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MIMESIS OF CONTRAST IN SHAKESPEARE'S EPHEMERAL SUBPLOT AND ITS USE IN VICTORIAN AND MODERNIST LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to present an overview of Shakespeare's employment of a narrative technique that could be referred to as the "mimesis of contrast." By analysing the characteristics of certain sequences in *Macbeth*, *Henry IV 1* and *The Tempest*, it will be spelt out that Shakespeare's sudden subplots, generally considered mere comic reliefs, are in fact revealing instances that not only mirror the play's primary narrative but also succeed in generating a drastic poetic effect. Moreover, the use of this method will be considered in the works of Victorian and Modernist authors, notably Charles Dickens, James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. Lastly, the ideas of traditional Shakespearian critics like S. T. Coleridge and Thomas De Quincey shall work as central arguments in this article, aiding to conclude that Renaissance drama, and in particular Shakespeare's motif of contrast, made an impact in the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Literary Criticism, Victorian Literature, Modernism, Comparative Literature.

LA MIMESIS DE CONSTRASTE EN LA SUBTRAMA BREVE SHAKESPERIANA Y SU USO EN LA LITERATURA VICTORIANA Y MODERNISTA

RESUMEN. En este artículo se pretende analizar el uso que Shakespeare hace de cierta técnica narrativa, a la que nos podemos referir como "mímesis de contraste." Tras analizar las características de determinadas secuencias en *Macbeth*, *Enrique IV 1* y *La Tempestad*, se mostrará cómo las subtramas breves de Shakespeare, generalmente consideradas descansos cómicos, son en realidad momentos de suma importancia, puesto que no solo reflejan la narrativa principal de la obra, sino que también generan un impactante efecto poético. Posteriormente, se tendrá en cuenta el uso de esta técnica dentro de la literatura de autores victorianos y modernistas, en concreto en los textos de Charles Dickens, James Joyce y T. S. Eliot. Por último, tendremos en cuenta las valoraciones de determinados autores acerca de la obra de Shakespeare, S. T. Coleridge y Thomas De Quincey, para demostrar que el teatro renacentista, y en concreto la mímesis de contraste, tuvo un gran impacto en la literatura de los siglos diecinueve y veinte.

Palabras clave: Shakespeare, Crítica Literaria, Literatura Victoriana, Modernismo, Literatura Comparada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"So foul a sky clears not without a storm" (4.2.110), writes William Shakespeare in *King John*, presenting in this concise verse an existential, politically tainted prophecy. In fact, the clearing of a thick atmosphere into an environment of lesser heaviness is a device that this author employed to arrange decisive sequences of some of his most influential dramatic works, a storytelling method to be considered as Shakespeare's "mimesis of contrast." This paper focuses on three plays of different genres, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV 1*, and *The Tempest*, which will aid to show that with these plot changes Shakespeare sought to move the audience and engage with it, bearing an intention both poetical and social. In addition, how the latter section of several pairs of scenes was arranged as a sudden subplot that not only reflected the leading narrative but also provoked a feeling of renovation will be observed. The three plays to be discussed have been selected for several major reasons. Firstly, they will aid to show how Shakespeare made use of similar narrative patterns, and in particular the one named above, throughout his wide range of production. I deem proper to raise this idea, since at a first glance the readership may assume that plays as varied as the ones chosen–that is, a Tragedy, a History, and a Romance produced in different stages of his writing career–must be notoriously dissimilar pieces. Secondly, since this study focuses on the transitions between major storylines and apparently abrupt plots, the plays have been selected to show that, no matter how

distant the secondary characters are from the protagonists, there is at all times a strong similitude between them. Through an analysis of three scenes which rely on the effects of inebriation to unfold–the "Porter Scene" in *Macbeth*, the Carriers' conversation in *Henry IV 1* and the plotting of the murder of Prospero in *The Tempest*–the following section will provide an overview of the characteristics of the mimesis of contrast and the use of this narrative strategy in the plays, supported by ideas postulated by traditional critics of the Shakespearian canon, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas de Quincey.

De Quincey's and Coleridge's commentaries on Shakespeare have been taken into account, primarily, because they allow this study to transcend Renaissance drama. The use of De Quincey's essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" and Coleridge's lecture on *The Tempest* will permit us to easily reflect on the use of Shakespearean motifs and narrative devices in Victorian literature, and particularly in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. The critical works of both authors will shed light on the understanding of the Shakespearean canon in the nineteenth century as well as of its use as a source to develop pioneering literatures. As it will be noticed, the mimesis of contrast is employed in Dickens' novel in a way which follows the same steps which Shakespeare set while using this formula. Moreover, in the last sections of this paper, the inclusion of two Modernist writers–James Joyce and T. S. Eliot–will allow to complete an overview of how Shakespeare's major topics and techniques have been constantly rearranged in the English language literary tradition, as well as to show which have been the different approaches towards this borrowing through time. In their respective works, these authors applied profusely Shakespeare's motif of contrast to enhance their texts with an atmosphere of renewal, breaking a slowly woven suspense. By focusing on a pair of radically different scenes from *Ulysses*, it will be pointed out how Joyce's narrative patterns and voices mirror Shakespeare's prosodic shifts, which are contained in the sudden changes between verse and prose present in the plays as well as in the various registers used by characters belonging to different social spheres. Lastly, T. S. Eliot's employment of the Shakespearean tradition in *The Waste Land*, and particularly in "A Game of Chess," will show how Modernism broadened the width of experimentation in regards to the use of primary and secondary sources in the literary text. The differences and similarities between the two scenes that compose "A Game of Chess" will be explored, considering Eliot's employment of Shakespeare's themes to create a drastic change of environment and a contrasting mimesis. Finally, relying on studies such as Harry Berger's (2015) "A Horse Named Cut: *1 Henry IV*, Act 2, Scene 1" and Frederic Tromly's (1975) "Macbeth and His Porter," it will be stated that while Dickens made use of Shakespeare to enrich his novels with particular narrative shifts, Joyce and T. S. Eliot went further, blending Shakespeare's texts with their correspondent criticism to present meta-literary pieces, thus adapting centuries of tradition into a literature adequate for what, as James Nohrnberg writes, Eliot referred to as the "present chaos" of their era (21).

