



## AN EMPHERICAL REVIEW ON FEMINIST APPROACHES IN SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

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### **Abstract:**

For a variety of reasons, men and women have admired William Shakespeare's comedies from 1564 to 1616 for centuries. Shakespeare's comedies were a staple of the entertainment industry when he was alive, but over time, attitudes toward criticism have changed significantly. In recent years, Shakespearean comedies are still enjoyable, but they are also at the centre of provocative critical practice and are an essential component of curricula for schools, colleges, and universities. The main purpose for which the plays were created was theatre production. The market and mode of production expanded; plays were produced on film, radio, and television in addition to the stage. There have been several dramatic and non-dramatic adaptations of the comedy. Continuous critical works have evaluated the comedy side by side from a variety of perspectives. In this article, an empherical review on feminist approaches in Shakespeare's comedies has been discussed.

**Keywords:**Feminist, Shakespeare, Comedies



## **INTRODUCTION:**

Shakespeare's comedies are frequently associated with the ringing of wedding bells and have historically been enjoyed and read in this way. The plays were evaluated primarily in terms of topics like character development, love and marriage, appearance and reality, and other "universal" problems that were justified in terms of moral and/or aesthetically pleasing design. Along with character studies, the dramatic structure and comedic methods were among the reviewers' favourite topics of study. In reality, comic book women have always been the focus of scholarly discussion. Shakespeare's comedies underwent a notable attitude change in the 1950s as a result of the writings of Northrop Frye and Cleo L. Barber, who suggested that the comedies were artistic representations of society's common and recurring ritualistic and mythical patterns. Works created from this approach include Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), *A Natural Approach* (1965), and Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959). On the critical practice of viewing comedies as the celebration of a collective fantasy of freedom and togetherness, they have had a significant impact. But in the 1960s, this lovely arcadia of Shakespearean comedies began to fade. The main driving force behind this was the Polish director and critic Jan Kott's *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary* (1964), which demanded that our reading of Shakespeare be politically informed by our contemporary, changing social scenario, which is obviously poles apart from that of Shakespeare. This represented a radical departure from all previous critical practice.

## **RELATED REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

**Munia, Islam (2021)** explained that the primary topic of the paper will be the representation of women in Shakespeare's plays during the 16th century. Only 16% of Shakespeare's



characters are female. Women's absence from his plays was not considered as a failure; rather, the parts were filled with 'female page' roles (a male actor performing a woman's character). Because of their "mystic" sexuality, most of Shakespeare's female characters are portrayed as the weaker sex and as dangerous. Even in terms of dialogue, the key female characters in the play had much less lines than their male counterparts. The purpose of my thesis will be to highlight the problems and inequality in Shakespeare's plays about women both offstage and onstage during the Elizabethan era.

**Ali Mohammadi (2021)** framed the central concerns that ladies have experienced generally while delivering abstract fills in as the focal point of this request. The women's activist exemplary *One's very own Room* by Virginia Woolf filled in as the review's fundamental accentuation. Woolf is beyond question perceived as a pioneer of the women's activist scholarly development of the 20th 100 years. She committed her life to writing books about the verifiable difficulties looked by ladies. Besides, Woolf tends to ladies writers and their composing problems in some of her fiction and genuine works. This study's fundamental goal is to reflect significant contentions with respect to ladies' issues, some of which are as per the following: a lady's on the whole correct to compose freely of her monetary circumstance; the social acknowledgment of her composition; the verifiable undervaluation and embarrassment of ladies' composition; the well established practice of quiet ladies' voices; and a lady's equivalent right to communicate her thoughts on paper, autonomous of unimportant ideas like predominant manliness and substandard gentility. In fact, Woolf was the trailblazer pioneer women's activist creator to give ladies a voice. She likewise carried the public's consideration regarding their battles, difficulties, and long periods of segregation that have held them back from being rises to and from seeking after their composing dreams. In synopsis, the clarification for why such countless extraordinary artistic works have been written by men.



This isn't on the grounds that ladies weren't quite so gifted or effective as men; rather, this is on the grounds that ladies have never been permitted to partake in similar material and monetary advantages and amazing open doors as guys. Eventually, manliness and being a lady were characterized by men. Along these lines, paying little mind to how great they became, they couldn't put themselves out there through composition, they were denied admittance to training, not to mention the chance to seek after professions as creators, and their abilities were undeniably underestimated.

