

**“Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth”:
Shakespeare’s Authority in José Carlos Somoza’s
El cebo (The Bait)¹**

Ángel-Luis Pujante
University of Murcia
apujante@um.es

ABSTRACT

This article sets out to present and analyse the extent and nature of the appropriation of Shakespeare in José Carlos Somoza’s *El cebo* (*The Bait*, 2010), and to discuss its real relevance. Apparently, this is the first detective—or popular—novel in which the presence of Shakespeare extends to all his plays rather than centring on just one of them, as is usually the case. Each chapter of the novel draws on one or more situations or characters of a specific Shakespearean play, and the plays referred to in the respective chapters are presented in chronological order. These references are more or less relevant to the story in the long first part, but their relevance becomes more obvious as the action moves on, and is absolute in the final stages. This article will show that the presence of Shakespeare’s work in Somoza’s novel is not merely an element lending prestige to it, but functions as a structuring device and forms an integral part of it.

I

The appropriation of Shakespeare in the novel began in the eighteenth century and has been on the increase ever since (Keymer, 2012). In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, he has been fully incorporated into popular culture, the popular novel being one of the various genres in which this incorporation has taken place (Lanier, 2002;

Shaughnessy, 2007). In this context, a growing number of mystery and detective novels make use of Shakespearean authority. Susan Baker (1995) categorized his authority in the classic detective story as author, as “auctor”, as “Bartlett” and as an ethics of etiquette, but she also pointed out that most of the previous studies on the subject are more descriptive than analytical and that none of them asks the question “Why Shakespeare?”. But there is more. Up to the present, all these novels tend to centre on one particular Shakespearean play, usually *Hamlet*. As a consequence, the relevant criticism also concentrates on these specific appropriations (Bakerman, 1981; Gottschalk, 1981; Abiteboul, 1986; Dörr, 1992; Mitton, 1998; Hateley, 2006; Osborne, 2007). Other than that, since most of the research and documentation locates itself in English-speaking cultures, it will be useful to supplement this information with some “foreign Shakespeare” in this area. In this article, I propose to give an account and attempt an examination of Shakespeare’s presence in a recent Spanish novel, José Carlos Somoza’s *El cebo* (*The Bait*, 2010), not least because, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first detective novel in which the presence of the Bard extends to all his plays.

Somoza is an established name in contemporary Spanish fiction. Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1959, he came to Spain at the age of one as the only thing his parents were allowed to take with them when they were unexpectedly and summarily ordered to leave their country for political reasons. He studied Medicine and Psychiatry and worked as a psychiatrist for a short while before he decided to become a full-time writer—which he did after his first novel was awarded a literary prize. Then, the international success of his fifth novel, *La caverna de las ideas* (English title: *The Athenian Murders*), confirmed that his decision had been the right one. So far he has written a dozen novels, four of which—including *El cebo*—have been translated into several European languages, and three of which are being adapted for the cinema.²

But Somoza, a lover and connoisseur of Shakespeare, is particularly known for his use of the Bard as a fictional character. He first used him in *Miguel Will* (1999), a semi-Pirandellian play in which Shakespeare appears obsessed with the writing of *Cardenio* and confuses reality and fiction in his private life. Then in 2008 he published “Hamlet”, a short story about Shakespeare being compelled to write a play by a mysterious member of a secret society, told from the viewpoint of Hamlet (Shakespeare’s dog). However, in *El cebo* (2010) Shakespeare the character is replaced by his work, which becomes ubiquitous in the novel.

Somoza has also published three articles on Shakespeare. In his “Shakespeare is Legion” (2002a), published in the USA, he explains how he got to know Shakespeare’s work and confesses that he is the author who has most “possessed” him—a possession which continued at the time of writing the article. In “Remordimientos de una reina” [A Queen’s Remorse] (2005), Somoza explores evil in Lady Macbeth in association with the famous invocation “Unsex me here”, the implications of which he tentatively explores. However, Somoza’s concern with evil in Shakespeare is best found in his previous article “La maldad es silencio (Shakespeare y los personajes malvados)” [Evil is silence (Shakespeare and evil characters)] (2002b).

