ENVISIONING AESTHETICS OF UGLINESS-BEAUTY DUALITY IN DRAMATIC DISCOURSE: A RECEPTIONIST VIEW ON WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S SELECTED PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify and explicate the concept of aesthetics of both ugliness and beauty in William Shakespeare's selected plays based on the conceptualization of beauty-ugliness duality in aesthetic, artistic, and critical studies. It draws on aesthetic values and their role in fostering readers' aesthetic and thematic taste. The paper starts with a preface that identifies the said concept and its implications in Shakespeare's dramatics, in which ugliness thematically attends the major dynamic characters and their actions. It also investigates the ways readers accommodate, evaluative, and appreciative standards of the aesthetic values that widen the scope of critical and aesthetic appreciation of dramatic texts. Meanwhile, the paper sheds light on the significance of the aesthetic quality of ugliness for realizing the manifestations of the aesthetics of beauty in the dramatic texts within a modern receptionist theatrical context and aesthetic appreciation.

Key words: Ugliness, Beauty, Aesthetics, Grotesqueness, Artistic Appreciation, William Shakespeare.

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics is one of the most openly creative and flexible human theories that study the aesthetic values of beauty and taste. Critics argue that aesthetics is interested in the euphemism of dramatic texts to foster the artistic and theatrical creativity in its various forms. In its modernist sense, aesthetics "attempts to move beyond the seemingly closed dialectic of beauty and the ugly" (Huhn, 1988, p. 2). In this light, aesthetic consciousness critically determines the aesthetic concepts and the aesthetic values in realistic human life and art. Revisiting both concepts of ugliness and beauty comes in the light of that "The 20th century was not kind to the notions of beauty or the aesthetic" as beauty itself embodies qualities of both the beautiful and the ugly (Zangwill, 2014). Therefore, critics should keep exploring the aesthetic values that include the beautiful and the ugly, the comic and the tragic and the lofty and the decadent. Revisiting both concepts of ugliness and beauty comes in the light of that aesthetic taste and human self are not compliant with all things. Therefore, the aesthetic images and artistic structures of beauty in literature emerge between the recipient and the aesthetic space that embraces the aesthetic values and aesthetic experience.

This paper deals with the concept of aesthetic ugliness and beauty in dramatic texts for ugliness is an aesthetic experience that results from the interaction between dramatic discourse and readers. Thus, ugliness is "contingent and relational" that it is available due to binary oppositions of beauty and ugliness (Przybylo, 2010). In addition, ugliness is not naturally ugliness in origin, but it is a deformed beauty of certain function and value. The British scholar Matthew Kieran (1997) argues that beauty is conventionally a "paradigmatic aesthetic quality" that confers pleasure (p. 383). Hence, it is necessary to explore qualitative ugliness; its content and form. While the content embodies the ethical and moral dimensions
within the social and behavioral theory, the form reflects the physical dimension. In this aspect, the German philosopher Karl Rosenkranz (2015) assumes that there is "no beauty without ugliness" and vice versa and that "beauty is an absolute" while "ugliness is a relative" (p. 95). This equation creates a binary tension between the beautiful and the ugly for both exist in the characters' body and soul.

In drama, the ugly characters represent the ideological side of implied ugliness that appears in the web of social relations and behavioral tendencies. In tragic plays, modifying ugliness to beauty is an ethical and moral aesthetic, in which "ugliness as evil" should be converted into sadness to get "an aesthetical pleasure" of the spectators and readers (Shiying, 2013, p. 6). Meanwhile, this impact is not explicitly negative; it is a positive excitement that discloses the centers of imperfection and the reasons for disharmony. In addition, this impact should allow such conflicts to invade the psyche of readers. Meanwhile, the British critic Walter T. Stace (1997) refutes the idea that ugliness is against beauty because there is a visionary mistake that feeling of pain might be aroused by ugliness, but it is not an aesthetic feeling that beauty may be destroyed by the moral sense of the valueless. Stace argues that aesthetic beauty is "an all-encapsulating concept including the pathetic, the comic, the sublime, the grotesque, the magnificent, the grand, the whimsical, the romantic, the idyllic, the realistic, the impressionistic, the symbolic, the classical, the sad, the melancholy, the graceful, the humorous, the majestic, the pretty, and so forth." (p.61)

