



Masculine Traits in Women Characters: A Comparative Study between Lady Macbeth and Clytemnestra

Kiswar Zereen¹, Afshana Islam Muna²

¹Lecturer, Department of English, Britannia University, Cumilla, Bangladesh

²BA (Hons.) and MA in English, Britannia University, Cumilla, Bangladesh

Received: 15 Feb 2023; Received in revised form: 11 Mar 2023; Accepted: 21 Mar 2023; Available online: 30 Mar 2023

©2023 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract— Ancient and modern societies both have a binary way of observing gender. Through this dual thinking, gender roles are imposed on men and women. They were judged according to their gender roles. Modern mentality also could not bring about much change in this fact about gender stereotypes, which has been happening since the beginning of the world. Masculine gender roles portray men to be physically strong, intelligent, and aggressive. Feminine gender roles portray women to be physically weak, emotionally fragile, and submissive to a man's whims and fancies. Historically, there have been some iconic women who have challenged these gender stereotypes which became inspiration for those women who are struggling for their rights. From ancient to modern literature, many authors also tried to create some female protagonists with endowment to break them all the barriers of gender stereotypes. Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth from Macbeth* (1623) and Aeschylus' *Clytemnestra from Agamemnon* (458 BC.) are two of such characters. Both of the women are conscious of their rights and do not let either their femininity or their womanhood prevent them from their destined and determined paths. They struggle for their own identity, glory, dignity, strength, and defense of their own rights. They tried to increase their status as women even if they had to become evil in order to do so.

Keywords— Equality, femininity, masculinity, manhood, womanhood.

I. INTRODUCTION

Play is a literary form of writing for theatre, which narrates a story with elements of conflicts, tensions, and actions through dialogues of characters. For dramatic significance, it is divided into acts and scenes. The playwrights present their feelings, emotions, and ideas through their characters who speak to the audience. They use various dramatic elements to create more profound meanings and enhance understanding of the audience. Also, they insert text, apart from the actual dialogues of the characters, to unfold the description of characters on stage, their natural action, and psychological intentions. In this way, the writers make their texts emotive, lifelike and thought-provoking. From classic to modern literature, there are many successful plays which have the challenge of untangling layers of influence, source material, and intertextuality. This

influence happened not only in the themes but also in the characters.

In the literature and myths of the Greeks from the earliest poems of the ancient period to the sophisticated dramas of modern period, there emerges a pervasive fear of women which ultimately lead men become oppressive towards women and thus the reality of womanhood became a common theme which playwright took seriously. The playwright tried to create an equitable society for both men and women throughout their play which is, necessary to recognize sexism in daily life and attempt to challenge and erase it through analyzing mutually exclusive concepts of femininity and masculinity as biologically determined categories.

In Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth* and Aeschylus' *Clytemnestra*, two tragic female characters created by the playwrights are portrayed as strong-willed women. This

characteristic is not necessarily typical of women of their time and their ultimate downfall creates catharsis to the audience and also influences every character of the play. Where Lady Macbeth murdered for power and authority, the other character Clytemnestra killed for motherly love. So, Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth both wanted power and authority, but to achieve them they need to become evil and in order to become evil they need to become masculine.

The aim of this work is to examine the strength of women, who fought against the contemporary societies' perception of womanhood and how this perception affects the personality of the women in both ancient and modern periodical time. With the comparison between the protagonist Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth from two periodical plays, this work will examine how both of their influences and ambitions are the driving force behind the actions of each character of the play and how these two female characters play masculine roles in order to fulfil their desires. Their appearances show some sorts of masculine attitudes and these masculinized characteristics in them allow them at once to show dominance towards the male characters, which ultimately leads them to tragedy. This work will also show how these women tried to make themselves free from the patriarchal dominance and tried to achieve their inner desire to become the dominant one. The study will give us the idea on how women are treated in a male dominated society and become subordinate and subaltern and how this affects them psychologically in reference of classic and modern works of literature. The main objective of the study is to know about how women's helplessness and powerlessness lead them to act like men in order to achieve their ambition, motives and power even if, it made them evil. This work is an examination of society's perception of womanhood which has an impact on the personality and psychology of women and their action.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reverent Authors' Criticism on the Characters of Lady Macbeth and Clytemnestra

