

# The Bear in the Bush

O Urso no Arbusto

Aimara da Cunha Resende\*

## Summary

*This study discusses the different use of duplication in the structuring of ideological stances in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Linear duplication reinforced by classical motives and techniques forms the delimitation characteristic of Renaissance art while voicing the ideals of the status quo. On the other hand, not seldom simultaneously, a complex play of mirrors brings about the effusion and blurred contours of Baroque art and ironically destroys the established artistic and social ideals of the time, introducing doubt and a sense of relativity.*

## Resumo

*Este estudo discute o uso diferenciado da duplicação no processo de construção de Sonho de uma Noite de Verão. A duplicação linear, reforçada por motivos e técnicas clássicas, forma a delimitação característica da arte renascentista enquanto expressa os ideais do status quo. Por outro lado, e não raro, um complexo jogo de espelhos leva à efusão e aos contornos indistintos da arte barroca, destruindo ironicamente os ideais artísticos e sociais vigentes, introduzindo a dúvida e a relatividade.*

Renaissance art is characterized by a strong tendency to clear countours, definite ideals of balance

and propriety, classical motives. The Baroque, in its opposition to the Renaissance and in its search for expansion and infinitude, is built up through lack of delineation, doubt, complexity. As a result of these opposed tendencies the duplication structuring them is one of linear mirroring in the case of the Renaissance; and of complex mirrors in Baroque works of literature. In his play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* William Shakespeare makes use of both kinds of specularity so that the certainty and stability of the establishment is shaken and ironically destroyed at the deep level of the text while on the superficial level there is an appearance of idealized values both social and artistic.

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream* one has a comedy based on classical motives such as love hindered by a father's antagonism, crossed pairs of lovers, misunderstanding and misplaced interference, partial disguise, of the sort of Bottom's asses' head.<sup>1</sup> At the very beginning the reader/audience is presented with the characterization of Theseus – the representative of the ideals of the time – as a man utterly aware of the human condition and consequently very much linked to the earth. To him doubtless man had better live the **present moment** (and here one has an obvious Renaissance motive) than experience the beatitude of spiritual existence. He is also the man aware of the facts of this world, to whom only feason counts, and whose judgement cannot be directed by fantasy or dreaming. It is the sensible mind that speaks through him. When Hippolyta comments on the strangeness of the young lover's report he replies: "More strange than true. I never may believe/

\* Departamento de Letras Germânicas, Faculdade de Letras, UFMG.

These antique fables, nor these fairy toys." (v. i. 3-4).

As a counterpart to the classical ruler embodied by Theseus, one has the rustics. Crude mechanicals, they are unable to grasp what is beyond the appearance of truth and consequently the play they are going to present before the nobility needs all warrant of reaffirmations. They cannot apprehend the dream-world of the treatise and so they feel the utter need for explanations concerning the duplicity of their roles. Reality is an imperative for them; and their reality is, above all, their delineated being, having a definitive place and time to exist. They must be ensured of this concreteness by the insertion of their identity in the language of the play or by detailed information concerning their characterization. They must be sure of not being mistaken for someone or some beast they really are not:

**Bottom:** Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver.

(III i. 18-23)

**Bottom:** Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, "Ladies", or, "Fair ladies", 'I would wish you', or, 'I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing: I am a man as other men are; and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

(III. I. 31-48)

And they go on with their preparations making sure that every little device does embody reality. In their little clear-cut world so intensely contrasted with Oberon's and Titania's fairyland! – every detail has to conform with the place assigned for it; no imagination is allowed. Very often expressions such as 'pat', 'my life for

yours', 'it were pity on my life', 'the truth is so', 'in truth' body forth the actuality they endeavour to establish during the prologue and in the replies of the actors to the interfering audience of the 'play within the play'.

