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PARALLELS BETWEEN "THE TRAGIC" AND "THE KAFKAESQUE" AS LITERARY TERMS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS IN THOMAS MIDDLETON AND WILLIAM ROWLEY'S *THE CHANGELING* AND WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH*

Edebi Terim Olarak "Trajik" ve "Kafkaesk" Arasındaki Benzerlikler: Thomas Middleton ve William Rowley'nin "The Changeling" ve William Shakespeare'in "Macbeth" Oyunlarındaki Karakterlerin Analizi

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Öz

Kafka'nın edebiyat dünyası üzerindeki etkisi o kadar büyüktür ki onun adından hareketle "Kafkaesk" isminde bir sıfat türetilmiştir. Kafkaesk teriminin farklı tanımları yapılsa da, bu makaledeki anlamı, karakterin içerisinde bulunduğu paradoksal durum ve tüm çabalarına rağmen karakterin kendisini bu paradokstan kurtarmaya yönelik çaresizliği olarak ifade edilebilir. Benzer şekilde, eğer bir araştırmacı bir trajedideki trajik karakterlerden herhangi birine daha derinlemesine bakacak olursa, bu karakterlerin çıkmazlarının ve sürekli düşüşlerinin giderek kurtulunamaz bir hal aldığını görecektir. Bu makalede Thomas Middleton ve William Rowley'nin *The Changeling* (1622) oyunundan Beatrice ve De Flores karakterleri ve William Shakespeare'in *Macbeth* (1606) adlı eserinden Kral Macbeth karakterinin 'Kafkaesk' özellikleri trajik özellikleriyle karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir. Ünlü tragedyalara ait bu karakterlerin "Kafkaesk" özelliklerinin ortaya çıkarılması, aynı zamanda 'trajedi' ve 'Kafkaesk' kavramları arasındaki benzerlikleri de ortaya çıkaracaktır. İki karakter tipi arasındaki temel fark ise karakterlerin düşüş süreçlerinde görülebilir: Kafkaesk karakterler sistem sebebiyle bu düşüşe maruz kalırken, trajik karakterler ya kaderlerinden ya da kendi kusurlarından dolayı trajik felakete maruz kalırlar. Çalışmada, 'Kafkaesk' teriminden yaklaşık üç yüz yıl önce kaleme alınan eserlerdeki bu karakterlerin niteliklerinin, terimin kendisiyle ne kadar paralel olduğu değerlendirilmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Franz Kafka, Kafkaesk, Thomas Middleton, *The Changeling*, William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*.

Abstract

Kafka's influence on literature was so enormous that the adjective 'Kafkaesque' was coined in his honour. Although the term has different definitions, this article expresses its meaning as the character's paradoxical situation and their despairing struggle against it. Similarly, if an analyst looked deeper at any of the tragic heroes in a tragedy, the predicament and continued fall of those characters would be a popular topic of research. In this essay, the 'Kafkaesque' traits of the characters Beatrice and De Flores from Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622) and King Macbeth from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) will be examined comparatively with their tragic qualities. Revealing the 'Kafkaesque' features of these characters in these famous tragedies will also present the similarities between the concepts of the 'tragedy' and the 'Kafkaesque'. The main difference between the two can be obtained from the process of their downfall: While Kafkaesque fall is due to the system, the tragic downfall is because of the characters' themselves. The study will attempt to assess how consistent the attributes of these characters, penned around three centuries before the coinage of the phrase, are with the term itself.

Keywords: Franz Kafka, Kafkaesque, Thomas Middleton, *The Changeling*, William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*.

