



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree

in

European, American and Postcolonial
Languages and Literatures

Final Thesis

***Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and
The Tempest: Same Story, Different Versions?***
A Comparative Analysis of Shakespeare's Romances.

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Academic Year

2019 / 2020

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ABSTRACT

Late plays, Last plays, Romances and Tragicomedies are the most commonly used labels adopted by critics to describe and classify *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. These four plays were written by William Shakespeare between the years 1608-1611. Why are these works usually grouped together? Starting with Edward Dowden, several critics have observed that themes and motifs are repeated throughout each play. All four plays' storyline follow a 3-steps scheme composed as follows: separation, quests and reunion. The present study aims to investigate if these plays are four different versions of the same story. To answer this question, I will make a comparative analysis of the plays by focusing on their common features. This dissertation is composed of an introductory chapter and three other chapters, each one pertaining to the analysis of one of these three steps. References will be also made to other relevant topics such as characters, time, music and magic.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to the Plays

1.1. *The group*

The present study will focus on *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

William Shakespeare wrote these four plays at the end of his career between 1608 and 1611. To be more accurate, these are not the only last works he wrote during his last phase as a playwright. Taking into account that there is no certainty over the exact order of composition, what follows is the list of those supposedly written between 1608 and 1614.

- *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607-1608)
- *Coriolanus* (1608)
- *Cymbeline* (1610)
- *The Winter's Tale* (1609-1611)
- *The Tempest* (1610-1611)
- *Cardenio* (1612-1613)
- *Henry VIII* (1612-1613)
- *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-1614)

This dissertation, however, will not deal with *Coriolanus*, *Cardenio* (a lost play), *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, as they do not fit its object of research.

Since the 19th century, literary criticism has started to group *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* together and to look for a name to define this cluster. The question of authorship did not allow this group to be fully accepted by all the critics. Therefore, certain scholars have included in the group *The Two Noble Kinsmen* while others have excluded *Pericles* from it.

It has soon been noticed that it was not an easy task trying to categorize these plays with a particular literary genre. These works could not be defined as proper tragedies nor comedies. This was not new with Shakespeare, who was known for his ability to range from one genre to another. And yet these four plays have pushed several critics throughout the years to find a reason behind their peculiarity. They have tried to justify their originality by focusing on the written late style, on Shakespeare's personal vicissitudes, on historical and cultural events happening in England during the early 17th century. Both the question of categorization and the question of originality have already been widely discussed by critics.

This paper aims to explore, through a comparative analysis of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, themes, characters, motifs and literary techniques repeated throughout each play. Particular attention will be given to the 3-steps scheme that characterizes the structure of all four storylines. This scheme is composed as follows:

- 1) First step: Process of separation
- 2) Second step: Series of quests
- 3) Third step: Process of reunion and reconciliation

Furthermore, references will occasionally be made to other Shakespearean works that these plays reminded us: *Othello*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *King Lear*.

As Hallett Smith noticed in his *Shakespeare's Romances*, this group of four plays distinguishes itself from other Shakespearean plays; He wrote:

It would be easy to pile up instances of repeated themes, motifs, and phrases from the earlier plays in the romances and still leave the reader of Shakespeare unsatisfied because he would feel, no matter what you said, that there is a striking difference between the romances and the tragedies¹.

In the essay *Constant Wanderings and Longed-For Returns: Odyssean Themes in Shakespearean Romance* while talking about the central theme of male-female relationship in both Homer and Shakespeare, the author John Dean states the following:

The coherent development of this theme throughout Shakespeare's romances is one reason why we find that "in his last romances...Shakespeare continues to write the same play", a play which he alters somewhat with each "retelling" to achieve fresh dramatic results, yet within which he maintains a constant set of thematic preoccupations and similar structural unity².

The present study in fact aims to investigate how these plays seem to be four different versions of the same story. To this introductory chapter will follow three other chapters, each one pertaining to the analysis of the storyline's three steps.

References will also be made to other relevant topics such as characters, time, music and magic.

1.2. First Folio and Labels

¹ H. Smith, *Shakespeare's Romances*, in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, May 1964, pp. 279-287, p. 284.

² J. Dean, *Constant Wanderings and Longed-For Returns: Odyssean Themes in Shakespearean Romance*, in *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1, University of Manitoba, Autumn 1978, pp. 47-60, p. 52, quoting D. Stauffer, *Shakespeare's World of Images*, New York, Norton, 1949, p. 291.

Before diving into the analysis of the four plays taken into account, I believe it is necessary to present the various terms used throughout the years in reference to this group.

In 1623 John Heminge or Heminges (1566-1630) and Henry Condell (1576-1627), two of Shakespeare's fellow actors and friends, published, as a homage to their colleague, the first authorized collection of his plays known as *First Folio*. According to the website of The British Library, it has been estimated that Shakespeare wrote approximately 37 works (plus one lost play named *Cardenio*, written with John Fletcher), and only half of them were printed during his lifetime in quarto editions³. These plays were written to be performed and not to be read. The texts of the plays were printed for practical reasons only. The main reason why companies printed their playbooks was to submit them to the Master of the Revels, the official government censor of drama at the time. He was the one in charge to evaluate if a play was suitable to be performed at court before the queen. Once the play was approved, the Master of the Revels attached his license at the end of the manuscript⁴. Besides these editions, there were pirate copies (bad quartos).

As Professor Garber wrote in her book *Shakespeare After All*, these texts, that today we would call "scripts", were not regarded as literature. It is important to remember that at that time there was not the concept of copyright as we are used to know. For this reason, playwrights had no control in the printing and diffusion of their plays⁵.

Introducing the Folio edition, the editors of this collection wrote:

Where before you were abused with diverse stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors that exposed them: even those are now offered to your view

³ <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/shakespeares-first-folio>, accessed June 2020.

⁴ M. Dobson, S. Wells & W. Sharpe (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 70.

⁵ M. Garber, *Shakespeare After All*, New York, Pantheon Books, 2004, pp. 8-9.

cured, and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them.⁶

Without the Folio edition the other half of these plays might never have reached the present day. Not only did Heminge and Condell collect these plays as an homage to Shakespeare, but also their larger purpose was to put an end to rewritings and falsifications. Likely based on their memorial reconstruction and perhaps using some company's manuscripts or playbooks, Heminge and Condell published what they believed to be the correct versions of his works. Additionally, they catalogued his works into three main categories: comedies, histories and tragedies.

COMEDIES.			
<i>The Tempest.</i>	Folio 1.	<i>The First part of King Henry the fourth.</i> 46	
<i>The two Gentlemen of Verona.</i>	20	<i>The Second part of King Henry the fourth.</i> 74	
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor.</i>	38	<i>The Life of King Henry the Fifth.</i> 69	
<i>Measure for Measure.</i>	61	<i>The First part of King Henry the Sixth.</i> 96	
<i>The Comedy of Errors.</i>	85	<i>The Second part of King Hen. the Sixth.</i> 120	
<i>Much ado about Nothing.</i>	101	<i>The Third part of King Henry the Sixth.</i> 147	
<i>Twelve Labours of Hercules.</i>	122	<i>The Life and Death of Richard the Third.</i> 173	
<i>A Midsummer Nights Dreame.</i>	145	<i>The Life of King Henry the Eighth.</i> 205	
<i>The Merchant of Venice.</i>	163	TRAGEDIES.	
<i>As you Like it.</i>	185	<i>The Tragedy of Coriolanus.</i>	Folio 1.
<i>The Taming of the Shrew.</i>	208	<i>Titus Andronicus.</i>	31
<i>All is well, that Ends well.</i>	230	<i>Romeo and Juliet.</i>	53
<i>Twelve-Night, or what you will.</i>	255	<i>Timon of Athens.</i>	80
<i>The Winters Tale.</i>	304	<i>The Life and death of Julius Cesar.</i>	109
HISTORIES.		<i>The Tragedy of Macbeth.</i>	131
<i>The Life and Death of King John.</i>	Folio 1.	<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet.</i>	152
<i>The Life and death of Richard the second.</i>	23	<i>King Lear.</i>	283
		<i>Othello, the Moore of Venice.</i>	310
		<i>Anthony and Cleopatra.</i>	346
		<i>Cymbeline King of Brittain.</i>	369

[Fig. 1 Table of Contents from the First Folio, 1623.]

⁶ M. De Grazia & S.W. Wells (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 16.

The table of contents of the First Folio [Fig.1] listed *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* respectively as the first and last of comedies and *Cymbeline, King of Britain* as the last of tragedies. *Pericles* instead is not included. In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*, according to Professor Eugene Giddens the play *Pericles* "is the only late play to be published during Shakespeare's lifetime". The printed version of *Pericles* that we know is from a 1609 quarto. Giddens wrote:

The available evidence suggests that the play was just as well received by the contemporary reading public. It was published in quarto twice in 1609, and again in 1611, 1619, 1630 and 1635. Few plays of the period received so much print circulation⁷.

According to Garber this quarto edition is not regarded as a reliable or authorized one⁸.

There is no certainty as to why *Pericles* was not included.

A possible explanation is that *Pericles* being the result of a collaboration between Shakespeare and a writer called George Wilkins, did not deserve to be included in this collection. Because of the noticeable difference in style, most think that Wilkins has written the first two acts, while Shakespeare was the author of the last three.

The question of authorship is also supported by the fact that the play *The Two Noble Kinsmen* that Shakespeare wrote in collaboration with John Fletcher was not included either in the Folio edition. The first quarto edition of this play appears only later in 1634.

However, the similarity of *Pericles* with *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* is so remarkable that it is common practice to include it into this cluster.

⁷ E. Giddens, *Pericles: the Afterlife*, in Alexander Catherine M. S. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 173-184, p. 173.

⁸ Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 756.

From the table of contents, it can also be observed that terms such as Romances or Tragicomedies are not included in this first subdivision, meaning that at the time Shakespeare's editors did not consider these plays as a homogenous set⁹.

Up to the present day we do not have yet a precise term used to classify this group and that is universally accepted by literary criticism. For this reason, we can come across different labels like Romances, Tragicomedies, Late Plays or Last Plays.

Depending on what critics want to put emphasis on, they can choose one or more among these terms. In other words, choosing a term means to choose a particular critical approach.

To better explain their different use, I will briefly summarize each one of them.

1.2.1. Romances

With the tag 'Romance' the emphasis is put on their identification with a genre that is in itself difficult to define. Conventionally, romance is used to describe stories that are extravagant and picturesque and include certain recurrent literary elements. It is usually characterized by the presence of heroic and adventurous characters that have to face quests and events in remote places and times.

The first to use the term 'dramatic romance' in reference to Shakespeare's last plays was Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) during a lecture on *The Tempest* in 1818.

Nevertheless, the most influential critic who first gathered these plays in a group and appropriately elaborated their categorization as romances, was the Irish critic Edward Dowden (1843-1913) in his book *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (1875)¹⁰.

⁹ X. Chen, *Labelling Shakespeare's 'Last Plays'*, Vol. 12(3) Nanjing University, Literature Compass, March 2015, pp. 93-105, p. 95.

¹⁰ D. Fuller, *Shakespeare's Romances*, in C. Saunders (ed.), *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 160-176, p. 160.

Perhaps due to the aforementioned motifs concerning the authorship of works, Dowden initially did not include *Pericles*. Therefore, the group was only formed by *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. Because *Pericles* seemed to fit well the description of the genre of romance, he later added it to the group.

Certain critics argued whether or not to include *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as well, but still to these days, this group of four is the most frequent used when referring to Shakespeare's romances.

As regards the sources used by Shakespeare, according to Howard Felperin, the playwright might have known three kinds of romance:

classical prose romances (such as those of Longus and Heliodorus, and the Apollonius of Tyre that is the source of *Pericles*); chivalric romances of the Middle Ages (Chrétien de Troyes, Malory); and certain miracle and morality plays – sources that, he argues, converge in Shakespeare's romances¹¹.

According to Barbara Mowat in her *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* there was a close connection between Shakespeare's Romances and Greek Romance. Greek Romances were full of stories concerning children lost or stolen during infancy, recognitions scenes, and dangerous travels by sea¹². These works had a great impact on medieval production of texts such as the ones regarding saints' legends and certain miracle plays.¹³ However, it is restrictive to look only at medieval texts as sources of inspiration for these plays. Furthermore, we have to consider that during Elizabethan Era, the reading public had access to English translation of several Greek Romances.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161, quoting Felperin Howard, *Shakespearean Romance*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.

¹² C. Moseley, *The Literary and Dramatic Contexts of the Last Plays*, in Alexander (ed.), *The Cambridge*, cit., pp. 47-69, p. 48.

¹³ B. Mowat, *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances*, Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Press, 2011, pp. 2-3.

To conclude, this label is too generic and ambivalent, and other earlier plays satisfy the definition of romance. A more restrictive tag that gives exclusivity to these four plays is needed.

1.2.2. Last Plays

This term is most suitable for a chronological approach. When critics want to emphasize the fact that these works were written in the late phase of Shakespeare's career, they usually go for the tag 'last plays'

When does this last phase start? The year 1608 is usually considered as the start of the final period of Shakespeare's career.

Starting with *Pericles* (1608), critics noticed a change in genre and in the mode of his literary canon. From a biographical point of view, it could be assumed that some changes in his private life might have had an impact in his literary production.

It is in this year that his daughter gets married, his first grandchild born and his nephew, his mother and his younger brother die¹⁴.

1.2.3. Late Plays

This term is often used interchangeably with the previous one. The focus is on the so-called late style, the idea that artists towards the end of their career change somehow their style and their beliefs.

This thematic was extensively discussed by Edward Said (1935-2003) in his book *On Late Style*. Said went against the presumption that artists undergo a decline in their creativity when they reach an older age. According to him, they reach instead a period of great and renascent

¹⁴ Chen, *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

creativity, returning to those thematic and motifs addressed in their early stage¹⁵.

Said took Shakespeare as an example of the kind of lateness in style that he disliked¹⁶.

Shakespeare's style was the one of the artists for whom "We meet the accepted notion of age and wisdom in some last works that reflect a special maturity, a new spirit of reconciliation and serenity often expressed in terms of a miraculous transfiguration of common reality"¹⁷.

As regards Shakespeare's career, I do not think that this label is a suitable one either. When he died, he was 52 and when he wrote these plays, he was in his late 40s. Even for the standards of 16th and 17th centuries, Shakespeare was not an old man and it is difficult to believe that he felt he was about to die¹⁸. So, his age or the fear for an imminent death, in this case would unlikely have influenced the style of late plays.

