

## **THE ROMANCE IN SHAKESPEARE: *ROMEO AND JULIET AND THE TEMPEST***

**Concha Sastre Colino**  
Universidad de Valladolid

Shakespeare did not write any philosophical treatise on drama but he understood the deep interaction between laughter and tears in dramatic art. Shakespeare delights in portraying human life with the specific circumstances and peculiarities involved in it. In Shakespeare, life includes good and evil. Therefore he gives a vision of life and characters interlaced with comedy and tragedy.

The happy end which characterizes comedy is transcended in romance given that romance contemplates a wider spectrum: in romance, we find a mixture of content. It is a story with a happy ending without the logical aspect: cause and effect. In Romance, the characters in the end have reached the impossible: they find themselves transcending time and space; reconciliation takes place; virtue and joy, common to man's happiness, become real. This achievement is only possible when man is in harmony with Divinity and Nature, in which the idealistic landscape is a reflection of supernatural light.

Doctor Samuel Johnson says that Shakespeare's literary production cannot be classified simply as tragedy or comedy, but should be considered in its own right. The "comic relief" acquires magnificence in relation to the tragedy, the emphasis in Romance lies in happening. With regard to the subject under discussion, Samuel Johnson says that the dialogue emerges from the event. Romance has so much lightness and simplicity that it seems to have life, to be real. These dialogues seem to be taken from common events in life.

The features mentioned above fit the comprehension and flexibility that Shakespeare tries to give to the expression. The language is ductile and fluent, being at the service of a metaphorically spiritual conception. Although the language becomes precise, it does not refer specifically to particular events of every day life. Rythm is deliberately slow and beauty prevails in his works.

The effect of music is another important aspect worthy of consideration. In *The Tempest* we can appreciate that spirituality is represented through music: it is the music of heavenly spheres which suggests purely mystical joy, captivates

the senses and enchants the critical faculty of mind. Music awakens conscience: it is the filter of spiritual experience. In *The Tempest*, Act III, sc.iii, there is a strange vision in which spirits dance to the music of intense melody. Here is the introduction to this scene:

Solemn and strange music; and Prosper on the top (invisible). Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with gentle action of salutations; and inviting the King, & c., to eat, they depart!

Alonso and Gonzalo, while listening to the strangely solemn music, exclaim:

Alon.: What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

Gon.: Marvellous sweet music!

(III.iii.18-19)

In Act V. sc.i., Alonso, who remained motionlessly bewitched by the spell Prospero had cast upon him, is greeted by the latter:

A solemn air, and the best comforter.  
To an unsettled fancy, cure the brains,  
Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! there stand,  
For you are spell-stopped.

(V.i.58-61)

The Shakespearean Romance is mainly influenced by two important literary genres:

In the first place, The Medieval Romance (Knight Romance). The Romance has certain typical features: it generally concerns young Knights and involves a large amount of fighting as well as a number of miscellaneous adventures; the hero is often involved in romantic love with an inaccessible lady; The hero or the heroine, in the romance, is the representative of virtue and spiritual transcendentalism. The romance makes liberal use of the improbable and often of the supernatural. The plots generally consist of a great number of events, and the same event is apt to occur several times within the same romance.

Shakespeare adopts the style of the romance featuring the overtones of the code of chivalry: love at first sight, courtesy, commitment, adventure and intrigues. The writer takes over the religious, moral and social system of the Middle Ages, based on the ideal qualities expected of a knight, such as courage, honour, courtesy and concern for the weak and helpless.

1 Shakespeare, William: *The Tempest*.

In the second place, The Pastoral Romance: ranging from *Daphne and Chloe* to Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, Sir Philip Sidney's *The Arcadia*, John Lyly's *Galathea and La Diana* by the Spanish writer, Jorge de Montemayor.

The Pastoral setting shows the idealism reflected in the romance. It is the story of unlucky lovers or shepherds of noble birth. This is made evident by divine intervention, which always helps young lovers in an environment of a supernatural and wonderfully idyllic atmosphere.

The romance idealizes love, irrespective of the realities of life. Nevertheless, Shakespeare, while accepting idealized love, imbues it with temporal elements, vis-à-vis every day life.

Shakespeare creates harmony between the romantic and the comic effect. This is highly visible in the subject of our study: The plays of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*. These plays feature the most representative imagery of both The Knight and The Pastoral Romance. Let us analyse these aspects:

Both couples, Romeo and Juliet and Ferdinand and Miranda, fall in love the instant they meet and love immediately blossoms. They express their love for each other passionately.