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Introduction

Franz Kafka was born on 3 July 1883, in Prague, to a Jewish family whose financial situation was over the average. The depression and melancholia which resulted in numerous speculative works later in his life started when he was young. He lost two of his brothers at infancy, three sisters died either in Nazi camps or Polish ghettos; his adulthood coincided with all the tension of the World War I and World War II. He experienced a great dilemma with his Jewish background and his intellectual favour for German culture. His father was such a tyrant and did not give him the freedom to do what he dreamt of, and his mother was unintellectual, so she could not support her son intellectually. That is a very short summary of Franz Kafka's biography on the website biography.com (2021). Among the numerous reformist techniques, the concept 'Kafkaesque' has been created for his name and honour. Firstly giving the definition of the term 'Kafkaesque', this study aims to reveal the similarities and differences between the 'Kafkaesque' characters and the "tragic" characters by revealing the 'Kafkaesque' qualities of three different characters of two important tragedies: Beatrice and De Flores from Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling* and King Macbeth from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606). Both plays are excellent examples of "tragedy" in Renaissance English drama, with the latter also classified as "tragedy of sin". In doing so, the study will attempt to determine how consistent the features of these characters, penned around three centuries before the emergence of the phrase, are with the term itself. Tekşen in his study entitled "An Enigmatic Play: When Skulls Speak Loudly A Deconstructive Reading of Shakespeare's Hamlet" (2024) talks about Shakespeare's mastery in manipulation and "wordplay[s]" (p. 559) and this quality makes his plays open to comparing with another wizard on words and rhetoric, Franz Kafka.

1. 'Kafkaesque'

In order to stress the impact of Franz Kafka in the literary world, Kessel and Kelly claim that "Kafka's influence happened, in literary time, very quickly. Before World War II his work was known [only] in German … [however] after the war, no writer seemed more relevant than Kafka" (Kessel and Kelly, 2011, p. 1). It was such an absurd world with wars, pain and all kind of discrimination; therefore, his innovative narrative technique was quite applicable to the novelty the world was experiencing. His timing and his style of reflecting this absurd world is best elaborated with the words, "It is as though Holocaust, Communism, Existentialism and Cold War all had to happen to validate a handful of texts written in the first quarter of the twentieth century" (Hofmann, 2007, p. 1). Kafka's influence on the literary world was so immense that an adjective called 'Kafkaesque' was derived to honour his name. This adjective "has come to denote a sense of absurd, intricate or menacing state or quality as well as a desperate condition of petty man in relation with bureaucratic forces. The term is a reflection of Kafka's ominous world, where the contemporary man inhabits" (Toprak, 2008, p. 11). In their essay "Stories after Kafka", John Kessel and James Patrick Kelly attempt to answer the question of what it means for a writer's name to become an adjective, concluding that "From a certain perspective, this would seem to be any artist's ultimate symbol of success. After all, the number of writers who have been elevated to adjectival status in common parlance is vanishingly small. Shakespeare is one" (Kessel and Kelly, 2011, p. 1). Moreover, they emphasize the fact that this term has a definition even in a dictionary as "of, relating to, or suggestive of Franz Kafka or his writings; especially: having a nightmarishly complex, bizarre, or illogical quality" (Kessel and Kelly, 2011, p. 1). It is a very ambiguous term, and it has been a complete struggle to clarify and describe it as a literary term. Jeffrey Ford, in his "Bright Morning" speculatively claims that "when a novel does not fit a prescribed format, it immediately becomes labelled as Kafkaesque" (2011, p. 145). As in many of the contexts of Kafka stories, the definition of the adjective uttered on his name has its share of incomprehensibility; therefore, when a story is difficult to comprehend, the easier way chosen is to label it as 'Kafkaesque'. According to Harold Bloom, it could be "a universal term for what Freud called 'the uncanny'" (1994, p. 448). Harold Bloom further illustrates the term, stating,

> we say a situation is Kafkaesque when we mean: Don't be silly, it can't be like that, while seeing all too plainly that it is. Indeed, while seeing something still odder: namely, that we have no idea *what* it is, the likeness of which we so plainly see. (2010, p. 25)