Of all these rustics Bottom is the one who most deeply embodies Theseus's counterpart. Mirroring the amateur actors of that time who thought of themselves as excellent performers, able to play any part, Bottom cannot flutter above Theseus's earthly kingdom and so depends entirely on truth, discharging even the possibility of a dream being told. From the very beginning he is a 'man of evidences' and as such unable to appreciate the subtle opportunities offered him by enamoured Titania. In the scene in the woods, when she introduces her elves to him, the earthliness with which he talks to them makes the reader/audience instantly change from the paradisiac dream-world to his prosaic universe. Just observe the opposition, brought forth by language, between the scenes when Puck meets a fairy and when Titania goes to sleep, on the one hand, and that with Bottom among the fairies, on the other. The environment is the same but the feeling transmitted is radically changed. In the first scenes mentioned, where the whole pattern is a Renaissance one, there is a touch of suave beauty, like a miniature by Nicholas Hilliard. The suggestion of the enchanted land is created by means of the rhythm, of antithesis, of enumeration – all Renaissance techniques. There is clear delineation of each element and one is aware of a composition where every image accords with the others, in some sort of complementation; in act II, scene 1 the fairy describes the fairyland both to Puck and, obviously, to the reader/audience:

**Puck:** How now, spirit! Whither wander you?

**Fairy:** Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander every where,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green:  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In their freckles live their savours:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
(II. I. 1-15)

The balance achieved in the fairy's speech is based on antithetical images: hill-dale; bush-brier; park-pale; flood-fire; on some alliteration, such as park-pale; flood-fire; bush-brier; swifter-moon's-sphere; must-see-some-drops; one repetition: thorough; and mainly on the rhythm, marked but not tiresome, due to a gradual variation which takes place as the idea is developed from the suggestion of the elf's errands, in the beginning, bringing forth the connotation of his hopping movement. The rhythm conveying this movement is brought about by amphimacer dimeters which make up the first four lines and first half of the fifth, when it changes to iambic feet of which the following lines are composed in tetrameters, except for the beginning of the sixth, seventh and eleventh lines, where a trochee introduces the ideas of comparison to the movement of the moon, statements of the elf's function and the jewel-like present of the fairies. This melodious speech has no enjambment, which accounts for the clearly marked rhythm. In this balanced indirect description of Titania's Nature Kingdom, where England's countryside is depicted, one has the environment functioning not as some confuse interpenetration of the human and fairy worlds, of the kind found in Baroque pictures, but only as the background where human and supernatural beings move and

are juxtaposed in their parallel but separate worlds.

The second Renaissance scene to be considered is the one just before and during the time when Titania is lulled by the fairies, in act II, scene 2:

**Titania:** Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;  
Then, for the third of a minute, hence;  
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,  
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back  
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, and wonders  
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;  
Then to your offices, and let me rest.  
(the fairies sing)

I

You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen;  
Newts, and blind-worms, do no wrong;  
Come not near our fairy queen.  
Philomel, with melody,  
Sing in our sweet lullaby  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla lulla, lullaby:  
Never harm,  
Nor spell, nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh;  
So good night with lullaby.

II

Weaving spiders come not here;  
Hence, you long legg'd spinners, hence!  
Beetles black, approach not near;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.  
Philomel, with melody & c.

(II. II. 1-24)

Once again alliteration, chiefly of sibillant sounds, creates an atmosphere of peace and drowsiness: some-cankers-musk-rose-buds; war-rere-their-leathern; small-elves-coats-some-spirits-sing-asleep-of-fices-rest-spotted-snakes; hedge-hogs; long-legged; beetles-beach. Besides alliteration, repetition lulls one into a doze: Some-some; Hence-hence; this is reinforced by the refrain, another sort of repetition. Once again most of the stanzas are formed of end-stopped lines, thus delineating the images created at the same time that

rhythm is fixedly marked. Iambic pentameters make up the largest part of the stanzas; only when a new idea is introduced is the foot changed. Thus, in the second line, one has a dactylic trimeter encompassing Titania's dismissal of her servants; the third line, which opens the listing of their appointed tasks, begins with a trochee, to go on in iambic pentameters. When the fairy queen stops enumerating her vassal's offices and orders them to lull her, the iamb gives room to a trochaic trimeter. As a matter of fact on a first reading of this line the Latin scansion would detect an iamb. It happens that due to the peculiar stresses of the English language the words 'Sing me now asleep' correspond to a trochaic foot, not an iamb. In the song there is extense variation of feet, which creates a lively rhythm, suitable to the light creatures that sing it at the same time that it reflects the multiple beings it is addressed to. The device of the song, at this point, is a good way of bringing forth the 'essences' of Titania's natural kingdom.

