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THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP
IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:
HAMLET AND THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

MA. THESIS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented on accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this thesis.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Masters Thesis to my father in law, Waleed Fardosi.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since many Renaissance literary works offer valuable and important information regarding paradigms related to gender and identity, Shakespeare's plays contain some of the most remarkable representations of family members, especially fathers and daughters, and because these depictions and descriptions are various, many contrasts and comparisons between the main characters in these plays can be made. In my research on Ophelia and Jessica in *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, I have found that little attention has been paid to the two daughters, although much literary criticism has focused on the way of which they are treated by their fathers. Although Ophelia and Jessica have been briefly examined in individual studies of the plays, few critics have attempted to compare them and go into the depth of their psyches and minds especially regarding their behaviour and relationships with their fathers.

These relationships reflect the reactions of individuals towards other people and reveal that while patriarchal society can often function to generate a certain relationship between fathers and daughters, they affect the type of lives in the society and create a very deep conception of self and other. This fact becomes evident when we put into consideration two of the most popular Shakespearean plays: *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*. As an analysis of these two plays makes evident, many father-daughter relationships in Shakespeare's literature worked to reinforce male power by subjugating women. My thesis will cover how patriarchal ideologies determine the course of relationships between fathers and daughters in two of Shakespeare's plays; *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

William Shakespeare, through his literary works; tragedies, comedies and poems, is considered as a controversial figure of the Renaissance time. People and critics in his time and even in the modern age shared many different contradictory and conflicting views about him. People had countless multitudes and endless attitudes about his works to understand the hidden shadow and the depth of Shakespearean mind. The attitudes are not only related with the personality of Shakespeare, but it is also related with the analysis and the understanding of many important characters, heros and heroines in his works. For example, a contrast could be seen in the interpretation of the characters of Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Jessica *The Merchant of Venice*. For some critics, like A. C. Bradley, Ophelia is considered as a character whose personality is different from many other girls in many plays of Shakespeare. For them, she is a pure and an obedient girl who cannot act according to her will or take her own decision, but others, like Kat Stanton, say that she is completely different from what we see. On the other side, some critics, like Camille Slight, sympathize with Jessica and agree with her when she escaped from her father, while others, like Derek Cohen, do not and they feel that her father is a pitiful victim. I was also curious to discover the ambiguity of the works and the characters by which Shakespeare uses his own technique, and I wanted to discuss this matter according to my own opinion. To be able to achieve this goal, I have selected these two important heroines; Ophelia and Jessica from *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare. I selected these characters to go into the depth of their mentalities relation of what was existed during Shakespeare's time, which is in some way characterized with the mentality of Shakespeare in many of his works. I focus in my thesis on daughters because these heroines, in my opinion, reflect the strength of the plot and complete the ideas and actions of both books.

Through the conversations between Ophelia and her father Polonius on one hand, and between Jessica and her father Shylock on the other hand, the plays reinforce the idea that fathers are authoritative and dominant. They want to control

the private lives of their daughters. The speech and the behaviour of each of Polonius and Shylock are obvious evidences of the power and authority they have on their daughters. Ophelia and Jessica are characterized as young daughters who suffer from the control of their fathers, but each of them behaves in a different way; in other words, Ophelia is a very obedient girl who obeys her father in all his advices and instructions, whereas, Jessica is a rebellious one who rejects her father's words and orders.

The essential reason for which I chose these heroines is the difference of their characters and the wide gap which makes them separated from each other. Each one behaves in accordance of her own personal mentality and understanding of the social rules around her. Shakespeare, through Ophelia and Jessica wanted to show two different types of girls who have contradictory reactions and different behaviour towards the patriarchal society in which they lived. This reflects how much attention the audience or readers intend to understand the masterpiece and how they can deal with all the information to have a complete picture of the father-daughter relationship about Shakespeare's plays.

My thesis is divided into two parts: the first one is theoretical while the other one is practical. The theoretical part contains an introduction and a historical and critical background. The historical background deals with Shakespeare's Life, family and daughters in the age of Shakespeare and family life in Shakespeare's works. But the critical background previews fathers and daughters in Shakespeare's plays. The practical part, which consists of three chapters, highlights the aspects of the heroines; Ophelia and Jessica and discusses the evidences of being obedient or rebelling. It includes particular aspects of sense which is more obvious in each selected character to clarify the female characters and their significances.

It also contains a deep analysis and important details of the characteristics of the relationship between fathers and daughters in the selected plays, and a significant comparison between Shylock and Jessica in one hand and Polonius and Ophelia on the other hand. In chapter three, I focused on the relationship between Jessica and her father in *The Merchant of Venice* besides other female characters like Portia and Nerissa. But in Chapter four, I concentrated on the character of Ophelia and her relationship with her father in *Hamlet*. Through the division of the chapters, we can quantify various aspects of the selected characters which, in turn, lead to their comparison.

In my thesis, I will highlight the father-daughter relationships in these two of Shakespeare's plays; *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet*. And in order to be able to go into the depth of the background of these relationships, I have to find an answer to my question: To what extent do these plays challenge or confirm traditional rules of the Renaissance society?

CHAPTER 2

SHAKESPEARE'S BACKGROUND

2.1. Historical Background

2.1.1. Shakespeare's Life

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616), the English poet, playwright, and actor is considered to be the greatest of English authors and one of the most extraordinary literary creators in human history. Shakespeare, during his lifetime, enjoyed considerable critical attention and worldwide reputation among authors, poets and playwrights. Francis Meres, the English writer, in 1598, declared him to be England's greatest writer in comedy and tragedy. In his essay, *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1688), John Dryden declared that "Shakespeare was the man who of all Modern, and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the Images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but likely: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too" (Dryden 33). Shakespeare, for many critics, is also acknowledged one of the most influential writers in all English literature, and one of the greatest writers of all time. Shakespeare created comedies, histories, tragedies, and poetry. He was known for works like "*Hamlet*," "*The Merchant of Venice*," "*Romeo and Juliet*", "*Othello*", "*The Tempest*" and many other works. Beside his poem and plays, Shakespeare's works are among the most famous establishments in literature.

In Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire north of London, William Shakespeare was born. It was in April, 1564. He was baptized on April 26 according to the records of Stratford's Holy Trinity Church. Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway on November 27, 1582. He was educated at the Grammar School

in Stratford from the age of six or seven. The first poem that was published by him was "Venus and Adonis", in 1593. He after that wrote 154 poems and 37 plays, and his reputation has increased with time. Shakespeare's works were printed in various editions in the century that followed his death, and by the early Eighteenth Century his fame as the greatest writer was well established.

In the 16th century, according to Tim Lambert; the British researcher from Lancaster University, most of the population in England lived in small villages and worked in farms. Towns grew larger and became more important. During that century, industry and trade grew fast and England started to become a more commercial country. Coal, tin and iron industry led to flourish. So England regularly became richer. For William Harrison, in his book *Description Of Elizabethan England* (1577), "the society was divided into four groups. The first was the nobility who owned huge amounts of land, Then came the gentry and rich merchants." (Harrison 75). He also says that Gentlemen were usually educated and they owned large lands. Manual work was not done by most important gentlemen, because for them it was considered beneath their dignity. Yeomen and craftsmen were below the gentry. Yeomen were as wealthy as gentlemen because they owned their own land. Craftsmen and yeomen were usually able to read and write. The farmen who leased their land from the rich were below the yeomen. There also were wage labourers who were often very poor and illiterate. In the sixteenth century, about 50% of the population lived at a subsistence level. For them, life was very hard and money cannot be easily earned. In other words, they had just shelter, clothes and enough food to survive. At that time, London was the heart of England, reflecting the various qualities of the Elizabethan Age. This atmosphere led London to be the center of culture as well as of the trade. In this environment, Shakespeare lived and started to write. In 1580s, the writings of the University wits (1585), Marlowe, Greene, Lyly, and Peele, defined the London Theatre. Those men produced new comedies and dramas using the style of blank

verse of Marlowe. Shakespeare exceeded all of them. He combined the traits of Elizabethan drama with classical sources, enriching the literature with his ideas, thoughts and imagination.

2.1.2. Family and Daughters in the Age of Shakespeare

During the time of the late 1500s and early 1600s, namely, in the middle of what is called the early modern period (1500-1700), Shakespeare lived and wrote all his works. England during this time was not like most European countries. It was a place of brilliant literary achievement, intellectual mental thinking and religious and political disturbance. These conditions and events influenced the social atmosphere and family life of society and that in turn became a topic of literary representation and a way of discussion in that society. Besides linking the events and conditions of past, present, and future, family also linked the philosophy of earth with heaven, soul and body and heart and mind.

In the relation with their children, parents were supposed to imitate the perfect love of God. This kind of love can only be presented by parents towards their children, and parents only can determine the way they express their love and feelings towards their children. In various ways, parents were able to convey heavenly grace to their children. For them, God himself was considered as the father of nature and of humankind. According to Anne Dunan, in her book, *Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture* (2008), a father should therefore, "represent the Majesty of God, at home" (Dunan 14). But this role of parents, especially fathers, could be misbehaved. Yet the similarity between the authority of God and a father was not supposed to be accepted as an excuse for fathers to be tyrant. The idea of resemblance between Fathers and God is not to be in power only, but in love too. Father, for Dunan, should also have the same fatherly care for children that God has for human beings.

