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Misogyny in Shakespeare's Hamlet

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by

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Dedication

I dedicate the fruit of my humble effort to my master, the absent present, the owner of the era and the time (may God hasten his reappearance)

And for, the owner of the fragrant biography and his enlightened idea, has had the first favor in my attainment in higher education (my beloved father), may God prolong his honorable life

And to enlighten my path, to the one who gave me strength and determination that was the reason for continuing my studies, to the one who taught me patience and diligence, to my dear (my mother)

To my brothers who had a great impact on many obstacles and difficulties, To Everyone who helped me.

Acknowledgment

The Almighty said: ((*And whoever is grateful, he is grateful for himself*)) (Surah Al-namel: 40)

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Abstract :

Although Shakespeare was classified by some critics as a noble supporter of the feminist movement, this is not the case. Critic McCluskey says: What Shakespeare wrote was for the enjoyment of men, and what was said about him as supportive of gender equality is a big mistake.

But what prompted some to classify Shakespeare as a supporter of equality is "his ability as a great writer to draw characters, enter their worlds, and depict their psychological states in a patriarchal society" (Shakespeare's Women, Liz Lewis) In fact, Shakespeare presented a single image of women in his literature, despite the diversity of personalities and subjects that he presented. He saw in women a permanent source of evils and sins, and this was a reflection of the religious source of Adam's first sin based on a purely feminine motive.

Introduction

In the play Hamlet, two feminist models are presented, namely Gertrude, the queen, Hamlet's mother, and the wife of the new king, who killed his brother to seize the throne, according to the ghost story that appeared to Hamlet at the beginning of the play.

Gertrude was presented as a superficial and lustful character, and her reactions do not involve any intellectual depth, loyalty, or even respect for her age. She, days after the death of King Hamlet, in mysterious circumstances, marries his brother. At least in the eyes of Hamlet, her son, and her head is surrounded by flowers, and she dresses and dances as young girls do, and her maternal affection is not sufficiently awakened, even when she sees the changes and disturbances that her son is going through. On the contrary, she helps perpetuate the saying that her son is mad, only some of the places where her motherhood was awakened, as she did in the scene of Ophelia's death and at the duel, and this may have been motivated by what her status as queen dictates for the most part. (Lauzen,2014)

Her son, Hamlet, did not accept her because what was required of a mother and wife in this society was not what Gertrude did, and this is the point that raises the question of whether Shakespeare wanted to defend women through Gertrude, but the truth is that he presented an honest picture of what a patriarchal religious society could see in the woman.

Ophelia: a main character in Hamlet's play. Outwardly, it appears as if she is a victim of the other characters in the play. Hamlet used her love for him as a tool in his revenge plan against his uncle Claudius. He was harsh with her in many places, including his speech "Go to the monastery" as a

reflection of what he saw from his mother. As it was firmly established in his mind that women, with their vicissitudes, transformations, and weaknesses, are incapable of fulfillment.

And when her father, Polonius, warned her of the consequences of continuing her emotional relationship with Hamlet, her weakness and hesitation appeared, and this is a natural thing in her society, which is governed by its circumstances, and this is what entered her into a double role when Hamlet accidentally killed her father. And in the killing of her father, and her resorting to madness was the only means of escaping from this feeling of guilt, or it can be considered in its deep meaning as a protest against the patriarchal society, and it ended with her suicide.

Thus, Ophelia and Gertrude were nothing but negative characters represented on the side of lust, selfishness, and detachment from the feelings that women are supposed to contain, and represented on the other side weakness, hesitation, and moral instability. (Courtney & Starks,2013)

Chapter One

1. Literature review:

Literature, a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. (Leverenz,1978)

For historical treatment of various literatures within geographical regions, see such articles as African literature; African theatre; Oceanic literature; Western literature; Central Asian arts; South Asian arts; and Southeast Asian arts. Some literatures are treated separately by language, by nation, or by special subject (e.g., Arabic literature, Celtic literature, Latin literature, French literature, Japanese literature, and biblical literature).

Definitions of the word literature tend to be circular. The 11th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary considers literature to be "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest. Literature, a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter.

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having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest.” The 19th-century critic Walter Pater referred to “the matter of imaginative or artistic literature” as a “transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinitely varied forms.” But such definitions assume that the reader already knows what literature is. And indeed its central meaning, at least, is clear enough. Deriving from the Latin *littera*, “a letter of the alphabet,” literature is first and foremost humankind’s entire body of writing; after that it is the body of writing belonging to a given language or people; then it is individual pieces of writing. (Levine,1998)

But already it is necessary to qualify these statements. To use the word writing when describing literature is itself misleading, for one may speak of “oral literature” or “the literature of preliterate peoples.” The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page; they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond “mere” pleasure. Literature also functions more broadly in society as a means of both criticizing and affirming cultural values. (Loehlin,2003)

1.2. Elizabethan Era:

The English Elizabethan Era is one of the most fascinating periods in the History of England. The Elizabethan Era is named after the greatest Queens of England - Queen Elizabeth I. The Elizabethan Era is not only famous for the Virgin Queen but also for the era itself - Great Explorers, such as Sir Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh.

