Journal of Basrah Researches (Humanities Series) V: 31 No.(2) P:B,pp26-52

When Shakespeare's Heroines Speak : A Linguistic Study of Four Shakespearean Female Characters in Terms of Searle's Speech Acts Theory

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Shakespeare's heroines have been a permanent source of inspiration, controversy, and infatuation for spectators and critics alike in spite of the fact that Shakespearean female figures appear the least and speak the least in comparison with his male characters, heroes or even villains. One cannot help admitting that even the most reticent and furtive among his women, Cordelia in ***King Lear*** for instance, towers up as high as the hero of the tragedy itself, Lear in this case. The same applies to Desdemona, the heroine in ***Othello*** and the most querulous among the selected heroines. In addition, Ophelia in ***Hamlet*** and Miranda in ***The Tempest*** join in so the present study concentrates on four Shakespearean heroines; three of them are apparently tragic and one, namely, Miranda is the heroine of a romance. The study pivots on the application of the Speech Act Theory as expounded by Searle to these characters' speeches. Their speech acts are picked, classified, and analyzed. Consequently, comparisons are struck; interpretations and character analysis follow.

Introduction

One way of character– and, in the long run, human–portrayal is, in effect, the one that speech lends. The words one utters in addition to the way they are uttered, i.e., the **what** and **how** of what one says can be an efficient and direct vehicle of thought–revealing. Of course, there is no attempt whatsoever to equate speech and thought for they are certainly different phenomena. Nevertheless, speech stands for thought no matter how insufficiently and deficiently the former represents the latter. Evidently thought subsumes other "***mind stuff***", Cohn (1978: 11) explains, that can never be realized verbally. Speech can be regarded as one manifestation from a rather semiotic perspective, viz., on a verbal level. The nonverbal components of thought, i.e., the mind stuff are yet to be discovered and defined. Hence, it is not far – fetched, in fact, to make do with speech as an inlet to the realm of thought and its varieties

including intellect, psychology, feeling, mentality, and attitude that can be only hinted at, though, by means of speech.

From a dramatic point of view, characters are apparently and practically portrayed and defined, action is dictated and advanced, events, incidents and episodes take place, plot progresses, twists, rises, falls, and is concluded all by means of dialogue, viz., speech. In fiction, authors have leisure and space as well as means other than dialogue to furnish the fictional world. Dialogue may be even subordinated to narration proper, which supplies basically narrative and expositive information responsible for the story world. In drama, the story has to progress on its own through the pithy speech exchanges. The dramatists, of course, provide bits of information in the form of dramatic instructions and directions, the counterpart of dialogue, which are intended to guide the directors. But these instructions, placed in the onset of acts/scenes or inserted in between characters' speech exchanges in the play, are conventionally scanty, terse, meagre, and marginal. The very core and centre of the dramatic world is characters' exchanges of repartee around which every thing else rotates. Dialogue is, thus, loaded with dramatic and narrative nuggets of information on the emotional/mental/attitudinal ambience of the entire drama and its participants. Hence, speech is definitely indispensable as it provides almost the only means by which the dramatic world is perceived and accomplished.

Consequently, in drama thought and speech have to be coincident and should be used interchangeably. The mental, emotional, and thematic contours of the dramatic characters have to be conjured up in reliance on the speech these characters voice whether in dialogue or monologue/soliloquy. The variety or else the monotony of a character's speech exchanges, i.e., whether witty or dull can offer a peep-hole into that character's way of perceiving the world and responding to its goings-on. Hence, the intellectual/thematic mono/multi-layer cordons of both character and drama unfold in consequence.

Accordingly, Searle's Speech Act theory is selected to study, analyze, and interpret the thematic and dramatic significance of speech exchanges of four female characters in four Shakespearean plays, viz., *Desdemona* in ***Othello***, *Ophelia* in ***Hamlet***, *Cordelia* in ***King Lear***, and *Miranda* in ***The Tempest***. The choice of the Speech Act Theory is a case in point as the study examines the speech these women voice along the play in pursuit of clues that work as keys to character's portrayal. Thus, speech acts are studied and interpreted in term of their mental, emotional, and thematic contexts that would yield consequently mental/emotional/thematic sketches of the speakers.

Hypotheses

The study investigates at least two hypotheses. Firstly, in a dramatic situation speech is almost the only means of expression available to the dramatist. So, when a character speaks, it is assumed that thoughts, emotions, intuitions, and attitudes are revealed simultaneously. Secondly, Shakespeare's women are stereotypical of the patriarchal society, i.e., the male–oriented society he wrote for its entertainment. Thus, his female characters must display in their speech acts the patriarchal model that women were moulded in.

Speech Acts Theory: Theoretical Background

Language is one way of representing thought, yet its use is not reserved to the communication of thoughts since people do many more things with language. A teacher, through the use of language guides her/his students to the best and most rewarding way of learning; a lawyer is able to convince the jury to convict or acquit a suspect in a crime; and a supervisor uttering "**you are fired**" terminates the service of an employee. These examples demonstrate how the use of language brings effects and changes in the environment. Hence, the way language can be viewed exceeds the mere system of representation to be a vehicle that embraces all sorts of social activities. Many linguistic theories attempted to study the use of language and its effects; one among which is **Speech Acts Theory**.

The notion of speech acts goes back to the philosophical work of Austin (1962) who observed that most things that people say are not simply propositions that are true or false, but performatives that succeed or fail. Utterances are attempts by the speaker to do something for "***to say is to do***" (Austin, 1962: 14). The framework that Austin has innovated was further extended and developed by other linguists, mainly Searle (1969, 1971,1975).

In general, speech acts are the acts of communication. Consequently, speech acts theory adopts a holistic view of the utterances and captures the intentions of the speaker, the meaning of the utterance, the attitude of the speaker, and the action produced by the utterance. For instance, a statement expresses a belief, a request expresses a desire, and an apology expresses regret and so on (Sitarama, et al, 2001: 2).

