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! 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). “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

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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” (Balcerzak 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 *persona* 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 I scene 5, the so-called “pilgrim sonnet”:

Romeo If I profane with my unworthiest 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 mannersly 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 courtisé* 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 seventeen 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 Kasprówicz, Władysław Tarnawski, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz,
Zofia Siwicka, Krystyna Berwińska and Stanisław Barańczak.

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

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, Iwaskiewicz'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, Kasprzowicz’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 zprowotem, 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 purged” – 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 oczyszczę z wszystkich 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 dotknąć 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”⁴ (“[lips] full of adoration, […]

⁴ 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 regul, 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" ("niebiana na ziemi"), "image of an Idol" ("obraz Bóstwa"), "motionless light of [his] soul" ("nieruchome światło mojej duszy"). And he declares to "suffer the cruelest 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 podzęki"). 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 pojęty"). 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, Iwaszkiewicz'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 cnótę mily!” (“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 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 Juli
Jeżeli moja ręka zuchwała nad miarę
Śmie dotknąć twojej niebiano na ziemi;\(^7\)
Najostrzejszą pokuć poniosę za karę!
Me usta są pielgrzymy! miej litość nad niemi
Gdyż wpołóżnej pokorte pełne ubóstwania
Gotowe do czei twojej – i ucałowania.

Romeo to Juliet
If my hand, much too bold,\(^7\)
Dares to touch yours, heavenly creature on
the Earth,\(\text{ }^9\)
I shall suffer the cruellest 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.

Julia
Pielgrzymie niech twe usta twej ręki niewinią,
Ona to uczyniła – co pobożni czynią.
Wszak pielgrzymem jest welone nieśio swiątym dzięki
Bez grzechu własną ręką dotykać ich ręki –

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
Czyż święci ust niemają, równie jak pielgrzymy?

Romeo
Do not saints have lips as do pilgrims?

Julia
Ach tak, gdyż zmowa wszyscy się modlimy!

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

Romeo
Więc pozwól mi obrazie Bóstwa tyle miły!
Niech me usta uczynią co ręce czyniły.
One ci szłą swe modli – usłysz ich błagania,
Niech mi żadna watliwość nadziei niezgania.

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.

Julia
Święty chociaż zezwoli lecz sam się nieruszy!

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.
\(^9\) Italicics, apart from those in stage directions, come from the author of this essay.
Romeo
Zostań więc nieruchome światło mojej duszy!
A kiedy moje usta zetkną się z twojemi.
Niech mnie wiecznie oczyszczą z wszystkich
grzechów ziemi!
Caha ją, ją.

Julia
Teraz wiec na mych ustach twe grzechy zostały?

Romeo
Na twych ustach? Zarzucie pełen szczęśliwości!
Oddaj mi więc na powrót rejestr grzechów cały!
Caha ją znów.

Julia
Caha ją, posłuszna, w mojej pobożności —

Juliet
So now on my lips your sins have staved?

Romeo
On your lips? Oh, a happy reproach!
Then give back to me the whole register of sins!
He kisses her again.

Juliet
You kiss in accordance with the rules, in a very
godly manner!

[1856] ca 1890: Józef Edmund Paszkowski

Romeo do Juli
Jeśli dłoń moja, co tę świętość trzyma,
Błężni dotkniciem: zuchwałstwo takowe
Odpokutować usta me gotowe
Pokałowania pobożnym pielgrzyma.

Julia do Romeo
Mość pielgrzymie, błężniz swojej dłoni,
Która nie grzeszy zdroźnym dotykaniem;
Jestli ujęcie ręk pokałowania,
Nikt go ze świętych pielgrzymom nie broni.

Romeo jak pierwej
Nie mając święci ust tak jak pielgrzymi?

Julia jak pierwej
Mają ku modłom lub kornej podzięce.

Romeo jak pierwej
Niechże ich usta czynią to co ręce;
Moje się modlą, przyjem modły ich, przyjmij.

Romeo
Stay then, motionless light of my soul!
And when my lips meet yours,
May they clear me forever of all sins of the
Earth!

He kisses her.

Romeo to Juliet
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 pilgrim’s God-fearing kiss.

Romeo like previously
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.

Juliet like previously
They have them to pray with or to humbly
thank.

Romeo
May their lips do what hands do:
Mine pray, receive their prayers, receive.
Juliet

Niewzruszeni pozostają święci,
Choć gwiźdź modłów niewzbronne ich chęci.

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

Romeo

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

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

Juliet

Moje więc teraz obciąża grzech zdjęty.

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

Romeo

Z mych ust! O! grzechu, zbyt pełen ponęty!
Niechże go nazad rozgrzeszony zdejmę!
Pozwól.
    Całuje ją znowu.

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

Juliet

Jak z książki całujesz, pielgrzymie.

You kiss by the book, pilgrim.

