

Romeo and Juliet for Children

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Written in approximately 1595/6, *Romeo and Juliet* is considered to be William Shakespeare's tenth play immediately prior to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Evans, 1984; Gibbons, 1980). The play was first published in Quarto 1 (1597) and then later in Quarto 2 (1599).¹ Since first being presented on the stage, the play continues to be in constant production. However, while it is considered to be one of his most popular plays, Shakespeare was not the first to present this story to an audience.

Sources of the Play

There are many literary sources for the story of Romeo and Juliet, including Italian (which was probably the first version), French, and English versions. Moreover, the story of Romeo and Juliet is found in Stith Thompson's *Motif Index*:

"The general type of story represented by Romeo and Juliet has its roots in folklore and romance, it shows obvious analogies with the story of Hero and Leander, Pyramus and Thisbe, Tristan and Isolde." (D1364.7, K1348, N343, T211.3)

In 1476, Masuccio Salrintano first published the story in Italian in his book, *Il Novellino*, consisting of the plot's primary elements. Fifty years later, Luigi da Porto's *Giuletta e Romeo* was published - with the principle characters' names being mentioned for the first time. Later, in 1552, Bandello's prose version was published. There was also a French translation by Boaistuau, based on Bandello's version.

¹ Quarto 1 is referred to as "The Bad Quarto" since it was reconstructed from memory of the theatrical production, while Quarto 2 is considered to be "The Good Quarto" as it was compiled from the Shakespeare's actual written drafts (Gibbons, 1980).

Shakespearean scholars tend to agree that there is no persuasive evidence for Shakespeare's having knowledge of Italian or French. Therefore, the two later English versions - Arthur Brooke's poem, *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), and William Painter's *Rhomeo and Julietta* (1567) - were the principal sources for Shakespeare's play (Evans, 1984). While most of the stage adaptations were not directly influenced by previous sources of the play, the adaptation for children may have been influenced by these sources, especially in light of the violence and sexuality contained therein.²

Adaptation for Children

The best-known children's literary adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is by Mary and Charles Lamb. In the early 19th Century, Mary Lamb, the elder of the two siblings, was commissioned to adapt 20 Shakespearean's plays for children. Mary adapted 14 comedies and romances while her brother and lifelong and writing companion, Charles, adapted six tragedies (Lambs, 1987).³

The current paper focuses on two main questions regarding Lamb's *Romeo and Juliet* for children: Why was it adapted, and how was it accomplished? In other words, what was the cultural

² Restrictions of violence and sexuality in children's literature have been discussed by numerous scholars (e.g., Cohen, 1998, Shavit 1986). Shakespeare's play contains many violent scenes, such as the first scene that begins with a skirmish between the Capulets and the Montagues, and later in Act 3 Scene 1 - Tybalt's killing of Mercutio. Moreover, there are numerous sexual references in the play, such as the bawdy talk both in Queen Mab's monologue by Mercutio (1.4) and in the Nurse's dialogue with Juliet's mother (1.3).

³ On the first page of the Puffin Classics edition (1987), the following is written: "Charles Lamb exhibits his compelling genius to bring to life dramatic scenes from tragedies such as *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, while his sister Mary skillfully recreates such comedies as *The Taming of a Shrew* and *Much Ado about Nothing*." It is not hard to comprehend from this wording that although Charles adapted only six of the plays, they are considered more important and difficult because they are tragedies. As such, Charles had to utilize "compelling genius" to carry it out, as opposed to the "easier" task accomplished by Mary, who merely dealt with the comedies. Ironically, Mary was the one who was commissioned to adapt the selection of Shakespeare's plays for children, from the beginning.

function of this adaptation, and what were the ways in which this was executed.

