

Contrastive Views of Disguise in Shakespeare's Selected Plays

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Abstract:

Disguise and hiding the identity are regarded as disgrace in many literary works. The same term is welcomed in certain states to such extent that disguise helps its owner to surpass the naïve stage to gain maturity . This research tries to shed more light on this theme so as to distinguish the hated disguise and the noble one to help readers to solve the ambiguity of this subject. The research sheds light on selected plays of William Shakespeare because of the overuse of this subject in his plays. Disguise is studied with emphasis on both sides of disguise due to playwright's authentic pen. The research tries to hold a logical comparison between the characters before and after disguise in matters of maturity and vision. Disguise appears as a weapon with two edges. The disguise that emerges in this research does not include on the disguise of dressing, but concentrates the disguise of behavior to be regarded as the most dangerous one.

Keywords: Shakespeare`s Hamlet, As you like it, Twelfth, Night, Merchant of Vence, , disguise, behaviour.

التنكر بين آراء متناقضة في مسرحيات منتخبة لشيكسبير

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المستخلص:

التنكر وإخفاء الصفات الحقيقية للشخصية أعباه معظم رواد الأدب ولاقى في حالات خاصة الكثير من الاستحسان بل وشكل مرحلة رقي ونضج شخصي للمتكرين أنفسهم . البحث حاول الغوص في تلك الظاهرة من أجل فرز الحالات المعيبة للتنكر وحالات النبيل للموضوع

نفسه والهدف إيجاد توضيح دقيق لقراء الأدب المبتدئين وفرز حالات الالتباس والتناقض . والبحث ركز على مسرحيات ولیم شكسبير لانه من أكثر المسرحيين إن لم يكن الوحيد استعمالا لمفهوم التنكر. وأيضاً هو الكاتب الوحيد الذي ركز على الجانب الايجابي للتنكر وذلك لواقعية الكاتب المعروفة. حاول البحث المقارنة بين الشخصيات المتنكرة من حيث النضج الاجتماعي قبل التنكر وبعده. البحث أيضاً ركز على وضوح الرؤية والتحرر الاجتماعي الذي يعقب وإثاء التنكر. التنكر بدا سلاحاً ذا حدين. البحث لم يختصر على التنكر الملبس ليشمل تنكر السلوك ليس هذا فحسب إنما عده الأخطر إن وقع في أيدي الأشرار.

Contrastive Views of Disguise in Shakespeare's Selected Plays

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is a unique writer who has such a rare power to probe even the hidden spots of the human soul . In spite of having such a skill ,he cares to make reality present in all his works .He has an easy entry to every human emotion or depression of man to such a degree that he seems to have a knowledge of undiscovered science about human life. No corner in life escapes his investigation to such an extent that shows "universality of his interest"¹ . It is universally known that he owns an ability of deep understanding of human senses and hunting the intimate moment in life as if he lives this era himself. Not only this, he excels in injecting interest as well as suspense in every item he tackles and this is the key to his talent .He re-tells the historical or the old legend with a unique suspense as if they were told for the first time . He seems to be aware of his talent when he predicates his immortality through his writing. His masterpieces are still fresh fountains for various researches.

One of the important and repeated themes in Shakespeare's plays is disguise. Due to frequency, this device is in need for new investigation and probing not to trace disguise itself ,but to reveal the excuses behind its use and its influence on the person himself and the surrounding people. The prima facie of such theme seems to be superficial and easy to be comprehended . Being repeated and used by a genius like Shakespeare , it is in dire need for depthless probing .By indulging in Shakespeare's` world, one can be certain of the impossibility of using such a device randomly .It is imbued with

myriad intentions and goals .It is important to learn that disguise does not always require the changes in the dress or wearing a different mask ,but changing behaviors can achieve the similar aims. Shakespeare presents in some of his plays virginal ways to disguise without making any of these changes. Also, more light will be shed on the merits and demerits of this device in life and literature ,the latter seems more important to Shakespeare who wants to present lessons to be tackled in life through his works. Shakespeare keeps on calling and warning about the dangers of the appearance. One of the minor aims of inventing such covers in these plays is to unfold to the public eyes the deception disguise has on people. Even the wise are subject to be easy victims to such concealment. The new views that will be presented here are the following: some kinds of disguise can be useful as a vital means to have freedom in expressing the attitudes without any embarrassment or as a cover for protection.