If one compares these two previous scenes with those in the same environment, where Bottom is present, one notices an abrupt change of atmosphere, as if the human earthly being were here to destroy the flimsy background then existing. The unimaginative man, unable to grasp the meaning of beauty, can only see in nature and its bounty the practicality at hand. In act II, scene 1 and act IV, scene 1, the fairies' world is changed into mere tools to satisfy Bottom's material wishes. When Titania orders her elves to bring him the exquisite fruit of the forest, Bottom, the realist who states that 'to say the truth reason and love keep little company together now-a-days' does not want the delicious meal offered him, but declares that he would prefer:

... a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a good

desire to a bootle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

(IV. I. 42-3)

Titania evokes around her the classical atmosphere of a Boticelli canvas, while Bottom's gross materialism pulls one back to earth.

It is also only in the rustics' play that language appears in verse form. Here Shakespeare plunges into derision of the rules of Renaissance poetics by ironically recreating, in accordance with the alleged rules, the sort of poetry which would not stand criticism if brought into focus, not as the product of a rude, almost illiterate workman-writer, but as art for art's sake. Quince cannot create poetry though he obeys the established norms of repetition, alliteration, explanation, marked rhythm, simile, personification. Despite that subservience, his incapability to "turn to sha-pe" "things unknown" makes him a writer who had better disappear, as Theseus remarks:

If he that writ it had played Pyramus, and hanged himself  
in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy.

(v. I. 366-8)

Concerning the rustic's language, the very bush where a bear seems to be hidden, though on the superficial level it reflects the unpolished and incorrect utterance of rude people, at a deeper one it leads the reader/audience to the criticism of attitudes reflecting feelings characteristic of Shakespeare's time, ideologically conditioned to accept certain established values. The fact that they so often misuse words, as if in a slip of the tongue, makes one suspicious of so-me unconscious need or emotion repressed long ago and through some catexis able to emerge, though disguised.<sup>2</sup> Close analysis will show these slips of the tongue disguised among some real errors. But the disguise cannot prevent the discovery that the thoughts misrepresented

through those "joking" exchanges are nothing but the Poet's glimpses of another truth, not the one searched for by the Renaissance Theseus/rustics, but the truth behind the mask, some repressed feeling concerning either social values and 'status quo' or sexual yearnings. It is not merely the language of the uncultured. There is something behind such expressions as:

a) Bot.: We will meet; and there we may rehearse more *obscenely* and courageously. (I. ii. 111-12)

b) Bot.: and he himself (the lion) must speak through, saying thus, or to the same *defect*... (III. i, 40-41)

c) Quin.: Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to *disfigure*, or to present the person of Moonshine. (III. i, 63-66)

d) Quin.: and he is a very *paramour* for a sweet voice. (IV. ii, 12-13)

(my italics)

In quotes a) and d) the sexual connotation is clear; at a moment before the nuptial night it is very likely that many minds would be concerned with the expected "finale" of the wedding rites and thus the words emerging inadequately from the rustic's unconscious, merely reflect the general thoughts of both audiences, the one of the 'play within the play' and the one of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

In the other two instances the repressed feeling is not erotic, but critical – literary, a sort of malapropism. Here the Poet thrusts a dagger into the established norms of the Renaissance. As a matter of fact what there is in the play is a farce, which "desfigures" art to the "defect" of a badly written work.

Another very subtle use of distortion is to be found in the 'play within the play', in the scene of the exchange of loving oaths between Pyramus and Thisbe. Here the great symbol of everlasting love – Pyramus and Thisbe – is made fun of,

following the track of linear reflections provided by the deep level. The reversed image is to come out suddenly, veering from the linear to the unexpected complex play of mirrors, typical of the Baroque, in the Helen symbol and through a slip of the tongue. Pyramus and Thisbe, through the mouth of the ignorant Bottom and Flute, present a series of duplications of true love: Pyramus/Thisbe; Leander/Hero; Cephalus/Procris. Their names are somewhat distorted, just as their symbolism is reverted. So far, the same kind of Renaissance linear reflexivity is found. Nevertheless the synthesis of the incongruous ideal of everlasting love seems to spring up in the Baroque manner in the language they use. The Renaissance attitude expressed in the Pyramus/Thisbe dialogue is the certainty of their true love:

This.: My love! Thou art my love, I think.

