Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition

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A key work in Shakespeare criticism and one of the pioneering modern studies of romance and romantic love in Shakespearean comedy. THIS TITLE IS CITED AND RECOMMENDED BY: Books for College Libraries. (retrieved from Amazon Thu, 12 Mar 2015 18:25:14 -0400). Library descriptions. Defining Shakespeare’s plays as ‘Romance plays’ is a relatively new affair. Shakespeare’s plays have traditionally been classified as ‘tragedies,’ ‘histories’ or ‘comedies’ but as time went by and scholars began to regard him as the greatest English writer of all times, his plays were studied more carefully by academics, researchers and critics. It became difficult to accept the old categories because many of the plays refused to fit into those categories, so they began to be described in different ways.® The plays that usually fall into that category are Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter’s Tale and The Tempest. These plays are also called ‘tragicomedies.’ The late romances, often simply called the romances, are a grouping of William Shakespeare's last plays, comprising Pericles, Prince of Tyre; Cymbeline; The Winter's Tale; and The Tempest. The Two Noble Kinsmen, of which Shakespeare was co-author, is sometimes also included in the grouping. The term "romances" was first used for these late works in Edward Dowden's Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art (1875). Later writers have generally been content to adopt Dowden's term.