

## Comparing two characters of Goneril and Regan with the Goddess Artemis based on Bolen's psychoanalytical theories

*Mojgan Eyvazi\**

*Assistant professor English Dep. Payam\_e\_Noor university, Iran.*

*Maryam Sharifi Ghazijahani*

*Master student of English language and literature , Payame Noor university of Arak.*

### ABSTRACT

*The famous King Lear play is one of notable Shakespeare's tragedies. In his work, he portrays the untimely transfer of power based on an incorrect criterion among the children, which initiates the beginning of the animosities and bitter endings. From the very beginning to the end of the play, the moral and behavioral characters of Goneril and Regan (Lear's daughters) are seen as key and troubling points of the tragedy. For Bolen's psychoanalysis, the American psychoanalyst, seven behavioral patterns exist for every woman. Each woman archetype involves behavioral patterns as well as appetites and needs. To him, the behavioral tendencies of Goneril and Regan can be compared with Artemis, the Goddess of competition and hunt. The similarities they have in common include destructive wrath, loss of affection, disgust of incapacity. This research aimed to shed more light on the Goddess governing over the minds of Goneril and Regan in order to provide a better understanding of their lives.*

*Keywords: Goneril, Regan, Artemis, Lear, Bolen.*

### Introduction

King Lear is Shakespeare's utmost tragedy and pessimism concerning humans. In King Lear, Shakespeare has artistically converted a family fight into a trans-national myth, which has been preoccupying the minds of the readership for many centuries. It is true that "the readership of the Shakespeare's works, i.e., those who read his works with a love of literature and belief in committed authorship mission, are so impressed with his understanding of the human psyche who ask from themselves whether he is a writer or a psychologist. It is by no means wrong to consider Shakespeare both a writer and a psychologist" (Oliaeai Nia, 151).

Goneril and Regan, the eldest daughters of the family, are clear examples of this. Thus, they seize the father's wealth and property by flattery as Cordelia, the youngest child, loses the competition owing to her

honesty. The father's ambitions to gain worldly riches is an adverse outcome that has passed to the girls' unconscious minds for many years. On the other hand, Lear's wrong judgment and innocence strip him of authority and kingdom, making him a wandering destitute.

Bolen's main expertise is men's and women's psychoanalysis, emphasizing Jung's method to provide character types based on the ancient Greek gods and goddesses. After years of research into women's psyche and learning about their past, she concludes that mythological dimensions are within them, thereby finding a way into the goddesses governing their conscience. In these investigations, she has examined the effects of strong *inside* forces or archetypes on women's psyche. Bolen describes the archetypes through the personification of goddesses and uses this to analyze men's and women's behavioral characters. For her, these archetypes are embodied in the form of goddesses, arguing based on her experiences that the strong inside forces, i.e., archetypes, are the main derives of women's differences. Every woman is as a "woman-in-between" : acted on from within by goddess archetype and from without by cultural stereotype"(Bolen, 4)

Accordingly, women's hunger and interests and their different character types depend on the goddesses active inside them. Bolen maintains that the complex character of some women could also originate from the Goddess of their inside. He continues by suggesting that such characters involve several goddesses who interact together, and the more the number of goddesses inside a woman, the more complicated her character would be; thus, women of such characters possess too complex psyches to be perceived. Understanding these widespread inward forces could pave the way to perceive women better. This research demonstrates consistency between the Goddess Artemis and the moral and behavioral characters of Goneril and Regan. It suggests that many of the Lear' girls' conduct, initiated throughout the story, originating from the Goddess prevailing over them.

### **Examining the archetypal Artemis, the Goddess of hunt and moon, competition, and sister**

Psychological archetypes were introduced by Jung, who stated that they are intrinsic behavioral patterns that are present in the human's collective unconscious. The collective unconscious constitutes part of the people's unconscious, which is trans-personal and universal and unfolds everywhere in a more or less similar form. Goddesses, representing some notable characters, are clear examples who help the deeper layers of women's psyches. Inspired by Jung's thinking, Bolen expands her research in archetypes and argues that a goddess or a number of them in each woman's life creates different behaviors and forms a complex personality inside them.

