

# Hamlet and the problem of superfluity in post-modernist world

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## **Abstract:**

The aim of this research paper is to prove William Shakespeare's most popular literary type Hamlet as a superfluous hero, because he resembles strikingly and astonishingly in his character with the superfluous heroes of the nineteenth-century Russian, American and the other European novels. In fact, the term superfluous hero signifies an ineffectual aristocrat, dreamy, useless and incapable intellectual at odd with the given social formation of his age. No doubt, though, Hamlet is prior to the coinage of the term of the superfluous hero, but he shares many common characteristics with the superfluous heroes of world literature. Thus, the study revolves around the question whether Hamlet is the superfluous hero? Therefore, the comparison of Hamlet's character with those of the other superfluous heroes of world literature will be highlighted in this research paper in terms of Dialectical hermeneutics, which is scientific theory and method of analyzing the social and literary types in the socio-economic context of class milieu. Applying Dialectical literary hermeneutics to the art of characterisation of William Shakespeare and the authors of the nineteenth-century, the present study tries to introduce new portrait and re-evaluation of the personages of Hamlet and the other superfluous types in an innovative perspective.

**Keywords:** *William Shakespeare's Hamlet, Hamletism, Superfluous Heroes, Indecision, hermeneutics*

## 1. Introduction

William Shakespeare was pre-eminently a great producer of typical literary characters. He possessed so extensive knowledge of human psychology that he was able to delineate memorable and universal types of flesh and blood in his plays, which were able to transcend the limits of time and space. Therefore, William Shakespeare's contribution to cogitation of human types was profound and astonishing. From the age of William Shakespeare until the present Post-Modern age, his plays continue to mind for insights into human psychology. However, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" of William Shakespeare's tragedies, has aroused the great amount of debate and critical commentary.

William Shakespeare produced a universal literary type in the figure of Hamlet in the Elizabethan era, which has become immortal and universal character in world literature. Hamlet seems close to the social types of every era and country as well as the contemporary world. That is why Hamlet is one of the most discussed of William Shakespeare's debatable characters. He is so complex psychological type who becomes an enigma and so dominant a character in the play, who outshines all the other characters of the play. The tradition of the superfluous hero emerged with the early novels of Alexander Pushkin, Nikolay Gogol, Alexander Herzen, Mikhail Lermontov, Ivan Goncharov, and Ivan Turgenev in the nineteenth century, climaxing in the great novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy with a key cultural struggle for self-understanding of a Russian intellectual elite looking for solid ground. In fact, the term superfluous hero is used to refer to an ineffectual aristocrat, dreamy, useless and incapable intellectual who does not fit in the given social formation of his age.

When we study the British dramatist William Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark"; or Friedrich Schiller's play, "The Robbers" (1871); or Kate Chopin's novel, "The Awakening" (1899); or the French director Eric Rohmer's film, "Chloe in the Afternoon" (1972); we may trace the origin of the superfluous hero tradition in these novels. These novels round up into a shorn herd of superfluous heroes. Moreover, the list of the superfluous heroes may be expanded back to William Shakespeare's character type of Hamlet, Lord Byron's Don Juan, Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge, Hugo's Enjolras and many other famous literary character types of world literature who are still not recognized as the superfluous heroes in the history of world literature. Therefore, the present research paper tends to prove that the term superfluous hero may also be applied to William Shakespeare's Hamlet who like other superfluous heroes of world literature is tragically doomed to failure in his life and purpose.

## Objective:

In today's post-modernist era we need to revisit the Shakesperan classics with newer intellectual devices, present paper seeks to throw new light using some of the literary tools presented to us in 20<sup>th</sup> century

## 2. Critique of Hamlet

William Shakespeare produced a literary type in the personality of Hamlet, which has become immortal and universal character in world literature. That is why Hamlet is one of the most discussed of William Shakespeare's characters. The Romantics opine Hamlet as "inverted Aristotle's stress on primacy of action over character" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, p. 254). To Fredrick Hegel, Hamlet embodied the quest for "self-conscious and selfdetermination" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, P. 255). A. C Bradley followed Fredrick Hegel to formulate his "key principle of Shakespearean tragedy: "action is essentially the expression of character" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, P. 257).

