

The Role of Women Characters in The Shakespeare's Plays

RAJU NALLI

Lecturer in English
Government Degree College, Razole

Hero's Journey and the Freytag Pyramid Method served as the foundation for William Shakespeare's storyline. He uses female characters to set up the climax at the greatest point, convey a broader message to the audience, draw in the most readers, offer them a cathartic experience, and increase the likelihood that his plays will be successful. A climax is defined as "a decisive moment containing the maximum intensity or major turning point in a plot." It goes without saying that the more intense the climax, the more likely the drama will succeed. The key components of plays, short stories, and dramas are the characters. The most crucial type of character is a functional or dynamic one. "A Dynamic Character is an important person in the story who brings inner change in the course of the story." Because they endure the most conflict in Shakespeare's plays, female characters are portrayed as the dynamic characters. Because of these, the play reaches a higher peak, and the audience and readers enjoy it more and stay engaged throughout the narrative. Shakespeare's experimental work took place between 1588 and 1593. The era of great comedies and chronicle plays was 1504–1600. The years 1601-08 were marked by numerous catastrophes. Later comedies and dramatic romances were produced between 1608 and 1612.

Key Words: Freytag Pyramid Method, Hero's Journey, Climax, intensity, Dynamic Character, Inner change.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many people consider William Shakespeare to be among the best authors of the English language. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23, 1564. He was the eldest son of Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer, and John Shakespeare, a successful glover and local dignitary. He attended King's New School, a respectable grammar school in Stratford that taught rhetoric, Latin, Greek, and theology. It is said that he was raised as a Catholic. When William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was 26 years old at the time, he was eighteen. They had three kids together. Six months after the wedding, Susanna, the first daughter, was born. Hamlet and Judith, the twins, followed. Hamlet passed away at the age of eleven. The schooling of William Shakespeare began at home. He learned his alphabet, numbers, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer at Petty School when he was seven years old. Shakespeare went to Henley Street Home, which was only a short stroll from Church Street's Grammar School, also known as the King's New School. The curriculum of the Grammar School was designed to teach students both written and spoken Latin. On April 23, 1616, William Shakespeare passed away at Stratford-upon-Avon, UK.

SHAKESPEARE LITERARY OUTPUT

Shakespeare Plays split into three categories: (1) Comedy (2) Tragedy, and (3) Histories. He wrote 14 Comedies, 12 Tragedies and 11 Histories. In poetry, William Shakespeare penned down 154 sonnets, 2 long narratives. He addressed 1-126 sonnets to a fair youth, his patron the Earl of Southampton and 127-152 sonnets (28 Sonnets) to Dark Lady.

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDIE'S ELEMENTS

1. Mistaken identity or Misconception
2. Separation and Reconciliation
3. Happy Endings
4. Reason Versus Emotions

Themes are often subject to author's perception. "Theme is the main idea or underlying meaning a writer explores in a novel, short story, or any other literary work" (Kumar, 68). Theme of Shakespearean Comedies is Love. Themes come in two forms: (i) Major Theme, (ii) Minor Theme. Shakespeare plays are the part of either major theme or minor.

MAJOR THEMES OF SHAKESPEARE PLAYS:

1. Theme of 'Macbeth' is too much ambitious that leads to destruction.
2. The Theme of 'Romeo and Juliet' is Love and Hate, Fate and Free Will, Life and Death.
3. Theme of 'Tempest' is nature, imprisonment and freedom.
4. Theme of 'Hamlet' is madness, revenge, sin and salvation.
5. Theme of 'King Lear' is Justice, Sight and blindness.
6. Theme of 'Othello' is Jealousy, Racism, and self-deception
7. Theme of 'Antony and Cleopatra' is 'The Enduring Nature of Love'.
8. Theme of 'Coriolanus' is Loyalty, Betrayal, and Arrogance.
9. Theme of 'Julius Caesar' is Loyalty, Betrayal, and Arrogance.
10. Theme of 'Timon of Athens' is Loyalty is hard to find.
11. Theme of 'Titus Andronicus' is Revenge.

TRAGEDIES OF SHAKESPEARE PLAYS:

All of Shakespeare's Tragedies contain at least one more of these elements:

- (i) A Tragic Hero
- (ii) A Dichotomy of Good and Evil
- (iii) A Tragic Waste
- (iv) Hamartia (The Hero's Tragic Flaw)
- (v) Issues of Fate or Fortune
- (vi) Greed
- (vii) Foul Revenge
- (viii) The Paradox of Life
- (ix) Internal and external pressures
- (x) Supernatural Elements

WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE PLAYS

"In the vitality of Shakespeare's characterization in particular, he is unparalleled; no one else has created so many men and women whom we accept and treat not as figments of a poet's brain, but as absolutely and completely alive...His plays are remarkable for their general truth to what is permanent in human nature." (Women Characters in Shakespeare plays are Dynamic or functional in nature. The majority of Shakespeare's major female characters are young and involved in romantic plots that revolve around choosing a husband. The conflict between a father and daughter regarding who represents an ideal suitor had the potential to create serious quarrels in families, and Shakespeare repeatedly stages such quarrels in his writing. Following are the main characters in Shakespeare plays.

