

Done to Death:

Pastiching the Trope of the Beautiful Dead Woman

A Master's Thesis by:

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ABSTRACT

Tropen om den smukke, døde kvinde, er fokuset i dette speciale, med specifikt henblik på Lisa Kleins roman fra 2006 *Ophelia*. Denne roman er en pastichering af William Shakespeares stykke *Hamlet* fra 1603. Gengivelsen af det kendte stykke har Ophelia i fokus, med den ændring at Ophelia overlever plottet, og Klein derigennem giver den kendte karakter mulighed for at leve videre.

Pointen med specialet er at give en kritisk analyse af romanen. *Ophelia* anvender og omskriver tropen om den smukke, døde kvinde for at imødekomme et samtidigt publikum. Dette er for at give en mere moderne kvindelig hovedkarakter, mens Klein stadig trækker fra en kendt karakter. Måden Klein forsøger at skabe en mere moderne version af Ophelia rejser dog spørgsmålet om, hvorvidt dette er det rette valg for netop denne historie og karakterens indflydelse på tropen. Tropen centrerer sig omkring indflydelsen af den smukke, døde kvinde, både i litteraturen og i virkeligheden.

Vores fremgangsmåde har været nærlæsningen af Kleins roman, hvorefter vi har anvendt udvalgt teori, der fremhæver vores problemformulering.

Ved hjælp af teoretikere som Elisabeth Bronfen og Lucinda Becker, har vi kunne konkludere at tropen er tilstede i Kleins tekst. Vi har derudover gjort brug af Hoesterseys teori om den litterære pastiche, for at kunne arbejde med romanen som en genfortælling af Shakespeares værk. Dette har gjort det muligt for os, at vi har kunne sætte de to værker i kontrast til hinanden, og derigennem komme frem til at Kleins roman er et atypisk, moderne pastiche. Vi kan se det er moderne, idet at Klein gør bredt brug af stilistiske værktøjer og udnytter endda en nyere genre end den Shakespeares værk originalt tilhørte. Dog er værket atypisk, da et moderne pastiche ofte sletter forfatter personligheden i sin stræben på at efterligne det pasticherede værks forfatter, ifølge Hoestersey. Dette er ikke tilfældet med *Ophelia*, da det gør brug af et markant anderledes sprogbrug, samt tilmed gør brug af allusioner til at kommentere på Shakespeares værk, som eliminerer den subtile forskel et moderne pastiche ofte stræber efter.

Da tropen koncentrerer sig om køn, specifikt det kvindelige, har vi gjort brug af både Kath Woodward's teori om essentialisme og Laura Mulveys essay vedrørende the male gaze. Ved at bruge Woodward i dette speciale har vi identificeret og analyseret de sociale roller mænd og kvinder bliver placeret i. Dermed har vi konstateret at Kleins *Ophelia* besidder en del stereotypiske mandlige karakteristika, som ofte er et værktøj der er brugt på heltinden i ungdomsromanen. For at give den kvindelige karakter drivkraft tyes der ofte til de maskuline

træk. Mulveys teori bruger vi til at understrege forskellen på en autodiegetisk fortæller i en roman i forhold til en karakter på en scene eller skærm og hvilke reaktioner de hver især fremprovokerer i deres læser eller publikum. I denne undersøgelse er kommet frem til, at Kleins brug af en autodiegetisk fortæller i *Ophelia* er et forsøg på understrege, at Shakespeares Ophelia's plads på scenen udsatte hende for det Mulvey kalder 'male gaze'. Samtidig eliminerer Klein også dette element i hendes egen Ophelia, idet hun gør hende til en autodiegetisk fortæller.

Med en historie som Hamlet, der har utallige genfortællinger, omskrivninger og nyfortolkninger under bæltet, er det ikke overraskende at Klein har valgt netop denne fortælling. Derimod er Kleins dagsorden vedrørende en opgørelse med tropen om den smukke, døde kvinde ikke passende med netop Ophelia, som er kendt for sin rolle som pragt eksempel for tropen. Klein kunne have skabt en progressiv, kvindelig karakter i Ophelia, som vækker inspiration i et yngre publikum, og stadig efterleve Shakespeares Ophelias øde. At Klein har gjort brug af Shakespeares *Hamlet*, et af de mest indflydelsesrige og anerkendte værker i engelsk litteratur, udtrykker et klart ønske om at deltage i en samtale med en større kanon af litterære værker. Dog konkluderer vi, at denne ambition kommer til kort, da *Ophelia* henvender sig til et yngre publikum, hvor i det ikke kræves af dem, at være bekendte med hverken *Hamlet* eller Bronfen's trope. Uden et kendskab til disse vil Kleins ændringer og ligheder med *Hamlet* være svære at identificere, hvilket tilslører hendes budskab.

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INTRODUCTION

The fascination with death has been depicted and portrayed in art and literature consistently and repeatedly throughout history. Many works of fiction have had death, and all the questions the topic provokes, as the story's main focus and character drive. The contemplation of life and death has made its permanent mark on literary history through one of the most famous plays ever written: *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* from 1603 by William Shakespeare. With the opening words of his famed soliloquy - "to be or not to be" - Prince Hamlet reflects on the hardships of life and the uncertainty of death. Death seems to be surrounding Hamlet, and as death takes the shape of his deceased father, death even becomes the principal motivator for Hamlet's actions.

The idea of death is made beautiful through the poetic description of Ophelia's drowning. When Gertrude in the seventh scene of the fourth act gives a detailed report of Ophelia's death to Laertes and Claudius, it is done with such elegance that the speech almost seems to glorify the act, as she is portrayed as beautifully making her peace with her own death, without contemplating the implications:

When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like a while they bore her up,
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death (Shakespeare, 131).

William Shakespeare's tragedy has been told many times over, both in its original form as Shakespeare's play, but is also constantly reintroduced in many different shapes and sizes, e.g. *The Lion King* (1994) and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). However, this raises the question of why this story seems to contain an eternal urgency, and an ability to be applicable across the borders of time and culture. The picture Gertrude describes, forms a flowery and feminine image of Ophelia, which has been used again and again since Shakespeare first wrote the play. The imagery has, among other works of art, inspired Sir John Everett Millais' painting "Ophelia" from 1852 (attachment 1), which shows a young, dead

woman in a beautiful, white dress, floating among flower pedals in a slow going stream. Millais' famous painting "Ophelia" will be applied in the theory section as to provide an explanation of the differences between two texts that both discuss the beautiful dead woman, but with slightly different views on the meaning behind this trope.

A quote by Edgar Allan Poe reads: "The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (Poe, 435). The reasoning behind this statement will be examined in this thesis, and the question of why there is something so feminine about being dead, is going to be dissected and answered through the analysis and discussion. We will put the issues with the idealization of beautiful dead women into a modern context with the use of Lisa Klein's 2006 novel *Ophelia*. As the tragedy of the young Danish Prince is now seen through the eyes of Ophelia, this book will be examined in relation to Shakespeare's play and in this regard, the question whether the novel is staying true to the original form, while providing Ophelia with enough character to drive the plot. As the ending of the novel sees Ophelia alive and thriving, the question whether or not this is the right choice in relation to the character, or if, perhaps the beautiful mortality of Ophelia is what made her legacy immortal. Perhaps Ophelia's popularity stems from the unhappy, tragic and beautiful circumstances surrounding her death. This echoes the same train of thought as pondered over by Lovelace in the 1748 novel *Clarissa*: "had not the lady died, would there have been half so much said of it, as there is?" (Richardson, 253). Are we partial to favouring tragic figures? And moreover, is there a reason behind the gender bias seen in the trope?

In this master's thesis, we will analyse and discuss one of the most recent chapters in Ophelia's never ending narrative by examining the novel *Ophelia* (2006). The representation of a beautiful, young woman's death has been a dominant trope in literature. In this thesis, we will approach Klein's new interpretation of the integrated figure Ophelia, who follows this trope: Ophelia, from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. With an analysis of the interpretation, the 2006 novel *Ophelia*, we will approach this book as addressing and working with this central trope in the representation of women. The focus of our examination of the book will be on the character of Ophelia, where we will raise the question of whether the changes, which Lisa Klein has made, are to accommodate our contemporary society's ideals for women, and by so doing still present the character for the identification of women and the objectification of men, or to give a more realistic and nuanced portrayal of Ophelia. *Ophelia* pays tribute to the original text, through sustaining the established trope, which is used to represent women, by entertaining the idea of her possible death, but gives Ophelia enough agency to go beyond what the character was previously unable to accomplish.

We will entertain the idea that there is no longer such a thing as an ‘original idea’ - or an original text. In relation to this, this master’s thesis will answer what Klein’s pastiche of the classic play accomplishes and why a contemporary retelling of this character arch holds so much urgency. We believe that the relevancy is due to how Klein’s pastiche confronts the trope of the beautiful dead woman, which in contemporary literature could be described as problematic. However, the fascination of the dead, female body seems to run deeper in the subconscious and is not exclusively just an integrated trope in literature, according to the psychoanalytic concepts in relation to the experience of the uncanny. Therefore, the original version of the tragic heroine, Ophelia, will arguably still be more appealing over Klein’s version. And perhaps this trope will remain popular as it provides an integrated fascination of the mystery of death.

Ophelia applies and reconstructs the trope to accommodate a contemporary audience in order to give a more modern heroine, while drawing from an established character, who originated in one of the most popular plays ever written. The way in which Klein attempts to create a more modern version of Ophelia, beckons the question whether this is a service or a disservice to the character and her impact on the trope.

THEORY

To be able to answer the thesis statement of this master’s thesis, we began with collecting texts on theories we will apply in order to give a proper analysis and discussion of our text *Ophelia*, and thereby provide a conclusion on whether *Ophelia* applies and reconstructs the trope to accommodate a contemporary audience, in order to give a more modern heroine, while drawing from an established and beloved character, who originated in one of Shakespeare’s most popular plays. The theory selection process began with narrowing down and specifying our thesis statement, in order to choose which theorists and texts best suited this project. Following will be an account of these choices and an account of the concepts which they convey. The two texts centring around the trope are Lucinda M. Becker’s *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* and Elisabeth Bronfen’s *Over her dead body*. The two theorists express some differences on the trope; Becker talks of the dead woman as a mirror or a self-reflection for the female spectator, whereas Bronfen expresses that the trope is created by and for the man. The two contradictory theories will be applied in this master’s thesis to analyse the trope and provide an analysis which is aware of the nuances of the trope and the opinions on it. First, there will be an account of Becker’s *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman*.

The deceased female in Early Modern literature

Lucinda Becker's study on the literary portrayals of dead women during the Early modern period is used to establish the presence of the beautiful dead woman trope as a literary tendency in the period in which the original *Hamlet* by Shakespeare was conceived. Becker's study supports this thesis, as it will rest on the fact, that this trope was employed in Shakespeare's play in the shape of Ophelia. Becker's study will also help form a foundation for the following theory of Bronfen, who will go into depth with this trope.

M. Becker (2003) has conducted a study on how the image of a dying woman and her subsequent posthumous image was depicted in England during the Early Modern period. Becker underlines that her hypothesis is primarily built on a study of selected published texts, including literary and non-literary works (Becker, 1). However, Becker states that texts in the form of a manuscript have been of a lower priority in her study, regardless of the fact that a number of prominent texts of this sort were dispersed during this era. This approach was executed because Becker estimated that a selection of primarily published works, especially publications that were a commercial success, would mirror Becker's aspiration to establish what types of feminine and masculine behaviours were deemed socially acceptable during the era (1). We will draw use from Becker's study, as it will help define what purpose the imagery of a dead woman had during the Early Modern period.

The function of the dead woman in Early Modern literature

Becker worked out in detail what function the imagery of a dead woman in literature served during the Early Modern period. Essentially, a dead woman offered a prime example for the living of an ideal woman (Becker, 57). She would be held as an example of which Becker compares to a looking glass, due to the Early Modern period's expectancy of an ideal woman to always reflect society's idea of virtue, in life and in death (57). Becker refers to a quote from the *The Morals* (1603), a translation of Plutarch's *Moralia* from the 1st century, wherein a description of a good wife is given: "a wife should have no proper passion or peculiar affection of her own, but be a partaker of the sports, serious affaires, sad countenance, deep thoughts and smiling looks of her husband" (57). Similarly, the imagery of a dead woman would be utilized as a looking glass, as women in life would reflect "the goodness of their husband's" (57), while in death they would be "reflecting back to those that looked upon their posthumous images the goodness that their admirers should emulate" (57). Through the looking glass, the man's desires and expectations pre-empt and replaces that of the woman's, dead or alive.

The unavoidable emancipation of the living and the deceased also contributes largely to the polished idea of the dead woman. Becker underlines that the dead woman is no longer a participant in the real world, and therefore she is also unable to dissatisfy the ones left behind (58). This leaves plenty of opportunity for the living to glorify the deceased, but also gives the deceased woman a chance to be detached from her gender, in the sense that she can be viewed as “above it” (58). Becker further states that the emancipation between the living and the deceased creates the obvious environment for idolization, as the deceased no longer can influence her portrayal negatively, while the living celebrate and emphasize the qualities, such as virtue and piety made eternal through her death, that they would like to be emulated by the women left alive (58).

Thus, Becker establishes a literary tendency in England during the Early Modern period, wherein the imagery of a dead woman was heavily cultivated. As Becker has made clear, these narratives often had an agenda that neglected the genuine legacy of the deceased woman and replaced her coffin with a pedestal. To better understand this literary tendency, this thesis will draw use from the Bronfen’s theory on this subject.

For the purpose of this thesis we are only interested in Becker’s account on the period’s literary fascination of the dead woman and what she symbolized. Becker’s further extensive study of non-fictional accounts of dying women and in memoriams is not relevant to this master’s thesis. The inclusion of such would have urged a parallel investigation of non-fictionalized accounts of dead women, which would have derailed the fictional focus of this thesis. Instead, we will examine the trope further with the use of Elisabeth Bronfen’s theory on the trope.

Over her dead body

In her 1992 book *Over Her Dead Body* Elisabeth Bronfen, Professor of English and American Studies, examines the trope of the beautiful dead woman in culture throughout the past centuries. Through a thorough examination and dissection of the topic, Bronfen provides us with a knowledge of the trope, which goes beyond the skin deep and outlines an undeniable theme in many literary works, as well as a common theme in art in general.

Elisabeth Bronfen’s presentation of the comprehensive trope of the beautiful dead woman adds an overall knowledge of the presence of the portrayal of dead women in art and literature. As this master’s thesis concentrates on Klein’s Ophelia, and to some extent Shakespeare’s, an understanding of the trope on a larger scale will not only help to conclude that Ophelia is part of the trope, but also with the analysis on the impact of Ophelia’s portrayal

in relation to the signifier and signified. Bronfen seeks to give an explanation of the fascination with dead women in art and literature, which can then explain why Klein and others have sought to give their own interpretation of the famously tragic character.

Bronfen's theory is partly based on the works of other theorists such as Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. As Bronfen's theory builds upon psychoanalytic terms such as the uncanny, we could have chosen to include or perhaps replace some of Bronfen's theory with works of the mentioned theorists. However, Bronfen gives a unique overview of the trope as a whole, and mainly mentions others to back up her conclusions. Her findings in the book is the relevant information needed for us to be able to apply the knowledge of the trope to the chosen text. Though, most theory Bronfen uses in her search for the an answer to Poe's statement of the most poetical topic, is simply mentioned in the chapter on Bronfen's theory, we did find it necessary to include a more elaborate explanation on the uncanny.

The literary confrontation with death

As shown in Bronfen's theory, the imagery of a dead woman undeniably plays with the uncanny feelings it evokes. Therefore, this thesis has found it important to include Freud's theory on the uncanny. Freud's theory on this matter will help the study to understand what role death itself plays in literature.

The subject of the uncanny is frequently referenced to throughout Bronfen's study, which is why we have found that this thesis should have a subsequent account of Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny". Freud's essay will help us grasp what the uncanny entails, as well as the accompanying concepts "the double" and "unheimlich". This thesis uses Freud's account with the hopes of it aiding a larger comprehension of the beautiful dead woman trope, so this thesis will properly recognize its characteristics.

What is the 'uncanny'?

According to Freud, the uncanny is a feeling of fright and he defines it as an emotion that "belongs to all that is terrible - to all that arouses dread and creeping horror (Freud, 1). Yet, Freud believes that something special or unique has to be involved when choosing to use the word uncanny instead of just 'scary', which is why he has chosen to explore this particular word (1). The uncanny feeling is especially evoked in the encounter with the aesthetic, where the spectator may trigger what Freud calls the double (1).

The Double

Through his studies of the uncanny, Freud explains his theory of what he calls ‘the double’. Different versions of the double can be seen throughout literary history, as he lists “reflections in mirrors, with shadows, guardian spirits” (Freud, 9) as examples of this and highlights “the “immortal” soul as the first double of the body” (9). Freud’s thesis on this matter is that the double serves to protect the ego from self-destruction, as the double helps the ego deny the inevitability of death (9). Originally, the concept of the double was created in the primary narcissism, which could be found in the primary man and, still, in children (9).

As people evolve from their primary narcissism, the double still holds a claim on them, however, in a different shape (9). In the more evolved stage, Freud claims that “from having been an assurance of immortality, he (the double) becomes the ghastly harbinger of death” (9). As the ego develops a new, subsidiary branch grows, called the ‘conscience’, also known as ‘the critical faculty’, which suggests the conscience is a unit separate from the ego (10). The conscience is capable of defying the ego, as it can monitor, analyse and suppress the workings of the ego (10). The double is the existence of this self-governing unit observing the ego that makes it feasible to form a new understanding of the double (10).

The new understanding of the double includes a new critical approach to the narcissism, which the ego has now overcome, and looks upon it with offense (10). It even helps prevent self-destruction in aspects other than death, as the double is able the censor the disheartening truth of inaccessible and unrealized dreams (10). These dreams and aspirations may be enjoyable for the mind, but may be unreachable in reality due to outside factors, and in blocking this reality from the ego the idea of free will is boosted (10).

It is important to note, that this master’s thesis is only interested in the qualities of the uncanny in how it relates to the beautiful dead woman trope. Freud’s account will not be used to explore further elements of the uncanny other than what could help define this trope, as this would lead to a broader examination of the uncanny in the play and novel, entailing a derail of this thesis’ main focus. The need for self-preservation is illuminated in Bronfen’s account on the beautiful dead woman trope throughout history, for example as seen with the woman found in the Seine.

Death becomes her; the use of dead women in artworks

In the 1880s a young woman was pulled from the river Seine in Paris, where she was later brought to a nearby morgue (Bronfen, 206). Apart from this fact, not much else is known about the young lady, except that a spectator found this woman’s face so intriguing that he

decided to make her a death-mask (206). The vague hint of a smile lingered on the dead woman's face, which seemed to inspire a cult following in the early twentieth century, where the cast of the death-mask could be seen as decoration in many artists' homes throughout Europe (206). The cast of the unknown lady was called "L'inconnue de la Seine", which translates into English as "The Unknown Woman of the Seine".

Whether the fascination originated from the appearance of peace on her face, or rather the mystery of her death is undeterminable. However, Bronfen expresses that the interest of the cast comes from the voyeuristic distance between spectated to spectator: "She is desirable because distant, absent or not quite there, a dream, a phantom, a mediatrix, a muse" (205). She is without name and has no story, except from the one, the spectator decides to give her (208). The spectators could therefore freely project any emotion and interpretation onto the cast, or rather, the woman (207). Whether she was a virtuous and proper young lady driven to take her own life, or perhaps her death was the outcome of an unwanted and illegitimate pregnancy, was for the spectator to decide (206). In this regard, the death of this particular young woman became a matter for the re-teller to interpret, and thereby would erase her true story and the reason behind its end; "the equation of corpse with artwork means a translation or exchange that erases rather than preserves the body" (110). Through the popularization of the cast, the woman herself was erased and reduced to a death-mask. The same anonymity is seen in other works of art.

In 1869 German artist Gabriel von Max created the painting "Der Anatom", which sees a male anatomist with a dead, young woman, moments before performing an autopsy (4). The male anatomist guides the viewer's gaze by looking at the corpse of the dead woman, who furthermore is painted white, which stands in clear contrast to the rest of the painting that is dominated by dark colours.

The woman is, despite her state, still presented with a feminine figure and white unblemished skin, which is highlighted as the anatomist lifts up the sheet to expose her naked body. Von Max has clearly chosen to portray the woman as perfect, to showcase the beauty in contrast to death's inevitable deterioration (5). "Even as the painting articulates stillness, wholeness, perfection, it presages the dissolution of precisely these attributes of beauty" (5). The painting comes to represent a moment of wholeness before the inescapable dissolution of the woman becomes marked by death or the dissection of the anatomist. Bronfen uses this painting to introduce an idea of the man's narcissistic urge for self-preservation. By presenting the dead woman as Other, the man becomes aware of his own survival; introducing her mortality further assures the man of his immortality. "They will be about her dead body but

also about his signature, his gaze, his masculinity, and his survival” (12). In this regard, the woman’s dead body speaks to the man’s triumph over death and femininity (13). This relates closely to Freud’s idea of the double, as human beings will always find a way to repress the uncanniness of death. Furthermore, the body’s ‘beauty’ also serves as a source of inspiration for the man: “The feminine corpse inspires the surviving man to write, to deny or acknowledge death” (13). However the anatomist chooses to proceed, the fact is that anything that happens, happen “over her dead body” (13). The same can be said of a series of paintings created in the early 1900s.

In 1914 and 1915, the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler made a series of over seventy paintings of his lover, Valentine Godé-Darel, as she was slowly dying of cancer (39). He last painted her, six months after her death, with her former beauty restored (43). Through the seventy portraits of Valentine, her sickness is clearly represented as it slowly drains her face of life. The point and reason behind these oil paintings, gouaches, and sketches, is vague. The experience which they convey is unclear; do they represent Valentine or Hodler (46)? René Girard describes death as “the worst violence” (44) that a person can be exposed to, which beckons the question whether or not these paintings are an act of violence (or a violation) towards Valentine. “whether every representation of dying is not violent precisely because it implies the safe position of a spectator (‘voyeur’) and because a fragmentation and idealisation of the body [...] is always built into such images” (44). This in turn seems to make death into a fetish, where the dying female body is glorified. The corpse’s representation can be interpreted in many different ways, both ‘horrible’ and ‘beautiful’ can describe the same image - one does not exclude the other (47). And these images and representations are ambiguous and open for interpretation, which is exemplified through the painting “La toilette de la morte (marriée)” (1850-55).

Bronfen expresses that femininity and death are western discourse’s two biggest mysteries, as both represent all that is difficult to manage and hard to understand (255). The only tool to control these two concepts is found in the social construct and law; “that which cannot be faced directly but must be controlled by virtue of social law and art” (255). Freud left his theory on the darkness of femininity open, and confessed that most of his work on this specific topic was merely observation, and that it is a matter for the poet to complete his observations (255). In his unfinished painting, Gustave Courbet gave an ambiguous portrayal of the link between death and femininity. His painting “La toilette de la morte (marriée)” shows either preparations for a wedding or a funeral (258). Within the social construct, both the funereal and the wedding are rituals that seek to restore order in both the feminine and in death.

The woman's possible death restores a meaning, which previously lacked understanding: "precisely due to her death the woman can be read, can receive a stable meaning" (257). Though the other women's focus in the painting is to prepare the lifeless body, none of them look directly at her. Hereby these women's narcissism seek to sever the link between the dead and the living, between them and her (256).

Woman as Other: Narcissism and survival

Established through Bronfen, the death of another inspires the survivor, and helps the spectator suppress their own mortality. This naturally leads to the question: Why a dead *woman*, seen as woman often times also represent the life-giver? The mother's nourishing nature and the beautiful dead woman trope seems contradictory. "Woman is primarily connected with the domain of life, with life-bringing and nourishing nature. If she dies, commits suicide or is killed, this is not beautiful because it endangers the survival and procreation of her race" (Bronfen, 60). The inspiration for survival, which the trope provides the male spectator, seems to clash with Woman as the insurance of the survival of the human race. This means that the trope did not occur in nature or biology but in culture, or perhaps there is a stronger need for self-preservation than the idea of general survival.

