



**PSYCHOLOGICAL FEMINIST READING OF QUEEN
CHARACTERS IN SHKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*, *KING
JHON*, AND *HENRY VIII***

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE**

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by WILDAN SWASH ADNAN ADNAN titled “PSYCHOLOGICAL FEMINIST READING OF QUEEN CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET, KING JHON AND HENRY VIII” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the Master's Degree .

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dad and mom, for their endless love, support, and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

Many people believe that women should not be allowed to lead any society, regardless of how culturally evolved, intelligent, or rational they are. Literature has helped to portray this fact in its own unique way by adding female characters into literary genres such as poetry, drama, and other literary works. William Shakespeare is one of those playwrights who has and will serve as the central figure for this inquiry. Shakespeare made a concerted effort to include women as key characters in his plays. This research will examine three of his plays by analyzing the queen's personalities in those works. Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet*; Queen Eleanor in *King John*; and Queen Katharine of Aragon in *King Henry VIII*. This research employs a psychological feminist critical methodology because it demonstrates the value of women in society and serves as an advocate for them. This is accomplished by highlighting the injustices that a woman would suffer in society because of physical inequalities, regardless of her mental talents, and the obstacles she would encounter throughout her life. In the conclusion of this research, the reader is supposed to acquire a new perspective about those female characters that, hopefully, adheres to feminist fundamental principles.

Key words: Shakespeare, Queen, Psychological Feminism, Gender, patriarchy.

ÖZ

Pek çok insan, kültürel olarak ne kadar gelişmiş, zeki veya akılcı olurlarsa olsunlar, kadınların herhangi bir toplumu yönetmelerine izin verilmemesi gerektiğine inanırlar. Edebiyat, şiir, drama ve diğer edebi eserler edebi türlere kadın karakterleri ekleyerek bu gerçeği kendine özgü bir şekilde tasvir etmeye yardımcı olmuştur. William Shakespeare, bu soruşturmanın merkezi figürü olan ve bu konuya hizmet edecek olan oyun yazarlarından biridir. Shakespeare, kadınları oyunlarında kilit karakterler olarak sunmak için ortak bir çaba sarf etmiştir. Bu araştırma, bu eserlerdeki kraliçelerin kişiliklerini analiz ederek Shakespeare'in üç oyununu inceleyecektir. Hamlet'teki Kraliçe Gertrude; Kral John'da Kraliçe Eleanor ve Kral VIII. Henry'de Aragon Kraliçesi Katharine. Bu çalışmada psikolojik feminist bir eleştirel metodoloji kullanılmıştır çünkü bu eserler kadınların toplumdaki değerini gösterir ve onlar için bir savunucu görevi görür. Bu, bir kadının zihinsel yetenekleri ne olursa olsun fiziksel eşitsizlikler sonucunda toplumda yaşayacağı adaletsizlikler ve hayatı boyunca karşılaşacağı engeller vurgulanarak gerçekleştirilir. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda okuyucunun, feminist temel ilkelere bağlı kalarak bu kadın karakterler hakkında yeni bir bakış açısı kazanması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Shakespeare, Kraliçeler, Psikolojik, Cinsiyet, ataerkillik.

ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish)

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SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The study aims to provide the reader with an overview of the queen characters as important figures of the period, and their role in Shakespeare's plays that can be interpreted differently. The study attempts to explain how the characters influenced that period, how they responded to king, and how Shakespeare embodied them in his plays.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to highlight how William Shakespeare treats gender differently in his plays. Employment of the queen characters has constituted a major issue for debate throughout the late of 20th century. No doubt, this debate will be at the forefront of the 21 century as the world continues to change, using queen character to illustrate the role of the artist and the function of art in society is important, the chosen plays written by William Shakespeare with differ between histories and tragedies so the researcher intends to present selection of works which mixes these three plays.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The queen characters of three plays have been analyzed according to the feminist theory for the power of queens'. The result of the research enables the reader to realize the power of motherhood and their relation with children. Which is enforced by their state power.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher selected some plays written by William Shakespeare based on queen characters and their role in the play. Queens represent idea of Shakespeare on gender; therefore it is double significant site of exploration or innovation not only in literary criticism but also in gender studies.

Scope and Limitations/Difficulties

The scope of the study is to deal with queens' influence in the selected plays of Shakespeare. These plays are examined from this particular point of view. It examines the significant role of using queen in a literary work.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Before getting into the depths of this research's major issue, it is necessary to provide a summary of women's presence in drama, both as a subset of literature and as a kind of theatrical performance, throughout history. Additionally, to understand the beneficial influence that drama has on its audience in a specific society and era, this section will present the reader to the research's objectives, the question it answers, the research paper's hypotheses and propositions, the method utilized to analyze the previously described characters, and the procedure or style and manner employed in the process.

Originally, when Roman Theatre began, women were not permitted to act, despite the presence of female roles in the play. At the time, actors were exclusively male; despite the presence of female characters in the play, males used masks to conceal their identity and the appearance of the female characters. Acting for women was prohibited at the time. For instance, the cast of Sophocles' famous drama *Antigone* included primarily of male actors, even though *Antigone* is a female character. Later in history, throughout the mediaeval era, women gained more room and freedom in a variety of fields, including dramatic performance.

The evolution of drama occurred over numerous epochs in history until it became what it is today. From the earliest attempts in the Roman and Greek Empires through the most major ones, from the Golden Age to the Middle Ages, and finally to the Cycle theater in the late Middle Ages, each period added to understand mankind and the world in its own unique way; people both then and now required someone to illuminate the path to enlightenment. Writers, as representatives of society's educated class, took on this responsibility and began introducing literary works in which a message was transmitted to the public, whether it was political, romantic, religious, or even a concept. During the initial efforts, the message was perfectly apparent. By keeping the message simple, it would be understood by audience, regardless of their educational background.

Over time, writers evolved their method of conveying the message of the theatrical performance, which was to avoid the representations that would follow the introduction of apolitical or a rare and rebellious thoughts that society and the ruling figure would despise. The Renaissance period was a time when writers began to employ figures of speech in their poetic performances in order to avoid such

consequence; in England, it was a time of religious and political conflict between protestant converts (supporters of the Church of England) and Catholic Church supporters. The operation of introducing a theatrical performance has become increasingly sophisticated over time to attract increasing numbers of supporters to whatever causes is being introduced.

Naturally, these were not the only instances in which new figures of speech, writing styles, procedures, and concepts were coined. In this scenario, writers developed their writing style to introduce and develop an idea that female characters are just as deserving of being on the theater stage as male characters. That was not alone to demonstrate the importance of gender balance in theatrical performances, but also to demonstrate that female characters may hold positions of authority in society, just as male characters do. The idea was most likely acquired and evolved from ancient civilizations such as that of Roman and Greek. Celestial and divine female creatures existed in the Roman and Greek cultures, such as the Goddesses of beauty and war (Aphrodite and Athena). These phenomena led Renaissance writers to create the first efforts of feminist theory. Though it was not obvious that writers pioneered a new approach at the time, it served as foundation for later critics and academics to establish their hypothesis.

Writing by Renaissance author were the earliest attempts at feminism. Although it was not evident at the time that writers had pioneered new techniques, it provided a basis for other scholars and critics to build their theory in modern theatre which revived in Italy during the renaissance period. There was a fresh upsurge of interest in the Middle Ages classic mystery and miracle plays as result of this renaissance (James, 1997, p10). When it came to the renaissance, the Italian were affected by Seneca (a famous tragic writer and philosopher who served as Nero's tutor) and Plautus (who had a huge impact on the renaissance and subsequently). While Seneca was opposed to on stage blood and violence, Italian tragedy clung to a concept that was contrary to Seneca's ethics. Seneca's plays were exclusively performed by the characters.

Following the states of the Renaissance era in England and the succession of Queen Elizabeth of England (also known as The Virgin Queen) to the throne from her sister Queen Mary (commonly known as Bloody Mary), Drama saw a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity. It occurred when Queen Elizabeth promoted literary works by awarding bounties to bright poets and playwrights; this generosity was demonstrated by bringing the gifted writers closer to the royal court and the

Queen herself. Elizabethan literature is a term that refers to works written during Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558–1603). It is one of the most glorious periods in English literature. William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Richard Hooker, Ben Jonson, and Philip Sidney are all notable writers.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) and thereafter King James (1603–25), a London-centered culture, both courtly and popular, produced great poetry and theatre. The English authors were captivated by the Italian model, a visible society of Italian performers who had established themselves in London. John Florio (1553–1625), a linguist and lexicographer whose father was Italian, was a royal language tutor at the Court of James I and a likely friend and influencer of William Shakespeare, having brought much of the Italian language and culture to England. The oldest Elizabethan plays were Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (1561) and Thomas Kyd's revenge tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592).

The Spanish Tragedy, which was extremely popular and influential at the time, established a new genre in English Literature theatre: the revenge play or revenge tragedy. The vengeance tragedy plot involves multiple brutal killings and features a personification of revenge as one of its characters. Other Elizabethan writers, including William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe, frequently referred to or ridiculed *The Spanish Tragedy* in their works. Numerous aspects from *The Spanish Tragedy*, including the play-within-a-play used to apprehend a murderer and a vengeful spirit, appear in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thomas Kyd is frequently offered as the author of the fictitious *Ur-Hamlet*, which Shakespeare may have used as a fundamental source for *Hamlet*.

As a poet and playwrights William Shakespeare (1564–1616) stand out throughout this time. Many of Shakespeare's plays fall into a variety of genres, historical dramas comedies, tragedies, and late romances. Sometimes known as tragicomedies. From *A Comedy of Errors*, to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, to *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's early classical and Italianate comedies began to take on a more romantic tone in the mid-1590s. *Henry IV*, parts 1 and 2, and *Henry V*, which were written in prose in the late 1590, following *Richard II*, which was almost exclusively written in poetry. Both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, both of which are based on Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of *Plutarch's Parallel Lives*, marked the beginning and conclusion of a new period in the history of the theatre (Ackroyd, 2006, p235).

Shakespeare's career lasted into the Jacobean period, when he penned the so-called 'problem plays' *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*, as well as several of his best-known tragedies, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (Bradley, 1991, p85). The storylines of Shakespeare's plays frequently revolve around such catastrophic errors or flaws that disrupt the established order and ultimately destroy the hero and those he loves.

Shakespeare returned to romance or tragicomedy in his final era, completing three additional significant works: *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, as well as a collaboration, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Although less foreboding than the tragedies, these four plays have a graver tone than the 1590s comedies, they conclude with reconciliation and forgiveness of potentially catastrophic faults. Shakespeare collaborated with John Fletcher on two further surviving plays, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to shed light on the Queen characters in three Shakespearian dramas, *Hamlet*, *King John*, and *King Henry VIII*. Additionally, it will explore the Queen characters in these plays through the lens of psychological feminist theory. After the research is completed, the reader is expected to get a fresh understanding of the point of view advocated by this research. This viewpoint indicates that Queen Characters in Shakespearean theatre are just as deserving of being on the stage as primary characters as King Characters are. This is accomplished through debating the premise that female characters are deserving of and capable of being the governing figure, independent of stereotyped gender roles, and not simply by being on stage as any other supporting character. Additionally, the research will present an alternative to the prevalent assumption that females are stereotypically assumed to be subjects dominated by the dominating male character (Dowden, 1881, p57).

Women did not have the liberty and liberties they do now during Shakespeare's day; they were primarily regarded housewives, except for the Queen and the wives of the Royal and Noble classes. However, women in England were treated differently and more favorably than women in other European countries. While the Tudor era is replete with material about noble women, particularly royal wives and queens, historians have unearthed minimal record on women's everyday lives. Women's roles in society were largely unrestricted in comparison to their native countries; Spanish and Italian visitors visiting England frequently commented, and sometimes caustically, on the freedom that women enjoyed in England. England had a

higher proportion of educated upper-class women than any other country in Europe. Fortunately, literature has frequently defended women's rights. Although it was regarded an aberration by some poets and playwrights, some perceived the female character as a controlled object when viewed from a male perspective, and the male character as the dominator (Shapiro,1997, p27).

The research assumes that female characters in Shakespearian drama are meant to be a futurist base stone for the earliest attempts of Feminism approaches to build on and use as a reference, as the case is in this research. Hypothetically, the idea was mainly borrowed and developed from ancient civilizations such as the Roman and Greek civilizations. The Roman and Greek cultures had celestial and divine female entities, like the Goddesses of beauty and war (Aphrodite and Athena). These entities inspired writers in the Renaissance era to develop the earliest attempts of Feminism theory. Though it was not transparent that writers founded a new approach at their time, yet it became a base stone on which critics and researchers would build their hypotheses later.

1.1. Women and the Social Attitudes in Literature

Problems and issue related to gender are endless. They can include the way people identify their gender basically, as male, or female and how they have been affected by social structures related to gender as gender hierarchy. Each one tries to describe how society and the way of understanding that society deals with in the present time is affecting them to behave stereotypically. For example, housewife is a stereotype for a housewife in many cultures, and the man is the dominator being who is responsible for protecting women and making sure they have a proper life corresponding to his perspective. When some cultures deal with women in such a stereotypical manner, literature has a new responsibility, not a side task or a neglected one, but as crucial as any of literature's tasks, which is enlightenment. Considering literature and other types of writing pieces are the major influencing sources for humanity, these writings should influence present and future generations to have a better view of humanity in general, and the female gender in specific.

This could be done by introducing the female as a being capable of leading and being in the authority chair, even if they did not handle this authority correctly, on the other hand, the male is not always great and totally right in dealing with such responsibilities. Unfortunately, literature in the past ages did not give women a great deal of interest as they should have; some writers attacked the title of Queen and claiming that women are unfit to rule the kingdom. Considering the social attitudes

that existed before to the era of strong female rulers in Europe in the sixteenth century, it is vital to acknowledge that unhappiness and opposition are the result of change. John Knox, a well-known sixteenth-century statesman known for his orthodox views, was the prominent voice of this opposition.

Knox argues in his book *The First Flash of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* that admitting a woman to the truncheon is against the natural order of things. Knox vigorously opposes his generation's female kings, citing Old Testament and patriarchy cultural conventions to demonstrate their inability and incapacity to rule over nations. Thus, this thesis will deal with female characters in old texts of drama, written by William Shakespeare, to analyze these characters using the Feminist psychological approach in criticism. Based on previous research and books that deal with the same subject or similar ones, this research is a collection of other writers' and scholars' efforts to simplify the earlier mentioned process and gather as many pieces of information as available. The major critical approaches to literature are summarized in a logical order in "A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, fourth edition (1999)" by Wilfred L. Guerin; Earle Labor; Lee Morgan; Jeanne C. Reesman; and John R. Willingham. Additionally, this book includes a section on how to apply the techniques to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Each of these critical approaches aims to briefly discuss misconceived psychological and feminist critique, to describe the psychological and feminist theories most frequently used as interpretive tools by contemporary critics, and to demonstrate through examples how readers can apply these interpretive methods to their reading and appreciation of literature

Women in the Age of Shakespeare by Theresa D. Kemp is a book published in 2010. The author discovers the quality of the female characters in Shakespeare's plays, how each character is built, what differentiates each character from the other, and how these characters may have been influenced by ancient themes and the Roman and Greek mythologies. The aforementioned, of course, answers the question of what makes these characters worthy to endure for four ages in the history of English literature as dominating ones in the world of dramatic production, regardless of being written and brought to life by the great playwright William Shakespeare the book also states the situation of women in Shakespeare's everyday life away from the stage in addition to their status in his works and performance.

Kemp wrote his book to be like an official document for other scholars to

consult in historical and literary matters in the Jacobian and Elizabethan ages. *A Feminist Perspectives on Power* is an article paper first published in October 2005. In this paper, the author claims that the literature on power is marked by deep, widespread, and seemingly intractable disagreements over how the term power should be understood. He also defines power according to other philosophers. The paper also defines power from other perspectives, including the Liberal Feminist, Phenomenological Feminist, Radical Feminist, Socialist Feminist, Intersectional, Poststructuralist Feminist Approaches, and the like.

The author concludes concept of power is central to a wide variety of debates in feminist philosophy, and it is difficult to contain the concept of power from a feminist perspective in one theory that fits all feminist approaches.

In Sexuality of Female Royals in Renaissance Plays: Duchess of Malfi, Gertrude and Cleopatra Ishrat Jahan Prioti debates the three royal characters in the plays from the *Renaissance Era: Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster, *Hamlet and Antoni and Cleopatra* by William Shakespeare. The author also states the situation of the female gender from the dark ages until the reign of Queen Elizabeth chronologically, how women suffered injustice in gender issue and were under the domination of men and church authority for many ages, even in the early Renaissance.