2. MIMESIS OF CONTRAST IN *MACBETH*, *HERNY IV 1* AND *THE TEMPEST*

Shakespeare's employment of extreme thematic and stylistic alternations within the same play has long been subject to criticism, with some scholars labelling it as an avoidable narrative choice. Alan Stewart describes the Carriers' scene in *Henry IV 1* as "something of an oddity" (431), perhaps due to the strangeness of the sudden lowly prose of its characters in contrast to the delicate lines of Hotspur and the rest of the revolutionary plotters present in the previous scene. On the other hand, Michael Allen gives credit to these shifts, considering the porter scene in *Macbeth*, and classifies them as "thought-paralyzing concepts of comic relief" (327) taking into account Thomas de Quincey's essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth." De Quincey's piece of criticism analyses this scene, with which the playwright managed to produce his comic relief by means of presenting the base complaining of a hungover medieval porter in the aftermath of King Duncan's assassination–"Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key" (Shakespeare, Mac. 2.3.1-2).

In his essay, De Quincey argues that "in order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear" (84), culminating with the idea that at no instant is the "sense of the complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns so full and affecting as at that moment when the suspension ceases, and the ongoings of human life are suddenly resumed" (84). To support this thesis, he then regards the feverish plane that Macbeth's central deed establishes, theorising on how the arrival of the porter on stage breaks, with rather base though deep human touch, the hanging tension left by the murder of the king. For De Quincey, when the breath-taking tension is broken and a new world arrives to substitute the former,

> when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced: the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them. (De Quincey 84)

Considering De Quincey's theory, this ephemeral subplot and particularly its characteristic knocking produce an impact on the audience as the calm after the storm, although, as Frederic Tromly argues, its primary purpose might have been to adjust and clarify the audience's response to the intense plot developed immediately before (151). However, this approach is not only present in *Macbeth*. As commented before, in act 2, scene 1 of *Henry IV 1* the domestic conversation between the Carriers in Rochester proves to be a similar situation to that of the porter in the tragedy, though certainly Hotspur's revolution shall not be considered "fiendish." On a similar note, Fredson Bowers argues that the Carriers, as well as Macbeth's attendant have no ideological significance in themselves (53)–they represent "the mimic world of the underplot" (53) and constitute, along with the rest of the tavern scenes of the play "a form of parody of the main plot" (53). Furthermore, as Stewart points out, "the

consensus of twentieth-century critics was that these comic scenes have an important but subordinate relationship to the main plot" (432). This subordination works, moreover, as a parallelism to the primary narrative, their characters being domestic alterations of the circumstantial courtly protagonists as well as of their situations. For instance, as Harry Berger argues, after Hotspur's rhymed rhetoric in *Henry IV 1*–"Why, what a candy deal of courtesy / This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!" (Shakespeare, 1H4 1.3.247-248)–"the opening dialogue of act 2, scene 1 strikes an antithetical low note by introducing us to a Shakespearean version of contemporary truck-stop culture" (83). In this scene the rushed commentary on the time of the day spoken by the First Carrier–"An it be not four by the day I'll be / hanged …" (Shakespeare, 1H4 2.1.1-2)–brings the reader back to Falstaff's introductory words in act 1, scene 2–"Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?" (1H4 1.2.1)–thus presenting a mock parallel of the principal plot and characters. Yet this parallelism is not the only noticeable one, for Berger points out another correspondence between the world of the court and the Carriers' momentary subplot, stating that there is a social implication in the analogy between "the superficially careless escapism of the Eastcheap holiday–'What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day?' (Shakespeare, 1H4 1.2.6-7)–and the inconvenience to which transporters of food are exposed in a politically and economically unstable world, where the price of oats matters and sharp practices are the order of the day" (83). Consequently, this consideration would endow the seemingly comical atmosphere of the scene with a serious social critique, and reinforce A. R. Humphreys' opinion on the blending of tragic and light-hearted moments in *Henry IV 1*:

> The co-existence of comic and serious plots is not confined to their efficient alternation, although their alternations are superbly efficient. The more they are scrutinized, the more connected they appear, the connection being sometime of parallelism and reinforcement, sometimes of antithesis and contrast, sometime a reversal by which serious or comic is judged by the other's values. There are, too, stylistic relationships by which, for instance, major types of imagery are common to both parts, or by which the texture and pace of prose scenes offset those of verse. (Humphreys xlvi)

