

the Shakespeare's declarations are "total, unconditional, self-sacrificial..." (Hughes 60). However much "private pain" (Hughes 60) there is, Hughes then goes on to analyze the Dark Lady sonnets. In a way, this predicts his strategy of interpreting the role of the Goddess in the plays, yet we cannot fail to see that there is considerable inconsistency here. There is an Adonis figure in the poems, there is a dark Venus here, but the affections that are painful are not solely heterosexual but homosexual. This is the subject that Hughes does not develop, yet, he has given himself plenty of scope to do so. Right at the beginning of his study he states categorically:

In the Adonis myth, this fatal double emerged as Mars, Aphrodite's jealous lover, who took on the form of a wild boar and killed Adonis. So it comes about that the two versions of Adonis's death exist side by side. In the first, he is killed by Persephone in the form of a boar. In the second, he is killed by the one who will replace him - in the form of a boar. In other words, the boar is simultaneously the Queen of the Underworld in her enraged animal form, and Adonis's usurping double, a murderous martial warrior in enraged animal form.

(Hughes 8)

A radical change is brought about if the question of the double identity is analyzed. It sheds light on the problem of interpreting the sonnets as well as the plays, where sexual ambiguity plays a prominent part, for example, in the various amorous relationships, whether factual or imagined, in *Othello*. Neither should it be forgotten that women's roles were not played by women until Restoration times. Two years ago, Vita Fortunati gave us a very informative and stimulation lecture on the subject. Finally, Hughes himself stresses that Shakespeare's source for *Venus and Adonis* was presumably Ovid. *The Metamorphoses* is undeniably the epitome of ambivalence.

In reaching a conclusion in a paper of this sort, it is difficult to avoid a schoolmasterish attitude by saying "satisfactory, but could have done better", but that lies in the nature of any assessment.

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NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICAL APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE'S LAST PLAYS

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... We are such stuff
As dreams are made on

Northrop Frye's analysis of Shakespeare's last plays, the so-called romances, must be seen in the context of his theory of comedy as it is presented in "The Argument of Comedy" (1949), *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), and, most importantly, in *A Natural Perspective. The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (1965)¹. Frye's critical thought is inherently schematic, and his approach to literary works is fundamentally a search for patterns and overall structures. Thus, although he knows that "each play of Shakespeare is a world in itself, so complete and satisfying a world that it is easy, delightful, and profitable to get lost in it" (Frye 1965a: viii), Frye chooses to view the comedies, as he himself indicates in the preface to *A Natural Perspective*, "from a middle distance, considering [them] as a single group unified by recurring images and structural devices" (Frye 1965a: viii). He approaches the individual plays as unified structures which relate to other similar structures and constitute what he calls the *mythos* of comedy. His purpose, then, is to lead the reader

from the characteristics of the individual play, the vividness of the characterization, the texture of imagery and the like, to consider what kind of a form comedy is, and what its place is in literature.

(Frye 1965a: viii)

The rationale behind Frye's critical approach to Shakespeare's comedies and romances is as usual articulated in the spatial metaphor of distance. In a crucial passage of *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) he had justified his method in a famous extended simile, in which he compared the task of criticism to the contemplation of a painting: the minute rhetorical analysis of the New Critics would be like

¹ References to Shakespearean romance, especially *The Tempst*, can be found in other work by Frye. See in particular, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare, The Secular Scripture* and "Romance as Masque".

standing close to the canvas to "analyse the details of brush work and palette knife" (Frye 1957:140), while his own approach would be like "standing back" from the painting in order to see its overall design. In *A Natural Perspective* (1965) Frye looks at Shakespeare's plays from a "middle distance", and thus envisions the main thesis of the book, his belief that "the four romances are the inevitable and genuine culmination of the poet's achievement" (Frye 1965a: viii). The same spatial metaphor of "middle distance" guides my argument in discussing his approach to Shakespearean romance. Thus what he claims to be true for literary works is also true of his own critical works: when we read them, when we look at them "the further back we go, the more conscious we are of the organizing design" (Frye 1957:140). Therefore, if we "stand back" from Frye's analysis of Shakespeare's romances, if we leave the details of brush work and palette knife aside, its design becomes visible, and it clearly emerges as one more particular instance of the central *mythos* of his criticism. Echoing Frye's own words, I could say that my purpose in discussing his approach to Shakespearean romance is to lead the reader from the characteristics of the individual critical comments, the vividness of the characterization, the texture of imagery and the like, to consider what kind of a form Frye's criticism of Shakespearean romance is, and what its place is in his overall critical theory.