The story of Hamlet concerns a young prince with a ghost of his dead father who talks only to him and instructs him to commit a revenge murder. Hamlet is tragically doomed to failure to avenge from his uncle King Claudius, the slayer of his father because of indecision and procrastination. Therefore, he delayed and deferred his action in the whole play. However, William Shakespeare's Hamlet has aroused the great amount of debate and critical commentary among the literary critics and literary theorists. No critic from the Elizabethan period until of the present day has been able to neglect this complex and problematic literary character. A critical theory become fashionable and out of fashion in academia and scholarship, but always Hamlet remains the focal and central point of debate and great controversy in literary criticism. Most of the critics agree on the point that Hamlet is an irresolute and indecisive character. The Neo-Classicists fixed their gaze on his indecision. The Romantics also concentrate completely on this characteristic of Hamlet. S. T Coleridge says, "Seemingly accomplished for the greatest actions, whose existence is nevertheless an unperforming dream" (S.T Coleridge in Jump, John, 1968, p.31). William Hazlitt, S.T Coleridge, A. C Bradley and Sigmund Freud opine Hamlet's hesitation as "only an excuse for his want of resolution" (William Hazlitt quoted in Jenkins, Harold, 1982, p. 513). Sigmund Freud psychoanalysed the character of Hamlet in his works. The classic example of Freudian psychoanalytic approach is, of course, Doctor. Alfred Ernest Jones's

study of Hamlet provides a solution to the puzzle of Hamlet's delay in avenging his father in a full-scale psychoanalytic treatment of Hamlet's character in his essay "Hamlet and Oedipus"(1957).

Restudying Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan in his essay "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet" (1959), redefined the character of Hamlet-and modern awareness-no longer reading the text as tragedy merely of repressed desire but as a tragedy of "mourning for what it has had to give up" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, P. 261). In addition, Jacques Derrida also took interest in William Shakespeare's plays especially in "Romeo and Juliet" and "Hamlet, employing his deconstructive hermeneutics, which yields very interesting and thought provoking results. He identified the Ghost of Hamlet with the Marxian "spectre" haunting Europe in the first line of the Communist Manifesto in his book "Spectres of Marx" (1994). In the deconstructionist reading, Hamlet represents "a certain emancipator and messianic affirmation" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, P. 264), implying an absolute justice "beyond the logic of vengeance" existing in a non-linear "deferred time" (De Grazia, Margreta, 1999, P. 265). Therefore, Sedinger studied various facets of Hamlet's character to extend the discussion of Jacques Derrida's book "Spectres of Marx" (2007) in the context of historical critiques of presentation. Marthinus Christoffel Van Niekerk in his dissertation entitled "Shakespeare's Play: deconstructive reading of the Merchant of Venice, The Tempest, Measure for Measure and Hamlet" (2003) analysed Hamlet in a Derridean deconstructive perspective. Noorbakhsh Hooti also did so in his research paper entitled "William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Deconstructive Study" (2013).

The major common assumptions between new historicism and cultural materialism are the ideological constructions that authors live in and have internalized, inevitably become part of their work, which is therefore always political and vehicle for power struggle. As Dollimore and Sinfield put that "a play by Shakespeare is related to the context of its production-to economic and political system of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and to particular institutions of cultural production (the church patronage, theatre, education).culture is made continuously and Shakespeare's text is reconstructed, reappraised, reassigned all the time through diverse institutions in specific contexts. What the plays signify, how they signify, depends on the cultural field in which they are situated" (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1985, p. V111). There are some other interesting approaches to Hamlet's character.

Vanessa Pupavac in her paper entitled "Hamlet's Crisis of Meaning, Mental Wellbeing and Meaninglessness in the War on Terror" studied Hamlet in a new perspective of war on terror.

