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(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Original research article
DOI: 10.20544/HORIZONS.1.1.23.P19



VOICELESS SPEECH OF CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to indicate a different aspect of the characters in the plays of the genius Shakespeare, more specifically, the focus will be on some of the characters in the plays "The Merchant of Venice", "Hamlet", "Othello" and "Macbeth". Another approach will apply to those characters who speak very little or whose actions and deeds speak for them, so the title of this paper appears from their behavior or actions.

In this paper, a special place will be devoted to killer characters and their categorization of killers - unjustified initiators and killers - avengers. As a separate entity, the characters of the fathers will be considered in relation to their prejudices about the choice of a husband for their daughters, while the female characters are a special treasure for detecting momentum clues with the presence of voiceless speech. They will be considered according to the categories of women - victims of prejudice, women - victims of their own whims and women fighters.

Key words: speech, voice, killers - unjustified initiators, killers - avengers, women victims, women fighters

Introduction

The content of the paper is the killer characters and their categorization. In the category of killer characters - unjustified initiators, with special attention and excerpts, the characters of Othello and Iago in the play "Othello" and the character of Macbeth from the same play are psychologically portrayed. During the analysis, the significance will be placed exactly on those

places that show their voiceless speech or that silent space which announces their further action or act. As for the second category of killer characters - avengers, the characters of Hamlet and Macduff will be investigated through a comparative-interpretive method. This method is used for both dramas because they have similarity to the characteristics of fairness, honesty, courage, devotion to their country and people, as well as they mostly overlap in that they take revenge with murder, and in the name of the honor for which they are ready to sacrifice their lives.

After researching these characters, the analysis will investigate characters of fathers, such as Brabantio from the play "Othello" and the rich Jew Shylock from "The Merchant of Venice", then characters of women - victims of prejudice - Desdemona in the play "Othello", then characters of women - victims of their own whims - Lady Macbeth in "Macbeth", characters of women - fighters - Emilia from the play "Othello".

Numerous analysts of Shakespeare's play perceive dramatism and the dramatic in Hamlet's dilemma. Ernest Jones makes a psychoanalytical construction of Hamlet¹, he analyzes Hamlet not as a literary character or as an actant subject, but as a person, that is, an individual. Hamlet's deep depression, his hopelessness about the world and its values, his fears and nightmares, his self-recriminations and his desperate efforts to escape from thoughts of his duty, all this, according to Jones, points to his tortured conscience, to some hidden reason for avoiding tasks.

Characters killers - unjustified initiators and character killers-avengers

Shakespeare's characters do not say what they feel especially when they are preparing to carry out a work, as the rich Jew Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice", Hamlet in "Hamlet", Othello in "Othello", Macbeth in "Macbeth", Macduff in "Macbeth." These characters use a minimal fund of words or say nothing at all when they are ready to perform an action - usually with a tragic end. We meet characters who are distinguished by many positive characteristics that can adorn human nature, but in a given situation, under the onslaught of circumstances, they become murderers - unjustified initiators (Othello, Iago, Macbeth), and others in the category of murderers - avengers (Hamlet, Macduff). Regardless of how we classify the murderous characters - behind every murder there is a reason that eats away at human reason, in the case of Othello it is jealousy, and not only in this character, but it runs through all the characters in the play, and the most notable is at Iago, who, blinded by envy and jealousy and desire for dominance, will indirectly cause Desdemona's death, and directly cause the death of his wife Emilia.

Othello is a character who has all the qualities of a brave, self-sacrificing fighter, in his heart he has an immense love for the beautiful, gentle Desdemona which can be seen from the lyrics:

¹ Ernest Jones, 2005, Hamlet and Edip, Novi Sad, Zorana Stojanovica Publishing House, Sremski Karlovci.

O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues²!