The era of the very first Theatres in England - William Shakespeare, the globe Theatre and Christopher Marlowe.

The Elizabethan era in the 16th century was one of adventure, intrigue, personalities, plots and power struggles. At the centre was Queen Elizabeth I, 'The Virgin Queen' and the latter part of her reign (from 1558-1603) has been referred to by some historians as a 'golden age.' However, is this an accurate interpretation and how did Elizabeth deal with the political, economic and religious tensions she encountered during this period?

Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII, the most notorious of all the Tudors, and his second wife Anne Boleyn. She became queen aged just 25 after the death of her brother Edward VI and Sister Mary I.

The 16th century witnessed more religious change than ever before and Elizabeth's main priority when she came to the throne had been to settle the nation and ensure England's national security. From 1558 she took greater steps to enforce this settlement and this brought her into conflict with the Catholics both at home and abroad. She was a clever politician with a cautious approach, and was sometimes willing to compromise for the sake of her people. She never married, deciding to put the security of England before herself. (Mayo,2014)

1.3. William Shakespeare:

William Shakespeare was an English poet, playwright, and actor of the Renaissance era. He was an important member of the King's Men theatrical company from roughly 1594 onward. Known throughout the world, Shakespeare's works—at least 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and 2 narrative poems—capture the range of human emotion and conflict and have been

celebrated for more than 400 years. Details about his personal life are limited, though some believe he was born and died on the same day, April 23, 52 years apart. (McKellen,1996)

The personal life of William Shakespeare is somewhat of a mystery. There are two primary sources that provide historians with an outline of his life. One is his work, and the other is official documentation such as church and court records. However, these provide only brief sketches of specific events in his life and yield little insight into the man himself.

Shakespeare's influence on art, literature, language and the vast array of the creative arts has long been known and documented. He is the most-read playwright in the Western Hemisphere, and the English language is littered with quotes and phrases the originated from his works. He is also the inventor of the iambic pentameter, a form of poetry that is still widely used today.

He is also one of the most influential figures in English literature, having had a profound impact on everyone from Herman Melville and Charles Dickens to Agatha Christie and Anthony Burgess. But his influence did not stop at just the arts - the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud used Hamlet as the foundation for many of his theories on human nature, and his influence can be felt in painting and opera as well, particularly from the operas of Giuseppe Verdi and the whole community of Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite painters. (Neely,1996)

Chapter Two

2.1. Summary of Hamlet's play :

Hamlet, in full Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, tragedy in five acts by William Shakespeare, written about 1599–1601 and published in a quarto edition in 1603 from an unauthorized text, with reference to an earlier play. The First Folio version was taken from a second quarto of 1604 that was based on Shakespeare's own papers with some annotations by the bookkeeper.

Shakespeare's telling of the story of Prince Hamlet was derived from several sources, notably from Books III and IV of Saxo Grammaticus's 12th-century *Gesta Danorum* and from volume 5 (1570) of *Histoires tragiques*, a free translation of Saxo by François de Belleforest. The play was evidently preceded by another play of Hamlet (now lost), usually referred to as the *Ur-Hamlet*, of which Thomas Kyd is a conjectured author. (Parker,2007)

2.2. Theme of misogyny in the play:

Hamlet the misogynist "When a man gives his opinion he is a man. When a woman gives her opinion she is a bitch."- Bette Davis Throughout time society has used woman as a scapegoat for societal issues that have occurred. In the play Hamlet by William Shakespeare, Shakespeare uses character and rhetoric to display how ones hatred and anger are impulsively taken out upon woman, from this the reader learns how misogyny rather easy to practice.

