"Un-Romanticized" Love in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew*

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ABSTRACT

Among Shakespeare's plays revolving around the theme of love, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew* develop an un-romanticized attitude by focusing on carnal realities, reinforced through the imagery associated with Cleopatra and Katherine as well as the banquet occasions. In these two plays, the theme of love acquires a carnivalesque approach through which debasement is experienced as a part of love rapports. This paper discusses grotesque representations of love and feasting in the plays by employing relevant viewpoints of the 'grotesque,' mainly those theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin. Accordingly, Bakhtinian idea of 'grotesque realism' and carnival as well as the concept of degradation related to bodily life are highlighted in their association with carnal realities as portrayed in the selected works. The aim of the study is to demonstrate how the theme of love is un-romanticized through the idea of grotesque. Furthermore, since Bakhtinian analysis targets the comic and regenerative in the grotesque, the elaborate choice of a comedy and a tragedy for this study is assumed to be an illuminating endeavor. Grotesque and its implicative denotation revolve around the concept of language and the discourse carried out by the intention of the characters. The elaboration of linguistic discourse in this study goes along with love ideology in a dramatic text. Thus, Bakhtin's conceptualization of grotesque facilitates the dramatic orientation of love in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, whereby the theme of love gets un-romanticized in these plays.

Keywords: Bakhtin; Degradation; Festivity; Grotesque; Un-Romanticized Love

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines two works of Shakespeare, namely *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of Shrew* from the grotesque lens. Both plays epitomize mature, consenting adults' relationship and highlight feasting as a medium to portray the couples' carnal pleasures. Although the title of this paper might suggest its probable contestation against an ideal(ized) concept of romantic love, the authors recommend applying Bakhtinian concepts as the means to welcome the rebirth of love.

To fulfil this paper's objectives, Mikhail Bakhtin's key concepts of the grotesque will be used in the analysis especially from his undertaking of *Rabelais and His World.* The work which refueled controversies regarding the comic and tragic, somehow highlighted mid-twentieth century misinterpretations of the grotesque. Within the framework of Bakhtinian's "grotesque realism", the selected plays are somewhat stripped from the traditional "romanticized" love story and the heroines' characters are further enhanced in the current analysis. The analysis as supported by Mirmusa should "neither cherishes the authority of males, traditionally-believed superiors, nor reounces the power of women who are conventionally accepted as inferiors" (Mirmusa 2014, p.142). The carnivalesque approach towards the love story in both plays is now seen as a unique and innovative way in understanding the dramatic trend in Shakespeare's plays

CARNAL SUBJUGATION THROUGH INDULGENCE AND DEPRIVATION

In *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew,* thematic exploitations of festive occasions are intrinsically interwoven with carnal life in general and earthly love in particular. Regardless of its political context, the former shares an explicit portrayal of earthly love with the latter, focalising on material realities. As a major part of their romance, Anthony-Cleopatra and Petruccio-Katherine rapports take place in a very material way. Unlike most Shakespearean plays of romantic nature, the love relationships are un-romanticized in these two plays by a power struggle manipulated through a control of carnal life and highlighted by feasts and festivity. The feast and festivities as asserted by Vaught in her *Carnival and Literature in Early Modern England*, are held to celebrate a "particular spatial or temporal moment" and not "limited to those associated with a sacred or secular occasion during the festive calendar" (Vaught 2012, p.6). In this regard, both plays established their major conflict through a game of amorous power-struggle reinforced by controlling the partner's carnal needs.