Driana, in 'The Comedy of Errors', Volumina, in 'Coriolanus', Katherina, in 'The Taming of the Shrew', Cressida, in 'Troilus and Cressida', Juliet, in 'Romeo and Juliet', Three Witches, in 'Macbeth', Desdemona, in 'Othello', Goneril, in 'King Lear', Isabella, in 'Measure for Measure', Rosaline (only referenced), in 'Romeo and Juliet', Margaret of Anjou, in 'Henry VI Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 and Richard III', The Princess of France, in 'Love's Labour's Lost', Viola, in 'Twelfth Night', Cleopatra, in 'Antony and Cleopatra', Hippolyta, in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Hermia, in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Titania, in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Emilia, in 'Othello', Beatrice, in 'Much Ado About Nothing', Lavinia Andronicus, in 'Titus Andronicus', Tamora, in 'Titus Andronicus', Bianca, in 'The Taming of the Shrew', Portia, in 'The Merchant of Venice', Paulina, in 'The Winter's Tale', Julia, in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', Helena, in 'All's Well that Ends Well', Helena, in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Hero, in 'Much Ado About Nothing', Lady Macbeth, in 'Macbeth', Celia, in 'As You Like It', Gertrude, in 'Hamlet', Hermione, in 'The Winter's Tale', Imogen, in 'Cymbeline', Miranda, in 'The Tempest', Olivia, in 'Twelfth Night', Ophelia, in 'Hamlet', Perdita, in 'The Winter's Tale', Regan, in 'King Lear', and Rosalind in 'As You Like It'

ROLE OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE PLAYS:

The primary tool used to ensure a play's success is characterization. Shakespeare holds a unique position in this creative form. Women are essential to advancing the plot in several of William Shakespeare's plays. Particularly in Shakespeare's tragedies, when the other characters' responses rely on the women's actions, the women become the catalysts for the drama that develops. In Shakespeare's works, women's roles stifle those of male heroes (Granville-Barker, 64). When Desdemona marries Othello in "Othello," she transforms into a stereotyped woman. She suffers because of her altered personality, which finally results in her death.

In 'King Lear', Cordelia is presented strong and dynamic character. When the king Lear decides to retire as king and gives all his wealth to his three daughters based on the statement of their love. The two elder daughters, Goneril and Regan show hypocritical statement, but Cordelia says that she loves him according to her

duty as a daughter and bond between a parent and child. The king banishes her in a great anger. In 'The Merchant of Venice', role of Portia is unusual. She has to perform the role of a man. She saves Antonio from losing one pound of his flesh, leads her lover Bassanio to the personality transformation that he seeks, and makes a happy ending possible for The Merchant of Venice. In 'Macbeth', Lady Macbeth is presented very strong woman. She exercises power and encourages Macbeth to murder Duncan. In 'Macbeth', Lady Macbeth blurs gender lines by acting similar to a man for personal gain.

In 'Much Ado About Nothing', Beatrice is a feisty, independent woman. She is 'a pleasant spirited lady' with a very sharp tongue. She is highly intelligent and would be regarded as a feminist in our time. She is generous and loving. She wages a war of wits against Benedick and wins battle. In 'Romeo and Juliet', Juliet displays inner strength, intelligence, brave, wit and independence. She is indeed strong character in spite of being 14 years girl. In 'As You Like It', Rosalind is disguised as a man throughout, until the end. She organizes everything in a perfect manner. She wants to marry someone as can be fit and strong as she is. In 'Hamlet', the women character, Ophelia is no fool. "I do not know, my lord, what I should think." 'Hamlet love for her is wholly honorable...She sending back his letters and refusing to see him; till one day as she sees sewing in her closet, he suddenly breaks in upon her, dumbly distraught, suffering, mad. Mad- for they love! My lord, I do not know; But truly I do fear it.' (Granville-Barker, 229-230) In Antony and Cleopatra, Cleopatra is a woman in power, of darker complexion and is embodiment of Orient Empire. "What, no more ceremony? See, my women! That kneel'd unto the buds. Admit him, sir." (Antony and Cleopatra, 67)

II. CONCLUSION

It is evident from the discussion above that women are typically rounded, dynamic, or functional characters in Shakespeare's plays. They have a great passion and a lot of endurance to get things done quickly. They are all capable of handling any situation or task. They possess the intelligence and speed necessary for a comedy or tragedy. They are flawless by nature and possess the ability to bring about the necessary cathartic effect for the audience or readers by bringing the action to a peak. The characters have the strength to carry his plays to the stage and create dramatic moments. The majority of plays are presented in his own theaters. His plays are appropriate for any kind of stage or drama because of the strong roles played by the female characters. Shakespeare has given his female characters an unending amount of energy to produce any kind of impression that a play or drama requires and that the audience or reader wants. No character in Shakespeare is uninteresting. They are unique and appropriate for any king storyline, Hero Journey, or Freytag Pyramid. Shakespeare's plays are timeless because of their intense passion, overall personality, and tremendous intensity. His characters are endearing, which adds intrigue and appeal to plays and dramas. The Dilemma of the achievement of the extra height in love, where the comfort of the other is taken into account, dominates in the novel 'Memories of my Melancholic Whores'. "...My heart skipped a beat. Looking for a dignified way out, I said: We would have made a good team. Well it's wrong of you to say so now, she said, because you are no good to me anymore even as a consolation," (Marquez, 40).

REFERENCES

- [1]. Granville-Barker, Harley. Preface to Shakespeare (Volume I). New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributers (P) Ltd. 2007. Print.
- [2]. Hudson, William Henry. An Outline History of English Literature. Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 2000. Print.
- [3]. Marquez, Gabriel. Memories of my Melancholy Whores (Trans. by Edith Grossman). New York: Vintage International, 2006. Print.
- [4]. Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Jalandhar: Super Publications. Print.