1.2.4. Tragicomedies

Lastly, this term focuses the attention on the stylistic structure.

The English Oxford Dictionary defines tragicomedy as "A play or novel containing elements of both comedy and tragedy"¹⁹.

The term tragicomedy or tragicomoedia was first used by the Roman playwright Plautus (254-184 BC) with reference to his play *Amphitruo*. In the prologue of this play the god Mercury had to present a tragedy to an audience which was expecting a comedy, so in order to reach a compromise he proposed:

¹⁵ G. McMullan, *What is a 'late play'?*, in Alexander (ed.), *The Cambridge*., cit., pp. 5-27, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷ E. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, London, Bloomsbury, 2007, pp. 1-16, p. 3.

¹⁸ Chen, *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

¹⁹ <https://www.lexico.com/definition/tragicomedy>, accessed June 2020.

I will make it a mixture: let it be a tragicomedy. I don't think it would be appropriate to make it consistently a comedy, when there are kings and gods in it. What do you think? Since a slave also has a part in the play, I'll make it a tragicomedy²⁰.

Plautus through the words of Mercury made a reference to Aristotle's previous definitions of tragedy and comedy. Aristotle in his work *Poetics* (385-323 BC) defined the genre of tragedy and compared its peculiar features to those of other literary genres such as comedy and the epic. Mercury referred to the question of subject "when there are kings and gods in it". To Aristotle, only important and virtuous people like kings and gods, had to be the subjects treated in tragedies, whereas comedies had to deal specifically with less virtuous people, like slaves and common people, those not belonging to the nobility.

Given the presence of both virtuous and less virtuous characters, these plays did not fall within Aristotle's definition, hence the term tragicomedy.

Plautus' work was rediscovered in Italy during Renaissance, when the genre of tragicomedy found a great popularity. Italian literary critics claimed that it was a regular genre with its own peculiar features and rules²¹.

Two of the most famous exponents of the genre during the Italian Renaissance were Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio (also known as Cinzio; 1504-1573) and Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538-1612).

Cinthio claimed that the most ideal modern form of this genre might be found in what he called *tragedia de lieto fin* ('tragedy-with-happy-ending') also known as *Tragedia mista*. As the name suggests, these plays were tragedies with a happy ending.

²⁰ M. Romanska & A. Ackerman (eds.), *Reader in Comedy: An Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, London, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016, pp.17-32, p. 25.

²¹ Moseley, *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

If compared to Cinthio, Guarini, thanks to his work *Il Pastor Fido* written in 1590, became more known and more influential in the English scene. His play was considered a pastoral tragicomedy, a comedy which used techniques and motifs of the tragic mode. The publication of *Il Pastor Fido* however started a critical debate for its characterization. This led Guarini to defend his work from the accusations claiming that *Il Pastor Fido* was a travesty because of its hybridity. Guarini responded by saying that a tragicomedy was:

the legitimate offspring of the classical genres of tragedy and comedy, offering historically appropriate new possibilities for theatre and insisting that genre is not fixed but responsive to changing contexts²².

During the 16th century in England, the term tragicomedy was more likely attributed to those plays that did not follow the neoclassical taste and features which typically characterized tragedies or comedies.

Sir Philip Sydney (1554-1586) was an advocator of the general beliefs of the division of literary genre and of the respect poetic decorum. In his *An Apology for Poetry* written in 1580, he criticized the contemporary habit of mixing genres and defined this kind of works as “mungrell tragicomedies”. Sydney wrote:

How all their Plays be neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies; mingling Kings and Clowns, not because the matter so carriera it, but thrust in Clownes by head and shoulders, to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decencie nor descretion: So as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mugrell tragy-comedie obtained.

²² G. McMullan, *The Neutral Term ? : Shakespearean Tragicomedy and the Idea of the 'Late Play'*, in S. Mukherji & R. Lyne (eds.), *Early Modern Tragicomedy*, Vol.22, Woodbridge, Suffolk, Rochester, NY, Boydell & Brewer, 2007, Chapter 8, p. 117.

Despite the Neoclassical restrictions on genres that were diffused in England during the 17th century, during the early years of the century the emergent genre of tragicomedy was very much admired and flourished thanks to the work of two contemporaries of Shakespeare: Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher.

John Fletcher wrote *The Faithful Shepherdess* in 1608. This play was a reworking and adaptation of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*.

As reported in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Fletcher in the preface "To the Reader" gave the following definition:

A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned; so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy.

Fletcher and Beaumont were collaborators and their tragicomedy *Philaster* had a great success. *Philaster* and Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* had much in common, but we do not know exactly which one was written first. What we know is that Fletcher, Beaumont and Shakespeare played a key role in the development of this genre.

When Shakespeare's company the King's Men acquired the Blackfriars, Beaumont and Fletcher worked with them and wrote for the company three plays: *Philaster*, *A King and No King*, and *The Maid's Tragedy*.

Although both gained resounding success and notoriety in the theatrical scene, John Fletcher was the one who collaborated most with Shakespeare and the one who was considered to be the natural dramatist successor of Shakespeare within the company²³.

In conclusion even the term tragicomedy is not an accurate label for this specific group.

As mentioned earlier with the tag romance, here too the term tragicomedy, which identifies those plays that blend simultaneously elements from tragedies and comedies, can be used to define other previous works.

To sum up, on the one hand, the terms romances and tragicomedies are too generic and ambivalent, and they do not give that exclusiveness required to a fixed group; on the other, last plays and late plays shift the focus respectively on the chronological production and on the author's style and biography.

1.3. Shakespeare's Late Style

There is no unanimity of opinions when critics talk about Shakespeare's final period when he wrote these plays. Some think that at the very end of his career he had become more involved with religion and the mystical conception of the universe. Others, on the contrary think that he had become bored, cynic and disillusioned²⁴.

Edward Dowden divided Shakespeare's life into four parts: 'In the Workshop', 'In the World', 'Out of the Depths' and 'On the Heights'. Shakespeare emerged from his dark tragic third phase, entered a more serene and cheerful period and reached a peaceful state of mind. In his 1875 book Dowden wrote:

²³ Dobson, Wells & Sharpe, *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

²⁴ E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1958, pp. 1-2.

In the latest plays of Shakespeare the sympathetic reader can discern unmistakably a certain abandonment of the common joy of the world, a certain remoteness from the usual pleasures and sadness of life, and, at the same time, all the more, this tender bending over those who are, like children, still absorbed in their individual joys and sorrows²⁵.

In contrast with Dowden's view, we found the critic Lytton Strachey (1880-1932). Strachey believed that Shakespeare entered a period of boredom. In his 1906 essay he wrote:

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Shakespeare was getting bored himself. Bored with people, bored with real life, bored with drama, bored, in fact, with everything except poetry and poetical dreams. He is no longer interested, one often feels, in what happens, or who says what, so long as he can find place for a faultless lyric, or a new, unimagined rhythmical effect, or a grand and mystic speech.

The critic E.M.W. Tillyard (1889-1962) in his book *Shakespeare's Last Plays* openly criticized Strachey's statement. He wrote: "There is no lack of vitality, Shakespeare is not bored with things; and my conviction of this springs from the rhythms, the imagery, in fact from those most intimate poetical qualities about which it is futile to argue"²⁶.

In line with Strachey's view, we find other critics in more recent times that search the reasons of change in Shakespeare's personal life.

E.K. Chambers (1886-1954) believed that Shakespeare was victim of a mental breakdown while writing *Timon of Athens*, Clifford Leech (1909-1977) attributed the changes to the playwright's puritanism and D.G. James affirmed that the bard probably ran out of his poetic energy²⁷.

²⁵ E. Dowden, *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art*, London, Henry S. King & Company, 1875, p. 369.

²⁶ Tillyard, *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

²⁷ Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

Other critics sustain that it not possible to make assumptions on his style by simply analyzing the plays or the author's biography. So, they seek to find reasonable explanations on Shakespeare's changes of style by looking at external events that occurred at the time.

For example, Professor Gerald Eades Bentley believes that the change may be attributed to the shift from the outdoor playhouse (the Globe Theatre) to an indoor theatre.

In the summer of 1608, The King's Men took on the lease of the Blackfriars playhouse from Richard and Cuthbert Burbage. According to Bentley, the fact of having a new enclosed space to perform and a different kind of audience, a more sophisticated one, might have influenced Shakespeare's dramatic production²⁸.

In addition to that, the company had to deal with the separation from some original members. These departures resulted into a remarkable age gap between the leading male actors remained and the young apprentices. According to Andrew J. Power in *Late Shakespeare 1608-1613*, this situation might have influenced the production as well.

Another reason could be found in the rising popularity in the 17th century of the dramatic mode of tragicomedy. Two of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher successfully mastered this genre. According to Ashley Horace Thorndike (1871-1933) their work had a major influence in Shakespeare's late plays²⁹. John Fletcher is indeed the co-author of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

This image clashes with Strachey's assumption of a bored Shakespeare, who sticks to what he knows best. In this light we see a playwright who is aware of the changes in the interest of the public, a playwright who is willing to try to follow this new mainstream by adjusting the contents of his work, experimenting new things and working together with new artists.

As Barbara Mowat states in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume IV*:

²⁸ D. Lindley, *Blackfriars, Music and Masque: Theatrical Contexts of the Last Play*, in Alexander (ed.), *The Cambridge*, cit., pp. 29-45, p. 30.

²⁹ Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

These years, scholars pointed out, were far more than the final period of Shakespeare's working life. They were also the years in which Beaumont and Fletcher wrote a new and amazingly popular kind of drama, the years in which Shakespeare's company acquired and began to play at a private indoor theatre, and the years in which the court masque flourished and the anti-masque developed³⁰.

Finally, it is worth remembering that another reason can be sought in the ascent to throne of James I. When Queen Elizabeth died in 1603, James IV King of Scotland succeeded her and became James I of England. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth Shakespeare's company was called the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

James I who loved theatre and was interested in court masques and performances, in 1603 took under his own patronage Shakespeare's company which changed its name into The King's Men. It is known that James' greatest political ambition was the unification of England and Scotland into one kingdom.

For this reason, it is conceivable to interpret the insistence on the themes of reconciliation and union as a tribute to support the king's ambition. This concept is reinforced in *King Lear*, where terrible consequences are triggered by the decision to divide Britain into three independent kingdoms. Separation brings sorrow, lost and deaths whereas unification, as in *Cymbeline*, results in happiness.

Moreover, James I was devoted to magic and supernatural studies. In 1597 he wrote the treatise entitled *Daemonologie*. As evidence of their desire to support the king's interests, in most of the plays written in the Jacobean Era the magical and supernatural component is very strong. Lastly, James I was very different from the Virgin Queen Elizabeth. He had two sons and a daughter. As

³⁰ B. Mowat, *What's in a Name? Tragicomedy, Romance, or Late Comedy*, in R. Dutton & J. E. Howard (eds.), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume IV: The Poems, Problem Comedies, Late Plays*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008, Chapter 7, p. 131.

David Bergeron suggests, James I was much interested in the succession through the female line, and it was not a coincidence that in these late works daughters played an important role in the resolution of conflicts. Much of the focus of relationships between characters was dedicated to the father-daughter one. Bergeron thus believes that the royal family was used by Shakespeare as a source of inspiration for new themes and materials to put in his works.

CHAPTER TWO: First Generation Characters and Process of Separation

2.1. Introduction to Characters

As mentioned in the first chapter, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* cannot be classified under a specific literary genre and any label seems inadequate to satisfy the peculiarity of this group. In most cases critics use the labels romances and tragicomedies.

In the introduction particular attention was paid to the category 'tragicomedy'; these works are indeed the result of mixing elements of the genre of tragedy with those of the genre of comedy.

However, saying that these four plays are composed only of elements and motifs taken from these two genres is an inaccurate statement. It seems that Shakespeare took the opportunity to experiment certain themes and motifs inspired by various literary genres.

It is well known that Shakespeare was a man of culture and he was aware of what was fashionable during his time. Unfortunately, because his personal documentation (letters, diaries or books) is missing, much of Shakespeare's life is a mystery. The assumptions and speculations around his identity are many. Charles Dickens (1812-1870) wrote "The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery and I tremble every day lest something should turn up".

Nonetheless, although we do not know much about his life, it is generally believed that Shakespeare began his education at the Stratford grammar school where he probably received a fine training in classical studies, centered especially on Latin texts and Plautus' works. This education allowed him to have an extensive knowledge on a variety of literary genres which afterwards he adapted to the trends of his time.

The stories narrated in his plays were full of events and improbable happenings. Such copiousness of elements and happenings has not always been welcomed or appreciated by

literary critics. In his study *Copiousness in Shakespeare's Romances: Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest* Richard Andretta wrote that what renders this group of four plays different from other Shakespearean works and links it directly with the romantic tradition is indeed its "astounding copiousness"³¹.

From the genre of romance Shakespeare derived also the feature of improbability of events. Among the four plays, *Cymbeline* is the best example of the union between this feature of copiousness and Shakespeare's own technique of mixing literary genres. This play is indeed a complex one. Garber defined *Cymbeline* as "part history, part romance, part revenge tragedy and part satire, incorporating pastoral themes and lyric songs of an unusual beauty"³².

In each play we find two generations of characters. The first generation is the one that paves the way to 'tragic events' and initiates that process of loss and separation. The consequences of this process later on will fall on the second generation.

As previously said, in these plays there are themes and motifs already largely used in Shakespeare's earlier works, especially in those plays written at the beginning of his career as a playwright. Once again, Shakespeare brought to the stage the various aspects of familiar relationships. Following the theory of experimentation, even if Shakespeare inserted minor modifications and used different approaches or points of view to analyze the many aspects and mechanisms of family bonding, we cannot avoid observing that the organization and structure of families are basically maintained alike throughout all four plays. The focus is on family relationships, especially on the relationship between fathers and children. In all the plays the father-daughter bonding is the dominant one. Shakespeare continued with the type of relationship he started with King Lear and his daughter Cordelia.

³¹ R. A. Andretta, *Copiousness in Shakespeare's Romances: Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest*, New York University, Graduate School, 1997, pp. 5-6.

³² Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 802.

Those critics who are interested to look at the biographical aspects of the author's life to find sources of inspirations for these stories, will probably say that Shakespeare focused on the father-daughter relationships because at the time he wrote these plays, he was the father of two daughters³³.

