considered as a great sin against God in Christianity. Marlowe portrayed a man who commits seven deadly sins mentioned in the bible; lust, gluttony, greed, laziness, wrath, envy and pride. If man repent after committing sin God forgives them but Faustus refuses to repent no matter how much God tries to stop him through his omen and sending good and bad angels. Portraying a tragic hero who steps against god is offensive up to an extent to some people but it shows the change of faith and belief over time. People in the ancient time could not think of going against god. In fact all the religious plays reflected absolute respect toward gods no one dared to write against gods and goddesses but over time human being started shifting from god and focusing more on human and their knowledge. Lack of knowledge made human trust blindly and spend their lives more on thinking about spiritual things. But gradually man started educating themselves on different subjects and got to know that religion is important but at the same time human needs to be enlightened about their lives and surroundings. They are not the pawns on the hands of God because God has given them a beautiful life to explore everything around them and they are free to lead their lives in their way. God always helps them to be successful in life if they pray for their lives.

In the article *Marlowe and God: The Tragic Theology of Dr Faustus*, Robert Ornstein has mentioned that, Doctor Faustus is a cosmic tragedy where the plot sustained the philosophical magnitude of the opening scenes where fundamental questions raised about man's destiny. Ornstein said, "The earlier philosophical questioning of human limitations seems to have no bearing on the ultimate drama of Faustus' spiritual anguish, which seems wholly personal, and

emotional, and explicable by Christian doctrine. What Faustus has dared or done seems now irrelevant, because, according to doctrine, he need only repent and have faith to be saved” (1380). Faustus has committed the unpardonable sin of daring by going against God but scholars insist that Faustus is mistaken. They see him as the victim of his own illusion. Marlowe portrayed him as an intellectual rebel. He himself was an “exemplar of the restless questioning spirit of late Renaissance thought” (1381). His mind is more medieval than modern; his response to experience is more anti-humanistic⁷ than humanistic. “Marlowe’s heroes begin as lovers of the world they would remake_ they would seize their day_ and end as nihilists;” a believer of nothing (1381). Marlowe’s hero is the lover of world. He focuses on worldly power. He has no faith on God’s power. He has a strong interest on the concern for human welfare, values and dignity. The shift from religion to man is clearly visible in Marlowe’s play because man no longer depends on God to get what he wants. They commit crime without the fear of punishment.

Doctor Faustus is a Renaissance tragic hero who wishes to get all knowledge and power to be equal to God. His over ambition made him suffer and led him to his downfall. Marlowe’s tragic hero does not abide by all the ideas given by Aristotle in the classic form of tragic hero. In renaissance time there involved the religious ideas but not as strict as the ancient Greek world. They believed good work takes to heaven and bad work leads you to hell. People got involved in good work to achieve peace in afterlife. Faustus is an ordinary German parent who goes to Wittenberg for higher studies mainly supported by his kinsmen. He does not belong to a royal or noble parentage. But he is great because of his scholarship. Like Hamlet and Macbeth, he is an ambitious hero. He proscribes God, blasphemes the Trinity and Christian doctrines and sells his soul to the Devil to gain supernatural powers to live a life of voluptuousness for twenty four years. His fate is settled when he signs the deed with the devils.

He belongs to a high social class, he is a doctor who has knowledge of every sectors. But his fatal flaw in his character made him commit crime which he realizes later. His fatal flaw is his want of more power and knowledge. Since he is knowledgeable he thinks himself equal to God. Therefore, he wants the power and position of God. This is his swollen pride which stopped him from repent and made him suffer at the end of the play. He represents a great man with stature but he also represents a man with sins. His desire for more manipulates him to take the easy but fearful road instead of the steady and heavenly way. His tragic hero qualities reveal through his desires for honor and authority. He realizes at the end when it is too late, that his mistakes caused him the misery and suffering. His catharsis at the end makes the reader feel pity and fear. Faustus says,

“My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!

Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!

Ugly hell gape not! Come not Lucifer!

I'll burn my book! Ah, Mephistophilis.” (Scene XIX, 147, ll.187-190)

Dr. Faustus is a common man possesses good and bad desires through various actions and features of his personality. His desires overpower his true abilities in obtaining authority and recognition. Faustus portrays a vast amount of sinful desires and feelings that will not allow him to repent himself. His mind is dissolved in the idea that that he cannot get power from God. Therefore, he has to practice necromancy to get the power he wants. He is an individual tragic hero of Renaissance time who is the maker of his own tragedy. He falls not because of the ‘decree of fate’ or ‘fickleness of fortune’. His getting involved with Mephistopheles; the devil, agent of Lucifer is also not the reason of his fall. He falls because of his own will, because of his desire and because of his hamartia. He experiences a inner conflict between his consciousness and free will which is also remarkable in Shakespearean tragic hero, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello.

Like Hamlet, Faustus' conflict is inner. Faustus choice of necromancy is made because of his inner conflict. Marlowe's portrayal of the Good and Evil Angels are the personifications of Faustus' good and evil impulses. His conventional heart is opposed to his self damnation but he ignores all the warning and completes the scroll. He got disillusioned in the profits of black magic and the growing sense of loss. His damnation stung him like a scorpion.