**Mimouna Zitoun, et al (2020)** stated that in the present essay, female characters from William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is viewed from a feminist perspective. The essay aims to demonstrate how physical and psychological oppression often characterizes the interactions between the male and female characters. Men assault women's inner emotions and make them the victims of political schemes because they are driven by their egos. This essay also aims to explore Shakespeare's portrayal of women as courageous, independent, and not subject to male hegemony throughout the play. This research is based on a thorough text analysis and feministic interpretation of Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It makes an effort to investigate the position and privileges of female characters as they are portrayed in this comedy. The fundamental argument of this essay is that, although clearly extending women's rights to his characters, Shakespeare ultimately supports patriarchy, even if in certain instances he portrays the characters from a growing feminism point of view.

**According to Kadyan (2020)**, Shakespeare's valiant ladies are depicted in various ways. Shakespeare's female characters are displayed with a lot of insight, centrality, and a solid feeling of individual freedom. These qualities have made a few pundits view Shakespeare as a pioneer and boss of ladies, splitting away from the traditional depictions of ladies that were



predominant in progress of his progenitors and counterparts. Columnists from various sources, in any case, stress that even Shakespeare's most elevating portrayals of ladies had defective characters. William Shakespeare was an Elizabethan creator who made totally out of his works with the overall population of the day at the top of the priority list. All during the Elizabethan time, ladies were depicted as being more vulnerable than men. During the period, it was said that "ladies are to be seen, not heard." In this work, an endeavor has been made to explore.

**Md. Qader (2020)** explained that William Shakespeare, the English literary world's forefather, is an internationally acclaimed dramatist whose works and literary contributions grew more prominent in the Elizabethan period than in the Jacobean period. This is why, despite being a Renaissance and contemporary thinker, he is classified as an Elizabethan dramatist in English literature. His plays are heavily influenced by modernism. In his lifetime, Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays. Only twenty-five of them were written during the Elizabethan period (1558-1603). During the Jacobean period, Shakespeare penned his twelve major plays (1603-1625). However, he is an Elizabethan, not a Jacobean. Regardless of whether he is Elizabethan or Jacobean, he is superior to all modern writers. Furthermore, in his Preface to Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson stated regarding the elements of Shakespeare's plays, "Just depiction in general nature," indicating the evergreen prestige of his tragedies in all literary centuries, including modern times. As a result, from his lifetime to the present, the atmosphere, language and theme, characters and building of each century are reflected in his plays, and especially modern aspects are fused with his plays. A touch of feminism, realistic characteristics, newness in plot structure, horror components, handling of despair and hesitation, mental turbulence, use of foil and vulgarism, display of dominance are all depicted as if it were a modern work of literature. Indeed, the utilization of the aforementioned characteristics has made Shakespeare universal and appealing to people of all ages.



**Preeti, Oza (2020)** expressed that Twelfth Evening or What You Will is a satire composed by William Shakespeare in 1601 as a diversion for the finish of the Christmas season. The melodic breaks that were normal on the event were developed all through the play. Twelfth Night was conceivably made in 1599, yet it is ordinarily dated in 1601. The principal execution of this show is kept in 1603 in the Center Sanctuary. Shakespeare was doubtlessly affected by his counterparts' Italian plays. This Shakespeare parody is accepted to be the most noteworthy comic organization, composed doubtlessly after his comedies *A lot of trouble about something completely trivial* and *As You Like It* and before the incredible misfortunes *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Lord Lear*.

**Ajda, Bastan (2019)** stated that this study deals with the situation of women in the public sphere during the Elizabethan period and how it is depicted in William Shakespeare's compositions. The English writer is regarded as one of the best dramatists of all time for his handling of the roles that women play in his dramatizations and how they affect their particular plots. Shakespeare and Elizabethan-period individuals would be shocked by the freedoms that ladies as of now appreciate. What we observe in Shakespeare's plays is an understanding into the ladylike nature as seen by Elizabethan culture. Shakespeare's female characters mirror the Elizabethan period's perspective on ladies; they were to be prudent and manageable, while the individuals who were not were displayed as undesirable and, surprisingly, pernicious. The fact that exemplifies this upgraded attestation makes Shakespeare's ability to make various kinds of characters one eminent perspective. The splendid creator made a plenty of female characters that are so human and credible that the crowd can see parts of their own personalities in them. Shakespeare's capacity to portray any sort of individual, unexpectedly, shows his broad preparation and learning of everything.



