

“Structures of Feeling” in Gertrude, Tamora, and Cleopatra: The Queens in William Shakespeare’s Plays *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*



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Sofia Zafrin

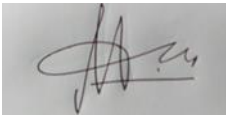
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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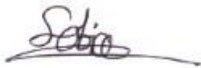
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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, without whom I would not possibly make it to this day.

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Abstract

The central focus of this research is to incorporate Raymond Williams' notions on "Structures of Feeling," to offer an analysis on Shakespeare's queens (Gertrude, Tamora, and Cleopatra) from his plays *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, to understand the portrayal of these queens in terms of their social, cultural, domestic, and political positions in their countries. Additionally, a book chapter written by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar titled "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity," and Helene Cixous' essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" will also be taken into account, to perceive a better understanding of these characters, and clarify putting forward Williams' ideas to analyze these characters. Thereby, investigating the queens' approaches, behaviors, attitudes, actions, and thoughts towards the entire society, family, culture, and politics, will determine the outcome of this research, therefore, fulfill the objectives. The analysis will reflect people's perspectives and treatment towards these queens, and it will justify the arguments of this research. Another significant proposition of this research is to showcase a comparative evaluation among the queens, to address their distinct qualities and characteristics, so that their different positions in the society are well defined. However, some journal articles, and chapters of books will be reviewed as secondary resources, which will have a major influence on the progress of this thesis, as they will contribute in perceiving the above mentioned notions, that will eventually help in the advancement of this study. Hence, the outcomes of this study will demonstrate how Shakespeare's queens have been treated in the society, based on their social, cultural, domestic, and political positions, actions, manners, and practices, and will offer an analysis on people's approaches, behaviors, and perspectives towards them.

Keywords: *Queen, Society, Culture, Politics, Approach, Treatment*

Chapter One

Introduction

“In a society as a whole, and in all its particular activities, the cultural tradition can be seen as a
continual selection and re-selection of ancestors.”

— Raymond Williams, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*

Initiating this research with this quote by Raymond Williams, marks the importance of perceiving the societal activities, by its cultural traditions and influences behind it. The ancestors in a society basically select, thus holds dominance over the cultural traditions which are to follow, in a particular society. Williams has defined culture through three general categories, which are ideal, documentary, and social. Firstly, the ideal state of culture demonstrates the embodiment of “human perfection” in many practical ways, which further creates a timeless order or universal values for the humans, so that they can continuously, restlessly, and blindly follow these ideal manifestations within a society. These eventually become the absolute and permanent references, therefore, determine the evolution of mankind in terms of personal, social, and cultural aspects (Williams 49). Secondly, the documentary state of culture sketches in human experiences, intellectual and imaginative works within a frame, to complement the features of culture within a society. This is also a form of historical criticism that justifies and clarifies the pattern of culture, which validates the documentary records. Thereby, humans get to know the observations and experiences of former witnesses, who have recorded the cultural and social norms for further usage. Thirdly, the social state works in a parallel manner to culture. It generally defines culture in accordance to its values, morals, traditions, particular features, and overall the traces people follow, in order to live in a society. Certain ways of life do not only reflect through art, learning, but they also can be portrayed through institutions, human behavior, approaches, communication, and so on. Williams suggests these three categories should be interconnected to identify society and culture as a whole, as well as

to understand its complex organization and authority over the people (50). This idea can be clarified if we take a closer look to the individual performance of each of the categories. Recorded documents keep tracing back to the ideal and social conditions of culture. Humans as social beings have the tendency to be surrounded by means of perfections, to be admired by others in a society. Therefore, the witnesses experience the society as valued and constructed by the social ideals, created by our ancestors. It can also be referred as an invisible boundary which engraves its territory, to the core of our society and culture, which surrounds us in all the possible ways. Now, to define a culture, some variables need to be mentioned to demonstrate their co-ordination, which contributes to the complex organization of culture and society. The variables consist of language, norms, values, institutions, traditions, and so on. Culture refers to certain ideas, meanings, values, practices, and other social aspects exercised by a group of people, which are reflected through human behavior, art, and learning. Now, culture cannot be constructed without human beings, and “gender” is a crucial part of argument to understand human relationship with culture.

William Shakespeare, throughout his life has written many plays consisted of different characteristics. Three of the significant tragedies by Shakespeare are *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, which tell tales of tragedies in Denmark, Rome, and Egypt. The fascinating fact is the chief queen characters in these plays are distinct and exemplary characters, who do not limit themselves into the clutch of conventional female characters. They are Gertrude, Tamora, and Cleopatra. *Hamlet* was written in between 1599-1601 (16th–17th Century), *Titus Andronicus* was written in between 1588-1593(16th Century), *Antony and Cleopatra* was written around 1606 (17th century). Well, the time spans are mentioned here intentionally to focus on the condition of women, in all over the universe. The wave of feminism is thought to be started in the late 19th and early 20th century. Even after the rise of feminism, the women are still struggling to get their hands on equal rights as men. So, it is evident that the oppression and subjugation of women, in the 16th and 17th century were too apparent and unavoidable. It is to mention that the three queen characters

in these plays do not really fit into the typical box reserved for women, rather they have shown distinct and notable characteristics, in terms of approach, action, behavior, thoughts, strategies, and other factors. Unfortunately, the natives and non-natives criticize these queens for their acts and strategies, behaving in the customary patriarchal pattern. Now, their psychology behind the treatment towards the unconventional women is crucial to identify, for which Raymond Williams' notion "Structures of Feeling" in culture will be brought to shed light on this research.

1.1 Structures of Feeling

Raymond Williams has explained the structures of feeling in a fascinating essay, through which we can understand the cultural aspects, traditional values, and their developments in a society. It creates awareness to understand the cultural ideologies, and their influences on us over the decades in our society. Therefore, Williams has mentioned that the structures "gives the sense of a generation or of a period" (131). However, there are three categories in this framework which are explained below.

- i. **Dominant Culture:** The dominant culture basically shapes the culture ideologies, norms, and values within a society, and majority of the people follows it. It also shapes their identities. The dominant culture has great impacts over the lifestyles of people, and they are bound to follow it, as it is widely approved and appreciated by people.
- ii. **Residual Culture:** The residual culture refers to the remaining influence of the former dominant culture, to the current dominant culture. Sometimes, some features from the residual culture become the contemporary dominant culture. Some features might also oppose the ideologies of the dominant culture.
- iii. **Emergent Culture:** This refers to new cultural ideologies that resist the former dominant cultural features, therefore, a new cultural phenomenon emerges.

Now, the dominant culture certainly is the mainstream form of culture maintained and followed by people, within a society. This is the ideal structure which is adopted by the majority in an existing society, except a few of them. Maintaining the ideal rules and norms keeps people away from social condemnation, and keep them updated with the traditions and trends. This eventually produces a staunch social boundary approved by the majority. Thereby, it creates a universal value in collaboration to mass acceptance. Identity, subjectivity, and power relations- these factors are mainly and heavily influenced by the impacts of dominant culture. Zembylas has comprehended Williams' approach, therefore, sketched out some facts. Williams' interdisciplinary legacy regarding this field demonstrates culture as "a series of complex relations among authorial ideology, institutional process, and aesthetic form" (Zembylas 189). Combining the series, the dominant culture emerges and spreads its wings. The wings convey their regards continuously in the residual and emergent phases too, either in larger extent or shorter extent. The structures of feeling initially reflect as a firm and definite phenomenon, but it operates through different periods in distinct forms and categories. It occurs in this manner as it results from individual interpretation of everyday lived experiences of society and culture, which brings in subjectivity and objective perspectives. In addition, the individual ideology ultimately is manipulated by the mainstream culture. Now, when we focus at gender studies, patriarchy or male dominance has ruled over the cultural practices so far (except a few cases), resulting in the creation of dominant culture in their favor. The culture is impacted by the commanding phase, which has been ruled by patriarchy through decades. It means male control over females is the dominant form of culture followed by people, almost everywhere in the world although some changes have been noticed, after the rise of feminism, feminist writings, texts, literatures, and other influential mediums. These ideas have rooted from many analytical writings by many scholars, authors, and literary critics. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity," and Hélène Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa"

will be taken into account for this research, to clarify the aspects of “structures of feeling” in terms of gender studies.

1.2 The Queen’s Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity

This is the first chapter from Gilbert and Gubar’s book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Some of the implications of this idea are the notion of ownership, authority, and power practice. Now, the significant question rises here on the representation of “penis” through the “pen.” The male authors throughout the ages have been creating literary works, as they are believed to have the originating power (both physically and psychologically). On the other hand, women are believed neither to have intellectual properties, nor generative or creative power. Authorship is not meant for the women, whereas the men can write and portray the women according to their own preferences, in their writings. Even though women’s authorship has been discussed here, the prime focus is on to the creativity, thought process, intellect, and power of women, which are underestimated by men. Observing these issues, it can be understood that most of the men writers have made such a portrayal of women in their writings, that it has taken shape of the governing cultural form for all. Thus, women are expected to fulfill the certain criteria imposed by the society and culture. As writing involves intellectual and academic process, it is evident that women are not allowed, appreciated, and motivated, to adopt proper learning system, education, and knowledge to become enlightened through multiple sources. Gilbert and Gubar quote from Robert Southey’s letter to Charlotte Bronte, in their book to emphasize on this misogynistic social idea against the women. He writes “Literature is not the business of a woman’s life, and it cannot be” (Gilbert and Gubar 8). However, the portrayal of angel-women and monster-women which will be referred for this research, as identified and explained by Gilbert and Gubar, is discussed below.