Bloom's analogy of the two words, 'uncanny' and 'Kafkaesque', may stem from the fact that Freud's term uncanny is also among the most ambiguous and puzzling terms for the literary world. According to Ted Geier, the definition of Kafkaesque was "'dead-end-ness' at the precipice of available experience and knowledge" (2016, p. 13), which also emphasizes the fluidity and difficulty of the word. When one starts to search for the definition of the word, there is a multitude of explanations, most of which are even inconsistent; therefore, Geier's explanation also refers to this diversity in meanings. The famous biographer, Frederick Robert Karl, in his book *Franz Kafka, Representative Man* (1991), devotes a whole chapter trying to explain 'Kafkaesque' and comes to the following resolution: "If we view life as somehow overpowering and trapping us, as in some way undermining our will to live as we wish, as strengthening the forces that wait malevolently for human endeavor to falter, then we enter Kafka's world of the Kafkaesque" (1991, pp. 758-9). In this article the concept of the Kafkaesque will be closer to Karl's definition, which will be used in the meaning of the captured state of the human being, his/her continuous fall no matter how hard he struggles to secure himself from the trouble. Even so, all the definitions aforementioned are valid: Kafka's narrative explores the absurdity of life, highlighting themes such as emptiness, power struggle, control, threat, confusion, and a banal existence. The characters are typically lower-class individuals stuck in a tight place, struggling against an unknown danger, demonstrating the painful nature of living, or fighting against their own impulses by minimising their mode of existence. Karl was asked in an interview published by *The New York Times* and entitled "The Essence of 'Kafkaesque'" (1991) to explain the term. His highly referenced answer, which is mostly relevant for the purpose of this paper, is as follows:

> What is Kafkaesque is when you enter a surreal world in which all your control patterns, all your plans, the whole way in which you have configured your own behavior begins to fall to pieces, when you find yourself against a force that does not lend itself to the way you perceive the world. You don't give up and you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have. But of course you don't stand a chance. That's Kafkaesque. (Karl, 1991, para. 4)

In Aristotle's widely accepted definition, it is stated that "Tragedy […] is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (1893, p. 23). Therefore, a tragic situation arouses pity and fear, or even shock according to Aristotle. This definition of tragedy is substantially applicable to the Kafkesque characters of Franz Kafka; for example, Gregor Samsa. His continuous struggle to protect himself from the degrading position he is trapped in makes him even more pitiful as he proceeds debasing himself, which makes him both a tragic and a Kafkaesque character. This desperate situation of the character creates a sympathy with the beholder. To continue with Aristotle's definition, the emotions aroused by the tragic situation are stimulated by "serious, important events, in which the main character comes to an unhappy end" (1893, p. 47). The characters' collapse stems from a "tragic flaw", weakness, or events beyond their control. The phrase "tragic flaw" refers to a character feature that leads to their downfall. Typically, the tragic hero is unaware of their flaw and does not anticipate their downfall. While in tragedy, the fall is caused by a character deficit or a kind weakness by the character himself/herself, Kafkaesque, on the other hand, refers to a fall which is caused by a power, a system that the character cannot avoid or evade himself/herself.

These definitions of tragedy would remind a Shakespeare scholar of a scene from *Richard III*, on his final battle against Henry Tudor. Before he loses the war and his life, Richard III shouts for a horse having lost his. He utters the famous sentences twice "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" (Shakespeare, 5.4.8, 5.4.13[1]). Even though his situation is desperate, he begs for a horse; and the rest of the sentence can be interpreted in two opposite ways: The first one is that he is ready to save his power and country once more only if he has a horse; and the second one is that he is ready to sacrifice all his kingdom for a horse to escape from the battlefield. In both cases, even though he does not "stand a chance", he fits to the definition above made by Karl, especially the part: "You don't give up and you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have" as cited by Karl (1991, para.4) above. Richard III's situation, which perfectly fits the definition of the 'Kafkaesque' above, inspired the topic for this study. His struggle to win even at

[1] Information about the Act number, the Scene number, and the Line number of the play.

the most desperate time, and his strong belief in success when there is no chance of it, is Kafkaesque. In this paper, the 'Kafkaesque' characters King Macbeth of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) and Beatrice and De Flores in *The Changeling* (first acted in 1622) written by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley will be analysed in terms of their 'Kafkaesque' qualities. Both of the plays are good samples of "tragedy" of the Renaissance English drama and the latter is also subcategorized as "tragedy of sin". Shakespeare's play coincides with the Elizabethan period while *The Changeling* dates back to the Jacobean period. Kafkesque, as a term of the modern times and these plays, as the productions of completely different eras and disciplines will be assembled together and compared in the rest of the study in order to reveal their common characteristics.

