

# THE FAÇADE AND THE BACK SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC IRONY REVISITED

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**الوجه والتقفا : دراسة المفارقة الدرامية في مسرحيات شكسبير**

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**Abstract:-**

William Shakespeare's critics often label the irony yielding a comic situation as 'comic irony': it is that irony whose effect is to arouse laughter, hence intensifies the audience's desired response. More often and powerful than comic irony is the tragic irony that undertakes to emphasize the limited scope of man's mind and understanding.

It is, however, the assumption of the researchers that it is also most likely to speak of another type of dramatic irony, which can be labeled as 'semi-comic', 'semi-tragic', or even 'tragi-comic' to indicate its being neither comic per se nor merely tragic, but a mixture of both. It brings about an effect of "mingled pain and amusement." It renders laughter and fear at the very time; but the dramatic situation eventually decides which surpasses what.

This paper, however, is essentially concerned with the working of irony in three Shakespearean plays: Twelfth Night, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello, where the three types of irony are dramatically explored and effectively manipulated.

**Key words:** Shakespearean drama, irony, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night, Othello, types of irony.

**الخلاصة:-**

عادة ما يطلق نقاد المسرح الشيكسبيرى تسمية المفارقة الهزلية على الحدث المسرحي الذي يحقق التفاعل المطلوب مع العمل المسرحي عبر تخفيف المشاهد على الضحك. وتتلقى المفارقة التراجيدية تفاعلا اكبر حيث انها تؤكد على محدودية تفكير الانسان وقصور فهمه.

يفترض الباحثان وجود نوع ثالث للمفارقة الدرامية، هذا النوع يمكن ان يسمى بشبه الكوميدي او شبه التراجيدي او الكومي-تراجيدي. يتحرر هذا النوع من قواعد الكوميديا والتراجيديا ليكون مزيجا من كليهما ويسبب الالم والمتعة معا. يشير هذا النوع ردود افعال كالحوف والضحك في ذات الوقت ويترك فسحة للحدث المسرحي ليحدد اي من النقيضين سيتغلب في الاخر.

يهتم هذا البحث بشكل خاص بكيفية توظيف انواع المفارقة الثلاث في مسرحيات مختارة لوليام شكسبير وهي: الليلة الثانية عشرة و روميو وجوليت و اوثللو.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المفارقة، المسرح الشيكسبيرى، روميو وجوليت، الليلة الثانية عشرة، اوثللو، انواع المفارقة الادبية

Both linguists and literary critics agree as to the different connotations of irony, although the latter elaborately highlight more functions and working of this probe. Geoffrey Leech, among linguists, clearly displays that most of the critical writings about irony are literature-oriented, and nothing "has been written [. . .] on the specifically linguistic aspect of irony." (Leech, 2014: p. 182) Nevertheless, he couples irony with hyperbole and litotes in the sense that the three probes categorically deal with a situation "suggesting that the speaker's feelings are too deep for plain expression," (Leech, 2014: p. 170) hence, the two-layered significance. Generally speaking, irony is an utterance wherein lies a contrast between the 'literal' and the 'figurative'; the 'intended' and the 'received' (Al-Kawwaz, 2002: p. 38).

Indeed, this two-layered significance yields an incident of ambiguity where irony is seen fitting "into the general pattern of tropes" (Leech, 2014: p. 172). Besides hyperbole and litotes, irony is also coupled with punning, which richly renders every reading of utterances "a re-creation, a fresh attempt to interpret [the speaker's] intention." (Mahood, 2003: p. 164)

In drama, however, irony often "postulates a double audience"(Leech, 2014: p. 171): one who is aware of the intention whereas the other takes the expression at its face value. This perception arises either discrepancy or incongruity between the 'intended' and the 'received', the expression and its meaning. Verbal or situational, irony is therefore "an oblique quality or mode of expression," (Cuddon, 2013: p. 371) wherein lurks shared information between the audience/reader and playwright on aspect of incidents or circumstances the speaker/character is unaware of, hence acts according to what he/she thinks he/she knows. Nonetheless, such predictions may come similar to what is anticipated but not to the character predicting. (Abrams, 1999: pp. 134-135)

What the speaker believes as his correct familiarization with the expression arises a distinct sense of defamiliarization for the audience who commonly knows more than what the speaker thinks he/she does. This resulting defamiliarization intensifies the audience's perception of the meaning, and, nevertheless, enriches his/her

insight into the thematic and aesthetic values of the dramatic situation. The audience's deeper awareness of the speaker's prediction and what the former already acquires highlights the play's rhythmic pace and its kinetic flow, be the play a comedy or a tragedy.