Bolen introduces Artemis as the Goddess of wild animals, hunt, vegetation, chastity, and childbirth. Infact,

She is sometimes said to have been the daughter of demeter, but is generally regarded as the twin sister of Apollo, their parents being zeus and leto. Artemis, the elder twin, was born in delos and helped her mother to give birth to her brother. Artemis was always a virgin and eternally young, an untamed girl with few interests beyond hunting(Grimal,60,61 Some accounts suggest Artemis was single as her celibacy could refer to her independence.

Infact, Artemis was a patroness of young girls, and herself was a virgin goddess. She differed from the other Greek virgin goddess, Athena, in that she was considered the goddess of girls before they married, whereas Athena's virginity was considered to be sexual (without a sexual orientation).(Warner,113)

The following describes these characters:

#### **1. The disgust of weakness and incapacity**

Goneril and Regan show incapacity throughout the play. Cordelia repeatedly tells Lear that she cannot flatter like her sisters do, demonstrating an example of incapacity in the description.

Cordelia: and yet not so, since I am sure my love's more ponderous than my tongue.(act I, sc.I,11)

And:

Cordelia: unhappy that I am, I cannot heave my heart into my mouth. I love your majesty according to my bond, no more nor less.(ACT 1. SC.1: 13)

This is while Goneril and Regan do not show incapacity until the story approaches its end. However, they are both engaged in a competition and the hostility between the two to seize power is the same competition sense Artemis held in her conscience, and fight over marrying Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester's son, is an example that. Regan considered the move as her reserved right, for she had lost her husband while Goneril would betray her husband. Her disgust for her husband and lust for the new love was also rooted in the Artemis' psyche.

She may lose interest or feel contempt for him if he shows "weakness " by needing her.(Bolen, 67)

## **2. Destructive wrath**

Artemis was destructive in nature as the wild boar, one of her holy animals, symbolized her character. Goneril and Regan's wrath over the old and kind father suggested their predatory conscience, which caused bitter happenings and negatively affected Lear's spirits. When Lear divided his lands and attempted to go to Goneril's house, she treated him harshly and sent Regan a letter not to welcome Lear's visit, either. Goneril ordered her servant the following:

Goneril: and let his knights have colder looks among you. What grows of it, no matter: advise your fellows so.(I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall, that I may speak). I'll write straight to my sister to hold my(very) course. (ACT 1.SC 3, 41)

## **3. Out of reach**

Artemis used to call herself out of reach whom no one could access her. Emotional distance is a characteristic of an Artemis woman, who is so focused on her own aims and undistracted that she fails to notice the feelings of others around her.(Bolen, 69)

This Artemis' behavioral character is also notable from the very beginning of the play. The eldest daughter Goneril does not support Cordelia and misuses her honesty for her own. Regan, also affected by Goneril's conduct, makes herself out of reach and distance from her husband. Lear's question when dividing the properties suggests that the girls never showed their love of their father, and now that he was old and decrepit, he expected to announce his real sense loudly.

Indifference and cold relations among the family indicate that Lear failed to approach his girls as deemed advisable. One would say that their failed marriages and Goneril's betrayal of the husband may have originated from such familial ties.

## **4. Loss of affection**

A lack of empathy usually characterizes Artemis. "Loss of affection and empathy intensifies in an Artemis-embodied woman when she weighs the others' conducts in her absolute black and white scales, assuming that not only is the intended conduct absolutely good or absolutely bad; but also, the doer is judged on this same absolutism. Thus, an Artemis woman sees herself justified to avenge and punish others" (Ibid). When ridiculing their old father's sentiments, Goneril and Regan's cruelty begins in the first confrontation with Goneril replying to Lear as follows:

Goneril: sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter, dearer than eyesight, space (and liberty, beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor (ACT 1.SC. 1: 11)

Furthermore, Regan, following the Goneril's behavior, praises her and suggests:

Regan: I am made of that mettle as my sister and prize me at her worth. In my true heart I find she names my very deed of love; only she comes too short, that I profess myself an enemy to all other joys which the most precious square of sense

(possesses)

And find I am alone felicitate In your dear Highness' love.(ACT 1.SC.1: 11)

Both show no respect for Cordelia at the onset of the story and leave her alone, even though she admits that she cannot express true love of her father; thus, they remain silent for pretentious support of her.

