Contradictions and Tensions in Shakespeare's Works An Analysis of Social Relations and Power

assistant teacher Ahmed kakah Waes Rashid
assistant teacher Azhin khalil Mahmoud
Kirkuk University
ahmedkaka@uokirkuk.edu.ig
azeenkhaleed@uokirkuk.edu.iq

Abstract:

In Shakespeare studies, network visualization is offered as a digital humanities technique that may "explore" and "negotiate" the gap between text and performance. The network created for this project turns literary texts into a network of spatial relations by tracing the relationships between characters in space using the language of Shakespeare's plays. Our research offers a particular technique for network visualization and demonstrates how it might be an important instrument to reevaluate how we perceive social dysfunction in Shakespeare's tragedies. As a result, this essay makes a two-point claim. From a methodological perspective, we contend that the "blockage" of staging and theatrical space can be eliminated from the play's language through the use of network visualization.

Our case study demonstrates how this approach might be applied to reevaluate the more general problem of social disorder in Shakespeare's tragedies as a kind of Shakespearean literary criticism. This analysis's network visualization shows how Shakespeare's plays' language builds the interactions between characters in space in a regular and repeatable manner. This work is the inception of a digital methodology that reads the plays and investigates the linguistic codes that structure stage space in an effort to bridge text and performance in Shakespeare studies.

Keywords : (Contradictions , Tensions , Shakespeare's Works , Analysis , Social Relations , Power).

Introduction

Social status matters. Writing about the time Shakespeare was born, Sir Thomas Smith was undoubtedly aware of the differences between being referred to as a gentleman, citizen, yeoman artisan, or laborer (notice the capitalization). It can be

presumed that the majority of the people belonged to the classes below the gentry, given that England's population increased from 3 million to 4 million during Elizabeth I's reign and the number of gentry is estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000.

Neither then nor today is the social order a simple one. People could become more powerful, as seen by La Pucelle (also known as Joan of Arc) in Henry VI, Part I, who went from being a shepherdess to becoming France's defender and savior. Some people, like Timon of Athens' hero, might go from being affluent aristocrats to misanthropic recluses. Others might not be conscious of their actual social standing. Polydor and Cadwal, two cave dwellers in Cymbeline, turn out to be the king's sons Giderius and Avilagus.

Because socioeconomic class is more frequently utilized as a prism through which we see both our own culture and the cultures of others, most people are familiar with the phrase. Shakespeare, however, makes extensive use of the ideas of social class in rigid hierarchical distinction. Shakespeare's play features people from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, which explains why. Shakespeare features monarchs, nobles, laborers, gentlemen, beggars, and yeomen in his plays. His profound sense of social differentiation leads him to blend high and low classes. Shakespeare's play's characters' social standing is demonstrated by this social distinction. Based on Shakespeare's works, the social constructions and class dynamics in the drama will be examined in this essay.

The theme of social class in the Shakespearean drama
Historians think that early modern England's social structures were influenced by the verbalization of social class ties. In fact, for English, Stuart, or Tudor inhabitants, "class" did not theoretically exist in nineteenth-century analytical categories. Though linked to money and occupation, their own social vocabulary of degrees and estates based on social standing, however, indicates a system of social inequities to which the idea of class would obviously speak. Its conceptual social intelligence can be linked to a social structure predicated on the unequal allocation of power, property, and privilege, even though class in its economic classification can be presumed to exist because of bourgeois social position.
 Shakespeare's numerous tragedies and romances demonstrate his concern in social structure. The nobility and the lower classes highlight significant socioeconomic

class issues, and Shakespeare frequently inverts class systems for dramatic effect. Shakespeare's writings also touch on other interesting social class-related topics, like language, social rank, the middle class, and the origins of social class. Some literary scholars provide insights into Shakespeare's perception of the subject, but most researchers focus on the origins and relationships of class.