As the Elizabethan attitude towards words and language is inspiringly much easier to feel than to define," (Mahood, 2003: p. 169) it is always expected that they show distinct concern with, and interest in, the 'power' of language and the 'authority' of words (Al-Masdi, 2007: pp. 45-46). Shakespeare's characters equally exhibit similar interest in their ability in 'dealing' with words. Irrespective of their status and intellect, Shakespeare's comic figures are, for instance, endowed with a brilliant power to quibble, pun, and employ ironies. Equally powerful are his tragic figures, for their 'wit' is intensely quickened by their tremendously uncontrolled feelings and passions of love, hatred, and ambitions. In fact, this holds for both male and female characters in comedies as well as tragedies.

Shakespeare's critics often label the irony yielding a comic situation as 'comic irony': it is that irony whose effect is to arouse laughter, hence intensifies the audience's desired response. More often and powerful than comic irony is the tragic irony that undertakes to emphasize the limited scope of man's mind and understanding. It is, however, the assumption of the researchers that it is also most likely to speak of another type of dramatic irony, which can be labeled as 'semi-comic', 'semi-tragic', or even 'tragi-comic' to indicate its being neither comic per se nor merely tragic, but a mixture of both. It brings about an effect of "mingled pain and amusement" (Al-Kaffaji, 2004: p. 16). It renders laughter and fear at the very time; but the dramatic situation eventually decides which surpasses what. This paper, however, is essentially concerned with the working of irony in three Shakespearean plays: Twelfth Night, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello, where the three types of irony are dramatically explored and effectively manipulated.

## II

Like any other Elizabethan, Shakespeare is quite aware of the 'power' of language and its vital effect on the audience. Nevertheless, as a great dramatist, Shakespeare is equally aware of the influence of language 'compactness' on the recipient: he knows well enough

that the economically manipulated discourse yields more potential response on part of the audience, for it can better please and exercise power than does the elaborate discourse. And as a poet-dramatist, Shakespeare resorts to the condensed images to replace detailed 'rhetorics', of discourse, wherein the function of language transcends the direct address into the metaphoric representation, where the image exercises more vital 'expressional' reception.

It is actually evident that although Shakespeare was not a theorist in the contemporary sense of the term, he intrinsically understands that 'poetics/rhetorics' (Al-Masdi, 2007: p. 46) render(s) his dramatic discourse/dialogue able to operate more powerfully, hence the fulfillment of his aims. Since his romantic plays, Shakespeare has been familiar with the Elizabethan fondness of both the mechanism of language and its lyricism, be it in comedies or tragedies.

Twelfth Night is a comedy wherein a good deal of language devices and probes is dramatically employed. Irony indeed occupies a wider space than that in the histories, because this romantic comedy of disguise holds the effective application of irony, especially comic irony, as a tool of dramatic manipulation of language. Irony in Twelfth Night yields a tremendous effect on the audience's response, and enhances the spectator's insight into the theme and his awareness of the world around. Besides, irony vitally operates in character portrayal, especially in the sense that irony provides an image of a sharp contrast between what the character believes and thinks s/he possesses and the truth which the audience obviously knows. It is through irony that Shakespeare ridicules his characters, and, simultaneously, pleases his audience through the wit the ironic discourse and situation aptly displays. The guise the character dramatically reveals by double-sided behavior defines how language is manipulated to portray the figure and yield an anatomy of mind and intellect. This 'power' that irony exercises interestingly operates in relation to such characters as Malvolio, Orsino, Olivia and Viola. In fact, these four characters ludicrously disguise themselves both physically (in the case of Viola) and spiritually (for the others).

