

## **“Autocratic Patriarchs and Subversive Angels”: An Analysis of the Father-Daughter Relationship in Selected Shakespearean Plays**

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Shakespearean plays, though varied on the basis of genre, thematic concerns and theatrical elements, generally dramatize familial relationships. One of the richest familial relationships dramatized among Shakespeare's plays is the depiction of the father-daughter relationship. The seeming tensions that emerge from the subversive means used by Shakespearean daughters through which they appear to challenge the “conventional” patriarchal body invariably receive the attention of the reader and the audience. In most plays, Shakespeare destines the father-daughter bond to collapse where both parties ultimately fail in unification as “fathers and daughters”. Most of the father figures in the plays appear to be authoritarians who tend to regulate and confine the children, daughters in particular, to “conventional” ideological formations. On the contrary, most of the Shakespearean daughters, except for a few, are positioned as autonomous, rebellious figures who tend to challenge the norms that govern patriarchy. In fact, the fathers' insistence and doggedness in upholding the conformist values of the Renaissance and Medieval society and the daughters' challenging behaviours and their transgressive desires to challenge the strict structures of hegemonic patriarchy bring forth the central conflict in most father-daughter relationships in Shakespearean plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*. Hence, this paper focuses on several father-daughter relationships such as “Jessica- Shylock”, “Goneril-Lear and Regan- Lear”, “Hermia- Egeus” and “Desdemona- Brabantio” that tend to challenge the “conventional” parental model. Thus the aim of this paper is to reflect on how the revolutionary and the challenging behaviours of the young daughters of the selected Shakespearean plays ruin the “expectations” of the father figures; how their subversive means and non-conformity appear to challenge and question the “masculinity” of both the nurturing father as well as the domineering and hegemonic father who symbolizes the state.

**Keywords:** *Conformity, Hegemony, Patriarchy, Subversion, Transgression.*

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