

SHAKESPEARE IN GARCÍA LORCA'S EARLY POEMS

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After establishing Lorca's possible access to Shakespeare's plays, this essay seeks to characterise the transformation of Shakespeare's dramatic materials — especially *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, but also *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* — in Lorca's early poetry (1917-1919). It analyses the neo-romantic reclamation of Shakespearean drama, and of Shakespeare as a cultural figure, within Lorca's rupture with the aesthetics of realist poetry. It relates Lorca's assimilation of Shakespeare's plays to Shakespeare's reception in Continental symbolist poetry and within the British pre-Raphaelite movement. It investigates the appropriation of Shakespeare's cultural value in Lorca's early access to the literary field.

Keywords: Shakespeare; García Lorca; Spain; Europe; reception studies; poetry

SHAKESPEARE EN LOS PRIMEROS POEMAS DE GARCÍA LORCA

Tras establecer las posibles vías de acceso de Lorca a las obras de Shakespeare, este ensayo persigue caracterizar la transformación del material dramático shakesperiano — especialmente El sueño de una noche de verano y de Hamlet, pero también Macbeth, Romeo y Julieta, y Otelo — en la poesía de juventud de Lorca (1917-1919). Se analiza la recuperación neo-romántica de la obra y la figura de Shakespeare dentro de la ruptura lorquiana con la poesía de estética realista, y se relaciona la asimilación del teatro shakesperiano de García Lorca con el simbolismo poético de la Europa continental y el pre-rafaelitismo británico. Se investiga la apropiación del valor cultural de Shakespeare en la incorporación al campo literario del joven Lorca.

Palabras clave: Shakespeare; García Lorca; España; Europa; estudios de recepción; poesía

1. Introduction

Already in his earliest poems, certain linguistic choices suggest that García Lorca's poetic language was permeated by an early reading of Shakespeare's plays. Dated 23 October 1917, the second poem in Lorca's earliest poetry (*Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* [I was sad before the sown fields]; García Lorca 1994b: 30-32) stands as the first trace of such a relationship. The poem indicates Lorca's familiarity with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the age of nineteen, while other pieces from this period (1917-1919) illustrate that Lorca had also access to other plays by Shakespeare.¹

Bearing in mind that Lorca's knowledge of English was probably fairly limited, it seems reasonable to suppose that the edition of Shakespeare's complete works which Mathilde Pomès found on Lorca's desk in 1931 was either not in English or an iconic memento of his brief visit to London and Oxford in the summer of 1929 (Martín 1986: 95-97). In addition to this, since Luis Astrana Marín's all-prose translations, which had the merit of being the first rendering of the entire corpus from the original English, began to appear in 1921, it is more likely that Lorca initially grew familiar with Shakespeare's work through Rafael Martínez Lafuente's rendering of French versions of the plays (1915-1918). Four of the eight volumes of Martínez Lafuente's *Complete Works* of Shakespeare were found in Lorca's library (Adani 1999: 10). The volumes included: I. *Hamlet, The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; IV. *The Merchant of Venice, Love's Labour's Lost, Cymbeline*; V. *Macbeth, Troilus and Cressida, Henry VIII*; VIII. *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These four volumes account for almost all the references to Shakespeare in Lorca's juvenilia and later work. Familiarity with *Othello* and, especially, *Romeo and Juliet*, which will be appropriated in Lorca's later experimental dramatic work, must then be attributed to other translations, stage productions or, as Fernández Montesinos believed (Adani 1999: 10), to the possibility that Lorca had owned all eight volumes of Martínez Lafuente's *Complete Works*. In these early years, it is perhaps significant, therefore, that the speaker in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* refers twice to his copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a *librote*: the image of the 'large book' among whose pages the speaker of the poem falls asleep could be connected with these volumes. Also equally conceivably, Lorca may have retained an image of the Italian actor Ermete Zacconi's highly acclaimed performances at the Teatro Comedia and the Princesa or more recent productions by Ricardo Calvo, José Tallaví, Francisco Morano and Emilio Thuillier.² In either case, whether Lorca worked from actual texts or live performances, it is a creative assimilation of Shakespearean dramaturgy, rather than a precise recollection of the scripts themselves, that spills over into Lorca's production. It is, precisely, such active appropriation that serves as a point of departure for the analysis of Shakespeare's presence in Lorca's early poems.

¹ The research for this essay was done under the auspices of the projects BFF2002-02019 and HUM-2005-02556/FILO, financed by the Ministerio de Educación and Feder.

² For the performance history of Shakespeare's plays in Spain, see Par 1936 and the Shakespeare in Spain Performance Database from the Shakespeare in Spain research project at the University of Murcia (www.um.es/shakespeare).

The analysis of Shakespeare's role in García Lorca's early poetic production has been largely overlooked by academic criticism. While Silvia Adani's book, *La presenza di Shakespeare nell'opera di García Lorca* (1999), offers an almost exhaustive inventory of Lorca's references to Shakespeare, the author does not engage in analysing or characterising the presence of the English playwright in Lorca's work. Thus, within Lorquian criticism, where Shakespearean drama is only of marginal interest, the few passing allusions to Shakespeare tend to cluster round the visible traces of Shakespearean drama in Lorca's experimental plays such as *El público* and *Comedia sin título*, where the explicit theatrical role of *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is hardly avoidable (Martínez Nadal 1976; Laffranque 1978; Huerta Calvo 2006). On the other side of the critical spectrum, García Lorca's *El público* appeared in Fischlin and Fortier's *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (2000). There, their short introduction to the play probably stands as the only contribution to the study of the relationship between Shakespeare and García Lorca within the field of Shakespeare Studies. Perhaps, the explicit visibility of Shakespearean drama in Lorca's experimental plays and the late publication and marginality of Lorca's early poetry within his better known poetic and dramatic production have prevented critical interest in the topic. Consequently, this article seeks to halt the delay in the study of Shakespeare's role in García Lorca's early poetry.

