Evaluating Shakespearean *Macbeth & Othello* through the Lens of Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics Model

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse Shakespearean tragedies, *Macbeth and Othello*, in accordance with the feminist stylistic framework proposed by Sara Mills in her book *Feminist Stylistics*. By drawing on the paradigm of feminist linguistics proposed by Mills, this research attempts to delineate the gendered implications of language employed by Shakespeare in *Othello* and *Macbeth*, thereby highlighting how the language of these plays both reasserts and contradicts patriarchal notions and gender hierarchies. The principal focus is on the linguistic utterances and the speech acts of the two pivotal female characters from both texts - Lady Macbeth and Desdemona. Through a lexical, syntactic and discourse analysis of the speech acts of these two primary female characters, this study reveals that gendered beliefs are embedded within the semantic structure of the aforementioned Shakespearean tragedies. By examining the linguistic passivity of Desdemona and the rhetorical authority of Lady Macbeth within the context of the Elizabethan era, this research posits that both language and gendered framework are rooted in the sociohistorical and sociocultural ideologies of the society in which the text is produced. Building upon the frameworks of discourse analysis and feminist criticism, this study offers a nuanced perspective of the politics of language and the linguistic representation of gender evident in *Macbeth* and *Othello*.

Keywords: Feminist Stylistic Framework, Sociocultural Ideologies, Discourse Analysis, Gendered Framework, Speech Acts

Introduction

Siti Hardiyanti asserts that Shakespeare was a prolific playwright of Elizabethan era - an age of "development in art, literature, science and politics" (Craig, 1965). Each of his plays stands as a single, new entity within itself. Shakespearean tragedies in particular are multifaceted

as they deal with a wide range of themes - moving from the domesticated social realm to monarchy, and then the macrocosmic political world.

This research offers an in-depth linguistic analysis of two Shakespearean tragedies, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. The primary focus of this research is to critically observe how these texts depict the primary female characters in accordance with the lens of feminist stylistics model proposed by Sara Mills. Mills is a contemporary linguist and Professor Emeritus in the field of linguistics in England. Her central area of interest is feminism with an emphasis on: feminist linguistics, textual and discourse analysis, and post-colonial framework. This study offers a comparative study of Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth* and Desdemona from *Othello*, by placing these female characters within the theoretical context of Sara Mills' feminist stylistics.

Although Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello* have long been praised for their profound examination of ambition, jealously, and moral deterioration, a feminist linguistic analysis of the portrayal of gender and power in these tragedies has not been extensively addressed in the existing scholarship. Thus, this study proposes a linguistic and stylistic framework for identifying the nuanced ways in which language creates, upholds, or contradicts patriarchal notions in these two Shakespearean tragedies. In order to uncover the relationship between language, gender, and power, this research examines the ways in which Lady Macbeth and Desdemona are positioned within the texts, through an in-depth evaluation of: narrative voice, transitivity patterns, and vocabulary choices. By highlighting how Shakespeare's linguistic devices both mirror and challenge gender-based beliefs of the Elizabethan era, this research attempts to provide a new understanding of how women are portrayed in Elizabethan tragedies and the sociocultural factors influencing their identities.

By drawing on the interpretative framework of Mills' model, the current research argues that *Othello* and *Macbeth* can be viewed as dynamic linguistic terrains that negotiate power, identity, and gender ideology, rather than as mere static relics of Elizabethan patriarchy. The stylistic analysis shows how subtle literary mechanisms — metaphors, and narrative focalization — that normalize male authority, serve to maintain women's subjugation in these tragedies. However, the monologic dominance of the masculine voice is also disrupted by these very linguistic fissures, as demonstrated by Lady Macbeth's control over the performative self or Desdemona's subdued rebellion through speech acts of fidelity and truth. Using Mills' feminist stylistics forces readers to consider the politics of language itself — to recognize how gendered

beliefs are incorporated not just into plot or characters, but also into syntax and semantics. Shakespeare's genius is thus enhanced rather than diminished by a feminist stylistic re-evaluation of *Macbeth* and *Othello*, which reveals that the linguistic discourse in his plays, when viewed through Mills' critical lens, foreshadows the very discussions about gender, voice, and representation that still drive feminist criticism today.