However, if we go through the depth of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, we find that Faustus is not just a character or a single man; he leads the life of everyman. His tragedy is not personal. His tragedy is a tragedy that is universal and can be suffered by any man who desires for more. He is the embodiment of Renaissance tragic hero who is forceful and individual. He dared to avoid the established concepts of society, religion and went ahead to his demand.

On the other hand, Hamlet the Shakespearean tragic hero is also a Renaissance tragic hero with all the Renaissance quality Doctor Faustus has. Unlike Faustus he is a noble born, he is a prince of Denmark. His tragedy begin with the noble motivation of punishing his father's murderer and ends in his death. Hamlet does not survive to the outcome of his action like the classical tragic heroes rather he dies a tragic death like Faustus. Shakespeare portrayed prince Hamlet's tragedy as the result of his unrealistic ideals and inability to overcome weakness of indecisiveness. This fatal attribute causes multiple deaths at the end of the play. Though prince Hamlet is described as an intelligent and brave person, he has the tendency to procrastinate. This procrastination prevents him from acting upon his father's murder and his uncle's ascension to the throne by marrying his mother.

Prince Hamlet sees the ghost of his father in his dream. The ghost tells him that Claudius, his uncle murdered his father. Hamlet becomes obsessed to avenge his father's death. A situation like this one needs to act decisively and quickly but prince Hamlet delays the revenge by thinking too much because he is a renaissance man. He cannot take his action out of impulse but he takes too much time to make his decision. He spends a lot of time thinking what to do and

what not to do. In Act III, Prince Hamlet holds the knife to hurt his uncle by placing it over his head but failed to strike him, instead he arranges a play with the same scenario to examine the reaction of Claudius to know whether he is guilty of murdering the king. When he gets to know that Claudius is guilty, he still relents. He says, "Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift/ As meditation or the thought of love/ May sweep to my revenge" (Act I, Scene II, l. 154-157). Prince Hamlet got several chances to kill Claudius but never acted upon him. He was also upset because of his mother marrying his uncle. He expected her to mourn the death of his father. He looked upon his mother's union with his uncle as incestuous because of this he also loses respect over woman. This affected his relationship with Ophelia. He neglects her, insults her and tells her to go to nunnery.

Hamlet finds murder of Claudius a difficult job when Claudius is to be crowned as king of Denmark. His avenger gets harder because of his delay. His delay gives his uncle to plot his murder. In a planned duel, his uncle plots to poison him but his mother also drinks the poison wine meant for Hamlet. His mother dies. Hamlet finally kills his uncle in an impulsive act and dies because of the poisoned wine. His death raises pity and fear into the readers mind.

Prince Hamlet is a high born but his downfall was not because of his fate but because of his procrastination. The evolution is quite clear in this point that. The tragic hero used to be the pawn of the hands of gods and goddesses but later on it transformed into a renaissance man full of knowledge and wit makes his own decisions, questions God's will. His pride can be the reason like Oedipus and Faustus at the same time can also not be the reason of his downfall like Hamlet. But the action the hero takes is a major reason of his downfall.

The Shakespearean idea of tragic hero is slightly different than the Aristotelian classical idea. Shakespearean tragic hero is a person of some stature or high position. For example, king, prince, general or noble man. He must be a good and worthwhile person. His actions have far reaching effects. He possesses character trait or quality which under normal circumstances is a

virtue but under special circumstances is a fatal flaw. He is a great man who promises to be farther greatness. He makes serious error of judgment which leads him to his downfall. He makes further errors of judgment following his misdeed. He has a distorted perception which makes him blind to reality. He frequently commits further crime. He suffers both outwardly and inwardly. For example, he suffers from isolation, alienation, attacks outwardly and also suffers from tortures conscience. He elicits pity and fear from the audience because of his recognizing his own mistakes and he dies at the end of the play. There are the qualities those Shakespearean tragic hero posses. Hamlet is a knowledgeable prince, who is good and worthwhile person. His actions have far reaching effects. His delay made him suffer at the end. He suffered both outwardly and inwardly. He suffered from isolation, alienation and he was tortured by his conscience. There was a conflict going on in his mind which came out through his soliloquy. His conscience was stopping him from his revenge. He could not come to a decision because the ghost could also be his illusion of mind. He was deeply frustrated and suffered inwardly more than outwardly. His death at the end brings pity and fear into the mind of the readers.

The renaissance tragic hero has evolved from the ancient Greek tragic hero over time. The imitation of one action of the tragic hero is not the only cause that makes the play revolve around it. The hero takes several actions in different acts. The story is not stick to one point rather it progresses with different sub-plots. The action and decision of God is no longer the main theme of the play. The hero is no longer destined by supernatural being. The hero takes his own decision and action. He is not bound by the Gods will. He believes in one and questions his will. This way the ancient idea differs from the ideas that came later on. The writers like Marlowe and Shakespeare moved a little away from the Aristotelian idea of tragic hero and included their own concept along with the Aristotelian principles in their plays.

Chapter IV

The Modern Era

The Modern time period occupied the years after the beginning of the twentieth century marked by sudden breaks from the traditional ways of viewing the world. In Europe, tragedy traditionally shows the influence of Greek drama by revolving around the downfall of kings and powerful rulers but in modern Europe or America no equivalent figure or system has established. The classical form of tragedy shows the Aristotle's view which deals with the fate of gods, kings, rulers and heroes but the modern world is a secular world that no longer believes in gods or kings to give energy to the classical tragic form to make it useful in the present world we live in.

