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A Critical Study of Women Portrayed in Shakespearian Play

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Abstract – The portrayal of women by Shakespeare and its ways of understanding & performing her leading leads have become subjects of discussion to concern. The heroines of Shakespeare encompass a number of forms and characteristics. Shakespeare's women display tremendous intellect, vitality & a clear sense of self-sufficiency in his gallery of female characters. Some commentators have found Shakespeare to be a female champion & innovator who has sharply left his contemporaries & earlier dramatists with stereotypical traits, which are typical to women. In comparison, other critics note that even Shakespeare 's best-pictured women have characters with derogatory characteristics. In this essay, Shakespeare's portrayal of women in his tragedies showing his feelings about women & their role in society was attempted.

Key Words – Women Characters, Women Roles in Society, Women in Power

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INTRODUCTION

The records of history show that women are profoundly unhappy in society. Women have been rather inferior and have therefore been marginalised. It was normal in any home-wealthy or poor. It was a natural phenomenon. Shakespeare, the leading dramatist, has carefully watched it and portrayed it in his works. He has a positive attitude towards the characters in Shakespeare's writings especially in his popular tragic events, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lear King, Antony & Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare is the poet, according to Virginia Woolf, who makes his writings open and free from any personal vices in order to describe the characters of women in their tragedies. With an exceptional ability to represent human comportment, Shakespeare portrays the plight of women and their characters who overcome the time limits in their richness, and the Shakespearean theme becomes timeless.

England was a very patriarchal culture in Shakespeare's time. Women are also seen as physically and mentally weaker than males (Schram, 2009). They are obligated to apply as wives or daughters to their husbands. Women were supposed to take on a more passive role, according to Gerlach (1996). Shakespeare portrays this kind of thought in the Romeo-Juliet scene in which Samson, one of Capulets' servants, comments: 'Women, therefore, are the weaker vessels are often pressed into the wall.' This line illustrating male dominance & female repression, which led to men's 'thrust.' Ironically, while society denigrates women as physically and mentally

weak, it also insists that women adhere to such a stereotype.

In her histories, she seemed to be against the social standard and to defy its male guardian; take Hermia from the dream of A Midsummer Night; regarding the risk of losing her life or of being sent into the nunnery, she declined even even to follow her father's will. Shakespeare seems to reject that traditionalist outlook on female by making powerful characters out of his female protagonists.

Hermia: But I implore you to know your grace.

In this scenario, the worst could happen to me,

If I don't marry Demetrius

Thesus: To die or to abjure death

Men's society forever...

If you do not give in to the preference of your father

The livery of a nun will last.

Hermia: To his unwelcome yoke His Lordship

My soul decides not to give law

As the males rule the household, a daughter's defy her father is just odd. Males in the family claim that the only thing that matters is their view. Juliet 's Dad, Lord Capulet, expressed that confidence in assuring Juliet 's love to Paris: "Sir Paris, I am going to make

my child's desperate tender love: ... it is all about me; no more, it is not I doubt"(III.IV). Therefore, Lord Capulet dismissed Juliet 's appeal as Juliet reasoned out and declined to marry Paris.

Juliet: Good father, I beseech you on my knees,

Hear me with patience but to speak a word

Lord Capulet:

Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday

Or never after look me in the face (III.III)

Despite the power of men , women of Shakespeare could show women's liberation & resistance to existing norms of behaviour. In Othello, even, when Desdemona married the African soldier, Othello, he disobeyed her father. Jessica eloped with Lorenzo in the Merchant of Venice, leaving her dad Shylock behind. Shakespeare also brought into question the notion of unintelligent women. In the development of wise characters like Kate and Portia, He changed the notion of women intellectually inferior. Kate outwit and mocks him when he says in an oral duel with Petrucio: "Asse are carried, so you are." (II.I) Portia demonstrated her intellectual prowess by alone saving Antonio's life out of Shylocks bonding. She demonstrated her genius by utilizing mercy as a point ironically:

"The nature of grace is not stressed / It drops down from heaven as gentle rain: it's blessed twice;/it blesses him that gives and him that gets.(IV.I) Then Shylock yielded, and Antonio was released from the bond, because of Portias extraordinary intellect. "I therefore take this offer: pay the bond three times / & let the Christian go."