Afterward in the thesis, the focus moves to Renaissance major writers, including William Shakespeare of course, and their writings regarding female advocacy; creating a female character in their plays to present a crucial role and deliver an important message. This research also seeks help from other psychological and feminist essays to aid its purposes regarding the attempt to change people's attitudes towards the female gender to a better one. As mentioned earlier, this can only be done by revealing the misunderstanding of the female gender throughout history, in addition to state and explain other writers' efforts who wrote about similar subjects and, of course, the base stone of these research the literary works themselves written by William Shakespeare.

1.2 Psychological Feminist Theory

In Europe of the 19th and 20th centuries psychoanalysis and feminism coexist as innovatory movements. During the first wave of feminism, psychoanalysis and feminism seem to ignore each other: psychoanalysis constitutes a revolutionary treatment in the field of mental health and feminism a movement which fights for

women's rights. The feminist movement also included the liberation of feminine sexuality with which psychoanalysis deals as well (Soumpenioti, 2010, 2)

However, the first feminist movement was directed more in the political rights of women and only later, at the decade 1970, dealt with questions of identity and recognized the contribution of psychoanalysis about the determination of significance of woman's mentality. In this second period different tendencies in the movement came out, some in favor and other against Freud's opinions.

The First Feminist Wave in central Europe was a result of Enlightenment. Thus, it is not strange that women's fights for their rights followed the changes of liberal governments that sometimes prevailed the political arena and others disappeared under the pressure of reaction. In Austria, during the reign Maria Theresia and Joseph the 2nd many progressive opinions against women's oppression were expressed in the palace environment, which reflected Mary Wollstonecraft quotes. In Germany, the Union of Women (BDF) follows a progressive way of radicalization mainly because the union had been under the leadership of organizations as the "Union for the Vote" and the movement for "New Ethic" from 1898 to 1907. However, in the general assembly of the Union in 1908 moderate and conservative opinions dominated, which resulted to change of the political direction. These preservatives' opinions summarized in what we call "social Darwinism" and contained the beginnings a racist perception for health, while liberals' opinions aimed at the improvement of society through "the improvement of woman's sex economically, legally and intellectually" (Soumpenioti, 2010, p.4).

Feminist psychology movement began in the 1970s. Its beginnings were memorably noted and analyzed in *Signs* in 1975 by Mary Parlee, on the first inclusion of the psychology of women as a special topic in the Annual Review of Psychology and the formation of a new American Psychological Association (APA) division on the psychology of women. In her article, Parlee focused particularly on the impact of feminism on psychology, noting with approval that these developments meant that "women, at least as a topic of research, are unlikely to be excluded with the same efficient thoroughness as they have in the past" (Stewart & Dottolo, 2006, p 493). At the same time, she registered some reservations about the concept of a psychology of women: "Considered as a subfield of psychology . . . the notion of a 'psychology of women' seems to me to be a conceptual monstrosity . . . an institutionally sanctioned

distinction between ‘psychology’ . . . and ‘psychology of women’” (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.493).

In 1976, also in *Signs*, Reese Vaughters reviewed the contributions feminist researchers had made to empirical research in many areas. However, she concluded that the important challenges coming from feminist psychologists were methodological and epistemological: “There is nothing new about women being psychologists. What is revolutionary is the force of women in psychology and in the psychology of women to change the structure of the belief system of science to construct a psychology of human behavior” (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.51).

In 1979 Parlee largely maintained this focus; she discussed four kinds of work that concerned “the relationship between feminist psychology and the field as a whole” (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.76). Here she considered the vigor of feminist psychologists’ critiques of methodological practices in the field, as well as their empirical research. Her article was much less hopeful than Vaughters's earlier one, however, as she noted “the strength of psychology’s resistance to feminist insights” (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.324).

In 1985 Nancy Henley again reviewed “patterns of development within feminist psychology and its relation to mainstream psychology” (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.4). Also enlarged the focus of consideration. She noted that although there were important empirical developments in feminist psychology, “Psychologists of women and gender have seldom brought broader feminist theory into their work (Soumpeniotti, 2010, p.421).

In short, Henley emphasized the impact or lack of it of interdisciplinary women’s studies on feminist psychologists. In fact, the relative absence of psychology from *Signs* over the subsequent decades suggests a rather distant relationship between the two. Apart from narrower essays on topics (Rochelle Semmel Albin [1977] on rape, Richard C. Friedman et al. [1980] on the menstrual cycle, Janet Hyde [1990] on meta-analysis and the psychology of gender differences), Henley’s is the last review essay focused on the discipline by psychologists in *Signs* until this one (Stewart & Dottolo, 2006, p. 497).

This section focuses on the process of Shakespeare's analysis of the play from the perspective of psychological feminism. In particular, the three plays *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII*, and *King John* provide excellent female roles for academic analysis.

Through his development and depiction of female roles, Shakespeare shows how fully he understands the difficulties involved in becoming a woman. Although he made a conscious effort to keep women under the eyes of suspicious men in both works, and even though he reflected the values of his patriarchy society in general, Shakespeare did his best to express his views. Views on the nature of the problem. Female identity and put forward his own views on the ideal status of women in the patriarchy society.

Basically, literary criticism interprets Shakespeare's chronicles in three ways: as an early study of the excellence of drama, preparing for great tragedies; as a form of entertainment that is indistinguishable from other types of entertainment such as comedy or tragedy; or, to this article, more recently and more relevantly, as feminist texts, it is closely related to the historical background that caused them.

Starting from the third direction of interpretation, this chapter focuses on Shakespeare's last historical drama "Henry VIII", to understand how much of the insight of the Elizabethan era as propaganda and anxiety is encoded here.

Although Queen Elizabeth I invested a lot of energy in her legal image as a ruling queen, the issue of ruling women in medieval and early modern literature is far from a tense subject. The best example may be Giovanni Boccaccio's famous female history *De mulieribus claris* (real or mythical female characters), the book he wrote is his influential *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355-1374), which inspired the entire Renaissance tradition, John Lydgate's translation of "The Fall of the Prince" (1439), and even the Elizabethan playwrights Shakespeare and Marlowe. Also included, they continued the so-called *de casibus* historiography tradition. The collection of biographies talks about the life, rise and fall of famous nobles, trying to teach moral courses or convey philosophical and religious concepts related to providence, good luck, and bad luck.

In his book devoted to female figures, which was a source of inspiration for one of the earliest instances of feminist writing Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies*. Boccaccio (2012) evokes noble women who displayed intelligence and bravery and are remembered for their deeds together with infamous ladies, who displayed unnatural impulses and grotesque needs, the latter category outnumbering the former by far.

It is not surprising that the French historian Philippe Delorme (2011) pointed out in a recent book about shameful European queens and princesses, because history

has always been written by men, who are in the body, it must be morally and intellectually superior, so it hates women and is biased. When women are determined to rule, he goes on to say that they are considered cruel and ruthless; when they are persuasive, they will be accused of temptation or witchcraft; the respectability of men and the vileness of women create families and nations Shame, misfortune, and chaos. To discuss the female figures in Shakespeare's chronicles related to Elizabeth I (or more generally, Tudor women), we must first remember the situation of the British dynasty in the early and first half of the 16th century. No female monarch has ever ruled those who have temporarily held power and thrones in her own right on British territory, such as Matilda, the daughter of Henry I.

William Shakespeare reveals an uncanny insight into the social problems facing Elizabethan women throughout his plays. Shakespearean female characters take on a variety of roles and traits depending on the genre of the play. The women of Shakespeare's comedies are, to some degree, in control and make life interesting for their male counterparts in the quest for love. On the other hand, Shakespeare's tragedies and romances reveal women to be much more complex creatures involved in greater philosophical struggles. Shakespeare's characterization of women necessitates further study and discussion to fully appreciate his genius for interpreting human nature (Conley, 2003, p.135).

Historiography is a major concern in Shakespeare's history plays. Characters repeatedly allude to history, past and future, and define their actions as attempts to inscribe their names in the historical record. Like their playwright, these characters show an obsessive concern with the work of the historian - the writing, reading, and preservation of historical texts (Rackin, 1985. p. 329).

No woman is the protagonist in a Shakespearean history play. Renaissance gender role definitions prescribed silence as a feminine virtue, and Renaissance sexual mythology associated the feminine with body and matter as opposed to masculine intellect and spirit. Renaissance historiography constituted a masculine tradition, written by men, devoted to the deeds of men, glorifying the masculine virtues of courage, honor, and patriotism, and dedicated to preserving the names of past heroes and recording their patriarchy genealogies. Within that historical record, women had no voice.

The protagonists of Shakespeare's history plays, conceived both as subjects and as writers of history, were inevitably male. The women who do appear are

typically defined as opponents and subverts of the historical and historiographical enterprise in short, as anti-historians. But Shakespeare does give them a voice. A voice that challenges the logo centric, masculine historical record. For the most part, and especially in his early histories, Shakespeare depicts male protagonists' masculine historical projects against both female characters who threaten to obstruct those projects and feminine appeals to the audience that threaten to discredit them. In Shakespeare's later history plays those feminine voices become more insistent.

They both threaten to invalidate the great, inherited historical myths that Shakespeare found in his historiographical sources and imply that before the masculine voice of history can be accepted as valid, it must come to terms with women and the subversive forces they represent. However, as soon as Shakespeare attempts to incorporate those feminine forces, marrying words and things, spirit and matter, historiography itself becomes problematic, no longer speaking with the clear, univocal voice of unquestioned tradition but re-presented as a dubious construct, always provisional, always subject to erasure and reconstruction, and never adequate to recover the past in full presence Shakespeare's only attempt to depict such a world is *Hamlet*, *King John*, and *Henry VIII*. Female characters, for the first time, are sharply individualized, and they play more important and more varied roles than in any of Shakespeare's other English histories.

Throughout his plays, Shakespeare depicts two types of women: Women who stand in opposition to men and deserve to be treated equally, and women who play the parts of Elizabethan women in a submissive manner.

In *Hamlet*, the character of Gertrude can be interpreted as 'strong' (Findlay 152). She is a Queen, then she must draw conclusions that benefit the state and put the needs of the state ahead of her own desires. To accomplish so, she should marry Claudius, even though he betrayed the King. When Gertrude marries Claudius, Hamlet criticizes her for being lusty and weak. A widow is a lady who's already lost her husband. The widow must mourn her husband and refrain from considering remarrying. Hamlet is partially enraged with Gertrude for she remarried, and therefore her dead husband's memory diminishes (Findlay, 2010, p445). Because Hamlet's actual affections are for his father, he does not even want his father's memory or soul to fade away.

Experts generally suggest that Shakespeare's *King John* (1623) is primarily about patriarchal legitimacy and patriarchal desire, and with good cause. The play

concerns King Richard the Lion heart's succession to the kingdom when he died without the need for a rightful heir, as well as the founding of the Plantagenet dynasty, on whose ancestors so many of Shakespeare's historical plays center. *King John* is unique in that it takes place around two hundred years before any of Shakespeare's other histories, in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. John, the youngest but only surviving son of King Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and younger brother to the late King Richard, holds the English crown with the help of his mother at the opening of the play (Calahan,2016, p.72).

While in the final historical play *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare makes some other key component of Henry's character in this drama is his interaction with his wives, Queen Katherine initially and then Queen Anne, as well as his mindset toward them. Katherine is portrayed as a competent and resilient woman. She first emerges in act one, scene two, kneeling, but Henry picks her up and embraces her, inviting her to sit next to him and assuring her, "You have half our power; / the other moiety ere you ask is given. / Repeat your wish and take it" (Kizewski, 2014, p. 22). He is gracious to her and appears to value her presence; he does not want her to kneel in front of him for too long.

As a result, she informs him about the Amicable Grant, a lately established levy on the people. She looks to be more knowledgeable about what is going on in the kingdom than the king, and she appears to be a decent Queen concerned about her people and Buckingham in this scene. There is nothing problematic with Henry's behavior with her, either. Afterward, the king realizes that his relationship may be illegal, and he announces that Cardinal Campeggio is on his way from Rome by Pope's command and that the Queen will be defended by the best scholars. Henry rarely despises Queen Katherine about any manner; he appears to be terribly tormented by his reservations about their marriage, but he still appears to respect and, in his words, love her.

In sum, in the three plays that are written by Shakespeare, women have been described in a new way. A way that is somehow modern in the cannon of literature. Shakespeare makes a great move in the form of creative writing when he gives women a space in controlling and sharing authority. Women become equal to men and share the same role in society. Shakespeare provides women a credit to be the second part of society that cannot be neglected. This new concept in describing the role of women is

the central objective of three feminist waves. So, in the realm of psychological feminist, women viewed as much as Shakespeare has had done.

CHAPTER TWO

Women in Shakespeare's Plays

William Shakespeare was born on April 26, 1564, in England. He was a poet and actor who is widely regarded as the greatest English writer and dramatist of all time. He died on April 23, 1616 (Willbern, 1975, p.7). He wrote 38 plays, 154 sonnets, three poems, and a handful of unpublished pieces. Collaborations are included in his previous works. His works have been translated and performed more frequently than those of any other dramatist in all major languages.

Shakespeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway. Susannah was one of three children, along with the twins Hamnet and Judith. Between 1585 and 1592, Lord Chamberlain's Men, renamed the King's Men, and enjoyed a prosperous career in London as an actor, author, and partner in a play company. At the age of 49 (about 1613), he appears to have retired to Stratford, where he died three years later. There are few papers relating to Shakespeare's privacy that have survived. This has sparked widespread discussion regarding his physical appearance, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs (Greenblatt, 2005, p. 10).

2.1. Shakespeare's Concern for Women and Patriarchal Issues

During his plays. William Shakespeare uncovers a bizarre image of Elizabethan women's societal difficulties. Shakespearean female characters take on a variety of roles and characteristics, depending on the play. To some extent, the ladies in Shakespearean comedies are in charge and keep their love-seeking rivals entertained. Shakespeare's plays and novels, on the other hand, show that women are more complicated individual who are interested in deeper philosophical topics. Shakespeare reveals how profoundly he understands the difficulties placed on him by being a woman throughout his creation and presentation of the female character. For example, he tries to demonstrate how problem-solving femininity, in his perspective, epitomizes his ideal women.

Shakespeare Was completely impacted by the formal thinking that pervades his patriarchal civilization in all spheres of daily life. For example, based on the commonly accepted picture of the male plug, masculine supremacy severely limited her function over Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare's *Desdemona in Othello* is an incredible example of Shakespeare's complexity. Desdemona is one of Shakespeare's

most maligned female characters. *Desdemona* embodies a notion of female duality and an individual expression of the Elizabethan world. By honoring their father, she acknowledges the patriarchal system's dominance.

It expresses the desire of the woman to choose her husband by fusing traditional and modern ideals in partnership with the existing hierarchy. The concept was designed to be singular. Extreme conceptions of femininity are comparable to those of Iago and Cassio. Shakespeare uses Iago and Cassio to highlight the extreme appearances of birds in Elizabethan culture. Saint Joe Cassio's progress could not be coordinated. The predominance of these extreme views demonstrates the patriarchal Elizabethan thought's limitations. Shakespeare's use of jealousy as a subject any behavior by women other than that of a wife is compelling in a patriarchal culture. Shakespeare's writing was bolstered by a depiction of behavior suspected by women without regard for the ramifications or penalties.

Shakespeare, while coexisting with him, establishes his new femininity onstage while satiating his audience with food. Jealousy enabled Shakespeare to satisfy his audience while pursuing his creative goals. *Othello* also demonstrates another of the Elizabethans' numerous preconceived notions about women; a fundamental concept that recognizes the values of a community that serves to perpetuate its own vision was offered for so many years in a natural civilization. Shakespeare frequently returned to these manly ideals and discussed the location. This is the misogyny scale, or an idea that you admire or dread. In terms of measuring the measurements, Shakespeare receives some of his most vehement sexual condemnation of women, and the masculine fear of women pervades his measurement scale.

Shakespeare's male role expresses patriarchal concern about women as the cause of society's evil; by portraying unmarried people, he supports 'ideal marriage'. Persecution and strife take various shapes in all of Shakespeare's female characters. Juliet is pregnant, and her fiancé is serving a life sentence for out-of-marriage infidelity. The first married woman she encounters. Shakespeare's shortened Juliet embraces a joint prostitute in the eyes of masculine authority. Juliet is to the left of a Central Elizabethan model of a married woman. Shakespeare's primary objectives were to depict women in England. Shakespeare was a chauvinist, who remains a point of contention among experts. He possesses extraordinary insight into the masculine and female human experience. Shakespeare analyzes the existence and extent of female power in a collection of plays, the meaning of 'female and strength', argues for the representativeness of women's characters, and questions gender construction.