The modern writers of the era adopted modern point of view deliberately and self – consciously. The central preoccupation of the modern world, which is an increasingly secular world, is the inner self and consciousness. This world no longer relies on Gods for spiritual guidance. They however felt like strangers in an alien world trying to come to grips with issues which define humanity and deal with the questions of survival of the race, relationship of man to God and the right way to live in the world. The modernist intellectuals focused on this growing state of alienation of the individuals.

The modern day tragic hero is a common man not necessarily of noble stature. He suffers from existential crisis living in this present world of chaos, and accepts the situation. He does not have blind faith on gods and goddesses like the ancient Greek tragic heroes neither is he a person equal to God. He does not try to outsmart God with his knowledge like Doctor Faustus. He is focused on his own life keeping the religious beliefs aside. He finds happiness in his sufferings.

He suffers from the existential crisis; the feeling of nothingness of this world and decides to fight to live as long as he is alive.

American playwright Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, published in 1949 is a play of twentieth century whereas, Miller stood inverse to the Greek and Renaissance concept of tragic hero and also the Aristotelian principles. For him, common man best represents the tragic flaw which leads to his fatal destruction. Miller believes, common man is proficient as a subject for tragedy in most elevated sense as the kings or elites were. In an existential world, it is not possible to relate oneself to the kings and people of noble stature and it also makes almost impossible to reach catharsis. Miller portrayed a common man as a tragic hero by setting up new scales of standard for a tragedy in his play *Death of a salesman*.

In the essay, "Tragedy and Common Man," Arthur Miller talked about his idea of tragedy and tragic hero of modern days. He said that, "I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were. On the face of it this ought to be obvious in the light of modern psychiatry, which bases its analysis upon classify formulations, such as Oedipus and Orestes complexes, for instances, which were enacted by royal beings, but which apply to everyone in similar emotional situations" (Miller 1). According to Miller, tragic hero in a tragedy is not necessarily a man noble by birth and nature. He can be a common man because a common man is as suitable as a king to be a tragic hero. If the tragic heroes are modeled on kings and queens, then the common man will not be able to relate his life to theirs. Therefore, common man is as important as a tragic hero in modern days.

Before Miller's play, *The Death of a Salesman* was written, the tragedians mainly followed the Aristotelian definition of tragic hero. Therefore, the plays of tragedy revolved around kings, Gods or people who belonged to the upper aristocratic class. Arthur Miller presented a new idea of tragic hero that challenged the previously accepted Aristotelian idea.

Miller's idea was to present a character to which the audience can relate to. Therefore, He created a character Willy Loman, the main character of his book, *Death of a Salesman*. Willy Loman is a working man with a wife and two kids. He is a complex and fascinating tragic character. Willy Loman struggles hard in the changing society to hold onto his dignity. Miller mentions that, in Willy Loman, the audience recognizes the human passion to surpass his given bounds, a fanatical insistence upon his self conceived role. He struggles in a society where his values and ideals are no longer the same as they were when he was growing up.

Willy Loman is believes in the "American Dream:" the notion that any man can rise from humble beginnings to greatness. He believes, the most important asset a man can have is to be well liked by others. Loman made a living believing in this ideal for 30 years but when he enters the reclining years of his life, he can no longer sell the firm's goods to support himself. His ambition was to work hard and to be a member of the firm. If that cannot be achieved, he at least should be liked by others and be able to sell until his death.

There are many facets to his personality that lead him to the state he and his family find themselves in. His upbringing of his sons Biff and Happy is a major reason of his state. He raised his sons with the belief that if one is well liked by others he does not need to worry about his qualifications. In Act I, Willy tells his sons that, his neighbor Charley's son Bernard may get good grades but his sons, Happy and Biff will be more successful in business because they are "well liked." Loman believed that if his sons were famous they would come out on top but he fails to realize that the ways to be rich is either by doing hard work like Bernard or through luck and good timing like Ben, who gained a good fortune at the age of twenty one by discovering an African diamond mine. Loman's sons grow up believing in all that their father had told them. But Biff, realizes Loman and his ambitions are not as great as he claims and begins to question his father's values. Biff realizes that for him, his father's values are not applicable. Biff is not as

concerned as his father to reach to the top whereas, Happy continues to believe in his father's ideals even after Loman's death.

Willy Loman spends most of his time living in his imagination and talking to himself. As he has grown old, he fails to sell his products like he used to sell. He lacks the charm that a salesman needs but in his imagination he is still the young Loman who talks to his children with hope and promises to better their lives. He has hope and desire to give his family a better life but in reality he failed. He can no longer provide his family with money and comfort for this reason guilty and ashamed of himself. His sense of dignity dissolves him into his guilt. Therefore, he ignores the harsh reality where he has no income and lives a life depending on his friend Chaeley's given few amount of money. His inability of serving his family gives him severe mental trauma; as a result he becomes mentally unstable.