The answers to these questions are interrelated. One of the goals of any particular culture is to impart its classics to subsequent generations. This is not an easy task since these texts were not originally written for children, and as such, contain unintelligible words and syntactic structures as well as controversial themes and contents - particularly regarding violence and sex. One of the ways to challenge these difficulties is to write a literary adaptation of a classic piece for children. As the Lambs wrote in their preface:

“The following tales are meant to be submitted to the young reader as an introduction to the study of Shakespeare, for which purpose his words are used whenever it seemed possible to bring them in; and in whatever has been added to give them the regular form of connected story, [...]: therefore, words introduced into our language since his time has been as far as possible avoided.” (Lambs, 1987, p. 7)

True to their word, the Lambs took a poetic play aimed at an adult audience of the late 16th century, and transformed it into a prose story for children of the 19th Century. This process entailed three major considerations: (1) turning poetry into prose, (2) appealing to children rather than to adults, and (3) using “modern” or “old” English.

To study their adaptation, we must first understand the conceptual framework of adaptation and its relationship with the Translation Theory.

Adaptation and Translation Theory

The common definition of adaptation (Denes, 1980) presents the adaptation as a re-encoding of the original (source) text while

preserving its message similar to the inter-linguistic translation process. In translation, the encoding is into a different language, and the translator is the author of the target text, which is closely related to the source text. Following this line of thought, we postulate that an adaptation has to comply with the same conditions as defined by translation theory (Shenberg, 2016; Toury, 1995). Adaptation is (1) text on text; (2) encoded differently from the source text; and (3) has an equivalent relationship with the source text. We found two main considerations in the production of literary adaptations: the educational ideological consideration and the aesthetic one. In order to illustrate how these considerations are expressed in Lamb's adaptation, we compare it to Shakespeare's play, taking into account the following components of a literary text: the plot, characters, themes, authorial narrator, linguistics and style, and possible interpretations.

Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare Versus Lamb

The Plot

While Lamb followed the play's central romance linearly, he omitted scenes that did not advance the plot, such as the servants' quarrel in the first scene. In addition, he removed several scenes that occurred simultaneously, and mentioned these events in later scenes in order to preserve linearity. For example, Act 3 Scene 4 in which Juliet's parents arrange their daughter's marriage to Paris in three days. This event occurs in parallel with Romeo and Juliet's last night together and, therefore, was omitted. Lamb described the lovers' final night and then added a sentence hinting at the new obstacle the lovers face.

“Romeo had not been gone many days, before the old lord Capulet proposed a match for Juliet.” (Lamb, 1987, p. 259)

Such an omission is reasonable considering the difference between the theatrical concept of Shakespeare's play as opposed to the written narrative of Lamb's story. It also presents an orderly world that is ruled by causality rather than by chaos; a world of adults as it is likely to be conceived by children. Thus, in this case, we see that Lamb's adaptation underscores both the aesthetic and educational considerations of the structure of the plot.

The Characters

Lamb retained the main characters, including their families and friends, but omitted many of the lower-class characters. The primary reason for these omissions is that they are not essential to the plot's progression. For instance, in the play, it is Balthasar - Romeo's servant - who informs his master of Juliet's death, yet in the adaptation, Lamb transforms this concrete situation into a generalization:

“Bad news, which always travel faster than good, now brought the dismal story of his Juliet's death to Romeo.”
(Lamb, 1987, p. 262)

In addition, the Nurse, who functions as Juliet's true mother (Shenberg, 2018), is only included in Lamb's text when her presence is essential to the unfolding of the plot. Her bawdy dialogue with Juliet and Lady Capulet is omitted completely, since vulgar language or dialogue containing erotic or cruel references are considered inappropriate for children (Shavit, 1986).

Moreover, as the servants' characters are omitted, there are no jokes or comical dialogues in the children's version. Likewise, Mercutio's witty “Quin Mab” monologue (1.4) is also removed, so as not to confuse the children with mixed concepts of tragedy and comedy. Children perceive tragedy as sad and comedy as happy, yet

in the play, this distinction is not always clear (see next subsection).⁴ Finally, the narrator often explains the characters' behavior, which is not always rational and ethical, in order to create a coherent world. This is a profound difference between the adaptation and the original play.

