

Articles

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Translator as the Prime Director in the Target Language Theatre on the Example of Polish Translations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

Studying Shakespeare's dramatic texts in translation gives a powerful impression that translators are sometimes tempted to re-create the original according to their own subjective interpretation. Since in the theatre the task of general interpretation of a play belongs to the director, there seems to exist a certain parallel between the activity of a translator dealing with a dramatic work and the activity of a stage director. The aim of this essay is to show this parallel and to prove that the translator may play the role of the very first director in the target language theatre. The problem will be illustrated with several examples from selected Polish translations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

The translator of a dramatic work is faced with a text of dual nature. The dual nature of drama results from the fact that a dramatic text constitutes simultaneously an actual literary text and a possible text of performance. The co-existence of a literary text and of a text of performance creates probably the greatest difficulty for the translator. The most fundamental difference between translating poetry or prose and translating drama is well expressed by Schultze, who argues that a translator of poetry (or prose) has to take into account only the aesthetic codes and the principles of functioning of one medium (a written text), whereas translating drama means a simultaneous transfer of two systems of communication (a one-medium

written text to be read and a multi-media theatre text to be staged) (1999: 23). In consequence, the translator has not only to understand the dramatic text as a work of literature but also to be able to imagine the text being performed on the stage. Of course, the extra-linguistic elements of drama such as scenery, music, scenic movement, mimics and gestures, although often included in stage directions or hidden in the text itself, to a large extent depend on the director, the stage designer, the actors and the technicians. The written text of a play could therefore be regarded as a constant, whereas the context in which it is uttered (scenery, movement, etc.) – as variables (changing not only with every new production of a given play but also within the same production, depending on the day or place of staging). Nevertheless, as will be shown further on, the text is very seldom a constant: apart from the situation in which the director omits certain parts of the text or changes their order, there exists a situation in which the utterances of the dramatic persons cease to be a constant value not because the number of words spoken is different but because the semantic content of the words is changed. The latter situation happens in the case of a play in translation, when the translator – for various reasons: from misunderstanding the sense, through the exigencies of the target language versification, up to conscious interference into the original imagery – changes the text. The effect of the changes is the following: the spectator watching a play in translation sees it not only through the prism of a specific production (actors, scenery, music, etc.) but also in a specific interpretation made by the translator. Therefore, the spectator witnesses not only one of many possible ways of staging the text of the play, but also one of many possible texts!¹ This, in turn, means that in the production of a play in translation there is no constant value left.

It is a commonplace to say that translation is preceded by interpretation. But that is indeed what places the translator in a position similar to that of the director. Direction constitutes stage interpretation of a dramatic work. It is, according to Pavis, “a recreation (or better: a concretization) of a text, made by the actor in the stage space at the time when this activity is received by the spectator” (2002: 197).² “Direction is therefore an interpretation of a written text, consisting in re-creating the text into action. In the theatre, there is no other possibility of accessing the text but through its reading made by the director” (Pavis 2002: 198). And if the play is staged in translation, then – of course – the reading made by the director

¹ Literary translation is subject to the so-called “law of series”: “A translation of a given work always has the character of an utterance that is one among many other that are possible. [...] A series is the fundamental way of existence of artistic translation” (Balcerzan 1998: 17–18).

² All quotations from Polish sources are translated by the author of this essay.

constitutes the second stage of concretization, the first one being the reading made by the translator, who – prior to the very act of translating – has to analyze among others the dramatic construction, the time and place of action, the configuration and characteristic features of dramatic persons (Pavis 2002: 397). The translator – being the first interpreter of a dramatic work – creates a text that will be further interpreted by the director. One scholar underlines precisely the presence of values “created” in translation (Cetera 1999: 116). The translator imagines a theatrical realization of a given work, a realization that is often influenced by contemporary stage conventions, which are different from those governing the original stage (Cetera 1999: 116–117). Thus, by constructing the particular scenes according to his or her own interpretation, the translator becomes the primary director of the play.

It is one of the most basic features of the dramatic genre that the *personae* are characterized indirectly through what they do and what they say. Shakespeare, himself a director, did not use elaborate stage directions and hid most of the information concerning the dramatic persons in their utterances. That is why the translator of a Shakespeare play necessarily creates a text that will be as important in a performance based on it on a foreign stage, as is the text of the original on the English stage. The translator, by interpreting the text of the original in the process of translating, seems to characterize the dramatic persons and their relationships in the language of the translation, just as the author did it in the language of the original. If, then, this translation is used in the theatre, the stage director already receives with it certain directions concerning the psychology of the *dramatis personae* and ideas for possible creations of the roles by actors. This becomes even more visible if the original is enigmatic and has significant theatrical potential allowing for different interpretations. If the translator includes his or her interpretation in those places of the text where more than just one interpretation is possible, he or she faces the stage director and actors with a specific characterization of the dramatic persons and their relations. As is argued by Gibińska and Tabakowska, the omission of a seemingly insignificant word or the addition of a word that is not present in the original, the use of a synonym that does not carry the same emotional or stylistic meaning – all these things, trivial on the surface, combine together to form complete meanings and images (1993: 72). By changing even the smallest elements of the original image, the translator directs the play in his or her own way and according to his or her own vision of the original. As will be shown in this essay, the dramatic persons as appearing in the translation may be quite different from their original counterparts.