Loman's mental instability makes him lose his job. He goes to Howard to ask for a non-travelling job so that he can telephone his buyers to make his sales without leaving his room. In reply to that, Howard says there is no opening and leaves the office to attend other people. When he returns, Willy begins to shout frantically switching on Howard's wire recorder accidentally. This drives Howard fire Willy from his job. He tells Willy that he does not want Willy to represent his company any longer. Moreover, Howard suggests Willy to be dependent on his sons financially but being dependent on his sons is Loman's worst nightmare. It hurts his dignity.

On the other hand, when Charley talks to Willy about an opening of a job available, indicating Loman to join it. Loman rejects Charley's offer because he suffers from a sense of shame, embarrassment and failure. He is depending on the amount of money Charley gives him. He takes the favor from him but he never talks about it or shows any gratitude because of his sense of embarrassment. To block out his emotions rather than thanking or giving acknowledgement he insults his friend back whenever he gets the offer. But borrowing money

from Charley makes him guilty inside. His sense of dignity which is a heroic character makes him guilty. To hold on to his dignity he exaggerates about himself in front of people. He talks highly about himself which he is not in the reality. But he has the desire to be a good and famous salesman and to become rich this way. He tries to prove himself as the best salesman in the sales world. He knows he is not well liked by others. He wants to be the best salesman so that everybody likes him. This is the reason behind his speaking highly of himself. His exaggeration about himself is to get the attention he desires but he fails to gain it. At the end, his failure makes him commit suicide. In Miller's words, Loman has "a sense of personal dignity," His dignity made him commit suicide at the end because he cannot accept his life as a failure. His committing suicide was the only way to help his family. He speeds up his car and kills himself. He made this sacrifice because he knew his accident will provide his family with money that will secure his family's future. His sacrifice is a heroic gesture of a tragic hero. He sacrificed his life in order to give his family a life he never succeeded to give earlier. Moreover, his suicide is a recovery of his lost dignity. Willy says to Charlie: "Funny you know? After all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive" (Miller 27). This statement is a sad reflection of his mind. He is a victim of an unfortunate combination of his ideals and the change occurred in society that caused his talents of selling fade away.

The modern literature of modern days has taken steps toward the psychiatric view of life. Modern day writers focus on the inner struggle of the hero. The hero struggle hard to get his position in the society and fights a mental battle to survive.

< The first title of the play was *The Inside of His Head* and Miller, attempting to work out a way of revealing the contradictions in Willy's consciousness, at first considered "an enormous

face the height of the proscenium arch which would appear and then open up, and we would see the inside of a man's head.">

Loman struggles hard between his reality and dreams. The changing society put him into a society where he blends up his imagination with reality. He constantly travels in his imagination and talks to himself. His imagination is stronger than his reality. He gets lost thinking about his children, his job and a better life. It is hard for him to get out of his delusions. His delusions are his psychic view of life that Miller explored in his book. This exploration of psychology was missing in the classical literature and classical tragic hero. However, in some few renaissance writers rarely portrayed the exploration of inner psyche of the tragic hero, for example, Shakespeare's Hamlet and his soliloquy but it mostly flourished in modern times. The thinking and analyzing of situation of the tragic hero has also been included mostly in modern times. Modern day literature creates skepticism whereas, thinking and analyzing are involved. The hero constantly tries to figure out a reason for whatever is happening around the world. He consciously and unconsciously devotes himself to thinking bringing out a solution that can help him to solve his problem that he regularly deals with.

According to Arthur Miller, "The Greeks could probe the very heavenly origin of their ways and return to confirm the rightness of laws. And Job could face God in anger, demanding his right and end in submission. But for a moment everything is in suspension, nothing is accepted, and in this sketching and tearing apart of the cosmos, in the very action of so doing, the character gains "size," the tragic stature which is spuriously attached to the royal or the high born in our minds. The commonest of men may take on that stature to the extent of his willingness to throw all he has into the contest, the battle to secure his rightful place in the world" (Miller 3). The modern day tragic hero is not the man who confirms the rightness of laws. Their job was to face God in anger while demanding his right and he may end it by submitting himself to Gods

and Goddesses. This way the hero gains stature which is attached to the Gods and kings in the mind of readers. On contrary, a common man as a tragic hero only battles to secure his place in the world. He may believe in God but never encounters him in a way classical tragic hero do. The Classical tragedies were considered as pessimistic stories because the hero always ended up losing his life and suffering from the punishment gods and goddesses selected for him. But in the modern days, the tragic hero is optimistic. He hopes for a better life and tries to improve his position being a common man, therefore, the tragedies of modern time are no longer seen as horrible and pessimistic stories.

The modern world is commercial and capitalistic. The society has been changed, the people have changed. There is no place for weaker people in this social, economical set up. People struggle hard for self identity in the modern world. In the article, “A modern tragic hero in Arthur Miller’s plays *Death of a Salesman*” Erkan mentioned that, “This modern tragic hero represents individuals who try to survive and quest for self identity in a capitalistic commercialized world” (Erkan 8). It is therefore, not easy to apply the classical definition of tragic hero into the modern day tragic hero because the society is not the same as it was before. A classical tragic hero spent most of his time trying not to incur the wrath of gods and goddesses because their main purpose of life was to serve god and make them happy in order to get a better life but in the modern time the tragic hero is an individual who struggles hard for betterment of his life living in a capitalistic commercial world. He suffers from alienation and struggles in order to fix and locate his identity. He is focused more on his life and the present world rather than focusing on God or any other supernatural being. He is a rational and optimistic man who has error in judgment, who is brave enough to fight and also goes through epiphany of life but he is a man of the modern world who deals his situation by himself living in a society without seeking help from God.