Gender has been characterized as preconceptions of specific ways of speaking, acting, and thinking that are considered proper for men or women.

This results in the creation of a male and female universe. This is the argument made by the author that the plays either support or reject this notion in a variety of ways. In four distinct areas: language, work, dress, and gender. This argument is debatable. Whereas the play demonstrates that grossing females is immoral, the author argues that power can exist without impinging on gender values. They are created concurrently from female sex. Make the case that masculine characters are similarly gendered. Despite this, women have a greater negative effect than men, which may imply that guys are also victims. (Columbians, 2003, p. 135–144).

2.2. The Depiction of Women in Shakespeare's Plays

Men portraying women in public theatrics dates all the way back to ancient Greek theatre and is found in a variety of dramatic traditions throughout the world. The reasons for the establishment of these traditions, which have existed in various forms for thousands of years, are inextricably related to our understanding of sex and sexuality in general, and the role of women. Ancient Greek women, like many women in Shakespeare's England, were expected to survive and raise children.

Numerous fundamental notions were at the heart of the 17th-century English gender relations. English ideas of sex and gender, women's legal rights, and feminist cultural demands all played a significant role in the performance of Shakespeare's theater and stories during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Along with numerous legal restrictions on women's rights, significant societal pressure has been imposed on women to conform to prescribed social roles. The woman was expected to be submissive, calm, and supportive in the home, as her roles were strictly limited to marriage, childbirth, and housework.

Their primary purpose was to ascertain the extent to which social position and economic class had a role, with Queen Elizabeth I serving as a prominent example. Women were not permitted to perform professionally on stage until 1661. It is beneficial to explore contemporary conceptions of gender to better understand why young males in women's roles were accepted in Elizabethan England and why women were legally constrained by theater.

Gender and sexuality were constructed in early modern England under the influence of two major forces: medicine and religion. At the time, the physical sciences were heavily influenced by Greek and Roman thinkers such as Plato, Hippocrates, Galen, and many others in their understanding and treatment of the

human body. Women were primarily flawed or incomplete men in this medical system. Due to a lack of heat, a phenomenon that would have resulted in the development of male reproductive organs.

As a result, women are more susceptible to mental and physical illnesses, necessitating genuine sex supervision, management, and, on occasion, self-control. Surprisingly, secular perceptions of sex and gender are at odds with biblical concepts. The Bible substituted two additional genders: Adam and Eve. Though the English king resigned from the Roman Catholic Church in the 15th century, Christian Biblical principles continued to dictate much of how sex is viewed and coded throughout *King Henry VIII's* reign.

While the Bible contains contradictory messages on sex and gender, early modern English society fostered the idea that women must be ruled and controlled by men. Additionally, the Bible was used to satisfy all people's sexual demands and to forbid wearing garments. Despite certain differences, these two major influences were reflected in the similar legal and social obligations placed on women at the time, when men and women were strictly segregated.

When a woman crossed gender lines and wore men's clothing in public during that era, she faced the same social stigma as actresses, only she was arrested and jailed. One of those women was Mary Firth, also known as the Mall of Cutpurse. Mary was frequently seen in public dressed as a man and mingled with the London crime scene. In the 17th century, she also portrayed *The Roaring Girl*. As a result, such activity was viewed as a threat to women's hierarchy, and any woman caught 'incidentally dressing' was viewed as rebelling against the best among them, mainly men. Under identical circumstances, any man who is imprisoned is also punished for wearing female clothing, which is viewed as a perversion of masculine and a sign of moral and sexual degeneration.

Although the consequences of so-called 'cross-dressing' were legally and socially significant in public, the theater provided an unparalleled forum for public manipulation and sex manipulation, albeit by males alone. Additionally, it is unknown if males posing as women constitute a legal threat to masculinity; nor does it constitute an intended challenge to hierarchy or the construction of sex in early modern England. It was, however, a common theatrical practice for men to portray women in behavior, costumes, and scripts, just as the audience was accustomed to being well aware of this. Shakespeare's day saw a rise in conservatism, both socially and legally.

Frequently, theater locations spoke to the moral and spiritual peril inherent in contemporary theatrical activity, notably the depiction of women by young people.

These essays also highlighted the dangers inherent in public business theater in general, particularly in terms of undermining women's gender preconceptions. In the Puritan imagination, theater has been a business venture in which women risk their economic and social independence to overthrow their rightful lords. Between 1642 and 1660, various Puritan factions were able to close theaters due to the political turmoil of the British Civil War and restoration.

Even after King Charles II legalized professional labor for women in 1661, severe social stigma and gender norms persisted. Throughout history, women of all races have fought for and defended expanded rights and benefits in England and its colonies, and later in the United States. These changes occurred not only legislatively, but also stylistically, commercially, educationally, and artistically. When women continued to participate in theatre, new forms of gender plays emerged.

The 1899 portrait of Sarah Bernhardt as Hamlet is arguably one of a woman who portrays a man as one of the best-known instances. Indeed, towards the beginning of the 21st century, women increasingly depicted males in so-called breaks. Since Shakespeare's day, scientific concepts of sex and gender have continued to evolve in tandem to an ever-social awareness of sex and sexuality. The contemporary social trends concerning gender incompatibility and individual gender variations are particularly significant. These developments foster the emergence of fresh and intriguing themes in Shakespeare's writing (Garcia et al, 2018).

In Shakespeare's plays when all is said, we can run over a few types of female beings. Its influence with different people and their motives or sides is as regularly underestimated as the women themselves. Women in Shakespeare's plays had reliable critical imagery, even the main character now and then. Regardless of whether they make initial encounters and base plays, or raise good and social great inquiries, they have been reliably put to test conditions. Few are more women than others, and their influence on the play is diverse for all.

In fact, they regularly outperform males in performance. It is relatively unbelievable, if we think of the status of women, evidently with their separation and harsh conditions, in the days of Shakespeare-Elizabethan England in the sixteenth century. Whatever the case, there may be other explanations for why he introduced such manners to his characters. Shakespeare was a feminist, or though generally inaccurate, because we should not overlook that he composed primarily for a male infusion.

Especially in his comedies, every now notices a woman who assumes the most cohesive character. It is very important to know the setting to fully understand it.

Women could do nothing but clean and cook for their husbands. They were similarly addressed and told as if they were staple dogs. In addition, women did not have the opportunity to choose whom to marry. Their steadfastness had a place first with their fathers and then with their wives.

This man-centered structure has constrained them to become submissive and helpless, not only according to man and society. In general, women were treated horribly compared to the present. The moment one thinks of the female characters of Shakespeare, one needs to remember that the plays were written when women were seen as weak, disapproving of creations who were adept at making terrible decisions whenever they had the opportunity. Shakespeare generally divided his female characters into two classifications.

One was the quiet, loyal, sublime, brave woman now and then, embodying every single one of that she was alluring in the female. The other was the independent partner and demonic leader. With and amidst this male-dominated society, Shakespeare portrays women as in any way equal to those of men. Shakespeare's views on women vividly characterize his plays and how, by using women as the most ruling and leading figures ever, he shows a surprising gift for separating the obstacles that have held women hostage. In what follows, some examples of Shakespeare's female characters are treated (Gertrude).

Through her hasty marriage and refusal to trust her child, Hamlet, Shakespeare portrays Gertrude as a double passerby and finalist. It seems that the women characters in *Hamlet* do not have many redeemable characteristics. Shakespeare successfully demonstrates the subordination of women to men by showing that without men, women cannot function as faithfully stable or healthy people. After the king's death, Gertrude quickly married the late king's brother, Claudius.

Gertrude's marriage to Claudius was a despicable disappointment and humiliation for Hamlet who was horrified by the speed with which his mother recovered from her widowhood. Not attending a period of grief for the Queen suggests that she demanded a husband so badly that she shamelessly cheated on Hamlet and her late husband and inserted herself into a corrupt marriage to allay her depression. Gertrude's energy to marry again testifies to her failure to act freely from the man. Shakespeare portrays Ophelia in a comparable way to Gertrude in that she is ill-equipped to keep up with her emotional toughness when she does not have a man to take a huge job in her life.

Ophelia collapses into frenzy precisely following the death of her father Polonius. Shakespeare quickly makes it clear to the reader that he is her father and

brother, unlike Ophelia herself when composing a play, Shakespeare reliably went to deliberately show disasters with intense feelings and activities. Women in *Hamlet*, Ophelia, and Gertrude hold positions of little importance, indicative of the present absence of autonomy; He made these characters rely exclusively on the main characters of the play, the men. Although Shakespeare typically wrote tragedies, he was a man of emotions.

If she does not play the comedy, the female role is emphasized as a weak lady, making her susceptible. Villa and Claudius, the play's two key male characters, provide the impression of being in the shadows of each choice and violent action. Shakespeare portrays *Gertrude and Ophelia* as the men he associates with and frequently orders in Hamlet: reliant, sensitive, and lifeless.

William Shakespeare joins many themes and ideas in his play *Hamlet*. Among the many critical ideas, the position of a woman is likely to be neglected. Only two characters in the play are female. Their lines are rare, but they hold enormous importance in terms of the action and plot of the play. Ophelia, a proposed admirer of Prince Hamlet, and Queen Gertrude, his mother, do not seem huge, but their activities and personalities consider different occasions to appear.

Gertrude and Ophelia are controlled and belittled. In their weak will, they end up deceiving Hamlet. Hamlet watches their control by individuals over other activities and can legitimize and move forward with his work. Since women were relied upon to stay in their homes and raise children, men additionally accepted that females did not know appropriate behavior and were unqualified for basic leadership, like Ophelia and Gertrude in *Hamlet*.

Having less emotional expectation, Shakespeare reliably wanted the starting dash in every play he composed, but while doing so, he spoke to the ladies as helpless and dependent on men. It is discouraged that Ophelia and Gertrude are exceptionally latent and obligated by everything they are told, as opposed to self-confident and proving their own importance. The villa displays the importance of the Elizabethan lady by making use of tenderness, dependence, and absence of distress. Gertrude is seen as exaggerating when she tries to exercise joint judgment with their husbands (Gupton, 2001, Pp. 672-674).

2.2.1. Role of Gender in Shakespeare Plays

Sexuality is a central concept in Shakespeare's plays. Sexuality is used to manipulate, propagandize, or, in certain cases, both, depending on the sort of play.

During Shakespeare's day, there was a societal construction of sex and gender standards, since there was now a hierarchy between the sexes, and each had its own position in society. Men were men; they were rugged and self-sufficient, unaffected by emotions. Women are domestic, man-made, and emotional, and are hence frequently assumed to make terrible choices. Shakespeare deconstructs these rules to demonstrate their ambiguity in his plays by narrowing the lines of sexuality. During the period of William Shakespeare, social conventions around sex and gender were comparable to those that exist now.

The significant difference here is that women are now fully conscious of their place in society, generally holding the same viewpoint as males, as opposed to Shakespeare's primacy in the 16th century. Shakespeare strove to subvert those rules by highlighting the uncertainty and subjectivity of gender and sexuality transition. By attempting to decipher society's unspoken rules about sex and sexuality, he can be considered a feminist by contemporary standards. Numerous researchers question if Shakespeare's sexual was reflected by a specific literature and whether he had homosexual sentiments toward males. However, it is not known whether this is true or not, but we do know that he shattered gender and sexual norms in his plays. It was contingent upon the sort of play used to deconstruct gender and sexuality.

Shakespeare wrote in a variety of genres, including romance, tragedy, historical fiction, and comedy. Each species had its own way of living, its own means of deconstructing sexuality, and sexuality had evolved. He was aware that his light-hearted tracks enabled him to continue with his comedies. It has not only utilized sex and gender opportunistically, but also as a formidable instrument for acquiring political dominance over others. Finally, sex and gender were used as propaganda by the English to demonstrate how great England was and how it would always defeat France. Shakespeare's deconstruction of sexuality and sex demonstrates that social systems are not fixed and may be broken (Borrow, 2014, p 6).

Women's roles in Shakespeare plays are much more limited than those in size and in number, female power is repeatedly described as threatening or even diabolical. Indeed, Shakespeare's representations, they often appear less sympathetic than other playwrights among the plays of history, for example, the most much studied and perhaps the most admired is *Henry IV*, the most marginalized female character in the plays of *Henry VI King John* and *Henry VIII*.

In Shakespeare's most famous historical plays, in the sixteenth century women in the family control large estates both on the land and in the interior capital, they also inherited property, and acted as executors of probate, participates in lawsuits designed

to defend and enhance their financial resources Interests. The status of English women was deteriorating during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This does not mean that the status and opportunities of women were on an equal footing with men During the Middle Ages, but many religious and economic factors, and politics, was now producing a growing division between Public and private life and the increasing domestication Women and the restriction of their economic scope. For women the work was increasingly distinguished from the work of men as was the women they are excluded from the trades and professions in which their ancestors were active (Rackin,2005, p. 9-49).

2.2.2. Women Conditions in Shakespeare's Era

Elizabethan England was a harsh patriarchal society, and its laws strictly restricted what women could and could not do. Women are not allowed to go to school or university, which means they cannot pursue careers such as law or medicine. Most guilds that train skilled workers such as goldsmiths and carpenters do not officially accept women. Even notorious acting professions prohibit women from entering.

The only industries that women legally engage in are those that can be mastered and practiced at home, such as hat making and winemaking. Women are also prohibited from voting. Although they can inherit property from their father or husband, they cannot purchase property themselves. In addition to these legal restrictions, women are also bound by strict social expectations, which do not apply to men in the same way. The sermons and books of the Elizabethan era encouraged women to remain silent and obey male authority, whether it was the authority of the father or the husband (Borrow, 2014, p. 2).

Marriage in England during the Elizabethan era copied the patriarchal structure of society. Legally, girls can get married at the age of 12 with parental consent, although young women usually get married in their teens or early twenties. When a woman's father thinks, she can get married, he has a large degree of control over who she marries. Among aristocrats, marriage is often more about politics than love, and women usually have no say in their marriage.

After marriage, the woman is no longer the father's responsibility, and the husband becomes her legal master. Shakespeare reflected this situation in "*The Taming of the Shrew*". *Petruchio* called his wife "my goods, my movable property... my cow... my anything" (Aspinal, 2002, p. 141). As the wife's legal guardian, the husband can punish the wife as he sees fit, especially in the case of infidelity. In several of his plays, Shakespeare showed the real danger that men's anxiety about infidelity brings

to women.

Hermione in winter's story is imprisoned because her husband mistakenly believed that she was pregnant by another man. *In Othello*, Desdemona was murdered by her husband because he thought she had an affair. Despite the strong patriarchal in the society in which Shakespeare grew up, for most of his life, the throne was occupied by a woman—and an unmarried woman. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, there was a fierce debate about whether women could rule as effectively as men. Faced with doubts from men, Elizabeth kept trying to prove herself.

When talking to her troops before the Spanish invasion, she assured them in a famous way: "I have the body of a weak woman, but "I have the heart and stomach of the king."(Susan, 1977:12) However, Elizabeth enjoyed a long and politically stable rule. Prove the effectiveness of female rule. Elizabeth's success as a ruler may have inspired other women to demand more freedom, especially in their marriages. Between 1595 and 1620, the number of disputes and separations between aristocratic wives and their husbands increased dramatically. However, for the same reason, the rise of women's dissatisfaction with marriage restraint has also given birth to the metaphor of the "*shrew*"—that is, a radical woman who dares to speak out. The parable of the shrew, in turn, rekindled the husband's need to discipline his wife, and once again updated the patriarchal norms.

2.2.3. Feminist Perspectives in Shakespeare's Plays

It's widely accepted that Shakespeare was a man ahead of his time. Ben Jonson remarked in 1623, "He was not of an age, but for all time!" And he was true; people still read his plays and adapt and replicate his works today.