Also, it can be destructive to falsify the truth and divert the sight from the true essence to the cover. So, there are two kinds of disguises and two kinds of results .In other simple words, one should confront the appalling question ,is there any excuses or logical pretexts for disguise? The overuse of disguise is part of Shakespeare's` continual call for the discrepancy between reality and appearance. He presents concrete embodiment of his views when he visualizes this deception to add persuasive authenticity to his old slogan. He also wants to prove through this practical proof the vain cover and the short life of such a mask. He uses this method to show the entire world his views practically by following the aftermaths of the mistaken identity. He shows justice in presenting such a message when he shows certain advantages of this cover .So, the cover can be a noble or evil one. Through comedies, he wants to make fun of all the victims of appearance, he alleviates the loss of such persons to be a warning only. Reversing the roles sometime provides freedom in expressing the inner needs which is the main aim of the noble disguise.

Shakespeare makes full use of the guise in many of his plays to highlight the merits and demerits of his theme like: adding certain facilities to human behavior or hiding the evil appearance under a noble cover. In spite of the laughter which is aroused by reversing the roles, it carries many messages. This is part of Shakespeare's genius to provide this mixture which is adopted from reality so as to reach

the simple minded to convince them of the triviality of the false bright and bombastic shell which usually contains a corrupted crux. Because of having "unbelievable understanding of human psychology,"² Shakespeare succeeds in presenting his point of view to his generation and the successive ones. Many critics notice that Shakespeare exploits disguise of appearance mainly in comedy ,perhaps possible because it contains the laughter that diverts the main goal of tragedy and sometime it is the sub-plot to the main one. This research will prove that the writer actually creates two kinds of guises to suit comedy as well as tragedy . In his Short History of English Literature (1996), Sanders states that:

Disguise and cross- dress, schemes that explode Upon themselves and contrived encounters also Figure prominently in the so-called romantic comedies of Shakespeare middle career. In these plays however, such festive fooling tends to be demoted to sub- plots which the pains, strains and pleasure of young love become the central concerns.³

Any plan in life as well as in literature depends on the intention to be noble or evil. Thus besides the negative items of disguise , it has a positive aim since it provides fundamental opportunities for the disguised to relinquish his real personality ephemerally to enjoy the merits of the adopted role and sometimes to endure the disadvantage of such a role. It grants the disguised an ample chance to live without his actual personality and exceeds the limitations of his personality. He hints to the social chains that seem worse than disguise itself. It provides a golden opportunity to watch the other personalities that will also enjoy the identical freedom by the absence of the disguised character that deadens the fear to declare their opinion without any reserve . As if Shakespeare mocks the societal convention through this feature of hiding the reality that forces man to wear masks to gain freedom. Thus, disguise does not offer merits of free expression for its owner only but also to the other persons. In few words, Shakespeare uses disguise as a weapon of two edges as it has been previously stated.

As You Like It (1599-1600) is a comedy in which Shakespeare injects many of his views towards various subjects that are deeply rooted in the Elizabethan society. This confronts us with appalling inquiry; does man in a certain society needs to wear a mask to say or hear the truth .It mirrors its author's great capacity of studying and revealing the authenticity of many beliefs in his community. This play which "title is advertising promise, and whose uncharacteristically flirtation epilogue is an appropriate wooing of a new audience"⁴ is rich with disguise. This is the prize comedy of Shakespeare that mirrors the adventures of lovers over a rural setting. During the sequences of the events all wrongs are corrected and all lovers are happily married. In other words there is no cruelty in the events, this does not mean that Shakespeare abandons reality and its pain, but he creates the conflict between sincerity and hatred and makes the latter lose in front of any sincerity in love, nature and life. Shakespeare uses disguise to correct many wrong traditions.