The Goneril's inclemency in breaking Lear's heart is clear, as her callous conduct with her husband also is evidence of this, because: An Artemis woman can be cruel to a man who loves her, once she no longer is interested in him. She may rebuff him and treat him as an unwanted intruder.(Bolen, 68)

Goneril's brutality reaches its highest when she decides about the death or life of Regan and Cordelia, considers herself to be a judge of this, and issues verdicts.

### **5. Loss of mother**

Bolen discusses the girls inspired by Artemis and describes an interesting point in her research. He refers to fathers who oppose their daughters, The daughter maintained a defiant pose outwardly but inwardly was wounded. She appeared to be strong, uninfluenced by what he thought, biding her time until she could be on her own. The consequences vary in intensity and severity, but follow a pattern: what results is a woman who feels conflict about her competence and often sabotages herself- her own doubts are her worst enemies.(Bolen, 55&56)

Bolen, who seeks to look for the goddesses of the patients based on the archetypes inspiring their psyche and to address their behavioral characters, suggests that many Artemis girls describe identifying themselves with their mothers...

"I was the parent." Talking further brings out their sadness at not having stronger mothers and not being strong enough themselves to change their mothers' lives.(Bolen, 56)

Accordingly, and consistent with Bolen's experiences, although Goneril and Regan are bold and stubborn, they suffer from the absence of a mother and are devastated by maternal affection, which is lacking. Shakespeare does not speak of Lear's wife. Like their own Goddess, the play girls are bereaved of their mother's blessing and love, hurting their feelings. Undoubtedly, the role mother plays, and her sympathies greatly contribute to the children's psyche. This sense of gentleness and lack of affection in the girls was suppressed and replaced by negative sentiments, while, on the other hand, the father's aggressive spirits made the girls prone to ambitions. It is well established that family, especially parents' conducts play key roles in the way children are educated. Psychologists state that "Suppressive parents are despotic and tyrannical, seek absolute obedience from their children and apply strict control over them. They also expect them to follow their orders disproportionately" (Bakhshani, 60).

Bolen also believes in the key role of the family in the children's upbringings and introduces the family environment to be a major factor in shaping their characters. The family determines which Goddess has an overarching role over the girls. She maintains that. The expectations of the child's family support some goddesses and suppress others.(Bolen, 27)

So, which lost love is truly sought by Lear during his old age? This indicates the loss of a wife and lack of love in the family environment. The absence of a mother hurts older girls than the younger ones. This was because Cordelia could benefit from the presence of two older girls, supposedly playing the role of a

mother, albeit an unkind mother, though this sense of loss was not compensated for in the mind of Goneril and Regan who later developed into some mental illnesses and complexes.

When the reader starts reading the text, s/he begins to identify Lear's daughters as cruel but relinquishing his/her feelings by continuing deep into their psyches. The loss of parents and anger over this hurt the older girls and caused agonies for them. However, Lear measures their true love, and the girls seek to seize his kingdom to prevent his anger and find a haven.

## **Conclusion**

Studies suggest that Bolen maintains that many of Goneril and Regan's personality traits are consistent with those of the Goddess Artemis what they have in common include inclemency, violence, destruction, and disgust. This research concludes that Bolen's theories can help the readership better understand play's happenings. Although Goneril and Regan's conducts symbolize mischiefs and ill-treatments and their behaviors are characterized by evil-doing and hate their father, the readership relinquishes this sense when they go deeper into the text by looking into their minds. As the last point, Lear, as a father, plays an undeniable role in the personality and spiritual development of the girls while Shakespeare teaches the readership some moral points via creating this tragedy.

## **References**

- Bakhshani, Noor Mohammad. *The role of the family in raising children (raising and family)*, part 1, no 39, 58-66. 2009. ,  
Bolen, Jean Shinoda, and Gloria Steinem. *Goddesses in everywoman: A new psychology of women*. London: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Oliaenia, Helen. *Shakespeare author or psychologist*, faculty of literature and humanities, no: 3 1991. Grimal, Pierre. "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology." (1991).  
Warner, Rex. *Encyclopedia of World Mythology*. Octopus, 1975.