

**“BETWEEN THE PALE
COMPLEXION OF TRUE
LOVE AND THE RED
GLOW OF SCORN”.
TRADITIONS OF
PASTORAL LOVE IN
SHAKESPEARE’S *AS YOU
LIKE IT***

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In his well known *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (1959: 215), W.W. Greg explains how by the opening days of the sixteenth century, romance became chivalric in Spain and courtly in France, reaching England in three main streams: the eclogue borrowed by Spenser from Marot, the romance suggested to Sidney by Montemayor, and the drama imitated by Daniel from Tasso and Guarini. But Maybe the most interesting thing about this statement is the fact that he explains that once there, these traditions blended with other influences and native traditions, giving place to a particular dramatic work not to be found in any other European nation. Because following this theory by Greg, Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* (1600) turns out to be one of these “particular dramatic works” gathering together a variety of the different pastoral conventions established by authors such as Virgil, Marot or Mantuan, and Sannazaro or Montemayor. Not in vain, the most immediate source for this play is to be found in Thomas Lodge’s pastoral romance entitled *Rosalynde: Euphues’ Golden Legacy* (1590), for which Thomas Lodge was not only indebted to Sidney; but also to the ancient pastoral tradition, the Italian Sannazaro, and the Portuguese Jorge de Montemayor. Moreover, the characters of Shakespeare’s play can be organized by couples into three different groups: the group of the idealized shepherds, that of the courtly characters who are not shepherds but are disguised as such; and finally, the group of those other characters who are neither one thing, nor the other. That is the reason why once these couples of characters turn out to be three couples of lovers, each of them is going to be representative of a particular type of pastoral love. And in this sense, this paper is going to analyze these three types of love relationships with the intention of connecting each of them with one of the three different conventions of pastoral love already considered.

In his well known *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (1959: 215), W.W. Greg explains how by the opening days of the sixteenth century, romance became chivalric in Spain and courtly in France, reaching England in three main streams: the eclogue borrowed by Spenser from Marot, the romance Sidney

adopted from Montemayor, and the drama imitated by Daniel from Tasso and Guarini. But maybe the most interesting thing about this statement is the fact that the critic explains that once there, these streams blended with other influences and native traditions, giving place to a particular dramatic work not to be found in any other European nation. Because following this theory by Greg, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1600) turns out to be one of these "particular dramatic works" gathering together a variety of the different pastoral conventions of the time. Not in vain, the most immediate source for this play is to be found in Thomas Lodge's pastoral romance entitled *Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacy* (1590), for which he was not only indebted to Sidney, but also to the ancient pastoral tradition, the Italian Sannazaro, and the Portuguese Jorge de Montemayor. Moreover, the characters of Shakespeare's play can be organized by couples into three different groups: the group of the idealized shepherds, that of the courtly characters who are not shepherds but are disguised as such; and finally, the group of those other characters who are neither one thing, nor the other. That is why once these three couples of characters turn out to be three couples of lovers in the course of the play by Shakespeare, each of them is going to be representative of a particular convention of pastoral literature and pastoral love.

The audience of *As You Like It* can see how some courtly characters such as Rosalind, Orlando, or the clown Touchstone, disguise themselves as shepherds and come temporarily to live in the forest of Arden where they get in contact with shepherds who already inhabit the forest such as Audrey, Silvius, Phoebe, or Jaques, the malcontent traveller. But not all the shepherds who actually belong to the forest can be classified as members of the same group: whereas Audrey is a real, illiterate goatherd who devotes herself to the care of her flock, Silvius is an idealized shepherd who knows the literary pastoral tradition well enough to convince Phoebe, an idealized shepherdess as well, to accept his love. For that reason, while Silvius and Phoebe belong to the group of the idealized shepherds who know the pastoral tradition, Rosalind and Orlando would be part of that other group of courtly characters who are disguised as shepherds and live in the forest temporarily. Neither Audrey nor Touchstone are really part of any of the groups already mentioned. Since Audrey is not an idealized shepherdess and Touchstone is not a nobleman who keeps his courtly manners in spite of living in the forest, they can be said to conform a third group of characters on their own. But anyway, each of these three couples of lovers follow the pastoral models established by Virgil, Mantuan, or Sannazaro and Montemayor depending on their respective social positions or groups. Thus, they allow the intended audience to identify each of their love relationships with one of the three different conventions of pastoral love which were widely known at the time.