Basing himself partly on A.O. Rorty's *The Many Faces of Evil* (2001), Somoza points out how "being evil" has evolved from the Biblical notion of "being disobedient" to the modern one of "being a criminal". Nowadays, he adds, being evil seems to belong exclusively to the field of psychopathology and here as a psychiatrist he could have a lot to say. He then moves on to evil characters in literature, and observes that Greek dramatists proved to be "incredibly understanding" of evil characters: Aeschylus and Euripides were mostly bent on showing the suffering of their characters, so that, when they speak, they do not seem to be quite so evil. When Dante's damned characters speak to us, we pity them. As Somoza puts it, "in literature, the awareness of 'being evil' dissolves into the awareness of 'suffering'".³ In other words, in literature the villains are villains until the moment they speak.

But then Somoza admits that it is not always like this, and that one of the most distinguished exceptions is Shakespeare. For him Shakespeare seems to have been obsessed with evil, which one can find not only in his tragedies, but also in his histories and his comedies. But what surprises us, he adds, is that Shakespeare's villains, far from attenuating their villainy when they are given a voice, increase it to a point where some of them seem evil to us *because they speak*. Somoza discusses Iago and Edmund, among others, but centres on Macbeth. He thinks that *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's most popular play for theatre people, but that *Macbeth* is the favourite play of novelists. It would seem that here Somoza the novelist has the upper hand of the psychiatrist or that, at least, the former complements the latter. He observes that one of the peculiarities of the play is that almost everything that is said in it seems to be out of context. Besides, he believes that, unlike Richard III, Iago or Edmund, we do not understand why Macbeth is evil—and, according to Somoza, the paradox is that we do not understand him despite the fact that he never ceases to speak and to explain himself.

II

Leaving aside the first article, the other two are highly indicative of Somoza's deep interest in Shakespeare and, particularly, in evil as treated in Shakespeare's plays. However, in none of the three articles does he make explicit or specific the extent to which Shakespeare's works have influenced or conditioned his fiction. *El cebo*, written some years after these articles, confirms his "possession" by Shakespeare and his interest in Shakespearean evil, not only by making his work omnipresent in the novel, but, as we shall see, by conditioning its plot. But first let us provide some basic information.

The novel is set in Madrid in a very near future, but not too distant or different from the present Spanish capital, except for the "fact" that the action takes place after a nuclear attack carried out by terrorists on the outskirts of the city (the "9-N"). In this world the police employ an ingenious method to trap murderers by means of "baits", a group of elite policewomen whose training is based on the theory of the "psynome", a mathematical code like the genome intended to measure and formulate the expression of desire. The many varieties of desire have been grouped under some sixty "philiias", of

which each person has one. The “baits” are trained to identify “philiacs” by enacting a corresponding “mask”, a kind of theatrical illusion reproducing the pleasure or rejection that each person experiences in every situation in life, which enables the “bait” to control and catch murderers. Every stage of the action draws heavily on Shakespeare’s works and characters, as all of them present a particular “philia” which can be analysed and used as a model to trap killers: Antony and Cleopatra belong to the “philia of Aura”, *The Merchant of Venice* to the “philia of Aspect”, etc. In turn, Shakespeare’s plays can also prompt particular masks: *Hamlet* that of “Spectacle”, *Titus Andronicus* that of “Innocence”, etc.

The action is centred on Diana Blanco, one of the most efficient baits, whose viewpoint, though not the only one, tends to dominate the narrative. As the blurb says, “she is the best, the most highly trained, the only one who can trap ‘the Spectator’, the greatest and most brutal murderer of all time. She is the bait: she has been schooled to hunt him.” The pace increases when Diana discovers that her sister Vera, another bait, seems to have been the Spectator’s latest victim. She will then start a race against time which will lead her to the monster’s lair. The murderer in question is Juan Leman Godoy, a highly intelligent psychopath and the owner of a security firm which is supposed to be a leader of level 2 in Europe. They design software for computer security and work for both private individuals and government bodies, among them the Spanish police and Europol. As he points out, it is not that he is able to discover the passwords of confidential documents: he invents them. In other words, he is in a position to hack information from secret sites that makes the baits highly vulnerable.

This Spectator is in the habit of kidnapping prostitutes and immigrant girls from Eastern Europe. He then takes them to his bunker just outside Madrid, an impregnable, closed-circuit protected and highly sophisticated chamber where he becomes the real spectator of his drawn-out tortures. As he puts it, “a month or two at the lathe, and you become octopuses, your head in the midst of a jelly body.” Diana will run this risk, but as the most highly trained bait, she will eventually be able to trap and destroy the Spectator. When this happens, the readers realise that they have been misled by the blurb, that the action has not yet finished and that the destruction of the Spectator actually leads up to more sinister and dangerous goings-on within the baits’ network.

