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IMAGES OF FATHER AND MOTHER IN W. SHAKESPEARE'S SELECTED PLAYS: DYNAMISM OF DEVELOPMENT AND PECULIARITIES OF INTERPRETATION

The article discusses the specifics of the interpretation of the images of father and mother in W. Shakespeare's plays "Richard III" (1597), "Coriolanus" (1608) and "The Tempest" (1623), identifies the main features of these images in the dynamics of their dramatic development, traces the features of their formation in the context of M. Mazur's theory of character. The features of Shakespeare's interpretation of the categories of paternity/motherhood are analyzed in the cultural-historical and psychological context. In the plays of W. Shakespeare, many different images of father and mother are presented, but the paradox is that none of them, with rare exceptions, is a model of a good parent. This manifests the tragedy of the discord of the human personality of the late Renaissance with oneself and with the world.

Key words: literary image; father; mother; dynamism; interpretation; Duchess of York; Volumnia; Prospero; W. Shakespeare.

Ref.: 7 titles.

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ОБРАЗЫ ОТЦА И МАТЕРИ В ИЗБРАННЫХ ПЬЕСАХ У. ШЕКСПИРА: ДИНАМИКА РАЗВИТИЯ И ОСОБЕННОСТИ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ

В статье рассматривается специфика интерпретации образов отца и матери в избранных пьесах У. Шекспира «Ричард III» (1597), «Кориолан» (1608) и «Буря» (1623), выявляются основные черты данных образов в динамике их драматического развития, а также прослеживаются особенности формирования этих персонажей в контексте теории характера М. Мазура. Анализируются особенности шекспировской трактовки категорий отцовства/материнства в культурно-историческом и психологическом контекстах. В пьесах У. Шекспира представлено множество разных образов отца и матери, но парадокс состоит в том, что никто из них, за редким исключением, не является образцом хорошего родителя, способного наладить правильные взаимоотношения с собственным ребенком. В этом проявляется трагедия разлада человеческой личности эпохи позднего Возрождения с собой и с миром.

Ключевые слова: литературный образ; отец; мать; динамика; интерпретация; герцогиня Йоркская; Вольфганг; Просперо; У. Шекспир.

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Introduction. The images of father and mother are presented in almost all Shakespeare's plays. They have not only plot-forming significance, but also reflect the philosophical and aesthetic position of the author. However, in modern Belarusian literary criticisms there are no scientific works in which the characters of the father and mother in Shakespeare's dramaturgy would be analyzed comprehensively, in the context of various literary methods. In foreign literary criticism, the images of parents in the plays of W. Shakespeare are considered in religious and biographical contexts (St. Marx [1] and Fr. J. Furnivall [2]), as well as in connection with the transformation of folklore traditions (D. Percec [3]). The categories of fatherhood and motherhood as a social and ethical problem are discussed in the works of D. G. James [4] and M. A. Faedo [5].

At the same time, the image of the father/mother plays a very significant role in W. Shakespeare's dramaturgy; they provide the reader with a holistic view of the inner nature of a person in general and the structure of the family in particular. These factors determine the relevance of our research.

The purpose of the article is to identify and analyze the features of the interpretation of the images of father and mother in the context of the dynamics of their development in selected plays by W. Shakespeare.

The materials of the research. The materials of the research are Shakespeare's selected plays of one-parent family: "Richard III" (1597), "Coriolanus" (1608) and "The Tempest" (1623). The choice of research material is not random. Each father and mother is a unique part of humanity, whose actions and emotions are necessary to create the foundations of their son/daughter's personality. Thus, the absence of any of the parents greatly affects the future of their child, which is skillfully dramatized by Shakespeare in these plays.

Research methodology. During the research, the following methods were used: comparative-historical with elements of analysis in the aspect of psychopoetics.

Research results and their discussion. Dynamism of character is a term that explains the development of a character in the course of the action in the play. It is defined by Marian Mazur as "parameter" that determines "a person's general strategy of behavior in terms of motivation and needs" [6, p. 24].

M. Mazur introduces five dynamic classes of character:

- 1) Exodynamic characters "disperse everything and accumulate nothing";
- 2) Exostatic characters "disperse more than they accumulate";
- 3) Static characters "disperse as much as they accumulate";
- 4) Endostatic characters "accumulate more than they disperse";
- 5) Endodynamic characters "accumulate everything and disperse nothing" [6, p. 57].

This study presents an analysis of the dynamism of one father character (Prospero) and two different mother characters (the Duchess of York and Volumina) from three Shakespearean plays ("Richard III", "Coriolanus" and "The Tempest"). All selected characters are analyzed in accordance with M. Mazur's character theory and its five dynamic classes.

"Richard III". Duchess of York: Mother. The Duchess of York is the heroine of Shakespeare's "Richard III". She is the mother of King Edward, Clarence and Richard. Moreover, she's a widow. Although she does not appear on stage very often, she is considered an important figure in the play. Dramatically, she is a static character who does not change anything either in the social world around her or in her home.