Northrop Frye is best known as the author of *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), a book in which he made an important attempt to present a comprehensive and systematic theory of literature, and insisted that criticism was a structure of thought and knowledge existing on its own right. *Anatomy of Criticism* put Northrop Frye at the center of crucial critical discussions for over a decade, and still remains for some readers the most comprehensive theoretical work in criticism since Aristotle². In it Frye envisions four types of imaginative experience which articulate themselves in literature in four major genres: comedy, romance, tragedy and irony. For Frye, "the mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth" (Frye 1965a:119), and he conceives of the genres as forming a cycle that reproduces the natural rhythm of the seasons. Those which dramatize a downward movement towards winter and death are tragic or ironic; those that represent an upward movement towards spring and rebirth are comic. In Frye's view, "tragedy is really implicit or uncompleted comedy [given that] comedy

² Like all major figures in the world of criticism, Frye has provoked varied reactions among colleagues, and the responses run the whole gamut from those who see him as "the most influential critic writing in English since the 1950s" (Grady 21), to those who dismiss his criticism as irrelevant or even pernicious.

contains a potential tragedy within itself". He manages thus to make comedy the more capacious form, "because it points beyond death to intimate the cycle's fullness" (Danson 232).

Frye's concept of comedy has been so influential that some Shakespearean critics speak of pre- and post-Frye criticism of the comedies. Indeed, Lawrence Danson refers to Frye's theory of comedy as "the single most important impetus" in the attempt by twentieth-century critics to "invent or rediscover a point of view that can take Shakespeare's comedy seriously but on its own, not tragedy's terms." Frye's work is thus seen as the most important attempt "to rediscover the genre of comedy itself" (Danson 231). Although not all critics would agree with Graham Hough that "Frye's brilliant theory of comedy does what the *Poetics* did for tragedy at the beginning of our literary history" (Hough 85), Frye's postulates must be reckoned with even by those who explicitly claim they are of no use. Writing a review of Shakespearean criticism of the comedies in the seventies, Wayne A. Rebhorn entitled his essay "After Frye", for he found that "Frye's approach to the comedies is the inevitable starting point for all subsequent criticism which amounts to anything at all" (Rebhorn 555). Around the same time, another article reviewing Shakespearean critics of comedy and romance from 1957 indicated that "they all respond to Frye's theories about comedy" (Merrill 475). In fact, we could say of his theory of comedy what has been said of his work as a whole, ie, that "to posit Frye's influence on any English-speaking critic or work of criticism that postdates him is to hazard little" (Polansky 228).

Frye's concept of comedy centers around the idea of identity; for him, the basic impulse in comedy is "a drive toward identity" (Frye 118) in one of its three forms:

There is plural or social identity, when a new social group crystallizes around the marriage of the hero and the heroine in the final moments of the comedy. There is dual or erotic identity, when the hero and heroine get married. And there is individual identity, when a character comes to know himself in a way that he did not before.

(Frye 1967:15-16)

The structure of the Elizabethan comedy typically derives from Greek New Comedy, in which the main theme is a love story: a young man falls in love with a young woman, and has to overcome various blocking characters to finally possess the object of his desire. Shakespeare's comedy, Frye indicates, begins in a normal world, but moves into a "green" world, and before returning

to the normal world, it goes into a metamorphosis in which the comic resolution is achieved.

In the opening lines of *A Natural Perspective*, Frye classifies critics in two groups depending on their instinctive preference for tragedy and irony, or for comedy and romance. He calls them *Iliad* and *Odyssean* critics, respectively, and immediately remarks that he has "always been temperamentally an *Odyssean* critic... attracted to comedy and romance" (Frye 1965a:2). He is aware that he is in a minority, "in a somewhat furtive and anonymous group who have not much of a theory, implicit or explicit to hold it together" (Frye 1965a: 2). In fact, in the history of criticism "there has prevailed a more or less tacit assumption that dictates that the "serious" critic should work primarily on texts partaking of what Matthew Arnold called high seriousness" (Hamilton 52). Implicitly in *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which tragedy and comedy were given equal importance, and explicitly in *A Natural Perspective*, "Frye defends the serious value of comedy because of its particular closeness to myth" (Rebhorn 553), although he is fully aware that we live in an ironic age.