As in his previous tragedies and comedies, two generations within the same families were presented on stage: an older one centered on the male ruler, and a younger one centered on daughters and their love interests. These plays compared to earlier works distinguished themselves for their change of perspective. It seems that Shakespeare changed his approach by presenting the characters from the vantage point of the elder generation, that of the parents whereas in his previous comedies he privileged dealing with the point of view of the younger generation. Even if they cannot be considered events of the main plots, episodes of secret marriages, love at first sight or teenagers going against the will of parents are still present in these plays. Also, because there is not only one main character around which the whole action revolves, and especially because we follow the adventures of two generations in all the plays, it is commonly said that these romances are characterized by the presence of a double plot³⁴.

Even though Shakespeare changed his approach of storytelling, he still gave a crucial role to the second generation. All the events and happenings that these teenagers had to go through served as a means to restore peace and union within the families.

The present chapter is going to deal with the initial faults committed by the older generation.

Particular attention will also be dedicated to the resemblances among male characters and on the

³³ D. Bevington, *Shakespeare: The Seven Ages of Human Experience*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, p. 193.

³⁴ F. Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 171.

emotional depth of characters.

2.2. *The First Generation: Male Rulers*

Having established that romances are characterized by the presence of two different generations, it is now time to analyze the role of each generation within the plays. In all four works, the main character of the first generation is the father, the paternal figure. Despite being all different in their own way, these fathers are not common people. They all belong to nobility: Pericles is the Prince of Tyre, Cymbeline is the King of Britain, Leontes is the King of Sicily and Prospero is the Duke of Milan. They are aristocratic men who occupy the highest position within the society. The motif of a noble man as the hero of the play is taken from the tragic genre. All four characters are male rulers and that makes them both the heads of the state and the heads of their families. They all are depicted in their middle age with at least one child.

Furthermore, as seen in comedies, these fathers fall under the category described by Northrop Frye of the blocking fathers. Several times Shakespeare used blocking characters that have impeded or have hampered the realization of happiness of two young lovers. This situation is repeated in *Cymbeline*, where the father does not welcome his daughter's decision to marry Posthumous. Cymbeline, being the head of the family thinks that he is the only one in charge to decide about his daughter's husband, as she is the only heir of his kingdom. It is the duty of the king to decide who will be his successor.

The term "blocking" is used here because these characters represent an obstacle in the process of realization undertaken by their children, a process of searching for one's true self. How do they do so? By committing the initial mistake that starts the process of loss and separation changing their children's destinies, these male rulers block their daughters' process of finding independency.

According to John Dean both Homer, the ancient Greek author, and Shakespeare deal with similar themes and devices in their romances. In particular Dean made a comparative analysis between Homer's *Odyssey* and Shakespeare's romances, noting that their works share a similar structure. The figure of Odysseus has become an enigmatic one, a key expression of the romantic genre. Within the common literary imagination, Odysseus is considered a restless, imaginative, unique and resilient character, he has both conservative and anarchic qualities, he is distant and intimate and the same time, and most of all he possesses a "longing for wondrous adventures and a strong desire to go home". All these features can be found in Shakespeare's romances as well. Both authors deal with motifs of wandering and travelling in search of what or who has been lost³⁵. Travelling especially became a strong component in *Pericles* as the story is set in six different places within the Mediterranean area: Tyre, Antioch, Tarsus, Pentapolis, Mytilene and Ephesus.

It should not be surprising that Shakespeare did not follow the decorum so much cherished by Aristotle. According to the Italian literary critic Giorgio Melchiori (1920-2009), Shakespeare at the end of his career tried to renovate the dramaturgical principle defying the trend followed by some cultured authors of the time, among whom Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sydney, to re-establish traditional rules and Aristotelean unities. Aristotle defined three rules, which nowadays are mostly known as "The Three Unities". According to him a playwright must always comply with the following:

- 1) The unity of action: a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots.
- 2) The unity of place: a play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place.

³⁵ Dean, *Op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

- 3) The unity of time: the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours.

Plays like *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, in which there are several displacements of place (and temporal shifts) seem to be an intentional polemic towards the criticism of Sir Philip Sydney in his *Defense of Poesie*³⁶.

To sum up, Shakespeare to delineate the 'hero' of the first generation used the same basic character: a middle-aged male ruler at the head of the state that commits a fatal mistake the consequences of which have an impact on his children.

2.2.1. Depth of Characters

What follows is a comparison between the development of Shakespearean characters in tragedies and in romances. Plays in which there is a tragic hero are called tragedies by Aristotle. Aristotle defined tragic hero a person who must evoke a sense of pity and fear in the audience. He is considered a man of misfortune, and evil comes to him through his error of judgment. Watching the hero's downfall is what causes a sense of pity and fear in the audience, making it experience what Aristotle called "catharsis".

Ten of Shakespeare's plays are considered tragedies as they deal with tragic events and have an unhappy ending. In tragedies indeed, to each one of his tragic heroes the playwright gives a "fatal flaw", a defect within his personality which eventually leads the hero to an unhappy ending or most likely to death. Shakespeare took a personal trait, or a particular emotion, and developed it to its extreme thus bringing the attention to the dark aspects of humanity: the

³⁶ W. Shakespeare, *Shakespeare: I Drammi Romanzeschi*, edited by Giorgio Melchiori, Vol. 6, Milano, A. Mondadori, 1991, p. 17.

impulsiveness of the madly in love Romeo, the indecisiveness of Hamlet or the ambition of Macbeth just to remember some.

Usually the main protagonist, the tragic hero, will not achieve his goals and he most likely will die in the trying.

Tragedies give audience a lesson, a morality that infuses them with a wisdom which will make them avoid similar behaviors in life. The tragic hero is thus a character who raises sympathy in the audience. Typically, he is a person that covers a high position in the society where the story takes place.

First of all, it is important to point out that in contrast with tragedies, in each of these romances we find a higher number of characters on stage. In tragedies the focus is mainly on the tragic hero, whereas in romances the tragical happenings involve multiple characters simultaneously within the same play. According to Melchiori (1994) characters in romances exist in function of the story³⁷. They are part of that narrative mechanism which in this case become more important than the individual personality. These plot devices present disturbing implications that provide a hardly reassuring framework of human nature. Furthermore, all the characters of these late plays appear more planar, unidimensional, more similar to those of fairy tales and romances.

Characters lack that fullness, psychological individual density and complexity that distinguish the tragic heroes.

In the first chapter of his book *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, talking about the concepts of good and evil and about the knowledge of the true nature of characters, Kiernan Ryan says that in the late plays this knowledge is involuntarily acquired. Characters of romances may appear more difficult to understand because of their “isolated state of consciousness in which they not only make false judgments but cannot be reached or reasoned with by anyone else” (audience

³⁷ G. Melchiori, *Shakespeare: Genesi Struttura delle Opere*, Roma, Bari, Laterza, 1994, p. 563.

included we may add). These states of mind, which he defines extremes, are not the results of a logical process but they are “simply caught, like the flu”³⁸. This wall built around certain characters does not allow the audience, or nowadays the reader, to deeply understand the functions of their minds. They almost become as black boxes, where you cannot see inside.

From a stylistic point of view, while in tragedies the audience is accustomed to entering the mind of the tragic hero, to follow his stream of consciousness through theatrical techniques such as monologues and soliloquies, in romances Shakespeare preferred the use of asides and dumb shows.

2.3. *Pericles*

The male ruler of the first generation is the young Prince of Tyre, Pericles. At the beginning of the play he is a young naïve prince looking for a wife. According to Andretta Pericles “has many of the characteristics of the epic hero Odysseus: mainly, his cautiousness” and one of his most notable features is “his patience in adversity”³⁹. He is a charitable ruler who cares for the good of his people.

The process of separation in this play is set in motion not by one, but three remarkable mistakes that Pericles committed.

The first one occurs in Act 1 Scene 1 when he decides to go to Antioch. The young hero leaves his own reign of Tyre to go on an adventure; to seek fortune and glory, traveling towards an unknown world represented by the court of Antioch. The narrator of the play, Gower, introduces us to this royal and apparently ordinary family composed by the King of Antioch, Antiochus, a widowed father and his mysterious, beautiful and nameless daughter. As many others before

³⁸ R. Kiernan, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, New York, Longman Critical Readers, 1999, p. 35.

³⁹ Andretta, *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

him, Pericles goes there with the purpose of winning the hand of the king's beautiful daughter.

In order to tie the knot with her, like a knightly hero, he has to pass a test by resolving a riddle.

From the very beginning the atmosphere surrounding the kingdom is dark.

This sinful King corresponds to the classic evil character of tragedies and fairy tales⁴⁰. Pericles is

informed that if he does not manage to resolve the riddle, not only will he lose the possibility to

marry the king's daughter, but he will also lose his own life. Antiochus asks him if he

understands the dangers of this quest and reminds him of those who died in the enterprise.

He offers him a chance to save his life giving him the opportunity to withdraw, but Pericles is

determined and resolute: he answers that he is ready.

ANTIOCHUS

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,

With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touched;

For death-like dragons here affright thee hard⁴¹. (*Pericles* 1.1.28-30)

Pericles starts reading the riddle:

I am no viper, yet I feed

On mother's flesh which did me breed.

I sought a husband, in which labour

I found that kindness in a father:

He's father, son, and husband mild;

I mother, wife, and yet his child.

⁴⁰ S. Palfrey, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Worlds*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 57-59.

⁴¹ W. Shakespeare, *Pericles*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series, edited by Suzanne Gossett, London, Bloomsbury Arden, 2004, p. 180. All references to this play in the text are quoted from this edition.

How they may be, and yet in two,
As you will live, resolve it you. (*Pericles* 1.1.65-72)

The riddle is created by the king to hide his incestuous relationship with his daughter, who is conveniently nameless. In this way her character is transformed into a fantasy, she becomes the object of male carnal desire, more precisely a sinful desire. The motif of incest renders the atmosphere of the play darker and more tragic;

Medieval writers used the theme of incest as a means to boost the bad side of a character and as Charles Moseley says « [...] use incest as a metaphor for the ultimate test of tyranny»⁴².

The meaning of the riddle is relatively easy to understand, and it appears even more obvious because it is difficult to imagine that many predecessors of Pericles' have failed to solve it⁴³.

Terrified and horrified, after solving the mystery behind the riddle, Pericles indirectly admits to the king that he has understood the secret, but he does not want to challenge him by revealing it out loud. Perhaps, it is reasonable to assume that, even the other knights died precisely because they had deciphered it. However, the king appears rather shocked after Pericles' declaration.

ANTIOCHUS [*aside*]
Heaven, that I had thy head! He has found the meaning.
But I will gloze with him. [...] (*Pericles* 1.1.110-111)

Pretending to go along with it, Antiochus magnanimously grants him forty more days to solve it before his death sentence. Fearing for his life he immediately flees Antioch and returns at Tyre. At the same time Antiochus hires an assassin to end Pericles' life and protect his kingdom from the incestuous secret.

⁴² Moseley, *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁴³ P. Goolden, *Antiochus's Riddle in Gower and Shakespeare*, in *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 23, Oxford, Oxford University Press, July 1955, pp. 245-251, p. 245.

Shortly after his return, Pericles fearing a military attack decides to follow the advice of his trustworthy counselor Helicanus to leave Tyre and travels for a while, until things would calm down. First, he goes to Tarsus at the court of King Cleon and his wife Dionyza, whose reign is suffering from famine. By bringing food to the reign, Pericles helps and saves them.

After having received a letter from Helicanus warning him that an assassin is after him, he sets off again. Caught by a shipwreck he loses all his possessions and his whole crew. He ends up on the shore of Pentapolis. Pericles here finds a situation that is very similar to the one that he has just experienced in Antioch: a widowed King named Simonides with his beautiful daughter, Thaisa. Here again, Pericles has the chance to enter a competition to win Thaisa's hand.

Although the similar premises, there is no dark sinful secret around this family and the atmosphere is much lighter. The relationship between King Simonides and his daughter Thaisa is the exact opposite of the previous relationship between King Antiochus and his nameless daughter. Antiochus puts on a whole charade; he is not intentioned to leave his daughter and his kindness and courtesy towards Pericles are false. Simonides instead does the opposite. He pretends not to be favorable to their union, whereas in reality he is only trying to test the personality of Pericles to see if he is the right person for his daughter.

Echoing somehow what he has previously done in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare repeated this scene in *The Tempest* when Prospero tested the faith and constancy of Ferdinand, the lover and suitor of his daughter Miranda. Unlike Antiochus, it is clear that Simonides cares for the good and happiness of his daughter. According to Garber these two opposite relationships between father and daughter will serve later on in the play as foils for the central recognition scene between Pericles and Marina in Act 5⁴⁴.

He enters the competition, he wins, and they get married. Not long after their wedding celebration, while on sea on their way back to the reign of Tyre, they are hit by another storm.

⁴⁴ Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 766.

During this storm Pericles commits the second mistake.

He erroneously thinks that his wife has died while giving birth to their daughter.

Blinded by panic and fear, he is not able to properly judge and verify if that is the truth. He decides instead to follow the insisting advices given by his crew members: to calm the tempest, he has to cast Thaisa's coffin overboard.

MASTER

Sir, your queen must overboard. The sea works high, the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead.

PERICLES

That's your superstition.

MASTER

Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it hath been still observed: and we are strong in custom. Therefore briefly yield 'er; for she must overboard straight.

PERICLES

As you think meet. Most wretched queen! (*Pericles* 3.1.47-54)

After this tragic event he commits the third mistake. Thinking about what was best for his daughter, he decides to leave his newborn babe in the care of Cleon and Dionyza at Tarsus, therefore moving away from her.

Unfortunately, he puts his trust in wrong hands, setting his own daughter in a great danger.

Overall all of his decisions can be classified as errors of judgment. All things considered he is a good character but at the same time he appears submissive, impulsive and at times easy to influence. At Antioch he loses his freedom, he risks losing his own life and he is forced to leave losing his own reign; At sea he loses his bride and at Tarsus he separates from his daughter.

2.4. *Cymbeline*

Cymbeline is the King of Britain. With his first wife whose name remains unknown, he had three kids: one daughter, Imogen and two sons Arviragus and Guiderius. Although the play is named after Cymbeline, he appears very little in the course of story, with the exception of few salient moments. When first seen, the character is presented as a strict and irascible father addressing cruel words towards his own daughter. Overall, he does not appear as a strong character; he is indeed easy to influence and to manipulate.