In its first part, this essay interrogates the formal and thematic mechanisms that Lorca recurrently applied to Shakespearean drama. The analysis of these mechanisms provides a coherent frame for the otherwise seeming arbitrariness of Lorca's creative appropriation. At the same time, these processes advance the seminal guidelines of Lorca's experimental adaptation of Shakespearean drama at the latter stages of his production in the 1930s. Subsequently, in the second part, the discussion moves on to describe Lorca's perception of Shakespeare as a literary figure. Here, the early poems serve to illustrate Shakespeare's role in Lorca's aesthetic aspirations, the position that both are imagined or projected to fill, through the poems, within Lorca's contemporary cultural landscape and, subsequently, the image of Shakespeare projected by Lorca at this early stage. As in the case of Lorca's creative mechanisms of adaptation, this section closes with a discussion of the poems as an anticipation of Lorca's later traits. In these, Lorca already demonstrates an interest in Shakespeare's canonical iconicity, which will become a problematic concern at a later stage in his experimental dramas.

2. Lorca's early rewriting techniques: The tragic appeal of Shakespearean drama

In this early period (1917-1919), Lorca's engagement with the poetic expression of tragic love results in the reformulation of Shakespeare's forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a central signifier and site for the expression of fatalistic poetic pictures of despair and frustration, which will later on extend to Lorca's experimental plays *El público* (*The Public*; 1930) and *Comedia sin título* (*Play Without a Title*; 1936). Lorca's poem from 1917 reads:

<i>Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados.</i>	I was sad before the sown fields. ³
<i>Era una tarde clara.</i>	It was a clear afternoon.
<i>Dormido entre las hojas de un librote</i>	Asleep among the pages of a heavy book
<i>Shakespeare me acompañaba...</i>	Shakespeare was with me...
<i>El sueño de una noche de verano</i>	A Midsummer Night's Dream
<i>Era el librote.</i>	Was the heavy book.
<i>Estaban</i>	The ploughs
<i>Descansando en la tierra los arados.</i>	Were resting on the soil.
<i>La tristeza de aquellos armatostes</i>	The sadness of those big useless objects
<i>Dormidos junto al agua.</i>	Asleep by the water.
<i>¡Qué hermosas son las nubes del otoño!</i>	How beautiful are the clouds of autumn!
<i>Lejos los perros ladran.</i>	Afar the dogs bark.
<i>Y por los olivares lejanos aparecen</i>	And through the distant olive groves appear
<i>Las manos de la noche.</i>	The hands of night.
<i>Mi distancia</i>	My internal
<i>Interior se hace turbia.</i>	Distance grows blurred.
<i>Tiene mi corazón telas de araña...</i>	My heart has cobwebs...
<i>¡El demonio de Shakespeare</i>	The demon of Shakespeare
<i>Qué ponzoña me ha vertido en el alma!</i>	What poison he has poured into my soul!

(García Lorca 1994b: 29-30)

Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados (*I was sad before the sown fields*) stands as the earliest trace of Shakespeare's dramaturgy in Lorca's verses. In the poem, the English playwright is blamed for causing the speaker's sadness after falling sleep. The speaker's melancholy — provoked by the 'poison poured in to the soul' when reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — is explored in parallel to Shakespeare's play, which Lorca borrows in order to reflect on the arbitrariness of affections and the afflictions of unrequited love:

<i>¡Casualidad temible es el amor!</i>	A fearsome coincidence love is!
<i>Nos dormimos y un hada</i>	We fall asleep and a fairy
<i>Hace que al despertarnos adoremos</i>	Makes us adore the first passer-by
<i>¡Qué tragedia tan honda!</i>	What a profound tragedy! . . .
<i>Al primero que pasa</i>	When we awake.

(García Lorca 1994b: 30)

Like the characters in Shakespeare's play, in the poem the speaker suffers the consequences of love at first sight, a prey to the influence of 'a fairy'. From there, he moves on to question the nature of 'a fairy', and the agonic unpredictability of the human experience of love (García Lorca 1994b: 31-32).

In a way, almost all other Shakespearean characters and references in Lorca's early poems are swallowed by the 'dark green forest' already formulated in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados*. As is also characteristic of Lorca's later verse, in these poems images and metaphors are already constantly revisited and reformulated. At this first stage, Lorca rewrote Shakespeare's materials and adapted them to his early poetic

³ All Lorca's translations are mine.

interests by having their former dramatic characteristics transformed into the mood of a new poetic locus. Thus, only three months later (30 January 1918), García Lorca went back to some of the ideas included in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* when he united his dark vision of the forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* with *Hamlet* in *El bosque* (*The Forest*).

Unlike the earlier poem, in *El bosque* references to *Hamlet* are not metaphorical, thematic or oblique:

<i>El bosque es lo romántico de la naturaleza</i>	The forest is that which is romantic in nature.
<i>Ideales figuras desfilaron por él.</i>	Ideal figures paraded in it.
<i>Shakespeare glorioso y triste a Hamlet vio pasar</i>	Sad and glorious Shakespeare saw Hamlet walk by
<i>Un día que entró en su negra verdura a meditar.</i>	One day as he entered its black greenness to meditate . . .

(García Lorca 1994b: 122)

In his reformulation of Shakespeare's work, Lorca relocates Hamlet's meditations at Elsinore by imagining the character inserted in the *Dream's* forest. Thus, Lorca's *El bosque* offers a rare example of poetic adaptation, through the rewriting and conflation of two apparently distant dramatic works by Shakespeare;⁴ this adaptation will become recurrent when, in *La muerte de Ofelia* (*The Death of Ophelia*), Lorca again reunites disparate Shakespearean elements. Thus, just as he had merged the *Dream* and *Hamlet* in *El bosque*, in *La muerte de Ofelia* Lorca potentially summons one image from a different Shakespearean source:

<i>Hundiéndose en las sombras. Hamlet con su siniestra</i>	Sinking in the shadows. Hamlet with his sinister
<i>Mirada ve el espectro que lleva el corazón</i>	Look sees the spectre he bears in his heart
<i>Herido y a una daga</i>	Wounded and a dagger
<i>Que sangra en las tinieblas.</i>	That bleeds in the darkness.