Similarly, the transitory subplot of the Porter in *Macbeth* relates back to the protagonist of the play, although the parallelism might not be as clear as in *Henry IV 1*. In my view, the audience of *Macbeth* may find attractive to fall into a Manichaean understanding of the play due to the sanguine features of the protagonist. In this case, the characters would be divided into two groups consisting of, firstly, the Macbeth marriage–perhaps associated to the Weird Sisters–and, secondly, all other dramatis personae. This taking would make difficult to acknowledge the Thane of Cawdor as a creature of human capacities relatable to, e.g., the Porter, contrary to the facility of assuming that the disastrous new owner of the Rochester stable might parallel the figures partaking in the primary plot of *Henry IV 1,* mirroring the prospect of a new king of England. Thus, as De Quincey commented on the human making its resurgence against the fiendish, many critics have made use of the principle of contrast to analyse and justify the radical

difference between the Murder and the Porter scenes. "The simpler vices of the Porter," writes John Harcourt, "serve to establish an ethical distance between the failings of ordinary humanity and the monstrous evil now within the castle walls" (397). Nevertheless, contrary to this remark, I would argue that the Porter might aid the reader to elaborate on some traits of the personality of Macbeth, being not his antithetical character, meek inhabitant of merry England, but rather a cynical figure that will prophetically and decisively speak to the audience about the penalty of any crime, here encouraged by the knocks upon the door discussed by De Quincey:

> … *(Knock.)* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty. Come in time! Have napkins enough about you; here you'll sweat for 't. *(Knock.)* Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake yet could not equivocate to heaven. O, come in, equivocator. *(Knock.)* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor. Here you may roast your goose. *(Knock.)* Knock, knock! Never at quiet. —What are you? — But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further. I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire. *(Knock.)* (Shakespeare, Mac. 2.3.1-19)

From these lines the reader assumes that for the Porter, the suicidal, the equivocator, and the thief will virtually end up in the same path as the murderer–in "the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire" (2.3.19). Thus, this passage establishes Macbeth as a common man cynically enhanced by the impression caused by the Porter's comic relief. In *Macbeth*, the sudden subplot not only breaks the "courtly" sublimity typical of the early Jacobean drama, but also allows the audience to identify Macbeth with the waking hungover character as well as with itself. As Tromly writes, considering the Porter's opinion that all deeds deserve the same punishment, "the ultimate function of the scene is to humanize the murderer by forcing us to recognize him in the 'ordinary' Porter and perhaps in ourselves as well" (151), a cognizance that would turn the traditional Coleridgean understanding of the

scene–"the disgusting passage of the porter" (Coleridge, "Macbeth" 154)–into a revealing brief plot.

To my mind, it is certainly interesting to comment on Coleridge's opinion on these scenes, for, in one of his lectures on Shakespeare, "Thursday, 17 December 1818," he discusses in depth what I would consider another instance of Shakespeare's renewal of action after a bold moment: the preposterously comical encounter of Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano in *The Tempest*–another scene masterfully led by drunkenness. Firstly, Coleridge elaborates on act 2, scene 1 of the same play, in which the frustrated assassination of Alonzo and Gonzalo by Antonio and Sebastian takes place. He states that it is a moment of intense poetical strength, comparing it with the plotting of the murder of Duncan, classifying it as

> an exact counterpart of the scene between Macbeth and his lady, only pitched in a lower key throughout, as designed to be frustrated and concealed, and exhibiting the same profound management in the manner of familiarizing a mind, not immediately recipient, to the suggestion of guilt, by associating the proposed crime with something ludicrous or out of place; something not habitually a matter of reverence. (Coleridge, "The Tempest" 139)

Then, to conclude his commentary on this Romance, he acknowledges something of great interest for our analysis. Coleridge encourages the reader to "observe how the effect of this scene is heightened by contrast with another counterpart of it in low life, that between the conspirators Stephano, Caliban, and Trinculo in the second scene of the third act, in which there are the same essential characteristics" ("The Tempest" 139). Hence, the power of the former scene increases as the following arrives, mirroring it. The Romantic critic relates the absurd plotting of these minor characters against Prospero to the hampered scheme of the preceding scene, that, if carried out, would have led to a decisive undertaking for the political regimes of Naples and Milan. Traditionally, the minor speakers Stephen and Trinculo–like the Carriers and the Porter–have been described by critics such as Berger as characters "neither individuated nor stabilized by their roles in the drama" (85). Certainly, as protagonists of an unforeseen subplot, they necessarily have to bear some of the traits belonging to the central characters in order to fit within the width of the play. Nevertheless, these figures have been designed under the influence of Shakespeare's "low-life" comedy and, as a unique and successful experiment within the wide spectrum of this author, they deserve further recognition. Coleridge, yet again, granted it, describing this scene in *The Tempest* and its secondary characters as contrasting followers to the previous ones, successful and "intensely individualized; the results of meditation, of which observation supplied the drapery and the colours necessary to combine them with each other" (140).