The first time that Romeo sees Juliet (a Capulet), with whom his own family (the Montagues) are at feud, expels all childish sentimentalism, and he asks himself: "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight. // For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night" (I.v.51-52).

Romeo, bewitched by Juliet's beauty, does not hesitate to speak in a loud voice in the house of his enemy, singing the praises of his lady:

Romeo: O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright,  
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night  
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear  
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.  
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows  
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.  
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,  
And touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.  
*Did my heart love till now?* Forswear it, sight.  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

(I.v.43-52)

As Juliet, in the balcony scene reveals, her love for Romeo with sweet, tender words:

Juliet: Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form; fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke. But farewell, compliment.  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay',  
And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st,  
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,  
They say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

(II.ii.85-94)

The commitment, avowals of love and loyalty from the lovers occur in their second encounter, in Capulets' garden, the night they saw each other for the first time. Let us look at this little fragment:

Romeo: Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops-

Juliet: O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Romeo: What shall I swear by?

Juliet: Do not swear at all.  
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
And I'll believe thee.

Romeo: If my heart's dear love-

(II.ii.107-115)

Some similarities are found between the scene mentioned above and the final part of scene i, in Act III, 67-90 in *The Tempest*. In this scene Miranda y Ferdinand declare their mutual love for each other and seal it with vows of marriage, swearing to be loyal and true. Aside, Prospero takes great delight in gazing at the young couple together. He watches them cautiously, avoiding being seen.

We can appreciate the beauty of this scene in the following lines:

Mir.: Do you love me?

Fer.: O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,  
And crown what I profess with kind event,  
If I speak true! if hollowly, invert  
What best is boded me to mischief! I,  
Beyond all limit of what else i' th' world,  
Do love, prize, honour you.

Mir.: I am a fool  
To weep at what I am glad of.

Pros.: Fair encounter  
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace  
On that which breeds between 'em!

Fer.: Wherefore weep you?

Mir.: At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer  
What I desire to give; and much less take  
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;  
And all the more it seeks to hide itself,  
The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!  
And prompt me plain and holy innocence!  
I am your wife if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow  
You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,  
Whether you will or no.

(III.i.67-85)

Here again we may think of the analogy between Ferdinand and Romeo. Such emotional power and authentic voice emerge in Ferdinand's language in his first encounter with Miranda. He is so impressed by Miranda's charm and beauty that he, at first, thinks that she is a supernatural being: a goddess.

Fer.: Most sure the goddess  
On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my prayer  
May know if you remain upon this island;  
And that you will some good instruction give  
How I may bear me here: my prime request,  
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!  
If you be maid or no?

(I.ii.424-430)

As has been mentioned above, one of the features of the romance is that the human element makes an incursion into the supernatural world. Heroes and heroines are taken for gods and goddesses. This theme is prominent in *The Tempest*. Yet Ferdinand takes Miranda for a goddess and, in the same way, Miranda thinks that Ferdinand is a spirit.

The interaction between the supernatural and the human world is a theme widely used in literature: Christopher Marlowe makes use of the theme in his tragedy *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, in a rewording of the Aeneid by Virgil. A

very similar situation to that happening in *The Tempest* is found in the play *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* and Edmund Spenser, in *The Fairie Queene*, also introduces the supernatural element into the human world through the heroine whose specially efficacious virtue transforms her into a splendid apparition which can be scarcely accepted as human.

Miranda, impressed by the appearance of Ferdinand (a handsome, sensitive, affectionate young man), exclaims in front of her father, Prospero:

Mir.: What is 't? a spirit?  
 Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,  
 It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.  
 (I.ii.412-413)

She, bewitched by the attractiveness of Ferdinand, can not believe her eyes and, in spite of her father's words assuring her that Ferdinand is human, Miranda can not help thinking that he must be "A thing divine", from the supernatural world:

I might call him  
 A thing divine; for nothing natural  
 I ever saw so noble.  
 (I.ii.420-421)

Miranda is unique in that her father and the uncouth Caliban (the offspring of the witch Sycorax, a "man-monster" reduced by Prospero to the servitude in which he appears at the beginning of the play) are the only two beings she has known. Therefore, she shows an innocent admiration for the strangers she meets on the island: "How many goodly creatures are there here! / How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, / That has such people in't!".