III

The title of this article indicates that Shakespeare is present in *El cebo* from the very title of the novel. He then appears explicitly before the first page of its text: the first two lines of the seven-ages speech quoted there suggest to the reader that, like the real world, this fictional world is also a stage where all the men and women are merely players. The 485-page novel is made up of a Prologue, thirty-three chapters which are divided into three parts (Beginning, Entr’acte and Finale), and an Epilogue. Each of the three parts is preceded by the drawing of an open theatre curtain with a Shakespearean quotation in the middle which has a bearing on the respective part of the action: the Beginning by “[W]hat masques, what dances shall we have? (*Dream,*

5.1.32), the Entre'acte by "Come, seeling night, / Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day" (*Macbeth*, 3.2.48-49), and the Finale by "My high charms work, / And these mine enemies are all knit up" (*The Tempest*, 3.3.88-89).⁴ Neither the Preface nor the Epilogue are preceded by Shakespearean quotations, but contain references to plays which seem to be proposed as Shakespeare's first and last writings, respectively: *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* —references which, in turn, relate to these two stages of the action. As for the thirty-three chapters, each contains an explicit reference to a specific Shakespearean play —sometimes with more than one quotation—, which has a bearing on the action of the chapter. Other than that, each of the chapters is conceived of as a kind of playlet and is centred on a specific character from whose point of view the action is narrated. The exception is chapter 22.

As will be seen in the next section, the plays in question, above all the first group of plays, are presented by the author in slightly free chronological order. *The Comedy of Errors* is certainly an early work, but it is not usually proposed by scholars as Shakespeare's first play. Nor is *King John* normally accepted as such an early play. Moreover, placing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* after *Twelfth Night* and preceding the problem plays would seem rather odd, and *Julius Caesar* should certainly come further down the list. However, it is also evident that Somoza has not attempted to be blindly faithful to the chronologies proposed by scholars and editors —which he seems to be well aware of—, but has adapted them to his narrative ends. Thus, the fact that *Hamlet* heads the second group preceding the other great tragedies, and not *Twelfth Night* and the problem plays, can be explained as a deliberate ploy to relate the content and significance of these tragedies to the action of the novel in these chapters. Likewise, the references to Shakespeare's last plays appear in successive chapters at the end of the novel, but not forming a homogeneous group: the allusions to *The Winter's Tale* are placed in a chapter closing a group of chapters, and those to *The Tempest* appear in a chapter which heads the finale.

IV

In what follows I will limit myself to presenting the Shakespearean references in *El cebo*, and will only relate them to the story line when not doing so would make the references unintelligible. For the sake of clarity, I will deal with each chapter separately:

Prologue

Leni (Olena Gusyeva), a Ukrainian immigrant, sees a copy of *The Comedy of Errors* on a coffee table during a casting audition; no more is heard of Leni until chapter 32 (p. 443), in the Finale section, when her role in the action and the significance of the "error" become evident.

I. BEGINNING

Chapter 1

Diana's first attempt to identify and trap the Spectator: posing as a prostitute, she is picked up by a man who takes her to his home and insists on her doing everything he wants (among other things, stabbing him with his collection of knives). The struggle between them is explained with reference to what happens in *The Taming of the Shrew*, in which Kate "presents obstacles which inflame Petruchio, who in turn tames her with more obstacles" (25). Here Diana remembers a remark by a person called Gens about how this "battle of wills which get in the way of each other" is "a symbol of the mask of Holocaust".

Chapter 2

The action continues. Now the man's definition of himself as "good" and his plans as "not wicked" is characterised as belonging to the "philia of Repulsion". Again, Diana remembers how this Gens compared these characters with Joan of Arc in *Henry VI*, a woman full of contrasts: warrior and maid, whore and saint, witch and saviour.

Chapter 3

Diana is told off by Álvarez, her immediate boss, for having broken the suspect's nose. During the conversation she is able to characterise Álvarez as belonging to the "philia of the Ambiguous", which reminds her of Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and his transformations "from friend to traitor, from lover of a lady to lover of another, from good boy to wicked rapist" (45). And once again, she refers again to "Gens", who made the baits play fragments of this comedy, and who later in the chapter is described as "Professor Víctor Gens", who personally trained Diana.