2. *Macbeth* and 'Kafkaesque'

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has a reputation for being the shortest tragedy written by him. No matter how short it is, it is no less intriguing than the other tragedies written by Shakespeare or other famous dramatists like Cristopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, John Marston, Thomas Heywood, Ben Jonson, etc. during the Elizabethan era. After showing several heroic qualities during a battle in Scotland, Macbeth and Banque, two of King Duncan's generals, come across three witches, who tell the two generals interesting prophecies, which cause the start of tragic events. The prophecies are that Macbeth is going to be awarded twice by his fate, first to Thane of Cawdor "All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!" (1.3.47), which is an aristocratically higher status for Macbeth and even more to the kingdom of Scotland "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (1.3.48). A third prophecy is about Banque which is "Lesser than Macbeth, and greater" (1.3.63) that "Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none" (1.3.65). Macbeth does not believe the possibility of these prophecies; however, naturally, he cannot help being enchanted by greatness of them. They want to learn more, but the three witches disappear. The first prophecy proves to be true as soon as the two generals come near King Duncan to talk about the details of the war: Macbeth is promoted as Thane of Cawdor as a response to his good service in the previous battles. This even causes Macbeth's enchantment to grow, and his ever-continuing commitment of sins starts in this way. The king announces his will to visit Macbeth in his castle at Inverness that night. Macbeth reaches home earlier than King Duncan and his company and gives his wife, Lady Macbeth, the good news about his promotion and the prophecy the witches made with a note on a letter he sent her. Lady Macbeth is even more enchanted by the possibility of her husband's becoming the king; however, she is hopeless about her husband's ennoblement as she is afraid of his husband's "nature" as it is "full o' th' milk human kindness", "without ambition" and because "What thou wouldst highly, / That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false" (1.5.14-23). At this point, the reader has a clear idea about the character of Macbeth bearing all the traits suitable for a noble man. He is, by no means, fit for killing a nobleman just for his personal welfare as he is not fit for all the intrigues of holding those benefits under his control; however, Lady Macbeth is passionate about what she has read and is extremely motivated about encouraging and helping Macbeth about these metaphysical promises, which is clarified by her words as, "That I may pour my spirits in thine ear / And chastise with the valor of my tongue" (1.5.24-5). After learning from the messenger that Duncan is going to visit their castle that night, she heartens herself by praying the spirits as, "Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty!" (1.5.38-41). She has to find a way to kill Duncan that night because that might be the best opportunity she will ever have. Duncan does not give any reason for Macbeth's killing him because he is in very good terms with Macbeth; he praises his house as well as Lady Macbeth when they reach the castle. As opposed to Lady Macbeth's pressure to kill Duncan so that Macbeth can become the next king, Macbeth is very hesitant, and he is in a great ethical dilemma whether to run for his personal gains and become the greatest of all men or to remain noble and loyal to the king and continue his virtuous life as a secondary man in status. He enumerates several reasons for not killing him, which can be exemplified as, "First, as I am his kinsman and his subject, / Strong both against the deed; then, as his host, / Who should against his murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife myself" (1.7.13-6). It is not appropriate, for his kinsmen, to assassinate a king and traditionally, it is not acceptable to kill one's guest. Moreover, in character, Duncan is such a virtuous man that Macbeth's ethical dilemma peaks when he thinks about Duncan's personal traits:

> … Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind, (1.7.16-25)

At this point, Macbeth clearly reveals his unwillingness to commit the crime by the words "– I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, / And falls on th' other." (1.7.25-8). He changes his mind about continuing this bloody plot and says "We will proceed no further in this business:" (1.7.30) revealing his fright saying "If we should fail?" (1.7.58); however, Lady Macbeth gives him no chance but to take action. Just before he commits the crime, he looks at the dagger in his hand and says "Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee" (2.1.33-4) he reveals he is under the effect of his ethical dilemma with the words, "I go, and it is done. The bell invites me. / Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell / That summons thee to heaven, or to hell" (2.1.61-4) when his wife rings the bell to show that she has all the arrangements for the assassination. In contrast with Macbeth's desperate situation, which sweeps him to an unforgivable sin minute by minute and his functionless attitude like a paralyzed being, which makes his situation even worse, his wife is full of energy and determination. She says, "That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold; / What hath quenched them hath given me fire" (2.2.1-2). She pushes Macbeth to take action, and Macbeth acts accordingly like a puppet. His sensations, body and conscience act independently from each other. Macbeth cannot escape the inevitable result, and he commits the crime, and his remorse starts then. He regrets killing Duncan and his men in their "innocent sleep" (2.2.39) and he takes it as an ominous sign because he reflects his remorse stating, "could not I pronounce 'Amen'" (2.2.32). This way, Macbeth enters the wheels of sin that he cannot avoid any more.