In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Alexandria is chiefly portrayed as the site of carnal life. Binary oppositions, set between Rome and Alexandria, serve to illuminate the luxurious idleness and excessive material life of the latter. Discussing the differences between Rome and Egypt, Arthur Lindley (2003) stipulates that the delicate point of opposition is not in respectively being sites of business and pleasure since they are both involved in business, but in trading differently "in honour and hoarded treasure" and "in love."[i] In the play, it is explicitly acknowledged by Cleopatra that she does "trade in love" (II.v.2).[ii] She indulges Anthony in feasting and love-making, gains control of him, and influences his political ambitions. Viewed through the Romans' eyes, this has to be taken as the main reason for Anthony's ultimate downfall. Pompey gives voice to such a fate as he utters the following statements:

> Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both
> Tie up the libertine, in a field of feasts
> Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks
> Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
> That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour
> Even till a Lethe'd dullness (II.i.22-27)

As observed, the quotation abounds with references to Cleopatra and Alexandria, which signify indulgence in material life. Unseen through the Roman spectacles, feasting is not necessarily taken as a replacement for serious affairs. Through love and feasting, Anthony and Cleopatra seek to strengthen their political status and stability. As asserted by Peter Parolin, "the Romans err when they see Anthony and Cleopatra feasting and revelry as antithetical to the serious business of politics."[iii]The couple also mean to do business through pleasure since what is seen by the Romans as a "meal-centred courtship" showing "Anthony's degrading subjection to Cleopatra" can be "a moment of culinary diplomacy" (Parolin, 2005, p.220) to Cleopatra. In fact, it is not essentially feasting and pleasure making that culminates in their downfall; Cleopatra's strategic mistake in the battlefield is more of a reason for what befalls them.

Beyond the Romans' strict attitude towards Anthony's involvements in Alexandria, *Anthony and Cleopatra* is still a tale of indulgence in bodily life, whereas *The Taming of the Shrew* conversely gives an account of the deprivation from material life. In relation to feasting, while Cleopatra shows and exploits her hostess

skills by providing luxurious feasts, Petruccio devastates his own wedding as he wipes out the occasional revels of the play's feasting conventions.

As a matter of fact, Petruccio succeeds in taming Katherine into an obedient wife by cunningly depriving her of basic human needs which are sleep and food. He carefully engineers his plan of simultaneous deprivation and verbal praises. Even before meeting her, Petruccio is determined to "board her though she chides as loud as thunder" (I.ii.91).

Petruccio's determination corresponds to the fact that deprivation and verbal compliments reveal desperation to establish a behavioral function "as the object of desire, revitalizing"[iv]. Katherine's shrewish and apparently untamable verbal and behavioral obstinacy ultimately yields to Petruccio's policy of torture disguised as endearment. In the lapse of time between the spoiled wedding feast and the final banquet at Baptista's house, Petruccio practices his taming game. He deprives Katherine of food and sleep and even intervenes with her choice of the garment to wear for the feast. In *Elizabethan Grotesque,* Neil Rhodes asserts that "Petruccio's strategy of domestication consists of depressing Katherine's spirit through exhibition of squalor" (1980, p.97). As the newlywed couple leaves for the bride's father's house for the second feast, Petruccio speaks as follows:

> [aside] Eat it up all, Hortensio, if thou lov'st me.
> [To Katherine] Kate, eat apace; and now, my honey love,
> Will we return unto thy father's house,
> And revel it as bravely as the best (IV.iii.52-54)

GROTESQUE REALISM: MANIFESTATIONS OF PHYSICAL LIFE

Discussing *Love's Labour Lost*, Neil Rhodes speaks of "an unmistakably Nasheian stamp" in "the solidification of language into food, of incontinent talking into hungry feeding" which he considers as "a comic grotesque device."(1980, p.96) That the grotesque can be employed as a comic device and language be solidified into food is not hard to discern in other Shakespearean plays including the two under consideration. In accordance with the aforementioned statement, the present study deals with the grotesque as a medium or device for the portrayal of un-romanticized love through a depiction of carnal needs and the inevitably physical side of human nature in these two plays.

As such, references to bodily life and physicality are mainly manifested through food imagery, feasting, and sensuality. As depicted, these images are compatible with Bakhtin's notion of 'grotesque realism,' which he discusses as a fundamental characteristic of Renaissance literature as well as folk culture and carnival.[v] Bakhtin "conditionally" uses the term "grotesque realism" to speak about the presence of images concerning body especially lower stratum in the literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[vi] He refers to Shakespeare as a playwright whose work is rich in carnivalesque features comprising representations "of bodily lower stratum, of ambivalent obscenities, and of popular banquet scenes."[vii] In this regard, the above mentioned images are traced in some parts of both plays to demonstrate the grotesque realism portrayed in them.