No matter the setting, honor is continuously reinterpreted. The universal requirement for social existence to govern the bonds gives rise to ideas of honor frequently.

between people and groups. Such laws safeguard people from victimization and exclusion while simultaneously promoting collective cohesion. Animals often solve this issue by acting on very basic instincts, but even the closest cousins of primates seem to have developed social norms - expectations about other people's behavior - that, when broken, basically result in animosity within the group.

Shakespeare's Understanding of Honour by John Alvis, in particular, offers a thorough examination of the plays' conception of honor. Alvis focuses on the people in Shakespeare's text as the plays' main plot points.

Alvis analyzes characters like Prospero, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Hal in his text as theatrical representations, mirrors of the greater human experience, and stores of basic moral dilemmas. Alvis claims that his mission is to "help young people in America 'feel again their ancestors' choices about the value of honor" (Alvis 37). He contends that Shakespeare strikes a balance between Christian celebrations of passive virtue and Roman republican honor by examining Roman drama alongside Hamlet, Lucrece, and History. Alvis's personal empathy is obviously with the honor of Roman republicanism more than than the celebration of Christian virtue, but he aims to illustrate how Shakespeare follows the emergence and decay of republican ideas in the Roman tragedies and presents a more foreseeable interpretation of Henry V. Even though Lucrece is the most openly admired character in the book, the lack of consideration given to the inequality in honor between men and women is indicative of the political nature of the work.

David Barclay's Blood Speaks in Shakespeare's Plays is particularly relevant to Alvis's artistic endeavors. Because Alvis hypothetically divides these personalities into aristocrats and degenerates based on the idea of hereditary succession. Berkeley claims that the idea that a person's temperament is determined by their natural body substances—such as blood, phlegm, and other substances—is a preoccupation for the characters in Shakespeare's plays (Berkeley 12). Berkeley

claims that Shakespeare bases his usage of this schema on the aristocratic background of his characters.

Without a question, one of the many fascinating plays in Shakespeare's canon is Titus Andronicus. Murder, rape, dismemberment, and even cannibalism occur in the game. Most people find it difficult to comprehend the aim of the violence since it is so intense. The phrase George Peel uses in the play's opening scene, however, is what really matters. He employs a variety of etymologies for the word "honor" in its first 482 lines, including honor, honor, honored, honored, dishonored, and dishonorable, which is mentioned in over 13 lines. Furthermore, not a single character in the same scenario fails to make reference to honor or to question its significance.

Thus, honor's representation captures the Elizabethans' understanding of Rome as a society where honor played a major role in determining one's chances for survival. Thus, it is evident that early modern England placed a high value on honor. In addition to social and interpersonal attributes like social standing, rank, prominence, dignity, and notoriety, honor also encompassed psychological traits like morality and greatness of mind. It was employed, particularly among the nobility, which Shakespeare frequently portrayed in his plays, to both affirm social standing and positively describe an individual's nature.

When Shakespeare lived, the terms "genteel" and "noble" were practically synonymous, designating a first-class society dominated by an upper class that accounted for four or five percent of the population. Social historian Peter Laslett describes this class as such. In The World We Lost, Laslett analyzes the England Shakespeare knew and includes a significant chapter on socioeconomic class. However, what he looked at was a society where place influenced social interaction and social rank were deeply ingrained.

In reference to nobility, Laslett observes that during Shakespeare's era 'the difference between those inside and outside the ruling group was greater than any other order within the ruling group' (Laslett 45). There were also about 55 noble families in England at this time. Although there were many wealthy nobles, they did not hold any noble titles.

Nevertheless, they were educated and respected, but most of them never held any real office other than knighthood or squire. The 17th century witnessed the rise of a new social class known as the middle class. During this period, merchants and

traders dominated society. These social classes were not only wealthy, but also educated and powerful.

In The Merry Wives of Windsor, for example, there are two leaders of middle class families: The Fords and the Pages. Shakespeare associates the city of Windsor with the monarchy and the middle class. With the appearance of Fenton and Falstaff in the play, the middle class people of the city face social class difficulties. The appearance of Fenton and Falstaff in the play means that the middle class people in this city face social class difficulties.

