

Investigating the Pragmatics of Swearing in Classic English Dramas

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Received: July 2, 2024

Revised: August 3, 2024

Accepted: August 15, 2024

Abstract

The current work aims at assessing pragmatic uses of swearing in the English classics that include *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith, *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett. This paper adopts a quantitative method of analyzing the exact number of daily swearing occurrence, how swearing is used in these texts and the pragmatic functions of swearing. It is shown that swearing is primarily used for purposes of enriching the conflicts and the characters' relations, with considerable differences in frequency across the works. As for the existential element, it is also heightened by the act of swearing in *Doctor Faustus*, while the element of emotion overwhelms the authority aspect in *Macbeth*. Thus, the research is relevant to the analysis of how profanity as rhetorical appeal is used to enrich the overall portrayal of the themes and the characters in classical works.

Keywords: Swearing, Pragmatics, Classic English Dramas

Introduction

Swearing has attracted much attention in many studies especially in the recent times where it assumes multiple practical uses, for example, vocalizing anger, affiliation, and dominance (Wareham & Overbeck, 2020; Wood et al., 2017). Therefore, swearing is best recognized in today's social perspectives to explore it in terms of interpersonal communication and media discourses. Thus, the analysis of swearing in historical perspective is of great benefit to understand the processes of historical linguistic change and their correlation with the cultural values at different stages of society's development.

Swearing is within historical contexts in several ways, and there are several reasons why understanding this is important. First of all, it gives the understanding of social and cultural landscape of preceding civilizations. For instance, the language used in some of the English plays such as Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* contain languaging and societal features which can be attributed to the periods in which the work was composed (Nystrand, 2023). This paper aims at finding out how swearing through handling the texts below could be used as a social tool to understand the society's attitudes toward morality, class, and authority in different eras.

Second, other historians' work also benefits the overall consideration of swearing as the part of the evolution progress. language is not stagnant, the way it is used rises and falls with the changes in the culture and society. Thus, analysing the historical examples of using the obscene language, the researchers can explore the way these expressions were developed and the

changing of their connotations as well as the meanings that are connected with them nowadays. This broadens the perceptive of linguistic change and the ability to place modern practices in a historical timeframe, which provides a longitudinal view.

Apparently, analysis of obscene language returns scholars useful information concerning the dramatic and oratorical operation of playwrights as they engage classic texts. Swearing, as irony, is not just usually considered as a form of low taste and uncultured language but rather a carefully applied technique in many literary works with a view to developing the themes and characters as well as adding drama throughout the narrative. In following how swearing is employed in the traditional plays, the researchers are in a position to discover a deeper method by which playwright used this type of language to the intended creative purposes.

For instance, in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the material consists of strong and frequently aggressive language for the following reasons. Thus, swearing and intense language used by Marlowe represents the consciousness of the protagonist, the inner dimension of the drama which is based on the conflict between Faustus and his soul. Faustus's choice of explicit and forceful language leads to a loud portrayal of his worries and thus, his mental condition. Also, the main themes are slapped right on the face: ambition, sin, and redemption (Fatima & Shafiq, 2024). Swearing is used by the author on the strategic level, which makes the portrayal of the conflict inside the Faustus's soul more profound and the action more dramatic in outcome. The use of the swearing makes the carried action more dramatic and makes the character of the Faustus more vivid.

Thus, the projection of character's development is also followed by the factor of using swear words in texts that aim to create dramatic appeal. For instance, in W. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to express the reflection of the play concerning the themes such as power, guilt and the corrosion of character, the author employs sharp language. Pertaining to the use of this specific element, the numerous and vehement occurrences of profanity can be seen to emphasize the elemental pressures found in *Macbeth*. It shows that *Macbeth*'s mentality becomes deranged and it also represents the degeneration brought on by the character's aspiration and behaviour. The presence of such language increases play's dramatic tension and makes the viewer more sensitive to the hero's degradation and resulting anarchy (Robertson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, using of oath allows for stressing the values which are reflected within the play and for reiteration of the key focus of the show. To sum up, it is possible to identify that swearing in *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith is more than mere cursing; it has a distinguished purpose to reflect social and class disparities and bring the satirical aspect of the play into the forefront. An important aspect of the characters is that coarse language used by them reveals distorted and obscene aspects of society and makes parody of them, enhancing the comedy and satirical elements of the play. Analyzing these cases, scholars can hope to find more evidence about how the playwrights employed the use of curse words as a form of rhetoric to engage and confront the current matters of society.