In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, in the conversation between Charmian and the soothsayer, the maid amusingly asks whether she would be "married to three kings in a forenoon and widow them all" or "have a child at fifty" (I. ii). In response to her question about the number of children she may have, the soothsayer says "if every of your wishes had a womb, and fertile every wish, a million" (I.ii). In the background of the scene, a feast is being prepared for Cleopatra and Anthony. In the final scene, the

dialogue between the clown and Cleopatra is laden with sexual implication epitomized in the word "worm." As another example, act 1 scene 5 can be referred to for the verbal game through which Cleopatra is expressing her impatience for Anthony's arrival and her extreme sensuous appetite:

> Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
> Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?
> O happy horse, to bear the weight of Anthony!
> Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st? (I.v.19-22)

The Taming of the Shrew also exemplifies a good deal of verbal ambivalence in an obscene manner, portraying lower bodily stratum with sexual implications. The best instance is given early in the play during Petruccio and Katherine's first meeting. Both initiate a lively verbal challenge to conquer each other and prove themselves respectively as the tamer and the shrew:

> Katherine: Remove you hence. I knew you at the first
> You were a moveable.
> Petruccio: Why, what's a moveable?
> Katherine: A joint stool.
> Petruccio: Thou hast hit it: come, sit on me.
> Katherine: Asses are made to bear, and so are you.
> Petruccio: Women are made to bear, and so are you. (II.i.193-198)
> …
> Petruccio: A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!
> Katherine: What is your crest, a coxcomb?
> Petruccio: A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.
> Katherine: No cock of mine, you crow too like a craven. (II.i.220-223)

The talk between Petruccio's servants, Grumio and Curtis, upon the arrival of the newlywed couple, is also worth mentioning for the language with which they address each other. Curtis warns Grumio, "Away, you three-inch fool. I am no beast;" to which Grumio openly returns the insult "why, thy *horn* is a foot, and so long am I, at the least" (IV.i.23-24, italics mine). A few lines later, Grumio gives an account of a funny and caricature-like incident on the trip home, during which Katherine falls off and under the horse, and Petruccio raves at Grumio instead of helping Katherine from "miry a place" under the horse (IV.i.62).

In this relation, the tailor scene is also to be mentioned for the way Petruccio scolds the tailor, "Thou yard, three-quarter, half-yard, quarter, nail, thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket, thou" (IV.iii.107-108). The words 'yard' and 'nit' convey obscenity respectively as the slang for penis and the pun on the word egg as the egg of a louse. In another example, the last scene shows signs of ambivalence and obscenity as the verbal war between Petruccio and the Widow breaks out. The pun on the words 'conceive' and 'tale' needs no further elaboration:

> Widow: Thus I conceive by him.
> Petruccio: Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?
> Hortensio: My widow says thus she conceive her tale.
> Petruccio: Very well mended. Kiss him for that, good widow (V.ii. 23-26).

Concerning food imagery and banquet scenes, Cleopatra has a unique role both as the hostess and her association with food imagery. She is a lascivious provider of feasts. Not only is she the hostess but also the amorous, tantalizing and sensuous food for Anthony's emotional and erotic entanglements. As Lindley comments, Cleopatra

is "both feast and its purveyor." (Lindley, 2003, p. 66) Implied in the word *morsel*, she refers to herself as "*morsel* for a monarch" when Julius Caesar "wast here above the ground" (I.v.30-31). Anthony makes use of the same metaphor, though reproachfully, when he refers to her in his anger and disappointment as "a *morsel* cold upon Dead Caesar's *trencher*" and "a *fragment* of Gnaeus Pompey" (III.xiii.118-119 – italics mine).

