

How male female relationships explored in the texts



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Male and female relationships are portrayed in different ways, like the power and struggle in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; Carol Ann Duffy's *Havisham* demonstrating the bitter, loneliness, Christina Rossetti's *Cousin Kate* presents the betrayal and William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 130* and how he shows that relationships should be honest and truthful. Yet their attitudes are in stark contrast as a consequence of how these intensely personal feelings have impacted on their respective lives.

At the start of act one scene seven, Macbeth's soliloquy considers all the arguments for and against murdering Duncan which are very weighted toward staying loyal to his king. However, upon almost completely persuading himself not to kill Duncan, Lady Macbeth enters. The reader notices an instant change in the mood, as if an evil presence had entered the room with Macbeth's long speeches being reduced to short sentences.

Bravely, Macbeth decisively states " We will proceed no further in this business" showing no option for doubt or debate. He takes the traditional role of a man in this and acts like the strong and tough like the warrior he is.

In the Jacobean times the man was meant to be the one in control of the relationships and how things are supposed to go, he took this power and said that that was it his final decision. However Lady Macbeth disrespects his wishes and exploits his love for her and tries to manipulate Macbeth by encouraging him to go ahead in the murder of the king. Lady Macbeth's main persuasive technique in the scene was to torment Macbeth. One of Macbeth's ambitions is to uphold his reputation for being brave which Lady Macbeth is aware of and uses to her advantage.

She taunts, " And live a coward in thine own esteem" knowing that he will become angry at being called a ' Coward', and force him to want to prove that he isn't. This shows that Lady Macbeth is in control of the relationship as she has the confidence to say these things; in the time of when this play was written women were not meant to be the ones making the decisions in the household. Lady Macbeth then goes on to question Macbeth's manhood when she challenges him mentally and says " when you durst do it then you were a man" suggesting that by not doing it, he would not be a true man.

Macbeth would have been distraught that his wife thinks him a weak man, in society during this period men were considered the more powerful. How cunning Lady Macbeth was to attack his masculinity, making Lady Macbeth once again the leading one in the relationship. Lady Macbeth throws off her own femininity when she uses the idea of a sweet innocent baby smiling in their faces and turns it into something horrible overpowering the innocence, this shows to what extent Lady Macbeth is prepared to go to, just for a higher status and prosperity.

She claims she would have " dash'd the brains out" of a child she was breast-feeding rather than go back on such a promise, it shows her to be very clever in the way she puts her femininity against Macbeth's manliness. To say that she would sacrifice her own baby rather than break a promise to him tells Macbeth that she is very determined and he would not want to seem weak compared to her. Shakespeare's language is highly descriptive and uses fierce, graphic, shocking imagery to enable the character of Lady Macbeth to convince and manipulate her husband into committing this terrible deed.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-malefemale-relationships-explored-in-the-texts/>

After Lady Macbeth's accusations and insults, he simply replies with ' if we should fail? ' Macbeth is also vulnerable when it comes to his wife and what she perceives him as. He is finally giving in to her and is starting to question the plan to kill King Duncan. This shows that it's not a traditional relationship if Macbeth is letting his wife control him. She now has total power for a while. She will now feel that he will do anything she tells him. However he is still very scared and wants to ensure that nothing goes wrong. All he can ask is what if it should go wrong as he has given up trying to fight her.

In act 3 scene 2 Lady Macbeth is troubled because she feels they have gained nothing from murdering the King but actually lost everything ' Noughts had, alls spent where our desire is got without content. ' This shows us her regret of pushing her husband to kill the King as they have gained nothing and envy to be him. These things drive her to her madness, as she realises what they have done has sealed their fate, if her desires were obtained without happiness, then everything would be lost forever. She felt that their achievement and success would come for nothing.

Also, she was not " content", as she ultimately has to pay for her crime and everything that she did would be useless. Lady Macbeth doesn't know what Macbeth is up to any more when she had to ask to see him which suggests he is too busy to see her. When she finally gets to see him she says " How now, my Lord, why do you keep alone? " shows that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are not meeting often, as they earlier used to, this also shows that their relationship has changed from before. At the same time, it also shows that Lady Macbeth wants to be a support system to Macbeth.

She also refers to him as his status ' lord' which gives him the respect he didn't have before meaning he is now above her and the traditional role of how a man was supposed to be, she's lost his power over him and their relationship isn't the same and that they are beginning to separate.

Shakespeare then uses imagery to demonstrate how the psychological state of Macbeth is deteriorating because of his overwhelming ambition. Macbeth realizes that he is tormenting his mental state by trying to fulfil his ambitious goals.

He admits this to Lady Macbeth when he tells her " O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife". The imagery addressed in this line is very significant because it shows the confusion and tension that Macbeth is facing, where the ' scorpions' represent the chaos in his mind, the connotations of this are that a ' scorpion' is a poisonous, vicious, evil unwanted thing meaning his mind is full of darkness and evil, with dangerous thoughts. He keeps thinking about it he can't get Duncan out of his head, he is becoming obsessed, full of troubled thoughts.