In order to illustrate the thesis that the translator can act as director Polish translations of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* will be used. I will

focus on one short fragment of the tragedy: the lovers' first encounter and conversation at the Capulets' ball, i.e. verses 92–109 of Act 1 scene 5, the so-called "pilgrim sonnet":

Romeo 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.
Juliet Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
 Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
 For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
 And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.
Romeo Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?
Juliet Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
Romeo O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
 They pray: grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.
Juliet Saints do not move, though grant for prayer's sake.
Romeo Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.
[He kisses her.]
 Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purg'd.
Juliet. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.
Romeo Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urg'd.
 Give me my sin again. [He kisses her.]
Juliet You kiss by th'book. (Gibbons 1980: 1.5.92–109)

The choice of this particular fragment for the analysis is not accidental, since the pilgrim sonnet is in a way representative of the whole tragedy. Constituting the first meeting and conversation of the two main characters, leading later to their love, marriage and eventually tragic death, the fragment is significant for the plot. It is crucial for the audience's understanding of the "star-crossed" lovers' relationship as well. The conversation assumes the form of a Shakespearean sonnet followed by an additional quatrain. Both the sonnet and the quatrain abound in conceits. Both are accompanied by significant movement: the sonnet's couplet finishes with a kiss, another kiss happens towards the end of the quatrain. Moreover, this fragment of *Romeo and Juliet* reveals many of the contrasts on which the play is based: veneration vs. desire, personal vs. social, verse vs. prose, poetic vs. vulgar.

A brief analysis of the pilgrim sonnet in the original will help notice differences in the creation of the characters in some of the Polish translations. In the pilgrim sonnet, Romeo is courting Juliet using religious imagery. This *amour courtois* behaviour characterized a medieval "gentleman" and was still present in the sixteenth-century England. Juliet responding in verse and wittily developing Romeo's Petrarchan tropes is the evidence of women's literary education in Elizabethan England and reminds of the fact that

female roles were played by young boy-actors trained to recite poetry with elegance. Romeo's adoration for Juliet expressed in the use of the sonnet form and the veneration of her person seen in such words as "holy shrine" (1.5.93), "pray" (1.5.103) or "dear saint" (1.5.102) gradually give way to the expression of desire visible in the frequent use of vocabulary from the semantic field of *body*, such as "lips" (1.5.94, 100–102, 106–108) or "palm" (1.5.99). Juliet intelligently and modestly delays Romeo's advances, finally grants the kiss. Romeo dominates in the scene: he starts the conversation and pronounces more lines than Juliet. He is the "aggressor", while Juliet is merely responding, however cleverly. She is gentle and reserved. He persists in his begging for a kiss, mingling the spiritual with the erotic, and wins the kiss twice. One critic describes the fragment in the following way, underlining the importance of the sonnet form:

It is as formal as a dance; Romeo advances for four lines; for four more Juliet evades, but does not repel, him; there is a slight pause, then in alternate lines they 'set to' each other, and the movement ends with a kiss. Underneath this formality, this witty conflict, we sense the intensity of their feeling – which will be openly expressed next time they meet, in the orchard (Morris 1970: 75).

Last but not least, the pilgrim sonnet is an extraordinary example of the genre. As one scholar stresses, "it is a shared sonnet, for which I know of no parallel; and it is shared, because through it love is not only offered but also accepted" (Hibbard 1981: 123).

The translator of the *Romeo and Juliet* pilgrim sonnet should take all the above-mentioned cultural, stylistic, compositional and theatrical features into account. In the comparative analysis of chosen Polish translations I will therefore concentrate on three aspects: the sonnet form, the *word – movement* relationship and the imagery. Out of seventeen³ Polish translations of the tragedy, ten, in which the translators' "interference" into the image of the protagonists is most visible, will be focused on. The authors of the chosen translations are: Leon Rudkiewicz, Józef Paszkowski, Józef Komierowski, Leon Ulrich, Jan Kasproicz, Władysław Tarnawski, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Zofia Siwicka, Krystyna Berwińska and Stanisław Barańczak⁴.

³ The authors and the dates of creation of all the seventeen translations are as follows: Ignacy Hołowiński (pseud. Kefaliński) (1839), Leon Rudkiewicz (1840), Julian Korsak (1840), Józef Edmund Paszkowski (1856), Józef Komierowski (1857), Adam Gorczyński (1885), Wiktoria Rosicka (1892), Leon Ulrich (1895), Wojciech Dziędużycki (1903), Jan Kasproicz (1924), Władysław Tarnawski (1924), Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz ([1926] 1954), Zofia Siwicka (1956), Jerzy Stanisław Sito (1975), Maciej Słomczyński (1983), Krystyna Berwińska (early 1990s) and Stanisław Barańczak (1990).

⁴ The texts of the ten translations, together with their English translations made by the author of this essay, are to be found in the Appendix.

First of all, the preservation of the sonnet form in translation is crucial not only for cultural and literary reasons. *Romeo and Juliet* was written when the vogue of courtly sonneteering was at its height. The tragedy begins with a sonnet Prologue and the shared sonnet of Romeo and Juliet is the culmination of the conventional Elizabethan poetry employed in the play. As one scholar notices, “to impose a form on measureless passions was almost a moral duty for Sidney’s generation” (Salingar [1955] 1982: 93). Using the terminology of one of the translators (Barańczak 1992), the sonnet genre constitutes the “semantic dominant” of this special dialogue between Romeo and Juliet. More specifically, the semantic dominant “is located at the clash point between the discipline of a strictly stabilized and codified genre and the unstopped abundance, breathless haste and emotio-expressive extreme of what the speaker has to say [...]” (Barańczak 1992: 39). Therefore, the fourteen-verse lyric form, whether it is still immediately recognizable to the contemporary audience as it was to the Renaissance audience or not, should be preserved in translation.

