

El Lenguas

Proyectos Institucionales

Número 1 | Agosto 2015

Celebrating Shakespeare

Suplemento en línea de la revista
Lenguas Vivas
ISSN 2469-0244



"El Lenguas": Proyectos Institucionales

NÚMERO 1 | AGOSTO 2015

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Directora
Paula López Cano

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Lenguas Vivas | ISSN 2469-0244

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Este suplemento ha sido publicado con el aporte de ESSARP
(English Speaking Scholastic Association of the River Plate)
y del Festival Shakespeare de Buenos Aires.
Agradecemos a Hernán Flores por la ilustración de tapa
y a Belén Ferreri por la realización del collage de fotografías de la página 6.

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E D I T O R I A L

De junio a noviembre de 2014 nuestra institución organizó un amplio abanico de actividades en homenaje a William Shakespeare a los 450 años de su nacimiento. *Celebrating Shakespeare* incluyó representaciones teatrales y musicales, paneles temáticos, talleres, un simposio de estudiantes de nuestra institución, abundante material gráfico y hasta una “caminata Shakespeare: *Hamlet*” al aire libre.

Este número de la revista presenta una síntesis fotográfica de las actividades pedagógicas y teatrales realizadas y recoge buena parte de las ponencias pronunciadas en los paneles temáticos, de manera de que puedan conocerlas quienes no las hayan presenciado y analizarlas con mayor detenimiento quienes hayan conocido su versión oral. A la vez, como los trabajos incluidos pertenecen a los diversos núcleos temáticos del programa del evento, intenta recrear hasta donde sea posible la suma de enfoques e interpretaciones que continúa suscitando hoy

Shakespeare en distintas generaciones y que dialogaron de manera muy rica en *Celebrating Shakespeare*.

Así lo demuestran las diversas lecturas de Shakespeare desde una perspectiva transcultural y una poscolonial, el análisis de aspectos compositivos de su obra dramática –las primeras escenas, el humor, el contexto sociopolítico y geográfico–, los estudios de la situación de las mujeres y de los cambios de género en sus obras de teatro desde perspectivas feministas y *queer*, los problemas de la traducción de Shakespeare, su tematización de la transición renacentista a la modernidad sobre la base del análisis de cuatro obras e incluso la contextualización y traducción de un homenaje de Goethe.

Por todo ello, este volumen es especial en tres sentidos: no está centrado en un tema sino en un autor; refleja una actividad institucional, de manera que los artículos no son producto de una convocatoria pública sino de una selección de los trabajos presentados en *Celebrating Shakespeare*; los publicamos en la lengua en que fueron presentados e incluimos solamente un resumen en castellano en el caso de los trabajos en inglés.

Esperamos contribuir así a recrear y prolongar la celebración, pues pensamos que los trabajos incluidos en este número pueden constituir también una base para un nuevo homenaje a los cuatro siglos de la muerte de Shakespeare en 2016.

Roberto Bein

Suplemento de proyectos institucionales

Celebrating Shakespeare

Este suplemento de la revista *Lenguas Vivas* se propone compartir con sus lectores algunos de los trabajos que formaron parte del programa *Celebrating Shakespeare* con el que el Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Lenguas Vivas “Juan Ramón Fernández” celebró los 450 años del nacimiento de William Shakespeare en 2014.

La celebración comenzó el 23 de abril, día del cumpleaños del dramaturgo, con un collage de escenas y reflexiones en el British Arts Centre. Participaron los actores Hugo Halbrich, James Murray, Alicia Vidal, Helen Sutton, María Bach, Kevin Schiele y Natalia Goldin. El programa anual fue presentado el 21 de mayo, con canciones, sonetos y escenas de obras, en la residencia del embajador del Reino Unido, John Freeman, con el auspicio de ESSARP y Oxford University Press Argentina. Participaron la actriz Malena Solda, el actor y director James Murray y el músico Miguel de Olaso.

A partir de entonces, durante todo el año, con el auspicio y apoyo del Festival Shakespeare de Buenos Aires, Trinity College London y Oxford University Press Argentina, se presentaron siete paneles académicos en inglés y en español. Los artículos de este suplemento, en la lengua en la que fueron presentados, son una selección de esas ponencias. Hubo además cinco talleres focalizados en el desafío de llevar la obra de Shakespeare al aula –desde la narración oral, pasando por la lectura de adaptaciones, hasta la puesta en escena de obras completas– y Patricio Orozco organizó una divertida caminata shakespeareana como las que realiza anualmente como parte del Festival Shakespeare de Buenos Aires.

En el día del traductor, tuvo lugar una mesa de traductores de la obra de Shakespeare organizada conjuntamente por el SPET (Seminario

Permanente de Estudios de Traducción) y la AATI (Asociación Argentina de Traductores e Intérpretes). El panel estuvo compuesto por los destacados traductores Miguel Ángel Montezanti, Pablo Ingberg y Daniel Samoilovich



El 3 de noviembre, APIBA (Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires) coorganizó con el programa el evento *Playing (with) Shakespeare*, donde se presentaron propuestas de los estudiantes de profesorado y el proyecto de representación de *Macbeth* de la escuela media del instituto (que culminó con tres exitosas funciones en noviembre y diciembre dirigidas por la profesora Valeria Plou). El cierre lo ofreció Rob Dickison, con su versión musicalizada de algunos sonetos.



Por su parte, los alumnos de nivel primario, coordinados por la profesora Magdalena Barañao, trabajaron en un proyecto utilizando tecnología. Sexto grado creó revistas digitales reconstruyendo la época isabelina y séptimo grado generó un chat de Facebook ficcionalizando roles de personalidades contemporáneas a William Shakespeare.



Se destaca además el simposio de alumnos de nivel terciario, donde dos alumnos del profesorado de inglés, Juan José Arias y María Cecilia Frattin, presentaron sus trabajos de investigación dentro de los dos seminarios sobre Shakespeare de la carrera. Además, dos alumnas del traductorado de inglés, Natalia Barry y Salomé Boustani, presentaron una obra escrita, dirigida y representada por ellas: *To be or not to be from the South*. Como cierre del programa, se ofreció un concierto de música isabelina a cargo de Laura Blanco, Cecilia Corrent, Nicolás Arroyo y Julia Blugerman.

Celebrar a Shakespeare fue el disparador que hizo posible crear un espacio de creatividad, reflexión académica y sinergia entre instituciones. Esperamos que esta publicación nos permita comunicar el entusiasmo de esa celebración interdisciplinaria y compartir nuestras reflexiones e inquietudes con la comunidad educativa.

*Dra. Claudia Ferradas
Regente del Nivel Superior*

Bringing Setting Centre Stage: A Geocritical Analysis of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*

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Este trabajo tiene por objetivo demostrar la manera en que el análisis geocrítico (Westphal, 2011) de Venecia en las obras de teatro de Shakespeare, Otelo y El Mercader de Venecia, favorece el estudio de sus personajes principales, Otelo y Shylock. Para alcanzar este objetivo, se busca resignificar a la República de Venecia, y a su ciudad homónima, como espacios y lugares geográficos desde un punto de vista histórico y cartográfico; como también se estudia a las dos obras de teatro en búsqueda de referencias polifónicas. Se explora tanto a la república como a la ciudad de Venecia como centros de comercio europeo y espacios fronterizos entre occidente y oriente y el Cristianismo y el Islam en los siglos XV y XVI. Se investiga los conceptos de la geografía humanística de topofilia y topofobia (Tuan, 1974) que se ven representados en Otelo y Shylock. También se indaga en contextos semejantes y opuestos a Venecia, como lo son Chipre y Belmont, y se busca dilucidar su simbología en relación a sus protagonistas.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: firstly, in it, I propose a Geocritical Approach to those works by William Shakespeare that either share the same setting or are set in similar areas, secondly, I seek to prove that this geo-centered approach enables a better analysis of characters' iden-

tity. According to its creator, Bertrand Westphal, a French professor at the University of Limoges, '[Geocriticism] places place at the center of debate' (2011: 112). Therefore, I will be centering my analysis on two literary representations of a same place, Venice, since I believe that this setting is much of a charac-

ter in Shakespeare' plays as the characters that appear in them. Even though Westphal suggests working with a network of literary representations or the 'extension of an intertextual (or intericonic) chain' (2011: 122) of a given place, I will only be focusing on the two works by Shakespeare that are set in Venice, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, since I aim to explore the texture of this place that probably Shakespeare never visited.

As Geocriticism is based on the productive potential of the encounter between the social sciences and the humanities (Prieto, 2012: 2), I will be taking a transdisciplinary perspective that will involve history, cartography and humanistic geography. Moreover, I will compare and contrast the characters' gaze of the city of Venice, especially that of Othello, Shylock, Desdemona and Portia, as 'the comparative method is at the heart of the geocritical approach' (Prieto, 2012: 4). By taking this myriad of observers that merge in the city of Venice, I will be seeking a so-called plural and reciprocating point of view in order to come close to the identity of the referred place. Multifocation is based, according to Westphal, on a 'multiplicity of heterogeneous points of view, which all converge in a given place, the primum mobile of the analysis' (2011: 122). Finally, this 'polyphonic or dialogical understanding' (Prieto 2012: 4) will help me study how characters negotiate their identities as aliens and citizens of Venice.

Although in *Othello*, four out of five acts take place in Cyprus and, in *The Merchant of Venice*, characters move to and fro between Venice and Belmont, Venice's presence is pervasive in both of them. As depicted in both

plays, the Republic of Venice is still the dominant colonial force and the cradle of thriving mercantilism of the beginning of the 15th and end of the 16th centuries, exactly what England was in Shakespeare's times. In *Othello*, the Republic of Venice extends to places like Verona (II,i,25), Rhodes (I,iii,23) and Cyprus whereas in *The Merchant of Venice* there are references to the city of Genoa (III,i,85), the capital city and port of Venice's lifelong enemy republic and where Jessica supposedly spent Shylock's eighty thousand ducats in one night, and the city of Padua (IV,i,110) where Bellario allegedly comes from.

In the Middle Ages, cartographers used to place the city of Venice close to the center of T and O world maps. The lower part of the T dividing the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa was the Mediterranean, while Jerusalem was always represented at the center of the map. A similar location is the one chosen by Shakespeare for his plays, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, where the three continents are also referred to. As Edward Said would put it: "the Orient and Europe are staged together." Yet, in both Shakespearean plays, we observe how the city of Venice is giving way to other centers. Most specifically in *Othello*, Shakespeare depicts how, as the Republic of Venice grew towards the West, the Ottoman Turks began threatening the Eastern boundaries of the Republic. After the fall of Constantinople into Turkish hands despite Venetians' desperate call for assistance to courts around Europe, Venice's situation worsened as Constantinople became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, in *The Merchant of Venice* we see Antonio's, and

probably other merchants', attempt to recover Venice's centrality when Shylock observes that 'his [Antonio's] means are in supposition; he/ hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies. I understand moreover, upon the Rialto,/ he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England,/ and other ventures he hath squandered abroad' (I,iii,16-20). By the end of the 15th century, Venice finally lost its reputation as the center of the Western European world when the Venetian spice trade route became obsolete with Portugal's discovery of a new route to India. Finally, as early as the 16th century the wealth flowing into countries like Spain, France and England displaced Venice and the Mediterranean from the centre of the world.

In *Othello*, Cyprus is an island in the Aegean Sea annexed to the Republic for the greatest part of the 16th century until it is ceded to the Ottomans. In fact, owing to Shakespeare's use of 'double time' and even though the characters make three separate voyages, the audience is never aware that Cyprus is the furthest Venetian outpost. Furthermore, the storm at the beginning of Act 2 and the night brawls between Roderigo and Cassio in Act 2 Scene 2 and in Act 5 Scene 1 show the fragile state of affairs in Cyprus. The tension the characters are subjected to can be both seen when Iago hints to Roderigo that the brawls he will provoke will bring Cyprus to 'mutiny' (II,i,266) and when Othello asks his men after the first brawl: 'are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that/ which heaven had forbid the Ottomites?' (II,iii,156-157). 'To turn Turks,' to Othello's way of seeing it, involved rejecting their Venetian rationality and suc-

cumbing to heathenish barbarism (Tosi and Bassi, 2011: 20).

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Belmont stands for the Orient, though probably located on a southern island such as Sicily in the Mediterranean. As Edward Said reminds us, 'the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe' (1978: 63). Belmont functions in the same way as Venice, which was defined by Manfred Pfister as "an inner-European orient," a site of orientalist fantasy displaced from the orient back into Italy' (Holderness, 2010: 33). As a matter of fact, Venice would not have become a world power without the Orient. For this same reason, no other state in Europe was as active as Venice in the cause of the crusades to the extent of its being put at great financial risk, especially after the Fourth Crusade. Moreover, every time Jerusalem was regained after each crusade, Venice would become Europe's last stop on the pilgrimage route to Holy Land. Tosi and Bassi agree that: 'Venice broke down the binary between East and West. As historian Eric R. Dursteler contends, "In the early modern era, the Venetian Empire was uniquely situated to function as both boundary and cultural middle ground, "a place of transition" in which people from throughout the Mediterranean and from every corner of Europe came together"' (2011: 29-30).

By the same token, Belmont is, as Said

would call it, ‘a domestication of the exotic’ (1978:60): a utopian world ruled by woman with the hegemonic supervision of a father’s will. In Act 1 Scene 1, Antonio asks Bassanio to tell him ‘what lady is the same / to whom you swore a secret pilgrimage’ (119-120). To this, Bassanio later discloses that ‘she is fair, and fairer than that word,/ of wondrous virtues [...] / for the four winds blow in from every coast/ renowned suitors, and her sunny locks/ hang on her temples like golden fleece’ (162-170). Antonio’s use of religious language and Bassanio’s use of hyperboles in connection to Portia contribute to the idealization of Orientalized Belmont.

Therefore, the two locations, Cyprus and Belmont, point at Venice’s ‘universal compendium of every possible thing’ (Holderness, 2010: 24). Shakespeare portrays Venice as a microcosm of the world, a cosmopolitan and multicultural place where distinctions of rank, race and nation were blurred: ‘In Venice you could find people of all nations coexisting in the one place’ (*Ibid.* 27). The Doge or Duke of Venice had significant power but he also had a system of checks and balances by a succession of different organs of government which prevented his rule from turning into tyranny (Tosi and Bassi, 2011: 8). On the other hand, these political bodies did not constitute hereditary nobility and thus, would change depending on the families of either nobility or wealth that became powerful and provided service to the state for a certain amount of time. In *Othello*, senators are Romanized ‘togaed consuls’ (D’Amico, 2001: 69) and Brabantio is a ‘magnifico’ (I,ii,11) who according to Iago’s warning to Othello, has ‘in

his effect a voice potential/ As double as the duke’s’ (I,ii,12-13). Venice was a city whose signiors or nobles were also merchants and whose merchants could wield power; a city where the division between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie was blurry since aristocrats and wealthy bourgeois could take part of the organs of government that checked the Duke’s power.

In both plays, Venetians take pride in their city even in extreme situations. In *Othello*, when being awoken by Iago and Roderigo’s shouts with the news of his daughter’s elopement with Othello, Brabantio asserts: ‘this is Venice;/ my house is not a grange’ (I, i, 102). Moreover, at the basis of the city’s survival, wealth and prosperity was international trade, ‘Venetian law promised to keep an open market, not to confiscate goods for political motives and last but not least, not to set private interest above the laws (Holderness, 2010: 76, D’Amico, 2001: 42-43). In *The Merchant of Venice*, when Salerio hints to Antonio that the Duke may side at court with him, Antonio quickly answers that:

The Duke cannot deny the course of law;
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
‘Twill much impeach the justice of the state,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. (III, iv, .26–31)

Othello, Antonio and even Shylock place themselves in the hands of the Duke because they trust him. Othello says when talking to the Duke: ‘If you do find me foul in her [Desdemona’s] report,/ The trust, the office I do

hold of you,/ Not only take away, but let your sentence/ Even fall upon my life (I,iii, 118-121). Shylock brings his case to court because he trusts the Duke. Moreover, Portia hints at these equal rights when she enters the Venetian courtroom and, unable to distinguish between Shylock and Antonio, asks: 'Which is the merchant here and which is the Jew?' (IV,i,70).

'Venice presented itself as universally tolerant, but was in practice systematically intolerant towards certain ethnic minorities such as Jews and Moors' (Holderness, 2010: 8). In Othello's case, Roderigo calls him 'an extravagant and wheeling stranger/ of here and everywhere' (I,i,132-133), a character without roots, a nomad. Othello's ethnicity is difficult to identify because, in Shakespeare's time, the term moor could mean an African, any dark-skinned person, a Berber-Arab from North Africa, or a Muslim (Holderness, 2010: 48). Because Venice lacked arable land and depended on fish and trade for sustenance, the majority of Venetians were sailors that lacked military training and would hire mercenaries to defend their interests. At the beginning of the play, Othello is portrayed as a very successful mercenary that has carved a reputation for himself in the Republic of Venice. Despite his hatred for Othello, Iago admits:

For I do know the state,
However this may gall him [Othello] with some
check,
Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embarked
With such loud reason to their Cyprus wars,
Which even now stands in act, that for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have none,
To lead their business (I,i,143-149).

Unlike Othello's identity, Shylock's is much easier to pin down. Holderness holds that in contrast to Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* who is a Levantine Jew, Shylock is a 'Tedeschi' or German Jew (2010: 36) on grounds of his profession as money lender and the fact that he mentions having bought his wife's jewels in Frankfurt. In connection to Shylock's activity as a money lender, Holderness states that 'Christians had no quarrel with borrowing and lending per se, or with interest being added to the principal after the repayment date had passed' (36). Jewish scripture forbade lending on interest within the Jewish community, but permitted lending to foreigners (38), hence he had no problem with lending money to Venetians.

In a similar fashion to Othello, Shylock bears the brunt of Venice's intolerance. While providing the Jews with the necessary accommodation, Venice segregated Jews on the island known as the Ghetto Nuovo to avoid cultural cross-contamination with the Venetian population. In Shylock's case, he does not have to reside in a Jewish ghetto. Nevertheless, he feels racially segregated when he makes the ironic remark to Antonio "Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;/ You spurned me such a day; another time/ You called me 'dog'—and for these courtesies/ I'll lend you thus much moneys?" (I,iii,123-126). According to Edward Said, 'the Orient and the Islam are always represented as outsiders having a special role to play *inside Europe*' (1978:71).

In the light of humanistic geography,

which can be consulted in connection to two simple notions such as space and place, we could venture to say that Venice has become a place for Othello. To differentiate the concepts of space and place, we can resort to a humanistic geographer, Yi Fu Tuan, who says that spaces are free, open and threatening while places are stable and secure. Space is an open arena of action and movement while place is about stopping and resting and becoming involved; places are experienced (Cresswell, 2004: 20). Despite the fact that Othello has taken part in Ottoman wars, he has stopped leading a nomadic life and has made Venice his dwelling place, his home. Othello loves and feels loved by the city of Venice: when he is accused by Brabantio of stealing his daughter, he says 'her [Desdemona's] father loved me' (I,iii,128) and Brabantio does not contradict him but it does not mean he accepts him as his son-in-law. Othello expresses the same feeling of love in his valedictory speech before suicide, when he describes that:

[...] in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and turban'd Turk,
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him- thus (V,ii,349-357)

However, the paradox, and the source of Brabantio's claims as well, lie in the fact that Othello was supposed to protect the Venetian possessions not to steal them. To Brabantio, Othello is still a soldier that the republic employs to safeguard its borders. In fact, Venetian fear and mistrust of Muslim Turks was of course greater than any anxiety about

the Jews, since the latter had no political affiliation, while the Turks were from time to time an enemy power' (Holderness, 2010: 53). Moors were granted a one-building ghetto, what is now called the Fondanco dei Turchi. Venice was almost the only city in the whole of Europe which had Turkish and Ottoman residents.

Nevertheless, in Othello's mind, his private and public life are not clearly divided. In the periphery of the Republic of Venice lay Cyprus, a colony which was particularly valued for being a profitable source of sugar and cotton. The Duke is in such a great need of 'valiant Othello' (I,iii,49) to safeguard the colony of Cyprus that when, in the context of impending war against the Ottomans, Brabantio accuses Othello of having stolen his daughter, he tells Brabantio to 'take this mangled matter at the best' (I,iii,172-173). The fact that the Duke places Venice's 'general care' (I,iii,55) above a magnifico's 'particular grief' (56) blinds Othello to such an extent that he is convinced his discourse, tale and military success have finally outweighed his racial difference to make him, at long last, a Venetian citizen. In fact, this event places him above a Venetian 'magnifico' (I,ii,11), Brabantio, who according to Iago's warning to Othello, had 'in his effect a voice potential/ As double as the duke's' (I,ii,12-13).

To analyse Othello's delusion, we could take into account another contemporary humanistic geographer, Tim Cresswell, who considers place as 'space which people have made meaningful' and thus, feel attached to (2004: 7). Othello's attachment to Venice prevents him from becoming aware of Venice's

mercantilist affection. Moreover, Othello extends his love for Venice to his love for Desdemona to such an extent that both become one. From a humanistic geographer's perspective, we could dare say that Othello has acquired a feeling of topophilia, 'the affective bond between people and place or setting' (Tuan, 1974: 4). Desdemona becomes the stable center around which Othello the nomad, 'the restless spirit of Venetian extravagancy,' orbits (Holderness, 2010: 94). Desdemona is Othello's home as Venice is Othello's place in the world. Tuan would define Othello's compelling feeling or topophilia for Venice as 'emotionally charged' or 'as a symbol' of Desdemona (1974: 93).

By shifting the setting from Venice to Cyprus, Shakespeare's characters leave the protection of the Venetian social structure and embrace a new identity. In fact, Othello feels more comfortable in Cyprus than in Venice, he says this to his wife on their arrival: 'you [Desdemona] shall be well desired in Cyprus;/ I have found great love amongst them' (II,I,198-199). Probably, Othello's feelings spring from the fact that Cyprus is a much more liminal place than Venice. Cyprus's liminality acts as a double bind for Othello since it enables him to come face to face with his otherness. Desdemona sees how Cyprus has affected Othello's personality when she points out that:

Something sure of state,
Either from Venice or some unhatched practice
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things

Though great ones are their object
(III,iv,1137-142).

The same questions are asked by Lodovico when he asks 'Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate/ call all in all sufficient?' (IV,I,255-256). Despite the fact that, as audience we know that Othello's change has been triggered off by the 'monster' (III, iv,157) of jealousy, we may wonder if Cyprus has not produced it.

What we see is that Othello's feelings for both Venice and Desdemona have reverted. His feelings of topophilia for Venice have reverted to topophobic ones. Once the seed of jealousy is planted by Iago, Othello places himself as an outsider to Venetian wooing: 'for I am black/ and have not those soft parts of conversation/ that chamberers have' (III,iii,262-264). However, Othello's disappointment is not with Desdemona but with all Venice: 'look here, Iago;/ all my fond love thus do I blow to heaven./ 'Tis gone./ Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!' (III,i-ii,442-445). Othello concludes that 'she must die, else she'll betray more men' (V,ii,6), the symbol of perfection that both Venice and Desdemona represent has to be eradicated from the surface of the earth so that no men will suffer from their betrayal. By the same token, Othello is not the least disturbed when he admits to Emilia that he has killed her and explains plainly: 'she [Desdemona] turned to folly, and she was a whore' (132).

When Iago describes women, most precisely the ones he knows of, Venetian women, he defines them as 'pictures out of door/ bells in your parlours, wildcats in your kitchen,

saints in your injuries, devils being offended players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds' (II,i,107-110). Iago suspects that his wife has cheated on him with Othello. Be it true or just a plain excuse, Iago promises to himself that 'nothing can or shall content my soul/ till I am evened with him, wife for wife' (II,ii,289-290). Iago's revenge scheme seeks to even their wives in all matters, cuckoldry included. Before his jealousy is unleashed, Othello harbours the idea that Venetian women are not constant in their love; he claims: 'perdition catch my soul/ but I do love thee [Desdemona]! And when I love thee not / chaos is come again' (III,iii,90-93). He even voices his disappointment at Desdemona when he calls her both a 'public commoner' (IV,ii, 72) and the 'cunning whore of Venice that married with Othello' (IV,ii,88-89). In her feminist speech, Emilia blames women's behavior on men, 'it is their husbands' faults/ if wives do fall' (IV,iii,87-88) and even encourages women 'let husbands know/ their wives have sense like them' (94-95).

In comparison to *Othello*, Shylock's Venice provokes ambiguous, if not contradictory feelings in him: those of topophilia and topophobia. If, as above mentioned, humanist geographers define topophilia as the human love of place, topophobia is the human fear or repulsion of it. Shylock's feelings of topophilia and topophobia towards Venice are directed to the city and its citizens in a different fashion. Like topophilia, topophobia involves 'an emotional bond between person and place-but one in which the relationship is essentially negative' (Douglas et al, 1996: 912).

Shylock's retaliation is based on his abso-

lute trust in Venice and its laws and in his deep hatred for Antonio i.e. in his feelings of topophilia towards Venice and in his feelings of topophobia towards a citizen. Unlike Othello, Shylock is fully aware that he is not considered, and probably never will be considered, a citizen of Venice. In fact, Shylock lends money to Venetian citizens because he considers himself foreign. Hence, he keeps reminding the Duke at court of the consequences of not complying with the laws of Venice that protect citizens and foreigners in equal manner: 'if you deny it [the forfeit of his bond], let the danger light/upon your charter and your city's freedom' (IV,i,37-38). According to Holderness, Shylock's legal strategy is wise since he proceeds from the position of a stranger rather than of a citizen of Venice (2010:79).

On the other hand, while Shylock trusts Venice and its laws, he shows great disgust at the Venetians. The reasons for Shylock's topophobic feelings reside in both his attitude and social context. Not only does he seem to have great difficulty in developing and maintaining social bonds, as proved by the fact that both his servant and daughter run away from him, but neither does he seem to confide in any other members of the Jewish community. His hatred for Antonio could apply to any Christian Venetian. Before lending money to Bassanio, he makes this clear when he states: 'I hate him [Antonio] for he is a Christian / but more, for that in low simplicity/ he lends out money gratis, and brings down/ the rate of usance here with us in Venice' (I,iii,39-42).

However, Shylock's failure lies in the fact that he is totally unaware that the perspective changes as soon as 'the action moves

from the open piazza to the closed courtroom, where the same judicial system that had protected the trader attacks the alien' (D'Amico, 2001: 44). For starters, he should have realized that the Duke's words 'we all expect a gentile answer, Jew' (IV,i,34) mean that the Venetians expect him to provide a Christian solution. Secondly, as James Shapiro argues, Shylock aims at circumcising Antonio's heart but to Christian eyes, he is restaging the crucifixion (Holderness 2010:80-81). Thirdly, he should have accepted Portia's ecumenical offer: 'we do pray for mercy / and that same prayer doth teach us all to render/ the deeds of mercy' (IV,i,180-196).

Once the verdict is given, Shylock is not only deprived of part of his properties that in turn will be transferred to Lorenzo (IV,i,382.383), who will now enjoy both his daughter and wealth, but also of his identity -he is made to become a Christian (IV,i,385). To this verdict, Shylock will have a rather apathetic response in comparison to his eloquent defense while on trial: 'take my life and all, pardon not that./ You do take my house when you do take the prop/ that doth sustain my house; you take my life/ When you take the means whereby I live' (IV,I,372-375). With the trial, Shylock has lost his reason for living; he has been reminded that his topophilic and, even topophobic attachment to Venice is non-existent and that he has, ultimately, been displaced from Venice.

Unlike Shylock, Othello regains his initial eloquence in his final speech. Before committing suicide, he makes Venice and Desdemona his place in the world again. In his confusion, he asks himself 'where should Othello go/

now?' (V,ii,269-270) even though he previously provided an answer to his question: 'here's my journey's end, here is my butt,/ and very seamark of my utmost sail' (V,ii,265-266). As Tosi and Bassi hold, Othello's suicide foreshadows the fall of Cyprus and the decline of the Venetian Republic: 'the person it [Venice] depended upon to lead its forces against the Turk is dead; command of the Cyprian fortress is in the hands of Cassio, an inexperienced officer, and the Turkish threat lurks beyond the citadel's walls. No wonder Lodovico will relate this heavy act with heavy heart to the Venetian state' (2011:28-29).

Although Shakespeare's plays describe Venice as a booming centre of commerce and banking, he must have been aware of the decline of the oldest republic of Europe and the beginning of a mythology of fantasy and imagination built around it. David McPherson suggests that there have been four key myths that have been taken as true across the centuries: Venice the Rich, Venice the Wise, Venice the Just and Venice the 'citta galante' (Holderness, 2010: 7). These myths are probably the same myths that Shakespeare both believed in and questioned alongside with what Holderness suggests are other mythological reputations such as Venice the Chaste, the Seductive, the Imperfect and the Decadent among others (*Ibid.*). In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, Venice is constructed as a puzzle of utopian and dystopian qualities that gives a hint of what England would become and the way in which it would deal or was already dealing with internal and external conflicts (Tosi and Bassi 2011:8). Moreover, Shakespeare's plays are warning us against mak-

ing Venice a place. As George Simmel states, Venice is ‘never a home,’ it is not a place to dwell in but a place to view from the outside (Holderness, 2010: 10).

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Exploring (Con)texts: “Writing Back” to *The Tempest* by W. Shakespeare

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¿Hasta qué punto La Tempestad marca un hito al explorar lo (pos)colonial? ¿Cuántas culturas reescribieron y recontextualizaron el texto Shakespeareano, de manera de transformar el “original”, cambiando la asimetría de poder y logrando una verdadera revolución? Los escritores que leen La Tempestad como alegoría (pos)colonial, y que la eligen como punto de partida para una genuina contracritura, se proponen reconstruir el texto renacentista por completo desde una mirada paródica que posiciona los supuestos márgenes en el centro y que resignifica no sólo las lenguas sino también las culturas y las identidades. Estos (con)textos ahondan en la deconstrucción del maniqueísmo colonial mediante la hibridación de lenguas, géneros, sistemas semióticos y legados culturales, e imprimen sus identidades dinámicas plasmándolas en el dialogismo de la polifonía textual. Esta exploración hace posible que los autores poscoloniales que reescreiben La Tempestad resignifiquen el hipotexto e intervengan en los paradigmas y epistemas que la sostenían. Esta práctica contra-discursiva da lugar a que los escritores poscoloniales materialicen en sus obras la manera en que las culturas se desconstruyen y reconstruyen al hibridarse en un nuevo espacio de enunciación que inscribe la voz y el eco de la transculturación como marca identitaria.

CALIBAN

After having seized *his books* [...]
Remember to possess *them*, for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command.
(*The Tempest*, III, I, 90-98)

To possess, or not to possess, Prospero's books – that is the question that Caliban can neither evade nor handle. Caliban has been displaced and dispossessed within his own island under the ominous 'tempest' conjured up by Prospero, the Magus whose unparalleled powers emanate from his books of magic. Caliban knows that he is spell-bound, and that he can only free himself from Prospero's epistemic violence by means of appropriating his master's tools. Caliban, having been acculturated and alienated from integral aspects of his personality, needs to 'write back', to 're(con)textualise' and to resignify his subject position, so as to re-inscribe his cultural identity.

This view of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) as a colonial allegory can be traced back to Shakespeare himself, who was particularly drawn to the trope of the new world, with its many commercial and imaginative possibilities. Shakespeare's context of production, an expansionist Jacobean court nurturing relations with prominent members of the Virginia Company, paved the way for the exploration of imperialism, other worlds and 'others', as well as the loss of domains, realms and universes of meaning. Shakespeare, an avid reader of the accounts of the journeys by Francis Drake (1578), Thomas Gates (1610) and William Strachey (1609)

and of Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals" (1580), in which the Americas were (mis)represented as *tabula rasa*, chose the island and the Prospero/Caliban encounter as a natural environment and a clear dynamics through which European values could be re-assessed (Fernie, 2005:19).

Shakespeare, an explorer of Humanism, borrowed exotic, savage and masterless stereotypes as well as nature/nature and coloniser/colonised tropes to frame *The Tempest*, as if willing to expose the very inconsistencies within the hegemonic discourses of his time. These fissures in the supposedly solid foundations of the Shakespearean classic have been appropriated as points of departure for counter-discursive writing by postcolonial writers aiming at dismantling the epistemic violence of colonial discourse. Indeed, postcolonial hypertexts of *The Tempest* have engaged in direct contestation of not only the Shakespearean text, but also the whole discursive field against which it had been constructed (Tiffin, 1978: 17-34).

Hypertextual postcolonial renderings of *The Tempest* have precisely delved into the extent to which canonical texts are far from unitary, transparent and stable by means of representing them anew from their own deconstructive perspective and culture-specific gaze. Some postcolonial writers have resorted to "writing back" (Ashcroft, 1995: 57), dismantling Eurocentric centres of meaning and Manichaeism, while others have focused on recreating "(con)texts" (Thieme, 2000: 5), exploring how a canonical text means and how it may be resignified in other contexts. *Writing back* is a notion popularised by Indi-

an writer and cultural critic Salman Rushdie (1991), punning on the title of the *Star Wars* sequel, *The Empire Strikes back*. To Rushdie, postcolonial authors should “strike back with the pen” by means of seizing the master’s tools –language, canonical texts, semiotic systems– in order to challenge the epistemic violence of reified Eurocentric centres of meaning. (*Con*)text is a concept developed by postcolonial theorist and critic John Thieme (2000), who adds that counter-discursive strategies should particularly focus on those moments or processes in which the articulation of cultural differences are produced, and use this as a point of departure to re-centre the previously marginalised. Each postcolonial author should re-write and re-stage canonical texts foregrounding and re-inscribing the very characters and subject positions which may metonymically reposition their own culture.

Transculturating (*Con*)texts

Postcolonial writers have engaged with Shakespeare’s last play due to its allegorical content. However, not all renderings have deconstructed universes of meaning, worldviews and ideological perspectives in the same way. (*Con*)texts are loaded with culture-specific references, aims and textures, and they inscribe divergent reactions to *The Tempest*. This can be seen in the particular cases of Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America, to name a few, and how each culture has foregrounded and empowered different characters to ‘seize Prospero’s books’.

Restaging Canada: Miranda and Gonzalo’s close up

GONZALO

In the *commonwealth* I would by contraries
Execute all thing [...]; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure.
(*The Tempest*, II, i, 98-101)

MIRANDA

How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is!
O brave new world,
That has such people in’t!
(*The Tempest*, V, I, 110-1)

Canadian (*con*)texts have systematically chosen to foreground Gonzalo and Miranda, two characters who have been assigned peripheral and marginal positions in *The Tempest*, since they are functional to Prospero’s centrality. Canadian postcolonial writers have focused on these characters, since they are believed to metonymically represent Canada’s experience, always instrumental to British Empire and never fully acknowledged (McPherson, 1960: 18). Canadian hypertexts generally reinforce this deconstructive strategy by means of offering framed discourses so as to narratologically represent the need to offer multiple, critical and more detached perspectives about the past. In *The Salterton Trilogy* (1951), Robertson Davies opens with *Tempest-Tost*, a novella set at a university in which faculty members embark on the ill-fated journey of staging an amateur production of *The Tempest*. This theatre production provides a colourful backdrop for a hilarious look

at unrequited love and asymmetrical power relations among colleagues. A satirical tone goes in crescendo throughout *Tempest-Tost* as the author instrumentally uses ‘the play within the novel’ to expose the foibles of a Canadian town, criticising the shallowness and pettiness of Canadian life.

The central figures in *Tempest-Tost* are initially Prospero and Caliban, mirroring the Shakespearean hypotext, with a pantomime-like Gonzalo, always lurking behind their backs. The reader understands that Gonzalo specularly represents Canada, often made to play a minor role on (the world) stage. However, Gonzalo is gradually foregrounded as the crucial catalyst to the order of things. The text by Davies nurtures the belief that Canada is a Gonzalo, forever devoured by a mask and in absolute denial of his true self (McPherson, 1960: 25). This central theme is alluded to in the very title of the novella, which is a line wisely borrowed from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* as the three weird sisters see through the tragic hero’s fatal flaw: “[...] *Though his bark cannot be lost / Yet it shall be tempest-tost*” (Act I, ii, 25). This is further reinforced as we come to understand that in *The Tempest*, everything is mere illusion. *Tempest-Tost* brings Gonzalo-Canada to the fore in an attempt to problematise the need to re-centre the marginalised.

The human dichotomy about whether or not to accept the true nature of the self, and the new order of things, is further explored in the Canadian novel *The Diviners* (1974) by Margaret Laurence. The author lived in Africa, in Somalia and Gold Cost from 1950 to 1957, and read O. Mannion’s African (con)

text *Prospero and Caliban* (1956), focused on Caliban’s dependence complex. Laurence was amazed by this postcolonial version, writing back to the asymmetry and indoctrination brought about by colonial systems. *The Diviners* is a framed narrative in which the protagonist, Morag Gunn, is a writer undergoing the process of creation of her second novel, *Prospero’s Child*, an allegory of the Canadian condition, as the “dutiful daughter of Empire” (Brydon, 1984: 77). The plot revolves around the ordeal of Miranda, called Mira in the story within the story, who is gradually infantilised by Prospero, His Excellency the Governor, also cynically referred to as H.E. This alludes to colonial-patriarchal repression, since Canada is metonymically represented as the “maiden colony penetrated” by the epistemic violence of Empire (Zabus, 1994: 120). *The Diviners* suggests links between domestic and macro-colonial forms of authoritarian control, and its polyphonic technique lends itself for a revisionist perspective that interpellates colonial processes. In *The Tempest*, Caliban realises he will need to seize the books of Prospero to divest the master of his powers. In *The Diviners*, it is Morag who ‘seizes the book’ by means of becoming a successful writer who denounces the annihilation of female agency (Greene, 1995: 12). This (con)text foregrounds feminine characters, exposed in their condition as the disempowered subjects of the “colonial island” (Thieme, 2000: 151) to specularly reflect the Canadian experience.

Canada writes back by means of foregrounding both Miranda and Gonzalo. This makes it possible not only to de-centre Prospero, but also to dismantle the Prospero-Ca-

liban binary. In *The Tempest*, Gonzalo's and Miranda's connivance with Prospero prove to be key to his framing himself as the master of the island. Both Gonzalo and Miranda know that Prospero is powerless against the background of the new order of things on the island. However, they behave as truly functional subjects to the mystification of Prospero and to the make-believe of his absolute supremacy. Gonzalo furnishes Prospero with the book of magic and Miranda is complicitous with his delusions of grandeur and his narratives of conquest. Canada's counter-discursive strategy implies stating that those perceived as peripheral, if not marginal, may prove to have been central to the construction of power and the reinforcement of colonial paradigms. Canadian writers of (con)texts write back not only to *The Tempest*, but also to the whole discursive field within which the text operates, since their main purpose is to denounce the extent to which Canada has contributed to 'the making of Prospero'.

Retextualising the Caribbean: Caliban's rite of passage

CALIBAN

*This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me.
Cursed be I that did so!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king.*
(*The Tempest*, I, ii, 340-55)

Caribbean writers, particularly throughout the decolonisation process of the second part of the twentieth century, were gradually drawn

to problematising and re-writing the dynamics of the Prospero-Caliban colonial paradigm. Caribbean (con)texts have been particularly concerned with interpellating colonial discourse and exposing how the formerly colonised have been 'Calibanised', that is to say, psychologically framed by Empire. Caribbean texts have also aimed at writing back to Prospero's annihilation of Caliban's selfhood as "*this thing of darkness I acknowledge as mine*" (*The Tempest*, V, i, 267-275) in an attempt to decolonise and reinscribe Caribbean identity.