(García Lorca 1994b: 420-421)

Lorca had already diverged from its Shakespearean source when, in his poetic reconstruction of Ophelia's death, Hamlet stood as witness of the scene. In the

⁴ In 1930, Lorca will rewrite *Romeo and Juliet* into the metatheatrics of his experimental play *El público* (*The Public*), while at the same time Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will operate as underlying theme. As Anderson has suggested, "the scenographic and symbolic nexus of night, darkness, wood and moonlight is a key factor in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* . . . A strikingly similar range of scenographic elements, possessing both individual extended significance and a place in a more complex web of imagery, is to be found in several of Lorca's plays" (Anderson 1985: 189-90). Also, critics such as Anderson or Ernesto Jareño have seen Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the originating locus for the setting in the unfinished early drama *Elenita* from 1921 (Jareño 1970: 223), and later of *Bodas de sangre* (*Blood Wedding*; Anderson 1985: 189-190).

rewriting, just before Ophelia drowns, Hamlet has a vision of Ophelia's wounded heart and of the 'dagger that bleeds in the darkness'. Certainly, this last image may autonomously stand as a symbol of Hamlet's responsibility for Ophelia's death, yet the hallucination of the bleeding dagger as a response to a guilty conscience does not belong to the 'tragedy of the ghost prince', but to *Macbeth*:

MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 . . . A dagger of the mind, a false creation
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
 . . . I see thee still,
 And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood . . .

(II.i.33, 38-39,45-46)⁵

One way to account for Lorca's recycling of the bloody dagger in his poem about Ophelia's death or his placing of Hamlet in the forest of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is to regard such conflation as a case of misplacement, that is, as if Lorca "did not know his Shakespeare". Regardless of the extent of Lorca's familiarity with Shakespeare's plays, the issue that will close the conclusions of this essay, the fact is that throughout his body of work Lorca never showed an interest in direct quotation or verbatim appropriation of his sources. It would perhaps be more accurate, therefore, to describe Lorca's intertextual relationship with Shakespeare as an interested creative derivation or as an idiosyncratic reworking of selected materials. In the case of Lorca, interest in Shakespeare can be limited to an image, a symbol, a setting, perhaps even a mood that eventually travels into the poet's writing.

Together with this, *La muerte de Ofelia* also illustrates two characteristics of Lorca's appropriation of Shakespeare. On the one hand, the poem provides an active interpretation of the source, Queen Gertrude's narration of Ophelia's Death:

LAERTES

Drowned? O, where?
 QUEEN GERTRUDE
 There is a willow grows aslant a brook
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
 Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
 There on the pendent boughs her crownet weeds,
 Clamb'ring to hang, an envious silver broke,
 When down the weedy trophies and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
 And mermaid-like a while they bore her up;

⁵ All quotations from Shakespeare are from Wells and Taylor's 2005 edition.

Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
 As one incapable of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and endued
 Unto that element. But long it could not be
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

(IV.vii.138-55).

In the Spanish poem, Ophelia's death is connected to the dark green forest — which Lorca extracts from Shakespeare's *Dream* in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* — in the way both forests give shelter to those 'incapable of [their] own distress'. As is characteristic of Lorca's appropriation of Shakespeare in his early poetry, when he committed himself to reconstructing Ophelia's drowning, Lorca is drawn by the play's potential to develop the theme of unrequited love. On the other hand, the poem fills a space in the play by providing a poetic picture of Ophelia's actual death, which is absent in the play:

<p><i>¡Con qué santa dulzura Se muere la doncella! Shakespeare tejió con vientos La maravilla tierna de la mujer extraña Que pasa en la tragedia del príncipe fantasma Como un sueño de nubes Recogidas y castas, Hecha de espigas rubias Y estrellas apagadas, Que se fue sonriendo por los reinos del agua Como una luz errante Que encuentra al fin su lámpara.</i></p>	<p>With such a holy sweetness The maiden dies! Shakespeare wove with winds The tender wonder of the strange woman That passes by the tragedy of the ghost prince Like a dream of clouds Cloistered and chaste, Made of blonde ears of corn And extinct stars, Who left smiling through the kingdoms of water Like a wandering light That finds its lamp at last.</p>
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(García Lorca 1994b: 422-23)

Lorca will re-use this technique again when he opens up a narrative space for Juliet in the middle of his experimental play *El público*, later on in 1930. For the time being, in this fragment Lorca casts Ophelia as a virgin through the religious tones of his early poetry ('holy sweetness', 'sacred sadness', 'vague corolla of a religious flower'), adapting Shakespeare's character to the development of his own field of poetic expression.

As Lorca develops these early poetic landscapes, the collection of juvenile verses evinces a complex network of Shakespearean intertextuality, which comprises a relative unity arising from the common objective: putting Shakespeare to work for Lorca's early tragic project.⁶ Thus, as Lorca merges Ophelia's death with Macbeth's imaginary

⁶ As Silvia Adani points out, Lorca's assimilation of the Shakespearean forest can also be seen to resonate in other juvenilia poems like 'Baladas de las niñas en los jardines', 'Lux', or in Lorca's early prose work, *Impresiones y paisajes* (Adani 1999: 33-35). Then, Adani locates echoes of

dagger, or makes Hamlet witness Ophelia drowning and strides through *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* forest of fairies, the disparate Shakespearean references gain uniformity if perceived as reinforcing the collection's tragic ethos. Lorca's initial interest in Shakespeare relies on tragedy and, even when the Spanish poet incorporates Shakespearean comedy into his poetry, the festive, harmonious or conciliatory elements of a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are reshaped into the despair of the poems' speakers. As fellow poet and scholar, Pedro Salinas put it,

Lorca . . . expresses the feeling for death with an undoubted originality and personal accent . . . He discovers it all around him, in the native air that gives him breath, in the singing of the servants in his house, in books written in his tongue, in the churches of his city . . . (Salinas 1955-1956: 18).

However personal or original, Lorca also found a well of images, symbols and characters to develop the tragic initial interests of his early poetry in the foreign dramaturgy of Shakespeare.

