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Representation of Women's Suffering and Patriarchy in Shakespeare's

Measure for Measure

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By

Binaya Neupane

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
kirtipur

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Binaya Neupane has completed this thesis entitled **Representation of Women's Suffering and Patriarchy in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*** under my supervision. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for Viva.

.....
Dr. Shiva Rijal

Supervisor

Date: 2010 Jan 15

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Approval Sheet

This thesis is submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, by Binaya Neupane entitled "**Representation of Women's Suffering and Patriarchy in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure***" has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu
Date: _____

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Abstract

Worsening relationship between Claudio and Juliet, Angelo and Mariana as well as fake and passionate relationship between Isabella and Duke seems at last a fatal disease which creates psychological tension among women characters in *Measure for Measure*. Though Shakespeare has raised a rebellious lady- Isabella in the beginning of the play, she later internalizes the idea of the need for the establishment of patriarchal social system. This drama discusses about how women characters like Isabella, Mariana, Juliet and other females are represented and how they suffer at last in the solid entrapment of patriarchal social norms and values, which is only one factor to create tension between man and woman. Females in patriarchal societies are deprived of personal freedom and social opportunities. Similarly Shakespeare has exposed the patriarchal social reality of the Elizabethan period. Thus, this present research especially deals with the humiliating position of the females characters in *Measure for Measure* and brings into light their overwhelmingly helpless plight.

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Chapter I

Introduction: Shakespeare, Text and Context

William Shakespeare is a universal scholar who transcended the limit of time and place. Born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 23rd April 1564 and educated at King's New School in Stratford, Shakespeare devoted to writing career from the mid of 1580's. Most of his works deal with contemporary politics, character's inwardness, tensions of love and moral cum psychological fluctuations. Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest dramatist and the poet because of his capacity to speak to the contemporaries and also to the succeeding generations. Shakespeare wrote thirty seven plays over a period of twenty seven years, as well as the most famous sonnets collection in English. He was a constant experimenter with dramatic form and content.

Repeated studies of Shakespeare's plays do not debate their beauty and variety. They deal with the issues that are of perennial interest and significance to human life. Moreover his plays are the glowing and glittering pictures of human beings. They are also the studies on the subtle problems in human relations. Shakespeare's characters are true to the eternal facts of human life, not merely the superficial studies of contemporary society. Therefore we still understand and sympathize with them as much as we love or hate those who live around us. He possessed "almost unbelievable understanding of human psychology, a God like love and compassion for the world and its inhabitants, and a richness and control of language such as no other English writer has had" (Rees 54).

His art and expression was molded and evolved by life. He possessed the gift of handling any subjects of life impersonally and there is no mark the dramatist ego to

be perceived in his plays. His plays are the natural expression of human suffering and pleasure.

Most of the Shakespeare's career unfolded during the monarch of Elizabeth I, the great virgin Queen from whom the historical period of the Bard's life takes its name as the Elizabethan Age. Queen Elizabeth's keen interest in music, drama and poetry fostered an atmosphere in which many of England's greatest writers found encouragement and financial patronage. Under Elizabeth's leadership, England experienced the true cultural reawakening or renaissance of thought, art and vision which had begun in Italy a century earlier. The greatest literature created during the Elizabethan period falls into two categories: drama and poetry. William Shakespeare is commonly associated with drama. Unlike Medieval dramas that were largely used as a means of showing God's designs, drama in Renaissance England focuses on man, and becomes a way of exploring his weakness, depravities, flaws and qualities. Shakespeare's theme is frequently the great abstract, universal themes, seen both on the social level and individual level: ambition, power, love, death and so on.

Measure for Measure ranks as one of Shakespeare's greatest achievement. *Measure for Measure* has fascinated and perplexed audiences and critics alike for centuries. Shakespeare boldly deals with the theme of justice versus mercy in this drama. Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* which is often identified as one of his problem play makes minute studies on the regulation of sexuality in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. It also exposes the female subjugation in a patriarchal society of Shakespeare time. According to the critic, Cynthia Lewis (1983), this drama evaluates the character of Duke, as a means through which Shakespeare demonstrated that even the best and most beloved monarch are ultimately human and have imperfection. This drama derives subject matter from relevant contemporary issues of Shakespeare time.

Shakespeare's drama *Measure for Measure* vividly reflects the status of female character as a potential site of poverty, prostitution or premarital pregnancy that requires the surveillance and intervention of male authority. Shakespeare artfully fuses the anxieties of political and sexual power. He minutely depicts the Duke's action and his strategy of looting Isabella's chastity. There lies a grave fear about the precariousness of male identity and the fear of destructive power of women at the heart of the drama. The warning of female potency makes Angelo's violence seem like a defense, as if he resorted to rape so as not to confront his weakness. This drama is set in Vienna of Renaissance period. Though Renaissance period was the period of discovery, of the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the exploration of human nature itself, the gender and sexual discrimination was at its pinnacle. Patriarchal norms and values gave importance only to the female body and beauty. The sentiments and feelings of females were completely discarded. It was the time when Queen Elizabeth was at the throne. In spite of this fact, females haven't experienced any freedom during that period. They were excluded from different opportunities. Beauty was all the qualification of them.

The balance between justice and authority in *Measure for Measure* is set against the society filled with sexual corruption and amorality. The extremes of Puritanism and Catholicism are meeting in the character of Angelo and Isabella. Angelo ever desires to have total control over Isabella and to absolve himself of any guilt or blame by insisting that she come willingly to him rather than he force himself on her. Isabella's mind is racing. She has completely trusted Angelo and pinned all her hopes on him. She has believed stories of "the austereness of his life" and suddenly what she believes is blasted away. Angelo boasted to Isabella that his reputation is such that he can do as he pleases and no one will believe her accusation

against him. Isabella finds herself in a situation many children find themselves in when someone does something terrible to them. This event of drama portrays the status of female in highly male dominated society.

All through the drama, Shakespeare has tried to present gender hierarchy in the contemporary society. The society is divided into two hostile camps where marginal groups that is the females are struggling to get equal social, economical and cultural status. In the Renaissance England, women were defined in relation to marital status. Alberto Cacicedo (1995) notes that: "the use of marriage is the means of limiting feminine freedom and denying autonomy in the repressive and highly gendered society of Shakespeare's Vienna"(7). Stephen Greenblatt, who is a restless and often brilliant pursuer of analogies, compares the Renaissance artist to the Renaissance monarch in his introduction. He says:

The ambivalence of the creative act, by which the text appears to be the spontaneous product of an autonomous self while at the same time expressing "complex network of despondency and fear," corresponds to the ambivalence of the prince power. The latter is supposed to emanate from him directly and subdue society to his will, while we also know that it is largely a collective invention. This kind of ambivalence is central and can be compared to the ambivalence of language itself: every act of speaking or writing is both free and constrained. (4)

Like many other dramas of Shakespeare, this drama *Measure for Measure* also concerns with kingship and history. His heroes are mainly historical figures, kings, Duke, as he traces some of the historical background to nation's glory. The main purpose of his drama is to exploit a topical event or manipulate public opinion. Some

of the critics of Shakespeare opine that his fascinating texts examine many aspects of women's lives from the cradle to the grave for all levels of society.

Regarding the presentation of gender and sexuality in dramas of Shakespeare Jean E .Howard says, "His plays reproduce the ideas that perpetuate gender inequality. They are not a mirror of nature, but a reflection of man-made ideas and concepts, concepts that other age can question and even discard" (417).