**Gündüz, Ela (2018)** noticed that William Shakespeare's "Subduing of the Vixen" uncovered Elizabethan traditions like man centric power, which represent a danger to the social request. The show investigates a troublesome subject by outlining orientation standards. Whether or on the other hand if the young ladies in Shakespeare's "Subduing of the Vixen" are dependent upon male oppression in their close connections is the hazy point. Numerous assessments of the play's presentation and message have been made all through the years by chiefs, makers, and pundits. This dubious part of the play acquires new layers of intricacy with virtually every translation. Shakespeare's own text will be inspected in the wake of examining Caroline Byrne's 2016 Globe Theater creation. This is on the grounds that it's basic to look at how as a cutting edge female chief resolves the quarrelsome issue of "subduing" in its re-show of the continuous discussions over Shakespeare's depiction of a "restrained vixen" in present day eyes. Then, the text will be firmly inspected to decide how gendered personalities are depicted.

**Guarino (2018)** framed how the examination sheds new understanding on the connection between As You Like It and Thomas Cabin's Rosalynde, the work's essential source, as well as the contemporary late Elizabethan peaceful sentiment sort, which was impacted by Lyly's Euphues and Sidney's Utopia. Shakespeare's humor obviously shows a basic reaction to the standards of Arcadian practices and Petrarchism. However you see fit, occasions and characters, along with the traditions of singing numbers and perusing composed sonnets in the Arden world, ought to be generally viewed as mocking rewritings of present day verse examples, assortments, and shows according to the viewpoint of acting and performing customs. In conclusion, a few perceptions about the peaceful verse leftovers that associate normal entertainers to the illustrious diversions and their surroundings.



**Ankita Gupta (2017)** pronounced that Shakespeare is the world's most prominent huge writer and playwright, unquestionably. His plays have been concentrated on by countless individuals, and they have even been transformed into films and stage creations. His plays all depict the terrible truth of the human inner voice. Shakespeare's perspectives on ladies and their place in the public eye are reflected in the manner in which he depicts them in his plays. However they don't assume the primary parts in his plays, ladies are by the by very significant. We can perceive what culture and time have meant for the female characters in his plays. Shakespeare's day saw an absence of independence, control, and acknowledgment for ladies. The place of their dad or companion directed their position. It was expected of them to stay silent. Shakespeare made various enchanting and charming characters over the course of that time, including Beatrice, Cleopatra, Juliet, Rosalind, Hermione, Woman Macbeth, Helena and Hermia, Olivia and Viola, and others. Thusly, the fundamental goal of this exploration paper is to stress the way in which his female characters connect with time and society and how they capability as a mirror or reflection.

**Ghandeharion (2016) guaranteed that Othello (1603), Romeo and Juliet (1591-1595), Hamlet (1599-1602), and Pericles (1607-1608)** are among the Shakespearean misfortunes that have been adjusted into the most notable Iranian sitcom, KolhGhermez. It investigates how the chief has reconsidered Shakespeare. Like kids' understandings of Shakespeare's plays, the video modifies the story, subdues the savagery, and grants moral examples. Pastiche and the dialogical carnivalesque custom — in what men change into ladies and creatures expect human jobs — are likewise normal. Shakespearean characters are depicted by manikins that are chosen in view of their apparent public personas, which incorporate sly, accommodation, and straightforwardness. In the event that somebody is keen on adjusting Shakespeare for an



alternate setting and a fluctuated crowd, the consequences of intently breaking down the exhibitions utilizing variation procedures might be useful.