Therefore, ugliness is not against beauty, but what stands against beauty is its absence. In this sense, the American scholar George Hagman (2005) describes ugliness as a “traumatic disruption of our aesthetic experience” in which human suffers of both horror and disgust (7). Thus, there is no surprise that the ugly has a positive aesthetic value despite being conceptually negative based on its psychological impact.

Thinking of beauty requires thinking of its binary opposite: ugliness. The Italian critic Umberto Eco (2007) states that "beauty could now express itself by making opposites converge, so that ugliness was no longer the negation of beauty, but its other face" (p. 321). In this regard, the beautiful can become ugly or the ugly can transform into beautiful through the artist's creativity and recipients' taste. Meantime, the Chinese philosopher Zhang Shiying (2013) argues that beautifying ugliness requires admitting that "ugliness has an aesthetic significance" because it reveals the “true color of life” in arts (p. 1). Then, ugliness is valued in art as it bestows delight on the portrayal of the grotesque and ugly. For example, in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, The skilled and clever Helena appreciates the beautiful look of Hermia who "has beautiful eyes" that make the former seem "as ugly as a bear" (2.2, L. 79). Yet, this internalized view is transformed into a positive one when Lysander describes her as "Radiant, beautiful Helena" and he tells her that he feels "like Mother Nature" that allows him to see into her heart (2.2, L. 80). Here, Shakespeare transforms the ugly feeling of scorn into a beautiful look manifested in Hermia's face. Also, these words suggest that the deformed and grotesque features metamorphose into beautiful and delightful qualities, and readers get delight from this oxymoronic grotesque image.

Relevantly, Rosenkranz (2015) emphasizes that ugliness is "the negation of beauty without being reducible to evil, materiality, or other negative terms used in its conventional condemnation" (p. 25). So, in dramatic texts, the aesthetics of ugliness never critically appear as a contrary value to the beauty. Shiying (2013) states that when ugliness is beautified, it signifies the implied meaning of human real life, enabled by the artists of sublime
imagination who construct beautiful structures out of the ugly by "means of color, figure, or languages" (p. 2). It means that the ugly forms possess an aesthetic significance that creates a suggestive meaning of ugliness. To exemplify, the ugly scenes of killing, burlesque, profligacy, deception, and avarice are realistically different in their ugliness but equal in their aesthetic value.

The Aesthetic Value of the Ugly-Beautiful Binary

Binary oppositions constitute a wide scope of the postmodern criticism which explores the aesthetic and expressive aspects of such binaries. The technique of binaries is a center in the aesthetics of the receptionist theory that interpretively results in readers' suspense. The American artist Naomi Baker (2010) describes the binary oppositions of beauty and ugliness as relevant embodiment of goodness and/or perversity in their literary and cultural context, in which "physical ugliness" is associated with "evil character" (p. 43). In a sense, there is no absolute good or absolute evil or beauty without ugliness; hence, ugliness is not the dogmatic antithesis of beauty. In literature, the ugly is as significant as the beautiful for both inspire writers to create their own literary tools. In this regard, Oscar D. Chinchilla (2012) argues that ugliness and beauty in literature "coexist naturally without necessarily interfering with each other." Binary oppositions explain the relationships between the idea, as content, the aesthetic structure, as value, and their tension. In this view, the American critic Thomas Huhn (1988) describes the tension between ugliness and beauty as a value "supplanted by the harmony that attempts to disown this tension by suppressing the ugly, that is, nature" (p. 5).