Literature Review

Shakespeare's use of language as a mirror of social ties and hierarchies in early modern England is examined in Lynne Magnusson's *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue* (1999). Magnusson uses sociolinguistics and discourse analysis to show how the underlying power and gender dynamics in Shakespeare's plays are revealed through patterns of address, politeness, and verbal bargaining. Her emphasis on the ways in which routine speech acts influence social identity, offers a useful framework for overcoming patriarchal linguistic restrictions. Magnusson's research reveals how speech serves as a social performance, thereby highlighting the nuanced ways in which Shakespearean language encodes opposition to and compliance with gender and authoritative norms.

Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy by Dympna Callaghan (1989), reveals how a paradigmatic Renaissance play creates femininity within ideological systems of control. Her book continues to be a key work in feminist Shakespearean criticism. Callaghan contends that binary oppositions - chaste or corrupt, subservient or defiant - are frequently used to depict women in Shakespearean tragedy, reflecting societal concerns about female autonomy and sexuality. She exposes how male discourse and narrative authority construct the identities of tragic heroines. Therefore, Callaghan's work sheds light on the historical and cultural factors that shape Shakespeare's female characters, and explores how their speech serves as a vehicle for both acceptance and transgression.

Kim F. Hall's seminal work *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (1995) places *Othello* in the context of Renaissance racialized and gendered discourses. Hall investigates how the play's language and imagery reflect fears about diversity, desire, and social order that were sparked by early modern England's growing experiences with Africa and the New World. She shows how the colonial framework that defines race and gender through ideas of possession, purity, and otherness, entwines Othello's racial identity with Desdemona's femininity. Hall's work highlights the economic and cultural factors that influence

these identities, exposing complex relationships between gendered and racial hierarchies in Shakespeare's plays and demonstrates how the language of loyalty, love, and treachery, functions within larger ideological frameworks of power.

Deborah Cameron's *On Language and Sexual Politics* (2006) and Janet Holmes's *Women, Men and Politeness* (1995) have made significant contributions to feminist linguistic theory by exploring how language both reflects and combats gender inequality in literary and social contexts. According to Holmes' research on gendered communication, discourse strategies, and civility, women's speech often conveys cooperation and covert kinds of resistance. Cameron challenges the ideological assumptions that underlie claims of male and female language while highlighting the impact of context and power on linguistic behavior. Both works highlight the fact that gendered language is not biologically established but rather socially generated and contextually adaptable. One can see how linguistic patterns, including interruption, address, and self-representation, encode and negotiate gendered power dynamics.

Matt Trueman's work explores the intersectional working of race, class and identity in *Othello*. He analyses *Othello* mainly in terms of the identity politics and "ingrained institutionalized racism". He further elaborates the "toxic masculinity throughout, with both men treating their wives like possessions". Similarly, Andrzej Lukowski in *Time Out*, explores that "Othello is a distinct contrast to the course, thuggish world around him, in a production that suggests white rage and Black mental health problems are inextricably linked, in a white-dominated society". Additionally, he asserts that "Race isn't the only tension here: as well as sexual jealousy, there's class".

The aforementioned scholars have examined gender, language, and representation in Shakespeare's plays. While feminist linguists like Holmes and Cameron have created theoretical frameworks for comprehending how language creates and maintains gendered identities, Magnusson, Callaghan, and Kim have shed light on the societal and racial aspects of gender in Shakespeare's plays. The current study uses Sara Mills' *Feminist Stylistics* to analyze *Macbeth* and *Othello* and to investigate how stylistic elements implement gendered ideology. By emphasizing the gendered implications of language at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels, it connects literary criticism and linguistic analysis. By combining stylistic accuracy with ideological criticism, this study expands feminist interpretations of Shakespeare and advances

feminist stylistic studies by offering a nuanced perspective of evaluating classical Renaissance works.