Undoubtedly we can claim that Shakespeare has shared the gendered assumption of his own time even in this drama *Measure for Measure*. At the heart of drama lies troubled marriage and loss of sexual morality. To depict the corrupting mixture of human concupiscence and world power Shakespeare shows Angelo, the male protagonist, as an embodiment of a strident morality distorted by his own power over other. Isabella is shown in no-win position throughout the play. She has to struggle hard to preserve her chastity. She defies the tyrannical and lusty quest of deputy governor Angelo. She not only behaves petulantly for her chastity rather threatens the duke with an outstretched throat.

Almost all the female characters of this drama are exploited and tortured psychologically by the males in one way or other. Mariana's marriage was cancelled when her brother had been lost at sea with her dowry. Angelo broke the engagement with her, hinting at supposed dishonor in her. Similarly Juliet's life was tainted by pre-marital pregnancy. All the charm and glory of life disappeared for females. Juliet and Mariana are conspicuously submissive. Mariana even apologizes for listening to music-sad music at that- and introduces convent discipline into her marriage: "I will not show my face/until my husband bid me."

Bearing that all in mind, it can be argued that *Measure for Measure*, a drama about the Duke and its subjects of Vienna deals with patriarchal social norms and values which creates clashes between men's interest over women's freedom.

Amid the scholarly conception that inform the study of social norms and values, one is really the social go-about which pin points the root of associational problematic in human society. On that row, this study is an inquiry into Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The gender distinctions creating relational clash between Angelo and Isabella, Angelo and Marianna, Claudio and Juliet is the focal point of this study. Shakespeare's female protagonist Isabella is a lady up-brought in lower class background whereas the male figure Angelo belongs to aristocrat cum tyrant ruler. The female characters in the drama are presented as fragile, suppressed and inferior occupying lower position in the society since they are by nature women whereas, Shakespeare present male characters as dominating, powerful and superior. In every text of Shakespeare, there are the male characters who are portrayed as superior, strong and the controller of female characters.

William Shakespeare is perhaps the finest and premier poet and playwright in the field of English literature. His long and prolific career was marked by well-received dramas and poetry. *Measure for measure* is one of the well known and widely criticized drama of Shakespeare. Since its publication in 1623, many critics have criticized it from different perspectives. Most of the critics talked about political and sexual corruptions, human flaws and religious aspirations in drama.

William Shakespeare's plays are written with extra ordinary power because he has a strong moral honesty and courage to accept life with no pretence .Much of his plays reveals the theme of sex and gender, human psychology and relationship, class

conflict and politics etc. Many critics have made up their minds to throw light on the work of Shakespeare. Michael Billington opines:

Shakespeare's aim is to project character and incident in such a way as force on the reader a radically new apprehension of the meaning of human personality and human relationship. And the assault is frontal, not through the slow and complex accumulation of moving moments whose total effects on the readers might be challenging. (116)

Jonathan Dollimore in his book *Transgression and Surveillance in Measure for Measure* insists on the oppressiveness of the Viennese state and interprets low- life transgression as positively anarchic, ludic, carnivalesque- subversion from below of a repressive official ideology of order. He overtly pronounces:

The unrestrained sexuality in Vienna is ostensibly subverting social order; anarchy threatens to engulf the state unless sexuality is subjected to renewed and severe regulation. Such at least is claim of those in power especially the punitive zeal of Angelo [. . .] corruption is displaced from authority to desire and by implication from the rulers to the ruled. (72)

Dollimore at the same time focuses upon the feminist theme of the drama. The victimization of female subjects in the city of Vienna is highly emphasized.

Robert Stoller for example in his landmark book *Facts and Fancies: An Examination of Freud's Concept of Bisexuality* (1974) comments on masculinity.

Regarding this matter he points:

One might speculate that a figure like Angelo, his masculinity extremely fragile, seeks to destroy women in order to escape the danger of merging with them, of returning to a fusion which would

erase his sense of an autonomous self. Perhaps that danger is the meaning he hears in Isabella's wish: "I would to heaven I had your potency/ and you were Isabel." for a theoretical account of such conflict, which he considers would built into the sense of maleness". (343-363)

In a way, Stoller re-examines the Freud's concept of bisexuality and he further says that:

The whole process of becoming masculine is at risk in the little boy from the day of birth on; his still- to- be created masculinity is endangered by the primary, profound, primeval oneness with mother, a blissful experience that serves, buried but active in the core of one's identity, as a focus which, throughout life, can attract one to regress back to that primitive oneness. (358)

Similarly some critics think it as the exploration of pathetic and throbbing situation of major female character Isabella. Peter Alexander's "*A Shakespeare Primer*" (1951), which is a succinct account of Shakespeare's life and work, sets the critical eyes on Isabella. He further writes:

Claudio, who is abjectly afraid of death, behaves as though he would like his sister Isabella to accept Angelo's bargain. He begged her to placate Angelo and give herself to him. His words inflict a deep wound on the already wounded Isabella's heart. True, her position is intolerable and tainted. (17)

Actually, he intends to show how hard it would be to tolerate for a woman who has to struggle hard to preserve her chastity in the hypocritical society.

Alexander Leggett, like many other critics, examined Shakespeare's representation. For Leggett, the inadequacy of multiple substitutions is a crucial factor in his conception. He identified a pattern of failed, inadequate and problematic substitution. He concluded the play is flawed. He states:

I am not saying that Shakespeare, in order to make a point about the imperfection of his art, deliberately wrote an imperfect play [. . .] He seems, however, to have found *Measure for Measure* a harder struggle than most, and as he faced the gap between conception and embodiment, his imagination generated image after image of representation that are vivid but not quite adequate, and substitution that are fascinating and revealing but complete. (393)

On the other hand, Stacy Magedanz, another important critic, bitterly attacks on Angelo and Vincentio and directly focuses on their lusty character. They negate the public law to gratify their sexual quest. Regarding them he writes:

Two male figures Angelo and Vincentio use public law to gratify private desire though the objective of power is to mediate between nature and law. Angelo's shows passion for Isabella's body leads him to abuse the law but the duke conceals his own desire for her under a friar's cloak, exhibiting it finally to her- and to us- only when we cannot evade its grasp. As a result the innocent female got victimized. (26)

His argument as illustrated above vividly acknowledges us that the female were evaluated in term of their physical beauty. They could never escape from the eagle-eyes of brutal males in society.

Regarding this drama, J.M. Nosworthy pronounces that 'No play of Shakespeare's more amply vindicates the claim that "he was not of an age but for all time" than does *Measure for Measure* (7).

Another critic, Maurice Hunt in "*Comfort in Measure for Measure*" opines that Isabella is much more revolutionist and determinant lady. Unlike Mariana, she boldly accepted the sorrows and miseries than herself to those males who basely try to wrong and exploit her. He further writes:

Isabella strikes the viewer as a rather brittle character who has never loved life, or as one who has never found anything lovable in life. Thus she stands amazed at Mariana's desire to embrace not only this often sorrowful life but also the man who has so basely wronged her.

Obviously; Isabella could never imagine herself doing so. (219)

Likewise some critics think it as the content of drama is realistic. Carolyn E. Brown (1996) asserts, "Shakespeare has drawn parallel between the character of duke Vincentio and king James I" He notes that the play work at two levels- as a glorification of the theory of divine right, and an example of the ultimate of human failing that plague even the most well- intentioned rulers.