Remarkably, some theatrical texts employ the notion of disharmony between the dramatic elements to imply a large proportion of ugliness. The devilish dramatic character and its ugly patterns presented with a wrinkled, gloomy, and sullen face with thick lips, ruthless eyes, and unnatural laugh. Baker (2010) notices that "ugliness is infused with moral and supernatural meaning repeatedly collides with an emergent understanding of ugliness as a purely physical phenomenon, devoid of spiritual significance" (p.55). In this light, ugliness may shape characters' identities on both moral and behavioral levels. For instance, Shakespeare presents Othello with an aged black complexion that passively decides on his tragic destiny, evident in Iago's words, "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram. Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise, Awake the snorting citizens with the bell" (1.1, L. 91). Here, Iago confirms his stereotypical implication of Othello's blackness that signifies ugliness and depravity. Yet, Othello uses striking poetic metaphors and images to maintain his individual beauty and to conceal his ugliness. Moreover, when Othello gets raged, he utters a poetic language and transforms into an "ugly, idiotic" character, manifesting the binary oppositions of beauty and ugliness (Rocha, 2013, p. 10). In this sense, Othello says, "Haply for I am black, And have not those soft parts of conversation (3.3. L.265). Thus, Othello's color becomes a tool for aesthetic evaluation. In this respect, Baker (2010) admits that "power dynamics of ugliness" categorize people based on "gender, class, and race" (p. 188). Such a view affirms that ugliness reflects mental perceptions of human moral evil.

Furthermore, dramatists can portray the structurally and cognitively devilish characters based on the disharmony assumed by the concepts of ugliness and abnormal behavior reflected negatively on the social and psychological levels. Thus, ugliness has two aesthetic elements: content and structure. The content embodies the value of the ugly, and the task of the aesthetic critic is to identify its features in the light of other aesthetic values. The structure contains the value of the ugly and determines the way and the level of its embodiment. Accordingly, there are two relevant issues: the beautiful structure that embodies the value of
the ugly and the ugly structure that fails to embody any other value. Shiying (2013) affirms that "there is neither pure beauty nor pure ugliness" as they are reciprocally infuse in human realities, arguing that beauty generates a positive and optimistic value, while ugliness generates a negative and pessimistic value (3). In a sense, we fail to distinguish between the value of the ugly, manifested in the content and in the beautiful structure, and the ugly structure that does not reflect any aesthetic value. Stace (1997) argues that beauty arouses an aesthetic feeling of the beholders of "an intellectual content" with perceptual faculty (p. 149). Obviously, the significance of aesthetics in the study of dramas is manifested in the creative dramatic discourse and the discovery of its intellectual and aesthetic values.

Dramatic analysis includes searching for aesthetic values of the beautiful versus the ugly or the tragic versus the comic and identifying their interrelationships and values. In comic plays, ugliness of humility may be transformed into an "aesthetic state of comedy," that creates a sense of beauty (Shiying, 2013, p.7). Thus, critics should explore the aesthetic dramatic structure and the integration of its components its ability to embody the aesthetic values. In this respect, the aesthetic values should be delivered to the readers within the study of the transformation of the aesthetic concepts into aesthetic values. Therefore, dramatic criticism entails introspecting the beautiful and the ugly and searching for the reasons that make such texts tragic or comic. In addition, it searches for the basic aesthetics of both the structure and content that include the binary oppositions and the various juxtaposed dramatic forms. In this context, the dramatic aesthetics surpass the fixed norms and stringent specifications. Moreover, ugliness should not be viewed as a dirty value that distorts or degrades the beautiful; especially that aesthetics is the science of perceptual cognition. In this view, things may be weighed in a beautiful way and the beautiful things might be viewed in an ugly way. Furthermore, social concepts of beauty vary from a culture to another. Chinchilla (2012) states that beauty is traditionally viewed "a synonym of harmony, enjoyment, properness, and symmetry." Meanwhile, Rosenkranz (2015) points out that “beauty is the original divine idea, and its negation, ugliness, as it is a negation, has only a secondary existence” (125). This means that beauty is a center while ugliness is peripheral in the perceptive mentality of receivers.