In *The Pleasures of Exiles* (1960), Barbadian writer and essayist George Lamming is concerned with exposing the exploitation, stereotyping and dehumanisation of African Diasporic subjects. The book intends to change the rules of engagement between Prospero and Caliban by means of displacing them both from the island to the shipwreck. The fact that both characters are stranded and drifted by the thrust of the sea, as if entrapped in the Middle Passage, radically changes the nature of the relationship between Prospero and Caliban. George Lamming, by having both archetypal characters transcultured, insists on their interdependence and highlights how they will both need to negotiate their identities to survive postcolonial transformation, symbolised by water. Prospero is terrified by the fluidity of water, which he construes as a 'non-place' (Augé, 1995: 15), a space of engulfment and alienation. In contrast, Caliban is mesmerised by the water vortex, which he sees as a 'liminal place' (Bhabha, 1994: 3), an interstitial space of fusion and transformation. Caliban seizes the possibility of reinventing himself, metamorphosing back to

his very roots through the mediation of an Afro-Caribbean ritual that initiates him both into retribalisation and hybridisation (Thieme, 2000:131).

In his book *Water with Berries* (1971), George Lamming is more hesitant about Caliban's agency and power to restage history and re-inscribe identity. The novel explores the condition of Caribbean exiles in London through the experience of three exiled artists, Derek, Roger and Teeton, who specularly reflect one another. Derek is an actor who has been cast for a play but is only assigned minor roles. Ironically, when he eventually plays a leading role, he is made to flesh out the roles of either Caliban or Othello. Understanding the implications of "being Caliban" is epiphanic to the three characters. Indeed, the title of Lamming's novel intertextually refers to a pivotal moment in *The Tempest* (I, ii, 330-43), when Caliban states that the island is his, and resents having welcomed Prospero. George Lamming displaces the very grounds of the coloniser-colonised encounter in *The Tempest* onto a new terrain, the water-with-berries trope. The archetypal figures of the hypertext recur but only for characters to gradually grow aware of how stereotyping practices operate. According to Lamming, recognition of the role, frame of mind and behaviour introjected by the formerly colonised appears to be the first step towards the deconstruction of otherness and the re-inscription of selfhood.

In the third part of his trilogy *The Arrivants* (1969), called *Islands*, Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite writes back to *The Tempest* through his poem "Caliban". The narrative poem is a hypertext of Act II, scene ii,

in *The Tempest*, in which a drunken Caliban attempts to plot against Prospero in alliance with Trinculo and Stephano, paradoxically uttering the words "Ban-ban Caliban has a new master" (I, ii, 160-177). Brathwaite is particularly concerned with denouncing the extent to which the colonised have been psychologically framed as slaves, so that they merely drift from master to master. The poem "Caliban" takes a particular force, since it is set at the very beginning of the post-imperial era amid changing political hegemonies in the Caribbean. Just like Lamming in *The Pleasures of Exiles*, Brathwaite writes back by means of displacing characters from the island and relocating them in a borderland space, the sea. This recontextualisation allows Caliban to assume a new role as a Trinidadian Masquerader enjoying the release from oppression offered by the island's annual Carnival.

This counter-discursive strategy lends itself for Caliban to take part in a ceremony of liberation and descent into the self, parodically worshipping only one master, the Lord of Misrule. For Brathwaite, the transculturation of Caliban into the bowels of a slave ship during Carnival paves the way for Caliban, metonymically representing the Caribbean, to go back to African roots. Caliban performs the limbo dance and takes part in an extensive repertoire of ancestral rites to the rhythm of the drums as a central symbol of the assertion of African experience (Thieme, 2000: 139). As African legacy and Caribbean experience come to the fore in Caliban's rite of passage, the Prospero-Caliban binary is deconstructed. Caliban achieves to emancipate himself from the gaze and epistemic violence

of his former master, inscribing his own system of representation and textualising Afro-Caribbean semiotics.

Rewriting Latin America: from Arielism to Calibanism

ARIEL

Where the bee sucks. there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.
(*The Tempest*, V, I, 88-94)

The nature of Latin American literatures writing-back to *The Tempest* has changed over time. In their counter-discursive versions, Latin American (con)texts have foregrounded the figure of Ariel, ironically the true (super)natural source of Prospero's magic. The tendency among Modernist Latin American writers and cultural critics was to embrace 'Arielism' (Jauregui, 1998: 47), that is to say, to emulate the superiority of Latin American spiritual force and to foster the vindication of its legacy. Arielism was to be constructed in binary opposition to 'Calibanism', which was associated with brutality and devastation. This alluded to the growing expansionism and imperialism of the United States of America, from their intervention in Mexico in 1846 to their subsequent interventions in Cuba, Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam (Vaughan, 1996: 50-75). Latin American Post-Modernist thinkers, on the other hand, transitioned

towards the deconstruction of the figure of Caliban and, within a changing macrocosm of post-colonialism and transculturation, they resignified Calibanism into cultural hybridisation or *mestizaje* (Ashcroft, 1995: 57).

Cuban writer José Martí, in his essay entitled "*Nuestra América*" (1891), is one of the first within his Modernist Generation to aim at re-staging and re-inscribing Latin America, so as to raise a case for Pan-Americanism. The very title of his essay is a counter-discursive move for the re-appropriation of the name *America*, seized by the United States as from George Washington's administration. Martí is one of the first Latin American (con)text writers to resignify the civilisation [Europe] vs. barbarism [Latin America] opposition introduced by Argentinean statesman Domingo Faustino Sarmiento within the intellectual arena. Martí underscores that the true battle runs between false erudition and nature, and warns Hispanic-American cultures against the continuing threat of Anglo-Saxon American imperialism and expansionism developing as from Monroe's Doctrine (1823) and Manifest Destiny (1840). Martí fosters the awakening of *his* America by developing self-awareness and reinforcing sovereignty and unity, and particularly by means of exalting the spirituality and ancestral traditions of Latin America. This conviction and sentiment will soon be strengthened and widely spread as *Arielism* in allusion to a critical re-interpretation of *The Tempest*.

Nicaraguan writer Rubén Darío, in his essay "*El Triunfo de Calibán*" (1898), is inspired by the anti-American position of Argentinean Statesman Roque Saenz Peña's speech

in the Pan-American Congress of 1898 against US Manifest Destiny. Darío sides with Spain in the Spanish-American war of 1898, and echoing the words of Cuban writer José Martí, “*Nuestra América*” and “the cannibalism of tiger [should be left] outside”, calls on for “Latin-American Union” from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. Argentinean French cultural critic Paul Groussac had also referred to the monstrous (Caliban-like) body of the United States and to the (oxymoronic) barbarisms of their civilisation. Darío, in dialogism with his fellow Latin American writers, resorts to *The Tempest* to shed light onto the duality between *Calibanism* [materialism, utilitarianism, brutality, mass culture] and *Arielism* [idealism, spirituality, elevation, authenticity]. His harsh critical paper denounces Caliban’s [US] triumph to awaken Latin America from its passive denial of reality, exposing the extent to which she has been in connivance with imperialism and, therefore, also to blame for cultural annihilation.

Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó’s masterpiece essay “Ariel” (1900), has been considered one of the most influential within the field of Latin American cultural politics. His essay is hypertextual with an essay, “Caliban” (1878) by his mentor, French philosopher Ernest Renan, in which the characters in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* are allegorically used to represent different forms of government, and to raise awareness about the weakening of democracy. Rodó’s implied readers are Latin American youngsters who are to see through the epistemic violence of Prospero’s discourse and the self-deprecation of Caliban due to his utilitarianism/materialism. Rodó uses the fi-

gure of Ariel instrumentally to illustrate how Latin America has become functional to other social actors to the very detriment of its own well-being. Rodó invites his readership to go back to Latin American roots and to re-inscribe not only the letter but also the spirit of Pan-Americanism.

Cuban writer and cultural critic Roberto Fernández Retamar, in a series of essays (1971-1999) compiled in his anthology *Todo Calibán*, writes back to *The Tempest* in contradistinction to his fellow Latin American writers from the previous generation. Fernández Retamar is immersed in the anti-imperialist turmoil of the seventies, and together with African and Caribbean critics, such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Edward Brathwaite, embark on the task of bringing Caliban to the fore and deconstructing its stereotype. Caliban is epitomised as the symbol of cultural hybridisation in Latin America, that is to say, the crisscrossing of the white, the black and the aborigines to blend into the true *mestizo* culture. Fernández Retamar celebrates the moment in which Caliban writes back to the epistemic violence of Prospero by means of appropriating his master’s tool, the language and using it to curse him (I, ii, 360-365), and to re-assert Latin American identity and unity.

(Con)texts stand out due to their heterogeneity. However, what arguably binds all the above together, be they Canadian, Caribbean or Latin American, is a consensus about the need to change the very grounds of the ‘original’; to bring the supposed margins to the centre; to tell a plurality of stories; to break down stereotypes; to interrogate the very

notion of canonical hypertexts. Ultimately counter-discursive writing functions less as a mode that opposes the English canon than as a mode that subverts its practice of (re)telling a single story (Thieme, 2000: 12).

Literary transposition: travelling across genres

ANTONIO

What is past is prologue
(*The Tempest*, II,i, 50-52)

As Antonio very well puts it, history influences and sets the (con)text for the present. This implies that there are multiple optics to any situation, multiple frames to every scene, multiple voices to tell any story. *The Tempest* has travelled well not only through time, place and culture, but also across a wide variety of genres. Some versions of *The Tempest* adapted for children (Bourdett, 1999; Miller, 2003; Walker, 2006; Moseley 2007; Linley, 2015) have contributed to raising awareness about how the origins and mechanisms of intolerance and inequality operate. Therefore, from a very early stage, students can have access to literatures that make visible the historically and socially constructed places and borders we inherit, and that frame our discourses and social relations. These (con)texts are instrumental for young learners to experience the extent to which *The Tempest* writes back, since they signal forms of transgression already present in the hypotext and explore how different hypertexts have tampered with them. These (con)texts locate voice and difference and include those forgotten, erased or

missing to engage in cultural remapping as a form of resistance.

(Con)texts in the form of various genre transpositions, such as Manga or Graphic Novels (Duffield, 2007; MacDonald, 2009), to name a few, have written back to *The Tempest* in highly visual and dynamic forms. These textual interventions, generally targeting adolescents and young adults, have fused stimuli to contribute to helping readerships see through the play and the very grounds against which it was originally constructed. Duffield's and MacDonald's (cont)texts refract back on *The Tempest* opening up possibilities of variant readings by undermining the notion of the classic as a stable text. These texts attempt to offer a genuine revolution by means of performing an actual decentring and re-centring of power through the lens of a postcolonial gaze in a kind of parodic reversal that engages the reader in critical and reflective thinking.

There have always been more experimental, trans-genre, (con)texts attempting at blurring all boundaries framing *The Tempest*. Tad Williams's *Caliban's Hour* (2011), fusing epic fantasy with speculative fiction, retells *The Tempest* from Caliban's perspective foregrounding the need to dismantle the colonial allegory. It is now Caliban who, representing a travelling culture, makes his way to Italy into the chambers of Miranda to have her –since Prospero is already dead–listen to *his* version of what actually happened in the past. Apart from exploring the other side of ‘truth’, *Caliban's Hour* delves into several gaps of indeterminacy in the Shakespearean hypotext, and resignifies them from a postcolonial pers-

perspective to contribute to the re-writing of Caliban. This (con)text also bears intertextual connections with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Beauty and the Beast* as it allows Caliban to dynamically elaborate how his new routes lend themselves for him to re-inscribe his roots and his own view of himself.

The most cutting-edge (con)texts of *The Tempest* seem to be Jagi Lamplighter's *Prospero's Daughter Trilogy* (2011), entitled *Prospero Lost* (2009), *Prospero in Hell* (2010) and *Prospero Regained* (2011). These texts are inscribed within the mash-up genre of urban fantasy, a hybrid between fantasy and science fiction. Lamplighter's trilogy foregrounds Miranda as the narratorial gaze that writes back to *The Tempest*. The three novels explore Miranda's, and her sibling's, journey to attempt to rescue their father from Hell, since he has to pay for what he did in the past. Their five-hundred-year epic ordeal is also intertextual with Dante's *Inferno*, and draws on from theology and mythology, as it further deepens into the quest for individual and cultural identity. Jagi Lamplighter sets the bar even higher with her Trilogy as readerships can also read into her Book One and Book Three, *Prospero Lost and Prospero Regained*, hypertextual adaptations of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) metaphorically exploring the human fall from heaven and from the 'illusion' of the tempest.

Changing the nature of the book

PROSPERO

I'll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,

And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

(*The Tempest*, V, ii, 88-94)

Postmodernism has taught us that every time we read a book, the book reads us, and even re-writes us. In this closing epigraph, Prospero tells us that he is willing to let go of it even before Caliban solves his dichotomy to seize, or not to seize, the book of magic. Prospero's willingness to 'drown the book' paves the way for the creation of new texts, for a true re(con)textualisation. This opens up possibilities for the resignification of textual identities in the form of sequels, prequels, interventions, opacities, transpositions, mash-ups and polyphonic silences. And yet, as seen all through the postcolonial renderings of *The Tempest*, counter-discursive responses are essential to the deconstruction of archetypes, stereotypes and violent hierarchies. The emphasis, in virtually every case, is on dismantling binary oppositions and paradigms, and on interrogating the very notion of alterity that has consigned postcolonial subjects to the margins. This implies not only cultural remapping but also individual transformation.

(Con)texts are key contributors to intercultural interpretation. They invite reflection on socio-cultural misconstructions and misrepresentations, and they initiate readers into the experience of critical exploration of selfness and otherness. This helps them cross their cultural borders, so as to challenge their own schemas, and to even re-imagine themselves into very different situations and identities. (Con)texts stand out as a springboard for readers to empathise with the experience

of others, to get to know more about themselves and to explore what binds cultures together in spite of their differences. There is, then, a particular foregrounding of the instrumental value of recontextualisation within a model more sensitive to critical cultural awareness and intercultural mediation. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and its multiple "writing back" and "(con)text" versions across cultures –Canada, the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America– and genres –graphic novels, manga, urban fantasy, epic– delve into whether or not the "book of magic", that is to say, discourse and meaning, can ever be truly appropriated. Postmodernist renderings of *The Tempest* have chorally explained it to us that the very nature of the book has changed. And Shakespeare himself may have foreshadowed this in the very last line in the play as Prospero, representing the Magus, his book of magic, the bard, the actor, and even the play itself, pierces the fourth wall with his eloquent metatextual musings and begs us to "[l]et your indulgence set me free" (Epilogue, 20).

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La tempestad: primera visión de América y los amerindios, un análisis desde el marco crítico de los “estudios de traducción” y el poscolonialismo

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Este artículo analiza la última obra de Shakespeare desde una visión no europea, a través de las teorías e ideas de literatura que tienen las tribus del Norte de América (críticos como Paula Gunn Allen o Louis Owens) y dentro del marco de los llamados “estudios de la traducción”, (sobre todo el crítico Eric Cheyfitz en The Poetics of Imperialism) y la visión latinoamericana y marxista de Retamar en Todo Calibán. Este tipo de lectura opone una contra-memoria a una de las primeras visiones literarias de los “indios”, según la mala denominación de Cristóbal Colón, “indios” representados en la obra por Calibán y su madre. El análisis toca temas como la traducción y el uso del lenguaje “del conquistador” o “del enemigo”; el problema del derecho a la posesión de la Tierra; y las justificaciones europeas de la colonización con las ideas de “progreso” y “conocimiento / ciencia” europeos (lo que Mary L. Pratt llama “anticonquista” en Imperial Eyes) que incluyen el uso de estereotipos y presupuestos sobre grupos humanos particulares.

Algunas ideas básicas

Antes de intentar una lectura propia de *The Tempest*, creo que es importante aclarar desde qué marco teórico leo y por qué me animo a tratar de analizar esta obra de Shakespeare en particular. Yo vengo del estudio de la literatura contemporánea estadounidense, sobre todo la literatura de minorías, y dentro de ella, las literaturas de autores negros y amerindios.

Se trata de literaturas esencialmente mestizas: que expresan visiones del mundo africanas y americanas según la categoría de Lucien Goldmann (1967) en idiomas europeos (en este caso el inglés). Para Goldmann, la “visión del mundo” es la lectura del mundo que un grupo humano lega a sus descendientes. Hay puntos en común entre las visiones del mundo europeas por un lado; y puntos en común entre las visiones del mundo de los pueblos del continente americano. Es a partir de esas lecturas previas que me interesa asomarme a uno de los primeros textos literarios anglosajones que describen la colonización desde un punto de vista europeo, específicamente inglés. Un texto que habla sobre el encuentro entre los europeos y los habitantes originarios de América.

Además de la idea de “visión del mundo”, hay algunos conceptos importantes que quiero aclarar. El primero tiene que ver con una divisoria de aguas que se dio durante el siglo XX en la crítica y teoría del arte (*todo* el arte, incluso la literatura): la que divide a quienes creen que hay una grieta entre la representación y lo representado (en el caso literario, entre el lenguaje y lo nombrado, el significante

y el significado) y que por lo tanto cualquier estudio sobre el referente es erróneo (recordemos la cita de Umberto Eco: “el referente es una falacia”, Eco, 1979: 58), y quienes, por el contrario, creen que el referente es una parte necesaria en cualquier análisis de lo artístico y que todo texto sobre todo literario, aunque no quiera, tiene un pie en el mundo extratextual. En ese debate, este trabajo está claramente inscripto en lo que A. Quintana llama “realismo genético”, es decir del lado de quienes apoyan la idea de que el referente *siempre* es importante para el análisis artístico. Desde ese punto de vista, en cualquier lectura de *The Tempest*, un tema esencial es el de la colonización del mundo por parte de las potencias europeas, contada aquí desde Inglaterra.

Cualquier análisis de una obra debe considerar el punto de vista. Sabemos hace ya mucho que quien cuenta tiene el poder. La conciencia del poder del que cuenta es particularmente importante en el caso de textos que tocan temas relacionados con pueblos colonizados o esclavizados. Un ejemplo evidente y más cercano que yo manejo bien: la historia de la conquista del Oeste estadounidense contada desde el “western” (género esencial para el “mito básico estadounidense”, muy unido a conceptos como el “Destino Manifiesto” o el “American dream”) es bien diferente de la historia del Oeste que cuentan los autores amerindios contemporáneos como Leslie Silko, Linda Hogan, Louise Erdrich, Simon Ortiz. Esos autores (de origen laguna, ojibwe, ácoma, etc.) escriben desde la resistencia a la “apropiación” que hace la cultura colonizada (europea) de los recursos naturales por un lado, y por otro de la historia de los coloniza-

dos, historia que Europa trata de borrar por completo.

Parte de la razón de ser de las literaturas de los pueblos colonizados como los africanos o los amerindios es justamente recuperar su propia historia, contarla desde otro punto de vista, con su propia voz. En palabras del gran poeta negro Langston Hughes: “algún día alguien se/ va a parar y va a hablar sobre mí,/ y escribir sobre mí—/ negro y hermoso—/ y cantar sobre mí,/ y hacer teatro sobre mí—/ ¡Seguro que voy a ser yo,/ yo mismo!”¹.

Entre muchas otras cosas, *The Tempest* es una visión de la colonización europea escrita por Shakespeare, un inglés con relaciones directas con la corona inglesa, cabeza de un enorme Imperio europeo. En su libro *Todo Calibán*, Roberto Fernández Retamar (2000), dice que es necesario leer a los europeos desde lo “americano”. Este intento de lectura trata de cumplir con esa misión y agregar una dimensión más a una obra cuya polisemia es legendaria.

Anticonquista y justificaciones

En *Ojos imperiales*, su estudio sobre la literatura de viajes, Mary Louise Pratt (1997) describe los textos de la “anticonquista” como

1 De “Note on Commercial Theatre”, Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, editors: Arnold Rampersad y David Roessel. USA: Vintage Classics, 1994. Página 215. Traducción Márbara Averbach. Original: But someday somebody'll / Stand up and talk about me, /And write about me— / Black and beautiful./ And sing about me, /And put on plays about me! /I reckon it'll be /Me myself

aquellos en los que la conquista y la colonización se pintan como hechos necesarios y hasta aceptados voluntariamente por los colonizados. Esta operación se realiza mediante máscaras de distinto tipo (por ejemplo, el amor sentimental, el comercio, los estudios científicos). Los textos de la “anticonquista” (el término no me parece claro pero estoy citándola a ella) están directamente relacionados con mecanismos que la justifican o la consideran inevitable.

Esas justificaciones aparecen con claridad en *The Tempest*, sobre todo (aunque no únicamente) en boca de Próspero, que, con ese nombre absolutamente simbólico, es el representante directo de la colonización europea y de lo que significó para los países que la llevaron a cabo: prosperidad, recursos, mejores índices económicos.

Como figura, Próspero hace recordar a una estatua portuguesa que representa a un conquistador que lleva un barco en una mano, y en la otra mano un pergamo, y está acompañado y apoyado, por un guerrero con una espada. Por un lado, Próspero domina la isla en la que transcurre la obra con la fuerza de su magia, una magia que sabe ser violenta y está basada en los libros, ambas tecnologías que los habitantes originales no tienen. Hay que recordar que la magia y la tecnología van juntas. Basta con volver a la cita de Arthur Clarke en 1962 cuando dijo: “Toda tecnología avanzada es indistinguible de la magia”.

Según dice en varios parlamentos, Próspero emprende un programa “educativo” con respecto a Calibán: por empezar, le enseña su idioma. En cuanto a justificaciones, esa es la primera: supuestamente el beneficio que ad-

quiriría Calibán con esa educación europea justificaría el uso de la fuerza y su reducción a la esclavitud. Pero hay un problema: según el mismo Próspero, el programa (pensado para borrar la cultura original de Calibán y reemplazarla por otra, supuestamente superior) fracasa por completo. En el acto IV, el mago dice de su discípulo y esclavo: “A devil, a born devil, on whose nature/ Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,/ humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost!” [“Un diablo, nacido diablo, en cuya naturaleza/ la educación no puede hacer mella; en quien mis esfuerzos/ que llevé a cabo humanamente, están todos, todos perdidos, perdidos por completo”]. Próspero es bastante claro: piensa que Calibán nació malvado y que, por lo tanto, no hay forma de educarlo.

Los críticos y escritores amerindios estadounidenses llaman “falsa opción” a los caminos que ofrecieron los colonizadores a las tribus nativas de América: morir en el genocidio indio o aceptar que se borrara en ellos lo que tenían de “indios” mediante la asimilación forzosa en instituciones totales como la escuela, la cárcel, el ejército. La opción es “falsa” por lo menos por dos razones: la primera es que la asimilación que se ofrece a los que aceptan borrar su indianidad nunca les da un lugar social del mismo nivel que el que tienen los colonizadores, siempre terminan en una posición servil, como esclavos o siervos (eso es evidente en el trato que da Próspero no solo a Calibán sino también a Ariel); la segunda razón es que la muerte física o la muerte cultural son muertes, ambas..., no hay salvación de la identidad en ninguno de los dos casos. En *The Tempest* queda claro que, ya que la

opción “educativa” ha fracasado, la única salida que queda es que el colonizador extermine o esclavice para siempre al colonizado. Al final de la obra, Calibán queda sometido a la esclavitud más abyecta, ya sin esperanza de resistencia.

Por otro lado, todas las justificaciones de la colonización y la esclavización están basadas en una clasificación despectiva del Otro, aquí no sólo Calibán sino también su madre, Sycorax, muerta a manos de Próspero; y, en otro nivel, incluso Ariel (que necesita la ayuda de Próspero para librarse de Sycorax). En la literatura sobre la colonización o la literatura de viajes estudiada por Mary Louise Pratt, las representaciones del Otro se hacen dentro de una estricta jerarquía en la que las culturas europeas son superiores y las no europeas se animalizan o cosifican. En los pocos casos en que se las glorifica, se las considera destinadas a la extinción (como en el caso del estereotipo del “buen salvaje”). En el relato europeo de la colonización, la transformación del Otro en no-igual, no-humano, monstruo, es indispensable porque ella justifica la necesidad de exterminarlo, y convierte al exterminio en acto heroico.

En *The Tempest*, ese mecanismo es constante. Algunas palabras que se aplican a Calibán son: “poisonous (5); “monster of the isle” (11); “born devil” (18), “demi devil” (21); “mishapen”. Y es importante hacer notar que, al comienzo, cuando Ariel recuerda a Próspero la promesa que hizo de liberarlo, el mago lo insulta de la misma manera que a Calibán y lo llama “malignant thing” (4). Esa reacción muestra con claridad que, para el colonizador, no hay demasiada diferencia entre el “sirvi-

ente bueno”, que acepta la asimilación y el “esclavo malo” que se resiste.

La relación Ariel/Calibán/Próspero podría leerse como un primer planteo de los dos tipos de indios que aparecen más tarde en la literatura que desciende directamente del colonialismo inglés: la literatura WASP (White Anglo Saxon Protestant) en los Estados Unidos. Para usar las palabras de la gran crítica literaria laguna pueblo, Paula Gunn Allen: “Los estadounidenses dividen a los indios en dos categorías: el noble salvaje y el salvaje que aúlla. Se considera al noble salvaje una víctima condenada pero atractiva de la evolución inevitable de la humanidad” (Gunn Allen, 1985: 4-5). Ambos tipos están condenados, uno porque el “progreso” va a acabar con él y el otro porque su monstruosidad hace necesario que se lo exterminate. Aquí, Próspero exige de Ariel y Calibán la misma obediencia ciega y se enoja con ambos cuando ejercen cualquier tipo de resistencia.

Quizás la figura más representativa de las justificaciones que estamos viendo sea la visión del Otro como “monstruo” (palabra que se utiliza varias veces en *The Tempest*), o en versiones más específicas, “antropófago”, “caníbal”. Como muchos otros críticos, Eric Cheyfitz hace todo un estudio del origen del nombre “Calibán” (y su relación con caníbal y caribe) en *The Poetics of Imperialism, Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (1997). No voy a repetir sus conclusiones aquí. Baste decir que el desprecio que sienten todos los europeos y Ariel también por el aspecto físico, el cuerpo de Calibán, convierte al personaje en “monstruo”, fuente de miedo (Miranda) y objeto de odio y desprecio (los demás).

En ese sentido, podría leerse *The Tempest* en relación con la descripción que hace José Rabasa del primer planisferio europeo en “Allegories of Atlas” (Rabasa en Ashcroft, Griffin, Tiffin, 1994: 358-365). Para Rabasa, el planisferio de Mercator es una herramienta de la colonización. En él, Europa va tomando posesión del mundo mediante la representación. Los nombres europeos (que borran constantemente nombres locales) introducen a los otros continentes en la Historia europea, y esa Historia es la única que se considera con capacidad para dar sentido al mundo. Cuando la Historia europea llega a esos lugares, borra todas las historias locales; las hace intrascendentes. Las palabras “Más allá hay monstruos”, inscriptas en los márgenes del planisferio, definen al Otro como descartable, como carne de genocidio.

Shakespeare se refiere al proyecto europeo de colonización casi en esos mismos términos cuando Próspero le dice a Calibán que le enseñó a hablar, “when tou didst not, savage,/ Know thine own meaning” [“Cuando tú, salvaje, no / conocías tu propio significado”] (5). Europa coloniza y, para ella, solamente esa colonización da sentido al resto del mundo, un sentido europeo, por supuesto, sentido que, después del siglo XVIII, está cada vez más relacionado con la magia particular de Europa, la ciencia occidental.

Escritura, poder y naturaleza

En *The Tempest*, hay dos magias, según el típico esquema binario del pensamiento europeo: la de Sycorax, la “witch” (4), vencida por Próspero y madre de Calibán, y la de Próspero,

el colonizador. Una de esas magias (la de Próspero) es positiva: todos los adjetivos que la describen son positivos en el sistema binario europeo. Entre otros: es una magia masculina (lo masculino está jerarquizado en el par binario masculino vs. femenino); es una magia escrita, depende de los libros (la escritura es superior a la oralidad en los sistemas europeos). La otra magia, la de Sycorax, en cambio, es femenina y oral y por lo tanto, negativa.

Esa oposición de magias muestra a Europa como dueña de un conocimiento válido y constructivo, opuesta a un “resto del mundo” como lugar en el que florecen conocimientos orales destructivos y relacionados con el mal (la oposición “witch” versus “wizard” sigue repitiendo el par binario en la literatura de fantasía).

La escritura es, sin duda, una de las fuentes de poder en Europa: a eso se refiere la estatua portuguesa en la que el conquistador, además del guerrero y el barco (sus tecnologías de guerra) lleva un pergamo en la mano (tecnología de guerra cultural). En la obra de Shakespeare, Próspero sabe que su poder depende de los libros y por eso, agradece a Gonzalo que se los haya puesto en el bote cuando lo abandonan en el mar con su hija: “Knowing I lov’d my books, he furnish’d me,/ From my own library, with volumes that/ I prize above my dukedom” [“Sabiendo que yo amaba mis libros, me proveyó/ de mi propia biblioteca, con volúmenes que / yo aprecio más que a mi ducado”]. (3).

Calibán también reconoce el valor de los libros como fuente del poder de Próspero. Es por eso que, cuando traza los planes para rebelarse con los dos blancos borrachos, les dice

que maten a Próspero cuando se duerma pero “Having first seiz’d his books/ ...Remember,/ First to possess his books; for without them/ He’s but a sot, as I am, nor hath not /One spirit to command: they all do hate him,/ As rootedly as I” [“antes hay que tener sus libros/... Recuerden,/ primero los libros porque sin ellos/ él es solamente un tonto como yo y no tiene/ ni un espíritu que le obedezca: todos lo odian,/ con tanta fuerza como yo”] (14).

Calibán sabe que la magia de Próspero, encerrada en sus libros, es lo que convierte el mago en su amo; sin ella, los dos son iguales. Por otra parte, deja en evidencia que no es el amor ni el consentimiento el que hace que los espíritus colonizados (Ariel, por ejemplo) obedezcan a Próspero. Todos lo odian: obedecen solamente por el poder de los libros.

La conciencia de la importancia de la escritura en la cultura europea (frente a las culturas americanas, esencialmente orales) es tópico en la literatura de los amerindios del siglo XX, que tratan de invertir el par binario “escritura versus oralidad” haciendo de la oralidad el centro de todos los relatos aunque esos relatos sean escritos. La idea es que la oralidad colonice la escritura, la cuestione desde adentro. Calibán no quiere los libros para él, no quiere ese conocimiento europeo, lo que quiere es destruirlos. En cambio, sí está dispuesto a apropiarse de otros conocimientos de Próspero para utilizarlos contra el mago en un acto de “apropiación inversa” que es parte de su rebeldía.

Los libros (la magia, ¿la tecnología?) dan a Próspero el dominio de la naturaleza. Para “Próspero” (para Europa), la humanidad debe dominar lo que hay en el planeta, usarlo, ma-

nejarlo a su antojo, como hace el mago con el clima y como se ve con claridad en la obra que representan los espíritus en honor de Fernando y Miranda, donde Ceres les ofrece sus frutos. La naturaleza debe dominarse.

En *The Tempest*, esa naturaleza dominada es generosa, “Here is everything advantageous to life” (7), y Próspero ha tomado la parte buena, fértil de la isla y ha condenado a Calibán a la parte más dura y seca: “and here you sty me/ In this hard rock, while you do keep from me/ The rest o’the island” (5). Esa descripción de la situación de Calibán se parece muchísimo a una de las “soluciones” estadounidenses para el “Indian problem”: las reservaciones. En el avance hacia el Oeste, se destinaban las peores tierras del gran territorio a las tribus indias conquistadas y se las trasladaba a esos “malos lugares” a punta de pistola en los llamados “Trails of Tears”, como se hizo también en Argentina con la tribu de los quilmes.

Aunque nunca se habla de la relación de Calibán con la naturaleza, su nostalgia por la otra parte de la isla, interpretada en la obra como deseo de poder, podría verse también como el deseo de volver al lugar de origen, que para las visiones amerindias del mundo es un pariente esencial, sin el cual no hay identidad individual.

Por otra parte, Próspero también parece reconocer la relación diferente que tiene Calibán con lo natural cuando lo llama: “Caliban! Thou, earth, thou!” (5). No hay duda de que el “earth” está pensado como insulto. Para las visiones europeas del mundo es lo mismo que decir “no-humano”. Pero leído desde el lado amerindio, parece un reconocimiento de

las relaciones especiales que tienen todas las culturas americanas con la Tierra, a la que consideran Madre.

Resistencia y apropiación inversa

Como hará más adelante *Heart of Darkness* de Joseph Conrad, *The Tempest* mira al Otro desde Europa y no consigue imaginarlo del todo. Tal vez por eso, la obra de Shakespeare recurre dos veces a lo que en Estados Unidos se llama “tópico del Mesías Blanco”: 1. cuando (en el pasado de la obra) Próspero libera a Ariel; y 2. durante el intento de rebelión que llevan a cabo Calibán, Trínculo y Stephano. Muy común en la literatura blanca estadounidense, la historia del “Mesías Blanco” narra la llegada de un blanco salvador a una tribu incapaz de solucionar sus propios problemas sin esa ayuda. Las literaturas de negros y amerindios estadounidenses rechazan esa historia y la critican.

En *The Tempest*, Calibán es rebelde desde la primera vez que aparece pero no se rebela solo. Elige a Trínculo y Stephano como Mesías Blancos en su lucha contra el que llama “tyrant” (11, 12). Sin duda, su elección es errónea: la forma en que adora a los dos borrachos lo hace ridículo a los ojos del público. Pero hay una contradicción en la obra: el plan de ataque contra Próspero es de Calibán y él será el guía de la operación; más todavía: en el momento del ataque, el único que tiene claro el objetivo es él. ¿Entonces para qué necesitaba a los blancos? Ese cuestionamiento a la historia del Mesías Blanco es un punto muy interesante.

También lo es la rebeldía fracasada de Calibán en sí misma. En primer lugar, por-

que Calibán no es un personaje cómico (como los blancos) sino más bien trágico. En eso también es superior a los que elige como sus “Mesías”. El tono que lo rodea lo acerca un poco (solamente un poco) a lo que será más adelante la figura del “noble salvaje”, víctima del progreso. Es un personaje muy capaz de expresar su odio a pesar de que habla en un idioma que no le es propio. También ahí hay una contradicción interesante. Próspero afirma que la “educación” de Calibán es un fracaso. Y lo es en el sentido de que Calibán conserva un núcleo de Otredad, una identidad a la que se niega a renunciar. Desde el punto de vista de Calibán, la educación que le ofrece Próspero también es un fracaso porque no lo ha convertido en par de Próspero sino en su esclavo pero en otro sentido, es un triunfo porque ahora sabe lo suficiente del lenguaje como para expresarse y lo suficiente de los europeos como para planificar una rebelión con Trínculo y Stephano.

El famoso parlamento en el que Calibán dice: “You taught me language; and my profit on’t/ Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!” [“Me enseñaste lenguaje y la ventaja que saqué /es que sé cómo insultar: ¡ojalá te ataque la peste roja /por enseñarme tu lenguaje!”] (5) es la descripción de una operación de “apropiación inversa”, un “Reinventing the Enemy’s Language” (Joy Harjo, Gloria Bird, 1997), para usar el título de una famosa antología de autores amerindios estadounidenses. Calibán aprende el lenguaje del enemigo y lo usa no para ofrecer respetos al poder, como quisiera Próspero, sino para insultar al que le quitó la isla. Su espíritu rebelde está intacto. Y si bien

es cierto que para pasar del insulto a la acción, parece necesitar el apoyo de otros blancos (y los elige mal), el impulso de resistencia está ahí, entero, siempre.

Así, aunque al final Próspero diga “this thing of darkness, I acknowledge mine” [“esta cosa de la oscuridad, la reconozco como mía”] (21) Calibán no es suyo, no completamente. La colonización no es completa (como no lo fue en América). Por otra parte, la frase puede interpretarse en muchos sentidos. Por ejemplo, podría decirse, con Cheyfitz y Edward Said (Said, 1978), que a partir del descubrimiento de otros mundos, Europa ya no podrá definirse a sí misma sin ubicarse en un par binario como opuesta a algún Otro y que necesita a ese Otro para ser ella misma. La doble valencia la vuelve dependiente de sus colonizados.

Tal vez esclavice a Calibán pero no consigue borrarlo y, por supuesto, depende de él como confiesa a su hija en el comienzo de la obra. La verdad es que, a pesar de Próspero y sus definiciones, Calibán tiene fuerza propia, como Facundo en la obra de Sarmiento, a pesar de Sarmiento. Un ejemplo es su capacidad para dirigirse al público y contarle sus planes, exactamente igual que el mago protagonista. En esos momentos, Calibán hace avanzar la acción tanto como Próspero en otros y, sobre todo, lo hace *contra* los deseos de Próspero (a diferencia de Ariel, que obedece siempre y protesta solamente una vez).

Así, en *The Tempest*, parece haber un reconocimiento de la capacidad de Calibán para resistir la definición que hace de él la cultura europea, la “violencia de la traducción”, como la llama Cheyfitz. Calibán siempre está intentando definirse a sí mismo, resistir la tra-

ducción de Próspero. Su fracaso tiene lógica en el contexto de la creación de la obra. Pero, en el siglo XX, los personajes de las literaturas escritas por los descendientes de los primeros habitantes de América, esos pueblos a quienes Calibán representa en escena por primera vez, retomarán su lucha con una fuerza nueva y conseguirán “decirse a sí mismos” en el “idioma del enemigo”.

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Shakespeare and his View of Modernity from a Contemporary Standpoint

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Desde una óptica contemporánea, se concibe el Renacimiento como un período de transición hacia una incipiente Modernidad. Esta propiedad transicional se visibiliza en el pasaje de una economía feudal a otra mayormente mercantilista alimentada por empresas coloniales, en la consolidación de la escritura como forma de producción de conocimiento en detrimento de prácticas de oralidad, y ascenso del Protestantismo por sobre la fe católica, con repercusiones sobre los modos de conducir la política, particularmente en el caso de Inglaterra. Estos acontecimientos integran el fenómeno moderno no solo enmarca las obras de Shakespeare, sino es objeto de interpelación sobre el escenario en las obras de este autor. Cabe decir que sus textos ofrecen una crítica de amplio espectro de la Modernidad al exponer sus posibilidades, sus alcances y sus límites. El presente trabajo explorará esta hipótesis en un conjunto de obras plurigenérico: Como Gusteís, Ricardo III, Hamlet y La Tempestad. La oposición entre el campo y la ciudad, las relaciones amorosas, la antinomia entre individuo y sociedad, la melancolía por un mundo pasado y la ansiedad por un futuro incierto, la construcción del movimiento humanista –su ascenso y declinación como ideología dominante del Renacimiento– y el estatuto de la literatura serán los ejes temáticos que guiarán la lectura de las obras seleccionadas.

