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Feminist Take on “The Taming of the Shrew” and “10 Things I Hate about You”

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Abstract

This research explores the evolution of feminist themes from Shakespeare’s “The Taming of the Shrew” to its cinematic adaptation, “10 Things I Hate About You.” While the original play lacks explicit feminist elements, the film, influenced by third-wave feminism, introduces empowered female characters challenging traditional gender norms. Examining character dynamics, relationship structures, and feminist critiques, the study sheds light on how cinematic reinterpretations can infuse new dimensions into classic works, impacting broader conversations on gender and feminism.

Keywords: Gender Roles, Feminist Themes, Transformation, Exploration, Cinematic Language

Introduction

Shakespeare’s timeless works have an enduring resource of inspiration for many filmmakers across different time periods. The cinematic reinterpretations of Shakespeare’s plays create a rich and varied landscape which mirrors the evolving tastes and preferences of audiences. From the early silent films like the 1908 adaptation of “Macbeth” to modern blockbusters such as “Romeo + Juliet”, each time period has imprinted its permanent mark on the cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare’s narratives. The world of cinema provides directors with a dynamic stage to delve into, reimagine and modernise these age old timeless narratives. This allows the directors to be creative and sets a vibrant stage for reinterpretation which further leads to an interactive space to bring fresh perspectives and contemporary touches to age old narratives. This part of literature review digs deeper into the wide range of Shakespearean adaptations in cinema, exploring the historical path and underlying themes that filmmakers have embraced

Critical perspectives on “The Taming of the Shrew”

Analysing “The Taming of the Shrew” within the world of literature expresses a complicated interplay and multifaceted nature of the relationships and interactions that are portrayed in the play, especially in terms of gender dynamics that has sparked the interest and discussions of scholars for many centuries. Traditional interpretations have often examined the play for its apparent patriarchal themes, but it remains a centrepiece for discussions on love, power, and societal expectations. Even though “The Taming of the Shrew” doesn’t directly include feminist ideas, experts have different opinions.

Some criticize it for what they see as mistreatment of women, while others have more detailed views that showcase the strength and independence of female characters. This part explores into the levels of critical scrutiny, laying the groundwork for understanding the gender roles inherent in the original play

The Evolution of Cinematic Language in Adaptations

As cinema is developed throughout different eras, the language and the techniques have been developed as well. The development of cinematic language in Shakespearean adaptations is an active process of exploration of visual narration. In olden days, the silent films were dependent on expressive acting and detailed sets, highlighting the visual spectacle. With the introduction of sound, adaptations gained a new dimension as the introduction of dialogues played an important role in the process of narration. The further developments including the transition to colour, development in special effects and the advancement of diverse cinematic styles even more transformed the way Shakespearean narratives were presented on screen. This part explores the evolution of cinematic language, highlighting how technical and artistic innovations have made an influence in the depiction of Shakespearean works in movies. It lays a foundation for understanding on how the changes in cinematic language can possibly influence the representation of gender dynamics, as posited by our research hypotheses

Navigating Feminist Perspectives in Literary and Cinematic Realms

Literature and Cinema act as mirrors of society. This statement has been examined critically through various perspectives. One such perspectives that has secured significance is feminist literary criticism. It offers a unique and revolutionary to understanding narratives. This part directs through the journey of the evolution of feminist literary criticism, scrutinizing its origins and its modern age application in both literature and cinema

Introduction to Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist Literary Criticism acts as a lens that gives us an opportunity to see the deeper layers

of stories which reveals the significance of hidden narratives and perspectives. Imagine it as a set of magic glasses that emphasizes previously unseen aspects of stories. These magic glasses have been around for a while, changing over time to match the modern days. At the central part of feminist literary criticism is the dedication to unveiling tales that might have been marginalised, particularly those from voices usually ignored

In the beginning days of feminist literary criticism, scholars wanted to interrogate old stories that often silenced female voices or showed them in limiting roles. The lens broadened to look at more than just the explicit part of stories but also the finding the hidden patterns that provoked gender inequalities. Overtime, this perception has changed and it has been adapted to fit our modern society. When we dig deeper into feminist literary criticism, it's not just about finding the flaws but also about understanding and liking the different voices we find in the narratives. This extraordinary lens aids us to look at how power works and operates, how female characters are portrayed, and the hidden unfair ideas in tales. It's like a tool that aids us to see stories in a different light. It makes the readers to appreciate them differently but also making sure that everyone's story is seen and heard.

William Shakespeare's play "Taming of the Shrew" and its modern film adaptation "10 Things I Hate About You" have been subject to various interpretations and discussions. One such exploration is the feminist perspective, which brings a crucial viewpoint into these works that challenges the traditional gender norms depicted.