For modern critics, next only to Shylock, Malvolio is mistreated most, for he is so bitterly ridiculed on the stage that even Olivia sympathizes with him when she eventually reflects that Malvolio

"hath been notoriously abused," and she frankly proposes that if the "grounds and authors" of the trick are known, he "shalt be both the plaintiff and the judge/ Of [his] own cause." (Shakespeare<sup>(1)</sup>, 2019; TW: V, I, 365, 391, 365-6) Malvolio is portrayed as a stupid puritan who is so self-conceited of his 'graces' that he illusively believes himself a nobleman whom Olivia treats "with a more exalted respect than anyone else that follows her," for, as "Count Malvolio," he will enjoy the grandeur of the position and "have the humor of state." (TW: II, v, 31-2, 40, 59)

The irony, however, lies in the incongruity between Malvolio's prediction and the actual truth. Whilst Malvolio is still thrilled with false day-dreaming of Olivia manifesting "herself to [his] love, and with a kind of injunction [driving him] to these habits of liking," (TW: II, v, 185-7) Olivia indeed does send for him because she knows "[h]e is sad and civil/ And suits well for a servant with my [ill] fortunes." (TW: III, iv, 5-6) The discrepancy between Malvolio's supposed self-awareness that he is admired and loved; and what both other characters and audience really know yields an interesting dramatic situation where irony functions as a bitter mockery of the steward's vanity:

The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass, that cons state without book, and utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of himself; so crammed, as he thinks, with excellences, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him (TW: II, iii, 161-7)

Beneath Malvolio's false purity and self-denial lies his sick sense of self-importance, for he ambitiously aspires to win Olivia in order that he may achieve a higher social status. Akin to the Duchess of Malphey (Malfi) who "married the yeoman of the wardrobe." (TW: II, v, 45) His worldly ambitions trespass his Puritan philosophy and commitments, and blind him enough to become a target of humiliation. His frailties fail him, indeed, and make him even without respect overstep the boundaries of decorum, manner and register.

Such satirical intent is also the aim behind the presentation of the rest of figures. Orsino, who thinks he is in love with Olivia, is no less self-deluding character. He is portrayed as so fully occupied with love feelings and powerful passion that he is unable to think of any other thing:

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purged the air of pestilence;  
That instant, was I turned into a hart,  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'en since pursue me. (TW: I, i, 19-23)

Nevertheless, he, more arrogantly, refuses the idea that Olivia cannot love him, for he thinks that he "cannot be so answered." (TW: II, iv, 90) Shakespeare is quite aware that the discrepancy between what Orsino considers himself and how the audience beholds him. It considerably contributes to the satirical force of the incident. Ironically, Orsino proves that 'his' type of love can destroy a person's ability to do anything but helplessly stick to "the constant image of the creature/ That is beloved." (TW: II, 1v, 19-20) He loves Olivia obsessively, and does not even respect her plead to be left to her mourning and sadness. Instead, he threatens to torture Olivia when he discovers that he is betrayed by Cesario, and therefore, he is turned into a tyrant brute (Ryan, 2000: p. 194).

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,  
Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,  
Kill what I love? (TW: V, I, 121-3)

Despite the magnificent show of love he displays over most of the play, Orsino, ironically, is not truly in love; he is only infatuated (Ryan, 2000: p. 194). He with no remorse gives up Olivia's love to make Viola, whom not long ago, he believed to be a man, his "mistress" and "fancy queen" after he has realized that he has lost Olivia forever.

And since you called me master for so long,  
Here is my hand; you shall from this time be  
Your master's mistress. (TW: V, I, 336-8)

The incongruity between Orsino's prediction and what eventually happens clearly holds that his feelings are not genuine, for during

most of the play, he has not been able to talk to Olivia. "For him," Wilders says, "it is as good to have loved and lost as to have loved and won." (Wilders, 1988: p. 164).

Olivia, however, is not an exception, for she ludicrously deceives herself. Olivia is pictured as intelligent and solitary, and, like Viola, she has lost a brother for whose mourning, she has made up her mind to devote herself: she is seen with her face covered, and self-imprisoned for seven years:

The element itself, till seven years' heat,  
Shall not behold her face at ample view,  
But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk (TW: I, i, 26-8)

It is as if she aimed at disguising herself "to the point of disappearing," because she thinks her pain intolerable. However, to keep herself in that hermitage does not look like real mourning, especially when she "jokes expertly with the clown" (Wilders, 1988: p. 164).

Clown: Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

Olivia: Good Fool, for my brother's death.

Clown: I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Olivia: I know his soul is in heaven, Fool.