The Shakespearean sonnet is composed of three quatrains, in which a problem or proposition is stated, and a climactic couplet, in which the problem or proposition is solved or concluded. In the pilgrim sonnet the first kiss appears exactly as the climax after the concluding couplet. Therefore, violating the particular form and composition in translation, for example by lengthening the sonnet with additional verses, deprives the audience of important cultural information concerning the protagonists and causes the loss of the climactic effect described above. Only in Ulrich’s, Iwaszkiewicz’s, Siwicka’s, Berwińska’s and Tarnawski’s translations of the discussed fragment, the composition of content follows the original pattern: the solution to the proposition made in the first quatrain is contained in the last line of the sonnet and the kiss takes place after the fourteenth line. Also the construction of the additional quatrain in the five translations mentioned above reflects the original. In contrast to this, Rudkiewicz’s translation, for example, counts twenty-four lines instead of eighteen! The effect on the recipient is then quite opposite to the one intended in the original: instead of hearing a concise lyric into which numerous emotions are forced, the Polish spectator is presented with a lengthy, verbose, over-eloquent dialogue (filled with images that are not present in the original, which problem will be discussed later). Komierowski’s translation begins with a Shakespearean sonnet but the couplet ends earlier than the actual climax takes place and Romeo kisses Juliet only after three more lines: the sonnet courting, although present, is not properly sealed with a kiss – this kiss appears later. Similarly, Paszkowski’s translation begins with a sonnet but then another rhyming couplet is needed before Romeo can actually obtain the kiss from Juliet. Kasprowicz managed to preserve the form of Shakespearean sonnet but

lengthened the additional quatrain by one line. Barańczak, on the other hand, spoiled the original pattern by changing the sonnet and the quatrain into three quatrains and two triplets with the first kiss appearing after the first triplet. To sum up, unfaithfulness to the sonnet form – apart from causing the loss of important information regarding the protagonists – is obviously followed by unfaithfulness to the rhythm of the utterance and, consequently, to the tempo of the growing feelings.

Second of all, the *word-movement* relationship suggested by the original text should be preserved in translation. Unfaithfulness to the stage directions (both the ones signified with italics and the ones hidden in the text) may lead to alterations as regards particular actions and movement of the protagonists. For example, Kasprowicz's translation is quite illogical as far as the relationship between words and movement is concerned: according to the stage directions in the translation, Romeo kisses Juliet for the second time before actually uttering the words "Give it back, I shall wash away this sin" ("Daj go zpowrotem, ja ci grzech ten zmażę"). In Rudkiewicz's, Paszkowski's and Barańczak's translations, on the other hand, the first kiss remains in logical relation to the words uttered, but it does not happen after the sonnet couplet. In these three translations the words informing about the effect of the kiss (appearing in the original after the kiss) – "Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purg'd" – are changed into words preceding the kiss and having a different force and meaning, since Romeo justifies with them his request: "May [your lips] clear me forever of all sins of the Earth!" ("Niech mnie [usta twoje] wiecznie oczyszczą zwszystkich grzechów ziemi!" – Rudkiewicz), "And let my lips take the absolution from yours" ("I z ust swych moim daj wziąć rozgrzeszenie" – Paszkowski), "Let the touch of your lips clear my lips of the sin" ("Niech ust twoich dotknięcie z moich ust grzech zdejmie" – Barańczak). Putting aside for a moment Rudkiewicz's impassioned style and the hyperbole employed by him, the three translations, though they remain within the frame of the semantic fields of *body* and *religion*, change the actual order and meaning of the events. It can then be argued that the translator who changes the original *word-movement* relationship enters into the competence of the stage director.

Finally, the preservation of the original imagery is essential for the image of the protagonists and the development of their relationship. It appears that the Polish translators, by means of words used, suggest different creations of the parts of Romeo and Juliet: from the most to the least innocent. For instance, Rudkiewicz's Romeo is extremely devout – "[usta] pełne ubóstwiania/gotowe do czci twojej"⁵ ("[lips] full of adoration, [...]

⁵ This and other quotations concerning the imagery have been marked with italics in the texts of the translations in the Appendix.

ready to venerate you”) – and servile – “w pobożnej pokorze” (“in godly humility”) – towards a perfectly innocent and naïve Juliet, who, to Romeo’s question whether “saints do not have lips as do pilgrims”, answers “z powołania wszyscy się modlimy” (“to pray is the vocation of us all”), and at the end she says “całujesz podług reguł, w całej pobożności” (“you kiss in accordance with the rules, in a very godly manner”). This Romeo calls Juliet a “heavenly creature on the Earth” (“niebianka na ziemi”), “image of an Idol” (“obraz Bóstwa”), “motionless light of [his] soul” (“nieruchome światło mojej duszy”). And he declares to “suffer the crudest penance as punishment” (“najostrzejszą pokutę poniosę za karę”). Rudkiewicz stresses the spiritual dimension of the relationship. His Romeo talks in a romantic, idealistic way, actually reaching extremes of devoutness and religious adoration instead of burning desire⁶. Komierowski’s Romeo is also quite humble, however not as much as Rudkiewicz’s. His lips are “pielgrzymy korne” (“humble pilgrims”) instead of “blushing pilgrims” and naïve Juliet even thanks him for touching her hand (“i owszem podziękuję”). Komierowski employs additional religious vocabulary, calling Juliet “a blessed” (“błogosławiona”) and hides Romeo’s courting persuasion under a humble picture: “niech [...] posługę dłoni poniosą ci usta” (“let the lips bring to you the hands’ service”). In Paszkowski’s translation, the eroticism is veiled in the sonnet, but becomes more open in the closing quatrain. There is no talk of lips being “blushing pilgrims” or of a “tender kiss”. Instead, Romeo speaks of a “godly” or “God-fearing” kiss (“pocałowaniem pobożnym”). But later the sin becomes even “too tempting” (“zbyt pełen ponęty”). In Paszkowski’s translation, Juliet is as modest as in the English original.