Most recently, N. Maleki in his research paper “The Paradigm Examples of Polar Concept in Shakespeare’s Hamlet” (2012) has tried to focus on the polar concept for a much deeper understanding and a far joyful enjoyment of Hamlet’s world through hierarchizing the different opposing concepts. Charlotte Keys in the chapter four “A Kind of Fighting: Subjective Life in Hamlet” of her Ph.D. Thesis entitled “Shakespeare’s Existentialism” submitted to Royal Holloway, University of London proves Hamlet as an existentialist hero. Moreover, many Dialectical literary critics, including Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels studied Hamlet in new and innovative Dialectical perspective. Anatoly Lunacharsky, A. A. Smirnov, Mikhail Lifshitz, Christopher Caudwell, L.C Knight, Georg Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, Raymond Williams and many others describe Hamlet’s character in early classical Dialectical perspective. The best example of which is Georg Lukacs’ theory of realism. He remarks on the plays of William Shakespeare as follows: “The example of Shakespeare’s great tragedies is particularly instructive, because in them the specifically dramatic character of historical charges, of dramatic historicism, is clearly manifest. As a true dramatist, Shakespeare does not try to point a detailed picture of historical and social circumstances. He characterizes the period through his actors. That is, all the qualities of a character, from the ruling passion down to the smallest ‘intimate,’ yet dramatic, subtlety, are coloured by the age.

In this respect, Terry Eagleton’s Deconstructive Dialectical study of Hamlet is also very interesting and thought provoking. Terry Eagleton writes that the character of Hamlet is “decentred, who does not wish to be part of the Lacanian “symbolic order”, and moves toward the realm of “bourgeois individuality” (Eagleton, Terry, 1986, p. 74). Terry Eagleton further writes that Hamlet is “opacity” that means the “enigmatic being legendary in world literature” (Eagleton, Terry, 1986, pp. 70- 75). Moreover, Fredric Jameson also analyses Hamlet’s character in his thought-provoking paper entitled “Marx’ Purloined Letter” (1995), reviewing Jacques Derrida’s book “Spectres of Marx” in innovative and brilliant Dialectical perspective. Richard Halpern’s intelligent critical response to “Derrida’s Reading of Hamlet and Marx” (2001) in a Dialectical perspective, is also an illuminating essay in Jean Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow’s edited collection entitled “Dialectical Shakespeare” (2001). These books and research papers are very interesting, most informative and thought provoking on the character of Hamlet in many respects, but no one has yet attempted to compare Hamlet with superfluous heroes of world literature. However, as this literature survey proves that Hamlet and superfluous heroes of world literature fail to find their purpose in their lives, therefore, they may be compared on these grounds. For this reason, the comparison of Hamlet with the other

superfluous heroes of world literature is conducted in this research paper in terms of Dialectical hermeneutics and in the light of the brilliant ideas of the above-mentioned Dialectical literary critics.

### **3. Hamlet and the Other Superfluous Heroes of World Literature**

In fact, Hamlet is a superfluous hero resembling to great extent with the superfluous heroes of the nineteenth century Russian and European literature. In fact, the superfluous hero is a product of a peculiar socio-economic phenomenon of the nineteenth-century Russia. The superfluous hero represents a particular cultural conflict in a particular space and time that sets him apart from other more or less socially awkward or dissatisfied members of the literary canon. The superfluous hero is the dual product of Russian culture and Western education, a man of exceptional intelligence. Therefore, the superfluous hero is increasingly and painfully aware of his failure to synthesize knowledge and experience into lasting values, whose false dignity is continually undermined by contact with Russian reality, and whose growing alienation from self and others leads to an unabashed exhibition of an indulgence in cowardly, ludicrous, and sometimes destructive instincts.

In this way, the portrayal of the superfluous hero in the novels of the nineteenth century is bound up with dying old order of feudalism and coming new one of capitalism, coming in conflict with the socio-economic conditions of declining the old order of feudalism and the new establishing system of capitalism. This situation of confusion and irresolution is prevailed in the social formation. Therefore, this confusion and indecision of the individual is fully reflected in literature of this age. For example, Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina still identified herself with social conventions and her love defied and suffered under the ostracism of social circle she believed she belong to. Moreover, we also find the examples of tragic decision in Edith Wharton's "House of Mirth" and in George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda", consumed by conflicting value systems of personal love and high society recognition and material affluence. In addition, this superfluous character type provides us with the occasion for comparing him with the same kind of previous types, which the Russian and other writers have depicted in their works of art.

