



THE ANALYSIS OF FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

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<https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7932677>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 01st May 2023

Accepted: 11th May 2023

Online: 12th May 2023

KEY WORDS

Literature, Shakespeare, father-daughter relationship.

ABSTRACT

Literature from the 16th and 17th centuries offers a rich and varied analysis of the father-daughter relationship. Shakespeare's plays are rife with father-daughter interactions that explore the many sides of this tie. Even now, we can see the emotions, struggles, and complexity of this connection, and Shakespeare's ability to depict these nuances has guaranteed that his works remain relevant despite the passing of time. The strength of these father-daughter connections emphasizes the need of appreciating the importance of establishing good bonds between parents and their offspring.

The relationship between fathers and daughters has always been a fascinating topic throughout generations. It is a bond that is both fragile and strong, as the father figure takes on the role of protector and guide in his daughter's life. In literature from the XVI-XVII century, this relationship is explored in depth, with many authors shedding light on the intricacies of this connection. This article will examine the various representations of the father-daughter relationship in literature from the XVI-XVII century. As an example, the father-daughter relationship is one that Shakespeare often explored in his plays. Shakespeare's father-daughter relationships are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the many different ways in which fathers and daughters interact. (Phyllis Rackin, author of "Shakespeare and Women¹") In his works, Shakespeare presents various facets of this relationship, ranging from paternal protection to paternal control, love and attachment, abandonment and betrayal, to ultimately, the crucial and sometimes fatal impact that fathers have on their daughters' lives. Shakespeare's father-daughter relationships are characterized by a mix of love, affection, and control, as fathers struggle to guide their daughters through the challenges of life. (Carol Thomas Neely, author of "Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture")

Coming to analysis of the image of the fatherhood in Shakespeare's works one must investigate father's relationship with his daughters. That gives to the reader clear view of the characteristics of each fathers in different novels. To understand the above said opinion let us

¹ <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1437875/FULLTEXT01.pdf>



look through some writers' ideas about the topic. For instance, Tina Parker, author of "Women of Will: Following the Feminine in Shakespeare's Plays²" states that Shakespeare's daughters are his most fully realized female characters, and his father-daughter relationships are among his most compelling. Another writer Marjorie Garber, author of "Shakespeare After All" affirms "Shakespeare's father-daughter relationships are often fraught with tension and conflict, reflecting the patriarchal society in which he lived."

One of the most enduring examples of a father-daughter relationship in Shakespeare's work is the relationship between King Lear and his three daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. Lear tries to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, and in the process, tests their love for him. He is both a father and a king, and his need for flattery from his daughters is an aspect of his character that ultimately leads to his downfall. Goneril and Regan, who go overboard with their praises, are rewarded, while Cordelia who speaks with sincerity, ends up being banished. The relationship between King Lear and his youngest daughter, Cordelia, is a prime example of the bond between fathers and daughters. Initially, Cordelia refuses to express her love for her father as he demands, leading Lear to banish her from the kingdom. However, as the play progresses, Cordelia returns to show her father love and kindness, even though Lear had previously disowned her. Lear realizes too late the worth of his youngest daughter Cordelia's love, and the tragic ending that befalls her as well as her father prompts a reflection on the devastating consequences of a father's foolishness. Through this story, Shakespeare portrays the unconditional love that exists between fathers and daughters, highlighting the importance of forgiveness and acceptance within this relationship.

The theme of sacrifice is also present in the father-daughter relationship in literature from the XVI-XVII century. In William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," the character of Prospero, the Duke of Milan, is a father figure who willingly sacrifices his own needs to ensure the happiness and safety of his daughter, Miranda. Prospero's love and attachment to his daughter is evident in his constant efforts to protect her from the dangers of the island they are stranded on. He cares for her and lavishes her with the kind of love that only a doting father can give. While their relationship is one of love and devotion, it also delves into the complexities that come with paternal control. Miranda's dependency on her father is a reflection of her sheltered life, and her choice of love for Ferdinand³ challenges Prospero's perception of his daughter as well as his own protective and controlling nature. This concept of selflessness is also evident in the famous ballad of "Tam Lin⁴," where the father sacrifices his own life for his daughter's freedom. These stories illustrate the bond between fathers and daughters through the selflessness and willingness to put the needs of the other first.

Another classic example of a father-daughter pair in Shakespearean literature is Shylock and Jessica from The Merchant of Venice. Shylock is a moneylender who is portrayed as villainous for many reasons, one of which is his reluctance to accept that his daughter, Jessica, has fallen in love with a Christian. Jessica's relationship with her father highlights the traditions and cultural norms of that time, and the tragic rift it can create between a father

² <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22716373-women-of-will>

³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_\(The_Tempest\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_(The_Tempest))

⁴ <https://csmaccath.com/blog/tam-lin>



and his child. The entire episode underscores the perils of religious and societal norms and how it affects father-daughter relationships.

In conclusion, literature from the XVI-XVII century provides a rich and diverse exploration of the father-daughter relationship. Shakespeare's works are replete with father-daughter relationships that explore the various facets of this bond. The emotions, conflicts, and complexities of this relationship can be seen even today, and Shakespeare's ability to capture these nuances has ensured that his works continue to be relevant despite the passage of time. The power of these father-daughter relationships highlights the importance of understanding the value of nurturing healthy ties between parents and their children.

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