Ferdinand, fascinated by Miranda's grace, virtue and beauty, offers his love to her the instant they meet:

O, if a Virgin,  
 And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you  
 The Queen of Naples.  
 (I.ii.450-452)

There is mutual attraction and, as Prospero says: "They are both in either's pow'rs" (I.ii. 53). Prospero's own comments, as he watches the young couple together, express the sense of their fitness for each other: "Fair encounter/ of two more rare affections".

Miranda says to herself that Ferdinand "is the third man she has ever seen and the first she has ever sighed for". And asks:

... Why speaks my father so ungently? This  
 Is the third man that e'er I saw; the first  
 That e'er I sigh'd for: Pity move my father  
 To be inclin'd my way!  
 (I.ii.446-449)

Nevertheless, Prospero, who sees the young couple's growing love, is determined to strengthen the bond by making the path of true love anything but smooth. He is severe with his daughter and is to Ferdinand at first "compos'd of harshness". However, his treatment of Ferdinand and Miranda is calculated to increase their love for one another:

Pros. (Aside): They are both in either's pow'rs: but this Swift business  
 I must uneasy make, lest too light winning  
 [Make the prize light.  
 (I.ii.453-454)

We may say that the love between Ferdinand and Miranda –and Romeo and Juliet– recreates similar situations in both plays. However, we may also admit that the difficulties which the lovers overcome to reach their definite love is placed farther apart.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the disapproval of their love arises from their own families (The Montagues and Capulets) who are deadly enemies. The speech, in the *Sonnet prologue*, spoken by *Chorus*, briefly introduces the plot, telling us that in Verona there exists a long standing feud between two families, the Montagues and Capulets. This feud is to be ended only by the sad fate of Romeo, a Montague, and Juliet, a Capulet, whose love for each other surpasses their families' hatred. This hatred, however, is to bring about the tragic death of the "star-cross'd lovers". The conflict in *Romeo and Juliet* is painfully unhappy. The sudden or violent changes occurring in the play bring ill fortune and catastrophe. Tybalt's death, caused by Romeo in a street duel, gives rise to a series of unfortunate events.

Shakespeare imposes a marked rhythm which brings out the interplay of conflicting time scales. The hero and heroine scarcely escape from one dangerous situation only to find themselves in trouble once again. The swift changes which the characters are forced to endure oblige the reader to think, from the beginning, that this deplorable lack of time entraps the characters in a spiral of misfortune. There is no way out for them as long as their spirits are imprisoned and, given the sword of Damocles which hangs over them, the only possible route to liberty and liberation is that to be found as a result of their own death.

The tragic fate of Romeo and Juliet contrasts with the happy ending of *The Tempest*. In the latter, Miranda and Ferdinand make arrangements for their wedding in Naples once Prospero has approved their betrothal. Prospero's wish to see his daughter Queen of Naples does come true. The happy event takes place in Act IV.sc.i.1-23, outside Prospero's Cell.

In this scene, the atmosphere of tender intimacy is created in candidly pure diction; tiny details of sensation, sound and image suggest a tender love for Miranda, and enliven the speech:

Fer.: As I hope  
 For quiet days, fair issue and long life,  
 With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,  
 The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion  
 Our worsen genius can, shall never melt  
 Mine honour into lust, to take away  
 The edge of that day's celebration  
 When I shall think, or Phoebus' steeds are founder'd,  
 Or Night kept chain'd below.

Pros.: Fairly spoke  
 Sit, then, and talk with her; she is thine own.  
 (IV.i.24-33)

Romeo would certainly like to have spoken Ferdinand's words:

As I hope  
 For quiet days, fair issue and long life,  
 With such love as 'tis now,....  
 (24-25)

As far as one can tell, that happy ending reflects the antithesis of the sad end of Romeo and Juliet. However, we may ask ourselves: did the young couple succeed in finding true love? Is happiness qualitative or quantitative? Does not, in fact, Romeo and Juliet's love transcend time, space, and even death? Are these aspects not likely to exist beyond the happy end?

From the point of view of style, one of the relevant elements of romance is to transcend time and space. In other words, to surmount earthy hindrances. Romeo and Juliet have overcome death due to the intensity of their love which does not die with their human body but remains in their spirits throughout eternity.

Shakespeare describes Romeo and Juliet's death as a sacrifice. If, finally, peace between Montagues and Capulets is restored, it is as a result of the tragic fate which has befallen "the star-crossed lovers".