We find such superfluous heroes as Alexander Pushkin's Evgenii Onegin, Mikhail Lermontov's Penchorin, Nikolay Gogol's Tentetnikov, Alexander Herzen's Beltov, Ivan Turgenev's Rudin and the heroes in "Unwanted," and "Hamlet from Shchigry Country", Fyodor Dostoevsky's Stepan TrofimovichVerkhovensky in "The Devils", and Leo Tolstoy's Andrei Bolkonsky in

“War and Peace”, are almost identical with Hamlet. In his short story, “Hamlet of the Shchigrovsky District” (1849), Ivan Turgenev recognized Hamlet as the superfluous hero, in which the anonymous narrator narrates his story of attending a dinner party at the home of a landed and serf owning feudal lord. He meets there with a series of would-be Hamlet figures, finding immediately himself amongst the company “a young man of about twenty, blond and myopic, dressed from head to foot in black’ and, although he appears shy and withdrawn, he continues to ‘smile venomously” (Turgenev, Ivan, 1990, p.276). The anonymous narrator then meets Lupikhin, an embittered man who hides a greater personal pain under his stinging witticisms. Retiring to his shared accommodation, the narrator is finally introduced to another clone of Hamlet with whom he happens to fall into conversation during a sleepless night. Recognising him as a metafictional cliché, the character complains bitterly about being “born an imitation of someone else” (Turgenev, Ivan, 1990, p.286). In fact, Hamlet like the other superfluous heroes of world literature is also a product of the age of transition, which is known in the history, the era of the Renaissance that follows the decline of the landed and serf-owning nobility and emergence of rising bourgeoisie in England. “The sixteenth century was the era of the Renaissance in England. This fruition of art and philosophy in England was analogous to that of other Western European countries. It also resulted from the radical upheaval in all domains of economic and social life—the decline of the old feudal order with its method of production, which was now being replaced by capitalist relations characteristic of the epoch of primary accumulation” (Smirnov, A.A.1936, p. 5). This situation formed the so-called gentry, composed principally of the middle and petty landed and serf-owning nobility, which, by fusing with the old landed and serf-owning nobility, replenished its ranks, which marked the beginning of that squirarchy which ruled England from the time of Queen Elizabeth to the middle of the nineteenth century. The new class of wealthy peasant farmers, the so-called yeomanry that was the backbone of old England, degenerated during the sixteenth century. This new landowners drawn from the bourgeoisie and the nobility dislodged it. Therefore, it was forced to accept the status of tenants.

On the other hand, the new joint-stock companies (including the paying troupes) were proto-capitalist and operated outside the regulatory systems of the guild structure. They depended on monopolies granted by the monarch in Britain. Catherine Belsey inadvertently gets closer to the nub of the matter when she observes, “.The selling monopoly was one of the means by which the Tudors and Stuarts sought to evade parliamentary control,” so that rather than a simple struggle between the old feudal ways embodied in a modified monarchy and the demands of the rising

urban bourgeoisie. (Belsey, Catherine, 1985, p. 93) In this period of transition, the process of rejection of old social values and adoption of the new ones was a continuous process in every sphere of the Elizabethan social formation of England. The situation was truly dialectical: the aristocracy, not the bourgeoisie or bourgeoisified nobility produced the conditions for primary wealth accumulation that made Britain the first capitalist economy. However, the portrayal of Hamlet is bound up with dying the old order of feudalism and emerging the new order of capitalism, which is yet seeking to be born. In this way, Hamlet is repetitive of this transitional epoch of England.