Society itself has given a room to cultivate the notion of gender/sexuality in patriarchal society, one enjoys in belonging to the so called superior of masculine or male gender and the 'other' bears "status panic" for it is the given lower position- one belongs to. The consciousness roots on the fact how "one" is given more importance than the "other". Here 'one' represents male/masculinity and 'other' represents female femininity. 'One' is aware of being superior because the social position one affiliates to is higher class and the other feels inferior since it is lower position she has to fix

herself. The origin of conflict is located here; the attitude and concepts divert between or among the male and female so as to formalize the gender consciousness.

The present study creates a space to introduce representation of women's suffering and patriarchy in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. It makes a conclusion that the cause of problematic relationship between the characters in the drama is nothing but merely the representation of women's sufferings and pains in patriarchal Renaissance society of writer's time. This study paves a way through the psychological impact on the characters to create their own truth and the clash between the truths created.

Different literary critics have evaluated this drama from different point of views. This present study is going to concentrate on female's subjugation, identity crisis and gendered biasness in patriarchal society of Shakespeare's time. Especially, Isabella, the protagonist of the drama grows more assertive and rebellious against the normative gendered roles. She is empowered and then proved herself as rebellious and independent seeking lady. In order to escape troubled marriages and sexual excess that hold sway in the brothers of Vienna Isabella eschew the company of man and determine to become a nun. She rather prefers the company of women. This study will be based on the textual analysis of *Measure for Measure* supported by theoretical tool pertaining to feminist theory introduced in early twentieth century and twentieth century to the recent postmodern period.

Chapter II: Feminism, Writing and Similey

Feminism is a political cum literary movement advocating the gender equality and freedom in order to explore females' roles and space at political, cultural, and social level. The vital purpose of this doctrine is to redefine women's activities and goals from the women-centered point of view. Moreover, it refuses to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to an object, a second sex and something inferior. Feminism which pertains to the marginalization of women seeks to eliminate domination, inequalities, injustice and oppression faced by females just because of their sex. Thus, the aim of feminism is to identify and eliminate all kinds of sufferings and discrimination of women in patriarchal society.

The term 'feminism' has many orientations, so only a single definition cannot encapsulate the whole concept. To trace the history about the origin of word-It was derived from the French word 'feminisme' coined by utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The term was first used to denote the support for women's equal and legal rights with men. Feminism assumes that women have been excluded or marginalized from the mainstream of society and it is because of men they have been oppressed. So, feminists thinkers regard feminism as innovative, inventive and rebellious. Sheila Ruth, about this movement, posits her view as: "A conceptualization of women's movement that strikes me as more helpful and more constructive is simply that of women moving toward greater strength and freedom both in their awareness and in their socio-political position"(444). Similarly Beasley points out that the point of view of feminist writers is that the western thought is patriarchal and its authority needs to be questioned (Beasley 3). Beasley has collected some of the definitions from some dictionaries and other related books which are as follows:

Dictionaries usually define it as the advocacy of women's rights based on the belief in the equality of the sexes, and in its broadest use, the word refers to everyone who is aware of and seeking to end women's subordination in anyway and for any reason. Feminism originates in the perception that there is something wrong with the society's treatment of women. (27) (*Encyclopedia of Feminism*,1987)

The penguin dictionary of Sociology defines feminism as a doctrine asserting that women are systematically overlooked in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women (Beasley 27). E.Porter defines feminism as a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex (Beasley 27). R Delmer says:

It is certainly possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism. Many should agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remained negated and unsatisfied and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change [. . .] in the social, economic and political order. (27-8)

In the society women have been overlooked in such a way that the overlooking itself is a kind of rule. It is often because of hegemonic nature of men and patriarchy pervading in the society. Since men have been remained in powerful position, they have not paid much attention to the needs of women, they just patronized their own need. And this tendency has been practiced for centuries and centuries of human civilization. Since the beginning of human civilization men were taken as rational, active and superior beings whereas women were counted as inferior and passive. Women were placed to inferior ranks in society. They were treated as the means to

fulfill the men's need. As a result; women never achieved their independent identity. Not only in the society, this sort of discrimination and biasness prevail in literature too.

The views of intellectuals and philosophers whose mind was filled with the stereotypical identity of women got handed down the posterity along with the different periods of human history. In Greek civilization, Aristotle, a great philosopher, defined women as "incomplete men" from which statement most of his followers took his overlooking thought about women and they continued ill treatment toward women. His another statement justifies his neglecting tendency towards women "female is female by the virtue of a certain lack of qualities" (34).

Similarly St. Thomas Aquinas thought that a woman is "an imperfect man". The pre-Mendelian men considered their sperm as the active seeds which give form to the passively waiting sperm. Women were regarded as insignificant, invisible, and worthless being in patriarchal society. *The Old Testament* holds the similar view: women are an afterthought. God, knowing Adam to be in need of companion, created all the animals and brought them before him to be named- but for Adam there was not found a help mate for him. Therefore, Adam provided from his body, the material out of which Eve is made: ' she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man'(Genesis 314). Since the beginning of human civilization people made some rules and regulations which created a hierarchy between men and women. Along with the practice of the rules, the hierarchy became a kind of ideology which was male-created and remained constant in society. As a result, women began to be defined as a means to be consumed; not as human beings. They occupied almost no space in cultural, political, economic, social level as well as in literary disciplines. Hence it is

nothing but patriarchy and male chauvinism that makes women inferior and secondary.

Though the feminist movement got impetus in the late 1960s for the social, legal and cultural freedom and autonomy in every sphere of life, it had its origin form since two centuries earlier. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), is considered to be the first formal enhancement of feminist writing though many others had tried their hands before her too. In exploring women space and self, it is said that the origin of revolting voice against patriarchal ideology goes to seventeenth century female critic Mary Wollstonecraft. She also falls in the line of feminine writing that seeks the rights through the intimate relationship with men. Her essay advocates the women's social and political rights. In her famous essay, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* she asserts:

There are many follies, in some degree, peculiar to women: Sins against reason of Commission: as well as of Omission: but all flowing from ignorance of prejudices, I shall only point out such as appear to be particularly injurious to their moral character and in animadverting on them. I wish especially to prove that the weakness of mind and body, which men have endeavored, impelled by various motive to perpetuate, prevents their discharging the peculiar duty of their sex: for when weakness of body won't permit them to suckle their children, and weakness of mind makes them spoil their tempersis women in a natural state. (396)

Wollstonecraft appeals to understand the essence of the discrimination and to realize the potential abilities of women. She blames men as the most responsible factors in remaining women backwards. She advocates that the repressed condition of women is

because of lack of sufficient training and women neglecting tendency of the society in educational sectors. Women don't have fewer potentialities than men. She claims that women should be free to use their own abilities so as to receive many opportunities in politics and education as men have been doing.

The feminist revolutionary spirit implanted by Wollstonecraft, however, could not accelerate so speedily for more than coming one century. *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) by Margaret Fuller and *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by John Stuart Mill were the two major works on feminism in the whole nineteenth century.