In the remaining translations Romeo and Juliet are presented not as more but as less modest than in the original. For instance, Iwazkiewicz’s Juliet says “moje usta grzeszą i pragną pokuty” (“my lips are sinning and they desire penance”); Siwicka’s Juliet is equally tempting and she openly craves for another kiss – “Mam [grzech] na ustach. Chętnie się zamienię” (“I have [the sin] on my lips. I shall eagerly exchange with you”); Berwińska’s Juliet, though “saint”, at the same moment wants to “taste the sin” (“Niechaj więc święta smak grzechu poczuje”), she thus talks like a mature and consciously tempting woman and not like a naïve fourteen-year-old girl. All the abovementioned cases of Juliet’s tempting behaviour happen in the additional quatrain, after the sonnet’s couplet and the first kiss. However,

⁶ It must be added in this place that Rudkiewicz’s translation of *Romeo and Juliet* (1840) is in its entirety quite unfaithful stylistically and rhythmically to the original and is therefore regarded by some as having been based on a foreign translation (e.g. German) and not on the original.

there are also translations in which Juliet becomes more openly tempting than in the original already before the first kiss. In Barańczak's translation, for example, she appears almost to tell Romeo to do what he seems to wish (to kiss her, of course), not excluding the possibility that she will join him in the process. She says: "the first step must be made by the sinner and not by the saint" ("Pierwszy krok musi zrobić grzesznik, a nie święty"). In the four above-mentioned translations, the image of Juliet no longer innocent but instead taking the initiative is to a certain extent imposed upon a future stage director and actress.

Ulrich, Kasprowicz and Tarnawski also stressed the more erotic dimension of the exchange, but in the creation of Romeo, not of Juliet. Ulrich changed the original "gentle sin" into "słodka rozpusta" ("sweet debauchery") accompanying the expression with an exclamation mark. The words are written in brackets, which might suggest that Romeo speaks them aside. Both operations – replacing the word "sin" with the word "debauchery" and adding an exclamation mark – lead to an image of admiration, almost ecstasy, more appropriate, if at all, for the additional quatrain after the first kiss than for the beginning of the conversation. Although the sonnet genre was destined at expressing desire, Romeo speaking these words at the very beginning of his first talk with Juliet makes the spectator immediately aware of only the erotic side of the protagonists' future relationship, whereas in the original, apart from being physical, it is also pure, thanks to its poetical and youthful character. Moreover, the use of brackets creates a certain inconsistency in Romeo's character and in his elegant behaviour towards Juliet. Romeo seems to be saying the words to himself or to the audience, which again introduces another, maybe even satirical, dimension. In Kasprowicz's translation, Shakespeare's "gentle sin" becomes a "crime" ("zbrodnia") and "lips [...] blushing pilgrims" – "boiling lips" ("wrzące wargi"). Kasprowicz's Romeo almost reaches the extremes of eroticism by speaking in this way. Finally, Tarnawski breaks up with the religious convention of the sonnet and with Romeo's tenderness from the second line, when he makes Romeo say "poddam się rozkosznej karze" ("I shall submit to a delightful [or lustful] punishment"). This operation finds its culmination in Romeo's last utterance, when the boy says: "O grzechu, ponad cnotę miły!" ("Oh sin, nicer than virtue [or virginity]!"). Summing up, in translations where neutral words or expressions are substituted with marked vocabulary (e.g. words that may suggest desire, as in the examples above) the image of the *dramatis personae* and their relationship is altered and demands a very concrete interpretation in the theatre.

To conclude, the analysis of several Polish versions of Romeo and Juliet's first conversation has made it possible to see that a stage director,

looking for a translation of the play to be used in his or her production, may already to some extent choose between different creations of the main roles. It can then be argued that the translator who imposes his or her interpretation of the text, for example by trying to explain things that in the original are left enigmatic or by changing drastically the imagery or the *word – movement* relationship, implies a specific construction of the characters and their relationships on the stage. It is thus the translator, not the stage director, who in the target language theatre is the first person to indicate possible creations of the roles, to suggest particular ways of staging given scenes and, finally, to influence the audience's reception of the *dramatis personae* and their actions. A stage director looking for a translation of *Romeo and Juliet* for his or her production may already choose from among different creations of the main roles. Depending on the translation, his or her Juliet may be either innocently modest or mature and tempting, while his or her Romeo – either humble and elegant or straightforwardly passionate.

It is interesting to notice that just as Polish readers and spectators have oscillated between more bowdlerized and more daring translations, so have English-speaking audiences in the case of stage or screen adaptations of the play in the original. Hearing always the same English text, they could, for instance, watch innocent and modest Juliets, like that of Fanny Kemble, and polite, gentleman-like Romeos, like that of Johnston Forbes-Robertson, in nineteenth century; as well as star-like, womanly, sensuous Juliets, like that of Adelaide Neilson in mid-nineteenth century; and straightforwardly passionate Romeos, like that of Laurence Olivier in mid-twentieth century. However, in the English-speaking countries it was the same English text that led directors and actors to so many interpretations, which proves the openness of the original, whereas in Poland, directors and actors have already at their disposal many different interpretations, thanks to different translations. This proves that, in the target language-speaking theatre, it is the translator who precedes the director in the process of adapting a dramatic piece for a given production. In the activity of interpreting the text of the original, appropriating it and supplying it (consciously or unconsciously) with new and/or different meanings, the translator resembles a stage director. It seems thus that the translator may play the role of the very first director of a play in the target language theatre.

Appendix

1840: Leon Rudkiewicz

Romeo do Julii

Jeżeli moja ręka zuchwała nad miarę
Śmie dotknąć twojej *niebianko na ziemi*;⁸

Najostrzejszą pokutę poniosę za karę!
Me usta są pielgrzymy! miej litość nad niemi
Gdyż *wpobożnej pokorze pełne ubóstwiania*
Gotowe do czci twojej – i ucałowania.

Julija

Pielgrzymie! niech twe usta twej ręki niewinią,
Ona to uczyniła – co pobożni czynią.
Wszak pielgrzymom jest wolno – niosąc
świętym dzięki
Bez grzechu własną ręką dotykać ich ręki! –

Romeo

Czyż święci ust niemają, równie jak pielgrzymy?