#### **4.Inner turmoil of the central character**

Terry Eagleton writes, “Hamlet is a radically transitional figure, striking out between a traditional social order to which he is marginal, and a future epoch of achieved bourgeois individualism, which will surpass it. But because of this we can glimpse in him a negative critique of the forms of subjectivity typical of both of these regimes” (Eagleton, Terry, 1986, p.74). Therefore, Hamlet comes in conflict with the socio-economic conditions of declining feudalism; when this situation arises, inner changes occur in Hamlet’s personality. In this manner, Hamlet is as indecisive as the superfluous heroes of Mikhail Lermontov’s “A Hero of Our Time,” and Turgenev’s stories, who would be Romantic heroic figures, unable to find purpose in their lives. However, it is noteworthy that these superfluous heroes sometimes are not doomed to failure in their actions because of their heroic and romantic deeds. The superfluous heroes found purpose through their action, including adventurous or violent action: the hero’s soldiering or duelling for example, the death of Alexander Turgenev’s Rudin on the Paris barricades in 1848 or self-sacrifice in the form of guillotining of Charles Dickens' hero Sidney Carton in “The Tale of Two Cities.” However, Hamlet also shares the gallivanting heroic deeds with these superfluous heroes of world literature.

In fact, Hamlet was the new kind of Elizabethan ideal of a gentlemen, a good all-rounder, scholar, courtier and soldier, like Sir Philip Sidney, something of romantic chivalrous hero. For this reason, Hamlet as a young melancholy university student is not the ideal of the crowd of people. Even King Claudius, his one of the most deadly enemies, admits that Hamlet is popular with the “distracted multitude.” Since Laertes went to France, Hamlet has been “in continual practice” with the foils, and if he was fond of fencing he probably tried his hand at other sports. In the sea fight, he led the attack against the sea pirates, taking the lead “in the grapple alone boards the pirate ship” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act1V, Scene V1, 14-18). Moreover, he was



obviously fond of the stage. Further had Hamlet been the recluse that the king and queen would have noticed no great change in him. The very fact that they noticed his distemper described that he must have been something different before these events. Everything goes to show that he is naturally an active young university student, fond of his studies, sports, games and good mixer. In this way, he possesses striking resemblance to the above-mentioned superfluous heroes of world literature.

Like other superfluous heroes of world literature, Hamlet is rebellious against tradition and existing social order; he suffers the same downfall as that of the other superfluous heroes of world literature. Nevertheless, Hamlet fails to find his purpose in his life and love because of his superfluous indecision and procrastination, however, the ghost of Hamlet's dead father as a state apparatus constructs him as a subject to realise him that he is sole and real heir of the throne of Denmark. He assigned him the role to instruct him to take his revenge from the King Claudius and regain the throne of Denmark. The other Ideological state apparatuses also make Hamlet believe that he is source of all values, sole and real heir of the state of Denmark and assigned him the role to take revenge of his father from his uncle King Claudius and regain the kingship of Denmark. In this manner, Hamlet becomes shaped and circumscribed as a subject by the Ideology and ideological state apparatuses, the social structures, values, and assumptions. Like other superfluous heroes of world literature Hamlet possesses a feudal background. His upbringings in the royal court and his higher university education make him believe that he is the most extraordinary person, source of all values and prince in Denmark. Therefore, he privileges and protects his unique sense of self and regards this feeling as an extraordinary figure in Denmark. However, when Hamlet is visited by his father's ghost, who informs him that he was murdered by Claudius, therefore, the duty of revenge falls upon the shoulders of Hamlet but he feels himself ill-situated for it. He feels his inadequacy and inability for the task imposed upon him.

He thinks, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite. That ever I was born to set it right!" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene V, 188-189). In this sense, Hamlet shoulders the burden of his duties and responsibilities as a prince of the state of Denmark. His first impulse is to "sweep to his revenge" "with wings as swift as meditation or thoughts of love". By adhering to his father's dictum and 'setting things right', Hamlet will not be acting on his own terms in his own way, and therefore, will be a hypocritical as those around him. Instead, Hamlet cannot find a proper way to act and exist. His short-lived enthusiasm reduces to prudentially relaxing in

indolence and procrastination. For this reason, Hamlet finds very difficult to avenge his father's murder. Yet he still feels an obligation to fulfil these expectations. Something of this idea emerges when Hamlet gives advice to his mother, telling her: "Assume a virtue if you have it not. That monster Custom, who all sense doth eat of habits devil, is angel yet in this, that to the use of actions fair and good. He likewise gives a frock or livery. That aptly is put on" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act III, Scene 1V, 158-63). In fact, Hamlet gets a crushing blow when his ideal of womanhood, his mother Queen Gertrude is wedded with King Claudius, his uncle less than two months after his father's death. Therefore, he has a poor opinion of woman, thinking that, "Frailty thy name is woman!-" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene 11, 148).