The dramatic portion of the play is set in motion because he committed two major mistakes. As just seen in *Pericles*, Cymbeline's first mistake is an error of judgement. Sixteen years prior to the beginning of the story, he naively puts his own trust in the hands of the wrong people. He was easily convinced by two villains that his friend, the nobleman Belarius, was a traitor.

BELARIUS

Have at it then, by leave:

Thou hadst, great King, a subject who

Was called Belarius.

CYMBELINE

What of him? He is

A banish'd traitor.

BELARIUS

He it is that hath

Assumed this age; indeed a banished man,

I know not how a traitor⁴⁵. (*Cymbeline* 5.5.314-321)

Cymbeline, instead of investigating the truthfulness of the declared facts, believed them right away and proceeded by unjustly banishing Belarius. Once Belarius had left the court, he went

⁴⁵ W. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series, edited by Valerie Wayne, London, Bloomsbury Arden, 2017, pp. 366-367. All references to this play in the text are quoted from this edition.

dwelling into the Wales caves. But he did not go alone. To take his own revenge on the wrong suffered he kidnapped the king's two sons Guiderius and Arviragus. He changed his own name to Morgan and renamed them respectively Cadwal and Polydore.

Because of his misconduct and because he treated people with no due respect, he was separated from his two sons, the heirs of his kingdom.

Sixteen years after the first mistake, Cymbeline committed the second one.

The play starts in Britain, in the garden of Cymbeline's palace. In the first scene of the first Act through the dialogue between two gentlemen the audience is informed that the King Cymbeline "[is] touched at the very heart". Discovering that his daughter, the heir of his kingdom, has already married in secret "a poor but worthy gentleman" named Posthumous Leonatus caused a great sorrow in the king. Influenced by the desires of his new cruel nameless Queen, Cymbeline instead had already planned to marry her to "his wife's sole son", Cloten, a not bright young man. The character of the Queen can be ascribed to the stock figure of fairy tales: the wicked stepmother⁴⁶.

From the very beginning the characters of Posthumous and Cloten are compared. The first one is presented as a poor young man with a noble soul. The first gentleman used only positive words for Posthumous and described him as:

1 GENTLEMAN

[...] is a creature such

As, to seek through the regions of the earth

For one his like, there would be something failing

In him that should compare. I do not think

So fair an outward and such stuff within

⁴⁶ Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 808.

Endows a man but he. (*Cymbeline* 1.1.19-24)

Posthumous' father Sicilius was a valiant soldier who fought against the Romans and "served [his country] with glory and admired success". After his other two sons died in war, Sicilius already old was not able to bear the pain and eventually died. Posthumous' gentle mother instead died giving birth to him. From that moment on, King Cymbeline took the baby under his protection and gave him the name Posthumous Leonatus and

1 GENTLEMAN

[...]

Breeds him and makes him of his bedchamber,

Puts to him all the learnings that his time [...] (*Cymbeline* 1.1.42-44)

At court he was the most praised and the most loved, which is in itself a rare thing to happen. In contrast, the description of Cloten is short and negative. The first gentleman described Cloten as "thing too bad for bad report". He used the word 'creature' to describe Posthumous and the word 'thing' to describe Cloten. It seems the word thing here is used to remove the humanity from the character of Cloten, reducing him to some sort of object of pure evil. The first words that Imogen utters when talking about Cloten are very hostile "Your son's my father's friends, he takes his part to draw upon an exile. O brave sir!" Clearly, she does not consider him a brave man. From this first scene we come to the conclusion that even if Posthumous is the son of a valorous professional soldier, the nobility of his soul is considerably higher than Cloten's.

According to Garber, if we think of the motif of the noble savage the character of Cloten appears as the opposite: he is a savage noble. Despite having received an

education at court like Posthumous, he has remained “a boor... animated by lust and appetite, spiteful, scornful and ambitious”.

Not only is he the opposite of Posthumous, a sort of travesty of him, but he is also the contrary of Guiderius and Arviragus, the king’s two sons. Even though they did not grow up at court but in a cave in Wales, they distinguish themselves from Cloten for their valor and the nobility of their souls. According to Tillyard, Guiderius and Arviragus “meet us first as symbols of the kingly nature blooming in wild surroundings.”⁴⁷

Cloten however, a prince by adoption, is the typical standard noble character who thinks that he is allowed to be rude to those that are beneath him in the social rank.

The kind of characters described by Aristotle are those we commonly find in comedies.

Aristotle said that the most comic and ridiculous characters are those who, although nobles or well-born, are usually of low moral because usually pompous or self-important.

When the secret of the marriage is revealed, Cymbeline banishes Posthumous, who then decides to go to Rome, in Italy. It is hard not to make a comparison with another Shakespearean play: *Romeo and Juliet*. This scene brings us back to what we have seen in *Romeo and Juliet*, when Lord Capulet is furious against his daughter after her rejection to marry Paris.

Themes are indeed very similar between the two plays: they both start with a blocking father who wants his daughter to marry a noble prince whom she does not love; a secret marriage and a sorrowful separation of the young lovers because the husband is banished by the girl’s father.

As a consequence of his mistake, Cymbeline this time loses his daughter. To reach Posthumous, Imogen decides indeed to leave his father’s court.

Both Cymbeline’s mistakes caused by his misjudgment lead him to lose all his children.

⁴⁷ Tillyard, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

As said before, the play of *Cymbeline* is a complex one as more stories are intertwined with one another.

Unlike in the other three works, Cymbeline is not the only character to commit a mistake. The other character guilty of an initial fault is the young male hero of the second generation:

Posthumous Leonatus. Surprisingly, Posthumous did not trust his own wife.

After the banishment and while he was staying in Italy, he had a conversation on women and their lack of virtue, with his Italian acquaintance Iachimo.

What started as a theoretical confrontation, then changed into a bet between the two on Imogene's fidelity and chastity. With the intent to save his wife's honor he accepts the wager.

The prize for the winner was the ring that Imogen had given to him.

Iachimo, deceptively made Posthumous believe that she had been unfaithful to him.

Mad with jealousy, Posthumous decides to write a letter to his loyal servant Pisanio asking him to accompany Imogen in Wales with the excuse to meet her and with the occasion, to kill her to avenge his wounded pride. The change in Posthumous' attitude is quite sudden and striking. He transforms himself from the noble poor gentleman that was presented at the beginning of the play, to a man thirsty for revenge who degrades himself to Iachimo's level.

Shortly after, Posthumous regrets his behavior and his order, but Pisanio had already reported him the news that he has committed the murder and Imogen is now dead.

Even if it is an apparent death, the outcome of his mistake is the loss of his wife Imogen.

2.5. *The Winter's Tale*

Along with what seen with the previous two plays, in *The Winter's Tale* the male ruler is the one who is guilty of several errors of judgment.

The play starts at the court of Leontes, the King of Sicily. From a dialogue between the two noblemen Archidamus and Camillo we discover that the King of Sicily and the King of Bohemia are childhood friends, and their mutual affection has grown stronger throughout the years. Because of this premise on their long-term friendship, we find ourselves displaced by the Leontes' reaction. In Act 1 Scene 2 he insistently tries to convince his best friend Polixenes to stop at court a little more. After staying there nine months, Polixenes is afraid of what could happen to his reign if he decides to extend his absence. So, he gently declines Leontes' offer and declares that he needs to leave the following day. The urgency of his necessity emerges in the following lines:

POLIXENES

Press me not, beseech you, so.

There us is no tongue that moves, none, none i'th' world

so soo as yours, could win me.⁴⁸ (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.19-21)

Leontes then asks the queen Hermione to convince him to stay. Following her Lord's request, the queen through gentle and comprehensive words is able to convince Polixenes to stay and delay his departure. Having seen Polixenes so firm in his decision just for few moments, watching him agreeing so easily to Hermione's request is what triggers in Leontes the sentiment of jealousy and insinuates the suspicion of adultery. It is unquestionable that Polixenes addresses Hermione gentle words while talking to her "...offending; which is for me less easy to commit Than you to punish... fair queen..O my most sacred lady...your precious self.". Nonetheless this is not sufficient to justify Leontes' growing and sudden jealousy. His reaction denotes how much

⁴⁸ W. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series, edited by John Pitcher, London, Bloomsbury Arden, 2010, p. 151. All references to this play in the text are quoted from this edition.

he gets caught by jealousy, to the point that his emotions impair his reasoning. His feelings towards his wife and best friend change abruptly as can be seen in this aside:

LEONTES *[aside]*

Too hot, too hot!

To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.

I have tremor cordis on me: my heart dances;

But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment

May a free face put on, derive a liberty

From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,

And well become the agent; 't may, I grant;

But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,

As now they are, and making practised smiles,

As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere

The mort o' the deer; O, that is entertainment

My bosom likes not, nor my brows! Mamillius,

Art thou my boy? (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.108-120)

The situation gets worse when he sees his wife holding hands with Polixenes. Jealousy drives him mad and he ends up losing himself, his rationalism and questioning if his son Mamillius is really flesh of his blood.

Seeking a personal revenge, he orders the poisoning of Polixenes, declares the illegitimacy of the baby that Hermione was bearing and while waiting for her sentence he throws her in prison with the accusation of betrayal. While in prison, Hermione gives birth to a baby girl and shortly before the verdict is announced, Leontes is informed that Apollo, through the Oracle of Delphi, had declared his wife and Polixenes innocent.

Up until this point the audience could not be sure of the queen's innocence. We have to keep in mind that we were not present to see the development of the relationship between Hermione and her husband's friend. It is fair to say that the king's reaction, even if too strict and harsh, could

also be understood. After all, Leontes is the King of Sicily, a monarch, a ruler and the one holding the leadership of his country. If we think this way, we can come to the conclusion that his suspicions could be true and his behavior was a way to protect his honor and his reign, and consequently his reaction.

However, the certainty of Hermione and Polixenes' innocence arrived only with the response of the Oracle. At this point Leontes is too blind with rage, and he wants to punish Hermione anyway, so he disregards the Oracle's prophecy.

LEONTES

There is no truth at all i'th'oracle.

The sessions shall proceed - this is mere falsehood (*The Winter's Tale*
3.2.137-138)

The king wrongly thinks that within his reign, his Sicilian domain, he is the authority and because of that he is allowed to dismiss the Oracle's sentence. His arrogance rising above the Oracle's verdict is punished in the next lines when a servant enters and announces the death of his son Mamillius.

[Enter a Servant.]

SERVANT

My lord the king! The king!

LEONTES

What is the business?

SERVANT

Oh, sir, I shall be hated to report it.

The Prince your son, with mere conceit and fear

Of the Queen's speed, is gone.

LEONTES

How, 'gone'?

SERVANT

Is dead. (*The Winter's Tale* 3.2.139-145)

After few lines, Paulina announces that because of this painful news, the queen died as well.

LEONTES

Apollo's angry, and the heavens themselves

Do strike at my injustice. [*Hermione faints.*]

How now there?

PAULINA

This news is mortal to the queen. Look down

And see what death is doing. (*The Winter's Tale* 3.2.145-149)

The outcomes of his jealousy, blindness and arrogance are many: the destruction of a lifelong friendship with Polixenes, the imprisonment of his pregnant wife, the banishment of their newborn baby and ultimately the real death of his son Mamillius and the feigned one of Hermione's.

2.6. *The Tempest*

With *The Tempest* Shakespeare experimented something different. Among the group of romances this play stands out for its different approach. Some critics believe that *The Tempest* is the best result obtained by the experimentation of themes, motifs and characters that Shakespeare had done in the previous three works. Tillyard talking about *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* wrote:

Shakespeare, it is said, was feeling his way, was experimenting, in a manner quite alien to *Much Ado* or *Othello*. He fumbled in *Cymbeline*,

did better in *The Winter's Tale*, and only in his third attempt [*The Tempest*] achieved full success⁴⁹.

In this play Shakespeare maintained the original fault that initiated the tragic events, but as happened with the first error in *Cymbeline* he pushed the narration of it in the past. The play indeed starts in medias res, when the characters are already living in the post-mistake situation. Along with what we have seen so far, in *The Tempest* the initial mistake is committed by the male character of the first generation: Prospero, the Duke of Milan. However, unlike Pericles', *Cymbeline's* and *Leontes'*, Prospero's mistake is of a different kind.

Prospero, his daughter Miranda, his secret helper the spirit Ariel, and their servant Caliban, live on a desert remote island which is probably located somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea. In the second scene of the first act, Prospero is ready to tell Miranda the events that happened twelve years before. Miranda discovers that her father was the Duke of Milan, a prince of power and therefore she is a princess, the only heir of his Dukedom. Miranda asks why they left the kingdom. Prospero tells her that twelve years before he was deposed in a coup arranged by his own brother Antonio, the only person besides her, who he loved most. His brother has put Prospero and the 3-years-old Miranda on a rotten carcass of a boat with the intent of letting them die at sea.

As David Fuller asserts in his "*Shakespeare's Romances*", although Prospero's narrative puts all the blame for the usurpation of his position on his brother, it is nonetheless evident that his passionate pursuit of knowledge, through the study of numerous matters among which logic, grammar, geometry and above all, the study of occult books, carried him away from his duties as duke⁵⁰. Prospero's various personal interests rendered him inattentive to his duties and political affairs. Furthermore, not only was he guilty of negligence, but also, he was focused on himself to

⁴⁹ Tillyard, *Op. cit.*, p. I.

⁵⁰ Fuller, *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

the point he was not able to see his younger brother's political desire of dispossession. Prospero at this point is depicted as a young and naive ruler, whose egocentricity and indifference towards others made him blind and vulnerable.

PROSPERO

My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio-
I pray thee, mark me, that a brother should
Be so perfidious – he, whom next thyself
Of all the world I loved, and to him put
The manage of my state, as at that time
Through all the signories it was the first,
And Prospero the prime Duke, being so reputed
In dignity, and for the liberal arts
Without a parallel; those being all my study,
The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies⁵¹. (*The Tempest* 1.2.66-77)

Prospero was guilty of neglecting to perform the duties requested as the head of the State. As mentioned before, as opposed to the other male rulers' errors of judgement caused by their blindness or by their emotions, here we see a different kind of mistake. Somehow deep-down, Prospero is aware that he is ignoring his duties for other personal interests. It is fair to say that what he is doing is an act of egoism: taking better care of himself rather than of others, as a ruler is instead expected to do. We do not witness these events directly, but we are allowed to have a partial knowledge through Prospero's narration and moreover we are able to know only his side of the story.