Pry.: Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace.

(V. i, 198-9)

and it is then elaborated through the repetition – characteristic of classical equilibrium – of other mythological symbols: Hero and Leander, Cefalus and Procris. The distorted names are easily accepted as mispronunciation due to the speakers' ignorance. But before the exchange of their oaths, something takes place subtly – the presentation, in language, of the disturbance and bewilderment implicit in the Baroque attitude, by means of misplaced sensations: "Pyr.: I see a voice: now will I to the chink,/ To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face." (V. i, 195-6): This misuse of language may be thought to have its origin in the actor's lack of knowledge and, obviously, considered a device to achieve comic effects. So far, acceptable. But as one goes on critically detaching these mispronunciations one gets to a point when the cause for the confusion is obvious – it will spring up in the very

central symbolism of Hero/Helen. Hero is the model consciously chosen as duplication of true love. She was so faithful to Leander that she killed herself after his death. But in a slip of the tongue, Pyramus/Bottom calls her Helen, the symbol of sensuality, of feminine frailty. The change, here, is quite to the point since it cannot be linguistically explained, as is Limander for Leander; this mistake comes out of ignorant distortion by way of addition; or Shafalus for Cephalus, and Procris for Procris, also explained through the similarity in the position of the mouth during the production of these sounds. But the nearly total modification of Helen for Hero has no possible explanation on linguistic grounds. Only a slip of the tongue can be responsible for it. Shakespeare's belief that love is not everlasting comes out skillfully mixed in the distorted symbolism. This is a Baroque moment, as it has no clear delineation, no step by step elaboration such as is found in the 'myse en abyme' of the sequence of mythological true lovers. It confronts one in the reversed verb sensation of the beginning and achieves its full disturbed synthesis in the implications conveyed by the Helen myth.

Another example of Shakespeare's stance running counter to the Renaissance canons comes to light in Thisbe's speech when she sees Pyramus dead:

This.: Asleep, my love?

O Pyramys, arise!

Speak, speak! Quite dumb?

Dead, dead! A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone:

Lovers, make moan!

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word:  
Come, trusty sword:  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

(stabs herself)  
(V. 1, 332-353)

Among the repetitions and alliterations that due to misrepresentation and hyperbolic expression of distress lead one to a mocking vision of the established norms, there appears Shakespeare's attitude towards classical impositions: the wrongly applied description of the beloved. One has only to compare it to any literary composition after Petrarch to see the ridicule of the imagery here presented in reverse: lips are not cherry, but lily; marble-like nose becomes cherry and lovely rose cheeks are now yellow cowslip. To complete the ironical portrait nothing better than leeks to stand as symbolical of his eyes. The marked rhythm is broken when an interjection appears; and the passage is full of interjections. Shakespeare's criticism of contemporary writers is thus clear.

A play absorbed in the ideology of its time, the *Midsummer Night's Dream* tends towards the use of Renaissance structure as well as the motives and techniques then considered important. The main Renaissance motives here found are:

- a) The realistic man either sensible and intellectualized – and as a consequence upholding the status quo, embodied in Theseus; or the earthy man, gross and ignorant, whose characteristic stance is drawn through Bottom and his companions;
- b) Love seen as immature experience. Theseus's love for Hippolyta is utterly different from that felt by the young people. It is mature and lacks beauty, looking more like some necessary compromise while theirs, full of romanticism, stands out as being unflinching and so easily changeable.
- c) Clearly exposed feeling; the young lovers' feelings are seen through their expressions.
- d) Ideal Platonic/Petrarchan feminine beauty, chiefly symbolized in Helena.

Idealization of sentimental experience, mainly presented through Titania's love for ass-headed Bottom.

e) Search for stability, which permeates the whole play by means of the attempt to support the status quo, represented by Theseus and wedlock.

f) Man – in all cases, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* seen as easily analyzed, presenting no riddle. One can predict what is to become of all characters.

g) More importantly: the present time embodied in the May nights, chiefly the midsummer night.

h) Use of pastoral images twice inside two eclogues to be studied further on.