Julija

Ach tak, gdyż *zpowołania wszyscy się modlimy!*

Romeo

Więc pozwól mi *obrazie Bóstwa* tyle miły!
Niech me usta uczynią co ręce czyniły.
One ci szła swe modły – usłysz ich błagania,
Niech mi żadna wątpliwość nadziei niezgania.

Julija

Święty chociaż zezwoli lecz sam się nieruszy!

Romeo to Juliet

If my hand, much too bold,⁷
Dares to touch yours, *heavenly creature on the Earth,*

I shall suffer the cruelest penance as punishment!
My lips are pilgrims! Have mercy on them,
For *in godly humility, full of adoration,*
They are ready to venerate you – and to kiss.

Juliet

Pilgrim! Do not let your lips blame your hand,
It has done what the devout do.
Pilgrims may indeed – when bringing thanks
to saints –
Touch saints' hands with their own without sin!

Romeo

Do not saints have lips as do pilgrims?

Juliet

Oh yes, for *to pray is the vocation of us all!*

Romeo

So let me, *image of an Idol*, so pleasant!
Let my lips do what hands have done.
They send their prayers to you – hear their
supplications,
Let no doubt destroy my hope.

Juliet

Though saint will allow, he himself cannot
move!

⁷ In translating into English the Polish translation of the pilgrim sonnet the author of this essay tried to be as literal as possible in order to convey most of the senses present in the lexis, therefore the English texts are neither rhymed nor rhythmical.

⁸ Italics, apart from those in stage directions, come from the author of this essay.

<p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Zostań więc <i>nieruchome światło mojej duszy!</i> A kiedy moje usta zetkną się z twojemi. Niech mnie wiecznie oczyszczą z wszystkich grzechów ziemi!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją.</i></p> <p><i>Julija</i></p> <p>Teraz więc na mych ustach twe grzechy zostały?</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Na twych ustach?! Zarzucie pełen szczęśliwości!</p> <p>Oddaj mi więc na powrót rejestr grzechów cały! <i>Całuje ją znowu.</i></p> <p><i>Julija</i></p> <p><i>Całujesz podług reguł, wcalej pobożności! –</i></p>	<p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Stay then, <i>motionless light of my soul!</i> And when my lips meet yours, May they clear me forever of all sins of the Earth!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He kisses her.</i></p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>So now on my lips your sins have stayed?</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>On your lips? Oh, a happy reproach!</p> <p>Then give back to me the whole register of sins! <i>He kisses her again.</i></p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p><i>You kiss in accordance with the rules, in a very godly manner!</i></p>
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[1856] ca 1890: **Józef Edmund Paszkowski**

<p><i>Romeo do Julii</i></p> <p>Jeśli dłoń moja, co tę świętość trzyma, Błuzni dotknięciem: <i>zuchwalstwo takowe</i> Odpokutować usta me gotowe <i>Pocałowaniem pobożnem pielgrzymia.</i></p> <p><i>Julia do Romea</i></p> <p>Mości pielgrzymie, błuznisz swojej dłoni, Która nie grzeszy <i>zdrożnem dotykaniem;</i> Jestli ujęcie rąk <i>pocałowaniem,</i> Nikt go ze <i>świętych pielgrzymom</i> nie broni.</p> <p><i>Romeo jak pierwszej</i></p> <p>Nie mająż <i>święci</i> ust tak jak <i>pielgrzymi</i>?</p> <p><i>Julia jak pierwszej</i></p> <p>Mają ku <i>modłom</i> lub <i>kornej podzięce.</i></p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Niechże ich usta <i>czynią</i> to co <i>ręce;</i> Moje się <i>modlą,</i> <i>przyjm</i> <i>modły</i> ich, <i>przyjmij.</i></p>	<p><i>Romeo to Juliet</i></p> <p>If my hand, which is holding this saint thing, Profanes with the touch: my lips are ready To do penance for such impudence With a <i>pilgrim's God-fearing kiss.</i></p> <p><i>Juliet to Romeo</i></p> <p>Honourable pilgrim, you profane your hand, Which does not sin with an indecent touch; If hands' touch is a kiss, No saint forbids it to pilgrims.</p> <p><i>Romeo like previously</i></p> <p>Do not saints have lips as do pilgrims?</p> <p><i>Juliet like previously</i></p> <p>They have them to pray with or to humbly thank.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>May their lips do what hands do; Mine pray, receive their prayers, receive.</p>
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Julia

Niewzruszonymi pozostają święci,
Choć gwoli modłów niewzbronnie ich chęci.

Romeo

Ziść więc cel moich, stojąc niewzruszenie,
I z ust swych moim daj wziąć rozgrzeszenie.
Całuje ją.

Julia

Moje więc teraz obciąża grzech zdjęty.

Romeo

Z mych ust? O! grzechu, *zbyt pełen ponęty!*
Niechże go nazad rozgrzeszony zdejmie!
Pozwól.

*Całuje ją znowu.**Julia*

Jak z książki całujesz, pielgrzymie.

Juliet

Saints remain unmoved,
Though against prayers their wills cannot fight.

Romeo

So fulfill the aim of mine, standing still,
And let my lips take the absolution from yours.
He kisses her.

Juliet

Mine are thus loaded with the sin that has
been taken away.

Romeo

From my lips? Oh! Sin, *too tempting!*
May the absolved take it back again!
Let me.

*He kisses her again.**Juliet*

You kiss by the book, pilgrim.

1857: Józef Komierowski*Romeo (do Julii).*

Jeśli znieważam przez dotknięcie dworne,
Ten święty ołtarz; za wdzięczną obrazę,
Gotowe wargi dwa *pielgrzymy korne*,
Ucałowaniem zgładzić twardą skazę.

Julja

Dobry pielgrzymie, *i owszem podzięk*,
Godzien uczynek zbożny i życzliwy;
Pątnikom wolno tykać świętych ręki;
Dłoń w dłoń, to dla nich całus *świętobliwy*.