⁵¹ W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series, edited by V. M. Vaughan & A. T. Vaughan, London, Bloomsbury Arden, 2011, pp. 175-176. All references to this play in the text are quoted from this edition.

When the play starts, Prospero is presented as a man in his middle age. On the island he has become a sort of magician. He is in control of everything that happens there. Even if he orchestrates a shipwreck, his magic can be ascribed to the side of the good magic, the white magic of nature. During the twelve years that he stayed on the island, he had the opportunity to further his magical studies, especially through the books that he brought with him.

The play starts in medias res when the members of the crew of a ship are trying their best to survive the storm that they are caught in in the middle of the sea. Shortly after, along with Miranda, we watch its shipwreck. Immediately after Prospero assures Miranda that no one is hurt because he is the one controlling the tempest. After this moment, the whole atmosphere of the narration changes and it becomes more relaxed. From the beginning it is established that no one is in danger anymore and that the fear of a tragic direction of event is now dissipated. It is not a coincidence that the editors of the First Folio put *The Tempest* among the comedies.

The tragic elements in the play are indeed very few if compared with the ones in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. And even those that are present are narrated in such a way that are not taken seriously. Other than that, we know that behind the various happenings there is the hand of Prospero, or of Ariel following Prospero's directions.

At the beginning of the play he appears very severe and tough especially when he interacts with his servant Caliban and with Ariel, a spirit of the air that Prospero freed from a tree where he was imprisoned years before by the witch Sycorax. Furthermore, he is presented as a man, a ruler who wants to take back his power and kingdom, a man in search of revenge. However, even if he had become this powerful magician able to control nature it is interesting to note that he has not left the island to go back to his reign. One could think that this would not appear somewhat difficult to realize for someone who has become so powerful. Nonetheless he stays on the island, waiting for revenge. The occasion occurs when his brother conveniently along with

all those who have contributed to his downfall, pass by his island while returning from a marriage in Cartagena.

Anyway Prospero is a multilayered character. Throughout the course of the play we see the different facets of his personality. Towards the end of the play, we see a more human, benevolent and forgiving side of Prospero.

The character of Prospero has often been seen similar to the role and art of the playwright in general, and to Shakespeare in particular.

Since it is believed that *The Tempest* is the last play that Shakespeare has written on his own, some critics think that the author had constructed the character of Prospero in his own image and likeness, and by extension these critics read in the last lines of Prospero Shakespeare's farewell to the theatrical world.

Actually, there is notable evidence of the similarities between Prospero and the playwright.

Prospero at the beginning of the play takes the role of the storyteller, of the narrator. We have seen that he gives Miranda the backstory of their situation. Also, he is the only one who knows what is happening to each person on the island. This knowledge is indeed similar to the one of the playwright who during a performance of the play was the only member within the company to know the play in its wholeness. Not even the actors were aware of the whole script, but they basically only knew the lines of the characters that they were portraying. This was a diffused technique during the Renaissance used by theatre companies to safeguard their repertoire and production. Additionally, Prospero and the playwright control everything that was going on stage, or in this case everything that was happening on the island.

As already introduced before, the common theme for all four plays is one of reconciliation.

Before that happens, it is necessary that a process of separation and/or a process of losing something or someone occurs. As demonstrated all these errors have indeed led to a loss or at

least a separation. These outcomes not only involve family members as in the case of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* or *The Winter's Tale*, but they could also affect the ruler's social position, his rank and his place in the government, as happens in *The Tempest*.

The following table shows the common traits among the four rulers.

Plays	Male character	Social position	Daughter	Mistake
<i>Pericles</i>	Pericles	Prince of Tyre	Marina	3 mistakes
<i>Cymbeline</i>	Cymbeline	King of Britain	Imogen	2 mistakes
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Leontes	King of Sicily	Perdita	Several mistakes
<i>The Tempest</i>	Prospero	Duke of Milan	Miranda	1 mistake

CHAPTER THREE: Second Generation Characters and Series of Quests

3.1. *The Second Generation: Daughters*

This chapter will focus on the characters of the second generation.

The narrative of these four plays is mainly focused on the second generation, which is centered on the young women, the daughters of the male rulers of the first generation that we have seen in the previous chapter.

Marina is the daughter of Pericles, Imogen is the daughter of Cymbeline, Perdita is the daughter of Leontes, and Miranda is the daughter of Prospero.

These young women occupy a prominent position within the play, especially because they are the ones who re-establish the order previously compromised by their fathers' original error. Only in the case of *The Tempest* Shakespeare shifted back the focus of the narrative from the daughter to the male character, Prospero. Prospero will be at the same the one who makes the mistake and the one who restores the order.

Shakespeare seemed to have followed a scheme as well for the daughters. They all share common features in their characterization and at certain extent they all live in a similar situation.

First of all, each daughter has a name that is allusive and emblematic. Their names invite the audience to think of them in allegorical terms. Each name highlights a trait of their personality or alludes to something that had happened on them.

Marina's name means of the sea. This name recalls the fact that in Act 3 she was born at sea.

In the recognition scene in Act 5 Scene 1, her name will help Pericles to finally recognize the young woman in front of him as his daughter.

PERICLES

[...] Where were you born?

And wherefore called Marina?

MARINA

Called Marina

For I was born at sea. (*Pericles* 5.1.145-148)

The first record of the name Imogen is found in *Cymbeline*.

The origin of the name Imogen is not quite certain and according to some scholars this name could be a misspelling or a purposely transformation from the Celtic name Innogen meaning maiden, girl⁵². In this play the name Imogen means innocent, and it is used to underline the fact that this character is innocent of all charges made against her.

For the portion of the play in which she is disguised as a young boy, she goes by the name Fidele, which means faithful.

Perdita, from the Latin word 'Perdita' (lost woman) and the Italian word 'Perdita' (the loss) is here employed as the lost daughter. Her mother Hermione appeared in a dream to Antigonus and told him to call her daughter Perdita as lost forever.

ANTIGONUS

[...]

Of my poor babe according to thine oath,

Places remote enough are in Bohemia;

There weep, and leave it crying; and for the babe

Is counted lost for ever, Perdita

I prithee, call't. [...] (*The Winter's Tale* 3.3.29-33)

⁵² T. Norman, *A World of Baby Names*, London, Penguin Publishing Group, July 2003, p. 131.

Lastly, Miranda's name derived from the Latin gerundive 'mirandus', which is to be admired. This name definitely calls attention to the pure and saintly aspects of her character.

In Act 1 Scene 1 Ferdinand, during their first encounter is indeed enchanted by Miranda:

FERDINAND

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?

MIRANDA

No wonder, sir,

But certainly a maid.

FERDINAND

My language? Heavens!

I am the best of them that speak this speech,

Were I but where 'tis spoken. (*The Tempest* 1.2.422-433)

The depiction of these later heroines reminds us of the princesses in fairy tales. They all present a noble soul and heart. Their charm and their virtues are described as almost unreal. The ultimate sensation that the audience feel is that these women are comparable to half-imaginary creatures. At a first glance they can be ascribed to the stereotype of the damsel in distress. Three of them will have, at some point of the story, to face a threat, a sexual assault to their innocence.

In Act 4, Marina is kidnapped by the pirates and forced to enter into prostitution.

Imogen's sexual menace is represented by Cloten, the queen's son and lastly Caliban, Prospero and Miranda's servant, tried to rape the latter.

Another aspect they have in common is that all of them grew up without their biological mother, and in the case of Marina and Perdita also without their biological father. Cymbeline and Prospero had to compensate this absence. The absence of the motherly figure in their life reinforces the idea of danger. Being an orphan means to be alone in the world, to be deprived of the parental protection that comes from the family. Orphans are abandoned to themselves to face the dangers of the world.

For Marina the danger is represented by her adoptive mother Dionyza, while for Imogen the danger is represented by the nameless widow that her father had married in his second marriage. Both Dionyza and the second wife fall within the category of the wicked stepmother in fairytales. As usually happens in fairytales, these princesses are not protected by their fathers either because they are absent or because they are dead. In the case of *Cymbeline*, we will see that Imogen will be also the victim of her husband's mistake.

Throughout the story daughters have to face many injustices, wrongs and threats coming from the dark side of human nature. Anyway, we must not be deceived by these situations.

Even though these heroines are the victims of their fathers' mistakes, they are anything but damsel in distress. They all share a strong temperament. Strong, fierce, independent and brave, the daughters are the heroines of the second generation.

They are able to face several trials and emerge victorious, restoring order and peace.

According to Melchiori, the role of the daughters is to restore an order that was initially distraught by an original mistake committed by the male ruler and then to start a new order, a new life, in brief to accomplish that process of restoration, regeneration and rebirth. However, in the end after having overcome these various trials, they will come out victorious, redeeming their fathers and restoring their respective families and kingdoms. Only in *The Tempest* the power to restore the order is given to the Prospero, while the daughter is rather a witness of her father's deeds.

Lastly, all plays feature a love interest. Lysimachus, the Governor of Mytilene, is Marina's love interest; Posthumous Leonatus is Imogen's; Perdita will fall in love with the Bohemian Prince Florizel and Miranda with Ferdinand, the heir and son of Antonio, the King of Naples. These young men are all of noble origins, with the only exception of Posthumous in *Cymbeline*, who however is still presented as noble in spirit. In the process of achieving its own happily ever after, the second generation of characters is going to save their families.

Next paragraphs will go through the most significant events that each one of these daughters had to face as a consequence of their fathers' actions.

3.1.1. Marina



[Fig. 2 *Marina singing before Pericles*, Thomas Stothard, 1825.]

Marina was born on a ship in the midst of a tremendous storm. She is immediately separated both from her mother, who is thought to have died of childbirth, and from her father, who leaves her to the cares of Dionyza and Cleon.

From Act 3 and Act 4 there is a time gap of sixteen years and Gower, the narrator, presents Marina as a beautiful young woman living in Tarsus. She has become a very well-educated woman, praised by everyone. Her beauty and grace however cause envy and jealousy in Dionyza. Dionyza and Cloten's daughter Philoten who spends all her time with Marina, is not as beautiful, as graceful and as gifted as Marina. According to Dionyza, Philoten, who is now at a marriageable age, lives in Marina's shadow. In order to help her daughter to shine and be praised, the envious Dionyza plans to murder Marina and hires an assassin named Leonine.

Gower says:

GOWER

[...] Marina gets

All praises, which are paid as debts

And not as given. This so darks

In Philoten all graceful marks

That Cleon's wife with envy rare

A present murderer does prepare

For good Marina, that her daughter

Might stand peerless by this slaughter. (*Pericles* 4.0.33-40)

Gower narrates that Marina's nurse has just died. Without a father and a mother, and now even without her nurse, Marina is an unprotected teenager. The first time Marina comes to stage is presented as an almost saintly young lady with a basket of flower in her hand. Following the suggestion of Dionyza she takes a walk with Leonine, who shortly after confesses Marina that he is hired by Dionyza and his duty is to kill her. Marina prays him not to kill her, but he is determined to complete his order.

Suddenly a group of pirates enter the scene and kidnap her.

Maurice Charmey in his book *Shakespeare's Style* says that "Much about Marina is presented as miraculous". He makes the example of the kidnapping. In the exact moment that she was about to be murdered by Leonine she is miraculously "saved" by these pirates⁵³.

Marina's sufferings however do not end here.

Marina is taken by these pirates to Mytilene where she is sold as a prostitute to a brothel. Both the fact that she is remarkably beautiful and that she is still a virgin, helps to give her a great popularity among the men that usually go to the brothel.

In the fifth scene of the fourth act, we discover that Marina is able to protect her chastity by convincing and converting each man to be more virtuous.

She is able to protect herself thanks to the power of her words. The religious connotation is very strong. She is the saint, the pure being able to convert even the worst of sinners.

Pander and Bawd, the two characters who run the brothel, say:

PANDAR

Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her
She had ne'er come here.

BAWD

Fie, fie upon her. She's able to freeze the god Priapus
and undo a whole generation. We must either get her
ravished or be rid of her. When she should do for clients
her fitment, and do me the kindness of our profession,
she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons,
her prayers, her knees, that she would make a puritan of
the devil if he should cheapen a kiss of her. (*Pericles* 4.5.10-18)

⁵³ M. Charmey, *Shakespeare's Style*, New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014, p. 145.

The power of her virtue is thus able to “freeze the god Priapus”, the ancient Greek god of fertility. She manages to even convert the governor of Mytilene, who went to the brothel in disguise.

In only two acts, Marina had to face many adversities. None of these events would have happened to her if it was not for Pericles’ bad decisions. However, she is able to overcome them all by herself.

3.1.2. Imogen

From the very beginning of the play Imogen is put to test by various adversities. Unlike other female heroines of the second generation, Imogen has to suffer from the mistakes committed by her father, King Cymbeline, and by her husband, the exiled Posthumous.



[Fig. 3 *Imogen*, Wilhelm Ferdinand Souchon, 1872.]

From the very first scene she appears as an independent young woman able to take her own decisions and going against the will of her father who wants her to marry her stepbrother Cloten. As a consequence of that behavior, she is forced to separate from her husband Posthumous, who once the secret marriage was discovered, was banished from the reign by Cymbeline.

Without the protection of her father who rejected her, and the protection of her husband who is far away in Italy, she has to face the queen by herself. She finds assistance in Posthumous' servant, Pisanio.

If compared to her father, Imogene appears as a stronger and less influenceable character.

Cymbeline on the other hand appears like a puppet in the queen's hands.

Andretta says that Imogen "Unlike her father, Imogen is a woman of perception and quick insight. She is not fooled by her stepmother's hypocrisy"⁵⁴. He continues by saying that Imogen is at the same time "tender and impatiently curt with fools like Cloten", she is able of quick repartees and she is fierce by nature. According to Andretta, Imogen is not as static as Cymbeline. Throughout the course of the story she develops and learns about human nature.

Another threat advances towards her. Her beloved husband Posthumous orders via letter to his servant Pisanio to kill her, as he believes that she has been unfaithful to him with the Italian Iachimo. Pisanio confesses his master's order and convinces her to escape into the woods at Milford Heaven in Wales. Helped by the faithful Pisanio and disguised as a young boy named Fidele, she runs into Morgan/Belarius and his two sons, Guiderius/Polydore and Arviragus/Cadwal, her two long-lost brothers.

