From Recognition to Reconciliation: Cognitive and Textual Spaces in *Romeo and Juliet*

Chih-chiao Joseph YANG *

Abstract

*Romeo and Juliet* is a text that contains many spaces reconciled by recognition of the characters and the reader or the audience. This paper will investigate how separate spaces are created and negotiated by different characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, how these spaces interact as well as impact each other, and how they combine into a complete text. The analysis of the play’s various spaces shows that different characters own their own physical and mental states, and that the closure of each character’s space is his or her departure from the textual world. Each character in turn arrives at the limitation of his or her space or a degree of self-realization before he or she leaves the stage. When the play reaches its ending and all conflicts are resolved, the remaining characters realize their limitations in the textual world, while the reader or the audience will likewise come to recognize the completeness and the limitation of the textual world created by the playwright. The tragic and the theatrical effects of such recognition recast the imagination of the reader or that of the audience and engender a reconstruction of reality at the discourse level.

**Keywords:** *Romeo and Juliet*, recognition, reconciliation, cognitive poetics, spaces, textual world, character

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, National Dong Hwa University*
1. Introduction

The tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* is a consequence of false timing and misconception. This paper aims to adopt a cognitive approach to a textual analysis on the development of the plot. It will demonstrate that in *Romeo and Juliet*, various spaces are created and negotiated, and by distinguishing these spaces, the reader or the audience of the play is able to recognize the recurring conflict, the complex movement, and the denouement of the play. *Romeo and Juliet*, in other words, is composed of many spaces which interact with and impact on each other, and its ending is a completion of all of them. For the reader or the audience, the realization of the textual world is the ending of the play, at which the imaginary spaces switch back to reality, or the actual world.

A textual analysis of the play requires a cognitive approach in order to see through the text. As Stockwell defines, cognitive poetics is both “a shift in emphasis” and “a radical re-evaluation of the whole process of literary activity” (5):

> Concerned with literary reading, and with both a psychological and a linguistic dimension, cognitive poetics offers a means of discussing interpretation whether it is an authorly version of the world or a readerly account, and how those interpretations are made manifest in textuality. (Stockwell 5)

By this cognitive approach, Shakespeare’s creation of the play and the literary critics’ interpretation of the play should altogether be made patent, and the significance of the work can be revealed by textual analysis. In this paper, the interpretations of literary critics are re-oriented to this cognitive perspective, as the relationship among the reader or the audience, the writer, and the text can be made manifest. I borrow the idea of “discourse worlds and mental spaces”
(Stockwell 91-103) in cognitive poetics and use textual world to refer to the “dis-\nscourse world” of the play and spaces to the reader’s or the audience’s cognitive “possible worlds” and the character’s “sub-textual worlds.” Either a cognitive space or a sub-textual world constitutes “a world which is in some way subordi-
nate to its originating text-world” (Gavins “(Re)thinking Modality” 82). Based on cognitive poetics, I hope to create a “cognitive turn” in reading Romeo and Juliet and carry out a further communication with the existing literary interpretation of the play.

According to text world theory, a textual world consists of “world-building elements” and “function-advancing propositions,”¹ and the switch of different sub-worlds depends upon the levels of accessibility.² In Romeo and Juliet, no character can have the access to the textual world created by the playwright and recognized by the reader or the audience. I will analyze several passages in the play according to development of the plot to foreground the cognitive spaces and the sub-textual worlds of the characters, especially those of Juliet and Romeo.

There is, of course, a discrepancy between the characters’ spaces and those possi-
ble worlds recognized by the reader or the audience. By analyzing what a charac-
ter can see, this paper attempts to reveal the very gap that the play envisions be-
tween the inner spaces, or “character worlds” (Werth 212), and the “dynamic and readerly aspects” (Stockwell 136) of the textual world. The distinction between these two ways of cognition can be classified as “bottom-up or stimulus-driven processing” and “top-down or conceptually-driven processing” (Semino 124).

What the characters know can be detected from textual material written on paper

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¹ For further discussion, see especially Gavins “(Re)thinking Modality” 81; Gavins Text Word Theory 36, 56; Stockwell 137; and Werth 180.

² For Gavins’s comment on the term “sub-world,” see Gavins, “(Re)thinking Modality” 82-85. For discussion of accessibility, see Gavins, Text Word Theory 12, 78; Stockwell 95, 142; Werth 210-16.
or the theatrical situation on stage; on the other hand, what the reader or the audience can recognize contains contextual perceptions, inferences, and expectations. However, these two ways of processing are “bound to interact with one another” (Semino 68) or “inextricably lined with each other” (Semino 125). It is this dual, interactive cognition that enforces the dramatic effects achieved by *Romeo and Juliet*. The hinge of this interaction, as shown below, is a discussion of different cognitive activities. My analysis will illustrate how these spaces are manipulated in the tragedy. Each space reaches its closure when the character is killed or disappears in the textual world.

2. Romeo

The male protagonist Romeo has modified his cognitive spaces several times in the play, but not until Romeo meets Juliet can he leave his imaginary world. At the beginning, when other characters recognize that he is an incurable idealistic lover, Romeo is confined within his love-lorn world. Romeo tells Benvolio how he feels without revealing his beloved (1.1.188-92). Romeo’s use of a series of metaphors, such as *love is a smoke*, *love is a sea*, *love is a madness*, and *love is a gall*, reveals that he tries to blend his conception of love with some conventional and abstract ideas. Since this blending is distant from the reality of the textual world, his suffering is kept completely to himself in his own mental space. Also, the physical existence of Rosaline is created entirely by Romeo: “It is significant that we see Rosaline exclusively through Romeo’s eyes and that she has no independent existence in the world of the play” (Gajowski 31). Romeo’s beautiful love world remains a vision, and “when his lover’s imagination fails, he imagines only death, oblivious to or contemptuous of whatever charms reality might offer”

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3 It is “idolatry” as Dusinberre points out in her *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (156-57). Romeo, at this stage, stays in his limited cognitive sub-world.
(Allan Bloom 11). The suffering and the beautiful love world is as much of a paradox as the awakening to death.

