

I want to talk about the character of the confidant in the Shakespearean plays and I think the best form is getting the definition of this word: The confidant (feminine: confidante, same pronunciation) character is usually someone the lead character confides in and trusts. Typically, these consist of the best friend, relative, doctor or boss. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confidant>). That I want to demonstrate is this character appears in all the plays of Shakespeare. We always have a main character that needs to tell his/ her problems to a secondary one, who everytime is the accomplice and helps the protagonist to resolve the plot and that never betrays him/ her. We always need a confidant, we feel secure if someone shares our secrets and this creates an atmosphere of complicity and friendship. I think that without this character, Shakespeare's plays would not be the same, it is a role that helps the other characters to be developed. In my opinion if you have a secret but only you know it, it is like it does not exist. A secret needs to be confess to a confidant, who takes part of it and it is when the plot of the play is developed. As I said before there are four types of confidants: best friend, relative, doctor and boss, and I want to show you them at different plays.

Firstly I want to show the role of the best friend confidant and I will talk about Puck the confidant of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. He is Oberon's servant and best friend, we can see this from the very beginning of the play, when he appears the first time and defends Oberon when a Fairy criticizes him. Then we see their complicity when Oberon tells Puck his plan to get Titania's child and the confidence when Oberon asks Puck for his help. Of course Puck never fails his friend and, from the beginning to the end, he makes everything his lord orders. The relation between them is of friendship, Puck is Oberon's best friend. They have a close relation, they know the plan and they work together to get the solution.

OBERON : This falls out better than I could devise.

But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK :I took him sleeping,--that is finish'd too,--
And the Athenian woman by his side:
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS

OBERON : Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK : This is the woman, but not this the man.

(Act III, scene 2, lines 35-42)

Secondly we have a relative relation in *As you like it*. And this time we are going to talk about a confidant between two women: Rosalind and Celia who are cousins and friends. They share their secrets since they were born because they were educated as if they were sisters, due to that when Rosalind must leave her uncle's home, Celia decides to go with her. They show the love of two real friends and the eternal devotion they feel to each other. The difference with the relation between Puck and Oberon is that

Rosalind and Celia are equals, both of them are princess while Oberon is the Lord and Puck his servant.

Enter CELIA and ROSALIND

CELIA: I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

ROSALIND: Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

CELIA: Herein I see thou lovest me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine: so wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee.

ROSALIND: Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

(Act I, scene II, lines 1-15)

We can find the confidant relation between a character and a doctor in *The Comedy of Errors*. Here we have a very mixed-up plot because two pairs of twins appear on scene. On one hand we have Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant Dromio of Ephesus and on the other hand we have Antipholus of Syracuse with his servant Dromio of Syracuse. Both Antipholus are twins separated when they were child and with them both Dromios. During the whole play there is a lot of mistakes that pretend to be solved with the role of the doctor confidant, who knows the story because Antipholus of Ephesus' wife told it to him. And here we have a very big difference with the other two plays, in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As you like it* we had a direct relation between the protagonist and the confidant, they were friends or relatives and they spoke to each other, while in *The Comedy of Errors* the confidant knows the story because a third person told it.

ADRIANA: He came to me and I deliver'd it.

LUCIANA: And I am witness with her that she did.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS: God and the rope-maker bear me witness
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH: Mistress, both man and master is possess'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks:

They must be bound and laid in some dark room.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS: Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth
to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

(Act IV, scene IV, lines 91-97)

And finally the confidant relation between a main character and a boss that we can find in *The Taming of the Shrew*, with the roles of Lucentio who is in love with Bianca and his servant Tranio. Lucentio arrives to Padua with his servant Tranio and he falls in love with Bianca, Lucentio develops a plan to get Bianca's love and he needs Tranio's help. Tranio is the servant at the same time he is the friend. Here we have an extract of the first appearance of Lucentio and Tranio in Act 1, scene 1, where I want to show the intimacy that Lucentio has with his servant, telling him the story why he is in Padua.

Enter LUCENTIO and his man TRANIO

LUCENTIO: Tranio, since for the great desire I had
To see fair Padua, nursery of arts,
I am arrived for fruitful Lombardy,
The pleasant garden of great Italy;
And by my father's love and leave am arm'd
With his good will and thy good company,
My trusty servant, well approved in all,
Here let us breathe and haply institute
A course of learning and ingenious studies.
Pisa renown'd for grave citizens
Gave me my being and my father first,
A merchant of great traffic through the world,
Vincetino come of Bentivolii.
Vincetino's son brought up in Florence
It shall become to serve all hopes conceived,
To deck his fortune with his virtuous deeds:
And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,
Virtue and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be achieved.
Tell me thy mind; for I have Pisa left
And am to Padua come, as he that leaves
A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep
And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst.

(Act I, scene I, lines 1-24)

I have chosen this topic because I think that everybody needs a confidant who hears and helps him/her. Shakespeare shows us this in all his plays, we have studied the comedies this year, but we can find this character in the tragedies too, as in *Romeo and Julliet* where the priest is the confidant of both lovers. The confidant is normally a very close person to the protagonist, generally a friend or a relative, the unique case where we find an external confidant is in *The Comedy of Errors*. The confidant always helps the protagonist and never breaks a secret with the confidence. The confidant can be a woman or a man, always the confidant of a man is another man and the confidant of a woman another woman, the line that the writer follows is that this confidant knows

everything about the protagonist, he/she plays a role around the protagonist and he/she is essential to the solution of the plot. As I said at the beginning of my work and I have demonstrated then, there are four types of confidants, and Shakespeare playing with these four types, always chooses the role of the confidant to be the axis of the story, because this character knows everything of the others, and because that he/ she can help to get the solution.