Chapter 4

Here the reader is introduced to more aspects of the world of the baits, including the admittance of a very young boy who is described as "an Arthur" —according to Gens' terminology—, so labelled after the infant character in *King John*.

Chapter 5

The world of the baits is further introduced here, where, among other things, the "mask of Orgy" is being rehearsed on the basis of the exchange between Gloucester and Lady Anne in *Richard III*.

Chapter 6

Here we read about how Elisa —another bait, who is not very fond of Diana— "hooks", and gets rid of, two men who are following her. The situation is related to that of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, who, according to "the genius Víctor Gens", was "a symbol of the mask of Flesh, like the whole play" (83).

Chapter 7

In the course of a visit to a psychologist, in which Diana tells him of the childhood trauma that subsequently led her to become a bait, a long silence between the two is associated with a similar one in which Diana and the bait Claudia Cabildo were rehearsing *Romeo and Juliet*.

Chapter 8

Diana, who is planning to give up being a bait, finds herself in a transitory situation which for her is like the “phantasma” of Brutus’ interim in *Julius Caesar* — a Shakespearean character who is also referred to when Diana considers that, like him, it is sometimes necessary to sacrifice something to obtain something else.

Chapter 9

Diana hears from a criminal profiler that the Spectator shows signs of being “a Berowne Perjurer”, which, Diana remembers, is the label given in Professor Gens’ study on *Love’s Labour’s Lost* to the criminal who, after a spell of repression, gives free rein to his psynome.

Chapter 10

Having made up her mind to be caught by the Spectator in order to trap him (she has been given three days to do the job), Diana prepares her next steps with, among other things, Gens’ annotated text of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. She will seek advice from other people, and here she decides to visit her former colleague Claudia, now disabled. Seeing that it is cloudy, she imagines her forthcoming encounter with the Spectator at night by remembering a line from the play (“Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania”) — a line which she also applies to her visit to Claudia. There are several references to the play in the chapter, one of them to the effect that, according to Víctor Gens, Shakespeare had written it at the command of the secret “Gnostic Circle of London”.

Chapter 11

Here the reader is offered the first glimpse of the Spectator. He plans to get to know “the Enemy” well, so he is reading or re-reading Shakespeare. The play this week is *The Merchant of Venice*. Without being a Shylock, he is determined not to spare his pound of flesh.

Chapter 12

In what is her last opportunity to identify and trap the Spectator, Diana lets herself be picked up by two men. When she realises that neither of them can be the looked-for man, she gets rid of them by applying Gens’ observation on *Much Ado About Nothing* and the “emotional changes” in characters like Claudio, Benedict and Beatrice.

Chapter 13

During an interview with Diana’s psychologist (see note on chapter 7), detailed

information is given of Gens and his ideas: “Gens claimed that the psynome was already known five hundred years ago. He said that Shakespeare described all the psynomes in his works. This theory is not fully accepted, but in Europe, part of a bait’s training consists in studying Shakespeare’s plays in depth” (175). Discussing murderers, Diana points out that the qualities of their “philia of Prey” are contained in the abdication scene in *Richard II*, when the king asks for a mirror and breaks it.

Chapter 14

Diana now seeks advice from her former instructor, Professor Víctor Gens. He sees himself as a retired and banished old man in his own Forest of Arden who is now visited by Rosalind. This reminds him of the story that Shakespeare played Adam in *As You Like It*. Later in the chapter, the application of a “mask” in which sexual perception changes is associated with those Shakespearean plays where “a man pretends to be a woman who pretends to be a man who pretends to be a woman”.

Chapter 15

The interview with Gens continues. He observes that the Spectator is a genius of pleasure and that he has the hedonism of a Falstaff, the Falstaff of *Henry IV*, not that of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: sheer pleasure, an epicurean, a liar, so emotional...

Chapter 16

Just before an appointment, Álvarez, Diana’s immediate superior (see chapter 3), remembers his own “philia of the Ambiguous”, which is related to that of “Fall” and, in turn, to Falstaff’s death in *Henry V*, “a symbol of the Fall in maturity, of the pleasure which the young king must repress”. Incidentally, he also remembers that for his younger son, who saw it at the modern Globe, the play was a bore, “certainly not the best *that man wrote*” (215).