An Introduction to Modernity in the Bard's Plays

Specialists have lately placed the Renaissance under close scrutiny. Among the different theories, there exists one which conceives of it as a turning point in Western societies. It is considered a social and economic revolution which unfolds from the beginning of the 14th century and the early stages of the 17th century (Heller, 1980: 9). Events such as the invention of the printing press, the colonisation of America, the development of more sophisticated forms of trade, and the Reformation, among others, contribute to framing the Renaissance as a wide-ranging process that involves social and economic spheres, by means of which the basic structure of society is affected, as well as the field of culture, everyday life and mindset, moral practices and ethical ideals, religious consciousness, arts and sciences (1980: 8). This radical rupture defines two periods: the end of the Middle Ages and the emergence of a new world view in which the complex roots of Modernity lay. Although the equation between Renaissance and breakup is not free of conflict, it confirms the transitional nature of such a period, to which Shakespeare's plays bear witness. In doing so, his texts provide a far-reaching critique of Modernity by exposing its possibilities, its scopes and limits. This hypothesis will be explored in a cross-genre corpus: *As You Like It*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*.

To begin with, the characters in the comedy, exiled in the Forest of Arden, evince the features of the tension between an increas-

gly mercantilist society, embodied in Rosalind, and its feudal counterpart, expressed through Orlando's courtly love and Jacques's melancholy. As far as the history play is concerned, it reveals how the Renaissance construction of history –equated to the beginning of a Golden Age– cannot prevent the past from becoming uncanny. Concerning the tragedy, by means of mirror games performed by the three avenging sons –Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras, it reveals the dilemmas of the Renaissance period. Finally, in the romance, Prospero's loss of his dukedom, his experimental stay on the island and his return to Milan, represent the three stages of a process that inevitably leads to a submission to the ideals of Modernity.

As You Like It and the Forest of Modernity

The play composed around 1600 portrays how different groups of Londoners are compelled to depart from life at court towards the Forest of Arden. The spaces seem to emerge in clearly different and opposing terms: nature and civil urbanity. However, the exchanges of multiple kinds that take place in the forest dismantle the apparently trouble-free division between those two areas. Further, a phenomenon of major complexity and danger for the world left behind unfolds in Arden, which actually requires the observance of an Army: the alleged natural environment witnesses the incipient rise of an alternative political order.

The first group of exiled members of the court, led by the Duke deposed by his brother, remains oblivious to such event and their

active participation in it. In fact, the exiled Duke claims:

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
[...] This our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds *tongues* in trees, *books* in the running
brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.
(II, i, 1-11; emphasis added)

The former authority conceives of the forest as a *locus amoenus*, where peace and communion with nature reign. Nonetheless, a closer scrutiny to his phrasing reveals an ideological construction of this place: it is measured in terms of elements and inhabitants typical of the urban space, as the words in bold suggest. Precisely, it is at this civility that Orlando, also exiled into Arden due to the danger posed by his brother, is surprised: “Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you./ I thought that all things had been savage here” (II,vii,107-109). The young courtier cannot understand how a parallel city has been projected on the wilderness. Montrose explains such paradox:

Literary pastoralisation involves not only a process by which agrarian social relations are inscribed within an ideology of the country but also a process by which that initial inscription is itself appropriated, transformed, and reinscribed within an ideology of the court. (...) The aristocratic and courtly culture of the Renaissance cleanses the taint

of agrarian labour from pastoral imagery (1983: 431).

In this light, the forest emerges as the place where a parallel court materialises, one which instruments language as a tool to subdue nature as part of a broader political project.

Rosalind –the Duke’s daughter and Orlando’s lover– and Jaques, the melancholy traveller, expose the ideological process unfolding in Arden. The latter states: “All the world’s a 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” (II,vii,142-145). Jaques reveals the fictional streak with which Arden has been endowed. His interventions are a “touch of so-called realism –the recalcitrance of Jaques– which humanistic criticism apprehends as a peculiar wisdom” (Sinfield, 2006: 38). Such realism, however, is divorced from the social sphere, as confirmed by Jaques’s final reclusion in a monastery. This is precisely what Rosalind, the lady who has escaped from court and carried out financial transactions in the forest, accuses the traveller of when she claims: “you have great reason to/ be sad: I fear you have sold your own lands to see/ other men’s; then, to have seen much and to have/ nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands” (IV, i, 20-23). In this way, Rosalind suggests that the melancholy experienced by Jacques lacks the rational productivity expected in Modernity.

As the embodiment of Modern tenets, Rosalind has more battles to fight: Orlando and his courtly-love ideology. She questions him:

“But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?” (III,ii,387). Rosalind perceives the tricky language that regulates love relationships in Feudal times. As Montrose asserts, “[she] interrogate[s] and undermine[s] self-deceiving amorous rhetoric with bawdy word-play and relentless insistence upon the power and inconstancy of physical desire” (1981: 49). As she has done with Jaques, Rosalind imposes reality on melancholy idealisation. Mockery is her destabilizing weapon: wearing a palimpsest of fabrics and fabrications, she ridicules the artificial character of Medieval love forms. In fact, once Orlando has learnt the lesson, he disapproves of his brother’s sudden love for Celia, Rosalind’s cousin: irrational behaviours are not accepted in Modern times, which is why the new couple remains in the Forest.

Finally, Modernity is to be developed in a non-rural setting, different from the one that has regulated the Feudal system, which is the reason why most of the characters return to court. Arden has allowed the transitional instability towards a new political, economic and amorous order and the city is the place to channel such reform. This implies a conformation to a new *status quo*, which explains why Rosalind advertises the play in the epilogue: though fiction can participate in the construction of ideology, it can also dismantle it, as the language of the comedy has done with the Feudalism overcome by Modern times.

Richard III and the Uncanny Modernity

The tension between past and Modern ti-

mes becomes evident in the first scene of the play written in 1592. In his opening soliloquy, Richard states: “Now is the winter of our discontent/ Made glorious summer by this son of York” (I,i,1-2). The initial deictic conjures up the present of the setting –the War of the Roses in Medieval England– and that of the performance –Elizabethan England. Such combination foregrounds the peace that governs the island. At once, the future king provides minute details of the conflict between the past and the present when opposing “bruised arms” (6), “stern alarums” (7) and “dreadful marches” (8) to “monuments” (6), “merry meetings” (7) and “delightful pleasures” (8). In this transition towards a more harmonious state, Richard presents himself as a destabilising figure:

But I (...) that am curtail’d of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish’d, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I (...) descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
(...) I am determined to prove a villain. (I, i, 14-30)

His ugliness becomes the objective correlative to his villainy, which threatens the stability achieved by the island, reminding its audience of a bellicose past. In this way, Richard embodies the uncanny, that which “goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar” (Freud, 2003: 124). Such feature undermines not just the peace achieved, but the political project of Moderni-

ty started by Henry Tudor, his opponent, and grandfather of the present queen.

The uncanny also makes room for an aesthetic intervention. Richard admits: “[I] descent on my own deformity” (I,i,27). His ugliness provides him with fertile artistic material, as the verb suggests. This paradox is again explained by the concept of the uncanny: it “belongs to two set of ideas, which are not mutually contradictory but very different from each other –the one relating to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden” (Freud, 2003: 132). By means of the aesthetic intervention on Richard, the play evinces that he is as well part of England and its present: although it is a past expected to be hidden, it becomes constantly present and, contradictorily, attractive.

It is language that makes deformity an artistic object. This is Richard’s major attribute: through rhetorical tricks, he assumes the animalisation and demonologisation he is subjected to, pretending to elevate the status of his enemies. This is shown when he seduces Anne in front of the corpse of her father-in-law, killed by the protagonist, just like her husband, and through a parallel scene in which he tries to persuade the king’s widow to support his marriage to her daughter. His command of rhetoric makes Richard’s monstrosity become aesthetised. Rhetoric, then, participates in the fictional treatment of history by making this uncanny character familiar and attractive.

The presence of the uncanny through the use of language makes *Richard III* adopt an ideological direction. The main character is given the possibility of reflection by appeal-

ing to the oneiric technique. In act V, all the characters he has killed become present in a dream, instilling fear in him and, consequently, some form of reflection. However, rejecting the major humanist tenet, he claims: “O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me” (V,ii,309). Richard is a king who cannot think of himself as such. That is why the play condemns him: the England founded by Henry VII and perpetuated by Elizabeth I, to which the initial “now” of the text refers to, sends the monster into exile since it symbolises, by rejecting conscience, a warlike past that has submerged England into a “cultural backwater” (Crane, 2003: 18). In this way, the Tudors harbour their political project by opposing it to a past seething with wars, and thus becoming a government open to the fertile development of arts and literature, a literature that constructs, precisely, the dynasty in those terms. *Richard III* gives rise to the Tudor myth.

Hamlet in the transition to Modernity

Humanism, the intellectual movement that emerges during the Renaissance, considers that the arts of language, with a particular attention to the ancient Latin and Greek, are the foundations of culture and thus guarantee access to other epistemological studies. For humanists, the *studia humanitatis*, by bringing antiquity back to life, will enlighten a new civilisation (Rico, 1993: 18). This school involves a radical social and political transformation. It is not easy, however, to imagine the articulation between the syntactic, lexical, orthographic aspects of language, some of the main interests of these learned men, and

their project, which aims at a far-reaching reform of societies.

Hamlet is written in the context of this intellectual atmosphere and its protagonist represents the figure of a humanist struggling to overcome these contradictions. The Medieval prince has studied at the Renaissance University of Wittenberg and must leave a place of theoretical reflection to confront a world that demands a leading participation in history. When the ghost of his father asks him to avenge his assassination, the Danish prince feels that “The time is out of joint” (I, v, 196), a phrase that depicts his paradoxical feelings: the reflective scholar does not make room for the man of action.

His dilemma cannot be solved because he has a contradictory relationship with the past. Avenging his father means abiding by the old social order that fosters seeking retribution privately, an attitude which implies transgressing Modern trends. As from the emergence of absolute monarchies there is a concentration of power –and so, of the enforcement of the law– in the State. However, this is not a conflict for Laertes, the quintessence of the avenging son. Polonius’s son reacts immediately to the assassination of his father and leaves France to take action at the Danish court but, once there, he becomes an instrument of Claudius. The moment Polonius’s son poisons Hamlet with his sword he realizes he has been deceived and exclaims, referring to the treacherous king, who has just been killed by Hamlet: “He is justly served;/ It is a poison temper’d by himself” (V,ii,320-321). After that, he asks Hamlet: “Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:/ Mine and

my father’s death come not upon thee,/ Not thine on me!” (V, ii,320-324). Laertes comes to understand that he has been subjected to Claudius’ manipulation and killed a victim of his evil tricks. Such a realisation makes the relevance of Laertes’ revenge dissolve in the context of the play. The demands of the past are in this way played down and the death of Laertes suggests the death of the Medieval past, restricted to enforcing justice without the interference of the State, in the transition to Modern times depicted by the piece.

Hamlet has also a conflictive relationship with the future. Avenging his father means for the prince to become king. Yet, it is his humanist tenets that prevent him from having an active role in the Danish court. Humanists in the late Renaissance period find it difficult, if not impossible, to unite their political task to their intellectual aims; that is, to consummate their political project. Modern England hires scholars like Thomas More to be incorporated to the State bureaucracy. Their function becomes mainly “propaganda, to legitimise a rather tenuous claim to the throne” (Thomas Crane, 2003: 18). More’s execution as a traitor for not accepting the King’s separation from the Catholic Church illustrates these thinkers’ impossibility to bridge the gap between their principles and political life. It is this distance that prevents Hamlet from having a political role at the Danish court, which is clearly seen in his famous soliloquy: “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,/ And thus the native hue of resolution/ Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought...” (III, i,84-86). Claudius, on the other hand, embodies the Machiavellian prince in the

terms England has understood the Italian philosopher's treaty: evil, ambitious and corrupt. He has achieved his power by breaking with Christian moral principles when killing his own brother. Underlying Hamlet's and Claudius's behaviour, there is a conception of politics in which a tension between pragmatism and morality can be observed. Neither Hamlet, the humanist with elevated moral principles, nor Claudius, the pragmatic but corrupt ruler, seem suitable for the political stage in the transition to Modern times.

As an alternative, the play sketches gradually the figure of Fortinbras. He, same as Hamlet and Laertes, embodies the avenging son. But for him revenge means the recovery and expansion of the territories lost by his father. Compensation does not lie in personal vengeance but in the strengthening of his political power. His interpretation of facts at the end of the play, when he sees the dead bodies of the protagonists of the tragedy, reveals this approach: "Such a sight as this/ Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss" (V,ii,406-407). Deaths, for Fortinbras, are only justified in the battlefield, with the purpose of conquest. With his incorporation to history, the political, moral and cultural spheres have become independent, and so, he represents a Machiavellian prince according to a contemporary reading of this thinker. In this character, Machiavellism has been cleansed of evil connotations. What is more, in him, humanism's dichotomy –thought and action– has been overcome to make room for the demands of Modern times and the limits imposed by the sixteenth century reality. These are times of a growing mercantilist economy,

with an increasing interest in production and accumulation of wealth, in the context of colonialist expansion. The humanist erudition that Hamlet brought from Wittenberg will be sentenced to silence.

Modern Knowledge in *The Tempest*

At the beginning of *The Tempest*, Prospero tells his daughter the story of their lives before they become inhabitants of an almost deserted island. He explains it to her that the reason for their exile from European civilisation has been the usurpation of the throne of Milan by his brother Antonio. He also confesses that, as former the Duke of Milan, he devotes most of his time to his magic and the study of his books: "Those [the liberal arts] being all my study/ The government I cast upon my brother/ And to my state grew stranger, being transported/ And rapt in secret studies" (I,ii,74-77). His attachment to knowledge brings as a consequence his separation from his political duty, which makes Prospero an alienated ruler. Such alienation is precisely the one Marx identifies when framing his critique to Hegelian Logic, to which the former Duke seems to have fallen prey: the distance between erudition and the social sphere reduces his intellectual work to "*alienated thinking*", and therefore thinking which abstracts from nature and from real man" (Marx, 2007: 148; emphasis in the original). This "*alienated thinking*" is what characterises the last century of humanism. The men of letters of this period, through the revision of the classics, have put themselves in direct relation to their object of study, without the me-

diation of the scholastic gloss. But, by doing so, they have also isolated themselves from their social context and resigned political intervention.

The island, far away from civilisation and, in consequence, from history, is the perfect laboratory for Prospero to experiment and deal with his own alienation and to design a new political project. The account of his actions at the arrival on the island shows a new attitude on the part of the exiled Duke. Here, the magician must entertain new strategies to survive. The “technology” the Duke uses to consolidate his abstract knowledge is represented in Ariel, the “airy spirit” (*dramatis personae*), just visible for him, and in Caliban, his “poisonous slave” (I,ii), pure materiality, embodied in a grotesque monster. It seems then that Ariel performs the orders related to Prospero’s magic as Caliban produces the material work necessary for survival. However, the dichotomy subsumed in these characters –spirit/ body; culture/ nature; language/ action– is dissolved in the play. Ariel is Prospero’s language in action since he unleashes the tempest at the beginning of the play (I,i), guides Ferdinand to his encounter with Miranda (I,ii) and leads the other castaways to different places of the island (II,ii). Gradually, he puts into action his master’s wishes. Caliban, on the other hand, has acquired the language of the protagonist and reveals he is provided with a sophisticated degree of reflection on his own condition and status, especially when he claims he has learnt Prospero’s language to curse him (I,ii,365-367). Both, Ariel and Caliban, are manifestations of the blending of action and thought, a result of the

experimentation of the exiled Duke in the laboratory of the island. This is the magic that Prospero performs: a new form of politics, which will be materialised in the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda.

However, before this event takes place, Prospero stages a dramatic performance, which far from becoming facts, is frozen in mere attempts. Sebastian, the King of Naples’ brother, and Antonio try to kill this ruler unsuccessfully (II,i); Caliban, accompanied by Trinculo and Stefano, struggle unavailingly to overthrow Prospero (V, i). These gestures are just echoes of past actions that remind the audience of Milan’s struggles for power. Prospero’s magic, now a blending of theoretical information and action, turns them into empty gesticulation, futile efforts of usurpation. There is no room at this moment for the action devoid of reflection, typical of the past –another expression of alienation.

It is this same magic that brings Ferdinand and Miranda together. In their relationship, Miranda represents erudition. Prospero has educated her in such direction: “Here in this island we arrived; and here/ Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit/ Than other princesses can, that have more time/ For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful” (I,ii,171-174). Miranda is the one who carries knowledge as one of the foundations of politics. Nevertheless, Prospero knows that this is not enough. That is why he unites the knowledge embodied in his daughter with a conception of politics based on pragmatism, materialised in the “heir of Naples and of Milan” (II,i,104-105). This “[f]air encounter/ Of two most rare affections” (III,i,74-75) brings

to life a new form of politics based on an inseparable bond between knowledge and action.

Still, the materialisation of this new form of government cannot be performed on the island. It must be taken to a place where spatial and temporal conditions constitute the right material frame. The need to return to Milan is, thus, the need to return to history, to put into practice Prospero's experiment. But this "brave new world" (V,i,84), in Miranda's words, is, according to Eagleton, the context "of the very colonialism which signals the imminent victory of the exploitative, 'inorganic' mercantile bourgeoisie" (1987: 96), a world which will condemn Prospero's work to failure. The combination of humanist intellectual work and pragmatic action in the definition of politics reaches its limits in the political reality of the European 16th century. The transition to Modernity reduces Prospero's magic to a utopian sphere, replaced by the new epistemologies of this period, such as Baconian empiricism and Descartes's rationalism. The former, particularly in England, will become subsidiary to the naturalisation of the new mercantilist and expansionist world.

Final reflections

By means of different genres, and therefore, through the dissimilar commands of plots, characters and settings, Shakespeare has managed to stage the foregoing aspects celebrated by Modern times as well as those objected to. In the Forest of Arden and through Rosalind, *As You Like It* portrays the rise of Modernity. The forest becomes the setting for commercial exchanges and new conceptions

of love that mark the transition to a political, economic and social world of growing productivity and increasing pragmatic demands. Along similar lines, *Richard III* constructs a protagonist that is defeated and so seems to have been left in the Medieval past. However, his uncanny permanence through his powerful rhetoric reveals how Modernity is constructed upon a past which is denied but continues to haunt Modern England. *Hamlet*, precisely, exposes the contradictions of this new political, social and economic system presenting a play of oppositions in the images of three avenging sons. Finally, *The Tempest* provides a conciliatory and unavoidable submission to Modern ideas after the storm they have caused in the previous order. The Bard has disclosed the promises of Modernity to his audiences, promises which paradoxically become its own limitations.

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That Strain Again! The Shakespearean Text and its Classical Music Transposition: Throwing a Semiotic Feast in the Literature Classroom

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Shakespeare ha sido fuente de inspiración para los compositores de música clásica a través de los siglos: Händel, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Prokofiev son solo algunos de los compositores que han “traducido” obras de Shakespeare a la música, creando piezas que han sobrevivido el paso del tiempo. A pesar de la estrecha relación entre el corpus Shakespeareano y la música clásica, este nexo intertextual no es usualmente explorado en la enseñanza de la literatura inglesa. Esto se debe a la dificultad que plantea tal exploración, dado que el alumno estaría mediando entre dos otros: por un lado, Shakespeare como otredad lingüística y cultural; por el otro, la música clásica como otredad textual y objeto cultural asociado a una élite. ¿Por qué aventurarse a explorar un medio impopular y difícil de deconstruir? El presente artículo analiza un extracto de Romeo y Julieta, y la transposición de éste hecha por Serguei Prokofiev en su ballet Romeo y Julieta (1940), para demostrar cómo se puede explorar este fenómeno transpositivo desde un enfoque pos-estructuralista y cómo dicha exploración enriquece la lectura tanto de Shakespeare como de la música clásica, favoreciendo la apertura del yo hacia el otro.

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour!

Twelfth Night I, i, 1-7

In *Twelfth Night*'s opening scene, a melancholy, lovesick Duke asks his musicians at palace to give him 'excess' of music, in the belief that that excess will alleviate his suffering; he longs for a particular strain that seems to act like a balm upon his spirit. It is unlikely that Shakespeare could have ever imagined that four and a half centuries ahead of his time a vast amount of people living anywhere in the Westerly-influenced world would be familiar with his Duke's speech on love and music. Even if a person has not had access to Shakespeare's play directly, s/he may be familiar with it indirectly; that is, through the exposure to cultural texts referring to it: 'If Music be the Food of Love' has been quoted in the title of texts such as a classical song by Henry Purcell, an album by the English rock band *Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich*, a novel by D. Elam Dauw, newspaper articles and television episodes to mention a few. This is one of many intermedial phenomena serving as proof of Shakespeare's influence upon culture, of his 'contemporariness', as Jan Kott (1965) has signalled. Shakespeare is our contemporary, which means that readers can still relate to his characters, to the themes presented in his texts, to his view of the world. As Harold Bloom (1995) points it out,

Shakespeare is the true multicultural author. He exists in all languages. He is put on the stage everywhere. Everyone feels that they are represented by him on the stage.

In spite of Shakespeare's appeal to heterogeneous audiences around the globe, of his aliveness in our postmodern, mediatised world, we are confronted with a paradox regarding the actual exploration of his texts in the language and/or literature classroom: on the one hand, Shakespeare is hailed as one the most influential writers in universal literature; yet, he represents *otherness* to most learners, due to the cultural and linguistic complexity inherent to his texts; more than four hundred and fifty years span between Shakespeare's context of production and our context of reception, which results in the contemporary learner often feeling detached from the Shakespearean text. In keeping with the tenets of intercultural education, Rex Gibson (1998: 6) suggests that what should encourage the exploration of Shakespeare in the classroom is his *otherness*:

A powerful argument for studying Shakespeare exists in his extraordinariness, his strangeness, his unfamiliarity... All education is about opening doors, extending opportunities and experience. It is concerned that individuals should not be imprisoned in a single point of view, confined solely to local knowledge and beliefs... These educational characteristics are abundantly displayed in the characters, language, settings and issues of Shakespeare's plays.

Shakespeare as *other* certainly poses a challenge to educators, for how can the teacher open the door to this textual *otherness*? One way of narrowing the distance between Shakespeare and the learner is to have students explore the relationship between the Shakespearean text and other texts belonging to contemporary culture. It should be noted that this approach abides by a broad definition of ‘text’, comprising not only traditional written texts but ‘any assemblage of signs (such as words, images, sounds and/or gestures) constructed (and interpreted) with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication’ (Chandler, 2005).

Pedagogical proposals such as Gibson’s (1998) and Mc Rae’s (1991) suggest exploring texts such as films, anime, television shows, songs, contemporary poems, etc. When it comes to the teaching of Shakespeare, the use of intertexts which are closer to the culture of the learner facilitates the access to Shakespeare as *other*, due to students’ familiarity with these contemporary media’s semiotic code. A good example of this could be the exploration of a film such as Baz Luhrman’s *Romeo + Juliet*, or hands-on work with anime cartoons or creative tasks on a rap-song based on *Macbeth*, since all these may provide the learner with motivation and a sense of attainability. While Shakespeare is often regarded as literature with a looming ‘L’, these other texts can be said to belong to what Mc Rae (1991) calls “literature with a small ‘l’”. The exploration of Shakespeare and these non-canonical texts certainly results in a more effective and enriching reading of the

Shakespearean text for contemporary readerships.

One medium that has been intertextually linked to Shakespeare throughout the centuries is so called ‘classical’ music: Handel, Tchaikovsky, Gounod, Verdi, Prokofiev are just a few of the composers who have translated Shakespeare’s works into music, creating pieces which have, like their source texts, survived the hands of time. In spite of their captivating power, these Shakespeare-inspired pieces still have little effect over audiences today. The classical music intertext is not often included as an object of exploration in the intercultural literature and/or language classroom. Let us consider the reasons behind this phenomenon. On the one hand, culture plays an important role in shaping the view of a particular object. When it comes to classical music, there tends to be a stereotyped view of it as belonging to an *elite*. Furthermore, classical music is not the type of music most frequently played on radio channels, television programmes and other mass media. This contributes to broadening the distance between classical music and potential audiences. A teacher willing to provide motivation in the classroom will probably not think of exploring a medium regarded as unpopular by most learners.

On the other hand, the musical medium poses the problem of the ‘floating signifier’, as pointed out by Levi-Strauss. That is, music has signifiers with no specific signified within a semiotic system, unlike verbal language. For instance, if an English speaker hears someone utter the word ‘poet’, s/he will know what that sound is referring to because

s/he has knowledge of the English language system: the signifier ‘poet’ in English refers to ‘a person who writes poems’, the latter being its signified. Likewise, if that speaker hears the phrase ‘In fair Verona, where we lay our scene’, s/he will understand what the phrase means because s/he knows each of the phrase’s constituents: ‘in’ is a preposition of place indicating location, ‘fair’ means beautiful, Verona is a place, etc. Even if s/he did not know where Verona is, the speaker will still be able to grasp the overall meaning of this utterance. Instead, a purely musical passage does not refer to anything in particular; it has no fixed signified. Yet, the passage does bear semantic content in spite of the fact that it is elusive and difficult to articulate.

The problem of the lack of referentiality is also present in popular music; yet, classical music poses more difficulty to the untrained ear, for this type of music is more complex in its construction. A person not used to listening to classical music will probably feel at a loss when trying to ‘read’ a musical text for the first time. How should s/he go about it? Does the text have meaning? If so, what is it? How can it be articulated?

Classical music’s unpopularity and elusiveness therefore pose several challenges to its exploration. A paradox analogous with the one previously signalled seems to arise: Classical music, like Shakespeare, has survived the hands of time; most people living in the Westerly-influenced world are familiar with the names of Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, etc., as well as with some famous classical passages; yet this music represents textual *otherness* for a great majority, due to the comple-

xity of the medium. The exploration of the intertextual relationship between Shakespeare and classical music thus implies the exploration of two *others*. Such a challenge will probably make us wonder whether this intertextual exploration is worth the effort. Put in more colloquial language, why should we care about it after all?

This paper intends to prove that the exploration of classical music as (inter)textual *other* is worth exploring in the intercultural literature and/or language classroom. In what follows, an analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*’s Act 3, scene 5 and the *transposition* of it made by Sergei Prokofiev in his ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1940) is carried out, in order to show to the reader how the intertextual link between Shakespeare and classical music can be explored.

Deconstructing Shakespeare

The focus of the present exploration is *Romeo and Juliet*’s Act 3, scene 5, 1-59. In terms of plot, the scene portrays Romeo and Juliet’s last moment together; their wedding night is coming to an end as the first signs of day are made manifest. Romeo must leave, having been banished from Verona for killing Juliet’s cousin Tybalt. This scene is intertextually linked to the medieval ‘dawn song’ or *aubade*, a lyric poem belonging to the courtly love tradition which expresses the regret of parting lovers at daybreak. As Bloom points out, in *Romeo and Juliet* the *aubade* is resignified, for the lovers ‘know that death after dawn would be Romeo’s punishment, not for adultery, but merely for marriage’. In this case, the *aubade* has more tragic connotations:

The subtle outrageousness of Shakespeare's drama is that everything is against the lovers: their families and the State, the indifference of nature, the vagaries of time, and the regressive movement of the cosmological contraries of love and strife. Even had Romeo transcended his anger... the odds are too great against the triumph of love (Bloom, 1988: 102).

In order to deconstruct this Shakespearean passage, its linguistic and structural characteristics should be the first point of destination in the learner's voyage from the *self* towards the *other*. A task wherein students have to reflect upon the different layers of meaning structuring the text facilitates the access to this textual *otherness* and serves as guide for future deconstructive readings learners may carry out on their own:

cribed by Barthes (1979). At this stage, the reader/learner focuses on the meaning of the words used by the characters in order to grasp what is going on in terms of narrative development. Comprehension may be hindered by the amount of Renaissance English vocabulary present in the text, but once the meaning of unfamiliar words is clarified, the learner can understand that Romeo and Juliet are here referring to their impending separation. The learner can also divide the text into different sections, each corresponding to changes in the characters' emotional state. In the first section of the *aubade*, Juliet seems to be in denial of reality: she clings to the idea that night has not come to an end; Romeo, instead, has a more objective perception, telling Juliet that the singing lark and the incipient light in the East are announcing daybreak: he must leave or he will die.

Task: Read *Romeo and Juliet* III, v, 1-59, then answer the following questions:

- 1) What is going on in this passage? What are the characters referring to?
- 2) How is the text structured in terms of narrative development? Can you divide the text into different sections?
- 3) What is the passage's subtext (i.e. what is being implied; content underneath the spoken dialogue)? How is the subtext expressed through the use of images?
- 4) Why can we consider this passage a 'dawn song'? What makes it look or sound like a song?

The task presented above aims at establishing a purpose in the exploration of the mentioned scene: the learner must read the passage in order to find a (personal) answer to each of the questions.

Questions 1 and 2 deal with the referential level of language or 'first meaning' des-

In the second section, Juliet becomes aware of the tragic consequences Romeo's staying with her may bring, so she vehemently tells him to leave. In the third section, the nurse enters, announcing that Lady Capulet is on her way to Juliet's bedroom: day has definitely broken in. Finally Romeo descends down

the rope-ladder: the lovers sorrowfully say farewell to each other and Juliet now seems to be more aware of the tragic fate ensuing: Romeo still has hope that they will reunite some day, but she has a foreshadowing vision of Romeo's death.

Question 3 aims at having students focus on the symbolic level of language, or 'second meaning': that is, meaning which is expressed through figurative language. Barthes (1979: 54) sustains that this is meaning 'taken from a kind of common, general lexicon of symbols'. The symbolic level of language has cultural connotations: any reader familiar with a poetic text's cultural information can easily understand the symbolism underlying it, which is why Barthes also proposes to call this *the obvious meaning*. In this passage, the symbolic is expressed through the imagery related to night and day: Shakespeare here inverts the cultural symbolism associated with darkness and light: while traditionally the latter connotes life, happiness, hope, darkness being its opposite pair, the *aubade* presents night as the realm of love and life and light as synonymous with death for the lovers. Romeo's descent from Juliet's balcony to the garden also carries connotations of death. What is being implied through symbolic language is the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* itself: the violence involving the two feuding families, the impossibility for the young lovers to free themselves from that violence, the sense of impotence they feel regarding their own lives, the fear of death, etc.

Question 4 focuses on the aural aspect of the text; its 'third' or *obtuse* meaning (Bar-

thes), also defined by Julia Kristeva (1984) as *the semiotic*. It concerns those layers of meaning whose access seems to be interdicted to the subject; what Mallarmé (in Kristeva 1984: 29) calls 'the mystery in literature':

Indifferent to language, enigmatic and feminine, this space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement.

If we can consider Shakespeare's passage a 'dawn song', this is due to its lyricism, manifested in its rhyme, its use of iambic pentameter, its alliterations, its repetition of words as well as other devices which provide the text with musicality. An example of this aural richness is the rhyming couplet below, uttered in the play by both Juliet and Romeo. Not only do we find rhyme here but also repetition of words, alliteration and two perfect iambic pentameters:

Juliet: O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

Romeo: More light and light; more dark and dark our woes.

How can we articulate this extra layer of meaning provided by the text? Auditory devices have traditionally been taught in the literature classroom: with proper training, students can learn to identify instances of alliteration, rhyme, iambic pentameter, etc. Yet, further discussion as to what those devices convey seldom ensues, for how could anyone determine what a rhyming couplet such

as the one above actually means? And still, there is some type of meaning: a third, non-referential, non-symbolic meaning inherent to what Kristeva (after the Russian formalists) calls *poetic language*, a term denoting all signifying systems which have melody and rhythm in their signifiers. Poetry, drama and music thus become synonymous with poetic language.

From Shakespeare to Classical Music

Having deconstructed a passage from *Romeo and Juliet* wherein the three levels of meaning are interwoven, we can now explore the intertextual relationship between Shakespearean drama and classical music. What happens when Shakespeare is *transposed* or ‘translated’ into classical music? How is meaning carried across?

The composer willing to translate *Romeo and Juliet* into an orchestral music piece should find a way of transposing the meaning resulting from the three language levels previously explored into a medium which is purely non-verbal. Verbal language is certainly the Shakespearean text’s vital matter: without it, the text would be deprived of its content. How can a classical music composer create a ‘faithful’ transposition or ‘intersemiotic translation’ (Jacobson, 1959) of Shakespeare when this vital element is entirely removed from the text?

If the linguistic text is constituted by the word as its minimum unit, the traditional classical music text is constituted by the musical phrase (i.e. a combination of sounds expressing a given melody) and the harmo-

nic background (i.e. a series of sounds played simultaneously to form a chord) as its minimum units. The musical text is thus traversed by two forces: the horizontal line of the melody and the vertical line of the harmony. Themes in the linguistic text are expressed through speech. To solve the problem of translating a linguistic text into a non-linguistic text, Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) recurred to the use of *leitmotifs* to express the themes present in the source text (i.e. *Romeo and Juliet*). A *leitmotif* or musical theme is an identifiable melody which is associated with a specific theme or character. It is played several times throughout the development of the musical piece: it may be presented in a given way, then it may appear again but with a variation in its melody or harmonic background, it may be juxtaposed with one or more themes; there is an ongoing recycling of musical material as the text unfolds. Prokofiev’s music transposition is thus shaped by several musical themes, each of them associated with one of the play’s themes or characters. ‘Capulets and Montagues’, ‘The dance of the Knights’, ‘Juliet’s Theme’, ‘Romeo’s Theme’, ‘Love Theme’ are just a few of the *leitmotifs* upon which this musical text is built.

To transpose the *aubade* scene herein explored into ballet music, Prokofiev created three main *leitmotifs*, as pointed out by Bennett (2003): ‘Romeo and Juliet’s Theme’, ‘Love Theme A’ and ‘Love Theme B’ (the latter two complementing each other). These themes constitute the text’s main constituents. Yet, they are not presented in lineal order but interspersed with one another, thus enriching

the piece's texture. In addition, they are antecedent by an opening theme which functions as introduction to the whole scene. It should be noted that the only linguistic element in this transposition is the title given by the composer to the scene: 'Romeo and Juliet before Parting'. This element is not uttered in performance but only present in the piece's music score. Devoid of all verbal sign, this text is therefore constituted exclusively by the third level of meaning described by Barthes and Kristeva in their post-structuralist frameworks: what Prokofiev's musical text and its Shakespearean source scene have in common is the 'floating signifier', that disruptive, inarticulable element associated with the unconscious and the emotional. How can this hyperbolisation of *the semiotic* (Kristeva) be explored in the classroom?

First of all, it is worth noting that Prokofiev composed this piece for ballet performance. Having learners watch the ballet scene right away would be to the detriment of the exploration of the music transposition itself, for attention would immediately be placed on the visual, bearing in mind the context of a visually-dominated culture. Therefore I propose exploring the musical themes first, with a view to having learners focus on their personal response to the aural. I suggest playing the themes in isolation before listening to the whole piece, so that learners can identify these *leitmotifs* as they are unfolded. Below is an example of a task that guides learners in their exploration of Prokofiev's musical text:

Exploring Prokofiev's Music for the Ballet *Romeo and Juliet*

Task: While you listen to Act 3, scene 1 of Prokofiev's ballet music, jot down at least three words or phrases describing **your personal response** to the music. Bear in mind the following questions in order to fulfill this task:

- What emotions, feelings does this music convey?
- Does it provoke any physical reaction? (relaxation, tension, anxiety, peace, etc.)
- Does it evoke any images?
- What type of atmosphere does the music create?

Use the following chart to guide you in your listening:

Romeo and Juliet before Parting:

Scene Structure

- Introduction to theme ("Romeo and Juliet")
- I. Romeo and Juliet theme
- II. Love theme A
- III. Romeo and Juliet theme (repetition of I)
- IV. Love theme B

When carried out in various academic contexts, such as the *Celebrating Shakespeare* workshop I facilitated at the *IES Lenguas Vivas "Juan Ramón Fernández"*, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2014), this task proved to elicit highly personal responses from learners/listeners. It is particularly revealing how the emotions, images reported to be evoked by Prokofiev's music were similar to those evoked by Shakespeare's poetic text. There is a striking correspondence between the dramatic development of Shakespeare's *aubade* scene (i.e. from a state of idyllic calm to growing tension and Juliet's foreshadowing of Romeo's death) and the dramatic development of Prokofiev's transposition: from a musical theme played by a flute and celli evoking the sound of birds at dawn, to the unfolding of musical themes that increasingly convey tension as well as passion and a feeling of helpless tragedy. Not only have the emotions present in the source text been carried across, but they have been hyperbolised as well, due to the emotional drive inherent in the purely *semiotic* or *obtuse*. This enriches the emotional understanding of the source text, which has now been explored from its 'mysterious', non-rational layers of meaning.

Once the music has been explored, learners can watch the ballet scene. The additional layers of meaning provided by the dancers' choreography in combination with the music constitutes a textual whole overflowing with 'semiotic excess' (Barthes, 1979). In spite of the subject's impossibility to articulate this 'excess', the exploration of the text by focusing on his/her own physical or emotional re-

action to it, contributes to narrowing the gap between this textual *otherness* and the *self*.

A Semiotic Feast

The exploration of the intertextual link between Shakespeare and classical music constitutes a double-mediation: having first explored Shakespeare as an *other*, and reached a place where the *self* is enriched, the learner explores classical music transposition, and performs another journey: first, towards the classical music text as another *other*; then back to the Shakespearean play. Finally, s/he returns to a place where the *self* is further enriched.

The exploration of the third meaning inherent in these (inter)texts, brings about a movement of the *self* towards its inner-most essence, outside the realm of the referential and the symbolic. Paradoxically, the emotional understanding of these texts entails a better understanding of them as cultural objects, for in grasping the non-referential, non-symbolic, universal essence present in them, the learner is able to empathise with the culture of *the other*.

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Humour in *Twelfth Night?*

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Este trabajo se propone explorar hasta qué punto los elementos humorísticos presentes en Twelfth Night de William Shakespeare aún hacer reír al público del siglo veintiuno. Por esta razón, se analizará el uso particular del lenguaje por parte de los diversos personajes de la obra, dado que el humor Shakespeareano es puramente lingüístico. Esta característica distintiva del humor verbal se ve plasmada en la trama, la sub-trama, la caracterización, el tono, las tensiones dramáticas, es decir; en las redes de sentido que constituyen la organicidad de la comedia, y que hacen posible que el humor de Twelfth Night transcienda en el tiempo, el espacio y la cultura y se resignifique en nuestro ‘aquí y ahora’.

In *The Language of Humour*, Alison Ross states: “One definition of humour is: ‘something that makes a person laugh or smile’ [...] the response is an important factor in counting something as humour” (1998: 1). He also says: “The social context is important for the creation and reception of humour. It is

hard for humour to cross boundaries of time and social groups” (1998: 2).

Then, one could wonder why Shakespeare’s comedies are still being performed nowadays and why audiences still find them amusing. This is the case with *Twelfth Night*, for example, which Harold Bloom considers

“the greatest of all Shakespeare’s pure comedies” (1998: 226). The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the elements of Shakespearean humour present in *Twelfth Night* still cause laughter in 21st-century audiences at the theatre.

The sources of humour in this play are basically linguistic. The elaborate manipulation of language in the creation of character and the comic situations resulting from it provide audiences with a highly amusing type of comedy. This paper is an attempt to delve into the main sources of humour in this play. The analysis will be first focused on situational humour, and then on an approach to the portrayal of characters through language and the types of verbal humour present in the play.