Despite the existence of love that has no mercantile value, Othello falls under the influence of suspicion born of Iago's actions. Iago is a character who does not speak much, only throwing in short lines that will initially confuse Othello as shown in the following lines

Iago
Did Michael Cassio,
When (you) wooed my lady, know of your love?
OTHELLO
He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?
IAGO
But for a satisfaction of my thought,
No further harm.
OTHELLO
Why of thy thought, Iago³?

Othello becomes entangled in the chain that Iago sets for him, so entangled that he cannot get out of it. He tries to get away, but the more he tries, the more he gets tangled up. In the interweaving of "it will help him the most" and his own character who does not know patience, he is shown to be gullible, compliant, unstable and shows the first signs of aggression when he hits Desdemona, it is the first signal of the bully Othello who unfortunately Desdemona does not have in time to recognize it and be saved.

Othello
I am glad to see you mad.
DESDEMONA
Why, sweet Othello!

OTHELLO
Devil! ⚔ striking her ⚔⁴

After discovering the truth or unmasking Iago, and after Desdemona's fatal end, Othello will say:

²William Shakespeare, p.1981, Othello, Macedonian book, Skopje, p.85

³Shakespeare, p.85

⁴Shakespeare, p. 137

Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought⁵.

The character of Iago belongs to the category of killer characters - unjustified initiators, he does not kill Emilia in self-defense but kills to avoid being unmasked. He previously orders a murder, convinces Rodrigo to kill Cassio. After Rodrigo's failed attempt, Iago stabs Cassio in the leg and runs away. Iago's hypocrisy and corruption reach a climax when he helps Cassio who has previously been wounded by Iago.

Iago
Forgive me. I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains
Cassio is wounded by abominations.

Gratiano
What? Cassio?

Iago
How is't, brother!

Cassio
Ah, my leg is cut in two.

Iago
Marry, heaven forbid!
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it
With my shirt⁶.

The word brother told to a man who stabs him with his sword few minutes ago is the most vivid example of the kind of man Iago is. There is a lot of content in that one word. This is another one of Shakespeare's places where the character doesn't have to say anything more, because the reader detects everything. Iago speaks very little when facing disastrous scenarios such as the scenario of the end of love between Othello and Desdemona. Watching Desdemona and Cassio talk, Iago will address Othello with the following line: "This no longer pleases me." From that moment everything begins, all evil begins in the story line of Desdemona and Othello.

Hypocrisy as a feature of Iago is transparent in the dialogue with Desdemona when she visibly upset asks for an explanation of Othello's rude behavior, and Iago who is directly to blame for it, will say:

⁵Shakespeare, p.196

⁶Shakespeare, p. 168

Iago

Don't be restless, please:

so it's only temporary anger.

He is angered by state concerns,

And you have poured out the misery on you.

Desdemona

If only there was no other reason...

Iago

No, just that, I assure you⁷.

The character of Macbeth, without a doubt, belongs to the category of characters – unjustified initiators. He decides to kill in order to get the royal throne. In the bloody way to the goal, he becomes totally disintegrated, completely bloodthirsty, he does not even stop in front of innocent children's lives. There are two theses:

First thesis - everything is destiny

Second thesis – the supernatural elements are a reflection of Macbeth's subconscious.

Belief in verticality or belief in the connection of the earthly and heavenly worlds is as old as man and humanity in general. Even in ancient Greek literature, Sophocles very gracefully explains the laws of polis, city-states and heavenly laws. Both common subjects and supreme lords were afraid of the gods. Therefore, it is not a sin to believe in the oldest thesis of all time that everything is predetermined or that everything is fate. But here we dwell on the second thesis. Apparitions - witches are a reflection of Macbeth's subconscious, that subconscious in which the fear of failure is hidden. This is the reason for the disintegration of the person. Fear destroys a person, makes him powerless to solve the problem situation.

At the beginning of the dramatic action, Macbeth is an integrated character, successful on the battlefield, worthy of respect, until the moment when Lady Macbeth persuades him to commit the heinous act of murdering King Duncan, as seen in the following line:

Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent
flower,
But be the serpent under 't⁸.