Victimization of both genders is a common theme in the relationships between male and female characters. As a result, women who must deal with political intrigues and manipulations fall prey to guys whose egos govern their actions. Plays of Shakespeare depict women who refuse to be subordinated by males and demand equal rights as well as passive women who perform Elizabethan roles. Wearing period-appropriate attire did not ensure a happy existence for Elizabethan women, as shown by costumed ladies. This resulted in male authority and harshness wreaking havoc on all female characters, regardless of whether they were subservient or not. A man or a woman disguise themselves as the other often in Shakespeare's plays. As much as one-fifth of Shakespeare's existing plays have characters who hide their gender. Young male actors playing female roles during Elizabethan times led to the notion that this gender misunderstanding was widespread. There are two main hypotheses as to why

Shakespeare was so enamored with the idea of cross-dressing: either he found the idea of a male dressing up as a woman amusing, or he was a secret feminist. According to this scenario, it is possible that Shakespeare was a feminist in the 16th century since many of his female heroes are strong, educated, capable women who defy the established norms.

If feminism did not exist during Shakespeare's lifetime or for hundreds of years after he died, is it appropriate to label him a feminist? Is Shakespeare's work relevant now if we see it through the prism of feminism? A few critics may claim that portraying William Shakespeare as a true feminist when he was a guy who played a woman mimicking a man was unjust. Seeing a play through the eyes of someone who saw it during the Elizabethan era is almost impossible for us (Haniph, 2017, p36).

Erasmus and Thomas More are convinced that knowledge is sufficient to address all of humanity's issues. They believed that the freedom of humankind was possible only via education, because they thought that women had the same capacities as men. Erasmus Western cultural theory maintains that rationality is synonymous with masculinity, while irrationality and sensuality are tied to femininity. The religious intolerance of Thomas More and his followers was not tolerated in Utopia or anywhere else in Europe.

Beforehand, silence was seen as a virtue that was frequently possessed by the best couples. More spoke in a more eloquent manner than himself, it believes intelligent women are likely to be the best wives, because silence does not equate to submission; it is a defensive strategy against tyranny. Support for women's advancement via the expansion of education. "As a break from the difficulties of the world, the wife's company gives the husband not only a companionship of another person but also the benefit of her wisdom on the cares he brings to her." (Garcia et al, 2018).

John Calvin and other Protestant reformers favored equal educational opportunities for all. Martin Luther in contrast, believed silence to be a virtue that is enjoyed alone. It was a protector of the religious institution of marriage. The idea may be secure, but its implementation is futile because of the social mayhem it causes. Protestant theologians, however, believe that women were created to live domestic lives, to bear children, and to take care of their homes and families. Marriage is childbearing, for the most part.

Raising children was the main job of women. As a rule, literary works serve as a reflection of the time in which they are written. It is a snapshot of social life, culture, and the era when it was written. Because Shakespeare did not write about anything he

considered unimportant, his genius is clear. He dealt with a broad spectrum of people, from their personal troubles to their anxieties and concerns. His opinions are distinct, but the challenges reflect the period in which he lived. There is no author who can avoid the effect of the time, society, and current world on his or her mind. A gifted writer, though, uses his time to ponder fresh perspectives.

2.3. Shakespearean Drama throughout the World

Shakespeare's plays are a canon of approximately 39 dramatic works written by English poet, playwright, and actor William Shakespeare. The exact number of plays as well as their classifications as tragedy, history, or comedy is a matter of scholarly debate. Shakespeare's Drama is widely regarded as one of the greatest dramas in English, and it is continuously performed all over the world. These plays have been translated into various major living languages. Many of his plays were published in quarto forms, but about half of them remained unpublished until the posthumous "*First Folio*" was published in 1623. According to the classification used in the first folio, his theatrical tradition is divided into tragedy, comedy and history. However, modern critics call some of these dramas "problem dramas", which are difficult to categorize, or may deliberately break general conventions, and introduce the word romance to scholars who believe that his later comedies. When Shakespeare first arrived in London in the late 1570s or early 1580s, playwrights writing for London's new commercial theaters (such as "*The Curtain*") were combining the two theater traditions into a new and unique Elizabethan complex. Previously, the most common form of popular British drama was *Tudor moral drama*. These plays, usually celebrating piety, use anthropomorphic moral attributes to urge or instruct the protagonist to choose a moral life instead of an evil life. The characters and plot conditions are largely symbolic rather than realistic. As a child, Shakespeare might see this type of drama and maybe mystery drama and miracle drama (Nimavat, 2017, p 145).

2.4. Women in Shakespeare's World

The roles of early modern women included daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers. Women are not seen as fit to play the role of soldier or judge, and as warriors of country. Now, socioeconomic class as much as gender determines the scope of roles available to women during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Standards of living and economic situation in Elizabethan and Jacobite England which was a very hierarchical society for both men and women, was harsh for the majority of the

English people. Early modern families were often very hard. With the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of *Henry VIII*, Women's life choice has been eliminated, pressure to about marriage was increased for women, legislative and cultural aspect Gertrude in *Hamlet* is another rare example of a Shakespearean mother. But in this play, Shakespeare does not introduce any of his female characters, Gertrude or Ophelia, with inner monologues or expressions of within the confines of the play, both characters primarily interact and obey men struggling for power. Gertrude's initial presence is a nurturing presence of motherhood, worried about what surprises her is Hamlet's excessive sadness when he mourned the death of his father.

However, Hamlet seems to be overwhelmed by the female gender - whether it is his mother or Ophelia. His mother's marriage again makes him alienated, and his negative reaction was not considered in the early modern era about woman's need to be protected by man. Perhaps this need for male support stimulates Hamlet's mother's desire for Hamlet to stay with her in Denmark. Hamlet focuses on the generally imaginary misogynist reasons about why a widow remarries but often fathers at the end of the play with a relative roles do not Shakespeare's daughter such as Lear's daughter, Desdemona only meets her mother and father at the end of the play (kemp, 2010, pp30- 92) in *Feminist thematic and Shakespearean tragedy* therefore it is aimed at correcting misinterpretations on the basis of gender from the female characters of Shakespeare, to a large extent tragedies it is generally considered to be Shakespeare's greatest work Achievements (Levin, 1988p125).

Chapter THREE

3.1. Comparison of Shakespeare's Queens

Hamlet must be the most famous character in the theatre in the world. In the first part of the play, *Hamlet* seeks and finds satisfactory evidence that proved his uncle's involvement in killing the king. Immediately after the king's death, the queen, Hamlet's mother got married his uncle. Hamlet is of special nature because of his noble mind in an evil world, it takes turns as any human being does between reason and emotion. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which is written in 1599 repeatedly brings up female sexuality. The emphasis on female sexuality has a lot to do with the period and gender stereotypes, which are still vivid in the twenty first century. *Hamlet* is written in the early contemporary English era, in a time where female's chastity was held as her "primary virtue". During 1555 the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I changed the religion that was imposed upon England by Queen Mary, to Protestant. Protestants have been known for being very vocal about sex and sexual desires, just like the characters within *Hamlet*.

The most influential writers of the sex manuals claim that the best way to learn about sex is through the bible itself (DeRogatis p.99). The sexual topics have always been taboo, as a result people shied away from talking about sex openly. Living in a country that is gradually beginning to talk about sex and sexuality prepares an easier platform for the author to approach such sexual topics. Hamlet is a character who seems to be obsessed with sexuality and that is not very appalling to the people around him, rather they talk very similarly about females and female sexuality. Hamlet is known for repeatedly bringing up his mother's sex life which seems odd to many people. Prince Hamlet speaks about his mother's sexual life with his uncle, Claudius, by saying, "why she should hang on him/As if increase in appetite had grown/By what is fed on" (*Hamlet* 1.2.143-145)

Prince Hamlet believes that his mother is still his father's property. Adhering to the conventions of traditional gender roles, comes female criminals' judgment. Remarrying is not an option for Gertrude. He views his mother as the most destructive women, a smiling monster bent on doing havoc. Nowhere else do men receive these titles and insignia following the death of their wife and subsequent re-marriage. When his mother remarried, Prince Hamlet blamed his mother for the death of her husband. She is now required to follow his son's regulations about herself, even though she

previously managed her daughter's lives. The second marriage of Gertrude is an affront to Hamlet. He regards it as a disgrace to the virtues and affections he adores and disagrees with a woman's right to make her own decisions as an adult. The mother should comprehend her preference, as "he wants for her to view things through his eyes. Declared it to be repugnant and intolerable. He coerces his mother into denying her husband. This is the purest form of patriarchy on exhibit" (Jajja, 2014:230-231).

3.1.1 Courageous Queen Gertrude of Denmark: A Loving and Brave Mother

Queen Gertrude of Denmark became a widow due to the sudden death of the king and married his brother Claudius less than two months after his death. Everyone thought he was a strange indiscretion, or indifference, or worse; because this Claudius is not like her late husband in character or thought, but looks mean, and unworthy; some people cannot help but suspect that he is in private with the brother of the late king. The purpose of the marriage was to marry his widow and ascend the throne of Denmark, excluding the young Hamlet, the buried king, and the legal heir to the throne. However, no one can leave such a deep impression on the queen's unwise behavior like this young prince. He loved and respected the dead father and almost became idolatry, and he possessed a good sense of honor and most exquisite etiquette. He really valued this unworthy behavior of his mother Gertrude; so that, between grief over his father's death and shame over his mother's marriage, the young prince was deeply depressed.

He has lost all his joy and beauty; he has abandoned all the pleasures he was accustomed to books, and the noble sports and sports of his youth are no longer accepted. He is tired of this world. In his opinion, this is a weed-free garden, where all healthy flowers are stifled, and only weeds can thrive. It is not that the prospect of his legal inheritance being excluded from the throne had such a great impact on his spirit, although it was a painful wound and an extreme insult to a young and noble prince; But what made him so annoyed and took away all his joy was his mother's forgetful memory of his father, such a father! Who has been so loving and gentle to her husband! Then she always acted like a loving and obedient wife in front of him, and would nestle on him, as if her feelings for him were getting deeper and deeper. Now within two months, or, in the eyes of the young Hamlet, less than two months later, she married again, married his uncle, the brother of her beloved husband, and this was a very unfair marriage Illegal marriage because of the close relationship, but the nasty

rush at the end and the kingdom character of the man she chose to be her partner on the throne and bed made the situation even more so. It was this point that not only lost ten kingdoms, but also brought a spiritual shock and dark clouds to the noble young prince (Periori, 2017, p28).

3.1.2. Refuting the Traditional Image of Gertrude

Due to her bad image, Gertrude is the most twisted character in Shakespeare's writings. There is substantial textual evidence to substantiate the truth of this character's injustice. Gertrude's defects and errors revealed by other male characters, which cannot be deemed fair criticism for her character. Due to the time constraints, she did not have sufficient opportunity to speak in her defense. By examining the numerous facets of her acts and dialogue, one may conclude that she is neither lustful nor decadent; rather, she is a woman of high morals, an intelligent ruler, and a caring and loving mother.

To begin, Gertrude was chastised for marrying her sister-in-law Claudius shortly after her husband died. The Thesis relates to the fact that Denmark was on the edge of a deadly conflict with the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras following the death of the late King Hamlet. Several years earlier, Prince Fortinbras's father was assassinated by Hamlet, the late king. There were reports that he desired vengeance for his father's death by assaulting Denmark's precarious political condition and invading Denmark. With regards to Gertrude's hurried marriage, there is no conclusive evidence that she was an adulteress. After all, widowhood is defined as being unmarried. Alternatively, she is a woman, and her second marriage simply is a matter of adapting to the situation, Gertrude's representation does not conform to these traits. She looks for her son while also being a devoted wife to her husband, and the woman's relationship with Claudius is domestic and ritualistic; there is no indication of sex between the newly couples. Taking everything into consideration, it can be concluded that Gertrude marries Claudius to confront the political peril into which Denmark has descended. Gertrude was not only a devoted and caring mother, but also a courageous woman. Additionally, her marriage to Claudius appears to have been as much a survival strategy as it was for certain. She knows that marrying her brother-in-law was rejected by the social structure, and that she must face the consequences of her actions, despite Hamlet's and her ghostly departed husband's harsh condemnation (Periori, 2017, p37).

3.1.3 Motherhood and Power of Queen Gertrude

Shakespeare tries to present the relationship between mother and child from several point of views, in general, human behavior on maternal characteristics, and in a different way, depicts sad and pessimistic representations of children, as well as depicts human psychology prevailing over the power of evil, and how the cruelty of a woman's heart works like a melodramatic reaction to obtain power, crown, and love. It is a subtle or passive extension of Shakespeare ideology on the character of a woman, especially the lack of maternal love and attachment with kids.

It represents a complex vitality to create new depth for Shakespeare. In Shakespeare's tragedies for example Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet*, the characters of women are not cruel but rather mysterious. Queen Gertrude never performed like a cruel lady but somehow became the wired reason for every disaster happened in *Hamlet* that shows how life is trapped and even created by cruel the situation to face a dear mother like Hamlet's: though it is true that Hamlet's mother marries King Claudius after the death of her first husband. To Hamlet, her greatest crime is marriage. Hamlet knew from the start that his mother has not killed his father. But in his extreme indifference his mother remains with King Claudius wife or as a partner in bed, and as King's son he never accepts this marriage, from which it identified Queen Gertrude as the mother of a victim of 'Oedipus complex'. It is very difficult to generalize about Hamlet because everyone observation will have to admit its opposite.

He is the pragmatic of grief, yet he expresses mourning by an extraordinary verve, and his continuous wit gives the pragmatic effect of making him seen endlessly high spirited, even as he mourns for his father's death and nevertheless the question of human existence and human survival is at the center of Hamlet's heart, and this burning question has an unpredictable answer of fullness and emptiness playing off against each other in our life cycle" (*Hamlet* 1.2. p. 146-147). A mother can devise thousands of ways to save her child's life; or she can show ways of survival. Even to make a difficult decision about life, a mother can attach her to her child in an artistic way, where the mother can be a demonstration realist philosopher (Mahbub-ul-Alam, 2015, p. 313).

From a patriarchal standpoint, in *Hamlet* Gertrude looks to be weak because the play is written and viewed from a male point of view (Findlay, 2010, p. 152). Furthermore, she is not really the Queen since she is a woman. She is a married and a mother. When Hamlet starts to convince Gertrude that Claudius assassinated the King, she accuses him of being insane. It could also be a symptom of Gertrude's frailty.

Rather than expressing her voice in condemnation of Claudius, she attributes his craziness on Hamlet and her behavior was significant. She knows well that Claudius has the power and without Claudius power, she cannot even protect her son Hamlet. And this kind of behavior can be interpreted according to Psychological-feminist theory as wisdom and intellectual act.

Thus, she guards Hamlet because he believes with his emotions rather than his intellectual mind (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 4). Gertrude is a widow and an aunt in addition to being a lady and a wife. An aunt is “an old woman and a gossip, or, in a bawdy sense, a procuress or whore,” thus according to Findlay (2010, p. 19). Hamlet refers to Gertrude as an aunt since she married his uncle Claudius, but he also refers to her as an aunt to express his disgust with her sexuality and remarriage (Findlay, 2010, p. 20). Despite Hamlet's anger and enmity, Gertrude maintains her silence to shield him, as well as the state, from ruin due to his drive for vengeance. This controversial in thinking between Hamlet as a man and Gertrude as woman what distinguishes man from women based on psychological feminism. Woman has her own belief in structuring the behavior of human. Therefore, Gertrude's decision of marrying Claudius is a wisdom choice. She knows that she cannot stand and care her son without a man because in that time women were marginalized.

Hamlet's insanity might excuse his charges against Claudius and Polonius' killing. So, even though she finds out the truth, Gertrude dismisses his charges for her own safety. To comprehend Gertrude's personality, it is necessary to dissect her. She tends to be traditionally feminine on the substratum: weak, docile, and reliant. She meets her brother-in-law because she needs a King by her side to keep her title as Queen. Conversely, the play depicts a strong, intellectual woman who, for the sake of the state, assumes the character of an emotional and vulnerable woman. Gertrude can indeed be portrayed as illogical yet rational, feminine yet patriarchy, by dissecting her character (Bennett & Royle, 2016, p. 216). Nevertheless, it is debatable if she is emotional and traditionally feminine, or if she plays like a submissive lady in terms of getting everyone's trust while avoiding trying to draw attention or concern to herself. It is possible that revealing her true voice and individuality may make her appear more untrustworthy. As a result, if the insane males had complete power, she would not have been able to prevent the ensuing catastrophe. Hamlet's acts, on the other hand, caused turmoil, but Gertrude at least tried to avoid it, and she was able to foresee the destruction that resulted from his deeds. Gertrude's acts are a clear example about her character as an intellectual woman who tries to get benefit being Claudius's wife to

maintain the continuity of balanced between her son and society.