A typical situation of communication involves a speaker who tries by producing linguistic elements, viz., morphemes, words, sentences to convey a message to the second essential partner in the communicative situation, i.e., a listener. In such a case, the speaker is said to be performing **speech acts**. When a

speaker makes an utterance, s/he is said to fulfill a hierarchy of acts, whose essential types are represented as follows:

a. A locutionary act or the act of utterance

In performing such an act, the speaker is producing an expression such as a sentence or a sentence fragment from a language spoken with identifiable prosody.

b. An illocutionary act

It involves what the speaker does by uttering the locutionary act, i.e., stating a fact or an opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction, offering thanks or making an invitation, making a promise… etc.

c. A perlocutionary act

It is the hearer's behavioural response to the meaning of the utterance. Such a response cannot be necessarily physical or verbal, perhaps, a mental or emotional response of some kind (Allan, 1998: 3).

Levinson (1983: 236) believes that the term **speech act** has come to refer exclusively to a specific type of speech acts, i.e., the illocutionary act. According to Searle (1975: 91), illocutionary acts are "**the most fundamental kind of speech acts**" embracing such acts as "***making statements, asking questions, giving orders, making promises, describing, warning, betting, thanking, apologizing, advising, threatening, pledging, praying, and so on.***" Illocutionary acts can be performed by a large class of sentences, each of which is said to be made up of two essential components: the function–indicating device (or illocutionary force) and the proposition–indicating device. If one considers Searle's examples:

- *Will you shut the door?*
- *You will shut the door.*
- *Shut the door.*
- *Would that you shut that door!*

Each of these sentences manipulates the two devices mentioned above. As for the function–indicating device, each sentence is said to have its own syntactic form, which makes it different from the others; the first is a question, the second is a prediction, the third is an order, and the fourth is a wish. Consequently, this device includes word–order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and a set of performative verbs. The propsitional content or the function–indicating device of these sentences, on the other hand, is said to be the same, which is that "you **will shut the door.**" Abdullah (1997: 25) sums up the function of each of these two devices in affirming that "syntactic ***rules are devices or vehicles for performing acts,***

whereas semantic rules govern the syntactic devices to perform acts of illocutionary type."

The propositional content of the illocutionary act is governed by two types of semantic rules: **regulate** and **constitutive**. Searle (1971: 41) distinguishes between these two types in explaining that the former regulate an already existing action or "*form of behaviour*", whereas the latter "*do not merely regulate but create or define new forms of behaviour*" as the behaviour does not have existence without these rules. As to language, Searle (1971: 42) remarks that the rules that govern it are of the constitutive type "and *that illocutionary acts are acts performed in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules.*"

The Taxonomy of Speech Acts

There are certain conditions that facilitate the classification of illocutionary acts into different types like requests, orders, promises, warnings, threatening, and so on. Searle (1975a: 93) sees that "each *type of illocutionary acts has a set of conditions which are necessary for the successful and felicitous performance of the act.*" So in order to perform a successful and nondefective speech act, a number of components termed felicity conditions should be available in that act. Searle (1975b: 67) explains that there are at least twelve differences among speech acts that can be used as bases for classification, but spells out only four of them to be dominant:

1. Illocutionary Point

It is the most important component of the illocutionary force. The illocutionary point is said to be the purpose of a given type of an act. The point of a request, for instance, is to get the hearer to do something, while that of a promise is the undertaking of an obligation that the speaker does something.

2. Direction of Fit

It is the relationship between the words uttered and the world that they relate to, for instance, statements have a word–to– world fit since, according to Allan (1998: 11), "*truth value is assigned on the basis of whether or not the words describe things as they are in the world spoken of.*" A request, on the other hand, has a world–to–words fit for the world has to be changed to fulfill the speaker's request.

3. Propositional Content

Most illocutionary acts have an illocutionary force **F** and express a propositional content **P**. Hence, they have the structure of **F(P)**. For instance, when a speaker makes a command, the propositional content of the command is going to be that the hearer should do some future action in that: "I ***order you to come early***" and not "***I order you to have come early***" (Abdullah, 1997: 33).

4. The Expressed Psychological State

Searle and Vanderveken prefer to term it **Sincerity Conditions** (cited in Abdullah, 1997: 33). This condition is related to whether the speaker is sincere or not when s/he makes an illocutionary act. So, one cannot perform an illocution and at the same time deny that he has the corresponding psychological state. For instance, a promise expresses the speaker's intention to do something and a request expresses the speaker's desire that the hearer should do something. In consequence, Searle (1969, 1971, and 1975) recognizes five types of speech acts:

Assertives (also called representatives)

They have the syntactic structure of either:

a. I verb (that) + sentence

Or:

b. I verb NP+NP

They have a truth-value since "***the point or purpose of the members of the representative class is to represent (truly or falsely, accurately or inaccurately) some state of affairs***" (Searle, 1975: 92). They also show words–to–world fit and express the speaker's belief. Assertives embrace such a variety of verbs as **assert, claim, affirm, state, deny, disclaim, assure, argue, inform, object, predict, suggest, admit, guess, swear, describe, call, classify, identify, diagnose**, etc.

Directives

The deep structure of directive speech acts is:

I verb (you) + (you) Volitional verb (NP)

Functionally speaking, directives are attempts to get **Hearer** to do something. They show world–to–words fit and express the speaker's wish or desire that **Hearer** do some action. Again this category subsumes such a variety of English verbs as **direct, request, command, order, ask, forbid, prohibit, permit, insist, warn, advise, recommend, implore**, etc.

Commissives

They have the deep structure of:

I verb (you) (that) + I Volitional verb (NP)

The point or purpose is to commit **Speaker** to some future course of action. They show world–to-words fit and **Speaker** expresses the intention that **Speaker** do an action to which s/he commits her/himself. The following are among the English verbs that convey commissive speech acts: **commit, promise, threaten, vow, pledge, swear, accept, refuse, offer, assure, warrant**, etc.