Romeo

Wszak usta mają pielgrzymi i święci?

Julja

Tak, lecz w ich ustach modła wiekuista.

Romeo (to Juliet).

If I profane, by a courtly touch,
This holy altar, for the gracious insult,
Lips, two *humble pilgrims*,
Are ready to smooth the hard blemish with
a kiss.

Juliet

Good pilgrim, *indeed thanks*,
A proper deed pious and kind;
Pilgrims may touch saints' hands;
Hand in hand is a saintly kiss for them.

Romeo

But pilgrims do have lips and so do saints?

Juliet

Yes, but in their lips there is an everlasting
prayer.

Romeo

Więc święta, dozwól, *niech* przy równej chęci,
Posługę dłoni poniosą ci usta;
 Weź modły z warg mych, o *błogosławiona,*
 A moja wiara w rozpacz nie skona.

Julja

Święty wysłucha, jednak się nie ruszy.

Romeo

I ty się nie rusz, równie, bóstwo moje,
 Dopóki modłów nie zbiorę pociechy.
Całuje ją.

Twe usta, moje rozwiązały grzechy.

Julja

Więc na me usta zbiegły grzechy twoje?

Romeo

Grzechy warg moich? wdzięczne oskarżenie,
 Więc zwróć mi grzechy.

Julja

Całujesz uczenie,
 Jak z książki.

Romeo

So, saint, *let the lips bring to you*
The hands' service with an equal eagerness;
 Take the prayers from my lips, oh *blessed,*
 And my faith will not die in despair.

Juliet

A saint will hear, but will not move.

Romeo

And don't you move either, my idol,
 Till I have harvested the consolation of prayers.
He kisses her.

Your lips have absolved my sins.

Juliet

So onto my lips have your sins fled?

Romeo

My lips' sins? A charming accusation,
 So give the sins back to me.

Juliet

You kiss learnedly,
 By the book.

1895: Leon Ulrich

Romeo (do Julii)

Gdy się me dłonie profanować ważą
 Ten ołtarz święty, (jak *słodka rozpusta!*)
 Dwa rumieniące się pielgrzymy – usta,
 Ślady dotknięcia pocałunkiem zmażą.

Julia

Myśl twa zbyt nisko o ręce twej trzyma,
 Boć rąk dotknięcia pobożność nie broní;
 Dłoni święci mają, a dotknięcie dłoni
 Jest pocałunkiem świętego pielgrzyma.

Romeo

Toć jak pielgrzymi święte usta mają.

Romeo (to Juliet)

If my hands dare profane
 This holy altar, (what *sweet debauchery!*)
 Two blushing pilgrims – lips,
 Will erase the traces of the touch with a kiss.

Juliet

Your thought rates your hand too poor,
 For devoutness does not forbid hands' touch;
 Saints have hands, and hands' touch
 Is the kiss of a holy pilgrim.

Romeo

But women saints have lips as do pilgrims.

<p><i>Julia</i></p> <p>Mają, pielgrzymie, tylko do modlenia.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Niechże co ręce i usta działają, Niechaj się wiara w rozpacz nie przemienia.</p> <p><i>Julia</i></p> <p>Święte przyjmują pobożną pokorę.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Pokornych modłów niechże owoc zbiorę</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją.</i></p> <p>Ust twoich świętość z mych ust grzech omywa.</p> <p><i>Julia</i></p> <p>Więc grzech ust twoich na moich spoczywa.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Twoich wyrzutów nie zniosę potęgi: Oddaj mi grzech mój!</p> <p><i>Julia</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Całujesz jak z księgi.</p>	<p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>They have them, pilgrim, only to pray with.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>May lips do too what hands do, Do not let faith turn to despair.</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>Women saints accept godly humbleness.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Let me harvest the fruit of humble prayers</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He kisses her.</i></p> <p>The holiness of your lips washes away the sin from my lips.</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>So the sin of your lips reposes on mine.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>I shall not stand the power of your reproaches: Give my sin back to me!</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">You kiss by the book.</p>
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1924: Jan Kasprowicz

<p><i>Romeo (do Julji)</i></p> <p>Jeśli się ręką dotykam niegodnie Takiej świętości, wówczas na ukoje Niechaj całunkiem zapłacą za zbrodnię Te dwa pielgrzymy, wrzące wargi moje.</p> <p><i>Julja</i></p> <p>Krzywdzisz, pielgrzymie, swą rękę, co zbożna</p> <p>Tak obyczajnie moją rękę trzyma! Dłoń świętych nato, że jej dotknąć można – I to jest zacny całunek pielgrzyma.</p>	<p><i>Romeo (to Juliet)</i></p> <p>If I touch such holiness in an unworthy way, Then as consolation Let for <i>the crime</i> these two pilgrims, <i>My boiling lips</i>, pay with a kiss.</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>Pilgrim, you do harm your hand, which, de- vout, So mannerly is holding my hand! Saints' hand is for being touched – And this is pilgrim's worthy kiss.</p>
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<p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Warg, jak pielgrzymie, nie mająż i święci?</p> <p><i>Julja</i></p> <p>Ku modłom tylko i kornej podzięce.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Broń od rozpaczy, daj folgę mej chęci Czynić mym ustom to, co czynią ręce.</p> <p><i>Julja</i></p> <p>Święty pozwala, choć go nic nie wzruszy.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Więc niewzruszenie spełnię chęć mej duszy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją.</i></p> <p>Tak przez twe wargi grzech z mych warg jest zdjęty!</p> <p><i>Julja</i></p> <p>I moim wargom pozostał on w darze.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Grzech warg mych? <i>Zbrodnia</i>, przepelna ponęty!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją ponownie.</i></p> <p>Daj go zpowrotem, ja ci grzech ten zmażę.</p> <p><i>Julja</i></p> <p>Całujesz waćpan, jak z książki...</p>	<p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Have not saints such lips as pilgrims'?</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>Only for prayers and humble thanksgiving.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Protect from despair, indulge my will So that my lips do what hands do.</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>Saint allows, though nothing will move him.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>So I shall fulfill the will of my soul without being moved. <i>He kisses her.</i></p> <p>Thus by your lips the sin from my lips is taken!</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>And it has remained as a gift on my lips.</p> <p><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Sin of my lips? <i>Crime</i>, so full of temp- tation!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>He kisses her again.</i></p> <p>Give it back, I shall wash away this sin.</p> <p><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>You kiss, sir, by the book...</p>
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1924: Władysław Tarnawski