2.1. Romeo and Mercutio

When Romeo talks about his dream: “I dreamt a dream tonight” (1.4.50), Mercutio makes a long address about dreams (see especially 1.4.96-102), but Romeo’s dream world remains undisclosed. In 1.4.106-13, Romeo seems to tell his friends that his dream is ominous, but it can only be a foreshadowing one, if its fulfillment is his death in Act 5. The prophetic effect requires the reader’s or the audience’s recognition; on the other hand, Romeo’s worry about the power of dreams indicates the significance of his dream world. Even though Mercutio tries very hard to laugh off Romeo’s anxiety and so to dispel his dream, Mercutio’s interpretation of dreams has raised the reader’s or the audience’s awareness of the importance of dreams. Mercutio’s words seem to show that Romeo’s description of his dream is a sheer fantasy which deserves no attention at all. In a sense, Mercutio’s comment on dreams could possibly help awaken Romeo from his romantic but impractical illusion; however, the dissolution of Romeo’s imagination occurs only when he has had another dream of furthering a relationship with Juliet, rather than when he could be persuaded by Mercutio’s advice.

As Goddard states, Mercutio has no belief or further consideration of Romeo’s dream or his description of dreams: “Mercutio’s anatomy and philosophy of dreams prove that he knows nothing of their genuine import” (31). Although Mercutio does not really recognize the importance of dreams, his delineation of the fantastic worlds (1.4.53-95) not only diminishes the significance of Romeo’s dream space, but also creates his vision of Romeo’s reality. Mercutio considers Romeo as a melancholy lover who is impractical and over idealistic, for he thinks that “dreamers are still in their day world at night” (Goddard 31-32), and, thus,
Mercutio’s recognition of Romeo remains the same even when Romeo has changed his love for Rosaline to Juliet. Later, when Romeo enlarges his space by climbing over the wall to meet Juliet, Mercutio still thinks that Romeo is enclosed in the space of his obsession with Rosaline (2.1.17-21). Mercutio fails to realize that Romeo’s passion is actually beyond his imagination. Ironically, when he addresses Romeo, who physically hides in the dark (2.1.37-40), Mercutio delivers a message which recommends that “Romeo should stay with, or come back to, the world of male comradeship” (Porter 107), but Mercutio is not aware of the inconsistency between his cognitive space and Romeo’s, either physically or mentally.

For Romeo, his worry concerning his dream disappears as soon as he sees Juliet. He suddenly falls in love with Juliet at first sight; on the other hand, he begins to realize that in the past he did not see well: “Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight. / For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night” (1.5.51-52). At this moment, Romeo seems to enlarge his cognitive space; however, he simply transfers his infatuation for Rosaline to Juliet. His love world awaits improvement, which will be impelled by Juliet. In the balcony scene, as he eavesdrops on Juliet, Romeo begins to merge his cognitive space with Juliet’s. To reveal his love, Romeo tries to share his world with Juliet by negating his own identity:

By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself
Because it is an enemy to thee.
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

(2.2.53-57)

Romeo’s revelation from concealment represents his love expanding its space, and it also reminds Juliet that he has physically climbed over the high wall, and
the likely danger of being killed by any Capulet. The physical wall symbolizes the barrier between their different spaces. Moreover, what Romeo speaks to Juliet on the upstairs balcony shows Juliet's active instruction and Romeo's humble acceptance. In this scene, with the combination of their spaces, Romeo transforms himself into a more mature person.\textsuperscript{4}

Yet this change seems to be rather a dream to Romeo. After Romeo exchanges vows with Juliet, he says: "O blessed blessed night. I am afeard, / Being in night, all this is but a dream, / Too flattering sweet to be substantial" (2.2.139-41). Apparently he has forgotten his bad dream before, and now he is worried about the transience of his beautiful encounter. Even though this scene occurs at midnight, the dreamlike experience is soon proved true and Romeo's wishful space is confirmed by Juliet, who returns to him in no time to give him her promise of marriage.

Now it is probably the first time when Romeo, inspired by Juliet, goes beyond his cognitive space. Departing from Juliet's house, Romeo immediately goes to ask Friar Laurence to perform their marriage rites. Winning the Friar's approval, Romeo seems to be able to make his dream come true; however, his problem is that he cannot reveal what he learns to his friends or his enemy. The expansion of Romeo's space obviously creates a dark area for some other characters associated with him. His shrouding of this knowledge then causes the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt and the banishment of Benvolio from the textual space.

For the reader or the audience of the play, Mercutio's misunderstanding leads to his fight with Tybalt. When the Nurse comes to meet Romeo, in order to arrange his wedding with Juliet (2.4.142-209), Mercutio, leaving Romeo and the Nurse alone, misses the chance to discern further about Romeo's change. Ironically, Mercutio's misunderstanding of the meaning of dream is reflected in his

\textsuperscript{4} For Juliet as a mother figure for Romeo, see Krims 86.
blindness of himself. When he criticizes Benvolio, who Goddard defines as a “cautious and temperate” person (34), Mercutio is in fact describing himself (3.1.16-29). The false description of Benvolio immediately turns out to be the actual account of Mercutio himself. When Tybalt comes to them without any provocation, Mercutio is prone and ready to fight with him. When Tybalt challenges Romeo but Romeo remains tolerant, Mercutio incites Tybalt and draws his sword first (3.1.73). Tybalt is reluctant to fight with Mercutio, the Prince’s relative, for his target is Romeo, a Montague (3.1.75). Nevertheless, Mercutio simply wants to vent his anger on Tybalt, as Romeo, his good friend, is humiliated and yet not active (Goddard 36-37).