In his chapter about pastoral to be found in *The Legacy of Rome*, Richard Jenkyns distinguishes three different conventions of pastoral love. This distinction is basic to relate each of the couples of lovers in the play to a particular tradition of pastoral love. According to this critic, Theocritus was the first writer to establish the conventions defining this literary genre, but Virgil was the first Latin writer to follow Theocritus' tradition, and the most influential one. Jenkyns also explains that Virgil was the first author who introduced real features characterizing peasants and shepherds' real lives. According to this critic, Eclogues II and VII by Virgil already have a realistic touch because Corydon announces the end of his song by making reference to some peasants who come back home after a hard day of work in Eclogue II: "See, the bullocks drag home by the yoke, the hanging plough, and the retiring sun doubles the lengthening shadows" (Goold 1986: 66-8), while Meliboeus explains in Eclogue VII that he will have to go back to work after attending Corydon and Thyrsis' musical match. And it is just this "realistic touch" that allows the consideration of Eclogues II and VII as the literary source for Silvius and Phoebe's love relationship. At first sight, theirs is a "typical" pastoral love based on the idealized shepherd's complaint to a cruel beloved. Their amorous story seems to be quite similar to that of Corydon's unrequited love in Eclogue II. But very soon, Shakespeare takes that same "realistic touch" of Eclogues II and VII with the intention of modifying the Latin model in order to allow his idealized shepherds to enjoy a happy ending consisting in marriage. According to Jenkyns, Virgil's realism is always portrayed in a very subtle way. But the critic explains that Mantuan, one of Virgil's most important followers, makes explicit what Virgil just implies, giving place to a different pastoral convention known as the "strong tendency" of the pastoral tradition. This tendency can be easily related to Touchstone and Audrey's love because these characters always reject a highly artificial love discourse that they do not even manage to understand. The clown Touchstone is not a nobleman living in the forest, and Audrey is not an idealized beautiful shepherdess who refuses to accept his love. Rather on the contrary, both of them seem to consider their love to be perfectly physical and possible from the very beginning and till the end of the play, when they get finally married. That is at least what Touchstone points out when he tells Audrey: "Come, sweet Audrey. / We must be married, or we must live in bawdry" (3.3, 86-7). Meanwhile, Rosalind and Orlando's love could be said to be part of that other pastoral tradition mentioned by Jenkyns and introduced by Sannazaro in 1504, when his work *Arcadia* was first published. In Sannazaro's work, the royalty of the court and the simplicity of the country come together for the first time. The noblemen disguise themselves as shepherds in order to avoid some dangers, and go on behaving as if they were at court in spite of being actually living in the forest. Nevertheless, Montemayor's *Diana* (1558-9) is the first referent in order for the intended audience to locate an amorous story

similar to that of Rosalind and Orlando. Both Montemayor's *Diana* and *As You Like It* by Shakespeare, present two women from the court, Rosalind and Felismena, who disguise themselves as men in order to be near their beloved. None of them hesitates to "serve" those men with whom they are in love. And in both cases, these two women are finally able to make their love possible. So at the end, the three couples of lovers in the play by Shakespeare have the same happy ending in spite of being representative of three different conventions of pastoral love.