The idea of Woman as Other seeks to explain the reason why death is so often associated with the feminine body. The female is set in contrast to the man, and her death, as previously stated in relation to "Der Anatom" is about the male gaze and the man's triumph over death (13). In this regard, she becomes his double, his guarantee for survival and insurance to continue to live: "The double is an ambivalent figure of death since it signifies an insurance that one will continue to live," (114). The representation seen in the dead woman's portrayal becomes a victory over death and decomposition. However, the double (or the 'Doppelgänger') is by definition something which represents a gap in the whole, which in turn means that the double is a figure for castration (114). Thereby, the double is ambiguous as it both maintains the idea of mortality while also contradicting it. The woman as the man's double goes far to explain the fascination of the dead woman's image, as it affirms the triumph over death. The desire to repress the ever present uncanny death drive is expressed through the double, which both represent death and life, and is the "most resistantly and universally repressed" (114). This might explain the fascination with the Woman's death, but fails to give an account for the importance of the woman's beauty.

Beauty seems to be a tool for us as human beings to hold the idea of death away as it disproves fragmentation: "We invest in images of wholeness, purity and the immaculate owing

to our fear of dissolution and decay” (62). Beauty serves as a compelling antithesis to death, despite of the unquestionable fact of death which all living things must abide by (62). According to Poe, beauty in itself is not enough to counteract death, but it has to be the “superlative feminine beauty” (63). This then means that the dead body must be gendered, as nothing but the body indicates gender after the death of the individual. Freud accounts for three figures that represent the desired ‘objects’ which are “the mother, the beloved chosen on the pattern of the mother, and mother earth” (63). As such death and the woman are linked due to the established loss of the primordial mother, and is therefore a repetition of an imagined projection (63).

To counteract the above mentioned, there is a case to be made surrounding that of the dead body that it no longer is a person and therefore has no gender. There is a certain anonymity to death. Death takes away all individuality and leaves a corpse without a soul, person or gender (Bronfen, 64). “this obliteration of gender, along with all other socially constructed features, is represented in western culture through a gendered body, the superlatively beautiful, desirable feminine corpse” (64). This statement then importunes another reason for the fascination of the beautiful dead woman. The desirable aspect of voyeurism, which woman as the observed has come to represent is clearly illuminated in Laura Mulvey’s theory on the male gaze.

The male gaze

In Laura Mulvey’s essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” from 1975, she examines the role of the woman as object and signifier in classic Hollywood cinema, and coins the term the male gaze. The idea for the term was to examine the psychoanalytic aspect of female (and male) representation in classic Hollywood cinema, as a part of the second feminist wave. This theory is chosen for this project to be able to give an account for some of the visual choices when portraying Ophelia on screen in the 2018 film adaptation of the 2006 novel. The visual aspect of the theory concerning the spectator and the object will be the key aspect which will be applied when this master’s thesis concentrates on Ophelia as visible spectacle.

Woman unable to create meaning herself

The male gaze describes woman, her relation to her surroundings, and her role, in cinema and literature from a heterosexual, male perspective (Mulvey, 57). The woman is in this relation found to be objectified for the pleasure of the male audience. Mulvey seeks to reveal the influence of the patriarchal society in the cinema; “the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle”

(57). This theory assumes the loss of agency the woman suffer due to the patriarchy, and is heavily reliant on the idea of Woman being the castrated Other, and through symbolism thereby comes to represent lack. Mulvey applies Freud's term, the castration complex (57). According to Freud, Woman is only able to exist in relation to her role as "the bearer of the bleeding wound", and cannot move beyond that (58). In this regard, the woman then becomes the signifier and the man is the signified, which means that the man, symbolically, "can live out his fantasies and obsessions", while the woman must simply be the immobile spectator and be a source of meaning for the man; "the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning" (58). This can be seen through the woman's passive role in cinema, which will be elaborated upon in the following chapters.

The pleasure derived from looking

The male gaze has an obvious voyeuristic aspect to it, which Freud coins with the concept of scopophilia (59). Scopophilia is the act of making another person into an object, which is then subjected to gaze that is both controlling and intrusive (59). The gaze can even, if forceful enough, turn into a perversion (60). Cinema is far from this side of the voyeuristic, as everything on screen is specifically designed to be observed, and thereby removes the unwilling or unwitting victim. However, the idea of cinema is to create a world which often times is unaware of it being observed. The world where the story and plot unfold is sealed and show its audience vulnerable and intimate moments; "indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic phantasy" (60). Furthermore, the structure of the cinema offers a sense of isolation as well, as the darkness of the auditorium gives each audience member a sense of being alone with the illustrations on the screen; The darkness "helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation" (60). In this regard, the cinema fulfils the instinctive desire to observe, while at the same time "developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect" (60).

An unconscious desire to self-identify with what is seen on screen is also present in Mulvey's theory. The curiosity and fascination with the shown world create a need for recognition; "curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition" (60). Mulvey links this to Jacques Lacan's mirror stage (60). The mirror stage is based on the idea of the baby recognizing itself in an image and thus creating a separation of the true self (id) and the conscience (ego) (60). In relation to cinema: When in the darkness and isolation of the cinema the audience re-encounter themselves in the protagonist, as they have lost their ego in the cinematic experience – the screen then becomes the mirror; "the cinema

has structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing the ego” (61).

According to Mulvey, the two aspects of pleasure in looking are: First, the self-identification with what is seen on the screen, as explained by applying Lacan’s theory on the mirror stage. Second, the objectification of the other, with the purpose of following a primordial desire.

What woman as image provokes

Mulvey describes the male as an active part of the cinematic world, while the female is the impassive signifier; “pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female” (62). In classic Hollywood cinema the woman was designed to be looked at, mostly in an erotic way (62). The man in the audience will not identify with the male figure if he is objectified, as he will be unwilling to gaze on “his exhibitionist like” (63). The protagonist is often designed for the purpose of self-identification. The audience member sees his “screen surrogate”, the male protagonist, as a more complete version of himself – someone who can move the plot along and thereby has a control that the audience member may lack (63). By sexualizing the woman, and make her desire for the man her defining characteristic, the audience gets to experience and own her through the male protagonist (63).

Her role as image, draws the attention of the audience but often times does not contribute to the plot of the story she is placed in (62). Mulvey then uses a statement from film director Budd Boetticher to underline her point: “What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero [...] In herself the woman has not the slightest importance” (62). The woman is used as a plot tool for creating inspiration and thereby makes the male protagonist act accordingly.

As this essay was written in 1975 and deals with the view of women as sexual objects in the patriarchal society of classic Hollywood cinema, some aspects on Mulvey’s theory will inevitably be outdated in the contemporary society. This is also an issue Mulvey points out in her text; as more independent filmmaking has found its way to the silver screen the view on the female character has changed as well. However, some tropes still have a presence in cinema, which is why Laura Mulvey’s essay is applied despite of some dated examples of her concept ‘the male gaze’. As this master’s thesis concentrates on the woman both as spectacle and as a signifier that creates impact, the following chapter will concentrate on the emotional impact of the ‘what if’.

What if?: the muse, the waste of potential and lost love

The uncanniness surrounding the image of the dead woman is undeniable in the sense that it creates such ambiguous reactions in the spectator. After the woman is gone but before the body starts wasting away there is a strange familiarity which is somehow unfamiliar at the same time. “It is not only strange, no longer itself, but also familiar [...] The triumph over death figured over her dead body includes three moments. Her perfect corpse effaces all traces of death’s inscription in life, it resembles its living counterpart and it generates commemorative stories, the latter two assuring continuity” (Bronfen, 89). The dead body still possess all the same features as the person who has died, but since everything that made them an individual is now gone, the visual representation is nothing but an echo of the dead person. Freud links this desire for preservation with fetishism; the fetishist is aware that something is lost but wants to preserve it nevertheless (96). This desire is also mentioned in relation to the painting “Der Anatom”, where Bronfen discusses the fascination with the dead woman and relates it to the desire to preserve as the spectator is aware that this state, the state of wholeness and stillness, is temporary. The body will begin to deteriorate and start its own destruction and here beauty is “defined in its contrast to destruction” (5).

The pleasure derived from this image, or idealization of wholeness only found in the stillness of a dead feminine body, originates from the nostalgia of the dead lover. The pleasure in relation to nostalgia comes from the untouchable phallic symbol which the dead feminine body has become (98). The dead body of the spectator’s lover creates a strong melancholic feeling, as the body still resembles the deceased, there is a certain sense of “within reach but lost for ever” (98). This sparks an idealisation of the dead individual as a sense of lost potential – the life that could have been – gives occasion for even more attention to the death of the beautiful, young woman. The death gives birth to an endless number of ‘what ifs’, as seen both in reality, e.g. *L’inconnue de la Seine*, where there were speculations of the woman’s death, or in fiction, e.g. “Clarissa” with Lovelace’s statement of the talk surrounding Clarissa’s suicide. The deaths do not seem to be set aside as a horrible act by the women. The reason behind their death and the condemnation surrounding their suicide is instead laid on the circumstances in which the women were put in. This can be due to the preferment of an innocent death, so to not ruin the wholeness of the dead woman. “Perfection is so compelling because it contradicts the idea of disintegration” (126).

The beautiful dead woman is, according to author Edgar Allan Poe not only about the wholeness and the narcissistic insurance of the man’s survival, but is described by Poe as ‘the most poetical topic’. According to Poe the beautiful dead woman trope surpasses all other

poetical topics, and is the superlative topic. Poe believes that art should illustrate the end already at the beginning; art should begin with the end to show the “inevitable return to the inanimate” (61). This is done to create an effect, which is what poetry sets out to do. To accomplish the strong effect the poet or artist should use the most effective tones, which according to Poe is sadness and melancholy due to beauty’s presence in the those tones (61). Bronfen then elaborates that beauty is used as an effect rather than a quality. In this regard, the purest and most intense pleasure is found in contemplating the beautiful within the melancholic tone (61). The most melancholic topic is death, and when linked to beauty the artwork accomplishes the superlative ‘most poetical’ which Poe is talking about (61). Moreover, Poe points out that adding a mourning lover into the tone will only add to the sadness and melancholy the topic offers: “the lips best suited for such a topic are those of a bereaved lover” (61). The definite resolve of this, the most poetical topic, offers an unambiguous stability, that is often missing from life.

The idea of the muse, an unearthly embodiment of inspiration, is also applicable to the trope of the dead woman. The death of the woman is, in some cases used as an inspiration for the survivor to work on either an art piece or a, in the case of Freud, a boost of the work ethic. While the death of his father, became an unforgettable and marking event, the death of Sophie Freud, Sigmund Freud’s daughter, was described by Freud as ‘a loss to be forgotten’ and a means to throw himself into work (16-17). Sophie’s death almost became a source of inspiration and she did, in some way, become her father’s muse (17). This illustrates that the love for the woman does not necessarily have to be romantic, as long as the melancholic aspect is still upheld. The woman becomes a blank page for the man to write his own legacy on; “The feminine tissue is treated like a page on to which lovers, society’s laws or the repressed past write themselves” (227). This sentence illustrates, in short, Bronfen’s idea of the trope existing for the man.

To exemplify the difference between Bronfen and Becker’s theories, the following chapter will apply Millais’ painting “Ophelia”.

Becker vs. Bronfen

The theorists both examine the trope of the beautiful dead woman, and both seek to give an account of the meaning behind the trope. Becker and Bronfen derive different explanations to the popularity of the trope and who benefits from it. To exemplify the difference we will apply Sir John Everett Millais’ painting of Ophelia’s death in relation to these two theories. In

both cases, the role of the spectator is important as the provider of meaning depends on the gender of the signifier.

Applying Becker's theory of the trope of the beautiful dead woman on the painting "Ophelia", the meaning to be derived from the artwork would be for the woman to perceive her better. Millais has painted Ophelia in a feminine pose, while her garments are spread wide, almost "mermaid-like" as Gertrude phrases it in *Hamlet*. So even though Ophelia is dead or dying, her appearance is still wholesome and admirable, thereby placing her as something to aspire to.

In relation to Bronfen's theory, the dead woman floating in the stream would partly be a reminder for the male spectator of his own survival. The image of Ophelia's death would further emphasize his own immortality, as she as the Other signifies all that he is not. Furthermore, the beauty underlined by the flowers, the brook, her dress, the peaceful expression on her face and her inevitable death in the original narrative will all contribute to the most poetical topic within poetry, according to Poe, the death of a beautiful woman. The man is able to deal with the concept of death by exclusively making it a female trait. Millais' painting, which expresses both femininity and melancholy, would according to Bronfen's theory be an expression of poetry and the narcissistic instinct of survival in the male spectator.

Suicide as the woman's agency

In the previous chapters, we examined woman as a tragic figure, whose life was cut short by no means of herself. In this chapter, death as a woman's agency, as a way of taking back control and rewriting her own story will be looked into. Choosing death and thereby ending all the double meanings life otherwise offers, is an act which goes beyond words and communication, but is somehow also an effective communicative act (Bronfen, 141). Suicide gives the woman an opportunity to tell her own version of the story with an authority not often given otherwise; Death deconstructs the societal and cultural oppression connected with the female body (142). In this regard, death then becomes a form of autobiography for the woman (151).

The autobiography becomes an attempt for the woman to convey a message with her death (141). The author of the suicide might intend the death to be a detextualising procedure, which seeks to control meaning and limit interpretations (151). Though this be the intention, when detextualisation is connected to a death, and a body is left behind, textualization becomes unavoidable (151). As her body is left behind, it forces the spectators to interpret and make sense of the act, and she is thereby forced back into textuality (152). This leaves her in a grey

area where the body forms the founding pillars of the narrative about and after her death, and an autobiography which has constructed a self (152). Bronfen states that there is such as ‘good writing’ and ‘bad writing’, which further illuminates the problematic nature of the ‘dead letter’ (144).

The good writing is a constructed representation on the basis of an experience of loss and lack (144). The good writing makes it possible to reflect and create meaning on topics such as loss, existence and death. This type of writing is seen as an attempt to overcome death and move away from the symbolism of the dead letter, which leaves the survivors to textualize the act (145). The bad writing, which is constructing a text with the use of suicide, destroys the difference of signifier and signified that is only implied in the good writing (144). “Death is chosen and performed by the woman herself, in an act that makes her both object and subject of dying and of representation” (141-142). Even though the dead letter seems to lack the control the suicide sought to obtain, some women in literature have benefitted from the little control it gives them over their own deaths in the patriarchal society, as seen in the examples Bronfen gives (142).

The gender construction the woman is placed under and which places her in an inferior position is destroyed by death (143). Suicide then becomes a feminine strategy in which the woman can gain agency by cancelling the constraints of her gender and the feminine body (142). This of course is a self-defeating form of autobiography, where the only power gained is the obtained control of the denial of her body (143). Bronfen applies examples of literary female characters who use suicide as the solution and agency (145). Clarissa who seeks to restore the wholeness and purity she had before her rape; Elaine who decides to die for her love for the knight Sir Lancelot; Emma who loses her life because of her too deep devotion to literature.

Throughout the above mentioned theory, the terms ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ have been applied liberally. To provide a theoretical aspect of these two terms, we have chosen to illustrate this through Kath Woodward’s theory on essentialism.

Essentialism

As the theories used so far in this thesis have already stressed, gender plays an integral part in the creation and cultivation of the beautiful dead woman trope. For this reason, Kath Woodward’s study on essentialism has also been included with the purpose of shedding a light on the segregated and rigid views on groups, of which this thesis employs it to understand an essentialist approach to gender. By employing Woodward’s account of essentialism this thesis

expects to clarify how the imagery of a dead woman could become synonymous with femininity and beauty, while also gaining an understanding of some of the institutionalized gender bias present in both Shakespeare and Klein's works and how they both address this issue.

As the studies of Becker and Bronfen both emphasizes, gender plays an integral part when it comes to the trope of the dead woman. There will now be given an account of essentialism, as it is important to establish the existence of such a viewpoint and the repercussions thereof, in order to understand the trope of the dead woman.

The essentialist viewpoint

In many aspects, approaching the subject of gender can be a difficult task, as it is pregnant with the influence of culture, social constructs, time and place. However, there are still theories that choose to approach such topics disregarding such influences, which is when essentialism becomes relevant. When describing what the essentialist viewpoint is centred around, Woodward stresses the literal meaning of the word: the essentialist viewpoint interprets the meaning of a concept by its essence. An essentialist viewpoint would imply that if something is to be categorized as male it has to imply the presence of a y chromosome and a penis, as this is the essentially what being a male is, while everything around it is just a consequence of this (Woodward, 51-52). This also means, that other more fluent aspects, such as having a y chromosome but performing or dressing in a manner that is socially ascribed to women, are disregarded (52, 49). The essentialist viewpoint separates itself from these socially ascribed gender characteristics, as these tend to be more 'fuzzy' and are constantly reshaped by time and culture (52). The self-image of the essentialist categories consider itself to be locked and unchangeable, clearing itself from the more 'fuzzy' perceptions of gender, that do take other factors than just biology into consideration when defining gender (52).

The fixed viewpoint of essentialism also extends to how it sees and treats certain groups of people, including gender. When groups are looked upon as having an unchangeable essence, in the way that essentialism does, it further overstates the distinction and underestimate the likeness between groups, e.g. male and female (126). Essentialism does not only exaggerate the lines between two groups, but also removes the lines within a group as it consistently treats members of group as they were all the same regardless of their differences and individuality (126). Woodward adds, that a side effect of this way of thinking is how efforts of understanding and acknowledging the differences between groups may culminate in stubborn views of other groups (126).

Woodward describes essentialism as a way of thought that confines and reduces identities (127). She underlines that just because someone has certain characteristics, such as skin colour, gender or nationality, it does not mean that the person identifies with the fixed ideas that others may have of one (127). This can be a cause of tension if a discrepancy between how someone identifies and how someone else looks upon them through an essentialist viewpoint (127). Woodward maintains the notion that how someone chooses to identify is an individual choice, thereby making it optional whether or not someone chooses to conform to the notions essentialism has assigned to one's traits (127).

As it has been made clear thus far, Woodward does not agree with the simplified standpoint of essentialism. She makes the claim, that everybody has several identities and nobody could be confined to just one (130). She further states that any individual has an active part in shaping their own identity, to which she brings up the 19th century human rights advocate Sojourner Truth (130). Truth was an Afro-American woman born into slavery, who spoke in favour of the abolition of slavery and equal rights between the sexes (128). Woodward aims her attention at Truth's ability to highlight her identity as a woman with less emphasis on her skin colour (129). According to Woodward this was a challenge to the recipients of Truth's speeches as they would be confronted with the similarities between Truth's womanhood and the womanhood of white women, which wasn't normally intertwined at the time (129). Moreover, Truth also stated that she was as strong as a man (129). In short, Truth showed that she has shaped an identity that contradicted essentialist notions of women being weaker than men and enslaved women not being real women (129). Woodward also uses this example to point out, that claiming a certain identity can make others question their idea of identity (130).

The challenging aspect of using the theory of essentialism is its minimalistic nature. Its fixed approach is, as stated, what makes it relevant in this thesis, however, disregarding influences, such as culture, time and place, is rather conflicting. These factors are heard to not take into account, especially as the criteria of essentialism, e.g. the presence of a penis and a y-chromosome, are rarely overtly disclosed. But as Woodward states, everything around the essentialist criteria are considered a consequence thereof, and this is what this thesis intends to do.

To be able to cross-examine Klein's novel and the original text, we will treat *Ophelia* as a pastiche, which will offer a series of concepts that will be applied in the analysis. The pastiche will be explained in the following chapter.

The pastiche

This master's thesis aims to give an account of the changes the beautiful dead woman trope has undergone through the past couple of centuries. This will be done by analysing Lisa Klein's *Ophelia* that has applied the trope and used it to create a new telling of an established character, a pastiche. To better understand what the effect of this is on the trope, we must also get an understanding of the tools used in the pastiche.

The literary pastiche

The pastiche has been the subject of many debates; whether this style of writing is of high or low culture; and how a genre, which can appear as an overwhelming hotpot of many different genres and styles, can be pinpointed. As this thesis will occupy itself with a pastiche, in this chapter we will seek to illuminate the theory of Hoesterey, who offers an outline of the pastiche genre in literature.

As this master's thesis will work from the premise of Klein using Shakespeare's play and, most notably, the character Ophelia, to tackle the trope of the dead beautiful woman, the pastiche genre also has an integral part in the thesis. Therefore, we have found it crucial to employ Hoesterey's study on the genre. To understand how the novel tackles the trope of the beautiful dead woman, it is also important to understand the format on which this was done through. Understanding the genre better will also lead to a better understanding of what Klein was trying to achieve when she choose to utilize this genre.

The pastiche: A literary medley

To help explain what the fibre of the pastiche entails, Hoesterey travels back the antique cento, as she believes this is a prime example of showcasing the "the initial paradigm for all other forms of borrowing by artists from the archive of their tradition" (Hoesterey, 80). The cento is an antique form of text that is constructed as a patchwork of texts (11). The cento appropriated texts from known authors, e.g. Homer and Virgil, with the main intention of parodying the original texts (11). The cento could also entail a more serious intent, as *The Frogs* (405 B.C.E.) by Aristophanes shows an example of a cento that works as a "literary satire and critique in their time" (80). In the fourth century, the cento was redefined as the Roman Christian named Proba Folconia used Virgil's style to do a rewriting of the parts of the New and Old Testaments that was available to him (80). Folconia's work resonated with other Christian writers and had thereby created a popular amalgam of "classical poetry and Christian intention" (80).

Hoesterey notes, that classical linguistics does not take much interest in the antique cento, as it is viewed as a divergent of classical, literary art (80). Nonetheless, Hoesterey disputes this notion, as she insists on the important influence the cento has had on the history of the literary pastiche (80). Hoesterey argues that the cento is filled with the typical features of the pastiche, such as appearing as a medley of different famous texts, while also stealing the style of other famous authors and texts. This makes them suitable for the benefit of the pastiche, resulting in a new text with a posture and message different to the texts it borrowed from (80). Moreover, the homage pastiche also aligns with the original form of the cento, as they both emerge from the premise of a known literary work by a prized writer being appropriated by a succeeding writer (80). Lastly, the cento helps showcase that the pastiche style, at times, can be quite similar to that of parody given its tendency to express a “subtextual anxiety” (81).

In spite of the modern literary pastiche bearing many of the same characteristics as the cento of the antique era, it was not until the late eighteenth century the pastiche joined the European discourse of literature (81). Namely the French were first movers in grasping and cultivating the pastiche form, which was first introduced to them in the form of paintings (81). The *Anthologie du Pastiche* (1926) by Deffoux and Dufay reinforces the notion that France was practising the literary form of the pastiche in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century more than any other European country (81). In their anthology Deffoux and Dufay make the argument that the pastiche can be held to a higher regard than its close relatives; parody and caricature (81). This is due to the pastiche’s form of expression as it does not need to be crude or exaggerated, but instead depends on subtlety to get its point across (81). Hoesterey adds that the pastiche, in the French usage of the literary form, was what she calls a “quasi-homage”, also called the “pastiche volontaire” by Proust, as the pasticheur would create their pastiche with the intention of achieving an understanding of the original work and its author (82). Notably, there is also the “pastiche involontaire”, which is when an author inadvertently duplicates another work or does so aimlessly (82).

“It is not to be mixed up with parody and travesty, because in these genres the author polemically rewrites a model and triumph over it. The writer of an homage pastiche, however, annuls himself in order to be reborn on a higher level” (95). In this way Hoesterey translates the Danish scholar Leif Ludwig Albertsen’s words on the literary pastiche during its tender years in France. Hoesterey draws a huge resemblance between the cento pastiche from the antique period to the postmodern pastiche. She lists their structure and its medley element as the primary revenants of these two periods of the genre (95). However, Hoesterey does make it clear that the cento pastiche has entered a new era in the postmodern period (95).

To master the pastiche, or understand and categorize a work as such, it is crucial to have a pre-existing knowledge of the pastiched author (82). If the reader of a pastiche is not familiar with the style or intent of the pastiched author, it can be difficult to understand and interpret the pastiche, a common issue in postmodern pastiches (82). This issue can arise if a pastiche should try to reach from one language culture to another or if the pastiche is confronted with a reader who has a limited knowledge of literature (82).

The contemporary pastiche

Hoesterey makes the claim that the contemporary pastiche has made itself more approachable (Hoesterey, 83). Hoesterey credits this quality to the contemporary pastiche's inclination to merge the quasi-homage and tones of the parody in a "sophisticated patchwork of textual styles" that is reminiscent of (83). Additionally, a contemporary literary pastiche has a vast list of accomplished works, styles, genres, etc to draw and borrow from as literature is one of the oldest art forms in the world. That means, that a literary pastiche would be far more enriched than e.g. a cinematic pastiche, as the cinematic platform has only existed for about a century (83).