Shakespeare does not give the Duchess of York political power, because he wants to emphasize her motherly voice. She is a positive character who cares a lot about her family's loyalty, and this further enhances her true sense of motherhood. It is noteworthy that she is a mother whose traits and mood are strongly influenced by the behavior of other characters, but no one can deny her

role as a protector. The mother bears and protects her cubs from any threat; she is the only maternal figure of this kind in the play [3, p. 3].

She is a caring mother who tries to do everything to protect her children and grandchildren. Her main goal is to save her young Clarence's children after his death. She is a sympathetic figure, but above all she is a patient mother who has survived the violent death of all the male figures of her family. At the beginning of the play, the Duchess of York appears as a grieving widow after the death of her husband and an unhappy mother after the death of her son Clarence. She suffers watching the sufferings of her sick son Edward IV, whose death is announced by his wife, Queen Elizabeth. She is indeed a grieving mother who expresses her inner deep sadness and mourns all the deceased kings of her family.

The main plot, depicting the Duchess of York as a real patient mother, dramatizes her attitude and feelings towards her son Richard. Her eyes fill with tears whenever she compares him to his other brothers, as she finds in him a source of shame for her existence:

Oh, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,
And with a virtuous visor hide foul guile!
He is my son, yea, and therein my shame;
Yet from my days he drew not this deceit (II, ii, 27—30).

In these lines, she indirectly evokes the deepest sympathy from the audience for her misfortune. But as a mother, she cannot deprive him of that blessing, for which he insincerely asks her.

God bless thee, and put meekness in the mind,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty (II, ii, 107—108).

The Duchess is destructed when she finds the crown and ill desires become the cause of the tragedy of her family, particularly Richard who is ready to do everything for power and wealth. She curses him without hesitation:

Either thou will die, by God's just ordinance,
My prayers on the adverse party fight (IV, iv, 20—21).

The Duchess is actually a caring mother who does her best to change her son's personality, but she is a passive and static character who cannot change the endodynamic nature of Richard. He is ready to kill anyone who gets in his way. The Duchess finds him a Machiavellian figure or monster. Richard is a "fake copy" of his father, unlike his brothers:

I have bewept a worthy husband's death
And lived with looking on his images;
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are cracked in pieces by malignant death,
And I, for comfort, have but one false glass (II, ii, 48—54).

Thus, the Duchess is an unchanging (static) character from the beginning to the end of the play; she is the personification of a grieving mother who mourns the unfortunate fate of her children.

"Coriolanus". Volumnia: Mother. Volumnia is a domineering mother of Caius Martius Coriolanus in Shakespeare's "Coriolanus". She is an endodynamic character: Volumnia opens the play as a caring and loving mother who worries too much about her son, but soon the action of the play proves that she was a caring woman for the sake of honor and success.

She sends her son to war when he was still sixteen. In other words, she framed his personality from an early age and raised him to be a true hero of his country (Rome). Coriolanus becomes a glorious war hero, whose courage and honor allowed his mother to be called good, as it is stated by F. J. Furnivall: “No grander, nobler woman was ever created by Shakespeare’s art... From mothers like Volumnia came the men who conquered the known world, and have left their mark for ever on the nations of Europe” [2, p. 168].

But she is also called the “refrigerator mother” because of her cool attitude towards her son. She is very pleased with her son’s wounds in battle, as she considers them to be signs of honor and bravery. Volumnia is a powerful mother who raises men. She did her best to provide Rome with such a fearless warrior as Coriolanus.

In the course of the development of the dramatic action, Volumnia challenges her femininity and becomes a male character. She is more Coriolanus’ father than mother. In fulfilling her parental role, she takes on a patriarchal rather than a matriarchal side. Paradoxically, she plays the role of the father of Coriolanus, who motivates his son to enter the military and political world. Such idea is supported by M. A. Faedo: “Volumnia is aware of the ubiquitous plots and treachery within the world of Roman politics. And this is a man’s arena, but Volumnia knows the ins and outs of it” [5, p. 35].

She is the most powerful and dominant parental figure who influences and controls Coriolanus’s personality from his early years to his adulthood. He is a famous warrior and a real mature man, yet he can’t do anything without his mother’s approval, as it is stated by M. A. Faedo: “[Coriolanus’s] manhood is secure only when he can play the role that she has deigned, and play it with her approval” [5, p. 36]. Such a statement proves that Volumnia understands and accepts patriarchal society; she is also strong and courageous, and this fact allows her to engage in “male professions”. Her knowledge of a male-dominated society gives Volumnia the opportunity to change her role from mother to father.

Volumnia overcomes her maternal instincts and follows her Machiavellian mind, as she chose to send Coriolanus to war. Through her son, she tries to prove her sense of patriotism. “Volumnia identifies vicariously with her war hero and [her] patriotic spirit for Rome is what characterizes her” [7, p. 245]. She satisfies her pride with her son’s military victories, so she cannot remain idle when Coriolanus is expelled from Rome and joins the enemy of Rome. She considers that this is an act of betrayal of her beloved Rome, which metaphorically can be called her second son. Without hesitation, Volumnia saves Rome and sacrifices her real son, Coriolanus: “She sees her duty here as being towards Rome, not towards her son, and she follows the path that she sees as the only right one” [5, p. 36].