According to Lynne Magnusson, *Twelfth Night* is among the “plays developing situational comedy” [...] “The comic plotting engineers a whole series of well-timed and fantastic deceptions and mix-ups which generate discrepancies in awareness among the characters” (2002: 173). The main source of these gaps of awareness which give rise to different comic situations is the heroine’s use of disguise.

“Uniquely among Shakespeare’s heroines, Viola assumes sexual disguise at the outset of her role, from which all the play’s misunderstandings and plot complications arise” (Hodgdon, 2002: 186). These complications affect the characters belonging to the main plot, the romantic plot of the play, which is centred on Viola –and later on her twin brother Sebastian, Olivia and Orsino. Having arrived in Illyria, an idyllic place ruled by Duke Orsino, after a shipwreck, Viola decides to disguise as a boy and serve him. She tries to imitate her

“dead” brother in everything. This will give rise to humorous situations because they are identical twins.

Soon afterwards, Orsino asks Viola, now dressed up as a boy –Cesario-, to woo Olivia for him. Viola is reluctant because she has fallen in love with Orsino, though she knows her “state is desperate” (II, ii, 34), that is, hopeless, because she passes off as a boy. And immediately afterwards, Olivia falls in love with Cesario [Viola]. As this is a comedy and Sebastian arrives in Illyria early in the play (II, i), the audience can feel confident throughout that all the problems will be solved and that there is no risk of the play ending tragically.

The comic misunderstandings arising from Viola’s disguise reach a climax when she is challenged to a duel by Sir Andrew, who is really a coward. As she is actually a girl, she does not know how to handle weapons, and she is frightened by Sir Toby and Fabian, who describe Sir Andrew to her as if he were brave (III, iv).

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian make up another group of characters who could be said to belong to the sub-plot, although they sometimes share scenes with those belonging to the main plot. Characters such as Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria, Malvolio and Feste –the Fool- are involved in a series of comic scenes which provide the basis for the situational humour of the play.

One of them is the so-called drinking scene (II, iii), where Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and later on Feste are drinking, singing and shouting so loudly that first Maria and then Malvolio try to silence them. Malvolio is very disagreeable and even insults them because, as he is

a “kind of puritan” (II, iii, 122) according to Maria, he dislikes any form of entertainment.

As Maurice Charney states, he “looks with disdain at all those whom he deems beneath him” [...] “The fact that Malvolio is steward [...] puts him in an ambiguous position because, however important his function, he is still a servant, as Sir Toby is at pains to remind him” (2000: 116). In this drinking scene, Sir Toby finally addresses Malvolio asking him: “Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no cakes and ale?” And Feste adds: “Yes, by Saint Anne; and ginger shall be hot i’ the mouth too” (II, iii, 99-102).

To take revenge, Maria writes a letter imitating Olivia’s hand to suggest to Malvolio that the Countess is in love with him. The scene where he finds the letter (II, v) is considered by David Daniell “the funniest scene Shakespeare wrote, the box-tree scene” (1986: 115). All along the scene, hidden behind the box-tree, or hedge, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian criticize Malvolio –without his hearing them-, to the delight of the theatrical audience.

Before finding the letter, Malvolio already thinks that Olivia cares for him. In his day-dreaming he exclaims “To be Count Malvolio!” (II, v, 29) and then he imagines himself getting up from bed, where he has left Olivia sleeping. According to Stanley Wells, these fantasies are really “about the power he hopes to acquire through marriage to his mistress, and about the humiliations that he would be able to impose upon Sir Toby” (1995: 181).

So, when he reads the letter, he does not doubt that his lady is in love with him. “The

letter gives Malvolio specific instructions on how to play the lover and how to woo Olivia: wear yellow stockings, go cross-gartered, smile continuously in her presence –all things that in reality will appall and astound her” (Charney, 2000: 118).

This is what he does in the climactic scene where he appears before Olivia. Lloyd Davis states: “His [Malvolio’s] entry is one of those moments when the written text cannot do justice to the impact that a crazily dressed, strutting, and smiling Malvolio has in practically all productions. It’s a showstopper” (Davis 2003: 201). Malvolio even quotes phrases from the forged love-letter expecting to see some sign of acknowledgement in Olivia. But she is so shocked by this situation, his statements and his appearance that she concludes “Why, this is very midsummer madness” (III, iv, 51).

So, Olivia –somehow prompted by Maria’s stating early in the same scene that he “is, sure possessed” (III, iv, 8-9)-, assumes Malvolio should be taken care of as if he were mad. That is why he is locked in a dark room. This was common practice with madmen at the time, and even if nowadays this looks sadistic, perhaps it is what he deserves for offending the comic spirit. According to Maurice Charney, “Malvolio never enters the world of comedy;” he “can never be recovered for comedy” (1993: 76). And Catherine Bates states: “In the discomfiting and excluding of Malvolio [...] Shakespeare seems to be making a stronger case than usual for the power of dramatic art. For Malvolio is drama’s enemy, the embodiment of the anti-theatrical prejudice” (2002: 121), because of his puritanical behaviour.

According to Harold Bloom, “Shakespeare’s Malvolio is more victim of his own psychic propensities than he is Maria’s gull. His dream of socio-erotic greatness –‘to be Count Malvolio’- is one of Shakespeare’s supreme inventions, permanently disturbing as a study in self-deception.” And he adds: “Malvolio’s very name indicates that he wishes no one well but himself” (1998, 238; 239).

According to David Bevington, “Malvolio’s sober-sided performance of duty would be acceptable as a counterweight to Toby and Andrew’s excessive merriment were it not for the fact that Malvolio is a hypocrite. Secretly he longs for the pleasures of this world and for the authority to control others [...]” (2002: 200).

His hypocrisy is very clearly seen in his reaction to the superscript of the letter he finds in the garden. On picking it up and looking at it, he exclaims: “By my life, this is my lady’s hand! These be her very C’s, her U’s, and her T’s; and thus makes she her great P’s” (II, v, 75-77). Then, he reads, “*To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes*” (II, v, 79).

Maurice Charney comments on this reaction: “C-U-T” is an obscene reference to the female genitalia,” [...]. “Of course, there is no C or P in the superscription of the letter” (2000: 117). This shows, then, that Malvolio is only outwardly sober and above a man’s sexual fantasies; he is really thinking of the physical prerogatives he would enjoy as Count Malvolio.

This is also shown by his reaction to Olivia’s “Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?” (III, iv, 29), implying that he should lie down to recover from his fit of madness. He replies: “To bed! Ay, sweetheart, and I’ll come to thee” (III,

iv, 30). He takes Olivia’s question to be a sexual invitation because this is exactly what he has been day-dreaming about.

“The social status of Malvolio as steward is insisted on throughout the play. He is the chief officer in Olivia’s household, but always a servant, an employee, and never a noble figure like Olivia, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and the Duke Orsino [...]. Maria is also much above Malvolio in status because she is a waiting gentlewoman [...]” (Charney, 1993: 76-77).

The funniest characters in the play are Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, both of whom are Shakespeare’s creations. Sir Toby’s surname (Belch) refers to his habit of hiccupping caused by his heavy drinking. He is a parasite, since he lives on Olivia and tries to get as much money as he can from Sir Andrew, assuring him that Olivia will fall in love with him, even though she pays no attention to him. As Stanley Wells says, “Sir Toby may be drunken and parasitical but he is attractive as an upholder of merriment and good fellowship” (1995: 181).

Sir Andrew Aguecheek, as his name suggests, is very thin, very pale and very silly. Though he has some pretension to being witty, he admits in I, iii: “I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.” (I, iii, 71-72) Perhaps the only laughable thing about him is his attempt at being funny, his naïve stupidity, and his fondness for repeating parrot-like, whatever Sir Toby says, as can be seen in I, iii:

SIR ANDREW: An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home tomorrow, Sir Toby.

SIR TOBY: *Pourquoi*, my dear knight?

SIR ANDREW: What is “*pourquoi*”? Do or not do? I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting. [...]

(I, iii, 74-79)

“The genius of *Twelfth Night* is Feste, the most charming of all Shakespeare’s fools, and the only sane character in a wild play” (Bloom, 1998: 244). Stanley Wells states: “The fool is the wise man of the play, and it is fitting that at the end he remains on stage to sing his song of the wind and the rain which manages at once to mean so little and so much as he looks backward to a time when he ‘was and a little tiny boy’ and forward to the actors’ future efforts to please their audiences” (1995: 184).

He is witty, he speaks incisively, he dares say more than most people would deem politically correct, because as a licensed fool, he is allowed to say whatever he wants to his superiors as he is not supposed to be in his right senses. He is there to entertain the lady Olivia by his humorous retorts. He describes himself as a “corrupter of words” (III, i, 30) but he is far more than that: his mastery of the English language is such that he can play with words, use puns and speak so wittily that theatre audiences can laugh wholeheartedly when he says something.

At the beginning of the play, Olivia is mourning her brother’s death and has decided to shun the presence of men for seven years (quite an odd situation for a comedy). So, in I, v, through witty syllogisms, Feste proves Olivia a fool:

FESTE: God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA: Take the fool away.

FESTE: [To the Attendants] Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

OLIVIA: [To FESTE] Go to, you’re a dry fool; I’ll no more of you; besides you grow dishonest.

FESTE: Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel will amend; for give the dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry; bid the dishonest man mend himself; if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher mend him. [...] The lady bade take away the fool; therefore, I say again, take her away.

OLIVIA: Sir, I bade them take away *you*.

FESTE: Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, *cucullus non facit monachum*: that’s as much to say I wear not motley in my brain. Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

OLIVIA: Can you do it?

FESTE: Dexterously, good madonna.

OLIVIA: Make your proof.

FESTE: I must catechize you for it, madonna; good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

OLIVIA: Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I’ll bide your proof.

FESTE: Good madonna, why mournest thou?

OLIVIA: Good fool, for my brother’s death.

FESTE: I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

OLIVIA: I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

FESTE: The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother’s soul being in heaven. [To the Attendants] Take away the fool, gentlemen.

(I, v, 31-40; 45-63)

Perhaps, this witty dialogue paves the way for Olivia’s instantly falling in love with

the Duke's messenger [Cesario], since she may be prompted to think of how foolish her behaviour has been.

Feste's use of nonsensical words and phrases is another source of humour. In II, iii, Sir Andrew quotes Feste and the fool replies wittily using high-sounding words, in most cases, of his own invention. The joke seems to be related to Sir Andrew's reaction to Feste's pseudo-learned speech, which he openly admires:

SIR ANDREW: [To FESTE] In sooth, thou wast in very gracious fooling last night, when thou spakest of Pigrogromitus, of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus; 't was very good, i' faith. I sent thee sixpence for thy leman; hadst it?

FESTE: I did impeticos thy gratillity, for Malvolio's nose is no whipstock; my lady has a white hand, and the Myrmidons are no bottle-ale houses.

SIR ANDREW: Excellent! [...]

(II, iii, 19-26)

Another instance of Feste's wit can be seen when he meets Viola [as Cesario] in III, i, and –together with Viola– he plays on two different senses of phrases starting with “by”: make a living, and by the side of:

VIOLA: Save thee, friend, and thy music.
Dost thou live by thy tabor?

FESTE: No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA: Art thou a churchman?

FESTE: No such matter, sir; I do live by the church for I do live at my house, and my house Doth stand by the church.

(III, i, 1-5)

Sebastian's role is important for the comic resolution of the play. Before the beginning of Act V, he has been betrothed to Olivia, who thought it was Cesario she was being betrothed to. (This betrothal was then considered as binding as the final wedding ceremony). When in V, i, Olivia calls Viola [Cesario] “husband” (V, i, 134), Orsino's anger reaches a climax: He has been betrayed by the “boy” he had thought was his friend. Commenting on this idea, R. W. Maslen says “in Orsino's eyes Cesario has become what Elizabethan manuals on male friendship describe as a ‘second self’ [...]. On learning that Olivia has fallen in love with Cesario, Orsino promptly resorts to the usual male solution of violence [...], he will kill Cesario to spite Olivia” (2006: 210).

Immediately afterwards, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby arrive claiming that Cesario has wounded them. The problem is soon solved, because Sebastian appears and the twins are seen on stage together for the first time. The comic atmosphere is restored and the play can end happily, with the prospect of marriage for the main characters. (Sir Toby has married Maria before the beginning of Act V.)

Perhaps these will not become the typical Elizabethan couples. According to Barbara Hodgdon, Viola [Cesario] prompts “Olivia's desire [...] for a husband *unmasculine* enough for her to master” (2002: 186). And Maslen adds “it's in male clothing that Viola leaves the stage with Orsino [...] at the end of the play. Her clothes seem to promise that their marriage will be an egalitarian one” (2006: 211). So, this comedy can be said to be somehow open-ended; it seems to have what Marilyn French calls a “feminine” conclusion.

From my point of view, we may wonder whether these couples will live happily ever after. Nevertheless, on the stage we see the triumph of humour over sadness and we can celebrate the restoration of the comic spirit. In the opening scenes of the play, Olivia is first spoken about, and then seen, mourning her brother's death, which she has vowed to do for seven years. We also see Orsino choosing to remain alone, dreaming of himself in love with the image of Olivia he has made up for himself. This is unnatural for this genre of play, since the characters in the world of comedy should be sociable.

This sad atmosphere is counterbalanced by the presence of Viola, and also of Feste and the rest of the characters involved in the subplot. Both the comic situations in which we can see them and Shakespeare's witty creation of character through their use of quibbles, plays on words and jokes, and through their universal foibles, such as being parasitical, foolish or cowardly, can still be considered sources of humour by contemporary audiences.

My conclusion is that, around four hundred years after its composition, the linguistic and dramatic tensions and the humorous effect of both the main plot and the comic subplot of *Twelfth Night* still amuse audiences at the theatre in the 21st century. Finally, as regards audiences' reactions to Shakespearean humour, I would like to quote Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it; never in the tongue
Of him that makes it.
(*Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 862-864)

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Shakespeare's Dramatic Openings

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*La primera escena de una obra teatral suele ser la más memorable de todas. Esta escena introduce el tono, la atmósfera, los símbolos, las figuras retóricas, los personajes centrales y los temas nodales para captar la atención de la audiencia, dado que la escena introductoria debe plasmar una red de sentido inter-semiótica y orgánica. Este trabajo tiene por objetivo explorar las escenas introductorias de cuatro tragedias Shakespeareanas *Hamlet*, *Otelo*, *King Lear* y *Macbeth* a fin de analizar la manera en que las primeras escenas se articulan con el resto de la obra.*

The first scene of a play is, more often than not, the most memorable of all. It is the one that should set tone and setting, introduce motifs and imagery, themes and characters, as well as grasp the audience's attention. In short: an opening scene should be effective and organic to the play as

a whole. This work aims at looking into the opening scenes of two of Shakespeare's major tragedies: *Othello* and *Macbeth*. It will consider the dramatic elements at play, and the articulation between these first scenes and the remaining scenes of the play.

To begin with, the word "dramatic" in this

paper will be used as a synonym for “theatrical”, that is, a dramatic scene will be one which skilfully combines stage elements to create a certain effect. At the same time, the word “dramatic” denotes excitement and impressiveness, which will also be considered in this analysis.

According to Will Dunne, a playwright has only ten minutes to grab the audience’s interest: “This ‘grabbing’ needs to occur as soon as possible and preferably within the first ten minutes—that’s usually ten pages—” of a script. This will allow audiences “to settle into the world of the story, pay most attention to what’s most important, get emotionally invested in a main character, and begin to follow a through line” (Dunne, 2009: 221). The author highlights the importance of grasping not only the spectators’ attention but also their hearts.

A dramatic scene needs to move the plot forward, reveal the characters’ traits (personality, feelings, thoughts, and so on), build up atmosphere and develop an interesting conflict. In order to do so, a successful playwright will combine the following theatrical elements:

- Setting
- Effective dialogues (diction) / effective silences
- Stage directions
- Action

It is known that the stage in Shakespeare’s time was almost bare: there was nothing of the fancy scenery created often in modern stage productions. Consequently, the vividness of the setting had to be conveyed

through language. Shakespeare’s masterful handling of language is, in part, functional: it was the means by which audiences could picture the setting in their minds.

Stage directions in Shakespeare are brief and limited: they provide vague information of place (“A desolate place”), of the characters’ entrances and exits, and about some actions (“They fight”). Nothing is said about a character’s tone of voice, body language, clothing and physical appearance. Thus, all those missing details are for readers to imagine, for editors to add, or for directors to portray as s/he wishes.

Shakespeare’s first scenes, besides blending the elements mentioned above, encapsulate the gist of the whole play they open: they introduce key themes, imagery, conflict and character.

Othello (1603-4)

Setting

The tragedy of the Moor of Venice opens with a heated argument in a street in Venice, at night. This setting is not random: the republic of Venice was a great successful commercial centre in Shakespeare’s time. It was believed to be tolerant in terms of religion and politics. In addition, Venice was admired for its respect of law and order, reason and justice: it “was most serene, the *serenissima* [sic] that could boast a history free of the civil discords that plagued other Italian city states” (D’Amico, 2001: 70). When Iago and Roderigo wake up Brabantio to tell him that his daughter has been robbed, he answers “What tell’st thou me of robbing? This is Venice; / my house

is not a grange." (I, i, 102-3). Thus, the senator states the impossibility of uncivilised behaviour in this place.

Iago's plan will be developed and accomplished in Cyprus, not Venice:

The physical movement of the principal characters from Venice to Cyprus corresponds to a psychological movement from the calm and security of rational order, where individual energy is shaped and supported by social forms, to the chaos of emotional turbulence. (Salgado, 2000: xvi)

However, Venetians "were held to be extremely cunning, and the women were believed to be sensual and sophisticated" (Salgado, 2000: xv), a fact that Iago will unjustly use against Desdemona.

Shakespeare also sets the opening scene at night-time, thus adding an element of mystery through the darkness. Brabantio cannot see the faces of the men who shout beneath his window: only Roderigo will identify himself, Iago will remain unseen and unrecognised.

Darkness could also be said to have a symbolic function:

- From Brabantio's point of view, darkness could stand for the irrationality of Desdemona's act of treason, which has left him "naught but bitterness" (I, i, 158). It also stands for Othello's alleged witchcraft: "Is there not charms / by which the property of youth and maidenhood / may be abused?" (I, i, 167-9) There is no logical explanation for Brabantio to understand his daughter's "treason of the blood" (I, i,

165) but the Moor's use of black magic to enchant her.

- Roderigo is portrayed as Iago's puppet. He is easily manipulated and blind to the villain's true intentions, and cannot see through his masks. In his case, darkness is both literal and metaphorical.
- Having read / watched the play, and coming back to the opening scene, we realise that darkness should be associated with Iago, not Othello. Thus, the darkness in which he shades himself not to be seen by Brabantio is a symbolic projection of the evil shadows within him. "The fact that the darkness of 'Hell and night' spreads from Iago and then takes over Othello—this fact at least should prevent us from supposing that the blackness is inherent in Othello's barbarian nature." (Hunter, 2005: 69). In fact, as Orkin (1987) states, Shakespeare reverses the associations of black and white, as it is "Iago, the white man, who is portrayed as amoral and anti-Christian, essentially savage [...]" (170).

Characters

Like almost every Shakespearean tragedy, *Othello* does not bring the hero to the stage in the first scene. Unlike most other tragedies, however, the hero is described negatively. Nothing seems to be heroic about him. Othello is presented as conceited and unfair, having chosen a supposedly unfit man to be his lieutenant over the apparently more qual-

ified Iago. Michael Cassio is a Florentine, another outsider in Venice. Iago despises him for considering him inexperienced in battle, an “arithmetician” of “mere prattle without practice” (I, i, 16, 23), and for his reputation as a womaniser. At first sight, Othello also seems to have dishonestly eloped with Desdemona, without her family’s approval or even foreknowledge of their engagement. Roderigo tells Brabantio that his daughter has escaped “to the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor” (I, i, 122).

No other play subjects its ostensibly tragic hero to so long and intensive a debunking before he even sets foot onstage. And the audience is inevitably complicit in this debunking: before we meet Othello, we are utterly dependent on Iago’s and Roderigo’s descriptions of him (Adelman, 1997: 125)

Othello’s blackness would have been interpreted as a sign of evil by English audiences, as the “colour prejudice” of the time associated dark-skinned people with promiscuous lust, slavery, monstrosity, paganism and bewitchment. All these features will be illustrated by Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio at the beginning of the play. First, both Iago and Roderigo refer to him in derogative, racist terms: never do they mention his name, but call him “the Moor” repeatedly. Othello is also named “the thick-lips” (I, i, 63). Secondly, Iago uses vivid sexual imagery to depict Othello’s behaviour as lascivious: in his words, Othello and Desdemona “are making the beast with two backs” (I, i, 113). Thirdly, imagery of darkness is used to refer to Othello: “an old

black ram / is tupping your white ewe” (I, i, 85-6). Othello is “a Barbary horse” (I, i, 108), making reference to a horse from the north of Africa; and “the devil” (I, i, 88), following the Elizabethan belief that the devil was black. In his discourse, Iago vividly denotes the horror of miscegenation and portrays Othello as the agent of such contamination.

Audiences rely on this bestial portrayal of the hero, and it is only when we meet him that we learn we have been deceived. It is only then, in I, ii, that we understand Iago is not to be trusted, as he shows he is double-faced. This implies some mental challenge for the audience, who needs to re-evaluate their perception of the hero and the villain.

Shakespeare has presented to us a traditional view of what Moors are like, i.e. gross, disgusting, inferior, carrying the symbol of their damnation on their skin; and has caught our over-easy assent to such assumptions in the grip of a guilt which associates us and our assent with the white man representative of such views in the play—Iago. Othello acquires the glamour of an innocent man that we have wronged, and an admiration stronger than he could have achieved by virtue plainly represented [...] (Hunter, 2005: 68)

There are hints, nonetheless, that suggest Iago’s double nature in the opening scene. In his argument with Roderigo, Iago confesses: “I follow him to serve my turn upon him”, “In following him, I follow but myself”, “I am not what I am” (I, i, 39, 55, 62). Of course, in a scene so quick and so packed with information, these hints can slip by, and we may miss

them, just as Roderigo does. As regards Iago's actions, they also anticipate the villain's deeds later on: he dupes Roderigo, creates a public scandal (which foreshadows the brawl that will bring Cassio down), and remains unseen and unrecognised (which foretells the fact that no one in the play will see through his mask).

Roderigo is presented as Iago's source of income, since he claims right at the very beginning, “[thou] hast had my purse / as if the strings were thine” (I, i, 2-3). He speaks short lines in the scene, heavily surpassed by Iago, who dominates the stage with his long, eloquent speeches. Roderigo is also easily influenced by Iago, who will take advantage of his love for Desdemona to use him as a pawn throughout the play. His blindness towards Iago's manipulation is an antecedent for other characters' inability to see through Iago's deceit.

Links with the rest of the play

Cassio: his reputation with women will be exploited by Iago throughout the play. Cassio will have an affair with Bianca, a courtesan in Cyprus, and will be accused of having an affair with Desdemona. Iago's description of him –“a fellow almost damned in a fair wife” (I, i, 18)– will take on more significance as Iago's plot unfolds.

Iago: his grudge against Othello and Cassio is the first thing we learn about him, and it is what will drive the plot forward. Yet, he will not be satisfied with getting Cassio's position: Iago is a sweeping tornado that destroys everything in his path, including him-

self. Shakespeare gives hints of his true self and his skilful, subtle handling of language to control others. His manipulation of Roderigo foreshadows his memorable manipulation of Othello in act III. Iago will make Othello believe the impossible: that his wife has been unfaithful, even without showing him any proof whatsoever. Iago's power of conviction is seen as well in his manipulation of Emilia, his wife, who is also unaware of her husband's personality. Only the audience gets to know him. Every one else on stage will trust him and consider him honest, a word that will reverberate along the play.

Iago's language is also worth mentioning: he curses ('Zounds, 'Sblood) and shows his disgust with sex, resorting to animal imagery, and as his plot takes root in Othello's mind, the hero will also become infected with Iago's foul language, losing his exotic sophistication.

Iago's selfishness is evident in the first scene as well. As Adelman (1997) points out, he hammers out the word “I” to vent out his injured ego:

The structure of the first scene models Iago's relation to the world that he calls up, for the play proper seems to arise out of Iago's injured “I”: it is not only set in motion by Iago's “I” but becomes in effect a projection of it, as Iago successfully attempts to rid himself of interior pain by replicating it in Othello (Adelman, 1997: 127).

Additionally, the “gross imaginings of Iago in the first scene, when Desdemona and Othello have not yet appeared, introduce an obsession with visualizing hidden acts that will

return with deadly effect later in the play” (Leggatt, 2005: 115).

Othello: it is clear from the opening scene that Othello is an outsider in Venice, a black man who has managed to become General but remains an alien throughout. Although we listen to Iago disparage against him all along the first scene, by the end, before Brabantio comes out, he admits that Othello has no peer, as Venetians “have none / to lead their business” in the Cyprus wars (I, i, 148-9). This is the only hint we get in the opening scene of Othello’s heroism. Yet his otherness is clearly highlighted: “We are made to understand that, while Othello’s service in arms may be welcome to the state of Venice, he is not a welcome son-in-law for a Venetian senator. He can never truly become a Venetian” (Dillon, 2007: 78). Othello’s language is also introduced in the opening scene, as Iago sneeringly comments:

But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war (I, i,
11-13)

His reference to the Moor’s “bombast circumstance” and “stuffed” way of speaking denote Othello’s sophisticated and high-sounding discourse. When Othello appears on stage, we will come to enjoy his lyrical language, just like Desdemona, who fell in love with his words.

Yet Othello remains unnamed in the opening scene and does not have a voice. This might precede his identity crisis later on in the play. From being a sophisticated man, certain of

his royal nobility and his wife’s devotion, he will fall prey to Iago’s poisonous image of him.

Othello sees himself either as an exotic Venetian, a convert in the fullest sense, capable of complete assimilation, or he sees himself as a barbarian, worthy of destruction. His failure to break free of this constricting framework, to achieve a true sense of personal identity, is one of the play’s most powerful sources of tragic feeling (Berry, 1990: 323).

Themes & imagery

The opening scene of *Othello* anticipates major themes that will later be developed:

- Appearance and reality / duplicity
- Jealousy
- Prejudice / racism
- Loyalty
- Manipulation
- Power
- Marriage
- Love & Hatred
- Sexuality
- Otherness / alienation

The scene also illustrates key imagery that will permeate the tragedy:

- Animals
- Nature
- Darkness vs. light / black vs. white,
- Sex & lust,
- Hell & the devil.

Macbeth (1606)

“The Scottish tragedy”, as superstitious people call *Macbeth*, is considered

to have the best opening in Shakespeare's canon:

If it be true that all art aspires to the state of music, the opening of *Macbeth* approximates perfection. The contention of the elements and the battles of men are the themes of the Witches' colloquy. But their lines are more overture than scene, and the drama has a second opening in the account given by the wounded Sergeant of Macbeth's conquest of the rebels. The passage is like a smear of blood across the first page of the play. The double opening defines precisely what we are to expect: a work dedicated not to the supernatural nor to blood but to the relation between the two. (Goddard, 1960: 108).

Shakespear [sic] excelled in the openings of his plays: that of *Macbeth* is the most striking of any. The wildness of the scenery, the sudden shifting of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited, are equally extraordinary (Hazlitt, 2008: 85).

Setting

The entrance of the Weird Sisters is preceded by references to the setting: "a desolate place" (maybe denoting sterility) and the weather "thunder and lightning". The attentive reader / theatre-goer might spot an instance of pathetic fallacy right at the beginning of the tragedy: nature will act as mirror to human emotions. Thunder and lightning are signs of a storm, which in turn, is symbolically associated to chaos and unrest. Yet, modern audiences are well used to special effects. But what about audiences in Shakespeare's time? "It

was from high up in the playhouse's superstructure that cannon were fired and fireworks let off to represent the 'exhalations in the sky' (thunder and lightning)" (White, 2005: 116).

Characters

The three characters that step on the stage are uncanny bearded figures wearing "wild attire". The reader is soon told that they are "witches", but the spectator needs to guess this fact on his/her own. In such a short scene (consisting merely of 13 lines), Shakespeare shows his mastery at characterisation in the most economic possible way:

- Language: the Sisters speak in rhymed verse, unlike the blank verse or prose used by "human" characters. The use of rhyme tends to be associated with supernatural beings. The quick pace of their lines added to rhyme and alliteration denote a certain musicality associated with magic spells and incantation.
- Style: the Weird Sisters speak in paradoxes ("when the battle's lost and won", "fair is foul and foul is fair"). This use of intentional opaqueness is a clear sign of equivocation, or the language of riddles typical of oracles.
- Power: it can be clearly seen that the Sisters can foresee the future. We learn that there is a battle going on ("hurly-burly") and that it will soon end ("ere the set of sun"). Shakespeare anticipates plot by letting us know that a battle is about to be finished, and these supernatural beings will

- meet the play's hero ("there to meet with Macbeth") "upon the heath".
- Action: not much is written about what the Sisters actually *do* on stage in this scene. In later scenes, we will see them cast spells, prepare revolting potions, chant, dance and even vanish. In this opening scene, however, there are no stage directions to detail their movements. In addition, the dialogue is *in medias res*: we see them by the time they are planning their next meeting. What have they done up to this moment? Theatre and movie directors have experimented with varied options; readers are left to their own imagination.
- Objective correlative: (following T.S. Eliot, an object used by a poet to evoke emotions in the reader/audience) two Sisters are "called" by familiar spirits: "Graymalkin" and "Paddock". The former refers to a grey cat, the latter to a toad. In *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Reginald Scot (1584) exposes common beliefs about witches:

[Witches] can raise and suppresse lightning and thunder, raine and haile, clouds and winds, tempests and earthquakes. [...] Some say they can transubstantiate themselves and others, and take the forms and shapes of asses, woolves, ferrets, cowes, apes, horsses, dogs, &c. Some say they can keepe divels and spirits in the likenesse of todes and cats. (Scot, 1584, Book I, Chapter IV)

In short, the theatre audience will have to deduce that these characters are witches by their physical appearance, their rhymed verse and paradoxical language and their objective correlative.

Why witches? The play is far from being a fairy tale and the use of witches in a play for adults might be considered unwise. Some modern film versions of the tragedy have tried to "accommodate" these characters and make them more believable:

- Roman Polanski (1971): witches as beggar-looking women who meet on a desolate beach.
- Geoffrey Wright (2006): witches as teenage girls who meet in a cemetery to vandalise tombs and effigies.
- Rupert Goold (2010): witches as uncanny war nurses.

Yet, for Shakespeare's audiences, witches were not considered children's fantasy: they were very real. Although at the time some claimed that witches did not exist, witch hunts had been carried out across Europe, and several books had been published in England on the topic. Probably, the most significant for the Bard was James I's *Daemonologie*, which had been published in Scotland in 1597, before he became king of England. Shakespeare's theatrical company changed its name from "The Lord Chamberlain's Men" to "The King's Men" when King James became their protector. So it could be safe to assume that Shakespeare added elements to the play he knew would please the new king.

1. The play is set in Scotland.
2. James I had an interest in witchcraft.

3. James I is said to have been a descendant from Banquo.

Macbeth is Shakespeare's most straightforwardly political play. It celebrates Stuart absolutism in the person of Duncan, warns against its deposition in the person of Macbeth and confirms its cyclical renewal in Malcolm. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was a timely play. James was troubled about his succession, so Shakespeare staged his direct descent from Banquo. Witches troubled James as well, so much so that he even wrote a book about them, so Shakespeare created the 'Weird Sisters' (Guntner, 2000: 123).

So, we can understand why he included witches. Even Lady Macbeth is considered to have witch-like traits by some critics! After all, she will invoke night spirits to "unsex" her and do away with her feminine features (weakness, remorse, tenderness), as well as claim to be able to kill her own new-born baby to show her strength:

I have given suck and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless
gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this. (1.7.54-9)

Her shocking analogy might have associated her with the witches, who were believed to commit infanticide.

In sum, it is clear why Shakespeare found it effective to include witches in this play. Yet, the word "witch" is pronounced only once in all the play. In I, iii, 5 the First Witch tells her sisters that a sailor's wife said "Aroint, thee, witch" to her. Still, throughout the play they are called "Weird Sisters", not witches.

Who are the Weird Sisters? Shakespeare might have taken them from his main source (Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, first published in 1577). Holinshed writes of "thrée women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world" (p. 268), who are "thrée faries or weird sisters" (p. 274). Marjorie Garber explains that

Wyrd is the Old English word for "fate," and these are, in a way, classical witches as well as Scottish or Celtic ones, Fates as well as Norns. The Three Fates of Greek mythology were said to spin, apportion, and cut the thread of man's life. But the Macbeth witches are not merely mythological beings, nor merely historical targets of vilification and superstition: on the stage, and on the page, they have a persuasive psychological reality of their own (Garber, 2005: 587).

So the Weird Sisters are goddesses of destiny, sisters of fate. However, in *Macbeth* they "do not create the evil heart, they only untie the evil hands. They put nothing into Macbeth's mind, but merely draw out what was already there" (Hudson, 2008: 153). Despite the Sisters' power, Macbeth will remain a free man till the end: a tragic hero accountable for his actions.

Links with the rest of the play

Shakespeare depicts the way the witches pervade the atmosphere of the play by using echoes of their language in the oncoming scenes: by the end of I, ii King Duncan will exclaim “What he (Thane of Cawdor) hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won” (I, ii, 67), a line that reverberates the witches’ “lost and won”. The most striking echo of all is Macbeth’s first lines in the play: “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (I, iii, 36). The audience can quickly perceive, before the hero, the unconscious link that will tie Macbeth to the witches.

Shakespeare tends to create expectation by delaying the appearance of heroes. As mentioned above, they hardly ever appear in the first scene, but are described by other characters in order to build up their heroic personalities. In *Macbeth*, though, that will be done in the second scene, where Macbeth’s prowess and military skills will be praised nonstop: “brave Macbeth” is “Valour’s minion”, Duncan’s “valiant cousin” and a “worthy gentleman” who is called “Bellona’s bridegroom” (I, ii, 16, 19, 24, 54). As a tragic hero, Macbeth needs to be admired for his good nature and his admirable traits (loyalty, courage, strength). Yet the fact that the witches anticipate a meeting with him in the opening scene might be a clue to his future decay: meddling with dark forces, in a Faustian way, will be the beginning of his undoing.

Themes & imagery

The opening scene of *Macbeth*, brief as it

is, also anticipates major themes that will later be developed:

- Appearance and reality
- Power
- Evil
- Ambiguity & equivocation
- The supernatural
- Order and disorder
- Fate and free will

The scene also illustrates key imagery that will permeate the tragedy:

- Animals
- Nature
- Darkness

It could be concluded, finally, that the opening scenes in both *Othello* and *Macbeth* are successfully dramatic because they move the plot forward, reveal characters’ traits, build up atmosphere and develop an interesting conflict. Shakespeare skilfully combines setting, effective language, stage directions and action. At the same time, the first scenes condense the major themes, imagery and characterisation of the whole play. In a nutshell, Shakespeare gives a powerful sample of his art and penmanship in these opening scenes, which are memorable and act as hooks to keep audiences on the edge of their seats for the remaining time of the performance.

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Semantic Change

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Un análisis cuidadoso de una obra literaria –aún cuando ésta tenga un valor intrínseco en sí misma que la torne significativa para lectores de diferentes contextos temporales– debería considerarla como un reflejo del momento histórico en el que fue producida y, por lo tanto, contemplar la posibilidad de que haya sufrido cambios en el valor semántico de los conceptos que utiliza. La localización de la obra en su contexto socio-histórico aportará elementos sobre las contribuciones intertextuales que pueda haber recibido y sobre la intencionalidad que subyace a su producción. Un análisis de esta naturaleza nos permite una mejor apreciación de la obra porque nos define como sujetos históricos. Este ensayo se concentrará en conceptos clave en Hamlet y Macbeth, e indagará cómo su valor semántico ha cambiado desde el momento en que las obras fueron producidas.

Introduction

Language change is an inevitable process and every language alters gradually and continually: all living languages undergo change over time; new vocabulary appears to allow it to respond to chang-

ing situations or a word's semantic load may give way to new sense relations to cover those novel situations.

Though the problem of language change has always worried people concerned with languages, it was only during the twentieth century that linguists found better ways of

describing how this may occur. As Jean Aitchison (2001: 95) says:

At one time, a sound or word was assumed to slowly change into another, like a tadpole growing legs and gradually becoming a frog. Yet nobody ever succeeded in identifying the half-way stage, the tadpole with front legs, as it were. This is because the tadpole-to-frog (gradual change) model is a false one. Cuckoos provide a better image than tadpoles. A ‘cuckoo’ (replacement) model has now supplanted that of slow alteration. A new sound or word creeps in alongside the old, then eventually replaces it, like a young cuckoo getting larger and larger, and finally heaving the original occupant out of the nest. But even a cuckoo image is an oversimplification. In some cases, several possibilities compete, like candidates vying with one another in an election. Eventually one wins over the others. But the variants may fluctuate for years, even in the speech of a single person.

Diachronic variation occurs at every level of the language system, i.e. there may be changes in the pronunciation of words through articulatory simplification or erosion of the phonological substance; there may be the extension or generalisation of a regularity at the morphological level, sometimes through the addition or loss of certain morphemes (Bybee et al., 1994); sometimes, though less often, the changes are syntactic as is the case with some changes in word order. But what we are going to pay attention to here is lexical change, i.e. the change the meaning of a word may undergo over time in its denotation

(through generalisation or narrowing of its meaning) or its connotation (through amelioration or deterioration), or through semantic shift, usually when a word loses some aspect of its former meaning, taking a partially new but related sense.

Changes in the denotation of a word:

- 1. Generalisation or broadening:** ‘bird’, originally /a small fowl/; later /any feathered vertebrate/
- 2. Narrowing:** ‘meat’, /any type of food/; later, /the flesh of an animal/
- 3. Semantic shift:** ‘bead’ /prayer/ /little balls/ (prayers were said by means of the little balls on the rosary).

Changes in the connotation of a word:

- 4. Amelioration:** ‘pretty’, /tricky, cunning/ later /clever, skilful/, later /attractive, nice/.
- 5. Deterioration:** ‘wench’, /a girl/, later /a wanton woman/.
- 6. Weakening:** ‘crucify’, /to kill by nailing to a cross/ became /to cause pain/.

Historical Semantics is concerned with the description of changes in meaning by detecting the reasons and causes of this change; the mechanisms and types of semantic variation, and the consequences or effects of such change.

The point of view favoured in our analysis of the topic is that the main driving force behind processes of language change is pragmatic, i.e. it is dependent on context and on the speaker’s active role to use the abstract structural meaning of words dynamically and

strategically in changing situations. What follows is an attempt to describe these processes and apply this description to the analysis of some key concepts in two plays by Shakespeare, namely, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

Semantic change as pragmatically conditioned

Drawing on the indeterminacy much language use is characterised by, we rely on inferential processes to derive the possible meanings an utterance or a certain word or expression may have in a given situation. These inferential processes apply to both the information-related contents in the message and to the communicative rhetorical aspects arising from the negotiation of meaning between the producer of the text and the addressee. As Bartsch (cited by Traugott & Dasher, 2001: 24) points out, 'semantic change is possible because the specific linguistic norms, including semantic norms, are hypothetical norms, subordinated to the highest norms of communication (the pragmatic aspect of change)'.

