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As You Like it:
A Journey from the Known to the Unknown

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Abstract

Orlando and Rosalind in William Shakespeare's *As You Like it* — one lacking self-awareness and behaving like a weakling, and the other too sentimental and emotional, preferring to cry herself out of a situation — are unable to cope with the situation that Oliver and Ferdinand have created for them. Both hesitate to declare their love for each other. Both have lopsided personalities, Orlando, being unconscious of the strength of his animus, and Rosalind, having an overdeveloped anima to the detriment of her animus. This paper is an attempt to study the two characters from a Jungian point of view. I contend that both need to individuate and integrate into the conscious mode to show what they are potentially capable of. The change of setting, from the Urban (the conscious) to the Woods (the unconscious), affords them the chance to connect the conscious with the unconscious in order to become whole.

Keywords: *As You Like it*; Jung; animus; animas; individuation

Introduction

Orlando and Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like it* are an interesting couple who seem to have serious problems in coping with the situation that Oliver and Ferdinand have created for them. Rosalind is perhaps a little too sentimental and emotional for the problem facing her. Orlando, on the other hand, does not have self-awareness of

his talent and potential. Both display an imbalance in their attitude which renders them ineffective in their day to day life. Orlando, despite his physical strength, behaves like a weakling. Rosalind, on the other hand, prefers to cry herself out of a situation rather than stand up to her adversary. Both claim to love each other but are mute to speak it out. At court, both are unable to change their present state. Orlando's unconscious has flooded his conscious. Being a man, i.e., animus¹ in the conscious mode, he makes little use of it; his physical strength is symbolic of how he is animus but he is unconscious of it. Rosalind, on the other hand, has an overdeveloped anima² to the neglect of her animus. Both have lopsided personalities; Rosalind and Orlando have to integrate into their conscious what they are potentially capable of. This paper is an attempt to read Orlando and Rosalind's characters and their behaviours from a Jungian point of view. I contend that both need to individuate³ and integrate into their conscious attitude what they are potentially capable of. Orlando needs to be more assertive than he is; Rosalind, on the other hand, has to stop crying about every small, little problem facing her.

From the Conscious to the Unconscious

Rosalind and Orlando have to move into a more fluid space to be able to get in touch with their unconscious. The highhanded attitude of Ferdinand and Oliver proves to be a blessing in disguise for both Rosalind and Orlando. Both of them are forced to move from the court to the woods and during their stay in the Forest of Arden, they experience a transformation of attitude. It is here that their love gradually finds maturity, and they gradually start integrating their unconscious mode into their conscious state. They are no more rigid, since they can adapt themselves to the changing circumstance; they become practical, sagacious and balanced personalities. The lopsidedness⁴ in their character is due to their lack of connection with the unconscious, as Jung would say. The urban setting, by virtue of being clearly defined, symbolizes the conscious⁵; while the woods, by virtue of being vast dark and infinite, symbolize the unconscious⁶. To be able to get in touch with the unconscious, Orlando and Rosalind have to move into the Woods which is symbolic of establishing connection with the unconscious.

In the beginning, Orlando is dominated by feelings as he feels frustrated, sentimental and desperate for being deprived of his due rights by his eldest brother, Oliver, " he lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother" (I/i, 18-19). Orlando seems to have an over developed 'anima' due to which he behaves in a sentimental and emotional manner. Moreover, he feels helpless,

“This is it Adam, that grieves me, begins to mutiny against this servitude. I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it” (I/i, 20-24). As conscious level is invaded by his unconscious, he turns oblivious to his potentialities. He is attracted to Rosalind and loses his heart to Rosalind, “Yet she urg’d conference. / O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!” (I/ii, 243-244). He is suddenly captivated by the looks of Rosalind as she is taller and more beautiful than Celia, which indicates that his love for Rosalind is not based on the needs of his internal anima. Moreover, Orlando, being lopsided cannot ascertain the true potential of his physical strength. Thus, despite his physical strength, he cannot fight against his brother. Orlando expresses his sense of deprivation in these words; “but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth” (I/i, 12-13). He cannot find any option to do away with such a situation, “yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it” (I/i, 23-24). In such a state of mind he decides to risk his life, “if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so” (I/ii, 176), by fighting with the stronger opponent, Charles the wrestler. He defeats Charles, but ironically instead of realizing his strength, he gets lost in the looks of Rosalind. Orlando feels special warmth in Rosalind’s replies after revealing his parenthood. He confesses that there are some soft feelings in his heart for Rosalind but he could not find it easy to express, “What passion hangs these weighs upon my tongue? /I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference” (I/ii, 247-248).