Research Methodology

This study examines how gender is portrayed in Shakespearean tragedies, *Macbeth* and *Othello*, using a qualitative methodology based on Sara Mills' *Feminist Stylistics*. It provides Mills' lexical, syntactic, and discourse analysis to reveal the ways in which language patterns support, contradict, or create patriarchal ideals. This approach fills a research gap in stylistic studies of Shakespeare by introducing a linguistically grounded framework that links language usage to gender ideology, thereby adding to the existing traditional feminist readings that emphasize theme or character-based interpretations. In order to examine gendered interactions, agency and power relations, as well as dialogues and scenes involving Lady Macbeth, Desdemona, and other significant characters are examined. Finding linguistic patterns is the first step in analyzing the ideological implications of Elizabethan sociocultural context. Tracing these linguistic patterns contributes to the analytical precision in terms of examining how Shakespeare's language contributes to the formation of gender discourse.

Theoretical Framework

Mills' book *Feminist Stylistics* is divided into two parts, each having three chapters. The current research revolves around Mills' terminologies such as "sexism in language"(62), "linguistic determinism" (63), "naming and androcentrism" (78), and "endearments and diminutives" (89). In addition to this, terms such as "transitivity choices" (110) "fragmentation" of women (133) and the "focalization" (147) of men is discussed in comparison and contrast with the selected Shakespearean tragedies to see how the characters are enacting and subverting these theoretical ideas proposed by Sara Mills.

The first part of Mills' text focuses on the "general theoretical issues" such as "the gendered sentence" where she discusses the problems of "female affiliation complex" (33) in a phallocentric society and the role of "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser's term) in the "production" and "reception" (22) of a literary text. Contrary to this premise, this research paper proposes the alternative view that the powerful persona of Lady Macbeth is strong enough to assert her worthy presence among the male characters; therefore, she cannot be classified as the "stereotypical subject matter" (40) of the Elizabethan age. The second part of Mills' book is entitled "Analysis" where Mills displays a detailed view regarding the analytical approaches,

starting from the analysis at level of word (62), phrase/ sentence (98) and discourse (123). According to Mills, epistemic modality in form of "metaphor" (105) such as "alabaster" for Desdemona, and the selection of "adjectives" (41) and the "generic pronouns" (65) such as 'she', play a significant role in shaping females. The aforementioned ideas highlighted by Mills in *Feminist Stylistics* are examined in detail in the discussion section.

Discussion

Stylistic Analysis of *Macbeth*

In her book *Feminist Stylistics*, Sara Mills asserts, "I am mainly concerned with the issue of gender, and how this can be incorporated into stylistic analysis"(7). Mills' book analyses the connection between the signs, meanings, and sociocultural ideologies in texts that oppress women, thereby emphasizing the significance of discourse analysis to unravel the "power of state agencies" that subjugate women. Mills maintains that language is context dependent (Levinson, 1983). She reiterates Roger Fowler's claim that there is a dialectical relationship between language and social structure and that language varieties are the product of socioeconomic forces and institutions (6). Fowler and Mills' observations are significant in the context of Shakespearean plays, since Shakespeare is sometimes considered to be misogynistic due to his representation of stereotypical femininity in his plays.

Mills initiates her argument by focusing on the concept of "naming and androcentrism", and claims that the word " lady" is a diminutive term for woman (82). The wife of Macbeth is not called by her own individual name (84), rather she is "Lady Macbeth". Here, the designation of naming her character as a lady can be correlated with Sara Mills' concept of " linguistic determinism" (63) which Mills equates with "the semantic degradation of women" (83).

This research intends to offer an alternative perspective to the existing canvas of knowledge about Shakespeare's feminine representation, by showing that Lady Macbeth is a source of inspiration for Macbeth, as is evident from the following line: "Hie thee hither, that I may pour my spirits in thine ear" (19). Her power of expression has a more profound impact than Macbeth's power of action in the first two acts. Moreover, Lady Macbeth rejects the Elizabethan model of feminine stereotypes by asserting "unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top- full of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood" (20). Lady Macbeth's "unsex me" remark in *Macbeth*, is a powerful example of challenging Sara Mills' theory of linguistic determinism— which holds that language both reflects and supports gendered power structures. Instead of being

bound by patriarchal linguistic conventions, Lady Macbeth subverts them by employing imperatives and violent images to express agency that is not typically accorded to women. Her speech is assertive in Act I ("come," "fill me," "take my milk for gall"). However, by Act V, her disjointed, guilty remarks "Out, damned spot!" reveal a reassertion of patriarchal order as a result of her psychological collapse. This language trajectory demonstrates how social and linguistic structures that Mills describes as upholding patriarchal authority, eventually erode Lady Macbeth's early resistance to gendered speech.