Reality in his works creeps even to love so as to create a practical kindness whereas the old belief that love is an admixture of romance and beauty only. Shakespeare wants to denounce the unclear image of love. Disguise offers help when it emerges to correct the mistakes in this attitude . Disguise in this play appears either voluntary or forced and under various grounds like fear, love, protection and other causes. It frees people from any restriction towards the disguised personality that carries wrong views. So, disguise here has two-fold benefits, during the guise ,Rosalind confronts different personalities that stand for wrong trends in this age. Her disguise supports her in battering such views. Her disguise helps her even in checking and testing the personality of her lover, Orlando, who stands for the typical lover of the Elizabethan society. His problem is that his love for Rosalind exceeds the limitation of reality to settle in romantic utopian or Shangli La world. He flies to the world of dreams and romanticism. He writes poems and hangs them on the tree. like a crazy lover.

She changes the aim of her disguise to use it as a way to cure him. Disguise here is exterior to reach appearance only ,but the matter is so different to be also an interior one when Rosalind denies even her romantic nature or female feature for the sake of her lover`s treatment. She announces that her love weighs times than his love, but she should convince her lover to be moderate in his feelings .She

tells him about the frailty of women who do not deserve such sacrifice of pain. Thus, she criticizes even her own sex as a woman to prove that her guise is interior also. She tells him that women are mere earthy creatures, not nymphs. Sometimes they change their color and states according to their benefits. Rosalind makes full use of her guise to persuade her lover. Perhaps she fails to do this without disguise. She gives him many proofs of the weaknesses of women: "No, no Orlando. Women are April when they Woo, December when they weds maids are May when they are maids, but the sky" (p.115)

Disguise emerges as a way of protection for is proved to be a successful means of self-protection. Rosalind, the daughter of the banished Duke, decides to disguise as a man because of her cruel uncle who drives her out of his court. Thus, under this excruciated pressure, she determines to disguise as Ganymede to gain a safe travel to her father's wood. She is certain that without disguise "beauty provoketh(sic) to thieves sooner than gold."⁵ Then she realizes that disguise has untold benefits rather than protection only since it provides a golden opportunity to gain freedom and experiences by studying many characters, to comprehend , to criticize, and provide wisdom in declaring her points of view. Due to disguise, she is able to free herself from the feminine reservance and traditions, she sees herself in the mirror of other eyes. It also frees others from any restriction to say their real opinions that may bring pain to a lover like Silivus; she tells her truth that aches Phebe

In her GCSE English Literature (1988) Julie Grover states that "this(disguise) sometimes worries those who are not used to because it does not seem believable."⁶. Yet, the unique giftedness of Shakespeare makes this translation so spontaneous and almost convincing . Many critics suspect or question the power of the persuasion of disguise ,but also many find that "the masculine disguise, presumably so impenetrable that even her (Rosalind's)father fails to recognize her."⁷ . Roslind`s disguise turns to be a tool for correction . She starts with reforming love's problems via Silivus-Phebe connection. Her guise allows her to gain a vivid comprehension of human nature. She realizes that the admixture of

realism and romanticism should be balanced in love relations. She satirizes Phebe, the spoilt shepherdess, who is proud , and egoist. She rejects true love to fall in Rosalind`s love. This mistake refers to a positive side that Rosalind achieves her role well and also refers to a negative side that one may fall in the trap of appearances only to find the opposite choice as the matter when she selects a woman to be her lover. She loves the shell as many people do by loving the disguised Rosalind and having no idea about the hidden essence .There is also a shocking hint about the deception of any mask that carries the power of the spell to reach this degree of persuasion . Rosalind gives Phebe a cruel advice:

But mistress, know herself down on your knees
and thanks heaven, fasting for a good mans`love,
for I must tell you on ear sell when you can,
you are not for all markets. Cry the man mercy,
love him, take his offer so take her to thee(sic) (p.1570)

Shakespeare invites us to a moment of reflection about the hidden essence that cannot be gained without making accurate penetration of the cover to dive deeply in the soul so as to catch the gem of reality. Thus, there are undiscovered benefits of guise in the play that present many messages, one of which is that man should not judge others depending on their attire and neglecting the interior crux. Rosalind-Ganymede gains another merit of her cross- dress when she blames Phebe for her spiritual blindness because of not seeing the faithful love of Silivus. She also she reminds Phebe about the ephemerality of her physical beauty that will be decreased due to the passage of time. Rosalind's treatment seems so realistic that is foreign to the exaggerated attitudes of the Elizabethan age. Via the freedom of her guise, she adopts many merits, Shakespeare uses these features for the benefit of the guise. Duke Fredrick says:

That` secure serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad woman,
She would not hold out enemy forever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.(p.225)

To make her guise convincing, Shakespeare injects her with certain features that enable her to achieve this heavy role like patience and wisdom . Her uncle's words are demerits according to his views but to the readers they are enough to enumerate her spiritual power. This makes her skillful in her disguise because she is injected with sharp looks which arm her uncle. So, he fears her power in changing his people. He also fears her nobility and patience that attract his people's love just like her noble father. Thus, he wants to stop her influence on people by keeping her at bay. In tackling Shakespeare's comedies one should note that his ultimate aim is not sheer laughter. Thus, he injects his comedies with doses that are mixture of funny action and seriousness. He imbues this theme with political ideas and human conduct to make his readers laugh, sympathize and through laughter the readers gain fresh experiences. His comedies contain farce, laughter and poetry . Rosalind's disguise offers unbelievable opportunity to discover the true essence of many personalities.

Then disguise leads her to reveal an eccentric kind of personality which is popular at that time. The main sign of this personality is the pretence of being melancholic as a sign of being wise. Jacques who stands for the artificial philosophy stands for a new arena to be criticized by Rosalind, whose disguise helps her to stand man to man to show him his wrong belief. Ganymede starts with his melancholia, manner, and dress. Through him, she criticizes a well-known trend or phenomena in this age. She tells Jacques that "experience makes you sad, I had rather have a fool to make you merry than experience to make me sad to drive for it too."(p.167) Rosalind-Ganymede gains a wide horizon after her guise ,which adds a new benefit of the cross- dressing. She turns to be a hard critic of social diseases like the extremity in mood and over romanticism of her age. She conveys her creator`s slogan of making balance between heart and mind of her age. With disguise only, she treats people as well as her lover without any reserve.

Rosalind has a partner in disguise, her niece, Celia , who is like Nerissa in *The Merchant Of Venice* (1595). She follows the advice of her friend . She represents another part of the disguise process which enlarges her experiences. At first, she invents a naïve plan of disguise when she suggests smearing their faces with blackness and wearing poor clothes so as not to be recognized . This

plan can not hide any thing because it is partial and it is not convincing to the reader. One can compare her childish personality before and after her disguise to learn the advantages of disguise, she tells Rosalind that:

I'll put myself in the poor and mean attire. And
with a kind of umber smirch my face. The like do
we; so shall we pause along. And never
stir assailants. (p.51)

The plan of Rosalind is perfect in hiding her personality and her true essence. She studies the personality of her lover, Rolando, during her disguise to drop any attempt of concealing the negative side of his personality as it is popular among lovers during the engagement. Celia also meets her lover during her disguise. It is interesting to know that all the five heroines that will be discussed in this research meet or check their love during disguise. Celia does not find love only, but she gains new wisdom from this experience .Dropping the true personality through disguise enables all the masked persons to receive the pure reality only. The shocking question is whether man able to achieve this without a mask.