Later on, when discouraged by Fredrik, Orlando finds consolation in the words of Rosalind. She gifts him a chain from her neck. Symbolically, she passes on ‘anima’ to which both Orlando and Rosalind are unaware of, since this act takes place after an acquaintance is established between them. It seems only to be the beginning of Orlando’s process of individuation. Thus, after meeting Rosalind, Orlando can listen to Adam, who later on appears as an archetypical symbol of ‘good old man’, saving Orlando from a possible death- trap laid by his brother. Persuaded and later on accompanied by Adam, he leaves for an unknown destination. He moves out of the court for his life which previously seems meaningless to him, “only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty” (I/ii, 176-179). Thus, after interaction with Rosalind, Orlando starts looking into the reality of the affairs. It is this energy from his ‘anima’ that pushes Orlando to move towards the Forest. According to Jungian psychology forest is a symbol of unconscious which in turn is feminine in sense of gender (Wali, Jung’s archetypes). Thus again, Orlando moves towards the ‘anima’. The traffic between his conscious and the unconscious starts in both directions, thus gradually rectifying imbalance in Orlando’s lopsided approach.

He gains courage as he manages Adam who is in a critical situation after they reach the woods. It is Adam who saves his life at court; now here in the woods, Orlando saves the life of Adam by arranging food for the starving old man, "for my sake be comfortable, hold death a while at the arms end, I will be there with thee presently" (II/iv 9-10). Still, his process of individuation is to be completed as he needs a deeper level of interaction with his unconscious.

If Ferdinand and Oliver represent negative energy forcing people to leave the court, the senior duke, on the other hand, represents the positive energy at the woods. The characters moving towards the forest interact with him and gradually start moving towards self-realization. The forest is loaded with psychic energy. Orlando, after meeting this banished Duke, changes his point of view regarding people in the Forest. He says, 'Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you. I thought that all things [have] been savage here' (II/vii,108-09). Orlando is then taken to the "cave", which is yet another symbol of the unconscious. According to Jung, it is one of the manifestations of anima implying protection and wisdom (Khattak, On Jung). It means that Orlando will attain protection and will gain wisdom in the woods through interaction with his unconscious, anima. The symbolic nature of "cave" is also significant in a sense that it is the dwelling of the senior Duke who guides people as a wise solicitor, especially, Orlando: "Give me your hand, And let me all your fortunes understand" (II/vii 202-203). After Orlando's meeting with the old Duke, Orlando becomes more expressive in expressing his love for Rosalind.

Thus in the Forest, the readers meet a more expressive Orlando who expresses his love for Rosalind by composing poetry and carving the name of his beloved on various trees as Celia reports it to Rosalind, "But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees" (III/ii, 167, 168). At court, he is not as expressive as he is now. A marked difference is observed in the style of his speech and choice of diction. His prosaic diction is replaced with a more poetic one. He now composes songs to give way to his unconscious. He writes, and Celia then reads it out to Rosalind, "Why should this a desert be? / For it is unpeopled? No; / Tongues I will hang on every tree, / That shall civil sayings show" (III/ii, 123-126). Paradoxically, he is obsessed with Rosalind's love and beauty but cannot recognize her despite meeting her frequently and regularly, though he later on admits that he can see glimpses of Rosalind in Ganymede, "My Lord, the first that I ever [see] him,/Methought he [is] a brother to your daughter" (V/iv, 28-29). Orlando's interaction with Rosalind

in guise and his failure to recognize the true identity of Ganymede symbolically speaks for the fact that Orlando's conscious level needs more interaction with his unconscious self. His individuation has not yet been completed, he still needs to develop an insight, he needs more trials, and he still needs to unravel the mysteries of his unconscious which is possible only if he successfully integrates his unconscious into his conscious.