In her seminal work, Mills highlights that there is an excessive usage of "sexism in language" (62) in male writings. The present study posits that Lady Macbeth is not portrayed in sexual language as a typical female; rather her "unsex me" speech reflects that she is rejecting the societal norms that portray women as sensual; she is rejecting the notion of linguistic determinism as well by rejecting her own femininity. Mills contends that words such as "pretty, voluptuous" (87) have a "derogatory effect" but Shakespeare has not depicted the character of Lady Macbeth in a pejorative way commonly used for objectifying and highlighting women.

It is noteworthy that from a gendered perspective, Lady Macbeth can be regarded as an active agent- more so than her husband. She exclaims, "Leave all the rest to me" (21) "you would be so much more than man" (26). In Act 2, scene 2, Lady Macbeth reflects her man-like power when she adamantly asserts, "That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold; What hath quenched them hath given me fire." (31). Moreover, Mills views words such as "babe", "sweety" and "sweetheart" (117) as terms of endearment used by men for women; these terms highlight a hierarchical relationship between men and women and metaphorically signify "consumption" of women. It needs to be stressed that in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare does not incorporate such terms of endearment for Lady Macbeth, thereby refuting the premise that male writers are increasingly inclined toward using conventional "gender-specific language" or "the gendered sentence" (Mills, 1995).

Mills defines another model framework with two strategies- the material process with action process and event process, and secondly, the mental process with the internalized process and externalized process (112). Lady Macbeth's power to lead Macbeth in the earlier parts of the play, exhibits her material processes - not through action but as the pivotal acting force behind Macbeth's actions. The other part of Mills' model is shown in the mental processes of Lady Macbeth when she comes so close to her impending doom and states in Act 5, scene 1, "Here's

the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (97). By highlighting Lady Macbeth's enhanced self-awareness and internalized mental process, this particular line reiterates the premise that Lady Macbeth is not presented as a passive victim of circumstances. The stylistic model compels the readers to reflect on the androgynous elements evident in Shakespeare's plays, thereby refuting the notion that he is a male-centric playwright.

Stylistic Analysis of *Othello*

As opposed to *Macbeth*, Shakespearean tragedy *Othello*, aligns more closely with Sara Mills' theoretical framework. As Mills asserts: "The extent to which a character is the passive 'victim' of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action, is one of the concerns of feminist stylistics" (112). She maintains that women are generally presented as emotional, out of control, falling in love, without having any vital role in the process and "it is about pleasure and enjoyment…that is based on (women's) suffering and despair" (116). These passive attributes assigned to females are evident in Desdemona. In her relationship with Othello, Desdemona primarily comes across as a silent participant. Siti Hardiyanti reaffirms this stance and contends that "Her life is full of restriction and control and she dedicates her life to be subordinated towards her husband. Desdemona tends to be passive over the violence of men" (13).

Desdemona falls in love with Othello because of his bravery. Referring to Desdemona, Othello clarifies in Act 1, scene 3 that "She loved me for the dangers I had passed" and Desdemona replies: "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (33). Later on, her love turns her life to suffering and unending despair which is subsequently followed by her murder by her own beloved husband. Mills contends that language is a tool of power and a field of ideological struggle that is used to sustain patriarchal dominance in a given culture. Mills (1995) argues that "Feminist stylistics…aims to show that gender is foregrounded in texts at certain key moments…for example, love scenes in books, differential usage of terms for men and women, sexism, and so on" (13). Furthermore, Mills emphasizes the male power and control over "romantic love" and sexual experiences; she argues that in romantic and sexual equations, women have "passive/ affected role" (121) and that women are merely acted upon – overwhelmingly dependent on the actions of men. Mills' observation can be applied to Desdemona whose deplorable fate depends on the final decision of her husband, Othello, who is representative of the patriarchy. He says in Act 4, scene 1 that "I will chop her into

messes...cuckold me!" (90) thereby articulating the generalized mentality about "bad girls" (Tyson, 1998). Desdemona, as a passive receiver of his decisive power, begs to prove her naivety, by stating desperately, "Your wife, my lord, your true and loyal life" (94). Hence, Sara Mills' perspectives about gendered language can be applied to Shakespearean tragedy *Othello* where typical ideology of patriarchal regime is closely aligned with the "focalization" of men – where focalization refers to the presentation of females as objects for the male gaze (133).