Saptorshi Das and Dr (Prof.) Arindam Modak (2014), brought together six characters who are not goddesses; yet they cannot be categorized among ordinary people, for there are stories which surpass the barriers of ordinary human existence, which have created histories ever since, and which have remained inscribed on the hearts and minds of readers across the globe since time immemorial. They are Vyasa's Draupadi, Sophocles' Antigone, Euripedes' Medea, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, Aeschylus' Clytemnestra and Valmiki's Sita, within the

narrative texts associated with them, adumbrate the same cyclicity of events and influences, movements and stasis, diversions and extensions that can be witnessed in women across the globe, and pave the way for female aspirations and expectations, to establish individual identities in a world which is till now male-dominated and distinctly patriarchal.

In the paper entitled "Presentation of Women in Literature from Past to Present" Tippabhotla Vyomakesisri (2017) has discussed feminism, problems and issues of women portrayed in the literature through the women centered roles. He also discussed the evaluation of women from ancient to modern period. He said women in Greek Mythology show that women's rights were very limited and not allowed to exercise much of their freedom and their role was considered to be insignificant compared to that of Greek men. Most of the popular plays in Greek have female characters complex, taking upon the roles not only heroine, but also of villain along with victim. The medieval literature shows women adhere to the narrow roles of wives and mothers. It is apparent from medieval literature that restrictions placed on women underwent significant changes. As the period went on, women gradually began to express more of her opinions and play equal role in society. For example, Shakespeare's famous Lady Macbeth is ambitious and driven; convincing her husband to kill the king even after he had convinced himself not to that she cannot bring herself to do the deed herself is indicative of the weakness that comes with her being a woman-she can instigate the action.

In the paper entitled "The Values of Masculinity in William Shakespeare's Macbeth" Mafruha Ferdous from Northern University (2017), argued that from the very beginning of the play the dramatist focuses on the importance of masculinity in attaining power and authority. Lady Macbeth along with the three witches are as important characters as Macbeth because they influence Macbeth profoundly and Shakespeare very carefully draws the character of Lady Macbeth who being a female sometimes exhibits more masculinity than Macbeth. Similarly, in the case of the three witches though they look like women, they are bearded which proves the presence of masculinity in their nature.

Tahsina Yasmin in her research paper entitled "Aeschylus' Clytemnestra as a Seductress" analyzes that how Clytemnestra very easily falls into the category of power-seeking individuals who use the art of seduction to satisfy their lust for power. She also analyzes Clytemnestra's character as a powerful lady who is also a powerful character in Greek plays of classical period. Author said in

her paper that Aeschylus presented the character of Clytemnestra in contradiction to the roles to which female characters were ordinarily assigned. Greek men wanted women to be passive and servile. Clytemnestra was a self-actualized active woman. Her character has been analyzed as a mother who requires vengeance on the killer, as a grieved wife who is treated by her husband in cold and dismissive manner and finally as an adulteress. She commands the readers' respect in terms of her strength of character, her oratory skill, her emotion, intelligence, persuasive power as presented by Aeschylus. She also said that in the depth of her character there are certain features with which are distinctly associated with masculinity.

From ASA University (2017), Mohammad Jashim Uddin and Mst. Halima Sultana conducted a research entitled "Patriarchal Dominance in Shakespeare's Macbeth: Viewing from A Feminist Perspectives" where their aim is to read the text from a feminist perspective to search the treatment of Shakespeare towards Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and to know why Lady Macbeth's identity is ignored here. They explain that women are more united and aware to establish the equity and equality in society, but men in the name of social and religious doctrine always try to enchain women and use as they wish. For these, they change their strategies frequently. As feminism is a discourse and academic discipline, people have attempted to know why and how men have started dominating women. They also explain that reading Shakespeare is important as he creates a lot of women characters of different features in his tragedies and a deep reading of Shakespeare's Macbeth from a feminist perspective shows how delicately Shakespeare introduces Lady Macbeth as a criminal and the so-called fourth witch. Even nowhere does Shakespeare mention what Lady Macbeth's real identity is.