Instead of being afraid by these men grown in the caves she is pleasantly surprised by their tenderness and courteous manners. She does not stop at appearances; she goes under the surface and recognizes the nobility of their souls.

⁵⁴ Andretta, *Op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

INNOGEN

Great men

That had a court no bigger than this cave,
That did attend themselves, and had the virtue
Which their own conscience sealed them, laying by
That nothing gift of differing multitudes,
Could not outpeer these twain. Pardon me, gods,
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,
Since Leonatus' false. (*Cymbeline* 3.6.79-86)

3.1.3. *Perdita*



[Fig. 4 *Perdita*, Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys, 1866.]

Born in prison, Perdita from the very start of her life is rejected by her father who thinks that she is the product of the unfaithful love between his wife Hermione and his best friend Polixenes.

Perdita's story is somehow different if compared to Marina's and Imogen's. She does not go through many threatening events as happened to Marina and Imogen. After being rejected by her father, she was brought by the lord Antigonus on the coast of Bohemia. Here Antigonus was attacked and eaten by a bear, while Perdita was found in a box by an old shepherd who decided to take care of her bringing her home with him.

Similarly, to what seen in *Pericles*, there is a time gap of fifteen years. Perdita is now a beautiful young woman.

The presentation of Perdita is very similar to the one which occurs with Marina. She appears as a pure, almost perfect angelic character. Andretta in his study reported indeed:

Growing up in nature, she has all its purity and freshness, she is “the queen of curds and cream”. From her mother she has inherited her chastity, modesty and innate courtesy. In her we find a harmonious blending of nurture and nature⁵⁵.

The love between her and Florizel is blocked by the father of the latter, who does not want his son, the heir of his kingdom, to marry the daughter of an old shepherd.

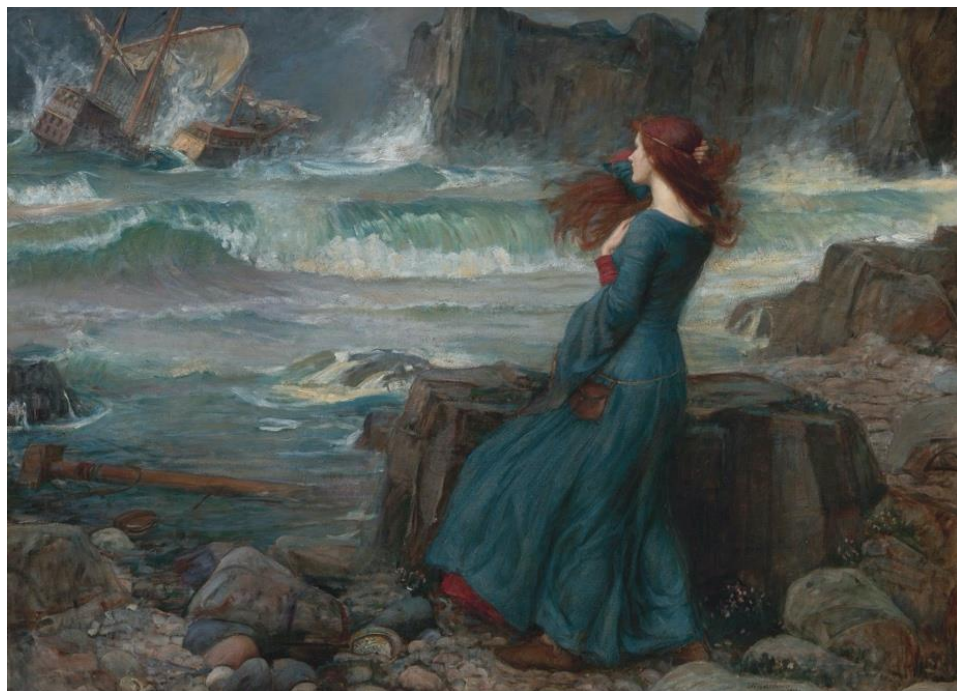
This romantic love story recalls earlier comedies where a young love is put to the test facing the adversities coming from the disapproval of their families.

In the case of Perdita, the major impact that her father's mistake had on her life was her passing fifteen years of her life without knowing her real identity. She was forced to live with an

⁵⁵ Andretta, *Op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

adoptive family, far from the life at court and deprived of the upbringing suitable for a princess. However, unlike Marina, she seems to have been very lucky with her adoptive family. Apart from the threat and insults that she received by her lover's father, this life does not bring her to deal with painful situations. She has the chance to live a simple life in perfect union and harmony with mother nature. The pastoral component is indeed very strong in this tale. Only good qualities are attached to her. She is well-mannered, she is beautiful and a good dancer. During the sheep-shearing feast she is proclaimed the Queen of the event.

3.1.4. *Miranda*



[Fig. 5 *Miranda—The Tempest*, John William Waterhouse, 1916.]

Lastly, the beautiful Miranda. She too shares common features with other heroines: she is a beautiful and gracious young woman. However, her role has a different weight on the narration.

She is the only one who is not completely detached from both parental figures. We know very little of her mother. She is the only female heroine of the romances who will not be separated from her biological father in the play.

Nonetheless she still has to deal with the consequences derived from her father's original mistake. She is forced to spend her life till the age of fifteen, in a desert island only in the company of her father and their servant Caliban.

Even though the island is inhabited by only three persons (not counting the figure of the spirit Ariel visible only to Prospero) at a certain point of her life she was sexually attacked by Caliban. This episode may induce to think that despite his physical presence, the father is not present on a mental and emotion level, and he does not give her the proper paternal protection.

It is worth recalling that Prospero is presented as an egocentric and careless ruler, so these features may be at a certain level reflected again in his role as a father.

Shakespeare did something different in the characterization of Miranda. He continued to bring on the association of daughter as a saintly/angelic figure, but the audience will be surprised and bewildered to see her character speaking words of hatred and contempt towards Caliban.

Caliban is presented as the evil character, but yet it is astonishing hearing her saying:

MIRANDA

Abhorred slave,

Which any print of goodness wilt not take,

Being capable of all ill; I pitied thee,

Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour

One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,

Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes

With words that made them known. But thy vile race

(Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good

natures

Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou

Deservedly confined into this rock,

Who hadst deserved more than a prison. (*The Tempest* 1.2.351-363)

Witnessing a beautiful and supposedly saint creature turning to him with so much hate is what may destabilize the audience, especially if we compare her to other princesses.

Like Perdita as a consequence of her father's original fault she has to live far from her real home, unaware of her true identity.

Other than Caliban's sexual assault, Miranda as well as Perdita, does not have to face other direct consequences of the situation. She is not in danger as Marina or Imogen.

Like the other daughters, she is not a damsel in distress. Quite the contrary, the audience discovers her as an independent young woman, falling in love with Ferdinand even without her father's approval.

For the resolution and restoration of the initial order, she does not play a crucial role. As said before, it is Prospero the one in charge of it, and her story, even if helpful to the final familiar reconciliation, becomes more a subplot.

3.2. The Role of Time

Time plays a crucial role in the development of these romances. In each play there is a significant time gap that divides the moment when the original fault happened and the start of the process of reconciliation and restoration. In order to let the second generation grow enough to be able to restore the order, Shakespeare inserted a time gap in each play.

In addition, these passages of time serve to let the male characters of the first generation grow in maturity, understand and suffer from the consequences of what they have done. It seems as if the only way that these characters have to mature and to reach a peaceful state of mind and free themselves from their “sins” is going through a period of penitence. A period of time in which they are separated from someone or something that they think is forever lost.

In *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale* this gap is announced respectively by the figure of Gower and by the Time. In *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, the time gap is prior the start of the plays.

In *Pericles* the character of Gower represented the Chorus, the Prologue for each section of the play. This character is based on the real poet John Gower (1330?-1408) who in his eight volume of the work *Confessio Amantis* wrote the first English version of the story of *Apollonius of Tyre*; this story was later on used by Shakespeare as source material for *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*.

Each section of *Pericles* begins with Gower speaking in a medieval language.

According to Garber his language “stress the archaism of the play as a whole, and this is valuable in naturalizing unlikely events and extreme coincidences”⁵⁶.

This play is basically divided into two sections. The gap between section one, composed of Act 1,2 and 3 and section two, composed of Act 4 and 5, is a time span of fourteen years.

In *The Winter’s Tale*, the time gap is announced by Time itself at the start of Act 4:

⁵⁶ Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 758.

TIME

[...]

Now take upon me, in the name of Time,

To use my wings. Impute it not a crime

To me or my swift passage that I slide

O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried

Of that wide gap, since it is in my power

To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour

To plant and o'erwhelm custom. [...] (*The Winter's Tale* 4.1.3-9)

The time gap in this case is of 16 years.

As regards for *Cymbeline*, the time gap marks the distance from the first error when the king banished Belarius and consequently lost his two sons and his second error when he mistreated his daughter and banished her husband Posthumous. In this case the audience is not aware of the exact amount of years that passes between these two episodes.

Arviragus and Guiderius were very young when they were taken away by Belarius and they do not remember their past at court. Considering the fact that when Imogen/Fidele meets them they are already men, it is reasonable to think that it is a span of almost of twenty years.

Finally, in *The Tempest* what happened to Prospero is narrated in the background. From the moment that Prospero has been overthrown and has ended on the island and the moment at the start of the play when he is controlling a tempest, there is a gap of 12 years.

Prospero the narrator in Act 1 Scene 1 says:

PROSPERO

Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan and
A prince of power. (*The Tempest* 1.2.52-54)

CHAPTER FOUR: Process of Reunion and Reconciliation

4.1. Reconciliation Scenes, Deities & Magic

So far has been analyzed what the characters of the first generation did to initiate the process of loss and separation, and what the characters of the second generation had to go through as a consequence of that.

This final chapter is going to deal with the last passage common to all these four plays: the moment of recognition, forgiveness and reconciliation. Characters are going to be reunited with what was initially lost.

In these romances Shakespeare made large use of one of the most recurrent themes used in drama: that of recognition. The term recognition, which is adapted from the Latin word *recognitio*, is the equivalent of the Greek word *anagnorisis* which was coined by Aristotle. In his work *Poetics* Aristotle defined *anagnorisis* as “a change from ignorance into knowledge, leading to either friendship or enmity”. In literary works the moment of recognition can be briefly defined as the moment in which the true identity of a character is revealed. Recognition scenes are then followed by forgiveness and ultimately end up with a moment of reconciliation. Reconciliation is indeed probably the most dominant theme of Shakespeare’s romances.

In order to have a final reunion with him or her who was believed to be forever lost, the characters that have supposedly died in the first part of the play need to be still alive. To do so, Shakespeare used a common literary plot device, that of feigned deaths. Every time he inserted a moment in which one member among main characters is believed to be dead, when in fact he or she is not so. It always came out as an apparent death in which a character seemed dead to another one, or when someone reported the information that a character has died. In *Pericles*

there is the counterfeit death of Marina, and Thaisa is believed to be dead not once, but twice. In *Cymbeline*, Imogene/Fidele, Arviragus, Guiderius, Posthumous are believed to be all dead. In *The Winter's Tale* the most tragic episode of the play is when Paulina declares that Hermione has died. In *The Tempest* Prospero makes every character on the island believe that all the others have died in the shipwreck.

The grief deriving from these deaths is the first step that character have to go through in their process of redemption that would eventually lead to final peace, serenity and restoration. The apparent deaths are then denied and followed by a sort of resurrection, a return of a character. The presence of episodes of feigned deaths has contributed to define these works as tragicomedies as the end is not tragic and characters turn out to be alive.

Nevertheless, not all the deaths are false; we find tragic moments with real deaths as well. In *The Winter's Tale* we are informed of the death of Leontes and Hermione's child, the innocent Mamilius and in *Cymbeline* the wicked Cloten is beheaded by the valorous Guiderius.

Furthermore, there are episodes of intervention of gods punishing evil characters that committed awful sins. Gods then sentenced these characters to horrible deaths. The return to life of characters can be interpreted as references to the Christian concepts of resurrection and rebirth. These plays are indeed the result of a combination between Christian and classical references. Arthur Kirsch in the essay *Twixt two extremes of Passion, Joy and Grief* wrote that Shakespeare made a copious use of two emotions: joy and grief. These two emotions were often associated both with the Christian story of Jesus' suffering on the cross and the Christian notion of Felix culpa which is defined as "the fortunate fall, the process in which grief is redeemed by joy"⁵⁷. The grief is found in the episodes of deaths, apparent deaths or the threat of deaths. This grief

⁵⁷ A. Kirsch, *Twixt two extremes of Passion, Joy and Grief. Shakespeare's King Lear and Last Plays*, in *The Yale Review*, Vol. 103, Issue 1, Wiley Blackwell, January 2015, pp. 26-47, p. 27.

will eventually lead to joy. Kirsch continues by saying that in romances the heightened feeling of joy occurs with “the revelation that characters who have been mourned as dead are in fact alive”. Besides Christian references, we find pagan settings and intervention or participations of gods and goddesses from the Greek and Roman traditions. The presiding deity of *Pericles* is Diana, the Roman goddess of hunting and protector of childbirth. Pericles, Thaisa and Marina will all eventually address words of devotion to this goddess; Thaisa will even become a priestess in Diana’s temple.

In *Cymbeline* the main entity is Jupiter, the king of gods. In the fifth Act he appears in a dream to Posthumous to reassure him. The stage direction of this scene says:

*JUPITER descends in thunder and lightning,
sitting upon an eagle. He throws a thunder bolt.
The ghosts fall on their knees*⁵⁸.

In *The Winter’s Tale* the moment of grand appearance of a god on stage as the ones made by Diana or Jupiter is absent; the pagan setting of the play is reinforced by several references to various gods and goddesses made by characters throughout the course of the story. Florizel even describes gods’ behavior in Scene 4, Act 4:

FLORIZEL
Apprehend
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,
Humbling their deities to love, have taken
The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter
Became a bull and bellowed; the green Neptune
A ram and bleated; and the fire-robed god,
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,

⁵⁸ Shakespeare, *Cymbeline, cit.*, p. 339.