Macbeth's reluctance to commit the crime, and, even so, his despair in taking part in many following crimes, his ethical dilemmas before the crimes, his strong feeling of the guilt which appears firstly with insomnia, later with hallucinations and paranoia are strong reflections of Kafka's protagonists, who are frequently obsessed by guilt and worry about perceived offenses. Apart from this, the presentation of the supernatural like prophecies, witches or other apparitions in the play, the elements which blur the line between real and illusional are reminiscent of Kafka's works, where the ludicrous and supernatural frequently infiltrate the commonplace. Moreover, Kafka's works frequently deal with the feeling of being trapped by fate, regardless of one's deeds, which is quite parallel to the situation of King Macbeth who cannot escape his fate. Last but not least Macbeth's fear and paranoia leads him to a complete isolation where he even suspects his closest ones which is a common issue in Kafka's fiction, especially "the novella *The Metamorphosis*, published in 1915, stands as a prime example of Kafka's literary prowess, exploring themes of identity, isolation, and existentialism" (Uddin, 2023, p. 132).

To continue with Lady Macbeth, pleased with the result, tries to confront Macbeth; however, Macbeth is too much under the effect of the killing scene when one of them said "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor / Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more" (2.2.45-6). It is also the foreshadowing of Macbeth's upcoming sleepless nights without comfort and peace. His traumatic situation and regret about the crime is revealed when Lady Macbeth asks him to leave the daggers at the crime scene, which is part of the murder plot, to show it is the action of the guards of the king. He states that he will not be able to go there again, and on Lady Macbeth telling him to wash his bloody hands he says: "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (2.2.63-4). The next day, Macbeth keeps murdering; this time he kills the two guards of the king whom they had casted as murderers of Duncan with stains of blood on them and bloody daggers. Again, he has to kill because he has no other chance, the first murder has to be covered up somehow, so he has to eliminate two probable witnesses.. As his hands get bloodier day by day, his spiritual peace deteriorates. He becomes the King of Scotland, which makes him even more restless about what the three witches prophesied about Banquo's children: According to the prophecy half of which was fulfilled by

Macbeth's unpleasant fate, they would become the rulers that follow. This idea did not give him comfort, so he had to kill Banquo and his sons, too. From then on, he is like in a car which does not have breaks; his life is independent of his wills; there are only obligations, each of which creates new obligations; and this distances Macbeth from the pleasures of life. Once one starts, one has to continue dwelling in the swamp he is in;

> For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
> Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
> Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
> Given to the common enemy of man
> To make them kings–the seeds of Banquo kings. (3.1.67-71)

As a result, Banque is murdered by the murderers taking the order from Macbeth; however, his son, Fleance, manages to escape death. Macbeth's desperate situation gets even worse when he sees the ghost of Banquo at the banquet and causes to worry the people invited for the banquet. His mentally disturbed situation, which causes him to see hallucinations, is clear proof that he is not consciously comfortable about his previous sins; however, he cannot prevent the upcoming ones. When Macbeth talks to the murderers and learns that Fleance escaped the murder, he literally mentions his uneasiness as in the following: "But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?" (3.4.23-4). His utterance refers to his upcoming anxieties about losing his kingdom.

Apart from the regret and discomfort caused by his earlier sins, the issue of manhood and manly behaviour also corners Macbeth. He is in a position which symbolizes the man who is over all men and women as a king and this tension is frequently triggered by his wife with such sayings as "Are you a man?" (3.4.58), and the implications such as being full of emotions like fear and anxiety are not the things suited for a man. Macbeth's claim to be in a place whose manhood must be ultimate-throne-and the pushy attitude of Lady Macbeth's utterances also leave him choiceless.

The following victims in Macbeth's head are Macduff and his family because there is no turning from this point back, "… I am in blood / Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er" (3.4.136-8). He slaughters Macduff's family; however, Macduff is absent as he leaves his wife and children back and goes to England for a revolt against Macbeth.