The earliest poem, *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados*, is particularly characteristic of this early phase in the way it assimilates Shakespeare's *Dream* into the tragic mode, an idiosyncratic example of what will later be developed in subsequent work. Lorca's rewriting can be compared with one of the seminal characterisations of Shakespeare's forests put forward by Northrop Frye who, writing in the 1950s and 1960s, suggested a characterisation of Shakespeare's archetypal *green world*. Like Lorca, Frye also detected the tragic potential of Shakespearean comedy, yet he located and delimited it to a certain moment in the comic narration. For Frye, "the images of chaos, tempest, illusion, madness, darkness, death, belong to the middle of the action of the comedy, in the phase of confused identity" (Frye 1965: 137), yet, in the case of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "[after] the action moves from a world of parental tyranny and irrational law into the forest . . . the comic resolution is attained, and the cast returns with it into their former world" (Frye 1965: 141). By contrast, in Lorca's rewriting of the *Dream's* forest there is no harmonic return. In fact, in Lorca the forest stands as a site of the opposite tyrannical and irrational laws of love. While for Frye Shakespeare's *green world* constitutes a device for the resolution of comedy, Lorca's forest is painted with a "black greenness" ("*Negra verdura*" [García Lorca 1994b: 122]) from which the speaker never returns. These mechanisms of selection and revision are characteristic of both Lorca's early relationship with Shakespeare and of his latter incorporation of Shakespearean elements into his experimental dramas.

Hamlet in Lorca's early prose (*Meditación que trata de nuestra pequeñez y del misterio de la noche*), other early poetry ('La balada de Caperucita roja') and later poems like 'Baladilla de Eloisa muerta', 'Sombra', 'Reflexión', 'El sátiro blanco', (from Lorca's *Suites*), 'Nocturnos de la ventana' (from *Canciones*) and 'Romance sonámbulo' (from *Romancero Gitano*). According to Adani, echoes from 'La muerte de Ofelia' reach Lorca's very late poem, 'Casida de la muchacha dorada', from 1936 *Diván del Tamarit* (see Adani 1999: 77-110 and Martín 1988: 205).

The tragic assimilation of Shakespearean drama initiated in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* permeates the rest of Lorca's Shakespearean early poems. Thus, although the forest in *El bosque* seems to be initially characterised through brighter tones —

<p><i>El bosque surge en los campos serenos Como acorde profundo de azul profundidad... ... El bosque es una piedra preciosa con vida Que oculta melodías de infinito cristal. Tiene acento de luna su divina maleza, Tienen sus troncos tonos de una épica grandeza.</i></p>	<p>The forest emerges in the serene fields Like a profound chord of blue profundity... ... The forest is a precious stone with life That hides melodies of infinite crystal. Its divine undergrowth has a moon accent, Its trunks have tones of epic grandeur.</p>
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(García Lorca 1994b: 121)

— this ambivalent forest ends up being characterised through attributes that lie closer to the darker overtones of the earlier poem:

<p><i>El bosque tiene algo de mística tragedia, Tiene melancolía de dulce terciopelo . . Encierran sus encantos un silencio mortal.</i></p>	<p>The forest has some of that mystical tragedy, Has melancholy of sweet velvet . . . Its charms hide a mortal silence.</p>
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(García Lorca 1994b: 121)

El bosque can thus be traced back to Lorca's earlier version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which, for him, stands as a symbolic location of disharmony. Again, it seems as if Lorca had dispossessed Shakespeare's forest of all of its reconciliatory potential and focused on the tensions created by the fairies. As in the earlier poem, Lorca's version of Shakespeare's forest generically recasts the *Dream* into the tragic mode:

<p><i>Por la noche su orquesta canta en clave de fa. Sus naves escarchadas de amargura y de pena Las cruzan silenciosas almas enamoradas Que vivieron dolientes las antiguas baladas . . .</i></p>	<p>At night its [the forest's] orchestra sings in the key of F. Its naves frosted in bitterness and sorrow Are crossed by silent souls in love That lived the old ballads in suffering.</p>
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(García Lorca 1994b: 121-22)

Then, in *La muerte de Ofelia*, which dates from 7 September 1918, the poem starts by constructing the image of Ophelia, slowly drowning in the "green water", "a hidden pool / Among the clear waves of hope/dream/illusion" ("*Agua verde*", "*un oculto remanso / Entre las ondas claras de illusion*" [García Lorca 1994b: 420]). Lorca, then, juxtaposes a number of images to construct the symbolic narration of the poem:

<p><i>Como vaga corola de una flor religiosa Se hunde y el Amor</i></p>	<p>Like the vague corolla of a religious flower She drowns and Love</p>
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*Ha tronchado su arco sobre una encina vieja
Hundiéndose en las sombras.*

Has cracked its arrow on a holm-oak
Sinking in the shadows.

(García Lorca 1994b: 420)

The poem then extends the characteristic religious overtones of Lorca's early writing through a second image:

*Y Ofelia dulce cae
En el abismo blando.
Toda sacra tristeza
Y palpar de tarde.
Sobre el tenue temblor
De la aguas, su pelo
Se diría una vaga y enigmática sangre,
Unas algas de oro
Que cayeran del cielo
O un ensueño de polen
De azucena gigante...*

And sweet Ophelia falls
Into the soft abyss.
All sacred sadness
And afternoon throb.
Over the faint trembling
Of the waters, her hair
Seemed like vague and enigmatic blood,
Golden seaweed
That'd fall from the sky
Or a dream of pollen
Of a giant white lily.

(García Lorca 1994b: 421)

The succession of images closes with one last picture of Ophelia's hair as she finally drowns in the river:

*No queda en el remanso sino la
cabellera
Que flota. ¡Un gran topacio!
Deshecho por el ritmo
De eterna primavera
Que agita el dulce espacio
De las aguas serenas.*

Nothing is left in the pool but the
head of hair
That floats. A great topaz!
Undone by the rhythm
Of eternal spring
That stirs the sweet space
Of calm waters.

(García Lorca 1994b: 421)

The last lines of the poem ratify that, in its melancholic natural setting, this green river bears parallels to the forest constructed in previous poems:

*Ofelia yace muerta coronada de flores.
En el bosque sombrío
La llora la Balada.*

Ophelia lies dead crowned by flowers.
In the sombre forest
The Ballad weeps for her.

(García Lorca 1994b: 423)

In this way, *La muerte de Ofelia* seems to secure the recasting of Shakespeare's dark forest in the tragic mode, as Lorca finds points of departure in Shakespeare mainly to engage with the catastrophic consequences of love, a central theme of the poet's juvenilia.