In the play, Gertrude is embarrassed in a few ways, the most egregious of which is Hamlet's. When Gertrude remarries, Hamlet accuses her of being wretched and vile, and she is shamed for betraying the previous King. When Hamlet kills Polonius, for example, he remarks, "a bloody deed." Almost as awful as killing a king and marrying his brother, good mother" (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 13). Her deception, according to Hamlet, is much worse than death. He is always implying that she is a terrible mother and lady. Of course, when he is unaware of the true cause for her remarriage, this is simple to accomplish. He proceeds to criticize her for her conduct during their talk. Even though Hamlet blames her of being evil, he remains perplexed as to why she wedded Claudius:

You cannot call it love, for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment. And what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 9).

Gertrude certainly did not want to marry Claudius out of real affection. Still, what rational explanation could she have for marrying a fool? She is rational and intelligent, but Hamlet does not understand how she can move from being the noble King to being his brother. Hamlet likewise ridicules Ophelia by declaring that she only has understanding in the sense that she moves. She lacks the wisdom and common sense of a wise and reasonable person:

Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty! (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 14).

Irrationality has been linked to emotional or hysterical behavior in the Elizabethan era (Devereux, 2014, p38). Logical behavior is linked to reason. Hamlet depicts a variety of sensible and irrational actions as well as their repercussions. Gertrude is a sample of a rational thinker. As a result, she cannot act in her own best interests, or the nation will suffer even more damage in the process of the King's death and the Prince's insanity. Gertrude's logical actions are not always obvious. For example, she tries to dissuade Hamlet from seeking vengeance on Claudius by claiming that death is inevitable because she is prepared for the consequences:

Good Hamlet, cast thy knighted color off,

And let thin eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not forever with thy vial'd lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity (Samuelsson, 2020, p.8).

Gertrude tries to persuade Hamlet to marry Claudius and forget over his father's death. And besides, it was Hamlet's personal quest for vengeance that resulted in countless deaths and Norway's invasion success. Gertrude does her job of maintaining control of the nation, despite her inability to dominate and behave in an openly "masculine" manner, which is impossible under male power. Shakespeare depicts an unconventional woman who should be dismantled to be understood. She is torn between being a ruler, a woman, a mother, and a wife (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 9).

3.1.4. Eleanor of Aquitaine

It is believed that Eleanor of Aquitaine was born in 1122 and died on April 1, 1204, reigning as queen consort of France for a short time (1137-1152), queen consort of England for a long time (1154-1189), and duchess of Aquitaine in her own right for a long time (1137-1204). As the heir to the House of Poitiers, the rulers of southern France, she was one of Western Europe's wealthiest and most influential women throughout the High Middle Ages. They included Wace, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, and Bernart de Ventadorn, who worked with her in their literary endeavors. The Second Crusade failed because of her leadership, which she was supposed to have exercised many times throughout the course of her life. (Polly Schoyer, 1983, p. 210.)

Eleanor, Duke of Aquitaine's father, was given the honorary title of Eleanore. King Louis VI's grandson Louis married her three months after her father's death in April 1137, and they had a son together named after him. A few days after their wedding, her new husband was proclaimed King of France. Marie and Alix were born during their time together as a married couple. The Second Crusade was a failure for Eleanor of Aquitaine. She demanded an annulment of her marriage soon after, but Pope Eugene III rejected her plea. After 15 years of infertility, Louis agreed to an annulment. Because of this edict, in 1152, couples tied by four degrees of consanguinity were not allowed to marry. Eleanor and her children were able to return to their home in the woods.

As soon as her annulment was approved, Eleanor was engaged to her third cousin, Henry, Duke of Normandy. The wedding took place on Whitsun Day, May 18,

1152. King Henry I and Queen Eleanor of England were crowned in 1154. They have a total of six biological children and three grandkids. As time went on, Henry and Eleanor were less and less in contact. She was sent away in 1173 for her part in Henry's rebellion against him led by their eldest son, Henry I. She was ultimately released from jail on July 6, 1189, the day Richard I became king. The Third Crusade necessitated Eleanor to assume the role of regent in Richard's absence. When her oldest son, John, became the last king of the House of York, she was still living. (Elizabeth, 2013, P.305).

3.1.5. Overview on her Early Life

The precise year of Eleanor's birth is unknown, but according to a genealogy from the late 13th century, she was 13 years old when she died in the spring of 1137. On Eleanor's fourteenth birthday, in 1136, many Aquitaine lords vowed allegiance to her. When she died at the age of 82, it is most probable that she was born in the year 1122, according to historical records. Her parents' marriage is most likely to have taken place in the year 1121. Eleanor's mother and brother were murdered in a vehicle accident while she was between the ages of six and eight.

When it came to the Duke of Aquitaine and his wife Aenor de Châtelleraut's three children, Aliénor, William X's first daughter, was the most well-known and adored of them all. The Dangereuses de l'Isle Bouchard, his long-term mistress, was also the mother of Eleanor's maternal grandmother, Aenor de Châtelleraut, who was also Eleanor's maternal great-grandmother. Dangereuse received assistance from William IX and Dangereuse in arranging her parents' marriage. (Frank McMinn, 1941, P.459)

Aliénor, sometimes known as the other Aenor, is a Latin word for Eleanor's mother, Aenor, who is known as the other Aenor. Eleanor was the name given to her by northern French dialects and the English language, respectively. Eleanor of Normandy was a notable Eleanor in her own right, not only because she was a niece of William the Conqueror, but also because she lived more than a century before Eleanor of Aquitaine. In France, she was recognized by the honorary name Helienordis, which was her given name in Latin characters, throughout the length of her rule there.

Eleanor's father, it seems, went to considerable lengths to ensure that she had a solid education. Eleanor got herself in this situation because she had a strong desire to learn how to do basic arithmetic calculations. In addition, she was taught household skills such as housekeeping and needle arts such as needlepoint and sewing, among

other things. Eleanor was taught everything from how to converse to how to dance to how to play chess and backgammon as she grew up, including how to read and write. She also learned to sing, which was a bonus. Her early education included lessons in music and literature, as well as Latin, which she learned as a child. Additionally, she was a brilliant horseback rider, hawker, and hunter, among her many other abilities. Eleanor was an outgoing, vivacious, intelligent, and strong-willed little girl as she was growing up. In the spring of 1130, she and her mother perished at Talmont Castle, on the shore of Aquitaine's Atlantic coast. She was just four years old at the time. By virtue of her birth, Eleanor was elevated to the rank of heir presumptive to her father's estates, which she still holds today. Aquitaine was the most powerful and prosperous province in France, and it dominated the roost. More than a third of France's landmass was covered by the Poitou-Aquitaine region while Eleanor was growing up there. Until Eleanor's younger sister Aelith (also known as Petronilla) was up, she was the only genuine sibling she had. While William X considered Joscelin to be her son, he did not hold him in high esteem as a potential successor to his father. Years have passed since rumours about her half-brother, William, were dispelled. When Eleanor died, Henry II's siblings moved into the royal palace and remained there for the first four years of his reign as king. (Katherine, 2012, P.160)

3.1.6 First Marriage

Eleanor and Louis were married on July 25, 1137, at Bordeaux's Cathedral of Saint-André, by the archbishop of Bordeaux, who presided over the ceremony. Aquitaine's Duke and Duchess of Aquitaine are elevated to their respective titles after their wedding. When Eleanor's eldest son was crowned king of France and duke of Aquitaine, the kingdom made the decision to maintain its independence from the French Empire. "Because her inheritance would not be shared with France for another century, she gifted Louis this rock crystal vase to commemorate their wedding, which is currently on display at the Louvre." Louis XIV donated the vase to the Basilica of St Denis in Paris, France. One of Eleanor of Aquitaine's personal possessions, this vase is the only one that has survived.

Louis reigned for a few days as Duke and Count of Aquitaine and Gascony, but his reign was short. His death from dysentery was announced to him on August 1, even though his coronation as King of France was to take place on August 2. On Christmas Day of the same year, they were formally crowned as King and Queen of France in Paris (Mark Turnham, 2006, p. 218).

Because of Eleanor's vivacious personality, it is said that Louis's mother, Adelaide of Maurienne, was concerned about the influence Eleanor would have on her son. Constance of Arles, the daughter of Robert II, was married to a filthy Provençal lady who was unable to save her from her situation. Ecclesiastical figures like as Bernard of Clairvaux, and Abbot Suger were among those who expressed strong disapproval of Eleanor's actions. However, despite her outlandish behaviour, the king was captivated by his attractive and worldly bride. To make Eleanor's Cité Palace in Paris more comfortable, a spectacular refurbishment was undertaken.

3.1.7. Eleanor of Aquitaine between the duties of motherhood and the desire for domination

During the early years of Henry II and Eleanor's marriage, the Angevin court was frequently on the road. "We wear out our cloths, shatter our bodies, and our creatures, and never find a time for the treatment of our sick souls," stated Walter Map. Eleanor's extended travels with her children may be a mystery to some, but I contend that she did so because she had a true love and feeling of obligation for her children. Medieval aristocratic ladies allegedly sent their infants to wet nurses, foster families, the cloister, or other nobles' households, according to Lloyd de Mause, in his book, *The History of Childhood*. However, Eleanor and her children would ride in litters or barrel-topped waggons over narrow and rutted roads so that Eleanor could keep her children always close to her. It would have been easier for Eleanor to leave her children at home with servants, but she opted for the more difficult option of travelling with them to be near to them. Eleanor's love to parenting is evident in this instance (Giles, 2010, p. 387).

When it comes to Eleanor of Aquitaine and her effect on the lives of her children, historians such as Stafford and Turner have delved into the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine. In order to maintain her authority and influence with Henry II, secular officials, and religious leaders, she maintained tight connections with her children as adults. Eleanor's love for her children may be difficult to show since emotions are transitory, but historians' evaluations of mediaeval emotion are crucial to record, not the actual experience of mediaeval men and women.

Emotions, as a philosophical idea, have proven to be almost as tough to grasp as infancy itself throughout the years. Peter and Carol Stearns, who coined the term

"emotionology," defined it as "the attitude or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression [and] the ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct." Historian Barbara Rosenwein rejects this theory. Before the early modern "advice manuals" on which the Stearns's study of emotions was founded, emotions had been explored and written about, but not in large numbers or depth. Emotions were felt and expressed by mediaeval men and women, despite the assertions of the Stearns that groups within a society "thought" about emotional reactions. Some researchers have been guided by the work of Norbert Elias, who argued that the "grand narrative" of the history of the West "is the history of increasing emotional restraint," which might indicate that emotions were more restrained after the Middle Ages. In his writings, the Iliad and the Odyssey, Homer (c. 750 BCE) supplied a wealth of information on ancient emotions. He wrote in 1919 on the "childlike essence" of mediaeval society, arguing that even if life was lived in public and harshly, children felt emotions as children, unfettered and unashamed (Alison, 1991, p. 280).

3.1.8. The Duties of Queenship

Eleanor of Aquitaine's motherhood and queen ship have been examined through fresh social, political, and domestic lenses by historians such as John Carmi Parsons, Marion Meade, and Wheeler and Parsons in the 1990s and a collection of works compiled by Wheeler and Parsons in 2003. Historians have gained insight on the roles and place of queens via the study of birth, genealogy, betrothal, marriage, ritual, childrearing, widowhood, death, and burial practices. 171 There are few documents from Eleanor's era that explicitly discuss the powers or obligations of a queen in the Kingdom of England. Coronation details may be found in the "Edgar" ordo, which was first penned in 973 and then revised by William the Conqueror. 172 In addition to being the mother of the king's offspring, the queen consort was expected to serve as a supporter of the monarch, aiding in the establishment of churches, and providing charitable contributions to these institutions. Even if the king was not there, the queen consorts would step in to fill the void left by the absent monarch.

The deeds and activities of monarchs and their sons were primarily documented by chroniclers, not those of queens and their daughters. It was not that queens were overlooked; rather, historians emphasized the importance of kings. Kings were ordained by God, and high-ranking clerics sanctified the monarchs. Queens were crowned by the clergy as well as the king, which signified the queen's submissive

function as a consort, not a ruler appointed by God, as was the case with King Henry VIII of England, who was crowned by the church. 174 Men were seen as capable and reasonable because of the Church's struggle for clerical celibacy, whereas women were seen as unable and irrational because of the feminist movement. When powerful women wielded power, male religious and secular leaders branded them as "unfeminine" and "unnatural" for doing so. The Church scolded the husbands of powerful women for allowing their wives to have a public role. 175 The position of queen was one of the most prestigious in society for a woman even though queens had a submissive function due to their gender (Foedera, 1741, p. 463).

King John's struggle centers on competing claims to rule England, which John, his nephew Arthur, and, in some extreme interpretations, King Richard's illegitimate son, Philip, all have. Arthur is John's younger, but also deceased, brother Geoffrey's adolescent son. He is allied with the King of France, who has pledged to defeat John in war and install Arthur as his ally or even as his puppet on the English throne (Schwarz, 2003, p. 226).

By the end of the play, both John and Arthur have died, leaving only John's son to ascend to the English throne as King Henry III, to whom Philip the Bastard pledges his allegiance, resolving any succession issues. King John, on the other hand, is unique in emphasizing the role of mothers in the action: their words, actions, and impact on the play's meaning make it even more distinctive and call for a rethinking of critical readings of motherhood in King John.

Scholars generally relate the possible heirs' weakness to their dependency on their mothers for protection and authority, and John and Arthur are frequently and properly described as weak leaders. In this interpretation, the adolescent Arthur is accompanied by his mother, Constance, who advocates for him for much of the first half of the play and actively promotes his ascension to the throne. John, who is now an adult, is joined by his mother, Queen Eleanor, to whom he has delegated major authority. She admonishes him for not following her advice early in the play, then follows him to the battle in France and participates in the discussions, where she subsequently employs a fair number of political knowledge (Womersley, 1989, p. 499).

As a result of this evidence, researchers have interpreted Eleanor and Constance's maternal presence as overbearing and incompatible with Early Modern

conceptions of perfect motherhood. A Queen-ideal mother's action comprises what Katherine Schwarz describes to as a "vanishing act" (Womersley, 1989, p. 500). Mothers are not allowed to get involved in their sons' affairs, and overbearing mothers are sometimes associated with witchcraft. Mary Beth Rose backs up this view of Early Modern maternity by portraying "the best mother" as an "absent or dead mother," resulting in an ideal society in which all maternal desires are abandoned. This is how the mothers in the second tetralogy of Richard II through Henry V are described. Mothers are mentioned in these plays, although they are almost always missing and play no part in the narrative. Considering this Early Modern conception of motherhood, Ian Mc Adam labels both of King John's mothers as "dominating" (Calahan, 2016, p.75). And, according to Schwarz, these women's emasculating envelopment of their boys, which is like castration, endangers their children's masculinity.

Indeed, numerous interpretations by Shakespeare and Early Modern academics portray overbearing women as liabilities to their sons. In her essay "Wicked Women of Macbeth," Dympna Callaghan outlines this structure of power. She demonstrates how the patriarchy, patrilineal structure of English government rotates around a linear axis in which the husband's power in his home and the King's power over his land are both like (and legitimized by) God's sovereignty over the Earth (Callaghan, 1992, p. 357). The opposition of this God/King/Husband alignment, as Peter Stally brass puts it, is demonic insurgency, in which "the Devil wants to rule over the earth, and the woman over the family" (qtd in Callaghan, 1992, p. 357). Patriarchal society power, from this perspective, threatens far more than a son's or husband's role: it undermines Christian deity. Supporters of King John have almost always pointed to Arthur's mother Constance's outbursts and Queen Eleanor's suspected political maneuvering in confirmation of this picture of demonic matriarchal power., but rather a system that shows promise in the absence of strong male leadership.

Evelyn Tribble writes that Arthur's time on stage is filled with embedded cues. On Arthur's entrance to the stage, King Philip gives "explicit instruction to Arthur to 'embrace,' 'love,' and 'give welcome' to the Duke of Austria" (Calahan, 2016, p. 75). Arthur rarely speaks or moves without a cue from someone else, usually King Philip. We get a sense Act II that if Arthur is dominated by anyone, it is by King Philip who tells John "In right of Arthur do I claim of thee" the territories of England (Calahan,

2016, p. 74). King Philip is as much a usurper as John here, using Arthur's right to stake his own claim. Even John tells the King he "dost usurp [Arthur's] authority" to which Philip agrees, remarking "Excuse it is to beat usurping down" (Calahan, 2016, p. 78). Either John or King Philip could take on a role as a father figure for Arthur if they chose, but neither does. The closest anyone comes to filling this void in Act II is the Duke of Austria, who pledges he will never return home until Arthur has won his kingdom (Calahan, 2016, p. 72).