Another point to be discussed about *Macbeth* and the term 'Kafkaesque' is related to the prophecies he hears when he visits the witches a second time out of discomfort about his end. The prophecies give clear depictions about the end of *Macbeth*. The first is, "Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn / The pow'r of man, for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" (4.1.78-80). Under normal circumstances, this prophecy means that none of the living beings can harm Macbeth as all the living beings are born by a female. Inevitably, Macbeth gets over the majority of his fear, and says "Then live, Macduff, what need I fear of thee?" (4.1.81). The other is: "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him" (4.1.91.3). Literally, one can easily say that it is impossible for any wood to march against someone. Therefore, Macbeth is relieved, too, about his end because it is not sensible to worry anymore. He says "That will never be: / Who can impress the forest, bid the tree / Unfix his earthbound root?" (4.1.93-5). However, it is also implied that Banquo's descendants will become the next kings. These three prophecies seem paradoxical in literal terms; however, the threatened witches find the best way of explaining Macbeth about his destiny while comforting him at the same time. Moreover, what is impossible becomes possible if one is a 'Kafkaesque' character. As a means of camouflage, Malcolm's army carries branches from trees of Birnam Wood and gets closer to the castle Macbeth is in, and the fact that Macduff is the child of a caesarean birth "Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" (5.8.15-6) also prove that the last prophecy is going to prove to be true soon. Lady Macbeth dies of committing suicide which adds to Macbeth's unending sorrows. Finally, he is murdered and loses the kingdom to Banquo's son, Fleance. He does not give up until the last moment, he does not wait for being murdered but struggles with the last equipment he has, saying; "Send out more horses, skirr the country round; / Hang those that talk of fear – Give me mine armour" (5.3.36-7) and he shows his concrete determination by saying "I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked. / Give me my armour" (5.3.33-4) and "Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff" (5.3.49). When the enemy

comes at the gates of the castle he shouts "Our castle's strength / Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie / Till famine and the ague eat them up" (5.5.2-4). Before he is slain, he reveals his intentions even though he does not stand the slightest chance of winning "I will not yield, / To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (5.8.27-8).

As clearly revealed, at repeated times, the unfortunate, desperate, pessimistic situation of Macbeth does not stop him struggling for a better fate, they do not hesitate to hold on to the smallest hope to get away his cursed fate. He kafkaesquely tries to better his situation without noticing that his position is getting even worse just like Samsa's case in the famous *The Metamorphosis*. As a character trait, this uncontrollable fall is typical in tragedies which is also highly consistent to the characteristics of the 'Kafkaesque'.

3. *The Changeling* and 'Kafkaesque'

Being a Jacobean play, first performed in 1622, *The Changeling*, was written in collaboration with Thomas Middleton and William Rowley. Published in 1653, the play is based on John Reynolds' story collection, *The Triumphs of God's Revenge Against the Crying and Execrable Sinne of Willful and Premeditated Murther* (1621). In *The Changeling*, there is a main plot and a subplot and the critics have not resolved yet, which parts have been written by which author. Both plots, especially, the main plot is abundant in intricacies; therefore, the play, is hard to follow. In the central plot, Beatrice-Joanna, who is secretly in love with Alsemero, hires De Flores (who is also secretly in love with her) to assassinate Alonzo. The setting of the subplot is a madhouse where there is Alibius and his young bride, Isabella, who are chased by two men masquerading as madmen to get closer to her.