Like Arthur Miller, the German Philosopher, cultural critic poet, composer and scholar Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) also found classical tragedy an art form that transcended the pessimism and nihilism of a meaningless world.⁵ The Greek observers by looking into the abyss of human suffering and verified it passionately and joyously accepted the meaning of their own existence.⁶ They presented themselves to be endlessly more than petty individuals. They find self-affirmation not in a world to come or in another life but in the fear, frenzy and ecstasy celebrated in the performance of tragedies. To discuss the history of tragic form Nietzsche introduces an intellectual dichotomy between Dionysian and Apollonian attitude towards life. One is the reality as disordered and undifferentiated by forms another one is the reality as ordered and differentiated by forms. He believes life always involves a struggle between these two elements both fighting to have control over the existence of humanity. In Nietzsche's words, "Wherever the Dionysian prevailed; the Apollonian was checked and destroyed.... wherever the first Dionysian onslaught was successfully withstood, the authority and majesty of the Delphic god Apollo exhibited itself as more rigid and menacing than ever" (Nietzsche 47). Both work side by side but do not prevail each other. Nietzsche argues Greek tragedy as the highest form of art because of its mixture of Apollonian and Dionysian elements into an incomparable whole. It allowed the spectator to experience the entire spectrum of the human condition. The Dionysian element was found in the music of the chorus and the Apollonian element was found in the dialogue. This way it is a balance between these two forms.

Ancient Greek culture was viewed as noble, simple, classy, graceful and pompous but Nietzsche believed the Greeks were struggling with pessimism. The universe where we live is the product of great interacting forces but we neither observe nor know these as such. What we combine as our conceptions of the world does not address the underlying realities. Human destiny is to be controlled by the darkest universal realities and to live life of illusions. The

moment one questions this foundation of life suffers from existential crisis. People in ancient time did not question the darkest universal realities. Their lives were simple and they lived their lives without questioning much. They enjoyed their life in dance, song and rituals but the modern day tragic hero struggles hard to reach to the reality. He suffers from the existential crisis. The modern world is no longer the world of illusion or myth. People no longer pass time believing the myth rather consider them as stories and focus in their real life whereas they deal with their own sufferings that cause because of nothingness. The idea of existential crisis is a very modernistic term which was not paid attention in ancient Greece or renaissance time period. When one tries to question the darkest reality of universe and rejects to accept the life of illusion and asks the meaning, purpose or value of life suffers from existential crisis. This crisis comes from the philosophy called existentialism that emphasizes individual existence and freedom of choice. In this philosophy human try to find out the meaning of life and define it in their own way. They try to make rational decisions living in this absurd and irrational universe (Luke 3). It mainly focuses on human existence. It questions the existence and establishes a feeling that there is no explanation and purpose of human existence. It gives an idea that there is no God or any kind of transcended force. Therefore, the only way out is facing this nothingness, embracing it and trying to find meaning in own way by living life in freedom.

Existentialism originated with the 19th Century philosophers Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche but none of them used this term in their work. French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre(1905-1980), Albert Camus (1913 - 1960), and Simone de Beauvoir (1908 - 1986) wrote fictional and scholarly works that popularized existential themes in the 1940s and 1950s such as dread, alienation, boredom, the absurd, commitment, freedom, commitment and nothingness.

The modern day tragic hero suffers from existential crisis. He/she sometimes called an anti-hero unlike the Greek and renaissance tragic hero. An anti-hero is not a man with unchecked ambition and knowledge; instead he is a man who lacks conventional heroic qualities for example, idealism, courage and morality. He is not as brave as Oedipus or as knowledgeable as Hamlet or Faustus. He is a man like Willy Loman, who at the end failed to be the person he had deceived himself into believing he was, or a person like Ephraim Cabot who reaches to despair at the end of the play *Desire under the Elms* by Eugene O'Neill.

The antihero is compared and also derived from the tragic hero who is mainly traced back to the popular stage dramas of ancient Greece. The tragic hero is an archetypal hero with one major or fatal flaw that leads to his downfall, destruction and usually death whereas the antihero is also a flawed character who has evolved beyond the tragic hero because his/her flaws don't always lead to his downfall. Moreover, flaws can help him achieve redemption and victory. Example?? He is not the typical hero who possesses good qualities and personality traits. A hero is considered as courageous, brave and handsome but an anti-hero can be afraid in battle field. He may be a person who is not at all handsome rather fat, hairy or short. He may be plagued with insecurities, selfish and rebellious against good. He may not fight for justice rather lead a common life of a neglected man (Nami 1).

The concept of anti-hero has been identified in Greek drama, Roman satire and Renaissance literature, for example, *Don Quixote* and the *picaresque rogue*.⁷ This term was first used in 1714. It was also used to cover the term Byronic hero during that time.⁸ The 19th century Romanticism has a huge contribution to popularize the term anti-hero, such as the Gothic double.⁹ The antihero has become an established form of social criticism for example, *Notes from Underground* by Fyodor Dostoevsky's.¹⁰ The antihero has emerged as a foil to the traditional hero. It is a change in heroic ethos from 'feudal aristocrat' to 'urban democrat.' It is also a shift

from epic to ironic narratives. This term mainly became prominent in early 20th century existentialist works, for example, *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, *La Nausee* by Jean Paul Sartre and many more. The protagonists in these two works are an indecisive central character who drifts through his life and is marked by alienation, emotional turmoil, anxiety and depression. The antihero entered American literature during 1950s and stayed up to the middle of 1960s. The hero was portrayed as an alienated figure, who was unable to communicate. The British version emerged in the works of the “angry young men”¹¹ during 1950s.