Dramatic texts involve condensed aesthetic values and always try to offer their valuable forms to reflect a current reality or create a new one. Meanwhile, we can find aesthetic manifestations of ugliness in dramatic texts fused with other aesthetic values, creating a significant conflict with beauty. In this term, Stace (1997) argues that this conflict probably originates from the belief that ugliness is necessarily against beauty and that beauty and ugliness aesthetically are binary oppositions like goodness and evil or sincerity and telling lies (p. 94). Hence, Stace thinks that if the goal of art is to create aesthetic impressions, ugliness cannot be excluded from art, in which this ugliness implies an aesthetic pleasure. This pleasure value manifested in the ugly colored with grotesqueness may afford "positive evaluative" reactions that certainly include serious aesthetic pleasure (Kieran, 2014, p. 395). Thus, the ugly leads to a beautiful aesthetic impression instead of a painful one that we traditionally assume, taking in account the differentiation between ugliness as a negative value and beauty as a utilitarian aesthetic value.

The dramatic discourse entails evoking aesthetic that can lexically and aesthetically judge the discourse in terms of its absolute beauty or absolute ugliness and break the barriers between them. Eco (2007) argues that "art has the power to portray [ugly things] in a beautiful way, and the beauty of this imitation makes ugliness" (p.133). This mysterious and complex relationship between beauty and ugliness is manifested in the relationship between crime and
ugliness within an aesthetic and philosophical context. For instance, the witches' prophecies lead to committing murder in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a thing that confirms the significance of approaching the value of the ugly within the aesthetic interconnections in the reception theory. Further, the mechanisms and concepts of this theory and the aesthetics of ugliness in such dramatic texts are devices to appreciate and thematically harmonize the ugly and the beautiful.

Based on the aesthetics of beauty, the beautiful is not the ordinary beautiful that we conceive as an anti-ugly thing, and the ugly itself may aesthetically be a beautiful subject in an artistic and cognitive context. In this light, the aesthetician George Santayana (1963) prefers displaying the ugly reality in a beautiful form to displaying the abstract beauty, in which "the distance between beautiful and ugly things is increased," creating "a loss of aesthetic insight" (p. 75). Thus, it is not necessary that the aesthetic theme can be a beautiful model of human life, which means that natural ugliness may become a positive factor in artistic beauty. Other aestheticians argue that the function of ugliness in art is a major aesthetic concern. As Eco notes, "ugliness can be redeemed by context and restored of its uselessness" (p.409). This necessarily applies to ugly topics in dramatic texts that would provoke the recipient's feelings of fear, dismay, sadness, disgust, and sarcasm. All these feelings enable the recipient to extract aesthetic implications based on the subjective experience and aesthetic taste associated with the thresholds of the dramatic text. Meanwhile, the contextually integrated aesthetic experience of the recipient always affects the aesthetic approaches, which emphasize the social nature of the artistic experience by fusing various themes through the aesthetic perception and its relation to theories of psychoanalysis, socio-aesthetics, and cultural aesthetic values.

In dramatic texts, the aesthetics of ugliness are an attempt to extrapolate the cultural and aesthetic values of any human community. In this respect, Chinchilla (2012) views ugliness in literature as essential "enjoyable ... objects of disgust" that mediate readers to texts. Aesthetically and thematically, integrating ugly objects or characters in literature requires creative skills to enable readers to enjoy such aesthetic and significant skills. This vision is textually aesthetic that enables readers to explore the aesthetic implications of ugliness in dramatic texts. In *Henry IV*, ugliness is associated with moral corruption, illness, and aging manifested in Harry's words that he will "imitate the sun, / . . . / By breaking through the foul and ugly mists" (1.2, L.175–180). Moreover, Harry's words to Kate are suggestive of other associations of ugliness,

> … in faith, Kate, the elder I wax, the better I shall appear: my comfort is, that old age, that ill layer-up of beauty, can do no more spoil upon my face: thou hast me, if thou hast me, at the worst; and thou shalt wear me, if thou wear me, better and better" (5.2, L. 227-230).