According to Thomas Fuller, in his book, *The Sermons of Mr. Henry Smith* (1866), Henry Smith who was a popular London preacher contemporary with Shakespeare, declared that "they which are called fathers, are called by the name of God, to warne them that they are in stead of God to their children, which teacheth all his sonnes." (Fuller 114). The father, for him, should be a teacher and a model for " what example have children but their parents?" (Fuller 114). Like every good governor, a father "must governe for the good of those that be under him" (Fuller 115). The roles of children and fathers or other family members were thought of as being natural; this means that they were related with the nature of reality, which, in turn, had been accomplished by God. In fact, during that period, the word nature had many related meanings and interpretations: it could be understood in several ways. It could refer to the universe as a whole, or in other words, it could refer to the force that support the universe, or to the nature of human being, and specifically to the senses and emotions that should live inside the members of a family, particularly between parents and children. Thus, loyalty, love and coherence within a family were called natural, and the word nature could also refer to true behavior of a family; namely the behaviour of children towards their parents especially fathers and also the behaviour of parents towards their children especially daughters. It is a matter of interaction between children and parents about all social norms of the atmosphere in which they all live. On the other hand, "conflict and disloyalty in a family were called unnatural because they were against meaning of nature" (Fuller 129). This meaning, as it is explained, does not reflect the true understanding of the relationship that should be done between fathers and children. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, family, with all members, should have an important role in society. To them, it was an important part of the structure of reality and was thought as part of an agreeable system in social life. Yet at the same time, jealousy, antagonism, hypocrisy and other evils were aspects of family life which was troubled by these aspects, particularly in the society which does not care of the social and moral norms. Transition was one of the most noticeable aspects of the age of Shakespeare. This

transition was not only dominated, but also challenged. The challenges gradually appeared in various forms, including the beginnings of philosophy and modern science, and also the movement toward more effective political and religious freedom. Such changes led to a split between the public sphere and the private one. Shakespeare and some other writers used the conflict and tension between older and newer views to enrich their works supporting them by providing interest and effective dramatic conflict to them. But the traditional view, for most of those writers, was authoritative and affected how they dealt with every issue, especially the ones that are related to family life. During the time of Shakespeare, most of women did not have their own rights in England. On the contrary, they had very limited rights and deprived from even their own feelings, emotions and taking decisions, and they also were treated as a lower class, especially regarding having their own properties and choosing their husbands .

Although England was ruled by a woman for more than four decades, most women did not have much power over their lives, on the contrary, they lived under the control of men. Most writings about the family life during this time of history, concentrated on the traditional patriarchal paradigm of authority, submission and domination. The father ruled over his wife and children, and women were deprived from formal education. They also were not able to speak out too freely in fear of being described as a scold, because it was considered that such women were thought a threat to the public, and to stop them from this behaviour, they were corrected with punishments as public humiliation.

2.1.3. Family Life in Shakespeare's Works

Family is a very important concern in most of Shakespeare's plays, and it is in the center of many of them, especially the plays whose male characters are violent or dominant. The plays of Shakespeare often present children and parents,

wives and husbands, and cousins and relatives interacting in a variety of styles, and courtship and familial conflict are often focused on in the plots in which the important events take place. The standard Renaissance portrait of the family as organism or body is often used by Shakespeare. King Lear, for example, uses his own language which is a customary one identifying his daughters as his blood and flesh: "Or rather a disease that's in my flesh, / Which I must needs call mine" (2.4. 221-223). The daughters' ingratitude is like violence of one part of the body against another: "Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand / For lifting food to't?" (3.4. 15-16). In this play, Albany, Goneril's husband, makes a comparison between King Lear and his daughter Goneril to parts of a single tree, and argues that because she damaged the organism of which she is part of, her bad treatment of her father would destroy her. The symbolism of nature is very clear in his example. This image indicates that the familial connections in the plays of Shakespeare are natural whereas the violations of love and loyalty within the family are considered unnatural. For him, what is good is natural and vice versa. Regarding Hamlet, the ghost of his father uses the phrase: "if thou hast nature in thee," (1.5. 81). Because Hamlet's father was killed by his brother, he called his killing "most foul, strange, and unnatural" (1.5. 28). It is unnatural because this is against the moral norms of humanity. Gloucester, in *King Lear* was not sure that his son Edmund is going to betray him, so he calls him as his "loyal and natural boy" (2.1. 84). In *The Tempest*, after calling Antonio flesh and blood brother, Prospero does not take revenge, on the contrary, he forgives him, saying: "unnatural though thou art" (5.1. 79). The words nature, natural, and unnatural in the plays are used to refer to various family members; between siblings, children and parents and even between nephew and uncle. Coriolanus in Shakespeare's play *Coriolanus*, goes very far when he describes the action of his mother when kneeled before him as unnatural: "Tell me not/ Wherein I seem unnatural" (5.3. 85). For him, the action of kneeling by mother to her son is unnatural for this it is considered as a strange and unnatural behaviour.

Like his contemporaries, Shakespeare understood that household and lineage mean family. The households that Shakespeare draws and portrays in his mind have many characteristics in common with those in early modern England. Fathers, for example, are figures of power and authority, but mothers only help in the duty of taking care of home and governing the household. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Capulet orders his wife to persuade Juliet to consider marriage. He uses his male power indirectly to convince Juliet to marry Paris. In other words, he uses his wife as a tool to do what he can't directly do. Lady Capulet also has much of the direction of the household servants in her hands. Lord Capulet determines the general plan of their life such as Juliet wedding, but both of them, he and his wife give specific orders to be carried out by servants, But sometimes Lord Capulet does not have authority on everything in the house. For example in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 4 Scene 4, he is out of place in the kitchen, it is his wife's domain. Furthermore, when Lord Capulet tries to find a way to force a match on his daughter, Lady Capulet tells him: "You are too" (3.5. 175). This indicates that he mustn't exceed his proper authority.

Most of Shakespeare's plays focus on great households which are not different from those of Shakespeare's time. There are many similarities between the household of Shakespeare's plays and the ones of his age. Many households viewed by Shakespeare include servants and guests, and others include grandparents and sometimes aunts or uncles. When King Lear tries to live with his married daughter, the result is grievous. Bruce Wilson Young, in his book *Family Life in the Age of Shakespeare* (1999), states that Daniel Rogers, in his writing in the seventeenth century, gave an advice that came from his belief of that the relationship between parents and children should have given more concern. He said: "Be wise, your parents, yield not yourselves captives and prisoners to your children; no prison can more irksome to a parent than a son or daughter's house" (Young 239).

2.2. Critical Background - Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare's Plays

In his book, *The Family Relationship in Shakespeare and The Restoration Comedy of Manner* (1983), the Indian author Sarup Singh from the university of London declares that the relationship between children and their parents was very different from what we know at the present. In modern society, for him, parents have to change their treatment with their children. A father should be a teacher or a friend. The old way of dealing between parents and children, for him, is not suitable in the modern age. In Renaissance England, the relationship between parents and their children was based on the fifth commandment, which orders children to honor their father and mother, but father is more important to be honored because father, according to the fifth commandment, obtains his authority from God. England at that time was a patriarchal society and, "Daughters are perhaps the greatest victims of a patriarchal family and Elizabethan daughters were no exception" (Singh 33). In Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, the father Prospero and his daughter Miranda, are an example of the father daughter relationship in Renaissance England, however they were rather different from the social norms of their time. During that time in England the wife and children were to obey the father because he was considered as the head of th household. Rosemary Masek, in his book, *Women of England: From Anglo-Saxon Times to The Present* (1979), declares "A woman's status depended upon that of her husband, or if she remained single, upon that of her family" (Masek 141). This means that the female can do nothing with the dependence on a male member, either this male is a father, a brother or a husband. A girl during this era was her father, but when she was married she became her husband. She was always dependent on a male figure around her, namely a father, a brother or a husband. Eeverything was in the hands of males, and girls were treated as inferior beings within the household and what they were prepared to be was just to be obedient and good future wives. In this society which was considered as male-centered one,

women were put in the lowest step of the ladder and considered as a lower status . They had to answer positively to the father. A male had a complete power over all the members of his family. The father was considered everything in the house even the members of his family as his property. His sons inherited his possessions, but his daughters were sold off to live in another man's household when they were married. Boys were educated to have the role of their fathers that of power and authority, but girls had to learn skills to help their households and please their husbands; in other words they are not more than sex objects. Fathers chose their daughters' husbands for their girls who have no will, no opinion and no ability to choose, and love had no value or importance in the process of marriage.

Marriage in Renaissance England for prof. Susan Dwyer Amussen who has published gracefully written study on gender and class in early modern England, was placed political and social power. In her book, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (2007), she says, "the family and the state were inextricably intertwined in the minds if English women and men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Amussen 16). This means that there was an interaction between the political power represented by the political authority and between the social position represented by the members of family and their influence on their society. Kari B McBride, in his book, *Domestic Arrangements in Early Modern England*, says: "we cannot understand politics without understanding the politics of the family" (McBride 1). This kind of relationship between social and political lives created a different kind of relationship. And this, in turn, caused a result that in order to have more land, fathers tried to choose husbands for their daughters. Fathers wanted to choose husbands in accordance of how much they own, not how much they love. Fathers also tried to increase social status and acquire titles. They also had to provide a dowry for their daughters. When the dowry was large, this means that the girl was desirable to her husband and his family. In the matter of

marriage, girls had no will or chance to say no, and most likely did not meet or see their husbands until their wedding time.

Among Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies there is a lot of plays which concentrate on the relationship between parents and their children. The most interesting relationship is the one between fathers and their daughters, because it is the most controversial, especially when the mentality of father and his daughter is completely different and when also their points of view towards social environment is not the same. Shakespeare destines most of the father- daughter pairs to fail, not because he wants them to fail, but because they really fail in their normal lives. The father usually proves to be incapable as he does not know his own child's nature and personality, and he does not will to know her enough or even to try to know her desires and wishes. His paternal authority does not allow him to descent on his daughter's level and make an attempt to understand her will and her needs. He considers himself to be upper than to speak with his daughter in a normal or respectable way. Although the ruler of England at the time of Shakespeare was a woman, the Elizabethan society was patriarchal and the power is in the hands of men. This comes clearly in the literary works of the time in which Shakespeare lived. In many plays of Shakespeare, like *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, the father-daughter relationships refer to the changing roles of women within Elizabethan society.