Similar pattern of individuation can be observed in Rosalind. Rosalind, due to the social pressure in the court also faces an over developed 'anima' due to which she behaves more sentimentally and emotionally. She is sad and feels dejected for her father, "Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of, and would you let I were merrier? Unless you teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure" (I/ii, 2-4). While wishing Orlando, she confesses to have little strength, "The little strength that I have, I would it were with you" (I/ii, 180), which is yet another indication of the fact that her anima is inflated. It is because of her over developed anima that she considers herself tender and thus fails to fight for her rights against her usurper uncle who considers her "subtle" (I/iii, 74) for her daughter, Celia. She later on suddenly falls in love with Orlando, "He calls us back: my pride fell with my fortunes; / I will ask him what he would" (I/ii, 237-238). Celia tries to convince Rosalind to control her feelings and sentimentality, "Come, come wrestle with thy affections" (I/iii, 21). Celia argues to be convinced by Rosalind regarding her love at first sight with Orlando, "is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking" (I/iii, 26-27). Again similar patterns of development between Orlando's and Rosalind's process of self-individuation are fairly visible. Rosalind after being banished by her uncle feels weak as she decides to move towards the woods. She prudently decides to adopt the guise of a male, Ganymede. Now the overdeveloped anima finds a neutralizing guise. This seems to be her first step towards her individuation as adoption of the guise is an indication of an interaction between her conscious and the unconscious mode of psyche. The guise has been used positively since Rosalind wants to protect not only herself but Celia as well, "We will have a swashing and a martial outside, / As many other mannish cowards have / That do outface it with their semblances" (I/iii, 117-119).

After travelling a great deal of distance, Celia and Rosalind are both exhausted. Here Rosalind musters up Celia's courage, "therefore courage, good Aliena" (II/vi, 7). In the court, it is Celia who guides and encourages Rosalind, where as in the

woods their roles seem to have reversed. Rosalind solves the problem of survival in the forest by deciding to buy, “the cottage, pasture, and the flock” (II/vi, 89). In the garb of Ganymede, integration with her ‘animus’ helps Rosalind to take a prudent decision at an appropriate time.

The process of integration with her unconscious starts helping Rosalind in two ways: Firstly, she along with Celia successfully faces the entire situation she comes across during her stay in the woods. Secondly, her false appearance paves the way for the anima—animus integration between Orlando and Rosalind. At an unconscious level, she passes through the process of integrating her unconscious into her conscious. In this on-going process, she successfully overcomes some of her own problems of sentimentality that have resulted from her over-developed anima. Yet, Rosalind, who suddenly loses her heart to Orlando at court, surprisingly enough cannot identify the possible lover composing poetry in her love and carving her name on the trees in the woods. Though she faces the situation positively after her arrival at the forest, she needs a better sense of judgment. Celia tries to remind her but Rosalind fails to recognize Orlando, “Nay, I prithee now with most petitionary vehemence, tell me who is it” (III/ii, 183,184); again she says , “I prithee tell me who is it quickly, and speak apace” (III/ii, 191). It indicates that her love for Orlando in the court is the result of her lopsided psyche; otherwise she would have recognized him in the woods. It furthermore indicates that Rosalind like Orlando at this stage needs a deeper interaction with her unconscious. It is interesting to note that she has not yet met the old Duke, who is symbolic of her animus, which implies that she needs to interact with her unconscious in greater depth. Her unconscious desire to be called as Rosalind is manifested in these words, “Nay you must call me Rosalind” (III/ii, 415). Again, it is her desire to marry Orlando but unconsciously she is not prepared. Thus, in the garb of Ganymede, she arranges a mock wedding with Orlando (IV/i, 110-130). The act of not throwing off her attire unless the ground is prepared shows a sensibility on her part as she still needs to get channelized with her unconscious.

Orlando finds Oliver who lies unconscious under an old oak tree. Orlando fights for the life of his brother and hurts himself badly. This fight changes him for good as he fights for the life of same brother whom he dislikes at court, “Wert thou not my brother, I would not take this hand from thy throat” (I/i, 56). By this time, he has unconsciously integrated his conscious with his anima in the woods. He is now more assertive and seems to have gained maturity in love as despite remaining

'away' from 'Rosalind', his love for Rosalind has successfully passed the entire test and trial that Ganymede makes him go through.