Eclogues II and VII by Virgil seem to be the source for Silvius and Phoebe's love. In Eclogue II, Corydon suffers from Alexis' unrequited love. He is completely aware of the impossibility of his love for the boy when recognizing Alexis to be his "master's pet," or when realizing that his gifts would never be as good as his master Iollas'. Nevertheless, Virgil's Corydon goes on complaining, trying to convince Alexis to accept his love by introducing catalogues of his possessions, and catalogues of the gifts with which he is willing to provide the boy. He seems to be perfectly convinced that the idealized shepherd's fate is to complain and to feel sorry for himself while enumerating the characteristics defining him as a good lover despised by a cruel beloved. That is why he justifies his persistence by making use of a *priamel* allowing him to make clear that he is behaving in a natural way when following Alexis; the same way in which "The grim lioness follows the wolf, the wolf himself the goat, and the wanton goat the flowering clover" (62-5). In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Silvius is in love with Phoebe while the "cruel" shepherdess is in love with Ganymede, a young boy who turns out to be Rosalind in disguise. So at the beginning, Silvius' love for Phoebe is also an impossible goal to achieve. But Shakespeare solves this problem by taking the structural model of Eclogue VII, and making Phoebe play the role of Corydon's opponent in Virgil's poem. That is to say, the author of the play endows Phoebe with a position of authority allowing her to have a voice of her own. From this new position, she is able to take part in the dialogue, and to make Silvius understand that she does not believe in those love arguments defining her "as a cruel mistress." According to Phoebe, lovers who feel sorry for themselves and "shut their coward eyes on atomies," are the ones who "should be called tyrants, butchers, murders" (3.5.12-4). She is so against the pastoral conventions used by Silvius in order to convince her to accept his love, that she definitely breaks them down when she simply accepts Silvius' love after finding out that her beloved Ganymede is a woman in disguise instead of a young shepherd. Thus, Silvius and Phoebe's love only turns out to be possible once Phoebe realizes that she cannot marry someone else; but never because Silvius' words can convince her to marry him, or even make her feel sympathy for him. In fact, no lover in the literary pastoral tradition can be said to have achieved this goal just by complaining. Eclogue II by Virgil is a good example of this: since Corydon's

complaint takes place in the solitude of the forest where his beloved Alexis can not be listening to him, the boy is never going to answer to Corydon or to allow him to get his favors.

Disguising as the opposite sex was a common mechanism of pastoral. Sidney's Pyrocles, for instance, spends most of the *Arcadia* as Zelmane, an amazon, in order to be near his beloved, the princess Philoclea. Lodge and Shakespeare's Phoebe becomes mistakenly infatuated with Ganymede, and Lyly's play entitled *Gallathea* (1586) presents two girls disguised as boys who fall in love with each other. But maybe the source for Rosalind and Orlando's love is to be located in the episode of Felismena that can be found in Montemayor's *Diana*. Starting from Matteo Bandello's *Novella* (II,36), Montemayor portrays Felismena as a great lady who disguises herself as a page called Valerius in order to follow her beloved *Don Felix*. He was forced to leave Felismena after having been courting her for a year; right the same time that she serves her beloved in return. During the time Felismena works for him as a page, she sees how *Don Felix* starts forgetting her little by little, and how he starts suffering from her new beloved Celia's unrequited love. Moreover, she is in charge of the letters *Don Felix* sends to his new beloved; a situation that ends up bringing about Celia's infatuation with Felismena in disguise. Celia only accepts the letters to make her beloved Valerius happy. But as soon as Valerius disregards her love, she commits suicide and *Don Felix* leaves the house without a trace. Then Felismena disguises herself as a shepherdess in order to enter the forest looking for him. And after wandering for a long time, she saves the life of a man who turns out to be *Don Felix*. When she recognizes him, Felismena identifies herself as a woman who had always loved him: "In the habite of a tender and daintie Ladie I loved thee... and in the habite of a base page I served thee... and yet now in the habite of a poore and simple shepherdesse I came to do thee this small service" (*Diana*, 238-9). As a result, *Don Felix* compensates her for all her love's labours, so that they can be finally happy: "I am forever bound unto thee: since I enjoy it thy means, I thinke it no more then right, to restore thee that, which is thine owne" (*Diana*, 240).