3. Lorca's initial shaping of the bard: Shakespeare's cultural role in the early poems

Within the poetic scenarios of his early verses, Lorca submitted a number of passages and images from Shakespeare's dramas to a process of adaptation. Thus, Lorca's early adaptation techniques can be thematically characterised by the way they consistently contribute to the verses' tragic drive. Although through elements from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, Shakespearean tragedy contributes to this process, it is a comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that turns out to be Shakespeare's most productive material at this early stage in Lorca's writing. As his experimental dramas will evince, when Lorca turns to Shakespeare, the shadow of the *Dream's* forest recurrently taints the other Shakespearean images.

In parallel to this tragic drive, in Lorca's reformulation the *Dream's* forest is attributed with certain qualities – 'romantic' qualities – *El bosque* suggests. This characterisation is connected with the opening poem in Paepe's anthology of unpublished poems (García Lorca 1994b), that is, Lorca's earliest dated poetry, where the verses incorporate a number of different Romantic authors. With the characteristically "exalted religious feeling and unbridled sensuality" of his early writings ("Exaltado sentimiento religioso y una desenfadada sensualidad" [Herrero 1989: 1825]), in *Canción: Ensueño y confusión* (*Song: Dream and Confusion*),⁷ Lorca explores "a night of sheer lust" ("una noche de plena lujuria") through a blend of exotic geographic settings, Catholic iconography, allusions to Spanish Romantic writers — Larra and Hartzenbusch — and European Romanticism — Berlioz, Goethe, Mérimée/Bizet (García Lorca 1994b: 25-27).

In relation to this first poem, in *El bosque* Lorca defines the Shakespearean forest as that which is 'romantic in nature'. It is immediately after this line that the speaker moves on to reference Shakespeare and establish the connection between Hamlet, his meditative sadness and the 'romantic' forest. The juxtaposition of these elements suggests Lorca's initial assimilation of Shakespeare as a Romantic literary figure. As in the opening poem of the anthology, in *El bosque* the speaker identifies with Romantic values, Hamlet is characterised as 'sad' yet 'glorious' and as one of the 'ideal figures' that visited the 'romantic' forest, which in the poem is filled with "strange characters, with divine animals, with crosses, with ghosts, with pilgrim saints, [and] Christian romances" ("Raros personajes, de animales divinos, de cruces, de fantasmas, de santos peregrinos, [and] romancescos cristianos" [García Lorca 1994b: 122]). Lorca's neo-Romantic imagery seems to recast the forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hamlet and, ultimately, Shakespeare, as Romantic figures; that is, to insert them as part of the Romantic literary tradition.

This image of Shakespeare had been circulating around Europe for some time now. Thus, after the ambivalent response of 18th-century Neoclassicism, in Spain, as in many other European nations, Shakespeare's works secured their canonical status during the end of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, thanks to the impulse of the Romantic movement and the Romantic appropriation of

⁷ Dated 29 June 1917 (García Lorca 1994b: 25-28).

Shakespeare and Calderón started by German critics and translators.⁸ Also, Lorca's characterisation of Shakespeare as a Romantic author should not come as a surprise, since the neo-Romantic appropriation of Shakespeare and his work can be seen as an early sign of his artistic rupture against realism. In *Comentarios a Omar Kayyam* (*Comments to Omar Kayyam*), an article written only two months after *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados*, Lorca traces a number of literary and dramatic characters, establishing a line of metaphysical Romanticism that develops from Cervantes, to Calderón, to Shakespeare, to Goethe: "Los hombres tienen el gran defecto de considerarse superiores a las obras de los hombres grandes . . . Los personajes que rodearon a D. Quijote le compadecieron superiores. Y lo mismo pasó con Segismundo y con Hamlet y con Werther... Siempre lo grande produce en nosotros el abismo de la incompreensión momentánea" (García Lorca 1994a: III, 376).⁹

Also, in the misleadingly titled *El poema de la carne* (*The Poem of Flesh*), which most likely is Lorca's first recorded Shakespearean prose reference, Othello is mentioned among a list of passionate 'great lovers': "El crepúsculo tiene en sus colores ardientes rayos de amor y de pasión. El crepúsculo oculta en sus nieblas los corazones de Paolo, de Othello, de Werther, de Don Juan y todos los grandes amantes. Las nubes rojizas que parecen ascuas de granates son la sangre derramada por los corazones que amaron y no fueron amados" (Maurer 1994: 245).¹⁰

By going back to Romantic themes and aesthetics, and recasting Shakespeare as a paradigmatically Romantic figure, Lorca advances his early rejection of Realist modes of feeling and representation, a rejection that will be consolidated and amplified through the Symbolist and Surrealist features of later poetic and dramatic production.

In parallel to these direct references to Romantic literature, Lorca's early poetry provides other instances that project a Romantic image of Shakespeare. This time the connection comes through Lorca's early references to the circle of the English Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of artists, poets and critics who dwelled equally between "a derivative and subordinate relation to that of the great Romantics" and the attempt to "revitalise an art that had become stale and stereotyped" in the Victorian period (Ford 1958: 356; Fredeman 1968: 259). In his early poems, Lorca seems to parallel "the use of . . . medievalism [and] an autumnal mood or habit of feeling, religiosity, and literariness" of Pre-Raphaelite poetry and painting (Ford 1958: 364). Reverting to Romantic paradigms, Lorca connects with Pre-Raphaelite sensibility in *El bosque* — 'The soul of forests is a medieval creation' — or in *La muerte de Ofelia* when

⁸ See Calvo 2002, Pujante 2005 and the first volume of Par 1935. For criticism that shows the transition from the Spanish Neoclassical rejection of Shakespeare to his gradual acceptance through the perspective of Romanticism, see Pujante and Campillo 2007.

⁹ 'Men have the great defect of considering themselves superior to the works of great men . . . The characters that surrounded D. Quixote superiorly pitied him. And the same happened to Segismundo, Hamlet and Werther... Greatness always produces in us the abyss of momentary incomprehension'.