Virginia Woolf, by writing *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* (1949), contributed greatly for the worldwide emergence of feminism in the first half of the twentieth century. Woolf focuses on situation of women authors throughout the history and their cultural, economic and educational disabilities within the patriarchal society which had prevented them from realizing their creative possibilities. The feminist trend of her time was concerned for 'absolute equality' between sexes. But Woolf, who belongs to the school of Gynocriticism deals with the issues like the social and economic obstacles extended before women that always restricts the women's creativity. For her women being imprisoned within domestic premises, cannot create their own literary works. According to her, due to the patriarchal social norms and values in the past prevented women writers to write openly because the work was considered as a sin. At the same time, the women writers who attempted to write were disfigured and deformed. They were not provided separate rooms for literary canons. So, a women writer has to write as Woolf says:

And so, since no women of sense and modesty could write books, Dorothy who was sensitive and melancholy, the very opposite of the Duchess in temper wrote nothing. A woman might write letters while she was sitting by her father's sick-bed. She could write them by the fire whilst the men talked without disturbing them. The strange thing I thought, turning over the pages of Dorothy's letters, what a gift that untaught and solitary girl had for the framing of a sentence, for the fashioning of the scene. (820)

Thus, the work explains about how women were imprisoned within the patriarchal social norms and the values and are stopped from the literary creation. It shows that the women of the then society were victims of the male's strict rules and regulations. In *A Room of One's Own*, the 'Room' refers freedom in concern of women's identity which women lack. Women don't have a room to express their own feelings rather they are captured in the "Concentration Camp". Woolf advocates "radical changes" that erase suppressed values of then society "shaped by men"(817).

Simon de Beauvoir, a feminist critic of twentieth century through *Second Sex* presents herself as one of the pioneer of modern feminism as she primarily focuses on Sartrean notion of existentialism (just reversed opinion of that of Rene Descartes: existence precedes the essence) (Critical Theory 998). Her *Second Sex* is the narrative of women's existential otherness. Basically she attacks the attitude of the scholars and writers who believe that women are a 'privileged other'. Clarifying the otherness she opines:

Each separate writer reflects the great collective myths: we have seen women as flesh; the flesh of the male is produced in the mother's body and recreated in the embraces of the women in love. Thus woman is

related to nature, she incarnates it; vales of blood, open rose, siren, the curve of a hill. She represents to man the fertile soil, the sap, the material of beauty and the soul of the world. (Qtd. in Adams 994)

A mark of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identity. Beauvoir accuses men for their belief that transcendence can only be attained by men. Men project women as an inherently demure creature and man as a powerful and virile so that latter can achieve transcendence. There is ambivalence in man's nature toward women for at one hand he calls woman a Muse, Goddess or Beatrice and he associates her with demon, death, cruel stepmother on the other hand. Women have been projected as 'other' subordinate being. Beauvoir rejects the otherness of women and gives proper reason for equality. The othering mystifies women's qualities and pushes them into isolation. The myth is utilized by men for their own purposeful mission is a means to look at women as being of luxury to be consumed. The myth is a mirage into which man makes his purposeful valuations. Finally Beauvoir realizes the bondage obstructing a woman's free path so it is difficult for them to accept their status as autonomous individual and other womanly destiny. Yet Beauvoir believes that when men realize the situation woman will be a full human being. Feminist thinkers, like Beauvoir, expect emancipation of women from all kind of oppressions and constraints. Their view focuses, in one way or other, on the urgency of ending the prejudices and discrimination between male and female.

Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) expresses that the female psyche is influenced by the generally culture but the general culture there is their own subculture which forms a collective experience of women. She thinks women are naturally different from men since they have their own type of body, language, psyche and capacity to behave and think. She invented the term

‘gynocritics’ to describe the study of women as writers in which they are invented to speak for themselves. She divided women feminist critic into two groups : women as reader and women as writers. The first mode offers feminist reading of texts which considers the images and stereotypes of women literature and the second mode is the study of women as writers which considers history, style, themes, genres and structure of writing by women. In this essay, she examines the British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing from the point of view of women’s experience. She takes the view that while there is no fixed or innate female sexuality or female imagination, there is nevertheless a profound difference between women’s writing and men’s. She thinks that the new language or the language with sexism can integrate women’s intelligence, experience, reason, suffering, skepticism and vision. She further says:

The task of feminism critics is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our skepticism and our vision. The enterprise should not be confined to women. I invite Criticus, Poeticus and Plutarchus to share it with us. One thing is certain feminist criticism is not visiting. It is here to stay, and we must make it a permanent home.

(1233)

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is another brilliantly written massive book on historical study of feminism which stresses especially the psychodynamics of women written in nineteenth century. Gilbert and Gubar in this book locate the place in its large context and examine the boarder in which women writers defined themselves as free as male writers. About the condition of women writers, they say:

What does it mean to be a women writer in a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are, as we have seen, both overtly and covstly patriarchal? If we vex the polarities of angel and monster; sweet dump, snow white and fierce mad queen are major images offered to women in literary tradition. How does such imagery influence and encourage the ways in which women attempt to hold their pen? (Adams 1235)

Gilbert and Gubar's main argument is that artistic creativity of the nineteenth century tradition which is perceived basically as a male quality is in fact patriarchal superimposition upon the women writers who are imprisoned within it. In the image of 'Devine Creator' the male authors fathers the text. But taking the same masculine cosmic author as their model, women end up copying or identifying with the dominant literary images of femininity which comes out of the phallogentric myth of creativity. They suggest the female writers first to struggle against the effect of socialization that becomes struggle against men's oppressive reading of women. But they further argue that the women can begin such struggle only by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal authority is possible.

Patriarchy weaves such a network of power in which the entrapement of females by males is not only easy in all socio-eco-political fronts but also justifiable, at least to the patriarch. Marilyn French in *Beyond Power* analyses patriarchy and its effects on the world at large- including women, men and children. She defines patriarchy as a system that values power over life, control over pleasure and dominance over happiness. According to French:

[. . .] Patriarchy is not enough either to devise a morality that will allow the human race simply to survive. Survival is an evil when it entails existing in a state of wretchedness. Intrinsic to survival and continuation is felicity, pleasure. Pleasure has been much maligned, diminished by philosopher and conquers as a value for the timid, the small- minded and the self – indulgent. "Virtue" involves the renunciation of pleasure in the name of some higher purpose, a purpose that involves power (for men) or sacrifice (for women). Pleasure is described as shallow and frivolous in a world of high- minded, serious purpose. But pleasure doesn't exclude serious pursuits or intentions. Indeed it is found in them and it is the only real reason for living alive. (56)

Similarly, Judith Butler propounded an innovative idea regarding the social responsibility that is founded not only on our mutual dependency on others but also upon the vulnerability established in that dependency. In a key essay in *Precarious Life*, she writes that:

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the grace of others, but also to touch, and to violence and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very body for which we struggle are not quite even our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Instituted as a social phenomenon it's the public sphere, the body is and is not mine. (26)

Thus, vulnerability- which entails finitude, contingency and openness to external force is characteristics of the body in its presentation to and with others. For her,

vulnerability is a 'precondition of humanization'. According to Butler, the condition of being given to another from the start implies an irrecoverable vulnerability and opacity in the very constitution of subject or "I".

The feminist analysis explores the fact that women have been excluded from the political exercises. In this regard, feminist criticism is mostly aware of the suppression of women in society as well as literature. Male dominated society disregard the creative potentiality of female. Females are stereotyped as unintelligent, incompetent, physically weak to male. This stereotypical images force women to become dependent, weak, and submissive. Female stereotype is the patriarchal definition that is to be broken apart. In patriarchy, everything is analyzed from male perspective. Anne- Fracins, Wendy Warning, Pam Stavropoulos and John Kirby jointly write about stereotype as:

A stereotype is a political practice that divides the world into like and unlike, self and other. It is a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Different stereotypes applied to particular social group or community may attribute to them conflicting characteristics. This apparent contradiction reveals the facts that stereotype are (a) generated by those outside the group and (b) are part of a political strategy for managing a group in community. While marginalized groups received negative stereotypes: powerful groups are endowed with positive stereotypes. Against the way women are stereotyped as emotional, nurturing, sensitive and deferring, men are seen as powerful, emotionless and authoritarian. (141-142)

Stereotypes exclude or reject everything which falls out of definition- everything which is different. It sets up symbolic boundaries and then provides the mechanisms of cultural production for people to strengthen those boundaries. People use stereotypes to determine who should naturally belong to one group or another. One person cannot produce and circulate a stereotype all alone; stereotypes function within the groups of people as knowledge. Importantly, they are usually produced by people who are positioned to circulate their ideas widely so that even the group stereotyped may come to take on this as a kind of fact.