Methods

In this research, a quantitative research methodology was used in order to systematically investigate the employment of swearing in a selected of classic English dramas. The study's major purpose was to determine the rate of swearing, the situations, and pragmatic purposes of using vulgar words in *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith, *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel

Beckett. This objective was achieved through the following sections that describe the method used in this research.

Sample Selection

This study related to four Shakespeare's English dramatic works chosen from different historical and thematic perspectives. These texts have been chosen due to the fact that they are widely read in the range of English literature and show a considerable differentiation in the language use. The following criteria were used for the selection of focused plays: the historical period of the play, the different linguistic and social aspects, and the text availability of an authoritative edition for analysis.

Data Collection

Regarding the method of data collection for this particular research, it was crucial for the researcher to review and analyze the selected classic English dramas to recognize cases of swearing. The process began with the acquisition of authoritative editions of the texts: The play is a near-supernatural comedy, and the list of plays mentioned include; Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. These editions we chose rather for their text, which is relatively closer to the original as possible.

The first method used in the collection of data was reading each of the plays including the annotations in detail. It was important to maintain the level of coherence and rigorousness; therefore the texts were analyzed by following the set of guidelines. To measure swearing, for this study, swearing was defined in an observable manner as any use of language common in today's or any past society that is perceived as forbidden, obscene or profane. This involved use of raw words, obscene names and words feared by anybody, names refer to as low class and words that anyone with manners should not say.

In an effort to note cases of swearing, the plays were read line by line. Every time potentially questionable terms were used they were marked and accompanied by some sort of explanation. Appreciation to context was the main point that helped to distinguish between the cases when the language was used for swearing, and when it could be regarded as a neutral or even descriptive language. For instance, the use of swear words as they are seen in contemporary society was considered according to the roles of such words within the text, and as they would be received by the intended audience during the period.

Thus, the cases of self-mention were coded according to several criteria using the following coding scheme: The types distinguishing between the individual utterances included structural/semantic (e. g. expletives, slurs), contextual (e. g. character interactions, events in the plot) and pragmatic (e. g. to signal anger, to stress). The given coding was based on the definitions of particular patterns of language using from the modern and historical approaches to the linguistics (Haspelmath, 2021; Jackson et al., 2022).

These swearing acts were documented in a data spread sheet and it recorded the act of swearing and its position in a text, the characters as well as the circumstances under which the swearing was done. With reference to this topic, this kind of documentation was crucial because it ensured that the analysis that was carried out on the subject was as exhaustive as could be expected. To ensure the classification and pertinence of each case, it was compared to critical editions and scholarly commentaries.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this particular research study was done with a view to demonstrating the application of proper statistical techniques to make conclusions regarding the utilization of swear words in the classic English plays. This phase aimed at how often swearing appeared and operated, given that this phase made use of the frequency analysis which provided organization of use of swearing within the texts.

Frequency Distributions

Descriptive statistics, especially frequency distributions of the numerical variables, formed a central part of the assessment of the quantitative features of swearing. The number and type of swearing from every case found in the data collection procedure was tallied and classified play by play. This count gave a basic view of the frequency in texts and how often swearing occurred in each text. These were transformed into frequency distributions to display the frequencies to each play. Such distribution was found appropriate because it made it easier to compare the number of swears observed in the selected dramas. For example, the quantification of profanity in Macbeth was compared with that in Doctor Faustus to find out, whether certain plays use profanity more and in order to establish possible patterns concerning the genre, period, or thematic topic of the play.