In this part of the scene, the reader or the audience can find that Mercutio actually never speaks to Romeo, for the real Romeo cannot even exist in his cognitive space. As Porter points out, very likely, the only words that Mercutio addresses Romeo are in line 72 “O calm, dishonourable, vile submission” (Porter 111-13). While Romeo is on the scene, Mercutio fails to see the reality. He does not address Romeo until he is hurt. Even then, Romeo’s response to his question “why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm” (3.1.104-05) is ignored, for what Romeo says is alien to him. Turning away from Romeo, Mercutio asks for Benvolio’s help to leave the scene. Mercutio’s blindness of Romeo’s space finally turns into the tragedy of his death. It is symbolic that Tybalt fatally wounds Mercutio when Romeo tries to intervene (3.1.89): Romeo does not share his cognitive space with Mercutio but causes Mercutio to become trapped in his own space. Mercutio’s last curses on the Montague and the Capulet houses appear misfired (3.1.100-05), for he cannot see his own petulance but blames his serious injury on the rift between the two houses.

Unfortunately, Mercutio cannot understand why Romeo is unwilling to accept Tybalt’s challenge. His cognitive space focuses on the feud between the
Montague and the Capulet, from the beginning of the play to the end of his life. When he is dying, Mercutio asks Benvolio, instead of Romeo, to help him (3.1.106-07). At this moment, Mercutio, as Frye describes, “has turned his back contemptuously on Romeo” (159). He leaves the textual space without forgiving Romeo. As Porter defines, here begins “Mercutio’s exit limen, or threshold” (114). Mercutio’s space is at this point closed and is gone forever.

Mercutio’s wry description of Romeo’s dream has foreshadowed his limited vision. His early death in the play, therefore, becomes inevitable. The actual space on the stage, as well as the dream space, is beyond his reach: Mercutio has to become the first to sacrifice for the unknown reality. The disaster, of course, is contributed by his ignorance (Allan Bloom 18). Although Allan Bloom argues that Mercutio is “forgotten by everyone, including the audience” (19), Mercutio’s comments on dreams stay in the reader’s or the audience’s mind, and the aftermath of his departure leads to more deaths. As Wells points out, “Mercutio inadvertently and tragically lets Romeo down with the rash act that, resulting in his death, turns the direction of the play form romantic comedy to tragedy” (137). In other words, the closure of Mercutio’s space activates more closures of other characters’ spaces in the textual world.

2.2. Romeo and Tybalt

Similar ignorance also causes Tybalt’s death. Right after Mercutio’s death, Tybalt has to face his departure from the textual reality that he thinks he knows well. While Romeo falls in love with Juliet in the party, Tybalt recognizes his voice and prepares to fight with him. Even in the same scene (1.5), Tybalt’s cog-

5 In Greenblatt’s view, Mercutio has “simply escaped the playwright’s control” (284), so he must be killed. Mercutio’s extravagant behavior indeed makes his cognitive sub-world incongruous in the textual world.
nitive space has no interaction with Romeo’s. While Romeo’s love grows, Tybalt’s hatred does likewise.

Constrained by his uncle, Tybalt does not explode at once but challenges Romeo to fight on the following day. Before he meets Romeo on the street, he misses what has happened between his cousin Juliet and Romeo. Tybalt’s enmity of the Montagues might have been alleviated, though not removed, if he had known that Romeo was to become his relative. Unable to make his own cognitive space accessible to Tybalt, Romeo tells Tybalt that “Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee / Doth much excuse the appertaining rage / To such a greeting: villain am I none, / Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not” (3.1.61-64). As Goddard points out, the reader or the audience knows that Romeo’s “reason” is Juliet, and that “his love for her is capable of wrapping all Capulets in its miraculous mantle” (36). However, Romeo’s implication of his relationship with Juliet does not draw any of Tybalt’s attention, even when Romeo tries a second time to explain: “I do protest I never injured thee, / But love thee better than thou canst devise / Till thou shalt know the reason of my love. / And so, good Capulet, which name I tender / As dearly as mine own, be satisfied” (3.1.67-71). Although the reader or the audience can recognize Tybalt’s misconception, any suggestion to another possible world exists beyond Tybalt’s comprehension and fails to enter Tybalt’s cognitive space.

While Romeo’s words give Mercutio the impression that Romeo is timid and weak, Romeo’s ineffable difficulties cannot reach Tybalt either. Like Mercutio, Tybalt is unaware of the commitment made by Romeo and Juliet, so he has to leave the stage. This is why Synder claims that “While he is alive, Tybalt is an alien” (61). Tybalt’s limited knowledge of other characters’ spaces set him apart from the textual world.
2.3. Romeo and Benvolio

Benvolio, another consort of Romeo, cannot understand Romeo’s refusal to fight with Tybalt. Unlike Mercutio who is cynical and hot-tempered, Benvolio is cautious and, as his name suggests, full of good will. However, like Mercutio, Benvolio is not aware of that new space, in which Romeo and Juliet have agreed to get married. Benvolio is better than Mercutio in that he does not tease Romeo, but he is similar to Mercutio in his limited knowledge and his flawed suggestion to Romeo. Although Benvolio is successful in penetrating into Romeo’s world when he learns of Romeo’s old love (1.2.85), he is alien to Romeo’s new world. Benvolio is later laid outside Romeo’s changed space, where Juliet has replaced Rosaline and become Romeo’s lover.