Willy Loman is called both a tragic hero and an anti-hero. He is a protagonist who lacks traditional heroic qualities such as idealism and courage. He is passive and ineffectual. He possesses human-weakness, disillusionment and lack of identity. He is unwilling to accept his mistakes and admitting his faults. He lives in his dreams in a world where he is prosperous. He spends money on a mistress and lies to his family. He hopes only to impress his imagination. He is preoccupied with being admired and liked. Instead of doing hard work he spends his life dreaming. He pressurizes his son Biff to be the person Willy sees himself as. He criticizes his neighbor, Bernard for earning good marks. He sees shortcuts as the way to success and popularity as the main achievement without doing any hard work. Willy sees popularity and shortcuts as the routes to success rather than hard work and effort. He overstates his past performance as he proceeds to withdraw from reality. He remains a passive victim of the society that values only them who are the forerunners and become the number one. He sees the dream he cannot accomplish and at the end he takes his own life. Dishonesty and self-deception works through the entire play *Death of a Saleaman*, which are the qualities an anti-hero possesses (Tresvivace 2).

All the modern tragic heroes not necessarily called Anti-hero. There are modern tragic heroes who do not fall under the quality of Anti-Hero. There are modern tragic heroes who are

common man, hard working and focused in his life, who do not suffer from existential crisis thinking that they live in a world full of chaos. An example of modern day common man as a tragic hero is Eugene O'Neill's Ephraim Cabot.

Desire Under the Elms written by Eugene O'Neill is a tragedy that also reveals Miller's idea of common man as a tragic hero. Though O'Neill wrote his tragedy 25 years before Miller's idea was shared. O'Neill presented life of a simple everyday family of 19th century. His hero is not a king, prince or noble man. His hero does not possess any supernatural quality. He is a common man who lives in the reality of the present world. O'Neill's portrayal of the present world in his play is not similar to the world as it was in classical or renaissance tragedies. People of modern day have evolved from the ancient world by leaving old beliefs and structures behind. O'Neill portrayed a common man Ephraim Cabot by showing the present world of a common farmer having an ordinary existence.

However, *Desire under the Elms* follows some rules of ancient dramas written in the centuries before it, as a result, it has exposition, conflict and catastrophe. These are also the three parts of Shakespearean dramas according to the Shakespearean critic A. C. Bradley. Influences of old myths in modern drama are sometimes unavoidable but the evolution from old to new is remarkable in the modern plays. Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* published in 1924 consists the themes of Greek tragedy in a rural New England setting. This play was inspired by the myth of Phaedra, Hippolytus and Theseus.¹²

Ephraim Cabot in O'Neill's play is the father of Simeon Cabot, Peter Cabot, Eben Cabot and husband of Abbie Putnam. He is a seventy five years old hard working man who spent most of his life working in his firm. O'Neill writes, "gaunt, with great wiry power, but stoop-shouldered from toil." Cabot is a looks gaunt but he has strength to work. His face looks so hard that it can be compared to the rocks of his farm. At the same time "there is a weakness in it, a

petty pride in its own narrow strength" (O'Neill 5). Cabot has a hard face but there is a weakness and a slight sign of pride visible on his face. He is the archetypal of New England Puritan. He believes in hard work is the only way to glorification. He thinks himself to have a connection with God and hears God speaking to him. He believes God is angry. Being father of three sons he lives his life in loneliness. His third wife Abby and sons fail to understand him. As a result, Cabot's life has been filled with loneliness.

Once, Cabot went away from his rock-riddled farm following others from the locality to the Middle West. There he found the land so rich that one had to plant the crops and sit back until they grew but this distressed him. He heard the voice of God. God tells him, this is not what He wanted. Cabot constantly says, "God's hard, not easy." Cabot believes God, ordered him to go back to the farm. He goes back and builds his stone walls.

Ephraim has married three times. His first wife is a woman like himself. She was a hard worker who was the mother of Simeon and Peter. His Second wife is the mother of his youngest son Eben. She was a softer person. According to Eben, His mother worked to death. Cabot married third time to Abbie Putnam, a young woman of 35. The main intention of Abbie is to get Cabot's farm but Cabot expects love and care from her.

Cabot spent his entire life working hard in his farm. He made his two wives work hard and latterly both of them died. He makes his three sons work hard in his land. His sons portray him as a heartless man and hate him equally. They consider him the murderer of their mother because they think their father made their mothers work to death. None of his family members ever tries to understand the reason behind his hard work and force to make others work hard. His land needs extra effort because of the rock scattered in it which makes the farm less productive. It is difficult to make the stony land fertile. He works hard only to maintain his land and livestock. The place he finds comfortable sleeping is in barn with his cows. This shows how lonely he is. His sons hate him but he wants to have a suitable son who is eligible to inherit his

farm. Therefore, he gets married thrice. His sons not only hate him but also rebel against his hardness. Years of slavery under Cabot, his older sons Simeon And Peter decide to follow an easy life by going to ‘California gold rush.’¹³ But Eben does not live his father because he believes the farm belongs to his mother only and he will not allow anybody else to usurp the farm.