He also refers to Lady Macbeth as his ' wife' no his equal, she referred to him as a ' Lord' but Macbeth doesn't refer to her as his status. Lady Macbeth has now become dependent on Macbeth and ends not with resolution but with a question: ' What's to be done? ' this shows that Lady Macbeth is frightened and anxious, she doesn't know what is going on and asks Macbeth, she is worried for him and wants to get him back to her as she is no longer the one in control, she is concerned about him because before it was her who decided on everything and now she doesn't know what to do and is left in the dark.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-malefemale-relationships-explored-in-the-texts/>

When Macbeth reveals that he plans to deal with Banquo, he shows that he has become more dominant in the relationship by dominating the conversation. Lady Macbeth defers to him and he is affectionate and protective of her saying “ Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck”. Their roles are now beginning to reverse and Macbeth begins to assert his dominance. This shows also that so he obviously cares about her because he’s not telling her so she’s not caught up in it. Macbeth scolds her, before he would never have done this but the sudden surge of authority and power in his life changed him.

He also calls her ‘ chuck’ which is patronising her, this makes her feeble as now there is nothing left for her. Macbeth’s behaviour has changed from cowardly babbling to powerful planning. Lady Macbeth’s character has changed from a powerful woman to a cautious, content woman. The poem ‘ Havisham’ first few words set the scene almost: “ Beloved sweetheart bastard”. The fact that Duffy has used an oxymoron so early in the poem suggests that she is trying to put a huge amount of emphasis on the conflicting emotions.

The speaker uses both hateful and loving words which suggest that she has been hurt by love. These three words show Havisham’s feelings towards her lover, ‘ beloved sweetheart’ means that she still loves him but ‘ bastard’ means she hates him for what he has done to her and turned her into. The oxymoron that love is hate and hate is love is shown again in the poem when the enjambment of ‘ Love’s hate’ which shows that that Duffy is relating to it as hate belonging to love, here she meant that for this kind of hate to be produces, much love is needed to be broken first.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-malefemale-relationships-explored-in-the-texts/>

This straddles the break between verses, and shows the unstable mixture of Havisham's emotions. The second stanza of 'Havisham' is full of sadness, and the speaker has moved from a position of total fury and resentment into a state of depression; this stanza brings in the element of decay into the emotional, and physical, state of Miss Havisham and her possessions, she despises herself as 'spinster'.

The dramatic start once more draws the reader's attention to the poem, and the word 'spinster' itself makes Miss Havisham incomplete, and is without someone to love, it means elderly single women with no children, as at the time this poem was set it was almost strange to see unmarried women, this one word sentence is what she is, what society sums her up as, what she has been condemned to be by the man's abandonment of her almost as if there would be nothing more to say about her for the rest of society.

After Havisham was left at her wedding she never recovered this led to her sitting in her chair in her wedding dress not doing anything or going anywhere just sitting there wasting away, smelling and putting herself down "I stink and remember." this is good use of onomatopoeia and gives the reader a view of what she was like and what the smell was like.

She's is wallowing in her own pity, knows that she 'stinks' but doesn't care. Throughout the poem it goes through her mental state of mind, from the words Duffy uses you can see she has had a bit of an emotional rollercoaster, in the poem you can see Duffy is interested in mixing her love and hatred as it shows Havisham's sexual passion has not ended yet.

By looking at the structure in Havisham Duffy has created an effect that shows Havisham's hatred for men, how much men have put her through but still shows she isn't a ruin yet as she still has a sexual passion, however back then women were not supposed to sleep with men before marriage so she must have been a virgin: " my fluent tongue in its mouth in its earthen down till suddenly bite awake". The ' bite' shows that Havisham lost her chance of being a woman when her fiancé ran out on her and now she wants to take his manliness away by biting away what makes him a man.

Havisham is heartbroken and can't get over what her fiancé did she tells him ' Don't think it's only the heart that b-b-b-breaks' which means that her heart is broken, she is broken, her life has gone she wants to get her revenge but will never actually do anything to hurt him as she does love him. It shows she is crying or stuttering, so she is still upset and just heartbroken woman who needs help and it obviously still upset. It shows the negative side of love and the aftermath of a relationship which ended suddenly but in a bad way.

The man is in charge and she wants to change that and get her revenge. In ' Cousin Kate' there is a rhetorical question, it shows how her life was uprooted, how she came to lead a " shameful" life in the eyes of society. For instance, " Why did a great lord find me out, and praise my flaxen hair? Why did a great lord find me out to fill my heart with care? " This shows how she was lured from her cottage home by a great lord, who had managed to seduce her with an enormous amount of flattery. The speaker also seems as if she's demanding to know why the great lord found her.