In his *Structural Semantics* (1966), A. J. Greimas advances the hypothesis that in every lexical item there is a stable core of meaning which remains the same in every context and a 'classematic' base made up of more general and abstract categories, which determine the conditions of compatibility or incompatibility with the various contexts where the lexical item may be included (Pozzato, 2011: 103). Thus, if we say:

The policeman's dog barked at us.
The policeman barked at us.

We have used the same verb 'bark' in both sentences but with a different value, keeping the feature /sound/ for both and transferring it from /animal/ to /human/ to mean /repetitive/, /unpleasant/ or /exaggerated/. Since words are used by people in contexts, redefinitions of this sort are commonplace and they may follow a path of change from the coded meaning of the word (the conventional semantic meaning at a given time) to novel meanings via utterances where pragmatic implicatures play a key role in bridging the way to the generation of polysemies or the split into homonymies.

This means that the initial coded meaning (utterance-token meaning) is used innovatively by the speaker / writer in his stream of speech; innovations are later conventionalised (utterance-type meaning), thus generating pragmatically polysemous terms in the final stage (*ibid.* Traugott & Dashler: 35).

Apart from what has been stated above, we must also consider those cases where significant changes occur in a particular period that have a particular effect on people's points of view and outlook on life. In these cases, while words may be retained, their meaning may be enriched by adding shades and nuances that account for the ongoing ideological, social and political innovations. In this sense, we shall rely on Reinhart Koselleck's theory of *Begriffsgeschichte* or *History of Concepts*, which he uses for the analysis of historical and social documents. His semantic analysis stresses the polysemous character of concepts, i.e. it refers to the different meanings a concept adopts as it is used in different historical periods (Cheirif

Wolosky: 86). Therefore, research in the history of concepts consists in recognising the discourses that are linguistically present in concepts (ibid, Cheirif Wolosky: 90). Or rather, we may consider texts as being connected to other texts in a vertical axis, from which they receive intertextual contributions. As it is through language that we have access to past facts and events, we must reconstruct the semantic load words have.

Koselleck summarises his position in the following terms:

Basic concepts combine manifold experiences and expectations in such a way that they become indispensable to any formulation of the most urgent issues of a given time. Thus basic concepts are highly complex; they are always both controversial and contested. It is this which makes them historically significant and sets them off from purely technical or professional terms. No political action, no social behaviour can occur without some minimum stock of basic concepts that have persisted over long periods, have suddenly appeared, disappeared, reappeared; or have been transformed, either rapidly or slowly. Such concepts therefore must be interpreted in order to sort out their multiple meanings, internal contradictions, and varying applications in different social strata¹. (p. 64)

Any historical document may be approached from two orthodoxies: that of the context, which considers religious, political and economic factors, and that of the text autonomy, which does the analysis of works from the past from the point of view of their value as bearers of timeless and universal ideas.

Without disregarding the linguistic determination underlying both positions, none of the two approaches confronts the dichotomy between history and action, thus separating actions from the narrative about those actions, and therefore, underestimating the deep connection existing between action and discourse and the notion of language itself as a form of action (Austin). Discourse is not only the locus for the utterance of an action; it is also what produces the action or an act of language in itself.

When discourse is considered as a form of action, it is seen as having an illocutionary force, with the ability to perform an act at the same time it is saying something and then it becomes essential to pay attention to what the author's intention was when he said what he said. It was Quentin Skinner that laid emphasis on intentionality in the history of concepts, when he said:

What I am interested in is what texts are doing as much as what they are saying, so my concern is to provide the kind of contextual and inter-textual information that enables us to say, of any text that interest us, what kinds of intervention in what kinds of debate it may be said to have constituted. The question of whether the writer had it as his intention to contribute to those debates is, for me,

¹ Koselleck, R., "A Response to Comment on the *Geschichtliche*" in Hartmut Lehman Melvin Richter (eds), *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, Washington 1996: 59-70.

secondary to the idea of the performativity of the texts themselves (personal letter to J. Guilhaumou, in Ayer 53/2004, P. footnote on page 56).

However, such a task runs the risk of attributing world views and aims to authors from the past which they were possibly far from considering. A contemporary analyst is also immersed in a historical time and, therefore, conditioned by his own present. The concepts he works with, which determine the perspective from which he observes the past are pervaded by the semantic changes and derivations the concepts may have suffered over their discursive history. This difficulty is even greater in the case of literature because a literary piece usually makes an ambiguous use of terms and concepts and this ambiguity may be deliberate. Metaphors, comparison, allegories, puns, which are characteristic of literary works, have in common – as Octavio Paz says – the intention to preserve the multiple meanings of a word without breaking the syntactic unity of the phrase or of a group of phrases².

Considering the fact that changes are constantly occurring in the meaning potential of terms alongside with changes in the historical past, we must confront works from previous centuries as being determined by this process of variation. In our view of the linguistic sign, *signifier* and *signified*, or the *plane of form* and the *plane of content*, are closely linked but this connection is also fed

by the context where the word or the sign comes in. Words may concentrate multiple meanings which reflect the historical situation they refer to.

When reading a literary piece by authors from previous centuries, we will not respond – as twenty-first-century readers – as spontaneously as we would do when we read contemporary writers, unless we delve deeply into the historical context when those pieces were produced. Whether we read Shakespeare from our own historical standpoint or attempt to withdraw him from every context, i.e., to read his dramas as if they were timeless, will mean, in both cases, to miss much of the value that has allowed his plays to live on over time. In the former case, we run the risk of reducing the play to a mere fossil, and in the latter we would rely on an idealistic approach that views texts as ideal forms expressing some timeless intrinsic feature of the human mind (Arnold Kettle, 1964: 9).

Shakespeare and his time

The significance that the plays by Shakespeare have had over the last four centuries should not make us overlook the strong impact the Swan of Avon had during his lifetime. It was not by chance that another English playwright, Ben Jonson (1572 or 73 – 1637), almost contemporary to Shakespeare, should have referred to him as “the Soule of the Age”. Shakespeare’s plays condense the varied amalgam of forces that were set in motion during a period of so many, and so big, changes. His was a period of transition: a traditional medieval society gave way to a

2 Paz, Octavio, 1996, “La Imagen” en *El arco y la lira*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

new social organisation characterised by its strong impetus and renewed vitality.

For one short season in English history the springs of folk-drama and the people's enthusiasm for the arts of acting were not yet smothered by Puritanism and the rise of capitalism; while broad sections of the population were still capable of enjoying first-rate drama, they were – as never before in modern history – already in a position, economic and social, to support a large-scale theatrical organization. The very conditions which made possible the modern theatre, with its professional and financial apparatus, had not yet transformed the minds of its audience. (Weimann R.: 26)³

With the end of the War of the Roses, which allowed the Tudors to gain the throne of England, and with the ascent of Queen Elizabeth I and the peace achieved when religious strife came to an end, a period of prosperity marked by a deep sense of national unity started. The rule of the feudal barons was left in the past and their decline appeared to be an irrefutable and irreversible fact. The new governing dynasty, however, was not free from the internal feuds for succession, the threat of a war with other overseas powers and the need to attend to the maintenance of internal order, all of which contributed to the weakening of the process

started by the Tudors towards the end of the sixteenth century.

It was during the Elizabethan period that the theatre became the great 'laboratory' (ibid. Weisman: 26) where the contending elements of this transition period were mixed and kneaded and where the humanist ideas in vogue acquired their full significance. In this scenario, language could not go unchanged and many terms acquired new value. Such was the case of the word 'humanism'. Even when this concept had its origins in the Greek and Latin traditions and relied on them when it came to be used in the Italian cities of Rome, Venice and Florence in the fourteenth century, it suffered a process of transformation in contact with the ideas of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the following centuries. Arnold Kettle says (ibid. Kettle: 11):

The word humanist, in this context, has a wide but essential significance. The humanist tradition cannot be described as though it were a set of unchanging ideas, much less a revealed philosophy. It implies, rather, an evolving outlook which has developed with man's increasing knowledge and control of the world he lives in and hence in his own destinies. One would not expect a twentieth-century humanist to hold all the same opinions or even the same attitudes as a humanist of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. What distinguishes both, and brings them into the same tradition, is a fundamental tough confidence in the capacity of men (though not necessarily the individual man) to master – with whatever difficulty, error and tragedy – the particular problems and challeng-

3 Weimann, Robert (1964) "The Soul of the Age: Towards a Historical Approach to Shakespeare", in *Shakespeare in a Changing World*, (ed. A. Kettle), London: Lawrence & Wishart.

es with which, at the particular stage their world has reached, they are faced.

Shakespeare's life elapsed during the period when Renaissance humanism flourished in Elizabethan England and the humanist ideas found a fertile ground in him to make his work possible. At the same time, his work strengthened and deepened the spread of the humanist concepts, which meant a break from the medieval feudal past and the liberation of man's energy required by the new social environment. The relation was dialectical. The social context contributed to the formation and change of ideas, but ideas, in their turn contributed to the formation and change of the social context. The tool he used to further this action was poetry.

The concept of 'man' in the Shakespearean drama

One of the lexical items – and, therefore, all those linked to it – that would show the impact of the humanist discourse was the concept of 'man'. This concept, which had been reloaded during the Renaissance with the connotations it had had in the early Middle Ages, through the reappearance of the Romantic Chivalry genres and the enthusiasm for heroic deeds, got soaked with the ideas coming from the Greek and Latin traditions that came from the continent, mainly from Italy. But, as this phenomenon occurred during a time when 'political realism' (Hauser A., 1951: 152) prevailed, its fate would only be its defeat. A. Hauser says:

The great poets and dramatists of the cen-

tury, Shakespeare and Cervantes, are the mouthpiece of their age – they merely proclaim what is everywhere apparent, that chivalry has outlived its day and that its creative force has become a fiction.

We will now consider how the concept of 'man' is used in both *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* and how it covers the different connotations it received at this time of change.

When in the first Act of *Macbeth* (1605-6), its main character states, at his wife's insistence that he should carry on the witches' prediction that he will become king

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none... (I, vii, 44-45)

and Lady Macbeth retorts:

What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. (I, vii, 46-51)

Both of them make use of the word 'man', though, evidently with a different connotation. In this play, Shakespeare works on two opposing conceptions of what it means to be a man: on the one hand, someone is much more a man when he foregrounds the interests of his community and those of his peers rather than his own, and, on the other, a man is someone who goes after his own personal wishes and ambitions fighting every obstacle in the way. Macbeth himself, who feels tortured by his ambition and his sense of duty,

makes this clear when he receives King Duncan in his castle, by saying:

He's here in double trust:

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then as his host,
Who should against the murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself... (I, vii, 12-16)

... I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself...
(I, vii, 25- 27)

The first of these attitudes might be related to the type of link of loyalty and service between the feudal landlord and his subjects, but if we consider all the work by Shakespeare, this point of view does not appear to be enough to explain the semantic load given to the term. In fact, in a previous scene, Lady Macbeth reflects, after receiving her husband's letter advancing the witches' omens that he will be Lord of Glamis and Cawdor and he will also be a king:

Yet I do fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. (I, v, 13-15)

In a careful analysis of the semantic variation some terms have suffered since the end of the sixteenth century, J. K. Walton says:

In order to understand the full meaning of 'human kindness', we have to remember that both words had in early seventeenth century usage a more extended meaning than they do today. 'Human' (which was usually spelt

'humane', as it is, in fact in the Folio text) could mean 'belonging or pertaining to a man or mankind', but also 'befitting a man, kindly... kind, benevolent' – that is to say, it combined the meanings now usually given to 'human' and 'humane'. On the other hand, 'kindness' could mean both 'kinship' and the 'natural affections arising from this' as well as its more limited present day sense of 'kind feeling... affection, love'. We should therefore take the phrase 'the milk of human kindness' as meaning the gentle qualities which arise from a sense of community with other men. This sense in Macbeth finds its supreme expression in his vision of 'pity, like a naked new-born babe'. (Walton: 105)

Macbeth's conscience is divided between these two conceptions of what being a 'man' implies, and this is, in the end, what tortures him. His gradual detachment from the rest of men gains ground and takes hold of his mind after Banquo's death, whom he orders to kill lest the prophesy that he will be 'father of kings' (III.3) should come true. From then on, after conjuring up the spirit of Banquo that appears before his eyes, like a threatening shadow, the vision of man that leads him further and further away from his fellow countrymen gains and this leads to a despotic use of power and a growing confusion regarding what a man's attributes should be.

What man dare, I dare
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,

And dare me to the desert with thy sword,
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The babe of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mock'ry, hence! (Exit Ghost) (III, iv, 100-108)

More and more often, Shakespeare will refer to men using images connected with animals, thus showing his rejection of attitudes that contemplate the highest attributes a man should have in the humanistic sense of the term:

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are clept
All by the name of dogs. (III, I, 91-94)

The same ambiguity in the use of the terms we have considered is shown with reference to other concepts related to what 'being a man' means. Concepts do not happen in a vacuum; they move together as if in constellations: when one of them suffers some change in its semantic load, others, linked to it, will reveal some change in their content as well. When Lady Macbeth urges her husband: 'Art thou afear'd / To be the same in thine act and valour / As thou art in desire?' (I. vii. 39-41), the meaning attributed to the word 'valour' (and the same happens with the word 'cowardice' when she uses this concept) carries the load of 'valour' as boldness to achieve his personal designs. It is very different from the concept of 'valour' used by King Duncan at the beginning of the play to honour Macbeth after his participation in the battle against the traitor Macdonnell. It is also

different from the 'valour' Macduff proves to have towards the end of the play when, getting over the pain caused by the murder of his wife and children, he takes up the responsibility of fighting the tyrant.

The discursive load running through the concept of 'man', in the sense embodied mainly by Macduff – who is, in fact, the character Shakespeare has invested with the humanist attributes he voices – are expressed through Malcolm's words. As King Duncan's legitimate heir to the throne, he has gone into exile in England and is getting ready to fight Macbeth. When he wants to try Macduff's faithfulness, he simulates not to have any of the values associated to the concept of 'man':

But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stablyness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them... (IV, iii, 91-95)

Not only does Macduff act according to his idea of service to the King and the community, but he also keeps his freedom of mind and gets away from Malcolm after his own personal description. Such a king does not deserve his trust and service:

Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Hath banishe'd me from Scotland.
(IV, iii, 111-113)

When Malcolm tells him 'Dispute it like a man', he immediately answers: 'I shall do so; / But I must also feel it like a man' (IV, iii,

219-221). The word man appears in both sentences, but they are joined by the adversative conjunction *but*, which means that the second mention of the concept must be re-elaborated.

In *Hamlet*, there is a similar development of the concept of 'man', though not from the perspective of a tyrannical king, going after his own interests, but from that of a prince who is deeply imbued with the humanistic ideas of his time and can see through appearances and perceive the general corruption surrounding him.

Hamlet is a typical sixteenth-century prince who, at a certain moment in his life, when he is still young, has to confront two traumatic experiences: his father's death and his mother's overhasty marriage to his father's supposed murderer and usurper of the throne he is the heir to. The effect of both experiences is a radical change of attitude in Hamlet: from that moment, he will be divided between the urgency to carry out the revenge his father's ghost has asked for (which, in fact, was the common way to redress conflicts in drama until shortly before Shakespeare appeared on the Elizabethan stage) and his humanistic conception of man and the world; between action as the natural way for someone of his rank and disposition and a rational and human outlook on life. It is this new vision of the world that delays action and makes him judge himself as a coward, although Hamlet makes it clear on several occasions that his disposition is prone to action.

In an age of political realism in which any prince would have favoured his personal interest to that of the community, Hamlet ap-

pears as one of the most advanced humanists of his time.

Over and over again the author voices, through Hamlet, his criticism for the corrupt practices of those in the court of Denmark and those around him, while still making it evident what it means to be human. In answer to a comment by Horatio referring to his dead father, Hamlet says:

HORATIO: I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
HAMLET: He was a man, take him for all in all;
I shall not look into his like again.
(I, ii, 186-188)

In a conversation with his childhood friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who he now considers obsequious flatterers, he refers to man in the following words:

What a piece of work is man! How
Noble in reason! How infinite in faculty!
In form and moving how express and admirable!
In action how like an angel! In apprehension
How like a god! The beauty of the world!
The paragon of animals! (II, ii, 296-300)

It is this contradiction between the two concepts of man in Hamlet's mind that gives the play its dramatic tension. In the well-known soliloquy that starts 'To be or not to be – that is the question...', Hamlet accuses himself of cowardice for not taking action:

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pitch and moment,

With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. (III, I, 83-88)

But Hamlet is not a coward or a lunatic. Shakespeare takes great care along the play to show him as a man of action, when he does not hesitate to go after his father's ghost to get his secret revealed; when he confronts the sailors King Claudius has engaged to take him to England; or when he fights Laertes in the final duel. Nor is he a lunatic. His vision of the world is confirmed as correct by facts. The perception of this dysfunction between the ideals of humanism and the likelihood of making them true may explain the deep pessimism this play shows, at a time of social and economic advance both for the country and for Shakespeare himself. As Arnold Kettle says (*ibid.*: 147)

The degree to which Hamlet, in the last act, capitulates to the values he has previously rejected – the extent to which he gives up the battle to act as a man rather than as a prince – corresponds, I suggest, to the actual possibilities in the year 1600 of putting into practice the ideas of the new humanism...

As regards the concepts of 'kin' and 'kind', whose limits were not clearly defined in the sixteenth century, as explained above, and which are used in an aside in answer to King Claudius:

KING: But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son –
HAMLET (Aside): A little more than kin, and less than kind. (I, ii, 64-65)

The explanation given by Bernard Lott, the author of the notes accompanying the edition used for this work, is that "kin and kind both come from the same root, which in Old English meant 'species', i.e. all of one sort of thing. One development of the word led to the idea of 'race, people', and hence came kinsman, a person of the same race. Another development gave kindly, kind, which meant '(done) in a way which is fitting to people of one's own sort', hence 'gentle, friendly'", though its previous denotation is still kept in compounds such as 'mankind', or 'humankind'.

Conclusion

Though still not exhaustive enough, this brief analysis of the semantic variation of some key concepts in two plays by Shakespeare intends to bring home how important it is to delve into the context of production of a literary piece to reconstruct the process behind the product, the addresser / addressee's connection and the intertextual contributions to it. It is also necessary to be aware of ourselves as historically conditioned by our own context to be able to establish the distance we may have with the literary piece. This approach will allow us a better understanding and appreciation of any literary work as readers, and it will be essential for those devoted to literary criticism or translation.

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Paisajes Mediterráneos en la dramaturgia de Shakespeare: *Mucho ruido y pocas nueces, Noche de Reyes, El mercader de Venecia, Otelo*

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El propósito de este trabajo es explorar las referencias a paisajes de Venecia, y Sicilia en algunas obras de la dramaturgia de Shakespeare y se intenta responder los siguientes interrogantes. ¿Son Venecia, y Messina sólo exóticos lugares que funcionan como atractivas ambientaciones para audiencias del período isabelino? ¿Los paisajes urbanos tienen rol instrumental o son marcas simbólicas de identidad cultural? ¿Son ‘espacios identitarios’, según Morley y Robbins, y reconfiguran fronteras culturales para audiencias nómadas?

Desde el Renacimiento, un amplio espectro de lectores/espectadores ha tenido una relación duradera y empática con la obra del Bardo de Avon. Su obra estuvo en boga en Francia durante el siglo dieciocho gracias a Voltaire y Diderot (Sampson 1979: 237) aunque este último eligió ins-

pirarse en *Tristam Shandy* de Sterne para su obra *Jacques el Fatalista y su Amo*. En el siglo veinte, Anthony Burgess creó un intrigante relato sobre un supuesto encuentro entre Shakespeare y Cervantes, ambientado en la ciudad de Valladolid.

La escasez de material documental sobre

las dos primeras décadas de vida de Shakespeare es impactante. No hay registro previo a su casamiento o actividad profesional en Londres, ni de viajes posteriores a Europa continental. Se ha escrito que “aunque Shakespeare nunca dejó Inglaterra, su dramaturgia está ambientada en todo el globo” (Dickson 2014: 1). Recordemos que a diferencia de Chaucer, que visitó puertos italianos en misión profesional por su rol de funcionario en la Aduana Real, Shakespeare era un independiente. La trayectoria de su familia en la producción de guantes ofrece un motivo plausible para hipotéticos viajes a Calais, puerto que ejercía el monopolio para el comercio de lana o a los centros de producción textil en Flandes. Sin embargo, no hay evidencia de tales viajes o del conocimiento directo que habría podido obtener de otras sociedades. La interpretación sugerida aquí es que Dickson utiliza el término “globo” en una perspectiva euro-céntrica ya que no hay referencias extensas al Nuevo Mundo más allá del Atlántico o al territorio de Asia cartografiado, fuera de la palabra “India” en la enumeración de una ruta marítima en *El mercader de Venecia* o una elíptica mención en *La Tempestad* a cautivos indígenas de la Bahía Chesapeake, América del Norte, exhibidos en Londres. Sin embargo, el ansia de expansión, conquista y la experiencia de contacto con la alteridad fueron parte de la Inglaterra isabelina, evidenciado en el clima de época, donde otro dramaturgo, Christopher Marlowe, elige un contexto geográfico pan-asiático para su obra *Tamerlán*.

Dickson sostiene que Shakespeare sentía “fascinación por Italia, en especial la cente-

lleante y cosmopolita” ciudad de Venecia, donde ambienta dos de sus obras: *El mercader de Venecia* y *Otelo*, el moro de Venecia. También alude a una “obsesión por islas tanto reales como imaginadas”. Por ejemplo, puede señalarse que en *La Tempestad*, la isla no lleva nombre y, en verdad, su ubicación permanece inidentificada durante la obra, aunque se dice que la madre de Calibán, la bruja Sycorax, proviene de Argel. Para las recurrentes referencias a varias islas habría una explicación plausible: el carácter insular que subyace a la cultura británica. Ya en el siglo diecisiete, el poeta John Donne advirtió a sus contemporáneos que ‘ningún hombre es una isla’, mientras que en el siglo XX, Paul Johnson alude al concepto insular en el título de su obra sobre el desarrollo de la sociedad británica en tres milenios (Johnson 1992).

La amplitud y variedad de escenarios en las obras de Shakespeare, desde las Tierras Altas de Escocia y Escandinavia hasta la cuenca Mediterránea ofrece una oportunidad para que los espectadores puedan participar, por interpósita persona, en la exploración de tierras distantes. Inglaterra en particular, por conflictos internos, no había jugado un rol en viajes de exploración a cargo de potencias europeas que tuvieron auge al inicio de la dinastía Tudor y que tendrían un punto culminante en la era isabelina. La Corona y las Compañías de mercaderes londinenses financiaron viajes para hallar rutas marítimas a China. ‘Los informes publicados eran consumidos ávidamente; Shakespeare y su audiencia los conocían’ (The British Council 1978: 48).

Expedicionarios franceses habían explo-

rado y colonizado la cuenca del río San Lorenzo, establecido La Nueva Francia y posteriormente la Louisiana en la desembocadura del río Mississippi. Grupos holandeses cartografiaron la cuenca del río Hudson y establecieron enclaves comerciales en la Nueva Amsterdam. Incluso hoy, la topografía de Manhattan sirve de testigo sobre el legado de esos exploradores pioneros y colonos. La culminación del proceso de expansión dejó a Inglaterra rezagada ante otras potencias europeas, debido, entre otras causas, al conflicto dinástico interno del siglo quince, conocido como “La guerra de las rosas”. Sin embargo, el flujo de información desde el Nuevo Mundo y las ilimitadas posibilidades de expansión y creación de riqueza serían escenarios familiares para la sociedad inglesa y servirían como fuente de inspiración para los artistas de su tiempo.

Al respecto, uno de los icónicos retratos oficiales de la Reina Isabel I, el ‘Woburn Abbey Armada’, exhibe múltiples niveles de significado en un texto visual centrado en una monarca que posa entre signos que remiten al poderío territorial y la construcción de poder imperial. En cada esquina del lienzo hay objetos de alto valor simbólico como mapas, un globo terráqueo, y galeones que transmiten referencias inequívocas a la Armada Invencible. La expansión colonial está ligada de forma indisoluble a la derrota de la flota española, epítome de la tecnología bélica marítima de su tiempo y al auge de compañías mercantiles.

Los puertos del Mediterráneo han sido durante siglos la llave para el comercio con el Lejano Oriente. Mesina y Venecia también

comparten un rasgo: son cruce de civilizaciones, desde reyes Normandos, las casas reales de Aragón y Borbón-Sicilia hasta los mercaderes moros y judíos en la República Serenísima. El rol de Sicilia es significativo; es punto de encuentro de culturas Meditarráneas. El Sacro Emperador Romano- Germánico Federico II, criado en Sicilia, ejerció una influencia indeleble sobre la isla; “hizo suya la cultura cosmopolita de Sicilia y tenía en su corte sabios del Islam, astrólogos y animales exóticos” (Denley 1988: 235).

En *Mucho ruido y pocas nueces*, donde la acción dramática se desarrolla íntegramente en Mesina, no hay referencias a estilos arquitectónicos corrientes en la Sicilia del siglo dieciséis como el Románico o el gótico. En cambio, hay una mención a la naturaleza con la descripción de un jardín que asemeja a la que haría un paisajista cuando se destaca que el Príncipe y el Conde Claudio caminan por un sendero umbrío y las especies arbóreas se identifican. También Benedick pasea por ahí y se esconde en una pérgola.

No sorprende que de conversaciones escuchadas al azar durante paseos por entornos bucólicos se deriven malentendidos. Podemos conocer los niveles de significado simbólico asociados el típico trazado de los jardines medievales y renacentistas y sus rasgos centrales como un área cerrada de árboles frutales y un laberinto. Los cítricos dan fruta utilizada con fines medicinales, exhibida en cornucopia como símbolo de abundancia, retratada en naturalezas muertas para enfatizar la naturaleza fugaz de la vida y el camino inexorable de la decadencia. Así se transmite sutilmente un mensaje a lectores o espectadores: en un

jardín diseñado para la vida contemplativa, o pasear con tranquilidad y disfrutar del ocio, acecha el peligro.

Los jardines con frutas han sido asociados con la tentación y el placer o el castigo. En textos sagrados, los jardines son representaciones del Paraíso, como el Jardín del Edén u otros donde el agua fluye entre fuentes y acequias. En el Medioevo, los denominados “jardines de los cinco sentidos” fueron predecesores de los jardines galantes; en el Renacimiento, tales áreas de extraordinaria belleza son ámbitos para el amor galante. Un grabado iluminado de un “*verger d’amour*” que representa el amor cortés se incluye en uno de los más destacados ejemplares de textos devocionales: el Libro de Horas del Duque de Borgoña. En cuanto a modelos de ficción, en su Decamerón, Boccaccio describe un jardín galante que servirá como inspiración para los diseños renacentistas (Chebel 2000: 20). Otras fuentes de información que alertaron sobre diseños en el extranjero fueron los relatos de viajeros, de participantes en las Cruzadas y poemas diseminados por trovadores. Estos últimos habían hecho su aparición en la corte inglesa, ya en el siglo doce, traídos por la reina Eleonor (Alienor) de Aquitania, esposa del primer rey Plantagenet.

Los modelos para el paisajismo fueron los jardines árabes e italianos, similares a montes frutales por sus vastas áreas plantadas con limoneros, naranjos y granadas (Chebel 2000: 20). Elementos característicos de los espacios galantes eran los árboles siempre-verdes, senderos umbríos, fuentes de mármol blanco, los laberintos vegetales y, por supuesto, las rosas. *Le Roman de la Rose* de

Guillaume de Lauris (1235) y Jean de Meung (1275) o, en la versión anglicista, William of Lorris y John of Meung, es un texto capital sobre la convención que regía el amor cortés. Esta obra ha sido evaluada como la “perfecta esencia de la alegoría medieval” (Sampson 1970: 236). El jardín entre muros era típico de una estructura simbólica dual: un plano religioso y otro profano. La búsqueda del paraíso perdido y de la persona amada confluye en el jardín celestial-jardín galante, presente desde el siglo catorce. (Chebel 2000: 20)

Tal cosmovisión se encuentra codificada en la serie de tapices de finales del siglo quince conocida como *Teinture de la Dame a la Licorne* [Tapices de la Dama y el Unicornio], exhibida en el Museo Nacional de Cluny, París, dedicado a la Edad Media. Elegidos entre los diez tapices más hermosos de todos los tiempos, son un clásico ejemplo del estilo *millefleur* [mil flores] “con fondos saturados de motivos relacionados con la naturaleza. Mientras cinco de las seis composiciones ilustran los sentidos, en el último tapiz la dama se aleja de su entorno y parece renunciar a lo mundial para elegir el reino de lo espiritual” (Farago 2014). Sin embargo, no hay consenso sobre otro significado fuera de una celebración de amor profano.

El Renacimiento redescubrió la arquitectura griega clásica, que a su vez se había inspirado en los típicos jardines persas dotados de rosas con fragancia persistente procedentes de Isfahán, agregó el topiario y esculturas de mármol. Gonzague de Saint Bris señala que “la obra maestra de Francesco Colonna ‘*El Sueño de Poliphile*’, publicada en 1499, establece las reglas para el jardín re-

nacentista ideal (Saint Bris 2000: 28-29). Familias principescas en los ducados y repúblicas que hoy forman Italia estructuraron los jardines de sus villas según el modelo clásico griego. Por lo tanto, se sugiere aquí que un dramaturgo afincado en Londres en el siglo diecisésis no necesariamente debía haber sido un viajero asiduo afín de expresar el espíritu de su tiempo. Las audiencias inglesas tenían conocimiento de una cosmovisión europea, lo cual implica que una mera referencia a jardines Mediterráneos desencadenara mensajes anticipando el desenlace de la acción: el amor daría fruto.

Misterio insondable

Mesina es el contexto exclusivo para *Mucho ruido y pocas nueces* y el elenco es íntegramente local. La elección de un territorio lejano para abordar temas sensibles puede remitir a la tradición de *Piers Ploughman*, alegoría donde Langland denuncia la sociedad de su tiempo o posteriormente, a las *Cartas Persas* de Montesquieu. Por otra parte, el foco sobre Mesina podría explicarse a la luz de la tesis desarrollada por el Profesor Martino Juvara, de la Universidad de Palermo. En su libro *Shakespeare Era Italiano*, publicado en 2002, Juvara retoma las hipótesis expuestas en 1927 por el periodista romano Santi Paladino y en 1950 por el Profesor Enrico Besta, titular de la Cátedra Historia de la Legislación Italiana, Universidad de Palermo, e incluye su propio estudio lingüístico e investigación genealógica (Medail 2000)

Juvara sostiene que un médico calvinista de Mesina, Giovanni Florio, y la noble

siciliana Guglielma Crollalanza tuvieron un hijo, Michelangelo Florio. Considerado un niño prodigo, a los dieciséis había obtenido un diploma en Latín, Griego e Historia y escrito una obra de teatro en dialecto siciliano con el título *Tanto Traffico per Nulla*, que puede traducirse como *Mucho ruido y pocas nueces*. Para evitar ser blanco de la Inquisición española, fue enviado al continente: vivió en Milán y Padua donde conoció a Giordano Bruno, posteriormente acusado de herejía y quemado en la hoguera. Florio se trasladó a Verona y Venecia, de donde huyó a Londres y halló refugio en Stratford-upon-Avon con unos primos Crollalanza que ya habían cambiado su apellido, traducido al inglés. Juvara sostiene que Florio se habría convertido en William Shakespeare, adoptando el nombre de pila de su madre (Principato 2014)

Aunque la teoría de Juvara sobre el origen de Shakespeare suena poco plausible, no es más frágil que los relatos cristalizados basados en leyendas o afirmaciones no corroboradas por documentación, por otra parte inexistente, sobre su nacimiento en Stratford o su asistencia a la escuela local. La escasez de evidencia no permite corroborar o refutar la hipótesis de Juvara pero sus datos no son más magros que aquellos del discurso fosilizado.

'El Reino Acuático'

Se ha escrito que "los venecianos son una nación que no ara la tierra, siembra o cosecha" (Morris 1998: 224). Su poderío estaba basado en el control de rutas comerciales. Se extendían "de la Lombardía a lo largo del valle del río Po a la costa Adriática. Istria y otros

sectores de Dalmacia norte se convirtieron en protectorados venecianos a cambio de ayuda contra los piratas eslavos” (Morris 1988: 225).

Se sostiene aquí que esta referencia al alcance del poder veneciano y a las amenazas de la piratería echa luz sobre el trágico episodio que protagonizan Viola y su hermano Sebastián en *Noche de Reyes*; luego de un naufragio en la costa dálmata, ninguno sabe qué ha sido del otro. El paisaje, a su vez, refleja la sensación de fatalidad que Sebastián expresa con un oxímoron: ‘las estrellas brillan oscuramente’. Viola recurre a un recurso convencional: disfrazarse de hombre para protegerse en un territorio extranjero percibido como hostil. Vale la pena destacar el uso contemporáneo de este recurso dramático. María Elena Passeron ha señalado que en un romance pastoral, Sir Philip Sidney recurre a la convención del disfraz en el contexto de un naufragio. Sin embargo, en el texto de Sidney, los naufragos son dos hermanos mellizos disfrazados de princesas.

Viola pregunta en donde está y la respuesta es ‘Iliria’. No hay descripción topográfica o contextual más allá de una mera referencia a la costa del mar en el inicio del Acto II. El área es quizás inexplorada pero no está en la periferia de la civilización ya que Viola recuerda que su padre conocía al Duque Orsino, gobernante de Iliria. El paisaje urbano y el patrimonio arquitectónico del lugar es parte el bagaje cultural de los protagonistas como se ve en el Acto Tercero, Escena III. Sebastián sugiere ir a ver las reliquias del poblado, señalando la existencia de arquitectura que ha cimentado la fama el lugar. La conclusión expuesta aquí es que este territorio es un si-

gnificante para el exotismo pero no es lo que Michel de Certeau ha definido como un ‘espacio vacío’.

Gran parte de *Noche de Reyes* tiene lugar en el jardín de la condesa Olivia. Se observa una yuxtaposición de los roles atribuidos al espacio paisajístico; el jardín de Olivia será el contexto para el ocio y el disfrute de la naturaleza pero también para la intriga malévolas y el complot. En el Acto Segundo, Escena V, María advierte que deben esconderse tras un árbol de boj. Malvolio encuentra una carta con un texto críptico que desata especulaciones; su orgullo desmedido lo alienta a entregar otra posición social -ser el conde Malvolio- sólo para devenir víctima de la ironía corrosiva del resto del personal de servicio. Por otro lado, en su búsqueda de amor, la condesa Olivia llama repetidamente al paje Cesario (Viola) y decide enfrentar los obstáculos relacionados con la diferencia de rango nobiliario. Olivia cree que su jardín es el ambiente perfecto para su propia versión de amor galante y para la ceremonia de casamiento. Al entrar allí por primera vez, Sebastián celebra el ‘aire y sol glorioso’ y se enfrenta al pedido insistente de Olivia para dirigirse a la capilla cercana junto con un sacerdote. El carácter polisémico del jardín se encuentra realizado aquí al unificar las referencias implícitas a un jardín galante y al amor profano que es sacralizado por medio del matrimonio.

La sección siguiente contiene un análisis de las referencias a paisajes urbanos en *El Mercader de Venecia* y a fuentes locales para la creación de un contexto multicultural donde se resuelve el conflicto, ya que el poder y la riqueza de la ciudad derivan del comercio

en productos de lujo traídos de Asia. Se puede apreciar la privilegiada posición de mercaderes venecianos en Constantinopla a través de documentos imperiales bizantinos emitidos en los siglos décimo y undécimo, las chrisóbulas (Morris 1988: 225). Traducción: bulas de oro. Por otra parte, el alcance del poderío marítimo ostentado por Venecia se refleja en la siguiente cita: “al aprovechar la innovación consistente en navegar a ciegas, que posibilitó la navegación invernal, a finales del siglo trece los venecianos habían establecido una red de tráfico marítimo regular en hacia el Mar Negro (donde Venecia y Génova tenían colonias), Siria, Egipto, la costa norafricana, desde Tánger hasta el Estrecho de Gibraltar, Marsella, Barcelona’ (Morris 1988: 225?).

Está claro que la expansión territorial y la innovación se retroalimentan. Denley sugiere que Italia fue pionera en el uso de técnicas comerciales como la contaduría de doble entrada, seguros marítimos, letras de cambio. Señala que monarcas ingleses y franceses se endeudaron con banqueros italianos y “ocasionalmente entraron en default, con consecuencias desastrosas” (Denley 1988: 252). Menciona a florentinos y genoveses pero omite a los lombardos, cuyo activo rol en la intermediación financiera londinense está atestiguado, aún hoy, por la nomenclatura: la calle Lombard, corazón de la zona banquera.

El tema de territorios bajo soberanía veneciana se aprecia en *Otelo, el moro de Venecia*, donde la mayor parte de la acción dramática transcurre en Chipre. Una vez más, una isla Mediterránea, donde hay una ciudadela fortificada para prevenir ataques turcos. Al inicio del Segundo Acto, la audiencia descubre que

la amenazante flota otomana ha sido destrozada por una tempestad y el Moro, autoridad veneciana local, no ha podido ser hallado. El Tercer Caballero trae noticias sobre el naufragio del ‘noble barco de Venecia’.

En la siguiente sección la interpretación sugerida es que la construcción de una imagen pública para reflejar el creciente poder y riqueza generados por la República Marítima fue un objetivo cumplido por medio de espléndida arquitectura monumental, además de pinturas encargadas a artistas de talento. Por ejemplo, Carpaccio fue un pintor veneciano del siglo quince, cuyas obras principales son series de pinturas realizadas para las *scuole*, sobre las vidas de santos patronos de tales cofradías (Collier’s 1961: 417). En un análisis general, ofrecen destellos de la vida urbana. En el cuadro ‘El Embajador Inglés entrando a Venecia en góndola’, un análisis focalizado revela que Carpaccio no sólo presenta un paisaje veneciano sino el ceremonial de la época. Es un potente texto visual, gracias al uso de la perspectiva y la creación de atmósferas, que exhibe reglas del protocolo aplicadas a los diplomáticos y el rol múltiple de la góndola como vehículo de transporte, lugar de encuentro privado, y objeto de culto, *nec-plus-ultra*, para exhibir poder y riqueza.

En Londres, los paisajes y vistas de Venecia pintados por Canaletto tuvieron tal éxito que fue invitado dos veces, en 1746 y 1751 (Collier’s 1961: 331). Un siglo más tarde, Turner pintó lugares icónicos y desarrolló un relato visual de la ciudad lacustre; creó un espacio simbólico para una creciente, próspera burguesía británica que aún no se había embarcado en el ‘Grand Tour’ pero que así podría

familiarizarse con los hitos de Venecia. Lejos de la exactitud topográfica de Canaletto, los extraordinarios textos visuales que produjo Turner moldearon representaciones de la ciudad que han tenido una influencia perdurable en la sociedad moderna. Esos paisajes tan atractivos son todavía un potente imán para audiencias contemporáneas que acudieron a la Tate Gallery en el año 2003 para la deslumbrante exhibición “Turner en Venecia”. ¿Pero cómo habría sido conocida Venecia, con su carácter único, en la época de Shakespeare? Simplemente a través de la obra de artistas italianos, a menudo contratados para pintar escenas en cielorrasos de salones palaciegos.