According to Sharon Hamiltonin, in her book *Shakespeare's Daughters* (2003), "Shakespeare created two of his most memorable father-daughter pairs at the beginning and end of his career" (Hamilton 13). In *Romeo and Juliet* in 1596 and *The Tempest* in 1611, the conflict situations between fathers and daughters, caused by the conflict on the choice of the right husband for the young girl, are very similar in both plays, as well as the fathers and daughters personal characters. However, these two plays are of his most contrasting plays regarding the father figure. Each father in these two plays tries to control the behaviour of

his daughter according to his rules. Juliet and Miranda have many similar characteristics in common, for example their beauty, and intelligence. They are both the only child in the family and due to this fact they constitute the only hope and that is why their fathers pay more attention for them. The fathers in both plays wanted to build their daughters' future regarding their own minds not the minds of daughters. For Hamilton, most of Shakespeare's generation conflicts first appear when it comes to choice of the future husband and in these plays they form the main plot. "The entire plays are actually about finding out if the lovers succeed to marry or not, unlike *Othello* which does not end immediately after Desdemona's marriage. Infact, the last one is rather about the tragic outcome of such a marriage without her father's blessing." (Hamilton 135). The speech of Hamilton asserts that the most important point in the plot of Shakespeare's plays in accordance of the father daughter relationships is the appearance of a lover in the life of the girl and how the father interferes to stop this love if it does not come with benefit to him. For MaryEllen Buckley Nicholson, in her book titled *Like Father, Like Daughter: The Similarities Between Fathers and Daughters in Five Shakespearean Plays* (2011), most Shakespearean criticism concentrates on the rebellious daughters of these relationships. In father-daughter relationship in *The Merchant of Venice*, for instance, "observes the changing role of woman within Elizabethan society" (Nicholson, 2). But in other plays, like Hamlet, we find Ophelia an obedient girl and be under the control of the male authority, especially with her father

In a patriarchal society, women are expected to obey all social rules and restrictions by reverence and obedience to the males in their lives. In this case, women were not treated humanly but more like sex objects and properties. They were under a complete control of men who were seen as the superior of sex. Being females, women were considered lower than men in their social atmosphere. Women also were considered very weak and always in need of being protected by a father or a husband or even by a brother. In some of Shakespeare's plays, many

female characters are in Shakespeare's world seem have freedom and personal power more than what we would expect in a society which is considered a patriarchal one. The role of the women that they play in many plays of Shakespeare often refers to the intelligence and strength they have. This perhaps refers to that women should get rid of the violence and power of males and be treated equally with men.

Lagretta Lenker, in her book, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (2001), notes the historical similarity between the early modern and late Victorian period, including strong patriarchal rules and systems, the family as an analogue for the state, and new feminist rebellions. She declares that father-daughter relationship had a cultural echo of historical civilizations. For her, through history, many cultural conflicts appeared, and this in turn, was a base that developed during civilizations. She argues that "the theme of generational conflict as found in Menander, Terence, and Plautus is successfully adapted by Shakespeare for comedy (*Midsummer Nights' Dream*, *Taming of The Shrew*), for tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*), and for Romance (*The Winter's Tale*)." (Lenker 22). This argument perhaps matches, somehow, the point of view of Diane Elizabeth in her book *Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare* (1986). She argues that "the power of the patriarchy depends not so much on law or raw power as on tradition" (Elizabeth 17). In deed, I agree with both of them because that most daughters in Shakespear's plays, as I see, rebel against their fathers, traditionally, either for their lovers or to get rid of the patriarchal dominance against them. Most of Shakespearean daughters are rebels who defy their father's word and will. They search for their own way to get freedom and independence. In *The Merchant of Venice*, like many other Shakespearean plays, we see two father-daughter relationships which reflect theme of the father-daughter of the mentioned play. The hard relationship between Jessica and her father, and the relationship between Portia and her dead father, show how the society of Shakespeare's time is patriarchal. It undoubtedly reflects

the mentality of fathers in Renaissance Age. Portia's father has a strong control over his daughter even after his death. This is a strong evidence about the authority of men over women. According to the will of Portia's father, the person who wants to marry Portia must choose the correct box which contains Portia's picture. "Oh, me, the word, "choose"! I may neither choose who I would like nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father" (1.2. 22-24). Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, lives under her father's strict rules. Shylock, her father, always asks her not to open the doors and windows, especially when he leaves home; that is because of his bad relationship with the Christian society.

Shylock:

"Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum

And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,

Clamber not you up to the casements then,

Nor thrust your head into the public street

To gaze upon Christian fools with varnished faces;

Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter

My sober house" (2.5. 28–36).

In her first scene, Jessica is very angry of her father because of the hard way he treats her with: "Our house is hell" (2.3.2). She considers her house a hell which she can not endure. Although she feels guilty of being ashamed of her father, she rejects him. She does not like his way of life, she is unhappy to have a father like him and she also refuses his religion. "Alack, what heinous sin is it in me / To be ashamed to be my father's child! / But though I am a daughter to his

blood,/ I am not to his manners" (2.3.16–19). Jessica here does not feel happy and she is frustrated because she lives in a bad position with her father. She does not care about the instructions of her father and creates an emotional relationship with a Christian boyfriend called Lorenzo. And because of the misery which lives with her father, she plans to escape from her father's home with Lorenzo. She steals a part of her father's money and runs away. By her escape, she feels that she became free and is able to do what she likes. She achieves a psychological independence in her soul and a physical freedom in her body.

The transformation of Jessica's position is significant. She moves from a humiliating living which is full of strict rules, limits and restrictions to one that she considers full of freedom, will and independence. Jessica marries Lorenzo, her Christian boyfriend, and becomes a Christian like him. Since she has married him, She has converted to Christianity. Shylock's heart has been broken because of the behaviour of his daughter. By running away, Jessica cuts the last line that links her with her father. She does not only escape from her father's house, but she also steals his money and changes her religion by converting to Christianity. The speech of Lancelot about Jessica that she is damned to hell just because her father is a Jew, makes her take a decision of leaving her father and running away with her boyfriend. She says "I shall be saved by my husband. He hath made me a Christian". (3.5. 3). Jessica, who rejects her father's instructions, symbolizes the stereotypical rebellious daughter. There are many similar females who rebel against their fathers in many other plays of Shakespeare, like Rosalind in *As You Like It* and Miranda in *The Tempest*. In the later, Miranda challenges the patriarchal restrictions of her time in the way of her speaking to her father; that is she takes a decision to marry Ferdinand. The decision which was quick and impulsive. But the case of Miranda is different because Prospero, Miranda's father, as Sharon Hamilton argues in her book, *Shakespeare's Daughters* (2003), "understands her perfectly and devotes his life to nurturing her, and Miranda flourishes" (Hamilton 75). For Hamilton, the relationship between a young

woman and her father in the plays of Shakespeare affects daughter's life and determines her fate. But when Jessica is compared with the main character of the play, namely, Portia who obeys the orders, the restrictions and the will of her dead father, we find a big difference between them. While we find that Portia is under the complete power of her father's will, we see Jessica rejects her father's instructions and feels ashamed of being his daughter. Indeed, here, we can read a message of contempt with the patriarchal rules of Shakespeare's time. The inequality of gender is focused on by the feminist perspective, so to defy social and traditional norms of gender, for example changing clothes is considered as a physical action which female can do as a way of empowerment to encourage this aim. In *The Merchant of Venice*, we see three female characters; Jessica, Portia and Nerissa. They have their own experience with different levels of the affect of the patriarchy upon the actions in the play; these actions are considered as radical ones. Jessica uses this activity to achieve her own purpose differently from others. Within Act 2 Scene 6, Jessica has a man character. She assumes a male one to be able to escape from her father's control and she runs away with Lorenzo. She says:

"I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

For I am much ashamed of my exchange.

But love is blind, and lovers cannot see,

For if they could, Cupid himself would blush,

To see me transformed to a boy". (2.6. 36-41)

Jessica does not accept the way Portia and Nerissa behave to face the rules of the society. She is confounded to be disguised to flee from her social limits and this refers to the tight patriarchal ideals that are bound to her character. When she realizes that she must pretend to be a man, she feels that she is unable to save

herself and exercise her own will. But, on the other hand, Portia and Nerissa, use this action in another way. Portia and Nerissa do not feel shamed for their actions, because they feel that by this way they do not only indicate to the lack of concern for patriarchal values, but also to the interest in saving the life of Antonio because of the deep relationship that he has with Bassanio. The most powerful activity of Portia and Nerissa as lawyers in Venice can now move covered in their society and accomplish their aims more than men of Venice themselves, namely Bassanio, Antonio and Shylock. This new activity deconstruct the authority of males because they become stronger than the other men in the courtroom. Their actions in the courtroom prove that they have more power than the males. As men, these women were able to astonish the people in the courtroom with their astonishing deeds because they went out their old world of low expectations that placed on female figures for a long time.

In the beginning of her book, *In Defense of Jessica* (1980), Camille Slight defends the behavior of Jessica against her father. She argues that "Jessica has not fared well in the criticism of *The Merchant of Venice*. Those who see the play primarily as an exposure of Christian hypocrisy respond sympathetically to Shylock and judge harshly the daughter who deserts him for his Christian enemies". (Slight 1). Actually, I agree with Slight's in her argument. For me, Jessica suffers from the patriarchal society in which she lives, she also suffers from the hard way Shylock treats her. When Shylock discovers that Jessica fled, he became very angry, not because he lost the daughter he loves, but because he loves his money more.

"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!

Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!

Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!

A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,

Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!

And jewels- two stones, two rich and precious stones,

Stol'n by my daughter! Justice!" (2.8. 15-22)

After Shylock loses his money, his feelings and emotions towards his daughter become very clear. He prefers to see his daughter dead instead of being runaway with his money. "I would my daughter dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin!" (3.1. 83-85). In his book, *The Plays of Shakespeare: A Thematic Guide* (2001), Victor L. Cahn also focuses on the will of Jessica and her wish to get rid of being with her father. He argues that "Jessica seeks to be part of society around her. In deed, she has completely accepted its values, including the anti-semitism, and she sees her salvation, both literal and metaphoric, in escape from her father's home" (Cahn 73). To Cahn, Jessica preferred to accept the Christian rules more than the rules of her father. But on the other hand, Bridget Lyons, in his book *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatment of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (1975), has pointed out "of all the characters in Hamlet, Ophelia is the most persistently presented in terms of symbolic meanings." (Lyons 125). He argues that the gestures, the behaviour and the appearance of Ophelia are freighted with symbolic significance. For him, many critics of Shakespeare consider the part of Ophelia in the play is primarily iconographic.

