

**WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE :  
A REREADING**

**Editors**

**Dr. A. Muthu Meena Losini  
S. Vennila**

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A Rereading

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Kodaikanal  
Tamilnadu

## Mother Teresa Women's University College

Kodaikanal

Tamilnadu

### About the College...

Mother Teresa Women's University College is the first and the foremost constituent college of Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal. It was started in August 1995 and the college fulfills the need of the girls' education in and around Kodaikanal hills and rural areas. Mother Teresa Women's University College is named after a great Humanitarian, a Philanthropist and a Saint Mother Teresa. This is a blessed and a sanctified one as Mother Teresa visited here. This college is an Atchaya Pathra of knowledge and wisdom and whosoever shelters here, satisfied and fulfilled their dream of achievement. Especially for the girl children, it has been a foster Mother, who cares, mends, moulds and encourages them to face the new world in front of them. The Institution infuses them with integrity, adoptability, flexibility that every women should have imbibed to survive in the modern world. It uplifts the level of the rural girls of Kodaikanal by providing them education. By educating the girl children of our Kodai Society, Kodai has a quite a number of first generation graduates who are the natives. As mountains are abodes of Gods, every student studies in this college inhales the fresh air, lives in the ever green environ, experiences the wonders of Nature and feels safe and protected in the warmth embrace of nature as if a child cuddled in the arms of a mother. It trained and nurtured the students in various aspects of life practically.

The course B.A. English has been started in 2009. The Department of English works dynamically in offering U.G course in English. The Department with the blessings and constant support and encouragement of our Vice-chancellor, Registrar, Principal, amicable students and Faculty Members has organized various programs which motivate and inspire our students to ignite their mental caliber to succeed in education and in life. The department regularly conducts International, national seminars, workshops and quiz programs and involves students in extension activities and it encourages internship programs for students.

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## FOREWORD

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) towers as a colossus over the English Literary scene. It is said that his creative genius has flowered and shaped the theatrical arena. His poems, sonnets and histrionics have become a part of English life. As a dramatist, Shakespeare as a multifaceted luminous personality- is just not a product of his times but a man who is of all ages, defying all nations of region, religion, class, caste, race and time. He excelled in writing tragedies where he exhibited the intensity of passion, deceit and destruction in a manner that was unparalleled in contemporary drama. His character creations, particularly his concept and perception of his women characters are so contemporary and modern that they resist the convention or traditional notion of womanhood.

This edition on *Women in Shakespeare: A Rereading* comprises various dimensions on his creations, the relevance that Shakespeare has for the modern audience of readers. Each generation gains its own meaning and derives its own nature of interpretation of the Shakespearean canon, this book is no less. The young evolving generation of readers have driven to re-read Shakespeare in the contemporary situation and as always Shakespeare, as with all ages, has yielded new readings of the ever-green dramatist. And holds out the self- same promise for the future generation of readers as well. This effort on the part of the editors is to be appreciated and may their literary ventures of this kind follow. Wishing the editors all the best.

**Dr. N. Geetha**

Registrar

Mother Teresa Women's University

Kodaikanal

## EDITORIAL

The place Shakespeare has found in the world of English Literature is ineffaceable and his contributions are invincible.

Had he not been found by the lovers of literature and language, what would have been the position of the British Literature? His immortal characters are living testimonies for his craftsmanship. His works have paved ways for *new readings*. "He was not of an age, but for all time!" exclaimed Ben Jonson in his poem "To the Memory of My Beloved".

Shakespeare's consummate artistic achievements in creating characters have made him the monumental figure who "invented the human as we continue to know it". His characters testify with great eloquence to move us and to enlarge our imaginations. His supreme literary talent with necessary precondition for the composition of great works have shaped our language, embedded themselves in our individual and collective imaginations, and encouraged other artists.

Shakespeare's works function in many ways. His cultural effect has the largest place-name on the world map—it covers so much territory. Beautiful and profound in themselves, they have provided a world of stories and a language of unparalleled reach. More than any other single corpus of imaginative literature, Shakespeare's works prove the immortality and universality of secular art. Especially, his women characters are blessed with infinite variety.

TJELLS, in collaboration with the Department of English, Mother Teresa Women's University College, Kodaikanal, is immensely pleased to appreciate and place on record, the receipt of quite a number of articles on Shakespeare's women characters. Here are a few for the readers to read and relish.

**S. Vennila**

Assistant Professor of English,  
Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai,  
Executive Editor, TJELLS

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# Women Characters as the Manifestation of the 'OTHER' of Macbeth: A Psychological Reading of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

G. Petricia Alphine Nirmala

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Theni, Dt.

In modern times, the term 'archetype' has been used to refer to fundamental structures in human's psyche which can be applied to the dynamic structures of the unconscious that determine individual patterns of experience and behavior. A psychoanalytic reading of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* arrives at a central or nuclear fantasy in which all the separate elements of the text play a role. The greatest of the universal archetypal theme 'anima and animus' embodied in the character of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is unveiled. It brings us to the specific dimension of Lacanian 'Other' the invisible order that structures Macbeth's experience of reality in this paper which changes the very basic mode of how we relate to reality.

"Actualities seem to float in a wider sea of possibilities out of which they were chosen; and somewhere, indeterminism says, such possibilities exist, and form part of the truth."

-William James

The conception of thought and experience manifests an account of perception, imagination, intellect and ideas in the mind. The history of the world is nothing but the progress of the consciousness of freedom. From archaic period, only one person -the ruler- is a free individual and others are totally lacking in freedom (cf. Singer 15). Many suspect that their lives are

insufficiently joyful; the zest for utopia has been a recurrent and powerful ingredient of countless theories of life. Since, it is people who are the substance of legends, it is important to scrutinize their lives with a special and strategic focus on the role played by race, gender, economic status, social status, and various other aspects in the scenario of the particular legend. For, the psyche of human being is primarily responsible for all the historical changes wrought by the hand of man on the face of the planet remains an insoluble puzzle and an incomprehensible wonder, an object of abiding perplexity - a feature it shares with all Nature's secrets (cf. Jung 1957: 46).