3. THE SHAKESPEREAN CANON IN VICTORIAN FICTION: DICKENS' *OLIVER TWIST*

It can be argued that this dramatic technique–the use of a relieving minor scene after an intense poetic moment–transcended Shakespearian plays and was used by renowned modern writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to achieve a sublimity in their narrative as proposed by De Quincey. In the following pages, by analysing a certain sequence of scenes from *Oliver Twist*, it will be appreciated how "the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live" (De Quincey 84) has been a device employed by Dickens as subtly as by Shakespeare, not only for the sake of contrast, but also to create a parallelism between the characters present in their correlative situations. Yet, there is a noticeable shared characteristic in the commented "comic" Shakespearian scenes that needs to be addressed before bringing into discussion the more modern passages selected. As A. Lynne Magnusson declares, in *The Tempest* "the comic material occasionally gives the impression of improvisation," as if "the methods of the commedia dell'arte were in Shakespeare's mind when he devised the drunken pranks of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban" (52). The fact that the renovative scenes in each Shakespearian play feel almost as if they were momentarily improvised–in contrast to the carefully woven plotting of Hotspur's revolution, Duncan's murder, and Antonio's attempt of assassination–is caused, as Tromly argues while discussing the Porter, by a disorientation in which the senses are pestered, through which imagination takes reason prisoner (154).

This is precisely what can be found in chapter XLVII of *Oliver Twist*, "Fatal Consequences," which involves the moment when Bill Sikes, the oldest and leader of Fagin's gang, discovers that his lover Nancy has betrayed him, denouncing him to the authorities. After Sikes's fit of rage, the reader encounters what could be regarded as one of the most explicit episodes of Victorian literature, the scene in which this outcast assassinates the girl in cold blood, a passage defined by Sue Zemka as "the climax of the plot" (29):

> She staggered and fell: nearly blinded with the blood that rained down from a deep gash in her forehead; but raising herself, with difficulty, on her knees, drew from her bosom a white handkerchief—Rose Maylie's own—and holding it up, in her folded hands, as high towards Heaven as her feeble strength would allow, breathed one prayer for mercy to her Maker.
>
> It was a ghastly figure to look upon. The murderer staggering backward to the wall, and shutting out the sight with his hand, seized a heavy club and struck her down. (Dickens 423)

Compared to the slowly woven plotting of Shakespeare's central scenes such as the murder of King Duncan, Sikes's undertaking is rather unanticipated and lacks the solemnity of the previously analysed conspiracies. However, in this suddenness the reader shall also find Shakespeare, a drastically different one–one who writes relying on the immediate cruelty of loss as an emotion. As John Jordan spells out, stating an opinion which I second, "the scenes between Sikes and Nancy in the final one-quarter of the novel represent, I believe, Dickens' attempt to retell the story of

Othello, with Bill Sikes in the role of the murderer, Nancy as Desdemona, and Fagin as the cunning, manipulative Iago who drives Sikes to commit the deed" (11). Moreover, Dickens not only recreates the narrative of this awful situation and its various characters, but at points even takes line for line the last interaction between Othello and Desdemona: "'Let it be,' said Sikes, thrusting his hand before her. 'There's enough light for wot I've got to do.' … 'Bill,' said the girl, in the low voice of alarm, 'why do you look like that at me!'" (Dickens 423).

Nonetheless, Dickens does not seem content with turning *Othello*'s climax into a shockingly sudden subplot for this early novel of his, and proceeds to develop a subsequent scene based on a radical variance, presenting a situation of such calmness that the change surely feels eery, almost psychotic. The sequence composed of the murder scene and the following one present in chapter XLVIII, "The Flight of Sikes," "breaks the linearity of the plot" (Zemka 31) and "occupies a transitional zone in the aesthetic history of the momentary" (33). The environment which the new episode presents is pastoral and tender, creating a contrast with the startling crime and achieving a feeling of renovation that causes the mind of the reader not only to be liberated from the former dense atmosphere, but also to understand and overcome "the awful parenthesis that had suspended" (De Quincey 84) the distressing situation. In a similar way to the relieving secondary scenes of Shakespeare, the flight of Sikes to the countryside unfolds as if nothing decisive had happened, the readership finding itself face to face with the ongoings of an absolute realistic everyday life:

> It was nine o'clock at night, when the man, quite tired out, and the dog, limping and lame from the unaccustomed exercise, turned down the hill by the church of the quiet village, and plodding along the little street, crept into a small public-house, whose scanty light had guided them to the spot. There was a fire in the tap-room, and some country-labourers were drinking before it. …
>
> The conversation of the men assembled here, turned upon the neighbouring land, and farmers; and when those topics were exhausted, upon the age of some old man who had been buried on the previous Sunday; the young men present considering him very old, and the old men present declaring him to have been quite young—not older, one white-haired grandfather said, than he was—with ten or fifteen year of life in him at least—if he had taken care; if he had taken care. (Dickens 425)

The country scene gives voice, through a rather intrusive narrator, to the clients of the tavern: "if he had taken care" (Dickens 425) allows the narrative to open momentarily, including each of the citizens of the isolated village, engorging itself, and producing the same effect as the Carriers' comments about the previous owner of the inn where they spent the night in *Henry IV 1*–"Poor fellow never joyed since the price of oats rose, it was the death of him" (Shakespeare, 1H4 2.1.11-12). The fact that Dickens gives in this passage a situation and a life, not only to the protagonists of the primary plot but also to a casual villager puts the reader in a sympathetic situation. Thus, like in Shakespeare, through this frame one is led to

the realization that in the novel each individual belonging to the working classes may have troubles, feelings, and intentions as deep and valid as that of the protagonists, proving that, as Coleridge considered it, a scene may be "heightened by contrast with another counterpart of it in low life" ("The Tempest" 139).