When Tybalt challenges Romeo, and Romeo declines to fight, Mercutio, as Romeo’s friend, cannot help but rise up to challenge Tybalt. On the other hand, sharing a similar cognitive space with Mercutio, Benvolio at least needs to intervene, if he is actually a person of good will. Nevertheless, he remains completely silent on the spot (3.1.55-93). He seems to disappear from the scene, until Mercutio is mortally wounded (3.1.93). This silence suggests that Benvolio’s cognitive space does not urge him to take any action in this emergency. His departure from the stage is also caused by his ignorance. As Perng points out, Benvolio leaves the textual world due to his false report of the death of Tybalt (120). Conspicuously, Benvolio finishes his report to the Prince with “This is the truth, or let Benvolio die” (3.1.177). He, in other words, is not allowed by the playwright, to appear “in the last scene of reconciliation” (Perng 120). This curious situation should be obvious, if Benvolio’s limited vision can be recognized by the reader or the audience. Benvolio should have given a “remarkably accurate account of the affair,” if he had mentioned Mercutio’s fault of instigation (Goddard 42). Like Mercutio, Ben-
voio cannot “survive” in the textual space that he fails to see clearly. Although he is not killed by any character in the play, he is removed by the playwright from the textual world.

Right after these characters are expelled, Romeo is exiled, too, from the physical space of Verona. His temporary awakening lasts until the death of Mercutio. Romeo, in a sense, would have been able to avoid his exile, but he triggers the situation, owing to his choice. When he decides to kill Tybalt, it is “the moment when two totally different universes wait as it were on the turning of a hand” (Goddard 37). Goddard’s “universes” are parallel to the sub-textual worlds in this paper. But Romeo’s “intimations” are strong, and so he moves from his world of love to the world of violence (Goddard 38). Goddard recognizes the alternative of Romeo’s choice:

If Romeo had only let those two firebrands fight it out, both might have lost blood with a cooling effect on their heated tempers, or, if it had gone to a finish, both might have been killed, as they ultimately were anyway, or, more likely, Mercutio would have killed Tybalt. […] In any of these events, the feud between the two houses would not have been involved. (39)

As it happens, Romeo intervenes, but Mercutio is seriously wounded (3.1.89). Romeo, without recognizing his own choice to the switch of the cognitive space, blames Juliet’s beauty instead (3.1.115-17). As soon as Mercutio is dead, Romeo throws away his world of love and peace and enters the world of fury and vengeance. This changed space determines Romeo’s further action:

Just as Juliet’s love initiates Romeo into the private realm of authentic emotional commitment, Mercutio’s death initiates him into public
world of the feud. As though rehearsing for love, Romeo as idolator of Rosaline creates a world of "artificial night." But he has no like preparation for Mercutio's death because he never participates, as does his peers, in the rehearsal for death that is street fighting. Under the influence of Juliet's love he begins to shed role playing as he begins to act from his innermost self. (Gajowski 43)

Romeo has experienced the change of his cognitive space and this affects his physical behavior and reaction. Mentally, he, after all, is forced to be irritated.

This world of revenge does not last long, as it does not belong to Romeo's disposition. Physically, after having killed Tybalt, Romeo enters another world of Mantua. As McAlindon points out, when Romeo says that "There is no world without Verona's walls" (3.3.17), Romeo is "at least right in assuming that Verona is a world in itself" (McAlindon 171). Verona has become an unattainable space to him. However, Romeo has to deviate from this physical space, and his departure from Verona blinds his insight of Juliet's plan. While Romeo is absent from the world of Verona, he learns nearly nothing about Juliet. Even though Friar Laurence tries to communicate with him, Romeo eventually fails to see through the false space elaborately created by Juliet. Before Romeo hears about Juliet's death, he has been in his dream world again (5.1.1-11).

Romeo's dream of his death, unlike the dream he mentioned in Act 1, turns out to be true in the end. On the other hand, Romeo "derives false hope from the dream" (Watts 45). His joy at becoming an emperor shows his cognitive space as imaginary again. As Nevo argues, this dream reveals the orientation of Romeo's mental space: "Apart from the obvious pathos of the dramatic irony, the lines effectively underline by contrast the bondage of dread in which a man lives who has 'given hostages to fortune,' so that his deepest dream is of liberation and sover-
Moreover, Romeo’s description of his dream reveals a “new maturity,” and as Gajowski states, this change “is also the suggestion of readiness for death” (47). The positive side of his dream is demolished by the appearance of Balthasar. After Balthasar tells him about Juliet’s death, as he is now stuck in the unknown, Romeo immediately sets out to look for the apothecary who will sell him poison. He casts away his wish to be the king, but attempts to fulfill the possibility of death. To the reader or the audience, Romeo should have checked the truth with Friar Laurence first, but since he cannot see beyond his limited knowledge, his death is close at hand.

In front of Juliet’s tomb, when Paris tries to prevent Romeo from opening the grave, Romeo fights with Paris without knowing Paris’s identity. After Paris is killed by him, Romeo realizes that he has made another fatal mistake, but he even doubts that this is only an illusion (5.3.74-79). Romeo, thinking that he has lost Juliet, is confused in his mental space, although he might “achieve self-realization obliquely through learning how to love” (Gajowski 50). As he cannot recognize the world clearly but wants to join Juliet in the underworld, he drinks the poison he bought from the apothecary and dies. The failure to see beyond hence leads to the closure of Romeo’s recognition and his existence in the textual world.