**M. Lindsay Kaplan (2016)** framed how one part of the play's Christian way of thinking tries to retain and coordinate Jews and ladies into a social ordered progression, with unique concentration to how this is finished in this section. The *Trader of Venice* investigates the strain among same and other in various conditions; this section focuses on one of those specific circumstances. It achieves this by looking at and differentiating Emmanuel Levinas' work on alterity or otherness — a subject he tends to in his philosophical paper *Entirety and Endlessness* — with the play's conversation of contrast. In spite of the fact that alterity appears to make the play's focal issue, it likewise gives an answer. Jewish temperances, for example, otherness or separateness are depicted adversely in *The Vendor of Venice*. By utilizing the general set of laws, Shylock and Portia both attempt to shield their freedom from the people who might attempt to sabotage it. Among these impacts are the people who might try to ruin it. Indeed, even while Portia at long last beats Shylock as far as progress, she doesn't stick to the ethic of alterity through to its unavoidable end.

**Sandhya Singh (2016)** stated that one of my absolute favorites from this exercise of rereading William Shakespeare was this. It had angelic characters, a pleasant message and finish, and a few phrases that would stick in your head forever. It was quite light-weight. It was so much pleasure to read that I was unable to put the book down. It was similar to one of the histories, and I distinctly recalled it as a comedy, thus the name absolutely suggested it. But now that one brother has deposed the other, a vicious Duke is in charge and wants to put an end to any dissent. It wasn't progressing in the way a comedy would. However, there was a dramatic transformation, and many of the bad individuals changed for the better, so the worst of all becomes religious and has faith.



**Nahvi, Alaeddin (2015)** guaranteed that the battle for social, political, and financial balance among people in the public arena is the underpinning of women's liberation. The objective of woman's rights is to wipe out the possibility of sexism, which is depicted as the abuse, denigration, and oppression of ladies. The way that Portia's dad keeps on administering over his girl even after his passing shows how men rule ladies' issues and treat them more like articles than like people. As per her dad's will, Portia's mate will be the one to pick the fitting casket that holds her picture. "Gracious, the words "pick" !"I can't pick who I need or decline who I don't; the desire of a live girl is defeated by the desire of a dead parent" (Shakespeare, 1.2.23-24). Regardless of whether picking a final resting place appears to be a severe prerequisite, Portia sorts out a strategy to in any case have some command over the man she weds. As he chooses the lead casket to fulfill her dad's requests, Portia "acknowledges" that she should marry Bassanio. By clandestinely highlighting the proper final resting place, she figured out how to steer the results in support of herself and select her companion. "Play some music while he thinks about his choices. We should all sound the mark of the end of imagination with "Ding, Dong, ringer; Ding, Dong, chime." Portia, then again, acts to neutralize the severe agreement she is focused on and set the way fitting her better half's personal preference, proposing that the issue is about the general male controlled society and its solidarity.

**StanulGrozev (2015)** proclaimed that this paper analyzes the different manners by which the characters in William Shakespeare's amusing satire "As you like it" false or compliment each other for the sake of nature. Shakespeare writes in the Renaissance, a period when the speculations of the old style rhetoricians and thinkers are exceptionally respected. This is the explanation that the contention of nature is given such reliance on Old Greek way of thinking and way of talking. Three fundamental features of the's comprehension play might interpret



nature are checked out: (1) The substance of mankind; (2) the objective reality that separates itself from the organic and inorganic universes of people; and (3) a heavenly beginning, power, and divinity. analyzing opportunity of decision, training, and childhood corresponding to the play's naturalistic subject. Since "As you like it" is a peaceful satire and the play's focal setting puts forward clear the case of nature, the last segment of the request looks at the inborn worth of nature and its purging impact over humankind.

**AlaeddinNahvi (2014)** stated that Shakespearian plays often showcases the endurance, fortitude, and brilliance of women by giving them prominent roles. This may be a sign that the dramatist believed that men and women should be treated equally. However, the strong, independent lady returned to society with her husband after the completion of his tasks. The female characters in the play *The Merchant of Venice* do incredible feats to "clean up" the messes that their husbands had caused and to accomplish their own objectives, only to return to their inferior roles as spouses. In order to go unobserved between Belmont and Venice, Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica assumed the masculine form. This gave them a peek into the realm of feminist ideas. The foundation of feminism is the fight of women in society for economic, political, and social equality with men. The idea of sexism, which is the denigration, oppression, and subjugation of women, is something that feminism aims to eradicate. Numerous subgroups of feminism concentrate on certain issues related to women's relative inequality to males. One subcategory, radical feminism, is concerned with the notion that a patriarchal or male- dominated hierarchy has an impact on society. According to this school of thought, the patriarchy is the oppression of women and the prioritization of males, resulting in the division of rights, advantages, and authority predominantly by gender. The fundamental belief of a radical feminist is that women are oppressed because of their gender, and it might be argued that changing one's gender would constitute a radical feminist action. The radical