Likewise, Katherine is given attribution to foodstuff though in a partially converse or at least harsher and more negative manner. She is once referred to by one of his sister's suitors as "rotten apple" (I.i.125). When Petruccio talks to her for the first time, he tells her that she is "as *brown* in hue as *hazelnuts* and sweeter than the *kernels*" (II.i.255-256 – italics mine). In fact, scarcely any sensual attraction through food imagery is ascribed to Katherine at least at initial stages. Remarkably, Petruccio takes advantage of food imagery when he means to express opinions negatively; most clearly uttered in the fake row with the tailor over Kate's dress in act 4 scene 3. He finds fault with the cap and the gown, which he scornfully compares with foodstuff, such as "custard coffin," "silken pie," "apple-tart," etc. (IV.iii.81-92).

According to Bakhtin's discussion on banquet imagery, liberation of human speech results from the "power of food and drink." (Bakhtin, p.296) This "prandial libertinism," which is typical of the "democratic spirit" in the Middle Ages and the works of Rabelais is somehow echoed in the "English prandial tradition" of Shakespeare and some of his contemporaries.[viii] As such, the ideal, the mystic and the abstract are debased through the grotesque materialism of this liberating type of speech.[ix] The speech liberation gained through food and drink in the spirit of festivity in the two plays under consideration is also compatible with the notion of debasement reinforced through material realism.

DEGRADATION THROUGH DEATH AND AGGRESSION

Degradation is conceived by Bakhtin as an essential principle of the grotesque realism. (Bakhtin, p.19) As he elaborates, it is the most obvious consequence of the grotesque imagery especially bodily lower stratum, which is necessarily ambivalent in its being positive and regenerative as well as negative and debasing.[x] Regeneration is further dealt with in the next section, and this section is basically concerned with how the experience of degradation is portrayed in these two plays. In a sense, beyond bodily lower stratum, the grotesque imagery can vary within a range of possible manifestations of material life from eating and drinking to sexuality, death and birth or any other characteristic through which man is bound to his animal side, particularly in an exaggerated manner.

Broadly speaking, degradation can be depicted through any aspect of material life; channeling its way into a spectrum of experience and epitomizing human physical or mental sufferings. Among the recurrent elements of the grotesque, deformity (physical degradation), madness (mental degradation), aggression or death can be noted as the most recurrent forms through which degradation is experienced in the literature of the grotesque. As for *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*, degradation takes place for a considerable part in encounters with aggression and death respectively.

Referring to death in "Grotesque Renaissance" in the seminal and voluminous *Stones of Venice*, John Ruskin expresses that the "contemplation of death" almost always borders on and is mingled with varying degrees of grotesqueness, being accompanied by "the paralysis of the reason and over-excitement of fancy." (Ruskin, p.156) Discussing *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Ernest Schanzer describes that both

Anthony and Cleopatra "characteristically look on death as an erotic experience." (Schanzer, p.135)Anthony imagines himself as a bridegroom in his death (IV.xv.99), and Cleopatra compares "the stroke of death" to "lover's pinch" (V.ii.293). Death eroticization, which came along with its demonization dating back to the Middle Ages, considers the experience of death "as a rapture, similar to orgasm." (Kuryluk, 1987, p.17)

Apart from eroticization of the macabre, death is distinctly fantasized most notably in Cleopatra's final decision to end her life by snake-poisoning. She displays fanciful excitement with her suicidal action conveyed through calling the asp a baby which "sucks the nurse sleep" (V.ii.299-301). Furthermore, she distinctly fantasizes about afterlife and imagines herself and her beloved Anthony in the moment they meet, Anthony praising her "noble act":

> Yare, yare, good Iras! Quick! Methink I hear
> Anthony calls: I see him rouse himself
> To praise my noble act. I hear him mock
> The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
> To excuse their after wrath. – Husband, I come! (V.ii.274-278)

Concerning degradation, prior to the eventual death experience, they are also humiliated through their defeat to Caesar. For Anthony, mixed feelings towards his betrayal of political affiliation and marital duties opposed to his unremitting love for Cleopatra trigger a sort of chronic pain that troubles him at times. He is claimed by Schanzer to be the best example among all Shakespearean characters for "persistent oscillation of feelings" and "violent veering between emotional extremes" (1963, p.143).Wilson Knight also discerns the unsteadiness of feelings and attitudes not only in Anthony but also Cleopatra. According to Knight, Cleopatra's "wavering" attitude is for a good part epitomized in and associated with her indecisiveness between Caesar and Anthony regarding their political supremacy and final triumph whereas Anthony's predicament about their relationship mainly has to do with his "twin loyalties at Rome and Alexandria"(Knight, p.265). As for Cleopatra, she can thus be considered a contradictory character, both in her own standpoints and the way she is treated by Anthony.