These words imply that Henry's own ugliness is not but ugliness that negates the contextual "traditional beauty associated with youth" (Zangwill, 2014). Meantime, Henry informs Kate that his own ugliness is contextualized with the classical beauty of youth characters,

> … downright oaths, which I never use till urged, nor never break for urging. If thou canst love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sun-burning, that never looks in his glass for love... (5.2, L.137-40)
Here, Henry's discourse is a confession of his own internal conflict with physical ugliness and grotesqueness that make him a foul. In the same way, Richard proclaims, "I can add colors to the chameleon, / Change shapes with Proteus for advantages" (3.2, L.191–2). This animal image signifies an ugly feeling of exceptional prejudice. Likewise, in "Fair is foul, and foul is fair," the witches believe that objects that men view foul and ugly are beautiful to women because they incorporate evil (Macbeth, 1.1, L. 12-13). This reflection offers readers an ugly insight about the witches who plot against Macbeth; they dislike every beautiful thing. However, this internalized feeling of ugliness is not continual; it does not deny Macbeth's spiritual beauty that arises from his intelligence, rhetoric, and charisma. Human self has a range of uncertainties and ambivalences towards what ugly and beautiful are. For example, both Hamlet and Macbeth glorify the grotesque in nature like mountains, forests, winds, stormy oceans. Meanwhile, Bloom (2009) asserts that there is a link between beauty and ugliness which is "essential to understand grotesque" in which ugliness is ugliness and beauty is beauty (p.8). In this aspect, Shakespeare presents ugliness as a source of creativity and inspiration by creating deformed characters. In other words, Shakespeare presents dramatic ugliness as a stigma to satirize human internal dim side that entails the presence of its binary of beauty.

The new dramatic aesthetics re-establish the modern aesthetic standards that view ugliness and beauty as binary opposites with thematic aesthetic values. In this light, Kieran (2014) argues that featured ugliness may have "intrinsic aesthetic value" while beauty is "only parasitic" (p. 393). In this respect, tragedy is manifested in dramatic texts by the beautiful death of the tragic character, a thing that generates a tragic sense and lack of harmony between the ideal that the character aspires to achieve and the social and cultural milieu. Huhn (1988) asserts that ugliness is the antithesis of beauty and the ugly object turns into "an aesthetic taboo" which disapproves beauty (p. 6). This tragic sense arouses ugly feelings of sadness and disappointment that, however, result in a deep aesthetic value embodied in tragic significant images. For example, in Hamlet, the insane Ophelia suffers from Hamlet's cruelty and eventually climbs into a willow tree from which she drops into the brook, where she drowns, signifying an ugly suicide. She is insane since she starts to consider "error as truth, lies as reality, and violence as beauty and justice" (Foucault, 2001, p. 23). Also, Ophelia says to Hamlet, "Could beauty have better commerce than with honesty?" and Hamlet answers that beauty reduces honesty (Hamlet 3.1, L. 110). Moreover, in Othello, Othello realizes that his murdered wife, Desdemona, is not culpable of infidelity and stabs his chest with a dagger and dies beside Desdemona's corpse. In this sense, the Portuguese scholar Ana Maria Rocha (2013) asserts that Shakespeare presents "an ugly Othello," who is dominated by immense wrath and jealousy and kills his innocent wife (p.70).

Seemingly, the dramatic evil character in the drama of mysteries and miracles has a mask that presents an example of human ugliness. Here, Hagman (2005) argues that ugliness of any sort implies "the provocation and projection of unconscious fantasies" that arouse human experiences of "the most disturbing and repulsive feelings" (7). In this way, Hagman offers his own definition for ugliness that focuses on the sensual qualities of ugliness. In a sense, the devil appears in the hybrid bodily mask that combines the animal and the human to reflect the ugly side of the latter. For example, in King Lear, this hybrid mask is evoked in a pejorative way when King Lear describes Goneril's behavior in terms of animal imagery, "Thy sister's naught. O, Regan, she hath tied / Sharp-toothed unkindness, like a vulture, here." (2.4, L. 1413-14). Such ugly animal images suggest an ugly aspect of human behavior, signifying an ugly feeling of exceptional prejudice. Furthermore, ugliness is incarnated in the characters who commit ugly crimes and bloody violence. For example, Shakespeare presents his unique
characters in a dramatic context through ghosts, witches, raging storms, murder, revenge, and despicable conspiracy.