Similarly, for Rosalind this fight proves to be a catalyst to reveal her identity. As soon as she comes to know about Orlando's injury, she becomes unconscious which seems to imply that she, yet again, interacts with her unconscious. Soon after she recovers, she plays an important role to resolve the problems which Celia and Oliver; Touchstone and Audrey; Phebe and Silvius; and above all Orlando and she face. She addresses Orlando in these words, "By my life, I do; which tender dearly, though I say I am a magician. Therefore, put you in your best array; bid your friends; for if you will be married tomorrow, you shall; and to Rosalind, if you will" (V/ii, 67-70). She talks to Orlando regarding Oliver and Celia's wedding, "and it is not impossible to me if it appear not inconvenient to you, to set her before your eyes tomorrow" (V/ii, 63-64). Then she addresses Phebe, "I will marry you, if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married tomorrow" (V/ii, 109-110). She then informs Silvius, "I will content you, if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married tomorrow" (V/ii, 113-114). Rosalind, symbolically, seems to have balanced her lopsidedness as she changes something seemingly impossible into possible by playing her role in a sensible way. Both the old Duke and Orlando are impressed with the abilities of Ganymede:

Duke Senior. Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy
Can do all that he hath promised?

Orlando. I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not;
As those that fear they hope, and know they fear. (V/iv, 3-4)

This is what Rosalind does. A skilful manager is at work. She brings Rosalind and Celia for Orlando and Oliver; and thus resolves their problem. She gives her hand to her father, "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (V/iv, 112). The same is said to Orlando, "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (V/iv, 113). She finds her father for whom she yearns at the court. In addition, she successfully gets her unconscious integrated into her conscious thus attaining an access to her real animus-- the senior Duke and Orlando. The process of individuation completes with the appearance of the religious Hymen, "Peace, ho! I bar confusion: / 'Tis I must make conclusion / Of these most strange events: / Here is eight that must take hands / to join in Hymen's bands, / If truth holds true contents" (V/iv, 121-126).

Conclusion

Both Orlando and Rosalind have successfully overcome their lopsidedness to which they have been oblivious as their conscious mode does not have any connection with their unconscious mode. The Jungian process of individuation is possible only if both the conscious and the unconscious start integrating. The process of individuation is continuous process which if stops, normally results in lopsidedness. The dynamic nature on individuation opens ways and doors to the self-actualization of personality. Though neither Shakespeare nor Jung had each other in their minds, both seem to be unanimous about the problems of human nature. Thus, if Shakespeare had written part II of this play, he would have shown both Orlando and Rosalind as strong and better human beings.

The best part regarding Jung's process of individuation is that it can be applied to individual as well social level irrespective of time and space. Especially, the lopsided behaviour among the teenage boys and girls is an evident indication of the over and underdeveloped anima/animus problem. Even at individual level, the male and female attitude, towards each other as well with the society around, is deeply affected by the problems emerging from unbalanced psychological aspects. These psychological problems lead to misunderstanding which not only results in destruction of family life but social life as well. If today's man adopts a balancing way of behaviour, he will overcome not only his individual problems but will also contribute towards the overall peace at different levels of his social life. The only thing that today's man needs is to peep into his inner self, in other words, his unconscious in order to find what is missing that results in his lopsidedness.

Notes

¹ Animus represents the totality of masculine attributes in the Unconscious of female. In other words it is the man in woman. Unless this aspect is integrated in the conscious of a female, she cannot attain individuation.

² Anima is the woman in man. It is the totality of female attributes in the unconscious of a man. For normal behavior, it is essential to get the anima integrated in the conscious of a man.

³ Individuation is the process of maturation of psyche. In simple words it means to come to terms with one's own self. One way of individuation is to get conscious of one's anima and animus which is possible after the integration of one's conscious with that of the unconscious. The ego tries to find into its true internal self; it looks through its anima or animus thus moving towards the process of wholeness. The goal of individuation is to attain self-certainty.

⁴ Lopsidedness means to act in one extreme way and to overlook the other important aspect of one's personality such one directional attitude may be positive or it may be manifested in negative direction. It is normally a result due to the lack of coordination between the conscious and the unconscious.

⁵ The conscious is that state in which an individual knows about himself. This is structured in the ego mode.

⁶ The Unconscious is that major aspect of human psyche that is not visible and is unknown to an individual. It consists of personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The former manifests itself in the form of complexes, whereas the latter appears in the form of archetypes; the two common one are anima and animus.

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