Expressives

The deep structure of expressive implies:

I verb (you) for,

They express **Speaker**'s attitude to a certain state of affairs specified in the propositional content. There is no direction of fit, a variety of different psychological states and propositional content must be related to **Speaker** and **Hearer** (Searle as cited in Allan, 1998: 15). The expressive speech acts can be conveyed by a number of English verbs such as **apologize, thank, condole, congratulate, complain, lament, protest, praise, boast, welcome**, and **greet**.

Declaratives

According to Searle (1975: 93), this class of speech acts exhibits a variety of syntactical forms:

1. **I verb (NP) + be predicate:** *I pronounce you man and wife.*
2. **I verb + sentence:** *I declare the meeting adjourned.*
3. **I verb + NP:** *I resign.*

Declarations bring about the correspondence between the propositional content and the world; thus the direction of fit is both words–to–world and world–to–words. Searle proceeds to add that declaratives:

> *require an extra linguistic institutions such as the church or the law or the state or private property, and often their performance requires the utterance of ritual phrases by the speaker. Examples are declaring war, excommunicating, pronouncing some couple man and wife, etc.* (1975: 93)

The following verbs are examples of English declaratives: **declare, resign, adjourn, appoint, nominate, approve, renounce, disclaim, bless, curse, excommunicate, christen, abbreviate, name**, and **call**.

Indirect Speech Acts

Language cannot be always used literally or explicitly. This is quite applicable to performing speech acts. Searle (1975: 98) cites the following examples for further consideration:

- *Can you reach the salt?*
- *Will you leave now?*
- *Officers will wear ties at the dinner.*

Neither any of these sentences is in the imperative mood, nor do they contain any explicit directive verbs. Nevertheless, they are utterances, which would be understood to be obviously directives. However, not only directives can be expressed implicitly. Other illocutionary acts such as commissives can be similarly disguised:

- *I intend to marry you.* (a promise)
- *Can I help you?* (an offer)

Sometimes, the same utterance may have more than one illocutionary act. For instance, the utterance "**can you reach the salt?**" can be either a question about the hearer's abilities or a request to pass the salt. Searle and Vandervekon postulate that determining which of the meanings the speaker wants to make depends on:

> *a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative conversation, ..., and mutual shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inference.* (cited in Abdullah, 1997: 27)

It is worth stating that most of the speech acts uttered in every day life conversations belong to the implicit, indirect class. The linguistic potential allows the speakers freedom to disguise whether intentionally or not their speech acts. Hearers never lose the track most of the times as they rarely miss the disguised meaning. Misunderstanding and misinterpreting are quite possible, though. However, that does not really hinder or inhibit communication.

Analysis of Speech Acts: Uttered by Desdemona, Ophelia, Cordelia, and Miranda

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was born, lived his life through, wrote, and died within a society governed by the patriarchal system in which women were definitely subordinated to men. It is a male–oriented society whose patriarchal doctrines imposed certain modes of behavior and expected women to act according to them (Lewis, 2001: 1). However, the genius of Shakespeare

created female characters in a way that does not jeopardize the patriarchal ideals. Alternatively, he managed to comprise them with his own revolutionary vision of the roles to be played by his heroines so as to assert the influence they were created to exert in and on the plots of his plays. That is why, perhaps, modern critics claim insistently that Shakespeare was a first–rate feminist (ibid.). Lewis (2001: 1) maintains that in spite of the fact that Shakespeare "***wrote for male entertainment***", it is quite indubitable, however, that he was really male–chauvinism free. Apparently, he created very rich, colourful female characters whose qualities, actions, and responses go certainly beyond the limits of his time and the patriarchal model it used to embrace. Of course, this can be attributed to the Shakespearean talent that recognized beforehand the magical equation of the popular drama where every social variety and almost all the human prism found in his drama their engaging components and interests. Hence, Shakespeare managed to infuse in unison elements that the spectators of every time and kind, perhaps, seek and rejoice in.

Desdemona

Cygan (2006:2) cites a French critic who decribes Desdemona as one of two types of Shakespearean women; she obviously represents the virtuous woman who is eventually reduced into a **subhuman**. Along the play she strikes one as the submissive compliant wife whose entire world revolves around her husband (ibid.). In his introduction to the play, Turner (1974a: lxiii) sums up the dramatic character of Desdemona in terms of complication and presence as ***"one of the simplest in range of Shakespeare's women characters."*** In Desdemona, purity, virtue, innocence, and almost foolish confidence of the good of the world are all epitomized. According to Faucit (cited in Cygan, 2006: 3), Desdemona is "so bright, so pure, so unselfish, generous-so devoted in her love, so unconquerable in her allegiance to her 'kind lord,' even while dying by his hand." On the level of characterization, she lacks in the sophistication and knowledge of the world which both men and women need to survive. Some have this knowledge almost instinctively, almost primitively; some others acquire it in the course of experience. Much to her dismay, Desdemona is armed with neither experience nor knowledge. She seems to lack in the awareness and sharpness that protect one from falling an easy prey to tricks and intrigues. She does not have the courage to look her fears in the face, to wake up and dispel the nightmare. Contrarily, she continues furtively dodging and lying so as not to risk and suffer exposure. And by avoiding and hiding, she affirms Othello's suspicion most inadvertently.

In comparison with other Shakespearean women, Cordelia and Ophelia for instance, Desdemona seems to be charged the least. She has not been subjected to any intellectual, emotional, or moral ordeal as happens to Cordelia. She has not been required to wade through the sloughs of despond and unravel Hamlet's world of riddles like Ophelia. Still Desdemona has been through a hell of indetermination, deceit, bewilderment, and delusion all by herself and so unaware that she finally has to pay dearly with her life. Compared to Cordelia and Ophelia again, Desdemona is the most eloquent, though. Unlike these two, her voice is affirmed over and over again in spite of her alleged passivity and phantom–like presence. As a stereotypical wife moulded according to the Patriarchal system, Lewis (2001: 2) asserts that Desdemona sums up all "the ***feminist qualities***" of passivity, softness, and obedience a wife displays. When seriously threatened, she senses the danger but the only self–defence mechanism available to her is retreat into a child–like status where she seems to be unreservedly vulnerable and open to blame and reprimand.