The symbolic meanings of Ophelia, moreover, are specifically feminine. Ophelia is a very good sample of the obedient daughter in the period of Shakespeare. She agrees with everything her father and her brother ask her to do. Her famous sentence to her father "I shall obey my Lord" (1.4. 10), is a clear evidence of her positive attitude to the rules of her society. Polonius uses her as

bait in order to spy on Hamlet for King Claudius. When he does that Ophelia doesn't refuse, but on the contrary, she does exactly what her father has told her to do. Being unmarried, she lives by her father's rules and power. Essentially, she has no control over her character, her body and her will. Her choices and relationships are controlled by her father. Scene 3 of Act 1 is considered one of the most important scenes in the play. It explores the relationship between Ophelia and her brother in one side, and between her and her father on the other side. The conversation between them reflects the reaction of both Polonius and Laertes towards the relationship of Ophelia and Hamlet. Both of them concern Hamlet and her relation with him. As Laertes warns Ophelia for her relationship with Hamlet, she responds in a very positive way; this means that she has a deep respect and obedience for her brother; that respect is built on love and good relation with him. Laertes counsels Ophelia to be very wary of Hamlet. He does not want her to be very close to him. He wants her to put into her consideration the potential consequences of becoming sexually involved with Hamlet: "Fear it, Ophelia. Fear it, my dear sister,/ And keep you in the rear of your affection,/ Out of the shot and danger of desire". (1.3. 9). His speech refers that Laertes has a deep concern of his sister to be in a good position, and it shows that he loves her and cares for her. When he calls her as dear sister, and urges her to keep away from Hamlet for her own good is clearly significant. The way her brother speaks with her is different from the one her father does. This attitude is sharply different from the one of Polonius towards his daughter. The gentle advice of Laertes with his sister is contrasted with the orders that Polonius gives to Ophelia, even it is not violent, but it is not like the one done by her brother. Polonius tries to speak openly that the way she deals with Hamlet is not acceptable by him. He urges that if she is not careful of him, she will make herself and her father like a fool:

"Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby,

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,

Which are not sterlin. Tender yourself more dearly,

Oh- not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Running it thus- yoy'll tender me a fool". (3.2. 7)

The way of talking of Polonius refers that he is more concerned about his fame more than what happens to his daughter; this is completely different from what Laertes concerned about. In the case of Laertes, the relationship is characterized by mutual respect. Laertes cares for his sister more than being dominant or authoritative, but with Polonius, the matter is different. Power and authority are the center of his relationship with Ophelia, because Polonius only cares about his daughter in relation to his goals and ambitions. For Kay Stanton, Ophelia is considered the most important character in *Hamlet*, and she is the most static. In her essay, *Hamlet's Whores: In New Essays on Hamlet* (1994), Stanton declares that "Ophelia herself is not as important as her representation of the dual nature of women in the play" (Stanton 167). She considers that "Through Ophelia we witness Hamlet's evolution, or de-evolution into a man convinced that all women are whores; and Ophelia has been made a whore by her father" (Stanton 167). In Act 2 Polonius has a plan to make an arrangement to use Ophelia in order to discover why Hamlet behaves so curiously. This is considered as an important evidence that Polonius cares for himself more than his daughter. When Polonius tries to use his daughter to understand the strange behaviour of Hamlet, this asserts that Polonius only cares about himself more than caring about his daughter.

For Stanton, Polonius in this case prostitutes his daughter. Actually, I agree with Stanton that Polonius uses his daughter to discover what is behind the behaviour of Hamlet, but not to the extent that he prostitutes his daughter for this reason. Ophelia agreed what her father asked her to do, in my opinion, for two reasons: the first is her love to Hamlet. She wanted to know what happened to

Hamlet and why he behaved in such a strange way. The second is her duty towards her father. Being an obedient girl, Ophelia is ready to do whatever her father wanted from her to do. Ophelia's blind behaviour is considered as another proof of the role of the patriarchal society on women in the period of Shakespeare.

In my opinion, Ophelia represents something very different from other girls. Because she is very young and because she has lost her mother at birth, her father and her brother loved her too much. They do as much as they can to protect her. She is not involved in what her father and her brother are. She spends her time engaged in collecting flowers. She knows that Polonius and Laertes love her and protect her, so she is very loyal to them and she puts herself under their control and authority. In her book, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1966), A.C. Bradley argues about Ophelia that "Her whole character is that of simple unselfish affection" (Bradley 130). Although her love to Hamlet is very strong, she obeys her father and promise him to keep away from him. She also tells her father that she would not take any letters from anymore. Since her heart is very pure, she sometimes does something dishonest, such as when she tells Hamlet that her father is not at home but he was behind the curtain.

In this position, there is a complicated conflict between her heart in one side and her mind on the other side. Her heart tells her to love Hamlet and not to lie on him, but her mind orders her to obey her father and do whatever he asks her to do. Actually Hamlet causes all her emotional pain throughout the play, especially being the reason of her father's death. Hamlet also is the direct reason of her madness because of two reasons; the first is that he is the one who killed her father and the second is because he denied her love and told her that he had not loved her. "In her wandering we hear from time to time an undertone of the deepest sorrow, but never the agonized cry of fear or horror which makes madness dreadful or shocking. And the picture of her death, if our eyes grow dim in watching it, is still purely beautiful" (Bradley 132). The immoral songs of Ophelia

in the presence of Laertes, Gertrude and Claudius are an important evidence of her love to her father and at the same time they are considered as a significance of the corrupt world which has taken what she liked most in her life. But for Bradley, these songs are said only in her insanity, and they show her love only in her insanity not in her ordinary life.

CHAPTER 3

DAUGHTERS IN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

3.1. Daughters as Rebellious Females

In his book *The Awakened One Poetics* (2009), Joseph Spence declares that "in Shakespeare's time such a societal structure was largely acceptable. The modern reader views the subjugation of women with aversion, and the ways in which Shakespeare presents the female characters in this play perhaps to show that was not entirely comfortable with the unbalanced scale of power between men and women" (Spence 47). Actually, I agree with this declaration because in many plays of Shakespeare, like *The Merchant of Venice*, daughters represent the rebels against the rules of patriarchal society. In this play, the scene is opened to show how a society is controlled by men who have the authority in the society of Venice. Men in such a society use their power in business, government, family life and many other fields. Women are submissive to the power of their fathers or husbands, and are considered as helpless and powerless and when they want to make decisions. Women cannot take their own decisions without the approval of their male figures. The three female characters; Portia, Nerissa and Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* are clear samples of women who are not in good relationship with the traditional rules of their society. They seek to have the freedom to act as they like, so they decide to disguise themselves as men. When they are disguised, they can escape from the social and traditional restrictions which previously limited their actions and affected their behavior in their society. The setting in *The Merchant of Venice* is characterized by a hierarchy of gender roles in which masculine figures hold power and control over women, so a male character like the father of Portia, who has power over his daughter, is made possible. Additionally, the society whose structure is social, allows for his behaviour of subjecting Portia to the traditional way to be able to choose her husband. Portia's

father hold a great influence over her even he is not alive. Although, Portia is lucky that Bassanio loves her and he will choose the correct casket which contains her photo, but Portia feels unhappy because she is unable to act according to her own choice, saying:

"O me, the word choose! I may neither

Choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike, so is

The will of a living daughter curbed by the will of

A dead father" (1.2. 22-25)

Since the action of choosing a spouse is not available for girls, the male dominance in Venician society is seen the great power of authority which the father of Portia continues to hold over her life either when he is alive or after being dead. One of the most important decisions a person can make is choosing a spouse, but Portia has nothing to say or to do in the matter. She can do only what her father asks her to do. Her will has no value. She has no opinion to act. She must accept her fate according to a system of riddles and boxes by which all her behaviour will be controlled, and this means that she is just a machine more than being a human creature. But when Portia wears male clothes, her behaviour is completely different. When Portia is disguised as a male lawyer, she becomes a new and intelligent character. This is, in my opinion, another proof about the high gap between the power of male and female that Shakespeare wants to clarify in his play. The gender roles are reversed in the courtroom and power turns to become in the hands of females. Portia gets rid of the thumb of men who exercise control over her, and she is now in a good position of authority over men. She has a great deal of power in the courtroom and she is able to deal with action more than anyone else. She can take decision and determine the destiny of both Antonio and Shylock who turned to become under her authority. Portia behaves

cleverly in the trial. Antonio is saved and Shylock is condemned and punished. She led Shylock into a trap and could change the action and the result of the trial. She could also get the ring from Bassanio and had made him swear to care for it and never let go. Portia by her disguise could affect the social hierarchy and make it collapse. She used her power over Bassanio and achieved what she hadn't been about to do before. They state empowerment when being disguised is completely different from being undisguised. When she is dressed as a woman she was under the control of others, namely men, but when dressed as a man she could make all the society under her control, and she also was able to control her own life and doesn't allow anyone to interfere her position or influence her decision. She doesn't want to be a toy of the social system which deprived her from being free and able to choose her husband. Even Nerissa is not a main character, she is another female who decided to disguise herself as a man in order to achieve her power. As she could obtain the ring from her husband, Gratiano, she gained the dominant role in her relationship with her husband. Without being disguised, she is not able to obtain the ring. By doing this, she manages to confound the social system and overcome the traditional limits around her. When Nerissa saw the positive result of Portia's disguise, she became sure that the best behaviour to get her right is to do the same and change her character to a boy, and this in turn helps her to achieve empowerment. Jessica, Shylock's daughter, is the third female in the play who suffer from the traditional society around her. Jessica comes from different background. She suffered from society more than Portia and Nerissa who suffer only from being females in a masculine society, but Jessica suffers from being female in one hand, and from being a Jew on the other hand. As a female, she suffers from her father's strict restrictions and harsh rules. Shylock, her father does not allow her to marry Lorenzo, the one she loves because he is a Christian. Because her father wants to control her life completely, she feels that she lives in a hell. She says: "our house is hell" (2.3. 2). She is not satisfied with the lack of freedom in her father's atmosphere. She does not accept the inability to act as she

likes and wishes. She considers herself without any value because her father makes her as a prisoner in her house, and always commands her to do what only he wants:

"What! Are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,

And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,

Clamber not you up to the casements then,

Nor thrust your head into the public street

To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces," (2.5. 27-33)

Shylock forbids her to do the thing that she loves most, namely, marrying her boyfriend Lorenzo. She finds that the only way to get rid of her suffering from her father's hard treatment is to dress as a man and escape with Lorenzo. When she is undisguised she can only dream of the day of marriage. Her wishes can be done only in her imagination because the truth is something different. But when she is dressed as a boy, she feels free and strong, she rebels against the rules of her father without feeling afraid of punishment. This reflects her will to disobey her father and his traditional way of dealing with her in his patriarchal society. She knows that her father's authority is supported and approved by the society in which she lives, so when she feels that she is ready to behave as a free person, she gets rid of fear, steals his money and runs away with her boyfriend. By this behaviour, she takes no attention of her society and acts without concern for her father's rules.

Actually, although I agree with Jessica to defend herself against the strict rules and the hard authority of her father, I sometimes sympathize with Shylock

and feel that Jessica shouldn't escape and steal her father's money and behave in such a way. I see, she had better to try to convince him change his hard system by making him feel that she loves him more than everyone else, even more than Lorenzo. If she had tried to convince him change his mind, he might have positively responded to her action.

Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica and in *The Merchant of Venice*, assert their personal freedom to act in the way they like and have their own actions according to their own terms. They do not seek to live under the dominant authority of males and they refuse to accept the rules of the social hierarchy of Venice. Actually, I understand the rebellion of Jessica against her father, but not in the way she behaved, especially running away, stealing his money and converting to Christianity. I also agree and understand the actions of Portia and Nerissa to get back the control of their marriage. Through the actions of the three females against the social structure and the rules of their society which control their own lives, I think that Shakespeare intended to show us that when the three females disguise themselves as men, each one of them feels that she is an independent human being who can rebel against the society that deprived them from their rights to take their own decisions and do the things they like. Women in their male disguises have the same authority and power as men and they are able to act with the same rights and the same freedom that men have. Shakespeare in this play wants to highlight the system of the social hierarchy of the world in which he lived. But whatever Shakespeare meant to say about the matter, *The Merchant of Venice* deserves to be read carefully because it certainly opens the door widely for looking for the justice of power and domination of males in the social hierarchy of Shakespeare's time.

3.2. Jessica as a Stereotypical Rebellious Daughter

Michael Flachmann, a Professor of English and Director of The University Honor Program at California State University, published in *Insights Magazine* (2000), that after the tragic death of Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, Shakespeare "began an extensive theatrical study of the relationships between parents and children during the rest of his career. Although *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* are the most notable plays devoted to this theme, *The Merchant of Venice*, written less than a year after his son died, offers rich and varied insights into the issue of paternity in Shakespeare's scripts." (Flachmann 37). For him, the relationship between the moneylender, Shylock and his daughter, Jessica, is considered the first and the most obvious relationship. Jessica, the unhappy daughter feels frustrated because of the way her father treats her. In her plan to escape with her boyfriend from her father's home, she achieves a very psychological independence which affects her soul and her mind. She wants to be free in order to do as she wants and enjoys her life without any complaints or restrictions.

Transformation is the significance of Jessica's position. She is according to Spence, "transitions from an underdog living with restrictions to one of freedom and independence" (Spence 76). Since Shylock failed to get his pound of flesh from Antonio, *The Merchant of Venice*, in the court with a knife, he lost the trial and the judge gave his orders that Jessica receives a percentage of his wealth, so Shylock who is a very rich Jewish man who collected all his money from profit, loses everything. He loses his daughter, his money, his reputation and even his religion, because Jessica converts to Christianity through her marriage to Lorenzo, and he is obliged to do the same. Indeed, even I partly agree with Spence that Jessica has the right to get rid of her father's restrictions, but I do not agree with Jessica to convert to Christianity for the sake of Lorenzo and marry him in that way.

When we compare Jessica with Portia who is under the rules of her dead father whose restrictions influence the life of Portia, Jessica symbolizes the stereotypical rebelling girl who does not obey her father's rules. Jessica is similar to many other females who rebel against their parents' rules in the time of Shakespeare. In essence, there is similarity between the daughters from the 17th century and the ones of today, who are rebellious against their fathers. The character Jessica, on the surface, steals money from her father and abandons her faith and family. However, when we go deeper at her character, we notice in her speech a kind of self-hatred that comes from being suffered. This play seems to highlight the relationship between white and black, between good and bad and between light and dark. It is clear that the process of transformation is affected with morality. When Bassanio, for example, talks about the caskets, he remarks on this principle: "Look on beauty / And you shall see 'tis purchased by weight / Which therein works a miracle in nature" (3.2 90-92). We can also witness this idea in Jessica's story. Within her text, she illustrates how much she endures to achieve her happy ending. In Act two Scene five, we have an objective glance in Shylock's home. The domination of Shylock's conversation is very clear. He behaves badly with Launcelot and insults him for his behaviour and complains about the actions of Christians: "Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter / My sober house" (2.5. 35-36). Shylock's bad words refer to how much the atmosphere of his home is terrible. Everything reveals the reality of Shylock's character. The words about closed doors and the sound coming from the surrounding area are the only sound that Jessica can daily hear, especially when Shylock feels that Jessica might go out or talk to her boyfriend. The strict control of Shylock over his house also reflects his strict attitude towards wealth. Comparing her inner sphere with what is done by her father, Jessica cannot share her state of mind with her father. Even she physically shares blood and flesh with her father, but Jessica feels that she is very far psychologically and mentally from her father: "Though I am a daughter to his blood / I am not to his manners" (2.3. 18-19). Her passionate escaping illustrates that the tight pressure of her psychological and internal state acts as a

logical reason or an emotional passion to run liberally out. She convinces herself that her bad position at home is enough to decide to escape. The love that was choked by Shylock's harshness changes to be represented the last scene of the play when she is playing and having fun with her lover in a moonlit garden. Even the action of Jessica's transformation occurs, but it is full of shame, betrayal and fear. When Lorenzo comes to take Jessica away, she clearly expresses this feeling. She asks Lorenzo to certify that he is her boyfriend not anyone else. She does this because of the darkness outside, yet the darkness also symbolizes that she is uncertain in her choices and in Lorenzo's faith. And also her figurative language represents the meaning of hesitation. She states:

"I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

For I am much ashamed of my exchange:

But love is blind and lovers cannot see

The pretty follies that themselves commit;

For if they could, Cupid himself would blush

To see me thus transformed to a boy." (2.6 34 39).

The transformation she speaks of is the behaviour that related to her disguise. On her personal level, she asserts that she feels shamed because of her action. She also considers that her love to Lorenzo would be confused because of being disguised. Her words also refers to a deep meaning related to her near future about which she subconsciously speaks about. In her inner world she blames herself about the hurt she caused to her father by escaping with her boyfriend and stealing his money. When she leaves her father's home, she expresses this meaning: "I will make fast the doors, and gild myself / With some more ducats, and be with you straight" (2.6 49-50). This means that after she had a deep

thinking about what she is going to do she decided to leave her father and escape without caring of anything else.

In her essay in *Word Magazine* titled *On Playing Jessica* (2011), Sarah Stark comments on Jessica's lines that "Jessica's insight into Shylock's evil drives her to place all her hope in love" (Stark 68). Jessica wants to replace her fear of future by love and she also wants to get rid of her hate by living in love with her lover. She considers that love is the only way by which she can get rid of everything hurts her. When she states "I shall be saved by my husband" (3.5. 17-18), She reveals her faith in salvation by her love. So she gains wedding and gets bedding in the end because she had already decided what to do. But I see the wedding and bedding that Jessica received in the end may bring temporary happiness or she may blame herself in the future for her unfaithful behaviour towards her father because her love to Lorenzo appeared as a result of her hatred to the restrictions of her society in general and to her father in particular, not for the sake of her boyfriend. For this I say that nobody is sure that happiness is waiting for Jessica as a reward for her escaping from her father and the result or consequence will be discovered only by time.

3.3. Shylock as Dominant or Pitiful Father

In his book, *Jewish Presences in English Literature* (1990), Derek Cohen argues if "Shylock is a better man than we might be disposed to believe, or that he is not really human" (Cohen 33). Actually in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare could convince us that he had unique abilities to draw a colourful picture about his characters and portray life and human nature in all its strange complexities and ambiguities. Shylock is one of Shakespeare's complex characters. In my opinion, Shylock deserves to sympathize with more than being considered as a dominant person. He had a tragic end, and his daughter's love for Lorenzo has caused her to

betray her father in a shameful way. Shakespeare could make the character Shylock seem like he is villain and bad at one point, and a victim and pitiful at another. As the story progresses, it becomes ever easier to sympathise with him. Shylock's life is a hard one and just gets worse as he is introduced into the story. Shylock, in my opinion, is a victim because the society around him considers him as of a lower class because he is Jewish. Because of this, he loses everything. He loses his daughter, his money, his possessions and he is forced to convert to Christianity. Throughout the play, Shylock is criticized because he is a Jew: "Here comes another of the tribe- a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turned Jew" (3.1. 64-65). This is one of the quotes which support that Shylock is worth to be sympathized with because he is tortured by others for being a Jew. And because he is a Jew, Shylock was hated and he suffered from discrimination done against him by Christians. He states: "You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish garb." (1.3. 17).

