

Gender disparity in lives of the saints, the great gatsby and hamlet

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Introduction

John Stoltenberg once said, ' Finally, the dirty little secret about sexual objectification is that it is an act that cannot be performed with any attention to its ethical meaning.' This quotation proves that even males can value women's rights because women's rights should be considered equal rights. Throughout history, humans have existed in a gender binary with specific roles allotted to men and women. In Nino Ricci's *Lives of the Saints*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and finally William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. These three works of literature share the commonality of women as objectified and oppressed; since time, women within these texts have no power to stand against social expectations and are continually conforming to patriarchy. Conversely, Ricci's *Lives of the Saints* illustrates a strong female character that defies the laws of patriarchy. Moreover, Shakespeare and Fitzgerald present a society that enchants females and binds women to norms that are degrading. Thus, throughout the three texts, the authors present gender disparity that segregates and oppresses women by keeping them in stagnant positions within life.

Lives of the Saints

Throughout the novel, Cristina rejects the traditional roles and values of patriarchy. Cristina is an independent woman as she does not rely on others, and especially not men. Cristina's resilience is particularly prevalent in her affair. Ricci explores a female character trapped in an abusive relationship that subjects her to female roles that are unattainable. He illustrates Cristina's affair and the consequences that arise as Cristina's son, Vittorio,

hears moaning and muttering of an unfamiliar male voice from the barn. Vittorio states, ' Someone opened the door of the stable. Two dark eyes staring down at me from the shadows.' (Ricci 6) The man in the stable is assumed to be the subject of Cristina's affair, with his dark eyes representing society watching. Ultimately, Ricci's use of ' two dark eyes staring down' at Vittorio illustrate a society with a corrupt sense of morality in regards to women (Ricci 6). Furthermore, it represents society's inability to view men and women as equal, deeming the village to have an oppressive darkened perspective. This is evident when Giuseppina states, ' I do not have to tell you that name everyone is calling you? You have to make a gesture.' (Ricci 54) This quotation exemplifies the dark eyes and the constant overwatch of society that expects women to be submissive. One can assume that Cristina's big gesture was evident in the affair to liberate her from the control of her husband. Therefore, freeing her from society's immense grasp that controls a female's life. Ricci portrays Cristina's affair as liberating in regards to female evolution. Cristina represents the opposition to patriarchy, and the idealistic expectations women must fulfill. Her affair represents a movement away from patriarchy, and her escape from an abusive relationship. Overall, Cristina goes against the typical role of women who are imprisoned within the walls of patriarchy.

Hamlet

Similarly, in Hamlet, Shakespeare portrays gender disparity that isolates females towards the bottom of the social hierarchy. The society painted in Shakespeare consists of women that must exploit their femininity to achieve

status. Consequently, women are subjected to idealized, unattainable roles. This is evident in the form of an affair for Gertrude. Gertrude hastily married her husband's brother months after his death. However, one can assume the affair had been rooted earlier before King Hamlet died. To illustrate, Hamlet states, ' Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears Had left the flushing in her galled eyes. She married-O most wicked speed!' (I. II. 154) Hamlet curses his mother for marrying his uncle only two months after his father died. Shakespeare demonstrates the strain on women to maintain their position at the top. Additionally, Shakespeare portrays women as overlooked and judged by society; as represented through Hamlet. In *The Lives of the Saints*, Hamlet takes on the role of the ' dark eyes' that attempt to conform women to their role as laid out by society. Likewise, both authors represent female characters imprisoned within patriarchy; both women are willing to tarnish their reputation within society in order to achieve freedom. Moreover, Shakespeare and Ricci allude to the idea that women's status in society is attached to a male counterpart. Therefore, both text's prove the mere nature of a patriarchal society that pressures women to engage in sexual relations to pattern their movement away from patriarchy. Overall, *Hamlet* and *Lives of the Saints* represents patriarchy's ability to force women to exploit their sexual characteristics and confine themselves to roles that are subjective and degrading.

The Great Gatsby

Next, Fitzgerald depicts a post-war world which carries very subjective values and customs towards women. In Fitzgerald's novel, women remain

prisoners of patriarchy. They are either commodities to be possessed and discarded by brutish men such as Tom Buchanan or embodiments of an ideal for romantics such as Jay Gatsby. The theme of gender disparity is illustrated through the character Daisy. For example, Daisy resists the maternal duties she is depicted as fake, in her pursuit of wealth. Similar to Cristina, both women are viewed as fake because of their pursuit away from patriarchy. This is evident in Daisy's affair, like Cristina, both women, through the use of the affair, attempt to liberate themselves from abusive relations. One can assume the authors are attempting to prove abusive relationships are directly correlated to patriarchy; ultimately form due to male superiority. Moreover, gender inequality is illustrated in Daisy's comment about her child. She states, 'the best thing a girl can be in this world is a beautiful little fool.' (Fitzgerald 17) She implies that she is not a fool herself, but would be so much happier if she was one, this relates to her abusive relationship and the duality between roles of men and women. Furthermore, Fitzgerald illustrates through Daisy that even women are aware of the idealistic role women must take on, and by being a beautiful fool, one becomes oblivious to society's inequality. Fitzgerald evokes the idea that conformation to society is the best way for a person to be happy. Ricci compares a female character who takes on the means of rebellion to evolve as a female in society. Unlike, *The Lives of The Saints* Daisy alienates herself to society, allowing men to degrade and objectify women. Thus, alluding to male superiority as a commonly accepted practice during that time.

Conclusion

Finally, through these works of literature, the authors depict gender disparity that acknowledges men and women as unequal. The troubling treatment of women, from the patriarchal society in *The Lives of the Saints*, *Hamlet* and finally, *The Great Gatsby* results in the female characters being belittled, and being expected to conform to unrealistic expectations. Moreover, a patriarchal society causes a great deal of suffering towards women as they are viewed as weaker and inferior to men. In a world where the mistreatment of women is a commonality, change must be made to create a peaceful society.