Upon the analysis of Desdemona's speech acts, results crop out to list (278) acts of speech uttered by her along the entire play as table (1) below makes clear. To start with the assertives, it is observed that the majority of the assertives uttered by Desdemona are basically confirmed answers whether in agreement or denial/rejection to questions addressed to her:

- *Nor I, I would not there reside.*
  To put my father in impatient thoughts
  By being in his eye. (i. iii. 240-242)
- *That I did love the Moor to live with him,*
  My downright violence and storm of fortunes
  May trumpet to the world. (i. iii. 247-249)
- *You do love my Lord:*
  You have known him long, (iii. iii. 10-11)
- *You may, indeed, say so.* (iii. Iv. 40)

Table (1): Desdemona's Speech Acts

Speech Acts	No
Assertives	110
Directives	131
Commissives	20
Expressives	14
Declaratives	2
Total	278

On the linguistic level, assertive acts are signalled in a variety of structures. The assertive act itself may exploit repetition (**Nor I, I would not...**) where denial is affirmed twice as in the first example. The occurrence of emphatic **did/do** as in the second and third and the reversing of word order, which commences with the that–clause in the second all redound to their assertive nature. The use of the adverb **indeed** to effect emphasis in the last contributes to the vein of assertion which assertive speech acts invest. Thematically speaking, the positive nature of the assertives and the certainty and surety of their thrust come in the line with the innocent trusting nature of Desdemona's. She barely seems to entertain doubts or suspect other people's intentions or double–dealing. Her words, intentions, and actions all match and converge.

However larger in number and more paramount in thrust are Desdemona's directives. Along the play Desdemona seems to be seeking information, assurance, support, and agreement. In short, she appears knowledge–thirsty. The directive speech acts, which occur particularly on pages 138-40, 144, 174-80, 194, and 210 are the best vehicles available to answer her queries and satisfy her inquisitive nature. At the beginning of the play, Desdemona cuts a very fine figure, which seems to shatter the patriarchal code as she speaks assuredly promising and binding her self to Othello before the assembly of the senators, the Duke, and her own father. Later on her way to Cypress escorted by Iago, Desdemona displays an appetite for question–asking that exposes a far more sophisticated mentality than it overtly appears as she chooses to question Iago on womankind in the way of argument which happens to be portentous of her own tragic fate:

- *What wouldst thou write of me if thou shouldst praise me?* (ii.i. 18))
- *How if she be black and witty?* (P. 62)

- *What miserable praise has thou for her that's foul and foolish?* (ii. i. 140-141)

Ironically, the subject of women, which she broaches quite unaware with the wrong guy, i.e., Iago augurs ill for her. Iago is going soon to inaugurate, though rather delicately and testily at first, similar veins of argument with Othello whose suspicious nature, to Desdemona's bad luck, entraps him tenaciously in Iago's diabolic intrigue. Iago, "the soulless villain" as Faucit (cited in Cygan, 2006:2) explains, applies his diabolical "machinations' making a net out of her own goodness that eventually "enmeshed her too incredulous husband."

However, not all Desdemona's directives are questions asked out of ignorance or inexperience. On a level parallel almost with questions, requests, soft commands, prayers, and beseeching expressions all appear in Desdemona's directive acts. She seems to be too tender and gentle to boss or order people around not even her own servants that is why requests occur quite frequently in the form of the imperative though. Similarly, Desdemona beseeches, prays, and begs all in the imperative. Directives tend to amass in certain situations, for instance, as Desdemona tries to reconcile Othello to Cassio. She utilizes the directives to accomplish her end by urging the former with requests on behalf of the latter. Thus, Desdemona seems to be wheedling, cajoling, beseeching, and requesting all imperiously:

- *That Heavens forbid*
  But that our loves and comforts should increase,
  Even as our days do grow! (ii. i. 192-194)
- *Do not doubt Cassio, ...* (iii. Iii. 5)
- *Why stay, and hear me speak.* (iii. iii. 31)
- *I prithee, call him back.* (iii. iii. 51)
- *Seek him, bid him come hither, tell him*
  I have moved my lord on his behalf,.... (iii. Iv. 15-16)

Toward the end of the play and as Othello betrays, in awe, his intention as to killing her, Desdemona acts so helplessly. While Othello prepares to strangle her, she resorts to questioning, beseeching, pleading, and praying but all in vain. She conjures up directives to help her press her suit or in pursuit of understanding, in the first place, and escape later as she ascertains that Othello has made up his mind and will not relent. However, he is invincibly deaf to her pleas and prayers:

- *Talk you of Killing?* (v. ii. 33)
- *Then heavens / Have mercy on me!* (v. ii. 35-36)
- *Send for the man and ask him.* (v. ii. 49)
- *O, banish me my lord, but kill me not!* (v. ii. 78)
- *Kill me tomorrow: let me live tonight.* (v. ii. 80)

It is apparent that the directives Desdemona utters deepen her tragedy and fathom out her dismay. At first, she seems to be incredulous of Othello's intention. When she realizes the inevitable truth, she forges into depending on herself, in vein, though.

As for commissives, they are, though few in number, paramount in significance as they expose an interesting facet of Desdemona's character. Commissives appear relatively frequently in the onset of the play as Desdemona binds herself to the Moor and justifies her attachment to him, which seems to everyone other than herself so weird and abnormal. Thus, the commissive acts of promising, pledging her word, and obliging herself to the man she chooses to marry in secret and against the canons of her class and race present Desdemona as the determined, willful woman. She is capable of making a crucial decision, carrying it out, defending it vehemently against the wrath of her father and scorn of her society, and bearing her share of its consequences:

- *My noble father, ...*
  To you I am bound for life and education, (i. iii. 180-182)
- *And to his honours [Othello's] and valiant parts*
  Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate. (i. iii. 252-253)

Together with the extensive use of assertives, Desdemona implements commissives to make clear her point, defend her choice, and persuade of the soundness of her decision. She argues so logically pressing her point and putting her opponents to route.