En los primeros tres actos de *El mercader de Venecia*, la ambientación más común es una calle o un lugar público. A pesar de la recurrente ambientación escénica en calles, no hay referencia a canales. Sin embargo, hay una mención aislada a una góndola como el medio de escape al que la hija de Shylock recurre para su huída. Por contraste, el carácter laberíntico de la ciudad se hace explícito cuando Gobbo pregunta el camino a la morada de Shylock. Lancelot sugiere ‘doblar a la derecha en el próximo cruce, pero en el siguiente tomar la izquierda y luego en el próximo, ni una ni otra mano sino descender indirectamente’, lo que deja a Gobbo con una sola certeza: llegar será difícil.

En el Acto Tercero, Escena I, Solanio pregunta sobre noticias del Rialto. Este puente icónico y el mercado anexo son el núcleo duro de la ciudad, o según Shakespeare, ‘el reino acuático’ mientras que en la Escena IV, la acción dramática se traslada al jardín de la casa de Porcia en Belmont. Se ha afirmado que es

una referencia a Montebello, un suburbio de Venecia en tierra firme comunicado por un *traghetto*, nave para transporte público. Justamente, Porcia manda a Baltasar en misión a Padua e insiste en que regrese rápidamente ‘por el ferry común que lleva a Venecia’.

Luego del desenlace, la última escena se desarrolla en el jardín de Porcia; es una lujosa ambientación para la reunión a la luz de las velas, amenizada con música donde los agravios y aprensión de los amantes se desvanecen. Chebel sostiene que “un jardín es un testigo silencioso del latir de corazones, un espacio impregnado de emoción...Es el sello de un hombre rico y culto; ofrece *panache* social a una gran señora” (Chebel 2000: 23). Al analizar uso social del paisajismo, de Groote sostiene que en el siglo dieciséis, el paisaje se concebía como un escenario, según el texto *El teatro de agricultura* por Olivier de Serres (de Groote 2000: 48). Cabe recordar la famosa línea de Jacques en *Como gustéis* donde ambos contextos también confluyen: el mundo, es decir la vida, es un escenario.

Así, Shakespeare explora temas universales e indaga en la psiquis de sus personajes. La variada selección de exóticos escenarios, particularmente en la cuenca del Mediterráneo, ofrece variedad e impulsa a soñar con regiones plenas de sol y sociedades multiculturales, renovando el deseo de asistir a ulteriores representaciones. Podría decirse que el rol instrumental de paisajes urbanos y jardines galantes se debe a la pericia de Shakespeare en atraer audiencias que pagaran entradas. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, como dramaturgo les ofrecería una experiencia singular: entretenimiento y reflexión sobre emoción,

identidad, la condición humana. En suma: *weltanschauung* en cada función.

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Traducción al castellano de referencias bibliográficas en inglés, francés e italiano por Jessica Bohan.

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Shakespeare's Silent Women

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El uso magistral del lenguaje que ostenta William Shakespeare ha sido fuente de estudio y análisis por siglos. Por lo tanto, focalizar en su uso del silencio podrá parecer extraño. De todas maneras, este trabajo tiene como propósito indagar en una tragedia temprana, en una comedia madura, y en una de las grandes tragedias a fin de explorar algunos personajes femeninos cuyas voces son silenciadas. El uso que Shakespeare hace del silencio en estos personajes puede ser interpretado como una forma de ilustrar el tema de la identidad: la ausencia de la voz femenina puede ser vista como una forma de evitar el discurso patriarcal. Este trabajo ahondará en la caracterización de estas mujeres, teniendo como eje central del análisis la manipulación que hace Shakespeare del lenguaje y de los silencios. Los personajes que se analizarán son: Lavinia (Tito Andrónico), Hero (Mucho Ruido y Pocas Nueces) y Cordelia (El Rey Lear).

Silence occurs when something is left unsaid.

It represents more than the absence of words.

It is a significant presence that lies behind language.

KYUNG JIN BAE (2006)

William Shakespeare's masterful handling of language has been critics' source of analysis for hundreds of years. It might seem odd, consequently, to focus on his use of silences. Still, this work aims at looking into an early tragedy, a festive comedy and one of the great tragedies so

as to explore some female characters whose voices are silent and/or silenced.

Shakespeare's use of silence in these female characters could be intentional or imposed, and it represents a means to portray identity: either obedience or rebellion, powerlessness or a way to sidestep patriarchal

discourses. This work will delve into the characterisation of these women, having the bard's manipulation of speech and silence at the centre of our analysis. The characters who will be explored are Lavinia (*Titus Andronicus*), Hero (*Much Ado about Nothing*) and Cordelia (*King Lear*). The order of the analysis is chronological, taking into account the year of composition of the plays.

Silence in this work will follow two of the *OED*'s definitions: "the fact of abstaining or forbearing from speech or utterance; the state or condition resulting from this; muteness, reticence, taciturnity" and also "omission of mention, remark, or notice in narration". As Bae (2006) claims, "Silence as an important element in literature can be most clearly apprehended in drama, which is probably the least silent of literary forms. On the stage where words are performed aloud, and where even silent thought is often delivered in the form of speech like an aside or monologue, for example, a deliberate absence of words attracts and gains special meanings".

Speechless complainer

She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
She is a woman, therefore may be won.

(*Titus Andronicus*, II, i, 82-3)

The only daughter amid twenty-five brothers, Lavinia is presented in the play as the most virtuous woman in Rome: submissive, chaste, honourable: "Gracious Lavinia, Rome's rich ornament" (I, i, 52). As an "ornament" she is clearly treated as an object to be admired, not heard. Disputed by two sets

of brothers (Bassianus and Saturninus, and Chiron and Demetrius), she will become the target in the war between Romans and Goths.

Titus' daughter will experience two different kinds of silence: a symbolic and a literal one. To begin with, her symbolic silence is evident since she is treated as property as she is passed from one suitor to another. As compensation for having supported him as emperor, Saturninus claims he will marry Titus' daughter: "to advance / Thy name and honourable family, / Lavinia will I make my empress, / Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart" (I, i, 238-241). Titus is pleased, although Lavinia is already engaged to Saturninus' brother. Bassianus will claim Lavinia, supported by Titus' family, who know of their betrothal but Lavinia remains speechless throughout. In their argument, their references to Lavinia equal her to a material possession:

BASSIANUS: Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.

(...)

MARCUS: *Suum cuique* is our Roman justice:
This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

(...)

TITUS: Traitors, avaunt! Where is the emperor's guard?

Treason, my lord! Lavinia is surprised.

SATURNINUS: Surprised! By whom?

BASSIANUS: By him that justly may
Bear his betrothed from all the world away.

MUTIUS: Brothers, help to convey her hence
away

And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

TITUS: Follow, my lord, and I'll soon bring
her back. (I, i, 276-289)

Lavinia is presented as an object that is taken away and must be recovered. Titus will even kill his own son (Mutius) to retrieve her. After marrying her, Bassianus proudly states that he is “possessed of that is mine” (I, i, 408). During most of the long opening scene, she remains silent, as if a pawn of the men around her. She even remains speechless when she re-enters as Bassianus’ wife, and is rebuked by Saturninus, who has by now married Tamora, Queen of the Goths and Titus’ enemy:

Lavinia, though you left me like a churl
I found a friend and sure as death I swore
I would not part a bachelor from the priest
(I, i, 486-8)

There is no way for the audience to learn about her feelings and thoughts. Her silence is symbolic: her voice has no place in this male-centred Roman society. Marion Wynne-Davies (1991) contends that “The womb is not only the centre of female sexuality, but the repository of familial descent [...] Control of the womb was paramount to determining a direct patrilineal descent” (Kahn, 1997: 55).

The only time when Lavinia is granted eloquence of speech is when she unavailingly pleads with Tamora and her sons: first for pity, then for an expedient death. Tamora has become, after Titus kills her son in the opening scene, a merciless avenger, adopting a typically male role. Lavinia, on the other hand, “becomes a grotesque emblem of female passivity, the particular victim of masculine Tamora” (Dillon, 2007: 32).

Lavinia’s literal silence is brutally forced on her in an unashamed act of debasement.

After her husband is killed by Tamora’s sons, she endures rape and physical mutilation, after which Chiron and Demetrius sneer:

DEMETRIUS: So now go tell, and if thy tongue can speak,
Who ‘twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee.
CHIRON: Write down thy mind, bewray they meaning so,
And if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.
(II, iv, 1-4)

Her imposed silence “signifies a living death” (Garber, 2005: 70), as if in “depriving her of language they have deprived her of human contact and of normal life, taking not just her chastity and her speech but her humanity” (Leggatt, 2005: 17). The former model of womanhood has become a source of shame. She will not be a nurturing and caring mother, as she was supposed to be, but will need Titus to nurse her. Being the most valuable possession of the Andronici, she is an easy target to disgrace them:

Lavinia’s body acts as the battlefield laid out between Tamora and Titus, at once being torn (tongue), pillaged (chastity), and blemished (hands) (Contos: 2013, 4)

Lavinia is a re-enactment of Ovid’s Philomel, though her ordeal is twice as hideous. She is not raped by one man, but by two, who hew off not just her tongue but her hands as well. Thus, she will be unable to report her crime or even to depict it by weaving a tapestry (as Philomel did in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*).

It is emblematic that Lavinia will find a ‘voice’ through literature to communicate her “wrongs unspeakable” (V, iii, 125). Through an open use of intertextuality with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Shakespeare will grant her the power of communication. It could be claimed that this (IV, i) is the only scene in the play when Lavinia plays an active role. She enters running after young Lucius as if “some fit or frenzy do possess her” and “busily turns the leaves” of his book (IV, i, 17, 45). By signalling “the tragic tale of Philomel” (IV, i, 47), she will at last be able to denounce her rape, of which her relatives had been unaware. Taking a staff in her mouth and guiding it with her stumps, she will be able to write the names of her rapists: “*Stuprum – Chiron – Demetrius*” (IV, i, 78) and she does it on her own, without help from her male relatives. Literature will help her communicate what she cannot tell. Reading and then writing are the keys to a recovered humanity [...], the classics are seen as explicitly enabling a kind of rebirth for Lavinia (Garber, 2005: 72).

After identifying her aggressors, she will disappear for several scenes and will only come back to assist her father in his revenge. Symbolically, Titus orders to “stop their mouths” (V, ii, 167), forcing them into wordlessness, as they did with his daughter. Lavinia will merely hold the basin upon which her rapists’ blood will be poured after Titus slits their throats. Once again, she is deprived of agency: her father takes revenge for her, she is merely next to him to behold.

Unlike Lucrece¹, Lavinia will not be al-

lowed to commit suicide. And unlike Philomel, who is transformed into a nightingale after obtaining vengeance, there is no possible future for her, no reconstruction or transformation of her reality. Lavinia’s final silence is brought about by her father in an act of filicide. This action is both political (“Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee” – V, iii, 45) and personal (“And with thy shame thy father’s sorrow die” – V, iii, 46). She enters the scene wearing a veil, “making her less readable than ever” (Leggatt, 2005: 26). Is this the end she had been waiting for? Probably, but there is no way for readers / audiences to know for sure.

Lavinia’s sexuality, as Kahn (1997) argues, is a family matter in such a patriarchal society. Kahn quotes Lynda Boose (1989) who claims that “A daughter’s virginity is perceived to ‘belong to’ the blood of—and therefore to—the father” (Kahn, 1997: 48). Her sacrifice seems inevitable in Titus’ society.

The virgin daughter’s womb is the hidden, prized treasure of her father, to be guarded, given or exchanged as he determines (Kahn, 1997: 50)

There is no place for an “enforced, stained, and deflowered” woman in patriarchal Rome (V, iii, 38); a woman who has turned from idealised model of virtue to pariah, from pariah to martyr. Lavinia and Tamora have been

William Shakespeare in 1594 and based on Ovid’s *Fasti*. In it, Lucrece is raped by the Roman King’s son. After denouncing her rape and demanding revenge, Lucrece commits suicide.

1 *The Rape of Lucrece*. Long narrative poem written by

considered two sides of the same coin: one admired for her feminine submission and chastity, the other demonised for her lust and masculine revenge:

Neither can live as herself in Rome, which can accept neither sexual disgrace nor sexual desire in a woman (Leggatt, 2005: 27)

Most foul, most fair

Without language to interpret and intercede, mistakes are made, misinterpretations and false “noting” take place, and tragedy looms behind the scenes.

(Garber, 2005: 321)

Hero, Leonato’s only child and heiress, is respected and admired for her submissive, unassuming manner, like Lavinia and Cordelia.

Hero’s silence is symbolic, and it is made evident in the opening scene, when she is present yet largely speechless. She barely opens her mouth in a scene that is roughly three hundred lines long. Claudio is struck by her at first sight, and considers her “a modest young lady” (I, i, 147).

Believing that Don Pedro intends to propose to Hero, Leonato and Antonio leave her no room for opinion: Antonio tells her “I trust you will be ruled by your father” (II, i, 45-6), which earns Beatrice’s mockery:

Yes, faith; it is my cousin’s duty to make curtsey and say, ‘Father, as it please you’. But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsey and say, ‘Father, as it please me’. (II, i, 47-50)

Oddly enough, Hero remains silent even after Beatrice’s invitation to rebel.

Hero reflects the ideal Renaissance virtues of silence, obedience, and chastity in a woman; this is a stark contrast to Beatrice, whose chastity is never called into question but who is unmistakably not silent. (Bloom, 2010: 7)

Grace Latham (1891) claims that Hero’s behaviour is the result of “an exterior tyranny” (Bloom, 2008: 125).

Hero only gains a voice during the masque, when Don Pedro will woo her on behalf of Claudio. It is as if she can only allow herself to be witty while wearing a mask, thus, while not being openly herself.

Hero does not have a say in the choice of her husband. As Don Pedro informs Claudio, “I have wooed her in thy name, and fair Hero is won. I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained” (II, i, 273-5). “The betrothal is performed with no communication between the couple, no attempt to get to know each other as young lovers. Hero in this scene is virtually a silent commodity, handed from her father to the Prince (the two male authority figures), and only then to Claudio” (Gay, 2008: 75). Both Hero and Claudio are silent in this scene. The latter explains himself by claiming that “silence is the perfectest herald of joy” (II, i, 281). Nevertheless, Hero remains wordless, even after Beatrice’s exhortation:

Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither (II, i, 285-6).

Still, there is no stage direction or comment by other characters to give indication that she does either.

Don John's plot against Hero will turn her into "a contaminated stale" (II, ii, 24). During the wedding, Claudio humiliates her publicly:

There, Leonato, take her back again;
Give not this rotten orange to your friend. (...)
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty (IV, i, 28-9, 38-9)

Hero has become "a rotten orange", an object that can be returned if found deficient. She lacks power of discourse to defend herself against Claudio's accusations and can only "blush". Even her father turns against her since "she not denies it" (IV, i, 179). Deprived of words, Hero merely faints.

A daughter's lack of chastity is a father's ignominy:

[...] why, she, O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh! (IV, i, 143-7)

Believing his daughter to be a disgrace, Leonato (like Titus) welcomes her death:

Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wished for. (...)
Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes;
For, did I think thou wouldest not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,

Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life (IV, i, 118-9, 127-131).

The Friar, coming up with a plan to protect her stained reputation, suggests she should pretend to be dead. In case no solution were to be found, Leonato is advised to "conceal her / as best befits her wounded reputation, / in some reclusive and religious life, / out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries" (IV, i, 247-250). Once more, Hero is forced to submit to men's commands, silently and powerlessly. Her inability to defend herself is a clear sign of her powerless vulnerability and the weakness of her speech: she has no words, but is overpowered by the violent discourse of Claudio and Leonato. Her only choice is to "die to live" (IV, i, 261).

"Hero's mock death is a means of purifying her (...) name" (Findlay, 2003: 404). The spirit of comedy allows for such fantastical means of redemption, which is impossible in the world of tragedy (as Lavinia's and Cordelia's real deaths illustrate). After her name is cleared, and her innocence restored by the men around her (just like Lavinia), Hero does not gain a voice. Her father will bring her back to life as his "niece", and will force Claudio to marry her to make amends. Of course, Hero's imposed silence will make it impossible for readers to decipher her true feelings. Is she willing to marry the man who offended her on her wedding day?

Hero enters the last scene veiled and wordless, like Lavinia before her death. To Claudio, this new bride is a mere possession he will "seize upon" (V, iv, 53). "Hero becomes a literal emblem of 'nothing,' a mysterious

masked and unspeaking figure who could be anyone or no one." (Garber; 2005: 323) When she is granted words Hero speaks only to assure her honour, not to describe her feelings: "One Hero died defiled, but I do live, / And surely as I live I am a maid" (V, iv, 63-4).

Claudio's acceptance of an unseen bride is a symbol of his internalization of the patriarchal order where daughters can be passed along as commodities.

Significantly, Claudio's shaming requires his later acceptance of Leonato's "niece" as his bride. While his willingness to do so necessarily troubles our sense of Claudio as a romantic lead, it also restores the relations of hospitality that he had earlier ruptured. The form that this restoration takes – Claudio's willing acceptance of Leonato's choice as his bride – makes plain the extent to which these relations are first and foremost male homo-social ones, consolidated here through the traffic in women (Sullivan, 2003: 190)

Hero's silent docility is a requirement in such social contexts. Her unquestioning acceptance of her father's will equates her with Lavinia, whose will is also superseded by the men around her.

A soul in bliss

Silence is the most powerful medium to express immense feelings.
(Bae: 2006)

Cordelia is the youngest of three sisters, and her father's favourite. Just like Lavinia

and Hero, she is the most virtuous and admired female character in *King Lear*. Yet unlike her predecessors, she represents a clear example of willing silence. Her reluctance to comply with her father's demand is evident at the very beginning of the play. In act I, scene i, Lear announces his intention to split the kingdom among his three daughters, and opens a twisted love-contest: the one who loves him the most will be apportioned the biggest share. Goneril and Regan lavish their father with hyperbolic declarations of love. Cordelia, however, chooses silence over empty flattery. When Lear asks her "what can you say to draw / a third more opulent than your sisters?" she replies:

CORDELIA: Nothing, my lord.

LEAR: Nothing?

CORDELIA: Nothing.

LEAR: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

CORDELIA: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth (I, i, 81-88)

Her simple answer stands as an affront to her father, who considers her unkind and unruly, but it also represents her disgust with her sisters' unfelt exaggerations: "Cordelia's silence is an antidote to the unfeeling hypocrisy of Goneril and Regan" (Garber, 2005: 552-3). In asides to the audience, she confesses her love ("I am sure my love's / More richer than my tongue" – I, i, 73-4), but is adamant in her public speech. After all, she knows her father is not actually interested in her words: he simply wants her to mimic his wishes.

Several critics have criticised Lear's "joy" (I, i, 78) for her behaviour. To A.C. Bradley, she is "exceptionally sincere and unbending" (Bradley: 2008, 145). Harold Goddard even writes of her "abruptness and bluntness, her strain of disdain" (1960, 137), while Harold Bloom makes reference to her "recalcitrance" (1998: 479). It should be remembered, however, that Lear's test is but a show as the division of the land had already been done: "the dependence of the division on the speeches of the daughters was in Lear's intention a mere form, devised as a childish scheme to gratify his love of absolute power and his hunger for assurances of devotion" (Bradley, 2008: 145). "Cordelia's refusal, however, destroys the public facade and with it the political efficacy of the test. It also destroys Lear as King, driving him first into blind anger and ultimately into an apolitical madness" (Zaslavsky, 2003: 3). Cordelia's eloquent silence thus stands as a challenge to patriarchal authority, as her way of voicing her resistance and as "an assertion of ownership of her own words" (Prodromou, 2013: 31). "Her repeated offer of "nothing" throws the phallocentric, patriarchal view of woman back at Lear, the symbolic head of that tradition." (Goffin, 1999: 4) Lear calls her "untender" and wrongly attributes her answer to "pride" (I,i,102, 124). He expects complete submission and devotion from her:

[...] Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased
me better
(I, i, 229-230)

Lear admits that he "loved her most, and

thought to set [his] rest / on her kind nursery" (I, i, 118-9). This brings about another interpretation of her silence, provided by Coppélia Kahn, who claims that *King Lear* depicts "the failure of a father's power to command love in a patriarchal world and the emotional penalty he pays for wielding power" (1986, 10). Kahn adds:

In view of the ways that Lear tries to manipulate this ritual so as to keep his hold on Cordelia at the same time that he is ostensibly giving her away, we might suppose that the emotional crisis precipitating the tragic action is Lear's frustrated incestuous desire for his daughter. For in the course of winning her dowry, Cordelia is supposed to show that she loves her father not only more than her sisters do but, as she rightly sees, more than she loves her future husband; similarly, when Lear disowns and disinherits Cordelia, he thinks he has rendered her, dowered only with his curse, unfit to marry – and thus unable to leave paternal protection (23)

Cordelia's refusal to comply with the role her father assigns to her ensures her integrity and independence. Her lines "Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,/ to love my father all" (I, i, 99-100) position her as both practical and rational: she is ready to leave her father's control and get married. She claims her husband will carry "half [her] love with him, half [her] care and duty" (I, i, 98).

Lear expects that Cordelia has a duty to follow his commands and, if he desires, to relin-

quish any and all of her basic entitlements. Cordelia, however, assumes the unspoken sanctity of her autonomy and basic entitlements, all of which should trump or at least mitigate the duties that are demanded of her by Lear (Cefalu, 2004: 116)

Cordelia's refusal to speak eloquently brings about her devaluation: in his rage, Lear will curse her, banish her from his court and disinherit her. She is now "unfriended, new adopted to [Lear's] hate / dowered with [his] curse" (I, i, 198-9). Thus, she will be condemned to 'die' as Lear's daughter (like Lavinia and Hero). As such, Burgundy rejects her, but France will "seize upon" her (I, i, 248), as if she were a booty. It is striking that Cordelia remains silent after France's speech. Lear answers him instead:

Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we
Have no such daughter (I, i, 258-9)

Of course, in her present situation, Cordelia has no option but to accept her only suitor. Yet her lack of words makes it impossible for readers to grasp her true feelings.

Leggatt sees female silence as a linking thread between *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*:

Behind Lear and Cordelia we glimpse Titus and Lavinia, a father desperately trying to get speech from a silent daughter – except that Lear has silenced Cordelia himself by demanding a speech she cannot give. Yet while Lavinia says nothing Cordelia says "Nothing," and that makes a difference. She

is not just tongue-tied; she says, quite articulately, that she is tongue-tied (2005: 146)

Cordelia's "nothing" will resonate throughout the rest of the scenes: it will become a powerful "leitmotif for the entire play" (Rothwell: 247) until Lear's final speech:

Lear is confronted by a reprise of the "nothing" uttered by Cordelia at the outset, though it here takes the form not of a spoken word but of the eternal silence of death (Rudnytsky, 1999: 305)

Their reconciliation near the end of the play will prove Cordelia right: she will become "like the Virgin Mary" (Kahn, 1986: 31), Lear's "redeemer" (McCoy: 189). As he asks for her forgiveness, "the gestures of deference that ordinarily denote patriarchal authority now transformed into signs of reciprocal love" (Kahn: 31). In a nutshell, Cordelia could be said to be the only female character in the play who manages to undermine patriarchy mainly through her powerful "rhetoric of silence" (Garber, 2005: 552). Yet, as her silence stands opposed to her father's wishes, she will have to pay a high price for her transgression.

Eloquent Silences

Silence is the common thread that links these three women. Some critics have also noted the absence of a mother as a role model in all, which leaves these daughters at the mercy of patriarchal authority and domination. Lavinia, Hero and Cordelia must submit their feelings, opinions and voices to the powerful

discourse and decisions of their fathers. Their basic freedoms are curtailed so as to make them fit within socially acceptable behaviours. Whereas their silences are brutally forced (Lavinia), built in their personality (Hero), or used as a way of transgression (Cordelia), absence of discourse in these plays evidence the expected female role in Elizabethan and Jacobean society. Judith Butler (2009: 11) claims that

[n]orms are acting on us before we have a chance to act at all, and that when we do act, we recapitulate the norms that act upon us, perhaps in new or unexpected ways, but still in relation to norms that precede us and exceed us.

Shakespeare dexterously pitches female silence against female eloquence (Lavinia – Tamora, Hero – Beatrice, Cordelia – Goneril & Regan). In all cases, wordless women are portrayed as worthier and more virtuous than their counterparts, as docility and silence are considered female virtues. However, it is precisely their silence that makes them victims. Unable to make their voices heard, Lavinia, Hero and Cordelia become easy preys in male-dominated contexts. Thus, all of them will have to pay with their lives (even Hero, who ‘dies’ symbolically). “Like every oppressive system of privilege, patriarchy feeds on silence” (Johnson, 2005: 238).

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A Queer Reading of *The Taming of the Shrew*

AILEN GERAGHTY

En este trabajo se intenta una lectura a contrapelo desde una perspectiva feminista y queer según la cual se busca mejorar la condición de la mujer y deconstruir discursos dominantes. Es en mira de este objetivo entonces que fenómenos como el sadomasoquismo se vuelven altamente controversiales. ¿Es el sadomasoquismo siempre un indicador del heteropatriarcado? En relación a estos interrogantes, el estudio examina cómo Catalina y Petrucio entablan relaciones sadomasoquistas en La Fierecilla Domada de Shakespeare. La obra es analizada desde un enfoque feminista influido por la teoría queer y teniendo en cuenta el concepto de performatividad de Butler. En el trabajo se da por sentado que en la época isabelina toda mujer estaba de una u otra manera sometida; el propósito es indagar si Catalina es realmente una víctima o si está ridiculizando los arraigados preconceptos que caracterizan a su género. Al leer sadomasoquismo en la obra, el presente análisis explorará la acción (o influencia) de Catalina como una mujer que, dentro de los límites de una sociedad opresiva en la cual es tildada de impotente (y este trabajo analizará hasta qué punto), parodia activamente actos y roles de género estereotipados y convencionales para obtener placer.

This analysis focuses on the political intentionality of feminism. Feminism is understood not merely as a battle against male supremacy rife with anger as in the 1970s but as a means to better women's condition and deconstruct dominant discourses. Within this conception of feminism

the question to be posed is: what is good for women? It is in this instance that phenomena such as sadomasochism, from now on SM, become a matter of high controversy. Are these phenomena always indicators of heteropatriarchy? Are these practices favourable to women or do they reproduce a heteronorma-

tive logic? In recent years, lesbian feminist scholar and political activist Sheila Jeffreys (1993) has highlighted the ethical implications of SM practices and has seemed to pathologise such practices. Adversely, literary critic Michael Mangan (2006) appears to celebrate SM. In search for plausible answers to the aforementioned questions, this paper sets out to explore how Katherine and Petruchio engage in SM practices in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. As Hodgdon (1992: 551) points out, the play "always represents Katharina bound". It is assumed that in Elizabethan times and the Renaissance period, with its ideas about women's submissive roles and the ever-present patriarchal discourse, every woman was, in some way or other, bound. This paper explores whether Katherine is truly a victim or not in order to attempt to deconstruct the paradigm derived to some extent from the Freudian sexual taxonomy which establishes the binary, gendered oppositions upon which currently dominant notions of desire and sex depend. By reading SM into the text the present analysis will explore Katherine's agency as a woman who, within the boundaries of an oppressive society in which she is deemed powerless (and this paper shall analyse to what extent), she actively parodies stereotypical, conventional and ingrained gender/ed roles and acts to attain pleasure.

As Murray and Murrell (1989: 2) explain, for the majority of humans sadistic and masochistic behaviour conjures up frightful images: those of tortures, murders and many other cruel acts. Consequently, the person for whom such behaviour is not only acceptable but also enjoyable is accorded neither sympathy nor

understanding by the rest of the society. Yet, there are some people for whom sadomasochistic behaviour "provides the (perhaps necessary) framework for successful relations". In addition, they claim that although sadomasochism has been studied both as a social and individual behaviour since Krafft-Ebing's seminal work, "Psychopathia Sexualis", published in 1885, "no one has been able either to shake the names he gave to these behaviours or the negative 'whips and chains' connotations those names carry as psychopathic acts" (ibid). Moreover, they point out that Freud, as much as Krafft-Ebing set the tone and defined the parameters for studying sadomasochism in isolated cases of deviant behaviour. These works combined with the morals and norms of the time resulted in a misunderstanding of sadism and masochism as substitutes for 'natural sexuality'. In the past and in the present, the social construction of 'perversion', and that of 'sadomasochism' particularly, is always based on the 'relational distance' between the 'sexual' behaviour in question and "the normal", the established norm of 'heterosexuality' (Beckmann, 2001). As Foucault observes, the favoured example since the 1840s for what was called moral insanity, instinctive insanity, aberration of the instincts and finally perversion, was deviation in sexual conduct or sexual identity. He wonders how sexuality has come to be considered the privileged place where people's deepest "truth" is read and expressed; he describes sexual identity as the forum where this "truth", as human subjects, is decided. In Christian societies, Foucault sustains, sex has been the central object of examination,

surveillance, avowal and transformation into discourse since Christianity and the Western world have never ceased saying: “to know who you are, know what your sexuality is” (Foucault in Kritzman, 1990: 111). He explains sex became both a target and an instrument of power and intends to prove how dominant discourses and ideologies of “sexuality” as well as of “perversion” established conditions of domination that directly or indirectly produced social harm. In this way, Western discourses aimed at reproducing socio-political power relationships and constituted the “perverts”, one of which was the sadomasochist.

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence.

‘Queer’ then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality *vis-à-vis* the normative (Halperin, 2001:62)

Queer theory challenges the validity and consistency of heteronormative discourse, and focuses to a large degree on non-heteronormative sexualities and sexual practices. Although Judith Butler describes herself as a feminist, her work has been taken by Queer theory as foundational. She describes gender through the concept of *performativity*: “[...] the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler, 1993: 2). The concept places emphasis on the ways in which identity is passed or brought to life through discourse. Performative acts, Butler claims, are types

of authoritative speech. Statements, just by being uttered, carry out a certain action and exhibit a certain level of power. This notion of performativity and the idea that discourse has the power to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains have their roots in the Foucaultian concept of discourse: in that discourse does not merely describe ‘reality’ but creates what it names. In addition, it can be concluded from her work that gender and sex, in the same way as social reality, are not a given; as she asserts: “gender is a performance that produces the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core; it produces on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the illusion of an inner depth” (Butler, 1991: 317). Butler views gender not as an expression of what one is, rather as something that one does, as an act that has been rehearsed, like a script, and we, as the actors, make this script a reality by performing certain actions:

The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed; much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again (Butler, 2003:397).

By incessantly citing the conventions and ideologies of the social world around us, we enact that reality; in the performative act of speaking, we “incorporate” that reality by enacting it with our bodies, but that “reality”

nevertheless remains a social construction. So, we may believe that we act according to our subjectivity but Butler suggests that our sense of apparently ‘independent’ subjectivity is in reality a retroactive construction that is realised through the enactment of social conventions. However, she argues that since those ‘rules’ are not essential or natural; they do not have any claim to justice or necessity. Actually, those ‘rules’ are socio-historical and can be challenged and modified through alternative performative acts.

So, Sheila Jeffreys is one of the feminists that stands against SM in that she considers it a reproduction of women’s inequality, that reinforces male domination and women’s oppression. Adversely, Queer theory will study SM and its role play as a revolutionary strategy and as an instance where a paradoxical freedom can be found by players, where discourses can be reversed and deconstructed. As Foucault (1996: 195) points out, “the S&M game is very interesting because it is a strategic relation, because it is always fluid. Of course there are roles, but everyone knows very well that those roles can be reversed.” SM defamiliarises gender in a performative manner. So we could consider that Shakespeare’s Katherine comes to understand that “when power and dominance are played as games rather than inherited as societal and ideological necessities, a kind of freedom is achieved” (Mangan, 2006: 11).

Basically, the play deals with the traditional comic situation in which a shrewish woman is tamed into a wife who is submissive to her husband. But Shakespeare does more than that; he gives the character of the

shrew multidimensional qualities so that she is not merely the conventional creation of the medieval and renaissance anti-feminist. In addition to the taming theme, different attitudes toward marriage, wooing and wedding are depicted together with the idea of appearance vs. reality. Apart from role-playing, disguising and imposture are present all along the play: suitors disguise themselves as schoolmasters, passing pedants impersonate wealthy fathers, and masters and servants exchange places. As a matter of fact, the main body of the play is role-playing, since it is all performed for Sly in the induction. Sly is the drunk beggar who is tricked by a Lord that orders his servants to take Sly back to his house and treat him as if he were a lord, the lord even has one of his servicemen dress as a lady and play the part of Sly’s wife. Then a travelling group of players arrives to perform for the enjoyment of Sly and the play that they perform constitutes the rest of *The Taming of the Shrew*. One of the lord’s servicemen asserts: “He is no less than what we say he is” (Induction.i.66), thus the theme of appearance versus reality is presented right at the beginning of the play.

By reading SM and role playing we can read the play in terms of Kate’s journey from the frustration of her actual societal role as an oppressed woman, to the point where she finds a paradoxical liberty in the role-play. Her oppression is symbolized by the genuine public humiliation of her father’s open attempt to dispose of her on the marriage market. After Grumio remarks that instead of courting Kate he would: “cart her, rather” (I,I,55), alluding to the Elizabethan

pratice in which prostitutes and scolds were tied behind a cart and whipped as it moved through town for the whole of the people to watch;- Kate asks her father, “I pray you, sir, is it your will/ To make a stale of me amongst these mates?”(I,I,57-58), reluctant at first to believe that her own father wants to debase her. Along this journey there are a series of key steps: Kate’s initial reaction to this first humiliation is to claim the dominant role and make out of Bianca a “bondmaid and a slave”(II,I,2) striking, torturing and submitting her. She also goes to the extreme of beating Hortensio. However, in Kate’s interactions with Petruchio not only does the power shift, but also Kate’s discourse changes, as it can be seen in their first encounter where a playful element emerges and they engage in an erotic battle of words:

KATHERINE: I knew you at the first/You
were a moveable

PETRUCHIO: Why, what’s a moveable?

KATHERINE: A joint stool.

PETRUCHIO: Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me.

KATHERINE: Asses are made to bear, and so
are you.

PETRUCHIO: Women are made to bear, and
so are you (II.i.190-196).

The playful doble pun here on the verb ‘to bear’, together with the sexual overtones are a constant along the play. The series of games that follow in which both engage are controlled by Petruchio yet, in contrast to Baptista’s or the so called suitors’ humilliation of Kate, these are staged as games; as fiction. Michael Mangan (2006: 206) explains that

one of SM’s major givens is that “it is the submissive that is in control” and that Kate “joins in the game on terms that only seem to disadvantage her”. Katherine places Petruchio in the role of master. At the begining of the play Petruchio does not start his wooing of Kate as master. He tells the audience that he intends his courtship to be a spirited one, “And woo her with some spirit when she comes” (II,I,164), the terms in which he describes his intentions show that he has not yet decided what his role will be. Yet, after Kate’s appearance, in the witty battle of words Petruchio realises that a docile role will not work since Katherine is clearly not attracted to submissive men. Furthermore, during their interaction Kate asks him, “What is your crest? A coxcomb?” (II,I,218) to which Petruchio responds that he will renounce his comb if she would be his hen: “A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen” (II,I,219), but Kate clarifies: “No cock of mine. You crow too like a craven” that is a coward (II,I,220) insinuating he has no fighting spirit so he is not for her. Petruchio tries to tone down the argument but Kate continues to provoke him: “Go, fool, and whom thou keep’st command” (II,I,248), she even strikes him. So, finally Petruchio claims the dominant role: “setting all this chat aside,/Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented/That you shall be my wife”(II,I,258-260) and tells her: “will you, nill you, I will marry you”(II,I,266). After Petruchio’s words Kate for the first time remains silent and does not answer back, as if pleased to have gained what she intended to. Baptista, Gremio and Tranio enter the scene and Kate continues to insult Petruchio but as a game now; she had her chance to gen-

uinely turn Petruchio down and she did not. Thus, the taming is, in its entirety, a game. Let us take the scene where Petruchio breaks the fourth wall and equates Katherine with a falcon:

Thus have I politely begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And, till she stoop, she must not be full-gorged,
To make her come and know her keeper's call
(IV, I, 124-130).

This quotation echoes the fun in the taming. The falconry image Petruchio uses to describe his method is crucial. Kate is a hawk and she is trained like one. In opposition, Bianca, Kate's soft-spoken, sweet younger sister, is described as a "proud disdainful haggard" (IV,ii,39). Petruchio's words reflect the alert, tough mind of a sportsman, Katherina's taming is not just a lesson but a game, a test of skill and a source of pleasure. The roughness, Leggatt (1974: 156) maintains, "is, at bottom, part of the fun: such is the peculiar psychology of sport that one is willing to endure aching muscles and risk the occasional broken limb for the sake of the challenge and the pleasure it provides". He also points out that the sports most often recalled along the play are blood sports thus "invoking in the audience the state of mind in which cruelty and violence are acceptable, even exciting"(i-bid). The fact that this relationship they hold is a game or, one may even say an act, is made clear by the characters. Both Petruchio and Kate are seen as performers. Kate remarks

of Petruchio's bombast, "Where did you study all this godly speech?"(II,i,256). Petruchio also asserts that Kate's shewishness is only a pretence since "Tis bargained 'twixt us twain, being alone,/That she shall still be curst in company"(II,I,297-298). In this manner, the violence and brutality in their relationship is somehow limited and conventionalised so that we, the audience, can enjoy the taming together with them. While endorsing women's subordination within patriarchal marriage (at least publicly), the play mitigates the violence used to control unruly women in the real world and in the shrew-taming literary tradition.

It is true that the taming is harsh and initially has physical consequences on Kate; she is starved, soaked and made to walk long distances. Yet, Katherina's taming is not absolutely crude it is, in fact, interesting and amusing. As Leggatt (1974: 155) asserts, "it is not just that we sense the philosophical purpose behind the knockabout; there is something attractive in the knockabout itself". In the taming, Petruchio and Katherina "have a special vision, an awareness of life as a play or a game that gives them power to control their lives" (ibid:162). Thus, they build their own lives, "they have a sense of convention, to create experiences rather than have experiences forced upon them" (ibid: 162).

Kate's acceptance of both of their roles is symbolised in her final speech where she reasserts this game where she is the slave. Her final speech has been taken as the epitome of wifely obedience, or it can also be read as ironic. As Khan (1975: 99) affirms, although the speech "pleads subordination, as a speech

—a lengthy, ambitious verbal performance before an audience— it allows the speaker to dominate that audience”. Kate’s ‘education’ culminates in winning recognition and approval from the social group, something that for a long time had been denied to her. Petruchio certainly demands that Katherine submit to his will, this is what he needed to win the bet to prove to all the men and the few women that he was successful in taming this crazy shrew. Kate seems to be in on this bet so although she places her hand under his foot and tells him “My hand is ready, may it do him ease” (V,ii,145-188) we know, as she does, that he will not step on her hand.

If we agree with the argument that Kate is portrayed as a woman trapped in the self-destructive role of a shrew by the limited norms of behaviour prescribed for men and women, we can say that Kate, in the end, releases herself from this role which, before Petruchio arrived in her life, was not an act. She now assumes another role, that can be considered, as it is by many, a submissive role but it is always in flux and capable of being reversed or changed.