However, all the contradictions seem to be resolved once the battle is won by Caesar, which is worth mentioning so as to highlight the regenerative essence as nurtured in a tragedy. Anthony forgives Cleopatra's fatal and untimely retreat in the battlefield, which consolidated Caesar's victory, and gives her advice regarding her later encounter with Caesar. Cleopatra appears strong-willed as she decides to end her life and thwarts Caesar's plan to have her taken to Rome in humiliation. In order to have time and privacy to commit suicide, she behaves self-humiliatingly by excusing herself to Caesar for her female 'frailty' causing the destruction of her and Anthony as well as Octavia (V.ii.116-119).

Degradation in *The Taming of the Shrew* is kindled through aggression. Bernard McElroy posits that the grotesque causes aggression both in subject and object form, which implies that a character can be both humiliated through being aggressive and/or being tortured by aggression. (McElroy, 1989, p.4)Similarly, the representation of aggression is a creative device by which "Shakespeare as a playwright had to be conscious of the taste and the positive or adverse responses from his audience" (Safaei, 2013, p.187). As a very distinctive example of the case, Katherine is likewise both aggressive and suffers aggression. She is initially shown as aggressive, both verbally and in her behavior. Act 2, scene 1 begins with her sister, Bianca, imploring her to be kind:

Good sister, wrong me not, not wrong yourself,
To make a bondmaid and a slave of me.
That I disdain. But for these other goods,
Unbind my hands, I'll put them off myself, (II.i.1-4)

However, Katherine's role as an aggressor shifts to being a target of aggression by Petruccio's appearance in the same scene. Once he has started his cunningly planned taming game, as his servant says, "he kills her in her own humour" (IV.i.160). In fact, Petruccio gives her a taste of her own medicine as a way to have her obstinacy degraded and tamed. This is initiated by his 'delayed' arrival for his own wedding ceremony at the church. As Katherine burst into tears upon hearing the news of his delay, her father – Baptista – says:

Go, girl. I cannot blame thee now to weep,
For such an injury would vex a very saint,
Much more a shrew of thy impatient humour. (III.ii.27-29)

As Rhodes asserts, in this play "verbal vituperation is indivisibly fused with physical punishment." (Rhodes, p.156) Not only does Petruccio go around his house shouting and blaming, but he also upsets Katherine by creating a very unpleasant and inconvenient atmosphere in which he deprives and interferes with her choice of what to eat or wear and when to sleep. All through the so-called taming game, both Katherine and Petruccio suffer debasement. Once again referring to Rhodes and his postulation concerning Petruccio's degradation, it is noted that through his harshness towards both Katherine and his servants, Petruccio "socially degrades himself, disguising his nobility with a show of boorish and slovenly behaviour."[xi] In fact, through his aggressive behaviour, he degrades both Katherine and himself so as to tame her into their new phase of matrimonial life. He is praised in the final scene by Baptista:

Now fair befall thee, good Petruccio
The wager thou hast won, and I will add
Unto their losses twenty thousand crowns,
Another dowry to another daughter,
For she is changed as she had never been (V.ii.115-119).

FROM DEGRADATION TO REGENERATION

Degradation, as discussed by Bakhtin, is to be viewed positively; man's superiority is paradoxically achieved through a descent into bodily materialism. Hierarchical differences are brought down through grotesque realism solidified by the gay essence of regeneration, of being born, of reaching a horizontal level once the vertical hierarchies are removed (Lindley, p. 66).