¹⁰ 'The twilight has in its burning colours rays of love and passion. The twilight hides in its fogs the hearts of Paolo [from Dante's *Divine Comedy*], of Othello, of Werther, of Don Juan and all the great lovers. The reddish clouds that look like ashes of garnet are the blood spilt by the hearts that loved and were not loved'.

he produces a poetic picture that can arguably traced back to John Everett Millais' painting *Ophelia* (1851). Together with the common features that link Lorca and the Pre-Raphaelites in their recuperation of Romantic values, Millais' *Ophelia* can be seen in relation to the opening images in Lorca's poem:

<i>Fue sobre el agua verde.</i>	It happened over the green water.
<i>Un oculto remanso</i>	A hidden pool
<i>Entre las ondas claras de un río de ilusión.</i>	Among the clear waves of a river of illusion.
<i>El crepúsculo muerto puso en las ondas hojas</i>	In the waves the dead twilight placed leaves
<i>De luz que Ofelia enciende</i>	Of light that Ophelia lights up
<i>Con su carne de rosa</i>	With her flesh of pink rose,
<i>De oro blanco y de sol.</i>	Of white gold and sun.

(García Lorca 1994b: 420)

Both Millais and Lorca concentrate on Shakespeare by focalising and reconstructing the death of Ophelia, yet, while the connections between Pre-Raphaelite painting and Lorca partly reside in the pre-Raphaelites' seminal influence on the Symbolist movement,¹¹ Lorca — writing over sixty years after Millais' painting was produced — moves away from pre-Raphaelite detail and stasis when his Ophelia ends up as an inkblot in Lorca's poetic canvas:

<i>No queda en el remanso sino la cabellera</i>	Nothing is left in the pool but the head of hair
<i>Que flota. ¡Un gran topacio!</i>	That floats. A great topaz!
<i>Deshecho por el ritmo</i>	Undone by the rhythm
<i>De eterna primavera</i>	Of eternal spring
<i>Que agita el dulce espacio</i>	That stirs the sweet space
<i>De las aguas serenas.</i>	Of calm waters.

(García Lorca 1994b: 420)

In this way, Lorca's poetic appropriation of Shakespeare stands closer to the Symbolist aesthetics of the work carried out by Adrià Gual and his *Teatre Intim* (Cerdá Martínez 2010: 106-25), where in the sketches for his productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Hamlet*, the paintings are reduced to barely representational forms and colours, rejecting detail in favour of the symbolic creation of mood or atmosphere. In this way, *La muerte de Ofelia* can be seen to extend the Symbolist appropriation of Shakespeare established by Arthur Rimbaud in his poem

¹¹ For the relationship between the pre-Raphaelites and Symbolism see Kotzin 1966 and Smith 1981. Then also, Huerta Calvo argues that, together with the influence of the pre-Raphaelites in the scenery of scene four in *The Public*, "La invocación al arte de los primitivos, los llamados pintores prerrafaelitas, es un recurso que ya Lorca emplea en *Don Perlimplín*: 'La mesa con todos los objetos pintados como en una "Cena" primitiva'" ('the primitive's invocation of art, the so-called pre-Raphaelites, is a resource that Lorca uses already in *Don Perlimplín*: "The table with all the painted objects as in a primitive 'Last Supper'" [Huerta Calvo 2006: 169]).

‘Ophélie’, another early poem written by the French Symbolist in 1870 around the age of sixteen, which has also been connected with Millais’ painting (Forestier 1984: 25):

<p><i>Sur l'onde calme et noire où dorment les étoiles La blanche Ophélie flotte comme un grand lys, Flotte très lentement, couchée en ses longs voiles... — On entend dans les bois lointains des hallalis</i></p>	<p>On the calm black water where the stars are sleeping White Ophelia floats like a great lily; Floats very slowly, lying in her long veils... — In the far-off woods you can hear them sound the death knell.</p>
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(Rimbaud 1972: 11)

(Transl. from Rimbaud 1962: 81)

In Rimbaud’s poem, Hamlet also stands as mute witness of Ophelia’s drowning, rewriting, like Lorca, the Shakespearean source for his own poetic and later, in the case of Lorca, dramatic project.¹² Thus, together with the tragic interest that attracted Lorca’s creative assimilation, in his early poetry Shakespeare is also cast as part of a wider intertextual network of references, which contributes to Lorca’s rejection of Realism and the search for alternative modes of expression. It is under these circumstances that Shakespeare is presented as inserted in the Romantic tradition, a characterisation that sheds light into Lorca’s own poetic project.

Thus, at the same time that Lorca reacted against Realist modes of expression by going back and reclaiming Shakespeare among the names and works of several Romantic figures, Lorca can be described as seeking legitimacy in the works and figure of the English playwright as an upcoming literary figure in the making. As Pierre Bourdieu suggests, within the *field of cultural production*, “the new comers” — Lorca at this point was nineteen —

are not disposed to enter the cycle of simple reproduction, based on recognition of the ‘old’ by the ‘young’ . . . and recognition of the ‘young’ by the ‘old’ . . . but bring with them dispositions and position-takings which clash with the prevailing norms of production and the expectations of the [artistic] field”. “In fact, one never observes either a total submission . . . or an absolute break . . . — a break with the immediately preceding generation (fathers) is often supported by a return to the traditions of the next generation back (grandfathers). (Bourdieu 1993: 57-58)

Bourdieu’s ideas can be applied to Lorca’s early verses, by which Lorca can in this way be seen as formulating his own notion of Shakespeare within his contemporary cultural field. Yet, as Bourdieu adds, “returns to past styles . . . are never ‘the same thing’” (Bourdieu 1993: 60; emphasis in the original). Thus, I claim, through rewriting,

¹² According to Valerie Minogue, Rimbaud identifies himself with Ophelia. In this “Romantic view of the poet-victim”, Ophelia and Hamlet “symbolise the frustration of the motherless child” and the poet’s “own aspirations and struggles” with poetic language at this early stage (Minogue 1989: 431). This poem has also been connected with Berthold Brecht’s ‘Ballad of the Drowned Girl’ (1919-1920), written shortly after Lorca’s, and also sharing the same Shakespearean point of departure (Nägele 2002).