In fact, I sympathise with Shylock because of the discrimination that had been done upon him. It is very hard for him to live in a place in which the treatment is very harsh and bad. He seeks to be respected not only by other people but also by the law. His speech has a strong significance about this meaning.

"I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs,
Dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with
The same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
To the same diseases, healed by the same means,
Warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as
A Christian is? If you prick us, do we bleed?
If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison

Us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not
Revenge?" (3.1. 51-61).

Actually, I feel sympathetic with him and see him more as a pitiful than being dominant or villain because through the above quotation, we find that Shylock insists on that there is no difference between human beings and that Jews and Christians share a common humanity. He also shows the hypocrisy of some Christian characters who always talk about love and mercy, but at the same time, they go out of their belief and isolate Shylock just because he is Jewish and has a different faith.

On the other hand, in my opinion, Shylock loves his daughter ; this love comes clear through his shouting "My daughter" (2.8. 15). After he found out that Jessica left him and ran away with a Christian, he was shocked and became very sad. This shows that Shylock cared about his daughter and loved her so much that he was so overwhelmed with grief. When she left he did not care that he is in the public, so he shouted out loudly regardless of his image and reputation in the town. Thus, there is a one-sided love from Shylock to Jessica who does not appreciate her father's love by being ashamed of him as well as running away from him which also shows that she does not deserve to be his daughter. The quote "To be ashamed to be my father's child" (2.3. 16), shows that Jessica hates her father to the extent of being ashamed to be related to him. Moreover, Jessica shows a complete disregard for her father by saying "I have a father, you a daughter lost" (2.5. 55), as she did not care about the disappointment her father will feel and the loneliness he would have to face without his wife and daughter. Her only aim is escaping with Lorenzo from her harsh father and her house which is, for her, like a hell, and gaining the freedom that she wanted. This means that Jessica is very selfish and loves nobody but herself. She ignored the possible results and consequences of her actions and carried on with her selfish

plan to escape with Lorenzo, when she could think about alternative methods to change her father and his hate for Christians. The effect of Jessica's betrayal is obvious when Shylock quotes: "she is damned for it .. My own flesh and blood to rebel" (3.1. 28). Through Shylock's talking to Tubal about the elopement of Jessica, we understand that he is not as materialistic as Solanio make him out to be. This idea can be understood through Shylock's response the news about what his daughter did and that Jessica traded an important heirloom of her family: "Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my / turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor:/ I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." (3.1. 14). Jessica threw the turquoise ring which is very important to Shylock because this ring was a gift from his dead wife, not because it is too expensive and worth a lot of money. So here, we cannot see that Shylock is the villain person that he has been made out to be, but on the contrary, he is a pitiful one, especially at the end of the dramatic trial, when shylock becomes a broken man. He was humiliated in the court, forced to be Christian and stripped of much of his wealth. These situations are enough signs, for me, to say that Shylock in the *Merchan of Venice* deserves to be considered as a pitiful father.

CHAPTER 4

BLIND OBEDIENCE IN HAMLET

4.1. Ophelia as an Obedient Daughter

Since, over the years, many people have considered Ophelia as a pure and a perfect girl, and many other people have become fascinated by her, many famous critics and writers have said memorable speeches for Ophelia's sake. One of these speeches is mentioned in Joanna Gondris' book *Reading Reading: Essays on Shakespeare Editing in the Eighteenth Century* (2001). She quotes that William Hazlitt said that : "Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh rose of May, oh flower too soon faded!" (Gondris 229).

In her book, *Feminist Criticism: Female Characters in Shakespeare's Plays Othello and Hamlet* (2009), Sara Ekici declares that "Ophelia is a sweet, innocent woman, who obeys to both Polonius and Laertes. She is a smart young and loving woman what is overtaken by dramatic fate, madness and death" (Ekici 38). Actually, I agree with Ekici because most characters in Shakespeare's tragedies have flaws that lead to their demise. In hamlet, for example, the character of Ophelia is clearly killed because of her flaw. The thoughts and actions of Ophelia since the beginning of the play refer that she is a very obedient girl. Her thoughts and actions also show that she is a weak and entirely dependent character. The cruel actions of Ophelia towards Hamlet, which are against her nature, also prove her blind obedience to her father. For example, in the beginning of the play, Ophelia tells her father about her feelings and emotions towards Hamlet, namely that she loves him: "My lord, he hath importuned me with love / I honorable fashion" (1.3. 118-119). By saying this to her father, she asserts that she loves Hamlet who is a honorable man, but even her love to Hamlet is very strong,

Ophelia's later actions refer that she sacrifices her personal feelings under the desire and order of her father, and this, in turn, proves her complete obedience and her father's strong control over her. In particular, after the request from her father, Ophelia agrees to listen to his instructions and not to see Hamlet anymore. She says: "I shall obey, my lord." (1.4. 145). Ophelia's actions reveal that her father can move her whatever he likes and the proof is that she was ready to sacrifice her personal senses to please him. Since she agrees not to see Hamlet, after the order of her father to do so, this means that her desire to please her father refers to the direct cause of her obedience, especially when Ophelia agrees to be used as a puppet in order from her father to spy on Hamlet: "Ophelia walk you here / We will bestow ourselves" (3.1. 48-49). Ophelia has an inner desire to make others happy, especially her father and her brother even if this behaviour displeases her, and her obedience comes from this meaning. Actually, the obedience of Ophelia goes deeper than her trying to please her father and her brother, it also refers that she is a very weak girl. For instance, when she is annoyed by Hamlet when he tells her to go to a nunnery where she can no longer harm anyone, she doesn't defend herself, but she pities herself after he has gone: "O woe is me t' have seen what I have seen / see what I see" (3.1. 174-175). Ophelia has no ability to defend herself. She is not strong enough to do that even when Hamlet is mocking everything that she is. Her pity comes from the truth that she barely is blamed because she always tries to please others. Furthermore, when her father dies, she does not attempt to go on with her own life, on the contrary, she feels that she loses her main guidance and asks her brother to help her in finding solutions for her problems: "My brother shall know of it / and so I thank you for your good counsel." (4.5. 75-76). When Ophelia's father dies, she collapses because he is the one who always guides her, directs her and instructs her, and now she is left to her own guidance. Ophelia is not able to survive by herself. She is not strong enough to do that, so after the death of her father, she calls her brother to fill the gap and be the one whom she depends on. But her father's controlling position is unreplaceable and Ophelia later realizes this fact: "I would

give you some violets / but they withered all when my father died." (4.5. 207-208). Violets for which Ophelia sings are a symbol of faithfulness, and the relation between the symbolism of violets and her father is very clear in the meaning of death. The death of violets means the death of her father; for this Ophelia says that the violets are gone, because she feels betrayed that her father has left her. It is clear for me that the obedience and weakness of Ophelia as a character can be related to her complete dependence on other people particularly her father. Her actions can be explained that she cannot depend on herself at all and she is completely in need to be helped by her father. She obeys her father and her brother because she cannot depend on herself at all. In fact, the dependence of Ophelia on others is evident in the very beginning: "I do not know, my lord, what I should think" (1.3. 113). This refers how much Ophelia depends on her father to be able to behave, think and feel. Her lack of independence is the most important reason for her death. The speech of the Queen after the death of Ophelia bears this meaning when she says:

"At which time

She chanted snatches of old lauds

As one incapable of her own distress or like a creature

Native and endured unto that element." (4.7. 202-205).

Because she is a weak person and because of her dependence on others in everything, Ophelia is completely unable to help herself. In deed, her dependence on others is not her fault, because her father and brother's protection over her is the main reason for her weakness, this is shown when Laertes curses Hamlet at her funeral saying: "O treble woe / fall ten times on that cursed death / whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense deprived thee of!" (5.1. 258-260). Laertes proves here that he is dominant because he is willing to give up his own life to

take revenge for his sister's death. It is obvious that Ophelia through her life does not need to be independent because she always felt that she was protected by her father and her brother whether she needed them or not. Ophelia's complete dependence on other people is sadly an essential reason that leads to her undoing. Ophelia's flaw is a fatal one. It was done because of what her father and brother do to help and protect her. Ophelia's tragedy refers to the importance of being independent and strong person who does not accept placing fate into the hands of others.

Since, in Shakespeare's time, it is typical for a woman to be obedient to her father and dependent upon him, Ophelia, in my opinion, is a symbol of obedience, and she also a representative of the perfect daughter who obeys her father and does everything he likes without any argument. Even when her father asks her to reject Hamlet, she responds with a subservient way: "I shall obey , my Lord" (1.3. 136). Polonius uses her for his own reasons. Shakespeare refers to future events, so the actions of both Ophelia and her father refer to their deaths. In the opening scene, her father and her brother warn her to stop seeing Hamlet. This warning gives an idea about what is going to happen in the future and predicts the future conflict with Hamlet, her madness and death. When Ophelia describes a short meeting with Hamlet in the beginning of Act 2, she tells her father that Hamlet appeared to her looking and acting like a crazy man. Ophelia is most definitely used by Polonius and she obeys him in a meeting with Hamlet; the meeting which was full of deceitfulness and this becomes a turning point in the play.

In Act 1 Scene 3, which is one of the most important scenes of the play to explore the relationship with her father and brother, Ophelia has a conversation with both Laertes and Polonius. Both of them care about the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia. It is clear from the warning and the way of talking that Ophelia has a deep respect for her brother that is built on love and a good

relationship. He asks her to be very careful of Hamlet, and advises her not to be too close with him. He also warns her to fear the results of becoming sexually involved with him:

*"Fear it, Ophelia. Fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire,"* (1.3. 34-36).