Chapter 17

Diana remembers her interview with Víctor Gens, in which the old man has agreed to help her hunt the Spectator in exchange for her offering him a mask of (absolute) Beauty. This mask is explained in terms of what happens in *Twelfth Night*, where each character loves, or pretends to love, the wrong person. The main clue of *Twelfth Night* —“one of the most profound plays ever”— is “the Inaccessible”, the fact that the characters love those who cannot love them. Basing himself specifically on the exchange between Viola and Olivia in 3.1.135-140, Gens points out that “Olivia is in love with a *disguise* and, at the same time, *knows* that she must separate the disguise she loves from the human being who wears it, and that only in this way will she be able to meet Sebastian, Viola’s twin brother” (227). According to Gens, the Spectator wants Diana’s lie, her disguise, her theatre, her *Twelfth Night*.

Chapter 18

Juan Leman’s (the Spectator’s) son has problems at school (an elitist international

school). After a conversation with the boy's female teacher, he tells the headmaster that this teacher must stop teaching his son. He remembers that there is such a thing as the *philia* of Leopold, related to Sacher-Masoch and his own *philia*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where women laugh at men, whom they make wear deers' antlers on their heads.

Chapter 19

Diana rehearses the mask of Exhibition, whose clues lie, according to Gens, in *Troilus and Cressida*, which Shakespeare "had filled with pervert warriors, vulgar pimps and unfaithful lovers, and where the value of life and dignity depends on other people's opinion" (242). Later in the chapter, Diana tells her psychologist that Shakespeare, like Jonson, Marlowe and Middleton, belonged to the secret "Gnostic Circle of London", created by John Dee to influence the people through drama, so they would return to the supposed purity of Medieval religion.

Chapter 20

It deals with Diana's sister's last minutes before her disappearance. Herself a bait, she is listening to a recording of *All's Well that Ends Well*, of which she likes Helen's story, explained here as that of a Cinderella who pursues her true love despite the class difference and the opposition of the loved man.

Chapter 21

In her attempt to hunt the Spectator and find her sister, Diana goes to "The Grange", the now abandoned buildings where she and other baits were trained. There she finds dummies of Angelo and the Duke, which reminds her of *Measure for Measure*, "one of Shakespeare's most wicked comedies" (276), and one that, according to Gens, contained the hidden clues for the mask of Chastity. It is also there that she finds the dead body of Álvarez, her immediate boss.

II. ENTR'ACTE

Chapter 22

Diana has let herself be caught by the Spectator, and is now being carried in the boot of his car inside a sack. He is considering the possibility that he has been chosen by a bait to be exposed to the mask of Spectacle, which is described in *Hamlet*: a play-within-the-play to trap his conscience, a mousetrap, just the show he would most hate, and that by the same token he would not be able to help watching. It is with this "bait of falsehood" that she will "take this carp of truth". But *Hamlet* is also used here by Diana in more ways. She avoids remembering how she was caught and projects her mind from the inside out as Gens had taught her: "You can be bounded in a nutshell and count yourselves kings of infinite space. Remember Hamlet, Hamlet, always Hamlet." (296) And Gens had also told her never to leave her mind inactive, for "a mind that never questions itself falls immediately into the trap of fear." Therefore, "Hamlet, always

Hamlet faced with any situation: think, think, think.” Finally, when the car is stopped at a police check, she finds herself in a situation of “Hamletian doubt”, examining all the pros and cons of the case, and considering whether or not to make a noise to attract the police’s attention, in view of the possible consequences for her sister.

In this chapter, two different and opposed points of view are offered for the first and only time in the novel. As *Hamlet* is for Somoza the work par excellence on the mystery and identity of the human being, the visions of “being” (Diana, locked in the car boot) and “not being” (the Spectator, driving at night only a couple of yards away from her) are set against each other in a kind of duel.

Chapter 23

Taken out of the car boot and carried by the Spectator into his lair, Diana trusts things are running according to plan: she feels that he is carrying her like a bridegroom would his bride on the wedding night, and remembers *Othello*: “Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour / ... / To spend with thee.” (1.3.298-300) Shortly afterwards and facing him, she begins to consider a mask which may work with him, like that of Agony, based on Iago’s techniques to deceive and torture his victims.

Chapter 24

Diana, now a prisoner facing the Spectator, considers the possibility of using the “mask of Destruction” (to be quiet and yield without pretence), implied in *King Lear*. According to Gens, after disinheriting Cordelia, Lear spends the rest of the play looking for her. By keeping quiet, by constituting an enigma, Cordelia becomes Lear’s obsession, which attracts him, captures him and, eventually, destroys him.