The difference of degree within one's own species is of little significance compared with the possibilities of self-knowledge. Moreover, this simply depends on the operation of sense organs and records the data exactly as it is and it cannot become knowledge since it is purely subjective without being brought into public. A genuine knowledge is impossible without universal concepts and it is said to have 'objective reality'. Outside oneself, self-consciousness requires an object, which is something foreign and opposition to oneself. This love-hate relationship between self-consciousness and the external object comes to the surface in the form of desire (cf. Singer 75-76). In the social phenomenon, the subject desires from the view of other for the subject becomes subjugated by the other's desire. Desire is a social product constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of others. The interdependence of demand and desire is illustrated by Lacan as "the interior of whose outside continues its inside" for demand is an appeal for love and recognition from the other (cf. Khare Stuti 81-83).

The desire of the subject comes to be governed by the stipulations of its society, which argues about gender roles, equality and environmental conditioning. The psyche is inherently an androgynous entity regardless of the gender. According to Carl Jung "The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche ..." (186). Basic qualities, which can be shared by both men and women, should not be labelled as "male" or "female". However, Jung describes the concept of the anima/us as the archetypes of Eros that is associated with human relationships, earthiness, receptivity, creativity, and passivity and Logos, which is identified with power, abstraction, and action. These can be applied to the dynamic structures of the unconscious that determine individual patterns of experience and behaviour. The consistent findings about male-female differences in various areas such as verbal skills, spatial skills, aggressive behaviors help to solve objective rather than subjective problems though they begin at the moment of conception and emerge later in life as radical and significant divergences. The importance of underlying an evolutionary focus on sex difference employs an analytic perspective to comprehend the individual psychological factors. C. G. Jung states:

Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definite feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, Even if no women existed, it would still be possible, at any given time, to deduce from this unconscious image exactly how a woman would have to be constituted psychically. The same is true of the woman: she too has her inborn image of man.-



Since the literature is the expression of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, a psychoanalytic reading will arrive at a nuclear fantasy in which all the separate elements of the text play a role. Unravelling the truth imbibed in the psyche of the constructed or fantasized literary characters of Shakespeare in *Macbeth* is the chief idea of this paper. The transition of Macbeth from a hero to a villain can be comprehended through the unconscious explored by Lacan in the 'mirror stage' in which the individuation of Macbeth (the subject) fantasies the Witches (the Other) as one and the same; and lacks a sense of self and imagines himself to exist in the Weird Sisters in the persisting background. Although initially prepared to wait for Fate to take its course, Macbeth is triggered by ambition and confusion when King Duncan nominates his son Malcolm as his heir. Unconscious desire of Macbeth emerges in relation to the big other. In the discourse of the other, the desires which are condemned to speak, come out of the language and desires of the Witches. Returning to his castle, Macbeth allows himself to be persuaded and directed by his ambitious wife, Lady Macbeth who suggests that regicide is the quickest way to achieve the destiny that her husband has been promised. She is exemplified as the archetype anima where the negative traits are deformed in Macbeth. Though he is refusing the input from his anima (Lady Macbeth), his gender identification becomes a criminal hero: following an evening of revelry, Lady Macbeth drugs the guards of the king's bed chamber; Macbeth ascends to the king's room and murders him coarsely and brutally as a macho, power-hungry, overly ruthless brute. Through this process, he creates his ego through the enhancement of particular qualities while putting the opposite qualities into his shadow, Lady Macbeth whose inner strength seems only to have been increased by the

treacherous killing. Her passionate courage sweeps him off his feet; his admiration for her is aroused,

“ Bring forth men-children only;  
     For thy undaunted mettle should compose,  
     Nothing but males”

And the deed is done. His repressed qualities become more persistent in their demands for expression. Ideally, his ego has been developed and defined, and so the ego's antitheses has emerged through the shadow and anima Lady Macbeth. As Jung believes, she is the personification of the anima 'Eve', who deals with the emergence of a man's object of desire.

By occasional meetings with the Weird Sisters or the Three Witches, the members of the mysterious world tend to leave some kind of stain on the Macbeth's psyche, which makes him suffer and deprives him of sleep, calmness, prudence, caution and self-control. They take possession of both Macbeth's soul. The projection of Other's Desire constitutes the part of the subject without his awareness of it. In the process of the (mis)identification of self, the imaginary self is constructed and when the notion of the self is embedded in three Witches' prophecy, the self is constructed and placed as subject in the language of culture. According to Lacan, there is no unconscious without language. In fulfilling the second prophecy, a literary quibble takes place when Macbeth boasts that he has no reason to fear Macduff, for he cannot be killed by any man born of woman, his sworn enemy reveals that he came into the world by cesarean section thus he is not "of woman born" which is composed more of signifiers than of stable meanings. Macbeth realizes too late that he has misinterpreted the witches' words. Though he realizes that he is doomed, he continues to fight. Macduff kills and

beheads him, thus fulfilling the remaining prophecy. The desires other than natural desires are formed by the Weird Sisters come from the Elizabethan period in which they were considered to be devils dwelling on earth. Macbeth does not simply exist as a free and self-determining agent but socially constituted by the symbolic order. The personifications of Macbeth's Other in Lady Macbeth and the Witches, are "the products of a ceaseless dialectical interaction between the phenomenal body and the pre-objective worlds" ("Khare Stuti: 93). Macbeth's gender identity is emerged in an enriched developmental perspective of the subject detailing in the critical periods.

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