The Elizabethans never used the term "romance" to refer to any of Shakespeare's plays, and the editors of the first Folio classified *Cymbeline* as a tragedy and *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* as comedies – *Pericles* was not even included in it. Modern critics have labelled these plays romances, given the thematic and episodic similarities between them and medieval and Renaissance romance. Shakespearean romance often includes

the separation and disruption of families, followed by their eventual reunion and reconciliation; scenes of apparent resurrection; the love of a virtuous young hero and heroine; and the recovery of lost royal children.
(Wells 1971)

In *A Natural Perspective* Frye sees Shakespeare's romances within the same general movement as the comedies, and views them as the logical consequence of Shakespeare's technical interest in the structure of drama. The romances give us "drama within drama, a kind of ultimate confrontation of a human community with an artistic realization of itself... [In them] the action cannot be lifelike: it can only be archetypal" (Frye 1965a:32). Frye finds a tendency toward romance in the movement from early to late Shakespeare, and concludes that "the turn to romance in Shakespeare's last phase represents a genuine culmination". He is not suggesting, he insists, that "the romances are better or greater plays than the tragedies"; he simply means that "there is a logical evolution toward romance in Shakespeare's work, and consequently no anticlimax, whether technical or

spiritual, in passing from *King Lear* to *Pericles* to *The Tempest*" (Frye 1965a:7). Frye's view of the romances fits in with his own interest in myth, archetype, ritual and dream. For Frye, literary works are displaced myths, and the simple, more conventionalized works are closer to the original myths. It is not surprising therefore that Frye should see in Shakespeare's romances the culmination of his career, because in them the poet is "trying to capture the primitive and popular basis of drama", and this attempt leads to "a close affinity between romances and the most primitive (and therefore most enduring) forms of drama, like the puppet show" (Frye 1986:154-55).

We must see this view of Shakespeare's last plays, then, in the context of Frye's recovery of the romance as a serious literary genre. When *Anatomy of Criticism* appeared, the critical scene was for the most part dominated by the close readings of the New Critics, always in search of ambiguity and paradox. The simplicity of a naive genre like romance was not appreciated in that ironic age. Frye rescued the endangered genre of romance in the best romantic manner, using the sharp edge of his rhetoric and the involving mantle of his all-embracing visionary system. In the first essay of *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye envisions the history of Western literature as descending from "myth" through "romance" to "high mimetic", "low mimetic" and "irony", which roughly correspond in conventional historical periods to the classical, medieval, Renaissance, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and modern period. Frye's idiosyncratic chronology seems to present literary history as "a process of disintegration or displacement away from the natural integrity and univocality of myth toward the self-conscious distancing and discontinuity of irony" (Felperin 62). As a genre, romance is, in its neglect of realism, close to the wish-fulfillment sphere in which literature, in Frye's view, most genuinely belongs; romance furthermore articulates itself around the quest-myth which Frye sees at the core of human nature. At one point in his career, Frye even suggested that part of the critic's business was "to show how all literary genres are derived from the quest-myth" (Frye 1963b:17).

With the possible exception of *The Tempest*, the romances are among the least frequently performed plays of Shakespeare. (When *Pericles*, for instance, was recently staged in Great Britain in 1990, this was its first performance in thirty years.) For Frye, however, the romances are the plays in which the dramatic experience itself is at its strongest, precisely because the dramatic construct has been reduced to great simplicity and directness. Even though the stories are governed by desire rather than by logic or reference to the real, "we surrender ourselves to the story and accept its conventions" (Frye 1965a:10). We resemble Miranda in *The Tempest*; we are like "a child listening to a story,

too spellbound to question the narrative logic" (Frye 1976a:51). While comedy remains within the cycle of nature, romance transcends it as the hero and heroine transcend tragedy and death:

The romance differs from comedy in that the concluding scene of a comedy is intensely social. The emphasis is thrown on the reintegrated community; there are multiple marriages, and the blocking characters are reconciled or have been, like Shylock previously excluded. In the four comic romances there are glimpses of something beyond this, something closer to the imagery of pastoral, a vision of a reconciliation of man with nature, in which the characters are individualized against nature, like Adam and Eve in the solitary society of Eden.