⁷Shakespeare, p. 151

⁸William Shakespeare, 1981, Macbeth, Macedonian Book, Skopje, p.26

Macbeth's response is a laconic "we shall see." There is only one predicate in this answer that heralds chaos, but is that immediately obvious to the reader? And if there was only a nod, the announcement was made, that moment would be Macbeth's voiceless speech. Lady Macbeth's further conviction, although it seems to be crucial, is at the core of this answer, which is another confirmation of Shakespeare's hidden method of portraying his characters, when they think of the greatest crime they do not speak or speak a little.

Nothing is different when Shakespeare portrays the characters - revenge killers, such as Hamlet and Macduff. Numerous analysts of Shakespeare's drama perceive dramatism and the dramatic in Hamlet's dilemma: the character is fighting hard battles, he is undecided. Many volumes, entire libraries, have been written on the problem of Hamlet's dilemma. Indecision can be considered as a speech without a voice, an empty space, in which the script for the further work is drawn. Here is born the idea of how to determine the correctness of the assumption whether Claudius and Gertrude (Hamlet's uncle and Hamlet's mother) are the culprits of his father's death. In the play "Hamlet" as well as in the play "Macbeth" there is a vertical connection (earthly and heavenly). They are always in balance. Injustice must be corrected. Confirmation of this is the Ghost of Hamlet's father, who is also seen by the friends of Hamlet. His line does not leave anyone incurious:

Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forgèd process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown⁹.

Macduff can be compared to Hamlet in many ways, but they mostly overlap in one feature, which is the anger they cannot overcome when their loved ones are hurt. In Hamlet's case it is the father, while in Macduff's from "Macbeth" it is the wife and children. For these reasons, we place Hamlet and Macduff in the category of killer-revenge characters. They cannot continue to live after the death of their loved ones. They swear to themselves that they will take revenge on the culprits. It drives them into action. In Hamlet revenge is finished, honor is saved and paid for with the young prince's life. Macduff is honest, brave, and he is characterized by a deep sense of justice and devotion to his country and people, very similar to Hamlet, when he learns about Macbeth's crimes and tyranny, he swears revenge and turns into a force that will push Macbeth from the throne. The lines that cause the strongest emotional experiences in the reader of "Macbeth" are:

Macbeth
Thou lovest labor.
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests,
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

⁹William Shakespeare, 1981, Hamlet, Macedonian Book, Skopje, p.40

Macduff
Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd¹⁰.

The fathers and the prejudices

Shakespeare, illustrating family relationships, devotes a special place to the father-daughter relationship. It is easily seen in the plays "Othello" and "The Merchant of Venice" through the characters of Brabantio and his daughter Desdemona against the rich Jew Shylock and his daughter Jessica.

Brabantio and Shylock are characters full of prejudices towards everything, the other gender, and the nations. These two characters cannot realize anything "smarter" than what they have mapped out in their limited world, which eventually crumbles for them like a house of cards, precisely because of their belief that they are always right and can never be wrong. In such a relationship, everything comes down to voiceless speech, that empty space that literally "screams" from the daughters' dissatisfaction. Neither Brabantio nor Shylock ask their daughters what they feel, they don't have to ask, it would be enough with one "watchful" parental eye to see what fills them. But they don't change anything in their behavior and are sure that they are doing the right thing. Their nature full of prejudices and stereotypes does not allow them to see where they are wrong. They are blinded by their conviction that they are infallible. Brabantio, doesn't notice the happiness on Desdemona's face, as well as the sparkle in her eyes when she listens to Othello's skillful storytelling in their home. Brabantio is unwittingly the main culprit of the love between Desdemona and Othello. He creates the base, the essence for the birth of this love. Too bad that love ends tragically because of Othello's stubbornness and liability.

Shylock is a victim of himself, that is, he is a victim of the power of money. They will deform him as a person, as a person in general. He would sooner see his daughter on a bier, because she took some of his precious jewels, which after a certain time and logic would belong to her again in her inheritance: "I would like to see my daughter dead at my feet, and the precious stones to hang on her ears! I would like to see her on the bier before me, and the ducats in her coffin! Is there no voice for them! There! I don't even know how much was spent on the request itself! Oh, loss after loss!"