Clown: The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

(I, v, 71-7)

Moreover, Olivia fails to keep to her status as both a woman and the lady of the house; there arises a discrepancy between her 'power' to stand firm against the suitors, especially, the Duke, and her powerlessness when she meets Cesario. After having refused the Duke's proposal, she madly falls in love with his page who is not really a man, but only a shadow of a man:

Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit,

Do give thee five-fold blazon. Not too fast; soft! Soft!-

Unless the master were the man. . . How now!

Even so quickly may one catch the plague? (TW: I, v, 313-6)

She violates the “conventional standards of behavior for women of her class,” for she risks her social status by sending Malvolio after 'him' (Ryan, 2000: p. 193). Olivia knows well that she trespasses etiquettes as well as social norms: women are not the ones to start wooing. Olivia's deviation from common conventions of class and time is meant to show that she has lost control of communicative medium with herself and others. Her failure to properly master the situation and live up to the image already shown of her renders her a target ridicule, verbally and situationally.

Comic irony in Viola's case obviously differs, for this charming, but practical figure disguises herself as a male servant, an act that enhances the bulk of humour and ridicule: ridiculously, Olivia is charmed by that same disguise, thinking Cesario a real man whom she can marry. To Olivia's dismay, Viola suffers for her, and pities her plight but she cannot tell her the truth:

I am the man; if it be so, as 'tis,

Poor lady, she were better love a dream. (TW: II, ii, 27-8)

Disguise is a common Elizabethan theme; and in Twelfth Night it adds to the function and employment of comic irony in the sense that Viola's mistaken identity leads almost all characters to think her Cesario, especially in the last third of the play. Ironically, faithful Viola is accused of ingratitude and cowardice for 'denying' deeds 'she' is supposed to have already done (taking Antonio's purse, being married to Olivia, and beating Toby). The first one to mistake Viola for Sebastian is Antonio who has been taking care of her brother for three months. He defends her when she is forced to fight a duel thinking her Sebastian. Whilst Antonio is being seized by the Duke's men, he asks for his purse. Amazed, Viola offers to give him half her money in return, in fact as a kind of gratitude:

For the fair kindness you have showed me here,

And part, being prompted to your resent trouble,  
Out of my lean and low ability  
I'll lend you something; my having is not much;  
I'll make division of my present with you. (TW: III, iv, 378-82)

With Sebastian in Illyria and the duel unfinished, Viola is to face another problem. Dramatically ironic is the scene when Viola attending Orsino when he arrives to woo Olivia, keeps aside making room to the Duke to speak for the first time with Olivia; but, equally ironic, Olivia addresses Viola as "my lord," and then "husband." Denial does not save Viola, and the Duke threatens to sacrifice "the lamb that I do love/ To spite s raven's heart within a dove." (TW: V, i, 134-5) More ironically, Olivia calls the Friar who assures the claims that they have already had

A contract of eternal bond of love,  
Confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands,  
Attested by the holy close of lips,  
Strengthened by interchangement of your rings. (TW: V, i, 160-3)

The interesting irony of Viola's question (TW: I, ii, 2-4) about what she should do as her brother went to Elysium, is dramatically answered in the closing scene when happily her journey shows her transformed from woman, to man, and eventually to queen: she is blissfully enabled to live out her life in an earthly Elysium.

### III

If the mingle of verbal and situational humour highlights the mood of Twelfth Night, the blend of humour and eroticism in Romeo and Juliet constitutes the essential responsiveness of the Elizabethan audience to jest and sexuality. Romeo and Juliet is also characterized by the interplay of the 'dark' and the 'bright', wherein irony potently operates either tragically or light-heartedly according to situation. The sunlight life in Twelfth Night evokes constant overflow of irony and lyricism which, both, contribute to the increase of humour and satire. In Romeo and Juliet, lyricism, however, is potent through the 'fair day' and the 'dark night': it is, in other words, the

association of lyricism and tragedy that defines the types of irony in this play. The ironic implications of Mercutio's and the Nurse's speeches widely contrast with those of Romeo and Juliet, bringing about the foreboding mood the audience anticipate by the discrepancy between the 'predicted' and the 'actual'.