In Act IV. sc.iii, Juliet endures a most painful experience. She is face to face with the terrifying task of carrying out the Friar's instructions: to drink the potion. She acts her "dismal scene" alone. She is tormented by doubts and misgivings: what if she awakens from her death-like trance before Romeo arrives at the tomb? What horrors will beset her in this gruesome place of death? At last with a cry of "Romeo I come! This do I drink to thee", she swallows the potion.

The last scene of the play (V.iii.88-120) once more demands of her an act of lonely courage and faith in love: Juliet awaking to the sight of Romeo dead beside her. She turns to the lifeless figure, resolved to follow him into death! The lovers are truly at last united in death. Romeo and Juliet lie together, immune to will, confusion and death. As Romeo had wished a moment before at the sight of Juliet, whom he thought to be dead: "...Here, here, will I remain / ...O here will I set up my everlasting rest".

The moral realm which Shakespeare describes in *Romeo and Juliet* is intended to be "qualitative" not "quantitative". Previously, in Act II, we were able to appreciate the great value of "psychological" time (the lovers' private time) and the powerful emotion of the instance. In Romeo's words:

But come what sorrow can,  
 It cannot counterveil the exchange of joy  
 That one short minute gives me in her sight.  
 (II.vi.3-5)

Echoing these sentiments, Juliet also expresses the same feeling by prolonging the moment:

Juliet: Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay husband, friend,  
 I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
 For in a minute there are many days.  
 O, by this count I shall be much in years  
 Ere I again behold my Romeo.  
 (III.v.)

As the play develops, Shakespeare sustains emphasis on the continuous counterpoint between ordinary time (an exactly stipulated day, hour or moment) and unreal time. The lovers withdraw into a private world of intimacy, suspending the world's ordinary time and replacing it with the rival time of the imagination. In this way, we can see at the close of the play two different realities. The physical reality: sad and sorrowful; and the psychic reality which, for Romeo and Juliet, is the authentic one. The strength and depth of their passion go beyond the mere dimensions of time. Thus, their love survives after death and achieves a spiritually eternal alliance.

"Reconciliation" is *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest's* conclusion. However, in *Romeo and Juliet* reconciliation is achieved at a high price. Friar Laurence, an important character in the play, sees that in Romeo and Juliet's marriage there lies a chance of reconciling the Montagues and Capulets. Thus, he agrees to assist Romeo. The Friar's hopes come true through the sacrifice of the lovers: "Poor sacrifices of our enmity", exclaims old Capulet. Capulet takes Montague's hand as the play ends in front of the lifeless young lovers, sealing the bond of marriage between the two families in a dowry of love:

O brother Montague, give me thy hand.  
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more  
Can I demand.

(V.iii.295-296)

In *The Tempest*, Prospero also aims at reconciliation. He says that he will offer his enemies forgiveness rather than revenge: "Though with their wrongs I am struck to th' quick, / Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury / Do I take part: the rarer action is virtue than in vengeance". (V.i.24-32)

The climax is reached, in Act V.sc.i. 71-79, when Prospero says to his enemies, as they are arraigned for judgment in a circle: "Behold, Sir King, the wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero". However, so completely has he adopted the policy of forgiveness that he follows this immediately with: "To thee and thy Company I bid a hearty welcome". Then follows general restitution: his Dukedom to Prospero; Ferdinand to his father; his island to Caliban and freedom to Ariel. In this scene, Prospero offers forgiveness to his brother Antonio and King Alonso through whose conspiracy he had lost the Dukedom of Milan. Prospero achieves reconciliation with his enemies by means of his magic (his Art), assisted everytime by Ariel, the spirit of air, and other supernatural beings.

Repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation is the great triptych we find at the close of the play. Living in harmony with men and nature is ultimately a characteristic of romance. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the character who symbolises the union between man and nature is Friar Laurence: philosopher and scientist, an expert in herbs who manufactures drugs, medicines and the like. In *The Tempest*, Prospero is the symbol of harmony and wisdom. In direct contrast to Prospero, who also personifies good and evil, there arises the figure of Caliban, who represents evil. Nevertheless, this "horrid" character is aware of Prospero's powerful "art". Caliban knows that Prospero's magic is irresistible to evil. Thus, when being threatened by Prospero, Caliban answers:

No, pray thee.  
(Aside) I must obey: his Art is of such pow'r,  
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,  
And make a vassal of him".