Needless to say, many later critics have observed degradation in a more or less negative light. Such arguments generally deal with the grotesque in the literary works of later periods i.e. the Romantic era and a body of works penned in the twentieth century. Such studies are justifiably based on critical views of Bakhtin's contemporary theorist Wolfgang Kayser who potentially proves much more applicable and promising for critical studies of the more recent eras. Notwithstanding, Bakhtin's positive standpoint of degradation as a regenerative element has a strong justification for the literature of the sixteenth century, on which he bases his claim exclusively focusing on Rabelais and occasionally referring to later prominent figures of the period, Shakespeare and Cervantes.

As it can be witnessed, in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*, regenerative essence is traceable. In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra is the key figure through whom regeneration takes place. Accordingly, Lindley compares her with the grotesque body of Renaissance culture as defined by Bakhtin.[xii] In this sense, she can be identified as a body which is open and in the process of regeneration; never complete and constantly changing. The claim can particularly be supported considering her death and her attitude towards life hereafter.

In the form of a suicidal feast in which all end their lives, Cleopatra decides to join Anthony in the happy reunion of afterlife. Once again based on the Roman's account, this is the predictable tragic end of anyone yielding to and indulging in bodily life. As Parolin reminds, to the Romans "the dependence on food evokes an awareness of the body vulnerability: to need food is to be subjected powerfully to the body and to mortality; it is to recognize the limits of one's own autonomy."[xiii] However, as he asserts, *Anthony and Cleopatra* develops a very different attitude to this matter. They accept and even celebrate man's limitations by welcoming death in the same manner that they had enjoyed life. Thus, the love initiated from the battlefield of the two nations and the conquering of Egypt by Rome first turns into an amorous relationship and then terminates in an ultimate fatal feast of love following their crushing defeat to Octavius Caesar. They even seem to take Caesar's triumph as part of the destiny, which Cleopatra believes gods to "give men to excuse their after wrath" (V.ii.277-278).

As already mentioned, Cleopatra has a comic attitude toward what she imagines as a "perpetually festive afterlife with Anthony."[xiv] After meeting Octavius, Cleopatra dresses herself up in her best garment as she prepares herself for her suicide. She seems to be preparing for another feast, feast of death; she is dressed and asks for the clown and the basket of figs. Cleopatra welcomes death by having an asp biting her in her chest, which implicitly signifies body openness in the subsequent penetration of the snake poison into her blood. In a playful talk between the clown and Cleopatra before her death, the clown speaks of women being dish for gods and warns her of the worm waiting to devour her. Her own last words about death are:

> As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle.
> Followed by:
> O Anthony!
> …
> What should I stay- (V.ii.303-306)

As discussed before, Anthony is transformed by his inner struggles as well as the incidents taking place throughout the play. Cleopatra gradually influences Anthony by lulling his power of resistance against her constant temptations for feasting and love-making. In this regard, Anthony evolves from his Roman side of character to one who develops a tendency for being "powerful, generous, larger-than-life" through an open and extravagant attitude to food.[xv] At some parts of the play, while still stuck in his own conflicts, Anthony rages against his own yielding to her persuasion:

> Have I my pillow left unpressed in Rome,
> Forborne the getting of a lawful race,
> And by a gem of a woman, to be abused
> By one that looks on feeders? (III.xiii.105-109)

Gradually, he is taken into a mood similar to that of Cleopatra culminating in his final attitude towards death. In his final conversation with Cleopatra, he asks for wine and her kiss. Immediately preceding this scene, after he has mortally stabbed himself and

is being carried to where Cleopatra is, he advises his men not to please death by their sorrow:

> Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp fate
> To grace it with your sorrows. Bid that welcome
> Which comes to punish us, and we punish it,
> Seemingly to bear it lightly. (IV.xv. 133-136)

Despite facing degradation, both internally and as an external force, Anthony and Cleopatra reach their own kind of salvation by welcoming death and a life together in the hereafter. As dealt with in the preceding section, contradictions are either resolved or ignored once the defeat is certain and death is inevitable. There is necessarily a sense of lamenting defeat and death, but there is nothing cowardly in the manner they face it. As it is the case with most of Shakespearean tragedies, they die a noble death. Caesar Octavius has no choice but to have Cleopatra "buried by her Anthony" as the Roman army "in solemn show attend this funeral" (V.ii.348, 354).