The usurer Shylock, evil and dishonest, owns speech without a voice in his actions, then when he has to say the most, when he is asked if he agrees with the proposed offer, he speaks inaudibly, barely. That inaudible speech contains all his determination and all his cruelty:

Shylock

Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound...

Bassanio

Your answer to that.

¹⁰William Shakespeare, 1981, Macbeth, Macedonian book, Skopje, p. 128-129

Shylock

Antonio is a good man¹¹.

Shylock's prejudice against Christians is pervasive throughout *The Merchant of Venice*. He feels the curse from the hour of Christ's crucifixion, but he requires human correction as a living being who is born into this world completely equal to all other human beings. Here's how Shylock thinks about this issue:

How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian.

He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him¹²!

Both Brabantio and Shylock are against the choice of a husband for their daughters, because they are full of prejudices, vanity and stereotypes. When Shakespeare created them as characters, it was as if he reproduced them into each other.

Types of female characters

There are different classifications of female characters in Shakespeare's dramatic work. But here we consider a different classification depending on the character structure of the female characters, namely:

1. Female characters - victims of prejudice;
2. Female characters - victims of their own whims and
3. Female characters – fighters

The classification is based on the consideration of the actions of the characters in relation to their environment which are the result of their power of thinking logically or mental ability to cope or not to cope with the situation.

In the first category of female characters - victims of prejudice, we consider the character of Desdemona from the tragedy "Othello" as the most typical representative. Desdemona is a key character in terms of the dramatic plot. She is a good and faithful wife, but she faces many injustices. He carries a lot of love and understanding for his entire environment. From the very beginning, she faces the displeasure, the misunderstanding of her father Brabantio regarding the choice of her husband Othello:

¹¹Shakespeare, p.21

¹²Shakespeare, p.23

My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education.
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you. You are the lord of duty.
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my
husband¹³.

Desdemona is immensely beautiful, young, with an innocent appearance and a wonderful soul. The theme of jealousy runs through the play "Othello", something that leads to a fatal end, something that is difficult to recognize and very difficult to appreciate as a danger. Desdemona with her naivety and innocence will not recognize the signs of aggression from Othello and therefore ends tragically. The first sign of violence is when Othello hits her:

Othello
I am glad to see you mad.
Desdemona
Why, sweet Othello!
Othello
Devil! *striking her* ¹⁴

This is that crucial moment which, if it had been recognized in time, Desdemona would not have fallen dead from the hand of her beloved Othello. And this moment marked by Othello's blow on Desdemona's face is a speech without a voice, the plan speaks more than a thousand words. There is no justification for such an action, this is not how a man acts, even less true love. It should be didactic for the reader. To recognize the speech in the actions of the characters or listen to the speech without voice.

The character of Desdemona is a symbol of innocence, perfect beauty, love and injustice that innocent people face. She becomes a victim of circumstances and people who, although they love her, their prejudices are a kind of sword that cuts off her head.

In the second category of female characters - victims of their own whims, without a doubt, Lady Macbeth, the wife of the main protagonist Macbeth in the tragedy of the same name, has a significant influence on his decisions and actions. Lady Macbeth is illustrated as an ambitious, cold-blooded and manipulative woman. She supports Macbeth in his desire to come to power and by various methods of approach, influences his conscience and determination. She is ready to do whatever it takes to satisfy her ambitions. At one point in her line to Macbeth, she questions his masculinity when he hesitates to commit the heinous act – killing Duncan. Here's that moment:

¹³William Shakespeare, 1981, Othello, Macedonian book, Skopje, p.30

¹⁴Shakespeare, p.137

Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valor
As thou art in desire¹⁵?