4. SHAKESPEARE'S SHIFTING VOICES IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

Moving from Victorian literature to Modernist fiction, I would like to comment on how one of the greatest experimental writers of the twentieth century implemented this narrative approach in his fragmented masterpiece. With a similar procedure to that of T. S. Eliot, as it will be commented on shortly, James Joyce reached, by means of the clash of different narrative voices in *Ulysses*, a feeling of renovation produced by a sudden plot which collides with the one that comes right before it. Furthermore, I would say that it is not too daring to assert that this modernist narrative choice may have been taken directly from Shakespeare, since both Joyce and Eliot acknowledged to have made use of what the latter referred to as the "mythical method." This idea, spelt out by the American poet in "Ulysses, Order and Myth" is described by Nohrnberg as

> an author's practice of taking an ancient or received myth, legend, traditional, archetypical or historical story – from the point of view of literary realism a tall tale or fantastic legend – as the skeleton or organizing principle or the scaffold or template or infrastructure or pentimento for a narrative that is both ostensibly self-standing and, in some sense, "modern," or more contemporary, and yet can be mapped onto a kind archaeological other original. (21)

In this essay, Eliot states while discussing *Ulysses* that "if it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will no longer serve; it is because the novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter" ("Order and Myth" 177). The reinventing of the novel form was what Eliot most valued considering Joyce's works, applying the mythical method himself to his poetry and particularly to *The Waste Land*. These authors were engaged in making use of the solid beams of tradition to sustain the literature of their age, which from their point of view was formless: they employed the "ancient stay"–the topics and forms of Western and Eastern literatures up to the modernist era, and particularly Shakespeare–against their contemporary "present chaos" (Nohrnberg 21). Nonetheless, as will be commented in the following section, there are paramount differences in the manner in which both authors carried out the sudden Shakespearian shift from the "royal" to the "daily," from the poetic to the common.

Discussing the novelist, there are a pair of sections in *Ulysses* that present a drastic change of situations which serves to showcase how the discussed Shakespearian technique is applied in the fiction of the early twentieth century. As it can be noted, there is a great contrast to be noticed between Joyce's prose and Dickens' previously commented third-person realist writing. Principally, it has to be stated that in the

fragments of the modernist novel the narrative is definitely bound by its characters' voices. Being presented in a free discourse that does not only describe–as the traditional Victorian writing does–the situations, ambitions and fears of the characters through an external eye, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom expose themselves most nakedly to the reader, their consciousnesses working as the narrator. Their respective motivations and capacities become thus easily noticeable, as is the case of Dedalus in "Proteus," the shifting episode, the third one in the novel and the last belonging to the "Telemachia." "Proteus" is written as a stream of consciousness almost in its entirety, giving to the reader the final glimpse that leads to a definite understanding of Stephen's personality. The prose is dense, resembling Dedalus's melancholic mind, and the sublimity of his discourse certainly belongs to one of the climaxes of the novel, as he is, Patricia A. Rimo comments, "engaged in the characteristic activity of abstraction" (296):

> Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them, sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, maestro di color che sanno. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see. Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. (Joyce 37)

The personality of the younger protagonist is hence presented as intricate and delicate. In fact, the pre-speech discourse he has with himself while walking along Sandymount Strand proves that "despite any answers the philosophers might provide, Stephen, for his part, prefers intellect to matter, or thought to things" (Rimo 37). Moreover, it could be argued that his inner talk works here as a well-crafted main plot that not only was fully developed in the first two episodes, arriving here to its zenith, but also in the ambitious work that precedes this modernist masterpiece, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In the shorter novel, as well as in the episodes of *Ulysses* directed by Dedalus, "he is apt to choose the speculative over the actual, for the material world discomfits him" (Rimo 37). Hence, Stephen's narrative is tailored slowly, working as a main plot burdened with references to his inner guilt, which is illustrated by Shakespeare's lines and particularly by Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's traditional symbolism of sin–"Conscience. Yet here's a spot" (Joyce 16). The seriousness of Dedalus's plot is heightened by the tradition of Shakespeare, finding its absolute contrast as the episode finishes and "Calypso" presents itself with one of the most simple and domestic scenes of the novel, the breakfast of Leopold Bloom. The next fragment arrives after the last words of Stephen's elaborated stream of consciousness–"Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship" (Joyce 50)–and in the same manner as in Shakespeare and Dickens this homely sequence illuminates the narrative, dissipating the clouds:

> Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine. Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray. Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish. (Joyce 53)