Finally, expressive and declarative speech acts are obviously the least in number since Desdemona relies heavily on assertives and directives as her main vehicles of expression. However, expressives outweigh declaratives since the former appear more available than the latter in the form of greeting mainly, a situation that redounds to its frequency:

- *You are the lord of my duty.* (i. iii. 84)
- *My love doth so approve him.* (iv.iii. 18)
- *You honour is most welcome.* (iv. iii. 4)

It is clear that the first is a declarative act of speech where Desdemona makes a solemn declaration. The remaining couple are expressive in nature where praise and a greeting are mapped into the acts of speech.

Ophelia

Lewis (2001: 1) describes Ophelia as one who seems "***wholly at the mercy of the male figures within her life***" and hence their victim. Ophelia is definitely subordinated to her male relations that tower over, make a tool of, exploit, and then do without her in the end. On her part, she exerts no effort whatsoever to free her self, extricate her mind, attitude, and ultimately her destiny from the male grip of her father and brother. In relation to Empowerment of women, Laws (1999:1) talks about Shakespearean women who meet all the requirements of dutiful daughters, an observation that is clearly relevant to Ophelia. Bound by duty, Ophelia can be also regarded as one who is dispowered by her sense of duty towards her male tycoons.In relation to Hamlet, she shows that same passivity she does her father and brother. As she blindly obeys them, she pities and laments for Hamlet who is barely in need of pity or sorrow. He genuinely requires a poised female figure that restores his confidence in womankind, which his mother has defiled. Ophelia fails him terribly. In his mental and emotional turmoil, Hamlet can not tolerate any womanish pretensions of modesty, demureness, or coyness, which are the hallmarks of the patriarchal formula.

The analysis of Ophelia's speech acts, as table (2) below illustrates, proves the dominance of assertives that come on top of the scale. Her assertives are not the sign of a sure confident character that poses opinions and attitudes with certainty. Contrarily, she echoes others' sure views and footing; Ophelia reverberates others' attitudes and stands. She originates nothing that is genuinely hers. She subserviently takes her cues from the only two men she has blind confidence in: her father and brother. Her assertives are almost always positive/affirmative responses, replies, and answers in agreement with Polonius and Laertes. Thus, she proposes second–hand opinions and views according to whose dictates she eventually acts. One can unmistakably notice the sure tone with which Ophelia answers her brother in the first, father in the second and third, and Hamlet in the fourth:

- *'Tis in my memory locked,*
  And you yourself shall keep the key of it. (i. iii. 85-86)
- *He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders*
  Of his affection to me. (i. iii. 99-100)
- *I shall obey, my lord,* (i. iii. 36)
- *Indeed my lord, you made me believe so.* (iii. i. 116)

Table (2): Ophelia's Speech Acts

Speech Acts	No
Assertives	46
Directives	30
Commissives	15
Expressives	11
Declaratives	0
Total	102

Similarly, Ophelia's directives are at large questions she asks in pursuit of information that helps her unravel the mysterious affairs around, which she observes but fails to grasp. With her father and brother around, she seems to be at ease for they are both anxious and keen to inform and keep her intellectually equipped to match Hamlet's advances. However with Hamlet, Ophelia always seems to be at loss for he twists and plays with every question, deforms her answers, and mocks cruelly her innocence, which seems to him only alleged. Right from the very beginning of the play, Ophelia is introduced as inquisitive, and later on she sustains her inquisitive nature, not out of sheer curiosity for she is hardly curious. Her questions expose her reserved, cautious nature that has virtually evolved from the strict, conservative, male upbringing she has received:

- *Do you doubt that?* (i. iii. 5)
- *No more but so?* (i. iii. 91)
- *What means your lordship?* (iii. i. 17-18)
- *Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with Honesty?* (iii. i. 17-18)
- *Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?* (iv. v. 21)

Ophelia couches a fair portion of her directives in the form of requests and prayers as the situations intrigue and complicate and as her comprehension falls short of providing explanations:

- *Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,*
  Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,... (i. iii. 47-48)
- *Madam, I wish it may.* (iii. i. 43)

- *My lord, I have remembrances of yours*
  I pray you now, receive them. (iii. i. 93-94)
- *Oh, help him sweet heavens!* (iii. i. 35)
- *Heavenly powers, restore him!* (iii. i. 144)

The first directive is a rare instance of an order or a soft command where Ophelia gives up subordination and seems to be capable of preaching and admonishing her brother to practice what he preaches himself. Ophelia elsewhere hardly uses that same peremptory tone neither with Laertes nor with anybody else for it does not seem like her.

As for commissives, Ophelia utters (13) commissive speech acts in which she makes promises that bind her almost always to her father's dictations. When first introduced in the play, Ophelia appears to be engaged in an urgent conversation with her brother, Laertes who nearly lectures her. Distracted by worry on behalf of Hamlet's intentions, Laertes admonishes, advises, and warns her against his advances. This dialogue is concluded by Ophelia's pledging her word assuring:

- *I shall the effect of this good lesson keep*
  As watchman to my heart, ... (i. iii. 45-46)

Later on, Ophelia keeps on pledging her word of obedience and submission to her father, Polonius, whenever she is summoned up to do that and as often as possible:

- *I shall obey, my lord.* (i. iii. 36)
- *I'll mark the play.* (iii. ii. 45)

Finally, Ophelia uses comparatively very few expressive speech acts to the effect of approving, disapproving, praising, and lamenting almost always in relation to Hamlet's sudden mental degeneration of which he manages to delude her:

- *O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.* (ii. i. 72)
- *But truly I do fear it.* (ii. i. 83)
- *O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!* (iii. i. 53)