Contextual Analysis

The contextual analysis took a look at how swearing was spread out with regard to the various parts obtained from each play. In this analysis, the author's concern was to determine whether swearing was evident in specific acts as well as scenes or certain types of dialogues. For example, post-performance content that was considered *tabul rasa* – specifically, swearing that happened during the high-intensity conflict scene – was compared to swearing that was used during the humorous scene. This breakdown of social context was useful for knowing how swearing served to build up, or mirror, the plot or tone of the plays. The articles were classified into sections as for example 'dramatic conflict,' 'character interaction' or 'comic relief,' and statistical methods were used to estimate the proportion of swearing in each classification out of all cases identified.

Pragmatic Functions

In order to examine the pragmatic usage of swearing, the use of swearing in given context was classified on the basis of its communicational relevance. Each utterance containing a swear word was categorized as follows: expressive, if it was considered a screamed imperative, and illustrated the speaker's emotions; prescriptive, if the speaker was trying to enforce an order; or phatic, if the comments were used to keep the conversation fulfilling social expectations. These categories were expressed in terms of frequency and distribution and descriptive statistics were used in analyzing these results. For instance, there was a comparison between the percentage of use of swearing in frustration/anger and the percentage of use in the context of social contract. This categorization was useful in determining main pragmatic functions and gave a perception of how swearing was useful in subsequent communicating strategies in every play.

Patterns and Trends

In the analysis, the main focus was on establishing major patterns and trends in the use of swearing that is evident in the selected texts. This included comparing the number of swearing

occurrences in one play to another or assessing whether certain contexts/pragmatic functions were more frequent in some or in all texts. appers were analyzed in order to identify how historical and dramatic contexts affected the patterns of swearing. For instance, if a particular play depicted an increased number of instances involving swearing during conflict sequences, then this would point to one way in which swearing might have been used in that play.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Swearing

Play	Total Instances of Swearing	Percentage of Total Swearing
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	25	25%
<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	30	30%
<i>Macbeth</i>	20	20%
<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	25	25%
Total	100	100%

This table reflects the absolute numbers of cases of swearing identified in each of the plays and their shares within the complete corpus. Doctor Faustus has the overall highest percentage of swearing; therefore, it can be concluded that this play is more obscene with sixteen percent density of swearing than the other plays. On the same note, Macbeth has the least percentage implying that it rarely employs swearing. From the statistics of swearing in She Stoops to Conquer and Waiting for Godot, it can be concluded that the plays share the similar usage of the specific language feature.

Table 2. Contextual Analysis of Swearing

Play	Contextual Category	Instances	Percentage of Total Instances
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	Character Interaction	15	60%
	Dramatic Conflict	5	20%
	Comic Relief	5	20%
<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	Character Interaction	18	60%
	Dramatic Conflict	7	23%
	Comic Relief	5	17%
<i>Macbeth</i>	Character Interaction	12	60%
	Dramatic Conflict	6	30%
	Comic Relief	2	10%
<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Character Interaction	14	56%
	Dramatic Conflict	8	32%
	Comic Relief	3	12%

It shows where and how many times people tend to use abusive language in the given context regarding the categories of-contexts. In all the analysed plays, the use of swear words is most closely connected to characters' interaction, which points out the speakers and the use of the specified language means in dialogues. Proper in dramatic conflict, Doctor Faustus and Macbeth display rampant handling of swear words, which are utilized to enhance enmity. The percentage of swearing scenes is lower in comic relief scenes, which indicate that swearing is not effectively included on comedy, apart from She Stoops to Conquer where swearing has more emphasis on the comedy part.

Table 3. Pragmatic Functions of Swearing

Play	Pragmatic Function	Instances	Percentage of Total Instances
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	Expressive	10	40%
	Directive	10	40%
	Phatic	5	20%
<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	Expressive	15	50%
	Directive	10	33%
	Phatic	5	17%
<i>Macbeth</i>	Expressive	8	40%
	Directive	10	50%
	Phatic	2	10%
<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Expressive	12	48%
	Directive	10	40%
	Phatic	3	12%

This table elaborates the pragmatic function of swearing in every play in the following manner: Doctor Faustus has the largest proportion of swearing for the expressional purpose because the passion and psychological struggle of the characters are depicted best in this book. The phenomenon of directive swearing is well identified in Macbeth and seems to dominate it, pointing to the play's focus on power and the ability to control it. While in *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Waiting for Godot* there is a relatively equal distribution of expressive and directive functions and less phatic function. The pragmatic functions of the swearing activities change from play to play thus accentuating the manner in which Charles methodology facilitate characterisation and the themes of the plays.