3. Juliet

In contrast to the other characters, Juliet is the one who is most capable of modifying and expanding her spaces. As Trevor analyzes, Juliet’s “levelheadedness” is noticeable: “She is in control of what she is thinking, and her passionate outbursts appear appropriate in relation to the objects and events that cause them” (Trevor 90). In the play, Juliet succeeds in her attempts to switch her world until the last scene when she finds out that Romeo is dead. Her understanding and con-
control of the movement of all the spaces show her extraordinary cognitive ability and mobility.

When Juliet first appears on stage, Lady Capulet asks Juliet about her opinion of her marriage, and Juliet replies to her mother that, “It is an honor that I dream not of” (1.3.66). It amazes a modern reader or the audience to see that a girl of thirteen can have such a clear mind. She speaks and acts like a “proper-young-lady” (Frye 159). Juliet can see through the physical/sexual love world presented by the Nurse, and the social/material love world by Lady Capulet, but she keeps to her own romantic, yet rational love world. Without making her cognitive space accessible to the other two, Juliet responds to her mother’s inquiry in an appropriate manner (1.3.97-99). Her reply satisfies both her mother and her nurse, but she actually holds on to her love until she meets her Romeo.

3.1. Juliet and the Nurse

Like Mercutio, Tybalt, and Benvolio, the Nurse, as Juliet’s confidant, cannot participate in the last scene. It can be strange to the reader or the audience that neither Romeo’s nor Juliet’s intimate associates can remain till the end; however, regarding the limitation of their cognitive spaces, the reader or the audience should be able to recognize the necessity of the arrangement.

Although the Nurse knows more than Tybalt, Mercutio, and even Benvolio

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6 Romeo and Juliet ends with the Prince’s comment that “never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo” (5.3.308-09, my emphasis). The use of the possessive pronoun “her” suggests that the two protagonists’ relationship is not symmetrical and that Romeo seems to belong to Juliet.

7 As Wells writes, “the Nurse’s earthy and unselfconscious sexuality sets off Juliet’s initial innocence just as Mercutio’s sophisticatedly bawdy and cynical wit sets off Romeo’s romanticism” (137). While Mercutio cannot penetrate Romeo’s space, the Nurse fails to enter Juliet’s. The failure of both to have access to the protagonists’ sub-world leads to their departure from the textual world.
in that she helps Romeo and Juliet have their wedding ceremony and spend their wedding night together, the Nurse does not actually recognize the love space created by Romeo and Juliet. When she learns that Tybalt has been killed by Romeo, right in front of Juliet the Nurse begins to criticize Romeo (3.2.85-90). Her criticism of Romeo indicates that she still considers Tybalt to be more important than Romeo, even though she knows about the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. In the Nurse’s mental space, the connection between Romeo and Juliet is not strong enough to win over the relationship between Juliet and Tybalt:

_Nurse._ Will you speak well of him that kill’d your cousin?

_Juliet._ Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

(3.2.96-97; my emphasis)

The different senses of deixis
8 used in the Nurse’s and Juliet’s words show the discrepancy between their cognitive spaces.

Nevertheless, the Nurse’s recognition of the love between Romeo and Juliet still remains at the corporeal level. She does help Romeo and Juliet consummate their marriage, but after Capulet and Lady Capulet insist on the marriage of Juliet and Paris, the Nurse forsakes Romeo (3.5.216-23). Her comparison of Romeo to “dishclout” (3.5.219) surprises Juliet as well as the reader or the audience, who now realizes that the Nurse never goes over the boundary of her fixed mental space, where everyone’s love is a temporary and physical relationship.9 As Wells points out, “the Nurse fails Juliet by her inability to understand the depth of her love for Romeo” (137). The Nurse’s teasing words to Juliet about Juliet’s wedding

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8 For the definition of deixis, see Gavins, *Text World Theory* 37; Green 11; and Stockwell 41.

9 The Nurse’s view, though wrong, is meaningful. As Auden argues, “If you take the Nurse’s view that Juliet should marry Paris and have an affair with Romeo on the side, the plot does not make any sense to us” (45). It is this recognition that makes the progress of the plot.
night seem resonant: “I am the drudge, and toil in your delight, / But you shall bear the burden soon at night” (2.5.76-78). This is why, after she recognizes the Nurse’s space, Juliet decides to conceal her secret from the Nurse hereafter (3.5.235-40). Juliet now understands that the Nurse cannot help even though she seems to participate in the world which Juliet shares with Romeo.

After Juliet goes to meet Friar Laurence, the Nurse is unable to acknowledge Juliet’s secret plan. When the Nurse finds out that Juliet “dies,” she never feels guilty about her rendering the possibility of bigamy to Juliet. The last words for the Nurse are addressed to the musicians: “Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up, / For well you know this is a pitiful case” (4.5.97-98). The Nurse thinks that this is the end of the story, but actually it is not. Like Benvolio, the Nurse is expelled, for her ignorance prevents her from the last act.

3.2. Juliet and Paris

In Act 5, Paris is the first character that dies. Paris appears to be the ideal match for Juliet; however, as his cognitive space cannot link to Juliet’s, he must leave the stage before the rest of the characters. When Paris first appears in Act 1, Capulet does not seem to approve of his proposal to Juliet, but rather encourages him to “see” more in order to win Juliet’s love (1.2.30-33). Yet Paris cannot “see” at all, and Juliet falls in love with Romeo, not with Paris, at the Capulet’s party.