By the same token, Julius Caesar presents another example of ugliness manifested in both blood and violence. This is clear in Brutus's ugliest words to the conspirators,

And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords;...
Let's all cry, "Peace, freedom, and liberty!" (3.1. L. 118-122)

Here, this is the ugliest moment that Brutus unjustifiably manifests, and Shakespeare wants to expose human dimly ugly part that none can make beautiful. Meanwhile, Eco (2007) indicates that embodiments of ugliness include "a lack of equilibrium in the organic relationship between the parts of the whole" (p. 19). This view fuses the philosophy of laughter in theater with what is human and social, stressing the comic character that lacks consistency and gets defeated by ugly vanity. Here, the designer can be the producer and the judge of a reconfigured beauty within a new system and hierarchy of aesthetics. Here, ugliness becomes a motive to arouse certain feelings for "ugliness does not counteract beauty but complements it" (Buller, 2014). Moreover, Shakespeare incorporates mythical grotesqueness by negatively presenting some characters with deformed bodily appearances.

Seemingly, Shakespeare presents physical-moral ugliness of his characters to suggest a technical grotesque portrait of his own "literary creation" (Chasin, 2010, p. 28). In Richard III, the insane Richard indifferently commits ugly crimes of killing children, women, and parents, seducing the hearts of the widows. Also, he insanely confesses committing ugly crimes and complains,

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward. (1.2 L.183-185)

Richard's madness, being a sign of his ugliness, "discloses a secret of animality which is its own truth, and in which, in some way, it is reabsorbed" (Foucault, 2001, p. 71). Also, Richard's ugly behaviors create panic and aversion of others and are severely rebuked in the play. For instance, Richard disappointedly describes himself as

... a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size (3.2 L. 147-50)

Here, Richard’s overstated ugliness arises from his deformed body that parallels mental and moral ugliness. Thus, ugliness fused with moral sickness implies features of grotesqueness and eccentricity that dominated Renaissance (Baker, 2014, p. 11). Richard presents himself as a deformed villain, "And descant on mine own deformity ... I am determined to prove a villain" (1.1, L. 26–30). These words signify a correlation between Richard's physical deformity and ugliness and his sinister mood. In this regard, the British critic Nick Zangwill (2014) argues that the features of beauty, ugliness, and aesthetic rely on "non-aesthetic properties" for both beauty and ugliness are authentic basic qualities of the world of human and arts. As such, Richard’s justifications for his bloody behavior coincide in his
deterministic despair brought about by his deformity and madness. However, despite his ugliness and monstrosity, Richard’s rhetorical appeal is unquestionable and relieves his tense ugliness.

In short, Shakespeare’s purpose in depicting his ugly characters is to disgust them. The American scholar Benjamin A. Chasin (2010) argues that Shakespeare’s dramas fuse mythical grotesque images by invoking "horrific and monstrous images and descriptions," denoting multifaceted characters with rapacity, corruption, and monstrosity (p. 33). Sentimentally, grotesqueness implies "an excessive or distorted experience of the body" (Bloom, 2009, p. 100). Meanwhile, the stereotypical comic characters who suffer from immorality, like liars, slanderers, queers, and wantons, are manifesting examples of moral ugliness. In this sense, Shiying (2013) points out that "sarcastic comedy often makes originally humble and insignificant forms -manifested in ugliness- appear as lofty and serious faces" (p. 4). Yes, in drama, spectators laugh as a way to disrespect the ugly and ugliness. For instance, Caliban, in The Tempest, exemplifies absurdity reflected in his atrocious ugliness, moral ignorance, and inhumanity, manifested in Prospero’s words,

A devil, a born devil, …
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
And as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers. (4.1, L.188–92)

In addition, Prospero describes Caliban as "disproportion'd in his manners/As in his shape. (5.1, L. 290-91). In this context, Prospero asserts that Caliban is internally and externally ugly. Furthermore, the monstrous culturally signifies ugliness, "reflecting cultural anxieties, fears, and fascinations" (Przybylo, 2010). Ostensibly, the concept of ugliness is aesthetically embodied in the simulation of the inferior human beings.