The three examples above are all uttered in fear and lament of what becomes of Hamlet whose pretensions throw Ophelia in a tumult of concern, guilt, and remorse. The second example presents a curious issue for it can be considered both expressive and assertive. The occurrence of the adverb **"truly"** and dummy **"do"** contributes to its assertive content. However, the presence of the verb **"fear"** is definitely expressive. Other expressives are intended to criticize, praise, greet, and show gratitude:

- *You are keen my lord, you are keen.* (iii. ii. 248)
- *Still better, and worse.* (iii. ii. 250)
- *...and so I thank you for your good counsel.* (iv. v. 70)
- *Good night, ladies, good night.*
  Sweet ladies, good night, good night. (iv. v. 71)

Cordelia

Abreu (2004:1) cites the observation of Paul Rudnystky, a feminist critic of King Lear, that Shakespeare's women are illustrations of two opposite stereotypes of characters as " the polarization of women intyo angels or demons, Madonnas or whores," the formula which seems to pervade the patriarchal culture. So while Goneril and Regan are demonized, Cordelia is angelized. Turner (1974b: 51) sums up Cordelia in two major points "***the first being that it is mainly Cordelia's excessive frankness that causes the tragedy, and second, that she appears very little in the play.***" And, indeed, Cordelia has the least score of speech acts in comparison with the three other female characters of the study as table (3), below, makes clear. Moreover, Turner (1974b: 52) affirms that " ***Cordelia is not a complex character; she is portrayed in a few and simple strokes.***" Unlike Desdemona and Ophelia, Cordelia seems to be fully aware, equipped, alert, and guarded. Only, she misses in her over trusting candour and frankness, which could not overthrow the hypocrisy and vileness of her sisters. Her speech acts redound to her simple fabric for Shakespeare designed her to stand for the simple, untainted nature.

When asserting, Cordelia affirms opinions, denies accusations, assures the purity of her intentions, describes, classifies, informs, predicts, suggests, and answers questions in agreement or denial:

- *Good my lord*
  You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
  Return these duties back as are right fit. (i. i. 87-89)
- *Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,*
  To love my father all. (i. i. 95-96)
- *The jewels of my father , with washed eyes*
  Cordelia leaves you, I know what you are. (i.i. 250-251)
- *Alack, 'tis he:* (iv. iv. 1)

Cordelia, in fact, utters these assertives in relation to her father at the beginning of the play and towards its end. These assertives reflect a firm stand and unscrupulous certainty as to her convictions. The candour with which she praises or disapproves is neither an affectation nor arrogance. In contrast, it stems from the surety, with which she holds and poises her views. Linguistically speaking, Cordelia's assertives are clearly marked by parallelism and the repetition of the grammatical pattern as in the first example. The adjective '**sure**' stamps clearly and strongly the second example. The third assertive manipulates the reversed word order. The fourth conjures up the assertion by its conciseness and condensation; the adverb '**alack**' that introduces the assertive, though expressive in thrust, lends power to the assertive clause " ***'tis he***".

Table (3): Cordelia's Speech Acts

Speech Acts	**No**
Assertives	31
Directives	39
Commissives	10
Expressives	2
Declaratives	0
Total	82

When it comes to directives, which hold the sway and come on top of Cordelia's speech acts, one notices the balance, otherwise overthrown, between Cordelia, the princess, and later on, the queen, and Cordelia, the daughter. Through directives, Cordelia gives orders, asks questions, prays, and pleads. Her directives carry a clear resounding peremptory ring though softened. After all, Cordelia appears in the onset of the play as the daughter cast out for she falls out of her father's favour. Then, she disappears a long while to reappear again close to the end of the play as the queen of France. One can mark the radical transformation from the daughter to the monarch. It is worth stating that the first speech acts uttered by Cordelia when she appears first in the onset of the play are directives whispered aside to no addressee other than herself. While her sisters proceed in their pretensions as to their alleged love to their aging father, the king, Cordelia watches her sisters' performance feeling the sting of their humbug:

- *What shall Cordelia do love and be silent.* (i. i. 33)

These are a question and a command said within a brief soliloquy while she listens to her sisters' hypocrite love demonstrations to the vitiated father. Abreu (2004: 3) asserts that these scenes at the beginning and end of the play which are marked by their imperious ring portrays Cordelia's masculine rather than feminine facet where Cordelia seems to be taking after her father. Her reappearance towards the end of the play as the full–fledged queen of France entices her, in effect, to command and order people around all in search of her father:

- *A century send forth;*
  Search every acre in the high–grown field.
  And bring him to our eye. (iv. iv. 6-8)
- *Seek, seek for him.* (iv. iv. 17)
- *Be better suited:*
  These weeds are memories of those worser hours;
  I prithee, put them off. (iv. vii. 5-7)
- *O, look upon me, sir*
  And hold your hand in benediction o'er me: (iv. vii. 57-58)

Though in the imperative form, the last two examples are requests and pleas that Cordelia begs her father for on their second meeting. Cordelia's directives display a various array of not only requests and commands, but also questions and prayers:

- *Why have my sisters husbands, if the say*
  They love you all? (i.i. 91-92)
- *I yet beseech your majesty, —* (i. i. 115)
- *Well may you prosper!* (i. i. 74)
- *O, you kind gods, cure this....* (iv. vii. 15)
- *Sir, do you know me?* (iv. vii. 49)
- *How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?* (iv. vii. 44)

By the utterance of commissives, Cordelia binds and commits herself, pledges her word, vows, and promises using rather more direct and straightforward commissive acts than any of the other characters so far tackled:

- *I return these duties as are right fit.* (i.i. 89)
- *To your professed bosoms I commit him;* (i.i. 265)
- *He that helps him take all my outward worth.* (iv. iv. 10)

As for expressives, Cordelia uses this variety of speech acts basically to greet and expose sorrow:

- *So farewell to you both.* (i. i. 267)
- *Alack, alack!* (iv. vii. 41)

It is worth stating that the adverb '**alack**' and the interjection '**O**' are often inserted in the various speech acts to express sorrow, suffering, pain, and pity. As Cordelia becomes aware of the wrong turn things have taken, she cannot help feeling the pain of the grave consequences that will inevitably ensue. However, such interjections that occur within speech acts proper are not counted for convenience since it is rather hard to assign a single utterance to more than one type of speech acts.