Angel-women: “Woman’s virtue is man’s greatest invention” (Gilbert and Gubar 13). It refers to the fact that eventually men are the ones, who have written the features of a virtuous, angelic, and ideal woman. The term “angel in the house” originates directly from Coventry Patmore’s poem. Milton, Goethe, Poe, Swift, and other authors have further strengthened the root of this idea, in their literary works. An angelic woman should be domestic which is the most significant criterion. In addition, she has to be passive, selfless, gentle, meek, and vulnerable, so that she can easily be controlled and subjected to patriarchal oppression. Moreover, her only aim in life is to please her husband both physically and mentally. Mental pleasure defines her place within the text the male pleases to write. She cannot have any story of her own, rather she is expected to console and offer comfort to the others, and listen to their stories. One striking statement is put in the book, while referring to the female character from Patmore’s poem named Honoria. The statement is “Man must be pleased; but him to please/Is woman’s pleasure” (Gilbert and Gubar 23). The image of an ideal and angelic woman is imposed on the woman, by the misogynistic male authors in their writings. This is why the most of the women are convinced to perform their so called ideal roles in a society.

Monster-women: The monster-women are exactly opposite of the angelic-woman, according to the male authors. They are rebellious, cannot be confined into societal rules, find their own space, talks against the patriarchal dominance, and have their own stories to tell and write. If a woman wants to be an author, therefore, contribute to the literary work, she becomes non-ideal and evil. Men are afraid of the monster-women, because they cannot rule or own them. This type of woman is usually referred as sorceress, witch, or any other negative terms in the male authored texts. Reference of Spenser’s first book *The Faerie Queene* is given in Gilbert and Gubar’s book (Gilbert and Gubar 30). Spenser mentions a female monster named Errour in the book, who is half woman and half serpent. She spurts out books and papers in a fight. It clearly gives a message that women cannot digest intellectual properties from books, and they cannot be enlightened through it.

Another sorceress named Duessa has deformed physique below the waist like Error. Both of them deceive men, and their ugliness is associated to their hidden genitals. Now, it is ironic how women's genitalia offers bodily pleasure to men which is one of the greatest so called virtues, and the same organ is also criticized when women cannot match the male-ego. Therefore, they are called monster-women. According to the Jewish lore, Lilith was the first wife of Adam, who denied being subjugated and thought of herself as equal to him. Then, Adam tried to control her, and she flew away to live with the demons, and became a monster. She was punished and threatened by god and the angels. She represents the strength, courage, and power of a woman, which is socially unacceptable and criticized. Thus, the male authors have showcased women empowerment as a monstrosity, throughout the decades in their writings.

Gilbert and Gubar's analysis on male perspectives on women, and the ways they treat women can be further explained by looking at "The Laugh of the Medusa" by Hélène Cixous.

1.3 The Laugh of the Medusa

Cixous is concerned of women's existence in the male dominated territory, as just objects of oppression. She has made a triggering comment "woman must write woman" (877). She boldly approaches the women to write about themselves, their struggles against conventional men, society, and culture, the stirring male driven politics against them, and all the injustices done against them. It means Cixous has realized the cultural and societal norms which is strangling women since ages, for which women need to speak up for themselves. She also mentions how women are brainwashed in a narrow society, to get lost in the labyrinth of patriarchal governance (877). The reason men do not like women generated writings is because they are afraid of those, they are afraid of women empowerment. Women are taught that their continent is dark which is dangerous (Cixous 878). As nothing can be seen in dark, women's provinces are shady, full of harmful instincts. So, they are taught be enlightened by the men, and their writings. Moreover, the phallogocentric (concerned with

the phallus or penis) society and culture have made the women meek, fragile, passive, pessimistic, completely domestic, and non-creative. They are bound to fit into the dominant ideals measured by men, just to get away from the typical judgments, underestimation, negligence, and criticism. They are taught to see their bodies as something forbidding, which is meant to be hidden and not expressed, like the men do with pride. Here, Cixous' has pointed out how men have created a notion of "lack," which means the lack of penis. It injects the idea into the culture that women cannot be equal to men, as they lack the penis, therefore, lack every positive quality men possess unless they acquire the ideals imposed by the society.

Gilbert, Gubar, and Cixous have brilliantly pointed out some pivotal aspects in our society and culture, on the male perceptions on women, how women are treated, ideal models imposed on women to follow, overall acceptance of woman by people (especially men), expected roles of women to play, and other issues. Their writings show how women's generative power, intellectual capability, thoughts, imagination, creativity, and wisdom have been questioned, thereby, criticized. If women speak up against all the injustices, repressions, and unequal treatments towards them, and act beyond the archetypical social and cultural ideals and norms, they are considered as monsters, dark, pathetic, and unwise. Even though women's writing has been the primary concern in their writings, the chief reason is that women can make people hear their voices through writing. They can rebel against all the patriarchal oppressions by taking up the pen. The male dominance and controlling behaviors towards them have been going on since decades. Hence, it is evident that this is the dominant form of culture in terms of gender studies.

1.4 Research Objective, Questions, and Methodology

This research will adopt a qualitative approach to solidify the analysis. William Shakespeare's three plays *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* will be analyzed in this research as primary texts. Raymond Williams' "Structures of Feeling," Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan

Gubar's "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity," and Hélène Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa" will be used as theoretical texts to justify the research objectives. Furthermore, some journal articles, and books by different authors will be referred at times as secondary resources. The aim of this research is to explore Shakespeare's three distinct queen characters (Gertrude, Tamora, and Cleopatra) in terms of their unconventional actions, strategies, qualities, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies, to analyze the criticisms, judgments, representations, and treatments towards them within their societies and cultures, so that the reasons behind such approaches are understood as a whole in these plays. The questions which will be investigated to answer, to carry on with the research objective are mentioned below.

1. How Tamora, Gertrude, and Cleopatra's characters are represented in the plays? Why?
2. Which conventional and unconventional characteristics they reflect in the plays?
3. How other people perceive these characters in the plays? Why?
4. How they are accepted both socially and culturally in the plays?
5. What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the characters?

This thesis is consisted of five chapters. I will be introducing the theories, texts, a few concepts, object of study, and methodology which will contribute to bring out the outcome of my research, and fulfill the aim of this study, in the first chapter. The second chapter will demonstrate some existing researches on Shakespeare's women characters, and it will also discuss the existing gap in these researches which is aimed to fulfill in my research. I will be offering thorough analyses on the three queen characters (Tamora, Gertrude, Cleopatra) in the third and fourth chapters, along with a comparative study among them, and will discuss their social and cultural acceptance in the plays based on the "angel-monster" depiction. I will be returning back to the pivotal issues which have influenced my thesis, in the fifth and last chapter to conclude my arguments.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Majority of Shakespearean women characters have adopted archetypal ways to express themselves, in terms of behavior, social approaches, actions, and lots of aspects. Critics take interest in describing their predominant persona, mostly through a feminist or patriarchal lens. Conducting a critical analysis of several journal articles, serves the intention of scrutinizing some of the prominent Shakespearean heroines, in regard to their social, domestic, and socio-political conditions. Three Shakespearean queens have been taken into consideration for this research, and the articles will help understanding certain patterns of their conventional or unconventional characteristics, thereby, exploring the influence of cultural evolution through a feminist lens. Although this literature review has been divided into two sections, all of the articles signify the social perspectives over several Shakespearean characters and their persona. However, the first section offers general overviews of several heroines from Shakespearean plays, whereas the other section offers specific overviews of specific heroines.

2.1 General Overviews on Multiple Shakespearean Heroines through Feminist and Patriarchal Lenses

Carole Mckewin offers a detailed explanation on Juliet Dusinberre's article, which features the Renaissance traditional and typical patriarchal views on woman in Shakespeare's plays. Basically, Mckewin explains the feminist framework used against the convicted Elizabethan-Jacobean perspectives, that is also formulated by Shakespeare in his plays. Dusinberre's comprehensive work articulates independent approaches women should adopt, and also shows the compelled attitudes of women in the conservative period (158). Keeping a unilateral perception over characters like Portia, Rosalind, and Beatrice, in terms of their intellect, maverick mindset, and lovely appeal, Shakespeare also holds a dualistic vibe through interpreting their optimism as

non-harmful (Mckewin 160). Portia, fostering her feminine identity, has to submit her independent faculty to the male authority. Mckewin further tries to extend Coppelia Kahn's idea on irrational aspects of marriage, within a male dominated society. The explanation refers to Kate's forceful submission to Petruchio, by bringing up one instance where she assents the sun as to be the moon, to please her husband (163). It is ironic how Shakespeare has frequently used prototypical norms against women, to proceed with the dramatic conflicts, whereas outcomes of the dramatic actions indicate falsity of these existing stereotypes. Therefore, Mckewin urges to create a new platform, so that women's identity can be free from traditional fabrications, and the audience can nurture newer standpoints to understand the agendas of feminist criticism. Although this article investigates some of Shakespeare's women characters through a feminist lens, it does not cover the cultural aspects behind these quintessential norms.

Gordana Galić Kakkonen and Ana Penjak have put emphasis on critical analysis of the characters, Desdemona, Juliet, and Cordelia from an ecofeminist perspective. The societal inequalities imposed on these characters, by following patriarchal prejudices are examined by them. The representation of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' father-daughter relationship is evident here. These characters are married off only to claim their rights in the socio-economic surroundings, also to accept the typical "contract" assigned for them by their fathers (Kakkonen and Ana 22). The paternal authority rejects them to take any decision whatsoever. For instance, Juliet's father, Capulet regrets of her birth, as she does not show satisfaction over her father's choice of a suitor, whom she is supposed to marry (Kakkonen and Ana 24). Sadly, the characters are portrayed in such a manner, as if they are constantly owned by men, either by father or husband. The ownership changes in exchange to massive dowry, in a custom called "marriage." Raising the voice to fight for equal rights, is considered in the dramas as scandalous and shameful for women. Although this article applies an ecofeminist framework, the cultural shift influencing

the framework remains unclear, and the chosen characters also represent conventional female persona.

