

Archetypal Representation of Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale and King Lear

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Abstract: The term archetype is applied to narrative designs, character types or images which are identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams and even social ritual. The women of The Winter's Tale and King Lear could be stereotyped in Jungian archetypes. Hermione, reflecting Imogen and Desdemona remains a mother figure archetype being a model of marital submission, genuineness and compassion and the victim of baseless jealousy of Leontes. The intense feeling, pathos and simplicity of Cordelia at the misery and humiliation of an old man heighten her as an epitome of unsurpassed love of mother figure. Perdita is the child archetype of hope bringing Leontes and Hermione together in the bond of spiritual rejuvenation and restoration. Paulina is an archetype of loyal retainer for her unwavering faith, forthright charisma and logical prudence. Goneril and Regan are the archetypes of vengeance and manipulation and subvert the notions of femininity.

Key words: *archetype, mother figure, child archetype, loyal retainer, villain.*

1.1 Archetypal Representation of Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale and King Lear

The word archetype developed from Latin 'archetypum' is a model, first form or original pattern. Archetypes in literature are repeated symbols or images which carry same meaning across many ages and varied cultures. Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in his 'Analytical Psychology' calls archetypes as universal patterns that derive from the collective unconscious either reflected in behaviour or through social interaction.

"The term archetype is applied to narrative designs, character types or images which are identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams and even social ritual. Such recurrent items are held to be the result of elemental and universal forms or patterns in the human psyche, whose effective embodiment in a literary work evokes a profound response from the attentive reader" (Abrams. M.H 11).

1.2 Archetypal figures

The women of The Winter's Tale and King Lear could be stereotyped in Jungian archetypes. Their individuation is interpreted by the readers both on conscious and subconscious level. A close scrutiny of Shakespeare's dramas reveals the metamorphosis of the plot through the life of women, the weaker sex of Elizabethan society. Misfortune in their lives crowns them with moral glory and the author acclaims through Hermione, Perdita of The Winter's Tale and Cordelia of King Lear. The tragic intensity of these plots significantly determines the women characters as archetypes.

1.2 a) Mother Figure

Hermione of The Winter's Tale exhibits 'dignity without pride, love without passion and tenderness without weakness' (Jameson 160). She is portrayed as a beautiful daughter of the Emperor of Russia, a noble wife of Leontes and a graceful mother of Mamillius and Perdita. She succeeds in delaying the departure of Polinexes, at her husband's request. This sunshine of friendship and laughter kindles the suspicion of Leontes. Hermione, reflecting Imogen and Desdemona remains a mother figure archetype being a model of marital submission, genuineness and compassion and the victim of baseless jealousy of Leontes. She is strong and tolerant bearing her husband's humiliating accusations. I am not prone to weeping, as our sex commonly are (Winter's Tale 385).

Hermione's supposed death and her concealment for sixteen long years prove her an embodiment of patience, forgiveness and chastity. Leontes arrogantly turns down even the pronouncement of Oracle and the only hope of finding her abandoned daughter Perdita pushes her to the seclusion and concealment. She possesses the qualities of mother figure archetype, being calm, serene, pure and divine. The incidents like false accusation of relationship with Polixenes, the abandonment of her innocent daughter Perdita, the sudden death of her promising son, Mamillius strengthen her magnanimity and fortitude. Thrown in to a dungeon, wounded in heart and soul, she is conscious of her innocence and internal power and remains a sacred lady of surpassing beauty. 'The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance', says Shakespeare (Tempest 22). Years of repentance mould Leontes as a person of calm spirit and thus he calls Hermione, a noble mistress when Paulina shows the statue of Hermione standing on a pedestal.

She was as tender as infancy and grace'...

O royal piece! There's magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjured to remembrance and from thy
admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee (Winter's Tale 411).

Hermione forgives the maddening fury and jealousy of Leontes and reconciles with him. The royal couple come together in bonds of love and fidelity. Her mild solemnity and saint like patience thrill us with admiration as well as pity. She has a perfect control of her senses and even after long years of isolation, she throws herself in to the arms of husband which heightens the poetic beauty of mother figure archetype. Her solitude of life, motherly grace and concern accepts the repentance of Leontes.

The shades of Hermione's lofty sense of female honour can be seen in Cordelia of King Lear. King Lear in a fit of rage disowns Cordelia, the youngest and favourite daughter when she expresses that she loves him as a daughter should love a father and her love will also be tendered to her husband after marriage. Her natural reticence, candidness and modesty shine out when she bids farewell to her sisters.

The jewels of our father! with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you! (Lear 1076).

Cordelia is a mother figure of sympathy, suffering and noble spirit. She, the sensible daughter also becomes a mother committing her insane father to a physician. Her filial tenderness and sorrow on her father's mistreatment by her

sisters are beautifully conveyed by the master dramatist. King Lear is brought asleep and she kisses him forgiving his unsuspected kindness and arrogance.

and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made! (Lear 1106).

The meeting of Cordelia-Lear stimulates reconciliation and Lear imagines Cordelia to be an angel from heaven. He pathetically utters that he is ready to consume poison if she gives. The intense feeling, pathos and simplicity of Cordelia at the misery and humiliation of an old man heighten her as an epitome of unsurpassed love of mother figure.

1.2 b) Child

The child archetype, first suggested by Carl Jung represents the symbol of developing personality. Perdita, the daughter of Hermione-Leontes embodies an abandoned child archetype and Cordelia, the daughter of King Lear as wounded child archetype. In the words of Shakespeare, Perdita and Cordelia have the purifying power of repentance promising happiness.