Therefore, Hamlet's childish attachment to his mother and his over-emotionalism in his action suggest that he is indecisive and irresolute. Rejecting Gertrude's question "Why seems it (grief at death) so particular with thee?" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene 11, 75), Hamlet insists: "Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems'. 'Ts not alone my inky cloak, good-mother, Nor customary suits of solemn black, Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, Nor the dejected haviour of the visage, Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief That can denote me truly. These indeed 'seem', For they are actions that a man might play; But I have that within which passeth show, These but the trappings and the suits of woe" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene 11, 76-85). Moreover, Hamlet's response towards his mother's over hasty marriage with King Claudius is made known as early as the second scene. Hamlet speaks, "A little more than kin and less than kind" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene 11, 66). This indicates that Hamlet already suspects something afoul is afoot. Later in the same scene, during his first soliloquy, he describes his disgust with his mother's over hasty marriage, but tells himself he must keep quiet: "But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue". His thoughts show that Hamlet is not a natural fighter but he is bookish, dreamer and brooding thinker. He cannot understand why he does not act. As he says, "I do not know Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do': Sith I have cause, will, strength, and means To do't" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1V, Scene. 1V, 42-45). Furthermore, Hamlet also gets questioning the motives of all who are exposed to him. He receives other shocks, which make him want to be out of this loathsome world. He regards Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as his good friends, as his greeting to them shows no less, "My excellent good friends" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 11, Scene 11, 136). When he finds them insincere, he puts them to the test. "Be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no?" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 1, Scene 11, 295). They confess that they "were sent for" (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act

II, Scene 11, 299). However, Hamlet gets another attack of melancholia, saying that, “Now I am alone” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act 11, Scene 11, 533) and “...They are not near my conscience” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act V, Scene 11, 58). Therefore, Hamlet does distance himself from those who have “the tune of the time” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act. V, Scene, 11.169-70). On hearing the distant wedding revelries, Horatio asks, “Is it a custom?” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act I, Scene 1V, 12), to which Hamlet replies: “Ay, marry is’t, But to my mind, though I am native here And to the manner born, it is a custom More honoured in the breach than the observance” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act I, Scene 1V, 13-6). Like other superfluous heroes Hamlet also becomes disillusioned and disenchanted man, when gloom has settled upon him. Therefore, Hamlet turns largely sceptical about what he sees as degrading customs and general opinions of the given social formation. “ And indeed Hamlet dreams of a world which has been somehow made straight, a world of honest people, honest relationships, but he does not believe that such world will ever in fact become reality” (Lunacharsky, Anatoly, p. 237). Thus, Hamlet cries out against his fate that requires him to act: When Hamlet finds his own death warrant in the purloined letter, (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act V, Scene 11, 6-7), he seems to be confirmed in that view, leaving it to chance because he realizes the power of destiny: “.and that should learn us. There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, Roughhew them how we will” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act V, Scene 11, 10-11) and that “We defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of sparrow” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act V, Scene 11, 197-198). At last, Hamlet fails to take revenge and regain the kingship of Denmark because of his indecision and procrastination. This is even more impressive when taken in light of Terry Eagleton’s point in his short book “William Shakespeare” that “Hamlet has no ‘essence’ of being whatsoever, no inner sanctum to be safeguarded: he is pure deferral and diffusion, a hollow void which offers nothing determinate to be known” (Eagleton, Terry, 1986, p. 72). Actually, Hamlet’s all utterances show ideology of time because ideology is present in every word he utters in his speeches. As Catherine Belsey remarks that ideology is engraved in each and every utterance and use of language but there are some other signifying systems of the social formation also where its presence can be traced easily: common sense, everyday behaviours mores and folkways, myths, social gestures and routine truisms are relevant signs in this regard (Belsey, Catherine, 1980, pp.56-85). However, Hamlet becomes entrapped in indecision and procrastination. He bears the latent passion of a hesitating breeze. He breathes with hesitation, irresolution and delay. Laurence Olivier posits that Hamlet is “the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind” (quoted in Alexander, Peter, 1953, pp. V-V1). Hamlet’s purpose exists in