Henry David Gray, in his article sheds lights on the exemplary evolution of some of Shakespeare's heroines, with the shift of genres from comedy to tragedy. It is understood that plays like *The Comedy of Errors*, are entirely men driven in terms of the plot, storyline, course of actions, and dramatization of other aspects (Gray 123). Heroines like Adriana, Silvia, and Helena have been trivialized, in their participations in any event, by the male protagonists, in the plays. Likewise, Portia and Katherine follow the archetypal tendency to a greater extent, although the initial supremacy of their traits can be spotted (Gray 124). Now, a shift of focus can be observed considering characters like Rosalind and Viola. Men are no longer the central figures in the plays, as soon as these heroines arrive. A detectable fact is none of these heroines act in entirely unconventional ways, rather they comply with the social boundaries. Grasping such attributes, they save themselves from being evil. However, Gray has used a triggering word which is "evil-willed heroine," referred to characters like Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra (127). Both of them possess atypical characteristics, which is why they are addressed as evil. Gray has shown the evolution in such a way that it seems as if, the shift from comedy to tragedy is done to showcase women's massive influence behind every tragedy. Even though the article has drawn the evolution of Shakespearean heroines, it does not clarify the cultural motives to identify the unconventional heroines as evil.

Kay Stockholder demonstrates in her article, how the Renaissance disciplines articulate women's virtues, ideals, characteristics, and actions in Shakespeare's plays. Women are reportedly accused of adultery (even in the marriage-bed), manipulating the good men to be distracted from divine blessings, by arousing their sexual desires and seducing them. Thus, it is quite clear that women's sexuality is addressed as inherently evil, which make them lesser creatures. Despite some nuances, almost every female character in Shakespeare's plays is shown to be circling around in a

diabolical realm. A very specified discourse has been brought by Stockholder, which is the dichotomy of active and passive women. An active woman characters associates with cruelty, deviousness, and witchery, whereas a passive woman affiliates with sexual motives which are poisonous for men (Stockholder 36). Cleopatra from *Antony and Cleopatra* indeed breaks through the archetypal women forms, and she is also hold responsible for Antony's doom for her sexual enterprise (Stockholder 44). However, Gertrude and Ophelia from *Hamlet* are considered being personally frail, vulnerable, and timid. At the same time, the attribution of their sexuality is symbolized to poison (Stockholder 36). Hence, it is evident that active femininity and sexual drives are supposed to be antithetical by nature, according to the Renaissance Manichean beliefs, but they are deliberately put together in several Shakespearean female characters. This paper critically analyzes the active and passive position of several Shakespearean women characters, in terms of Renaissance Manichean ideas, but does not discuss the cultural significance behind the issues.

Morris P. Tilley has drawn our attention to an existing social stereotype which is “colorism,” deliberately used by Shakespeare in many of his plays. Following the customs of sixteenth century, the reign of Queen Elizabeth supposedly has admired and nurtured the desire for physical beauty (Tilley 207). Blonde hair, ruby-like lips, fair complexion- these are some of the renaissance beauty standards set for women. Hence, fair skin tone is one of the predominant features in most of the Shakespearean plays, of most of the heroines. Characters like Jessica, Silvia, Helena are often praised for their whitish, snow-like hands, by their lovers- Lorenz, Proteus, Demetrius (Tilley 208). For instance, Demetrius' propensity of preference is delivered, when he addresses Helena's hands as “pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow.” On top of that, fair skin is compared to “lily” by Shakespeare, frequently in some of his plays. Furthermore, the notion of cleanliness is also presumably associated with fair complexion, which determines the exquisite charm, delicate features, and rarest form of possessions among the women. The matter of “colorism” arises when Shakespeare provides us with detailed portrayal of “dark” complexion,

which is treated as to be accompanied by uncleanness and dirt (Tilley 212). For instance, Rosalind evidently expresses her disgust towards Phoebe's blackish hands, therefore, tries to underestimate her as if she is an ineligible one. This article portrays aspects of colorism by bringing in several women characters from Shakespearean plays, but it does not apply the feminist or cultural viewpoints behind such notion.

Richard Levin interestingly identifies some major gender controversies revolving around Shakespearean tragedies, basing on the plots of masculinity and femininity, in his article. Levin argues that these two ideas create abstract yet a binary opposite phenomenon, which eventually result in universal clashes and stereotypical themes (126). Besides, other triggering facts are the feminist framework on toxic machismo, and the men driven oppressing weapons against feminine ideals, within an existing patriarchal society. Well, Levin points out how both the ideals get vulnerable being in a society full of masculine consciousness, and it is well-explained through the example of Lear and Cordelia, who so deeply suffers as they are obliged to certain behavioral patterns (127). Characters like Juliet, Desdemona, and Ophelia are entirely suppressed, and offer their submission to the dominant male figures. Originating multiple forms of catharsis in the play, the staunch root of patriarchy causes sufferings to both the male and female characters. Levin goes on explaining this issue with intrinsic male psyche (of majority of the male characters), which shape the female characters according to their machismo's satisfaction (130). Development of the tragedies is arguably one of the most controversial issues in this article, where Shakespeare is shown as an author deliberately putting effort, to influence the misinterpretations regarding two sexes. This article indeed explores intriguing facts over the prejudices, developing through decades over the roles of both men and women, though it does not particularly focus on the misogynistic ideals and cultural prejudices, against the Shakespearean women characters.

2.2 Specific Overviews on Certain Shakespearean Heroines through Feminist and Patriarchal Lenses

Abigail L. Montgomery emphasizes on the fact of Gertrude's character portrayal as contingent, in regard to the male figures in *Hamlet*, which is dissected and criticized by her in the article. Montgomery argues that Gertrude appears as an active, influential, and strong character, whereas she is seen as a marginalized, subordinate, and has been minimized throughout the play. Gertrude interprets Hamlet's vexation after his father's death, as the fruit of her and Claudius' "overhasty" marriage (Montgomery 106). Montgomery here attempts to showcase Gertrude's courage to face the ultimate problem, in her marriage to Claudius, and her deliberate recognition of the complicated affair that has caused the turbulence. Furthermore, she does not occur solely as a facilitator or producer of Hamlet's frustration and anger, rather she also appears as a counselor and guardian of Hamlet (Montgomery 107). These instances make her an active participator and strong interpreter in the play. Gertrude's perspectives regarding Ophelia's death is indeed notable. Being marginalized by several men, she decides to have everyone see Ophelia's death with generosity, compassion, and modesty. She even grows a rather brawny voice to command Claudius and Laertes, to reshape their views regarding this death, as long as they are concerned (Montgomery 109). Nevertheless, her affirmation towards her own desire, freedom of mind, and willful act ultimately reigns over her husband, when she clearly defies Claudius by drinking from the poison-filled cup. Here, Gertrude's character is analyzed through a feminine scheme, but the cultural foundations of it remain in the dark.

Carolyn E. Brown, in her article explores Juliet's character to establish it as a strong, courageous, dominant, and intelligent, as critics often marginalize her role in the play. Reversing the gender roles, Brown highlights Juliet's dominance over Romeo, and her sense of freedom, whereas most of the critics have addressed her as naïve, shallow, and passive. If the famous balcony scene is taken into consideration, it is visible that Juliet shapes Romeo's perceptions

according to her own desires, which further influence him to obey her commands (Brown 334). Romeo, being a former young boy who is gullible, physically attracted to Juliet, and an emotional fool, utterly transforms into a pragmatic man who loves Juliet's heart and soul, after getting controlled by her. Well, she also suggests and wishes that he will renounce his first and last name, in order to live a healthy, peaceful, and happy life (Brown 340). Surprisingly, Romeo agrees on that being too desperate for Juliet, but Juliet neither speaks of renouncing her family name, nor does she bring any change at all within herself. However, this article portrays Juliet's distinct characteristics through a feminist ground, but it does not apply the cultural views influencing the circumstances.

Despite Desdemona's everlasting innocence, modesty, and purity, scrutinized by most of the critics, Stephen Reid has demonstrated her complex act, and her psychological discrepancies. Desdemona thinks of herself as a woman of high virtue, purity, and piety, in both of her physical and mental state (Reid 246). Her modesty reaches to an extent that she cannot even utter the word "whore." However, Reid focuses on Desdemona's dualistic mindset, while she almost forces Iago, to vocalize the words of praise assuming her virtue (249). Well, she clearly knows that Iago will not say something pleasing, rather his words will invoke erotic discomfort, which she has deliberately rejected to utter or hear previously. Now, it is very normal for a woman to encounter with such instances, as discussed by Reid, but for a woman like Desdemona who is full of divine sanctity as claimed by her, it does not fit well. Besides, Desdemona's susceptibility towards Lodovico's masculinity, charm, and personality is acknowledgeable (Reid 252). She manifests her sanction towards Emilia's praising words on Lodovico, and it might seem as an attitude of generosity, but her ways of talking about him do not suggest likewise. Her unquestioned submission towards the heinous allegations against her moral self, does seem suspicious withal. She does mention of her "guilt" when Othello charges her, which is a fact of concern as Reid

suggests. However, this article offers a critical analysis on Desdemona's complex psychology and dualistic behavior, but it does not employ any feminist or cultural framework.