Hoesterey states, she has found a study and an appertaining account of the contemporary literary pastiche challenging, given what she considers the two fundamental models of the literary pastiche both occur in most of these texts; the homage type and the stylistic medley (83). To better comprehend this tendency Hoesterey divides this text into two main categories: "quasi-homage/rewriting/parodi" (83) and "cento pastiche" (83). Moving on into the outlining of the ur-pastiche Hoesterey underlines that these tendencies have been taken into measure (83).

The ur-pastiche

Given the literary pastiche's long history, Hoesterey makes the claim that it adds a layer of finesse mostly unmatched in other art forms (Hoesterey, 83). Hoesterey points to the pastiche "Pierre Menard autor del Quijote" (1939) by Jorge Louis Borges, with help from Jean Franco's analysis of the same work.

In Borges work, a character by the name of Menard attempts to duplicate the famous work *Don Quixote* (1602) by Miguel de Cervantes (83). The story is told by a homodiegetic narrator, who tries to compile the work of Menard after his death (83).

In Franco's reading of this text, he is mainly focused on the intradiegetic pastiche, meaning he only seeks to understand how the text handles Menard's recreation of *Don Quixote*

(84). In Franco's understanding Borges has created this work in an attempt to surpass the original classic by Cervantes (84). Furthermore, Franco observes how the novel shines a light on the semantic aspect of a pastiche, as the language in Cervantes work from the year 1602 inevitably has gathered new connotations over the years, resulting in a completely new meaning as they are reproduced by Menard in Borges work from 1939 (84). Thus, Borges' work illustrates how a more contemporary pastiche can demonstrate the difficulties a reading of an older text can provide when read today (84). Hoesterey further adds that Cervante's original work and the character Menard's pastiche both are products of the time and place in which they were conceived in, while also being uniquely shaped by their individual author (85). Hoesterey herself believes that Borges utilized the pastiche to mock the idea that the inaccessible atmosphere a historical classic, like *Don Quixote*, contains could be emulated in a modern work as it is the contrast to our own present we find appealing (85).

Modern/Postmodern/Homage deconstructed

A tendency that is highly dominant in the contemporary pastiche is the "anxiety of influence" (Hoesterey, 85). Through her reading of postmodern pastiches, Hoesterey has found what she has coined as the "postmodern sensibility" (85), wherein the pastiche handles the original text with a layer of irony (85). Hoesterey puts a few examples forward, to showcase the signifiers of the postmodern pastiche.

Hoesterey points to Thomas Bernhard, an Austrian writer, as a pasticheur who perfectly illustrates the self-reflexivity that often vacates in these postmodern texts (86). In Hoesterey's reading of his work *Goethe Stirbt* (1982), a pastiche of *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836) by Johann Peter Eckermann, she notices that Bernhard's style of writing emulates that of Eckermann, an attempt to erase the author persona (86). Furthermore, Hoesterey notes that the central element of homage that can be found in Eckermann's original work has been twisted into satire in Bernhard's work (86). However, Hoesterey underlines that satire is not unusual in the pastiche genre as a whole as this element often is employed when dealing with an influential persona (86). What characterizes this satiric approach in Bernhard's work as postmodern, is his way of incorporating the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein; In Bernhard's pastiche, Goethe expresses a wish to meet with Wittgenstein, but in reality Wittgenstein was born more than a 100 years after Goethe (86-87). Thus, by implementing this anachronistic wish of the German Goethe, Bernhard manages to extend the German culture with an Austrian contribution (87). This example showcases that in postmodern texts the pasticheur implements changes in the carefully chosen original texts that promote their own agenda.

To touch on the semantic aspect, Hoesterey refers to another pastiche of Eckermann's classic, "Conversations with Goethe" (1983) by Donald Barthelme. In Barthelme's version there is a notable use of slang words that was not common at the time and place of which Eckermann's original was written. Hoesterey's theory suggests that this stylistic choice may be to emphasize how pointless it would be emulate the original style as only "a dramatic distance from a master writer can produce another" (88).

Lastly, Hoesterey also gives an example of how the postmodern pastiche sometimes produces texts that relies on the reader's literary knowledge. The art exhibition *Looking Up, Reading the Words ...* (1997) by Ilya Kabakov includes a sculpture with a text on it that if the spectator has knowledge of Goethe, looks strikingly close to one of his works (89). While the passage on the sculpture is trying to simulate the lyrics and the idioms of Goethe, it is just a pastiche (90). This pastiche artwork, Hoesterey claims, exists to put the spectators concept of Goethe's work on display (90).

What can be challenging in Hoesterey's study, is her focus on the 'current' pastiche. Pastiche is very much a genre created through literature having a conversation with itself. Of course, this conversation has continued on since 2001, which is when Hoesterey's study was published. This also means that Hoesterey study, in some areas, will have its shortcomings, as it cannot help this thesis explain how this conversation has developed over the last two decades.

Method

The method we apply in this master's thesis relies on a close reading of the chosen text; *Ophelia* by Lisa Klein. To be able to answer our thesis statement we will examine how the novel pastiches William Shakespeare's play by first analysing the overall changes from play to novel. Next, we will dive into the analysis of the plot. Thus, we will determine the links from the source text to the pastiche, and analyse the choices made in relation to this.

We will also examine the figurative language, in the sense that Klein has chosen plants to symbolize empowerment for her Ophelia. In this regard, we will perform an examination of the transformed meaning of water, flowers, and nature, from *Hamlet* to *Ophelia*. Klein's formalistic choices for *Ophelia* will also be discussed, by first determining the language, tense, and word-choices Klein applies, and then analyse how this impacts the novel as a whole. Close reading and analysis of the relationships between Ophelia and the novel's other characters, will be done to better get an understanding of why Klein chose to step away from the trope of the beautiful dead woman.

By applying close reading and our chosen theories, Becker, Bronfen, Hoesterey, Woodward, and Freud, we will create a focussed analysis, which will make it possible for us to give a conclusion on our thesis statement.

ANALYSIS

The theory will now be applied to the text, which will provide an analysis of Klein's Ophelia and the pastiche she is a part of, to decipher the change in the beautiful dead woman trope, and the consequences of changing this aspect of Ophelia.

From play to novel

This part of the analysis will focus on some of the more overall changes made in the rewriting of the plot from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, seen in Klein's pastiche *Ophelia*. A play and a novel are different approaches when deciding to tell a story. When choosing to rewrite the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Lisa Klein chose to make the change from one platform to another. The premise of the novel *Ophelia* is to tell the plot from *Hamlet* from Ophelia's point of view, which indicates that Klein thought this the best way to convey Ophelia's story.

From side-character to lead-character

A play is a collaboration; a play is the product of many combining factors, such as the director, the actors, the visual presentation of the stage, etc.. *Hamlet* is a play with several characters, all portrayed by individual actors, and a director with a vision themselves. As Hamlet and his will and drive is the undeniable focus for the plot, the character of Ophelia is only described as far as her relationship to Hamlet. *Ophelia*, however gives the reader direct access to Ophelia's mind and only Ophelia's, making her version of the plot from *Hamlet* the only narrative in order to tell the story. "This drama was but one of the night's shows. My own plot was of greater interest to me then" (Klein, 77). The pastiche has Ophelia not only narrating the plot, but also the other characters, making her descriptions and opinions of them the only access the implied reader has to form an impression on *Ophelia*'s other characters. In this way, while Ophelia is now the narrator of her own story, she also takes on the role of the audience at Hamlet's displays of madness. Ophelia raises many questions about Hamlet's behaviour and questions whether his madness is mainly for show or if he is starting to fall into the part he is presenting (145-148). This homage to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* presents the same questions the audience might raise at Hamlet's contradictory lines in the first scene of the third act, where he

admits the love he had for Ophelia, only to take back the statement moments later (Shakespeare, 88).

The dead woman is often portrayed from the outside according to Becker and Bronfen's theory on the trope - this is also the case with Mulvey's the male gaze. By making Ophelia the narrator Klein removes these ways of looking at her; the reader is no longer a spectator at her tragedy but a confidant in her struggles. The impact of giving Ophelia agency as the narrator will be analysed throughout the analysis in this master's thesis.

From Middle Ages to Renaissance

In *Ophelia*, Klein has changed the setting from *Hamlet*, making the plot unfold in the Renaissance rather than the Middle Ages. This places Klein's *Ophelia* in the time in which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written and not when the plot Shakespeare wrote takes place. The change in the historical setting might be construed as an homage to Shakespeare and the circumstances in which the play was created. In this regard, the choice to apply the plot of *Hamlet* and borrow Shakespeare's cultural status in a new narrative, is seen in Klein's pastiche.

The shift is clearly shown as the three parts *Ophelia* consist of are written out with setting and time period (Klein, 5, 89, 243). The cultural and historical references to the Renaissance in the novel indicate that one of the reasons for this change is to apply the romantic influence the period had on literary works, the decorum from the Renaissance, and the advancement in using herbs, directly referencing the book *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* by John Gerard, published in 1597 (37). Other works which underlines the historical placement of the narrative are the novels: *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, from 1544 (40), *Heptameron*, from 1558 (41), *Book of the Courtier*, from 1528 (54). These are all literary works published after the time period from the original text *Hamlet*. The decorum displayed at the court, such as the masquerade ball, exemplifies Klein's choice to change the time period so as to give *Ophelia* an overall romantic feel.

The time period also has an effect on the overall feel of the novel, which fits well with the change in genre. The cold stone walls of Elsinore castle in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, sets the scene for the revenge tragedy with a cold and harsh estetic. *Ophelia*'s central theme is love and betrayal, intrigue, a corrupt striving for power, and a young woman's struggle to get by in surroundings that display little consideration to innocence, which is often seen in the young adult genre.

From revenge tragedy to young adult novel

Lisa Klein's pastiche sees a change from the original revenge tragedy in *Hamlet* to a young adult novel, which *Ophelia* is being categorized as, thereby making young women is the demographic.

The trope of the beautiful young woman is a concept which is applied and altered in Klein's novel. Instead of having the young Ophelia take her own life, she outlives the plot from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and finds her own story after the Danish court dissolves. The alteration of Ophelia's participation in the trope, could be an attempt at conveying an empowering message about agency to the young demographic. Entertaining the idea of there being no such thing as an original idea, *Ophelia* takes a known literary character and alters her to the contemporary idea of an active female character. However, taking away the most memorable aspect of the character, while altering her personality to such a degree that Shakespeare's Ophelia is no longer to be found in Klein's pastiche, might not be the most impactful way of discussing the melancholic aspects of the trope and its influence on a younger demographic. The genre will be examined further in the form of a discussion later in this master's thesis.

In Summary, the ideas presented in these chapters will be elaborated upon throughout this master's thesis, all in order to present an analysis that weighs the limitations and possibilities of Klein's pastiche, in relation to the presentation of Ophelia and her participation in the trope of the beautiful dead woman.

Ophelia's style: Moderating a classic to fit a contemporary, young audience

When Klein changes the format of *Hamlet*'s plot from play to novel it is interesting to look at the style Klein has chosen to utilize doing so. And from what our study has found, Klein has appropriated a style that fits the young adult genre's audience, which is a distinct difference from Shakespeare's original text.

The first interesting factor to look at when examining the style in *Ophelia* is the novel's use of tense. *Ophelia* uses both past and present tense as opposed to *Hamlet*, which only uses present tense. The present tense fits nicely to *Hamlet*'s platform, as a play, often, has a "right here, right now" element, as the audience is watching the events unfold before them live on stage. However, the plot in a novel is oftentimes written in the past tense, as the narrator looks back at the events with an overall picture. Therefore, the choice to narrate in present tense during *Ophelia*'s prologue, Part Three and epilogue stands out, but it is not unique in its genre. Other young adult novels written in the 2000's utilize a present tense, such as can be seen in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* from 2008. The stylistic choice to narrate in present tense

can be a tool to create an immediacy and excitement as the reader is now experiencing the plot on the same plane as the narrator. Shakespeare's classic *Hamlet* and the contemporary young adult genre might not be an obvious match, but this accommodation in style fits well with Hoesterey's description of a pastiche. She states, a more contemporary language might be used in a pastiche as compared to the language of the pastiched text in order to produce a text that aids the interpretation of an older text to a contemporary audience. As we see Shakespeare's *Hamlet* pastiched as a young adult novel it is evident that Klein attempts to mediate Shakespeare's work to a younger audience, thereby appropriating stylistic choices typical to the young adult genre.

The discourse in the two works is also significantly different. *Hamlet* consists mostly by lines and stage directions, given its nature as a play. As Klein has chosen to pastiche *Hamlet* as a novel a natural shift in the language use appears as a novel typically consists of more than just lines. However, it is evident that Klein's language use does not completely emulate Shakespeare's, whose language was characterized by both his own unique writing style, but also the time in which the text was written in. In this regard, Klein has chosen to use a language that is closer to a contemporary language, while occasionally mimicking Shakespeare's original text by using intertextual references. An example of this can be seen in *Ophelia* when Klein's version of Hamlet cites this poem to Ophelia:

*“Doubt thou the stars are fire
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love”* (Klein, 132)

This is an example of something Klein has taken directly from *Hamlet*'s act 2, scene 2, as this poem is a part of the love letter Shakespeare's Hamlet sent to Ophelia, confiscated by Polonius, who is the one reading this out loud to King Claudius and Gertrude (Shakespeare, 71). Klein puts this poem into a different context, as this poem is now an intimate moment between her versions of Hamlet and Ophelia, wherein they are writing this poem together with the intention of it being found by Polonius, so they can feign a love affair. This plot motive also allows Klein to dissect the poem's potential meaning:

“Not bad, but not all good, either,” I said. Indeed the hasty poem was lacking in music and halting in meter.

“Never doubt I love can also signify Never suspect I love. See?” (Klein, 132)

This example showcases how Klein takes the liberty of discussing the meaning behind Shakespeare's original text. As she employs a more contemporary language use she is able to

approach Shakespeare's work with a contemporary interpretation. In this manner, she is also able to assist her younger audience in understanding Shakespeare. However, Klein's use of overt interpretation can be used for her own benefit, as *Ophelia* clearly uses Shakespeare's text to aid its own plot. Additionally, *Ophelia* is able to profit from the literary currency a classic like *Hamlet* holds by using intertextual references to *Hamlet*. Lastly, Hoesterey has stated, the meaning of words naturally evolve over time, which inevitably invites new interpretations to older works. The choice to not use a language that consistently resembles Shakespeare's also showcase Klein's intention to produce a text that is easier to understand for a younger audience, who does not need to be familiar with Shakespeare's works to understand Klein's text.

Consequently, Klein has taken a classic play that holds nearly 400 years to its name, and reused its plot and characters to create a novel with a more modern language use that suits the young adult genre. She implements intertextual references, but without demanding its reader to be familiar with *Hamlet*. Thereby, Klein has pastiched Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to accommodate a younger audience, who does not need to be familiar with Shakespeare or the Shakespearean language in order to understand *Ophelia*.

The Shakespearean self-awareness in *Ophelia*: How Klein reconstructs *Ophelia*'s narrative by using Shakespeare's tools

Klein's novel *Ophelia* undoubtedly builds its premise on a story already told: Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. And as the title suggests, the plot's focus has switched from the character Hamlet to the character Ophelia. In this chapter it will be revealed how *Ophelia* draws on several of Shakespeare's themes, which underlines *Ophelia*'s as pastiche, as it pays homage to text it borrows from. By the same token, *Ophelia* uses Shakespeare's themes to draw attention to its own agenda and provide Klein's Ophelia with agency. Lastly, this chapter will illuminate how Klein's imagery draws attention to Klein's Ophelia as an autodiegetic narrator in contrast to Shakespeare's Ophelia, a character in a play. This will be done by looking at the role of Klein's Ophelia as narrator and what perspective this offers. Furthermore, we will examine the novel's ongoing theme of its own self-awareness as a pastiche, its own need to compare itself to *Hamlet*, and what issues this technique highlights.

For the purpose of clarity, it is important to mention that this part of the analysis will be exploring how the Ophelia from Klein's novel and the Ophelia from Shakespeare's play differ and compare, and what Klein's Ophelia is trying to convey. As it might be difficult to identify which Ophelia this master's thesis is referring to, we would like to underline that going forward this master's thesis will refer to the Ophelia from the novel *Ophelia* as "Klein's Ophelia" and

the Ophelia from the play *Hamlet* as “Shakespeare’s Ophelia”. Seemingly, there are also two types of implied reader of *Ophelia*. To clarify which reader we are referring to throughout this analysis they will be referred to as 1) the familiar reader, who has read *Hamlet*, and 2) the unfamiliar reader, who has not read *Hamlet*.

Firstly, to understand that *Ophelia* does not simply pastiche the plot from *Hamlet*, but also apply and pastiche the tool in storytelling, which we refer to as a character’s self-awareness. Shakespeare uses self-awareness in several of his works, which we will examine in the following paragraphs.

Shakespeare’s use of self-awareness

As well as being a pastiche of Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, Klein’s novel *Ophelia* also applies a tool in her storytelling, which is often found in Shakespeare’s plays in general. The self-awareness portrayed by a number of William Shakespeare’s characters is applied in Klein’s new narrative in the form of Klein’s Ophelia’s references to a play – bringing forth an allusion to the plot in *Hamlet*. Shakespeare, perhaps most famously illustrated this in the self-aware character Jaques from *As You Like It*.

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages (Shakespeare2, 622).

In this quote, Jaques talks of the workings of the world as a stage with actors, each playing their part. He then goes on to explain the seven ages, which ends in second childness (622). Going as far as explaining the entrances and exits of the actors, this monologue is showcasing a hyper-self-awareness, almost explaining the ins and outs of theatre to the audience. The observing character trait found in Jaques makes him an interesting character, in the sense that he, as the only person in the forest of Arden, can objectively judge the foolishness portrayed by the others. Jaques stands on the side line, along with the audience, often having ‘aside’ remarks, heard by no one but the audience. This tool, used by Shakespeare, makes it possible for him to convey his own thoughts on the extremity often found in the lovers in a Shakespearean comedy. Another character used in the same way, is Puck from the earlier play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Another recognizable phrase is: “Lord what fools these mortals be” (290), which clearly tells the audience what to think of the four lovers in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Though

very much an ensemble play, Puck is the closest thing the play comes to a lead character. As with Jaques, Puck is the only character to break the fourth wall and talk directly to the audience. This, combined with his aloof and taunting nature, make him a comical narrator of the plot, which emphasizes the strangeness of the situation. At the end of the play, Puck directly addresses that what has just unfolded is a play, and he excuses any possible shortcomings:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends (301).

This might have been a way for Shakespeare to address these shortcomings of the stage in a comical way. However, the self-awareness is not something strictly reserved for Shakespeare's comedies. The histories Shakespeare created showcase a self-awareness, perhaps best exemplified in Richard III.

In his opening monologue, Richard Duke of Gloucester tells the audience of the events leading up to the beginning of the play. Here, he lets the audience know of his disdain of the current days of peace. The Duke of Gloucester sees the idleness of his brother the King, as an opportunity to advance himself in the succession, setting a plan in motion to become king. Richard acknowledges that this act would make him the villain of the story. However, as his appearance makes the role of the lover impossible, he believes himself destined to be the villain:

And therefore, — since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days, —

I am determined to prove a villain (98).

Richard thereby lets the audience know that he is aware of the criteria for the roles in a story, and that he himself is best suited for the villain. He counts on his brother Edward (the king) to play the role of the hero, which makes it possible for him to deduct how Edward will act when Richard's plan is set in motion. Richard acts as though the play is a game of chess, where he foresees his opponents' next move. Richard knows the ins and the outs of a plot, and uses this to his advantage.

Later, when admitting a possible defeat to the Earl of Richmond (the future King Henry VII), Richard talks of how he will be remembered. As both the title character and the antagonist of the play, he confesses to the audience that he acknowledges the fact that he will be remembered as 'the villain of the play'.

And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain (136).

As the play was written during the Tudor dynasty in England, Richard III was seen as the villain, not only in *Richard III* but in history, as the current monarch at the time the play was written was Elizabeth I, descendant of Henry VII (Snell). This speech is then used to link the play to factual history. The use of allusion in this example is applied for Richard to appeal to the audience or to remind them of his defeat at Bosworth. The play, *Richard III*, sets Richard's character up as a man, who willingly took up the part of the villain, while using the other characters as pieces of a chessboard.

In *Hamlet*, the idea of a play is something which is set up by the other characters. Hamlet sees their grief as well as their joy as acts, put on to please the audience, which in this case is the kingdom. He believes himself to be the only person, not acting for show, but because he truly feels the grief caused by the passing of his father, King Hamlet:

'Seems', madam? Nay, it is; I know not 'seems' [...]
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe (Shakespeare, 673).

In a sense, Hamlet believes that everyone, except for Horatio, are actors in the play against him, directed by Claudius. As Hamlet spends a great deal of time thinking over and devising a plan, the self-awareness and the access to his inner thoughts act as his agency in the moments where the character otherwise seems passive. This self-awareness is something Klein has

detected and applied when creating Ophelia, who just like Hamlet, makes comparisons between ‘reality’ and a play.

A common denominator showcased in all of the examples above, is that the characters giving their opinion on the plot unfolding around them are all men. This is the only link between the four characters, as the first two of the aforementioned characters do not function as their stories’ leads. Furthermore, the self-awareness is not a tool Shakespeare solely applied in one dramatic structure, e.g. the comedy or the tragedy. Though *As You Like It* has a female lead (Rosalind), it is still Jaques who has the direct contact with the audience.

When tackling *Hamlet* and creating the new narrative in *Ophelia*, Klein pastiches the self-awareness of several Shakespearean characters by changing the gender of the self-aware character. This pastiche contributes to the agency Klein attempts to offer Ophelia, when telling her own story. Furthermore, the agency Klein gives Ophelia evidently changes the perception the familiar reader has of the character. As with Hamlet in Shakespeare’s play, the access to Klein’s Ophelia’s inner thoughts act as her agency in moments of passive observation; Ophelia’s inner dialogue functions as her agency in moments that would otherwise prove her to be passive. This impacts the reception of the plot’s events, leading up to and including Ophelia’s survival, which changes the message and possible meaning behind the trope of the beautiful dead woman. How Klein applies self-awareness and the choices made in narration will be explored in the following chapters.

Klein’s Ophelia: a character with agency

“Here is my story” (Klein, 3). In this manner, *Ophelia* ends its prologue and the plot begins, making it clear that Ophelia will act as the navigator through this new narrative. As Klein has chosen to explore Ophelia’s character through another literary platform than playwriting, another set of narrative tools have been made available to do so. Narrator voice is a tool that is particularly interesting, as it helps shape the story to the reader and, in the case of *Ophelia*, Klein’s Ophelia serves as an autodiegetic narrator. This narrative instrument is an effective tool to further emphasize Klein’s Ophelia as the centre of this story.

First, the implementation of Klein’s Ophelia as an autodiegetic narrator invites the readers into a more intimate space where Klein’s Ophelia can open up about her thoughts and feelings, as it shows through this example:

I was often sad, thinking I had caused her to die and therefore my father could not love me. I tried not to vex or trouble him further, but he never gave me the attention I desired. Nor did he dote on Laertes, his only son (Klein, 8).

Consequently, *Ophelia*'s shift in genre from play to novel carries new possibilities in how the characters can be presented to the reader, which in this case creates a deeper understanding of Klein's Ophelia's family dynamic. Klein's Ophelia's role as the autodiegetic narrator thereby invites the reader to a more intimate insight into a character, along with the characters around her, which provides the familiar reader with added characteristics, which the reader was not provided with in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This stylistic choice is the first of many indications that *Ophelia* matches Hoesterey definition of a postmodern pastiche. Hoesterey states that postmodern pastiches often employ stylistic choices as a tool to promote the agenda that the pastiche is trying to put forth. By making Klein's Ophelia the autodiegetic narrator of *Ophelia* the text ultimately has a radically different focus, that in particular would stand out to the familiar reader. As the familiar reader recognizes Klein's Ophelia as the autodiegetic narrator the text, an integral theme will be mediated to them: this narrative will focus on another character's perspective and their version of the events. Although this stylistic differs greatly from Shakespeare's original text, Klein uses her Ophelia's role as the autodiegetic narrator to implement the ongoing theme of self-awareness as her Ophelia is capable of making alert observations about the text itself, which the following chapter will reveal.