To continue with the 'Kafkaesque' qualities of De Flores and Beatrice in *The Changeling*, one has to start with the fact that the play is subcategorized as "tragedy of sin" by scholars like S. Yu Budekhin and Tony Bromham. Budekhin claims that "It is important to emphasise the authors' focus on the issue of human depravity. The study of the essence of sin, its various manifestations, and the stages of the fall is one of the most characteristic features of the tragedy of sin" (Budekhin, 2019, p. 705). The argument is furthered as "The aesthetic and philosophical basis of the tragedy of sin is associated with its special ethical focus, caused by the increase in the role of Puritan morality in the English society of the time" (Budekhin, 2019, p. 705). Bromham does not use the term "tragedy of sin" directly but he implies it in his explanation as "Middleton and Rowley present […] tragic view of human life in general: human reason is limited, and all people have an innate tendency to sin, so that, without holding fast to moral principles, they are likely, blindly, to bring about their own destruction" (Budekhin, 2019, p. 4). He also makes an indirect reference to the plot of the play having 'Kafkaesque' qualities, "The main plot shows how one sin inevitably leads to another and to the eventual destruction of the sinner" (Bromham, 1986, p. 50). The eventual, inevitable, unescapable destruction step by step which is caused by the first sin committed is also an explanation of the 'Kafkaesque' fall of a character. The first sin committed in the main plot is a direct reference to the Fall of Man and the original sin from *The Bible*. While Adam and Eve were pleasant in the Garden of Eden, Eve is tempted by Satan to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As soon as they eat the fruit they are banished from Eden and fall on the earth as mortals. "It was believed that all succeeding generations of the human race, descended from Adam and Eve, were born tainted by Original Sin, with an innate propensity to act in a sinful manner, from which no individual was free" (Bromham, 1986, p. 50). Bromham strengthens these claims stating that "Beatrice is linked with Eve in the final scene when she is called 'that broken rib of mankind' (p. l46), alluding to the biblical story of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib. De Flores is several times linked with the serpent or snake (I, i, 224; III, iv, 165-6; V, iii, 66)" (p. 50).

Beatrice's first sin is by falling in love with a stranger, Alsemero, and flirting with him when she is about to marry another man, Alonzo. This innocent sin opens to very evil sins unstoppably like murdering, adultery, deception, betrayal, etc. Later on, she confesses her love towards Alsemero and compares Alonso and Alsemero, which is unethical and unacceptable. She defines Alsemero as "How wise is Alsemero in his friend! It is a sign he makes his choice with judgment" (2.1.5-6) as he chose Jasperino as a friend which "Proves most discreet in every choice he makes" (2.5.12) while she utters the words for Alonzo "What's Piracquo / My father spends his breath for?" (2.1.19-20) confessing that she "regard[s] his name, / … Transform'd into a curse" (2.1.21-3). She adds that "He's so forward too,

/ So urgent that way, scarce allows me breath / To speak to my new comforts" (2.1.24-6). Later, she puts into action her plot to postpone the wedding with Alonzo for three days, actually she is trying to find a way to escape the marriage with Alonzo so that she can marry Alsemero. After that in a secret meeting in a chamber in the castle, the reader comes across Betarice's manipulative manner. Alsemero declares that he is ready for a duel with Alonzo for his love, which is common during the period; however, the evil plan comes to Beatrice's mind: She would use De Flores's fondness towards herself and manipulate him to kill Alonzo acting that she would respond to her love if he did so. That way she would get rid of Alonzo and De Flores at the same time, "I shall rid myself of two inveterate loathings / At one time: Piracquo and his dog-face" (2.2.147-8). Beatrice's calling De Flores by his name rather than a humiliating nickname like rascal or rogue, her touching his face, her interest in his ugliness and her will to help him with a physician is more than enough for De Flores to think that she is flirting with him. De Flores easily accepts the challenge and Beatrice says "How lovely now dost thou appear to me! / Never was man dearlier rewarded" (2.2.137-8). She plays an evil game with De Flores, a game she will pay with her chastity.

Beatrice tries to pay De Flores for the "favour" he has done; however, he does not accept it because what he expects as a reward is sexual intercourse with Beatrice. Beatrice confesses her destructing fate as "Bless me! I am now in worse plight than I was" (3.4.77). Bromham describes her situation as "Beatrice […] finds herself trapped, as a result of the murder, in a maze of consequences and fears which lead her ever more deeply into sin and towards destruction" (24). From this moment on, no matter how much she tries, her situation only deteriorates, which is quite 'Kafkaesque'. De Flores enlightens Beatrice's desperate situation literally in the play saying "Why, are not you as guilty, in, I'm sure, / As deep as I?" (3.4.86-7). De Flores clearly reveals that what he wants as a reward is her virginity not money, "If I enjoy thee not, thou ne'er enjoy'st [Alsemero]" (3.4.130). Beatrice comes to senses and sees her situation more clearly and says, "Vengeance begins; / Murder, I see, is followed by more sins" (3.4.167-8) which foreshadows her 'Kafkaesque' fall from that moment on.