Cabot is so unlucky that being a God obsessed man of New England who finds God in the stones of his land pursues the Oedipal father whose son seeks to defeat and replace him in his mother's bed according to the Freudian psychoanalytical theory. He is also a partaker of Dionysian celebration when he acts like a satyr in the party. He thinks the new born is his child whereas in reality, it is Abbie’s child and the father is Eben. When he hears of the murder of the child he sinks in despair. He thinks of surrendering to his harsh God of Puritanism, in Nietzschean term, the Apollonian God. He feels like burning everything he has but hardness wins over his life and his life on the farm continues. He is confined within his destiny. His loneliness is ineffable which is able to arouse pity and fear in the mind of the readers.

In the article, Desire under the Elms, : a Modern Tragedy, Sophus Keith Winther mentioned that, “In this play he departs from the traditional interpretations of Aristotle, a departure that made it possible to develop his later and greater tragedies” (327). O’Neill in *Desire under the Elms* departs from the Aristotle’s forms and portrays a modern tragic form by implying modern ideas in his novel along with the traditional ideas. There are mentions of mythological ideas of ancient Greece but the drama fulfills the quality of modern day drama. Cabot is ill fated and destined to suffer but he is neither a noble born nor a man controlled by any supernatural being. He is just a common man. His story is the story of any hard working man living a rural life like any other New England farmer. He does not need traditional catharsis¹⁹ to bring the story to close. He does not need any epiphany of his destiny. He suffers without the ability to change whatever happens to him. His story closes without his death. He has dedicated

his life to God who is only an image of his own ego. His God is in the rocks, hard, pitiless and uncompromising. His judgment is based on his hamartia that brings a turning point in the story (Winther 326). But he does not fall from a good fortune to bad because of his hamartia. He is a common hardworking man who does not have a good fortune. Whatever he has, he got through excessive hard work. The play starts with his life of being a farmer and at the end he stays a farmer. Therefore, till the beginning to the end he leads the same ordinary life.

Ephraim, “the tragic hero of O’Neill is a man apart from other men” (Winther 328). He is hard working. He rejects his weak and troublemaker sons. He spends all his life working for his farm. He believes life is not easy. Many critics agree that, this drama follows the actions of the classical Greek dramas and is a revival of the ancient drama in the modern world. O’Neill takes inspiration from the Greek myths including many parts of classical dramas, for example, partners in sin go to redemption, forbidden desire, tragic and complex love and hate, being rebellious against father, sacrifice of a child, a haunting past, inner struggle and so on. All these are included in a modern setting and a modern world. O’Neill took this drama on a new level by building an idea of a common man as a tragic hero like Arthur Miller. This idea presents *Desire under the Elms* as a classical tragedy in a modern sense and setting which echoes Greek drama.

It is mentioned earlier that ancient Greek dramas echo in modern day dramas but all the elements are not present in it because it has been evolved over time and established a different mold. In the article, *Some Notes on the Problem of Modern Tragedy*, Haskell M. Block said, “Not all of the elements of ancient tragedies are present in their modern counterparts, but there are important similarities and continuities which should warn us against easy applications of a formula to a large and varied body of dramatic literature” (81). There are some similarities between the ancient and modern drama which warn us about the structure and form of the drama of different eras. The nobility and grandeur of the ancient drama may also be found in the modern tragic theater, for example, the performance of Oedipus Rex or Prince Hamlet is not only

an expression of their social and political role but also derived from the depth intensity and complexity of his suffering. A suffering that makes tragic hero acquire knowledge of himself and human condition that the hero and also us cannot gain in other way (Block 81). Classic tragic hero is not only seen as a victim, incurably doomed to defeat and death but also seen as affirming human dignity and his own nobility also in the time of catastrophe. Block argued that, this quality can also be found in the modern tragic theater. The beauty of tragedy is in the honor of the tragic hero over his sufferings. His greatness is present as a declaration of nobility of character gone beyond any physical suffering. Therefore, he is not destroyed but transformed. At the end he is greater than the circumstances and forces that defeat him. The modern performers include plays in which the suffering and self knowledge are central to the tragic hero along with the internalization of experience and psychological concentration. Modern drama is made including the characterization and action both.

Although there are some similarities between Greek, Renaissance and modern dramas, they have their own way and essence which makes them distinct from one another. The reason behind similarities in tragic hero of different era is Aristotelian ideal form which gave the structure of a proper tragic hero. Tragedians of different era wrote tragedies including their own style and version, keeping the ideal model upfront. Therefore, they came up with tragic heroes evolved from the classical times and furnished with distinct qualities and new forms.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The tragedy after its birth in the classical period is constantly evolving over time. This change in tragedy is highly noticeable because it is a part of human life. Since the ancient time tragedies have entered into human life because they reflect the life of people lived over time. The tragic hero is a character in tragedy but represents our lives and society of different time period. Through the characteristics of tragic hero we see a model of the human being functioning in the society. In the classical time period we saw heroes of high born royal kings and princes falling from their position mainly because of fate that had been destined by gods and goddesses. The classical tragic hero had impulsive behavior, error of judgment and extreme pride or hubris that dragged him toward his downfall. But his fate was mainly responsible for his doom. After watching a man fall from a very high position to a very low position a sense of pity and fear arises in the minds of the audience. The audience feels sad watching a person of very good position turning into a blind beggar as King Oedipus.

