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Week 6 Assignment

1. I believe Showalter is trying to say that feminist versions of *Ophelia* should stay on track with their original cultural and historical meaning, even if the representation changes drastically. It should not be an entirely different play altogether.
2. Showalter’s essay refers to many versions of *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* in order to present how one character has been interpreted in many different ways, in accordance to the way of thought of different sub-cultures at the time of writing. She organizes her argument in chronological order of the plays and analyzes the cultural representation of *Ophelia* as a character at all of these times.
3. Yes, there is a thesis statement: “To play such a part obviously makes Ophelia ‘essential,’ as Lacan admits; but only because, in his words, ‘she is linked forever, for centuries, to the figure Hamlet.’ (pg. 299, paragraph 1). From this statement and the introductory paragraph, we see that Jacques Lacan thinks of Ophelia as a character that is not essentially important to the play, *Hamlet*; however, the author is implying that this is simply not the case and gives many examples of the impact Ophelia has made amongst people throughout the centuries.
4. Showalter’s language in this essay is deeply formal and analytical. It resembles the language of an analytical text that is meant to persuade as well as inform the user of the impact Ophelia has made, despite Jacques Lacan’s statement in Paris in the 1950s. I believe that the audience is for theatrical critics, especially as she is using theatrical history to support her thoughts.