

APROXIMACIÓN ECOCRÍTICA A LOS “TEXTOS ROMANOS” DE SHAKESPEARE

AN ECOCRITICAL APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE’S “ROMAN PLAYS”

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Resumen

Mirada ecocrítica sobre *The Rape of Lucrece* (W. Shakespeare). En nuestro proyecto actual el concepto que preside nuestras búsquedas es el mismo de investigaciones anteriores: la violencia, vista desde el distanciamiento témporo-espacial y psicológico que brinda el clásico inglés en un eco de su propio tratamiento del tema. La mirada ecocrítica interroga su discurso no solo desde la naturaleza y necesidad de la violencia, sino también sobre sus formas y métodos de regulación, evitación, transformación. Comenzamos por inventariar antecedentes relacionados con el tema eje de nuestro texto, la violación.

Antecedentes temáticos. Examinamos esta modalidad de violencia primero en 2 Samuel, 13 donde uno de los hijos del rey David, Amnón, pretexta enfermedad y al ser visitado por su padre le pide que le envíe a su hermana Tamar para que le cocine su plato favorito. Así planteada la orden, la joven viene a verlo con dicho plato y es sorprendida por este, violentada y luego echada de su presencia por medio de gruesos insultos. La desgracia de Tamar dará lugar a la venganza de su hermano Absalón quien, tras matar a Amnón, se levantará contra su padre el rey con apoyo de buena parte de la población, que ya no quería más a David.

En el ámbito grecolatino, el relato de Tito Livio sobre la violación de la dama romana por parte del hijo del rey, a quien ella debe recibir por la ley de hospitalidad, desencadena una serie de sucesos que acabarán con un sistema político y darán origen a la república.

En el discurso del mundo ibérico de la alta Edad Media, se relata el trágico baño de la Cava Florinda que, espiada por el rey don Rodrigo, precipita el hecho en el que, según el romance, “ella dice que hubo fuerza/él que gusto consentido” (Flor Nueva de Romances Viejos, R. Menéndez Pidal, Libro 1º), y empujará a su padre el Conde Julián, Guardián de Gibraltar, a abrir las puertas de España a los moros.

La violación, tal como aparece en los casos mencionados, se inicia como una ofensa personal, usualmente furtiva, ejercida sobre una persona vulnerable que garantiza la impunidad del agresor pero, inesperadamente, se convierte en una catástrofe de proporciones épicas. El castigo del agresor trasciende así la pena que normalmente le hubiera correspondido. Y es que el violador en estos casos tenía la función ejemplar de proteger a quienes está abusando.

En el primer caso el responsable, ya que no culpable, es el rey David, quien debió haber previsto la intención del hijo o la situación de desprotección en la que colocaba a su hija al obedecer a su padre y rey. Por eso, la reacción de Absalón no se reduce a castigar al violador de su hermana, sino que va contra el padre que hizo viable el delito. En la leyenda de Lucrecia, es la misma situación: el hijo del rey comete la transgresión pero es el padre quien debe responder porque la función del rey/padre es la de proteger a sus súbditos, en lugar de propiciar, por un comportamiento negligente, la comisión del delito. Algo diferente ocurre en el relato hispánico: aquí es el mismo rey quien ofende, y por tanto no hay ante quién recurrir para repararla. Don Julián debe actuar como padre y juez: el castigo de un rey, sin embargo, no es personal, recae también sobre su reino.

Conclusión. La ecocrítica como perspectiva teórica de lectura explora aquí tácticas de engaño del macho para atrapar a su presa: en el Viejo Testamento es la comida, asociada a la hembra de la especie, la que vehicula el ataque. En el contexto romano, un macho invade el territorio de otro a sabiendas de que está desprotegido. En España, en cambio, es una circunstancia climática, el calor, que incita a la hembra a buscar la frescura de la fuente y a exponerse, inadvertidamente, a la mirada del macho “en celo”. Nuestra lectura revela una temprana crítica de Shakespeare a la sociedad patriarcal y ensaya otros modos de pensar la realidad y de interactuar con ella mientras enlaza con el sinsentido de la violación de Lavinia en la siguiente obra, *Titus Andronicus*.