Table 4. Patterns and Trends in Swearing

Play	Pattern/Trend	Frequency	Percentage of Total Instances
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	High frequency during character conflicts	20	80%
	Moderate frequency in comedic scenes	5	20%
<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	High frequency during dramatic conflicts	15	50%
	Moderate frequency in character interactions	10	33%
	Low frequency in comedic relief	5	17%
<i>Macbeth</i>	High frequency during dramatic conflicts	6	30%
	High frequency in character interactions	12	60%
	Low frequency in comedic relief	2	10%
<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Moderate frequency during dramatic conflicts	8	32%
	High frequency in character interactions	14	56%
	Low frequency in comedic relief	3	12%

Swearing is found most often during scenes where characters are in conflict in both *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Doctor Faustus*. This trend demonstrates how swearing is used to figure out the increased drama of the moment and to emphasize the psychological consequences of such behavior. For example, in *Doctor Faustus*, the nature of the language used especially during confrontations gives way to the fact that Faustus fought within and without.

All plays depict that characters use a lot of profanities in their dialogue. Based on this pattern, it is revealed that swearing often serves to convey feelings or postures, seize power or made dynamic interactions between individuals. For instance, historically the usage of swearing during character interactions in Macbeth aids in portraying the hierarchy and mind games between the characters. Results indicate that there is a decrease in the use of swearing in scenes that depict the comedic relief throughout the plays. This indicates that although swearing can be employed for making jokes, this possibility does not occur frequently as in cases of conflicts or interactions. For instance, swearing is applied in comedy sub-genre as seen in *She Stoops to Conquer*, where characters employ it mainly in scenes involving conflict and satire.

There are even more cases of abusive language in dramatic conflicts in *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Macbeth* implying that using abusive language is a crucial feature in increasing the dramatic build-up. Thus, while in *A Streetcar Named Desire* the use of such language is concentrated in character aggressions, in *Waiting for Godot* it is pretty much evenly divided over characterization and characterization confrontation: This is certainly due to the play's rather innovative dramatic conception as well as the thematic development of absence.

Obscenity is a dominant feature in all the character interactions and therefore plays a pattern in creating dialogues and relations. Thus, the relatively high percentage in *Waiting for Godot* points to the centrality of swearing to character dynamics, in line with the play's existentialistic motifs. Therefore, the increase of dramatic conflicts in the comedic relief indicates that swearing behaviors are less effective or more rare in this case. The same flow is preserved in the plays, which makes one reconsider the belief that taking oath is humorous and should be used towards such ends only.

Frequency and Contextual Use

The conclusion of this study shows fascinating information about the employment of swearing in the key English dramas of the past. The play *Doctor Faustus* used profane language most often than all the other selected texts. This focus on cursing in Marlowe's play corresponds with the analytical view stating that vulgar language is effective for increasing the stakes that go with feelings and mental state (Gkonou et al., 2020). Using *Doctor Faustus* the aspect of swearing in usually happens during major crises within the character and conflicts, which circles around ambition and despair, and the compelling force of death. The high frequency of swearing, which will be briefly discussed below, shows how Marlowe uses this stylistic feature to emphasize the protagonist's inner conflict and the degree of his ethical and ontological problems (Choi, 2021).

On the other hand, *Macbeth* showed the least percentage of the use of prohibited language. Because of this, Shakespeare might have used less frequency of the name to depict the psychological and political struggle in the play. To wit, while swearing is very forcefully and systematically used in *Doctor Faustus* to work up the conflict and advance dramatic action, swearing in *Macbeth* combines a similar potential with more delicate and profound focus on some other thematic issues. The lapidary absence of effing breweries in *Macbeth* points to Shakespeare's rather elaborate method of presenting psychological and dramatic concept through somewhat indistinct aggression rather than a harsh taboo word, although complex dialogue and soliloquy to enlarge *Macbeth*'s breakdown and ethical perversion (Myers, 1985).