Chapter 25

The Spectator sees himself as a Macbeth: he is what he is, cannot help it and needs to please his philia with other people. Looking at him with his young son, Diana finds them symbiotic, like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth helping each other. Diana plans to free herself remembering what Gens had taught her: “The future is a ghost, and we invent it to frighten ourselves. Macbeth is horrified at what *may* happen, and this stops him from realising what really *happens*.” (334)

Chapter 26

Recovering in a hospital after having destroyed the Spectator, Diana talks to her new boss, whom she ascribes to the philia of Aura, one that is to be found in the protagonists of *Antony and Cleopatra*: according to Gens, they are not in love with each other, but with the images and the context each represents to the other. Diana must continue to look for her sister, who had not been kidnapped by the Spectator.

Chapter 27

On a visit to her psychologist, Diana finds he has been reading *Timon of Athens*. They comment on Gens’ interpretation of the character: when he pretends to despise

everyone, he is more generous than ever. His attitude corresponds to the *philia* of Cruelty: the key to it lies in the attitude of Timon's seeming contempt. Later, in the course of her visit to her disabled colleague, Diana witnesses the fire that ends Claudia's life.

Chapter 28

At Claudia's burial, Diana, determined to find her sister, gives free rein to her *true* emotions, and says she tends to lose her temper like Coriolanus. She later has to get rid of Gens' bodyguard with a mask inspired by Coriolanus, a mighty character who finds it very hard to implore the people and barely manages to subdue his pride when asking for the plebeians' votes. When talking to Gens, they discuss the Spectator's young son as a veritable "child of Coriolanus", so bent on "mammocking" live butterflies. And here Gens tells her that Shakespeare might have been educated by John Dee's "Gnostic Circle" (see chapter 19).

Chapter 29

Padilla, one of Diana's superiors, is at home scrutinizing a painting by her invalid daughter, which she wants to entitle "Resurrection", and which is based on *Pericles*. According to Gens' interpretation, the play contained the key to Padilla's own *philia*, that of Petition, expressed in the scene of Pericles' reencounter with his daughter.

Chapter 30

After making love with her boyfriend Miguel, who is from her own department, Diana finds herself in her bathroom covered by his gun, as a suspect of the family massacre unleashed in Padilla's household. She feels like a ghost just out of a shower and remembers *Cymbeline*. Dinner with him, love conversation, and love-making was just his theatre. For her, he was just like Iachimo in *Cymbeline*, when, after coming out of a trunk in the bedroom where Imogen lies asleep, he tries to obtain false evidence that he has slept with her. For Gens that was a symbol of Negotiation, but for Diana the trunk scene could serve as a metaphor of betrayed trust.

Chapter 31

Miguel and Diana go the abandoned Grange in search of Gens and Diana's sister, and find what looks like a display of hoop skirts, ruffs, doublets, hoses, cloaks and masks, but is actually a collection of torn, dusty, moth-eaten dummies of Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Othello, Juliet, etc. They eventually find old Gens looking like a remote and tired Lear, sitting on a throne, wrapped in greeny grey robes and with a sign on his chest saying "Lear" and a white mask covering his face. But, as soon as they come near him and a conversation begins, they realise that the sign does not say "Lear" but "Leontes". Diana then remembers *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes' wife and the statue scene at the end. Here Gens regrets having awoken an ancient power, one that Shakespeare knew and left in writing. But Shakespeare, Gens continues, understood that he was not able to change anything with his theatre, because, "if we all change the others with our words and

gestures, who controls the change?” (429), and so he gave up and retired for good. Diana, however, is in no mood to hear him out and runs in search of her sister, whom she finds, but very close to someone else wearing a moth-eaten dress with a sign saying “Hermione”, Leontes’ wife, who “pretended to be dead and then returned to life from the immobility of a fake statue.” (434)

III. FINALE

Chapter 32

“Hermione”, however, turns out to be a wicked female Prospero: she has planned everything from the beginning, has used her Ariel and her Caliban in the process, and now has everybody at her command (remember the quotation at the beginning of this group of chapters: “My high charms work / And these mine enemies are all knit up”). *The Tempest* is expressly mentioned in this chapter several times. Like Prospero to Miranda, she compels Diana to “hear a little further” and informs her of her project against her enemies, which includes Diana herself.