Mills explains that gendered analysis mainly focuses on massive social structures at the level of discourse (123). Desdemona, while exhibiting the socially acceptable character of a girl/ woman, appeals to her husband throughout the fourth act and at the end, she questions the degradation of women by demanding "How have I been behaved, that he might stick the smallest opinion on my least misuse?" (96). This remark reiterates Mills' assertion that a woman is not the central agency in the structure of the narratives because at the end, a woman is always passive (131), just like Desdemona.

Mills also delineates Kingsley's observation that men are "affirmed by drinking or fighting" (132), as is evident from Othello's warrior stories of fighting the dangerous wars and his other heroic deeds. In the fifth act, the linguistic analysis of Othello's speech through Mills' theoretical lens, highlights the objectification of women and the male gaze. Desdemona, in the words of a male lover, is depicted as "Not scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, And smooth as monumental alabaster" (109). According to Mills, women are depicted as the passive recipients of male love; therefore, as the stage directions in *Othello* indicate, Othello kisses Desdemona while she is asleep- moments prior to killing her - thereby rendering her as a passive recipient of his love. Moreover, Mills critically evaluates that "if the term 'man and wife' is reversed to 'wife and man', " the cohesion of the phrase is lost" (86). In her in-depth critique of word choice, Mills claims that using the word "sweety" for a female has a "derogatory effect" (87). In *Othello*, act 5 scene 2, Othello calls Desdemona as "sweet soul" (111) and then abruptly, he says "O perjured woman" (ibid) which is a semantically diminutive term within the context of Sara Mills' feminist stylistic model.

Mills also highlights two oppositional concepts of female fragmentation in relation to focalization of men (140). Critics who have analyzed *Othello* argue that the male gaze is starkly evident in this play where misogyny and patriarchy are the norm. However, it can be argued that Emilia's feminine voice is focalized as well. Moreover, Siti Hardiyanti sees Bianca as a "vocal

woman" (18), who displays her power of disobedience, contrary to Desdemona. Mills argues that the focalization "appearing at first sight to be neutrally focalized, is in fact focalized from the male point of view" (144).

In the second half of *Feminist Stylistics*, Mills mentions the "large scale frameworks... as schemata" (148). Her other concept regarding the agency of the male murderer in texts -that either exhibit overt or covert sexism (Mills,188)- is also evident in Shakespeare's play *Othello,* when Othello makes the following pronouncement regarding Desdemona, "Yet she must die" and "I will kill thee" (110). Linguistically, Mills explains that the use of "generic pronouns" such as "he" & "she" are rooted in the 'socio-historical' and 'sociocultural' ideologies, that combine "language and ideology" (156). She calls "women as the marked form" and maintains that women are often addressed by "derogatory", "trivializing" and insulting "affixes" such as "lady" and "-ess" (Mills, 1995). In Mills' view, these affixes imply that women are a deviation from the men who represent the universal norm. Hence, women are marked, whereas men are unmarked. Viewed from Mills' perspective, the affixes "lady" and "mistress" used for Lady Macbeth and Desdemona, have a derogatory connotation. In the section entitled "Metaphor", Mills claims that metaphors in literary works conventionally favour men over women; in most instances, metaphors portray female sexuality as being subversive and uncontrollable (133). This viewpoint is evident in *Othello* when Othello exclaims, "She was a whore" (114), thereby revealing the sexist and misogynistic implications prevalent in a patriarchal society.