Constance responds by thanking Austria, invoking her motherhood and widowhood, and telling him that his "strong hand shall help to give [Arthur] strength" (Calahan, 2016, p. 76). Constance promotes her son because he is not yet strong enough to do it himself, and because no father figure steps up to guide him, but she shows a willingness to entrust his care to a strong male figure. Arthur's weakness stems not from his maternal dependence, but rather, from his misfortune to be a child. Shakespeare's text even intimates that Arthur could develop into a much stronger king if given the time to mature.

After spending time in the English court, Arthur learns to defend himself quite well. He masterfully convinces Hubert to go against John's orders and not execute him, a stunning blow to patriarchal authority. In as vulnerable a position as we have ever seen him, Arthur talks his way out of his execution by appealing to Hubert's pathos. He describes the fire that heats the iron Hubert will use to put out his eyes as "dead with grief / Being create for comfort, to be used / in undeserved extremes" (Calahan, 2016, p.75). By assigning feminine attributes of comfort and protection to the fire, and by telling Hubert he will "make [the fire] blush" if Hubert tries to build it up again to hurt him, Arthur's appeal is ultimately successful. Hubert breaks his promise to his Lord and acts in opposition to patriarchal authority.

If Arthur's weakness results from his youth, John's emerges through his actions. John makes several critical errors of judgment, many of which his mother would have prevented if she had had more authority. Eleanor begins the play by chiding John about his handling of Constance, telling him "This might have been prevented and made whole / with very easy arguments of love" (Womersley, 1989, p. 499). She had previously warned John about Constance and Arthur, yet John ignored her. Rather than reconciling with Arthur as his mother suggested, they must now rely on "fearful bloody issue" to "arbitrate" the conflict. Throughout the play, the word

“issue” refers to children as a product of their mothers from childbirth, specifically Arthur, as when Constance calls Arthur the “removed issue” of his grandmother Eleanor (Womersley, 1989, p. 499).

However, by referring to war as the issue of John’s actions, Eleanor credits him with engendering war. Whereas a mother creates life through childbirth, a father destroys life through warfare. Warfare is the patriarchal method of solving problems, and in King John, its results are disastrous. John makes his gravest mistake his decision to kill the captured Arthur without the approval of his mother. While John talks Hubert into committing murder, Eleanor is in private conversation with Arthur, and Eleanor is absent from all the decision-making prior to Arthur’s death. John’s manipulation of Hubert starts with subtlety and craft, relying on Hubert’s love of both patriarchy and affection for John himself. By telling Hubert, “by my troth, I think thou love’s me well” (Calahan, 2016, p. 78), John elicits Hubert’s affirmation of love. However, even John has difficulty broaching the murder of his nephew; he tiptoes around the topic until finally blurting out the words “Death,” then “A Grave,” and finally ‘Enough’. John’s language breaks down into convulsive exclamations at such a repellent prospect, and his rule collapses shortly after. When Arthur dies by leaping from John’s castle, John is blamed and as a result, the English nobility abandon him to join with the invading French army.

The misguided decision that John makes on his own proves his ultimate undoing, not an overbearing mother. John’s floundering continues after he learns of his mother’s death, as if this causes him to lose his ability to lead. After learning of Eleanor’s death, John resolves his feud with the Pope by making peace with the Cardinal Randolph (2016, p. 79). Rather than continue to oppose Rome, John submits, and even briefly offers his crown to Randolph to formally secure England’s ties to Rome. At this point, John remembers that it is Ascension Day, the day a prophet warned John he would give up his crown (Womersley, 1989, p. 500). He muses that he understood the prophecy to mean he would be forced from power, but instead has had merely to offer to relinquish his crown to Randolph. However, forty lines later, the prophecy will ring truer than John realizes. On learning that his nobles have turned on him, and that the French are invading, he tells the Bastard, “Have thou the ordering of this present time,” effectively putting the Bastard in charge of England’s defense. Since John’s authority comes primarily from his control of the English military, by handing that control over to the Bastard, John makes the Bastard the de facto king of

England. Under pressure and without his mother, John does not lead his people but rather relies on others to lead for him and removes himself from situations which require confrontation. John's and Arthur's weaknesses function to expose the complexities within the patriarchal system foundational to monarchical authority.

The play's major tension stems from the two equally undesirable contenders for the throne. John and Arthur represent two means of inheritance and authority under a patriarchal system. John represents legal right, and Arthur blood right. John possesses a legal will from his older brother, King Richard, declaring John his heir, whereas Arthur, by virtue of being the son of John's older brother Geoffrey, has a right by his blood (Calahan, 2016, p. 78). Arthur's claim may seem to establish him as the clear heir by birth, but Philip the Bastard complicates this. If blood takes precedence, then the Bastard should be king since he is Richard's son. And yet, illegitimacy coupled with the Bastard's lack of desire to be king disqualify his claim to the throne. Blood alone is not enough to determine authority: some concession to the law, particularly legal marriage, must be made for either John or Arthur to be king. Patriarchal authority, then, proves much less straightforward than either side would make it seem, and patrilineal descent does not answer the question of inheritance (Womersley, 1989, p. 502).

3.1.9 An Overview of Catherine of Aragon's Early Life, the Queen of England

After their nullification on June 11, 1509, when they were married, King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine of Aragon were officially divorced on May 23, 1533, according to the laws of the time. The Princess of Wales was wed to Arthur, the Prince of Wales' elder brother, before to her marriage to Prince Henry, the Prince of Wales, who conferred the title "Princess of Wales" upon her.

Catherine, the daughter of Isabella I and Ferdinand II of Castile, was betrothed to Prince Arthur, the son of Isabella and Ferdinand. Catherine was the daughter of Isabella I and Ferdinand II of Castile. Arthur died barely five months after they were married in 1501; their marriage lasted only five months. When the Aragonese kingdom sent Catherine to England in 1507, she established herself as Europe's first known female envoy. In 1509, she tied the knot with Arthur, the younger brother of Henry VIII, who had just been crowned king of England at Westminster Abbey. In 1513, when Henry VIII was travelling in France, she took over as regent for the kingdom of

England. Catherine played a crucial part in the English victory over the Scots at Flodden, thanks to an emotional speech she delivered in honour of English chivalry (Emma Luisa, 2012, p.19.).

Because of his feelings for Anne Boleyn and his sadness at not having any children from his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII did not proclaim Mary I of England as the assumed successor until 1525, when she was already queen of England. The desire of King Henry VIII to dissolve their marriage resulted in England's withdrawal from the Catholic Church and its transformation into a Protestant kingdom. Even though Pope Clement VII refused to annul Henry's marriage, King Henry VIII seized control of the Roman Catholic Church. As a result of the English church's invalidation of their connection in 1533, Henry was free to marry Anne without the approval of the Pope. When Catherine stood up to Henry's dominance, she garnered the adoration of the whole English population. Even though she was the dowager princess of Wales, Henry VIII only recognised her as the queen of Wales because of her position. Catherine's last resting place was Kimbolton Castle, where she died in 1536 after a long battle with cancer. Many people across the world wept when the news of Catherine's death was revealed.

Catherine was the subject of Juan Luis Vives' controversial 1523 work, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, which was widely condemned at the time. Her sexuality, in the words of Thomas Cromwell, "might have challenged all of history's greatest heroes if it had not been for her sexuality." The rebels' families sent an appeal to those who participated in the Evil May Day celebrations, and this resulted in their deaths being spared. Catherine was well-known for her efforts to assist individuals who were in desperate need. The academics Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More, two of the brightest minds of the Renaissance, were among her many companions. (H. Eugene, 2011, p. 352).

A few of hours after Catherine's mother, the Archbishop of Alcalá de Henares, near Madrid, gave birth to her on December 16, 1485, the world was introduced to her. Isabella, the only child of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, died when she was nine months old. She was the only child of the couple. His face was extensively tattooed, but she had a broader face, long red hair, and wide blue eyes, which contrasted with his. Why she was referred to as "Catherine of Lancaster" is explained by the fact that her great-grandmother Catherine of Lancaster and great-great-grandmother Philippa of Lancaster were both descended from John of Gaunt and

were granddaughters of King Edward III of England, thus explaining why she was referred to as such. The fact that she had a fourth cousin once removed to her husband, King Henry VII of England, was a blessing in disguise for Elizabeth of York.

Aside from being an expert in mathematics and theology, she is also knowledgeable in a wide range of other areas. The fact that she was raised in a religious environment and had a deep conviction in the Roman Catholic Church speaks volumes about her character. She was fluent in Latin, Greek, and French, in addition to her native tongue of English. In addition to academics, she learned how to cook, sew, embroider, and perform a variety of dances as part of her extracurricular activities outside of school. At the time of her death, Erasmus said that Catherine's appreciation of fine literature had been "well-honed from an early age" (G. Bietenholz, 1987, p. 122)

The fact that Catherine of Aragon was the heir apparent to the English throne and descended from her English mother's lineage led many to believe that she would make the ideal wife for Arthur, Prince of Wales. He had a stronger claim to the English throne than either his mother Blanche or his grandmother Constance, who were both first wives of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, and hence had a stronger title to the kingdom. Following his marriage to Katherine Swynford, whose children were born out of wedlock and only legitimised when Constance died and John married Katherine, John married Katherine's children. Henry VII was derived from

Gaunt, who in turn was descended through his third marriage to Constance, which resulted in the birth of Henry VII. However, even though John and Katherine's children were legally recognised, they were not allowed to succeed to the throne of England. Because of Henry VIII's illegitimate offspring, the Tudor monarchy was not acknowledged by all of Europe at the time of its establishment. At the time, European royalty regarded Catherine's descent from the House of Trastámara as highly regarded, but Arthur and Catherine's marriage as Catholic Monarchs of France only served to enhance the Tudor claim to the throne of England. It seemed to be a safe bet for a male successor to the throne. On May 19, 1499, Arthur reached the legal age of consent for marriage, and as a result, he was legally married to his future bride by proxy. (Josephine, 2009, P.302.)

Archbishop Alonso de Fonseca of Santiago, and Bishop Antonio de Rojas Manrique of Mallorca were dispatched to England as envoys by Catherine of Aragon on behalf of the Catholic Church. One of her numerous travelling companions was

John Blanke, a trumpeter from Africa who was also on the journey. After arriving in London, this group of Africans was seen as servants to the affluent, which they were not. The princess and her dynasty had a long-lasting impact on the world at large. Her duenna, Elvira Manuel, was in command of the Spanish contingent accompanying her.

Originally, Catherine's ship was slated to dock in Gravesend, England. When she arrived in England in October 1501, she was met by a group of English gentlewomen who wished her well. Catherine was to be transported to the Tower of London on boats on the River Thames. (Mitchel, 2011, P.406.).

3.1.10 Katherine of Aragon, Shakespeare's, Queen Lost between the Duties of Motherhood, and the Desire for Domination

When Katherine married her husband, her political and personal power were at their highest ebb. Henry's attentions were showy, to say the least. Her gynecological history is unknown, with stories of losses and stillbirths coming mostly from diplomatic sources. On 31 January 1510, she had a miscarriage. When Henry was born on the first day of the year, he became the Prince of Wales, and he died on the 22nd. Assuming that the dubious allegation is true, there must have been an instantaneous death following the Battle of Flodden in September of 1513. In November or

December of 1514, a male kid was stillborn. Princess Mary was just born healthily on February 18th, 1516. The final child Katherine gave birth to, a stillborn girl, was born on November 9–10, 1518.

Katherine had a role in international affairs at some point. Fuensalida, the Spanish envoy to Henry VIII, was recalled in August 1509, and she got a commission from Ferdinand to serve as his formal conduit of contact with Henry. She seems to have communicated in cypher. In March 1510, Don Luis Caroz, a new ambassador, arrived. As a result, Katherine was furious with him. Because of the influence of Katherine's confessional pastor Diego Fernandez, he blamed her for this. The extent to which Katherine had an impact on English policy is difficult to assess. Henry's hatred of France led him to form an alliance with Ferdinand. When Henry joined the Holy League in November of 1511, he and the other members of the alliance were planning combined military operations. To reclaim Guyenne for England, an English army was sent to the Basque area in May 1512 to join a Spanish force. When Henry's forces mutinied and went home in October, Ferdinand utilized his army to seize Navarre for

himself. Because of the subsequent recriminations, Katherine had an impact. Despite this, the English notion that Ferdinand misled them twice made Katherine's situation difficult. Diego Fernández convinced Caroz in December 1514 'to abandon Spain and everything Spanish to acquire the favor of the King of England and of the English,' she wrote in her diary. (Josephine, 2009, p.377)

During Henry's absence in France from 30 June to 21 October 1513, Katherine served as administrator of the realm and captain general. Archbishop Warham, the Lord Chancellor, was the leader of her council, which had the power to recruit armies and appoint officials. There was still a significant lot of everyday business that Henry's council handled out in the field. Even though she did not write to the king, Katherine kept Wolsey updated on Henry's whereabouts and expressed her concern for his safety while also apologizing for taking up so much of his precious time. According to the LP Henry VIII, the sarcasm level in her allusion to typical feminine hobbies is impossible to judge. She did describe herself as 'horribly occupied with manufacturing standards, flags and badges' (LP Henry VIII, 1/2, no. 2162). (Isabella oversaw the production of campaign banners.) When James IV of Scotland invaded England on August 22, she found herself in a predicament. In the Battle of Flodden on September 9th, Henry VIII selected Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, to lead the north before he left, and he destroyed the Scots, leaving James and a vast number of Scottish nobles dead. In the aftermath of the triumph, Katherine's reserve army was disbanded at Buckingham. Spanish sources claim that Katherine gave a stirring address to the soldiers, although there is no English material to back this up. In her own writing and in English, she wrote to Henry triumphantly: 'In this your grace shall see how I may maintain my promise, sending you for your flags, a King's cloak. But our Englishmen's hearts would not let him to send himself to you' (Emma Luisa, 2012, p. 410).

In 1515, a new alliance between England and Spain was formed. However, King Ferdinand died in January 1516, and Juana's son Charles, Juana's grandson, took over the throne. It was not possible for Charles to forge an alliance with England while Katherine's connections with her nephew were less tight than they were with her father. Both informal and official channels of communication stopped working. Henry Fitzroy's mother, Elizabeth Blount, had given birth to Henry Fitzroy in 1519, and there was speculation of Henry having a mistress as early as 1514. A Venetian diplomat described Katherine as 'more ugly than otherwise' in 1515 (indicating that the five-year age difference between husband and wife was becoming increasingly noticeable. In

contrast to Michel Sittow's 1505 painting of her in young beauty, which is currently housed at Vienna, the undated image of her in the National Portrait Gallery portrays her as a very hefty woman (though the identity of the sitter is not entirely certain). In her 30s, Katherine may have been settling into a dignified early middle age, presiding over court ceremonies, controlling her household, and using her immense power of patronage as queen. During London's "bad May-day" riots in 1517, she played a planned role when she publicly asked for the forgiveness of those convicted of participating.

When Katherine first arrived in England, she brought with her a command of French and Latin. While in Isabella's court, she took advantage of the opportunity to further her interest in Latin education by becoming a scholarly patron. He intervened with Henry to safeguard Lady Margaret Beaufort's benefaction to St. John's College, Cambridge, and she championed the interests of Queens College, Cambridge. She visited both Oxford and Cambridge and received the accolades that are customary for royal guests. She helped fund lectureships and exhibits for underprivileged students. Perhaps she was engaged in attempting to convince Erasmus of the need of a long-term stay in England. He dedicated his *Christiani matrimonii institutio* (1526) to her, and she often complimented him. Thomas Linacre and John Leland were among her patrons. Instead of translating Petrarch's "Ill Fortune," Sir Thomas Wyatt wrote "Of the Quyetie of Mynde," a version of Plutarch. (Katherine, 2012, p. 432.)