Lorca selected and manipulated a number of Shakespearean elements, both reinserting Shakespeare into the tradition of his early nineteenth-century European reception, while at the same time reformulating Shakespeare's work within the interests of his early Symbolist agenda and as a reaction against Realist aesthetics, a move which will later crystallise in the adaptation of Shakespeare into Surreal aesthetics in the plays *El público* and *Comedia sin título*.

Thus, Lorca's juvenilia show the early mechanisms that will constitute his subsequent relation with Shakespeare, while at the same time they illustrate how Shakespeare, in conjunction with Romantic aesthetics, served Lorca to produce his own configuration of the field. On the one hand, the poems show the creative manipulation that will continue to characterise Lorca's use of Shakespearean material while, at the same time, these Shakespearean elements connect Lorca with a range of cultural currents that helped construct the characteristics of Lorca's early production. In these poems, the juxtaposition of decadent images and settings, the already hermetic narrative, the anti-mimetic landscaping and the metaphorical density of the poems anticipates Lorca's consolidation as a Symbolist and, later, a Surrealist poet and playwright. It is through this stylistic and thematic positioning that Shakespeare is recast as a Romantic figure, even as a predecessor, father, or (in Bourdieu's words) 'grandfather' to Symbolism. At this early stage, Lorca's interest in Romantic and early Symbolist aesthetics, his rupture with Realism and the uses Shakespeare fulfils in this process connect Lorca's juvenilia both back to the Romantic tradition and forward to a future of experimental aesthetics.

This would summarise Lorca's early poetic relation to Shakespearean drama. Yet, a relatively marginal instance of Shakespearean adaptation in these early verses anticipates later discussion, when Lorca's experimental dramas are inspected in their relation to Shakespeare. In *Balada (Ballad)* — dated 31 October 1918 — Lorca includes another element from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Again, in Lorca's ballad the speaker finds himself in despair, dwelling on the remembrance of past affection and concerned about future uncertainty:

<i>Y el amor fue un engaño</i>	And love was a deception
<i>O un dolor imposible.</i>	Or an impossible pain.
<i>Y la aurora un momento</i>	And dawn was nothing
<i>De ilusión nada más.</i>	But a moment of illusion.
<i>Tengo el alma bordada</i>	My soul is embroidered
<i>Con puñales de noche</i>	With dark daggers.
<i>Y no sé a la ventura</i>	And, aimless, I know not
<i>Qué camino tomar.</i>	Which road to take.

(García Lorca 1994b: 427-28)

As in previous poems, Lorca resorts to the iconology of Shakespeare's *Dream* to draw a landscape of disharmony. This time, Lorca presents pairs of opposing mythical figures to establish the mood of the speaker, where dystopian elements prevail over the symbols of concord and measure:

<i>¡Ay de mí que no tengo</i>	Alas, I have neither
<i>Mediodía ni aurora!</i>	Midday nor dawn!
<i>(Venus y Apolo ceden</i>	(Venus and Apollo cede
<i>Su trono a Baco y Pan.)</i>	Their throne to Bacchus and Pan.)
<i>Mi corazón reposa</i>	. . . My heart rests
<i>En un gris sentimental.</i>	In a sentimental grey.

(García Lorca 1994b: 429)

Here, Lorca replaces the influence of Apollo and Venus — the male deity, “always young, beardless, . . . of harmonious beauty, the ideal epebe and young athlete”, and the goddess associated with “charm” and “gracefulness” — with the accession of Bacchus and Pan — the Roman equivalent of Dionysus, whose “myths and cults are often violent and bizarre, a challenge to the established social order”, and the equivalent of Arcadia, which can “exercise a type of savage and violent possession” (Hornblower and Spawforth 1996: 122, 1587, 479, 1103). In the poem, the speaker’s despair is constructed through this replacement of mythological figures. It follows:

<i>Los silfos se adormecen.</i>	The sylphs fall asleep.
<i>Oberón quita al niño</i>	Oberon takes away the child
<i>Cupido su carcaj.</i>	Cupid’s quiver.
<i>Y las frondas marchitas</i>	And the withered leaves
<i>Del bosque legendario</i>	Of the legendary forest
<i>Derraman sobre el césped</i>	Shed on the grass
<i>Su llanto milenario</i>	Their ancient lament
<i>Como un sueño de cuerdas</i>	Like a dream of strings
<i>En arpa de cristal.</i>	On a crystal harp.

(García Lorca 1994b: 429)

Here, Lorca is reusing images already articulated in previous poems, where the *Dream*’s forest serves as a site for the symbolic representation of emotional instability and decay. Yet, here Lorca is introducing Oberon as the symbolic replacement for Cupid, or Eros, the emblem of romantic and erotic love. In a way, the incorporation of Shakespeare’s *Dream* to the poem functions as in the previous poems although, in this ballad, Lorca’s treatment of Oberon — as part of or at least in juxtaposition to the body of Greek and Roman mythology — speaks of Lorca’s positioning of Shakespeare as a canonical figure. By contrast, much later, in his play *El público*, Lorca will address the implications of such a canonisation when Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is questioned as a legitimate or culturally acceptable dramatic work. In this way, Lorca’s early poetry provides yet another of the embryonic guidelines that will support the Spanish poet and playwright’s later appropriation of Shakespeare’s works.

Thus, in parallel to this, in his early poetry Lorca provides an assessment of the English playwright himself. The repeated inclusion of the author’s name in these poems, and even some direct allusions, such as that in *Yo estaba triste frente a los sembrados* — “My friend William! / Are you listening? Yes?” (“¡Amigo William! / ¿Me escuchas? ¿Sí?” [García Lorca 1994b: 31]) — supports the idea that Lorca’s writing not

only appropriates Shakespeare's work creatively, but that these poems also rely on the image of the English playwright as a cultural symbol. In Lorca's early poetry, Shakespeare appears as an already canonised author on a high cultural pedestal, with his characters aligned with those of classical mythology. This can be understood as an initial phase that will later on give way to Lorca's questioning of Shakespearean drama, where the representation of Shakespeare and his work will prove more problematic. Thus, the tension between regarding Shakespeare as a cultural emblem and questioning his work as a valid model for contemporary artistic expression can already be detected, in embryonic form, in the second stanza of another of Lorca's early ballads, *La balada de las tres rosas* (*The Ballad of the Three Roses*).