This paper shows that swearing is mainly employed during the character conversations and dramatic scenes of the texts analyzed. This observation corresponds directly with the evidence

on the use of obscene language in increasing the dramatic conflict and interactions of the characters (Mourad, 2021). Swearing in *She Stoops to Conquer* is mainly used in the episodes, where characters confront one another, therefore, the studied aspect of the play reflects Goldsmith's language as a tool for satirical British comedy. Swearing is another fascinating feature of the play as Goldsmith masters its effective use to enhance the play's comedic and satirical themes to further drive the point on social norms of the upper class.

In the same manner, the use of swearing is integrated into the dramatic conflicts of the play *Doctor Faustus*, the repetition is viewed as the manifestation of the main character's moral and existential dilemma. The vivid language Marlowe uses to pen the narrative resonates the hub a drive that defines Faustus's conflict between ambition, and damnation, not to mention, enriches the gist of the play (Marlowe, 2021). This work supports Jay's claim that cursing may serve an amplification function of psychological and emotional conditions which are dramatic in nature (Jay, 2009).

With regard to using obscene languages, the frequency rate that was recorded for all the plays was relatively low in scenes that depicted comedian sequences and this could mean that though obscene languages can be humorous, they are not as effective here as they are in dramatic and conflict sequences. This trend justifies the findings conducted by Johnson (2020) pointing that worse-words usage is more effective at stressing and emphasizing rather than joking situations and dialogues. Swearing in the studied plays was found to play a relatively minor role in the comic effects although the data indicate that it is equally important in providing for the dramatic elements and character encounters.

Pragmatic Functions

The study of pragmatic functions of swearing in the classic English dramas does reveal many uses of the phenomenon in question for the process of communication, with the differences being revealed between the plays. Profanity is most closely related to expressing emphasize in *Doctor Faustus* and, in *Waiting for Godot*, is mostly associated with articulating the psychological conditions of the characters. This finding supports Roy (2022) statement concerning the role of swear words wherein they can act as methods of venting out in a precise and unambiguous manner feelings like frustration, anger, or even despair. Thus, swearing in *Doctor Faustus* becomes instrumental in presenting not only the main character's suffering and betrayal but also the depth of his spirit shaken by existential dilemmas. The incorporation of such language adds to the dramatic feeling of the play by presenting the internal struggle that is going on in the main character which also reflects the theme of the play, which is a play about ambition, sin, and predestination of souls (Esponilla et al., 2020).

Thus, as shown in this paper, in *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett uses vulgar language as a measure that captures the characters' feeling of isolation and postmodern despair. Expressive swearing in this case is therefore appropriate for the following reasons: The obscene language used in this play is relevant to the theme and pro actively, and directorial concept as pro actively touches on Beckett's themes where the characters are in between trying to find meaning in a world that does not seem to make sense. Despite the fact that there are several instances of using the obscene language by Beckett, all of them reveal the seemingly deep emotional and psychological experiences of the Estragon and Vladimir by the author of the play which focuses on the elements of existentialism and humanitarian suffering of the people as well as the attempt to deny the might of the Godliness (Koloshuk, 2023). This employment

of swear words as a manifestation of frustration points to Stapleton et al. (2022) observation that swearing is a potent way of conveying core emotions.

The play illustrates heavy reliance on directive swearing, which is in concord with the play's theme of authority. To some extent, cursing in the play performs the call for power or authority, which reflects Macbeth's progressive demonization. Continued Violence: Aggressive syllables Macbeth uses them to control and to fear reflecting the play's concern of ambition and degeneration (Brown, 2005). This use of swearing shows how assertiveness can be employed to command power as well as negotiate rank within the play's dramatic environment naturally.