In *Twelfth Night* (1600-1601) Shakespeare also finds in disguise a solution for his heroine . Disguise appears after Viola's survival of the shipwreck. She finds herself in a strange land called Illyria which is ruled by Orsino. She does not know anything about her twin, Substian. She consults her captain about a way to hide her personality so as to move freely .He agrees to help her by disguising her as a page in Orison's court. Her decision is determined when she tells her captain :

Conceal me what I am and be my aid for such disguise as
haply shall become the form of my intent. I'll serve the
duke. Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him. It may
be worth thy(sic) pain. For I can sing, and speak to him
in many sorts of music. That will allow me very worth
his service, what else may hape thou thy silence to my wit .⁸

After a short time of her disguise ,she turns to be the best attendant to Orsino who reveals all his heart secrets especially his rejected love to a beautiful lady, Olivia. Viola, unlike Rosalind of *As You Like It* and Portia of *The Merchant of Venice* ,fails to hide her feminine features completely. Thus, Orsino notices her hidden beauty ,but she tries to behave according to her disguised role. Her disguise is so different because her guise is external only. So in her asides, she returns to her actual womanhood to declare her love to her master. She is like all the disguised heroines in finding love through the disguise .The disguise of Viola hints that many people in life wear permanent or ephemeral masks due to circumstantial difficulties identical to Viola`s.

Shakespeare creates every circumstance to make Viola-Cesario's guise convincing, this is supported by his "unique force."⁹ The first ensuing aftermath of this disguise ,perhaps resembles that of real life, is her dear love to her master who chooses her to be the love messenger to Olivia . This is the cruel side of hiding her true character and she cannot tell anyone about her love ,then she should carry the love letter of her lover to another woman. She should shoulder this difficult job to explain the suffering and the painful sting of Orison's love . viola-Cesario asks Olivia to be merciful on her master. Thus ,adopting another role or wearing a mask has certain benefits. It can create much misunderstanding that can be solved easily in literature, but difficultly in life . In spite of her deep love, she conveys the message faithfully.

She benefits a lot from her guise when she gains a golden opportunity to know closely the romantic personality of Orisno. This allows her to gain true love. The important part of disguise is that it grants her with a chance to speak on behalf of women ,perhaps she alludes to the social chains that force women to select and find true love only in disguise. She defends female sincerity by inventing a story about her sister who dies for her love. She states that:

Too well what love women to men own. In faith, they
are as true of heart as we. My father had a daughter
loved a man. As it might be perhaps, we're I a woman,
I should your lordship(p.57)

In *The Pelican Guide To English Literature* (1963), Boris Ford states that the energy of the greatness of Shakespeare lies in his "creative use of language and especially of metaphor."¹⁰ This is clear when he makes such an unbelievable topic like disguise acceptable to the audience of all ages. Shakespeare reveals via Viola's disguise the naivety of a woman who responds quickly to heart music without any probing sight especially in Olivia's state. Olivia, like Phebe of *As you Like It*, falls in love with a woman. She loves Cesario to an extent that she tries to tempt him. Through her, the writer alludes that women fail to control their passion, and commit mistakes in their choices. This reflects Shakespeare's personal dilemma with women is reflected in selecting similar fate for his heroines. Again, the playwright stresses the discrepancy between the outside and the inside. In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare presents his motto which addresses the persons who do not wear masks to be aware because "though that nature with a beautiful well. Both oft close in pollution, yet of thee..."(p.9).

Via these literary experiences of disguise one can also notice the simplicity of adopting a mask to pretend the opposite of his intention and deceive people. Also through this guise, one can learn that it is not necessary to wear a mask to hide your personality. Some evil persons change behavior so as to hide reality and this is the most dangerous kind of disguise. For the first time, we can hear a moan complaining from guise which hinders the achievement of happiness. The cry is from Viola who loves her master, but now she is a man. She says:

Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness, wherein the pregnant enemy does much. How easy is it for the proper false. In women's waxen hearts to set them forms. Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we. For such as we are made of such we be. How will this fudge? My master loves her dearly, I and I (poor monster) seems to dote on me. My state is desperate for my master love; As I am woman. Now also the day. What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe? O time, thou must untangle this not I; It's too hard knot for me to untie. (p. 41)

The other effect of disguise is the scheme of Sir Andrew, Fabian and Sir Toby to challenge Cesario to fight Andrew who loves Olivia in a dual. And this is part of Shakespeare's` method in creating comedy. The disguise of Viola creates various misunderstandings and mistaken identity. Shakespeare uses his skill when "he draws as it were, a magic circle round picture of experience which forbids us to look beyond to the world of genuine conflict and suffering. "¹¹ Again this leads to mediation in the assumption of the allusion of sight of man who depends on appearance. The assumed manhood may hide a horrible cowardice as in the state of Cesario. A hard appearance also hides a romantic core as in the state of the disguised Viola. The mistaken identity is the repeated result of disguise in the play.

Captain Antonio ,who saves Sebastian ,is the first victim of mistaken identity. When he is arrested by Orisnos' men because of previous enmity, he asks Viola to give him part of the money that he had previously given him .He mistakes Viola for Sebastian. This situation is so suggestive since it reminds us of many people who are just like Sebastian when they ask people to return a favour ,mistaking them to be faithful persons especially when their appearance aspires different impressions. The cheated persons may repeat the identical words of Sebastian who blames himself to trust such an unfaithful man:

Will you deny me now? Is possible that my desserts to
you, can lack persuasion? Do not tempt my misery. Lest
that it makes me so unsound a man as to upbraid you
with those kindness. That I have done for you. (p.156)

The pain of mistaken identity occurs when Olivia mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and announces him to be her husband in front of Orisno. She makes Orisnio believe that viola is an unfaithful messenger. All gain their happiness after dropping their masks, this presents a golden message that man cannot be happy with the heavy mask that hides the true impression to reveal a false sight .

In *The Merchant of Vince*(1595), disguise emerges at the beginning of the end and it carries the aura of love. The ultimate goal of disguise is protection . Portia, a beautiful lady, decides to disguise herself as a lawyer called Balthazar, and Nerissa ,her maid,

as a clerk. Portia insists on protecting her lovers' dearest friend, Antonio, who falls as a victim to an evil bond. Portia's husband, Bassanio, and Antonio's friend is sincere, thus Antonio borrows a large sum to help Bassanio. The condition is that the money should be paid back on time otherwise the situation will be horrible. If Antonio fails to return the money on the exact date, the Jew who lends them the money will cut a pound of Antonio's flesh. Amid these circumstances emerges the idea of disguise. Disguise is decided after the failure of many attempts to persuade the Jew to leave the case and accept the compensation. Her plan begins simply when she tells her maid that both will dress up as men, Portia will pretend to be a lawyer and the maid will be my clerk. They'll go to Venice and defend poor Antonio. She tells Nerissa that:

With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps.
 Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
 Like a fine bragging youth: and tell quaint lies,
 How honourable ladies sought my love,
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
 I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that I had not kill'd them:
 Above a twelvemonths-I have within mind,
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks
 Which I practice.¹²

Portia adds certain touches to her disguise to make it convincing and complete. She makes her voice harder, and talks proudly as many men do. Thus even her husband does not recognize her. She paves the way towards achieving a complete plan when she does not tell anyone save Nerissa who is part of the plan. She provides excuses behind her sudden travel to visit the monastery. Her plan of disguise is decided when Shylock, the Jew, refuses any attempt to drop the case and accept the compensation. She does not change her dress only, but her behavior too. She orders Nerissa that:

I hold thee any wager, when we are both accounted
 Like young men. I'll prove the prettier fellow of the
 two, and wear my dagger with the brave grace; And
 speak, the change of man and the boy, (p. 219)

Via her disguise, Portia criticizes the behavior of many men who use treachery of women's hearts to be a matter of pride. Portia succeeds in saving the life of Antonio from impending death. She asks Shylock, the Jew, to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's` body without shedding a drop of Antonio`s blood which is impossible.