In light of the above-mentioned arguments, it can be concluded that Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was ahead of its time in terms of presenting a modern formulation of feminist linguistics. Some of Mills' models such as naming and mental and material processes can be traced in Lady Macbeth speech; however, a close analysis of *Macbeth* reveals that the concept of sexism in language is replaced by Shakespeare's gender-neutral language. On the contrary, Desdemona's melancholic distress reflects "female affiliation complex" (33) in "phallocentric" tradition – to use a term by Sara Mills. Although Desdemona takes a feminist stance to prove her naivety and even the character of Emilia straightforwardly mentions that "I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak" (115), yet the play *Othello* as a whole, falls in the category of Sara Mills' observations about passive femininity.

As asserted earlier, the two radical viewpoints in the existing scholarship on Shakespeare, regard Shakespeare either as a misogynist or a feminist. This research has delineated a balanced

perspective of Shakespeare as a playwright, by offering a comparative analysis of *Othello* and *Macbeth*.

Conclusion

When *Macbeth* and *Othello* are re-examined using Sara Mills' *Feminist Stylistics* paradigm, it becomes clear how Shakespeare's language both creates and challenges patriarchal power. Mills' theory, which pays close attention to vocabulary choice, transitivity, and narrative placement patterns, reveals complex interactions between gender, discourse, and dominance that are frequently hidden beneath the canonical stature given to Shakespeare's works. Throughout *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth's initial rhetorical authority—characterized by agentive verbs and assertive imperatives—emerges as the play re-inscribes her inside a linguistic and moral framework of lunacy and guilt, thereby reflecting the linguistic dimensions of female ambition. In contrast, Desdemona's voice in *Othello* is framed by layers of male narrative and interrupted conversation, making it a linguistic site of erasure where women's silence is not only thematic but structurally ingrained in the text's grammar.

The feminist theorist Sara Mills maintains that there is a strong relationship between language and society that is "combined in a" given "literary text which the feministic stylistics" aims to unravel. She identifies "women's speech" (34) and the "female sentence" as stereotypes of inferiority in the dominance of male-oriented society. For instance, Desdemona is depicted as 'alabaster' and 'a balmy breath' which has a sexual connotation according to Mills, who observes that women are objectified to satisfy the sexual appetite of men, as Desdemona is for Othello. On the other hand, Mills provides the oppositional opportunity of "gender free language" and the "transitivity choices" by the strong depiction of women where a woman must boldly articulate her thoughts, just as the Shakespearean character, Lady Macbeth does.

Mills' selected theoretical framework demands for "the systematic analysis both with the linguistic and stylistic comprehension" in relation "with gender" (10). Her concept of sexism in language indicates that women mainly express themselves physically and emotionally but this is in striking contrast with Shakespeare's female characters who express themselves verbally, as Desdemona says "So would not I, my love doth so approve him" (101). This study uses Sara Mills' feminist stylistics model to explain how language reinforces androcentric ideology through the dynamics of naming, transitivity, and focalization in Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Desdemona and Lady Macbeth are both linguistically situated within a patriarchal

framework that defines them in relation to their male counterparts—Lady Macbeth rarely exists outside the shadow of her husband's title, and Desdemona is frequently recognized as "my fair warrior" or "my lady" through Othello's possessive gaze—depriving both women of their own identities. The broader cultural presumption that male identity is normal and female existence is subordinate, is reflected in this androcentric name.

Shakespeare creates opposing depiction of female agency using transitivity patterns: Desdemona serves as the passive object of action, who is commanded and eventually silenced—her linguistic passivity reflects her subordination within patriarchal power structures. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, acts as a grammatical and psychological agent, issuing directives ("unsex me here," "screw your courage to the sticking-place") and actions that challenge traditional femininity. As both plays are filtered through male consciousness, the interaction of these linguistic features is heightened by focalization and the male gaze: Othello's jealousy and insecurity reflect Desdemona's innocence and loyalty, while Macbeth's moral turmoil mediates Lady Macbeth's ambition and descent into madness. As a result, both women are eventually confined within male-centered discourse, despite having different temperaments.

In the final analysis, this research offers a contemporary re-reading and contrasting linguistic perspectives of two Shakespearean tragedies- *Othello* and *Macbeth*- based on Mills' theoretical model of discourse analysis. The critical evaluation of both plays, delineates the linguistic style of Shakespeare, thereby compelling the readers to revisit and reframe the gendered implications of these plays.

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