The women have both images of being fascinating and destructive in patriarchal society. They are stereotyped as either good women or bad women. If a woman accepts her traditional gender roles of being gentle, passive, emotional, virginal, angelic, and obeys the patriarchal roles, she is counted as 'good woman'; if she doesn't she is called 'bad woman'. These two roles also identify women as 'Madonna' and 'Whore' or 'angel' and 'bitch'. These two images are projection of patriarchal male desire. We also find the images of 'good girl' and 'bad girl' in the following Lois Tyson's words:

According to a patriarchal ideology, 'bad girls' violate patriarchal norms in some ways; they are sexually forward in appearance or behavior or they have multiple sexual partners. The 'good girl' is rewarded for her 'good' behavior by being placed on a pedestal by patriarchal culture. She is attributed all the virtues associated with patriarchal femininity and domesticity; she is modest, unassuming, self sacrificing and nurturing. She has no needs of her own, she is completely satisfied by serving her family. (89)

Feminist writing covers a broader scope and embraces variety of aspects in relation to humanity. Despite the fact that its primary focus is on the issues of women, several dimensions have been shown ranging from liberal attitudes and the demand of equal rights for sexes to the radical ones voicing out the extreme ideology that tends to theoretically turn the patriarchy up and down. Some thinkers have adopted liberal feminism and some radical one. While along side these other feminist thinkers have developed their affiliation to certain theoretical backgrounds, they include political feminism, Marxist/social feminism, poststructuralist feminism etc. Yet their aim too calls for women's own identity in society.

Radical feminism which was established as a feminist criticism remained revolutionary in respect to women's issues. It posits hostility toward patriarchy. The notion of sexual oppression is intimately connected with a strong emphasis on the sisterhood of women. Chris Beasley reports Johnson as defining it as "one of the basic tenets of radical feminism is that any woman [. . .] has more in common with any other women regardless of class, race, age, ethnic group nationality than any woman has with any man" (Beasley 54). It encourages some degree of separatism from men because it recommends putting women first making them a primary concern. Radical feminists, like Showalter demand an expression of female sexuality in literature which will burst through the bonds of male logic with a poetic power that defines the tyranny of logo centric meaning. Beside sexual oppression, radical feminists often view other forms of power for example, unequal power relation within capitalism as derived from patriarchy. They think that at least sex is the primary oppression. Radical feminists writing aims to counter women's supposedly natural, biological inferiority and subordination within patriarchal society by asserting their at least equal

status in relation to men. After Showalter, this radical notion got nourished by her followers: Kate Millet, Michele Barrett, Norman Mailor and others.

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1977) signifies a significant point in feminist writing on literature. The unequal roles assigned to females in society resulted in subordination and domination; this is what Millet calls 'sexual politics'. This book displays the enforcement of power relation with sexual differences in relation to the power mechanism of society:

She analyzes the Western social arrangement and institution as covert ways of manipulating power so as to establish and perpetuate the dominance of men and the subordination of women. In her books she attacks the male bias in Freud's psychoanalysis and also analyzed selected passage by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailor as revealing the ways in which the authors in their fictional fantasies, aggrandize their aggressive phallic selves and degrade women as submissive sexual objects. (Qtd. In M.H. Abrahams)

As these lines refer, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* shows that it is men who enjoy power to constrain women. Since there is a fact that women have been excluded from the exercise of political power the feminist analysis of politics, therefore, is necessary. Millet opposed the gender discrimination and studies institution in which women have been still underrepresented.

It is with Millet's *Sexual Politics* modern feminist writing began. And in the earlier phase, the emphasis was often political in the sense that the writers were expressing anger of injustice and were engaged in raising women's political awareness of their oppression by men. They believe that politics has been dominated by masculine to express their identity implicitly or explicitly. The writing asserts the

need of avoiding gender discrimination and that of allowing women to take free breath as man do in the society.

Similarly Michele Barrett is another feminist who begun joint venture with Kate Millet to advocate against women's oppression. She not only blames patriarchy to be the root cause of women's oppression, she thinks there are many other issues to be raised together. Barrett steps further giving an interesting view that any text lacks the 'meaning'. Meaning is formed because of ideologies, circumstance, values and space of reader in society. Giving common view against women's suppression Millet and Barrett say: "The oppressor is seen as consciously endeavoring to sustain the oppression indefinitely through ideology [. . .] literary values and conventions have themselves been shaped by men and women have often struggled to express their own concern [. . .]" (Qtd. in Selden 138-139).

They view that women don't have their own ideologies. They are in problem to express their view in male dominated society. Women are always suppressed by males by forcing them to obey their rules.

Gender/Sexuality

Sex refers to the biological characteristics which differentiate human beings as male and female. Thus, it is natural and fundamental biological traits. On the other hand, gender is created by society. It is conceptualization sowed in every human being's mind. The society and culture introduce the status and role of male and female. So gender is not fundamentally biological feature, it is social and cultural construct. According to social and cultural norms and values, the community creates boundaries and assigns different roles and identities to males and females. Not only it divides the human race into two categories, it privileges male over female. Anne Cranny in *Gender Studies* quotes Aristotle's opinion as, "Men were stronger, women

weaker; men courageous, women cautious [. . .] men educate children; women nurture them” (20). Moreover, gender is the set of roles and cultural meanings acquired in the course of ego formation within family structures. So, gender is one of the feminism’s most central categories of inquiry and it internalizes/intersects with many other social systems which are governed by binary oppositions. They have to pay prime attention to how these markers of differences work to constitute and reinforce individual and social subjectivities.

The concept of patriarchy or sexism is the major ideological values which all feminist criticism share as their motto. All the feminists agree that the entire cultural phenomena are dominated by patriarchal values. Feminists write for freedom, autonomy and self identity of women. They think that men should take females as their necessary counter parts and help them to come in the independent arena. The feminist are heading to maintain and recreate the individual freedom and self- identity in society. With the choice of the self-activity and subjectivity of the person Maria Mies focuses her view on autonomy and says:

[. . .] autonomy means the preservation of human essence in women [. . .] it is also a struggling concept which was developed to demonstrate the women’s want to get separate from being mixed and male dominated organizations. They desire for autonomous organization with their own visions, programs and methods. (40-41)

For her, true identity and freedom are necessary components for life. Females as mentioned above are in quest of freedom from male dominated organization and false identity. Alison Prentice and Ruth Pierson say; "women as a human should not have to make a greater sacrifice for autonomy than men” (164).

On the other hand, Butler has collapsed the sex/gender distinction in order to argue that there is no sex that is not always already gender. All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence and there is no existence that is not social, which means that there is no 'natural body' that pre-exists its cultural inscription. She makes the conclusion that gender is not something one *is*, it is something one *does*, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a 'doing' rather than a 'being'.

Butler elaborates this idea in the first chapter of *Gender Trouble*:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is a successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. (62)

To sum up, my study of feminism especially redefinitions and re-conceptualizations of women explored by radical nature of feminist have helped me to generate arguments and justify the protagonist of Shakespeare's drama *Measure for Measure*. The feminist movement has given us a perspective to analyze the drama in scrupulous manner. It has enabled us to understand the female psyche and their struggle to bring about new possibilities in both personal and social lives. The application of the approach 'feminism' on the drama will be discussed in next chapter.