Though the guise achieves its role successfully, she decides not to drop the mask. She determines to use it to check the love of her husband. It is important to know that all the heroines use their disguise to check on or find love. She asks him to give her his marriage ring as a gift for her success in this case. She practises certain pressure on him, he is embarrassed and under the pressure of Antonio, he agrees to grant this ring as a fee. Nerissa plays the same role on her husband, Gratiano, when she asks him to give her his marriage ring. Portia tells Bassanio that:

Many men say this excuse to save having to
give presents. If your wife is not a mad woman,
and ,if she knew how much I have deserved
this ring she will not be angry with you for
giving it to me .(p.111)

Disguise in this play has another part to be continued even after their return to their home and even after the removal of the masks when Portia and her maid quarrel with their husband because of losing their rings. Portia and her maid swear that they have given the rings to women. Portia decides to reveal the truth after she notices that the matter annoys Antonio .

The disguise of appearance usually occurs in comedy while in tragedy the disguise of manner or behavior is exploited more. Thus disguise in tragedy takes another form yet achieves the same job of hiding the truth. It is not necessary in Shakespeare's plays to change your appearance or sex in disguise .This provides a horrible message that even in life, there are unseen masks that can hide the corrupted spots. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603) will be tackled here as an example of this kind of disguise in tragedy . This play is one of four romantic tragedies. Its most unique feature is "the praise of variety"¹³ ,because it has a mixture of supernatural elements, love, suicide, madness and revenge. Perhaps this variety is the ground

behind its popularity and it is strange to include the favorite theme of Shakespeare in a different genre which is the tragedy. The personality of its hero is so complex as well as suspenseful. Hamlet adapts himself to every person and situation.

The unfortunate circumstances force him to wear the mask of madness to learn the truth about the murderer of his father. His disguise is the only noble disguise in this play. Many characters use this skill to be flatterers with double faces; false softness is visible and the true evil is hidden. The opposite takes place with Hamlet who hides his wisdom to show madness to reveal the truth regarding the ghost's words. It is significant to learn the intention of any guise, this will be the gauge for its nobility. Hamlet resorts to change in his behavior because this provides more freedom. All of Shakespeare's heroes agree about this point.

Hamlet designs his scheme with queer behavior of madness, he as many other heroines consults his friend, Horatio, and tells him the entire plan. Hamlet has another intention in telling Horatio to gain his help in his assumed madness and to quieten him so as not to reveal his plan. Hamlet tells him:

To put an antic disposition on. That you, at such times seeing me, never shall, with arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake, or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase, as "well, well, we know," or "we could, an if we would" or "we could, an if we would" or "If we list to speak"...

Hamlet via his assumed madness gathers information and talks to people. The adoption of madness brings its fruits when he learns that his uncle is the actual killer, but his disguise contains series of losses. He loses his love, Ophelia, when he denies his love to her as part of disguise. This maddens her soul to commit suicide. She kills herself thinking that she is abandoned. Other results of the plan is the death of his mother and he even loses his life. Again women prove to be easy victims for disguise.

Disguise of behavior is more dangerous than the disguise of dress especially if it falls between the hands of the wicked. Claudius wears the mask of a romantic lover to Gertrude and the mask of a

good father to Hamlet. Not only this, he succeeds in cheating his people to be a loyal king. This state draws attention to the noble and evil disguise. So, the entire matter depends on the intention of the users of this device.

This is suggestive that the disguise of behavior carries many losses that are impossible to be cured , while we do not find this in the guise of appearance. Hamlet finds in madness a concealment of his suspicions and hatred to his uncle. Claudius is the only person in the play who suspects this insanity to be assumed. He tries to make his pretence perfect when he speaks wildly even in front of her lover thinking that she is watched by her father. Many other personalities adopt different disguises of behavior to cover the inner self and to wear the mask of a loving uncle, a noble king and a soft husband , but in reality he is a mere killer. He covers his secret intention to deceive all and kills his brother, usurps the crown and marries his wife. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also pretend to be faithful to Hamlet to spy and gather information .