(Frye 1976b:177)

In his approach to Shakespeare's romances, Frye has been called "visionary" (an adjective which is really most appropriate to define his criticism), because for him the romances take us from reality to illusion, but the kind of illusion embodied in art, which is in fact more genuinely "real" than the physical world that surrounds us. As he significantly says in *The Educated Imagination*, "the ideal world that our imaginations develop inside us looks like a dream... but it isn't. It is the real world, the real form of human society hidden behind the one we see" (Frye 1964:152)³.

Comedy for Frye deals with what we want and has much to do with the world of dreams and hopes and wishes. The more romantic the comedy, the more closely the society reached at the end approximates the upper level of nature. We could say that for Frye a romance is a comic structure taken one step further, because the integration of the characters at the end implies transplantation to a higher sphere. The romances offer at the end a paradise where spring and autumn exist together, and we emerge from them

into a recognition of a transcendental nature that we could not know other than by the symbols of art... The romances can take us... beyond tragedy and into the participation in a higher order of reality that all men desire.

(Sanders, 9)

³ Frye's conviction that only this ideal world deserves to be called real was poignantly stressed at the time he was writing *A Natural Perspective*. This study was in its original version a series of lectures he delivered at Columbia University in November, 1963, exactly the same week that President Kennedy was assassinated. In the published version of the lectures there is no reference to the assassination, but it affected him deeply. As he reflected a few weeks later, "A world in which the Presidency of the United States can be changed by one psychotic with a rifle is not real enough for an intelligent person to want to live in". (Ayre, 295).

Literature for Frye gives us an experience that stretches us vertically to the heights and depths of what the human mind can conceive. In the case of Shakespeare's work, "the world of higher nature which romance approaches is... a world not of time but of fulfillment of time, the kind of fulfillment traditionally symbolised by the perpetual spring of paradise" (Frye 1965b:57). For Frye, the framework of all literature is the story of the loss and regaining of identity embodied in the "divine comedy" of the Bible, in which man loses the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and recovers them at the end of Revelation. The stories presented in romance are secular versions of the history of man's salvation; they represent our quest as human beings for individual and social fulfillment. Given thus the central role played by romance in Frye's visionary critical system, it is only appropriate that he should have considered Shakespeare's romances as the culmination of the poet's career.

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REDEFINING CHARACTERS IN TRANSLATION: A CASE

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This paper focuses on the process of translation of the characters in *The Spanish Jilt*, the English translation carried out by Captain John Stevens of the Spanish novel *La Pícaro Justina* in 1707. Captain Stevens' accomplished his translation by suppressing and changing many elements of this Spanish novel, and by adding others; as a consequence of this, *The Spanish Jilt* turns out to be rather different from its original.

As A. Lefevere asserts,

translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation¹.

and Captain Stevens' translation of *La Pícaro Justina* certainly is, as he clearly states in the preface to the book:

The Country Jilt, in Spanish, call'd *La Pícaro Justina*, is not a Translation, but rather an Extract of all that is Diverting and good in the original, which is swell'd up with so much Cant and Reflection...²

The treatment the characters undergo is not very different from that of the translated text. The most outstanding features as far as characters are concerned are reduction, simplification and forwardness. On one hand we shall study the giving of a collective identity to individual members of a group, the blending and the suppression of characters; and on the other, the free rendering of the names, nicknames and epithets that characterize them, which have different connotations in English that suggest a certain kind of behaviour, and then

1 Lefevere, A., *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge, 1992. Preface, p. 7.

2 J. Stevens, *The Spanish Jilt*, in *The Spanish Libertines: The Spanish Jilt, The Bawd of Madrid, Estevanillo Gonzales and An Evenings Intrigue*. (London: Printed for Samuel Bunchley, 1707) 1-65. Preface, p. 3