In the real Elizabethan world, in the public world, women, and thus Kate, cannot have power. They cannot be masters like men so *The Taming of the Shrew* transgresses the binary logic upon which patriarchal mandates depend and satirises the male urge to control women. It breaks with the culturally prescribed assumption that ‘femininity’ implies passivity and unveils what Butler will call the ‘script’ displaying the *performance* in gender. If gender is an act, as Butler maintains, Petruchio and Kate break with its script, al-

ter their performance and thus modify reality. In their case their subjectivity is closer to being independent than that of those who reproduce social conventions. They are the protagonists and directors of their own play, they set up and negotiate the boundaries and they decide whether these can be transgressed and how. As we said before, sex is, and has always been, an instrument of power, it is inseparable from the norm of heterosexuality which Kate and Petruchio break by definition: in attaining pleasure out of pain and humiliation whether it is in a submissive or dominant way they are perverting the norm. SM parodies women’s inequality, Kate actively parodies stereotypical, conventional and ingrained gender/ed roles. SM is in some way the eroticising of women’s agency. Katherine is no victim. Kate does not fit within the economy of patriarchal heterosexuality; she is filled with what makes women problematic: movement, inconsistency, change and unpredictability. Additionally, the play breaks with some dichotomies: Kate is not dichotomised into virgin or whore, nor is it romantic love divorced from sexuality. Indeed, stasis and calmness, associated with romantic love, and the chaotic violence, associated with sexuality, are merged as one. There is a possibility of female agency within the excess of masculine control in this play. The attempt of this work has been to disclose this agency, to deconstruct the master discourse of “natural”, “normal” heterosexual sexuality and propose a renegotiation of it. I believe Shakespeare’s Katherine is the perfect example of the possibility of embodying and transgressing socially construed and imposed gendered binaries

within a phallocentric culture. To escape this culture's mandates entirely is ultimately impossible but to deconstruct them by parody through practices such as SM is feasible.

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The Gender Principles at work in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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A partir del análisis feminista de French, podemos considerar una división en los principios de género. Dado que las mujeres han sido históricamente asociadas a la naturaleza, se postulan dos principios femeninos correspondientes a dos imágenes de la naturaleza, uno benevolente y el otro malevolente, es decir, el principio “dentro de la ley” y el “fuera de la ley”. La forma en la cual los personajes femeninos de Shakespeare transgreden y subvierten estos principios y la manera en la cual esta conducta es aceptada o rechazada por su entorno ha generado innumerables debates. A partir de las lecturas de diferentes autores de la conducta de Rosalind, la heroína de *As You Like It*, se postula una discusión sobre cómo la subversión o transgresión de principios de género evidencia mandatos sociales o la crítica a los mismos, a la vez que el recurso mismo de la ruptura con el rol femenino esperado permite la progresión dramática. La protagonista de *As You Like It*, tironeada entre su propio deseo y aquello que la sociedad espera de ella, encarna preguntas que desbordan el texto y se proyectan sobre todo un sistema de valores.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the gender principles at work in the play *As You Like It*, by William Shakespeare (1994). The play questions these principles, as it will be seen in the various possible readings of the protagonist's masking and constant play between female and male prin-

ciples. According to French (1981), it is possible to divide human experience into gender principles, the masculine and the feminine ones. The author claims that the masculine principle is predicated on the ability to kill, associated with prowess and ownership, with physical courage, assertiveness, authority, in-

dependence. It is linear, temporal, and transcendent. The masculine principle aims to construct something in the world and within time that will enable the individual to transcend nature.

The feminine principle, on the other hand, is split into two. According to French, because women have been associated to nature, there are two different images of nature that correspond to two opposite feminine principles. Nature is seen as having a benevolent aspect, and also a malevolent one. The two images of nature (and women) were provided by the Christian church. The Eve responsible for the fall from unity with nature is a subversive figure, which French calls the “outlaw” principle. This figure is associated with darkness, chaos, flesh, magic and sexuality. The “inlaw” principle is the benevolent aspect of nature “purified” of its malevolent side. According to French, because the two gender principles occupy different conceptual realms, they cannot be synthesised. But because both principles are abstractions from universal human experience, they need synthesis. French (1981: 30) states that “all the great poets of the English Renaissance—Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney—attempted to synthesise the gender principles in more earthly locals”.

Gender Roles in Shakespeare's Comedies

It has to be noticed that it is not in this case only that women have very surprising roles in Shakespeare's comedies. As Gordon (1965: 27) states: When we turn to the comedies of Shakespeare, we enter another world:

a world of which the first quality is- what? [...] I should say that its first quality is that it is a world made safe for women- a climate in which a girl can be happy and come to flower, in which the masculine element drops its voice. Certainly, whatever may have happened on the historical scene, here, in this land of Arcadia, in this Utopia or Romance, Man, mere Man, lays down his arms. There is never any question who rules in these latitudes- it is Woman, Woman all the time. The question of whether or not Shakespeare's plays are sexist continues to be in discussion. His female characters are very strong but have many shades. However, scholars do not agree on this. Gordon (1965: 30) claims: “His Comedies are a riot of feminine supremacy, a feminist revel”.

According to Dash (1981: 1) women in Shakespeare's plays have a clear sense of themselves as individuals and challenge accepted patterns for women's behaviour. Although compliance, self-sacrifice for a male, dependence, nurturance and emotionalism are the expected behaviour for women, independence, self-control and frequently defiance characterize Shakespeare's female characters.

Later on, Dash even sees the will in Shakespeare to question gender principles as the plays make evident how the behaviour expected from his female characters is unequal under the same conditions:

Shakespeare focuses on this inequity. Men and women confront the same experience from opposite perspectives. By creating confident, attractive, independent women whom we like, he questions the wisdom of a power

structure that insists they relinquish personal freedom [...] Like the men, the women too respond to a variety of forces in their environment and are troubled by the world they see. But that world differs from the one perceived by men (Dash, 1981: 5).

However, the fact that there are very impressive female characters in Shakespeare's plays does not necessarily imply that his plays are non-sexist or non-patriarchal. Many critics, play directors and actors argue that they are in fact sexist since there is final submission to gender principles. Even though the female characters play with the rules, they eventually submit to them in order to reach happiness, or are otherwise punished.

Parrish, founder director of the Women's Playhouse Trust, acknowledges richness in characters and gender principles synthesis in Shakespeare's plays, yet she does not see them at work in the female characters, which she finds flat, but in the masculine ones (El-som et al., 1995: 66).

***As You Like It*, Rosalind's roles**

As You Like It is an interesting play from the point of view of gender divisions, because the main character is female and she is the one who actually sets the action in motion. In Elizabethan times, women were not supposed to take control of situations, with the remarkable exception of the Queen herself, who indeed had to acquire a very masculine image to remain in power. However, Rosalind is an impressive character because she does things that go against gender divisions: she disguises herself and acts like a man, she courts the

man she loves, and she actively influences people's lives, so much so that she makes other people contract marriage.

In the play we have a female character torn between what society wants her to do and her desires. She has been banished to the forests by her authoritarian uncle, and she has fallen in love with Orlando. As she is in exile, she is forced to take on a new identity. It is safer for her to conceal her identity and pretend to be someone else. Yet as she has chosen a male identity, she is already subverting gender principles, taking a place in society which does not correspond to her. Because of this new identity, she cannot be wooed the way a lady is expected to, which is passively and waiting for the man to make the first move. How does she go about this problem? By violating further violating gender principles, she does not just pretend to be a man. She pretends to be a man who pretends to be a girl so that Orlando can practise how he would woo Rosalind, without knowing that he *is* wooing Rosalind. She teaches him to woo, therefore embodying the outlaw feminine principle and the masculine principle. As Girard (1991: 99) claims it: "If Rosalind consented to be wooed openly, in her own name, by her own lover, her constant availability would rapidly squander the metaphysical capital that has accumulated during the phase of separation. Under her masculine disguise, Rosalind can enjoy her lover's presence without losing the benefit of absence. She makes herself accessible, yet keeps reaping the fruit of inaccessibility".

Moreover, Rosalind declares that her love for Orlando is due to her obedience to her father and therefore gives a sense of righteous-

ness to her personal and “out of the norm” behaviour. If she claims that she is following her father’s desire, then her behaviour could be ascribed to her following patriarchal commands and not her own subjectivity.

There is a very interesting dialogue between Celia and Rosalind to analyse:

CELIA: [...] Is it possible on such a sudden that you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland’s youngest son?

ROSALIND: The Duke my father loved his father dearly.

CELIA: Doth is therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly?

By this kind of chase, I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando.

ROSALIND: No, faith, hate him not, for my sake.

CELIA: Why should I not? Does he not deserve well?

ROSALIND: Let me love him for that, and do you love him because I do!

(I, iii, 1-10)

Girard (1991: 94) analyses these lines stating that “once again the mimetic heroine tries to camouflage her desire behind the respect that is due to fathers, and this bad faith is ironically criticized by the perceptive Celia”.

The author analyses specifically the phrase “do love him because I do”. There is a typical misogynistic belief that expects to find female rivalry everywhere. However, this pair does not adjust to this characteristic. Girard (1991: 94) states: “Since Rosalind falls in love first, Celia politely abstains from doing the

same. If Celia had been first, Rosalind would have returned the courtesy; she would not have cast even a single glance in the direction of Orlando”.

Rosalind is a very intelligent character. Usually, this is characteristically associated to the ability to compete verbally. In sexist literature, men tend to be better speakers. However, Shakespeare, as Gordon (1965: 19) states, provides us with various female characters perfectly capable of defending themselves verbally.

Rosalind’s amazing wit and challenging behaviour does not necessarily mean that the play does not conform to gender principles. We have to remember how the play ends and what kind of closure there is. The play ends with multiple weddings. Rosalind’s behaviour of breaking gender principles has finally come to an end. Since she has made what is supposed to be the most important achievement for a woman (she got married to a man who she loves and who is also in good economic and social position) she can then go back to the conventional behaviour expected from a woman. From then on she will be, we expect, a good married woman, adjusted to the “in-law” feminine principle: chaste, loyal, tender.

Throughout the play we have seen that Rosalind played with both feminine principles and with the masculine principle as well. However, this was probably possible only because of the exceptional state of affairs. She had been banished to the Forest of Arden and she had to do anything that was possible for her to survive. Her outstanding behaviour, the way it was she who courted Orlando and not the other way about, were

only possible under very special circumstances. Rosalind is not a flat female character and Shakespeare has shown that female characters can be witty, verbally intelligent and defy norms. But this conduct was only accepted in a very out-of-society limbo, the Forest of Arden. Once the political scheme has been resolved and everything goes back to normal, so does Rosalind's behaviour. Her reluctance to adjust to gender principles division would not be accepted back in court. She and Celia are put back where female characters belong. From then on they will be married women and devout wives.

Anyway, we will never know how much Orlando was aware of what was going on then. It may be possible, as well, that he always knew that he was being courted by a woman in disguise, so we may have hopes for Rosalind being accepted as the rebellious and subversive character she is and not brought to submission by her husband after the play has finished.

Epilogue and Unmasking

In the epilogue of the play the audience, or the readers, are also informed that Rosalind has only been allowed to behave like this because she was, in fact, a man playing a woman. The play metaphor illustrates in fiction what happened in reality. A woman could only behave like a man under very special circumstances. A woman could only behave like a man, we are told, if she *was* actually a man.

Jensen (1991: 80) challenges the belief that Rosalind, controlling and directing the main actions of the play, is a figure of com-

manding power. Instead of seeing the epilogue as Rosalind's (i.e. a woman's) ultimate witty triumph, he sees it as the reduction of the stage, in Rosalind's assertion of her boy identity, to an all-male preserve. Thus the structure of the play is patriarchal, and the sense of the patriarchal ending in *As You Like It* is that male androgyny is affirmed whereas female "liberty" in the person of Rosalind is curtailed.

Challenging gender bias

We are confronted with a play which clearly questions gender principles. Rosalind's masking allows her to perform actions which would be normally sanctioned in any female heroine, but which are acceptable in an exceptional state of affairs. However, the closure includes all the triumphant elements of traditional gender principles, though leaving a hint of optimism. Moreover, the epilogue, which unmasks the gender role play in Elizabethan's theatre, where all characters were performed by men, makes this game of gender rules' crossing even more complex. The question about the possibility of an alternative, exceptional place, where gender principles can be transgressed, projects from the text on to the nature of theatre, on the one hand, and on to the whole social arrangement, on the other.

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El Pílades de Orestes. *Zum Shakespearestag* de Goethe

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En 1771 el joven Goethe organiza en la casa paterna un homenaje a Shakespeare y pronuncia en esa ocasión un discurso que vamos a presentar en traducción propia, acompañada de una breve introducción y comentarios.

A modo de digresión inicial

En un texto de 1982, el dramaturgo alemán –y también traductor de Shakespeare– Heiner Müller nos plantea una versión cruelmente aggiornada de un verso de Hölderlin. Donde decía “Pero

lo que permanece lo aportan los poetas”¹, Müller pone: “Pero lo que permanece lo aportan las bombas.” “El resto –agrega– es poesía” (Müller, H. 1983:99).

Antes de levantar las copas y brindar por

1 Cf. Friedrich Hölderlin: “Andenken” (Recuerdo).

Shakespeare en palabras de Goethe nos detendremos en un ritual cuyos orígenes son distintos. Nos estamos refiriendo a los cantos que acompañan muchos enfrentamientos futbolísticos entre clubes ingleses y alemanes. La letra suele ser de una estructura clara y poco exigente. El primer verso de una de las canciones más difundidas reza así: *There were ten german bombers in the air* (Había diez bombarderos alemanes en el aire). Tras unas tres repeticiones llegamos a la próxima estrofa, que dice: *And the RAF of England shot one down* (La Real Fuerza Aérea de Inglaterra derribó uno). Ya habrán reconocido el patrón: Hasta hace no tantos años en Alemania todavía se cantaba la *canción de los diez negritos*, acá me enteré de otra versión, la *canción de los diez indiecitos* (¿No resultan un tanto pegajosos los lazos culturales a veces?). La canción inglesa, como ya se habrán imaginado, siempre termina con todos los bombarderos alemanes derribados, mientras que la fracción nazi de los hinchas alemanes no se cansa de entonar la canción “Bomben auf Engeland” (bombas sobre Inglaterra). Todo eso se repite cada año en las previas de los partidos, a esta altura siete décadas después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Una guerra que, cabe recordar, Alemania llevó en su momento a muchos países del mundo.

Esa guerra volvió a casa. En 1944, uno de los últimos ataques aéreos contra Frankfurt llevados a cabo por la Royal Air Force destruyó el viejo centro de la ciudad, donde también redujo a cenizas la casa paterna de Goethe (la fecha del ataque, casualidad o no, fue un 22 de marzo, día de la muerte de Goethe). Así que los muros que supuestamente escu-

charon en algún entonces la voz del joven Goethe dejaron de existir. Los peregrinos de la literatura mundial que hoy en día visitan la casa de Goethe en la calle Großer Hirschgraben (“Gran zanja de ciervo”) ven una fachada religiosamente reconstruida, o sea, una truchada sin aura.² Una vez más en palabras de Müller: “Para deshacerse de la opresión de la historia primero hay que reconocer la existencia de la historia. Hay que conocer la historia. Si no, podría renacer a la antigua, como pesadilla, como espíritu de Hamlet. Primero hay que analizarla, después se la puede denunciar, deshacerse de ella” (Müller, H. 1989:309).

Acerca del texto de Goethe

A pesar de que en el único manuscrito que conocemos³ hay varias señales que permiten pensar en un texto destinado a la difusión en forma escrita, en casi todos los trabajos de los especialistas *Zum Shakespearestag* se considera un discurso de Goethe, pronunciado por su autor en la casa paterna en Fráncfort, y probablemente leído en otro acto de homenaje a Shakespeare, en este caso en Estrasburgo.

Aunque parece un poco tarde confesarlo: No sabemos si el discurso alguna vez fue pronunciado por Goethe ante un público. Por lo

2 La casa fue reconstruida entre 1947 y 1951.

3 El texto fue editado por primera vez unos veinte años después de la muerte de Goethe, en 1854. En 1938, en vísperas de la guerra, se publicó en los escritos de la Asociación Goethe, en una edición que contiene el facsímil de las ocho páginas escritas por Goethe (Beutler 1938).

menos es llamativa la falta de testimonios: Ninguno de los amigos de Goethe menciona el discurso en su correspondencia o en su diario (que a pesar de ser géneros *pre-facebook* siguen teniendo cierta importancia para el investigador).

Lo que sí parece seguro es que en la casa paterna de Goethe tuvo lugar una fiesta dedicada a Shakespeare; en este caso hay un testigo poco sobornable, porque el evento dejó huellas en el libro de gastos de la Familia Goethe. En la entrada del 14 de octubre de 1771 se puede leer: “Dies onomasticus Schakspear 6 Gulden [Florines] 45 Kreuzer⁴; dos días más tarde encontramos una nota más, escrita con un poco menos de paciencia: “Musicis in die onomast. Schacksp. drei Gulden.” (Tomamos estos datos de Fischer-Lamberg 1999:328. Para que se tenga una idea del tipo de cambio: Celebrando el onomástico de Shakespeare, en la casa de Goethe se gastó aproximadamente lo que en ese entonces un albañil ganaba en un mes.)

Hay que aclarar que elogiar a Shakespeare para el joven Goethe y sus amigos era rendirle homenaje al gran dramaturgo, pero a su vez participar del rédito de ese homenaje, haciéndose miembro de la comunidad ilustre de sus admiradores y seguidores. Recordemos que en 1771 el joven Goethe era, efectivamente, un muchacho de corta edad (22) y aún más corta fama. Pensemos que su primer gran éxito, el *Werther*, es de 1774. Así que toda la modestia con la que Goethe habla de Shakespeare, hasta cierto punto es una máscara. Goethe se conforma con el rol

de Pílades, que para Orestes era compañero de viaje imprescindible, amigo fiel si los hay. Cuando escuchamos que el orador habla de Shakespeare como un gran caminante, cabe recordar que la obra de Goethe está plagada de estas figuras con potencial de identificación. Famoso es el *Canto del caminante en la tormenta*, como *Zum Schäkespearestag*, una obra de 1771; aun más famoso es el breve *Canto nocturno del caminante*, escrito cinco años más tarde. Otro tema presente en el discurso: Goethe se valía de Shakespeare para combatir lo que veía como un reglamento a esa altura poco productivo para el teatro: las llamadas “tres unidades”, las unidades de lugar, tiempo y acción. Simultáneamente, Goethe trabaja en su drama sobre el caballero *Götz von Berlichingen* (el de la mano de hierro), y no es exagerado decir que esta pieza hubiera sido imposible sin el impacto que le causó a su autor la obra de Shakespeare. Queremos terminar esta breve introducción con una cita de 1945 que parece recordar uno de los pensamientos que Goethe presentó en su homenaje a Shakespeare: “No hay dos Alemanias, una buena y otra mala; hay una sola, cuya mejor parte se inclinó al mal por astucia del diablo. La Alemania mala es la buena extraviada, la buena en desgracia, en culpa y ocaso.” Contra el orden cronológico, le dejaremos la última palabra a Goethe en este asunto;⁵ la cita que acabamos de escuchar es de Thomas Mann (Mann 1996:280). Es de su discurso “Alemania y los alemanes”, del 29 de mayo de 1945, pocas semanas después de la capitulación de Alemania. Las

4 72 Kreuzer = 1 Florín.

5 Ver el antepenúltimo párrafo del texto que sigue.

circunstancias históricas llevaron a Thomas Mann a pronunciarlo en la Biblioteca del Congreso de EE.UU., en el inglés de un extranjero, o sea, en una de las variantes más difundidas de la lengua de Shakespeare.

Discurso presuntamente pronunciado por el joven Goethe con motivo del onomástico de William Shakespeare, o Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Para el santo de Shakespeare

Tengo la impresión de que la más noble de nuestras sensaciones es la esperanza de quedarnos aun después que el destino parezca habernos devuelto a la no existencia general. Esta vida, señores míos, es demasiado corta para nuestra alma. Prueba es que todos, del más bajo al más alto, del más incapaz al más digno, se cansan de cualquier cosa, menos de vivir; y que nadie alcanza su meta, la meta que había salido a buscar con tantas ansias. Porque por mucho que uno ande feliz por su camino, igual termina cayendo –y a veces cuando ya está frente a la esperada meta– en una fosa que sabe dios quién le habrá cavado, y ya no cuenta más.

¡No contar más! ¡YO! ¡Yo que soy todo para mí, porque todo lo que conozco lo conozco por mí! Es lo que profiere todo el que se siente. Y cruza esta vida a grandes pasos, preparándose para el camino infinito del otro lado. Pero claro, cada uno a su medida. Uno sale al mejor ritmo del caminante, pero el otro tiene puestas las botas de siete leguas, lo adelanta, y dos pasos suyos equivalen a todo un día de viaje del otro. De cualquier manera, este viajero hormiguita seguirá siendo nuestro amigo y compañero cuando miremos llenos de admiración y respeto los pasos gigantes del otro,

Presentemos entonces en una nueva versión castellana⁶ el homenaje que Goethe le dedicó a Shakespeare.

UWE SCHOOR

cuando sigamos sus huellas, cuando midamos sus pasos con los nuestros.

¡A viajar, señores míos! Contemplar una sola de esas huellas nos llena el alma de más ardor y grandeza que quedarnos mirando como bobos los cien ciempiés de un cortejo real.

Honramos hoy la memoria del mayor de los caminantes, y haciéndolo nos estamos honrando a nosotros mismos. Los méritos que sabemos apreciar están en germen en nosotros.

No esperen que escriba mucho y ordenado, la tranquilidad de ánimo no es traje de fiesta; y por ahora tampoco he pensado mucho sobre Shakespeare; intuir, como mucho sentir, eso es lo máximo que pude lograr hasta ahora. Ya con la primera página que leí de él me entregué de por vida; y cuando terminé la primera pieza, quedé como un ciego de nacimiento al que una mano milagrosa le regala la vista en un instante. Me di cuenta, sentí con toda el alma que mi existencia se había ampliado una infinitud. Todo era nuevo para mí, desconocido, y esa luz a la que no estaba acostumbrado me hacía doler los ojos. De a poco fui aprendiendo a ver y todavía sigo sin

⁶ El texto en alemán, “Zum Shakespearstag”, está tomado de Müller, P. 1978: 3-6.

tiendo con el alma –eso tengo que agradecérselo a mi genio receptivo– cuánto gané.

No dudé ni un instante en renunciar al teatro de reglas. La unidad de lugar me parecía que daba tanto miedo como una cárcel, las unidades de acción y de tiempo me parecían pesadas cadenas de la imaginación. Me lancé de un salto al aire libre y recién entonces sentí que tenía pies y manos. Y ahora que veía cuánto mal me habían hecho los señores de las reglas en su agujero, cuántas almas libres seguían encorvadas ahí adentro, me habría reventado el corazón si no les hubiera lanzado el guante y no tratara todos los días de tirarles abajo las torres.

El teatro griego que los franceses decidieron imitar es un teatro que para adentro y para afuera está hecho de tal modo que sería más fácil para un marqués emular a Alcibiades que para Corneille seguir a Sófocles.

Primero un intermezzo del culto, después seriamente política, la tragedia le mostraba al pueblo diversas gestas de los padres, con la pura candidez de la perfección, despertaba sensaciones íntegras y grandes en las almas, porque ella misma era íntegra, y grande.

¡Y en qué almas!

¡Almas griegas! No puedo explicar qué significa, pero lo siento, y para ser breve me remito a Homero y a Sófocles y a Teócrito, que ellos me enseñaron a sentirlo.

Y ahí nomás agrego: Francesito, ¿para qué querés la armadura griega? Te queda muy grande. Es muy pesada para vos.

Y por eso también todas las tragedias francesas son una parodia de sí mismas.

Que son predecibles, y parecidas como zapatos, y a veces también aburridas, sobre todo

por lo general en el cuarto acto, son todas cosas que los señores saben por experiencia propia, lamentablemente, así que no voy a decir nada al respecto.

No sé quién fue en realidad el primero al que se le ocurrió llevar las acciones principales y de Estado al teatro; ahí tiene el aficionado oportunidad de escribir un tratado crítico. Dudo que le corresponda a Shakespeare el honor del invento; alcanza con que haya llevado este modo a un grado que sigue pareciendo el supremo, ya que son tan pocos los ojos que llegan hasta ahí arriba y por lo tanto no es fácil esperar que alguien pueda captarlo en su totalidad y menos superarlo. Shakespeare, amigo mío, si estuvieras todavía entre nosotros yo no podría vivir en ninguna otra parte que no fuera con vos. Cuánto gusto me daría hacer el papel secundario de un Pílades si vos fueras Orestes, mucho más que la figura venerada de un sumo sacerdote del templo de Delfos.

Voy a dejar acá, señores míos, y sigo mañana, porque estoy escribiendo en un tono que para ustedes quizás no sea tan edificante como me sale de corazón.

El teatro de Shakespeare es un bello titiri-mundi de rarezas donde la historia del mundo pasa borboteando ante nuestros ojos por el hilo invisible del tiempo. Sus planes, para decirlo sencillamente, no son planes, pero sus piezas giran todas alrededor del punto secreto (que ningún filósofo ha visto y definido todavía) donde lo peculiar de nuestro yo, la pretendida libertad de nuestra voluntad, choca con la marcha necesaria del todo. El gusto corrompido, sin embargo, nos nubla de tal manera la vista que estamos necesitando casi una nueva creación para desprendernos de esas tinieblas.

En este asunto, como en varios, todos los franceses y los alemanes contagiados, incluido Wieland, no han quedado muy bien parados. Voltaire, que siempre hizo un culto de vituperar todas las majestades, resultó ser también en esto un auténtico Tersites. Si yo fuera Ulises, con el cetro le haría doblar la espalda de dolor.

La mayoría de estos señores, además, se escandalizan especialmente con sus personajes.

Y yo digo: ¡Naturaleza!, ¡naturaleza! Dónde hay más naturaleza que en las criaturas de Shakespeare.

Y ahí se me vienen todos encima.

¡Déjenme respirar, que quiero hablar!

Shakespeare compitió con Prometeo, le copió rasgo a rasgo sus criaturas, sólo que *en tamaño colosal*; y esa es la razón por la que no reconocemos a nuestros hermanos; y luego les dio vida a todos con el hálito de su espíritu, él habla desde todos ellos y nosotros les reconocemos el parentesco.

Y qué se va a atrever nuestro siglo a juzgar de la naturaleza. De dónde quieren que la conozcamos, nosotros, que desde la juventud sentimos en nosotros y vemos en los demás todo atadito y decoradito. Muchas veces me avergüenzo ante Shakespeare porque suele pasar que a primera vista pienso: yo eso lo hubiera hecho de otra manera. Pero después me doy cuenta de que soy un pobre pecador, que la naturaleza profetiza a través de Shakespeare y que mis criaturas son pompas de jabón, infladas por quimeras novelescas.

Y para terminar, aunque ni siquiera había empezado.

Lo que nobles filósofos han dicho del mundo vale también para Shakespeare: lo que

llamamos el mal no es más que la otra cara del bien, que forma parte de su existencia y tiene su lugar en el todo con la misma necesidad con que la zona tórrida tiene que arder y Laponia congelarse para que haya una zona templada.

Él nos lleva a recorrer el mundo, pero nosotros, criaturas mimadas e inexpertas, con cada langostita extraña que aparece nos ponemos a gritar: ¡Ay Dios mío, nos quiere comer!

¡Arriba, señores míos! Sáquenme a trompetazos todas las almas nobles del elíseo del “buen gusto”, donde somnolientas, envueltas en el crepúsculo aburrido, son a medias, tienen pasiones en el corazón sin tuétano en los huesos; y porque no están tan cansadas como para dormirse, pero son demasiado haraganas para actuar, pasan su simulacro de vida vagando y bostezando entre mirtos y matas de laurel.

TRADUCCIÓN DE GRISELDA MÁRSICO

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Leer a Shakespeare, traducir a Shakespeare

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Buscando escapar a la consabida disputa normativa –y su inevitable, craso corolario, el empezar a afeiar las traducciones de los demás al tiempo que se destacan las virtudes de las propias– este texto intenta pensar la traducción de Shakespeare en el marco de la lectura de Shakespeare. Entre otras cosas, leer a Shakespeare es ingresar a un club internacional, con una prosapia de 400 años. Es fantástico discutir con Nietzsche, con Tolstoi. ¿Pero acerca de qué podemos discutir? Acerca de Shakespeare, por supuesto. Revisando algunas lecturas de Shakespeare en los siglos XVIII y XIX, y aun los desafíos que plantea a nuestra propia noción de verosimilitud, empezamos a descubrir que el genio de Shakespeare se emplea a fondo en una suprema sabiduría verbal, no en la creación de “motivos” o de personajes histórica, lógica o psicológicamente congruentes. Si uno es tan pretensioso o inconsciente que decide traducir a Shakespeare, y si un editor es tan loco como para comprar esa traducción, no queda otro remedio que tratar de emular al genio, o sea, tratar de hacer sobre la lengua propia operaciones de algún modo semejantes a la que hizo el genio. Será un fracaso, seguro, pero quizás un fracaso que valió la pena.

A la salida de una reunión del Club de Traductores en la que Patricia Willson expuso brillantemente sobre la presencia de asuntos ligados a la traducción en el monumental volumen de memorias de Biyo sobre Borges, se comentó que, en la reunión anterior, había habido gran participa-

ción y un poco de revuelo en torno a una exposición de Pablo Anadón. Cuando le contaron algo de lo allí discutido, Patricia resaltó que, efectivamente, lo que despierta generalmente más pasión e interés son las discusiones sobre cómo hay que traducir. En recuerdo de aquel comentario, que en mi memoria ha ido

ganando en filo e ironía, quisiera escapar el bulto a la consabida disputa normativa y su inevitable, craso corolario: el empezar a afear las traducciones de los demás al tiempo que se destacan las virtudes de las propias. Una posible línea de fuga sería pensar la *traducción de Shakespeare* en el marco de la *lectura de Shakespeare*.

En el prefacio a los diversos volúmenes de la colección *Shakespeare por Escritores*, dirigida por Marcelo Cohen y publicada por la editorial Norma entre 2000 y 2003, Cohen escribe: “Cada generación necesita volver a traducir a los clásicos”. Bien, si pensamos la traducción como una forma especial de la lectura, podríamos extender el concepto: cada generación necesita volver a *leer* a los clásicos. Las notas que siguen quisieran ser, además del testimonio de un traductor y lector apasionado, un mosaico no sistemático, pero ojalá incitante, de confrontaciones con otras lecturas de hoy y de ayer.

¿Por qué cada generación necesita volver a los clásicos? El motivo tal vez esté en la propia definición de lo que los clásicos son: un selecto grupo de obras que una cultura se ha puesto de acuerdo en considerar como los nudos que atan su experiencia o, si se prefiere, los núcleos en que la experiencia de una cultura condensa su sentido, se torna agudamente significativa. Son clásicos, justamente, porque volvemos a visitarlos, y volvemos a visitarlos por dos razones: porque de esas visitas siempre nos traemos algo que ilumina nuestro presente y porque, al retornar a donde tantos otros antes que nosotros han viajado, establecemos una suerte de comunidad, de diálogo y también, a veces, de disenso con

muchas generaciones de hombres y mujeres de talento con las cuales esta es una de las pocas experiencias que podemos compartir.

Entre otras cosas, leer a Shakespeare es ingresar a un club internacional, con una prosapia de 400 años. Es fantástico discutir con Nietzsche, con Voltaire. ¿Pero acerca de qué podemos discutir? Acerca de Shakespeare, por supuesto. A Tolstoi, por ejemplo, le parecía “salvaje, inmoral, vulgar e insensato”. No deja de ser interesante, no deja de ser iluminador sobre el propio Tolstoi: ¿cuántas veces no hemos deseado que él mismo fuera un poco más salvaje, que dejara de jugar al predicador de una vida piadosa y justa, y se concentrara en el modo en que unos caballos corren su carrera hacia la mitad de *Anna Karenina*? Voltaire, por su parte, compara desfavorablemente a Shakespeare con Corneille y destaca que sus romanos, hablando como parroquianos de una taberna inglesa, son por completo inverosímiles. Ajá: ¿y los griegos de Corneille, cómo qué otra cosa hablan sino como griegos de Corneille? Es lógico que a Voltaire el modo en que estos griegos hablaban en alejandrinos franceses le pareciera más natural que los ásperos romanos de Shakespeare, a condición de que por “natural” entendamos “próximo”, que por “verosímil” entendamos “a la medida de los propios prejuicios”.

En cualquier caso, está claro que Shakespeare desafía tan completamente nuestra noción de verosimilitud, o más, de lo que desafía la de Voltaire. Los celos de Otelo aparecen tan súbitamente como los del rey de Sicilia en *Cuento de Invierno*; en los dos casos, tenemos que creer en ellos un poco a la fuerza, porque el autor los pone allí con unos colores

tan subidos y unas consecuencias tan irreversibles que no queda otra que aceptar que allí están; persiste, empero, al menos para mí, por un largo rato la sensación de un definido *tour de force*. Lo mismo pasa con el aparentemente absurdo comportamiento de Harry Monmouth, el joven príncipe Hal de *Enrique IV*. Cuando aparece, al comienzo de *Enrique IV, Primera Parte*, y enuncia su propósito:

Seré tan malo que del mal un arte haré
y he de enmendarme cuando ya nadie lo espere,

uno no puede dejar de preguntarse por qué quiere ser tan malo. Y si eso es lo que le plantea, ¿por qué enmendarse después? El hecho es que esto que ha anunciado es exactamente lo que hace: participa en diversas fechorías —no tan, tan malvadas; de bastante poca monta, a decir verdad— y vagabundeá por las tabernas, para desesperación de su padre el Rey, siguiendo la pista de su mentor en la vida disipada, el gordo Sir John Falstaff. Su compañía son entonces ladrones, borrachos y prostitutas baratas, hasta que la guerra lo pone frente a la posibilidad de desempeñar un papel heroico. Más tarde, a la hora de su coronación, sobre el fin de *Enrique IV, Segunda parte*, cree llegada la hora de “enmendarse”: se reconcilia con los representantes de la justicia que antes había humillado, desconoce, en una escena terrible y memorable, a Falstaff (“No te conozco, viejo. Mejor, reza. / ¡Qué mal sientan las canas a un bufón!”) y emprende una guerra contra Francia que ha de cubrirlo de gloria. Así, lo que empezó como una torsión psicológicamente inverosímil, va tomando cierta lógica. Mientras no tuvo función en el Estado,

se portó como un joven calavera; cuando la tuvo, asumió el papel para el cual su cuna, su educación y las expectativas del reino entero lo habían destinado. ¿No es acaso, hasta donde lo conocemos, parecida la carrera del Julio César “histórico”, tal como los primeros historiadores romanos nos lo cuentan? ¿Y no es parecido, también, al “sentar cabeza” de cualquier joven aristócrata a la hora de administrar su fortuna y su prestigio? Quizás lo raro acá sea lo deliberado del proceso de hundirse en el mal y enmendarse, el hecho de que esas dos conductas formen parte de un propósito, y las pocas y poco convincentes explicaciones que se nos dan acerca de ese propósito. Cuando el príncipe enuncia su deseo de conocer los bajos fondos para luego evitarlos mejor, no podemos evitar preguntarnos si Shakespeare no estará zurciendo un poco arbitrariamente a su personaje, con los primeros motivos que se le ocurrieron, tal vez.

Empero, cuando caemos en este y otros “dilemas”, contamos poco con las necesidades, público y metas del escritor del 1600, y demasiado con nuestra propia formación de lectores. Lo que nos parece “psicológicamente inverosímil” nos lo parece porque estamos demasiado acostumbrados, por la novela realista y por el cine, a la presencia, contundente y sutil a la vez, de motivos para las conductas, “motivos” que a menudo no son otra cosa que la exposición de un puñado de deseos y condicionamientos más o menos simples o complejos, unívocos o contradictorios, atribuidos a los personajes, ligados a su historia y sembrados cuidadosa o torpemente en la trama por el autor. Estos no son los motores de la acción en los poemas homéricos, donde los

dioses se la pasan metiendo la cuchara; tampoco son los motores de la tragedia clásica, ni de las farsas medievales, ni de la *Commedia dell'Arte*, ni de ninguna otra forma o género hasta la novela realista del siglo XIX. Así, no hay precedente para los celos de Otelo, como no lo hay para el enamoramiento de Julieta y Romeo: estos sentimientos se desencadenan sin más, a la primera ocurrencia o a primera vista, y a partir de allí hay que atenerse a las consecuencias. Borges recuerda en varios textos que Coleridge dijo que las obras de arte nos reclaman una suspensión momentánea de la incredulidad; bien, Shakespeare reclama esta suspensión de un modo sin duda más abrupto para nosotros que la novela moderna. En compensación, si le otorgamos nuestra credulidad, nos hace saltar de la silla más que nadie antes o después.

En *Cuento de Inviero*, apenas transcurridas un par de páginas de lectura o cinco minutos de representación, estamos ante lo que a Tolstoi le debe haber parecido suficiente para tildar a Shakespeare de insensato: Leontes, rey de Sicilia, le pide encarecidamente a su esposa que convenza al rey de Bohemia de que prolongue unos días la visita que está haciendo a la isla; la reina hace lo que le piden ante nuestra vista con palabras corteses (más precisamente, con elaboradas figuras de retórica cortesana) y, al instante, a Leontes, de quien no se nos había informado ni que estuviera loco ni que tuviera motivos de desconfianza para con su esposa, se le antoja que la reina lo engaña con el monarca de Bohemia. Más allá de lo extemporáneo e infundado de los celos de Leontes, que son evidentes para los espectadores, su discurso es convincente-

mente amargo: de su mal, dice que no hay médico para él; no es cuestión de médicos, sino del cielo:

Es el influjo de un planeta obsceno
que hace caer su azote
sobre las gentes en que predomina.

De su lecho, dice:

Mis sábanas: impolutas son sueño,
mancilladas se tornan campo
de ortigas y agujones.

Y de sus congéneres, a quienes supone tan pasibles de ser engañados como él mismo:

Más de un hombre
existe en este instante, ahora mismo
mientras estoy hablando, que toma confiado
el brazo de su esposa y no imagina
que en su ausencia le abrieron las compuertas
y ha pescado en su estanque su vecino,
el vecino de al lado, Don Sonrisa.

¡Don Sonrisa! (en inglés, *Sir Smile*). Parece difícil un epíteto que plasme mejor la amargura del engañado: ¿qué más amargo que el hecho de que el dolor propio se conjugue con la alegría, entre satisficha e hipócrita, del vecino? Por otra parte, la repetición de la palabra “vecino” en dos versos sucesivos (“his neighbor”, “his next neighbor”) conlleva, mejor que mil explicaciones, el pasmo y el horror de lo familiar que, acercándose más y más, se ha tornado enemigo. Repetición que hace juego con la otra, unos versos más arriba, entre “en este instante”, “ahora mismo”,

“mientras estoy hablando”; qué distintos serían estos versos si no fuera por esa urgencia de precisar, con tres cercos sucesivos, el ámbito del presente: no se habla del hombre en general, de un mal eterno, etcétera, sino de algo que pasa, y pasa de verdad, y pasa ahora mismo a muchos hombres reales en este mismo instante (la glosa está condenada a utilizar la repetición Shakespeareana, porque sin esa forma nada queda del “contenido”).