We understand from his speech that the main concern of him is his sister's wellbeing, and this reveals that he loves her and cares for her, especially when he addresses her as dear sister and urges her to keep away from Hamlet for her own reputation. This attitude can be contrasted with the way Polonius treats with his daughter. Her brother asks her to tell him what she talks with her brother about the matter of Hamlet. He does not speak with Ophelia in the same way her brother does. While Laertes gives her an advice in a polite way, Polonius tells her openly that if she does not care of what he asks her to do, she will make both herself and her father look like a fool:

*"Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
Or-not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus-you'll tender me a fool."* (1.3. 105-110).

From the quotation above, I can say Polonius is concerned about his fame more than he is about what may happen to his daughter; and this is considered as the complete opposite to the relationship between Ophelia and her brother who is

concerned about his sister more than his reputation because their relationship is characterized by love and mutual respect, but with Polonius, it is characterized by a power imbalance. Polonius wants to achieve his own goals, ambitions and standing. When Laertes warns his sister against the importunities that done by Hamlet, saying:

"For Hamlet, and the triling of his favour,

Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature,

Forward not permanent, sweet not lasting,

The perfume and suppliance of a minute-

No more!" (1.3. 5-10).

She responds with a kind of half consciousness: "No more but so?" (1.3. 11). There is no doubt that Ophelia loves her father, she becomes insane when he dies. But if we wonder why he is against his daughter making a relation with the Prince of Denmark, I think it is because Polonius knows that Hamlet's future is not clear enough to have a relation with and it is not as bright as it could be, for this reason, he does not want his daughter to be involved with a person like Hamlet. He says:

"For Lord Hamlet,

Believe so much in him, that he is young

And with a large tender may he walk

Than may be given you.

Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,

Not of that dye which their investments show." (1.3. 123-128).

To sum up, I can clearly say that the relationship between Polonius and his daughter is considered as a window into the thought of Shakespeare's time. Although during Renaissance, women were given freedom more than they had before, but they were still under the authority of men. Ophelia is completely subservient to the wishes and desires of her father and looks up to his patriarchal position. Although she is sure of her feeling towards Hamlet, she places her family and her father above other affairs.

4.2. Ophelia as a Sex Object

In her book, *Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Possibilities of Feminist Criticism* (1985), Elaine Showalter declares "Renaissance anatomy illustrated women as no more than vehicles for the womb, eroticized images of opening and revelation where women made their bodies available to view" (Showalter 59). This declaration asserts women were a mere sex object in the hand of males; this object is like any other material that can be bought, sold, used and even thrown any time. In the case of Ophelia, Gabrielle Dane, in his essay, *Reading Ophelia's Madness*, (1998) argues "Ophelia is the paradigm of unrelenting sexual abuse from the patriarchal society in which she lives. Her brother Laertes and father Polonius smother Ophelia in an incestuous stronghold where she is both elevated as the idealized, virginal female and reduced to a piece of political currency" (Dane 8). Actually, I agree with both Showalter and Dane because even for Polonius and Laertes, Ophelia is portrayed as a sexual object by Hamlet. Polonius says to Ophelia: "you speak like a green girl" (1.3.101) when she stuck up for her love and that Hamlet was in love with her as well. When Hamlet loses his sanity, he makes rude remarks and behaves in a manner that was unacceptable. For example, he enters into Ophelia's chamber

and just stares and hurts her. Hamlet makes sexual remarks throughout the play. The identity of Ophelia is constructed by masculine figures around her, namely, Hamlet, Laertes and Polonius. Ophelia desires Hamlet, so Polonius and Laertes warn her back in to the traditional limits and the corral of the accepted paradigm of female chasteness. Her father also uses Ophelia as a pawn in order to make Hamlet admitting he is mad, by saying: "Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you, / We will bestow ourselves." (3.1. 43-44). Laertes treats Ophelia like a naive girl who has no idea how to deal with the opposite sex. For him, Ophelia is unable to deal with men, and she may fall in the trap of them easily because she can not evaluate their feelings truly, so he tells her that Hamlet does not have true feelings and he is using her. The amatory relationship that is growing between Prince Hamlet and Ophelia is not accepted by Ophelia's family. Laertes advises his sister that Hamlet's affection for her is only a game to him. He warns her to be far away from him, to be careful of what he says to her and not to pay too much attention to him: "For Hamlet, and the triling of his favour, / Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood, / A violet in the youth of primy nature, / Forward not permanent, sweet not lasting, / The perfume and suppliance of a minute- / No more!" (1.3. 5-10). Not only Laertes warns his sister, but also Polonius. After Laertes leaves to England, Polonius tries to investigate about what her brother told her. Polonius also asks her not to receive any letters from him and not to be close to Hamlet: "Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby that you have ta'en these tenders for true pay, which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly" (1.3. 105-108). Even Hamlet who was her betrothed and was about to marry her, rejects her sexuality after denying any affection for her. He commands: "Get thee to a nunnery" (3.1. 121), but later, Hamlet seems to see her as a means of a sexual object, when during the presentation of his play, she comments of his foul mood, he responses: "It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge" (3.2. 244-45). The contradiction of both encouraging and chastising her for her sexuality refers to the ideology in which female sexuality both exists and is denied.

In his essay *Reviving Ophelia Abstract Female Adolescent Development* (2012, Kent Tompkins says "Girls who are too attractive are seen primarily as sex objects. They want to be known for more than their packaging, yet the reinforcement for the packaging is a strong lead in to becoming a sexual object to adolescent boys and men" (Tompkins 2). In my opinion, what Tompkins says is true. Beautiful girls in general, especially when they are in the age of adolescence, always try to attract boys without caring of their fame or reputation. Ophelia's story shows the destructive powers that young women are affected with. Being a girl, Ophelia is happy and free, but she loses herself with adolescence and the destructive powers that affect young women. As a girl, Ophelia is happy and free, but with adolescence she loses herself. Ophelia has a difficult role in this play because Shakespeare wrote his female roles for men, so there were always limits and restrictions on the characters. Actually, Ophelia is moving between two edges; She is confused and torn between two contradictory sides; in one side her social atmosphere, on the other, her feelings. Her father and brother think that Hamlet would take her virginity and throw her away, because for them, after having a sexual relationship with Ophelia, Hamlet will not marry her. Her heart is convinced that Hamlet loved her, but to her father and brother, Ophelia is eternal virgin. They consider her the symbol of morality whose purpose is to be a true mother and a dutiful wife. Her father and brother believe that Hamlet considers her as a sexual object, a corrupt, deceitful and playful girl. Since Ophelia's mother is dead, so there is no mother to take care of her and give advices to her. She has no way to analyse the contradictory expectations. The medieval principle that the word of the father is unquestionable governs and controls Ophelia. The words of her father, for her, are like holy instructions. But the Renaissance sense of romantic love also affects her. Ophelia tries to live in two contradictory worlds. She wants to be obedient to her father in one hand, and to be true to her love on the other hand. Ophelia cannot live in both worlds, she has chosen one, and the choice that she has selected determined her fate.

The dilemma forces Ophelia into her madness. She does not have any way to reconcile the contradictory situations in which she lives. When young women, like Ophelia, in modern, society, face this kind of dilemma, they become frustrated and depressed as a result of the conflicting demands. The misery of Ophelia drives her crazy and insane. She does not know how to save and protect herself. She is caught between two fires; the obedience for her father and the love for Hamlet, so her love was one of the key components to her collapse and death. Ophelia's sexually explicit behaviour drives its force from its social impropriety. Through song and lyrical free association challenges male constructs of reason and action, the voice of female folly expressed. It appears to be nothing, the nothing which, as Hamlet points out to Ophelia, "lies between a maid's legs" (3.2.107), refers to Hamlet's dirty talk in the second scene of the third part. When Hamlet says to Ophelia: "Lady, shall I lie between in your lap" and "That's a fair thought to lie between maid's legs" (3.2. 14), he puts Ophelia in a difficult and an impossible situation. When he makes dissolute allusion, Ophelia cannot respond in a way that refers to what can be understood that she comprehends what he is talking about, because if she knows about sex before marriage, this will affect her reputation and will cause damage to her social personality in society. Because in Shakespeare's time, women has no right to have sexual education or even to ask about sexual subjects. Like Polonius and Laertes who control the mind of Ophelia, Hamlet gets the power to control her conversation.

On the other hand, we find that Gertrude is also a very sexual person, and sexuality is the reason for which Hamlet behaves so violently against her. The violence of Hamlet with his mother comes from the disturbing information that the Ghost gave to Hamlet about the Queen, his mother:

"Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,

O wicked wit, and gifts that have the power

So to seduce-won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen," (1.5. 42-46)

I think the words "adulterate beast" above are a proof that Claudius had loved Gertrude before the death of Hamlet's father. This means that Claudius had done so before Hamlet's father died. And, as Olav Lokse points out in his book *Outrageous Fortune* (1960) "The scholar J.W. Draper also draws attention to the Ghost's complaint that he was of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatce'd" (Loske 75), which is said by Claudius' words: "My crown, mine own ambition, and queen" (3.3. 55), that maybe understood to indicate that pre-play events had occurred.

4.3. Women Being Protected by a Father or a Husband

When Ophelia first appears In Act one, Scene three, we find Laertes speaking to her about her relation with Hamlet. He advises her on what to do , and tells her in a very direct manner: "Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain if with too credent ear you list his songs, or loose your heart chaste treasure open" (1.3. 29-31). Laertes warns Ophelia that before committing herself to Hamlet she must think about what he can offer her and how happy and safe she is going to be with him. Laertes is sure that there is a very close relationship between Hamlet and his sister, and he is afraid of that if she loses her virginity, the chances of having a husband in the future will not be good. Here, we know something about the character of Laertes and how he evaluates love. Laertes believes that love is

something can be measured. He does not accept his sister to be involved with Hamlet if she is not sure that he will marry her. He thinks that she has not enough knowledge to evaluate the feelings of Hamlet.