It is, therefore, most likely that in *Romeo and Juliet*, one cannot expect the comic irony of *Twelfth Night*; yet there is some resemblance that cannot pass unobserved. Engraved by melancholy, most of the characters virtually fail to utter comic statements; they are doomed to resort to tragic situations. But, few are, indeed, exceptions: they are the minor characters like the Nurse, the servants, and Mercutio who dies early in the play. Markedly enough, most of the comedy in the play is either enhanced or suggested by these characters. Mercutio's and the Nurse's bawdy and erotic jests correspond with the 'fair-day' imagery, and potentially enrich the vitality, kinesis and rhythm of the play, simultaneously, they highlight the tragic irony of the outcome of this kinetic rhythm ironically through Tybalt's fiery temper. (Long, 1976: pp. 227-228).

The Nurse jests most of the time; she is rarely serious, and most of her jokes are sexually and erotically oriented. Nonetheless, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the energetic power of sexuality is twinned with violence: in Shakespeare's plays, this mingle is a "continuous subject of meditation – a dangerous, volatile quality, but vital and desired" by the audience (Long, 1976: p. 105). Besides, it increases the effect of the interplay of both the 'comic' and the 'tragic' ironies in the play.

She could have run and waddled all about,  
 For even the day before, she broke her brow,  
 And then my husband (God be with his soul,  
 He was a merry man) took up the child.  
 "Yea," quoth he, "Dost thou fall upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit,  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?" And, by my holidam,  
 The pretty wretch left crying and said "Ay." (R&J: I, iii, 36-44)

As Shakespeare's audience is homogenous, there is ample space to frankly talk about sex: both the audience and actors are males, hence the liberality to jest about sex. Dramatically enough, the Nurse's hints are so comic, though ironic, that they are uttered at a time Juliet is called to speak about marriage, a dramatic situation that emphasizes the tragic bearing of the jests.

The servants, on the other hand, appear on some occasions and create light-hearted atmosphere by joking or making comic ironies. One of these comic ironic scenes is in Act IV, Scene V: after the supposed death of Juliet, Peter jests with the musicians. A comic scene after such a 'tragic' event means that Shakespeare intends to make fun of the characters who mourn Juliet who is not dead.

Peter: Musicians, O musicians, 'Heart's ease, Heart's ease'

.....

O musicians, because my heart itself plays 'My heart is full of woe;' O! play me some merry dump to comfort me.

(R&J: IV, v, 102, 107-8)

Mercutio's statements and remarks are all jokes about Romeo's love; his Queen Mab dream enhances the kinetic tempo of the poetry, wherein the audience experiences "the transports of an imagination which is recklessly quick and headlong, but also accurate and subtle." (Long, 1976: p. 224). The twin energies of vital lyricism with kinesis embody the aspects of the world where the lovers live and identify their fortunes. The images the verse yields keep up with the accelerating pace of tragic events towards the end. Interestingly, even when Mercutio is at his death, he does not darken his light spirit whilst talking about the wounds he has received: "No, 'tis not so deep as a well nor wide as a church door, but 'tis enough, 't will serve." (R&J: III, i, 101-3)

It is true that with the death of Mercutio, the comic spirit of the play is lost. Once Mercutio is murdered the play becomes a tragedy. Romeo depicts the dramatic irony of the situation when he says: "This day's black fate on more days doth depend." (R&J: III, i, 125)

The space jests and comic ironies occupy in a tragedy is expected to achieve its function, but in Romeo and Juliet it keeps

half-way between the light-heartedness of Twelfth Night and the gloominess of Othello, therefore, it does not loosen the tragic texture of the play. The presentation of Romeo and Juliet as a tragedy is maintained from the beginning of the play itself when the servants are engaged into a howl that have dismayed both families and prepared for the real tragic atmosphere of death in which the lovers are doomed to live

The tragedy begins when Romeo, suffering from his unrequited love for Rosaline, hears of the Capulet's' feast that will be attended by his beloved. In order to delight him, his friends suggest that he can go there to compare his 'beloved' to other ladies who will attend the feast. The infatuated Romeo refuses such an idea at first; there cannot be, he says, "one fairer than [his] love" (R&J: I, ii, 97). However, he agrees to go to that feast just to see Rosaline, refusing any attempt on the part of his friends to brighten his mood:

Mercutio: . . . gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Romeo: Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes

With nimble soles. I have a soul of lead

So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

(R&J: I, iv, 13-6)