Miranda

If Cordelia is described as the simple, pure female character in the Shakespearean tragic drama, Miranda, then, must be the simplest and most naïve of all Shakespeare's creation. Turner (1974c: ixii) maintains that Miranda differs from Desdemona, Ophelia, and Cordelia in that " ***she has not to face any great problem of life***", and that she has a father who watches over, guards her, and arranges every thing to assure her happiness and comfort. It is true that Miranda faces no problems, undergoes no tests or ordeals like the tragic characters above studied. Nevertheless, as the heroine of a Romance, which The ***Tempest*** is, Miranda could have been more like the damsel in distress, only Prospero, her father, would allow no danger to befall her. Cygan (2006: 6) points to the fact that by the time Shakespeare wrote the Tempest, the Patriarchal model was in absolute dominance. Miranda appears to fulfill all its demands down to the cipher.She is not the focus of the play, but still she is the only women on an island full with men and thus she is more or less to epitomize her kind (ibid.).

Her pure nature, simplicity, and naivete are obviously reflected in her speech acts where the assertives hold the sway as table (4) demonstrates. The assertives Miranda utters reflect minutely her simple, tractable, amenable nature that blindly trusts Prospero's sound judgement. She is accustomed to having her parent protect, ward off evil from, and guide her with complete passivity, concession, and complacence on her part.

Table (4): Miranda's Speech Acts

Speech Acts	No
Assertives	51
Directives	37
Commissives	8
Expressives	9
Declaratives	0
Total	105

However, she does not seem to stand in awe of her father though it is obvious that Miranda, willingly and complaisantly, complies with her father's instructions. Burris (1999: 2) points to the fact that Prospero always demands Miranda's "constant silent submission" commanding her often to hush and be silent. Her assertives are almost always answers in the affirmative in agreement with her father's arguments, commands, and directions:

- *'Tis far off*
  And rather like a dream than assurance
  That my remembrance warrants. (i. ii. 45-47)
- *Sir, most heedfully.* (i. ii. 78)
- *Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.* (i. ii. 96)
- *The strangeness of your story put*
  Heaviness in me. (i. ii. 306-307)

Miranda's directives are basically questions, requests, pleas, and prayers. When the play begins, a storm is portrayed. When Miranda first appears, her first words are a plea to her father to allay the storm, which she anticipates her father to have ordered his powers to initiate:

- *If by your art, my dearest father, you have*
  Put the wild waters in the roar, allay them. (i. ii. 1-2)

So, her very first directives, in effect, are requests and prayers in which she beseeches her father to calm down the ferocity of the agitated waters on behalf of the ship that passes by their secluded island. However, Prospero seizes the occasion to inform his daughter on their past, the injustices he has received, and the conspirators who were responsible for their being stranded on this wild

island. Miranda's inquisitive nature that has been so far kept pent-up and now let loose helps him carry out the task perfectly. She abandons her passive, complacent attitude and assumes a curious, inquisitive one instead:

- *Had I not*
  Four or five women once that tended me? (i. ii. 48-49)
- *Sir, are you not my father?* (i. ii. 56)
- *What foul play had we, that we came from thence?*
  Or blessed was't we did? (i. ii. 60-61)
- *Wherefore did they not*
  That hour destroy us? (i. ii. 138-139)
- *How came we ashore?* (i. ii. 148)
- *Why speaks my father so ungently?* (i. ii. 436)

A fair portion of Miranda's directives are requests/prayers in which she asks her father's favours on behalf of Ferdinand and the people aboard the shipwreck:

- *Heavens thank you for't! And now,*
  I pray you , sir—
  For still, 'tis beating in my mind— (i. ii. 174-176)
- *O dear father*
  Make not too rash a trial of him, (i. ii. 448)
- *Beseech you father! —* (i. ii. 446)
- *Sir have pity:*
  I'll be his surety. (i. ii. 467)
- *Be of comfort*
  My father's of a better nature, sir, (i. ii. 486)
- *Alas, now, pray you,*
  Work not so hard: (iii. i. 15-16)

Again, the requests and prayers with which she is intent to beseech her father or comfort Ferdinand expose a nature so simple and innocent and a mind that is bent on and accustomed to being answered in the affirmative. She has never been denied before. When it comes to commissives, Miranda commits herself and pledges her word in all sincerity in reference to the promises that become her simple, naïve nature:

- *Had I been any god of power, I would*
  Have sunk the sea within the earth,.. (i. ii. 10-11)
- *I'll be his surety.* (i. ii. 467)
- *If you'll sit down. I'll bear your logs the while,* (iii. i. 23-24)
- *I am your wife if you will marry me,*
  If not, I'll die your maid; to be your fellow
  You me deny me, but I'll be your servant,

Whether you will or not. (iii. i. 83-86)

A relatively fair number of expressives occurs along Miranda's acts of speech. Most of her expressives are loaded with the emotional ring of sorrow and pity as she laments the fate of her father's, the shipwreck, and finally Ferdinand's labour and mortification:

- *A brave vessel,* (i. ii. 6)
- *O my heart bleeds*
  To think o' the teen that I have turned you to,.... (i.ii. 63-64)

The first example is said in praise of the ship resistance of the violent storm raised by her father where Miranda hopes that the ship and its passengers would survive. In the second, Miranda laments her father's fate and suffering while he is relating to her the story of how his throne was usurped and how he, along with her, came to be marooned on this isolated island.