Laertes thinks that his sister should care for the results and consequences of her actions and behaviour before having any relationship with Hamlet and before becoming very involved with him. This means that she must measure the pros and cons of her relationship early. Laertes does that because he wants to care a lot for her, and he wants to protect her from herself and from people around her. There are many scenes in *Hamlet* in which we find that men have more authority and knowledge than women. When Laertes talks to Ophelia, he makes her small. He speaks to her as she knows nothing and she can do nothing in her life. Shakespeare, in this play, paints a clear picture of Ophelia. We see her an obedient girl who is always controlled by men. When Ophelia speaks to her father about how Hamlet confessed his emotions to her, Polonius tells her not to believe his feelings and that Hamlet is lying and will not fulfill his promise and marry her. Polonius also tells his daughter that Hamlet will hurt her feelings and she will discover the truth that he is using her because she is too young to marry her.

Polonius thinks that Hamlet will not marry Ophelia because he is royalty, for this reason, he is expected to marry royalty. He also thinks that if Hamlet and Ophelia married, their marriage would not be accepted by their society, their marriage would not be valid, so Polonius cannot see this marriage happening, and this in turn, pushes him to protect her from what is going to happen. But the protection that is always done for Ophelia affects her in a negative way, because when Ophelia feels that she is always protected by her father and her brother, she does not depend on herself, so her dependence on others was not her fault, but her father and brother's one, because they always put themselves in the position that they are ready to protect Ophelia at any time, and nobody else, for them, can hurt her. During the funeral of Ophelia, Laertes expresses the full meaning of

protection upon his sister, saying: "O treble woe / fall ten times on that cursed head / whose wicked deed thy most intengious sense deprived thee of." (5.1. 258-260). Ophelia, in Act Two, Scene One, informs her father that Hamlet came to her room when she was sewing and his actions were very strange. But the question is why has she done that? Is it because she is afraid of Hmalet since he was mad, or is it a kind of protection for Hamlet from doing something bad to himself? Shakespeare knows his characters well, so he uses Ophelia in this situation because Hamlet believes that whatever he tells her she will trust, simply because she ia an innocent girl and will not challenge men whatever the circumstances are. When Ophelia tells Hamlet that she has some letters sent to her by him, he denies and asks her to go to a nunnery. Shakespeare in this idea is making Ophelia into a stereotypical innocent girl and Hamlet believes that she needs to be protected. There are many examples in the play that refer to the protective side of Hamlet. When Hamlet orders his actors in his play on the stage to act a scene that refers to the murder of the King Hamlet, he uses this opportunity to talk to Ophelia and ask her very strange questions:

"Lady, Shall I lie in your lap?" (3.2. 104)

"Do you think I meant country matters?" (3.2. 104)

Ophelia responds to these questions and acts very innocently: "Ay my Lord" (3.2.105). "I think nothing my Lord" (3.2.107). Ophelia is not used to think. She is always told what to do and what to think. When Hamlet asks her the previous questions, she looks to him to tell her what to think. She looks that she cannot behave or think without the help of others. This refers that men in the play has a strong authority over females. This idea is accepted in Shakespeare's time, but in the modern age, it would be different because men and women are supposed to have equal rights and duties, and their thinking is almost equal. Ophelia in this scene seems to have a lack of self respect. She feels that her opinion is not valid

and not important and she has to be told what to do. Here, she feels that she thinks nothing and her actions need guidance to impress others. In this scene, Ophelia also opens the door widely to understand other characters. Polonius, Ophelia's father, for instance, is shown in the play as a very authoritative towards Ophelia and Laertes: "ay, fashion you may call it, Go to , go to" (1.3. 111). "The time invites you, Go, Your Servants tend." (1.3. 83). In Act Four, Scene Five, Ophelia through her madness sings a song about the death of her father, then she sings about loosing her virginity. This refers to what extent her father is important for her life.

" He is dead and gone lady,

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone," (4.5. 25-28)

"Then up he rose and donned his clothes

And dupp'd the chamber door;

Let in the maid that out a maid never dparted more." (4.5. 35-38)

Actually, the madness of Ophelia is still confusing the readers of Hamlet. Is it because the death of her father, or is it because Hamlet left her and denied his love to her? I think Shakespeare may make Ophelia go mad to show that she cannot live without being protected by a father, a brother or a lover, namely, by a male. Shakespeare has presented Ophelia in this way to show his audience that his characters have their own breaking points. Hamlet for example has a breaking point when he went mad. But the case of Ophelia, because she is so innocent, other characters used her in different ways. Polonius' real character is displayed

through Ophelia who helps the audience to see how her father interferes with everyone's business. Through Ophelia's character, we see Hamlet's caring and loving side on one hand, and being aggressive and dismissive on the other hand. To conclude, Ophelia's character helps readers to understand that *Hamlet* is a realistic, emotional and dramatic play.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the comparison between the father-daughter relationship of two of Shakespeare's plays; *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and the relationship of his female characters; Ophelia and Jessica with their fathers, I have come in my Master thesis to the following conclusions.

William Shakespeare shows two different types of women. One of them; named, Jessica has the unusual role of a wide variety of character features. She is able to make her own decision, to manifest emancipation of females, to resist the contemporary standards and does not respond to a typical picture of a Renaissance woman. While the other, Ophelia, represents the stereotypical woman who accepts to live under the authority of the patriarchal society of Shakespeare's time. The heroines in many plays of Shakespeare, especially in *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, which are the center of my thesis, are at the crossroad. Although they can make their own choices, the society around them forces them to be obedient to laws and rules of that time.

Since the women in these two plays silently suffer from having the chance to love and choose their own lovers, and they also suffer from having the opportunity to express themselves and take decisions for themselves, this leads them to be in the margins of society without being independent from the social restrictions in which they live. It can be noticed that with a growing position in the social scale, the heroines are increasingly oppressed by the limits and norms of Shakespeare's time.

This thesis focuses on the description of the heroines according to the main character traits. The character of imagination and passion of Ophelia, for instance,

is fated to suffer from the beginning to the very end. Her innocence and naive ideas make her look at the world through a different colour, and this, in turn, leads to her demise.

Unlike Ophelia, Jessica can make decisions by herself and resist the social standards around her. She had a chance to succeed. She could resist the authority of her father and escape with her boyfriend. In comparison with Jessica, Ophelia is ruled by the endless affection to the extent that she could not survive after the death of her father and this feeling, in turn, led at the end to her demise. Ophelia becomes a victim of the affection and she dies because of the affection of her father.

The division of this thesis into chapters as described in the introduction helps readers to understand more details and get more information about the events and actions in the plays. This information, in turn, can serve to have a deeper understanding of the studied characters. The analysis of the characters is followed by many essential turning points that complete the characterization of the particular daughter. Obviously, this division illustrates that although the observed heroines are of different characteristics, they face similar various obstacles and restrictions. Their circumstances led to their expected ends.

Most of Shakespeare's heroines come from the upper social class and the rules around them made them have no idea about the surrounding world in which they live until the moment when they are forced by certain conditions and circumstances to comprehend that there is a hard truth to face. They are unable to overcome this situation which is full of limitations and restrictions.

The tragic ends of some of Shakespeare's heroines, like Ophelia, are caused by the circumstances that come from the fact that those heroines become victims of heroes or men around them who try to return through the personal

humanity and moral purity to the ideals of the old world which are crashed by historic and social development. On the contrary, Jessica's happy end emerged from the resistance of the patriarchal rules from which she escaped and chose to have another life far away from the harsh control of her dominant father.

This thesis has been written with taking into consideration that the understanding of Shakespeare's plays is not considered to be fixed, because their events and details can be understood and explained in different ways by the audience or the readers, and this may lead to many interpretations of the same event or the same character. But whatever the understanding of the deep meanings of Shakespeare's plays by contemporary and modern readers is, Shakespeare's works are still deeper than what we can comprehend or understand of what Shakespeare exactly wanted to say many centuries ago.

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ÖZET

İlişkiler tarihimiz boyunca önemli bir rol oynamıştır. En önemli rollerden biri de baba ile kızı arasındaki ilişkidir.

Hamlet ve Venedik Taciri adlı oyunlarında, Shakespeare iki farklı baba-kız ilişkisini sergiler. Bunlar bir yanda Ophelia ve Polonius, diğer yandan ise Jessica ve Shylock arasındaki ilişkilerdir. İlki Ophelia'nın ne kadar itaatkar ve güçsüz bir kız olduğunu gösterirken, diğeri ise Jessica'nın ne kadar isyankar ve güçlü olduğunu gösterir. Ophelia'nın babası ile olan ilişkisinde saygı ve sevgi hakimken, Jessica babasını sevmez ve onun kaba biri olduğunu düşünür. Ancak her iki ilişki de Shakespeare'in zamanında var olan ataerkil toplumun gücünü ve baskınlığını gösterir.

Bu çalışmada, Shakespeare'in sıradan baba-kız ilişkisini ele alış şeklini, 16. yüzyıldaki kız evlat rollerini sorgulamak için Ophelia ve Jessica'ya yüklediği rolleri ve babanın otoritesinin kızının bütün hayatını etkilediği bir toplumda, kızların neden erkekler kadar önemli olarak görülmediğini inceleyeceğim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Shakespeare, Aile İlişkisi , Patriarchal Kulup, İtaat, İsyan

ABSTRACT

Relationships have played an important role throughout our history. One of the most important roles is the relationship between a father and his daughter.

In *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare shows two different father-daughter relationships. The relationships are between Ophelia and Polonius in one hand, and Jessica and Shylock, on the other hand. The first relationship shows how far Ophelia is an obedient and weak girl, whereas the other one reflects how Jessica is rebellious and strong. Ophelia's relationship with her father is full of respect and love, whereas Jessica does not like her father and thinks he is rude. But both of the relationships show the authority and the dominance of patriarchal society in Shakespeare's time.

In my thesis, I will explore the ways in which Shakespeare discusses the stereotypical father-daughter relationship and employs Ophelia and Jessica to interrogate the traditional sixteenth century roles of daughters, and how daughters were not considered as important as men in a society in which the authority of father influenced the whole life of his daughter.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Family Relationship, Patriarchal Society, Obedience, Rebellion