1857: Józef Komierowski

Romeo (do Juliit).
Jeżeli znieważam przez dotknięcie dworne,
Ten święty ołtarz, za wdzięczną obrazę,
Gotowe wargi dwa pielgrzymy korne,
Ucalowaniem zgładź twardą skazę.

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

Dobry pielgrzymie, i owszem podziękuję,
Goszczarnik uznany święty i wycztylity;
Płtnikom wolno tykać świętych ręki;
Dłoń w dłoń, to dla nich całus świętołity.

Juliet

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

Romeo

Wszak usta mają pielgrzymi i święci?

But pilgrims do have lips and so do saints?

Juliet

Tak, lecz w ich ustach modła wiekuista.

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 rozpaczy nie skona.

Juliet

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.

Juliet

Więc na me usta zbiegły grzechy twoje?

Romeo

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

Juliet

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.

Juliet

Your lips have absolved my sins.

Romeo

So onto my lips have your sins fled?

Juliet

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 Juli) [85]
Gdy się me dłonie profanować ważą
Ten oltarz święty, (jak słodka rozpustal)
Dwa rumieniące się pielgrzymy – usta,
Slady dotknięcia pocałunkiem znażą.

Juliet

Mysii twa zbyt nisko o ręce twej trzyma,
Boć ręk dotknięcia pobożność nie broni;
Dłon 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.
Juliet
They have them, pilgrim, only to pray with.

Romeo
May lips do too what hands do,
Do not let faith turn to despair.

Juliet
Women saints accept godly humbleness.

Romeo
Let me harvest the fruit of humble prayers

Juliet
He kisses her.

Ust twoich świętości z mych ust grzech omywa.
The holiness of your lips washes away the sin
from mv lips.

Juliet
So the sin of your lips reposes on mine.

Romeo
I shall not stand the power of your reproaches:
Give my sin back to me!

Juliet
You kiss by the book.

1924: Jan Kasprowicz

Romeo (do Julii)
Jeśli się ręką dotykam niegodnie
Takie świętości, wówczas na ukoje
Niechaj całunkiem zapłacą za zbrodnię
Te dwa pielgrzymy, wrzące wargi moje.

Juliet
Pilgrim, you do harm your hand, which, devout,
So mannerly is holding my hand!

Krzywdzisz, pielgrzymie, swą rękę, co zbożna
Tak obyczajnie moją rękę trzyma!
Dłoni świętych nato, że jej dotknąć można –
I to jest zacny całunek pielgrzyma.

Romeo (to Juliet)
If I touch such holiness in an unworthy way,
Then as consolation
Let for the crime these two pilgrims,
My boiling lips, pay with a kiss.

Juliet
Saints’ hand is for being touched –
And this is pilgrim’s worthy kiss.
Romeo
Warg, jak pielgrzymie, nie mająż i święci?

Juliet
Ku modlom tylko i kornej podzięce.

Romeo
Broń od rozpaczy, daj folg mej chęci
Czynić mym ustom to, co czynią ręce.

Juliet
Święty pozwała, choć go nic nie wruszy.

Romeo
Więc niewzruszenie spełnię chęć mej duszy.

Juliet
I moim wargom pozostał on w darze.

Romeo
Grzech warg mych? Zbrodnie, przepelna ponęty!

Juliet
Całuje ją ponownie.

Romeo (do Juliet)
Świętości może profanacją grzeszy
Dłoń moja, — poddam się rozkosznej karze:

Romeo (to Juliet)
My hand might sin with profanation
Against holiness — I shall submit to a delightful punishment:

1924: Władysław Tarnawski
Świętości może profanacją grzeszy
Dłoń moja, — poddam się rozkosznej karze:
Pielgrzymów para zapłonionych śpieszy
I ślad dotknięcia pocałunkiem zmaże.
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 trammed 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.
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 hanby przez pocałowanie.

Julia
Nie miej za zle tej ręce, o dobry pątniku,
Że z nabożeństwem mojej dotyka się dłoni.
Pocahnków zawartych w rąk naszych dotyku
Nawet mnichom suрова ustawa nie broni.

Romeo
Czyż świętem jak pątnikom usta nie są dane?

Julia
Tak, pielgrzymie, lecz służą one do modlenia.

Romeo
Pozwól więc usto 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 wpada ci do ucha.

Julia
Twa warga moje usta z grzechu oczyściła.

Romeo
Zło z mej wargi? O, szybko odrobie to, mila!

Julia
Lecz moje usta grzeszą i pragną pokut. 

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.

Juliet
Are not lips given to saints as they are to pilgrims?
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.
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!
Julia
Całuj. He kisses.

Give the sin back to me!
Juliet
You kiss very skillfully!