The passage, in contrast to Stephen's narrative, is clearer and much humbler. Not only the scenery and the main interests of the narrator are fairly different from those of the preceding episode, but the narrative technique changes also, which provides an even greater contrast to the sequence. In "Calypso," Joyce casually shifts from stream of consciousness to free indirect discourse (FID), as this third-person narrative is that employed in the previously selected fragment presenting Bloom. FID allows the narrator to embody, or at points even mimic, the personality of the figures it regards, thus giving an indirect though detailed overview of a particular character. Daniel P. Gunn writes, while discussing Jane Austen's free indirect discourse in *Emma*, that the aesthetic pleasure of this passage comes from "subtle modulations among narrative registers, as the prose moves in and out of a complex array of voices, including that of the narrator" (35). Consequently, the FID technique should be understood "not as a representation of autonomous figural discourse but as a kind of narratorial 'mimicry', analogous to the flexible imitations of others' discourse we all practice in informal speech and expository prose" (Gunn 236). Thus, Joyce gives a straightforward understanding of Leopold Bloom' personality and preoccupations despite the fact that there is no use of stream of consciousness in the opening of the episode. The reader notices, due to the catalogue of organs that compose Bloom's breakfast and the feeling generated by the relish with which he enjoys them, that the sensorial pleasures of the body are what appeal to him most, contrary to Stephen's metaphysical obsessions.

The contrast produced by the change of narrative techniques in *Ulysses*, along with the radical shift of topics, prompts a sensation similar to the one caused by the immediate subplots of Shakespeare's plays. The figures of the two protagonists are parallel, and the personal and intellectual differences of the two Dubliners are perceived as the sudden introduction of Bloom interrupts the settled narrative to present a character devoted to base material passions, in the same manner in which Trinculo and Stephano's comic subplot in *The Tempest* shows sudden signs of gluttony and lust–"He shall taste from my bottle" (Shakespeare, Tmp. 2.2.76). Moreover, the domesticity of the second scene bestows the character with profound humanity, and provides the reader with a sympathetic understanding of Bloom as a familiar antihero, an average man whose implications, in the words of Morton Levitt "are indeed for all mankind" (134). As the Porter's monologue in *Macbeth* and the Carriers' conversation in *Henry IV* endow the plays with a warm, though rough human touch, the breakfast of Bloom suddenly brings to the novel a homely feeling after the over-intellectualized discourse of Stephen Dedalus. As in Dickens, the momentary subplot, depicting a scene of non-heroic human life, disentangles the overwhelming scenario that preceded it.

5. A METALITERARY DEPICTION OF SHAKESPEARE'S MIMESIS IN T. S. ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND*

Something not widely discussed by critics needs to be acknowledged to pursue the analysis of the use of Shakespeare in T. S. Eliot's masterpiece: *The Waste Land* was drastically influenced by Joyce's techniques. Up to the poem's publication in 1922, T. S. Eliot had drunk from Joyce's chapters, which were published in *The Little Review* from March 1918 to December 1920 (Geert Lernout 8). The two works share verbal parallels, as well as many of their topics. This can be easily concluded if one compares, for instance, passages from episodes like Joyce's "Hades"–"Your heart perhaps but what price the fellow in the six feet by two with his toes to the daisies? … The Botanic Gardens are just over there. It's the blood sinking in the earth gives new life (Joyce 102, 104), "An obese grey rat toddled along the side of the crypt, moving the pebbles" (Joyce 110)–to certain lines from Eliot's "The Burial of the Dead" and "The Fire Sermon"–"That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it began to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (Eliot, *TWL* lines 71-72), "A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank" (Eliot, *TWL* lines 187-188). Nevertheless, of all the traceable similitudes that can be found in the two works, what is of most interest for this analysis is the poet's use of Joyce's mythical method. Contrary to Joyce, who was influenced by literary tradition in the sense that he implemented recurrent topics and motifs to frame his narrative and guide his characters–as he used Lady Macbeth's blood spots to define Dedalus's guilt–Eliot made use of his sources as an order that was to be readjusted. He explains this method in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" as:

> the existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. (Eliot, "Tradition" 23)

Considering this view, the second section of *The Waste Land*, "A Game of Chess," might be the perfect instance for us to spell out T. S. Eliot's use of Shakespeare as a primary source in order to "rearrange" tradition and achieve a new poetic scenario based on mimesis, since, apart from being filled with Shakespearian motifs, the key of the passage will be proved to be Thomas de Quincey's theory on the strength of the knocking on the door. Firstly, the luxurious opening of "A Game of Chess" shall ring a bell to Shakespeare's readers:

> The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
>
> Glowed on the marble, where the glass
>
> Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
>
> From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
>
> (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
>
> Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra

Reflecting light upon the table as

The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,

From satin cases poured in rich profusion; (Eliot, *TWL* lines 77-85)

Here is to be found, as Eliot points out in the notes to the poem, a direct reference to *Antony and Cleopatra*. Enobarbus's well-trodden description of the Queen the day she and Antony met–"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne / Burned on the water. The poop was beaten gold …" (Shakespeare, Ant. 2.2.23-24)–has been taken by Eliot to fit the purposes of his poem. Nevertheless, the verse parallels are not the only sign that brings the reader back to the doomed Alexandrian couple. As the environment is developed and the opulence of the scenery engorged, adorned by a sense-disturbing synaesthesia, an aristocratic pair is introduced. Two lovers are subdued to a delicate relationship of power, a modernist Cleopatra ruling over the psyche of a mentally devastated Antony, controlling his physical and mental movements–they are not playing the same colour and she has him in check:

'My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

I never know what you are thinking. Think.'

I think we are in rats' alley

Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?'