Azime Aydoğmuş's paper entitled "Clytemnestra as a Nightmare to Patriarchy in Aeschylus Tragedy, The Oresteian Trilogy" concentrates on the facts in the perception of women in democratic Athenian society that was shaped by both the state and the religious system. Both of these sources are apparatuses of male dominant society, and expose themselves in Clytemnestra's life, because patriarchy uses religion to confirm the needs of authorities. Azime also argues that the interaction between religion and newly established democratic Athens in order to create an ideal woman image because non-ideal woman is considered as destructive and a threat to a man driven society.

"Patriarchal Designs on Women: Mother Goddess or Femme Fatale"--- in this research paper, Principal Dr. M. B. Fernand said "...While women have generally been depicted as helpless and powerless, termed as the weaker

sex, there have been many instances where women have taken on prominent roles and changed the course of history. Euripides' Medea written in 431 BC is one such instance. Agamemnon (458 BC.) by Aeschylus who predates Euripides deals with the assassination of the title character by his wife Clytemnestra. The characters of Delilah and Lady Macbeth are also legendary. These stories do not end here. In our own time we find instances of the Femme Fatale or the Iron Lady, endorsing thereby, that women need not subscribe to the male design of being cast into a mold that will keep them eternally servile but they have the power to take things into their hands and shape and fashion the world to make it more comfortable for them to live in...."

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is done and analyzed by following the qualitative method of research. For the analysis, the author used William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* (1623) and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (458 BC.), as the primary sources. The paper has depended on printed and online research essays, journals, articles and sometimes online books for our secondary sources. After reading the collected sources, the paper has tried to compile the relevant information to support the research goal.

IV. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

1. Condition of Women in the Society

Everything that is a great in the world,

All the works, beneficial and good,

Half must be credited to woman,

And to man half only we should. (Nazrul, *Nari*, 3-6)

From the earliest days of human civilization to the present, women and men have been collectively building social culture. So, the contribution of men and women are equally important in creating glorious beauty on earth. They are equally responsible for the bloodshed, laughter, pain, sorrow, distress that flows on the earth. But in the contemporary society, economic value of women's work and their overall contribution is mostly unrecognized because people do not monetize the value of women's labor. Usually, it is taken as voluntary work or family responsibility because men are supposed to do all the outside work. Our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in his poem *Nari*, roaringly talked about equality and brought the most subtle attitude of men. In his view, he saw women as a lover, as a conqueror, as a goddess, as a mother, as a Jayalakshmi, as a monk. On the other hand, he attacks them by saying that women are greedy and insatiable.

Once again in another point, the poet shows his heartfelt prayer to women those prove his shifting attitudes towards the judgement of women.

Women are expected to be delicate, emotional, compliant and graceful and they had to follow what they are told to do by the head of the family, who is usually a man. When they show qualities like ordinary people, for example, anger, greed, lust, hunger, thirst, fascination, women are condemned to be and eventually unacceptable, rejected, criticized, chastised and hated by men. If a woman values her wishes, rejected the love approach of a man, she then treated by the society as a non-ideal and non-traditional. This is an age old gender stereotype and most women became used to it but when a woman tried to break free from this shackles of discrimination, she unconsciously started to adopt man-like qualities. For example, blue used to be considered a masculine colour in the U.S. while pink is considered feminine. So, if a man chooses to wear or use anything of pink colour, he is considered as homosexual or gay. In fact, it is not a religion of the heart of a woman to be a man, they are like a book in the eyes of men who should be written and read according to the text of them.

"Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste Brought Death into the World, and all our woe." (Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book-I, 1-26)

Islam provides us with the astonishing details of the creation of Adam and Eve. Both Christian and Jewish traditions are remarkably similar, yet importantly different to the Holy Quran. According to the Holy Quran, Allah created Adam, the first man, the first human being, with a handful of soil containing portions from all varieties on Earth, and Eve, the first woman, from Adam's rib which is sometimes referred to as 'side'. They were in heaven before they were sent into the earth because of their act of disobedience. It is believed by many people that the act of disobedience was committed by a woman. But Islam, in no way, indicates that Eve was the weaker between the two, or that she tempted Adam to disobey Allah. Eating the fruit of the tree was a mistake committed by both Adam and Eve. They bear equal responsibility. In Islam, Prophet Muhammad (sm.) used the story of Eve's creation from Adam's rib as a basis for imploring people to be gentle and kind to women.