El genio de Shakespeare se emplea a fondo en esta suprema sabiduría verbal, no en la creación de “motivos”. Le preocupan tan poco que, a menudo, cambian según la ocasión, y los personajes parecen más o menos nobles, más o menos valientes, o groseros, o envidiosos, o sabios, en distintas escenas de una obra (ni qué hablar en las secuencias como los tres *Enrique VI*). Polonio, el padre de Ofelia, que en casi todo momento es un tipo pomposo y vacuo, no lo es cuando le da consejos a su hijo; Macbeth pasa, de escena en escena, de ser un soldado valiente y fiel a ser un criminal bastante miedoso y, poco después, casi sin solución de continuidad, el hombre que apura con valor su cáliz hasta las heces, y todo esto hablando tan impiadosa y frontalmente de sus crímenes, que resulta, otra vez a nuestra mentalidad, inverosímil, absurdo casi, que un hombre en tales circunstancias no se engañe siquiera un poco, moderando con explicaciones lo innoble de sus actos. Esto por no hablar del gran inconsiguiente, Hamlet, saltando de la decisión a la melancolía sin transiciones.

Ante estos casos, se podría caer en la tentación de coincidir con los que piensan que Shakespeare era desprolijo en el diseño de los personajes (ya Ben Jonson, su contemporá-

neo, se lo señala ocupándose de aclarar que lo hace sin desmedro de su amor y admiración). Bien, permítaseme decir que esa tentación es un error, que fijarse en la cuestión de las incongruencias cierra el paso a una lectura más profunda. Quisiera considerar este asunto con algo de detalle y, a propósito de un personaje menor, el conde de Northumberland, rebelde alzado contra Enrique IV. Al comienzo de *Enrique IV. Segunda parte*, Northumberland se entera de que su hijo, Hotspur, a quien él ha empujado a la revuelta y luego abandonado con el pretexto de que estaba enfermo, ha sido derrotado y muerto. En ese mismo momento, nos enteramos nosotros de que Northumberland ha mentido, que no estaba enfermo en absoluto y, difícilmente, puede ser más patético su rol, tocado como está con un bonete de dormir y munido de unas muletas que no necesita. Entonces, al enterarse de la muerte de su hijo, tira su muleta y arranca:

¡Fuera esta muleta de marica!
Un escamoso guantelete de juntas de acero
cubrirá esta mano.

[Arroja también el gorro de dormir]
¡Y tú también, enferma cofia!
Eres defensa demasiado delicada
para una testa que unos príncipes cebados
de victoria quisieran ver rodar.
¡Ceñid con hierro mi frente, que venga
La hora más cruel que el tiempo y el rencor
osen traer para que juzgue ceñuda
al rabioso Northumberland! ¡Que el cielo
bese la tierra, que Natura no contenga
ya las olas salvajes! ¡Muera el orden
y no sea ya el mundo el escenario
de un combate alargado, titubeante!

¡Que en todo pecho impere el alma de Caín
y al lanzarse cada cual a su carrera sangrienta
se acabe de una vez esta obra torpe
y sea la noche quien entierre a los muertos!

Es bastante incongruente y René Weis, editor de la obra en la colección *The Oxford Shakespeare*, en comparación con *Henry IV, Part Two*, edición de René Weis (1988), no se olvida de señalarlo, este agrio discurso sobre el horrible desorden del mundo en boca de un rebelde alzado contra el rey, y bastante hipócrita, siniestra, la apelación a las armas que no usó cuando traicionó a su hijo. Y sin embargo, ¿quién podría discutir la sublimidad, la belleza, de estos versos? Antes de reprochar a Shakespeare una incongruencia más, la de hacer tan bello un discurso tan falaz, o de excusarlo con la fácil explicación de que lo hace así porque no puede con su genio, antes, quiero decir, de juzgar, tomémonos un instante para tomar nota de un hecho: la belleza no termina de sufrir al estar al servicio de una mentira y la mendacidad, a su vez, no se torna menos monstruosa. Pasa como con los pajarracos del grabador francés Grandville, vestidos de banqueros y robando a los miserables su comida: John Berger ha hecho notar que su compostura y sus vestidos elaborados los vuelven más atroces. Ciertamente, estos duques son más pájaros de cuentas que los simples embusteros y tramposos de taberna con los que el príncipe Hal ha andado dando vueltas por ahí.

Así, las incongruencias, insensateces, salvajadas, etcétera, de Shakespeare no son, creanlo o no Tolstoi y Voltaire, que no lo querían, expresiones de un espíritu inferior; ni

tampoco son máculas en la piel de un genio, como creía Ben Jonson, que sí lo quería. Por el contrario, son vías regias hacia lo central de su genio porque –y una vasta literatura crítica, especialmente del siglo xx, lo atestigua– las “incongruencias” y ambigüedades de personajes como Macbeth o Hamlet o Lear abren paso a las más ricas interpretaciones de sus obras. ¿Por qué Hamlet no actúa decididamente contra Claudio, el asesino de su padre? Es una pregunta que ha desvelado a generaciones. ¿No está seguro de si lo que ha escuchado decir al espectro de su padre es algo más que el fruto de su imaginación? ¿No encuentra la medida de su venganza, o es la enormidad de la pena o lo infinito de su odio lo que lo detiene? ¿Está demasiado convencido de su fuerza, pero en tanto no la ejerza, en tanto el deseo de venganza no sea agotado por su consumación? ¿Es esta una condición de todo odio, y aún de todo amor, o la impotencia de un Edipo que no puede matar a su padre y tomar a su madre porque alguien se le ha adelantado? Cuando Claudio y la reina lo acusan injusta y cínicamente de estar instalado en su dolor, tal vez aciertan; efectivamente, está instalado en el dolor y el odio con una fuerza (un goce) infinitos. Oscuramente, con horror lo entendemos. El enigma de Hamlet es un enigma para la razón, no para el entendimiento. La razón debe crecer para tratar de abarcarlo, para acercarse a él, sin terminar de conseguirlo. Llega un momento en que las interpretaciones parecen nuevos, sucesivos fantasmas de una pesadilla porque, como Joyce le hace decir a Stephen en *Ulysses*, *Hamlet* es una historia de aparecidos, del mismo modo que *Macbeth* es una de brujas. Y

de la pesadilla de aparecidos que es Hamlet, la inmovilidad es el rasgo más pesadillesco, como un sueño en que uno intenta caminar sin lograrlo porque percibe el peso, la sensación física del cuerpo acostado, sin terminar de comprender que uno está acostado. Esta conciencia parcial, imperfecta del cuerpo me parece congruente (otra vez la palabreja) con una historia de aparecidos, una historia de desesperado terror. Ahora bien, como el miedo no lo pueden tener los muertos, sino los vivos, acá el asunto no es lo fantasmal de los fantasmas, sino lo fantasmal de uno que vive, transformado él mismo en una sombra, riéndose cada tanto del mundo como único entretenimiento. Esto es para mí Hamlet, y no necesito decidirme por una explicación de la inmovilidad; todas me sirven, ninguna me sirve, son, como dije, nuevos fantasmas que obsesionan al inmóvil pensativo.

Esta imagen final de Hamlet, esta imagen unitaria de parálisis pesadillesca en medio de una acción por momentos frenética, me hace recordar la sintética imagen que Bradley formuló a propósito de *Macbeth* y que Borges glosa a partir de su obra *Shakespearian Tragedy* de 1904: “La oscuridad domina *Macbeth*, casi la negrura: la tiniebla rayada de brusco fuego, la obsesión de la sangre”. Uno podría buscar el color, la imagen final de cada obra de Shakespeare: el *Sueño de una Noche de Verano* verdinegro como el reino de los duendes y las hadas; *La Tempestad* desenvolviéndose con la gracia de un baile de corte, con sus entradas y salidas siempre ajustadas a los propósitos del director de la danza, Próspero; *Ricardo III* hundiéndose más y más en el abismo de su desventura, de su contrahechura. El genio de

Shakespeare está siempre más allá y más acá de la lógica de los personajes, en el desaforado esplendor verbal y la extraordinaria unidad e intensidad de cada obra. Está claro entonces por qué ofrece grandes oportunidades al director que decide la puesta en escena: cada obra es un objeto tan brutalmente artístico, tan centrado en sí mismo y libre de referencias y pintoresquismo, que necesariamente el director tiene que pensar qué hacer con ese objeto, y el resultado de su pensamiento tiene que notarse. Piénsese, por ejemplo, en el acierto de Kenneth Branagh cuando traspone *Hamlet* a una corte de principios del siglo xx: su gran palacio estilo *fin de siècle*, pretensioso y ecléctico, y el convencionalismo de la etiqueta cubriendo lo que se adivina como un mundo lleno de negocios e intereses, de avidez burguesa hacen un escenario maravilloso para el inquieto y a la vez impotente Hamlet; del mismo modo, Roberto Villanueva puso, en Granada hacia 1992, *La Tempestad* con un Calibán joven y bello, una decisión audaz que se adivina como el fruto de una lectura delicada; Fiona Shaw, por su parte, montó en Londres con su compañía (y luego filmó) un *Ricardo II* donde el desgraciado Ricardo era ella misma y algunos de los duques y condes eran negros: aturde y fascina ver el soberbio, casi histérico rey de los primeros actos hecho por una mujer y también es interesante que sea mujer el personaje vulnerable y a la vez superior en que Ricardo se transforma casi de un golpe cuando pierde su corona, y tanto cuando besa a Gante como cuando abraza a Bolingbroke, que este abrazo sea dado por una mujer carga sexualmente, o bien, revela la carga sexual de su ambigua relación con sus víctimas y sus

victimarios, con el poder tal vez. Los duques negros, por su parte, o bien son príncipes del África que llevan la obra a un pasado ancestral, digamos a los tiempos de Salomón y la Reina de Saba, o son trasunto de la sociedad multirracial inglesa del presente, arrancando la representación a cualquier falso naturalismo. El naturalismo “histórico”, por cierto, es más posible de quedar fuera de moda que una obra honesta, pero no chabacanamente, contemporánea (¿qué cosa es más ridículamente setentista que una película de cowboys o romanos de los años 70? Hasta el genio de Flaubert deviene un tanto *kitsch* cuando escribe *Salammbó*). Del mismo modo que cada lector o espectador se ve obligado a cubrir por sí mismo las explicaciones que Shakespeare no nos da, el director de talento hace que cada personaje, como este impactante Ricardo-mujer, encuentre su sitio sinfónico en el conjunto: luego, nadie le pide a los violines de la orquesta que expliquen sus razones, solo necesitamos que suenen como tienen que sonar en la pieza en que tocan.

Permítaseme volver a las dos partes de *Enrique IV*, las dos obras que traduje con Mirta Rosenberg y con las que conviví cuatro o cinco años (el último de ellos, para desesperación del editor). No solo es intrigante la mecánica de la “enmienda” del príncipe Hal, su transformación de calavera en estadista; sino que también el sentido moral de ese cambio es discutible. Cuando Hal era un “perdido” bebía en los *pubs*, montaba bromas y sorpresas para su gordo mentor, hablaba con gracia e ingenio, era el rey de una menesterosa corte que lo adoraba y no había matado a nadie (a lo más casi le saca una oreja de un mordisco a un

juez de lo más pesado); cuando se “enmienda”, traiciona a Falstaff, se reconcilia con los nobles, hace colgar a uno de sus antiguos amigos y lleva adelante una mortífera guerra contra Francia. Contando esta historia, Shakespeare ha creado a Falstaff, uno de sus personajes más amables y amados, el punto donde toda la hipocresía de su tiempo se hace patente, en él, que no teme ser quien es ni querer lo que quiere, ni pensar lo que piensa, ni decirlo; el pequeño noble de panza enorme, charlatán, cobarde alguna vez, valiente alguna otra, que termina quebrado como una rama frágil cuando el cariño del príncipe le falta. A la luz de la traición a esta especie de antihéroe *avant la lettre*, Hal aparece de pronto bajo otro aspecto, el de una conversión negativa, no de un adicto al “mal” a un “enmendado”, sino de un joven libre y lleno de gracia a un aristócrata sanguinario, desalmado y trámoso, como esos buitres con armadura que hemos visto sacándose los ojos en *Ricardo II* y todo a lo largo de las dos partes del *Enrique IV*. Es cierto que nada permite suponer que ni Shakespeare ni su público lo vieran así. De hecho, Hal, el Enrique V histórico de principios del siglo xv, era tenido, todavía un siglo y medio después, por un héroe nacional. Pero Shakespeare está demasiado ocupado en asombrar y divertir como para preocuparse en ser del todo coherente, incluso con su propio juicio. En suma, al no cargar sus obras con un exceso de coherencia histórica ni psicológica, pero sí con una poderosa, casi sobrehumana potencia dramática y poética, Shakespeare transmutó todo lo que tocó, desde oscuros episodios de la historia de Inglaterra hasta leyendas celtas, olvidables folletines italianos o retratos de Suetonio, en

asuntos que siguen conmoviéndonos, cuando poco importa ya quién derrocó a quién o si era justo o no que a este o a aquel lo privaran de su corona o su cabeza.

Deliberadamente, he estado hablando más de Shakespeare que de traducir a Shakespeare. Devolvamos un poco el foco a la traducción. Auden dice una cosa muy aguda: “Los malos lectores son como los malos traductores: glosan cuando tienen que ser literales y son literales cuando tendrían que glosar”. Con ello, está mostrando que lo que hay que hacer es acertar, cada vez. No hay una fórmula fija o pura. Si uno se pone a buscar una fórmula, se encuentra con que ninguna sirve, con que no se puede hacer nada. Si uno se empieza a decir todas las cosas que no tiene que hacer, llega a un punto muerto. Por ejemplo, no tendría sentido traducir el inglés de Shakespeare al español del siglo XVI. ¿Lo vamos a traducir como si fuéramos clones deformes de Lope de Vega? Sería lo más apropiado, desde el punto de vista de la recreación histórica, y al mismo tiempo sería un disparate completo. En segundo lugar, ¿cabe traducir a Shakespeare a un español “general”, no afincado en ningún lugar de la tierra? Bueno, esta pregunta se contesta por sí sola: el “español en general” no existe, como no existe la literatura en general (yo tenía un amigo que cuando escuchaba un poema lleno de palabras altisonantes o insípidas decía, como el peor insulto posible, “esto es poesía en general”).

¿Se podría traducir a Shakespeare como si estuviera hablando hoy, en el bar de la esquina? El inglés de Falstaff, tal como Shakespeare lo hace hablar, tiene un sabor popular, pero desde luego no se trata de un inglés “co-

loquial”: la densidad de retruécanos, *calembours*, alusiones históricas, antiguas y contemporáneas, míticas y bíblicas, las ironías, los cambios de humor y de tono, lo alejan de cualquier lengua “real” y descartan toda pretensión mimética. No solo nadie podría hablar así hoy, es muy difícil que ningún tipo común haya hablado *nunca* así. Sí, la ubicación de esa parla en boca de un hidalgo viejo, panzón y cínico, frequentador tanto de la corte como del burdel, tiene un viso de verosimilitud. Pero este no es un hidalgo cualquiera, es Falstaff, es una creación de las más geniales que la literatura nos haya dado y es una creación modelada justamente —en rigor, exclusivamente— por ese habla de la que Shakespeare lo dota. O sea, es un personaje extraordinario, genial porque su habla es una creación genial que Shakespeare se inventa de pe a pa, como solo él es capaz de inventársela. Si uno es tan pretencioso o inconsciente que decide traducir a Shakespeare y si un editor es tan loco como para comprar esa traducción, no queda otro remedio que tratar de emular al genio, o sea, tratar de hacer sobre la lengua propia una operación semejante a la que hizo el genio, tensando la lengua propia para que corcovee como corcovea el inglés en boca de Falstaff, mezclando lo culto y lo anticuado, lo irónico y burlón y brutal del mejor modo que uno pueda. Será un fracaso, seguro, pero quizás un fracaso que valió la pena.

En cualquier caso, creo que operaciones de “mezcla” como las que describí no son más que la consecuencia lógica del fantástico juego de escondidas y de espejos que juegan las propias lenguas en la traducción o, al menos, en las traducciones de las que yo puedo hablar,

o sea, del latín, las lenguas romances y el inglés, porque apenas se empieza a traducir, las palabras de los diversos idiomas empiezan a reflejarse unas en otras. Lo que es anticuado en una lengua es moderno en otra; lo que es popular en una lengua en otra es un cultismo; los sentidos pasan de un lado a otro por ese puente que es la etimología; las épocas y niveles de lengua se superponen y confunden revelando su arbitrariedad. Véase, por ejemplo, qué distinto derrotero tomó el *picare* latino al llegar a la palabra *pegar* en portugués, con su sentido tan distinto de los dos (adherir y golpear) que tiene en español. Los ejemplos se pueden multiplicar al infinito y los falsos amigos a menudo son la divertida manifestación de esta deriva de las lenguas. Leer del catalán o el portugués es, para el hispanoparlante medianamente culto, una excursión fascinante por otros avatares, antiguos, dialectales, hipermodernos o puramente conjecturales de la propia lengua. Nunca dejará de divertirme que *lavoro* sea una palabra hecha y derecha en italiano, mientras que nuestro “laburo” rioplatense arrastra un sabor incorrecto y dialectal que viene a su vez a resignificar el culto (y anticuado) “laborar”. Nadie lo ha dicho mejor que Elías Canetti (2006): “Los idiomas encuentran su fuente de eterna juventud unos en otros”

Repasando estas notas me doy cuenta de que quizás solo haya traducido para poder leer y que solo he leído bien lo que leí en

castellano o lo que traduje al castellano, que probablemente haya volcado mis propias obsesiones como escritor en cada cosa que leí o traduje y que, finalmente, quizás haya caído en algún momento en la “maldición Willson”, o sea, tal vez haya permitido que mis elucubraciones sobre la traducción de Shakespeare se deslizaran a una preceptiva. Me disculpo: no era, de veras, mi intención. También me disculpo de haber lanzado alguna que otra pulla contra los detractores del Bardo: esto resulta un poco demasiado fácil hoy cuando la lucha entre el neoclasicismo y el romanticismo se ha dirimido a favor de una forma particularmente desleída y casi cretina de este último, por lo cual Shakespeare no tiene ya enemigos. Tal vez sea una lástima: Como dice Robert Graves: “Lo curioso con Shakespeare es que es muy bueno, a pesar de todos los idiotas que dicen que lo es”.

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Daniel Samoilovich ha publicado once libros de poemas; los más recientes son *Las Encantadas*, (Tusquets, Barcelona, 2003), *Driven by the wind and drenched to the bone* (edición bilingüe, con traducciones de Andrew Graham-Yooll, Shoestring, Londres, 2007) y *Molestando a los demonios* (Pre-textos, Madrid-

Valencia, 2009). Ha traducido, entre otros, a Shakespeare (*Enrique IV*, Primera y segunda parte, en colaboración con Mirta Rosenberg, para la colección *Shakespeare por escritores*, dirigida por Marcelo Cohen para la editorial Norma, publicadas en Barcelona, 2000 y Bogotá, 2003 respectivamente). Ha dado conferencias y dirigido seminarios sobre poesía y poética en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas, la Residencia de Estudiantes de Madrid y las universidades de Rosario, Nacional de Colombia, Mérida (Venezuela) y Princeton (Estados Unidos).

Traducir el verso de Shakespeare

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Toda la obra poética y unas tres cuartas partes de la obra dramática de Shakespeare están escritas en verso. ¿Qué función cumple el verso allí? ¿Cómo traducirlo? Distintas opciones; ventajas y desventajas de cada una.

Aclaraciones preliminares

1º) Digo “obra dramática” o “teatro” y “obra poética” o “poesía” por simplificación. Bien podría calificarse al teatro de Shakespeare, como al de Sofocles o el de Racine, de “poesía dramática”, pero entonces no habría un calificativo

adecuado para abarcar el resto de su producción poética: “poesía lírica” puede aplicarse a los Sonetos y a algunos otros poemas, pero no a *La violación de Lucrecia* y *Venus y Adonis*, que, aunque tengan pasajes o tintes líricos, son más afines a la épica, según la entendían poetas griegos del período helenístico como Calímaco.

2º) Algo que suelo decir en mis talleres de traducción. Una pintura abstracta puede ser buena o mala más allá de que el artista sepa o no dibujar un rostro o una mano, pero el artista que sabe dibujar un rostro o una mano tiene más posibilidades de elección incluso al pintar abstracto. Saber métrica inglesa (o de la lengua original que sea) y castellana no garantiza que uno vaya a hacer una buena traducción de poesía o teatro en verso. Una traducción en verso libre o “prosa cortada” puede ser excelente y una traducción en verso medido ser muy floja. Pero el que sabe algo de

métrica tendrá más posibilidades de elección al traducir.

3º) En estos planteos soy juez y parte. Por lo tanto, aunque no me creo dueño de la única verdad y paso revista a distintas alternativas con cierta amplitud, mis convicciones tiñen lo que digo. Pásenme por ese tamiz.

4º) Lo que voy a exponer, muy sintéticamente por razones de tiempo, está en buena parte desparramado en veinte introducciones que escribí a traducciones mías de Shakespeare (otras dos traducciones parcialmente mías tienen introducciones ajenas).

El verso en Shakespeare y la traducción

Toda la obra poética y unas tres cuartas partes de la obra dramática de Shakespeare están escritas en verso. Verso de metro fijo. Abrumadora mayoría de pentámetros yámbicos, con ocasionales versos yámbicos más extensos (hexámetros, también llamados alejandrinos) o más breves y otros tipos de metro en algunas canciones. Versos rimados en la poesía y mayormente blancos (sin rima) en el teatro. En el teatro el uso de la rima cumple funciones específicas; por ejemplo, la obra dentro de la obra en *Hamlet* va rimada para subrayar el artificio, para diferenciar teatro dentro del teatro de teatro a secas. La variación entre verso y prosa también cumple funciones específicas: *grossomodo*, verso para situaciones serias y personajes de alcurnia, prosa para situaciones cómicas y personajes plebeyos.

¿Qué hacemos con esto al traducir? Dejo de lado la salida fácil: la de no prestarle atención a esos aspectos, por ejemplo con la excusa de que

son convenciones de otra época. Esas convenciones tenían funciones específicas que producían sentido, como el de subrayar qué tipo de personaje hablaba o qué nivel de teatralidad estaba en juego. Por lo tanto, en mi opinión, una buena traducción no debería soslayarlas. Otra excusa fácil, a menudo hermana de la pereza, es argüir que la traducción no debería ceñirse al corsé de un metro fijo. El caso es que ese mismo corsé se lo puso el autor al escribir. ¿Por qué el traductor, representante del autor en otra lengua, no va a ponerse un corsé equivalente? Si mal no recuerdo, Paul Valéry, que en tiempos en que empezaba a cundir el verso libre seguía escribiendo con metro fijo y rima, respondía a quienes consideraban eso una cárcel diciendo que a él, por el contrario, tales parámetros le daban libertad.

Pues bien, las opciones ante el pentámetro de Shakespeare son: traducir en prosa, traducir en verso libre o traducir en verso de metro fijo. Dejo a un lado la prosa por lo que acabo de decir y paso a las otras opciones.

Traducción en verso libre

En poesía, desde fines del siglo XIX el verso libre fue desplazando progresivamente al de metro fijo, aunque nunca por completo (Yeats, Dylan Thomas, Montale, Pasolini, Ajmátova, Mastronardi, Borges y muchos más son célebres ejemplos de perduración de los metros fijos). En materia de teatro en castellano, después del Siglo de Oro español no conozco en verso, tal vez por ignorancia mía, nada orgánico de verdadero peso salvo el caso aislado de la obra dramática de García Lorca; fuera de lo suyo, sólo tengo vaga noticia de algunos ejemplos sueltos muy puntuales, como *El niño argentino* de Mauricio Kartún en nuestro país, que seguramente no será el único pero ciertamente está más del lado de las excepciones que del de la regla.

En ese contexto, no resulta llamativo que algunos opten por traducir el pentámetro yámbico de Shakespeare en verso libre castellano. Podría decirse que es una actualización del original, una traducción que lo acerca a las convenciones del presente. Con lo cual, podría decirse desde el punto de vista opuesto, una traducción así se aleja de convenciones constitutivas del original. Cuando se publica y se representa en castellano teatro de Lope de Vega, sigue utilizándose su texto original en verso (además rimado), al igual que en las ediciones y representaciones en inglés de su contemporáneo Shakespeare (para la representación se recortan o reordenan sus textos, pero no se los moderniza ni se les cambia palabras ni se le desarma la versificación).

De todas maneras, es autoevidente que una traducción en verso libre tiene mayor fle-

xibilidad para seguir de cerca al original. Si además el traductor es poeta o tiene buen entrenamiento del oído para atender al ritmo, el resultado ofrecerá mayores probabilidades de escapar al máximo riesgo que entraña el verso libre: el de que resulte “verso para el ojo”, evidente sobre la página pero imperceptible como tal en boca de actores sobre el escenario. Quienes hayan visto la película de Al Pacino *Looking for Richard*, conocida en Argentina como *En busca de Ricardo III*, tal vez recuerden la entrevista a Vanessa Redgrave, donde esta actriz de celebrada trayectoria shakespeariana destaca la importancia del ritmo yámbico en la dicción de los textos del Bardo. Una traducción en verso libre que merezca ser reconocida como verso incluso en voz alta no será, por consiguiente, tan flexible para seguir al original, porque, si bien no se impone restricciones métricas, se impone alguna restricción rítmica, más flexible pero restricción al fin.

De hecho, no sin cierta dosis de simplificación por cuestiones de tiempo, podríamos incluir aquí las combinaciones libres de metros fijos diversos, con variaciones entre el endecasílabo y el alejandrino y medidas intermedias, por ejemplo. Tales combinaciones constituyen una mezcla de libertad métrica con cierta base de patrones fijos. Por lo tanto, son algo más libres que el metro fijo único, pero su libertad está restringida por patrones rítmicos asociados a bases métricas. El riesgo de este tipo de opciones es algo similar al que corre el verso libre: el uso de bases métricas distintas puede diversificar en exceso el ritmo hasta el punto de hacerle perder perceptibilidad al oído. Eso podría suceder, por ejemplo,

en el caso de una mezcla de ritmos tan diversos como los de endecasílabos y alejandrinos con dodecasílabos.

Traducción con metro fijo

Si se opta por traducir los pentámetros yámbicos en versos castellanos de metro fijo, lo siguiente a decidir será en qué metro. El más elegido históricamente ha sido el endecasílabo. El alejandrino es otra opción más reciente (no recuerdo si alguien lo usó antes que yo para el teatro de Shakespeare). No conozco que se hayan empleado otras variantes posibles, como el dodecasílabo en hemistiquios hexasílabos, usado para temas graves antes de la adopción del endecasílabo italiano y que nunca desapareció del todo (“setenta balcones - hay en esta casa”), o como el verso de dieciséis sílabas en hemistiquios octosílabos, metro de escaso uso y perdido en el tiempo.

a) Endecasílabos

El endecasílabo es un metro de origen italiano trasladado por primera vez al castellano por el Marqués de Santillana en el siglo xv y aclimatado definitivamente en el siglo xvi por Boscán y sobre todo por Garcilaso, a partir de lo cual fue convirtiéndose en el verso canónico por excelencia del castellano para temas elevados. El teatro del Siglo de Oro lo empleó entonces para las situaciones serias, a veces mezclado con heptasílabos.

El pentámetro yámbico tiene el mismo origen pero es algo anterior: en el siglo xiv Chaucer tomó el endecasílabo italiano y le impuso el ritmo yámbico más propio del inglés. Pero sólo a partir del siglo xvi fue imponiéndose como verso canónico, único y sin rivales de fuste en esa lengua: al menos las tres cuartas partes de la poesía en lengua inglesa escrita desde Chaucer hasta 1970 se estimaba escrita en pentámetros yámbicos.

Hasta aquí, en teoría, no caben mayores dudas de que el endecasílabo sería el metro más equivalente al pentámetro yámbico: por origen, por época de desarrollo inicial y hasta cierto punto por “canonicidad”. De hecho, ha sido el más utilizado hasta ahora en traducciones de Shakespeare con metro fijo. Ahora veamos lo que sucede al pasar a la práctica.

Un ejemplo ilustrativo. Promedio de sílabas en los diez primeros versos de *Ricardo III* en traducción de Cristina Piña en verso libre: 14. Promedio de sílabas en los diez primeros versos de *Otelo* en traducción de Delia Pasini en verso libre: 14,7. Es decir, un pentámetro yámbico inglés traducido al castellano sin restricción métrica tiende a dar un verso de alrededor de catorce sílabas en promedio.

Invento un ejemplo concreto *ad hoc* con palabras inglesas breves de uso frecuente cuyos equivalentes castellanos son bastante más largos: *I find it in the nature of your heart*, “Lo encuentro en la naturaleza de tu corazón”; un pentámetro yámbico inglés de nueve palabras y diez sílabas da en traducción literal un “verso libre” castellano de ocho palabras y quince sílabas; la cantidad de palabras incluso disminuye, pero en la cantidad de sílabas se produce un aumento del ¡cincuenta por ciento!

Las traducciones de teatro de Shakespeare en endecasílabos se ven por lo tanto forzadas a agregar versos: hacen tres o cuatro versos de traducción por cada dos o tres del original.

Un ejemplo. El segundo parlamento del rey Lear al hacer su entrada en escena al comienzo de la obra homónima tiene en el original diecinueve versos yámbicos (dieciocho pentámetros y un trímetro final); en la traducción de Idea Vilariño en endecasílabos da treinta versos (veintiocho endecasílabos, un heptasílabo en el medio y un pentasílabo al final).

De esa manera, se deja de lado la unidad versal del original, la decisión del autor en cuanto a la cantidad de “información”, por así llamarla, incluida en cada verso. Algo particularmente notorio en las primeras obras de Shakespeare, donde cada verso conformaba una unidad más evidente incluso de sentido, pero que sigue mereciendo atención en obras de madurez como *Rey Lear*, desde mi punto de vista.

Ilustro. El primer verso de ese parlamento de Lear dice:

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Idea Vilariño traduce:

Entretanto expondremos nuestros planes más secretos. (...)

Lo que en Shakespeare era una oración que coincidía con el verso se transforma en una oración repartida en un verso y medio encabalgados. Es decir, la traducción ha modificado la unidad rítmico-expresiva, que a mi juicio forma parte incluso de la producción de sentido.

Dicho esto del teatro, veamos qué sucede en las traducciones de poesía. Tomemos el caso de los *Sonetos*. Un soneto no puede

agregar versos a sus catorce sin dejar de ser soneto. Por lo tanto, si se quiere traducir un soneto de Shakespeare a un soneto castellano en endecasílabos, sólo se puede hacerlo mediante el recurso permanente a la síntesis y la mutilación.

Ilustro con la primera estrofa del soneto II y la respectiva traducción de Mujica Lainez en endecasílabos blancos:

*When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed, of small worth held:*

Cuando asedien tu faz cuarenta inviernos
y ahonden surcos en tu prado hermoso,
tu juventud, activa vestidura,
será un andrajo que no mira nadie.

El primer verso es uno de esos raros casos en que un endecasílabo hábil captura perfectamente bien un pentámetro yámbico completo. En el segundo verso, que literalmente dice “y caven hondas trincheras en el campo (de batalla, se sobrentiende) de tu belleza”, la metáfora bélica, que en el original continúa la línea del *besiege* (“asedien”) del verso anterior, se transforma en una metáfora campestre o bucólica. Del tercer verso sólo está traducida la mitad, hasta la cesura, y en esa mitad traducida la librea, uniforme de la servidumbre de un noble, se transforma en el más genérico “vestidura”. En el cuarto verso, “andrajo” sintetiza muy bien *tattered weed* (“atavío andrajoso”), mientras que “que no mira nadie” constituye una habilísima síntesis entre el *so gazed on now* (tu juventud “tan observa-

da ahora") mutilado en el verso anterior y *of small worth held* ("tenido en poco valor").

Cada uno decidirá si a su juicio el saldo de ganancias y pérdidas da positivo o negativo. A mi juicio, según se desprende de mi elección de otro metro para esas traducciones, da negativo, incluso en Mujica Lainez, cuya traducción de sonetos de Shakespeare en endecasílabos (blancos) es la que más estimo de las que conozco, porque hace gala, como en el ejemplo que acabo de mostrar, de una altísima destreza poética para la síntesis; pero, aun así, sus transformaciones y mutilaciones me hacen sentir muy lejos del original, me hacen sentir demasiada intrusión del traductor, al punto que no sé si no correspondería llamar a lo suyo versión más bien que traducción.

b) Alejandrinos

Metro de origen francés, su nombre proviene de *Le roman d'Alexandre*, poema narrativo del siglo XII. Su debut castellano en el siglo XIII con el anónimo *Libro de Alexandre* lo constituyó en el primer metro fijo empleado en nuestra lengua. Poco después en el mismo siglo lo empleó Gonzalo de Berceo, primer poeta castellano cuyo nombre nos es conocido. Ciento que aquellos versos de catorce sílabas en dos hemistiquios de siete no contaban las sílabas como se haría luego (sospecho que a partir de la influencia de la métrica italiana): no tomaban en cuenta fenómenos como la sinallefa ni la acentuación aguda o esdrújula al final de hemistiquio y verso. A través de los siglos su presencia y su prestigio sufrieron altos y bajos, bajos debidos principalmente a la histórica antipatía española por lo francés. Incluso en pleno Siglo de Oro puede rastrear-

se su uso algo disimulado en Góngora y su uso declarado en el "Soneto en alejandrinos" de Pedro Espinosa, publicado en 1611, apenas dos años después que los *Sonetos* de Shakespeare. Pero el auge del alejandrino castellano, que lo elevaría a segundo metro canónico de nuestra lengua para temas "elevados" (el octosílabo es el canónico para temas más "llanos"), se debió a una nueva oleada de influencia francesa, el arrastre del neoclasicismo cuyo teatro (Racine y compañía) se escribió en alejandrinos. Hizo así este metro una *entrée* triunfal en nuestra lengua con el Romanticismo español (Iriarte, Zorrilla), y terminó de levantar vuelo con el Modernismo hispanoamericano (Darío a la cabeza: "La princesa está triste... ¿Qué tendrá la princesa?") y la generación española del 98 (los hermanos Machado: "Mi infancia son recuerdos de un patio de Sevilla"). En teatro, fue uno de los varios metros empleados por García Lorca.

Todo esto, sumado al hecho de que sea catorce el número natural promedio de sílabas resultantes de la traducción sin restricción métrica de un pentámetro yámbico inglés al castellano, ofrece cartas de peso suficiente para la consideración de la aptitud del alejandrino con este fin.

Veamos algunas posibles objeciones al alejandrino frente al endecasílabo:

- "El pentámetro yámbico y el endecasílabo son los versos canónicos de una y otra lengua": Equivalencia no del todo exacta, porque el pentámetro yámbico no tiene ninguna competencia que le llegue a los tobillos, mientras que el endecasílabo tiene no muy detrás en reputación al alejandrino y tal vez no

muy detrás en cuanto a cantidad de uso al octosílabo.

- “El pentámetro yámbico y el endecasílabo fueron los metros ‘estrella’ del Renacimiento en una y otra lengua”: Equivalencia no del todo exacta, porque el pentámetro yámbico no tuvo competencia de mayor importancia en este rubro, mientras que el endecasílabo, si bien ascendió en esa época a metro castellano más prestigioso, de todos modos se usaba combinado con heptasílabos en cierto tipo de estrofas y nunca dejó de convivir con otros metros y combinaciones métricas de amplia aceptación.
- “El pentámetro yámbico y el endecasílabo fueron los metros utilizados en el teatro renacentista de una y otra lengua para las situaciones serias”: Tampoco es del todo cierto, porque en castellano el endecasílabo se combinaba a menudo con heptasílabos (y el alejandrino es la suma de dos heptasílabos, o sea que tiene ritmo de heptasílabo, y al menos las tres cuartas partes de los buenos endecasílabos habituales tienen acento en la sexta sílaba, lugar del acento fijo del heptasílabo, lo que hace de ese endecasílabo mayoritario una especie de heptasílabo alargado).
- “El alejandrino es un verso con cesura”: Bueno, el pentámetro yámbico también la tiene muy a menudo: *To be or not to be –cesura– that is the question*. Alrededor de la mitad de los versos de ese celebérrimo soliloquio de Hamlet tiene cesura. Valga como muestra o si-

nécdota de lo que ocurre en general a este respecto con el pentámetro.

Reformulo ahora en síntesis una contraobjeción que expresé antes:

- Un endecasílabo raras veces puede contener la misma “información” que un pentámetro yámbico; un alejandrino raras veces no puede contenerla.

Veamos la principal y acaso única objeción posible al alejandrino frente al verso libre:

- “Imponer una restricción métrica única a la traducción del pentámetro yámbico puede forzar a veces a mutilar o a agregar relleno”: La primera parte de esta objeción, “mutilar”, se aplica muchísimo más al endecasílabo que al alejandrino. En cualquier caso, solicito ejemplos concretos antes que afirmaciones abstractas: invito a cotejar diez alejandrinos blancos de cualquier traducción mía con la respectiva traducción en prosa de Astrana Marín y con el original y después díganme quién agregó o mutiló más.

Es que el arsenal de herramientas para estirar o comprimir una o dos sílabas es amplio y variado y muy poco intrusivo. Dos ejemplos:

- “Ser o no ser, ahí está la cuestión”: endecasílabo. “Ser o no ser, ahí reside la cuestión”: alejandrino.
- Vendrá/va a venir/ha de venir/habrá de venir: dos, tres, cuatro y cinco sílabas, distintas posibilidades de conjugar futuro según necesidades métricas.

Final con rima

Pasé por alto la cuestión de la rima por razones de tiempo y espacio. Traducir con rima, y más aún si es rima consonante, obliga cada tanto, con mayor o menor frecuencia según ciertos cruces astrológicos entre lengua original y de destino y la inspiración del traductor, a alejarse un poco o no tan poco del original. En las piezas teatrales un apartamiento ocasional de este tipo puede pasar bastante inadvertido y tal vez sostenerse y justificarse si así se rescata una relevante función semántica y dramática de la rima. En la poesía, en cambio, donde los juegos de sentido y de figuras son mucho más condensados y complejos, sobre todo en poetas tan extraordinarios y sofisticados como Shakespeare, esos apartamientos pueden implicar un desmedro muy fuerte de la calidad poética. Por eso yo, aunque respeté a rajatabla toda rima en las obras dramáticas

de Shakespeare que traduje, no hice lo mismo en la traducción de su poesía, como tampoco lo hice cuando traduje un par de sonetos de Mallarmé, un caso vagamente equiparable en ese aspecto de la condensación, la complejidad, la sofisticación y la “extraordinariedad”.

Cada maestrito con su librito. Expuse desde mis convicciones, pero sé que hay otros libritos y otros maestritos. Creo incluso que las traducciones pueden ser complementarias. Se me ocurre que si uno leyera varias buenas traducciones de un soneto de Shakespeare: una en endecasílabos rimados y otra sin rima, una en alejandrinos rimados y otra sin rima y una en verso libre blanco, y luego las mezclara todas en la licuadora de su cabeza, se formaría una idea mucho más aproximada de lo que es el original que si leyera una sola de esas traducciones, por lograda que sea.

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