Chapter III: Representation of Women's Suffering and Patriarchy in *Measure for Measure*

This study deals in revealing the women's suffering in the societies where males norms and ideologies pervade. Shakespeare has made the use of frank treatment of sex and vague use of language as a powerful weapon to dominate women politically, economically, culturally and physically. He has represented women as 'other' and man as 'self' focusing the gender differences. In every patriarchal society, males generate their own rules and regulations in order to control over females. When there erupts clash between male's interest and female's regarding their way of life, perception, interpretation, cultural values and social ethos; it is termed class conflict. There lies an uneradicable hierarchy between males and females since the beginning of human civilization. This hierarchy creates a trend of biasness and discrimination on the basis of sex in patriarchal society. Females are oppressed, dominated and misrepresented. The males basically give rise to certain ideologies that define males as ruler, protector, powerful and creative whereas negative references such as other, subordinate, imperfect and submissive are used to define females because of the lack of identifying male organ. In the process of being socialized and up grown, the females are taught to internalize and practice the reigning patriarchal ideology about the male superiority and female inferiority.

In patriarchal society, women are deprived of power, freedom and income generating activities. They are treated as passive recipients of male's sympathy and support. Nonetheless, in such societies the power- relation ships were firmly patriarchal in nature. They possess a social vision in which it is perceived as 'natural' and 'common place' that men should control the dominant position of power. On the

other hand, women are considered as the "weaker vessel". This sort of patriarchal ethos and values are dominant throughout the drama *Measure for Measure* as well.

In the first scene of the play, Duke, Escalus and other councilors have gathered at the council- chamber in the Duke's palace at Vienna. They have got assembled in this place in order to identify and select a fit person to handle or undertake the responsibility of Dukedom. When the Duke imparted his design to Lord Escalus, his chief counselor, Escalus said, "if any man in Vienna be of worth to undergo such ample grace and honor it is lord Angelo" (27). This statement of Escalus vividly exemplify that the males have no conception regarding the females as rulers. Then, the Duke departed from Vienna under pretence of making a Journey into Poland, leaving Angelo to act as the lord deputy in his absence; but the Duke's absence was only a feigned one, for he privately returned to Vienna, habited like a friar, with the intent to watch unseen the conduct of the saintly seeming Angelo

Females are always doomed to be ruled. Degree of ownership to power and resources determine level of independence. If one possesses more power and property there is chance to be free and independent. Obligation to deprivation of power is to accept rule over them. Patriarchy believes father as protecting and ruling figure whether that be in family unit, society or in the nation. Restoration of line of fathers means restoration of patriarchal system. There is no possibility of ruling by females in the society where every nook and corner is influenced by patriarchal value system. Women in this system either have to surrender or be ready to get penalty as the system demands, if they try to violate the laws set by patriarchy.

Tragedy revived patriarchal ideology which separated men and women in the society by exposing certain laws for women and men. It is the representation of social and political hierarchy. So tragedy gives birth to gender discrimination. The world of

tragedy is on the behalf of the male whereas female role in tragedies is like that of a doll or plaything which can be modeled according to the wish of the player. Tragedy is the product of the patriarchal norms which establishes a long dichotomy between male and female. Tragedy teaches that a decent woman should not even attempt to cross the established rules and regulations of the society and should not revolt against men that she should be demure not dauntless, she should always be under the control of men. Patriarchal society is structured under male ideology. Structure of society is in favour of males. Females are just supportive to males. In patriarchal state replacement of ruler is only possible if that be himself a male. It is reveled in Duke's dialogue as:

Angelo [. . .]. There is a kind of character in thy life,
That to th'observer doth thy history
Fully unfold: thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves: for if over virture [. . .]
In our remove, be thou at full ourself:
Mortality and mercy in Vienna (29)

Before the starting of drama, Claudio, a gentleman had seduced a young lady from her parents. Juliet, his beloved, was impregnated before her marriage in this connection, it can be claimed that the tussle between male and females and the violence upon female character is generated by the gender differences existing in patriarchal society. Females are not free to spend life on their own. They are in constraint to submit themselves for male's sake.

In a way this drama is concerned largely with Isabella though other female character is often felt. At first, Isabella finds difficulty in assimilating sensuous experience. She willingly tries her best to deviate from ordinary life through religious intensity which would make the world for her a nunnery garden or paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing. Isabella as well as Francisca desire to free themselves from the worldly affairs where they could not be able to attain any thing except their physical body. So, they grew religious intensity leaving all other activities. It becomes clear that they try their best to liberate themselves from male's preference to become nun abandoning all fake and torturing relationship with males.

Isabella: And have you nuns no further privileges?

Nun: Are not these large enough?

Isabella: Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more

But rather wishing a more strict restraint

upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare. (Scene I,44)

Isabella seems highly enthusiastic on her commitment. It was her intent, after passing her probation as a novice, to take the veil. So, she was inquiring to a nun concerning the rules of the convent. She believes in achieving utmost freedom and pleasure in association with females rather than with males.

Similarly, Shakespeare in this play, *Measure for Measure*, portrays most of the male characters with power and reputation. Angelo, the deputy governor, is shown marvelous, strong, and hardworking and exposed to civilized society. Beside all these, he has strong determination to do anything for the state whereas the female protagonist, Isabella, is luxurious, beautiful, domesticated and inferior. Her interests and choices as well as ways of life are contradictory with other males. We don't find

any mutual, static, harmonious marital relationship between male and female characters. Since they are biologically gendered into two: one is man and the other is woman, which is considered to opposite sexes in patriarchal social norms and values, in it male's choices must lead to females. That is why all relationship between male and female characters head toward disintegration. The irresolvable dispute is not simply that of between two classes; bourgeoisie and proletariat as claimed by Karl Marx but in general a conflict between two genders; man who may be found in a strong association with 'public life and supremacy' and the women in 'domestic life and fragile'.

Throughout the drama we find ample stereotypical representation of females. Females are addressed not by highlighting their intellect and other good qualities, rather their beauty and physicality always get priority. We perceive such trait in the Lucio's speech as well; "Hail, virgin, if such you be, as the roses on your cheeks proclaim you are no less [. . .]" (44). Isabella is presented as lovely, beautiful, delicate and a little shrink which describes women as commodity.

Likewise, the impact of psychological stance of the 'other' and 'inferiority' pervade in the mental space of Isabella. When Lucio asks her to do some request and prayer for softening Angelo for her brother's release, she utters herself as- "Alas ! what poor ability is there in me to do him good? I doubt I have no power to move Angelo" (46). Isabella lacks determination and zeal. It is not because of her disablement but the psychological stance.

Shakespeare, like in his other popular plays, grants dominant role and utmost power to male characters in this drama *Measure for Measure*. Being a male dramatist, he has misrepresented females. He possesses extreme social and cultural influence. The patriarchal cultural norms and values pervade in his plays.

Though males disregard women's sufferings and problems; females are more sensitive and serious regarding their sibling's freedom, honor and pain. Isabella gets extreme grief by hearing her brother, Claudio's imprisonment. "I have a brother is condemned to die. I do beseech you, let it be his fault, And not my brother" (60). She even desires to sacrifice her soul for his release and betterment. Isabella goes to Angelo and requests him to forgive her brother.

Isabella: Must he needs die?

Angelo: Maiden, no remedy.

Isabella: Yes, I do think that you might pardon him

And neither heaven nor man grief at the mercy.

