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SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE
AS A MEANS OF SHAPING INDIVIDUAL WORLDVIEW

The article deals with the study of the enormous potential of Shakespeare's language and style to serve as a means of shaping individual worldview. It makes an attempt to elucidate the reasons why Shakespeare's plays have always been popular with readers speaking not only the original language, but all the languages they were translated into, as well. Shakespeare's characters, stories and themes, expressed through his unique language and style, have been a source of meaning and significance for every generation, as their relevance lies in the virtually endless opportunities they offer for reinterpretation. So students who explore his great works gain a deeper understanding of the interrelation of individual and society, and this experience undoubtedly contributes to the formation of their worldview.

Key words*: reinterpretation, interrelation of individual and society, cultural and historical context, personal development, empathy, linguistic growth, critical thinking, metaphoric meaning, stylistic device.*

Shakespeare's characters, stories and themes have always been a source of meaning and significance for every generation.

There are endless opportunities for reinterpretation and local application of familiar human relationships and passions. The plays are peopled with fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, wives, husbands, brothers and sisters. As R.Gibson states (2004), Capulet, raging at his daughter Juliet, is just one of many Shakespearean fathers who fiercely seek to control their daughters' lives. The same is true about Polonius and Ophelia, Lear and Cordelia and others from Shakespeare's plays. It is recognizable and familiar experience in almost everybody's real life experience. The scenes depicting such relationships are an excellent spur to discussion of parent-child relationships. So, too, is the ambiguous relationship of Hamlet and Gertrude. Similarly, students can explore other relationships of lovers, friends and enemies, masters and servants, etc. All of them are widely available in the plays. The emotions expressed reach across the centuries: love, hate, awe, tenderness, anger, despair, jealousy, contempt, fear. This list is endless. And students make immediate connection with emotions and motivations that link with their own feelings and experience, as human emotions are common to all ages.

But it is not only in personal experience, in family relationships and individual emotions that students find relevance. Shakespeare's plays also explore issues which worry every society: abiding questions of how people should live together, issues of justice, politics, wealth, war. And again the list of all these is endless.

The peculiarity of Shakespeare's style is that all his plays naturally interconnect the private and the public, the individual character and the social world. Thus, students who explore, for instance, the question "Why did Romeo and Juliet die?" gain a deeper understanding of the interrelation of individual and society. Their inquiries increase the comprehension of how morality is the product of not only individual character, but cultural and historical context as well. Students learn to understand that in case of Romeo and Juliet the responsibility cannot be placed only upon the lovers, or their parents, or Friar Lawrence, or the violent society of Verona, or even on chance or fate. In some way, it is influenced by many such factors. The same is true about the students' own lives and personal experience. Thus, studying Shakespeare they learn to judge the causes and consequences of certain steps and events in one's life.

Besides looking anew at familiar and abiding human concerns, studying Shakespeare greatly contributes to student development. To investigate Shakespeare is to acquire all kinds of knowledge. It might be increased vocabulary, or an understanding of Elizabethan age, or of Shakespeare's life. It might be knowledge special of each play. In his study of Shakespeare R.Gibson (2004) discusses some useful applications of the plays: *The Tempest*, for instance, can motivate students to research into the colonization of the Americas, the Roman plays offer opportunities for developing different kinds of historical understanding. Beyond such new knowledge, the study of Shakes-

peare stimulates more personal development. As a result, many students gain more self-confidence and self-esteem that comes from performing various activities, such as analyzing some passages or learning a part and performing it before and audience. Students may also be asked to make presentations of many kinds cooperating with others. All these methods are personally demanding, they require great responsibility from students, help them to confront and control their emotions at the same time giving emotional release in the classroom.

The exploration of Shakespeare's characters can also lead to greater empathy, which is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing, the capacity to place oneself in another's position. In other words, Shakespeare develops the understanding heart. Students often express sympathies for some characters asking themselves: "What does it feel like to be Ophelia or Hamlet?" The dilemmas that so many of Shakespeare's characters face, offer students opportunities to argue the moral issues and exercise judgment. Such arguments may be conducted through writing essays or having discussions, or they can be undertaken in role-play. Thus, students' moral understanding can increase as they explore the moral perplexities of individual, social and political life embodied in the plays. For example, students discussing Capulet and his wife can try to imagine how they make sense of their daughter's death. Thus students develop critical thinking, which is accompanied by their

imaginative and emotional growth as they speculate and reason the characters' actions and motivations.

Among the reasons why teach Shakespeare the most important one is the language of the plays. Shakespeare's language is both a model and a resource for students. It offers unlimited opportunities for students' linguistic growth. Different styles of language and all kinds of language games found in the plays enable Shakespeare's characters to fully reveal themselves through language. Iago uses language to deceive and destroy Othello. Juliet uses it to express her love, Macbeth uses it to voice his suffering conscience. And the more students explore Shakespeare's language, the deeper insight they gain into the power of language.

It is common knowledge that in Shakespeare's times the English language was exceptionally fluid, that is – rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation were relatively relaxed. There was no dictionary of English (the first was published in 1604) to give precision to words and confine their meaning. It was a time that encouraged playfulness with language, and Shakespeare felt free to make up words, to adapt old ones, to change old meaning to new. For instance, some words that Shakespeare used have changed their meaning since his time. For him **silly** meant **innocent, naughty** meant **wicked, sudden** – **violent**, still meant **always,** etc. Other words that Shakespeare used have completely dropped out of use, such as **haply** for **perhaps, wight** for **person, tristful** for **sad.** Students can understand the meanings of unfa-

miliar words from their context, but not always. Shakespeare also used his imagination to make up new words. He made verbs out of adjectives and nouns, such as **to happy, to bold, to child, to father,** he liked to add prefixes such as **un-** increasing the potential of existing words. For example: **unkinged, unpeople, undeaf.** Shakespeare frequently used the hyphen to create new compound words, such as **tell-tale, sea-sorrow, sight-outrunning** and so on.