Paris returns to the stage in Act 3, scene 4, when Capulet has changed his mind and decided to marry Juliet to Paris. In this scene, while he has not yet seen all and has not yet known that Romeo and Juliet have consummated their marriage, Paris, on Capulet’s authority, suddenly becomes Capulet’s future son-in-law. For the reader or the audience, the physical situation is ironic: while Paris accepts Capulet’s arrangement downstairs in scene 4, Romeo and Juliet appear “aloft at

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*The Nurse “should have kept her mouth shut” (Auden 49).*
the window” in scene 5, apparently having just spent their first night together in
the bed upstairs. From scene 4 to scene 5, the reader or the audience is aware
that the love world of Romeo and Juliet lies beyond the wishful world of Paris,
both spatially and cognitively. Without the actual expansion of his spaces, Paris’s
attempt to step into Juliet’s world is doomed to fail.

Later, in Act 4, scene 1, the stichomythia between Paris and Juliet shows the
discrepancy between the two sub-worlds:

Paris. Happily met, my lady and my wife.

Juliet. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Paris. That may be, must be, love, on Thursday next.

Juliet. What must be, shall be.

Friar Laurence. That’s a certain text.

(4.1.18-21; my emphasis)

Paris considers his marriage with Juliet a certainty, but Juliet, knowing much
more, plays on words, especially the modal verbs in this dialogue. Friar Laure-
ence’s comment suggests the idea of a different sub-textual world, which Juliet
creates from Paris’s world. Then Juliet continues to play on the pronouns to reply
to Paris:

Paris. Come you to make confession to this father?

Juliet. To answer that, I should confess to you.

Paris. Do not deny to him that you love me.

Juliet. I will confess to you that I love him.

Paris. So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

11 The reading of the staging follows the Arden Edition. For a visualization of the scene, see the
postcard about Romeo and Juliet (Orgel 47).
Juliet.  If I do so, it will be of more price

Being spoke behind your back than to your face.

(4.1.22-28; my emphasis)

For Paris, the third person pronoun refers to Friar Laurence, and the second person pronoun indicates Juliet. Juliet’s ambiguous references of pronouns are, of course, intentional, but Paris can mean and understand only by the literal sense. The pronouns here help constitute cognitive deixis. While Paris cannot recognize the boundary of Juliet’s use of the deictic field of these personal pronouns, the reader or the audience is able to identify the literal text field created by Paris, the allusive text field by Juliet, and the contextual field of the playwright.

This blindness continues when Juliet’s “death” has been discovered. Paris laments on his flawed sight of the truth: “Have I thought long to see this morning’s face, / And doth it give me such a sight as this?” (4.5.41-42) Paris keeps this false vision when he goes to Juliet’s grave in Act 5, scene 3. Romeo’s appearance and his opening of the grave surprise Paris and prompt him to challenge Romeo. Unwilling to offend Paris, Romeo addresses Paris with a speech similar to what he addressed Tybalt (5.3.63-67). Romeo attempts to create another cognitive space for Paris, but Paris fails to enter it: “I do defy thy conjuration / And apprehend thee for a felon here” (5.3.68-69). Paris’s death results from this misunderstanding. Gajowski is right to point out Paris’s “confinement within the comic conventionality of the chivalric lover” and Romeo’s “breaking through the boundaries of that role” (48). Like the foregoing characters, Paris cannot go beyond the limitations of his cognitive spaces and is obliged to leave the stage.

Although Paris thinks that Juliet loves him, it never happens. The reality is cruel to him, even though he is unaware of it. Coincidentally, Paris’s death seems to occur in the dream of Balthasar, Romeo’s servant (5.3.138), for Romeo is not
even aware that the one he has killed is Paris. As Goddard describes it, Paris’s death is “all like a dream, or madness” (46). Not only the other two characters in the scene, but also the reader or the audience are made to deem it dreamlike. Paris’s death, in other words, results from Juliet’s false death and Romeo’s dream-like killing.

3.3. Juliet and her Romeo

After meeting Romeo, Juliet decides to fall in love with him. She, on the one hand, expands her love world to another person; on the other hand, when she knows the man she loves is actually her enemy, she keeps adjusting her cognitive space, while she must be confined physically in her house. Nevertheless, Romeo’s trespassing on the Capulet’s garden opens an outlet for Juliet. Juliet, manipulating to bridge their spaces, keeps her control: the balcony scene, where Juliet is physically higher than Romeo, who stands below, shows Juliet’s superiority in their shared space. Moreover, Juliet modifies the idea of love and hate by addressing her imaginary Romeo (2.2.38-47). Juliet advocates an indifference to names, and criticizes not other people’s blindness to names but, on the contrary, their uncritical acceptance of names as appropriate and meaningful. Her awareness of others’ biases toward names indicates that she knows more. As Romeo listens to her secretly, he is the only character who is enlightened. Juliet, as Gajowski states, “tutors the male protagonist in love” (38). Furthermore, she is frank in expressing her love to Romeo: “Juliet’s openness and artlessness in declaring her love for Romeo is modest because honest” (Dusinberre 71). She owns a much better cognitive sub-world than Romeo’s. Since Romeo begins to enter her space, Juliet makes her

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12 As Greenblatt writes, Juliet shows the reader or the audience “what it feels like to be young, desperate to wed, and tormented by delay” (122). On the other hand, as shown later, she also displays her courage and maturity.
move to arrange their marriage.\(^{13}\)

What Juliet cannot see is the conflict beyond the wall. When the news that Romeo has killed Tybalt reaches her, Juliet at first bursts into anger but then composes herself and controls herself within her original world (Allan Bloom 13). Juliet is fully aware of her situation. She does lose her control for a while when Romeo is leaving for Mantua after their first night. While Romeo’s departure pains her, she seems to dream that Romeo is dead (3.5.54-57). In contrast to Mercutio, Juliet seems to realize the omen of a dream (Goddard 32). Nevertheless, due to this vision, Juliet’s cognitive space is wavering—she has the need to rebuild her world, as Romeo is away from it.