That sadness or, more precisely, negativity does not last for a long time as he soon sees Juliet and, ironically, falls in love for the second time: "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight,/ For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night." (R&J: I, v, 56-7) The difference between his love to Rosaline and his new love is degree. In fact, it is the intensity and violence of the passion that distinguish these two experiences. Romeo's new love experience is violent and sexual; it vividly recalls the blend of the 'lyrical' and the 'destructive'. Although such strong passion is supposed to beautiful, bringing wonderful ideas and making the lovers' world fantastic. Unfortunately, it plagues their minds with thoughts of suicide, and a willingness to experience it, as Juliet says: "My grave is like to be my wedding bed." (R&J: I, v, 139)

It is no longer than few hours that they are together, declaring their love to each other and planning for marriage. Friar Lawrence,

being asked by Romeo to fulfil that marriage ironically thinks it will be for the best of the two families who may reach reconciliation for their children's sake: "For this alliance may so happy prove/ Turn your households' rancour to pure love." (R&J: II, iii, 91-92)

Juliet waits for her husband eagerly. Ironically, she says that Romeo for her is like "new robes" of "an impatient child" (R&J: III, ii, 30) that he "may not wear" (R&J: III, ii, 31). She does not know that Romeo has killed Tybalt and she may never meet him again. Yet, Romeo comes that night and they stay together until morning not knowing of her father's plans for her.

With the newly-married couple meeting for, perhaps, the last time and after what Romeo has done in Friar Lawrence's cell, one might expect to see them desperate, speaking only of how they can live without each other. However, Romeo believes that they are going to have a joyful day.

Juliet: O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Romeo: I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve  
For sweet discourses in our times to come.

(R&J: III, v, 51-3)

Juliet, on the other hand, tells her lover that he looks as pale as a dead man in his grave.

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!

Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Either my eyesight fails or thou look'st pale. (R&J: III, v, 54-7)

As soon as her husband leaves, Juliet is told that she is going to marry. Her parents come to tell her that they have arranged for her marriage to Paris on Thursday. Although Old Capulet has said earlier in the play that Juliet is the one to decide consent concerning any proposal of marriage,

My will to her consent is but a part.

And, she agreed, within her scope of choice  
Lies my consent and fair according voice. (R&J: I, ii, 17-9)

yet, he forces her to marry Paris. After all, Juliet is his heiress and he will not let her marry any man unless of his own choice.

Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,  
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next  
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,  
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.

.....  
I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face. (R&J: III, v, 153-6, 162-163)

After having appeared as a loving father at the beginning,  
Earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she

.....  
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart;  
My will to her consent is but a part. (R&J: I, ii, 14, 16-7)

he says he wishes she had never been born just because she refuses to marry Paris.

Wife, we scarce thought us blessed  
That God had lent us but this only child,  
But now I see this one is one too much,  
And that we have a curse in having her. (R&J: III, v, 166-9)

The Nurse, on the other hand, agrees with the idea of marriage leaving Juliet to suffer alone. The young lady goes to the Friar, her last haven after Romeo's departure, to seek the 'remedy' that will, ironically, lead to her and her lover's death.

When she comes back with the poison from the church, Juliet tells her father that she has consented to the marriage they have prepared for her. Juliet is deceiving Old Capulet who is ironically extremely happy with that 'decision' on the part of Juliet. He even brings forward the date of marriage, bringing, thus, the date of his daughter's death forward: "I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning/ [ . . . ] Why, I am glad on 't. This is well. Stand up." (R&J: IV, ii, 25, 29)

Old Capulet continues to prepare for the wedding without knowing that she is drinking the 'poison' in the meantime. The irony occurs in the fact that in Old Capulet's speech, church means marriage for him and death for the audience: "Go, Nurse, go with her. We'll to church to-morrow." (R&J: IV, ii, 38)

Soon the moment comes when the Nurse tries to wake Juliet and finds her 'dead.' She cries and calls everybody and they all started lamenting the young 'dead' lady.

All things that we ordainèd festival  
Turn from their office to black funeral:  
Our instruments to melancholy bells,  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast,  
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change,  
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,  
And all things change them to the contrary. (R&J: IV, v, 84-90)

They seem to care, ironically, for the dead Juliet more than the living one. They have not cared for her so much the day before; they have been about to force her to marry someone she has already decided to refuse.