Jo Eldridge Carney, in his article exquisitely brings out legit resemblances between Tamora and Catherine de Médicis, a French queen. Carney mentions of Dowriche and Marlowe's work on Catherine, who explain her associations with many controversial events in France, at her time. The proximity of their and Shakespeare's works is fascinating, in terms of representing both the queens. Tamora provokes Saturninus to let her orchestrate all the revenge desired by them, which is similar to Catherine's actions as she is considered responsible, behind the horrendous acts of her royal lineage (Carney 427). The apparent features of the queens are clearly visible, in their way of plotting revenge, or setting up conspiracies. The most prominent and exemplary parallelism among them occurs when Tamora mentions of "Massacre." Grudging over her son's death, Tamora seeks vengeance over Titus' entire family, while she utters this word. Certainly, it reverberates of Catherine's heinous associations regarding the terrible events on St. Bartholomew's Day (Carney 428). Moreover, Tamora and Catherine's maternal intensity is similar, as both of them possess a controlling motherhood towards their child. Both of them are said to master their child in violence, nasty fights, and destructive forces, which are observable in different incidents and events. Even though both of the queens have practiced their agency of power vigorously, they have always been treated as "other" in their provinces (Carney 431). This article focuses on the parallelism among Catherine and Tamora. Nonetheless, it does not put forward the themes of feminism or cultural influences.

John P. McCombe expresses T.S. Eliot's thoughts on Cleopatra, where she is shown to be a product of orientalism. Her attractiveness, charm, seducing capability, and beauty have made her an object of oriental discourse, which later becomes a resonant notion. Geographically, Orient is linked to Africa along with other regions, which creates an easy passage for Cleopatra to become a product of orientalism. McCombe also puts Edward Said's remarks that an orient desires of a

vibrant sexuality and sexual fantasies, opposing the occident (29). Therefore, Cleopatra's sexual attributes can be observed as bold, strong, and fascinating, which further create her identity as an orient. Moreover, her use of perfume and oil is also shown being linked, to the oriental perspectives against her. However, Cleopatra's sexual practices are not regarded as something positive, rather they are portrayed as harmful and destructive towards the men (McCombe 35). Cleopatra is held responsible for the doom of Antony, due to her constant erotic approaches towards him, which make him even more attracted to her. Nevertheless, this article only showcases an oriental view on Cleopatra, where she is not portrayed as a righteous character. The cultural or feminist frameworks are not applied in this study.

Julie Hankey offers us a dualistic view of Portia, where she is shown to stand on the borderline of angel and evil, as argued by different critics. The standpoints rely mainly on the renaissance ideals for women, rooting in the later times after Shakespearean era. Despite the discursive notions on women's elevated status as portrayed by Shakespeare, critics have often labeled them as feminine weakness. Hankey brings over John Ruskin who willfully marks the territory of women, to be confined in the domestic periphery where men are supposed to rest (427). Ruskin defines womanish qualities that should possess delicate features, innocence, and tenderness, thereby, they are deprived of any creative qualities and sanctify themselves of any non-feminine statures. Snubbing Portia due to eloquent and independent characteristics, Hazlitt's ideas defy Shakespeare's unusual portrayal of hers, whereas August Wilhelm generously praises of Portia's wit, intelligence, and beauty (Hankey 431). In addition, Portia's unconventional attributes are addressed as unusually mannish (in a negative intonation) by some male critics, who identify them as provocations against the social norms and values (Hankey 434). Hence, Portia's impressive victory in the courtroom scene against Shylock has triggered most of the male critics, who associate her approaches as passive aggressiveness lacking feminine gentleness, even though her actions are celebrated by other critics. This article analyzes the polarity of Portia's characteristics

as identified by multiple critics, but it does not interpret the cultural conditions causing such differences. Besides, no other Shakespearean female character is analyzed here employing these themes.

Evaluating all of these journal articles, it is perceptible that most of the subsisting researches on Shakespearean women from different plays, chiefly focus on the acceptance of these women in the existing society, through employing a feminine or masculine spectacle. The major concern of these articles is to measure the characteristics of these women, using traditional methods imposed by the patriarchal society. Furthermore, the themes of colorism, racism, and orientalism against these heroines are also contemplated, in some existing works. However, the spotted research gap which is aimed to be fulfilled in this thesis, is that none of these works actually discuss on the cultural framework, which influences such attributes of society and people against the women. The cultural evolution is needed here to justify these women's conventional or unconventional approaches in all aspects. Additionally, characters belonging to all categories in terms of their social status, have been explored commonly. It lashes out the underpinning of pivotal arguments on distinct perspectives, on discrete social positions of women, thereby, rejects the possibility of clarifying multiple attributes on several occasions, of the Shakespearean heroines.

Chapter Three

Depiction of the Angel or the Monster

In *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, Tamora, Gertrude, and Cleopatra portray exemplary characteristics, which do not only inspire the notion of the “new women” to a greater extent, but these also showcase the failure of patriarchal oppressions by most of their actions. The dichotomy of angel and monster-women offered by Gilbert and Gubar, does complement these characters in terms of their actions, approaches, and thoughts. It is evident that none of these characters is presented as an angelic or righteous woman, in the plays rather their character portrayal suggests or evokes hatred, from the surface level. Looking at the tertiary level, it gets more visible to observe their persona from a whole different perspective. An in-depth analysis on Tamora and Gertrude’s characteristics, actions, approaches, behavior, and attitude will be offered in this chapter, which is divided into two sections.

3.1 Exploring the Unorthodox “Tamora”

Tamora is the former queen of Goths, who are defeated by Titus Andronicus. When she is brought back to Rome, she becomes the queen by marrying Rome’s emperor, Saturninus. However, Tamora does not possess the typical characteristics, which have been imposed on women through ages, by the dominant cultural formations. Her characteristics signify components of residual culture, as its themes suggest. She exposes herself within a typical society ruled by patriarchy as its dominant form, and she abides by the norms. At the same time, she also manifests anomalous personalities, rejecting so called standard ideals set for women. However, when Tamora and her followers along with her lover and sons are brought to Rome as trophies of war, Titus and his sons become very eager to kill her firstborn to satisfy the souls of Titus’ son and others. Then, Saturninus tries to comfort her by saying, “Princely shall be thy usage every way” (Shakespeare 1.1.13), and “Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths” (Shakespeare 1.1.14). It signifies

how she is going to be treated, as the word “usage” has been used. He subtly puts a hint of being physically attracted to her, as he asks Lavinia’s (his fiancé) opinion on this matter right away. He shows his authority by promising Tamora to put in a better position, which is humiliating towards her former royal position. It means her supremacy is overlooked by him, which can be easily snatched away, and she can be in a better position with the help of a male royal figure. Moreover, her tragic situation is not even taken into consideration, and she is straight away indirectly offered to be a mistress, just after her firstborn is brutally killed. She cannot protest against it, which denotes her unquestioned submission to the male authority, as imposed by the societal and cultural norms, as if women are born to be used and enjoyed regardless of her social position. Now, when Lavinia elopes with Bassianus, Saturninus offers Tamora to marry him without a second thought, and the rise of Tamora as an unorthodox character comes in light. Although Tamora warmly replies him,

“She will a handmaid be to his desires,

A loving nurse, a mother to his youth” (Shakespeare 1.1.17),

she plots of avenging the wrongs done to her and her sons. Her statement clarifies one social fact that women are supposed to be puppets to fulfill men’s desires, and they should be loving, mother-like, and timid by nature. These are some social prejudices which have been spreading its masculine hypocrisy throughout the ages as “from Eve, Minerva, Sophia, and Galatea onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men” (Gilbert and Gubar 12). During the course of the play, she neither acts as his handmaid, nor does she becomes his puppet.

Surprisingly, despite noticing Saturninus’ extreme anger towards Bassianus and Titus, she takes up the courage to convince him, so that he at least pretends to forgive them for the time being, and she can handle the situation. She is not afraid of the consequence as she is new to Rome,

and does not yet know Saturninus well, yet she has the nerve of making an effort to control and manage her husband strategically, opposing the expected women's virtue. Advancing this fact, Saturninus also is successfully convinced by her, wherefore she acts as his counselor. Thereby, she adds up to her unorthodox personality by uttering in rage "I'll find a day to massacre them all," and

"And make them know what 'tis to let a queen

Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain" (Shakespeare 1.1.23).

These two triggering statements reveal her extreme psychological strength, strategic mindset, independent approach, and a rebellious personality against all the injustices happened to her. She is a very confident person, as she knows that she is certainly going to punish her enemies. Currently, she is in a different kingdom, but she is already planning to take revenge which shows her ability to manipulate people, and her strong determination. Furthermore, she has a strong sense of self-respect, and takes pride in herself, which is why she feels very humiliated to kneel and beg in useless venture. It also demonstrates she does not want public sympathy as she has once been a ruler. She cannot bear the thought that how mercilessly she has been treated by Titus and his sons, in an open crowd where everyone has witnessed her helpless situation. Her use of the word "queen" prioritizes her sense of supremacy, power, independence, and authoritative status.

Opposing this quality, women in a patriarchal society are not supposed to have sense of self-respect and pride, let alone have strong personality, and they are not even allowed to raise their voices against and injustice, oppression, or humiliation. The irony is most of the unequal and brutal treatments towards women are not considered as violation of rights, rather these are addressed as dominant features and norms of culture, produced and nurtured by patriarchal sovereignty. However, it is very astonishing that the others including Titus and Bassianus, also falls for Tamora's political trap, which signifies her knowledge on diplomacy, and political tactics as suit best to a strong queen. Well, another striking feature of Tamora is she dares to have an extra-

marital relationship with Aaron, being a queen in Rome under the nose of Saturninus. Now, she finds her happiness being with Aaron, as he offers her comfort, peace, and supports her in all her moves under all circumstances. It is clear that she loves herself, and is very generous and conscious of her physical and psychological desires. Emphasizing on her desire, Aaron mentions “though Venus govern your desires” (Shakespeare 2.3.36). Venus is the goddess of love, charm, sex, and fertility, according to Roman mythology. Therefore, Aaron’s statement makes it clear that she is aware of her physical needs and wants to fulfill it, and she can boldly approach him for it. Tamora states passionately,

“And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave,

We may, each wreathed in the other's arms” (Shakespeare 2.3.36).