To conclude his commentary on Augustine (given to Henry VIII), Juan Luis Vives was brought over to England by Katherine in 1523 and commissioned to compose his *De institutione foeminae Christianae* (delivered to Katherine in 1523 and printed one year later). As a maid, a wife, and a widow, she was commended by Vives in the prelude. Even though Isabella's daughters were classically educated and had an excellent command of Latin, the book recommends just a small selection of classical works for noblewomen since they would not have to dedicate themselves to business and because of their feminine modesty. The scriptures, the church fathers, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, among others, are the most appropriate. Women should be prepared to engage in conversation, but not to take the lead, and should abide by the teachings of their fathers and husbands in this regard. In addition, ladies ought not to overlook their duties as housewives or mothers to their children. Based on his later engagement with the upbringing of the princess, it is safe to believe that Katherine shared same ideas. On their way back from Syon to Richmond in January of 1524,

Vives and Katherine had a talk, according to Vives' account. The subject of conversation was the ups and downs of life. According to Katherine, she has had a lot of luck. Her preference would be for a poor outcome over a good one: 'when confronted with calamity folks need comfort, but excessive wealth destroys their spirit. (Giles, 2010, P. 178)

3.2. Comparison of Shakespeare's Queens

3.2.1 Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet*

There are some characters in Shakespeare that defy analysis because they are too difficult to make out, and Gertrude probably heads that list. (Graf, 2013, 7)

While reading the tragedy, you cannot surely tell if Gertrude is good or bad or something in-between does she really love her son above all and unconditionally? Is she in any way involved in the murder of Hamlet's father? Why did she immediately marry her dead husband's brother? Does she love Claudius? Who knows?

There are some things that are clear about Gertrude – she is a woman who is defined by her desire for position and affection, and she has a particular approach to men – using them to fulfil her instinct for self-preservation. (Graf, 2013, p. 9). She is a very attractive woman that uses her charm to capture men; two kings. Moreover, her instinct is to prefer being a queen to being the mother of a king. That could be easily seen after her confrontation with Hamlet when she immediately goes to Claudius. She seems, at first glance, to have no moral backbone. Gertrude, unlike Hamlet, does not have any soliloquies in which she reflects on herself and her deeds. Emotions, rather than reflection, drive her. She is passionate, impetuous, and determined (Eugenio, 2018, p. 66) Gertrude possesses many positive attributes, yet she is neither intelligent nor smart. Gertrude's interactions with the other characters in the play reveal her strong emotional bonds. She is honest and devoid of hypocrisy. Despite these excellent characteristics, she does not appear to be a very powerful character. Gertrude takes the concept of "living in the now" to its logical conclusion. She seldom thinks about the future or the past (Graf, 2013, p. 11).

The fact that she wants to love both Hamlet and Claudius, even though they hate one another, makes her even more bewildered. (Graf, 2013, p. 18) In response to

Hamlet's murder of Polonius, Claudius is told by Gertrude that "British worry kills the unseen good old man" (*Hamlet* - Act 4.1. p. 11-12). So, when the king inquires about Hamlet's well-being, she lies to him, telling him that he's only acting mad. At times like these, she adds, "I'm as mad as the sea and the wind" (*Hamlet* - Act 4. p. 17). Thus, she exhibits her desire to help both of her loved ones by suspecting one and telling the other. Throughout the play, she is referred to as an ignorant character since she is entirely oblivious to what is occurring. Although the whole kingdom of Denmark had previously accused Claudius of murdering Hamlet, according to certain readings, Gertrude is ignorant of this. She is also unaware of Claudius and Laertes' plot to poison Hamlet's cup, which results in her death. In the end, her narcissism leads to her demise. "She wedded; O most evil haste, to post," Hamlet's Soliloquy says of Gertrude as a sexually active lady in the play (*Hamlet* - Act 1.2.156). "O shame!" Hamlet exclaims another occasion where he guesses she remarries for her sexual wants. What happened to thy blush? If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones, rebellious devil, to flaming youth let virtue be as wax" (*Hamlet* - Act 3.4. p. 82-84).

One of Hamlet's strongest emotions is rage. Hamlet's rage would be directed towards Gertrude because of her quick marriage and brief mourning time. When Hamlet cannot bear to remain in the filthy stench of an enseamed bed, stewed in depravity, honeying and making love over the ugly stay—" (*Hamlet* - Act 3.4.91-93).

As a result, Gertrude contributes to the development of Hamlet's personality. Gertrude's deeds also aid Hamlet in his quest to assassinate Claudius. Hamlet's shield is Gertrude. She guards him in the same way as a hawk guards its young. Hamlet would be dead if Gertrude was not Hamlet's mother or a member of the royal family. (Eugenio, 2018, 69).

As a result of Gertrude's wickedness, Hamlet is emotionally disturbed. A mother's guilt may have a profound effect on her son in *Hamlet*, a play by William Shakespeare. In the year of our Lord (Graf, 2013).

Gertrude's dangerous circumstances caused her to break society's standards and fight vehemently with her kid.

Hamlet's now-father, Gertrude's ex-uncle, has no clue how dangerous and illegal his connection with Gertrude is "Modern-day stupid blondes," even if their hair colour remains a mystery. In the play, Gertrude's absolute lack of comprehension is nearly sad to see, of course until Hamlet informs her otherwise. Despite her best

efforts, Gertrude manages to harm everyone she meets. When she drinks the poisoned wine Hamlet had prepared for her, she dies because of her reckless thinking. As with Polonius, Gertrude's character flaws led to her death.

Hamlet's now-father, Gertrude's ex-uncle, has no clue how dangerous and illegal his connection with Gertrude is." Modern-day "stupid blondes," even if their hair color remains a mystery. In the play, Gertrude's absolute lack of comprehension is nearly sad to see until Hamlet informs her otherwise.

3.2.2. Queen Eleanor in *King John*

Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine (1124 -1204), is without a doubt the most renowned or notorious of all medieval queens. She was the wife of Louis VII of France and the mother of three English kings. Her life would have been significant in any era, but it was particularly memorable in the Middle Ages. (Ralph and Vernon Turner, 2021, 2)

Eleanor of Aquitaine was the grandchild of William IX, a king and a troubadour. She was well educated, but her childhood went from happy to sad when her parents and brother died at early ages. Eleanor's youth was defined by three deaths: her mother's, her younger brother's, and her father's. The first took her mother away when she was just six years old (Turner Eleanor of Aquitaine, 34). At thirteen years old, the second and third left her heiress to the duchy of Aquitaine, the largest French duchy at the time. She married Louis VII in 1137; he consulted her because she was intelligent; accompanied him on a Crusade; rumors of her marital unfaithfulness; has daughters but no sons. Then she married his younger brother; *Henry II* in 1152. Their marriage was not a successful one. In 1173, Eleanor's sons will attempt to revolt and take the throne from their father; they fail, Eleanor goes to jail for 16 years till the death of *Henry II*.

Eleanor's son Richard the Lion-Hearted becomes king but spends all his time outside of England; Eleanor rules the country in Richard's absence – a de facto queen. Prince John, another son of Eleanor and Henry II, is also active in politics during his brother's absence. Eleanor pays a ransom to free Richard when he's taken captive; stops John from usurping the throne and reconciles John and Richard. Eleanor's financial support for her children ensured that Matilda, Leonor, and Joan were financially self-sufficient from their husbands' families (Mégane Barreiros 2016, p. 36).

As a result, it shows *Henry* and Eleanor cared for their daughter to the extent of providing financial independence, which was not anticipated of them. Eleanor, for example, was not financially supporting her kids from a previous marriage, Marie, and Alix. Finally, Eleanor of Aquitaine was a remarkable woman in many ways. Even decades later, she is seen as a horrible mother when it comes to her children, particularly little Henry, Richard, and John. This assumption, however, appears to be unfounded for two reasons: it fails to account for all of Eleanor's children, and it is based on modern standards of education and motherhood rather than those of Eleanor's time. Women under the reign of King John are more aware of their surroundings than men. Despite her dishonesty, Eleanor is the only one who has real authority. Despite their best efforts, Constance and Blanche fail miserably in their efforts to transform the world around them. (Finn, 2018, 16). The influence of his mother Eleanor, King John's mother, drives him. She would have made better decisions if she were in control. This is evident from the very beginning of the play, when Elizabeth chastises John for his bad choices. To put it another way, if John had followed his mother's counsel and agreed to a settlement with Constance over Arthur's claim, the battle between England and France may have been avoided. John "bungled" his diplomacy; Eleanor asserts her influence in the male-dominated society. Juliet Dusenbery asserts this. Eleanor's intelligence and drive are on display in the play's first few acts, paving the way for her pivotal role in the story. King John is more powerful during Eleanor's live than he is after her death. Eleanor's advice should be followed rather than rejected by John since she is brighter and more forceful. As far as the English throne is concerned, Eleanor is unequivocal in her support of John's claim and argues against any doubt. Borrowed magnificence is an odd way to begin an essay. When the French envoy, Chatillon, refers to John as "borrowed majesty," Eleanor cuts him off (*King John* - Act 1.1.4). In accordance with King John, despite her outward backing of her son's claim, she is not unaware of the circumstances as shown by Shakespeare the throne remains "our strong property and right for us," even when John and her are alone in their discussion (*King John* - Act1.1.39). The opposite is true for her mother, Eleanor: "Much more than your right, you have a tremendous property," she tells her son. That is what my conscience tells you: "Which neither you nor I, nor the angels of heaven will be able to fix." For example, (*King John* - Act1, p. 40–3). By the conclusion of the play, John has been reduced to a cypher. Just like in life, Eleanor and Constance's conflicting energies were a counterbalance to one another in death. In other words, (Finn, 2018, p. 55).

3.2.3 Queen Katherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII*

Katherine was betrothed to *Henry VII's* son Arthur when she was only three years old. When they first met, they were both only 15 years old, and they were married in Old St. Paul's Cathedral just 10 days later. Katherine was betrothed to *Henry VII's* son Arthur when she was only three years old. When they first met on November 4, 1501, they were both only 15 years old, and they were married in Old St. Paul's Cathedral just 10 days later (Ruth, 2010, pg. 15). When she was only three years old, Katherine was engaged to *Henry VII's* son Arthur. They were both 15 years old and were married 10 days later in Old St. Paul's Cathedral. When Katherine was only three years old, she was engaged to Henry VII's son Arthur. It was barely 10 days after their initial meeting on November 4, 1501, that they were married at Old St. Paul's Cathedral (Ruth, 2010, p. 15).

To avoid having to return her 200,000-ducat dowry, she married *Henry VIII*, Arthur's younger brother, who was five years her junior, at the age of twenty-five. They were married in 1509 in a secret ceremony in the church of the Observant Friars, only a few blocks away from Greenwich Palace. As the king approached his 18th birthday, the princess was 23.

As a representative of the Spanish Crown in England, Isabel became the first female ambassador in European history in 1507.

Katherine had two sons and one daughter because of six pregnancies. The other babies perished soon after they were born. Even though none of Henry Duke Cornwall's sons lasted more than a few months, they were nevertheless referred to as Henry Duke of Cornwall. There were no surviving children from the marriage of Elizabeth I to her half-sister Mary. Henry designated Catherine Regent, or Governor of England, while he was on a military expedition in France. James IV of Scotland declared war on England and commanded Thomas Lovell to build an army in the midland counties. Even though she was heavily pregnant, Katherine went north in full armor to address the soldiers. After England's triumph at Flodden, she gave Henry a fragment of King James's bloodied cloak that had been left behind by the slain king himself.

When Henry VIII became dissatisfied with Katherine's inability to produce a male heir, he petitioned the Pope to annul the marriage, claiming that the earlier permission had expired. Thanks to Thomas Cranmer's urging, Henry declared himself Supreme Head of a new Church of England, severing ties with Rome. Henry and

Catherine's marriage was declared null and void by Thomas Cranmer, the

newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury (Richard, 1842, p. 49). Catherine died in January 1536 at Kimbolton Castle, and her monument is in Peterborough Cathedral. Henry's new Queen Anne Boleyn miscarried a boy on the day of Catherine's burial (Annabel, 1996, p. 30).

3.2.4. Queen Anne Boleyn of Henry VIII, Queen of England

When Henry VIII died, Anne Boleyn became Queen of England and remained in power until her death in 1536, alongside her husband. Anne Boleyn, the daughter of Thomas Boleyn and Lady Elizabeth Howard, was born and raised in Kent, England's Hever Castle, before moving to Europe when she was 12 years old. Two years from now, Clarke (Clark, 2021, p. 2). Upon her return to England nine years after her first visit, she was assigned to Catherine of Aragon, who was then a married woman and the wife of the King. According to contemporaneous records, the King and his courtiers were wooed by Anne's raven hair, pale complexion, and dark eyes. Henry Percy, the heir to the Earldom of Northumberland, was initially intended to marry Anne, but the agreement broke through and she started a romance with James Butler, her Irish cousin. Along with educating the monarch new religious concepts and English instead of Latin, Anne had won Henry VIII's heart (Ives, 2004, p. 16). Henry married Anne on January 25, 1532, despite Pope Clement VII's reluctance to dissolve the king's marriage to Catherine. He then broke relations with the Catholic Church in Rome and founded the Church of England. His first marriage was not annulled until May of that year, when Archbishop of Canterbury Henry VIII cancelled it. On June 1, 1533, in the Tower of London, Anne was crowned Queen. Before her marriage to Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn had already given birth to Elizabeth. After marrying in 1533, Elizabeth came on September 7 – barely three months later. Henry approved the Act of Succession in March of the following year to ensure that his daughter would be king. Henry and Anne kept trying for a male heir, despite the British monarch's supposedly progressive policies. Anne, on the other hand, had several miscarriages and never had a male child. Some historians and others have claimed that Thomas Cromwell organized a plot to kill Anne Boleyn. It was widely believed at the Royal Court that the queen was a witch with six fingers on one hand, and that she had an incestuous relationship with her brother George. There, she was tried for treason, allegedly having sex with male courtiers, and employing magic to bewitch the King of England on May 2, 1536 at the Tower of London. More than 2,000 people came out to see the show. For committing adultery with the queen, Boleyn's allies Francis Weston, William Brereton, Henry Norris, and her brother George were all killed. On

May 19th, Anne was executed in secret on Tower Green by a sword from France (Ives, 2004, 200).

In the play, the playwright punishes, corrects, or rewards the goodness or immorality of the female characters. How each queen (Queen Katharine and Queen Anne Bullen) is shown as a mother and a wife, as viewed through the prism of religious beliefs, as depicted in the film.

Katherine of Aragon is shown to be virtuous in *Henry VIII* and is saved by the author, Anne Bullen turns out to be a villain. For all of *Henry VIII's* portrayals of her as a pious woman, she seemed to contradict that picture in her own deeds. The playwright used the memory of each historical queen to show virtue or depravity, and the consequences of both, on the international stage. When it came time for Shakespeare to represent Katherine and Anne as mothers and wives, their character traits were inexorably intertwined (Ives, 2004, p. 105).

Historical sources depicting early modern Europe's views about women in leadership roles, whether good or bad, are reflected in their representations of Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn in chronicles. The playwright used the politically heated legends of Katherine of Aragon, Anne Bullen, and *Henry VIII* as allusions, which pleased the audience while educating them about monarchy's terrible history and the morals, or lack thereof, of queens (Woodcock & Matthew, 2011, p. 8).

3.3.5. Queen Elizabeth of Henry VIII

Her reign lasted from 1558 until 1586, during which time she was referred to as the Virgin Queen and Good Queen Bess. She reigned from 1558 to 1603, during the Elizabethan Period, which saw England rise to prominence as a political, commercial, and artistic power in Europe.

The only surviving child of Anne Boleyn and King *Henry VIII* was Queen Elizabeth I. Before her marriage to *Henry VIII*, Anne Boleyn had already given birth to Elizabeth. After marrying in 1533, Elizabeth came on September 7 – barely three months later.

The following March, Henry passed the Act of Succession to secure his daughter's right to the throne. Henry already had a daughter – later referred to as Bloody Mary, with Catherine. Further down the line, both Mary and Elizabeth would contest their right to rule England, with the former seeking to undo her father's Reformation and revert England back to Catholicism (Kim, 1988, p. 50)

While her kingdom was divided by internal struggle, Elizabeth's humour, boldness, and extravagant self-promotion inspired impassioned shows of loyalty and

united the country against foreign adversaries. During Mary's lifetime and throughout the years, the affection she received was not totally spontaneous. As part of a highly planned and brilliantly executed campaign, the queen positioned herself as the country's shining symbol of its future.

Because the queen was more than just a figurehead, the queen's political significance was deeper than usual. Despite her lack of ultimate power, she stubbornly maintained her authority to make critical decisions and define the primary policies of both government as well as religion.

Among Elizabeth's many noteworthy lecturers was Roger Ascham, a Cambridge humanist who oversaw her rigorous education in ancient languages, history, rhetorical and moral philosophy. Her "intellect has no womanly fragility; her perseverance is akin to that of a man, and her memory long preserves what it promptly takes up," according to Ascham. She was proud of her ability to speak French, Italian, and Latin in addition to Greek and Latin when she graduated from Paris's University of Paris in the late 1500s (Kim, 1988, p. 108)

According to many Protestants and Roman Catholics, her outward appearance was deceptive. Despite this, Elizabeth was able to keep her religious beliefs private, and they've remained so ever since. When Elizabeth appeared on the outside, she seemed to be a completely different person from the person she was on the inside.