The wind under the door.

'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'

Nothing again nothing.

'Do

'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

'Nothing?'

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?' (Eliot, *TWL* lines 111-126)

This dialogue, along with the previous description of the room, present what I would regard as the central motif of "A Game of Chess:" sterility and its psychological consequences in opulence as well as in frugality. As John McCombe writes of Eliot's "Cleopatra," she is "a problem insofar as she is artificial, even

inanimate, and she represents the antithesis of the life and rebirth that are so central to Eliot's poetics" (24). Following this opinion, I would say that the excess and luxury of the scenario forbear the presence of fertility, sympathy and any fulfilling sensorial experience. The candelabra producing a disturbing game of lights and reflections as well as the coloured glasses and marbled finery erase the woman from the attention of the reader, given that "the same profusion of jewels and fragrances which should ostensibly stir the senses of those who gaze upon her instead 'drowns' those same senses" (McCombe 31). The epic catalogue describing the sumptuous but dull objects that crowd the room, Carolyn Holbert says, "shows us a world where sexual relations have lost their moral or spiritual relevance and have also lost their connection with fertility, where sex is disconnected from either love or children" (6). Then, as Holbert writes, the dialogue previously quoted makes clear that the lack of sensitiveness and fertility in this environment "is not just a result of spiritual drought but also of deliberately destructive act" (6).

One of the theories that has been argued to explain why the "successful" like this couple, as understood by their environment, fall into a state of apathy and are dragged into a neurotic position was described by the psychology of the early twentieth century some years before T. S. Eliot published *The Waste Land*. In 1916 Sigmund Freud wrote "On Those Wrecked by Success,"[1] an article partly focused on the dissatisfaction of the Macbeth marriage, in which he proposed that "people occasionally fall ill precisely when a deeply-rooted and long-cherished wish has come to fulfilment" (316). In the cases Freud proposes, an "illness followed close upon the fulfilment of a wish and put an end to all enjoyment of it" (317), like languor in the poem's marriage. Certainly, it can be argued that the two characters that open "A Game of Chess" are doomed by the coldness of their opulence and power, which reflects their lack of action and consequent sterile lives. Yet again, I would say that this links *The Waste Land* to Shakespeare's canon, adding that Eliot's adaptation of Enobarbus's lines, within the context of poem, allows the lovers to distance themselves from Antony and Cleopatra–the figures are "rearranged," detached from the particular, so that they can take any form the psyche of the reader may provoke. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth would perfectly fit into Eliot's personae, even Ferdinand and Miranda, whose romance-like situation trembles and is challenged as they start discussing affairs related to politics and warfare in the mildest of tones while playing a game of chess:

> *[Here* PROSPERO *discovers* FERDINAND *and* MIRANDA *playing at chess]*
>
> MIRANDA: Sweet lord, you play me false.
>
> FERDINAND: No, my dear'st love, I would not for the world.
>
> MIRANDA: Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
>
> And I would call it, fair play. (Shakespeare, Tmp. 5.1.72-74)

[1] This is the second section of "Einige Charaktertypen Aus Der Psychoanalytischen Arbeit." (1916*) Imago*, 4 (6), 317-336, titled "Die am Erfolge scheitern".

Towards the end of Eliot's scene, the reader has entered a state of suspense of the kind that can be found in King Duncan's assassination, Hotspur's planning, and the plotting of the murder of Prospero, encouraged by constant direct references to Renaissance drama which brings the Shakespearian canon to mind. Finally, Eliot makes the characters realise that there is a need for renewal both in their lives and the main narrative of *The Waste Land*. As active gears of the poem, conscious of the part their plane is playing in it, they feel that "in order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear" (De Quincey 84)–they pledge for a change of atmosphere, hoping for the suspension, repetition, and neurosis to cease:

> "What shall I do now? What shall I do?"
>
> "I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
>
> "With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
>
> "What shall we ever do?"
>
> The hot water at ten.
>
> And if it rains, a closed car at four.
>
> And we shall play a game of chess,
>
> Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door. (Eliot, *TWL* lines 131-138)

From my point of view, the fact that this last line is presented after a long series of motifs that explicitly connect the text with Shakespeare turns it into an intentional direct reference both to *Macbeth* and Thomas de Quincey. After this passage a lowly parallel plot unfolds, the scene moving from an aristocratic environment to a daily conversation taking place in a pub at closing time. Even though there is no possibility of change for the modernist Shakespearian couple, there is for the reader as well as for the poem as a whole, as the lines are liberated from a dense atmosphere. The following picture is composed by Eliot to produce a feeling of radical contrast, the scene including many of the traits designed by Shakespeare commented above. Just like in *Henry IV*, the new characters represent "the mimic world of the underplot" (Bowers 53), constituting "a form of parody of the main plot" (53) and causing, as Coleridge put it regarding *The Tempest*, the previous scene to be "heightened by contrast with another counterpart of it in low life" (139). In addition, like in all of the above commented plays, the less heavy scene occurs under the effects of a sudden alcoholic inebriation, which works as an earthly and modest parallel to the first section's "strange synthetic perfumes" (Eliot 87) that "drowned the sense in odours" (89). Nevertheless, what I would consider the feature that conclusively breaks the lingering abeyance is the shift of narrators. In a similar way to Joyce's employment of direct and indirect discourse, Eliot turns the leading poetic voice from an omniscient narrator to an unnamed character participating in the conversation which leads the scene, its first words truly working like a knock upon the door which erases the previous suspension from the reader's mind in a flush:

> When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—
>
> I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
>
> HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
>
> Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart. (Eliot, *TWL* lines 139-142)

In this reported narrative, Lil and the narrator discuss sideways the former's relationship with her husband. The talk is constantly interrupted by the voice of the owner asking them to leave the bar, with a sentence that has many connotations within poem's context–HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME (Eliot 41)–and which I would say that works as a constant "knocking" renewing action. Regarding the conversation topic between Lil and her company, it is what links this section to the first, despite all elements producing contrast. Like in the aristocratic previous part, sterility and a pitiful marriage frame the plot of these lines. Albert, Lil's husband, is returning from the First World War, and the narrator instigates his wife to become "smart" (Eliot 142) for him to "enjoy" her:

> He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
>
> To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
>
> You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
>
> He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you. (Eliot, *TWL* lines 143-146)

If in the previous section sterility was represented by a dull opulence, in this one, on the contrary, it unfolds as poverty and physical incapacity. In Christina Hauck's words, "Lil is a type, often found in the discourse about reproductive control, of what I call the abject mother, the usually working-class woman whose inability to control her own fertility was inscribed on her pain-wracked, weakened body" (242). Soon, it is revealed that Lil has taken abortive pills which have pitifully degraded her, not only regarding her looks, but also psychologically:

> You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
>
> (And her only thirty-one.)
>
> I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
>
> It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
>
> (She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
>
> The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
>
> You are a proper fool, I said.
>
> Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
>
> What you get married for if you don't want children? (Eliot, *TWL* lines 156-164)

With "A Game of Chess" Eliot crafted an ideal piece concerning the use of the myth and tradition, following Joyce. While in the introductory part he rearranged motifs recurrent in Shakespeare, in the second he adapted that first scene to a usual situation of his era, and any era. If in the former section the characters' apathy was the result of having everything–of fulfilment, as Freud put it around the time of the *The Waste Land*'s composition–in Lil's situation it is produced by the impotence of penury. Like the Renaissance playwright in *Henry IV 1* and Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, Eliot created a world that shared the characteristics of the main plot, only in a working-class environment. Nonetheless, going even further than his Victorian predecessor, he employed De Quincey's critical ideas on Shakespeare as a paramount subject to make the pulses of life beginning to beat again. By means of the knock upon the door which leads to Lil's situation Eliot produced a successful metaliterary depiction of Shakespeare's mimesis of contrast.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As it has been argued, these brief subplots presented through several centuries should not be understood as isolated fragments of a lower intention, nor as momentary instances that lean on undeveloped characters. In my view, they need to be considered analogies of the primary narrative, which prove to the reader that the protagonists' situations can also belong to minor or modest figures in the same manner as Gloucester's disgrace mirrors Lear's, and Oberon and Titania parallel Theseus and Hippolyta–although presented with a much subtler and ephemeral approach than these major resemblances. While considering other works from the Shakespearian canon, it needs to be pointed out that the plays which have been discussed in this paper are not by any means the only ones in which the discrete mimesis of contrast is applied. I would suggest that if the topic was to be commented further, a sudden change taking place in *Cymbeline*, act 4, scene 5, could not be left out of consideration. The disparity between Jupiter's appearance as a *deus ex machina* and the scene's sway towards the world of the living as a "macabre discussion" (Phillip Collington 294) between Posthumus and his jailer is an instance that would ideally fit in a broader review of the field. While the former of the pair of scenes, Posthumus's dream, is introduced by lines in fourteen beats in an attempt to resemble "epic poetry associated with national and dynastic heritage," (Valerie Wayne 336), the latter unfolds in a dialogue that "shifts the tone closer to comedy due to the wry, earthly, yet quasi-philosophical jailer," (343) a figure that truly resembles the Porter in *Macbeth*.

The speakers of Shakespeare's sudden situations as well as the characters from the selected pieces of Victorian and Modernist literature–by no means to be considered mere choruses fit to support the main plot–could be understood, Berger writes discussing *Henry IV 1*, as "bearers of the meanings of others" (85). Considering the more recent writers, the case of Eliot as it has been presented in the final section of this study is particularly striking. The use of tradition is applied by this poet to produce an ideal instance that represents how English literature has

been rearranged, step by step, from the Renaissance to the twentieth century in a blending of criticism and poetry. Using his own theory on creative writing as presented in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Ulysses, Order and Myth," he recovered motifs from Shakespeare and his critics, putting them together with topics recurrent in Modernism like sterility and abortion. A particular example of recreation in English literature's tradition has been proposed in this study, aiming to show how from a narrative choice that bears a clear poetic intention, novelists, poets, and critics intertwiningly developed a strong trail. Through the use of particular changes of action from epic to domestic, Shakespeare and his later followers did not only achieve the dramatic effect of creating a parallelism between protagonists and secondary characters in order to increase the dramatic value of the piece, as it was described by Coleridge, but also made the reader engage with the sublimity of the knocking on the door, as theorized by De Quincey, by breaking off the suspense after a decisive tragic moment when all "must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion" (85).

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