<p><i>Romeo (do Julji)</i></p> <p>Świętości może profanacją grzeszy Dłoń moja, – <i>poddam się rozkosznej karze:</i></p> <p>Pielgrzymów para zapłonionych śpieszy I ślad dotknięcia pocałunkiem zmaże.</p>	<p><i>Romeo (to Juliet)</i></p> <p>My hand might sin with profanation Against holiness – <i>I shall submit to a delightful punishment:</i></p> <p>A pair of blushing pilgrims is in a hurry To wash away the trace of the touch with a kiss.</p>
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Julja

Pielgrzymie, ręka twoja jest pobożna,
 Żle o niej nie mów, – potwarz rzecz to niska.
 Dłoń mają święci, tej dotykać można,
 I nie całuje pielgrzym, lecz ją ściska.

Romeo

Cóż usta świętym i pielgrzymom pęta?

Julja

Spletane winny być modlitwy niciami.

Romeo

Rąk przykład porwał usta me, o święta, –
 Spełń modłów cel – lub wiarę rozpacz przyćmi.

Julja

Święta nie wzrusza się i w łaski porę.

Romeo

Więc się nie ruszaj, aż plon modłów zbiorę.

Całuje ją.

Tak twoje wargi z moich grzech ten zmyły.

Julja

Więc moje teraz w grzechu są ohydzie.

Romeo

Z mych ust? *O grzechu, ponad cnotę miły!* –
 O, oddaj mi go!

Julja

To jak z książki idzie.

Juliet

Pilgrim, your hand is God-fearing,
 Do not speak ill of it – calumny is a low thing.
 Saints have a hand, it can be touched,
 And the pilgrim does not kiss, but clasps it.

Romeo

What trammels the lips of both saints and pilgrims?

Juliet

They should be trammelled with the threads of prayer.

Romeo

The example given by hands has ravished my lips, oh saint,
 Fulfill the aim of prayers, or despair will eclipse faith.

Juliet

A woman saint is not moved even in the time of grace.

Romeo

So do not move till I have harvested the fruits of my prayers.

He kisses her.

Thus have your lips washed this sin away from mine.

Juliet

So now mine are in the atrocity of sin.

Romeo

From my lips? *Oh sin, nicer than virtue!*
 Oh, give it back to me!

Juliet

It goes by the book.

[1926] 1954: **Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz**

Romeo

Jeśli dotyk mej dłoni ujmy jakie czyni
Tej świętości, tom gotów pokutować za nie:

Wargi moje pobożne, niby dwaj pielgrzymi,
Zmyją skazę tej hańby przez pocałowanie.

Julia

Nie miej za złe twej ręce, o dobry pątniku,
Że z nabożeństwem mojej dotyka się dłoni.
Pocałunków zawartych w rąk naszych dotyku
Nawet mnichom surowa ustawa nie broni.

Romeo

Czyż świętym jak pątnikom usta nie są dane?

Julia

Tak, pielgrzymie, lecz służą one do modlenia.

Romeo

Pozwól więc ustom w ślady iść ręką wskazane
I nie daj, aby z wiary przeszły do wątpienia.

Julia

Wiesz, święty nie da poznać, choć modłów
wysłucha.

Romeo

Nie drgnij więc, choć ma prośba wpadła ci
do ucha.

Całuje ją.

Twa warga moje usta z grzechu oczyściła.

Julia

Lecz moje usta grzeszą i pragną pokuty.

Romeo

Zło z mej wargi? O, szybko odrobuję to, miła!

Romeo

If my hand's touch brings discredit
Up on this holiness, I am ready to do penance
for it:

My God-fearing lips, like two pilgrims,
Will wash away the blemish of this shame
with a kiss.

Juliet

Do not blame your hand, good pilgrim,
For touching my hand with devotion.
Kisses that are present in our hands' touch
Are not forbidden even to monks by severe
rule.

Romeo

Are not lips given to saints as they are to
pilgrims?

Juliet

Yes, pilgrim, but they are used for prayer.

Romeo

So let lips follow the hand's tracks
And do not let them pass from faith to doubt.

Juliet

You know, saint will not let you know, though
he will listen to the prayers.

Romeo

So do not move, though my prayer has been
heard.

He kisses her.

Your lip has cleared mine of the sin.

Juliet

But my lips are sinning and they desire penance.

Romeo

Evil from my lip? Oh, I shall be quick to
undo this, dear!

Oddaj mi grzech z powrotem!
Całuje.

Julia

Całujesz jak z nuty!

Give the sin back to me!
He kisses.

Juliet

You kiss very skillfully!

1956: Zofia Siwicka

Romeo do Julii

Jeśli niegodna ma ręka obraża
Tę świętość cudną, me wargi by rade
Jak dwaj pielgrzymi korni u ołtarza
Pocałunkami zetrzeć dotknięć ślady.

Julia

Pielgrzymie, krzywdę wyrządzasz swej dłoni,
Która tak godnie objawia szacunek,
Bo święty ręki pielgrzymom nie broni,
Dłoni w dłoni włożona to ich pocałunek.

Romeo

Czy ust nie mają święci i pielgrzymi?

Julia

Pielgrzymi mają – by mówić pacierze.