Angelo: I will not do't.

Isabella: But can you, if you would?

Angelo: Look what I will not, that I cannot do.

Isabella: But might you do't, and do the world no

Wrong, if so your heart were touched with
that remorse. As mine is to him.

(Scene II, 61)

It seems that Isabella is very loyal and serious regarding her brother's pain and suffering. Males are portrayed as more merciless, dominant and inhuman. Angelo further plans to take advantage of this up-growing circumstances. Angelo invites her the next day "well: come to me to- morrow. I will bethink me" (65). By this time, evil desires have started to flourish in Angelo's mind and heart. Because of their straight forwardness females undergo ample bitter experiences in life. Their voices for honor, freedom and independence always get marginalized. Female characters in this drama are highly suppressed.

Angelo as a man plays a vital role to dominate, control and suppress Isabella, who is represented as the 'other'. When Isabella comes to the palace in the morning, the next day, Angelo desires she might be admitted alone to his presence and being there, he says to her, if she would yield to him her virgin honor and transgress even as Juliet had done with Claudio, he would give her brother's life. Angelo's intentional and belying plan makes Isabella amazed and furious. For exploiting Isabella, Angelo remains more commanding

Angelo: Say you so? Then I shall pose you quickly....

Which had you rather- that the most just law
now took your brother's life, or to redeem him
give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he had stained?

Isabella: Sir, believe this,

I had rather give my body than my soul.

Angelo: I talk not of your soul: our compelled sins stand more for
number than account

Isabella: How say you?

Angelo: Nay, I'll not warrant that: for I can speak against the thing I
say[. . .]. Answer to this I (now the voice of the recorded law)
pronounce a sentence on your brother's life [. . .]. To save your
brother's life? (Scene II, 72-73)

Isabella, going before Angelo to plead her brother's cause, met with little success at first. Nevertheless, Angelo's cold heart is somewhat touched by Isabella's beauty. He has become so passionately aroused as to forget his reputation for saintly behavior. He tells Isabella frankly that she could obtain her brother's release only by

yielding herself to his lustful desires. Angelo's lust for Isabella may indeed be caused by his deeper desire to locate the source of his own sexuality outside his body. It is the result of patriarchy because males are free to expose their interests publicly whereas females are always under restriction. Without hesitation Angelo utters; "Plainly conceive I love you, Isabella" (76).

Isabella is shocked at Angelo's words. She grows more rebellious. She asserts that she would expose him in public. Moreover, she challenges Angelo for his exploitation and domination over women and assaults on orthodox patriarchs for using their politics of power to suppress women. She claims that a woman is not a puppet to impose order. She even prepares to sacrifice her life then to surrender herself before Angelo. She revolts courageously against the corrupted male ruler. Her revolution is not for power and other's injustice rather it is for chastity, freedom and self-identity. Though several women rebel against male's brutal deeds in patriarchal societies they are strictly controlled and dominated. Voices of females always remain marginalized and similar is the case of Isabella. Angelo becomes amused after hearing Isabella's threaten of exposing him in public.

Isabella: I know your virtue hath a license in't,
which seems a little fouler than it is
To pluck on others.

Angelo: Believe me, on mine honour,
My words express my purpose

Isabella: Ha; little honor to be much believed,
and most pernicious purpose [. . .]. Seeming, seeming [. . .]
I will proclaim thee, Angelo- look for't !
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,

or with an out stretched throat I'll tell the world aloud
what men thou art.

Angelo: Who will believe thee, Isabella? My
unspoiled name, th' austereness of my life,
my vouch against you, and my place I'th
state, with so you accusation over weigh,
[. . .] Say what you can; my false o'er
weighs your true (Scene II, 78)

The grim consideration of the nature of justice and morality in both civic and psychological context is explored in *Measure of Measure*. Angelo, who was renowned for his probity and puritanical stringency falls victim to the sexual license. Angelo's self- delusion and cynical moralism clash with Isabella's innocence and quest for self-identity. Angelo is an embodiment of a strident morality distorted by his own power over other. He is a representative male figure who symbolizes the male-dominated sexual hierarchy existing in patriarchal societies. Male dominate females just because they lack male representating sexual organs.

Isabella after listening to Angelo and threatening him to expose publicly rushes toward prison to meet her brother, Claudio. Meanwhile, Isabella is face with an especially nasty dilemma, since her choice is between her honour and her brother's life. Neither is a noble alternative, and Claudio is not strong enough to after himself up for her. Unfortunately, when Claudio shows his reluctance, she behaves petulantly rather than graciously. She finds her self as a helpless and isolated. She is not large enough to ennoble her moral context. Though Claudio was outraged after hearing Angelo's proposal, the thought of death so terrified him that he finally begged Isabella

to placate Angelo and give her to him. Isabella, horrified by her brother's attitude, lashed out at him with a scornful speech.

Isabella : What says my brother?

Claudio : Death is a fearful thing.

Isabella : And shamed life a hateful.

Claudio : Ay' but to die, and go we know not where,

To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot,

This sensible warm motion- to become

A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit

To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside [. . .]

Isabella : Alas ! Alas !

Claudio: Sweet sister, let me live.....

What sin you do, to save a brother's life,

Nature dispenses with the deed so far,

That is become a virtue.

Isabella: O, you beast,

O faithless, coward, o, dishonest wretch

with thou be made a man out of my vice ?

It is not a kind of incest to take life

From thine our sister's shame?

What should I think?

Heaven shield my mother played my father fair [. . .]

(Scene III, 84-85)

Isabella's heart was torn up after hearing her brother's betraying response. Her cry for help remained unheard. Her attempt to save her virginity falls into threat. Still,

she has not lost her hope. She becomes much bold and firm in her decision later Claudio repented of his weakness. Overwhelmed with shame and sorrow for his fault he says, " let me ask my sister's pardon. I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it" (87). Claudio's realization of his mistake reinforced Isabella's mission to some extend.

Meanwhile, Isabella is interrupted by the Duke at prison's gate. He commends her virtuous resolution saying, " the hand that made you fair, hath made you good: the goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair[. . .]" (88). The duke Vincentio is astonished by her beauty, he plans to redeem her from Angelo not for her honour and chastity rather he plans to prove himself as an honest person and win her heart. Also the Duke advises Isabella to substitute Mariana for Angelo's bed.

Not only the life of Isabella is worsening .Mariana, the other female character, is left in tears. Glory of her life has been withered. It has already been five years; the misery and misfortune has occurred in her life. As the Friar, disguised Duke, to Isabella, she was betrothed to Angelo. Mariana's marry remained unborn since her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel of dowry. Along with her noble brother she loses the sinew of her fortune. It is very convenient to argue here that the female's pleasure and charm of life rely upon male's willingness and decision. Females are victims of male brutality. In patriarchal society females are bound to follow males. They are not free to revolt and maintain self identity. Mariana is considered as a good to be consumed. Her quest for happiness, settled married life and transcendence into new mode of life stunted along with Angelo's rejection. As narrated by Duke:

Left in her tears, and dried into one of them with his comfort:
swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour:
in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for
his sake: and he, a marble on her tears, is washed with them, but
relents not. (Scene III, 89)

This scene depicts the helplessness of females. They are not treated as human beings. Female's life is no more precious than dowry. They are puppets and sexual toys for males. Even in this ruining situation, females remain silent since they have internalized the system of tolerance being subordinated.