Through our analysis of "Taming of the Shrew" and "10 Things I Hate About You," we will delve into the complexities of gender roles, transformations of characters, and feminist themes portrayed. We will explore how the modern adaptation diverges from or remains faithful to the original text in relation to feminist themes.

Overall, "Taming of the Shrew and 10 Things I Hate About You Feminist Explorations" aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these works through a feminist lens and highlight their enduring relevance in the context of contemporary discussions on gender and society.

Understanding Feminism in Literature

Feminist literary theory is an approach to analyzing literature that aims to uncover the ways in which gender and patriarchal structures impact the portrayal of characters, themes, and societal values in texts. It seeks to examine the ways in which female experiences have been historically silenced or distorted in literature and how these problematic representations contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequalities in broader society.

With the emergence of feminist literary theory, works such as William Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" and its modern adaptation "10 Things I Hate About You" can be reexamined through a feminist lens. This approach gives readers a unique perspective on classic and contemporary works of literature and reveals the ways in which these works can be interpreted in relation to feminist issues.

Summary of "Taming of the Shrew"

William Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" is a comedic play consisting of five acts. The story revolves around the wealthy Baptista, who refuses to allow his younger daughter, Bianca, to marry until her elder sister, Kate, is wedded. However, Kate is known for her sharp tongue and aggressive nature, and no man wants to marry her. Enter Petruchio, a flamboyant gentleman from Verona, who sets his sights on Kate and sets out to "tame" her, with the hopes of winning her father's approval and her hand in marriage. He uses a series of psychologically manipulative techniques to break her will and transform her into a subservient wife. Eventually, Kate submits to Petruchio, and they are married. The play ends with Kate delivering a monologue on the importance of obeying her husband.

Throughout the play, the relationship between Kate and Petruchio is the central focus. Their interactions reflect traditional gender roles and societal expectations of marriage during Shakespeare's time. However, the play has been the subject of controversy due to its potentially misogynistic themes.

Taming of the Shrew: Traditional Gender Roles

William Shakespeare's play "Taming of the Shrew" portrays a patriarchal society where men

hold power and women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles. The play centers around the courtship and marriage of Kate, the "shrew," to Petruchio, who sets out to "tame" her wild and disobedient spirit.

The male characters in the play, including Petruchio and Baptista, hold authority and make decisions that affect the female characters. Baptista, for instance, sets the terms for his daughters' marriages and ultimate fates. Meanwhile, Kate and other female characters are expected to be obedient, modest, and dependent on men for their futures.

These traditional gender roles in "Taming of the Shrew" have significant implications for feminist analysis. It raises questions about the power dynamics between men and women, and how societal expectations shape gender roles and relationships.

Moreover, the play's depiction of women as primarily ornamental objects to be won and subdued by men has sparked debates about its problematic nature. Is "Taming of the Shrew" perpetuating sexist ideologies or challenging them by highlighting their absurdity? This ongoing discourse is a testament to the play's significance and complexity.

Taming of the Shrew: Kate's Transformation

Kate, the protagonist of "Taming of the Shrew," undergoes a significant transformation throughout the play. At the beginning, she is portrayed as a strong-willed, independent woman who challenges the traditional gender roles of her society. However, as the play progresses, Kate is gradually "tamed" by her husband Petruchio and forced to conform to his expectations as a submissive wife.

This controversial shift in Kate's character has been the subject of much debate among feminist scholars. Some argue that Kate's transformation is a reflection of the patriarchal society in which she lives, while others interpret it as a commentary on the limitations of gender roles and the importance of compromise in relationships.

Regardless of one's interpretation, Kate's transformation highlights the complex dynamics between men and women in "Taming of the Shrew" and raises important questions about the role of gender in society.

Summary of 10 Things I Hate About You

Released in 1999, *10 Things I Hate About You* is a modern adaptation of William Shakespeare's play *Taming of the Shrew*. The movie takes place at a high school in Seattle and revolves around two sisters, Kat and Bianca. The younger sister, Bianca, is not allowed to date until her older sister, Kat, does. This humorous and touching film touches on themes of sisterhood, identity, and love.

What to Expect from the Adaptation

While maintaining the spirit of the original play, *10 Things I Hate About You* takes creative liberties with its characters and plot. For example, Kat is a strong and outspoken feminist who is not initially interested in dating, unlike her original counterpart. Bianca is also a popular and materialistic high schooler, a complete divergence from her submissive Shakespearean character. Fans of the original will enjoy seeing how this film breathes new life into a classic work.

10 Things I Hate About You: Modernization of Gender Roles

In the film adaptation of "*Taming of the Shrew*", "*10 Things I Hate About You*", we see a refreshing modernization of the gender roles depicted in the original play. Rather than obediently conforming to societal expectations, the female characters in the film actively resist and subvert traditional gender roles.