Beatrice has to yield De Flores's demands and she marries Alsemero at the same time; however, she is extremely afraid that her husband would understand that she was not a virgin at the wedding night. She plots to use Diaphanta, making sure she is still a virgin with the test she found in Alsemero's book, instead of herself at the wedding night by changing their places until the sexual intercourse takes place in the dark of the night. She says, "I will give a thousand ducats to that woman / Would try what my fear were" (4.1.76-7) claiming that it was only out of "fear" of the first night. This way, because of her previous sins, she has to "resign [her] first night's pleasure and give money too" (4.1.87-8).

Finally, Beatrice causes Diaphanta's murder by De Flores because she is afraid that Diaphanta will reveal the fact that Beatrice is not a virgin. De Flores sets a fire in Alsemero's wedding chamber and an environment of panic and rush is constructed. In this fuss, Diaphanta is murdered by De Flores. Beatrice has been sinking into sin deeper and deeper; however, she does not give up. When she is blamed for being unfaithful to Alsemero by him, she reveals the fact about Alonzo's murder which she blames Alsemero for "your love has made me / A cruel murd'ress." (5.3.63-4), but she keeps the rest of the story as secret. This is the last attempt of survival by Beatrice. She is locked up by Alsemero. De Flores is blamed for the murder of Alonzo by Alsemero and thinking that he has been betrayed by Beatrice, he reveals the secret about Beatrice's infidelity. He is also locked up. From the closet Beatrice and De Flores are kept, people hear voices and when they come out, they see Beatrice is stabbed by De Flores and he confesses his crime and commits suicide stabbing himself and dies.

The sin chart of Beatrice and fall of De Flores are quite parallel to each other, indeed, as they are partners in crime. In this coexistence De Flores is more innocent as he does whatever he is told because of his pure love towards Beatrice while Beatrice is an evil manipulator. Bromham agrees with this idea saying:

> From the start Beatrice is a manipulator, using her attractiveness and socially-charming manner to make people say or do what she wants. She uses this ability most obviously on De Flores in Act II, scene ii, leading him on by treating him gently and kindly, touching him, calling him 'my De Flores', and getting him to demand what he should do for her. (pp. 55-6)

His innocence makes De Flores even more 'Kafkaesque' because being a member of the lower class in the society, as a servant, he has to struggle against the class distinction as well. Moreover, he is physically ugly, which puts him in a more disadvantageous position in his strive in the social environment he is situated in. The biggest "sin" of De Flores is covered under these facts, that an ugly man of lower class, cannot fall in love with a beautiful daughter of a noble class. The society cannot accept it and will eventually punish the sinner. He murders Alonzo for his love, he murders Diaphanta for his love, and he raises suspicion of Beatrice's fidelity towards the end of the play because of his love. His love causes him to sink deeper and deeper into sin. There is only one moment he claims equality in the eyes of the society before he has sexual intercourse with Beatrice as a payment of his crime. De Flores claims that he and Beatrice became equal because of the crime they committed, that is how he gains the only but unwilling respond from his lover. Even after all the humiliations, he never gives up his love, he continues to help her in the most chivalric manner. As a result, this causes his destruction at the end of the play.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, 'Kafkaesque' has been a widely accepted term in the world of literature especially after the 1950s. It mainly describes the gloomy air, depressive and desperate situation of the character or the plot that generally exists in Franz Kafka's novels. Samsa's situation in *The Metamorphosis* is generally cited to explain the use of the term for a character. No matter how hard the character tries, he cannot rescue himself from his plight; on the contrary, his situation gets even worse as he struggles. The imagery of a living being who has fallen into a bog, sinking deeper and deeper into mud as it gives effort to save itself; or a small insect captured by the web of a spider who gets wrapped by the web even deeper as it struggles would be the perfect pictures to illustrate the term. Similarly, the situation and ongoing fall of the tragic characters in a tragedy in the course of the play would make tragic characters available for the analyses in respect of their 'Kafkaesque' characteristics. The continuous ill-fate of the characters Beatrice and De Flores in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling* and King Macbeth in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth;* additionally, their continuous struggle to reverse their disastrous fate is not much different from that of Samsa's struggle in Kafka's most famous novel. The term 'Kafkaesque' is applicable for also the desperate struggle of the tragic characters. Even though there are about three hundred years between the contemporary term, 'Kafkaesque' and the characters of the Jacobean drama, the dexterity of the literary world has enabled us to unite them in this critical analysis

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