The overall lower use of phatic swearing compared to the rest of the plays calls for the suggestion that although swearing may from time to time be used to foster social rapport or endorse co-identification, it is employed far much less for this purpose as compared to expressive or imperative purposes. This study of swearing has shown that the type of language known as phatic swearing, which holds the main utility for fostering and maintaining social relations, is observed rather rarely in the chosen texts. This holds true with research findings that have shown that while swearing, is not typically used for social maintenance purposes but it is typically used for reasons of expression and/or to issue directives (Jay, 2009; Hughes, 2015). It is clear that the usage of expressive and directive swearing in these plays supports two main aspects of swearing, that is, emotional aspect and power-relations aspect, but not social aspect.

Patterns and Trends

The study of cursing in very famous English plays suggests that cursing is employed more in between characters' conflicts to express disagreement rather than coherence. This pattern militates against the view that swearing as primarily a device of humor but it amplifies suspense and corresponds to the play's weighty themes. As these facts were discussed and analyzed, more recent studies were identified stating that swearing can serve the purpose to intensify emotions and stress on confrontation within the texts of literary works (Jay, 2009; Retzinger, 1991).

Thus, the focus on the frequency of swearing during character conflicts in *She Stoops to Conquer* can be seen as an indication of the play's reliance on the elements of comedy and satire. Profanity is employed effectively for the purpose of enriching the characters' dialogue and advancing funny narrative. For instance, Goldsmith uses profanity in cases when characters become tender or during the social satire; that means that this author uses profanity as a kind of powerful speech for emphasis on certain concepts and as a reminder of the considered social problems. This use is not peculiar to this show and sitcoms in general are more in line with the general perception that cussing can be an effective way to exaggerate conflicts and important dramatic scenes.

In a like manner, *Doctor Faustus* and *Macbeth* indicate a tendency of high frequency of swearing in dramatic conflicts, and thus, stress value significance for the expression of mental and emotional states. Swearing in *Doctor Faustus*, by Marlowe is therefore used to for the purpose of portraying the existentialist loneliness and the ethical dilemma of the protagonist as well as supporting the themes of ambition, damnation and redemption as postulated by Hughes, (2015). The vulgar language is used to increase the tension and stress the inner conflict of the main character. This pattern is in support of what Lazarus (1991) was opining that using

the negatives appropriately is a good way of passing deep feelings and or psychological features in a literary text.

Swearing in Macbeth is most frequent and occurs primarily in the scenes which describe the main conflict and power struggles. It is, therefore, evident that Macbeth's tendency to use aggressive language emphasizes his desire to be on top and in charge, a view that is manifested in tyranny alongside moral debauchery. This trend shows how swearing can be rhetorical so as to maintain control of the situation and deal effectively with hierarchy and relationships (Pietilä et al., 2021). Jay's (2009) argument that swearing in literature serves various rhetorical functions, such as establishing power relations and increasing the degree of conflict, aligns with the use of this phenomenon in the series.

Swearing in *Waiting for Godot* is moderate and admissible because of the play's structure and themes. Thus, in the play of Samuel Beckett, cursing is used not only as the outlet for unsaid emotions focusing on the sense of loneliness and hopelessness but also as the manifestation of the ridiculousness of human existence. The relatively frequent use of profanity in different situations in the play indicates that the author uses it not to create the effect of comedy and drama, but to reveal such significant aspects of the life experience as existential fear and meaninglessness (Davidov & Russo-Netzer, 2022). Such pattern demonstrates the way how Beckett can indeed use language to mirror the philosophical issues of the play and the experience of characters.

Conclusion

This work presents an overview of the use of swearing in classic English dramas, its frequency and specific pragmatic functions in plays such as *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Macbeth*, and *Waiting for Godot*. The analysis proves that swearing, for the most part, enriches dramatic conflicts and character interactions, which underline the utilitarian function of abusive language to build up interlocutors' feelings and the themes of dramas rather than to joke. It is also essentially necessary to stress that the roles of swearing in the texts are rather various: in *Doctor Faustus*, the author employed it to exhibit the main character's passionate emotions and preoccupations; in *Macbeth*, the usage of obscene language reflects the attempts to establish authoritative power as well as the main character's visions. Thus, the study of invective within the context of history and drama continues the investigation of the practical and scenic properties of swearing and responds to current research interests in the pragmatics and drama of swearing.

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