For instance, the protagonist, Kat, embodies characteristics typically associated with male characters in teen films. She is intelligent, independent, and rebellious, and actively challenges the patriarchal norms of her high school. Kat's younger sister, Bianca, also displays agency and independence, defying her patriarchal father's efforts to control her love life.

This modernization of gender roles in "*10 Things I Hate About You*" aligns with feminist ideals of female empowerment and agency. By subverting traditional gender roles, the female characters in the film break free from patriarchal limitations and challenge audiences to reconsider societal expectations.

10 Things I Hate About You: Feminist Themes in a Teen Rom-Com

"*10 Things I Hate About You*" is a film that explores feminist themes despite its classification as a teen romantic comedy. The movie challenges societal norms and addresses issues such as consent, agency, and female friendships in a way that appeals to younger audiences.

The protagonist, Kat Stratford, stands up against the patriarchal norms of her high school and fights for her own agency and independence. The film also showcases the importance of female friendships and the ways in which girls can support and empower each other.

The portrayal of consent in the movie is also noteworthy. The male love interest, Patrick Verona, gains Kat's trust and respect by respecting her boundaries and communicating with her throughout their relationship. This is a refreshing take on teenage romance and sends a positive message to viewers.

Overall, "*10 Things I Hate About You*" proves that feminist themes can exist in any genre, even in a teenage romantic comedy. The film offers important messages and lessons to young viewers while remaining entertaining and enjoyable.

Comparing *Taming of the Shrew* and *10 Things I Hate About You*

While "*10 Things I Hate About You*" is a modern adaptation of "*Taming of the Shrew*," the two works diverge in significant ways. The film's feminist themes and updates to traditional gender roles set it apart from the original play. For instance, while "*Taming of the Shrew*" deals with the submission of women to men, "*10 Things I Hate About You*" presents a strong female character who does not shy away from standing up for herself.

Even though both works center around a male lead's efforts to "tame" a strong-willed female character, there are more differences than similarities between the two. While Petruchio convinces Kate to submit through manipulative and at times abusive tactics, Patrick in "*10 Things I Hate About You*" takes the time to genuinely get to know and understand Kat before she decides to open herself up to him.

Moreover, "*10 Things I Hate About You*" presents a far-reaching critique of traditional gender

roles, making it a more feminist-friendly adaptation than the original play. “Taming of the Shrew” portrays women as subservient to men and existing only to serve them, whereas “10 Things I Hate About You” challenges this notion by presenting female characters who have agency and voice their opinions.

Impact and Reception of Taming of the Shrew and 10 Things I Hate About You

Both “Taming of the Shrew” and “10 Things I Hate About You” have left a lasting impact on feminist discussions in literature and film. While Shakespeare’s play has been subject to debates and controversies due to its perceived misogyny, it has also been reinterpreted and adapted to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations.

On the other hand, “10 Things I Hate About You” has been praised for its progressive approach to gender dynamics and portrayal of female empowerment in a teen rom-com genre. It has become a cult classic and a staple reference in discussions of feminist representations in popular culture.

The reception of these works has been mixed, with some critics and scholars arguing that they reinforce harmful stereotypes and patriarchal norms, while others defend them as significant milestones in feminist explorations. However, it is undeniable that both plays have had a profound impact on how we understand gender and power dynamics in literature and film.

“Taming of the Shrew and 10 Things I Hate About You have both been subject to debates and controversies. Whilst one brought Shakespeare’s play back into modern discussions, the other reinterpreted a classic to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, making a reference in discussions of feminist representations in popular culture.”

Conclusion

Throughout this exploration of “Taming of the Shrew” and its modern adaptation “10 Things I Hate About You,” we have seen how both works offer rich material for feminist analysis. By examining the traditional gender roles portrayed in the play and its

implications for Kate’s transformation, we can gain insights into the patriarchal society of Shakespeare’s time and its echoes in our modern world. Similarly, the film adaptation invites us to consider how it modernizes and challenges these gender roles, emphasizing female empowerment and agency despite its genre as a teen romantic comedy.

As we conclude this article, it is clear that feminism has a crucial role in analyzing and interpreting literary and cinematic works. By applying a feminist lens, we can uncover hidden meanings, challenge societal norms, and offer new perspectives on familiar stories. “Taming of the Shrew” and “10 Things I Hate About You” remain enduring works that offer ample opportunities for feminist explorations, and their impact and reception continue to spark debates and controversies.

In conclusion, we hope this article has offered a thought-provoking analysis of these works and emphasized the importance of feminist perspectives in our cultural discourse. As we engage with literature and film, let us continue to question, analyze, and challenge dominant narratives, and celebrate the diverse voices that shape our understanding of the world.

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