The extensive space of Juliet can be detected by the reader or the audience from her dialogues with her mother, her father, and the Nurse, in addition to the repartee between her and Paris (see above). After Romeo escapes from Verona to Mantua, Lady Capulet goes to Juliet’s chamber, a space of Juliet’s own, to comfort her daughter. The conversation between Juliet and her mother is full of double meanings.\(^{14}\) Juliet’s maneuver on the references illustrates her understanding and

\(^{13}\) Contextually, Juliet’s efforts to conceal her inner world from others mirror her efforts to achieve a “marriage of true minds” (“Sonnet 11”) with Romeo. Nevertheless, the lovers also experience “lust in action” (“Sonnet 129”), and hence two aspects of love that are respectively idealized and despised in Shakespeare sonnets are both attained in Juliet’s love world. The sexual innuendo in the play suggests that true lovers do it just like any others, but that their emotion and imagination hallows the physical act.

\(^{14}\) 

**Lady Capulet:** So shall you feel the loss but not *the friend*

Which you weep for.

**Juliet:** Feeling so the loss,

I cannot choose but ever weep *the friend*.

**Lady Capulet:** Well, girl, thou weepst not so much for *his death*

As that *the villain* lives which slaughter’d him.

**Juliet:** What villain, madam?

**Lady Capulet:** That same villain Romeo.

**Juliet:** *Villain and he* be many miles asunder.
Lady Capulet’s blindness. Here, of course, the dramatic irony requires the reader’s or the audience’s recognition.

When Capulet comes and speaks to her, Juliet keeps shifting her roles in order to adjust her cognitive spaces. As Capulet becomes more and more exasperated, Juliet develops her strategy of dealing with her father’s limited mental space. After her father begins to question her unwillingness to marry, Juliet is brave enough to show both her opinion and her gratitude, though trying very hard not to offend her father (3.5.146-48). However, in Capulet’s recognition, his decision cannot be challenged, so he bursts into a series of threats to Juliet. In order to ease her father’s anger, Juliet kneels down and tries to refute (3.5.158-59). Capulet, in turn, is neither moved nor persuaded; he leaves without yielding to any compromise. Juliet, a disobedient daughter in her father’s eyes, now becomes a child who is in need of help (3.5.196-201). For the overwhelming power of Capulet, Lady Capulet, and the Nurse (see above) as well cannot provide any comfort for Juliet. As a result, Juliet has to turn to Friar Laurence as the last resort. As Goddard says, “In a matter of seconds the child has become a woman” (45). Juliet now goes alone to Friar Laurence and “consents as the price of her fidelity to be ‘buried’ alive” (Goddard 45).

Friar Laurence’s arrangement of Juliet’s false death seems to create an exit for her difficult situation; however, her sleeping symbolizes her departure from the reality, and during these hours, the change of reality is beyond her comprehension. Before Juliet takes the potion, she has a terrible ominous vision
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(4.3.24-58), and then she has to sink into her dream world, which leads to her ending soon afterwards. In order to rebuild her romantic world with Romeo, she does more than rebel against her father: she takes the risk of remaining unconscious for 42 hours. Although Juliet once had the ability and the time to shift her cognitive spaces with the changes of the outside world before this dormancy, now the outside world is out of her control, and she has only a brief time to deal with the rapid development after she wakes up.

When she finds that Romeo is dead beside her, Juliet has only a few seconds to converse with Friar Laurence, but Friar Laurence, being frightened of the horrible scene and fearing for his own safety, flees at once. Then Juliet, saying that “I’ll be brief” (5.3.168), kills herself with Romeo’s dagger.

Right after Romeo’s death, Juliet has lost her mutability of orienting her cognitive space. Much better than Romeo, she is the character who is active and most adjustable with her spaces; her real death propels the closure of the whole textual world.

4. Recognition and reconciliation

In the last part of the play, when the remaining characters find out the deaths of Paris, Romeo and Juliet, hear the report from Friar Laurence (5.3.228-68), and learn the contents of Romeo’s letter (5.3.285-89), the main textual world finally moves toward the end. In the final reconciliation, all the surviving characters recognize their flawed cognitive spaces. These realizations, of course, lead to the reader’s or the audience’s awareness of the textual world structure.

4.1. Friar Laurence

Like Juliet, Friar Laurence is one of the characters who know and help the main formation of the textual world. His arrangement of the marriage of Romeo
and Juliet (2.6.9-15), of Romeo’s escape (3.3.107-53), and of Juliet’s feigned death (4.1.89-120) all seem perfectly promising. However, like the Nurse, Friar Laurence has “no place in the new world brought into being by Mercutio’s death, the world of limited time, no effective choice, no escape” (Synder 65). Of course Friar Laurence shows better knowledge than the other characters, on the occasion they find Juliet dead (4.5.91-95). What he cannot think of is the failure of the deliverance of his letter to Romeo about Juliet’s pretended death, and the sudden return of Romeo to Verona. More ironically, Friar Laurence’s advice to Romeo that “Wise and slow; they stumble that run fast” (2.3.90) becomes his own doom, and the collapse of the world he deliberately builds. As Allan Bloom proposes, Friar Laurence might have prevented the tragedy (26); nevertheless, Friar Laurence relies on a series of chances. He bets on Juliet’s apparent death and the Prince’s mercy after Juliet revives at the right time. As a result, his plan goes wrong, and, even worse, Juliet wakes up at the wrong time. However, he might still have been successful, if he had gone to the grave earlier and save Romeo in time. His forsaking Juliet at the last moment causes her death, as well as the ruin of the textual world.