At this point there are different academic views and thoughts regarding Macbeth's actions. Many forgive Macbeth for giving in to Lady Macbeth's demands because it was a fatal occurrence. But no man can succumb to the influence of a femme fatale and no strong woman can succumb to the influence of an alpha man when it comes to defending the highest human virtues if he possesses them. Regardless of whether she succeeds in her intentions, she becomes a queen, but loses the crown of her soul. Slowly but surely, the instability and worry of conscience are destroying her sanity, she no longer knows what is real and what is an image of her madness and in one such a moment reaches for her life. From the epilogue of the events, it is very clear why Lady Macbeth belongs to the category of female characters - victims of their own whims.

The third category named as female characters, women - fighters, includes characters with a sophisticated and self-aware nature, such as the character of Emilia from the tragedy "Othello". Her character is important in terms of exposing Iago's deception and conveying the truth. She is adorned with a strong inner beauty; she is a person with the highest human virtue – honesty. In the beginning, she helps her husband Iago, she is in a way his accomplice, but she does not know Iago's true intention. She cannot even guess how much cruelty there is in him. It is also interesting in the way of thinking in relation to the male and female philosophy. At one point he will share his reasoning aloud with Desdemona:

Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and
smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have¹⁶.

There is definitely no gender discrimination with this woman, no prejudices, she is very determined, strong and, above all, fair. Then when she realizes who is guilty for Desdemona's death, she will try to do what few would do if they were in her place. She is sure of Desdemona's honor and therefore she is determined at the cost of her own life to reveal the truth that it is not Desdemona's fault but her husband Iago, who is trying to destroy the marriage of Desdemona and Othello. Her determination to go all the way with uncovering of Iago speaks for itself in the line:

'Twill out, 'twill out. I peace?
No, I will speak as liberal as the north.
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

When he dies pierced by Iago's sword, he addresses Othello:

¹⁵William Shakespeare, 1981, Macbeth, Macedonian book, Skopje, p. 30-31

¹⁶William Shakespeare, 1981, Othello, Macedonian book, Skopje, p. 161

O thou dull Moor, that handkerchief thou speak'st
of
I found by fortune, and did give my husband—
For often, with a solemn earnestness
(More than indeed belonged to such a trifle),
He begged of me to steal 't¹⁷.

There is no stronger character than a woman who dies for the truth and honors for another human being, her empathy is worthy of admiration and reflection. Although she falls dead at the hands of the bloodsucker Iago, she remains a fighter, because by dying she proves the truth, and that takes courage. Courage is Emilia's second name. She wins with her fairness, determination, fearlessness at the end of the drama. Through the character of Emilia, Shakespeare shows what qualities should adorn a woman and how proud the word woman can sound.

Conclusion

Revealing voiceless speech, as a very important indication in discovering the dramatic action, places the reader in a position of creative activity, thereby developing his critical thinking. In this way, interest and attention increases. But it must be noted that the same reader should be expert in terms of knowledge of other methods for vertical reading of a narrative text.

Voiceless speech or silent space is a different view of some of the characters in Shakespeare's plays, ie. a different vision regarding their actions, or it is a clue that announces the further dramatic action. Just as the weather conditions are an indication of the sequence of events of a fable, so the speech without a voice is an indicator of further dramatic actions, usually in Shakespeare's plays these are actions with a tragic epilogue. The idea is to detect and recognize those dramatic momentums, which would educate the reader regarding their convenient recognition in order to prevent a fatal realization in life practice. The reader comes to such an impression thanks to the realization of the key points through the voiceless speech and the recognition in that sense, as we have noticed, the aggressive behavior of the characters as Othello, Iago, Lady Macbeth, Brabantio, Shylock and others. We have perceived that the danger lies in silence, or in giving time to come up with a false answer when one of the characters is asked for a specific answer, and regularly as a second accompanying element of some of the aggressive characters is hypocrisy where the leading role without competition is played by the character of Iago in the play "Othello". Even the character of Lady Macbeth, as it was highlighted, is expressed by hypocrisy and tactfulness in order to pursue the ultimate goal

¹⁷Shakespeare, p.190

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