"O Muslims! I advise you to be gentle with women, for they are created from a rib, and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part. If you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked; so, I urge you to take care of the women." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

2. Condition of Women in Ancient and Modern Literary Perspective

Literature has witnessed the roles of women evolving through ages and there was an unending debate over the roles of women. In the ancient world, literacy was strictly limited, and the majority of those who could write were male. While the era was dominated by writers who represent women in their writing as angelic figures-innocent, physically weaker and nothing less than household commodities. And it is evident in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Milton's interpretation of man's first act of disobedience which happened when the devil, in the form of a serpent, tempts Eve to take and eat some fruit from the tree of knowledge hints at some of the problems of gender roles and traditional misogyny that are so much a part of the Western tradition. In Milton's poem Eve, the first woman who is created out of Adam's rib was subjected to his rule and punished for her alleged inferiority. She is slightly inferior to him and must "submit" to his will. As soon as she is created, Eve shows a fascination with her own beauty, gazing at her reflection. Eve is the first to be tempted by Satan, who is in the Garden of Eden and wants to destroy men in order to create sufferings to God, and she is the first to eat the fruit that causes the fateful fall.

Another epic writer, Edmund Spenser's conception of womanhood is different from that of his contemporary writers and poets and his works dominated in the Middle Ages. During the middle ages, the woman had no freedom to participate in worldly affairs along with man. They had to helplessly depend upon the chivalry and protection of man. In *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Spenser's most famous epic work, his description of a horrible monster: half-woman and half-serpent, lives in a cave whose name he gives as Error and it represented mistakes of mankind and it appears to be a Biblical reference back to the story of Adam and Eve. Eve, was provoked to eat an apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil by Satan in the form of a serpent. Spenser's combination in creating such a monstrous character, Error can be interpreted as a half-human but that part of her is also a woman and with the other part which is of a serpent, a venomous creature, combining with women, he tried to paint a clear picture of how women are always associated with serpent. Serpents are venomous creature and just like them it is believed that women poisoned the mind of men into their act of committing sin. Eve from *Paradise Lost* (1667) and Una from *The Faerie Queene* (1590) both of the women tried to do something which is not women-like for example; they tried to break the tradition and want to do something which was forbidden for them to do. Women were supposed to follow the rules and not to run towards danger but both

Una and Eve broke the tradition and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and Una went to rescue her parents even though she is a woman. In classic, even in modern literature the author always shows that women are believed to be helpless creature and they should be protected by men.

In John Donne's poem *Go and Catch a Falling Star* (1633) he states that it is impossible to find a woman who is loyal and chaste at the same time. Even if an individual travels through the whole world till his hair turns grey, he will not be able to swear an oath that he found one faithful woman.

All strange wonders that befell thee

And swear

No where

Lives a woman true, and fair. (Donne 15-18)

Since classic to modern literature, it has been noticeable that literature reflects this predominant social attitude towards women. Shakespeare and Aeschylus, two periodical playwrights, in their plays reflect these social norms and attitude towards women and their portrayal of female protagonist which differ from other writers. They both make their female protagonist act in non-conventional way and they show brutality, aggression and domination which is generally related to men. For example, in *Lady Macbeth* from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1623) and *Clytemnestra* from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (458 BC.), they both influenced their respective lovers into committing such a crime to fulfill their hidden agenda. They did everything possible to reach their goal adapting men-like qualities.