Volumnia also plays the role of the creator, who does everything possible to raise and educate Coriolanus as a warrior. She is an architect who designs the life of Coriolanus and she is a historian who documents a long list of her child warrior actions. Volumnia also appears to be a patrician who exaggerates her patriotic feelings. She is a terrible mother who tries on the role of an all-powerful parent to complete the monumental figure of her inner self.

Volumnia herself destroys the heroic figure of her son created by her. She returns Rome as a great victorious warrior and she is very happy about the salvation of her city, but at the same time she does not pay attention to her son, traumatized by such a “quasi-mother”. So Volumnia can be called a victimizer who “has succeeded all too well in making her son not a person, but a personification, a grotesque caricature of Roman manhood” [7, p. 247].

In brief, Volumnia is a fully developed dramatic character, capable of psychic depth and change. She is an endodynamic person who defies everything to prove that she is the perfect Roman matron and great patriot. She is the magnificent mother of Rome.

“The Tempest”. Prospero: Father. Prospero who “has more godlike attributes than any other Shakespearean character” [5, p. 10] is the father of Miranda in Shakespeare’s late play “The Tempest”. He is described as “an enigmatic protagonist” [6, p. 17].

The play opens with an image of a loving father taking care of his daughter Miranda. He decides to raise her with great love so that she doesn't feel isolated as she misses her mother. Prospero himself takes the position of mother. He fulfills the expected role of a single parent, raising and educating Miranda, to whom he admits that "I did nothing but take care of you..." (I, ii, 102). Moreover, he proves his abilities as a highly qualified teacher.

Prospero tells his daughter that he was overthrown from the ducal throne by his brother Antonio. But then he declares that the real reason he lost his dukedom is his "hunger" for knowledge. He wanted to learn more about the special art which is mentioned in the play as a magical. So, Prospero identifies himself as a seeker of knowledge, but in fact he is a magician whose esoteric knowledge makes him extremely powerful.

Prospero takes on the role of a manipulator and controller who regulates everything that exists on this island, even the storm. Sometimes he appears as an autocratic figure, especially in his treatment of Ariel. Thus, he threatens to return Ariel to his former captivity and decline if he violates his orders or annoys him. The same autocratic style is used in his obnoxious treatment of Ferdinand, who is led by Prospero to Miranda to be imprisoned and enslaved [4, p. 46].

In fact, most, if not all, acts of power are for Miranda's sake. Prospero, protector of his daughter, shows his extreme fury and anger when he learns that Caliban wanted to harm Miranda. He enslaved Caliban and took charge of Miranda's safety. Prospero is a skilled architect who measures and plans every detail in Miranda's life. He even thinks through the questions Miranda is allowed to ask. If she insists on more questions, he casts a spell on her to make her sleep. Sleep instead of asking more questions, "Here cease more questions. / Thou art inclined to sleep" (I, ii, 219—220). Moreover, he hides the details of his former life and keeps their past events a secret until the age of twelve, when Miranda is old enough to understand all the politics behind their banishment to the island.

By the way, casting spells on his daughter Miranda to sleep and hiding information about her former life gives critics the opportunity to characterize Prospero as a "dishonest parent" [4, p. 21]. But in fact, parents often keep many details a secret because they are difficult for immature children to understand. In other words, Prospero's behavior can be analyzed as evidence that he is an example of a successful parent who raises his child to the best of his ability. Prospero passes various stages of responsibility and occupies many positions: "rightful duke of Milan", "beneficent ruler of the island", and "the cruel jailor of Ariel and Caliban".

It can be stated with certainty that Prospero is the image of a loving father. Indeed, the endodynamic character of Prospero shows a good example of a model parent through his love, respect, education, protection, hope, patience towards his daughter Miranda. But of course, the dramatic character of Prospero is something more than just a father:

...Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free (V, i, 245—246).

In the final act, Prospero asks the public to evaluate his submitted work, just like an artist who seeks feedback and appreciation from the recipient of his current work. So, an endodynamic character, Prospero is indeed one of the most enigmatic characters in Shakespearean drama, and he can also represent Shakespeare himself, sacrificing everything for his art.

Conclusion. W. Shakespeare reflects in his plays a variety of the images of parents with different lines of dynamism. All the selected characters (the Duchess of York, Volumina and Prospero) belong to the category of stable dynamism and do not change their dynamic class throughout the play: the Duchess of York is static, while Volumina and Prospero are endodynamic characters.

At the same time, each of the presented parents is not a fully positive image of the father/mother. So, the Duchess of York and Volumina are opposed to each other as too weak and strong character. If the Duchess cannot exert any influence on her son Richard and is forced only to observe his atrocities, then Volumina, on the contrary, suppresses Coriolanus, subordinates him to her will, taking on the functions of his father. The image of Prospero is also rather contradictory: on the one hand, he is a controller and a manipulator, and on the other, he is a caring and loving father.

Thus, families with one parent reflect Shakespeare's idea of imbalance, violation of harmony both in the inner world of a person and in relations between people, which is associated with the "crisis" features of the late Renaissance.

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