Making Klein's Ophelia the autodiegetic narrator ultimately supplies her with a power that is new to her character. Shakespeare's Ophelia only acts as a supporting character in *Hamlet*, but through *Ophelia*'s setup she is granted editorial influence: "I will dispel the darkness about me and cast a light upon the truth. So I take up my pen and write" (3). Clearly, this indicates that the stories based on Shakespeare's Ophelia have been different from the truth that Klein's Ophelia recognizes. Moreover, *Ophelia* creates an allusion to the original Ophelia's storyline from *Hamlet*, and the subsequent retellings and speculations, such as her suicide is a consequence of an illegitimate pregnancy with Hamlet's child. Through this allusion Klein's Ophelia states that, unlike these other narratives, Klein's Ophelia will be given a voice and agency of her own story. Of course, this power is only one that the implied author grants her. It is important to note that the choices Klein's Ophelia make are directed by the implied author, which means that the implied author has an intent when creating her path. This analysis will also be attentive to this aspect.

The example also shows that there is an intent behind the autodiegetic narrator's plot. As Klein's Ophelia has editorial influence and an intent with her plot, it subsequently means that she could use her role as autodiegetic narrator to censor or exaggerate the narrative in order to fit the story she wants to tell. However, there are signs of Klein's Ophelia being a reliable narrator as she often points out her own flaws, e.g.: "I had none of a mermaid's curves, for my

body was as slim as a boy's" (22) and "I asked, but my father only laughed and Laertes called me stupid" (10). These examples show that Klein's Ophelia seems to have no ambition to present herself as better looking or smarter to the implied readers, but rather offers a full disclosure to her flaws, which indicate that Klein's Ophelia attempts to give an honest account of the narrative.

Klein's Ophelia with a Shakespearean self-awareness

"An excellent device, worthy of a playwright" (Klein, 75). Klein's novel is filled with these little cues that refer back to the work it is trying to pastiche, which only signals that *Ophelia* is highly self-aware. *Ophelia* knows that it is a novel trying to pastiche a play. And it is this exact angle that Klein is trying to mediate a message through. By consistently comparing the events in *Ophelia* to those of a play, the novel shows an attempt to not only create a new storyline for Ophelia, but also to add commentary and new meaning to *Hamlet's* Ophelia. By the same token, *Ophelia* shows its homage to Shakespeare, as this text previously revealed Shakespeare's use of self-aware characters, which underlines *Ophelia's* role as a pastiche.

First and foremost, these references begin to appear when the plot in Part Two of *Ophelia* clashes with some of the same plot events the novel has taken from *Hamlet*. Klein's Ophelia begins to experience a dual reality between the events around her and their likeness to a play when Hamlet first has an encounter with his father in the shape of a ghost. As opposed to Shakespeare's original text, Hamlet tells Klein's Ophelia of this occurrence and she responds with the comment: "This is the stuff of a strange fiction" (121). Clearly, there is some hidden recognition in Klein's Ophelia's reaction when she is confronted with the parallels of her own story and the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This addressment mirrors Jaques' from *As You Like It* as Klein's Ophelia is able to recognize the fictional world she lives in. From this point a homage theme has its take off, showcasing what Hoesterey states as one of pastiche literature's essential elements. This tendency continues when *Ophelia* mirrors act 2, scene 1 from *Hamlet*. In the scene from *Hamlet*, a Shakespeare's Ophelia seeks out Polonius in distress and confide to him how a piteous Hamlet had come into her chamber, causing Polonius to think that an affection for Shakespeare's Ophelia is the cause of Hamlet's madness, which leads him to confront the king with this information (Shakespeare, 67-68). In *Ophelia* events preceding this scene are added, which create a new meaning and purpose to it. In *Ophelia* Hamlet and Klein's Ophelia are already married at this point and they agree to disguise their marriage behind a pretended courtship (Klein, 129), which leads to the scene mirroring act 2, scene 1 from *Hamlet*. Here, Ophelia opens the scene with the words: "The next morning, I ran to my

father, pretending distress” (133). In this manner, *Ophelia* confirms that Klein’s Ophelia is only acting distressed in this scene and, moreover, she is deliberately trying to manipulate Polonius. When Polonius reacts as he does in *Hamlet* and wants to confront Claudius with this information, he reacts as Klein’s Ophelia and Hamlet had intended, which further unveils the text’s self-awareness:

Thus encouraged, I played the false role of obedient daughter with even more zest. So well did I act my part that even my father, despite being schooled in deceit, did not perceive my mask (134).

This creates an allusion that not only sets up a new storyline for the Klein’s Ophelia, but also toys with how Shakespeare’s Ophelia is perceived in *Hamlet*. As events from Shakespeare’s play are now played out with new plot events that precedes and builds up to the plot events that mirror scenes from *Hamlet*, along with the self-awareness aspect, it alludes to a notion of Klein’s Ophelia having more agency than a spectator of Shakespeare’s play could have been aware of when watching the play unfold. In this manner, *Ophelia* does not only manage to create a character in her own right with agency and intent, but tries to connect its narrative as a prolonging of Shakespeare’s play, where this novel has an added behind-the-scenes effect of Shakespeare’s play. The scenes in *Ophelia* continue to run parallelly to *Hamlet* and Klein’s Polonius subsequently mirrors act 3, scene 1 from *Hamlet*, wherein Polonius, Claudius and Gertrude plant Klein’s Ophelia for Hamlet to find in order to spy on their meeting and determine the nature of Ophelia and Hamlet’s relationship (Shakespeare, 85-86). However, in *Ophelia* the plot unfolds to Klein’s Ophelia’s disadvantage as she fails to inform Hamlet of this setup and they lose control of their own plot as their families have taken control of the scene:

I was an unwilling player but could not choose to quit the scene. Claudius led me to the stage, the broad foyer where Hamlet often passed and the very place where I had watched him instruct the players. My father directed me to return Hamlet’s gifts and speak nothing that would encourage his attentions. Gertrude tended to my costume (Klein, 143).

This allusion perfectly illustrates the possibilities in Hoesterey’s definition of the contemporary pastiche, as Hoesterey has underlined the vast portion of literary techniques, including genre, the pasticheur has access to utilize. Although Klein has made a shift in genre from the literary work she is attempting to pastiche, she has chosen to do it in manner that allows her to use imagery that nods to the genre of the original work. By the same token Klein composes a theme of ambiguity in her pastiche. This example have the ability to move the plot forward as part if

an independent narrative without disrupting the reception thereof to the unfamiliar reader. However, if the reader is familiar with *Hamlet*, the ambiguity of this imagery is unveiled.

Not only does the aforementioned scene mirror the actions of the characters in act 3, scene 1 from *Hamlet*, but in *Ophelia* the chosen imagery describes the setting of scene in a play with a stage, a director and Ophelia in her costume. This allusion to *Hamlet* underlines the nature of Shakespeare's Ophelia; a character in a play. This allusion emphasizes how. More importantly, it also underlines Ophelia's unwillingness to participate in this play, but is forcibly endured it by particularly Claudius, who places her on the stage and Polonius, who acts as her director. In this manner, the imagery manages to lead the mind of the familiar reader back to Shakespeare's Ophelia and suggests that she too was unwilling to undertake this role.

The events *Ophelia's* Ophelia and *Hamlet's* Ophelia are subjected to clearly mirror each other at several occasions, but *Ophelia's* mirroring of act 3, scene 1 from *Hamlet* continues to be of interest as this is where their situation seems the most similar. The passage exemplifies a situation in which Ophelia's agency has been usurped by her male counterparts, which was also the case with Shakespeare's Ophelia in act 3, scene 1. Hence, they are both subjected to a situation where they are assigned a role that is submissive to their counteracting male characters. According to Bronfen, a gender-oriented power structure has oftentimes lead to suicide in literature in an attempt by the female to regain her agency. By letting her mirroring scene in *Ophelia* be similar to the circumstances to the ones Ophelia from *Hamlet* endures, Klein highlights how both Klein's Ophelia and Shakespeare's Ophelia are exposed to the same loss of agency, but also makes the differences in their ending more significant, as *Ophelia's* Ophelia does not resort to suicide in order to escape the gender-oriented power structure. In this manner, Klein's commentary to the pastiche text shines through and reveals the subtextual anxiety that Hoesterey states can be present in pastiches. It becomes evident to the familiar reader that while situations as Ophelia's may occur, suicide is not the default solution. As Klein's Ophelia and Shakespeare's are subjected to the same situations and feelings but react so differently ultimately set them apart. Like Hoesterey has pointed out, pastiche writers can implement an idea of their own that adds to the history of an established work. *Ophelia's* implied author makes her ideas known by highlighting the struggles Shakespeare's Ophelia goes through by making Klein's Ophelia experience the same issues, which signal to the readers that Ophelia's struggles, both Klein's and Shakespeare's is what *Ophelia* would like to address. The implied author sets up a narrative that mirrors the one Shakespeare's Ophelia endures, but as Klein's Ophelia is faced with the same reality she resorts to different actions. It is thereby evident that the implied author is attempting to present a confrontation between the beautiful

dead woman trope, that very much can be found in Shakespeare's Ophelia, and an alternative presentation of a struggling beautiful woman, who does not result to suicide.

In summation, it is apparent to this analysis that the implied author of *Ophelia* draws heavily on Shakespeare's self-aware characters to help underline the core of *Ophelia*'s message. As it was illustrated in *Shakespeare's use of self-awareness*, Shakespeare often used male characters who would address the audience directly or even verbalize the setting of the play. The same self-awareness is seen in Klein's Ophelia, this time with the intent to provide Klein's Ophelia with agency, while also communicating with *Ophelia*'s readers, just like Shakespeare did with his audience. According to Hoesterey's theory, this makes Klein a pastiche writer, who borrows techniques from the pastiched author, while promoting a personal agenda.

Klein's Ophelia: uses Shakespeare's theme to highlight her own

"Was the scene of our wedding in the woods a false dream? Was I mad?" (Klein, 147). The self-aware imagery in *Ophelia* further distances itself from Shakespeare's play, despite its similarities. When the narrative in *Ophelia* emphasizes the theatrical aspects of a scene, it also makes several hints to a "false" and a "true" narrative. This is first evident in the example above, which is when Klein's Ophelia questions her sanity after she cannot publicly recognize her marriage to Hamlet. Here, Klein's Ophelia's memory of marrying Hamlet, a plotline original to *Ophelia*'s narrative, is separated from the narrative that parallels the original *Hamlet* as a "false dream". This mirrors the struggles Hamlet experiences in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as he too recognizes another truth than the characters around him:

[...]These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes how;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe. (Shakespeare, 46)

This example shows how Shakespeare's Hamlet considers himself to be the most honest and genuine unlike the people he is surrounded by. As Klein's Ophelia comes to know the same struggle, albeit less overtly recognized by herself as such, *Ophelia* once again draws on the text it borrows from. Thus, Klein's Ophelia obtains the same perception of the world that has earned *Hamlet* so much praise over the years. This is clearly an homage to Shakespeare's original work, and it helps showcase why Klein has chosen to pastiche *Hamlet*. This is yet another example of Hoesterey's point, which states that pasticheurs use recognized works to promote their own agenda. As Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been so praised because of the perceptions

about reality Hamlet oftentimes offers in the play, it seems apparent that Klein has used this opportunity to give Klein's Ophelia the same quality in an attempt to further her agency.

As Ophelia experiences another truth only known to her and *Ophelia's* readers, she questions her own sanity, suggesting the madness Shakespeare's Ophelia famously succumbs to in *Hamlet* is a result of experiencing a reality unrecognized or unacknowledged by her surroundings. This suggestion matches *Ophelia's* wish of wanting to give an explanation for the part Shakespeare's Ophelia played in *Hamlet*. Klein's pastiche seeks to give a clear idea of Klein's Ophelia's struggles to further underline the reason for her agency in the new narrative. Furthermore, in rationalizing the behaviour Klein's Ophelia exhibits in distancing herself from those around her, Klein introduces an explanation for the choice to alter her characters' end from the characters it is trying to pastiche by moving away from the trope of the beautiful dead woman.

Ophelia's theme of distancing Klein's Ophelia from the events around her continues when she is told that Hamlet has slain her father: "It was a dreadful scene, like something acted in tragedy" (Klein, 168). Here, Klein's Ophelia expresses the uncanniness of the events around her and their likeness to a theatrical tragedy, and even further stresses the distance between Klein's Ophelia and the narrative from the original *Hamlet* unfolding around her. This imagery is at its most transparent when Klein's Ophelia observes the court of Elsinore before her:

The scene before me was a hollow pretense of grandeur and gaiety. It seemed that all love was nothing but lust, all seeming truth only a mask for lies (155).

Of course, this can be interpreted in an intradiegetic fashion, wherein Klein's Ophelia means the very scene before her in the narrative of *Ophelia*. However, this can also be interpreted on an extradiegetic level. Here, Klein's Ophelia is likened to Shakespeare's Ophelia from *Hamlet*, describing how the events around must have seemed and, moreover, suggesting that she too was encircled by a false truth. In this interpretation, the implied author's commentary reveals itself once again through *Ophelia's* overt imagery. It appears as if the implied author seeks to create a narrative that, like Klein's Ophelia, can be partly separated from *Hamlet*, the text it attempts to pastiche. By consistently using words such as "tragedy", "scene" and "hollow pretense" to describe the events in *Ophelia* that mirror the plotline from *Hamlet* it creates a detachment between Klein's Ophelia and the narrative in *Ophelia* that mirrors events from *Hamlet*. It is an interesting choice to separate *Ophelia* and *Hamlet* like a true and a false narrative.

Thus, *Ophelia* sends a contradictory message; it is made apparent that the implied author seeks to create an independent narrative along with its independent main character. And yet,

this is done through a pastiche, that has made the choice to use the same pool of characters, same setting and several of the same plot events as the pastiched work. Instead of creating an original text, the implied author borrows from an already established, and critically acclaimed text. This is where *Ophelia* sets itself apart. It seems to have a wish of communicating with a larger literary canon as it has chosen to pastiche one of the most integral and influential text in English literature. However, *Ophelia* is written to a younger audience without expecting them to be familiar with *Hamlet*, which could leave many of the differences and similarities between *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* go unnoticed by an unfamiliar reader. In this manner, the author's persona is not erased. As it was touched upon in *Ophelia's style: Moderating a classic to fit a contemporary, young audience*, Klein does not emulate Shakespeare's writing style, which would otherwise help Klein erase her author persona if she had done so, according to Hoesterey. In accordance to Hoesterey's theory, these decisions make *Ophelia* an atypical contemporary pastiche as it clearly has no anxiety of influence. Of course, Klein's choice to distance herself so drastically from the original work could be caused by an inclination with Hoesterey, who states that only a dramatic difference would create another great work. In regard to our thesis statement, this discovery helps us conclude that Klein's *Ophelia* might not appear as a direct confrontation to an unfamiliar reader, which halt her ambition of making a statement with Shakespeare's original character.

Klein's distinction between the two characters reception

Ophelia's ongoing theme of intertextual references also has another effect that concentrates on the reception of Ophelia's character, especially to the familiar reader. Evidently, the two Ophelia's reception differs greatly between *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* as the texts are two different literary formats, which consequently results in two different receptions thereof.

The imagery used in *Ophelia* stresses the different circumstances Shakespeare and Klein's Ophelia are exposed to as it is seen through the following remark made by Klein's Ophelia: "Inside the great hall there was only dim light, as in a theater darkened for a play" (Klein, 200). Again, imagery is used to lead the reader's mind on to the theatrical format Shakespeare's Ophelia was created under in his play. But this example from *Ophelia* also calls attention to the other conditions under which Shakespeare's Ophelia was perceived. As the example describes the dim light resembling the one in a theatre it links to Mulvey's theory. Here, Mulvey draws on Freud's scopophilia concept to build her thesis, stating that a person is made into an object subjected to an intrusive and controlling gaze. Like the cinema a theatrical

stage is designed to be observed and, moreover, the stage described in *Ophelia* also has the dim light like in a cinema. In this manner, *Ophelia* accentuates how a reception of *Hamlet* as a play has some of the same qualities present in Mulvey's theory where an audience of *Hamlet* is given the feeling of being alone with the events acted out on stage, as the darkness boost the spectators feeling of prying, according to Mulvey. Thereby, an audience of Shakespeare's play would have had their natural urge to observe fulfilled. Consequently, a theatrical production of *Hamlet* creates an environment wherein the audience can develop scopophilia, meaning Shakespeare's *Ophelia* was created with the purpose to be the subject of an audience's intrusive gaze.

When *Ophelia* points out this notion through the aforementioned example, it is clear that the novel seeks to underline the contrast between a character in a play and a character in a novel, and how the reception of each is different. However, it is notable that Klein's *Ophelia* seems to have similar circumstances, as it is her who describes her surroundings as a scene from a play. She finishes the same paragraph as such: "Now I had no choice but to play out my scene here" (Klein, 200). In this manner, the theatrical references in *Ophelia* do not only serve an intertextual purpose, but also applies to itself. In this example, *Ophelia* expresses an unwillingness or a loss of agency, as any choice of participation in this scene is stripped from her. The surroundings around *Ophelia* are like the setting of a play. As the stage, when compared to Mulvey's theory of the cinematic screen, is a world detached from its audience and unaware of it being observed it is conflicting that Klein's *Ophelia* destroys the illusional separation between audience and characters. Secondly, the unwillingness *Ophelia* expresses profess that she is not an unwitting victim, but a witting one. In this manner, *Ophelia* creates a meta-environment in which the reader is confronted as being a spectator to Klein's *Ophelia*'s struggles. As opposed to a production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Ophelia* breaks the seal between the narrative and its spectators, according to Mulvey's theory. Consequently, Klein's *Ophelia* is disrupting Mulvey's concept of the safe space of voyeuristic fantasy as the main character on stage, or in this case page, is no longer indifferent to its spectators. This further underlines the implied author's choice to create a new version of the *Ophelia* character through a novel's format, wherein she acts the autodiegetic narrator as this erases the focus on visual excitement.

Evidently, the self-aware imagery underlines the difference in how the two *Ophelia* characters are meant to be received. *Ophelia* manages to illustrate how Shakespeare's *Ophelia* was mainly viewed in a play, making the character susceptible to scopophilia, while Klein's *Ophelia* is a character, who feels like she is acting through a play. In this relation it is important to emphasize that Shakespeare's plays were heavily focused on its use of language and made

its audience pay attention to its discourse. Nonetheless, the arena in which *Hamlet* is meant to be received still has a visual aspect that plays a role when compared to a novel's reception. In this manner, *Ophelia* creates a reception wherein the readers become self-aware; Klein's Ophelia's acknowledgement of being observed in *Ophelia* confronts the reader with their own position as the observer. Again, this is a layered experience to the familiar reader of Klein's *Ophelia*. Of course, there is the aspect mainly concentrated on Klein's novel, wherein Klein's Ophelia cancels the separation between the reader and herself and consequently obstructs the readers' voyeuristic experience. However, there is also the aspect of this theme reaching back to *Hamlet* and how the reader perceives Shakespeare's Ophelia. If the reader is confronted with Klein's Ophelia, who is highly aware of a gaze being on her, they may connect this quality to Shakespeare's Ophelia, which would further mean that the reader would become aware of the scopophilia they possibly had subjected Shakespeare's Ophelia to. In this manner, the familiar reader is likewise forced to revise their understanding of Shakespeare's original character, as they now become aware of their own gaze and its apparent influence. Moreover, this also entertains the idea, that *Hamlet's* implied author created Shakespeare's Ophelia as a character that falls into the pitfalls of Mulvey's concept of the male gaze.

It is an interesting choice to break the illusional seal between the character and its spectator, especially since the characters in *Ophelia*, a novel, are not subjected to the gaze of an audience under the same circumstances as the characters in a theatre play. The reason for this choice might be found in the analysis above. The effort to use imagery that communicates with the pastiche text's original platform suggests that the implied author of *Ophelia* has had an ambition to intervene with the familiar reader's perception of Shakespeare's Ophelia. As the analysis above shows, the implied author might have taken issue with the format Shakespeare's Ophelia was portrayed in. *Ophelia* shows an obvious attempt to navigate its reader away from the psychological bear traps that Mulvey points out, such as creating the separation between spectator and character, which can cause the spectator to develop a scopophilic gaze on the character. *Ophelia* attempts to discontinue the voyeuristic experience between the Ophelia character and her audience by grating Klein's Ophelia the role as a self-conscious autodiegetic narrator. The implied author does not only eliminate the reader's voyeuristic experience with Klein's Ophelia by interfering with the spectator-character relationship in *Ophelia*, but seems to attempt to obstruct this aspect in the familiar reader's perception of Shakespeare's Ophelia as well by constantly referring back to her and Shakespeare's text.

By pointing out the similarities between Mulvey's theory about scopophilia and the circumstances of *Hamlet's* characters, including Shakespeare's Ophelia, was meant to be received under, the implied author also suggests, that Shakespeare's Ophelia was a victim to the male gaze. In relation to Mulvey's concept of the passive female character, this would mean that Shakespeare's Ophelia was only meant to inspire meaning in her male counterparts, but was by herself meaningless. In such case, Shakespeare's Ophelia and Klein's Ophelia are once again divided as two different characters, as the implied author of *Ophelia* has made an effort to apply meaning and agency to Klein's Ophelia, according to what this analysis has learned so far.

Summation

In summary, Klein uses her pastiche to underline the agency Klein's Ophelia is given in *Ophelia*, while suggesting Shakespeare's Ophelia lacked the same. "I had wanted to be the author of my tale, not merely a player in Hamlet's drama" (Klein, 241). This quote indicates that Shakespeare's Ophelia had a wish to be understood, and a need to have the agency, which other male Shakespearean characters were given. Pastiche of *Hamlet* invites the idea that Klein indirectly critiques Shakespeare's way of handling Ophelia. Klein offers Ophelia a set of tools which were given to the male characters in Shakespeare's plays, thereby giving her the agency she lacked in *Hamlet*. While providing *Ophelia* with an autodiegetic narrator, Klein showcases the agency Ophelia's character could have had in the original plot. In this manner, Klein manages to create a pastiche that pays homage to the style of the author it borrows from, and by the same token uses this style to underline the differences between the pastiche and the pastiched text. The pastiche presents itself as an atypical contemporary pastiche, as it not afraid to make forthright changes in contrast to many other contemporary work, which Hoesterey states are often more subtle in style.

Recontextualizing Ophelia's Original Narrative

In order to understand what *Ophelia's* narrative is trying to convey, it is vital that the key plot elements are examined. Therefore, this chapter will illuminate how Klein has implemented themes throughout *Ophelia's* narrative that oftentimes aligns Mulvey's concept of essentialism. However, it will also reveal how these themes become contradictory, as we have also found Becker and Bronfen's trope to be present in *Ophelia*. To give a more thorough analysis of these events this part of the analysis will be approaching these key plot elements chronologically.

Prologue: establishing the alternative ending

An examination of the order of events in Klein's novel, *Ophelia* reveals that the narrative follows a chronological scheme, only the prologue deviates from the otherwise linear structure. This scheme serves a greater purpose that suits the agenda of this pastiche very well, and, as this chapter will go into greater depth with, it is clearly defined by the three parts Klein has divided this narrative into.

First and foremost, Klein opens the novel with a prologue with an attached timeframe and a geographical stamp; "St. Emilion, France" (Klein, 1). This places the prologue in the proximity of the presumed timeline of the original *Hamlet*. But the geographical pin places Ophelia in France, far from Elsinore Castle in Denmark, which is also a newly introduced setting to this narrative, as there was no reference to St. Emilion in Shakespeare's play. Furthermore, the prologue starts with a letter from Horatio to Ophelia, wherein Horatio describes events that also took place in the plot of *Hamlet*:

Your brother, Laertes, and Prince Hamlet have slain each other with poisoned swords. I have failed in the task you set me. Now Fortinbras of Norway rules in our conquered land. (1)

This is a clear reference to the narrative of the original play. However, these events do not occur until act 5, scene 2 (Shakespeare, 140), which is near the very end of the play. What is more striking is that Ophelia is already dead when Laertes and Hamlet slay each other in Shakespeare's play, as Gertrude announces Ophelia's death in act 4, scene 7 (131), but in Klein's novel Ophelia is alive to hear of these news through Horatio's letter (Klein, 2). These elements also reflect Hoesterey's theory, as the characters' names, a mention of Elsinore Castle (2) and the events described above clearly refer to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as these mirror those of Hamlet's narrative. However, it is clear from the outset that this does not directly imitate the original text's style of writing, as *Hamlet* was written as a play, but Klein's pastiche is written as a novel. This further fits well with Hoesterey theory, as Klein uses a patchwork of the above mentioned elements from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but chooses to explore this narrative through a different genre, which brings forth different opportunities and effects, which this analysis will give a parallel attention to. This stylistic choice also entertains Klein's argument that claims the pasticheur makes a conscious decision to create a distance in style between the pastiche and the pastiched text, as the pastiche would never be able to emulate the brilliance of an original piece, but would have to distance itself in order to create its own brilliancy, while still paying homage to the original work.