3. Masculinity in Aeschylus' Clytemnestra

Clytemnestra is a powerful, rebellious, controversial character who dominates in Aeschylus' tragedy, *Agamemnon* (458 BC.). In this play, Aeschylus reflects the perception of women in patriarchal democratic Ancient Greek society by Clytemnestra who is a "non-ideal" image of a woman. She exposes the imposed "ideal women" identity on females by the male dominant Athenian sociological system by rejecting it. She is a powerful character, because she has political aspirations; she displays masculinity, and she chooses a sexual partner other than her husband. At the time Athens was in transition to be a democratic society which was male oriented. Therefore, women with the qualities of Clytemnestra are considered as destructive. Her character has been analyzed as a mother who requires vengeance on the killer, as a grieved wife who is treated by her husband in cold and dismissive manner and finally as an adulteress.

She says at the sight of the signal fire "the power of my Troy passed on from Troy to me!" (Aeschylus 115).

4. Clytemnestra as a Mother

She has suffered immensely in her life by losing her beloved daughter Iphigenia. Agamemnon was leading Greek forces in the Trojan War in Troy, when consistently weak winds were preventing his ships from sailing, and he was asked to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to the Goddess Artemis, to set sail again. He persuaded Clytemnestra to send Iphigenia by deceiving her into believing that the purpose was to marry her off to Achilles. When Iphigenia arrived, she was sacrificed to ensure her father's safe return from Troy, with Cassandra, his concubine. When Agamemnon arrived at home, Clytemnestra treated him almost like a god, ensuring a non-existent struggle before she stabbed him three times. For, although Agamemnon looked upon Iphigenia's death as a public necessity, Clytemnestra saw her death as a private loss- any mother would- and consequently could not forgive it. Aeschylus thus creates a woman with whom his audience could sympathize, and whose pain felt real to them. This was no small effort, considering the fact that in ancient Greece women were looked upon as slaves.

Clytemnestra was seeking vengeance and planning for ten years to murder the man who killed her child. In ancient Athenian society, women had no legal rights; their function, aside from motherhood, was to see that home ran smoothly and the lives of their men were secure and comfortable. Clytemnestra broke free from these shackles- this is what makes her an exemplification of the earliest attempts of feminism.

During this time, many civilizations across the world had a patriarchal society, or a society in which the men dominated over the women. This characteristic of a culture, in which men were the more powerful of the two genders, was also prevalent in ancient Greece at the time. Women were often discriminated against and were not deemed as important as the opposite sex.

5. Clytemnestra as a Powerful Lady

After Agamemnon's betrayal, Clytemnestra decides to take revenge. It is evident, through the way she manipulates the other characters within the play and takes control of her present situation, that she is quite intelligent and rational. Clytemnestra's self-will and determination to accomplish her own goals further portrays her as the complete opposite of a typical woman who has internalized the norms and values of patriarchy in the Greek society. It was not believed that a woman can be extremely intelligent, have strong opinions, or assert one's rights. But she shows powerful, bold and rational attitude in her character which can be believed to be only found in a men's character.

Clytemnestra is a brilliant strategist. She sets up a communication system that would give news about the

result of the Trojan War shortly after it is ended. She sets up a beacon to sign the news, and places a watchman on the roof. When Clytemnestra told the news to the chorus, the elderly men think that she is acting according to her dreams and it may not be true. The men don't think that women can make rational strategies. Clearly, they underestimate Clytemnestra by saying,

Chorus: Surely you feed yourself on unconfirmed report?

Clytemnestra: You chose to criticize me as an ignorant girl (Vellacott 32).

That is how societies traditionally view a woman that they are incapable of making realistic decisions. But Clytemnestra proves her intellectual by the clever communication plan. She had guts to handle an affair where women were usually treated as slaves of men. In fact, setting up a clever communication is just one part of a big plan. The big plan is to kill Agamemnon, and to take the revenge of Iphigenia; furthermore, to stay in power. Therefore, the early arrival of news gives Clytemnestra and Aegisthus enough time to prepare themselves for the murder.

6. Clytemnestra's Revenge

In *Agamemnon* (458 BC.), Clytemnestra switches between playing a masculine and feminine role. Her masculine role, which is most clearly seen in the language she uses and the actual murder at the end of the play, allows her to gain the power needed to take revenge on her husband. However, she also has no doubts about playing an obedient feminine role in order to accomplish what she wants. Her feminine role is revealed by the language she uses which is, the language the men of Classical Athens would have expected of women: misleading and deceitful. In the very first scene, the watchman comments on Clytemnestra's masculine role. He explains how Clytemnestra ordered him to watch the signal fires which would notify Argos of Agamemnon's victory at Troy and impending return:

For thus she rules

woman with an expectant, man-counseling heart.