Abstract

An Ecocritical Eye on The Rape of Lucrece (W. Shakespeare). According to the guidelines of our present project the concept that rules our research is just the same as that of previous studies: violence, seen from the space-time and psychological distance that the English classic provides in an echo of its own treatment of the subject. The ecocritical view interrogates its discourse not only from the point of view of nature and the need of violence but also about its ways and methods of regulation, evasion, and transformation of violence. Hence the need we feel to look into some background information concerning the core topic of our text, i.e. rape as announced from the very title of the shakespearean poem.

We examined this mode of violence first in the Bible, 2Samuel 13, where we read how one of King David's children, Amnon, pretending to be ill, solicits and obtains from his father the King that he send his sister Tamar so that she cook his favorite dish for him. Put it in this manner, the young woman has no choice but to fulfill the royal order. She comes to visit Amnon with said dish only to be ambushed by his brother, raped and then sent off amid gross insults. Tamar's disgrace will give way to the revenge of her brother Absalom who, after murdering Amnon, will rise against his father the King with the support of a large number of the population who did not want David any longer.

On the Graeco-Roman scene, the narrative of Tito Livio about the rape of the Roman lady by the son of the King, whom she had had to hold her doors open to by the ancient laws of hospitality unchains a series of events that will bring down a whole political system and will give birth to a new one, centred on the people.

In the Iberian world of the High Middle Ages the bards sang the tragical fountain bath of the maid known as 'la Cava Florinda': her being spied upon by the King don Rodrigo paves the way to her disgrace. A romance records it with the proviso that 'ella dice que hubo fuerza/él que gusto consentido' (Flor Nueva de Romances Viejos, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Libro 1º) Be as it may, this occurrence will push her father the Count don Julian, the Protector of Gibraltar, to open the doors of Spain to the Moors.

These cases of rape have in common that the act starts as a personal offence, usually performed in the sly, exerted on a vulnerable person, a fact which seems to warrant the rapist impunity but, unexpectedly, turns out into a catastrophe of epic proportions. The aggressor's punishment goes

thus far beyond the penalty that would normally have been imposed on him. The reason is that the criminal, in these cases, had an exemplary function, a role model to fulfil: to PROTECT the very people he was abusing.

In the first case the subject responsible for the abuse, if not the culprit, is King David himself. He should have foreseen his son's intention, or the vulnerable position in which he was placing his daughter who was expected to obey her father and King. That's why Absalom's response is not bound just to punishing the defiler of his sister; he goes for the father who ultimately made the crime feasible.

In Lucrece's legend we find the same situation: the king's son perpetrates the crime but it is the father/king who must pay the price because it is his function to protect his subjects instead of facilitating the commission of the abuse through an absent or indult gent behavior.

In the Hispanic narrative the crime is carried out somewhat differently: to begin with, the offense is perpetrated by the King himself. Therefore the victim has no superior instance to resort to for reparation. Don Julian must proceed both as a father and a judge. The punishment of a King, however, is never wholly personal, it also affects his kingdom. We also note here that the rape was not premeditated as in the Biblical and Roman instances. The occasion presented itself and the predator jumped to it almost unthinkingly, the prey presumably unawares.

Ecocriticism as a theoretical perspective of reading explores in all three cases mentioned above the deception tactics practiced by the male of the species on the female whom he targets not as an equal but as his prey: in the Old Testament the baiting that promotes the attack is food, traditionally and biologically associated with the feminine gender. In the Roman context, a male invades the territory of another male provided with inside info about the unprotected state of it. The bait is the wife's desire to learn about the husband's health and war exploits. In Spain, instead, it is a climate issue; it is the hot weather at midday that sends the female in search of a fountain's coolness and thus exposes herself, unknowingly, to the hidden gaze of a male 'in heat'.

Our reading reveals an early Shakespearean criticism of the patriarchal society of his time while rehearsing other ways of thinking reality as he links them with the non-sense of Lavinia's rape in his next drama, Titus Andronicus.