The renaissance time period saw a tragic hero falling from high position into his doom mainly because of his hamartia or error of judgment. But the hero brought doom for himself, for example, Doctor Faustus. He practiced Necromancy, associated with the devil, sold his soul and brought his doom upon himself. On the other hand, Hamlet delayed his decision several times and finally lost his life in a duel.

The modern hero does not need to occupy any higher position to be called a tragic hero. A common man can also be called a tragic hero, as Arthur Miller and Eugene O' Neill's heroes depict through the characters of Willy Loman and Ephraim Cabot.

It is important for the modern day tragic hero to be a common man so that the audience can relate themselves to the life of common man and sense the pity and fear by relating to the life of tragic hero. The modern era is no longer the era where people are ruled by gods and goddesses or kings and queens, so if the tragic hero belonged to that class, then the common man would fail to relate their lives with them. Modern era is the era of commercialization and industrialization where people work hard to better their lives. One cannot be just born into a royal family, claim himself as a king or prince and lead his life with all the facilities and bravery. In modern days people need to do a lot of hard work to better their position in the society. No supernatural beings come to rescue them from their hard lives and struggles. They focus on their life, inner psyche and their society solves their problems by themselves. In order to live in a competitive society they struggle hard to win the battle of their lives not the battle of kings or gods but the battle of real world.

At the end of the play the death of a Greek tragic hero is not necessarily required but raises pity and fear. Although the hero realizes his fault at the end and suffers more than he deserves. The renaissance tragic hero must die at the end of the play by raising pity and fear into our minds because the hero suffers outwardly and inwardly. He like the classical tragic hero realizes his fault at the end and suffers a lot. The modern tragic hero does not need to die at the end but the sense of isolation and alienation are major issues of his psyche. His death is not needed to raise pity and fear in the readers mind. Mostly the readers can relate their lives with the modern day tragic heroes because he does not fall from his high position rather lead a life of a common man. He does not have supernatural power or controlled by any supernatural being. Moreover, he does not need traditional catharsis to bring the story to close. He has no epiphany of his destiny. He is a common man; therefore, he suffers without the ability to change whatever happening to him/ her. By looking at them readers feel like looking at themselves but from an objective position. Human beings are not obsessed with the idea of God by being dependent in

modern days. They prefer keeping their belief aside and focus on their lives and work because the modern world is a secular world that no longer believes in gods but pays attention to the inner turmoils of men, making it clear that the evolution of tragic hero over time is a clear shift from God to Man.

End notes

1. Choral poetry or choral lyric poetry is a Greek poetry that was performed in choruses usually at public religious festivals or major family functions.

2. Dithyramb was an ancient Greek hymn, a song of worship and praise, sang and danced in honor of the god of wine and fertility, Dionysus. Aristotle and other ancient and modern scholars believed that this song is the root of tragedy. Dithyramb was a choral song chanted by 50 people previously but Aeschylus; the ancient Greek tragedian reduced the size of chorus and made it short in his dramas.

3. *Uomo Universale* is an Italian term means Universal man.

4. Anti-papal is a term used as opposed to the pope or to popery relates to the Roman Catholic Church.

5. Nihilism is the rejection of all religious and moral principles, believing that life is meaningless. It is the belief that says nothing in the world has a real existence.

6. Abyss of human suffering means the deep or seemingly bottomless chasm of human life, mostly used to describe the life and sufferings of Greeks.

7. *Don Quixote*, full title- *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*, is a Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra Published in 1605 and 1615 in two volumes and *The picaresque rogue* or Picaresque novel is a genre of prose fiction. It depicts the adventure of a roguish hero of low social class who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. It adopts a realistic style with elements of comedy and satire.

8. Byronic hero is an antihero of the highest order. He/she is typically rebellious, arrogant, anti-social or in exile and darkly and romantic.

9. Gothic double refers to a duality within a character. It is based on the presumption that the duality centers on the separation of good and evil.

10. *Notes from Underground*, also translated as *Notes from the Underground* or *Letters from the Underworld*, a novella by Fyodor Dostoyevsky published in 1864, considered as the first existentialist novel.

11. Angry young men were a group of working middle class British writers who became prominent during 1950s. John Osborne and Kingsley Amis are two of this group's leading members. This phrase was coined by the Royal Court Theatre press officer to promote John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* published in 1956.

12. *Hippolytus* is an ancient Greek tragedy by Euripides. It is based on the myth of Hippolytus, son of Theseus. The play was first produced for the City Dionysia of Athens during 428 BC. Eugene O'Neill's desire *Desire under the Elms* is inspired by this Myth.

13. The California Gold Rush (1848–1855) was the rush for gold in California. When James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in California found gold and the news was told it brought approximately 300,000 people to California from the rest of the United States as well as abroad. They arrived on the California Trail and the Gila River trail with a view to find out gold in Coloma, California.

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