Despite the possible differences, Montemayor's episode of Felismena seems to be present in the story of Rosalind and Orlando's love depicted by Shakespeare. This author changes the urban setting of the episode for a pastoral one, but he keeps a Rosalind who has to disguise herself as a man and who gets Phoebe in love with her while she is "serving" his beloved Orlando just in the same way as Felismena does in Montemayor's *Diana*. Shakespeare's Rosalind is also going to become Orlando's confidant in terms of love. But in addition to that, she takes the responsibility for Orlando's love cure, serving him in this way. So metaphorically speaking, Rosalind can be also said to "save" her beloved's life. At least, her "love cure" prevents him from dying of an

impossible love. The differences appear because Rosalind does not have to see how Phoebe commits suicide, or how Orlando complains about another woman's unrequited love. Rather on the contrary, being disguised as Ganymede, Rosalind has the chance to test and even to mock Orlando's love, challenging him to prove that he is a desperate lover, and to declare his love for Rosalind openly: "Then your hose should be ungartered,... your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. (...) You may as soon make her that you love believe it,..." (3.2, 361-70). Under such guise, she can extract from him more declarations of his love for her, in a shorter time, than if he had known who she was. In this way, Orlando is even forced to consider the possibility to marry a Rosalind who, as a non-idealized wife, could turn out to be "more clamorous than a parrot against rain," or "more new fangled than an ape" (4.1, 136-9). Only then does Rosalind definitely make up her mind to save Orlando's life with their own marriage, the most effective cure for unrequited love. So at the end, both Rosalind and Felismena can be said to have saved their beloveds' lives and to have reached the same happy ending, despite the fact of having used different methods.

According to Jenkyns' article, Mantuan was the first to introduce a real moralistic touch into the Virgilian tradition. That is also what the Elizabethan critic Puttenham explains in *The Arte of English Poesie*, where he states that Virgil's eclogues "came after to contain and enforme morall discipline, for the amendment of mans behaviour, as be those of Mantuan and other modern poets" (XVIII: 38-9). But at the same time, Mantuan's shepherds are perfectly real: they have to work very hard in the forest, and they use a far from idyllic semantic field including many "bawdy" expressions which are just part of the real shepherds' daily life. And it is this duality explicit realism / morality to be found in Mantuan what can actually lead the audience to identify this "strong tendency" with Touchstone and Audrey's love relationship. Jaques is the character who provides Touchstone and Audrey's explicit realism with a moralistic touch because he plays a very important role as the narrative voice with which the author's intentions can be identified.¹ In fact, by means of Jaques' philosophical discourse, Shakespeare highlights the importance of the fool characters of the play, and considers them as a useful weapon against the hypocrisy of the world represented in the play by the hypocrisy of the lover's melancholy to be found in Silvius and Orlando's love discourses. This hypocrisy is not to be found in Touchstone's "natural" behavior. As he explains himself when talking to Audrey: "... for the truest poetry is the most / feigning, and lovers are given to poetry; and what they / swear in poetry it may be said, as

¹Jaques is a melancholic character, just as Philisides, the melancholic shepherd to be found among the minor characters of Sidney's *Arcadia*, and who can be considered to be a version of Sidney himself when he appears as "The Knight of the Sheep" —Sidney's own pseudonym—.

lovers, they do feign...” (3.3.16-8), Touchstone is not a melancholy lover who sings to an impossible love while suffering from madness. Far from it, he can be described as an unconventional lover who is perfectly able to accept his beloved as she really is —“a foul slut”—, being this lack of idealization what makes their love a possible goal to achieve from the very beginning: “Well, praised be the gods for thy foulness. / Sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, / I will marry thee...” (3.3.35-7).

Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* is a “particular dramatic work” that provides the audience with a complete catalogue of love relationships and pastoral traditions. There are options to please everybody, no matter their social positions or groups: ordinary people in favour of an artificial love discourse can follow Virgil’s model, whereas people from the higher classes fond of the amorous games can rather prefer the models established by Sannazaro and Montemayor. But maybe Mantuan would be the author chosen by lovers belonging to any of the groups already mentioned who are clearly against the artificial complexities of courtship. Each of these choices —going from the pale complexion of Orlando’s true love to the red glow of Touchstone’s scorn— entails a different degree of complexity. But all of them lead to marriage as the only possible happy ending, and all of them are equally important in order for the play to fulfil the expectations of a varied audience composed of people belonging to different social groups and with different levels of education.

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