feminist viewpoint places a strong emphasis on gender inequity, therefore to challenge long-standing gender roles in society, a woman can engage in cross-dressing as a form of activism to further this objective.

**Rukhsana Chowdhury (2010)** explained that contends that, although reflecting age-old man-made conceptions about race, gender, female sexuality, and power, Shakespeare's plays remain timeless "s plays appear to be at war with patriarchal gender norms. Cleopatra and Katherine, the chosen characters, do not follow the usual rule of feminine behaviour. Both are powerful women who dare to break established rules and shine brightly in their respective fields. As a result, they have a bad reputation and are slurred by the male characters. Nonetheless, Shakespeare is to blame "It is to their credit that he demonstrates their intellectual superiority and position of power in the plays. The purpose of this article is to investigate the extent to which Shakespeare shared the gender assumptions of his period, as well as the ways in which his plays provide an alternative viewpoint on these values and principles. An attempt will be made to investigate how a proto-feminist Shakespeare denaturalized gender-based society norms and values.

**Hugh Grady (2008)** stated that the concept of "the aesthetic" has traditionally been avoided in Shakespeare studies; nonetheless, it seems that a return to aesthetics may soon be on the agenda for critical theory. This article makes the case that "impure aesthetics," a term that was coined by Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, is an attractive direction for the renaissance to adopt. It would seem that Shakespeare himself subscribed to some of the principles of an impure aesthetic, particularly in the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a result, the play is both a meta-aesthetic drama and a growth of the comedy genre to previously unheard-of levels of artistic complexity and self-reflection. It is also one of Shakespeare's broadest explorations of aesthetic themes and is considered one of his greatest works. Titania and Oberon embody



important aspects of the play's aestheticizing strategy by figuring the potential harmony between the human and the natural, while also displaying human foibles that disorganize the natural world. The play models the relation between the aesthetic and the world in the contrasts between the play's fairy and human realms. Bottom's Dream is another figural representation of the relation of the aesthetic to the social, and it is one that (similar to the play-within-the-play) emphasizes the material and bodily bases of art's representation of the ethereal and the spiritual. Bottom's Dream is also a representation of the relation of the aesthetic to the social in the form of a dream.

**Farah Karim-Cooper (2006)** stated that this chapter focuses on Shakespeare's use of cosmeticsignifiers as stage components and page tropes in crafting his own dramatic art in twocomedies: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labor's Lost*. To do so, some knowledge on the use of cosmetics in early modern theatre and their utility in staging, particularly Elizabethan dramatic tactics, is required. Second, the chapter investigates how Shakespeare, in these two plays, artistically legitimizes cosmetics by recalling their materiality within a poetic and theatrical setting. Shakespeare employed cosmetic analogies to dramatize the relationship between love and cosmetic mutability in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, he used cosmetic signifiers to investigate contemporary formulations of poetic models and the proper use of rhetorical language. In a dramatic context, Shakespeare also used cosmetic parallels to illustrate competing definitions.



## **CONCLUSION:**

Feminism is one of the most important critical stances that holds the key to comprehending Shakespeare's comedies, as is seen from Waller's classification. Over the past 35 years or so, feminist criticism of Shakespeare has built a distinct political platform as a literary outgrowth of the feminist movement, which began in the 1970s as a protest against gender-based injustice and discrimination. Shakespeare has been projected as a protofeminist, placing women at the centre of the shifting socio-cultural environment of early modern England, where ideas about women were undergoing sea-changes under the influence of Puritanism and the Renaissance Humanists, in Juliet Dusinberre's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (1975), the first feminist work solely devoted to Shakespeare. Shakespeare, according to Dusinberre, was a feminist because he recognized the equality of men and women and rejected stereotypes about them.

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