Though Mariana is betrayed and harshly treated by Angelo, she still awaits him in life. She is loyal and faithful towards him. Mariana, though left by Angelo supposing dishonor in her, she is still proud to announce herself as his wife. Mariana loves her cruel husband with the full continuance of her first affection. Mariana agrees to substitute Isabella to satisfy Angelo as his bed. So that it could be the means to force Angelo to marry her. In the context of revealing herself to Lucio, Mariana says; " My Lord, I do confess . I ne'er was married, And I confess beside I am no maid. I have known my husband, yet my husband knows not [. . .]" (Scene V, 141). Mariana lacks her identity. She is neither maid, widow nor wife.

In one way or other, this play illustrates the women's suffering. All female characters have degraded life. They don't experience the progress, freedom and pleasure in life. Shakespeare has raised a variety of compelling issues such as; the relationship between men and women, gender roles and human sexuality. The status of women in the then society is revealed more explicitly in Angelo's dialogue to the Duke.

I did but smile till now

Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice-
My patience here is touched: I do perceive
These poor informal women are no more
But instruments of some more mightier member
That sets them on [. . .] Let me have way, my lord,
To find this practice out. (Scene V, 143-144)

At the end of the play, Isabella abandons her religious commitment. She is silent in the face of Duke's marriage proposal though the Duke has used subterfuge to accomplish his aims. However, the Duke, who has disguised as a friar, helped Isabella to escape from Angelo's evil desires at first later couldn't redeem himself from her enchanting beauty. He wants to possess her in his life. He lures Isabella saying;

If he be like your brother, for his sake
Is he pardoned and, for your lovely sake,
Give me your hand, and say you will be mine,
He is my brother too: but fitter time for that
By this lord Angelo perceives he is safe-
Me thinks I see a quick'ning in his eye:
Well Angelo, your evil quits you well [. . .]
Look that you love your wife; her worth, worth yours
I find an apt remission in myself. (Scene V, 158)

The acceptance of Duke's proposal depicts the female's subordinated position, Females have internalized the belief that they shouldn't neglect or reject men's proposal and willingness for maintaining harmony and stability in society. Her effort for creating self-identity remains unaccomplished. In this very context, Shakespeare has exposed the patriarchal social reality of existing society through inability of

women to establish their own norms due to restraint of prevailing patriarchal social structure at that time. Similarly Mariana is married to someone who doesn't want her in life. Though the female characters try to free themselves from the cultural restraints that restrict their identity freedom within a narrow boundary they couldn't get victory. The females are portrayed as helpless beings in absence of male. They are forcefully controlled by males as the toys or any other means of entertainment. By the very birth, the females in patriarchal societies are taught to internalize the male's rules and values though they are against female's freedom and prosperity. Thus, this research portrays the condition of females in patriarchal society especially during Shakespeare's time.

IV. Conclusion

William Shakespeare depicts the very nature and repercussion of the patriarchal system of contemporary Elizabethan England in *Measure for Measure*. In his treatment of male and female characters, we can distinctly feel and observe the deeply ingrained assumptions and ideals of patriarchy. The defining elements of patriarchy in drama can be taken as its male-dominated, male-centered and male identified characters. Patriarchy is a set of symbols and ideas that forms a culture hegemonized and constrained by male's ethos and interests. Patriarchal culture determines the separate beliefs and thoughts regarding women and forces them to be content in subsidiary social roles. Manhood and masculinity are most closely associated with 'human norms and rationality' whereas womanhood and femininity are relegated to the marginal position of 'other'. Patriarchal culture defines men as women as opposites, about "naturalness" of male aggression, competition and dominance and of female caring, co-operation and subordination. It is about the valuing of masculinity and maleness and devaluing of femininity and femaleness. In a patriarchal society, men possess the authority of naming, defining, explaining and directing the female to their wish. Thus, women are perceived from the masculine perspective and are forced to adopt the images wrought upon them by male power. The patriarchal society prevents women to live as human beings and to have equal authority. The patriarchal ideology degrades women as subordinate beings.

The representation of Isabella, Mariana, Juliet and other female character's suffering in *Measure for Measure* is more pathetic. This situation is in strict adherence to dictate the injustice and domination prevailing in patriarchal society. All the female characters are deprived of social and economical opportunities, personal liberty and individuality. None of these female characters are successful in

establishing their own reputation and freedom. They are associated to the names of male counterparts. Their voice has always been marginalized. All of them are confined within the boundary of domesticity. They lack social mobility and prospects of personal enhancement.

Isabella, the protagonist, suffers from alienation and faces numerous domestic problems and is left in no-win position. She becomes utmost gloomy when all males including her brother didn't listen her wail for her chastity. Truly, her position is intolerable. She spends more time speaking in defense of her virtue. Young and innocent females like Isabella have to confront ample hurdles and pains in patriarchal society. The quest for evil-will in males especially those with power in societies push the female's reputation and virginity into threat. Isabella, like many other female characters in drama, is condemned to spend hellish life. From the beginning of the drama till its end she is interiorized, dominated and marginalized by the patriarchal social system. She is victim of male supremacy throughout her life and has a very limited sort of existence.

The suffering, tortures, domination and bitter violence experienced by Mariana and Juliet in the drama is a strong evidence to strengthen the fact that women are treated as 'other' or a kind of 'deficient male'. Mariana is left in great tension and grief by Angelo, the deputy governor. Though Mariana had been betrothed to Angelo, the marriage was cancelled after her brother had been lost at sea with her dowry. In patriarchal societies, females have no justice to their will. They are always considered as the commodity to be consumed. She is left alone and fully discarded by the society when she is rejected by her fiancée. Being woman, living in society where patriarchal social norms and values are at practice, cannot choose another mate of her choice or interest. This sort of attempt and rebel is strictly prohibited according to the principle

of patriarchy. On the other hand men are free to break the marriage, choose the partner of their interest and even loot the chastity of females they like even after marriage. Mariana, even after betrayal by Angelo plans to sacrifice her whole life for getting him. This event is convenient to reinforce the argument that the females happily support and enjoy their position as 'subordinate, inferior and other'.

Since the very childhood, the society forces females to internalize the paradoxical, hierarchical and brutal norms created by patriarchal society. All the female characters in drama are elongated from social position and are frowned upon by everybody. They pass their life miserably. Moreover, they are compelled to limit their desires and spend tortured life with frustration ever.

Francisca bears the same fate. In order to escape troubled marriages, sexual excess that hold sway in state of Vienna she as well as Isabella eschew the company of man and determine to become a nun. They choose the religious path to redeem themselves from the male's excessive trouble violence and lusty quest.

In this play *Measure for Measure*, males have been represented as rational and powerful while females as 'other' or a kind of 'non-human'. The sentiment of Apollo's idea must be recalled here; "since the male seed is all important, any female will suffice" (657). For Duke and Angelo, women should be demure and submissive. Isabella, the female protagonist is in a derogatory situation. She boldly rebel against the males at first but later patriarchal ideology forces her nature to change and she become submissive and womanly. It is convenient to argue so because she even remains silence when Duke purposes her. She adheres the accompany with males which she has been abandoning earlier. William Shakespeare in this drama attempts to show that patriarchy is an unalterable situation and any procedure to its abolition would lead to anarchy and chaos in existing society.

Thus, in *Measure for Measure* William Shakespeare has explicitly depicted the women's suffering and bitter experiences such as; deprivation of power and freedom, subordination, victimization and forceful internalization of patriarchal ethos. Patriarchal ideology pervade throughout the drama. The females are used and manipulated by the males as sexual toys and left in wilderness. They are depicted simply as helpless beings without the males. The unsuccessful, degrading and wearisome life of all the female characters in drama pictures us the life of female in patriarchal societies.

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