One may expect Romeo to be suffering and about to die in Mantua because he cannot see Juliet. However, he is actually in a very good humour. His dreams, at the beginning of Act V, of Juliet kissing the life back into his body:

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,

My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.  
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,  
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit  
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.  
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead  
(Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think!)  
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips  
That I revived and was an emperor.  
Ah me, how sweet is love itself possessed  
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy! (R&J: V, i, 1-11)

Also ironically, as soon as he finishes his speech, Balthazar enters telling Romeo of Juliet's 'death.' He, immediately, starts looking for poison to kill himself. Just like Juliet who calls the poison 'remedy,' so does Romeo calls it "cordial and not poison" (R&J: V, ii, 85)

There he goes, to Juliet's grave where he duels and kills Paris only to commit suicide. Tragically, a few moments later, Juliet wakes to find her beloved dead beside her and she kisses him as he has dreamed, not to revive him, but to die with him. That "double suicide" is the most tragic though the most potent expression of love that they can make. Only through suicide, they can preserve. Their death makes Juliet's "Hei to high fortune" ironical as well as Romeo's speech about Rosaline: "For beauty, starved with her severity,/ Cuts beauty off from all posterity." (R&J: I, i, 225-6) It is Juliet's "posterity" that is cut for loving and marrying him, not Rosaline's for rejecting him.

The Friar's expectation concerning the end of feud between the families due to that marriage is also ironic. It is only after the young lovers are dead that the two families reach conciliation.

#### IV

The kinetic lyrical tempo in Othello witnesses a distinctive departure from the world of the romantic tragedies, for the potent focus in Othello is essentially placed on the mind of man, and how it plays a significant role in affecting others' lives. Othello is a warrior-

hero who extremely embraces marked idealism, and appears as "sumptuously Petrarchan and courteous in love, chivalric in bearing, magnificent in war," yet, he is equally "child-like if not childish" (Long, 1976: p. 37). This ironic mingle of extremes constitutes the incongruity between Othello's 'magnificent egotism' and the collapse of his personality between prediction of his statuses as a war hero and a lover: the pride and magnificence of occupation, and his management of marriage problems. It displays a sharp discrepancy that yields the irony both tragic and dramatic (Leavis, 2011: p. 137).

Othello's collapse both as a hero and a lover results from his failure to flexibly understand culture and control energies of sexuality and furious violence. It is, indeed, ironic that besides his excessive pride and attachment to ideal ethos, Othello equally blinds himself to the 'chaos' of life around him, which widely alienates him from the world of Venice and explores irremediable sexual jealousy potently caused by the transport of words into live images. Plainly enough, Othello is subjected to influences that eventually attain and restore his sense of pride and grandeur. This ironic failure is tragic and the play is rich in instances that identify how the war-hero lover reacts even childishly, all by the effect of Iago's manipulation of words.

Othello is in fact a tragedy of words and intrigue; unlike Romeo and Juliet, it is characterized by very minor space of faint smiles: there is hardly any room for jests; but the smile itself is blended with the bitterness of tragedy. The atmosphere of gloom and intrigue contributes to shaping the setting when a scheme is prepared by Iago who shrewdly conspire against both his leader and Cassio, for he thinks that Othello's choice of Cassio as his lieutenant is a hideous military mistake. He believes that he is more entitled for the rank than the 'bookish' Cassio.

Three great ones of the city,  
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Off-capped to him; and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place (Oth: I, i, 8-11)

To seek a *causus belli* for his malignity, Iago claims that he hates Othello because he suspects him have a relation with Emilia, Iago's wife.

I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
'Has done my office. (Oth: I, iii, 392-4)

In full darkness, Iago's plan begins. By help of the blanket of night, he instigates Brabantio against Othello, howling in the midst of night that Othello has kidnapped and married Desdemona. Iago's manipulation of language is very subtle, for he is endowed with a potential power to employ words and their images to help attaining his end. He meanly uses beastly and animal images to degrade Brabantio's social status so that he may insinuate him against Othello: "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tugging your white ewe." (Oth: I, i, 88-9)

Ironically, when Iago meets Othello, he calls him 'sir' and tells him that a villain has told Brabantio about Othello's marriage.