The Baroque elements in this play do not appear so massively as the Renaissance ones do. These are found as part of the presentation of the identity of the characters and also of the society the comedy is written for. But the Baroque clash of emotions, the lack of delineation, the obscurity of ideals are conveyed through language, and more extensively, in five moments; the *Pyramus-Thisbe* play, already considered here, Titania's speech on the disturbance of the seasons, Hippolyta's words about the impact of hunting dogs in Crete, Helena's speech evocative of hers and Hermia's childhood and in Theseus's speech on the poets, madmen and lovers. If these are confronted with three other speeches, which resemble eclogues, the two kinds of duplication can be seen.

The eclogues, written at their beginning after the Arcadian manner, are structured around the Renaissance principles of balance, repetition and opposition. When Hermia and Lysander are left alone after her being given some time to decide between Demetrius and the convent, they lament over the predicament of true love. Their dialogue sounds classical, at first, with antithetical ideas: high x low, old x young; and with balanced rhythm, in end-stopped lines:

Lys.: Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,

Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth;

But, either it was different in blood, –  
Her.: O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

Lys.: Or else misgraffed in respect of years, –

Her.: O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

Lys.: Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, –

Her.: O hell! to chose love by another's eye.

Lys.: Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death or sickness did lay siege to it,  
Making it momentary as a sound,

Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,  
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,

That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,

And ere a man hath power to say,  
'Behold!'

The jaws of darkness do devour it up:  
So quick bright things come to confusion.

(I. 1, 132-149)

Shakespeare's idea of true love, as presented through Lysander, is at first one of something 'momentary' as lightning in the darkness. But the way he puts it follows the Renaissance decorum. The reasons why 'true love never did run smooth' are given, step by step: it cannot be fulfilled because there is a difference in social status, or in age, or because relatives won't accept the match. If nothing like that occurs, then some outer force will come in its way – death, war, sickness. Hermia's interference comes in just to corroborate what Lysander says and to add a 'crescendo' to the misfortunes presented: 'O cross!'; 'O hell!'. The 'crescendo', a Baroque technique, insinuates itself among the Renaissance threads and reinforces the motive of impossible, suffering love. After the balanced collocation and subtle interpolation of the 'crescendo' there is a clash of emotion and thought when the Baroque synthesis makes its appearance – the image of night devouring up lightning; the idea of the swift passing by of love. The symbolism of the lightning (power and utmost creative element,

uniting heaven and earth) conveys the idea of a return to the womb, possibly the only situation in which happiness can be achieved.<sup>3</sup> Though here, too, alliteration appears, it is only once: 'Swift as a shadow, short as'; and it is skillfully used to reinforce the achievement of sensation of movement created by the short sounding words in the lines: 'war, death... night', which come after slowly flowing verses and followed by long sounding and nasal words such as appear in the line: 'That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth'. The nasalization helps to convey the impression of heaviness.

Another moment to be considered, this time a Renaissance one, the talk between Hermia and Helena, brings forth once more some characteristic elements of pastoral eclogues: the contrasted predicaments creating balance, the clearly marked rhythm (iambic), the pastoral images surrounding idyllic love. The girls' feelings are presented in the Renaissance style of classical pastoral ideals:

**Hell.:** Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

**Demetrius** loves you fair: O happy fair! Your eyes are lode-stars! and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching: O were favour so, Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go; My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated. O! teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

**Her.:** I frown upon him yet he loves me still.

**Hel.:** O! that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill.

**Her.:** I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

**Hel.:** O! that my prayers could such affection move.

**Her.:** The more I hate, the more he follows me.

**Hel.:** The more I love, the more he hateth me.

**Her.:** His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

**Hel.:** None but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

(I. I, 181-201)

The classical construction goes from the pastoral images – lode-star, shepherd; green wheat, hawthorn buds – to repetitions – eye... eye; tongue... tongue. Then it moves on to the balanced oppositions – frown x smile; curse x love; love x hate. In the evolution of these balanced rhetorical statements, one element marks the passage in Helena's mood from despondency to decision (the decision here hinted at which will later on be the catalyst in the development of the plot of criss-cross lovers). She shows how ready she is to do anything capable of abating Demetrius's resistance to her love. This moment of transformation in her mood is marked by a change in rhythm; a trochee suddenly thwarts the iambic lines: 'Sickness is catching: O were favour so,/Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go'.