It is not clear whether Shakespeare's dramas are set in Venice, Rome or elsewhere, but the way these characters are placed reflects Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

It is not clear whether Shakespeare's dramas are set in Venice, Rome or elsewhere, but the placement of these characters reflects Elizabethan and Jacobean England, based on the way social classes are ranked. In his linguistic interpretation, Ralph Berry examines the social organization of characters in Shakespeare's plays. Focusing on the parallels between the social structure of Rome and Shakespeare's England, Berry focuses primarily on the overarching social picture of English history and the relationship between gender and class in Shakespeare's plays. It is clear that Shakespeare's plays contain a rich source of social relations that tend to disrupt and overturn the social order.

terms of social construction

In terms of social construction, Shakespeare's plays have raised questions about the nature and hegemonic patriarchal power of each gender, with patterns of male and female representation based on the characteristics of each gender, and feminine and masculine qualities and behaviors. For Shakespeare and Renaissance society, the role of women represented the virtue of relating to men. What is important is that gender characteristics are socially constructed. Shakespeare's plays did indeed include female roles, but male actors were used to play the female roles.

Women were envisioned, but not represented on stage, but in the tradition of Elizabethan popular theater acting. To talk about women in Shakespeare's plays is to talk about women as historical subjects and to talk about the representations of women provided by commercial theater. In other words, women are invisible but men play women's roles. Even when the king and the clown meet on the English Renaissance stage, the king and the clown themselves are not there, only the actors

playing their roles. Therefore, the class position on Shakespeare's stage is female. Women's roles on the Renaissance stage often transcended class and gender.

As the Renaissance defined the role of women, it also markedly authorized male behavior (Watson 206). Society was founded on patriarchy. This patriarchal society can be seen in plays like Romeo and Juliet, where Lord Capulet wields power. Clearly, men are given roles and women are given fewer roles. Women are shown to live in their father's house like Juliet or in their husband's house like Lady Macbeth. In Macbeth, Lady Macbeth only appears in Inverness castle and is responsible for making preparations for the king's arrival.

This female responsibility is emphasized by Lord Capulet's announcement, while waiting for the marriage of Paris and Juliet, that it is the duty of men to be involved in public affairs such as leadership and politics, to make decisions and keep things moving forward. According to Capulet's interpretation, men's lives were limited to fulfilling their duties, being aggressive and satisfying themselves.

Women, on the other hand, had to take on passive roles. For example, when the play Romeo and Juliet begins, the men run a mile through the streets of Verona and say unnecessary things about the girls, and Capulet's servant Sampson says that women are weak and that he will drive the servant into the wall. This passage is typical of the Renaissance stereotype of the weak woman.

Some traits relate to men, others to women. Shakespeare reflects this Renaissance difference and the link between femininity and masculinity. Women were particularly exposed to such limited roles.

There is clearly a need for a more open dialog on gender roles. An examination of gender classifications in Shakespeare's plays provides impetus for such a discussion. Throughout Shakespeare's plays, personality is a function of social status, and the emptiness of the aristocrats' personalities is a function of their repulsiveness as a class and the lack of difficulty in drawing social boundaries.

The victory over deception that marks the harmonious ending of Shakespeare's comedies is also a trump card against challenges to the social order. Similarly, epistemology is thematically important in Shakespeare's tragedies.

In Shakespeare's Much Ado, the challenge to the social order is deliberately excluded as a comic or callous villain as far as the dramatic action is concerned. This is because the social superiors do not accept Don John's 'honor' in place of the honor of Leonato's dying family, and do not allow Dogberry's competence to be perceived in place of his failure to worry. Don John and Dogberry move the play

forward, but their actions have no impact on the character qualities of the protagonists.