Nay, but he prated  
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
Against your Honor,  
That with the little godliness I have  
I did full hard forbear him. (Oth: I, ii, 7-11)

More ironically, despite Othello's magnificence of personality, he fully trusts Iago and considers him 'honest': "A man he is of honesty and trust." (Oth: I, iii, 287) Othello is not the only one who trusts Iago, but all other characters do equally. Moreover, it is Iago who in meanness plans to kill them all. Events drastically accelerate in such a way to fulfil Iago's intriguing schemes. The voyage to Cyprus and its result in separating Othello and Desdemona contribute to the success of Iago's revenge planning.

The shift of the setting to Cyprus is not merely a change in place, but it displays a multi-layered transposition in mood and fortunes. Aside from its function as a device to help Iago fulfil his schemes, it symbolically foreshadows Othello's ill-fortunes as a warrior and a lover. The storm highlights the discrepancy between the bright

atmosphere of Venice and the dark violent world of Cyprus. The irony is more intensified by the short span of marriage-life, dramatically embodied by the separation of the bride and the bridegroom. Nonetheless, it operates quite potently to 'implant' Othello's cultural frame of mind in a foreign setting that is 'unfit' for peace, but quite fit for violence and death. Othello is transported to fight enemies of the country, but, ironically enough, he does only a 'green-eyed monster', that exists only in his fantasy, whilst he is too brittle to defeat it despite his valour.

To Othello's dismay, all Iago's plan incredibly succeeds. Cassio, for instance, is put immediately into a quarrel and is no longer Othello's lieutenant after he stabs Montano. Cassio foolishly trusts Iago unknowing of that hidden evil: "You advise me well." (Oth: II, iii, 335). Being asked for advice, Iago tells Cassio to ask Desdemona to plead Othello for him and here starts the second part of his plan: to get rid of Desdemona.

And what's he, then, that says I play the villain,  
When this advice is free I give and honest (Oth: II, iii, 345-6)

Desdemona, on the other hand, seems completely sympathetic with Cassio's case. Unaware of the ironic implications of her speech, Desdemona swears she would rather die than leave his problem unsolved. (Oth: III, iii, 1-2, 5-7) The prophetic anticipation of death sharpens the power of words. It works perfectly well when Iago proceeds with his plan. Subtly, he insinuates Othello against his wife manipulating words to infer that Desdemona betrays Othello with Cassio. Othello is now portrayed as weakest and most sexually jealous:

if I do prove her haggard,  
.....  
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind  
To prey at fortune. (Oth: III, iii, 260, 262-3)

Ironically, Iago 'advises' the confused Othello to watch his wife, but when he sees that it does not work, he starts enacting the

supposed relationship to ruin Othello, who even forces Iago to show him an ocular proof, declaring that he is "bound to" Iago "forever" (Oth: III, iii, 214). Soon afterwards, Othello is presented convinced that Desdemona who is, as Bradley describes her,

... the eternal womanly in its most lovely and adorable forms simple and innocent as a child, ardent with courage and idealism of a saint, radiant with that heavenly purity of heart which men worship the more because nature so rarely permits it to themselves (Bradley, 1969: p. 164)

betrays him with Cassio who is his most faithful and loving friend. As she promises Cassio, Desdemona insists that Othello reconsiders his decision concerning his friend and lieutenant not knowing that the more she insists, the more she proves Iago's claims to be true, intensifying Othello's fears and mistrust, and enhancing his sexual jealousy. (Oth: III, iii, 70-4) The irony in this instance lies in the incongruity between Desdemona's intentions and the actual consequences of the pleading. Unable to control his violence, Othello changes the way he treats Desdemona, who is portrayed as fully enwrapped with the notion of death, for she asks Emilia to put her wedding sheets on her bed:

Emilia: I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Desdemona: All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!

If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me

In one of those same sheets. (Oth: IV, iii, 22-5)

It is clear that Othello is not only rich in ironic implications, but in fact it is primarily constructed on the heavy function of irony. Not only does Othello fall a victim of Iago, but everybody does; an act that constitutes the tragic complacency of Iago's schemes and intrigues which are based on a variety of dramatic devices besides the vital employment of tragic irony.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Henceforth, all references to Shakespeare's plays will be from this edition and will be parenthetically referred to within text, abbreviating plays as follows: Twelfth Night as TW, Romeo and Juliet as R&J, and Othello as Oth.