Thematically, Shakespeare presents caricature characters with significant ugly manifestations of deformation and physical uglification that deepen the comic aspects of dramatic discourses. In Othello, Othello's beauty arises from his poetic discourse that undermines his ugliness that is cultivated by his blackness and strangeness, manifesting an aesthetic incongruity. Rocha (2013) argues that the Negro were "black, ugly, cruel, evil, pagan ... and barely human" (p. 57). This statement is embodied in Othello’s character whom The Duke describes as "noble signior, If virtue no delighted beauty lack, Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.328-331). Here, despite having a negative connotation, the word black bears a positive significance in which the Duke signifies that Othello is an exception to equation of blackness and ugliness. Othello has a beautiful virtuous spirit manifested in his striking goodness. Likewise, A Midsummer Night's Dream presents Bottom and his mates as caricatures of dilettante players to play the roles of women. In other words, Bottom is a grotesque caricature depicted as "an asshead," a thing that makes him incredibly a monstrous ugly figure (3.1, L. 116). The Swedish scholar Marina Buller (2014) argues that ugliness occupies the distance between beauty and caricature that ends ugliness and that this ugliness results in caricatures in relation to physical and behavioral features. Clearly, implications of ugliness and alienation result from Shakespearean grotesque discourse.

Furthermore, black comedy or tragicomedy, which is grotesque in nature, is a good example of the aesthetic of ugliness through its unique themes that include death, terrorism, crime, madness, and racism. Such black comedies satirize human ugly realities; they humorously and caricaturally disclose these realities in a grotesque way to diagnose and reveal human
shortcomings and implied disadvantages. This grotesquely aesthetic portrayal uses irony, humor, and parody to monitor the status quo of humanity and anticipate its future. For instance, Shakespeare's *King Lear* is an example of grotesque comedy with a tragic flavor that mocks a common devoted character. The grotesquely absurd features in *King Lear* signify the ugly chaos in the king's disturbed psyche. One of the comically grotesque features is the Fool's humor in various stances in the play. For example, Gloucester thinks that the Fool is jumping off the cliff at Dover and says, "Methinks the ground is even" (4.6, L. 3) and then Edgar retorted, "Horrible steep" (4.6, L. 4). Here, Edgar creates a morally ugly, mimic, and grotesque scene. In addition, in the imagined courtroom, Lear absurdly puts his daughters on a trial and mocks them, "The little dogs and all...see, they bark at me," (3.6, L. 62-63). This scene signifies Lear's mockery of his own impaired mental condition and bestows a grotesque humor on the play. Finally, Cordelia’s death suggests an ugly and despicable game of fatalism fused with absurd grotesqueness. The scene also embodies merits of a grotesque comic play in which Cordelia, in spite of her devotion and goodness, passes away in an inappropriate way. This event is a metaphor for human ugly sufferings like torture, rebuke, offense and physical and moral injustice.