This dialogue is loaded with the established elements of Renaissance poetics. One doesn't find in it any device conducive to doubt, disturbance, unbalanced positioning. Helena's suffering is the classical suffering of 'star-crossed lovers'. In her features the conventional romantic lover is present (pale, tall, unendingly doting upon an emotionally disinterested man). In her suffering and in its contrast to Hermia's fortune lies the motif of the speech – love as it is ideally seen by those watching the play. Such love, as it is going to be developed in the structure of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is the one fitting the ideology of the audience it is addressed to; it must then be presented by means of the

accepted conventional poetics. In the duplication here found Hermia is the mirror reflecting Helena's wishes as well as the values of Shakespeare's society.

This sort of linear duplication is repeated in act I, scene 2, in the dialogue between Demetrius and Helena, in the woods. Using the same devices of contrast and repetition, including the antithetical images of the reversed hunting when 'cowardice pursues and valour flies' – Daphne x Apollo; dove x griffin; hind x tiger; cowardice x valour, Demetrius's speech reproduces unloved Helena's verbal construct.

From the suggestion of incongruity in the idea of human love's everlasting essence as is reiterated throughout the play by variously constructed linear mirror reflexions or duplications, Shakespeare leads one to the deeper vision of the only valid possibility of intense feeling: creative experience. It is through fancy that beauty and happiness take place. Fancy and imagination – the dream that is a vision, 'a most rare vision' because it is not part of ideologically viewed human life, cannot be conveyed by means of the accepted poetic standard of the times, Renaissance duplication. At this moment, when the Poet probably means to stress the value of creative life, he makes use of the Baroque synthesis: glimpses of a compound of impressions, mixed up vision lacking realistic contour.

The ideal of beauty/love as Shakespeare seems to conceive it, will emerge and set the pattern for the deeper structure: love will be great and true only when experienced by lovers whose place is among lunatics and poets. As these are the only ones able to grasp deep and everlasting feelings, they can feel love to its full, or the ecstasy of creation in its quintessence:

Lovers and madmen have such seething  
brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever  
comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can  
hold,  
That is the madman; the lover, all as  
frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from  
earth to heaven  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's  
pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy  
nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

(V. I, 4-17)

These words, in the mouth of the sensible man, Theseus, echo the opposition Renaissance x Baroque inside the play. Theseus's imagery is Baroque. It is the apprehension of another world, not the world of reality, but of fancy. In his creative process, the poet gives a place and a name to the unacceptable and so builds a bridge between dream and reality; the lunatic and the lover experience the 'most rare vision' but are powerless to give it an habitation and a name, because they don't master language.

The Baroque motive of evocation is superbly created in a moment of classically comic abuse. In the midst of the dissensions between the four young people, when Helena believes both Lysander's and Demetrius's protestations of love to be a means of ridiculing her, which she thinks Hermia approves, there appears her address to the latter, full of tender evocation of their childhood:

Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,  
The sister-vows, the hours that we have  
spent,  
When we have chid the hasty-footed time  
For parting us, o! is it all forgot?  
All school-days' friendship, childhood  
innocence?  
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,  
Have with our needles created both one  
flower

Both one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
Both warbling of one song, both in one  
key,  
As if our hands, our sides, voices and  
minds,  
Had been incorporate. So we grew  
together,  
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
But yet an union in partition;  
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;  
So, with two seeming bodies, but one  
heart;  
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
Due but to one, and crowned with one  
crest.