In the adaptation, Romeo is not involved in the conflict between the two families at all; he loves his enemy as every Christian boy should:

“This young Montague had never thoroughly entered into the family quarrel, being by nature wise and gentle [...]” (Lamb, 1987, p. 255)

As to Juliet, she is portrayed as a model of Victorian modesty, apologizing for not even pretending to be modest during the Balcony Scene. She also regrets making the hasty love pact:

“Yet she had no joy of that night's contract: it was too rash, too unadvised, too sudden.” (Lamb, 1987, p. 253)

In contrast, the same words in the original play are followed by others, which are omitted from the adaptation, as they suggest an erotic meaning that contravenes Victorian modesty:

“I have no joy of this contract tonight,
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning which doth cease to be
Ere one can say ‘It Lightens’. Sweet, good night:
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.”
(2.2.117-122)

⁴ Harold Bloom notes that both Mercutio and the Nurse are scene stealers, being the audience's favorites for many years: “and there is a tradition (reported by Dryden) that Shakespeare declared he was obliged to kill off Mercutio, lest Mercutio kill Shakespeare and hence the play.” (Bloom, 1998, pp. 93)

Moreover, Harold Bloom argues that in Shakespeare's play, Juliet's love is exceedingly romantic and erotic, and does not transcend the human heroine, as does Beatrice's for Dante. Also, Shakespeare does not place irony on her words, but "reinvents the representation of a very young woman (she is not yet fourteen) in love [...]" and "[...] allows Juliet the most exalted declaration of romantic love in the language." (Bloom, 1998, pp. 91-92):

But to be frank and give it thee again;
And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep: The more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite. (2.2.131-35)

This representation of Juliet as the model of a romantic lover who does not transcend humanity is replaced in Lamb's text by her concern for her modesty as well as her religious sentiment. In the play, it is Juliet who initiates the declaration of love, telling Romeo there is no need to vow his love for her, since she has already given him hers. However, in the adaptation, she is passive, her bold love for him being less clear, condensed by the narrator from a dialogue into one single sentence:

"But he being urgent with her to exchange a vow of love with him that night, she said that she already had given him hers before he requested it; meaning, when he overheard her confession; but she would retract what she then bestowed, for the pleasure of giving it again, for her bounty was as infinite as the sea, and her love as deep." (Lamb, 1987, p. 253)

The bounty and depth of her love, which thrives on infinite giving without asking for anything in return, cannot be fully understood from the wording in the adaptation since Lamb referred to her

"bounty" as a concept that differs from that of her "love". By arranging each simile in accordance with each word - "her **bounty** was as infinite as the sea" and "her **love** as deep" - Lamb diminished the volume and scope of Juliet's emotions.

Thus, in the adaptation both Romeo and Juliet are portrayed as good and obedient children, and their love being pure and ideal, very much like that of Christ's. Also, by omitting Mercutio's Queen Mab monologue, and the Nurse's bawdy reminiscence of young Juliet, Lamb concealed the final irony of the play's ending, which could be summed up as too little (golden statues instead of living heirs), too late (the deaths of 5 people due to a feud between their elders). In contrast, the ending in the adaptation is proper because order is restored and there is a moral that young readers should learn (Lamb, 1987, p. 267).

The Themes

There are two major and intertwining themes in the original play: The romance between the young lovers and the deadly hatred and feud between their elders. With regards to the first theme of love, traditional interpretations of Shakespeare's play perceive Romeo's love for Juliet as ideal (Evans, 1984; Gibbons, 1980), in contrast to his love for Rosaline, which is perceived as immature:

"We watch Romeo's passage from a sexless puppy love for Rosaline - which his family could approve, to the dog days of passion that nearly tear Verona apart." (Skura, 1980, p. 204)

Other interpretations indicate the impossibility of their love, due to the contradiction of these themes: the young lovers are bound together by death because of the conflict between their elders (Holland, 1964). The deaths in the play are not arbitrary or incidental, but stem from the families' conflict. Gulke (1980) reasons these contradictions:

“Both lovers have lively imagination of disaster. While Romeo ponders: ‘Some vile forfeit of untimely death’ (1.4.111), Juliet speculates: ‘if he is married my grave is like to be my wedding bed.’ (1.5.136-7). Premonition for both has the force of self-fulfilling prophesy. While Romeo seeks danger by courting Juliet [...], Juliet [...] exclaims: ‘I’ll to my wedding bed; and death not Romeo, takes my maidenhead!’ (3.2.136-7). Read metaphorically, the plot validates the perception expressed variously in the play, that love kills.” (Gulke, 1980, p. 172)

Moreover, psychoanalytical approaches, such as Holland’s, argue that Juliet’s “O” in the famous balcony dialogue: “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” symbolizes her vagina opening up in sexual love for Romeo (Holland, 2019).

I, on the other hand, propose that Romeo’s love of Juliet is not that different from his love of Rosaline. Like Gulke, who argues that Romeo is challenged by the danger of loving Juliet, I believe that the same is true regarding Romeo’s loving Rosaline. His unattainable love object, Rosaline, has a meaningful name: Her name begins with “Rosa”, which is Italian for “rose”. During the Renaissance period, a rose symbolized romantic love; yet the end of her name, “line,” contradicts this meaning as line form boundary between lovers and prevents intimacy. Thus, neither themes of love – both between Romeo and Juliet and between Romeo and Rosaline – are ideal.

These themes of youth’s love bound by death caused by the conflict between families have also created an ongoing argument regarding the genre of the play. Such domestic themes as these are not seen as appropriate and do not suit a tragedy. Renaissance tragedies revolve around the inevitable fall of the “Great Man” (Callaghan, 1989), but Romeo is not Oedipus or King Lear, nor is he Othello. Many scholars argue that a domestic play like this should be considered a comedy rather than a tragedy (Evans, 1984). Others, however, argue that the play’s highly formal style and

language compensates for these domestic themes, as does the vast use of oxymorons. These correspond with both the contradiction of themes and with certain events, such as the senseless, prosaic, and realistic death of Mercutio as opposed to Romeo and Juliet’s heroic, solemn, and ceremonial deaths (Brook, 1965, pp.251-2).

In Lamb adaptation, there is no duality between tragedy and comedy, because of the common perception that children cannot comprehend complexity – neither in real life nor in literature (Shavit, 1986) – and should in fact be protected from it. In other words, the adult world should be perceived by children as simple, orderly, and coherent. Therefore, in the adaptation, Romeo and Juliet’s love is as pure and ideal as in the Christian interpretations (explained later in this paper). Moreover, in the adaptation, Romeo’s love for Juliet is ignited in spite of the elder’s conflict and not because of it like in the play:

“And Romeo inquiring who her mother was, discovered that the lady [...] was young Juliet, daughter and heir to the lord Capulet [...] and that he had unknowingly engaged his heart to his foe. This troubled him, but it could not dissuade him from loving.” (Lamb, 1987, p. 250)

In both the play and the adaptation, there is no inherent malice like Iago’s in *Othello*. However, the themes in the play cannot be reasoned merely as compatible for they are also contradictory; while the themes in the adaptation are only compatible since the story is told by an authorial narrator.

Authorial Narrator

In the play, there is no narrator; instead, the characters present the story through their dialogues and monologues. In the adaptation, however, there is an authorial narrator, in line with much of the literature from the Victorian Era. The narrator knows all of

the characters' inner thoughts, and portrays them both directly ("telling") and indirectly ("showing"). Although, the narrator does not approach the reader directly in the manner of "Dear Reader", he conveys his opinions by attaching explanatory adjectives or adverbs to the characters' actions and dialogues, or by adding his own opinions in parentheses. For example, at the end of the story:

"So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outdo each other in mutual courtesies: while so deadly had been their rage and enmity in past times, that nothing but the fearful over-throw of their children (poor sacrifices to their quarrels and dissensions) could remove the rooted hates and jealousies of the noble families." (Lamb, 1987, p. 267)

Lamb attempted to explain the adult's impure and complex motivation to pure young children in a didactic manner, so as not to corrupt their souls. This is the reason why the plot is organized around an authorial narrator who knows everything and is able to explain events with a moral at the end, similar to a good father teaching his children a lesson.