To begin with, Shakespeare uses rhetoric to illustrate how Hamlet is a misogynist. Throughout the play Hamlet refers to his mother as an

incestuous, cold hearted, whore, whose actions are only defined by her sexual desires. (Pittman,2011)

2.3. Hamlet's misogyny in case of Gertrude:

The first female character presented in the play is Gertrude, the Queen of Denmark. Despite the fact that she belongs to the royal family and is of high order, she constantly carries a shadow of irresponsible and careless behavior. The way Shakespeare portrays her is a woman of weak character. Although she is a noble lady, but there is a continuous refusal from her side to stay determinant and strong. When Hamlet is accused of stalking Ophelia, the only reaction from the Queen, Gertrude is, "I question it is no other than the fundamental, his dad's demise and o'er-rushed marriage". (Act II, scene ii. 56-57). The natural reaction by a mother is trusting her son and backing him up till the very end. (Rackin,1996)

However Gertrude quickly surrenders to the ploy made by the men. Claudius and Polonius, both made her believe that Hamlet is deeply in love with Ophelia and that love is the cause of his madness. Instead of looking in her son, she falls prey to Polonius and Claudius's scheme easily. The characterization of Gertrude is of a woman who can easily be manipulated by men and remains simple minded under the control of oppressive men. Right from the opening, Shakespeare builds the mood for this misogyny. In the opening scene Gertrude's portrayal is of a lustful whore dying to marry. "With an auspicious and a dropping eye, with mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, in equal scale weighing delight and dole". (Rackin,1996)

2.4. Hamlet's misogyny in case of Ophelia:

Ophelia is the epitome of the misogyny in the play. None of the soliloquies in the play features Ophelia. She remained a victim of dictatorship both from her father and her lover. Through her dialogues and actions, she is represented as a lacking woman. In her own words she says, "I think nothing, my lord. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs. What's my lord? Nothing. (Act III, scene ii.116-19). Her treatment by her brother and father is that of a child. In their opinion, she lacks consciousness, self-awareness and maturity to think and take her own decisions. They both portray a cultural control and dictatorship over woman. The irony of the situation here is that Ophelia accepts that clichéd control and wisdom where she readily accepts what Laertes says, "Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well What I have said to you (I.iii.84-85). Tis in my memory lock'd, And you yourself shall keep the key of it". (Showalter,1985)

Not only he advices but also plans her actions properly. Her dialogues with her fathers are of more curtsy and respect more of a servant than a daughter as she says, "so please you...my lord...I do not know, my lord, what should I think...I shall obey, my lord" .

It is evident from just characterization of the play that the play is misogynist. Both the women are portrayed as weak, controlled and victimized by patriarchal set up. They fall prey to the ploys and manipulation of men. Not only falls prey but readily and easily gets manipulated and controlled. (Silverman,1990)

Conclusion:

Writing the emotional and physical submission that is presented as Kat's happy ending on 10 things i hate about you, Actually We Have: 10 Things is one movie in a sequel to long-running adaptation picks Unquestionably misogynistic elements in Shakespeare's work. In the previous topics, This study examined three different ways of adapting Shakespeare to the screen.

In all three cases, I've examined the different ways in which the female characters in Hamlet act.

All the things I hate about you bears some traces of language and gender attitudes are part of Shakespeare's work, and the different ways in which women are represented These films are influenced by the different approaches to adaptation that each director takes.

In both Branagh's Hamlet and McKellen and Loncrin Richard III, the lead actor The power of the stars and their influence on the script and direction of the film is used to naturalize it The film's dominant perspective. Kenneth Branagh as Hamlet and Ian McKellen as Richard III Both have previously played their film roles in stage productions, and both have written as well scripts for their films. Branagh has additional power over his production of Hamlet as its director. Because of the power Branagh and McKellen have over scripts and directing of their films, and because of their long associations with Their characters from previous shows, both Branagh's Hamlet and McKellen's Richard III of Loncraine is partial to the views of male leaders.

This prejudice Most notable in the way both films represent their female characters: Branagh The film attempts to confirm Hamlet's own construction of Gertrude as brutal and sexual An aggressive character

despite adapting textual evidence to the contrary, while McKellen points out The traditional gender roles seen in Shakespeare's Hamlet but to divide the virgin or the whore which many critics have consistently used to classify Ophelia and Gertrude.

Who are they ,The ability to use her culture's gender role to her advantage—undermines her in general conservatism.

An example of this conservatism is the concern that all three amendments take Its source is about women and their discourse. In Hamlet, this concern It manifests itself in the suppression of the mother's body, and the denial of Gertrude's sexuality while he is present At the same time he denounced her power. The play diminishes the power of women Removing the disruptive undertones of Ophelia's manic speech. McKellen and Loncrine Richard III removes many of the female curses that appear in its source, calming it down Concern about female characters by removing Margaret, who acts in Shakespeare's play as a symbol of female bitterness and witch-like power. Another concern these films depict is related to motherhood. This is explained Most evident in Branagh's Hamlet, where Hamlet's fear and desire to suppress his mother Sexuality is featured heavily in the film itself, which would take a lot of effort to avoid showing Gertrude in A.J sexy light. In avoiding any depiction of Gertrude's sexuality, she is only allowed to lean in To hold Claudius' hand, Branagh's film highlights the absurdity of so much Maternal concern in Hamlet while at the same time encouraging the audience to subscribe to it.

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