Celebrations of joy erupted throughout England on November 17, 1558, when Mary Tudor died, and Elizabeth was installed as the new monarch in her place. It was a political masterpiece when she arrived in London and the coronation procession followed. Anyone with the ability to captivate people's hearts was this Queen," one ecstatic witness said. "At that time she expressed the same in blending mildness with grandeur as she did and gracefully dropping to the meanest kind" (Kim, 1988, p. 178).

Queen Elizabeth I is adored by many in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries because of her effective "prince" interaction between sexuality and authority. There have been several studies and monographs on Elizabeth's use of both feminine and masculine language since the turn of the century. This chapter shows how Elizabethan England's early modern gender and power norms were destroyed, based on earlier research. (Bevington, 2018, p. 30)

In the last days of *Henry VIII* Elizabeth emphasizes the exact terminology she used to construct and run her two ruling bodies, the political and natural ones. That Elizabeth's wife and motherly role in preserving the kingdom is praised contrasts with the queen's 'masculine' capacity to calmly manage and defend the English people."

Elizabeth's ability to solidify the English kingdom's image as a strong and stable queen is shown by impressive, authoritative portrayals of Henry and Cranmer. There were two bodies for centuries and Elizabeth's choice not to marry and have her first child was a clear illustration. The legal illusion of the King's Two Bodies characterized

English political thought throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts, according to historian Ernst Kantorowicz. When it comes to Christ, Christians perceive themselves as "Chrisomimts," "actors or impersonators," who are "the living image of the two-natured God, particularly in reference the unconfused natures," according to an interpretation of the Christian king of the monarch's two bodies. The monarch, like God, had both good and evil qualities. (Ernst Kantorovich, 1957, p. 212)

As the phoenix symbolizes a new beginning, its image and ability to rise from the ashes are crucial. To emphasize Elizabeth's virginity, femininity, and natural body, Cranmer employed the term maiden phoenix. Consequently, Elizabeth may "birth a son" without giving birth to a man. As the play makes clear, Elizabeth does not have to marry and therefore relinquishes her throne over England. The "phoenix Elizabeth" preserves the planet by not getting married and so not having children. But the story of the phoenix gives her permission to engage in "natural" reproduction, which she has rejected physiologically. In her lifetime, efforts to "write her out" of early modern society via the performativity of her two fabricated bodies were vigorously resisted. Her use of body politic was so important to her success as queen because she had to write herself into a tradition of masculine history and violent authority. According to Kim, this is the case (1988, p. 80).

Throughout *Henry VIII's* reign of terror, Elizabeth emphasizes the exact terminology she employed to construct and manage both her political and natural governing bodies. That Elizabeth's wife and motherly role in preserving the kingdom is praised contrasts with the queen's "masculine" capacity to calmly manage and defend the English people." Elizabeth's ability to solidify the English kingdom's image as a strong and stable queen is shown by impressive, authoritative portrayals of Henry and Cranmer. The phoenix's ability to rise from the ashes is a key component of its metaphorical importance. Cranmer referred to Elizabeth as a naturally attractive virgin when he called her a maiden phoenix. Consequently, Elizabeth may "give birth to a boy" without really birthing a boy. Elizabeth may be able to. Since she does not have to be married, she gives up the throne of England. Phoenix Elizabeth rescues the world despite being single and childless. However, despite her opposition to the concept of "natural" procreation, the myth of the phoenix gives her permission to do so.

The phoenix's ability to rise from the ashes is a key component of its metaphorical importance. Cranmer referred to Elizabeth as a naturally attractive virgin when he called her a maiden phoenix. Consequently, Elizabeth may give birth to a boy without really birthing a boy. Elizabeth may be able to. Since she does not have to be married, she gives up the throne of England. Phoenix Elizabeth rescues the world despite being single and childless. However, despite her opposition to the concept of natural procreation, the myth of the phoenix gives her permission to do so.

Even in her own time, the two created bodies she used to "write herself out" of early modern society were fiercely rejected. As a queen, she had to write herself into a history of male history and brutal power, and her body politic was crucial to her achievement in this regard. According to Kim, this is the case (1988, p. 80).

Henry VIII concludes with the king confirming that they would meet at Black friars to resolve this situation, and addressing Queen Katherine as follows, "O my lord, / Would it not grieve an able man to leave / So sweet a bedfellow? But conscience, conscience / O, 'tis a tender place, and I must leave her" (Schwarz, 2003, p228). The king confesses his love and admiration for the Queen, claiming that it is his conscience that forces him to abandon her. The monarch did exactly this, arguing that the only reason he left his Queen was that he had been misguided and guilty in marrying her during the first position. Nothing has been said about her as a Queen or a wife.

The fourth scene depicts Katherine's case, in which she justifies herself as a wife and Queen, refusing to be laid away, and then refusing to have Cardinal Wolsey as her judge. When she goes, the king commands her to return, but she refuses, and it is there that the queen delivers his first statement in this scene. He begins by saying, "Go thy ways, Kate" (Cahill, 2014, p 18), maybe expressing affection, and then praises her by affirming:

That man in th' world who shall report he has / A better wife, let him in naught
be trusted / for speaking false in that. Thou art alone / If thy rare qualities, sweet
gentleness / Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government, / Obeying in
commanding, and thy parts / Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out / The
queen of earthly queens. She's noble born, / and like her true nobility she has / Carried
herself towards me (Schwarz, 2003, p. 226).

King Henry then assures Wolsey that he was not the one who made him doubt the validity of the marriage, "I free you from 's" (2003, p. 229). Despite the fact that many regard Wolsey as the one who is guilty, the king even arrives to the point of

saying that the cardinal never wanted to have anything to do with the matter:

You ever / Have wished the sleeping of this business, never desired / It to be stirred” (Kizewski, 2014, p. 20) The king explained how he first started thinking about it, saying that it was the Bishop of Bayonne who made him have doubts, when he questioned the legitimacy of Princess Mary. When the king talks about his conscience, there is something feminine about the way he presents himself: he talks about his bosom and his breast, and says that conscience “entered me, / Yea, with a spitting power (Kizewski, 2014, p29).

He first thought God was not in his favour, because he and Katherine could not have a male heir, and “hence I took a thought / this was judgment on me, that my kingdom [...] should not be gladdened isn’t by me” (Schwarz, 2003, p. 229). He is not just worried about himself, but also about his kingdom, and the fact that he might leave it with no heir to reign. He realized he was putting the kingdom in danger and “that gave me / many a groaning throe” (2003, 229). Henry explains here that he was really suffering, also physically, for this problem.

Comparing his conscience to the open sea, he says “I did steer / toward this remedy whereupon we are / Now present here together” (2003, p. 230). This matter is so serious that it needs a remedy, a cure, just like an illness. In fact, he then says he summoned “all the reverend fathers of the land / and doctors learned” (Cahill, 2014, p. 20) to solve the matter, but he still “feel full sick, and yet not well” (2014, p. 20). This problem is consuming him. After Lincoln’s answer to him, Henry proceeds by saying he asked for everybody’s opinion, and “therefore go on, / for no dislike in ‘th’ world against the person / of the good Queen, but the sharp thorny points / of my alleged reasons, drives this forward” (Schwarz, 1998, p 143).

He refuses, again, to blame Katherine. From his point of view, it is solely his conscience that told him he was being wrong, and he has reasons to want to divorce from her. These men know it, and they can prove it. If they prove his marriage valid and lawful, “we are contented / to wear our mortal state to come with her, / Katherine, our Queen” (Kizewski, 2014, p. 29). He says that to show, again, that it is the validity that worries him, not his wife in herself. But he also says, “before the primest creature / that’s paragoned o ‘the’ world”, which can be a reference to Anne. Campeau’s affirms that, Queen Katherine being absent, the court needs to be adjourned, and Henry, to himself, says “I may perceive / these cardinals trifle with me. I abhor / these dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome” (Cahill, 2014, p. 24). If not angry, he sounds at least spiteful and displeased. Even though he previously said he wanted Katherine to have

scholars defend her case, and that if the court decided that his marriage was valid, he would return to her, now he thinks the cardinal are trying to delay the sentence, and that they are trying to trick him into staying married with his wife. He wishes for Cranmer's return, calling him "my learned and well-beloved servant" (2014, p.25).

Scene one of act three is the one where the cardinals go to Queen Katherine, bringing their advice, and this is the scene in which it is possible to see the relationship between the king and the queen from another point of view, that of Katherine's. Campeius tells her to "put your main cause into the King's protection" (2014, p. 28), and she is outraged by this proposal. "Would you have I [...] / Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me? / Alas, 'has banished me his bed already; / His love, too, long ago" (Schwarz, 2003, p. 230).

Here Katherine gives us another image of the king: not a king, who, troubled by his conscience, decides to do what he can to settle the matter of his marriage, but a king who stopped loving his wife a long time ago, and who does not want her in his bed anymore. Henry does not care about her anymore that is what she thinks. Still, as a faithful wife, even when her husband did not love her anymore, she has continued loving the king, obeying him, being so fond of him to the point of idolatry. "And am I thus rewarded?" (Schwarz, 1998, p. 145). The king is not just cold, and unlovingly, but also ungrateful. Campeius, later, tells her that "The King loves you / Beware you lose it not" (1998, p. 46), suggesting her not to make him become a 'true enemy' of hers, which also underlines that the king might not be as gracious as he is now, were Katherine to cross him in any way. Her fate is not a particular bright one, in fact, she is sent away from court, and ends up living in Kimbolton Castle. In the first part of scene two of act four, Katherine and her servant Griffith talk about Wolsey.

Then, after her vision, a messenger is sent to her by the king, Lord Caputius (Eustache Chapuys). The king sent him there because he "grieves much for your weakness and by me / Sends you his princely commendations / and heartily entreats you take good comfort" (Krier, 2019, p. 22). To be fair, the king is the one responsible for sending her there, and we do not know whether he really worries about Katherine's health, but still, he sent somebody to visit her. Katherine replies that the comfort comes too late, while the king, says Chapuys, is in good health. To which Katherine says, "so may he ever do" (2019, p. 25), without accusing him, and then she says she has written a letter for him, in which she has "commended to his goodness / the model of our chaste loves, his young daughter" (Schwarz, 2003, p. 229), and asked him to "give her virtuous breeding" (Schwarz, 2003, p. 231). She also asks the king to have

pity on her ladies, all virtuous and honest, and find them a good husband.

King Henry paints a depiction of an 'ideal woman', a wife, and a queen. This compliment could be interpreted as either wistful (because Henry is losing such a woman) or hypocritical (since Henry is losing such a woman, he wants an annulment, and he also wishes to marry Anne). While it is true that the king wants his divorce as evidenced by the fact that he will not stop at the trial until he has it, this praise could also be interpreted as genuine. The queen is a beautiful woman who is fair, lovely, holy, and obedient. But because she is unable to provide the king with what he desires, an heir, he throws her off. This is exactly what happened over the years. And just because he wants to get rid of her, she does not imply he does not believe her to be endowed with these qualities.

CONCLUSION

Women have been mostly represented as the ones who lack the ability to deal with real concerns and challenges in literature, and as a result, unable to be true leaders. Women are portrayed as immoral and bad stereotypes, according to a large body of textual evidence. In selected Shakespeare tragedies studied in this thesis, women do not have true independence and liberty, and men make all key choice regarding their life without ever consulting them. Therefore, these plays should analyze the concepts underlying racism, feminism, or any other important idea that is current in modern society since it is practically hard to see the plays from the perspective of someone who saw it in the Elizabethan age. The absence of the word 'strong woman' during Shakespeare's period does not imply that strong women did not exist. Previously, Shakespeare did not consider the possibility that women were worth receiving more attention than his society permitted.

Throughout Shakespeare's lifetime, he believed that women were just as capable as men. Shakespeare's master tragedies discussed many issues, but this thesis is concerned with one main idea: Queens.

Women in Shakespearean plays have always had important roles, sometimes even the leading role. They may create the main conflicts and the essence of the plays, or bring up interesting moral and cultural inquiries, they have always been put in challenging situations. Some women are stronger than others, and their effect on the play is different for each one. They often even surpass the male heroes.

Nevertheless, during this male-dominant society Shakespeare portrays women with strengths at least equal to those of men. Shakespeare's views on women clearly define his plays and how, by using the women as some of the most powerful and stage dominating characters, and he shows a remarkable gift for breaking down the barriers that held women captive.

Some studies suggested that these texts present women as lesser and inferior to men. Women do not occupy equal positions with men in a society, socially, politically, and economically. If they happen to occupy such positions, it implies disaster. Women are portrayed as creatures of passion and irrationality. They are not capable of handling serious issues and conflicts and because of this lack cannot be true leaders. Women in these tragedies do not have the genuine freedom and liberty and all major decisions about their lives are taken by men without them being ever consulted. Even though the women in Shakespeare's plays went against the rules of being a woman in

the society of his time, it is not fair to call him a 'feminist' when feminism was not even a thing during the span of his life, nor did it come around for hundreds of years later. A look at Shakespeare's writings suggests that he can be called an advocate of women according to modern-day feminism since his plays show gender stereotypes. Rather than condemning gender norms in society, he used gender roles in his plays to communicate the notion that a woman can climb beyond her male counterpart's position there.

Women are frequently alluded to as weak in *Hamlet*. When Hamlet pursues vengeance for the death of his father, Claudius murders Hamlet's father for personal gain. "Frailty, thy name is woman," Hamlet says, implying that Gertrude is weak for marrying Claudius (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 8). Her femininity, according to Hamlet, is one of the reasons for her weakness. He is also furious with her for sullyng his father's reputation. The previous King's memory will vanish now that she has decided to marry. Her sole appropriate role is that of the bereaved widow (Samuelsson, 2020, p. 6). There should never be a decision for her to make about remarriage because she should honor her deceased husband while still considering him. Hamlet's rage at his mother was prompted by his feelings in contrast with his mother whose decision to marry Claudius is to protect and save her son and the state from destruction and crisis.

As a result, she was first the King's wife and then his brother's wife. Her character, on the other hand, becomes a mother when Hamlet goes insane. She must take care of him in some way. Gertrude does not fit the stereotype of a nurturing mother. She does not, like a mother might, renounce her position as Queen to aid Hamlet in his vengeance. Instead, she attempts to concentrate on what is best for the state, rather than allowing her emotions to dictate her choices. Nonetheless, she protects Hamlet from himself as a mother. Therefore, Gertrude accuses Hamlet of being insane to save him from killing by Claudius when he tries to persuade his mother with what Claudius has done and mistakenly murders Polonius.

The character of woman that is represented by King John's mother Eleanor is strong and they have a voice to share equally with men. This concept is new in the age of England because women have usually been seen as weak and subjected to men's will. According to the psychological feminism, this concept is the most one that this theory of criticism tries to achieve. Women have been seen as equal to men in everything and the gender issue is classified on the mentality of the person.

In Henry VIII, Shakespeare punishes, rewards. or corrects the virtues or

immorality of the women characters. Each Queen Katharine and Queen Anne Bullen has been shown as a mother and a wife, as viewed through the prism of religious beliefs, as depicted in the film.

Katherine of Aragon is shown to be virtuous in Henry VIII and is saved by the Shakespeare, Anne Bullen represented as a villain. For all of Henry VIII's portrayals of her as a pious woman, she seemed to contradict that picture in her own deeds. The playwright used the memory of each historical queen to show virtue or depravity, and the consequences of both, on the international stage. When it came time for Shakespeare to represent Katherine and Anne as mothers and wives, their character traits were inexorably intertwined.

The good features of women described as wise, ideal, lovely, and inspirational were not available in previous periods. That is the time before Shakespeare. But in the modern age, these characteristics are somehow available to represent the character of women. In fact, this progress in mentality of people comes from the flourished feminist movement. This movement paves the way for such ideas. Namely, giving women a voice in art and literature. Therefore, in this play, Katherine is a central character that plays a role of ideality. She is represented as a part of the kingdom that can be avoided.

If Shakespeare and his master tragedies were regarded as supporting, argumentative, or feminists, they really depicted women and their delicate abilities during a period of ignorance and disregard to female roles. When Shakespeare was writing, he was able to show the inner thoughts, ideas, and effects on England's huge empire of women who are well-known in public.

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CURRICULUMVITAE

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