Moreover, the narrator never forgets that his readers are inexperienced children, so the story told to them must be both moral and coherent; it must be neither too complicated nor illogical, as a child's memory is not yet sufficiently developed (Shenberg, 2016). This is another reason for omitting "unnecessary" characters and reminding the children of secondary characters only when they reappear in the plot. For instance, when Tybalt appears and begins his fatal quarrel with Mercutio:

"At the same day, about noon, Romeo's friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, walking through the streets of Verona, were met by a party of Capulets with the impetuous Tybalt at their head. This was the same angry Tybalt who would have fought with Romeo at the old lord Capulet's feast." (Lamb, 1987, p. 255)

Thus, the narrator adapts the story to the comprehension levels of young audiences and imparts didactical messages, such as adults are good and rational; if their actions seem arbitrary, it is because of their lack of knowledge. Another example is when Lady Capulet demands the death penalty for Romeo:

"Thus she pleaded against her new son-in-law, but she knew not yet that he was her son-in-law and Juliet's husband." (Lamb, 1987, pp. 256-7)

The same phenomenon is detected when the narrator argues that Lord Capulet cares greatly about his daughter and only his ignorance of her marriage to Romeo causes his insistence on Juliet's marriage to Paris. Thus, in the adaptation, his cruel words to his daughter are omitted, and he is portrayed instead as a concerned father who is looking out for his daughter's best interests (since Paris is a very good match for her.) The narrator also hints that tragedy could have been prevented had Juliet told the truth rather than just giving excuses:

"She pleaded every reason against the match, but the true one, namely, that she was married already. But Lord Capulet was deaf to all her excuses." (Lamb, 1987, p. 260)

The message implied from these lines is quite harsh, but the narrator does not say it bluntly: the tragedy could have been avoided for it was not the adult's fault that the child did not tell the truth, but merely gave excuses.

The Lambs in all their adaptations chose to tell the story through a reliable authorial narrator who imparts both the didactical and moral norms of the Victorian era to the young audience.⁵ This

⁵ By emphasizing the didactical messages, the Lambs' adaptations omit Shakespeare's sophisticated and witty language, such as the following well-known sayings: "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It* 2.7.137-8); and "[...] it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (*Macbeth* 5.5.26-8).

narrator faces the problem of transforming a dramatic and poetic text into a prose one. The Lambs, however, confronted this difficulty by weaving selected fragments from the Shakespeare's plays into their adaptations, and by implementing additional strategies to create an adequate adaptation for children.

Style and Language

As mentioned, the purpose of the Lambs' adaptations was to introduce Shakespearean texts to children, and this was of great importance to them, as seen in the above quoted preface (Lambs, 1987, p. 7). To do so, their main challenge was to transform a dramatic text into a narrative one, and to transform verse into prose. Back to *Romeo and Juliet's* adaptation, the fundamental difference between the original play and the adaptation stem from these two transformations, as well as from the numerous omissions of secondary characters and dialogues. Thus, the adaptation is shorter than the play and it has a single narrator. This creates a uniformity in the language of the adaptation as opposed to the polyphonic language of the play. Moreover, there is a stylistic distinction in Shakespeare's play between metrical poetry and prose, whereby the commoners in the play use prose - especially in comical situations (Lakoff, 1982. p. 243), while the aristocrats speak in metrical poetry, and in some significant scenes in heroic couplets.