As I seem now. [...] (*The Winter's Tale* 4.4.24-31)

The most mentioned god is Apollo. Moreover, Apollo is the one whom the characters addressed while seeking the truth of Leontes' accusation. Leontes questioning Apollo's word pronounced by the Oracle of Delphi is one of the initial mistakes for which he will be punished. Lastly, in *The Tempest* during the masque scene the spirits summoned by Ariel take the form of Greek gods and goddesses.

Along with references to Greek and Roman deities, there are other magical, supernatural or semi-magical episodes.

In *Pericles* Cerimon the physician who lives in Ephesus, a charitable person and a good doctor, seems to possess supernatural abilities or at least skills unknown to the majority of people. When he first sees Thaisa in the coffin he immediately realizes that she is not dead, and he is able to cure her. Cerimon says to "Have studied physic, through which secret art". His own reference to a secret art makes the audience think that his knowledge and abilities might go beyond what is natural in this world.

Analyzing the scene there is nothing really supernatural in what he does to "revive" Thaisa. As Suzanne Gossett says:

Cerimon ostensibly uses only medicine and music to awake 'nature', but references to his 'art' and suggestion that 'virtue and cunning' may make 'a man a god' create the impression that his abilities are magical or supernaturally assisted⁵⁹.

We do not then witness supernatural happenings like the ones of *The Tempest* with Prospero and Ariel.

⁵⁹ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, cit., p. 109.

In *The Winter's Tale* the miraculous resurrection of Hermione orchestrated by Paulina seems a supernatural event. Anyway, we are uncertain of what really happened and perhaps Shakespeare left a specifically open interpretation. The character of Paulina can either have supernatural powers or she might simply have hidden Hermione in her chapel for sixteen years. Whatever our interpretation is, this scene remains wondrous in any case.

With the participation of Ariel, the spirit of air, Prospero, the witch Sycorax and various spirits, *The Tempest* is the densest of magical components of all four the plays.

4.2. *Pericles*

In this play there are two recognition scenes. The first one occurs between Pericles and his daughter Marina, and the second one between Pericles and his wife Thaisa.

The reconciliation scene between Pericles and his daughter is probably one of the most powerful and intense scenes of this play. Gower informs the audience that the news of Marina's death causes a great pain in Pericles, and he eventually becomes dysfunctional and hopeless.

GOWER

And Pericles in sorrow all devoured,
With sighs shot through and biggest tears
o'ershowered,
Leaves Tarsus and again embarks. He swears
Never to wash his face nor cut his hairs [...] (*Pericles* 4.4.25-29)

He stops speaking, he lets his hair and beard grow, he lets himself slowly die. After the death of his own daughter he becomes a man that has nothing left to live for. Pericles passes his days in a ship off the coast of Mytilene. When the governor Lysimachus goes on board the ship to “know of whence you are”, Helicanus explains him that the ship is of the sad King of Tyre:

HELICANUS

Sir, our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king,
A man who for this three months hath not spoken
To anyone, nor taken sustenance
But to prorogue his grief.

LYSIMACHUS

Upon what ground
Is his distemperature?

HELICANUS

'Twould be too tedious
To repeat, but the main grief springs from the loss
Of a beloved daughter and a wife. (*Pericles* 5.1.19-27)

We are informed that Pericles stopped speaking and caring for himself three months ago.

He is in a mental state that can be defined catatonic. Even if he is still alive, there is no life in him, he is living the life of a dead person.

Lysimachus then thinks that a maiden of his acquaintance will be probably able to help the king.

Marina is called, comes on board and starts singing for Pericles.

At first, he does not recognize this young woman as his daughter Marina; In all fairness he does not even seem to realize her presence at all, he pushes her back. Then she starts speaking and telling him her story. Pericles slowly begins to notice the girl and he starts responding to her. It is only when he sees a resemblance with his wife Thaisa that he becomes more interested and willing to talk with her and to know her story.

PERICLES

[...]

My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one
My daughter might have been. My queen's square

brows,
Her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight,
As silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like
And cased as richly, [...] (*Pericles* 5.1.97-102)

When she tells Pericles her name, the wall he had been building in the last three months begins to collapse.

MARINA [*Sits.*]
My name is Marina.
PERICLES
O, I am mocked,
And thou by some incensed god sent hither
To make the world to laugh at me. (*Pericles* 5.1.133-136)

The name Marina becomes a recognition sign, a magic word, a name that according to Garber functions as identification, a token used for the recognition between father and daughter⁶⁰.

Marina continues her story and reveals to be the daughter of a king.

PERICLES
How! A king's daughter?
And called Marina?
MARINA
You said you would believe me,
But, not to be a troubler of your peace
I will end here.
PERICLES

⁶⁰ M. Garber, *Harvard ENGL E-129 - Lecture 9: Pericles*, Recorded on Nov 28, 2007, available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRu2E1QW4L0&list=PLLBTlqKLPFAOwyw6tyJdshu-aHOyHA4TN&index=9>

But are you flesh and blood?
Have you a working pulse and are no fairy?
Motion as well? Speak on. Where were you born?
And wherefore called Marina? (*Pericles* 5.1.140-146)

This union is the beginning of the return to life for Pericles. The playwright dedicated a good portion of the play to the recognition scene between father and daughter;

Although the first information that Pericles receives from her was clearly sufficient to recognize her as his own daughter, he keeps asking for further proofs. This scene is indeed a crescendo of emotional intensity and it seems to replicate the act of awakening, a slow re-awakening to life and joy.

This scene is generally considered the most important and climatic scene of the whole play.

At last, Pericles is finally sure to have found his daughter:

PERICLES

O Helicanus, strike me, honoured sir,
Give me a gash, put me to present pain,
Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me
O'erbear the shores of my mortality
And drown me with their sweetness.
[*to Marina*] O, come hither,
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget,
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus,
And found at sea again! - O Helicanus,
Down on thy knees, thank the holy gods as loud
As thunder threatens us, this is Marina!
[*Helicanus kneels.*]
- What was thy mother's name? Tell me but that,
For truth can never be confirmed enough

Though doubts did ever sleep. (*Pericles* 5.1.180-192)

“O, come hither, Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;” is a key line in the play. The daughter here becomes the maternal figure; the daughter that gives new life to her father. According to editor Suzanne Gossett, this inversion “recalls and corrects the incestuous relationship between father and daughter with which the play began”⁶¹. According to Garber this period also served as a period of redemption for the incest riddle at the beginning of the play⁶². When the process of recognition and reconciliation is done, it is Marina’s turn to realize that the man in front of her is indeed her father. Pericles then starts hearing some music. A music that only he is able to hear.

HELICANUS

My lord, I hear none.

PERICLES

None?

The music of the spheres. List, my Marina. (*Pericles* 5.1.215-217)

Few lines later:

PERICLES

Most heavenly music.

It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber

Hangs upon mine eyes. Let me rest. [*Sleeps.*] (*Pericles* 5.1.220-222)

Pericles is the only one able to hear this heavenly music as he is the one going through this process of regeneration and revival into a second life. The music makes him suddenly fall asleep.

⁶¹ Shakespeare, *Pericles, cit.*, p. 387.

⁶² Garber, lecture on *Pericles, cit.*

He dreams of Diana telling him that if he does not want to live in woe for the rest of his life, he has to go to her Temple in Ephesus, make a sacrifice on her altar and when all her priestesses are reunited in front of the population he has to tell how he lost his wife.

DIANA

My temple stands in Ephesus. Hie thee thither,
And do upon mine altar sacrifice.
There when my maiden priests are met together,
Before the people all,
Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife.
To mourn thy crosses with thy daughter's, call
And give them repetition to the life.
Perform my bidding, or thou liv'st in woe;
Do it and happy, by my silver bow.
Awake and tell thy dream. (*Pericles* 5.1.227-236)

The husband-wife recognition is generally considered not as moving and emotional as the father-daughter one. It is shorter and more dismissive, and the recognition happens in a more abrupt way. In fact, it is said that this recognition is subordinated to the previous one. However, it is still powerful and as Garber writes it “does not come off as an anticlimax”⁶³.

Thaisa recognizes Pericles from his voice and appearance. This unexpected and miraculous meeting makes her faint. Not having recognized Thaisa yet, Pericles asks:

PERICLES

What means the nun? She dies. Help, gentlemen!
(*Pericles* 5.3.15)

⁶³ Garber, *Op. cit.*, p. 774.

For the second time Pericles believes that Thaisa is dead. Cerimon intervenes and informs Pericles that this nun is his wife, Thaisa.

PERICLES

The voice of dead Thaisa!

THAISA

That Thaisa am I, supposed dead

And drowned.

PERICLES

Immortal Dian!

THAISA

Now I know you better.

When we with tears parted Pentapolis,

The king my father gave you such a ring. (*Pericles* 5.3.34-40)

Here too we find a token of recognition: a ring.

The circle is finally closed and the initial order is re-established. Both Pericles and Marina had to undergo a period of separation and sorrow but in the end the family is reunited and can now start living again.

4.3. *Cymbeline*

This play too ends with a series of recognitions or as Aristotle called them, anagnorisis. Critics have counted 24 recognition scenes in this play, but we are going to analyze only few of them, the most relevant to this research.

Because of its copiousness, *Cymbeline* was considered by many scholars an experimental play. Shakespeare continued what he has started with *Pericles* by developing themes and forms. Other than recognitions and reconciliations, Shakespeare called into question the difference between

appearance (what it seems) and reality (what it is). We do not only find recognition scenes but also misrecognitions and partial recognitions.

One of the most famous misrecognition scenes occurs in the second scene of the fourth Act, when Imogen waking up from her death-like state sees near her a headless body and she thinks it belongs to her husband Posthumous.

INNOGEN

[...]

Struck the main-top! O Posthumus, alas,

Where is thy head? Where's that? Ay me, where's that?

Pisanio might have killed thee at the heart

And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio?

[...] (*Cymbeline* 4.2.319-322)

Shakespeare maintained the theme of reconciliation in *Cymbeline*, but here he used a different approach.

The fifth Act of the play is full of recognitions and reconciliation scenes. At court, after the victory against the Romans, winners and prisoners are all brought together before King Cymbeline. Within the play there are a lot of episodes of feigned deaths as well. Posthumous believes that Imogen was killed by Pisanio, Guiderius and Arviragus believe that the young boy Fidele is dead and Imogene believes that her husband Posthumous has been beheaded.

The fifth scene is rich of happenings leading to the happy resolution of the play. All these apparent deaths are disproved, and the truth is revealed. Within few lines Imogene/Fidele reveals her true identity, Guiderius and Arviragus discover that Fedele is still alive, Posthumous finds his wife and Cymbeline finds his daughter.

BELARIUS

My boys,

There was our error.

GUIDERIUS

This is sure Fidele.

INNOGEN

Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?

[She embraces him.]

Think that you are upon a rock, and now

Throw me again.

POSTHUMUS

Hang there like a fruit, my soul,

Till the tree die.

CYMBELINE

How now, my flesh, my child?

What, mak'st thou me a dullard in this act?

Wilt thou not speak to me?

INNOGEN

[Kneels] Your blessing, sir. (*Cymbeline* 5.5.257-265)

Shortly after this reunion, it is Morgan/Belarius' turn to reveal his true identity and that of his two sons.

BELARIUS

[...] These gentle princes,

For such and so they are, these twenty years

Have I trained up; those arts they have as I

Could put into them. My breeding was, sir,

As your highness knows. Their nurse Euriphile,

Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children

Upon my banishment. I moved her to't,

Having received the punishment before

For that which I did then. Beaten for loyalty

Excited me to treason. Their dear loss,
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shaped
Unto my end of stealing them. [...] (*Cymbeline* 5.5.335-346)

Cymbeline is not only reunited with his daughter, but he is also reunited with his two long-lost sons. An interesting detail about this play is that even though it is entitled *Cymbeline*, it seems that the author has not dedicated an important role to the title-character. In fact, among all these reunions, no character seems to be primarily interested in reuniting with the king. Imogen appears to be more interested in her reunion with her husband and with her brothers.

Cymbeline indeed says:

How now, my flesh, my child!
What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?
Wilt thou not speak to me? (*Cymbeline* 5.5.262-264)

As response he only obtained:

INNOGEN
[*Kneels.*] Your blessing, sir. (*Cymbeline* 5.5.265)

Apparently, Imogen does not even notice her father's presence until he calls for her attention.

Compared to the one occurred between Pericles and Marina, the reconciliation between Cymbeline and Imogene appears not as emotionally intense.

Even his sons, they too seem more interested in their reunion with the sister rather than with their father, the king of the country.

In *Cymbeline*, there is no happy reunion with the wife as seen in *Pericles*. On the contrary, at the end of the play Cymbeline finally discovers the true evil identity of his second wife and of her cruel plans to kill him, his daughter and to make her son Cloten the king's successor.

At the end of the play once again the order is re-established, and the family is reunited.

Hallett Smith while talking about reconciliation and restoration in *Cymbeline* said "the whole atmosphere [...] is strongly flavored with social implications". He continued by saying the general feeling is "the health of the state, extending even to its foreign relations, is dependent upon this family reconciliation"⁶⁴.

4.4. *The Winter's Tale*

The ending of *The Winter's Tale* resembles for certain aspects the ending of *Pericles*.

Again, Shakespeare revised a reunion between husband and wife and between a long-lost daughter and her father. In this case he modified the focus of the narration.

If in *Pericles* the most climactic scene of the whole play is when father and daughter are finally reunited and the second recognition, the one between husband and wife is of secondary importance, here the author proposed the exact contrary. At the end of the first scene of the fifth Act Paolina tells Leontes:

PAULINA

Sir, my liege,

Your eye hath too much youth in't. Not a month

'Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes

Than what you look on now.

LEONTES

⁶⁴ Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 287.

I thought of her,
Even in these looks I made. (*The Winter's Tale* 5.1.223-228)

From this exchange we only see a glimpse of what could probably have started the recognition process. What Leontes says may be interpreted as a half-recognition. Perhaps Perdita looks almost exactly like her mother. Nevertheless, unlike what is seen with *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, we do not witness the reunion between father and daughter. We are told of this reunion in the following scene, when three gentlemen tell the event to Autolycus. The first gentleman narrates that both father and daughter were overwhelmed by emotions.