a perpetual state of twilight of confusion, indolence and indecision. Repeatedly, his compulsive tendency to analyse and question distracts him away from revenge in every situation he faces. In this manner, Hamlet loses his will to act, even to live and “unpack his heart with words” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act. 11, Scene 11, 572). He thinks, “How all occasions do inform against me....” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act. 1V, Scene 1V, 32). Moreover, he is tragically doomed to failure in revenging his father. In this manner, he possess two wills the will to revenge and the will of indolence and procrastination. Consequently, his inner conflict causes insomnia: “sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting. That would not let me sleep” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act. V, Scene 11, 4-5). As a result, he turns epitomized in conflict of the two wills as Christopher Caudwell remarks: “In Hamlet the problem of conflict of unmeasured wills is posed in yet another form— here a man’s will is divided against itself, and therefore even though nothing ‘external’ can oppose or reflect it, it can yet struggle with itself and be wrecked. This ‘doubleness’ of a single will is aptly symbolized by the poisoned swords and goblet in which one aim is as it were two-faced, and secures opposite ends” (Caudwell, Christopher, 1977, pp. 87-88). Nevertheless, Hamlet’s postponement of the killing of Claudius is his reluctance to murder the King Claudius while he is praying that his soul should enter heaven.

However, it is not so much his hesitation, as the tone that Hamlet adopts when he speaks of his revenge that proves him lacking in will-power. He is horrified by the crime, by his mother's inconstancy in marrying the usurper, "ere those shoes were old," and by the rampant hypocrisy and debauchery of the entire court, even of his beloved Ophelia, a debauchery and hypocrisy, which he attributes to the world at large. Moreover, Hamlet fails to take revenge of his father from his uncle King Claudius. Finally, he wants to commit suicide but cannot do so because of his indecision, indolence and confusion. Hamlet contemplates the meaning of suicide because of his father’s unexpected death and his mother’s indecent hasty marriage, which have led him to think about “self-slaughter” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act I, Scene 11,132). Then he teasingly speaks of walking out of the air and ‘into (his) grave’ (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act II, Scene 11,204) with Polonius.

He is astonished by the men in Fortinbras’ army, who can “Go to their graves like beds” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act IV, Scene 1V, 61) for a plot of land that would not be big enough to bury them all in. In his soliloquy, beginning, ‘To be or not to be’ shows an inbetween state of his mind or inbetweenness of to be or not to be in which he meditates on the desirability and the fear of death. Hamlet suggests that reflection is the adversary of suicide: “To be, or not to

be – that is the question” (Shakespeare, William, 2005, Act III, Scene 1, 55). The world and life he sees is painfully purposeless and pointless, and this is what entices him to contemplate suicide but he cannot do so because of his superfluous class nature and indolence. Finally, he is doomed to fail in his life.

## 5. Conclusion

This research paper tries to prove Hamlet as a superfluous hero because he resembles to great extent with the superfluous heroes of world literature. Actually, his Hamletism is because of his inability to find purpose, meaning and dimension in his life and love and his failure to have successful relationships with others especially with Ophelia. Therefore, this research paper highlights Hamlet’s striking and astonishing resemblance with the superfluous heroes of world literature. At the end of this analytical and comparative study of them, the noticeable point is that in fact, the superfluous heroes including Hamlet are product of the transitional historical era from feudalism to capitalism, when the old social values and traditions are rapidly waning and the new ones are not coming into existence. However, the employment of Dialectical hermeneutics in this comparative study yielded the result that the superfluous heroes belong to the decadent land-owning and serf-owning aristocrat class, representing class confusion, irresolution and procrastination of the intelligentsia of their age. It can easily be inferred from this comparison that the superfluous disappointment and disenchantment of the superfluous heroes of world literature with the existing social formation and status quo of their era and their inability to find dimension and desire to change them may be termed as Hamletism or Oblomovism.

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