(Aeschylus 11)

Even when playing her female role as a supposedly faithful wife, she still tries to subvert the patriarchal system. She ignores the expected propriety of women's behavior in terms of public and private speech and speaks out with great boldness. She forces Agamemnon to enter the palace by walking on rich tapestries laid out on the ground.

Agamemnon, afraid of incurring the gods' wrath, does not want to do this, but Clytemnestra again uses her sharp wit and even sharper tongue to persuade him. Agamemnon finally gives in to her orders and walks to his death over the tapestries. While her persuasive power is displayed in

the tapestry scene, her heroic language is portrayed in the scene after Agamemnon's murder. She was also playing a masculine role but her deception was done in such a cunning way. She has accomplished a masculine deed, the murder of a man, by playing a masculine role.

7. Masculinity in Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth*

William Shakespeare's masterpiece *Macbeth* (1623) deals with a wide variety of themes (history, traditions, war etc.), but the theme of gender roles is the main among others. The writer focused a particular attention on the theme of manhood in women that was traditionally defined by ideas of their physical weakness, loyalty, and assertiveness. Heroic and deviant demonstration of masculinity makes readers ponder the nature of this trait. The author also managed to persuade generations of readers that masculinity was not only the feature of a male character; some women were no less masculine in their search for ambitions and power. Interrogation of the play from the perspective of some male characters that shed lights on the notion of masculinity helps readers understand Shakespeare's idea about masculinity in the main characters of the play.

8. Lady Macbeth's Obsession for Status

Lady Macbeth is a highly ambitious. Her character based on at a time, when society does not accept the authorities of the women. Macbeth starts "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene ii, 10) told by the three witches and next echoed by Macbeth, the protagonist of the play. The first appearance of the witches with their beards can be associated with masculinity. And it has been noticeable that witchcraft is always connected with female roles. These witches are seen as a severe criticism of the European male-dominated culture that leaves women no chance to take an equal position in the society.

Even in the beginning of the play, when in the scene of prophecy given by three weird sisters to Macbeth and his wife; the first witch said to them

When shall we meet again?

In thunder, lightning and in rain (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene i)

She gives the insights of how women are treated at that time because she is expecting to meet them in a dreadful situation where it is easy to control people's thought in the case of Macbeth. But it is not clear that whether they are controlling Macbeth in order to attack Lady Macbeth or they are manipulating Lady Macbeth so that they can get control over Macbeth and these sisters hear from the lips of Banquo:

You should be women, / Yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so. (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene iii L 46)

First witch also said to the Banquo

Hail Banquo, lesser than Macbeth and greater. (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene iii)

It is visible to the audiences that this whole play is an exploration of status and with the word of the first witch it can be said that they are obsessed with status. Lady Macbeth did everything because she wanted to become queen. She wanted to enrich her status but women were denied any power over men in the society, she could not achieve that on her own and she needs more power to achieve her goal which she can only do it with her partner, Macbeth because he is a man and they are always considered fit for such powerful position. So, it can be said that this tragedy would not happen if women had same rights as men. If Lady Macbeth could have achieved that power by herself then she would not become so evil.

In Shakespearean society, to become a powerful one especially a woman had to be born into a wealthy family or to marry of in a rich family like Lady Macbeth who married to Macbeth or a woman had to be an attractive one which helps her to find her husband matched with her economic status. The three sisters are described as hag, weird sisters, indicating that they had an unpleasant appearance and thus, the play shows the audiences that women were judged according to their appearances and they turned evil because they had no other option left for them to gain power. The only way they can get it by becoming evil.