To recapitulate, the ugly and the beautiful are dramatic aesthetic and conceptual strategies, since readers can distinguish the dramatic distinct features which qualify the realistic and imaginative components of the beautiful and the ugly. In this respect, Zangwill (2014) maintains that once "beauty is a generic aesthetic value, then sublimity can be understood as a kind of beauty" which means that sublimity in arts is a perpetual aesthetic concept. Thus, the aesthetics of ugliness deal with the tragic, the comic, and the tragicomic and transform into aesthetic values that manifest the creative dramatic embodiment of costumes and harmonious audio-visual effects. For instance, in *Macbeth*, the dialogue between Macbeth and Banquo presents the witches as old, skinny, ugly, and bearded; they are grotesquely hideous and exceptional. Their dramatic significance arises from their prophecy and its impact on Macbeth and its relation to his ugly crimes. In a word, human ugliness and beauty are evaluated based on qualities of height, color, complexion, appearance, heredity factors, deformations, and diseases. All these factors affect the dramatic character and give it a different view of life, and therefore affect its psyche and cause its internal and external psychological conflicts. For example, a blind man has a different view from the sighted man, a thing that is decisive in the structure of the character. To this end goes Eco (2007) who states that ugliness is agreeable and delightful in arts that present "the ugliness of ugliness" in a beautiful way (p. 133). Therefore, the dramatic conflict is the conflict between the ugly and the beautiful based the aesthetic values and parameters.

CONCLUSION

In dramatic texts, ugliness is an aesthetic value and has an important role in guiding and arousing the aesthetic taste of readers based on aesthetic appreciation and preferences, emphasizing binary relationship between the ugly and the beautiful. The non-traditional moment of suspense in dramas arises in the reception process through the significantly aesthetical and structural unfamiliarity of ugliness and the alignment with the familiarity of the beautiful. Besides, ugliness in dramas has a dual function; it is excitingly tension-generating and poignant. It is also purgatory and cathartic of the receivers' negative feelings. Meanwhile, the value of ugliness can aesthetically be adopted as a critical standard in accordance with the concepts of aesthetic criticism to establish the aesthetics of ugliness in both content and structure. In addition, identifying the aesthetics of ugliness in dramatic texts contributes to determining the level of textual creativity and to judging the value of
transforming the aesthetic concepts into aesthetic values. This transformation would achieve aesthetic harmony and semantic activation of the thematic artistic function. Thoroughly, dramatic texts should be searched for aesthetic values, including the beautiful and the ugly and their systematic relations that govern the dramatic discourse that explores human behaviors based on social and artistic practices. Seemingly, the moral and behavioral contexts impose a structural concept of the aesthetic values of ugliness in dramatic texts. Also, deformation, paradoxes, ironies, mockery, satire are not but featured qualities of the aesthetics of ugliness in any human drama.

Moreover, beauty revives conscience and transcends the human to the highest ranks. It is divided into a spiritual beauty and a physical one. The former is a source of comfort and tranquility and expresses human deliverance from the negative effects of life and cleanses human from hatred. The beautiful conscience defends human against the self that seeks ugliness; it matches with the virtue and sincerity of feelings. Human is keen on the beauty of the soul, mind and conscience. In this light, the beauty of expression - as in dramas- is the broadest type of arts and the most influential on people's lives and their practices in speech, style, guidance, and education. Accordingly, man should attain gravity in style and aesthetic expression, in which human life is fused with love, kindness, high morals, and beauty of speech and behavior. This aesthetic beauty is above truth; there is no beauty in telling lies, and art is never in debauchery. In addition, the aesthetics of expression is never fabricated with falsehoods in daily speeches. When beauty is a means to demolish the truth, it must be stopped so that beauty and decorum are sustained visibly and invisibly.

In the same manner, the beauty of the judge is embodied in his justice and fairness, the beauty of leader is manifested in his dedicated carefulness and sincerity towards his people's security, safety, and comfort. In addition, the beauty of the rich is in their charity and empathy, and the beauty of the poor is reflected in their hard-work and labor. Then, beauty is a companion of truth and goodness; the rhetoricians' job is to disclose the truth. There is no rhetoric without beauty, and beauty is born with rhetoric. Thus, aesthetic beauty arises to express what is human, while ugliness is divinely condemned. When someone feels the ugly, his psychology becomes bleak, his morals get worse, and he often turns into a pervert who has no passion because he sees the images of life ugly. On the other hand, the human soul, illuminated by the candles of beauty, bestows on others elegance full of passion and romance. Therefore, real beauty remains the beauty of human soul and appears in expressions that demonstrate nobility and tolerance and serve as a symphony that infiltrates into human psyche that seeks purity, tranquility, and aesthetic.

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