(III. II, 198-214)

As if on a tapestry the picture of the two girls is brought before the reader/audience, in a unified composition. The imagery connoting the idea of two in one is repeatedly conveyed: 'both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion', both warbling of one song'; 'both in one key'; 'double cherry'; 'union in partition'; 'two lovely berries moulded in one stem'; 'two seeming bodies'; 'coats crowned with one crest'. There is repetition, here, not aiming at enumeration or opposition, but presented in such a way as to prepare one for the 'crescendo' in lines 207, 208: 'As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds had been incorporate'. This is one of the few examples, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, of what Hatzfeld calls 'hidden antithesis'.<sup>4</sup> The static view of the two girls together, as fruit coming from one common stem, in truth leads one to some deeper feeling of loss. The Baroque motives of evocation, passing of time, spiritual incorporation of physical aspects are all there waiting to be detected and in fact give the passage its main mood. This mood is also built up by means of the alliteration of sibilants together with many caesuras in the verses, which create an atmosphere of diaphanous irreality.

It is through Titania, a fairy goddess, the queen of England's green world that there appears the greatest Baroque poetical synthesis in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Handling

pastoral elements some of which were used linearly in the *Hermia-Helena* speech and in the fairies' scenes, Shakespeare empties them of their previous meanings and what was once gradual opposition becomes now total apprehension of a state of bewilderment and disturbance:

Tit.: And never, since the middle  
summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,  
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling  
wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd  
our sport.  
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the  
sea  
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the  
land,  
Have every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their  
continents:  
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke  
in vain,  
The ploughman has lost his sweat, and  
the green corn  
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:  
The fold stands empty in the drowned  
field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrion  
flock;  
The nine men morris is fill'd up with mud,  
And the quaint mazes in the wanton  
green  
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
The human mortals want their winter  
here:  
No night is now with hymn or carrol  
blest;  
Therefore the moon, the governess of  
floods,  
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound:  
And through this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on Hiem's thin and icy crown  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer  
buds,  
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the  
summer,  
The chiding autumn, angry winter,  
change  
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed  
world,  
By their increase, now knows not which  
is which.  
And this same progeny of evil comes

From our debate, from our dissension:  
We are their parents and original.  
(II. i, 82-117)

Disturbance here is due to lack of love and misunderstanding. Shakespeare is not talking of married love, of love as it is established by social rules, but of harmony. The same images which might be connected with idealized pastoral values appear in this passage. But there is no Arcadia here. They are emptied of their pastoral meaning and come out as a void that is transposed from the outer to the inner surface. Void in wedlock (true love?) = void in symbolism of pastoral life connotative of love. Here the opposition becomes a paradox: where there is plenty (contagious fogs;

overborne continents; stretch'd yoke; fatted crows; drowned field; abundant diseases), this abundance means lack, void (fogs sucked up from the sea; lost sweat; stretched yoke **in vain**; **no seasoning** of corn; **empty** field; **murrion** flock). The world which might be paradisaical becomes full either of nothingness or evil. This paradoxically unified image of plenty/void is compressed into the confused visualization of the altered seasons. There is no balance, no distribution. The only global image is that of 'distemperature'. The sweet remembrance of hymns and carols being sung in winter nights is washed away by the 'governess of flood'. One might say that Shakespeare, through

Titania, with the imagery of rain and floods, yearns for some sort of purification which will put an end to the compelling force that disturbs the environment: lack of true love. Hatred, embodied in the fairy sovereigns 'debate' and 'dissension', is the cause of it all. And hatred cannot coexist with beauty and creativity. Being destructive, it has demolished every possible suggestion of peace and classical illusory beauty. Titania's speech, Baroque in its unity, expresses perhaps some repressed ideal of return to the richness of the imaginary world of the poet/lunatic/lover lost in the Renaissance 'cool reason'. □

---

#### NOTES

All quotations from Shakespeare are from GRAIG, J. W., *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1955.

- <sup>1</sup> On classical motives see NEVO, R., *Comic transformations in Shakespeare*. London; Methuen, 1980, p.37-107.
- <sup>2</sup> See FREUD, S., *Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis*. London; Hogarth, 1973, part I, v.14 of the Standard Edition.
- <sup>3</sup> See HATZFELD, H. *Estudios sobre el Barroco*. Trans. FIGUEIRA, A., CLAVEIRA, C. & MINIATI, M. Madrid; Gredos, 1966, p.122.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p.196.