Chapter 33

Thinking of a possible mask against her enemy, Diana remembers that she belongs to the philia of Blood, so called because of the possible effects of the colour red on these people. According to Gens, this philia is related to *Henry VIII*, a play written in collaboration with another supposed member of the “Gnostic Circle” of London: its curious and plentiful stage directions, the majestic décor involved, as well as the purple in the costumes of characters like Wolsey and the red blood of the king’s beheaded wives were hidden symbols of the necessary mask. Towards the end of the chapter, this wicked female Prospero is associated with Henry VIII himself, the “bloodthirsty absolute monarch”. (466)

EPILOGUE

Having been saved, both Diana and her sister see themselves as “two noble kinsfolk”. In fact, before the novel finishes, Diana has to tie up a loose end by applying the “mask of Curtain”, which enables her to block certain people as if a theatre curtain fell: its keys were contained in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in the struggle of the two men for the same women. For Gens, the fact that Shakespeare had finished his creative life with the keys to the mask of Curtain was a happy metaphor.

V

As the American mystery writer Harlan Coben has reminded us (2011), nowadays the reader does not accept detectives who only investigate. Indeed, from Hammett and Chandler onwards, mystery novels have tended to include detectives who have a private

life, and through whose feelings and frustrations we can find a reflection of the world we live in. And Coben points out that the devising and preparation of the intrigue in his novels is determined by his choice of subject: most of his books deal with the duel between truth and falsehood, and for him this is more interesting than just writing about how we discover a murderer. As a result, mystery writers like him are the social novelists of the day, for all the importance they have to attach to the plot element in their novels.

Mutatis mutandis, these observations also apply to José Carlos Somoza's novels. He has planned to dedicate each of them to each of the creators (not only writers) who have meant a great deal to him and his work. Since he is a psychiatrist himself, it should come as no surprise that he is interested in evil, and particularly, that he places so much emphasis on an understanding of it from the viewpoint of his professional training: if, as he pointed out, being evil nowadays seems to belong exclusively to the field of psychopathology, in *El cebo* Shakespeare's work helps the psychological work of the police.

The reader of *El cebo* soon realises that Shakespeare's presence is not used here simply to give a veneer of prestige to the novel, but that it works as a structuring device. However, his plays do not structure the action in the same way throughout the novel. As I pointed out earlier, the action is not finished when the murderous Spectator has been destroyed, but his destruction leads to the discovery of a hidden plan within the baits' network. This is hinted at very gradually. Besides, some references to Shakespeare's plays are less relevant to the action than others, especially in the long first part. In some of them, the situation reminds us of a similar one in Shakespeare (8 or 10). In others, Shakespeare's characters and plays are explained in terms of the psynome theory (6, 9, 13, 19 or 22). In some, the characters are related to some of Shakespeare's characters (3, 11 or 15). In chapter 4, for example, the boy who is to be trained as a bait is classed as an "Arthur" after the young character in *King John*. This helps to enrich the information about, and the atmosphere surrounding, the baits, as well as confirming the Shakespearean framework of reference in the novel, but does not determine the course of the action as later do the references to Gens as a Lear who then appears as a Leontes punished by a Hermione who, in turn, reveals herself rather as an evil female Prospero who had planned her revenge long before. In other words, these characters in Somoza's novel are narrative replicas of the respective Shakespearean characters and function as such. One could imagine that *El cebo* was planned and written with this ending in mind, so that the various stages of the action should lead to it, and with them the different kinds of allusions and references to Shakespeare's plays, some of them being more relevant than others. However, they are all absolutely relevant to the final stages and thereby to the whole conception of the novel.

Somoza believes that in the literary world the presence of Shakespeare is almost a metastasis: it springs and spreads where you least expect it, and not only to lend prestige to the narrative, but to become an essential part of it and prove how much Shakespeare can still contribute to our society. In *El cebo*, Somoza has related Shakespeare to the psychological work of the police, and by doing so, he has written his

most serious and extensive homage to Shakespeare to date —one that is operative and relevant to the story. Granted, any novel could work without the presence of this or that element, but in *El cebo* Shakespeare is more than an authority and his plays are there as an integral part of it. If they were removed, it would be a different novel.

Notes

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2. More information, both in Spanish and English, can be obtained from Somoza's webpage (www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/somoza/home.htm). I would like to thank José Carlos Somoza for the generous help given me in the preparation of this article.
3. This and all subsequent translations into English are my own.
4. References are to William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, eds. (1988). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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