The poetic dialogue is conveyed through formal and subtle language and complex sentences. The prose dialogue, on the other hand, is informal and dialectic, with a limited vocabulary; its long sentences are compound rather than complex (Evans, 1984). While these stylistic distinctions are helpful in portraying each character's social class and status in the play, they do not exist in the adaptation where the text is simpler and coherent. Although Lamb used Shakespearean vocabulary, he made greater use of reported speech (rather than direct quotations.) For example, in the adaptation,

when Romeo first sees Juliet at her parents' ball:

“[...] Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there, who seemed to him to teach the torches to burn bright, and her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel warn by a blackamoor.” (Lamb, 1987, p. 249)

This reported speech has virtually the same number of words as in the play's dialogue, beginning with the phrase “teach”:

Romeo: “O she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear...” (1.5.43-45).

The question arises as to the reason for Lamb's preference for reported speech over direct quotations. To begin with, as previously mentioned, the story is presented by a single reliable narrator. Therefore, a metaphor is used not only to describe but also to rationalize Romeo's sudden crush on Juliet: “Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there.” (Lamb 1987, p. 249). Moreover, Lamb strives to simplify Romeo's complex imagery into a one-dimensional image. In Shakespeare's text, Juliet has both a metonymic and a metaphoric relation with the night, since she is “a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear”. This is both a metonymy and a metaphor: she is **light** while the night is **dark**, and at the same time, she is **physically** close to the night, like an earring dangling from an ear. In the adaptation, Lamb provides an explanation for the use of figurative language, and simplify the metaphor by focusing on Juliet's beauty rather than on Juliet herself, as in Shakespeare's play. In addition, Lamb omits the personification of the night, “she hangs upon the cheek of night”, and in doing so emphasize the metaphor over the metonymy.

When Lamb quoted the famous line from the balcony scene: “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” (2.2.33), he inserted “she said” in the middle of the sentence, as well as an exclamation mark after the second “Romeo”: ““O Romeo, Romeo! she said, ‘wherefore art thou Romeo?’”(Lamb, 1987, p. 251). Thus, he interrupted the iambic meter of the Shakespearean line, transformed it into a prose sentence, and attempted to compensate for the emotive rhythm by inserting the exclamation mark. In other words, Lamb tends to use Shakespearean phrases, but alter the punctuation and insert explanatory phrases. In doing so, direct quotations became reported speech, providing the narrator with a tone of seriousness and accountability throughout the adaptation, and supporting the construction of the authorial narrator. Lamb enhanced his adaptation with words from Elizabethan English, such as “thou,” “thee,” or “alack,” adding to the general tone seriousness and even gravity as opposed to the impulsivity of the youth and the hatred and cruelty of the elders in the original play.

Moreover, the play includes an excessive amount of oxymorons, puns, and wordplays - all of which are beneficial for the themes and comic-ironic characters in this tragedy (Bloom, 1998; Evans, 1966; Brook, 1965; Holland, 1964). In contrast, the adaptation is a prose one and directed at children, with little use of oxymorons, puns, and wordplays - as many are inappropriate for children as they involve sexual inuendo and bawdy language. Thomas Bowdler, in his “Family Shakespeare” (1807), discussed his use of language when adapting Shakespeare's works himself. Similar to the Lambs' text, Bowdler wrote:

“To removing words and expressions which are of such a nature as to raise a blush on the cheek of modesty.” (Evans, 1984, p. 38).

It is not surprising that the Victorian norm of using euphemisms and respectful language is crucial to the Lambs. In their preface of the first edition they wrote:

“[...] therefore, instead of recommending these tales the perusal of young gentlemen who can read them so much better in the originals, their kind assistance is rather requested in explaining to their sisters such parts as are hardest for them to understand: [...] then perhaps they will read to them carefully selecting what is proper for a young sister's ear (some passages).” (Lambs, 1987, p. 8)

Thus, in addition to being a story of prose that is presented by a single narrator and lacks a stylistic distinction between the characters' dialogues, the language of the adaptation is highly euphemistic and didactical - in line with the Victorian perception of children. These angelic and innocent creatures should not be exposed to the harsh reality of the adult world.

Possible Interpretations

There are several interpretations of the Shakespearean play. After introducing the most renowned ones, I will attempt to determine whether they can be applied to the adaptation. As the play's main themes are domestic ones, most interpretations are psychological, many are feminist, and some political and Christian interpretations also exist.