1956: Zofia Siwicka

Romeo do Juli
Jeśli niegodna ma rękę obraża
Jeśli niegodna ma rękę obraża
Tę świętość cudną, me wargi by rade
Tę świętość cudną, me wargi by rade
Jak dwaj pielgrzymi korni u ołtarza
Jak dwaj pielgrzymi korni u ołtarza
Pocalunkami otrzeć dotknięć ślady.
Pocalunkami otrzeć dotknięć ślady.

Julia
Pielgrzymie, krywąte wyznaczacz swej dłoni,
Pielgrzymie, krywąte wyznaczacz swej dłoni,
która tak godnie objawia szacunek,
która tak godnie objawia szacunek,
Bo święty ręki pielgrzymom nie broni,
Bo święty ręki pielgrzymom nie broni,
Dłoń w dłoń włożona to ich pocalunek.
Dłoń w dłoń włożona to ich pocalunek.

Romeo
Czy ust nie mają święci i pielgrzymi?
Romeo
Do not saints and pilgrims have lips?

Julia
Pielgrzymi mają – by mówić pacierze.
Juliet
Pilgrims do – to say prayers with.

Romeo
A więc daj ustom to, co ręka czyni.
Romeo
So give to lips what the hand does.
Moje się modłą – lub w nic już nie wierzę.
Mine pray – or I believe in nothing more.

Julia
Święty pozwala, stojąc niewzruszenie.
Juliet
Saint allows, standing still.

Romeo
Więc się nie ruszaj i spełnia me pragnienie.
Romeo
So stand still and fulfill my wish.
Całuje ją.
Your lips have cleared mine of the sin.
Twe wargi z grzechu moje oczyściły.

Julia
Mam go na ustach. Chętnie się zamienię.
Juliet
I have it on my lips. I shall eagerly exchange
with you.
Romeo
To grzech z warę moich! O, ty grzechu mily!
Daj go z powrotem.
Caha ją znów.

Julia
Cahałesz uczenie.

Romeo
This is the sin from my lips! Oh, you, dear sin!
Give it back.  

He kisses her again.

Juliet
You kiss learnedly.

ca 1990: Krystyna Berwińska

Romeo
Jeśli dotknięcie twoj dłoni ma ręką
Jest świętośladztem - warzy powędrują
Jak dwaj pielgrzymi i reliwą święta
Aby grzech zmazać - ze częścią ucałują.

Juliet
Pielgrzymie, nazbyt krzywdzisz rękę swoją.
Nie zasługuje weale na naganę.
Dotknięcie ręki święci się nie boją,
Ich pocałunkiem jest dłoni spotkanie.

Romeo
Czyż wargie nie mają pątnicy i święci?

Juliet
Pielgrzymie! Służą do modlitwy wargi.

Romeo
Święta! Niech wargi czynią to co ręce,
Lub wiara zmieni się w rozpaczą i skargi.

Juliet
Święte do modłów wysłuchania skore...

Romeo
Więc mnie wysłuchaj! Nagrodę odbiorę.
Caha ją.

Juliet
Women saints are eager to hear prayers...

Romeo
Przez twoje usta - z grzechu oczyszczonym.

Juliet
I am cleared, by your lips, of the sin.

Romeo
So let the saint taste the sin.
Romeo
Z moich ust grzech ten? Aniele wcielony!
Ten grzech mi oddaj –
Cahuje ją.

Julia
Tak jak z nut całujesz.

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

Juliet
You kiss very skillfully.


Romeo
Jeżeli profesuję nazbyt szorstką dłonią
Świątynię twojej dłoni, grzech to jest olbrzymi:
Zgładzi go czule para warg, które się płonią
Z powrotem winny, jak dwaj niedbiali pielgrzymi

Julia
Dobry pielgrzymie, nie ma w tym grzechu,
gdzie dłoni inna dłonią dotknięte lub nawet ją trzyma:
Są święci, przed którymi tłum wiernych się kloni,
I nie szkodzi, gdy rękach ich dotkną dłonie pielgrzyma.

Romeo
Czyż święci ust nie mają, tak jak i pielgrzymi?

Julia
Usta są im potrzebne, aby wznosić modły.

Romeo
O, niech tych ust ustami dotknięte spragnionymi:
Gdy wiary z nich zaczernię, już mnie w raj przywiodły!

Julia
Pierwszy krok musi zrobić grzesznik, a nie święty.

Romeo
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.

Juliet
Do not saints have lips as do pilgrims?

They need lips to raise prayers.

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

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

Nie ruszaj się więc, zanim kroku nie postąpię: Niech ust twoich dotkniecie z moich ust grzech zdaje się.

Caluże ją.

Juliet

But now I have on my lips the sin, from your lips taken.

Romeo

O, ja ci rozgrzeszenia również nie poskopię: Oddaj mi grzech z powrotem.

Caluże ją.

Juliet

It is very polite of you...

Bibliography

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