Romeo

A więc daj ustom to, co ręka czyni.
Moje się modlą – lub w nic już nie wierzę.

Julia

Święty pozwala, stojąc niewzruszenie.

Romeo

Więc się nie ruszaj i spełń me pragnienie.
Całuje ją.

Twe wargi z grzechu moje oczyściły.

Julia

Mam go na ustach. Chętnie się zamienię.

Romeo to Juliet

If my unworthy hand profanes
This wonderful holiness, my lips would like to,
Like two pilgrims humble by the altar,
Erase the traces of the touch with kisses.

Juliet

Pilgrim, you do wrong your hand,
Which shows respect so suitably.
For saint does not forbid his hand to pilgrims.
Hand put in hand is their kiss.

Romeo

Do not saints and pilgrims have lips?

Juliet

Pilgrims do – to say prayers with.

Romeo

So give to lips what the hand does.
Mine pray – or I believe in nothing more.

Juliet

Saint allows, standing still.

Romeo

So stand still and fulfill my wish.
He kisses her.

Your lips have cleared mine of the sin.

Juliet

I have it on my lips. I shall eagerly exchange with you.

<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>
To grzech z warg moich! O, ty grzechu miły! Daj go z powrotem. <i>Całuje ją znowu.</i>	This is the sin from my lips! Oh, you, dear sin! Give it back. <i>He kisses her again.</i>
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Całujesz uczenie.	You kiss learnedly.

ca 1990: **Krystyna Berwińska**

<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>
Jeśli dotknięcie twej dłoni mą ręką Jest świętokradztwem – wargi powędrują Jak dwaj pielgrzymi i relikwię świętą Aby grzech zmazać – ze czcią ucałują.	If to touch your palm with my hand Is a sacrilege, the lips will wander Like two pilgrims and – to erase the sin – They will kiss the saint relic with veneration.
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Pielgrzymie, nazbyt krzywdzisz rękę swoją. Nie zasługuje wcale na naganę. Dotknięcia ręki święci się nie boją, Ich pocałunkiem jest dłoni spotkanie.	Pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much. It does not deserve reprimand at all. Saints do not fear hand's touch, The meeting of hands is their kiss.
<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>
Czyż warg nie mają pątnicy i święci?	Do not pilgrims and saints have lips?
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Pielgrzymie! Służą do modlitwy wargi.	Pilgrim! Lips are used for prayer.
<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>
Święta! Niech wargi czynią to co ręce, Lub wiara zmieni się w rozpacz i skargi.	Saint! Let lips do what hands do, Or faith will turn to despair and complaints.
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Święte do modłów wysłuchania skore...	Women saints are eager to hear prayers...
<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>
Więc mnie wysłuchaj! Nagrodę odbiorę. <i>Całuje ją.</i> Przez twoje usta – z grzechu oczyszczonym.	So listen to me! I shall be awarded! <i>He kisses her.</i> I am cleared, by your lips, of the sin.
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Niechaj więc święta smak grzechu poczuje.	So let the saint taste the sin.

Romeo

Z moich ust grzech ten? Aniele wcielony!
 Ten grzech mi oddaj –
Całuje ją.

Romeo

From my lips this sin? Angel incarnate!
 Give this sin back to me –
He kisses her.

Julia

Tak jak z nut całujesz.

Juliet

You kiss very skillfully.

[1990] 1998: **Stanisław Barańczak***Romeo*

Jeżeli profanuję nazbyt szorstką dłońią
 Świątynię twojej dłoni, grzech to jest olbrzymi:
 Zgładzi go czule para warg, które się płonią
 Z poczucia winy, jak dwaj nieśmiali pielgrzymi.

Romeo

If I profane too much with a rough hand
 The shrine of your hand, an enormous sin is
 this.
 It will be redeemed tenderly by a pair of lips,
 which blush
 From a sense of guilt like two shy pilgrims.

Julia

Dobry pielgrzymie, nie ma w tym grzechu,
 gdy dłoni
 Inna dłoń ze czcią dotknie lub nawet ją trzyma:
 Są święci, przed którymi tłum wiernych się
 kłoni,
 I nie szkodzi, gdy ręk ich dotknie dłoń piel-
 grzyma.

Juliet

Good pilgrim, there is no sin in that one hand
 Is touched with veneration or even held by
 another hand:
 There are saints before whom a crowd of
 believers bow,
 And it does not matter if their hands are
 touched by pilgrim's palm.

Romeo

Czyż święci ust nie mają, tak jak i pielgrzymi?

Romeo

Do not saints have lips as do pilgrims?

Julia

Usta są im potrzebne, aby wznosić modły.

Juliet

They need lips to raise prayers.

Romeo

O, niech tych ust ustami dotknę spragnionymi:
 Gdy wiary z nich zaczerpnę, już mnie w raj
 przywiodły!

Romeo

O, let me touch these lips with thirsty lips:
 If I draw faith from them, they will have led
 me to paradise!

Julia

*Pierwszy krok musi zrobić grzesznik, a nie
 święty.*

Juliet

*The first step must be made by the sinner and
 not by the saint.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Nie ruszaj się więc, zanim kroku nie postąpię: Niech ust twoich dotknę z moich ust grzech zdejmie.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Julia</i></p> <p>Lecz teraz mam na ustach grzech, z twoich ust zdjęty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>O, ja ci rozgrzeszenia również nie poskąpię: Oddaj mi grzech z powrotem.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Całuje ją.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Julia</i></p> <p>Bardzo to uprzejmie...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>So do not move till I have taken a step: Let the touch of your lips clear my lips of the sin.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He kisses her.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>But now I have on my lips the sin, from your lips taken.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Romeo</i></p> <p>Oh, I shall not stint of absolution either: Give the sin back to me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He kisses her.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Juliet</i></p> <p>It is very polite of you...</p>
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