It defines her urge to enjoy her passionate relationship with Aaron. This is a very distinct characteristic for a woman, as they are supposedly prohibited not to talk of their sexual desires openly, because it will be an insult to their virtue, ideal, and maidenhood. Cixous has also highlighted this issue mentioning “we’ve been turned away from our bodies, shamefully taught to ignore them, to strike them with that stupid sexual modesty” (885). Thinking of another affair outside of marriage is not even an option for them even if it makes them happy, if they are unhappy in the married life.

However, Tamora gives birth to a child who resembles Aaron, and its complexion and other bodily features undoubtedly represent the Moorish people. It is evident that it belongs to Aaron, which terrifies Tamora and she send it to Aaron to have a solution. If Tamora would have wanted to kill it, she could have done it with the blink of an eye without anyone noticing, but she actually wants a proper solution as is proven when she wants Aaron to see it. It expresses her motherly nature, as well as a thoughtful insight. She is basically terrified of Saturninus because he will find out the truth in an instant, right after looking at its complexion. The nurse who assists Tamora to

give birth, also emphasizes on this issue by telling, “The emperor, in his rage, will doom her death” (Shakespeare 4.2.84). Even though the nurse continues explaining that Tamora wants the child dead, the question remains that what possibly could have resisted her from killing it right after birth, and Tamora never mentions of it anywhere. Being a mother, her instincts and inner love might have stopped her killing it. Her love for her offspring is very intense which can be seen, when her firstborn is killed, and other two sons get into any trouble. However, Tamora has a very good self-control which is evident here, and she does not hastily take any decision which shows her wisdom too. She is also extremely courageous because she has already given birth to Aaron’s child, inside of the palace. She responds quickly and takes decision to avoid creating any scene whatsoever. Women are not taught and expected to manage any critical situation with wit, and having a strong nerve is also discouraged for them. She proves herself as to be a confident, brave, and witty queen with a sense of military strategies. When Saturninus knows about Lucius’ position as the general of Goths, and that he wants to take revenge, Saturninus becomes weary and frustrated of the upcoming consequences. It is Tamora who tries to lift his spirit up. She, in firm determination tells Saturnine “Why should you fear? is not your city strong,” and “King, be thy thoughts imperious, like thy name” (Shakespeare 4.4.97). This instance evinces her skillful attributes, and strong leadership as a queen who is both physically and psychologically strong, therefore, can stay calm in every warlike or complex situation. In addition, she shows her expertise in statecraft, when she confidently tells Saturninus that she is able to convince old Titus, so that he prevents Lucius from declaring a war upon Rome. Her remarks elaborates on this matter, as she utters, “For I can smooth and fill his aged ear with golden promises; that, were his heart,” and

“Now will I to that old Andronicus;

And temper him with all the art I have,

To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths” (Shakespeare 4.4.98).

Now, Saturninus also gets convinced, and almost dependent on her in terms of political issues, also to get rid of his personal frustrations. He agrees on whatever she says and commands, and she almost acts as the ultimate authority who makes the others obey her political bidding, including the king. This is a striking personality of a woman, which is not allowed for the other women to have in an archetypal society maintained by patriarchal authority. Women are not authorized to interfere in any diplomatic or political issues. Hence, they do not have any access to counsel their husbands, or any other male figure on any issue, for they are thought to be useless, unimaginative, unwise, timid, non-creative, and voiceless. Furthermore, “woman’s sphere was defined and maintained by men” (Showalter 198). Nonetheless, she holds her nerves strongly during such a political and personal turmoil, and plans accordingly to visit Titus in a disguise. However, she visits Titus taking up a different name, “Revenge.” She claims that the infernal world has sent her to him, to have vengeance upon Titus’ enemies. She is well aware that if Titus finds out the truth, he will definitely kill her along with her son, as he deliberately mentions to them,

“There is a queen, attended by a Moor;

Well mayst thou know her by thy own proportion,

for up and down she doth resemble thee:

I pray thee, do on them some violent death;

They have been violent to me and mine” (Shakespeare 5.2.112).

These words of Titus deliver a clear message to them, that he strongly wishes to kill them, and he knows their secrets, the heinous deeds they have done to him and his family members. Listening to such infuriated desires, Tamora does not quiver a bit, and remains true to her intentions. Moreover, she even attempts to console him by saying she will gather all of his enemies, if he calls Lucius back to home and prevent the upcoming war among the Romans and the Goths. This is a very

distinct quality, because women are not perceived as witty, courageous, and strong skilled, according to typical patriarchal beliefs. It has also become a norm that women cannot manage difficult situations smoothly, and they are shy, frightened, and innocent creatures by nature. Tamora has strategically shown a splendid personality combined with many unconventional features, every woman should espouse for their own betterment.

3.2 Exploring the Atypical “Gertrude”

Gertrude is the wife and queen of Old Hamlet (the former king of Denmark), who becomes the wife and queen of his brother, Claudius right after the king's death. She reveals herself as a part of residual culture, considering its aspects and characteristics. Like Tamora, she is an unorthodox woman who has shown instances of acting, against the social and cultural standards set for the women. Her overhasty marriage to Claudius does indicate multiple possibilities, associated with her persona. Initially, she does not at all want to relinquish her jurisdiction, as she cannot replace the position of her former husband. Therefore, she needs to secure her position first, because political turmoil is inevitable to arrive after the king's death. Securing her position, she marries Claudius even though she knows it well, that it will create massive controversies. This act apprehends her strategic mind, and non-traditional behaviors expected by the society. Women are assumed and anticipated to be mourning for her husband for quite a long time, as it is thought that husband is one of their biggest supports. She may have married Claudius for support, but she has first calculated her own benefits out of the marriage, thereby pursues a disputable act. However, when Claudius tells Gertrude that Polonius has found out why hamlet in such a restless condition, Gertrude makes a striking remark. She says,

“I doubt it is no other but the main,

His father's death and our o'er-hasty marriage”(Shakespeare 2.2.74).

Her statement shows her acknowledgment of their rushed marriage, which is tormenting Hamlet at present, along with his father's death. This refers to her courage to confront Claudius on every matter. Given the fact that she is the wife of Claudius, she is not afraid to clearly state a fact that might trigger him. Claudius could have found it offended, as women are not allowed to offer any comment on the marital bond, in a male-dominated society. They are supposed to be content with whatever they have in a marriage. Being suggestive or conscious of anything on marital issues, is prohibited for them. Surprisingly, Claudius does not show any reaction against her comment, which narrates her shared authority with her husband. Thereby, it is understood that she independently expresses her opinions, regardless of the consequences, and the king also takes her opinions earnestly.

In addition, when Polonius blabbers a tiresome explanation on Hamlet's madness, Gertrude puts a halt to his speech saying, "More matter, with less art" (Shakespeare 2.2.77). It seems hilarious, but there is a deeper meaning added to it. It is to be mentioned that women are considered as foul talking creatures, who talk without purpose in a foolish manner. This issue is also emphasized by Cixous as she states "her words fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks in the masculine" (880). Talking more is a trait of women, as assumed by the egocentric men who think only their words are supercilious. Nonetheless, Gertrude has put a sign of resistance to this widely popular perception. She does not like excessive ornamentation of words by Polonius, and wants him to state his issues straight away. She is a very straight spoken person who boldly approaches a councilor to the king, without blinking the eye. It represents her political involvement and practice of the supreme authority, over the high-ranked people in the kingdom, even if they are closer to the king. Polonius' reactions are also surprising as he denies of adopting any art, quite instantly. It shows Gertrude's strong participation in the political matters, as Polonius is indeed talking to her cautiously. Moreover, when Hamlet confronts her about his father's death, he keeps on accusing her, behaving extremely

rude to her, and questioning her virtue and purity. Having a strong sense of self-respect she insists him to stop talking nonsense about her, as she knows nothing of the foul murder of her former husband. It reveals that she did not co-operate Claudius to murder her husband. Besides, his father's ghost also suggests so. However, she says to Hamlet impatiently,

“What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue

In noise so rude against me” (Shakespeare 3.4.174).

Her use of the word “dare” and “rude” indicate her intolerance of disrespect towards her by anyone. Her dignity and self-respect matter a lot to her, for which she not even allows her closest ones to speak to her in unpleasant ways. This is an atypical approach for a woman, because women are taught to keep their mouth shut in every circumstance, even if they are being insulted for no reason. Protesting against insults and humiliation, is considered as a non-feminine act. They are never encouraged to nurture a sense of dignity, and expect respect from the men. This mistreatment of women is also suggested by Gilbert and Gubar, as they quote John Ruskin's statement in their book which is “the woman's power is not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings” (24). Thus, Gertrude has carried out unconventional attitudes here, showing that she is not going to endure such obscene act from anyone. She makes it clear that she should be respected, and can never be treated like a subjugated object. Furthermore, she also shows her never-ending love and support for Hamlet. Even though he murders Polonius in front of her, and reveals how his father has died, she makes a promise to him. She tells,

“Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe

What thou hast said to me” (Shakespeare 3.4.187).

Now, her promise to him refers to her loyalty to her son, as she gives him her word not to disclose the secret information he has shared with her. Even though she has shared with Claudius how Hamlet has killed Polonius, she does not share any other information uttered by Hamlet. This again shows her skillful mind and calm thoughts, as she does not want to create any complications in Hamlet's life. It can also be regarded as a diplomatic, as it signifies that she might be interested to investigate the issues, which are tormenting Hamlet. Hence, she is represented as a dexterous woman, who thinks properly before taking an action, which is a wise act. Women are not addressed as "wise" in a typical misogynist society, as their thinking capability is never recognized and appreciated. In act 4, scene 5, Laertes is seen to be enraged, asking for the slayer of his father (Polonius) and demanding his body. Gertrude also shows her bravery here by holding him back, even though she sees men following him. It refers to her political senses as she tries to handle the matter in a calm way. Besides, she has the courage to face him in such an unrest condition, whereas women are not allowed to be involved in diplomatic issues, let alone face such situations. Moreover, it is very unusual that the king relies upon the queen's counsel, because when she discloses Hamlet's attack on Polonius, Claudius discusses the matter with her to come to a solution.