Psychological Interpretation

Most scholars argue that the play deals with adolescence (Kahn, 1977-8; Skura, 1980; Zarlov, 1965), and adolescent suicide (Faber, 1972), or teenage rebellion (Barber, 1980; Holland, 1964). Holland (1964) discusses the dualism in the play as expressing - both in style and themes - a universal psychological truth: The love of the youths

as opposed to the hatred of their elders. The tragedy is constructed around the contrast between the impulsiveness and hastiness of youth and the procrastination of adults: Romeo and Juliet hurry to marry and Tybalt and Mercutio rush towards their senseless deaths, while Montague compared to Capulet and the Prince of Verona, who procrastinate over the resolution of their quarrel for many years (Holland, 1964). Barber (1980) focuses on the lovers' failure to rebel against their family ties.

Although not yet an adult, Juliet is forced to face reality as a grown woman, forced to make hard choices following her father's harsh decision to marry her off to Paris. She had expected, in vain, the support of her Nurse, who up until that point in the play (3.5) - and despite their affiliation to different social classes - had functioned as her close and loving mother. Now Juliet is all alone. Her entire family is against her, her husband is in exile and incommunicado. Her only friend is Friar Lawrence, who helps her to carry out the decision she has made (Shenberg, 2018).

In the adaptation, on the other hand, Romeo and Juliet's love is ideal, and the cause of the tragedy is not their love, but the elders' quarrel. The main characters do not mature throughout the story, but behave like good children, who are unaware of the consequences of their actions. In comparison to Brook's poem, the Shakespearean play illustrates the public layers of the families' quarrel as equal to the personal layers of the youths' love (Evans, 1984, pp. 6-12; Gibbons, 1980, pp. 32-37). The adaptation also maintains this equilibrium between the public and the personal layers, but the fatal ending is more abstract and connected to the Christian interpretation.

Feminist Interpretation

The feminist slogan, "the personal is political," bridges between these two levels of the personal and the public. Callaghan (1989)

views the Renaissance tragedies not only as mere tales of the Great Man's fall, as mentioned earlier, but also as a means for ensuring that the patriarchal hierarchy is served and conserved. Therefore, in the *Romeo and Juliet* play, all dialogues about sex, desire, and marriage are not merely personal, but also political - allegorically reflecting political situations. As such, marriage, for instance, transfers authority from man to man, from the woman's father to her husband:

"Children who married without their fathers' consent undermined the ability of the entire system of social relations to reproduce itself." (Callaghan, 1989, p. 21)

Should parental disagreement arise, the husband is in danger of losing his right to parental authority, as exemplified in *Othello* in the dialogue between Brabantio (Desdemona's father) and Othello (1.3.292-3), and in *Romeo and Juliet* when Capulet reproaches his daughter for refusing to marry Paris:

Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.
[...]
And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
(3.5.188-92)

Another feminist interpretation suggests that the play *Romeo and Juliet* presents the inability of heterosexual relationships to achieve a plausible solution due to their embedded patriarchal legacy. Gulke (1980) argues that the connection between love and war, and love and death, is basically patriarchal. In this play, as discussed earlier, the metaphors of love bound by death are intertwined.

Such feminist interpretations cannot be applied to Lamb's adaptation. Moreover, in their preface the Lambs mentioned

that tragedies as reading materials are more suitable for boys as opposed to girls (Lamb, 1987, pp. 8-9). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, this way of thought is in line with the division of the 20 plays for adaptation between the siblings, whereby it was Charles who adapted the tragedies, including *Romeo and Juliet*, even though it was Mary who was actually commissioned to write the adaptations, from the beginning.

Political and Social Interpretation

Many modern theater productions of the play realize the families quarrel in the form of political or social conflicts. For example, the famous *West Side Story* musical about gangs fights in New York (1957), or the Jerusalem Khan theater production of *Romeo and Juliet* that reflected the Israeli-Arab conflict (1994). In the adaptation, however, there is no potential for realizing such interpretations.