(I.ii.373-376)

In the tragic romance of *Romeo and Juliet* the supernatural world is less evident as the result of the lovers' certain death which acts against the wonders of the supernatural world and forces it to remain in the background, as Northop Frye describes in *Anatomy of Criticism*<sup>2</sup>.

In *Romeo and Juliet* (I.iv. 53-94) the supernatural world is introduced in the "Queen Mab" speech spoken by Mercutio. The Queen Mab speech is a burlesque, mocking an assembly of folk-tale figures, proverbial rural superstitions, old wives' tales and ancient myths.

Northop Frye remarks that *Romeo and Juliet* "is nearer romance than the later tragedies due to the mitigatory influences which act in opposite direction to catharsis, absorbing the irony of the leading characters" (p. 59)<sup>3</sup>.

Besides the Queen Mab speech, we can also appreciate that supernatural powers are present throughout *Romeo and Juliet* in the omens and auspices which emerge from the characters and fill them with horror.

Thus, Friar Laurence, or the nurse, are constantly in fear because of the conflicting situation between love and hatred, misfortune and death, and the ambiguous environment which causes events to move at high speed.

The omen is an important aspect in tragedy. It holds the threads of the plot entwined, as regards both action and suspense. This is precisely the facet in which we find the analogy with the supernatural world featured in romance. In conclusion, we maintain that *Romeo and Juliet* is endowed with the characteristics of romance, although ultimately it is a *tragic* romance.

2 FRYE, Northop: *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays*, New York, Princeton University (1957), 1967, pág. 59.

3 FRYE, Northop: *Op. cit.*, pág. 59.

WORKS CITED

- AGUILAR, M., ed. *William Shakespeare. Obras Completas* (Translated and annotated by Luis Astrana Marín), Madrid, Aguilar S.L., 1947.
- ARNOLD, Edward, ed. *Later Shakespeare*. London: Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, 1966.
- BULLOUGH, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
- FELPERIN, Howard. *Shakespearean Romance*. New York: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- FRYE, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. 1957. New York: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- . *On Shakespeare*. Ontario (Canada): Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1986.
- JOHNSON, Samuel. *The plays of William Shakespeare*. [1765].
- KNIGHT, G. Wilson. *The Crown of Life*. Great Britain: Methuen & Co., 1982.
- SHAKESPEARE, William. *Romeo and Juliet*, (edited by Brian Gibbons). The Arden Shakespeare. London: Methuen & Co., 1986.
- . *The Tempest* (edited by Frank Kermode). The Arden Shakespeare. London: Methuen and Co., 1986.

## CRISEYDE / CRESSEID / CRESSIDA: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Robert K. Sepherd

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Shakespeare's main source for *Troilus and Cressida* (1601/2) was, most probably, the 1599 Francis Thynne edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* in which *The Testament of Cresseid*, composed towards the end of the fifteenth century by the Dunfermline maker Robert Henryson, was appended to Chaucer's text. It is my opinion that the dramatist set out to blend the two very different treatments of the "heroine" that he found in these works into a coherent whole, and my aim in this paper is to show how he performed such a delicate literary graft. In so doing I wish to prove that the "operation" was successful in that it produced not the stock figure of a "shallow coquette"<sup>1</sup> whose metamorphosis from Troilus' lover to Diomedes' whore is too swift to be believable, but a well-rounded character whose reasons for doing what she did are, if not morally spotless, at least understandable.

When stating that Shakespeare set out to fuse Chaucer's and Henryson's treatments of Criseyde / Cresseid, I do not wish to suggest that he was attempting to reconcile polar opposites. His task was much more difficult - that of combining the ambivalent with the forthright.

Chaucer's interpretation of the lady's character and actions - particularly as regarded her motivations for deserting Troilus - was ever anything less than open-ended; here he took his cue from French and Italian sources. As C. David Benson points out, although Benoît de Saint-Maure (*Roman de Troie*, c. 1160) "draws a conventional lesson from the affair about the untrustworthiness of women"<sup>2</sup> he gives the "heroine" a long final speech in which "Briseida", although condemning herself as an opportunist, also pleads self preservation as an excuse. Alone and friendless in the Greek camp, she needed a protector, to be bought at any price. In *Il Filostrato* (c. 1338), while Boccaccio plays lip-service to Guido delle Colonne's harshly anti-feminist approach (*Historia Destructionis Troiae*, 1287) he seems rather to lose interest in than actively wish to condemn "Criseida"

1 W.W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (London and New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931) p. 197.

2 C. David Benson, *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 2.