



Frailty, thy name is woman

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Hamlet:

Heaven and earth,
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on, and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—

[Hamlet Act 1, scene 2, 142–146](#)

Hamlet, in his first soliloquy, recalls tender scenes between his mother, Queen Gertrude, and her deceased husband. What irks Hamlet is that, after his mother had seemed so sexually dependent on the old king, she could turn around within a month of his death and marry her brother-in-law Claudius, who, Hamlet claims, is "no more like my father/ Than I to Hercules" (lines 152–153) and compares to his father as "Hyperion to a satyr" (line 140)—as the sun-god to a deformed goat-man.

To Hamlet, his mother is the archetypal woman. Her incestuous inconstancy moves him to exclaim, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" It's not so much that Hamlet is a misogynist as that his mother's sexuality has poisoned his own, as we shall see in his relations to Ophelia [*see* [GET THEE TO A NUNNERY](#)].

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