In act 5, scene 1, Gertrude shows her extreme love and care for Hamlet. Ophelia dies and Hamlet gets even more insane upon her death. He tries to see her face while Laertes starts to rebuke him. They almost get into a fight while Gertrude implores to consider Hamlet's insanity. She tries a lot to save her son from a serious clash. It shows her profound motherhood. There are many instances in the play where she has been seen protecting Hamlet, from whichever situation he is in. Although she is much concerned of her position in the kingdom, she does not forget to think for Hamlet's well-being. Moreover, she has a kind personality as well, which is seen when she talks to Ophelia with compassion, as Ophelia acts almost insane out of grief. She is also concerned of Claudius, and cautious of any upcoming turmoil. Furthermore, she tries to help Claudius in every political and personal matter, and always thinks of his safety. She never abandons Hamlet for her

own benefits, and has always been a protector for him in the kingdom. However, in act 5, scene 1, Ophelia dies and the manner of her death refers that it is a suicide. Gertrude is the first person to notify Laertes on her death, which shows that there is a huge possibility that she might have witnessed something, regarding Ophelia's untimely and unusual death, yet she does not tell anything about it to anyone. She scatters flowers to Ophelia's grave and sadly utters,

“Sweets to the sweet.

Farewell!

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife:

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave” (Shakespeare 5.1.251).

Well, the issue is a person cannot have proper burial, if she/he seeks for own salvation by taking his/her own life. It is one of the Christian rules as shown in the play, and the grave-diggers also talk about it. They are discussing whether she should have a proper Christian burial or not, as the cause of her death is still unclear. However, Gertrude is showing compassion towards her, even after knowing that it might be a suicide, or she has known it all along. Nevertheless, she speaks sweet words for her, and wishes good to her soul, which denotes her unconventional characteristics against the traditional Christian norms and beliefs. Thereby, it is evident that she is not confined by the staunch Christian rules, and listens to her conscience. Women are always expected to be blind followers of religious norms, and become virtuous women bathed in the light of religion. They are not allowed to act according to their conscience, as it is thought to be useless for them in typical patriarchal societies. Here, Gertrude is present along with other officials, and even a priest, yet does not hesitate to express her own feelings towards Ophelia's burial. If she has kept secrets on Ophelia's death (it seems so), it is also a kind act on behalf of her. Furthermore, Gertrude shows

her immense support and love for her son, which she boldly shows no matter what the consequences are. She receives a very tragic end to her life by drinking from a poisoned goblet of wine, which is meant for Hamlet. She is very optimistic about Hamlet winning against Laertes in the battle, which is why she wants to drink to cheer for Hamlet. She mentions, “The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet” (Shakespeare 5.2.274). Although Claudius tries to stop her from drinking, she refuses him dauntlessly, therefore, expresses her strong will to support her son. She replies to Claudius saying, “I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me”(Shakespeare 5.2.274). A fact needs to be put forward that women are never allowed to refuse their husbands’ order/advice/request, under any circumstances in a rigid patriarchal society. They are taught to always obey their husbands, and it seems like almost worshipping them. Now, Showalter is also concerned of women’s condition. She says, “all are struggling to find a terminology that can rescue the feminine from its stereotypical associations with inferiority” (186). However, Gertrude has shown uncusomary approach here in terms of obeying her husband. She is not concerned that Claudius is a king, and his order needs to be followed. Nevertheless, she has chosen to cheer up her son, rather than listening to the king even though it is for her own good. The fact is her straight forward and unconventional approaches. It demonstrates her freedom of mind which she always nurtures, and avails when it is necessary. She is not worried about the consequences, and she talks without ambiguity. This is one of the most prominent features of her, which shows her strong personality. She does not want to restrict her thoughts and act according to any other person’s perception, rather she acts independent which is an atypical characteristic of women.

Nevertheless, it is apparent from the discussion that both Tamora and Gertrude are atypical women, standing against the masculine tide of male-supremacy, and patriarchal oppression. Although they represent features of residual culture, the effect of dominant culture on them is too feeble. They can be regarded as sort of similar to the “monster-women” according to the typical classification in our rigid society and culture, based on their overall attributes. Well, their

unconventional traits are judged and criticized by the people in the plays, which is why they have evolved as non-ideal women characters.

Chapter Four

Social and Cultural Acceptance based on the “Angel-Monster” Depiction

This chapter is divided into three sections. An in-depth analysis on Cleopatra’s characteristics, actions, approaches, behavior, and attitude will be offered in this chapter. In addition, a comparative discussion among the three queens, as well as their social and cultural acceptance based on people’s perspectives in the plays, will also be offered in this chapter.

4.1 Exploring the Unconventional “Cleopatra”

Cleopatra is the queen of Egypt, who is a charismatic character possessing extreme beauty, sheer intelligence in various sectors, thoughtfulness, boldness, and passion. She is a very well-educated sovereign who has learned over 10 languages, as we can see that she can fluently communicate to people from diverse regions in her empire. She has expertise on Economics, Law, Linguistics, Chemistry, agriculture, and other spheres of knowledge. Her diplomatic or political sense is highly appreciable, for we can observe her capabilities of maintaining strategic relations with the other heads of different states. She is the lover of Mark Antony, who is one of the triumvirs of the Roman Republic. Like Tamora and Gertrude, Cleopatra can be defined as an unconventional character, who is a part of the residual culture as evident based on its aspects and characteristics. Initiating to describe her charisma, it is necessary to look at her approaches, behaviors, sense, actions in terms of dealing with political matters, her personal life, and the other people. In Act 1, Scene 1, an attendant comes to tell Antony some news from Rome. Upon hearing this, Cleopatra openly addresses Octavius Caesar (one of Antony’s fellow triumvirs) scarce-bearded, and goes on mimicking him (Shakespeare 5). It shows that she is not a timid or shy queen, rather she is quite straight-forward to express her thoughts over the others, even though it is a powerful person. However, when Antony prepares to leave for Rome due to a state emergency,

Cleopatra does not want to let him go, and tries to stop him in desperate attempts. For instance, she says to Antony,

“O, never was there queen

So mightily betray’d! yet at the first

I saw the treasons planted” (Shakespeare 1.3.25).

Therefore, it can be understood that she is a bold person who is open about her feelings, without the fear of judgment, criticism, and social boundaries. Even though she knows it is an emergency situation, it does not stop her to desire Antony so that he stays with her. Antony gets impatient, constantly trying to convince her. Still, she shows stubbornness at her fullest. She is well-aware of her supreme authority being a queen, and she practices her power almost all the time, despite the fact that Antony is also a powerful man. Furthermore, Antony mentions before leaving for Rome,

“Our separation so abides and flies,

“That thou, residing here, goes yet with me;

And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee” (Shakespeare 1.3.31).

Despite knowing that his wife, Fulvia is dead, Antony utters these loving words towards Cleopatra which shows his intense love, care, emotion, and dedication for her. It refers to Cleopatra’s charm and beauty, which can attract any man and make him passionate for her love. Being stubborn, or expressing personal feelings strongly are not applicable for women in a male dominated society. There are some boundaries which they cannot cross, in terms of making demands to their husbands or lovers. Moreover, men are not supposed to listen to women’s demands and desires patiently, act accordingly. It is considered a shame for a man if he shows his zeal in loving a woman, in an

archetypal patriarchal society. There are certain notions in such society on the treatment of women as Gilbert and Gubar points out, “Patriarchal texts have traditionally suggested that every angelically selfless snow white must be hunted, if not haunted” (28).

In addition, Cleopatra possesses a great amount of wealth, and she uses it according to her own will. She likes to show up her royalty and wealth to the others, and it pleases her when others do admire her for the generosity. For instance, when a messenger arrives to provide some news of Antony, Cleopatra assures him to provide gold in return if he has brought good news. It is interesting that she has offered gold just for bringing one good news, which also shows her extreme love for Antony. On the other hand, her sense of justice, boldness, and determined approaches are remarkable. She threatens the messenger ferociously saying she will melt down the gold, and pour it to his throat if he delivers any bad news (Shakespeare 69). Besides, she strikes him down repeatedly, and even draws a knife towards him hearing that Antony is now married to Octavia (Shakespeare 71). She just cannot bear the news, and the betrayal from her dearest one. It is already mentioned how she has considered Antony’s leave from Egypt a treacherous act. So, now her heart is shattered into pieces. She realizes the injustice done to her, which she cannot tolerate being a prestigious woman. Now, two things can be interpreted here. Firstly, Antony has insulted her love. Secondly, her dignity and self-respect have been triggered greatly, which force her to act aggressively to the messenger. However, she is also conscious of her beauty and loves herself very much. When she knows from the messenger later that Octavia is not compatible to her, in any regard, she becomes quite delighted. Her anger calms down. It actually falls under a conventional trait as most women want to maintain the beauty standard, but she also takes pride in her attractiveness, charm, and extreme beauty. Besides, she assures the messenger to reward him with gold, and also the opportunity to kiss her hand which is

“a hand that kings

Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing" (Shakespeare 2.5.68).