Shakespeare was eventually able during his time to explain the multiple facets of women. His women characters in a patriarchal society, not the foolish and uneducated kind, are very fascinating, wise and smart. It is therefore no surprise that up to this stage Shakespeare's plays are revived. Notable, indeed, that Shakespeare has given them the voice in the midst of a culture in which women cannot speak and be heard.

She reveals his thoughts about women & their roles in society through the performances of women by Shakespeare. Looking at female roles in Shakespeare, it reveals that women in Shakespeare had less equality than their male counterparts. It is common knowledge that during Shakespeare's active years women were not permitted on the stage. Indeed, men once played all of his famous female roles, such como Desdemona and Juliette.

Women are frequently underestimated in Shakespeare's shows. The Bard demonstrated how

women can influence the men around them, although they were obviously limited by their social roles. His performances showed that the standards of top and bottom class women were different at the time. Highborn women are shown as "possessions" between husbands & fathers. In the majority of situations, the world around them without chaperones is socially limited and unable to explore. Many of these women in their lives have been compelled & dominated by men. In their acts, babies were granted greater freedom precisely because they have been regarded as less significant than baby women.

Sexuality in Shakespeare's Work

Women who are sexually conscious are more likely to be lower classes in general. Shakespeare encourages them to pursue their sexuality more openly, possibly because their low status makes them socially harmless. In Shakespeare's plays, women never are completely free. Many lower-class characters owned by their employers if they are not owned by husband and father. For Shakespeare's women, attractiveness or desirability can also result in deadly consequences. Desdemona chose her passion & asked her dad to marry Othello. Later this passion was used against her when the vile Iago convinced her husband that she would also lie to her father. False allegation of adultery, nothing is necessary to reassure Desdemona of his faithfulness. Desdemona says or does. Her bravery in deciding to defy her dad eventually leads her jealous lover to death.

In most of the Bards' work, sexual harassment often plays a major part. The character Lavinia is violently violated and mutilated, particularly in Titus Andronicus. Her assailants cut her tongue and take her hands away so that she cannot naming the assailants. After she can write her names, her dad kills her to protect her reputation.

Women in Power

Shakespeare regards strong women with suspicion. You have dubious morality. Gertrude marries the assassinating brother of her husband in Hamlet, for instance, & Lady Macbeth is coercing her husband into murder. These women display a willingness to be able to equal or exceed the strength of the men around them. In particular, Lady Macbeth is seen as a dispute between men and women. She has forgotten normal 'feminine' characteristics such as maternal concern for more 'men' like ambition that is destroying her family. The punishment for these women is generally death for their schemes. They affect other characters, but they are often also undervalued. Women have always had vital roles, even leading roles in Shakespearean plays. Whether it's to alter or stabilise the narrative, there's a reason for this. Some people are stronger than others, and each has a different impact on the action. Sometimes they outweigh the male heroes.

Early critique of Shakespeares female characters concentrated on their positive qualities and also argued that Shakespeare captured the "essentials" of femininity in the practical sense. In a preface to the English translation of the study by Louis Lewes *The Woman of Shakespeare* in 1895, Helen Zimmern argued that "their wives are perhaps the most attractive of Shakespeares' dramatis personae and also, in some respects, his most original creations, very distinct in their entirety from the ideals of the feminine form prevalent in his contemporary literature."

In the early women 's phase in Shakespeare at the end of the 20th century, a rather traditional tone and therapy and affirmation of female submission are defined. Three books by the female writers of the 19th century (*An authentic book: Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of the Ladies*, originally published by Anne Jameson in 1832, & two fictional biographies in novel form of two Shakespeare's Heroines, published in 1885) were written by the editors from a compilation in 1983, which called *The Women's Part*.