Christian Interpretation

Many Christian interpretations have been influenced by the Middle Ages perception of sexual love as solely an expression of the Lord's cosmic love (Evans, 1984, pp. 14-15). Thus, Romeo and Juliet's love nourishes the universe as it is part of a cosmic love; their death converts the hatred in the world into social harmony through the "death" of the families' quarrel. Indeed, Romeo and Juliet's first infatuation, is conveyed by the Christian metaphor of a holy pilgrimage (1.5.92-95): "If I profane with my unworhiest hand\ This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this\ My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand\ To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss."

Barber (1980) compares between the Holy Family and the human one, arguing that initiation ceremonies into the Catholic and Anglican Churches aim at helping people in their moments of crisis, when they change or lose their family's ties. These ceremonies direct people's fears towards the Lord's support. While this is successful in

Shakespeare's comedies, it fails in tragedies. Although both Romeo and Juliet are good and faithful Christians, they pay the price for their families' sins. For this reason, at the end of the play, their statue is built to show the triumph of love over the deadly quarrel.

The Christian characteristics of Romeo and Juliet are very prominent in the adaptation. The construction of the two statues in Verona is reported in full, as if there is a "happy ending" in spite of the tragedy - because the cosmic principle of love overcomes family hatred and feuds.

However, in Christianity, suicide is a mortal sin and thus - the protagonists' death by suicide is problematic. Moreover, it is quite astonishing to find that in the play, Romeo excuses his death through 46 lines of monologue compared to only 3 lines referring to his slaying of Tybalt, as if slaying is a lesser sin than suicide. Perhaps it results from Romeo's immaturity. That is - he is so self-centered that his own suicide is much more meaningful to him than his slaying Tybalt.

However, in the adaptation, this is how Romeo explicates his suicide:

"And near her laid Tybalt in his bloody shroud, whom Romeo seeing, begged pardon of his lifeless corpse, and for Juliet's sake called him cousin, and said that he was about to do him favour by putting his enemy to death. (Lamb, 1987, p. 264).

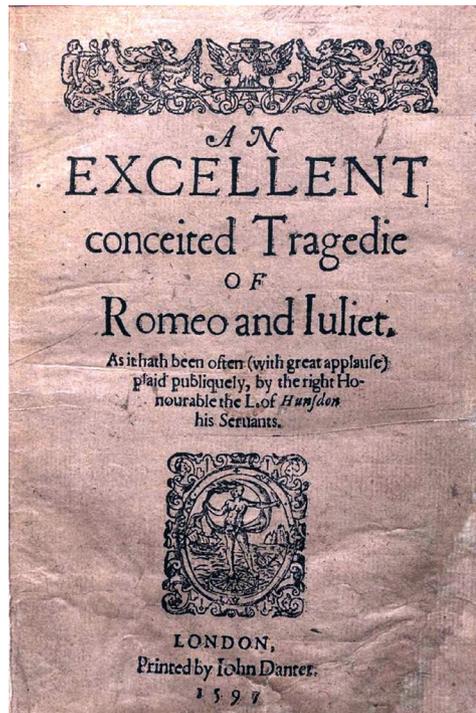
In other words, Romeo reasons that his own death serves as his punishment for his slaying Tybalt. Furthermore, Romeo is a good Christian and now that he has been punished for his sin, he can enter Heaven without blemish.

Conclusion

By comparing the Shakespearean play to Lamb's adaptation, this

paper attempts to illustrate and explain the main alterations made in transforming the source text into the target one. The main transformations include the significant omission of certain texts (violent or sexual) and secondary characters (usually of lower classes), the creation of a linear plot organized around a reliable narrator, and the use of language deemed appropriate for young readers.

While the Elizabethan play was written for theatrical production for adult audiences, the transformation needed to adapt this classic to a prose story for children in the Victorian era. As such, it was necessary to simplify the poetic and polyphonic language, turning it into euphemistic, didactical, and uniform prose - transforming an obscure Baroque into a black-and-white world of Enlightenment.



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