Well, this statement shows her self-love and dignity. It also refers to her power and strong personality, that even kings have trembled while kissing her lips. Thereby, she is aware of her standards, and considers kissing her hands as a privilege. It is to mention that a woman is not encouraged and influenced to have sense of dignity, to raise voice against injustice done to her, to love herself, possessing power, and nurturing a bold yet strong personality. It is seen by the society as monstrous acts performed by women, and they are addressed as either non-virtuous or non-ideal women. As a result, most of the women do not care about self-love, rather they just spend their lives caring for the others (especially the husband). Whatever the husband or the male partner does, the women are taught not to consider this as an injustice or heinous act, rather to consider it a normal and regular issue. Having a sense of dignity is also strictly prohibited for them, and their beauty is not always appreciated. Hence, they usually do not get the chance to take pride in their beauty, as they are mostly busy praising and pleasing their partners. Cixous has called such woman old and false who "is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow" (880). In Act 3, Scene 7, although Cleopatra flies away from the battle through the sea for unknown reasons (maybe fear has seized her witnessing such a bloody and horrible battle), she is the one who provides sixty sails for Antony and fearlessly comes forward to aid him. She is very enthusiastic to join the battle with him, and she encourages Antony a lot. It indicates her power, wealth, determination, and courage. Fear grasps even the bravest in the battle field, thereby, it is also applicable for her as Antony's life and her soldiers are involved here. A lot of the soldiers has died in the battle. Witnessing such terrible scenes, she might have decided to safeguard the rest of them, or she gets frightened by all the bloodshed. It is undeniable that she lifts up the spirit of Antony, and comes forward in the battle with great power and motivation. It shows her active political involvement, and courage. Antony, along with the other important people also prioritizes her decisions regarding political matters. Women are not treated as politically sensible humans, and

men do not ask and consider any of their decisions, in a patriarchal society. Women are not supposed to possess political power, and wealth to face any danger, as men are only considered to be capable of carrying out such actions.

Well, apart from these qualities, Cleopatra is known as a seductress who has the ability to attract any man with her charm, beauty, and intense emotional vibes. Enobarbus comments on her extreme beauty and charm in the play saying,

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety" (Shakespeare 2.2.62).

It shows her overwhelming and evergreen beauty, and her alluring persona. Enobarbus has also referred to each and every distinct quality of Cleopatra, which can drive any man insane over her. He describes her perfect and intriguing bodily features, as well as her fierce personality. Moreover, Cleopatra also shows her sexual desires and fantasies towards Antony, in a quite open manner. She is neither afraid nor ashamed of showing her sensuality, which exists in almost every human being commonly. For instance, when Antony is away from Egypt, she cannot bear the loneliness which ultimately indicated her desire for him, both physically and mentally. Now, her bold personality complements her beauty as expressed by Enobarbus. However, it is strictly prohibited for women to talk of sexual desires, in a male-dominated society. Besides, their bodily features are also criticized and addressed as a matter of shame, which supposedly need to be confined within the social, cultural, and religious boundaries. Showalter has emphasized on this issue as it has been witnessed, that the gender of women is considered as "a painful obstacle or even a debilitating inadequacy" (195). Although it is especially applicable for the women writer, but the reflection on the attitudes of women is evident in their writings, regarding the consideration of their own gender. Cleopatra emphasizes on her passionate yet delicate nature by saying "I am fire and air; my other elements, I give to baser life" (Shakespeare 5.2. 214). She is a very dedicated and loyal lover as she

has proven over time, for Antony. So, her passion for loving and adoring Antony is exquisite too. It also indicates her uniqueness and boldness. Additionally, when Antony is dying, he constantly keeps mentioning Cleopatra as “Egypt” (Shakespeare 183). It demonstrates her priority, importance, power, and personality, which reflect the entire Egypt in her. It shows Egypt is represented through her, as she is a charismatic queen. Her value is shown through Antony’s speech, and her ever-glowing amazing personality also contributes to this factor. Women are not prioritized in this manner by the men, in a staunch male-oriented society and culture. Women are not given the right to be honored by prestigious positions in the society, as if only men deserve these. Cleopatra has actually made significant contributions towards Egypt, which is evident through Antony’s speech. Nevertheless, when Antony states to her, “Caesar seek your honour, with your safety,” she replies, “they do not go together” (Shakespeare 4.15.185). This reply of Cleopatra portrays her strong sense of self-respect. It means that if Caesar imprisons her, it will violate her honor even though she is safe. She becomes vulnerable with Antony’s death, but she does not yell to Caesar at last. She honors herself very much, that she is not ready to leave her power and royalty, therefore, become a mere humiliated human being. She does not care for safety, but her honor and respect. She does not want to be the trophy or subjected to public humiliation, which leads her to take her own life. Taking her own life refers to the fact that she wants to die with her honor intact, in case of public humiliation and shame. Her strong sense of dignity and bold personality do not let her be subjected to be a prisoner, and lose honor, power, and authority. Now, women are always expected not to think about honor, dignity, or self-love in a male-oriented society, as these are only preserved for men. Therefore, women are mostly forced to sacrifice their honor, and told to take it easy if a man insults her. Most women do not take any action against such mistreatment, as they learn from their childhood that women have to sacrifice and compromise, in all the phases of life.

4.2 Similar and Distinct Features among the Three Queens

Similarities: Gertrude, Tamora, and Cleopatra have both similar and distinct characteristics, in terms of their conventional and unconventional approaches towards their social, personal, cultural, and political surroundings. Firstly, their similarities will be discussed. These queens possess strong personalities in their own political spheres. They are not always subjected to the male authority, rather they are thoughtful and like to take their own decisions. They do not like to be suppressed by men in any manner, as their thoughts and ideas cannot be influenced always. Besides, they are talented queens who are able to think of their own welfares, and taking actions accordingly. They do not really obey all the social and cultural norms against women, which determine the customs women should follow, rather they care to nourish their own peace of mind. In addition, it is very important to mention that they know how to raise voice against any form of injustice, done against them. They do not play a meek and shy role against mistreatments, rather they play active roles in ensuring that they are treated right. Sometimes, it has happened that they have been ill-treated by the people around them, but they have also adopted necessary measures to minimize the harms. Another positive thing is they are also affectionate towards their beloved ones. For instance, Gertrude loves Hamlet very much, Cleopatra desperately cares for Antony, and Tamora loves her sons so much that she has planned a revenge as her first-born is killed, therefore, has executed it. Now, it is also a surprising and a very atypical thing, that their husbands/lovers do respect and care for them. The queens have acquired that special position to their husbands/lovers, that their decisions are taken seriously and their honors are always higher in the eyes of their husbands/lovers. All of their diplomatic senses are praiseworthy, as they know how to manage the political matters even if they are in critical situations. Nevertheless, the sense of honor complements their fierce personalities. For instance, Gertrude does not even allow her son to say hateful or disrespectful things towards her. She is a straight-forward person who likes to state her feelings and thoughts quite openly and boldly. Likewise, Tamora takes a horrible revenge against

Titus and his family as he openly humiliates her, on the street. It triggers her honor and self-respect, which she has mentioned directly with anger. Then, Cleopatra has taken her own life, so that she does not have to be war-trophy and showcased to the people, on a street. She also does not want to be captivated and dishonored by Caesar. However, they also have similar traditional qualities. All of them are depended on men (husbands/lovers) for securing their social positions, and they want to please the men which is seen in many instances in the plays. For instance, Gertrude marries Claudius to keep her authority intact, and maintains a good bonding between them to please him. Besides, Tamora marries Saturninus to secure her position in Rome, and always says soothing words to please him. Moreover, Cleopatra makes many attempts to please Antony, and she wants to be his wife to establish a legalized social recognition from the society.

Dissimilarities: Now, these queens also have some distinct features. Apparently, Tamora and Cleopatra own stronger personalities than Gertrude. Being a completely new person in Rome, Tamora carries out her actions and plots a successful revenge, against all the odds. She even hides the fact from Saturninus that she has given birth to Aaron's child, living under the authority of Saturninus. Moreover, she faces many critical situations, but gets through them using her wit and strength. Additionally, Cleopatra also has controlled and managed her kingdom in Egypt almost all alone. She does not really need her counselors to take any political decision, and she possesses great wealth. She is able to keep Antony in her grip, even though they are not married. Her charm and boldness attract everyone, even though she is known to be a seductress. She shows her anger at Antony although he is one of the triumvirs of the Roman Republic, if she is ill-treated by him. Overall, she cannot tolerate to be underestimated, and always wants to be prioritized in any circumstance, no matter how adverse it gets. Moreover, both Tamora and Cleopatra's war strategies are good and well-planned, and they are not afraid of upcoming wars within their peripheries. On the contrary, whenever Gertrude falls in a critical situation, she discusses it with Claudius and she kind of fears the adverse situations. She actually does not strongly refuse her son

to address her with hateful approaches, rather she tries to softly discourage him. When she talks to Claudius, her voice and tone are soft and convincing (in kind of a typical manner). Besides, she cannot take an active attempt to safeguard her son, even though he falls in dangerous situations constantly. She also fails to recreate the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia, and remains passive about it. However, Cleopatra distinguishes herself from the other queens, in terms of the relationship between her and Antony. Sometimes, she talks in a humiliating manner towards him, shows her frustration and anger openly to him, and asks for clarifications for his actions. Tamora and Gertrude do not act in such manners to their husbands. Well, Tamora differentiates herself from the other queens, in terms of being selfish in manner. She wants to kill Aaron and her child so that her position is secured in the kingdom. She kind of shows a controversial characteristic here, as she desperately seeks revenge upon the killing of her first-born, but she turns a blind eye to Aaron's child. Cleopatra and Gertrude neither think of murdering anyone, nor do they show any such sign. However, considering all the similar and dissimilar aspects among them, it can be said that most of the things are similar in them. They have carried out unorthodox characteristics throughout the plays, in terms of personal, social, cultural, and political aspects.

4.3 Social and Cultural Acceptance of the Three Queens

Considering the discussions over the three queens, it can be seen that they possess some of the traditional features of women, but mostly they reflect unconventional attributes. This is why all of them are considered part of the residual culture. Feature of the residual culture demonstrates a cultural ground where the influence of dominant culture is visible, yet some practices oppose the dominant forms. Here, the queens portray mostly opposing ideals against the dominant cultural forms, which trigger the patriarchal ego, customs, rules, and supremacy over the women.