9. Macbeth's Manipulation

Macbeth, then, becomes excited for the prophecies of the weird sisters and he passes the information to Lady Macbeth immediately so that she can proceed to fulfil his desire. Hearing the prophecy, Lady Macbeth becomes highly ambitious. Macbeth in his letter manipulates her to help him to achieve his goal. This letter explores the level of choices made by Macbeth. He wrote the letter in such a way that Lady Macbeth can come up with a plan to kill Duncan and can also manipulate Macbeth. Macbeth actually wants to fulfill his desire of becoming a king but he cannot do it of his own, because he knows that he is less of a man without her. Macbeth has a true knowledge about the characteristics of his wife and he knew it very well that status is the only thing which his wife wants most. So he uses this idea to manipulate her to persuade his wife into killing king Duncan and so he states:

Thou wouldst be great Art not without ambition,
but without the illness should attend it. (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene v, 17-19)

Here Macbeth indicates her to give up her womanliness which is compared with illness to think how to fulfil his desire. Lady Macbeth tries to apply it in her character by

wishing as Macbeth maps the structure to be a king. As a result, Lady Macbeth wishes to give her womanly attitude and wants to be a common gender one. Thus, she dreams:

Unsex me here

And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty. (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene v, 40-42)

Lady Macbeth knows that she is not allowed to do what she wants to do because she is a woman. So, she had to become a male to fulfill her desire and wishes. The society continues to remind her that she lives in a patriarchal society and men control everything. So, to fulfill her desire she had to adopt masculine qualities and ultimately that leads to her tragedy.

When Lady Macbeth started sleepwalking after the murder of Duncan, she started to fixate over her small hands and perfumes which indicating she no longer wants the feminine things as if she wants to be a male. She thinks that the only way to gain power is to become more masculine. She likes to be in control and she does that time to time. She commands Macbeth and he obliged. It is very frustrating for Lady Macbeth that she had to pretend all the time that men are important because she is the one who is planning all the things. But no matter how persuasive she is she can never be a ruler or a king because women were never accepted as king.

10. Tragedy of Lady Macbeth

She at first makes herself mentally ready to kill King Duncan but later she hesitates to kill him because he was reminding her of her father. No matter how much she wants to be a queen, psychologically she can never be free from patriarchal domination. After killing Duncan, Macbeth started to hesitate. He was becoming more feminine but Lady Macbeth did not hesitate to continue with the plan and she was becoming more masculine.

Becoming the king of Scotland, Macbeth's first attempt is to kill Banquo and his son Fleance because a feeling of insecurity has arisen in his mind as Banquo's descendants will also be kings. Lady Macbeth consoles him by saying that nature has not made them immortal and they must die one day. But at one banquet, when Banquo's ghost appears Lady Macbeth tries to cover up Macbeth's odd behavior as he becomes abnormal. But when Lady Macbeth becomes mentally disordered, there was no consolation from Macbeth to his wife. Even it is also absent how Lady Macbeth leads her life after becoming the queen of Scotland. Though she finds power, eventually loses her marriage, peace and everything because of the tragic flaw in her character. Macbeth started to turn against her when he realizes that she is becoming more masculine and he cannot accept it as he belongs to a male dominated society.

When Macbeth wants to kill Macduff's family, he does not discuss it with his wife. He was excluding her from decision making which indicates Macbeth's realization of being the dominant one because he knows that his planning was better than her.

In this play, Macbeth's crime does not introduce him as a murderer, rather he is rewarded for it and his murderous activities are compared with the heroic deeds. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth's crime is compared with the evil though she repents. It is Macbeth, who commits the crimes. Shakespeare shows the audiences that all the wrong deeds happened because women are trying to come forward by breaking the social norms and structure. The dramatist thinks that if women accept the status of living underneath of the male-dominated society then the tragedy would never happen. As a dramatist, Shakespeare could not be able to come forward from his age to please his audiences. He has depicted almost all his female characters in a typical way. If anyone is trying to break the social norms, she is either transformed by himself into a schizophrenic patient or committing suicide at the end of the dramas.

So, the tragedy of Lady Macbeth happens because she denies showing her submissive attitude towards the patriarchal society to achieve her success. Being an aspiring and conscious lady, she knows it very well that in a patriarchal society, her ultimate success can only be achieved through a man which is none other than her own husband and Shakespeare shows the audiences quite clearly that the destructive attitudes of the patriarchal society are the very thing that oppresses women and because of their oppressive attitudes, women turn against men and they start to adapt masculinity to achieve their goal.