Degradation leading to regeneration and its gay process are much more overtly pictured in *The Taming of the Shrew.* The play ends happily and all affairs are settled, a typical ending for a Renaissance comedy. Reconciliation with the merriment of a feast coincides the taming of Katherine in her final appearance as the obedient wife. The battle is won by Petruccio, and the wager with his friends ends as he had expected and promised. In the final scene, he talks to the guests, notably Lucentio and Hortensio – the other two newly-weds as follows:

> … I will win my wager better yet,
> And show more sign of her obedience,
> See where she comes, and brings your frowned wives
> As prisoners to her womanly persuasion. (V.ii.120-124)
> …
> We three are married, but you two are sped.
> 'T was I won the wager, though [to Lucentio] you hit the white,
> And being a winner, God give you good night. (189-191)

Emotional affection and love are reconciled in communicative discourse because "discourse functions as lexical bundles will facilitate communication" (Kashiha, 2014, p. 25). Beyond winning a wager, Petruccio is finally blessed with Katherine's affection and obedience. In fact, the taming of the shrew turns out to be a blessing not only for Petruccio and Katherine, but also for Katherine's father. The play ends with Baptista having both his daughters married, while feeling particularly happy for Katherine's change of character from a headstrong girl to a mild-mannered woman. In her own words, Katherine describes her change as follows:

> My mind has been as big as one of yours,
> My heart as great, my reason haply more,
> To bandy word for word and frown for frown;
> But now I see our lances are but straws
> Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
> That seemingly to be most which we indeed least are. (V.ii.174-179)

Katherine's final talk, "always a crux in any interpretation,"[xvi] is generally evaluated in a variety of ways ranging from most feministic to liberal perspectives. No matter how intensively the interpretations may be inclined to extremities, the bottom line is that the matrimonial satisfaction is achieved by mutual consent. Since it is the art of Shakespeare "to raise issues rather than provide solutions," the gay essence of reconciliation achieved at the end of this play may better be left open to

interpretations, as it has always been. Thus, the play achieves "hegemonic authoritative voice to the social actor associated with 'perseverance' and 'work.'" (Hazaea, 2014, p.181)

CONCLUSION

Through a basic focus on the imagery concerning carnal realities, the theme of love is portrayed in these two plays in a most un-romanticized manner. Grotesque realism is depicted through images of material body and the obscenity attributed to bodily life. Food, drink, and festive occasions are exploited to highlight the debasement which is an inherent part of man's earthly life. In line with Bakhtin's discussion of the grotesque, degradation is accompanied by a sense of regeneration, which is portrayed in both *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Although the regeneration of a tragic nature differs from that of the comic one, all affairs are settled since death is considered only as a continuation or a comic interval in the tragic background of *Anthony and Cleopatra*. As discussed, the Bakhtinian notion of regeneration emphasizes that, in a large scale, life is never exhausted and always followed by rebirth. Such a state is generally achieved in Shakespearean tragedies through the cathartic ending of the play, which signifies a continuation of life. This sort of ending is particularly significant in those plays which mingle life and death by welcoming death as a way to reunite with the loved ones. As Wilson Knight asserts, in *Anthony and Cleopatra* life and death are brought together with "a positive aim." (Knight, p. 348)Rather than a life terminator, the grotesque suicidal feast is a medium for bridging the gap between life and death by uniting those who could no longer be together in this world.

ENDNOTES

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[1]Ibid. 275
[1]Ibid. 297
[1]Ibid. 296
[1]Ibid. 150-151
[1]Bakhtin, p. 363-365
[1]Parolin, p. 217.
[1]Lindley, p. 68.
[1]Ibid. p.222
[1]Karen Newman, "Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*" in Shakespeare Comedies, ed. Gary Waller (London & New York: Longman), p. 40.
[1]Ibid. p.40

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