GENTLEMAN

[...] They seemed almost,
with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their
eyes. There was speech in their dumbness, language
in their very gesture. They looked as they had heard
of a world ransomed, or one destroyed. A notable
passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest
beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if
th' importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity
of the one it must needs be. (*The Winter's Tale* 5.2.11-19)

The second gentleman declares:

ROGERO

[...] The oracle is fulfilled,
the king's daughter is found. Such a deal of wonder is
broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot
be able to express it. (*The Winter's Tale* 5.2.22-25)

With the testimony of the third one, we are informed that here as well there were objects that function as tokens of recognition, proofs of the truthfulness of the story:

STEWARD

Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by
circumstance. That which you hear you'll swear you see;
there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen
Hermione's; her jewel about the neck of it; the letters
of Antigonus found with it, which they know to be his
character; [...] (*The Winter's Tale* 5.2.30-35)

Even if it was not represented, we are told that this union is emotional, powerful and intense, as the one of *Pericles*. The third gentleman continues:

STEWARD

[...] There was casting up of
eyes, holding up of hands, with countenances of such
distraction that they were to be known by garment,
not by favour. Our king, being ready to leap out of
himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were
now become a loss, cries, 'O, thy mother, thy mother!',
then asks Bohemia forgiveness, then embraces his
son-in-law, then again worries he his daughter with
clipping her. [...] (*The Winter's Tale* 5.2.45-53)

Not only does this recognition lead to the reunion with her daughter, but also Leontes and his friend are reunited at last. Shakespeare anticipated the motif of forgiveness that he will later better explore at the end of *The Tempest*.

The father-daughter recognition is a fundamental step leading to the happy ending of the story. To celebrate this reunion, all the characters decide to go to Paulina's, have dinner together and

see the statue of Hermione that Paulina has commissioned to the famous Italian artist Giulio Romano.

Shakespeare decided to bring to the stage the reunion between Leontes and the unjustly accused queen. The statue of Hermione coming to life is perhaps one of the most known scenes of this play. After sixteen years of suffering believing to have forever destroyed and lost his whole family, Leontes is ending his period of penitence. As well as in the previous two works, the moment of final recognition and reunion of the family happens during the last scene of the last Act.

Paulina, who previously declared the death of Hermione, is also the one to lead Leontes and Perdita in her chapel to see the statue of the queen.

PAULINA

[...] But here it is: prepare

To see the life as lively mocked as ever

Still sleep mocked death. Behold, and say 'tis well.

[Draws a curtain and reveals the figure of Hermione, standing like a statue] (The Winter's Tale 5.3.18-20)

Leontes is surprised by the natural posture and look of the statue; compared to what she used to look like when she was alive, she looks aged:

LEONTES

[...] But yet, Paulina,

Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing

So aged as this seems. *(The Winter's Tale 5.3.27-29)*

And Paulina replies:

PAULINA

So much the more our carver's excellence,
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her
As she lived now. (*The Winter's Tale* 5.3.30-32)

This observation is a hint at what is going to happen next. The audience starts to suspect that what they believed to be a statue is in reality the living queen.

As seen before, the moment of awakening from this death-like state is accompanied with music. Shakespeare here presented the scene in a way that leaves a veil of incertitude similar to the one left during the resurrection of Thaisa. This scene has long been discussed. The awakening of the statue seems to be justified by a magical explanation. Paulina awakens Hermione by playing music. The whole scene can be seen as a reference to the Christian concept of resurrection. This resurrection, as David Fuller notice "has the effect of magic or miracle, even though it is not ultimately presented as either"⁶⁵.

4.5. *The Tempest*

In *The Tempest* Shakespeare seemed to focus more on the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation.

At the beginning of the story we watch a storm that splits a ship in half. All the passengers of the ship are spread on the island and divided in three main groups. Each survivor believes that the other passengers of the ship have died during the shipwreck. The passengers were the people on whom Prospero had planned for years to take revenge: his brother Antonio and the king of Naples, Alonso. Besides them, there are Alonso's son Ferdinand, Alonso's brother Sebastian and the honest old counsellor Gonzalo.

⁶⁵ Fuller, *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

What apparently starts as a project resulting from a desire of revenge, takes a different turn.

In the last Act Prospero asks Ariel how the enemies are doing on the island and Ariel answers that they are all confined together as per his command; Ariel says:

ARIEL

[...] Your charm so strongly works 'em.

That, if you now beheld them, your affections

Would become tender. (*The Tempest* 5.1.17-19)

We have no way of knowing if these lines are the reason why Prospero changed his mind or if the reason must be sought in the love between Miranda and Ferdinand. No matter what the reasons are, we unexpectedly hear Prospero declaring he is ready for forgiveness:

PROSPERO

[...]

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,

Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury

Do I take part. The rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,

The sole drift of my purpose doth extend

Not a frown further. [...] (*The Tempest* 5.1.25-30)

Then Ariel, following his last command goes and gathers everyone together at the presence of Prospero. He changes his clothes and gives a long speech. He proclaims his forgiveness to everyone:

PROSPERO

[...] Most cruelly

Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter.

Thy brother was a furtherer in the act. -
Thou art pinched for't now, Sebastian! - Flesh and blood,
You, brother mine, that entertained ambition,
Expelled remorse and nature, whom with Sebastian
(Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong)
Would here have killed your king, I do forgive thee,
Unnatural though thou art. [...] (*The Tempest* 5.1.71-79)

After the intervention of Gonzalo, Alonso is the first and only one to respond to Prospero.

Alonso says he is ready to surrender the dukedom and asks for his forgiveness.

ALONSO
[...]
Thy dukedom I resign and do entreat
Thou pardon me my wrongs. [...] (*The Tempest* 5.1.117-118)

He continues asking how he was able to survive all these years considering the fact he has lost his own son in a terrible shipwreck just few hours before this moment.

Contrary to what is seen so far, in this play we do not witness a father-daughter or wife-husband reconciliation.

Nevertheless, with a close look to the last part we find that Shakespeare inserted for the fourth time a reconciliation similar to what seen in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*.

Not a father daughter reunion, but a father-son reunion. Shakespeare proposed again a middle-aged male ruler, Alonso king of Naples, who is guilty to have deposed the duke of Milan 12 years before, and for this reason he is punished. Alonso believes to have lost his son Ferdinand, the heir of his reign, during the shipwreck. Prospero shows him otherwise.

PROSPERO
[...]
My dukedom since you have given me again,

I will requite you with as good a thing,
At least bring forth a wonder to content ye
As much as me my dukedom.

*Here Prospero discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess (The
Tempest 5.1.168-171)*

For Alan Dessen the theatrical term ‘discovers’ means to part a curtain or otherwise reveal to the playgoer (and often to onstage figures) something hitherto unseen⁶⁶.



[Fig. 6 *Ferdinand and Miranda Playing Chess*, Lucy Madox Brown, 1871.]

For this father too there is a happy reconciliation.

⁶⁶ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, cit., p. 296.

According to John Dean, even though we do not have reasons to doubt the truthfulness of the joy derived from this reunion, it pales if compared it to “ Pericles’ double recovery of Marina and Thaisa; Cymbeline’s triple recovery of Imogen, Guiderius and Arviragus, and Leontes’ double recovery of Perdita and Hermione.”⁶⁷

In addition, Alonso has to suffer from the loss of his son for approximately only three hours, whereas Pericles, Cymbeline and Leontes had to suffer for at least a decade before being reunited with them.

Despite the fact that forgiveness and reconciliation are certainly central to the play there is something odd I would like to direct attention to. In this final Act we only see the reconciliation between Prospero and Alonso.

Being Antonio a member of Prospero’s family, his own brother, we would have expected a moment of reconciliation between the two. Instead Shakespeare opted to make the audience witness only the reunion between the duke of Milan and the king of Naples. What is probably most disconcerting is the fact that Antonio seems not even to acknowledge the presence of his brother, and the only lines he pronounces are in response to Sebastian.

4.6. *Blackfriars*

Some critics believe that Shakespeare probably wrote these plays while having in mind what the stage of the Blackfriars could offer. One of the major differences with the Globe theatre was that at the Blackfriars, Shakespeare had the opportunity to experiment new narrative techniques and

⁶⁷ Dean, *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

devices thanks to the facilities this indoor theatre provided. In contrast to the Globe, the King's Men had a greater number of resources both in personnel and equipment at their disposal⁶⁸.

First of all, it is generally believed that the audience of this theatre was different; there was a greater presence of women, and apparently the audience of the Globe was less sophisticated than the one which usually attended the Blackfriars. These assumptions are supported by the fact that the entrance at the Globe was less expensive than the entrance at the Blackfriars⁶⁹.

Being an enclosed space, the Blackfriars allowed to experiment with new theatrical techniques as well, such as playing with the lights created by the candles or experimenting with music and sound effects which could not be easily reproduced in an outdoor theatre. The possibility of using new theatrical resources made easier to create on stage moments of wonder. Aristotle said that wonder is essential for tragedy⁷⁰. But what does the term wonder mean? Many are the meanings attached to this word. According to the Cambridge Dictionary wonder means “a feeling of great surprise and admiration caused by seeing or experiencing something that is strange and new⁷¹”.

In order to convey this feeling of wonder, it was necessary to introduce wondrous moments and scenes. Unexpected and special effects cause surprise in the audience. To offer that the Company needed expensive stage machinery and the Blackfriars offered that.

Another major difference was that performing at the Blackfriars meant to have access to the consort of musicians who used to accompany the children's company in the theatre.

Fuller reports how music had become of central importance during performances not only because playwrights started to introduce songs and masques in the storyline but also because

⁶⁸ Lindley, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷⁰ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, cit., p. 69.

⁷¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/wonder>, accessed June 2020.

they entertained the audience with music both before the starting of the performance and during the necessary breaks between scenes.

The indoor theatre needed these breaks to check the candles within the building. Supposedly these breaks may have lasted as out modern intervals⁷². By looking at some stage directions it is plausible to think that Shakespeare considered these breaks while writing these plays. For example, in *The Tempest*, Prospero exits at the end of Act 4 and enters at the beginning of Act 5. It is reasonable to think that maybe between these two acts there was one of these allegedly breaks.

In addition, many of the most significant moments of these romances are indeed accompanied by music. There are many references of music in *Pericles*. To help reviving the supposedly dead body of Thaisa, the physician Cerimon uses music. When Pericles is reunited when his daughter, he hears some music, a magical music only he can hear. Just before falling asleep and before the appearance of the goddess Diana, Pericles hears the music of the spheres.

According to Fuller, music too may be understood as natural (restorative and animating) or as magical (a usual stage accompaniment of the supernatural)⁷³. He continues by saying that whether we want to interpret it as natural or quasi-magical, music is however what sets the emotional tone for the climatic restoration⁷⁴.

If in *Cymbeline* there is not a large use of music, Shakespeare employed it again in *The Winter's Tale*. In this play music is employed multiple times, but one of the most relevant contribution of music is during the resurrection scene. Paulina uses music to awake the statue of Hermione.

PAULINA

Music, awake her; strike! [*Music*]

⁷² Lindley, *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁷³ Fuller, *Op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[to *Hermione*] 'Tis time; descend; be stone no more;
approach.

Strike all that look upon with marvel.[...] (*The Winter's Tale* 5.3.98-100)

According to Catherine M. Dunn music here, as well as in *Pericles*, has a restorative power.

Considering the three kinds of music formulated by Boethius in early sixth century, in

Hermione's resurrection scene Shakespeare used a kind of music that can either be *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis*.

Regardless of the various possible definitions that can be attributed to it, to use music serves to intensify the emotional charge of these scenes.

Among Shakespearean plays, *The Tempest* is perhaps the most "musical" one. This play is indeed full of music. The editors Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan in the introduction *The Tempest* wrote about music:

The atmosphere of *The Tempest's* enchanted island is created largely through sound. The stage directions call for a variety of auditory effects, including Ariel playing on a tabor and pipe[...]⁷⁵.

Music is not only employed in the background, but it becomes part of the play, it has a role in it.

If in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* music accompanied only specific moments of the story to intensify it, to enhance its dramatic purpose or simply to give a magical touch to the atmosphere, in *The Tempest* music is present throughout the play.

The character of Ariel singing songs functions as a vehicle for Prospero's magic.

⁷⁵ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, cit., p. 17.

Conclusion

The introductory chapter of the present dissertation has shown how the peculiarity of these plays renders their labelling a difficult and an almost unattainable task to accomplish. No label is indeed able to satisfy the need to find an umbrella term that comprehends all the literary aspects these works involve; we have seen that choosing a label means to choose a specific approach. After having reflected upon the question of the genre, and after having analyzed some of the major external factors that might have contributed or influenced this production, such as the acquisition of the Blackfriars, William Shakespeare's personal life or the ascension to the throne of James I, we have moved on the main goal of this paper: trying to make a comparative analyses of the common features of these works to see if they are indeed four different versions of the same story.

Even though critics usually agree that Shakespeare used different source materials for each one of these works, my aim in this thesis has been to demonstrate that he still had followed a common main guideline for both characters and basic plots. Throughout the chapters has been demonstrated that all storylines are in fact composed of three main steps.

The second chapter focused on first generation characters and the original mistake which caused losses and separations.

The third chapter was instead dedicated to second generation characters and the conflicts and tragic outcomes they have to go through as a consequence of the errors committed by first generation characters.

The fourth and last chapter was centered on final reunions and reconciliations. The restoration of the initial order. The period of penitence ended up in a rebirth, a return to life, a recovery of what was believed to be forever lost. In doing so Shakespeare also always focused on familiar relationships, in particular on the father-daughter one.

Furthermore, Shakespeare repeatedly used common literary devices, innovative stage techniques and settings such as time gaps, feigned death, magical and quasi-magical episodes, intervention of gods and pagan settings.

To conclude, my hope in this thesis has been to highlight some of the major similarities that concern *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

The main goal was not to seek the reasons why Shakespeare wrote them, rather to help bringing to light all those common themes, motifs and features that justify their grouping together. To look at those elements that made the past and present audience to feel of watching (or reading) almost four versions of a similar story.

Even though the literary criticism which revolves around these works is immense, in the end no one can ever know if the similarities were intentional or not, if this was specifically made by Shakespeare, if it was for reasons of practicality, if it was to please the king's desires or simply because it was what the audience wanted.

Regardless of the real reasons, the fascination of these four plays is that after almost four centuries they are still being studied and admired by students, critics and researchers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Loretta Innocenti, for her guidance, support, encouragement and patience from the very beginning of this study.

I would also like to thank all my friends and colleagues. Even in the most difficult moments, they have always been there for me.

Finally, heartfelt thanks go to my family, for their constant love and support.

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