Thus, the prologue of Klein's novel helps set the premise; it establishes the survival of Klein's Ophelia, or at least extends her lifetime beyond the narrative of *Hamlet* as opposed to Shakespeare's Ophelia. This signals to the familiar reader of *Ophelia* that this narrative is about to tell a different version of *Hamlet*, wherein Klein's Ophelia is given a different ending.

The prologue ends with a stream of Ophelia's consciousness after having read Horatio's letter (Klein, 2-3), which ends with the line: "Here is my story" (3). This further cements that this pastiche will focus on Ophelia's storyline, with it being apparent from the beginning that this plot will provide her with an alternative ending.

Part One: Ophelia's contradictory use of the beautiful dead woman trope

Ophelia grasps a unique opportunity to partly resist Bronfen's trope of the beautiful dead woman by applying her with her own backstory. Just like the prologue, the beginning of Part One offers a timeframe and a geographical stamp. Part One takes place in Elsinore, Denmark in the years between 1585-1601 (Klein, 6). The place is familiar to Shakespeare's original text, but the timeframe stands out, as the events in *Hamlet* unfolds during a short time period as it only concentrates on the sequence of events following Hamlet's father's death. Therefore, these additional years are also new to the narrative and serve a specific purpose; Part One explores Ophelia's life from birth (7) and her life up until the death of King Hamlet (87), Hamlet's father. From this outline of the plot's events, it is evident that Part One of *Ophelia's* narrative offers a backstory to Klein's Ophelia. Furthermore, as *Ophelia's* narrative has developed a timeline that precedes the events of Shakespeare's text, it builds a suspension as the familiar reader awaits the events they know are coming. The extended timeline also creates new meaning to the events ahead as the readers are now provided with a further look back in time, while also being offered a new perspective.

Chapters 1-3 offer an outline of Ophelia's childhood. Notably, it is evident that Klein's Ophelia looks back on this and narrates. Here, it is important to refer back to Ophelia's statement from the prologue: "So I take up my pen and write. Here is my story" (Klein, 3). Hence, what comes next in Chapter 1 and hereafter acts as a flashback. However, this does not disrupt the subsequent chronological order, as Ophelia henceforth chooses to narrate in a sequential manner. Klein's stylistic choice is another signal to the familiar reader that Klein's Ophelia has survived longer than Shakespeare's Ophelia did in the plot of *Hamlet*, as Klein's Ophelia is able to look back on events that Shakespeare's Ophelia did not survive to see. Moreover, the flashback narrative also suggests that Klein's Ophelia is still alive to narrate this novel. Klein's Ophelia's added backstory also erases some mystique around her character. The

backstory helps outlining her character and gives a more specific presentation of the character, her feelings and her story. In this manner, it is not up to the reader of *Ophelia* to determine or wonder about these qualities; they are fixed.

Given that Shakespeare's Ophelia was never given a backstory, it leaves plenty of space to be imaginary in the narrative of *Ophelia*. An example of this is the more clear profiling of Ophelia's mother: "I have always been a motherless girl. The lady Frowendel died giving birth to me, depriving also my brother, Laertes, and my father, Polonius, of her care" (Klein, 7). This stands in sharp contrast to *Hamlet*, wherein Shakespeare's Ophelia, or any other character in the play, never mention the presence of a mother. In *Ophelia*, not only is she mentioned, but she is granted a name and meaning, as the example illustrates how her absence has had an impact on Klein's Ophelia. This example further illustrates one of *Ophelia*'s on-going themes, self-awareness. This is evident through the line "I have always been a motherless girl" (7). This sentiment could be restricted to the character in *Ophelia*, Klein's Ophelia, but could also be another intertextual reference to Shakespeare's Ophelia in *Hamlet*. In this manner, *Ophelia* points out how the original character, Shakespeare's Ophelia, never had a maternal relationship, but was, as the former example shows, only portrayed in relation to her male counterparts, where Laertes, Polonius and Hamlet were her main interactions. In this way, the pastiche takes its liberties to add a more specific outline of Ophelia's mother, despite them having no interaction. This indicates that the implied author thought it was important to include Ophelia's relationship with her mother, despite them having no interaction. This inclusion is another subject that links Klein's Ophelia to Mulvey's theory. This works against Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, wherein the female character only functions as the male character's driving force, but is in herself meaningless, passive and with no influence to the plot's course. Klein's Ophelia seemingly adds meaning to her mother, while the narrative even has a name and an explanation for her absence. In this manner, another aspect of Klein's Ophelia is explored, that *Hamlet* did not investigate with Shakespeare's Ophelia. It even adds another meaning to the plot going forward, which the familiar reader would notice, as Ophelia's relationship with Laertes and Polonius is now also defined by the absence of lady Frowendel, which was not a factor in *Hamlet*. Like this, the implied author has highlighted the obvious absence of the mother of Shakespeare's Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and how addressing this was not important to the implied author of *Hamlet*, while neither being an apparent factor to the characters to whom she would have been related to.

Lady Frowendel also introduces a key element of the plot, as Part Three ties a knot around Klein's Ophelia's confictions as a motherless girl. However, it poses an interesting dilemma

as the implied author has chosen to portray Klein's Ophelia's mother as a deceased woman. Lady Frowendel is not a character in *Hamlet*, but it is safe to assume that there must have been a wife to Polonius, as well as a mother to Ophelia and Laertes, dead or alive. It is, however, interesting to speculate on why the implied author chose to present lady Frowendel as dead and not alive in *Ophelia*, given that the same text offers an alternative ending to its Ophelia character than the tragic suicide which *Hamlet* gives. Bronfen's beautiful dead woman concept underlines the question mark to this issue as her theory also finds it conflicting that this trope is built on the woman's death when she is the one who gives birth and brings life into this world, a point that is clearly illustrated by Klein's Ophelia: "The lady Frowendel died giving birth to me, depriving also my brother, Laertes, and my father, Polonius, of her care" (Klein, 7). When looked upon through Bronfen's theory, lady Frowendel might come to symbolize the beautiful dead woman's absurdity as a trope. As lady Frowendel is deceased her nourishing nature as a mother is also taken from Klein's Ophelia and Laertes, which according to Bronfen cancels out the beauty of the dead woman as it against humans natural survival instinct to kill the mother.

But *Ophelia* complicates what looks like an alignment with Bronfen's concept. *Ophelia* does indeed highlight the absurdity of the beautiful dead woman trope as Klein's Ophelia stresses how her mother's absence negatively affects her. That being said, the manner in which lady Frowendel is portrayed and used in the narrative can also qualify her as the beautiful dead woman according to Bronfen's concept, while simultaneously leaving an impression that resembles Becker's definition of how dead women were placed on a pedestal that surviving women could look up to. To first link Bronfen's concept to lady Frowendel, the following example can be used to identify a key part from Bronfen's theoretical outline:

I had not so much as a scrap of lace or a remembered scent of her. Nothing. Yet by the miniature framed portrait my father carried, I saw that I was the living image of my mother. (7)

This example correlates to Bronfen's example of The Unknown Woman of The Seine. Klein's Ophelia did not know her mother, had no memories of her, but was only familiar with her through a picture. As with the Unknown Woman of The Seine, Klein's Ophelia creates her own idea of what her mother could have been like based on an image of her. Even though Klein's Ophelia clearly expresses that she has no memory of who her mother was, she still adds meaning to her character. This is evident as Klein's Ophelia also shows signs of idealizing her mother, often assuming that the shortcomings of her life would be different if her mother was alive:

I remember no tender words or scented kisses. My father sometimes made me kneel while he put his hand on my head when I rattled off a blessing, but his was a heavy hand, not the gentle touch I desired. We were a family living without a heart, a mother, to unite us. (10)

Klein's Ophelia clearly expresses that she believes she would have experienced more love in her childhood had her mother been alive, despite not knowing what her mother was like. In this manner, lady Frowendel becomes a voyeuristic fantasy to Klein's Ophelia. As Klein's Ophelia has no idea of who her mother truly was, she is free to project any meaning she likes onto her. By the same token, lady Frowendel also becomes an excellent example of Becker's concept. As Klein's Ophelia uses her mother as an example of a person who would have been perfect, had she been alive, she echoes Becker's report, stating the deceased woman becomes the object to idolize, as she no longer has the opportunity to participate in the real world and consequently never disappoints anyone.

In summation, *Ophelia* offers a contradictory plot line through lady Frowendel. She is implemented in Part One to act as a motivator to Klein's Ophelia, which the plot picks up on during Part Three. She represents a loss that helps underline the absurdity in the beautiful dead woman trope, as she can no longer provide care for her children. Yet, she is still portrayed in a manner that both reflects and ticks the marks in Bronfen's and Becker's theories alike. Consequently, the seed *Ophelia* plants in its plot with lady Frowendel comes to represent an idealization of the beautiful dead woman.

Part One: Elsinore and its essentialism

Woodward's concept of essentialism helps outline a pattern in Klein's Ophelia's environment as Chapters 4-6 centres around how Klein's Ophelia turns into a lady. Chapter 4 opens with Polonius, who wants Klein's Ophelia to join Gertrude's court, stating this to Klein's Ophelia:

"But I cannot care for you. I have no idea how to raise a young lady. That is a task best suited for women" He spoke as if this were a truth evident to anyone with a speck of reason. (Klein, 25)

From this example, it is evident that the course of Klein's Ophelia's plot is very much determined by her environment, which is heavily affected by a way of thinking that resembles Woodward's concept of essentialism. As the example above shows, Polonius clearly has a fixed viewpoint on gender, wherein he draws up the lines between the two groups that he acknowledges, just as an essentialist viewpoint dictates, according to Woodward. He even

underestimates any likeness between the two gender groups as he thinks it impossible to raise a lady, when he himself is not one, which aligns him with Woodward's concept. According to Woodward, the essentialist frame of mind can be a cause of tension as no one can be reduced to just one identity. Nonetheless, Klein's Ophelia is placed in Gertrude's court where she will begin her education as a lady. In this manner it becomes evident that the plot here is moved forward by a mind-frame matching Woodward's concept. This means, that Klein's Ophelia is shaped by a viewpoint that limits her identity to what her surroundings think it means to be lady.

Woodward's concept is not only visible in Polonius' statement above, but becomes a repeated theme for Klein's Ophelia after she joins Gertrude's household and is taken under Elnora's wing, an older member of Gertrude's court. Elnora often makes comments intended to shape Klein's Ophelia into a lady: "No man wants a wife more learned than he is, for fear that she will prove a shrew and make him wear the skirts" (27). From this example, it is apparent that it is not only Polonius, who has an essentialist mindset and acts accordingly. This stands in sharp contrast to Klein's Ophelia's rather progressive way of thinking, thus underlining the uniqueness of Klein's Ophelia. Likewise, this mindset also exists in Gertrude's court, who seemingly instructs Ophelia not to confuse two gender's different attributes. This proves a pattern in the environment surrounding and shaping Klein's Ophelia. This mindset seems, at first, to be one that contradicts Klein's Ophelia:

"I would not become a shrew!" I said, thinking of how I had often bested Laertes. But I held my tongue after this retort. Would I always be so contentious? "Please teach me how I should behave, then," I said mildly. (27)

This example shows, that Klein's Ophelia takes issue with Elnora's essentialist remark and showcases an example of Woodward's theory, as Woodward states how the essentialist mindset can lead to conflict when an essentialist viewpoint clashes with a non-essentialist viewpoint. As Klein's Ophelia reminds the reader of how her scholarly capabilities have often proven better than Laertes' she underlines how she does not subscribe to the essentialist beliefs. She even highlights the essentialist viewpoint's shaky foundation as she showcases how neither her nor Laertes fit into their respective gender groups as she advances him academically, which did not fit the time period's gender expectations. This notion further supports Woodward's concept, which states identity cannot be divided into fixed groups. However, the example above also shows that even though Klein's Ophelia tells the reader about an idealist conflict between Klein's Ophelia and her surroundings, Klein's Ophelia eventually abides to her surroundings' expectations as she asks Elnora how to behave. Again, this is another example of how the plot

takes Klein's Ophelia in a direction wherein she is shaped by the essentialist views the characters around her subscribe to.

Consequently, Klein's Ophelia evolves according to her environment as chapter 6 opens with Klein's Ophelia's following statement: "After four years in the queen's household, I had now learned the art of being a lady" (46). This shows that Klein's Ophelia adheres to the essentialist expectations that her surroundings place on her. Notably, the statement reads "the art of being a lady" (46), indicating that this is a learned skill and not a matter of nature's course. This helps establish that Klein's Ophelia recognizes the difficulties Woodward's concept presents, but she is still shaped and steered by a mindset that aligns with essentialism.

The established pattern of essentialism in the plot of *Ophelia* allows us to study the implied author's agenda. Presumably, the implied author intends to illustrate the difficulties the essentialist mind-frame provokes, as stated by Woodward. As the implied author places Klein's Ophelia in an environment where essentialism is enforced and rules as the status quo. As Klein's Ophelia is also the autodiegetic of the narrative, her thoughts that counters the essentialist status quo are revealed to the readers and a more fluent idea of identity is illustrated. This reinforces Woodward's concept, which states identity is not a fixed matter. Instead, she states, every individual plays a part in how their identity is shaped, while most people cannot be conformed to just one identity. This aspect does not shine through in the early plot of *Ophelia* as Klein's Ophelia chooses to ignore the sides of her that her environment does not agree with. As she agrees to follow essentialist status quo, she reduces herself to what the essentialists believe her identity should be, thereby confining her identity, according to Woodward. By leading its autodiegetic narrator through this path the implied author gives the impression that she, the implied author, supports Woodward's concept and the nuance and fluency found in identity and opposes any restrictions thereof.

Part One: The biased curtain raiser

The next part of the plot offers a preliminary love story to Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet. This is important to *Ophelia*'s plot and its abilities as a pastiche as this sheds a different light on the relationship between Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet in *Ophelia* in contrast to Shakespeare's Ophelia and Hamlet in *Hamlet*. Here it is important to note, that this paper says "preliminary love story" as this is where the nuance is found between Klein's pastiche novel and Shakespeare's original play.

The plot found in *Hamlet* is mainly built as a revenge story, but is a plot woven together by many pieces. *Hamlet*'s audience becomes intimate with his philosophical thoughts and the

injustice he feels towards the world after his uncle, Claudius, murdered Hamlet's father, usurped the crown and married his mother. Consequently, Shakespeare's main character, Hamlet, offers a wide palette of themes and plotlines, wherein his relationship with Shakespeare's Ophelia is only one of many. That being said, *Ophelia's* chapter 7-11, the last chapters of Part One, are building up to Part Two, which mirrors *Hamlet's* plot. Hence, this is where *Ophelia* is going to catch up and attach itself to the pastiche text's plot. *Ophelia* is approaching this issue by initiating Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet in a secret love affair that will continue into Part Two.

During chapter 7-11 it becomes apparent that it mainly concentrates on building the relationship between Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet. What is interesting to look at here is the nature of their love, as this appears to be the binding glue that will connect *Ophelia's* plot to *Hamlet's*. During one of Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet's first conversations, Hamlet states the following: "(...) Women are *wantons*, for they make men to *want them*." (Klein, 56). This illustrates, that Hamlet also has an essentialist viewpoint, which has been established to be present in Klein's Ophelia's environment. Here, Klein's Ophelia opposes Hamlet's statement:

"Lord Hamlet, it seems you see all women as deceivers, be they beautiful or ugly. Perhaps the fault lies in the man who trusts only his sight and is a slave to his base desire!" (56)

In this case, Klein's Ophelia stands up to the essentialist status quo, which she has previously shown to act inferior to. In this fashion, the implied author builds a foundation where Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet conflicting worldviews. Notably, Klein's Ophelia's response does humour Hamlet as he states Klein's Ophelia's "mind is a fair match for mine" (56). However, he continues by making comments that align more with Woodward's essentialist concept as he consistently makes comments that describe a view on women as a fixed group, which is exemplified once more, as Hamlet states.: "Nature is beautiful, but she can be cruel. Just like a woman" (69). As mentioned, chapter 7-11 is what acts as the binding glue between *Ophelia's* plot and *Hamlet's*. Evidently, *Ophelia's* transition into the part of its own plotline that mirrors *Hamlet* is Klein's Ophelia's connection to Klein's Hamlet character. In this manner, Klein's Ophelia maintains her relevancy to the plot by the same token as Shakespeare's Ophelia: as a romantic opposite to the Hamlet character.

Where *Ophelia* differs from *Hamlet* is Klein's Ophelia's position as the autodiegetic narrator. The readers are introduced to her as a character who struggles with the essentialist status quo ruling in Elsinore. As Klein's Ophelia encounters Hamlet, he too displays signs of an essentialist viewpoint. This results in a difference in their relationship's narrative, as this is

a key element, according to Woodward's concept: as Klein's Ophelia recognizes the fluency of identity, while Hamlet exaggerates the differences, it imposes conflict of interest between the two characters from *Ophelia's* narrative that did not play an apparent role in the relationship between Shakespeare's Ophelia and Hamlet.

To summarize, *Ophelia's* plot during Part One has proven to be pregnant with themes that relates and sympathizes with Mulvey's the male gaze concept and Woodward's essentialism concept. This will prove to have a strong influence on Klein's pastiche as it moves into its Part Two, as Part One has acted as a curtain raiser biased with modern, feminist theories.

Klein's Ophelia: Centralizing gender

"That night it was reported that a serpent had stung King Hamlet and its venom had instantly paralyzed his heart" (Klein, 87). *Ophelia* ends its Part One with the catalyst to the events that is about to unfold in Part Two. As a result of Hamlet's father's death *Ophelia's* plot allows itself to continue its narrative in a way where it now runs parallel to *Hamlet's* plot. In other words, *Ophelia's* plot has now caught up to the timeline of *Hamlet's* plot. Part Two is also introduced with a timeframe and a geographical stamp: "Elsinore Denmark. May-November 1601" (89). This is the shortest timeframe of the three parts the novel is divided into, but this is where the familiar reader will reap their reward as this part is overflowing with intertextual references, a theme that will be dived deeper into later in this master thesis in the chapter "self-awareness". This chapter will have its focus on how *Ophelia's* plot differs from the events it is mirroring from *Hamlet*, given many of the same plot events are played out, but now in a different context. Through this chapter it will be revealed how.

As this plot analysis has stressed several times, *Ophelia* is heavily controlled in its role as a pastiche. Its narrative's premise strongly leans on the text it borrows from, as it primarily uses the same characters and the same setting. But as it is not until Part Two the plot begins to show events similar to the plot in *Hamlet*, it means the mirroring events in Part Two will be shown through a different lens. And as the previous chapter concluded, Part One acted as a curtain raiser to Part Two, wherein a theme of essentialism is established. Consequently, Part Two's plot will now be looked at through the lens of Woodward's essentialism concept and not as a replica of the story *Hamlet* is trying to tell, which inevitably offers a different interpretation of *Ophelia's* plot than that of *Hamlet*.

In Part Two Klein's Ophelia secretly marries Hamlet, but immediately after their wedding Hamlet has his first encounter with his father's ghost. This is where a rift begin to arise between Klein's two characters. This is where *Ophelia* tries to offer an explanation of

their relationship, where the plot of *Hamlet* poses a question. In act 2, scene 1 in *Hamlet* Shakespeare's Ophelia tells Polonius how Hamlet had come into her chambers and left her affrighted (Shakespeare, 67). When Polonius asks if Hamlet was mad for her love she answers:

My lord, I do not know,

But truly, I do fear it (67)

In this manner, a suspicion of a love affair, or at least an affection towards Shakespeare's Ophelia seems to be revealed to the audience. But the next time Shakespeare's Ophelia and Hamlet encounter each other in the play, he shows no affection towards her. In act 3, scene 1 Hamlet denies any affection towards Ophelia as he first tells her he once loved her (88,) only to retrieve his statement immediately after:

You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock,
but we shall relish of it. I loved you not. (88)

Clearly, there is discrepancy between these two scenes that causes unclarity about their relationship's nature and Hamlet's feelings towards Shakespeare's Ophelia. This is where *Ophelia* tries to fill out certain gaps leading up to this moment.

As mentioned above, a rift arises in Klein's Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship after Hamlet encounters his father's ghost. Just like Shakespeare's Hamlet *Ophelia's* Hamlet character is provoked to avenge his father after he begins to suspect Claudius as his father's murderer. However, this plotline does not agree with Klein's Ophelia:

I would undermine his revenge, not aid it. This game of love would distract him
from his dire course. Revenge was Hamlet's plan; this was mine (Klein, 130)

In this example Klein's Ophelia clearly illustrates what ultimately divides Hamlet and herself. Klein's Hamlet emulates the plot of *Hamlet*, while Klein's Ophelia is, opposed to Hamlet, motivated by love. It is also possible to analyse this from a meta perspective. In such case, this example states that *Ophelia's* plot is a love story, while *Hamlet's* plot is a revenge story. When gazing at the above example from a meta perspective, *Ophelia* seems to directly undermine *Hamlet's* revenge narrative, stating that this pastiche does not wish to aid such a narrative. When this message is put in relation to the Woodward's essentialism concept established in *Ophelia's* plot, it is obvious that Klein's Ophelia is put at a disadvantage. When she, a character who is expected to act as a lady with no equal stand to her royal love interest or his opponents, Claudius in particular, her wishes of a different path than Hamlet's comes to short. In this manner, *Ophelia's* use of Woodward's essentialism during its Part One is transferred into Part Two, where it is used to underline why Klein's Ophelia falls between the cracks in Elsinore's machinations.

Hoesterey's inclusion of *Goethe Stirbt* (1982) by Bernhard, the pastiche of *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836) by Eckermann, helps illuminate why *Ophelia* has chosen to add new colour to Part Two with its inclusion of Part One. As seen in *Goethe Stirbt*, Bernhard plants the Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein in pastiche, even though he is included in Eckermann's text. By doing so, Eckermann extends the German culture with an Austrian contribution. When Klein likewise implements an additional narrative that exposes a theme of Woodward's essentialism concept in *Ophelia*, the pastiche uses *Hamlet* to mediate a message of gender inequality. This can pose as an independent narrative that can be read by an unfamiliar reader, but it is important to underline its strong affiliation with Shakespeare's text, as this is clearly intended. By attaching this message to the plot of *Hamlet* the pastiche also comments on the fate of Shakespeare's Ophelia. By illuminating a pattern of Woodward's essentialism in the environment around Klein's Ophelia, *Ophelia* offers a modern take that mainly highlights how Shakespeare's Ophelia not only was a victim of circumstance, but a victim of her gender's inequality. Hereby, *Ophelia* centralizes gender as an essential factor in how both Shakespeare and Klein's Ophelia is regarded.

Part Three: An homage ending to a Shakespearean narrative structure

"I have already exited the stage" (Klein, 216). Klein's Ophelia offers this sentiment to Horatio towards the end of Part Two after having faked her own suicide. This is a clear reference to how *Ophelia* has excused Klein's Ophelia from the plot that mirrors *Hamlet*'s. But as *Ophelia* exits the plot that mirrored *Hamlet*, it still continues into its Part Three. In this manner, the example clearly shows how *Ophelia*'s plot is split into two lines, whereof one of them ends with Part Two. This might be interpreted as *Ophelia* exiting the plot it borrowed from *Hamlet* and continuing its own separate narrative. However, this shift in the plot is not unique to *Ophelia*, but can be found in some of Shakespeare's own narrative structures. In this fashion, *Ophelia* uses its narrative structure as an homage tribute to the author it borrows from. Thereby, *Ophelia* comes to show the homage element, which Hoesterey underlines as a key element of the genre.

In Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the ending of the fourth act serves as a conclusion to the plot, wherein the four lovers pair up, believing that the chaos of the forest was all a midsummer night's dream (Shakespeare2, 296). However, the play continues into the fifth and final act, where the workers of Athens, led by Peter Quince, perform the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe. The two scenes which make up the fifth act, serve little or no purpose in relation to the plot, but conclude on the play's story. The tragedy of Pyramus and

Thisbe mirrors the rashness seen Shakespeare's other play *Romeo and Juliet*, where one lover believes the other to be dead, and in grief commits suicide. This allusion serves as an example of the fact that the play in progress, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, could just as easily have ended in tragedy if not for the interference of the fairies of the forest. As Puck points out the foolishness of the mortals, the happy ending must be recognized as a touch of luck. In this same vein, Klein's *Ophelia* concludes on the plot in Part Two, while the story continues into its 'final act'.

As the narrative structure in *Ophelia* takes note and mimic this fashion of concluded its plot it is evident that Klein pays homage to Shakespeare. An understanding of Shakespeare's literary canon is revealed and shows that *Ophelia* not only pays tribute to the plot of *Hamlet*, but Shakespeare's literary legacy in general. Like Hoesterey's theory suggests, Klein partly annuls herself as a writer in an attempt to let the literary legacy she borrows from dictate her structure.

Part Three: Ophelia

As the chapter before this touch upon, *Ophelia* ends parts of its narrative as it enters its Part Three. The focus has now changed to Klein's Ophelia's transition into motherhood. In this chapter it will be examined how Klein's Ophelia returns to her ideal of her dead mother and how this once again links *Ophelia* to Becker's and to Bronfen's concepts.

"I draw from my pocket the miniature painting of my mother that I carry always" (Klein, 262). Part Three is when the plot circles back to the mother of Klein's Ophelia, lady Frowendel, as Klein's Ophelia herself is now faced with the task of motherhood. It is clear that Klein's Ophelia still leans on the idyllic image she has created of her mother, lady Frowendel. As this analysis concluded earlier, this portrayal of lady Frowendel proves problematic to Bronfen's trope, the beautiful dead woman. Klein's Ophelia cultivates Bronfen's notion using a dead woman's image as a blank canvas for her own voyeuristic fantasies, while also using her as an exemplary role model as someone who can do no harm, which according to Becker was literary tendency during the Early Modern period. When Klein's Ophelia is faced with the task of motherhood she returns to this image: "Oh, teach me how to be a mother, and give me courage!" (262). Klein's Ophelia begs the image of her mother to guide her. Again, Klein's Ophelia continues to cultivate her voyeuristic fantasies through her dead mother's portrait. She even attempts to use the dead lady Frowendel as a mentor in this example, underlining the admiration Klein's Ophelia has for her mother, and tightening lady Frowendel's link to Bronfen's example; The Unknown Woman of The Seine, which this analysis has previously pointed out.

Like *The Unknown Woman of The Seine's* spectators, Ophelia uses lady Frowendel as a blank canvas for what she imagined her to be like. As such, *Ophelia* continues to cultivate lady Frowendel's portrayal of a beautiful dead woman.

Part Three strings the bond between Klein's Ophelia and the idea of her mother as the idea of what lady Frowendel is what constitutes her concept of a mother. This is shown when Klein's Ophelia engages in a conversation with the nun Isabel, who has just stated that a mother can be powerless in her parenthood as it is the father who holds the ownership of their daughter: "I do not say what I feel - that no mother, while she lived, would willingly part from her daughter" (253). The comment "while she lived" is a clear confirmation that Klein's Ophelia is building this idea on what she believed lady Frowendel would have done as a mother had she been alive. It also merges Klein's Ophelia as mother, as she is pregnant at this time, with what her idea of lady Frowendel is. Thus, Klein's Ophelia develops a mindset that is in accordance to the exemplary behaviour she believes lady Frowendel would have exhibited. On that account, lady Frowendel qualifies under Bronfen's concept of a beautiful dead woman. Klein's Ophelia continues to project her fantasies of a perfect mother onto her image, despite having no memory of her. As Klein's Ophelia strives to live in accordance to the example she believes lady Frowendel has set, her mother becomes a role model for living women to follow, which characterizes her as a typical portrayal of a dead woman during the Early Modern period.

Consequently, *Ophelia* creates a plot wherein Klein's Ophelia survives and is steered away from Elsinore's river. Klein's Ophelia does not get the opportunity to become the beautiful dead woman herself, but this does not result in a cancellation of Bronfen's trope. Lady Frowendel's implementation in the plot acts as a motivator and a spiritual guide to Klein's Ophelia, and as a consequence, her inclusion in this plot suddenly means that Bronfen's beautiful dead woman is present in the novel. Additionally, Becker's outline of the tendency to portray dead women in literature as perfect role models, regardless of how they lived their life, also becomes an important aspect of the plot, as Ophelia carries it with her and acts accordingly. Thus, Klein's Ophelia cannot be categorized as a beautiful dead woman herself, but she does act as a spectator and cultivator of the trope.

Summation

As we conclude this chapter, it is evident that *Ophelia* acts as an homage pastiche that attempts to reverse the Ophelia character's qualification as a beautiful dead woman, while also enforcing the trope itself.

Klein utilizes Shakespeare's plot *Hamlet*, paying homage to the original work. The inclusion of the plot events that mirrors *Hamlet* during *Ophelia*'s Part Two is an obvious nod to the excitement and originality found in *Hamlet*. It is obvious that *Ophelia*'s plot has its focus on Klein's Ophelia and her narrative. Klein implements themes and plot elements that echoes feminist concepts in an attempt to distinguish what makes her Ophelia different to that of Shakespeare's. Woodward's essentialism concept helps signify why Klein's Ophelia struggles with her surroundings, as Klein's Ophelia has a more complex and nuanced view on gender than the rest of Elsinore, while this theme also functions as a comment to Shakespeare's Ophelia, stating that her character likely was influenced by a more fixed view on gender. But the plot also complicates its own message in lady Frowndel's depiction. As Klein's Ophelia places her own voyeuristic fantasies on her, and strives to imitate this ideal, *Ophelia* implements Bronfen's beautiful dead woman as an essential part of the plot. This creates a plot that is in conflict with itself: through *Ophelia*'s use of Woodward's essentialism it promotes, and utilize a feminist agenda that shows clear intent to create a nuanced Klein's Ophelia character, who is hyper aware of gender inequality. However, Klein's Ophelia has only switched places with her mother, who now has taken the role of the beautiful dead woman.

Characterization

In this chapter, this master's thesis will provide a characterization of Klein's Ophelia. Through this section of the analysis we will examine the changes made in the character from Shakespeare's original play to Klein's novel; Ophelia's character will be analysed by using her own account of herself, and the implied characteristics, which has made for a more contemporary female character than seen in Shakespeare's play. Ophelia will also be analysed through her relationships with established characters from Shakespeare's play. The purpose of the characterization is to determine how the changes in Ophelia's character influence the plot and thereby give an informed and thorough examination of Klein's choice to change the trope of the beautiful dead woman. Firstly, there will be given an account of the character as seen in the source material.

Shakespeare's Ophelia

To be able to understand where Klein's Ophelia originated from, an analysis of Shakespeare's original character will be a necessary tool in order to analyse and assess the changes made in the character, and thereby introduce Klein's choice to change aspects of the trope of the beautiful dead woman. By applying *Hamlet* in this section of the analysis, it is

important to start with a clarification for the reasoning behind it. As there are almost no scene directions, and no access to Ophelia's inner thoughts and afflictions, as seen with the protagonist Hamlet in his soliloquies, the main focus on determining Ophelia's character in Shakespeare's play will be an analysis of her through her relationships with the other characters. Through discussing the importance of who Ophelia shares the stage with and the dialogue shared between them, it will be possible to analyse the relationship she shares with Hamlet, Polonius and Laertes. The following chapters will be applying both explicit characterization and implied characterization of both Shakespeare and Klein's Ophelia made by other characters. The findings through this analysis will be used to analyse the impact of her death within the play, and what it means to inspire, which is one of the main ideas of the trope, according to both Becker and Bronfen's theory. The changes in Ophelia's character, which have been made from play to novel, will then be possible to detect and to analyse.

Especially relevant to the characterization of Shakespeare's Ophelia is her relationships with the three central men in her life: Hamlet, Laertes, and Polonius, who all influence her decisions and the way she is perceived and interpreted by audience and readers.

Polonius: Ophelia as the obedient daughter

Shakespeare's Ophelia shares all but one of her scenes with her father Polonius, which indicates the influence he has on her life, as most of these scenes revolve around his attempt to guide or advise her. The one scene Ophelia has without Polonius, while still alive, sees her mad and in mourning of her father's death, which further emphasizes this link between the two. This is one of the changes Klein has made in her pastiche; Klein's Ophelia lives her life more distanced from her father, which will be elaborated upon in the analysis of their relationship in *Ophelia* in her own narrative. The novel does keep Polonius' assumption that, given the chance, Hamlet will ruin Ophelia's honour.

Ophelia's first two scenes both, almost exclusively, deal with Polonius' schooling of his daughter; both scenes include her father's advice on how she should deal with the attention she receives from Hamlet (Shakespeare, 54-55, 67-68). While in private, Polonius repeatedly attempts to convince Ophelia that she lacks an understanding of the world and scorns her for her obliging behaviour towards Hamlet (54), he does not fail to praise her in the company of the King:

I have a daughter – have while she is mine –
Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this (71).

The possessive nature of this statement, while it holds true to the time in which *Hamlet* was written, still showcase a particular need to underline the virtue of his daughter. Ophelia's honour is Polonius' privilege; while he does not express a desire for Ophelia to pursue her relationship with Hamlet, he does want her to be completely eligible. Before expressing her 'duty and obedience' he begins by emphasizing that she will not always be his, and that these qualities therefore will be the privilege of her future husband (71). Polonius strives to influence Ophelia in such a way that she can embody what her rank and gender demand of her; To be the perfect choice for a wife, she must, among other thing, continue to seem virtues (55). As far as Polonius is concerned, Ophelia does accomplish this task if she follows his guidance, which, by all accounts, he believes she does. As the end of the third scene in the first act sees Ophelia agreeing to obey Polonius in terms of avoiding Hamlet, with no clear indication that she does not follow his advice, the line indicates that she does try to be the obedient daughter (55). Furthermore, Ophelia does this without much resistance and lets herself be guided by her father, showing a great respect for Polonius and an obedient nature. As concluded in the chapter: *Part One: Elsinore and its essentialism*, Klein's Ophelia finds it difficult to conform to the essentialist ideas, which those around her acknowledge and follow. However, Shakespeare's Ophelia does not show much resistance to the expectations put on her by her surroundings, and follows Polonius' advice to stay away from Hamlet.

Polonius is also a character who is explicitly trying to advance his own standing by remaining close to the King, which is a trait Klein keeps in her pastiche. When Claudius and Gertrude attempts to understand the new state of madness Hamlet is in, Polonius believes the cause is the Prince's love for his daughter, and readily makes Ophelia available to Hamlet, and thereby turns her into a pawn in Claudius' plan against Hamlet (86). Not much of Polonius' attention is paid to Ophelia after his plan fails, and they share only an ensemble scene together after this without sharing dialogue (95-98). Klein pays homage to this strain in *Ophelia*, by Klein's Ophelia purposely distancing herself from Polonius, and even to some extent her brother Laertes.

Laertes: Ophelia as the angel-like sister

In *Hamlet*, Polonius' idea of Ophelia is as a virtuous, though perhaps, untutored young woman, is shared with Laertes, who also wants to protect Ophelia (Shakespeare, 52-53). Laertes sees Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship as a real possibility, but as he also knows that a young romance is intense, and that Hamlet could be misleading Ophelia in terms of his long term intentions, he feels the need to warn his sister:

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmastered importunity (52).

The warning Laertes gives here seems to have more of a focus on the losses Ophelia may endure if she entertains the idea of a relationship with Hamlet, rather than the loss of honour her family will suffer if she does not maintain her virtue, which is Polonius' main concern (55). This loving relationship is also present in Klein's pastiche. However, the angelic perception Laertes has of Ophelia in *Hamlet* is cancelled out by Ophelia's tomboyish nature in *Ophelia*, which will be elaborated upon in the analysis of Klein's Ophelia.

The circumstances in which his advice is given to Ophelia must also be taken into account. Laertes is going back to France, leaving Ophelia at the Danish court (45-46). As Ophelia's older brother, Laertes would presumably have a natural need to protect, and therefore the advice he gives is well-meant and links closely to the following comment that she should be afraid, because only then is she safe when he is not there (53). As his departure leaves Ophelia with two men with widely different opinions of her, Laertes urges her once more to stay chaste, so that no one can doubt her honour.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon (53).

Though many doubt the circumstances surrounding Ophelia's death, Laertes keeps his opinion of his sister intact (138). He still believes that she is the innocent and sweet girl, who he left behind, as seen in scene one in act five (138). This image of Ophelia is closely linked to Woodward's idea of essentialism. As Shakespeare's Ophelia acts in accordance to what is deemed feminine by her surroundings, and by Laertes, she is held to a higher standard. Though the priest accuses Ophelia of taking her own life, Laertes would rather resort to calling the priest a sinner than his sister:

Lay her i'th'earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring!
I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling (138).

In this statement Laertes applies only positive traits to Ophelia, while also talking about what may become of her in death. The preceding part of the same scene revolves around a

conversation between Hamlet and a gravedigger, talking about the decay of the human body after death. The repression of any thought of Ophelia's bodily decay can be a way of suppressing the mortality of living beings, according to Freud's theory of the uncanny, and instead making her immortal as an angel. Furthermore, Laertes mentions that flowers will grow where her body is laid; the violets, which Ophelia mentions, withered when Polonius died (124), will grow again because of her - the flower that symbolizes truth, modesty, and innocence. This statement shows Laertes' glorification of his sister, and speaks to Ophelia's feminine nature.

This image of the pure and beautiful Ophelia is who Laertes remembers her as. In regards to what her death inspires in relation to Laertes will be examined further in the chapter *The impact of Ophelia's death in Hamlet*. First, the relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet, which is perhaps the most significant in defining her character, as it represents her struggle in the play.

Hamlet: The beautified Ophelia

The relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet is of a romantic nature, and is the only indication that Ophelia is being viewed as anything other than wholesome and innocent. As this relationship has been analysed throughout centuries and been the source of many theories, it is important to clarify that the focus in this chapter will be on Hamlet's general opinion of Ophelia and the impact her death has on him in Shakespeare's play.

Hamlet is the only person, except from Polonius and Laertes, who Ophelia shares the stage with alone. Their interaction in the first scene of the third act is heavily influenced by Hamlet's new state of mind, and he controls the dialogue, in spite of the fact that the encounter is orchestrated by Polonius and Claudius (Shakespeare, 86). Ophelia, who is aware of the observers, is offering neutral answers to Hamlet's attacks on her person and gender (88). The interaction implies that Hamlet's view of Ophelia has undergone a change since the beginning of the play. This assumption is based on Hamlet's letter that Ophelia gives Polonius, stating that he does love her and that he never wants her to have any doubt on this subject (72). This is further emphasized as Hamlet tells Ophelia that he did love her:

I did love you once (88).

However, he retracts this in his next line by telling her that he never did (88). The change in Hamlet's attitude can be the result of a number of factors. One being his altered view on women, springing from his contempt of his mother's marriage to Claudius.

Frailty, thy name is woman [...]

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,
She married. O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not (nor it cannot come to) good (48).

By criticizing Ophelia on his idea of the nature of women, Hamlet projects the issues he has with his mother onto Ophelia, and thereby thinking less of her with no other reason than what he believes must be the way of all women. Hamlet begins his critique of Ophelia by addressing his wish for her misfortune if she ever decides to marry (88). However, his attack on her person quickly changes into a critique of women in general, which exemplifies the idea of his quarrel being with the feminine gender, more than with Ophelia herself (89). Worth noting in the question surrounding Hamlet's feelings for Ophelia is that his cruelty towards her intensifies when Ophelia tells him that Polonius is at home (88). Whether or not Hamlet knows this to be a lie, Ophelia's relationship with her father inspires Hamlet's rudeness.

Ophelia's interaction with Hamlet in this scene evokes the only time in the play where Ophelia tells the audience of her struggles, and there is a direct glimpse of her feelings towards Hamlet, in her own words (89). In her monologue, Ophelia expresses the strong attachment she has developed for Hamlet, and the experience of being singled out by him. There is an indication of awe for the prince and, a realisation that the feelings she experiences now is of her own doing for reaching too high (89). This again showcases her modest and humble nature, and a passive resignation to her circumstances, as seen when Polonius forbids Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship (55). Either way, Ophelia is met with expectations of how a woman should act by both her father and Hamlet, that clearly mirrors Woodward's concept of an essentialist mindset. However, it is impossible for Ophelia to meet both Polonius or Hamlet's standards without confirming the other in their essentialist belief about women.

There are also several indications of the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia being intimate, most prominently in Hamlet's letter to Ophelia(72). This theory is further emphasized by the fears of both Polonius and Laertes. The play never explicitly mentions the degree of Hamlet and Ophelia's intimacy, but rather indicates it, which leaves it open for interpretation. Klein's interpretation of Ophelia and Hamlet's intimate relationship in her pastiche will be analysed in the chapter *Hamlet: Young love and its lasting effects*.

The impact of Ophelia's death in Hamlet

The tragedy of Ophelia lies mostly in the melancholic predictability of her death, as the events of the play intensifies. Her death, though due to suicide rather than an accident, is not the direct outcome of her own actions. She is caught in a series of events, which have nothing to do with her, while still suffering the consequences of them. This seems to be the overall feeling by the people who knew her, namely Laertes and Gertrude, as she is being buried (Shakespeare, 138). Gertrude especially lingers on the woman Ophelia could have been, had things gone differently:

Sweets to the sweet. Farewell!
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife:
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
And not have strewed thy grave (138).

This hope for Ophelia's future, is not one mentioned before her death, other than a comment of a hope that Ophelia's beauty was the cause of and the cure for Hamlet's madness (86). Ophelia's death does seem to inspire the poetic sadness in Gertrude, which is marked in Bronfen's theory. This is also exemplified when Gertrude describes Ophelia's drowning (131). Gertrude enters the scene by telling Laertes and Claudius that Ophelia has drowned, she subsequently tells them of the incident, which is one of the tools used to emphasize the melancholic. Knowing the ending of the beautiful retelling of Ophelia by the brook marks the speech with a general sadness. Gertrude portrays a genuine sadness for Ophelia, which does not spark a strong response for either revenge or a large display of affection towards the dead woman (138). In Klein's pastiche, Gertrude's sadness for the dead Ophelia is given a more elaborate reason, as their relationship in *Ophelia* is closer to that of a mother and daughter. Though Laertes talks of mourning and the angelic memory of his sister, Ophelia's death also functions as a motivator for revenge to him. The death of his beautiful sister inspires the surviving spectator, Laertes, to act on the injustice he believes his family has endured.

In both Laertes and Hamlet's case, the death of Ophelia inspires an urge for revenge, as it sparks a feud between the two men, who are both disgusted in the way the other shows their grief. Hamlet sees Laertes' emotional reaction as an attempt to outdo Hamlet in his grief for Ophelia, and vows that his love surpasses Laertes' forty thousand times over:

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her? (139).

As mentioned in Bronfen's theory, the lips most suited for the melancholy poetry of the beautiful dead woman is that of the mourning lover, by his sudden display of affection Hamlet takes on the role of the wronged lover. However, nothing before or after this display indicates any truth to Hamlet's claim. As there is no other indication in the following scene of the impact of Ophelia's death with the two men, it will be assumed that her death becomes the most convenient excuse for their disagreement. Thereby, making Ophelia's death and representation of the trope in the play a source of inspiration for the surviving men in her life.

Klein's Ophelia

Throughout Shakespeare's play there are many instances of other characters expressing their opinions on who Ophelia is and, perhaps even more frequently, who Ophelia should be. In Klein's novel *Ophelia*, the readers are allowed direct access to Ophelia's thoughts, which gives Ophelia an opportunity to tell her own story. Thereby offering her view on who she is and why she acts the way that she does. The novel begins in Ophelia's childhood, before all of the events from *Hamlet* take place. She is being moulded into a 'proper lady' by the ladies in Gertrude's household, which she is struggling to adjust to (Klein, 27). The following chapter will be an analysis of this adjustment, as the novel's later chapters centre around Ophelia's attempt to decipher those around her.

Finding her place: Ophelia's struggles in fitting in

The first chapter of the novel centres around Ophelia's childhood before becoming a member of the Danish court, and her struggles with being without a mother. Ophelia's childhood is little marked by the gender expectations at court, as she spends her days with her brother Laertes, hunting for salamanders, learning to read and write, and playing in the streets (8-9). As these activities were thought exclusively to be appropriate for boys at the historical time the novel is set to take place, the implied author exemplifies the statement that Ophelia is a tomboy, which is mentioned the first time Ophelia meets Hamlet: "My skirt was torn and my hair unkempt. In truth, I was more tomboy than lady" (19). The intent of the implied author is for the implied readers to acknowledge this fact as true through the continuous examples of Ophelia's tomboyish behaviour. Though her father longs for a life at court, Ophelia never expresses a need for this, and she enjoys being both able and allowed to spend her days as her brother would (7-9). The positive association with the idea of changing her behaviour and appearance to be more ladylike, according to the social norms of the time period, is introduced

when her attention is captured by the world of love. This will be elaborated upon throughout the analysis.

Ophelia is reluctant to leave her father and Laertes when she is offered a place in Gertrude's household, but finally complies with Polonius' wishes to be a dutiful and obedient daughter (25). Though Ophelia quickly learns that her father will never give her the attention she desires, she still strives to please him and make him proud (29). Though this character trait is something which holds true to the idea of Shakespeare's Ophelia, she moves beyond owing her father all of her loyalty, as she grows closer to Gertrude (45). This is an example of her growth from the compliant side-character in *Hamlet* and the beginning of her journey in Klein's novel.

Though adjusting, Ophelia still expresses a wish to get past what she thinks of as prison bars, she feels are capturing her due to her gender and newfound rank as one of the Queen's ladies: "I was the plain robin among them, longing for freedom and unable to sing for the bars around me" (28). Her identity is reduced and confined to what is deemed appropriate for a lady of the Queen's household. Ophelia misses the activities she once enjoyed with Laertes, such as running and swimming (30). However, she finds some enjoyment in getting Gertrude's permission to read, though this sparks a longing for more: "Sometimes I wished I had been born a man, so I could have been a scholar" (49).

She finally finds interest in joining "the world of women" (28) as she starts to become interested in the dynamic relationship between women and men. Reading romance stories to Gertrude at night sparks Ophelia's curiosity, and Gertrude encourages this study in the human character, so that Ophelia might be better prepared for love when it comes (43). This is an alteration from Shakespeare's Ophelia, who is being schooled in the ways of love by her brother Laertes. The scene from *Hamlet*, wherein Laertes warns Ophelia of young men's tendency to have fleeting fancies, illustrates an ignorance in matters of the heart (Shakespeare, 52). This is far from Klein's Ophelia's observant and analysing nature showcased in Klein's pastiche. Ophelia enjoys applying her knowledge of love, as seen in her eagerness to debate the topic of love and beauty with Horatio and Hamlet (Klein, 54).

"I believe that a virtuous mind outlasts the fleeting beauty of youth and thus is more desirable" (55). Here, Ophelia directly contradicts the idea of the beauty associated with the trope of the beautiful dead woman. She finds the virtue of the mind far more admirable than the beauty found in youth. As she outlives this trope herself by surviving and becoming schooled in potions and medicines, she lives up to her own idea of the 'more desirable'. Thus,

Ophelia becomes her own motivator, instead of mainly being the source of inspiration to Hamlet and Laertes.

Ophelia's self-sufficiency

One of the many changes made from original text to Klein's novel, is the self-sufficiency Klein's Ophelia is showing in the plot. This is partly expressed through her interest in potions and herbs, which is already introduced in the fourth chapter of the novel. Shortly after leaving the care of her father, she goes with Elnora, another lady in Gertrude's household, to see the woman Mechtild, who specialises in potions (33). This practise is quickly drawing Ophelia in: "my ears caught her words and fed them to my memory" (34). She is given a book on herbs by Elnora, who has become too old for reading, and Ophelia is eagerly learning all she can about plants and mixtures: "I studied its precise drawings and stored in my memory the virtues and uses of all plants" (37). The plants and flowers that become a source of empowerment to Ophelia, as this gives her a profession at the nunnery, is also linked closely to the flower-imagery associated with Shakespeare's Ophelia, illustrated throughout *Hamlet* and showcased in Millais' painting.