Results and Conclusions

The analysis of the speech acts uttered by four Shakespearean female characters: Desdemona, Ophelia, Cordelia, and Miranda proves beyond dispute the limitation with which the characters are handled. Their speech acts range over a limited continuum from assertive to directive speech acts. Other speech acts, viz., expressives, commissives, and declaratives are barely utilized. Whether the character is rich and endowed with intellectual assets like Cordelia or naively portrayed and constructed like Miranda, they all have in common the heavy reliance on assertives and directives. Moreover the assertives that most frequently occur are almost always answers to questions, requests, or orders whether the characters respond positively in agreement/affirmative, or negatively in denial or objection. The dominance of assertives proves clearly the passivity of these characters, a feature that becomes the portrayed women and is normally imposed by the patriarchal system the society leans on.

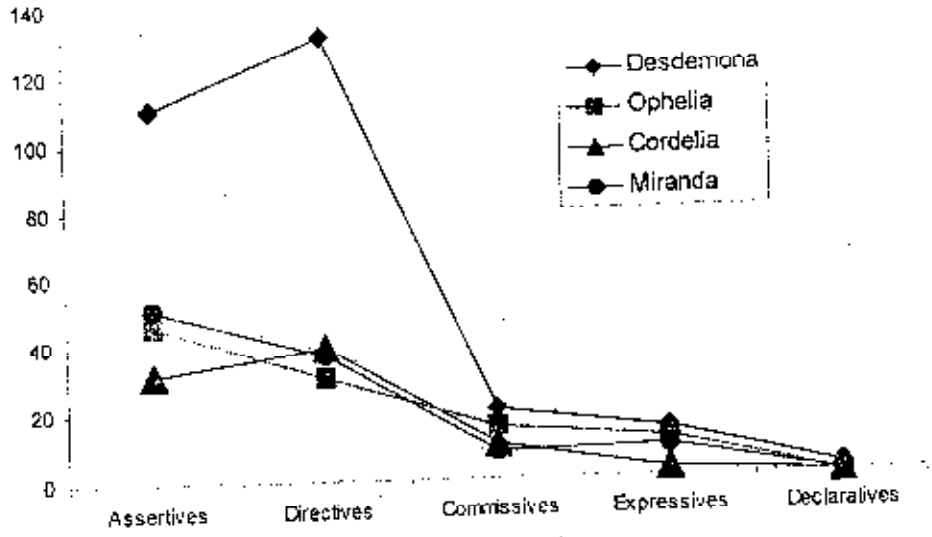
To even the scale, directives occur almost as frequently as assertives as table (5) illustrates. The detailed analysis of directives indicates that they can be dissected into at least three groups, viz., questions, requests, and pleas/prayers. These women seem to be always in need of answers to their queries and it is the role of the male characters to inform, explain, and illustrate. As for requests, though these women are royal in nature (Cordelia and Miranda), or of some power and authority (Ophelia/Desdemona), still they are barely imperious. With

the exception of Cordelia, later the queen of France, all other characters utter directives that are peremptory in their imperative form but pleas in thrust and context. The orders and commands these women use are furtively ventured save of course Queen Cordelia. A fair number of directives is apportioned to pleading and praying whether directly delineated by the words **pray** and **beseech** or obliquely indicated. Their prayers are addressed to God, gods, or persons. In the case of the last, the directives are those in which characters beg and plead.

As for other classes of speech acts, its apparent that the four women have very little recourse to expressives, commissives, and least of all declaratives. The rarity of these acts is pertinent to the fact that these women are portrayed with neither sophistication nor intellectuality complex enough to yield and utilize such acts of speech. In ordinary every day exchanges, assertives in particular, directives prevail. Commissive and expressive speech acts demand dramatic situations that are, if not extraordinary, at least complicated and intricate. That is why, the commissive/expressive/declarative acts are reserved to such situations that are rare in the drama as far as these women are concerned. They are almost always excluded when events come to a crux. Declaratives, for instance, which come at the bottom of the scale, require by definition certain rituals to be performed in certain institutions, hence, their rarity. Besides, their absence from a large portion of the drama justifies further the rarity of some speech acts as they are not called upon to make contributions.

Table (5): Speech Acts of Desdemona, Ophelia, Cordelia, and Miranda

Speech Acts	Desdemona	Ophelia	Cordelia	Miranda
Assertives	110	46	31	51
Directives	131	30	39	37
Commissives	20	15	10	8
Expressives	14	11	2	9
Declaratives	2	0	0	0
Total	278	102	82	105


140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Desdemona
Ophelia
Cordelia
Miranda
Assertives
Directives
Commissives
Expressives
Declaratives

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الخلاصة

لطالما كانت بطلات شكسبير مصدرا" متواصلا" للسحر و الجد لو التناقض لكل من المشاهدين/ القراء وللنقاد على حد سواء على الرغم من قلة ظهورهن في المسرحيات و اختصار و قصر الأحاديث المخصصة لهن بالمقارنة مع ابطال شكسبير الأخيار منهم و الأشرار. ومع هذا كله بقيت تلك الشخصيات تستحوذ على الأهتمام و تستقطب الكثير من الدراسة و البحث. ركز البحث الحالي على تلك الشخصيات التي على الرغم من قلة ظهورها، كان لها حضورا" موازيا" للبطل اذا لم يتفوق عليه وهن كل من دزدمونة بطلة عطيل و اوفيليا بطلة هاملت و كورديليا بطلة الملك لير و ميراندا بطلة العاصفة. تمحورت الدراسة حول تطبيق نظرية افعال الكلام لسيرل لغرض دراسة الحوارات التي تحدثت بها تلك الشخصيات. اظهرت نتائج التحليل ان وليم شكسبير خلق شخصيات نسائية اتسمت بالعمق والتفرد مع التزامه بالنظام الأجتماعي السائد والذي يعتمد المبادئ البطريركية التي تقضي بتهميش المراة وتجميد دورها في عالم الرجل فجائت تلك الشخصيات غنية و نابضة بالحياة .