Perdita (means 'lost one') is abandoned at her birth by the cruel command of Leontes suspecting Hermione's fidelity. She is raised by an old shepherd and Florizel, the son of King Polixenes falls in love with her in a sheep-shearing festival. Leontes' jealousy causes the innocent birth of Perdita in prison and thus her childhood is a journey of pastoral simplicity unaware of her royal heritage. Perdita dressed as shepherdess with all her magical charm and grace reflects nativity and elegance of Hermione. She stands in awe finding the statue of her mother and Hermione's miraculous resurrection embraces her to forget her sixteen years of tragic suffering and penitence. Thus Perdita is the archetype of hope bringing Leontes and Hermione together in the bond of spiritual rejuvenation and restoration.

Cordelia, the righteous heroine of Shakespeare is unable to satisfy the morbid desires for expressions of love and hence wounded by the misjudgement of Lear. 'He casts out his once loved daughter, the darling of his heart, the hope of his age – without his grace, his love, his benison' (Samdani 115). The heavenly beauty of soul of Cordelia has a steady mind and vindicates her case answering 'nothing'. She is tender as well as obstinate confronting the mighty, hot and hasty old man. Her unyielding nature, filial piety, loving heart, magnanimity, firm spirit and untimely death earn our tears and pathos. 'If Cordelia reminds us of anything on earth, it is one of the Madonnas in the old Italian pictures, "with downcast eyes beneath th' almighty dove"' (Jameson 218).

1.2 c) Loyal retainer

Paulina, a kind friend of Hermione, the queen and the wife of Antigonus, a Sicilian lord goes through fire and water to remain loyal to the queen whom she reveres a lot. Her undaunted courage, natural eloquence, determined honesty and sound commonsense save the life of Hermione who is loathed by Leontes, the king. She dares to carry the infant Perdita to Leontes hoping that the sight of naive baby would soften his heart. Thus she declares the innocence of Hermione but in vain. She is the vigilant guardian of Hermione preserving her for sixteen long years and remembered for her loud, bold, strong mindedness and fearlessness in asserting the truth. Paulina mirrors the cruel injustice of Leontes by her sharp tongue reminding the good queen's perfections.

The fiery spirit of Paulina conceals the noble Hermione for sixteen long years. She is exposed as a courageous woman to fight with the king for her noble friend, helps her to surpass her emotions throughout the years of seclusion and also brings them together after the fulfilment of the prophecy of Oracle. Invoking the majestic, melancholic beauty, she presents Hermione to Leontes and Perdita, she says: 'descend from the pedestal and be stone no more. Turn, good lady; our Perdita is found' (Winter's Tale 412) She is a loyal retainer archetype for her fierce good will and being an unrelenting termagant.

Paulina, the female version of St. Paul is the bridge of salvation reprimanding Leontes, 'It is required, you do awake your faith' (Winter's Tale 412). She never flatters him and is reputed for her outspokenness. In the last act of the play, reformed Leontes acknowledges the worthy nature of Paulina calling her, 'My true Paulina' and 'Good Paulina'. She reminds him constantly of his guilt foreordaining him to the path of redemption and penitence.

A thousand knees,
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods
To look the way thou wert (Winter's Tale 392).

She makes him endure the miracle of Hermione coming alive with all his repentance atoned. She is upstanding and a true symbol of friendship who risked her life to save the queen. She is courageous to manage her fears with her burning hope, voice of honesty and truth. In the sixteen years, she not only concealed the queen, but also developed a compassionate friendship with Leontes. When Perdita is found, she reveals Hermione only because she realizes that Leontes is truly regretful of his accusation. She will be remembered as an archetype of loyal retainer for her unwavering faith, forthright charisma and logical prudence.

1.2 d) The Villain

Goneril and Regan, the two unnatural daughters of King Lear are the villain archetypes depicted as the personification of demoniacal cruelty and filial ingratitude. 'Among the twin monsters, Goneril is the stronger and more masculine spirit, while Regan is of a more feminine bearing' (Samdani 120). The former constructs the plan of going against Lear and she never heeds any suggestions of others. Her manipulation and strong rebuttals leading to the madness of Lear set an example of dysfunctional familial relationships. Goneril and Regan are hypocrites and carry their malice with their serpent sharp tongues and vengeance. Their empty protestations of love to father, quickness to flattery, exercise of power on old man, greed for wealth, disrespect, bloodthirsty nature and betrayal endorse them as femme fatale. Lear becomes a prey to Goneril's hypocritical confessions of love and shocking aggressiveness. 'Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter' (Lear 1074).

Goneril despises her husband calling her 'Milk-liver'd man' (Lear 1100). Her acumen and sharp-sightedness hatch wicked plans insisting Albany, 'The laws are mine, not thine' (Lear 1100). She is unchaste to her husband by her intimate relationship with Edmund, the illegitimate son of Gloucester. She is unforgivable when she poisons her sister in order to possess Edmund for herself. She is unrepentant to the end and her inherent dishonesty and pride string her up. She designs the idea to pluck the eyes of Gloucester and disrespectful Regan is ruthless to pull the beard of him.

The Gorgon sisters are overambitious, decadent, sadistic, malign, and venomous in their spirits. They remain in a bond of sisterly affection till they secure the property of their father and eventually become treacherous in their adulterous love for the same man, Edmund. They are the archetypes of vengeance and manipulation and subvert the notions of femininity. They are frightening and monstrous in their sinister designs and thus their deaths are not lamented. Shakespeare compares them to kite, vulture, serpent and tiger emphasizing their bestial qualities, parasitical nature and avariciousness.

How sharp than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away! Away! (Lear 1082).

Archetypes hold control of the plots of Shakespeare fulfilling the psychic dispositions of human life. Various archetypes are heavily integrated in to the basic trait of Shakespeare's characterization. The archetypes of Winter's Tale and King Lear carry the intellectual and psychological perception reinforcing character traits, their flaws and positivity.

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