



Love at first sight and Melancholy in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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ABSTRACT

Love is the central theme of *As You Like It* like other romantic comedies of Shakespeare. *As You Like It* is a tale of love manifested in its varied forms. In many of Shakespeare love stories, it is love at first sight. This principle of "love at first sight" is seen in the love stories of Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, as well as Phebe and Ganymede. The love story of Audrey and Touchstone is a parody of romantic love. Another form of love is between women, as in Rosalind and Celia's deep bond. Jacques is a cynic character who cannot be cured of melancholy because he himself like his character so much.

Key words

Love, romance, sympathetic, melancholy, beauty, faithful

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Rosalind is the sprightliest and lovable of all Shakespeare's heroines. She is full of wit and gaiety, full of youthful winsomeness and withal so full of resources of adapting herself to situations, that she seems to come near that other famous heroine of Shakespeare. Rosalind is charmingly beautiful. Her personality has been described as a harmonious compendium of all that is best and loveliest in the world. Even the Duke Fredrick is conscious of her charming personality which seems to him to undermine his own daughter. It is her charm Orlando at once falls in love with her. The beauty and grace of her personality attract everybody in the forest of Arden. Rosalind heart is essentially feminine and she reacts to the situations accordingly. In the male dress she never able to suppress the women in her.

Rosalind's love for Orlando is as firm and faithful. Both of them are falling in love with each other at first sight. The best of her character comes out when she is courting Orlando in her disguise in the forest of Arden. Her love is pure, simple and steadfast. She is not a sentimental love for silvius, nor disdainful love of Phebe nor even sudden outburst of enthusiasm such as the one in which springs between Celia and Oliver. Rosalind adapts sensible middle course over jealousy in passion. It does not mean that her love is cold or indifferent that means she is saved from the ridiculous absurdities which might have overtaken this kind of passion such as Celia and Silvius experience. Rosalind aspect of her love when she tells Orlando how no one ever died in the cause of love. Orlando is like Silvius in his overflow of passion and sentimental attachment to his mistress. She reply to Orlando when the latter asserts that he will die if passion is not favourably responded to, is characteristic of this freedom from excessive sentiment.

Celia love for Rosalind is unqualified and complete. The sisterly attachment existing between Rosalind and Celia is one of the most pleasing and interesting points in the characters of both. Celia's greatest love for Rosalind is seen in her protest against her father charge that Rosalind is a traitor.

We still have slept together,
 Rose at an instance, learned played, ate together,
 And wheresoever we went, like Juno's swans,
 Still we went coupled and inseparable.

It shows how deep is Celia's affection and her love towards Rosalind. In fact, both of them are single soul with two bodies. Celia is conceived as full of contrasting qualities. Without her, Rosalind the heroine, would have lost much of her best qualities. With Rosalind, she makes a perfect pair of the lovable ladies presented in Shakespeare's plays.

Jaques is conceived in the play as a pessimist, full of melancholy and dejection. No one in the play is sympathetic with him and no one ever speaks good words for him. Jaques has tried to find a good place in life and has been unsuccessful in getting it. He declares that he could suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs. Melancholy has claimed Jaques for her own and he does not try to disclaim her. Jaques is purposively melancholy "I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks egg" (Act II Scene V)

In *As You Like It*, Jaques the melancholy philosopher speaks about the seven stages of life of a man. Jaques is almost a cynic. He has given the most profound truths of life which are applicable to all human's life. Jaques tells that the world in which we live is a theatre when men, children and women merely play their different roles.

All the world's stage,
 And all the men and women merely players;
 They have their exits and their entrances;
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His act being seven stages (Act II Scene VII).

The remarks of Jaques are not tinged with such tragic tones. When he says is more just and reasonable than the aforesaid observation.

In the first stage man plays the role of new born baby crying in the hands of nurse. In the second stage, he appears the role of mischievous school boy and he would much prefer playing. In the third stage, man plays the role of youthful lover passionately sighting and composing love poems in the name of his beloved. In the next stage, he will play a part of a warrior having a beard and given to indiscriminate swearing and oaths. In the fifth stage he will play the role of a justice of peace, with his sleek and bulging belly which is filled with various types of appetising flesh as that of a bowl. As for the sixth part, he plays the role of the old and decayed person looking extremely funny in his lean body. The last stage is the conclusion of the wonderfully romantic life of human individual. At this stage the human individual becomes as weak and dependent upon others as a child.

Conclusion

All the lovers, in this play might fallen in love with each other at first sight. In this world, the melancholy of Jaques is a peculiar state of mind which has been embittered by the failures in life. His melancholy is the result of his personal experience which has brought him an irresponsible wandering in the world. Jaques loves to be sad even in the happiest and hilarious situations. Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Jaques most inspiring passages in the play. His intellectual words might threaten our affection and feelings. At the end of play. Rosalind stands alone onstage to deliver the epilogue. It was not the fashion, to see a lady as autonomous and powerful as Rosalind has been in this play. Love is illustrated by eight

characters who all marry at the end of the play. In the play, *As You Like It* cannot be interrupted as a typical love story. In fact, Rosalind and Orlando illustrates a relationship of true love which ends in happily and mutually agreeable marriage. Falling in love at first sight, symbolise Shakespeare's typical romantic lovers who overcomes any obstacles. Rosalind is one of Shakespeare's captivating, clever, wise and adorable female characters. She is encapsulation of Elizabethan womanliness lovely, virtuous and then she can rise above conventional sexual orientation limits to turn into an incredible manly figure.

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