In this poem, Lorca attempts a division of love into three kinds, each embodied by the distinct characteristics of the white, the pink and the red rose. In the neo-Romantic, early-Symbolist style that characterises these poems, Lorca arranges a number of images into three groups, each providing a network of allusions, descriptions and metaphors that gradually construct the characteristics of each of the roses. For the first stanza — the white rose — Lorca develops a language close to that in which Ophelia was described in *La muerte de Ophelia*. Again, the white rose can be distinguished through its religious overtones — “chaste thought”, “warm and sacred milk / Fallen from the breasts of motherly sky/heaven” (“Pensamiento casto”, “leche tibia y sagrada / Caída de los senos del cielo maternal” [García Lorca 1994b: 519, 521]) — or through its static attributes — “the white rose has the passion of eternity / And the calm of blank stares” (“la rosa blanca tiene pasión de eternidades / Y la tranquilidad de las miradas yertas” [García Lorca 1994b: 519]). Like Ophelia, the white rose — like the other two roses — is destined to die in the poem, and so Lorca provides tragic literary examples for each of the roses, profiting from the intertextual baggage of each of the characters alluded to in the poem. While describing the white rose, the speaker adds:

<p><i>Otelo el gran Sombrio</i> <i>A una de ellas segó.</i> <i>Crecen en los jardines igual que en los</i> <i>conventos.</i> <i>Su luz es filtrada</i> <i>De un antaño sin sol.</i></p>	<p>Othello the great Dark One <i>Cut down</i> one of them. They grow in gardens just as in nunneries. Their light is filtered By a sunless past.</p>
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(García Lorca 1994b: 520)

Thus, Lorca uses Desdemona to provide an example for his white rose, summoning the reader's familiarity with the character to be added to the characterisation provided in the poem.

So far, Shakespearean adaptation in this poem resembles earlier appropriation. Yet, in the second stanza, as it addresses the significance of the pink rose, the poem can be seen to contradict, and somehow challenge, Shakespeare's initial source. In the poem, the pink rose stands as the symbol of youth and adolescent love:

<p><i>Vemos la primavera</i> <i>de los adolescentes.</i></p>	<p>We see the spring Of the adolescents.</p>
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<i>El seno que se agita</i>	The breast that shakes
<i>Y el labio que suspira.</i>	And the lip that sighs.
<i>. . . Satán es bello y joven</i>	. . . Satan is beautiful and young
<i>Dios no ve los pecados.</i>	God sees no sins.
<i>La carne es dulce y rosa</i>	The flesh is sweet and pink
<i>Y canta juventud.</i>	And it sings of youth.

(García Lorca 1994b: 522)

Next, Lorca draws on a Shakespearean character to embody and complement the poem's characterisation of the rose. This time the character is Juliet, yet Lorca here diverts from convention where the perhaps expected cliché of Juliet as a symbol of young and inexperienced love is rejected and reformulated into Lorca's poetic vision:

<i>La rosa rosa tiene</i>	The pink rose has
<i>La elegancia discreta</i>	The discreet elegance
<i>De amor apasionado</i>	Of passionate love
<i>Pero sin frenesí.</i>	Yet without frenzy.
<i>¡Nunca la tomaría en sus dedos Julieta!</i>	Juliet would never hold it between her fingers!
<i>Ella lleva en sus manos la rosa carmesí.</i>	In her hands she holds the crimson rose.

(García Lorca 1994b: 522)

Midway through the poem's second stanza, devoted to the pink rose, the lines lead the reader forward to the last part, that of the red rose, or the phase of passion, lust and physical contact, deferring Juliet's characterisation. Thus, I suggest, Lorca's appropriation of Shakespeare's Juliet is two-fold. On the one hand, the poem partly assumes the resonances that Juliet might bring to the reader; yet on the other hand, it also modulates Juliet's characterisation into the sexually active attributes put forward in the last part of the ballad. This last stanza and, extensively, Juliet become characterised by the explicit language of the passage — "the billy goat trembles with potent lust . . . / Rose of turbid water / Of a summer afternoon" ("El chivo se estremece de lujuria potente", "Rosa de agua turbia / De tarde de verano" [García Lorca 1994b: 423, 424]). This characterisation of Juliet may seem contradictory to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conservative perception of Shakespeare's Juliet, yet Lorca's interest in the character precisely resides in reverting the recognisable features of the Shakespearean character to explore the outcome of alternative associations. Juliet will become a central character in his play *El público* (1930), where the playwright will develop some of the ideas and mechanisms only hinted at in this earlier poem (23 July 1919). It is only then that Lorca will question Shakespeare's work. Still, this early trace should serve as marginal anticipation of a later and much more evident crossroads where Lorca's work can be seen to oscillate between homage and admiration, and a similar necessity to depart from and radically transfigure Shakespearean drama.

4. Conclusion

These early poems already show some of the primary traits of Lorca's creative assimilation of Shakespearean drama. In what can be seen as a line of continuity, Lorca will freely borrow, interpret and rewrite Shakespeare's work at the same time as he produced his own oeuvre, where Shakespearean elements become both sporadic and central to Lorca's poetic and dramatic landscape. Thus, the echo of Juliet and of Shakespeare's 'dark green forest', presented for the first time in these early poems, will reverberate as far as *El público* (1930) and *Comedia sin título* (1936), some of Lorca's last dramatic writings, in what constitutes the beginning and the end of Shakespeare's expanded trajectory within Lorca's production. Nonetheless, the appropriation of Shakespeare's works in these early poems projects the image of the 'new comer', as described by Bourdieu. They project the image of the young aspiring Lorca as he started to arrange the hierarchical order of his subjective poetic field, in which Shakespeare held a privileged position which contrasts with Lorca's later experimental rewriting of Shakespearean drama. In turn, from the perspective of Shakespeare's reception, Lorca's early poems open a window onto the early twentieth-century neo-romantic appropriation of the English playwright, who will witness a reevaluation of his work by a number of cultural agents, from the British Pre-Raphaelites to the European symbolists, who borrowed Shakespeare as an antidote to the aesthetics of realism.

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Received 27 September 2010

Revised version accepted 17 January 2011

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