The conflict that creates the characters is not about social order and its conflict, or about mere appearance and reality, but about an open, socially recognized aristocratic standard, where appearance is taken into account and its recognition in marriage is the play's final claim to aristocratic hegemony.

Shakespeare's works are rich with contradictions and tensions that reflect the complexities of social relations and power dynamics in his time, as well as enduring truths about human nature. Here are some key themes and examples:

1. Class Conflict:

- Example: In "Romeo and Juliet," the feud between the Montagues and Capulets drives much of the conflict in the play. Despite Romeo and Juliet's love transcending this divide, their families' enmity ultimately leads to tragedy.

- Analysis: Shakespeare often portrays the destructive consequences of rigid social hierarchies and the clash between individuals from different social classes.

2. Gender Roles and Power:

- Example: In "Macbeth," Lady Macbeth challenges traditional gender roles by goading her husband to commit regicide. However, her actions lead to her own psychological unraveling.

- Analysis: Shakespeare explores the complexities of power dynamics within marriages and the societal expectations placed upon men and women, often revealing the consequences of defying these norms.

3. Authority and Rebellion:

- Example: In "Hamlet," Prince Hamlet struggles with his duty to avenge his father's murder while also questioning the legitimacy of the authority figures around him.

- Analysis: Shakespeare delves into the tension between obedience to authority and the desire for personal agency, highlighting the moral ambiguity of rebellion against established power structures.

4. Race and Ethnicity:

- Example: In "Othello," the titular character faces prejudice and discrimination due to his race, despite his military prowess and noble status.

- Analysis: Shakespeare confronts themes of racism and xenophobia, illustrating how societal prejudices can lead to tragic outcomes and internal conflict for individuals.

5. Politics and Ambition:

- Example: In "Julius Caesar," the assassination of Caesar sparks a power struggle among the conspirators and leads to civil war in Rome.

- Analysis: Shakespeare explores the corrupting influence of ambition and the fragility of political stability, highlighting the dangers of unchecked power and ambition.

6. Family Dynamics:

- Example: In "King Lear," the titular character's flawed understanding of love and power leads to betrayal and chaos within his family.

- Analysis: Shakespeare examines the complexities of familial relationships and inheritance, revealing the tensions between filial loyalty and personal ambition.

In analyzing Shakespeare's works, it's crucial to recognize how these contradictions and tensions reflect not only the social and political realities of his time but also the enduring complexities of human nature and the perennial struggles for power, love, and identity.

Conclusion

In this idealized version with its dramatic conflict, Shakespeare presents a clear dramatic expression of the ruling class's struggle to insulate itself from a tradition built against a loss of value and quality. Perhaps the 'nothingness' of the play's title is this loss. In general, class differences affect every relationship in Shakespeare's play. For every Englishman knows his own primacy before and after everyone else he comes into contact with.

References

- Barabasi, A.-L., R. Albert, and H. Jong 2000 Scale-Free Characteristics of Random Networks: The Topology of the World-Wide Web. *Physica A* 281:69–77.

- Bate, J. 1997 *The Genius of Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan.

- Bernard, H. R., P. D. Killworth, M. J. Evans, C. McCarty, and G. A. Shelley 1988 Studying Social Relations Cross-Culturally. *Ethnology* 27:155–179.

- Birdsell, J. B. 1968 Some Predictions for the Pleistocene Based on Equilibrium Systems among Recent Hunter-gatherers. In *Man the Hunter*. I. DeVore, ed. Pp. 229–240. New York: Aldine.

- Broder, A. 2000 Graph Structure in the Web. *Computer Networks* 33:309–320.

- Carroll, J. 1995 *Evolution and Literary Theory*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

- 1999 The Deep Structure of Literary Representations. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 20:159–173.

- Dissenyake, E. 1992 Homo aestheticus: *Where Art Comes From and Why*. New York: The Free Press.

- Dunbar, R. I. M. 1993 Coevolution of Neocortical Size, Group Size and Language in Humans. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16:681–735