Shakespeare's Ophelia and the flowers associated with her are something usually linked with her madness and eventually her death in the brook. The beautiful, flowery imagery that Gertrude describes makes Ophelia an unquestionable example of the beautiful dead woman trope, which takes away her agency. In Klein's novel the flowers and plants become the very thing that gives Ophelia back her agency. Staying on the theme but changing the meaning they convey, Klein offers a new way to portray Ophelia - still as the nymph in the brook - without having the beauty be associated with the character's death. Transferring the water element, *Ophelia* changes the fatality of being compared to a mermaid from the deathly garments Shakespeare's Ophelia wears in *Hamlet* and in Millais' portrait where they drag her down, to the lively, youthful splashing around in the novel. "I swam upstream, feeling the current against me. Hamlet followed along the bank, mimicking my swimming motions. "'Tis a mermaid indeed!" (22). This change offers life to the connection between Klein's Ophelia, flowers and water.

Her skill with potions and herbs also gives her a more influential part to play in Hamlet's story, as she is able to recognize the poison used to kill King Hamlet (164). Through this she would be able to confirm Hamlet's suspicion, but she never gets the opportunity to tell him, as Polonius' is killed, and Hamlet is sent away (167).

Ophelia acquires the skill-set to make a life for herself in a time where this was rarely possible for women, because of what she has learned from Elnora and Mechtild. Due to her studies, encouraged by Polonius, Elnora, and Gertrude, she is able to become a teacher at the nunnery (261). Ophelia makes herself invaluable when her knowledge of plants and herbs qualifies her to become a healer (277). As she is afraid that her pregnancy is cause enough for the nuns to send her away, she is reminded of her own worth by Sister Isabel: “Mother Ermentrude would not send you away, for then who would tend to our aches and illnesses?” (288). Ophelia’s eagerness to learn and the possibilities she was provided with in her youth, despite being a woman, has made it possible for her to lead a life after the tragedy of Hamlet. As her death in Shakespeare’s play was described with an aspect of her beauty being linked with nature, so is her life now unquestionably linked to the flowers and plants that has given her independence. Ophelia ends up as the steward at the nunnery, raising her son by herself: “Since Hamlet’s birth we have lived in a stone cottage near the convent gate. I have taken over the duties of the steward” (319). Klein’s novel presents a female protagonist, whose self-sufficiency goes beyond what was normal for women at the time, thereby making Klein’s Ophelia a very progressive character. This portrayal stands in sharp contrast to Shakespeare’s Ophelia, who was guided by others to the point of total dependency. This change demonstrates an ongoing attempt to change Ophelia’s agency, while still paying homage to Shakespeare’s Ophelia by applying the character’s established connection to plants.

Ophelia’s resourceful nature

Ophelia’s resourceful nature is demonstrated through her display of madness after her father dies (168). She wants to be alone, and by acting distant she achieves both the anonymity and solitariness she desires (179). The idea to feign madness is first introduced in the early chapters, when Ophelia first encounters Yorick, the King’s jester. Polonius describes Yorick’s place at court: “Like an idiot or a madman, he can mock the king without fear of punishment” (12). This same concept is also the measure Hamlet makes use of, as he plans to revenge his father. In the novel, Ophelia assists Hamlet’s endeavour by composing the poem she gives to Polonius to illustrate Hamlet’s madness (132). Though Hamlet’s display does not go according to plan, Ophelia still believes this is the safest bet, as she believes her life is of little consequence (185).

Ophelia makes Horatio her confidant, and tells him of the act she has put on: “I am not as I seem. I wear this guise of madness for a purpose. I may put it on and take it off at will” (185). Horatio soon makes Ophelia realize the faults in her plan, and soon after that she is

resolved to change her plan and fake her own death. Her knowledge of plants and herbs gives her the means to mimic death and sees this as her only option to leave Denmark.

While being an active show of Ophelia's agency, faking her death also illustrates her limitations; Ophelia is out of options and has to resort to the extreme. Death becomes the young woman's agency, which strongly reflects back on the trope of the beautiful dead woman. The change lies in what the trope, in the new story, seeks to represent. This in relation to Ophelia's pregnancy closely links life and death. The death of Ophelia and the birth of her son gives an impression of an intended inspirational message, which seeks to convey the beauty of life rather than death. However, this is not to say that Ophelia's active agency is introduced in Klein's novel and are nowhere to be found in the original text.

The scene in which Shakespeare's Ophelia offers flowers to Laertes, Gertrude and Claudius in *Hamlet* is mainly about the sadness of her dishevelled mind. However, the scene also contains the only time Shakespeare's Ophelia gives her opinion on the other people in the play, and the audience gets an invitation to her thoughts (123-124). Flowers bear meaning, so when Shakespeare's Ophelia offers a specific flower she conveys a hidden meaning. Therefore, what sounds like the ramblings of madness are actually very direct opinions of the people in the scene with her. Ophelia offers Claudius rue, which stands for regret and penitence:

There's rue for you, and here's some
for me (Shakespeare, 124).

She gives herself the same flower as to tell them that she has regrets of her own. Ophelia goes on to say that Claudius shall wear his rue for a different reason, meaning that his penitence is self-inflicted. Thereby, telling the King that she knows of his sins in regards to the old King Hamlet. Ophelia's madness in this scene is her safety net, as this is the only reason for the absence of punishment. Whereas Shakespeare's Ophelia is not consciously acting on the injustice of the situation, Klein has chosen to make Ophelia's madness a choice, providing her with a conscious agency. Klein's Ophelia's more active nature in the new narrative comes through both in her self-sufficiency and in her reluctance to relinquish all of her control. However, these are not the only changes in Ophelia's character. To further analyse Klein's changes, the next chapter will discuss Ophelia's character through her relationships with the other characters.

Ophelia: A character created in contrast

This chapter will give an analysis of Klein's Ophelia as seen through her relationships with other characters in *Ophelia*. As with Shakespeare's Ophelia, many of the aspects in

Klein's Ophelia's nature are shown through her interaction with others. Though not as central as in the play, two significant relationships to Klein's Ophelia are with Polonius and Laertes.

Polonius and Laertes: The negligence and control of Ophelia

Polonius and Laertes have undergone many character-changes from the source material, the play *Hamlet*, to the new story *Ophelia*, which indicates that Ophelia's relationship to the two men must have changed as well. Klein's pastiche pays homage to Polonius' ambitious character trait by making it the final rift between Ophelia and Polonius, which the altered plot calls for in relation to the relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet. Furthermore, Klein's pastiche alters the nature of Ophelia and Laertes' relationship in a way that now offers a reason for Ophelia's choice to leave Laertes behind after faking her suicide. This chapter will analyse Klein's alterations in her pastiche in relation to Ophelia's relationship to her father and her brother.

Ophelia, Laertes, and Polonius make up the small household of their family. When introducing herself, Ophelia begins by defining herself as "a motherless girl" (Klein, 7). She sees her family as broken, with one piece missing; a family without a heart: "We were a family without a heart, a mother, to unite us" (10). Though never having a mother, Ophelia still experiences the loss, as she never receives parental affection. Ophelia tries to excuse her father's emotional unavailability by blaming herself of her mother's death, as she died giving birth to her, thereby stripping Polonius of his wife and Laertes of his mother (7). Making her guilt worse, Ophelia knows of the likeness between her mother and herself, and assumes this is the reason for her father's inability to love her as he should. Lady Frowendel, Ophelia's mother, comes to signify the heart of the family, which is taken away when she dies.

Ophelia's relationship, or lack thereof, with her mother, defines her relationship with Polonius. Polonius is driven by his own ambition and desire for power, which leaves room for little else in his life: "he was ambitious to be the king's most valued and secret informant" (7). After his wife's death, Polonius is left with nothing but a wish to be a part of the king's counsel, and often leaves his children alone for days (8). A factor in this endless striving, could be that Ophelia is described as being the living image of Lady Frowendel, which reminds him of the exchange; by Lady Frowendel's death Polonius was given a daughter (7). Ophelia's existence has thereby become a reminder of her mother's death, and the two events have become interchangeable. Losing the heart of his family, her death has come to signify a need to search for satisfaction in other areas of his life that has nothing to do with his own family. Thereby,

making the death of his wife an inspiration to try and climb the hierarchy. In this quest he freely uses his daughter for his own advances.

Placing Ophelia in Gertrude's household is a deliberate move by Polonius to have eyes and ears within the Queen's chamber (25). However, this is the cause for the final rift in his and Ophelia's relationship. As Ophelia grows closer to both Gertrude and Elnora, she is introduced to a kindness Polonius never was able to give her, and thus entrust her loyalty to the Queen rather than her father (45). "I should have knelt before him, but I felt disinclined to show this respect. After all, he had neglected his duty to me" (104). Ophelia feels wronged by Polonius, who should have loved her as his daughter, and she resents him for it. This alteration in their relationship changes their relationship drastically from *Hamlet*, wherein Ophelia is seen to be obeying Polonius throughout the story. Instead, Ophelia is actively being a part of the plan to throw both Polonius and Claudius off Hamlet's true ploy to revenge his father (133). "I had given everything to Hamlet. He, not my father, was now my lord" (109). In the historical context, the romantic relationship to Hamlet, would signify a shift in allegiance, as the wife would be the property of her husband. Seeing as Ophelia's sense of obedience is strongly implanted in her character explains the new allegiance to Hamlet instead of Polonius. Underlining this could be Ophelia's resentment towards her father's lack of affection towards herself and Laertes. Ophelia's allegiance is now with Hamlet instead of Polonius, which contributes to her character as an active player in the story, instead of being the innocent bystander. Furthermore, Shakespeare's Polonius states that Ophelia's obedience is due to him while she is unmarried, which makes the shift in obedience an allusion to Polonius and Claudius' conversation about Shakespeare's Ophelia in *Hamlet*.

The strained relationship between Polonius and Ophelia impacts Ophelia's reaction to the news of his death differently from the play. Assuming Polonius' death actually is the cause of Ophelia's madness in the play, Ophelia is less influenced in the new narrative. The mourning is mixed with confusion, and her display of madness is instead a tool she uses to protect herself. In this regard, Polonius becomes the inspiration for Ophelia's survival, which reverses the idea of the trope of the beautiful dead woman. However, Polonius' death has become a contributing factor to the strained relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet.

Polonius is the final crack in the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia. Though Ophelia is able to forgive Hamlet, she admits that staying with the man who killed her father, would be impossible for her:

”I could forgive a man who killed my father by mistake, but love him as a husband? By God, Horatio, I do not know!” I cried, flinging up my hands. “I will go and live a solitary life; disappear and be Hamlet’s wife - no more!” (187).

Though never having had a love for her father, she still finds the idea of loving his murderer impossible, which surprises Horatio. In Ophelia’s mind, her duty as Hamlet’s wife cannot endure after the attack on Polonius, and her obedience which she previously subscribed to her husband is now terminated. This showcases a development in Ophelia’s character; previously she has always talked of herself in relation to others, where her loyalty laid and to whom she owed her obedience. Now, Ophelia starts acting on her own behalf as she forsakes her previous role in Gertrude’s household, her husband Hamlet and her brother Laertes. This side of Shakespeare’s Ophelia is not seen in *Hamlet* where all the original character’s acts can be traced down to the will of someone else, be it Polonius or Claudius. As Polonius fails in attaining Klein’s Ophelia’s affection as her protector and guide. Instead, Ophelia ascribes this to her brother Laertes.

“Laertes was my constant companion and my only protector” (9). As Polonius’ neglect leaves the position of Ophelia’s caretaker vacant, Laertes is left with the charge of taking care of his little sister. Though not much older than Ophelia, Laertes is ascribed the role of Ophelia’s protector. This means that until Ophelia finds affection in others, Laertes is the only person she considers her ally. Their relationship is layered, however, and it does not go beyond common sibling disputes. Ophelia often displays a resistance to the societal and cultural expectations of a younger sister’s owed obedience to her brother and senior (16-17, 106-107). Ophelia’s unrestrained nature and wilful personality show itself most frequently in Laertes’ company: “So from the time I could babble and my brother could reason, we spent hours in daily study” (9), and “In a rage, I threw myself at Laertes, sending him sprawling in the dust” (16). Where Ophelia quickly becomes embarrassed when behaving unladylike in others company, she seems more herself with her brother.

Though growing up together, Laertes recognizes that as Ophelia is now a lady of the court, and he is a scholar, both bound to the expectations ascribed to their gender, his duty ultimately lies in defining himself as superior to Ophelia. “Our father will decide whom you will marry and when. Or I will, when he grows infirm” (106). The wilful nature of Klein’s Ophelia shows itself in this particular scene, as it goes against the proper manners Shakespeare’s Ophelia portrayed while being schooled by her brother (106). This gives their relationship a more contemporary sense of family, which contributes to the modernization Klein attempts to give in *Ophelia*. Though the relationship is different, the novel does not stray

from the plot of *Hamlet*, which means that their relationship still ends in Ophelia's madness and her apparent suicide.

"I wished for him to remember me as I used to be, to remember how we used to study and play together" (201). Directly addressing her legacy, Ophelia hopes that her death does not spur any thoughts or desires for action or revenge, but simply to be remembered by her brother as they were as children. Stepping away from the woman she has become and the man he has become, Ophelia distances herself from the small world of the court, and the expectations it has for her. These expectations are what strained her relationship with Polonius, and ultimately what distanced her from Laertes. However, the cultural and societal expectations put on her offers Ophelia no influence on how she is to be remembered, and Laertes uses her assumed madness to spur his own grief, rage, and desire for revenge: "If you had wits and could persuade me, it would not move me to revenge as much as the sight of you" (201). Laertes' reaction creates an understanding; Laertes feels as though he has lost Ophelia already, and his anger makes Ophelia realize that nothing can be done, but to resign herself to leave her brother behind. After hearing how Laertes and Hamlet acted at her burial, she finds their reaction unfathomable, and questions the feelings her death created in the two men (215). Ophelia believes they should have come together in their grief, and not used her death as a springboard for a dual. Ophelia's reaction showcases a disappointment about how the two men end up using her death as a reason for duelling, indirectly criticizing the impact her death has had on them, and that she is now only a beautiful dead woman. However, she recognizes this hatred is spurred by Claudius (218). As she distances herself from the court and the men who sought to control her, she sets out to save herself and her unborn child.

Gertrude, and Ophelia's search for a mother

In contrast to the play, Ophelia and Gertrude have a comprehensive relationship in Klein's novel. The interaction between the two women in the play is limited to a short exchange in relation to Polonius and Claudius' plan to present Ophelia to Hamlet, and a conversation after Ophelia has gone mad with grief (Shakespeare, 86, 119-124). In *Ophelia*, Gertrude has taken over the role of a mother figure in Ophelia's life, which is bound to show as an influence in Ophelia's character change. This will be the focus for the analysis in this chapter.

"I have no idea how to raise a young lady. That is a task best suited for women" (Klein, 25). With these words, Polonius entrusts Gertrude with the raising of Ophelia, afterwards he hardly proves the parental figure again. Ophelia believes that love is best shown through obedience, which is something she has been taught by Polonius from an early age. As she has

never experienced anything but longing and duty in connection to her father, these can be said to be the emotions Ophelia connects with the love of a parent. Ophelia strives to please the Queen, and Gertrude in turn gives Ophelia what Polonius never did: affection. “I almost wept at her touch, which lingered like a memory. Were my mother’s lips this soft?” (43). Ophelia becomes the favourite in Gertrude’s household as the two share a common understanding, which springs from their equal curious and slightly rebellious nature. Ophelia is chosen to read to Gertrude in the evenings, as Gertrude believes her sensible and in need for more schooling in the affairs of love (43). It is one of these occasions that Ophelia expresses her thoughts on the material she reads to Gertrude: “for it pleases me to read of clever women who find love” (42). This confession gives an indication from the implied author that this novel has the same premise. Ophelia’s knowledge of love is to a large extent due to Gertrude’s encouragement, which is something not found in the original plot, meaning that the new narrative introduces Ophelia as a woman with a more informed approach to love than found in Shakespeare’s Ophelia. The relationship between Ophelia and Gertrude can therefore be said to be the most impactful deviation from the source material that Klein resorts to in changing Ophelia’s character, in relation to the trope. Klein’s Ophelia becomes aware of the implications of love, and does not have to, unquestionably, believe in the information about love she receives from Polonius and Laertes in *Hamlet*.

When faced with the news of Ophelia’s death, Gertrude displays the grief associated with Becker’s account of the trope of the beautiful dead woman. For Gertrude, Ophelia’s death provokes speculations of what Ophelia could have been to her had she lived, and she regrets her behaviour as she pushed Ophelia away when she needed her. Assuming Ophelia’s funeral includes the plot events from *Hamlet*, as Horatio’s account of the affair insinuates (214-215), Gertrude expresses the hope that Ophelia would have been as close as a daughter to her, by marrying Hamlet. The touching sentiment of this illuminates Gertrude’s idea of Ophelia on a pedestal - being dead, Ophelia no longer has the chance to disappoint. This perfect imagery of Klein’s Ophelia links closely to Shakespeare’s Ophelia, and to the beautiful dead woman trope. In this sense, Klein has done nothing to change Gertrude’s immediate response to Ophelia’s death. However, this is not the last the two see of each other.

Gertrude goes to Mechtild’s cottage after suspecting Ophelia’s survival (219). This meeting offers a closure; Ophelia and Gertrude are given an opportunity to say their goodbyes. Ophelia’s need for a mother figure in her life, which has been an underlining part of Ophelia’s story and growth throughout the plot, which we established in *Part One: Ophelia’s contradictory use of the beautiful dead woman*, finds a resolve as she is finally accepted by

Gertrude as a daughter. “Had I not longed for years to embrace Gertrude as my mother?” (223). This emotional scene marks the end of Ophelia’s life in relation to *Hamlet*, and the beginning of her hardly earned own narrative as she moves beyond the simply being a poster girl for the trope of the beautiful dead woman.

Gertrude provides Ophelia with the foundation on which she can begin to build her new life; Gertrude gives Ophelia the financial aid she had set aside for her wedding, which was never to be (224). “May God go with you, too, my would-be daughter, and may you soon have cause again for laughter” (225). Though the aspect of the trope as being an inspiration to the survivor, in this case the one left behind, is still present in *Ophelia*.

Reversing the idea of the trope, Ophelia’s life rather than her death inspires Gertrude to stand up to Claudius (225). This changes the essential aspect of the trope, and illuminates Klein’s attempt to offer Ophelia an alternative image. Still as the signifier, holding on to the trope’s passive state, but changing the melancholic aspect to one of hope and life.

Hamlet: Young love and its lasting effects

“We boys are ever careless of flowers” (15); The pansies Klein’s Ophelia offers Hamlet are briefly held in a firm grip before he lets them fall to the ground (14). Ophelia’s infatuation is implemented into Klein’s pastiche early on in the narrative, and as they both grow into adulthood passion takes the lead. The relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet is the main link between the original play and Klein’s novel. The similarities and differences in their relationship, and the impact this has on Klein’s Ophelia will be the focus of this analysis chapter.

“But I, too, felt my eyes drawn to him, and after that night, I watched for the prince everywhere at Elsinore” (12-13). Ophelia is eight years old the first time she sees Hamlet, while he is fourteen, and their relationship springs from Ophelia’s desire to make Hamlet her playfellow (13). Early on Ophelia is favouring the prince and she looks up to him. However, she is confused about her feelings towards the prince, which are of a romantic nature but mixed with innocent childhood confusion (16-23). The shared childhood memories give Ophelia and Hamlet’s relationship, in *Ophelia*’s narrative, a foundation on which a strong connection could be build. This gives a reason for one notable change between the two lovers in Klein’s pastiche, which is the reduced age-gap. While Hamlet’s age is mentioned in *Hamlet*, him being around 30 (Shakespeare, 136), Ophelia is arguably much younger. As women of that time were often married early, the youth of Ophelia is to be assumed as she is still unmarried. The implied author chose to minimize the age difference, most likely to accommodate a contemporary

audience. The contemporization is a common theme in their interactions and their relationship; the Ophelia character's modernization demands Hamlet to show an open mindedness uncommon for the historical time in which the novel is set to take place.

Though I shared his confusion, I rose to Gertrude's defense.

"You are unjust, my lord," I said gently. "We women are not all frail. I for one am strong and true." (Klein, 99).

This interaction is an allusion to Hamlet's statement in *Hamlet*, where he accuses all women of being frail and weak-minded (Shakespeare, 48). In *Ophelia*, Ophelia is given the chance to speak in defence of women, and correct the accusation Hamlet puts on the female gender. Where Shakespeare's Ophelia is exposed to Hamlet's projection of the injustice he feels from his mother, Klein's Ophelia has the agency and gets the opportunity to tell Hamlet that his judgement is misplaced (Klein, 99). While Ophelia is not afraid to contradict Hamlet in *Ophelia*, their love still succumbs to the same miscommunication, which is the cause for the rift in their relationship, and the reason for their downfall.

"Believe me, before the lust for revenge seized his mind, he loved you deeply" (1). The same madness spurred on by Hamlet's need for revenge is what causes Ophelia to give up on the hope that Hamlet would ever love her again. Ophelia lets Hamlet believe that she is truly dead, which evokes the reaction in Hamlet that is also seen in *Hamlet*. Laertes' display of anger and despair provokes in Hamlet, causes the scene to unfold true to the source text: "But he said his love was more than forty thousand brothers" (216). Though their relationship is vastly different from the play Klein is pastiching, Hamlet's reaction remains the same. In relation to the beautiful dead woman trope, the connection the two shares throughout the novel would rightfully deepen the melancholy Hamlet would feel at hearing of Ophelia's death. If the lips best suited for talking of the deceased woman are those of the bereaved lover, according to Bronfen's concept, Hamlet's reaction gives reason to believe that he has become consumed with his hatred for Claudius. Ophelia recognizes this when being told of the burial scene, and tells Horatio that she is not sure that Hamlet knows the meaning of love (216).

In the original plot, Hamlet's love and actions is the alter whereon Ophelia ultimately dies. Shakespeare's Ophelia is the victim of circumstances beyond her control. In her novel, Klein gives Ophelia back her control, and lets her life be more than her relationship with Hamlet. Horatio tries to reunite Ophelia with Hamlet to which Ophelia answers: "I cannot be such a dutiful wife as you are a friend. I will not go to Hamlet" (188). However, the pregnancy links Ophelia's life to Hamlet, whether she wants this or not. Thereby, the pastiche fails in

severing the two lives from one another. Hamlet will forever be the most important person to enter and exit Ophelia's life.

Horatio: Ever the companion and helper

"I knew Horatio to be steadfast and incorruptible, the unmoving center of a world that turned unpredictably" (229-230). As the quote suggests, though the narrative has changed, Horatio remains a steadfast character, having many of the same character traits in *Ophelia* as he has in *Hamlet*. However, as Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship has changed, so has Ophelia and Horatio's. This change has an impact on Ophelia's character, which will be the focus of the following analysis.

Horatio acts as the confidant and Hamlet's helper in the original plot, which is a part Klein has kept and adapted in her pastiche. As Hamlet's polar opposite, Horatio is able to objectively assess the situations, though he tries to help Hamlet in any way that he can: "Horatio was as still as Hamlet was active, as silent as Hamlet was talkative. While Hamlet roused with the younger boys, with Horatio he would converse seriously" (13). Hamlet's wild nature contrasts Horatio's easy manner, which benefits Klein's Ophelia on several occasions. The ease in which the two communicate is the reason for the trust Ophelia places in Horatio, which could be the same reason Hamlet is drawn to him. Ophelia and Hamlet share the same passion and wildness of spirit, and Horatio is the factor that keeps them grounded.

"In faith, Ophelia, I remain your servant" (159). The relationship Hamlet and Horatio share in *Hamlet* is replicated and applied in *Ophelia*, and Horatio has the exact same relationship to the new narrative's title-character (184). Ophelia trusts Horatio with her life, and he is the only one rewarded this sign of faith, which is also seen in *Hamlet*:

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

As e'er my conversation coped withal (Shakespeare, 92).

Hamlet trusts Horatio with the task he has been set by the ghost of his father to revenge the murder (93). Ophelia trusts Horatio with the task of helping her escape Elsinore before Claudius has her killed (Klein, 189). Though the two friendships resemble each other to an extendable degree, there is one notable difference. Horatio's wish to help Ophelia is perhaps rooted in more romantic feelings than those that are canonically correct in Hamlet and Horatio's relationship in Hamlet.