These are interrogatives which could mean many different possibilities of things but could be a premonition of what is to come. The poem also uses imagery such as "flaxen hair" which makes her the ideal woman as back then it was the pale blonde colour which made her beautiful and ideal. The rhetorical question is then repeated again to emphasise her regret and misjudgement over the lord. 'To fill my heart with care' is ambiguous: the first is that she loves him; the second is that the lord brings the maiden worries.

The speaker describes how the lord mistreated her and how he used her when she says 'he changed me like a glove' which suggests how she lost her virginity to him in the time the poem was written it was meant to be a traditional relationship and no sex before marriage but the lord 'changed' her, because of what he did. He put her on when he needed her and when he was finished he threw her away, he treated her like an 'object' he wore here then threw her away. The use of the simile changed me like a glove shows how thoughtless the lord is.

In the Victorian times, when this poem was written, men wore white gloves, which can become dirty very quickly, so they got changed regularly. When you change a pair of gloves you do not put thought into how they feel, meaning the lord did not care how the Maiden was feeling. The maiden shows how unfaithful Kate was towards her and shows a gesture of disrespect towards the lord where 'I would have spit into his face' showing no remorse, no respect this is the peak of her anger in this poem. She says she would've shrugged off his marriage proposal. The word 'spit' is a strong word and reflects how strongly she feels.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-male-female-relationships-explored-in-the-texts/>

She's saying that if she was in Kate's place she wouldn't have married the lord, the unnamed maiden is trying to get sympathy for herself and saying how she's the good person and how she is better than Kate, it shows female oppression as women should support each other and be there for each other and for the relationship of being cousins. The beginning of the last stanza continues to be addressed to Kate, but the tone seems very smug, as if the maiden is gloating: 'yet I've a gift you have not got' the use of the word 'gift' shows it was given to her and that it is good.

The fact Kate may not be able to 'not' one suggests she may not be able to have children. Despite being cast aside, she has a treasure, or something special that Kate will never have. In "Cousin Kate" she is in control of her life despite everything. "Yet" shows the turning point in the poem and one of the reasons the maiden is so upbeat is also made clear in the above quote, she has a child but Cousin Kate does not and also seems to imply that she cannot conceive. The unnamed maiden still loves the lord, but it is non-reciprocated love as he does not share the feelings back.

In "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" Shakespeare forms an argument against the then popular conventions to flatter one's lover with praise of her beauty, as well as make comments about the way that love between two people can be expressed and interpreted implying that the sun is beautiful, radiant and full of life whereas his mistress' eyes have none of these qualities. He compares an ideal woman to a woman who is by no means physically perfect to emphasize that love is deeper and more important than these superficial comparisons.

In sonnet 130, Shakespeare rejects the metaphors that are usually used to describe a beautiful woman such as 'brighter than the sun', and twists them to not insult the woman, but to praise her unconventionally 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun'. He does this to show a more true full description instead of the usual exaggerated metaphors, which he describes as false compare 'as any she belied with false compare', which shows that she is just as beautiful as all the other woman who are described with exaggerated metaphors.

All the texts portray the theme of relationships in different ways. They are similar in the way that in 'Havisham' it shows that Miss Havisham is jealous of other women, how they are happily married with children and wants that, she is obsessed with the day she got rejected and it now took over and rules over her life. This is the same as in 'Macbeth' where he is obsessed with power as is Lady Macbeth with status. In 'Cousin Kate' the unnamed maiden is obsessed with revenge to get back at the Lord and her cousin's betrayal.

Also someone always has to be in control and have power in 'Macbeth' for their relationship to work and they always act on their thoughts, this contrasts with 'Havisham' where she has no power because she got rejected by her fianci?? e, she's always thinking of revenge but never acts on her thoughts. This links in with the unnamed maiden as she has no power in society because she is an 'outcast' although she has power over the lord because she has his son and he would give anything to have him. In the Sonnet 130 it shows an equal loving relationship and it shows relationships in a realistic way.

In 'Macbeth' at first Shakespeare portrays their relationship is equal as they go on how they want to do everything together, however to the end the Macbeth starts not to care as much and Shakespeare puts dark imagery into the play and shows that when Lady Macbeth dies at the end Macbeth doesn't care. In 'Cousin Kate' Rossetti shows the traditional side of relationships and how if you lose your virginity before marriage it could really impact your life, she showed a non-requited love as the unnamed maiden obviously wants the lord back although she is angry but he doesn't want her.

In 'Havisham' Duffy shows the negative side of love and the aftermath of a relationship which ended in a bad way, Miss Havisham wants to get her revenge as in the poem it keeps referring to violent things and it had an angry aggressive, bitter tone to the poem. Over all I preferred Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 because I think it portrayed relationships in a realistic way, I think that act 1 scene 7 in Macbeth also had a realistic view to their relationship although they were planning to kill a person.

I enjoyed Havisham it was a good poem and it showed the negative side of a relationship although it might have been a little over exaggerated because it's only her view we hear this is the same with cousin Kate where the unnamed maiden tells her own side of the story and make people feel sorry for her but I think there was more to it and it would be nice to know her cousin Kate's side of the story.