There are different approaches to the subject recently taken by critics. The study of the female body of shakespeare's works has proved fruitful for feminist critics inspired by French feminism. For instance, Carol Chillington Rutter, writer of *Enter the Body: Women & Representation on the Shakespeare Stage* (2001) focuses on the Cordelian body as the King Lear, her father carries her on the stage, the Ophelian body in the grave & two women's bodies on the bed at the end of Othello, 'a play that wipes women off.'

TYPES OF FEMALE CHARACTERS

Some woman's characters also appear in the shows of Shakespeare and say us to about Shakespeare's perception of women & their role..

The Bawdy Woman

They are sexualised, cheeky & flirtable. Often they are characters of the working class like the nurse in *Romeo & Juliet*, Margaret in *a lot of hell over nothing* or Audrey like you. These characters also utilize sexual innuendo in conversation, especially in prose as it fits their low social status. These low-class characters can get rid of riskier conduct — maybe because they are not afraid of losing social status.

The Tragic Innocent Woman

At the beginning of the game these women are mostly innocent & chaste and tragically die after their purity is lost. **Shakespeare's** portrayal of young innocent women is very brutal, in sharp contrast to his depiction of bawdy women. They are simply killed to demonstrate this failure until their innocence or chastity is removed. These characters are usually courteous characters, such as *Romeo and Julia Juliet*,

Titus Andronicus Lavinia or *Hamlet Ophelia*. Its high social status is even more unfortunate for its demise.

The Scheming Femme Fatal

The archetypal woman is fatal, *Lady Macbeth*. The manipulation of *Macbeth* brings them eventually to their deaths: suicide takes place and he is killed. She invites her husband to murder in her desperation to be a Queen. The daughters of *King Lear*, *Regan & Goneril*, scheme to bequeath the riches of their father. Again their arrogance leads them to death: after *Regan's* poisoning, *Goneril* stabs herself. While Shakespeare seems to admire his fatal woman's intellect at work, which helps her to exploit the men around her, his reputation is ruthless & unforgiving.

The Witty, but Unmarriable Woman

Katherine of The Shrew's The Taming is the witty, but unmarried woman's prime illustration. Feminists commented that their joy of this play is affected by the idea that a man literally "breaks" the heart of Katherine when *Petruchio* says, "come on & kiss me, Kate." Relatively, *Benedick* eventually conquers the fiery *Beatrice* in his complot *Much Ado About None* and says, 'Peace, I'll stop your mouth.' They're portrayed as smart, brave & independent but are set up before the end of the game.

The Married off Woman

Most comedies of Shakespeare end with the marriage-and thus secure-of an eligible woman. Often quite young, these women have gone from the care of their fathers to their new husband. There were most frequently born characters, like *Miranda* in *The Tempest*, who in *A midsummer night's dream* was married to *Ferdinand*, and *Helena & Hermia*, and *Much Ado of nothing*.

Women Who Dress as Men

As you like, *Rosalind & Viola* dress like men at twelfth night. They may therefore take a more active role in the storey of the take. These characters, as "kids," are more free to emphasise Shakespeare's lack of social freedom.