Although it might be argued that the failure of Friar Laurence’s plan is due to chance, the limit of his cognitive space engenders the situation and causes the outcome. As Auden argues, Friar Laurence “thinks he knows God’s will, and he arranges the marriage. He wants to play God behind the scenes. But he is a coward, afraid of anything happening to him, and he runs away from Juliet at the end out of self-conceit and fear” (49). Friar Laurence indeed is enclosed by his own cognitive space until the very end.

On the other hand, as Allan Bloom proposes, “it is interesting to speculate about what the opinion of that world would have been if the priest had succeeded” (27). Whether Friar Laurence can actually merge his cognitive space into the textual world remains questionable, but of course it is reader’s recognition that determines its reconciliation. As Auden conjectures, if Friar Laurence had stayed in the last scene and told the story, we “would get a play on marriage, which is not aesthetically interesting” (50). Different readers would propose different reconciliation.
4.2. The Prince of Verona

That the play ends in the grave suggests the dark side of the love world of Romeo and Juliet. It reveals the nexus between love and death. The mixture of two cognitive spaces strengthens the paradoxical effect of the play. As Allan Bloom argues, this textual world is full of uncertainty and terrors: "the eros for the beautiful is the hopeless attempt to overcome the ugliness of the grave, an attempt of the unwise to adorn a very questionable world" (14). The darkness of the location, as well as the development, shows that no characters can thoroughly see through this textual world created by the playwright.

The Prince of Verona gives his remarks on this tragic ending by addressing Capulet and Montague (5.3.290-94). Having lost his two relatives, Mercutio and Paris, the Prince admits the limitations of his earlier recognition. His confession also leads to the reconciliation of the two feuding families, the Capulet and the Montague. When they shake hands, the Prince points out the significance of the morning (5.3.304-05). He reminds the characters and the reader or the audience that all should wake up from this dream-like world.

5. Conclusion

With this analysis of the different spaces owned by Juliet and Romeo in the text, Juliet's space is apparently larger and more comprehensive than Romeo's. While other characters also share parts of the protagonists' spaces, most of them misread each other's space because limited spaces are allotted to them. The misreading and the realization develop the plot and result in the existence/exit of each

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17 The action of *Romeo and Juliet* can be "punctuated by the three appearances of the Prince" (Wells 141), so that the textual world can indeed be divided into three sub-worlds. As this paper focuses on the sub-worlds owned by Romeo and Juliet and their spaces shared by other characters, the division of the three sub-worlds is not discussed and elaborated here.
When Mercutio says that “dreamers often lie” (1.4.51) and keeps on describing his idea of “dreams” (1.4.53-95), Romeo interrupts him by commenting that he talks about “nothing” (1.4.95-96). This “nothing,” similar to that in King Lear (1.1.86-92), turns out to be significant in reverse. Those who do not recognize the flaws of their spaces have been forced to leave the stage. The survivors at the end of the play are those who can at last see the boundaries of these spaces. The feuds between the Capulet and the Montague might continue, but all the characters have experienced their limitations and might have had a glimpse of others’ cognitive spaces. Harold Bloom suggests that, “What is left on stage at the close of this tragedy is an absurd pathos” (103). However, the play is never merely ridiculous; instead, the reality in the play is, as Frye states, “the sense that nothing perfect or without blemish can stay that way in this world, and should be offered up to another world before it deteriorates” (166). Nevo, on the other hand, points out a different perception of this reconciliation: “We reconcile ourselves to our pity and terror because we have witnessed one complete cadence of the human spirit, enacted to the full, rendered entirely intelligible. What reconciles us is not what could possibly reconcile us in life. Only achieved art can so order and satisfy our appetencies, our perceptions, and our insights” (85). Indeed, the reader or the audience has their reconciliation or recognition or both. Each has to make his or her own sense of the play. The cognitive space is created by the confined textual space or the theater.

In the construction of all the spaces in the play, it seems that a dream world is whimsical, just as Mercutio describes it, but each character’s realization reveals his or her accomplishment. In this light, their awakenings appear to echo much of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. As no character dreams fruitlessly, he/she does not
leave the stage in vain. Overall, the textual world helps the reader or the audience to develop each person’s imagination after the performance and reflect on reality. The textual world and the characters’ sub-worlds of the play, though unreal in a sense, do impinge and modify a certain reality of the characters and the reader or the audience. The reconciliation, indeed, results from the recognition.

**Works Cited**


From Recognition to Reconciliation


責任編集：王沐嵐
從認知到認命：《羅密歐與茱麗葉》裡的認知空間與文本空間

楊植喬∗

提要

《羅密歐與茱麗葉》一齣劇裡包含許多的空間，讀者或觀眾與劇中的角色藉著認知這些空間的過程達到協調認命的結果。本文旨在探討劇中的認知與文本空間是如何被不同的角色創造、調整，這些空間又是如何互相交互作用、彼此衝擊，而最終建構成完整的劇本。分析劇本中不同的空間可以呈現出不同角色所擁有的物質與心理狀況，一旦這些空間閉合了，也就是該角色離開舞台的時候。當劇中的角色輪流告別文本世界時，也就是其認知的程度已達極限之際；而當整齣劇邁入結局，所有的衝突與問題都獲得解決，一方面劇中角色完成演出的任務，一方面讀者或觀眾也因劇本或劇場的空間走過一段心路歷程，對於劇作家所創造的作品有一番體悟。《羅密歐與茱麗葉》一劇的悲劇效果乃借由劇本或劇場的空間傳遞給讀者或觀眾，刺激讀者或觀眾的想像力，使其重新檢視與調整現實生活的空間轉換與認知。

關鍵詞：《羅密歐與茱麗葉》，認知，認命，認知詩學，空間，文本世界，角色。