“Assertiveness, aggressiveness- all characteristics of a male life of significant action- are monstrous in women precisely because unfeminine” (Gilbert and Gubar 28). Here, Gilbert and Gubar have pointed out a significant aspect, to understand the actions of unorthodox women like

these queens. The queens are totally aware of their authorities, and they act according to the situation mostly by their own, without the help of men. It shows their assertive attitudes towards any circumstance. Additionally, they have also reacted aggressively while getting mistreated. Now, this personality is not taken positively in the plays, as their characterizations suggest. There is a clear association of their attributes to that of a monster-woman, as discussed earlier. Gertrude is continuously taunted by her own son for her second marriage, and people around her do not really take it in a good way. Then, Tamora is repeatedly referred as an evil-woman. Besides, Cleopatra has been mostly famous for her charm and called a seductress, despite her knowledge, intellect, and political power. She is even thought to be a sorceress who has casted spells on Antony. Well, their situations are not considered to understand the necessity or reasons or logic, behind their actions or reactions. Thereby, the staunch male-dominated society and culture are not ready to accept them cordially, rather they are reduced to the status of evil women. For instance, Gertrude may have married Claudius because she has feelings for him, but mostly because she needs to secure her position in the kingdom. Otherwise, she could be highly mistreated as a woman. Still, Hamlet talks to her as if she has committed the greatest crime on earth. Likewise, Tamora has married Saturninus to secure her position in Rome. If her revenge on Titus' family is considered, it should also be noticed how her first-born is killed without any mercy when she begs for it. She is also showcased as a war-trophy which is utterly humiliating for a queen, and she has no other option other than marrying Saturninus, because he could have also killed her upon rejection. Moreover, Cleopatra desperately loves Antony, whereas Antony can never marry her. Her seductive nature, sorceries, bold attitudes are highlighted in the plays, whereas her sense of honor, love and affection, intellect, political knowledge are not discussed much. She is considered to be the only one responsible for Antony's condition, and his rivalry with Caesar, but the fact is ignored that she has always motivated and helped Antony, and Caesar has always been thirsty for power and fame. However, men cannot tolerate such so called monstrosity of women, therefore are afraid

of them because they cannot rule or own them, as discussed in the angel-monster dichotomy by Gilbert and Gubar. The queens do not leave any room where a man can oppress them entirely, or become their master which is the expected notion in a male-dominated society.

The toxic masculinity has always preferred and idealized a woman who “has no story of her own but gives advice and consolation”(Gilbert and Gubar 22). It is pretty clear that none of the queens resembles “the angel in the house,” which constantly triggers both the toxic masculinity, and typical ideologies determined for women. Now, if the matters are scrutinized more closely, it can be seen that the actions, behaviors, approaches of these queens fit in the frame of monster-women, whereas almost the similar actions are considered heroic for the men. For instance, Hamlet deliberately insults and hurts his lover, Ophelia which is not criticized in the play, rather women are shown as deceivers especially with reference to Gertrude. So, his reactions have been justified as it is his choice in love, but Gertrude has also chosen her ways in love which is utterly criticized. Tamora avenges her first-born and herself, which makes her an evil and disgusting woman, whereas Titus avenges his family members and gets labeled as a hero. Cleopatra loves Antony deeply and desperately, for which she is addressed as a seductress, but Antony is not ready to marry her which makes him a righteous Roman person. Besides, his love for Cleopatra is considered divine and pure. However, “it is time to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her” (Cixous 878). It demonstrates the significance on breaking the staunch, age-old, dominant cultural norms of patriarchy, to make a breathing space for the new, unconventional women who get to speak for themselves, their rights, and their desires. “Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away- that’s how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak- even just open her mouth- in public” (Cixous 880). Thus, Cixous has nicely and clearly discussed how women have been muted for decades, surrounded by the social and cultural manacles of the controlling masculine power. This is why when the queens show unorthodox

characteristics, it triggers the dominant cultural and social ground which has never been broken through ages. Thus, men have become afraid of losing their dominance, supreme authority, and control over the women. As the queens only step in the residual stage of culture, carrying some of the dominant features but mostly non-traditional features, they are getting labeled as monsters, evil, deceivers, seductress, and so on. Apparently, there is a fear of an emergent culture, which will completely oppose the dominant cultural forms and norms. If there is a rise of an emergent culture rooting from the residual culture, it will break all the toxic masculine grounds of oppressions against women, which is the ultimate fear among the masculine authorities. Therefore, the notions of an ideal woman and a monster woman are tried to be legitimized through such texts, portraying the unorthodox women as some kind of vile creatures. Hence, it can be understood that although the queens have stepped into the forms of residual culture, there will always be complexities and obstacles to make it an emergent culture, breaking the shackles of the dominant culture.

This is how people perceive these queens' characteristics, and their cultural and social positions are influenced and manipulated, due to the fear of men of losing patriarchal authority over the women. Cixous has also mentioned of such fear saying, "When the repressed of their culture and their society returns, it's an explosive, utterly destructive" (886). "There are some men (all too few) who aren't afraid of femininity"(Cixous 885). Both of her statements showcase that most of the men are indeed afraid of the bold and strong women, who eventually learn to speak up against all sorts of injustice and suppression. They are the repressed of their culture and society, they are the women, whom the toxic patriarchy is afraid of because their unharmed authority will now be stabbed with legit justifications.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Choosing queen characters for this research, does have a purpose behind it. The purpose is to basically showcase that the notion of “power” is not cordially accepted for a woman, in a male-dominated society and culture. Power, freedom, and boldness in a woman trigger the toxic men off of their social anxiety of losing their control, dominance, and power over the women. This is why the society and culture have determined very specific roles for women, and presented them as ideal norms which all the women should follow to be accepted in the culture and society. These norms have contributed in creating the notion of the so called “angel in the house,” which basically promotes snatching away women’s freedom and power. Therefore, if a woman points her finger at a misconception created by the society against women, she is tagged as a monster or evil woman. She is shamed, criticized, judged, and even humiliated for demanding clarification or justification, over any controversial issue. Now, such ideas are generated and promoted using different mediums. Texts are one of the most influential mediums among them. Especially the male authors have been portraying or representing women in their texts, throughout the ages. It means women are getting their identities through male authored texts mostly, which has had a great impact on the treatment of women. Here, the documentary culture has influences in the creation of the dominant cultural forms. The documentary culture indeed provides us the images of ideal values, which hold the most supreme position in a culture and society. The social and cultural phenomena get their shapes considering the ideal values and rules. Thus, creation of the dominant culture takes place. However, the three queen characters in Shakespeare’s plays do not represent the “angel in the house,” rather they represent the evil or non-ideal women who cannot be any woman’s idol, according to the masculine society and culture. Apparently, people in the plays have highlighted their bold attitudes, strong approaches, unorthodox behaviors, ability to take actions by their own, and unconventional personalities, as something forbidden and harmful for women. Unfortunately,

their skills, strategic knowledge, and intellectual capabilities are deliberately ignored by mostly the men in the plays, as discussed earlier. The irony is other women characters in the plays such as Ophelia from *Hamlet*, Lavinia from *Titus Andronicus*, and Octavia from *Antony and Cleopatra*, are considered innocent and angelic, solely because they have played passive roles in the plays. They have victimized themselves on several occasions, without playing any active role and have allowed men exploit them. They do not have strong voices, do not adopt bold approaches, and do not show courage to speak up against mistreatments done to them. These do not hurt the male-ego and supremacy, thereby, these women are not labeled as monster or evil, rather they receive public sympathies in the plays. Thus, they oppose the queens in the plays in manners, personalities, approaches, behaviors, and actions, and comply to the expected socio-cultural norms and regulations.

Every coin has two sides. So, it is not indicated in this research that the queens are entirely and inherently angelic or superior characters. They also possess controversial characteristics which are observed in many instances in the plays. For instance, Tamora has wanted to kill her child to safeguard her position in the kingdom. Besides, Gertrude does not think of her son's reactions before marrying Claudius. Additionally, Cleopatra does not care about any of Antony's wives as she always wants him to be with her. All of them have also shown selfishness on several occasions in the plays. Well, it does not necessarily mean that they are evil, as men have also shown extreme selfishness in the plays. They are never motivated, and their achievements are neither praised nor admired. The sarcastic fact is the queens are criticized and humiliated for possessing unnatural qualities, whereas men are praised and admired for having the same qualities. Therefore, it is understood that having bold and strong personalities is not considered a feminine quality, rather it is a masculine quality and a matter of pride for the men only. Here, the fact of social and cultural inequality among men and women is evident. This is why men do not like such characteristics in women, because it makes them equal to men in all aspects, and men naturally lose control over

them. Unfortunately, it is practiced through decades to always dominate the women, and oppress them by all means even though the rise of feminism is evident. The main problem is in the root of our society and culture. The dominant cultural forms have always been the same, although some changes are noticed. This is why the residual culture in terms of women empowerment is not getting the opportunity, to be newly formed and reveal itself as an emergent culture. The queens in the plays represent the residual culture incorporating both the traditional cultural forms, and mostly non-traditional aspects, which are shown as something evil. These perspectives are expressed by men through different mediums like texts for ages against the women, because they are afraid of the feminine emergent culture. This is the scenario in almost every socio-cultural phenomena, which is brought in by Shakespeare through his plays. There is still a long way to go to make radical changes in the condition of women, because the root has grown stronger over time. The root signifies dominant patriarchal rules which are now extremely difficult to destroy. Nevertheless, it is evident from the analysis that the queens are criticized, humiliated, and judged in their society and culture, as men have been afraid of their atypical characteristics, and cannot process the matters both physically and psychologically. Therefore, as long as the dominant or the root culture will keep flourishing, it will be extremely difficult to transform the residual culture into an emergent culture.

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