Falsely Accused of Adultery

Sometimes women in the plays of Shakespeare are misguided and greatly suffer from adultery. For starters, *Othello* kills *Desdemona* who supposes that she's infidel & when *Claudio* fakes accusing *Hero*, he is terribly ill. It appears, even though women of Shakespeare remaining faithful to their current husbands and husbands, are measured by their sexuality. Some women claim that male insecurity regarding women's sexuality is illustrated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Harold Jenkins (1982) reflects on the dramatic problems & ambiguities of the game in his commentary on Hamlet. The issues of pause, vengeance and the discussions on the creation of the plot are key. For Jenkins, Hamlet's key focus is the binary struggle between evil & good, which coexists with each other in the universe and which Hyperion springs from the same stock as satyrus. Johnson (1969) is happy and pleased at a Shakespearean play that has a clear and deep moral intent at last. "The preparation is everything" Johnson wants us all to chat in unison with Hamlet. A complete book on the existence of ghost & on the bad that it stands for was published by Eleanor Prosser (1967). The essence of the fantasy, vengeance, delay and other similar issues were also explored by Wilson Knight, (1949). T. In the view of the educated critic, S. Eliot (1932) considers Hamlet to be a "artistic failure" because of the unnecessary emotion that is justified by play-related evidence. Bradley (1904) also wants to derive a sense of "some larger force" rather than concentrate on other aspects that might divert our focus from this important topic. C. The poem of Hamlet, S. Lewis (1964), is considered more significant than the Prince Hamlet. His attention was based on the issue of delay by Stoll (1933). The brief analysis on Hamlet justifies the thesis as well as its theoretical framework.

John Wilders (1995) has discussed it from nearly every perspective in his thorough introduction to Antony & Cleopatra. It starts with the dramatising of a tragic and famous love affair. He touches on the prestige and stature of the legendary and lavish people. He concentrated on Cleopatra as "a marvellous work." He dwells on the swift change from sensitivity to rage and sorrow by Cleopatra. Wilders regards it as a prediction of international politics at the time when numerous opponents are vying for Rome's mastery. He is also aware of the irresistible force and reliance of Cleopatra on Antony. Its dialogue, language and style are no exception. He also reflected on Shakespeare's breach of the unities of time, action and place. From the feminist / patriarchal point of view, Wilders approaches the play, but he does not look at it from this perspective. The play was investigated morally by Dryden (1984) & Dowden (1967). The tragic ending of the protagonists' unethical way of life is due to these two critics.

It was condemned as a love tragedy by Swinburne (1909) and Wilson Knight (1965). The game is seen by Swinburne as the "greatest all-time love poem"(318). Cleopatra is proclaimed as the "pure and incarnate lust" by Knight (318). Bradley (1904), for lack of consistently high gravity, omitted the play from his research on Shakespeare's tragedy, but spent some time reading it and found it inferior to Shakespeare's key tragedies. The picture, particularly the picture of the sword, was examined by Maurice Charney from 1961. The use of this picture is explored by a good study that traces Antony's carrier as a sword walker.

G. Knight Wilson (1949) calls Macbeth "the darkest vision of evil, a declaration of evil," as Shakespeare's. It's a damnation game for him. Samuel Johnson (1969) has similar feelings about the play. Kenneth Muir (1984) sees Macbeth as structured by the tension between order & disorder. He appreciates its wealth and intensity as well. Muir, however, recognises the ability to be done in an endless number of forms by Shakespeareans drama, reflecting its vastness and complexity. From the perspective of unavailability and coherence, Robert Bridges (1927) sees the game. He argues that Shakespeare has sacrificed theatre coherence for psychological purposes. Stoll (1943) also makes a similar claim about Shakespeare's dramatic or literary bias. Critics such as A. The supernatural aspect of the play was focussed by A. Smirnov (1937).

Brian Gibbons (1980) concentrated primarily on lyricism and the sonnet as the quality of this tragedy in his contrast to Romeo & Juliet. In the sense of reconciliation, he also pointed out the greater position of literature by praising the importance of faith and love, and ultimately by restoring order in the universe. As the key theme of the play, Donald A. Stauffer (1949) described Love & its healing power. In terms of its structural and dramatic shortcomings, King Lear has been discussed by a number of critics. It was also commented from the point of view of his creativity and poetry.

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare realises that women were always socially, culturally and politically marginalised in the history of mankind. Shakespeare has defined gender problems through strong women characters. He provided a wide view of life with an equal focus on both men and women. The social stigma they faced during this period is seen in their female character. He depicts his personal appreciation for intelligent & influential women with virtues & courage.

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