"I take his fair face in my hands, not minding that they are creased with dirt, and I kiss his lips, inhaling for a moment the scent of him" (327). After years apart Ophelia and Horatio meet again, and Horatio admits that he has not gone a day without thinking of her (323). This

change in their relationship is unique to Klein's pastiche. Though Ophelia has submitted to a life near the convent, seeming quite content in life (319), the need for a romantic resolution is something the implied author chose to appease. This choice seems to move her pastiche further away from the revenge drama it originally was, and closer to the genre of young adult novels. The choice to have Klein's Ophelia survive for her to end up with Horatio seems to cancel out the inspirational twist her survival could have brought to the beautiful dead woman trope. The relationship she shared with Hamlet is undermined by her easy dismissal of the two of them losing the love they shared. However, the choice to let Ophelia and Horatio find each other underlines the personal growth Ophelia has undergone. Ophelia chose Hamlet at a time in her life where she was in love with the idea of love, and passion dominated her idea of love: "But night after night, Gertrude and I spent an hour or more in such devotions, reading tales of love and desire" (42). Her time in the convent has taught Ophelia to be content and modest, which would make Horatio rise in her esteem. Ironically, the time the novel spends on Ophelia after her departure from Elsinore, makes Ophelia's character more like the one seen in *Hamlet*, where obedience and contentment rules her character.

The significance of Ophelia's "death"

Now, we will discuss the analysis leading up to this chapter in relation to the impact and significance of Klein's Ophelia's survival in contrast to the original plot. This analysis will take the characters' reactions to Ophelia's death into consideration in relation to the trope of the beautiful dead woman, but will also seek to consider the reaction of the familiar reader. Klein's pastiche will be analysed in relation to Hoesterey's theory, which will create the foundation for a critical look on the contemporary twist on an established trope.

What are the consequences of Ophelia's survival?

Both Becker and Bronfen agree on the essential idea that the trope of the beautiful dead woman serves to inspire and evoke emotion in the survivor, which in *Ophelia's* case is the narrative's other characters and the implied reader. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia's death inspires strong emotional responses in both Laertes and Hamlet, which evolves into them seeking an escape in the form of revenge on the other. After the initial shock and grief, Ophelia's death is no longer about her, which is evident since she is not mentioned again in the play. Instead the emotion her passing evokes is what remains, which is an important part of the trope's criteria. This makes Ophelia's death an important part of the plot, as it is an event manipulated by the play's antagonist, Claudius. However, the plot does not call for her continued participation.

Ophelia's influence on the male characters, namely Laertes and Hamlet, is what is important to move the plot along, making her death, in regards to the plot, the important and influential part of her character in Shakespeare's original story. Laertes adopts Becker's visualization of the dead woman being a prime example of what a woman should be. Laertes puts Ophelia on a pedestal, as she is no longer able to do anything wrong, Laertes will see her as a pure, angelic and amiable woman. Hamlet fits Bronfen's idea of the melancholic lover, left behind and in mourning. Furthermore, Hamlet believes himself most wronged of all by Ophelia's death, and that he is experiencing the superlative grief. This means that their relationship with the deceased Ophelia is the determining factor in their reaction to her death as seen through the beautiful dead woman trope.

As Klein pastiches the plot in such a way that Laertes and Hamlet still believe Ophelia has died, the two reactions do not differ from *Hamlet*. Though Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship in Klein's novel is vastly different from *Hamlet*, even extending to a marriage between them, according to Horatio's account of Ophelia's burial Hamlet reacts the same to the news of Ophelia's passing. This indicates that as far as the original plot, which Klein keeps in her pastiche, Ophelia's death is still the most important thing about her in relation to Hamlet, as the new narrative applies the original plot, as we showed upon in *Klein's Ophelia: Centralizing gender*. Though, suicide is not meant to be a passive submission to her circumstances in *Ophelia*.

Bronfen introduces suicide as a woman's agency in relation to the trope, which makes Ophelia a more active part of the trope in Klein's pastiche. As Ophelia survives the plot from *Hamlet*, it is possible to argue that the novel introduces a more contemporary, progressive character, who does not yield to the patriarchal idea of women associated with the trope of the beautiful dead woman. However, even as a more self-sufficient and resourceful character, Ophelia still succeeds by imitating the trope. As both texts, *Hamlet* and *Ophelia*, use the trope, with the reason as the trope being an inspiration to the survivor, it is relevant to discuss the best use of the trope.

So, does the impact of Ophelia's character change, and with it the trope? As introduced, the topic of death introduces a source for questions, some of which cannot be answered. The mystery behind death, and the protection of the survivor's ego, need to be taken into consideration when discussing the trope's impact. Death has a way of freezing time, to still an otherwise moving image, which is what protects the beautiful dead woman from the negative impact of time. Shakespeare's Ophelia is a character known for her death; she is a poster girl for the beautiful dead woman trope. And would there be half as much said as there is, if Ophelia

had not died? Doing right by the character, as if she was a real person, by offering her a happy ending, might be a disservice to the trope, and the poetry Ophelia has been the source of. Though her character has changed in Klein's pastiche, Ophelia is still exposed to the same plot events and her death in *Hamlet* is out of her control. These uncontrollable events illuminate the general, inevitable downfall of the court of Denmark. Though Klein's Ophelia might be a more progressive character, with many attributes to underline her self-sufficiency, which is not seen in Shakespeare's obedient and innocent Ophelia, the events are still out of her control, which would make her actions null. Therefore, Ophelia could still be a progressive character and fall victim to the trope without it affecting her character and the impact on the implied reader.

As previously mentioned, Klein pays homage to Shakespeare's works and his tools in storytelling. Shakespeare illuminates that a strong character does not necessarily succeed in achieving a happy end, as demonstrated in his play *Henry V*. However, this revelation is in the form a chorus performing the epilogue. The epilogue explains the downfall Henry's son is going to experience, and lose what his father obtained (Shakespeare2, 519). This does not reflect badly on Henry the fifth's character, and does perhaps make his actions in life more impactful and melancholic to the audience. Taking into consideration that Shakespeare wrote a historical play when he wrote *Henry V*, the ending would be inevitable since this is historical fact. However, Shakespeare could have chosen to end the play with Henry's marriage to Katharine, thereby giving the character a happy ending, but chose not to do so. Likewise, Klein could have made Ophelia an empowered character, with as much agency as the time period would allow, while still letting her fall victim to the inevitable death of Shakespeare's Ophelia, but chose not to do so.

DISCUSSION: Putting *Ophelia* and the trope in context

Through our analysis, we have examined the novel *Ophelia* and Lisa Klein's choice to change aspects of the original work, *Hamlet*, which she pastiches. She draws from Shakespeare's plot structure and tools in storytelling, such as self-awareness, which we have established throughout our analysis. The focus in the analysis has made it possible to conclude on the fact that whether intentionally or not Klein applies the beautiful dead woman trope. The trope's presence in the literary work complicates the intentions of *Ophelia*, as it does show a clear attempt of breaking away from the trope through Klein's Ophelia, but when looked upon through the theory of Mulvey, Bronfen, and Becker it becomes evident that the novel does not succeed. This discussion will focus on the problems associated with the trope in our contemporary culture, drawing on other works, both in literature and in media, focusing on

works created for a young audience. We will also examine the young heroine, who has become a central part of the young adult genre to illuminate some common denominators writers have applied to these young women.

All of this is done to critically examine Klein's choice to change aspects of Ophelia from the original work, to better accommodate a contemporary view on strong female characters in young adult fiction. However, as Klein distances herself from the trope and Shakespeare's Ophelia character, while adding attributes to the character, she falls short in living up to Ophelia's legacy, without ever conveying progressive ideas. This will be elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

The common denominators of the young adult heroine

Klein's *Ophelia* fits well into the literary time period the novel was written in, as the progressive, female main character in fiction was a comprehensive part of young adult literature in the mid-2000s and early 10s, when many of these novels were adapted to films (shereads.com, rivetedlit.com). *Ophelia* was published in 2006, only two years before the poster girl for the genre was introduced in the first book of its series *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen (Collins). The young woman, only sixteen at the beginning of the plot, represents a number of ideals which give her a skill set that equips her to survive in the dystopian society she lives in. That same idea is used in Klein's *Ophelia*, where Ophelia's passion for herbs, tonics, and mixtures provide her with the agency to survive the plot from *Hamlet*. Though their agency relies on different forms of skills, one thing is to be said in relation to both: their agency comes from attributes strongly connected with stereotypical masculine traits.

Katniss finds herself in a position from a very young age where she has to take on a paternal role and care for her family by hunting for food to see to their survival (4). Her skills of hunting and tracking become her salvation in the arena when she volunteers for the games. Drawing from Woodward's ideas about essentialism, the attributes ascribed to Katniss' character all originate from her father, and are objectively often associated with the masculine (Woodward). The caring and nurturing nature that we identified as part of Bronfen's theory, is characteristics that fit better to describe Katniss' love interest Peeta. Thereby, Collins presents a reversed portrayal of the feminine and the masculine in the Hunger Games. While Klein's Ophelia still possess the character traits derived from the feminine stereotypes, the attributes Ophelia uses in order to survive are the skills that are masculine, eg. reading and having a profession in that time period. Furthermore, these skills are also what set the two women apart

from the other female characters in the two works, forcing through the trope of the girl, who is not like the other girl, i.e. the tomboy. This is also seen in other works of the young adult genre, e.g. Tris from the *Divergent*-series from 2011 to 2013 and Teresa in *The Maze Runner* from 2009. Tris is like Katniss in many aspects, and her stereotypical masculine nature allows her to stand against the totalitarian regime. Teresa stands out in another way, as it is made very clear throughout the first novel that she is the only girl in their small society. Though different, the four women all thrive because of their masculine characteristics, while other, more maternal characters, suffer from the patriarchal circumstances they are exposed to, eg. Gertrude (*Ophelia*), Prim (*The Hunger Games*), and Natalie (*Divergent*).

As shown in the above examples, these ideas of the progressive female lead dominated the young adult genre at the time when *Ophelia* was published. Applying these traits on Shakespeare's Ophelia, Klein wrote a contemporary version of the character, who distanced herself from the idea of committing suicide, which is one of the original characters' defining features. Showcasing suicide in literature aimed at a young audience is controversial and can give massive backlash as young people's impressionability is often discussed in the media. This was the case with the TV-series *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2017-), which is an adaptation of the novel by the same name from 2007, written by Jay Asher (Curtis).

The backlash of the dead woman in teen dramas

The TV-show, which aired in 2017, centres around the aftermath of the suicide of Hannah Baker (Katherine Langford). The circumstances leading up to her suicide, and the reason behind it, is narrated by Hannah through tapes she has left for all the people who were one of the reasons for her suicide. The series received a great deal of backlash on the way the topic of teen suicide was depicted:

As I watched, I found the aftermath of her suicide troubling [...] 13 Reasons Why failed to end Baker's story, since she lives on through the tapes. We become captivated by the drama of the suicide rather than the actual suicide itself (Curtis).

Thirteen Reasons Why was received by an audience who thought the depiction of Hannah and her suicide was glamorized, and was aware of the repercussions that could follow. After the show's release, the producers added trigger warnings before the episodes, which offer information on where to seek help. However, the plot of the series still relies heavily on the drama surrounding the aftermath of suicide, while failing to linger too much on the tragedy of the end of a young woman's life (Curtis). While very graphically showing the audience

Hannah's suicide, the series still glorifies Hannah, making her somewhat of a martyr. The glorification especially comes through in the main character Clay (Dylan Minnette), who was secretly in love with Hannah. The sadness and love he feels for the young, dead woman is conveyed through his eyes, which puts Hannah on a pedestal. This is in accordance to Bronfen and Becker's theory, linking Hannah Baker to the beautiful dead woman trope. The contrast to the other characters illuminate their survival and moving on, while still remembering Hannah. The series' plot evolves over the following seasons, from Hannah's story to the struggles of the other teens from her high school. Dealing with such big issues is hard to manoeuvre when targeting a young audience.

Lisa Klein distances herself from the controversy of the trope, as *Ophelia* tries to convey a strong and progressive young woman to the audience. However, to stay true to *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's Ophelia, we have shown throughout the analysis that Klein chose the wrong character and work to pastiche. Shakespeare's Ophelia, who was immortalized through her tragic part in Hamlet's story, would need to undergo such changes as to make her completely different from the original character. Therefore, the plot and not the character, is the main link to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Addressing Bronfen's trope outside of fiction

When addressing a confrontation with Bronfen's trope in more recent fictional works, Quentin Tarantino's film *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* (2019) makes for an interesting discussion topic.

Tarantino's film is built loosely on the real life events unfolding during the late sixties' Hollywood. The plot follows the two fictional characters Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio), an accomplished actor who is struggling to adjust to the changing Hollywood scene, and his stunt double Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt) (Tarantino). The main character, Rick Dalton, is the nextdoor neighbour to Sharon Tate (Margot Robbie), a character based on the real life actress Sharon Tate, who was murdered in her house while pregnant, by members of Charles Manson's cult (Tarantino). What is particularly interesting when examining Sharon Tate's presence in the film, is how Tarantino has chosen to portray her. Tarantino has made the choice to mix completely fictional characters with characters based on real life people, whereof the latter, Sharon Tate in particular, have been well known for many years. In this manner, the plot comes to lean on fictional events mixed with real life events, thereby including a real woman, who is infamously associated with how she died, in a fictional narrative. However, the plot in *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* provides Sharon Tate with a different ending than what actually

happened to her, as Charles Manson's cult followers encounters the characters Rick Dalton and Cliff Booth, and are killed by them, before getting to Sharon Tate's house (Tarantino).

This alternative ending wherein Sharon Tate survives is alike the one Klein seeks to offer in her version of *Ophelia*, but there is also a large contrast in who the two narratives are trying to save. As *Ophelia* occupies itself with a well-known character from the fictional world, *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* deals with a well-known person from the real world. Notably, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is an integral part of literary history, and how its characters were portrayed and perceived still aid a broader understanding of literary tendencies today. That being said, the *Ophelia* character only ever existed in literature, while Sharon Tate was a real person. As we know from Bronfen's theory, the beautiful dead woman trope is not limited to the literary world, but can also be found in how the culture around us reacts to dead women, who existed in the real world. Therefore, it makes sense to see the portrayal of an actual person being addressed. In this sense, *Ophelia* might look like less of a bold project as *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* changes something that cannot actually be undone.

The film's inclusion of Sharon Tate clearly shows an awareness of the trope's existence, and from what we can gather, Sharon Tate's presence in the film serves two purposes: 1) To benefit from the trope's effect, and 2) to simultaneously confront its audience with their voyeuristic fantasy of Sharon Tate's murder. To further elaborate on this matter, we can see how Tarantino knowingly builds an excitement throughout the plot, assuming the audience is familiar with Sharon Tate's fate (Tarantino). He also makes sure to show Charles Manson's and some of his cult followers, giving a clear signal to the audience that the plot is working towards Sharon Tate's death (Tarantino). However, as this never happens the audience become aware of their expectations and their strong association between Sharon Tate and her murder is never realized. Instead, the audience have now watched a film, wherein Sharon Tate, according to Tarantino himself, serves no larger meaning to the plot, but just gets to live her life though this film:

“(...) And the fact that she's a person consigned to history for the most part defined completely and utterly by her tragic death, and in these last four weeks people have watched Margot play this person, and they saw that she was more than that. (...) And you even got to see the real Sharon juxtaposed into that. And now I actually think people will think about her differently than they thought before. (...) as far as saving her from her tombstone, the movie has kind of done that, to a small degree but to a significant degree.” (Chitwood)

This quote from Tarantino shows that he created the character with the aim to disassociate Sharon Tate's legacy from her murder and directing his audience towards a lively image of her. However, this is hard to achieve when the film constantly leans on the audience's knowledge of her murder. The suspense it then builds still draws and benefits from the trope; the ending might be different from the trope, but the journey was not. Thereby, Tarantino does not entirely achieve what he stated, as the film would not have the same effect if the audience did not have a strong affiliation between Sharon Tate and her tombstone.

The attempt to create a new narrative to a non-fictional person who falls under Bronfen's trope can also be seen in Monica Ali's novel *Untold Story* (Ali). Ali's novel entertains the idea that Princess Diana never actually died in the Paris car crash in 1997, but changed her identity to live an anonymous lifestyle in the American Midwest. Arguably, this premise can be seen as another attempt to remove the beautiful woman from her tombstone, to paraphrase Tarantino. However, it also asks the question: would a story of Princess Diana living an anonymous life in the Midwest be intriguing if she had never died in the tunnel? Eventually, this question echoes of Lovelace's question from *Clarissa*: "had not the lady died, would there have been half so much said of it, as there is?" (Richardson, 253). Over two centuries later Lovelace's question still seems relevant. Had Princess Diana and Sharon Tate not died, would *Untold Story* and *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* be able to catch a reader's or an audience's attention? *Untold Story* would certainly lack the melancholic "what if?" element, and *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood* would miss a fundamental pillar in the film's suspense. By the same token, *Ophelia* mirrors this aspect as Klein's Ophelia's survival might not have been as interesting had Shakespeare's Ophelia not died in the first place. Klein, Ali and Tarantino might have been genuine in their intent, but this just shows how hard it is to tackle Bronfen's trope without, in one way or another, reaffirming the interest in a beautiful dead woman.

This beckons the question of what is the right way to avoid portraying or benefitting from Bronfen's trope. So far, taking women who fall under the trope and providing them with a new narrative wherein they survive have only reinforced that there is indeed an interest in the beautiful dead woman. One way to approach this could be to portray women, who might not be categorized as traditionally beautiful or with any previous affiliations with death, and show them alive, as this would be an antithesis to the trope. It might not appear as a direct response to Bronfen's trope, but it would act against the adorned illusion of women as both dead and beautiful.

However, it is hard to eliminate a trope, as it would not be considered a trope if it did not frequently appear throughout literature. Therefore, it still bears meaning that authors and directors like Klein, Ali and Tarantino show an awareness of the beautiful dead woman. Nonetheless, it can be said that common for all three of them is how obvious they use the trope. When non-fictional personas like Sharon Tate and Princess Diana or a fictional character like Ophelia are used in a new story, the recipients of the story are already aware of what draws them, as the fate of the persona and characters alike are heavily associated with them. The stories all signal to readers and audiences how susceptible we are to romanticize the beautiful dead woman, which can lead to two very different conclusions. The first conclusion could be how mindful the authors and directors now are when using the trope that they are now attempting to incite a reaction in their readers and audiences that will make them reflect on how they perceive a beautiful dead woman. The second conclusion could be that we, the readers and audiences, are now so comfortable with the trope that a blatant use of her is now the new normal of the beautiful dead woman.

CONCLUSION

Ophelia applies and reconstructs the trope to accommodate a contemporary audience in order to give a more modern heroine, while drawing from an established character, who originated in one of the most popular plays ever written. This is done by applying aspects of the modern, contemporary heroine in young adult literature, as we illuminated in our discussion. The stereotypical masculine attributes create a tomboy, as a woman with more agency, and thereby the power to drive the plot forward. At the same time, Klein pays homage to Shakespeare's Ophelia by turning the flowers, plants, water and nature in general that the audience has associated with Ophelia into her agency. Klein's homage to Shakespeare can also be found in *Ophelia's* plot structure, as *Ophelia's* Part Two heavily mirrors *Hamlet's* plotline. By the same token, Klein has implemented a self-aware quality in Klein's Ophelia, which can also be found in several of Shakespeare's male characters. This quality helps Klein's Ophelia convey her agency. By giving this quality to Klein's Ophelia an agency is added to her character in moments when she is otherwise passive, the reader is invited into her private grievances and Klein thereby adds, or offers reason to Ophelia's passive state in Shakespeare's play. In the introduction of our thesis, we mentioned that *Ophelia* pays tribute to the original text through sustaining the established trope which is used to represent women, by entertaining the idea of Ophelia's possible death, but gives Klein's Ophelia enough agency to go beyond what the character was previously unable to accomplish. Through our analysis we have found

this not to be the case. As mentioned, Klein draws on Shakespeare's plot structure, self-aware characters and flower imagery to pay homage to the original work. But when it comes to the beautiful dead woman, Klein seems to break with the trope through the agency she tries to provide her Ophelia character with. However, we have also found the manner in which Klein attempts to break with the trope problematic, as her attempt to modernize Ophelia evoke other issues.

The way in which Klein attempts to create a more modern version of Ophelia, beckons the question whether this is a service or a disservice to the character and her impact on the trope. Whether or not the modernization of Ophelia is a disservice or a service to the character, we have concluded that Klein's attempts to make her more progressive falls to short. Klein assimilates a strong character and the trope, meaning that she displays Shakespeare's Ophelia as weak for falling victim to the trope and the objectification which follows. Moreover, Klein confuses her message, as she herself finds it hard not to create another version of the trope; lady Frowendel, the mother to Klein's Ophelia. If the aim is to crush the beautiful dead woman trope, then it defeats the purpose to create an original character who is adorned as a beautiful dead woman by the saved character, Klein's Ophelia. We have not only found similarities between lady Frowendel and Bronfen's description of a beautiful dead woman, we have also been able to find similarities between lady Frowendel and Becker's description of how deceased women were idealized by the living during the Early Modern period. In this manner, Klein counteracts her own attempt to modernize the Ophelia character, as her own Ophelia shows obvious signs of romanticizing Bronfen's beautiful dead woman, while emulating a description of her mother that resembles that of the Early Modern period. Klein's Ophelia might live on, but with her she is taking the inspiration which the trope holds.

The reason behind the trope's eternal urgency and the ability to be applicable to so many narratives, can be found in the human experience; death. Death is the inevitable all, which we as human beings are designed to suppress according to both Bronfen's theory, which is based on Freud's essay *The Uncanny*. The trope of the beautiful dead woman provides the survivor with a reminder of their own life. By removing this aspect from Ophelia, Klein does offer her life, but at the cost of the impact her life and death have had. We have found that the immortality of Ophelia's legacy is associated with her death, and that there would not have been half as much said, wrote, painted etc. of her otherwise. Thereby, Klein distances herself so much from the original character, Shakespeare's Ophelia, that the plot from *Hamlet*, which she pastiches, becomes the only link between the play and the novel.

The death of the original idea entertains our point that Klein uses an established character to convey a new message to the contemporary audience. The trope possess aspects of a troubling nature, which we illuminated in the example of *Thirteen Reasons Why*. This speaks to why Klein chose to change this aspect from the play, but beckons the question why she chose Ophelia, if not to borrow from the cultural aspect and impact of Shakespeare, to create interest in her own novel. As established, Ophelia is strongly associated to her death, and why Klein chose to change this one aspect removes Klein's Ophelia so far from the source text that Klein's Ophelia becomes almost unrecognizable to the familiar reader. What we can conclude to this question from the basis of our discussion is the inevitable intrigue the trope incites. The trope has proven hard to break, as we have seen through *Untold Story* and *Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood*, where beautiful dead women have been given new life, but their new stories are only intriguing giving the women's initial affiliation with the trope.

To conclude, Lisa Klein's novel *Ophelia* pastiches Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, while further paying homage to Shakespeare's works and storytelling tools, eg. self-aware characters. Klein attempts to confront the beautiful dead woman trope, by letting Ophelia outlive the plot from the original work. However, we can conclude that this attempt falls short of what the novel promises and that Klein's Ophelia becomes a mere shadow in comparison to the legacy of Shakespeare's Ophelia. Leaving the effects Klein tries to convey, which is a progressive character with agency, without impact, as she submits to the framework of the young adult genre. By comparing *Ophelia* to the scholarly work of Bronfen we have found that Klein's novel still follows the definitions that make up Bronfen's concept of the beautiful dead woman, as Ophelia comes to find a voyeuristic fantasy in the image of her dead mother. By the same token, her dead mother comes to symbolize the image of a perfect mother, which is also in accordance with Becker's theory of how deceased women of the Early Modern period was placed on a pedestal for living women to emulate. Moreover, Woodward's essentialism concept helped us illuminate how Klein throughout her novel tries to highlight how the fate of Shakespeare's Ophelia was affected by living in a patriarchy, by placing Klein's Ophelia in the same environment, and letting her narrate her troubles. There are many aspects of Klein's work that do not live up to the promise of a unique interpretation of an established character. However, Klein do offer her own interpretation of Ophelia's struggles and thereby seek to give her some agency.

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