V. CONCLUSION

The ultimate tragedy happened to the protagonists not because they are evil but because in order to become evil, they had to become more masculine. When Lady Macbeth becomes conscious of her crime, she no longer wants to act like man because trying to act like man actually made her to forget her femininity. Her masculinized characteristics allow her to show dominance and tip Macbeth's hand towards her own personal desires but also for the betterment of their situation. By the end, however, it is Lady Macbeth who feels that not even "all the perfumes of Arabia" could get the scent of blood off her hands. It is Lady Macbeth's masculine nature that propels Macbeth to victory and, in the end, tragedy strikes back.

Clytemnestra challenges gender roles from the very beginning of the play. Her husband sacrificed their

daughter to ensure safe winds for sailing before going off to war for ten years. Ancient Greece's patriarchal society expected wives to run the household and keep it afloat while the men were at war. Clytemnestra was expected to be complacent and understanding about the sacrifice and wait for her husband to return to the throne and rule over Argos. By murdering her husband, she inherent masculinity. But it becomes clear that simply playing a masculine role is not enough for a woman to achieve her desires. Instead, a person must actually be a man in order for society to accept his rule.

These fictional women reveal how the real-life women of our society, were always caught in a double bind due to the patriarchal society in which they lived. In these plays, both of these women disrupt the male-ordered society when they engage in both their feminine and masculine roles. Obviously when they take on masculine roles, these women are rejecting the behavior pressed upon them by society in favor of masculine behavior which allows for both freedom and power. However, these women are ultimately unsuccessful in their attempts to achieve their desires because they are, in the end, women and it became societal rules that whether women act in their proscribed feminine roles or endeavor to play masculine roles, they have already been judged and found guilty.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aeschylus. Agamemnon. 458 BC.
- [2] Aydogmus, Azime. Clytemnestra as a Nightmare to Patriarchy in Aeschylus Tragedy, The Oresteian Trilogy, 2015.
- [3] Das, Saptorshi and Dr (Prof) Arindam Modak. Vyasa's Draupadi, Sophocles' Antigone, Euripedes' Medea, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, Aeschylus' Clytemnestra and Valmiki's Sita: A Feminist Approach. National Institute of Technology, Vol. 19, Issue 1, Ver. VIII, 2014, PP 69-72.
- [4] Diner, Hellen. Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture. New York. Doubleday Anchor Books, 1973.
- [5] Donne, John. John Donne: Selected poems. New edition, Friends Book Corner, 2013.
- [6] Ferdous, Mafruha. The Values of Masculinity in William Shakespeare's Macbeth. Northan University, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2017.
- [7] Fernandes, Dr. M.B. Patriarchal Designs on Women: Mother Goddess or Femme Fatale.
- [8] Gassman, Jennifer Y. A textual analysis of the role of women in historical fiction for young people. 2006.
- [9] Guerriero, Stephen A. That Woman-She Manoeuvres Like a Man the Aberrant queen: Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' Agamemnon. 2012.
- [10] King, Emma. Furious: Myth, Gender and the Origins of Lady Macbeth. City University of New York (CUNY), 2017.

- [11] Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. New Edition, Friends Book Corner, 2013.
- [12] Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. New edition, Friends Book Corner, 2013.
- [13] Stacy, Aisha. *The Story of Adam (part 1 of 5): The First Man*. 2018.
- [14] Vellacott, Philip., translator. *Aeschylus The Oresteian Trilogy*. Penguin Books, 1959.
- [15] Sultana, Mst. Halima and Md. Jashim, Uddin. *Patriarchal Dominance in Shakespeare's Macbeth: Viewing from A Feminist Perspectives*. *ASA University Review*, Vol. 11 No. 2, 2017.
- [16] Vyomakesisri, Tippabhotla. *Presentation of Women in Literature from Past to Present*. *Osmania University*, Vol 22, Issue 11, Ver. 9, 2017, PP 18-20.
- [17] Yasmin, Tahsina. *Aeschylus' Clytemnestra as a 'Seductress'*.