Shakespeare via these plays presents this device to be used with many edges. It is used either to remove certain burden or to gain more freedom in expressing opinions .It is used to gain free travel or a cover for spite and indecisiveness . The appalling question here is whether society is responsible for forcing man to wear a mask there is any other means by which one can a chive freedom without self-deception. Disguise in certain cases provides a relief because in hiding the true personality, social chains will be dropped . Thus, man in disguise can speak directly and express his attitudes without any hesitation. With all these benefits, the device is so dangerous because it can be used by the evil who uses the mask for deception. This subject confronts us with an urgent question ; can man drop the social chains without resorting to disguise? Since there are concrete and abstract masks ,there is no way to reveal the truth. The matter is grave dangerous because it is not necessary to wear a mask to deceive people since there is a mask of behavior . This device is horrible if it is found in the hand of the wicked. If this weapon is found between the hands of the pure, the matter is different. Disguise emerges at time of distress and hardship in Shakespeare's plays as in the states of: Rosalind, Celia, Portia, Viola and Hamlet.

It is so indicative that all the disguised persons in comedies are women who are disguised as men . It has a painful indication that in all societies and at different cultures men enjoy wider freedom than women. It reflects the historical call of women for more opportunity to be free. Being a man is in itself provides mutiny and protection from any social attack. There is no single character in the previously discussed plays that disguises to a woman is regarded as an insult in itself in any traditional society. Disguise provides an opportunity to have a neutral judgment and see the sophisticated topic so clear without any cover. Thus, almost the disguised heroines in the comedies of Shakespeare find love or check love during the concealment of personality like Rosalind, Celia, Portia, and Viola. Some find more strength or truth like Hamlet. It is important to declare that unfortunately most of the deceived persons by disguise are women who are proved to be easy victims to disguise in literature as well as life like Olivia who mistakes Viola to be a man and Phebe who mistakes Rosalind to be a man also even Ophelia loses her life because she thinks that Hamlet says the truth regarding his love for her. Finally, it is important to warn people not to be victims to disguise and it is an invitation for the maskers to drop all the masks and be themselves with all their negative sides and not be other persons regardless of the positive merits that are not theirs.

Notes

- 1- Ifor Evans , *A Short History of English Literature* (New York: Penguin Books, 1940), p. 155.
- 2- Reza Beeddar and Mozghan Mansur, *Understanding Drama* (Tehran: Rahman, 2001), 737.
- 3- Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History Of English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1996), p.162.
- 4- Allardyce Nicall, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900* (Cambridge: University press,1961), p.63.
- 5- William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* ,ed. J. W. Lever (London: Longman, 1967), p.145.All the subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.
- 6- Julie Grover , *G C S E English Literature* (London : Longman,1988), p. 89.

- 7- Karen Lawrence, Betsy Seifter and Lois Rather, *The McGraw Hill Guide to English Literature* (New York: MacGraw Hill Inc., 1989),p.191.
- 8-William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* ,ed. Rex Gibson (Cambridge : University press, 2000),p.9. All the subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.
- 9- Hugh Kenner ,*The Pound Era*(London: Faber and Faber,1972), p.154.
- 10- Boris Ford, , *The Pelican Guide to English Literature The modern Age* (London: Penguin Books,1963),p. 89.
- 11-David Daiches ,*Critical Approaches to Literature* (London: Longman,1981),p.233.
- 12-William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* in William Shakespeare ,*The Complete Works*,(New York: Gramercy Books,1997),p.219.
- 13- John Wilders , *New prefaces To Shakespeare* (New York: penguin press, 1982),p.767.
- 14-William Shakespeare , *Hamlet* ,in William Shakespeare *The Complete Works* (New York: Gramercy, 1997), p.1080. All the subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.

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