On the other hand, hundreds of Shakespearean expressions have become part of our everyday language. All of us use them often without even realizing their origin, such as **in a fool's paradise, what must be shall be, above compare, what's in a name, if love be blind, we were born to die, fortune's fool, on pain of death.** All these expression are taken only from *Romeo and Juliet*, let alone Shakespeare's other plays.

In his plays, Shakespeare widely used all the known stylistic devices, starting from metaphor and simile, on which all Shakespeare's imagery is based. For instance, a metaphor from *Macbeth* "*There's daggers in men's smiles*" (Donaldbain). Shakespeare often uses personification. His *King John* is especially rich in personification. His *Romeo and Juliet* is particularly rich in puns. Shakespeare also widely uses antithesis, which is the opposition of words against each other. The most famous ones are "To be or not to be…".

Shakespeare's use of repetition gives his language great dramatic force. In his plays, not only words and phrases are re-

peated, but many other subtypes of repetition are used such as alliteration and assonance. King Richard III, for instance, is full of various kinds of repetitions, such as the following anaphora: "*Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers? Where be thy two sons? Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?*" And in Macbeth, the witches combine assonance with alliteration: "*Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine, and thrice again, to make up nine*".

In Shakespeare there are also other stylistic devices such as hyperbole, irony, oxymoron. For example, much of Romeo and Juliet is about the clash of opposites, and these oppositions are reflected in the play's oxymorons: "*Parting is such sweet sorrow*" says Juliet bidding farewell to Romeo. In this play we have love versus hate, heavy versus light, feather versus lead, cold versus fire, sick versus health, and so on and so forth.

Among other language peculiarities we can mention Shakespeare's use of malapropisms, that is inappropriate or mistaken use of words, and also the use of old-fashioned pronouns **thee, thou, thy** and **thine**. What is interesting here, in some plays, for example, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* Shakespeare uses both **you** and **thou** in the same character's – let's take Sylvia's speech – suggesting a change of her mood or attitude. She uses **you** in a more formal communication, and thou – to express contempt to some character.

Thus, summarizing all the above discussed linguistic phenomena, we can say that knowledge about Shakespeare's lan-

guage can really have a great impact on the student's worldview. Shakespeare's language is not just a mere tool for expression and understanding; it is, in fact, a paradigm of a view of the world. Knowledge of it ensures an expanded worldview, and from the perspectives discussed, studying Shakespeare becomes an essential ingredient in the formation of mature-minded society members.

References

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ԱՆՆԱ ԽԱՉԱՏՐՅԱՆ - Շեքսպիրի լեզուն որպես անհատական աշխարհայացքի ձևավորման միջոց - *Հոդ-վածը քննարկում է շեքսպիրյան լեզվի և ոճի հոգեկան ներուժը՝ ծառայելու որպես անհատական աշխարհայացքի ձևավորման միջոց: Սույն ուսումնասիրությունը փորձ է անում լուսաբանել Շեքսպիրի ստեղծագործությունների հարատև հանրաճանաչության պատճառները: Հասարակության զարգացմանը զուգընթաց՝ փոփոխվում են նաև Շեքսպիրի պիեսների իմաստային նրբերանգները, սակայն յուրաքանչյուր սերնդի համար Շեքսպիրի յուրահատուկ լեզվի և ոճի միջոցով արտահայտում գտած կերպարները, պատմություններն ու սյուժեները հանդիսացել են իմաստի և նշանակության մեծ աղբյուր: Այս ամենի զագտնիքն ընկած է բոլորին ծանոթ մարդկային փոխհարաբերությունների վերամեկնության այն անսահման հնարավորությունների մեջ, որ ընդերում են Շեքսպիրի ստեղծագործությունները: Ուստի նրա մեծ ժառանգության խոր և համակողմանի ուսումնասիրությունը անկասկած նպաստում է հետազոտողների աշխարհայացքի ձևավորմանը:*

Հիմնաբառեր. *վերամեկնում, անհատի և հասարակության փոխհարաբերություն, մշակութային և պատմական համատեքստ, անձնական զարգացում, համակրում, լեզվական զարգացում, քննադատական մտածելակերպ, փոխաբերական իմաստ, ոճական հնար:*

АННА ХАЧАТРЯН - Язык Шекспира как средство форми-рования индивидуального мировоззрения - Данная статья посвящена изучению огромного потенциала языка и стиля шекспировских произведений как средство формирования индивидуального мировоззрения. Одна из причин долго-вечной популярности шекспировских произведений кроется в бесконечных возможностях реинтерпретации знакомых всем человеческих взаимоотношений и удивительной спо-собности шекспировских произведений к адаптации. Для каждого поколения образы, истории и сюжеты, изображен-ные посредством уникального шекспировского языка и сти-ля, являлись бездонным источником смыслов и значений. Поэтому исследователи его большого наследия глубоко и всесторонне изучают поднятые Шекспиром общечеловече-ские проблемы, что несомненно способствует формирова-нию их мировоззрения.

Ключевые слова: реинтерпретация, взаимоотношение лич-ности и общества, культурный и исторический контекст, личное развитие, эмпатия, языковое развитие, критическое мышление, метафорический смысл, стилистический прием.